

**Fourth Session of the Open Working Group
on Sustainable Development Goals
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LAMG STATEMENT

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

Dear Co-Chairs, Dear Member States and colleagues,

Building on the Rio+20 outcome document that recognizes local and sub-national authorities as key partners, Local and Regional Governments organizations gathered in a Global Taskforce for Post 2015.

As the closest level of government to the populations, local and regional governments have key roles in bringing sustainable development issues to the knowledge of their citizens.

Local and regional governments have long been advocating for culture to be recognised as the fourth pillar of development, looking at it in all its dimensions as essentials to reach healthy, safe, tolerant and creative societies.

With strong culture and innovation local and regional governments are key drivers for sustainable and inclusive growth necessary for structural transformation of the economy. A culturally and innovative reliable approach can foster decent jobs and resilience, through energy efficient building, development of multimodal and alternatives transports, bringing back to the city or close to it the food supply, as urban agriculture.

CULTURE

Local governments have made great progress in developing culturally sound policies that will contribute to resilient and innovative societies. Hundreds of cities around the world have adopted the **Agenda 21 for culture**, which builds on the relationship between local cultural policies and human rights, governance, sustainable development, participatory democracy and peace.

In 2010, the international associations of local governments agreed to advocate for "**Culture, Fourth Pillar of Sustainable Development**", engaging local governments to explicitly include culture in the model of development, as well as ensuring the enjoyment of culture and its components by all inhabitants. This approach includes the protection of citizens rights to freedom of expression and access to information and resources.

A holistic and integrated approach to development needs to take creativity, heritage, knowledge and diversity into account: poverty is not just a question of material conditions and income, but also of lack of capabilities and opportunities, including in cultural terms.

We believe sustainable development policies and goals will only be achieved if rooted in culture and sensitive to local contexts:

- Culture boosts the economic dimension: it generates income and employment, it has impact on entrepreneurship, new technologies and tourism. Culture brings creativity and innovation to the economy.
- Culture is linked to the social dimension: it provides tools to fight against poverty, it facilitates participation of citizens, and ensures a sense of dignity of all while enhancing intercultural dialogue and equality of rights and is contributing to peaceful societies.
- Culture embraces the environmental dimension raising awareness on individual responsibility to protect the environment and act against climate change.

Successful sustainable development policies should build on Culture as driver and enabler of development and people-centered societies.