The Localization of the Global Agendas

How local action is transforming territories and communities

African region

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United Cities and Local Governments of Africa
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The GOLD V Regional Report on Africa

Edited by
UCLG and UCLG Africa

Content

Abbreviations and Acronyms

A

AfDB – African Development Bank
AIMF – *Association Internationale des Maires Francophones* (International Association of French-speaking Mayors)
ALGA – African Local Governments Academy
AMA – Accra Metropolitan Assembly
AMM – Association of Municipalities of Mali
ANAMM – *Associação Nacional dos Municípios de Moçambique* (National Association of Municipalities of Mozambique)
ANCB – *Association nationale des communes du Bénin* (National Association of Municipalities of Benin)
ANMCV – *Associação Nacional dos Municípios Caboverdianos* (National Association of the Municipalities of Cape Verde)

C

C40 – C40 Cities Climate Leadership
CAP – Common African Position
CDS – City development strategy (Africa)
CEE – City Enabling Environment
CIDP – County Integrated Development Plan (Kenya)
CLGF – Commonwealth Local Government Forum
CO$_2$ – Carbon dioxide
CoG – Council of Governors (Kenya)
CSO – Civil society organization

D

DFI – Development financial institution
DRC – Democratic Republic of the Congo
DRR – Disaster Risk Reduction

E

EU – European Union

F

FMDV – Global Fund for Cities Development
FNVT – *Fédération nationale des villes tunisiennes* (National Federation of Tunisian Cities)

G

GDP – Gross domestic product
GHG – Greenhouse gas
GIZ – German Society for International Cooperation
GOLD – Global Observatory on Local Democracy and Decentralization
GTF – Global Taskforce of Local and Regional Governments

H

HLPF – United Nations High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development

I

ICLEI – Local Governments for Sustainability
ICT – Information and Communications Technology
IDP – Integrated Development Plan
IPCC – Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change
IUDF – Integrated urban development framework

K

KCCA – Kampala Capital City Authority
Km – Kilometre

L

LED – Local economic development
LGA – Local government association
LGBTQIA+ – Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer/questioning, intersex, asexual and other gender identities
LGDG – Local Government Development Grant (Tanzania)
LGFI – Local government finance institution
LRG – Local and regional government

M

MDG – Millennium Development Goal
MLG – Multilevel governance
MTAD – Ministry of Tinkhundla Administration and Development (Eswatini)
MW – Megawatts

N

NALAG – National Association of Local Authorities of Ghana
NDCs – Nationally-Determined Contributions
NDP – National development plan
NDS – National development strategy
NGO – Non-governmental organization
NSDS – National sustainable development strategy
NUP – National urban policy

O

ODA – Official Development Assistance
OECD – Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
O&M – Operation and maintenance
OIF – *Organisation internationale de la Francophonie* (International Organization of French-Speaking Countries)

P

PLATFORMA – European Platform of Local and Regional Authorities for Development
PNDES – *Plan national de développement économique et social* (National Plan of Economic and Social Development, Burkina Faso)
PPP – Public-Private Partnership
PPPP – Public-Private-People Partnership

R

RALGA – Rwandan Association of Local Government Authorities
REFELA – *Réseau des Femmes Elues Locales d'Afrique* (Network of Locally Elected Women of Africa)
RIAFCO – African Financial Institutions for Local Government

S

SADC-RISDP – Southern African Development Community and Regional Indicative Strategic Development Plan
SALGA – South African Local Government Association
SDG – Sustainable Development Goal
SDI – Slum Dwellers International (Africa)
SEZ – Special economic zone
SID – Small Island Developing State
SME – Small and medium-sized enterprise
SNG – Sub-national government
SOE – State-owned enterprise

T

TALD – Territorial approach to local development

U

UCLG – United Cities and Local Governments
UCT – *Union des communes du Togo* (Union of Municipalities of Togo)
ULGA – Ugandan Local Government Association
UN – United Nations
UNCDF – United Nations Capital Development Fund
UNDESA – United Nations Department for Economic and Social Affairs
UNDP – United Nations Development Programme
UNECA – United Nations Economic Commission for Africa
UN-Habitat – United Nations Human Settlements Programme
UNICEF – United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund
UNSG – United Nations Secretary-General
USD – U.S. dollar

V

VNG – *Vereniging van Nederlandse Gemeenten* (Association of Netherlands Municipalities)
VNGi – VNG International
VNR – Voluntary National Review

W

WIEGO – Women in Informal Employment, Globalizing and Organizing
WISP – Western Cape Industrial Symbiosis Programme

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100RC – 100 Resilient Cities Project

Ministerial Roundtable at the ECOSOC
Forum on Financing for Development,
New York, April 2018 (photo: UCLG-CGLU/
Joel Sheakoski, bit.ly/33dIWf2).

Foreword

Jean-Pierre Elong Mbassi
Secretary General
United Cities and Local
Governments of Africa
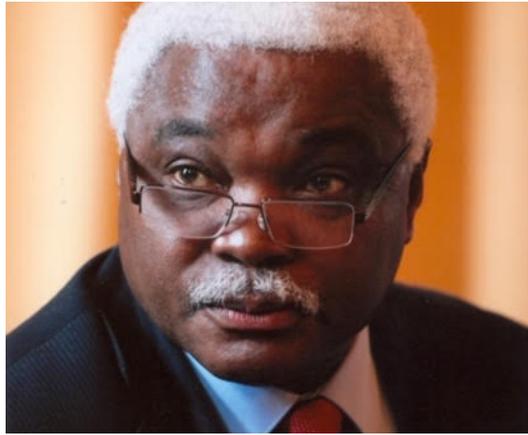
Africa has committed to implement the Africa Union Agenda 2063, the 2030 Agenda and its Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and other related global agendas while undergoing a huge shift in its population settlement pattern. By 2050, it is estimated that Africa will be the most populated region of the world, with over two billion. By then, more than 1.1 billion African people will be living in cities and 15 African cities will be home to more than 10 million people. This demographic change and fast-growing urbanization is also happening as Africa is caught in a dramatic poverty trap, with over 160 million urban dwellers living in informal settlements and slums, nearly a third of the population lacking access to clean water, sanitation, energy or mobility facilities, and 200 million young people about to enter the labour market, with little hope of getting decent jobs.

In this context, African local and regional governments are often on the frontline, as the first public authorities having to deal with the consequences of situations stemming from this poverty trap and backlogs in infrastructure and public service delivery. This is also why most African local and regional governments welcomed the adoption of Agenda 2030 and its SDGs, and considered it as a possible way forward to catch up on improving the living conditions of African populations so that no one is left behind.

Unfortunately, the UNECA 2019 report on sustainable development, albeit based on incomplete data available to monitor progress, shows that the continent is not on track to achieve most of the SDGs, particularly with regard to changing targets brought about by the pace of demographic growth and rapid urbanization. Therefore, Africa cannot and should not follow the same path for the implementation of the SDGs as other regions of the world. As elsewhere in the world, however, it is now widely agreed that the SDG targets will surely not be achieved unless they are defined and implemented at the local level, with the participation and coordination of local and regional government leaders.

Despite the difficulties encountered, this report shows that significant efforts are underway in African countries to deliver on the SDGs, and to enable a greater local and regional governments contribution in this effort. But the report also highlights six main actions to be made to scale up the contribution of African local and regional governments in the implementation of the SDGs, namely:

1. Get the management of urbanization right, recognizing the need for a more coherent and integrated urban and territorial system of human settlements from villages and towns to metropolitan agglomerations, through intermediary and major cities, giving traction to the overall economic, social, political and structural transformation at national and regional levels; 2. Get the enabling environment of local and regional governments right, including the effective implementation of decentralization policies; 3. Get the financial resources of local and regional governments right, ensuring that devolution of powers go hand-in-hand with devolution of public resources and greater fiscal autonomy to local and regional governments; 4. Get the human capacities of local and regional governments right, considering that the effective delivery of the SDGs and the sustainable provision and good management of local government financial resources depend largely on the quality and capacity of human resources in local and regional political and administrative bodies; 5. Get the multilevel governance collaboration and multi-stakeholder partnership right, to mobilize all layers of society and promote a whole-of-government approach, with national governments taking positive steps to support SDG localization strategies involving all levels of government; 6. Get the data revolution started, ensuring that greater attention is paid to establishing routine data production processes, including localized data on the SDGs, as a tool for measuring, reporting and assessing progress made in the implementation of the SDG targets at national, local and regional levels. ⊙

Background:
Why SDG localization?

In 2015 and 2016, world leaders came together to set a historic milestone in multilateral cooperation with the adoption of global agreements towards sustainable development. The 2030 Agenda and the 17 Sustainable Development Goals, the New Urban Agenda, the Paris Agreement on climate change, the Sendai Framework on Disaster Risk Reduction and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda on Financing for Development all showcased a global will to respond to today's global challenges through the adoption of a firm rights-based approach.

Local and regional governments (LRGs) have risen to the scale of the challenge, demonstrating their commitment to the realization of the global agendas by putting in place elaboration, adoption and implementation processes. From their perspective, the global agendas are interlinked and cannot be achieved in isolation: all sustainability actions to address the highly interrelated challenges affecting our territories and cities must be fully integrated and comprehensive. The 2030 Agenda has been widely embraced across territories and represents a significant step forward in terms of ambition, universality and complexity with respect to the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The interconnectedness of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) provides, on the one hand, our best shot at tackling the multi-dimensional challenges facing our societies. On the other, it requires a significant step up in policy-making efforts and the adoption of a truly integrated approach that ensures that 'no one and no place are left behind' — in other words, the UN **'whole-of-government' and 'whole-of-society' approach** to development (see Box 1), encompassing a truly **multilevel** and multi-stakeholder **governance** system that puts people at the centre of development (see Box 2).

We currently stand at the end of the first quadrennial cycle of implementation of the SDGs, which means that the worldwide state of implementation of each SDG has been evaluated at least once. Consequently, the international community is taking this time to take stock of the progress made, the trends that have emerged and the challenges encountered over these past four years, and these will be discussed at the

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Box 1

'Whole-of-government' and 'whole-of-society' approaches

Multilevel and collaborative governance frameworks that emphasize the need to approach policy-making processes in an integrated way, factoring in all government bodies and members of society. Adopting these approaches is critical for advancing sustainable development, since they constitute the basis for policy coherence (see Box 7) by requiring policy-making to happen in an integrated manner beyond institutional siloes, promoting synergies and improving public accountability. Putting governance frameworks in place requires the establishment of adequate coordination and participation mechanisms that ensure that sub-national governments (SNGs) and members of society take part effectively in policy design, implementation and monitoring processes at all levels of government.

Source: UNPAN; GTF, UCLG (2019), 'Towards the Localization of the SDGs'.

SDG Summit in September 2019. According to the UN's quadrennial Global Sustainable Report and the UN Secretary-General 2019 Special Report, positive trends have emerged at the aggregate global level, in particular regarding the implementation of SDGs 1, 3, 5, 7, 8, 11 and 14.[1] Extreme poverty, child mortality rates and the share of the urban population living in slums continue to decrease, while progress has been made with respect to health, certain gender equality targets and access to electricity in poor territories. However, the shift towards a new sustainability paradigm is not taking place at the pace and scale required to trigger the necessary transformation to meet the Goals by 2030. The incidence of hunger has continued to spread in 2019, a trend observed since 2016. Greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, 70% of which cities are responsible for, also continue to increase, while the loss of biodiversity continues to accelerate dramatically as the intensity of climate change worsens.[2] Despite the progress made in poverty reduction, rising inequality continues to fuel the exclusion of discriminated and disadvantaged populations (such as the poor, women, youth, the elderly, people with disabilities, ethnic and sexual minorities, amongst others). Moreover, although the means of implementation are progressing, finance for sustainable development remains an ongoing issue. Institutions often depleted by territorial conflict are not robust enough to respond to the magnitude of the interrelated challenges they face.

As stressed by the UN Secretary-General (UNSG), the current social, economic and environmental trends that are shaping the world have a major impact on the realization of the SDGs and present a daunting challenge in terms of meeting the Goals in the mandated time. The UNSG identifies five such trends — urbanization, demographic change, climate change, protracted crises and frontier technologies.[3] The interactions, synergies and trade-offs between these trends give rise to highly complex and interconnected policy-making environments at local, national and international levels. One of the main objectives of the GOLD V Report has been to examine how LRGs are contributing to the achievement of the global agendas in the face of such trends. These agendas — and the commitment of LRGs to achieving them — are changing our societies and promoting the evolution of good governance and citizen participation in highly diverse contexts all around the world. It is therefore critical to take this time to better understand where LRGs stand with respect to SDG implementation, and to revisit policy-making processes in order to take full advantage of the mutually reinforcing potential of global agendas and local processes as catalysers for change. The aim of the GOLD V Report is to contribute to such an endeavour, looking at

how to promote integrated policies and actions that meet today's 'challenges from the local and regional perspective.

The report highlights how, as part of their day-to-day responsibilities, LRGs are implementing policies and carrying out actions which although not always officially 'SDG-labelled', have a direct impact on populations' access to infrastructure, services and life opportunities. As acknowledged by the UN General Assembly, the UNSG and the Habitat III consensus, the decarbonization of our economies and ensuring access to energy, water, food, transport and infrastructure will ultimately be achieved through project-level investments that take place mostly at the sub-national level and are led by LRGs.[4] It is thus crucial to build up a critical mass of knowledge about how territories and cities are progressing towards sustainability, what initiatives are being put forward and what obstacles are being encountered if we are to achieve the SDGs and other global agendas.

One of the main transformations humanity is experiencing is the rapid urbanization of society, and in this respect LRGs find themselves increasingly at the centre of many crucial challenges. The percentage of the world's population living in urban areas is expected to rise from 55% to nearly 70% by 2050 — an increase of 2.3 billion urban dwellers likely to be concentrated in low and lower middle-income territories where urbanization is happening at the fastest rate. Changes in population growth, age composition and migration patterns heavily impact urbanization pathways and those of the surrounding territories, cutting across a wide range of SDGs — for example poverty eradication, access to food and water, health, gender equality, economic growth and decent work, the reduction of inequalities and promoting sustainable cities

Box 2

Multilevel governance

A decision-making system based on coordination mechanisms that allow the allocation of competences and responsibilities of government both vertically and horizontally in accordance with the principle of subsidiarity (see Box 6) and that respect local autonomy. This system recognizes that there is no optimal level of decentralization (see Box 5) and that implementation and competences are strongly context-specific: complete separation of responsibilities and outcomes in policy-making cannot be achieved and different levels of government are interdependent. Multilevel governance necessitates all levels sharing information and collaborating fully, so that every level can publicly and accountably lead horizontal relations with respective stakeholders to optimize policy outcomes.

Source: UCLG (2016), 'Fourth Global Report on Local Democracy and Decentralization. Co-creating the Urban Future'.

that are better articulated with their hinterlands — which significantly influences the prospects for SDG implementation. At the aggregate level, world population growth has slowed compared with ten years ago and stands at an annual growth rate of 1.1%.[5] However, such figures mask highly heterogeneous demographic patterns between regions and urban and rural territories.

While more than half the growth forecast between 2019 and 2050 (estimated at two billion people) is expected to take place in Africa, Asia is expected to grow by 650 million people, Latin America by 180 million whilst Europe's population is expected to decrease.[6] Population growth will be concentrated in the least economically developed regions, which will make it even harder for those territories and cities to eradicate poverty and hunger and improve the provision of education, health and basic services. Moreover, the number of persons aged over 60 is expected to rise to 1.4 billion by 2030, although the pace at which the population is aging varies greatly between world regions. By 2050, all regions of the world are expected to have more than 25% of their populations aged over 60 — with the exception of Africa, which is expected to concentrate the world's largest share of population aged between 15 and 19. Aging territories and cities will face increasing fiscal and political pressure to provide the elderly with pensions and social protection. At the same time, it will be critical for territories and cities with swelling youth populations to provide adequate healthcare, education and job opportunities to ensure the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

Climate and environmental challenges are profoundly reshaping our territories and have a direct impact on cities. According to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) 2018 Special Report, the world has already warmed by 1°C above pre-industrial levels and, at the current rate of warming of 0.2°C per decade, global warming will reach 1.5°C by 2030. This report stresses the pivotal role played by cities in climate change mitigation and in reaching the agreed goal of limiting climate change to 2°C, and if possible 1.5°C. Allowing global warming to reach 2°C will critically endanger natural and human systems and will particularly affect the most vulnerable populations and territories. Since 1990, climate-related extreme disasters have more than doubled. This, together with drastically changing weather conditions, is causing unquantifiable suffering and loss of human life and the destruction of infrastructure, aggravating resource scarcity and forcing the displacement of populations. Existing tensions act as risk multipliers for violence, putting additional pressure on often fragile political systems and resources. Since 2010, state-based and non-state-based conflicts have risen by 60% and 125% respectively, while the number of globally displaced people has doubled over the past 20 years to reach 65 million.[7] The deterioration of global peace constitutes a fundamental threat to the rule of law and good governance and, consequently, to the cornerstones of sustainable development.

In the face of such challenges, it is imperative that we scale up and accelerate action before it is too late. In order to do so, we need to think differently about development strategies and adopt an evidence-based approach to sustainable development that reflects the reality of today's world. Urbanization, the development of frontier technologies and connectivity are some of the defining features of our contemporary societies, and although they pose challenges to governance, they are also the key to achieving the SDGs and preserving life for future generations. ◉

The Local and Regional Governments' Forum, organized by the Global Taskforce, during the United Nations' SDG Summit in New York on September 24, 2019 (photo: UCLG-CGLU/Ege Okal, bit.ly/2naVvsb).

Purposes and goals of the report

The purpose of the GOLD V Report is to propose how these ambitious Global Goals and objectives can be met through policies, actions and initiatives designed and put in place by the territories and communities that make up cities, towns and regions. The report suggests that this cannot be done unless urban and territorial planning, strategic design, institutional environments and political roadmaps are fully embedded in the territories, i.e. 'territorialized', taking full advantage of local potentialities, involving all local stakeholders and building on local needs and demands. In other words, these goals can only be achieved through a fully-fledged, co-owned and accountable process of localization of the global agendas (see Box 3).

Territories and cities can lead transformational processes that promote development models that are both respectful of the environment and put people first. Territorialized development strategies based on integrated planning have the power to transform cities and territories, foster inclusion, reduce resource usage and GHG emissions, and improve rural-urban linkages. When coupled with cutting-edge technologies, the economies of scale facilitated by cities and their ability to attract innovation become major catalysts for the achievement of the SDGs, allowing for the development of alternative patterns of production and consumption, decentralized renewable energy systems, individualized healthcare, natural disaster detection solutions, and stronger bonds between cities, towns and their hinterlands. The possibilities are endless. As shown throughout the GOLD V Report, such localized development strategies, developed from and suited to local realities, also have an impact on the global process of transforming development, which in turn reinforces sustainable

local processes. The transformational potential of a **territorial approach to local development (TALD)** is enormous (see Box 4). Yet, in order to fully unleash it and ensure the implementation of the global development agendas, important challenges must be tackled. Significant efforts have been made since 2015 to implement the 2030 Agenda's provisions and advance towards the achievement of the Goals. However, given the multi-dimensional challenges our societies are facing, the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs call for a move beyond narrow targeted policy-making towards a review of governance culture and

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Box 3

Localization

The 2030 Agenda emphasizes the need for an inclusive and localized approach to the SDGs. Localization is described as 'the process of defining, implementing and monitoring strategies at the local level for achieving global, national, and sub-national sustainable development goals and targets.' More specifically, it takes into account sub-national contexts for the achievement of the 2030 Agenda, from the setting of goals and targets to determining the means of implementation and using indicators to measure and monitor progress.

Source: GTF, UCLG (2019), 'Towards the Localization of the SDGs'; GTF, UNDP, UN-Habitat (2016), 'Roadmap for Localizing the SDGs: Implementation and Monitoring at Sub-national Level'; UN Development Group (2014), 'Localizing the Post2015 Agenda' (outcome of the global UN dialogue process realized from June 2014 to October 2014).

institutions. As discussed in the GOLD V Report, existing national strategies and institutional frameworks for SDG implementation, as well as the state of **decentralization** and the means available for local implementation of the global agendas, determine the transformational strength that local action can achieve (see Box 5). Questions thus arise: can the SDGs both inspire local action and influence such institutional environments?; and can local action arising from the cities and territories translate into global change?

Box 4

Territorial approach to local development (TALD)

National development policy that recognizes local development as being endogenous, incremental, spatially integrated and multi-scalar, and which acknowledges the primary responsibility of local authorities for plan-ning, managing and financing such local development — in other words, development that enables autonomous and accountable local authorities to leverage the contribution of actors operating at multiple scales to produce public goods and services tailored to the local reality, which in turn brings incremental value to national development efforts.

Source: European Commission DEVCO (2016), 'Supporting decentralization, local governance and local development through a territorial approach'.

Box 5

Decentralization

The existence of local authorities, as distinct from the state's administrative authorities, to whom the legal framework allocates powers, resources and capacities to exercise a degree of self-government in order to meet the allocated responsibilities. Their decision-making legitimacy is underpinned by representative, elected local democratic structures that determine how power is exercised and make local authorities accountable to citizens in their jurisdiction.

The World Observatory on Subnational Government Finance and Investment proposes the following definition: 'decentralization consists of the transfer of powers, responsibilities and resources from central government to sub-national governments, defined as separated legal entities elected by universal suffrage and having some degree of autonomy'.

Source: UN Habitat (2009), 'International Guidelines on Decentralisation and Access to Basic Services'; UCLG (2008), 'Decentralization and Local Democracy in the World,First Global Report on Local Democracy and Decentralization'; OECD-UCLG (2019), 'World Observatory on Subnational Government Finance and Investments'.

This is important for shedding light on a number of related issues affecting (and changing) development policy globally. As stated previously, this study primarily aims to show the state of progress of SDG achievement in the territories and emphasize its critical importance for the realization of the global agendas. On the one hand, it is widely acknowledged that fulfilment of the 2030 Agenda requires the full engagement and commitment of all levels of governance including LRGs, civil society and local stakeholders such as the private sector, social partners, academia and grassroots organizations. On the other, territories and local communities are where implementation is taking place. The key question addressed by the GOLD V Report is the extent to which towns, cities, provinces and regions have been able — through their actions and initiatives — to become part of the solution to the fundamental and historic challenges they face. Analyzing the progress that local governments are making in the implementation of the Goals and their 'localization' — bringing them down to the local level, rethinking and re-designing them so that they fit with the characteristics and demands of citizens and territories — is an indication of how well the SDG framework itself is developing, and how much there is still left to do.

The GOLD V Report also aims to provide an updated picture on the current state of decentralization around the world. Achieving the SDGs and the other global agendas at the local level will not be possible unless territories, communities, and local authorities at different sub-national levels are adequately empowered, supported and funded. This implies strengthening and improving decentralization of the political system, promoting the devolution of competences and powers, ensuring respect for the principle of **subsidiarity** and making local governments responsible and accountable (see Box 6).

This regional report includes an analysis of national strategies for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and how LRGs are being engaged in this process, whether the institutional framework enables LRGs to be proactive in the implementation of these agendas, and the status of decentralization in the region. The report aims to answer questions on decentralization trends and the development of a truly multilevel understanding of policy-making: are LRGs more empowered and active than they used to be?; have the SDGs and the other global agendas driven any change in institutional relationships and vertical/horizontal cooperation?; are national planning and decision-making mechanisms and systems more open, sensitive to and aware of LRGs and their unique potential within territories and communities to effect change?

Looking at decentralization and providing up-to-date mapping of how this trend has evolved are all the more essential in studying territorial and municipal authorities, given that rapid (and often uncontrolled) urbanization has become a worldwide phenomenon and a fundamental challenge facing local governance. Urbanization has had a crucial impact on several dimensions of local and regional governance: from urban and territorial planning, to the provision of basic public services; from socio-economic equality to marginalization and informality in housing and work; from the inevitable impact of climate change to the creation of new social and cross-cutting alliances to improve democracy, transparency and the quality of life in cities and territories. However, advances in these fields raise fundamental questions of sustainability and viability. The global agendas were agreed with the expectation that LRGs would act as accelerators and catalysts in the process, but how is this pressure altering the political balance? What room is there for LRGs to see their competences, powers, capacities, financial and human resources grow and improve, making them more aware, responsible and able to play an active role in the global quest for sustainability, prosperity and inclusiveness? What kind of financial autonomy is really granted to local and regional governments? There are plenty of financial and management instruments (climate and green bonds, Public-Private-People Partnerships — PPPPs — and remunicipalizations, amongst many others) that are changing the way actors are empowered at all levels to become drivers of change and leaders in policy-making. In what way are these new opportunities accessible to local governments? And how can those that are more visionary and long-sighted fund and sustain their policies and agendas in the long term?

The ability of LRGs to report on their policies and actions is also problematic since it is currently limited by a substantial lack of data, indicators and measurement which historically has not been devolved or disaggregated enough (with the partial exception of larger and wealthier regions and cities), hindering the capacity to grasp the huge potential at the local level for the localization and achievement of the Goals.

Ultimately, the responsibilities that LRGs are assuming in the localization of the SDGs and other agendas are raising fundamental questions of local democracy, accountability and transparency, representation and the place occupied by the local level in the current global system. Can LRGs be catalysts for change in politics and development policy? Do LRGs have the means and capacities to ensure that 'no person or place is left behind'? Can effective intergovernmental cooperation across all levels of governance improve performance, boost **policy coherence** (see Box 7) and help make the SDGs

and the global agendas a reality, with positive effects on the quality of life of territories, cities, communities and society? Can the SDGs trigger a new model of development — urban, territorial, social, economic and human — which starts at the local level? This regional report provides inputs, answers and critiques of these points, as well as exploring other relevant issues. The conclusions and policy recommendations provide a common vision and understanding of the way forward for LRGs. ◉

African region

Northern Africa

Eastern Africa

Western Africa

Central Africa
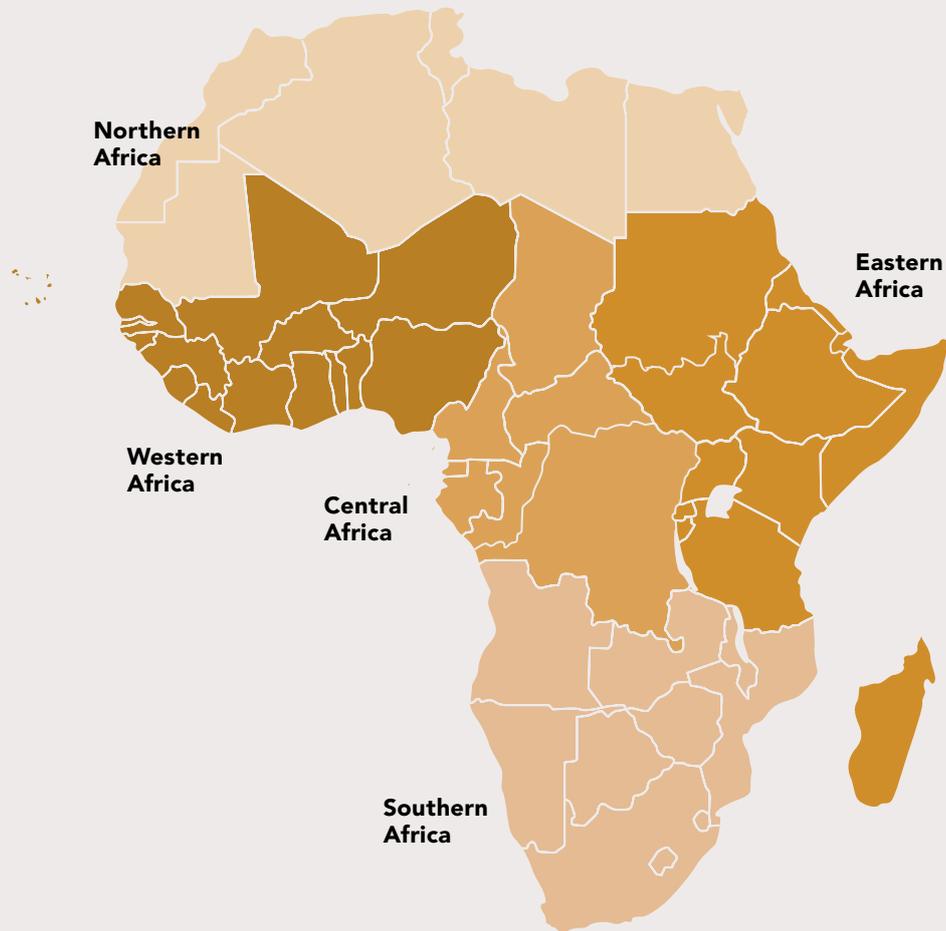
Southern Africa

Northern Africa

Algeria
Egypt
Libya
Mauritania
Morocco
Tunisia

Central Africa

Cameroon
Central African Republic
Chad
Republic of the Congo
Democratic Republic
of the Congo
Equatorial Guinea
Gabon
São Tome and Principe

Western Africa

Benin
Burkina Faso
Cape Verde
Côte d'Ivoire
Gambia
Ghana
Guinea
Guinea-Bissau
Liberia
Mali
Niger
Nigeria
Senegal
Sierra Leone
Togo

Southern Africa

Angola
Botswana
Eswatini
Lesotho
Mozambique
Namibia
South Africa
Zambia
Zimbabwe

Eastern Africa

Burundi
Comoros
Djibouti
Eritrea
Ethiopia
Kenya
Madagascar
Malawi
Mauritius
Rwanda
Seychelles
Somalia
South Sudan
Sudan
Tanzania
Uganda

01. Introduction: The African región

Over the past decade, African governments have joined other countries across the world, first in lobbying for and then in adopting a number of global development policy commitments. These include the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Paris Agreement on climate change, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda (AAAA) on financing for development, the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, and the New Urban Agenda. This global policy realignment by Africa is rooted in a continent-wide policy shift towards sustainable development, as formulated in the Africa Union Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want. This shift reflects a growing recognition of the role of cities and territories as key sites and actors of development, and the African region as a major hub of the global transition to a predominantly urban world. Thus, it will not be possible to achieve sustainable development at a global level without sustainable urbanization in Africa. Urbanization is key to economic development and growth in Africa, with cities combining labour, skills, knowledge and capital. However, fulfilling the potential of sustainable urbanization in Africa will depend on overcoming significant challenges, ones that are at the heart of the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).[1]

Driven by natural population growth, as well as increasing rural-urban migration, Africa's urban growth rate is currently almost 11 times higher than Europe's (although growth rates vary across this vast continent).[2] In 2018, the African population was estimated at approximately 1.3 billion people, with a large youth population.[3] The urban population is estimated to be 587 million and is expected to grow three-fold by 2050. Most

Sierra Leone (photo: Annie Spratt, bit.ly/2pApj25).

growth is occurring in middle-sized, intermediary cities with between 50,000 and one million inhabitants, and the majority of city inhabitants are under the age of 35. Economic performance in terms of jobs, growth and inequality varies across the region, but overall the number of decent, productive and secure jobs is low, while the levels of poverty and informality remain high.[4] At the heart of the lack of structural economic transformation in Africa is the absence of basic infrastructure and services in a context in which on average over half of urban dwellers still live in informal settlements.[5]

In addition, the region remains one of the most unequal in the world, undermining global progress towards poverty eradication. The United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Africa's 'African Poverty Clock'[6] provides real-time poverty forecasts for every country in Africa and, overall, shows more people entering than escaping poverty. As of August 2019, an estimated 34% of the region's population were living in extreme poverty (residing in Sub-Saharan Africa), earning less than USD 1.90 per day,[7] of

which 49% were children.[8] In some countries, the effects of conflict and an increase in natural disasters associated with poor urban planning and climate change are hampering economic progress even further. There is an urgent need to plan, manage, finance, as well as monitor and report on urban and territorial growth and development — in this context in an inclusive, coherent and sustainable way. Furthermore, the potential role of local and regional governments (LRGs) as policy stakeholders must be fully realized. This will require radical institutional reforms that support and strengthen the creation of stronger, more competent LRGs.[9]

The establishment by African leaders of the Sustainable Development Goals Center for Africa in 2016 to support SDG implementation in line with Agenda 2063 is testament to the commitment and approach to SDG implementation that characterizes the region. The Sustainable Goals Center is based in Kigali and works to create partnerships across the SDGs. In 2018, it launched the Africa SDG Index and Dashboards Report,[10] and released a three-year 'Reality Check', which

concluded that: 'where progress was assessed, only three goals (SDG 5 on gender equality, SDG 13 on climate action and SDG 15 on life on land) are likely to meet the 2030 Target. Of the 13 goals that have sufficient data (after 2015), it is considered likely that ten goals will not be achieved by 2030. In relation to these goals, countries are not just underperforming; the reality is that achieving them appears virtually impossible.'[11]

The overarching aim of this regional report is to present the challenges and opportunities from an African perspective of the implementation of the SDGs and related development agendas by LRGs. The second section of the regional report demonstrates the support for and engagement with the SDG agenda at the national level. At the same time, it shows that the participation of LRGs in SDG implementation frameworks remains limited, although with notable exceptions. This reflects the differences between intergovernmental frameworks and ongoing decentralization reforms across the continent. The third section of the publication gives examples of

In Africa, 'where progress was assessed, only three goals (SDG 5 on gender equality, SDG 13 on climate action and SDG 15 on life on land) are likely to meet the 2030 Target'.

those 'frontrunning' LRGs and associations in the region that are supporting localization, as well as partnerships between civil society, academia and the private sector. It shows how the creation of an environment to support, harness and upscale such initiatives, as well as capacity to generate locally embedded spatially disaggregated data on these efforts, is crucial to monitoring and to achieving progress towards the implementation of the SDGs in Africa. ⊙

View of Oran, Algeria
(photo: K YA, t.ly/egLb3).

2. National and local institutional frameworks for the implementation of the SDGs

There is strong commitment to the implementation of the SDGs at the national level in Africa, reflecting a shift towards sustainable development that has local action at its core. Among African leaders, entrepreneurs, professionals and scholars, there is also growing recognition of the role of cities and territories as key actors of development and the need for an African urban agenda that takes into account the potential and particularities of Africa's rapid urbanization.[12] In this context, the localization of the SDGs and the role of LRGs therein, are of increasing importance.

The views of African countries on the SDGs were represented within the G77+China grouping, contributing to intergovernmental negotiations and the Open Working Group on the Sustainable Development Goals that preceded the adoption of the 2030 Agenda.[13] Moreover, Africa was the only region in the world to articulate a 'common position' on the 2030 Agenda in the run-up to Habitat III, through its Common African Position.[14]

Many objectives in the raft of policies of the 2030 Agenda adopted in 2015 include a commitment to localization — a position that is at the core of the African Agenda 2063, a document approved even before the adoption of SDG 11 or the New Urban Agenda. Agenda 2063 sets out Africa's vision for 'institutions at all levels of government [to be] developmental, democratic, and accountable' and for 'cities and other settlements [to be] hubs of cultural and economic activities, with modernized infrastructure, and [...] access to affordable and decent housing including housing finance together with all the basic necessities of life such as water, sanitation, energy, public transport and ICT.[15]

African institutions such as the African Union, the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) and the African Development Bank (AfDB), have established numerous initiatives and strategies for an enabling institutional framework for the monitoring and implementation of Africa 2063 alongside the global agendas, such as the 2030 Agenda.[16] Development agendas such as the continent-wide East African Community Vision 2050 have moreover been adopted at the regional level. Furthermore, African countries are exploring the creation of a draft harmonized regional framework for the implementation of the New Urban Agenda in the region.[17]

A staffer of UNDP's Africa Bureau sets up the stage for the high-level event on 'Implementing Agenda 2063 and Agenda 2030', New York, September 2016 (photo: Lei Phyu/UNDP, bit.ly/2o5vNpl).

2.1 National institutional frameworks

At the national level, the commitment to implement the SDGs is evidenced by the presentation of the Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs) by a number of African countries to the annual UN High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF). To date, 35 out of a total of 54 African UN Member States have presented a VNR during the first four-year cycle of the HLPF (2016-2019).[18] Some have done so several times. Togo, for instance, reported annually in 2016-2018. Others, such as Burundi, Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Gambia, Liberia, Libya, Malawi, Mozambique, Seychelles and Zambia, have committed to present their first VNRs in 2020. This report also includes information available for countries that have not yet committed to submitting VNRs. These include Angola, Comoros, Djibouti, Eritrea, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, Guinea Bissau, São Tomé e Príncipe, Somalia and South Sudan.

Many of those African countries that have presented their VNRs have made significant progress in incorporating the SDGs in their national plans and strategies, raising awareness and involving stakeholders to create ownership of the SDGs, as well creating and establishing institutional mechanisms and means of implementation, as per the UN guidelines for VNRs.[19] A review of localization processes across the continent shows that SDG implementation experiences and contexts vary considerably (see Table 1), but there are a number of emerging patterns.

Firstly, the majority of countries are focusing on the **alignment of national development plans (NDPs) with the 2030 Agenda**, and continental and sub-regional level development agendas. The latter include South Africa (the Southern African Development Community and Regional Indicative Strategic Development Plan — SADC-RISDP), Rwanda (the East African Community Vision 2050), and Cape Verde and Mauritius (the Small Island Developing States — SIDS Accelerated Modalities of Action — the SAMOA Pathway). A few countries have developed their own SDG plans. Countries, such as Mali, where national planning cycles did not coincide with the adoption of the 2030 Agenda, are revising their NDPs to align them with the SDGs. Countries such as Botswana, Kenya and Uganda have specific SDG roadmaps setting out guidelines to adopt the SDGs in key areas. Morocco has a national sustainable development strategy (NSDS) aligned with the SDGs. Sudan has an NSDS and implementation plan, but with a timeline until 2020 only. As well as these efforts, almost all countries in Africa have made their national commitments to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, with a view to fulfilling obligations related to the Paris Climate Agreement.[20] Benin, for example, has put in place various national strategies and legislation aligned with the Paris Agreement on climate change, the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction. Its institutional framework, similar to that in countries such as Nigeria, Senegal and South Africa, also includes local governments. However, Benin's level of commitment is still an exception in the region — indeed in the world.[21] It is notable also that, in 2018, most African countries with national urban policies (NUPs) had not yet explicitly aligned these with the SDGs.

Secondly, while other sub-national

Benin has put in place various national strategies and legislation aligned with the Paris Climate Agreement, the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction.

arrangements can be found, **national institutional mechanisms to coordinate and lead SDG implementation tend to exist at the highest political level**.[22] These include inter-ministerial entities with leadership by the head of state or government (e.g. Egypt, Liberia, Madagascar, Mali, Mauritius, Sierra Leone, Togo); inter-ministerial entities with ministerial leadership (e.g. Algeria, Botswana, Cape Verde, Cameroon, Ghana, Mozambique, Niger, Rwanda, Senegal, Seychelles, South Africa); a head of state or government office (Burkina Faso, Nigeria, Sudan); and a specific ministry (Benin, Central African Republic, Ethiopia, Guinea, Kenya, Uganda).

Some countries, for example Kenya, have incorporated SDG implementation into budget processes. Rwanda meanwhile has a strong monitoring and evaluation framework. Neither the organizational structure of the state nor the system of government appear to be determining factors in institutional follow-up. Three federal states have implemented institutional follow-up under the leadership of either the head of state (Nigeria), or a specific ministry (Ethiopia), or an inter-ministerial committee under the leadership of the head of state (South Africa, considered quasi-federal). Similarly, the three constitutional monarchies in the region (Eswatini, Lesotho and Morocco) have opted for different models of coordination, either chaired by the Prime Minister or coordinated by specific ministries.

Like South Africa, many coordinating bodies, such as national commissions or high-level councils to facilitate the coordination and follow-up of the 2030 Agenda, are relatively new structures. Alternatively, they may involve the adaptation of former structures, as with the National Council for Evaluation in the Republic of the Congo. In other countries, coordination relies directly on the existing planning system which needs to be reformed to ensure the follow-up of both the national plan and the SDGs (e.g. the Steering Committee for the National Development Plan in Burkina Faso; the High-Level Ministerial Committee in Ghana, or the National Steering Committee for the National Development Plan and the SDGs in Chad). Namibia stands out for extending its coordination and reporting mechanisms to include a Development Partners Forum to provide coordination oversight of SDG implementation.[23]

Thirdly, a variety of stakeholders, such as civil society, private sector and academia, tend to be included in coordinating and committees (e.g. Rwanda's SDG Taskforce, Côte d'Ivoire's National Steering Committee and Mauritius's SDG Steering Committee). However, **among those countries that reported to the HLPF, very few such structures include LRG or national local government association (LGA) representation.** In fact, only nine countries (Benin, Burkina Faso,

Cape Verde, Côte d'Ivoire, Ethiopia, Kenya, Mauritania, South Africa and Togo)[24] reported that these multi-stakeholder structures explicitly include or consult with local government representatives in the HLPF coordination mechanism. Moreover, LRG representatives were involved in the consultation process for the preparation of the VNRs **in only 15 out of the 35 countries that presented their VNRs** between 2016 and 2019.[25]

UN agencies such as the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), UN-Habitat, the United Nations Capital Development Fund (UNCDF) and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), **play an important role in supporting SDG localization efforts**. On the one hand, UN agencies directly support LGAs, (see Section 3.1). On the other, UNDP has been instrumental in supporting rapid integrated assessments of the extent of mainstreaming the 2030 Agenda into national development frameworks; providing support for the preparation of VNR reports; developing national roadmaps for the 'domestication' of the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063, and assisting in convening national stakeholder workshops and conferences on SDG implementation,[26] the latter involving LRGs and LGAs. A total of 18 African countries have also benefitted from UNDP mainstreaming acceleration and policy support (MAPS) missions that have been deployed to support SDG implementation.[27]

To summarize, **the participation of LRGs in the reporting and coordination mechanisms** (only 47% for VNRs and 31% for coordination)[28] **needs to be strengthened to ensure the national process is truly inclusive.** ◉

Table 1 National strategies and institutional arrangements for the implementation of the SDGs

Algeria
National Strategy for Environment and Sustainable Development (2019-2035). Inter-ministerial committee, coordinated by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. No mention of LRG participation.

Benin
Action Plan of the Government developed under the 'Ownership agenda for the SDGs'. Directorate-General for Coordination and Monitoring of the SDGs, supervised by the Ministry of Planning and Development. LRG participation.

Botswana
The National Vision 2016-2036. National Steering Committee (multi-stakeholder), co-chaired by the government and the UN; Technical Task Force (multi-sectoral). Although they are involved in the SDG alignment process, no mention of LRG participation.

Burkina Faso
National Economic and Social Development Plan. National Steering Committee of the National Plan, chaired by the Prime Minister; National Technical Committee; 14 sectoral committees; 13 regional committees. LRG participation.

Cape Verde
Strategic Plan for Sustainable Development (2017-2021). Inter-sectoral body on Sustainable Development; technical implementation body on SDGs under the coordination of the National Planning Directorate of the Ministry of Finance; four thematic groups on the SDGs. LRG participation.

Cameroon
2035 Vision and the 2010-2019 Strategy for Growth and Employment. Technical Monitoring Committee of the National Development Strategy, coordinated by the Ministry of Economy and Planning; regional and municipal technical committees (sub-national follow-up). LRG participation.

Central African Republic
Peacebuilding and Recovery Plan 2017–2021. National committee set up by the Department of Environment and Sustainable Development and the Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation. No mention of LRG participation.

Chad
Vision 2030, le Tchad que nous voulons. National Coordination for Monitoring the SDGs (intersectoral and inter-ministerial), under the supervision of the Ministry of Economy and Planning. Limited participation of LRGs.

Republic of the Congo
National Development Plan 2018-2022. National Council for Evaluation (including Steering Committee, technical coordination, Permanent Technical Secretariat and departmental coordination). No mention of LRG participation.

Côte d'Ivoire
National Development Plan 2016-2020. National Steering Committee (inter-ministerial) and Permanent Technical Committee attached to the Ministry of Planning and Development and Multi-Stakeholder Committee. LRG participation.

Egypt
Egypt Vision 2030. National Committee for the follow-up of the implementation of the SDGs; inter-ministerial national committee, supervised by the Prime Minister and under the coordination of the Ministry of Planning, Monitoring and Administrative Reform. No mention of LRG participation.

Eswatini
Vision 2022 in the National Development Strategy (NDS) and Strategy for Sustainable and Inclusive Growth 2030. Technical working team and Steering Committee. The SDGs Secretariat is under the Ministry of Economic Planning and Development. No mention of LRG participation.

Ethiopia
Second Five-Year Growth and Transformation Plan 2016-2020. Coordination: Council of Ministers and House of People's Representatives and National Planning Commission. Regional government participation; no participation of local government.

Ghana
An Agenda for Jobs: Creating Prosperity and Equal Opportunity for All, 2017-2024. Coordination: National Development Planning Commission, supported by 16 regional coordinating councils; the High-Level Inter-Ministerial Committee; the SDGs Implementation Coordinating Committee; and National Technical Committee. Limited participation of LRGs.

Guinea

Guinea's National Economic and Social Development Plan 2016-2020 and the national Vision 'Guinea 2040'. Coordination: Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation and Technical Monitoring Committee, supported by eight thematic dialogue groups. No mention of LRG participation.

Kenya

Vision 2030 – Second Medium-Term Plan. SDG Coordinating Department, led by the Ministry of Devolution and Planning; Inter-Agency Technical Working Group and SDGs liaison office in the Secretariat of Council of Governors. County government participation.

Lesotho

National Vision 2020 and National Strategic Development Plan II 2018/19-2022/23. National Oversight and Advisory Committee, chaired by the Prime Minister. The Minister of Development Planning coordinates the Cabinet Sub-Committee on the SDGs and National Technical Steering Committee (multi-stakeholder). No mention of LRG participation.

Liberia

'National Vision, Liberia Rising 2030' and Agenda for Transformation currently being revised. National Task Force and technical working group that will develop the implementation strategy. No mention of LRG participation.

Madagascar

National Development Plan (2015-2019). Orientation and Monitoring Committee, headed by the Prime Minister; and Technical Committee headed by the Ministry of Economy and Planning. No mention of LRG participation.

Mali

Strategic Framework for the Economic and Sustainable Development Recovery 2019-2024. National Coordination and Monitoring Committee, attached to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and under the responsibility of the Prime Minister. Limited participation of LRGs.

Mauritania

Strategy for Accelerated Growth and Shared Prosperity for 2016-2030. Inter-ministerial steering Committee, chaired by the Prime Minister and Technical Coordination Committee. LRG participation.

Mauritius

Vision 2030 and roadmap for implementation of the 2030 Agenda. SDG Steering Committee chaired by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade. No mention of LRG participation.

Morocco

National Strategy for Sustainable Development. A Steering Committee follows up the national strategy and Strategic Committee on Sustainable Development monitors the SDGs. The latter is led by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation and the High Commissariat of Planning. No mention of LRG participation.

Mozambique

The Economic and Social Plan and Government Five-Year Plan (2015-2019). National Commission for Sustainable Development, chaired by the Prime Minister. LRG participation.

Namibia

Fifth National Development Plan. Development Partners Forum (coordination and oversight) and National Steering Committee (multi-stakeholder) and National Planning Commission. Weak participation of LRGs.

Niger

Five-Year Development Plan for Social and Economic Development (2017-2021). Council of Ministers; Steering Committee of the Development Plan (chaired by the Prime Minister). Coordination ensured by the Minister of Planning, assisted by a National Technical Committee and sectoral and regional coordination units. No mention of LRG participation.

Nigeria

Vision 2020 and the Nigeria Economic Recovery and Growth Plan for 2017-2020. Presidential Committee on the SDGs; the Office of the Senior Special Assistant to the President on the SDGs; the Inter-Ministerial and Non-Governmental Core Working Group. Regional government participation, no participation of local governments.

Rwanda

Vision 2050 and the National Strategy for Transformation (2017-2024). SDG Steering Committee, facilitated by the Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning; district-level Joint Action Development Forums. LRG participation.

Table 1 National strategies and institutional arrangements for the implementation of the SDGs

Senegal
Plan for Emerging Senegal. Directorate-General of Planning and Economic Policy within the Ministry of Economy, Finance and Planning, in collaboration with the Prime Minister. Limited participation of LRGs.

Seychelles
Long-Term Vision 2018-2032 and the National Development Strategy for 2018-2022 under preparation. National Oversight and Strategic Committee for the Implementation of Regional and Global Commitments, chaired by the Minister of Finance, Trade and Economic Planning. Limited participation of LRGs.

Sierra Leone
Medium-Term National Development Plan (2019-2023). Ministry of Planning and Economic Development ensures SDG coordination; Regional Planning Offices of the Ministry being installed. No mention of LRG participation.

South Africa
National Development Plan: Vision 2030. Department of Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation coordinates the national coordinating mechanism which includes the Cabinet and its committees, the Inter-Ministerial Committee on Sustainable Development Agendas (the SDGs, Agenda 2063 and SADC-RISDP) and an interdepartmental implementation committee with working groups. Presidential Coordinating Council and a National Sustainable Development Stakeholders Forum. LRG participation.

Sudan
Sustainable Development Implementation Plan (2017-2020). The Higher Committee for Sustainable Development, chaired by the Vice-President and the Secretary-General of the National Population Council. Limited participation of LRGs.

Tanzania
Long-Term Vision 2025 for Mainland and 2020 for Zanzibar. In Mainland: Coordination Steering Committee supported by the Coordination Secretariat, comprised of the Deputy Permanent Secretaries of key ministries. Implementation and monitoring is coordinated by the Ministry of Finance and Planning. No mention of LRG participation. In Zanzibar: Zanzibar Planning Commission includes LRGs.

Togo
National Development Plan (2018-2022). National Steering Committee on Development Policies, chaired by the Prime Minister; Stakeholder Commission for the National Development Plan, chaired by the Ministry of Development Planning and Development. LRG participation.

Tunisia
Five-year Development Plan 2016-2020 (national socio-economic). Ministry of Foreign Affairs (diplomatic) and Ministry of Development, Investment and International Cooperation (technical) in charge of SDG coordination. Limited participation of LRGs.

Uganda
National Development Plan 2015/16–2019/20. Coordination: Ministry of Development. SDG Policy Coordination Committee; SDG Steering Committee; SDG National Task Force; and five SDG technical working groups. No mention of LRG participation.

Zambia
Seventh National Development Plan (2017-2021). SDG Sub-Committee for SDG Coordination under preparation which relies on National Development Coordinating Committee, Cluster Advisory Groups, Provincial Development Coordinating Committees and District Development Coordinating Committees. No mention of LRG participation.

Zimbabwe
Zimbabwe Agenda for Sustainable Socio-Economic Transformation. Steering Committee at Ministerial Level (chaired by the Chief Secretary to the President and Cabinet); Technical Committee with stakeholder participation. No mention of LRG participation.

Africa
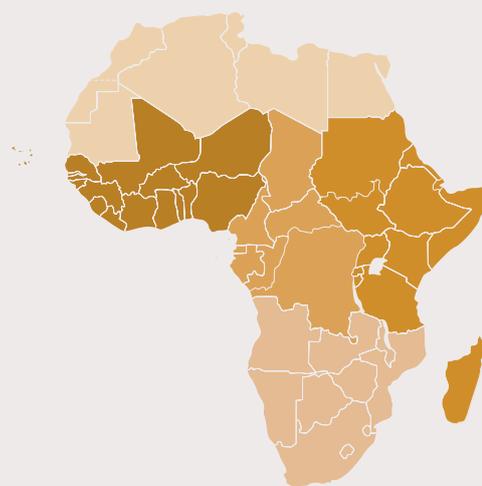
Sources: VNRs 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019 (UNDESA 2017 and 2018); 'Compendium of National Institutional Arrangements for implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development'; GTF Surveys 2016-2019.

2.2 Local and regional governments' institutional frameworks in the region

The mixed participation of LRGs in SDG implementation frameworks in Africa is a reflection of the uneven strength and quality of sub-national government (SNG) institutional frameworks across the continent.

Between 2012 and 2018, overall there was improvement in the enabling environments for LRGs in Africa. However, countries and regions vary significantly, with the East Africa region performing best among regions in Africa in terms of advances in enabling environments for LRGs, and the Central African region performing worst.[29]

Decentralization trends

In terms of their formal political structures, most African states — except for Eswatini, Lesotho and Morocco, which are monarchies — are presidential, semi-presidential or parliamentary republics with a multi-party government system. Most African countries are unitary states, except for Comoros, Ethiopia, Nigeria, Somalia, South Sudan and Sudan, which are federal states, and South Africa, generally regarded as a quasi-federal state.[30] Most constitutions in force in Africa are relatively new, having either been created or revised in the 2000s. Exceptions are Benin, Cape Verde, Ethiopia, Liberia, Mali, South Africa and Tanzania, whose constitutions have been in force since the early 1990s.[31]

There is significant variation between countries and regions in Africa in their commitment to and process of accelerating decentralization. As is the case in many regions of the world, in Africa de jure decentralization or the distribution of powers and functions to sub-national structures as defined by law does not reflect de facto decentralization or the actual position of LRGs in multi-scale governance configurations and policy deliberations.

One example of this is the criteria of the UCLG Africa and Cities Alliance Assessment on the Institutional Environment of Local Governments.

The 12 criteria represent a legal framework: out of 53 countries, only five constitutions make no provision for local government participation (Botswana, Ethiopia, Liberia, Seychelles, Sierra Leone) and seven make detailed provisions for their role and responsibilities (Kenya, Madagascar, Nigeria, São Tomé e Príncipe, South Africa, Uganda and Zimbabwe). In the remaining countries, LRG responsibilities are set by legislation, which could be interpreted as being contradictory to the constitution, unstable or as not being commensurate with the financial and/or human resources that are needed.

A delegation from the United Nations Security Council meets with South Sudan civil society in Juba, the capital city (photo: UNMISS, bit.ly/2p7kj4H).
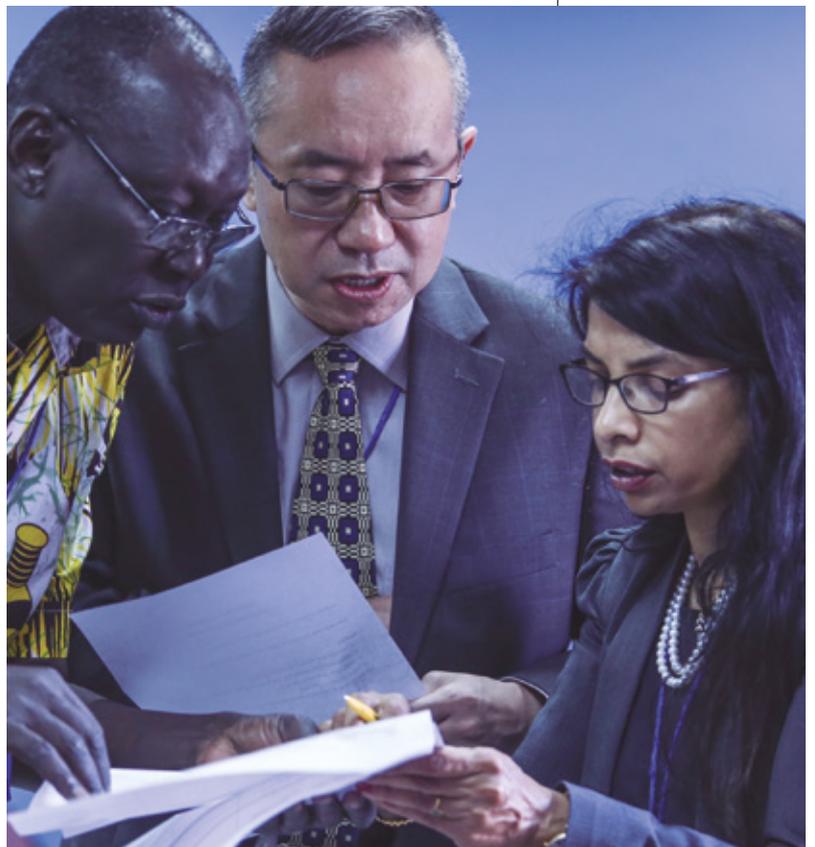
Moreover, decentralization may often not cover all of a nation's territory; mandates of local government are sometimes ambiguous/unspecified; and critically, administrative decentralization does not always have a fiscal dimension or the political commitment to realize the vision of multi-scale collaborative governance necessary for SDG implementation. It is generally held that a wave of decentralization hit Africa in the 1990s. Since then, the push to enhance the power of public action at the local level has been coupled with a more general drive towards democratization.[32] Both endogenous processes and international drivers have contributed to supporting, but also at times weakening, decentralization in Africa. Decentralization can be understood as a response to the social demand for popular participation and the democratization of society. In many countries during the 1990s, decentralization reforms were initially made in the context of the structural reforms of the state at that time, as well as in response to regional conflicts and demands for autonomy that in some countries threatened the unity of the state.

In some cases, the relatively little power assigned to the local level comes from national political interests: thus, decentralization is used to strengthen the power of central government while, especially in capital cities, devolution is blocked to prevent local governments and opposition parties becoming a threat to national government and the ruling party.[33] In other cases, decentralization is designed along ethnic boundaries. For example, the two Ethiopian charter cities Addis Ababa and Dire Dawa are devolved as special cases, with special levels of autonomy, because of their diverse ethnic composition, and they do not report to the regional level but only to national federal government.[34] At the same time, their special status functions as a power-sharing arrangement to keep possible ethnic tensions in check.[35] A similar logic was behind the reform of the local governments system in Kenya in the aftermath of election violence in 2007. Since the adoption of a new constitution in 2010 and the enactment of the Urban Areas and City's Act of 2012, decentralization is concentrated at the regional provincial level (47 counties). Before this reform,

there were 174 decentralized local authorities. However, this reform may have shifted the ethno-politics that characterize national politics in Kenya to the county level, undermining the promise of peace and inclusion.[36]

In some countries, the government holds special regional elections to address underrepresented interests in regional and local assemblies of some groups of the population, although this does not guarantee local autonomy. This is the case in Algeria, where the national government held special regional elections to address underrepresentation of Berber interests in regional and local assemblies. However, local autonomy remains weak and regional governments are still a mix of appointed executive and elected councils (with limited powers).

This combination of appointed and elected representatives exists in several countries in the region. The power distribution and way in which these two parts of municipal government relate to each other varies from country to country. In Egypt or in Algeria, for example, governors and executive positions are appointed, and have a dominant position in elected local councils. This has changed in Morocco since the adoption of the 2011 Constitution and the 2013-2015 reforms. In the tradition of some Anglophone countries, there is an appointed city manager with an executive role and strong decision-making powers — often appointed by the local council or the national government — while the mayor, although elected, plays a limited role. In Lusophone Angola, provincial government representatives are appointed by national government, and municipal administrators by provincial governors, although this needs to be signed off by national government.

Furthermore, across Africa a complex web of interfaces between elected local government and customary governance arrangements makes the overall picture of urban and territorial rule very difficult to read — or indeed reform. In Botswana, the *kgotla* (assemblies of tribes) function as a platform connecting communities to the public administration. Likewise, chiefdom councils in Sierra Leone, represent the first level of administration, but may have stronger connections with national parliaments and coordinated power-sharing with LRGs. The constitutional reform of the *tinkhundla* system in Eswatini is another example of this complexity (see Box 2).

International organizations have also played an important role in promoting and supporting decentralization and the creation of institutions to support good governance and new democratic arrangements. Nevertheless, at the same time, international donors and financial institutions continue to back policies that recentralize resources in central governments, thereby weakening LRGs and capacity-building and strengthening this level of government.

Decentralization efforts at the continental level include the adoption of the African Charter on Values and Principles of Decentralization, Local Governance and Local Development in 2014.

Table 2 Overview of crucial legal and institutional decentralization reforms over the past ten years (2009-2019)

Country	Reforms and City Enabling Environment (CEE) assessment rating	
Angola	Since 2008, local governments have become budget units and the 2010 Constitution explicitly mentions local governments as spheres of government. In 2018, the Decree 40/18 increased, de jure, fiscal autonomy and decentralization of skills.	22
Benin	In the Constitution, decentralization is linked to local free administration and a multi-party system. Since 2009, departmental plans for inter-sectoral development have been formulated within the decennial national policy of decentralization and deconcentration. In 2017, the government initiated the review of the policy and laws on decentralization.	31
Botswana	In 2016, a new policy outlined the roles and responsibilities of all levels of government in the process of achieving sustainable local development. The country is still developing legislative tools to articulate the decentralization policy. The Constitution is neutral on the topic.	25
Burkina Faso	The General Code of Local Authorities identifies 11 blocks of local government responsibilities which were progressively transferred until 2015. A new reference framework was adopted in 2018 launching a ten-year decentralization strategy and five-year action plan.	28
Burundi	Decentralization is addressed in the 2018 Constitution. The country ratified the African Charter on the Values and Principles of Decentralization, Local Governance and Local Development in 2016. Since 2017, decrees to decentralize responsibilities have been proposed.	28
Cameroon	Since the adoption of the New Urban Agenda, a National Council for Decentralization has monitored the roll-out of decentralization policies. In 2018, the Ministry of Decentralization and Local Development was created.	26
Cape Verde	The Constitution recognizes autonomy of local power and in 2010 the government adopted a Decentralization Framework. A new law on regionalization is underway.	n.a
Chad	The legal framework acknowledges the principle of subsidiarity and the 2018 Constitution recognized the 'autonomous local governments'. A capacity-building strategy for decentralization was formulated in 2013. In 2017, recommendations were presented to the High Committee on Institutional Reforms to improve financing of local governments.	24
Côte d'Ivoire	A new decentralization process has been underway since 2011. The general territorial organization is being reshaped with a corresponding general framework for decentralized administration: regional and municipal councils. Decentralization of responsibilities and resources is recognized in the 2016 Constitution.	26
Eswatini	The reforms mentioned in the 2005 Constitution had not been implemented five years later. Building on the national decentralization policy of 2006, a bill was presented to parliament in 2015 to replace the Urban Government Act that had been in place since 1969.	27
Ghana	The objective of decentralization reforms are enshrined in the 1992 Constitution. Since 2010, a quadrennial National Decentralization Action Plans (curr. 2015-2019) are factored within the 2016 amendment of the Local Government Act.	31
Guinea	In 2012, the government approved the National Policy Letter on Decentralization and Local Development and its action plan. This is a practical strategic instrument. Since 2015, the vast majority of elected representatives have been replaced by special delegations appointed by the central level; the last municipal elections were held in February 2018.	22
Kenya	The 2010 Constitution led to three major devolution laws in 2012: the Transition to Devolved Government Act; the Intergovernmental Relations Act; and the County Government Act. In 2017, a new Devolved System of Government Policy was adopted to clarify division of tasks between national and county levels. Both other devolution laws are under revision. In 2015, the Makueni County became the first LRG in Africa to instate financial commitments on climate change in law; other county governments are doing the same.	31
Madagascar	Together with the enactment of the 2010 Constitution, new legislative and regulatory provisions governing local governments were adopted in 2014. Although elections were held in 2015, according to legal and electoral frameworks, regions and provinces are still under the supervision of appointed chiefs. In 2017, the country ratified the African Charter on the Values and Principles of Decentralization, Local Governance and Local Development.	26
Malawi	The 1994 Constitution formalized the decentralization policy. From 2005 to 2014, local councils and executive bodies were appointed. In 2014, elections took place for heads of councils. The 2017 Local Government (Amendment) Act led to a change of wording replacing 'local authority' with 'local government authority' wherever it appeared in previous acts.	26

Table 2 Overview of crucial legal and institutional decentralization reforms over the past ten years (2009-2019)

Country	Reforms and City Enabling Environment (CEE) assessment rating	
Mali	The Algiers Peace Agreement, signed in 2015, launched a process of renewing the Constitution. The constitutional review process has currently been suspended but new 'decentralization', 'territorial administration' and 'elections codes' were adopted in 2017. Stakeholders are currently addressing issues raised about the condition of the free LRG administration and the new Local Government Code. In 2019, the country ratified the African Charter on the Values and Principles of Decentralization, Local Governance and Local Development.	26
Mauritania	In 2010, the principles for a decentralization reform were presented and the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (2010-2015) consequently assigned additional responsibilities to the administrative regions. In 2017, the Constitution was amended (new Article 98 Title X) to establish regions as a decentralized self-government with political and financial autonomy — changing the system established in 1968.	26
Morocco	The 2011 Constitution (introducing direct elections for regional councils) and three organic laws of 2015 were conducive to the current territorial division and the assignment of competences to different layers of government. Regional and local elections, held in September 2015, are a milestone of the new de-concentration and decentralization process. Several administrative legal texts have been adopted since.	33
Mozambique	The 2004 Constitution provisions putting deconcentrated state services on an equal footing with local government services have been met with some ambiguity. In 2018, the Constitution was amended to recognize the political and administrative autonomy of provinces in relation to deconcentrated bodies.	19
Namibia	Decentralization is mentioned in the 1990 Constitution as are LRGs. Since 2010, the national government increased its regional presence and appointed regional governors. In 2016, no functions have yet been devolved to regional councils and the decentralization policies do not match local government responsibilities to local resources. The country ratified the African Charter on the Values and Principles of Decentralization, Local Governance and Local Development.	27
Niger	Local self-government in enshrined in the 2010 Constitution. The 2013 National Policy for the Modernization of the State has made limited progress; of the institutional mechanisms described, only the National Agency for the Financing of Local Authorities has been initiated. LRG elections scheduled in 2016 were postponed several times until 2019 and, most recently, the 2016 General Policy Statement makes little mention of decentralization.	26
Nigeria	The Constitution recognizes three levels of government and leaves decentralization to the discretion of the federated states. While elections were held in 2015, many mayors are still appointed by the governors. The most recent attempt at local government reform was made in 2017 with the Fourth Alteration Bill N°6.	23
Rwanda	Decentralization policy was implemented in phases. The third and current phase started in 2011. It focuses on the 'fiscal and financial decentralization' component of the Rwanda Decentralization Strategic Framework (RDSF). LRG responsibilities, competences and fiscal powers were established by a series of institutional acts in 2013. In 2018, as part of the national reform of local taxation, a new Property Tax was enacted.	32
Senegal	The General Local Government Code of 2013 consecrates Act III of the decentralization. It defines new legal, institutional and financial frameworks and clarifies distribution of responsibilities. In 2016, a guide for measuring the performance of local governments was adopted and tested.	32
Sierra Leone	In 2010, Sierra Leone's National Decentralization Policy set the goals to be achieved by December 2016. Yet the Ebola epidemic (2014-2016) disrupted the process at all levels. In 2016, a recommendation from the Constitutional Review Committee to include a Local Government Chapter relaunched the process. Meanwhile, ministries have kept control of the 'coordination' of non-devolved functions at the local level.	29
South Africa	Local governments are enshrined in the Constitution. Provincial and municipal governments are responsible for the roll-out of the integrated urban development framework (IUDF), adopted in 2016. This is South Africa's national urban policy (NUP), coordinated by the Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs.	40
Tanzania	From 2008 to 2013, the second phase of the Local Government Reform Programme (LGRP) was implemented through decentralization by devolution. In 2013, after allegations of irregularities in the implementation of the Local Government Development Grant (LGDG), development partners decided to stop their contribution altogether. Since then, reforms were sought to relaunch a revised LGDG and the decentralization process as a whole. This process of local government reform is ongoing.	34
Togo	The 1992 Constitution acknowledges decentralization but from 1987 until June 2019, no local elections were held. This is the result of various initiatives, such as the 2016 national roadmap for decentralization and local elections, the territorial reforms creating municipalities (2017-2018) and the creation of the National Decentralization Monitoring Council responsible for steering the process.	21
Tunisia	The 2014 Constitution marks a new era in the decentralization process. It takes into account the principles of electing local councils, independent administration, and the functional and financial local autonomy. The constitutional provisions are reinforced with the 2018 Code of Local Self-Government and the local election held the same year. The territorial reforms between 2014-2018 resulted in the creation of 86 municipalities, bringing the total number of municipalities to 350.	27

Country	Reforms and City Enabling Environment (CEE) assessment rating	
Uganda	The 1995 Constitution provides for a system of decentralization and local government. Despite strong de jure framework, the reality is quite different. Since 2005 constitutional reforms, local councils lost the right to appoint their own chief administrative officers. Since 2015, a major reform of intergovernmental transfer to local governments in being implemented in four stages. In July 2018, elections for village council were held for the first time in 17 years.	37
Zambia	In 2009, the Ministry of Local Government and Housing published a Decentralization Implementation Plan to operationalize the main elements of the decentralization policy adopted in 2002. In 2013, this policy was reviewed and relaunched. Key revisions within the revised decentralization policy included the recognition and emphasis on public participation and traditional authority within local governance.	30
Zimbabwe	Since 2013, local government derives its authority from the Constitution. It also establishes provincial/ metropolitan governments, granted with more powers and greater independence from the central government as compared to local authorities, and ten members of the provincial councils, as well as their chairs, are now democratically elected.	31

Source: Reforms per country, OECD/UCLG (2019); and CEE assessment rating of UCLG Africa and Cities Alliance (2018). There are four groups assessed. Ratings of 30 and above are countries with an environment that is most favourable. Ratings between 25 and 30 are countries whose environment is overall favourable but require certain improvements. Ratings between 20 and 25 are countries that require significant reforms towards a favourable environment. Ratings below 20 are countries with an environment that is globally unfavourable.

Decentralization efforts at the continental level include the adoption of the African Charter on Values and Principles of Decentralization, Local Governance and Local Development in 2014. This seeks to 'promote, protect and act as a catalyst for decentralization, local governance and local development in Africa'.[37] As of 2018, four African countries (Burundi, Madagascar, Mali and Namibia) had ratified the African Charter on Decentralization.[38] It has been adopted by the heads of state and government of the African Union and is awaiting their final signature and ratification before becoming an important instrument of governance for that organization. Nine other countries signed in 2015-2016 but the ratification process has yet to be completed.

Table 2 gives an overview of decentralization reforms in the past decade. However, some general trends can already be seen showing the wide disparity in the state of decentralization in the African region. Broadly, these correlate with the four categories of countries grouped according to assessment ratings that show the quality of their national institutional environments. These reveal wide variations ranging from those countries with the most favourable environment for the action of cities and regions, to those where the environment is found to be considerably unfavourable.[39]

An analysis of the state of decentralization and reforms across the continent (Table 2), shows that despite improvements, and even when countries are meeting institutional criteria, in practice the governance space for LRGs may still be limited and even decrease over time. This is due either to the actions of national government, or because of external events, such as conflict (Mali), epidemics (Sierra Leone) or natural disasters, that are beyond the control of both national government and LRGs.

Such factors point specifically to the challenges faced in achieving **SDG16** — on peace, justice and strong institutions — but apply to all of the SDGs.

Some countries in Africa represent frontrunners that have already completed a major programme of local government reform, generally dating back to the 1990s. These include **South Africa,** which scores highest on the quality of its enabling environment by having one of the world's most highly devolved systems of government. However, it is important to note that even here, devolution remains asymmetric. The so-called, category 'A' or metropolitan municipalities, have far more autonomy than smaller category 'B' or local municipalities, or the category 'C' district municipalities. Interestingly and directly relevant to the objective of expanding local capacity to deliver the SDGs in the South African experience, has been that it is much easier to strengthen and extend the capability of already strong and robust municipal structures than it is to reinforce weak structures or build new local government institutions from scratch.[40]

Morocco is currently implementing a regionalization reform that has been formulated by a regionalization consultative commission and is the cornerstone of a new socio-economic and environmental development model that aims to reshape the coherence between national, regional and local development policies. **Uganda** and **Tanzania** perform well in terms of their institutional enabling environments. But local governments have been subject to the recentralization of power and authority by the central government in Uganda, while in Tanzania the process of local government reform is still ongoing and fraught with major challenges, particularly relating to sound funding streams to local governments.[41]

In other countries, formal/constitutional decentralization reforms are more recent, occurring in the last five to ten years. For instance, **Zambia** reviewed and relaunched its Decentralization Implementation Plan as the National Decentralization Policy in 2013. Key revisions include the recognition of and emphasis on public participation and traditional authority within local governance. These principles of collaborative governance are also in the current Zambian constitution adopted in 2016 that sees the creation of new council districts. However, operationally these new districts still lack the power or authority necessary to decentralize decision-making and resource mobilization effectively.[42] Similarly, in 2017, countries such as **Benin** and **Kenya** started to revise decentralization policies and laws that had been enacted and implemented in the previous decade. However, as in **Senegal**, LRG performance in those countries is still not properly assessed and/or is patchy.

Meanwhile, **Kenya** has made substantial progress since the Constitutional Reform of 2010, the reforms of 2012 that transferred devolved powers to counties and the devolved system of government policy adopted in 2017. **Burundi**, **Ghana** and **Rwanda** have also made significant progress: national governments have implemented regular assessments of LRG performance and enacted important fiscal reforms. Along the same lines, the latest governance reforms in **Burkina Faso** in 2018 are aimed at boosting decentralization (a third cycle of decentralization), with financial programming

A man walks in Bein-al Qasreen street in downtown Cairo, Egypt (photo: PnP!, bit.ly/33avN6k).

of resources to be transferred to LRGs, thus more closely aligning fiscal transfers and the real needs of LRGs and their constituency.

A number of countries still require significant reform efforts to begin to foster an environment that is favourable to LRGs. For instance, **Botswana** has one of the oldest decentralization policies in Africa but it is still in the process of developing a legislative tool for its decentralization policy and fiscal transfers from central to local government are unpredictable.[43] In **Guinea Conakry**, decentralization is guided by the National Policy Letter on Decentralization and Local Development and Action Plan from 2012. But even though municipal elections were held in 2018, local governments still lack the administrative and fiscal power to act autonomously. In **Niger**, while complete municipalization of the national territory was adopted in 1999, municipal and regional elections have not been held since 2011 and the General Policy Statement of 2016 makes little mention of decentralization. The same is the case in countries such as **Cameroon** and **Angola**, where the President still holds executive power over local authorities. In Cameroon, local elections have been postponed since 2017 and regional councils, established by the 2008 Constitution, remain inactive. In Angola, parliament has approved a plan for the first local elections to be held in 2022. In countries such as **Côte d'Ivoire** and **Mali,** the functions of local government, as well as reforms, have been delayed or restricted by civil conflict. In the former, a new constitution was adopted in 2016 specifying the principle of local self-government and the country has reported that it actively involves LRGs in its SDG National Steering Committee and Standing Technical Secretariat.[44] In Mali, legal reforms are currently underway, including a new constitution, and the country recently ratified the African Charter on the Values and Principles of Decentralization, Local Governance and Local Development. In **Tunisia** the adoption of the Code of Local Self-Government, as well as new regional and local electoral laws, have been major milestones in the country's transition from an authoritarian regime to a democracy.

Nonetheless, in other countries, decentralization reforms have stagnated or worse, regressed. There, the institutional environment for LRGs is unfavourable. This includes countries where local elections have yet to take place.[45] In **Egypt,** the last local elections took place in 2008 but the country has been functioning without local councils since 2011, when a court dissolved the ruling party after the popular uprising that ended the rule of President Hosni Mubarak. In **Sudan** and **Somalia**, there has not been sufficient stability to date to improve existing institutional environments for LRGs. Power in such countries thus remains highly centralized and the space for participatory and transformative delivery demands associated with

the 2030 commitments to have any prominence, is therefore limited. **Mozambique and Togo** fit into this category. Nonetheless, Mozambique adopted a new constitutional provision in 2018 intended to strengthen decentralization processes vis-à-vis deconcentrated public administration. This should result in the head of provincial executive bodies being directly elected at the next general elections to be held in October 2019. On another encouraging note, Togo has seen some positive developments including its first local elections in 32 years, which took place in June 2019.[46]

State decentralization is only one part of the African localization challenge however, albeit a crucial axis for the delivery of the SDGs.

Territorial organization: structure of local and regional government

Sub-national government (SNG) arrangements are highly diverse across the continent and reflect the wide variety of LRGs, ranging from those in vast metropolitan areas to those in middle-sized cities or small towns, as well as rural municipalities, regions, counties and departments. These all represent different levels of power, capacity or resources for SDG engagement. In many countries, legal and territorial reforms for LRG and citizen participation are recent or ongoing. According to the Observatory on Decentralization of UCLG Africa, there is no evidence of a link between rates of urbanization and the number of LRGs in the country. A full overview of LRG systems and territorial organization can be found in Table 3.

A number of general patterns can be discerned. Francophone countries tend to have three or more tiers of SNG (although some of these can be administrative divisions, not elected local governments), while Anglophone countries tend to have two. A large number of countries have different arrangements for rural and urban areas. These include Burkina Faso, Cameroon and Mali, which distinguish between urban and rural municipalities. In Benin, a distinction is made between ordinary municipalities and the three main cities in the country that have special status. Guinea, Malawi, Niger, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe also give special status to specific cities or urban municipalities. Both Ghana and South Africa make distinctions between metropolitan areas, as well as regular municipalities and districts. Nonetheless, the diversity of the African experience in terms of the allocation of powers and functions once again mitigates any broad generalization.

Additionally, regionalization reforms have been implemented in the last decade.[50] As mentioned above, since 2015 within the framework of 'advanced regionalization', the regions in Morocco are self-governing entities. In Mauritania, in 2018, although still incipient, 15 administrative regions in six regions merged, with a regional council elected which in turn elects governors. In Ghana,

the national referendum of December 2018 established six new regions, bringing the total number of regions to 16. These are headed by deconcentrated regional coordinating councils. In Cape Verde, a law on regionalization currently being finalized should establish regions in the near future. Likewise, in Mozambique, provincial governors should be elected in the aforementioned general elections of 2019. Conversely, in Senegal, Phase III of decentralization has led to the suppression of the regions and granted 45 departments local government status, reclassifying municipalities as urban and rural.

On the other hand, progress has been somewhat slow in countries such as Chad, Cameroon and Namibia. In the latter, appointed regional governors should improve coordination between central government and elected regional councils, but central government functions have yet to be devolved to regional councils. Likewise, regional councils in Cameroon are still not active since being established de jure in 2004. Finally, in Chad, 12 years after establishing the status of regions, departments and municipalities, the first local elections were held in 42 (out of 365) municipalities — the appointment of the mayors in all other municipalities remains the responsibility of the national government.

Table 3 Territorial organization and number of LRGs by country (2018)

2018	System of government / form of state	Total n° of LRGs	1st level (municipal)	2nd level (intermediary)	3rd level (regional/state)
Algeria	Republic/unitary	1,589	1,541	48	
Angola	Republic/unitary	181	163		18
Benin	Republic/unitary	77	77		
Botswana	Republic/unitary	16	16		
Burkina Faso	Republic/unitary	364	351		13
Burundi	Republic/unitary	119	119		
Cape Verde	Republic/unitary	22	22		
Cameroon	Republic/unitary	370	360		10
Central Africa Rep.	Republic/unitary	181	174		7
Chad	Republic/unitary	507	377	107	23
Comoros	Republic/federal	57	54		3
Dem. Rep. of the Congo	Republic/unitary	337	311		26
Congo (Rep. of the)	Republic/unitary	18	6		12
Côte d'Ivoire	Republic/unitary	234	201		33
Djibouti	Republic/unitary	8	3		5
Egypt	Republic/unitary	407	380		27
Equatorial Guinea	Republic/unitary	30	30		
Eritrea	Republic/unitary	56	56		
Eswatini	Constit. monarchy/unitary	68	68		
Ethiopia	Republic/federal	927	916		11
Gabon	Republic/unitary	97	50	47	
The Gambia	Republic/unitary	122	114		8
Ghana	Republic/unitary	254	254		
Guinea	Republic/unitary	350	342		8
Guinea-Bissau[51]	Republic/unitary	(46)	(37)		(9)
Kenya	Republic/unitary	47	47		
Lesotho	Constit. monarchy/unitary	86	86		
Liberia	Republic/unitary	102	102		

2018	System of government / form of state	Total n° of LRGs	1st level (municipal)	2nd level (intermediary)	3rd level (regional/state)
Libya	Republic/unitary	120	120		
Madagascar	Republic/unitary	1,723	1695	22	6
Malawi	Republic/unitary	35	35		
Mali	Republic/unitary	763	703	49	11
Mauritania	Republic/unitary	233	218		15
Mauritius	Republic/unitary	143	130	12	1
Morocco	Constit. monarchy/unitary	1,625	1,538	75	12
Mozambique	Republic/unitary	64	53		11
Namibia	Republic/unitary	71	57		14
Niger	Republic/unitary	262	255		7
Nigeria	Republic/federal	811	774		37
Rwanda	Republic/unitary	30	30		
Sao Tome and Principe	Republic/unitary	9	7		2
Senegal	Republic/unitary	602	557	45	
Seychelles	Republic/unitary	25	25		
Sierra Leone	Republic/unitary	22	22		
Somalia	Republic/federal	n.a.	n.a.		6
South Africa	Republic/quasi-federal	266	257		9
South Sudan	Republic/federal	115	83		32
Sudan	Republic/federal	154	136		18
Tanzania	Republic/unitary	200	169		31
Togo	Republic/unitary	161	117	39	5
Tunisia	Republic/unitary	374	350		24
Uganda	Republic/unitary	169	169		
Zambia	Republic/unitary	103	103		
Zimbabwe	Republic/unitary	102	92		10
TOTAL		14,854	14,246	289	319

Key functions and responsibilities of sub-national governments

Most African countries recognize the establishment of LRGs and have administrative divisions at the provincial and regional level. However, the territorial divisions at the regional, municipal and sub-municipal level are not always clear or recognized in the constitution or other legislative texts. Moreover, for many countries, detailed information on intermediary levels, municipal and lower administrative divisions in terms of governance, functions, power and responsibilities are ambiguous or unspecified. Clarity around functional mandates and jurisdictions is necessary for successful SDG localization, taking into account their multifaceted nature and the local realities on the ground.

In that regard, it is important to consider the role of intermediary cities. On the one hand, these play a critical function connecting rural and urban areas through the provision of services and facilities, although this is often not reflected in their formal service delivery mandates. On the other hand, metropolitan city governments are often faced with the challenge of administrative boundaries that cannot be adjusted quickly enough to keep up with sprawling informal urban areas — thus affecting their implementation of the SDGs.

The capacity of LRGs to deliver services is also frequently hampered by the disproportionate share of natural hazards and disasters associated with climate change that impact on cities, and the fact that cities paradoxically have neither the funding nor the mandates to plan or deal with the costs of disaster prevention and response. Countries such as Sierra Leone have recently experienced extreme flooding washing away infrastructure and disrupting service provision. In Liberia, Guinea and more recently, Central African Republic and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, local governments have moreover been affected by the Ebola emergency. The burden that climate adaptation and disaster risk and mitigation represent for municipalities not even managing to keep pace with basic service delivery demands of their residents cannot be underestimated.

There are important differences between countries and sectors in the extent to which local governments across Africa have direct control or decision-making power through ownership or direct management of infrastructure and the services they have to deliver as part of the functions allocated to them.[52] This has major implications for how much they are able to plan for and deliver on targets related to the urban **SDG 11**, such as waste collection, public transport, and housing, but also services such as health (**SDG 3**), education (**SDG 4**) or water (**SDG 6**), since cities are the main delivery sites of these services. Often such functions are controlled at the national or regional level or through national public utilities or state-owned enterprises (SOEs). As the number of SOEs and other agencies involved with urban infrastructure and development increases, so the governance and administration costs grow and coordination of planning, customer relations and urban development becomes more difficult.[53] In this regard, there is a need to improve multilevel governance (MLG) of infrastructure and services through the reform of SOEs and innovative actions in the transport, water, waste, ICT and energy sectors, adapted to each particular context, to ensure more efficiency and access to quality public services for all. The successful reform of Uganda's National Water and Sewerage Corporation is a case in point, which turned a loss-making company into a highly effective service provider. Burkina Faso, Kenya, Mozambique, Niger, Senegal and Zambia have also demonstrated success in reforming their water utilities, experimenting with private sector participation and improving their internal governance through performance-based contracts and third-party monitoring. However, in other countries, SOEs in the utilities sector continue to underperform and efforts to reform them have been unsuccessful (e.g. ESKOM in South Africa).

Informal providers in these sectors also represent a critical, but poorly documented, component of service delivery to some of urban Africa's poorest citizens. With about 55% of urban dwellers in Africa living in informal settlements, according to UN-Habitat (rising to as much as 90% in Central African countries such as Central African Republic and Chad), it is simply impossible to improve service delivery without taking informal actors into account. Acknowledging the importance of community actors provides an opportunity for upscaling and building alternative decentralized models of service delivery in ways that build local ownership and are more economically and environmentally sustainable. Important examples of success can be found in countries such as Egypt and Ghana where informal waste pickers have been integrated into the solid waste management sector; or in Kenya or Benin where local organizations have extended water and sanitation infrastructure into unplanned urban areas and manage the collection and billing in these areas on behalf of the water and sewerage utility company (see Section 3).

Among the most important set of actors

Clarity around functional mandates and jurisdictions is necessary for successful SDG localization, taking into account their multifaceted nature and the local realities on the ground.

in roles that are auxiliary to local government in Africa are chiefs and traditional authorities. Their role in governance is in some instances legally recognized and incorporated by national government, such as in Botswana, Sierra Leone, Zambia or Eswatini (see Box 2). However, in the majority of cases, the developmental role of chiefs is not recognized, regulated or funded — with the resultant challenges in formative areas such as land allocation, control and management. This is a crucial difference between the African Charter on the Values and Principles of Decentralization, Local Governance and Local Development (2014), which recognizes their role, and the previous African Charter on Democracy (2007), which does not.[54]

Other local structures and associations that play a crucial role in the delivery of services at the neighbourhood and community level in Africa include resident and street committees, neighbourhood watch groups, home-based childcare facilities, but also large corporations (e.g. mining), as well as non-governmental organizations (NGOs) or international organizations. All of these structures play a key role in contributing to service delivery at the most local level but in ways that are not always recognized, supported or democratically accountable.

There is a need to adequately acknowledge the role and contribution of all stakeholders across multiple levels and harness them towards the fulfilment of the SDGs through modes of co-production via grassroots or community engagement or through Public-Private-People Partnerships (PPPPs) and delegated management models, while safeguarding inclusiveness and accountability. Such partnerships can have impacts that go beyond the mere delivery and management of services and infrastructures, also contributing to strengthening urban adaptiveness and resilience. For instance, the experience from community organizations such as Slum Dwellers International (SDI) shows the potential of these collaborations with organized communities for achieving slum upgrading but also urban risk reduction and resilience-building at the same time (see Section 3).[56] The 'Know your City' campaign and programme launched by SDI and UCLG Africa, with the collaboration of the Cities Alliance, is a good example of such partnership contributing to the implementation of SDG 11.

Local and regional government finance

Finance is one area in the region where local government can rarely act alone, yet the fiscal needs in Africa are the highest of all regions. Overall infrastructure needs in Africa are estimated at between USD 130 billion and USD 170 billion per year.[57] This is based on current models of service delivery, although the cost of alternative and more

decentralized solutions should be explored.

The limited fiscal resource availability for African LRGs severely hampers autonomous policy impact. Thanks to the efforts of LRGs in promoting the importance of localizing financing for sustainable urbanization, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda (AAAA) makes provision for the appropriate assignment of autonomous fiscal functions at the sub-national level (paragraph 34). This is crucial for the implementation of wider global development agendas on the continent. The extent to which LRGs can effectively mobilize revenues, control expenditure priorities, and engage in borrowing activities are all fundamental to the fiscal autonomy and effectiveness of LRGs and their ability to innovate on SDG implementation.

Notably, sub-national fiscal data for many African countries is difficult to access.[58] A few countries have complete and reliable data available online (e.g. South Africa, Morocco). Several countries have laws that require making fiscal documentation publicly available, for example Botswana and Kenya. Many countries have undertaken extensive documenting of their public finances at the sub-national level. According to UCLG Africa, at least 151 LRGs since 2016 underwent a Public Expenditure and Financial Accountability (PEFA) assessment. This includes all provinces of South Africa (2013-2017); the regions of Ethiopia (2007-2015) and Nigeria (2008-2017); and capital cities such as Douala, Cotonou, Ouagadougou, Antananarivo,

Nouakchott, Dakar, Johannesburg and Tshwane, Tunis and Kampala. Despite these legal fiscal frameworks, challenges around data availability persist. Almost all African countries (except for South Africa) rank as limited or low on the Budget Transparency Index, suggesting that even when data is collected, other factors might limit transparency.[59]

Where data is available for comparison between countries, there is wide variation in LRG finance (see Figure 1). It is however important to single out federal countries (Nigeria, Ethiopia and South Africa) where LRGs control around half of state revenues and expenditures. Significantly, this is mainly concentrated at the level of federated states or provinces, and not at the local level. For example, in Nigeria, states are responsible for 37% of total expenditure (more than 55% of total public investment) and 26.9% of public revenue. Meanwhile, local governments are responsible for 11% of total public spending.

Expenditure. Table 4 further illustrates the

Figure 1 **Sub-national government (SNG) expenditures and revenues (% of GDP and % of total government, 2016)**
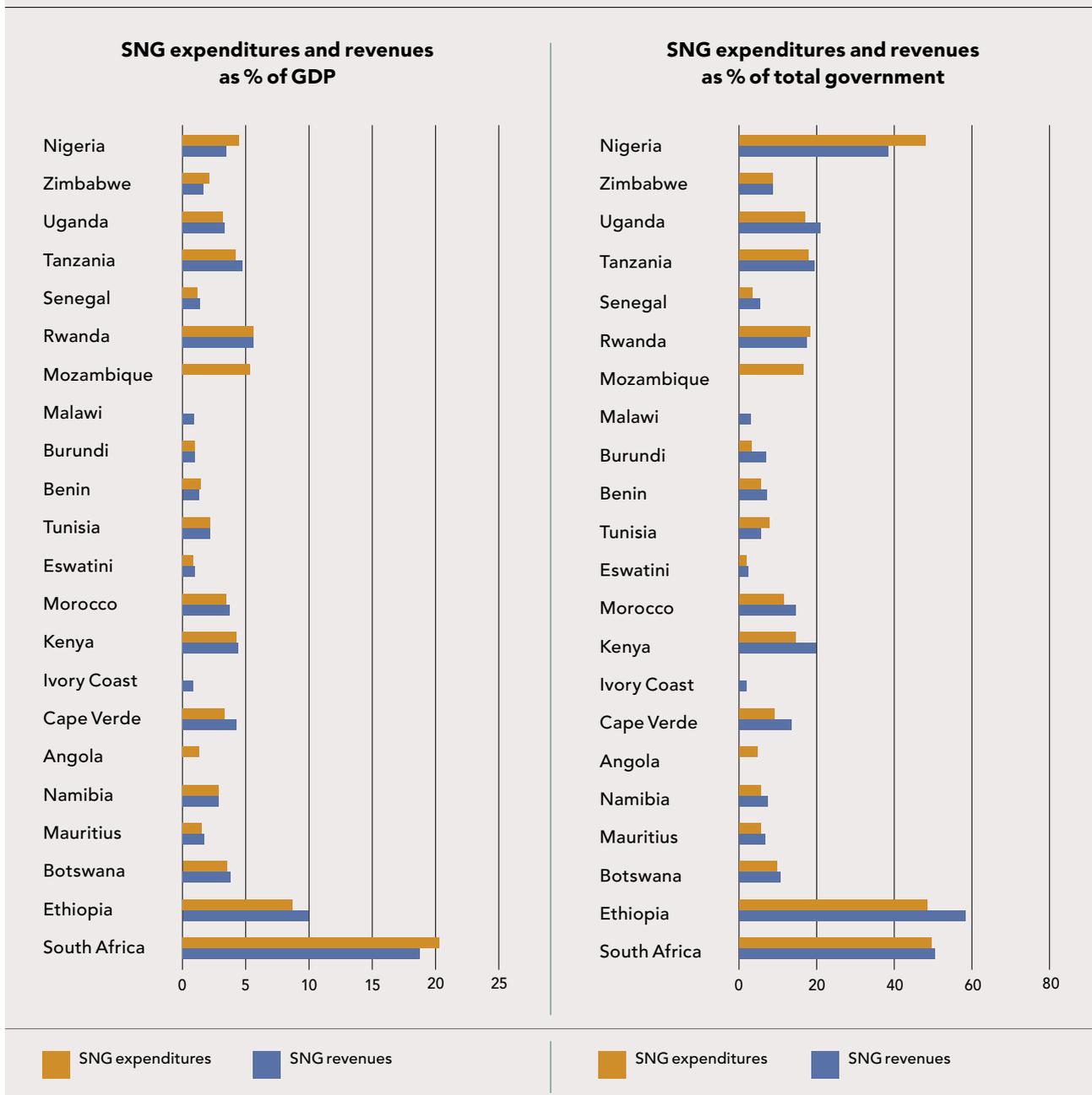
Source: OECD/UCLG (2019).

wide variations among cities and countries. From this table, it is not however possible to see the breakdown in revenue types (for example between own-source collections and grants). It is important that this is understood since own-source collection can be improved through local enhancement measures (such as updating the cadastre) and allows for expenditure prioritization at the local level. In contrast, grants depend on national contributions and may have conditions attached to them. Thus, higher levels of own-source collection may indicate higher levels of sub-national autonomy.

From an urban perspective, city authorities have differing levels of autonomy. This depends on how city governments fit into the fiscal architecture of countries and regions. This has implications for how fiscally strong these cities are and their ability to address the challenges of sustainable urbanization. Of note, the fiscal structure of countries is often uneven, with different types of responsibility given to different types of areas (e.g. urban, rural, metro, special economic zones — SEZs etc.). These differences are borne out when comparing primary and secondary cities in the same country. In terms of per capita spending, the UCLG Africa's Observatory on Local Finance data suggests that there is a mix with some countries having higher spending in primary cities and others having higher spending in secondary cities. For example, Cotonou (which

is the economic capital of Benin) spends almost five times more per capita than the city of Nikki; and in Burundi, Bujumbura spends almost four times more than Gitega. In these contexts, the larger cities may be significantly better resourced than smaller urban areas. This is even though their expenditure capacity is still lower than primary cities in the rest of the world, which in turn reduces their capacity to finance the delivery of public services, operation and maintenance of infrastructure and actual investments. In contrast, Kenitra in Morocco spends USD 50 per capita, compared with Rabat, which spends only USD 5 per capita. In cases such as these, there may be biases within the fiscal allocation structure or urban investments are directly financed by the national government so are not reflected in sub-national fiscal data.[60]

Key to the fiscal autonomy of LRGs is control over core expenditure areas. The nature of the expenditure has important implications for the ability of LRGs to shape development processes. Most public expenditure is broken down into roughly three categories. These categories differ in terminology and scope from place to place. On the one hand, generally, staff expenditure (also referred to as personnel or personal emoluments), and operation and maintenance expenditure (O&M) make up the current or recurrent expenditures of LRGs. On the other hand, LRGs being able to shape investments (also

Table 4 **UCLG Africa, Observatory on Local Finance 2018, selected cities**

Region	Southern Africa		East Africa		West Africa		North Africa		Central Africa
Country	Malawi		Burundi		Benin		Morocco		Congo (Rep. of the)
Cities	Lilongwe	Blantyre	Bujumbura	Gitega	Cotonou	Nikki	Rabat	Kenitra	Brazzaville
Actual operating revenue (million)	3.880	2.201	1.68	0.247	21.393	0.765	12.366	26.377	28.692
Actual operating expenditure (million)	1.292	411.65	1.76	0.159	10.670	0.385	5.972	19.765	18.025
Gross savings (million)	2.587	1.790	0.081	0.088	10.722	0.379	6.393	6.611	10.666
Actual operating revenue/inh	3.53	4.58	4.51	1.16	31.51	6.73	10.22	67.59	6.21
Actual operating expenditure/inh	1.17	0.86	4.73	0.75	15.71	3.39	4.94	50.64	3.9
Capital expenditure/inh	0	0	1.42	1.30	14.63	5.81	0.58	43.71	0
Personnel costs/ operating revenue	30.9 %	7.84%	68.73%	62.12%	30.35%	20.64%	46.34%	56.82%	62.72%
Self-funding margin	66.69 %	81.3%	-4.87%	35.53%	50.12%	49.66%	51.71%	25.07%	37.18%
Operating cost coverage rate	33.31 %	18.7%	104.87%	64.47%	49.88%	50.34%	48.29%	74.93%	62.82%

Note: amounts in current USD, budgets from 2015/16.
Source: UCLG Africa (2018), 'State of Local Finance in Africa'.

In Africa, sub-national public investment represented less than 20% of total public investment and 0.9% of GDP on average in 2016. In cities such as Abidjan in Côte d'Ivoire, the entire municipal budget is as low as USD 0.02 per capita.

referred to as capital expenditure or development expenditure) in local areas allows for political inclusion of communities. The citizenship finds tangible implications in participating in local elections and pushing for local accountability as well as engaging in participatory processes.

As the LRG finance systems of African nations become more complex, there is more and more variation across the continent (see Figure 1 for examples). There are several extreme cases: in Angola, Eswatini, Burundi, Senegal and Mozambique, for example, data from 2016 indicate that less than 5% of total public expenditure are controlled by local governments. Mozambique is a particularly compelling example. Approximately one third of public sector spending is carried out at the sub-national level, of which 16.6% of total public expenditure are controlled by deconcentrated bodies (districts), and 15.2% by the provincial level (which includes the city administration of Maputo). In both cases, the national government has had a strong oversight role, but this should start to shift with the regionalization trends and elections of provincial governors in 2019. In 2016, municipalities account for 1.6% of total public spending.[61] On the other end of the scale, local governments in Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, Rwanda, South Africa and Ethiopia spend more than 15% of total public spending. In Ethiopia, data indicate that local government spending as a share of the federated state ranges from the Afar region where 38% of spending are at *woreda* (district) level to the Tigray region where 56% are at *woreda* level.[62]

In Africa, sub-national public investment represented less than 20% of total public investment and 0.9% of GDP on average in 2016.[63] Resources for capital investment are negligible in most city governments in Sub-Saharan Africa, where in cities such as Abidjan in Côte d'Ivoire the entire municipal budget is as low as USD 0.02 per capita.[64] In some countries, for example Kenya, there are regulations which indicate how much of a budget can be allocated to each priority (to get a budget passed, at least 30% should be allocated for development). This has to be a significant limitation on how much the local government can do to advance the SDGs.

In other countries, local governments have more autonomy to dictate spending priorities.

Similarly, local governments forced to make harsh trade-offs between O&M and capital may have to deal with infrastructure that is not sufficiently maintained (as it is politically more appealing to invest in new projects). Indeed, if many urban public investments are decided and managed by national government or central government utilities, O&M is transferred to local governments that were not part of the original planning or do not have the financial and human resources to cope.

Own revenues. Sub-national revenues are generally a combination of transfers from higher levels of government and own-source revenue collected from taxes, charges and fees. What happens locally is thus the outcome of a complex system of fiscal transfers, conditionality imposed by national government and local revenue practices.

According to public finance theory, transfers are meant to overcome the disjuncture between the ability of LRGs to collect revenue and the expenditure requirements placed upon them. In unitary governments and low-income economies, central government grants and subsidies tend to dominate sub-national revenue sources.[65] This is the case in most African countries, but with some notable exceptions such as Morocco, South Africa and Zimbabwe. Financial transfers from central government to local and regional authorities are determined in different ways in different countries. As a trend, there is a lack of transparency and predictability, making it difficult for local governments to plan and execute projects.[66]

The relative scale and volume of fiscal transfers to local government vary greatly among countries, as well as between and among the local and regional government within countries. In some countries, larger cities with higher revenue-raising capacity get lower levels of grant transfers than smaller urban centres or rural areas. For instance, Addis Ababa receives almost nothing in national grants while smaller Ethiopian towns get the majority of their revenues from the central state. Similarly, in South Africa, metropolitan governments receive smaller grants per capita relative to secondary cities and towns. Overall, however, South African local governments get a much smaller proportion of their revenue from transfers, compared with most other African SNGs. Importantly, as much as the grant amounts that SNGs receive matter, so too does the nature of the grants. Ring-fenced or conditional grants are not uncommon. They allow for higher levels of oversight, but the highly regulated fiscal flows also constrict the flexibility of LRGs because this expenditure is tied and very tightly monitored, leaving little room for discretion or innovation.

Of note, many African national governments

have been resistant to fiscal decentralization, in particular when it requires transferring centrally raised revenue to LRGs or allocating high value revenue streams to LRGs. In fact, according to the Institutional Assessment of Local Governments in Africa, 31 countries do not ensure transfers of resources or do so irregularly, and 12 countries are transferring resources and distributing them among local governments but annual amounts and methods of distribution are neither transparent nor predictable.[67] The problem is that rising expectations of what local government can and should deliver to residents requires higher levels of expenditure. The SDGs compound this as they place additional requirements on sub-national (and particularly local) governments to deliver on globally set agendas. Increasing responsibilities, coupled with limited revenue streams and partial or fragmented grant allocation processes, result in local governments facing unfunded mandates and insufficient local resources to meet their obligations.[68] What is emerging across the continent is a municipal fiscal squeeze as local expectations rise, without the matching fiscal resources to meet these expectations.

The fiscal squeeze faced by most LRGs means that they are under increasing pressure to improve revenue generation. All African countries allow LRGs to collect local revenue. This may include taxes, charges and fees of various sorts. In practice, many LRGs are not able to collect own-revenues as budgeted.

In terms of own-source revenue, property taxation is one of the major sources of sub-national collection.[69] In some cases, property taxation is the single source (i.e. Mauritius) or the outmost (95% of tax revenue in Cape Verde and South Africa in 2016).[70] In some cities, for example Addis Ababa in Ethiopia, land leasing (rather than property taxation) provides significant flows of revenue to the sub-national level.[71] In both cases, an up-to-date and modernized cadastre system is key. This is a lesson learnt common to both the Financial Director of Cotonou and Ex-Chief Financial Officer of Port Louis.[72] The Ex-Chief Financial Officer of Port Louis, with the support of central government and the Valuation Office has, since 2012, implemented the self-assessed scheme for property tax and mapped out areas where cadastre values are not up-to-date. The Financial Director of Cotonou implemented an Urban Land Registry in 1991 that became an online tool in 2012. The city government now signs an annual contract with the Directorate-General of Tax to improve tax collection: in Benin in 2016, property tax represented 23.3% of municipalities' tax revenue.[73] Similarly, local councils in Sierra Leone were required to implement a property cadastre system in 2017 to facilitate collection.

Moreover, local taxation, and property tax collection in particular, constitute a relationship between citizens and LRGs. Reforms and programmes to strengthen LRG tax revenue include a component of sensitization of the population to ensure high levels of taxpayer compliance. This is particularly the case in Mzuzu, Malawi with the 'My city, my responsibility' campaign. At the end of a five-year Revenue Mobilization Programme (REMOP), the revenues of the city had increased seven-fold to over USD 350 million in 2018. [74]

In cases where key services are controlled by LRGs, their sale can provide valuable sources of revenue. In South Africa, for example, water and electricity charges are critical sources of revenue for metropolitan governments. In Kenya, county governments recently received the right to collect hospital fees, which provide large revenue streams at the sub-national level. However, these sources are more constrained in nature than property tax since they must be used to finance the ongoing provision of the service.

Sub-national revenue collections are small as a proportion of total government revenue, with the exception of South Africa, Ethiopia, Cape Verde and Mozambique whose local government revenue collection is more than 20% of total government revenue. In Morocco, 80% of local budgets come from tax revenues and 7.5% from tariffs and fees.

With sufficient political will, institutional changes, and buy-in from urban citizens, own-source revenue collection could be significantly raised.[75] An integrated strategy for domestic resource mobilization is necessary to ensure that new provisions in financial law ends unfair competition between territories that currently denies LRGs a significant share of their revenue. Collaborative frameworks between LRGs and national governments are crucial since the LRG share of tax revenue is often redistributed via a shared system, and in many countries national governments have control over tax base and tax rate. The parliament in Rwanda recently passed fiscal reforms to improve property tax collection rates and gradually reduce over-reliance on transfers.

Taxpayer compliance also reflects the quality of the social contract. In Uganda, the experience of Kampala is a compelling example of transformative reforms (see Box 3). Although it has not led to external investment, lack of which is a common problem, this has helped improve credit ratings and the possibility of Kampala issuing its first municipal bond.[76] In the aforementioned Mzuzu, Malawi's third largest city, and in the Lagos state government in Nigeria, tax reform contributed to a significant increase in tax generation, allowing the leveraging of finances that could be invested in urban development, transportation facilities, housing, industrial and commercial development.[77]

Kampala Capital City Authority: accessing finance for urban infrastructure

In 2009, in an effort to explore ways to improve urban infrastructure and the related delivery of services across the city, the Kampala Institutional and Infrastructural Development Programme commissioned a study to investigate ways of corporatizing the management of the city. This culminated in a clear recommendation to create the Kampala Capital City Authority (KCCA) through an act of the national government, where the authority itself would be responsible for the administration of the city as a management entity separate from the political arm of the city.[78]

KCCA, which began operations in 2011, recognized that, faced with rapid urbanization and limited financial resources, it would need to take decisive steps to boost its organizational robustness and stability. Through careful planning and a commitment to improve both billing and collection efficiency, KCCA was able to increase revenue collection by 89% during a four-year period (2010/11-2014/15); create a strategic plan outlining a vision of the future of the metropolitan area, and set out the projects required over the medium term to achieve this vision.[79] The Ministerial Policy Statement 2017-2018 shows continued momentum in ever-increasing revenue flows in the city (Figure 2).[80]

Nevertheless, despite increased financial flows and stronger municipal management, KCCA has been unsuccessful in attracting external investment, which is critically important to meeting the magnitude of the city's urban infrastructure needs. Existing legislation prohibits the city from borrowing anything more than 10% of its annual revenues, so amounts are insufficient to deliver on its long-term capital investment plan. This inability to access finance for urban infrastructure represents a sort of incomplete financial decentralization, a phenomenon plaguing cities across the Global South.[81]

Local revenue projections (billions of Ugandan shillings)

70.1	80.4	85.0	112.7	122.8	127.35
Actual 2013/14	Actual 2014/15	Actual 2015/16	Target 2016/17	Target 2017/18	Target 2018/19

Access to long-term financing. In Africa, the debate about how to retrofit and build new infrastructure, particularly energy and transportation, is critical to overcoming historical divides and realizing the potential for sustainable urbanization. It is important that initiatives for infrastructure finance not only address the massive infrastructure deficits, but also promote greater regional integration and productivity. Strategic investment programmes must take into account the issue of scale in conjunction with the specific needs of each contextual space. Moreover, LRGs must be able to access long-term finance for LED and support their share of infrastructure investment for GDP growth, and social and territorial cohesion in the region.

In the context of the SDG framework, several reports have pointed to the declining levels of Official Development Assistance (ODA) in Africa.[82] Africa has been the largest recipient of ODA in the last three decades, although the role of ODA in promoting good governance and supporting an integrated and territorial approach to investment programming has been widely questioned. Moreover, overall commitments to Africa's infrastructure from all reported sources fell to USD 62.5 billion in 2016, the lowest level in five years, due mainly to a reduction in Chinese funding and private sector investments. There are also stark regional differences in terms of the destination of funding for infrastructure, with almost one third going to West Africa, about 20% each to North and East Africa, and only 10% each to Central and Southern Africa. Most funding goes to the transport, water and energy sectors and less than 3% to ICT, which is crucial to enable technology-based innovations for economic growth and development.[83]

A number of special multilateral funds have been set up in recognition of the need for infrastructure finance. At the national level, some countries are putting financial instruments in place to attract funding and strengthen coherence between national policy, major infrastructure investment and climate.[84] Nonetheless, these do not have a strong urban focus, nor do they go beyond conventional development finance solutions.[85] While borrowing is often seen as the best (indeed often the only) way for LRGs to raise capital for infrastructure projects, in many countries LRGs have neither the legal authority to contract debt, nor do their projects match the current feasibility, bankability and risk standards that are required. Consequently, LRGs are not able to access the full range of financing options available locally, nationally or globally.

Even in cases where LRGs can borrow, this is often restricted or tightly controlled (as is the case for South Africa at the provincial level, and for Kenya and Malawi). Eswatini, Botswana, Zambia, Zimbabwe, Namibia and South Africa (at the
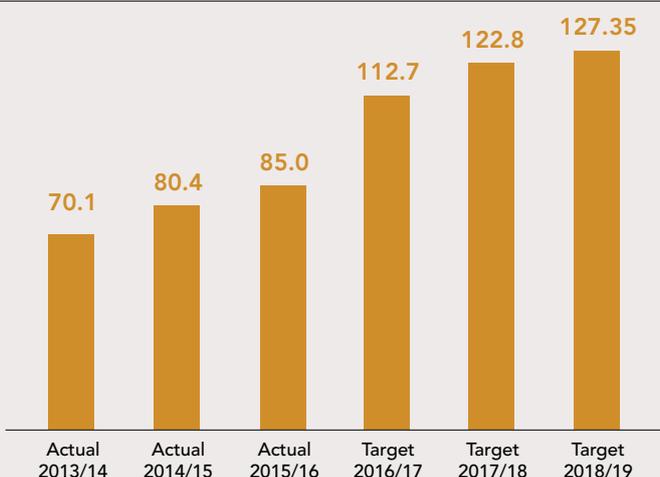
Road traffic in Kampala, Uganda (photo: Carlos Felipe Pardo, bit.ly/30Sjzhj).

municipal level), have been granted borrowing power with no restrictions but the levels of local government borrowing are unknown due to a lack of available data. Although in many countries LRGs can borrow, they may not be seen as creditworthy by lenders. It is therefore important for cities to communicate to credit institutions so that lenders have a better understanding of local financial contexts and needs.

While the continent has no municipal bank or fund, a number of recent initiatives focus specifically on strengthening the financial means of implementation for the SDGs in Africa at the sub-national level. Ultimately, these show that it is possible for cities to mobilize private reimbursable

resources to finance their development, set examples and learn from them to trigger a virtuous dynamic circle of transformational change.

With the support of the African Development Bank (AfDB), UCLG Africa has initiated an African Territorial Agency to set up a cooperative fund financed by an initial investment from the continent's main cities (initially some 20 cities).[86] The programme aims to help cities to raise additional resources from financial institutions and capital markets to finance their investments. UCLG Africa published a call for expressions of interest in January 2019 to mobilize a first group of cities and local governments to be its founding members.

Development banks and international donors can assist governments and cities building the necessary technical capacity and creditworthiness to further unlock and expand access to finance, for instance through the creation of local government finance institutions (LGFIs).[87] Important work in this area is happening in West Africa (see Box 4). AfDB has also committed to create the Urban and Municipal Development Fund (UMDF) for Africa, to target urban growth management and climate-resilient development in African cities by improving governance and the quality of basic services, including infrastructure. This will be supported by a EUR 4 million grant from the Nordic Development Fund (NDF).[88]

Moreover, case studies of municipal bonds in Johannesburg, Douala, Dakar, Kampala and Nairobi show that the chief obstacle to municipal bond issuance for raising funds is not related to non-eligibility, lack of capacity or lack of creditworthiness, but to regulatory systems or political blockages which prohibit municipalities from issuing bonds.[89] Hence, national governments, within an MLG approach, have an important role to play in making laws to enable borrowing or supporting intermediary financing institutions. To date, only South African and Nigerian LRGs have successfully created a municipal bond market. In Nigeria, a total volume of EUR 1.186 million was levied against 23 GHG emissions in local currency. Both these cases demonstrate the potential of innovative financing tools that leverage the need for more sustainable and renewable energy through green bonds and local climate change funds.

Box 4

Local government finance institutions in West Africa

The United Nations Capital Development Fund (UNCDF), together with the Global Fund for Cities Development (FMDV), is working in Cameroon, Madagascar, Mali and Niger to identify the most effective ways to sustain and diversify the financial resources of local government finance institutions (LGFIs) to reinforce and support local authorities and bolster their financial resources.[92] This is in partnership with the Network of African Finance Institutions for Local Authorities (RIAFCO) and through the Municipal Investment Finance programme.

Such support is particularly relevant for secondary cities in Africa, which are among those with the most rapidly rising infrastructure needs.[93] RIAFCO was created in 2014 by founding members Cameroon, Gabon, Burundi and Mali and now has ten members, including Benin, Burkina Faso, Cote d'Ivoire, Madagascar, Niger and Senegal.

Furthermore, a number of LGAs provide technical assistance for project preparation to access funding mechanisms for cities, such as the C40 Cities Finance Facility, which supports larger cities to prepare and deliver climate change projects. In Africa, this includes support in the cities of eThekwini and Dar es Salaam.[90] ICLEI in turn provides support through a range of initiatives that better position LRGs to access finance and to implement innovative local financing mechanisms.[91]

LRGs need to be involved in these innovative approaches to mobilize and improve access to finance down to the community level. This can in turn contribute to strengthening participatory local government and an accountable, effective state.[94] In Kenya, the Akiba Mashinani Trust (AMT) provides funding and financial services to the Kenyan Homeless People's Federation (*Muungano wa Wanavijiiji*) by using the funds of saving groups as seed capital for revolving funds at the community, city and national scales. The funds offer informal settlers a range of financial products, including community project loans, which allow savings groups to finance social housing, sanitation and basic infrastructure in an affordable way.[95]

Examples from across Africa show the innovative ways in which technologies are used to harness the fourth industrial revolution that include the youth and women and contribute to generating much-needed employment and income opportunities. The launch of the software platform *MaTontine* that automates the workings of local savings groups in Senegal is an example of the way in which technology and innovation can improve and expand financial services for low-income populations. This builds on traditional savings circles which can be found across the continent.[96] Similarly, women in the Nigerian city of Kano are using Whatsapp to communicate with local politicians, accessing information about health and safety, connecting to online study groups, as well as advertising small businesses or services, resulting in income generation and saving opportunities.[97] ◉

2.3 Intergovernmental relations

Given the holistic, interlinked and transversal nature of the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs, the Global Goals cannot be achieved through single sector or silo approaches. As an example, SDG target 17.14 calls on all countries to enhance policy coherence for sustainable development, as a cross-cutting means of implementation.[98] Policy coherence is necessary to ensure that progress achieved in one goal contributes to, rather than undermines, progress in other goals. SDG 17.14 thus entails considering institutional mechanisms for coherence, policy interaction and policy effects.[99] Such a framework requires effective intergovernmental relations that facilitate not only coherent policy but also fiscal mechanisms and approaches to implementation. This is encouraged by the African Charter on the Values and Principles of Decentralization, Local Governance and Local Development (see Box 5).

Notwithstanding, the continent has a disproportionate number of low-income countries that are aid beneficiaries or dependents of donor support. In relation to the priority given to the localization of the SDGs, it is important to note the opportunity to transform donor methodologies and conditionality to be more supportive of MLG and local development, in particular. In that sense, it is essential to shift assistance away from mainly sector-oriented and nationally-centred budget support to a more decentralized and LRG-centred territorial approach to local development (TALD). Moreover, donors, development banks and investors should move away from models that reinforce business as usual, top-down and sectoral approaches (dealing usually with governments at the ministerial level) to SDG localization.

Generally speaking, translating and devolving national policy and expenditure processes around the SDGs to the local level in a coherent and integrated way necessitates not only a change of values but also the recalibration of laws and the budget, along with the reconfiguration of the civil service and the overall structures of government. Furthermore, ensuring greater policy coherence for sustainable development is a responsibility shared across a wide chain of actors, including the private sector, civil society and ordinary citizens.

National urban policies (NUPs) are a useful intergovernmental policy instrument for achieving SDG target 11.a and facilitating the establishment of such collaborative and coherent frameworks across different levels of governance and between interdependent LRGs and territories, regardless of their size. Various efforts to adopt and implement NUPs are underway across the continent. A narrow definition of NUPs, or the policies resembling them, means a total of 18 African countries have NUPs.[100] A broader definition of NUPs that concurs with the UN-Habitat description of '[a] coherent set of decisions derived through a deliberate, government-led process of coordinating and rallying various actors for a common vision and goal that will promote more transformative, productive, inclusive and resilient urban development for the long term', means a total of 38 countries have explicit or implicit NUPs in early or more developed stages.[101]

Housing and transport are a major focus in these NUPs. However, many explicit NUPs lack resources to deploy comprehensive NUPs and very few countries have the financial and technical

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Box 5

African Charter on the Values and Principles of Decentralization, Local Governance and Local Development

Adopted in 2014, the African Charter on the Values and Principles of Decentralization, Local Governance and Local Development succeeded the African Charter on Democracy (2007) and, before that, the African Charter for Popular Participation in Development and Transformation (1990). It is the first charter to enshrine decentralization, calling for foundations for democratic local governance and providing an adapted framework for its implementation in the African context and local realities (Art. 8). The charter also provides for the inclusion of marginalized groups and gives them priority in public service delivery (Art. 10).

The charter makes provisions for LRGs to gain expenditure powers and discretionary powers to manage financial resources, including the provision to allow, and properly regulate, LRG access to borrowing (Art. 16). It also recognizes the need to create legal and institutional environments that encourage cooperation between different levels of government (Art. 6 and Art. 11). The territorial approach is moreover evident in specifying that national governments should involve LRGs in policies that directly or indirectly affect them and at the same time, LRGs should involve national governments in developing and implementing local plans. Finally, the charter encourages inter-municipal and horizontal cooperation which includes the right to form LGAs (Art. 17).

capacity to implement their NUPs. In some countries, urban strategies have expired and need to be reviewed.[102] A number of countries, such as Burkina Faso, Kenya and South Africa, have started making headway in creating a 'whole-of-society' approach to the implementation of the SDGs and the New Urban Agenda through the creation of MLG frameworks. Notwithstanding, while some challenges have emerged, ranging from lack of follow-up and review mechanisms to incomplete fiscal decentralization and lack of coherence between local policy guidelines and the different global agendas, it is notable that all of these countries have NUPs in place.

These countries are taking advantage of coordination mechanisms (see Table 1) to ensure greater collaboration between their national and sub-national levels of government. A few countries have integrated local governments into localization efforts. They include Benin, which has made significant strides in the integration of the SDGs in national and local plans in ten (out of 12) departments, as well as annual investment plans (including both programmed actions since 2017 and implementation costs). This relies mainly on the mobilization of local governments and civil society: local governments were not only key participants in the development of a roadmap for the implementation of SDGs, but also represented through the Association for Communes in Benin (ANCB) in the Steering Committee, chaired by the Minister of State for Planning and Development for the SDGs, and the Technical Steering Committee, chaired by the Directorate-General for Coordination and Monitoring of the SDGs.[103] The diagnostic, developed by the International Association of Francophone Mayors (AIMF) and the ANCB in 2018, did stress the need to strengthen the operations of the Departmental and Local Committees in the follow-up of the SDGs and the need to revise ongoing sectoral plans.[104]

Ghana stands out for actively creating institutions and mechanisms for SDG review and implementation, as well as championing the SDGs ahead of presenting its first VNR to the 2019 HLPF.[105] In December 2017, it hosted the High-Level African Roundtable on SDG Implementation.[106] The country has taken advantage of its 'decentralized planning system' to ensure better coordination of the SDGs. National SDG coordination is done through the National Development Planning Commission supported by 16 regional coordinating councils, as well as the SDG Implementation Coordinating Committee. The latter brings together key ministries and agencies (including the Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development) as well as other stakeholders.[107] The National Association of Local Authorities of Ghana (NALAG) cooperates with the Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development (MLGRD). Under the District Assemblies' Common Fund, at least 10% of GDP

are transferred to the assemblies.[108]

In both Benin and Ghana, local governments are seeking innovation in integrated, multilevel governance through the City Deals approach. Using this approach, cities engage challenges of rapid urbanization by working together in new partnerships. In Kumasi, Ghana, a comprehensive decongestion effort of the city centre is being implemented by an interdepartmental local government team together with other local governments and stakeholders such as 'market queens', transport unions, and the university. In Sèmè-Podji, Benin, waste management is being addressed by local government together with small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), religious authorities, sanitation groups, and line ministries. It ensures an iterative alignment of the policies with upcoming reforms in the waste management sector.

Burkina Faso has also experimented in this area by joining together the mechanisms for the follow-up to the National Plan 2016-2020 (*Plan national de développement économique et social* - PNDES) and the SDGs, from the national to the local levels. Under its National Steering Committee for the PNDES, sectoral committees and 13 regional committees should ensure a regular dialogue at the territorial level, help to coordinate the implementation of the PNDES, and ensure the follow-up of regional and local development plans (LDPs) and annual assessments. The regional committees involve sub-national tiers of government for vertical and horizontal policy coherence. Local governments may choose to prepare local development programmes that are aligned with the PNDES but focus on specific local priorities. At the regional level, implementation of the PNDES is reviewed every six months, by a committee (*cadre regional de dialogue* – CRD) that is chaired by the regional governor, with the participation of the president of the regional council, deconcentrated ministerial bodies, local governments, the private sector, civil society and other actors. At the national level, responsibility for the review of the implementation of the PNDES rests with the Office of the Prime Minister and draws on inputs from the regional and local level. However, the extent to which there is a separate follow-up and review structure for such a local development programme is up to the local governments to decide.[109]

In Kenya, SDG implementation and monitoring is coordinated by the National Treasury and Ministry of Devolution and Planning. The SDGs Coordinating Department established in 2016 within this ministry serves as the national focal point. An SDGs liaison office was set up within the Secretariat of the CoG to improve coordination between the two levels of government. Focal points have also been identified in all 47 counties. The national government, in

collaboration with the CoG, has prepared county integrated development plans (CIDPs) to guide implementation of the SDGs by local authorities. The monitoring framework is designed to be inclusive and provide for multi-stakeholder participation from local through to national level. At sub-national level, tracking progress towards the achievement of the policies, projects and programmes outlined in each CIDP is undertaken through the County Integrated Monitoring and Evaluation System (CIMES). However, a number of challenges for the implementation of the SDGs in this framework can still be seen. For instance, despite having the responsibility for many functions, the counties do not always have the financial or technical resources and capacity to fulfil their responsibilities. These challenges are most salient in the country's smaller cities. Moreover, county budgets are often not implemented as planned. Even if the budget aligns with the five-year CIDPs, there is no certainty this will lead to on-the-ground commitments.[110]

In addition, in Kenya, a multilevel and stakeholder approach has been adopted for the implementation and financing of the SDGs at all levels of government. This was done through the creation of SDG units at national and county level and the involvement of private sector, NGOs and non-state actors under the coordination of the Ministry of Devolution and Planning. The CoG also participated in the preparation of the VNR in 2017.[111]

In federal countries such as Ethiopia, Nigeria or Sudan, on the other hand, LRG involvement is restricted to the regional or state level. In Ethiopia, federal, regional and city administration government representatives were involved in consultations preceding the adoption of the SDGs into the national planning framework through the growth and transformation plans, but are considered mere implementing agencies of the SDGs.[112]

In South Africa, the national government is currently working to improve the coordination and coherence of its global, regional, national, provincial and local development plans, particularly with respect to the 2030 Agenda, the African Agenda 2063 and the SADC-RISDP. SDG implementation and coordination have been facilitated through an NDP, medium-term strategic framework (MTSF) and provincial growth and development strategies (PGDSs), as well as integrated development plans (IDPs) at the local level. In addition, in 2016, the national government adopted the integrated urban development framework (IUDF), South Africa's NUP and an initiative coordinated by the Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs (COGTA) in collaboration with other national departments, LGAs and international partners. Together with the NDP,

the IUDF represents South Africa's vehicle to localizing the New Urban Agenda. The IUDF has been promoted not as a policy or plan, but as an approach to activating an 'all of society' approach to implementing the New Urban Agenda and its four strategic goals of spatial integration, inclusion and access, inclusive growth and effective governance. Provincial and municipal governments are responsible for the roll-out of the IUDF through their provincial and municipal spatial development frameworks and strategies. However, clear guidelines and support for the implementation of the IUDF at the local level, and the way in which the IUDF can contribute to other development agendas such as the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063, are so far absent. This is because the responsibility for the implementation and monitoring of these agendas lies with other government departments such as the Department of Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation.

Finally, among those countries that do not refer to a specific strategy or mechanism to involve LRGs, some have however mentioned developments towards decentralization as policies that could favour the implementation of the SDGs. The Central African Republic emphasizes the need to strengthen the presence of the state throughout the territory by implementing the law on local government bodies, ensuring access to basic services, and creating regional development policies to facilitate and promote decentralization. Mauritania, meanwhile, underlines the need to involve its regional councils (recently created as part of its decentralization policy) in the process of defining the country's NDS. In Tunisia, follow-up on the decentralization process and strengthening the role of the country's regions to 'leave no one territory behind' are also central to its sustainable development policies.[113] Notwithstanding, in these countries, no local government bodies are currently involved in any national coordination mechanisms.

As these examples show, it is only through high-level political support, national reform and institutional change, following a territorial development strategy, that enabling environments can be created to bring LRGs and other relevant stakeholders into the sustainable development process, and such efforts must be well-integrated. Inclusive stakeholder participation is crucial to ensure the SDGs are owned by people, diverse actions are aligned, and resources and knowledge for sustainable development are mobilized. Hence, the quality of intergovernmental relations and policy coherence, and not just a narrow understanding of devolution, is key to overall progress towards the development agendas in Africa. In this context, unless they are tailored to African contexts and supported by domestic institutions, including local governments, NUPs will struggle to overcome the political, financial and practical barriers to effective, accountable multilevel governance.[114] ◉

3. Local and regional governments' contribution to the localization of the SDGs

The high-level support for the SDGs and related development agendas at continental, regional and national level in Africa has elevated the profile and emphasized the importance of LRGs as leading actors towards more sustainable development. However, as shown in Section 2, this is yet to be reflected in the overall political, institutional and fiscal environment for LRGs.

The limits to locally-driven SDG action in Africa, influenced by the intergovernmental framework, the political realities of decentralization, the local impact of macro trends, such as climate change and armed conflicts, and the local consequences of the policies of development actors, such as donors or global finance, have been noted. The analysis now moves to consider the de facto role of LRGs in delivering the SDGs. The localization process refers not only to what the devolved parts of the state need to do to run cities. It also acknowledges that, if the SDGs are to be realized, local buy-in will be imperative and local government, broadly defined, will need to assume even greater responsibility for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, Agenda 2063 and related development agendas in fostering a territorial development approach. The role of international cooperation and partnerships to support the efforts of LRGs in this regard is crucial to ensure that 'no one and no place is left behind'.

This section provides an overview of LRG initiatives in the localization of the SDGs. LGAs and LRG networks are playing an important role in supporting the localization of the SDGs across the continent, through the organization of conferences and workshops for SDG exchange and awareness-raising, training, pilot projects or technical support. Important progress is also being made when it comes to the alignment of national and local strategies with the SDGs. LGAs, as well as decentralized cooperation and international donors, play an important role in building local capacity in this regard.

Looking at practices at the LRG level, there are inspiring examples of SDG implementation

An artist paints in the Centre for Research and Dialogue of Mogadishu, Somalia (photo: AMISOM, bit.ly/30WUXnw).

from across the continent. Some of these predate the adoption of the SDGs and related development agendas, while others explicitly refer to them. Progress in pushing forward an African Charter for Local Gender Equality, based on the principles of Agenda 2063, the New Urban Agenda, the Paris Climate Agreement, and the 2030 Agenda — in particular SDG 5, represents an important example of the kind of actions that can simultaneously address multiple goals and development agendas.[115]

Recognizing the progress that is being made in the efforts towards SDG localization at local level, there is still much scope to strengthen the means of implementation of the SDGs. This is especially needed when it comes to the mobilization of finance to sustainably address Africa's massive infrastructure deficit and the costs related to climate change adaptation, as well as the capacity and locally embedded partnerships required for the production of much-needed data for the implementation and monitoring of the SDGs. ◉

3.1 Role of local government associations and local and regional government networks in the localization of the SDGs

Local government associations (LGAs) and LRG networks play an important role in the localization of the SDGs in Africa, connecting cities and regions, facilitating peer-to-peer learning and exchange, as well as capacity-building, and directing advocacy towards national governments, regional institutions and international partners for sub-national sustainable development. The specificity and scale of African challenges around SDG implementation and the imperative of finding alternative and increased funding for the new focus makes the strengthening of African LGAs and LRG networks even more imperative.

African networks and regional organizations

Regional and continent-wide institutions are actively working to involve LRGs in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the African Agenda 2063. These include African LRG networks, e.g. UCLG Africa; LRG international networks with strong presence in Africa, e.g. Commonwealth Local Government Forum (CLGF), the AIMF; the Union of Portuguese Speaking Capital Cities (UCCLA), and their partners, e.g. Cities Alliance; as well as regional and international organizations, e.g. the AfDB, the African Union, UNECA, Southern African Development Community, UN agencies and European Union (EU) programmes.

In November 2018, with the support of the African Union, UNECA, UN-Habitat and others, the 8th edition of UCLG Africa's major Africities Summit of African local leaders took place in Marrakesh, Morocco, with a focus on 'the transition to sustainable cities and territories: the role of local and sub-national governments in Africa'. Through the African Academy of Local Governments (ALGA), as well as UCLG learning programmes, UCLG Africa has in the past year promoted learning, peer-to-peer exchanges and workshops on SDG localization in eThekwini-Durban (South Africa), Accra (Ghana), Ouagadougou (Burkina Faso) and Morocco, as well as Cape Verde and Mali. The regional network is also developing strong regional and international advocacy to integrate African LRGs into regional development agendas, and encourage ratification by national governments of the African Charter on the Values and Principles of Decentralization, Local Governance and Local Government, adopted by the African Union in 2014 (see Box 5).

Furthermore, UCLG Africa's Network of Locally Elected Women of Africa (REFELA) has been active in raising awareness among women mayors on leadership and the implementation of the SDGs, and has been lobbying national parliament around SDG 5 on gender equality. UCLG Africa has initiated a series of major programmes related to the global agendas to reinforce the role of local governments in Africa. These include the Climate Change Task Force; the Global Dialogues on the New Urban Agenda and the SDGs; the Local Economic Development Network (LEDNA); the Knowledge Dialog Sharing Hub; the Observatory on Finance and Human Resources; the Pan African Peer Review Facility; different professional networks (Africa Magnet, Finet and Technet); LGA support, territorial coaching, transparency and integrity; and the African Capitals Culture, as well as the joint initiative with Slum Dwellers International (SDI) and Cities Alliance to support local data collection in slum areas, 'Know your City' (see Box 7).[116]

The crucial role of international city networks and local leadership for SDG advocacy, learning and innovation must be acknowledged, although the implications for smaller, less affluent and less well-connected cities are as important.

Through Metropolis, the UCLG section representing major cities and metropolitan areas of the world, large African cities such as Accra, Abidjan, Abuja, Brazzaville, Dakar, eThekwini, Johannesburg, Libreville, Rabat and Tshwane have come together as a unified voice in the quest for sustainable development in the Forum of African Metropolitan cities.[117] The New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) cities programme unites the cities of Bamako, Douala, eThekwini, Lagos, Lusaka, Nairobi and Rabat to debate key issues related to sustainable development, in particular housing and infrastructure development.[118] Similarly, the African Capital Cities Sustainability Forum functions as a network for the mayors of capital cities across Africa to achieve those SDGs that are common to all.[119]

In Central Africa, where capacity among local governments is especially weak, the AIMF provides support to the Association for Central African Mayors (AMCA) for different capacity-building initiatives. This project provides support to the cities of Bangui (capital), Bambari and Bangassou. The AIMF has an advocacy group dedicated to localizing the SDGs and has supported localization and decentralization reviews in African francophone countries. Similarly, the International Organization of la Francophonie (OIF) supports a project on local development and the SDGs in the regions of Thies, Kaffrine and Louga in Senegal and the municipalities of Agbétiko, Kovié and Katanga in Togo.

The Commonwealth Local Government Forum (CLGF) has also been active in building the capacity of its members to localize the SDGs, with a strong focus on local economic development (LED). This forum launched a number of pilot initiatives, mainly in Botswana, Eswatini, Ghana, Sierra Leone, South Africa, Zambia and Zimbabwe, to assess how LED can help local governments deliver the SDGs. The CLGF also developed a range of knowledge products to support SDG localization, including a Commonwealth Local Government Handbook that profiles local government systems in member countries, with a section on how countries are localizing the SDGs.

International city networks such as C40,[120] ICLEI[121] and the philanthropic initiative of 100 Resilient Cities (100RC)[122] have moreover been instrumental in supporting climate and resilience initiatives across the continent. For example, the creation of the Covenant of Mayors in Sub-Saharan Africa in 2015 is an opportunity to support Sub-Saharan cities in their fight against climate change and in their efforts to ensure sustainable access to clean energy. The covenant has developed guidance on energy and emission data collection in developing cities. One hundred and thirty eight cities across Africa have already joined and nine have developed action plans within this framework.[123] Together with the World

Bank's City Resilient Programme, the Global Covenant of Mayors announced a USD 4.5 billion at the One Planet Summit for 150 cities in the world, including a cohort of ten cities in Africa.

The African section of ICLEI also seeks to foster dialogue and exchanges on sustainable development issues. ICLEI organized several events, including the Local Climate Solutions for Africa Congress, a platform for local African leaders to build positions and forge partnerships to accelerate local climate action. The meetings and other activities facilitated by these networks also offer key platforms for peer learning and exchanges that can benefit SDG localization.

A number of African cities are members of multiple city networks and alliances, which attract funding opportunities and generate global connectedness, allowing cities to leverage and coordinate their connections to these networks in ways that are complementary and create synergies. The crucial role of international city networks and local leadership for SDG advocacy, learning and innovation must therefore be acknowledged, although the implications for smaller, less affluent and less well-connected cities are as important.

Local government associations' actions at country level

Many local government associations (LGAs) in Africa, as well as the organizations of intermediary levels of governments (regions, counties, districts, departments or provinces) have established a wide range of initiatives to mobilize and support their members around the SDGs, often backed by or in collaboration with regional and international networks.

In **West Africa**, the national LGAs of Benin, Ghana and Togo are the most actively involved in championing the implementation of the SDGs at the local level. In **Benin**, the National Association of Municipalities of Benin (ANCB) developed a roadmap to support the localization of the SDGs. The ANCB also launched benchmarking between municipalities to measure progress and facilitate knowledge exchange on good practices (through a group of 37 out of 77 municipalities) and supported the constitution of committees for the follow-up of the goals at municipal level. In **Togo**, the Union of Municipalities of Togo (UCT) has initiated, under the Local Governance Enhancement Project for Community Project Management (PAGLEMOC), actions aimed at strengthening the capacity of the communes in the management of water, hygiene and sanitation projects, which links to SDG 6 and 11.[124] It also undertook training of local officers (for both Benin and Togo, see Section 3.2).

In **Ghana**, the National Association of Local Authorities of Ghana (NALAG) addressed the SDGs at its 2018 regional conference and will have a special SDG focus at its 2019 national

conference. It has undertaken SDG awareness training for staff and its national executive council. It also organized nationwide SDG sensitization workshops in all ten regions in 2017 'to educate our members and the local authorities on what these targets and goals are and why it is important to carry everyone along' and the benefits these have for District Assemblies.[125] The national association in collaboration with UCLG Africa and the Ghana Institute of Management and Public and Administration organized a training of trainers' workshop in April 2019 to build the capacities of local government officers to localize the SDGs and adopt strategic planning at the local level. The NALAG has also been working with the CSO Platform on SDGs and development partners such as the German Society for International Development (GIZ) and CLGF on SDG localization. The CLGF has been implementing a programme to help align assembly development plans to LED and SDG targets.

In **Mali**, the Association of Municipalities of Mali (AMM) organized an information session on the SDGs for mayors and regional presidents on the National Day of Communes of Mali in 2017. These sessions were attended by nearly one thousand participants, including 703 mayors of Mali.[126] In March 2019, an EU-funded AMM programme was launched to support the localization of the SDGs in 100 Malian municipalities over a 24-month period. The programme also aims to assist municipalities in formulating participatory budgets at the local level and providing training sessions to local actors to facilitate the appropriation of SDGs. The AMM has also taken measures to address the lack of regular coordination between stakeholders on the SDGs. A taskforce of locally elected officials has been set up there, which serves as an advocacy group to follow up on the national strategy and on the implementation of the SDGs at the LRG level. The AMM is also active in many committees that are dealing with SDG-related issues, including the national committee responsible for monitoring the implementation of the SDGs.

In **Niger**, the Association of Municipalities of Niger (AMN) disseminated brochures and information on the localization of the SDGs during the National Day of Communes of Niger held in Agadez in July 2018. In **Cape Verde**, the Association of Cape Verde Municipalities (ANMCV) is leading a project in partnership with UNDP to support localization of the SDGs in nine municipalities and the development of municipal strategic sustainable development plans using a participatory approach. The municipality of Praia in partnership with UNDP also launched an awareness-raising initiative to promote SDG empowerment among citizens in three of Praia's districts.[127] In **Côte d'Ivoire**, the Union of Cities and Municipalities of Côte d'Ivoire (UVICOCI) participated on the 15-16 May 2019

in a 'structured dialogue' organized by the AfDB and UCLG Africa on the role of African local governments in the localization of Nationally-Determined Contributions (NDCs) and access to climate finance (for more information see Section 3.2).[128]

In **East Africa**, the national associations of Kenya and Rwanda stand out for their efforts to promote SDG localization. In **Kenya**, the Council of Governors (CoG) has established an SDG unit to coordinate SDG implementation and support county governments in mainstreaming SDGs in projects, programmes, strategies and plans. The CoG also takes advantage of social media to sensitize the public to the SDGs. With regard to monitoring activities, CoG members are currently working in collaboration with the national Monitoring and Evaluation Department, to develop a county monitoring and evaluation handbook that incorporates the SDG indicators. Handbooks have already been produced for the counties of Kericho, Nakuru, Taita Taveta and Kilifi. In addition, the CoG has established the Maarifa Centre as Kenya's premier devolution knowledge-sharing and learning platform for effective governance and service delivery to disseminate experiences related to the SDGs.[129]

In **Rwanda**, the Rwandese Association of Local Government Authorities (RALGA) has been undertaking specific awareness-raising and training workshops on the SDGs and SDG localization for its staff and members with support from the CLGF/EU and GIZ. In March 2017, the RALGA convened a high-level, multi-stakeholder dialogue that brought together key local government decision-makers, government representatives and other relevant stakeholders. The national association is also leading an SDG localization project supported by the CLGF and the EU to strengthen the capacity of local governments to adapt the SDGs to their local realities. The project's components include SDG awareness-raising campaigns; providing technical support to three pilot districts (Bugesera, Gicumbi and Ruhango) for the inclusion of the SDGs in their development strategies; and helping monitor SDG implementation in their local development strategies. In addition, the RALGA Inclusive Decisions at Local Level (IDEAL) project, with support from Dutch VNG International, in all six of the country's secondary cities (Musanz Accelere, Rubavu, Huye, Muhanga, Nyagatare and Rusizi), is strengthening local capacities in areas such as planning, inclusive LED, sound local social welfare strategies and services, and gender-sensitive policies.

In **Uganda**, the Local Government Association (ULGA) has started working with UNCDF to raise awareness of the SDGs among politicians in district councils.[130] As part of the CLGF's Framework Partnership Agreement with the EU, the ULGA is also operational in Uganda's different regions to

localize the SDGs.[131] LGAs have organized training workshops to build capacities, staff and members to localize the SDGs. In **Burundi**, the Association of Local Elected Officials (ABELO) has organized workshops on local planning and the performance of municipalities in the implementation of the SDGs to help communes prepare local plans for the SDGs. In **Mozambique**, the Association of Local Governments (ANAMM) provides support to municipalities for the planning and introduction of SDG-related projects in different municipalities, placing strong emphasis on resilience, and reducing the risk of disasters. The ANAMM is also empowering municipalities in the fields of local finance, planning and budgeting from a gender and children's rights perspective. At the local level, Pemba City is participating in a two-year project funded by the EU known as 'Shaping Fair Cities', which seeks to spread knowledge about the SDGs to local decision-makers, civil servants, grassroots organizations and citizens.

In **Southern Africa**, the South African Local Government Association (SALGA) has been raising awareness about the SDGs among its political leadership and members, for example during the National Member's Assembly. It made active use of the media to disseminate information about the SDGs, in particular through its 'Voice' magazine. The LGA developed a book, 'Leading change — Delivering the New Urban Agenda through Urban and Territorial Planning' in support of SDG 11. In December 2018, the SALGA signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the UN in South Africa to support South African municipalities in localizing the SDGs. With regards to its monitoring activities, the SALGA also developed a 'municipal barometer' web-based portal and works closely with Stats-SA to promote disaggregated local data.[132] The SALGA is also collaborating with ICLEI Africa which in July 2019 organized South Africa's first SDG symposium, bringing together local government representatives to discuss SDG localization.[133] In **Zambia**, the Local Government Association (LGAZ) has organized several workshops to train local elected officials in LED. The LGAZ also has plans to introduce a project on 'Building Effective Partnerships for Inclusive and Sustainable Urban Governance', in 2019, with the support of the CLGF.[134] In **Botswana**, Francistown and Gaborone have held training workshops, with the support of UN-Habitat and UNECA, to improve their capacities in such areas as monitoring, producing disaggregated data and reporting on SDG 11, using various statistical tools.[135]

In **North Africa**, specific pilot projects and technical support to accelerate the implementation of the SDGs have been put in place. In **Tunisia**, with the support of different partners, the National Federation of Tunisian Municipalities (FNVT) is leading a project to develop strategic

The South African Local Government Association has developed a 'municipal barometer' web-based portal and works closely with Stats-SA to promote disaggregated local data.

plans to contribute to localizing the SDGs (e.g. Madinatouna project, see Section 3.2) and a programme on waste management (Wama-net), involving 20 Tunisian cities. The FNVT organized training labs for its members (Lab'baladiya). A first PRIHQ1 programme for neighbourhood upgrading was implemented in 65 municipalities; a second programme will involve 121 municipalities. The Tunisian association in collaboration with GIZ also launched the 'Citizen Space' initiative to restore trust between the citizens and the municipalities while increasing transparency and accountability at the local level. In addition, the municipalities of Mahdia and El Mourouj have promoted a more integrated and participatory approach to sustainable urban development, through the SymbioCity framework, supported by the international agency of the Swedish Association of Municipalities (SKL International). The city of Sousse has also been active in setting up projects in the fields of citizen participation, energy efficiency, sustainable environment, urban mobility and migration, with support from national and international experts (see Box 9). In **Algeria**, a joint programme of the Ministry of the Interior, the EU and UNDP has been launched, called the Capacity-building Program of Local Development Actors (CapDel) (see Section 3.2).

In **Cameroon** in **Central Africa**, the United Councils and Cities of Cameroon (UCCC-CVUC) organized several workshops to raise awareness on the SDGs, held in parallel with national events or conferences (e.g. *Salon sur l'Action Gouvernementale*). In 2017, the national association together with the AIMF organized a national workshop to present the results of a study on the localization of the SDGs in Cameroon and promote decentralization to support the localization of the 2030 Agenda.

Despite these positive efforts, relevant data availability on the SDGs remains weak and continues to impede effective reporting on the Global Goals. As pointed out by UNECA's 2017 assessment of African progress on the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063, 'approximately six out of every ten SDG indicators cannot be tracked in Africa due to severe data limitations'. ⊙

3.2 Local and regional government efforts to align the 2030 Agenda with local policies

The alignment of national and local strategies to the SDGs

In aligning national and local development strategies, there is also an opportunity to integrate the different global and regional agendas such as Agenda 2063, the Paris Climate Agreement, the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction and the New Urban Agenda. In many countries across the continent, localization strategies and initiatives around these commitments are still taking place separately. There is thus a need to foster synergies between the different global and continent-level development agendas through synergistic implementation plans and monitoring at the local and regional level.[136]

In Africa, in part as a result the commitment of LGAs and regional networks and in partnership with national governments, important steps were taken to align national and local plans for a coherent implementation of the development goals. In fact, almost all respondents from 19 countries stated that they were undertaking initiatives or specific projects to support the alignment of LDPs with the SDGs.[137]

In **North Africa**, international support has been crucial in supporting SDG alignment at the local level. In **Tunisia**, the FNVT with the support of UNDP, Cities Alliance, GIZ, VNG International and Medcities, has helped eight cities to align the SDGs with their strategic development plans in the context of the Madinatouna project.[138] The cities of Beja, Gabes, Jendouba, Kairouan, La Soukra, Medenine, Monastir, Sidi Bouzid and Tataouine have already aligned their development strategies for 2030 with the global agendas. The region of Médénine has promoted a participatory process to elaborate a guiding framework for the localization of the SDGs in the region. In **Algeria**, ten pilot municipalities are currently working on the adoption of a participatory approach to local development planning and the integration of the SDGs into the planning, implementation and monitoring of local strategies. In this context, the municipality of Ouled Ben Abdelkader has made important efforts to adopt a participatory approach through the inclusion of local residents into a Consultative Council for Development. This initiative is part of the CapDel (see Section 3.1) that benefits from a new law on local government adopted in 2018, seeking to foster the implementation of the SDGs at the local level.[139] In **Morocco**, Chefchaouen mapped the 63 projects belonging to the Communal Action Plan 2016-2022 and municipal budget against the SDG framework. This exercise allowed the city to set priorities and identify the social, economic, environmental, cultural and human aspects of actions and municipal investment for the coming years.[140]

In **West Africa**, there is a mix of national leadership and international support across countries, with LGAs and regional networks playing a key role in the alignment process. In **Benin**, as mentioned above, the ANCB is supporting the alignment of the SDGs with LDPs in the municipalities of ten departments, in partnership with the national government. The third-generation local development plans (*Plans de développement communal* - PDC) developed in 2017 have largely taken into account the SDGs and their annual investment plans, including the programmed actions and related implementation costs. In **Togo**, building on efforts initiated in

In Tunisia, the cities of Beja, Gabes, Jendouba, Kairouan, La Soukra, Medenine, Monastir, Sidi Bouzid and Tataouine have already aligned their development strategies for 2030 with the global agendas.

A family outside the Wamba Local Government Primary Health Care Centre in Wamba, Nigeria (photo: Dominic Chavez/The Global Financing Facility, bit.ly/2LYhR9P).

previous years, the UCT has supported five communes (Tabligbo, Bassar, Pagouda, Kanté and Mango) in the preparation of their LDPs. These have been aligned with the country's NDP and the SDGs, through participatory and inclusive consultation mechanisms and the creation of a handbook.[141] In addition, other local governments have elaborated their LDPs in line with the SDGs (Kpalimé, Kara and Dapaong).

A similar initiative is underway in **Niger**, led top-down by the ministry in charge of the country's long-term action plan for SDG implementation, together with the Ministry of Community Development and Land Use Planning. This includes the creation of a guide for planning and monitoring the SDGs at the local level and for integrating the SDGs into the country's communal and regional development plans.[142] In **Nigeria** there is evidence of extensive integration of the SDGs into the main national development policy and planning blueprint (NERGP), as well as within the various state development plans. Many of these plans, including for Benue, Taraba, Yobe, Kaduna, Ebonyi, Kano, Jigawa, Anambra, and Delta States, are aligned to the SDGs.[143] In **Burkina Faso**, the Association of Municipalities (AMBF) has helped municipalities to draw up LDPs and to align them with both national development strategies (NDSs) and the SDGs. Thirteen intermediary cities will work on their respective master plans and the four regional capitals will revise their land-use plans.

In **Ghana**, LGAs are required to follow guidelines laid down by the national government and to align their medium-term district development plans and activities with the SDGs. The NALAG works with the Assemblies and the NDPC to assist such alignment 'in order to aid reporting and aid standardization and localization.'[144] In this framework, the CLGF has been undertaking a programme on achieving the SDGs through LED in Ghana to improve the capacity of four Metropolitan, Municipal and District Assemblies (MMDAs) to align their development plans to LED and SDG targets.[145] In **Côte d'Ivoire**, LRGs are encouraged to align their local plans, and in particular the Triennial Programme, with new national priorities and the SDGs. The national associations (UVICOCI and the Assembly of Regions and Districts of Côte d'Ivoire — ARDCI) are involved in the process of localization.

In **Sierra Leone**, the Local Councils Association (LoCASL) has organized workshops to streamline the SDGs into local development programmes. This alignment process has also been supported by the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development and the Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development, both of which have encouraged the 22 local councils to integrate the SDGs into their district and municipal development plans. The country is replicating an inclusive local governance model across the country, entitled 'The People's Planning Process', led by an NGO. This involves

The Kenyan Council of Governors has worked with the national government to guide SDG implementation at the local level. To date, all 47 of Kenya's county governments have aligned their county integrated development plans with the SDGs.

placing chiefdom and village-level planning at the centre of the formulation and implementation of all development plans and fostering cooperation with local government councils.

In **Senegal**, there are new ongoing mechanisms for integrated regional and urban development plans in several regions (e.g. Area Dakar-Thiès-Mbour), as well as new urban plans (e.g. Dakar Horizon 2035). In **Cape Verde**, in the context of the ongoing project on SDG localization, conducted in partnership with UNDP, the ANMCV has organized several training sessions in eight pilot municipalities, to support the creation of thematic committees for local development platforms and the SDGs. Each platform will put together a Strategic Municipal Plan for Sustainable Development for the 2017-2030 period.[146] In **Mauritania**, following the creation of regions

and the obligation to integrate the concepts of climate change and sustainable development into various planning areas, the Nouakchott Region has embarked on an environmental resilience and sustainable development project.

In **Central Africa**, the alignment of the SDGs with local and regional development plans is still in its early stages and is mostly encouraged by national governments. In **Cameroon**, the national government has promoted the alignment of the SDGs and of the NDP with local plans (e.g. the municipalities of Nguelemendouka and Mbona) and, more recently, with the Public Investment Budget.[147] However, the worsening of conflicts in different regions of the country does not aid progress.

In **East Africa**, national leadership has been essential to steer the alignment of county and local plans with the SDGs, in particular in **Kenya**. Indeed, county governments are required to demonstrate how they will mainstream the SDGs and other global frameworks such as the Paris Climate Agreement, and the Sendai Framework on Disaster Risk Management. The Kenyan CoG, working in collaboration with the national government, has prepared a series of County Integrated Development Plans (CIDPs) for 2018-2022, to guide SDG implementation at the local level. To date, all 47 of Kenya's county governments have aligned their CIDPs with the SDGs. Thus, the SDGs will be mainstreamed at the local and county level.[148] In **Uganda**, the ULGA has started working with lower levels of administration about contributing to the implementation of the SDGs, but it has found that national alignment must cohere to fiscal management reforms so that LRGs are enabled to collect and spend revenue in accordance with local priorities.[149] In **Rwanda**, district development strategies (DDSs) are being aligned with the national agenda and SDG targets through an assessment of the level of integration of SDG indicators with the support of RALGA in three pilot districts (Bugesera, Gicumbi and Ruhango). It is planned to roll out the results in all the other 27 districts of the country, although it will require further expertise and new resources to continue the work on SDG alignment and awareness-raising.[150]

In **Tanzania**, the national government has promoted the integration of the SDGs into its LDPs and projects. A strategy for the localization of the SDGs has also been presented to the planning officers of the country's regional secretariats, its district planning officers (DPOs) and the assistant administrative secretaries responsible for coordinating with LRGs. Awareness and sensitization workshops have also been organized for LGAs to help integrate the SDGs and national plans into local plans and budgets. On **Comoros**, the municipalities of Moroni, Mitsamiouli, Wella, Iconi, Foumbouni, Mutsamudu, Ouoini and

Nioumachouoi are aligning their local strategies to the SDGs. In **Madagascar**, regional consultations have been organized in three of the 22 regions. At least 18 local governments, including that of Antananarivo, are now beginning to refer to the SDGs in their commitments and policies. In **Mauritius**, following the adoption of a Climate Change Charter in 2015, action has been taken to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions at the community level. Moreover, all the country's seven districts and five municipalities, as well as the Rodrigo Regional Assembly, have adopted disaster risk reduction (DRR) strategies.

In **Southern Africa**, local authorities have presented district and urban development plans to align their priorities with the NDP in **Botswana**.[151] In **Malawi,** the Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development (MLGRD) has organized regional workshops for local councils in the regions to review LDPs with the objective of aligning the priorities of rural and urban councils with the SDGs.[152] In **South Africa**, progress has been made in terms of aligning national policies with the SDGs, but local policy alignment remains incipient. The metropolitan municipality of eThekwini-Durban represents a frontrunner when it comes to SDG localization at the sub-national level through the alignment of its Integrated Development Plan (IDP) (see the Metropolitan Chapter of the GOLD V Report, Box 3). A similar effort has been undertaken by the City of Cape Town, which has aligned its resilience strategy to the SDGs down to the target level. However, it should be noted that both these cities are metropolitan municipalities and thus are better able to facilitate work around the SDGs than some other cities might be.

As shown above, the alignment of the SDGs with local and regional development plans is gaining ground but at different paces in different countries of Africa. International organizations, city networks and LGAs are crucial in facilitating such activities, especially in the absence of national guidance. However, national government leadership is indispensable in ensuring that alignment and implementation is long-term, covering all territories and scales of government, and also matched with adequate fiscal capacity. This shows that successful SDG localization must be both bottom-up and top-down.

Data availability for monitoring at the local level

Monitoring and reporting (SDG 17.18 and 17.19) are essential to understanding where and why there has (or has not) been progress on the SDGs (as well as on any other global or national policies or goals), and where further action is needed. In spite of continental and national level efforts to improve data collection and monitoring for the SDGs, vast challenges remain. The prevalence of informality in Africa has implications for the measurement of the SDGs, as targets and indicators rely on official data, which exclude unregulated informal activities.[153] Therefore, Africa is currently vastly underrepresented in existing global urban databases.[154]

A number of initiatives are underway that focus on strengthening the capacity of national governments to collect and monitor data on the SDGs and on urbanization. In 2018, the African Union adopted the (second) Strategy for the Harmonization of Statistics in Africa 2017-2026. This seeks to support the production of timely, quality, disaggregated and harmonized statistical data across the continent for the purposes of monitoring and evaluation of the implementation of development agendas such as the 2030 Agenda and Africa 2063.

In addition, **some countries have opted for mechanisms to collect sub-national place-based data.** The Ghana Statistical Service (GSS) has conducted a review of data availability for SDG indicator production, which has resulted in the creation of the National Data Roadmap, to be implemented through a multi-stakeholder advisory committee.[155] Rwanda provides another

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Box 6

SDG monitoring and implementation in Rwanda

SDG monitoring and implementation in Rwanda is being done through various fora and systems that include performance contracting (*imihigo*), which is now being mainstreamed under an online results-based management system. The National Institute of Statistics is responsible for the annual assessment of performance contracts for all government agencies and districts; as well as citizen report cards and an Annual National Dialogue (*Umushyikirano*) attended by top leadership and a cross-section of all leaders, and representation of Rwandans in the diaspora. The Annual National Dialogue is streamed and broadcast live on all media and citizens can provide instant feedback or comments to their leaders.[157]

However, one drawback is that these mechanisms do not seem to be directly connected to the National Urban Fora (NUF) that Rwanda has held since 2008. The NUF are regular multi-stakeholder platforms to support sustainable urban development processes and debates through action-oriented meetings. These meetings address the way in which cities and human settlements are planned, designed, financed, developed, governed and managed, through cooperation with committed partners, relevant stakeholders and various urban actors.

The purpose of the third of these meetings to be held in 2019 was to assess the progress made and reflect on the continuing implementation of the New Urban Agenda in Rwanda.[158]

Slum Dwellers International and data co-production

Slum Dwellers International (SDI) is a network of community-based organizations of the urban poor in 32 countries and exists in hundreds of cities and towns across Africa, Asia and Latin America. The network has helped create a global voice for the urban poor, engaging international agencies and operating on the international stage to support and advance local agendas.

SDI's work, specifically their slum dweller federations' use of data, has supported the empowerment of women in slum settlements. As a particularly active member of Cities Alliance, the organization's methodologies of facilitating inclusion and participation of informal citizens in urban management through a gender lens, are now an integral part of all projects being developed by Cities Alliance, and many local governments have their own engagement with SDI outside of donor-funded projects.

SDI has been part of the New Urban Agenda-SDG Joint Work Programme of the Cities Alliance, which focuses on the implementation of the global agendas relevant for cities, and has emerged as possibly the most powerful agent for localization of the SDGs in Africa. Through the momentum created by SDI, African local governments' pivotal role in service delivery and the imperative of bolstering that capacity if poverty is to be meaningfully addressed, has gained significant traction.

example of where different government levels and stakeholders are involved in monitoring and evaluation for the SDGs albeit with some limitations (see Box 6). The next step is to connect national statistical offices and their regional offices with LRGs. Indeed, unless each local authority in Africa has and is able to utilize its local data,[156] the evidence and knowledge base that informs delivery will be seriously compromised. For instance, Kenya has established the County Integrated Monitoring and Evaluation System; meanwhile Zimbabwe has created focal points appointed by local authorities to support the work of the national State Statistical Committee. Interoperable data facilities (that currently exist in only a few of the largest and best-resourced African cities such as the Gauteng region in South Africa) and systems-based analyses that reflect and inform the complex choices local government officials face in Africa, will be essential. Only with these will the interplay and linkages between SDGs be understood and managed, and local government be able to maximize its limited capability.

Such processes also need to include and empower local communities, civil society and other stakeholders to understand, contribute and use data independently in order to hold government to account. Civil society organizations (CSOs) are important in terms of making the voice of groups in society that are not always represented heard in formal decision-making platforms, thus ensuring that 'no-one is left behind'. A prime example of this comes from the work of SDI, which has pushed for a politics of enabling communities to interact directly with local government by making poor communities eligible and ready for improved service delivery. Examples of such innovative efforts include the work of SDI on collecting data with local governments and communities in slums in partnership with UCLG Africa and Cities Alliance 'Know your City' (see Box 7).[159] The CSO African Monitor is also involved in the monitoring and the review of the 2030 Agenda by working together with youth organizations and networks in Botswana, Burkina Faso, Ghana, Kenya, Uganda and Zambia.[160]

A number of examples of research-policy partnerships between LRGs and academic institutions and researchers across the continent also show the importance and potential of multi-stakeholder knowledge partnerships to assist local governments with knowledge and data production for SDG localization (SDG 17.16). The issues of intellectual property, quality and interoperability, and the lack of capacity in African local governments to act as the curators of public information on the local environment, make data management issues central to the localization of the SDGs in Africa.

Since 2017, researchers of the Mistra Urban Futures research network[161] have been working with local governments in the cities of Cape Town and Kisumu to support the understanding and implementation of the SDGs and the New Urban Agenda and to facilitate transdisciplinary as well as cross-city learning and interaction.[162]

Another initiative that bridges the gap between government and academia is the Leading Integrated Research for the 2030 Agenda in Africa, a five-year programme that seeks to increase the production of high-quality, integrated (inter- and transdisciplinary), solutions-oriented research on global sustainability by early career scientists in Africa. This knowledge is used to address complex sustainability challenges in the region. Projects in Lagos and Accra as well as Luanda and Maputo look into co-produced data collection and monitoring of SDG 11 involving different urban stakeholders, including local governments.[163] A range of urban research institutes across the continent, such as the Sierra Leone Urban Research Centre (SLURC) based in Freetown are doing similar work with local government and other urban stakeholders around producing knowledge relevant to the SDGs.[164] ◉

3.3 Local and regional government-driven initiatives to localize the SDGs

Many cities across the continent carried out initiatives, before the 2030 Agenda or the New Urban Agenda were adopted by the international community, that posthumously relate to different areas of the SDGs. In these cases, SDG localization is implicit. The absence of SDG 'branding' of these initiatives does not detract from the value they add to the global campaign and the efforts to localize and spread awareness of the global 2030 commitments through SDG projects on the ground. Increasing the traction of the SDGs through the implementation of such projects has the potential to become an awareness-raising tool in itself to help African LRGs conceive of new instruments and priorities that are compatible with the 2030 Agenda, as well as with the African Agenda 2063. Simultaneously, this may contribute to scaling up existing efforts that have wider transformative potential and that will maximize progress towards the SDGs as well as other global policy targets and the New Urban Agenda principles.

Strong examples of the potential to leverage SDG benefits can be found across African cities and regions. The diverse initiatives led by African LRGs have been clustered into cross-cutting themes to address the interconnectedness of sustainable development and local action to achieve sustainable development pathways. These local initiatives and policies can be viewed as possible responses to the challenges of African urbanization, including widespread informality, poverty, and lack of access to basic services; growing vulnerability to climate change impacts; and increasing inequalities, urban violence and conflicts. They show how LRGs can lead transformative approaches from the territories.

Dealing with multidimensional poverty and widespread informality for improved access to basic services

Poverty remains one of the biggest barriers to development in Africa and the poor state of education, health, basic services and lack of food security especially affects the most vulnerable populations, such as women, children and the elderly. In Africa, poverty is a widespread problem, although more concentrated in a number of the fastest growing countries, as well as in certain areas. Often it is rooted in structural issues such as violence, political instability, climate change and other deep-seated crises.[165] Another critical issue is the magnitude of informality in the African economy and urban landscape. Most non-agricultural jobs in Sub-Saharan Africa are informal and most of these are in self-employment, with informality representing 70%-80% of the urban economy. The policies and practices of local governments and the ways in which they respond to informality thus have an important impact on urban livelihoods.[166] This section outlines selected examples of local initiatives in food security, housing and basic services that contribute to poverty reduction.

While individual SDGs (as compared with the Millennium Development Goals — MDGs) are

The policies and practices of local governments and the ways in which they respond to informality have an important impact on urban livelihoods.

Bread delivery in Cairo, Egypt (photo: M M, t.ly/Je0O8).

designed to address the complexity of the issues they cover, they need to be seen together in all their dimensions in the context of Africa, indeed in all regions. For instance, achieving **food security** in all its dimensions means addressing not only SDG 2 on ending hunger, but also other SDGs focused on social development such as SDG 1 on poverty, SDG 3 on health, as well as SDG 5 (gender equality), and its economic and specific urban dimension (e.g. SDG 8, 9 and 11).[167]

Examples of African initiatives that tackle these various aspects include the cities of Antananarivo in Madagascar and Dakar in Senegal. Both received prizes, for their urban agriculture and micro-gardens projects, respectively, from the Milan Urban Food Policy Pact, for innovative practices and the creation of Urban Food Action Platforms. The projects promote the installation of micro-vegetable gardens in low-income neighbourhoods to improve food security and create income-generating activities. A similar initiative was awarded in Arusha, Tanzania, with a specific focus on women's roles as food security providers and protectors of agro-biodiversity. The Milan Urban Food Policy Pact not only supports cities' efforts to strengthen urban food systems, but it also contributed to stimulating the exchange of practices and learning between signatory cities. This type of peer-to-peer learning will deepen project work at city level and potentially enable the move from project to

systemic engagement with local government at its heart on food security.[168]

The challenges of informality and poverty come together especially in the area of **housing**. UN-Habitat estimates that 62% of urban African households live in slums.[169] It is therefore notable that there is an increase in the number of African countries, such as Rwanda, Lesotho and Ghana, implementing new, more comprehensive housing policies which set out clearer roles and functions for LRGs in the planning and production of housing. In Morocco for instance, in the framework of the national initiative Cities without Slums, the city of Casablanca has undertaken important work in co-financing the rehousing of informally housed households by mobilizing household finance and third-party investments.[170] These new policies develop from international housing rights frameworks and covenants, such as the New Urban Agenda and the SDGs. Further, an 'inclusionary housing' policy is being adopted by various local governments. Johannesburg now requires a proportion of all its units that are developed to be more affordable housing units. Cape Town and eThekwini city governments are also proactively identifying well-located land parcels on which to develop more affordable housing.[171]

In the area of **slum upgrading and urban infrastructure**, there are also several experiences of partnerships between LRGs and community-based organizations that have been successful

in reducing the gaps in provision and finding affordable, safe and sustainable solutions.[172] UCLG Africa in particular has partnered with Shack/SDI to implement the 'Know your City' programme. Its objective is to enhance greater collaboration between local governments and urban poor communities in the planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of urban planning processes; and ensure a more inclusive approach to urban development and management. Initiatives around participatory slum upgrading contribute not only to better housing but also to improved access to basic services such as water and sanitation, waste management and energy, as well as more integrated development. A notable example is the Mukuru slum upgrading project in Nairobi, Kenya, where Nairobi County created a Special Planning Area for participatory upgrading.[173] Other examples of participatory approaches to slum upgrading include the town of Epworth in Zimbabwe, where a settlement profile, mapping and enumeration of the informal settlement Magada, provided the basis for an upgrading programme as part of an agreement between the residents and their community organizations and local and national government.[174] Transform the Settlements of the Urban Poor in Uganda is another example of an initiative where five secondary cities are supported by an MLG framework that includes both the national government and LRGs. This has been extended to the country's 14 main intermediary cities, ensuring the urban poor participate in planning and decision-making processes, in particular in the municipal development forums. Similarly, in Mozambique, the municipality of Beira created the Multi-Functional Community Centre for Renewable Energy in the slum of Munhava with the support of UN-Habitat, to provide slum dwellers with access to clean energy, better sanitation and drinking water. The centre is also expected to provide opportunities in particular to young people and women to exchange experiences and generate local initiatives linked to the development of their communities.[175]

Informal waste collection happens in the majority of African cities. In certain cities such as Kinshasa, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, waste collection services are almost entirely provided by the informal workers (98%).[176] Interesting local examples of participatory co-production in the informal sector are evident in this field, such as in Qalyubeya Governorate, Egypt. There, local informal waste pickers were central to the launch of an integrated community-based solid waste management system. The system improved the local environment, raised the living conditions of local residents, alleviated the problem of solid waste and created new jobs without affecting current ones. This innovative project was awarded

the 3rd Guangzhou International Award for Urban Innovation in 2016.[177]

Similarly, in the city of Accra, Ghana, the Accra Metropolitan Assembly (AMA) is incorporating the informal waste collectors into the contracts signed with waste collection companies, as part of its membership of the 100RC initiative. In May 2017, the city commissioned a waste transfer station that serves as a transit point for waste hauled from other parts of the city by informal collectors who service communities located in poorly planned areas of the city. Because of the success of this approach, AMA is in the process of registering all informal waste collectors to regulate their operations.[178] The city of Johannesburg (South Africa) has established seven waste buy-back centres, operated by the informal community of waste pickers, with the aim of empowering impoverished communities and providing job security benefits, while increasing recycling rates. As part of a comprehensive waste management project, N'Zérékoré (Guinea) has set up activity zones across the city to inform and train the population about environmental and public hygiene and foster good public health practices. As well as improving living conditions and public health across the city, this project has created jobs for disadvantaged groups, including women.[179]

Access to basic services in **schools**, including electricity, drinking water and the Internet is an equally critical challenge in Africa.[180] In Zambia, local governments play a crucial role in improving health interventions in school institutions by ensuring students have access to drinking water and sanitation. The Egyptian city of Aswan has also developed a comprehensive strategy that integrates gardening and water conservation programmes in schools, as well as diverse entrepreneurial training opportunities for all groups of society.[181]

In the area of **transport**, there are significant initiatives that look into ways to integrate informal transport systems, such as the MoveWindhoek project in Namibia. The city of Windhoek, together with the Ministry of Works and Transport and GIZ, developed the Sustainable Urban Transport Master Plan for Windhoek, which enables decision-makers to develop an affordable, accessible and efficient public and non-motorized transport system for the next 20 years, thus addressing the specific needs of the most disadvantaged urban populations.[182] In the case of Tshwane, South Africa, the city administration has improved its collaboration with informal transport providers, leading to improvements in local economic development (LED) (SDG 8), which has accelerated the rate of social change and had a direct impact on the lives of the poorest citizens.

Making communities more sustainable and resilient to mitigate the effects of climate change

The 2019 Index and Dashboard Report published by the Sustainable Development Goals Center for Africa indicates, surprisingly, that African countries are on track to reach SDG 13 and focused on taking urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts.[183] However, there is no way in which the 1.5°C target can be attained if the current urbanization mega-trend in Africa follows the same industrial and infrastructure pathways as Europe and North America from a century ago.[184] Fortunately, recent technology innovations and political economy shifts render many of the renewable energy and infrastructure solutions required compatible with the least-cost and most tenable options for improving the lives of people in these cities and adjacent rural areas.

African cities and territories have been implementing a range of initiatives to adapt to and mitigate the consequences of climate change (flooding, rising sea levels, extreme temperatures and drought). These include projects in the area of ecosystems and biodiversity, water, agriculture and energy and urban planning and infrastructure, which link to a range of SDGs beyond SDG 13 and to the Paris Agreement on climate change and the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction. By adopting sustainable and more integrated approaches to urban planning, LRGs can contribute to reduce disaster risks, improve the delivery of basic services and strengthen resilience at the community level. Efforts to improve resilience at the local level may also contribute to achieving SDG 1 and SDG 11.

The city of Accra has been a pioneer in Africa in building its capacity to transform commitments into concrete plans and to become more resilient and carbon-neutral. The city of Cape Town has implemented an ambitious climate change policy, with the aim to reduce the carbon and energy intensity of its activities, improve its transport network, and reduce the use of private vehicles.

In addition to these two cities, several other municipalities such as Kigali, Lagos, Luxor, Nairobi or Paynesville, have engaged in **urban resilience strategies** to better recover from socio-economic and environmental stresses, in the framework of the 100RC. The city of Kigali in Rwanda has for instance based its action plan on local challenges, including aging infrastructures, energy insecurity, environmental degradation, lack of affordable housing and flooding, while Paynesville in Liberia has focused its strategy on specific areas of intervention, such as public health and water management. The latter managed to provide education and hygiene supplies to communities affected with the Ebola Virus Disease, as an attempt to increase its resilience to future public health challenges.

Eco-cities projects have also flourished in a few countries offering innovative models of urban sustainability. The eco-city of Zenata in Morocco, located between Casablanca and Rabat, was conceived based on sustainable development and resilience principles. The organization of the city facilitates natural ventilation and 30% of public areas are green spaces, with public lighting entirely Light Emitting Diodide. In Burkina Faso, the new eco-city of Yennenga that is currently being built 15km from the capital of Ouagadougou, pays particular attention to the Harmattan winds, solar energy and the collection of rainwater.

A few municipalities have also committed to take actions to implement effective **disaster risk reduction** (DRR) strategies. Béguédo, Burkina Faso is strengthening and protecting its ecosystems and natural buffers to make them more resilient to natural hazards. The municipality is taking action on good governance of natural resources; adapting to climate change by implementing best practices, such as mapping the protected areas, and working with the community to show how they can improve their livelihoods while reducing disaster risk.[185] In Cameroon, Yaoundé 6 has been engaged in DRR at the local level since 2013 and has shifted from a sectoral vision to a global and integrated vision of its development, with a plan covering the period 2019-2030.[186]

It is important that projects also extend beyond large cities to small towns, coastal and rural areas. For instance, in Mozambique, the coastal municipality of Quelimane has in recent years shifted from a narrow focus on economic development and poverty reduction to a more forward-thinking climate-compatible development approach integrated into its urban planning. The municipality has undertaken a series of actions, as part of a multi-year project supported by international cooperation, that seek to address multiple challenges and sustainability goals. By restoring its mangrove forests, Quelimane manages to simultaneously enhance its adaptive capacity to the risk of flood and sea-level rise and provide economic opportunities for the poor and marginalized

In Mozambique, the coastal municipality of Quelimane has in recent years adopted a more forward-thinking climate-compatible development approach integrated into its urban planning.

communities that are tasked with managing the tree seedlings, thereby contributing to SDG 15. Within the same configuration on the Atlantic coast, the city of Saint Louis in Senegal in collaboration with Enda Energie and Wetlands International has established a comprehensive framework for protecting the vulnerable coastal ecosystems. At the village scale, two villages (Gazi and Makongeni) in Kenya, have joined forces for the preservation of the mangrove swamp by exchanging carbon credits. The profits so far have made it possible to preserve 117 hectares of mangroves and ensure regular revenues used to provide access to water. In 2017, this project received the Equator Initiative Award, and is being replicated in other regions in Kenya.

Moreover, the development of national biodiversity strategies and action plans (NBSAPs) under the framework of the Convention on Biological Diversity has become a key policy tool for many LRGs to plan sub-national **biodiversity strategies**. The Fatick Region in Senegal has for instance developed the Integrated Regional Development Plan 2012-2018 that used an ecosystem approach to meet the Global Goals at the regional level. The transfer of environmental and natural resource management powers to the regions enabled Fatick to design and monitor its biodiversity, safeguarding efforts to protect wildlife in particular. As of today, 33 forests are being developed and 100 villages are involved in forest management. On the same lines, the city government of Dakar has organized reforestation activities with schoolchildren from disadvantaged areas, in a more inclusive learning environment to simultaneously raise awareness on climate change and fight inequality.

While these various projects and initiatives are important in their own right, in Kenya three different counties have taken important steps to approve **climate change legislation** at SNG level to address climate change in more structural ways (see Box 8).

Numerous cities in emerging countries, such as Lagos (Nigeria) and Tshwane (South Africa), report higher emissions than cities in more advanced countries, particularly due to high emissions in the transport and energy production sectors.[188] Paradoxically, walking share in African cities is higher than the global average, e.g. 61% in Nairobi, 48% in Dar es Salaam and 34% in Cape Town.[189] In this context, large cities such as Johannesburg and Cape Town (South Africa), Dakar (Senegal), Nairobi (Kenya) or Dar es Salaam (Tanzania) have inaugurated **rapid transport systems** in recent years.[190] Their aim is to provide residents with access to a quality, sustainable and affordable public transport system, while helping to reduce air pollution and promote sustainable mobility patterns with the creation of cycle paths

and sidewalks.

Certain municipalities have set up initiatives to foster the **sustainable consumption and production of energy**. In Uganda, Kampala (Capital City Authority) and Jinja are innovative cities that have implemented solar street lighting systems. Around 1,800 solar street lights have been installed in Kampala, and 92 in Jinja. This system has generated a range of economic, social and environmental benefits for both cities, including lower crime rates, better road safety, a more vibrant night-time economy and higher property values, contributing to SDG 11, SDG 13 and SDG 16 targets.[191] Others have been active in providing innovative solutions to transform waste into energy. The city of Addis Ababa, Ethiopia has recently inaugurated a waste-to-energy station, which collects the heat emitted during incineration to produce energy. The waste-to-energy plant is expected to incinerate 1,400 tonnes of organic waste per day, representing about 80% of the city's waste, and to provide 100 skilled jobs in Addis Ababa.[192] Similarly, in the island of Zanzibar (Tanzania), a pilot was started in September 2017 in a low-income area of the island called Shauri Moyo, where 200 households were selected. On a smaller scale, a waste management centre was created in 2017 in the village of Houègbo in Benin,

to encourage citizens through financial incentives to collect their organic waste for conversion to biogas. The project is expected to be replicated in the country's 77 municipalities.

Furthermore, a number of cities are adopting initiatives towards an **urban circular economy**. Cape Town, South Africa, has initiated action to recover and reduce waste and improve energy efficiency in municipal buildings since 2009. By 2015, the city had installed about 500 smart meters within municipal facilities and developed an automated energy management system, the 'SmartFacility' application. This interprets the facility's electricity consumption data in a friendly, accessible manner, illustrating the data on a dashboard for internal end users and the public. In addition, the Western Cape Industrial Symbiosis Program (WISP) was established in the city, and provides business members with time and technical expertise, connecting companies with unused or residual resources, such as materials, energy, water, assets, logistics and expertise. The cumulative impact of WISP over the last five years has included: 27,436 tonnes of waste diverted from landfill; 46,700 tonnes of GHG saved (equivalent to nine 2.2MW wind turbines installed in South Africa); EUR 2.8 million generated in financial benefits through additional revenue, cost savings and private investments; 143 jobs created in the economy (25 directly in member companies). The programme has received multiple award nominations, including being a three-time finalist for various circular economy awards. While the circular economy is still in its infancy across the continent, as a reformative system it presents significant opportunities for Africa to deliver on more inclusive, economic growth, which includes job opportunities and positive environmental practices.

Building inclusive and peaceful cities and territories

Fragility and conflict as well as growing inequalities are recognized as major factors in hindering progress towards the SDGs, and in particular a major obstacle to achieving the targets of SDG 10 and SDG 16. Many examples of local government-driven initiatives in the area of peace and inclusive societies are supported by partnerships with actors such as UN agencies, civil society or the private sector in the area of slum upgrading, participatory planning and budgeting or service delivery (see above). Partnerships between cities are also instrumental.

An important example that stands out in this regard is the partnership between the Beninese city of Dogbo and the Belgium city of Roeselare in the area of birth registration. Birth registration is key to gain a legal identity and ensure access to basic rights and services (SDG 16.9). The two cities were twinned in 2010 and work closely on projects ranging from water schemes to cultural exchanges. Because of the birth registration project, all the children born in the city of Dogbo had their births registered, compared with only 40% in 2010. This received an award from PLATFORMA, the European network of national LGAs, in 2018.[193]

African LRGs have supported initiatives to fight against urban violence and overcome inter-ethnic, religious and socio-economic conflicts. In critical situations, local governments played a crucial role in contributing to resolve the crises and the reception of refugees, as recognized by the international community. One such example is the crisis in Mali in 2012, the result of the coup d'État and occupation of the North of the country by Tuareg insurgent groups and later by Islamist groups. The subsequent Sustainable Recovery Plan of Mali 2013-2014 (PRED), proposed by the national government, foresaw the strengthening of decentralization, and LRGs in Europe launched a strong solidarity movement with LRGs in Mali. This is also the case with the G5 Sahel Alliance of Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania and Niger. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the local authorities in Shabunda established 'permanent peace committees', as an effort to stop violence and restore state authority, in a context of post-ethnic war in the community. The programme included awareness-raising to facilitate the demobilization of combatants.

Africa hosts more political and climate change displaced persons and migrants than any other continent in the world. While the refugee crisis poses significant economic and social burdens on host countries, some LRGs are implementing proactive solutions. Within the framework of the National Strategy for Immigration and Asylum, the cities of Tangier and Nador in Morocco acknowledge their humanitarian responsibility and facilitate access to basic services for migrants, such as shelter, education and health. Because of lack of resources, Tangier actively encourages CSOs to partner with local government actors around issues of migration.

Culture can also be a powerful tool to promote social cohesion and create peaceful environments. In 2016, the city of Timbuktu, Mali launched a strategy to reinforce the socio-economic and urban fabric and civic participation in the city, urgently needed after its occupation in 2012 and 2013. The initiative strengthened local cultural heritage, defended citizens' freedom to maintain their cultural practices, and promoted culture as a strategy for resilience and sustainable cohabitation.[194] Another initiative to foster interculturalism and social cohesion is found in Yopougon, a suburb of Abidjan in Côte d'Ivoire. This project promotes cultural citizenship among the local youth in a post-election crisis context through participatory programmes. Although

this initiative enabled the conditions for peaceful coexistence, the youth unemployment rate remains high and requires ongoing dialogue to ensure social cohesion. Worth mentioning also is the launch of the celebration of the African Capitals for Culture during the last Africities Summit in 2018: Rabat was chosen as the first African Capital for Culture.

The importance of **public spaces** must also be highlighted as a means of enhancing community cohesion and promoting health, happiness and wellbeing for all citizens, especially children. UNICEF has been working in seven municipalities in Mozambique as part of its work on making cities more child-friendly through interventions in the area of early childhood education, nutrition, and participation and governance. Cities in Kenya and South Africa have also been working with the UN-Habitat Global Public Space Programme to improve the quality of public spaces. In Kenya, Nairobi committed to restoring and rehabilitating public spaces across the city with the inclusion of local communities in the governance and management of spaces. Along with the Nairobi Integrated Urban Development Master Plan, detailed urban area plans have been prepared based on the principles of building safe, inclusive and accessible public spaces.[195] In Johannesburg (South Africa), public spaces serve as bridges to reconnect the urban areas to recreational spaces and allow for freedom of movement. Because of the spatial legacy of apartheid, parks and public facilities were all concentrated in higher-income neighbourhoods, while townships remained dense areas with almost no open green spaces. The 'Corridors of Freedom' initiative illustrates this new vision of making public space inclusive, particularly in poorer areas, and improving living conditions in former townships.

As part of their efforts to **tackle discriminatory practices**, several LRGs have also engaged in programmes promoting equal access opportunities for all. Pikine in Senegal has inaugurated an Office of Rights to provide services of attention, welcome and advice for irregular migrants. In addition, 75 Senegalese local authorities in 2017 adopted a Charter of Citizen Participation and the Right to the City to commit themselves to advancing the human rights and citizen participation agendas at the local level.[196] In the Cameroonian commune of Mayo-Baléo, a Centre for the Promotion of Women and the Family has been built to train women, girls and young people in running small businesses and to offer them a range of other courses (languages, sewing, computer courses, catering, etc.).[197] Finally, African local governments have adopted a Charter of LRGs on Migration, which over 30 cities have adhered to.

Ensuring responsive and participatory decision-making

Most of the interventions at the local level address the need to ensure responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative decision-making at all levels (SDG 16.7). This is interlinked with SDG 11.3 on the need to enhance inclusive and sustainable urbanization and capacity for participatory, integrated and sustainable human settlement planning and management in all countries by 2030, as well as with most of the principles of the New Urban Agenda.

In Africa, planning systems remain highly centralized with urban planning laws mainly inherited from colonial times and primarily under the control of a central government department. Some governments have committed to decentralize these laws. However, new laws have often been written and not approved, or the necessary changes have not been made to urban governance and land management legislation.[198] The city of Johannesburg, for example, sought to create a strategy to rethink the nature of local governance. The Joburg 2040: Growth and Development Strategy (GDS) is both an aspirational document that defines the type of society Johannesburg seeks to become by 2040, and a long-term planning instrument with a set of strategic choices to guide the city's development

Streets of Nairobi, Kenya (photo: Xiaojun Deng, t.ly/2W8G5).

trajectory. It lays the foundation for multilevel, multi-scalar and integrated responses to the city's urban challenges.

Other initiatives seek to integrate local communities in the design of local development planning. For instance, city development strategies (CDSs) developed by Cities Alliance support local governments in the elaboration of long-term development strategies, using a participatory approach. These strategies have been formulated in Ouagadougou (Burkina Faso) and Douala (Cameroon) based on collaborative exercises involving local communities, in particular representatives of the most marginalized and vulnerable members. These have yielded interesting results in terms of consensus-building and funding opportunities for follow-up investments.[199] In Cotonou (Benin), the definition of the urban development strategy has proven useful in improving the coordination of urban development issues between the cities of Cotonou, Abomey-Calavi and Sèmè Podji, which form part of the Cotonou agglomeration. In Mozambique, the city of Mandlakazi has put a particular emphasis on strengthening citizens' participation with the creation of municipal participatory forums to debate and plan municipal actions. Apart from the municipal forum, a 30-member women's forum and a 30-strong young people's forum were created to interact with the city council and participate in planning activities.[200]

In Africa, the urban population is expected to grow threefold by 2050. Thus, planning cities extensions has become an urgent issue for LRGs, and different modalities of 'soft planning', particularly to prepare for future land uses and plan infrastructure development, should be explored. To be responsive and formulate polices that are adapted to the importance of informality in Africa, LRGs are increasingly involving communities in their sustainable development strategies in these areas. It is much more expensive to retrofit urban infrastructure a posteriori than to plan ahead for land use. This is particularly relevant in the case of intermediary cities where LRGs have lower financial capacities while being at the core of national, and the overall African, urban demographic transition. Another example is the 'base-plan' developed in 12 African cities that has been presented as an opportunity ahead of the New Urban Agenda. The success of such practices relies on involving communities and social actors in the diagnostic, and anticipating both the existing territorial dynamics and 'hard planning' needs for future amenities.

Participation in planning processes has also gained ground in the Maghreb countries. Morocco introduced such provisions in 2010, requiring cities to design strategic plans in a participatory way. The cities of Sousse and Sfax in Tunisia also provide interesting examples of the development of participatory urban strategies (see Box 9).

Participatory mechanisms have paved the way for greater accountability of LRGs and improved access to basic services. In Sekondi-Takoradi, Ghana, citizens have access to scorecards to assess their satisfaction with the quality of public service delivery to the poorer communities. With the support of the Open Government Partnership, the metropolitan assembly of these twin cities has made considerable progress in obtaining better sanitation, access to toilets, and street lighting (which has resulted in a reduction in night-time crime). Similarly, **participatory budgeting** processes provide a route through which groups not generally involved in political decision-making can make their voices heard, help to identify common priorities and have these priorities realized. Dondo, Mozambique is the first widely recognized example of participatory budgeting in Africa: 51 local communities, debating within consultative municipal fora, discussed the allocation of up to USD 2.6 million of public spending. The Municipal Council subsequently decided to invest these funds in priority public works such as access to clean water and drainage (2007-2009). This experience was later supported by national development cooperation and the national LGA, and replicated by other municipal

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Box 9

Participatory planning for urban development in Sfax and Sousse, Tunisia[201]

In Sfax, the Greater Sfax Development Strategy (GSDS) was elaborated to promote local economic development (LED) strategies and prioritize underserved neighbourhoods. This strategy also sought to foster inter-municipality cooperation for city and regional development and leverage significant budget allocation. Almost all segments of the population were actively involved in formulating a long-term economic development strategy for Greater Sfax. The Sfax leaders thus provided a significant example of the power of participatory governance.

A similar project has been promoted in Sousse, where the city's urban development strategy has been developed based on an innovative methodology involving local communities. With this methodological approach, the city was able to identify five common strategic objectives: social and territorial cohesion, economy, competitiveness, spatial planning, and environmental management and governance. In addition, an action plan has been prepared in order to clarify Sousse 2030's vision. The overall participative process made it possible to identify 40 projects for 2014-2017 and 30 others are being considered in the future action plan.

governments, such as Inhambane, during the following legislature (2011-2014). This pioneering experience has been followed by other cities, such as Rufisque Est District (Senegal), Ampasy Nahampoana (Madagascar), and Yaoundé 6 District (Cameroon), or Blantyre (Malawi).

The global organization, Women in Informal Employment, Globalizing and Organizing (WIEGO), developed a collective document outlining principles and actions for national and local governments to implement the New Urban Agenda in a participatory and inclusive way to be supportive of informal workers. WIEGO has also developed methodologies for engaging with local governments to address their needs for access to public space, public services and public procurement processes, which were launched at the Africities Summit in Marrakesh in November 2018.[202] These were successfully used in cities such as Accra (Ghana), where the Focal City Initiative created multi-stakeholder platforms through a series of participatory consultative processes with informal traders that contributed to improved occupational health and safety in informal markets and increased awareness of the contribution of informal workers to the local economy.[203]

Other examples include the 'We are Medina' project in Larache, Morocco, which highlights local and regional commitment to promote communities' participation. Key to the success of this project was the creation of a bond of trust and technical neighbourly cooperation, channelled through an interdisciplinary Neighbourhood Technical Office as well as monitoring committees with the participation of all the stakeholders involved. This project won the Dubai International Award for Best Practice for National Urban Policies in 2017.[204]

Transparency and accountability of LRGs remain crucial in Africa to enable more effective delivery of basic services tailored to local needs. A pilot project, known as Leaders in Local Government for Transparency and Integrity in Service Delivery in Africa, aims to strengthen local government transparency and integrity to fight against corruption in service delivery. This was launched by UCLG Africa in partnership with Transparency International in 2017. Three local governments, Walvis Bay Municipal Council in Namibia, Kabarole District in Uganda and Tema Municipal Assembly in Ghana, have volunteered to participate in the project to assess the institutional organizational weaknesses that render local governments susceptible to corruption and other malpractices in the delivery of services, and develop policies and systems that mitigate, detect and attenuate the risks.[205] ◉

4. Conclusions[206]

By 2050, Africa will be the most populated region of the world, with over 2 billion people — more than the populations of either China or India. Thus, the overall success or failure in the realization of the SDGs, indeed how realistic their attainment is, will depend to a large extent on whether or not the Global Goals are achievable in Africa. The UNECA 2019 report on sustainable development (albeit based on incomplete data available to monitor progress), shows that the continent is not on track to achieve most of the SDGs. In particular, more action is needed to foster inclusive growth and take full advantage of the potential for demographic growth in the region.

In fact, Africa will have to implement the African Agenda 2063, the SDGs and other related global agendas while undergoing a huge shift in the population settlement pattern that sees the continent moving from 'majority rural' 30 years ago to 'majority urban' in the coming 30 years. African decision-makers need to fully understand the extent to which rapid urbanization is impacting the economic, social and spatial dynamics of the continent, making metropolises, cities and towns, local and regional governments (LRGs) key and emerging 'game changer' agents in shaping the structural transformation.

This report shows the positive contribution of the African LRGs to the implementation of the African and global agendas. It argues that this contribution could be even greater if enabling conditions were in place that capitalized on the energies and life force of African cities that is the young people who form the majority of the population. Across Africa, there is high-level social demand to reconfigure the powers and functions to make the overall system of LRGs work better for a continent where poverty, the youth bulge, the backlog in infrastructure supply and basic service delivery, make the 2030 aspirations both extremely relevant and difficult to achieve. Positive attitudes to devolution and reform of local government bodies to give them greater strength to deliver the SDGs are espoused in frameworks such as the African Charter on Values and Principles of Decentralization, Local Governance and Local Development. However, the effective legal and structural changes to the systems of government remain incomplete, or stagnated in some countries and globally, they are still fairly new for almost all African countries. Indeed, the Charter has been signed by 17 countries and ratified by only six (Benin, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Madagascar, Mali and Namibia).

There is **a mismatch between the policy commitments at the highest governance level of the Africa region and the ability of LRGs at national level to unlock their potentialities to deliver on the 2030 Agenda, Agenda 2063 and the other global and continent-wide policy agendas**. Unsurprisingly given this, there are delays in the localization of the SDGs gaining real traction. LRG capacity is further eroded by a variety of factors that include ongoing conflicts, climate change impact and increasing natural disasters. Furthermore, in Africa, as elsewhere in the world, there are clear examples of resistance by national governments trying to prevent the diffusion of political decision-making and fiscal powers away from the central level.

Nonetheless, there is evidence of nationally-driven change enabling rather than detracting from local action. Below are six key actions that can help unlock the status quo and catalyse innovation to scale up the contribution of LRGs in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063. These actions mitigate against weak overall systems of government and misaligned intergovernmental systems, factors that are further incapacitating LRGs and limiting their powers to deliver sustainable development.

Africa will have to implement the 2030/2063 Agendas and other global agendas while undergoing a huge shift in the population settlement pattern that sees the continent moving from 'majority rural' to 'majority urban'.

Get the management of urbanization right

Unless bold steps are taken immediately to re-establish the practice of urban and spatial planning that more than 20 years of structural adjustment policies have squandered in most African countries, Africa will not meet the SDGs. The result of this lack of planning has been a boom in informal settlements and slum areas, a serious backlog in basic service infrastructure, and poor maintenance and management of the infrastructure that does exist, in most African cities. Given the pace of urban growth — with cities doubling their population and areas in less than 20 years — the situation could dramatically worsen. The lack of investment in well-planned, well-managed cities and territories has largely contributed to the poor standing and in efficiency of the LRGs and national economies.

It is time for African decision-makers to recognize the important role that cities and territories play in the structural transformation of the continent. As recommended in the New Urban Agenda, adopted by the United Nations in October 2016 in Quito, Ecuador, every African country should define and implement a national urban policy (NUP). It is worth noting that in 2018, most of the 18 African countries that had an NUP had not yet explicitly aligned the policy with the SDGs. Thus, more closely linking the SDGs, the New Urban Agenda and the African Agenda 2063 would in turn be an opportunity for LRGs and their networks to promote a more coherent and integrated urban and territorial development approach and prevent duplication that in any case cannot be afforded in resource-scarce contexts.

All countries are compelled to connect their villages, towns and cities into an organized system of human settlements with dedicated functions that will give traction to the overall economic, social and territorial structural transformation at the national level. At the regional level, regional economic communities should endeavour to define regional-wide spatial plans to support and invigorate the organization of regional markets structured around the main cities of the region that will in turn connect the region to other parts of the African continent. At the continental level, it is also important to reflect on the role that metropolitan cities and city regions play in connecting all the regions of the continent and integrating the continent into the mainstream of global cities that lead the dynamic of the global economy.

Strategically planning for the accelerated urban transition, creating enabling environments, and providing human resources training are key components for LRGs to transform their planning and decision-making processes. Developing 'soft' and participatory planning of cities' extensions in

Linking more closely the SDGs, the New Urban Agenda and Agenda 2063 would be an opportunity for LRGs and their networks to promote a more coherent and integrated urban and territorial development approach.

a way that could contribute to better managing urban expansions will help reduce urban sprawl and be more effective than costlier retrofitting interventions to integrate new informal areas in the urban fabric.

These measures would gain greater traction if the role of cities in the structural transformation of Africa was considered as a theme to be put on the agenda of one of the upcoming conferences of heads of state and government of the African Union.

Get the enabling environment of LRGs right

In almost all African countries, urbanization has led to the emergence of a strong social demand for more proximity and greater people participation in the management of public affairs. This in turn has resulted in the definition and implementation of decentralization policies in most African countries, which legally recognize greater powers and autonomy in decision-making of LRGs. As it is widely known, at least 65% of SDG targets fall within the realm of the decentralization laws and regulations entrusted to LRGs.

In the last few years, many countries have renewed existing institutional frameworks (e.g. Benin, Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Kenya, Morocco, Rwanda or Zambia). In others, where progress has been relatively slow, there is new momentum explicitly linked to formulating coherent strategies in the framework of the development agendas (e.g. Cameroon, Cape Verde, Togo where local elections took place in 2019) or as part of a process of peace and democratization (e.g. Mali and Tunisia).

Despite these legal provisions, African LRGs are not truly empowered to deliver on their mandate and to lead sustainable territorial development. As concluded by UCLG Africa, in most African countries the national institutional frameworks for LRGs need to be revised. Across Africa, LRGs still have limited decision-making powers, resources and capacities, including the control of infrastructures for services as per the functions allocated to them. This has major implications for the extent to which LRGs are able to plan and develop strategies to boost local development and to deliver on targets related to

the SDGs. This issue is particularly acute in small and intermediary cities, where the service delivery mandate is functional not just for the city residents but also for the wider peri-urban neighbourhoods and rural hinterlands, as well as in fast-growing metropolitan areas.

African governments acknowledged in Africa's priorities for the New Urban Agenda the need for an integrated vision of Africa's human settlements and territorial development that spans the rural environment, intermediary cities, as well as major cities and metropolises. They also recognized that LRGs are on the frontlines of the management of urban growth.

African governments should therefore accept that only empowered LRGs, with clear mandates, improved capacities and strengthened resources, supported by adequate multilevel governance (MLG) collaborative mechanisms, can help master rapid urbanization, accelerate the implementation of national strategies for more balanced territorial development, and more inclusive cities and territories, responding to the 2030 Agenda resolution that 'no person and no place should be left behind'.

Get the financial resources of LRGs right

African national governments and their development partners should give priority to the empowerment of LRGs in terms of their financial resources.

In fact, the fiscal costs of power devolution and localization of the SDGs are rarely calculated or provided for. Despite the increased vulnerability of LRGs from more frequent and intense impacts of climate change and natural disaster, there is general ignorance of the cost of implementing the Global Goals in localities and countries.

Fiscal decentralization and localizing financing must be enhanced, together with administrative and political decentralization. Levels of fiscal autonomy vary greatly between as well as within countries across the continent. Moreover, given the political history and the weak fiscal base – due to both poverty and informality — in the region, LRGs face a fiscal squeeze. Certainly, the two challenges in improving sub-national financing systems are 1) to strengthen local capacity to mobilize local own resources; 2) to improve intergovernmental transfers systems. Greater fiscal autonomy at the sub-national level must go hand-in-hand with improved systems for resource mobilization across the different scales of government, and the development of adequate transfer mechanisms to share national wealth. But this will probably not be enough to meet the vast funding requirement.

In many countries, LRGs do not have the powers to contract debt or attract additional funding. Even in cases where LRGs can borrow, this is often restricted, tightly controlled or LRG projects barely meet the feasibility, bankability and risk standards. It is therefore essential that national governments

Floating market at Abomey-Calavi, Benin (photo: Melissa Cooperman/IFPRI, bit. ly/2MtYYuC).

and cities develop mechanisms to upgrade the quality of LRG projects to meet the conditions set by the financing institutions, investment funds and private partners. This is one of the objectives of the African Territorial Agency championed by UCLG Africa, as well as other project preparation programmes led by LGAs and regional networks. These initiatives are however still limited to pilot cities; hence there is an urgent need to develop a range of sub-national lending mechanisms to respond also to intermediary and small cities (e.g. through the creation of local government finance institutions or strengthening those that already exist).

The expansion of sub-national investments is urgent considering the social, financial and environmental costs of catching up, retrofitting the expanding urban fabric, responding to and recovering from the climate emergency and disaster impacts that will only keep growing. Given the localization of the SDGs as a priority, it is also crucial that international partners seize the opportunity of transforming their financing mechanisms to be more supportive of LRG development investments.

Get the human capacities of LRGs right

In order to improve own-revenue generation, attract more funds and prepare bankable projects eligible for funding, LRGs need competent administrations with well-skilled staff. So far, the dialogue between the leaders of the national government and those of LRGs has focused mainly on fiscal decentralization and financial issues, and not enough on human capacity. This is despite the fact that the effectiveness, sustainable provision and good management of LRG financial resources depends largely on the quality and capacity of human resources in the political and administrative bodies of LRGs.

This is why UCLG Africa set up the Africa Local Government Academy (ALGA) aimed at improving the skills and professionalism of LRGs' elected officials and administrative staff. ALGA offers two kinds of capacity-building activities: 1) a 12-month Executive Master on LRG Management for senior staff (namely the city manager or director-general of LRG administrations, the chief finance officer and the chief technical officer); 2) a series of short-term training courses delivered in ALGA's specialized colleges. UCLG Africa and UCLG World are also developing peer learning and mentoring programmes, taking advantage of the wealth of experience and knowledge that is embodied within the LRG community.

It is essential to address the human capacity gaps of LRGs' political and administrative bodies if the expectation that they be more active in the implementation of the African and global agendas, and specifically the SDGs, is to be met. The questions that arise in this regard are: 1) how to make a career in LRG one of the first options for young people entering the labour market; and 2) how to attract and keep the best talents. Looking at the insecure labour conditions of most LRG personnel and the particularly low wage levels compared with other employment areas, the answers to these questions will not be easy.

What is clear however is that the LRGs will not be up to the tasks expected of them unless the capacity and professionalism of their political leaders and administrative staff drastically improves. One area that should immediately be developed is the financing of capacity-building activities. Successful experiences from around the world suggest that this should be through recurrent resources coming from a percentage of the wages paid to LRG staff that could possibly be complemented with a grant from the national government. The recourse for LGAs to document and disseminate capacity-building experiences and initiatives has also proven to be instrumental in upscaling their impact across the membership. Finally, the observation that mayors and LRG leaders learn best from other mayors and LRG leaders shows the usefulness for UCLG to develop, in collaboration with its regional sections, a dedicated peer review and peer learning programme, with a specific component on mentoring activities using and benefitting from the collective endowment of their respective networks.

The fundamental principle here is to realize the centrality of the human resources of LRGs in order for them to play their rightful role in the realization of the 2030 Agenda and the African Agenda 2063.

Get multilevel governance collaboration and multi-stakeholder partnership right

Given the holistic, interlinked and transversal nature of the 2030 Agenda, the SDGs cannot be achieved through single-sector or silo approaches or narrow place-based interventions. Quite the reverse, higher tiers of government must build on territorial partnership and the local political leadership for investment to be adapted locally and to strengthen local economic, social and environmental sustainable development. For instance, the strategic debate over how to retrofit and build massive infrastructure to promote greater regional integration and productivity must consider the issue of scale in coordination with the specific needs of each context and territory, actions to be carried out at different governance levels – from sub-national and national, to regional and continental. In this sense, multilevel governance matters.

Meeting the SDGs targets will require a collective effort of all levels of government and not just the LRGs. **Cooperation and**

The issue of data is not only one of measuring, reporting and verification, but more critically a political one. More structural support for the development of locally embedded monitoring and reporting processes is required.

collaboration between the different spheres of public governance including the alignment of budget flows is key to putting the subsidiarity principle into practice. There are inspiring examples of countries adapting their national planning systems to increase the involvement of LRGs with the aim of better coordinating SDG implementation and follow-up on specific targets (e.g. Benin, Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Kenya, Rwanda, South Africa or Togo). However, the alignment of national and local strategies remains, in most cases, a top-down process and LRGs' involvement is limited.

In almost all countries, national institutional mechanisms to coordinate and lead SDG implementation exist at the highest political level. Some countries have set up coordination mechanisms that rely directly on reformed planning systems, while others have created new mechanisms. However, the participation of LRGs in these coordination mechanisms and, moreover, in the reporting process to the UN High-Level Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF) through the Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs), remains limited (to 47% of countries that reported between 2016-2019 for VNRs and 31% for coordination mechanisms), showing weak involvement of LRGs. **The participation of the LRGs in national coordination, assessment and reporting, needs to be further improved to ensure that the national process truly reflects a 'whole-of-government' approach. It is suggested therefore that national governments take positive steps to support SDG localization strategies involving all levels of government.**

Furthermore, for the SDGs to be an all-encompassing, all-inclusive exercise, all layers of society must participate fully in their implementation and in the definition of priorities. **Adopting a multi-stakeholder approach to SDG implementation is the best way to ensure ownership by citizens and communities, and long-term sustainability of impact. However, it is one thing to say that LRGs value a multi-stakeholder approach to SDG implementation, but it is quite another to put in place appropriate mechanisms for this to be effective.** In many instances, the participation of

civil society, traditional authorities, academia and the private sector is minimal and confined to short-lived consultation workshops.

Nonetheless, this is an area where true democratic processes can prove to be instrumental in delivering concrete progress towards the realization of the SDGs targets. This is firstly by deliberating about the priorities to consider among the 17 SDGs, given the social demands and the local conditions of each LRG; secondly by discussing the indicators that seem the most appropriate in driving social transformation brought about by SDG implementation; and, thirdly by collectively defining the data that need to be produced to inform the chosen indicators and to contribute to the voluntary reports that national, local and regional governments should periodically submit to the UN as part of the monitoring and evaluation mechanism of the implementation of the SDGs.

Get the data revolution started

The localization of the SDGs and related need for bottom-up reporting mechanisms calls for a serious reflection on data collection. This analysis is necessary not only for the sake of reporting to the UN, but also and mainly for the mobilization of all actors at national, local and regional levels to catch up on the full implementation of the SDGs in Africa by 2030.

The gaps so far observed in this area are testimony to the poor understanding of the importance and need to establish routine data production processes linking all spheres of government and all stakeholders. This is vital in order to collectively assess whether countries are on track or not with regard to meeting the SDG targets by 2030, and to deliberate on the best corrective measures in case of setbacks.

The issue of data is therefore not only one of measuring, reporting and verification, but more critically a political one. This is because it creates the framework for the choice of indicators and information, as well as the resulting analysis, and thus structures the way in which all stakeholders will assess and understand progress made in the implementation of the SDGs targets, following the trajectories chosen in each country and by respective LRGs. The challenge is that Africa is currently vastly underrepresented in existing global urban databases and much still needs to be done to build disaggregated, place-based datasets.

The dominant picture on the continent is that monitoring and evaluation mechanisms for the SDGs are not nearly established or robust enough, especially at the sub-national scale. There is a need for more structural support for the development of locally embedded monitoring and reporting processes to national and sub-national levels and globally on the SDGs. Such

Civil society meeting with local public officials in Tanzania (photo: SDI, bit.ly/2LXd3ld).

processes also need to include the empowerment of local communities, civil society and other stakeholders to understand, analyse and use data independently in order to hold government to account. A good example showing the relevance of data in building inclusive cities and territories and a productive dialogue among stakeholders at the LRG level is the 'Know your City' programme, developed by UCLG Africa in collaboration with Slum/Shack Dwellers International (SDI) with the support of the Cities Alliance. In addition, there is a need for partnerships to produce relevant data for monitoring development progress, especially for indicators for which currently no data are being produced.

In other words, recurrent routine processes should be developed between different levels of public governance on the one hand, and between the public authorities and other relevant stakeholders on the other, so that data collection and analysis becomes a collective effort aimed at measuring whether or not countries are on track to meet the SDG targets and recommending corrective action in case of setbacks.

African national governments, African LRGs and the other African stakeholders are inextricably connected in sustainable development delivery and in the partnerships upon which this delivery depends. They should therefore also be intrinsically part of the production of data and analysis to assess progress in SDG implementation. ◉

05. Policy recommendations at the global level

Our roadmap to accelerate the achievement of the 2030 Agenda through the localization of the SDGs

The transformation that needs to be brought about to achieve the global agendas will only occur if our development model responds to the dreams and expectations of communities, and if there is collective responsibility to make the necessary adjustments and sacrifices to achieve more equitable, fair and sustainable societies.

The global agendas must either be local or they simply will not be. The constituency of local and regional governments (LRGs) has a critical role to play to catalyse change and provide the kind of service delivery that will deliver inclusion, efficient use of resources and sustainability. This LRG constituency shares the sense of urgency to scale-up and accelerate such a transformation.

The findings of the GOLD V Report have inspired policy recommendations that build upon the 'Bogota Commitment and Action Agenda', adopted by the World Organization of United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG) in 2016, as well as the annual reports of the Global Taskforce of Local and Regional Governments (GTF) to the UN High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF) since 2017.

In a context of increasing inequalities, endangerment of ecosystems and tensions that are threatening human solidarity, the GOLD V Report presents the efforts of a key constituency that serves communities, responding to their needs and hopes. It is a positive message about the impact that well-resourced localization can have in a new vision for the sustainability of our planet. The recommendations are addressed to local and regional leaders and their organizations, to our partners, national governments, international organizations, civil society and social actors, as well as to the business sector.

Local and regional governments lead the way towards a more equal and sustainable world

In the globalized urbanization era, the actions of cities and LRGs are integral to the global agendas: it is at the local level that the interrelationship between the different agendas most clearly manifests itself. With regard to the global agendas, getting the 2030 Agenda commitments right necessitates the full implementation of the principles of the New Urban Agenda and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, that in turn are fundamental to changing the patterns of production and consumption as the basic premise of the Paris Agreement on climate change and the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction. The following recommendations situate the LRGs as drivers of an alternative territorial approach to local development (TALD).

Actions at local and regional levels

Galvanize forces for the localization of the 2030 Agenda in our cities and territories

LRGs and their global and regional organizations have pioneered the localization of the SDGs. To make the 'quantum leap' currently needed they must:

- Adopt the **SDGs as a reference framework** for LRGs' policies, programming, planning and budgets, ensuring a coherent and integrated approach — mindful of the Paris Agreement on climate change, the Sendai Framework and empowered by the principles of the New Urban Agenda.

- Embolden ambitions by fostering **greater ownership** of the communities and attain real **local buy-in** of policies. Co-creation with other local stakeholders will be critical in the definition, implementation and assessment of the localization process.

- Share and learn: participate in LRG networks and invest in **peer-to-peer knowledge-sharing**, practice exchange and training. Fostering and accessing technical assistance and decentralized cooperation to promote the localization of the SDGs will be key.

- Link with science: serve as catalyser to foster partnerships with research institutions and promote **'labs' to experiment** with innovative ways to implement, review and follow-up the localization process.

Protect the commons, human rights and culture as foundations of peace

The preservation of the global commons (biodiversity, land, atmosphere, oceans) that determine the survival of all living beings, as well as the protection of peace, cultural diversity and human rights, require strong local action and LRGs' commitment to:

- Foster an **ecological and systemic relationship between people and nature**. LRGs must support cohesion of the 'urban-rural continuum' and strengthen the interconnected policies that halt deforestation and desertification; effectively manage the current network of protected areas, including terrestrial, freshwater (both surface and ground) and marine areas; and improve human wellbeing, particularly of indigenous populations and communities whose livelihoods depend on forests, water and soil conservation and climate change mitigation.

- Achieve **climate neutrality in cities and territories**, taking into account the life-long cycle of GHG emissions to proactively tackle the climate emergency. Decoupling socio-economic development from environmental degradation calls for well-planned urban development and land management, responsible and fair management of natural resources and waste, and ensuring the reduction of inequalities. It implies divesting from fossil fuels to free up resources. These can in turn be invested to accelerate scaling-up the protection of most vulnerable populations and ecosystems, and offsetting any emissions that cannot be further reduced or avoided.

- Contribute to **holding global warming to 1.5°C** by the end of the 21st century, through the collective definition of Territorially-Determined Contributions (TDCs) feeding into the Nationally-Determined Contributions (NDCs) for the implementation of the provisions of the Paris Agreement. Support the post-2020 negotiation of the global biodiversity framework, as well as the Convention on Wetlands of International Importance and the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora.

- Promote peace and city diplomacy by tackling the roots of local violence, educating for its eradication and to create a mindset that makes it possible to build a culture of dialogue in cities and territories. Foster cities and territories as spaces for **co-existence and peace** through measures that fight interpersonal violence, extremism, racism, xenophobia, gender-based violence and other forms of intolerance, and introduce measures to integrate all citizens.

- Promote **culture as the fourth pillar of development** and as a core component of local identity, a strand of global solidarity, and a vector for peace and human rights. Foster locally relevant cultural policies and programmes on memory, heritage, creativity, diversity and knowledge, as intrinsic to local sustainable development.

Put human rights and the 'Right to the City' at the core of the local agendas – strengthen inclusive local policies to 'leave no one behind'

Given its multiple dimensions, the eradication of extreme poverty is inextricably linked to the protection of human rights. LRGs should put the 'Right to the City' at the centre of urban and territorial governance to ensure universal access to quality basic services, nutritious food, health and education, economic opportunities, access to adequate housing and disaster risk prevention for the most vulnerable. These are essential components of territorialized pro-poor policies. Partnerships with communities and community-based organisations are instrumental in creating alternative solutions, particularly where public services are scarce. LRGs should commit to:

- **Remove any discriminatory legal and social policy** at the local level to ensure equal opportunities for all, particularly for women, indigenous peoples and ethnic minorities, the LGBTQIA+ populations, the elderly, the youth, and people with mental and physical disabilities. Facilitate migrants' and refugees' access to rights and services, regardless of their status.

- Tackle **gender-based discrimination and violence** with tailored policies, budgets and legal reforms. LRGs can raise awareness and reinforce education on the changing conception of gender roles. Women must be equally represented and granted equal powers in decision-making forums. It is necessary to enact gender-sensitive policies in territories that promote equal access to health and education and acknowledge the role of women in the domestic and informal economy. Gender equality has a multiplier effect in advancing sustainable development, environmental protection and social justice.

- Support the fulfilment of the **right to adequate housing for all**, which includes affordability, legal security of tenure, habitability, accessibility and cultural adequacy standards, and must be understood within the framework of the 'Right to the City'. Promote inclusionary housing policies and slum upgrading initiatives that are undertaken in partnership with the communities and seek to avoid forced evictions.

- Promote the **Principles of Open Government** as a tool for the improvement of policy ownership and accountability. Create spaces and mechanisms that favour citizen participation in local decision-making, access to information and communities' ownership of the 2030 Agenda and other global agendas.

Harness the co-creation of cities and territories through sustainable participative urban and land planning

Planning needs to be the result of the political, economic and social systems within which it is embedded. Deep reforms on planning regulations and frameworks are a critical part of SDG localization and the New Urban Agenda. This includes the need to produce qualified professional planners and researchers. By renewing participatory urban and spatial planning, LRGs should:

- Adopt an **integrated planning approach**, as reflected in the New Urban Agenda, to strengthen the inclusive dimension of cities, climate adaptation and mitigation and disaster risk prevention strategies, and multiply the benefits of interlinkages between urban and territorial areas. Inclusive and participatory planning are key levers for the co-creation of sustainable and inclusive cities and territories.

- Build capacities and retain **local expertise** to address rapid urbanization with adapted approaches to reduce urban sprawl and avoid costlier retrofitting. Most urgent actions are needed in regions where rapid urban growth will be concentrated (Sub-Saharan Africa and South and South-East Asia).

- Scale-up efforts to build **urban resilience and disaster risk preparation**, involving local communities, particularly vulnerable groups, in particular in coastal cities and Small Developing Island States (SIDs).

- Contribute to promoting **'polycentric' urban development** to reduce core-periphery divides, promote more compact and social-mix neighbourhoods, reduce inequalities and avoid urban segregation.

- Create or preserve **open public spaces** to boost inclusion and protect urban heritage and culture, while also pursuing innovative solutions to foster creativity for sustainable urban development.

- **Curb urban sprawl**, reduce distance between home and work places to reduce commuting times and encourage access to alternative and safe modes of mobility (including walkable cities) to reduce GHG emissions. Urban and

spatial planning can lead to transformative use of renewable energy, and reduce the ecological footprint of cities and territories, greening public infrastructure and spaces, reducing air and waste pollution, and reducing risks such as floods, drought or urban heat island effects.

- Improve relationships with the surrounding peri-urban and rural areas, avoid land degradation, and improve **food security** and farmers' livelihoods.

- Enhance the management of **natural protected areas** and ecosystem services, such as upstream watershed areas that the city relies on for fresh water supply, and support reforestation.

Improve access to sustainable and inclusive public services in cities and territories

LRGs need to develop an integrated and systemic approach that will guarantee universal reach. This includes universal access to safe drinking water and sanitation, to quality education and health, to public affordable and sustainable mobility, to integrated waste management and to affordable and clean energy. LRGs need to:

- Develop **infrastructure plans** alongside urban land-use plans, including long-term investment strategies to guide economic and spatial expansion, especially where there are pressures for growth.

- Reduce the **environmental impact** of urban infrastructures and contribute to communities' resilience.

- Support **inter-municipal cooperation** or specific mechanisms that guarantee collaborations to ensure full coverage and adequate quality delivery in territories, be it in metropolitan areas, cities or peri-urban areas, or between neighbouring municipalities in rural areas.

- Guarantee access to affordable services exploring new universal models of service co-production, taking advantage of new decentralized technologies; support small-scale businesses as basic service providers and improve the **quality oversight of services**; and gradually insert the informal economy into the organization of public service delivery.

- Improve the management, delivery and transparency of public basic services, and facilitate innovative **partnerships for co-production and co-management**.

Focus on the future of jobs and local economic development (LED)

It is now urgent to steer a course away from the patterns of economic growth, consumption and production of goods and services that perpetuate deprivations, generate inequalities, deplete the global commons and threaten to cause irreversible damage to the environment. LRGs should therefore:

- Promote LED that helps generate **sustainable socio-economic development tailored** to the particular needs and contexts of cities and territories, and ensure decent work and respect for responsible sustainability standards.

- Prioritize **quality local employment** as a right and tailor fully-fledged policies responsive to the barriers faced by and vulnerabilities of specific groups, including women, youth, ethnic and religious minorities or people with disabilities among others; likewise find inclusive solutions to involve migrants regardless of their status; and facilitate intergenerational knowledge transfers to preserve, disseminate and evolve local know-how and crafts.

- Create spaces for **local innovation** in order to nurture and scale-up local capacities, including those enabled by technology and nature-based industries; develop synergies with local initiatives; support small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) that contribute to sustainable growth and to create employment in their local environments, give impulse to productive clusters and cooperative strategies both within and between sectors and territories.

- Ensure that **new technologies and e-platforms** do not widen the divide that is consolidating poor-quality employment, or priviledge extractive systems of production that do not support communities' social cohesion, connectedness and wellbeing. Develop policies to protect people's privacy, and foster traditional local small business.

- Promote **alternative economic models** such as the transition towards a circular and green economy; support the social and collaborative economy and sustainable tourism. Support the transition towards territorialized food systems that foster good health while minimizing environmental impact; and support efforts to reduce the environmental footprint.

- Recognize the critical role that the **informal economy** plays in the urban fabric. Because of this contribution and the growing number of

workers involved in informal economy activities (estimated at over two billion people worldwide, among which women are 'over-represented'), LRGs need to take necessary steps and support and create initiatives to help entrepreneurs in the informal economy. This must support them to evolve their activities towards the social and solidary economy, and promote the creation of mechanisms to facilitate access to social protection.

- Create enabling conditions, capacities and confidence to mobilize the transformative power of **public procurement**, while respecting the autonomy of LRGs to set their own policy priorities. This should be done by mainstreaming and implementing sustainable and decent work policies, and fair, labour-friendly and environmental clauses, and by encouraging a culture of transparent public contracts and disclosure.

- Coordinated strategies for the 2030 Agenda, the SDGs, the Paris Agreement on climate change and the New Urban Agenda are an imperative. **No single agenda can be addressed in isolation**. National sustainable development plans (NSDPs), Nationally-Determined Contributions (NDCs) to the Paris Agreement and national urban policies (NUPs), as well as other strategic plans, need to be articulated in order to overcome sectoral fragmented strategies, improve the allocation of resources and boost implementation at all levels, from global to local and vice-versa.

At the global and national levels

Foster a global-local movement to localize the SDGs. Localization should be a pillar of national sustainable strategies to implement the SDGs

To achieve the 2030 agendas on time, the pace of change needs to accelerate and ambitions need to be bolder. National governments and international organizations should work in collaboration with LRGs and their networks to increase the outreach and strengthen partnerships of the 'whole-of-government' with the 'whole-of-society' to boost localization. National governments should:

- Integrate (or strengthen) robust **localization strategies** in their sustainable development strategies and action plans to expand the involvement of LRGs and local actors, accelerating and upscaling territorial sustainable development. Localization strategies should be mainstreamed in all plans, programmes and budgets from national to local levels.

Create an 'enabling institutional environment' for localization – empowered local and regional governments and adequate financing flows to support localization are an imperative

Effective decentralization policies are intrinsic to empowering LRGs and supporting SDG localization. The principles of effective decentralization are defined in the International Guidelines on Decentralization and the Strengthening of Local Authorities, adopted by the UN-Habitat Governing Council in 2007.

- LRGs need **local autonomy and subsidiarity principles** to be respected in order to respond to the demands of their inhabitants, to innovate and to adapt national policies and the SDGs to the local context. Urgent actions are needed to unlock LRGs' potential to localize the SDGS and ensure access to basic services for all.

- Access to **basic social services** is a universal principle acknowledged by the UN and a building block for human development. LRGs need to be empowered and accountable to ensure the delivery of quality basic services for all, defined as direct or shared responsibilities in the legal frameworks of a majority of countries, to achieve the principle to 'leave no one behind' — one of the core objectives of the 2030 Agenda.

- LRGs' adequate **fiscal powers and capacities**, as acknowledged by the Addis Ababa Action Agenda (paragraph 34) need strengthened local tax systems, including the power to capture part of land and property added-value; a better allocation of national fiscal revenues through fair, regular and predictable intergovernmental transfers; and access to responsible borrowing

to invest in sustainable public services and infrastructures. Environmental taxes should be considered to advance energy transition and enshrine the 'polluter pays' principle into financing frameworks. Equalization funds are also necessary to ensure the adequate redistribution of resources across the whole territory to avoid 'leaving any territory behind', paying particular attention to intermediary cities and small towns and promoting more balanced and 'polycentric' urban systems.

- To mobilize national and international **sustainable investments** toward cities and territories, national policies and legal frameworks should be revised. An appropriate range of debt finance options needs to be adapted and made accessible to LRGs, one that considers multiple sources of financing and innovative financial instruments. It is also necessary to adopt vertically aligned NDC investment plans and open or facilitate LRGs' access to climate and green funds.

- Facilities supporting cities in making transformative projects reach **bankability and creditworthiness** standards are essential and require strong backing and leadership to close financing gaps and enhance match-making opportunities, either through specific funds, or connecting cities with potential financiers. The next phase, already in motion, is to support a more diverse set of financial mechanisms that are adapted to the different capacities of cities and territories, such as the upcoming International Municipal Investment Fund, set up by the UN Capital Development Fund (UNCDF) and UCLG with the support of the Global Fund for Cities Development.

- The promise of 'blended finance' can only be fulfilled with the creation of **adequate regulatory frameworks** and with support for LRGs in setting up partnerships with the private sector. These must be mutually beneficial and have clear contractual parameters ensuring that the needs of their citizens come first and that the poor and vulnerable groups are not 'left behind'.

Effective involvement of all spheres of government, civil society and key stakeholders is imperative to strengthen the governance of the SDGs and the localization process

Strong partnerships and the participation of LRGs, civil society, private sector, social partners and academia in SDG implementation, are critical to achieve the 'whole-of-government' and 'whole-of-society' approaches called for by the SDGs. It is also crucial to ensure policy and institutional coherence both internally and externally. Without the active and collaborative involvement of all stakeholders, the SDGs will remain aspirational goals only.

- At the national level, there is much to do in terms of effectively involving LRGs and stakeholders in the **national coordination mechanisms** for the implementation of the SDGs. Limited consultations and uncoordinated decision-making presently hinder the policy coherence necessary to achieve the SDG targets and reduce local ownership.

- Integrated national planning systems are at the core of **functional multilevel governance systems** and need to be revamped to enhance the coordination between national governments, LRGs and local stakeholders. A renewed approach to planning that articulates national strategies with strong local initiatives in active collaboration could recalibrate development policies, facilitate burgeoning local actions and promote institutional innovation. This collaboration needs to be founded on the respect of the principle of subsidiarity.

- As decision-makers, LRGs need to be involved in the definition, implementation and follow-up of NDCs and national strategies for the implementation of the New Urban Agenda. National urban policies (NUPs), adopted (or in the course of being adopted) by more than 92 countries, need to be integrated in national development strategies (NDSs) to take advantage of the cumulative benefits of urbanization and identify **cross-sector synergies to support SDG implementation**.

- **Horizontal cooperation** at the sub-national level (e.g. intra and inter-municipal cooperation) needs adequate governance mechanisms, tools and fiscal policies to foster urban-rural partnerships and reinforce the management of growing metropolitan areas. Coordination will also strengthen interconnections and cooperation between territories for service delivery and key environmental issues that require reinforced and trans-jurisdictional (and often trans-boundary) actions, such as the management of river catchments and environmental resources.

Support the production and dissemination of disaggregated data for monitoring, evaluation and impact measurement of the localization of the global agendas, including the SDGs

- LRG involvement in the global and **national monitoring and reporting processes** on SDG implementation is crucial and should not be limited to ad hoc consultations. The process of Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs) needs improvement, to ensure the fully-fledged participation of LRGs that brings the voice of the territories and local actors to the process.

- Fragmented reporting systems hinder ownership and the institutionalization of the SDGs across different spheres of government. Strengthening **local reporting capacities** and closing the data gap require particular attention and support. National and local capacities to define and collect disaggregated and localized data should be part of SDG localization strategies to ensure that planning processes at all levels are founded on realistic targets and that effective implementation can be monitored, as well as to ensure accountability and citizen follow-up.

- Voluntary Local Reviews (VLRs) contributing to national monitoring and to the global debate, and promoting knowledge-sharing and emulation between LRGs, are opportunities that need specific support and acknowledgment.

A global governance system that brings together local and regional governments and civil society will boost the implementation of the global agendas

- The UN High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF) will need to be reshaped to enhance the participation of different stakeholders, as well as facilitate **true innovation and learning**. The HLPF should be an effective multilateral and multi-stakeholder space for dialogue, exchange and knowledge-sharing in order to reinforce multilateral collaboration and partnerships and ensure the real oversight of commitments, policy agreements and implementation.

- The consolidation of the **Local and Regional Governments Forum** is essential as a critical space for interactions between the LRGs, UN Member States, and the UN system. Furthermore, multilevel dialogues need to embolden the local-global leadership, as proposed in the 'Seville Commitment'.

At the continental level, **LRGs' enhanced involvement in the regional forums** (e.g. Regional Forums on Sustainable Development, co-organized by regional UN Commissions), in multi-stakeholder platforms (e.g. the European platform) and spaces (e.g. urban forums) will enhance policy exchange to foster SDG localization and the active involvement of LRGs in the monitoring of the SDGs and related agendas. ◉

The audience at the Local and Regional Governments' Forum, HLPF, 16 July 2018, New York (photo: UCLG-CGLU/Joel Sheakosk, bit.ly/31UjlHR).

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The Localization of the Global Agendas

How local action is transforming territories and communities

Extracted from the Fifth Report of the Global Observatory on Local Democracy and Decentralization (GOLD V), this African publication demonstrates the positive contribution of cities and local and regional governments in implementing the Agenda 2063 and 2030 Agenda and its Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in African countries, as they face major challenges in addressing changing targets brought about by the pace of demographic growth and rapid urbanization, in an environment of rampant poverty, backlogs in infrastructure and facilities, and increasing demand for employment by a predominantly young population.

First, the report highlights the strong commitment to the implementation of the SDGs and related global agendas at continental, regional and national levels in Africa, and the ongoing efforts to enable a greater local and regional government contribution in the implementation process. An analysis of the overall political, institutional and fiscal environment at the national and local levels, however, reveals that it is only through high-level political support, national reforms and a territorial approach to development, as provided for in the African Charter on the Values and Principles of Decentralization, Local Governance and Local Development adopted in 2014, that enabling environments can be created for local and regional governments to play an active role in the sustainable development process.

Secondly, the report provides a snapshot of the initiatives carried out by local and regional authorities in the different countries and subregions of Africa to localize the SDGs and related global agendas. These locally-driven actions range from initiatives to provide basic services and promote local economic and social development, to actions to preserve ecosystems and biodiversity, water, agriculture and energy, through initiatives to enhance inclusive and sustainable urbanization and capacity for participatory and integrated planning. The report also shows the critical role played by local and regional government associations and networks in supporting the localization of the SDGs across the continent, including building local capacity to foster the alignment of national and local strategies with the SDGs.

Finally, this regional report identifies six key conditions that should be met to enable more effective contribution of African local and regional governments to the implementation of the SDGs and the Agenda 2063: (1) Get the management of urbanization right, (2) Get the enabling environment of LRGs right, (3) Get the financial resources of LRGs right, (4) Get the human capacities of LRGs right), (5) Get multilevel governance collaboration and multi-stakeholder partnership right, and (6) Get the data revolution started.

The GOLD V
Regional Report on Africa