



**#Listen2Cities**

# **LOCAL AND REGIONAL ACTION AT THE HEART OF THE HIGH-LEVEL POLITICAL FORUM ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT**

**POWERING  
THE LOCAL TRACK**

**2024**



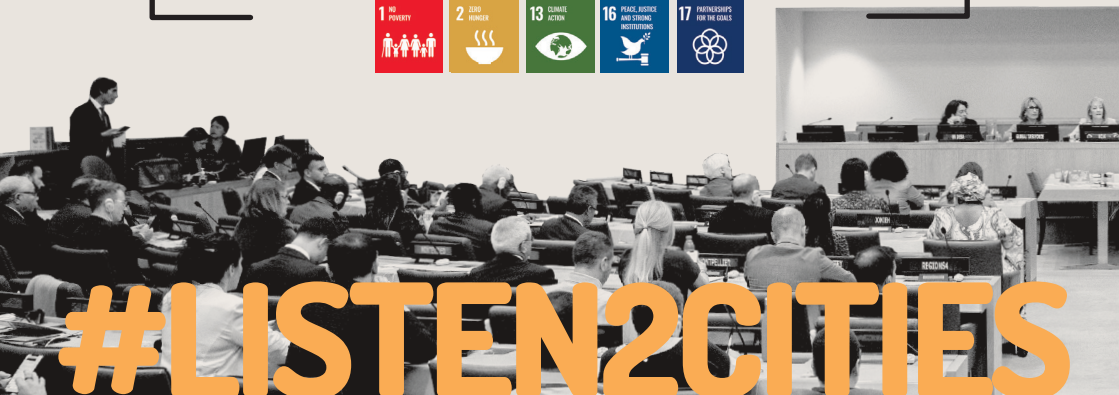
Every year, the organized constituency of local and regional governments gathered in the Global Taskforce of Local and Regional Governments (GTF) engages in various actions aimed at keeping localization at the forefront of the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF). These efforts highlight how the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development remains a daily priority for Mayors and Governors around the world. By maintaining a constant focus on localization, local and regional leaders ensure that sustainable development goals are actively localized in their communities, beyond monitoring and reporting efforts.

Throughout the year, numerous initiatives contribute to this mission and align with the UN Secretary-General's "to-do list" for rescuing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). These actions include comprehensive reports, dynamic events, learning modules, and ongoing processes to advance the localization of global agendas. Each initiative reflects a unique approach. But, collectively, they share the goal of embedding the SDGs into the fabric of local and regional governance. Scan the accompanying QR codes for detailed insights into these actions.



**READ IT HERE!**

Our constituency delivers a statement to the High-Level Political Forum underscoring our commitment to achieving the universal development agendas, and highlighting the importance of multilevel action and localization to achieve the Global Goals.



# #LISTEN2CITIES

The Global Taskforce  
Report *Towards the  
Localization of the SDGs*

2024 Local and Regional  
Governments Forum

Voluntary Subnational  
Reviews: transforming  
SDG governance and  
reporting

SDG Localization Learning  
Module 2

Voluntary Local Reviews:  
Local efforts showcasing  
SDG localization progress

Localizing the  
International Conference  
on Population and  
Development

Uniting for Change: Local  
and regional governments  
powering high-impact  
partnerships to localize  
SDGs 1, 2, 13, and 16

SDG Localization Policy  
Brief series

UN Secretary General's  
Advisory Group on  
Local and Regional  
Governments

Voluntary National  
Review Country Profiles  
on SDG Localization

Enhancing the Local2030  
Coalition

Towards the World Social  
Summit



# OUR CONTRIBUTION TO ASSESS THE STATE OF SDG IMPLEMENTATION: THE GLOBAL TASKFORCE REPORT *TOWARDS THE LOCALIZATION OF THE SDGs*

Launch of the GTF Annual Report  
“*Towards the Localization of the SDGs*”

Wednesday 10th July — 14:00 – 15:30

On behalf of the Global Taskforce of Local and Regional Governments, UCLG produces the annual *Towards the Localization of the SDGs* report. This report, which aims to report yearly on the state of SDG implementation at the local level around the world, has been produced and presented to the HLPF every year from 2017 to 2024. In its 8th edition, the report provides key and bold recommendations for all stakeholders to jointly contribute to enhancing the role of local and regional governments (LRGs) in achieving the Global Goals by 2030 and beyond.

Based on 196 responses from LRGs and their associations across 70 countries, including 15 reporting to the HLPF in 2024, this year's report analyzes the remarkable initiatives by LRGs to localize the SDGs. It also highlights the need for stronger LRGs involvement in national coordination and reporting processes, with a focus on the 37 countries presenting Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs) this year.

The *Towards the Localization of the SDGs* report details specific ways in which localization can be and is already being pursued, both as a means and an end to achieving a more just and sustainable future. In its 2024 edition, the focus is placed on achieving SDGs 1 on No Poverty and 2 on Zero Hunger from a People point of view, SDG 13 on Climate Action from a Planet perspective, and SDGs 16 on Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions and 17 on Partnerships for the Goals from a Government point of view.



**This year's  
report leverages  
our strategic  
partnerships  
and includes a  
consultation with  
the scientists  
behind the 2023  
Global Sustainable  
Development  
Report (GSDR)**



# **VOLUNTARY SUBNATIONAL REVIEWS (VSRs): TRANSFORMING SDG GOVERNANCE AND REPORTING FROM THE BOTTOM-UP**

Voluntary Subnational Reviews (VSRs) are bottom-up reporting efforts on SDG progress led by local government associations (LGAs) from around the world. With 44 reviews published by LGAs since 2020 with the support of UCLG, representing over 1.7 bn people, VSRs have transformed reporting practices around the SDGs across all levels – including Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs).

As such, they have been recognized by the United Nations, together with Voluntary Local Reviews (VLRs), as “an essential tool to show progress and foster exchange on local implementation” on SDGs. Their impact is manifold: they have helped consolidate whole-of-government and whole-of-society approaches to sustainable development while striving to break institutional and policy siloes. VSRs strengthen the ongoing trajectory towards SDG attainment, emerging as pivotal tools and processes for research, learning and advocacy.

VSRs have contributed to escalating the critical role of SDG localization in regional and international processes. In the framework of UCLG’s support to VSRs, an Insights Note (February 2024) and a summary of the 2024 VSRs have been produced to demonstrate the impact of these processes in the production of VNRs and other governance spheres.



**Local government  
associations  
of Costa Rica,  
Ecuador, Brazil,  
Mauritania, South  
Africa and Nepal,  
as well as in the  
Nordics, present  
new VSRs in 2024!**

# **VOLUNTARY LOCAL REVIEWS (VLRs): LOCAL EFFORTS TO SHOW PROGRESS ON THE LOCALIZATION OF THE 2030 AGENDA**

Voluntary Local Reviews (VLRs) demonstrate that local and regional governments are leading in implementation, awareness-raising, training, and coalition-building for the fulfillment of the 2030 Agenda from a local standpoint. While there is no fixed definition for VLRs, they all share the purpose of assessing and presenting progress from a local perspective. VLRs enable LRGs to (vertically) complement national-level information with local insights.

VLRs also allow LRGs to (horizontally) share and learn mutually from peers, strengthening the sense of community and ownership that underpins the 2030 Agenda framework. VLRs represent an aspirational statement and the commitment of a community to a global endeavour: the Sustainable Development Goals. In this webpage you will find several VLRs that have been produced until 2020 by local and regional governments throughout the different countries and regions of the world.



**Don't miss a new  
edition of the  
VLR-VSR Days on  
15th-16th July!**



# UNITING FOR CHANGE: LOCAL AND REGIONAL GOVERNMENTS POWERING HIGH-IMPACT PARTNERSHIPS TO LOCALIZE SDGS 1, 2, 13, AND 16

Local and regional governments are powering partnerships around the need to create meaningful change and impact at scale: to advance equality and wellbeing for all, promote climate action, and build peaceful societies from our cities to the global level. By building alliances with other levels of government, civil society, academia, or the private sector, local and regional governments are strengthening political processes and developing concrete actions to rescue the SDGs and meet the needs of present and future generations.

Following the presentation of the UCLG Decalogue on High-Impact Coalitions during the 2023 SDG Summit, we are now looking at the 2024 HLPF's SDGs in review to bring about how local and regional governments are accelerating the 2030 Agenda by harnessing partnerships and multilevel cooperation to localize SDG 1 on No Poverty, SDG 2 on Zero Hunger, SDG 13 on Climate Action, SDG 16 on Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions, and SDG 17 on Partnerships for the Goals. This is our collective statement on the importance to build up alliances for accelerated progress – and a call to widen partnerships in the second half of the road towards 2030.

The UCLG SDG Declarations look into the localization of SDG 1 to advance a new social contract centering human rights, equality and care, SDG 2 to achieve human well-being and food sovereignty for all, SDG 13 and power climate action through multilevel governance, and SDG 16 and SDG 17 to promote peace and good governance through youth participation.



**Rescuing the  
SDGs in a renewed  
multilateral  
system grounded  
on leaving no  
one behind and  
governing in  
partnership**



# UN SECRETARY GENERAL'S ADVISORY GROUP ON LOCAL AND REGIONAL GOVERNMENTS

In its vision of a networked, effective and inclusive multilateralism, the Secretary General's "Our Common Agenda" proposes twenty recommendations to foster ambitious and forward-looking thinking on global governance. Among these recommendations is the creation of the "Local and Regional Government Advisory Group," aimed at strengthening the relationship between the UN and local and regional governments.

Composed of 15 local and regional political representatives proposed by the Global Taskforce of Local and Regional Governments and 5 national leaders from five countries, the Advisory Group has been established to enhance the collaboration between the United Nations and local and regional governments. Its focus is on strengthening their engagement in intergovernmental processes and ensuring that local perspectives are integral to global decision-making, as a means to help shape the vision of Our Common Agenda of a networked, effective and inclusive multilateralism, and translate it into actionable strategies.

The works of the Advisory Group include a guidance note on enhancing institutional mechanisms for local and regional government engagement in intergovernmental processes, a policy brief providing strategic guidance to strengthen cooperation between national and local governments and UN Country Teams, and a set of recommendations for the Secretary-General to inform Member States' deliberations, advising on a United Nations global strategy for engaging local and regional governments.



**The group  
provides  
recommendations  
to the UN  
Secretary General  
to shape the  
vision of Our  
Common Agenda  
of a networked,  
effective and  
inclusive  
multilateralism**



# 2024 LOCAL AND REGIONAL GOVERNMENTS FORUM ON THE 2030 AGENDA

Thursday 11th July — 10:00 – 13:00

The Local and Regional Governments Forum (LRGF) is the political space of our self-organized constituency at the High-Level Political Forum. Co-organized with UNDESA, UN-Habitat, UNDP and Local2030, the Local and Regional Governments Forum serves as a living proof and testament of the unwavering commitment of local and regional governments with the 2030 Agenda. The LRGF illustrates the interconnected importance and breadth of local action and governing in partnership to power the SDG Rescue Plan through the six key SDG transitions, and its connections with other major global political processes and milestones, such as the Summit of the Future, to be held in September 2024, and the World Social Summit, to be held in 2025.

Building on this legacy, this year's LRGF will emphasize building high-impact coalitions led by local and regional governments, fostering transformative and multisectoral partnerships as drivers of progress. A special focus will be given to the five SDGs under review in the 2024 HLPF: SDG 1 (No Poverty), SDG 2 (Zero Hunger), SDG 13 (Climate Action), SDG 16 (Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions), and SDG 17 (Partnerships for the Goals), delving into their effective implementation through multilevel cooperation.

Further, the Local and Regional Governments Forum highlights the role of Voluntary Local Reviews (VLRs) and Voluntary Subnational Reviews (VSRs) in fostering policy transformation towards achieving the SDGs and their connection with Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs).



**Co-organized  
by the Global  
Taskforce with  
UNDESA, UNDP,  
UN-Habitat, and  
Local2030**



# SDG LOCALIZATION LEARNING

## MODULE 2: PLANNING FOR CHANGE WITH THE SDGS

Local and regional governments drive territories' and local communities' sustainable development paths. They ensure the delivery of essential public services and act as catalysts for transformative change. Nevertheless, they face critical gaps in terms of data, capacities, and resources to deliver on this mandate. Investing in municipal capacity building, institutional efficiency, and partnerships with local, regional, national and international stakeholders is crucial for the implementation of the SDGs at the local level.

In this context, UCLG, UN-Habitat, and UNDP, with the European Commission's support, developed the SDG Localization Learning Modules. The modules were applied and tested all over the world, using a Training of Trainers approach. Today, they represent one of the main sources of capacity building on SDG Localization for LRGs.

As the world continues to urbanize, an integrated sustainability and planning strategy that uses the SDGs as guiding principles is vital to guarantee the provision of basic urban services, urban health, and socio-economic inclusion as well as for creating urban systems that try to reduce their negative externalities towards climate change. Building on the first edition of the SDG Localization Module 2, the new version focuses on integrating the SDGs into local planning processes, providing guidance in terms of strategic as well as spatial planning. It offers an immersive experience based on interactive games, innovative content and the most recent practices on SDG-linked local planning processes.



**In partnership  
with UN-Habitat  
and UNDP, and  
the support of  
the European  
Commission**



# ICPD30 GLOBAL CONSULTATION: LOCALIZING THE INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON POPULATION AND DEVELOPMENT

Friday 12th July — 10:00 – 16:00

Considering recent demographic shifts and the pressing need for integrated development strategies that include access to Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights, there is a growing recognition of the importance of local governments in addressing complex issues surrounding the implementation of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD).

With the transformative promise of the 2030 Agenda as a universal mandate, local and regional governments have long committed to leaving no one and no place behind, echoing the ICPD and its focus on population, development, and territorial inequalities. The focus of the ICPD Plan of Action on public services resonates with the commitment of many local governments worldwide to care through local public services. To tackle social and territorial inequalities, transformative local policies are advancing a paradigm shift around care, promoting a people-centered and proximity approach to local public service provision as in a feminist agenda.

The partnership between UCLG and UNFPA is the first step to localizing the ICPD vision of inclusive, equitable, and sustainable development. To strengthen the involvement of women and marginalized groups in policymaking, especially in crisis recovery and climate-responsive initiatives, foster citizen participation and local multistakeholder engagement into policy-making and implementation, paired with renewed funding commitments for population and development policies should focus on financing public services and healthcare as commons, with evidence-based policy-making driven by local monitoring and reporting.



**UCLG and the  
United Nations  
Population Fund  
(UNFPA) signed  
a landmark  
Memorandum of  
Understanding  
in 2023**



# SDG LOCALIZATION POLICY BRIEF SERIES: TRANSFORMATIVE CHANGE FROM THE GROUND UP: THE ROLE OF LOCAL REPORTING IN ACCELERATING SDG ACHIEVEMENT AT ALL LEVELS

In the framework of a series of Policy Briefs on SDG localization launched at the 2024 HLPF by different UN agencies and partners, UCLG has authored, together with UNDESA, UN-Habitat and UNDP, the publication *Transformative change from the ground up: the role of local reporting in accelerating SDG achievement at all levels*.

The policy brief digs deeper into how Voluntary Local and Subnational Reviews (VLRs and VSRs) help local and regional governments (LRGs) reinforce local SDG action. It emphasizes the idea that VLRs and VSRs provide a critical initial step in the process of integrating the SDGs into their policymaking, making and monitoring progress, and demonstrating success stories of sustainable development in all areas of planning, including strategy and design; budgeting and procurement; data, monitoring and evaluation; and coordination and stakeholder engagement. The policy brief also demonstrates the transformative potential of these comprehensive processes to strengthen multilevel coordination and cooperation, contributing to informing national discussions, processes and VNRs.



**UCLG has co-authored the publication on Voluntary Local and Subnational Reviews, together with UNDESA, UN-Habitat and UNDP**



# A COUNTRY-BY-COUNTRY ANALYSIS OF SDG LOCALIZATION THROUGH VOLUNTARY NATIONAL REVIEW (VNR) COUNTRY PROFILES

The Country Profiles on SDG localization present a brief country-by-country analysis of the national strategies, coordination mechanisms and reporting processes related to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Most importantly, they highlight the involvement and, in many cases, the leading role of LRGs towards the localization of the SDGs.

These Country Profiles are an important complement to the GTF's *Towards the Localization of the SDGs* yearly reports. They share the goal of this report: to encourage action at the local, national and international levels by indicating both areas of progress and remaining gaps in the recognition of LRGs' role, based on the principles of subsidiarity and autonomy, and in their integration into decision-making and the implementation of the SDGs.



**Encouraging  
coordination at the  
local, national, and  
international level  
and showcasing  
the progress in  
LRG recognition**



## ENHANCING THE LOCAL2030 COALITION. Local 2030 Coalition Special Event

Wednesday 10th July — 10:00 - 13:00

The GTF is an active member of the Steering Committee of the Local 2030 Coalition, a UN-led multistakeholder initiative bringing together actors with the shared aim of localizing the SDGs. This includes the national governments of Brazil, Spain, the Mayor of Klang, Realdania, Hawai'i Green Growth Hub and other local stakeholders, under the co-chairmanship of UN-Habitat and FAO. Through this engagement, our self-organized constituency contributes to unlocking transformative change through the localization of the six SDG transitions to achieve the Global Goals by 2030 through advocacy, action, and monitoring and reporting.



**Localizing the  
SDG transitions to  
achieve the Global  
Goals**



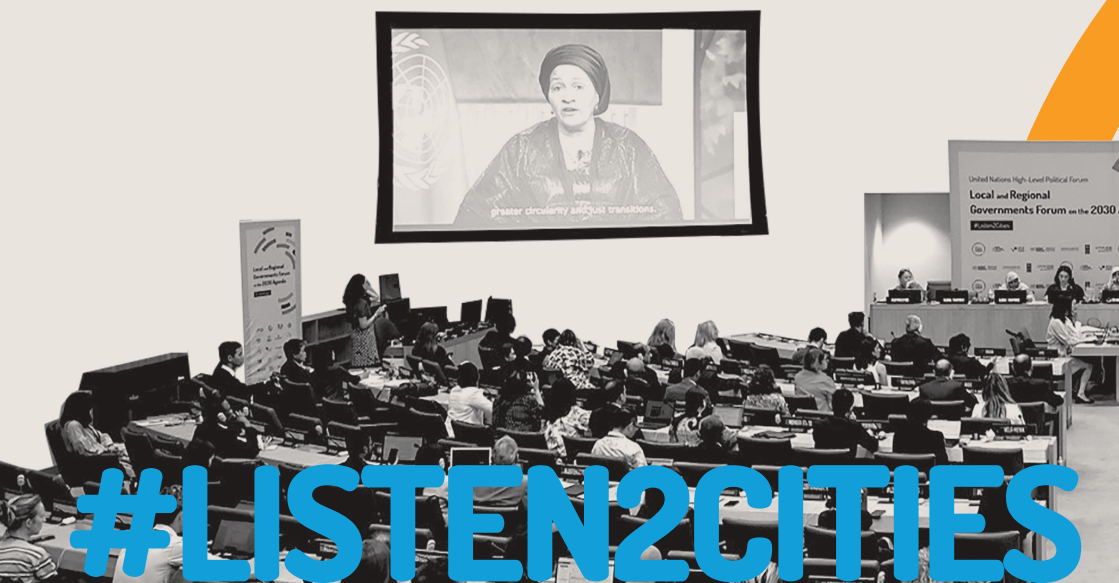
# TOWARDS THE WORLD SOCIAL SUMMIT

## HIGH-IMPACT COALITIONS: ANSWERING THE CALL TO RESCUE THE SDGs AND POWER UP A DEVELOPMENT TO-DO LIST

In the 2023 SDG Summit political declaration, Member States recognized the importance of partnerships for SDG localization and sustainable urbanization, calling for multilevel coordination to achieve the 2030 Agenda, and to urgently transform the international finance architecture. To this end, during the 2023 SDG Action Weekend, our organized constituency presented multi-stakeholder high-impact coalitions, aimed at speeding up the SDG rescue plan by mobilizing political commitment to scale-up local action with global impact.

## A NEW LOCAL SOCIAL COVENANT

As called by the Secretary General, the World Social Summit will be a unique opportunity to hold a different form of global deliberation and to live up to the values that must underpin a renewed social contract up to the challenges of our time. Towards the Summit, we are developing a New Local Social Covenant to deliver on the challenge of bringing about a global social agenda that is grounded on care, gender equality, and human rights, and driven by local public service provision.



The New Local Social Covenant is dedicated to reducing poverty and social inequality through localization and the promotion of rights, including the right to the city, food, housing, culture, and health. Aimed at supporting the final push to 2030, it emphasizes territorial rights and envisions local and regional futures, promoting knowledge co-creation and fostering multilateral cooperation among mayors, governors, and stakeholders interested in urban dynamics and territorial rights.

The New Local Social Covenant will secure high-level political commitments, develop actionable solutions for present and future generations, and employ multilateral strategies to integrate its goals into global discussions, collaborating with international organizations and the private sector to promote sustainable development.





# GLOBAL TASKFORCE

OF LOCAL AND REGIONAL  
GOVERNMENTS

