

CODATU XII

DECENTRALIZED COOPERATION IN URBAN TRANSPORTS

Scientific conclusions

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I expressly request the indulgence of the attendance, if by chance I totally betrayed the subject and depth of the debates that we have had over the past two days.

First of all, 25 years is not insignificant; 25 years means adulthood in most of our civilizations and cultures. CODATU is 25 years old.

And the choice to hold CODATU XII in Lyon for its 25th Anniversary is not insignificant either. Lyon is certainly, among the French cities, the one that is the most actively involved in the activities of decentralized cooperation, and it turns out that the city of Lyon chairs the decentralized cooperation commission of the world organization of United Cities and Local Governments.

The moment is not badly chosen either: time of convictions is left behind on behalf of time of questionings. We moved from being convinced that formal transport organized around heavy systems was the only answer adapted to the realization of transportation in big metropolises (the only ones where the question of transport was supposed to be raised!) and that this answer should spread, to a period when doubt with regard to this conviction is gaining ground. It is remarkable that all the CODATU conferences held up until now took place in cities which were setting up subways, tramways, heavy systems of transport. This is an extraordinary coincidence which actually reveals the culture of a time dominated by permanent and unique solutions. It is from the conference of Lome in 2002 that there has been a sort of break with regard to this culture and this break has not only occurred within CODATU, but also within the great international institutions such as the World Bank, as well as regional banks, and even by the great operators. Everybody realized that more flexibility, more adaptation to contexts was needed. This fact was particularly obvious in the works of CODATU XII: what impressed me in the 6 sessions which marked out our works was the attention now granted to the contexts as regard the consideration of transport problems and the implementation of adapted solutions.

All the presentations insisted a lot on the fact that different solutions correspond to each context and that these different solutions themselves require different conditions of services. And it is one of the stakes that CODATU has to raise from now on: how to put in synergy all these different proposals with the necessity of a joint reflection? Maybe one of the major lines to be privileged henceforth is a better understanding of the emergence and development of an urban transport economy understood in all its facets, and of the role of organization and regulation that should be played by local authorities for the improvement of the access to the service and of the performance of the sector. Attention should also be paid to medium-sized cities where the problem of the mastery of the transport questions is more at the scale of what local authorities can do and not only to large cities as it was case up to now.

The first challenge that we have to face and which was underlined during our works is to have transport listed among the priorities of the municipal action and the international community. Charles JOSSELIN said it from the very beginning, transport is not listed among the objectives of the millennium for development. This should speak to the community of transport. One of CODATU's missions for the new period would probably be to plead in favour of transport, as transport is what allows access to the basic services that are education, health, safety; it is what allows economic development. How can we be satisfied with the non-consideration of transport among the objectives of the millennium? How come that the European Union which sets up in its cooperation with Southern countries a certain number of instruments such as water facility, now energy facility has not thought of setting up transport facility? CODATU must politically plead to convince of the importance to get interested and to invest in the sector of urban transport if we are coherent with the realization of the objectives of the millennium for development.

Another conclusion of the exchanges which took place is the profusion of initiatives in decentralized cooperation and we should be satisfied with this. The more people cooperate, the more peoples get closer. And the more people cooperate at the local level, the more people get closer in a real, concrete and sustainable way. But the field of transport still has the smallest share in the programmes of decentralized cooperation. To increase the transport activity in this cooperation is the responsibility of local governments themselves. However this can be done only if local governments agree to debate, as they did for water, over the necessity of a financing of international solidarity among local governments in the field of transport. What could be considered for example is to take a percentile of the turnover of public transport of local governments in the North to help in the promotion of public transports in local governments in the South. Why couldn't the equivalent of the 1 % of the Oudin law on water and purification be applied in the field of transport? This is a questioning towards CODATU and the local governments of the North, so that systems of innovative and supportive financing in the field of transport can see the light within relatively short delays. The difficulty of the task is no secret. But to ensure that a minimum of means is foreseen in this field, it is precisely necessary to have access to permanent resources of this kind. To have resources is not enough. It is still necessary to define the mechanisms of access to these resources, and even then, CODATU has to play its role to define such mechanisms and to stimulate the community of local governments that wish to invest in decentralized cooperation in the field of the urban transports.

A third element which was widely underlined is the strengthening of capacities. This idea is on everybody's lips every time we speak about development and local governments. To avoid that it appears as a pet theme, it is necessary to be a little more specific. We are right to insist on the fact that the intensification of capacities should not remain the business of bilateralism in decentralized cooperation and that it is absolutely necessary to mutualize; and mutualization in this field goes through the use of existing institutions and the commitment of the national associations of local governments. I think there is a strategic reflection to be led at this level, and in the case of Africa, the organization of United Cities and Local Government of Africa (CGLUA) is ready for a partnership with CODATU so that this mutualization gets

organized at the best interests of partner cities. The field of transport is a strong capitalistic field of a complex access considering the differences of geographic, economic and cultural situations. We need to inform the experiences of decentralized cooperation in this field to avoid making the same mistakes and to learn from the success met. This task of capitalization is typically within the competence of CODATU and the university and research networks associated to it. We also need tools of analysis and help to make decisions. I inform in that respect that the Partnership for the Municipal Development (PDM) is working at present on a guide to the attention of local governments for their commitment in the organization of urban mobility and transportation. I know that other institutions are making a similar job focused on particular fields of interest. It is very important that such tools are mutualized somewhere and shared in a network as CODATU's. We need to articulate the initiatives of partners in development. I was struck by the availability of the World Bank, the AFD and the other partners to look with more attention at the cooperation with local governments in the field of transport. But it is necessary for local governments not to show too much enthusiasm at this attention. On the contrary, they have to give themselves the means to discipline the offer of the partners in development, because this offer sometimes excludes the attention paid by local governments to local sensibility, to local contexts. For the moment, unfortunately, the procedures of the great organizations are not flexible enough to adapt to the tricks of local problems, to the tricks of local policy. We have a great stake here which is to assert the necessity of the public utility of transport. It is not necessary that in the name of the economic efficiency, all public policy of transport is given up. It is necessary that the word of politicians enables to assert everybody's right to the access to transport. Now one of the presentations during our works showed that globalization maybe urges us too easily to refer to the market, to the rate, to the customer and to forget the citizens, the voters and solidarity. I think that on this point, we have something to say to the partners in development who are especially driven by the forces of globalization.

The last thing I would like to say is that we had extraordinary examples of decentralized cooperation in the field of transport: Hanoi's case in Vietnam showed that, with an investment of 1dedicated to economic planning and to the feasibility study of a system of transport, the Ile de France Region, the city of Brussels, the city of Hanover and the city of Hanoi were capable of raising eight times as much financing to set up a modern system of transport. Here is an example which shows the power and interest of decentralized cooperation in the field of transport, the power of mutualization, the capacity of spur to action in more important financing, provided that local governments give themselves the means to do it and provided that they really focus on these questions of transport. This encouraging example should be meditated within the CODATU network, and gives in a way one of the most promising directions of decentralized cooperation in the field of urban transports.

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