

Report of the CIB Working Group meeting, The Hague (The Netherlands)

Main conclusions and way forward

Information exchange and coordination: some conclusions from the roundtable

- National governments from the North (e.g. Belgium, France, Norway, Sweden) are revising their priorities, scope and funds for development, in the context of global economic slowdown and uncertain political environments, or due to the refugee crisis. Some organizations have been able to leverage constraints by building strategic partnerships with their national governments (for example Canada) or with multilateral organizations on development cooperation (such as the Strategic Partnership Agreements of the European Commission with UCLG, PLATFORMA and others).
- The Syrian refugee crisis and support to fragile states are priority areas for many CIB members.
- International agendas increasingly pay attention to urban issues. CIB members engage in relating global issues and agendas (SDGs, Climate, Habitat III, Disaster & Risk Reduction) to the local context. Exchange of material will be ensured through the CIB Working Group.
- There are several new initiatives (services, programmes, platforms) to support learning by local governments on various themes and sectors. This often includes web-based solutions.
- Local Government Associations (LGAs) from emerging economies present in the meeting (Brazil, Czech Republic, Poland, South Africa, Turkey, UCLG Asia Pacific) actively share their experiences and provide regional assistance, in many cases in cooperation with Northern associations.
- Several CIB members are currently formulating their multi-annual strategies.

Knowledge sharing

- It was reiterated several times that CIB members should move beyond yearly knowledge sharing to real cooperation. Only then our position in the international community can strengthen.
- Multi-stakeholder partnerships are currently in vogue; it is important to show how local governments align with CSOs and the private sector in international cooperation.

Policy and Advocacy

- For the moment, local governments and cities aren't natural participants in international UN agendas, even though most international agendas (will) have a great impact on the local context.
- Now is the moment to redefine the role of local governments – there is a lot of movement in several international cooperation domains (SDGs, Habitat III): “the cement is still wet”.
- It is important to achieve synergy between the international (cooperation) activities of cities and LGAs and to strengthen each other where necessary.
- International development and foreign economic relations are becoming increasingly intertwined.

CIB Working Group planning

For the remainder of 2015, the CIB Secretariat will focus on:

- **Knowledge sharing and exchange:** continued updating of the CIB website and dissemination of monthly newsletters, as well as Twitter and LinkedIn activity;
- **Monitoring and evaluation:** coordinating a study on M&E mechanisms of CIB members.
- **Policy advocacy:** i) collecting and sharing of tools of CIB members related to the SDGs and Habitat III; ii) formulating a renewed action plan on aid effectiveness; iii) providing continued support to the UCLG Champions of Development Cooperation (also align this to GPEDC);
- **UCLG:** i) participation in UCLG World Council: 4-7 December 2015 (Paris); ii) organization of activities to strengthen the LGA network

2016

- Important points for upcoming activities for 2016 will be defined in the upcoming months. You will find some elements of this under point 6.
- The next CIB meeting in 2016 will take place in Ankara, Turkey. Dates will be confirmed and shared with the CIB members as soon as possible.

Detailed report of the meeting

1. Opening and welcome remarks

Welcome address and opening: Mr. Peter Knip, Director of the International Cooperation Agency of the Association of Netherlands Municipalities (VNG), VNG International, as well as Chair of the Capacity and Institution Building (CIB) Working Group, welcomed the CIB members in The Hague. The Hague was for long time the location of the secretariat of the International Union of Local Authorities (IULA), the predecessor of United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG), and is also the place where the CIB work began. VNG International was established almost 15 years ago and is still growing. New projects include a programme in Jordan and Lebanon and a prolongation of the World Bank project in Ethiopia. Furthermore, daughter company CILG in Tunisia continues to acquire a lot of new work.

Mr. Sebastien Hamel, senior director of FCM International and Vice-chair of the CIB working group, reported on the **progress of the CIB Working Group in 2015**. Firstly, the CIB website and monthly newsletter have been renewed – he pointed out the compendium, where all information on who does what and where is compiled, and the library, where relevant CIB member publications are available, and asked the CIB members to regularly consult and update these applications. Furthermore, an online session on Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) methodologies was organized with a couple of CIB members. Thirdly, support to the UCLG champions was continued. This led to considerable progress in some of the international fora, such as the Global Partnership on Effective Development Cooperation (GPEDC). A last important development is that UCLG provided extra support to the CIB Working Group in the framework of the UCLG Work Plan supported by the European Commission. This support will make it possible to amongst others create a platform specifically for LGAs and to conduct a study on the M&E mechanisms used by CIB members.

Ms. Jantine Kriens, CEO of the Association of Netherlands Municipalities, opened the second day of the CIB annual meeting. She explained that all 393 Dutch municipalities are voluntary member of the VNG. She informed members about the new Municipality 2020 strategy of the VNG and emphasized three current trends: 1) increased decentralization processes, but still central government has to learn to let go, 2) there is a lot of discussion on the ideal size and scale of municipalities: whereas some argue that the bigger the municipality, the more efficient service delivery is, others argue that smaller municipalities are closer to the citizens and better able to understand their needs, 3) there is a decrease in trust in government and therefore local governments need to find innovative ways of engaging citizens in decision making, Ms. Kriens also referred to the importance of the international work for the VNG, to exchange good practices and policies and to learn from each other.

2. Roundtable on recent developments

Flemish Association of Cities and Municipalities (VVSG)

- A substantial reform of the Belgian development cooperation is taking place. The new Minister wants more coherence and synergy between development programmes, as well as a focus on fragile states, a reduction of countries and focus on non-state actors. The process towards this new form of development cooperation is difficult and time-consuming since all actors are put in one basket (associations, local governments, institutions etc.). All actors are currently working on a “common context analysis” per country (country-driven approach). The process should be ready by the end of the year.
- Current VVSG programme runs until 2016. VVSG has started to develop a new programme, which will be based on outputs of several regional seminars (1 of those is organized together with SALGA). Within this programme, a lot of attention will be paid to M&E. Also, a think-tank of municipalities has been established, which should lead to the establishment of 4-5 learning networks, of which one will be on migration and development.

Union of Cities and Communes of Wallonia (UVCW)

- At the moment Belgium is present in 100 countries in the world – this number will be reduced to a maximum of 30.
- The common country analysis which was mentioned by VVSG also provides an opportunity: UVCW is now talking to organizations they would have skipped otherwise. Nonetheless, the process is challenging: often at least 40 Belgian stakeholders per country. It is an interesting exercise but it seems difficult to organize the analysis and to implement it in practice in a later stage.
- Next year will see the development of common strategic frameworks (at UVCW); this will also be done in coherence/collaboration with other Belgian development actors.

German Association of Cities

- After the UN Summit where the SDGs were adopted, the German Association of Cities published a declaration on localizing of the SDGs, in which the focus lies on goals 4, 6, 7, 11 and 13 – German cities are now asked to sign it to show their support. Suggested measures for the cities for localizing of the post-2015 agenda include: awareness raising of citizens, networking, taking part in international (UCLG) events. These guidelines are currently only available in German [here](#).
- The German Association of Cities pointed out the publication “[Sustainable Development Goals: are the rich countries ready?](#)” by the Bertelsmann Stiftung to the other CIB members.
- The association is waiting for the approval of a new project together with SALGA in which both associations aim to learn from each other in the areas of lobbying, advocacy and strategies.
- The German Association of Cities was appointed co-lead of policy unit 9 – 1 of the 10 units which will help prepare Habitat III. This process is an organizational challenge for the association, especially since guidelines of UN Habitat are unclear and deadlines are short.

South African Local Government Association (SALGA)

- SALGA has launched its Center of Leadership and Governance. With this new center it aims to move away from original, traditional capacity building models. Next year will show national elections and, hence, a new 5 year strategic cycle, which will require shaping out the development cooperation role for SALGA, with a major role of the Leadership and Governance Centre.
- SALGA is collaborating with VVSG, VNG International, the German Association of Cities and is looking into opportunities to work together with other CIB members, such as FCM.

Union of Municipalities of Turkey (UMT)

- The Syrian refugee crises poses a big problem and financial burden on Turkish municipalities located at the border with Syria. UMT has been lobbying intensively for more support for those municipalities in the past 2 years – it seems likely that an agreement with the central government will be reached on this. UMT used the European Charter Local Self-Government in its lobby.
- The Safe Cities project in Serbia, with VNG International, is coming to an end. UMT expressed their hope for a follow-up project.
- UMT started a new project with Bulgaria, concerning municipalities at the border.
- Turkish municipalities frequently provide support and knowledge in different projects in the Middle East.

Frente Nacional de Prefeitos (FNP)

- FNP represents big and medium cities in Brazil and focuses on preparing the cities’ contributions to international agendas. The big Brazilian cities are particularly active in climate agendas.
- FNP often operates its programmes through networks of cities (instead of city-to-city cooperation). A good example was the programme with Brazil and Mozambique, jointly coordinated by UCLG, FNP and the national association of mayors in Mozambique (ANAMM), which has just come to an end. This programme led to important policy changes in different Brazilian cities.
- FNP calls on UCLG and the CIB Working Group to facilitate an exchange of experiences between directors of associations, both internationally and in the Latin American region, on issues like governance, financial management, priorities etc.

Ethekwini Municipality (city of Durban) / Municipal Institute of Learning (MILE)

- The Municipal Institute of Learning (MILE) is a programme of the city of Durban – also a founding member of the urban strategic planning committee of UCLG. The programme sets up exchanges between city practitioners, without charge, and does so in close cooperation with SALGA and national partners.
- A direct learning programme is carried out in Namibia, Malawi and Mozambique – all with good results.
- MILE is also looking into e-learning and online platforms, so that everyone can access the services in the future

CEMR – PLATFORMA

- CEMR-PLATFORMA just signed a framework partnership with the European Commission. Reached out to several European organizations to define areas of technical support that would be beneficial for local governments. Within the programme, there will be attention for cooperation in Ukraine, together with organizations like VNG International.
- In each of the partner countries, the European Union (EU) delegation focuses on three sectors of intervention. PLATFORMA has reached out to 92 EU delegations to find out what these priority sectors are, how they work with local governments and which funds they have at country level.
- CEMR is developing a 4-year programme to support countries in Sub-Saharan Africa/the Sahel region in collaboration with UCLG, UCLG Africa and ICLEA, on request of DG Devco. The EC wants to replicate the Covenant of Mayors and extend this to other regions/countries.

Cités Unies France (CUF)

- President Hollande was present at CUF's conference on decentralized cooperation for the first time in history. CUF regards this as supreme recognition of the French Republic.
- French municipalities operate in a context of financial crises and severe migration issues. Decentralised international cooperation is still a matter of local dreams (also in terms of financing; CUF does not exist through international funding) and shifting to partnerships with emerging countries. CUF is trying to grasp how the young generation of humanists can be become involved in municipal international cooperation.
- CUF and AFCCRE, the French Association of the Council of European Municipalities and Regions, have entered in a process of becoming a unified structure – this will potentially strengthen lobby position and programmes.
- CUF has published a booklet on how French governments can use their climate plans in international cooperation. It is available in English.

Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions (SALAR) / International Centre for Local Democracy (ICLD)

- As a result of new (progressive) government in Sweden, the board of SALAR has changed as well. The next congress is in November – ambition for coming period will be set there.
- Sweden has had a global policy for the last 10 years, similar to the SDGs but targeted at Sweden. The new government has said that it will now kick-start this and integrate it with the SDGs. The challenge remains to keep pointing out relevance of local/regional governments.
- The budget for the refugee crisis, comes from the development cooperation budget. There has been a deduction for development cooperation of 28%. This number might still increase. ICLD is negotiating a new municipal partnership programme at the moment.

The Norwegian Association of Local and Regional Authorities (KS)

- The Norwegian minority coalition government (in place since two years) continues to infringe on public solutions and aims to introduce private solution in many aspects of society. The international cooperation framework will be reviewed as well. It is moving toward less long term, more humanitarian, less countries. Consequently, KS has seen a portfolio shuffle.

- There are no more projects outside of Europe, however, KS is still thinking about how to be active outside of Europe. KS aims to build upon the SDGs (focus on goal 16) and look at unfinished business of MDGs in creating its supply.
- KS continues to work in a few initiatives in South East Europe, including Kosovo (with association of municipalities) and Serbia. The latter is related to responding to the refugee crisis. KS is still waiting for reply of the central government about increased support for municipalities in Serbia.

Barcelona City Council

- Barcelona changed its government in May and now has a new (first female) Mayor. Under the new council, the name of the international department changed to 'Global Justice and Cooperation department'.
- Barcelona is finishing its 'Masterplan of International Cooperation' – a multi-annual international cooperation strategy, which is always approved in the middle of a mandate by all parties represented in the council, making it a very stable policy. This allows to work through government changes. The Masterplan for 2013-2016 can be found [here](#).
- The budget for the Masterplan has stabilized – no budget cuts in this period. Furthermore, concentration of international partners has been achieved: Barcelona now works with less partners but more intensively. Barcelona also enters into consortia with NGOs.
- Barcelona is looking into applying theories of change to its international cooperation work – will try to introduce this in the next mandate as evaluation mechanism for the bilateral processes.
- The City of Barcelona published a paper "[Building a municipal private sector development cooperation](#)", which might be of interest to CIB members.

United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG)

- UCLG tries to actively involve its members in its intensive agenda. It has seen an increase in involvement of members of the South.
- The Agenda for learning remains a priority for UCLG, next to strengthening advocacy, creating and sharing intelligence, such as the Global Reports on Local Democracy (GOLD).

United Cities and Local Governments Asia Pacific (UCLG ASPAC)

- Disaster risk reduction has been a key topic throughout 2014 and 2015. Following UCLG ASPAC's advocacy, the role of local governments has been included in several frameworks. In June, UCLG ASPAC, with the support from UNISDR, conducted trainings for members on disaster risk reduction.
- In the run-up to Habitat III, Jakarta is hosting the Asia Pacific Urban Forum in October. Issues on the agenda include safety, spaces, LED, innovative financing for local governments etc.
- UCLG ASPAC is promoting peer-to-peer learning on good governance between its members. This mechanism has been endorsed by the Indonesian government.
- A waste energy cooperation has been established between UCLG ASPAC members India and Malang (Indonesia).

Union of Towns and Municipalities of the Czech Republic (SMO)

- In the Czech Republic, decentralized development cooperation is not a real priority for municipalities, but there are some exceptions.
- SMO does witness a change of thinking at the Czech Ministry of Foreign Affairs. They will, for example, support SMO in the first phase of a pilot project next year. The Ministry could see SMO take on a role as umbrella organization. However, the road towards becoming a real partner in development cooperation is still long.

Association of Polish Cities

- Just like SMO, the Association of Polish Cities is relatively new to the field of municipal international cooperation. The mandate for international activity is weak; it is not evident that the Association engages in international work. The Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs did not support/assist this until recently.

- The Association will be offering support to the newly established municipalities in the Ukraine, which will receive substantial responsibilities and public funds. Amongst others, the support will include the development of a promotion strategy on the reforms. The Association will be assisting the Ukrainian association of cities in cooperation with FCM.
- The Association is also working in Serbia (focus: benchmarking learnings).
- Furthermore, there is cooperation with SKL in several other countries, including the Middle East.

Local Government Association of England and Wales (LGA)

- Despite LGA's limited capacity for international work there remains a strong request for British expertise, mainly from commonwealth countries, but also beyond that. Uzbekistan, Nepal, South Korea and Brazil (Amazon) have approached the LGA – association is now facilitating access, helping disseminate learning etc. in these countries.
- The UK currently has a conservative-led government which does not prioritize the international work. However, quite a lot of reactive and proactive work is taking place around the international refugee crises (on the request of municipalities).
- While the international development budget is one of the protected budgets in the UK there is a shift towards a focus on mainly re-active policy programmes.
- LGA might enter into a partnership with FCM and VNG International in a programme with UCLG Africa, financed by their Strategic Partnership. This still needs to be approved by UCLG Africa.

Confederação Nacional de Municípios (CNM)

- CNM's main challenge regarding Habitat III and SDGs is to include its (small-sized) members in the preparation process of these agendas. Most members are not aware of the impact of international agendas. CNM organizes many workshops and seminars to bring the local authorities to the preparation process and involve them in the discussions.
- Goals for the next few years include increased capacity of CNM and the building of joint initiatives with other Latin-American countries.

Mexico City Council / AL-LAS project

- Mexico City has been coordinating the [AL-LAS project](#) for the past two years. This project brings together the international experience of 7 Latin-American cities and 2 European networks.
- The AL-LAS project has created both a technical and political platform.

European Union

- Also from a donor perspective, the SDGs are the new mantra. However, we need to look further than this: we should not lose ourselves in indicators and localization, but focus on how to influence regional geographical agendas, such as the revision of the [Cotonou Agreement](#).

DeLoG secretariat/GIZ

- The DeLoG secretariat, which is hosted by GIZ in Bonn, was invited to the CIB meeting as an observer.
- DeLoG gathers donors active in decentralization and support to local governance and is active in the field of knowledge sharing and exchange. It also supports lobby activities in support of decentralization and local governance.
- DeLoG is developing several e-learning courses, in cooperation with Learn4Dev ([concept note](#)) . One course will be developed in collaboration with VNG International and The Hague Academy of Local Governance in November 2015.

Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) International

- The federal elections are taking place at the end of the month. For the last 10 years Canada has had a conservative government. It is possible that there will now be a shift to a minority government. FCM International has developed a lobby strategy aiming at bringing international topics to the federal debate during the campaigning period. FCM International is presenting itself and international cooperation/programming as the solution for local economic growth. For more information on FCM's Roadmap for Election 2015 follow this [link](#).

- FCM International has signed a MoU with the Canadian government. The agreements are now materializing – results/impact/consequences are still to be seen. A big advantage of the strategic agreement is that FCM will not have to enter normal tender procedures anymore.
- LED remains the key focus (as it was in the last 5 years) but FCM International is looking into diversification of portfolio (disaster preparedness, good governance, mining, trade, migration etc.) FCM International is currently working in the Caribbean, Ukraine, Peru, Colombia, Indonesia, Vietnam and the Philippines amongst others.

Presentation on VNG International’s project portfolio, by Arne Musch and Rolf Swart, Business Unit Managers

Rolf Swart, Business Unit Manager Asia, Sub Saharan Africa and Latin-America

- Rolf Swart gave an introduction to some of the programmes in his Business Unit.
- VNG International has supported the set-up of a regional association of local governments of Central America and the Dominican Republic, CAMCAYCA (member states of SICA, the Central American Integration System). The aim of this project is to support the LGAs in the region in strengthening their voice in the development and implementation of regional policies and strategies in the field of conflict prevention, for example by SICA. These often do not match local realities and needs, which limits their effectiveness.
- The ESAP II programme in Ethiopia (financed by the World Bank) is oriented towards citizens learning about their rights in terms of service delivery in the field of Health, Education, Rural Roads, Agriculture and Water & Sanitation by local governments and sector departments. The programme brings citizens groups and service providers together to jointly come up with solutions including joint action plans. VNG International works in 223 local governments with grants to 49 consortia of NGOs (total budget is \$25 million). One of the reasons for the success of the programme is the commitment of the Minister of Finances in Ethiopia.
- In South Africa the Catchment Management Agencies (CMAs) are supported by their Dutch counterparts, the ‘waterschappen’ (Water boards), in coordination with VNG International. Integrated Water Resources Management is key in South Africa. The water institutions (water boards, water users associations) vary in power and scope, as well as local government (from municipalities to metros), requiring a delicate and powerful referee role for the CMA to be established. The support offered is in terms of institutional and organisational development and has been positively evaluated by a recent evaluation.
- Since 2014, VNG International has been active in Myanmar, in the field of public finance management, with the support of the Australian government and the Asia Foundation. The pilot project resulted in more work in 2015 and 2016.
- VNG International’s largest programme, the Local Government Capacity Programme, runs for 5 years and is nearing its end. The external mid-term evaluation, carried out by DEGE Consult, just ended. One of the interesting recommendations is to assure that one-to-one relationships with Local Governments are replicated at a higher level. In a possible follow-up programme we will focus even more on how we manage that good practices are disseminated and how we then influence the policy level debate.
- [PowerPoint presentation](#).

Arne Musch, Business Unit Manager Europe, Middle East, North Africa

- Our work is increasingly shifting to fragile states. VNG International has (in some cases together with daughter company CILG in Tunisia) acquired a lot of new work in the Middle East in the past years. The newest programme concerns support to Lebanon and Jordan. Of course, this is linked to the refugee crisis in Syria – for which attention of the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs continues to increase.
- VNG International was already active in Jordan, together with the city of Amsterdam. The focus of the project is to help the Za’atari camp cope with urbanisation and support to the UNHCR and Jordan’s authorities in scenario planning (budget: 1.4 million Euro). The project is funded by the Dutch

government, within the humanitarian budget. They requested the City of Amsterdam to be involved, whose urban planning experts have designed various models for possible urban development and structural integration of the area of the refugee camp, to ensure longer term perspective. Amsterdam provides bikes for the refugees in the camp, amongst other things. This boosts the local economy. One important thing has become very clear in this project: you need to have the UN in the field, as a liaison.

- [PowerPoint presentation](#)

3. Knowledge sharing – Development assistance, trade, and changing relations

Presentation by Arjan Schuthof (Senior policy advisor, Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs): Developments in the Global Partnership on Effective Development Cooperation (GPEDC)

- The GPEDC, is a large and broad mechanism, deriving from the Busan Agreement in 2011. It includes everyone who has a say in development cooperation (EU, AU, Arab World, World Bank, all different stakeholders, like NGOs, Trade Unions, Local Governments). The GPEDC is still finding its way on how to ensure an agenda relevant for both donors and receivers. Furthermore, the GPEDC is looking for additional resources; it is currently suffering from a deficit. The chairmanship of the GPEDC rotates. Currently, Malawi, Mexico and The Netherlands are co-chair.
- Development organizations are currently looking at two dossiers: Financing for Development and the SDGs. The organizations need to define their role and niche in these new, transformative agendas. The UN Summit on SDGs showed once again that governments are not yet used to holding multi-stakeholder dialogues; little responsibility for actors other than states. GPEDC sees a role in improving this situation.
- Knowledge management needs to increase and professionalise. Role models need to be framed and best practices need to be collected and translated. The GPEDC can forge alliances between organizations which subscribe to the 4 Busan principles. All partners need to be willing to co-create.
- The GPEDC in introducing the concept “Promoting Excellence in Partnering” – will be collecting and sharing information on when partnerships work and what lessons can be learned in multi-stakeholder constellations.
- The next high-level meeting (HLM) will take place in November 2016 in Nairobi. Local governments need to be on board. UCLG could hold a seminar on the role of local governments at the next HLM.
- GPEDC hopes that donors will broaden their scope from aid to development, security, inequality and many other issues.
- The CIB Working Group agrees that it will update the action plan on aid effectiveness in 2016.
- [PowerPoint presentation](#).

Presentation by Sara Hoeflich (project manager, UCLG): update on progress from strategic partnership agreements and involvement from CIB members

- UCLG has been very active last year and is keen to find out how to further improve its communication, so that all CIB members are well aware of all developments in international agendas.
- A major development is the signing of the Strategic Partnership Agreement with the European Commission. This will lead to more recognition and visibility of the work of UCLG.
- UCLG has been involved in all processes and steps towards the adoption of the SDGs. However, the recognition of local governments remains a process of “3 steps forward, 2 steps back”. On the bright side: we are moving forward.
- UCLG is keen to show that it is representing all local governments; not only the big or the small ones.
- The learning agenda remains one of UCLG’s priorities. UCLG will streamline the SDG agenda into the learning agenda in the next weeks/ months.

Presentation by Florent Resche-Rigon (project officer PLATFORMA): update on progress from strategic partnership agreements and involvement from CIB members

- The Strategic Partnership Agreements (SPAs) between the European Union (EU) and (the regional sections of) UCLG show there is a growing commitment to work with local government associations. The EU aims to reach similar agreements with Civil Society Organizations.
- The SPA with CEMR differs from the others; the other SPAs are agreements with organizations in developing countries. The CEMR SPA derives from the assumption/belief that LGAs in Europe have a role to play in development cooperation.
- The 5 SPAs form a framework – while the implementing process is bilateral, the 5 associations are asked to coordinate their work and to meet at least twice a year with the European Commission to monitor on the progress of the SPAs together.
- Activities within the CEMR SPA include continued advocacy work at EU level, awareness raising amongst European citizens on global issues and the role of local governments, reaching increased efficiency of decentralized cooperation and institutional strengthening of PLATFORMA.
- PLATFORMA is discussing the idea of developing a delivery mechanism within the SPA– a tool for PLATFORMA members which can serve the purpose of coordination/joint programming for the EU delegations.

Intervention by Sebastien Hamel (Senior director, FCM International) on strategic agreement FCM

- FCM has concluded a strategic partnership with the Canadian Government. This means that FCM is recognised as an essential partner to implement Canada’s objectives in the world and that it does not need to enter into tender procedures for new projects and programmes.
- The signing of this MoU is the first step. The second step was to formalise venues of discussion and exchange. The MoU already mentioned that FCM would meet with the Minister of Foreign Affairs once a year to discuss policies and how to achieve the orientation. This meeting then defines the broader agenda. After that, discussions need to move to the bureaucrat level; once the broader orientation is clear, a joint working group should be set up.
- A concrete example of an activity that will emerge from the MoU is to enable Canadian Municipalities to make their citizens more aware of results of international cooperation.
- FCM used PLATFORMA as an example in its negotiations with the Ministry; this is useful peer pressure. Other CIB members might want to do the same.

Presentation by Braulio Diaz (communication advisor, Mexico City): Results from the AL-LAS project

- Since 2013, Mexico City is coordinating the [AL-LAS project](#); a project focusing on strategic cooperation amongst 7 Latin-American cities, financed by the European Commission. Cites Unies France (CUF) and the Andalusian Municipal Fund for International Solidarity (FAMSI) are also involved.
- The project focused on strengthened city cooperation in Latin America and with Europe and the collective construction of knowledge and capacities, through thematic workshops, webinars, social networks and notebooks. The acquired knowledge of the 2 past years is now being disseminated in collaboration with academia. This will lead to an online knowledge platform and online courses.
- Mexico City and CUF organized a research competition within the AL-LAS project which led to a vast amount of articles from all over the world. The City of Barcelona won the prize – their article has been published in a cahier.
- There is huge potential for linkage between local and national governments in the region and Latin-America. The relationship of Mexico City and the Mexican Ministry of Foreign Affairs has significantly improved during/through the AL-LAS project. Mexico City is ready to discuss and liaise new opportunities/cooperation.
- [PowerPoint presentation](#).

Intervention by Reuben Baatjies and Kubeshni Govender (SALGA): UCLG partner learning methodologies

- The SALGA Centre for Leadership and Governance has been actively involved in the creation of UCLG's new learning agenda. On 28 and 29 September a learning event took place, in which various CIB members participated. SALGA presented a [mindmap](#) on the UCLG partner learning methodologies; mainly the criteria for which activities fall within the scope of the agenda.
- It is important to connect different learning initiatives to each other. Different people/organizations mentioned that the UCLG learning group and the work of SALGA need to be aligned.

4. Policy and advocacy: panel sessions

Panel discussion 1: Latest developments in international (development) agendas and attention of donors for local governments and decentralization

Panel members: Jorge Rodriguez (EC) and Maurice van Beers (Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs)

Introductory statement by Jorge Rodriguez (DG DEVCO, European Commission)

- Donors continue to focus on supporting national governments, also regarding the SDG agenda for example.
- The EC framework up to 2020 has been set. In the next framework (which will cover the next 20 years) the local dimension should be integrated. The important role of local governments was already recognized by the EC in a formal communication two years ago.
- For the moment, LGAs can do much more: the discussions with ACP and member states are beginning now. CSOs are already knocking on the door to become involved, national associations are not. If the LGAs do not present themselves now, this will be a lost opportunity. When at the table, it is important to know the history (Cotonou agreement etc.) and not only focus on formulating indicators for the SDGs.
- While everyone is talking about "localization" no one really knows what this means. According to Mr. Rodriguez it is about reframing the way we see decentralization: instead of a state reform process we need to stress the political dimension - local governments are political actors and have an important democratic dimension. Future work therefore should not only concentrate on countries that support decentralization reforms. Lastly, programme indicators of budget support should be localized.
- To change the traditional, state-orientated model we first have to have a basic understanding of two things: what is a local government and what do we mean with support to decentralization? Decentralization is about empowering people of the public policies. This is the niche in international agendas: no one else can make public policies, no one else has direct access to all the potential in the localities.
- While the SDGs are high on the agenda, it is important to not become obsessed with the SDGs: there is more than the SDGs.

Introductory statement by Maurice van Beers (Habitat III Taskforce, Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs)

- For The Netherlands, the process towards the adoption of the SDGs presented a lot of momentum to get a prominent place in different multilateral agreements.
- There are important linkages between the SDG agenda and the New Urban Agenda. Both aim for inclusive development, good governance (cooperation between government levels) and to transform cities into innovative productive urban centers. Cities have the potential to be motors of development.
- It is important to work with integrated approaches, in a participatory way and in partnerships. It is essential to include stakeholders, CSOs and the private sector to get things done.
- While most people/organizations agree that (major) cities should definitely be involved in a major conference on urban development, the UN remains a traditional organization which works with national governments only. Unfortunately, there is still big resistance to change this. Formal negotiations still take place at country-level. However, the major challenges arise at city-level, so they should definitely come on board. You can stimulate this by bringing Mayors and other city

representatives along in your country delegation to international meetings. Cities such as Rotterdam and Amsterdam already make sure they are in the front row in international meetings.

Intervention of VVSG and SALGA (South Africa)

- SALGA is an example of an LGA which is already at all tables/discussions. The LGA is inscribed in the constitution. South Africa has a cooperative governance system of which local government is a fundamental part. SALGA is represented in all intergovernmental structured – it is effectively the local government component of government as a whole. Whenever the local governments' position is asked, SALGA is naturally at the table. Cooperation between governmental bodies/levels is already a reality in South Africa. SALGA was engaged in the whole run-up to the UN summit on the SDGs. However, the financing of local governments remains an issue.

Panel discussion 2: Development and Trade opportunities: Innovative multi-stakeholder partnerships

Panel members: Maarten ten Wolde (Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs), Sabine Gimbrère (City of Amsterdam) and Wouter Boesman (City of Ghent)

Introductory statement and reactions to the group discussion - Maarten ten Wolde (Policy officer Sustainable Economic Relations, Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs)

- Multi-stakeholder networks are the future of international cooperation.
- The three ambitions of the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs regarding international cooperation are: to eradicate poverty; to stimulate inclusive and sustainable growth; and to facilitate Dutch business abroad.
- For the moment, VNG (International) is not an essential partner of the Department. Local governments and cities are not the usual suspects. However, being a synergy Department (Foreign Economic Relations & International Development) in the Ministry, these ties should be tightened.
- We should move away from the division between beneficiaries and partners and move towards a true global partnership.
- The financial sector is always forgotten as a partner – this is a missed opportunity. Even in the sustainability sector the financial sector is coming along now.

Introductory statement & reactions to the group discussion - Sabine Gimbrère (Director of International Office, City of Amsterdam)

- Amsterdam's motto for international cooperation is "Amsterdam Responsible Capital". Amsterdam has a strong international profile and a large variety of partners. Partnerships are build up around content/themes. The city does not think North-South – it focuses on how Amsterdam/others can contribute to themes. There are few partners in developing countries since reciprocity is difficult to achieve in these collaborations. However, as a responsible city you also want to take on cooperation which does not obviously benefit the city.
- Amsterdam tries to integrate its different ambitions (economic, social, cultural) in its international work. International cooperation can lead to city profiling and economic spin-off.
- Morocco and Turkey are important partners since many of Amsterdam's inhabitants come from these countries. Focus on ethics and tolerance is part of being a responsible, liveable city. The "liveable city" is also part of Amsterdam's rhetoric abroad.
- Amsterdam participates in quite a lot of (inter)national (city) networks and has professionalised quite a lot in international relations as a city. There is not always a clear added value for the city to work with or through VNG International. However, there is cooperation in for example Jordan (Al Za'atari) and when the Mayor of Amsterdam visited Ramallah recently it was helpful that VNG International is working there and could provide input. Amsterdam will look into other opportunities for cooperation together.

Introductory statement and reaction to the group discussion - Wouter Boesman (Officer on Team of International Solidarity, City of Ghent)

- The North-South divide is a concept from the past. The City of Ghent renamed its Office of North South Cooperation to Team of International Solidarity , which falls under the Department of Strategy and Coordination – International Relations and Networks. However, this does not mean that Ghent has completely shifted from international solidarity to economic cooperation.
- Ghent brought the global perspective back to its own city – in line with international agendas Ghent is currently working with local businesses to screen their supply chains; to be sure that the City is doing things right at home.
- Ghent wants to form a network with municipalities of other countries and continents (instead of city-to-city partnering) which can tackle issues related to the economic crisis. Contrary to other networks, this would be a project network – it is a temporary (and therefore flexible) learning opportunity. Also, it consists of similar cities with similar issues. The question remains: who will finance these networks?
- National LGAs should facilitate access to information and the tapping into networks of other associations in other countries (linking of international partners).
- Mutual learning cannot happen on technical issues – legislation etc. differs completely per country. Therefore Ghent rather works at policy making level and selects partners that can inspire each other at policy level and are prepared to learn and change policies accordingly.

5. Parallel sessions

A. Cities: comparison of international cooperation models

- The session, moderated by Jorge Cortés Roldan of the City of Barcelona and Jessie Post of VNG International covered three themes, which had arisen from the [analysis of the questionnaire](#) which was shared and completed before the CIB meeting. The three themes were: i) choosing international partners; ii) accounting for municipal experts in international programmes; and iii) reciprocity in international cooperation.
- The participants of the session witness a shift in their organizations: moving “from sisters to lovers” when it comes to choosing partners. There are less long-term, no life-time agreements, more flexibility, less formal (example of Amsterdam: no paperwork for partnership with Berlin; it is build up around mutual trust). It was emphasized that it is useful to have regional/local experts as “matchmakers” when establishing new partnerships.
- On accounting for municipal experts: a large part of the discussion focused on whether (departments in) municipalities should be paid for ‘supplying’ experts. Tendency is that municipalities are often not paid. Furthermore, the difficulty of implicating municipal experts often lies with heads of units, that do not want to make available their staff, not with experts themselves.
- There are good examples of true reciprocity. E.g. the City of Barcelona copied the library system of the city of Medellin. However, participants agreed that these are rather exceptional. Nonetheless, there is always some mutual knowledge enrichment. The degree of this enrichment mostly depends on the experts’ capacity for knowledge exchange and for intercultural communication. Reciprocity can be traced to the institutional and to the human level.
- Conclusion: three actions to follow up on this topic.
 - The City of Barcelona shares [its screening tools for selecting new international partners](#);
 - FCM International will share information on how they account for municipal experts;
 - UCLG will actively involve the CIB members in the drafting of a toolkit on South-South, city to city international cooperation.

B. Monitoring & Evaluation

- Bert Janssens (VVSG) presented VVSG’s Monitoring & Evaluation strategy and mechanisms; strengthening the logical framework approach by combining it with Outcome Mapping and the Most Significant Change method. Based on this presentation the group discussed the pros and cons and complementarity of these approaches.

- Issues of discussion are the extent to which Outcome Mapping is focused on actors and how it can be used to diverge thinking before converging this into the logical framework; how the Most Significant Change approach can help in monitoring impact on people's lives and how it is useful to find unintended effects of projects, though it does not suffice as a standalone M&E approach, and therefore is to be used as a complementary tool.
- The 5 Capabilities method, that VNG International uses the 5C model as an effective tool of self-reflection was discussed as a tool for measuring capacity. VNG International abandoned the model as a tool to use on an aggregated level, rather, it was operationalised in 25 indicators and used as a complimentary tool.
- The Theory of Change method was discussed as a means of identifying the assumptions underlying the approach of a project.
- The group agreed that a core question is how an organisation uses the M&E systems to actually support the learning process of an organisation while meeting donor requirements. Good M&E is very time-absorbing and it is important to use this time well.
- Conclusion: four actions to follow up on this topic.
 - Consider and discuss how we/CIB members could use selected SDGs as part of our M&E, including so that we have a few common indicators and to help us report our contribution under the SDG umbrella;
 - Consider and discuss how we/CIB members could use national performance indicators for local governments (where available) as part of our programs' M&E indicators;
 - Continue to share methodologies and tools for programme M&E, while keeping an eye on the big picture of: 1) How to report our impact meaningfully, 2) Measuring our program performance, and 3) Capturing development lessons and models that should be shared with development partners;
 - Following from this last point, the CIB Secretariat will develop a questionnaire for dissemination in the CIB network. Based on this questionnaire, a comparative analysis will be conducted of M&E approaches used in the context of local government capacity building. The findings of this analysis will be validated in online sessions and the LinkedIn group of the CIB to take this discussion further.

C. Democratic Governance in Eastern Europe: interventions in the Ukraine, Moldova and Georgia

- In this session, Tomasz Potkanski from the Association of Polish Cities presented several developments in projects in Moldova, Georgia, and mainly the Ukraine. The presentation mentioned the association's endeavours to merge municipalities in the Ukraine, aimed at developing a better management local government system.
- Subsequently, the participants shared which projects their organisations are currently carrying out in the Ukraine, Moldova and Georgia.
- The participants formulated their actions plans in the form of a working plan for CIB, aimed at making future interventions more efficient and consisting of three components:
 1. Coordination
 - The participants decided that all the activities in the Ukraine should be mapped in order to have a clear overview of what is done in which project by who (categories: thematic/geographic/HR support to Association of Ukrainian Cities (AUC)). This activity will be led by PLATFORMA. Moreover, there should come a list of contacts of organizations that are working in the Ukraine. VNG International will collect these contacts and share them.
 - The members want to empower AUC so that it will be able to fulfil the coordination role in all (future) projects carried out in the Ukraine.
 - A coordination meeting of all organizations active in the Ukraine will be organized by PLATFORMA and VNG International, probably in December of this year.

2. Policy

- Participants think that CIB should formulate a joint position on the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) and the ENP countries. Additionally, joint positioning towards international donors should take place, in order to better influence donors.

3. Know-how

- The participants aim to facilitate regional networking in Georgia, Moldova and the Ukraine. This is useful for the exchange of experiences on territorial reforms and decentralisation in the region.
- Central European LGAs should be established and/or strengthened; dormant town-twinning could be revived on concrete issues.

D. Services to members of local government associations on international affairs

- This session, coordinated by Renske Steenbergen of VNG International, focused on two topics: the relation with the respective Ministries of Foreign Affairs (and how to make local governments an indispensable partner of those) and the services developed on international agendas.
- The relationship with the Ministries of Foreign Affairs differs from “going well” to “having to explain the relevance of local governments and what they are about”.
- National LGAs should translate the message/guidelines of UCLG to their members, so that it can be put into practice; sometimes actions of local governments are already in line with international agendas, and just need to be labelled as being part of a wider framework.
- UCLG and the CIB Working Group need to function as a knowledge-hub and actively share the positions of national governments in the involvement of local governments. Moreover, UCLG should provide clear timeframes to ensure that members can engage in the process and should continue to send out clear and concise messages with which members can influence national governments. This should include ready-made material which can be applied by national LGAs immediately.
- Conclusion: three actions to follow up on this topic.
 - The participants of the parallel session committed themselves to the sharing of products and materials that they develop for their members. This will avoid everyone re-inventing the wheel. First available products: [Handbook CNM](#) on Habitat III, [Resolution of German Association of cities](#) and [paper of SALGA](#) on the (localization of the) SDGs;
 - UCLG, with support of the CIB Working Group should set out what local governments can do in fields related to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Foreign Affairs.

6. Wrap-up of the CIB meeting

- Now that thorough exchange has taken place again, it is important to move collaboration a step forward. Aside from the sharing of experiences, expertise and know-how, CIB members would profit from really working together in projects and programmes. The action points of the CIB meeting in The Hague should serve as a trigger to establish this cooperation.
- This year's CIB meeting pointed out once again that while our projects and programmes may be for the most part technical in nature, we operate in a highly political context. It is important to (continue to) join forces within international arenas and to continue to request that local governments be represented in all the forums in the field of international cooperation at all times.
- The CIB Working Group thanks UCLG for the extra support. This will enable the Working Group to strengthen the network. This includes the strengthening of the LGA network and the creation of an M&E toolkit, based on experiences with different tools and mechanisms of CIB members.
- Next year's CIB meeting will be held in Ankara, Turkey, on the invitation of the Union of Municipalities of Turkey (UMT). Dates will be confirmed and shared with the CIB members as soon as possible.
- SALGA already confirmed that they would like to host the CIB meeting of 2017.