

Mr. Liu Zhenmin Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs

Opening Remarks Local and Regional Governments' Forum

16 July 2018, New York

Mr. Miroslav Lajčák, President of the General Assembly

Ms. Amina J. Mohammed, Deputy Secretary-General

Ambassador Inga Rhonda King, Vice- President of the Economic and Social Council

Ms. Maimunah Mohd Sharif, Executive Director of UN-Habitat

Mr. Parks Tau, Global Taskforce of Local and Regional Government

Excellencies,

Distinguished Delegates,

Mayors, Governors,

Representatives from local and regional governments,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

On behalf of UNDESA, I would like to start by welcoming you all to this first Local and Regional Governments' Forum.

The excellent collaboration of UNDESA, UN-Habitat and the Global Taskforce of Local and Regional Governments has helped make this Forum one of the most sought-after special events held in connection with the High-Level Political Forum.

By bringing together Member States, the UN system entities, as well as an impressive and wide range of stakeholders, the HLPF is now the main global gathering for sustainable development leadership and expertise.

Today's special event will showcase the close connection between the sustainability of our communities and cities, and the universal aspirations of the 2030 Agenda.

Urban sustainability is a critical cross-cutting and far-reaching issue. What happens in our cities and human settlements directly affects our health and overall quality of life, our planet's health and the future of our world.

Cities are also where we see the important role that the 2030 Agenda is playing in breaking down silos whether between departments that work in transportation, parks and green space, water and housing, or accessibility, urban planning and economic planning, just to name a few.

We hope to hear from you today about your experiences working across sectors to achieve the 2030 Agenda.

Ladies and gentlemen,

I am impressed by the level of commitment and excitement expressed by local and regional governments, which are actively contributing to the implementation of the SDGs.

I take this opportunity to salute the mayors, governors and local leaders, from small to megacities, attending today's deliberations.

Reflections at this year's HLPF have been clear. We must transform our societies to make them more sustainable, resilient and capable of addressing the pressing problems of climate change, rising inequalities, lack of access to basic services and infrastructure, pollution, urban sprawl and unsustainable consumption patterns.

Ladies and gentlemen,

The successful implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals and their targets depends on local action.

The important topics you are discussing today merit more than a day of dialogue. I hope that your discussions thus enhance collaboration and learning, which you can each take back to your cities and regions.

I also encourage you to use the networks and platforms that play a key role in information-exchange, and follow-up on commitments made at all levels of government and between all stakeholders.

UNDESA is happy to continue to support and facilitate these important platforms where we can discuss trends, exchange best practices, build partnerships, and promote capacity-building.

We hope the conversations today leave you inspired to continue and build-upon your vital work.

I wish you have a very fruitful discussion!

Thank you.