
Joint Statement to the 2020 High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development of the organized constituency of Local and Regional Governments

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#HLPF2020



JOINT STATEMENT

In these trying times, with the world facing an unprecedented crisis, we need to put our resolve in creating a window of opportunity to bend the curve of the current unsustainable trajectory. Our world will never be the same. It is our shared responsibility to ensure a better future for the generations to come.

The current context has exacerbated our weaknesses. We can no longer ignore the persistence of inequalities, discrimination, and exclusion in our cities and territories. We must fight to eradicate poverty and transform our consumption and production patterns while protecting our common goods for the current and future generations. The fight against the virus has largely become a fight against poverty and structural inequality.

The transformative framework of the universal development agendas remains essential for a more sustainable future. The pandemic is demonstrating that all development agendas need to be addressed as one and will need to be underpinned by emboldened local action, co-led by local and regional governments and the communities they serve and in close collaboration with national governments.

Local and regional governments & the universal access to essential public services

Achieving the SDGs is directly linked to the capacity of local and regional governments to ensure populations' access to basic service provision that underpin quality of life, such as adequate housing, water, sanitation, education, food systems, mobility and health.

The living conditions of our citizens are more than ever a matter of life or death, particularly as self-quarantine and lockdowns stood up as central elements of the global response to the pandemic and have been critical to safeguard sanitary measures.

As digitalization, online service delivery, remote work and health issues reshape the morphology of our cities and towns, a new territorial model will need to emerge with invigorated roles for smaller and intermediary cities.

Strong, solidarity-driven local and regional governments will need to guarantee the quality of public services, the ecosystems of which are integral for the achievement of the global goals in the urban era.

As countries and international entities discuss financial packages and funds to recover economies, **we call to ensure and reinforce public service provision at all levels as a means to build back better.** The sacrifices of our communities cannot go unnoticed.



Localization and proximity at the core of acceleration

Rooting the 2030 Agenda implementation in local and regional priorities, what is known as **localization**, will allow the co-creation of a new framework of governance that is meaningful and practical in the day-to-day lives of citizens.

Localization requires multi-level and multi-stakeholder coordination, financial support and capacity building for local and regional governments to effectively participate.

The limitation to expanded and global supply chains is paving the way to a new wave of local economic development. Local and regional governments have turned to consider models of proximity that can guarantee the provision of food and essential products by means of local production.

With the support of national governments, investors and communities, local and regional governments are fostering circular economies and new patterns of production and consumption by consolidating urban-rural linkages and territorial approaches.

We stand for bottom-up and inclusive processes to apply the 2030 Agenda as a roadmap to overcome the present crisis and its subsequent effects, while accelerating the achievement of the SDGs in the Decade of Action.

A green and democratic recovery

Our efforts to tackle this crisis must be built on democratic values and lead the way to a green recovery, which reinforces the trust in local and regional institutions and governments, enabling the creation of new jobs and the required sustainable infrastructure.

We must not yield to solutions that compromise years of efforts to address the climate emergency and protect the biodiversity and natural resources of our world.

We call on international systems and national governments to promote legal and regulatory reforms necessary to enhance municipal and regional governments' resources and capacity to act and carry out the goals, especially during periods of distress.



Revamped multilateralism that targets local and territorial needs

As the UN celebrates the 75th anniversary of the General Assembly, our constituency has taken upon itself the challenge of triggering the conversation on the future of the world among our citizens.

The global solutions we need to tackle the universal challenges we face can only be achieved with a more inclusive and resourceful multilateralism in which communities have a say, and only if all stakeholders take collective responsibility to make it happen

Our hopes for the 2020 HLPF

Our constituency is convinced that the universal development agendas global goals remain a valid framework towards our sustainable future. This is why we have continued our work to ensure implementation of the SDGs around the world even in the midst of the pandemic.

This is also the reason why we look forward to the exchanges during the High-Level Political Forum (HLPF). We celebrate the mention in the HLPF Ministerial Declaration on involving and empowering local and regional governments to nourish local and territorial ownership of the SDGs. **We hope for further acknowledgement of local and regional governments and their national associations as key drivers of the SDGs.**

The local/territorial-global movement for localization has been growing over the years. The Global Taskforce annual report to the HLPF, *Towards the Localization of the SDGs*, shows that local and regional governments' involvement in VNR processes has increased to 55% in 2020, up from 42% in the 2016-2019 period. Additionally, our report points to an increase in the elaboration of Voluntary Local and Regional Reviews, with a number of countries facilitating this process and including its results in national reviews, while **recognizing the relevance of local and regional government networks as facilitators.**

We would envisage the HLPF as the space to discuss innovative governance mechanisms between local, regional and national governments. We call for an inclusive HLPF that promotes and institutionalizes the dialogue with local and regional governments and stakeholders.

We welcome the inclusion of a session on *Bolstering local action to control the pandemic and accelerate implementation* to address measures to empower and support cities, local and regional authorities, territories and communities, on issues related to climate adaptation, biodiversity, sustainable urban development, infrastructure, culture, urban-rural linkages, and people-centered services, among others.



We celebrate the third edition of the Local and Regional Governments Forum co-organized by our constituency. We exult the Forum as a critical opportunity for dialogue among local and regional governments, Member States, and the UN system in the localization, and follow-up of this agenda.

We call on all relevant actors to combine efforts and use this moment to transform our societies in the ways we promised through our global agreements, for a world that guarantees fundamental rights for all, equity, and sustainability, based on a renewed local and territorial democracy.

We call on national governments to acknowledge the importance and support the elaboration of Voluntary Subnational Reviews as opportunities to revise policy decisions and to generate additional traction for the goals. VLRs, beyond local and territorial borders and monitoring mechanisms, are levers for transformation, and embody the aspirations of local and regional governments and their sense of ownership, as institutions.

We reiterate the commitment of our organized constituency towards the localization of all the global development agendas, and we call upon national governments and the international system to not leave the transformative potential of the SDGs behind.

The time for transformation is now. Our governance models for the future need to reflect and empower the views of our communities. The aspirations for the future we want must not be placed in a secondary spot when we face difficult times. On the contrary, the 17 SDGs need to inspire our actions and be implemented at the levels in which citizens can truly own them.

We are ready to undertake our share of responsibility and accelerate the achievement of the SDGs. We are ready to unite efforts with Member States and the international community to build back with ambition, in line with our common vision for 2030 and beyond.

