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"The Integrated Approach to Urban Regeneration".

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Thank you. I would first like to thank you, the Spanish president for inviting me, not only as a participant but as a keynote speaker for this kind of a conference. I will focus in my presentation on the social dimensions of urban regeneration, because as for me, social sustainability is of course a core concept. Social sustainability or social cohesion is the focus through which I will look at the problem of urban regeneration.

My presentation consists of two parts. The first part is rather general. I try to understand the central concepts of this topic. And the second part is rather down-to-earth in the sense that I try to identify a number of pitfalls that will present them to everybody who tries to develop an urban regeneration problem.

So first, what is urban regeneration? I looked up a number of definitions, and discovered some common elements in those different definitions. Firstly, that's it's about a comprehensive and integrated vision and action, and this link is important of course, to check processes of economic, environmental, social and cultural decline that bring with them the decay of the built environment and this was in fact nice to see that there was a causal relationship here between the economic, the social, the cultural factors on the one hand and built environment on the other hand. And of course, the aim of urban regeneration is to bring about a lasting improvement in the economic, physical, social and environmental condition of an area. What was striking is that is that the concept is absent from the Leipzig chapter. It's not mentioned in the Leipzig chapter. Of course, the reality is very present in this Leipzig chapter, but it is however one objective of the regional front, a programme for the past 2 years and the next 3 years.

But the question always is, when I am confronted with new concepts at the European level, my main question always is, "is this old wine in new bottles?" Because certainly at the European level there is a tradition of replacing concepts by new concepts but not changing very much the reality that hides behind those concepts. Well, as for urban regeneration, is this just another word for urban renewal? Let's not forget that in 61 already, Jacobs has published a very strong critique on large-scale urban renewal which was then considered as responsible for the destruction of existing communities, for social exclusion and defacement, for pollution, for replacement housing, especially in the form of housing towers, which might be difficult to police and might lead to an increase in crime, and which was at the time considered to be non-consultative, and I think that these are the dangers that are threatening any form of urban regeneration, any programme of urban regeneration today, again. So let's learn from those lessons that have been deduced from experiences from 30-40 years ago. But perhaps regeneration is something else.

And regeneration perhaps focuses more on the use of the own resources of the physical, economic, social and cultural capital that already is present in an area and if this is the important shift, then I think we should welcome the concept of regeneration and everything that goes with it. And mainly that policy interventions, including forms of government or governments, are only successful if they take account of these conditions, that they do not forget that reality is hard to change. There are structural features that need a lot of efforts to change in the physical reality in the first place, but also in the social and the cultural reality. Then what is the relation between this structural and policy-making dimension in urban regeneration that should be perhaps our first concern how they interact, how these structural and policy-making dimensions in urban regeneration problems are interacting with each other.

What is the aim of regeneration? Usually reference is made to sustainability. Sustainability which until now has been used and marked as parallel strands of urban policy and not as integrated strands. There has been little coordination between them, which of course raises the question again, to what extent does urban generation really contribute to the sustainability. What conditions have to be fulfilled by programmes and plans of urban generation in order for contributing positively to social sustainability in particular, which means to the increasing of social cohesion at the urban level.

Because that's an important point of departure, when we are looking at a reality, it's the traditional, the face, double-face of the city. The city is at the same time the dumping place of problems which in that sense has to be avoided, and a bundle of opportunities, and as a bundle of opportunities, as a creative city, as a an entrepreneurial city, the city of course has to be fostered, as one of the central or perhaps the central place in our society. There has been some shift in the last decades from the former approach, the dumping place approach, to the opportunities approach, but let us not throw the old approach, the problematising approach, away, and replace it totally by this too optimistic approach, that a city just is a bundle of opportunities. I think that a relevant regeneration programme includes both dimensions in its objectives. The city is and will always remain at the same time a bundle of opportunities and a problematic place. Both have to be integrated into urban regeneration strategy, an urban regeneration strategy which has to be of the urban governance style.

And less go back to the golden standard definition of urban governance, because urban governance has been redefined so often that it has lost part of its content although it still is a very important approach to the solution of urban problems, urban problems which are created, as you all know, by more competition, more ethnic diversity, by the disappearance of cohesion and by the increase in spatial dynamics. Well, all those developments have created increasing challenges for urban governance. And because of this diversity, and also the gravity of those problems, we need an integrative approach. It's not possible for one actor in urban policies to tackle this combination of problems alone. There is need for partnerships, perhaps, at the simplest level, of course, there is need for urban governance which is a more developed form of cooperation at the local level. This concept of urban governance in essence boils down to three forms of cooperation, of cooperation between several actors, which means state, civil society and for-profit enterprises, which of course have a relevant degree of autonomy, but of course, which

need kind of a stage director for combining those actors, putting them together and organising their debate. Urban governance also implies the cooperation between different levels stretching out from the neighbourhood levels, the district level, over the city level, the region level, the nation-state level, and of course, the EU level. And it has to include, to bring together, several domains: employment, housing, education, health, culture, urban planning, not as separate domains, but in an integrated way we need transversal ideas, transversal logic which combine those several domains in an approach of urban regeneration. There are some other characteristics which should not be forgotten that in order to have urban governance we need a new political culture. We need a flexible and responsive administration, we need structural participation of citizens, not as clients or users, but as citizens, are really full-fledged members of our society, and we need some form of decentralised decision making. So we are here confronted with a very complex force field which is constituted on the one hand by the opposition between opportunities and threats and on the other hand by those two different dimensions of reality which are structures and processes that are there often, that we find there, and that we have to find solutions for, and of governance trying to develop forms of policy-making in order to overcome this contradiction, often, between opportunities and threats, and there's a whole bag of problems which you could try to analyse from this perspective, that you could try to put into this matrix, things such as sustainable social order, gentrification, the importance of transition zones, social cohesion, role of conflict, which often is forgotten in urban development programmes. The need for new forms of solidarity in our cities, and different temporalities, and I'm selecting a number of those items and trying just to identify some of the problems that any form of urban governance would be confronted with when trying to foster either social renewal or social development or urban regeneration.

So, these are the topics I selected and I will very briefly mention. I will start with the first one, which is the question, are areas relevant? which of course is a fairly evident answer, of course. Areas are relevant, otherwise we wouldn't be here. But there are still questions remaining. At what level of the target areas are urban regeneration programmes to be defined? How are they going to be defined? Who is going to define them? And how exclusively should urban generation focus on specific areas or take the whole city as its subject? And what should be done to avoid displacing problems from one area to another, from one neighbourhood to another? The famous waterbed effect.

The second question is about the need for any city to have marginal places in urban regeneration. The result of urban regeneration is often that marginal places are disappearing from the city centre, which of course could be catastrophic for the city because marginal places often serve as transition zones which are in the first place sites of socialisation for newcomers in the city, people who are not yet able to take part in all the formal institutions of mainstream society, of mainstream city, and need some time to integrate, to adapt to this urban culture. And of course, these are also places where creativity of the arts, of economic entrepreneurship, of social relationships, has some free space to develop.

Another point which is important to take account of is the fact that it's not the economy alone which is important for social inclusion, either in the neighbourhood or in the city, although one

trying to develop labour market policy, it's important to realise that one has to follow two tracks at the same time. First it will equip as many residents as possible with the skills that they need to function in an urban service economy and to help them to apply successfully for vacancies in the labour market outside their district. Often, urban labour market policies are focused on either trying to get people living in deprived neighbourhoods outside their neighbourhoods or to try to develop economic activity within the neighbourhood. Both have to be done at the same time. Another factor that should not be lost out of sight is the time dimension. What timespan should urban regeneration programmes cover. Should they try to closely reflect the mandate of local politicians? And then, how important are the different time perspectives or the temporalities of the actors, because we find in most urban development programmes, or urban regeneration programmes, some kind of conflict between on the one hand the short-term perspective of politicians and the long-term perspective of the administration, of the professionals and often also of the research community.

This conflict between the different time perspectives could impede the successful completion of any urban regeneration programme. And then of course there is the important question, because if such urban development or urban regeneration is turned in terms of programmes, which means that there is a limited time to work on urban regeneration, the question always remains, what happens when such a programme has been finished? There is of course the problem of partnerships. We used to consider the different actors which are participating in urban governance programmes as being on an equal footing and having the same interest. This, of course, is not the case. There is not only the problem of the complexity of policy items or the number of actors, but also the fact that they have conflicting interests and often public-private partnerships don't stand for profits for the private partner and problems for the public partner.

Another important dimension is participation. Is there what is called the straightforward level of participation? Is it sufficient, as many urban authorities consider, just to inform people, treat them as clients, or should they participate directly in the whole decision-making process, as citizens, as full partners, and they should be guided through the whole trajectory, from the developing of the idea to the final implementation of the problem? One of the main problems that are being identified through research projects is that often a minority occupies the important channels in the whole decision-making process. They act as gatekeepers and they exclude the dissenting or the weaker voices in the whole participation process. That means that lower-educated people, single mothers, ethnic minorities and the long-term unemployed often have no voice because the whole participation process is organised according to middle-class culture, to middle-class criteria. And the importance of strong informal leaders often shows in the evaluation of successful regeneration or urban development projects.

Another important problem of course is the relation between local authorities and central authorities, what kind of contracts, what kind of covenants are needed in order to develop a good working relation between the different levels in such a form of urban governance, in such a way to develop urban development control, generally how differentiated should these contracts be and what period should they cover?



I would also like to point out what I call the darker side of social cohesion, because social cohesion usually is presented as something very positive, that social cohesion has to be promoted because it supports people, but it is also very constraining, very oppressive. It prevents social mobility from deprived neighbourhoods, from minority groups of society. It often presents innovation at the local level. So it's important to realise that social cohesion has to be promoted but not at all costs. And the last point I wanted to make here, in the sense of problematic items for developing urban projects is the fact that traditional forms of solidarity have collapsed in our society, which are important, because they, for instance, have always acted as mechanisms of social control. The spontaneous forms of solidarity, which are what we could call bottom-up forms of solidarity have disappeared and have been replaced or are being replaced by top-down forms of solidarity, which either can be repressive or protective of social solidarity, such as policies in the private and the public sphere, the success of monocultural disclosure today is also a form of trying to impose some form of social solidarity at the local population. The eagerness of some city authorities to combat forms of indecent behaviour, including specific cultural behaviour in their cities is another expression of this tendency to replace bottom-up forms of social solidarity by top-down forms of social solidarity.

One important last item I wanted to touch upon, and of course, perhaps because I am a researcher, is that it's not enough to rely on intuition, guts or political feeling, to build a coherent framework of urban regeneration. You need more sophisticated means. You need to fulfil some minimal requirements with respect to, for instance, baseline measurement, with respect to the development of databases, with respect to the development of qualitative and quantitative indicators and the presence of irreversible procedures, which of course have to be in the hands of independent experts. There is some opening in this sense. There is also an opening for discussion this afternoon, of course, the main objectives of an urban regeneration perspective are in the Leipzig Charter and have been further developed in the reference framework for sustainable metrics, but what we are missing is a kind of instrument, a coherent instrument for following up the realisation, the implementation of these very general ideas, these very general goals that are being defined in the Leipzig Charter, and some form, some adapted form, of an open matter of coordination, which has been fairly successful in trying to develop a combined European policy regarding social protection and social inclusion, could be advisable, because it contains elements such as a set of good indicators. It contains annual reports. It contains a synthesis report by the European Commission, and of course peer reviews where, in this case it could be different cities would be invited to exchange best practices or just good practices which are transferable from one city to another one. I'm going to finish my presentation here. Thank you.