

**Fourth Session of the Open Working Group  
on Sustainable Development Goals  
17-19 June 2013**

**LAMG STATEMENT**

Intervention delivered by Mrs Aliye Celik, UCLG representative  
on behalf of the Local Authorities Major Group  
Public hearings on Health and population dynamics

Dear Co-Chairs, Dear Member States and colleagues,

As part of the population trends the world is currently facing, urbanisation is one of the most important and universal. Half of the world population is now living in cities and this rate should rise to 75 % by 2050, with the fastest growing urbanisation process in middle income countries.

In parallel, cities are hosting more and more population, with 23 cities from all continents hosting today more than 10 million inhabitants.

Rapid rural-urban migration has accelerated urbanization in many of the poorest countries, without the benefits that effective urban planning in advance provides. As a result, by 2030, 1/3rd (one third) of the global population will live in slums, creating an urgent need to address the immediate challenges linked to urban growth and informal settlements such as environmental sustainability, climate change, and water, food and energy security.

However growing urbanisation also affects local, regional and national governments and requires territorial cohesion based on planification and supported by legal, financial, and technical means.

**Urban planning**

This new urban partnership should contribute to **promoting strategic urban planning** as a way to engage a wider platform of stakeholders in the development process of the city, articulating physical, economic, social and cultural dimensions, and mobilizing local and national resources to improve the quality of life and promote territorial cohesion.

Well planned and managed urbanisation is a critical component of sustainable development. National and local plans should rely on inclusion policies on guarantee universal access to basic services and the safeguard of citizens' rights; guided by the values of equality, solidarity and respect for differences.

**Instruments enabling local governments to undertake long term planning and control of critical land resources** for agriculture (Food security) and environment (health and natural resources), but also to finance urban development as well as for efficient organization of urban services, should be explored in consultation with all levels of governments from local to national.

**Transparent and inclusive governance** will be key to work towards a healthy, safe, tolerant and creative society, ensuring the universal enjoyment of culture and its components, and protecting and enhancing the rights of citizens.

Given the increasing diversity of their population, and ongoing migrations towards cities, local and regional authorities must commit to the **promotion of culture as a vital part of development and as an unavoidable prerequisite for a diverse and peaceful society**. Participatory governance including citizens and civil society will ensure the most adequate policies for all at local level.

**To those ends, to effectively manage urban growth we recommend national governments:**

1. **Develop national policies** that take into account demographic changes, plans for managed urbanization that strengthens cities and protects rural environments, in collaboration with local and regional authorities from development phase to implementation. National strategies should integrate the urban, suburban, peri-urban and rural areas.
2. **Establish national investment programs** in urban infrastructure to improve service provision and provide populations with economic opportunities.
3. The particularity of urban challenges necessitate national frameworks that **decentralize local policy development, following the principle of subsidiarity**: the level of government closest to the people most affected by it is empowered and resourced to develop, implement and monitor approaches specific to local needs and opportunities.
4. Strengthen **urban governance structures** recognizing the role of the hinterlands that surround them, ensuring that regional concerns are well integrated in local policies and working beyond administrative borders on aspects such as public services infrastructure, protection against ecosystems fragmentation, internal connectivity and food systems.
5. Support city governments to prepare, implement and monitor **city development plans** that accommodate a growing number of urban residents, including the poor and slum dwellers, and provide them with access to land, housing, water, sanitation, energy, Information and Communication Technology (ICT) and transport as well as health, education and other public services.
6. Ensure evolutive and flexible **public services agenda**, based on partnerships with all relevant stakeholders (local governments, civil society and private sector) and ensuring the investment needed in improving, for example waste management, energy use and transport systems.

Indeed the agenda of public services is highly dynamic, due to advancing evolution in demography, regular technological progress and the need to tackle climate change and ensure disaster risks' prevention.