

**ORAL STATEMENT OF THE LOCAL AUTHORITIES MAJOR GROUP
AND THE GLOBAL TASKFORCE OF LOCAL AND REGIONAL
GOVERNMENTS
TO THE HIGH LEVEL POLITICAL FORUM 2016**

Delivered by Mr Kadir Topbas, Mayor of Istanbul and President of UCLG

Excellencies,

Dear Member States' representatives,

Dear colleagues,

A few months ago, in September 2015, Local and Regional Authorities were coming together in New-York to celebrate the adoption of the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly the adoption of a specific goal on urbanization –Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable (Goal 11).

The achievement of the 2030 Agenda requires us to seek complementarities and interlinkages with other recently adopted international agendas, such as the Paris Climate Agreement, the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Prevention and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda.

Further, the 2030 Agenda is an important milestone on the way to the Habitat III Conference and the adoption of the New Urban Agenda. In a rapidly urbanizing world, the New Urban Agenda is also an opportunity to strengthen the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

The capacity to develop inclusive partnerships based on the full involvement and collaboration of Major Groups and other stakeholders, in particular of the local and subnational government constituency, will be critical to the success of the SDGs.

THE ROLE OF LOCAL AND SUBNATIONAL GOVERNMENTS IN THE SDGS IMPLEMENTATION

Let me recall the UN Secretary General words in his Synthesis Report on the Post-2015 Agenda, "*many of the investments to achieve the sustainable development goals will take place at the subnational level and be led by local authorities*" (A/69/700, para 94).

Indeed, local and subnational governments are at the forefront of tackling most of the issues addressed by the SDGs in our daily work. We have a fundamental role in ensuring the safety, security, livelihoods and wellbeing of our communities. National strategies to implement the SDGs need to take in account these local policies to tackle the territories where vulnerable groups and where poverty is concentrated and where results should be delivered.

INCLUSIVE FOLLOW-UP AND REVIEW SYSTEMS

Local and Subnational Governments, as one of the Major Groups, are committed to contribute our experiences and initiatives from a sub-national perspective, mobilizing our constituency and strengthening a multi-stakeholder approach by engaging citizens in a bottom-up process for the implementation of the SDGs.

However, in many cases, policy development at national, regional and global level does not sufficiently take into account how these policies affect sub-national levels where people live and experience global challenges. **An effective review and follow-up of SDG implementation worldwide should take into consideration, not only the contributions of each country, but also the specific needs of different cities and regions, to avoid leaving anyone behind.**

MULTI-STAKEHOLDER AND MULTI-LEVEL FRAMEWORK

Considering the strategic position of LRGs, as the level of government closest to citizens and local stakeholders, and as intermediaries between national and local levels, it will be fundamental to create and develop the necessary enabling environment to allow us play our full role in the achievement of the SDGs on the ground. To facilitate our involvement an effective multi-level governance framework should be in place taking into account the need for coherence, coordination, cooperation and cohesion between national and local policies.

It is with this aim in mind that the Global Taskforce of Local and Subnational Governments, in collaboration with UNDP and UN Habitat, have been working on the "localization" of the SDGs, following the global consultation on localization in 2014 by the UN system. Further to these consultations, we are developing a roadmap of guiding principles and solutions to create an enabling environment that support a multilevel coordination and a multi-stakeholder mobilization for the effective implementation and monitoring of the SDGs at local and subnational level.

LOCALISATION OF THE SDGS

In a majority of countries, elected subnational governments have the legitimacy to lead inclusive and participatory policy processes to ensure a people-centered approach to development. We are ideally placed to lead local multi-stakeholder partnerships in which public sector, civil society and business actors are involved according to their distinct competencies, capacities and resources. This is essential to create local ownership and mobilizes stakeholders to contribute to the achievement of the SDGs.

Localizing the SDGs should be seen as political process, as well as a technical one. This implies recognizing and valuing the role of local leadership and encouraging local leaders

make the SDGs their own. Local governments have a democratic mandate. Such democratic accountability can be a powerful tool to drive the achievement of the SDGs.

CONTRIBUTING AND ENGAGING IN NATIONAL PROCESSES

The capacity of LRGs to cause policy to change on the ground should be taken into consideration in national government reviews. LRGs are strategic partners of national governments in supporting more balanced and inclusive territorial development, based on a strong system of cities that promote social cohesion and reduce inequalities between regions. To this end, and whenever possible, strategies and actions for implementation should be aligned and combined, in order to result in coherent and effective results in all countries. Local and subnational governments can enrich exchanges at the national level by sharing our knowledge and innovative experiences.

National reviews should be open to reports and inputs produced at the subnational level, not only by LRGs, but also by grassroots local communities, NGOs, think tanks, academia, media and others. These contributions could be instrumental to harness subnational disaggregated data and ensure more bottom-up monitoring and evaluation processes.

CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE GLOBAL REVIEWS

The HLPF, as the main forum to support the review and follow-up of the 2030 Agenda, could enable mutual learning across countries and regions through an inclusive approach that includes Major Groups and other stakeholders.

In this context, the aim of the Local Authorities' Major Group, organized within the Global Taskforce, is to promote in-depth

voluntary reviews at subnational level to contribute to the global reporting process, and thus enable the benchmarking of different strategies used by different LRGs worldwide. The challenges, conclusions and case studies could be compiled and presented to the HLPF as a joint and significant contribution to this process. LRG networks and associations are also exploring the feasibility of convening, ahead of future HLPFs, **regular conferences on SDG implementation at the subnational level** to contribute to the Global Review process, with the support of the UN and interested Member States.

I cannot therefore hide, excellences, our concern that the Declaration from this first HLPF following the adaption of the Agenda, might not contain sufficient reference to local and sub-national's roles. Allow me to convey to you once again, as I have been doing during the past three years the availability of our constituency to contribute constructively to this process.

Allow us to stress that by listening to cities you listen to real needs of our communities.