

A publication of the International Institute for Sustainable Development

Tuesday, 12 November 2019 Vol. 231 No. 16

UCLG Congress - World Summit of Local and Regional Leaders: Monday, 11 November 2019

The United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG) World Summit of Local and Regional Leaders convened on Monday for the first of two days of preparatory sessions, leading up to the official opening of the Summit on Wednesday. Approximately 20 sessions took place throughout the day, organized around four “Tracks,” as well as the Local4Action Hub, an informal meeting place, and related events organized by themes and constituencies.

Local4ActionHub

Inauguration of the Local4ActionHub: On Monday morning, a brief session took place to launch the Local4Action Hub, in the “Agora” area of the conference center. In his opening remarks, Mpho Parks Tau, President, UCLG, described the Assembly Track as the “heart” of the Congress, and explained that thematic discussions would be facilitated by UCLG regional networks, aimed at crafting a common policy agenda around five themes: finance; multi-level and multi-stakeholder governance; resilient and sustainable cities; demographic growth and associated challenges for cities; and migration.

Emilia Sáiz, UCLG Secretary-General, highlighted the role of the Hub as a space for co-creating a policy-making mechanism “that will define the future of our movement,” and noted all UCLG-affiliated networks would play an active role in the discussions.



Mpho Parks Tau, President of UCLG, and Emilia Sáiz, UCLG Secretary-General.

Mayors for the Future: This session was chaired by Emilia Sáiz Garrancedo, Secretary-General, UCLG.

Marvin Rees, Mayor of Bristol, United Kingdom, noted that cities deal with the consequences of failed international systems, including climate change and financial collapse. Speaking as a mayor of African descent, he highlighted the significance of what leadership means on the continent of Africa for black people all over the world.

Mxolisi Kaunda, Mayor of Durban-Ethekekwini, spoke of the need for cities to share experiences.

Rohey Malick Lowe, Mayor of Banjul, The Gambia, spoke of the challenge for women leaders to be heard, highlighting the role of corruption at the national level, and the need for directing international funding streams to benefit local communities.



Participants gather for the Local4Action Hub inaugural celebration.



Panel speakers during the special session entitled the 'Future of Local Finance.'

Mpho Parks Tau acknowledged the strides made by local and regional governments in bringing their voices to the global policy table, and called for further institutionalization of this role, especially at the UN.

Local4ActionTrack

Cities at the Centre: How 'State of the Cities' Reports Influence Urban Policy and Governance: This session, organized with the South African Cities Network, considered the role of African cities as engines of growth in the context of global investment. Ronald Wall, University of the Witwatersrand, South Africa, introduced findings in the *State of African Cities Report*. He noted the role of skills development in addressing income inequality, and highlighted the issue of skewed foreign investment distribution which has benefited larger cities. He noted the need to better understand and respond collaboratively to Africa's new status as a top attractor of inward investment.

Mzwandile Masina, Mayor of Ekurhuleni, South Africa, addressed urban priorities and equitable distribution of resources, noting the reality in South Africa is that voters are looking for change. Sithole Mbanga, South African Cities Network, outlined the contribution of the State of the Cities

Report as a policy instrument and as a source of ideas to address South Africa's post-apartheid policy legacy.

Beryl Mphakathi, Deputy City Manager, eThekweni Municipality, South Africa, noted that cities are striving for resilience, and called for a greater emphasis on grassroots leadership and social capital.

Shaping Resilient Cities: This afternoon session was co-organized by the African Local Government Academy (ALGA), UN Habitat, and the African Union of Architects (AUA), and was moderated by Vinesh Chintaram, Secretary General, AUA. The discussions focused on progress and challenges related to the localization of the SDG 11 (sustainable and resilient cities) and the New Urban Agenda, as well as anchoring resilient cities, with a focus on Africa.

Fatimatou Abdel Malick, President of Nouakchott Regional Council, Mauritania, and resilience champion, discussed resilience initiatives undertaken by the municipality of Teveragh Zeina, one of the signatories of the UN Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR) Cities Campaign, "My City is getting ready."

Rene Peter Hohmann, Cities Alliance Secretariat, UN Office for Project Services (UNOPS) provided an overview of the city resilience profiling tool, noting how it evolved from a scorecard



Rohey Malick Lowe, Mayor of Banjul, The Gambia



Mbali Hlophe, Gauteng Member of the Executive Council (MEC) for Arts and Culture, South Africa

to a more flexible tool to reflect the diversity of urban contexts and support integrated actions.

Mzwandile Masinā, Executive Mayor, City of Ekurhuleni, South Africa, highlighted challenges in developing resilient infrastructure in a zone with predominantly dolomite soils vulnerable to developing sinkholes. He described how a focus on innovative engineering solutions has helped to generate investments, especially for the capital-intensive planning phase.

Craig Laird, UN-Habitat, discussed challenges linked to accelerated urbanization in Africa, citing projections that one billion young people will enter the job market by 2040. Noting three key “access” gaps – data, networks, and finance – he highlighted lessons learned on, *inter alia*: the importance of building connections at national and regional levels; strengthening support for sustainable urban development of secondary cities and small towns; and extending infrastructure planning beyond the municipal boundaries to enhance connectivity.

Najat Zarrouk, Director, ALGA, outlined some national and regional experiences in building human capital at the local level in Africa, notably the Wave of Actions of UCLG-Africa.

Sikhumbuzo Mtembu, Deputy President, South African Institute of Architects, stressed that to cater for all categories of users in African cities, sustainable transport initiatives in Africa must look beyond rail infrastructure and make provision for walkways that also double up as market and social spaces.

Young African Local Elected Officials Facing the Challenges of Territorial Governance: This UCLG-facilitated lab session in the afternoon was co-moderated by Jean-Pierre Elong Mbassi, Secretary-General, UCLG Africa, and Emile-Gros Raymond Nakombo, President, Association of Mayors of Central Africa.

In introductory remarks, Mbassi emphasized the importance of youth leadership, remarking “this new blood should build the Africa we want.”

Christopher Kang’ombe, President, Local Government Association of Zambia and Mayor of Kitwe, attributed his early election as a local councillor in 2006, aged 21, to his success in mobilizing thousands of young voters.

Ibticem Atitallah Regaieg, Deputy Mayor of Sfax city, Tunisia, explained how the 2011 revolution had opened up democratic spaces, and discussed amendments to the legal framework, including lowering the legal voting age to 18 years for local elections.

Thérèse Faye Diouf, Mayor of Diarrère, Senegal, described the “demographic weight” of young people as an opportunity, noting there are more than 30 young mayors in the country. She highlighted advocacy around professional training and



Jean-Pierre Elong Mbassi, Secretary General, UCLG Africa

education to tap youth talent and bring their perspectives on climate change, digital literacy, and migration and security.

In the ensuing discussion, speakers emphasized, among other issues: the need for an inclusive and transparent process in developing the regional network; and opportunities for developing youth leadership skills through volunteering and other local-level activities.

The session concluded with a discussion on modalities for the preparatory process towards a proposed general assembly of young elected leaders in 2021.

Raising Awareness on Youth: This session focused on insights and lessons learned from youth. Sofia Moskin, Youth Delegate, Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe, introduced the Council of Europe as a European platform for diplomacy, communication and openness. She underlined that cities need to create contact with people who are not engaged and stressed the importance of active citizenship as a moral duty. She emphasized that people and youth in particular must contribute to creating and maintaining good societies and democracies. She also cautioned against the increasing manipulation of facts and the risks of a “credulity crisis” that could be averted by increasing data literacy.

Voluntary Local Reviews (VLRs) – Building Blocks for a Community of Practice: This “Lab” session was organized by the UCLG World Secretariat and chaired by Edgardo Bilsky, UCLG.

Miquel Rodriguez Planas, Commissioner 2030 Agenda, Barcelona, Spain, stated that VLRs allow cities to recognize gaps, improve transparency, and further innovation. He reflected on a common VLR methodology and emphasized the need for local targets.

Marvin Rees, Mayor of Bristol, shared his city’s experience in setting up a long-term plan with annual targets to 2050 to provide continuity. He stressed that while national governments talk about the SDGs, action is local.

Claudia Baranzelli, Joint Research Center, European Commission, introduced a handbook to support local and regional authorities in measuring SDGs. She said that assessments need to be replicable.

Akhona Tinta, Executive Director of Strategy, Amathole District Municipality, South Africa, shared thoughts on benchmarking and learning, an integrated planning community of practice, and the importance of integrated planning.

Maria Julia Reyna, Secretary of International Relations and Integration of the Government of the Province of Santa Fe, Argentina, emphasized the importance of territorializing the SDGs, and evidence- and rights-based approaches.



Participants meet in small groups

Puvendra Akkiah, IDP manager, eThekweni Municipality, South Africa, argued that cities are at the forefront of innovation and are central to success of global agendas. He also stressed that cities need a matching national framework and an alignment of public sector expenditure with the SDGs.

Discussions emphasized academia as a VLR partner, the importance of local coordination bodies and whole-of city approaches, tensions between localization and globalization, and the importance of culture.

Localizing the Transformative Agenda: Scaling up and out Social and Solidarity Economy and Finance: Carlos de Freitas, Executive Advisor, FMDV-Global Fund for Cities Development, moderated this session. He pointed to an enhanced recognition of social and solidarity economy and finance (SSEF) solutions to address the societal transformation expected with climate action, and the financing for development and 2030 Agendas.

Judith Hitchman, President, International Network for Community-Supported Agriculture (URGENCEI), highlighted advocacy success stories, as well as SSE framework legislation in 35 countries.

Laurence Kwark, Secretary General, Global Social Economy Forum, explained that the Forum's efforts are guided by values and principles aligned with the SDGs, a bottom-up approach, as well as participatory governance structures, and that the focus is on creating employment and decent jobs.

Nonhle Memela, Programme Manager, City of Durban, highlighted a vision aimed at building an enabling environment for self-sustaining social enterprises. She noted challenges including the need for government support with regard to financial assistance, high interest rates and the need to develop appropriate funding models.

Djilla Assitan, Diallo, Deputy Mayor, Bamako, Mali, discussed national initiatives and strategies including a network of female, political representatives.

Mohamed Boudra, Mayor of Al Hoceima, President, Moroccan Association of Mayors, emphasized the need for a new SSE model to be adopted by national and local governments.

Chang Hee Lee, Seoul Metropolitan Area, South Korea, reflected on how to solve social issues with the cooperation of citizens.

André Marie, Afouba, Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie (OIF), presented a programme directing support

to local economic development through SSEF solutions as they are key elements supporting local wealth production and sharing.

Special Sessions

The Future of Local Finances: Judy Nkosi, Director, National Treasury, South Africa, moderated the session. Issac Musumba, Minister of Urban Development, Uganda, observed that all revenue collected in the municipality must be remitted to the central government through a consolidated fund, noting a gap in the amount returned from the center for investment in local government. He highlighted various revenue generation approaches, including: land-based financing and user charges: land value capture; and congestion levies.

Sameh Wahba, World Bank, pointed to the need for a compendium of solutions to cover funding gaps. On land value capture, he highlighted two aspects: *ex ante*, sale of development rights; and *ex post*, property taxation, emphasizing the need for an appropriate regulatory environment and definitive property rights.

Mohamed Boudra, Mayor of Al Hoceima, Morocco, shared a territorial vision of solutions where wealth is created in proximity to the people who have familiarity with challenges at the local level.

Michel-Andre Volle, Meridiam, said many investors are struggling to find bankable opportunities, noting the need to balance stable returns with acceptable risk.

Christel Alvergne, Regional Coordinator West and Central Africa, UN Capital Development Fund, highlighted the need to generate data to facilitate local development, adding that a discussion is required around effectiveness and accountability of financial resources and strengthening capacities. Ahmed Aziz Diallo, Mayor of Dori, Burkina Faso, pointed out challenges relating to decentralization, noting that governments are quick to collect funds but slow to transfer them back to municipalities. He pointed to the need for mechanisms to strengthen trust between central and local governments.

Rodica Rossu, Mayor of Telita, Moldova, shared insights on the importance of building an innovative world based on sustainable local development; energy efficiency and eco-cities. She said that it is time for a new approach to local development that promotes social policies such as safety for families, jobs and personal development.



Participants network informally throughout the day.