Governance, Competitiveness and Innovation

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The United Nations recognizes that good urban governance "is characterized by the interdependent principles of sustainability, equity, efficiency, transparency and accountability, security, civic engagement and citizenship"[1].

The theme track named, "Governance, Competiveness and Innovation" is particularly well chosen for a conference like the *7TH VIRTUAL CITIES AND TERRITORIES*. In today's global world, cities play a major role, competing for reaching the top, being innovation a central keyword in this arena.

All the papers presented under this theme track are a good example of the importance of these aspects and the multiple ways to tackle them.

New models of governance, increasing the public participation process, with more collaborative approaches, provide better information to the citizens but at the same time create more responsibilities in the decision making process (**Augusto**). Knowledge is also other of the ways of improving competitiveness, helping to achieve more sustainable and efficient models of governance, exploring the technology, like video surveillance and all the constraints imposed (**Rojas-Arredondo** *et al*)

The look for more competitive and efficient models of governance is also present at the cases of Venezuela (**Giraud**), searching for indicators that could assess the development processes and readjust the old processes to the new developments (**Diaz**); the look for bridges between governance and competitiveness in urban areas (**Ajuriaguerra**), finding interesting correlations that need to be explored in further detailed and in México, were the globalization presented new challenges for the reshaping of the cities (**Gonzalez and Medina**).

All this scenarios and trends have also to be put in context of the different realities, were clearly the situations faced in Mexico (**Verduzco**) and Venezuela (**Fariña** *et al*) demand different solutions and strategies adapted to the local specificities from the ones in Portugal, Spain and France, (**Florentino**).

Finally an important issue, that is present in several of the papers in an indirect way, is transportation, which is addressed, using the example of the Italian Railways System, revealing concepts like social justice and how important they can be for mobility and occupation of the territory (**Panato and Cerasoli**).

All this papers and the reaming ones, promise very intense and lively sessions, with the discussion of new methodologies applied to different realities, producing better

understanding of these phenomena and contribute for a innovation and better governance of cities in the competitive environment mentioned before.

REFERENCES

[1]   United Nations (2010) **State of the World's Cities 2010/2011 - Cities for All: Bridging the Urban Divide**. UN-HABITAT, 224pp.