

SPEECH OF EMILIA SAIZ UPON HER APPOINTMENT AS UCLG SECRETARY GENERAL

UCLG World Council in Hangzhou, China, 8 December 2017

President, Co-Presidents, members, colleagues and friends, and – as I have learned from our President – all protocol observed.

More than an organization

I am deeply grateful for the challenging task entrusted to me. As you know, UCLG is more than an organization. It is the movement that drives us, and that has inspired our path together.

It is about shared values, even when we have different interests; solidarity, even when our capacities are challenged.

You define the policy

I will not describe here what the policy priorities of the organization should be, as that is what you – the political leadership and members – have defined.

You can count on me to materialize your policy priorities, to transform your vision into synchronized action by all of us, building on our diversity and strengths.

You can count on me to develop partnerships and contacts that can support your ideas and objectives.

The Secretaries General, the women and the teams

I would like to take a moment to acknowledge all the Secretaries General that I have worked with. They have been my mentors and references, in different ways.

Allow me to particularly thank Josep. You have challenged me professionally and given me great opportunities to develop ideas. I hope I will be up to the task.

I cannot and will not forget the women that have paved the way; that have made it possible for women like me to stand before you today.

I see my appointment as a recognition of the devoted teams in all the Secretariats of the organization. In the World Secretariat, but also in all our Sections, and in the Committees, Fora and Working Groups.

Thank you for confirming that we are on a good path going forward.

And thank you, colleagues, for your support and continued dedication.

An unprecedented movement

This is an exciting moment. Never before in the century-long history of our municipal movement has there been a greater need, or greater opportunity, for local and regional governments to shape international policy.

Never before have we had shared universal development agendas, nor has the significance of territorial development been so acknowledged.

I am happy to put my resolve and the capacity of our team at the service of your vision. I will speak on your behalf when needed, but mostly, I will ensure that we, your team, amplify your voices.

Changing, but building on our roots

As you all know, I have been with this movement for a long time. It has been a great adventure! A privilege and a pleasure. We have gone through many changes, evolutions and transformations, yet always preserving our history and roots.

The balance between the commitment and continuity of associations and the drive of cities and regions will guarantee our sustainability.

I am truly delighted with the perspective of continuing this path with you, for the protection of the commons, to foster justice, solidarity and development with people at the centre... In fact, to help you in your task to make this world a better place.