



Dear leaders, participants and colleagues,

I'm **Carolina Cosse, Mayor of Montevideo**. On behalf of United Cities and Local Governments and the local and regional governments constituency, it is my pleasure to address you. The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted that in the face of major, collective challenges such as the climate crisis, it is essential to take an inclusive and caring approach, which puts people and planet at the center.

Women and girls, the LGBTQI+ community, children, persons with disabilities, older persons, marginalized ethnicities, among other groups, are disproportionately impacted and commonly the first to have their sociopolitical and ecological rights compromised in times of crisis.

We thus wish to emphasize the centrality of feminist leadership within local and regional government action for a new social contract, to better safeguard our planet, manage our global commons and to protect the livelihoods and integrity of all living things.

The pandemic has prompted our local and regional governments to pursue innovative measures to ensure equitable access to services for all. Women and feminist leaders represent a major source of positive transformation - towards a model that is inclusive, empathic and based on solidarity rather than competition.

As such, we have learned that a feminist approach, rooted in care, is key to governance, leadership and policy-making. Indeed, at the local level, care and the provision of caring services is an essential dimension of leaving no one behind. This also means that the providers of care work - commonly unpaid and under-valued, and moreover, predominantly women and marginalized identities - must be cared for, and participate at all levels.

Nevertheless, women and diverse groups remain underrepresented in governance and leadership, and are the target of violence, discrimination and disinformation. For this, we call the international community to Action by involving them in crisis recovery and climate-responsive task forces and committees, and to elevate their voices at all decision-making tables.

By upturning deep-rooted gender norms, we can begin to build new narratives and just climate-resilient pathways for all. We are grateful for the opportunity to address you today, and for your partnership. Our feminist municipal movement remains committed to working together.

In these trying times we believe a new type of leadership rooted in the communities interests and safeguarding their dreams is more important than ever before. We trust feminist municipal diplomacy can be a vehicle for a peaceful, just and sustainable world.

