

A publication of the International Institute for Sustainable Development

Monday, 11 November 2019 Vol. 231 No. 15

## UCLG World Congress – World Summit of Local and Regional Leaders: 11-15 November 2019

The 2019 World Summit of Local and Regional Leaders, convened by United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG), opens Monday, 11 November 2019, in Durban's International Convention Centre, South Africa, and continues until Friday, 15 November. The World Summit is the largest gathering of mayors, presidents of associations, councillors, and local and regional practitioners and partners from around the world. Recommendations and policy papers adopted at the Summit are expected to become a reference for the development of future policies, advocacy and work plans for the Global Task Force of Local and Regional Governments and the World Organization of United Cities and Local Governments.

The Summit is expected to bring together 3000 local elected leaders and professionals representing towns, cities, metropolises and regions, civil society, citizens and experts from international business and academia with the aim of establishing links and developing policies to transform society in the context of multi-level approach to the implementation of Agenda 2030 and the Sustainable Development Goals. The session will be based on a renewed format and enhanced collaboration between UCLG members and partners, with enhanced policy outputs.

**Organization:** The meeting in Durban has a number of elements:

- The UCLG Congress will be held during the World Summit of UCLG, bringing together UCLG members to define their international agenda;
- A Global Taskforce will convene the World Assembly of Local and Regional Governments, providing an opportunity for local and regional governments to articulate their voice on the international agenda and upcoming processes.

**Themes:** Local and regional governments (LRG) approach global agendas as a single universal framework addressing the world's most urgent priorities. Given their local perspective, a multilevel and bottom-up approach to stakeholder deliberation, policy design and implementation is paramount. These global agendas include the 2030 Agenda, the UNFCCC Paris Agreement, the Sendai Framework, and the New Urban Framework. The World Summit will showcase how localization can be a significant dimension of policy design and be a catalyst for political will.



A view of the Durban International Convention Centre, venue of the Congress

The Summit will receive inputs and deliberate on a series of topical themes, including: gender equality, women's empowerment, and youth; local action; right to the city; inclusive and accessible cities; sustainable urban development; local peace initiatives; finance; local democracy; and localizing the global agenda. Building on the century-old international movement of municipalities, the World Summit will include interactive and innovative formats on four tracks that will guide participants, together with dedicated sessions for the UCLG membership. The Summit will consolidate policies with a strong focus on local governments as representatives of communities and for communities. Special attention will be paid to strengthening democracy, the implementation of the right to the city and the development of an intergenerational agenda.

### *A Brief History of UCLG and Related Processes*

The World Summit builds on the century-old international movement of municipalities. UCLG was founded in 2004 to ensure subnational and regional governments and other local authorities have a voice in the international processes that are defining the sustainable development and climate change agendas and addressing other areas of interest at the local level. Since its creation, UCLG has been convening city and local government representatives around the common issues affecting subnational jurisdictions and defending the interests of local governments on the world stage.

**Habitat I:** The UN Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat I) took place in Vancouver, Canada, from 31 May - 11 June 1976. The Vancouver Declaration on Human Settlements adopted by the Conference officially established the UN Centre



During FfD3 the dais applauds the adoption of the AAAA

for Human Settlements as the major UN agency mandated by the UN General Assembly (UNGA) to promote socially and environmentally sustainable towns and cities with the goal of providing adequate shelter for all.

#### **First World Assembly of Cities and Local Authorities:**

The First World Assembly of Cities and Local Authorities met in Istanbul, Turkey, from 30-31 May 1996, ahead of Habitat II. The final declaration on Habitat II issued by the World Assembly represented the constituency's official contribution to the Conference.

**Habitat II:** Habitat II convened in Istanbul, Turkey, from 3-14 June 1996, on the 20th anniversary of Habitat I. The Habitat Agenda and the Istanbul Declaration on Human Settlements adopted by the Conference outline over 100 commitments and strategies to address shelter and sustainable human settlements. With the adoption of the Habitat Agenda, the international community set the twin goals of achieving adequate shelter for all and ensuring sustainable human settlements development. The Istanbul Declaration recognizes local authorities as the "closest partners" of UN-Habitat and "essential" in the implementation of the Habitat Agenda. Article 102 of the Habitat Agenda acknowledges that municipal governments "can be an effective partner in making human settlements viable, equitable and sustainable," given that their level of administration is "closest to the people."

**UCLG Founding Congress:** In May 2004, mayors, councillors and elected city, local and regional representatives gathered in Paris, France, to establish UCLG. The Founding Congress Final Declaration addresses sustainable development and globalization, decentralization and local democracy, cooperation and diplomacy, and world health,

**2<sup>nd</sup> UCLG World Congress:** At UCLG's 2nd World Congress, held October 2007 in Jeju, Republic of Korea, the organization and other stakeholders discussed the consequences of urbanization, cooperation with regions and challenges of tomorrow's city. The final declaration lays out commitments on global warming and environmental protection, human rights, peace and development, and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). In addition, UCLG's Policy Paper on Local Finance was approved.

**First World Summit of Local and Regional Leaders and 3<sup>rd</sup> UCLG World Congress:** In November 2010 in Mexico City, Mexico, the first World Summit convened in conjunction with UCLG's Congress, adopting a document

titled, 'The City of 2030 – Our Manifesto.' The Manifesto lays out the common goals of local leaders and their determination to make the urban world a better place.

**2<sup>nd</sup> World Summit of Local and Regional Leaders and 4<sup>th</sup> UCLG World Congress:** Held 1-4 October 2013 in Rabat, Morocco, the 2nd World Summit celebrated the centenary of the international municipal movement and allowed participants to debate and exchange views on the most vital issues for subnational authorities and partners in the 21st century. The Summit's outcome document, the Rabat Declaration, recognizes the need to address change, innovation and the issue of just societies by reinforcing bottom-up governance under the leadership of inclusive local and regional governments

**GTF:** Set up in 2013 as an initiative of UCLG President and Mayor of Istanbul Kadir Topbaş, the GTF is a mechanism for coordinating advocacy efforts of the major international networks of local governments in international climate change and sustainable and urban development policy processes. The GTF has organized the Second World Assembly of Local and Regional Governments as a three-part process to provide formal input to Habitat III.

**FfD3:** Taking place in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, from 13-16 July 2015, FfD3 adopted the AAAA, which includes a global framework for financing development post-2015, along with specifications of action areas, data, monitoring and follow-up. The AAAA includes a focus on cities and commits to support resilient and environmentally-sound infrastructure in developing countries.

**UN Sustainable Development Summit:** The UN Sustainable Development Summit took place at UN



UN Summit adopts the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (credit: UN Photo/Cia Pak)



The dais celebrates the adoption of the Paris Agreement

Headquarters in New York, US, from 25-27 September 2015. The Summit adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which includes 17 SDGs and 169 associated targets. SDG 11 addresses urban areas, aiming to “make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable.” It includes seven related targets addressing, inter alia, housing, transport, urbanization and waste management, as well as three targets on means of implementation.

**Paris Climate Change Conference:** The UN Climate Change Conference convened in Paris in November - December 2015 and culminated with the Paris Agreement. The Agreement sets the goals of: keeping global average temperature rise to well below 2°C above preindustrial levels and pursuing efforts to limit the temperature increase to 1.5°C above preindustrial levels; and enhancing global adaptive capacity, strengthening resilience and reducing vulnerability to climate change. The Paris Agreement will enter into force on 4 November 2016. In the lead-up to Paris, local and regional

governments showcased the way in which they are leading, from the bottom-up, to address climate change by increasing pre-2020 ambition.

**2<sup>nd</sup> World Assembly of Local and Regional Governments:**

The first session of the Second World Assembly was held in New York, US, on 15 May 2016, immediately prior to the Habitat III Informal Hearings with Local Authorities Associations, during which representatives of local and regional governments exchanged views with member States and observers on the zero draft of the Habitat III outcome document.

**First Session of the UN Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) Assembly:** The inaugural session of the UN-Habitat Assembly was convened following UN General Assembly Resolution 73/239, which dissolved the UN-Habitat Governing Council as a subsidiary organ of the General Assembly and replaced it with the UN-Habitat Assembly, aimed at strengthening the organization through its



Delegates during the Habitat III Informal Hearings with Local Authorities Associations



**Victor Kisob**, Deputy Executive Director, UN-Habitat, UN-Habitat Executive Director **Maimunah Mohd Sharif**, and **Martha Delgado Peralta**, President of the Inaugural Session of the UN-Habitat Assembly

organizational structure. This makes the UN-Habitat Assembly a very high-level decision-making body on sustainable urbanization and human settlements. Its first meeting was successful in delivering important results for addressing urban challenges and its discussions and outcomes directly link to other multilateral development meetings and processes, including the upcoming Climate Action Summit, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and the Sustainable Development Goals, of which more than one third of the targets have an urban component.

The first session of the UN-Habitat Assembly, held at the UN Office at Nairobi, Kenya from 27-31 May 2019 attracted national delegations from 127 countries, including four

Heads of State and Government and 49 Ministers. Over a third of the more than 2,900 delegates attending came from national governments, along with 129 from local government, including over 60 Mayors and around 470 non-governmental organizations, academia, and a strong presence of the private sector. The total number of participants, including other technical, UN-Habitat staff, and entertainers came to over 3,900 persons.

**Third World Summit of Local and Regional Leaders and 5<sup>th</sup> UCLG World Congress:** The third World Summit of Local and Regional Leaders convened 12-15 October 2016 in Bogotá, Colombia, under the theme ‘Local Voices for a Better World.’ The event, which included plenaries, two permanent working platforms, workshops, policy dialogues, community forums, learning forums and other interactive sessions, was held immediately prior to the Third UN Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development (Habitat III) which took place from 17-20 October 2016 in Quito, Ecuador. On 14 October, the Global Taskforce of Local and Regional Governments (GTF), facilitated by UCLG, convened the second session of the Second World Assembly of Local and Regional Governments. The Second World Assembly adopted a statement containing key recommendations from local and regional governments for Habitat III’s main outcome, the New Urban Agenda, intended to guide urban development policy across the world during the next two decades. In addition, UCLG launched the 4th Global Report on Local Democracy and Decentralization (GOLD IV), providing analysis, innovative examples and case studies from around the globe to support the recommendations of the Global Agenda of Local and Regional Governments for the 21<sup>st</sup> century.



A group photo at the end of the UCLG Congress 2016