



STATEMENT TO THE SUMMIT OF THE FUTURE 2024

of the Organized Constituency
of Local and Regional Governments



Statement of the World Assembly of Local and Regional Governments

within the framework of the United Nations
Summit of the Future

New York, United States (19 September, 2024)

For over a century, the international movement of local and regional governments has stood as a beacon of democracy, quality of life through local public service provision, and social justice through the inclusion of all. Driven by our commitment to serve our constituents, we have continuously evolved to meet the challenges of each era, always grounded in the principles of local governance, inclusivity, and solidarity.

Today, we stand ready for the future. Our Common Agenda represents a new and essential roadmap for our shared journey. The protection of our planet, ecosystems, and commons, while prioritizing dignity and equality, must guide our work for current and future generations.

From where we stand, the message from our communities is clear: either we break through, or we break out. Achieving meaningful progress will require us to move forward together. This means developing collective decisions, and doing so depends on creating the right conditions for collaboration. At the top of these conditions is the need to expand and democratize the United Nations. Recognizing local and regional governments as distinct political actors within the UN system, separate from other stakeholders, is crucial for the new multilateralism of the 21st century.

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If we want to achieve sustainable development, we need to ensure it happens for the benefit of all through a renewed, networked multilateral system. Localization will impact the lives and livelihoods of millions of human beings, but it is also a political process that aims to bring the voices of these people to the forefront. This is the end goal, and this is what we are asking of the new multilateralism: recognising the united, allied voice of the organized constituency of local and regional governments, and thus structure its formal integration within this renewed multilateral system. Multilateralism cannot rear its head to the role that our organised constituency plays: we cannot be seen as only as mere implementers of the goals. Multilateral organizations need to work hand-in-hand with local and regional governments towards the good of our planet and the wellbeing of all people. This needs to be the cornerstone of the multilateralism that we seek.

To this end, we call for the systematic engagement of local and regional governments within the UN, establishing a structured, institutional mechanism to ensure the voices of our self-organized constituency are heard and our contributions are acknowledged. This call goes beyond political recognition; it is about enhancing the capacity of our collective multilateral system to address global challenges by connecting it with the realities and potential of local communities around the world. Building on the work of the United Nations Secretary-General's Advisory Group on Local and Regional Governments, we hope that the UN Pact for the Future will mark a shift in our capacity to contribute to achieving the global agendas for sustainable development.

We believe the Pact for the Future negotiated by Member States can significantly and positively impact the lives of our communities, but it can only do so if it truly reflects the needs of communities. The Pact for the Future needs to live up to its name and lead by example with actionable commitments that deliver for future generations, and by transforming the interaction of the multilateral institutions with our organized constituency through the recognition of a formal, and permanent status for local and regional governments within the UN's primary political bodies.

- **We Commit** to championing the localization of the global agendas, especially the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. We affirm that local public services are fundamental to achieving these objectives and to fostering inclusive, resilient, and sustainable territories.
- **We Pledge** to ensure universal access to local public services, including housing, and to strengthen local caring systems and economies that promote social inclusion. We believe in a new social contract that is people-centered and rights-driven.
- **We Commit** to advance gender equality, empower women and girls and foster women's political participation. We recognize that a redistribution of power and a redefinition of leadership are essential to safeguarding democracy.
- **We Urge** the global community to support reforms of the international financial system to foster a more inclusive and decentralized economy that goes beyond GDP as the sole measure of progress, integrating social, environmental, and economic indicators. To close the SDG financing gap, the global financial architecture should be reshaped to expand access to financing for local and regional government and to support investment in local public services.
- **We Acknowledge** the immense global challenges of war, climate change, and polarized narratives and stand ready to embrace the role of local and regional governments as the frontline defenders of peace, equity, and sustainable development.
- **We Recognise** that those least responsible for the global climate emergency are being affected first and most severely by it, and that an effective response must tackle existing inequalities such as wealth disparity and discrimination based upon gender, age, disability or indigenous status, as the impact of climate change can be made worse by these factors.
- **We Endorse** a new era of diplomacy that fosters peace, cooperation, and solidarity between communities, reinforcing city and territorial diplomacy, democratic participation, human rights, and renewed democracies.
- **We Advocate** for a new generation of human rights in both physical and digital environments that addresses contemporary challenges and anticipates future ones; recognizing the rights and contributions of all

residents, irrespective of their status, to foster social cohesion and lasting peace.

- **We Commit** to transformative climate action by applying multi-stakeholder approaches and prioritizing community resilience, biodiversity, and justice in all our policies. We urge rapid implementation of multilevel collaboration and enhanced finance to reach climate neutrality goals, adapt to impacts and address loss and damage at all levels. We strongly support mainstreaming of biodiversity in all areas of development, and call for an inclusive and sustainable urbanization addressing climate, nature and pollution emergencies to ensure a sustainable future for all.
- **We Commit** to promoting culture as an integral component of local sustainable development and global solidarity. Culture, heritage and creativity are sources of knowledge and vital elements of citizenship. Culture enables dialogue, coexistence and freedoms that need to be the cornerstone for peaceful societies.
- **We Pledge** to develop sustainable local food systems that enhance food security, reduce waste, and support equitable development of urban and rural communities, contributing to sustainable economies and healthy ecosystems.
- **We Call** for a renewed multilateralism that includes local governments as a specific sphere of government in global decision-making processes, recognizing their unique proximity to the people and their ability to drive change.
- **We Stand United** in our commitment to strengthen local governance capacities and foster inclusive decision-making processes that ensure transparency, trust, safety and accountability, creating frameworks for collaboration that drive sustainable development.
- **We Affirm** that local and regional governments are co-creators of global solutions and essential allies for hope in these polarized times. We pledge to act as leaders in building inclusive, just, and sustainable societies, recognizing that our desired future starts in our communities.

The organized constituency of cities and regions stands as a vital partner and key ally of the United Nations in shaping its future, given its networked and

inclusive nature. We rely on Member States to ensure our explicit inclusion and recognition in the Pact for the Future. We extend our gratitude to the co-facilitators, Germany and Namibia, for their efforts and support. We call on the full membership of the General Assembly to support our inclusion.



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