

**Sustainable Cities and Human Settlements at the core of
the Sustainable Development Goals and post-2015 Development Agenda**

4 to 7 PM, 23 September 2013

Turkish House, Mission to the UN – First Avenue and 46th street

Special event organized by DESA/DSD with the Local Authorities Major Group (LAMG) and Member States Friends of Cities. The outcome will be reported to the inaugural session of the high-level political forum on 24 September 2013

“The road to global sustainability runs through the world’s cities and towns. By building more sustainable cities and regions, you will lead us to a more sustainable world.”

UN Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon, June 2012, Rio+20 Global Town Hall

Urbanisation - with its challenges and also its opportunities - is unanimously recognised as a megatrend in current and future population dynamics. It is expected that by 2050 the global proportion of people living in cities will raise to about 70%. Besides, 6 million people will enter the global urban slum population annually, unless significant improvements are made. Moreover, it is increasingly understood that urban and rural development should – and can - be worked out in a holistic and synergetic manner.

Cities are the loci of local democracy and of decisions regarding the provision of basic social and public services. Worldwide, subnational and local authorities have long been partnering with other stakeholders involved in sustainable development,, such as higher education institutions, academia, the private sector and civil society as well as with national governments and international organisations, for ensuring the economic, social and environmental prosperity of their communities. Furthermore, a long history of decentralised cooperation programmes is linking developed and developing cities and regions, translating action into concrete impact.

The legacy of the Rio+20 Conference has put in place a universal intergovernmental high-level political forum which will certainly be the place to make serious waves on sustainable development. Rio+20 has launched an intergovernmental process to elaborate Sustainable Development Goals coherent with the needs of a Post-2015 development agenda. Several themes with relevance to cities and human settlements are being reviewed in this context - such as sustainable economic regeneration and decent work, poverty and inequalities eradication, education and culture, food security and nutrition, waste management, water and sanitation, energy and transport, climate and risk resilience, sustainable consumption and production, and democracy and accountability.

Development is ultimately local as demonstrated in practice by local Agenda 21 programmes. This has been reaffirmed in several occasions by the UN Secretary-General, It has also featured highly throughout the Rio+20 Outcome Document. Recognition as governmental stakeholders in the climate regime, and active engagement in the biodiversity agenda are flagship achievements of local and subnational governments in the context of global environmental governance as well.

In the context of the processes to establish a Post-2015 Development Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals which are now in full swing, the interlinkages between poverty eradication and urbanization will require a systemic and multi-disciplinary city-region wide approach, in order to vertebrate economically, socially and environmentally cohesive territories beyond administrative boundaries.

The Local Authorities Major Group has already put forward recommendations on the need for a strong subnational and local dimension in the implementation of the outcomes of Rio+20 . The Global Task Force of Local and Regional Governments for Post2015 Development Agenda also played a key role in feeding into the works of the UN Secretary General's High Level Panel of Eminent Persons. Several partners are elaborating initial proposals for concrete targets under a Mayor possible SDG on cities and human settlements and possible indicators for the subnational and local dimension of the SDGs. Initiatives will be further elaborated and discussed with other stakeholders, member states and the UN system to feed into the Seventh Session of the Sustainable Development Goals Open Working Group on 6-10 January 2014 (SDGs OWG) that is addressing sustainable cities and human settlements alongside sustainable transport, sustainable consumption and production, and climate change and disaster risk reduction

This 3 hours high-level event will bring together practitioners, local and subnational elected representatives and national governments in order to (i) review current proposals related to urbanisation and sustainable development; (ii) identify areas where more technical work is required and (iii) strengthen partnerships between relevant stakeholders to best manage urbanisation and establish links between rural and urban areas :

Draft Agenda

1. Opening: 4:00 - 4:20
 - a. Mr. John Ash, PGA (TBC)
 - b. Welcome by Turkey Mission (TBC)
 - c. Mr. Kadir Topbaş, Mayor of Istanbul, Turkey, President of UCLG, and Member of High-Level Panel of eminent persons on the Post-2015 Development Agenda.
 - d. Mr. Joan Clos, Executive Director, UN Habitat
2. Session I: Taking stock of progress and needs 4:20 – 5:40
 - a. What are the traits of sustainable empowered and resilient communities? What mechanisms, tools and means of implementation for catalysing and replicating action on the ground? How to improve the existing mechanisms, tools and means of implementation to deliver more efficient and effective impact?
 - b. What are the key areas of costs for eradicating poverty in urban communities by means of a sustainable development/growth? What are the real trigger of resilience communities and resource-efficient and low-carbon economies? What have been the information and implementation gaps so far? Are new indicators needed? How to strengthen decision-making processes, implementation and monitoring

and evaluation systems at city-region level? What appropriate prioritization of actions and resources allocation is needed?

- c. How to capitalise on the action of governmental stakeholders as key partners of the New Global Partnership for Action? How to reinforce and amplify subnational and local leadership and engagement? How to converge and complement international, national, subnational and local targets and actions to boost in the same strategic direction?

Proposed questions:

- a) What kind of basic services need to be implemented to tackle poverty in urban communities in a sustainable way?
- b) What are key elements to ensure access to those services?
- c) What type of partnerships are needed between Major groups and other stakeholder and local governments and how can they be developed/scaled?
- d. How can we ensure inclusive governance of Sustainable development?
- e. What are the real trigger of resilience communities and resource-efficient and low-carbon economies?

Facilitators

Iclei representative

Speakers:

Mr Frank Cownie, Mayor of Des Moines City Council, USA

Mr. Augusto Barrera, Mayor of Quito, Ecuador

Member State from Friends of Cities (TBC)

Business and Industry Major groups (TBC)

3. Session II: The path forward 5:40 – 6:15
 - a. Modalities of engagement between the HLPF and subnational and local authorities
 - b. Developing a specific Sustainable Development Goal for cities and further ensuring a territorial dimension to the SDGs
 - c. Building upon and expanding partnerships with the work of the Friends of Cities
 - d. Enhancing collaboration with other Major Groups (e.g. children and youth, see attachment on consultation) and also Science and Tech and Business and Industry like in prep Rio+20

Facilitator

Maruxa Cardama, Former executive director of nrg4SD

Speakers

Ms. Marta Subirà i Roca, Director General for Environmental Policies, Government of Catalonia

Mr. Aromar Revi, Director, Indian Institute for Human Settlements, India as Co-chair of the urban group within the UN Sustainable Development Solutions Network

Youth- representative from the other Major Groups

Ambassador Kőrösi, Co-Chair of the Open Working Groups on Sustainable Development Goals (TBC)

4. Session III: Message for the HLPF 6:15-7:00

Facilitators

UCLG representative

Rapporteur: Mr. Kadir Topbaş, Mayor of Istanbul, Turkey, President of UCLG

- a. Role and place of the LAMG in the HLPF - **proposal for** a permanent group of Friends of Cities consisting of Member States and LAMG to provide advice to the HLPF works following the pattern of ‘friends of the chairs.
- b. Key messages on Post 2015 and SDGs - i) call for one single process after February, (ii) call for a SDG on sustainable cities and human settlements and clear city-region targets across the SDGS framework.
- c. Next steps between now and January?