



SUMMARY

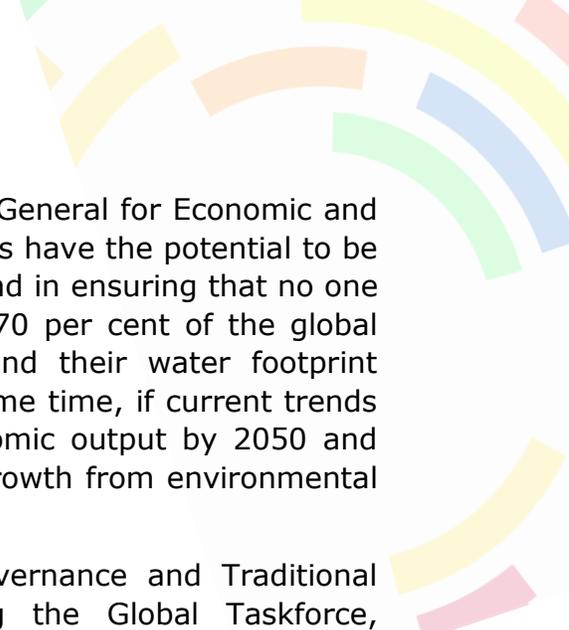
24 September 2019 Conference Room 3, UN Headquarters LOCAL AND REGIONAL GOVERNMENTS' FORUM

The Second Local and Regional Governments' Forum took place on Tuesday, September 24, 2019 at the United Nations Headquarters, in connection with the General Assembly SDG Summit. The High-Level event was co-hosted by Cameroon and Morocco and organized by the Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA), UN-Habitat and Local 2030 as well as the Global Task Force of Local and Regional Governments.

It brought together more than 400 participants and showcased successful experiences from around 30 local and regional governments on implementation and follow-up of the 2030 Agenda. The various discussions addressed the linkages between climate change and the SDGs, and also served as a platform for the announcement of SDG Acceleration Actions.

The Forum consisted of an opening session, two panel discussions and a session on the SDG Acceleration Actions. During the event, local and regional leaders reaffirmed the principles of the 2030 Agenda as the most relevant tool for a transformation towards a renewed social contract for sustainable development. National, regional and local representatives also acknowledged that no single sphere of government can do this alone: there is a need for multi-level, inter-governmental cooperation.

The opening session was chaired by H.E. Mbella Mbella, Minister of External Relations of the Republic of Cameroon. In his opening address, Mr. Mbella underscored the importance of local governments as a cornerstone for localizing and contextualizing the SDGs, improving the living conditions of populations, and mitigating climate change. Calling for the strengthening of multi-stakeholder partnerships, Mr. Mbella urged participants to focus on concrete, efficient, lasting and nature-based solutions to global challenges, especially climate change. During the opening, Ms. Maimunah Sharif, Executive Director of UN Habitat, stressed the need for dialogue between all spheres of government and noted that events such as the Forum provided space for such discussions. She encouraged participants to “think local, act global, learn global and apply local.”



Ms. Maria-Francesca Spatolisano, UN Assistant Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs, stressed that local and regional governments have the potential to be the game changers in making the SDGs a reality for all, and in ensuring that no one is left behind. She noted that cities are responsible for 70 per cent of the global greenhouse gas emissions from burning fossil fuels, and their water footprint accounts for 41 per cent of the Earth's surface. At the same time, if current trends continue, cities will produce 85 per cent of global economic output by 2050 and they create opportunities for fully decoupling economic growth from environmental degradation.

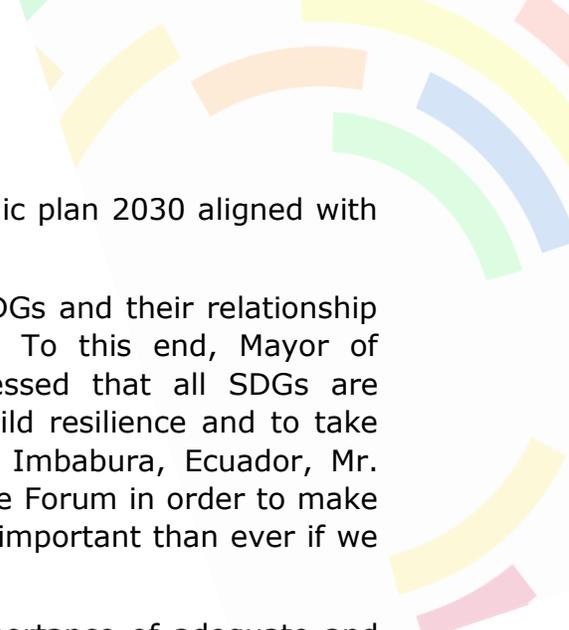
Deputy Minister of the Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs of South Africa, Mr. Parks Tau, representing the Global Taskforce, highlighted that the constituency understands like no other the links between the SDGs and climate action. He called on the different spheres of government to join efforts for shared implementation of the global agendas on climate change and sustainable development. Adding on this, Ms. Ada Colau, Mayor of Barcelona, Spain, called for a much-needed transformation from relations between public institutions to a true multi-stakeholder change. The private sector should play a transformative role towards a fair, inclusive ecological transition. In this regard, Ms. Colau called for national governments to move from declarations to action, showing the way for corporate powers.

Mr. Ashok Sridharan, Mayor of Bonn, Germany, and President of Local Governments for Sustainability (ICLEI), announced the UrbanEra4Life, a joint Bonn-ICLEI initiative that will drive local action over the next ten years on climate and sustainability. He also referred to the ICLEI Montreal Action Plan that lists 200 actions addressing all SDGs.

Triggering the transformation needed to address the climate challenge

During the Forum, local and regional government officials highlighted the local nature of the SDGs as well as the interconnected nature of the climate and sustainable development agendas. To this end, Mayor of Kazan, Russia, Mr. Iltur Metshin, and Mayor of Strasbourg, France, Mr. Roland Ries, stressed that cities and local and regional governments must act at the global stage. Mr. Metshin recalled that awareness of the SDGs will be a base for more local action, while Mayor Ries emphasized that Strasbourg sees itself as part of a global community. Hence, governments should to give local and regional governments more opportunities and responsibilities at the global level in making the SDGs a reality.

The importance of local ownership of both SDG implementation and climate actions was stressed by many, as was the need for relevant capacity-building to ensure the effectiveness of the actions. President of the region of Nouakchott, Mauritania, Ms. Fatimetou Mint Abdel Malick, highlighted the need to realize a full ecological transition that needs to be led and owned by communities for it to succeed. Mayor of Seville, Spain, Mr. Juan Espadas, noted that local and regional governments



must be empowered to act and said his city has a strategic plan 2030 aligned with the 17 SDGs.

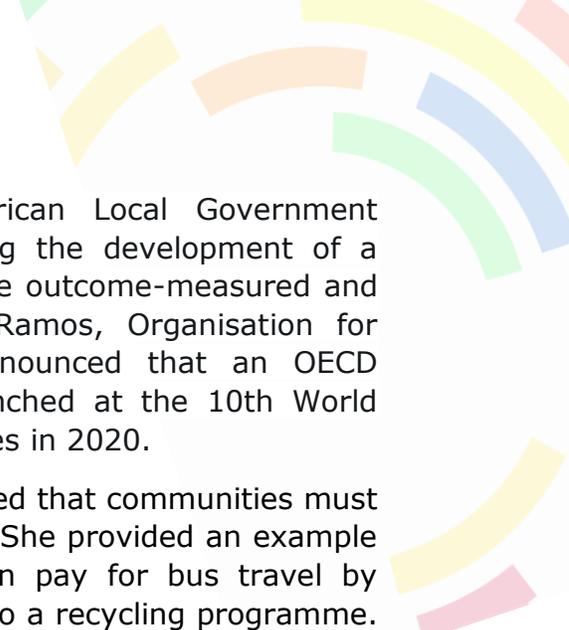
Speakers also stressed the cross-cutting nature of the SDGs and their relationship to climate change, nature and multi-level governance. To this end, Mayor of Freetown, Sierra Leone, Ms. Yvonne Aki-Sawyerr, stressed that all SDGs are needed to transform our relationship with the planet, build resilience and to take climate action. President of CONGOPE and Governor of Imbabura, Ecuador, Mr. Pablo Jurado, reminded that everyone was gathered at the Forum in order to make the world understand that multi-level action is now more important than ever if we are to protect our natural heritage.

The Forum was also a moment to highlight the vital importance of adequate and sufficient financing in the achievement of the 2030 Agenda and in tackling climate change. For example, Mayor of Chefchaouen, Morocco, Mr. Mohammed Sefiani, noted that local and regional governments have a responsibility and a duty to raise awareness of the 2030 Agenda and to localize the global goals but that without adequate financial resources, they will not be able to fully play this central role. In similar vein, Mayor of Belize City, Belize, Mr. Bernard Wagner reminded everyone that almost 1000 local and regional governments had declared a climate-related state of emergency which underlined that in order to take action, member states will need to unlock financial resources and allow for necessary regulatory changes.

Good practices for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and Acceleration Actions

The second and third sessions of the Forum focused on good practices and Acceleration Actions on localization of the SDGs. During the two sessions, both local and regional leaders had the opportunity to share their existing initiatives in implementing the SDGs and what additional Acceleration Actions they are committing to.

Aligning local action with the 2030 Agenda was emphasized as essential for the attainment of the SDGs. Mayor of Kitchener, Canada, Mr. Berry Vrbanovic stated that localizing the SDGs is not only translating the global objectives into local policies, but it means doing so in the real social, political and economic contexts of the communities. In similar vein, President of the Aude region in France, Mr. Andre Viola, noted that Aude aligning all its public policies with the SDGs, thus contributing to their localization and reversing a path from the international level to the local level. Governor of Oaxaca, Mexico, Mr. Alejandro Murat, reaffirmed his commitment to continue integrating the 2030 Agenda into all of the region's public policies. Ms. Marie Madeleine Nga, Coordinator of the National Community-driven Development Program of Cameroon, showcased the reforms undertaken by Cameroon in localizing the 2030 Agenda, such as the Communal Development Plans (PCD) oriented towards climate action, which according to Ms. Nghave helped Cameroon make significant progress in implementing the SDGs.



Ms. Thembi Nkadimeng, President of the South African Local Government Association (SALGA), reported that SALGA is supporting the development of a framework on SDG localization in South Africa that will be outcome-measured and outcome-based. Related to monitoring, Ms. Gabriela Ramos, Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), announced that an OECD localized indicator framework for the SDGs will be launched at the 10th World Urban Forum convening in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates in 2020.

Mayor of Surabaya, Indonesia, Ms. Tri Rismaharini, stressed that communities must feel involved in the policies that will transform their lives. She provided an example of such inclusion from Surabaya, where inhabitants can pay for bus travel by presenting plastic bottles to the driver, thus contributing to a recycling programme. Noting the need for ownership, Prefect of Azuay, Ecuador, Mr. Yako Perez, highlighted the roles both regions and indigenous communities play in SDG implementation.

Local and regional governments also shared their initiatives on enhancing gender equality and women's empowerment. Ms. Macoura Dao, President of the Network of Locally Elected Women of Africa (REFELA), presented the commitment of the network to accelerate the SDGs and noted that the localization of the SDG offers an opportunity to strengthen the role of women in politics and to promote the election of women. Mayor of Mannheim, Germany, Mr. Peter Kurz, noted that cities are often examples of practical cooperation and highlighted a project where the city of Mannheim is cooperating with the Turkish city of Kilis in building a community center for refugees and local women.

The forum also highlighted the role that Voluntary Local Reviews (VLRs) can play in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and in transforming our world. Mr. Yasutomo Suzuki, Mayor of Hamamatsu, Japan, argued that VLRs are more than an information tool. They have the power to drive the bottom-up transformation needed to accelerate the localization of SDGs. Mayor of Helsinki, Finland Mr. Jan Vapaavuori, mentioned that his city was the second city in the world to submit a VLR and noted Helsinki's efforts in implementing local participatory budgeting.

Closing the meeting, Ms. Lotta Tahtinen, Chief of Outreach and Partnership Branch of DESA, thanked the participants and invited all to launch "game changing" acceleration actions, and register them on the UN's SDG Acceleration Action platform: <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/partnership/register/?source=90>.

The webcast of the event can be found from the following website: <http://webtv.un.org/search/2nd-high-level-local-and-regional-government-forum/6089198485001/?term=&lan=english&cat=Meetings%2FEvents&page=50>
