

## **The Second UCLG World Forum of Intermediary Cities**

### **The Future of Resilience through Intermediary Cities and beyond**

The world has entered into the Decade of Action. The 2030 agenda generated a strong spirit of transformation over the world, and the unique potential and capacities from small and medium size cities to reach the Future we Want are still to be discovered and fostered. The Intermediary Cities will gather again in the Second World Forum of Intermediary Cities to review progress to date and present their joint voice on their crucial relevance to accelerate global agendas.

### **General presentation**

#### **Context**

The First World Forum of Intermediary Cities, celebrated in 2018 and hosted by the city of Chefchaouen, built the idea of the “potential to unlock” the potential to a resilient future. **Based upon the 5 capitals of Resilience** (Human-Social-Economic-Cultural-Environmental), the methodology and discussions of the First Forum led to the adoption of the **Declaration-Charter of the Intermediary Cities of the World, based on a structure of Resilience capitals, and the agreements generated during the gathering.**

The results of this first important global gathering on Intermediary Cities include:

- Living systems, as a unique perspective of intermediary cities that combine natural and built environments, with a key focus on life, would it be Human, Natural, and Animal for a better respect and balance between them all, for the benefice of the people and communities;
- The five capitals of Resilience, as a structure for measuring and guiding the balance of the concrete projects and local agendas;
- Enhancing the impact of green friendly policies and investments;
- Advocating for additional prerogatives for Intermediary Cities as a key player for the management and conservation of the natural resources and global commons, directly linked with the local culture of living, while integrating smart technologies and developing the necessary digital infrastructure.
- A definition that is based on the Intermediary Cities’ role as catalyst of development into the territory than preliminary definitions based on the number of citizens, which varies according to the national and continental classification

The momentum generated transformative lines for advocacy, financing, capaciting and implementation for Intermediary Cities, which were not identified as such before. The current context of COVID-19 pandemic crises has amplified the challenges, while demonstrating the true perspective on the Intermediary Cities’ potential for building global resilience. Intermediary Cities became compelling alternatives due to the attractiveness of open spaces, proximity scales and proximity of Nature to the urban environment, especially during the lockdown, for example the concept of the 15 minutes city is part of the defining feature of the Intermediary City . More than ever, Intermediary Cities have taken their places as intermediation poles, as the fundamental link in the broader system of cities and territories, Intermediary cities represent and expose the evident impacts at and of our city surroundings, and they are easily affected by changes, transformations and innovation try-outs, and thus configure

cornerstones of future resilience development, becoming part of the territory strategy and resilience balance.

Today, 3 years since the first gathering, in the midst of the COVID pandemic, the world is still looking pathways for processes, methods, systems and renewed models for the necessary transformation.

### **Intermediary Cities in the post-COVID era: a stronger positioning**

Intermediary Cities have been more impacted by the lockdown effects than by the pandemic in terms of health issues. Citizens from the metropolises and large cities sought green spaces and improved wellbeing in intermediary cities, with healthier environments and natural food systems; citizens from Intermediary Cities were living the lack of sanitary equipment as a distress, fearing the consequences that COVID-19 could have on them and their families.

As metropolises were living the crowded urbanity and strong density as a parameter of contagion, changing what was seen as a parameter of sustainability to a factor of stress and crisis management. Intermediary Cities became key to the basis of the change of paradigm that citizens have been dreaming about during the lockdown: a greener environment, a more implicated nature into daily life, a better quality of life i.e. food quality – slowing time – living the urban-rural proximity and city r- etc.

### **Building the Future Resilience at global level**

The world needs a green recovery, that allows equal opportunities for all, in terms of its economic capital (jobs, employment and prosperity potentials), social capital through cohesion and redressing inequalities (social crisis) and environmental capital (environments of life), while enhancing the Human capital, through the human value and potential to allow us to re-invent local democracy, for a world driven by I resilience and care, in the post-COVID world.

**There will be no resilience while inequalities persist**, and that, as said by the UN Secretary General, “*the Planet repair goes with the Recovery*”. From a health and public service provision point of view, nobody is safe until all are safe. We have to find the way to build a true resilience and **go from Emergency to Livability, and the** Intermediary Cities can provide unique pathways. The Planet arrived at a tipping point where there is no place to second-guess the need for resilient systems: the only possible **scenario is to leave a healthy, livable, manageable and resilient planet to the Future Generations**. It is a Right for the Future generations. **Intermediary Cities are part of this scenario**, and this is the time to prepare it.

Intermediary Cities are a grounded ‘tool’ that may allow this to happen if we, as a global community, are ready to take the right decisions, at the right moment. The pandemic is offering an opportunity that we, as a community, must take benefit from: we need to build the Resilience that the planet and the future generations require. The intermediary cities have some key features that no other urban segment can have: generators of sustainable, just and ecological development into the territory, in a symbiotic relationship of the urban-rural nexus throughout the ecosystem of cities and territories.

## **Intermediary Cities Consultation process: building towards the Second World Forum**

### **Key thematic axis**

This second World Forum will be built upon the unfolded concepts of the first Forum, projecting them in the specific context we are living in, as they are key in the midst of this pandemic. To allow that, a series of consultations will be carried out in April and May towards the Second World Forum in September

to finetune and crystalize how these concepts are seen, developed and experimented by/from the Local Governments, and how the territory is unpacking some key challenges in this complex context on the ground: **Intermediary Cities & Caring Places** (economic capital), **Intermediary Cities & Inequalities** (social capital), **Intermediary Cities & Ecological Transition** (environmental capital) and **Intermediary Cities & Reinventing Local Democracy** (human Capital) advocating for a tool to reinvent democracy in/by Intermediary Cities, under the shape of a code of conduct between citizens and their local governance.

The process towards the Second World Forum will also observe its roots both in the results of the Durban Congress and the First World Forum of Intermediary Cities, while **contributing to the larger strategy of UCLG: The Pact for the Future**, who's three components are: People, Planet & Government.

Under these auspices, a special link will be made with the G20 activities, under the Presidency of Italy, as its program has a special thematic line on Intermediary Cities, as a way to generate cooperation and secure resilient development.

### Consultation series

The consultation sessions will develop these key concepts through the five capitals of Resilience, to draw some work lines towards the future, and towards a resilient planet that we are seeking, dreaming about and pursuing as a global community. The UCLG Regional Sections will be invited also to organize their own consultations that will feed into the general thematic, while identifying regional specificities.

### Description of the Vision & process



### Detailed agenda for the Consultation Series

- April 30<sup>th</sup> 2021 \_ **Intermediary Cities & Re-inventing Local Democracy**  
**Human capital**  
**Vision:** Citizens & Governance, as multipliers of resilience  
**Objective:** A global code of conduct for resilience

- May 3<sup>rd</sup> 2021 \_ **Intermediary Cities & Caring places**  
**Economic capital**  
**Vision:** Intermediary Cities can allow the 'emergence' of new models of thinking development, economy and Finances  
**Objective:** *Intermediary City as a concept advocating for 'life' and beyond: transforming global paradigms through Life systems*
  
- May 5<sup>th</sup> 2021 \_ **Intermediary Cities & Inequalities**  
**Social capital**  
**Vision:** 4 Equal Territories  
**Objective:** *Territorial justice & fighting inequalities in the new era*
  
- May 7<sup>th</sup> 2021 \_ **Intermediary Cities & Ecological Transition**  
**Environmental & Cultural capital**  
**Vision:** Enhancing the culture of ecology for a global resilience  
**Objective:** Rural-Urban continuum & Transforming our use and understanding of Ecology
  
- Beginning from 10<sup>th</sup> of May 2021 \_ **Regional Sections' Consultations**  
The objective is a regional evaluation of the Intermediary cities state during the COVID – Challenges & Solutions for Resilience
  - Regional consultation for Africa's Intermediary Cities
  - Regional consultation for MEWA's Intermediary Cities
  - Regional consultation for Latin-American Intermediary Cities
  - Regional consultation for Asia-Pacific's Intermediary Cities
  - Regional consultation for Eurasia's Intermediary Cities
  - Regional consultation for NORAM's Intermediary Cities