

## **Resolution 21/3: Guidelines on decentralization and strengthening of local authorities**

*The Governing Council,*

*Recalling* its resolution 20/18, in which it took note with appreciation of the draft guidelines on decentralization and the strengthening of local authorities prepared by the members of the Advisory Group of Experts on Decentralization<sup>1</sup> in collaboration with the secretariat of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme, and cognizant of the report of the Executive Director on cooperation with local authorities and other Habitat Agenda<sup>2</sup> partners, which contains in its annex the most recent version of the draft guidelines on decentralization and the strengthening of local authorities, prepared in collaboration with United Cities and Local Governments,<sup>3</sup>

*Bearing in mind* paragraph 177 of the Habitat Agenda, adopted in Istanbul in 1996, which stresses that sustainable human settlements development can be achieved “through the effective decentralization of responsibilities, policy management, decision-making authority, and sufficient resources, including revenue collection authority, to local authorities, closest to and most representative of their constituencies”,

*Recognizing* the importance of decentralization policies to achieving sustainable human settlements development in line with the Habitat Agenda and the Millennium Development Goals of the United Nations,<sup>4</sup>

*Acknowledging* the role of national Governments within the overall context of sustainable development and their responsibility for good governance within each nation, with local authorities as their partners,

1. *Expresses appreciation* for the role that the United Nations Human Settlements Programme is playing in the international dialogue on decentralization through its promotion of improved governance at all levels by means including the consultative process on the finalization of the guidelines on decentralization;

2. *Approves* the guidelines on decentralization and strengthening of local authorities, as set out in the annex to the report on cooperation with local authorities and other Habitat Agenda partners,<sup>5</sup> as a key instrument to promote good governance at all levels and to strengthen local authorities;

3. *Requests* the United Nations Human Settlements Programme to assist interested Governments to adapt the guidelines to their national contexts, where appropriate, and to develop tools and indicators further as part of its support for the application of the guidelines, bearing in mind that the guidelines do not constitute a uniform or rigid blueprint to be applicable to all Member States of the United Nations;

4. *Invites* Governments to undertake further concerted and coordinated action to place decentralization and local development at the centre of governance and development policies and to strengthen their legal and institutional frameworks with regard to decentralization and governance at all levels, in line with the aforementioned guidelines;

5. *Calls upon* the United Nations Human Settlements Programme to develop innovative partnerships with local authorities and their associations, including United Cities and Local Governments, to support the ownership and application of the guidelines,

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<sup>1</sup> Established under Governing Council resolution 19/12.

<sup>2</sup> *Report of the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II), Istanbul, 3–14 June 1996* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.97.IV.6), chap. I, resolution 1, annex II.

<sup>3</sup> HSP/GC/21/2/Add.2.

<sup>4</sup> See document A/56/326, annex.

<sup>5</sup> HSP/GC/21/2/Add.2.

including assisting United Cities and Local Governments in developing the concept of an observatory;

6. *Invites* United Cities and Local Governments to facilitate the sharing of best practices, skills and knowledge between the local authorities of Member States and to contribute its expertise to the Executive Director's progress report;

7. *Encourages* Governments to provide technical and financial support to the future work of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme on decentralization, especially its application of the guidelines on decentralization and strengthening of local authorities;

8. *Requests* the Executive Director to include a discussion of the implementation of the present resolution in her overall progress report to the Governing Council at its twenty-second session.

*7th plenary meeting  
20 April 2007*