



Speech Ilsur Metshin

Mayor of Kazan, Co-Chair of UNACLA

Speech at the gathering of UNACLA

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(Translation from Russian)

Dear colleagues, Dear Friends

In these very crucial and trying times, it is an honor to be with you all in the first time after we our inaugural and in-person session back in Abu Dhabi last year.

The milestones ahead are critical. Already five years ago, the international community adopted the New Urban Agenda, a powerful agenda for transformation.

As we all advance on accelerating localization, it is our joint duty, as a collective network through UNACLA, and as networks, to put additional efforts in drawing more attention to the New Urban Agenda as critical building blocks for achievement of SDGs to achieve sustainable, inclusive, fair and safer cities.

This year and towards the United Nations High-Level Meeting on the Review of Implementation of the New Urban Agenda, our constituency is getting ready to demonstrate the interconnection between the New Urban Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

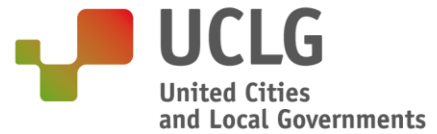
With strong focus on the SDGs, we sometimes have forgotten that the principles and policies included in the Quito Outcome Document are powerful.

In this year to come, let us make sure we can emphasize the critical role the New Urban plays as catalyzer for a number of core policies that link up with a number of SDGs and targets.

This includes a number of social and inclusive policies, integrated and territorial urban planning or the urban-rural continuum, which were unanimously agreed in Quito. But also gender equality in an urban context, culture and the support to decentralization, the reinforcement of multi-level governance and participatory approaches in urban life. All policies that remain at the core of the recovery process we are all facing.

It is not too risky to say that, five years after its adoption, the implementation of the New Urban Agenda, including its review and monitoring, at all levels, remains a challenge.

Also, many of the expectations related to a truly enhanced partnership between our constituency and the UN System remain unmet. Yet structural dialogue with all the parts of the system and increased interaction has been ensured.



The challenges before us are great, and greater with the pandemic and post-pandemic situation we are facing.

We need to ensure that the means of implementation can reach our constituencies and that policies associated to SDGs are accompanied by a localization of financial resources.

Let us remind ourselves that the New Urban Agenda is seen by local and regional authorities as the opportunity to address some of the representation deficits that global governance and policy-making instruments are facing.

Let us recall and acknowledge the important role that UN-Habitat has played in putting the agenda of local governments at the forefront of the international discussions. The recent launch of the UN Taskforce on the Future of Cities is a good sign in this path.

As we prepare towards the UN High-Level Meeting, the World Assembly of Local and Regional Governments, explicitly recognized in the Quito Outcome Document, will play a pivotal role in voicing our constituency in the process towards and during the UN High-Level Meeting.

In the coming months, the World Assembly of LRGs will put all its efforts in demonstrating the need to deepen the debate on the recognition of local and regional governments as formal actors in the review and follow-up of the New Urban Agenda.

UNACLA, as you well know, is the fruition of work of the organized local authorities. It is the result of our plea for a growing partnership of local authorities and the UN System, in particular UN Habitat.

The very existence of UNACLA emanates from the Istanbul Declaration which recognizes local authorities as key partners in the implementation of the international development strategy towards an urbanizing world, the Habitat Agenda.

We need therefore to ensure UNACLA can play a strong role and representative advice on all issues related local governments, ensuring a bridge between the local and regional government constituency and the UN System.

Let us also make sure that UNACLA ensures greater influence in resolutions to be adopted by UN Habitat. We, and many before us, have invested a significant amount of time, resources and efforts to make this happen. We would like to reiterate our commitment and that of our organizations to these efforts.

We will have the opportunity later today to look into these issues and I sincerely hope that we can utilize this vehicle that has been powerful in the past to become even more important in the future.