

LOCAL AUTHORITIES MAJOR GROUP - LAMG
POSITION PAPER for THE HIGH-LEVEL POLITICAL FORUM 2017
CONTRIBUTION FROM LOCAL AND SUBNATIONAL AUTHORITIES IN
"ERADICATING POVERTY AND PROMOTING PROSPERITY IN A CHANGING WORLD".

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with inputs from nrg4SD and other partners

The new international global development agendas – the Agenda 2030/Sustainable Development Goals, the Paris Climate Agreement, and the New Urban Agenda– offer an unprecedented opportunity for local and regional governments (LRGs) to contribute to global sustainability. The LRG constituency reaffirms our commitment to all these global development agendas and our political will to turn these global goals into localized objectives.

From development of the agendas to their implementation

The Global Taskforce of Local and Regional Governments (GTF), created in 2012 during the Sustainable Development Goal negotiation process, brought together major international networks of LRGs, thus strengthening our joint advocacy and coordination in international policy processes.

The GTF also acted as the convening and facilitating mechanism of the World Assembly of Local and Regional Governments, a fundamental moment in the definition and approval of the New Urban Agenda, which is closely interlinked with the achievement of the SDGs. Now, the Global Taskforce is building on this legacy and the leadership of the Local Authorities Major Group while entering a new stage, shifting its strategy towards the implementation, localization, monitoring and reporting of these global agendas.

As reflected in the UN global consultation, launched by the UN Development Group in 2014, and co-led by UNDP, UN Habitat and the GTF, the “localization” of the global agendas is a powerful driver of sustainable inclusive territories that can unite efforts and improve efficiency and delivery of the SDGs at national and global levels.

Localizing the 2030 Agenda – Sustainable Development Goals

Localizing the SDGs relates both to (i) how LRGs can support the achievement of the 2030 Agenda through bottom-up action and (ii) to how the SDGs can provide a framework for local development policy. Providing local and regional governments with an enabling environment and resources to participate in the “localization” of the SDGs is a strategic priority to ensure the success of national efforts and the whole global agenda.

As a contribution to this process, the networks of the Global Taskforce are putting in motion the following actions:

- **Development of tools** to allow LRGs to support follow-up at the national level and encourage localization and alignment of SDGs and local plans;
- Develop a **global reporting mechanism** to promote the involvement of LRGs in National Voluntary Reviews and build specifically upon local governments' experience of implementation and localization to contribute to the HLPF;
- **Awareness raising** to involve local communities and citizens in the implementation of the SDGs at local levels;
- Mobilization of **financial resources**.

TOOLS/TRAINING/ALIGNMENT OF SDGs WITH LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLANS:

Training modules for local and regional governments

As part of their learning initiatives, local and regional government networks are developing, in partnership with UNDP and UN-Habitat, training modules on the localization of the SDGs. Several events are planned in the coming months to involve LRGs in all regions.

Toolbox on “Localizing the SDGs”

A Toolbox on “Localizing the SDGs” has been launched in partnership with UNDP and UN-Habitat. This is a webpage to share information, experiences and tools to support the involvement of LRGs and local partners: <http://localizingthesdgs.org/>, including a “[Roadmap for Localizing the SDGs](#).”

UCLG has released [publications](#) explaining the links between SDGs and the everyday work of local and regional governments.

Peer-review and exchange

A simultaneous global agenda, coordinated by networks and associations of LRGs, can ensure a shared process for implementation, in which LRGs share experiences and learn from one other to help translate global goals into local actions (local plans, regional development strategies, sustainable programs). Nrg4SD organizes opportunities for subnational governments to exchange practices and results on subnational actions for the SDGs, in order to maximize efficiency.

Multi-stakeholder partnerships and awareness-raising initiatives

Many cities and local government networks are promoting public campaigns, education actions at schools and social initiatives to inform and involve citizens (young people, business, civil society, academia, etc) in different regions. With the support of the EC, LRGs and civil society organizations have adopted a [Joint Position paper on a Multi-stakeholder Approach for the implementation of the SDGs](#). In this regard, the UN should engage with these actors in the organization of capacity-building activities and workshops.

Indicators:

Indicators are a critical dimension of the SDG reporting process. However, many of the indicators defined by the UN for the 17 SDGs are still being discussed. The situation is particularly critical for SDG 11 on sustainable cities and human settlements: out of 15 indicators, only one has been completely approved (Tiers I). Seven indicators are still under discussion (Tiers III).

We therefore request stronger involvement of local and regional governments in the process of defining indicators and call on national governments and UN Agencies to

involve sub-national governments in the discussion around monitoring and reporting of SDG 11.

REPORTING: Participation in the HLPF follow-up and review process

An effective follow-up and review (F&R) framework should promote the **seamless integration of LRGs in the monitoring process at all levels**. The international community has initiated a mechanism of monitoring and reporting that refers directly to national governments. LRGs should take part in this global conversation with an original approach: building on an assessment of the process, its quality, features and effects, underscoring the direct impact of sub-national government initiatives and decisions in the SDG implementation, strengthening multi-stakeholder collaboration.

The first process should consist of an analysis of the **impact of implementation on national political processes**, emphasizing the link between national policies, sub-national governance and the challenges of policy localization. The second part should be more **thematic and topic-based**, following the HLPF's thematic review clusters mentioned above, SDG 11 being a natural candidate as a lynchpin around which an initial analysis could revolve.

Local and regional government networks at national level are currently being mobilized to get involved in the Voluntary National Reporting Processes. Surveys are being carried out at regional and global level to access methodologies and levels of involvement. Furthermore, UCLG and the Global Taskforce networks are developing a global reporting mechanism that will allow implementation to be monitored from a local government perspective, in line with the evaluation cycles defined by the HLPF, which include: periodical reports from national government (VNR) and a thematic review of the SDGs clustered in three cycles (eradicating poverty and promoting prosperity in 2017, transformation towards sustainable and resilient societies – including SDG 11– in 2018 and empowering people and ensuring inclusiveness and equality in 2019).

Local and regional governments from many of the 44 countries presenting VNR in 2017 have been called to participate as soon as possible in the reporting process, which will be essential to locate themselves in the national conversations and be ready to contribute to national reviews.

We call on national governments to make efforts to mobilize all stakeholders towards a consensus on the definition of national priorities, strategies and the institutional framework for the 2030 Agenda. Some countries are creating special multi-stakeholder institutional mechanisms or fora that include LRGs and civil society to maximize participation and ensure inputs that reflect the diversity existing within countries. These experiences should be promoted to facilitate close consultation and coordination with local and regional governments.

Further to the contribution of the constituency to the national reviews, a first **Local and Regional Report will be presented to the next HLPF** in New York in July 2017.

MOBILIZATION OF FINANCIAL RESOURCES

The mobilization of financial resources, including tax collection and allocation and access to borrowing and investments, at the subnational level is mentioned in the AAAA, but this needs more attention in the Finance for Development forum (FfD). To ensure Means of

Implementation for the 2030 Agenda, FfD Forum should also promote exchange of practices on the best modalities to mobilise domestic resources (including local taxes) and ensure a better **allocation of resources between national, local and regional governments to contribute to the implementation of the SDGs.**

In line with the Addis Ababa Action Agenda (particularly paragraph 34), local authorities should be recognized as specific partner –at the same level as CSOs and private sector- and should be included in the follow-up of FfD. **Local governments’ role in investments in basic services, resilient urban and territorial infrastructures are crucial for the achievement of the SDGs.** In high income countries, subnational governments are responsible for 50% of public investments, while in low income countries their contribution are limited to 7%. They play a particularly important role in emerging economies, where decentralization processes are more advanced.

In this regard, FfD **voluntary presentations, in alignment with VNRs, should include and disclose data on subnational financing.**

Some concrete examples of Local and Regional Governments’ role in the implementation of the reviewed goals in HLPF 2017

All of the SDGs have targets that are directly or indirectly related to the daily work of local and regional governments. LRGs should not be seen as mere implementers of the agenda. LRGs are policy makers, catalysts of change and the level of government best-placed to link the global goals with local communities and territorial realities.

Goal 1. End poverty in all its forms everywhere

SDG 1 takes a multi-dimensional view of poverty and therefore requires multiple, coordinated responses. LRGs are in the ideal position to identify people living in poverty on the ground, and to target resources and services to help them improve conditions.

LRGs’ responsibilities for local basic services, such as water and sanitation, as well as land management and regulations in many countries, make them key partners in the achievement of SDG1.

LRGs can also play a role by developing local economic development strategies to create jobs and raise incomes, and by building the resilience of our communities to crisis and disasters.

Goal 2. End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture

LRGs’ management of natural resources, territorial planning and basic infrastructures in rural areas, particularly land and water, underpins food security. LRGs can foster sustainable agriculture and local economic growth by improving transport infrastructure, access to mechanisation and new technologies, strengthening local markets, local food chains and urban-rural linkages.

The achievement of these goals rests on the involvement of citizens in responsible and sustainable food production and consumption practices, as well as the support of public authorities and the implementation of relevant national and international regulations.

In urban areas, local governments must ensure that people are able to purchase and cook safe, affordable, nutritious food, facilitate access to school canteens or gardens to ensure child

feeding. Urban/regional planning can play a major role in waste reduction and food security by facilitating effective food-related transport and storage, access to clean water and sanitation. They can also promote urban agriculture on both public and private land.

Rural local governments can manage collective resources and regulate land tenure in ways that protect the rights of the poorer groups, including secondary right holders.

Strengthening territorialized agri-food systems and establishing a better balance between the "globalized" and "territorialized" components of food systems are a priority. The food system can be a driving force in territorial development, also contributing to food security, the preservation of natural resources, the improvement of the environment, the creation of jobs in relevant sectors (catering, ecotourism, craft work, services), the promotion of cultural heritage (especially with regard to gastronomy) and the protection of food and agricultural diversity¹.

Goal 3. Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages

Many LRGs have direct competences in the provision of basic health care and assistance, including through the management of primary health centres, hospitals and subnational public health systems. Local governments in urban areas must be particularly vigilant as urban rates of child mortality areas are stagnating in many countries. Local governments can address this by slum improvement programmes and by increasing access to quality basic services for the most vulnerable.

HIV/AIDs are increasingly being understood as a local governance issue. Urban areas are often the nexus for the spread of HIV/AIDS because of their high population density, transport hubs, and prevalence of vulnerable groups. LRGs can play an important role in identifying local needs, mainstreaming HIV/AIDS activities across departments, and coordinating prevention and response activities. Many LRGs provide education and information services and campaign to prevent and treat HIV/AIDS.

LRGs can use urban and territorial planning and public transport to reduce air pollution, foster healthy lifestyles and prevent deaths from road traffic accidents. LRGs can contribute to the reduction of deaths caused by water and soil pollution through effective natural resource management and environmental protection. The provision of clean water and sanitation is essential to lowering infant, child and maternal mortality

Goal 5. Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls

LRGs can act as a model for gender equality and the empowerment of women through non-discriminatory service provision to citizens and fair employment practices.

LRGs are on the frontline of identifying and tackling violence and harmful practices against women. Urban planning (particularly the creation and maintenance of public spaces) and local policing are both essential tools in tackling these issues. LRGs also have a role to play in providing services to women affected by violence.

Regional governments and rural municipalities can identify and tackle barriers to women's equal access to land control and ownership.

¹ Quebec Declaration "For the Promotion of Local Initiatives for Responsible and Sustainable Eating and the Emergence of Territorialized Agri-food Systems", Quebec City, October 2, 2015; http://regions-france.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/Declaration-de-Quebec-ENG_final.pdf

Getting more women into elected office at all levels is a top priority in terms of empowering women, both as a goal in its own right, and because local politics is often the first step to regional and national office. Female leaders in local government can challenge gender stereotypes and set an example to young girls.

LRGs can mainstream gender equality across all areas of their work in order to tackle the multiple barriers to women's empowerment.

Goal 9. Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation

Regional and local governments are particularly important in developing and maintaining infrastructure to serve urban areas and to link them up with their surrounding territories.

LRGs can include the promotion of small-scale industry and start-ups in their local economic development strategies, taking into account local resources, needs and markets. Besides, territorial planning and zoning is fundamental to define the most adequate areas for expansion and industrialization, promoting local clusters and business collaborative strategies. As a result, LRGs are also responsible for the licensing and authorization of industrial and commercial activities, as they establish regulatory frameworks to authorize the operation of the sector and promote business friendly environment.

LRGs can identify gaps in access to ICT and the internet in communities and take steps to bridge them, particularly through provision of public services and spaces such as libraries.

Goal 14. Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development

Almost 80 per cent of the pollution in the oceans comes from land-based activities, both in coastal areas and further inland.

Half of the world's population lives less than 60km from the sea and 75% of large cities are located on the coast. Many coastal cities discharge sewage, industrial effluent and other wastewater directly into their surrounding seas.

However, protecting oceans and coasts is not just the responsibility of coastal cities. Worldwide, two-thirds of the sewage from urban areas is discharged untreated into lakes, rivers and coastal waters. Urban sanitation and solid waste management are essential to reducing coastal zone pollution, as is collaboration between municipalities and at regional level.

LRGs are critical to promote integrated coastal management plans to protect the natural resources of coastal areas while promoting their efficient use. Coastal cities must develop and implement planning and building regulations to prevent construction in unsuitable areas of the coast.

Finally, with regard the Goal 17, the strengthening of local taxes and local financing systems are critical to strengthen domestic resources mobilisation. At the same, local governments need that more direct attention from international partners and funding to local investments in resilient basic infrastructures, particularly in LDCs.

The local and regional government constituency is committed to contribute to a new global partnership with international institutions, national governments, civil society, and the

private sector. We will continue to use global platforms to highlight the potential of local action to drive development and to call for appropriate legal and financial frameworks to support all local and regional governments in playing our part in the achievement of this ambitious, integrated and universal agenda.