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Thank you to the co-facilitators and member states for your work on this document and for the opportunity to speak on its contents.

UCLG is here today representing the Local Authorities' Major Group, organized around the Global Taskforce of Local and Regional Governments.

We would like to start by recognizing the work that has been done in the Revision 1 of the proposal for HLPF Ministerial Declaration. From the constituency of Local and Regional Governments, we welcome the mentions made to these important local spheres of government to promote effective and coordinated government, to foster pluralism and peaceful coexistence, to ensure urban development and territorial cohesion, to contribute to essential services –such as water and sanitation, protecting the environment, as well as risk prevention. We would like to emphasize the importance of place-based policies to ensure broader multi-stakeholder participation, particularly of women, youth and children, and vulnerable groups, to reduce inequalities between territories and to guarantee that no one is left behind.

We welcome Para. 27. where the urban challenge is described and where Cities and territories are strongly recognized as the spaces where the battle of sustainable development will be won or lost. We welcome the recognition of the multiple challenges that our cities face and the call for strengthening the capacity of cities and local authorities for developing and delivering integrated, multi-sector urban planning policies.

We also welcome the reference to the New Urban Agenda, and we would like to stress the need to understand it as an unavoidable accelerator for the rest of the global agendas. In general, the number of issues contained within Para. 27 emphasize the interlinkages between sustainable development and the daily life of city inhabitants. It reaffirm that cities can act as catalysts for inclusion and powerhouses of equitable growth, if their governance benefits from strengthened normative and regulatory frameworks, and local authorities with adequate support to ensure their management responsibilities.

In fact our vision is that to a large extend the Global Goals are related to local implementation policies that are responsibility of local governments. This is why Local and Regional Governments should be explicitly recognized, both in the declaration and in the national implementation strategies, as instrumental actors to facilitate the achievement of the global goals.

Our research, which will be presented during the Forum, shows that the involvement of local and regional governments in the preparations of the VNRs made progress (local governments

were consulted in 53% of the countries reporting this year), but is still not where it should be. A stronger involvement of local and regional governments in the national SDGs strategies is necessary to ensure local ownership and implementation. We would hope that the Declaration of this HLP which will for the first time see a Local and Regional Governments Forum taking place will call for greater involvement of local and regional governments at country level.

Providing accurate, disaggregated data as mentioned in Para. 19 and mobilizing financial resources as mentioned in Para. 30, is indeed essential, but if they are not accessible to those at the local level and if they don't take into account local realities, then these resources will not help moving the implementation of the goals forward. National spheres of government need to support this mobilization of resources, taking into account that LRGs are at different stages in this process. Likewise, LRGs are essential for the realization of human rights – an overarching goal of global agendas, as mentioned in different Para. (12, 13, 17).

We look forward to continue contributing to this discussion and to the actual implementation on the ground. Our constituency will be present in important numbers, gathering many cities and regions of the world here on 16<sup>th</sup> July. Mayors from Barcelona to Antananarivo, from Montevideo to Berlin and Kitakyushu (Japan) will be sharing their experiences, vision and commitments. We hope that the Ministerial declaration will take the importance of local action into account.

Thank you.