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REPORT

UCLG RETREAT 2020

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GLOBAL
TASKFORCE
ON LOCAL AND REGIONAL
GOVERNMENTS

UCLG
meets @
UN

Localization decade

RETREAT
& CAMPUS



**SUMMARY AND
RECOMMENDATIONS**



The UCLG Annual Retreat is a week-long gathering that provides an opportunity for the key nodes (Secretariats of Committees, etc.) and partners of the organization to define synergies and develop actions in line with the work plans set out by the governing bodies. It offers participants an opportunity to boost the connections among the different parts of the UCLG ecosystem, including the involvement of political leaders and the technical staff, to come together as a network and reflect on our priorities for the year. It is further experienced by many of the participants as the perfect space to come to understand how a truly global network works and get introduced to different work areas.

The above explains the growing interest in the exercise that began by gathering around 60 participants and has grown into a 200-plus experience. During the five years since its inception, the UCLG Annual Retreat has become a global gathering, one that participants have come to define as “the DAVOS of local action”, signalling the good health of the Retreat, as well as the willingness of participants to engage and its usefulness for the broader UCLG Network.

The sixth edition of the UCLG Retreat and Campus was held from 24 to 28 February 2020 in Tangier.

This document provides an overview of the main discussions and expected next steps. A full report will be printed later in the year.

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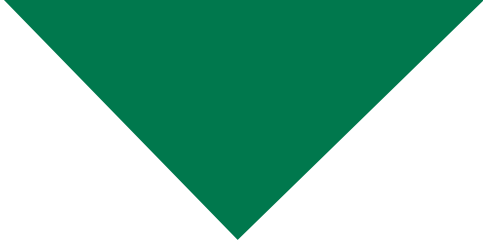
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DID YOU KNOW THAT, DURING THE RETREAT, WE ALSO HELD...?

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INTRODUCTION



◆ **THE UCLG RETREAT HAS BECOME, AFTER 6 EDITIONS,** a very representative gathering bringing together the key nodes of the movement. It fosters exchanges among practitioners and the development of new initiatives within the work programme. It allows for links between different parts of the network to be developed. The 2020 edition has paid special attention to ensuring that global action is grounded on local practice. Over 200 people participated in the gathering in Tangier, from local and regional governments, sister organizations, to partners and civil society. The report below provides an overview of the main discussions held and the expected next steps.

◆ **THE UCLG ANNUAL RETREAT IS A WEEK-LONG GATHERING** that brings together the key nodes and partners of the World Organization. The 2020 Retreat, took place from 24 to 28 February in Tangier and brought to the table the need to continue with the legacy of the Congress, and was defined by UCLG President Mohamed Boudra as the first step into the “UCLG Galaxy”.

◆ **THIS RETREAT, THE FIRST ONE AFTER OUR WORLD CONGRESS IN DURBAN** that solidified our strategy towards 2020, had the spirit of synchronizing our actions across the network. The week aimed to articulate the relevant tools, and how to apply them, needed in order to enhance the collaboration within UCLG and move one step beyond what we have already done.

◆ **THE RETREAT ALSO HAD THE GOAL OF CONNECTING THE POLITICAL VISION** with the different parts of the network and their work plans, to align the narrative of the world organization and connecting all of our work with the global agendas. The concepts of transformational diplomacy, localization decade, and the shift from an international to an interurban system were mainstreamed throughout the week, in order to ensure that the transformation that we want for our societies begins at home.

◆ **THE WORK AREAS OF OUR WORLD ORGANIZATION** presented their priorities for the year, with a specific focus on key topics such as Local Finance, the Ecological Transition, Local Democracy, and Equality and Rights. Our Learning and Research teams also held sessions on their agenda for the year, and our session on the Waves of Action aimed to synchronize our joint efforts to ensure that the next generation of the Waves is successful.



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- ◆ **THE RETREAT WAS ALSO THE PLACE FOR DISSEMINATING THE UN75 SURVEY.** As we stand at the beginning of the Localization decade, our membership, inspired by our UBUNTU Advisor, Aromar Revi, joined the conversation on the future of the world and multilateralism. The Tangier Declaration, launched at the tail end of the Retreat, put to paper the dreams of our political leadership, imagining a future that would allow us to transform peaceful societies, and ready to ensure this future through our commitments towards an inclusive multilateral system.
-
- ◆ **THE ANNUAL MEETING OF THE GLOBAL TASKFORCE OF LOCAL AND REGIONAL GOVERNMENTS** gathered representatives from the members of its 24 organizations, and agreed on joint action and mobilization for the year, with a particular focus on gender equality, climate and biodiversity, and our role in the upcoming HLPF 2020, that will for the first time not be linked to specific SDGs.



◆ **WORKING SESSIONS TOOK PLACE WITHIN THE RETREAT INCLUDING:** by our Committees, the Special Session on the upcoming Forum on Cities of Peace, a Communications Workshop, as well as sessions on migration, Monitoring of the Localization of SDGs, the All-UCLG Communication Strategy and Gender Equality, the work plan of the Forum of Regions, the meeting of the Community of Practice on Migration as well as Elevator Pitch presentations on Food Security, Peripheral Cities Forum, the Metropolis Urban Sustainability Exchange Platform (USE) and the findings of the Gender Study on Women and Public Space.

◆ **THE UCLG RETREAT HAS BECOME, AFTER 6 EDITIONS,** a global gathering that is able to showcase the strength of the movement no matter where it takes place. It has been able to build on local experiences and local practices, and ensuring that the work of the world organization is in touch with what is taking place at the local level. Over 200 people participated in the gathering in Tangier, from local and regional governments, sister organizations, partners and civil society. The report below provides an overview of the main discussions held and the expected next steps.



1

**THEMATIC PRIORITIES
AND DURBAN LEGACY**



KEY CHALLENGES AND OBJECTIVES FOR THE ACTION DECADE

◆ **THE FIRST SESSION OF THE UCLG RETREAT** introduced participants to the legacy and leverage of the Durban Congress, and presented the work plan adopted by the World Council in Durban. The World Secretariat took the lead and the different work areas presented their efforts for the coming year.

◆ **PRESIDENT MOHAMED BOUDRA, AND COPRESIDENT THEMBISILE NKADIMENG**, reminded of the Durban legacy and highlighted the Retreat as the first moment to get acquainted with the UCLG Galaxy. They recalled reminded of the commitment to maintain, support, and develop cities and local governments, and to remove the barriers to allow our local and regional governments to thrive.

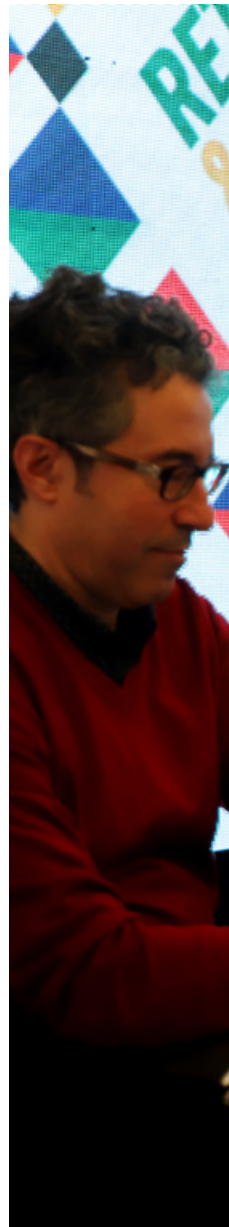
◆ **THE SECRETARY GENERAL OF UCLG, EMILIA SAIZ**, underlined that the Retreat is the meeting touching upon what UCLG does for the movement. And our movement is not only about the ideas that we share, but it is also about the people who make the movement. People change, generations change, but we are all united by an important legacy and we need to give more visibility to our superpowers. In the Durban Congress, we learned that in South Africa, societies are characterized by the stories they tell their children: this is the narrative we need to create in UCLG, to make sure the legacy is transmitted and further developed.

◆ **A BROAD AGREEMENT WAS REACHED DURING THE SESSION** as to the importance of communication tools, of which **#UCLGmeets** and **#CitiesAreListening** are powerful ways to garner attention and spark conversation for the movement. In this sense, both can be considered superpowers of the UCLG network: they mean that the international community takes us into account.

◆ **THE RETREAT IS ABOUT CONNECTING THE POLITICAL VISION** with the different parts of the network and their work plans. The place in which the **synchronization** of the Networks that make up our movement takes place. We need to enhance our work; we need to give more power to our actions. The instrument to make this happen is the connection of the local and global agendas, and developing the transformative concepts that will guide our work in the implementation decade. Thus, **city diplomacy**

is transformative diplomacy, a new way to interact among actors; and the **implementation decade** is the **localization decade**, the time in which local communities will own the universal agendas to ensure localization.

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- ◆ **THE RETREAT IS ABOUT TRYING TO ARTICULATE THESE TOOLS**, see how we can apply them, how we can enhance our collaboration to go a step further in what we do. It is about building on the local experience and local practice. Being a global organization does not mean that we are out of touch with what is happening at the local level.
-
- ◆ **THE DIFFERENT WORK AREAS OF UCLG ARE ALL CRUCIAL**. In policy, it will be key for this decade to co-define our narrative. Learning is also a critical piece, not so much about scaling up, as well as mostly pushing towards collective learning as a movement. Our voice in shaping the multilevel governance stage will be particularly relevant this year, since our task is to articulate our vision and to scale up the notion of localization to bring it to the next frontier.
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- ◆ **ALL OF THIS CAN BE DONE THANKS TO THE STRENGTH OF OUR NETWORK**, which remains inclusive and transparent, and through partnerships with other actors that enhance our work.
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- ◆ **THE POLICY TEAM HIGHLIGHTED THE KEY INNOVATIONS** in the policy area that were in the Work Plan. Chief among them was the need to consolidate and amplify the joint voices from the Global Taskforce, in particular in regards to **climate** and **biodiversity**. Localizing climate finance, and being at the core of the negotiations of the biodiversity framework will be at the core of our work.
-
- ◆ **ONE OF THE KEY INNOVATIONS OF THE 2020 WORK PLAN IS THE POLICY MAPPING** that would allow the World Secretariat to mainstream the political feedback from the Congress. Expanding on the Town Hall Sessions, and with the inputs from the entire network, the policy mapping from the World Secretariat will envision what the future holds for our movement.
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- ◆ **THE LEARNING TEAM** introduced their aim to be more inward looking for the year, to nurture a **network of trainers** and facilitate learning practices across the network.





◆ **THE TEAM MENTIONED THE LEARNING FORUM**, explaining what everyone is doing on learning issues, and the objectives to open the dialogue with all parts of the network, synchronize strategies, strengthen them, and make concrete changes more visible, from a more common perspective.

◆ **THE RESEARCH TEAM**, after a successful cycle that culminated in the 5th edition of our flagship report, is now setting the stage for the development of **GOLD VI**, with a focus on equality and basic services, and experts from the London School of Economics and Urbanism, and will also strive to involve more of the work areas of the World Organization as well as local governments' associations. The 4th Report to the HLPF is also one of the key items in the Research Agenda.



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- ◆ **THE COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE ON VLRS**, which started in 2020, is one of the key innovations that the Research team will help lead in the World Organization. It aims to facilitate a space where LRGs will be able to exchange information on the elaboration of **voluntary local reviews**, according to their own strategies and capacities.
-
- ◆ **THE BOTTOM-UP, COUNTRY WIDE PILOT EXPERIENCES** on subnational reporting are a key priority for the Research team for 2020. The aim is to enhance cooperation with local government associations (presently with those from Costa Rica, Nepal, Kenya, Mozambique and Benin), promote subnational involvement advocacy in the national reporting process and, whenever possible, foster the associations' own report.
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- ◆ **THE FINANCE TEAM** showcased the financial state of the World Organization, which hit a record budget of 5.1 million euros, with the bulk coming from membership fees. The other important part of revenues comes from partnerships and grants that our World Organization have undertaken from: the European Commission; the MC2CM migration programme and, most recently, the Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA).



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- ◆ **CONSIDERING THAT THE WORLD ORGANIZATION** receives public money from public donors, some strict procedures had to be set up. We have an audit report, as well as the audits from the European Commission, and starting in 2020, also from SIDA.
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- ◆ **QUITE RECENTLY, THROUGH THE AGREEMENT WITH THE EU**, a mechanism has been created to evaluate the activities carried out by the World Secretariat and the entire UCLG network. Indicators are currently being defined.
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- ◆ **SPECIFIC WORK AREAS PRESENTED THEIR PLANS FOR THE YEAR.** Metropolis presented their plans for a **Wave of Action** on inclusive access to the city, aiming to design public space in which everyone has equal access to the city.
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- ◆ **THE UCLG COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL INCLUSION**, Participatory Democracy and Human Rights brought to the table the need to explore what the concept means, in particular in regards to the right to housing, but also with issues such as gender, migration, climate justice, and claimed that the concept of the right to the city brings a real transformation at the local level. In a context of increasing discrimination and hate speech, local governments are the **guardians of the great values of human rights**.
-
- ◆ **THE UCLG CULTURE COMMITTEE** argued that it is essential for them to improve in advocacy, to ensure that culture and the **preservation of heritage** are considered goals in themselves. The Committee laid out the need to learn and share with other committees, and with the municipalist movement and other movements.
-
- ◆ **THE COMMITTEE SHOWCASED HOW THE 10TH WORLD URBAN FORUM** had contributed to showcase the key topics for the culture committee. They expressed how culture and heritage need to be at the basis of localization, for identity, and ownership by local communities to be at the forefront of localization efforts in order for the agendas to succeed. We need an “SDG 18”, on Culture!
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- ◆ **THE UCLG LOCAL FINANCE TEAM** provided inputs on the UCLG's strategy on the localisation of financing in support of sustainable development goals.

LOCAL FINANCE

The **UCLG Strategy on Localizing Financing** is structured around three main axes:

- 1 Advocacy** which needs to be based on realities, hence our partnership with the OECD to set up the global observatory which produced a report in 2019, containing information on local finance and municipal governance in more than 120 countries.
- 2 Interaction and experience sharing** which are the main objectives of the Community of practice on local finance, although work still needs to be conducted to develop the outreach of the Community.
- 3 Concrete action** is the third main axe of the strategy, as it is important to accompany local governments on one particular point: access to financial markets. It is clear that we cannot finance the considerable investments, necessary in terms of infrastructure or equipment, simply through development cooperation. Two initiatives have been taken, the setting up of the International Municipal Investment Fund and the Africa Territorial Agency, with the aim of raising additional resources on the financial markets to finance local authorities' capital investment.



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- ◆ **THE NEXT CHALLENGES OF THE STRATEGY** will be to find **sound political management**, as well as ownership: how do we organize a partnership within our movement, with the help of the sections, in order to have a greater impact? How do we go beyond pilot initiatives to amplify cities' access to capital markets?

 - ◆ **THE REPRESENTATIVE FROM UNCDF**, recalled that a coalition was created between UCLG and UNCDF for a global financial ecosystem that works for LRGs. The premise is that the world's financial system works for countries, as well as for big companies who can move capital and tax liabilities around. He stressed that the coalition created with UCLG for a global financial ecosystem is to try and make it local government-friendly and create a recognition at the highest level of the notion that, if we are to achieve the 2030 agenda, local and regional governments cannot be seen as recipients of aid, but as active actors.

 - ◆ **THE SESSION CONCLUDED** that what we are missing in this area is **concrete knowledge from the perspective of local governments**, that would help us set up different types of data and concepts to enter the dialogue with the international community and will then influence the type of projects we prepare. We need to transform the political vision in political analysis.



NEXT STEPS

- 1 Acknowledging the transformative potential of two UCLG mechanisms to facilitate cities' access to capital market and the need to promote their development:** The setting up of the International Municipal Investment Fund and the African Territorial Agency are both extremely promising initiatives not only as pilots aimed at facilitating cities' access to capital markets in the short term but also as agenda drivers to concretely demonstrate the power of municipal finance when cities have resources and access to capital.
- 2 Engaging in multi-stakeholder and multilevel dialogue is a critical step towards changing the current financial ecosystem:** Helping cities to structure bankable projects is certainly essential but this should be accompanied by a firm commitment by LRGs to foster and engage in a multi-stakeholder and multi-level debate to change the current ecosystem and enable cities to access stable long-term finance. Regional, national and international banks should be fully and prominently involved in this debate.
- 3 Recognising cities as full-fledged public actors with clear fiscal powers and the ability to take on direct debt:** To this end, in many countries, especially in the Global South, capacity development of local public administration should be a priority for our network, and include a combination of learning and technical assistance.
- 4 Increasing the negotiation power of LRGs with both public and private partners is critical:** This includes, in particular, promoting a climate of trust between UCLG membership and the international financial institutions. UCLG, its regional sections and consultation mechanisms can play a major role in this process.



“Unless we see local governments as the solution regarding implementing environmental policies, our survival on this planet is in trouble.”

David Jackson

Director of Local Development Finance, UNCDF

“The reality is not the same, according to whether you are in a European country or in a developing country. In many of our States, agreements with economic institutions are actually subjected to the agreements the States make with these institutions. So, we need to ask ourselves: can cities act independently on financial markets, without impinging on the debt capacities or margins that were agreed on national level?”

Khalifa Sall

Former Mayor of Dakar and President of UCLG-Africa

“We must invest in diversifying local governments’ financial resources. Let us not forget the importance of local taxation and decentralized cooperation. It is also of high priority to improve the capacities of local public administration.”

Najat Zarrouk

Director of the African Local Government Academy (ALGA) of UCLG-Africa

“Listen2Cities actually means that we have a convening power and we can define our interventions. Now, we define the playground. Let’s keep building it and invite others to join us.”

Jean Pierre Elong Mbassi

Secretary General of UCLG-Africa



ECOLOGICAL TRANSITION

- ◆ **THE SESSION INTRODUCED** the concept of resilience and how it had evolved, over the past few years, to become a question of **solidarity**, an endeavor of the entire planet, and needs to be worked on by all spheres of government.
- ◆ **THE SESSION ALSO WENT ON TO ASSESS** the capacity of the network to work together to accelerate action for resilience building through the “making cities resilient” campaign, which is in its second phase together with ICLEI, 100 resilient cities, and the Red Cross, and has gone beyond awareness raising and into action.
- ◆ **THE NEW PHASE** of consists of 3 steps:
 - a. Helping the cities better assess risks in their territories
 - b. Plan actions
 - c. Go into action - reduce risk



◆ **THE MAYOR OF IRIGA AND UCLG** Treasurer argued that the ecological transition calls for rethinking the relationship between humans and the physical environment, and laid out the role of **cultural ecology** in disaster risk assessment and reduction. Culture and heritage are important parts of this assessment and integral to carry out this transition. She also called to reinforce our international relations, share and exchange experiences on what was locally learnt from the Sendai framework.

◆ **THE FORUM ON INTERMEDIARY CITIES** is set to take place in 2020, and the role of intermediary cities in envisioning a new development model was explored in the session, in which they were defined as critical for urban, social, and environmental resilience.

◆ **THE COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE ON MOBILITY** called for finding the best way to move people from work to home, and praised the exchange of best practices, and promoting innovative practices from local and regional governments in regards to mobility. “The **right to move**” is a political framework that the Community has, together with the UCLG World Secretariat, pushed to develop combining social and environmental aspects. It can be used as a point of exchange and synchronization for the network.

◆ **OVERALL, THE SESSION SHOWED** that Ecological Transition is a **transversal topic** that must be taken as such. It is not only about climate, not only about a “green environment”, it is also about impacting measures, whether we talk about disasters, or mobility. The tipping points raised were captured by the speakers, as well as by the participants, whose feedback was very positive on the dimension of **humanity** that UCLG is bringing to the debate on ecological transition. It became quite clear that we have to change the technocratic approach to the climate emergency and that UCLG can contribute to this dialogue. Specific feedback and support were given by international institutions, from the United Nations, as well as from National Associations of Local and Regional Governments, willing to partner with UCLG on this specific approach on the topic. It will be important to see how local governments can contribute to the nationally determined contributions that are at the very centre of the Paris Agreement.

◆ **WHEN WE GO OUT OF THE RETREAT**, it will be important to give ourselves a strong mandate on how to include this humanitarian perspective in the debate.



NEXT STEPS

- 1 Ensuring that the transversality of the topic is identified in the UCLG ecosystem, both internally and externally.
- 2 Implementing a **cross-sectoral strategy for intermediary cities** that covered economic development, environment, and social aspects.
- 3 Changing the technocratization of the responses we give to climate change to ensure **collective transformations** and transitions, not only individual responses.
- 4 Preparing a position paper on this issue, including a roadmap, most likely for the Executive Bureau of UCLG.



“Cultural ecology pays a crucial role on disaster risk assessment and reduction. We must include cultural heritage and culture in our climate actions.”

Madelaine Alfelor

Mayor of Iriga, UCLG Treasury

“We need to change the way we relate to the planet. The added value of UCLG with respect to other sister organizations is the humanity dimension that we give to the discussion. And it is not only about human rights, but about the collective rights of us WITH the planet. One of the things we need to change is the technocratization of the responses we give to climate change. We need collective transformations, transitions, not only individual responses.”

Emilia Saiz

Secretary General of UCLG

“Intermediary cities have a strategic role to play in the new development model, following global paradigms and participatory policies. They also have a key role in urban, social and environmental resilience.”

Amal Khammal

Ministry of Urbanism and City Policy, Partner of the UCLG Forum of Intermediary Cities

“Local governments and cities have the legitimacy to gather territorial stakeholders and strengthen climate action on the territorial scale. Climate Chance shares good practices of climate actions from the whole world and produces a yearly report that assesses climate actions undertaken in different sectors, in order to see the possibility of replicating them in other contexts.”

Romain Crouzet

Programme Director, Climate Chance



LOCAL DEMOCRACY

- ◆ **IN THE SESSION ON LOCAL DEMOCRACY**, the main concerns and areas of interest of the different sections, commissions and members emerged as the basis for the next steps to be taken. The actions to be carried out are: to strengthen political leadership, to define a model for the evaluation and monitoring of local democracy, and to maintain or highlight within this theme issues such as **local autonomy, inclusion** or **gender equality**. Co-ordinating these different areas and establishing concrete action plans are the next steps to be taken.
- ◆ **UCLG'S WORK ON LOCAL DEMOCRACY** is therefore structured into three areas of work: research, focusing on the development of a monitoring methodology to create the state of local democracy; the **renewal of local democracy**, which includes political debate and the work of the International Observatory of Participatory Democracy on democratic and participatory innovations; and finally, the work on the **protection of local elected representatives** from unfair persecution.



◆ **GENERAL CONSENSUS FOUND THAT LOCAL DEMOCRACY** is in the DNA of UCLG, which is exactly the reason why the municipal movement came together in 1913. However, a century later, the type of transformation we will need to address will have to take into account the dreams of citizens. We need to address frustrations and lack of trust, and this is not only about transparency, but also about the need to link the new and true democracy to a **different concept of citizenship**. As local and regional government representatives, we need to create this collective thinking on what it means to be drivers of democracy.

◆ **ANOTHER VERY RELEVANT ISSUE THAT WAS TACKLED** during the session was **intergenerational dialogue**, which needs to serve as the basis for peace and needs to be a very critical pillar of any thinking about future democracy.

NEXT STEPS

- 1** Strengthen **political leadership**.
- 2** Define a model for evaluating and **monitoring local democracy**.
- 3** **Maintain or highlight within this theme** issues such as local autonomy, inclusion or gender equality.
- 4** **Coordinate these different areas** and establish concrete action plans.



“There has been a very strong crisis of confidence that has affected trust in politics. It's very good to have put this issue of open government, transparency and participation on the agenda of our work.”

Javier Ayala

Mayor of Fuenlabrada, FEMP (Community of Practice on Transparency & Open Government)

“We live a unique moment in the world, we see a renewal of democracy, and social mobilizations that reflect a certain political awareness. And when we talk about citizens' participation, we are placing politics into peoples' lives again. We certainly need that!”

Djamel Sandid

City of Nanterre, Coordinator of UCLG Forum on Peripheral Cities



“We went out of Durban with a very exciting declaration, which launches all of us to a new paradigm on the renewal of local democracy, on how to enhance new ways of driving citizen participation.”

Xolile George
CEO of SALGA

“If we look at the indicators, they show a general mistrust of institutions: we have to take great care of democracy. It is very important to think about synergies and work together to protect democracy at the local level.”

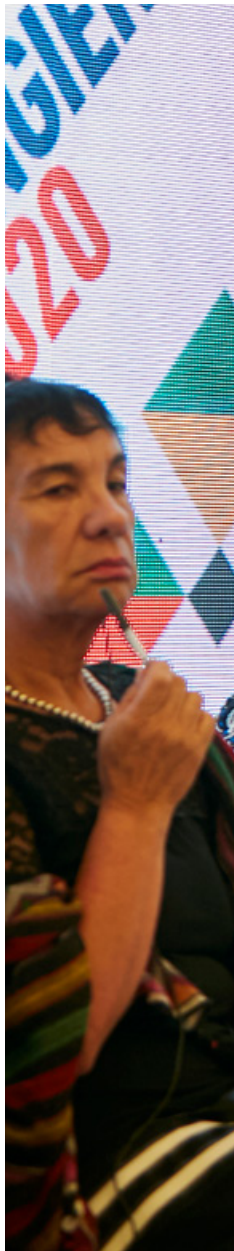
Adrià Duarte
Coordinator of ODP

“When we make a survey, we see that only 16% of mayors in Europe are women, and only 31% of councilors are women. At this rate, it will take us 107 years to close the gender gap and this is not OK! Local democracy is a democracy where everyone is involved.”

Carola Gunnarsson
Mayor of Sala, Vice-President of SALAR, Incoming Vice-President of UCLG for Europe.

EQUALITY AND RIGHTS

- ◆ **THE SESSION ON EQUALITY AND RIGHTS EXPLORED** the links between the right to the city and human rights, focusing on how cities are not only places for all, but also spaces for everyone. One of the key ideas mentioned during the session was the importance to place citizens and people's needs at the centre of the right to the city. The idea of a **human-rights approach** to the right to the city, including cultural rights was strongly echoed throughout the session, and clear links were established with local democracy and public participation, as key pillars of right to the city. The important transition that the Committee on Social Inclusion, Participatory Democracy and Human Rights is undertaking was mentioned as key to the work of the network in general.
- ◆ **WHEN TALKING ABOUT EQUALITY**, it is unavoidable to talk about inequality. Several participants highlighted that inequalities include land and spatial inequalities, access to transportation and other basic services that citizens use on daily basis.
- ◆ **GENDER EQUALITY** (and inequality) received much emphasis and was linked to the notion of intergenerational dialogue. Girls and young women are at the forefront of the discussions on gender equality and they bring a new perspective, which makes it absolutely necessary to take them into account when building an agenda on equality and rights. However, it was also stressed that the work of local and regional governments cannot substitute the work of grassroots organizations or feminist movements.
- ◆ **THE LINKS WITH CIVIL SOCIETY** were confirmed as one of the main priorities for our network on these issues. City society is not only transmitting the need of the people, but also promoting initiatives and actions on various issues. The voices that we hear from civil society are very diverse –as are the voices of the local and regional constituency-, which means that we should search for a common ground to work together. One possible way of developing this joint work is to further engage on the agenda of **accessibility**. The Inclusive and Accessible Cities policy paper, produced in Durban, informed local governments on the policy proposals of civil society. What is needed now is to see these recommendations turn into actions.





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- ◆ **AS A POLITICAL AGENDA**, equality and rights also encompasses topics like non-discrimination and fight against racism, which were mentioned as key priorities by several participants.
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- ◆ **OVERALL, IT WAS AGREED THAT** it is necessary to continue fostering the links between this agenda and the SDGs localization, taking into account that the equality and rights vision is essential to ensure that no one and no place is left behind.

NEXT STEPS

- 1** The Committee on Social Inclusion will continue and foster networking on these topics with the Organization, articulating debates, political visions and members' willingness to carry out joint initiatives in fields like advocacy, learning or implementation.
- 2** Successful **partnerships**, like the one with the Global Platform for the Right to the City, will be further developed.
- 3** Members' initiative in the field of implementation will be supported, as well as regional processes aiming to **scale up** the human right city vision.
- 4** It will also be necessary to look at more topics in the agenda from a right to the city perspective, for example social and solidarity economy, climate emergency or peace.



“Synchronization is very important to make sure that housing at the local level is planned in relation to what is planned at the territorial development level and the national level. Everyone has a fair and equal right to existence”.

Thembisile Nkadimeng

Mayor of Polokwane, President of SALGA,
Co-President of UCLG

“Mexico City wants to be a global city, where rights and innovations can allow the coexistence of rural, urban, native and settled cultures, in the sense that cultural rights are part of the human rights of all.”

José Alfonso Suárez del Real

Mexico City’s Secretary of Culture,
UCLG Policy Councillor

“The fundamental issue today is to change the paradigm and plan the cities with a view that is not only focused on production. We are dealing with the sustainability of life.”

Olga Segovia

Representative of the Women
and Habitat Network

“We are all working together to rethink and reshape our cities, putting the human being at the centre of our projects.”

Carla Rey

Secretary General of AICCRE

“UCLG must promote women leaders and make it a priority. We need to prepare future women leaders, we need to prepare women to go into politics.”

Najat Zarrouk

Director of the African Local Government
Academy (ALGA) of UCLG-Africa

“Our added value to the gender equality agenda is adding the local perspective, to show that local elected women have the capacity to bring transformation. And this is nowhere on the agenda of Beijing+25.”

Emilia Saiz

Secretary General of UCLG



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2

SYNCHRONIZATION

UCLG WAVE OF ACTION: MIGRATION

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- ◆ **THE WAVE OF ACTION ON MIGRATION STARTED** in 2017 aiming to change the narrative on migration at the local level, highlighting the opportunities of the inclusion of migrants and working to inform the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration, adopted in Marrakech in 2018 with inputs from the constituency of local and regional governments. The number of actions led by UCLG's regional sections and by the World Secretariat in partnership with international organizations and civil society has been growing over the years and has put migration high in the local agenda. At the beginning of the era of implementation, synchronising efforts becomes pivotal to ensure that local governments' role in the governance of migration is duly acknowledged and contributes to global goals.

 - ◆ **THE SESSION** "From Collaboration to Synchronization" aimed at taking stock of the outcomes of the Wave of Action to transform it into a **coordinated and solid commitment towards global advocacy**, ensuring that local governments play a substantive role in the fulfilment of the Global Compacts. By involving city members, Sections, Committees and partners, the session triggered a process of collective thinking on how to ensure that all the efforts of the network are translated into meaningful action and advocacy to ensure **knowledge sharing, greater support and stronger influence on multilateral processes**.

 - ◆ **AS IT WAS RECALLED**, migration is already on our agenda, and the waves of action are a tool to move this agenda forward. What was mostly highlighted during the session was the importance and emergency to **shift the narrative** on migration, as there is a real gap between perception and reality of migration, generating a narrative that is not conducive to an enabling environment in which to enact migration policy.

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- ◆ **THERE WAS GENERAL CONSENSUS** about the importance to pursue or develop specific actions, such as: **building capacities** by implementing actions and investing in territories, to provide material and resources. Advocacy remains of crucial importance in order to open spaces for local governments at the table, both globally and regionally. Promoting national policies in a strong coordination approach is also vital, so that the **partnerships** between different spheres of government and with international partners, are improved.
 - ◆ **IT WAS ALSO SUGGESTED TO ORGANIZE** a **database** to gather good practice and planning from municipalities, and reinforce **coordination with civil society** to strengthen individual support to migrants. Participants also mentioned the possibility to draft a policy paper to include the key messages from our Organization.
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NEXT STEPS

- 1** Consolidation of **an internal coordination mechanism** that will aim at: enhancing **communication** between the actions taken by the network and international multilateral processes; increasing **ownership** by all the constituency; and improving **learning experiences** across territorial levels and actors.
- 2** As a way forward, improving coordination mechanisms will be instrumental to enhance **multilevel dialogue** and ensure meaningful engagement of local governments in the transformation of the global governance of **migration from a human rights perspective**.
- 3** **Evidence-based approaches** to migration and strong partnerships will drive the consolidation of a strong **local narrative against discriminatory and hate speech** about migration and migrants.

“Migration is an opportunity for development, not an obstacle. We think it is important to support exchanges to improve our basic services for migrants.”

Bouchta Bourgoul
Vice-Mayor of Tangier

“When it comes to migration, one of the main barriers that we need to combat is that of perception. Migration governance goes beyond management of borders. It is about inter institutional coordination. To address migration governance, local governments need to be at the table.”

Ana Feder
Regional Portfolio Manager, ICMPD

CULTURE ACTIONS: 7 KEYS

- ◆ **THE UCLG CULTURE COMMITTEE**, in cooperation with the Learning team, presented the main features of a new UCLG programme: the **“Seven Keys”**. The programme is based on the UCLG achievements on culture: (a) the narrative and advocacy on culture as the fourth pillar of sustainable development, (b) the pioneering toolkit: Culture 21 Actions, (c) the document “Culture in the Sustainable Development Goals: A Guide for Local Action” and (d) the OBS of good practices.
- ◆ **THE BROAD OBJECTIVE** of the new **“Seven Keys”** initiative is to promote the localization and implementation of the SDGs using a cultural perspective. The programme takes place in specific cities and local governments, with a workshop in which participants relate SDGs, the local challenges and local cultural assets, activities, and policies, until reaching a consensus on the seven “keys” that they can commit to in order to localize the SDGs through cultural policymaking. **The “Seven Keys” are locally identified and will have to be locally implemented.**
- ◆ **THE CITIES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENTS** will obtain a dedicated report as well as **global visibility** through the newsletter, the website and the social media of the Culture Committee. The UCLG Regional Sections are expected to have a fundamental role to multiply the impact of the Seven Keys.



NEXT STEPS

- 1 Sections will be invited to share their contributions, in view of scaling-up the 7 keys and develop ownership at the regional level and at the national level, via local government associations.

“Culture is no longer a series of actions without a specific destination: they are rights, in line with the SDGs, and they generate community and solidarity.”

José Alfonso Suárez del Real

Mexico City's Secretary of Culture, UCLG Policy Councillor

“The subject of culture is attracting more and more interest. It is part of our identity, as local and regional governments, and has to be inclusive.”

Pablo Jurado

President of CONGOPE, Vice-President of UCLG for the Forum of Regions

“Urban rehabilitation is contributing to the economy through job creation and wealth. We need to develop tools to help culture and art combat inequalities.”

Catherine Cullen

UCLG Culture Committee Expert

“Through innovative partnerships between local governments, civil society and the private sector, we can promote green mobility including in the cultural sector.”

Valeria Marcolin

UCLG Culture Committee Expert



3

LOCALIZATION AND EVIDENCE-BASED IMPLEMENTATION



ACCELERATING LOCALIZATION

- ◆ **UCLG HAS BEEN THE VERY FIRST LOCAL GOVERNMENT organization to embrace the global agendas as the coordinating axis of its strategy. For UCLG, acceleration is localization, it is about ensuring that the local experiences are the ones defining the content of global agenda.**

- ◆ **THE DISCOURSE ON LOCALIZATION HAS SHIFTED THROUGHOUT** the years and, for our World Organization, localization is ensuring that local experiences are the ones that define the content of the agendas. The agendas might be global, but we have been working for them for years, and as such it is impossible for us not to be a part of the global processes.

- ◆ **OUR WORLD ORGANIZATION HAS CHAMPIONED LOCALIZATION**, placing it at the heart of the work of the Global Taskforce, undergoing a joint road to influence political processes, and accompanying advocacy with sound analyses and research on the state of localization, and produced learning modules around localization with our partners, in order to raise awareness, build capacities, and help plan and report on the state of localization.

- ◆ **WE HAVE ENHANCED the role of local governments in the reporting process of the global goals, promoting VNRs and sitting in a room with different actors involved, from civil society, media, to academia.** The first time we did it was 2017, and our report will happen again in 2020. The journey has been long, but we are slowly building the road to localization.

- ◆ **THE RETREAT OFFERED** an opportunity to discuss the scaling-up of our work on localization, as well as the product of our efforts to have local governments participating in this process. The session on “accelerating localization” had the aim of bringing the strategic issue of localization to the next level, and had the participation of the UCLG Networks, who presented their priorities for the year in order to enhance synchronization across the Network; representatives of Local and Regional Governments; and sister networks.

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- ◆ **METROPOLIS ARGUED THAT THE SHIFT** to a metropolitan world will not stop, and the Retreat -and the year 2020- were essential to define how the world organization should interact in a metropolitan reality. In particular, the Secretary General argued that it is crucial to rethink the narrative around metropolitan spaces, and that the discussions brought to the table by the metropolitan section also fit with the ones that UCLG is bringing to the agenda.

 - ◆ **UCLG-MEWA** presented its strategic goals for the year: chief among them were the strengthening of the institutional capacity of municipalities, with a focus on gender equality; ensuring the inclusion of refugees and asylum seekers in social inclusion policies at local level, to enable a quicker and smoother integration process; and strengthening the UCLG-MEWA network to be able to respond to the climate emergency and build resilient cities.

 - ◆ **UCLG-ASPAC** mentioned the issues related to covering such a diverse and densely populated region, including the regional distribution of countries, and how to work together with the sister networks. The key priorities **identified by ASPAC were their focus on environment, climate change and strategies of disaster risk reduction. Gender equality** was also identified as a key item in their agenda.

 - ◆ **THE WORLD SECRETARIAT** has placed a particular focus in ensuring that the local experiences are the ones that effectively define the content of the global agendas, through the fostering of best practice exchanges and training local and regional governments' participants.



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- ◆ **THE BARCELONA PROVINCIAL COUNCIL** shared the local impact of the 2030 Agenda in the Barcelona municipal government, who had endeavoured to mainstream it throughout internal thinking processes, workshops and trainings for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.
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- ◆ **THE AFRICAN LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACADEMY** of UCLG-Africa shared their collaboration with the UCLG Learning Team and the Capacity and Institution Building Working Group, in particular in regards to culture and heritage, in the empowerment of women and girls, and to be able to address climate and migration. Throughout the year, ALGA will aim to set a sound framework of cooperation and partnership, investing in training of trainers, peer learning; as well as capacitation and bringing to the spotlight the work of local practitioners.
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- ◆ **CEMR CALLED FOR BUILDING BRIDGES** between the training centres of our national associations, and developing a network of training academies that would allow us to multiply the action carried out in other regions.
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- ◆ **THE SECOND PART OF THE SESSION LAID** out the work being done by the World Organization to accelerate localization, in particular through the development of the Local4Action Hubs, and by pairing advocacy with analyses and research on how local and regional governments are localizing the global agendas each year, and placing localization at the heart of the work of the Global Taskforce.



NEXT STEPS

- 1** Scaling up in learning and reaching larger audience, ensuring the support of sections and regions.
- 2** Going to country-wide experiences, pilots. We will work in 5 countries: Kenya Costa Rica, Nepal, Mozambique and Benin, accompanying the associations presenting VLRs to make sure there is a process for sub-national reporting. This goes beyond VLRs, it is about the systems and the connection of cities.
- 3** Enhance political interlocution with the national level.
- 4** Local4Action Hubs need to be about anchored in local experiences and what we bring to the global level.



“I am very proud to be able to say that UCLG was the first local government organization that embraced the global agendas as the coordinating axis of its strategy. For us, acceleration is localization, it is about ensuring that the local experiences are the ones defining the content of the global agenda.”

Emilia Saiz
Secretary General of UCLG

“In the Provincial Council, we started a process of reflection at international level, on the local impact on the municipalities and an internal reflection of the corporation itself, to provide support to the municipalities.”

Antoni Montseny
Director of International Relations, Provincial Council of Barcelona

“The resilience of cities is not only about climate change, but also about health resilience. The whole world is experiencing an emergency, which started and is developing in cities, in regions. If there is anything urgent we need to localize, it is the efforts to address this planetary emergency.”

Johnny Araya
Mayor of San José, UCLG Co-President

“UCLG learning is important because it is based on evidence, and the needs and reality of local contexts and of local cultures.”

Bernadia Irawati Tjandradewi
Secretary General of UCLG-ASPAC

“We should establish bridges between the different training centres of our national associations, so that we could create a network that could multiply the actions carried out in other regions. From this point of view, I feel that the training of trainers is particularly relevant.”

Frédéric Vallier
Secretary General of CEMR

“I have learnt a lot during these three days and I hope I will continue to learn about this wonderful galaxy that UCLG is. The very foundation of UCLG was a necessity for mayors and presidents of regions, so that they could go further with what they were already doing: when we talk of localizing, we realize that local and regional elected already do it every day! They work on every SDG, every day.”

Mohamed Boudra
Mayor of Al-Hoceima President of AMPCC,
President of UCLG

THE RESEARCH AGENDA

- ◆ **THE UCLG RETREAT WAS THE PLACE** to shape the Research Agenda of the World Organization, laying out the next paths towards and beyond GOLD VI and the transformations in local democracy and governance in the past 20 years, and the reasons why the focus on research should lie in governance and inequalities.
- ◆ **EXPERTS FROM ACADEMIA HIGHLIGHTED** that inequalities are a **cross-cutting** issue that affects other parts of our work such as the **climate emergency, housing, informalities...** and that the GOLD report is an opportunity to reframe how the movement looks at inequalities beyond being an **income issue**, but rather as a lens upon which the movement can look at many other issues.
- ◆ **INEQUALITIES AND GOVERNANCE** were also seen as transversal topics by representatives of the **Huairou Commission** and our **UBUNTU** advisors, who called for showcasing the conditions for good governance and local finance, as well as recalling of the key principles of good governance: accountability, transparency, and participation.



◆ **THE SECOND PART OF THE SESSION** involved the need to develop the objectives and added value of GOLD VI, with experts highlighting that the importance of GOLD relied on developing not just a report, but putting it out in spaces where there is a real need and eagerness for new information for local and regional governments. The need to identify future needs, bridge new demands of citizens, and accelerate action from the local sphere were also highlighted as key differentiating elements from the GOLD Report.

◆ **PARTICIPANTS HIGHLIGHTED** that the research agenda, and GOLD in particular, needed to remain relevant for local and regional governments in the struggle against inequalities, by highlighting data on inequalities at the local level.

◆ **IN THE FINAL PART OF STOCKTAKING**, it was reminded that UCLG is a political organization, so the research agenda must support a political agenda, and not the other way around. The current political agenda is at least three-fold: UCLG attempts to place local governments in their rightful place in the multilateral system; it seeks to advance the urban agenda (although not at the expense for other territories, such as rural areas); and it is also positioning itself to respond to conflicts and conflict resolution, taking into account that conflict is an attribute of inequality.

◆ **THE MOST PRESSING QUESTIONS** about our research work remain: what impact is it making at the local policy-making level? And to what extent does it facilitate proximity of our political leadership to their constituencies? We have to position ourselves as content providers, and our research must enable meaningful engagement, as are communities must be maintained informed. It should also allow us to be the “go-to” platform. Equally important is the notion that our research must differentiate: it must not assume that we are all the same, that we are all cities, and the methodology must appreciate that we are different members of the same family.

◆ **WHY IS THE RESEARCH WORK SO IMPORTANT?** Because it impacts implementation; because we want to shift the narrative; and because we want to build alternative or transformative institutions in our respective territories. Research should not only follow an agenda: it should set one.

NEXT STEPS

- 1** The **GOLD VI** process will be boosted, exploring how to address inequalities and their governance challenges, from the local and regional governments' perspective.
- 2** We will need to consider how to develop an alternative research project on the topic of **governance and emergencies challenges**.
- 3** The **Report to the HLPF** remains an important yearly step. It includes the collection, through our networks, of good and innovative practices, to illustrate the progress made by LRGs and the survey on the localization of the SDGs.
- 4** Strengthening **synergies** and collaboration to contribute through research initiatives to all UCLG Work areas will be critical, as well as capitalizing on the products developed and expanding its range.
- 5** Another concrete outcome is the support to a Cross-institutional working group on **local indicators and monitoring**, within the framework of the ongoing collaboration between UNDP-ART and UCLG, on the SDG localization.



“If we want to deal with inequalities, we need to have a good governance. And thinking from a territorial approach is also critical.”

Carola Gunnarsson,
Mayor of Sala, Vice-President of SALAR,
Incoming Vice-President of UCLG for Europe

“In both inequality and governance, it is essential to provide the visions of the people that local and regional governments serve. We need to look at equality not from the governance lens only, but from the people lens.”

Sri Husnaini Sofjan
Senior Programmes and Strategies
Administrator, Huairou Commission

“There is an urgent need to articulate public enterprise, academia, and the private sector to curb inequalities. We cannot walk through different paths”

Pablo Jurado
President of CONGOPE,
Vice-President of UCLG for the Forum of Regions

“UCLG can be a pioneer on content, a leader on engagement, an opportunity to live through action, and a legitimate “go-to place” for real change and action.”

Philipp Rode
Executive Director of LSE Cities

“Why are local and regional governments fit for purpose to deal with inequalities? Because they are close to the phenomenon. They have the capacity to act and collaborate with other local actors. They have the potential to sustain action over time with increased legitimacy on the ground.”

Alexandre Apsan Frediani
Associate Professor, Bartlett Development
Planning Unit, University College London

“Shifting the narrative is the critical question: we are still an invisible community. We have to become visible! The connection to citizens is crucial. And this GOLD report is a huge opportunity to show the necessary conditions for governance and finance.”

Aromar Revi
UCLG UBUNTU Advisor

“This is not a discussion about whether governance is more important than inequalities, because our movement is about both. Governance is merely an instrument to achieve the reduction of inequalities. We need to come up with a shift in narrative: every government needs to underpin inequalities, and not the other way around.”

Emilia Saiz
Secretary General of UCLG



From collaboration to synchronization

Resilient
Sustainable
capable
crises

OPPORTUNITIES
FOR ALL,
Culture
and City Diplomacy

RIGHT TO
THE CITY
and inclusive
territories

Territorial,
MULTILEVEL
GOVERNANCE, and
sustainable financing

UCLG
meets
UCLG
meets



4

A NEW MOVEMENT



THE LOCAL4ACTION HUBS

- ◆ **THE 2020 RETREAT WAS THE OCCASION TO PRESENT** a new concept to be co-created among the network. UCLG has developed, in recent years, physical spaces in the shape of the hubs, particularly relevant during the World Summit of Local and Regional Leaders, as they provide spaces to showcase innovative initiatives or projects. The “**Local for Action Hub**” notion has been debated for a long time in UCLG. As a concept, it emerged from members’ willingness to be able to scale up, better share and showcase or connect those initiatives they developed or are developing locally, which could take a global perspective since their inception.
- ◆ **SO FAR, UCLG’S STRATEGY REGARDING** the 2030 Agenda has been particularly visible in the field of advocacy and political representation, becoming a major player in global conversations about sustainable development. At present, UCLG has become a key interlocutor to the UN organization and system in representation of the local and regional government (LRG) constituency.
- ◆ **UP UNTIL THIS MOMENT,** UCLG has been working to bring up the voice of the LRG constituency at the global level. It established new bridges between LRG representatives and global governance mechanisms, and sought to define shared voices and strategies: representing, bringing up, and manifesting the challenges, solutions, policies and measures brought up by LRGs.
- ◆ **TO DO SO,** UCLG has counted on a wide diversity of mechanisms to answer the shared needs and aspirations of members. Fora, communities of practice, working groups and committees have given platforms for members to develop UCLG’s work plan and key agendas, as well as showcase them at different levels. This strategy has driven UCLG to consolidate its position in recent years. At present, it is the only global network (and network of networks) that provides a comprehensive platform for the larger political representation, and dialogue between the local level and the global one.
- ◆ **HOWEVER,** this evolution also obliges the institution to be closer to the local challenges, aspirations and initiatives; to be closer to local life, closer to Mayors, to citizens, to local stakeholders and to the local experiences that are being developed at local and regional level.

THE LOCAL4ACTION HUBS, A TOOL FOR SYNCHRONIZATION

- ◆ **UCLG UNDERSTANDS THE NEED TO DEVELOP A NEW TOOL**, an instrument or a mechanism that allows to know more about what is going on at local level, to showcase it and establish means to foster synchronization between different existing initiatives led by LRG across the world. It is a matter of giving Mayors and local leaders more opportunities to speak out or feel **they are contributing to the Localizing of the SDGs Agenda by their own initiative**.
- ◆ **IT IS IMPORTANT TO AVOID THAT THE LOCALIZATION** efforts become a top-down approach. What is new in the proposal of the Local4Action Hubs is to bring the perspective of communities, to build training, research and action on local initiatives that are locally driven. Through this initiative, members of the network will be able to present their experiences, while **connecting the local actions to the global agendas**. Defining this tool would help UCLG to better represent the LRG community, have a better understanding of what is being done on the ground as initiatives, experiences and reflections, and the key issues that may be raised as agendas at global level.
- ◆ **THIS INITIATIVE WOULD** also help UCLG go beyond its current work plan and agenda, and open the new era of local and regional governments. Parting from the open framework proposed by the 2030 Agenda, this exercise could help expand our understanding of sustainable development on the basis of initiatives and key thematic areas brought by members.
- ◆ **HENCE THE LOCAL4ACTION HUBS PROPOSAL:** a new action-based proposal for the implementation decade, developed by UCLG and open to all LRG initiatives, with partners' engagement.
- ◆ **IT IS WORTH RECALLING** how this initiative marks an important shift in UCLG's strategy up until now: indeed, the Durban Congress has marked a new era for the organization, were its values and identity are set to give a global value to what is being developed at the local and regional level.

◆ **THE FIRST PART OF THE SESSION FOCUSED** on introducing a methodology, presenting ideas on what could be a Hub and how to translate this global vision into simple, concrete ideas. The colleagues from Xi'an presented the idea of a **dialogue hub for youth**, in order to gather different cultural backgrounds, promote education equality, improve inclusiveness and awaken young peoples' sense of responsibility for the future. Xi'an is willing to co-create a platform to develop innovation and practice exchanges and to implement scholarships for students from other member cities that would wish to participate in these exchanges, to improve a sense of international cooperation and, ultimately, contribute to the implementation of SDGs, leaving no one and no place behind.

◆ **THE GIPUZKOA PROVINCIAL COUNCIL** presented the initiative they have recently implemented on **collaborative governance**. In light of the change of paradigm, the loss of citizens' trust in their institutions, the rise of new political parties that put an end to previous political exclusivity, it became clear that politics should be rethought and reinvented. To do so, Gipuzkoa has implemented a model of collaborative governance, involving all stakeholders in spaces without hierarchy, and socializing the public agenda through institutional leadership. Through various steps of deliberation, definition and analysis, projects can be implemented as part of the public agenda of the Provincial Council. So far, these efforts have been fruitful in generating knowledge and learning, allowing to transform the way to define and implement policies. The link with a Local4Action Hub would thus have to do with how to inform the international process, from a very concrete, local experience.

◆ **ON THE BASIS OF THESE TWO PRESENTATIONS**, it was stressed that Local4Action hubs are action-oriented. Their main component is that they cannot be detached from the local, they need to be grounded in local experience and actionable: what happens in the hubs will have to be meaningful for local levels and have a link with what the Organization does at the global level. The difference with other existing mechanisms, such as the Communities of Practice or Observatories, is that a Local4Action Hub is a process inspired from the local experience. It showcases what a city or an association is doing, looking for connections with other cities to develop specific aspects of the project and make it resonate within the international agenda of the Organization. It is not a project, with specific funding, but rather a participatory process.

- ◆ **SEVERAL MEMBERS**, including political representatives, welcomed the concept very positively, stressing that the hubs will provide opportunities to make the work developed at local level known, which will be particularly important in term of generating data and knowledge. It was also agreed that the hubs offer an excellent potential of visibility and synchronization with other partners or cities around the world. They could be a way to capitalize all the intelligence in UCLG: we already have a lot of materials, but if members have a project or initiative that can bring added value to a specific proposal, it would nurture these hubs.
- ◆ **IT WAS AGREED THAT THE UCLG LOCAL4ACTION HUB** will aim to facilitate, consolidate and provide visibility to the integrated efforts of the UCLG strategy, as a UCLG-driven initiative for learning, monitoring and mobilizing.
- ◆ **THE GOAL OF THE LOCAL4ACTION HUB IS** to turn the 2030 Agenda into local actions, taking advantage of our network and our experience of exchange and cooperation. Localizing the SDGs at local and territorial level needs swift actions that are well-formed and implemented. Local and regional leaders need sound evidence and timely advice, as well as new approaches, to guide such actions.
- ◆ **OUR VISION FOR THE LOCAL4ACTION HUBS** is to offer a platform to those LRG wishing to locally showcase initiatives in favour of sustainability, to be able to reflect on their work, receive guidance, learn from other peers, access relevant knowledge, and ultimately, to truly **synchronize our work**. A large platform of inter-connected local initiatives showing that **LRGs are ready to answer the needs of citizens and develop measures to promote the localization of the global agendas**.





NEXT STEPS

Key components of local for action hubs:

- 1 Locally driven**, by a specific local or regional government.
- 2 Coherent with the UCLG brand**: physically or digitally, the values and visuals must be identified in the development of the Hub.
- 3** A defined **timeframe**: deliverables must be available in an agreed and limited timeframe (2 years maximum).
- 4 Actionable and scalable**, in particular in view of their acceleration and synchronization impacts.
- 5** Attached to a **communication strategy**, with a common set of activities and documents produced.
- 6** Centered on a **key topic** allowing the UCLG's policy priorities to advance. A possible link with the Manifestos produced during the Durban Congress was mentioned and will need to be explored.

A working group will be set up to consider which proposals are fit to be Local4Action Hubs.

Three phases are being foreseen to operationalize the Local4actionHUBs concept:

Phase I - Concept, co-creation and getting ready to launch.

Phase II - Open call for proposals and supporting the first wave of implementation, taking place in the second half of 2020, including a communication campaign

Phase III – Evaluation, to allow the monitoring of the results of the second phase

“With the Local4Action Hubs, we are trying to align policies and objectives to reach synchronization and we must synchronize together, otherwise there is no synchronization possible.”

Emilia Saiz
UCLG Secretary General

“We already have a lot of experiences within the Organization, a true richness of knowledge coming from the ground. The Local4Action Hubs can be the way to capitalize on these.”

Octavi de la Varga
Secretary General of Metropolis

“We need the pedagogy of the Hubs to get to know each other better and to make ourselves better known. In this way, we can raise our voices and demand the positioning of local governments in national and international strategies to achieve the SDGs.”

Carlos Martínez Mínguez
Mayor of Soria, Outgoing Vice-President of UCLG for Europe





RETREAT
& CAMPUS
TANGIER
2020

LOCAL 4
ACTION
HUB
by UCLG

5

CITIES ARE LISTENING

UCLG
meets UCLG

From

Safer, RESILIENT
AND SUSTAINABLE
CITIES, capable
of facing crises

UCLG
CGLU

FLACMA



TOWN HALL PROCESSES

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- ◆ **THE POSITIVE MOMENTUM INITIATED IN DURBAN** with the Town Hall process, that provided an opportunity for our constituency to establish a meaningful, ongoing conversation with Civil Society, was followed-up in Durban. Coinciding with the presentation of the UN75 Campaign, the Town Hall session aimed at **co-creating** our vision for the future with civil society, ensuring that their recommendations were not just adopted, but that they were transformed into actions.

 - ◆ **WHILE SETTING THE SCENE**, participants defined the current state of affairs in regards to how non-state constituencies are seen within the international system, but also how the current situation, and the challenges that the multilateral system is facing, can allow our constituency and the civil society to come into a multilateral system of shared governance and no longer plead for a seat at the global table.

 - ◆ **THE REPRESENTATIVE FROM THE HABITAT INTERNATIONAL COALITION**, laid out the importance of the **right to the city** as a tool for regaining trust among communities and the institutions that represent them, and called to **amplify the joint work between local governments and civil society**, thinking together with the UN rapporteurs. She reminded that this endeavor had already proven to be useful in regards to the right to housing, and could be the way to go to secure rights.

 - ◆ **THE REPRESENTATIVE FROM THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PARTNERS** addressed the complexity of revolutionizing the UN system. Localization and synchronization among non-state stakeholders is essential to develop a bottom-up approach to bring about the change that we want to see in the international system.

◆ **THE REPRESENTATIVE** from the Huairou Commission called for not only trust, but also respect among the international system and what local and regional governments and the civil society bring to the global table. She further highlighted the need for local ingenuity, and **local knowledge**, to benefit a new model of governance.

◆ **THE SESSION FINALIZED** with questions on how to advance and secure our seat at the global table, and if the approach is, still, to fight for the spaces that we have already achieved.



NEXT STEPS

- 1** Replicate the exercise that took place in the Retreat with the civil society throughout the year
- 2** Use the collective knowledge from the civil society to help the local governments' constituency envision answers, starting through the joint definition of the Local4Action Hubs.

“I am pleased to see that language is no longer about begging. Local governments need to be intelligent and we need to share the systems of governance.”

William Cobbett
Director of Cities Alliance

“Those of us in this room all agree that the international system gives us mechanisms, but we must improve. We need bottom-up-up processes, involving more actors.”

Sophia Torres
Habitat International Coalition

“Governance cannot be in a silo, and that is why we are calling for a bottom-up approach to the change we want to see.”

Hannes Juhlin Lagrelius
General Assembly of Partners

“Those are resources that local governments should bring and acknowledge. Other constituencies, such as grassroots women, can bring about solutions. How do you open up spaces?”

Sri Husnaini Sofjan
Huairou Commission

THE FUTURE WE WANT: UN75 AND BEYOND

SYNCHRONIZING OUR PRIORITIES FOR THE FUTURE THAT WE WANT

- ◆ **IN AN INTERTWINED WORLD**, local issues are no longer to be solved at local level and the global transformation that will have to respond to the needs of communities is not possible without local ownership. The international municipal movement has started to facilitate a local-global platform to ensure that the voices are our own, and that through governance of proximity, we will contribute to the thinking of our communities from our own perspectives.
- ◆ **UPON REQUEST OF THE UNITED NATIONS**, UCLG has committed to facilitate a Report on the vision of local and regional leaders of the challenges ahead, the future we imagine, and an inclusive and networked multilateral system that is fit for purpose to meet these aspirations.
- ◆ **LOCAL AND REGIONAL GOVERNMENTS ARE ANSWERING** to the call of the UN Secretary General, to ensure that the visions of local and regional leaders shape the global system, to bring about a system that integrates local democracy at the core of peaceful societies that fosters equality and stays true to the principles of decentralization, subsidiarity and accountability. The world that we imagine by 2045 is one that responds to the needs, to the dreams, to the aspirations of our communities.
- ◆ **THE QUESTION IS**, now, **what kind of system will be able to define the world that our communities are calling for?** How do we shape this model of governance, that allows us to achieve the goals that we set for ourselves five years ago?
- ◆ **WE IMAGINE A FUTURE** In which the seat at the global table for our constituency is guaranteed, securing the link between our communities and global institutions. We imagine a shift from an international system to one that has cities and territories at the core, reflecting the urban era. A system that has evolved beyond traditional, state to state diplomacy, and has embraced a new transformational diplomacy, driven by cities and territories.





THE FUTURE THAT LOCAL AND REGIONAL LEADERS WANT

- ◆ **LOCAL AND REGIONAL GOVERNMENTS ANSWERED** the call of the United Nations to join the conversation on the future of multilateralism, and the political leadership of UCLG was asked to imagine what we expect for the future of multilateralism, and what is the role that our constituency imagines for itself. Our leadership was also asked to define what key questions need to be answered in order for our constituency to join the global conversation.
- ◆ **UCLG PRESIDENT MOHAMED BOUDRA** argued that answering the call to action by the UN is essential to ensure a better world for the future generations, and that it depends on the actions, as humanity, all of us to ensure that we reach 2045 in the best possible way.
- ◆ **JAN VAN ZANEN**, Mayor of Utrecht, Copresident of UCLG, imagined a world in which local and regional governments have taken their role in regards to peacebuilding, and that the revival of local democracy that we are witnessing informs the national and international level.
- ◆ **MADELEINE ALFELOR**, Mayor of Iriga, UCLG Treasurer, imagined a future in which local and regional governments are trailblazers, and that local and regional leadership has been key to solve social inequalities and changed the ways in which we produce and consume our food.
- ◆ **JOHNNY ARAYA**, Mayor of San José, Copresident of UCLG, imagined a future in which inequalities have been addressed, a greener, and more resilient world in which cities and regions have mainstreamed the SDGs in their development models, and an international system that considers us observers.





◆ **THROUGHOUT THE SESSION**, participants brought to the table the issues of **migration, governance, territorial justice**, gender equality, and **heritage**, and how they should be addressed in the UN consultation. UBUNTU advisor **Aromar Revi** argued that some of the key important topics of our time, such as the mandate of peace needed to be addressed by local and regional governments to raise their voices.

◆ **PARTICIPANTS WERE FURTHER** asked to picture the global trends that would shape the world in the coming 25 years, an exercise that would allow local and regional governments to imagine the paths that our movement needs to follow, with more sustainable consumption and production patterns, equality between men and women, greater equality between cities and territories. In short, the trends that will shape the world in 2045 will have been influenced by our work as an equality-driven movement.

◆ **THE EXERCISE** of the Retreat will be followed-up by **regional consultations** to be held by the UCLG Regional Sections, as well as a global consultation that will take place within the framework of the UCLG Executive Bureau. The consultation will allow for the visions of our political membership to answer the call of the United Nations, imagining how our constituency will lead the way in the new multilateral system.

◆ **THE FINAL PART OF THE SESSION** was dedicated to the presentation of the **Tangier Declaration**, that highlighted how, and why, local and regional leaders were joining the conversation on the future of multilateralism, was presented during this session, calling for a new, inclusive and networked multilateral system and pledging to support and disseminate the survey to the communities that we represent.



NEXT STEPS

- 1 Finalizing the consultation on UN75.
- 2 Disseminating the consultation on UN75 throughout the membership, holding regional consultations at regional gatherings, and a global consultation in the occasion of the UCLG Executive Bureau.
- 3 Developing the report on UN75, facilitated by our UBUNTU advisors, to be presented to the UN General Assembly in September.

“This year, we feel how humanity is experiencing a historic turning point. We, who are on the front lines, are listening to what our people are saying.”

Mohamed Boudra

Mayor of AL-Hoceima, President of AMPCC, President of UCLG

“By 2045? My greatest desire is to exist. Today, when I look at West Africa, I see that social cohesion is being put to the test. There have never been so many internally displaced persons in our region.”

Armand Béouindé

Mayor of Ouagadougou, Vice-President of UCLG for Africa.

“We must be convinced of our strength and unity before we go to convince the United Nations. We will have to lobby the UN to convince them of our cause.”

Mohamed Sadiki

Mayor of Rabat

“My vision for 2045? A world that has handled climate change, and urgent actions for green innovation and gender equality”

Carola Gunnarsson

Mayor of Sala, Vice-President of SALAR, UCLG Incoming Vice-President of Europe

“For 2045, I have 5 “zero” visions: 0 inequality, 0 violence, 0 poverty, 0 intolerance and 0 greenhouse emissions. Local governments can make a big change!”

Bernadia Irawati Tjandradewi

Secretary General of UCLG-ASPAC

“I hope in 25 years we live in a time in which we cannot imagine that mayors had to call for a seat at the global table!”

Jan Van Zanen, Mayor of Utrecht

President of VNG, Co-President of UCLG

“UCLG began by being the voice of the cities, today we have a more integral vision: we are not only the voice of the cities, we are also the ears of the cities.”

Johnny Araya

Mayor of San José, Co-President of UCLG



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**DID YOU KNOW THAT,
DURING THE RETREAT,
WE ALSO HELD...?**



◆ **A MEETING OF the UCLG Committee on Local Economic and Social Development**, which allowed to discussed both the Committee’s work plan and strategy for the coming years, but also the forthcoming 5th edition of the World Forum of Local Economic Development. The session highlighted that the Committee’s work is articulated around three main axes: governance, advocacy and knowledge management. The will to synchronize this work with other parts of the network, especially other consultation mechanisms and regional sections, came out strongly during the session. The learning and training dimension are crucial in order to bring together the regional sections and consultation mechanisms to work together and design an integrated learning programme. Obvious links for synchronization were highlighted with issues such as **social and solidarity economy, social inclusion, right to the city, transformative economy, migration or informality**.



◆ **A MEETING OF the UCLG Working Group on Territorial Prevention and Management of Crises**, to debate the work plan and priorities of the Working Group, and the UCLG’s **international solidarity fund initiative**. The goal of this fund is to help collect funds to help victims of a disaster and make cities more resilient and leave them in a better situation than they were before they were struck by a crisis or disaster. A strong component of **resilience-building** and adaptation was highlighted during the session, as well as the idea of coordination among different stakeholders. In this sense, local and regional governments have a stronger role to play in resilience-building than in ad-hoc assistance, which might correspond more to the field NGOs are working on. Moreover, resilience-building is key not only in terms of giving an answer to a crisis, but mostly of designing crisis-readiness strategies. The **Campaign “Make cities resilient”** was also highlighted as an important tool to raise awareness at local levels on resilience in terms of knowledge exchange and capacity-building.

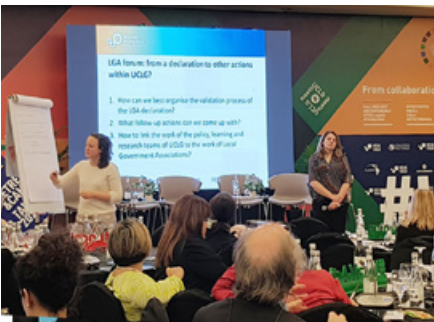
“It must be understood that local economic development is the development of the whole territory. Mayors and regional presidents cannot intervene in the territory without coordination and this is what gives strength and potential to the concept of local development.”

Mohamed Boudr

Mayor of Al-Hoceimas, President of AMPCC, President of UCLG



◆ The **Steering Committee of the World Forum on Violence and Territories of Peace** gathered within the UCLG Retreat, presenting the upcoming forum to be held in Mexico City, from 5-7 October 2020. The **City of Mexico** highlighted the change in narrative of the Forum, choosing to focus on peacebuilding rather than urban violence and highlighting the Forum itself as a process, signaling the symbiosis between the Forum and the concept of peace as a value that needs to be built. UCLG Secretary General Emilia Saiz encouraged the participation of cities, and also argued for the role of local governments' associations to map peace in cities. The value of intergenerational dialogues for peace and solidarity, which was one of the milestones of our Congress in Durban, was considered as one of the key aspects to ensure that the Forum is truly global and is manages to go beyond the Latin American Dimension. During the Retreat, the Forum was presented in an interactive session that asked participants to associate words, values, and images to peace. The exercise aimed at spurring the imagination of participants, to get people thinking on how the day-to-day work of cities could help with building and consolidating peace.



◆ A session led by the UCLG **CIB Working Group** was convened to work on the **Local Government Associations' Declaration**, presented during the World Congress in Durban. LGAs are an important type of member of the network and a greater, clearer visibility needs to be given to their work. The purpose of the declaration is to give a focus on the LGA Forum and the role it plays, to position associations within the Organization and to have a shared voice as a constituency. The main topics covered in the declaration are knowledge exchange, advocacy and learning. It was stressed during the session that the declaration needed to go deeper and mark a **differentiated agenda for LGAs**: even though their priorities might be very similar to the priorities of the rest of the network, it will be important to amplify some issues and provide new perspectives, as LGAs have the potential to play a pivotal role in dealing with an entire range of challenges, from ecological transition to gender equality.

“It is time to connect the dots and share our knowledge. In our city and our country, we have no choice but to become experts on facing disaster risk reduction. It is time for all of us to engage in peer training activities on these issues.”

Madelaine Alfelor

Mayor of Iriga, UCLG Treasury

“The core idea behind the Fund is to build back better, but also to prove that local and regional governments can manage the funds and use them to donate to other LRGs that are in times of necessity.”

Simoné Giovetti

Project Manager at United Cities of France, Coordinator of the Working Group’s Technical Secretariat

“LGAs have been part of the most important statutory bodies of the Organization but the visibility they have received has been relatively reduced. We need LGAs to use their full potential and influence international policy and advocacy.”

Emilia Saiz

Secretary General of UCLG

“The declaration was presented in Durban. It was not only a VNG/CIB initiative, but a joint initiative with FCM and the Flemish association, VVSG. We would like it to be a global initiative now!”

Jessie Post

Project Manager at VNG International, Coordinator of the Forum’s Technical Secretariat

“LGAs are also conveners of the municipal movement and the idea behind the creation of the LGA Forum was to bring visibility to their work.”

Elena Pierce

Governance, Policy and Networks Advisor at FCM, Coordinator of the Forum’s Technical Secretariat

“Being a local servant does not mean selling services for profit; it means bringing to the territories the policies that mayors make. This is why, as the global federation of trade unions of public service, we are happy to live this moment with UCLG, since it is the first time we can engage in such a way with your communities.”

Daria Cibrario

Policy Officer from PSI



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- ◆ The **Communication** team held a workshop highlighting the successful campaigns of previous years, involving focal points from regional sections, Committees, Working Groups, and other parts of the networks. The #Listen2Cities campaign at the 2018 HLPF, as well as the transition from #Listen2Cities to #CitiesAreListening which took place in Durban, accompanying the shift in narrative of the World Organization, were two of the success stories shared. Participants from Sections shared the challenges and opportunities of communicating, and how adapting to the region and the tools most used -different social networks, content, and ways of involving the membership had been key to carry out a successful communication. The workshop also laid out the foundation for the **UN75 campaign**, which launched at the end of the Retreat, focusing on the hashtag to be used to showcase how local and regional governments were joining the conversation. The campaign proved to be a hit, with the political leadership of UCLG joining the #UN75 feed on social media, and the messages from our constituency being the main result of the hashtag.

The hashtags used by UCLG, #Listen2Cities and #UCLGMeets, were Trending Topic in Tangier, in Morocco, and in Spain during the duration of the Retreat.

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- ◆ A networking session on **Local Public Service** allowed to place the focus not on local service provision, but on the people that work in municipalities and provide services (what we actually meant by “public service”). The session gave room for numerous exchanges of experiences from Africa and Asia, and highlighted three key recommendations on: rights and **labour rights** to be fully considered as human rights; **decent work** for public service workers and fight against inequalities, with the aim of leaving no one behind; and the fact that training is key but we need to go beyond and encourage local and regional governments to engage in **constructive social dialogues** with their workers. The exchanges concluded with the proposal to establish a wave of action on the specific issue of local public service and see how good practices can be replicated around the world.
 - ◆ A **working session of the UCLG Secretariats** gathered the Secretaries General of UCLG and its sections, to discuss **strategic issues** such as the agenda of the 2020 meeting of the Policy Forum on Development (PFD); the UN75 initiative and the way UCLG sections can contribute to organize regional consultations and give visibility to the broad initiative; ecological transition and its place on UCLG’s agenda; as well as **institutional matters**, such as the preparations of UCLG’s statutory meetings and the proposal for an evaluation of UCLG’s health and global performance.

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