

CODATU XII
DECENTRALIZED COOPERATION IN URBAN TRANSPORTS
Presentation of the topic by the two co-presidents of the Scientific Committee of CODATU XII
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Why does decentralized cooperation seem to be more difficult in the field of urban transport than in the other fields? Probably because urban transport can still be considered as a secondary priority only with regard to other subjects; in the relation to development, it is clear that health, education, water, purification are considered as more important priorities, or at least more acknowledged: in this respect, you only need to refer to the objectives of the millennium adopted in the year 2000 which still do not include transport in their lists; it is also probable that the transport system implies political, legal, financial conditions, which are not often gathered.

A system of urban transport means a state which is enough organized to set up this system, at least, to help the first actors, that is to say the local governments, set up such a system. It is clear that a strong local authority is needed to be able to assume this transport responsibility, politically strong to fully assume the relation with the populations, the associations and the users. Financial means, still very insufficient, and legal means are also needed, as the concept of intermunicipal links, which has very often enabled to go beyond the obstacles encountered between the city centre and the suburb in France, is only being set up.

Urban transport cannot be left at a second rank in actions of decentralized cooperation, because it first questions what the matrix of all public policies is a little like: town planning. Now it should be noted that decentralized cooperation, which was sometimes based on very punctual elements, is, if not globalizing, at least taking into account more global approaches of development. Town planning is one of it and from the moment there is decentralized cooperation on the subject of town planning, urban transports cannot be ignored, especially since the mastery of energy henceforth appears as a fundamental stake.

It should also be reminded that mobility is a synonym of freedom and that an essential dimension of urban transport is to give city-dwellers a feeling of belonging and a feeling of dignity. Now unfortunately, many African countries have noted disinterest in the policy of transport and in particular urban transports from the authorities, which led to a slow degradation of what existed, worsened by the fact that most local governments of Southern countries had no competence of transport. Indeed this competence was given to States or to State companies and very often, when they collapsed, the authorities had, by default, to start again a mission for which they were not prepared.

That is why it is necessary to develop decentralized cooperation in urban transports: transport management has become a requirement in sustainable development and the management of people's transportation in dignity is a requirement of life quality in our societies.

It is therefore important that the countries that have set up systems which are efficient and adapted to the demand can share their experiences.

The three fields in which decentralized cooperation in urban transports could be developed concern:

- planning and organization of transport systems: how to organize the sector by taking into account all types of transportation and all types of transport? How to anticipate the future? How to set up structures adapted to the management of transportation at the adequate scale?
- traffic management: consideration of pedestrians and two wheeled vehicles, management of policemen regulating the traffic for a better safety of vehicles and people, parking management
- management of roads and infrastructures: financing and maintenance.

CODATU therefore has an important role to play by making transport a vector of international solidarity.

[Back to Menu](#)