

The Bogotá Commitment

LOCAL AND REGIONAL GOVERNMENTS ENSURING A BETTER FUTURE FOR ALL

At precisely the moment in which the majority of the world's global population are urban citizens living in an array of settlements, we have come to realize that the current production model has reached its own limits and that the global community is confronted with both the persistent challenges of increasing social inequalities and the task of the ecological restoration of planetary systems while protecting cultural diversity.

We, local and regional governments the world round, representing communities large and small, rural and urban, gathered at the World Summit of Local and Regional Leaders in Bogotá, on the eve of the United Nations Habitat III Conference, firmly believe that:

- 1. The current context should be seen as a moment of **unprecedented opportunity** that necessitates bold undertakings, including the renewal of governance models, of the social contract and shifting priorities of governments at all levels to eradicate inequalities.*
- 2. Local and regional governments will need to be at the centre of public policy processes, **translating normative ideals into concrete policies** and practical investments that will remake human settlements as the primary driver of a new, sustainable era.*
- 3. The answers generated within urban settlements and territories will **pave the way for global solutions**, and we are committed to undertake our responsibility to improve conditions for a better future for all.*

*We present, therefore, the **Bogotá Commitment**, building on our Manifesto for the City of 2030, the worldwide consultations carried out within the framework of the **Global Report on Local Democracy and Decentralization (GOLD IV,)** the deliberations within the framework of the Global Taskforce, calling for:*

***Action at local and country level** to govern in partnership and build governance capabilities to that end, aiming to co-create cities and territories that preserve the Right to the City of all inhabitants, to adapt production and consumption patterns for a sustainable future, to share and protect the commons, and to foster heritage, creativity, diversity, understanding and peace.*

***Action at international level** to transform the role of local governments in international policymaking processes and to ensure structural consultation of the organized constituency of local and regional governments at all levels of governance, particularly through international partnerships.*

***Recognition** of local and regional governments' efforts to organize, produce informed inputs to international policy processes and develop international cooperation, solidarity and peer to peer learning through our international networks.*

***Commitment from our peers** to engage in international action to contribute to the united voice of local and regional governments through active participation in local government networks and to strengthen coordination and consultation mechanisms, in particular the World Assembly of Local and Regional Governments, to be developed into the true political interlocutor of the international community in all matters related to sustainable development.*

Bogotá, 15 October 2016

THE BOGOTÁ ACTION AGENDA

A POST-QUITO AGENDA FOR LOCAL AND REGIONAL GOVERNMENTS

The following recommendations for action build on the research and consultations with local and regional governments within the framework of the Global Report on Local Democracy and Decentralization (GOLD IV). They also draw upon the recommendations of the Global Taskforce of Local and Regional Governments in the Habitat III process. They encompass the reforms that must be immediately implemented to support countries, local and regional governments and other stakeholders in the New Urban Agenda to take action.

The first set of recommendations on '**local action**' addresses how sub-national governments can contribute to the achievement of the SDGs, the Paris Agreement, the Sendai Framework and the New Urban Agenda. The second set of recommendations on '**national action**' focuses on national legal, institutional and policy reform. The final set of recommendations on '**global action**' tackles three of the most potent enablers of national and local development: global governance, international financing and decentralized cooperation. All the recommendations seek to empower local and regional governments to take their rightful place at the head of a new international agenda for inclusive and sustainable development.

1.1 Local action: realization on the ground of the New Urban Agenda

As a result of the growing links between global and local challenges, **local and regional governments now play a greater role in the regulation of the urban fabric and territories, and the protection of the commons.** However, they often lack the resources to meet these new challenges, putting pressure on their ability to fulfil pre-existing responsibilities. To contribute to what in the SDGs is termed a 'transformed world', local and regional governments across all world regions must be proactive and commit to the following actions:

1. Improve their strategic management capacity.

Local and regional leaders must develop new capacities and modes of leadership to respond to and take advantage of new opportunities that are opening up for the achievement of the SDGs and the New Urban Agenda:

- Implement effective, democratic governance in partnership with multiple stakeholders to decide on common priorities and goals, act accordingly, and account for the results;
- Make innovation a way of life by establishing partnerships for innovation;
- Develop a strategic management approach to deal with local finance and assets effectively;
- Attract the best talents to protect the common good by developing inspiring careers in public office as well as peer-to-peer learning and knowledge networks within and across country contexts;
- Draw up a code of conduct, with independent control mechanisms and bodies, to fight corruption;
- Build solidarity between cities and territories and enhance inter-municipal cooperation.

2. Boost participation by fostering a buoyant and autonomous civil society to co-create cities and territories.

Local and regional leaders should use participatory democracy, shared public services, social and cooperative housing and collaborative and solidarity based economies contribute to a new effective and democratic governance approach, aiming at the common good. To be driving force behind the eradication of inequalities, local and regional leaders must:

- Guarantee the empowerment of citizens, making them able to fully participate in local political, social, economic and cultural life, recognizing the value of that urban knowledge that other actors cannot possess;
- Recognize the complex emerging systems based on citizenship collaboration, which are key for the sustainability of cities;
- Co-create societies starting from cities and territories, promoting bottom-up participation mechanisms and non-centralized dynamics;
- Involve all stakeholders in service provision for all; promote co-production;
- Grant visibility and legitimacy to those common citizenship practices that, thanks to self-management and autonomy, make urban life flow;
- Implement social housing programmes and support citizen initiatives for alternative decent housing, such as the social production of habitat;
- Recognize informal settlements as a legitimate and historical means of urban production;
- Implement public policies that nurture cultural practices and are able to expand the scope and institutional space of culture;
- Consider the urban space as a learning space that guarantees the free movement of knowledge, using open and free licences;
- Foster communal, associative and cooperative ways of life in cities' neighbourhoods;
- Stop considering the city as a space of consumption, and turn it into a space for exchange, co-creation and learning;
- Engage with the private sector, encourage the 'civic economy' and invest in collaborative, social and care economies, providing decent work and livelihoods for all;
- Favour digital inclusion and technological sovereignty, which by default protect the privacy of citizens.

3. Harness integrated urban and territorial planning to shape the future of cities and territories.

Strategic planning is an essential component of management. It integrates spatial planning, land use, economic stability, infrastructures and other dimensions that are key responsibilities of local and regional governments. Local and regional governments must:

- Shape cities and territories' built environment and their economic, social and cultural fabric according to the needs of their inhabitants; engage in long-term strategic participatory planning;
- Use flexible and dynamic planning to promote a better quality of life;
- Utilize land-use plans and regulations as a strategic tool to manage urban sprawl; reduce disaster risk; foster social inclusion; value local culture and heritage; reduce land and housing speculation and guarantee security of land tenure;
- Create mixed-use areas that integrate housing, commerce and offices;
- Ensure updated land and real-estate registers and enable mobilization of land and property value capture by local authorities;
- Build integrated and polycentric metropolitan areas that are sensitive to the socio-economic dynamics in their surrounding territories;
- Develop closer cooperation between regions, cities and rural municipalities to generate economies of agglomeration;
- Strengthen the role of intermediary and small cities, and relieve urbanization pressures on natural resources.
- Engage in peer-to-peer learning and exchange of expertise

4. Ensure access to quality and resilient infrastructures and basic services for all.

Access to basic services is a human right that should be guaranteed for all. Local and regional governments should expand services and, at the same time, reduce the

environmental impact of urban infrastructures. To 'square the circle', they must be given powers to experiment with innovative approaches:

- Design infrastructure plans alongside land use plans, including long-term investment strategies;
 - Improve the management, delivery and transparency of public services, facilitate innovative partnerships for co-production and co-management;
 - Develop mechanisms to guarantee minimum access levels, and make basic services affordable to all;
Explore new universal models of service co-production; support small-scale businesses and gradually insert the informal economy into the organization of public service delivery through tailored tendering procedures and training modules.
5. **Foster local economic opportunities to create decent jobs and social cohesion.**

Local and regional governments should have the necessary policy powers and resources to control economic development levers and take advantage of an ongoing transformation of the global economy to boost endogenous economic development:

- Harness local human capacities and assets by supporting local investment and entrepreneurship;
- Improve communication and transparency to increase the economic bases of tax payers;
- Support a broad range of sustainable local economic initiatives to adapt local economies to global challenges and improve their resilience;
- Implement local level public procurement systems that include social and environmental responsibility criteria;
- Promote labour-intensive growth strategies;
- Promote circular economies to encourage reuse and recycling;
- Promote the 'civic economy' and acknowledge and integrate the informal economy.

6. **Put the 'Right to the City' at the centre of urban and territorial governance.**

Growing inequalities create new forms of poverty and exclusion. Local and regional governments face the daily responsibility of tackling socio-spatial exclusion and promoting social justice, integrating migrants, preventing discrimination and urban violence, and protecting social rights to ensure prosperity and well-being:

- Reduce poverty and inequalities at the local level by identifying deprivation, and targeting policies efficiently;
- 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; regenerate poor neighbourhoods; recognize and support the social production of habitat; ensure secure tenure for the most vulnerable; and prevent forced evictions;
- Complement targeted social policies with the recognition of the indivisibility and universality of human rights as expressed in the **Global Charter-Agenda for Human Rights in the City**.
- Facilitate newcomers' (migrants and refugees) access to rights and services and strengthen integration and inclusion policies and strategies (employment, education, health, housing).

7. **Lead the transition toward low carbon, resilient cities and regions.**

Greener cities and territories are the key to a sustainable future. Local and regional governments must move towards sustainable production and consumption patterns and act to mitigate and adapt to climate change:

- Be vectors of awareness, change and knowledge for citizens;
- Reduce the ecological footprint of cities;
- Increase the use of renewable energies, climate change mitigation and adaptation initiatives;
- Integrate environmental and natural risk prevention into planning processes, following the principles of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction;
- Encourage urban agriculture and nature-based solutions and projects stemming from civil society, especially through subsidies and by creating truly enabling conditions;
- Adapt transport systems and promote multimodal public transport and carbon friendly mobility.

8. Promote local heritage, creativity and diversity through people-centred cultural policies.

Culture is a vital element of citizenship, integration and co-existence. Culture should be seen as the fourth pillar of sustainable development. All citizens have the right to culture. Cities and territories should promote active cultural policies, in particular:

- Draw up and implement cultural policies and activities and guarantee good governance of cultural policies;
- Build on the cultural and heritage potential of cities and territories to promote a sense of place, identity and belonging;
- Recognize cultural diversity as a prerequisite for innovation, co-responsibility and peaceful resolution of conflicts;
- Acknowledge and promote creativity as an aspect of human experience and a source of progress;
- Integrate heritage and culture in urban planning, including through appropriate cultural impact assessment methods;
- Integrate the cultural economy in local economic development strategies;
- Reconnect culture and education to support the acquisition of cultural skills and knowledge;
- Adopt and promote the **Agenda 21 for Culture**.

9. Prevent conflict, build bridges and dialogue and promote a culture of peace

SDG 16 calls for peaceful and inclusive societies, access to justice and effective institutions. Local and regional governments have the responsibility to act as promoters and facilitators of peace and by doing so to contribute to the international development and peace-building agenda. As the UCLG City of Bogota Peace Prize, which was handed out in Bogota for the first time in history, affirms, the role of local governments in this field is diverse. As the sphere of government closest to the people, it is their responsibility to:

- Act as mediator in conflicts within their communities;
- Ensure that service delivery is in place despite the difficult context;
- Ensure effective, accountable and transparent local governance;
- Promote true inclusion of all (ethnic) groups in their communities;
- Protect vulnerable and marginalized groups from (violent) conflict, in particular women and youth;
- Contribute to effective disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of (former) combatants;
- Promote and facilitate peace as an alternative to violent conflict.

1.2 National action: a new multilevel governance system

Local leadership will only flourish if there is a national enabling environment for local and regional governments with adequate legal frameworks and resources, as well as a transformation of top-down approaches. Moreover, it can only succeed if the uneven decentralization found in many countries and regions is urgently addressed. National governments should:

1. Renew institutional frameworks to promote partnership governance and effective decentralization.

The achievement of the SDGs, the New Urban Agenda and the Paris Agreement will not be possible without empowered local and regional governments with adequate political, administrative and fiscal decentralization:

- Recognize and protect local and regional self-government in national and international law;
- Create a system of multilevel governance (MLG), according to the principle of subsidiarity that recognizes the interdependence of different levels of government, exemplified in the many “hidden local dimensions” of national and international governance;
- Ensure an enabling environment for local and regional governments –where local and regional governments can experiment, innovate, and capitalize on their resources and potential afforded by their locations and populations;
- Ensure to local and regional governments the freedom to organise, plan and finance the delivery of Services of General Interest (public services);
- Reaffirm and apply the International Guidelines on Decentralization and Access to Basic Services for All, adopted by the UN Habitat Governing Council in 2007 and 2009, as the pillars of an MLG framework.

2. Build coherent and integrated national urban and regional policies in consultation with sub-national governments.

- Move urban and territorial policies up the national agenda.
- Facilitate regular coordination between central government ministries and agencies; representatives of local and regional governments (where appropriate through their representative associations); civil society and the private sector.
- Foster a leading role for regional and local governments in defining regional development policies, particularly supporting regions and cities with limited capacities.
- Ensure coordination between strategic infrastructure and regional plans, and improve their design and co-financing.

3. Rethink sub-national financing systems to reconcile financing with sustainability.

- Ensure appropriate fiscal decentralization and equitable sharing of national resources to reach a minimum percentage going to local governments - at least 20% of the total public budget - in the next decade.
- Give local and regional governments adequate fiscal powers and capacities to mobilize part of the wealth created in their territory, such as capturing part of land and property added-value.
- Improve transparency and strengthen enabling frameworks for participatory budgets;
- Ensure appropriate, regular and predictable transfers to complement local budgets, including equalization mechanisms for adequate redistribution of resources across the whole territory.

- Collaborate with local and regional governments to redefine financing strategies and regulate the role of private finances to support sustainable cities; improve local and regional governments' access to responsible borrowing.
 - Enact policies and establish legal frameworks to attract national and international investments, both sustainable and inclusive, in local development and infrastructures.
 - Facilitate local and regional governments' access to climate financing, through adapted guarantee mechanisms combined with capacity building at the local level.
4. **Involve local and regional governments and their associations in the follow up of the SDGs and the New Urban Agenda, supported by accurate territorialized data, learning tools and opportunities.**
- Create national mechanisms for participatory follow up of the SDGs, the Paris Climate Agreement, the New Urban Agenda, the Sendai Framework and the AAAA that involve all levels of government, civil society, the private sector and academia.
 - Strengthen the role of sub-national governments and local stakeholders in generating data for urban and territorial governance.
 - Strengthen the role of Local and Regional Government Associations to support, monitor and promote the implementation of the SDGs through their constituency.
 - Evaluate and share experiences and promote practical tools for implementation through peer-to-peer learning and decentralized cooperation.

1.3 International action: local and regional governments' rightful place at the global table

For global policies and agreements to properly harness local experience and commitment, the place of local and regional governments in international policy-making needs to change. They must be part of a structured consultation as a recognized and organized global constituency rather than subject to *ad hoc* consultation processes. The efforts of local and regional governments to organize and produce informed inputs must be acknowledged as part of the decision-making process by taking the following steps:

1. **Include organized local and regional government networks in the governing structures of international development institutions.**
 - Local and regional governments should be acknowledged with **specific status in the UN**.
 - The **World Assembly of Local and Regional Governments** – facilitated by the Global Taskforce of Local and Regional Governments – should be the liaison point for this constituency.
 - Enhance political dialogue: there should be a **system wide consultation mechanism for local and regional governments** in development institutions, in particular the United Nations. The inclusion of local and regional government representatives in national delegations to global negotiations will be instrumental to embed the local perspective in international institutions.
 - Local and regional governments should have a **concrete role in the follow-up and review of global development policies**, and the New Urban Agenda, the High-Level Political Forum, the Paris Agreement, AAAA and the Sendai Framework, in particular.
2. **Create new instruments to finance local sustainable infrastructure and services.**
 - **Convene a high-level panel of international experts** and elected leaders. This would agree strategies with financing institutions to translate criteria in international agreements into bankable proposals for new and existing financial actors.

- Set up **a global fund for infrastructures, basic services and housing** to mobilize resources for leverage, and facilitate access to financing from banks and markets, particularly in low-income countries.
 - **Improve access for sub-national authorities to climate finance.** A sub-national window should be included in the Global Climate Fund and other green financing mechanisms and selection criteria redesigned with sub-national authorities.
 - Support the **Global Observatory on Local Finance** to review the effectiveness of fiscal decentralization processes; and encourage the production of reliable public data on sub-national finances.
3. **Support decentralized and city-to-city cooperation, peer-to-peer learning and knowledge-sharing to foster innovation.**
- **Decentralized cooperation**, municipal international cooperation, solidarity and learning networks should have an enhanced role in programmes set up to implement the SDGs and the New Urban Agenda, including in responding to humanitarian crises and post-crisis reconstruction.
 - **Attract development partners and academic institutions** should increasingly support decentralized cooperation in order to better monitor and promote the scale and commitment of ongoing cooperation between cities and local governments.
 - A system of decentralized cooperation programmes should be developed to facilitate the **exchange of experiences and create a fertile ground to co-create innovative approaches on how to achieve the SDGs, the New Urban Agenda, the Paris Agreement and the Sendai Framework.**
 - Global, regional and national funding should be released to strengthen local and regional government learning networks and create a global knowledge management platform to facilitate local indicators and reporting.