



International Coalition
of Inclusive and
Sustainable Cities – ICCAR



United States Coalition of Cities against Racism and Discrimination

Perspective paper

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The United States Coalition of Cities against Racism is interested in sharing experience and expertise in order to improve their policies to fight racism, discrimination and xenophobia. This initiative was launched by UNESCO in 2004 and the United States Department of State launched the United States coalition in September of 2013. United States Cities are working to improve policies and legislation that act in the best interests of all people regardless of their national, ethnic, cultural, religious or social origin, allowing every segment of the population to live in dignity, security and justice.

The United States Coalition is leveraging public, private partnerships with non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and private foundations to help make urban areas throughout the United States more inclusive. The United States Conference of Mayors, the African American Mayor's association, the Dalai Lama Center for Ethics and Transformative Values at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), Harvard's School of Education and the Human Rights Institute at Columbia Law School have all contributed in some way to the success of the U.S. Coalition, as we continue to gather signatories. After leaving the First Meeting of the Global Steering Committee for ICCAR, held in Bologna, Italy, on 17-18 April 2016, we decided to focus on the history of segregation and its impact still today, just fifty years later, on inclusive and sustainable cities in the United States, using Birmingham, Alabama as the example.

The mission of the United States Coalition is embodied in the 10 Points Action Plan, a document that identifies the priorities and sets out guidance for its member cities across the following areas:

- greater vigilance against racism
- assessing racism and discrimination and monitoring municipal policies
- better support for victims of racism and discriminations
- more participation and better informed city dwellers
- the city as an active supporter of equal opportunity practices
- the city as an equal opportunity employer and service provider
- fair access to housing
- challenging racism and discrimination through education
- promoting cultural diversity
- hate crimes and conflict management

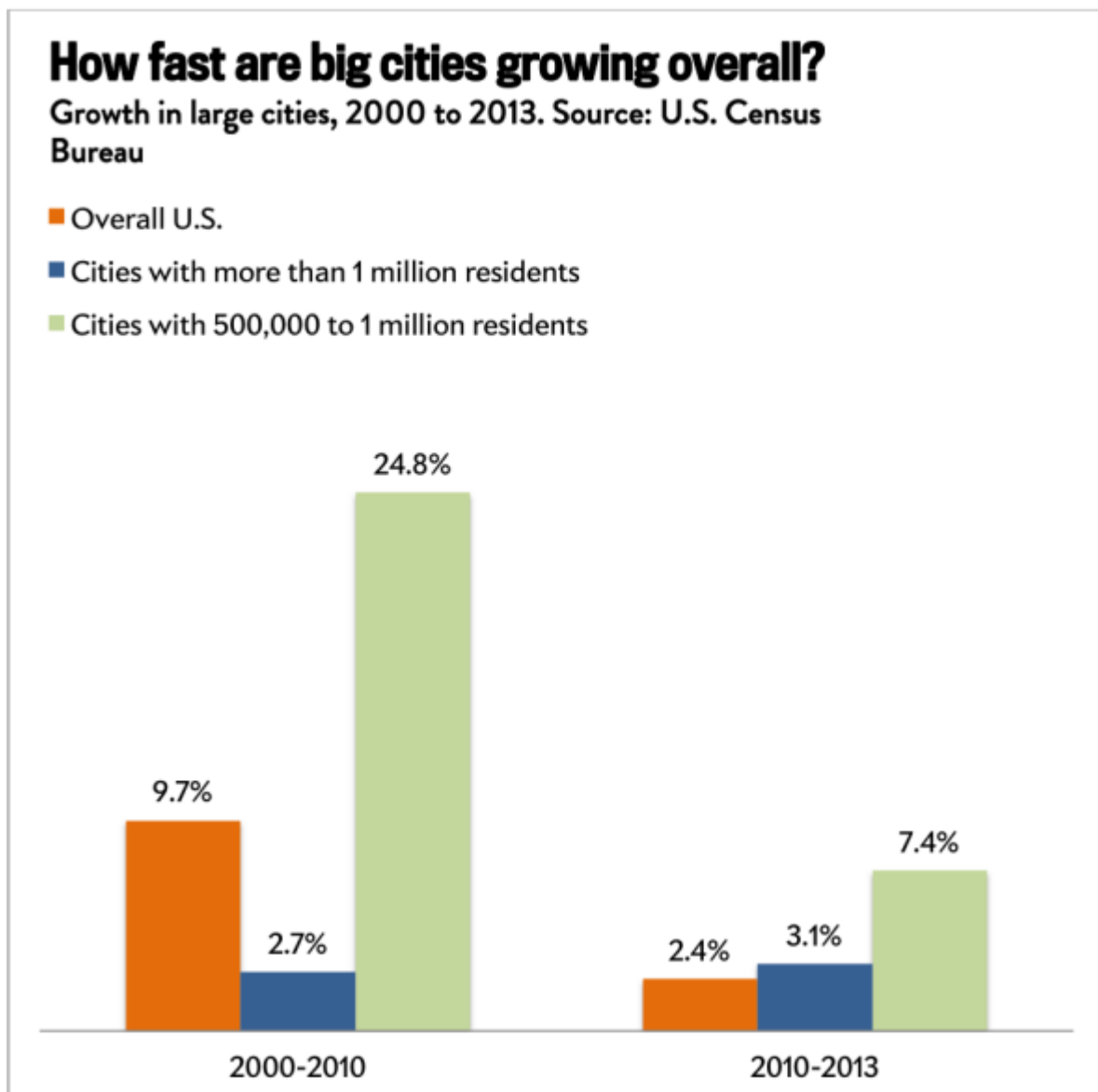
With the wave of police incidents, protests and the rise of the black lives matter movement, it is important for the global audience to understand that the United States is just fifty years from a deeply divided and deeply segregated existence. We have made tremendous progress and will continue. Conversations held in Birmingham, the heart of the racist South, for the past fifty years, are only just being explored in many parts of the United States. Our President, Barack Obama, the

first African American President in the Country's history, continues to break barriers and shine a light on the dark corners of racism insuring that we continue to make progress and solve the lingering problems working until everyone is treated equally and with honor and dignity.

Urbanization in the United States

Stories about America's urban renaissance have become common. The populations of big cities are growing faster than the United States as a whole, which has its positive aspects, especially since dense urban areas tend to be the most efficient and economically productive.

The United States Census Bureau shared its estimates of which locales have expanded quickest in these post-recession years. As a group, the largest cities, with populations exceeding 1 million, are growing far faster than before. During the entire first decade of the 21st century, they expanded by 2.1 percent. Between 2010 and 2013, though, they've bulked up by 3.1 percent. Though the Census Bureau doesn't break down the numbers on this front, experts suggest that it is that mostly has to do with fast-growing cities in the South and West crossing the 1 million threshold then continuing apace.



Source: U.S. Census; http://www.slate.com/blogs/moneybox/2015/03/04/u_s_urbanization_big_cities_are_booming.html

Inclusive cities

Several member cities of the U.S. Coalition of Cities against Racism and Discrimination have decided to cross promote and enhance the ICCAR experience by working together to promote inclusive behaviors and policies impacting upon various areas of municipal governments. Scheduled to be fully discussed during the mid-winter conference of the United States Conference of Mayors, the tenants are as follows:¹

1 | Promoting an inclusive education system, which expands opportunities for people of all ages and backgrounds to develop their human capital, acquire relevant skills and improve their life chances.

- **Work to ensure access to high quality education for all people in our city**, regardless of social background, as an indispensable pillar for inclusive growth. We recognize that educational outcomes can vary significantly among and within cities. We acknowledge that committing to high quality education for all will demand a focus on quality teachers, supporting disadvantaged students, addressing social and spatial segregation in education, and efforts to promote a more level educational playing field.
- **Recognize the diverse and numerous benefits of investing in Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC)**. These include boosting social, educational and economic performance of children in the long term; supporting parents and boosting female labor market participation; and acting as a lever to even out population inequalities.
- **Support investments in life-long learning and skills development**, recognizing that low-skilled individuals face significant labor market barriers, and that rapid technological and digital change means that low-skilled individuals are at risk of being left behind. Recognizing that development policies should focus on equipping adults with the knowledge they need for the labor markets of today and tomorrow – for instance by improving proficiency with technology and computers, on up-skilling and re-skilling all along the working lives of individuals, and on effectively putting skills to use in the workplace and in the living environment.
- **Support access to strong tertiary education for all, particularly the most vulnerable, and investments in Research and Development (R&D)**, because cities act as innovation hubs and bring together the human capital, resources and agglomeration forces that can help spur innovation and boost productivity.

2 | Promoting an inclusive labor market, in which women, youth, immigrants and people of all backgrounds have access to quality employment opportunities.

- **Promote a cross-cutting approach to improve labor market access for all**. This may be achieved through better matching of people to jobs, making more effective use of existing skills, and supporting vulnerable groups in business creation and self-employment. Concrete actions may include investing in education and training at the local level; engaging employers to invest in the skills of their staff and how they use technology in the production process, especially those with weaker skills; and supporting existing small businesses and local entrepreneurs by providing effective support services.
- **Work to develop targeted strategies for vulnerable populations who need extra support to integrate into the labor market**, working in partnership with firms and relevant economic and educational stakeholders. Initiatives should be tailored to meet specific needs and could

¹ Source: OECD, 2016: <https://www.oecd.org/inclusive-growth/about/inclusive-cities-campaign/Session%20Notes%20-%20FINAL.pdf>

include, as feasible: improving childcare support and facilitating more egalitarian parental leave policies; recognizing equivalent skills and certification and language training for immigrants and refugees; or working with partners to ensure that education and training systems equip young people with relevant skills for the labor market.

- **Work to improve the quality of jobs, particularly for low-skilled workers.** This could include developing career pathways that support progression; addressing in-work poverty (including but not limited to living wage campaigns); and working with employers to improve the quality of working environments where needed.
- **Work to facilitate the integration of migrants and refugees in our cities and our societies,** given the larger proportion of migrants that typically settle in urban areas and in recognition that migrants and refugees are key assets for a productive, inclusive society. This may include efforts to promote their employability through recognition of equivalent skills and certifications; pathways to entrepreneurship; and support for access to housing, education opportunities and other essential services.

3 | Building more inclusive urban environments, which provide quality, affordable housing in safe, healthy neighborhoods for all segments of the population.

- **Develop a comprehensive strategy to boost housing affordability and availability,** which may include: implementing supply-side and demand-side measures that target both owner-occupied and rental housing; contributing, where relevant, to social housing policies and programs; adopting strategies to make the existing housing stock more affordable; and creating incentives and/or removing barriers to new affordable housing development, including in the planning and zoning system.
- **Pursue integrated strategies to improve livability, quality of life and well-being in urban neighborhoods,** particularly in disadvantaged neighborhoods and/or areas that may be characterized by high levels of social segregation. We will also aim to avoid concentrating low-income populations in certain areas of the city or metropolitan area, and take steps to remedy the situation where these concentrations already exist by improving living conditions and access to quality services.
- **Link planning and investment for housing and infrastructure (particularly transport),** to ensure that all parts of the metropolitan area have access to quality housing, key public services, and economic opportunities. We will work with neighboring jurisdictions, other levels of government and relevant public and private authorities to guide decisions around housing, urban development, and transport infrastructure and regulation within the broader metropolitan area.
- **Tackle housing exclusion and homelessness** by developing strategies that combine the provision of housing with integrated health and social care support. We will seek to align housing support at local level with the broader social benefits landscape.
- **Work to ensure that efforts to combat climate change** and enhance the environmental sustainability of our cities also contribute to more equitable outcomes in our cities and our societies.

4 | Ensuring access to quality infrastructure and public services.

- **Improve access to vital services and infrastructure** – including transport, energy, information and communication technology, drinking water, sanitation, irrigation, healthcare and education – as an essential means of fostering economic growth and social

inclusion. We will work with relevant partners to increase the affordability and accessibility of essential services, including ensuring greater access to water services, protecting against water risks and reducing energy poverty.

- **Enhance accessibility within cities and metropolitan areas.** Concrete strategies may include developing well-integrated sustainable transport systems; prioritizing investment to improve conditions for pedestrians, cyclists and public transport users; integrating transport accessibility and affordability assessment into housing and land-use policy decisions; implementing efficient pricing frameworks for private vehicles; or pursuing affordable and financially sustainable schemes for public transport.
- **Access the long-term impact of infrastructure investment in urban areas,** taking into account economic, environmental and social criteria. We will seek to integrate the social impact of investment in urban infrastructure, notably on low-income populations, in *ex-ante* assessments of infrastructure decisions.
- **Acknowledge that health outcomes can vary significantly** between and within cities and metropolitan areas, and have important interactions with income inequality, employment status and education level. In cases in which local governments may provide health care services and assure social protection measures, we will seek to ensure that health services are economically and geographically accessible to all, of high quality, and comprehensive, with particular attention to public health strategies which may fall under local jurisdiction.

Building community trust and justice

Six member cities are part of a pilot, led by Birmingham, Alabama for building community trust and justice, a project to improve relationships and increase trust between communities and the criminal justice system and advance the public and scholarly understandings of the issues contributing to those relationships. In collaboration with the U.S. Department of Justice, the National Initiative is coordinated by the National Network for Safe Communities at John Jay College of Criminal Justice, with partnership from the Justice Collaboratory at Yale Law School, the Center for Policing Equity at John Jay College and UCLA, and the Urban Institute. The National Initiative's work involves trust-building interventions with police departments and communities based on three pillars:

- **Enhancing procedural justice:** the way police interact with the public, and how those interactions shape the public's views of the police, their willingness to obey the law, and their engagement in co-producing public safety in their neighborhoods.
- **Reducing the impact of implicit bias:** the automatic associations individuals make between groups of people and stereotypes about those groups, and the influence it has in policing.
- **Fostering reconciliation:** frank engagements between minority communities and law enforcement to address historical tensions, grievances, and misconceptions that contribute to mutual mistrust and misunderstanding and prevent police and communities from working together.

The National Initiative also regularly evaluates its interventions to determine effectiveness, and is committed to building and sharing a knowledge and practice base for communities everywhere. Birmingham was selected as a pilot site for its demonstrated willingness and capacity to engage in the National Initiative's research, intervention, and evaluation process, as well as its jurisdiction size, ethnic and religious composition, and population density.

The United States Coalition, under the leadership of the city of Birmingham, is committed to growing the Coalition and continuing to advance the inclusive character of cities across the nation. Several key meetings will take place in 2017 that will allow the U.S. Coalition to double its numbers and further the goals set forth in the original 10 point plan.