



Department of Economic and Social Affairs
United Nations



Directorate General for Development Cooperation
Government of Italy



Fighting Urban Poverty: Which Participatory Approaches?

**Report of the World Urban Forum III Side Event:
Fighting Urban Poverty: Which Participatory Approaches?
Convention and Exhibition Centre – Ballroom A
Vancouver, Canada, 20 June 2006**

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FOREWORD

In publishing her findings on the slums of Brazil, Dr. Janice Perlman, founder of the Mega-Cities Project, concluded in her 1976 book “The Myth of Marginality: Urban Poverty and Politics in Rio de Janeiro” that “*Favela* residents are not economically or politically marginal but exploited and repressed; they are not socially and culturally marginal but stigmatized and excluded from a closed social system. In short, they have the aspirations of the bourgeoisie, the perseverance of pioneers and the values of patriots, but are the victims of asymmetric integration.”

Several decades have passed since her initial ground-breaking study, but the root of urban poverty - exclusion - remains as pervasive today not only in Brazil, but in much of the developing, and in some cases, the developed world. While the wave of democratization over the past decade has allowed greater space for nominal political participation, the poor in general, but urban poor in particular, continue to be largely excluded from the essential decision making processes that intimately affect their socio-cultural-political-economic well-being.

To address these challenges, it is essential to develop policies, processes and institutional arrangements that create space for the poor and offer opportunities to the urban poor to participate in the decision-making processes in a manner that influences design, budgeting and implementation of public programmes that cater to the needs of the former. The urban poor must be given a greater say in the planning and budgeting processes of municipal administrations as well as in determining the public service delivery process; additionally legal issues pertaining to tenurial rights and entitlements must also be clarified and transparent processes be set in motion such that the most vulnerable, particularly slum-dwellers, gain their due rights and privileges. These initiatives are expected to contribute more positively to the UN Development Agenda including the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

Against this backdrop, the Directorate General for Development Cooperation (DGDC) of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Italy has developed a partnership with the United Nations Department for Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA) to jointly identify approaches and methodologies that are suitable for mainstreaming the urban poor into the urban governance processes and contribute to urban poverty reduction in a more effective manner. This partnership in addition to identifying appropriate participatory methods in urban poverty also intends to strengthen aid effectiveness in urban development as a whole.

The Panel Discussion on *Fighting Urban Poverty: Which Participatory Approaches?*, organized jointly by UNDESA and DGDC, as a side event to the Third World Urban Forum in Vancouver, Canada on 20 June 2006, brought together practitioners, policy makers and donors. It constituted part of the partnership to search for and articulate further the diverse approaches and methodologies conducive to participation in urban poverty reduction. The report has put together the presentations of the panellists,

responses of the participants and highlighted key agreements that emerged from the Side Event.

The Government of Italy and DESA are hopeful that the outcome of these debates and discussions, captured in this report will sensitize the development practitioners as well as national and local government administrators and advance further the discussions on the issue of participation in solving the problems of urban poverty.



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- *Ms. Ana Tibaijuku*, Under Secretary General and Executive Director, UN-Habitat, Nairobi
- *Mr. Guido Bertucci*, Director, Division for Public Administration and Development Management, UN-DESA, New York
- *Mr. Sam Sullivan*, Mayor, City Government of Vancouver, Canada
- *Ms. Loredana Stalteri*, Senior Urban Development Specialist, DGDC, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Italy
- *Mr. Adil Khan*, Chief, Socio-Economic Governance and Management Branch, DPADM, UN-DESA
- *Ms. Najet Karaborni*, Senior Interregional Advisor, SGMB, DPADM, UN-DESA
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- *Mr. Pietro Garau*, Lead International Consultant on Urban Poverty & International Development, UN-DESA
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ABBREVIATIONS & ACRONYMS

ASG	Assistant Secretary General
CBO	Community Based Organization
CLICK	Computer Literacy and Instructional Centre for Kids, Philippines
COPE	Community Organizers of the Philippines Enterprises
CSO	Civil Society Organization
DAC	Development Assistance Committee
DepEd	Department of Education, Philippines
DFID	Department for International Development, United Kingdom
DGDC	Directorate General for Development Cooperation, Italy
DPADM	Division of Public Administration and Development Management
ECLAC	Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean
GNP	Gross National Product
GOLD	Governance and Local Democracy Project
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
IDC	Italian Development Cooperation
IDS	Institute of Development Studies, University of Sussex
ILM	Integrated Livelihood Master Plan, Philippines
LGC	Local Government Code, Philippines
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
MENA	Middle East & North Africa
MFA	Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Italy
NCIB	Naga City Investment Board, Philippines
NCPPI	Naga City Participatory Planning Initiatives, Philippines
NCUPF	Naga City Urban Poor Federation, Philippines
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NIBR	Norwegian Institute for Urban and Regional Research
ODA	Official Development Assistance
OECD	Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development
PGS	Public Governance Scorecard
PPA	Programmes Projects and Activities
PO	People's Organization
SEF	Special Education Fund, Philippines
SGMB	Socio-Economic Governance and Management Branch
SIRP	Settlement and Integration of Refugees Programme in Serbia
ToP	Technology of Participation
UCLG	United Cities and Local Governments
UNDESA	United Nations Department for Economic and Social Affairs
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNCHS	United Nations Centre for Human Settlements
UNWFP	United Nations World Food Programme
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
USG	Under-Secretary-General
WUF	World Urban Forum

REPORT OF THE WORLD URBAN FORUM III SIDE EVENT

“Fighting Urban Poverty: Which Participatory Approaches?”

SECTION I: Executive Summary

High level panellists, discussants and a cross-section of participants representing various countries and diverse institutions, governmental as well as non-governmental, concluded, during the Vancouver World Urban Forum III Italy/DESA Side Event, that in recent times, poverty has increasingly become an urban phenomenon.

The poorest of the poor comprise the rural population, but the bulk of the poor is now urban. Statistics indicate that by 2020, more than 1.5 billion people will be living in slums and informal settlements. Despite some improvements, the issue of urban poverty remains crucial for a large number of countries. This alarming situation has called for urgent action. Urban poverty was one of the main themes of the 2004 Barcelona World City Forum, and the reduction of the population living in poverty in urban areas is part of the seventh Millennium Development Goal (MDG 7) related to environment sustainability.

The following five issues have been highlighted as critical:

- 1) Macro-economic policies and their relationships to poverty reduction in general and urban poverty reduction in particular.
- 2) Processes and institutional arrangements that are conducive to mainstreaming citizens, especially the urban poor, into the planning and budgeting systems, both at the local and national level.
- 3) Citizens' participation in monitoring, evaluation and audit of local government activities including service delivery.
- 4) Legal issues governing tenurial rights of the poor and slum dwellers.
- 5) Poverty/environment nexus that degrades the environment and exacerbates poverty in an inter-linking way.

Within the context of the papers presented and issues raised the panel drew up the following conclusions:

- The concept of urban has undergone radical change over the last few years, requiring new definition and understanding;
- Defining urban poverty is also seen as another challenge;
- The definitional complexities of what constitutes ‘urban’ and ‘urban poverty’ have implications for planning urban poverty alleviation strategies and policies;
- Urban poverty cannot be viewed simply from the national context; the international context, including globalization, has a profound impact on urban poverty, both positive as well as negative;

- A Participatory approach is critical to understanding the dynamics of urban poverty, as well as in the formulation of suitable poverty reduction strategies, policies and programmes; however, for participation to work, these must be outcome based;
- For participation to be successful, the poor must be part of the entire decision-making process;
- Also depending on the situation, participation can be both formal and informal and thus may have different forms and structures;
- Application of ICT and other forms of information access are important tools of participation;
- To ensure balance and equity in participation, it is important that special skills are developed to manage participation;
- Introduction of participatory methods require capacity building of both government as well as non-governmental institutions.

SECTION II: Main Report

A. Background

The Side Event, “*Fighting Urban Poverty: Which Participatory Approaches?*” conducted at the World Urban Forum III in Vancouver, Canada on June 20, 2006 has been a joint initiative of the Government of Italy and UN-DESA on urban poverty, especially on issues relating to approaches, methodologies, tools and techniques that are relevant to participatory methods (*See Annexes 1, 2 & 3: Aide Memoir, Agenda & Media Advisory*).

The Event, a discussion panel, has also been part of an on-going collaboration between the Directorate General for Development Cooperation of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Italy and the United Nations Department for Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA), to find solutions to urban poverty through participatory approaches (*See Annex 4: Side Event Organizing Team*).

It is expected that continuing debates and discussions on the emerging challenges of urban poverty including this Vancouver Side Event will greatly enhance the understanding of the complexities that surround the subject and consequently, contribute more robustly to the formulation of strategies of development cooperation that are suitable for addressing these challenges. Needless to say, such a strategy is equally relevant for the implementation of the broad UN development agenda, including the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

The Event, a discussion panel¹, consisted of high level speakers that included grassroots, national and international policy makers, practitioners, experts and donors. Additionally,

¹ Ms. Anna Tibaijuka, the Under Secretary General of the United Nations and Executive Director, UN-HABITAT(Co-chair of the panel), His Worship Sam Sullivan, the Mayor of Vancouver (Co-chair of the Panel), and Mr. Antonio Bernardini, Multilateral Coordinator, Development Cooperation, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Government of Italy, Mr. Patrizio Civili, Assistant Secretary General, UN-DESA

thanks to the widespread publicity endowed by the Government of Italy and UN-DESA, it succeeded in attracting a diverse group of around 200 participants, including representatives from central and local government bodies and non-governmental organizations. (See *Annex 5: Analysis of Event Participants*) The event was further facilitated by a resource paper developed and distributed by UN-DESA at the meeting (see *Annex 6: Participation in Urban Poverty Alleviation: Impacts and Challenges by Carlo Geneletti*).

The outcome of the panel is expected to be exploited in a number of ways. It is expected that the report of the panel will be an important resource to future work on urban poverty, and more immediately, an essential input to a donor meeting on “*Urban Poverty and International Development Cooperation: Policies, Experiences and Future Options*” to be organized by the Government of Italy tentatively in October 2006.

B. Synthesis of Discussions

The panel presentations and participant discussions contributed to the articulation of the issues and proposals highlighted below.

1. Concept / Definition

It is important to reach a consensus on the definition and components of urban agglomeration and its linkage to poverty. “The United Nations defines an urban agglomeration as the built-up or densely populated area containing the city proper, suburbs and continuously settled commuter areas. It may be smaller or larger than a metropolitan area; it may also comprise the city proper and its suburban fringe or thickly settled territory” (Background paper, WUF III: Our Future: Sustainable Cities – Turning Ideas into Action, page 11, Box 1: Defining “Urban”).

In addition to defining what presently constitutes “urban”, it is also important to define what urban poverty is and what its various dimensions are. Poverty (in general) and urban poverty (in particular) need to be defined not only by income, but also by social, political and cultural indicators as well.

2. Urban Poverty and Participation

a. In view of the rising urban growth, and consequently, urban poverty, all stakeholders (governments, CSOs/NGOs, the private sector, academia, media, the donor community,

presented the keynote speeches. Ms. Najet Karaborni, Senior Interregional Advisor, UN-DESA has been the Rapporteur of the Panel.

etc.) should continue to focus on and prioritize urban poverty as the cornerstone of their poverty alleviation policies and strategies.

b. The multidimensional indicators of urban poverty confirm that understanding the extent and depth of poverty as well as the conditions that contribute to poverty require the application of participatory approaches.

It is also important to ensure that participation, democracy, decentralization and partnerships are strongly interrelated and have a positive impact on urban poverty alleviation.

c. Methodological issues of participation

Who should participate (the people i.e. the poor themselves and/or their representatives - local council members, grassroots CSOs/NGOs etc)? What is the role of each stakeholder? Who are the enablers and who are the agents? What level of participation should be targeted?

d. Poor representation

How can CSOs and NGOs reach the poor, and effectively represent and defend their interest? How can the poor act directly and why have they not been able to in most cases? How can we use the outputs of participation in the planning, budgeting and monitoring processes and ensure a balance between the need for growth with those of environmental sustainability and equity? How can we ensure that participation will effectively benefit the poor and have the expected impact? Linked to these questions are also the issues of the tools and techniques of participation; it is apparent that most existing tools and techniques of participation have emerged from rural development science. Therefore one must ask whether these tools of participation are still valid for the appraisal of urban poverty.

e. Role of the stakeholders

Governments: Enablers and facilitators

NGOs/CSOs: Effectively represent the poor and defend their interests. Act as enablers and carry out training and capacity building programmes in addition to advocacy and programme implementation.

Poor: Be involved and actively participate in all phases: decision making processes, design, formulation, implementation and follow-up.

Local Authorities: Create an enabling environment and listen carefully to the needs and expectations of the poor, respect diversity and observe ethics and code of contact

Donor Countries and Agencies: (see 5 and 6 below)

3. Prerequisites - Effective Impact of Participation on the everyday lives of the Poor

To alleviate urban poverty in a sustained way there is a need for:

a. Equity in participation, gender balance, environmental sustainability, durable poverty alleviation, ethics, transparency, dissemination, role of media.

b. Commitment to human rights, democratic governance and values of freedom, equality, solidarity, tolerance, respect for nature and shared responsibility.

4. Dilemmas: Urban vs. Rural Poverty; Planning vs. Market; Growth vs. Environmental Sustainability and Equity

To overcome these three types of dilemmas it is essential to ensure:

a. Clear and realistic long term development vision based on sound diagnosis of natural, human and financial resources and potentialities at all levels (national, sub-regional and local).

b. Linkage between all levels (international, national, regional and local - urban and rural): Interrelation and interaction among all.

c. Linkage between urban planning, internationally agreed development goals including the MDGs and poverty strategies.

d. Balance between growth, environmental sustainability and equity (social categories: rich, poor, ethnic groups, disadvantaged, etc); gender; generations (elderly, youth, children, etc.).

e. Clearly defined role for each stakeholder within a strengthened partnership development framework:

- Mobilization of civil society at all levels, in cooperation with all stakeholders and all sectors, to alleviate urban poverty, especially for marginalized groups.
- Mobilization and local partnership campaigns to lobby Governments and hold them accountable to their promises, encouraging them to turn goals set into goals met.
- Fostering the energy of the civil society through national programmes and Official Development Assistance (ODA) efforts.
- Reinforcing the relationship between the UN, NGOs and civil society, especially with regards to achieving the MDGs.
- Participation and empowerment of people living in extreme poverty (MDG 1) through partnership activities.

5. Development of clear and transparent indicators, especially for ODA

a. Encourage and lobby developed countries to devote 0.7% of GNP to international development aid including urban poverty alleviation.

b. Encourage and lobby developed countries to eliminate trade barriers and subsidies so as to encourage economic opportunities, especially for impoverished people in both rural and urban areas.

6. Focus Areas for Development Cooperation Policies, Strategies and Programmes

a. Best Practices Information Exchange

Development, promotion, exchange, sharing and dissemination of adapted participatory approaches to local contexts, including the development and dissemination of useful and helpful tools such as citizens' socio-economic charter at the regional, sub-regional, national and local level, to maintain a sustained and institutionalized dialogue with CSOs and strengthen their active participation and involvement in all phases, from design to implementation, monitoring, evaluation and auditing of public policies, strategies, programmes and projects for urban poverty alleviation; people budgeting taking into account needs and rights of the poor to the city; etc.

b. Appropriate Tool Kits

Development of appropriate toolkits and implementation of adaptable capacity building programmes promoting participation techniques at all levels (international, regional, national and local) and for all stakeholders. This would include development cooperation staff of donor countries and agencies, governments (top and mid level officials and implementing staff), local authorities, communities, civil society organizations, NGOs and the private sector, including the training of trainers and citizen training programmes addressing the questions of What, For Whom, How and When? Success stories such as that of Naga City, Philippines must be highlighted.

c. Participative Environment

Support to governments to create enabling environment for effective and result-oriented participation to alleviate urban poverty in a sustained way:

- Political-legal-institutional-administrative support to promote local democracy and effective decentralization; promotion of adequate and adapted laws, rules and institutions to empower the poor and the CSOs/NGOs that represent them at the decision making level; support for the acquisition of tenure and loans; promotion of the funding of programmes accessible to all societal groups, taking urban integration and social cohesion into account; support for the promotion of transparency, professionalism and ethics; promotion of public service delivery to the citizens;
- Support infrastructure investment and improvement, including the related issues of employment and job creation, etc;

- Support the advancement of health and education and prioritize social protection measures.

d. Pro-Poor Macro-economic Policies

Development and promotion of a comprehensive and integrated approach to poverty alleviation and sustainable development for both urban and rural areas at all levels. This approach should conciliate social and economic, growth and equity, present and future (long, mid and short term and balance between generations) to encourage investment and job creation. It should also enhance social priorities and pro-poor policies and strategies with civic engagement and active participation; and link urban planning and development with MDGs and poverty strategies.

e. Partnerships

Promotion of effective participation in multi-stakeholders' partnerships for internationally agreed Millennium Development Goals including urban poverty alleviation and sustainable development with urban integration and social cohesion.

f. Periodic Donor Consultations

Periodic (annual) brainstorming and impact review by donors of their urban poverty alleviation policy and strategy in order to ensure synergy between development actors and harmonization between donors. It is important that the results be presented during the upcoming Fourth World Urban Forum (WUF 4) in China.

C. Evaluation and Recommendations of Panel Participants

1. Process Issues

In order to evaluate the relevance of the panel and to improve the quality of future initiatives, an evaluation form and questionnaire was sent to all participants (*See Annex 7: Event Evaluation Form*). Responses received covered the entire spectrum of participants including civil society stakeholders (NGOs, CSOs and academia) and local government entities from developed and developing countries as well as transitional economies. Participants rated the panel highly for documentation and organizational quality.

While transitional and developing country participants found the workshop highly relevant to their work in urban poverty alleviation through participatory approaches, developed country participants were appreciative of the background papers and recommended greater grassroots representation and hands-on research to be incorporated into future workshops.

KEY PARTICIPANT MESSAGES

Pertaining to methodologies of international cooperation that can effectively fight urban poverty with the participation of the poor –

“Long term cooperation programmes; devolution-by-decentralisation; improved local government finances through improved local tax collection and national block grant transfer systems; improved (more transparent and accountable) public financial management and national measures to empower the poor; legislation to ensure representation of disadvantaged groups in local councils; support to associations/NGOs working with mass communication targeting the poor; educating the poor with regards to participatory poverty reduction (including exchange of experiences).”

- Norwegian Institute for Urban and Regional Research (NIBR)

Pertaining to the priorities in socio-economic governance for poverty alleviation –

“Future workshops must factor into consideration that the fact that developing countries are transferring an inordinate amount of wealth to developed nations as a consequence of excessively high interest rates on debt repayment – resources that could have been used for urban poverty alleviation. Additionally future debates must evaluate the impact of the Washington Consensus on urban poverty, whose policy outcomes have allegedly had a negative impact upon the poor as a result of the privatization of social services and the deregulation of social policies.”

– Faculty of Architecture, University of São Paulo, Brazil

Pertaining to the deficiencies of development cooperation –

“Combined approaches to public sector reform and development are lacking; pro-poor civil society organisations have neither been adequately supported nor mobilized to develop poverty reduction strategies. There are the consequences of the dominance of “neutral” technocratic approaches that do not address the asymmetric power relations that underpin poverty and inequality”

- Norwegian Institute for Urban and Regional Research (NIBR)

Short term commitments tend to be the norm. Community building and fostering a culture of participation must be seen as a long term processes.

- UN World Food Programme (WFP)

Pertaining to the role of principal actors and the roles they can play in urban poverty alleviation –

“International organizations with experience in poverty alleviation programmes and projects can serve as a database and training tool for local government entities on the technical and managerial aspects of successfully implementing urban poverty alleviation programmes”

– Municipality of Pancevo, Serbia

Pertaining to the role UNDESA & IDC can play to support institutions in poverty alleviation –

“Partnering with CSOs and CBOs (with regional NGOs playing the role of facilitators) and providing technical assistance where necessary; supporting innovative approaches to urban poverty alleviation at the national level and facilitating the transfer of these approaches to other countries or contexts, where appropriate”.

- Building and Social Housing Foundation, UK

2. Recommendations

The following recommendations were derived based upon participant responses to the side event evaluation form:

- a. Greater funding and development cooperation for urban poverty alleviation;
- b. Training, capacity building, information dissemination, strategic planning and outsourcing to existing networks (CSOs and NGOs) to foster community participation in public policies;
- c. Respect local indigenous methodologies for participation and community building - appreciate local realities, values and ideas;
- d. Engage the urban poor in resource management and major decision-making processes;
- e. Emphasize upon long-term cooperation programmes, formal and informal networks and experience exchange as effective methodologies to combat urban poverty with the participation of the poor;
- f. CSOs and CBOs should be directly funded and community-to-community exchange should be supported and facilitated;
- g. Create an internal market in developing countries for popular needs in order to develop a popular economy;
- h. Top-down approaches and short-term programmes have proven to be detrimental strategies to urban poverty alleviation and should be seriously re-evaluated.

SECTION III: Proceedings

Mr. M. Adil Khan, Chief, Socio-Economic Governance and Management Branch, Division for Public Administration and Development Management, UN-DESA introduced the topic of the Side Event (Panel) and the discussants.

There were two welcoming addresses and opening remarks from two Co-Chairs, followed by two keynote addresses by the representative of the Italian Government and UN-DESA respectively. This was followed by six substantive interventions from six experts.

A. Welcome addresses and Opening Remarks

1. Ms. Anna Tibaijuka, USG and Executive Director, UN-HABITAT and Co-Chair of the Panel

Introductory remarks by Ms. Tibaijuka began with the acknowledgment and welcoming of everyone to the side event on *Fighting Urban Poverty: Which participatory approaches?* She was very grateful that the Italian Development Cooperation intends to give greater impulse and effectiveness to its international efforts in fighting urban poverty. This is very much in line with the follow-up activities to the 2005 World Summit and its endorsement of the Millennium Development Goals. She was also delighted that the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA) is a partner in this important endeavour on elaborating a strategy to guide and accompany this effort on public participation to urban poverty reduction. She pointed out that the main purpose of the meeting is to discuss what kind of participatory approaches are needed to achieve sustainable poverty reduction.

Ms Tibaijuka underlined that her expectations from the Panel are related to how do we combat poverty. How do we have to do when there is no finance for health, for energy, etc.? How do we provide food and services for everyone? How to fight urban poverty in a situation of under-industrialization? For the Executive Director of UN-Habitat, the problem is food, as there is not enough food creation, and we should look at how to solve the problem without decent income as adequate shelter needs decent income? We should acknowledge that taking into account the reality and globalization issues, Sub Saharan countries cannot compete in this field.

She also highlighted the continuously growing urban growth accompanied by a similar or even more important urban poverty growth. Combating urban poverty requires first and foremost, that we recognize the “local” dimension and the role of local actors as the majority of the urban poor have no access to land, infrastructure and basic services. In our work in slums across the world, we are reminded constantly that people without secure tenure, without an address, are simply not considered citizens. They are denied services such as water and electricity, education and health, access to information, transport and waste collection, banking and insurance etc.

Local authority is the front line actor responsible for land use planning, property administration, and the provision of basic infrastructure and services. This crucial situation necessitates the special attention of all, especially the donor countries, to assist governments to improve the situation of the poor and contribute effectively to the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals (*See Annex 8 for complete text of Anna Tibaijuka's Statement*).

2. Mr. Sam Sullivan, Mayor of Vancouver and Co-Chair of the Panel

Mr. Sullivan welcomed the participants and expressed his thanks to the Government of Italy and UNDESA for organizing the panel. He highlighted two types of poverty in Vancouver. The first one is linked to the problem of income distribution and the lack of affordable housing for low-income groups. This is on the ascendancy and the government can play an active role to mitigate it. The City of Vancouver has responded by actively advocating developers to expand high-density urban housing that led to an overall expansion in the urban housing market benefiting all social groups. The second problem is linked to social exclusion resulting in security concern. 80% of crimes in Vancouver occur in the poor areas and he describes it as a problem of policies. This requires the participation of all segments of society and cannot be dealt with by the government alone. The city government can promote the expansion of employment in low-income areas by promoting incentives to city businesses; however greater coordination is needed to resolve issues arising from the influx of aboriginal migrants who are often lured into illegal work due to the lack of legal alternatives.

The panel served as a reminder to participants that urban poverty was not only about local authorities and governments, but also about the poor themselves and their active participation in public policies to improve their situation. The Mayor emphasized the strengthened role of local governments, civil society and the private sector in becoming partners to combat urban poverty and welcomed once more the Italian Development Cooperation and UNDESA initiative to enhance donor development cooperation strategies and policies in fighting urban poverty.

B. Keynote Addresses

1. Mr. Antonio Bernardini, Multilateral Coordinator, Development Cooperation, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Italy

Mr. Bernardini started by thanking the Executive Director of UN-Habitat and the Mayor of Vancouver for accepting to co-chair the Meeting. He also congratulated UNDESA for the joint organization with the Italian Development Cooperation of this important event. He mentioned that he joined DESA for this Meeting because his country, Italy as the donor country, decided to support urban poverty in a generous way taking into account the high priority given to this issue. With World Bank and Cities Alliances in Brazil, Italy is already working in this field. In this context of stronger commitment to the development of poorer nations, the *Direzione Generale Cooperazione allo Sviluppo*,

Italy's development cooperation agency, now intends to work on how to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of its interventions against urban poverty. He underlined that "Italian cooperation with DESA has precisely this goal: to identify together the areas of intervention and the operational procedures required to make our aid more effective in this complex and sensitive field. With DESA we are going in the right direction for urban development. To understand better what our experiences in this field are, what is working well and what is not working well we are planning a donor meeting and consultation in September in Rome".

Mr. Bernardini emphasized the need for better preparation to alleviate urban poverty. Italy has been persuaded to give priority to fighting urban poverty essentially because the city offers its newcomers — even the poorest ones — chances for a better life and this process of integration into, and of participation in, the life of cities, needs to be supported and encouraged, because in developing countries it can become a process of mobility out of poverty especially as migration could be seen as one of the livelihood strategies of the rural poor. He also shared with the participants the main priorities of Italian development cooperation summarized as follows:

a. Slum upgrading which will stay at the top of the priority list of the Italian development cooperation in urban poverty alleviation for years to come. Helping the poor consolidate tenure and providing them with basic urban services is critical for the success of their fight against poverty especially as successful experiences were registered in this field with the Italian support. But slum upgrading should be done with community participation and inclusion of the least privileged. Participation should be promoted essentially by strengthening representative institutions and encouraging national governments to decentralize to local authorities' power, responsibilities and the resources to fulfil them.

b. The second is poverty in middle-sized cities and towns and the rural-urban interface. In search for better livelihoods, many families migrate from the countryside to the nearest city, which is often a small city or a town, and from there to the national capital, which, in several developing countries, is a mega city. But it is very important to also tackle poverty in the intermediate steps of the migration process, the medium-sized cities and towns.

c. The third priority is related to the issues of youth and violence. It is urgent to focus our attention on adolescents and youth who perceive themselves as the victims of social exclusion. This generates insecurity, crime and violence - harmful not only to the future of the youth but to their countries as well.

In concluding, the multilateral coordinator of the Italian Development Cooperation stressed that his agency is open and could consider other options based on Panel findings, interactive debate and the September 2006 donor meeting in Rome. He also called for enhanced donor support to urban poverty alleviation with civic participation and reminded the participants that "we are all here for a learning process" (*See Annex 9 for complete text of Antonio Bernardini's statement*).

2. Mr. Patrizio Civili, Assistant Secretary General, UN-DESA

Mr. Civili was delighted to welcome all the participants to the side event of the third World Urban Forum. He thanked Ms. Tibajuka for her crucial role in securing this event's incorporation into the Forum and the Mayor of Vancouver for kindly agreeing to co-chair the event with Ms. Tibajuka. He also thanked the co-organizer, the Government of Italy, for partnering with DESA to explore the issue of urban poverty and participatory approaches in order to help strengthen the effectiveness of development cooperation initiatives in this important sector.

Mr. Civili highlighted that the Panel was an interactive dialogue and discussants would introduce crucial issues to enhance participant interaction. Despite considerable progress since 1990, poverty persists as a challenge on a global scale as many countries, particularly in Sub-Saharan Africa, have seen little improvement or even suffered setbacks. Around the world, current estimates show nearly 1.5 billion people living in extreme poverty, on less than US\$1 dollar per day. Many of these impoverished people are residing in the urban areas of developing countries. Nearly half the world's people live in urban or sub-urban areas. According to UN estimates, 72% of the urban population in Africa live in slums—the highest concentration of urban poor in the world.

The definition of “urban” and “rural” is in flux as we see a new phenomenon—described by some as “edge city” or “city-out” growth—as urban areas grow beyond metropolitan areas and push into rural ones, where the inhabitants, especially the poor, may enjoy neither the benefits of cities nor those of villages. Another increasingly evident phenomenon is the so-called “rotating poor”, reflecting the situation of many urban poor who now move in and out of jobs much more frequently than in the past.

As an ethical, social, political and economic imperative, the goal related to poverty eradication is at the core of the comprehensive development agenda generated by the wave of UN conferences and summits beginning in 1990. This led to the articulation in 1995 by world leaders of a holistic policy framework for eradicating poverty, promoting employment and fostering social integration. Furthermore, in 1996 in Istanbul, the focus was on the development challenges of securing adequate shelter for all and the sustainable development of human settlements in an urbanizing world.

The UN Assistant Secretary General underlined that “the imperative of good governance, including a particular emphasis on participation, clearly cuts across the whole UN Development Agenda”. The nature and characteristics of contemporary urban poverty are moving beyond the capacity of traditional tools of development planning, which are mostly oriented toward rural development. “Our task today is to consider how to use participation as a strategic tool in urban poverty alleviation at different levels and in different institutional settings.

Participatory approaches can offer tools that are sufficiently flexible to take into account the multiple dimensions of urban poverty and to respond to the particularities of individual communities. By being interactive, non-threatening and sensitive, such

approaches can improve the quality of poverty alleviation policy and the prospects for its effective implementation over the long term. Moreover, by their very nature, they contribute to the building of inclusive societies, particularly by empowering the least advantaged and fostering trust among all of society's members".

Against this backdrop, he threw out a list of questions:

- Can we agree on a precise and workable definition of participation?
- How do we operationalize participation or, in other words, what are the methodological issues of participation?
- Who participates and how do we guarantee equity in participation?
- How do we secure gender balance?
- Who are the agents of participation?
- What are the enablers of participation?
- How do we use the outputs of participation in planning, budgeting and monitoring processes and ensure balance between the needs of sustainable growth with those of equity?
- What benefits has participation actually brought to the poor thus far?
- What are the implications of the mobility of many urban poor for the use of participatory approaches?

In concluding, Mr. Civili stressed that there are no easy answers to any of these questions and encouraged the panellists and the participants through their presentations and dialogue to help move a step further into identifying relevant and doable options and approaches of participation to get the potential to contribute to alleviating urban poverty in a significant way. He once again thanked all the participants, reiterating the necessity to have a concrete vision and to remain steadfast in their efforts to fulfil promises (*See Annex 10 for complete text of Patrizio Civili's Statement*).

C. Discussant Interventions

1. Ms. Marivonne Plessis-Fraissard, Director, Transport and Urban Development, World Bank, focused on how participation could be used as a strategic tool. She underlined the importance of a framework of participation. Cities have been given bigger responsibilities without the capacity to raise funds. They receive only 20% of revenues and have to deliver more than 75% of services. So cities should engage with their citizens in order to be able to deliver. She highlighted the Slum programme of the State of Bahia supported by the government of Italy as a big success.

Ms. Plessis-Fraissard also emphasized the importance of the issue of community access to information, as a crucial element in community empowerment and welfare. In this regard, she highlighted the importance of ICT. She further argued that participation should be seen as a process for providing decision making – the issue is not so much participation but inclusion. This is the new challenge. Finally, she mentioned that participation has to translate principles into reality, stressing the importance of year by year monitoring indicators.

2. Ms. Somsook Boonyabancha, President of the Asian Coalition for Housing Rights, started by saying that the introduction of the MDGs have defined the millennium, as for the first time, people have become the subject rather than the object of development. But how does one go about it? What could be the tool? People are the actors and at the same time, people are the solution. An example was cited from Cambodia, where communities were taught how to save, linking them to their municipalities' financial support. The role of the fund was to look at the peoples conditions; to allow those on the ground to link with other actors; to build connections with others in the community and organize themselves to link with organizations through institutional arrangements. Conventional institutions could not solve the problem. There is also a need to develop processes for the poor to come together.

3. Mayor Jesse M. Robredo, of Naga City, Philippines, described Naga's experience in using participatory approaches to address various dimensions of urban poverty more effectively. Capacity building is not only the responsibility of the central government but also the local government. He emphasized the importance of partners as well as stakeholders and stated that there was no one solution to the issue; the solution depends on the specificity of the problem and the capacity of the people to tackle it.

Mayor Robredo highlighted four key initiatives in the city's evolving institutional experience in participatory governance: first, the *Kaantabay sa Kauswagan (or Partners in Development) Programme* on securing tenurial rights for the urban poor, which laid down the groundwork for meaningful engagement with constituents; second, *Participatory Planning Initiatives* that strengthened local capacity on participatory approaches; third, *Reinventing the Local School Board*, which marked the first time participatory approaches were used to influence a national agency to address a key local concern and finally, the *ongoing preparation of Naga's MDG-aligned local development plans*, which seeks to further institutionalize peoples participation in governance and development planning (*See Annex 11: Participatory Approaches in Alleviating Urban Poverty: The Naga City experience by Jesse M. Robredo*).

4. Mr. William Cobbett, Programme Director, Cities Alliances, World Bank argued that participation is not an end by itself, but a means to share information to solve each others problems. To create the framework for participation is to create space for people. This involves other partners including the informal sector. The key choice is not what kind of participation we look for; but rather to negotiation and deal with confrontations if necessary. Consequently participation can be consensual as well as hostile. One of the key lessons of participation is the common understanding of the importance of sharing information, agreement and compromise. However, participation can be discredited if it produces no result. He additionally cites successful examples from Brazil and South Africa

5. Ms. Suzana Jovanovic, the City Councillor for Pancevo Municipality in Serbia, spoke about social housing projects and stressed that developing the practice of civil society participation was crucial for transition economies. She emphasized the need for a

strengthened partnership between NGOs in the North and the South (*See Annex 12: Participatory Approaches in Serbia - Municipality of Pancevo by Suzana Jovanovic*).

6. Ms. Erminia Maricato, Professor of Architecture at the University of Sao Paulo in Brazil, stressed the need to return to social housing, tackle soaring land prices and seek funding. She highlighted that participatory processes have led to the attainment of cheaper housing, monitoring, reduced corruption and greater respect for human rights. People learn together when they live as a community (*See Annex 11: Challenges to Participation in Poverty Alleviation in Brazil by Erminia Maricato*).

D. Participant Response and Interactive Dialogue

1. Green Party – Grazia Francescato (Parliament of Italy)

Environment and poverty are interlinked. Climate change is very important and affects urban quality.

2. Social Environment Centre (slum community) – Joseph Idahosa Amenyglanos

While the community has a project with the World Bank, no information was provided by the World Bank to the community and as such they were not even aware of what the World Bank was doing with the project.

WB Response: The World Bank's policy is to first disseminate information and then to hold discussions with the government; afterwards they would disseminate documentation on their website and then to the community

3. New Women and children and food banks – Vancouver – Claudia Medine

What we indeed need is to have ideas on how to deal with extreme solutions. The free market will not resolve the problem. For children, youth and people of colour, it is important to find ways and means of opening up to them and seeking their participation.

4. Addis Ababa – Slum NGO – Jember Teferra

Where extreme poverty exists, there is a need to enable participation. But how should this enabling environment be created? Who should do it? One major proposal is to give attention to the requests and needs of the poor and to be careful not to inadvertently harm people through participation.

E. Closing Remarks

In closing, the Co-Chair Mayor Sam Sullivan expressed his thanks and deep appreciation to all the participants, acknowledging everyone's unique talents and expertise and indicated that he was impressed by the recommendations put forward by the respective speakers and participants and how they were able to capture the essence of what needs to be done. He invited the participants to the UNDESA/Italy reception for more interactive dialogue among the participants.

It was agreed that a draft report will be sent to all participants for comments before finalization and dissemination to all. Everyone was encouraged to participate in the final report so it will reflect all participants' concerns and priorities.

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AIDE MEMOIRE (ANNEX 1)

Background

Poverty is an increasingly urban phenomenon. The poorest of the poor are among the rural population, but the bulk of the poor is urban and, according to Habitat's projections on the population living in slums and informal settlements, will be urban in the coming decades. These statistics indicate that by 2020, more than 1.5 billion people will live in slums and informal settlements. Despite some improvements, the issue of urban poverty remains crucial for a large number of countries. This alarming situation has called for urgent action. Urban poverty was one of the main themes of the 2004 Barcelona World City Forum, and the reduction of the population living in poverty in urban areas is part of the seventh Millennium Development Goal (MDG 7) related to environment sustainability.

At least four issues are seen as critical to address and these are:

- appropriate macro-economic policies that are conducive to urban poverty reduction
- processes and institutional arrangements conducive to mainstreaming citizens, especially the urban poor into planning and budgeting systems, both at local as well as at national levels
- citizens' participation into the monitoring and evaluation and audit of the local government activities including service delivery
- legal issues governing tenurial rights of the poor and slum dwellers.

The cross-cutting theme in all of the above is the theme of *participation*. But the key question is how to eventuate it; what indeed is the most suitable institutional framework; and what are the different levels of participation etc.

Against this background, the Directorate General for Development Cooperation of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Italy, in cooperation with the United Nations Department for Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA), are combining their efforts to address the challenges of urban poverty, especially the aspects of participatory governance in urban poverty by raising the debate at the international level. It is expected that the outcome of such debates and discussions will contribute to formulation of suitable strategies of development cooperation in alleviation of urban poverty. These strategies are also being pursued within the broad UN development agenda, including the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and the 2005 World Summit Outcome, and the national policies on development cooperation adopted in recent years.

The strategy will, *inter alia*, help identifying and formulating methodologies and policy guidelines for addressing urban poverty, with special reference to participation.

The June 20, 2006 side event, a discussion forum jointly organized by the Government of Italy and UN-DESA on *Fighting Urban Poverty: What Participatory Approaches* organized within the World Urban Forum III is intended to help highlight key issues and

articulate appropriate approaches and methodologies to tackle the challenges of urban poverty, especially the issues related to participation. A panel of high level speakers that include practitioners, policy makers and donors has been invited to participate in the discussion.

The discussion summary of the panel will then be presented at a series of meetings involving various stakeholders, including a donor consultation among bilateral donors in Rome, Italy, in mid September 2006 at the meeting on “Urban Poverty and International Development Cooperation: Policies, Experiences and Future Options”.

Objective of the meeting

More specifically the Vancouver panel discussion on *Fighting Urban Poverty: Which Participatory Approaches?* shall focus its discussions on an important pillar of poverty alleviation strategy: civic engagement in public, urban and pro-poor policies. Open to all WUF III participants, the meeting will seek to define how participation can become a strategic tool in urban poverty alleviation at different levels and in different institutional settings.

Expected Outcome

It is expected that the discussion will provide a better understanding of the strategic value of participation in policies, programmes and projects aimed at urban poverty reduction; an enrichment of the strategy’s focus and horizon; the strengthening of peer (donor) and partner networks.

A follow-up presentation is also being planned at this year’s main World Habitat Day on 2 October 2006.

Participants

Seven to ten high-level participants are invited to take part as panellists. About 100 participants in the WUF III, representing governments, CSOs, universities, local authorities and development cooperation agencies are expected to contribute to the debate.

Date and venue

The meeting will be held on Tuesday, 20 May 2006 from 06:00 p.m. to 08:00 p.m. at the World Urban Forum III, in the Ballroom A of the Vancouver Convention and Exhibition Centre, Canada.

Language

The meeting will be conducted in English.

Organizers

The meeting is jointly organized by the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations (UN/DESA) and the Directorate General for Development Cooperation of the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

For more information, please contact:

Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Italy

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**SIDE EVENT: Fighting Urban Poverty:
Which Participatory Approaches?**

**Convention and Exhibition Centre - Ballroom A
Vancouver, Canada
20 June 2006 – 18h:00 – 20h00
Agenda (Annex 2)**

Opening Remarks

Anna Tibaijuka, Executive Director, UN-HABITAT (co-Chair)
Sam Sullivan, Mayor of Vancouver (co-Chair)
Patrizio Civili, Assistant-Secretary-General for Policy Coordination and Inter-Agency Affairs, United Nations
Antonio Bernardini, Multilateral Coordinator, Italian Development Cooperation, Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Discussants

Lindiwe Sisulu, Minister of Housing of South Africa (tbc)
Maryvonne Plessis-Fraissard, Director, Transport and Urban Development, The World Bank
Jesse Manalastas-Robredo, Mayor, City Government of Naga, Philippines

- Open discussion

Discussants

William Cobbett, Programme Manager, Cities Alliance
Susana Jovanovic, City Counselor, Pancevo Municipality, Serbia
Erminia Maricato, Professor, Faculty of Architecture, University of São Paulo, Brazil

- Open discussion

Wrap up & Closing Remarks followed by a reception

MEDIA ADVISORY (ANNEX 3)

UN PRESSES FOR CIVIC ENGAGEMENT IN URBAN PLANNING TO ALLEVIATE POVERTY

Global panel to discuss participatory approach to fighting poverty

New York, 20 June 2006

Involving the poor in the fight against poverty is one of the key goals of the conference - *“Fighting Urban Poverty: Which Participatory Approaches?”* – a side event to be held in Vancouver, Canada on 20 June 2006 as part of the World Urban Forum III, UN-HABITAT’s international meeting on the state of the world’s growing cities.

United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA) is organizing this side event/panel discussion in conjunction with the Italian Development Corporation.

A distinguished panel of speakers including policy makers, practitioners, representatives of various governments, local authorities and members of civil society and academia will meet to discuss how participation can become a strategic tool in urban poverty alleviation.

“According to UN estimates some one billion people live in slums,” said Patrizio Civili, Assistant-Secretary General for Policy Coordination and Inter-Agency Affairs at the United Nations, in advance of the Vancouver meeting. *“We expect that this discussion forum will provide a better understanding of strategic value of citizens’ participation in policies and programmes aimed at reducing urban poverty. It will help us in formulating future guidelines in the area.”*

The panel discussion will be co-chaired by UN-HABITAT Executive Director, Anna Tibaijuka, and Mayor of Vancouver, Sam Sullivan. Patrizio Civili, UN Assistant Secretary-General and Antonio Bernardini, Multilateral Coordinator of the Italian Development Cooperation, will deliver opening remarks. Other panellists include Lindiwe Sisulu, Minister of Housing of South Africa; Jesse Manalastas-Robredo, Mayor, City Government of Naga, Philippines; and Susana Jovanovic, City Counsellor, Pancevo Municipality, Serbia.

A summary of the discussion is to be presented at a series of meetings involving various stakeholders including donors in Rome, Italy, in mid-September 2006.

Venue: Ballroom A, Vancouver Convention and Exhibition Centre

Day and date: Tuesday, 20 June, 2006

Time: 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. followed by Reception.

For more information please contact:

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Vancouver: 604-687-0511, Toll free: 800-833-6144, Fax: 604-687-2801

SIDE EVENT ORGANIZING TEAM (ANNEX 4)

Fighting Urban Poverty: Which Participatory Approaches?

Italian Development Cooperation

- 1) *Ms. Loredana Stalteri*, Senior Urban Development Specialist, In charge of Urban Development and Poverty Alleviation Sector, Directorate General for Development Cooperation, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Italy (Team Member)
- 2) *Ms. Adriana Catalano*, DGDC, MFA, Italy (Assistant)

UN-DESA New York

- 1) *Mr. Adil Khan*, Chief, Socio-Economic Governance and Management Branch (SGMB), Division for Public Administration and Development Management (DPADM), Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA), United Nations, NY (Team Leader)
- 2) *Ms. Najet Karaborni*, Senior Interregional Advisor, SGMB, DPADM, DESA, NY (Team Member and Rapporteur of the Side Event)
- 3) *Mr. Pietro Garau*, Lead International Consultant on Urban Poverty & International Development, UN-DESA, NY (Team Member)
- 4) *Mr. Carlo Geneletti*, International Consultant on Social Development and Participatory Approaches, UN-DESA, NY (Team Member)
- 5) *Ms. Stella Simpas*, Administrative/Technical Cooperation Assistant, SGMB, DPADM, UN-DESA (Assistant)

UN-DESA Rome

- 1) *Mr. Gherardo Casini*, Chief, Office of Human Resources for International Cooperation, UN-DESA, Rome (Team Member)

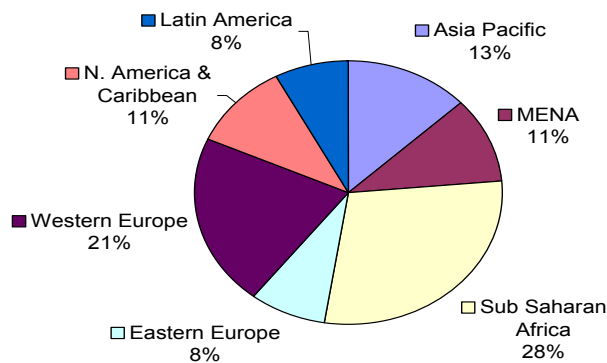
ANALYSIS OF EVENT PARTICIPANTS (ANNEX 5)

The side event on *Fighting Urban Poverty: Which Participatory Approaches?* attracted a total of 192 participants representing 132 organizations from 38 countries covering 6 continents. The event brought together members from all walks of life from academics to ambassadors, mayors to ministers, entrepreneurs to environmentalists, parliamentarians to peace activists and even from technocrats to bureaucrats to bloggers! Indeed the entire cross-section of society was present at the event, particularly the four major players essential to good governance - the public sector, private sector, international development agencies and the most numerous of them all - the civil society, ranging from NGO's, CSOs, foundations and think tank's to the media and academia.

I. REGIONAL DISTRIBUTION OF PARTICIPATING COUNTRIES (38)

A total of thirty-eight countries representing six continents took part in the side event. The relatively even regional distribution of countries demonstrate that urban poverty is a pressing issue for developing as well as developed and middle income countries. The entire African region was very well represented, with representatives from all four corners of the continent comprising a third of the total participating countries (13/38).

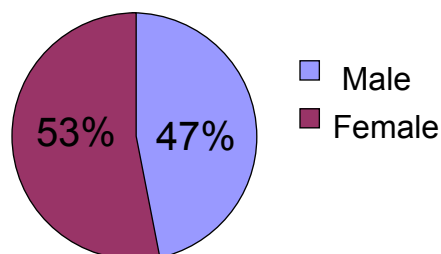
Asia Pacific (5)	MENA (4)	West Africa (4)	East Africa (4)	Southern Africa (3)	Eastern Europe (3)	Western Europe (8)	N. America & Caribbean (4)	Latin America (3)
Australia Bangladesh India Japan Philippines	Egypt Jordan Saudi Arabia Tunisia	Benin Ghana Liberia Nigeria	Ethiopia Kenya Uganda Tanzania	South Africa Zambia Zimbabwe	Albania Croatia Serbia	Austria Belgium France Germany Italy Norway Sweden UK	Bahamas Barbados Canada USA	Brazil Mexico Venezuela



II. GENDER DISTRIBUTION OF PARTICIPANTS

The side event had a total of 192 distinguished participants from all corners of the globe. The relatively even gender distribution of participants ensured that the voices of women – on whom the consequences of urban poverty often bear down more heavily than they do on men - were adequately represented.

Gender	Total per Gender	% of Total Participants
Male	90	46.9%
Female	102	53.1%
Total	192	100%

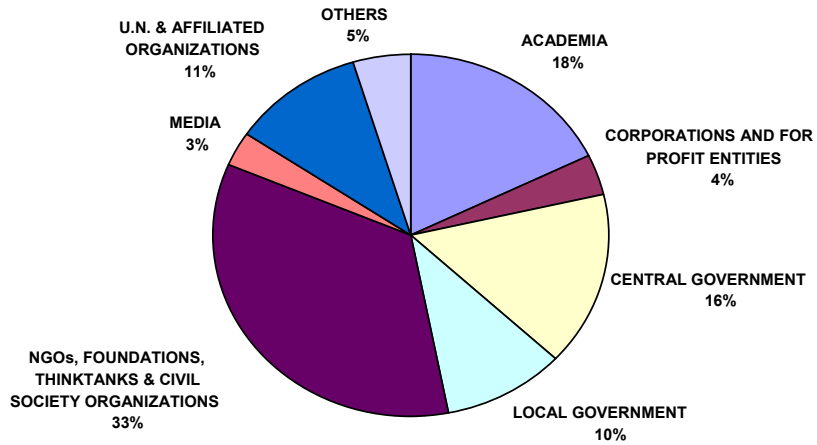


III. PARTICIPANTS PER CATEGORY

An overwhelming majority – more than 95% of the participants – were derived from the four principal sectors of society - the public sector (local and central government), private sector, civil society (NGOs, media and academia) and multilateral development institutions. The broad interest demonstrated through the participation of all the key societal actors is a clear indication that no one is shielded from the direct and indirect impacts of urban poverty.

Category of Organization	Total Participants in Each Category	Participants in Each Category as a % of Total Participants
ACADEMIA	34	17.7%
CORPORATIONS AND FOR PROFIT ENTITIES	7	3.6%
CENTRAL GOVERNMENT	30	15.6%
LOCAL GOVERNMENT	19	10%
NGOs, FOUNDATIONS, THINKTANKS & CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATIONS	66	34.3%
MEDIA	6	3.1%
U.N. & AFFILIATED ORGANIZATIONS	21	11%
OTHERS	9	4.7%

Participants per Category

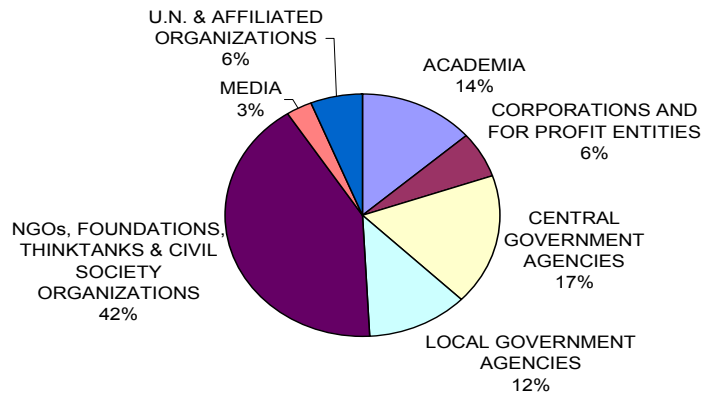


IV. ORGANIZATIONS PER CATEGORY

Over 130 organizations took part in the event with over 70% of the participating organizations coming from the public sector, NGO's & CSO's. The event attracted 18 academic institutions from five continents, 23 central government agencies from 17 countries including parliamentarians, ambassadors and ministers, 16 local governments entities from five continents including the Mayor of Vancouver (Canada) and Naga (Philippines), 55 NGO's, CSO's, Think Tanks and Foundations from 21 countries and several international development institutions including various UN agencies and the World Bank.

Category of Organization	Total Organizations in Each Category	Organizations in each category as a % of total organizations
ACADEMIA	18	13.6%
CORPORATIONS AND FOR PROFIT ENTITIES	8	6.1%
CENTRAL GOVERNMENT AGENCIES	23	17.4%
LOCAL GOVERNMENT AGENCIES	16	12.1%
NGOs, FOUNDATIONS, THINKTANKS & CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATIONS	55	41.7%
MEDIA	4	3%
U.N. & AFFILIATED ORGANIZATIONS	8	6.1%
	132	100%

Organizations per Category



V. LIST OF PARTICIPATING ORGANIZATIONS PER STAKEHOLDER

A. ACADEMIA (18)

- 1) Global Studio Vancouver (multiple universities worldwide)
- 2) Faculty of Architecture, University of Sydney (Australia)
- 3) University of Brasilia (Brazil)
- 4) School of Architecture and Urbanism, University of Sao Paulo (Brazil)
- 5) Malaspina University-College (Canada)
- 6) McMaster University (Canada)
- 7) Centre for Human Settlements, University of British Columbia (Canada)
- 8) University of Toronto (Canada)
- 9) University of Naples (Italy)
- 10) Urban Studies Centre for the Developing Countries (Centro PVS). Department of Territorial and Urban Planning, University of Rome La Sapienza (Italy)
- 11) Università Iuav di Venezia (Italy)
- 12) Matsumura Laboratory, University of Tokyo (Japan)
- 13) Royal Institute of Technology - KTH (Sweden)
- 14) Royal University College of Fine Arts (Sweden)
- 15) Development Planning Unit, University College London (UK)
- 16) Graduate School of Design, Harvard University (USA)
- 17) Portland State University (USA)
- 18) Children, Youth & Environments Centre for Research and Design, University of Colorado at Denver (USA)

B. CORPORATIONS AND FOR PROFIT ENTITIES (8)

- 1) Henriquez-Partners Urban Designers (Canada)
- 2) Rescan Environmental Services Ltd (Canada)
- 3) Vinno Vehicle Innovations Ltd. (Canada)
- 4) Siemens (Germany)
- 5) ELF Petroleum Nigeria Ltd. (Nigeria)
- 6) ITDG Publishing (UK)
- 7) Ecoist (USA)
- 8) Lloyds Financial Limited (Zambia)

C. MEDIA (4)

- 1) The Guardian (Nigeria)
- 2) IPPMedia Ltd. (Tanzania)
- 3) Daily Monitor (Uganda)
- 4) The New Vision (Uganda)

D. GOVERNMENT AGENCIES

Central Government & Parliament (23)

- 1) Ministry of Public Works (Albania)
- 2) Austrian Trade Commission (Austria)
- 3) Ministry of Health (Bahamas)
- 4) Ministry of Housing (Bahamas)
- 5) Ministry of Housing and Lands (Barbados)
- 6) Federal Public Service Foreign Affairs, Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation (Belgium)
- 7) Ministry of the Region of Brussels (Belgium)
- 8) Ministry of Cities – National Secretary of Housing (Brazil)
- 9) Ministry of Planning, Budget and Management (Brazil)
- 10) Ministry of Social Development (Brazil)
- 11) Ministry of Cities – National Secretariat of Urban Transportation and Mobility (Brazil)
- 12) Croatia National Youth Council (Croatia)
- 13) Embassy of France in Kenya (France)
- 14) Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Bureau for State Modernization and Local Governance (France)
- 15) Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Directorate General for Development Cooperation (Italy)
- 16) Ministry of Local Government, Rural Development and Environment (Ghana)
- 17) Ministry of Planning and Economic Affairs (Liberia)
- 18) Ministry of Capital Investment (Serbia)
- 19) Parliament of South Africa, Portfolio Committee on Housing (South Africa)
- 20) Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sweden)

- 21) National Youth Council (Uganda)
- 22) Embassy of Venezuela in Kenya (Venezuela)
- 23) Ministry of Local Government and Housing (Zambia)

Local Government (16)

- 1) Government of the Federal District – State Secretariat for Urban Development and Habitation (Brazil)
- 2) Municipal Secretariat of Planning and Administration - Nova Iguacu (Brazil)
- 3) Municipal Prefecture of Campinas (Brazil)
- 4) City of Mississauga – Planning and Building Department (Canada)
- 5) City of Vancouver - City Plans Division (Canada)
- 6) City of Vancouver - Office of the Mayor (Canada)
- 7) Provincial Health Services Authority (Canada)
- 8) Kumasi Metro Assembly (Ghana)
- 9) Tema Municipal Assembly (Ghana)
- 10) Wa Municipal Assembly (Ghana)
- 11) Municipality of Chihuahua (Mexico)
- 12) City Government of Naga (Philippines)
- 13) Municipality of Pančevo (Serbia)
- 14) Department of Local Government, Western Cape (South Africa)
- 15) Ekurhuleni Municipality (South Africa)
- 16) South African Local Government Association (South Africa)

E. NGOs, CSOs, FOUNDATIONS & THINKTANKS (55)

- 1) Co-PLAN - Institute for Habitat Development (Albania)
- 2) Cities Alliance (Benin)
- 3) Centre for Housing Rights and Evictions (Brazil)
- 4) Centre for Social Justice (Canada)
- 5) Edmonton Food Bank (Canada)
- 6) Focus on the Family (Canada)
- 7) Habitat for Humanity (Canada – Toronto & Vancouver)
- 8) Influenza (Canada)
- 9) Kelowna Community Food Bank (Canada)
- 10) Rooftops Canada (Canada)
- 11) Social Planning and Research Council of British Columbia (Canada)
- 12) Stanley Park Ecology Society (Canada)
- 13) Studentcare (Canada)
- 14) TakingITGlobal (Canada)
- 15) Toronto Community Housing (Canada)
- 16) University of British Columbia Food Co-op (Canada)
- 17) World Fisheries Trust (Canada)
- 18) World Peace Forum (Canada)
- 19) Vancouver Urban Arts (Canada)
- 20) YWCA (Canada)

- 21) Future Foundation (Egypt)
- 22) Integrated Holistic Approach – Urban Development Project (Ethiopia)
- 23) AITEC (France)
- 24) Sonacotra Corporate Foundation (France)
- 25) RHF (France)
- 26) Robert Bosch Stiftung (Germany)
- 27) WaterAid India (India)
- 28) European Green Party Federation (Italy)
- 29) ERVET (Italy)
- 30) International Alliance of Inhabitants (Italy)
- 31) IFL Infra Free Kids (Japan)
- 32) New Partnership for Africa's Development – NEPAD Kenya (Kenya)
- 33) Obunga Dry Fish Self Help Group (Kenya)
- 34) World Vision (Kenya)
- 35) Social and Economic Rights Actions Centre (Nigeria)
- 36) Norwegian Institute for Urban and Regional Research (Norway)
- 37) DAMPA (Philippines)
- 38) Lihok Pilipina Foundation (Philippines)
- 39) SANLAKAS (Philippines)
- 40) MENA Child Protection Initiative (Saudi Arabia)
- 41) Development Action Group (South Africa)
- 42) South African Cities Network (South Africa)
- 43) Development Action Group (South Africa)
- 44) XHASA Accounting and Technical Centre (South Africa)
- 45) Uganda Community Based Association for Child Welfare (Uganda)
- 46) Building and Social Housing Foundation (UK)
- 47) WaterAid (UK)
- 48) Acorn (USA)
- 49) Cities Alliance (USA)
- 50) Habitat for Humanity International (USA)
- 51) National Low Income Housing Coalition (USA)
- 52) The Thadhani Foundation (USA)
- 53) US Partnership (USA)
- 54) Worldwatch Institute (USA)
- 55) Housing People of Zimbabwe (Zimbabwe)

F. UNITED NATIONS AND AFFILIATED ORGANIZATIONS (8)

- 1) FAO
- 2) UNDESA
- 3) UN – Habitat (Jordan, Kenya, US)
- 4) UN – Habitat, Settlement and Integration of Refugees Programme, Serbia
- 5) UNIFEM – Brazil and the Southern Cone Regional Office
- 6) World Bank – Ethiopia Country Office
- 7) World Bank – Water and Urban, Eastern and Southern Africa
- 8) World Bank – Transport and Urban Development

Annex 6

Participation in Urban Poverty Alleviation: Impacts and Challenges by Carlo Geneletti

Executive Summary

This study is based on a desk review of reports on externally funded projects aimed at alleviating urban poverty through participatory approaches.

The meaning of participation is ambiguous. Aid agencies, international organizations and national governments, all share the view that participation is a key to success in anti-poverty initiatives in urban areas, but fail to agree on what it actually is.

Definitions are on a continuum between two extremes. At one extreme, participation is a planning tool. At the other, it is a bid for political power, or power itself. These definitions overlap with the type of intervention. In small, community-based projects, participation is essentially a tool. It becomes a goal in itself in the context of city-wide or nation-wide initiatives that try to redress the imbalance in the distribution of power and access.

The review of the literature also evinces opposing views in regard to the success of urban poverty alleviation projects. Many, essentially among aid agencies and NGOs, paint a very upbeat picture. Successes have been enough to show the way forward. Others, mostly from the academic community, paint a bleaker picture. There have been successes at community level, but efforts to modify urban governance to the benefit of the poor have fared less well. In many cases, urban elites have captured these institutions and maintained their hold on cities.

There are several reasons for these divergent views. Ex-post in-depth evaluations are rare because they are costly and time-consuming. Those that are done tend to paper over failures, because both evaluators and commitments have an incentive to show success. Also, the standards against which success is judged are often too high. Fighting poverty and promoting participation are a risky business and the proportion of the projects in this field expected to succeed should be smaller than usual.

To present the results of this research on success and failure in urban poverty alleviation programmes through participation, relevant programmes have been classified according to their main area of intervention, the urban poor, and the institutions that allow them to participate in urban governance and support organizations.

The urban poor do not always constitute communities in the strict sense of this word, but they often do, because migrants follow the trail of kins and neighbours. When they do, creating consensus on what needs to be done is easier. Projects thrive in these contexts.

However, communities are never the equalitarian societies romantics dream of, and they exclude as much as they include. Those excluded are generally the poorest and most vulnerable. Projects working with communities tend to exclude them as well, and to consolidate exclusion, unless specific efforts are made to prevent it.

Also, at the top of the scale, the better off tend to become leaders as well. They may be corrupt or unrepresentative. Working with them may be difficult, but skirting them or trying to replace them even more so.

But it is in trying to improve local democracy that successes are most difficult to achieve. Given the scope of the action, direct participation is unmanageable. Representation is unavoidable. But second-level organizations do not always represent the urban poor. Innovative ways must be found to ensure that they do. Aid agencies have tried to strengthen grass-roots organizations and supported meaningful participation in their activities. Also, existing media have been encouraged, and new networks have been created, to share relevant news with the urban poor – often using traditional communication channels.

Whether local organizations should ally themselves to political parties or remain neutral is a moot question. International organizations usually insist that they should remain neutral. Instead, qualitative studies tend to show that local organizations that play politics tend to get more for their members. Perhaps aid agencies should support local organizations making the most of their political capital, whatever strategy they choose.

Decentralization has proceeded at a breakneck speed since the 1990s. This is good, because the poor have greater access to the local than to the national authorities. However, relevant laws are not always implemented. Also, decentralization has not always translated itself into local democracy. Many institutions have sprung up to allow the poor to participate in urban governance: participatory budgeting, fora, assembly, consultation mechanisms and policy councils with ample participation. They have been effective in many cases, but not always. They sometimes lack the authority and the resources to take those decisions that make a difference in the life of the poor. Representation has not always been translated into empowerment, let alone into a better life for the poor.

Finally, local NGOs can be key partners of aid agencies in the field, provided that they uphold the true interests of the poor, and that they do so effectively. This is not always the case. Many NGOs are neither representative nor effective. Aid agencies must develop criteria for selecting NGOs and provide them with the support needed.

Introduction

This paper has been commissioned by the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations at the request of the Direzione Generale Cooperazione allo Sviluppo (DGCS) of the Government of Italy in the context of a project which has the aim to assist

the DGCS formulate a policy for its interventions in the field of urban poverty alleviation.

The paper is based on the review and analysis of reports on urban poverty alleviation programmes that have had popular participation as an important ingredient or as a key goal. Knowing what has caused these programmes to succeed - or fail - will help mark an area where the probabilities of success for foreign-funded interventions are highest.

It is perhaps unnecessary to recall that poverty in urban areas is “severe, pervasive and largely unacknowledged”². While data say that the incidence of poverty is still higher in rural areas – but these data are believed to underestimate urban poverty - the urban population is expected to overtake the rural population in 2007 and, as a result, there is a real possibility that poverty may increasingly become an urban phenomenon.

Also, there is no doubt that involving the poor in the projects meant to benefit them is a very significant improvement from the earlier practice of development assistance, which privileged government-to- government linkages. Volumes have been written on why this practice had done harm to the effectiveness of development programmes. However, does participation deliver the substantial progress expected from it? When and under what conditions does it contribute effectively to empowering the poor? What is required in terms of urban governance for participation to deliver the hoped-for results? These are some of the questions which this paper will begin to address.

The context

A wide consensus on participation

There is a very strong consensus among bilateral development agencies, international organizations, national governments, non-governmental organizations, and practitioners in the field of urban development that popular participation is the key to successful initiatives in the field in urban poverty alleviation. Even international agencies whose approach to poverty is somewhat dissimilar, like the United Nations Secretariat³, including Habitat and the World Bank, share this view: that it is good policy to encourage the urban poor to participate in the development and implementation of the programmes and projects that benefit them.

This consensus dates back at least from 1976. One of the six areas of the Plan of Action adopted that year at the first Habitat Conference in Vancouver was public participation.⁴ Thirty years later, *A Home in the City*, published by the Task Force on Improving the

2 Task Force on improving the lives of slum dwellers. *A Home in the city. Improving the lives of slum dwellers. Achieving the Millennium Development Goals.* Millennium Project. Earthscan. London. Sterling Vga- 2005.

3 *Popular participation in selected upgrading programmes.* New York, United Nations Sales Publication E.86. IV.8, 1986

4. Section E contains language that is still very relevant: “Participation is an integral part of the political processes of decision-making.”

Lives of Slum Dwellers, in the context of the UN Millennium Project – which had the aim to outline the path for Member States to implement the UN Millennium Declaration – contains two chapters on aspects of participation.⁵ The World Bank is very bullish about participation.⁶ All the DAC development cooperation agencies, which adopted this concept in their operational activities years earlier, still firmly support it.

So popular is the concept of participation, and so vast is its area of application, that the specialized literature has spawned some new concepts to describe processes similar or related to participation but defining a specific context within which it operates. Civic engagement describes essentially political activism. It is less concerned with whether the institutions that would harness it for the common good are in place. Democratic local governance – a concept dear to USAID – describes instead these institutions, which are designed precisely to convey pressure on the part of the social actors – including the poor - on local political and administrative authorities. Community-driven development is another concept - promoted a few years back by the World Bank and still *en vogue* - “to empower poor communities and build greater accountability.”⁷

Participation is also seen related to accountability, transparency and citizenship. Accountability and transparency are aspects of democratic urban governance that describe the disposition of local authorities to be overseen by social actors and to allow them to inspect their work – but lack the dynamic dimension of participation, whereby social actors not only control what authorities do, but also initiate action in support or in opposition to them. Citizenship is a concept developed particularly in Latin America, where participation is not only about contributing to the process of decision-making at central and local levels, but also about increasing citizen rights, including the right to set new rights.⁸

A crucial premise to the concept of participation is that the poor are social actors. Few documents on urban poverty alleviation programmes fail to remind us that the poor are, and so should be seen as, agents of their own destiny. They are not passive recipients of charity. Instead, the poor are fully capable, with a little help perhaps, to look after themselves and their families, to devise imaginative livelihood strategies, and to act effectively in the political arena; all of this is, of course, true. What these texts sometimes fail to remind us of, however, is that all other individuals and groups are social and political actors too. Therefore, participation is essentially about the poor negotiating with other societal actors for the access to resources to political power is the key. Additionally, they approach these negotiations from a position of disadvantage, i.e. they are less powerful and have less political experience, time and skills.

5 Task force, *op.cit.*

6 Two of the main topics listed in its site are *Participation and civic engagement* and *Community-led development*, which focus on accountability, enabling environment for civic engagement, participatory monitoring and evaluation and participation at various levels

7 <http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/TOPICS/EXTSOCIALDEVELOPMENT/EXTCDD/>

8 E. Dagnino, Meaning of citizenship in Latin America. IDS Working paper 258. Sussex, Nov. 2005

Participation is recommended in all types and in all phases of urban poverty alleviation programmes: from the macro-level of urban planning, to the micro-level of urban services projects, from the analysis of the forms and causes of poverty to the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of anti-poverty programmes. For participation to be effective in all these activities, a good number of approaches and techniques have been developed; action research, participatory research, social assessment methods, self-evaluation, etc. Also, several manuals and abundant teaching materials have been written and are available at the headquarters of aid agencies, international NGOs, research centres, and, recently, on the web.

In sum, there is a very strong consensus among all the institutions active in the field of urban poverty alleviation, that it is essential to promote the participation of the poor in the policies and programmes that affect them, in all their phases and in all the sectors of intervention. There are a few dissenting voices, of which more later, but what comes out of the revision of the relevant literature is the strength and width of the consensus on the importance of participation as a critical tool in the struggle against urban poverty.

Grappling with the meaning of participation

In spite of this consensus – or perhaps because of it – the concept of participation is not easy to define. Not that attempts at definition are scarce - quite the contrary. But the existing definitions are not compatible. They may be consistent in themselves, but they do not form a coherent picture taken together. Some define participation as involvement in programme activities, others as the fora where issues of wide concern are discussed, and others as the poor's ticket to a fairer world.

Despite this diversity, most definitions of participation are on a continuum between two extremes. At one extreme, participation is defined as a planning tool, employed by project managers to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the projects under their responsibility. At the other extreme, participation is seen as the exercise of a political right for a greater say in the management of cities, by sectors of the population that have been traditionally kept at the margin of the political arena⁹.

The definition of participation adopted is related to the context within which it is exercised. Participation in a water and sanitation project, fully funded by a foreign donor, can be construed as a planning tool. If participation is high, the project is more effective and efficient. Most, if not all, of the poor in the area under consideration will benefit from the intervention. The construction work will be timed in such a way as to minimize disruption of income-generating activities, which, in the South, are co-terminus with

⁹ This diversity can be hosted by the same institution. For instance, for the World Bank "... participation... is the involvement of the communities of beneficiaries in programme identification and execution." IDE del Banco Mundial, "Acción local, mejores vidas. Implementación de proyectos participativos y descentralizados. Daniel Sellen, Editor. "Participation is a means of acquiring new rights", and "Participation is a process by which stakeholders' influence or share control over..." S.Tokkare et al, "Participation", World Bank [A sourcebook for poverty reduction strategies](#), Washington.

residential housing. The construction will have been commissioned to a local firm or to a community-based enterprise, thereby increasing the employment opportunities of the poor in that settlement. Water and sewer lines will be placed so as to minimize displacement. Costs will be kept to a minimum. There are many case studies that show all this to occur, and it is an important contribution of participation to the welfare of the urban poor.

But projects are limited in scope, aid-dependent, and do not change over the long run the ways in which primary income is allocated across groups. Improving the situation of the urban poor requires changing the way in which cities are managed in a more fundamental way. Is participation up to this task? For many specialists, it is. But participation here cannot mean the same thing that it meant in the context of community projects. The requirements in terms of skills, institutional settings, and type of project, particularly in terms of activities, level of funding and timing, not to mention risks of failure, are very different. Also, the notion of conflict is inherent in this way of understanding participation. The field of urban governance to which the poor press to enter is full of players already well established and of many others that look in from the outside and want to join in the fray. It is the field of politics, conflict and negotiation. Rigorous planning methods are rarely applicable because reality is always changing. Planning processes are clumsy and untidy¹⁰. They may reach the end goal, but the way is not always the one they planned to take at the start.

Different as these two definitions of participation may be, the experience of participating gained at the lower end of the spectrum is useful for the exercise of participation at the opposite end as well.¹¹

Issues in the promotion of popular participation in urban poverty alleviation programmes

This section of the paper begins discussing the effectiveness of projects carried out to alleviate poverty with the participation of the beneficiaries. The intention is to identify the lessons that can be learnt from past experiences, in the expectation that they may be capitalized on for future interventions in this field.

The field under analysis is very vast. As said previously, relevant urban poverty alleviation programmes include those that operate at the level of a single community and those applied to higher administrative levels: from small credit facilities for women in a settlement, for example, to advocacy for decentralization of functions, resources and responsibilities to sub-national levels. There are those that work with the poor on a one-to-one basis and those that try to help the poor by changing the political and legal institutions that created and perpetuate their poverty.

10 S. Boonyabancha, "Baan Mankong", Environment and urbanization vol. 17, Apr. 2006; J. Manor, Democratic decentralization in India. Background study for Swedish Country Strategy for India, 2003-2007, Feb. 2003-

11 I am grateful to prof. Garau for this observation.

A way to make sense of this variety is to classify these programmes on the basis of the three different domains in which they operate: the communities of the poor, the institutions of local governance and support organizations. Experience shows that to be successful, participatory initiatives need capacities on the part of the poor, local institutions that encourage participation at city level, and NGOs that effectively support the poor.

After listing a few issues relevant for all efforts in the field of urban poverty alleviation with popular participation, each of these three areas will be explored separately. For each of them, this paper will list the main facts and move on to the difficulties which aid agencies have to confront to design and carry out effective action. Both facts and difficulties are presented in shorthand.

Issues in Development Aid for Urban Poverty Alleviation

Research and action: Do we know all we need to know?

To do a project with the poor, one needs to know how their societies work, the roles that people play on account of their occupation, kinship, ethnic or religious affiliation, age and gender, and what people do to make a living. Without this homework projects can fail – and often do. Aid agencies should ensure that enough time and money is allocated to preparatory work. Sufficient funds upfront can reduce the risk of failure down the line very considerably. Associating a local NGO to the initiative helps to avoid this problem, but can create other problems—see below.

Research on urban poverty is often done in the context of mega-cities. They are where most researchers live and they also constitute the most spectacular expression of urbanization. But most urbanites live in middle-sized cities and towns, and the level of poverty, judging on the basis of the limited evidence available, is more severe there than in the metropolises¹². Also, medium and small cities differ from mega-cities not just in size. Their problems are different. The poor in the rural hinterland tend to have stronger ties; in contrast, the root of poverty in urban areas can be attributed to the incomplete transition to urban life. In view of this, research and action on poverty in urban areas should include a focus on small cities as well.

However, the assessment of past experiences should be at the forefront of the research agenda for aid agencies working in the field of urban poverty alleviation. This may seem counterintuitive. In fact, accurate data on urban poverty alleviation may be scarce – most agree that urban poverty is underestimated - but good reports of field projects are thought to be abundant. The experiences recorded in project evaluations and sometimes summarized in the boxes which pepper many studies on urban poverty alleviation,

¹² D. Mitlin, “The economic and social processes influencing the level and nature of chronic poverty in urban areas”, CPRC Working Paper No. 29, June 2003

particularly by international organizations¹³, suggests that one knows all there is to know about how to promote participation and reduce poverty in poor urban settlements.

However, there are reasons to suspect that this is not entirely true and that, instead, ex-post project evaluations are scarce and those available tend to be too optimistic and upbeat. This is the view of several experts, mostly from the academic world, ¹⁴ who do not share the general enthusiasm about the success of urban poverty alleviation programmes. Comparative studies of political processes at the city level in developing countries tend to be cautious about the real possibility of the poor changing existing power distribution. Urban elites resist giving up the power they have traditionally enjoyed. In addition, it has been found – though from a small sample of case studies - that the participation of the poor in the management of cities has not always improved their welfare. Participation has turned into representation, but this has neither developed into empowerment nor improved significantly the lot of the poor¹⁵. If the poor are to spend their time and energy, they do so with the expectation of gaining a better standard of living; when living standards do not improve, it is very likely that the efforts to promote participation have failed.

If this suspicion that good evaluations are scarce should prove true, the reasons would not be hard to find. Given their high costs, ex-post evaluations are rarely done, even by generous donors. Also, for this same reason, when they are done, they are generally subcontracted to local research institutes. Typically, a senior national may retain overall supervision, but the field work is almost always done by local research centres. Despite the very high level of professional competence of many of these centres, their dependence on foreign funding sometimes works as an incentive to downplay the negative results that research uncovers. The messengers of bad tidings are never welcome and to point out that projects on which considerable resources have been spent have failed is certainly bad news for aid agencies. In addition, the evidence is sometimes hard to find. To please aid agencies, evidence is sometimes massaged or even, on rare occasions, made up.¹⁶

Also, expectations are often too high. Under pressure from politicians and the public at home that want “value for money”, aid agencies often set standards too high, and welcome evaluations that prove that these standards have been met. ¹⁷ But a high rate of

¹³ For instance MOST, by UNESCO (<http://portal.unesco.org/shs/en/ev.html>) and ID21, funded by DFID (<http://www.id21.org/urban/index.html>)

¹⁴ V.V.A.A. Urban governance and poverty. Lessons from ten cities in the South. University of Birmingham, 2002.

¹⁵ H. Blair, Spreading power to the periphery. A USAID assessment of democratic local governance, USAID, 1997.

¹⁶ ...“most such exercises only *appear* to occur (because governments insist that they take place), while in reality do not. Elected members of councils usually fill out forms containing essentially fictional “plans” to satisfy bureaucrats, without any intention of following them”. J. Manor, *op.cit.*, pg.7

¹⁷ An excellent study for SIDA by J. Manor makes this point. “Sida should not make the mistake “of assuming “that “success” was something close to 100 percent... figures of 17 to 22 percent ..., in reality, are extremely high”. (17).

success is possible in laboratory conditions, not in the political arena of developing countries.

The conclusion here is that there is a need for good, in-depth ex-post evaluations of urban poverty alleviation programmes. These evaluations should include assessment of changes in variables that are difficult to measure and that take effect after the intervention ends, for instance, changes in democratic culture.

Poverty and tenure

The menu of activities to fight poverty in cities and promote participation from which aid agencies can choose is long and varied. Working in urban areas, however, one should remember that security of tenure is critical for success in all other spheres. The provision of owner-occupied housing may not be the only way to ensure security of tenure, and in fact graduality has been recommended in this respect;¹⁸ however, there is no question that security of tenure is a key factor for poverty alleviation. It makes the poor less vulnerable, it provides a cushion against sudden crises, and it is an incentive to save and start the virtuous cycle of savings, improvements, and consolidation that leads to social integration and escape from poverty. The lack of an address sometimes denies the poor the right to identity and ration cards and prevents them from benefiting from anti-poverty programmes. The urban poor squatting in informal settlements are in permanent fear of eviction – fear that is by no means baseless, as eviction and slum demolition is still an oft-used measure for urban beautification and modernization.

Working with the urban poor: contexts, communities, capacities, chiefs;

Do the urban poor constitute communities and does it matter if they do?

At the community level, the promotion of participation means two different things: involving the poor in the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of community-based projects, and strengthening the capacity of the poor to participate in these projects and in the wider opportunities provided – when they are provided – by democratic local governance. In both cases, the success of an initiative depends in part on the nature of the community in question and in part on the way in which the initiative adjusts to this nature.

Participation in urban poverty alleviation policies and programmes is often predicated on the assumption that the urban poor, within the geographical boundaries of the slums or squatter settlements where they live, constitute a community in the sociological sense of this word. To recall, a community is a social group whose members share values and

¹⁸ Task force... op.cit.

norms, including those that determine relations of solidarity and reciprocity. The concept of social capital applies here, with its recent corollary of political capital.

Contrary to what was earlier assumed, the urban poor often form communities. Since migrants move where they can find kins and neighbours, they bring along, so to say, their own communities from the countryside. Also, ethnic, religious, social (caste for instance) ties, form and reform in poor settlements. The webs of relations uncovered by anthropologists in urban areas are thick and extended. They reach back to the countryside. Migrants do not sever their ties with their earlier homes, nor do their families of origin abandon those among them that have migrated. Remittances are found to flow both ways, depending on the need.

Does strong community solidarity make for success in projects? In general, yes. It is easier, faster and cheaper for an institution to deal with a community than with unconnected individuals. The decision-making processes are quicker and the implementation of these decisions smoother. Conflicts are less likely to develop – though they can never be ruled out all together. Leaders are recognizable by the external agent, the NGO or the aid agency. They are also recognized by community members and their decisions carry weight.

Sometimes, however, turnover in a settlement may be such that a community never can come to life. In a poor urban settlement, there may be no community or several communities competing with each other. Yet, a project can be effective even there. Only, the process is more complex. It is necessary to identify local leaders, win them over to the project, train them, ensure that conflicts will not arise (and make provisions for that when they do). Or, promote a process whereby a leader or leaders are produced by the community, but this can be difficult and time-consuming.

Social capital is difficult to create. Once the ties of solidarity that glue communities together weaken – due, among others, to growing poverty and the ensuing inability to reciprocate, and to worsening criminality – the way back is hard.

But this may be a blessing in disguise. Communities should not be romanticized. They can also breed anti-social capital¹⁹, political patronage, criminality and repression of minorities and vulnerable people. In the long run they also undermine civic engagement. Modern political institutions function on the basis of free and equal citizens and in a traditional community neither freedom nor equality for all members is the norm.

Inclusion and local democracy

An aid agency approaching a poor settlement, usually with, or through a local NGO, must be aware that it will meet a very complex society. The urban poor are not an undifferentiated mass. There is stratification among the poor as well, with differences in

¹⁹ This idea is Jo Beall's. However, the risk of insecurity and the effects of insecurity on social capital have been underlined elsewhere as well. See for instance GTZ, Services for sustainable urban development. Nov 2003.

status going both ways. There are people who are poor even by the standards of the poor themselves. Because isolation breeds poverty, their social ties are weak. They may be at the very top of the priority list of poverty alleviation programmes, but are seldom reached by these programmes. The better off may even try and prevent them from participating, except as a *claque*. Also, in many societies, women are not welcome in public spaces. They tend to be excluded from the fora where decisions are taken – including those opened up by foreign donors.

The donor agency must decide whether it values inclusion enough to invest time and money to secure it. The literature does not say whether those who do, succeed and under what conditions. To put it simply, assailing traditional values – much as aid agencies may abhor them – can either accelerate cultural change or generate a reaction against external pressures that end up consolidating them. It would be important to know what has worked in this area. Perhaps one of the factors that influence the acceptance of change by those who will eventually lose out in the process is the quick realization that change is to their advantage as well. Changing the values that keep women confined are easier when women bring home a much-needed salary. The norm that prescribes genital mutilation weakens when the health – including reproductive health – of girls who have avoided it is visibly better.

One thing is certain; that to consolidate change, even within a small urban community, is a time-consuming business. Donor-funded projects are sometimes in a rush to spend the money allocated and move on. There is perhaps a need to reconsider the planning frameworks to accommodate the timings of participatory projects.

Also, not all those who live in poor settlements are poor.²⁰ There are some who are rich by the standards of the poor, and some that are rich even by national standards. The usual reason why they live in - or near - slums is to keep an eye on their business, sometimes not entirely legal, that takes place in these slums. These individuals are likely to try and monopolize representational and authority positions in the institutions that manage local anti-poverty programmes and act as gatekeepers to the urban communities. They are not always to the donors' liking. They may be corrupt or allied with unsavoury parties. Additionally, elected corrupt leaders may not represent the interests of the poor.

Aid agencies may either decide to work with these leaders or try and replace them. To judge from the available literature, this latter seems to have been the preferred option. The few case studies that report on what happened as a result tend to agree that it often had negative consequences on community solidarity. The support provided by external agents to would-be leaders tends to breed conflicts and, in the end, weakens the community as a whole. However, some local leaders, known to be unable to manage project funds transparently, must be avoided at all costs.

20 S. Benjamin et al. Op cit.

Conflict, however, is not endemic among the urban poor. It can be brought into an urban community or into the whole category of the urban poor by national politicians.²¹ It can also result from the local organization lining up behind a political party, particularly when national politics is very confrontational. International organizations insist that CBOs should not take sides in an electoral competition. They should neither support nor oppose a political party. Studies of local politics conclude instead that playing politics – bartering the votes of the members of the association with a party in exchange for favours – improves the chances of obtaining concrete results for the poor. Ties with political and administrative authorities – based on traditional patron-client relations, or on transitory electoral alliances – are found to pay for the poor. Aid agencies may not approve of these political strategies, but cannot ignore that they are often successful.

Like the local organizations, aid agencies should keep all their options open. They can decide to support these strategies, or to oppose them, but exit may sometimes be the wisest option. When conflicts within a community are too deep-seated, and trying to create a new organization is as hard as it is unacceptable to work with the existing one, initiatives are not worth the effort. They are likely to fail. The pity is that these are the communities that need help most, but the kind of help that is likely to be effective is not project related.

The poor often lack the skills needed to participate effectively, both in local projects and in the management of their cities— but more so in this second context. Many donor-funded initiatives have aimed to provide them with these skills. They are reported to have been rather successful, insofar as the learning is concerned. Another matter is whether these skills have been put to use and whether their use has helped to improve the conditions of the poor. Training can hardly replace the lack of basic education. The better off and more educated among the poor will benefit from these projects more. Again inclusion may suffer.

The development of simple techniques for assessing needs, establishing priorities, setting goals, monitoring and evaluation probably count among the most innovative recent initiatives in this field. Also, to remedy the leadership problems mentioned above, aid agencies have provided assistance to local democracy. The communities of the urban poor have been helped to maintain their organizations in good working order and to keep their leaders under control. In addition, they have tried to feed the information needed for effective democracy. An interesting and potentially effective type of project is one that strengthens the capacity of local groups or of NGOs to disseminate information on urban issues of relevance to the poor, among the poor themselves²². There are some valuable experiences in this field using traditional culture-specific communication channels. Again, to know whether greater information has led to greater empowerment and this to a better life for the poor, we would need to look at the impact of these projects years after they have ended. Unfortunately, these types of evaluation are rare.

21 C.Rakodi, R. Gatabaki-Kamau and N. Devas, “Poverty and political conflict in Mombasa”, *Environment & Urbanization*, vol. 12, April 2000.

22 T.Schilderman, “Strengthening the knowledge and information systems of the urban poor.” DFID, March 2002

The local and national contexts

Enabling environment: decentralization and local democracy

The capacity of the urban poor to participate is often sufficient for area-specific, externally funded projects. But for initiatives that aim to promote the participation of the poor in urban governance, the capacities of the urban poor are not enough. There are at least two other conditions. One is that there must be institutions that allow or – better - encourage participation. The other is that the local authorities have the power to decide over issues of concern to the urban poor, and dispose of resources with which the demands of the poor can be satisfied. If local authorities have no resources to dispose of, or if they do not allow the poor a say on how to spend them, the poor would have no incentive in participating in urban governance.

Central governments must decentralize responsibilities and resources to local authorities for participation to be meaningful. Decentralization is an area where aid agencies have been very active, either directly - exercising pressure on governments - or indirectly - supporting the national organizations advocating for decentralization, including the federations of the urban poor. To judge from the wave of decentralization policies adopted in the course of the 1990s in countries all over the world, it is an area where the intervention of aid agencies has been successful.

However, it is essential to distinguish appearance from reality. For local democracy to work, national authorities must be strongly committed to participation and do what is in their power to make it effective. Despite very good intentions,²³ this has not always been the case. Many municipalities have more leeway on paper than in fact. It is not enough that a policy is adopted. It must be implemented. Insofar as implementation goes, the record is not always positive, particularly in respect to financial devolution.

When national authorities strongly support decentralization, and encourage local authorities to involve the poor, or when local authorities take the initiative, as in Porto Alegre, local democracy can be very effective. The institutions are there and some are well tested: parallel committees, community conversations, participatory workshops, e-governance, community outreach, public meetings, focus groups with urban poor, citizen advisory groups, consultation mechanisms at neighbourhood or city level, information dissemination through mass media and so on and so forth. The participation of the representatives of the urban poor contributes to the success of participatory budgeting, city wide inclusive planning, transparency in city management and accountability. The creation of institutions that encourage participation is a very positive step forward in democratic governance.

However, it is essential that these institutions provide opportunities for empowerment and not only for representation. Those who participate must really influence the results of the decision-making processes and these must benefit the poor. Again this has not always

²³ In Latin America, for instance, several countries have adopted laws promoting participation. However, some governments have been more committed than others

been so. The representatives of the urban poor in these institutions have tended to belong to non-poor income groups.

Politics, personalities and planning

There is no doubt that poverty will be defeated more by changing the distribution of power than by carrying out community-level projects, and it is also certain that, to that end, the political power of the poor must increase. Aid agencies have been working more and more in the area of governance for this very reason. But, as most of them are aware, it is difficult for a foreign actor to influence domestic political processes. Some of the questions that arise in this context have already been mentioned: should one work with a deeply divided community? Should one try and change some aspects of traditional cultures that are not in harmony with widely accepted human rights? Should one rely on existing leaders or encourage the creation of new ones? Should aid agencies support the political strategies devised by local and national organizations to obtain benefits for the poor, or keep a distance from them? Should one support NGOs that protect the poor against, for instance, eviction, when squatting is illegal? Wouldn't this be tantamount to encouraging illegal behaviour? The more hands-on an agency is, the more it risks getting involved in national politics.

There is another conundrum. The poor should influence national policies – on decentralization, land management, etc, by other means than electoral participation alone, and, as has been said above, aid agencies have often helped the poor in these efforts precisely through strengthening their representative organizations. However, there is a risk that, by scaling up, organizations may forget their base, the communities, thereby diluting the participation of the poor. Also, the temptation to join the political fray by choosing sides is powerful, but doing it can either bring rewards for the poor or split their communities down the middle. In addition, local leaders are often co-opted by national parties, depriving communities of their natural leadership. Finally, the intervention of foreign agencies in the political affairs of developing nations has not always been welcome – among others because this intervention has not always been neutral. The right national political context – essentially a strong national government committed to the fight against poverty - must be in place for it to be accepted.

There are other problems. The political coalitions that create the conditions for the participation of the poor are often short-lived. This is not always the case – for instance in Porto Alegre, participatory budgeting has survived political changes in city hall. But often, these conditions depend on personalities: a forceful and innovative mayor or a forceful national leader who imposes his/her views at the local or national level or both. The poor are voters, and, if they can be mobilized around a common political platform in their defence, politicians in democratic countries will not ignore them. But it is not easy for the poor to create political constituencies, and aid agencies helping them do so can be seen by some national governments as inappropriately interfering in domestic affairs.

An interesting hypothesis floated recently in the relevant literature is that the poor fare better if they mobilize local politicians and low-level bureaucrats than if they participate in the formal institutions of urban governance.²⁴ Master plans - so the argument goes - often ignore the needs of the poor. They impose building standards that the poor cannot meet. They want to keep separate the place of work and residence, which the poor cannot do, since transportation is either unavailable or costly. It is better for the poor to work with local politicians and local administrators, by exercising pressure, exchanging votes for favours and providing bribes. The decisions which benefit the poor are often within their power to make. Thanks to these methods, little by little, the poor are able to obtain tenure for their homes, and urban services for their communities, while demands to the municipal authorities for these same services through the appropriate channels are seldom satisfied. This hypothesis is based on a qualitative study of Bangalore and may not be applicable elsewhere, but it deserves to be tested.

Also, the participatory planning process is often cumbersome and time-consuming. Many among the poor lack the energy and the time to participate in it meaningfully. Elites often end up capturing the process and manipulating it to their advantage. But participating in planning builds citizenship and should be encouraged through incentives by aid agencies, if needed, with projects developed in parallel to the planning process that have quick and visible results.

Participatory budgeting is now done in more than 100 cities across the world. It can strengthen civic engagement among the poor and improve their welfare. However, for this to occur on a large enough scale, the poor must participate or be represented accurately, the discretionary budget must be considerable, and actual expenditures must follow the patterns set by the budget. Representation is discussed below. One or both of the other two conditions do not apply in many cities. Even in some of the most successful cases of participatory budgeting, less than 15% of the municipal budget is subject to this process.²⁵

Central, and/or local authorities keen to involve the poor in urban governance may create the institutions required. But the administrative staff in charge of operating them must be competent as well, for these institutions to work. There is much to do to improve the competence of local administrations. Capacity building for local administrators is high on the priority list of donors and successes have been reported.

²⁴ S. Benjamin, op.cit.

²⁵ A. Gurza Lavalle, A. Acharya and P. Houtzager in their "Beyond comparative anecdotalism: lessons on civil society and participation from Sao Paulo, Brazil", *World Development* N. 6, 2005. However, Prof. Garau in a comment to this paper has pointed out that Sao Paulo has a huge budget, and 15 per cent is no mean achievement.

Civil society

Representation and relevance

The poor can organize themselves. There are many interesting experiences here. However, despite this capacity and the training that many have received by national entities and international agencies, the poor often require the support of organizations outside their communities to take advantage of the opportunities to participate that are on offer. This support is provided by NGOs.

The relevant NGOs are usually classified in three categories: those that support community-based organizations in the context of a project, those that advocate the cause of the urban poor with local and national authorities, and those that protect the urban poor against these same authorities, when the situation requires it. The same NGOs may, of course, perform more than one of these functions.

Some NGOs work mainly at the local level to perform a variety of functions - mobilizing poor urban communities, assisting them in selecting their leaders (or co-opt the existing leaders) and conducting situation analysis, identifying priorities and organizing them in order to implement activities that have been agreed upon. These support NGOs are very numerous and very active on the urban scene. Often, they depend entirely on foreign funding and are voluntary associations only in name. In reality, they are business firms.

Other NGOs work at the political level. They represent the poor - or claim to do so - in the institutions designed to allow the poor to participate in urban governance. They lobby, they do research to prove the need for a pro-poor action, publish articles and books, and try and influence the administrative and political elites through the political means at their disposal. They prefer to work with and through local and national authorities. Finally, there are NGOs that protect the urban poor against initiatives taken by these same authorities that endanger their livelihoods, such as, for instance, eviction. These NGOs are often associated to a political party, and their members are politically active. Also, they are often perceived to oppose local and/or national authorities. Their methods can be confrontational.

Aid agencies often rely on these organizations to carry out urban poverty alleviation programmes in the field. This is so because community-based organizations (CBOs) sometimes lack the requisite skills and legal personality necessary to handle funds. Additionally, some CBOs are not trusted by the donors, who then turn to NGOs that can be relied upon. NGOs also speak the same language as aid agencies. Often they move between the two worlds. The ability to choose which type of NGO to rely upon for which type of action is very critical for aid agencies.

The issues with NGOs in urban poverty alleviation programmes – but this also applies to NGOs working in other fields – is their representativeness and their efficacy. Representativeness is associated with electoral processes and membership. Many NGOs that have as their goal to fight poverty are neither elected by the poor nor have the poor as

their members. How can they represent the poor? Is it enough that they claim to do so?26 The problem here is that just as there are NGOs that are neither elected nor have the poor as their members but nonetheless truly represent the interests of the poor, there are also NGOs that count the poor among their members but do little to promote their interests.

Additionally, for research conducted on NGOs fighting urban poverty, the aspect of efficiency has not been specifically tackled. However a study on CSOs in three African countries 27 reaches the following sobering conclusions: few CSOs have achieved significant policy impact, and those who have achieved it were not dependent on donor funding. Also, contrary to the common view, a strong relation with political parties, particularly those in power, is also useful28.

The issue for aid agencies here is how to identify NGOs that do represent the poor - and ensure that they do over the life of a project - and that they are effective. NGOs are increasingly aware that their very survival often depends on the confidence they enjoy from aid agencies and have been giving much importance to international networking and to marketing their image – sometimes with the support of the very agencies they intend to influence.

Concluding remarks

Because it contributes to improving the effectiveness and efficacy of anti-poverty policies, programmes and projects, and to preparing the poor for a more active role in the political arena, the participation of the urban poor in these activities is welcomed and supported by all national and international actors.

In their fight against urban poverty using participatory approaches, aid agencies can claim some successes. The provision of basic services through community arrangements has usually worked. Community solidarity becomes stronger and the sustainability of the intervention improves. Decentralization, which strengthens the scope for participation by local actors and aid agencies, has spread quickly. Organizations that represent the urban poor at the local, national and international level are often effective mouthpieces for their constituents, as are the support NGOs. Local information and communication strategies are often highly innovative. Many institutions have sprung up in the past decade or so to encourage the poor to participate in urban governance, and they have proven effective in several contexts.

However, the picture is marred by failures as well. Community-development projects may work, but do not go far enough to tip the balance of power in the urban areas in favour of the poor. Consequently, the overall orientation of urban policies, including regulatory frameworks and the allocation of public investment, continues to favour other

26 This is the view of A. Garza Lavalle, op. Cit.

27 M. Robinson and S. Friedman, Civil society, democratization and foreign aid in Africa, IDS Discussion paper 383, April 2005.

28 This is also a conclusion from Benjamin, op.cit and A. Gurza Lavalle, op.cit.

groups and classes, bypassing the poor. Relying on community solidarity may increase the chances of success for local development projects but stifles a truly democratic culture. Local organizations need support, but stronger organizations do not mean more democratic ones. Aggregating local organizations into national federations may help carry the demands of the urban poor to the highest centres of power, but are these organizations really listening to the poor? Decentralization is a critical pre-condition for greater participation by the poor in urban governance, but there is still much to do to implement the relevant legislation and to overcome the resistance from decentralized national departments and local elites. In the fight against urban poverty – as in other areas as well - there is no foolproof path, no solution that is always effective.

One conclusion that this review of the relevant literature brings out in all clarity is that lessons are never learnt once and for all. Analyzing past experiences helps avoid the severest blunders and chart a course which has good chances to succeed. But whatever course is chosen, it has to be verified on the march over and over again. Assumptions of how things should work out must be regularly checked out against the observation of how they work in reality. Banal as this may seem, it contains a modest lesson for aid agencies. Aid agencies should cultivate a culture and a style of work based on the ability to learn and the responsiveness to change. They must be able to perceive shifts in the contexts where they operate and adapt to them while never losing sight of their long term goals. They must learn how to manage conflict, how to respect the true priorities of the local counterparts, when to exercise pressure on authorities and when to exit, when to cut losses and how to identify competent and honest local counterparts. To do this, the actions required – and by and large recommended by OECD DAC - may include strengthening research capabilities at the headquarter and field level, rendering the project format more flexible, and investing in the capacity building of field staff.



Department of Economic and Social Affairs
United Nations



Directorate General for Development
Cooperation
Government of Italy

**World Urban Forum III *Fighting Urban Poverty: Which Participatory Approaches?*
Convention and Exhibition Centre – Ballroom A, Vancouver, Canada 20 June 2006**

EVALUATION FORM

Thank you for your participation in the **Panel on “Fighting Urban Poverty: Which Participatory Approaches?”** organized by the Italian Development Cooperation and the Division for Public Administration and Development Management of the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA), as a side event of the Third World Urban Forum in Vancouver, Canada 20 June 2006. In order to evaluate the relevance of this Panel, and to improve the quality of future initiatives, we would be grateful if you could fill out the following questionnaire, and email the responses to Mr. Numayr Chowdhury: chowdhury6@un.org

A synopsis of the responses will be published on the dedicated website of DPADM, DESA.
<http://www.unpan.org/>

On a scale of **1 (Very poor/Low)** to **5 (Excellent/High)**, please rate the Panel.

A. Overall Assessment

<i>Relevance of the Panel to your interest in Urban Poverty</i>	1	2	3	4	5	
<i>Alleviation with Participatory Approaches</i>						
<i>Quality of information received during the Panel</i>	1	2	3	4	5	
<i>Quality of documentation</i>	1	2	3	4	5	
<i>Quality of organization</i>		1	2	3	4	5
<i>The extent to which your expectations were met</i>	1	2	3	4	5	

If not met, please explain:

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B. Priorities

1. Which are the priorities in socio-economic governance for poverty alleviation in your country?

- Decentralization of power
- Empowerment of the poor
- Empowerment of CSOs/NGOs
- Capacity building and human resource development
- Public/private/civil society organization (CSO) partnership
- Funding
- Simplification of procedures
- Transparency
- Other.....

Please comment:

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2. Do you think that development cooperation is a useful instrument in order to face these priorities?

- Yes
- No
- Unsure

Please comment:

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C. Instruments/tools

1. Which instrument/tools can be useful in order to bring civic participation in public policies to fight urban poverty in your country?

- Training and capacity building
 - Information
 - Consultation
 - Strategic Planning
 - Outsourcing to CSOs and NGOs
 - Other.....
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Please comment:

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2. Which methodologies of international cooperation do you think can work more effectively in order to fight urban poverty with the participation of the poor?

- formal networks
- informal networks
- long term cooperation programmes
- short term cooperation programmes
- organization of capacity-building workshop, meetings
- exchange of researchers, technical and management staff
- exchange of experiences
- other.....
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Please comment:

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3. Which have been the faults and strengths of development cooperation to date?

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D. Contents and subjects

1. Which should be the contents of this cooperation?

- Technical issues
- Management issues
- Development cooperation issues
- Other.....
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Please comment:

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2. Which subjects should be involved in development cooperation for urban poverty alleviation?

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3. What role do you think DESA and the Italian Development Cooperation can play in order to support your institutions to achieve greater and more effective participation in urban poverty alleviation?

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4. What were the most significant strengths of the Panel?

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5. What could have been done better?

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6. Would you support the need for another panel on the topic of urban poverty alleviation to take the discussion further?

- Yes
- No
- Unsure

Any additional comments?

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(Add more pages if needed)

Thank you for your careful consideration in completing this evaluation. In order to target participants for future events, please take a moment to indicate the profile(s) that describes you best:

- Central government official
- Local Government official
- Faculty
- Student
- Media
- Representing an international development agency
- Representing a Non Government Organization (NGO)
- Representing a Community Based Organization
- Representing a private sector corporation
- Representing a foundation
- Representing a think tank
- UN / World Bank agency
(specify).....
- Other.....
- Country of origin.....
- Country of current residence.....

Name and Surname _____
Address _____
Institution _____



UN-HABITAT



STATEMENT (ANNEX 8)

ANNA TIBAIJUKA
UNDER SECRETARY GENERAL AND EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
UN - HABITAT

Distinguished Participants,
(Alt: Minister Sisulu, Mayor Sullivan, Mayor Manalastas-Robredo)
Colleagues,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I would like to welcome you all to this side event on ***Fighting Urban Poverty: Which participatory approaches?*** I am very grateful that the Italian Development Cooperation intends to give greater impulse and effectiveness to its international efforts in fighting urban poverty. This is very much in line with the follow-up activities to the 2005 World Summit and its endorsement of the Millennium Development Goals. Furthermore, I am delighted that the United Nations Department for Economic and Social Affairs (DESA) is a partner in this important endeavour on elaborating a strategy to guide and accompany this effort on public participation to urban poverty reduction. However, the question we are here to discuss is what kind of participatory approaches are needed to achieve sustainable poverty reduction?

Our work at UN-HABITAT is focused on reducing urban poverty through collaboration with Governments, local authorities and civil society. This is based on the commitments made by Governments at the Millennium Summit in September 2000. As you are aware, the Millennium Declaration and the Millennium Development Goals require national and international efforts to create a living environment which is conducive to development and to the elimination of poverty. Indeed, the MDGs can only be achieved through concerted efforts by all spheres of government working together and in concert with civil society and the private sector. However, let us first be clear on the main challenges so that we can identify the appropriate priorities.

In demographic terms, poverty is increasingly urban. This urbanisation of poverty has several implications, not least in how we think poverty, act on poverty and work towards reducing poverty.

Combating urban poverty requires first and foremost, that we recognise the “local” dimension and the role of local actors. By local dimension I mean the issues of access to land, infrastructure and basic services which the majority of the urban poor have no access to. I am reminded constantly in our work in slums across the world, that people without secure tenure, without an address, are simply not considered citizens. They are

denied services such as water and electricity, education and health, communications and therefore information, transport and waste collection, and banking and insurance. By local actors, I mean first and foremost the local authority, the front line actor responsible for land use planning and property administration, and the provision of basic infrastructure and services.

When the local dimension and local actors are ignored, our efforts are diminished in their effectiveness. Conventional and largely sectoral approaches to for example, health, education and job creation simply do not work in urban poor neighbourhoods. They often end up being conflicting and contradictory. A typical example I have seen again and again is when we improve access to water without simultaneously improving drainage and sanitation. The end result can be the worsening in the spread of diseases such as diarrhoea and malaria.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Looking back at the second session of the World Urban Forum, the main conclusions in the dialogues on urban poverty were that urban poverty must be overcome through more effective service delivery if an urban future is to be sustainable. To achieve effective urban service delivery for poverty reduction, we need to work closely with local authorities and the urban poor themselves.

UN-HABITAT, ever since the run up to the Habitat II Conference in 1996, has endeavoured to provide a space where the voice of these three groups can be heard.

The creation of United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG) reflects the commitment of the world's mayors to speak with a unified voice in global fora on local issues. I wish to reiterate what the Secretary-General stressed in his message to this Founding Congress: "the United Nations General Assembly recently decided that local authorities will participate in the deliberations of the Governing Council of UN-HABITAT, which is the UN focal point for Local Governments to strengthen its partnerships with governments in efforts to achieve the Millennium Development Goals". Rule 64 of the Governing Council of UN-HABITAT represents a real breakthrough in the relations between the UN and local authorities, providing real impetus to furthering the cause of decentralisation and the empowerment of the local authorities worldwide. Unless local authorities are empowered to adopt pro-poor and gender-sensitive norms and standards for service delivery, and are given the means to do so, there is little that can be done to attain the MDGs in urban areas in a sustainable manner.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Grassroots participation has been defined as 'a planned process whereby local groups are clarifying and expressing their own needs and objectives and taking collective action to meet them.' The grassroots should ordinarily be seen as those groups who are the intended beneficiaries of the poverty reduction strategies. In urban areas this would include women residents of informal settlements, low-income tenants, low-income owner-occupiers in slums, youth who often represent up to 60% of the urban poor

population, and marginalised groups such as indigenous peoples, immigrants and internally displaced people. Within each of the listed categories of persons, the majority tend to be women, so ensuring that the suggested approach is gendered is crucial.

How we engage these diverse groups, solicit their participation and facilitate a sense of shared ownership is both a challenge and a key to success in devising effective strategies in combating poverty. Our experience and the lessons learned from the more than 1,500 best practices we have documented in this area has shown that all these groups have invaluable contributions to make in improving their own living conditions and livelihoods. For this to happen, we have to remove the numerous barriers and hurdles that confront them each step of the way. These obstacles are found deeply embedded in our policies, our legislation, and not least in the exclusionary rules, procedures and practices in our public administration.

In summary, the key steps we need to make in devising and implementing participatory approaches to reducing urban poverty are to engage the urban poor in decisions that affect them and to strengthen local authorities as the sphere of government closest to the people.

I eagerly await the outcome of your deliberations and thank you for your kind attention.



**Directorate General for Development Cooperation
Government of Italy**

**STATEMENT (ANNEX 9)
ANTONIO BERNARDINI
MULTILATERAL COORDINATOR, ITALIAN DEVELOPMENT
COOPERATION,
MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF ITALY**

I am very glad to be here, in this prestigious forum, to present Italy's recent initiatives in the field of urban poverty alleviation.

As we all know, Italy's record on development cooperation in recent years has been less than buoyant. Until 2004, Italy has not been among the most generous of the DAC countries. However, the trend is picking up quickly. Happily, in 2005 Italian aid doubled. Also, in keeping with Italy's policy of support for multilateral institutions, most of our funds have been channelled through international development agencies.

In this context of stronger commitment to the development of poorer nations, the *Direzione Generale Cooperazione allo Sviluppo*, Italy's development cooperation agency, now intends to begin reflecting on how to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of its interventions against urban poverty. Our cooperation with DESA has precisely this goal: to identify together the areas of intervention and the operational procedures required to make our aid more effective in this complex and sensitive field.

I would like to stress this point. We are working with DESA non-only on the identification of the areas where our intervention might be made more effective, but also on how to improve the ways we do cooperation. I think that the success or failure of our interventions depends only in part on what problems we have chosen to address. To a larger extent, success depends on how we design the intervention, which we formulate it with, the civil society organizations we enrol to help, the human and professional qualities of our field staff and our technical work upstream and downstream. We are looking at all of these aspects of our cooperation in the field of urban poverty alleviation and hope to develop a consistent strategy that will sustain our cooperation for years to come.

Before moving to present our current thinking on this issue, I would like to place it in the context of our overall development cooperation strategy.

High on the agenda of our Department is the alleviation of poverty. Italy supports the efforts that are being made by the international community to achieve the Millennium Development Goals, the first of which is precisely to eradicate extreme poverty and hunger. Our two recent projects against urban poverty in Brazil and Serbia have been designed in the context of these efforts.

But we are particularly concerned with urban poverty. This concern is due not only to the fact that poverty in cities is severe and largely unrecognised, as argues the excellent study on the implementation of the Millennium Project, *A Home in the City*. We are aware of the data according to which the incidence of poverty is higher in rural areas, and, though we are not completely convinced that these data are accurate, we accept the fact that poverty may be equally or even more severe in rural areas. But we do not think this is a decisive argument.

We have been persuaded to give priority to fighting urban poverty essentially because we see that the city offers its newcomers — even the poorest ones — chances for a better life and we think that this process of integration into, and of participation in, the life of cities, needs to be supported and encouraged, because in developing countries it can become a process of mobility out of poverty. After all, migration is one of the livelihood strategies of the rural poor.

I am sure you have all read Lapierre's book about Calcutta, *City of Joy*. Probably you will have been moved like I was moved by the courage and optimism of the new settlers. If you recall, only one couple, man and wife, among the residents in this poor community returned home, to the old village. All the others stayed back in the slums, in conditions which we would find it difficult to imagine. All with the hope for a better life for themselves and for their children. If we could help some of the urban poor realize this hope I think we would have achieved our aim.

Now, to come back to the issue I started with, how to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of our projects, we are proceeding on two separate but related tracks.

On one side, we want to learn from our own successes and failures and from those of our friends and colleagues in the development cooperation community. For this reason, with our partners in this adventure, DESA, we have commissioned the evaluation of two of our own urban poverty alleviation projects in Brazil and Serbia. And we are inviting our colleagues in the development agencies of the OECD-DAC responsible for urban poverty alleviation programmes to an informal exchange in Rome in mid- September. At this meeting, we hope to learn from them what has worked and hear their explanations of why it has worked. We look forward to this opportunity to share our knowledge.

The second track is to try and get a sense of the problems that are likely to develop in the near future to prepare ourselves to deal with them quickly and effectively.

This adventure will wind up by the end of this year. At this stage we have only some vague ideas, but, with your permission and indulgence, I will present them here.

We expect that slum upgrading will stay at the top of the priority list of our cooperation in the field of urban poverty alleviation for years to come. It is a key policy priority. Helping the poor consolidates tenure and providing them with basic urban services is critical for the success of their fight against poverty. We have already worked in this area and have some positive experiences.

But with slum upgrading programmes the devil is in the details. The design can make all the difference. I am thinking particularly of the problems we have with participation and inclusion.

Italy feels very strongly about citizen participation. As many of you know, Italy became a nation less than two centuries ago. But for almost one millennium before that, the life of Italy was her cities. We have a very strong sense of belonging to a city and a strong attachment to city government and the autonomy that comes with it. We sympathize with those that want to participate in city government and will continue to encourage national government to decentralize to local authorities the power, responsibilities and the resources to fulfil them.

It goes without saying that our model city is not Renaissance Venice, Florence and Rome, where there was very little scope for citizen participation. We are not proposing to go back to that. The right of cities to manage their affairs, within the framework provided by the national government must be accompanied by the right of citizens to participate in managing those affairs.

To promote citizen participation we believe that we have first of all to strengthen the institutions for local democracy. In our view, it is essential to prop up community-based organizations and to ensure that higher-level organizations maintain their allegiance to the poor. We are studying projects that transfer to community organizations the techniques needed to design anti-poverty initiatives, projects that create and disseminate the information which they need to act, and projects that shore up their internal democracy. We hope to ensure that these organizations represent the poor and that the initiatives they propose do benefit them.

Inclusion should be as important as participation. One should ensure that projects are as inclusive as possible. The poorest of the poor, the single women, the widows, the disabled, should all benefit, to some extent, from the improvement in the conditions of the community that is generated by the projects we finance.

A second issue that interests us is the rural-urban interface. In search for better livelihoods, many families migrate from the countryside to the nearest city, which is often a small city or a town, and from there to the national capital, which, in

several developing countries, is a mega city. We have tended to focus our intervention on these mega cities, and I am not sure we did well. We are now looking at the possibility to try and tackle poverty in the intermediate stops of the migration process, the medium-sized cities and the towns.

But, as I said, above, we will also try and identify emerging issues. Looking at recent developments in poverty in urban areas, one is struck by the growing violence and insecurity in poor urban settlements. Sometimes, this violence finds a target - not necessarily with good reason - in government institutions. What characterizes these events is their violence and destructiveness. Also, the overwhelming presence of youth.

Youth, lack of opportunities for education, unemployment and underemployment, lack of integration ... violence. Of course not all young people go all the way along this process, but many do. A city, unlike a small village, displays poverty in the midst of plenty. The media shows the glitzy life of the national and international elites. With expectations so high, the youth in poor families are ill equipped to meet them. The educational system in slums does not provide them with the skills needed, and, in any event, the poor have to begin to work very early in life. The jobs on offer pay badly, and, while the chances for mobility are greater than in rural areas, they will not satisfy the youth' aspirations. We believe that we should focus our work more than we have done so far on how to integrate adolescent and young people in poor urban settlements.

In conclusion, we are now considering several priorities. We are still evaluating them but, for what is worth, they are these. One is slum upgrading with community participation and inclusion of the least privileged, where participation is promoted essentially by strengthening representative institutions. The second is poverty in middle-sized cities and towns and the rural-urban interface.

Finally, we think we should focus our attention on adolescents and youth. We fear that the exclusion which they perceive to be victims of can trigger reactions very harmful to their own future and to that of their countries.

As I said, we are still very open and are prepared to consider other options as well. In fact, we hope to learn from the debate which will follow here, and later on, in Rome, whether our initial selection of themes is valid, or whether, instead, we must look further afield.

There is another question which we are addressing with DESA: is the modus operandi we have adopted effective in fighting poverty, or should we try new ways? Here the question is not what to do but how to do it.

Dr. Civili has already discussed some of the options we are looking at, within the context of the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness of the DAC, which we are committed to implementing and I do not wish to repeat what he has said.

However, let me simply say that we are seriously looking at strengthening the research, training and evaluation functions. I do agree with one of the statements made by the paper that was circulated on participation: that when we deal with participation and poverty, no lessons is learnt once and for all; we are only trying to keep up with a reality that changes quickly and in unexpected ways.

Again, I am happy to be able to address this important meeting and I look forward to the discussion that is about to begin.



Statement (Annex 10)
MR. PATRIZIO CIVILI
ASSISTANT-SECRETARY-GENERAL FOR POLICY COORDINATION AND
INTER-AGENCY AFFAIRS
TO THE WORLD URBAN FORUM III SIDE EVENT ON
“FIGHTING URBAN POVERTY: WHICH PARTICIPATORY APPROACHES?”

Vancouver, 20 June 2006

Ms. Anna Tibaijuka, Executive Director, UN-HABITAT,
Honourable Sam Sullivan, Mayor of Vancouver,
Mr. Antonio Bernardini, Multilateral Coordinator, Italian Development Cooperation,
Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Government of Italy,
Honourable Dr. Lindiwe Sisulu, Minister of Housing of South Africa,
Respected discussants, ladies and gentlemen:

I am delighted, on behalf of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, to welcome you all to this side event of the third World Urban Forum. I would like to thank especially Ms. Tibaijuka for her crucial role in securing this event's incorporation into the programme of the Forum. Our thanks go also to Mayor Sullivan for kindly agreeing to co-chair this event with Ms. Tibaijuka. And I would like to thank very warmly and very sincerely our co-organizers, the Government of Italy and the Italian Directorate for Development Cooperation, who are partnering with DESA in exploring the issue of urban poverty and of participatory approaches to help strengthen the effectiveness of development cooperation initiatives in this crucial sector.

Today we come together to discuss “Fighting Urban Poverty: Which Participatory Approaches?” A draft paper has already been circulated. We have with us an array of learned panellists who will address this subject in depth from a variety of perspectives. And we hope to have a necessarily brief, but lively discussion in which, I hope, the audience, too, will participate, through questions and, ever more important, the sharing of experiences.

Let me say a few words on the broader context for our meeting, before suggesting some more specific issues for discussion.

Despite considerable progress since 1990, poverty persists as a challenge on a global scale. While much of the progress in poverty reduction has occurred in East and South Asia and in the Pacific, many individual countries, particularly in Sub-Saharan Africa, have seen little improvement or even suffered setbacks. Around the world, current

estimates show nearly 1.5 billion people living in extreme poverty, on less than US\$1 dollar a day. And many of these impoverished people are residing in the urban areas of developing countries.

Nearly half of the world's peoples now live in urban or peri-urban areas. And increased urbanization has become a marked feature of demographic transformation in many developing countries, which account for a large and rapidly increasing proportion of the world's urban dwellers. For example, 77 per cent of people in Latin American and Caribbean countries live in urban areas. The figure for Asia and Africa is lower, at 39 per cent, but is rising rapidly at an annual rate of 3 per cent and 4 per cent, respectively.

Sadly, the women and men migrating from rural areas to cities in search of greater opportunities and more secure livelihoods do not often experience a great deal of success. According to UN estimates, some one billion people live in slums, mostly in Asia (550 million), followed by Africa (187 million) and Latin America & the Caribbean (128 million). Seventy-two per cent of the urban population in Africa live in slums - the highest concentration of urban poor in the world.

At the same time, the definition of "urban" and "rural" is in flux. The neat administrative and spatial demarcation between them seems to be fading fast. We see a new phenomenon - described by some as "edge city" or "city-out" growth - as urban areas grow beyond metropolitan areas and push into rural ones, where the inhabitants, especially the poor, may enjoy neither the benefits of cities nor those of villages. This has coincided with another increasingly evident phenomenon, the so-called "rotating poor", reflecting the situation of many urban poor who now move in and out of jobs much more frequently than in the past.

The goal to eradicate poverty - as an ethical, social, political and economic imperative - is at the core of the comprehensive development agenda generated by the wave of UN conferences and summits beginning in 1990. Democratic in form and focus, each conference brought together Governments and a range of stakeholders to consider a different aspect of development from the perspective of its implications for the human person and human communities. This led, for example, in 1995 at Copenhagen, where the focus was on social development, to world leaders' articulating - and committing to - a holistic policy framework for eradicating poverty, promoting employment and fostering social integration. And, of course, the following year at Istanbul attention turned to the development challenges of securing adequate shelter for all and the sustainable development of human settlements in an urbanizing world.

Some of the key commitments made at these conferences took even more prominent form after the Millennium Summit, in the Millennium Development Goals. The world now recognizes the MDGs - and the array of internationally agreed development goals on which they are built - as key benchmarks for national and international efforts to eradicate poverty and promote sustainable development, in its economic, social and environmental dimensions.

The imperative of good governance, including a particular emphasis on participation, clearly cuts across the whole of this UN Development Agenda. That Agenda in effect calls for us to put participatory governance and participatory approaches at the centre of our efforts to find solutions to our common development challenges. This is precisely our task today, as we consider how to use participation as a strategic tool in urban poverty alleviation at different levels and in different institutional settings.

Our efforts can draw momentum from the Outcome Document of the 2005 World Summit, which strongly emphasizes the need to introduce and sustain participatory processes in the structures and processes of development management. The idea - and commitment - is to engage all stakeholders, including the least advantaged, in policy formulation, implementation, monitoring and review. This is a major factor shaping the current work of the United Nations system to help Governments formulate and implement their national strategies for achieving the development goals. This, in turn, is part of the broader campaign to translate the normative wealth of the conferences and our own analytical work into country-level implementation that directly benefits Governments and their peoples.

The nature and characteristics of contemporary urban poverty are moving beyond the capacity of traditional tools of development planning, which are mostly oriented toward rural development. Participatory approaches can offer us tools that are sufficiently flexible to take into account the multiple dimensions of urban poverty and to respond to the particularities of individual communities. By being interactive, non-threatening and sensitive, such approaches can improve the quality of poverty alleviation policy and the prospects for its effective implementation over the long term. Moreover, by their very nature, they contribute to the building of inclusive societies, by empowering the least advantaged and fostering trust among all of a society's members.

Against this backdrop, and with these basic ideas in mind, we still have much room to improve analytical rigor and applications in this sector. Let me throw out a list of some of the questions that come to mind:

- Can we agree on a precise and workable *definition* of participation?
- How do we operationalize participation or, in other words, what are the *methodological issues* of participation?
- *Who* participates and how do we guarantee equity in participation?
- How do we secure *gender balance*?
- Who are the *agents* of participation?
- What are the *enablers* of participation?
- How do we use the *outputs of participation* in the planning, budgeting and monitoring processes and ensure balance between the needs of sustainable growth with those of equity?
- What *benefits* has participation actually brought to the poor thus far?
- What are the *implications of the mobility of many urban poor* for the use of participatory approaches?

There are no easy answers to any of these questions. I hope that from the presentations of the panellists and the ensuing discussion, we will be able to move a step further into identifying options and approaches of participation that are relevant and doable and will have the potential to contribute to alleviating urban poverty in a significant way.

Thank you.

Participatory Approaches in Alleviating Urban Poverty The Naga City experience* (Annex 11)

INTRODUCTION

This paper seeks to describe Naga's experience in using participatory approaches to address various dimensions of urban poverty more effectively. It will cover four key initiatives that played and are playing key roles in the city's evolving institutional experience in participatory governance:

- 1) The *Kaantabay sa Kauswagan (or Partners in Development) Programme* on securing tenurial rights for the urban poor, which laid down the groundwork for meaningful engagement with constituents;
- 2) The *Participatory Planning Initiatives* that strengthened local capacity on participatory approaches;
- 3) *Reinventing the Local School Board*, which marked the first time participatory approaches were used to influence a national agency to address a key local concern, and
- 4) The *ongoing preparation of Naga's MDG-aligned local development plans*, which seeks to further institutionalize people participation in governance and development planning.

1) THE KAANTABAY SA KAUSWAGAN PROGRAMME

Conceptually, the Kaantabay programme is a form of social housing. It dates back to 1989, making it one of the oldest, most durable and sustainable initiatives of the city government.

Mechanics

At its core is securing tenurial rights for urban poor beneficiaries. This is accomplished by acquiring the landholding they are occupying through various innovative schemes, with the city government playing a critical facilitative and mediating role. When negotiations are completed, the beneficiaries are then able to amortize their home lots under very affordable terms through community mortgage. When the landholding is fully paid up, property rights to individual home lots are transferred to beneficiaries, thereby facilitating asset building by the poor.

Strategies

Two key programme thrusts operationalize participation, albeit in a less structured manner.

Community organizing

Putting together a group of potential urban poor beneficiaries is a critical requirement under the Kaantabay programme. A policy of dealing only with urban poor organizations,

* Presented by Mayor Jesse M. Robredo of Naga City, Philippines during the UNDESA/Italy Side Event on Fighting Urban Poverty on June 20, 2006 during the World Urban Forum III in Vancouver, Canada.

not individuals, compels interested applicants to take the initiative in organizing themselves. In implementing the programme, the non-government sector (through the Community Organizers of the Philippines Enterprises or COPE) has played a key role in social preparation and community organizing. The city government recognizes that these areas lie outside its core competence. The partnership between City Hall and COPE therefore made sense. As a result of COPE's efforts, there are now around 80 urban poor associations belonging to the Naga City Urban Poor Federation (NCUPF) compared with only nine in 1989 when Kaantabay began.

Tripartism

The programmes effectiveness also stems from a tripartite approach to problem resolution at the project level, involving the a) city government and other national government agencies; b) urban poor associations, aided by NGOs and POs; and c) private landowners. This mechanism enables the involved parties to sit down and cooperate in solving their disputes.

By adopting a pro-poor bias, the city government gives the programme strength and credibility. This bias is particularly manifested in its treatment of urban poor associations as "partner-beneficiaries" which compels them to actively participate in every step of the process. Meanwhile, national government agencies extend operational and financial support to the programmes land acquisition thrust.

Urban poor associations, on the other hand, signify their support and commitment to the project through their willingness to negotiate get organized and raise equity if necessary, including money for land acquisition and labour for urban upgrading.

Finally, landowners show their cooperation through willingness to explore more peaceful means of settling tenurial disputes as an alternative to ejection of urban poor occupants and demolition of their makeshift shelters.

Outcomes

Kaantabay has fashioned innovative approaches to land acquisition, community development and project financing which enabled it to achieve near universal coverage. In the process, it overcame resource limitations that handicap national and local government authorities. As of December 31, 2005, it has covered a total of 8,763 urban poor households, representing 30 percent of the total city. In terms of direct benefit, 67 percent of the households covered are on their way to acquiring their property titles, having benefited from 27 completed projects under the programme. Negotiations are ongoing for 14 more projects that will cover the remaining 33 percent. Thus, for roughly 2 out of every 3 urban poor households in Naga, agreement has been reached between the landowner, the urban poor association and the city government; the tenurial status of the occupants is already secured; and they are in the process of amortizing their home lots.

2) PARTICIPATORY PLANNING INITIATIVES

The Naga City Participatory Planning Initiatives (NCPPI), chosen in 1998 as one of the Ten Best Practices worldwide by the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (UNCHS), has already outgrown its original planning focus. Today, it has spawned diverse applications of participative governance that continue to attract international attention.

Originally, the NCPPI represents a more structured effort of the city government to actively involve local communities and interest groups as stakeholders in the crafting of doable action plans on key health and environment concerns. Impelled by a revolutionary “Empowerment Ordinance” mandating greater people participation in governance, Naga tapped the USAID assisted Governance and Local Democracy (GOLD) Project for technical assistance on how meaningful participation and stakeholdership can be ensured for action plans on these key areas. Under GOLD, a select group of city personnel and their NGO partners acquired basic and advanced skills on the highly participative Technology of Participation (ToP) group facilitation techniques.

Outcomes

These efforts led to the development of local plans, which guided local river rehabilitation, solid waste management and health service improvement; and the revitalization of the moribund City Health Board which coordinates delivery of integrated health services by the city’s five health-related agencies. It later led to the establishment of the city’s own environment and natural resources office.

From then on, continued use of ToP promoted participative governance concepts and practices, leading to wide-ranging applications, not only in planning but also in most other government activities. These new applications include:

- a) The creation of the Naga City Investment Board (NCIB) that is private sector-led, its membership consisting largely of nominees by the Naga City People’s Council and the local business chamber
- b) The crafting and adoption of an Integrated Livelihood Master Plan (ILM) that rationalized existing national and local livelihood programmes, including micro-lending for small entrepreneurs. Like the NCIB, a multi-sectoral body is directing its implementation.
- c) The development of the Naga City Citizens Charter, a guidebook on city government services that promotes citizen empowerment and accountability among city government service providers, and
- d) The strengthening of village-based people’s organizations as well as sectoral groupings in the city.

3) REINVENTING THE LOCAL SCHOOL BOARD

In 2001, the city government pioneered an initiative that sought to improve the quality of basic education in Naga, in the process engaging with local stakeholders of the public school system which is centrally managed and controlled by the national government through the Department of Education (DepEd).

Focusing on the city school board, a local special body provided for under the 1991 Local Government Code (LGC), it sought to address the governance of the local public school system, building on the city government's established competency as a leading exponent of good urban governance. Because the DepEd is an external agency, this initiative is one of the more difficult efforts of the city government, compared to other programmes that involved entities belonging to the local bureaucracy.

Challenges

The programme sought to improve the governance of public schools in Naga – with the end view of addressing local problems facing the sector which are symptomatic of the national situation.

These include:

- a) Deteriorating quality of basic education (elementary and high school) that has far-reaching effects on their generation and the city's future
- b) The general lack of awareness about the current state of public education among stakeholders
- c) Weak mechanisms for meaningful parent participation in the education of their children
- d) Weak “soft infrastructure” support (textbooks, reference materials, continuing professional development, etc.) to facilitate the learning process
- e) An underperforming City School Board that has been reduced to a mere budgeting agency for local education funds
- f) Weak local involvement and participation in the delivery of public education services
- g) Weak planning and budgeting practices and processes that contribute to inefficient and ineffective use of local education funds, and
- h) The lack of transparency and accountability in the administration of the public school system.

Strategies

In response, the city government pursued two key strategies:

Empowered city school board

First, it reengineered the city school board to become an empowered entity that goes beyond its traditional function of providing budgetary support to local public schools. This, in itself, is a controversial proposition. One school of thought held that the board can only operate within the limits prescribed by the LGC, which provide for its legal basis. But the city decided to deliberately embrace the opposite perspective – that what the law does not expressly prohibit, it allows.

Guided by this liberating mindset, it conducted the first ever meeting between stakeholders of the public school system in January 2002 – which clarified to everyone the real state of public education in Naga. In that meeting, local officials finally understood what the 42% achievement level meant – that in a 100-item test, the average Nagueño pupil is able to correctly answer only 42.

This new understanding underscored the urgency for education reform beginning with the school board. It also marked a watershed in school board budgeting. The stakeholders consultation validated results of a survey conducted by the board during the last quarter of 2001, and defined the priority areas it should address. And for the first time ever, its budget incorporated activities that, for more than a decade, fell below the board’s radar screen. Since then, those priorities guided the board’s allocation of the city’s Special Education Fund (SEF), which is collected from a local tax on real properties.

Grassroots Stakeholdership

The effort for education reform anchored on greater community engagement was carried down to the grassroots level. From February to March 2003, the board shared with local communities the real picture of education in Naga and the Philippines. Shuttling between schools, it presented the current situation of the public school system and what the board is doing about it, and asked them what more can be done. As a result, most parents became aware of the situation and pledged their support to ongoing efforts to improve achievement.

After completing a 3-year local education plan in 2005, a second round of school-level consultations updated local communities on gains made under the initiative (measured through access and quality indicators at the city and school levels), and promoted the creation of local school governance councils that would anchor grassroots-based education reform efforts.

Side by side, sectoral consultations – in the form of consultative meetings with school principals and officials of the city teachers association – yielded very interesting insights that have helped redefine the Board’s directions. One is the overwhelming preference for “soft” infrastructure – textbooks and other instructional materials, desks and armchairs – over school buildings. Another is the need for teacher training, performance-based incentives, and intervention to unburden lesson planning.

Outcomes

Five years later, the programme has institutionalized a more responsive support system for local public schools indicated by:

- a) A 1:1 textbook to student ratio in the core subjects of English, Science and Mathematics for both the elementary and secondary levels. This is a significant improvement over the 1:2 textbook ratio four years ago.
- b) A 1:1 workbook-student ratio in the same core subjects for the elementary level. Previously, only those enrolled in private schools had this privilege.

- c) Standardized the quality of instruction in English, Science and Mathematics through printed lesson plans for the elementary level.
- d) The conduct of annual localized testing whose results serve as a basis for providing performance-based incentives to public school teachers.
- e) Reduced average class size to around 45 students division-wide (down from 55).
- f) Efforts toward transparent recruitment of public school teachers that sought to attract the best available, prompting the DepEd to incorporate essential elements of these efforts in its own recruitment process.
- g) A comprehensive IT education programme for the public schools in Naga, built around a Computer Literacy and Instructional Centre for Kids (CLICK) laboratory, with complementary internet access, in each of the city's 36 public schools; I-Link, a teacher training centre working to upgrade teacher competency on IT education; the integration of IT lessons in the basic education curriculum; and wireless internet access to four rural public elementary and high schools.
- h) Localized and expanded an Aus-Aid project that sought to improve children's attendance in school. Now called *Sanggawadan*, this complementary programme helps around 3,000 households in ensuring their school-age children stay in school.
- i) Allocation of 100,000 Philippine Pesos for each public school as its own School Empowerment Fund to support the conduct of community-identified developmental activities.

In terms of actual gains in student academic achievement, Naga's efforts have clearly paid off, judging from the city's comparative performance in the National Achievement Test from 1999-2005.

- a) At the elementary level, improvement in academic achievement in the core subjects of English, Science and Mathematics registered an average annual increase of only 3.7 percentage points between 1999 and 2004 (from 32.07 to 50.58). But with strong intervention under the programme, the city attained a 9.5 percentage point improvement for 2005 (with a division-wide achievement rating of 60.10).
- b) At the secondary level, a 2.2 percentage point increase was attained between 1999 and 2004 (from 37.26 to 48.31). This year, it went up by 6.2 percentage points (on a division-wide achievement rating of 54.56).
- c) Both improvements are in line with the medium and high annual target under the city's education plan for the next three years.

4) DEVELOPMENT OF MDG-ALIGNED LOCAL PLANS

Beginning June 2006, the city government, through its local planning office, has begun updating Naga's development and land use plans, providing it an opportunity to further institutionalize participative approaches in local governance processes. In so doing, the following innovations were adopted:

1. *Using the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and the Public Governance Scorecard (PGS) outputs as planning targets.* By adopting the MDG and the PGS vision-

mission statement and scorecards, the city will no longer need to reinvent the wheel and go through a time-consuming visioning process. This also means that it will be updating the local land use and development plans with a 10-year time horizon. The planning process will therefore focus on revisiting these outputs, refining the targets set, and aligning the city plans towards attaining these 10-year targets.

2. *Working with existing and mandated local councils and special bodies as basic planning unit.* This involves tapping existing and mandated councils under the umbrella of the City Development Council (all of which have strong civil society representation) in coming up with sectoral components of both the land use and development plans. For instance, in regard to the social sector, the city will have to work with the Children's Council, the Women's Council, and the Youth Council in establishing the baseline data and assessing needs; crafting programmes, projects and activities (PPAs) that will respond to these needs in the context of the MDG and PGS targets; costing out these PPAs, and laying out a 10-year action plan for implementation, monitoring and evaluation.

This approach has the following advantages:

- a) There will be higher data quality as stakeholders will have the opportunity to validate and reconcile both official (i.e. those generated by the city planning staff) and non-official data
- b) The process will ensure shared ownership and responsibility over the output plans, and
- c) It will enable local councils and special bodies to play a more strategic and meaningful role in the city government's institutional planning processes.

5) CONCLUSION

Naga's journey as a trailblazer in participatory governance for close to two decades highlights the following:

1. *The urban poor are a key constituency in urban development.*

Very early on, the city government recognized that the urban poor – their economic and social status notwithstanding – are a vital sector that local authorities must engage with in actualizing urban development. The *Kaantabay* programme is our response to that need, and it opened the door towards more meaningful engagement and more functional partnerships with civil society.

2. *Local capacity for participatory approaches must be developed.*

While *Kaantabay* sowed the seeds, our Participatory Planning Initiatives made sure they will grow and bear fruit. It provided local government and non-government staff with skills on structured participatory processes, i.e. the ToP facilitation techniques whose use and applications went beyond planning.

3. *Participatory approaches can work, even in the difficult effort to influence external entities.*

Our School Board education reform initiative demonstrates this very well, whereby a local authority has succeeded in leveraging its expertise in participatory governance to introduce positive changes in the centrally managed and controlled public school system.

4. Local development planning can further institutionalize people participation.

The ongoing updating of local plans shows that Naga is coming full circle, with a twist. Traditionally, planning occurs at the initial phase of any process or activity. Here, it has emerged as the newest opportunity to integrate and tie in all these innovations together, when they already have individually achieved momentum and attained maturation.

5. For optimum results, participation must form part of the institutional development agenda.

This is perhaps what separates the city government of Naga from most other local authorities. Its institutional experience with people participation has evolved into its own governance framework that anchors all development initiatives of the city government. (See Fig. 1).

In this framework, three elements form the foundation of good urban governance:

Progressive perspective

In the model, it lies at the apex of the triangle because it is a function of leadership which the local administration must provide. Among others, a progressive perspective seeks to build prosperity for the community at large. But the goal of prosperity building is tempered by an enlightened perception of the poor, whose upliftment is an end to governance.

Functional partnerships

These are vehicles that enable the city to tap community resources for priority undertakings, in the process multiplying its capacity and enabling it to overcome resource constraints that usually hamper government.

Participation

These are mechanisms that ensure long-term sustainability by generating broad-based stakeholder and community ownership over local undertakings. Partnerships and participation lie at the base of the triangle because they are the elements that provide it sustainability.

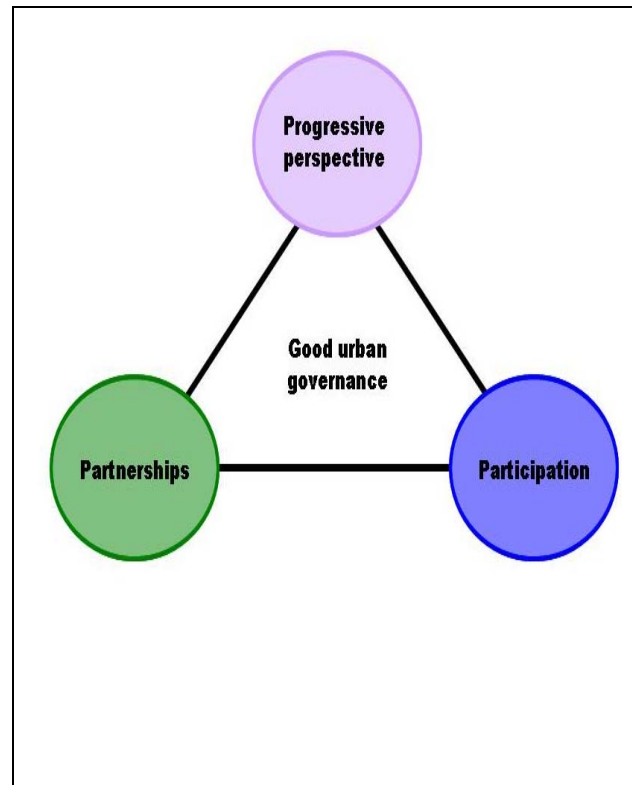


Fig. 1. The Naga Governance Framework

Participatory Approaches in Serbia - Municipality of Pancevo (Annex 12)

Suzana Jovanovic

As a transitional economy in South-Eastern Europe, Serbia has experimented with a variety of approaches to promoting socio-economic development in general and alleviating urban poverty in particular. The autocratic doctrines of the past regime wrought untold damages upon the educational system, industry, economy and the social welfare system, including public housing projects. Consequently the arrival of democratic governance also brought with it the challenge of system-wide reconstruction. In this regard, strategies and policies must be developed to allow for the effective transition of archaic structures. However the evident deficiency of human, financial and technical capacity greatly retards the desired level of progress. This deficiency can be partly mitigated through cooperation with international organizations.

Tackling urban poverty necessitates reforming legislation pertaining to construction and public housing projects, as well as capacity building initiatives to promote citizen participation in urban planning. Additionally socio-economic goals must be characterized by an essential developmental component. However success in this regard will eventually be determined by the level of citizen participation.

Prior to the fifteen years of socio-economic-political isolation that was the trademark of the autocratic Milošević era, civil society practices were highly developed in the former Yugoslavia. Much of this knowledge and expertise has been lost over the intervening period, and democratic reconstruction must begin afresh. SIRP - a planning and housing reform project financed by the Italian government and with technical support from UN-HABITAT, has come a long way in promoting participatory urban poverty alleviation & decentralization.

Serbian Planning and Construction laws necessitate that once engineers have designed a plan, they must be placed through public scrutiny by means of general debate before being passed. Such debates normally incorporate NGOs, public enterprises, academia and the educated citizenry, while leaving out marginalized groups that are the very victims of urban poverty – the unemployed, refugees and the handicapped. The conceptualization and implementation of SIRP has as its most prominent partner these vary minority groups and the NGO's that represent them.

SIRP also promotes decentralization in Serbia, a major advancement for a state where all property continues to be under full state control. While the central government sets out policies and laws, the local government develops and implements strategies and action plans to fight urban poverty based on need and resource availability. In a way, local governments have played somewhat of an activist role in accelerating decentralization and enhancing local autonomy.

While the process of reform has begun in earnest, societal transformation remains slow. Nonetheless, the reform process can be accelerated through increased international cooperation with an emphasis on citizen participation. Through its international partners - UNHABITAT Belgrade and the Italian Development Cooperation - Serbia is once again a member of the global community united in its fight against urban poverty. After fifteen years of isolation, the very fact that Serbia is no longer alone in its struggle is a major step forward.

Challenges to Participation in Poverty Alleviation in Brazil (Annex 13)

Erminia Maricato²⁹

There exists a general consensus that democratic participation greatly enhances efficiency in processes that explicitly target social inclusion. Participation plays a major role in minimizing investment costs at the levels of project planning and implementation and maximizing sustainability in their long-term management. Civic engagement is also fundamental in ensuring good governance and corruption reduction through the partnering of the civil society with state watchdog institutions.

Citizen participation humanizes processes and procedures, including the day to day functions of state that impact greatly upon the well-being of the citizenry. Participation as an essential tool in poverty alleviation is now part and parcel of mainstream discourse. Principal actors from the public sector and civil society, particularly international development agencies, NGOs, academia, the government and even bureaucrats have widely acknowledged the merits of participation, oft citing successful case studies to defend their assertions.

However, acknowledgement by these principal stakeholders does not necessarily translate into action as evidenced by the universal growth in urban poverty and the stark proclamation, both by UNHABITAT in their document *The Challenge of Slums* and by Sclar, Rubbo & Garau in their book *A Home in the City*, that many countries will not be able to fulfil the Millennium Development Goals where poverty reduction is an essential facet.

The mushrooming of informal human settlements in most Latin American cities serves as a clear reminder of the region's impoverishment over the past twenty years. Between 1990 and 2001 the number of informal settlements increased from 111 million to 127 million in the region, as a consequence of rapid urbanization, stagnant economic growth and minimal investment in public policies (ECLAC, 2004).

Brazil is a case in point. From the 1940s to the 1970s, the Brazilian economy grew at an impressive rate of 7% a year before embarking on a long-term decline. Neoliberal policies and the new international context obliterated the remnants of efficient social policies in what was historically an unequal society, where universal rights encompassed theoretically in the conception of the "Welfare State" applied in practice to only a small portion of the populace. Authoritarianism, political clientelism, neopatrimonialism, elite capture and restricted political and civil rights have for long been trademarks of Brazilian archaic political structure.

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Urban poverty in Brazil is further exacerbated by the deregulation and commodification of public services as a consequence of privatization, tax wars (politically motivated), inequitable economic policies and emasculated social functions of the state. Such deregulation comes on top of the already expansive informal sector (comprised almost exclusively of the poor and marginalized) over which the state has no control, further compounding the problem of effective pro-poor service delivery. Finally, the exclusionary and speculative nature of the Brazilian real estate market further compounds the problem of developing decent housing projects for the urban poor.

Sluggish economic growth during the 1980s & 1990s exacerbated the usual gamut of urban problems in addition to creating new ones like unemployment and violence, particularly in the major cities. As difficult as it is to imagine today, urban violence was a rare phenomenon in Brazil until the early 1970s.

Participation is crucial tool to tackling poverty alleviation, both at the micro-level of neighbourhood development committees as well as the macro-level of national development strategies increasingly swayed by global economic trends. Tackling the latter remains a major challenge and necessitates urgent attention. While decentralization can be an effective tool in addressing the challenges posed by the increasing concentration of the national population in the major cities, it must not come about through the weakening of the nation state, for it is the federal government which is ultimately responsible for outlining the national poverty reduction strategy and coordinating its implementation in all urban areas, irrespective of their size or influence.