

STATEMENT OF THE LOCAL AND REGIONAL GOVERNMENTS CONSTITUENCY GATHERED IN THE GLOBAL TASKFORCE



This Statement was adopted by the Global Taskforce of Local and Regional Governments at the Local and Regional Authorities Forum, held within the framework of the High-Level Political Forum, in New York at the UN Headquarters, on 16 July 2018.

The Development Agendas adopted throughout 2015 and 2016, in particular the 2030 Agenda, the New Urban Agenda and the Paris Agreement represent not only a unique landmark to achieve a shift of our societies and systems towards sustainability, but perhaps the last opportunity to preserve our planet and build new patterns of development.

Our commitment and political will towards the implementation process is what we describe as localization. Going beyond the simple adaptation of global goals to the local level, localization is about political will, co-creation with our communities and to find solutions at the local level for the global challenges and objectives.

The local and regional government networks gathered in the Global Taskforce are convinced that the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals depends on their full ownership by our communities, cities and regions. Local and regional governments around the world are also convinced that they have a key role to play in triggering that ownership, and an important responsibility in fostering implementation by integrating the various agendas on the ground and ensuring territorial cohesion.

Our place at the global table

The first edition of the *Local and Regional Governments Forum* within the framework of the HLPF 2018 represents a key milestone for our constituency, and should provide us with the opportunity to share our vision, experiences and commitments before national governments and the international community. As an organized constituency we consider this Forum and the Local2030 network as key contribution to our quest for a permanent seat at the global policy making table.



Localization is about the co-creation of cities and territories

Local and regional governments and their associations at the national, regional and international levels are championing the localization movement. To accelerate the implementation of the global goals, local and regional governments are carrying out a rights-based approach in their development strategies, building on the 'Right to the City' principles acknowledged in Habitat III that strongly foster the premise of *leaving no-one behind*. These approaches should provide a new frame for 'co-creating' our cities and territories and build new relationships with the communities.

To face the increasing challenges of rapid urbanization, visionary local and regional leaders are driving policy changes with their communities to facilitate access to affordable housing, basic services and sustainable mobility, as well as to safeguard heritage, develop culture, improve urban resilience, promote a more sustainable use of water and energy, integrated waste management, and participatory planning approaches that integrate risk prevention.

They are driving new forms of urbanism as well as urban-rural linkages and environmental sustainability, but they cannot accomplish this shift alone.



Accelerating the Localization of the 2030 Goals: strengthening ownership, local finance and the bottom-up monitoring

In spite of the significant efforts that cities, regions and their networks have made to raise awareness and foster real ownership for the localization of the SDGs, different subnational governments are at different stages throughout the localization process, and there is still work to be done to enhance the active involvement of local leaders in the process. It is our firm belief that only through integrated governance models that involve all spheres of government, scale up the local priorities aligned with the SDGs and foster the inclusion and participation of the communities we represent will we be able to achieve our joint ambitions.

Without fairer and clearer intergovernmental financial frameworks and regulatory reforms that adequately empower local governments, funding is failing to reach those spheres that need it most. One of the main challenges for localizing the goals remains addressing subnational governments' access to finance. This is where the Addis Ababa Action Agenda and the New Urban Agenda can offer a tangible opportunity to strengthen the role of local and regional governments as key drivers of urban and regional planning, since they call for supporting subnational governments through innovative financial mechanisms which build up domestic resources.

Extreme poverty is localized and inequalities between countries, as well as between territories and within cities, are increasing. Without localized data, ensuring that no one is left behind will become increasingly difficult. Local and regional governments are launching initiatives to collect data on the ground, but stronger support and coordination with communities is essential to disaggregate and localize data and monitor the localization process.



The Local and Regional Government Networks gathered in the Global Taskforce commit to:

- Strengthen awareness, policy commitment and ownership among LRGs and their communities as a shared responsibility.
- Develop further partnerships with civil society and other stakeholders to ensuring the achievement of the global goals.
- Support the proactive involvement of Local and Regional Governments in the process of the Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs).
- Ensure the active participation of LRGs in the Regional Forums on Sustainable Development.
- Promote and support the development of tools for LRGs' self-assessment on the alignment of their development plans and strategies with the SDGs.
- Promote Voluntary Local Reviews at both city and regional levels that include the development of accountability mechanisms.
- Promote international cooperation and peer-to-peer exchange of knowledge for localization in partnerships with other stakeholders.



GTF members and partners call national governments and the international community to:

- Foster the integration of specific references in the VNR to monitor the implementation of the SDGs at subnational levels in each country.
- Include specific follow-up processes to the VNRs in order to guarantee accountability mechanisms at all levels and further develop the HLPF.
- Enhance the presence and spaces for dialogue between LRGs and national governments within the context of the HLPF and beyond.
- Pay specific attention to local solutions and actions in the Quadrennial Global Sustainable Development Report.
- Promote the implementation of the New Urban Agenda as an accelerator of the SDGs.
- Rally LRGs to lead an international coalition for the implementation of SDG 11 within a broader localization strategy.
- Enhance the participation of local and regional governments and stakeholders in the renewed governance structure of the UN and of UN Habitat in particular building on the recommendations of Habitat III.

We would like to reiterate the commitment of our organized constituency towards the achievement of the global agendas and the wellbeing of our communities. The task is too large for any single level of government or any single stakeholder to fulfill alone. As the closest level of government to our citizens we are committed to leave no one behind and call for national governments and the international community not to leave local governance and territorial cohesion behind.