

Statement on the closure of the Metropolitan Municipality of Caracas

The World Organization of United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG) and in particular their Latin American membership MERCOCIUDADES, FLACMA and UCCI express their concern about the closure of the Metropolitan District of Caracas and the Metropolitan Municipality of Alto Apure, last 20 December 2017 by the National Assembly of Venezuela.

In our increasingly urbanised world the metropolitan and proximity governments play a vital role as the sphere of public authority closest to the citizen which they represent. Their role in service provision to communities and in guaranteeing inclusion, cohesion and territorial development is vital.

Latin America is the continent with more city dwellers than any other region in the world. Venezuela in particular is one of the 3 countries with most urban concentration in the whole region, with over 90% of the population living in urban areas, this is the reason why the measure of suspension of these two Metros is very significant.

The suspension of both metropolitan areas without consultation with the citizens and without a broader context of institutional reform can only be seen as bad news, and be interpreted as a limitation of the rights of the inhabitants of these metropolitan areas.

As representative organizations of local and regional governments worldwide we call for dialogue among all the institutional parties in Venezuela and call to respect the results of the electoral process by the inhabitants of Caracas. We further recognise the active and significant role played by Caracas in the international networks, in particular in the World Association of Metropolitan governments, METROPOLIS, which work towards exchange of experiences and development of joint solutions that will enhance the livelihoods of the inhabitants of our communities and metropolitan areas.

In this context we express our most sincere solidarity with the elected officials and the workers of the Metropolitan Municipality of Caracas and Alto Apure and would like to express our confidence that both institutions will be reinstated soonest.