



Durban2019
11-15 November

UCLG CONGRESS
**WORLD SUMMIT OF LOCAL
AND REGIONAL LEADERS**



MANIFESTO
**The Future of Equality:
Beyond Beijing+25**

#CitiesAreListening

UCLG Manifestos

MANIFESTO ON THE FUTURE OF EQUALITY: BEYOND BEIJING +25

Statement from the UCLG World Congress to the 64th session of the UN Commission on the Status of Women (CSW64) on Beijing+25 and Agenda 2030

Global problems, local solutions.

The pursuit of gender equality is not on track. Institutional and policy frameworks are still not adapted, as the Sustainable Development Goals Report 2019¹ demonstrates. It is true at the global level as much as at the local one. Women represent more than the half of the world population,² as such we must also take into account the diversity of women. Women, generally speaking, continue to be one of the populations most exposed to violence of all sorts; even more when they also belong to populations that have been historically discriminated against. This is a pressing challenges of our times: from economic development to migrations, from climate change to fair and equal access to basic services, from conflict resolution to the fulfilment of the Human rights declaration.

Whatever goal you pick out of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals of the UN 2030 Agenda, the status of women is one of 'vulnerability' or 'invisibility' even though they are pro-active and effective actress of the transformation. As a result, in most cases, policy design and implementation are less adapted to their specific needs, in particular those of women and girls of African descent, from autochthonous populations, migrants, LGBTQIA+ or belonging to any other population exposed to structural exclusion or marginalization.

Despite their pivotal role in the achievement of the transformational goals set out in the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, as well as in the UN 2030 Agenda, the contributions of local and regional governments to gender equality across development sectors also often remains invisible. However, as the level of government the closest to the communities, local and regional governments are best placed to

¹ <https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/report/2019/The-Sustainable-Development-Goals-Report-2019.pdf>

² https://population.un.org/wpp/Publications/Files/WPP2019_Highlights.pdf

reshape and implement relevant policies and sustain strategic partnerships that empower women and girls in the achievement of the global agendas.

Implementing the Beijing action plan.

The shaping of the world, from the conception of international and institutional frameworks to the effective local implementation based on bottom-up processes elaborated in collaboration with grass-roots and civil society organizations, will not happen sustainably if women, in all their diversity, are not fully included. Local governments must take action for gender mainstreaming as they play a crucial role for the achievement of the main critical areas foreseen by the Beijing action plan: poverty, education and training, health, violence, armed conflict, economy, power and decision-making, institutional mechanism, human rights, media, environment and the girl child.

1. Local and regional governments leading the way.

Gender equality is a human right with implications for the whole-of-society. As such, it is critical to guarantee that cities, metropolitan spaces, urban and rural areas are accessible and equally enjoyable for women and girls as they are for men and boys. Local and regional governments hold a collective responsibility to ensure that a full-fledge and coherent gender strategy for the fulfillment of fundamental human rights, including their financial, legal and political autonomy. As major employers and service providers, local and regional governments can have a significant impact on women's lives by promoting fair employment regulations, eliminating harassment and ensuring non-discriminatory practices. As a matter of fact, a large number of experiences, policies and actions towards this can already be found on the ground. Beyond the advocacy work, local governments act to promote models of best practices for communities. They must now lead the way to a more equitable, balanced and gender-responsible society.

2. *Enhancing local democracy.*

In its progress report 2019, within the section on the progress of SDG 5³, the UN underline that major gaps and challenges remain for gender equality in policy-making, with women continuing to be significantly underrepresented at all levels of political leadership, in most countries and regions of the world. Fair, inclusive and responsive local democratic governments, where women and men have equal access to decision-making has become for us, custodians of the local democracy, a major concern and one of our main priorities. Local governments must take action to improve female representation in elected, administrative and appointed office at the highest levels in our own institutions. In this sense, it is critical to support and promote laws, policies and measures to encourage and guarantee the equal participation of women in local politics. This can be achieved through a combination of anti-discrimination and positive action measures, and additional support through mentoring schemes, flexible working, and affordable childcare provision.

3. *Monitoring the condition of women.*

There is a clear gap on the monitoring of women representation in local political life across the world, there is no precise data. It is crucial to collect data and this is a main aim for UCLG, through its Gender Equality Strategy as the collection of sex-disaggregated data means to produce a qualitative change by developing monitoring and gender indicators, capable of informing further initiatives, actions and programmes towards the full achievement of gender equality. Local and regional governments across the world, through the regional level, have actually already started to monitor local political representation such as in Africa, Asia-Pacific, Europe and Latin America.

4. *Being at the frontline.*

The elimination of all forms of discrimination, harassment and violence against women is an unavoidable issue, and needs to be definitely resolved in all spaces, domestic and public, including transportation, school, work and public administration. The wellbeing of women conditions the future of the whole humanity, and the fully unlocking social, economic, environmental and cultural development

³ <https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/report/2019/The-Sustainable-Development-Goals-Report-2019.pdf>

in a holistic way. Local governments are in position to directly tackle harmful practices against women in both the public and private spheres. Local policing and urban planning, particularly the creation and maintenance of public spaces, are essential tools in tackling violence against women. Local governments have an important role to play in identifying women and girls affected by violence and providing them with the appropriate support and services to escape it and rebuild their lives.

5. *Building capacities.*

Women and girls experience cities in different ways to men and boys. Women still face discrimination in access to income-earning opportunities, education, housing, the rule of law and participation in local governance. Moreover, there is a clear commitment of local and regional governments to support, through cultural and educational programmes, the changing conception of gender roles. Local and regional governments have the duty to ensure women's equal access to opportunities, land, economic, natural and cultural resources. Local authorities can establish mechanisms to make it easier for women to obtain basic legal documents, provide legal aid services that support women in exercising their rights, and guarantee women's participation in land governance institutions and policy-making processes.

6. *Sustaining cooperation at all levels.*

The positive impact and results of capacity-building programmes and city-to-city cooperation initiatives demonstrate how international cooperation and peer-learning are crucial for the advancement of gender equality, both at the local level and at the global level. International and national associations of local and regional governments play a crucial role by implementing special programs and projects and promoting special actions aiming at achieving gender mainstreaming and equality. UCLG, through its regional sections and Standing Committee on Gender Equality in particular, aims at facilitating the exchanges of information and experiences across the world.

#UCLGCongress
www.durban2019.uclg.org

