

# Responsive Urban Governance

## A REPLICATION GUIDE

**Governance is defined as “distinct from government” and refers to the “relationship between the civil society and the state, between rulers and the ruled, the state and society, the government and the governed”. (Halfani et al, 1994) This definition veers away from the traditional definition of governance that merely focuses on government structures and institutional state processes. Halfani’s definition puts politics and power at the nexus of governance. Thus, central on the issue of urban governance is “the political relationship between the state and the different groups in society, particularly the urban poor”. (Porio, 1997)**

Sociologist, Dr. Emma Porio (1997) defined urban governance as the “power relationship among the different stakeholders in cities”. Dr. Porio highlighted the issue of the legitimacy of the state leadership and institutions or “power brokers” such as political parties, non-government organizations (NGOs) and community-based organizations (CBOs). According to Halfani, et al (1994), “state legitimacy and credibility are partly achieved through accountability, transparency, responsiveness, genuine public participation and consultation”.

Civil society, largely made up of popular organizations, social movements, voluntary organizations, citizens associations including progressive business and economic groups, is recognized as a “moral force”. (Karaos, 1994; Porio, 1997) This is because power in civil society is transformative as it is geared towards building the capacity of disadvantaged groups in terms of dealing with the state and its powerful instrumentalities



through the articulation of values and demands calling for accountability and responsiveness in governance. In the process, civil society is strengthened vis-à-vis the government. (Porio, 1997)

Therefore, **good governance or urban governance** for that matter, is ensured when both **“state and groups in civil society are able to create and sustain structures and mechanisms which eventually allow redistributive measures”**. As a result, marginalized groups such as the urban poor are able to benefit from the fruits of political and economic growth by way of increased political and economic participation. (Porio, 1997)

### **Challenges of Urban Governance**

Urban centers play an important and crucial role in national development. Aside from serving as political hubs, these centers contribute a substantial portion in industrial production and economic growth. According to experts, almost three-fourths of national investments, consumption and expenditures are accounted by urban centers. Since there are more jobs created in the cities, thousands of people seeking for work from the rural areas are attracted to migrate. Escalating problems of pollution and garbage, sanitation, transportation, water shortages, shortage of low-cost and affordable housing, increase in slum communities, rise of criminality, problems in peace and order are just some of the dire consequence of urban migration that face many cities in the country today. (Porio, 1997)

The metropolitan and urban centers in the Philippines are rapidly growing. Urban population is almost a third of the country's total population. According to the National Statistics Office (NSO), the country's 113 cities are home to more than 25 million Filipinos. (LCP, 2001) Cities could hardly keep up with the demands and needs of its growing population,

further exerting more pressure in the cities' capacity to deliver basic services, much more provide decent homes and productive sources of livelihood. Consequently, poverty has become prevalent in many city enclaves, home to slum dwellers and urban poor communities.

Poverty in urban centers is largely characterized by economic vulnerability brought about by insecurity of jobs, lack of productive income sources, lack of affordable decent housing, environmental degradation and lack of access to basic services. Urban governments therefore face enormous challenges in meeting the needs of its growing population. The tensions arising from these challenges demand new forms and strategies in urban governance. (Porio, 1997)