

Statement at the Tenth World Urban Forum World Assembly of Local and Regional Governments Abu Dhabi, 8 February 2020

In a landmark achievement for the constituency of local and regional governments, the contributions of World Assembly of Local and Regional Governments convened by the Global Taskforce are acknowledged in the New Urban Agenda. Significantly, it brings together the constituency of local and regional governments, and we build our joint advocacy from our contributions to the global agendas, including the New Urban Agenda, the 2030 Agenda, and the Paris Agreement.

The occasion of the Tenth World Urban Forum provides an opportunity for the World Assembly to **stress the role that local and regional governments can play in developing a sustainable development model that is strongly anchored in culture and human rights**, upholding public service provision to ensure adequate living standards for all.

In light of the implementation decade, which pushes us to upscale our actions to achieve the goals, the gathering of the World Assembly is an opportunity to bring to the table the role that good governance and service provision will play in transforming our planet and in the joint achievement of the global agendas.

Only if we address all of the agendas as one, as intrinsically linked, will we achieve global transformation. The New Urban Agenda plays a critical role in accelerating the achievement of the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs that are, in turn, central in implementing the Sendai Framework and the Paris Agreement. This is the only way in which we will respond to the climate emergency and secure a sustainable future.

We, local and regional governments from across the globe, representing the populations of metropolises, peripheral cities, intermediary cities, regions, rural areas, and small municipalities, are gathered at the World Assembly of Local and Regional Governments at the Tenth World Urban Forum providing the local perspectives to the dialogues that will take place in Abu Dhabi:

Urbanization shapes, and is shaped by, culture and innovation.

We are convinced that culture is an integral part of the solution to humanity's challenges.

Local and regional governments hold a fundamental position in driving culture for sustainable urbanization, through the promotion of **culture as the fourth pillar of development** and as a core component of local identity.

Local and regional governments play an integral in improving the urban life, through the development of a **rights-based approach to the cities** and, in particular, promotion of gender equality that can provide solutions to the so-called "triple informality" of work, housing, and transport, and carrying out participatory processes that envision our cities as spaces to be accessed equally is essential to guarantee a future of cities and regions that take care of their communities.

Global Partnerships and initiatives to face the climate emergency and achieve sustainable urbanization.

Co-creating spaces for all stakeholders is essential for the future of our communities and to ensure sustainable development. In our gathering in Durban, we committed to **consolidate**

these spaces for transformation, to include all stakeholders, enhancing the local-global movement that has been growing to deepen the localization of the global agendas.

As agreed by our constituency during the last Assembly, the Global Taskforce will continue to grow in its role to **secure strong partnerships**, to call for **multilevel and collaborative action** to raise global climate ambition and achieve sustainable urbanization. Embarking in partnerships with academia, cultural sectors, and all spheres of government, is essential to amplify global climate action, to respond to our challenges as one humanity and truly rise to the challenges that the world faces.

It is imperative for our constituency to have **a more prominent role in the discussions regarding the ecological transition**, to localize climate action, prioritise nature-based solutions and traditional knowledge, and mainstream both nature and culture in sustainable urbanization.

Urban and territorial policies play a key role in preserving urban heritage

Local and regional governments play an essential role in designing inclusive cities with opportunities for all, and acknowledge **culture and heritage as an important dimension in achieving the goals of the agenda**, notably in the context of citizens' empowerment, access to urban services and ownership of regeneration and social cohesion strategies.

Urban heritage is both a product and an enabler of sustainable urban development. Its preservation conserves embodied energy and reduces waste. Revitalising under-utilised urban heritage limits city sprawl and reduces infrastructure and transport costs.

Urban heritage includes not only cultural heritage but also natural heritage. Urban planning needs to include appropriate tools so that we can begin to imagine the future together, including impact assessment methods to ensure respect for biodiversity and cultural diversity.

Local and regional governments play a key role in maximizing the relationship between culture and sustainable urbanization.

The work of local and regional governments **fosters locally relevant cultural policies and programmes** to maximize the relationship between memory, creativity, diversity and knowledge which are keys for local sustainable development. Integrating **heritage and culture in urban planning** is a **strand of global solidarity**, a vector for peace and an operational component of the localization of the global agendas.

To this end, it will be essential to connect culture and education, to support the acquisition of cultural skills and knowledge, and promote a sense of place and belonging that ties us with our heritages and looks to the future to ensure safe, resilient, and sustainable cities.

Shaping frontiers technology for the future of our communities.

Innovation and technology will play an important role in the future of humanity, and it is up to us to imagine our future together.

We commit to **understanding innovation beyond technology**, placing communities at the center of the agenda, and securing a **technological revolution that services our communities** and ensures innovation and sustainability go hand in hand. It is imperative to integrate participatory processes, to envision our cities as spaces to be accessed equally, and

to see technology as a tool that can be accessed by all people equally and used for women empowerment, beyond the notion of consumerism.

Innovation and culture to implement the New Urban Agenda as an accelerator for the ambitious global goals.

Fostering ownership of the global development agendas by local communities through **localization** is the best way to ensure that we can harness creativity and innovation to ensure it services our communities.

All actors need to be involved in local, territorial, national, and international plans to carry out the New Urban Agenda as an accelerator for the SDGs, to make this achievement a global endeavor so that our communities can find ownership in these agendas and truly make them a reality, addressing the challenges as one humanity.

We call on national governments and the international system to join us to ensure culture has a real place in sustainable development, to put people at the center of human life and to secure a future for cultural policies at local, national, and international scale.

As the UN celebrates its 75th Anniversary, we invite all national governments and the global community to initiate a structured dialogue with constituency of local and regional governments as a means to support and advance multilateralism in the 21st century.

As the success of Decade of Sustainability Action heavily depends on the outcomes of the global conferences on biodiversity and climate change in 2020, **we invite Ministers of Urbanization and the UN-Habitat Assembly to support and actively engage with the advocacy efforts of the constituency of local and regional governments at Biodiversity COP15 in October in Kunming, China and the Climate Change COP26 in November in Glasgow, UK**

We commit to continue consolidating the World Assembly of Local and Regional Governments as the representative mechanism through which our constituency provides inputs to the global agendas, building on the realities and expertise of our communities.

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