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## No democracy without transparency

Public Services International General Secretary Rosa Pavanelli stressed the importance of transparency in public services as a means to fight corruption and to obtain resources to cover the needs of public service users, during forum discussions at the United Cities and Local Governments World Summit in Rabat, Morocco, 1-4 October.

Pavanelli was a featured speaker on the panel “Promoting local economic development.” It was the only panel in the Summit that included trade union representatives.

She highlighted that public services contribute substantially to the economic growth and productivity of local communities, and that it is necessary to look at quality public services as a factor of economic development – rather than a cost to cut.

“The contribution to sustainable development of public services such as education, healthcare, water and sanitation is invaluable, and must be considered as an investment in building inclusive, cohesive and fair societies,” Pavanelli said.

“Transparency is a pillar for building democracy and is based on the willingness of all parties: workers, institutions, decision-makers, citizens, and users of the services we provide, to accept a transparent way of living in our communities. Fighting corruption is crucial to democratic institutions, and enables funding for public services accessible to all,” she emphasized.

Pavanelli highlighted the importance of South-South cooperation, but noted the overriding tendency towards private-private partnerships. “Public-public partnerships are vital for the development of our local communities,” said Pavanelli, “They enable communities to share best practices while encouraging public cooperation rather than private competition, and they help to keep common goods and natural resources firmly in public hands.”

Decisions on sustainable economic development at municipal and local government levels need to be made without delay. “The future is now,” said Pavanelli, “we cannot afford to wait.” Without action, the future for young people looks especially bleak. In 15 years, some 60 per cent of the world’s population will be around 18 years old. Young people in many countries today are already deeply affected by high unemployment rates.

While the discussion focused on the inclusion of the informal sector in local economies, Pavanelli said it is important to develop public service measures that regulate the informal sector so that young people can develop their activity. A further vital means of reducing poverty will be the implementation through quality public services of the Social Protection Floor promoted by the International Labour Organization.

“Public services workers are not simply concerned about their working conditions or their collective bargaining agreements,” said Pavanelli. “They are primarily concerned about the quality of life for the people and communities they provide services to every day.”