

214 local and regional leaders from 40 countries come together in Rabat

The 12th UCLG Executive Bureau, hosted by the City of Rabat (Morocco), was officially opened on Thursday 23rd June by Fathallah Oualalou, Mayor of Rabat. Counting with over 300 participants, including 200 local and regional leaders from 40 countries from all continents, the Executive Bureau took place from 22 to 24 June in the capital city of Morocco.

The UCLG Executive Bureau comprises 115 members from around the world and meets twice a year. This statutory meeting was the first meeting of the Executive Bureau after the renewal of the Governing Bodies in Mexico last November.

One of the main decisions of the Bureau was the appointment of Josep Roig, Secretary General of Metropolis, as the new Secretary General of UCLG. The President of UCLG, Kadir Topbas, expressed the trust that the Organisation was putting in Mr Roig's great capacity to carry forward the work of UCLG. The appointed Secretary General expressed his honour to be selected and his intention to work with all members and regions to make the World Organisation stronger.

The Executive Bureau was chaired by Kadir Topbas, Mayor of Istanbul (Turkey) and President of UCLG, by Co-President Antonio Costa, Mayor of Lisbon (Portugal) and by Fathallah Oualalou, Mayor of Rabat (Morocco).

On Thursday 23rd, the opening session was dedicated to local and regional governments' working towards innovation, with presentations of Wan Qingliang, Co-President of UCLG and Mayor of Guangzhou (China), Anne-Marie Jorritsma, Mayor of Almere (Netherlands) and President of the Association of Dutch Municipalities, as well as special guests of the World Bank, Cities Alliance and representatives of national governments and financial institutions.

In his opening address, the President of UCLG, Kadir Topbas, Mayor of Istanbul, summarised the efforts of the UCLG Presidency to work on three pillars: leading the organisation; promoting membership and bringing the voice of the World Organisation before the international community. President Topbas mentioned the need to promote strong local democratic governments at the service of the citizens worldwide. He stressed the positive developments in UCLG relations with the UN and he quoted Ban Ki Moon who defined UCLG as a global ally of the United Nations in recent meetings with US mayors. He further highlighted the important work before us in updating the sustainability agenda, introducing culture as the fourth pillar of sustainable development, renewing the aid effectiveness agenda and addressing the issue of health and access to basic services.

The Executive Bureau further agreed to create a Standing Committee on Gender Equality in order to truly push forward the participation of women in local decision making and to boost up the role of women leaders in all the work of UCLG.

The regional workshop on financing infrastructure investment in Africa brought together 80 local leaders of most countries in the continent and made recommendations on urban infrastructure finance in Africa.

Members further agreed to devote the Third Global Report on Local Democracy and Decentralization (GOLD III) to the Governance of Local Public Services. The Executive Bureau also dedicated a full day to redefining strategic priorities of the Organization after the first six years of existence.

The UCLG leadership called for solidarity and denounced the situation of the civilian populations which are suffering oppression and destruction by their governments, in particular currently in some countries of the Mediterranean and Middle East.

United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG) is the biggest organization of local and regional governments in the world. UCLG represents and defends the interests of local governments on the world stage, regardless of the size of the communities they serve. UCLG's mission is to be the united voice and world advocate of democratic local self-government, promoting its values, objectives and interests, through cooperation between local governments, and within the wider international community.