

**First International Convention
For a Regional and Local Approach to Development
Marseille 5/7 March 2007**

Summary of the workshops held on 6 March 2007

Xavier Gizard, Secretary General of the CPMR

Minister,
Presidents,
Representatives,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I have been given the daunting task of attempting to make an on-the-spot summary of your debates of the last two days. This is something I will not, of course, be able to achieve, given the extremely rich substance of the discussions. However I will at least try to restore the main elements, and hope that those who feel they have been left out will not hold it against me. As from tomorrow, we will work on producing a detailed report of what everyone had to say.

May I first of all express our grateful thanks to Mr Antoine Joly for the support provided by the French Foreign Affairs Ministry for this event. May I also say to Mrs Noguerol that the CPMR is at her disposal should she wish to involve our regions in the meeting that Spain intends to organise on this same subject. I would also like to warmly thank the students of the *Institut d'Etudes Politiques* of Aix-en-Provence, who listened patiently to you yesterday and who have provided me with a detailed report from each of the 12 workshops in which you took part.

What emerges from your debates and the 12 workshops, Ladies and Gentlemen, is the existence of a new force – of which you have become the spokespeople – made up of the many thousands of anonymous, humble players who, at their level, i.e. in any given territory, are firmly embracing the realities of the 21st century and seeking, at their level, at the regional level, at the local level, the most appropriate responses of the present time to the realities of globalisation.

Two lessons emerge from your accounts and your contributions. It is around these that I would like to structure my summary.

- The first is that, contrary to the title of a book recently published by an American journalist, the world is not flat, it really is not flat. He uses this image to describe how new information technologies are bringing in a third era of globalisation, in which the planet's population of 6 billion individuals are in direct competition with each other.
- The second, to paraphrase one of the candidates in the French Presidential election concerning the inner city areas in France where many young people of foreign origin live, is that the regions are not a problem, they are part of the solution to the challenges of globalisation.

It is on this basis, born of your experience, that a regional and local approach to development can be built.

The world really is not flat. Mr Abdel Hai Bousfiha, Secretary General of the National Habitat Council, hit the nail on the head when talking of his country. "Morocco must have access to

globalisation without losing its own identity," he said, thus summing up the overall feeling expressed by all of you.

It is true that the world has become flatter as a result of the technological modernisation of trade, with the digital revolution and the reduction in transport costs, which has intensified the circulation of information, goods, capital, and people.

And it is true that there are universal risks which threaten the very conditions of human life (climate change, risks of pandemics, water management, sources of energy).

But although this world is threatened by technical flatness, humanity is anything but flat. On the contrary, all your contributions highlight not only its extreme diversity but even more importantly the fact that only the acknowledgement, the recognition and the exploitation of the value of this diversity, an acceptance of the infinite difference between each of the territories where there is human settlement, only this acceptance can lead peoples and citizens along the path of development.

What emerges first of all from all the workshops is the assertion, born from your experience as local and regional officials or NGO activists, that the first step in any development initiative must be to involve the people concerned in expressing their needs and in drawing up the responses to these needs. And this involvement must include all stakeholders, in a multi-partner partnership, on a local and regional basis. What you are asking for is a decentralised response to globalisation.

For this we need the necessary methodologies such as the ART-GOLD methodology.

We also need the necessary administrative and elective frameworks, with a need for North-South, South-South, and North-North exchanges of good practice.

And this should be done on a regional and local basis, which is the direction in which various agencies of the United Nations, such as the ILO or FAO, are moving.

The territory. This emerges as a certainty in the face of the challenges of globalisation, quite simply because it refers to the place where human beings live. Some further explanation is required.

You have talked of the globalisation-related changes in the roles of local authorities, in terms of thematic challenges and, as a result, in the capacities of the authorities and their agents to respond in a qualified manner to the new needs and expectations.

You raise the question of what are the best territorial levels (regional, local) at which to analyse problems and deliver satisfactory solutions. You note that there is dissipation when the territory is too segmented, too 'local' (Angelino Garzon, Colombia; Irina Rekchan, Saint-Petersburg). And you call for the organisation of coherent territories (workshop 5) to combat the dissipation of efforts. You call for the regional level to be strengthened as the meso-economic, social and environmental level.

But you are neither naïve, nor utopian. You do not demand exclusivity for the regions. You advocate a 'multi-level' governance, or approach, ranging from the local to the global, via the nation state which remains the guarantor of the major basic objectives such as education, the organisation of prevention of natural disasters, or conflict resolution. You call for this combination of efforts and you want to see, on this basis, the legal and financial frameworks being constructed pragmatically for each level.

Everywhere you call for this cross-fertilisation of local know-how and global know-how, you place your bets on this mix to exploit the value of each territory's specific features (Abdelhadi Benallal, workshop 6 on nutrition).

You call for the security of development strategies to be guaranteed. Someone mentioned 25-year programmes. I'm thinking at the moment of Danuta Hübner's account of the experience of European regional policy, which already gives quite a clear picture of their resources to regional actors: 7 years guaranteed for projects that have a structuring impact. Could the other continental and world organisations take inspiration from this commitment to multi-annual funding?

In this area of financial resources, you have a great deal of experience and an abundance of proposals, including:

- tax initiatives for renewable energies and 'eco-appropriate' buildings (project between Norway and China),
- differentiated pricing for water,
- micro credit and local health insurance schemes,
- a major idea of an energy debt of the developed countries vis-à-vis the poor countries (Mrs Essop).

The other clear contribution from your discussions concerns the recognition of the importance of sustainable development, and making growth and employment compatible with the protection of the planet. You have spoken of the need for 'awareness of our interdependence' in the field of water management (Vice President of Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur). And for you the same applies to energy sources or responses to climate change. This widely shared attitude is something new, even if some of you rightly emphasise that in a situation where people are more concerned with their short-term survival, the prospect of sustainability cannot really be taken into account. However, as soon as we enter a development dynamic, it is an aspect that quickly comes to the fore, as a Chinese representative underlined.

In the matter of this dual need for development and sustainability, you advocate several principles that should underpin our action:

- it should be based on a rationale of cooperation rather than competition between territories,
- we should be moving towards sustainable competitiveness, taking into account the costs that arise from excessive competition.

You place your bets on knowledge. You place your bets on exploiting the value of the human factor, in two ways in particular:

- first and foremost through basic education, with the indispensable and urgent task of closing the gap between boys and girls in this field,
- through migrations, the contribution of which to local and regional dynamics you underline. You also highlight the difficulty of the situations of the regions and countries of origin and of the host regions and countries, due to the lack of national, continental or global legislative and regulatory frameworks to deal with this increase in population movements. You underline the incoherencies of the European Union. You underline the need to channel financial flows back to the countries of origin. You emphasise co-development and its security.

These, Ladies and Gentlemen, are some of the main elements retained from your debates. You are not asking for any monopoly. You want the right people and the right institutions to work at the right level, from the local to the global, because nearly all the challenges of the 21st century, nearly all the Millennium Development Goals, are matters for the concern of all these levels.

And, for your part, you say that the regional level is ready and willing to contribute its new energy to mobilising all those concerned.

