

Policy Council:
**Safer, Resilient
and Sustainable
Cities, Capable of
Facing Crises**

POLICY COUNCILLORS



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BRIEFING

In our World Congress in 2016 in Bogotá, UCLG committed to “lead the transition towards low carbon, resilient cities and regions” and to actively participate in the activities of the Global Alliance for Urban Crises. Confronted with the pressing task of ensuring the ecological restoration of planetary systems, cities and regions across the world are leading the way in reducing their environmental footprints, building resilience and embracing innovation.

The UCLG Policy Council “**Safer, Resilient and Sustainable Cities, Capable of Facing Crises**” is the place to share initiatives and hold in-depth discussions about policies and their consequences at local and global level.

The roadmaps for climate change and resilience adopted recently (Sendai Framework, SDG 11 and Paris Agreement) require the involvement of all relevant stakeholders and local governments’ capacity to mobilize the human, financial and technical resources available to them. It is also a fact that local authorities are on the front line when crises strike, as recalled by the World Humanitarian Summit.

The urban development model of city expansion, the dysfunctional relationship between life and work, consumption and the destruction of the urban commons, such as cultural and natural assets, has led to social segregation, the negative ecological and economic footprints of cities, and worsened living conditions. The need for sustainable cities requires a new spatial and economic organization of the city. Local governments need support to understand disaster risk, strengthen disaster risk governance, invest in **resilience** and enhance disaster preparedness to “build back better”. Urban areas are increasingly at risk, but also provide opportunities to work differently to ensure that responses to crises provide immediate humanitarian relief while strengthening resilience. While coping with urban crises, local governments need to align their responses with development trajectories and promote the active participation of key stakeholders and the most vulnerable. Compact and mixed city, transit-oriented and socially inclusive development, with neighbourhoods where work and housing functions complement each other, are required. Local and regional governments must further move towards **sustainable production and consumption** patterns to mitigate and adapt to climate change, promoting renewable energies and adapting transport systems. UCLG wants to promote a vision of inclusive, safe, resilient, and sustainable territories in which urban communities have the capacities to address risks and mitigate the impacts of crises - both man-made and natural - on the most vulnerable, including the displaced, protecting their dignity and well-being.

Local governments are uniquely placed to experiment and capitalize on the resources and potentialities inherent to their locations and populations. As illustrated by the UCLG publication “The future’s edge for cities”, through multi-stakeholder partnerships, cities are experimenting and developing local **innovations** that, by leveraging disruptive new technologies, contribute to the goal of building self-sufficient and resilient cities. UCLG members’ learning work around public spaces can further display tangible results of innovative and integrated development at city and neighbourhood scale. Human-centred development policies require indicators beyond economic ones. The mental and physical health of all citizens is the final goal of safe and resilient cities.

This exchange will further refer to the contribution of the local and regional governments constituency to the relevant ongoing discussions and mechanisms, namely: the UN-Habitat programmes on public space and safer cities; the 5th Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction; the implementation of the Marrakech Roadmap for Action; support to the Global Covenant of Mayors for Climate and Energy; contributions to the Climate Chance Summit; the preparation of a conference aiming to further develop the scientific understanding of climate change in cities, in support of the implementation of the key relevant global agendas; and the World Humanitarian Summit (WHS) and the “agenda for humanity” process.