

**WORLD
URBAN
FORUM**
ELEVENTH SESSION



KATOWICE, POLAND | 26-30 JUNE 2022

UN HABITAT
FOR A BETTER URBAN FUTURE



Roundtable of Local and Regional Governments reimagining cities for a better future for all

Monday 27th June 2022

16.00 – 18.00 CEST

Venue: Roundtable Room 1

DESCRIPTION


Cities are engines of economic growth, hubs of creativity and innovation, and drivers of resilience; however, cities also grapple with a number of challenges of huge proportions, ranging from environmental degradation to social and economic cohesion.

When properly planned and managed, urbanization has the potential to become a transformative force for positive change and sustainable development, generating growth and wellbeing. Yet, when poorly planned, cities face the risk of becoming inequality traps, triggering poverty, and social exclusion. The uncontrolled growth of many cities has also resulted in inadequate provision of public services, failing to guarantee a minimum quality of life for all urban residents.

How we plan, build, and manage our cities and urban areas will decide the trajectory of people and planet. It is in the local arena where the global crises converge and is where the solutions should emerge from. The exacerbation of climate change impacts, the spread of the covid-19 pandemic or the on-going conflicts and wars had an enormous impact on local communities. Acknowledging that in the absence of effective and sustainable urban planning the consequences of this rapid urbanization will be dramatic, we must rethink our cities.

Rethinking our cities and equip them with the necessary means to drive transformation is key to face up to upcoming global challenges. In this context, universal development agendas such as the 2030 for Sustainable Development and the New Urban Agenda remains essential roadmap to flip the script and break the vicious unsustainable cycle.

Local and regional governments are at the forefront of change, being the best positioned to represent their communities at the national and international decision-making tables due to their proximity and better understanding of their needs and aspirations. At the same time, local public service provision is vital in providing social safety nets and effectively cover societal needs, which is particularly necessary when crises strike.



The global solutions we need to tackle today's universal challenges can only be achieved with a more inclusive and robust multilateralism in which local communities have a say and local and regional governments are fully recognized as transformative actors. As mentioned by the New Urban Agenda, ensuring close collaboration between local and regional governments with their national counterparts is essential to bend the curve of the current unsustainable trajectory and put us back on track to reach the global goals and to build sustainable development.

Despite their relevant role, not all local governments are well equipped to fulfil their mandates. This Roundtable will be the occasion to gather experts and practitioners from different areas to discuss the role of local and regional governments in reimagining cities for a more inclusive, greener and prosperous future, in close collaboration with different levels of governments and sectors of society.

The session will look and discuss ways to reimagine our cities from a double approach: through the lens of *empowerment*, discussing the need to strengthen an enabling environment for local and regional governments to deliver on their mandates; and through the lens of *caring*, highlighting the critical role cities play to reach those furthest behind.

EMPOWERED CITIES

There is a need to empower local and regional governments to enable them to fulfill their mandate providing them with the necessary legal, technical, and financial capacities. The strengthening of multi-level governance and local finance is essential to do so.

Fragmented governance structures often leave local and regional authorities operating independently without any means of aligning their policies, despite their shared interests. Multilevel governance provides a new lens to design policy and programming. In this sense, national frameworks facilitating multilevel coordination, policy coherence and (re)distribution of resources are the key to build community resilience and secure inclusion.


Similarly, local and regional governments around the world still face barriers to access multilateral funds. Covid-19 proved how critical it is for local and regional governments to have access to finance in order to secure income and investment in local service provision and promote the universal development agendas and their implementation at local level. To do so, national frameworks need to further fiscal devolution in order to empower cities to strengthen their own source revenue streams. Massive finance must be channeled to local governments to effectively support the necessary equipment of the growing urban conurbations.


CARING CITIES

The path toward equitable urban futures will require a shift towards a wider sense of empathy and recognition of the interconnectedness of our communities and societies. A sustainable urban future can only be equitable for all when the rights of vulnerable groups in cities are protected.

The new forms of social isolation and poverty call for caring policies that prioritize welfare and sustainability¹. Social inequalities have exponentially increased since mid-1970s, and the inability of governments to develop social policies to reduce them has turned into acute socioeconomic segregation in major cities. Local governments play a key role to revert this trend, due to their strategic position of proximity and knowledge of community needs.

As the New Urban Agenda Quadrennial Report proves, re-municipalization -the return of public service provision to municipal control- has emerged as a legitimate policy option in cities where privatization of public goods has hindered access by low-income households². Local and regional governments are





at the forefront of crisis responses working to maintain an orderly functioning of public services in their territories in turbulent times. Safeguarding effective local public services is essential to ensure that no one is left behind, as well as to protect and preserve the commons.

Caring for their communities has come to mean a way of governing with empathy, prioritizing the public goods responding to the needs of people regardless of gender, age, disability, economic or administrative status.

OBJECTIVES


- To create an environment of open discussion between different partners on mechanisms to rethink the transformative cities of the future based on the concepts of *empowered* cities through multi-level governance and financing, and *caring* cities, through inclusion, feminism and public service provision.
- To foster the debate on the role of local and regional governments as key actors to govern crisis and advance sustainability at the local level, thus acknowledging them as fundamental pillars for multilevel and multi-stakeholder dialogues.
- To identify concrete actions that cities, central governments, civil society organizations and the private sector are implementing to improve sustainable development from the bottom-up.
- To organize political inputs into concrete actions and innovation policies to enhance local governance and sustainable development based on global agendas.
- Improve the collective knowledge of sustainable urbanization and share sharing of lessons learned and the exchange of best practices and good policies;

EXPECTED OUTPUTS

Increase coordination and cooperation between different stakeholders and constituencies for the advancement and implementation of sustainable urbanization through the lens of *empowered cities* and *carina cities*.

To provide a dialogue platform between distinct tiers of governance and sectors of society, enhancing vertical and horizontal integration by connecting all levels of action.

To promote the institutionalization of multi-level and multi-sector governance processes to accelerate the implementation of global goals at the local level.



DRAFT AGENDA

Time of the session: 16:00 – 18:00 CEST

Time	Speaker and title	Category
Facilitated by Emilia Saiz , Global Taskforce of Local and Regional Governments		
Opening Session		
10 mins	Rafael Tuts , Director, Global solutions Division, UN-Habitat	
	Carlos Martínez , Mayor, Soria, UCLG Special Envoy for the New Urban Agenda	
1st Session: Empowered Cities		
40 mins	Moderator: Shipra Narang Suri , Chief, Urban Practices Branch, UN-Habitat	
	Iñiqui Carnicero , General Director of the Urban Agenda and Architecture, Spanish Ministry of Transport, Mobility and Urban Agenda	
	Berry Vrbanovic , Mayor of Kitchener, UCLG Governing President	
	Florah Noliqwa Maboab Boltman - SALGA Deputy President	
	Bekbolot Arzibayev , Vice Mayor of Osh, Kyrgyzstan	
	David Jackson , Director, Local Development Finance, UNCDF	
	Marylin M. Pintor , Undersecretary Vice Minister Department of Human Settlement and Urban Development, Philippines (TBC)	
10 mins	Q&A Section facilitated by the Moderator	
2nd Session: Caring Cities		
40 mins	Moderator: Lucy Slack , Secretary General, CLGF	
	Kjersti Bjørnstad , State Secretary of Local Government and Regional Development, Norway	
	Raouf Mazou , Assistant High Commissioner for Operations, UNHCR	
	Carola Gunnarsson , Mayor of Sala, UCLG VP, President of SALAR	
	Fahad Al-Jubeir , Mayor of Eastern Province, Saudi Arabia	
	Ignacio de la Puerta , Director of Territorial Planning and Urban Agenda, Basque Regional Government, Spain	
	Carlos Maya , Mayor of Pereira	
10 mins	Q&A Section facilitated by the Moderator	



10 mins	Wrap-up and Closing by Master of Ceremony
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