



## Madrid's commitment to peaceful cities

The outbreak of previously unthinkable forms of violence in our cities such as attacks via social networks, international terrorism or violence in sport, makes communities feel a new kind of vulnerability. This threat is in addition to other established types of violence which are in our societies but yet not always visible, and which damage both individual and community life in cities and which need to be identified and tackled.

In order to deal with structural, interpersonal and cultural forms of violence, Madrid City Council, together with the bodies making up the Organising Committee and others which are actively collaborating, set up the *First World Forum on Urban Violence and Education for Coexistence and Peace*, fulfilling the commitment made at the UCLG World Council in Paris during the COP21 Summit, in December 2015.

This Forum is a space intended to make the different types of urban violence visible, to debate ways of eradicating them as well as how to disseminate ways of thinking and practices which are capable of transforming cultures of violence into cultures of peace and non-violence.

Peace is not only the absence of war and the different types of violence. Peace is a culture which accentuates the abilities which human beings have to transform conflicts through peaceful and non-violent means.

The suffering caused by violence moves us and urges us to keep on taking action. Not only to take a stand against direct violence against people, be it gender-based, xenophobia or terrorism, but also to confront the structural imbalances which prevent essential needs from being met. It is structural violence which dictates all of the factors of human life: nutrition, life expectancy, access to opportunities, education, housing, the right to care and a clean environment, work opportunities and political participation.

Likewise, we also have to confront cultural and symbolic violence that is present in language, art, religion, political ideologies, the media, the entertainment industry, science, institutions and law which is built on symbols which seek to legitimise the marginalisation, exclusion and expulsion of those who are different. They are at the root of the proceedings for legitimising structural and direct forms of violence, eventually creating mentalities which justify inequalities and other forms of violence, and which encourage direct violence.

We have ascertained that violence emerges from inequality and from poorly handled conflicts and lack of dialogue and information. We have established the importance of distinguishing between violence and conflict.

Cities, the source of creativity, diversity, activity and cultural and artistic richness, are also the scenario of conflicts. Our everyday lives take place amongst all kinds of conflict, be it intrapersonal, interpersonal, intergroup or interstate. We know that conflicts are inevitable, but that violence is not. A culture of peace calls for the transformation of conflicts through dialogue and negotiation on equal terms, using non-violent means. It is not so much about reaching consensus as about managing dissent, about making room for diversity of opinion, views and ways of life.

We have understood and shared the diverse wealth of initiatives which are being carried out by local governments, social organisations and international bodies in order to eradicate the various forms of violence which occur in our cities. It acted as a meeting point for bodies and people from 67 countries for debate and learning, which cannot remain as a one-time event. We have recognised the city as an ideal space for building peaceful areas because it is also in the city where we project our concerns, relate to others and build communities.

It is for all of the above reasons that the local governments and civil society organisations which are signatories of this declaration, **are committed to:**

1. **Defending peace in the face of war.** Armed conflicts cause death, destruction and hate which lasts generations. War is the maximum expression of violence. This Forum calls upon cities and citizens all over the world to use all of the energy and tools available for promoting a culture of peace rather than war. In this respect, we celebrate the approach announced by the United Nations Secretary-General which focuses upon the prevention of war and the sustainment of peace, as the main response to conflict, positioning cities as key players in fulfilling this prevention-oriented agenda.
2. **Encouraging governments to create, implement and supervise a national plan of action for the prevention of violence,** in close collaboration with local governments. This means increasing collaboration and the exchange of information between the different authorities, providing the necessary resources to facilitate this. At the same time, it is necessary to promote and supervise the fulfilment of international treaties, laws and other mechanisms for protecting human rights which help to prevent urban violence.
3. **Implementing mechanisms which bring about an end to corruption.** Corruption has become a significant social scourge which invades the public and private arenas of both rich and poor societies. In the political arena, this undermines democracy, in the economic arena it generates an increase in the cost of goods and services, in the legal arena it eats away at the rule of law, and in the social arena it destroys ethical and spiritual values such as solidarity and justice. Many of the causes of urban violence can be explained by corrupt dealings. Corruption is avoidable and citizen control mechanisms must be established along with transparency in local management.

4. **Producing local plans of action** in order to confront urban violence and educate people in coexistence and peace, which implies:
  - a. Performing an analysis of city violence, which is carried out jointly with other city players.
  - b. Analysing the causes of violence.
  - c. Drawing up specific programmes to tackle education, mediation and non-violent conflict resolution.
  - d. Providing the necessary instruments and economic and human resources for the implementation of local public policy in this field.

This analysis and these local action plans will serve to build a **Local Agenda on urban violence and education for coexistence and peace** within the next two years (before the next World Forum). The implementation of these local plans implies:

5. **Fostering local equality policies.** Inequality is one of the great challenges of modern societies all over the world. We will not eradicate urban violence or achieve a positive coexistence if we do not put an end to relationships of domination and inequality. It is necessary to formulate and implement specific programmes in order to reduce these inequalities, featuring the participation of society.
6. **Fostering caregiving policies.** Human beings are vulnerable: we are born and grow up depending on other people, we become ill, we age and we die. The neglect of the elderly and the loneliness of children are forms of violence which are present in our cities. Caregiving tasks, traditionally attributed to women, must be visible, universal and shared through community action. There can be no real gender equality if caregiving policies are not taken into account. In this respect, it is necessary to promote greater support for primary prevention programmes and greater support for victims of violence.
7. **Promoting instruments for mediation and social dialogue.** The city is subject to tensions due to the confrontation of interests. Local governments, through regulations and political plans, have the capacity to act as catalyst of dialogue. It is for this reason that instruments for mediation and education should be established to produce skills for non-violent conflict resolution with the participation of all the actors involved.
8. **Establishing programmes to tackle urban violence** without focusing solely on prosecution and punishment, but on the other hand delving into the root causes of all types of violence, making it possible to develop instruments to integrate prevention through social and educational policies.
9. **Championing initiatives which promote coexistence, respect and diversity.** Tackling forms of violence which are suffered by specific groups (women, LGBTBI people, immigrants, or diverse cultural and religious groups) since the traditional concept of safety is insufficient. Support should be given to research into the causes and consequences of urban violence, which can then be fed into policies focusing upon

people, caregiving, on the elimination of stereotypes and on the development of plans for coexistence as well as drafting medium-term plans to influence educational and cultural aspects.

10. **Devising policies which promote the Right to the City guaranteeing Human Rights and sustainability.** The economic and environmental crises are excluding people and territories from access to a livelihood and social rights. In the face of the violence that this produces, cities can implement specific programmes for accessing housing, decent jobs, integration, prevention of climate change, the promotion of the social economy and the right to asylum, which contribute towards creating a better coexistence.

Finally, we are committed to disseminating, involving and incorporating more local governments and their national, regional and international associations, as well as civil society organisations in the implementation of these commitments and to spreading this message to governments, the media, economic players, the legal, academic and education worlds, and to international bodies.

In order to achieve this, an International Technical Secretariat is being set up. This will be a way of ensuring that this First World Forum on Urban Violence and Education for Coexistence and Peace is kept alive, forming part of international city agendas.

We reiterate our commitment to continue creating global, local and civic alliances for the promotion of a Culture of Coexistence and Peace.

Madrid, 21 April 2017