FIDEPA 06

6th INTERNATIONAL FORUM ON PARTICIPATORY DEMOCRACY IN AFRICA

OIDP AFRICA

AEL

Dakar, November 4-6, 2025

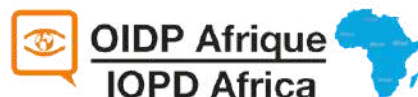Road To **DAKAR**

6TH INTERNATIONAL FORUM ON PARTICIPATORY DEMOCRACY IN AFRICA

November 4 - 6 2025

FROM RESILIENCE TO SOVEREIGNTY: ROLES OF CITIES, TERRITORIES, AND ACTORS

MUCTAT

AEL Union des Associations d'Élus Locaux Dooleel Elilokoyi

OIDP Afrique IOPD Africa

BACKGROUND AND RATIONALE

The current international context is marked by successive and interconnected crises that have a strong impact on societies: health, geopolitical conflicts, climate change, rising world prices, political instability. These disruptions have revealed the fragility of central systems and reinforced the need to anchor development dynamics at all territorial scales.

In Africa, the context is marked by an unprecedented demographic transition, with a mostly young population that could reach 2.5 billion by 2050 (UNDESA, 2022), and rapid urbanization, with about 700 million new urban dwellers within 25 years (OECD, 2025). This growth exacerbates challenges related to employment, infrastructure and basic services: 600 million Africans without electricity (World Bank, 2024), 400 million without drinking water (AfDB, 2023), and 256 million in food insecurity (FAO, 2019), aggravated by climate change (coastal erosion, droughts, floods, etc.). Urban poverty and inequality persist despite economic growth, while the informal sector, which accounts for 85% of jobs (UNDP, 2022), remains vital but precarious.

The context is also marked by uncontrolled urbanization, limited access to land and resources, migratory pressure, youth unemployment, urban insecurity and the digital divide, with only 38% of the African population having access to the internet, which complicates development (ITU, 2023). These interrelated challenges call for integrated policies for an inclusive, resilient transition supported by innovations and strengthened governance.

Faced with these multifaceted challenges, many African countries have adopted decentralization reforms aimed at bringing public action closer to citizens and strengthening the effectiveness of development policies, building better resilience and projecting themselves towards sovereignty.

In this context, territories – whether urban, peri-urban or rural – appear to be spaces of resilience, innovation, proximity and participation. They demonstrate their ability to react quickly to crises, mobilize endogenous resources and promote inclusive governance, adapted to the needs of the populations. Increasingly, citizens and community organizations are engaging in the co-construction of local public policies.

This local dynamic, driven by the growing involvement of citizens and the vitality of the territories, invites us to rethink the very foundations of development. It raises several questions: How can we move from this often spontaneous or cyclical resilience to a better thought out and structured approach to territorial sovereignty? What are the levers and anchors of this sovereignty in its holistic dimension (political, economic, ecological, cultural)? What roles for community dynamics? How can it be integrated into an overall vision of Africa's development, starting from its territories and their capacities to define their own priorities, to produce locally, to consume responsibly, and to defend its cultural and linguistic identities?

The International Observatory of Participatory Democracy for Africa (IOPD Africa), in collaboration with the Union of Associations of Local Elected Officials of Senegal, is organizing the 6th edition of the International Forum on Participatory Democracy in Africa (FIDEPA06), around the theme: **"From resilience to sovereignty: roles of cities, territories and actors"**. This forum is placed under the institutional anchoring of the Ministry of Urban Planning, Local Governments and Land Planning (MUCTAT) of Senegal, which also chairs the Technical Sub-Committee No. 8 of the African Union, on decentralization and local governance.

The Dakar Forum, scheduled from November 04 to 06 2025, will be a privileged opportunity to share inspiring experiences, good practices and innovations, as well as to foster dialogue between national and local governments, international institutions, the scientific community, civil society and citizens. It will contribute to the development of concrete recommendations for African cities and territories to play a more strategic role in building resilience and sovereignty. It will be an international meeting of actors committed to innovative forms of governance, where territories become the anchor point of democratic transformation, social inclusion and sovereignty.

Objectives of the Forum

The FIDEPA06 aims to serve as a platform for reflection and sharing of experiences on the current and future roles of cities, territories, and citizens in strengthening democratic systems and building endogenous sovereignties. Specifically, it seeks to:

1 Analyze the dynamics of territorial resilience in Africa in response to various crises (democratic, geopolitical, health, food, energy, security, etc.).

2 Explore the conditions for transforming these dynamics into genuine levers of local, national, and continental sovereignty.

3 Promote dialogue between national and local governments, civil society organizations, universities and research centers, and various partners involved in cities and territories.

4 Develop recommendations and concrete action plans to strengthen the accountability and capacity of cities and territories to contribute to the sovereignty of African states.

THEMATIC FOCUS

FIDEPA06 will bring together participants from Africa and around the world to focus on the central theme: "**From Resilience to Sovereignty: Roles of Cities, Territories, and Actors**." This main theme will be broken down into three (3) sub-themes, namely:

1. **Democratic Sovereignty:** Building citizen power from the ground up through territories;
2. **Economic Sovereignty:** Promoting financial accountability and empowerment of African territories;
3. **Digital Sovereignty:** Harnessing data to connect cities and territories.

High-Level Panel 1: "Democratic Sovereignty: Building Citizen Power from the Ground Up"
Tuesday, November 4, 2025 – 2:30 PM to 4:00 PM GMT

Democratic sovereignty refers to the capacity of citizens to exercise real and shared power over collective decisions through participatory, inclusive, and deliberative mechanisms. It is most meaningful when it is rooted in territories—close to the needs, identities, and aspirations of local communities. In a context where citizen participation is increasingly marked by mistrust and distrust toward institutions, democratic sovereignty emerges as a key issue for rebuilding legitimacy from the ground up.

This first high-level panel will explore local and community-based expressions of democracy, co-construction practices in public policymaking, and the dynamics of embedding citizen power within territories.

Breakout Sessions

Tuesday, November 4, 2025 – 4:00 PM to 6:00 PM GMT

Session 1: "Local Democracy and Citizen Participation: Engines of Legitimate Governance"

This session will focus on democratic innovations implemented at the local level—such as participatory budgeting, citizens' assemblies, and other mechanisms—and their impact on the legitimacy of local authorities and the strengthening of public institutions.

Session 2: "Inclusive Governance in Africa and Beyond: What Roles for Territorial Actors?"

This session will explore the dynamics of inclusion, participation, and representation in local governance—focusing on the involvement of youth, vulnerable groups, marginalized neighborhoods, persons with disabilities, and other key actors at the territorial level.

High-Level Panel 2: "**Economic Sovereignty:** Towards Financial Empowerment of African Territories"
Wednesday, November 5, 2025 – 9:30 AM to 11:00 AM GMT

Economic sovereignty refers to the ability of territories to define their own development paths, mobilize their resources, and control the production, distribution, and consumption chains. In a context marked by a significant decline in international development aid, strong dependence on external markets, and the fragility of informal economies, African cities and territories are called upon to fundamentally rethink their economic models. This panel will explore pathways to building inclusive, resilient, circular local economies rooted in endogenous resources.
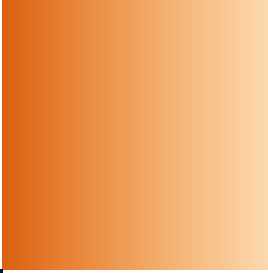

Breakout Sessions

Wednesday, November 5, 2025 – 11:30 AM to 1:30 PM GMT

Session 3: "Local Economies and Short Supply Chains: Towards a Revival of Territorial Production"

This session will focus on the promotion of local production. It will explore opportunities offered by urban and peri-urban agriculture, local commerce, cooperatives, local entrepreneurship, as well as innovations stemming from the circular economy and the social and solidarity economy.

Session 4: "Local Taxation, Alternative Financing, and Endogenous Partnerships: How to Build Economic Sovereignty?"

This session will provide a space to discuss various financing tools for cities and territories, including local taxes, crowdfunding, public-private partnerships, and more, aimed at supporting local productive investment.

High-Level Panel 3: "**Digital Sovereignty:** Mastering Data to Connect Territories"

Wednesday, November 5, 2025 – 2:30 PM to 4:00 PM GMT

Digital sovereignty refers to the ability of states and territories to develop and control their own technological infrastructures, protect their data, regulate digital usage, and design solutions aligned with their development priorities.On a continent undergoing rapid digital transformation, this sovereignty becomes a strategic lever for territorial development. Accordingly, this third high-level panel will discuss digital strategies aimed at mastering infrastructures, data, and platforms at the local level. It will address issues related to artificial intelligence, cybersecurity, data protection, and data governance. The panel will also explore the opportunities presented by smart cities, the digitization of public services, and the conditions for a digital transition that serves citizens while respecting cultural identities and local specificities.

Breakout Sessions

Wednesday, November 5, 2025 – 4:00 PM to 6:00 PM GMT

Session 5: "Public Data and Territorial Intelligence: Governing with Digital Technology"

This session will explore various digital governance initiatives that support the transition of cities and territories into smart cities. It will showcase experiences in digitizing administrative procedures, opening budget data, creating citizen feedback platforms, and deploying digital decision-support tools.

The session will also highlight the opportunities offered by the gradual integration of artificial intelligence in territorial management, while emphasizing critical challenges related to cybersecurity and data sovereignty.

Session 6: "Digital Inclusion: Connecting Territories and Citizens to the Digital Revolution"

This session will examine policies and initiatives aimed at ensuring equitable access to digital technologies for territories and populations. It will address challenges related to internet access, strengthening local digital skills, protecting personal data, and strategies to reduce the digital divide—especially in rural areas. Special attention will be given to the inclusion of marginalized groups to ensure that the digital transition promotes equity, citizen empowerment, and technological justice.

OVERALL ORGANIZATION OF THE FORUM

A **Scientific Space** structured around a inaugural conference, high-level panels, and thematic workshops, leading up to the adoption of the Dakar Declaration.

An **Exhibition and Collaboration Hub** designed to enhance the visibility of cities, territories, businesses, and various urban stakeholders, while also providing capacity-building opportunities for participants.

This hub will remain open throughout the entire three-day event.

An **Excellence Gala** celebrating territorial achievements, highlighted by the presentation of the Trophies for the Pan-African edition of the Local Leadership Excellence Award (PELL). This event will honor ministries, local authorities, academic researchers, journalists and communicators, young innovators, and transformative citizens who demonstrate the best practices, innovations, and inspiring experiences in decentralization and the development of cities and territories.

DAKAR, HOST CITY

Dakar, the capital of Senegal, is a vibrant metropolis located at the westernmost tip of Africa, bordered by the Atlantic Ocean. As a major economic, political, and cultural hub of the country, the city accounts for nearly half of the national wealth and plays a strategic role in regional and international exchanges.

A cosmopolitan and lively city, Dakar is also a key cultural crossroads where tradition meets modernity. It hosts prestigious institutions such as the Museum of Black Civilizations, which highlights the richness of African heritage, as well as major international events like the Dakar Biennale (Dak'Art), a showcase for contemporary African art.

Steeped in a rich and sometimes painful history—particularly through Gorée Island, a UNESCO World Heritage site—the city reflects a past full of memory while firmly looking toward the future. The African Renaissance Monument, a towering symbol of a continent on the move, overlooks the city as a powerful statement of identity and hope.

KING FAHD PALACE, VENUE OF THE FORUM

The King Fahd Palace is one of the most prestigious hotels and conference centers in West Africa. Located at Pointe des Almadies, in a stunning setting along the Atlantic Ocean, it is just an hour's drive from Blaise Diagne International Airport (AIBD) and in close proximity to numerous diplomatic and economic institutions.

Featuring over 370 rooms and suites, 66 meeting rooms, a 700-seat amphitheater, and several versatile banquet halls, the venue is perfectly equipped to host high-level international gatherings in an optimal environment. Its flexibility allows for the simultaneous organization of conferences, panels, exhibitions, receptions, and celebratory events, all supported by top-quality logistical and technical services.

A prestigious center for business and diplomacy, the King Fahd Palace fully aligns with the vision of FIDEPA as an inclusive dialogue space for participatory democracy, regional cooperation, and citizen engagement. It embodies the ambition of a forum focused on Africa's future, offering an environment that combines excellence, hospitality, and modernity.

PROVISIONAL AGENDA FOR FIDEPA06

Timetables	Tuesday 4		Wednesday 5		Thursday 6	Friday 7
09:00-09:30 AM	Reception and accreditation		Setting up		Setting up	Visiting Tourist Sites
09:30-10:00 AM			High-Level Panel 2: "**Economic Sovereignty:** Promoting Financial Responsibility of African Territories"		IOPD Africa General Assembly (by invitation)	
10:00-10:30 AM						
10:30-11:00 AM	COFFEE BREAK					
11AM-11:30 AM	Opening		COFFEE BREAK			
11:30-12:00 PM			Parallel Session 3	Parallel Session 4	Training and Networking Sessions	
12:00-12:30 PM						
12:30-1:00 PM	Inaugural Conference					
1:00 -1:30 PM						
1:30 -2:30 PM	LAUNCH BREAK					
2:30-3:00 PM	High-Level Panel 1: "**Democratic Sovereignty:** Building Citizen Power from Territories"		High-Level Panel 3: "**Digital sovereignty:** mastering data to connect territories"		1. Local Leadership Award Awards Gala 2. Reading of the PELL Memorandum and the Final Declaration 3. Closing	
3:00-3:30 PM						
3:30-4:00 PM						
4:00-4:30 PM	Parallel Session 1	Parallel Session 2	Parallel Session 5	Parallel Session 6		
4:30-5:00 PM						
5:00-5:30 PM						
5:30-6:00 PM						
	Exhibition and Cooperation Fair					

FURTHER INFORMATION

- **IOPD Africa President's Office:** president@oidp-afrique.org
- **General Secretariat:** secretariat@oidp-afrique.org / khadim@oidp-afrique.org
- **Registration link:** https://bit.ly/fidepa06

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