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JOINT STATEMENT TO THE 12TH SESSION OF THE WORLD URBAN FORUM

of the Organized Constituency of
Local and Regional Governments





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Statement of the World Assembly of Local and Regional Governments at the 12th World Urban Forum

Powering multilateralism from our territories to rescue the SDGs: towards the localization of the World Social Summit

We, local and regional governments and their associations from across the globe, representing the populations of metropolises, peripheral cities, intermediary cities, regions, rural areas, and small municipalities, gather as an organized constituency convened by the Global Taskforce of Local and Regional Governments, at the occasion of the Twelfth session of the World Urban Forum to reiterate our support to the importance of Local actions for sustainable cities and communities, with the transformative potential of local and regional governments as driver of change within a renewed multilateralism.

The World Assembly of Local and Regional Governments a second time this year, following the Summit of the Future at a critical juncture to accelerate the localization of the global goals, and before the Fourth Conference on Finance for Development and the World Social Summit.

As the political platform for local and regional governments, the Assembly seeks to underscore the essential role these governments play in advancing global development agendas, particularly through the New Urban Agenda and the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The United Nations Pact for the Future, adopted in September by Member States can significantly and positively impact the lives of our communities, but it can only do so if it truly calls to action on the needs of the people. Central to this effort needs to be the transformation of 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, as called for in the Pact

As the review and follow-up mechanism of the New Urban Agenda, we recall its critical importance to achieving the necessary transformations .Through the localization of the universal development agendas, accelerated by the New Urban Agenda we will be closer to delivering the UN SG's Our Common Agenda; to shaping the future between and between generations; to delivering global public goods; and to adapting the UN System for a new era, the four pillars of the Common Agenda

The theme of the World Urban Forum, "It Starts at Home", directly speaks to the transformative potential of local service provision and policies, to the potential from our territories: from rural areas to metropolises, and including intermediary cities, to drive the transformation that our planet needs. Towards the UN World Summit for Social Development, our constituency aims to build a global social agenda rooted in local public



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service provision and principles of care and equality. We call for a renewed financial structure now for the future generations. We need to be at the centre of decisions when it comes to housing, climate justice, culture, health, food security, and peace in order to drive solutions for the most pressing social challenges.

Through high-impact partnerships among all stakeholders—governments, civil society, the private sector, and others—the World Assembly of Local and Regional Governments reaffirms its commitment to ensuring no one is left behind in the pursuit of sustainable development.

Local and regional governments remain committed to strengthening the collaboration initiated within Habitat III convening and promoting the Right to the City as a useful framework for transformation, that fosters the social function of our cities and territories, mitigates social and territorial inequalities through the delivery of quality public services.

Against this backdrop, it is our joint duty, as an organised constituency representing over 250,000 local and regional governments, and composed of 27 networks to highlight the New Urban Agenda as a critical building block and an accelerator for the achievement of the SDGs to achieve sustainable, inclusive, accessible, fair and safer cities for all and beyond.

A local SDG Rescue Plan that places people and the planet first

Social, economic and environmental crises continue to hinder the advancement of the achievement of the global agendas and access to finance and international financial architecture remains inadequate to face the global challenges.

Addressing inequalities is paramount to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals, and gearing towards 2025, it will be essential to renew the conversation ensuring a just transition to the climate crisis, and revisiting financial architecture will need to be key priorities for the world to ensure no one and no place is left behind.

The World Social Summit will need to address locally driven **social justice, solidarity powered by proximity and feminist leadership that puts care at the heart of service provision**. It will need place local and regional governments and their potential in delivering caring cities and territories through proximity, and accessibility, as a way to foster equality and social justice through local public service provision adapted to the diverse needs and aspirations of all.

The local SDG rescue plan will need to address the rights and needs of current and future generations, through caring policies grounded on local public service provision. The world needs a local rescue plan to guarantee the right to the city, food, housing, culture, health, and benefit everyone, regardless of where they live.

We acknowledge the relevance of the WUF12 dialogues and commit to ensuring the right to local public services, aiming at ensuring the sustainability of our planet through peace and justice, through a new era of transformative diplomacy and solidarity between



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communities, reinforcing city and territorial diplomacy, democratic participation, human rights, and renewed democracies.

We are committed to ensuring housing for all by placing it at the centre of local service delivery, and driving partnerships between spheres of government and all stakeholders to guarantee its status as a human right.

Our calls:

We call to ensuring safe homes for all: housing is a global human right, and this means we need to protect internally and internationally displaced populations. We need to have the tools to revert the loss of homes and to ensure the human rights of migrants and refugees.

We advocate for a new generation of human rights, one that is driven also by innovative solutions to both physical and digital environments: we need to address contemporary and future challenges, empowering communities to be able to shape the global decisions on local, global, and digital governance to foster social cohesion and lasting peace.

We commit to contributing as an organised constituency to the SDG rescue plan, through the development of a Universal Local Social Covenant: a multistakeholder coalition built around localization to build a society of rights bringing the right to the city, food, housing, culture, health, and benefit everyone, regardless of where they live.

Bringing the outcomes of the Summit of the Future to life through a renewed multistakeholder multilateralism

The Summit of the Future concluded with a commitment from our constituency to continue advocating for the formal and permanent status of local governments within the United Nations system. The next steps include engaging with Member States and other stakeholders to garner support around these recommendations ahead of the United Nations Summit of the Future and beyond.

In a world facing compounding crises, local and regional governments and their representative associations and partner civil associations have been and still are at the forefront of service delivery while fostering a culture of peace.

Building on the work of the UN Secretary General's Advisory Group on Local and Regional Governments, our constituency laid the foundation for the future of local-global governance, signalling a new chapter in the United Nations' approach to multilateralism. The time for action is now; local and regional governments are poised to play a central role in shaping the future of global governance.

We are convinced that the localization of the New Urban Urban Agenda remains essential to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), as well as the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration and the Global



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Compact on Refugees. We are convinced that it can territorialize and ensure a bottom-up achievement of the 2030 Agenda, building on a system of metropolitan and intermediary cities and regions

Our calls:

We call for the international system to keep its promise from the outcome of the UN Summit of the Future of involving our self-organized constituency in the discussions around localization. Localization needs to be a whole-of-government affair, and the renewed multilateralism that we call for needs to place local and regional governments at the heart of the global decisions.

We commend the priorities of the upcoming UN Habitat Strategic Plan, which places Housing, Basic Services, Slum Upgrading and Land, which call for the role of local and regional governments in local public service provision to be upheld and strengthened.

We recall the importance of upholding the differentiated accreditation status for our constituency, and avoiding the imposition of any new conditions for our participation in UN-Habitat intergovernmental processes, and call for a renewed multilateralism that includes local governments as a specific sphere of government in global decision-making processes.

Financing the territories of today for future generations

Local and regional governments are still not considered as distinct stakeholders in the consultation on financing and access to funding remains limited. The global financial architecture is not fit to work with local and regional governments nor is it able to address the public investments that the climate and social realities demand at local level.

The lack of adequate mechanisms leads to underutilized funds that lack adequate pipelines of investments, and on the other hand, significant numbers of unfunded public services and investments that might not seem backable or suited for immediate financial returns but are critical to maintain the social fabric and ensure no one is left behind.

As the local and regional government global organized constituency, we need a restructured global financial architecture that caters to the needs of millions of people, in particular those of the Global South. A structure that, firstly, is more sustainable, participatory and inclusive; secondly, considers the capacities and needs of local and regional governments; and thirdly, redefines the type of investments that need to be prioritized around local and territorial service provision with a perspective of system of cities and paying special attention to the role of intermediary cities.

Our calls:

We call for an effective response to the climate emergency, one that is driven by communities and that places those that will be most affected at the centre, and that recognises the importance of the urban-rural continuum, considering the



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interconnections among cities and their broader territories, as well as the role of intermediary cities in safeguarding life systems at risk of degradation by climate change and protecting those most at risk

We call for a deep transformation in the governance and rules of the current economic system, paving the way for scaling up affordable financing, technical assistance and developing innovative financing mechanisms, to boost investment for social infrastructure, and to finance the basic services that our communities need.

We call for a future in which we finance the quality of life of our communities, and in which this metric replaces GDP to ensure we develop a world of empowered citizens created equally

We call for a new generation of human rights, one that is driven also by innovative solutions to both physical and digital environments: we need to address contemporary and future challenges, empowering communities to be able to shape the global decisions on local, global, and digital governance to foster social cohesion and lasting peace.

Who are we? The Global Taskforce (GTF) of LRGs is a coordination and consultation mechanism, facilitated by United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG) that brings together the major international networks of local governments to undertake joint advocacy work relating to global policy processes. For more information visit <https://www.global-taskforce.org>



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