



# The Durban Political Declaration

## ENVISIONING THE FUTURE OF OUR RENEWED INTERNATIONAL MUNICIPAL MOVEMENT

We, local and regional governments and their associations from around the world, representing communities large and small, metropolitan, rural and urban, gathered at the World Summit of Local and Regional Leaders in Durban from 11 to 15 November 2019, building on the century-old municipal movement, are convinced that:

The transformation that will need to be brought about in our development model will only be possible if it responds to the dreams and expectations of citizens and communities and if collective responsibility is taken to adjust and make compromises on a fair, equal and sustainable basis.

Transformational change will be local, or will simply not be. Communities, in relation with their territories, need to be at the centre of the decision-making to localize meaningful achievement in the global agendas and ensure a decent life and a sustainable future for the next generations.



### **We firmly believe that the next frontier of the international municipal movement:**

1. Will face the global trends by being more attached than ever to our origins, to protect and foster local democracy, as the safeguards of the dreams and hopes of our communities, being loyal to the values and principles of decentralization, subsidiarity, gender equality, self-government and accountability.
2. Will be committed to achieving equality, diversity, universality, and driven to champion the transition from an international to an interdependent interurban and solidary local governments system. It will place the protection of living beings and eco-systems, as well as the sustainability of our planet, at the core of its agenda, by connecting with the rural backbone of humanity. To achieve this, the DNA of the international local and regional movement is structured on tighter links between a more balanced system of cities and the strengthening of the urban-rural continuum.
3. **Will be an equality driven movement, taking a collective stand to end poverty and tackle inequalities**, that are still at the origin of the vast majority of problems worldwide. The movement needs to be built on solid grounds defending equality, special care of those that need it most by addressing how they access public spaces and public services, and putting gender equality at the heart of policies and actions.
4. Will build on the catalyzing force of the cities and regions around the world, as well as on the solidarity and capacity of their associations, with the support of UCLG Regional Sections to multiply impact and scale up action and amplify its impacts at all levels.
5. Will push for the transformation of society, empowering local and regional governments to fulfil their critical role as drivers of change in consumption and production patterns that allows for delivering **inclusive, affordable and fair service delivery, fostering the preservation of the commons and the promotion of the human rights.**

6. Will endeavor to secure that the 4<sup>th</sup> industrial revolution goes beyond strictly technological advancements, and that it works in service of local communities and not only the privileged. The defense of digital rights must be a priority for all local and regional governments, starting with public digital services and infrastructures to create a more egalitarian, just and non-discriminatory society. It must reconcile competitiveness with territorial cohesion and the local aspect to foster a prosperous future of decent work.



### Local ownership for the future of humanity

7. In an intertwined world, local issues are no longer to be solved at local level and global transformation responding to the needs of communities is not possible without local ownership. The international municipal movement will facilitate a local-global platform to ensure that the voices are our own, and that through governance of proximity, we will contribute to the thinking of our communities from our own perspectives
8. Encourages the renewed municipal movement to promote bottom-up engagement and follow-up in local, national, regional and international arenas. Enhancing the voices of local and regional governments internationally is not an aim in itself. Rather, achieving inclusive and just societies that allow our communities to meet their hopes and aspirations is what we strive for. The constituency of local and regional governments and their associations puts forward renewed policies in critical areas for general transformation building on the diversity of realities in the different continents.
9. There is a direct correlation between national human development and local and regional governments' capacities. A change of financial paradigm is critical to ensure territorial and urban cohesion - leaving no one and no place behind.
10. We will need to bring about changes in the way we co-create cities and territories, by empowering community-based organizations and civil society, developing partnerships with private sector and Academia, promoting local knowledge, and building up local scientific expertise to harness the power of co-production of our cities and territories, including data and information.
11. The 2030 Agenda represents an opportunity to renew the social contract, to rethink relationships. Making this global agenda our own is what we understand by **localization**, what allows the constituency to innovate and places us at the heart of the international development policy, and is the only guarantee for its accomplishment.



### The dreams of 2030 paving the way towards a new social contract

12. **The right to housing** is at the core of the priorities of any citizen and needs to continue to be at the center of the political agenda, intrinsically related to providing populations with decent

living conditions and life opportunities. The principles set out in the Cities for Adequate Housing Declaration, such as more powers to regulate real estate market, or an urban planning that combines adequate housing with quality neighbourhoods, are key milestones that will need to further developed and promoted.

13. We strive to fight discrimination and foster human solidarity, protect dignity for all regardless of legal status. In this regard, the movement supports a **rights-based approach to migration** beyond issue of border management, providing access to basic services and opportunities for social transformation through inter-cultural dialogues.
14. **Renewing democracy and citizenship:** There is a clear lack of trust of communities in the institutions that represent them, and governing systems are being challenged. The local and territorial level is critical to rethink, and to reshape the governance systems into more participatory, accountable and transparent ones. Responding to these calls and rebuilding trust between citizens, institutions and communities, at all levels, are determinant elements to achieve the global agendas. Citizens, and citizenship, through social movements and civil society, are increasingly calling for the transformation of governing systems.
15. **Defense of public representatives:** Our movement is committed to establishing mechanisms to defend the exercise of public service, and the mayors legitimately elected by the populations, from any democratic and violent affront for the sake of democratic stability and the development of our societies.
16. **Intergenerational dialogues and peace:** Local democracy is nourished by cultural diversity, one that is enrooted in local heritage as it evolves. A people-centered agenda relies on the transmission of local know-how through intergenerational dialogues, raising awareness and experimenting new tools. This is taking place and must be harnessed in every street and neighborhoods of every village, town and big city. Advancing this transformative change is but one of the myriad ways in which local governments can contribute to a culture of peace.
17. **Ecological transition:** The future of the international local and regional governments movement will be based on an integrated territorial approach, building on systems of cities based on solidarity and not competition. It will promote a shift in production and consumption patterns, working to ensure clean mobility, aiming to curb urban sprawl and underpinning decent work in the digital era. Local governments of all sizes will have a key role to play in the transition from a productive to a creative society by rethinking the complexity of global supply chain, as well as shorter and natural circuits in cities. We will need to enhance the use of renewable energies and consider the lifespan of greenhouse gas emissions to make sure we run this race together.
18. **Resilience:** Local and regional governments are at the forefront in responding to disasters. Communities need to be ready for hazards and proactively put in place mechanisms that can mitigate them. Building resilient communities goes beyond than responding to disasters. Our movement is ready to promote the role that cities and regions play in managing natural resources and contributing to the resilience of the planet, as well as social global justice.
19. **Gender equality:** Our movement unequivocally champions and will set in motion concrete actions to make the voice of women and girls heard in the localization process. The status of women, the specific needs and unique contribution to shape the future of humanity cannot remain invisible and unheard in the formulation and monitoring of public policies, particularly when they also belong to populations that have been historically discriminated against.

Equality, and more specifically gender equality needs to be put at the heart of all development processes in order to guarantee that decision-making is done conscientiously, without forgetting half of the world population.

20. **Culture:** Culture is a core component of local identity, the fourth pillar of sustainable development, and has a key role as a strand of global solidarity. Local cultural policies and programmes on memory, heritage, creativity, diversity and knowledge are key vectors, everywhere, of people-centred local sustainable development.



**Universality and solidarity: a commitment from a world membership of associations, cities and regions equal and strong**

21. Our membership, made up of local and regional governments associations at all levels needs to be further tightened and the roles of the different types of members put to work in a collaborative manner, fostering direct exchanges and peer-to-peer learning to gear-up to the 'Implementation Decade' of the SDGs called by the international community to achieve the global agendas.
22. It is through the development of a learning system and through decentralized cooperation and city diplomacy that the movement can disseminate its joint messages and that cohesion and solidarity can be achieved. More efforts, innovative methodologies and the development of new tools to upscale knowledge and cooperation will be key.
23. We reaffirm the commitment from our peers to contribute to the united voice of local and regional governments through active participation in subnational government networks, as well as through the Global Taskforce of Local and Regional Governments and the ecosystem of sister organizations, that will allow us to strengthen coordination and consultation mechanisms.
24. We reaffirm the **World Assembly of Local and Regional Governments** as the true international platform to ensure that local and regional voices are truly heard, and they contribute to the thinking of the communities around the world from their own perspective.
25. The above is what we acknowledge as our "**municipalist agenda**", forged through a century of collaborations. We, local and regional government leaders and our associations, are convinced that the values and experiences that build this patrimony can support our societies to go through the transformation that we need to become sustainable, fair, inclusive and driven by solidarity and peace to preserve our planet. Through this declaration, we confirm our responsibility before the communities we serve and our commitment to partner with the international community and all stakeholders in a joint quest for a hopeful future of humanity.