

The Future Local and Regional Governments Want

High-level Session of Cities, metropolises, regions and their associations
United Nations Headquarters - New-York
23 April 2012

REPORT OF KEY IDEAS AND STATEMENTS

UCLG and UN-Habitat, with the support of Cities Alliance and UNACLA, gathered local and regional governments leaders and their networks in New York on 23 April where their key messages for Rio+20 were presented to the United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, other UN officials and the Group of 29 states, Friends of Sustainable Cities.



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First row left to right: Ted Ellis, President of National League of Cities; Antonio Costa, Mayor of Lisbon; Joan Clos, ED of UN Habitat; Ban Ki-moon, UN Secretary General; Kadir Topbas, Mayor of Istanbul; Iltur Metsin, Mayor of Kazan; Gerard Tremblay, Mayor of Montreal

Second row left to right: Sebastiao Almeida, Mayor of Guarulhos; Lluís Recorder, Minister of Territory and Sustainability of Catalonia; David Cadman, Councilor of Vancouver; Maria Sol Corral, Vice Mayor of Quito, Paul Carrasco, Prefect of the Province of Azuay.

8 Joint recommendations of local and regional governments

The 8 recommendations stress the importance of acknowledging the positive role that urbanization plays in development. They advocate for new multi-level governance that promotes effective partnerships in building sustainable cities and call on members States to take into account the specific perspective of local and sub-national governments for addressing global challenges.

Undersigned by UCLG, FOGAR, ICLEI, C40, NRG4SD, with the support of the Ford Foundation, UN-Habitat and Cities Alliance, the "[Joint Messages of Local and Sub-national Governments](#)", contain basic requirements and actions to work towards sustainable urbanization, metropolisation and regionalisation.

The agreement is drawn on the bases that Cities and Regional Governments (federated states, regions, governorates, provinces) are part of the same governance. A balanced territorial development is rarely only urban or rural-based and needs the complementarities and synergy of all its assets. The inter-linking of territories and their economic, environmental and social interdependence require the use of integrated approaches.

Local and Regional representatives recognised urbanization as a driver for economic world growth and development. Local and Regional governments highlight that it is in the cities around the world that the pressures of globalization, migration, social inequality, environmental pollution, climate change and youth unemployment are most directly felt. On the other hand, urban areas have for centuries been cradle of innovation and they produce currently above 75% of the world GDP. In this regard, cities and regions stress the need of developing territories that are environmentally sustainable, socially responsible and economically productive.

Over 100 participants attended the session, including UN agencies and representatives of member States, acknowledging the need to go beyond sectoral approaches on sustainability. They further called for humanizing the debate, taking into account the important cultural dimensions of sustainability and for an integrated framework to assessing sustainable development, as regards basic services, territorial cohesion, social inclusion, equity, and resilience. Speakers emphasized the need for a more inclusive, multi-level and multi-actor governance and strong need to rethink the governance of sustainable development not limiting it to states.

Summary of the Joint recommendations of local and regional governments

1. A new multi-level governance architecture is needed.
2. Sustainable Cities should be a crosscutting issue in the Sustainable Development Agenda. Potential Sustainable Development Goals should include at least one Goal on "Sustainable Cities for All" and make reference to: Access to quality basic services, Social inclusion and equity, Environment.
3. Cohesion among territories in development policies should be fostered.
4. Culture should be acknowledged as an important dimension of sustainable development.
5. Development of legal mechanisms for local and sub-national governments.
6. Development of financial mechanisms for local and sub-national governments.
7. Local and sub-national governments as hubs of green growth.
8. The Rio+20 Conference should be considered as the first step towards Habitat III which focus will be on the global commitment to reinvigorate the urban agenda.

In the opening address, the **UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon** addressed the local and regional authorities, saying "your support has never been more crucial to delivering practical results that will defeat poverty, protect the natural environment and improve disaster risk reduction".



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Mr. Kadir Topbas, Mayor of Istanbul and UCLG President, underlined that local and regional governance should be clearly included in the international institutional framework of Rio+20.



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The UCLG President also stated that Rio+20 should set the ground for the Habitat III Conference and that a clear role should be devoted to local and regional authorities in the Post 2015 development agenda. The need for a Permanent Observer Status for Local and Regional Governments umbrella organization was also underlined.

Mayor Topbas made a strong call to the UN officials and to the Rio+20 Secretariat to ensure that Local and Regional Authorities are able to be adequately represented in Rio. The current challenges and conditions concerning accommodation will make it very difficult for political representatives accountable to the citizens to actually take part in the Earth Summit.

The Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations and Executive Director of UN-Habitat, **Dr. Joan Clos**, stressed that "nowadays, more than half of the population is living in urban areas and we are living a unique phenomenon of urban population increase. We call to prioritize sustainable urban

development through good urban design, urban legislation, economy and governance to face the challenges of the 21st Century".

"A political commitment to develop national urban policies that will help countries to balance regional development policies and strengthened urban economic and legal frameworks is needed"



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"Job creation is crucial for the survival of cities. We need to promote economy growth and generate employment in urban areas, with a relevant and serious focus on young people as we know that they mostly live in cities".

Dr. Joan Clos stressed the importance of the Local and Regional Authorities to participate at the Rio+20 Conference. He added that their message is relevant to the success of the summit and he is confident that Brazilian Government would be able to work out a viable arrangement for Local and Regional Authorities.



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Ms. Maria Luiza Ribeiro, Permanent Representative of Brazil to the UN and representative of the host country of the Earth Summit, noted Brazil's conviction that cities are "laboratories" for sustainable development.

The Group of Friends for Sustainable Cities presented 7 areas of importance to urbanization, to be taken into account in the outcome document of Ri+20 and proposed to the local and governments networks to work together beyond the Earth Summit.

Mr. Antonio Costa, Mayor of Lisbon (Portugal) and UCLG Co-President, put forward the important role that decentralized cooperation has played in the development agenda and in the innovation of governance. Local democracy and governance are important basis for national and global democratization and for the sustainability of our planet, he said. He recalled the successes booked by UCLG in working with the United Nations in topics as diverse as local agenda 21 for culture, Alliance of civilizations and the aid effectiveness agenda. He expressed the political will to develop a sustainability agenda together. He further expressed hope that the government of Brazil and the UN would enable local and regional authorities to play their role and to collaborate to the UN agenda.

Mr. Gerard Tremblay, Mayor of Montreal (Canada) and UCLG Vice-President, advocated for strengthening the partnership between local/regional authorities and the international community. He underlined the need to go to the next level of commitment and to provide a clear visible role for local representatives at the negotiation table. He stressed that if the UN and the member States, and in particular Brazil, are giving as much importance to urbanization and cities on the sustainability agenda, a true commitment needs to be seen to enable participation. He asked the Ambassador of Brazil to transmit the concern of 200 locally elected representatives that were not able to participate due to the challenging conditions of accommodation during the conference period.

Mrs. Maria Sol Corral, Vice Mayor of Quito reminded the international community that only with local governments able to implement inclusive policies and involve the citizenship in decision making we can achieve the kind of sustainable society we want: fair, ecologically viable and equitable. Social inclusion needs to be on the agenda in Rio.

Mr. Sebastiao Almeida, Mayor of Garulhos, Brazil and Vice President of FMDV (Global Fund for Cities Development), focused on the urgency to meet the demands of the citizens and stressed that additional financial instruments will be required. He recalled the creation of FMDV aiming at gathering resources and knowhow to support the access of basic services for all.

Mr. Paul Carrasco, President of Province of Azuay and 1st Vice-President of FOGAR, stated that it is essential that all subnational governments, cities, metropolises and regions, work closely together. A balanced territorial development is rarely only urban or rural-based and needs the complementarities and synergy of all its assets. He underlined that diversity needs to be respected: one size does not fit all and governance for sustainability needs to be built from the bottom up.

Mr. David Cadman, President of ICLEI and Councillor of Vancouver emphasized the urgency to undertake action: Rio+20 needs to be the turning point where current global trends such as population growth, urbanization, and global warming and biodiversity loss are managed.

Mr. Lluís Recoder i Miralles, Co-Chair for the North of NRG4SD and Ministry of Territory and Sustainability of the Region of Catalonia, stressed the importance of global Sustainable Development Goals with appropriate indicators evaluated according to specific targets.

Ms. Zoubida Allaoua, Director of Finance at the World Bank, highlighted the commitment of the World Bank to support countries in their urban strategies and to foster learning and capacity building in cities.

Mrs. Clare Short, Chairperson of Policy Advisory Forum at Cities Alliance, wrapped up the session acknowledging the messages provided about the need to turn the negative effects of urbanization in positive challenges and solutions. She also welcomed the way in which local and regional leaders were organizing themselves to have a stronger voice before the international community. She commended the work done by UCLG as umbrella organization and as political representative of the interests of local authorities and stressed the importance of the advocacy work done.

Local and sub-national authorities transmitted a sense of urgency: the need to act is now, they called for concrete actions and measurable commitments and results. They expressed the wish to work towards a « green society » moving from global governance to multi-level governance and defining strategies to achieve the Millennium Development Goals and Sustainable Development Goals with the Habitat III conference in 2016 as important milestone.

Joint Messages of Local and Sub-national Governments

Cities, metropolises, regions and their association contributing to Rio+20

Presented to the UN Secretary General
Conference Room 7, United Nations Headquarters - New-York
23 April 2012

Good urban development is the key to sustainable development

Urbanization is a driver for economic world growth and development. It is in the cities around the world that the pressures of globalization, migration, social inequality, environmental pollution and climate change and youth unemployment are most directly felt. On the other hand they have for centuries been cradle of innovation and they produce currently above 75 % of the worlds of GDP. We should strive to achieve cities that are environmentally sustainable, socially responsible and economically productive.

Local and sub-national authorities would like to transmit a sense of urgency: the need to act is now, this calls for concrete actions and measurable commitments and results.



UCLG Sections
Africa



Asia-Pacific



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Europe



Latin America



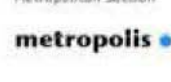
Middle East-West Asia



North America



Metropolitan Section



In consideration of the above, local and sub-national authorities put forward the following recommendations:

RECOMMENDATION 1: A new multi-level governance architecture is needed

We commit to promoting effective partnerships in building sustainable cities, integrating all relevant partners into plans of action for sustainable urban development at all levels. We should intensify exchange of experiences and examples from cities, possibly through an e-platform and a global partnership for sustainable cities, involving multi-stakeholder participation – cities and local governments, civil society, national governments and the private sector.

We emphasize the importance of citizen participation and the ability of the local community to involve the many actors including citizens and groups, civil society and the private sector.

As governmental stakeholders, we call on member-states to take into account the specific perspective of local and sub-national governments deriving from their proximity to citizens in international governance and to take them into account in any future institutional frameworks for the Sustainable Development Agenda. This is crucial to sustainability and to the implementation of good governance mechanisms, based on transparency, participation, equity and accountability.

RECOMMENDATION 2: Sustainable Cities should be a crosscutting issue in the Sustainable Development Agenda. Potential Sustainable Development Goals should include at least one Goal on “Sustainable Cities for All” and make reference to:

- A) **Access to quality basic services.** This is a fundamental responsibility of local and sub-national governments; they should be empowered with adequate human and financial resources: unfunded mandates should be avoided.

To improve living conditions in cities, we also need to upgrade basic services such as health, nutrition, safe potable water, sanitation, and waste management. City leaders should protect and sustain our natural and built environments, and foster the development of sustainable and efficient infrastructure through the promotion of sustainable building regulations [codes] and incentives, as well as the development of sustainable transport, infrastructure solutions and renewable energy infrastructure that enables access to sustainable energy for all. An integrated approach to infrastructure planning and provision should be maintained in the urban development process.

- B) **Social inclusion and equity.** This includes gender equality, and the needs of children and youth, and should be guaranteed through strong and accountable local governments. Only by investing on human capital and ensuring a more equitable distribution of wealth in particular to reduce national disparities, will it be possible to achieve a sustainable eradication of poverty and a territory balance of the development process.

- C) **Environment.** This implies recognizing a legal status for global public goods. The adaptation to climate change, a disaster risk reduction and a resilience planning are key issues that should receive increased attention and resources. We see a need for comprehensive risk management strategies that would ensure greater resilience to natural disasters due to geologic instability, weather and climate change impacts that can severely hit cities.

RECOMMENDATION 3: Cohesion among territories in development policies should be fostered

As sustainability challenges and responsibilities go beyond political borders, consultation mechanisms, solidarity among territories and integrated governance frameworks should be promoted in the outcomes of Rio+20.

Strengthened structural capacities of territories and investments in infrastructures are crucial to poverty eradication.

National Urban policies designed in full cooperation with sub-national authorities should enable them to address sustainable urbanisation.

RECOMMENDATION 4: Culture should be acknowledged as an important dimension of sustainable development

We urge local authorities to use culture as a force for urban regeneration and social inclusion, by encouraging heritage preservation, fostering creative industries, and recognizing the value-added of cultural diversity.

We encourage the adoption of information and communication technologies in order to foster smart, connected cities that provide access to the knowledge economy, enhance public services through e-government websites.

RECOMMENDATION 5: Development of legal mechanisms for local and sub-national governments

Sound rules are needed for local and sub-national authorities to set up good governance and management systems which will allow them for instance a) to develop modern municipal solid waste management systems that emphasize the 3Rs – reduce, reuse, recycle b) to enable urban land registration and land use planning v) to optimize urban management through improved monitoring and intervention.

We commit to implement land policy development and regulatory and procedural reform programmes, if necessary, so as to achieve sustainable urban development and to better manage climate change impacts, ensuring that land interventions are anchored within effective land governance frameworks. In this context, the link between rural and urban societies is of importance. The argument has been made that appropriate rural policies might be important for the management of the urbanization process.

RECOMMENDATION 6: Development of financial mechanisms for local and sub-national governments

We call for increased investments in urban infrastructure and call on national and international financial institutions to develop innovative financing mechanisms to enable improved service delivery including, among others: i) sustainable transport options and services management, particularly mass transit and non-motorized transport; ii) water supply networks and waste water treatment facilities;

RECOMMENDATION 7: Local and sub-national governments as hubs of green growth

A structurally and qualitatively different type of economic growth is needed. Incentives should direct growth towards more resource-productive, resilient, low-carbon and low risk urban infrastructure, and renewed urban design. A global Green Economy needs to comprise inclusive Green Urban Economies, and empower Local and sub-national Governments.

RECOMMENDATION 8: The Rio+20 Conference should be considered as the first step towards Habitat III which focus will be on the global commitment to reinvigorate the urban agenda

We commit to develop national urban policies, defined in full cooperation with local and sub-national authorities, integrating efforts across spheres of governments to support a holistic, integrated and multilevel governance approach to urban design and development that empowers local and sub-national governments, paying special attention to the unique and critical challenges of metropolitan areas.

We call upon all states to prioritize sustainable urban development through increased investment in and attention to urban design, urban legislation, economy and governance.

Group of Friends of Sustainable Cities

A group of representatives of 29 countries Co-Chaired by Singapore and Sweden have come together move forward the agenda of sustainable cities in the negotiations towards Rio+20.

The members of the group are:

Australia, Brazil, China, Costa Rica, Cuba, France, Gabon, Ghana, Guatemala, India, Indonesia, Japan, Kenya, Maldives, Mexico, Morocco, Nigeria, Poland, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, South Africa, Sweden, Thailand, Turkey, UAE and UK.



Local and Regional Governments networks are in close contacts with this Group which has greatly facilitated that the perspectives of local and regional authorities reach the discussions among states.

Key issues identified by the Group of Friends needing to be addressed by Rio+20 and beyond

Abstract, based on the statement delivered by the Co-Chairs of the Group at the High-Level Session in New York on 23 April

1. Developing national urban development policies that will integrate efforts to support a holistic, integrated and multi-level governance approach to urban planning and development that empowers local authorities;
2. Improving living conditions by upgrading basic services such as health, nutrition, safe potable water, sanitation and waste management. An integrated approach to infrastructure planning and provision should be maintained;
3. Implementing land policy development and regulatory and procedural reform programmes;
4. Calling on international financial institutions to allocate investments in urban infrastructure;
5. Encouraging the adoption of information and communication technologies to foster smart, connected cities;
6. Using culture as a force for urban regeneration and social inclusion;
7. Implement comprehensive risk management strategies;
8. Reaffirming the right to adequate housing; and
9. Promoting participation by civil society and local communities.

The Group of Friends further hopes that the body of knowledge on sustainable cities can be continually built upon and transmitted widely. To exchange experiences, one idea is to create an e-platform and a global partnership for sustainable cities, involving multi-stakeholder participation – UN agencies, cities and local governments, academics, civil society, national governments, international organisations and the private sector. Such an initiative will help to continue the rich dialogue and intensify the sharing of best practices, and can be useful in following up on the commitments post-Rio+20.