

## **Regions & Urban Agenda: a Green Aftermath**

### ***European Week of Cities and Regions***

Regions implementing the Urban Agenda in the post-COVID-19:  
building a Green Aftermath

Online side-event proposal  
Concept note and agenda

20 October, 2020  
15h30 – 17h30 CEST

*Registration for the Zoom meeting [here](#)*

**Summary:** The side-event will convene presidents, ministers and representatives of regional governments to discuss the modalities and challenges for a territorial and integrated approach when implementing the New Urban Agenda. Particularly in face of the COVID-19 pandemic, regions will be key to attain greater territorial cohesion, resilience, and to enable a green, sustainable and just recovery. Building on the European experience, the UCLG Forum of Regions will facilitate a global debate, with representatives from different parts of the world.

### **Background**

The United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG) promotes the localization of the global agendas in an inclusive and integrated fashion. The implementation of such agendas hold direct implications for cities and regions, and consequently, these become fundamental partners for the successful realization of the New Urban Agenda, the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the Paris Agreement, and others.

With that in mind, the UCLG Forum of Regions, under the presidency of the Consortium of Provincial Autonomous Governments of Ecuador (CONGOPE), and in collaboration with the member government of Catalonia, propose this side-event to generate a practitioners' debate on the territorial dimension of the urban agendas, led by regional governments.

The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated our vulnerabilities and added great pressure to the provision of public services and infrastructure at all levels. As movement restrictions and lockdowns were introduced, local and regional governments stood at the forefront, adopting measures to protect its people and ensure their wellbeing.

Provided the necessary governance structure, institutional and financial capabilities, regions, states and provinces can be drivers of change and innovation, which will be the core for the recovery from the pandemic to be in line with ambitious commitments for a sustainable future.

### **Territorial dimension in the COVID-19 aftermath**

Cities should not be addressed in isolation, but rather as parts of a broader territorial ecosystem of interconnected cities, surrounding areas and natural landscapes. The implementation, monitoring and review of the urban agendas will necessarily require multi-level and multi-stakeholder engagement and collaboration.

Beyond the traditional understanding of the rural world as mere providers of resources and services to major urban centers, regional governments need to aim for advanced territories, which seek an energy transition towards Resilience and redress persistent inequalities, as to leave no one and no place behind.

Regions are thus particularly well-positioned to lead on the territorial dimension of the urban and other global agendas, particularly by focusing on:

- Competitive territories (resilient): it is necessary to prepare for future distresses, tackle climate change and increase readiness to disasters are the ultimate goals, however facing the post-pandemic makes economic, social and health resilience between the most urgent to think about and plan. Also, in face of the pandemic, regions can help plan and control urban sprawl, designating areas for economic activity, or the protection of natural spaces. What are the mechanisms that the EU is putting on the table for the Regions to build a Green Recovery? What possibilities are offered and perspectives?
- Cohesive territories: moving forward it will be important to close gaps, as in the urban-rural dichotomy, and to reduce inequalities, as to eradicate vulnerability and generate equal opportunities throughout the territory. Regions can target tailored-cut action to each specific circumstance and develop a new territorial governance model in collaboration with local governments. How could be defined the balance of rural and urban when dealing with cohesion and inequalities?
- Connected territories: physical and digital infrastructure will be required in the recovery of the pandemic. As many services and jobs move to home office, regions can help ensure school children, workers and others have the necessary access to the internet and facilities. Simultaneously, as global supply is affected, regions can also turn to economies of proximity to support local producers and enhance territorial mobility. What services could be provided and facilitated to reinforce the connectivity and strength of the territories?

Regions in Europe have extensive experience in cohesion, climate change and others, which can be enriched and contrasted with the knowledge accumulated and similar challenges faced by regions elsewhere.

### **Objectives for the session**

- I.** Exchange insights, practices and knowledge on the challenges faced during the pandemic, as well as identifying the needs and opportunities to build a green and sustainable recovery. Building on the efforts of the European regions, a global conversation will be facilitated to compare and contrast the situation of regions worldwide.
- II.** Explain and exemplify the different efforts regional governments in the world have adopted to implement and engage the Urban Agenda, and how it could be accelerated in the aftermath of the pandemic. An integrated territorial approach based on multi-level and multi-stakeholder participation will be key to achieving global agendas.
- III.** Mobilize and invite a high-level group of interested regional government leaders and partners to join the UCLG Forum of Regions in further developing of these thematic. UCLG is keen to foster an active of regions to continue collaboration and mutual support towards *advanced territories*.

### **Program**

#### **Opening and welcome remarks**

Moderation & opening: Emilia Saiz, Secretary General UCLG

- Pablo Jurado, President of UCLG Forum of Regions, President of Imbabura Province, President of the Consortium of Provincial Governments of Ecuador (CONGOPE)
- Carlos Martínez, Mayor of Soria, UCLG Presidency's Envoy for the New Urban Agenda

#### How to attain advanced territories and the role of regions in the delivery of the urban agenda

- Damià Calvet, Minister of Territory and Sustainability, Government of Catalonia
- Anders Knape, President of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe, and Member of the Committee of the Regions (CoR) (TBC)
- Remy Sietchiping, Chief of Policy, Legislation and Governance Section, Urban Practices Branch, UN-Habitat

#### The urban agenda for regions in the post-COVID-19

Moderation: Albert Civit, Director of INCASÒL Government of Catalonia

- Alejandra Silvana Rodenas, Vice-Governor, Santa Fe Province
- Emilia Romagna (TBC)
- Alfons Röblom, Minister of Development, Government of Åland Island
- Emil Dardak, Vice-Governor, Government of East Java

- Rashid Seedat, Head of Delivery Support Unit & Gauteng Coordinator for Metropolis, Gauteng Province

### Debate

### Conclusion and next steps

- Edwin Miño, Executive Director, CONGOPE, UCLG Forum of Regions Presidency
- Agustí Serra, Secretary for the Urban Agenda Government of Catalonia

### **Format**

The 2h-virtual event will be hosted by UCLG, through the zoom platform. Simultaneous interpretation will be provided into English, French and Spanish.

### **About United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG)**

UCLG is the global organization of local and regional governments and their associations that represents and defends their interests on the world stage. Representing 70% of the world's population, UCLG members are present in all world regions: Africa, Asia Pacific, Europe, Eurasia, Middle East-West Asia, Latin America and North America - organised in seven continental sections, a metropolitan section and a regional forum. This network covers more than 240,000 cities, regions and metropolises and more than 175 local and regional government associations present in 140 countries. UCLG includes among its main areas of political interest local democracy, climate change and environmental protection, the achievement of Sustainable Development Goals, the role of culture in sustainability, local finance, urban development and city diplomacy for peacebuilding.

Visit <http://www.uclg.org> and follow @uclg\_org for more.

### **About the UCLG Forum of Regions**

The Forum of Regions, as a section for UCLG's regional authorities, aims to recognize territorial strategic planning resulting from multi-level cooperation, to promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth. The Forum of Regions' mission is (i) representing and ensuring the active participation of regional governments in the international agenda; (ii) promoting the essential participation of subnational governments in developing global development strategies; (iii) demonstrating the capacity of regions and the overall impact of their policies on the territory, especially in the linkages between cities and rural areas.

### **DISCLAIMER**

Registered participants are advised that the event will be recorded with the objective of being able to disseminate it on social media networks, pamphlets, publications, press and other portals, and between UCLG members. The images and audio and video content of the webinar could be used by UCLG for promotional purposes and in compliance with the objectives referenced in its statutes without said activities implying a right to remuneration in favor of the participant.