

Notes for Addressing the Official Major Group and other Stakeholders Session, HLPF 2018:

Dear Members of the major Groups and other stakeholders,

Dear Speakers,

On behalf of Local and Regional Governments, we are proud to be part of this dialogue and to learn from each other. Let me begin by stating that there has been a silent constructive tsunami taking place ever since the Agenda was adopted. Local governments are not only taking ownership of the agenda but are also implementing it at the local level and, often, without the means they need. Let me remind you all that without localizing the achievement of the SDGs in cities and territories, it will be particularly difficult to end poverty, ensuring that ‘no one is left behind’ and protecting our environment.

[\[Local and regional governments involvement in the localization of the SDGs is making progress but is still not sufficient\]](#)

Significant efforts have been made by local and regional governments and their networks to raise awareness and foster local ownership of the global agendas, and their involvement in the implementation of the SDGs is progressively growing in all regions. Embracing these SDGs allows the work around service provision to be part of the global conversation on the development agendas, since LRGs are at the front line with citizens.

The progress made is indeed remarkable but in order for the full ownership of the SDGs to take place we need stronger joint efforts, clear high-level political support and stronger alliances.

[Local and regional governments' participation in the VNRs has made progress since 2016, but needs to be scaled up]

The achievement of the Goals requires stronger collaborations within and between different levels of governments. One of the key indicators of said collaboration is the participation of local and regional governments in the preparation of the VNRs. Since 2016, local and regional governments were consulted in 45% of the countries that presented their VNRs and participated in 39% of the countries that have set-up national mechanisms for the coordination and follow-up of the SDGs.

[Institutional environment to empower local governments, as well as local stakeholders' participation]

We still need to improve local and regional involvement in the national reporting processes and in the institutional mechanisms for SDG coordination and follow-up. Wherever local governments benefit from an enabling institutional framework, they can play a key developmental role. Participatory and rights-based approaches, including the 'Right to the city', are being used by frontrunner cities and regions to develop a new framework for the 'co-creation' of cities and territories based on stronger involvement of local actors.

Local and regional governments' networks are also essential in developing partnerships with other organizations which can effectively ensure the achievement of SDGs. This is why we find it instrumental to have a place where all UN Agencies discuss action at local level with other stakeholders.

[Strengthen the follow-up processes of the VNRs and developing the HLPF as a space for further identification and exchange of successful practices]

The potential of local innovative actions to develop timely and context specific decisions to 'leave no one behind' cannot be left untapped. And this, fundamentally, requires active participation from all stakeholders. There are inspiring practices that can stimulate institutional change and improve multi-stakeholder approaches to root sustainable development at local levels. Some countries grant dedicated spaces in the VNRs to the local and regional governments and local stakeholders, while

others promote new approaches to promote the alignment with the SDGs in the national strategies, while fostering bottom-up innovation and enhanced collaborative mechanisms to promote effective coherence between policy-making; financing; and implementation.

Results are there to demonstrate that local capacities and national development strategies are correlated but more efforts are needed to raise awareness and support local governments' involvement in the localization of the SDGs.

Conclusion

Dear delegates, it is through democratic processes that communities can decide, together, where to target investment and action in order to harness the potential of the SDGs. Political leadership is needed to bring everyone around the table, resolve potential conflicts, and coordinate action towards the localization process with regional and national initiatives.

Our involvement requires both strong dialogue and long-term integrated strategies. We must guide transformative change and make sure that perspectives and necessities of Local and Regional Governments are no longer a side note.