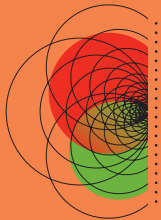# TOWARDS ACHIEVING SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND HUMAN SETTLEMENTS AND LOCALIZING THE POST-2015 AGENDA

An account of the 1st UN-ECOSOC Integration Segment on Sustainable Urbanization

GLOBAL TASKFORCE
OF LOCAL AND REGIONAL GOVERNMENTS
FOR POST-2015 DEVELOPMENT AGENDA
TOWARDS HABITAT III

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CONTRIBUTING TO
THE FIRST INTEGRATION
SEGMENT OF THE UN ECONOMIC
AND SOCIAL COUNCIL

BUILDING
THE FUTURE
WE WANT

ECOSOC • 27–29 May, 2014

"The conviction that Sustainable Urbanization should be at the core of the development agenda was the general trend at the three-day UN ECOSOC Integration Segment."

As an outcome of Rio+20 a new mechanism has been set up at ECOSOC, aiming to include policy feedback from different actors in the UN deliberations, and to present transversal topics of relevance to the sustainability agenda.

The first-ever Integration Segment of the Economic and Social Council focused on **"Sustainable Urbanization"**. The Segment demonstrated how urbanization can be an effective tool for the integration of the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development.

Members of the **Global Taskforce** gathered at the UN Headquarters in New York for the 2014 ECOSOC Integration Segment released their joint messages **"Towards Achieving Sustainable Cities and Human Settlements and Localizing the Post-2015 Agenda"** on the eve of the debates with Member States.

The **Global Taskforce** ensured the representation of local and regional governments within the programme and supports the participation of a High-Level delegation in New York.

"The call for new partnerships with civil society, and the need to utilize the transformative potential of cities in order to bridge inequalities and ensure the rural-urban continuum, were among the key messages from the multi-stakeholder forum."

"The ECOSOC constitutes a platform and a central mechanism, which, through this session, provides the opportunity to see how urbanization will be transformational in integrating the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development."

VLADIMIR DROBNJAK
—Vice President of ECOSOC

"Sustainable Urbanization is the key to the well-being of our citizens."

PAUL KAGAME
—President of Rwanda

"Cities and other urban areas should be taken into account when setting future development goals."

ANGELINO GARZON
—Vice President of Colombia

"Urbanization must not be seen as a demographic phenomenon, but as a transformative force shaping societies."

JOAN CLOS
—Executive Director of UN Habitat

ECOSOC INTEGRATION
SEGMENT AT A GLANCE

The meeting stressed that a clear division of responsibilities among local authorities, as well as between local and national authorities, is needed.

Furthermore, it was acknowledged that decentralization processes in all countries should be strengthened to ensure that local governments are engaged at all levels, from the creation of policies to their implementation.

Sustainable cities that can bridge inequalities can only be built on **good and transparent governance**, driven by **participatory decision-making** that responds to local needs. Special attention will need to be paid to financing urbanization, local finance, and **local economic and social development that promotes locally-based, stable and decent jobs**.

Placing creativity, innovation, education and integrated resource management approaches at the heart of urban renewal and planning can lead to more sustainable, liveable, safer and productive cities that offer a better quality of life. Further, **shared urban**

public spaces where creativity fosters social engagement, inclusion and security need to be promoted; as does strategic planning beyond urban boundaries, which would improve urban-rural connectivity. Participants clearly defended culture as a driver of sustainable urban development and management, and advocated that it should therefore hold a relevant place in the new development agenda.

The multidisciplinary panels in New York adressed topics such as urbanization policies, urban inequalities, cities as drivers of sustainable development, effective governance and partnerships for sustainable urbanization.

The focus areas of the side events organized by Global Taskforce partners included decentralized cooperation, localizing the Post-2015 Agenda, engendered local governance and partnerships with civil society.

"Administrations at all levels in developing countries should receive support from the international community, as well as adequate means of implementation, including technical capacity, technology transfers and financing, particularly in the context of the Post-2015 Development Agenda."

–Extract from the GTF Communiqué, May 2014

"WHAT THEY SAID"

_ECOSOC
2014, NY

"Because mayors have executive power, they do not have to wait for Government action to address such challenges and issues. That enables cities to play a critical and innovative role in addressing global challenges." "Cities have emerged as a leading force in climate change" by sharing strategies and lessons learned from both less developed and wealthy countries.

MICHAEL BLOOMBERG
—United Nations Special Envoy for Cities and Climate Change and former Mayor of New York City

"As the international community prepares to open a new chapter in development history, the world must harness the creative energies and resources of cities."

ISABELLE F. PICCO
—Vice President of the General Assembly

"**Urbanization currently occurs primarily in Intermediary Cities. [...] Megacities are the real driving engines of growth, whereas smaller ones can contribute to regional integration while bridging the gap between rural and urban areas Local governance is indispensable to achieving this.**"

KADIR TOPBAŞ
—UCLG President and Mayor of Istanbul, Turkey

"Cities, towns and regions should have a stronger presence in the new global governance landscape. The international community must ensure that local governments are included alongside other stakeholders."

JOSEP ROIG
—*Secretary General of United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG)*

"We need to identify the links between Habitat III and the post-2015 development agenda, and ensure that the local level has the means to implement it."

CARL WRIGHT
—*Secretary General of the Commonwealth Local Government Forum (CLGF)*

"There should be a focus on strengthening local and regional authorities so that they can choose the model best suited to them when implementing public-private partnerships."

FRÉDÉRIC VALLIER
—*Secretary General of the Council of European Municipalities and Regions*

"Urban areas are at the heart of many great challenges, opportunities and promise. [...] We must strengthen the capacity of governments to plan, construct and manage urban areas."

BAN KI-MOON
—*UN Secretary General*

"Territorial management plans based on citizen priorities are the only way forward to adequately managed urbanization and a sustainable future."

PAÚL CARRASCO
—President of the Organisation of Regions United (ORU-FOGAR) and Prefect of Azuay, Ecuador

"Citizen engagement is crucial for identifying the most pressing needs. Engaging the public means [...] giving citizens a voice. A joint approach across all spheres of governance will ensure effective participation."

ANGELA BROWN-BURKE
—Mayor of Kingston, Jamaica

"We call for the establishment of new modalities to help bring local stakeholders into the Sustainable Urbanization discussion. [...] A stand-alone sustainable development goal on urbanization should promote inclusive, accessible, productive and resilient cities."

DAVID CADMAN
—President of Local Governments for Sustainability (ICLEI)

"Urbanization places tremendous demands on social services, and city planners [...] will be forced to address three major realities: nearly two thirds of humanity will soon live in urban areas; the bulk of urbanization will take place in Asia and Africa; and small cities will pose unique challenges in the future."

BERRY VRBANOVIC
—UCLG Deputy Treasurer and Councillor of Kitchener, Canada

"Improving services in rural areas alone is not the answer. Cities must provide more, as well as upgraded services, while preparing the population for the threat posed by natural and man-made disasters. The needs of Small Island Developing States are particularly important in this regard."

JACQUELINE MOUSTACHE-BELLE
—UCLG Co-President and Mayor of Victoria, Seychelles

"All segments of society must join hands and bring about change," highlighting the example of the 'Know Your City' campaign, which allowed the collection of data in more than 10,000 cities in 34 countries, to stress the importance of data for future planning.
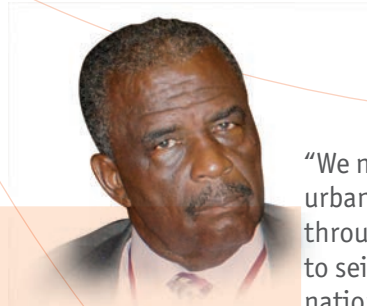
ROSE MOLOKOANE
—Coordinator of Slum Dwellers International

"Local authorities should play the biggest role in terms of implementation.[...] In developing countries, the central Government often does everything, from creating policy to implementing it; which is largely ineffectual."

AKWASI OPPONG-FOSU
—Minister for Local Government and Rural Development, Ghana

"We need a common approach to urban policies to be developed throughout the world we need to seize the opportunity to link national and local policies."

CLLR PHILIP MCPHEE
—Vice-Chair of The Commonwealth Local Government Forum (CLGF) and President of the Caribbean Association of Local Government Authorities, Bahamas

"Local governments are at the heart of the solutions to all major contemporary issues: **democracy,** for the local level gives a meaning to citizenship and to the construction of identities; the **climate and environmental crisis,** which depends largely upon the implementation of sustainable solutions to transform production and consumption patterns, in particular in urban areas; shared development, as it is in and around cities that a large proportion of wealth is concentrated, as are the most striking inequalities; and **solidarity,** because the fight for social inclusion and socio-cultural diversity, and the fight against precariousness, are first engaged at the local level."

ANNE HIDALGO
—*UCLG Co-President and Mayor of Paris, France*

"Decentralization and improved local government can play a major role in achieving equality through strategic investments, and in ensuring access to services and water for vulnerable populations. However, local authorities need appropriate support and empowerment."

AMIRI NONDO
—*UCLG Champion for Local and Regional Governments and Mayor of Morogoro, Tanzania*

"Extensive research focusing on four key outcome areas — development, job creation, environmental sustainability and justice, and good governance — has resulted in the adoption of strategies for building a resilient, sustainable and liveable city over the next three decades."

PARKS TAU
—*Mayor of Johannesburg, South Africa*

"Local business communities must support the promotion of sustainable development solutions."

PAUL LINDVALL
—*Mayor of Linköping, Sweden*

"It is concerning that the poor and marginalized are being pushed to the fringes and that cities are becoming havens for the rich."

TIKENDER SINGH PANWAR
—*Deputy Mayor of Shimla, India*

"GLOBAL TASKFORCE COMMUNIQUÉ"

_NEW YORK, MAY 2014

TOWARDS ACHIEVING SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND HUMAN SETTLEMENTS AND LOCALIZING THE POST-2015 AGENDA

Members of the Global Taskforce expressed commitment to contribute to the implementation of the Post-2015 Agenda.

Local and regional government organizations, representing sub-national governmental stakeholders, and collaborating in the Global Taskforce for Post-2015 Development Agenda towards Habitat III, welcome the mandate given to the Economic and Social Council to promote the integration of the three dimensions of sustainable development and its decision to dedicate its first Integration Segment to Sustainable Urbanization. This is a strong acknowledgement of the important role that local urban and territorial governance will have in the sustainability agenda.

Members of the Global Taskforce confirm their willingness to contribute to the definition, implementation and monitoring of the global Post-2015 Agenda and of local SDG targets, as well as to shape societies from the bottom up, and to make them resilient and ready to tackle the challenges of our time.

Local and regional leaders the world round, together with key partners of civil society, the private sector and the international community, are convinced that by giving specific attention to Sustainable Urbanization in the new agenda we will be triggering the type of transformation that will enable the integration of economic, social, environmental and cultural dimensions to address inequalities, prosperity, and sustainability. Our campaign advocating for a stand-alone goal on urbanization has mobilized thousands around the world and is raising awareness of our membership in the post-2015 process.

A new partnership must be created based on a common understanding of our shared humanity, mutual respect and mutual benefit. The challenges faced are universal and need to be addressed together by all countries, including Small Island Developing States (SIDS).

SOUND LOCAL GOVERNANCE AS
THE BASIS FOR SUSTAINABILITY

Urban strategic planning and resilient basic infrastructures for inclusive cities

Local and sub-national authorities need to be deeply involved in the development agenda if we are to respond to the needs of communities. **Urban planning and resilient basic infrastructures are key instruments to promote less segmented, more inclusive cities**, with universal, quality basic services, capable of mitigating and adapting to climate change and disasters, and capable of widening the freedoms of their inhabitants. **Urban management and governance will need to be a core focus to meet the challenges of growing numbers of urban dwellers** and improve the conditions of slum dwellers.

Accountability and participation: putting people first

Bridging the distance between citizens and their governments, building dialogue that will lead to tolerance, understanding and sustainable peace, and constructing societies based on equality and accountability from the bottom up, will be crucial milestones for any development agenda.

The future we want should enable individuals "to live and be what they choose", mindful of all the common goods of our planet, including cultural diversity and the environment. The role of women in this will be crucial. Particular attention should be devoted to the participation of women and vulnerable groups in local institutions, both through traditional forms of public representation and consultation, and innovative forms of participation.

The members of the Global Taskforce would like to further stress that only with democratic, inclusive, accountable and well-resourced institutions that develop policies with the people and in the interest of the communities, will we be able to achieve the goals for 2015 and beyond.

Multilevel governance and subsidiarity for more cohesive cities and territories

Multilevel and multi-partnership governance will be needed to develop and implement such policies. Ensuring that citizens are involved in decisions that will affect their future by, among other solutions, empowering the level of government closest to them, will be instrumental in the Post-2015 Agenda. **Furthermore, strong partnerships with civil society and the private sector will also be instrumental.**

Subsidiarity must be promoted as a vehicle to strengthen democracy and territorial cohesion. An "enabling environment", that is, adequate institutional frameworks, reinforced management capacities and, above all, sub-national resources must be ensured for local authorities to be able to take on their responsibilities.

Peer-to-peer learning and decentralized cooperation

As mentioned above, to address the challenges that the SDGs will contemplate, cities and regions will be key. Even though **national governments have an important role to play in ensuring an adequate level of autonomy, capacity development and financial resources,** collaboration and cooperation between local and regional authorities themselves is key in this process, as well as in promoting human rights, democracy, rule of law, equal opportunities and equal and sustainable growth.

Decentralized cooperation, peer-to-peer learning, municipal international cooperation and other similar means have been helping to enhance and build the capacity of local governments in the global south. These must evolve into a more structured and systematic approach, to support counterparts from all over the world to build resilient cities, fight climate change, reduce poverty, support democracy and local governance, and provide basic service delivery to the people.

CALL FOR A STRONG PARTNERSHIP AND A ROLE IN THE INTERNATIONAL GOVERNANCE ARCHITECTURE

A new, real global partnership including all stakeholders is a prerequisite to the implementation of the future development agenda.

The special role of local and sub-national governments, already acknowledged in the Rio outcome document, should be further strengthened in the Post-2015 Agenda and specific arrangements should be made to include this constituency in relevant decision-making mechanisms.

We call on the development partners to support local and regional governments to obtain the capacity and strategic support needed to face the challenges of the new, shared agenda.

We acknowledge the efforts made by ECOSOC to be an inclusive platform and we encourage the Council to continue to increase the participation of a diverse range of stakeholders, notably from local and regional governments. We also recognize the

Council's central role in promoting accountability for the commitments made by all stakeholders, and in the implementation of the Post-2015 Development Agenda.

The Habitat III Conference and the Conference on Financing for Development should be given prominent roles in the coming years as key instruments to implement and further develop the sustainable development agenda.

Local and regional governments shall continue to organize the constituency, to share experiences and to provide support to the above processes, with the aim of improving the well-being and resilience of communities around the world in a responsible and sustainable manner.

MEMBERS OF THE DELEGATION

UCLG, CLGF, ICLEI, ORU-FOGAR, nrg4SD, FCM, CEMR, PLATFORMA, CIB, the UCLG Culture Committee and UCLG Africa were part of the Local and Regional Governments' delegation, which included Kadir Topbaş, President of UCLG and Mayor of Istanbul, Turkey; Anne Hidalgo, Co-President of UCLG and Mayor of Paris, France; Jacqueline Moustache-Belle, Co-President of UCLG and Mayor of Victoria, Seychelles; Paul Carrasco, President of ORU-FOGAR and Prefect of Azuay, Ecuador; Cllr Philip McPhee, Vice-Chair of The Commonwealth Local Government Forum (CLGF) and President of Caribbean Association of Local Government Authorities, Bahamas; Angela Brown-Burke, Mayor of Kingston CLGF), Jamaica, and David Cadman, President, ICLEI – Local Governments for Sustainability, among others.

PARTNERS OF LOCAL AND REGIONAL GOVERNMENTS

UN-Habitat, UNDP, UNESCO, UNICEF, UNCDF, UNSDSN, United Nations Development Cooperation Forum (DCF), Cities Alliance, International Labour Organization (ILO), European Commission, Millennium Campaign, One United Nations Secretariat, Members of the High Level Panel of Eminent Persons on the Post-2015 Development Agenda, The Group of Friends for Sustainable Cities, The Development Partners Working Group on Decentralisation and Local Governance (DeLoG), SUEZ, Habitat for Humanity, Slum Dwellers International, The World Urban Campaign.

LOCAL AND REGIONAL GOVERNMENT MEMBERS

UCLG - World Organization of United Cities and Local Governments and its thematic Committees
UNACLA - United Nations Advisory Committee for Local Authorities
ICLEI - Local Governments for Sustainability
AIMF - International Association of Francophone Mayors
ATO - Arab Towns Organization
CLGF - Commonwealth Local Government Forum
MERCOCIUDADES - Network of cities of Mercosur
nrg4SD - Network of Regional Governments for Sustainable Development
FOGAR - Forum of Regions of UCLG
METROPOLIS - Metropolitan Section of UCLG
CEMR-CCRE - Council of European Municipalities and Regions
UCLG-ASPAC - Asia Pacific Section of UCLG
UCLG-Eurasia - Euro-Asian Section of UCLG
UCLG-MEWA - Middle East and West African Section of UCLG
UCLG-NORAM - North American Section of UCLG
FLACMA - Latin American Federation of Municipalities and Local Government Associations
UCLGA - UCLG Africa
CUF - Cités Unies France
FMDV - Global fund for cities development
PLATFORMA - The European voice of Local and Regional authorities for Development

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