



Multilevel governance and inclusive climate action

Workshop 7: Strengthening Public Institutions for Climate Action

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United Cities and Local Governments

Background and context on United Cities and Local Governments

- The **largest and oldest network** of local and regional governments, founded in 1913, with 250,000 cities and governments of all sizes
- Facilitator of the Global Taskforce of Local and Regional Governments, **focal point to the United Nations**
- Present in 185 countries, 7 Regional Sections, a decentralized structure
- Work programme focuses on **local governance, decentralization**, ecological transformation and fight against **climate change**, agenda of caring and rights, **basic and universal access to public services**
- Pillars of work: research, policy and advocacy, peer-to-peer learning

Multilevel Governance: From a Global Necessity for Local and Regional Governments to its Definition in Climate Action

As centralised planning finds its limits in dealing with territorial externalities, Multilevel Governance (MLG) has emerged as a **decision-making system based on coordination mechanisms of continuous negotiation that permit the distribution of government powers and duties** in a vertical and horizontal manner while adhering to the subsidiarity concept and preserving local autonomy

Table 1: Multilevel governance and selected emergency governance domains

The strength of influence between different emergency governance domains and shifting powers and coordination as part of multilevel emergency governance. Based on reasoned judgements by EGI research team.

	POWER SHIFTS			COORDINATION		
	Political	Fiscal	Administrative	Vertical	Sectoral	Teritorial
Coordination and integration across governmental units	3	3	3	3	3	3
Administrative capacity and organisational resilience	3	2	2	3	3	2
Local response and strategic direction	3	2	2	3	3	3
Authority and leadership	3	2	2	2	2	2
Legal frameworks and constitutional arrangements	3	2	3	3	1	2
Democracy and representation	3	2	2	3	1	2
Information technology and data management	1	1	2	3	3	2
Cooperation and collaboration across key stakeholders	2	1	1	2	3	3
Communication and Consultation	3	1	1	2	3	2
Gender and governance	3	1	1	2	2	2
Transparency, accountability and integrity	2	1	2	1	1	1

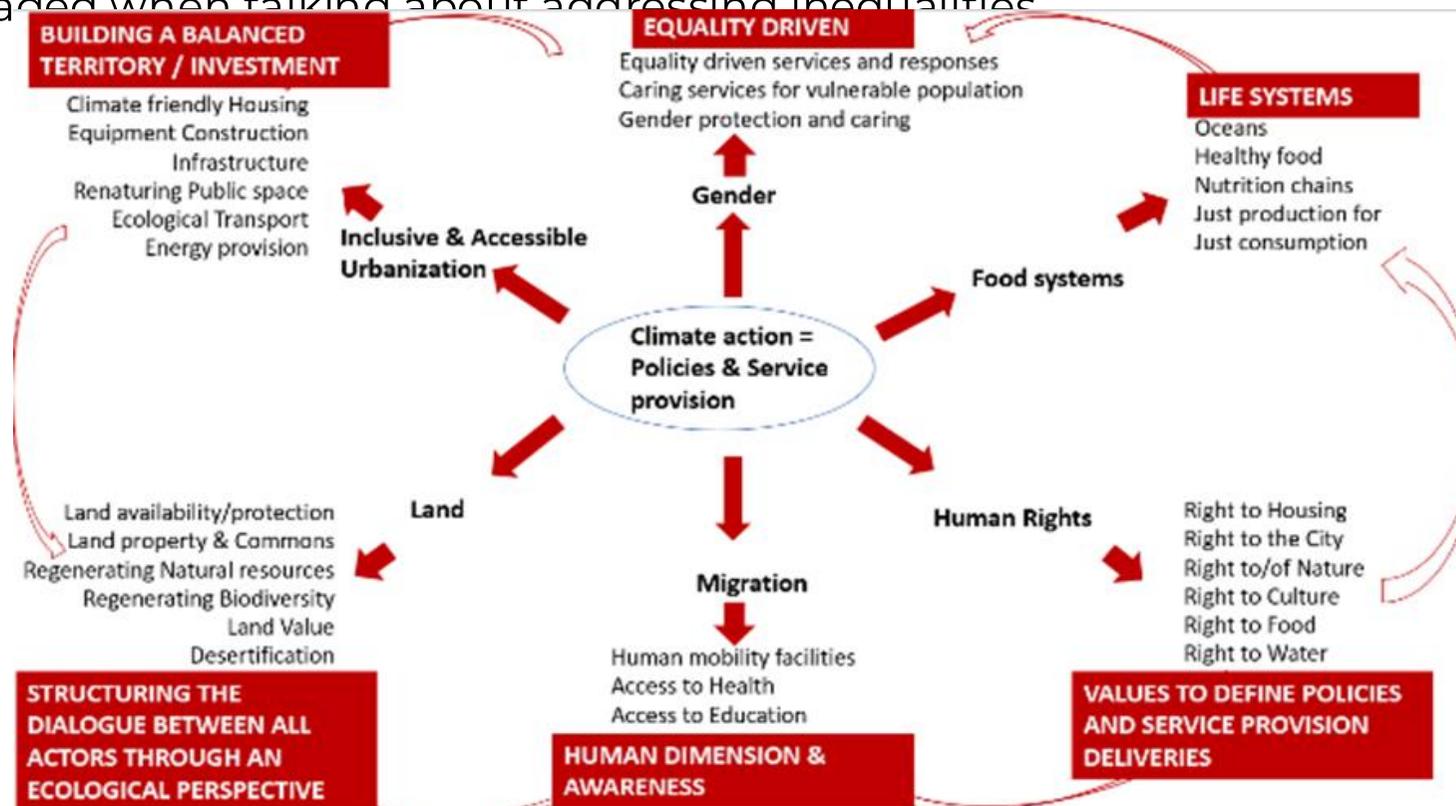
1 indirect impact
 2 direct impact in some cases
 3 direct impact in many cases

Public Service Delivery at the heart of the 'multilateral whole-of-Governance' approach

- **Local and regional governments have played a crucial role in addressing climate action** at various levels. They have responded to climate shocks and slow onset processes, usually by being first responders and by stretching the capacity of their service delivery over time.
- Therefore, **public service delivery** finds its meaning at the heart of this daily challenge: serving the citizens to address inequalities through different policies, actions and measures taken became, after COVID-19, the strongest parameter that underpins the efforts of local and regional governments.
- Moreover, in many countries, **public service delivery is the nexus that joins different levels of governance for the same objectives**: funds from the national level, through regional levels of governance, where decentralisation has taken place, up until the local level are streamlined to generate public services for the citizens.

Systemic transversalities to accelerate climate action: from localization to cascading effects

- Raising Climate ambition is a 'must' that local governance could adopt through local solutions, integrating a green-climate friendly dimension in policies engaged by municipalities to fight inequalities. Some key agendas are part of the spectrum that are dealt with on a daily basis from the local governance point of view, and engaged when talking about addressing inequalities



From a renewed Multilateralism to an Environmental Multilateralism

- It is crucial to have a **re-alignment on the mismatch between public policies at the local level and those proposed at the global level**. By enhancing the synergies between global agendas and the capacities of LRGs, incorporating foresight scenarios in land planning that anticipate future land use changes influenced by loss and damage.
- LRGs are proactively equipping themselves for this challenge through the development of **strategic plans, climate action plans, risk action plans, and, more recently, sustainable energy plans**. Even so, there is an emerging need to include loss and damage in them.
- These action plans should emphasise participatory, multi-level approaches and precise, quantifiable documentation. **Territorial climate plans**, if comprehensively understood, should systematically integrate the concept of Environment Balance through all levels of governance and throughout all stakeholders, so that the impact can be assessed into policies, specific actions that are unleashed through urban planning tools, specifications, and reference documents.

From a renewed Multilateralism to an Environmental Multilateralism

Local and territorial SDG financing: Local and regional governments must be integrated in multilevel SDG stimulus frameworks to ensure development is territorially balanced and addresses concerns of local communities.

Financing local caring public services and the commons: Closest to the needs of humans and the planet, local and regional governments can coordinate across spheres of government to reorient economic value towards social and environmental protection and sustainable use. The organised constituency of local and regional governments must be systematically integrated in global decision-making and financing for gender equality and biodiversity conservation and restoration.

Reforming the global financial architecture: effective taxation and moving beyond GDP: Establishing social and natural capital as an alternative indicator to GDP and following Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) benchmarks and criteria, including human rights principles in investment will foster a renewed fiscal architecture empowering local and regional governments to strengthen their resources and localize the SDGs.

Social climate justice and multilevel governance

- **Loss and Damage, a mechanism to enable a global restoration through Climate Justice**

As LRGs keep their work on **mitigation and adaptation**, and accelerate Inclusive Climate Action, it is inevitable to address the current losses and damages that are incurred by Climate Change. These hard climate-consequences primarily impact livelihoods and territories, emphasizing the interconnectedness of human and environmental well-being. Thus, inclusivity in climate action must be underpinned in a strong sentiment of **people-centered climate justice and equity**.

- **A renewed approach to global development and growth**

Solidarity alone may not suffice; a universal approach to development is needed to ensure fairness for all, including historically marginalised countries. A planetary restoration is needed where citizens, decision makers and governments are mobilising efforts towards the same goal.

This requires **multilateral cooperation and multilevel governance schemes**, grounded in principles of equality and local perspectives. Achieving climate justice and universal development requires both symbolic and practical measures through a global mechanism that fosters trust and equality on a global scale.

Way forward: uniting the voices of governance for climate action

- ✓ **LRGs play a key role in upholding the ways of local life, sense of place and identity.** As losses and damages press on, there are significant gaps created by cultural memory loss. New paradigms arise where actors need to be held accountable for the retrieval of traditional intellectual property that has been lost. LRGs can work well as articulators of stakeholders, providers and affected communities to ensure the knowledge chain does not break.
- ✓ Creating a **systemic and structural dialogue** through a whole of government and whole of society approach
- ✓ Inclusivity in Multilevel Climate Action is guaranteed through the **systemic approaches**
- ✓ The national level becomes a tool as well for the local level, as much as local government can be a tool for the national level: the **complementarity in the decision making** and in the implementation framing are the key to ensure that territories are receiving the co-benefits from all levels of government
- ✓ **Human settlements and nature need to be governed together**
- ✓ Recognising existing settlements' legitimacy is vital for reducing vulnerability to disasters. This involves integrating adaptation and disaster preparedness into national and local urban plans, ensuring **multilevel coordination**. The aim is to establish prioritised plans for efficient resource allocation when available.



Thank You

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