

**Third Session of the General Assembly Open Working Group  
on Sustainable Development Goals  
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Intervention delivered by Ms. Alyie Celik, UCLG representative  
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on behalf of Local Authorities Major Group  
Informal dialogue on water and sanitation

Thank you Mr./Madam Chair.

Mr./Madam Chair, Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen, it gives me great pleasure to address the third session of the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals.

In our ever more challenging global context, the questions surrounding water and sanitation governance have become increasingly pressing. Climate change is threatening the hydrological cycle, while population and urban growth are putting pressure on existing resources.

**Local and regional authorities consider Water and Sanitation Management as a Global Issue** and request that access to water and sanitation be ensured as a basic service, a strong tool to reduce poverty and tackle inequalities.

The Post-2015 agenda should address the issue of access to basic services and a special focus should be given to **access to water, recognized as an international human right by a resolution of the General Assembly (A/RES/64/292)** in July 2010. The resolution is calling on States and international organizations to provide financial resources, build capacity and transfer technology, particularly to developing countries, in scaling up efforts to provide safe, clean, accessible and affordable drinking water and sanitation for all.

**Cities and local authorities are key actors in the development and implementation of basic services** based on their strong convening power and their potential to develop key partnership with the civil society and private sector. Following the **“International guidelines on decentralization and access to basic services for all”** adopted by UN Habitat, the Post-2015 agenda should implement an effective decentralization of responsibilities, policy management, decision-making authority and sufficient resources, including revenue collection authority.

Local and regional authorities are already greatly involved in water and sanitation services' provision. The 6<sup>th</sup> edition of the World Water Forum, held in Marseille in 2012, saw the participation of 350 local and regional elected officials from across the 5 continents mobilized on the issues of water and sanitation and to reinforce the commitments agreed upon in the Istanbul Water Consensus. This forum reasserted the trend initiated in Kyoto in 2003 and upheld in Mexico in 2006 and Istanbul in

2009: the **increasing participation of local and regional authorities in the assembly of actors in the area of water.**

Outlining the key challenges faced in the sustainable provision of water and sanitation, the **Istanbul Water Consensus** was adopted during the 5<sup>th</sup> World Water Forum in 2009. It is a political engagement and call to action to make water an instrument for peace and development. The Consensus calls on States and international institutions, and commits local and regional governments to create local plans to improve water and sanitation management. Its originality lies in that it allows commitments to achieving concrete actions to be made. It highlights:

- the need for effective and transparent management of services and particularly for public control regardless of the management approach;
- the great difficulties (financial, technical and in terms of infrastructure) faced by local and regional elected representatives in certain developing regions to ensure minimum service provision for their citizens; and, finally,
- points out the urgency of certain situations such as cities in island countries, for instance, in the face of climate change and large-scale natural disasters.

**The governance issue of Water and Sanitation remains a priority.** If it falls under the States' remit to ensure equitable access to the resource throughout national territory and to define the general organisation of the water and sanitation sector, then it is the responsibility of local authorities to come together or cooperate on the level of territories which are pertinent with regard to management and preservation of the water resource, and to bear the responsibility of organising local service delivery.

**The Open Working group should consider including water and sanitation in the Sustainable development goals,** building on the MDGs, ensuring universal access to water and further taking into account the essential role of local governments to reach it.

We are encouraged by the opportunity provided to us to address these issues in the Open Working Group and hope that these concerns will be taken into account.

Thank you.