

**Voice of
the Mayors**



Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas

Ciudad de México

The relationship between the National
Government and the City Government

About

Voice of the Mayors

Celebrating its thirtieth anniversary, METROPOLIS wishes to leverage the unique experience of its members, represented by the mayors of the major metropolises, presidents and governors of metropolitan regions. Too often, the expertise of these high-ranking officials is lost once their term has come to an end. However, at a time when global urban development is quickening its pace, their experience is more beneficial than ever for the new generations of local decision-makers, the entire spectrum of public and private local development stakeholders and partners in the international community.

In its capacity as a network of the world's major metropolises, METROPOLIS also seeks to make an active contribution to the current international debate concerning the revision of the Millennium Development Goals, negotiations on climate change and the preparations for the United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development (Habitat III).

This is how the idea for **Voice of the Mayors** came into being, as a wealth of first-hand testimonies from local and regional leaders whose experience deserves to be recounted and disseminated. Bequeathing this legacy also conveys the willingness of METROPOLIS members to share their experiences and to enhance the exchange of knowledge, a concerted effort to contribute towards shaping sustainable urban development worldwide.

Upon the creation of METROPOLIS in 1984, the 14 founding members expressed their desire to work together to strengthen their mutual capacities to manage their cities. **Voice of the Mayors** helps to achieve this goal with the 136 members that comprise METROPOLIS today and the young generations of local decision-makers.

The testimony you are about to read serves to enhance the association's training activities and the work carried out within the framework of the METROPOLIS Initiatives, the METROPOLIS Women International Network and of METROPOLIS Youth.

The experience of the leading decision-makers in major metropolises across the world is essential. They manage the day-to-day needs of millions of citizens as regards housing, mobility, education, health, safety and energy, to name but a few. They run cities, urban areas and metropolitan regions that are sometimes larger than certain United Nations member states in terms of population, budget size and global reach. They are the main political leaders on the front line, tackling the challenges facing the planet. Nevertheless, this role has yet to be sufficiently recognised in present-day international relations.

It is Metropolis' aspiration that **Voice of the Mayors** will help these leaders' words to be better heard, listened to and taken into consideration by the international community.

Alain LE SAUX
METROPOLIS Secretary-General
October, 2014



Curriculum vítæ

CUAUHTÉMOC CÁRDENAS

México, D.F., 1° de mayo de 1934.

1951-1955 Escuela Nacional de Ingenieros (actualmente Facultad de Ingeniería). Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México (UNAM). Título de Ingeniero Civil obtenido el 22 de enero de 1957, con la tesis "Aprovechamiento de los recursos del bajo río Balsas".

1962-1964 Sociedad Mexicana de Planificación.- Presidente.

1970-1974 Sociedad Interamericana de Planificación (SIAP), con sede en San Juan Puerto Rico, y posteriormente en Bogotá, Colombia.- Presidente de la Junta Directiva. Movimiento de Liberación Nacional.- Miembro del Comité Nacional.

1967-1968 Confederación Nacional Campesina.- Presidente del Consejo Técnico Consultivo. Senador de la República, representando al Estado de Michoacán. Gobernador Constitucional de Michoacán.

1986-1988 Miembro de la Corriente Democrática dentro del PRI.

1987-1988 Candidato a Presidente de la República postulado por el Frente Democrático Nacional. Partido de la Revolución Democrática.- Presidente. Candidato a Presidente de la República postulado por el PRD.

1995 a la fecha - Fundación para la Democracia.- Presidente. Jefe de Gobierno (Alcalde) del Distrito Federal (Ciudad de México).

1999-2000 Candidato a Presidente de la República postulado por la coalición Alianza por México, integrada por el Partido de la Revolución Democrática y otros partidos políticos.

2003 Profesor Visitante (Tinker Visiting Professor) de la Universidad de Chicago.

2003-2008 Vicepresidente de la Internacional Socialista

2006 Profesor en el Centro de Estudios Latinoamericanos de la Universidad de California - Berkeley.

2008 a la fecha - Presidente Honorario de la Internacional Socialista

2008 a la fecha - Centro Lázaro Cárdenas y Amalia Solórzano. - Presidente

2010 Profesor en el Centro de Estudios Latinoamericanos de la Universidad de California - Berkeley

Dic. 2012 a la fecha - Coordinador de Asuntos Internacionales del Gobierno del Distrito Federal.

Feb-May 2013 Profesor visitante de la Universidad de Notre Dame

Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas

The relationship between the National Government and the Government of Mexico City (1997-1999).

The Federal District was created in 1824, recognized as such in the first republican constitution of the country. Mexico City is located within the Federal District, always recognized as the capital of the Republic. Throughout the twentieth century, the population settlements of the Federal District -now conurbated-elect municipal governments, like those of any other state in the country until 1929, when municipalities were replaced by delegations, which were now led by a designated authority.

The Federal District never had an elected authority with jurisdiction all over its territory. The Governor of the Federal District was an authority appointed by the President of the Republic until 1929, when that office was disappeared and replaced by a Chief of the Department of the Federal District, also appointed by the Federal Executive, a situation that lasted until December 5th, 1997.

Mexico City was not properly recognized in the various constitutions which ruled the life of the country until 1941, when the Organic Law of the Federal District and Territories established that Mexico City corresponded to the territory called Central Department, which in that capacity replaced the Delegation General Anaya (one of thirteen Delegations in which the Federal District was then divided). The Chief of the Central Department had political and administrative jurisdiction over all the entity. In December 1970, the Central Department -Mexico City- was divided into four Delegations: Miguel Hidalgo, Benito Juárez, Cuauhtémoc, and Venustiano Carranza, losing the official name of Mexico City, leaving only the Federal District in the Constitution. The legal recognition of Mexico City was recovered in the reform that became in force on October 25, 1993, which states that Mexico City is also the Federal District, seat of the Powers of the Union and capital of the United Mexican States.

In December 1994, three weeks after a new presidential term began and the new President of Mexico took office, a severe economic crisis erupted, which evolved from what is commonly



called the mistake of December. It resulted in a sudden and sharp devaluation of the peso, a decline of the economy in 1995 of about 6 percent of the GDP, strong political and social tensions and a 50 billion bailout credit to the government of Mexico agreed by President Clinton, backed-up by oil production. The measures taken to overcome this crisis were not only economic. On the political ground the electoral authority was granted autonomy¹, the Assembly of Representatives of the Federal District turned into a Legislative Assembly, obtaining more powers, electing the head of government of the Federal District became a reality -on this first occasion to fulfill a transitional period of three years; the government period would be of six years afterwards-, The Delegados (Chiefs of Delegations) would no longer be appointed but proposed by the Chief of Government and approved by the Legislative Assembly. In subsequent elections, the Delegados would be elected by direct vote of the citizens and called Chiefs of Delegations.

On the first Sunday of July, 1997 the first-time convocation for electing the Chief of Government of the Federal District took place. The capital of the Republic prepared itself, enthusiastically, to choose for the first time, its Chief of Government.

Because of the urgency of the lawmakers or some other unknown reason, the elected official was not called Governor. Such official would have jurisdiction over the entire territory of the Federal District considered in the Constitution as the territory of a state, part of the Federation. This official was nor called Municipal President because it was not a municipality -although some functions are equivalent to those of the municipalities-nor alcalde (in Mexico alcalde, equivalent to mayor, is not an officially used denomination).

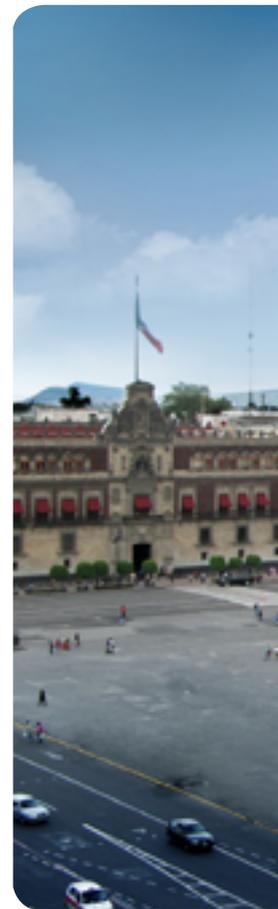
Anyway, leaving aside the question of denominations, two candidates emerged for the primary called by the Party of the Democratic Rev-

olution (PRD): Porfirio Muñoz Ledo and I. The campaign period for the primary was short, thirteen days, but with a condition that had not occurred in previous elections: for the first time the media, especially television and radio, opened spaces for the opposition (the national government was on the hands of the Institutional Revolutionary Party. Media had been closed almost completely, especially for the progressive opposition).

For the two aspiring candidates those were days of intense activity, which set in motion not only the constituents of the PRD, but also other important sectors of the city's society. Moreover, the opening of the media gave way to so many invitations to television and radio interviews, that many of them could not be accepted. Open television broadcasters based in the capital but with national coverage, turned the primary campaigns into campaigns with an impact on the whole population, not just in the Federal District but in the whole country.

In the election, open to party members and to anyone who wanted to vote, I was elected PRD candidate for Chief of Government. The primary served as a catapult that gave me advantage over the candidates of the other parties. However it looked hard to beat the PRI candidate, because this party throughout its history, from 1946 until then, in state elections, had only lost the governorship of Baja California in 1989. The regime didn't seem willing to lose any other state government, specially, not that of the capital city, although on that occasion the electoral process would be led by the new federal electoral authority, which recently had been granted autonomy.²

The electoral campaign was unlike any previous. It was the first one in the Federal District for electing an authority with jurisdiction over the entire territory, led by an authority not under the Executive, coinciding with the intermediate election of federal deputies and for the first time with the media really open to all political parties. The



¹The electoral Federal Commission was led by the Ministry of the Interior, and it had representatives of the Chambers of the Congress and an uneven representation of the political parties, more or less in function of their legislative representation. The commission was replaced by the Federal Electoral Institute, an autonomous agency, in which there was not representation of the Executive and where parties have a presence with voice, but no vote..

²The Electoral Institute of the Federal District started functions on January 15, 1999



opening of the media, indeed, as I have pointed out, made the election for Chief of Government a national political event.

On July 6, 1997 elections were held. The PRD won the Chief of Government seat and 38 out of the 40 deputy seats of majority; deputy seats of proportional representation were won by the opposition, according to the law then in force. The inauguration would take place on December 5. A waiting period of almost five months had been opened.

On election day I received by telephone, at night, greetings from the President and his offering that the Department of the Federal District would inform the status of the different areas of the city administration to anyone I would appoint. So, a few days after the election, meetings between officials of the Department of the Federal District and the people I appointed began. I was present during most of those meetings for receiving information the different officials considered relevant in connection with the various agencies they were in charge.

At the same time, qualitative changes needed to occur because we were transitioning from a government managed as a delegation or commission of the Federal Executive, to an autonomous government within a federal system. In addition, an opposition-borne government was replacing an official-borne government, with proposals and visions on fundamental issues clearly opposed, both national and local.

During the transition period from the outgoing to the incoming government, the media, induced by various interests, began to attack and pressure the government that had not yet taken office, to address and solve different problems. The apparent good relationship with officials who passed information to those who would replace them, occurred in parallel with the hostility of the official political organizations. They had lost a political position of great importance, which they never expected to happen, and they had lost it to the opposition which confronted them the most.

The information received from the outgoing government was general. Nothing that could be called confidential or to prevent possible problems was reported. The new officials found empty computers in the different agencies. Important open issues such as accounts payable to vendors and contractors, as well as last-minute commitments for housing projects had been hidden with the clear purpose of inheriting problems to the new administration. These issues only became known when the creditors demanded compliance. In the case of documented payments, payments were covered during the first months in office. Offers of housing, which had no backing, other than the requests of applicants, had to be postponed.

The discomfort of the federal government with the opposition victory was seen, among others, in the fact that on December 4, 1997, one day before the new government took office, the Congress, with an official majority, reformed the Statute of Government of the Federal District, reaffirming in Article 7 that "the government of the Federal District (DF) is under the charge of the federal powers", expanding and ratifying measures limiting the powers or politically consti-



tuting a threat to the new Chief of Government concerning the amount and control of public debt by the Federal Congress, procedures for removal of the Chief of Government, the obligation of the Public Ministry of local government to participate in the National System of Public Security or the authority to instruct the Chief of Government on the disposition of the security forces and the performance of duties on public safety.

Some areas that the new administration considered important had not been considered as such by the outgoing government, like everything that has to do with social, culture and sports issues. Other areas accumulated too many functions like the Department of Education, Health and Social Development. So, after the long name but little effective activity, the Institutes of Culture and Sports, the Health Department and Social Development Department were created. The Health Department kept those services already under the responsibility of the local government and others were transferred from the federal government. In the case of education, the local government was only responsible for the maintenance of schools. Educational issues and the relationship with the teachers union continued under the federal government.

The new Chief of Government appointed all its collaborators. By provisions of the law, the appointment of the Attorney General must be approved by the President of the Republic. The Secretary of Public Security (chief of the public force- police) is appointed by the President. In both cases, the proposals made were immediately accepted by the Federal Executive. Procedures for appointing these officials are limitations on the autonomy of the government of the Federal District, which remain and do not exist in the cases of the other state governments in the country.

Federal agencies that had to transfer facilities or services to the newly elected government kept those more efficient and with better equipment, those with wider service capacity. In the area of health, for example, the federal gov-



ernment kept large specialty institutes and the best equipped hospitals, and turned the small clinics to the local government, those which make the first contact with the population, most of them in poor material conditions and lacking equipment. We had to work to regain its service capabilities as a first priority.

The case of the culture area is representative of how facilities and services were received in different areas: "A museum turned into a ballroom, a theater was dismantled and another ceded to private entrepreneurs, an educational center transferred to the Federal Government, a broken laser beam, the philharmonic orchestra in crisis, choirs and bands with no directors or instruments, musicians employed as janitors, school gangs in charge of programs for the youth, and cultural centers of delegations completely abandoned, this was the heritage the city had to start with to regenerate the cultural life. The Fine Arts Palace, the National Arts Centre, the National Theater, the Cultural Complex of Chapultepec, the Cinematheque, art museums, cultural television channels, radio stations, theater, dance and opera national companies, based in Mexico City, continued under the administration of the federal government. There was an exclusion of Mexico City on the budgets allocated for cultural development to the rest of the states."³

On the other hand, throughout the three

³Alejandro Aura: "De la creación del Instituto de Cultura de la ciudad de México: la experiencia cultural del primer gobierno electo, 1997-2000" en "¿Una ciudad para todos? La Ciudad de México, la experiencia del primer gobierno electo". Universidad Autónoma Metropolitana-Unidad Azcapotzalco, México, 2002

years of the new administration, the necessary coordination with federal agencies was conducted normally, provided that the federal side did just its part, not generating any additional benefit to the population or the government of the Federal District, which could go against their political interests. The top federal officials held a warm welcome to local officials, but tried to avoid them as much as possible, especially in public appearances, and mainly in the case of the Chief of Government.

In all of our activities, we tried to keep as close as possible to the campaign commitments. The program presented as “A city for everybody” was the framework for the formulation of the development plan for the 1997-2000 administration, which was submitted to the Legislature and approved by it.

A fundamental objective of the new government was to recover the city to its inhabitants, the administration would serve the city and not serve itself of it, as had been the case with the recent previous administrations. The government structure had to be reorganized, part by part, and the task demanded time and attention. New teams had to be integrated to become efficient in key areas: social development, the Attorney General, culture, urban development, public works, understanding that while trying to reduce the differences in the quality of services in different parts of the city, it should address social problems and promote cultural activities as a way to integrate a large community by creating citizenship.

We never thought of building sumptuary works. We tried to go to the root of the problems and solve them both through government actions as with the participation of the people. Public works and activities were designed so as to reach and disperse throughout the city, not concentrate in certain areas. Contact and exchange with the people in the neighborhoods, towns, and residential units of the different delegations was continuous, with tours of the Chief of Government and heads of the different departments. The mayor’s office was always open to the people of the city.

It is difficult to make a balance when dis-

ussing activities under one’s personal responsibility and accountability. I believe, however, that we accomplished what we had committed, to set the foundations of a future change for broadening and deepening democratic spaces and avenues of citizen participation, as well as best practices in governance.

This is the way in which the relationship between the governments of the Republic and Mexico City, the capital, took place during the years of the first elected government of the Federal District.

Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas
Mexico City, December 12, 2013.

METROPOLIS' VOICE OF THE MAYORS IS SUPPORTED BY

Cities Alliance

Cities Without Slums

The Cities Alliance is a global partnership for urban poverty reduction and the promotion of the role of cities in sustainable development. Cities Alliance Members include local authorities, national governments, non-governmental organisations, multilateral organisations, and associate members. METROPOLIS is a founding member of Cities Alliance.

www.citiesalliance.org



The Global fund for cities development (FMDV) was created in October 2010 at the initiative of METROPOLIS, United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG) and 34 founding members (cities and city networks). It is an international political organisation which aims to strengthen solidarity and financial capacity by and among local authorities and is complementary to existing mobilisation, coordination and advocacy networks.

www.fmdv.net



Created in 2004, United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG) is the united voice and world advocate of local and regional self-government. Members of UCLG are present in 140 countries, and are organized into seven regional sections, a Forum of Regions, and a metropolitan section coordinated by METROPOLIS. UCLG's membership includes over 1,000 cities and regions, as well as 155 local government associations.

www.uclg.org



The World Urban Campaign is a global partnership coordinated by UN-Habitat, designed to promote a positive vision of sustainable urbanization and to place the urban agenda at the highest level in development policies. It is meant to build alliances with all the sectors of society in a movement to provide a knowledge and action-oriented platform to address urban challenges. It is a platform for Habitat III, the United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development to be held in 2016.

www.worldurbancampaign.org

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Voice of the Mayors # 05

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