

POLITICAL PLENARY SESSION ON CARING CITIES

Session organized by the City of Johannesburg

Date: 17 July 2013

Time: 11:00 – 13:00

Venue: Ballroom 1-3

PROGRAM

Opening & introduction: Prof Edgar Pieterse (Facilitator)

Speakers (One speaker per area):

- Mpho Franklyn (Parks) Tau, Executive Mayor of Johannesburg
- Antonio Balmón, Executive Vice-president of the Barcelona Metropolitan Area
- Nadia Campeão, Deputy Mayor of São Paulo
- Golkonda Rajkumar, Deputy Mayor for Hyderabad

Summary of key issues by facilitator

Panel discussion and Questions from audience: Panelists

SUMMARY

Caring local governments are concerned about...

Local government can play a key role in helping to meet some economic, social, environmental and democratic challenges. But to meet these challenges, civic enterprise will be required for councils to become more enterprising, business to become more civic and citizens to become more engaged.

Local government must seize the opportunity to shape its own future. Councils are becoming increasingly innovative and effective in delivering good quality services and value for money to the tax payer. While the focus was on the delivery of services in the 19th century, local government must now facilitate the development of infrastructure needed for the 21st century. Councils can also stimulate economic growth ensuring that the benefits are felt by all and forge new social contracts with citizens. Councils will need new approaches to fulfill this role successfully, such as informal social networks, participatory democracy, better engagement with young people and a broader influencing role.

Some of the core focus areas of a caring city are the following:

Area 1: Becoming civic entrepreneurs

Civic entrepreneurs within councils, business and communities change cities for the better. Political leaders should provide civic leadership to enable and support the work of others – we need less meetings and policy papers and more action that improves people's lives. Government-led civic enterprise networks should centre on results based accountability – replacing unpopular corporate communication with personalised engagement, including social media. Councilors must once again become the voice of disconnected citizens to improve people's lives.

How can councils foster a culture of civic entrepreneurship? What are the ways/tools in which councils can create more personalized engagement? What are the innovative ways in which councils can enhance community voices in council?

Area 2: Stimulating growth

The future of local public services depends directly on economic success. Local government must create the conditions for enterprise to thrive, reduce the cost of doing business and stimulate economic growth through catalytic projects. This should include socially responsible approaches to employment and economic well-being. Councils have a range of options, from investment in infrastructure and skills to direct support such as grants.

How can councils influence and drive a more equitable economic growth agenda? What are the best practice examples of councils driving catalytic urban regeneration projects? What are the institutional models for creating employment and economic well being?

Area 3: Sustainable infrastructure and resources

In the 19th century local government started to provide the infrastructure and utilities of water, electricity, sewers and health. The economic, social, environmental and technological challenges of the 21st century and beyond demand new infrastructure and different utilities to help create smarter cities. New infrastructure requirements include quality broadband, alternative energy models, integrated transport systems, etc. Social infrastructure also demands different thinking such as the multi-use of assets that have social value and act as community hubs.

What are the best practice urban sustainability models? What role have Mayors played in driving the sustainable city agenda?

Area 4: Social care

Society faces big challenges that cannot be solved by state alone – social care should focus on all levels of society, namely the aged, children, youth, women, the poor, the excluded, the vulnerable, etc. Collective action, led by local government, could be accelerated and communicated under a banner of a new social contract with citizens

How have councils created a social contract? What is the evidence globally of this? What would the new social contract look like in 21st City?

Area 5: Migration

Globalization is a powerful force shaping global cities. It is impossible to separate the globalization of trade and capital from the global movement of people. This is the age of global migration. There are 800 languages spoken in New York. Thousands attend the annual Sikh Festival in Barcelona. Dubai's foreign workforce population far exceeds the total proportion of the local population. Evidence suggests that the foreign born population in Johannesburg is 14.5%. Cities populations are in flux.

One of the key forces is how do city administrations capitalise on this powerful force? How do political leaders respond to migration and a change to urban constituency? As urban constituencies change, this ultimately impacts on the way in the city is governed. It also provokes some important governance challenges for political leaders? In this session we ask, how are city politicians are dealing with global migration and the ever increasing presence of foreign migrants who are making global cities their home? Are political strategies changing to meet the current global reality? What is the evidence of cities globally who have adjusted strategic political governance so that they may use diversity as a force for positive urban change?