

Statement of the organized constituency of local and regional governments at the occasion of the First UN-Habitat Assembly Nairobi, 29 May 2019

We, local and regional governments from across the globe, representing the populations of metropolises, peripheral cities, intermediary cities, regions, rural areas, and small municipalities, convened by the Global Taskforce of Local and Regional Governments as an organised constituency, and gathered at the occasion of the Local Governments Forum of the First UN-Habitat Assembly,

1) *Reaffirm the need to build on the legacy of Habitat III*

The New Urban Agenda is critical to the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development as it creates the acceleration and enabling environment for the localization of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) including SDG 11 of making cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient, and sustainable.

We recall the reference to the contributions of subnational and local governments to the Quito Declaration, in particular the reference to the World Assembly of Local and Regional Governments.

We recall the landmark inclusion of a reference to the Right to the City as part of a shared vision of “cities for all” of the Quito Declaration, as well as the recognition of many of the core principles of the Right to the City in the text.

We recall the commitment of Member States to ensure appropriate fiscal, political and administrative decentralization based on the principle of subsidiarity.

We recall the commitment of Member States to strengthen and empower the capacities of local governments to implement effective multi-level governance across administrative borders, and to ensure reliable financing mechanisms in all types of government.

We recall the value of reinforcing integrated territorial development approaches outlined in the New Urban Agenda as a vehicle to accelerate sustainable development.

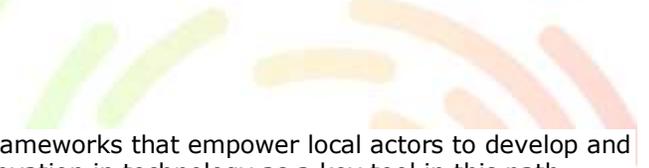
We appreciate the ongoing efforts to strengthen UN-Habitat as a vital instrument to achieve the implementation of the New Urban Agenda, which we consider a critical accelerator of the Global Agendas as a whole.

We recall the commitment of our constituency to continue building a strong UN-Habitat, welcoming the proposal to enhance the strategic and political framework under which UN-Habitat functions by providing a universal and intergovernmental membership to its Assembly as well as an Executive Board that will allow for greater engagement of member-states in the work of the organization.

We commend that the role of UN-Habitat is reaffirmed as a focal point for the implementation and follow up of the New Urban Agenda and the Programme’s lead role in defining and monitoring the urban dimension of the SDGs.

2) *Acknowledge local innovation for the New Urban Agenda implementation*

We acknowledge that the implementation of the New Urban Agenda relies on effective localization, underscoring that it needs to be fully owned and shaped by local and regional governments and their inhabitants as well as other local actors, to make the New Urban Agenda a reality and leave no one and no place behind. We recognise decentralised cooperation as a valuable asset in the ‘localisation’ process of the SDGs, without which the 2030 agenda might never come to fruition.



We acknowledge the necessity of building and enabling national frameworks that empower local actors to develop and lead sustainable, resilient and innovative urban policies. We see innovation in technology as a key tool in this path.

We recall the importance of reinforcing and establishing accountable, multi-stakeholder and effective local institutional frameworks to facilitate sustainable development as well as the importance of inclusive and participatory processes at local levels.

We reaffirm the pivotal role local and regional governments play in promoting innovation and innovative policies to support the implementation of the New Urban Agenda, providing a new frame for 'co-creating' our cities and territories, and building new relationships with, and within, the communities.

We reaffirm the visionary leadership of local and regional governments to drive policy changes with their communities to facilitate access to affordable housing, basic services and sustainable mobility, as well as to safeguard heritage, develop culture, improve urban resilience, enhance economic development, promote a more sustainable use of water and energy, integrated waste management, and participatory planning approaches that integrate risk prevention. They are driving new forms of urbanism as well as urban-rural linkages and environmental sustainability, but they cannot accomplish this shift alone.

3) *Call for enhanced local-national dialogue and renewed governance*

We, recognize the need to enhance the participation of local and regional governments and other stakeholders in the renewed governance structure of the United Nations, and of UN-Habitat in particular, building on the recommendations of Habitat III.

We recall the recommendations of the Report of the Independent Panel to Assess and Enhance Effectiveness of UN Habitat stating that "as the levels of government most engaged with addressing exclusion on the ground, local and regional governments must be high on the list of UN-Habitat's partnerships".

We are convinced that it is now essential to enhance the quality of the involvement and the activities that emanate from the partnership between local governments and UN-Habitat. As the Panel's report suggests, "Partnerships predicated on a mission of genuine inclusion, not just the delivery of participation as a project deliverable, imply a seat at the table for stakeholders who might not historically have occupied that position".

We recognize that UN-Habitat has always enjoyed strong commitment from stakeholders which have organised in constituencies in order to better contribute both to the work of the agency and to the Habitat III process. The capacity of UN-Habitat to partner and mobilise urban stakeholders from academics, to private sector to professionals and civil society has been broadly acknowledged. We recognise that innovative approaches such as Continental and Regional whereby cities, umbrella organisations, Member States and regional institutions are around the same table to exchange on specific urban development challenges should be enhanced.

In this light, we firmly believe that local and regional governments and their networks should have a seat at the table of decision making, and be considered in the renewal of the UN-Habitat's governance arrangements.

We call for:

- Creating specific spaces for consultation for local governments and stakeholders, such as 2 Executive Consultation Committees. These Committees could dialogue with the Executive Board on policy and programmatic matters;
- Enhancing the involvement of local governments and stakeholders in the design of the World Urban Forum and develop a worldwide campaign to promote engagement at the local, national and regional level in the implementation of the New Urban Agenda.
- Multi-stakeholder and multi-level governance platform on urban development at national level to follow up the implementation of the New Urban Agenda, fostering dialogues between ministries in charge of urban development and representatives of local and regional governments.

We recall, following the outcomes of Habitat III, the need for the World Assembly of Local and Regional Governments to become a significant and representative mechanism through which local and regional governments can provide political guidance and technical follow-up on the global sustainability agenda.

In the spirit of collaboration that traditionally guides our inputs, we the organised constituency of local governments gathered in the Global Taskforce of Local and Regional Governments remain at your disposal to contribute to further discussions.

