



LOCAL AND REGIONAL GOVERNMENTS


# OUR HABITAT III ACHIEVEMENTS

#Listen2Cities #Habitat3



**GLOBAL  
TASKFORCE**  
OF LOCAL AND REGIONAL  
GOVERNMENTS

2nd  
**WORLD  
ASSEMBLY**  
towards HABITAT III



The **Global Taskforce of Local and Regional Governments** facilitated by UCLG gathers over 30 networks that are active internationally.

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# 01

## TAKING STOCK OF THE HABITAT II AGENDA

### The Vision of Local and Regional Authorities

#### LOCAL AUTHORITIES “OUR CLOSEST PARTNER”

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Habitat II represented an important stage in the relationship of local authorities with UN-Habitat, with the recognition of local authorities as the agency’s “closest partner” for the implementation of the Habitat Agenda. Member States made a strong commitment to support “**effective decentralization and the strengthening of local authorities**” (Habitat II Agenda, paragraphs 177 and 180). The Istanbul Summit Declaration also stressed that national governments play a key role in enabling local authorities to implement the agenda, by providing them with appropriate regulatory frameworks and support. These commitments were confirmed in the Declaration on Cities and other Human Settlements in the New Millennium (Resolution S-25/2, 2001, paragraph 37) and followed up by the adoption of the Guidelines on Decentralization and the Strengthening of Local Authorities (Resolution 21/3) in 2007 and the Guidelines on Access to Basic Services for All (Resolution 22/8) in 2009.

Since the 1990s, decentralization policies and state reforms have led to elected local authorities in the majority of countries across the world. As result of these reforms, **local authorities have taken on increased responsibilities** in the delivery of basic services, urban planning, social policies, and environmental management, among other areas. In a world where more than half of humanity now lives in cities, local authorities have become a vital part of the solution to major contemporary challenges.

However, the commitments to “effective decentralization” made in Istanbul were not fully carried out. Though there has been progress, in many countries decentralization

is still in its early stages, or has only been partially implemented. Structural reforms are necessary to allow decentralization to reach its potential, and for local government to play its full role in development.

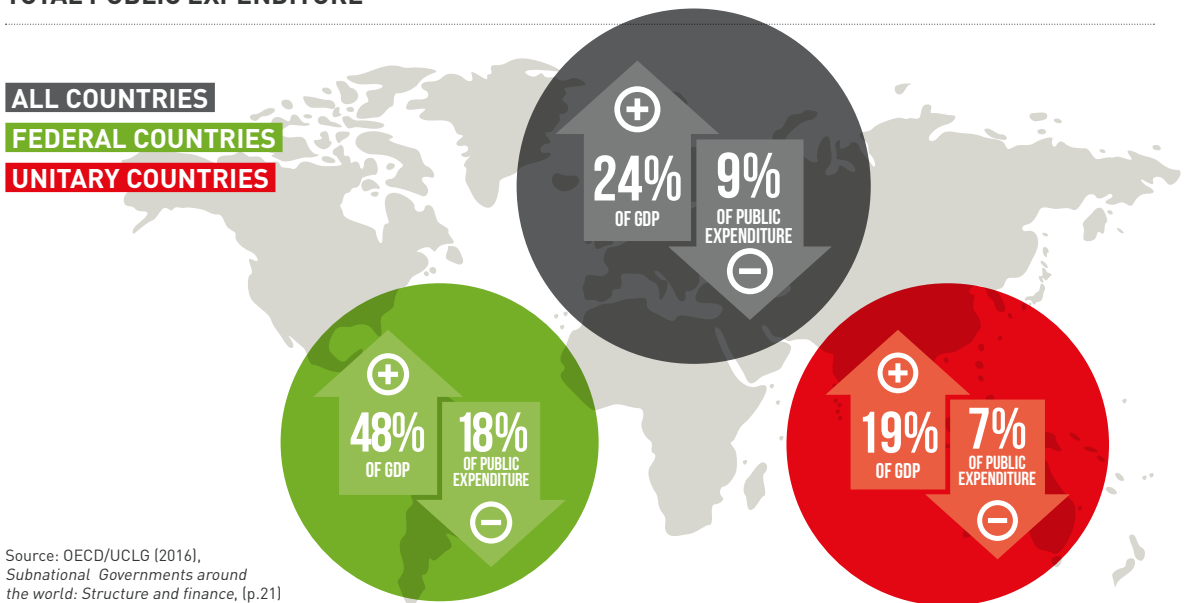
### DEFICITS IN FISCAL DECENTRALIZATION

In most countries, there is a greater decentralization of responsibility than of revenues. In OECD countries, sub-national governments account for around 22% of central government revenues, but 31% of public expenditure (and more than 65% of public investments). In Latin America, local governments collect nearly 12% of central government revenues but account for 19% of expenditure; in Sub-Saharan Africa, they receive around 3% of revenues but account

for 8% of expenditure. There is a striking contrast between high-income countries and most middle- and low-income countries in terms of local governments' share of total public expenditure. These contrasts between countries are even more dramatic if we consider annual local government spending per capita. Over the past decade, on average, they spent US\$3,000-4,000 in the USA and EU27 countries, but only US\$36 in Africa. Problems are being handed to local governments, but not the means to find solutions.

Local governments cannot fulfil their potential to **support urbanization and territorial development** if local governments do not have the necessary powers and resources to meet the demands of the population that elected them.

### SUBNATIONAL GOVERNMENTS' SHARE OF TOTAL PUBLIC EXPENDITURE



Source: OECD/UCLG (2016), *Subnational Governments around the world: Structure and finance*, (p.21)

## DELIVERING SHELTER FOR ALL AND SUSTAINABLE HUMAN SETTLEMENTS

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At Habitat II, Member States committed to promote adequate housing and sustainable human settlements, based on a broad approach that included poverty reduction, the upgrading of informal settlements, improved access to basic services, access to work and environmental protection. Most of these commitments depend directly or indirectly on local governments. On this basis, Member States proposed to strengthen the capacities of, and partnerships with, local authorities and other stakeholders.

What is the situation twenty years on? As global reports, particularly on the MDGs, show, there have been general improvements in poverty reduction and service delivery, particularly in middle-income countries. However, there is evidence of growing inadequacies in service delivery in urban areas in low- and middle-low income countries over the last ten years, especially in informal settlements. Estimated investment needs in infrastructure **require amounts currently allocated to urban investments to be doubled by 2030.**

Basic services and infrastructures should accompany and guide the spatial planning of cities and regions. However, the impact of the shortcomings in basic services and urban infrastructures has been compounded due to other global trends in recent decades, such as inadequate urban planning support and housing policies, as a result of the limited role of the state and a preference for market-driven solutions. In many developing countries, this pro-market and anti-planning turn was associated with the aim of limiting rural-urban migration. It should be noted

that the Habitat II Agenda embraced the promotion of market-driven solutions, whose greatest impact was on housing policies.

A failure to address the urban access issue will have serious repercussions for citizen well-being, environmental sustainability, and economic development. National and local governments need to join forces to mobilize domestic resources and experiment with innovative financing models.




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**Basic services and infrastructures should accompany and guide the spatial planning of cities and regions**

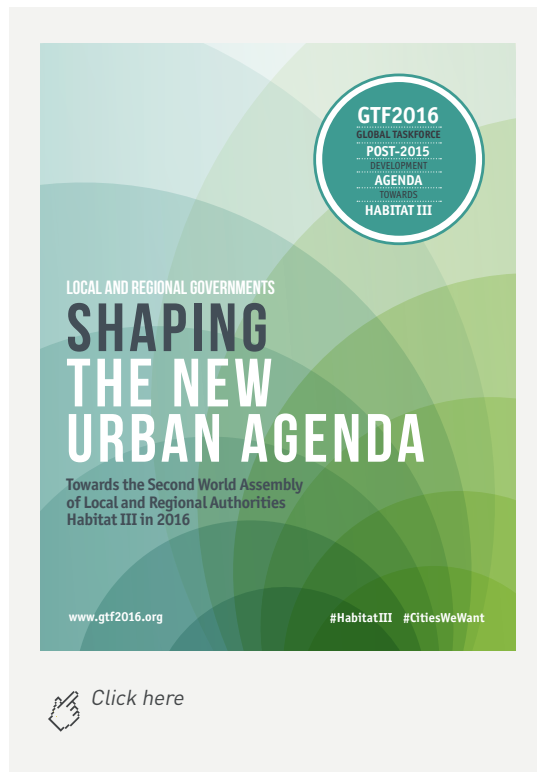
## THE ROLE OF LOCAL AUTHORITIES IN GLOBAL GOVERNANCE

The progress made in 1996 with the recognition of local authorities in the **Habitat II Declaration** was followed, in 2000, by the establishment of the Advisory Committee of United Nations for Local Authorities (UNACLA). In December 2003, Rule 64 (UNGA resolution 58/227) was adopted, which gave local authorities observer status in the Governing Council of UN-Habitat.

Increased collaboration between local authorities and UN-Habitat has included the participation of local governments in World Urban Forums and global advocacy work; for example, through the Global Campaign on Urban Governance in the 2000s, and more recently in the World Urban Campaign. In 1999, **local authorities and UN-Habitat participated in the establishment of Cities Alliance**, a partnership including multilateral institutions, national governments, local authorities and NGOs, with the aim of promoting strategic planning and slum upgrading policies.

Since 2000, the role of local authorities has been recognized by many UN and international summits, including the Millennium Declaration+5, Beijing+10, UCFCC COP 16, the Busan Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation, and Rio+20.

This process occurred in parallel to the strengthening of global and regional networks of local governments and the convergence of three global local government organizations with the formation of United Cities and Local Governments in 2004, as well as the constitution of new



global networks, particularly of regional governments. Most recently, **the launch of the Global Taskforce of Local and Regional Governments** has brought together the majority of international local and regional government networks to work together on global advocacy.

# 02

## PREPCOM I

### First Session of the Preparatory Committee for Habitat III



September 2014  
New York City

**PrepCom I was the first step towards the definition of a shared vision of the New Urban Agenda.**

**At the meeting, the Global Taskforce set out the hopes and the expectations of local and regional governments in terms of their role in the definition of the New Urban Agenda and future global governance mechanisms.**

#### **TERRITORIAL GOVERNMENTS: KEY PARTNERS FOR HABITAT AND THE POST-2015 AGENDA**

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During the preparation and outcomes of Habitat II, local governments were recognized as a key partner of UN-Habitat in the implementation of the Habitat Agenda. Habitat II was also an important step forward in recognizing the relevance of the networks of local authorities and contributing towards greater collaboration among them. The Rio+20 outcome document acknowledged local governments as governmental stakeholders and signaled the relevance of their strong involvement in the Sustainability Agenda. Likewise, the ongoing post-2015 process, notably the recommendations of the HLP and the Open Working Group, as well as key international policy positions (from the Commonwealth, SIDS and Communications of the European Union), have highlighted



the important role of local and regional governments, in particular that of cities, in sustainable development. Presently, the members of the Global Taskforce confirm their belief that a new, broad partnership must be erected, based on a common understanding of our shared humanity, mutual respect and mutual benefit. Mindful of the challenges that many parts of the world are facing with increased violence, in particular in the Middle East, we would like to call for far-reaching agreements based on universal commitments.

## **TRANSFORMATIVE POTENTIAL OF URBANIZATION**

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Habitat III will take place at a time when the transformative potential of urbanization is being broadly acknowledged. This is also a time when we face unprecedented global challenges such as migration shifts and consumption patterns, which will need to be tackled at territorial level. The Habitat III process leading up to the Conference should be an opportunity to strengthen existing partnerships and explore mechanisms that will enhance the participation of all actors, in particular local and regional governments, in the policy and decision-making mechanisms that will lead to the Habitat III and Sustainable Development Agendas.

Local and regional governments and their associations emphasize the need to draw a clear picture of the results, achievements and unfinished issues of the Habitat II Agenda, paying particular attention to the implementation of decentralization processes around the world, the state of access to basic services, the financing of sub-national authorities and infrastructures, and the development of territorial cohesion.

## **HABITAT III FUNDAMENTAL TO THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE SUSTAINABILITY AGENDA**

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The Habitat III outcomes need to be closely intertwined with the Post-2015 Agenda, as they will generate the basis for its localization and implementation on the ground. Considering that Habitat III will be the first conference taking place after the UN Summit on the Post-2015 Agenda Resolutions, the members of the Global Taskforce would like to stress the need to pay special attention to the means of implementation of specific targets and indicators for cities and human settlements. Local and regional authorities would like to further focus on the localization of the Post-2015 Development Agenda, so that they have the capacities to achieve the goals that relate directly to the responsibility of the local level.

Acknowledging that local and regional governments are not the only actors, it will be vital to ensure the full involvement of this constituency to foster the political will and innovation necessary to face common challenges and achieve the type of progress that leaves no one behind.

The full involvement of local and regional authorities as policy developers and not simply implementers will enable the creation of an inclusive Habitat III Agenda as well as the achievement of sustainable urban development in the future.

As inheritors of the First Assembly of Local Authorities organized in Istanbul during Habitat II, local and regional leaders and their networks see the organization of the representation of local and regional authorities at the Conference, and their contribution to defining the key recommendations, as an important mandate.

## KEY POLICY AREAS

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### TERRITORIAL COHESION

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Local and regional governments and their associations would like to emphasize the need for a territorial approach as being crucial to the New Urban Agenda, and stress how urbanization can contribute to national development. The territorial focus should take into account the rural-urban continuum as well as the important role of peripheral areas, intermediary cities and intermediary levels of governments. Local and regional governments will promote efficient and inclusive land-use planning as a mainspring for implementing sustainable urbanization.

### LOCAL AND MULTI-LEVEL GOVERNANCE

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Managing a rapidly urbanizing world will necessitate reinforcing local governance and improving collaboration between the different levels of government (national, regional, local). The promotion of public space policies, strategic urban and regional planning, and acknowledging the opportunities and challenges of metropolization and cohesion among territories will be instrumental. A clear division of responsibilities between the different levels of governance based on self-government and the principle of subsidiarity will be of great importance to achieving a sound agenda.

In this respect, local data production and mining, as well as access to local statistics and the definition of dedicated indicators, will



be key to inducing the evaluation, monitoring and efficiency of development policies and fostering innovation.

### CITIZENS AT THE CENTER OF GOVERNANCE

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Strengthening mechanisms to enable the genuine participation of the population in the co-production of public services and urban planning, the evaluation of public policies and decision-making, and in ensuring the accountability of governments at all levels, and including e-solutions, will be essential. Increased accountability and innovative formats of governance will be a fundamental change that should be factored into the outcome of Habitat III. The members of the Global Taskforce call for a Habitat III Agenda that is based on equality and accountability from the bottom up.

### CULTURE AS A DRIVER AND ENABLER OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

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Sustainable urban development needs to explicitly acknowledge the role of culture. A people-centered society needs to promote heritage, creativity, diversity and the

transmission of knowledge. There is no future without culture: cities need vitality, meaning, identity and innovation, and citizens need to widen their freedoms. This is why members of the Global Taskforce call for a Habitat III Agenda that makes culture an operational dimension of sustainable urban development.

### **INNOVATION AND LOCAL ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT**

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The agenda will need to support the efforts of cities to develop an enabling environment for economic development, promoting local enterprises and cooperatives as engines of growth, as well as corporate social responsibilities, decent and inclusive job opportunities, and connecting local initiatives with markets at the local, national and international scale. Further, it should foster resilience, solidarity, innovation, culture and build creative solutions, including social economic strategies and mechanisms based on solidarity – with a multiplier effect across the nation. This is particularly the case when social cohesion is threatened by excessive income and wealth concentration and growing urban inequalities, as reflected in the lack of affordable housing and gated communities with inadequate access to basic services and infrastructure.

Furthermore, local and regional governments will need to see their capacities strengthened to be able to better integrate the informal sector's contribution to local development, define and implement local economic policies and design strategies to support local

initiatives, especially those tackling income inequalities, support local policies, mobilize adequate and diversified resources, and create economic development structures, programmes and services involving community partners.

### **ADDRESSING CLIMATE CHANGE AND PROMOTING RESILIENCE**

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Climate change and disaster risk. We must move away from the connection between development and higher living standards and increased fossil fuel use and environmental degradation, and build resilience in each urban center to address the direct and indirect impacts of climate change. Local governments are committed promoting sustainable development that is mindful of the earth's capacity to sustain life.




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**The territorial focus should take into account the rural-urban continuum as well as the important role of peripheral areas, intermediary cities and intermediary levels of governments.**

## **ADEQUATE FINANCING AT TERRITORIAL LEVEL**

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There is widespread under-investment in basic services and infrastructures in urban and rural areas and an increasing gap between the responsibilities transferred to local governments and their revenues.

National and local governments need to join forces to mobilize domestic resources, create an enabling environment for long-term investment, adopt strong regulations against fiscal evasion, foster the creditworthiness of local and regional authorities, enable the hybridization of their resources and their access to financial markets, and experiment with innovative financing models and alliances.

Structural reforms are needed in national and international financial systems to bridge these gaps and allow decentralization to meet expectations. The localization of resources is instrumental and must be part of financial engineering and resource management capabilities to foster the modernization of local administrations, as well as to reduce costs and increase efficiency and accountability, implement fiscal autonomy and cooperation processes and promote a renewed official development assistance to better attend local and regional needs.

## **AN ORGANIZED CONSTITUENCY READY TO CONTRIBUTE**

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In order to articulate the voice of local and regional authorities and their networks more strongly towards Habitat III, and to properly reflect the great changes that have taken place since 1996, members of the Global Taskforce express the will to develop an intensive consultation process among constituency members, which will culminate in the Second World Assembly of Local and Regional Governments. This will enable the development of action plans at local level.

## **PEER-TO-PEER LEARNING AND DECENTRALIZED COOPERATION**

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Decentralized cooperation, peer-to-peer learning, municipal international cooperation and other similar means have been helping to enhance and build the capacity of local governments in the global south. These must evolve into a more structured and systematic approach to support counterparts from all over the world to build resilient cities, fight climate change, reduce poverty, support democracy and local governance, and provide basic service delivery to the people.

Local and regional networks gathered as part of the Global Taskforce reiterate their willingness to work with the international community towards a sustainable, fair and equitable future for all.



## 03

## PREPCOM II

Second Session  
of the Preparatory  
Committee for  
Habitat III

April 2015  
Nairobi

**PrepCom II took place in Nairobi, Kenya from 14 to 16 April, followed by the 25th Governing Council of UN-Habitat (17-23 April), also in Nairobi.**

**At PrepCom II the Global Taskforce called for the spirit of Istanbul to be recovered, for participation and community empowerment, and for clear means of implementation. It also called on Member States to ensure the far-reaching participation of local authorities in the definition of the outcome document of Habitat III by acknowledging the specific accreditation of local authorities through Associations of Local Authorities with consultative status to ECOSOC.**

The Global Taskforce is convinced that Habitat III will be a key mechanism to implement the Post-2015 Agenda at local level and address specific issues related to human settlements that will be the basis for a sustainable future.

### **RECALLING THE HABITAT II CONSENSUS**

Members of the Global Taskforce would like to recall the important agreement achieved by Member States in 1996 and to applaud their visionary statements recalling some of the many references of the Habitat Agenda:

- The Habitat Agenda recognized local authorities as the **“closest partner”** and **“essential”** in the implementation of the Habitat Agenda (Istanbul Declaration paragraph 12).

- Furthermore, Art. 102 of the Habitat Agenda already stated that “The municipal level of government can be an effective partner in making human settlements viable, equitable and sustainable, since its level of administration is closest to the people. Governments must recognize the **essential role of local authorities in providing services and empowering people**”.
- While Art. 56 mentioned that **local authorities are on the front line** in achieving the goals of Habitat II, progress will depend to a large degree on local authorities, civic engagement and the forging of partnerships at all levels of government.
- In 1996, Member States recognized that sustainable human settlements could be achieved through the **effective decentralization** of responsibilities, policy management, decision-making capacities and sufficient resources, including the capacity to collect revenues, to local authorities, as closest to and most representative of their constituencies (Art. 177).
- Early references to the impact of urbanization also recognized the need for strong local governments: “In the process of urbanization, policies and programmes for the sustainable development of human settlements in both rural and urban areas require **strong sub-national governmental institutions** working in partnership with all interested parties” (Art. 104).
- Art. 180 (b) called signatories of the Habitat Agenda to “review and revise, as appropriate, legislation to **increase local autonomy and participation** in decision-making, implementation, and resource mobilization and use, especially with respect to human, technical and financial resources and local enterprise development, within the overall framework of a national, social, economic and environmental strategy, and encourage the participation of the inhabitants in decision-making regarding their cities, neighborhoods or dwellings”.
- Art. 180 (d) also requested government support for “local authorities reviewing **revenue-generating** mechanisms”.
- Art. 180 (g) further called to “enhance the performance of local authorities by undertaking **data collection**, disaggregated by gender, age and income, and comparative analyses of, and by disseminating information on innovative practices in, the delivery, operation and maintenance of public goods and services, in providing for the needs of their populations and exploiting the fiscal and other potential of their cities”.
- Art. 180 (h) further encouraged the “institutionalization of broad-based **participation**, including consultative mechanisms, in decision-making and management processes at the local level”.
- Art. 180 (j) also called for promoting “policy dialogue among **all levels of government** and the private and community sectors and other representatives of civil society to improve planning and implementation”.
- And, very importantly, Art. 180 (m) also requested to “reinforce measures to **eradicate corruption and ensure greater transparency**, efficiency, accountability, responsiveness and community

participation in the management of local resources”.

- Finally, Articles 185 and 186 particularly encourage paying special attention to “the management and development of **metropolitan areas** and mega-cities [which] face unique problems caused by the size and complexity of their tasks and responsibilities”.

## RECOVERING THE SPIRIT OF ISTANBUL

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Building on the above agreed language, the associations and networks of local and regional governments would like to call for Member States to reinstate the spirit of Istanbul and truly “intensify their cooperation with associations and networks of local authorities, non-governmental organizations, voluntary groups and community associations, and the private and cooperative sectors, in adequate shelter and sustainable human settlements development” (Art. 211 (d) of the Habitat Agenda).

In this light, the Global Taskforce would like to highlight the following references for further reference during the upcoming negotiations:

- Recalling **General Assembly Resolution 55/194 of 20 December 2000** and in particular part III, entitled “Arrangements regarding accreditation of Habitat Agenda partners to the special session”;
- Recalling **General Assembly Resolution 32/162 of 19 December 1977**, entitled “Institutional arrangements for international cooperation in the field of human settlements”, and in particular part VIII, “Cooperation with organizations outside the United Nations system”;
- Bearing in mind **paragraph 21 of General Assembly Resolution 51/177 of 16 December 1996**, in which the Assembly requested the Commission on Human Settlements to review its working methods in order to involve the representatives of local authorities or international associations of local authorities, as appropriate, and the relevant civil society actors, in its work, taking into account the rules and procedures of the Commission on Human Settlements and the relevant provisions of the Economic and Social Council Resolution 1996/31 of 25 July 1996;
- Recalling the **General Assembly Resolution 66/288 of 11 September 2012** endorsing the outcome document of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, entitled “The future we want”, in which paragraph 42 reaffirms the key role of government and legislative bodies in promoting sustainable development, further acknowledging the “efforts and progress made at the local and sub-national levels, and recognize[s] the important role that such authorities and communities can play in implementing sustainable development”;
- Recalling **General Assembly Resolution 50/100 of 20 December 1995** which, inter alia, endorsed the rules of procedure for the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II) in Istanbul, Turkey, from 3 to 14 June 1996, and particularly Rules 62 and 63, on the participation of designated representatives of local authorities and accredited non-governmental organizations in the deliberations of Habitat II;

- Bearing in mind that **Article 76 of the “The future we want”** document further recognizes that “effective governance at the local, sub-national, national, regional and global levels representing the voices and interests of all is critical for advancing sustainable development”, underlining the need for more coherent and integrated planning and decision making at the appropriate level”; further underscoring “the importance of inter-linkages among key issues and challenges and the need for a systematic approach to them at all relevant levels”;
- Recalling the **Economic and Social Council Resolution E/RES/2014/30 of 25 July 2014** on “Human settlements”, in which Article 4 reiterates “its invitation to Governments to further enhance inclusive and sustainable urbanization and the role of local authorities and to consider the environmentally sustainable, socially inclusive and economically productive roles of cities and human settlements in their consideration of the Post-2015 Development Agenda”.
- Recalling the **decisions in other recent processes**, including climate change (paragraph 7 of Dec1/CP16 in 2010 and paragraph 5b of Dec1/CP19), disaster risk reduction (paragraph 16d of HFA 2005-2015 and paragraph 17f of Sendai 2015-2030) and the Convention on Biodiversity (Decision IX/28 in 2008, Decision X/22 in 2010 Nagoya 10 Year Action Plan) that all recognize the specific role of local and regional authorities.

## The Global Taskforce would like to put forward the following ideas to be included in the proposals that Member States bring into the Habitat III language:

### PARTICIPATION AND COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT

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Local and regional governments would also like to recall the importance of empowering citizens and community organizations to play their full part in shaping the new urban agenda.

Cities are already the primary engines of economic growth and sustainable development. Yet, cities and their surrounding territories can be home to important inequalities, exclusion, extreme deprivation and environmental degradation.

In the face of this reality, and the need to counter its negative trends, we are taking on the challenge of building a sustainable model of urban life in order to respond to new forms of urbanization (megacities, corridors, metropolises, intermediary cities, cities in small states and towns), in harmony with their rural surroundings. We are doing this based on the principles of human rights for all inhabitants, solidarity, freedom, equity, dignity, and social justice, and founded in the respect for different urban cultures promoting heritage, creativity and diversity, gender equality and balance between the urban and the rural. This will only be possible through long-term partnerships with civil society and between all spheres of government.

The New Urban Agenda needs to be built at the nearest public governance authority to the people concerned by the problem. It should



further promote a new concept of the city, understood as a collective common good, with real means for public management, and paying particular attention to the empowerment of women through innovative and inclusive governance mechanisms involving all stakeholders and spheres of government.

## MEANS OF IMPLEMENTATION

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Habitat III will be fundamental to the implementation of the Sustainability Agenda. The Habitat III outcomes need to be closely intertwined with the Post-2015 Agenda, as they will generate the basis for its localization and implementation on the ground.

Considering that Habitat III will be the first conference taking place after the UN Summit on the Post-2015 Agenda Resolutions, the members of the Global Taskforce would like to stress the need to pay special attention to the means of implementation of specific targets and indicators for cities and human settlements.

In this regard, we would like to recall the role of the 3rd International Conference on Financing for Development, where investment in long-term infrastructures are currently under discussion, and COP 21, where the urban challenges should be given stronger attention and resources should be mobilized for urban infrastructure adaptation and mitigation.

Local and regional authorities would also like to focus on the localization of the Post-2015 Development Agenda. To support these agendas, we will have to work together to develop an enabling institutional environment, including National Urban Policies based on the principle of equal partnership and subsidiarity, the mobilization of appropriate resources and the strengthening of capacities at national and local levels.

**The Global Taskforce would therefore like to call on Member States to provide the mechanisms to ensure the far-reaching participation of local authorities in the definition of the outcome document of Habitat III by acknowledging specific accreditation for local authorities through associations of local authorities with consultative status within ECOSOC.**

The full involvement of local and regional authorities as policy developers, and not simply as implementers, will enable the creation of an inclusive Habitat III Agenda, as well as the achievement of sustainable urban development in the future.

As the inheritors of the First Assembly of Local Authorities, organized in Istanbul during Habitat II, local and regional leaders and their networks see the organization of the representation of local and regional authorities at the Conference, and their contribution to defining the key recommendations, as an important mandate.

Local and regional governments are committed to organizing the Second World Assembly of Local and Regional Governments in 2016 and to taking on our role as the “closest partner” of the UN in the definition and implementation of the Habitat III Agenda. We are also committed to being an active partner in the future Global Partnership for Sustainable Development, called for by the UN for the implementation of the SDGs.

# 04

## KEY RECOMMENDATIONS FOR HABITAT III

**In April 2015, the local and regional government networks of the Global Taskforce finalized a set of key principles that should underpin the Habitat III process, as well as seven policy recommendations that should act as the “cornerstones” of the New Urban Agenda.**

The Global Taskforce called for the New Urban Agenda to recover the spirit of Habitat II, particularly with regard to its commitment to decentralization and its recognition of local authorities as the “closest partner” in the implementation of the agenda. It also reiterated its call for a single, universal agenda that links up with other major international agendas, including the SDGs and the Paris Climate Agreement.

The document also calls for “a seat at the global table” for local and regional governments in recognition of their legitimacy as part of the state and their role in sustainable development.



April 2015



## THE SEVEN POLICY CORNERSTONES OF THE GLOBAL TASKFORCE:

### 01

Make local and regional governments stronger and more accountable to drive inclusive and sustainable development.

### 02

Harness strategic planning to ensure a strong vision for the development of cities and human settlements.

### 03

Renew the social contract, putting the Right to the City at the heart of the New Urban Agenda.

### 04

Unlock the potential of territories to promote sustainable local economic and environmental policies and protect our planet.

### 05

Rethink local financing systems to make cities sustainable.

### 06

Improve local and regional governments' capacities in risk and crisis management.

### 07

Foster the spirit of solidarity through decentralized cooperation.



From 15-17 May 2016, over 100 representatives of sub-national governments from around the world gathered at the Habitat III Hearings for Local Authorities in New York to call for UN Member States to listen to their recommendations for the New Urban Agenda.

The Local Authorities Hearings coincided with the launch of the #Listen2Cities social media campaign and the first session of the Second World Assembly of Local and Regional Governments.

# 05

## LOCAL AUTHORITIES HEARINGS



May 2016  
New York City

**From 15-17 May 2016, over 100 representatives of sub-national governments from around the world gathered at the UN headquarters in New York to share our vision for the New Urban Agenda and call for our recommendations to be heeded at Habitat III.**

The delegation kicked off on 15 May with the first session of the **Second World Assembly of Local and Regional Governments**, convened by the Global Taskforce. The Second World Assembly is the mechanism through which the local and regional government constituency will make its joint inputs to the Habitat III process. This session in New York was a historic occasion, marking the first such meeting since the First Assembly at the Habitat II Conference in Istanbul twenty years ago.

In New York, the Assembly agreed on the **recommendations of local and regional governments, in response to the Zero Draft of the New Urban Agenda**. These recommendations are based on the ongoing international dialogue and collaboration between local and regional governments on sustainable urban development. Issues highlighted by elected local leaders at the Assembly included: the role of metropolitan areas, intermediary cities and small towns and rural areas in the agenda; the impact of migration in cities; the role of culture in sustainable development; the right to the city, the need to strengthen municipal finances, the links between the New Urban Agenda and the SDGs, and the transformative potential of decentralization and local democracy.



## KEY PROPOSALS

### IMPLEMENTATION MECHANISMS

We call on Member States, the UN and international institutions, civil society and professionals to build a common road map with local and regional authorities, building on existing initiatives and linked with the 2030, Climate, AAAA and Sendai Agendas, to ensure implementation at local, national and global levels. Concretely we propose:

#### 01

**SDG 11 as a part of Habitat III:** the New Urban Agenda should foster the implementation and monitoring of SDG 11 and the urban dimension of the targets of all SDGs. Specific instruments should be developed to ensure this.

#### 02

**Financing the New Urban Agenda by calling for a Global Partnership for Localizing the Financing of Inclusive and Sustainable Development:** the means of implementation set out in the 2030 Agenda, the Paris Agreement and the Sendai Framework need to be linked with the enhancement of new financial mechanisms as set out in the AAAA, including the Global Infrastructure Forum, to address urban investments more directly

and set a country implementation framework serving the development of the whole range of financing options for local authorities, including domestic capital markets.

#### 03

**Global Fund for Basic Services:** the creation of a Global Fund for basic service provision that will guarantee access to and the public governance of essential services such as water, sanitation and big infrastructure should be a long-term objective.

#### 04

**Global Observatory on Local Finance:** the creation of a Global Observatory on Local Finance, set up by local government



**The recommendations are based on the ongoing international dialogue and collaboration between local and regional governments on sustainable urban development.**

associations, would offer a concrete view of the effectiveness of the decentralization process and of the real capacities of local governments to finance development.

## 05

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**Climate financing:** climate financial mechanisms, building on the Paris Agreements, need to be made accessible to local authorities. A sub-national window should be included in the Global Climate Fund to enable cities to receive adaptation and mitigation financing directly or through domestic local financing institutions.

## 06

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**Recognize Social and Solidarity Economy and Finance (SSEF):** historically, the social and solidarity economy and finance constitute a source of resilience to the recurrent systemic crises; they are conducive to partnerships that will bring about transformational changes in urban development patterns. The creation of enabling environments (especially in terms of regulations and knowledge sharing) should be included in the New Urban Agenda.



### GOVERNANCE RECOMMENDATIONS

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We recognize the **Second World Assembly of Local and Regional Governments**, convened by the Global Taskforce of Local and Regional Governments, as the most inclusive political representation mechanism of our constituency. We therefore call for the outcome document of Habitat III to acknowledge these mechanisms as key partners in the agenda. Specifically, we propose:

## 07

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**A specific status for local and sub-national authorities:** we call on Member States to provide our constituency with a status beyond the "observer" status established by Rule 64 of the rule of procedures of the UN Habitat Governing Council. We call for a special status for local authorities that will allow us to play our full role as active partners both at the HABITAT III Conference and in the overall UN System.

# 08

**Enhancement of political dialogue:** this could include the creation of a liaison unit of elected local representatives and a committee of local and regional governments linked with ECOSOC, building on existing mechanisms such as UNACLA.

# 09

**Multi-stakeholder collaboration:** we wish to contribute to the creation of the International Multistakeholder Panel on Sustainable Urbanization “to generate evidence-based and practical guidance for the implementation of the New Urban Agenda and the urban dimension of the Sustainable Development Goals” and call for local and regional governments to be included in the panel.

# 10

**Tripartite governance of implementation agency:** the UN agency dealing with local development and urban issues should bring on board non-Member State stakeholders, following the model of the International Labour Organization.

# 11

**Decade of sustainable urbanization:** we join the call of other Habitat partners for a decade of sustainable urbanization, building on a common action agenda.



UN Photo: UN/Eskinder Dabebe

 Habitat III Hearings for Local Authorities

# 06

## STATEMENT OF LOCAL AND REGIONAL GOVERNMENTS AT THE CIVIL SOCIETY HEARINGS

Intergovernmental  
Negotiations for  
Habitat III



June 2016  
New York City



*"Every now and then a group of people are given the opportunity to leave a legacy.*

*A moment when something can be built to last; something that can renew the foundations of our society.*

*We all, and you in particular, honorable delegates, are in that position.*

*The outcome document of Habitat III can determine the future of our cities and the relationship between cities and their surroundings for the next 20 years. It has the potential to provide the bases for the world we want.*

*This, honorable colleagues, dear friends, cannot be done with agreed language only and with the structures that we know today.*

*Local and sub-national authorities, as well as the civil society partners, stakeholders and the communities we represent, consider that there are four core areas to take into account if a transformative agenda is to be possible; an agenda that will make us ready for whatever the future and our rapidly changing world might bring."*



## 01

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### **New urban governance needs to be geared towards combating inequality and promoting socio-economic inclusion**

ensuring access to basic services, decent housing and allowing every inhabitant, regardless of their status, to participate in decision making and be integrated through productive, decent opportunities. This new urban governance must protect common public goods and ensure the fair distribution of material, social, political and cultural resources. These are the building blocks of a renewed social contract that will allow our cities and territories to be co-created and seen as a shared responsibility of all.

## 02

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**Territorial and cohesion policies as well as solidarity** and enhanced metropolitan governance should be the backbone of national urban policies that also support intermediary cities to ensure balanced urban development. We must foster a rural-urban continuum that addresses food security, urban and territorial planning, economic development, climate change and environmental sustainability, promoting mobility policies and connections that ensure territorial development while preserving cultural heritage.

## 03

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### **The enhancement of the capacities and empowerment of all actors should be the guiding principle of the Habitat Agenda.**

This is what will make it actionable. Local authorities, but also civil society, in particular women, young people, the elderly, migrants, the displaced and indigenous communities, need to be empowered. Appropriate legal frameworks need to be developed to ensure that decisions are taken at the sphere closest to the group they affect. The principle of subsidiarity is broadly acknowledged in the International Guidelines on Decentralization that have been adopted by the Governing Council of UN-Habitat.




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**Renewed financial policies that enhance local taxation, ensure adequate fiscal transfers and access to responsible borrowing will be instrumental for healthy territories in the future. National and international frameworks should support the efforts of local governments to be inclusive, transparent and accountable.**

## 4

We need to create an appropriate space for **enhanced partnerships** between local governments (big and small) and national governments, civil society and the international community. These should be characterized by inclusive consultations and decision-making processes. The international community must not see cities and territories as mere implementers; it must harness their experiences and roles. There is currently no single mechanism that answers this challenge. This is why we are convinced the Habitat III outcome document needs to provide a good framework for governments at national level to define domestic multi-level mechanisms according to their circumstances. It should also agree on new mechanisms to enhance decision making at global level that recognize local government as distinct stakeholder.



**Enabling conditions need to be created to ensure that local government professionals are adequately trained, considered and rewarded to guarantee accountable and well-performing institutions.**



It would be a missed opportunity not to address these issues in a bold and universal manner, sharing responsibilities and rights.

Please count on our constituency as an ally both at national and global level to foster a transformation towards fairer, equalitarian, inclusive and sustainable development for all. We believe the Habitat III Agenda is critical to creating the conditions that will allow us to achieve the international agendas already agreed upon, in particular the Paris Agreement and the 2030 Agenda, given that most of the SDGs and climate change targets require implementation at sub-national and, in particular, city level.

Finally, let me affirm that local authorities support all comments made by the constituencies represented in the Global Assembly of Partners.

## 06

# STATEMENT OF LOCAL AND REGIONAL GOVERNMENTS ON THE REVISED HABITAT III ZERO DRAFT

Informal  
Intergovernmental  
Meetings in Preparation  
for Habitat III



June 2016  
New York City



**(extract)**

*"We believe we need to be able to go further and would like to emphasize three key components of this New Urban Agenda, necessary not only to face the new reality of an urbanizing world but also to achieve the ambitious goals of the 2030 Agenda.*

*Firstly, we will need to be daring in the renewal of the social contract. There is a clear call from citizens to the different spheres of governments, which in our view is best captured in the notion of the Right to the City.*

*Secondly, we will need to address the great challenges of financing the new urban reality. Infrastructures will need to ensure a territorial approach the urban-rural continuum and metropolitan areas will require new forms of financing. Business as usual will not suffice.*

*Finally, we will need to address the renewal of governance at local, national and international level. Missing this opportunity to involve all actors and spheres of government would mean missing out on a truly transformative agenda that can support the development agenda in general.*

*We therefore ask you, once again, to be brave and bold. To try to go beyond current national realities, which might limit the future societies we would like to shape."*

# 08

## PREPCOM III

### Second Session of the Preparatory Committee for Habitat III



June 2016  
New York City

**The third and final Preparatory Meeting for Habitat III, or PrepCom III, took place in Surabaya, Indonesia, from 25 to 27 July 2016.**

PrepCom III dealt with the finalization of the draft outcome document to be adopted in Quito. The Global Taskforce ensured the presence of local governments at the event in order to advocate for the inclusion of our recommendations in the New Urban Agenda.

#### STATEMENT OF LOCAL AND REGIONAL GOVERNMENTS AT THE OPENING PLENARY OF PREPCOM III

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*"The Global Taskforce welcomes the new draft of the New Urban Agenda released on the 18th of July.*

*We particularly welcome the increased recognition of the roles that local and subnational governments play in the different aspects of the agenda. The Habitat II Conference, twenty years ago, was ahead of its time in acknowledging local authorities as the "main partners" in the implementation of the Urban Agenda, and in its recognition of the transformative potential of decentralization.*

*Empowered local governments will be essential to the successful implementation of the Agenda on the ground. That's why it's vital that the reference to decentralization based on the principle of subsidiarity is maintained going forward.*

*We are also pleased to see that the reference to the Right to the City has been maintained. I would like to assure you that local and regional governments will continue to take the lead in exploring how to make this right a reality in our cities and territories.*

*We are pleased to see that the need to improve local government capacities in financing, management, planning, human resources and data collection has been recognized so explicitly in the latest draft. However, we would like to emphasize four key components needed in this New Urban Agenda.*

*First, we must be daring on the renewal of the social contract; there is a clear call from citizens which, in our view, is best captured in the notion of the right to the city.*

*Second, we must address the great challenges of financing the new urban reality. Business as usual will not work to create the infrastructure we need in our metropolitan areas and intermediary cities over the coming decades.*

*Third, we must be prepared to rapidly change track to sustainability of our cities in the way we plan our infrastructure, deliver our services, consume our resources and produce our energy.*

*Finally, and most importantly, we will need to address the renewal of governance. The current text fails to make the paradigm shift necessary on multilevel and urban governance that is necessary for a truly transformative agenda.*

*I would urge you to consider the scale of the challenges we face: in planning for the rapid growth cities of the global south, in the need for a more sustainable consumption and production pattern cities in the North and South, in the existential threat of climate change, in the call of citizens for a new relationship with the state, in the growth of inequalities, in global migration.*

*Let's be bold and ambitious and use the Habitat Agenda to renew local democracy, increase accountability, practice sustainable lifestyles and strengthen participatory governance across the world."*

# 09

## SECOND WORLD ASSEMBLY OF LOCAL AND REGIONAL GOVERNMENTS



October 2016  
Quito

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The Third United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development (Habitat III) took place in Quito, Ecuador, from 17-20 October 2016.





**The main objective of the conference was to reinvigorate the global commitment to sustainable urban development, focusing on the implementation of a “New Urban Agenda”.**

*On 16 October, the Second World Assembly of Local and Regional Governments met to deliver the joint statement of local and regional leaders to the conference. In the statement, they celebrated the adoption of the New Urban Agenda and committed to play their part in its implementation.*





### **Statement of the Second World Assembly of Local and Regional Governments to the Third UN Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development - Habitat III**

*We, local and regional governments from across the globe, representing the populations of metropolises, peripheral cities, intermediary cities, regions, rural areas, and small municipalities, are gathered at the Second World Assembly of Local and Regional Governments, convened by the Global Taskforce of Local and Regional Governments and our local government associations, for the Third UN Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development (Habitat III) to:*



## **CELEBRATE:**

### **01**

The adoption of the “**Quito Declaration on Sustainable Cities and Human Settlements for All**” by Member States of the UN to set global standards of achievement in sustainable urban development.

### **02**

The reference to the contributions of sub-national and local governments to the **Quito Declaration**, in particular the reference to the **World Assembly of Local and Regional Governments** in paragraph 8.

### **03**

The recognition of “the importance of continuing to engage in the **follow-up and review** of the New Urban Agenda with sub-national and local governments associations represented at the World Assembly of Local and Regional Governments” in paragraph 169.

### **04**

The commitment of Member States to launch a **2 year process** until September 2018 that mandates the UN Secretary General and UN General Assembly to conduct consultations, dialogues and analysis and agree on the institutional framework of the follow-up and review of the New Urban Agenda in paragraphs 171-172.


### **05**

The Quito Declaration’s recognition that the **New Urban Agenda must contribute to the implementation and localization of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development** in an





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 **Session on local and regional governments' response to the New Urban Agenda** - World Assembly of Local and Regional Governments in Quito

integrated manner, and to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and targets, including SDG 11 of making cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient, and sustainable, in paragraph 9.

## 06

The landmark inclusion of a reference to the **Right to the City** as part of a shared vision of “cities for all” in paragraph 11 of the Quito Declaration, as well as the recognition of many of the core principles of the Right to the City in the text.

## 07

The commitment of Member States to ensure appropriate fiscal, political and administrative **decentralization** based on the principle of **subsidiarity** in paragraph 89.

## 08

The commitment of Member States to **strengthen the capacities of local governments** to implement effective **multi-level governance** across administrative borders, and to ensure reliable financing mechanisms in metropolitan areas in paragraph 90.

## 09

The commitment of Member States to promote participatory policy and planning approaches rooted in new forms of **direct partnership** between civil society and governments at all levels in paragraph 92.

## 10

The commitment of Member States to “take measures to **promote women’s full and effective participation and equal rights** in all fields and in leadership at all levels of decision-making, including in local governments” in paragraph 90.

## 11

The Quito Declaration’s reference to the importance of planning and “**an integrated urban and territorial approach**” to encourage urban-rural interactions and connectivity in paragraph 50.

## 12

The commitment of Member States to **expand decentralized and city-to-city cooperation** to contribute to sustainable urban development in paragraph 146.

## COMMIT TO:

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### 01

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Lead local action for global sustainability by **localizing** international policy agendas and working to raise awareness of, implement and monitor the New Urban Agenda, the SDGs, and other global agendas in our cities and territories.

### 02

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Adopt an **integrated territorial approach** to sustainable development that recognizes the continuum of urban-rural linkages and promotes territorial cohesion.

### 03

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Govern in partnership, working towards the effective guarantee of the **Right to the City** for all in our cities and territories, ensuring the right to housing and sharing and protecting the **commons**.

### 04

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Foster **inclusive economic development** and decent jobs with a particular emphasis on the social and solidarity economies.

### 05

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Move towards sustainable production and consumption patterns, including the circular economy, and act to mitigate and adapt to **climate change** and reduce **disaster risks**.

### 06

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**Empower citizens**, particularly women, to fully participate in local political, social, economic and cultural life to promote the



**co-creation of cities and territories** by all who live in them.

### 07

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Harness **integrated urban and territorial planning** to reduce urban sprawl, prevent socio-spatial fragmentation, upgrade slums and poor neighbourhoods, and create quality, safe, green, inclusive and accessible public spaces, as well as to build **polycentric metropolitan areas**.

### 08

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Integrate **culture** as the fourth pillar of sustainable development and take action to foster heritage, creativity, diversity and peaceful co-existence.

### 09

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Increase the transparency and accountability of local and regional institutions to **strengthen local democracy**.

### 10

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Build solidarity between cities and territories and enhance **inter-municipal cooperation**.

# CALL ON THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY TO:

## 01

Embark on a **new era of partnership in global governance** and renew the relationship between local and regional governments and the UN to include the structural consultation of our constituency.

## 02

**Link up the implementation and follow-up of all global sustainability agendas** at global, national and local level, including the SDGs, the Paris Climate Agreement, the Sendai Framework, the Addis Ababa Agenda and the New Urban Agenda.

## 03

Dramatically **improve municipal infrastructure finance** by creating an enabling environment at global and national levels with new public and private financing instruments, including a global fund for

infrastructures, basic services and housing, city-responsive development banks, direct access for subnational governments to climate finance, increased powers for cities to control finance, and vertical alignment policy-planning among levels of government. Create a **Global Partnership for Localizing Finance** to act as a multi-stakeholder and multilevel umbrella coalition fostering dedicated programs and funding lines for local and regional governments.

## 04

Recognize the need for the **World Assembly of Local and Regional Governments** to become a significant and representative mechanism through which local and regional governments can provide political guidance and technical follow-up on the global sustainability agenda.



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 Session on local and regional governments' commitments - World Assembly of Local and Regional Governments in Quito

# 10

## THE NEW URBAN AGENDA BEYOND QUITO

**The New Urban Agenda adopted by UN Member States at the Habitat III Conference in Quito represents a significant victory for the global constituency of local and regional governments.**

Many of our key recommendations, from the Right to the City to multi-level governance and an integrated territorial approach were included in the Quito Declaration, proving the ability of local governments to take a lead in global debates. The New Urban Agenda recognizes that sustainable development is impossible without cities and territories, and that local democracy and leadership are vital to the future of our societies and our planet.

### **WORLD ASSEMBLY OF LOCAL AND REGIONAL GOVERNMENTS**

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The **World Assembly of Local and Regional Governments** in Quito was a unique global gathering. It saw broad participation of local and regional leaders, representing large cities, small towns and rural areas,



from both the global North and South. The Assembly was attended by over a thousand representatives of local and regional governments, marking an **unprecedented mobilization of mayors and elected local leaders** from across the globe. This mobilization was possible thanks to the active commitment and efforts of the networks of the Global Taskforce of Local and Regional Governments.

The recommendations laid out in the Statement of the Assembly to Habitat III were based on joint recommendations prepared by the networks of the Global Taskforce over the course of the Habitat process, with inputs from all types of local and regional governments and the highest levels of political leadership. The Statement was the result of a truly horizontal, collaborative

process, and has a strong claim to legitimacy thanks to the broad consensus it generated. The Assembly brought together both elected leaders and **key partners of local and regional governments**, including national governments, UN Habitat, the European Commission, Cities Alliance, the Global Assembly of Partners and the World Bank. These **alliances with civil society, the international community and the private sector** based on shared goals are essential to the growing influence of local and regional governments on the global stage.

The Assembly was included in the formal programme of the Habitat III Conference, and this recognition was reinforced by the presence of the host government of Ecuador, the UN Secretary General, and the President of the UN General Assembly.



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 Session on local and regional governments' commitments - World Assembly of Local and Regional Governments in Quito



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 Session on local and regional governments' commitments - World Assembly of Local and Regional Governments in Quito

The Mayor of the Habitat III host city, **Mauricio Rodas**, opened the event by recalling that the Assembly represented the culmination of months of work by international networks of local and regional governments, coordinated by the Global Taskforce.

Ecuadorian Minister for Housing and Urban Development, **María de los Ángeles Duarte**, emphasized the important role of local and regional governments in the achievement of the New Urban Agenda and called for national governments to commit to finance urban infrastructure and development.

Secretary General of Habitat III, **Joan Clos**, pointed out that local and regional governments have demonstrated their commitment and ability to deliver on climate and on sustainable development. He argued that *“the problems of cities are the problems of humanity”* and that *“local authorities stand ready to provide the solutions to global challenges.”*

President of the UN General Assembly, **Peter Thomson**, agreed that *“cities must be at the*

*vanguard of the SDGs”* and called on local and regional governments to use their local regulatory and fiscal roles to support climate-smart investment.

UN Secretary General, **Ban Ki Moon**, celebrated the significant global progress in decentralization in the 20 years since Habitat II. Thanks to this, he said, local governments are now seen as a key partner for progress by their national counterparts, with many adopting the principle of subsidiarity in their countries. The Secretary General told the Assembly that *“mayors governors and councilors are at the forefront of the battle for sustainable development... you are faced with the immediate demands of your people... and you must make the tough decisions to prioritize and manage budgets.”* Moon acknowledged the efforts made over recent years to unite the constituency of local and regional governments, and the work of their international networks in contributing to the implementation of global agendas at local level and in facilitating the exchange of knowledge between cities. He predicted that Habitat III will strengthen

this partnership and closed by encouraging local and regional leaders to “raise their voices” to contribute to sustainable urban development across the world.

forward, the Global Taskforce will continue to bring together networks of local and regional governments to share experiences, speak with a united voice, and ensure the New Urban Agenda becomes a reality.

### LOOKING FORWARD

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The Conference in Quito was by no means the end of local and regional governments’ Habitat III Journey. Our constituency sees the New Urban Agenda as the lynchpin of all of the other major international agendas adopted over recent years. The Paris Climate Agreement, the Sustainable Development Goals, the Sendai Framework... all will depend on the successful implementation of the New Urban Agenda in cities and territories for their achievement.

**The New Urban Agenda should be used as a framework to harness all sustainability and development goals and turn them into a reality on the ground.** This will depend, of course, on improved local financing and the strengthening of local democracy. Going



*“We believe in the power of local democracy and decentralization as the means to ensure that the transformative potential of urbanization produce benefits for all. We are ready to listen to our citizens and to engage them in the management of our territories.”*

*UNACLA Quito Declaration adopted in Bogota at the UCLG Congress, October 2016*



Photo by ISD/ENB | Franz Dejon

 Executive Director of UN-Habitat, Ecuadorian Minister for Housing and Urban Development, Secretary General of the UN and President of the UN General Assembly at the World Assembly of Local and Regional Governments, 16 October 2016



**GLOBAL  
TASKFORCE**  
OF LOCAL AND REGIONAL  
GOVERNMENTS

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