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Local Action For the People
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Position papers 02

UCLG WORLD CONGRESS 2019 ASSEMBLY TRACK LATIN AMERICA POSITION PAPER

1. Key Messages

The world has undergone major changes in the last three decades. Phenomena such as globalization and the financialization¹ of the economy, changes to production models, trade and consumption, the advancement of new technology and means of transport have shaped a hyperconnected and interdependent world.

As they are close to their policies, citizens and the territory, local governments play a vital global role in developing social, cultural, economic, and environmentally sustainable policies which leave no one and no place behind. Local governments, associations of local governments and cities are key players and the natural partners of national governments when it comes to designing and implementing policies in line with global challenges. Ibero-American local governments have shown their willingness to engage in global action, with local authorities from other regions, in order to strengthen mutual learning and build on relevant policy experiences that will help to provide effective responses to the global situation from the local level.

Local governments in Latin America and the Caribbean are facing economic, social, cultural, environmental, institutional and urban challenges. In order to meet these challenges, they will continue building on the achievements made and continue designing, implementing and strengthening political tools and strategies – based on the principles of transparency, participation, cooperation, accountability, the fight against corruption, the efficient use of resources and data – which will respond to those challenges and are linked to national, regional, continental and global agendas. Local priorities are also being identified while new public policies are being tested, learned from and improved, which is helping to achieve the global goals.

2. Current context and remaining challenges

2.1 Economic/Financial Context

Cities are the main sources of economic wealth because they generate around 70% of the world's Gross Domestic Product (GDP).

In economic terms, there is low growth and a lack of investment. Growth in the Latin American region is [estimated](#) to reach 1.4% in 2019 and 2.4% in 2020. However, in order to meet regional challenges, such as the 2030 Agenda, economic growth must be higher than 3%. Economic growth in the region has been insufficient and there have been delays in reducing poverty and income inequality. There are regional and territorial disparities in economic growth. Cities have limited resources to cope with the large number of tasks that they must carry out. There is a disconnect between the needs of cities in developing countries and the rules that dictate how resources are allocated; this poses a structural problem in the financial market, and it is a major obstacle to urban finance.

¹The term "financialization" generally refers to the increasing importance of financial capital in the operation of the economy. Financial activity is not only expanding rapidly, but its structure is also changing, in terms of markets, products and agents. These changes are deep enough to affect the logic behind economic performance. In most developed and some underdeveloped economies, non-financial companies, families and governments act under the logic of the financial sector. As a result, economic activity is "financialized" and leads to many problems of weakening demand, the slowing of the accumulation process and a restructuring of society that is to the detriment of working people and benefits the capital, particularly its financial sector. These numerous problems have finally led to the current crisis.

As an intermediate developed region, Latin America is able to attract and channel substantial internal or external funds into investment in urban transformation processes and use innovative ways to develop shared strategies aimed at mobilizing resources.

Economic/Financial Challenges

- Decentralizing finance to increase cities' capacity to respond. Creating and implementing innovative and diversified instruments to generate the necessary resources, which will help to activate and maximize the sustainable urban development value chain. Using innovative ways to design shared strategies in order to mobilize resources that would allow different stakeholders to be consistently involved in a suitable finance system for the sustainable development of cities and urban settlements in the region.
- Strengthening financial management by local and regional governments, by working to focus demand and seeking to diversify sources of finance. Creating new instruments for financing of infrastructure, and sustainable cultural and social policies. Making progress towards a new generation of instruments for attracting investment – public, private and mixed forms – for the purpose of promoting urban transformation initiatives and programmes.
- Promoting the definition, structuring and implementation of the “Ecosystem of Funds for Sustainable Urban Development”, an initiative which is aimed at boosting the sustainable urban development value chain by launching large-scale comprehensive urban transformation programmes in Latin America with medium- and long-term horizons.

2.2. Social/Human Context

Latin America and the Caribbean is one of the regions with the highest levels of economic and social inequality in the world; it is a result of an inequitable distribution of income among the region's inhabitants and the exclusion of vast segments of the population from basic public services, in addition to high socio-economic residential segregation, high unemployment rates and growing informality in the economy. Since 2015, there has been a further increase in overall poverty and extreme poverty levels (in 2017, over 187 million people were living in poverty and 62 million were living in extreme poverty).

Migration has been a constant feature of the historical reality in the region; in 2015, there were approximately 244 million migrants. This represents 3.3% of the total number (total world population is 7.35 billion) of people who currently live in a country other than their country of birth. Furthermore, the figure indicates that the number of migrants increased by almost 60% over the last 25 years, and by over 25% in the last decade.

In recent years, the increase to this figure has mainly been caused by the situation in Venezuela. By the end of 2018, a total of at least 3.4 million Venezuelans – more than 10% of the country's population – had fled to different destinations in Latin America and the Caribbean. Almost 5,000 people leave Venezuela each day. There are expected to be over five million refugees by the end of 2019. This phenomenon is also seen in Central America, due to insufficient growth, poverty and inequality. In this sub-region, the richest 10% earn up to 70 times more than the poorest 10%, and high youth unemployment also contributes to the migratory phenomenon – almost 362,000 young people try to enter the labour market each year, while only 127,000 new jobs are created.

In the light of the above, governments at various levels must adapt their policies and programmes in order to, on the one hand, address the structural causes of migration: insufficient economic growth with a high level of inequality, violence (gender, ethno-racial, intrafamily, social and sexual, as well as other forms), wage gaps and youth unemployment, family reunification and climate

change, and, on the other, receive and assist the migrant population that come to their territories. Violence in the region's cities reveals unforeseen vulnerabilities.

In addition, cities and their governments play a key role in social inclusion through the promotion and protection of the rights of people who belong to specific groups: young people, people with disabilities, women, the LGBTI community and indigenous peoples.

64% of young Latin Americans live in poor or vulnerable homes. They need to be given formal jobs and good public services if they are to have confidence in institutions.

With regard to gender equality, discriminatory and violent patriarchal cultural patterns; the predominant culture of privilege; the gender-specific division of labour; the unfair social organization of care; the concentration of power; and hierarchical relationships in the public sphere continue to pose obstacles to the inclusion of women in society.

In Latin America and the Caribbean, approximately 12% of the population has a disability, that is around 66 million people. These people have to contend with inadequate architecture, exclusion from health and treatments, discrimination in education, high unemployment, underemployment and precarious jobs.

With regard to safety, Latin America has been given the unfortunate title of the region with the highest number of the most dangerous cities in the world, following a comparison of the number of murders per 100,000 inhabitants in cities with more than 300,000 inhabitants and only counting intentional murder or death by assault. Out of the 50 cities in the ranking, 17 are in Brazil, 12 in Mexico, 5 in Venezuela, 3 in Colombia and 2 in Honduras. One of the cities is in El Salvador, one in Guatemala and another in Puerto Rico.

The region has witnessed armed conflict for decades and long negotiation processes. Cases like El Salvador and Colombia highlight the role that cities play in receiving victims, displaced and demobilized people, as well as their role in the post-conflict as key actors in implementing agreements and in building lasting and sustainable peace.

Social/Human Challenges

- Designing and implementing programmes and projects that seek to improve the social inclusion of all segments of the population (young people, women, people with disabilities, indigenous people, the LGBTI community), in social, political, economic and cultural areas of life. Supporting the coordinated work of the "UCLG Committee on Social Inclusion, Participatory Democracy and Human Rights" with the Coalitions of Cities against Racism, Discrimination and Xenophobia under the auspices of UNESCO. Considering new lines of work and strengthening those which have been successful in local areas in this field or innovating with new ideas that will help to tackle exclusion problems.

- Providing a response to the migrant population that moves within the region in search of opportunities. Making progress towards a common Latin American and Ibero-American agenda, which sets out a shared solidarity-based vision focused on integration and dialogue mechanisms and incorporates the capacities of local governments as key players in this strategy. Promoting the development of policies in line with the reality of migration, as well as good border control for inward and outward migration flows.

- Continuing to promote the Right to the City in global agendas and international forums; this is understood to mean the full exercise of rights through comprehensive social, cultural, urban, housing and habitat development programmes.

- Boosting the “Cities for Coexistence and Peace” initiative in order to achieve low criminality rates, and thereby strengthening coexistence and social inclusion in the region’s cities. Promoting prevention policy as an essential element in combating insecurity and creating standardized measurement mechanisms to generate and/or compile statistics on security while ensuring a cross-cutting approach to local policy. Cities for coexistence and peace seek to eradicate violence in all its forms: *direct violence*, which ranges from the violence of war to criminal violence; *structural violence*, as a result of an unjust order (economic and political); *cultural violence*, which is symbolic and based on ideologies and beliefs.

- Encouraging dialogue between different levels of government in order to coordinate efforts and initiatives aimed at consolidating peace locally, regionally and nationally. Post-conflict work from a territorial approach, as part of which cities contribute essential elements to the implementation of agreements.

- Making culture the fourth pillar of development. Promoting local heritage, creativity and diversity through people-centred culture policies. Promoting intersectoral and multilevel strategies and actions to help to achieve the 2030 Agenda sustainable development goals, regarding culture as a factor for integration and taking into account the rich diversity of cultural expression, as well as the importance of multiculturalism and interculturalism in Latin America and Ibero-America as cornerstones of development; and, by doing so, encourage discussion on the role of culture in the 2030 Agenda.

2.3. Environmental/Risk Management Context

Increasingly visible climate change, natural resource depletion and the loss of biodiversity require extreme solutions from local, national, regional and global levels; all stakeholders should be involved, and measures should also be implemented that aim to achieve environmental sustainability and manage the risk of disasters.

It is particularly vital that cities take action as they consume 64% of energy, are responsible for 70% of greenhouse gases, and around 70% of waste is generated in them. Furthermore, there is evidence of a trend towards pollution of natural resources; deforestation; waterproofing; drainage of marshy land and wetlands, which are then occupied; and unsustainable use of natural resources.

Since 1990, 117 million people in the region have been affected by natural disasters. Most of these people live in cities. The economic effects of natural disasters in Latin America are the most profound in the world (nearly 0.18% of GDP per disaster). The poorest households are the first to feel the effects and are the most seriously affected by environmental problems, along with the most vulnerable groups (women, boys and girls, the elderly, migrants, refugees, Afro-descendants and the differently abled); moreover, these people have fewer resources to adapt to disasters. People living in formal areas, but with ageing infrastructure, are also at high risk of suffering the effects of natural disasters such as floods and earthquakes. Heatwaves are also decreasing life expectancy among the urban population, particularly people over the age of 60 – the most rapidly growing segment of the population.

Environmental/Risk Management Challenges

- Tackling new environmental challenges. Mitigating and adapting to the effects of climate change, as well as reducing energy consumption and greenhouse gas emissions. In addition, working to implement efficient and sustainable urban mobility systems, urban planning and appropriate land management. The objectives of equitable and prosperous cities depend on the ability to plan cities which take into account their relationship with the environment.

- Comprehensively addressing disaster risk reduction, prevention, by means of mitigation and adaptation, and appropriate urban and territorial planning in human settlements, as well as handling emergencies and resilience after suffering damage caused by disasters.

2.4. Institutional Context

It is clear that politics in the region are in turmoil; crises such as those in Nicaragua and Venezuela are destabilizing it. Changes to the political model, such as the new government in Brazil, combined with the corruption that affects most Latin American and Caribbean countries lead to problems in territorial governance. Confidence in local public administration must be strengthened by preventing and combating corruption, guaranteeing the efficient provision of public services, creating participatory forums and improved communication channels that will bring the government closer to citizens.

For 30 years, significant progress has been made in the process of decentralization in Latin America. Since the mid-1980s, subnational governments in the region have been strengthened. At present, in almost all Latin American countries, the people elect the highest municipal authority. The characteristics of the region also include participatory budgets, local economic development and municipal associativism.

The share of subnational government spending in consolidated public expenditure in the region's countries almost doubled between 1985 and 2010, from 13% to 25%. However, if it is analysed in relation to GDP, it only represents 6.3% and 6.2% of expenditure and income, that is, less than half the proportion in the member countries of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) (corresponding to 16.2% and 15.9%, respectively).

Even though subnational governments' share of central government expenditure has increased in recent decades, subnational governments' autonomy in managing their resources may be limited in practice by continued central government controls, constraints on local capacities and a percentage of transfers that is higher than their own income, especially when such transfers are conditional, as is the case in many countries.

Decentralization in a broad sense can create horizontal fiscal imbalances as it grants power over income and assigns spending responsibilities to subnational governments, which propose and carry out projects with different fiscal capacities and expenditure needs. Local governments' fiscal capacities and needs are not always in line and this may mean that only some local governments are able to provide the appropriate services. It is also necessary to involve citizens in approving them.

Multilevel governance – which is regarded as an addition and not an alternative to local autonomy – is increasingly strong, which presents an opportunity for local and regional governments to become key players on the international scene.

Local and regional governments from around the world have committed to promoting a profound transformation of the current development model with a view to moving towards a human and sustainable development model. The 2030 Agenda and the New Urban Agenda provide the roadmap for many Latin American countries, which are already making efforts to achieve the goals set in both agendas. The clear and specific inclusion of the right to the city in the New Urban Agenda and Sustainable Development Goal 11 on cities and sustainable communities is proof of this progress in the participation and advocacy of local governments.

New forms of interaction between governments and citizens using technological tools and social media are helping to establish a new paradigm of public management, in which data and

information generated by citizens is important for validating and supplementing political decisions. Open governance practices – for the purpose of efficient public management; transparency; as a strategy for institutional coordination and strengthening; institutional organization; as a proposal for action in the fight against corruption; and as innovation in public management – are essential to consolidating new schemes of multistakeholder governance at local level.

Local governments have succeeded in establishing themselves as important players in the global system. It is also important to highlight the establishment and strengthening of local government networks, which allow cities to have an influence on policy, economic and social decisions, not only at the national level, but also at the regional and global levels. As emerging players at the international level, local and regional governments, and their networks, are bringing about a process which is spreading quickly. International relations are now a vital learning space and a window of opportunity for every city, municipality or territory.

Institutional Challenges

- Strengthening local governments' autonomy and decentralization; in this respect, the current context established by the 2030 Agenda and the 17 Sustainable Development Goals and the New Urban Agenda provide an opportunity for taking the following joint actions.
- Promoting effective decentralization, with competences, resources and capacities gradually being transferred to local governments. The achievement of the SDGs and the New Urban Agenda will largely depend on this happening. The world cannot be changed without first empowering cities and human settlements.
- Empowering governments to implement programmes and projects based on a participatory strategic urban plan, which will allow progress to be made towards the concept of "co-creating" or collectively creating the city. This plan must take global agreements into account, linking them to the territory's strategy.
- Developing data and information-management platforms which will enable dialogue between the different spheres of government and allow the different planning, management and assessment processes to be incorporated with transparency for citizens.
- Maintaining the spaces gained at international level and the progress achieved. Promoting local and regional government voices and voting rights in regional and global decision-making forums using a clear strategic framework. It is important for international activity to move beyond isolated, spontaneous actions focused on specific projects towards public policy connected to the territory's particular features and its strategic planning.
- Strengthening spaces for dialogue between regions and making progress towards a model of peaceful coexistence and supportive development.
- Supporting citizen's leading roles in designing and monitoring public policies; this protagonism has increased with the breakthrough of new technologies and access to information. This is a new paradigm of citizen-centred governance based on data which reflects the values of open governance and smart cities.

2.5 Urban Context

Today's world is predominantly urban. More than half the world's population live in cities with over 300,000 inhabitants, and it is expected that 66 percent of the global population will live in large cities by 2050. These percentages are even higher in the region of Latin America and the

Caribbean, where 80 percent of the population currently lives in urban areas.

The urban population in Latin America and the Caribbean is growing by more than half a million new residents per month. 81% of people live in cities. The population of cities will increase by 100 million people by 2035. By 2025, 100 million Latin American residents will live in only six mega-cities: Mexico City (24.5 million by 2025), Sao Paulo (23.2), Buenos Aires (15.5), Rio de Janeiro (13.6), Lima (11.5) and Bogotá (11.4).

Housing is still an ongoing issue in Latin America. While at least 10% of the world's inhabitants live in informal settlements, in Latin America the figure is between 20% and 30%. These peripheral neighbourhoods lack public spaces, while in the few that do have them they are of a very low quality.

In Latin America, 55% of the working population work in the informal sector; in some countries the total is even 70%. Furthermore, the growing number of self-employed workers shows that there is a lack of opportunities in the labour market and is generally associated with an increasing lack of job security for workers.

With regard to mobility, major cities in Latin America were built with the mobility of motor vehicles in mind and not the movement of people.

The region's major urban challenges are concentrated in the "triple informality" (in housing, transport and employment). This context of increasing urban concentration is turning cities into the ideal spaces in which to develop policies that will allow us to move towards a human and sustainable development model.

Urban Challenges

- Promoting urban infrastructure that is focused on sustainability, productivity and social justice, with the aim of closing existing gaps and creating urban areas that do not harm the environment.
- Further strengthening the urban dimension in the 2030 Agenda and continuing to promote the localization of the SDGs. The SDGs will only be achievable if the local level and civil society take full ownership of this Agenda. Localization is necessary in order to bring the SDGs into line with local development plans, to share experiences, monitor and prepare reports on their implementation.
- Increasing investment in urban development in order to create smart cities. This refers to building infrastructure but more so to communications infrastructure, investment in social capital and in improving residents' quality of life as opposed to physical infrastructure. Applying new technologies in order to develop smart cities in different areas of city life: environment, mobility, governance, economy, society, citizen participation and housing, so that urban spaces will be increasingly efficient and sustainable with a balance achieved between citizens' well-being and preserving the environment.
- Working to create decent jobs and encourage social cohesion. It is essential to plan balanced linkages between the productive matrix and urban development with social justice, which is one of the main challenges faced by our region.
- Supporting the planning process for local development, tourism, heritage and culture strategies, together with the various stakeholders living in the territory.
- Fostering the development of local housing/habitat plans, as territorial planning instruments that

provide an exhaustive assessment of the community reality, an action plan, goals and strategies, which will help municipalities to improve management.

- Promoting the recognition of migration as a factor to consider when designing urbanization policies, understanding the contribution of migrants: they strengthen labour markets, promote diversity, help to improve productivity, and are a source of cultural enrichment, etc. As well as potential demands on an issue as crucial as housing.

3. Key political priorities in the following areas

Economic/Financial Challenges

The challenge of reshaping supply and demand for urban finance is a priority and is linked to the UCLG priority on Territorial, Multilevel Governance and Sustainable Financing.

The “World Observatory on Subnational Government Finance”, which is organized by UCLG together with the OECD, is working on the issue based on studies on local and regional government finance and structures; the aims include raising UCLG members’ international profile and bringing their perspective to global discussions on development financing and supporting a more equitable distribution of national income; as well as promoting dialogue and partnerships between local and national governments, international institutions and academics. In the same connection, the UCLG Policy Council on “Territorial, Multilevel Governance and Sustainable Financing” will debate how to boost effective territorial and multilevel governance, and re-think sub-national and public financing systems to reconcile financing with sustainability.

Social/Human Challenges

With respect to the Right to the City and Inclusive Territories, the challenges are directly linked to UCLG’s policy priorities, since the Policy Council on the “Right to the City and Inclusive Territories” has been working to promote and push for recognition of this right, hand in hand with reducing poverty and exclusion.

As regards the challenge of social inclusion, national agencies and the United Nations regard the “UCLG Standing Committee for Gender Equality” as the global voice of locally elected women. It monitors and promotes the participation of women at local level across the world. The “UCLG Committee on Social Inclusion, Participatory Democracy and Human Rights” aspires to articulate a common voice for the world organization of local governments on social inclusion, participatory democracy and human rights.

There is also a direct link between the challenge posed by increasing migration and the need for governments at different levels to implement measures to address this issue. In this context, UCLG acts globally, making visible and accompanying the action of local governments in the governance of migration from the following angles: 1) The Mayors Mechanism, which is a tool for dialogue between States and local and regional governments in the framework of the implementation of the Global Compact on Migration. 2) The Community of Practice on Migration, to capitalize on and disseminate the work of the organization and its members on migration governance. 3) The Mediterranean Cities Migration Project (MC2CM), which supports the development of more open and inclusive urban policies that make it possible to protect and promote the rights of migrants for the benefit of the whole territory. Furthermore, with the Wave of Action “All migrants, all citizens”, governance of migration is a topic that UCLG links to urban development and planning, because today’s migrants are the citizens of tomorrow. This approach is part of the mission to promote the right to the city, access to basic services, the guarantee of human rights and participation processes.

Promoting culture in the international arena is a challenge that is linked to the UCLG policy priority Opportunities for All, Culture and City Diplomacy: Keys to Sustainable Development and Peace.

Local governments have been pushing for culture to be recognized as the fourth pillar of sustainable development. The “The Committee on Culture of the World Organization of United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG)” is the global platform of cities, organizations and networks to learn, to cooperate and to launch policies and programmes on the role of culture in sustainable development. The mission of the Committee on Culture of UCLG is “to promote culture as the fourth pillar of sustainable development through the international dissemination and the local implementation of Agenda 21 for culture”.

The UCLG Policy Council “Opportunities for All, Culture and City Diplomacy: Keys to Sustainable Development and Peace” addresses the challenge concerning post-conflict cities; it debates how to protect the core values of culture, foster city diplomacy and cooperation through capacity development, and promote solidarity and peace as the bases for sustainable development, since UCLG firmly believes that strong local democracy is the foundation of national development and international peace, prosperity and solidarity. Local governments have taken part in international initiatives for peace, and they play an important role in dealing with conflict in their own areas. Through the “Committee on Development Cooperation and City Diplomacy”, and the “Capacity and Institution Building (CIB) Working Group”, UCLG supports its members in their efforts to prevent violent conflict and work towards establishing solid foundations for democracy and peace. Furthermore, the UCLG Peace Prize informs the international community about local governments that are implementing strategies for preventing conflict, building peace and post-conflict reconstruction. The Prize also promotes local innovative peace-building initiatives.

Environmental/Risk Management Challenges

With regard to the challenges associated with climate change and disaster risk, UCLG has adopted a position on disaster risk reduction reaffirming the commitment of local authorities throughout the world to anticipate and reduce disaster risks and to act, if necessary, when disasters do occur. UCLG has also been constantly involved in climate change negotiations; the organization has also raised awareness on the impact of climate change on cities and their inhabitants, and promoted the implementation of a sustainability agenda to prevent its impact around the world. The UCLG Policy Council “Opportunities for All, Culture and City Diplomacy: Keys to Sustainable Development and Peace” is the place to share initiatives in these areas and to hold in-depth discussions about related policies and their impact at local and global level. UCLG is also supporting UNISDR in the “Making Cities Resilient” Campaign. Over 1,000 cities have joined this important initiative to raise awareness about disaster risk reduction.

Institutional Challenges

As regards effective decentralization, the “UCLG Decentralisation and Local Self-Government Committee” works to strengthen decentralization and local self-government in all regions of the world, by enhancing the capacities of local governments, supporting research, encouraging the exchange of information and promoting advocacy. UCLG is also actively involved in international fora on the topic: The Global Partnership on Effective Development Cooperation, the United Nations Development Cooperation Forum and the EU Policy Forum on Development.

Further strengthening multilevel governance is therefore both a challenge and a priority. UCLG has affirmed the need to govern in partnership, build governance capabilities, implement effective partnerships with multiple stakeholders, and ensure accountable and transparent local governance. The governance model needs to be integrated, long-term and innovative, and it must support the participation of sub-national governments in the definition of national policies, and particularly national urban policies and regional development strategies for the localization of the SDGs, the achievement of the New Urban Agenda and other global challenges. The UCLG Policy Council “Territorial, Multilevel Governance and Sustainable Financing” is the place to share initiatives and hold in-depth discussions about policies and their consequences at the different

levels of government, as well as to propose paths for the development of a new model of governance. The UCLG Local4Action Hub is an initiative that aims to turn the 2030 Agenda into local actions by taking advantage of the network and its experience in sharing and cooperating.

With regard to boosting cities' international role, UCLG would like to increase the visibility and influence of local and regional governments on the global stage, amplify their voice and highlight their priorities, challenges and achievements relating to global agendas and the Bogotá Commitment.

Urban Challenges

The Policy Council on the "Right to the City and Inclusive Territories" has been working on the issue of housing with an approach that aims to exchange views on how to support inclusive housing policies and ensure the full and progressive realization of the right to adequate housing for all, work with communities to upgrade slums and regenerate poor neighbourhoods, and support the social production of habitat. Through the Wave of Action "Housing is a right, not a commodity", UCLG will continue to defend the right to housing in the framework of the Right to the City at global level, as expressed in the Bogotá Commitment adopted in October 2016. It will promote debates on housing among its members to build a common narrative and strategy to influence the discussions of the High Level Political Forum (HLPF) on the implementation of Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 11. It is also pushing for the concept of housing to be seen as a human right; UCLG has been supporting this effort in collaboration with the UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Adequate Housing.

UCLG is working to address the challenge of promoting the local development strategies planning process in the "Committee on Local Economic and Social Development" by focusing on local economic development as a public necessity, that is, as part of public policy in local and national government agendas. This view of development involves a territorial approach, based on endogenous resources and obeying environmental sustainability criteria. In turn, this view of local development must be constructed through public participation; it must strengthen decentralization; and it must involve an integrated vision of the territory, through participatory territorial planning.

Urban planning is addressed in the "Committee on Urban Strategic Planning" by means of technical assistance, the dissemination of good practices and promoting urban planning in a variety of settings.

4. Political strategies and tools

Training and Knowledge Management

Work has been carried out on governance starting with knowledge management, and involving capacity-building and regulated training for Ibero-American politicians, experts and officials. The XI regional training session on "Promoting governance and innovation to develop public regional policies" is an example.

On the topic of localizing the SDGs, workshops have been held with officials to share tools with them that will help to localize the Sustainable Development Goals and the 2030 Agenda in their territories. Agendas have also been structured in order to work on the topic; this has facilitated collaboration between different sectors of society and the government. Social communication process have also been systematized to make the SDGs local with the aim of involving and raising awareness among different target groups.

As regards the international role of cities, governments have been increasing their international activities. To achieve this, work has involved increasing local capacities in international affairs and advocacy related to the main sustainable development agendas.

Managing and exchanging knowledge is essential to the training and improvement of the professional skills of local personnel; for this reason, the purpose of the Capacity and Institution Building (CIB) Working Group is to advance the effectiveness and quality of international policies and programs of local and regional governments and their associations. The CIB is making progress towards building a knowledge and learning community to improve advocacy and local international action and cooperation.

Campaigns

With respect to social inclusion, campaigns have been designed such as the Ibero-American Cities Free of Gender Violence campaign. Defending diversity has also been made a priority in action on equality and social development. In this respect, actions to defend the rights of the LGBTIQ community have been promoted and, therefore, actions aimed at defending diversity in cities. Similarly, the Latin American and Caribbean Coalition of Cities against Racism, Discrimination and Xenophobia has been carrying out activities.

In the area of migration, the “Diversity in you” [“La diversidad que hay en ti”] campaign was designed. It is an awareness campaign about the rights of migrants in South America, which emphasizes the importance of the continent’s cultural and ethnic diversity, and the social inclusion of the most vulnerable migrants: boys, girls and young people; women; low-skilled workers; indigenous peoples; Afro-descendants; and illegal migrants or asylum seekers.

International Fora and Events

In order to address social inclusion, the UCCI seminar “aliadas en el orgullo LGTBIQ” (united in LGTBIQ pride) was held in Buenos Aires, and CENESEX organized the 10th Cuban Day against Homophobia and Transphobia in Havana.

As regards the environmental, sustainability and climate change challenge, the region has taken part in fora such as the World Forum on Local Economic Development (LED) in 2017. The Forum is intended to be a further means to make progress towards achieving equality, equity and cohesion within the localization framework for the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) set by the UN in the 2030 Agenda. The Local Economic Development Committee, which supports the organization of this Forum together with networks of cities, managed to arrange for it to be held in the region in December 2019 (Córdoba, Argentina).

With the same purpose of global advocacy in the area of territory and sustainable economies, it took part in the Regional Forum of Local Economic Development (LED) for Latin America and the Caribbean. At the second edition of the Forum, cities reaffirmed their commitment to a sustainable economic development model.

In order to promote culture as the fourth pillar of development and a culture of peace, local governments have been playing a leading role in the international sphere, and taking part at the global level; this has been reflected in Declarations such as the Iberoamerican Cities of Peace Declaration. They also brought the voice of Iberoamerican municipalism to Madrid’s Commitment to Peaceful Cities, which was a result of the First World Forum on Urban Violence, and to the 2nd UCLG Culture Summit. It is also promoted through recognitions such as the Ibero-American Capital of Culture Award, which is awarded to a city for its outstanding efforts to promote culture, the UCLG-Mexico City-Culture 21 Award and the UCLG Peace Prize.

With regard to housing, the region has addressed this issue by looking for cities with adequate housing. Among other issues, demands have been made for more funds to improve public housing stocks; more powers for local authorities to better regulate the real estate market; urban planning that combines adequate housing with quality, inclusive and sustainable neighbourhoods; and more tools to co-produce public-private community-driven alternative housing. Local governments also participated actively in the United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development (Habitat III), held in Quito, at which the New Urban Agenda, the local road map that complements the 2030 Agenda for the construction of a human, equitable and sustainable development model, was launched.

Other Strategies and Tools

With respect to the challenge of preventing and managing the disaster risk, local governments have acknowledged the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030. They have committed to adopting and implementing local disaster risk reduction strategies and plans, establishing and strengthening coordination forums, promoting the incorporation of the disaster risk into the development and implementation of land use policies, among other measures.

As part of their approach to urban mobility, through their national associations, local governments have implemented cooperation programmes with various European agencies, such as: the Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation (AECID), the FIIAP Foundation, the French Development Agency (AFD), Expertise France and the German Agency for International Cooperation (GIZ).

With regard to the international role of local governments, the “South-South Cooperation Programme”, which is aimed at strengthening and revitalizing partnerships with other regional and global networks, is being promoted. Similarly, the process “A seat at the global table: local governments as decision-makers in world affairs” has been developed; its aim is to improve the global governance system through the internationalization of local and regional governments, as well as their networks, in order to face the challenges and opportunities of an increasingly urban world. Its purpose is also to strengthen the internationalization of cities and local and ensure that local and regional governments participate actively in international decision-making fora, with 3 focal points: I) Our added value, what we bring to the global table, II) Why do we want a change in global governance?, III) Our call for an Action Plan.

5. Links with global agendas and continental mechanisms.

Training and Knowledge Management

The Workshops on Localizing the SDGs respond to the need for the Sustainable Development Goals to be implemented at local level. They were developed for that purpose and with a view to achieving the global commitments, taking territorial realities into account.

Campaigns

Equality and social development initiatives go hand in hand with the 2030 Agenda goal of leaving no one behind and with SDG 1 (End poverty), 5 (Gender equality), 2 (Zero Hunger), 3 (Health and well-being), 4 (Quality education), 11 and 17. Work has been done on the topic of gender by joining the United Nations Global Movement and other initiatives led by different institutions and cities around the world through campaigns such as the Ibero-American Cities Free of Gender Violence campaign. These initiatives are also linked to goals 1 (A high standard of living, quality of life and well-being for all citizens), 5 (Modern agriculture for increased productivity and production), 17 (Full gender equality in all spheres of life) and 18 (Engaged and empowered youth and children) of the African Union’s Agenda 2063.

The work that has been carried out on the topic of migration through the “Diversity in you” campaign is closely in line with the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration and to Article 13 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The XXIII Summit of the South American Local Governments Network ratified its commitment to defend the human rights of migrants.

International Fora and Events

The culture of peace that is being promoted is linked to the SDGs, especially SDG 16. Events such as the First World Forum on Urban Violence, which led to the Declaration of Iberoamerican Cities of Peace, have been held. There is also a link with goals 11, 12, 13 and 14 of the African Union’s Agenda 2063, which are aimed at entrenching democratic values, practices, the universal principles of human rights, justice and the rule of law on the continent, and establishing capable institutions and transformative leadership, as well as preserving peace, security and stability, to make Africa stable and peaceful.

With respect to the New Urban Agenda, local governments are key actors in the global spheres in which work related to this agenda is carried out; they actively participated in the United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development (Habitat III), at which the New Urban Agenda, the local road map that complements the 2030 Agenda for the construction of a human, equitable and sustainable development model, was launched. In the framework of the New Urban Agenda, they also took part in the World Urban Forum IX (WUF), where a commitment was made to the sustainable development of cities, drawing inspiration from action under the New Urban Agenda and with the aim of succeeding in implementing the Sustainable Development Goals at local level.

Local governments in the region have promoted actions which guarantee the Right to the City in international fora and bodies. All of these efforts have been made in line with the reference to the Right to the City made in the New Urban Agenda, which was adopted at the Habitat III Conference, in Quito in 2016.

Work has been carried out on governance covering open governance, transparency, citizen participation, conflict prevention and human security, and support for the international action of cities. In this respect, it is linked to the Right to the City included in the New Urban Agenda, and to SDGs 16 (Peace, justice and strong institutions), 11 (Sustainable cities and communities) and 17 (Partnerships for the goals). With regard to SDG 17, the Networks are participating actively in international fora and spheres. Efforts have also been made to strengthen partnerships by working together through CORDIAL, as well as by collaborating with United Nations Agencies and programmes, such as UNDP-Art and UN-Habitat, and maintaining close relationships with the Ibero-American General Secretariat.

Other Strategies and Tools

Local governments have been making progress on greenhouse gas (GHG) emission inventories. Other cities already have Climate Action Plans and GHG reduction targets. It is also worth mentioning the development of Urban-LEDS, which are aimed at implementing low-carbon urban development strategies. In the area of biodiversity and food security, several cities have been actively involved in Cities With Nature and CITYFOOD.

As a result of the Sendai Framework, work has been done to develop disaster risk reduction plans, as well as to understand the disaster risk, improve disaster risk management, invest in disaster risk reduction, and step up disaster preparation to ensure an effective response and better recovery, rehabilitation and reconstruction.

The Regional Action Plan for the implementation of the New Urban Agenda in Latin America and the Caribbean 2016-2036 (PAR) is a road map that establishes synergies with the 2030 Agenda, the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, the Paris Agreement, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development and the Small Island Developing States Accelerated Modalities of Action.

The local and regional governments' constituency has contributed to the relevant debates and mechanisms, namely: UN-Habitat programmes on public space and safe cities; the 5th Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction, the implementation of the Marrakech Roadmap for Action; support for the Global Covenant of Mayors for Climate & Energy; contribution to the Climate Change Summit; preparation of a conference aimed at deepening scientific knowledge of the link between climate change and cities, in support of the implementation of the relevant global agendas; the World Humanitarian Summit (WHS); and the "agenda for humanity" process.

With respect to territories and sustainable economies, local governments have been implementing programmes and projects which are linked to the 2030 Agenda and the New Urban Agenda, as well as to SDGs 11, 17, 6 (Clean water and sanitation), 7 (Affordable and clean energy), 8 (Decent work and economic growth), 9 (Industry, innovation and infrastructure), 10 (Reduced inequalities), 12 (Responsible consumption and production), 13 (Climate action), 14 (Life below water) and 15 (Life on land).

6. Recommendations and key actions by the international movement of local and regional governments

Local Action

- Plan by linking the global commitments to the territorial strategy and taking into account policy coherence for development (PCD), that is, understanding policy effects and interactions both internally and externally and their contribution to global public goods.
- Step up strategic planning to ensure a shared vision of the development of cities and human settlements, based on the nature and governance of urban expansions; redistributive mechanisms for providing housing, infrastructure and local services; urban and peri-urban tenure and governance; joint governance; emerging cities, and rural urbanization.
- Strengthen the involvement of local governments in localizing the SDGs. Accelerate cities' participation in Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs) and local governments' efforts to monitor and report on progress made in implementing the Sustainable Development Goals.
- Promote the development of shared information systems to review public policies, and collect disaggregated and localized data to add to national indicator systems and contribute to global monitoring.
- Open more and improved spaces to encourage local community participation in security, the environment, social and territorial development, health education, and other areas. Citizen participation will strengthen democracy, and improve multilevel and multistakeholder governance.
- Push for the adoption of laws and regulatory frameworks which guarantee equality and prohibit discrimination against women in the world of work. Strengthen policies aimed at gender equality, social inclusion and non-discrimination in cities. Make progress towards a "50-50" law, which will raise standards for women's participation in politics.
- Urge our governmental authorities to legislate on local issues with a gender perspective, establishing measures such as: mandatory equality and gender committee in Municipal Councils; implementation of prevention protocols and punishment of workplace and sexual harassment in all State bodies; and a prohibition on anyone who has a history of abuse or violence against women holding a post.

- Strengthen permanent mechanisms for dialogue with and consultation of indigenous peoples.
- Continue to promote cities as places for coexistence and peace through initiatives such as “Cities for Coexistence and Peace” which fight organized crime; corruption; intolerance; interpersonal violence; violence against women; defend the city in times of war; prevent and counter violent extremism. In addition, implement care rather than security policies; cooperate with national governments in developing, implementing and monitoring of action plans to prevent violence; develop local action plans to deal with violence and conflict. Encourage citizen diplomacy as a strategy for peaceful conflict resolution or transformation.
- Guarantee access to infrastructure and resilient, quality basic services for all. Ensure equitable access to public goods and urban services through coherent and coordinated urban and territorial management.
- Promote the undertaking of territorial and risk assessments, which will determine the status of water, energy and potential hazards. This will make it possible to design and implement measures aimed at improving management with a focus on climate change and natural disasters.
- Support the creation of decent jobs with a gender perspective, foster social cohesion and reduce informal employment rates.
- Encourage the design of strategies for social and inclusive economic development, aimed at creating platforms which will allow collaborative experiences of proximity, time banks and responsible consumption, among others, to be shared. Identify social economy strategies based on municipal action, which help to boost solidarity-based, participatory, small-scale economies of proximity, as driving forces of change towards inclusion and social equity.
- Work to promote culture as the fourth pillar of development and promote Agenda 21 for culture. Promote local heritage, creativity and diversity through people-centred culture policies.
- Encourage the use of new technologies through initiatives such as the Digital Agenda and Open Government Initiative, which enable municipalities to provide increased and improved services to the community. Promote open and collaborative governance which places transparency, access to information, accountability, citizen participation and preventing and combating corruption at the centre of local agendas.
- Make progress in including the rural sector in the development of Sustainable Cities.
- Increase internal institutional capacities and adopt more innovative international development cooperation arrangements.
- Develop strategies, urban interventions and mechanisms which promote urban mobility and a safe, affordable, accessible transport system for all.
- Continue encouraging citizen participation through training activities, exchanges and cooperation between territories that help to create or update regulatory and institutional frameworks.
- Strengthen and promote local government global partnerships, mainly involving neighbouring countries and municipalities, to define joint strategies to address their various issues.

National Action

- Address the issue of the financing of cities from various angles; find new means of financing, adapt the supply and demand of resources to local governments and strengthen territorial management. Negotiate a new Fiscal Pact with central governments to provide municipalities with sufficient resources to achieve the 2030 Agenda and the 17 SDGs in all territories, particularly in the poorest and most deprived, ensuring that the allocation of resources

is adequate for the demands for action made to local governments; transparency control measures should also be put in place for the received funds².

- Adopt more territorial approaches to promote public investment as a tool that drives the localization of the SDGs.
- Support efforts aimed at establishing and launching the “Migrant and Refugee Reception Office” so that it can manage migrants’ needs. Central governments must incorporate these municipal offices into legislative proposals on migration. They must also provide local governments with the necessary resources to guarantee the social rights of all migrants.
- Continue promoting the Right to the City in a range of areas at national and international level.
- Improve local and regional governments’ capacity to manage the prevention, reduction and management of disaster risks, as well as their capacity to respond to and cope with crises. Implement systems for non-polluting clean energy generation and use; promote and encourage recycling, by means of recycling points, separate waste collection and extended producer responsibility. Enhance environmental education in order to include the community in this issue. Plan for urban and climate resilience through urban and territorial planning instruments and urban design.
- Support effective decentralization so that local governments have the necessary political and fiscal tools that will allow them to play a strategic role at the local, regional and national level.
- Improve the alignment of actions between the different levels of government with the aim of encouraging coordinated work to benefit national development, taking national, regional, continental and global agendas into account.. Improve legal processes and tools that boost the institutional and administrative capacities of local, metropolitan and regional governments in international topics, thereby promoting better coordination between the different levels of government.
- Involve civil society, academia and other key stakeholders in the process of implementing the agendas, with a view to sharing responsibility and ensuring a broad partnership and consensus.
- Encourage cities, through multi-stakeholder partnerships, to test and develop local innovations which may help to advance towards achieving self-sufficient and resilient cities by taking advantage of disruptive new technologies.
- Make localization an essential strategy as part of national strategies, with suitable legal frameworks, operational capabilities and appropriate financial resources.
- Address housing and habitat policy needs from the perspective of the housing deficit, improving existing marginal areas, planning and managing future growth.
- Promote sustainable urban development with a cross-cutting approach in national policies, which requires urban issues to interact with other public policies.
- Promote adequate and affordable housing and access to urban land as a fundamental element of urban planning and design.
- Incorporate the metropolitan dimension into proposals to respond to global challenges.
- Create strategies aimed at achieving more efficient and sustainable smart cities.
- Boost the participation of post-conflict cities by establishing covenants for the implementation of agreements based on territorial realities.

International Action

²Percentages will depend on local governments’ existing powers or those assigned to them. They will be higher if the local government is in charge of education, police, health, etc.

- Use innovative ways to design shared strategies in order to mobilize resources and create governance schemes that would allow different stakeholders to be consistently involved in an adequate financing ecosystem for the sustainable development of cities and urban settlements in the region.
- Make progress towards a new generation of instruments for attracting investment – public, private and mixed forms – for the purpose of promoting initiatives and programmes focused on the New Urban Agenda and the 2030 Agenda, alongside the structuring and implementation of the “Ecosystem of Funds for Sustainable Urban Development”, which is a response to the common challenge of promoting the sustainable urban development value chain.
- Boost cooperation between all levels of government – multilevel cooperation – which makes it easier to involve all stakeholders – multistakeholder cooperation.
- Continue supporting Citizen Innovation Laboratories in producing innovative solutions to achieving the 2030 Agenda and as an important tool that will help to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals.
- Manage actions aimed at countering the effects of climate change; adopt policies focused on the transition towards resilient cities and regions with sustainable environmental models.
- Support decentralized, city-to-city cooperation, learning, management and the exchange of knowledge between local governments.
- Revitalize the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development and encourage the coordination of inclusive partnerships in the search for the common good.
- Create an agenda with strategic topics that the region can lead and take ownership of, thanks to their experience, at the international level. Identify regional priorities that are in line with global commitments. Develop Waves of Action in partnership with UCLG on key topics for the region and which will reveal the multiplier effects of synchronizing thousands of local and regional actions at global level.
- Align the principles and goals of our region’s networks of cities with the main sustainable development agendas in relation to topics such as: culture, governance, equality and social development, territory and sustainable economies, including cross-cutting themes such as the culture of peace and human rights.
- Present the region’s experiences and potential while highlighting its diversity and its contribution to public policies with prizes, awards and recognitions that shed light on the contribution made to improving living conditions in territories. Highlight lessons learned that need strengthening and continuity, teamwork, and interaction between cities which create knowledge and critical mass.
- Participate in forums for consultation and mutual learning with other cities, through municipal networks that strengthen the common goals of Ibero-American municipalism with respect for its diversity and unique features.
- Revitalize networking and the coordination of local authorities in Latin America under CORDIAL. Strengthen and broaden partnerships and coalitions at local and regional level. Boost political dialogue, strengthen networking and “city-to-city cooperation” and regional cooperation in order to design sustainable development strategies and define the priorities of the New Urban Agenda. Strengthen and promote local government global partnerships, mainly involving neighbouring countries and municipalities, to define joint strategies to address their various issues.
- Acknowledge and strengthen territories’ processes of internationalization in order to work together with national governments and international bodies.
- Foster political dialogue, strengthen networking and “city-to-city cooperation” and cooperation between regions in order to design sustainable development strategies and define the priorities of the New Urban Agenda.
- Boost the influence that local and regional governments have at the international level and local governments’ professional expertise in international topics. Design and implement public

policies on international relations, and launch communication and citizen awareness strategies about the importance of these cooperative relationships between cities and regions. Unite efforts to ensure that local governments have a central role, not only in leading processes locally but also taking part in decision-making at global level.

- Ensure that local governments are represented in discussion fora in order to place local priorities on regional and international agendas. Press international bodies with one voice to enable participation while preserving the uniqueness and characteristics of each network, which will deepen diversity and enrich the debate.

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