

10. Recommendations

These recommendations were drawn up based on the results of the regional reports and the global conclusions, and revised and approved by the report's authors and members of the GOLD III Steering Committee:

For the achievement of the MDGs and to support the Rio+20 Agenda and the Post-2015 Agenda, a stronger partnership between national, regional and local governments, international organizations and civil society is needed to guarantee universal access to basic services as a cornerstone of global development.

‘Putting people first’ means putting basic local services first. This implies:

- The recognition of the vital role of basic local services in guaranteeing human rights and dignity, driving economic development, and addressing social and economic inequalities, including gender inequalities;
- A political commitment to increase investment in basic services in order to address existing deficits in provision, increasing demand in urban areas, and the sustainability and resilience challenges posed by climate change and other threats;
- The development of new forms of production and consumption for the provision of sustainable basic services in a world whose population will grow to 9 billion within the next 30 years.

Local and regional governments and their associations, with the support of other levels of government, should:

Take responsibility for ensuring universal access to basic services and, in pursuit of this goal, develop long-term strategic plans for basic service infrastructure development:

- Infrastructure plans should be developed alongside land use plans and support city development strategies;
- Planning should include long-term investment strategies that take account of the full economic and social cost of service provision;
- Priorities should include building and maintaining capacities to reduce disaster risk and improving the resilience of basic services to natural disasters and climate change.

Develop sustainable financial strategies that ensure access to quality basic services for all:

- Define business models that guarantee the long-term financial viability of each service. Tariffs and public spending should aim to cover operating costs and, where possible, contribute to investment and service expansion. Particularly in lower-income countries, increases to current levels of public financing remain essential;
- Use mechanisms such as social tariffs, cross-subsidies and safety nets to make basic services affordable to all members of society;
- Put in place accountable and transparent information systems on local budgets and the use and allocation of all funds for basic services to ensure that citizens can hold local governments and service providers to account;
- Take steps to improve local and regional governments’ creditworthiness, and that of public operators, to increase their borrowing capacity on the financing market.

Promote innovative multi-stakeholder and multi-level partnerships:

- Initiate policy dialogue with key stakeholders (central governments, service operators, trade-unions, civil society) to draw up local charters defining levels and standards of services, roles and responsibilities, financing and management;
- Local governments should acknowledge the role played by small scale and informal operators in basic service provision, particularly in informal settlements, and assume responsibility for monitoring quality, harmonizing prices, and coordinating service deliver with official providers to avoid gaps in provision;
- The following principles should inform partnerships with other stakeholders in the delivery of services: (1) local governments remain ultimately responsible for services; (2) clear legal and regulatory frameworks; (3) and the aim is to harness the financing and expertise of partners to improve service access and quality; (4) accountability and transparency must be ensured.

Build in-house policy-making, management and oversight capacities:

- Improve the efficiency and effectiveness of local and regional government departments and public providers by investing in human and technical resources and implementing modern management systems and technologies;
- When basic service provision is entrusted to external partners, local governments should develop and maintain the internal capacity to monitor and provide oversight to ensure that access, quality and tariffs meet the needs of citizens;
- Improve local data on basic service access and quality with the aim of identifying local needs and priorities and of monitoring service delivery. Local data should be made public so users can hold providers to account;
- Make preventing and tackling corruption in basic services a priority and establish appropriate criminal penalties and whistle-blower protections.

Urban and metropolitan governments should:**Adopt measures to ensure inter-jurisdictional coordination:**

- Coordinate between metropolitan and neighbouring local governments to ensure that basic service infrastructure accompanies and guides urban growth;
- In the water sector, carry out coordination at the level of the river basin, facilitating local partnerships to act in the event of emergencies or disasters.

Harness land management and land added value to develop service provision:

- Consider using land management and taxes on land added value to leverage funds to finance urban development and basic services;
- Use GIS (Geographic Information Systems) and other satellite based tools in land market analysis to monitor land value of areas served by basic service infrastructure.

Encourage participatory strategic planning:

- Engage all stakeholders in planning, including those living in slums and informal settlements. The needs of women should be taken into account at all stages of the planning process;
- Design facilities and transport systems to guarantee the mobility and security of people with disabilities and other special needs.

National governments and international institutions should:

Harness the enormous potential of local governments to provide basic services by applying the principle of subsidiarity:

- Recognize the diverse ways that local governments globally have expanded and improved basic service provision, with examples of both success and failure;
- Provide clear legal frameworks for decentralization, defining the responsibilities of local governments in service provision and facilitating their relationships with other stakeholders;
- Accompany decentralization with capacity building policies to improve the ability of local governments to manage services and negotiate and work with external partners.

Define and implement an effective multi-governance framework for basic service provision:

- Improve vertical and horizontal coordination between and within local, regional and central governments to: address the challenges of basic service delivery that cross municipal or regional borders; promote collaboration, knowledge-sharing and resource efficiency; and to improve the implementation of national sectorial policies;
- Recognize local governments' freedom to choose, in consultation with communities, the models of service management and partnership that fit local needs and priorities;
- Provide frameworks for procurement and contracting, and the technical, professional supports to implement them, so local governments can hold partners to account;
- Give local governments a seat at the table in international negotiations that affect basic service provision or impose constraints (e.g. trade agreements, employment laws, development goals, service standards, procurement rules).

Equip local governments with the financial resources to improve basic service provision:

- Local governments need financial powers and autonomy to generate local revenues, set service tariffs, target subsidies at the poor, and experiment with innovative financing models;
- Guarantee that transfers to complement local government budgets are regular and predictable, set based on objective cost assessments and aim to equalize service disparities between regions;
- Establish or reinforce mechanisms like municipal development funds and municipal banks to leverage access to credit or capital markets and adapt them to the long-term horizons of infrastructure investments;
- Donors and multilateral financial institutions should target technical support and aid to sub-sovereign levels of government; international institutions should support consistent, long-term investment in basic services in order to provide concessional loan rates to local governments and explore ways to develop guarantees and reduce risks;
- Give local governments direct access to global financing mechanisms such as the Clean Development Mechanism and emissions trading schemes, and facilitate their use of such mechanisms.

National and local governments and international institutions should:

- Promote decentralized cooperation between local governments and public-public partnerships between utility operators;
- Support international and regional training centres and programmes to strengthen capacities of local governments and service providers and improve provision.

Both national and local governments should:

- Create an enabling environment for civil society participation;
- Institutional frameworks should specify the rights and responsibilities of civil society organizations and trade-unions in relation to basic services;
- Promote the informed involvement of civil society in basic service provision, and in the definition, monitoring and evaluation of public policies;
- Set up ombudsmen to trouble-shoot and mediate between citizens, service operators and local governments to resolve conflicts;
- Involve community organizations and civil society in the co-management of systems for monitoring public opinion about the quality and price of services.

Public and private sector service providers should:

Carry out their contracts in accordance with *International Guidelines on Decentralization and Access to Basic Services for All*, national and international legislation and instructions from public authorities:

- Combine efficiency in service provision (to keep costs and environmental impacts as low as possible) with attention to the social impact of basic services;
- Submit to regular transparent auditing and develop mechanisms to ensure accountability and tackle corruption in public service delivery;
- Comply with local, national and international standards on working conditions, including ILO Conventions on fundamental rights and decent working conditions;
- Private providers should step up efforts to hire local workers, build their capacities and promote them to management positions.

Recognize their corporate social responsibility to the communities where they operate:

- Invest in health, educational or social services to support local development;
- Participate in local planning, consultation, monitoring and capacity-building.

Civil society, trade unions and community organizations should:

- Claim the right to participate in policy-making and the allocation of resources for basic services. Encourage underrepresented groups, particularly women, in this regard;
- Hold local governments and service providers to account for inadequacies in quality, coverage or cost of basic services by developing their capacity to monitor services, express their views, make claims and register complaints;
- Share knowledge about service delivery with other stakeholders and coordinate their initiatives with local governments to avoid overlaps or gaps in provision;
- Where informal organizations of workers work in partnership with local governments to provide services, efforts should be made to improve their working conditions and the quality of services.