

## **Local Authority Major Group intervention for Monday 30 April 2012 meeting with Bureau**

The Local Authority Major Group remains actively engaged in the Rio+20 process. Why? Because good urban development is the key to sustainable development and many cities around the world realize this and take innovative action. Urbanization is a driver for economic world growth and development. We should strive to achieve cities that are environmentally sustainable, socially responsible and economically productive.

Local and sub-national authorities would like to transmit a sense of urgency: the need to act is now, this calls for concrete actions and measurable commitments and results. It also calls for innovation.

In a meeting with the United Nations Secretary General and national governments last Monday, local and sub-national authorities put forward the following 8 recommendations:

1. Recommendation 1: A new multi-level governance architecture is needed
2. Recommendation 2: Sustainable Cities should be a crosscutting issue in the Sustainable Development Agenda. Potential Sustainable Development Goals should include at least one Goal on “Sustainable Cities for All” and make reference to access to quality basic services, social inclusion and equity, and the environment.
3. Recommendation 3: Cohesion among territories in development policies should be fostered
4. Recommendation 4: Culture should be acknowledged as an important dimension of sustainable development.
5. Recommendation 5: Development of legal mechanisms for local and sub-national governments.
6. Recommendation 6: Development of financial mechanisms for local and sub-national governments.
7. Recommendation 7: Local and sub-national governments as hubs of green growth
8. Recommendation 8: The Rio+20 Conference should be considered as the first step towards Habitat III which focus will be on the global commitment to reinvigorate the urban agenda.

Based on these recommendations, and in order to bring them into the Rio+20 negotiation process, the Local Authority Major Group has developed suggestions for paragraph 72 on sustainable cities. We support some changes which Member States suggested at the reading last Tuesday. We also propose three news ideas which we consider important:

1. Territorial cohesion
2. Urban biodiversity and urban agriculture
3. Recognizing the role of associations of local and subnational governments

Our messages and these points are innovative. We know we need to change from business-as-usual in order to achieve the transition we urgently need. Cities around the world have implemented sustainable development. There are countless innovative examples which have worked well and should be replicated and scaled up. Other ideas, like urban agriculture and urban biodiversity management, are up-and-coming.

We look forward to working with you, the national governments of the world, and all other partners to create sustainable cities. In order to do so we look forward to continue our dialogue with you all in these meetings between Major Groups and Member States, in bilaterals, and by events dedicated to cities and states in and around Rio in June where we hope to welcome many of you.

Let me finish by quoting the UN Secretary General, who said: "Our struggle for global sustainability will be won or lost in cities."