Human Settlement as a Global Issue and Local Governments as Actors in the International Arena

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Draft presented at the 2014 FLACSO-ISA Conference
Buenos Aires, Argentina
24th July 2014

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Abstract

With the end of Cold War the international system changed and this change made possible for new actors and new issues to be development in international relations. The importance of human settlements for domestic politics is obviously, but for international relations it was not and there are still some doubt about if this issue should be part of international studies. Despite the skeptical doubts, the United Nations Agency for Human Settlements (UNHABITAT) is an evidence of the importance of this issue for the international system. The conference HABITAT II held in 1996 in Turkey also presented another important issue for international relations which is the participation of local governments in the international arena. Therefore, the article will present a view of the participation of local governments in the international discussion of human settlements in the United Nations sphere, and it is important, for this analysis, to overview how this issue became international and the role of local governments in the international arena. The question of this paper is how to understand the global governance with the end of Cold War with the presence of new actors such as local governments, and new issues such as human settlements.

Keywords: United Nations; Human Settlements; Local Governments; Global Governance.

Introduction

With the end of the Cold War, new actors have emerged on the international scene and new themes began to illustrate the international agenda. The urban question appears as an issue needing urgent treatment, whereas the significant population growth in urban areas exposes many problems to be faced not only by local governments, but also by the national governments and the international community.

In addition to the changes in the logic of the international system, the twentieth century was marked by the expansion of urban centers and consequently the problems generated by this growth. Cities expose the weaknesses of a country by locating both richness and poverty. Thus, the cities of developing countries exhibit the many facets of the lack of financial resources or its unequal distribution. The precarious settlements mark the backwardness of the South.
Therefore, the international community could not remain motionless in front of the problems of human settlements, since it is not only a matter that requires local solutions. Moreover, it calls for the international society to cooperate. Thus,

Problems regarding housing were seen for a long time as merely local problems. [...] However, the worsening of the problems of development in human settlements, continued population growth, the existence of several cities in the world with over 5 million residents, concerns about the environment, and other factors, began to evidence that these issues deserve to be treated in other spheres. Moreover, a greater awareness of the interdependence between all factors and stakeholders made that issues that were previously treated as local became internationally. Thus, issues related to human settlements, both due to its worsening in recent decades, such as being the place of other major problems that humanity endures, became one of the biggest challenges of the international community (MACHADO FILHO, 1998, p. 137).

If there are no suitable conditions to live in a place, such as lack of housing, sanitation, employment or respect for human rights, this condition can lead to the migration of vulnerable populations. So what initially appeared to be a local issue becomes a concern for other countries, since it can boost the movement of people to other sites that may also have no decent conditions to accommodate them. It is a spillover effect that reaches the entire international system, so there is no way to remain immune to such issues or even ignore them. This is just one example of how the situation of human settlements can influence the flow of people, but there are also many consequences for the international community, which must therefore not exclude itself from the responsibility to promote improvement in human settlements around the world.

The international consequences of urban problems go beyond migration, encompassing important issues for International Relations, such as human rights, development and the environment.

The global struggle for development, supported by world leaders and the United Nations, finds in human settlements the recognition of the concept. It is in cities that you can see poverty and wealth and their interactions. The ways people live in the cities

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1 “Problemas relativos à habitação foram vistos durante muito tempo como problemas meramente locais. [...] No entanto, o agravamento dos problemas de desenvolvimento nos assentamentos humanos, o contínuo crescimento demográfico, a existência de várias cidades no mundo com mais de 5 milhões de habitantes, as preocupações com o meio ambiente, e outros fatores, começaram evidenciar que tais temas mereciam ser tratados em outros âmbitos. Além disso, uma maior consciência do processo de interdependência entre todos os fatores e atores, fez com que questões anteriormente tratadas como locais fossem abordados no plano internacional. Assim, as questões relativas aos assentamentos humanos, tanto devido ao seu agravamento nas últimas décadas, como por serem palco de outros grandes problemas que sofre a humanidade, tornaram-se um dos maiores desafios da comunidade internacional” (MACHADO FILHO, 1998, p. 137).
expose the degree of development of a country. Therefore, the international treatment of urban issues is key to fighting poverty and promoting development: "Significant Cities today play a role in development."\(^2\)

In addition to the human and social issues encompassed by the urban question, as noted above, the location of the subject in International Relations introduces the discussion about the role of local governments in the international arena and interests between the different levels of power. The phenomenon of paradiplomacy gained strength in the late 1980s and early 1990s, when cities started to act abroad. The presence of local governments in an environment largely dominated by national states post some questions: what is the scope of action of these actors? In which issues they should be involved? What is the weight of these actors in this new scenario?

Local governments now operate, particularly in the multilateral sphere, since it usually is more pluralistic and therefore accepts the participation of other actors more easily. Concomitant with the presence of local governments, it is also possible to observe the inclusion of NGOs, since the historical period is favorable to an expansion and diversification of actors. Thus, local governments are present at meetings of multilateral organizations, notably the United Nations, especially in summits where the theme is directly related to cities. Therefore, urban issues appear on the agenda of international relations along with the presence of these actors, which reaffirm that the treatment of certain matters demand the participation of those involved with them.

The participation of local governments in multilateral forums, especially those related to urban issues, requires the participation of these actors in the formulation, or even idealization of international policies concerning their governments. This exposes a more complex dynamic clash of political forces than the one that only nation states discussed in the international arena guidelines about various issues that generate immediate domestic implications. Therefore, while the urban question is inserted on the international agenda, local governments now operate in international negotiations, which consequently leads to a reflection about the power relations between local, national governments and international organizations (SMOUTS, 2004). Finally, human settlements are subject of international relations and deserve the dedication of the international community.

Human Settlements and the United Nations

The United Nations (UN) was established in 1945 and at that time two-thirds of the world population were still rural, so urban issues were not seen as a concern for the international community. However, there were a significant growth in the number of world population and urbanization: in 1976, a third of the world's population were now living in cities, and by 2002, half the world's population was already urban. Therefore, "The inclusion of human settlements in the list of global issues considered priorities for the United Nations in the 1990s is easily explained by the mere observation of statistical calculations: 2.4 million people worldwide were already living in cities in 1995 [...]" (ALVES, 2001 p.246-247).

The rapidly growth of urban population worldwide since the end of World War II, in a disorderly manner in most of the cases, exposed to the international community the problems faced by urban areas not designed to accommodate so many people. What seemed so far as a domestic problem began to be perceived as a global issue and as a

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3 "A inclusão dos assentamentos humanos no rol dos temas globais considerados prioritários para as Nações Unidas na década de 1990 é facilmente explicável pela mera observação de cálculos estatísticos: 2,4 milhões de pessoas em todo o mundo já eram habitantes de cidades em 1995 [...]" (ALVES, 2001, p.246-247).
threat to the goals of peace of the United Nations. If the discussion in the core of the organization was the development of the most vulnerable countries, improvements in health and education of the world's population, human rights and peace, then the UN would have to introduce the urban issue on its agenda.

It took a while for the United Nations to present the urban debate clearly in multilateral forums, mostly because the international community had not yet realized that the issue was a subject by itself and that it permeated all the other issues covered in the agenda of the organization. Although it might had appeared in sparse discussions, there was no perception of the urgency of the matter. Only in 1972, at the Conference on Human Development in Stockholm, was there an alert to the problem. From that moment, the United Nations began to cover issues related to urban life, and this change of perception culminated with the First United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat I), in 1976, carried out in the city of Vancouver, Canada.

Habitat I opened the multilateral debate to human settlements and allowed the matter to be discussed and designed by member countries of the UN. However, it is important to note the historical moment of the conference: the Cold War. At that time, although there was a warning to social issues, the discourse that prevailed in the international system was the one about security and defence. The world was still divided between the capitalist and the socialist bloc, which somehow overshadowed social problems, especially those faced by developing countries, and the participation of other actors such as NGOs and local governments.

The perception of the role of the state and the international community in combating underdevelopment was restricted, and the state was seen as the political unit concerning these issues. Hence, in 1976, the NGO movement had not yet gained strength, and the international scene was predominantly state centred. Alves explains this reality:

Non-governmental organizations (NGOs), fewer than now and almost all formed in the developed West, were frowned upon by the States in general and had almost no access to multilateral meetings. Governments, and alleged pretentiously self-sufficient, often dissociated of the aspirations of their societies, arrogated the right and the power to determine their own paths of development. Within this context, the recommendations of Vancouver on public participation of citizens in the planning, implementation and decision-
making in the sphere of human settlements, rather than reflect the empirical world, girt its evident artificiality (2001, p. 252).4

Therefore, at the Vancouver Conference, the perception of the world leaders was that urban problems were too complex and therefore demanded the action of a strong and unified state, “[...] the urban agenda was shaped by those who believed that only a strong central government was capable of dealing with the myriad of urban problems that were emerging at that time” (MORENO; WARAH, 2006, p. 6). The future dynamics of global governance would show the opposite.

The first UN conference on human settlements occurred in the midst of the Cold War and the oil crisis, important facts that certainly shaped a more state centred and less pragmatic character of this summit. At the time that the conference took place, the studies pointed to an exponential increase of the world population, generating pessimistic views about the future of cities and negatively marking the conference, since the feeling of powerlessness over the issue dominated the delegations they presented a proposal that was weak and detached from reality: "The passage of time and the developments make the decisions of Habitat I sound at least naive" (ALVES, 2001, p. 250).5 Therefore, Habitat I had not impact, as was expected, the international community.

The vision of how to deal with new challenges changed over the years that followed Habitat I, and in Istanbul (Habitat II) a broader perspective on the treatment of urban issues was presented, the one that should include different sectors of society on the discussion and not only the state. Therefore, before the Istanbul Conference in 1996, the countries believed in solving urban problems through projects and unilateral financial assistance, after that forum the perception shifted to cooperation projects with the participation of states, local communities, NGOs and the private sector

Despite the lower visibility of the 1976 conference, when compared to the 1996, and little application of the recommendations made, given the context in which it occurred, Habitat I had an important result: the creation of the United Nations Centre

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4 “As organizações não governamentais (ONGs), em menor número do que agora e quase todas formadas no Ocidente desenvolvido, eram mal vistas pelos Estados em geral e quase não tinham acesso a reuniões multilaterais. Os governos, suposta e pretensiosamente auto-suficientes, muitas vezes dissociados das aspirações das respectivas sociedades, arrogavam-se o direito e o poder de determinar sozinhos os caminhos do desenvolvimento. Dentro desse contexto, as recomendações de Vancouver sobre participação pública, de cidadãos e cidadãs, no planejamento, execução e tomada de decisões na esfera dos assentamentos humanos, ao invés de refletir o mundo empírico, cingiam-se de evidente artificialidade” (2001, p. 252).

5 “O decurso do tempo e a evolução dos acontecimentos fazem as decisões da Habitat I soarem no mínimo ingênuas” (ALVES, 2001, p. 250)
for Human Settlements (UNCHS). The office to address the issue was established in 1978, in Nairobi, Kenya, and ended up being the first office of a United Nations agency in Africa. Initially, Habitat was just an operating program of the United Nations Commission on Human Settlements attached to the General Assembly, and had only 58 member States (Machado Filho, 1998). The institutional structure of the Centre has been strengthened over the years and in 2001, after the Habitat II +5, the centre was elevated to United Nations Programme for Human Settlements.

The United Nations Centre for Human Settlements was initially created with the goal of providing support for critical situations caused by natural disasters, civil wars and urban violence, in addition to cooperating with member states policy of housing. With the institutional evolution of the Centre and its change to Program, the goals of the Habitat was expanded and, especially after the Habitat II, the participation of other sectors interested in the question of human settlements was amplified, especially for local governments.

From 1976 to 1996 conference, it took twenty years and many changes had occurred in the world. Thus, the complexity of the problems faced in urban areas was also thorough, and new issues have emerged, requiring new approaches to deal with the present difficulties. Among the new problems, it is possible to highlight: the irregularity and precariousness of popular settlements; the need for expansion of infrastructure and urban services; the new scale of the problems of transport and accessibility; storage, supply and use of energy and water; control and waste treatment; environmental, air and noise pollution; environmental degradation resulting from urban expansion itself; growth of poverty, lack of jobs and income; increased violence; the intensification of land conflicts and illegal removals (ROLNIK; SAULE JR, 1997, p 15.).

Changes in urban issues demanded a new approach to the difficulties of the United Nations, which in fact occurred:

[...] Habitat was incorporating urban themes ever more widely in order to refine their plans and programs of action. Moreover, increasingly the agency began to have greater dialogue with cities as political entities. And so, Habitat was gradually transforming its role as provider of assistance to countries that present an emergency situation in relation to housing, and constituting a body directed to cooperate with urban projects and programs in general, and particularly aimed at strengthening municipal management and local development. This profile change eventually emerged clearly during
both the preparatory process and through the activities during the [Habitat II] (ROLNIK; SAULE JR, 1997, p 15.)  

Nevertheless, after twenty years of the first world summit on human settlements, the Habitat had already incorporated the changes in the world and to consolidate the new vision regarding the treatment of urban problems and discuss the new challenges faced by countries in order to ensure the development of nations, the Second Conference on Human Settlements was called. Thus, “the 1996 Habitat II Conference placed the urban agenda on top of the world’s development agenda […]” (MORENO; WARAH, 2006, p. 7).

**Habitat II: the context and the meaning for international relations**

The 1990s was marked by the turbulence of the end of Cold War, but also by the UN social conferences. The Second United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II), headquartered in Istanbul, Turkey, was the last social conference of the decade, ending the cycle that began in 1992 with the UN Conference on Environment and Development (ECO-92).

The end of bipolarity had enabled new subjects to be included in the international agenda, as discussed previously. Moreover, with the end of the struggle between the socialist and capitalist blocs, the differences between the developed North and the underdeveloped South became more evident, which somehow emphasized the discussion of social issues that had been overshadowed by the power struggle between United States and the Soviet Union. While the Cold War had maintained a distinction between matters of high politics and low politics, with the preponderance of issues of national security and defence, the period was characterized by the minimization of the thematic segmentation (KEOHANE, NYE, 2001).

Therefore it was necessary to think the new dynamics of international relations and the United Nations had an important role to introduce the social issues on the

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6 “[…] Habitat foi incorporando os temas urbanos de forma cada vez mais ampla de modo a redefinir os seus planos e programas de ação. Além disso, cada vez mais a agência passou a ter maior interlocução com as cidades como entes políticos. E assim, Habitat aos poucos foi transformando o seu papel de prestador de assistência para os países que apresentam uma situação de emergência em relação à habitação, e constituindo-se em organismo voltado a cooperar com programas e projetos urbanos, de forma geral, e particularmente voltado a promover o fortalecimento da gestão municipal e do desenvolvimento local. Essa mudança de perfil acabou por emergir de forma clara tanto durante o processo preparatório, como através das atividades durante a conferência [Habitat II]” (ROLNIK; SAULE JÚNIOR, 1997, p. 15).
agenda of the debate between member states. Accordingly, the UN responded to the changes occurring in the international context. As Alves suggests:

[...] The great conferences of the 1990s sought to address the multiple factors of the respective subjects in their interconnections, entering the location on this national and international, with attention to the physical and human conditions of space that materialize. Corroborated thus the perception that certain vital issues are now more than ever, unquestionably global, requiring collective treatment and universal cooperation (2001, p. 34).


These conferences were designed "in a systemic way, not compartmentalized, such that the deliberations of a conference were able to influence the others and not just the subsequent one" (ALVES, 2001, p. 34). In this sense, two important concepts had permeated the summits: the sustainable development rooted in the ECO-92; and human rights, discussed at the World Conference on Human Rights in Vienna. This conference had a prominent role to reaffirmed human rights as an imperative for all states and made possible the subsequent creation of other human rights such as the right to housing, established in the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements in 1996.

The Habitat II falls within the post-Cold War period and the decade of social conferences. The context in which the conference on human settlements occurs is paramount to understand why the housing issue gains international treatment. The expansion of what was understood as issues to be addressed at the international level led to the introduction of the theme of human settlements in the discussions at the United Nations.

7"[...] as grandes conferências da década de 1990 procuraram abordar os múltiplos fatores dos respectivos temas em suas interconexões, inserindo o local no nacional e este no internacional, com atenção para as condições físicas e humanas do espaço em que se concretizam. Corroboraram, dessa forma, a percepção de que certos assuntos vitais são, agora mais do que nunca, inquestionavelmente globais, exigindo tratamento coletivo e colaboração universal” (2001, p. 34).
8 “sistemática, não compartimentada, de forma tal que as deliberações de uma conferência fossem influenciar as demais e não apenas as subsequentes” (ALVES, 2001, p. 34).
Another relevant factor that had also fostered the inclusion of this topic in the international arena was the intense process of urbanization and its consequences for health, housing, employment and dignity of life in the cities, especially in the least developed countries. The secretary of Habitat II, Wally N'Dow, made reference to urban problems, "No war kills this much!"9.

The treatment of issues intrinsically related to the urban environment has taken over many points that had been treated in previous conferences, since issues such as human rights, the role of women and the environment are explicit in the urban space. It is in the cities that the problems - and solutions - are more easily visualized and thus the Habitat II resumed the themes addressed in previous conferences in order to contextualize them in the urban environment.

Therefore, the last United Nations conference in 1990 brought together a greater extent of all the subjects covered in the previous conferences. The Habitat II presented a summary of the problems, but also the possible solutions, with which both the international and the national societies need to find ways to cope.

The ground-breaking about Habitat II refers not only to the statement of the theme of human settlements as international but also includes the participation of new actors in the official meetings. The successful implementation of the programs outlined in the conference depended on cooperation with national actors responsible for implementing the plans of action, as explained by Machado Filho:

> Considering the tone of the discussions at these conferences, in both global and local focus, you realize that the strategies outlined in them to solve the problems are driven on a combination of decentralized cooperation and local action. To promote peace, development and human rights around the world, it is necessary to implement programs and policies that simultaneous mobilizes resources and local, national, regional, international and transnational institutions (1998, p. 94)10.

Subsequently, to ensure the implementation of the actions agreed in Istanbul, national actors organized, particularly local governments, NGOs and academia were officially invited to join the conference. The official involvement of local governments,

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10 “Considerando-se a tônica dos debates nessas conferências, num enfoque simultaneamente global e local, percebe-se que as estratégias nelas esboçadas para a solução dos problemas pautam-se na combinação de uma cooperação descentralizada e uma ação localizada. Para a promoção da paz, do desenvolvimento e dos direitos humanos em todo o mundo, é necessário implementar programas e políticas que mobilizem ao mesmo tempo recursos e instituições locais, nacionais, regionais, internacionais e transnacionais” (1998, p. 94).
along with NGOs and other non-governmental actors in a United Nations summit was something that had not occurred in any of the previous conferences, so this is a significant event for the international representation of those actors and their demands and for the operation of a world conference. In previous summits, there were some movements from the civil society; already in 1992, NGOs were present in large numbers in Rio de Janeiro, however they were not able to attend the official conference and were relegated to parallel forums.

The Istanbul Conference, held twenty years after its predecessor, meant the resumption of the discussion on urban issues, but from a new perspective on the problem, in view of the changing international environment and the conditions of human settlements. The question of human settlements became, therefore, to be global, but with clear implications sites, so its discussion at a world summit demanded not only the participation of national governments, but also local government.

**United Nations Recommendations**

The Second United Nations Conference on Human Settlements was convened by the General Assembly through Resolution 47/180 on December 22, 1992, to take place in Istanbul (Turkey) in the period of 3 to June 14, 1996. Such resolution established the possibility of official involvement, both at the preparatory meetings and at the conference of nongovernmental observers, as long as they obey the same criteria of non-governmental observers at the General Assembly, i.e., with voice but without vote. In this sense, the call of the Habitat II already had an advantage over other conferences of the 1990s and a concern to include actors other than States

The resolution 49/109 of February 28, 1995 recaptures its previous and stressed paragraph 16: "the UN calls upon all States to encourage the broad-based participation of Local Authorities and all relevant actors [...]". Moreover, it stands out in the resolution the observation of the Secretary-general of the United Nations that the conference should be a “City Summit”

The same resolution convening the Conference on Human Settlements created a Preparatory Committee (PrepCom), composed by representatives of all the participating

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Member States of the conference, intergovernmental agencies and UN bodies and NGOs. Later, when was formed the G4 group representing international organizations of local governments, this has come to represent these units in the PrepCom meetings.

In accordance with resolution 47/180, in addition to the general meetings of the Preparatory Committee, organized by the United Nations, countries should create a national preparatory committee in order to delimit the domestic demands of many sectors concerning the issue of human settlements, in order to produce a broader, more representative and more democratic process of decision making.

At the end of the conference there were drafted two important documents: the Istanbul Declaration and the Habitat Agenda. The Habitat Agenda recommended a special session of the General Assembly to be held after five years (2001, Habitat II +5), to evaluate the work started in Istanbul and the implementation of the action plan outlined in 1996, as evidenced in paragraph 218 of that document: “The General Assembly should consider holding a special session in the year 2001 for an overall review and appraisal of the implementation of the outcome of Habitat II and should consider further actions and initiatives.”

For the review of the Habitat Agenda and its implementation by States attending the conference in Istanbul, States should submit, in New York, at the United Nations, in 2001, national reports with data on human settlements. Consequently, states that have signed the Habitat Agenda accepted to submit their national realities to the international community. And, as suggested by Alves, States "legitimized, therefore, not only the international treatment of global issues, but also its monitoring by the UN” (ALVES, 2001, p. 39).

The international preparatory process for the Conference and the participation of local governments

The resolution convening the Istanbul Conference had opened the possibility of involvement by other actors than not only the traditional States, but to do so, it was needed to establish how actors would participate in the decision-making process.

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14 “Legitimaram, portanto, não somente o tratamento internacional dos temas globais, mas também seu monitoramento pela ONU” (ALVES, 2001, p. 39).
Therefore, as was done in previous conferences, both international and national preparatory committees were established.

In the internal preparatory meeting of the secretariat that occurred even before the first PrepCom in the Habitat office in Nairobi, it was already highlighted the importance of involving local authorities in the preparing process for the conference in order to ensure greater applicability to the resolutions:

[...] It was impossible to obtain practical results without the mobilization and active participation of mayors, local authorities. They are, and not the central governments of each country, who knows the problems of the Conference; and are responsible in behalf of the population for local development, and they are usually charged by the population who know where they live. We should therefore find ways to involve them in the planning of the Conference (WILHEIM, 1998, p. 24).

In addition to the concern of including local authorities, it was also encouraged the involvement of other actors such as NGOs, trade unions, private companies and academia. The inclusion of new participants at a United Nations summit corresponded to the concept of "participation and partnership", which was widely used in the conference of Istanbul. This concept refers to the increasing participation of other sectors interested in the theme of the meeting and in strengthening partnerships with these new participants.

Local governments and other civil society organizations could then take part in the preparatory process for the conference, since the United Nations allowed the participation of these actors in the international preparatory committee and recommended their inclusion in the national preparatory committees. So there were formal channels of action for those interested in the subject to be present in the condition of partners in order to present their demands and proposals for resolutions to be discussed in Istanbul, an innovative and important fact, as already noted above. The official inclusion of these actors had meant a change in the pattern of functioning of the United Nations and the understanding by the international community of states, who should be the actors and sectors in the international arena, at least when regard to the urban discussion.

15"[...] era impossível obter resultados práticos sem a mobilização e participação ativa dos prefeitos, das autoridades locais. São eles, e não os governos centrais de cada país, que mais conhecem a problemática da Conferência; e são responsáveis, perante a população pelo desenvolvimento local, sendo usualmente cobrados pela população que sabe onde eles moram. Deveríamos, portanto, encontrar mecanismos para envolvê-los na montagem da Conferência" (WILHEIM, 1998, p. 24).
There was, for part of the conference secretariat responsible for its preparation, the conviction that the participation of local governments was essential for success in Istanbul. Assistant Secretary of the Conference, the Brazilian Jorge Wilheim was not a UN employee and not part of the diplomatic corps, but architect. And as such, he had a broader view of how the summit should be designed, and with the support of the secretary of Habitat II, Wally N'Dow, and Secretary-General of the UN, Boutous Boutrous-Ghali, he stressed the importance of local governments participation in Istanbul.

It was therefore necessary to convene representatives of international organizations representing these political spheres in order to articulate them internationally for the conference. The Secretariat held a meeting in Paris with leaders of the International Union of Local Authorities (IULA), the United Towns Organizations (UTO) and the Association of Metropolises (Metropolis). These were international organizations that gathered local governments and coordinated their interests internationally. So, it is possible to consider that they represented the aims of the localities that they supported which somehow facilitated the work of the conference secretariat by unifying their demands. The group of representatives of international organizations of local authorities – named G4 - was subsequently expanded to add other organizations that were not present in their initial gathering and thus it became to be called G4 + (WILHEIM, 1998, p. 237).

In 1995, was held in Lisbon a meeting between the G4 and the secretariat of the conference that culminated with a protocol that would determine how the participation of organizations representing local governments would occur in Istanbul. The thought that the presence of local governments could remove the impractical nature of the final declaration of the conference and mean the implementation of action plans guided the position of the secretariat, as it is evident:

[...] The integration of local authorities in the UN system was one of the conference requirements that we sought to obtain; and their participation in all the planning for the event could provide us useful information to anchor the basic documents in local realities, fleeing the rhetorical statements (WILHEIM, 1998, p. 162)\(^\text{16}\).

\(^{16}\)“[...] a integração das autoridades locais no sistema ONU era um dos produtos da Conferência que pretendíamos obter; e a sua participação em toda a montagem do evento poderia fornecer-nos informações úteis para ancorar os documentos básicos em realidades locais, fugindo das declarações retóricas” (WILHEIM, 1998, p. 162).
It is important to consider that the negotiation of an agreement signed at a conference of global scope, as was the Habitat II, occurs substantially in the preparatory meetings, once the topics to be discussed are sensitive and difficult to achieve consensus and a joint statement takes time to be drafted.

The International Committee (PrepCom) for the Habitat II held three substantive sessions between 1994 and 1996, respectively in Geneva, Nairobi, New York and an earlier, in March 1993, with only organizational range, at UN Headquarters in New York. The meeting held in Nairobi (PrepCom II) was decisively because it was able to advance in the inclusion of local governments into the debate.

At PrepCom II, nine decisions were negotiated that needed further approve by the General Assembly, following the standards of UN procedures. Among the decisions, which are relevant for this work are: the proposal to establish two committees during the conference, in which the second would be composed of representatives by "partners" as well as the occurrence of parallel thematic roundtables that would gather the opinions of these actors; the establishment of a second segment of plenary that could count with the highest level of representation; and the innovative recommendation for a special role for representatives of local authorities, by introducing the rule 61 in order to enable them to participate actively, but without voting rights, in addition to designing the final report (originally titled Istanbul Papers) with specific commitments and contributions of partners and actors other than states (WILHEIM, 1998).

Rule 61, adopted by the General Assembly and subsequently reaffirmed at PrepCom III, describes the privileged position of the representatives of local governments as establishing that:

Representatives of local authorities, designated by accredited international associations of local authorities in consultation with national associations of local authorities, invited to the Conference may participate, without the right to vote, in the deliberations of the Conference, its Main Committees and, as appropriate, any other committee or working group, on questions within the scope of their activities. Every effort shall be made to make the representation of local authorities balanced in terms of region, size and type of local authorities\(^\text{17}\).

\(^\text{17}\) UNITED NATIONS. Rules of procedure of the preparatory committee (HS/C/PC.0S/2 ). 1 March 1999.
To conclude, it was in Nairobi, at PrepCom II, that the secretariat of the conference was successful in the adoption of the innovations in relation to the participation of local governments and other partners, through the Committee II. Only after efforts by the PrepCom II is that local governments have been formally accepted by the national delegates in Nairobi to participate in the Habitat II, although the discussion had started since the call for the conference. In PrepCom III, held in New York, the UN Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali expressed support for the rule 61 in his closing speech:

You have pioneered a ground-breaking rules change. It could set a new pattern in the way the international community does business. Under rule 61, all relevant partners, especially local authorities, will be able to present their views to Habitat II. This is an innovative measure. It has been endorsed by the General Assembly. It broadens the normal participation of Member States in United Nations meetings to include representatives from their own cities. It is timely and necessary in the context of your agenda.

It is important to observe that the preparatory process for a global summit is not linear, but rather tortuous and complex. Thus, decisions taken at a meeting may return to the negotiating table at a later time, showing insecurity on the part of those who had borne with such determination. Therefore, since the question of the participation of local governments in the preparation and the conference itself is controversial, it is brought again in the following rounds, despite having been previously agreed. This issue is not exhausted in the preparatory process, although already established under rule 61, it is take up again during and after the conference, thus explaining the difficult to obtain endorsement by national delegates. The active presence of subnational units in the international scenario bothers because it stimulates the questioning of the role of national sovereignty, a difficult theme for national states to deal with as it was well illustrated in the meetings of the International Preparatory Committee for Habitat II.

Finally, "The preparatory process for Habitat II clearly pointed out the need of coping with urban issues at the global level by no more an exclusive and monolithic action of the state, but mobilizing and establishing increasingly partnerships" (ROLNIK; SAULE JR, 1997 p. 16).

19 “O processo preparatório para o Habitat II apontou claramente a necessidade do enfrentamento das questões urbanas no plano global não mais por uma exclusiva e monolítica atuação do estado, mas mobilizando e estabelecendo cada vez mais parcerias” (ROLNIK; SAULE JÚNIOR, 1997, p. 16).
Habitat II

Beyond the meetings of official delegations, a great number of parallel working groups took place and made an important contribution to the conference as a whole, finally they were noted as official events. Among those, the World Assembly of Cities and Local Authorities, which happened days before the official opening, is especially relevant to this work. The World Assembly of Cities and Local Authorities was an example of how the partners organized them, since there were a large number of participants, highlighting the coordination of local governments around the G4: "G4+ had managed to gather over five hundred high level local authorities; it had never been seen so many mayors at an international meeting. "(WILHEIM, 1998, p. 301)20.

The World Assembly of Cities and Local Authorities was designed, like other parallel events, by UN together with the G4, exposing and reinforcing the importance given by the organization to dialogue with the new actors. This meeting was essential as a landmark of the recognition by the United Nations and, therefore, its members, albeit with some concerns, of the importance of including local governments in the discussion of the problems of human settlements in the international sphere, as underlined by Alves:

These formal and official decisions of Habitat II, the subject of surprisingly little controversy considering their innovation meaning, constituted an unprecedented opening of the United Nations to "other actors", non-governmental, from national and international systems in the social sphere. Their "boldness" becomes much more evident as we recalled that in the 1993 at the Vienna Conference on Human Rights, NGOs and other non-official delegations could not even be present as observers in the deliberations of the Drafting Committee (2001, p. 255)21.

Local governments, gathered at the World Assembly of Cities and Local Authorities, presented a final statement gathering all the proposals of the group, in order

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21 "Essas decisões formais e oficiais da Habitat II, objeto de controvérsias surpreendentemente pequenas pelo que representavam em matéria de inovação, constituíram uma abertura inédita das Nações Unidas aos “outros atores”, não-estatais, dos sistemas nacionais e internacional, na área social. Sua “ousadia” torna-se tanto mais evidente ao se recordar que, na Conferência de Viena de 1993 sobre direitos humanos, as ONGs e demais delegações não-oficiais não puderam sequer estar presentes como ouvintes nas deliberações do Comitê de Redação” (2001, p. 255).
to contribute to the drafting of the final document of the conference and noted their claims. The statement reiterates the idea of strengthening local government through decentralization policies, as well as cooperation between several partners:

strengthen direct cooperation between our local authorities, with the support of the national, regional and international associations of local authorities, in order to encourage meetings between peoples, exchanges of experience and the development of partnerships between local actors. Such cooperation will also help us to build a local vision of the challenges of the future and to draw up appropriate strategies of action, in a constructive dialogue with the States, the international community, the private sector, non-governmental organizations and the other partners of civil society (UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE ON HUMAN SETTLEMENTS [Habitat II] - WORLD ASSEMBLY OF CITIES AND LOCAL AUTHORITIES. Final Declaration, 1996).

Looking beyond the national and international preparatory committees and the World Assembly of Cities and Local Authorities, local governments had a voice in the conference itself through the Partnerships Committee or Committee II (the First Committee was made up by national representatives of States). The Partnership Committee was composed by local authorities and NGOs, among other agencies, which met and were able to formulate and present recommendations to compose the final documents of the conference.

In order to constitute the proposals by Committee II, demands presented by several actors, who met in Istanbul weeks before the official opening of Habitat II, were collected. Due to the expansion of scope and diversification of participants, characterized by the Partnership Committee, the conference was also called by some media as the “Conference of Partnerships” (MACHADO FILHO, 1998, p. 145).

The new actors were present in parallel events, in meetings of official delegations, such as the World Assembly of Cities and Local Authorities, and in best practices panel, but the most significant was the Committee II, or the Partnerships Committee. Those attending, mayors, NGOs, among others, had direct contact with the official representatives of the Committee I, since the place where the negotiations took place was close (WILHEIM, 1998). Thus, in Istanbul, a different dynamic from previous conferences was observed in the parallel forums, since they were geographically close to the Committee I, there was greater interaction between the different actors who were there willing to discuss the issue of human settlements.
In the opening speech of the conference, Boutros Boutros-Ghali, Secretary-General of the United Nations emphasized the innovations brought to Istanbul, as indicated Wilheim:

Innovations of Habitat 2 are here to stay. They represent a turning point in the history of the UN. Local authorities are welcome and represent a guarantee of implementation of the decisions taken here. The spirit of Istanbul is the spirit of partnership and solidarity (WILHEIM, 1998, p. 307).

It is worth noting that the conference encompassed the entire process of preparation prior to its days in Istanbul and not just when delegates met in Turkey. The mobilization that Habitat II caused is a result of the work of everyone involved in its construction, but also demonstrates the relevance and urgency of the issue of human settlements. Therefore, all meetings made in the preparatory process to the conference are important to understand what happened in Istanbul and how the inclusion of local governments in the summit were built throughout the preparation period and aftermaths affirmed in Istanbul.

At the end of the conference, heads of national delegations presented two important documents, which encompassed the proposals of the Committee II: the Habitat Agenda and the Istanbul Declaration. The first document is extensive and serves as a guide to action for signatory countries of policies on human settlements. The Declaration is a more succinct document with a political character, and presents the main arguments contained in Agenda. The two documents have several quotes on the important role played by local governments; it is worth noting paragraph 56 of Chapter IV of the Agenda, regarding to the plan of action:

While Habitat II is a conference of States and there is much that national Governments can do to enable local communities to solve problems, the actors who will determine success or failure in improving the human settlements condition are mostly found at the community level in the public, private and non-profit sectors. It is they, local authorities and other interested parties, who are on the front line in achieving the goals of Habitat II. Although the structural causes of problems have often to be dealt with at the national and sometimes the international level, progress will depend to a large degree on local authorities, civic engagement and the forging of partnerships at all levels of government with the private sector, the

22 “As inovações de Habitat 2 estão aqui para ficar. Elas representam uma virada (turning point) na trajetória da ONU. As autoridades locais são bem-vindas e representarão a garantia de implementação das decisões aqui tomadas. O espírito de Istambul é o espírito das parcerias e da solidariedade” (WILHEIM, 1998, p. 307).
cooperative sector, non-governmental and community-based organizations, workers and employers and civil society at large.

The Second United Nations Conference on Human Settlements was an important milestone for reinforcing to the international society that human settlements are a global issue and that local governments are actors in international relations. In addition, the conference contributed to the reaffirmation, by both the Habitat Agenda and the Istanbul Declaration, of human rights gained at previous conferences and the inclusion of the right to housing.

The decision to open formal channels of participation for new representatives from different arrays is innovative and explains the dynamics of the international post-Cold War context. In the United Nations conferences of the 1990s, prior to the Habitat II, non-state actors were already present, especially NGOs, which have had a relevant role in the ECO-92. However, in previous conferences, these actors had been relegated to a parallel, unofficial participation. They were not officially included in the negotiations, leaving them with a secondary role.

During Habitat II, there were several parallel events such as the World Assembly of Cities and Local Authorities, organized under the guidance of the UN, which were considered as official. Their resolutions were forwarded to the delegates of the Committee I, who tried to draft a final text which embraced all demands.

Enlarge the process of decision making and negotiation for a UN conference is no easy task, whether international or domestic, since it seeks consensus to draft final documents. Thus, the preparatory process for Habitat II was lengthy and complicated, and certainly could not cover all the demands of various sectors interested in the matter. However, the effort to incorporate new voices to the discourse and to the design of plans of action is praiseworthy and responds to a more complex reality than that observed during the Cold War. The UN conferences of the 1990s pointed to the introduction of new issues in the international arena, as well as the introduction of new actors capable of dealing with these issues that go beyond the traditional boundaries of the Westphalia state and the anarchic international system.

**Following the Conference**

Alongside with the establishment of the Committee II for the participation of partners in Istanbul, besides the large mobilization on the participation of local
governments in general, these actors started to organize themselves more closely together. Thus, it is possible to observe the creation of new international organizations of local governments since the Habitat II. The organization which today brings together the largest number of local governments, City and Local Governments (UCLG), was formed due to the foundation of G4 in preparation for Istanbul (SALOMÓN, CANO, 2008). The congregation in institutions facilitates coordination of the demands of local authorities and makes its representation in an international forum, where there is no way to gather and give voice to all stakeholders, easier and more efficient.

The institutional evolution of the division of the United Nations responsible for handling human settlements is a demonstration of how the issue has grown over the years and how the conference of 1996 and the special session of the UN General Assembly, in 2001, were important to reassert the institutional strengthening of Habitat. In the Vancouver Conference in 1976, the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements was created. After Habitat II, the scope of action of the Habitat Centre located in Nairobi was extended, but it was only after the Habitat II +5 that the Centre was raised in the institutional hierarchy of the United Nations to become the United Nations Programme for Human Settlements (UN-HABITAT), stressing that the importance of the matters has only grow.

After the meeting Habitat II +5, held in 2001, a summit every two years were established - the World Urban Forums. The systematization of the discussion on human settlements through the World Urban Forums demonstrates a new dynamic in order to maintain constant debate and to ensure some regularity, so that the proposals and ideas are not lost with the absence of international forums. Instead of large events with long intervals between them, the forums do not let human settlements to be forgotten on the international agenda.

Conclusions

The Istanbul conference was ground-breaking in bringing the debate to other actors within the United Nations and, consequently, to international relations. The Habitat II was also important to reaffirm the human settlements as a global issue that demands the attention of the entire international community. Internationally, these two statements, actors and agenda are important and characterize the time of transition observed in international relations after the Cold War, and suggest a dynamic of global
governance (ROSENAU, 2000). The Habitat II is part of a larger context in which there is a change in the treatment of the issues that gain international system attention and actors who are participating in this "new agenda".

For international relations, the consequences of the Habitat II are related to the increasing participation of new actors in the UN system, in particular, local governments, and the reaffirm of human settlements as a relevant issue on the international agenda. As pointed out by Alves, "In the Maze of Contemporary History, Habitat-II, such as the metropolis that hosted it, represented within the diplomatic activity, a new crossroads." (ALVES, 2001 p. 280-281)

Paradiplomacy as the international activity of subnational governments gained power as a practice and as a theoretical concept in the 1990s. Habitat II provided the enabling environment for observing this phenomenon, since reaffirmed the international role of these actors.

The question of human settlements has established itself as an urgent issue for the international community. The resumption of the social agenda in the 1990s by the United Nations was essential to alert the international system of the challenges that should be tackled in a world of interconnected problems. Thus, not only the 1996 conference, but all those that preceded it, was important to place social issues at the centre of international discussions.

The major UN conferences of the 1990s reached a very large scale and were responsible for projection local governments, but also other sectors such as NGOs, to the international arena. However, it is likely that when those elaborations were made, the state representatives had not had the perception that multilateral spaces could not be solely dominated by the traditional structure of the national state. Along with the end of the Cold War, the traditional role of the states began to be questioned, and this inquiring was evident in the social UN conferences. Therefore, there is an estrangement and a resistance by states when they realized they needed to share the ground with other international actors.

This irregular behaviour of states in relation to the enlargement of international political space and the diversification of actors is expected, since the structure of the state as conceived in Westphalia in 1648, is challenged by the process of global governance in progress. However, paradiplomacy do not seems to constitute as a threat.

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to the state but as a response to the changes in the world after 1990. Dynamics of global governance makes impossible to maintain the international negotiations channels closed to sectors and stakeholders that have the ability to act both domestically and externally.

Today, the strict state action in addressing issues that are global, as human settlements, is restricted by the strength of the various actors on the international system. If the vision of the States and the United Nations in 1976 (Habitat I), was more restrictive, in 2014 it is broader and encompasses many actors who are to some extent involved directly or indirectly with urban issues. Global governance precludes the unilateral action by states, and this is possibly the most significant element since the end of the dynamics of the Cold War.

Finally, it is concluded that Habitat II was important to affirm local governments as actors in the international system and set the issue of human settlements in international relations. As a result of the changes, which are still ongoing, the local governments have emerged as important actors in the international system, and its activity, paradiplomacy, presented itself as a dynamic and growing phenomenon.
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