

COMMITTEE ON DECENTRALISATION AND LOCAL SELF-GOVERNMENT

BALANCE OF ACTIVITIES 2010-2013

0. Introduction

This document provides a summary of the main activities undertaken by the Committee from 2010 to 2013. During this period, the balance of activities of the Committee on Decentralization and Local Self-Government has been positive, as initial objectives have been fulfilled.

1. Observation of decentralization processes

The Commission has performed as an observatory of analysis in decentralization and local governance processes in the world, in order to define advocacy strategies of political influence and to strengthen local self-government according to the realities of each country or region. Thus, the main activities that have been conducted are the following:

a. Support to GOLD -Report on Decentralization and Local Democracy

During these years, three GOLD reports have been published, in which the Committee has overturned many efforts, actively participating in the development of content and also through financial support. In addition, it has worked to spread the obtained results, cooperating in the activities scheduled by the UCLG World Secretariat and driving own events for the presentation and dissemination of each of the reports.

- GOLD II- Local Government Finance: The Challenges of the 21st Century (2010)
- GOLD III – The Governance of Local Basic Services (2013)

b. Support to organizations, institutions and networks

International cooperation between local, regional and multilateral organizations, as well as the promotion of decentralization processes and the strengthening of local governance are common goals of UCLG. This is why the Committee is working with the **UCLG Global Observatory on Decentralization** in order to achieve greater impact.

2. Investigation and publications

The Commission has developed a series of analytical documents and publications to promote reflection and debate on decentralization and its impacts:

a. Edition of D+ magazine, whose content is directly related to the mission and objectives of the Committee. Its publication is biannual and delivered in four languages (English, French, Spanish and Catalan).

b. Preparation of documents and publications for the positioning and political influence of the Commission. The most relevant documents are:

- **Concept note** about the risks and opportunities of decentralization.

- Preparation of the discussion paper "**International Guidelines on decentralization and access to basic services for all**" by UN-HABITAT, in collaboration with the UCLG World Secretariat.
- **Task force** on decentralization and the role of local and regional autonomies in the legislative process, and its implementation at European level through the **CIVEX Commission** of the Committee of the Regions.

3. Enhancement of local governments' capacities

The strength of the local and regional governments' capacities is a means to deepen and expand the debate on decentralization from a local perspective. To do so, the Committee has developed a series of instruments that have been consolidated over time. Among them, the following can be highlighted:

- a. **Decentralisation and Local Governance Online Course**, directed at local, regional and central government officials and technical experts from different regions of the world. This training is given in parallel in two versions (the Decentralisation and Local Governance in Latin America online course, in Spanish; and the Decentralisation and Local Governance general online course, in English). Its fourth edition will be held between September and December 2013.
- b. **Glossary of terms on decentralization**, to promote the establishment and consolidation of terms such as *decentralization, local autonomy, subsidiarity and local governance*.
- c. **Database of best practices on decentralisation and local governance**, tool designed to facilitate and promote the exchange of best practices and to strengthen the role of local governments in the decentralization process, the provision of quality public services and the improvement of local funding.

4. Political advocacy actions

Political advocacy actions are decisive to the progress of decentralization and the strengthening of local government autonomy. Accordingly, the Committee devotes a significant part of its work to support local governments and their associations in developing political influence strategies. Some of the activities carried out during this period have been:

- Programme on **National Decentralization Dialogues**
- Support to the development and promotion of the **Ibero-American Charter of Local Self-Government**.
- Promotion of the **Guidelines on Decentralization and Strengthening of Local Authorities** and the **Guidelines on Access to Basic Services of UN-Habitat**.
- Support for the creation of the **group of ministers of Latin American local governments**.
- Participation in international events and conferences such as the **World Urban Forum**.
- **Steering Committee of the UN-Habitat project** "Identification of good practices, public policies and legislation enabling for the local provision of basic urban services"

5. Communication strategy

During this period, several communication tools have been created and used in order to disseminate and share knowledge, activities and strategies developed by the Committee. These instruments include:

- a. **Circulars** periodically sent to members of the Committee with updated information on the mission and objectives of this body.
- b. **Bulletin of Decentralization.** During these years a monthly newsletter has been developed. It is published in four languages (English, French, Spanish, Catalan) and received by more than 725 subscribers.
- c. **Website,** a dynamic and continuously updated virtual platform, available in four languages, where there is information about processes of decentralization and local autonomy in the world, amongst other information of interest to local and regional governments.

6. Participation at the UCLG Governing Bodies and Committee meetings

In order to ensure the success of the initiatives of the World Organization and to help develop a common strategy that favours local and regional governments in the world, the Committee has actively participated in initiatives and projects undertaken by the UCLG World Secretariat. Moreover, to ensure compliance with its own objectives and plan of action during this period, the Committee has conducted several meetings and coordination activities.