

## Speech by Bernd Vöhringer (Germany, EPP/CCE), Vice-President of the Congress

### United Nations 2024 High-Level Political Forum: “Transformation from the ground up: Acting at local level”

10 July 2024

(Approximately 2.5 minutes / 334 words)

Excellencies,

Dear colleagues,

In March, the Congress of the Council of Europe, the political assembly that represents local and regional authorities in the Council of Europe system, adopted a Recommendation *on the essential role of local and regional authorities in global sustainable development*. This Recommendation underscores the key role of local and regional authorities in addressing the global challenges and consequently, in delivering the Pact for the Future.

**Sustainable development and International peace and security** will come from fostering an inclusive multilevel global governance system that is grounded in subsidiarity, solidarity and human rights. As we saw recently with Russia’s war of aggression against Ukraine, the international peace and security can be directly supported by the involvement of local and regional authorities. We commend the resilience the local authorities have shown in Ukraine. Inclusive societies, based on solidarity and human rights, are the very foundation of peace and security.

Local and regional governments can also be innovators in **science and technology**. The proximity between citizens and elected officials at the local level allows local governments to be at the leading edge of implementing new and innovative solutions.

I must stress that we cannot achieve any of this without meaningful involvement of the **youth and future generations**. We must continue encouraging meaningful engagement of young people in policymaking and decision-making processes at all levels and promote additional avenues for enhancing youth participation.

Dear colleagues,

Local and regional governments must be recognised as indispensable actors in **transforming global governance**. Together, we must promote a genuine multilevel government approach. We must amplify the voices of local and regional authorities in international forums to ensure that their voices are heard.

Our experience at the Congress shows that institutionalising the voice of local and regional authorities strengthened the policymaking role of the Council of Europe. It created an enabling environment for addressing global challenges and building a stronger foundation for multilateralism. Therefore, we fully support similar efforts in the UN, and I very much look forward to the discussion today.

Thank you.