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Cities and Globalization

Michael Harcourt
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CITIES AND GLOBALIZATION: GOVERNANCE

IT IS MY GREAT PLEASURE TO BE HERE WITH CESAR, ALBERTO AND TAZID,- AND I THANK CHRIS FOR ACTING AS OUR MODERATOR TODAY.

SHAPING CITIES THAT WILL BE RESILIENT IN THE FACE OF UNCEASING GLOBAL CHANGE HAS BEEN MY MAJOR CONCERN FOR THE LAST TWO DECADES, FIRST AS MAYOR OF VANCOUVER AND PREMIER OF BRITISH COLUMBIA AND THEN, FOR THE LAST TWO YEARS, AS CHAIR OF THE PRIME MINISTER'S ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON CITIES AND COMMUNITIES IN CANADA.

I HAVE THREE GENERAL OBSERVATIONS FROM MY EXPERIENCES. FIRST, GLOBALISATION IS UBIQUITOUS AND HERE FOR THE LONG TERM; WE MUST CHALLENGE CITIZENS AND GOVERNMENTS TO ARTICULATE NEW VISIONS FOR THEMSELVES AND WHERE THEY LIVE, CONSTRUCTED ON PRINCIPLES OF SUSTAINABILITY AND CREATIVITY.

SECOND, GLOBALISATION BRINGS A MIX OF EFFECTS THAT VARIES FROM PLACE TO PLACE, EVEN WITHIN THE SAME CITY. IGNORING THESE EFFECTS REDUCES CAPACITY TO CREATE FURTHER OPPORTUNITIES.

THIRD, THERE IS GROWING EVIDENCE THAT WE CAN HELP FASHION BETTER, SUSTAINABLE OUTCOMES BY PROMOTING GOVERNANCE MECHANISMS THAT ARE APPROPRIATE FOR THESE NEW TIMES. IT IS ON THIS THIRD POINT THAT I WILL FOCUS MY REMARKS.

HAVING TALKED WITH MANY OF YOU OVER THE YEARS AND LISTENED TO MANY OTHERS, I FEEL THE CHALLENGES OUR CITIES ARE FACING ARE GLOBAL --- BUT THE RESPONSES - OR OPPORTUNITIES - ARE LOCAL.

I'M SURE YOU'D AGREE THAT ALL OUR CITIES HAVE FACED RAPID CHANGE OVER THE PAST 30 YEARS DUE TO FACTORS INCLUDING GLOBAL SHIFTS AND NEW TECHNOLOGIES.

IN GENERAL, MOST OF THE WORLD'S MAJOR CITIES HAVE BEEN MANAGING GROWTH RATHER THAN FACING DECLINE. BUT I THINK THESE CITIES ARE UNEASY WITH THIS GROWTH, AND ILL-EQUIPPED TO RESPOND TO IT.

WE USED TO TALK ABOUT COUNTRIES COMPETING AGAINST EACH OTHER FOR ECONOMIC PROSPERITY AND BETTERMENT. I THINK IT IS MORE PROFOUND THAN THAT NOW. -

BY THAT I MEAN THAT CITIES MUST NOW COMPETE WITH EACH OTHER, NOT JUST DOMESTICALLY, BUT WITH OTHER CITIES AROUND THE WORLD. THIS IS BECAUSE CITIES FUNCTION AS THE ECONOMIC ENGINES FOR A COUNTRY - AND TO BE THOSE ENGINES THEY MUST BE ABLE TO FUNCTION IN THE GLOBAL ARENA.

THIS CHANGES THE WAY COUNTRIES LOOK AT THEIR OWN CITIES.

AND THIS LEADS ME TO WHAT I FEEL IS AT THE HEART OF ENSURING OUR CITIES CAN MEET THE GLOBALIZATION CHALLENGE. I BELIEVE IT HINGES ON GOVERNANCE. NOT GOVERNMENT...BUT THE WAY CITIES ARE GOVERNED.

OF COURSE THERE IS NO GOVERNANCE FORMULA THAT FITS ALL CITIES, COUNTRIES OR UNIONS. BUT I THINK THERE IS DEFINITELY A COMMON GROUND WE CAN ALL USE AND THAT IS PARTNERSHIP.

RIGHT HERE TODAY, ON THIS STAGE, WE REPRESENT A VARIETY OF GOVERNMENT STRUCTURES: FEDERATIVE REPUBLIC, PARLIAMENTARY MONARCHY, REPUBLIC AND CONSTITUTIONAL MONARCHY.

WHY THEN, IN THIS ENVIRONMENT, WOULD I ATTEMPT TO LOOK AT GOVERNANCE WHEN WE ARE TALKING ABOUT CITIES AND GLOBALIZATION?

QUITE SIMPLY, BECAUSE I BELIEVE THAT IN THE GLOBAL CONTEXT, GOVERNANCE IS THE KEY TO SUCCESS.

THERE ARE TWO ASPECTS TO THIS ARGUMENT.

FIRST - PLACE MATTERS.

SECONDLY, RESOURCES AND RESPONSIBILITIES SHOULD BE DEVOLVED TO THE LEVEL OF GOVERNMENT AT WHICH THEY CAN OPERATE MOST EFFECTIVELY.

LET ME FIRST TACKLE THE ISSUE OF PLACE.

IN OUR BIG CITIES, AT THE LOCAL LEVEL, THE CHOICES WE MAKE IN WELCOMING AND SETTLING IMMIGRANT WORKERS, ATTRACTING HUMAN TALENT, ADDRESSING URBAN PLANNING AND INTEGRATING LABOUR MARKETS ALL AFFECT OUR ABILITY TO COMPETE GLOBALLY.

THERE IS NOT MUCH EVIDENCE, IN MY MIND, THAT MANY OF OUR CITIES HAVE THE CAPACITY TO MAKE THE BEST CHOICES.

THIS LEADS ME TO MY SECOND POINT: DEVOLUTION OF POWERS AND RESOURCES.

OECD COUNTRIES ARE FAMILIAR WITH THIS CONCEPT. INDEED ...THERE ALREADY EXISTS A RECOGNITION THAT DECISIONS ARE BEST MADE AS CLOSE AS POSSIBLE TO CITIZENS - THE CONSUMERS AND TAXPAYERS.

I AM SUGGESTING THAT WE WORK WITHIN OUR EXISTING NATIONAL POLITICAL STRUCTURES, TOGETHER AS PARTNERS, AT EVERY LEVEL OF GOVERNMENT, TO ENSURE THAT OUR CITIES HAVE THE POWERS AND THE RESOURCES THEY NEED.

IN SO DOING, WE EMPOWER THEM TO COMPETE ON THE WORLD STAGE.

ALLOW ME TO USE CANADA AS A TANGIBLE EXAMPLE.

CANADA IS A CONSTITUTIONAL MONARCHY - A FEDERATION - MEANING THERE IS A NATIONAL GOVERNMENT THAT DEVOLVES SOME AUTONOMY TO SMALLER GOVERNMENTS IN THE PROVINCES AND TERRITORIES. THIS CONSTITUTIONAL STRUCTURE AFFECTS NEARLY EVERYTHING WE DO IN CANADA.

IF THAT SOUNDS CONFUSING, LET ME SHARE WITH YOU A GREAT QUOTE: "CANADA IS A COUNTRY THAT WORKS IN PRACTICE, BUT NOT IN THEORY."

THERE IS INDEED A CLEAR CONSTITUTIONAL DIVIDE IN FEDERAL AND PROVINCIAL RESPONSIBILITIES...AND INDEED YOU'D THINK WE WOULD HAVE TROUBLE. BUT IT REALLY DOES WORK...FOR THE MOST PART.

FOR INSTANCE, IT IS QUITE CLEAR IN OUR CONSTITUTION THAT MUNICIPAL INSTITUTIONS ARE THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE PROVINCES BUT THE CONSTITUTION DOES NOT SAY ONLY PROVINCES CAN ADDRESS MUNICIPAL ISSUES - ONLY THAT AT THE END OF THE DAY THEY ARE ACCOUNTABLE.

TO BRING THIS BACK TO MY POINT ABOUT CITIES NEEDING THE POWERS AND RESOURCES TO MEET OPPORTUNITY, I'LL POINT OUT TO YOU THAT IN CANADA, THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT CLEARLY HAS CONSTITUTIONALLY-SUPPORTED RESPONSIBILITY FOR MATTERS SUCH AS TRADE, IMMIGRATION AND SECURITY. ISSUES THAT HAVE THEIR BIGGEST IMPACT IN OUR CITIES AND THAT ARE SOME OF THE VERY ISSUES AT THE HEART OF GLOBALIZATION - ARE DECISIONS OUR FEDERAL GOVERNMENT MUST MAKE WITH CITIES FIRMLY IN MIND.

I SEE THE NEED FOR CONSTITUTIONAL FLEXIBILITY THAT ENABLES CITIES TO SEIZE THE OPPORTUNITIES PRESENTED BY GLOBALIZATION.

TO ME, THIS MEANS NATIONAL GOVERNMENTS MUST TAKE THE LEAD ON FORMING PARTNERSHIPS THAT INCLUDE MUNICIPALITIES TO MAKE SURE DECISIONS TAKEN AT ANY LEVEL WORK LOCALLY.

IF I AM ABLE TO PASS ONE MESSAGE TO NATIONAL GOVERNMENTS IT WOULD BE THIS: OUR CITIES ARE OUR GREATEST ASSETS.

THEY ARE THE DRIVERS OF OUR ECONOMIES. THEY ARE WHERE OUR POPULATIONS ARE CONCENTRATED. THEY HAVE A PROFOUND IMPACT UPON

OUR ENVIRONMENTS THROUGH LAND USE AND AIR QUALITY. THEIR CULTURAL CAPITAL MAKES THEM LIVEABLE AND MAGNETS FOR TOURISM.

OUR CITIES CANNOT SHOULDER THESE RESPONSIBILITIES ALONE. I AM ADVOCATING FOR STRONG PARTNERSHIPS AMONG ALL ORDERS OF GOVERNMENT TO GIVE OUR CITIES THE COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE THEY NEED IN THIS GLOBALIZED WORLD IN WHICH WE NOW LIVE.

IN CONCLUSION, LET ME SIMPLY SAY THAT I AM INCREASINGLY CONVINCED THAT BALANCING GLOBALIZATION REQUIRES INFORMED LOCAL RESPONSES TO INTERNATIONAL CHALLENGES...AND THAT THE KEY TO SUCCESS LIES IN GOOD GOVERNANCE.

THANK YOU.