

LOCAL AND REGIONAL
GOVERNMENTS' REPORT
TO THE 2019 HLPF
3rd REPORT

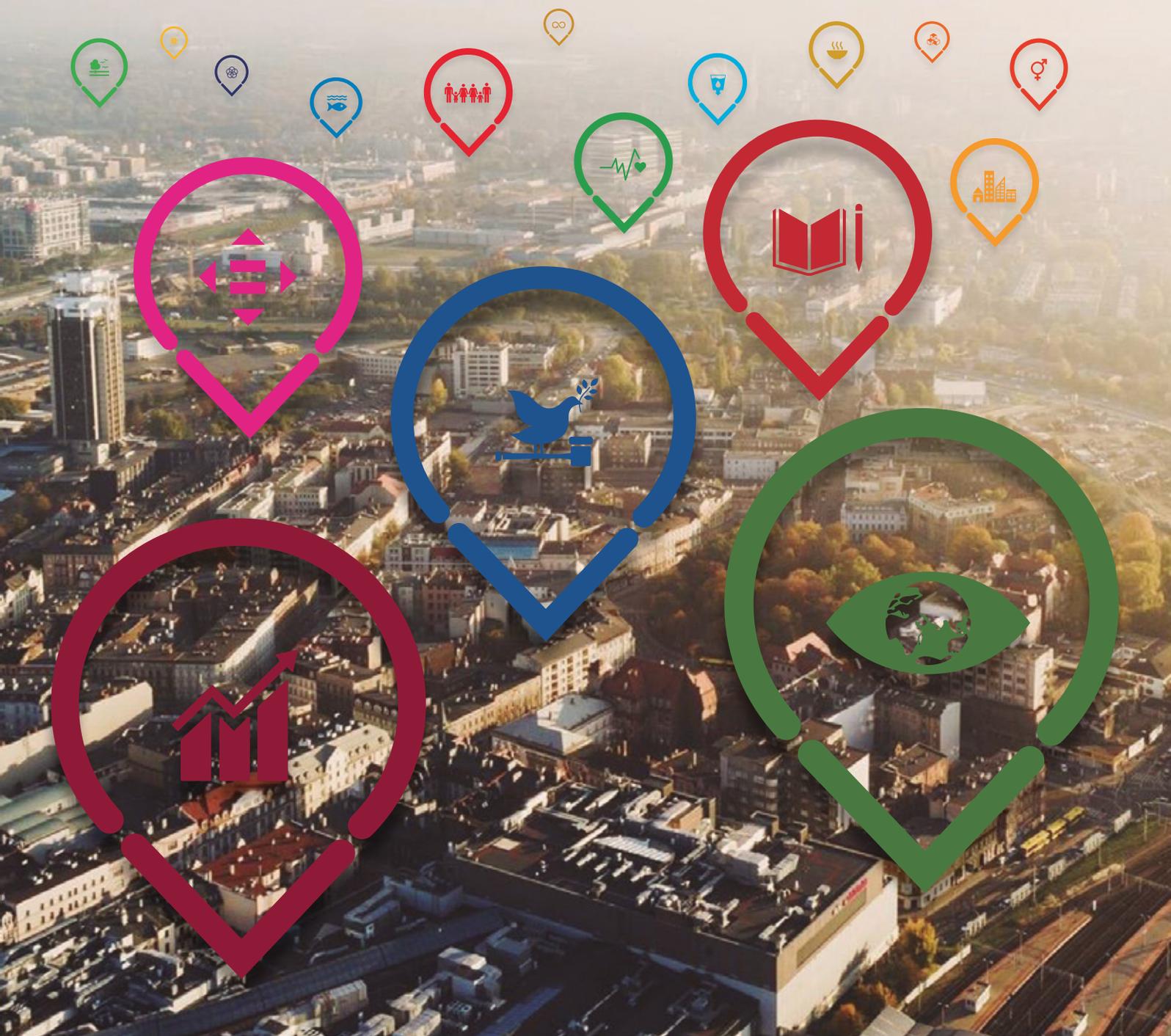
TOWARDS THE LOCALIZATION OF THE SDGs



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LOCAL AND REGIONAL
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REPORT TO THE 2019 HLPF

TOWARDS THE LOCALIZATION OF THE SDGs



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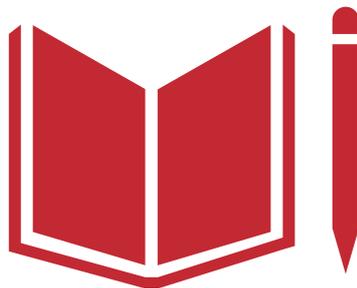
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Abbreviations

A

AAAA – Addis Ababa Action Agenda
AAM – Albanian Association of Municipalities
ABELO – *Association Burundaise des Elus Locaux* (Burundi Association of Local Elected Officials)
ABM – *Associação Brasileira de Municípios* (Association of Brazilian Municipalities)
AChM – *Asociación Chilena de Municipalidades* (Chilean Association of Municipalities)
ACVN – Association of Cities of Vietnam
ADDCN – Association of District Development Committees of Nepal
AFCCRE – *Association Française du Conseil des Communes et Régions d'Europe* (French Association of the Council of European Municipalities and Regions)
AGAAI – *Asociación Guatemalteca de Alcaldes y Autoridades Indígenas* (Guatemalan Association of Mayors and Indigenous Authorities)
AICCRE – *Associazione Italiana per il Consiglio dei Comuni e delle Regioni d'Europa* (Italian Association of the Council of European Municipalities and Regions)
AIMF – *Association internationale des Maires francophones* (International Association of French-speaking Mayors)
ALGA – African Academy of Local Governments
AL-LAs – *Alianza Euro Latinoamericana de Cooperación entre Ciudades* (Euro-Latin-American Alliance for Cooperation between Cities)
AMBF – *Association des municipalités du Burkina Faso* (Association of Municipalities of Burkina Faso)
AMC – Association of Municipalities and Cities of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina
AME – *Asociación de Municipalidades Ecuatorianas* (Association of Ecuadorian Municipalities)
AMGVM – *Association des maires des grandes villes de Madagascar* (Association of Mayors of Major Cities of Madagascar)
AMM – *Association des Municipalités du Mali* (Association of Municipalities of Mali)
AMN – *Association des Municipalités du Niger* (Association of Municipalities of Niger)
AMPE – *Asociación de Municipalidades del Perú* (Association of Municipalities of Peru)
ANAM – *Asociación Nacional de Municipalidades de la República de Guatemala* (National Association of Guatemalan Municipalities)
ANAMM – *Associação Nacional dos Municípios de Moçambique* (National Association of Municipalities of Mozambique)
ANCB – *Association Nationale des Communes du Bénin* (National Association of Municipalities of Benin)

ANCI – *Associazione Nazionale dei Comuni Italiani* (National Association of Italian Municipalities)
ANCT – *Association Nationale des Communes du Tchad* (National Association of Municipalities of Chad)
ANGR – *Asamblea Nacional de Gobiernos Regionales* (National Assembly of Regional Governments of Peru)
ANMCV – *Associação Nacional dos Municípios Caboverdianos* (National Association of the Municipalities of Cape Verde)
APEKSI – *Asosiasi Pemerintah Kota Seluruh Indonesia* (Association of Indonesian Municipalities)
APKASI – *Asosiasi Pemerintah Kabupaten Seluruh Indonesia* (Association of District Governments of Indonesia)
APLA – Association of Palestinian Local Authorities
ASEAN – Association of South-East Asian Nations
ASODORE – *Asociación Dominicana de Regidores* (Association of Mayors of the Dominican Republic)

B

BTVL – *Bureau Technique des Villes Libanaises* (Technical Office of Lebanese Cities)

C

C40 – C40 Cities Climate Leadership
CALM – *Congresul Autorităților Locale din Moldova* (Congress of Local Authorities of Moldova)
CAMCAYCA – *Confederación de Asociaciones de Municipios de Centroamérica y el Caribe* (Confederation of Associations of Municipalities of Central America and the Caribbean)
CCFLA – Cities Climate Finance Leadership Alliance
CEMR-CCRE – Council of European Municipalities and Regions - *Conseil des Communes et Régions d'Europe*
CIDPs – County Integrated Development Plans (Kenya)
CLGF – Commonwealth Local Government Forum
CNM – *Confederação Nacional de Municípios* (National Association of Municipalities of Brazil)
CoG – Council of Governors (Kenya)
CONAGO – *Conferencia Nacional de Gobernadores* (National Conference of Governors of Mexico)
CONAMM – *Conferencia Nacional de Municipios de México* (National Conference of Mexican Municipalities)
CONGOPE – *Consortio de Gobiernos Autónomos Provinciales del Ecuador* (Association of Autonomous Provincial Governments of Ecuador)

CORDIAL – *Coordinación Latinoamericana de las Autoridades Locales* (Coordination of Latin American Local Authorities)
COSLA – Convention of Scottish Local Authorities
CPMR – Conference of Peripheral Maritime Regions
CSOs – Civil Society Organizations
CUF – *Cités Unies France* (United Cities of France)
CVUC – *Communes et Villes Unies du Cameroun* (United Councils and Cities of Cameroon)

D

DILG – Department of the Interior and Local Government (Philippines)
DST – *Deutscher Städtetag* (Association of German Cities)

E

ECLAC – Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean
EIB – European Investment Bank

F

FAM – *Federación Argentina de Municipios* (Argentine Federation of Municipalities)
FAMSI – *Fondo Andaluz de Municipios para la Solidaridad Internacional* (Andalusian Municipal Fund for International Solidarity)
FCM – Federation of Canadian Municipalities
FCM – *Federación Colombiana de Municipios* (Colombian Federation of Municipalities)
FEDOMU – *Federación Dominicana de Municipios* (Federation of Municipalities of the Dominican Republic)
FEMP – *Federación Española de Municipios y Provincias* (Spanish Federation of Municipalities and Provinces)
FENAMM – *Federación Nacional de Municipios de México* (National Federation of Municipalities of Mexico)
FLACMA – *Federación Latinoamericana de Ciudades, Municipios y Asociaciones de Gobiernos Locales* (Federation of Cities, Municipalities and Local Government Associations of Latin America)
FNVT – *Fédération nationale des villes tunisiennes* (National Federation of Tunisian Cities)
FSLGA – Federation of Sri Lankan Local Government Authorities

G

GCoM – Global Covenant of Mayors for Climate and Energy
GDP – Gross Domestic Product
GHG – Greenhouse Gases
GSEF – Global Social Economic Forum

GTF – Global Taskforce of Local and Regional Governments

H

HDI – Human Development Index
HLPF – High-Level Political Forum

I

IALA – *Samband íslenskra sveitarfélaga* (Islandic Association of Local Authorities)
ICLEI – Local Governments for Sustainability
ICT – Information and Communications Technology
IGES – Institute for Global Environmental Strategies
ILO – International Labour Organization
IPCC – Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change

K

KEDE – Central Union of Municipalities of Greece
KiLGA – Kiribati Local Government Association
KS – *Kommunesektorens organisasjon* (Norwegian Association of Local and Regional Authorities)

L

LALRG – Latvian Association of Local and Regional Governments
LCAB – Local Councils Association of Balochistan (Pakistan)
LCA KP – Local Councils Association of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (Pakistan)
LCP – League of Cities of the Philippines
LGAs – Local and Regional Government Associations
LGAZ – Local Government Association of Zambia
LGBTIQ+ – Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex, queer, asexual and other gender identities.
LGMA – Local Government and Municipal Authorities
LGNZ – Local Government New Zealand
LoCASL – Local Councils Association of Sierra Leone
LRGs – Local and Regional Governments
LSA – *Lietuvos savivaldybių asociacija* (Association of Local Authorities of Lithuania)

M

MuAN – Municipal Association of Nepal

N

NALAG – National Association of Local Authorities of Ghana
NALAS – Network of Associations of Local Authorities of South-East Europe
NARMIN – National Association of Rural Municipalities in Nepal
NDCs – Nationally Determined Contributions

NEDA – National Economic and Development Authority (The Philippines)
NGOs – Non-Governmental Organizations

NLC – National League of Cities of Cambodia
NLC – National League of Cities (USA)
NUA – New Urban Agenda
NUP – National Urban Policy

O

ODA – Official Development Assistance
OECD – Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
OIF – *Organisation internationale de la Francophonie* (International Organisation of La Francophonie)

P

PSI – Public Service International

R

REFELA – *Réseau des Femmes Elues Locales d'Afrique* (Network for Locally Elected Women of Africa)
RALGA – Rwandan Association of Local Government Authorities
RIS3 – Research and Innovation Strategy for Smart Specialization

S

SALAR – Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions
SALGA – South African Local Government Association
SCTM – Standing Conference of Towns and Municipalities (Serbia)
SDGs – Sustainable Development Goals
SISMAP – *Sistema de Monitoreo de la Administración Pública* (Public Administration Monitoring System of the Dominican Republic)
SMEs – Small and medium-sized enterprises
SMO ČR – Union of Towns and Municipalities of the Czech Republic

T

TTALGA – Trinidad and Tobago Association of Local Government Authorities
TVET – Technical and Vocational Education and Training

U

UCCI – *Unión de Ciudades Capitales Iberoamericanas* (Union of Ibero-American Capital Cities)
UCLGA – United Cities and Local Governments of Africa
UCLG ASPAC – United Cities and Local Governments of Asia Pacific
UCLG Eurasia – United Cities and Local Governments of Eurasia

UCLG-MEWA – United Cities and Local Governments of the Middle East and West Asia

UCT – *Union des Communes du Togo* (Union of Municipalities of Togo)

UGRH – *Udruga gradova u Republici Hrvatskoj* (Association of Cities in the Republic of Croatia)

ULGA – Uganda Local Governments Association

UMT – Union of Municipalities of Turkey

UNCDF – United Nations Capital Development Fund

UNDESA – United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs

UNECA – United Nations Economic Commission for Africa

UNECE – United Nations Economic Commission for Europe

UNESCAP – United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific

UNESCWA – United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia

UNESCO – United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

UNDP – United Nations Development Programme

UNFCCC – United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change

UNGL – *Unión Nacional de Gobiernos Locales* (National Union of Local Governments of Costa Rica)

UN-Habitat – United Nations Human Settlements Programme

UNICEF – United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund

UNMUNDO – *Unión de Mujeres Municipalistas Dominicana* (Union of Municipal Women of the Dominican Republic)

UOM – Union of Municipalities of Montenegro

UVCW – *Union des Villes et des Communes de Wallonie* (Union of Walloon cities and municipalities)

UVICOCI – *Union des Villes et des Communes de Côte d'Ivoire* (Union of Cities and Municipalities of Côte d'Ivoire)

V

VLR – Voluntary Local Review

VNG – *Vereniging van Nederlandse Gemeenten* (Association of Netherlands Municipalities)

VNGi – VNG International, the international cooperation agency of VNG

VNR – Voluntary National Review

VVSG – *Vereniging van Vlaamse Steden en Gemeenten* (Association of Flemish Cities and Towns)

Z

ZMOS – *Združenie miest a obcí Slovenska* (Association of Towns and Communities of Slovakia)

Statement of the organized constituency of local and regional governments gathered at the 2019 High-Level Political Forum

New York, 15 July 2019

Local Acceleration to achieve the global agendas

The Development Agendas that were adopted throughout 2015 and 2016 are ambitious in their scope, and they represent our hopes that we can improve the way in which we live and work to preserve our planet for future generations.

The constituency of local and regional governments (LRGs) share the sense of urgency expressed by the United Nations Secretary General regarding their achievement as well as the sense of responsibility vis a vis the communities we represent.

We believe our current patterns of consumption and production, the way we are using resources and the visible drive against gender equality and women's rights and the growing inequalities make our societies vulnerable and are incompatible with the achievement of the SDGs.

The local and regional movement toward the 'localization' of global agendas is progressively expanding to all the regions. It is a testimony of the strength of our commitments. With the mandate received from our communities, as the level of government closest to the people, we are committed to play a leadership role in the achievement of the 2030 Agenda, and reinforce the synergies with the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, and the Paris Agreement, to transform our world. We are committed to act and accelerate implementation, and we believe that the LRGs associations, as leveraged institutions, are crucial to achieve this.

We are aware that we cannot do it alone. We call on governments and the international institutions to embolden their ambitions and accelerate the pace of the needed transformations. To upscale efforts, we need greater cooperation and the national and international coordination mechanism, as well as enough resources to make this happen.

Local and regional action is already in place to achieve the SDGs:

SDG 4

Local and regional governments are already contributing to quality education through public service provision, creating a learning environment at local level to foster inclusion, human rights and peace values, and working to provide a long-life education cycle in cities and territories. Supporting schools, extra scholar activities, vocational training, arts and culture, and organized civil society to foster local creativity for the achievement of this vital goal that will shape the lives of future generations and of our planet. LRGs are currently mobilizing, articulating and forging partnerships between different local actors in education in their territories, such as academia, civil society organizations, and the private sector, and pushing for innovative initiatives that are both transforming cities and contributing to the Agenda 2030.

SDG 8

Promoting inclusive local economic development and enabling decent work as complementary and mutually reinforcing policies is at the heart of city and territorial development. Cities and metropolitan areas are globally acknowledged as 'engines of growth' but risk becoming engines of precarious work if the appropriate rights-based and inclusive local policies are not in place to promote decent work and opportunities for all. LRGs have a role to strengthen their local economy, invest in local economic development to foster technological innovation, support the green and circular economy, facilitate the sharing and social economy, promote local culture and products, as well as better integration of informal activities and urban-rural partnerships. Local governments as important local employers and procurers of services have a role to play in ensuring social dialogue and enforcement of labour rights.

SDG 10

Inequality within countries has been the growing transversal challenge upsetting social cohesion both across and within cities and territories resulting in higher economic, social and environmental threats. Climate change in particular does not impact territories equally. Based on their responsibilities, local and regional governments are bringing out the message of inclusion and solidarity to reduce

inequalities and increase gender equality through different dimensions, namely through more inclusive urban designs, neighborhood regeneration, better access to basic services, improved mobility, gender integration, safer and greener public spaces, and improved urban-rural cooperation. City networks are particularly active in the protection of human rights, which are inherent to the principle of the 'Right to the city' and to the local responsiveness of local policies to global migration phenomena.

SDG 13

Local and regional governments have been at the forefront of climate action and driving change in global negotiations for over two decades. Our collective mobilization has changed the narrative and represented an important push towards the adoption of the Paris Agreement, our commitment to measurable actions is being consolidated. The means to be pro-active and the benefits of climate action are not equitably distributed. Promotion of circular economy and a zero-emission society will necessitate a global change of consumption and production patterns that go well beyond climate action alone. There is a full ecological transition that needs to be led and owned by the communities if we want it to succeed.

SDG 16

The fundamental contribution of local and regional governments lies in the daily task of ensuring access to quality public services for all, in building transparent and accountable local institutions, in making proactive measures to end violence and discriminatory policies, and to recover trust in public institutions. Promoting peace and coexistence in our communities, reducing inequality in access to justice and local opportunities in all environments, including schools, work, domestic and public spaces, is at the core of local public action. In the past decade, a number of LRGs have explored new ways to co-create and coproduce cities through participatory processes and the implementation of Open Government policies as a way to improving satisfaction and trust in public administration and as a basis for a renewed social contract.

SDG 17

The involvement of local and regional governments in the monitoring and reporting processes of the global agendas' progress is ongoing agendas is increasing, but it is still widely insufficient, as shown by this year's

report released by the GTF on behalf of the constituency.

While local and regional governments are working day in and day out towards the achievement of the goals, there is a clear necessity to transform governance and leadership at all levels to make true progress. We need to strengthen fora for multi-stakeholder engagement and both multi-level governance and the multilateral system must evolve towards a “governing in partnership” model.

Local and regional governments need to be regularly consulted by and where possible associated with national mechanisms created or nominated by national governments, to strengthen the coordination of the implementation strategy at all levels. The involvement of local and regional governments in the monitoring and reporting of the 2030 agenda is still limited and need to be strengthened, with the support of voluntary local reviews that are already being developed by frontrunner cities and regions.

The commitment of LRGs to international cooperation as a leverage policy to achieve the SDGs and to meet the gap between territories needs wider recognition, as well as city-to-city and triangular cooperation.

The way forward

Our commitments:

We are committed to further the agenda on localization and to champion the 2030 Agenda, building on the Seville Commitment to cement a local-global movement that can provide the bold transformative leadership that the SDGs call for, and provide dialogue among different spheres of government to make them a reality.

We strive to foster dialogue with all stakeholders in particular through the Local 2030 initiative, and to mobilize a multi-level coalition around localization, which can accelerate our efforts, while setting enabling national frameworks that empower local actors to develop and lead their own strategies aligned with the SDGs.

We are committed to aligning our strategies with the SDGs and to develop voluntary local reviews that can help assess progress and showcase innovation.

Our hopes:

We are encouraged by the development of the Political Declaration of the SDG Summit, that will be held in September 2019, which

A Local and Regional Governments' Forum, 16 July 2018 at United Nations (photo: UCLG-CGLU/Joel Sheakoski <http://tiny.cc/85na9y>)



highlights the need to bolster local action to accelerate the implementation of the global goals, to mobilize adequate and well-directed financing, and that acknowledges that local action is indispensable and that cities, regions and local governments are essential partners in the transformation of our communities. We welcome both the acknowledgment of localization, as well as the coordinated and coherent support from the UN System to local, regional and national governments that are part of this process.

We look forward to the consolidation of the Local and Regional Governments Forum co-organized by our constituency for the first 2018 HLPF as a critical space for dialogue between LRGs, Member States, and the UN system involved in the definition, implementation and follow-up of this agenda.

We are committed to furthering our work in this space. We are working to ensure that the next iteration of the LRGF in the framework of the SDG Summit becomes a recurrent space for dialogue among local, regional and national governments to ensure no one, and no place, is left behind.

As we are gearing up for the SDG Summit, it is vital to reiterate that local and regional governments are indispensable and integral

to this task. As an organized constituency, and the level of government closest to citizens, LRGs are committed to leave no-one, no place and no territory behind. We call on national governments and the international community to recognise us as partners in transformation and to truly embrace local governance and territorial cohesion in the global effort leave no-one and no place behind. ❖



**———— We
welcome both the
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are undergoing this
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Executive Summary

Background

This Report explores the involvement of Local and Regional Governments (LRGs) in the 'localization' of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Following UN guidelines, it complements the Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs) submitted by **143** countries to the High-Level Political Forum (HLPF) throughout the first four-year cycle of voluntary reporting. It delivers first-hand information from LRGs in 80 different countries, including 24 of the 47 countries reporting in 2019. This Report is the third edition of an annual series, coinciding with the yearly meetings of the HLPF. It also presents an overview of policies and initiatives carried out by LRGs to contribute to the achievement of the SDGs.

In the majority of countries that reported during the first cycle of the HLPF (2016-2019), LRGs have key responsibilities in policy areas that do affect the achievement of all SDGs. LRGs have been pro-active in strengthening their capacity to respond to challenges such as growing territorial inequalities, the impact of climate change, and the need to provide people, taking full advantage of their diversity, education, local economic development, decent work, peace and accountable local institutions. Emphasis is given to the interlinkages between strategies and efforts to strengthen multi-level and collaborative governance frameworks – consistent with 'whole-of-government' and 'whole-of-society' approaches – able to co-create solutions and adapt national strategies to specific local conditions.

Good practices

LRGs are promoting rights-based and place-based initiatives towards 'Empowering people and ensuring inclusiveness and equality'

LRGs promote the principle of leaving no one and no place behind. LRGs have been at the forefront of climate action. At the global scale, more than 9,000 cities from 129 countries made a commitment to take measurable action through the Global Covenant of Mayors for Climate and Energy. Hundreds of LRGs, cities and regions of all sizes pledged to pursue ambitious targets. Being at the first level of public administration, LRGs have a privileged position to foster lifelong learning and education as a means to promote civic engagement (e.g., the Barcelona Provincial Council), gender equality (e.g., North Lombok District) and improve coexistence and social cohesion (e.g., Vienna). LRGs are also key actors when it comes to support and incubate micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (e.g., Ulaanbaatar), and promote green and circular economy. LRGs play a role in building cohesive environments for social and shared economies (e.g., Seoul) and recognizing informal activities (e.g., Solo). An increasing number of LRGs are developing ambitious and responsive policies to foster inclusive local planning and social integration of marginalized neighbourhoods (e.g., Sekondi-Takoradi), tackle discriminatory practices (e.g., Mexico City), mainstream human rights in

local policies (e.g., Pichincha), and foster inter-municipal cooperation for social cohesion (e.g., several Tunisian municipalities). LRGs are building accountable and transparent institutions through participatory budgeting or Open Government policies (e.g., Tshwane), to improve satisfaction and trust in public administration. LRGs are also building up their capacities to prevent urban violence (e.g., Madrid) and promote peace (e.g., Kauswagan).

Voluntary Local Review mechanisms are an innovative and participatory response to the global quest for localized and timely information on the SDGs

A growing number of front-running LRGs are developing their own sustainable development reporting systems to assess progress in the achievement of the SDGs in their territories. The emergence of Voluntary Local Reviews (VLRs) in many regions of the world reflects this local and regional commitment to the Goals. This reporting innovation is not limited to metropolitan spaces: regions (e.g., Basque Country and Oaxaca), departments (e.g., Gironde), as well as cities of all sizes (e.g., Bakırköy, Bristol, Buenos Aires and Santana de Parnaíba) have prepared their voluntary contributions to this global process, with inclusive and participatory approaches. In addition to this, the report highlights bold efforts to produce disaggregated data adapted to local contexts. Local Government Associations (LGAs) in Germany, but also in Brazil, Belgium, and South Africa are developing or coordinating interesting tools for assessing municipal and metropolitan progress in sustainability. Building institutional alliances and partnering with other stakeholders such as civil society, foundations, academia and private sector is equally critical to co-produce local data. All these reviewing mechanisms have also been effective in fostering the alignment of local development plans and budgets with the SDGs.

Lessons learned

LRGs' participation in national mechanisms for coordination, follow-up and reporting at the national level has been limited throughout the first quadrennial cycle

The Report stresses that the involvement of LRGs in the national mechanisms for coordination and the reporting processes has been rather limited throughout the first cycle of the HLPF. The implementation of the SDGs requires strong subnational action to reach cities and territories. In practice, however, only a limited number of reporting countries gave LRGs an active role in the preparation of their VNRs (42%) or in the national mechanisms of coordination (34%). European countries, followed by African and Latin American ones, have been the most inclusive in terms of LRG participation. LRG involvement in these processes is essential to create synergies, join forces and ensure that local stakeholders are mobilized, so as to avoid that no one and no place is 'left behind'. Many countries still have to ensure greater collaboration between levels of government, and a stronger involvement of LRGs in both VNR preparation and institutional coordination. Only well integrated policies across all institutions can align implementation with effective 'whole-of-government' and 'whole-of-society' approaches.

To accelerate the localization process, it is necessary to join forces to generate a leap in LRG mobilization in all regions

This fourth year, global mobilization for the SDGs kept growing. Consistent with previous years, progress was most noticeable in Europe, especially in Northern and Western countries. African respondents to the GTF's survey reported being engaged in a wide range of dissemination, advocacy/training and pilot projects for the alignment of local and regional development plans with the SDGs. Similarly, LGAs in Asia-Pacific have also shown important achievements, such as increased participation of LRGs in new countries and greater involvement in regional mechanism, such as the ASEAN Mayors Forum and UNESCAP Forums. In Latin America, progress has been gradual and driven mainly by regional governments and larger cities. It has steadily expanded to intermediary cities too, albeit more slowly. In Eurasia, while 'localization' is understood as a top-down process, LGAs have been active in enhancing ownership of the global goals. Comparatively, LGAs in MEWA are increasingly putting forward initiatives to support the localization process, despite centralized governance systems and the persistence of severe conflict in the region.

In spite of these positive trends, the involvement of LRGs is still insufficient to accelerate the pace of implementation and meet the global commitments. LRGs and LGAs from all regions of the world continue to face many difficulties and obstacles, including unclear localizing strategies at the national level. The Seville Commitment is an important step forward to enhance partnerships for SDG localization. Report emphasizes that the lack of financial and human resources and limited coordination across different levels of government are among the main factors that hinder the localization of the SDGs.

Adequate financing streams should follow alignment efforts between national and local plans

Effective coordination among levels of government is fundamental for policy coherence and to create the necessary financial stream for sustainable projects in cities and territories. Embedding local plans within national development strategies should be supported by adequate financing to incentivize alignment efforts and ensure the transition to the implementation stage. The assessment of the financial costs associated with implementing the SDGs – or the National Development Plans aligned with them – will be crucial at all levels of government. Multilevel governance coordination, backed with adequate financing support, can be a lever to mobilize even more sources of financing. Ultimately, on a world average, LRGs account for 37% of total public investment. With sufficient autonomy to act on development-related issues, LRGs are potential game-changers in co-creating local innovative solutions and mobilizing resources among their communities and partners. They should be empowered to access responsible borrowing and diverse funds (e.g., climate or green funds). Better coordination will also contribute to raise and combine different investment sources, making public financing more productive, effective and inclusive.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are based on the experiences and lessons learned summarized in our Reports, as well as the recommendations of the 2019 UN Secretary General's Report on Progress towards the SDGs.

- **Support greater participation of LGRs in reporting and follow-up mechanisms.** There is a critical need to revise the strategies of mobilization and the involvement of LRGs in the VNR process. They should be part of national mechanisms for coordination in order to create more traction and ownership of the Goals. LRG participation in reporting and follow-up mechanisms is essential to expand their involvement in the localization process and accelerate implementation in line with agreed deadlines.
- **Make localization of the SDGs an essential part of national strategies.** Significant efforts are being made worldwide by LRGs to embed the SDGs in their policies and local and regional development plans. These efforts should be supported with adequate coordination and collaborative mechanisms, in order to strengthen synergies between national and local plans. They should be backed by incentives and a clear distribution of institutional responsibilities, ensuring effective 'whole-of-government' and 'whole-of-society' approaches.
- **Back localization efforts with adequate means of implementation.** Localization requires that LRGs are provided with resources and capacities commensurate with their responsibilities in the implementation process. Consistent with the Addis Ababa Action Agenda's recommendations, LRGs need to be empowered with adequate legal frameworks, financing resources and operative skills. Municipal funds, banks and innovative financing mechanisms can contribute to diversify local sources of financing and upscale sustainability-related projects.
- **Support bottom-up monitoring process, such as Voluntary Local Reviews, and develop disaggregated data.** Stronger LRG participation in monitoring and reporting on SDG implementation is necessary. Only disaggregated and localized data can support and inform local strategies of sustainable development. The initiatives of LRGs that develop their own reporting systems need to be encouraged. Cross-level collaboration should be enhanced to gather knowledge and resources and ensure that LRGs have access to appropriate and more disaggregated indicators of performance.
- **Boost international cooperation and multi-stakeholder partnerships for SDG localization.** City-to-city exchanges as well as decentralized cooperation and the support of international institutions are essential to promote and improve local practices of localization and promote mutual learning among cities and territories. GTF initiatives and multi-stakeholder alliances, such as the UN Local 2030 Network, are powerful mechanisms that can ensure continued support to the implementation of SDGs at the local and regional level.

1. Introduction

The third report, 'Towards the localization of the SDGs', represents the unique view of Local and Regional Governments (LRGs) worldwide and highlights their role in, and contribution to, achieving the main global development agendas (see box 1.1 for the definition of "Localizing"). It underlines the involvement of LRGs in national and regional processes and summarizes the key local and regional trends observed in the implementation of the SDGs, and particularly those that have been assessed during the last year of the 1st four-year cycle framework, which has focused on 'Empowering people and ensuring inclusiveness and equality'.

Table 1.1 shows the structure of the 159,800 LRGs in the 47 countries reporting in 2019. What are the local contexts and main characteristics of the countries presenting voluntary reports this year?

One characteristic of the countries reporting this year is the heterogeneity of the LRGs in

their different regions. LRGs and/or councils in European and Latin American countries are normally elected and enjoy a certain degree of autonomy. Elsewhere, however, LRGs may evolve in less enabling institutional environments and therefore be less able to promote the localization of the SDGs. For instance, of the 17 African countries reporting this year, only two could be described as having a favourable "institutional environment" for local governments¹ (e.g., South Africa and Tanzania), while five other countries (e.g., Burkina Faso, Ghana, Rwanda, Eswatini and Tunisia) would be categorized as having 'rather favourable' institutional environments. In the other ten countries, LRGs encounter difficulties carrying out their responsibilities and important reforms are needed.² The LRGs in these countries must cope with incomplete decentralization processes and overcome limited capacities and resources, which may undermine their roles in the localization process.

Box 1

The concept of Localization in this report

The 2030 Agenda emphasizes the need for an inclusive and localized approach to the SDGs. It states that 'governments and public institutions will also work closely on implementation with regional and local authorities, sub-regional institutions, international institutions, academia, philanthropic organizations, volunteer groups and others.'

Localization is described as 'the process of defining, implementing and monitoring strategies at the local level for achieving global, national, and sub-national sustainable development goals and targets.' More specifically, it includes the 'process of taking into account sub-national contexts in the achievement of the 2030 Agenda, from the setting of goals and targets, to determining the means of implementation and using indicators to measure and monitor progress'.

This report summarizes the key LRG trends observed during the first four-years cycle of the HLPF.

In Asia-Pacific, a similar assessment has allowed us to classify the 11 countries reporting in 2019. In fact, only four of the countries presenting voluntary reports have what could be described as LRG “enabling environments” (e.g., Indonesia, New Zealand, Philippines, Vanuatu). One (Cambodia) is currently at an “incipient stage of decentralization”, another three (e.g., Fiji, Pakistan, Timor-Leste) need to introduce further reforms, Tonga exhibits its own specific features, and the other two countries (e.g., Nauru, Palau) have no local government system (for more details see below).

In the countries reporting from the Eurasian region, only Azerbaijan has LRGs with a certain degree of autonomy and with elected officials at the municipal level. In Mongolia, councils (Khurals) are elected, but local executive bodies are appointed. In Kazakhstan, local self-government was only introduced in 2018. At present, there is no elected local government system in Turkmenistan.³

In the Middle East and West Asian region (MEWA), LRGs are only recognised in Israel and Turkey. Elsewhere, in Iraq, only the Kurdistan region benefits from some level of autonomy, while most other heads of LRGs (governorates or municipalities) are appointed (though there are some cases of local elected councils).⁴ Likewise, in the Sultanate of Oman, and in Kuwait, local councils are elected and the heads of LRGs are appointed, although their powers are limited.⁵

It is also important to highlight the situation of local governments in UN Member Small Island Developing States. In total, nine of these countries have reported since 2016 and nine will be reporting during the current edition of the HLPF; six of these belong to the Asia-Pacific

region. Their institutional organization tends to be diverse and fragmented. For instance, in Vanuatu there are three urban councils, and six provincial councils for rural areas with local elected authorities. In Timor-Leste, there are 12 municipalities/districts (and one special administrative region) and 442 villages (with elected *suco* councils). In Tonga, there is no ‘system of organised local government’, but 23-district and 155-town officials are elected by popular vote and report directly to the Prime Minister’s Office. The 14 regions of Nauru are each headed by appointed government representatives. Finally, traditional chiefdoms remain important components of local governance in countries like Fiji and Palau. In Fiji, traditional leaders head the 14 provincial councils elected by the indigenous Itukei people, while local administrations have been appointed since the military coup in 2006. The 16 states of Palau each have their own local governments, which include local legislators, governors, traditional chiefdoms, elders and clans, in accordance with their respective Constitutions. In Africa, Mauritius is divided into five elected municipal councils forming a conurbation. The seven remaining districts are rural and composed of elected village councils. In the Caribbean, Guyana and Santa Lucia are both divided in ten administrative regions. In Guyana, there are elected municipal and neighbourhood councils (first elections since 1994 were held in 2016) and Amerindian village councils. In Saint Lucia, there are 15 constituency councils which members are appointed by the Minister in charge of local government.

All considered, even when LRGs are acknowledged, their institutional contexts are not always conducive enough for them

¹ UCLG Africa and Cities Alliance (2018), *Assessing the Institutional Environment of Local Governments in Africa*. The report sets 12 criteria for assessing local government enabling environments across this region. These correspond to: the constitutional (1) and legal (2) framework, local democracy (3) and governance, financial transfers (4) and own revenues (5), local capacity (6), transparency (7) and civic participation (8), local government performance (9), urban strategy (10), gender equality (11) and climate change (12).

² The ten countries are: Algeria, Cameroon, Chad, Ivory Coast, Lesotho, Mauritania, Mauritius, Sierra Leone, Central Africa Republic and Republic of Congo. In the last two of these countries, local governments face a negative institutional environment.

³ Turkmenistan is divided into 5 provinces, 50 districts, 24 towns, 76 villages and 553 rural councils. All the heads of its administrative divisions are appointed and depend on the higher level of government.

⁴ In Iraq, the Constitution recognizes 18 governorates, three of which are subsequently associated to form the Kurdistan Regional Government; 69 cities (Baladiyah) with more than 10,000 inhabitants and 120 Districts (Qadaa) have elected local councils, but the executive is appointed and depends on the governorates.

⁵ Kuwait has sub-national authorities (6 governorates), which have some executive powers and the Kuwait Municipality now has decision-making power. Since 2011, Oman has been divided into 11 governorates headed by appointed governors. It held its first municipal elections in 2012 (61 wilayas).



A wordcloud collecting the key wording on localization, institutional organization, implementation mechanisms and arrangements, as used in the VNRs submitted by member states to the HLPF and the Survey UCLG received from its membership and network.

In this report, local stories show that LRGs can simultaneously become policy-makers, implementers and investors.

to play very significant roles in localizing the SDGs. In some countries, local democracy and accountability have been hindered by the long-term postponement of local elections (e.g., Fiji, Guyana, Saint Lucia) or a lack of Constitutional provision for them (e.g., Central African Republic).⁶ In other countries, local councils are elected and local executives appointed (e.g., Cambodia, Ghana, Mongolia, Pakistan, Timor-Leste). There are also countries where LRGs are only elected in some parts of the national territory (e.g., Chad,⁷ Eswatini,⁸ Republic of Congo⁹).

In summary, in 37 of the countries reporting this year, LRGs have some degree of autonomy recognized by law, although often with many constraints. Comparatively speaking for this edition of the HLPF, institutional environments of LRGs are mostly enabling in Europe (in 6 out of 6 reporting countries) and Latin America and the Caribbean (in 3 out of 4 cases). This occurs to a lesser degree in Africa (in 15 out of 17 reporting countries), Asia Pacific (in 7 out of 11 cases), Eurasia (in 3 out of 4 cases) and the MEWA region (in 3 out of 5 cases).

Looking beyond the countries reporting this year, this report also analyses initiatives that have been propelled by LRGs in other countries. Local stories show that, when adequately empowered, LRGs can simultaneously become policy-makers, implementers and investors. They can facilitate and catalyse sustainable development, linking the global, national, regional and local levels, and engaging communities as drivers of bottom-up change in their territories.

This report follows the guidelines proposed by the UN for the preparation of Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs) by countries. Section 2 presents the methodology used for this report. Section 3 analyses the ownership and involvement of LRGs in the SDG process. Section 4 presents a sample of policies and innovations implemented by cities and territories to contribute to the achievement of the SDGs reviewed this year. In the last two sections, the report presents a synthesis of the main considerations of LRGs regarding means of SDG implementation (Section 5) and finally draws conclusions and proposes next steps for the future (Section 6). ❖

⁶ Based on the 2016 Constitution, the Central African Republic is divided into 7 regions and 174 municipalities. No local elections have been held in the last 30 years. The municipal authorities are appointed by the Central Government.

⁷ Elections were held in 2012, but only in 42 municipalities. Elections in other municipalities should take place in 2019.

⁸ In Eswatini, 12 urban municipalities are acknowledged by the Constitution as decentralized entities, while the 55 rural municipalities all have very limited autonomy.

⁹ The most recent local elections were held in July 2017. The decentralization process does not extend to rural areas.

Table 1

Local government and local administrations in the 47 countries that reported to the HLPF in 2019

	TYPE OF STATE	REGIONAL-STATE LEVEL	INTERMEDIATE LEVEL	MUNICIPAL LEVEL	TOTAL LRGS		TYPE OF STATE	REGIONAL-STATE LEVEL	INTERMEDIATE LEVEL	MUNICIPAL LEVEL	TOTAL LRGS
AFRICA (17)						EURASIA (4)					
Algeria ¹⁰	U	48		1,541	1,589	Azerbaijan	U	1		1,607	1,608
Burkina Faso	U	13		351	364	Kazakhstan	U	16	215	6,938	7,169
Cameroon	U	10		360	370	Mongolia	U	22	339	1,720	2,081
Central African Rep.	U	7		174	181	Turkmenistan	U	(5)	(50)	(653)	(753)
Chad	U	23	107	377	507	EUROPE (6)					
Congo (Rep. of)	U	12		6	18	Bosnia and Herzegovina	F	3	10	141	154
Côte d'Ivoire	U	33		201	234	Croatia	U	21		556	577
Eswatini	M	68			68	Iceland	U			74	74
Ghana	U			254	254	Liechtenstein	M			11	11
Lesotho	U			86	86	Serbia	U	2		174	176
Mauritania	U	15		218	233	United Kingdom	M	3	27	389	419
Mauritius	U	1	12	130	143	LATIN AMERICA (3)					
Rwanda	U	30			30	Chile	U	16		345	361
Sierra Leone	U			22	22	Guatemala	U	340			340
South Africa	U	9		278	287	Guyana	U		6	65	71
Tunisia	U	24		264	288	MEWA (5)					
Tanzania	U			169	169	Iraq	F	18		189	207
ASIA-PACIFIC (11)						Israel	U			255	255
Cambodia	M	25	185	1,646	1,856	Kuwait	M	(6)			(6)
Fiji	U			27	27	Oman	M	(11)			(11)
Indonesia	U	34	514	83,344	83,892	Turkey ¹¹	U	81		1,397	1,478
Nauru	U	(14)			(14)	NORAM-CARIBBEAN (1)					
New Zealand	M	11		67	78	Saint Lucia	M			15	15
Pakistan	F	7	129	10,200	10,339						
Palau	U	(16)			(16)						
The Philippines	U	82	1,634	42,045	43,761						
Timor-Leste	M			13	13						
Tonga	M	(23)		(155)	(178)						
Vanuatu	U			9	9						

Notes: U: Unitary country; F: Federal country; M: Monarchy. Between brackets, local administration not recognized as local self-government.

Sources: information obtained from local government associations and particularly from CEMR's database for European countries; OECD/UCLG (2019) World Observatory on Subnational Government Finance and Investment; CLGF Country profiles, particularly Small Island Developing States; UCLGA and Cities Alliance (2018), Assessing the Institutional Environment of Local Governments in Africa; UCLG ASPAC and Cities Alliance (2018), City Enabling Environment Rating: Assessment of the Countries in Asia and the Pacific; OECD (2018) Subnational Government in OECD Countries; National Statistical Offices and the National Government and Local Government Portals of the different countries; and local press and online media sources.

¹⁰ In Algeria, the 48 wilayas (regional level) are both deconcentrated (the executive organ is appointed) and decentralized (they have an elected council).

¹¹ In Turkey, metropolitan municipalities are counted twice: as municipal-level entities and as regional entities.

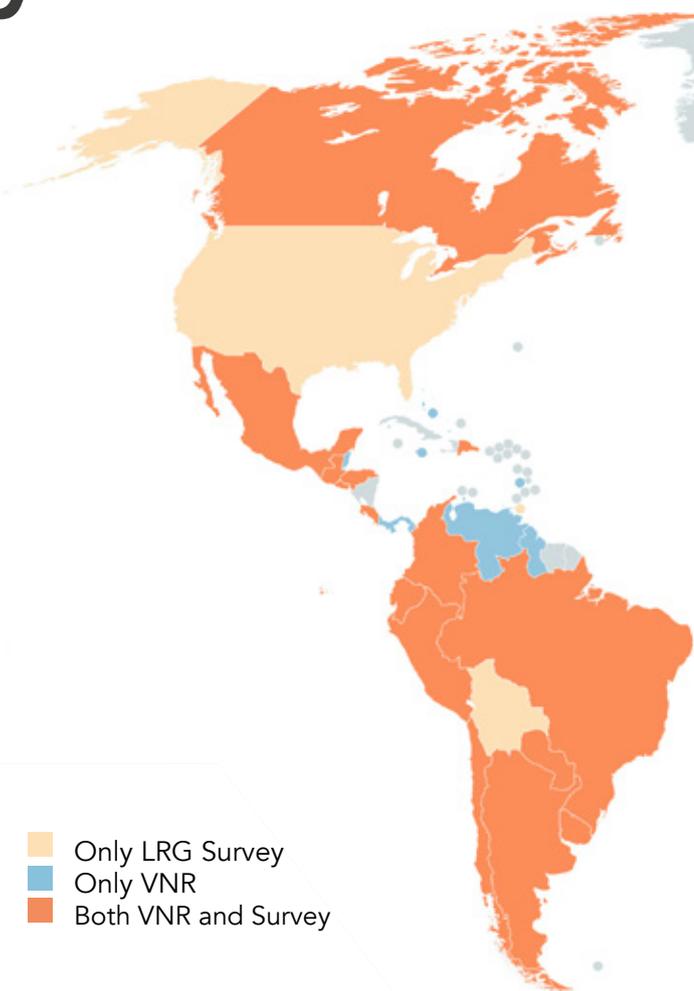
2. Methodology

This third edition of the local and regional governments' report to the HLPF comes in the final year of the first assessment cycle performed by the United Nations and corresponds to the period 2015-2019. It implies that a first 'world map' of countries actively participating in this process, via their respective Voluntary National Reviews, is now available, as is a first comprehensive overview of progress towards the localization of all the SDGs. All three editions of the Towards the Localization of the SDGs reports have now been combined. They bring together and analyse information on the 143 countries which have submitted VNRs and responded to the Surveys. The surveys were distributed to UCLG members and networks and to the Global Taskforce and related to 80 different countries.

This year's main report is based on three core sources: an analysis of the replies to the Survey on the Localization of the SDGs, which was circulated from March to May 2019; a study of the Voluntary National Reviews received and published by the HLPF (until June 28, 2019); and the contributions of international experts and institutional partners who have worked on the specific SDGs assessed at the 2019 HLPF, which were SDGs 4, 8, 10, 13 and 16.

For the 2019 edition, the Survey was further refined, building on feedback and outcomes relating to the questionnaire circulated the previous year. The Survey explored three main dimensions: awareness of the SDGs and of the global agendas, the national context for SDG implementation, and the initiatives put into place by LRGs and their respective associations. Working in collaboration with the UCLG's European section, CEMR-CCRE,¹² and PLATFORMA,¹³ a fourth dimension was added to the version of the questionnaire distributed to European members; this examined the translation of political commitment into practical action. The main Survey included 19 questions (with the European version containing 24). It combined both multiple-choice and open questions. There were also several 'narrative boxes' in which respondents were invited to share more details of their practices and expectations.

For the first time, the 2019 Survey was also fully available in an online version. This proved extremely valuable and helped to broaden the



response: 101 replies out of the total 180 replies received (56%) were compiled online. Both the (downloadable) paper and online versions were available in UCLG's three official languages: English, French and Spanish.

As usual, an analysis of these responses will help us to improve future surveys, an approach that will continue to be used henceforth. Figure 1.1 represents the countries that have presented VNRs and where LRGs answered the survey between 2016-2019. Explanation of the map: In dark-orange: countries that have presented VNRs and whose LRGs have answered the survey; In blue: countries that have presented VNRs but whose LRGs have not answered the survey; In light-orange: countries that have not yet presented VNRs but whose LRGs have answered the survey; In grey: countries that have not presented VNRs or answered the survey.

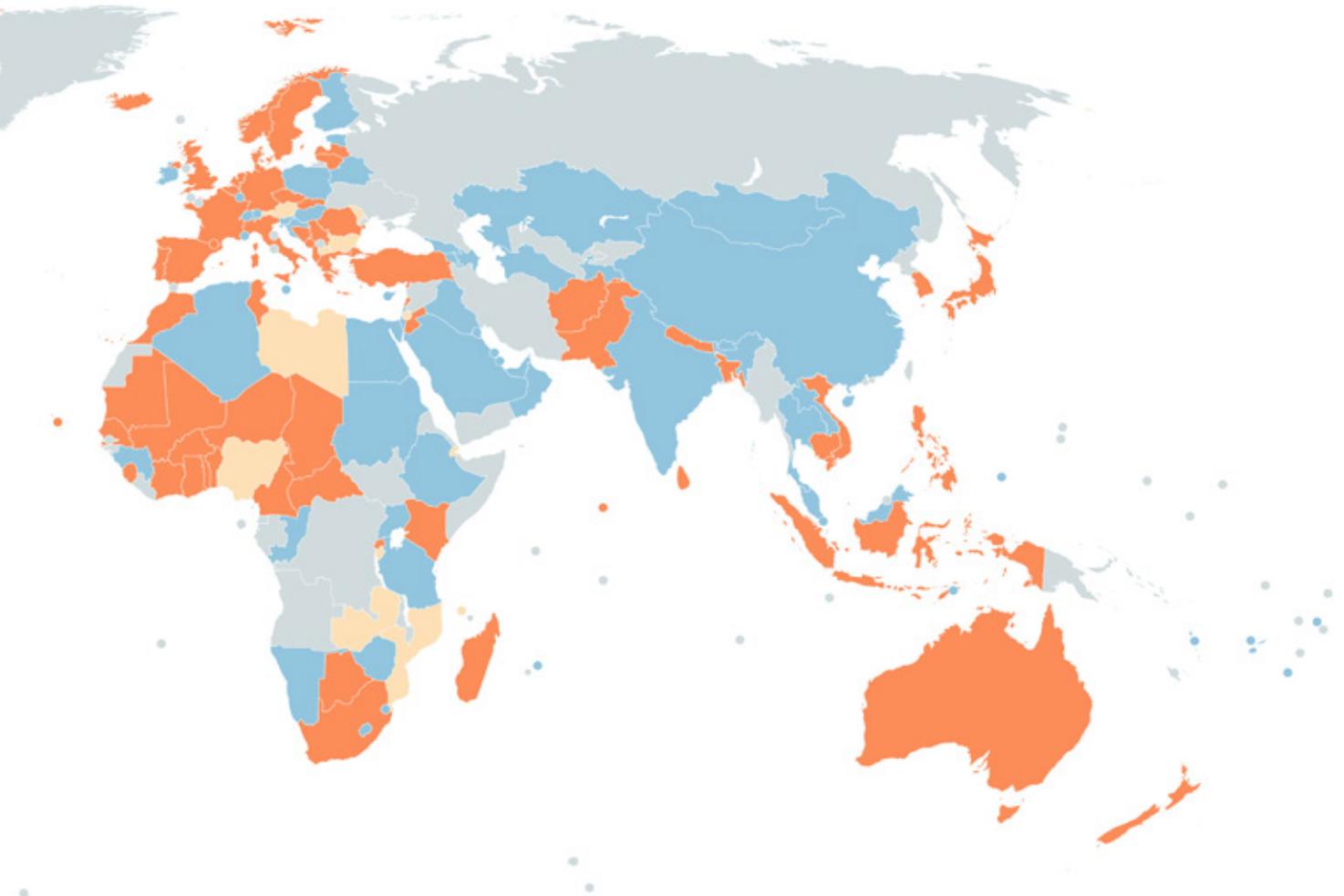
The 2019 Survey finally received a total 180 replies from 80 countries. Of these, 150 (86%), from 71 different countries, were submitted either by local governments themselves (87),

¹² More information on the activities of the Council of European Municipalities and Regions (CEMR-CCRE) is available on their website: <https://www.ccre.org/>.

¹³ PLATFORMA is a pan-European coalition of 30 local and regional governments and includes the associations that represent them at the national, European and global levels. More information is available on their website: <http://platforma-dev.eu/>.

Countries that submitted VNR to the HLPF and answered to GTF Survey (2016-2019)

Figure 1



or by national/regional associations of local government associations (63). The remaining responses show the growing interest of civic organizations, public institutions (at all levels of governance) and academic institutions in the process of localization and also the progress made in monitoring their respective territories and contexts. UCLG received replies to the Survey from 24 of the 47 countries that will be submitting VNRs to the HLPF in 2019.

The map of the countries and entities that submitted a VNR to the HLPF (national input) and which have shared answers and practices from a bottom up perspective (local input) is particularly interesting and encouraging (Figure 1.1). While the Survey sample is certainly too small to draw any universal – or even very generalized – conclusions, this is a valuable source of information about the participation, involvement and growing awareness of UCLG members and network partners. An analysis of 39 VNRs (submitted until June 28, 2019) was performed to compare and contrast the

information submitted by LRGs and national associations.

Finally, expert contributions have been drafted according to the terms of reference jointly validated by the different members and partners. In 2019, the preparation of the HLPF report has coincided with the final stages of UCLG's flagship publication: the triennial Global Report on Local Democracy and Decentralization (GOLD Report). The GOLD V report will be presented in November 2019 at UCLG's 6th World Congress, which will be held in Durban, South Africa. Much of the information provided in this report has been checked for detail and precision against the much larger body of research and analysis collected for the GOLD Report. ❖

3. The institutional framework for SDG localization



This section analyses the involvement of LRGs in SDG Localization at various different levels: firstly, in the preparation of the VNRs presented this year (section 3.1); secondly, in national coordination mechanisms and strategies designed to align national and local plans (section 3.2); thirdly, in actions prompted by LRGs, in the countries reporting this year, to make progress in the pursuit of SDGs at the subnational level (section 3.3); and, lastly, up-dating the mapping exercise of the 2018 report of LRG initiatives in each particular region (section 3.4).

3.1 Participation of local and regional governments in the preparation of the VNRs

Since 2016, 158 VNRs from 143 different countries have been presented to the HLPF; 14 countries have presented their VNR twice, and one country has presented its VNR three times. This confirms the tremendous commitment of the international community. Table 2 shows the participation of LRGs in the VNR process over the past 4 years. Compared to previous years, the participation of LRGs in the preparation of the VNR for 2019 showed only limited progress. In 2019, LRG involvement was clearly observed in 18 countries (38% of those reporting this year). The declining trend between 2018 and 2019 reflects the large number of countries reporting this

year whose institutional environments do not promote LRG action.

The reporting process began in 2016. Since then, the rate of LRG participation has reached 42%: in 66 of 143 countries. This should be given attention by Members States and international institutions, as well as by local leaders. The evolution of LRG participation in the reporting process could not, however, be viewed as a positive indicator if - as noted by the UN Secretary General, in 2015, and more recently by the UN Deputy Secretary General - "the battle for sustainability will be won or lost in cities" and the majority of the SDGs can only be achieved at the local level.

Table 2

LRG participation in the preparation of the VNRs 2016-2019¹

	2016		2017		2018		2019		TOTAL	
Total countries (per year)	22	100%	43	100%	46	100%	47	100%	158	100%
Consulted	10	45%	17	40%	21	46%	18	38%	66	42%
Weak consultation	6	27%	10	23%	7	15%	11	23%	34	22%
Not consulted	6	27%	14	33%	13	28%	9	19%	42	27%
No local government organizations²			2	5%	4	9%	5	11%	11	7%
No information³					1	2%	4	9%	5	3%

Source: VNRs and Surveys answered by LRGs. In total, 143 countries reported between 2016 and 2019. The total number of countries in the table (158) includes some that reported twice (14 countries), or three times (1 country: Togo). The number of countries that repeated (by year) was: 1 in 2017, 7 in 2018 and 7 in 2019.

¹ This table includes revised data for previous years based on information available up to June 28, 2019. Explanation of the categories: 1) Consulted: LRGs, either through their representative LGAs or a representative delegation of elected officers, were invited to participate in the consultation at the national and regional levels (conferences, surveys, meetings); 2) Weak consultation: only isolated representatives, but no LGAs or representative delegations participated in the meetings, or the LGAs were invited to a presentation of the VNR (when it was finalized); 3) Not consulted: no invitation or involvement in the consultation process was issued, even though the LGAs were informed of the need to prepare VNRs.

² No local self-government organizations: Bahrain, Kuwait, Monaco, Nauru, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Singapore, United Arab Emirates, Tonga, Turkmenistan

³ The VNR that were not published until June 28th, 2019: Cameroon, Croatia, Eswatini, Guatemala, Guyana, Lesotho, Nauru, Turkey. But for Cameroon, Croatia, Guatemala, Turkey we received the answer to the GTF Survey 2019. Those for which there was insufficient information about the LRGs: Bahamas (2018), Lichtenstein.

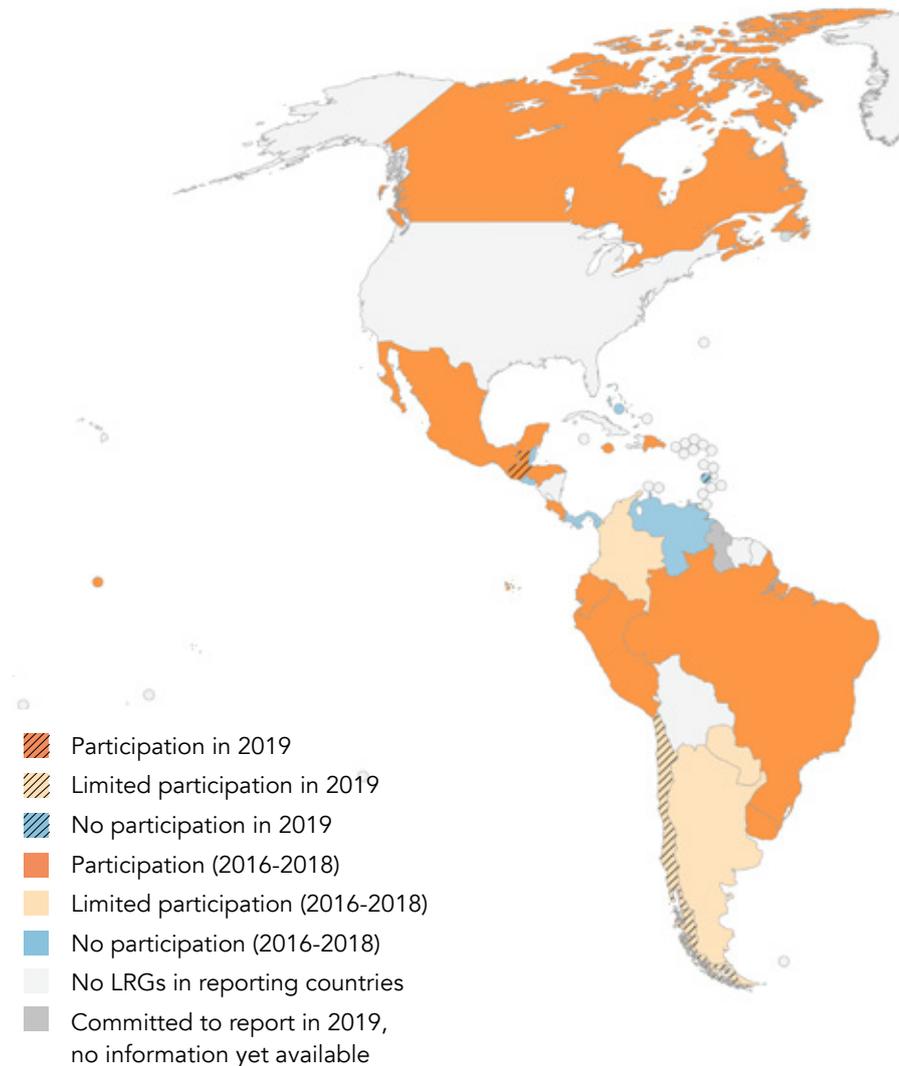
In 34 of the countries (22%), the level of participation by LRGs was 'weak', meaning that LRG involvement was limited in number and time and did not mobilize the LGAs in the country. In 42 countries (27%) there was not clear information about LRG participation at all.

As can be observed from the map (figure 2), the countries in Europe (61%, or 23 of the 38 reporting) were the most inclusive, in terms of LRG participation. This region was followed by Africa and Latin America (each with 50%: 19 of the 35 reporting countries, in Africa, and 11 of the 22, in Latin America). In North America and the Caribbean, 2 out of 4 countries consulted LRGs. In Asia-Pacific, the LRGs of 10 countries (out of 30) participated (33%). In the MEWA region, 4 countries showed only a 'weak level of participation', as opposed to 3 others where LRGs did not participate at all. This needs to be considered alongside the fact that in many MEWA countries (6 countries: 43% of the total), there are no local-level self-governments. Finally, amongst the Eurasian countries, there was no clear participation of LRGs in the preparation of the VNRs (63%).

In this analysis, it is striking to note that LRGs were mentioned as institutional actors in 72% of the VNRs presented in 2019. LRGs were said to play different roles in policy making and delivering services, ensuring disaster risk prevention, contributing to sustainable cities and social inclusion, etc. In some VNRs, 'LRGs' were mentioned more than one hundred times, (e.g. Iceland, Indonesia, Israel, Pakistan, Serbia, and the United Kingdom).¹ Some VNRs dedicated specific sections or spaces to explaining the role of LRGs (e.g., Iceland, Serbia, Turkey and the United Kingdom), or to presenting the specific commitments of these LRGs (e.g. Pakistan's VNR was introduced using the Declaration of Elected Local Government Representatives of March 2017; Israel included in its annex, a contribution of Israel Major Cities to SDG 11; and New Zealand gave space to the Local Government Leaders' Climate Change Declaration).

The majority of countries detailed progress made towards achieving the 17 SDGs and made reference to policies and initiatives that need strong subnational institutional action (only 5 exclusively reported on the thematic goals for 2019). These actions all fall under the responsibility of LRGs, but only a few of the countries gave LRGs an active role in the preparation of their reports. How could this gap be explained?

The majority of the VNRs highlight the inclusive consultative process, whereas some

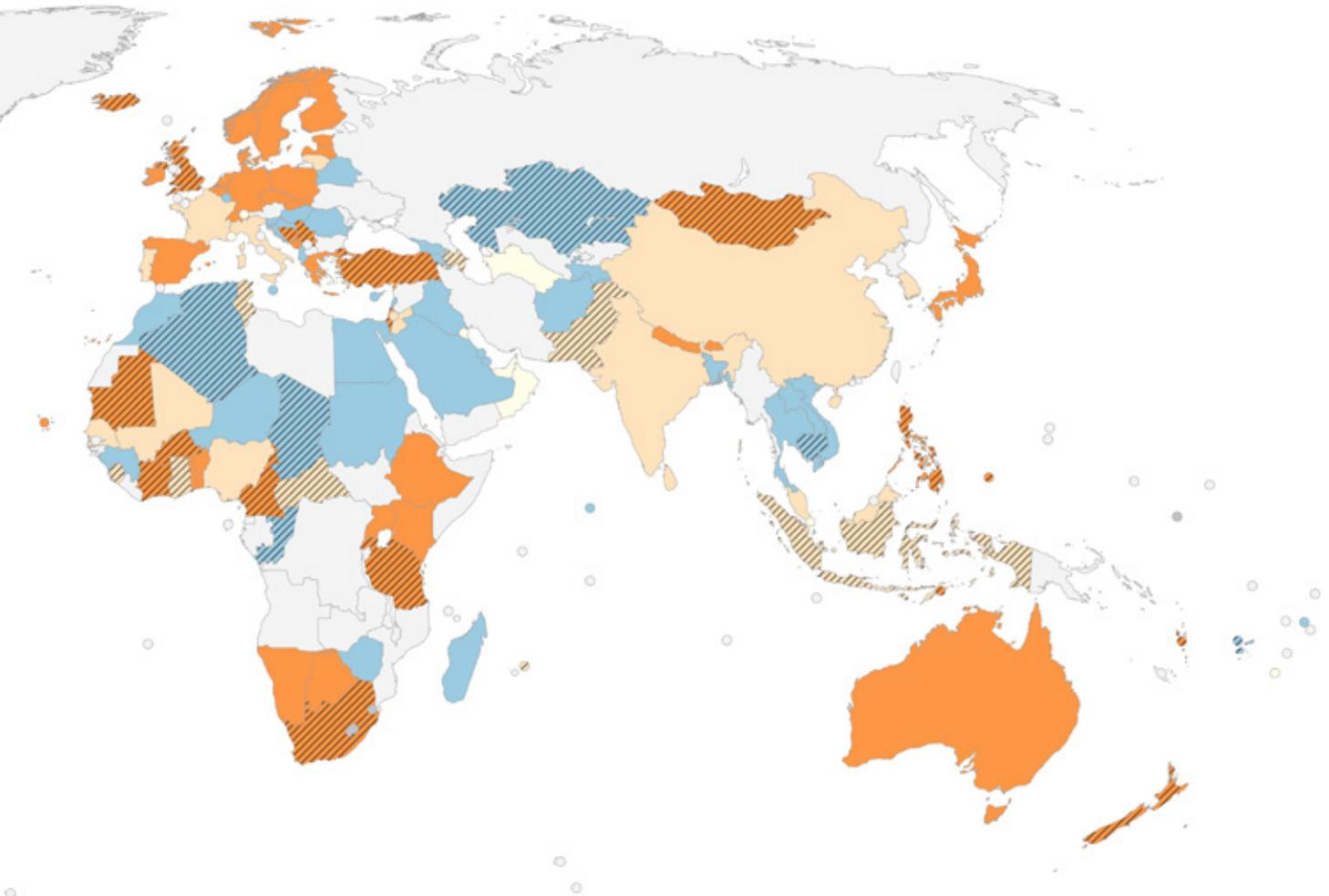


afford a lot of detail to the scope, length and quality of the consultation process. In some countries, the outreach efforts have been very important. Media campaigning via radio, press, public campaigns or awareness raising in schools is mentioned in several cases such as in Ghana. The mobilization of stakeholders has also been very important in some cases, extending to almost all levels of government, agencies, parliaments, political parties, traditional authorities, the private sector, academia, CSOs, NGOs, communities, international partners and agencies. Some VNRs also report specific efforts to include vulnerable groups. Different methodologies have been implemented to ensure data collection and participation: guiding documents for self-assessment, working groups, workshops, training sessions, focus groups, questionnaires, interviews, webs and portals.

¹ In the VNRs of at least two countries (Saint Lucia and Kuwait) LRGs were not mentioned at all.

Involvement of LRGs in VNR process

Figure 2



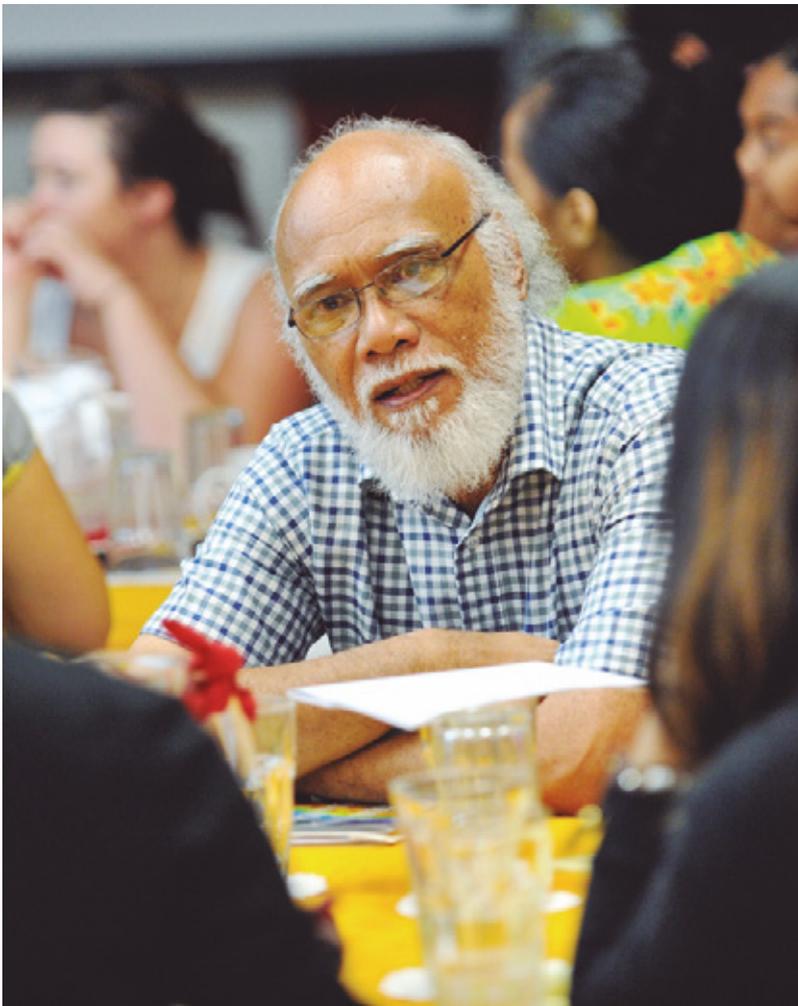
When included, LGAs have been particularly active in the collection of information and cases to illustrate reports (e.g. **Iceland, Israel, Serbia, New Zealand, Tunisia, and the United Kingdom**). LGAs have contributed to both debates (e.g. **Côte d'Ivoire, Mauritius and South Africa**) and preparatory work (e.g. contributing to the drafting process in **Turkey**). LGAs have also supported mapping exercises carried out using Rapid Integrated Assessment tools (RIA) to identify local priorities. This is the case of **Bosnia and Herzegovina** and in many countries in Africa, for example. In countries such as **Guatemala**, LGAs contributed to the completion of our surveys. In some cases, LGAs have promoted the participation of LRGs in regional and/or provincial workshops (e.g. **Burkina Faso, Ghana, Indonesia, Mauritania, Pakistan, Philippines, Tanzania, and Timor-Leste**).

Examples show very diverse stakeholder involvement. In **South Africa**, for example, the process began in November 2018 and passed through several stages of consultation. Between January and March 2019, various consultative platforms were created to validate each of the 17 goal reports. From March to June, the Zero Draft was validated through consultation with various stakeholders. LRGs were also involved in government consultations in March 2019. In **Mongolia**, the government established platforms for participation, including LRG representatives in national dialogue, to address regional concerns and inequalities and to exchange ideas between different sub-national entities. Local officers also participated in multisector consultations and training sessions addressed to all sectors (public, private, civil society, and academia). According to the VNR of **Côte d'Ivoire**, the LGAs as well

as civil society were involved since January 2019 in the early stage of the preparation and in collecting information in the different regions. The LGA reports they are satisfied with their level of involvement.

In **Indonesia**, the process has been driven from the centre. Although there has been an important effort to create ownership, the consultative process for the VNR has been limited to the members of the National Coordination Team of SDGs Implementation (NCTSI), which is a high-level multi-stakeholder mechanism. There is, however, no LRG representation at such a level.² In **Pakistan**, the VNR has been guided by the federal Ministry of Planning, Development and Reform (MoPDR) in collaboration with its counterparts at the provincial level (the Provincial Planning and Development Departments). While the involvement of provincial authorities has been attested, local authorities (districts and towns) have only been included to a rather limited extent.

² The VNR of Indonesia 2019.



In the **United Kingdom**, there was an initial call for contributions, but the consultation process itself has been more limited. The Department of International Development, which is in charge of VNR drafting, organized sectoral sessions throughout March 2019. 'Local delivery' sessions aimed at involving LRGs were also held in Leeds, on March 15, and Bristol, on March 18. According to the answers provided in the GTF Survey by participating LRGs, "the two events were outreach activities rather than bilateral discussions".

Other countries have devoted even less space to consultation. In the **Republic of Congo** stakeholders – from the private sector, academia and civil society – were only invited to one workshop in May, prior to the final validation of the VNR. Likewise, in the **Central African Republic** where a representative from the Municipality of Bangui reports its participation.

In many cases, there is no clear information about the involvement of LRGs in the process, but some LGAs have mentioned some degree of involvement (e.g. **Cameroon** and **Rwanda**). It should also be noted that in some countries there has been participation in the production of the VNR reports, but this has not been confirmed by the answers that LRGs gave to the GTF Survey (e.g. **Chile**, and **Sierra Leone**). Finally, there is a group of countries for which either there was no clear information available with which to assess LRG participation in the preparation of the VNRs (e.g. **Algeria, Chad, Republic of Congo, Iraq** and **Kazakhstan**), there were no autonomous local government organizations to ask about (**Nauru, Tonga, Turkmenistan** and the **Gulf states**), or where no LRGs have been elected in recent years (e.g. **Fiji** and **Santa Lucia**).

The analysis of the VNRs and of the LRGs' own sources show that the modalities and methodologies need to be revised to ensure that, in future, LRGs will be more involved in the VNR process. Bridging this gap should be a priority, particularly given that the use of disaggregated indicators and collection of data at the local level are still lagging behind in almost all regions of the world. There is a clear risk of a lack of monitoring at the subnational level of implementation. In other words, transformative action should take place where people live, work and play, and reporting should involve the government level which is closest to this level, in order to make sure that no one and no territory is 'left behind'. ❖

Tonga MP Hon. Sitiveni Halapua joins a roundtable discussion with the delegates at the Future Leaders of the Pacific Conference (photo: US Embassy to New Zealand, <https://bit.ly/2LxxULZ>).

3.2

Local and regional governments and the institutional frameworks for coordination and following up on the SDGs

The 2019 VNRs confirm the important efforts made by Member States to integrate the SDGs into their national development strategies and policies. Examples of this include: national long-term visions, such as **Chad** – ‘Vision 2030 le Tchad que nous voulons’ or ‘**Mongolia** Sustainable Development Vision 2030’ and national medium-term plans, such as **Burkina Faso**’s National Economic and Social Development Plan (PNDES) 2016-2020 or **Cambodia**’s National Strategic Development Plan 2019-2023. The example of **Indonesia** stands out in terms of coherence between the long-term national development plan (RPJPN 2005-2025); the mid-term plan (RPJMN 2015-2019), and the annual ‘short-term’ plans (RKP).

Sub-Saharan African Countries have aligned the SDGs with their national development strategies, but also with the African Union Agenda 2063 and other sub-regional agendas. The latter includes examples from **South Africa** (*the Southern African Development Community and Regional Indicative Strategic Development Plan*); **Rwanda** (*East African Community Vision 2050*), and **Mauritius** (SIDS Accelerated Modalities of Action – the SAMOA Pathway). Furthermore, Small Island Developing Countries in the Pacific, like **Vanuatu**, have made reference to the Pacific Roadmap for Sustainable Development.

Several countries have also made progress in integrating the SDGs into their policies. **Iceland**, for example, has included the SDGs within their social, economic and environmental policies. **New Zealand** has adopted A *Living Standards Framework* (LSF), with 12 domains that can be linked to the SDGs. This includes a dashboard and a database, with indicators, to support policy development and help improve intergenerational wellbeing. Some other countries (including

Azerbaijan, Chile, **Bosnia and Herzegovina**) are still in the process of defining their national strategies and SDG Frameworks. Finally, some reporting countries have made no mention of a ‘unified’ national strategy for sustainable development, but instead refer to different sectorial strategies (e.g. **Israel**).

Many countries began their alignment processes in 2015-2016, following the adoption of the 2030 agenda (e.g. Indonesia and the Philippines in 2015; Burkina Faso, Cote d’Ivoire, Rwanda, and Pakistan, in 2016). Others have started the alignment process, but with a certain time-lag (e.g. Chad in 2017, and the Republic of Congo in 2018). In aligning the SDGs with national development strategies, many countries in Africa, Asia and Eurasia benefited from the support of UN agencies and, in particular, the MAP-RIA methodology. The countries reporting in 2019 have highlighted the critical contribution of the methodology in providing gap analysis and identifying trade-offs when prioritizing goals, targets and assessment indicators.

Taking into consideration the closely webbed connections between national development strategies and the SDGs in many countries, the 2019 reports have confirmed a tendency observed in previous years: governments have created or assigned responsibilities for the coordination and follow-up of the SDGs to cross-sectoral or inter-ministerial mechanisms, most of which reside at the centre of government. Examples of this include inter-ministerial committees under the aegis of the President or Prime Minister. This has been the case in 15 countries (e.g., Tanzania Steering Committee, which operates within the Prime Minister’s office, or the Iceland’s Inter-ministerial working groups for the SDGs). Alternatively, the initiatives may

be led by important Ministries, as in the case of the Ministry of Planning and/or Finance, or the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. This has occurred in 12 countries (e.g. the Inter-ministerial Committee, chaired by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, of Algeria, or by a minister without portfolio, as in Serbia). Many of these, such as national commissions or high-level councils to implement and facilitate the coordination and follow-up of the 2030 Agenda, are relatively new structures (e.g. National Council for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda of Chile). Alternatively, they may involve the adaptation of previous structures, as with the National Council for Evaluation in the **Republic of Congo**. In several cases, these mechanisms are supported by multi-stakeholder representation and/or by complementary multi-stakeholder committees with an advisory role (e.g., Rwanda's SDG Taskforce, Côte d'Ivoire's National Steering Committee, Timor-Leste's SDG Working Group, and Mauritius's SDG Steering Committee).

Alternatively, the coordination relies directly on the existing planning system which must be enhanced or reformed to ensure the follow-up of both the plan and the SDGs with adapted targets and indicators (e.g. the National Economic Council, in Pakistan; the Steering Committee for the National Development Plan, in Burkina Faso; the coordination of the National Development Plan, in Vanuatu; and the High Level Ministerial

Committee, in Ghana). Less often, coordination is ensured by a single office. In the **United Kingdom**, this is done by the Department for International Development (DFID), which works closely with the Cabinet Office and takes into consideration the different levels of delivery, which include the regional governments of Scotland, Wales and Northern Island. It can also be looked after by special adviser. This is the case in Israel, where there is a Special Envoy for Sustainability and Climate Change, supported by the Director General for Strategy, at the Ministry of Environmental Protection). In some other countries, such mechanisms have yet to be clearly defined (e.g. New Zealand).

These national coordination mechanisms should serve as the pillars on which policy coherence must be built.

The 2030 Agenda makes a clear call for an integrated and territorial approach. However, as shown in the following Table 3, participation, and the consultative role of LRGs in these mechanisms is far from satisfactory. Globally speaking, LRGs participate in national coordination mechanisms in 34% of the countries that reported to the HLPF between 2016 and 2019 (ranging from full participation to advisory roles). In many countries (43%), LRGs are still not involved at all, while in other 15%, participation is 'weak'. The remaining 8% are countries without local self-governments.

Table 3

Participation of LRGs in the National Coordination Mechanisms for the implementation of the SDGs

	PARTICIPATION/ CONSULTATION		WEAK CONSULTATION		NO INVOLVEMENT		NO LRGs		TOTAL
Total number of countries	49	34%	22	15%	61	43%	11	8%	143
Africa	13	36%	6	17%	17	47%			36
Asia-Pacific	7	25%	3	11%	15	54%	3	11%	28
Europe	20	50%	6	15%	13	33%	1	3%	40
Eurasia	1	14%	1	14%	4	57%	1	14%	7
Latin America	6	35%	6	35%	5	29%			17
MEWA	1	8%			5	42%	6	50%	12
North America and Caribbean	1	33%			2	67%			3

Sources: VNRs and GTF Surveys 2016-2019. **Note:** The total number of countries (143) shown in Table 3 includes all those that have reported to the HLPF since 2016. It must be remembered that 16 of these countries have reported more than once (five in Africa, two in Asia-Pacific, one in Europe, one in Eurasia, five in Latin America, and two in the MEWA region). This total also includes six countries that answered the GTF Survey even though their respective governments had not previously volunteered to report (Bulgaria, Burundi, Moldova, Mozambique, North Macedonia and the Seychelles)

The only region in which the level of participation reached 50% was Europe. LRG participation reached approximately 35% amongst the countries of Africa and Latin America. In North America, Canada was the only country with national coordination. In the Asia Pacific region, LRG participation was only acknowledged in seven (of 28) countries (being most evident in Asian OECD countries and Indonesia). In Eurasia and the MEWA region, participation has remained very limited, with only one country in each region.

Among the countries that have given attention to coordination and alignment between national and subnational-level strategies, several different approaches can be identified. The following analysis focuses on the situation of the countries that are reporting in 2019. Of these, 11 propose ways of integrating the LRGs into their respective mechanisms for coordination; 10 countries describe mechanisms with a 'weak involvement' of their LRGs; and in 17 countries there is no involvement at all. The forthcoming GOLD V Report will provide a more detailed description of the national coordination mechanisms applied in each region.

In the first group of 11 countries, some are taking advantage of the coordination mechanisms to ensure that the follow-up process promotes greater collaboration between their national and subnational levels of government. **Iceland** provides a particularly good example of this: from the very beginning, its Association of Local Authorities has been directly involved in the national SDG working group. In its VNR, the Icelandic government underlines that: "With the involvement of the Association the introduction of SDGs is approached as a joint project of the state and municipalities, as they have an important role for successful implementation of the SDGs."³

Serbia has also made a strong issue of the contribution of its subnational levels of government to this process. The role of its LGA SCTM in the creation of the local community-led hub has been particularly underlined. This hub is one of the institutional, network-integrated mechanisms associated with the country's national, inter-ministerial working group for the implementation of Agenda 2030. The VNR highlights that the "achievement of the SDGs in Serbia relies on the advantages of the local self-government units, who can identify the needs of the local population the best and find the best way to meet those needs, *leaving no one behind*..."⁴ In Scotland, the regional government and the LGA (COSLA) have joined forces to develop

Among the countries that have given attention to coordination and alignment between national and subnational-level strategies, several different approaches can be identified.

the National Performance Framework, which is currently being used to mainstream the SDGs into existing medium and long-term plans for Scotland at both the national and local levels. In **New Zealand**, the LGA has also highlighted how joint efforts involving the country's national government have led to important progress over recent years.⁵

Côte d'Ivoire also promotes the active involvement of local governments in steering through the process. Two LRGAs (UVICOCI and ARDCI) form part of the National Steering Committee and are active in the Standing Technical Secretariat. They have also been closely involved in the consultation process for the preparation of the VNR. In 2018, special missions were organised to the country's 31 regions and two Autonomous Districts (Yamoussoukro and Abidjan) to carry out consultations.

In other cases, a similar process has been undertaken, but currently remains incomplete. In the case of **Bosnia and Herzegovina**, the VNR stresses that for the upcoming SDG Framework (which is currently being defined) to be made operational, the government must include subnational levels of government and their associated organisms within the coordination mechanism.

A second group of countries has looked to foster the coherence of national and local policies, taking advantage of (or improving on) the existing national planning system. In recent years, **Indonesia** has adopted a clear approach to improve coordination between its national and subnational tiers of government in order to facilitate SDG implementation. A Presidential Decree (No. 59, July 2017) formally required the integration of the SDGs and the national medium-term development plan into medium-

³ The VNR of Iceland 2019, p.18. One concrete example of this coordinated policy is provided by the joint Climate Action Plan, which was adopted in September 2018, which involved seven ministers and consultations with business, civil society and LRGs.

⁴ The VNR of Serbia 2019, p. 28 and 32.

⁵ Reply to the GTF Survey.

term regional and local plans. It also called for the preparation of an SDG roadmap and several action plans (RAD), annual reports and bi-annual monitoring systems at the subnational level (National Planning Ministerial Regulation n° 7, 2018). To support the localization of the SDGs, the government has also developed a specific communications strategy, a series of technical guidelines, a support system, and a set of metadata indicators, to ensure that the process is bought into by subnational levels of government. Others countries have designed similar schemes to support their alignment policies, but their strategies have often adopted what could be described as more ‘trickle-down’ approaches (e.g. the **Philippines**; for more details, see section 3.3).

Burkina Faso has also experimented in this area, by joining together the mechanisms for the follow-up to the PNDES and the SDGs, from the national to the local levels. Under its National Steering Committee for the PNDES, sectoral committees and 13 ‘regional committees’ (*Cadres Régionaux de Dialogue*- CRD) should ensure a regular dialogue at the territorial level, help to coordinate the implementation of the PNDES, and ensure the follow-up of Regional and Local Development Plans and annual assessments. The CRD involve subnational tiers of government for vertical and horizontal policy coherence.

With different language, a similar concern has been expressed in the VNRs of other countries when referring to a “whole-of-government” or “all of government” approach as a way to ensure policy coherence that responds to the needs of better coordination between national and subnational institutions (e.g. South Africa, among others). **South Africa** has made a strong point of the need to strengthen vertical coherence between the national, provincial and local levels of government as well as horizontal coherence between different sectors. The government

is currently setting up a comprehensive development planning mechanism to improve coherence and has got its LRGs involved in the development of a national sustainable urban strategy.⁶ LRGs in **Turkey** consider that important efforts have been made this year in the framework for preparing the VNR, which has included integrating LRGs within the coordination mechanisms.⁷

Ghana has also made efforts to better integrate its national and subnational levels of planning. To achieve this, the country has taken advantage of its ‘decentralized planning system’⁸. This assigns planning functions to Ministries, Departments and Agencies at the national level, and to local authorities, in the form of Metropolitan, Municipal and District Assemblies, at the sub-national level. “The coordination is vested in the National Development Planning Commission (NDPC) at the apex, supported by 16 Regional Coordinating Councils (RCCs). The Ministry of Planning provides policy coordination and monitoring support.” The VNR cites the “strengthening of local government capacity” as an important action and one required to accelerate progress and to increase efficiency in order to achieve the SDGs. Reform to ensure that elected executive bodies head subnational tiers of government is also currently under debate.⁹

In **Rwanda**, efforts have also been made to promote alignment between national development strategies (Vision 2020, National Strategy for Transformation and Sector Strategies Plans), District Development Strategies and the SDGs in order to ease their implementation and monitoring. This has opened the way for multi-level dialogues. At the local level, District Councils and District Joint Action Development Forums (JADFs) should engage with all stakeholders and contribute to the monitoring of SDG implementation at the local level. However, the ‘domestication’ process in Rwanda still faces

⁶ The VNR of South Africa 2019, p.15.

⁷ Reply from the UMT to the GTF Survey 2019.

⁸ Set out in the National Development Planning (Systems) Act, 1994 (Act 480).

⁹ Ghana is improving its local-level planning, monitoring and implementation capacity through recruitment of more local government staff and the appointment of statisticians at the local government level. These efforts must be further consolidated through effective training organized by the Regional Coordinating Councils (RCCs).

A “whole-of-government” or “all of government” approach as a way to ensure policy coherence that responds to the needs of better coordination between national and subnational institutions.

a number of challenges, including: the availability of resources (both financial and human), a lack of clarity in the methodology, and how to measure some of the SDG Indicators.

In other countries, like Chad, Sierra Leone¹⁰ and Cambodia,¹¹ there is also concern about the mechanisms for achieving alignment. In **Chad**, there is also interest in linking together the national steering committee for the National Development Plan (PND 2017-2021) and the pursuit of the SDGs and the subnational planning system, through several committees at the regional and local levels (*Comités Régionaux, Départementaux et Comités Locaux d'Action et de Suivi-évaluation*). Chad also mentions decentralization and the localization of the SDGs as key issues that should contribute to reducing regional inequalities. However, these mechanisms are not yet operational.¹² In **Tanzania**, LRGs are not involved in the SDG Steering Committee on the mainland, but on Zanzibar, they do form part of the 'implementation level' of the development plan (MKUZA III Monitoring and Evaluation System).

It should be noted that many of these efforts to redefine the coordination and planning mechanisms were conceived in a strictly top-down manner. This has particularly been the case in **Pakistan**, where seven SDG Support Units have been established at the federal, provincial and federally administered area levels. These units are guided by the federal Ministry of Planning, Development and Reform (MoPDR) and by the provincial and administrative Departments of Planning and Development (PDDs). To reach the local level, several "focal people" have been nominated in each district. Although Pakistan makes reference in its VNR to the promotion of 'vertical and horizontal policy coherence', its approach reflects a predominantly vertical vision. This has been the result of weakness regarding capacities and resources, and also of the political uncertainty that predominates at the subnational level.

Finally, among the countries that have not made clear reference to any specific strategy or mechanism through which to involve LRGs, there are some that have mentioned moves towards **decentralization** as one of the policies that could favour the implementation of the SDGs. These states are: the Central African Republic, Chile, Mauritania, Mongolia, Timor-Leste, Tunisia, and Vanuatu.¹³

Mongolia recognises that reforms must be carried out to further improve the country's institutional framework, reduce inconsistencies between long-term, medium-term, sectoral and

local development policies, and institutionalise coordination mechanisms at the national and subnational levels.¹⁴ The VNR of the **Central African Republic** stresses the need to strengthen the presence of the state throughout the territory by implementing the law on local government bodies, ensuring access to basic services, and creating regional development poles to facilitate and promote decentralization.¹⁵ In **Chile**, the transformation of the different regions in local self-governing bodies (with governors to be elected in 2020), make them consider decentralization as a lever with which to promote a more participative form of sustainable development starting from the territories. Among the next steps to be taken, Chile's VNR mentions the need to strengthen the dissemination and ownership of the SDGs at the regional and local levels.¹⁶ One of the final recommendations in the VNR of **Mauritania** was the need to involve its Regional Councils, which were recently created as part of its decentralization policy, in the process of defining the country's National Development Strategy (Strategy for Accelerated Growth and Shared Prosperity (SCAPP) for 2016-2030. **Timor-Leste** also underlined the need to strengthen the decentralization of services to its municipalities. In **Tunisia**, following-up on the decentralization process and strengthening the role of the country's regions to 'leave no one territory behind' were also at the centre of its sustainable development policies. Even so, in these countries, no local government bodies are currently involved in any of their national coordination mechanisms.

This quick analysis shows the different levels of progress and the challenges that the localization approach is facing in the countries reporting this year. Apart from the 11 countries where LRGs are involved in the coordination mechanisms (and in VNR reporting), our analysis shows six countries where efforts are underway to strengthen LRG participation, albeit mostly from a top-down approach. Finally, six other countries made reference to 'decentralization' as a way to strengthen local governance. This has raised expectations of enhanced participation from LRGs in the coordination and follow-up of SDG implementation in the future. As UNDESA observed: "*achieving the SDGs means strengthening collaboration and developing joint efforts within governments to a level that has not been seen before*".¹⁷ It is now imperative to walk the talk! ❖

¹⁰ According to the VNR of Sierra Leone, SDGs have been integrated into local council plans with the support of the Department of Local Government Finance and the Ministry of Finance. To improve this integration, a set of guidelines have been prepared which relate to all levels of the public sector.

¹¹ In Cambodia, the Royal government has acknowledged that Cambodia's SDGs should still be matrixed to the subnational level in 2019 including subnational budgets.

¹² According to the 2019 VNR of Chad, the roll-out of the reforms will be delayed. The VNR identifies the low capacity in human resources at the national and local levels as a critical obstacle to the implementation of the SDGs.

¹³ 'Decentralization' has also been mentioned by Burkina Faso, Chad, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Indonesia, and Rwanda. These countries include LRGs in their national mechanisms of coordination.

¹⁴ The VNR of Mongolia 2019, p.12-13 and 68.

¹⁵ The VNR of the Central African Republic 2019, p. 11. The representative of Bangui highlighted the expectations of LRGs that decentralization will boost local development and local democracy in the GTF Survey.

¹⁶ The VNR of Chile 2019, p.8 and p. 127.

¹⁷ UNDESA (2018), p.29.

3.3

The actions of LRGs and their associations to localize the SDGs in the countries reporting to the 2019 HLPF

The participation of LRGs and LGAs in the reporting process at the national level continues to make progress. The commitment of national governments to report is acting as a catalyser for the mobilization of local actors and institutions. However, and as mentioned in the previous section, the involvement of subnational levels of government in reporting and coordinating mechanisms still remains rather limited.

Key findings from the GTF survey and studies indicate that even though LGAs and LRGs themselves may not always be fully involved in the preparation of Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs) or national mechanisms for coordination, they tend to be actively engaged in the localization of the SDGs.¹⁸ Of the 47 reporting countries in 2019, the GTF survey was answered by LGAs and LRGs in 24.¹⁹ This confirms their acknowledgment of the SDGs and of other global agendas (such as the New Urban Agenda, Paris Climate Agreements, Sendai Framework and Global Compact for Migration). Moreover, 75% of the respondents recognized having referenced or integrated these global agendas into their advocacy work, while over 65% reported that the SDGs were “well known” to their institutions and had been integrated into their daily strategies.

Cambodia’s NLC is an interesting example in this sense. Although the NLC reported not having been invited to the preparation of the 2019 national report, it has, nevertheless, included SDGs in its five-year strategic plan (2018-2022) and is committed to organizing capacity-building workshops on the implementation of Agenda 2030, such as the international workshop it organized in April 2019, in Siem Reap.

In addition, LRGs and LGAs have mobilized a wide range of institutional mechanisms within their organizations to enhance the coordination of SDG-related work. Aware of the transversality of SDGs, 35% of the LRGs and LGAs surveyed stated that many, or even all, of their departments deal with SDGs, while 25% reported having created specific departments to coordinate SDG implementation (see the example of Bristol in box 4). In 15% of the cases reported, SDG-coordination work was carried out by the International Relations department, highlighting how LRGs and LGAs can leverage SDGs to boost international cooperation in favour of sustainable development.

A significant percentage of LGAs actively support the implementation of the SDGs in their respective territories: 67% of respondents indicated having adopted specific policy documents relating to the implementation of SDGs, while over 75% reported having organized conferences and workshops to promote SDG exchanges, raise awareness, and also organize training and capacity-building activities. Some also reported having developed pilot projects or provided technical support to promote the alignment of local development plans with the SDGs. Table 4 showcases the main types of activities undertaken by LGA and LRG networks to support the localization of SDGs around the world (including, in many of the 47 countries reporting in 2019)

The most common activities undertaken by LGAs in all countries are awareness-raising workshops and campaigns, which have been primarily addressed to association members, staff and political leadership. These activities have

¹⁸ See methodology. These results are consistent with previous reports.

¹⁹ The GTF received answers from the majority of LGAs. No replies from LGAs in Algeria, Eswatini, Fiji, Guyana, Iraq, Israel, Mauritius, Mongolia, Republic of Congo, Tanzania, Vanuatu.

mostly been held in parallel with other annual events or regional meetings of the associations in question (e.g. AChM, in **Chile**; LCAP, in **Pakistan**; LCP in the **Philippines**; NALAG, in **Ghana**; and SALGA, in **South Africa**). LGAs are increasingly involved in capacity-building measures, particularly aimed at newly elected officials, and trying to reach local political parties in order to ensure that initiatives relating to sustainability transcend mandates and become firmly embedded in electoral processes. In **New Zealand**, the LGNZ has promoted the SDGs to its members and encouraged them to contribute to the country's 2019 VNR.²⁰

Other associations have also broadened the scope of their awareness-raising activities by reaching out to civic organizations, national representatives and academia, in order to engage all local stakeholders in the effective implementation of the SDGs at the local level. For instance, in March 2017, the **Rwanda**'s RALGA convened a high-level, multi-stakeholder, dialogue that brought together key local government decision-makers, government representatives and other relevant stakeholders. LGA-organized SDG forums and summits are also gaining ground in **Iceland**²¹ and **Scotland**.²² The media, newsletters and publications are all critical tools that help LGAs to disseminate SDG-related information among their members. As part of its efforts to raise awareness of global agendas at the local level, in February 2019, the Network of Associations of Local Authorities of South-East Europe (NALAS), in collaboration with GIZ, published a handbook for practitioners for Localising the SDGs. The Union of Municipalities of **Turkey** (UMT) has also been very active in distributing materials to raise awareness and share SDG best practices among its members. Capacity-building and training programmes have also been expanded in almost all of the reporting countries (see section 3.4 for further details).

Substantial efforts have also been made to align local and regional strategies with the SDGs. In some cases, (such as **Ghana**, **Indonesia**, the **Philippines** and **Rwanda**), national regulations require LRGs to align their local development plans, including targets and indicators, with the national development plan (see section 3.2 for the countries reporting this year).

Let's have a quick view region by region.

In **Asia Pacific**, one of the most significant initiatives in this regard is the UCLG ASPAC and APEKSI flagship project: LOCALISE (Leadership, Ownership and Capacity for Agenda 2030 Local Implementation and Stakeholder Empowerment), which has been implemented in

16 provinces and 14 cities in **Indonesia**. Since it was launched, in 2018, the project has resulted in the organization of national and regional training sessions involving 875 participants from local government organizations and a wide range of national and international stakeholders. Within the project's framework, the activities planned for 2019 include the finalization of Local Medium-Term Development Plans, which are aligned with the SDGs, and the improvement of both multi-stakeholder partnerships and LRG involvement in the national reporting process. The project has also contributed to national strategies to localise the SDGs (see box 2). The national LGAs (APEKSI and APKASI) have organized training programmes for local government officers and stakeholders.²⁴ As a result of these joint initiatives, and those undertaken in collaboration with other partners (such as the UNDP), the country's alignment process has made noticeable progress: as of today, 52% of Indonesia's provincial governments have developed local action plans in line with the SDGs.²⁵

As mentioned in their VNR, at the Local Government Summit held in March 2017, **Pakistan**'s LRGs committed to promote the localization of the SDGs. In partnership with UCLG ASPAC, and with financial support from the EU, in March 2019, the Association for Development of Local Governance (ADLG) launched a four-year pilot initiative called LEAD for SDGs (Local Empowerment, Advocacy and Development for SDG Localization). The project seeks to accelerate localization efforts by supporting the monitoring and evaluation systems used in two selected pilot districts.²⁶ Even so, **Pakistan**'s context is much less conducive to localization than **Indonesia**'s. In the **Philippines**, SDG localization is considered a way to reduce regional disparities through Regional Development Plans.²⁷ Accordingly, in 2017, the national government issued an executive order²⁸ requiring all levels of government to align local plans with national development and investment plans; this process was complemented by regulations issued by the National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA) and the Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG). Such regulations include a main matrix for reporting and SDG indicators to be applied to regional, provincial and local plans and budgets so as to ensure vertical alignment.²⁹ However, although the country's national associations, and particularly the League of Cities (LCP) and the League of Municipalities (LMP), are active in SDG localization, it is reported that many local government units are not fully aware of these

²⁰ For more details, see: <https://www.lgnz.co.nz/>.

²¹ The Icelandic Association of Local Authorities organized a Co-operation forum for its municipalities to promote global goals and climate issues, in June 2019.

²² COSLA planned to hold a SDG Localization Summit in the spring of 2019.

²³ NALAS (2019) *Agenda 2030 in my municipality: a handbook for practitioners for localizing the Sustainable Development Goals*.

²⁴ "BAPPENAS Gelar FGD Untuk Mendaerahkan Pembangunan". Published online *Centroone* (15 May 2018). Available at: <http://tiny.cc/33x28y>.

²⁵ See GTF (2018).

²⁶ The VNR of **Pakistan** 2019: Local government leaders, both Chairpersons and Deputy Chairpersons, from 75 districts. The LEAD project includes Bhakkar and Rajanpur in Punjab, and Nushki and Killa Abdullah in Balochistan.

²⁷ The VNR of the **Philippines** 2019, pp. 12-13.

²⁸ Order no. 27, June 2017.

²⁹ In November 2018, the DILG, NEDA and the country's National Institute of Statistics issued the "Guidelines for the localization of the PDP 2017-2022". The Joint Memorandum Circular No. 1 Series, of 2018, also encouraged LRGs to identify and implement programmes, projects, and activities (PPAs) that could contribute to the achievement of PDP and SDG targets.

processes and that technical and financial support needs to be improved in line with the new SDG priorities. Both organizations have run seminars, information-sharing activities, conferences and workshops, while the LCP has developed pilot projects to integrate the SDGs into local actions.³⁰ The current electoral conjuncture and other national debates (e.g. about the country's federal structure) have also hindered the buy-in process at the subnational level.³¹ With the support of UN agencies, cities like Battambang, in **Cambodia**, are currently undertaking action to improve urban integrated management, particularly in such fields as waste management and participatory planning.

In **New Zealand's** LRGs are significantly mobilised around tackling climate change. The LGNZ has completed an assessment of the amount of underground and above ground infrastructure that would be affected by an increase in sea level based on three different scenarios. LRGs have also adopted a Local Government Leaders' Climate Change

Declaration whose sights are clearly set on reducing GHG emissions (e.g. the Live Lightly Programme of Auckland). Within the framework of the Urban Growth Agenda (UGA), which was adopted by the national government in 2018, LRGs are strengthening the role that they play in fostering sustainable urban development and resilience and also in the development of environmental policies (e.g. Auckland's Vector Urban Forest policy relating to the management of waterbodies and forests, and Wellington City Council's biodiversity strategy).³² In other countries, such as **Timor-Leste** and **Vanuatu**, decentralization plans have been included as part of the SDG implementation process, with the aim of modernizing the public administration (including its budgeting and planning), strengthening public services and reducing disparities at local levels. However, in recent years, both countries have been severely hit by natural disasters (cyclones, climate deregulation and volcanic activity), which have hampered the implementation of such initiatives.³³

Box 2

The Indonesian puzzle for the localization of the SDGs

Subnational public investment is mostly undertaken by regional/city governments and currently corresponds to 1.8% of GDP and 59% of total public investment. One of the main challenges is that of how to effectively combine and coordinate national and subnational-level development plans. In principle, and as previously mentioned in section 3.2, subnational governments must take into consideration Indonesia's National Medium-Term Development Plan when establishing their own regional development policies. At the provincial level, each governor is responsible (in conjunction with all the regents and mayors) for developing a regional action plan. Official decrees establish the legal basis for action in many provinces. At present, 19 of Indonesia's 34 provinces have developed and then formalized their SDG action plans (RAD) by official decree, while a further 15 are currently in the process of completing their respective RADs. At the same time, planning agencies at the provincial/district/municipal level play a key role in coordinating SDG implementation. Certain pilot provinces (like Riau) and innovative cities (such as Jakarta) have taken the lead and aligned their medium-term development plans with the SDGs. The province of East Nusa Tenggara is also mentioned in Indonesia's VNR as an example of alignment for the Regional Medium-Term Plan 2018-2023.³⁴ Connections through provincial data hubs, via the *OneData portal*, should facilitate follow-up activities, while there are also plans for an SDG Academy to facilitate capacity-building. However, as local government testimonies have underlined, coordination is not always as effective as it might be and numerous obstacles have already emerged (see section 3.4). In the conclusion of the Indonesian VNR, it is underlined that the progress observed over the last three years of SDG implementation has been due to a strong regulatory framework, high levels of stakeholder ownership, a robust set of tools for localizing the SDGs, and the mainstreaming of SDGs into national and subnational development agendas.³⁵

³⁰ For more information on LCP programmes and projects, see: <http://www.lcp.org.ph/22/programs--amp--projects>.

³¹ See ULAP National Executive Board Resolution No. 2018-15, available at: <https://ulap.net.ph/board-resolutions.html>.

³² The VNR of New Zealand 2019.

³³ The VNR of Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste 2019; the VNR of the Republic of Vanuatu 2019 mentioning the Decentralisation Act and the Decentralisation Policy 2017-2027.

³⁴ The VNR of Indonesia, p. 41 adopted as Regional regulation n°4 2019 by the regional Parliament.

³⁵ The VNR of Indonesia p. 240. See also UNDP (2018) SDG Localization in ASEAN: Experiences in Shaping Policy and Implementation Pathways; Teti Armiami Argo and Zuzy Anna (2019) Empowering Local Government Capacity and Regional Government Association to Strengthen Development Goals.



Traditional low-rise buildings in Médénine, Tunisia, hosting a street market (photo: Claudia Schillinger, <https://bit.ly/2LET76X>).

In the Eurasian region, **Mongolia's** VNR specifically singles out the development plan for the city of Ulaanbaatar and, in particular, the problem of air pollution and its impact on health, society and economic development. It highlights the complexity of the multifaceted development challenges being faced and stresses the need to adopt integrated policies based on multi-stakeholder participation and cooperation.³⁶

In the **African** context, the **South African** LGA (SALGA) has been particularly active in helping municipalities to develop Integrated Development Plans (IDP) that are aligned with SDGs and in improving coordination with the national government. Indeed, South Africa has placed policy coordination high on its agenda. Working together with the national government, SALGA has developed an Integrated Urban Development Framework (IUDF) to facilitate the coherent implementation of SDG 11 and the New Urban Agenda.³⁷ Internally, SALGA has sought to align its activities with specific SDGs. At the metropolitan level, eThekweni has gone a step further by aligning its budget and investments with the SDGs (see box 3).

In Northern Africa, and in **Tunisia** in particular, the National Federation of Municipalities (FNVT) and various other international cooperation organizations (including VNG International, Cities Alliance and UNDP) have helped several municipalities to promote strategic participatory

planning and include the SDGs into their plans. The cities of Beja, Gabes, Jendouba, Kairouan, La Soukra, Medenine, Monastir, Sidi Bouzid and Tataouine have already aligned their development strategies for 2030 with the global agendas. FNVT is also leading a programme on waste management (Wama-net, 20 cities) and organizing training labs for its members (Lab'baladiya). The Governorate of Medenine (region) has developed participative regional plan aligned with the SDGs. A first PRIHQ1 programme for neighbourhood upgrading was implemented in 65 municipalities; a second programme will involve 121 municipalities. In **Algeria**, ten pilot municipalities are currently working on the adoption of a participatory approach to local development planning. The pilots are also integrating the SDG framework into the planning, implementation and monitoring of local strategies. This initiative forms part of the CapDel programme, which is led by the Ministry of the Interior, Local Communities and Land Planning and receives support from the UNDP and the European Union. The adoption of a new law on local government, in 2018, seeks to foster the implementation of the SDGs at the local level. In **Mauritania**, following the creation of regions and the obligation to integrate the concepts of climate change and sustainable development into various planning areas, the Nouakchott Region has embarked upon an Environmental Resilience and Sustainable Development project.

³⁶ The VNR of Mongolia 2019, chap 4.

³⁷ The VNR of South Africa 2019, p. 36 and pp. 97-98.

Box 3

South African cities are leading the way in the SDG alignment process on the African continent



One of South Africa's main strategic objectives is improving the coordination and coherence between its global, regional, national and subnational development plans (in particular with respect to Agenda 2030, the African Agenda 2063 and the Southern African Development Community Regional Indicative Strategic Development Programme). SDG implementation and coordination have been facilitated through the National Development Plan (NDP), Medium-Term Strategic Framework (MTSF) and Provincial Growth and Development Strategies (PGDS), and also Integrated Development Plans (IDPs) at the local level. However, in practice, there is a need to strengthen this coordination, the alignment of goals and the effective allocation of resources. Within this context, eThekweni-Durban and Cape Town are local frontrunners when it comes to SDG localization. Indeed, eThekweni has been actively involved in the localization of SDGs through its advocacy work and the alignment of the SDGs with its IDP. In accordance with the Municipal Systems Act of 2000, which requires all municipalities to develop their own IDPs, for the last two fiscal years, eThekweni has aligned the SDG targets and indicators with its local government responsibilities and municipal budget. This alignment has focused on four main pillars: human rights, people, the planet and prosperity. This exercise has allowed the city's metropolitan area to introduce a system of benchmarking that permits more robust monitoring and provides a better reporting framework. In 2017, 66 out of 98 SDG indicators had been aligned with investment projects; in 2018, this number increased from to 75. eThekweni has also developed toolkits and training action to raise awareness of the SDGs and promote their localization. A similar effort has been undertaken in the City of Cape Town, which is currently in the process of linking the SDGs to its Preliminary Resilience Assessment and Index; this work was carried out within the framework of its Resilience Strategy. Both of these South African cities are also members of various global city networks (including UCLG, ICLEI, C40, the African Forum for Urban Safety, and the former 100 Resilient City Initiative), which has allowed them to share and learn from innovative experiences on SDG localization and alignment. As a result of joint efforts between the national and subnational levels of government, South Africa has adopted an Integrated Urban Development Framework. As a result, the rate of expansion of informal dwelling has decreased over the last year, progress is being made in waste management, and the public transport system has also been improved (through the development of multiple bus and BRT systems). Even so, South African cities continue to face great challenges, particularly with respect to inequalities resulting from the legacy of apartheid.³⁸

In **Cote d'Ivoire**, in West Africa, LRGs are encouraged to align their local plans, and in particular the Triennial Programme, with new national priorities and SDGs. The LGAs (UVICOCI and ARDCI) are involved in the process of localization. Elsewhere, other LGAs, such as AMBF in **Burkina Faso** and LoCASL in Sierra Leone, have also helped municipalities to draw up local development plans and to align them with both national development strategies and the SDGs. In Burkina Faso, thirteen intermediary cities will work on their respective master plans and the four regional capitals will revise their land use plans. A slum upgrading programme is currently underway, involving the construction

of 40,000 units of social housing. In **Sierra Leone**, LoCASL has organised workshops for streamlining the SDGs into local development programmes. This alignment process has also been supported by the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development and the Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development, which have encouraged the 22 local councils to integrate the SDGs into their local development plans. The country is replicating an inclusive local governance model, entitled "The People's Planning Process", in a process led by an NGO. This involves placing chiefdom and village-level planning at the centre of the formulation and implementation of all development plans and fostering cooperation

³⁸ The VNR of South Africa 2019. eThekweni presentation on the Localization of the SDGs (contribution to UCLG GOLD V).

with local government councils.³⁹ In **Ghana**, local government organizations are required to follow guidelines laid down by the national government and to align their medium-term district development plans and activities with the SDGs. With the support of the CLGF, LGAs in **Ghana** (NALAG)⁴⁰ and **Rwanda** (RALGA)⁴¹ have launched several projects to improve the capacity of local, provincial and district governments to adapt the SDGs to their local realities; in Ghana, this initiative focuses on four Metropolitan, Municipal and District Assemblies.

In **Rwanda**, in East Africa, the national decentralization programme has hastened the adoption of a new approach to local planning, monitoring and evaluation. With support from VNG International, RALGA is now implementing the "Inclusive Decisions at Local Level-IDEAL" project in all six of the country's secondary cities (Musanz Accelere, Rubavu, Huye, Muhanga, Nyagatare and Rusizi), in order to strengthen local capacities in areas such as planning, inclusive local economic development, sound local social welfare strategies and services, and gender sensitive policies. Rwanda's VNR highlights improvements in service delivery at the local level and also progress in the number of local government organizations and districts that adopted and implemented local disaster-risk reduction strategies between 2014 and 2017.⁴² In **Mauritius**, following the adoption of a Climate Change Charter, in 2015, action has been taken to reduce greenhouse gas emissions at the community level. Moreover, all the country's 7 districts and 5 municipalities, as well as the Rodrigo Regional Assembly, have adopted Disaster Risk Reduction strategies.⁴³ **Tanzania** has promoted the integration of the SDGs into its local development plans and projects. A strategy for the localization of the SDGs has also been presented to the planning officers of the country's Regional Secretariats, its district planning officers (DPO) and the Assistant Administrative Secretaries responsible for coordinating with LRGs. Awareness and sensitization workshops have also been organized for LGAs to help integrate the SDGs and national plans into local plans and budgets.⁴⁴

In **Cameroon**, in Central Africa, the LGA (CVUC) organized a workshop on the SDGs during the National Exhibition on Government Action (SGO 2017) and has also participated in several training activities. The national government has promoted the alignment of the SDGs and of the national development plan with local plans (e.g. the municipalities of Nguemendouka and Mbona) and, more recently, with the Public Investment

Budget.⁴⁵ Conversely, little information has been collected about LRG initiatives to promote SDG implementation in **Chad**, the **Central African Republic** and the **Republic of Congo**. The survey received from Bangui raised the issue of growing insecurity as a major constraint on SDG localization in the Central African Republic.

Many initiatives are currently being promoted in Europe by LRGs. **Iceland**'s VNR stresses that "LRGs are increasingly linking their policies and plans to the SDGs".⁴⁶ In its 2018-2022 strategy, Iceland's LGA highlights activities related to raising awareness, active dissemination and providing members with advice on implementation. In February 2019, the LGA organised a seminar to encourage all the country's 72 municipalities to promote the SDGs and it will also organise an SDG Forum in the autumn of 2019. Cities such as Kopavogur, Mosfellsbaer and Akureyri have already integrated SDGs into their local plans. Reykjavik is leading climate change action and aims to become a carbon-neutral city by 2040.⁴⁷ In **Serbia**, the project Support for Improving Governance and Economic Planning at the Local Level for Accelerating the Implementation of SDGs in the Republic of Serbia aims to reinforce economic planning and management capacities and support SDG localization in five cities through the introduction of the first Local Development Plans that comply with the Law on the Planning System. The project is part of a broader regional programme implemented by the UNDP. Serbia's VNR summarizes tens of initiatives of its LRGs and SCTM for fostering cooperation with national institutions in order to achieve each SDG. Some examples extracted from the VNR of Serbia

— **Despite progress made, many LRGs and several LGAs still rely on international agencies or global and regional networks to raise awareness about the SDGs.**

³⁹ The VNR of Sierra Leone, 2019.

⁴⁰ In Ghana, the programme is focused on "Achieving the SDGs through LED in Ghana" in: the Nadowu-Kaleo District Assembly, Asunafo North Municipal Assembly, Asunafo North Municipal Assembly and Tema Metropolitan Assembly.

⁴¹ See: <http://tiny.cc/ntz8y>.

⁴² The VNR of Rwanda 2019, Rwanda Governance Scorecard: service delivery improved from 71.1% in 2014 to 85.6% to 2018 and the satisfaction of citizens with participation in the elaboration of district budgets and plans is 47.7%; the number districts that adopted disaster risk reduction strategies passed from 22 to 29 (over a total of 30 districts) between 2014 and 2017.

⁴³ The VNR of Mauritius, 2019, p. 87.

⁴⁴ The VNR of Tanzania 2019, p. 21.

⁴⁵ GTF Survey 2019.

⁴⁶ The VNR of Iceland 2019, p. 16.

⁴⁷ The VNR of Iceland 2019 quotes the LGA's strategy pp. 81-82.

include the SCTM Health Network and local Healthcouncils (in 100 LRGs); the implementation of the European Charter for the Equality of Women and Men in Local Life (in 67 LRGs); the Network of Energy Managers and Commissioners; 108 Local economic development and investment support units; etc. In the **United Kingdom**, local government organizations have submitted cases to contribute to the VNR via the website launched by the Department of International Development of UK (DFID). Cities such as Bristol, Canterbury and York are implementing ambitious strategies for the localization of the SDGs, while British LRGs, together with various other organizations, have developed a global platform via which UK cities can disclose their climate data in order to measure and manage GHG (see box 4). **Bosnia and Herzegovina** has reported that 26 municipalities have organized training sessions on the SDGs. The case of Bijeljina is particularly worth highlighting: the city has conducted training sessions in collaboration with the private, public and civil sectors and, in 2018, revised its 2019-2023 Integrated Development Strategy in order to mainstream the SDGs.⁴⁸ In **Croatia**, the national LGA and the NGO ODRAZ

have worked in cooperation to improve the dissemination of the SDGs by coordinating joint events and publishing a brochure.

In Latin America, the national association in **Chile** (AChM) held in January 2019 a Municipal Training School on “Municipalities, Citizenship and Local Development” in Santiago focusing on the implementation of the alignment of the SDGs with local plans (PLADECO), with the support of FLACMA, UCLG, ECLAC and UNDP.⁵³

The SDG localization and alignment process is still rather limited in the MEWA countries that are reporting this year, with the exception of **Turkey**. As mentioned above, LGAs in Turkey have actively participated in the reporting process. The UMT has collected SDG practices from its municipalities. In early 2019, the UMT held a joint workshop on the draft version of the VNR, with the participation of all the different government and non-governmental institutions. Indeed, the UMT has been actively involved in the process of promoting the integration of the SDGs into local strategic plans and is currently adapting its strategic plan for 2019-2023 in relation to the SDGs. In addition, the UMT aims to introduce SDG implementation into its international programmes, including holding a special SDG

Box 4

The SDG Localization process in selected cities in the United Kingdom

In the United Kingdom, the Bristol's City Office stands out as a pioneer in SDG localization. The City is widely seen as the UK's most sustainable city and it has carried out a number of initiatives to achieve the SDGs. Bristol has committed to supporting SDG implementation through the appointment of an SDG Ambassador to the City Cabinet. The City also actively participates in the Bristol SDG Alliance, which is made up of various stakeholders. In July 2018, the City also published a report about localizing the SDGs in Bristol.⁴⁹ On top of this, in January 2019, Bristol published its One City Plan, which has been aligned to the SDGs.⁵⁰ The city has also led a wide consultation process, with the aim of producing a report on Bristol's progress towards achieving the SDGs. It has done this in parallel with the preparation of the UK government's national review and was the first UK city to undertake a review of this kind. Similarly, Canterbury City Council and the Canterbury SDG Forum have submitted reviews of that city's progress towards achieving the SDGs; these are expected to be included in UK's VNR.⁵¹

In Scotland, the LGA COSLA has also been engaged in the SDG localization process at the national level. As previously mentioned, it co-signed the National Performance Framework and this is now being used to mainstream the SDGs into Scotland's existing medium and long-term plans at the national and local levels. Moreover, certain individual municipalities, such as Aberdeen and Dundee, have undertaken additional work on SDG localization. For instance, Dundee City Council has mainstreamed the SDGs into its local budget and aligned its local strategies with the SDGs.⁵²

⁴⁸ NALAS (2019). See also the VNR of Bosnia and Herzegovina 2019.

⁴⁹ Bristol Green Capital Partnership, Bristol City Council and University of Bristol (2018) Bristol Method+ Driving the Sustainable Development Goals agenda at the city level in Bristol.

⁵⁰ See: <https://www.bristolonecity.com/sdgs/>.

⁵¹ Canterbury SDG Forum (2019) Canterbury Sustainable Development Goals Forum Reports on local implementation of the Goals.

⁵² More details available at: <http://tiny.cc/owyz8y>.

⁵³ See also: <https://www.achm.cl/index.php/capacitaciones/item/1166-escuelas-de-capacitacion-municipal-verano-2019-municipios-ciudadania-y-desarrollo-local-arica-puerto-varas-ancud-puerto-natales-y-santiago-21-al-25-de-enero-2019>.

event with its partners, in 2019, in cooperation with UCLG MEWA. In **Iraq**, the newly established national LGA has participated in several conferences and specific projects, but it is still in its institutional and political infancy.

In **Israel**, the country's largest cities are organized through the 'Forum 15 network' and launched a new strategy, in 2018, for mainstreaming sustainability. This strategy involves joint goals in six major fields of urban sustainability. It also delineates specific actions to be taken in every city and defines basic standards for promoting and measuring urban sustainability. Israel's Forum 15 cities advocate adopting a cross-departmental municipal strategy to pursue sustainability. This involves developing joint policies and best practices, providing information and opportunities, and encouraging peer learning, training, data collection and reporting.⁵⁴

What about monitoring and the indicators at the local level in the different regions?

According to the GTF survey, over 40% of the LRGs and LGAs from the countries reporting this year acknowledged being aware of local and regional initiatives regarding monitoring and reporting on the SDGs. In **Turkey**, for example, the municipalities of Bakırköy, Esenler and Maltepe have taken the lead and have already developed their own local progress reports on the state of SDG achievement. In **New Zealand**, the Society of Local Government Managers has already developed a national set of indicators that are closely aligned with the SDGs and which have been provided to all councils to help them conduct their annual monitoring reports. In **South Africa**, SALGA has also developed a 'municipal barometer' web-based portal⁵⁵ and works closely with STATS-SA to promote disaggregated local data. In **Rwanda**, one of the key components of the CLGF and RALGA project, mentioned above, is a fact sheet template to help monitor SDG implementation in the local development strategies in Bugesera, Gicumbi and Ruhango. In **Guatemala**, the Secretariat for Planning and Programming has

launched a municipal management ranking. It serves as a tool for assessing the progress being made, the challenges still facing municipal management, and the delivery of public services. These three components are used as criteria for resource allocation from the national to local governments.⁵⁶ The construction of this ranking has been supported and coordinated by the Municipal Strengthening Technical Committee, which is made up of 21 national entities, including the ANAM and the AGAAI and the IFOM, as well as other relevant ministries and national organizations.

To conclude this short 'journey', we should mention the constraints that they face when trying to support the implementation of the SDGs at the local level. Indeed, despite continuous progress made to involve more LRGs in localization processes, many of the LRGs and several LGAs, in particular those in Small Island Developing States and LDCs,⁵⁷ still rely on international agencies, or global and regional networks to raise awareness about the SDGs and to support the alignment of local development strategies.

For instance, in 2018, CLGF organized a workshop for LRGs in **Suva** (Fiji) to raise awareness on their role in Localising the SDGs. Similarly, in **Guyana**, CLGF has been working with the Ministry of Communities, the national associations, and other partners, to raise awareness in "Strengthening local government's role as a partner in development". Moreover, the AIMF supports the Association for Central African Mayors (AMCA) for different capacity building initiatives targeting specific cities (such as Bangui, Bambari and Bangassou).

Overall, the LGA responses indicate that "inadequate human resources or weak capacities", along with "limited local interest and/or awareness" are the main challenges facing local and regional governments pursuing the SDGs. The respondents also highlighted "insufficient financial resources" and "limited coordination across different levels of governments" as significant constraints for SDG localization. ❖

⁵⁴ Israel, VNR 2019.

⁵⁵ For more information, see: <http://www.municipalbarometer.co.za/>.

⁵⁶ In Guatemala, 45% of the municipalities (152) answered the survey circulated by the national Secretariat for Planning and Programming to assess their alignment with the SDG-aligned national development plan.

⁵⁷ About Port Vila (Vanuatu), see also Trundle A., Barth B. and Mcevoy D. (2019) Leveraging endogenous climate resilience: urban adaptation in Pacific Small Island Developing States in Environment & Urbanization Vol 31 n°1, April 2019.

Over 40% of the LRGs and LGAs from the countries reporting this year acknowledged being aware of local and regional initiatives regarding monitoring and reporting on the SDGs.

Activities of Local and Regional Governments Associations to support SDG Localization

COUNTRY	REPORTING INSTITUTIONS	DEGREE OF AWARENESS OF LGAS	DECLARATIONS, FORA, NATIONAL CONFERENCE	PUBLICATIONS (NEWSLETTERS, BROCHURES)	CAMPAIGNING, SOCIAL MEDIA	TRAINING, KNOWLEDGE-SHARING PROGRAMMES	PROMOTE LOCAL PLANS' ALIGNMENT WITH SDGs	SPECIAL INITIATIVES OR PROJECTS	MONITORING AND REPORTING ACTIVITIES	INVOLVEMENT IN VNRS
AFRICA										
Burkina Faso	AMBF	High		●		●	●			Participation (2019)
Cape Verde	ANMCV	High		●		●	●	●		Participation (2018)
Cameroon	CVUC	Moderate	●	●		●				Participation (2019)
Chad	ANCT	Moderate								No participation (2019)
Côte d'Ivoire	UVICOCI	High	●	●						Participation (2019)
Ghana	NALAG	High	●	●	●	●	●			Weak participation (2019)
Kenya	CoG	High	●	●	●	●	●		●	Participation (2017)
Madagascar	AMGVM	Moderate								No participation (2016)
Mali	AMM	Moderate	●	●	●	●	●	●		Weak participation (2018)
Mozambique	ANAMM	High	●	●	●	●	●			To be presented
Niger	AMN	Moderate	●	●		●				No participation (2018)
Rwanda	RALGA	Moderate		●	●	●	●	●	●	Participation (2019)
Sierra Leone	LoCASL	Moderate				●	●			Weak participation (2019)
South Africa	SALGA	Moderate	●	●	●	●	●			Participation (2019)
Togo	UCT	High	●	●	●	●	●			Participation (2018)
Tunisia	FNVT	Moderate					●			Weak participation (2019)
Regional Level	UCLG Africa	High	●	●	●	●	●		●	
ASIA-PACIFIC										
Cambodia	NLC	Moderate				●	●			No participation (2019)
Indonesia	APEKSI / APKASI	High	●	●		●	●	●		Weak participation (2019)
Kiribati	KiLGA	High		●	●	●	●			Participation (2018)
New Zealand	LGNZ	High	●	●		●	●	●		Participation (2019)
Pakistan	LCAB / LCA KP	Weak / High	●	●		●	●			Weak participation (2019)
Philippines	LCP	High	●	●		●	●			Participation (2019)
Sri Lanka	FSLGA	High		●		●	●			Weak participation (2018)
Vietnam	ACVN	Weak	●	●		●	●			No participation (2018)
Regional Level	UCLG ASPAC	High	●	●	●	●	●	●		
EURASIA										
Regional Level	UCLG EURASIA		●	●	●	●				
EUROPE										
Albania	AAM	Moderate	●							No participation (2018)
Belgium	VVSG	High	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	Participation (2017)
Bosnia & Herzegovina	AMC	Moderate	●	●						Participation (2019)
Croatia	UGRH	Moderate	●	●	●	●				No participation (2019)
Czech Republic	SMO	Weak	●	●	●	●		●		Participation (2017)
Denmark	Danish Regions	Moderate		●			●			Participation (2017)
Germany	DST	High	●	●	●	●	●		●	Participation (2016)
Greece	KEDE	Moderate	●	●						Participation (2018)
Iceland	IALA	Moderate	●		●	●				Participation (2019)
Italy	AICCRE	High	●	●	●	●		●	●	Weak participation (2017)
Latvia	LALRG	High	●	●	●	●	●			Participation (2018)

Table 4

COUNTRY	REPORTING INSTITUTIONS	DEGREE OF AWARENESS OF LGAS	DECLARATIONS, FORA, NATIONAL CONFERENCE	PUBLICATIONS (NEWSLETTERS, BROCHURES)	CAMPAIGNING, SOCIAL MEDIA	TRAINING, KNOWLEDGE-SHARING PROGRAMMES	PROMOTE LOCAL PLANS' ALIGNMENT WITH SDGs	SPECIAL INITIATIVES OR PROJECTS	MONITORING AND REPORTING ACTIVITIES	INVOLVEMENT IN VNRS
Lithuania	LSA	Moderate								Weak participation (2018)
Moldova	CALM	Weak								To be presented
Montenegro	UOM	Weak	•	•			•			Participation (2016)
Netherlands	VNGi	Moderate	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	Participation (2017)
Norway	KS	High	•	•		•				Participation (2016)
Serbia	SCTM	Moderate	•	•	•	•	•			Participation (2019)
Slovakia	ZMOS	Weak								Participation (2018)
Spain	FEMP / FAMSÍ / Fons Mallorquí	High	•	•	•	•	•		•	Participation (2018)
United Kingdom	COSLA / LGA	High	•	•	•	•	•	•		Participation (2019)
Sweden	SALAR	Moderate	•	•	•	•	•			Participation (2017)
Regional Level	CEMR / PLATFORMA	High	•	•	•	•			•	
LATIN AMERICA										
Argentina	FAM	High	•	•	•	•		•		Weak participation (2017)
Brazil	CNM	High	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	Participation (2017)
Chile	AChM	High				•				Weak participation (2019)
Colombia	FCM	High	•	•		•	•			Weak participation (2018)
Costa Rica	UNGL	High	•	•	•	•	•			Participation (2017)
Dominican Republic	ASODORE / UNMUNDO	High	•	•	•	•				Participation (2018)
Ecuador	AME	High	•	•	•	•				Participation (2018)
Mexico	FENAMM	Moderate	•		•	•				Participation (2018)
Trinidad and Tobago	TTALGA	High	•		•	•				To be presented in 2020
Regional Level	AL-LAS	High	•	•	•	•	•			
	FLACMA	High	•	•	•	•				
	Mercociudades	High	•	•	•	•	•			
MEWA										
Lebanon	DMU	High	•	•	•	•	•			No participation (2018)
State of Palestine	APLA	High	•	•	•	•	•			Weak participation (2018)
Turkey	UMT	High	•	•		•	•			Participation (2019)
Regional Level	UCLG MEWA	High	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	
NORAM										
Canada	FCM	High	•	•	•	•	•			Participation (2018)
Global Taskforce of local and regional governments (GTF)										
	AIMF		•	•					•	
	C40		•	•	•	•	•			
	CLGF		•	•	•	•	•			
	ICLEI		•	•	•	•	•			
	Regions4		•	•	•	•	•			
	UCCI		•	•		•				
	UCLG		•	•	•	•	•		•	

Note: Certain LGAs changed their opinion with respect to their degree of involvement in the preparation of VNR compared to previous years: some considered that they did not participate in the VNR's elaboration process (AICCRE, AME, Danish Regions, FSLGA, SMO) or that this involvement was not adequate (AMM, Deutscher Städtetag, UNGL, VVSG) while others reported their participation to be sufficient (LSA) and even higher (UMT).

Sources: Surveys answered by local and regional governments' associations and UCLG research.

3.4

Local and regional government actions, region-by-region

¹ The main source of information included in this section are the answers to the GTF Surveys 2019. Others sources are indicated.

² The countries whose LRGs and LGAs answered the 2019 survey were (those reporting this year appear in bold): Botswana, **Burkina Faso**, Cape Verde, **Cameroon**, **Central African Republic**, **Chad**, **Ivory Coast**, Ghana, Kenya, Madagascar, Mali, **Mauritania**, Mozambique, Niger, Rwanda, **Sierra Leone**, **South Africa**, Togo and **Tunisia**. Benin, Ethiopia, Morocco, Nigeria, and Senegal responded in 2018 and complementary information was collected.

As highlighted in the previous section, the localization process is gaining ground. This section seeks to continue the effort to map initiatives led by Local and Regional Governments (LRGs) and their associations (LGAs) in different regions to localize the SDGs. It proposes a comprehensive analysis of the actions undertaken by LRGs around the world and summarizes some of the findings that will be presented in the forthcoming Fifth Report of the Global Observatory of Local Democracy and Decentralization (GOLD V).¹

Morocco, and also in Cape Verde and Mali, in the past year). UCLG Africa also encouraged LRGs and LGAs from 53 African countries to participate in discussions on global agendas at the 8th edition of Africities Summit, held in Marrakech (November 2018), which focused on 'the transition to sustainable cities and territories: the role of local and subnational governments in Africa'. Other international LRG networks have demonstrated dynamism in this region, including the CLGF, the AIMF, and ICLEI (see 'Global networks' below).

In fact, 78% of the LRGs and associations surveyed in this region reported having carried out campaigns, conferences or training sessions. Indeed, 91% of the African LRGs and associations from the 19 countries which responded to this year's GTF's survey, stated that initiatives or projects were being undertaken either to support the alignment of local development plans with the SDGs or to implement the SDGs at the local scale.² The LGAs of **Benin**, **Ghana**, **Kenya**, **Rwanda**, **Togo** and **South Africa** deserve specific mention for their work in this area (see Section 3.3).

In **West Africa**, Benin and Togo continue to be the front-runners. In **Benin**, the ANCB is fully engaged in supporting the alignment of the SDGs with local development plans, in the municipalities of 10 departments, and working

Africa

In Africa, LGAs and LRGs from countries other than those reporting to the 2019 HLPF (see section 3.3) have also been actively undertaking a wide range of actions to disseminate and mobilize their members in connection with the SDGs and/or to extend initiatives begun in previous years. **UCLG Africa**, working through the African Academy of Local Governments (ALGA), has been particularly active in advocacy and training (running workshops in Accra, eThekweni/Durban, Ouagadougou and

on the improving financing mechanisms.³ Building on efforts initiated in previous years, the UCT in **Togo** has supported 5 communes (Tabligbo, Bassar, Pagouda, Kanté and Mango) in the preparation of their local development plans. These have been aligned with the country's national development plan and the SDGs, through participatory and inclusive consultation mechanisms and the creation of a handbook.⁴ A similar initiative is underway in **Niger**, through a top-down initiative led by the ministry in charge of the country's long-term Action Plan for SDG implementation. This includes the creation of a guide for planning and monitoring the SDGs at the local level and for integrating the SDGs into the country's Communal and Regional Development Plans. In **Nigeria**, which is a federal state, the process of alignment is being promoted in Benue, Taraba, Yobe, Kaduna, Ebonyi, Kano, Jigawa, Anambra and the Delta States. In **Cape Verde**, it is being promoted within the context of the ongoing project on SDG Localization conducted in partnership with UNDP; several training sessions have been organized by the ANMCV, in 8 pilot municipalities, to support the creation of thematic committees and help

³ See GTF Report (2018) Towards the Localization of the SDGs; See also: <https://www.ancb-benin.org>.

⁴ This handbook was written in partnership with the International Organization of French Speaking Countries (OIF) and is available at the following link: <https://www.francophonie.org/publication-guide-integration-odd-plans-locaux-developpement-49480.html>.

⁵ "Each neighbourhood with its SDG" (Cada Bairro seu ODS) project promotes SDG empowerment among citizens in 3 of Praia's districts (Castelão, Safende and Tira-Chapéu).

⁶ GTF (2018).

⁷ The Maarifa Centre is a knowledge-sharing and learning platform that documents and shares experiences, innovations and solutions between the country's 47 County Governments. This platform was recognized as the Best Innovation in the Service Delivery Category on African Public Service Day, held on 28th June, 2018. For more information, see: <https://maarifa.cog.go.ke>.

⁸ "Uganda EU partnership working" in CLGF website 'what's new' (26 February 2018). Available at: <http://tiny.cc/p9vs8y>.

with the drafting of the Strategic Municipal Plan for Sustainable Development 2017-2030. In the case of the country's capital city, Praia, a separate process had already been started before the national project.⁵ In **Mali**, as already stated in the previous report,⁶ the AMM is active in many committees that are dealing with SDG-related issues; these include the National Committee, which is responsible for monitoring the implementation of the SDGs. A Taskforce of locally elected officials has also been set up, which serves as an advocacy group to follow-up on the national strategy (namely, Strategic Framework for the Economic and Sustainable Development Recovery – CREDD) and on the implementation of the SDGs at the LRG levels. In March 2019, an EU-funded AMM programme was launched to support the localization of the SDGs in 100 Malian municipalities over a 24-month period.

In **East Africa**, in addition to the local actions in **Rwanda** (for further details, see section 3.3), other LRGs and their respective associations stand out for their efforts to promote SDG localization. One such case is **Kenya**, whose Council of Governors (CoG), working in collaboration with the national government, has prepared a series of County Integrated Development Plans (CIDPs), for the period 2018-2022, in order to guide SDG implementation at the local level. To date, all 47 of Kenya's county governments have aligned their CIDPs with the SDGs. Moreover, the CoG members are currently working, in collaboration with the national Monitoring and Evaluation Department, to develop a county monitoring and evaluation handbook that incorporates the SDG indicators. Handbooks have already been produced for the counties of Kericho, Nakuru, Taita Taveta and Kilifi. As part of its efforts to disseminate experiences, the CoG has also established the *Maarifa Centre* as "Kenya's Premier Devolution Knowledge Sharing and Learning Platform for effective Governance and Service Delivery".⁷ In **Burundi**, the ABELO has organized several workshops to help communes prepare local plans for the SDGs, while in **Uganda**, the ULGA has started to work with the UNCDF to raise awareness of the SDGs amongst politicians at the district council level. As part of the CLGF's Framework Partnership Agreement with the EU, the ULGA is also working in the country's different regions to localize the SDGs.⁸ On the **Comoros**, Moroni, Mitsamiouli, Wella, Iconi, Foubouni, Mutsamudu, Ouoini and Nioumachouoi are also aligning their local strategies to the SDGs. The Association of Mayors of Large Cities of

Weeding in a tea plantation, Kericho County, Kenya (photo: Linda De Volder, <https://bit.ly/2LvYVPN>).



⁹ Local Government Association of Zambia (2018) Annual Report.

¹⁰ UN Habitat (2018) Preparing Cities in Africa to Monitor and Report on Goal 11.

¹¹ The countries whose LRGs and LGAs answered the survey in 2019 were (in bold countries reporting this year): **Cambodia, Indonesia, Japan, Kiribati, Republic of Korea, New Zealand, Pakistan, Philippines, Sri Lanka and Vietnam.** Australia and Nepal responded in 2018 and additional information was collected.

¹² For the Urban SDG Portal see <http://www.urbansdgplatform.org>. CityNet is an association of urban stakeholders, established in 1987, which includes over 135 municipalities in 23 countries. For more information, see: <https://citynet-ap.org>.

¹³ Including Bac Ninh, Quang Tri, Thanh Hoa, Ninh Thuan, Vinh Long, Tra Vinh, Tuyen Quang, Hai Phong, Hanoi, Can Tho, Phu Tho, Quang Ninh, Hai Duong, An Giang, Ninh Binh, Dak Nong, Gia Lai, Lao Cai, Phu Yen, Cao Bang and Kien Giang.

¹⁴ KDI (2018) Establishing guidelines for the implementation of the SDGs by Local Governments, Final Report, p. 189 (in Korean).

¹⁵ The Voluntary Local Reviews of Shimokawa, Toyama, and Kitakyushu are available at: <https://www.iges.or.jp/en/sdgs/report.html>.

Madagascar has underlined the fact that the SDGs are still not very well-known amongst its members. They do, however, participate in the national mechanisms created by the central government for the implementation of the SDGs. Regional consultations have also been organized in three (of the 22) regions. At least 18 local governments, including that of Antananarivo, are now beginning to refer to the SDGs in their commitments and policies.

In **Southern Africa**, the association of local governments of **Mozambique** (ANAMM) provides support to municipalities for the planning and introduction of SDG-related projects in different municipalities, placing strong emphasis on resilience, reducing the risk of disasters. The ANAMM is also empowering municipalities in the fields of local finance, planning and budgeting from a gender and children's rights perspective. At the local level, Pemba City is participating in a two-year project funded by the EU known as "Shaping fair cities", which seeks to spread knowledge about the SDGs to local decision-makers, civil servants, grassroots organizations and citizens. In **Malawi**, regional workshops for local councils have been organized by the Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development, in order to review local development plans with the objective of aligning the priorities of rural and urban councils with the SDGs. In **Zambia**, the LGAZ has organized several workshops to train local elected officials in local economic development. The LGAZ also has plans to introduce a project for "Building Effective Partnerships for Inclusive and Sustainable Urban Governance", in 2019, with the support of the CLGF.⁹ In **Botswana**, Francistown and Gaborone have held training workshops, with the support of UN Habitat and the UNECA, to improve their capacities in such areas as monitoring, producing disaggregated data and reporting on SDG 11, using various statistical tools.¹⁰

Asia-Pacific

The recent survey collected by the GTF, in April 2019, showed that LGAs in at least eight countries were familiar with, and involved in, the implementation of the SDGs.¹¹

The most active LRG regional and national networks are organizing conferences, training sessions and cooperation activities to promote awareness of the SDGs and get their members

— In Mali, a Taskforce of locally elected officials follows-up on the national strategy.

involved. **UCLG ASPAC** has delivered training sessions on the SDGs and related issues throughout the region in the past year; it has also run a social media campaign about SDGs and published roadmaps on the Localization of the SDGs (in different languages). Citynet has also been involved in training actions and study visits and, in conjunction with UNESCAP and the Seoul Metropolitan Government, supported an *Urban SDG Online Portal* to promote knowledge-sharing and city-to-city cooperation.¹² Other global networks are also active in the region. Local government networks are now more involved in regional mechanisms through the ASEAN Mayors Forum and UNESCAP Forums.

In **South-East Asia**, as well as the initiatives in Cambodia, Indonesia and the Philippines mentioned in section 3.3, LGAs are also actively engaged in the SDG localization process in other countries in this region. The Association of Cities of Vietnam has participated in national workshops, whereas its provinces are more advanced in the alignment of their plans with the SDGs.¹³ In **East and North-East Asia**, progress has been made in the **Republic of Korea**, particularly through the active engagement of the Local Sustainability Alliance of Korea (LSAK): a network of Korean local government and civic organizations for working on Local Agenda 21. A recent study considers that five local governments (including Seoul and Gwangju) are at the implementation stage of introducing the SDGs, while 34 others are at the transition stage and currently building a system for implementation.¹⁴ In **Japan**, more than 30 cities and towns are involved in the implementation of the SDGs; they are supported by the national government through the Future City Initiative. Other cities are following the example of the three Japanese cities that first reported to the HLPF through Voluntary Local Reviews in 2018 (Toyama, Kitakyushu and Shimokawa).¹⁵ In **China**, in addition to the three cities (Guilin, Shenzhen and Taiyuan) chosen to be the first *Innovation Demonstration Zones for the*

Implementation of the 2030 Agenda, in 2018, cities and provinces are now working to foster sustainable development through innovative programmes in other areas (including Deyang, Yiwu, Haiyan, Chengdu, Guangzhou among many others).

In **South Asia**, in recent years, the FSLGA in **Sri Lanka** has developed workshops to raise awareness and initiated two pilot experiences to integrate SDGs into local plans and budgets in two provinces.¹⁶ In **Nepal**, three associations – ADDCN, MuAN and NARMIN – have made similar efforts to disseminate the SDGs. NARMIN, for example, has adopted the 15 Points' Directives to Rural Municipalities for the mainstreaming of SDGs in local planning processes and to establish a monitoring process (in the health, sanitation and nutrition sectors).¹⁷ In **India**, as already stated in the previous report,¹⁸ there is a big gap between involvement at the state and local government levels. Almost all the different states have set up a dedicated team to coordinate SDG implementation and 17 states have prepared their own Vision/Action Plan 2030.¹⁹

In the **Pacific region**, the Australian cities of Sydney and Melbourne, and the Eastern Metropolitan Regional Council of Perth, were among the first councils to integrate the SDGs into their plans or strategies. In **Kiribati**, the local government association (KiLGA) has ensured the dissemination of the SDGs through its monthly newsletters, radio broadcasts, forums and workshops. Between 2018 and 2019, the association has helped ten Councils to draw up Development Plans aligned with the SDGs. KiLGA, with support from UNICEF, has also assisted five Councils to develop their own WASH Policies and Development Plans aligned to the SDGs.

Eurasia

In Eurasia, the SDG localization process is largely determined by top-down approaches to SDG implementation and the high degree of centralization that can be observed throughout the region. Nonetheless, both LRGs and their associations are taking initiatives to advance in the implementation of SDGs, contributing to enhancing their dissemination and ownership at the sub-national level. For instance, in October 2018, the Eurasian section of UCLG organized the Eurasia Local Governments Congress,²¹ attended by the representatives of over 70

cities, LGAs and international experts, who exchanged their experiences with respect to localizing SDGs and engaged in capacity-building activities to further promote SDG localization processes. A training workshop on the localization of SDGs in the Eurasia region was organized from 4th to 7th October, 2018.

Eurasian LRGs are endorsing several initiatives at the European level. This is the case, for instance, of the 99 LRGs in **Ukraine**, 5 in **Georgia**, 29 in **Belarus**, 10 in **Armenia**, and one in **Azerbaijan** that have joined the Covenant of Mayors for Climate and Energy. Furthermore, in September 2018, Moscow hosted the II Climate Forum of Russian Cities,²² which brought together delegations from 36 Russian regions and propelled exchanges on, and the diffusion of, eco-strategies for the regions of Kalmykia, Karelia, Komi, Kaluga, Murmansk and Tula. Similarly, within the framework of the

— In Asia, local government networks are now more involved in regional mechanisms through the ASEAN Mayors Forum and UNESCAP Forum.

Mayors for Economic Growth initiative, which was set up as part of the Eastern Partnership, the conference "Municipalities for Sustainable Growth"²³ was held in Kiev, in November 2018, with the involvement of LRGs from **Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, and Ukraine**. This event took stock of current initiatives and discussed the best way forward to promote local sustainable development across the region. In **Georgia**, the city of Tbilisi joined the 100 Resilient Cities network²⁴ several years ago and has recently renewed its public transport network to improve its energetic efficiency.²⁵ Almaty, **Kazakhstan's** largest city, has developed a participatory land-use planning initiative to promote the upgrading of currently disused parts of the city into public spaces.²⁶ In **Kyrgyzstan**, the capital city of

¹⁶ It should be noted, however, that this project was suspended due to insufficient resources.

¹⁷ NARMIN. "Role of local government associations in Localizing SDGs in Nepal". Presentation during the UCLG ASPAC Retreat, Guangzhou, 9 December 2018.

¹⁸ See GTF Report (2018).

¹⁹ NITI Aayog (2018) SDG Index India, Baseline Report 2018. Another six states have developed, or are in the process of developing, a SDG monitoring framework; 15 states and the UT (Delhi) have worked on specific indicators and 9 states have reported interventions related to aligning their budget with the SDGs.

²⁰ See: www.kilga.org.ki.

²¹ More detailed information on the UCLG Eurasia Local Government Congress is available at: <http://tiny.cc/wbws8y>. In previous years, the members of the Association of Small and Medium-Sized Cities of Russia issued a joint statement on energy efficiency and sustainable development (2016). The national LGAs of Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine also signed a Memorandum of Understanding in Kiev (Ukraine), within the framework of the Partnership for Good Governance programme (2015-2017), aimed at building better and more responsible local governments.

²² See <http://climate-forum.ru/en>.

²³ The High Level Conference "Municipalities for Sustainable Growth" gathered 350 representatives of municipalities and national ministries from the Eastern Partnership countries in Kyiv, Ukraine. See: <http://tiny.cc/2ows8y>.

²⁴ For more information on Tbilisi and its efforts to improve resilience, see: <https://www.100resilientcities.org/cities/tbilisi>.

²⁵ Tbilisi's Sustainable Energy Action Plan is available on: <http://tiny.cc/fsws8y>. See also GTF (2018).

²⁶ An overview of Almaty's initiative to transform abandoned parts of the city into public spaces is available at: <http://tiny.cc/yuws8y>.

²⁷ Further details about the Green Bishkek project.

²⁸ The countries whose LRGs and LGAs answered the survey in 2019 were (countries reporting this year appear in bold text): Albania, Andorra, Belgium, **Bosnia and Herzegovina**, **Croatia**, **Czech Republic**, Denmark, France, Germany, Greece, **Iceland**, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Moldova, Montenegro, The Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, **Serbia**, Slovakia, Spain, Sweden and the **United Kingdom**.

²⁹ The territorial approach is reflected in the European Commission's reflection paper (2019) "Towards a sustainable Europe by 2030".

³⁰ The Reference Framework for Sustainable Cities is an open, online tool coordinated by the CEMR. It aims to guide cities implementing integrated sustainable territorial strategies and to monitor their progress. For more information, see: www.rfsc.eu.

³¹ Sánchez Gassen N., Penje O. and Slätmo E. (2018) Global goals for local priorities: The 2030 Agenda at the local level, Nordregio Report.

³² SDG Indicators for Municipalities - Indicators for Mapping the UN SDGs in German Municipalities (Summary), Available at: https://www.bertelsmann-stiftung.de/fileadmin/files/Projekte/Monitor_Nachhaltige_Kommune/MNK_SDG_Summary.pdf.

Bishkek has applied the Green Bishkek project,²⁷ whose aim is to expand the city's existing green areas and to create new ones. In **Armenia**, 18 municipalities have committed to developing sustainable energy action plans (SEAPs).

Europe

European LRG associations and networks are among the most advanced in the localization of the global agendas and, in particular, the SDGs. LGAs in Northern and Western Europe have led the localization process in the region. In many other countries (e.g. France, Italy, Spain, and the Baltic countries), mobilization around the SDGs is currently increasing, while it remains more limited in Ireland and Central Europe, and is still only incipient in East and South-East Europe. Half of the respondents to the GTF survey²⁸ already use the SDGs as a point of reference for their daily activities. Furthermore, most of the LGAs (74%) have promoted actions to support SDG dissemination and implementation and have developed initiatives to support SDG alignment and implementation at the local level (68.5%).

At the regional level, a Multi-Stakeholder Platform on SDGs within the European Union, including a subgroup on "Delivering the SDGs at the local and regional levels", was established in 2017. The sub-group is coordinated by the **CEMR-CCRE** and includes the members of Eurocities and various stakeholders strongly committed. This platform advocates for applying a territorial approach to the implementation of SDGs within the framework of EU policy-making.²⁹ The

European Committee of the Regions (CoR) also serves as a key platform through which LRGs can work to influence EU policy. The CEMR has also based its overall strategy around the SDGs and has set up a specific taskforce on SDGs to provide a platform for exchanging knowledge relating to their goals. Beyond this taskforce, the CEMR has produced numerous publications to raise awareness of the SDGs and has promoted various tools to assist LRGs to localize the 2030 agenda; perhaps the most notable of these has been the Reference Framework for Sustainable Cities (RFSC).³⁰ In the same vein, Eurocities has been active in organizing workshops, in conjunction with the CoR and CEMR, on the implementation of the SDGs; one example of this was the European Week of Regions and Cities, held in October 2018. Other international networks also play a crucial role in supporting the localization process in Europe. These include the Covenant of Mayors for Climate and Energy, the C40, CLGF, Global Parliament of Mayors, ICLEI, CRPM, ABR, Regions4 Sustainable Development, Metropolis and UCCI.

LRGs in **Northern Europe** have taken the lead in the localization process. A recent analysis commissioned by the Nordic Council of Ministers highlighted the holistic approach adopted by the first-mover 27 municipalities, in the five North European countries, working with the SDGs to mainstream sustainability in their local development strategies.³¹ In addition to action taken in Iceland (see section 3.3.), SALAR, in **Sweden**, is working in collaboration with the Swedish UN Association, with financial support from SIDA, to coordinate a three-year project called "Glocal Sweden", whose mission is to raise awareness, educate and engage municipalities,

Box 5

German and Italian initiatives to disaggregate data and develop SDG indicators at the local level



The German Association of Cities, in partnership with several other stakeholders – including the Bertelsmann Foundation, the Federal Institute for Research on Building, Urban Affairs and Spatial Development, the German County Association and the German Association of Towns and Municipalities – has developed "SDG Indicators for Municipalities". This initiative seeks to provide indicators for the local level and to review the implementation of SDGs in German municipalities. The website SDG-portal provides a useful tool for monitoring the progress of municipalities on their way towards achieving sustainability and benchmarking the progress of different municipalities with publicly accessible information (<https://sdg-portal.de>). The project was one of the three finalists for the UN Action Award. A similar initiative is currently underway in Italy, led by Platforma in collaboration with AICCRE (the Italian Association for the Council of European Municipalities and Regions).³²

In Belgium, 1 out of 3 Flemish LRGs are using the SDGs in their 2020-2025 multi-annual policy plans.

county councils and regions in relation to Agenda 2030. In 2019, 75 municipalities and 15 regions joined the seven entities that took part in the original pilot project.³³ The Swedish regions of Kronoberg and Västra Götaland have also developed regional development plans aligned with the SDGs. In addition, several other municipalities, including Upplands Väsby, have adopted sustainability plans and included the SDGs in their multi-annual plans and budgets. In **Norway**, the national association (KS) has participated in various international localizing initiatives and has promoted the exchange of good practices among its members. KS estimates that at least 30% of its membership (representing 422 local and 18 regional governments) is actively working on SDG implementation. At the local level, the municipality of New Asker, a merger of the towns of Hurum, Røyken and Asker, has used a participatory approach to identify the most relevant SDGs for its Municipal Master Plan.³⁴ In **Finland**, many municipalities, including Kemi and Espoo, have a long history of working on sustainable development projects.³⁵ Furthermore, Helsinki will submit its Voluntary Local Review to the 2019 HLPF (see box x). In **Denmark**, the Danish LRGs are currently working on a SDG roadmap. The association has also been promoting knowledge-sharing activities.

In **Western Europe**, LGAs in Belgium, the Netherlands and Germany have also played a crucial role in disseminating and supporting the SDG localization process. In **Belgium**, continuing the efforts of previous years the association of municipalities of Wallonie (*Union des Villes et Communes de Wallonie*) and Brulocalis (*Association des Villes et des Communes de Bruxelles*) have been very active in supporting specific initiatives.³⁶ According to the Flemish association's (VVSG) findings in May 2019, 1 out of 3 municipalities are using the SDGs in their new multi-annual policy plans for 2020-2025. VVSG has organized several campaigns and produced a variety of didactic material to raise awareness of the SDGs, including a handbook on local SDG indicators.³⁷ With VVSG support, 20 municipalities are integrating the SDGs into their municipal policy frameworks. In the **Netherlands**, VNG and VNGi have actively raised

awareness, has published a number of brochures on SDG localization. In November 2018, VNGi launched the Municipalities4GlobalGoals Forum, through which municipalities can share information and best practices, and created an 'ambassadors' network' of aldermen to promote SDGs. VNG also organized two workshops on SDGs as part of the SDG Action Day, the Netherlands' largest SDG Congress. This is an event that is held every year and which aims "to bring the SDGs closer to everyday practice".³⁸ Many cities are also developing their own initiatives: Oss has included the SDGs in its programme budget for 2019-2022³⁹ and, like Utrecht, has developed its own local indicators and dashboard,⁴⁰ while Rheden has decided to base its municipal reorganization on the Global Goals.⁴¹ In **Germany**, LGAs have been particularly involved in advocacy and providing technical assistance, from the very beginning. With the support of the Federal Ministry and the Service Agency Communities in One World (SKEW), they continue to help German municipalities with their local strategies to introduce the SDGs.⁴² The German LGAs have also supported the creation of local indicators to track progress on SDG implementation (see box 5). At the city level, Mannheim reviewed its strategic objectives in light of the findings of a broad-based public participation process and then adopted the "Mannheim 2030" mission statement in March 2019.⁴³ Hamburg reported on its SDG implementation in 2017 and will present an updated report in 2019. In **France**, AFCCRE has recently worked with Platforma to raise awareness of issues relating to sustainable development and international solidarity. AFCCRE and United Cities France were both invited to the High-Level Steering Committee for the SDGs, which was established in April 2018. United Cities France has created a working group on the SDGs and decentralized cooperation, which brings together various French cities and regions. The Association of French Regions has also collected information about the innovative actions of its members (see box 6). In addition, in 2018, the Committee Agenda 21, a multi-stakeholder association, continued the 'tour de France' which it began

³³ "Stort intresse från kommuner och regioner för Agenda 2030". The Swedish UN Association (23 January 2019). Available at: <http://tiny.cc/a4ws8y>.

³⁴ The municipality worked closely with high school students to prioritize six main SDGs (health, education, industry and infrastructure, sustainable cities and communities, climate and partnerships). See: "The new Asker municipality is based on the UN Sustainable Development Goals". Asker Kommune (29 November 2018). Available at: <http://tiny.cc/76ws8y>.

³⁵ Sánchez Gassen N., Penje O. and Slätmo E. (2018).

³⁶ For more information, see: <http://tiny.cc/pcxs8y>.

³⁷ See GTF (2018). In 2018, 120 municipalities (out of a total of 300) participated to the Week of the Sustainable Municipality: Local Heroes for Global Goals. A second edition of this campaign is scheduled for September 2019. See: <http://tiny.cc/idcu8y>. All the materials are available at: <https://www.vvsg.be/kennisitem/vvsg/sdg-material>.

³⁸ The SDG Action Day is a joint initiative of the Dutch SDG Charter, the KIT/SDG-house, the Municipality of Amsterdam and NCDO, with support from VNG International amongst others.

³⁹ About local SDG indicators, see: Telos, Gemeente Oss (2017) Prototype voor een lokale SDG monitor voor Nederland.

⁴⁰ Sackers, H. (2018) Localising SDG Approach City of Utrecht.

⁴¹ More information on the activities undertaken by Rheden is available at: <https://rheden4globalgoals.nl>.

⁴² See also: www.rgre.de.

⁴³ See: Stadt Mannheim (2019) Mission Statement Mannheim 2030.

in 2017, in partnership with the Association of French Regions. The Region de Normandie has established the "Sustainable Territory 2030" initiative to provide financial and technical support to 10 territories in the implementation of a comprehensive and integrated sustainable development strategy. In **Austria**, Vienna is currently revising its Smart City Strategy; this task will be completed by mid-2019.⁴⁴

In **Southern Europe, Spanish** associations have been particularly active, through advocacy, training and raising awareness. In October 2018, the FEMP launched its Local Week for the 2030 Agenda.⁴⁵ Many LRGs and their respective regional associations have taken the lead with innovative initiatives. Members of the FAMSÍ, and also other regional funds from Extremadura and Mallorca, have supported the localization process in their municipalities and provinces.⁴⁶ Following the efforts of several LRGs to integrate the SDGs into their local plans (including Madrid and several other cities and provinces⁴⁷), Barcelona and the Basque Country⁴⁸ presented their own Voluntary Local Reviews (see box 6). Other Spanish regional governments, such as those of Catalonia and Valencia, were among the first in Europe to launch their own SDG strategies. The Barcelona Provincial Council, working in collaboration with

the Strategic Metropolitan Plan for Barcelona (PEMB), has recently embarked upon a process for developing a series of local SDG indicators. Similarly, in **Italy**, AICCRES has organized training sessions involving more than 100 mayors. The Italian association is also a member of ASviS, a multi-stakeholder alliance for sustainable development. AICCRES, working together with UCLG, UN Habitat and UNDP, co-organizes the "Venice City Solutions 2030", which is an annual event that seeks to debate specific issues that can facilitate the role of local government organizations as key implementers of Agenda 2030. This event has provided a great opportunity for AICCRES to draw the attention of Italy's national government to the crucial role played by LRGs in SDG implementation.⁴⁹ In **Greece**, KEDE helped to sensitize 100 of its members to these issues at its annual meeting in 2018.⁵⁰

In the **Baltic states, Latvia** is among the most active countries in the localization process in the region. All its local governments have adopted sustainable development strategies that are aligned with the national development strategy for 2030. Their national association, the LALRG, has organized a series of discussions devoted to the most relevant SDG topics for Latvian municipalities and is planning two additional

⁴⁴ Further information is available on the website: <https://smartcity.wien.gv.at/site/en/the-initiative/monitoring>.

⁴⁵ More information on the event is available at: <http://localizandoods.es>.

⁴⁶ FAMSÍ (2019). "Un Comité de Pilotaje acompañará el programa del FAMSÍ para facilitar la implementación de los ODS" published Andalucía Solidaria. (31 January 2019). Several training courses have also been organized by these associations to build LGA capacities.

⁴⁷ Including Madrid, the Metropolitan Area and City of Barcelona, Acala de Henares, La Granja de San Idelfonso, Granollers, Malaga, Mostoles, Sant Cugat del Valles, Soria, Terrassa and Torrejón del Rey, among others. At the provincial level, Córdoba, Barcelona and Guipuzcoa, among others.

⁴⁸ The Basque Country has adopted several strategies aligned with specific SDGs and other global agendas, including the 2030 Climate Change Strategy (SDG 13), the Basque Urban Agenda (SDG 11) and Digitalization Agenda Euskadi Basque Country 2030 (SDG 16).

⁴⁹ For more information about the event, see: <https://www.aiccre.it/vcs2030/>.

⁵⁰ Fatouros, D. "The Greek mayors support the 17 Sustainable Development Goals" published on Localizing the SDGs (January 2018). Available at: <https://www.localizingthesdgs.org/story/view/169>.

⁵¹ Both reports are available at: <https://www.hel.fi/helsinki/en/administration/strategy/sustainability/>.

⁵² "El Lehendakari presenta la Agenda Euskadi Basque Country 2030, alineada con los Objetivos de Desarrollo Sostenible de la ONU". Euskadi Gobierno Vasco (11 April 2018). Available at: <http://tiny.cc/4kcl8y>.

⁵³ Ajuntament de Barcelona (2019) "Barcelona es posa a punt per assolir els Objectius de Desenvolupament Sostenible 2030". Available at: <http://tiny.cc/dmcl8y>.

Box 6

Reporting on sustainable development in Finnish, French and Spanish cities and regions

Many European LRGs have already started to develop their own sustainable development reporting mechanisms to monitor their progress towards achieving the SDGs within their territories. In Finland, when Helsinki decided to produce its first voluntary local review, it was one of the first European cities to do so. The first part of the report "The most functional city in the world" was completed in April 2019, while the final report "From Agenda to Action – The Implementation of the UN Sustainable Development Goals in Helsinki 2019" was published in June 2019.⁵¹ In France, Decree n° 2011-687 opened the way for a Sustainable Development Report which is mandatory for all Public Establishments for Intercommunal Cooperation (EPCI) and LRGs with more than 50,000 inhabitants. Within this same context, the cities of Paris and Besançon, and also the Gironde Department and the regions of Nouvelle Aquitaine and Normandie, have decided to go further and to include, with varying degrees of explicitness, the SDGs in their respective annual sustainable development reports. In Spain, the Basque Country has been the first regional government to register its commitment to the Agenda 2030, by presenting its Agenda Euskadi Basque Country 2030.⁵² This agenda assesses the degree of alignment between the Basque Government's programme and the SDGs and the local contributions that have been made to achieve the SDGs. Similarly, on a voluntary basis, Barcelona City Council has produced a report on the Localization of the SDGs in Barcelona.⁵³ This report was published in March 2019 and presents the progress of the City Council towards meeting the SDGs, putting special emphasis on reducing inequalities and conserving the environment.

seminars for 2019, on gender equality (SDG 5) and on sustainable and resilient cities (SDG 11) In **Lithuania**, the LSA, with support from KS, is currently helping municipalities to revise their Renewable resources energy action plans and Environmental Air quality management programmes so that they meet national and international targets.⁵⁴

In **Central and South-East Europe**, mobilization on SDG localization is still in its early stages, although certain projects can be underlined. In the Czech Republic, the national association, SMO, working in collaboration with the Caritas **Czech Republic**, has undertaken “the Sustainable Cities and Municipalities II” project, which includes the organization of various seminars and media campaigns and involves ten municipalities.⁵⁵ In **Albania**, several seminars were organized in 2018, in the municipalities of Elbasan, Librazhd and Kukes, to assess their knowledge of Agenda 2030, within the framework of the project “Monitoring the implementation of social rights of vulnerable groups at the central and local levels”.⁵⁶

Latin America

Latin American LRGs are also involved in the localization process, albeit mobbing at a different pace. There has been gradual progress in the number of local and regional government efforts made to align their sustainable development plans with the 2030 Agenda. Several regional governments and large cities are advancing more rapidly than the rest and the process is gradually expanding to intermediary cities, albeit rather more slowly.

74.1% of the Latin American LRGs and LGAs that answered the 2019 GTF survey stated that they had adopted policy commitments for SDG implementation, while 81.5% said that they were supporting initiatives, or other projects, for the alignment of local development plans with the SDGs.⁵⁷ The main regional associations of Latin America – the Federation of Cities, Municipalities and Associations of Latin America (FLACMA); Mercociudades; the Euro-Latin-American Alliance for the Cooperation between Cities (AL-LAs); and the Union of Ibero-American Capital Cities (UCCI), all four of which have been regrouped within the platform CORDIAL and the Confederation of Associations of Municipalities of Central America and the Caribbean (CAMCAYCA) – have integrated the

2030 Agenda in their respective agendas (e.g. through the Mercociudades Summit held in La Paz, in December 2018, and the FLACMA Summit held in Chile, in March 2019). In December 2018, the main national and regional networks met in Brasilia to discuss how to accelerate the dissemination of the SDGs by simplifying the language and using new methodologies. They made a call to improve multilevel and multi-stakeholder governance and to calculate the cost of implementing the SDGs at the local level.⁵⁸ A delegation of LRGs participated in the 3rd Forum of Countries of Latin American and the Caribbean on Sustainable Development, organized by the ECLAC.

As shown by the 2018 report, the LRGs of Brazil, Costa Rica and Dominican Republic are among the frontrunners in this region. Together with Mexico, LRGs from these four countries have participated in the coordination of national mechanisms for the implementation of the SDGs, under the guidance of their respective national governments.

Since 2016, the National Confederation of Municipalities of **Brazil** (CNM) has placed the 2030 Agenda at the centre of its advocacy. The CNM has developed an active dissemination strategy⁵⁹ – based on awareness campaigns, dialogues, publications, and training sessions,⁶⁰ pilot projects and monitoring initiatives, coordinated through the ‘Mandalá’ dashboard. In 2018, another association, the Brazilian Association of Municipalities (ABM), organized SDG workshops in five regions of Brazil.⁶¹ Participants include around 70 different municipalities in eight states, as well as state governments themselves. They are currently working to align their objectives with the SDGs.⁶²

In **Costa Rica**, the national association (UNGL) adopted a work plan for the SDGs, in 2017, which included publications and workshops, guidelines (SDG Compass - *Brújula de ODS*) and 11 pilot projects in different municipalities.⁶³ In the **Dominican Republic**, various associations (FEDOMU, ASODORE, and the “Un Mundo”, Union of Local Elected Women) have made policy commitments and developed activities to raise awareness and training sessions. FEDOMU has launched a methodological guide to help integrate the SDGs into local plans, contributed to applying the MAP methodology promoted by UNDP, and adapted the SISMAP municipal tool for monitoring.

In **Mexico**, both national associations participate in the National Strategy Committee. Almost 32 states and 100 cities have taken steps to create SDG ‘Follow-up and Implementation

⁵⁴ LSA “Sustainable energy and air quality management at local level”. Lietuovos savivaldybiu asociacija. Available at: <http://tiny.cc/5mcl8y>.

⁵⁵ The project will also create an interactive publication that will be made available online. SMO. “Projekt Udržitelná města a obce,II”. Svaz měst a obcí ČR (2019). Available at: <http://www.smocr.cz/cz/nase-akce/jine/projekt-udrzitelna-mesta-a-obce-ii.aspx>.

⁵⁶ NALAS (2019) Agenda 2030 in my municipality: a handbook for practitioners for localizing the Sustainable Development Goals.

⁵⁷ The countries whose LRGs and LGAs answered the survey in 2019 were (countries reporting in 2019 are highlighted in bold text): Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Mexico, Peru and Uruguay.

⁵⁸ This event was jointly organized by FLACMA/ Mercociudades/CORDIAL and CNM, with the support of UCLG.

⁵⁹ More information on the activities undertaken by the CNM is available at: <http://ods.cnm.org.br/>.

⁶⁰ The training session was attended by 100 municipal secretaries from 70 municipalities. See also: <http://cnmqualifica.cnm.org.br>, which provides a Guide to the Integration of the SDGs in municipal plans 2018-2021, developed with the support of UNDP ART, in 2017.

⁶¹ The interview with Ary Jose Banazzi, Mayor of Sao Leopoldo and President of ABM, was conducted on 14 February 2019.

⁶² These are: Goiás, Paraná, Minas Gerais, Amazonas, Piauí, Santa Catarina, Sao Paulo and the Association of Municipalities of Pernambuco.

⁶³ See GTF (2018); UCLG interviewed Mr. Juan Pablo Barquero Sanchez, Mayor of Tilarán, Costa Rica, in November 2018, at Venice City Solutions 2030.

Box 7

First Voluntary Local Reviews in Latin America

In Latin America, a growing number of LRGs are stepping forward and undertaking the task of presenting Voluntary Local Reviews; this reflects their engagement and commitment to achieving the Global Goals.

In Argentina, the city of Buenos Aires launched, in August 2018, the first report on implementation of SDG 16 with localised indicators (open government, accountable institutions, participation and inclusion).⁶⁴ The adaptation process of the SDG 16 was based on a survey consultation of civic actions and a broad consultation process within the city government (ten city departments) as well as among the diverse social organizations.

In Brazil, the municipality of Santana de w, located within the São Paulo Metropolitan Region, has adopted a highly innovative approach to the reporting process. It has produced its VLR through a public-private-institutional partnership involving the municipal authorities, leading institutions in education for sustainable development (Gaia Education and UNESCO Global Action Programme) and the private sector company Artesano. This combination of civil servants, local business personnel and representatives from civil society created an SDG Commission, by public decree. This organ has then become the main “SDG catalyser” for the municipality and has channelled the efforts undertaken to achieve localization in the run-up to the reporting process and also envisioned a plan for future action.⁶⁷

In Mexico, the states of Oaxaca and Mexico City launched their own Voluntary Local Reviews in 2018 and 2019, respectively. Both reports provide an overview of the comprehensive strategies implemented for advancing towards the SDGs in their territories. These two LRGs stress the importance of multi-level coordination, monitoring and follow-up mechanisms (Consejos para el Seguimiento de la Agenda 2030 and Technical Committees) and the capacity-building activities that can be implemented to promote ownership of the Goals by civil society. In both Mexico City and Oaxaca, local indicators were developed to bring the Global Goals closer to local realities. In Mexico City, 69.2% of the Agenda 2030 goals were identified as being aligned with the 2013–2018 municipal development plan, while the 690 indicators identified within Monitoreo CDMX, a mapping tool freely accessible online, have been aligned with 16 of the 17 SDGs.⁶⁸ Mexico City’s VLR also underlines how, having built on the mapping efforts, work is now underway to integrate the outputs from the Technical Committees into the new local government development plan.⁶⁹ In Oaxaca, the 240 indicators of Agenda 2030 were mapped against the 97 indicators contained in the state budgets and their revisions for the 2016–2022 State Development Plan (PED). In 2019, work has started to align the PED with the SDGs. Action has also been directed at the local level, with a strong focus on promoting civic participation through the establishment of 547 Municipal Social Development Councils. A guide for Municipal Sustainable Development Plans has also been drawn up for the implementation of participatory local planning pilot projects in 10 municipalities.⁷⁰

⁶⁴ The municipalities are located in the States of Chiapas, Cohahuila, Colima, Mexico and Tlaxcala. UNDP (2019) Localización de la Agenda 2030 en México, Sistematización y operacionalización de los Organos de Seguimiento e Instrumentación de la Agenda 2030. Available at: <http://tiny.cc/0ecl8y>.

⁶⁵ See also: <https://municipios.odsargentina.gob.ar/noticias.php>.

⁶⁶ Buenos Aires Ciudad (2018) “Towards an Open Government: SDG 16 adaptation process in the Autonomous City of Buenos Aires”. Several actions were launched for SDGs 11 and 16 (housing, neighbourhood 31, green space, soft mobility, energy reduction); many of these work towards achieving SDGs 3, 4, 5, 10.

⁶⁷ The VLR of Santana de Parnaiba is available at: https://www.iges.or.jp/en/sdgs/vlr/santana_de_parnaiba.html.

⁶⁸ See Monitoreo CDMX portal: <http://www.monitoreo.cdmx.gob.mx/>.

⁶⁹ The VLR of Mexico City is available at: http://www.monitoreo.cdmx.gob.mx/consulta/evento/informe_agenda_2030_v/1.

⁷⁰ The VLR of Oaxaca is available at: <http://www.agenda2030.oaxaca.gob.mx/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/Revisi%C3%B3n-Estatal-Voluntaria.pdf>.

Units’ (OSIs).⁶⁴ By early 2019, nine states had reached an advanced level of alignment, seven had aligned their guiding principles and 19 had not yet reached alignment. The City of Mexico and the state of Oaxaca published their own Voluntary Local Reviews (see box 7).

In **Argentina**, over the past year, the government has signed agreements with 18 (out of its 24) provinces to implement the SDGs in their territories. The city of Buenos Aires has been at the forefront of the localization

process, with initiatives including the alignment of SDGs with local plans, promoting resilience and raising awareness (through events like the Youth Olympic Games of 2018), and has specifically focused on SDGs 16 and 11. Around 30 municipalities are currently making progress in aligning their plans with the SDGs.⁶⁵

In **Ecuador**, both the national Association of Municipalities (AME) and the Association of Provincial Governments (CONGOPE) have promoted virtual and face-to-face courses on

In Latin America, a growing number of LRGs are stepping forward to present Voluntary Local Reviews.

the localization of the SDGs, in collaboration with UNDP.⁷¹ AME collaborates with the National Institute of Statistics in collecting indicators relating to SDG 6 and SDG 12. However, the involvement of these organizations in the coordination of national strategies has not been regular (and, in fact, quite limited). Cities like Quito, Cuenca and Ibarra have aligned their development plans with the SDGs, as have some provinces (Cañar, Manabí, Nayo, Santo Domingo, Galápagos and Azuay).

In **Colombia**, over recent years, the national government has encouraged the alignment of municipal and departmental development plans with the SDGs. Significant progress has been made (in Bogota, Medellin, Barranquilla and Cartago amongst other cities), but many local governments consider that national government support and guidelines are still insufficient. Various municipalities have, however, made progress in the monitoring process.⁷² The Colombian Federation of Municipalities (FCM) has regular contacts with central government, but it is not directly involved in the National Interinstitutional Committee for the coordination and follow-up of the SDGs. The FCM has organised and participated in several meetings to disseminate the SDGs and supported various projects that, although not specifically focused on the SDGs, have contributed to several of their goals (e.g. public accountability “*Gobernanza Con Sentido Público*”, gender equality, peace, justice and solid institutions, all of which are related to SDG 16). The Colombian Association of Capital Cities (Asocapitals) has also organized several SDG workshops (e.g. in Medellin, in March 2019).

In **Honduras**, the Association of Municipalities has integrated the SDGs into its work plan. The municipalities of Colinas, Santa Barbara, San Pedro Sula and Tegucigalpa have begun a rapid diagnosis at institutional and local levels and Santa Rosa de Copán has already initiated a pilot project to socialise the SDGs.

In other countries, the process still remains relatively incipient. In **Peru**, two associations –

the National Assembly of Regional Governments (ANGR) and the Association of Municipalities of Peru (AMPE) – have offered support and training to create participatory local and regional development plans. In **Paraguay**, the city of Asuncion is promoting a participatory approach for alignment. In **Bolivia**, La Paz has carried out awareness-raising activities for its staff, including virtual platforms, seminars and workshops, and published a report on the Localization of the SDGs in the municipality. In **Venezuela**, the UN System in Venezuela, in collaboration with other stakeholders, has launched the “Caravan of the SDGs” to facilitate local-level dialogue about the SDGs between local governments, political parties, companies, social organizations and academia. In total, 12 local dialogues have already been carried out, with the attendance of 1300 participants.⁷³

Middle East and West Asia

The countries in the MEWA Region mostly have centralized governance systems which limit the capacity of LRGs to localize the SDGs in their territories. Nevertheless, LGRs and their associations are increasingly putting forward initiatives related to the achievement of the SDGs.⁷⁴

At the regional level, **UCLG-MEWA** has designed and organized many activities and initiatives to raise awareness and involve local governments in the SDG implementation process. Based on four strategic priorities: migration and social cohesion; local development and governance; fighting against and adapting to climate change; and urban resilience, UCLG-MEWA has organized capacity-building workshops for municipal staff. These activities have taken place within the context of the Pilot

⁷² Through the alliance “*Ciudades, ¿cómo vamos?*”, 36 cities have developed civic platforms to follow-up on the SDGs. The Colombian government has developed two tools to help territorial authorities in their monitoring and evaluation process: the Performance Evaluation Information System (SINERGIA) and Terridata.

⁷¹ For more information on online courses, see: <http://www.amevirtual.gob.ec/capacitame/>.

⁷³ UNDP “SDG Caravan in Venezuela: local dialogues for development”. Published online on Localizing the SDGs (28 May 2019).

⁷⁴ The countries whose LRGs and LGAs answered the survey in 2019 were (countries reporting this year are highlighted in bold text): Afghanistan, Jordan, Lebanon and **Turkey**. In 2018, the LGA in Palestine, one city from Iran and a national institution from United Arab Emirates answered the survey.

Project on Mapping the SDGs in **Turkey**,⁷⁵ which UCLG-MEWA plans to disseminate to the other countries in the MEWA Region and to integrate these municipal activities into Turkey's VNR.

Although the presence of LGAs in the region is limited, they play an active role in **Turkey**, **Lebanon** and **Palestine**. As mentioned in the previous section, the UMT and the Union of Marmara Municipalities are actively engaged in supporting the localization process in **Turkey**, at both the national and regional levels, and in raising awareness and endorsing capacity-building activities amongst member LRGs (see section 3.3 for details). In **Lebanon**, both the Technical Office of the Lebanese Municipalities (BTVL) and the Dannieh Municipalities Union (DMU) have made comprehensive efforts to contribute to SDG localization in the region. The DMU has organized campaigns to raise awareness of the importance of achieving the SDGs. There have also been great efforts to make this work as transparent as possible and the DMU has revised its strategic plan in order to comply with the SDGs and the pursuit of its Goals. In **Palestine**, the national association (APLA) has similarly aligned its strategic plan for the period 2019-2022 with the SDGs. At the same time, it has also established the Palestinian City Managers Network (PCMN),⁷⁶ which is comprised of high-level administrators who are responsible for running day-to-day operations in the Palestinian municipalities. The aim is to exert leverage on decentralized cooperation efforts at the local level.

While LRG involvement in the implementation and reporting of the Goals has been limited by the predominantly centralized governance structures, initiatives endorsing sustainable development have still managed to emerge. Particularly in the most war-torn areas, many Middle Eastern municipalities have witnessed destruction and the abandonment of historical heritage and millennia-old settlements; whenever possible, they are now putting forward initiatives to revert such situations. Mosul, in **Iraq**, and Altindag, in **Turkey**, for example, have already accessed financial assistance from their central governments to rebuild damaged parts of their cities. Other LRGs are tackling challenges related to urban services and climate change. This is, for instance, the case of the Greater Municipality of Amman, in **Jordan**, which has developed Amman's Resilience Strategy Plan⁷⁷ to combat climate-related challenges and those related to the forced displacement of the population while, promoting a resilient and sustainable urban environment. Along similar lines, in **Iran** the city of Tehran has developed the Sustainable Development of Tehran City Green Space⁷⁸ project, which aims to achieve the sustainable development of Tehran's green space and improve environmental protection. The city of Shiraz has also implemented its Green City project,⁷⁹ which has helped to increase green space and to steer a route towards sustainable urbanization.

⁷⁵ For more information on UCLG-MEWA's Pilot Project on Mapping the Sustainable Goals in Turkey, see: <http://tiny.cc/0h1s8y>.

⁷⁶ To view the Palestinian City Managers Network Action Plan, refer to: <https://www.apla.ps/en/projects/881.html>.

⁷⁷ Amman's Resilience Strategy is available for access at: <http://tiny.cc/oj1s8y>.

⁷⁸ Tehran's City Green Space project is a comprehensive and long-term programme to promote sustainability. For further details, see: <https://use.metropolis.org/case-studies/sustainable-development-of-tehran-city-green-space>.

⁷⁹ The Green City project in Shiraz endorses sustainable development patterns integrating environmental conservation and economic growth. More information is available at: <https://use.metropolis.org/case-studies/shiraz-the-green-city>.



Adiza Lamien Ouando, trainer in gender-responsive budgeting, approaches Target 5.5 at a 'Training of Trainers' on Localizing, organized by UCLG in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso, 16-17 June 2019 (photo: UCLG).

Northern America

In Northern America, certain LGAs are explicitly using the SDG framework as a roadmap for action at the local level.⁸⁰ Notwithstanding this, they have, either directly or indirectly, supported the effective achievement of the SDGs through campaigning, awareness-raising and knowledge-sharing activities. In **Canada**, the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) promotes SDGs through the use of social media, knowledge platforms and the FCM newsletter. By hosting the Big City Mayors' Caucus, the FCM has also played a significant role in drawing attention to the importance of SDG localization and its links with many of the issues addressed by the 22 largest Canadian municipalities that comprise the Caucus. The FCM also explicitly supports using the SDGs as a tool for monitoring development assistance in all of its international initiatives. In Canada, several municipalities, including those of Calgary, Edmonton, Toronto, and New Westminster, have aligned their strategic plans with the SDGs. In doing so, they have placed considerable emphasis on alleviating poverty.⁸¹ Others, like Bridgewater, are planning to do the same.⁸² With support of the British Columbia Council for International Cooperation and the Pacific Institute for Climate Solutions, Kelowna has also started working on a pilot project to localize the SDGs.⁸³ As far as monitoring initiatives are concerned, the city of Winnipeg – in partnership with several local stakeholders – has developed a community indicator system called “Peg” that uses the SDG framework to measure well-being in the city.⁸⁴

In the **United States**, the work of the National League of Cities (NLC) has been crucial for empowering and mobilizing smaller local government organizations and their communities in the process of SDG Localization. The NLC's policy positions have put strong emphasis on reducing GHG emissions, promoting clean energy and improving energy efficiency, and also preserving natural resources and reducing ethnic, gender and income inequality. At the provincial level, the advocacy priorities and actions of US provincial associations of municipalities, although not explicit, have had a positive influence on the localization of the SDGs. In addition, several pioneering cities and local government organizations have committed to achieving the SDGs and including them in local strategies and medium-term planning. Besides New York City,⁸⁵ other US cities, including Baltimore, Los Angeles,

Orlando and San Jose, have either indicated their willingness to monitor progress towards achieving the SDGs or explicitly used them as a basis for their own local plans. Los Angeles, for instance, is developing a public dashboard after mapping its city strategies relevant to the SDG framework.⁸⁶ Meanwhile, Orlando is using the SDGs to build a new regional resilience plan in eight counties and more than 40 towns.⁸⁷ The US branch of ICLEI (Local Governments for Sustainability) has developed the ClearPath tool to track progress towards achieving its climate change goals. To date, 251 cities have submitted their GHG inventories to ICLEI's ClearPath tool.

In the Caribbean, the CLGF has sensitized local authorities in **Dominica, Jamaica and Trinidad and Tobago** to SDG implementation at the local level through the organization of a regional conference, which was held in Port of Spain, in December 2018. Through the “Strengthening local government's role as a partner in development” project, the CGLF has also been working with the Ministry of Social Transformation, Local Government and Community Empowerment of **Saint Lucia** to strengthen the role of local governments and other local and national stakeholders in localizing and implementing the SDGs.

Despite the efforts of various networks and associations, which have been shown from the replies to the survey, LRGs and LGAs from all regions of the world still face many challenges in working towards achieving the SDGs. The majority of local government associations surveyed stated that the main difficulties to overcome are associated with their limited financial and human resources. African respondents also highlighted limited access to information as one of their major constraints. The Asia-Pacific, European and Latin American respondents reported that limited local interest and awareness of the SDGs and limited coordination across different levels of government were the main factors that were hindering the implementation of SDGs at the local level.

⁸⁰ The Federation of Canadian Municipalities and the League of Cities (USA) answered the GTF Survey in 2019 as well as Trinidad and Tobago from the Caribbean region.

⁸¹ Enough for All Calgary (<https://enoughforall.ca>), End Poverty Edmonton (<https://www.endpovertyedmonton.ca>), Toronto's Poverty Reduction Strategy (<http://tiny.cc/xm1s8y>) and Community Poverty Reduction Strategy of New Westminster (<http://tiny.cc/a01s8y>) overlap significantly with the SDGs.

⁸² Bridgewater is considering to align its energy initiatives with the SDGs. See: <http://www.energizebridgewater.ca>.

⁸³ This project includes reviewing policies, targets and indicators in local plans to align them with the SDGs, including the city's Official Community Plan, Climate Action Plan, and Healthy City Strategy. See: <http://tiny.cc/cq1s8y>.

⁸⁴ For more information, see: <https://www.mypeg.ca>.

⁸⁵ See GTF (2018).

⁸⁶ Erin Bromaghim (2019) Revising National SDG Targets for the City of Los Angeles. Trends.

⁸⁷ Pipa A. “Cities: The labs for Sustainable Development Goal innovation”. Published online Brookings blogs (18 June 2019).

Global Networks

United in the **Global Taskforce of Local and Regional Governments**, the world's 24 major international and regional networks of local governments work towards the achievement of the 2030 Agenda and the global agendas for sustainable development – including the Paris Agreement, the New Urban Agenda, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, the Sendai Framework for Action on Disaster Risk Reduction and the Global Compact on Migration.

Networks engage in activities that complement themselves to reinforce the localization of SDGs. As part of its decentralized cooperation programs, the **International Association of French Speaking Mayors (AIMF)** has supported projects in the fields of modernizing financial management in local administration, waste management, local economic development, protection of national ecosystems, women empowerment and access to sustainable energy, among others. The association has an advocacy group dedicated to localizing the SDG and supported the *Localization and decentralization* reviews in African francophone countries in 2018.

Around the world, **C40 Cities**⁸⁸ action's to tackle climate action and implement the Paris Agreement on climate change has a direct impact on the localization of the 2030 Agenda. In this respect, C40 has put forward cross-cutting initiatives such as *Deadline 2020*, which supports cities in designing climate action plans consistent with the 1.5 C scenario of the Paris Agreement, C40 City Diplomacy and City Finance programmes, as well as the Coalition for Urban Transitions. Every C40 programme actually supports cities to localize

the different parts of the 2030 Agenda: Food on SDG2, Co-benefits on SDG3 and SDG8, Women4Climate on SDG5, Adaptation on SDG6, SDG11 and SDG15, Energy & Buildings on SDG7 and SDG12, Inclusive Climate Action and Mayors Migration Council on SDG8 and SDG10, Transport, Urban Planning and Waste on SDG11, and Sustainable Consumption on SDG12. By making those links more visible and explicit, C40 contributes to strengthening both the climate and sustainable development agendas at the global and local levels.

The **Commonwealth Local Government Forum (CLGF)** actively works with both its membership and the GTF to promote SDG localization and since 2016, it has organized 10 regional events focused on awareness-raising and experience-sharing regarding SDGs' localization processes. CLGF projects place strong emphasis on local economic development as a means of reducing poverty and achieving the SDGs, as well as on increasing the capacity of potential and existing elected women. CLGF has also developed a range of knowledge products to support SDGs' localization, including a *Commonwealth Local Government Handbook* that profiles the local government systems in the countries of the Commonwealth.⁸⁹

ICLEI's⁹⁰ work through peer exchange, partnerships and capacity building to create systemic change for urban sustainability by providing networking, learning and cooperation opportunities to LRGs. Articulated around five interconnected pathways⁹¹ to sustainable development, ICLEI's initiatives emphasize providing LRGs with technical guidance and support allowing LRGs to access renewable energy and energy efficiency experts, tools and resources. The ICLEI Montréal Action Plan 2018 – 2021 is designed to accelerate sustainable,

⁸⁸ <https://www.c40.org>
Representing 94 of the world's greatest cities 700+ million citizens and one quarter of the global economy, mayors of the C40 cities are committed to delivering on the most ambitious goals of the Paris Agreement at the local level, as well as to cleaning the air we breathe.

⁸⁹ For more information on the country profiles, see: <http://www.clgf.org.uk/resource-centre/clgf-publications/country-profiles>.

⁹⁰ ICLEI – Local Governments for Sustainability is a global network of more than 1,750 local and regional governments committed to sustainable urban development active in 100+ countries. ICLEI advocates for sustainability policy and drive local action for low emission, nature-based, equitable, resilient and circular development.

⁹¹ Departing from the understanding of cities as complex systems, ICLEI's action is structured along five interdependent pathways towards low emission, nature-based, equitable, resilient and circular development. See: https://iclei.org/en/our_approach.html.

Global networks engage in activities that complement themselves to reinforce synergies towards the localization of SDGs.

UCLG has focused its advocacy efforts in opening and enhancing spaces of dialogue within the UN, and among local and national governments.

integrated urban and territorial development. As of June 2019, ICLEI is undertaking globally 194 projects, each contributing multiple SDGs. ICLEI is most actively engaged with SDG 11, SDG 13, SDG17, SDG7, SDG3 and can have a greater impact. In addition, ICLEI is supporting efforts of its pioneering members developing VLRs, such as New York City, Orlando or Kitakyushu, as well as those that embark on innovative national or global partnerships like Bonn, Ghent or Seoul.

Since the launch of its Action Plan 2018-2020, **Metropolis** has been shedding light into the efforts of its members, the governments of major cities and metropolitan areas, to implement the SDGs. For instance, at **USE** (urban sustainability exchange),⁹² the association's platform for citymakers to exchange practices, all of the 319 cases published online are urban projects related to the implementation of the SDGs.⁹³ Resulting from a pioneering comparative research on 61 Metropolis members, Metropolis has launched the Metropolitan indicators, which are aligned with the Agenda 2030 and have been structured into a framework that encompasses 12 SDGs.⁹⁴

Through their flagship initiatives for the localization of SDGs, **Regions4 Sustainable Development** support the role played by regions the implementation and follow-up of the Agenda 2030 Goals, leveraging on their strategic position to overcome territorial inequalities, create enabling conditions for sustainable and inclusive development and integrate efforts between different levels of government. Regions4's reporting efforts include three reports on the state of SDGs' localization, an assessment of regional participation in VNRs. Moreover, it has also elaborated guiding steps and methodology to support localization,

including the experiences of 47 regions from 23 countries and 4 continents with respect to SDGs implementation.⁹⁵

As part of **UCLG's** efforts to make the global agendas truly co-owned by all its members, learning and training initiatives have been developed to provide LRGs and their associations with guidance and toolkits for policy alignment and localization (module 2), monitoring and reporting processes (module 3). Moreover, UCLG has made significant contributions on monitoring and reporting through the launching of the 2019 report of the World Observatory on Subnational Government Finance and Investment,⁹⁶ in partnership with the OECD, and the elaboration of the upcoming Fifth report of the Global Observatory of Local Democracy, GOLD V. Throughout the past year, UCLG has focused its advocacy efforts in opening and enhancing spaces of dialogue within the UN, and among local and national governments. Further, it has worked to shift the narrative on the phenomenon of migration through its inputs to the Global Compact on Migration. ❖

⁹² Accessible online at: <https://use.metropolis.org>.

⁹³ Out of which, 144 are projects from Metropolis members related to at least one of the SDGs being reviewed for the 2019 HLPF.

⁹⁴ Even SDGs 2,4,7,15 and 15, which are not directly present within the developed framework, are indirectly addressed by many of the 38 indicators available.

⁹⁵ More information available at: <https://www.regions4.org/about-us/regions4>.

⁹⁶ Joint initiative from OECD and UCLG, carried out with financial and technical support from UNCDF and financial support from AFD, CEB and DeLoG.

4.

Empowering people and ensuring inclusiveness and equality



The SDGs – as well as the New Urban Agenda, the Paris Agreement, the Sendai Framework and other global agenda – have acknowledged the major role and the specific challenges Local and Regional Governments (LRGs) face in the cities and territories they manage.

This fourth year, the global mobilization to the SDGs has kept growing. The section summarises the challenges and illustrates the main trends in promoting the rights-based agenda with over 160 practices led by LRGs. Cities and regions of varying sizes (both large and small) and with different characteristics (from high, middle and low-income countries) are strengthening local partnerships and multi-level dialogues to innovate and co-create more sustainable solutions for sustainable development. Databases gathering additional local knowledge and potential ways forward are proposed to accelerate the pace of localizing the SDGs, the Paris Agreement and, overall, empowering people and ensuring inclusiveness and equality.





Metro station in Caracas, Venezuela (photo: Eneas de Troya, <https://bit.ly/2xstaud>).



SDG 4

Inclusive and equitable quality education¹



SDG 4

Cities, large or small, offer countless opportunities for education²

Education is recognized by the core human rights treaties as a fundamental right for unlocking the full development of individuals and communities. Education is not only relevant from a national government perspective though, with many cities and regions also playing a pivotal role. Local and regional governments (LRGs) have a privileged position, as the first level of public administration, from which to foster relevant educational policies. In many regions they contribute to educational policies, school infrastructure, professional learning, extra-curricular activities, and also to assessing the impact of public policies on the day-to-day lives of communities. According to the UN Secretary-General,³ disparities in education need targeted answers, structured along the lines of gender, urban-rural location and other dimensions linked to the local reality. Education is crucial for developing human capacities and creativity and essential in building cities and territories that foster social coexistence, resilience and active citizenship.

as Australia, Austria, Canada and Germany, it is the states, provinces or regions that are allocated education-related responsibilities. In other countries, such as Finland, the United Kingdom and Brazil, strong decentralization processes have resulted in the transfer of power concerning most schooling matters to local authorities.⁶ Similarly, in the USA, school districts are responsible for raising and managing funding at the local level, with variable levels of financial support from federal government.⁷ Likewise, the Republic of Korea has delegated much of its budget planning and major administrative decisions to local authorities;⁸ this trend has also been followed in Denmark, Lithuania, Sweden and the Slovak Republic.⁹

Some other countries count on sub-national administrations to act as bridges between their central and regional-level; this is, for instance, the case in Spain (with its autonomous communities), Japan (with its prefectures) and Argentina (with its provinces). In other countries (such as France), although the National Ministry of Education has overall responsibility for organizing the education system, specific responsibilities and funds are also transferred to LRGs. Accordingly, cities are responsible for early childhood and primary education; intermediate levels of government (*départements*) are responsible for compulsory secondary education (*collèges*) and regional governments are responsible for secondary education and vocational education (TVET, *lycées and enseignement professionnel*).

Even though the main effort deployed in education falls under the formal education system, education needs to be considered a lifelong learning endeavour that transcends schooling. Worldwide, LRGs are critical actors with the capacity to complement and expand the impact of country-level educational policies by assuming a proactive, inclusive and rights-based approach.

A diverse set of responsibilities assigned at local level

The scope of the responsibilities assigned to local and regional governments⁴ in educational policy-making, planning, management and funding is wide-ranging. On a world average of 67 countries with available data, education is the primary area of spending of LRGs both as a share of GDP (2.6%) and as a share of the current expenditure (23.6%).⁵ For federal countries, such

¹ This section has been produced by the International Association of Educating Cities and UCLG, with specific contributions from the UCLG Committee on Culture.

² International Association of Educating Cities "Charter of Educating Cities" (1990).

³ 2018 Report of the UN Secretary-General, The Sustainable Development Goals Report.

⁴ In this section, the terms "city and regions" and "local and regional governments" can be used indistinctly.

⁵ OECD/UCLG 2019 Report World Observatory on Subnational Government Finance and Investment: Key Findings.

⁶ OECD (2017) The funding of school education.

⁷ Roser M. and Ortiz-Ospina E. "Financing Education" published online at OurWorldInData.org.

⁸ For more information see: <http://english.moe.go.kr/sub/info.do?m=020108&s=english>.

⁹ OECD (2017) The funding of school education.



SDG 4
Inclusive and
equitable quality
education

Local initiatives and policy responses¹⁰

Regardless of their legal responsibilities, LRGs implement a wide range of initiatives that help to advance the SDG 4 in highly strategic dimensions. One key role cities and regions play is to **promote equal opportunities in quality education** to help citizens, regardless of their age, sexual and gender identity, economic, social, cultural, religious or ethnic background, to develop the knowledge, skills, values and attitudes required to foster social cohesion, find decent employment and fully participate in society.

A number of cities around the world, including **Rennes** (France), **Brighton** (UK), **Amsterdam** (The Netherlands) and **Adelaide** (Australia), have introduced school district zoning policies, with the aim of fighting segregation and preventing the creation of ghettos, by ensuring that schools reflect the city's diversity. Pursuing this same objective, many have set up municipal scholarships or funding programmes which help to cover educational costs for vulnerable groups (e.g., **Guadalajara**, Mexico). Other cities provide tutoring and mentoring programmes aimed at students with learning difficulties, such as peer-tutors (e.g., **Sabaneta**, Colombia), or volunteers within the classroom (e.g., **Granollers**, Spain), to help children and youth with their school assignments. Other cities offer support strategies to enhance academic success for all, by offering extra-curricular activities, or summer camps, aimed at enriching students' educational opportunities.

Efforts are also being made to **reduce absenteeism and early school dropout**, by offering complementary educational pathways that encourage student reenrolment at school (like programmes providing pre-employment support for adolescents at risk of social exclusion, and second chance schools).¹¹ Specific support programmes for vulnerable groups at risk of social exclusion, such as migrants and refugees, have also been introduced by cities such as **Amman** (Jordan) and **Chyah** (Lebanon), amongst many others.

Engaging families in the educational process of their children, by offering different spaces for collaboration, is another strategy that has been used by local governments to ensure quality in education for all. **Paris** (France), **Balanga**¹² (The Philippines) and numerous other cities have set up parent training programmes to encourage

children to adhere to educational paths. This same line of action includes programmes aimed at engaging the community in its broader sense; these have been successful in cities such as **Brussels** (Belgium), **L'Hospitalet de Llobregat** (Spain) and **Montevideo** (Uruguay), providing learning experiences through civic practices with local NGO or at civic services. Other cities complement the educational curricula by offering students the opportunity to analyse and propose improvements for their city (e.g., Évora, Portugal), by offering study visits to different municipal facilities (e.g., Turin, Italy), among many others) and/or by setting up participation platforms for children and/or adults.

Gender equality (SDG 5) is inextricably linked to the right to education for all. It needs to be mainstreamed in all the different axes of intervention. To counteract the pervasive effects of gender-based discrimination, which limits educational opportunities and outcomes for girls and young women, some LRGs have assessed local barriers and adopted specific measures, such as promoting educational practices that foster greater gender equality. **San Francisco** (Argentina) offers a specific programme to prevent teenage mothers and fathers from dropping out of school by providing them with tailored educational support, and kindergarten facilities for their children. **Changwon City** (Republic of Korea) promotes the specific participation of fathers at school to help break down prevailing gender stereotypes related to child care. In Indonesia, the government of North Lombok District is working with civil society to promote adult education for women born in grassroots communities. The Women's School has led to immediate results in reducing discriminatory barriers to political participation in village and district consultative fora (see SDG 16). The practice will be replicated in villages of East and **North Lombok District**.¹³ Other possible preventive strategies would involve promoting non-gender-biased upbringing, to be achieved through campaigns to raise awareness and/or mentoring programmes run at the local level. This could allow children to unlock their full potential and encourage them to challenge traditional gender roles that might otherwise influence their choice of educational pathways.

A number of **LRGs are working towards innovation in the learning process**. To do so, LRGs are collaborating with networks of local agents and the private sector, are actively involved in reinforcing innovation and the quality of learning supports and methodologies

¹⁰ If not stated otherwise, more information on the examples mentioned in this section can be found at the International Association of Educating Cities Bank of Experiences: www.edcities.org/en/bank-experiences.

¹¹ See the European Association of Cities for the Second Chance Schools available online here: www.e2c-europe.org/#.

¹² The City of Balanga is the UNESCO Learning City Award winner in 2015. see: <https://uil.unesco.org/case-study/gnlc/balanga>.

¹³ See Kapal Perempuan Institute and Kompas Newsletter in the VNR of Indonesia 2019.

and also offering in-service teacher training. All of these measures are relevant for ensuring quality education for all (e.g., **Viladecans**, Spain).

The city of **Tampere**, along with many others in Finland and elsewhere, is considering the **school environment** as a crucial variable for fostering student engagement in education, backed by scientific evidence. The city currently supports a programme to combat bullying in schools through emotional education, addressed to students, teachers and families. Similarly, other cities have implemented specific campaigns to raise awareness of issues such as wellbeing and healthy lifestyles. It has therefore become a priority for LRGs to ensure that schools are safe places, from risk going from gun-violence to air/noise pollution, **by providing a supportive atmosphere for their students**.

On another level, local governments are usually the authorities under whose ownership educational facilities fall, even though the activity that takes place within them may well be managed by a national or regional administration. Some LRGs, such as **Saint Etienne** (France), have set up participatory initiatives to improve the design of educational facilities. They have done this in an effort to incorporate the views and needs of the target population and to make their content more responsive to its needs (see SDG 10). This might also include removing barriers that obstruct access to these facilities, be they structural, cultural or language-related, in order to achieve greater inclusion (**Montréal**, Canada).¹⁴ Based on this inclusive approach, **Besançon** (France) fosters coexistence and inclusion at a kindergarten where diversely-abled children are given the chance to share their daily lives (see

— **LRGs are working towards innovation in the learning process and providing an accessible, safe and supportive environment to all.**

Box 8.

BiblioLab: creating laboratories in the libraries

BiblioLab is a program implemented by the Barcelona Provincial Council library network that develops and supports activities to foster access and knowledge through experimentation and innovative and creative methodologies in a collaborative space open to the communities. The program encompasses technological and social sciences projects as well as others related to the arts or reading and writing. The concept behind Bibliolabs introduces a new dimension of the libraries that can now be dynamic learning and experimentation spaces where users become the protagonists through the generation and exchange of knowledge.

For more information see <https://bibliotecavirtual.diba.cat/bibliolab> and the Barcelona Provincial Council library portal: www.diba.cat/en/web/biblioteques/.

also SDG 16). In Zambia, local governments play a crucial role in improving health interventions in school institutions **by ensuring that students have access to drinking water and sanitation (see SDG 6)**.¹⁵ For other cities with heavy traffic, access to school for children is a concern that has led to the establishment of school paths and/or community walking buses **Auckland**¹⁶ (New Zealand) and **Nantes** (France) among many others), aimed at reducing the use of motorized vehicles, enhancing safety, and promoting cleaner air and healthier habits.

For many LRGs, **early childhood development, education and care** offer a field of action that is highly flexible and open to their intervention, as it tends not to have such strong state-level regulation as primary or secondary education. Numerous municipal early childhood and pre-school education programmes therefore aim to provide a mechanism to compensate social inequalities and enhance social cohesion through a more local approach. Some cities, such as **Sant Feliu de Llobregat** (Spain) and **Aarhus** (Denmark), therefore focus on providing equitable access to childhood education and care services through a social pricing strategy that allows families to pay for such services in proportion to their income. In **Medellin** (Colombia), an interdisciplinary team offers a comprehensive

¹⁴ See City of Montreal portal: http://ville.montreal.qc.ca/portal/page?_pageid=8258,90439645&dad=portal&_schema=PORTAL.

¹⁵ UNICEF (2013) Snapshot of WASH in Schools in Eastern and Southern Africa. See also GTF (2018).

¹⁶ See the Walking school bus initiative, available online at: <http://tiny.cc/f2ok8y>.



programme for mothers in vulnerable situations that starts from early pregnancy and continues until children are five years old. Other cities, such as **Gothenburg** (Sweden), offer spaces dedicated to families in order to help parents to nurture child development during early infancy. By working hand-in-hand with families, these interventions also provide a platform for identifying specific needs and designing appropriate local-level social welfare policies.

The cause and effect relationship between education policies and working conditions has been emphasised in many occasions. Taking the example of Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) programmes, from a LRG perspective, ideally, they should incorporate the views and requirements of the local production base into their planning and implementation processes in order to ensure that they respond to these needs. This is not, however, always the case; TVET policies are often drafted at the national level and fail to incorporate a more decentralized perspective. Changes in national-level TVET policies may be slower or harder to implement, leaving local-level needs unsatisfied.

Regardless of the above, LRGs can design and develop complementary TVET programmes that meet the needs of local companies and foster employability within their territory. **Sorocaba** (Brazil), for instance, has introduced vocational orientation programmes and entrepreneurship reinforcement programmes through the University of the Worker Entrepreneur. The courses offered by this University are based on the needs of the local labour market, which are assessed via indicators and reports provided by the Workers' Services Offices, which works in close collaboration with the local productive sector. **Aswan**¹⁷ (Egypt) also offers various

entrepreneurial training opportunities, aimed at all groups in society. Similarly, in **Buenos Aires** (Argentina) the local authorities are improving labour market integration and the educational inclusion of young people, through counselling and vocational orientation. Other programmes focus on protecting traditional local manufactures and crafts by training activities and entrepreneurship promotion, as in **Rosario**.

Tackling the educational needs of specific groups who are at risk of exclusion from the employment market is a line of action that many other local governments have committed to develop in order to foster a more inclusive society. For instance, the city of **Malargüe** (Argentina) has set up an employment integration centre for people whose disabilities hamper their full integration into the private sector labour market. **São Paulo** (Brazil) is currently implementing a project aimed at providing job opportunities to homeless people. In this comprehensive approach, participants follow specific training itineraries and receive social and financial support. The project builds alliances with local companies so that they can provide internship opportunities to employ participants in what may eventually become stable jobs, it has clearly interlinkages with SDG 8 and SDG 10.

Learning can take place in a variety of settings and on an on-going basis, throughout life. Educational policies must therefore keep adults and the elderly involved and motivated, engage them in relevant learning activities, encourage their personal development, and promote their wellbeing and civic engagement. LRGs are actively promoting a wide variety of initiatives that foster lifelong learning and education. Some of these focus on giving people foundational and digital literacy skills, while other

¹⁷ In 2019, UNESCO Learning City Award winners are Aswan (Egypt), Chengdu (China), Heraklion (Greece), Ibadan (Nigeria), Medellín (Colombia), Melitopol (Ukraine), Petaling Jaya (Malaysia), Santiago (Mexico), Seodaemun-gu (Republic of Korea), and Sønderborg (Denmark).

Responding to specific educational needs of people, who are at risk of exclusion from an ill-equipped employment market, for instance people with disabilities or homeless, is a line of action taken by LRGs to foster a more inclusive society.



Mural in Seattle (photo: Jamie, <https://bit.ly/2Ly5TUo>).

focus on personal development through culture or physical education, as at the Happy Learning Centre in **Paju** (Republic of Korea) and in the adult education programmes run in **Okayama**¹⁸ (Japan) and in **Tunis** (Tunisia). Following a similar line of action, **Quebec** (Canada) offers university courses for the elderly, which include a wide variety of disciplines and activities, while **Shenzhen**¹⁹ (China) has developed a learning website that integrates numerous educational resources and offers more than 100 free courses on a wide range of topics.

Complementarily, programmes aimed at facilitating the process of adaptation to the hosting community for newly arrived migrants are good examples of local-level initiatives that contribute to expanding lifelong learning. This is, for example, the case in **Vienna** (Austria), where language courses and information on local public services are provided. These programmes can also foster improved coexistence and social cohesion when local people and civic organizations are involved in the process, as happened in **Castelfiorentino** (Italy) with the Castello Alto Project, which improved social cohesion in the old city centre, which is a multi-cultural neighbourhood (see SDG 10).

LRGs can act as levers to promote **education for sustainable development, human rights, coexistence and culture. Implementing the principle of leaving no one and no place behind**, LRGs can encourage both urban and rural dwellers to protect the natural environment, adopt sustainable patterns of

production and consumption, and fight climate change (as in **Surabaya**,²⁰ Indonesia, and **N'Zérékoré**,²¹ Guinea). They can implement health and prevention strategies and run campaigns to raise awareness and improve health and wellbeing, as well as developing more caring and supportive attitudes towards others (e.g. violence-free women's networks in León, Mexico; see also SDG 16).

LRGs also promote ethical and cultural values, such as respect for other people and for nature, and promote and defend human rights). Along these lines, the city of **Seattle**²² (USA), is committed to promoting racial equity and actively works to eliminate institutional racism through different programmes, policies and practices. Similarly, the city of **Munich** (Germany) has implemented what is a pioneering pedagogical programme in Europe: it uses the power of street football as a universal language in order to reach out to populations at risk of exclusion, which are from different backgrounds and origins.

Cities and regions thrive on cultural diversity and LRGs promote culture's contribution to sustainable development.

They can do this through a range of initiatives, which include education and lifelong learning programmes. These may involve promoting access to, and participation in, cultural life through both formal and non-formal education. Examples of this include: the 'Creators in residence' programme, run by the city of **Barcelona** (Spain), which involves secondary-

¹⁸ See the Okayama city profile, available online at <https://uil.unesco.org/city/okayama-city>.

¹⁹ See the Shenzhen city profile available online at <https://uil.unesco.org/city/shenzhen>.

²⁰ UN Environment and IGES (2017) Planning and implementing of integrated solid waste management strategies at local level: The case of Surabaya city; available online here: <http://tiny.cc/ctiy8y>.

²¹ The city of N'Zérékoré received the UNESCO Learning City Award in 2017. See the case study online: <http://tiny.cc/c2zi8y>.

²² See the Race and Social Justice Initiative webpage: <https://www.seattle.gov/rsji>.



school students in creative processes that are facilitated by professional artists and creative groups; and the Crea programme, in **Bogotá** (Colombia), which provides a wide range of out-of-school opportunities for education involving the arts. Elsewhere, other programmes involve improving educational activities organised in collaboration with cultural agents, such as museums, libraries and theatre companies. One such example is a series of creative writing courses for refugees and asylum-seekers provided by the Dylan Thomas Centre in **Swansea** (UK). Measures can also be adopted to promote more integrated governance of education and culture. This can be achieved through joint strategies, programmes and networks, as in the *kültürLab* programme of **Izmir** (Turkey), and through the educational goals included in the Charter of Cultural Cooperation promoted by the city of **Lyon** (France).

To complement these actions, LRGs also foster civic engagement and empower people to participate in decision-making processes by setting up participative platforms and community deliberation groups; this helps to bring the diverse views and needs of the population to the table. Setting up volunteer programmes and encouraging local inhabitants to participate in them and to contribute their knowledge and talents are other ways of helping to build stronger and more inter-connected communities, especially when inclusion is mainstreamed and people of different ages, genders, origins, abilities and backgrounds are contacted and become actively engaged (as in the human library of **Valongo**, Portugal).

Furthermore, some LRGs provide support to civil society organizations, either by offering training courses, guaranteeing funding, offering local facilities to promote their work, or getting them actively involved in local policy-making processes.

The way forward

Education and lifelong learning lie at the heart of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and are indispensable for achieving them. As all the examples included in this report show, LRGs can make an important contribution to achieving the SDG 4 and so should not be neglected. Nevertheless, some key issues need to be considered in order to boost their impact, looking to the future.

Multi-level partnerships to advance in the provision of inclusive, quality education for everyone. Regardless of their legal attributions, LRGs are key actors in implementing educational policies and in improving the conditions that ensure inclusive quality education for all. For this reason, LRGs have to participate in the process of policy-making, together with Central Ministries of Education and other relevant actors within the educational sector. This multi-level cooperation in the policy-making process guarantees coherence and efficiency, a greater reach for those responsible for promoting quality in education and also better solutions to meet local needs.

Cities and regions are learning environments, irrespective of their size, population or economic strength, and offer countless opportunities for lifelong learning. Education transcends schooling and it is present across the entire city, in its public spaces, neighbourhoods and institutions. Different sectors of city management, including those responsible for health, education, culture, social welfare, urban planning, sports and leisure, and transport, provide the tools required to engage citizens in lifelong learning, to motivate them to become active learners acquire the necessary skills to develop in life, and to enjoy the opportunities the city offers. To reap the benefits of this approach at the local level, learning approaches must be mainstreamed as part of a cross-cutting priority which is applicable in all areas of intervention. However, strong horizontal integration is required to operationalize integrated planning and governance mechanisms. Besides permitting better connections between different departments, this approach helps to maximize the use of resources and the impact of outcomes. In this sense, the work carried out by the *International Association of Educating Cities*²³ proves that education is a key local policy area which has an unquestionably transformative impact at both the local and global levels.

²³ A worldwide network of local governments that supports cities and communities to ignite and develop their educating potential.

Local and regional governments should be enhanced as hubs of innovation for in formal, non-formal and informal education. In order to provide answers to local needs through education, LRGs are currently mobilizing, articulating and forging partnerships between different local actors and stakeholders in education, such as academia, civil society organizations, and the private sector in the territory. This has already resulted in innovative initiatives that are both transforming cities and contributing to the 2030 Agenda. Within this framework, cities and regions all over the world have made varying levels of progress in eliminating some of the multiple barriers that continue to exist. These are based on gender, age, ethnicity, poverty or disabilities and stand in the way of equal rights to enjoy quality education. Even so, LRGs still have important barriers to overcome and face significant constraints on their economic and human resources. National governments must recognize the important role of LRGs and transfer to them the financial resources required to achieve better outcomes in the fulfilment of SDG 4 and provision of quality education for all.

The cultural dimension of education should be strengthened. When LRGs and other local stakeholders engage in educational work, learning processes can become better adapted to the local cultural context. This may include the use of local languages, the inclusion of locally-relevant content, and the engagement of cultural organizations and other relevant stakeholders, all of which contribute to richer learning processes. This demonstrates the need for cultural considerations to be integrated across all SDGs, both where targets explicitly refer to culture (as in SDG 4.7) and elsewhere. The UCLG *Committee on Culture* actively promotes understanding of how culture is critical for the achievement of the SDGs. The *Obs* database of good practices relating to culture and sustainable cities has so far collected over 140 examples of projects from across the world; these have indexed on the basis of their relevance to each of the 17 SDGs. In 2018, the Committee on Culture published *Culture in the Sustainable Development Goals: A Guide for Local Action*, which provides evidence and practical guidance on how to strengthen the cultural dimension of the localization of the SDGs.²⁴

Measuring the contribution of local and regional governments to the progress made in quality education as an integral part of the global agendas is a pending challenge. The contribution made by LRGs to achieving SDG 4 needs to be monitored using a series of

standardized indicators. The current lack of assessment makes it difficult to identify the impact of local policies in fulfilling the right to education for all. This has also limited the power of LRGs to campaign for, and advocate, more localised educational policy domains and to have their views considered in global dialogues. It is therefore important to encourage cities and regions to assess and monitor the contribution that they make to the global educational goals, by implementing systematized follow-up and reporting mechanisms, and also by offering them specialized training and counselling. Similarly, LRGs need to increase their participation in global networks that can make their work in advancing the 2030 Agenda on education more visible.

In conclusion, in order to advance towards a more equitable and inclusive form of lifelong education for all, regional and local government organizations must work in close cooperation with national authorities. These, in turn, should incorporate them into their strategic policy-making processes. Treating LRGs as allies in the fight to make quality education for all a reality, also calls for a strengthening of their capacity to monitor their contributions to the SDG 4 and to encourage their full, and equal, participation in global conversations relating to Agenda 2030. ❖

²⁴ See examples in the UCLG Committee on Culture, Good practices database: <http://obs.agenda21culture.net>.

LRGs should be enhanced as hubs of innovation for formal, non-formal and informal education and provide answers to local needs through education.



SDG 8

Decent work
and economic growth²⁵

SDG 8

Local and regional governments fostering inclusive Local Economic Development

Even in spite of such an overwhelming trend as globalization, most work opportunities and the inherent quality of employment and working life still remain deeply intertwined with the dynamics of the cities and territories in which peoples live. While the commitment of national governments to promoting decent work and economic growth, in line with SDG 8, is mainly based on national-level policy making and economic targets, it is ultimately the task of local and regional governments (LRGs) to put into effect national economic, social and employment policies in their territories and to make these operative within their own respective communities.

All around the world, unemployment was lower in 2018 (at around 5%), than it had been since the onset of the global crisis in 2006. Even so, the growth of employment is projected to be rather modest over the coming years. Furthermore, and as highlighted by several reports from the International Labour Organization (ILO), “being in employment does not always guarantee a decent living”. On the contrary, most of job creation tends to involve low-quality, underpaid and insecure employment, providing little or no social protection and few basic rights for employees. In fact, most of the “3.3 billion people employed globally in 2018 experienced a lack of material well-being, economic security, equal opportunities or scope for human development”.²⁶ Informal and non-standard forms of employment are on the rise worldwide, with up to 1.1 billion people currently employed in this way, including most of the working poor. Moreover, the gender gap problem has yet to be adequately addressed: only 48% of the women have access to decent work, as opposed to 75% of men. Young people have been particularly affected: 20% of those under 25 are currently jobless.²⁷

Against this background, cities – and metropolitan areas, in particular – are globally acknowledged as fundamental ‘engines of growth’. They attract productive activity and investment (ranging from micro-enterprises to SMEs and multinational corporations), host and/or provide essential infrastructure for economic growth, and serve as hubs that provide public services for local communities.²⁸ Processes of decentralization and devolution have increased the responsibilities and competences of LRGs with respect to economic policy, job creation and the establishment of an environment that is conducive to sustainable growth and the creation of decent work. LRGs are also closer to local economic and social actors than any other tier of governance and, as such, are best placed to formulate development strategies tailored to meet the needs of their territories and communities. These needs include providing: an appropriately skilled and resourced public administration; effective support for local businesses and investors; and the political tools needed to deliver growth and innovation. They can be met by working in collaboration with all the relevant actors. Cities and regions are also exploring some of the options and possibilities provided by the green and circular economy, sharing and social economy; establishing stronger urban-rural partnerships; and improving the integration of the informal economy within the urban fabric in which it develops. Local governments are also important local employers and are responsible for ensuring social dialogue and defending and enforcing labour rights through the application of viable and sustainable procurement policies. The following sections provide selected examples that illustrate how initiatives driven, or supported, by subnational governments have contributed to the implementation of SDG 8.

²⁵ This section has been produced by UCLG’s Committee on Local Economic and Social Development, with specific contributions from the International Labour Organization (ILO), Public Service International (PSI), and the UCLG’s Committee on Culture, and the Community of Practice on Social Economy.

²⁶ International Labour Organization, World Employment and Social Outlook: Trends 2019, International Labour Office, Geneva: ILO, 2019, p. 1.

²⁷ ILO (2018), World Employment Social Outlook. Trends 2018, Geneva, ILO.

²⁸ UN General Assembly, Outcome Document of the UN Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development (Habitat III), A/Conf.226/4; Habitat III Policy Unit 7 – Urban Economic Development Strategies.



The role of local and regional governments in innovation and providing job opportunities for all

LRGs play an important role in the delivery of public services, the provision of vital infrastructure, and establishing an administrative context and conditions that are conducive to business and/or providing a socio-economic environment that favours growth and productivity (SDG 8.2). They can also facilitate partnerships and mobilization by working closely with economic institutions (such as chambers of industry and commerce), small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), universities, research centres, trade unions and other representatives of civic society. Such coalitions have made crucial contributions to the creation of tailor-made policies and instruments that foster development-oriented policies that promote entrepreneurship and the creation of decent employment (SDG 8.3), as well as endogenous and inclusive sustainable development (SDG 8.4).

Business districts and industrial and technology parks have mushroomed all over the world in the past few decades. Cities looking to attract skilled workers and competitive firms require quality infrastructure, services and facilities, good education centres, a quality of life and an engaging culture. To maintain the pace of the latest economic cycles, many cities have also had to adapt declining industrial sectors to the needs, instruments and language of new technologies, creative industries and more sustainable ways of manufacturing. **Montevideo** (Uruguay), for example, established a new industry and technology park in El Cerro, one of the poorest areas of the city. This district, of approximately 35,000 inhabitants, had been profoundly affected by industrial decline. The new initiative sought to create jobs, address problems of inequality and promote socially inclusive innovation.²⁹ In Ethiopia, agro-parks have generated employment in rural areas, particularly for women and young people. This has had a noticeable impact, through the indirect creation of employment and the establishment of a protected environment that guarantees decent working conditions.³⁰ City regeneration and renovation projects have also provided opportunities for local governments to learn more about and experiment with collaborative

approaches. The **Cheonggyecheon** district of Seoul, which has been redeveloped to support the city's transition towards creative and service industries, provides one of the most well-known examples of this.³¹ **LRGs are also giving increasing importance to the leading role that technological innovation plays in the creation of better and more accessible services for everyone** and have placed increasing interest in smart city, smart village³² and smart region solutions.³³ However, several such projects still raise certain doubts, particularly in relation to job substitution and automatization and the sensorization of the daily life of the community. They have also provoked a more critical approach from cities willing to take on smartification.

LRGs are also key partners when it comes to providing support for small and medium-sized enterprise clusters and densifying a territory's productive and economic fabric. They do so by facilitating connections and market intelligence, supporting access to grants and credit, pooling resources. For example, boosted by the EU Research and Innovation Strategy for Smart Specialization (RIS3), the **Basque Country** cluster (Spain) has pursued policies that have promoted cooperation among SMEs. It has done this by co-financing initiatives and by providing technical assistance to help meet what are increasing global challenges.³⁴ Other

²⁹ About the Parque Tecnológico Industrial del Cerro (PTIC) and the "Oeste Productivo" project, see: <https://www.pti.com.uy/?p=1892>.

³⁰ For example, in Ethiopia, ILO (2017) Rapid market assessments for six sectors.

³¹ UCLG (2016), Co-creating The Urban Future, GOLD IV, pp. 76-77; Leanza E. and Carbonaro G. (2016) 'Socially Inclusive Urban Transformation after the Great Recession'. In Human Smart Cities, pp. 175-94.

³² The EU has also been quite vocal in stressing the impact and added value of 'smart villages' in revamping rural-urban linkages and improving service provision and quality in rural contexts. See, EU Rural Review (Issue 26).

³³ United4Smart Sustainable Cities (2017), Enhancing innovation and participation in sustainable smart cities; DGIP-European Parliament (2014), Mapping Smart Cities in EU. At the global level, see also UCLG's Committee on Digital and Knowledge-Based Cities and the City of Bilbao, Smart Cities Study 2017.

³⁴ See: <https://www.interregeurope.eu/clusters3/>. The autonomous administration of the Basque Country and other stakeholders established the 'Basque Industry 4.0 Pilot Group', with active clusters in advanced manufacturing technologies, the automotive industry, energy and ICT.

International Women's Strike demonstrations in Montevideo, in 2017 (photo: Álvaro González Novoa, <https://bit.ly/2xpRTE1>).



LRGs are equally active in the development of business incubators offering technical support, training and employment opportunities for women and young people.

³⁵ Junta de Andalucía, Estrategia de Innovación de Andalucía 2020 RIS3 Andalucía.

³⁶ The "Rafaela Productiva-Plan estratégico 2020" has gathered information from over 800 SMEs. See: <https://rafaelaproductiva.com.ar/pagina/120/industria>.

³⁷ See: <https://www.barcelonactiva.cat/barcelonactiva/es/index.jsp>.

³⁸ The centre is funded by the Korean International Cooperation Agency (KOICA) and the Lotus Circle of the Asia Foundation.

³⁹ See the City of Cape Town webpage 'Work and Business' at <http://tiny.cc/lerk8y> and <http://salgadigital.org.za/pubs/innovation/4/index.php#page/1>.

⁴⁰ See the Working Document on 'Revitalising rural areas through digitisation', published in September 2018 by the European Network for Rural Development, available online at this address: https://enrd.ec.europa.eu/sites/enrd/files/tg_rural-businesses_case-study_rural-digital-hub.pdf.

⁴¹ A detailed description of the project is available here: https://enrd.ec.europa.eu/sites/enrd/files/tg_rural-businesses_case-study_agrient.pdf.

⁴² The Municipality of Molenwaard provided start-up funding of EUR 30,000 to a project aimed at connecting about 5,000 residents in rural areas to the broadband network. More information: https://enrd.ec.europa.eu/sites/enrd/files/tg_rural-businesses_case-study_molenwaard.pdf.

⁴³ UNDP (2013), Green Jobs for Women and Youth, What Can Local Governments Do? as well as OECD (2013), Green Growth in Cities, Paris, OECD.

⁴⁴ The London School of Economics, ICLEI and GGGI (2012) carried out interviews and complementary studies in 90 cities, including New York, Tokyo, Berlin, Johannesburg, Buenos Aires, Melbourne, Paris and Singapore.

⁴⁵ National Association of Counties, Growing a Green Local Economy, County Strategies for Economic, Workforce and Environmental Innovation.

⁴⁶ LSE, ICLEI, GGGI (2012). Energy Cities works on the thermal renewal of buildings, the transition towards sustainable mobility and the development of proximity as the linchpin of urban planning. See also: www.energy-cities.eu/IMG/pdf/local_energy_ownership_study-energycities-en.pdf. The Eastern Europe Energy Efficiency and Environment Partnership (ESP) supports projects on district heating, solid waste management, and energy efficiency in public buildings in many cities. See also <http://e5p.eu>.

regional governments in Spain, such as that of **Andalusia**, have used RIS3 as an opportunity to give greater importance to innovation and new technologies within its wider development strategy.³⁵ LRGs also have a fundamental role in helping to innovate in promoting local community's tacit and local labour expertise (traditional artisanship, high-tech development, electronic and vehicle industries, textiles and fashion, furniture, education, etc.) in local economic development strategies. In Latin America, the city of **Rafaela** (Argentina) is a well-known example of a local government with an established track-record of assisting its local agroindustry and mining clusters.³⁶

LRGs are equally active in the development of business incubators, dedicated planning areas and districts that offer technical support and training to promote economic activity, as well as **promoting employment for women and young people**. Many of them have already gained international recognition (such as *Barcelona Activa* and its 'equal opportunities for all' initiative).³⁷ In **Ulyanovsk** (Russia), the local authorities have developed a programme to support SMEs, boost entrepreneurship and train unemployed people and young workers (the World Skills Junior Centre for Improvement and Skills Development). **Ulaanbaatar** (Mongolia) has developed a nationally recognized Women and Business Incubator Centre (WBC), which provides technical assistance, training, personalized advice, financial consultancy services, and a co-working space endowed with a playroom for children.³⁸ In South

Africa, the **City of Cape Town Metropolitan Municipality** is partnering several different business incubators and helping them in many areas, including ICT, design, fashion, furniture, green economy and renewable energies.³⁹ Finally, the European Union has also supported efforts to overcome the digital divide in rural and more isolated areas. It has done this as a means of creating decent, innovative and technology-driven work,⁴⁰ even in remote territories. Such initiatives range from an agri-food and bio-technology business accelerator in Greece⁴¹ to the installation of over 150km of broadband network infrastructure in rural areas of The Netherlands.⁴²

LRGs are also leaders in developing policies to promote the green and circular economy: renewable energy, green buildings, waste management, transportation, eco-tourism, ecosystem protection and park management are all sectors with a strong presence of LRGs. Over the last few years, several studies have presented evidence of the ever-greater efforts of local authorities to make their economies greener.⁴³ Out of a sample of 90 large and medium-sized cities on all the continents, 94% claimed to have already developed local strategies for 'green growth'.⁴⁴ Several county governments in the USA have developed guidelines for taking similar action.⁴⁵ In Europe, city networks and local governments have supported integrated regional planning for green growth with an important level of private partner involvement.⁴⁶ Similar LRG-led initiatives have been undertaken on other continents and in other countries, states and regions. Examples of this include: renewable



energy initiatives in **Ribeira Grande** (Cape Verde),⁴⁷ **Suratá** (Colombia), and the states of **Rajasthan** (India) and **Queensland** (Australia).⁴⁸ The circular economy has been mainstreamed through various strategic approaches in many different cities. A recent study collected 130 city-led initiatives for the transition to a circular economy. These included city-wide strategies in **Amsterdam, Cape Town, Ljubljana, Maribor, Tel Aviv** and the **Samsø 'Bio-Circular Island'** (Denmark).⁴⁹

Cities are currently working to integrate cultural aspects in strategies for sustainable tourism (e.g. the Target 8.9 states).⁵⁰ The Agenda 21 for culture has identified several similar examples in **Abitibi-Témiscamingue** (Canada), **C sis** (Latvia), **Bilbao** (Spain), **Nev ehir and Seferihisar** (Turkey), **Yarra Ranges** (Australia), **Strasbourg** (France), **Kanazawa** (Japan), **Ségou** (Mali), **Jeonju and Jeju** (South Korea), **Regensburg** (Germany), **Pekalongan** (Indonesia), and **Ha Long** (Vietnam). There are also, no doubt, countless other examples of cities and communities that have put such policies into practice in their territories.⁵¹

Sustainable local food systems and food security provisions also have significant implications for 'greening' an economy and promoting a territory's environmental sustainability. Such initiatives also enhance opportunities for job creation in rural areas as well as providing opportunities to spur on local food production systems. **Several initiatives by LRG networks have promoted a more holistic approach to production and consumption, especially through transitions to sustainable agro-food production and 'responsible and sustainable regional food initiatives'** (RSRFIs) (see SDG 2). The aim of this approach is to engage the adoption of sustainable criteria and objectives. These apply to the whole food chain, from production through to the final consumption. Several LRGs in Argentina, Bolivia, Ecuador, France, Morocco and the Ivory Coast, to name but a few, have already adopted this strategic approach.⁵² The most visible initiative in this regard has been the Milan Urban Food Policy Pact, which began in 2015 and has since gathered the support of 179 signatory cities. Its aim is to work on developing food policy and cooperation between cities, while paying specific attention to fostering fair economic relations, fairer wages and improving labour conditions within the food production and agricultural sector. The Pact promotes integrated food cycles, the reuse of resources, the recycling of waste, and the reduction of 'food miles' by encouraging local production and 'km 0' promotions.⁵³ As a result, urban farming initiatives have become extremely popular and are now quite widespread on all continents and in all regions.

The sharing and collaborative economy has grown and presents both challenges and opportunities of its own. While it first emerged as an opportunity to drive change, innovation and entrepreneurship from the bottom up, it soon began to raise doubts and to attract increasing attention from cities and local governments, who sought to guarantee – often via regulation – the creation of decent works and sustainable innovation (in line with SDG 8.3). Many of the experiences within the larger spectrum of the collaborative economy originated from the provision of direct personal services, cultural empowerment, education and training, care provision, housing, energy, food production and environmental protection. On the other hand, start-up companies such as Uber, Cabify and Airbnb have rapidly become multinational corporations with limited transparency and fiscal compliance and only the loosest of respect for basic workers' rights and

⁴⁶ LSE, ICLEI, GGGI (2012). Energy Cities works on the thermal renewal of buildings, the transition towards sustainable mobility and the development of proximity as the linchpin of urban planning. See also: www.energy-cities.eu/IMG/pdf/local_energy_ownership_study-energycities-en.pdf. The Eastern Europe Energy Efficiency and Environment Partnership (E3P) supports projects on district heating, solid waste management, and energy efficiency in public buildings in many cities. See also <http://e5p.eu>.

⁴⁷ Ribeira Grande (Cape Verde) has developed a photovoltaic electrification programme for 140 families in rural areas, with the creation of stable jobs and tourist activities.

⁴⁸ Rajasthan has set itself the goal of producing 100 GW using solar power by 2022. Queensland has created CleanCo, a publicly-owned renewable energy producer. For more information, see: <https://cleancoqueensland.com.au>. For the Indian case, see: ICLEI-South Asia (2015), Green Growth Good Practices for Indian Cities.

⁴⁹ C40 Cities, Climate-KIC (2018), Municipality-led Circular Economy Case Studies.

⁵⁰ See the reports "The Relationship Between Culture and Tourism in Barcelona: Current Context and

Challenges" and "Creating synergies between cultural policy and tourism for permanent and temporary citizens", produced in 2017 and 2018 by the City Council of Barcelona and the UCLG Committee on Culture with the support of policy advisors Greg Richards and Lénia Marques.

⁵¹ See UCLG Committee on Culture; Good practices database: <http://obs.agenda21culture.net>. Some of these cities are members of the UNESCO Creative Cities Network.

⁵² Many of these initiatives are included in the framework launched by Regions of France, with the support of UCLG, to create 100 local food systems and promote food security and nutrition transition. Knowledge is gathered here: <http://regions-france.org/actualites/actualites-nationales/transition-agricole-partenariat-resolus>.

⁵³ See the Milan Urban Food Policy Pact: <http://www.milanurbanfoodpolicycompact.org>. Several city and regional networks have recently emerged at both the national (Sustainable Food Cities in the United Kingdom, Red de ciudades por la Agroecología in Spain, Rete Città Sane OMS in Italy, City Deal: Food on the Urban Agenda in the Netherlands, the BioStädte network in Germany) and European (Agroecocities, ICLEI-RUAF CITYFOOD network) levels.

the legal requisites of the countries in which they operate. This provoked a wave of stricter and more 'conventional' regulation to preserve the rights of groups and collectives whose survival or basic rights were being affected (starting with traditional taxis and hotel businesses) and an outpouring of protest and rejection from communities and civil society in the municipalities most affected by this process. The cities of **Paris, Berlin, Madrid** and **Barcelona**, to name only the most visible cases, have all had to adopt specific regulations in order to conserve the social coexistence and urban fabric of many of the neighbourhoods affected. In contrast, many cities and networks have sought to introduce practices associated with the collaborative into their communities in order to promote solidarity, participation and inclusive involvement. **Seoul's** 'Sharing City' initiative, for instance, led to the creation of about 20,000 jobs in the local area, with a specific focus on vulnerable groups (such as the women who represent 65% of the newly created workforce).⁵⁴ As well as similar developments in other Asian cities, the shared economy is also expanding in many American and European cities.⁵⁵ Similar experiments are gaining traction in Africa, with a large capital like **Abidjan** having already established its one-stop office for the social and shared economy.⁵⁶

In many contexts, LRGs have actively supported the social economy as an alternative model for promoting greater inclusion. **The**

Global Social Economic Forum (GSEF) is an international association that encompasses local government and civil society actors and which works to further the recognition of the social economy as a key factor in local economic development.⁵⁷ For example, the municipality of **Córdoba** (Spain) adopted the Pact for a Social and Solidarity Economy as "a fundamental vector for social cohesion, a more equitable distribution of wealth and the protection of the values of sustainability, equality, equity and participation".⁵⁸

In other urban contexts, especially in developing countries, the **informal economy** also plays a critical role. The **ILO estimates that at least two billion workers** (61% of the world's estimated working population) **form part of the informal economy**, with little or no access to social protection.⁵⁹ Informal activities cover a broad range of economic sectors and services, in which women tend to be disproportionately overrepresented. Although informal employment is not, by definition, decent work, LRGs have taken an ambiguous stance with regard to informal employment. While many recognize that it contributes to the overall economy and guarantees a base for the social inclusion of informal workers, others highlight the downside of its opaque fiscal impact, lack of work safety and employee rights, and the risk of it resulting in unsanctioned exploitation. The progressive formalization of what are currently

⁵⁴ Social economy data for Seoul for 2017: 7,810 jobs by 286 registered Certified Social Enterprises and 1,310 jobs by 202 Pre-Certified Social Enterprises; 7,590 jobs by 2,701 cooperatives; 250 jobs by 114 Village Enterprises; and 1,379 jobs by 171 Self-Reliance Enterprises. Seoul is exploring how to reform outdated regulations that currently hamper the diffusion of sharing initiatives (e.g., car insurance and home-sharing policies).

⁵⁵ See: <https://www.shareable.net/sharing-city-seoul-a-model-for-the-world>.

⁵⁶ See: <http://www.gsef-net.org/>. See also One Earth, in collaboration with the Urban Sustainable Directors Network: <https://bit.ly/2YKo9NZ>, and ILO (2015), Localizing the Decent Work Agenda through South-South and City-to-City cooperation, available online at: <http://socialeconomy.itcilo.org/en/readers>.

⁵⁷ For more information on the Global Social Economic Forum (GSEF), see: <http://www.gsef-net.org>.

⁵⁸ See Córdoba's Municipal Plan Peace and Solidarity, available online (in Spanish) <http://tiny.cc/qsun8y>.

⁵⁹ ILO (2018), World Employment Social Outlook, Trends 2018, Geneva, ILO. WIEGO estimates that around 80% of urban employment in developing countries is informal, particularly in Sub-Saharan Africa, Southern Asia and, increasingly, Latin America. See: <http://www.wiego.org/informal-economy/statistical-picture>.



Sisters collecting waste materials to burn it in the fireplace before sunset in Blaj, Romania (photo: Attila Erdélyi/ILO, <https://bit.ly/2LAd1zC>).



informal workers is critical for compliance with SDG8.⁶⁰ **Several cities have already made important progress in the recognition of their informal economies.** Municipalities have long established formal partnerships with groups representing waste-pickers in **Quito** (Ecuador), **Belo Horizonte** (Brazil)⁶¹ and **Surabaya** (Indonesia).⁶² Other promising initiatives have emerged in **Asuncion** (Paraguay),⁶³ **Esquel** (Argentina),⁶⁴ **Pietermartizburg** (South Africa), **Lagos** (Nigeria), **Nairobi** (Kenya), and in Egypt.⁶⁵ In **Solo** (Indonesia), the local administration provides up to five different options to help street vendors to upgrade their status to that of legitimate merchants and kiosk owners at local markets.⁶⁶

Together with other relevant dimensions of local economic development, local and regional governments worldwide have proven the relevance of initiatives that favour the creation of a truly territorial approach and have strengthened co-ownership by adopting bottom-up policies that are in line with the objectives of global commitments such as SDG 8 and its targets.

———— The ILO estimates that at least two billion people work in the informal economy. Although informal employment is not, by definition, decent work, LRGs have already made important progress in the recognition of their informal economies.

⁶⁰ Cibrario D. "SDG11: To ensure sustainable waste services, we must value waste workers and make sure they are in decent jobs" in 2018 Spotlight Report on Sustainable Development. Available here: <http://tiny.cc/20hk8y>.

⁶¹ Lethbridge J. (2017) "Municipal Solid Waste Management Services in Latin America", PSIRU.

⁶² See: <http://www.emaseo.gob.ec/quito-a-reciclar/> and <https://www.emgirs.gob.ec/index.php/setup/centros-de-educacion-y-gestion-ambiental>. Freek Colombijn and Martina Morbidini (2017), Pros and cons of the formation of waste-pickers' cooperatives: a comparison between Brazil and Indonesia, Volume 44, Issue 2, pp. 91-101.

⁶³ Maffei L., "Asuncion: municipal workers, waste pickers and the community in strategic alliance for a quality public waste collection service" PSI website (6 May 2018) Available here: <http://tiny.cc/iyun8y>.

⁶⁴ Maffei L., "Esquel: recognition of the workers' contribution and community participation – keys to the success of integrated waste management" PSI website (4 May 2018) Available here: <http://tiny.cc/wyun8y>.

⁶⁵ Sandra van Niekerk and Vera Wegmann (2019) "Municipal Solid Waste Management Services in Africa" PSIRU, pp 45-46 Available here: <http://tiny.cc/gzun8y>.

⁶⁶ The project is the People Oriented Approach in Rearranging Traditional Market and Street Vendor towards a Liveable City. More information is also available in CLGF (2015), Local Economic Development in Asia-Pacific: A review of Policy and Practice is available online at: <http://tiny.cc/y3hk8y>.



Wastepicking truck in Bandung, Indonesia (photo: Ikhlusal Amal, <https://bit.ly/2Ly3yc5>).

Local public administration and public service promote decent work and human rights

⁶⁷ The agreement is mentioned in ILO (2015), cited, p. 67-68.

⁶⁸ Kishimoto and Petjean (2017), *Reclaiming Public Services*, Howe cities and citizens are turning back privatization.

⁶⁹ See: <https://www.worldfuturecouncil.org/energy-remunicipalisation-hamburg-buys-back-energy-grids/>.

⁷⁰ See: <http://energia.barcelona/en/barcelona-energia-municipal-electricity-company>.

⁷¹ See: <http://www.eltis.org/discover/news/free-public-transport-launched-successfully-dunkirk>.

⁷² Smirl, E., (2018) "Trashed. How outsourcing municipal solid waste collection kicks workers to the curb" Canadian Center for Policy Alternatives.

⁷³ OECD-UCLG (2019), *World Observatory on Subnational Government Finance and Investment*.

⁷⁴ Examples include contract specifications to foster social inclusion and fight poverty in their communities by selecting local bidders that employ workers under decent conditions; pay a living wage; negotiate and implement collective agreements; and facilitate access to employment for disabled, vulnerable, young workers and/or the long-term unemployed.

⁷⁵ More information on the Dutch case is available at this address: <http://tiny.cc/r0rk8y>. Also ILO has been collecting experiences related to green job creation and awareness in its Green Jobs Programme: see <http://tiny.cc/w2rk8y>. A few highlights of the programme are available here: <http://tiny.cc/6lik8y>.

⁷⁶ The World Forum meets every two years and also includes several regional forums. The next forum will take place in Cordoba (Argentina) in October 2019. It is supported by UN agencies (UNDP, ILO), national governments (Cape Verde), local and regional government networks, national associations and cities (UCLG, ORU FOGAR, FAMSÍ, FCM, the city of Torino), chambers of commerce, industry and tourism (Cape Verde), NGOs, and SME agencies (e.g., SEBRAE from Brazil).

As public employers, LRGs are responsible for the employment conditions of subnational-level government workers in charge of local policy implementation and public service provision. Social dialogue and collective bargaining are rights for public sector workers that are defined by ILO Conventions 151 and 154; they are also closely linked to efficiency and performance within the public sector. Several municipalities have put into practice valuable examples of social dialogue processes designed to empower local workers while, at the same time, ensuring the quality of public services. In **Bislig City** (The Philippines), for example, the municipality and local trade unions support shared responsibilities and transparency and are committed to promoting greater accountability. Both parties also have mandates for maintaining a constant multi-level dialogue relating to city policies and services. In Sweden, the collective agreement covering local government bodies establishes a forum for regular dialogue between LRG social partners to develop "a common approach to how collaboration can work and to how effective operations can be combined with a sustainable working life in the local authorities, county councils and regions [...] to provide inspiration for new ideas and development".⁶⁷

The quality of public service management is also essential for sustainable growth and guaranteeing public employment conditions. Recent decades have been dominated by the outsourcing, (partial) privatization and corporatization of many public services and this has limited the power of public authorities to provide quality services to their communities. Over the past decade, the re-municipalization of public services has emerged as a steady trend in various continents and sectors. More than 1,600 local governments around the world have taken back some degree of public control of essential services in order to reduce costs, enhance quality and improve working conditions.⁶⁸ Cases include the re-municipalization of the energy distribution grids in Hamburg,⁶⁹ the establishment of a public electric-power provider in **Barcelona**,⁷⁰ bottom-up pressure to re-municipalize water supplies (in large cities such as **Paris, Jakarta, Stuttgart** and smaller such as **Terrassa**), waste management (in

Oslo, Fribourg, in Switzerland, Dortmund, and Conception Bay South, in Canada), and even (free) public transport (**Dunkirk**, in France)⁷¹ and more general social services (**Bergen**, in Norway), among many others. It must be stressed that municipal workers' unions have played a key role in the public sector's attempts to meet a growing demand for quality services, as well as in the protection of workers' rights in public institutions.⁷²

LRGs are also important public procurement agents in many contexts, as well as accounting for 37% of total public investment.⁷³ Socially responsible public procurement based on criteria of awareness and sustainability — as well as economic convenience — could become drivers for promoting the centrality and effectiveness of subnational governments as they strive to implement and localize SDG 8, as well as other Goals and agendas. The inclusion of labour-related and environmental clauses in public procurement tenders and contracts allows local authorities to promote sustainable sourcing practices for both short and long supply chains.⁷⁴ In the Netherlands, the 'Joint investment agenda of municipalities, provinces and water authorities' (2017) provided an example of sustainable investments and procurement policies. In total, the three tiers of governance spent EUR 28 billion per year on investments and, wherever possible, opted for energy-neutral, climate-proof and circular economy solutions.⁷⁵

LRG networks also promote local economic development initiatives, knowledge sharing, and the development of resources to strengthen locally-based policies and capacities. They have also long advocated the reinforcement of local competences and resources (e.g., the Global Social Economic Forum, the work of UCLG's Committee on Local Economic Development, the Local Economic Network of Africa, and the Commonwealth Local Government Forum). In 2011, a joint effort involving several UN agencies and local government networks resulted in the creation of the World Forum on Local Economic Development: a platform for promoting dialogue on key issues, such as local employment and decent work policies, sustainable entrepreneurship, multi-stakeholder partnerships, and the involvement of civil society and organizations representing both workers and employers in local affairs.⁷⁶



The way forward

Promoting place-inclusive local economic development and decent work creation as complementary and mutually reinforcing policies at the heart of city and territorial policies. Several recommendations have emerged from this wide overview that may help to strengthen, and even ensure the continuity, of the role played by LRGs in achieving the targets of SDG 8.

Policy coordination and collaboration across different tiers of government and between institutions should be strengthened and inclusive dialogue and participation with key stakeholders fostered in order to promote innovative local economic development strategies, including in towns and rural areas. This implies ensuring an adequate, predictable stream of financing and resources to support policies conducive to inclusive local economic growth and to generating quality employment. Also, the meaningful involvement of all relevant local actors is necessary in implementation and follow-up process to preserve sustainability, transparency and accountability.

Local development initiatives should be supported as well as the creation of spaces for innovation in order to nurture and scale up local capacities and innovation; promoting synergies among local initiatives, maximizing the job creation potential of urban-rural links and connectivity; supporting SMEs that contribute to sustainable growth and create employment in their local environments and which give impulse to productive clusters and cooperative strategies both within and between sectors and territories.

Sustainable local economic growth and endogenous development can be supported through social and collaborative economic initiatives, urban-rural partnerships, sustainable

tourism, and local food systems initiatives. Other transformations in the building and construction sectors or greening and circular economy models are also sought for to promote activities that facilitate social inclusion and quality employment, to foster civic awareness, to promote an enabling business environment, to encourage mobilization and to provide the necessary technical support. LRGs can provide leverage, through the transformative power of public procurement, to mainstream sustainable and decent work policies, foster the inclusion of social, labour-friendly and environmental clauses in public procurement, and encourage a culture of transparent public contracts and disclosure.

Localizing the commitment of national governments can be accelerated by harnessing the power of local territorial pacts to provide decent work, bringing together local authorities, enterprises and business actors, trade unions, research centres and education institutions, as well as relevant actors and stakeholders in the local society. It is possible to develop collective strategies to help generate sustainable socio-economic development tailored to the needs and peculiarities of the local territory.

Localized targets and disaggregated indicators for SDG 8 should be developed to facilitate the localization and monitoring of the SDGs in different territories and communities. This goes hand in hand with paying special attention to ensuring access to quality local employment for vulnerable workers such as women, young people, the elderly, and migrant workers, among others; facilitating intergenerational handovers between senior and younger workers to help preserve and scale-up local know-how and crafts; creating avenues of transition from local educational and vocational training institutions into local employment.

It is possible to develop collective strategies to help generate sustainable socioeconomic development tailored to the needs and talents in the local territory.

Even with the trends of globalization, most work opportunities and the inherent quality of working life remain deeply intertwined with the dynamics of the cities and territories in which peoples live.

Uphold workers' rights and promote greater social dialogue and collective bargaining in local government to ensure the delivery of quality public services and the active engagement of local administration staff in the development of sustainable policies. Subsequently, promoting (city to city cooperation and between local and regional governments to up-scale initiatives into regional and national development strategies as well as in south-south and triangular collaborations.

Acknowledge the contribution of the informal sector as a structural part of the local economy and people's livelihoods strategies; provide an enabling policy and a regulatory environment to facilitate the transition from the informal to the formal economy (developing targeted policies and actions to integrate the informal economy within the urban fabric, through actions such as providing: tailor-made regulations, technical assistance, adequate spaces and infrastructure, access to credit, channels for dialogue and an inclusive structural transformation of the urban economy); promoting actions to improve the working conditions of those operating in the informal economy (through actions such as providing and guaranteeing: appropriate social protection schemes, Occupational safety and health tools and workers' rights).

Adequate powers and capacities to local and regional governments must be granted so that they can work autonomously to: promote local economic development and decent work for all, support local stakeholders, provide adequate

public services and skill development, and target the policies and technical assistance required by local entrepreneurs; ensuring that they have a voice in negotiations involving the business sector and investors; helping to establish agreements, and also tax and trade deals, that ensure fair returns for local communities in terms of tax revenues, financing and employment.

Combining efficiency and innovation in the provision of public services in order to ensure quality and accessibility and positive environmental and social impacts, which may serve as levers for achieving greater local economic development and improving the quality of life, especially in rural and/or more marginalized areas; introducing more inclusive and participative process, and promoting innovation-driven social inclusion. ❖



SDG 10

Reduced inequalities⁷⁷

SDG 10

Inequalities are increasing and need to be tackled in the different territories

Inequality within countries has been a growing transversal challenge and is one that has upset social cohesion both between and within cities and territories, resulting in an increase in the number of economic, social and environmental threats. The *2018 World Inequality Report*, which focused on traditional distributions of income and wealth, showed a global trend towards greater concentrations of income within a business-as-usual scenario.⁷⁸ The report stressed that strategies to reduce inequalities within countries are a priority if we are to achieve a true transformation towards a fairer distribution of income and wealth. Likewise, various studies have stressed that hidden behind national averages lie many significant regional and spatial inequalities.⁷⁹ As well as income disparities, inequalities also involve social, cultural and environmental differences, which are highly entrenched in many territories, in terms of access to job opportunities and the availability of healthcare services, quality education, quality food and cultural facilities. Inequalities between dynamic and stagnating regions, large, middle-sized and small cities, central and peripheral cities and neighbourhoods, and wealthy gated communities and slum areas, have experienced a sharp rise, resulting in greater urban fragmentation and territorial polarization.

Indeed, the New Urban Agenda, as a tool for accelerating the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, calls for urgent and innovative measures to promote more inclusive and sustainable cities and human settlement. In doing this, the two agendas raise key questions as to how to reduce inequalities both between and within cities and territories. It promotes more equal access to economic, social, environmental and cultural opportunities for all, and also greater social integration and respect for diversity. At the national level, it focuses on fostering territorial cohesion and more balanced urban systems in

order to reduce polarization, strengthen links between urban and rural areas, and promoting the principle of “leaving no one and no territory behind”.

Local and regional governments (LRGs) are expected to take bold measures to protect vulnerable groups and territories which have been most hardly hit by climate change, disasters and unhealthy environmental conditions (such as air and water pollution). Some from runner cities and regions have been doing so (see SDG13). In parallel, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change Special Report on Global Warming of 1.5°C has stressed the need to maintain social cohesion and solidarity as a key pillar of adaptation pathways to needed transformation scenarios. This is key to avoid further economic concentration and additional burdens on low-income groups (individuals, cities and states).

In line with their responsibilities, LRGs are currently spreading the message of inclusion and working to reduce inequalities through various different policies, including: more inclusive urban design; neighbourhood regeneration; better access to basic services; improved mobility; safer and greener public spaces; improving urban-rural cooperation; and providing better access to opportunities for all. Such policy responses may also include participatory mechanisms, rights-based approaches and/or promoting different gender perspectives. In all these cases, as the levels of government closest to citizens, LRGs can help to co-create greater social inclusion and territorial cohesion and thereby reduce inequalities.

⁷⁷ This section was developed under the coordination of the UCLG Committee on Social Inclusion, Participatory Democracy and Human Rights, with contributions from the Global Platform for the Right to the City and UCLG.

⁷⁸ The World Inequality Report and database are available online here: <https://wir2018.wid.world>.

⁷⁹ ODI (2018) Leaving no one behind in the health and education sectors, An SDG stocktake in Ghana; UCLG (2016), Co-creating the Urban Future, GOLD IV.



How local and regional governments are tackling inequalities at the local level

Propelled by global and national trends in economic development, urban segregation and exclusionary practices often dominate the urban landscape.⁸⁰ Infrastructure and amenities often mark otherwise 'invisible' urban borders between rich and poor neighbourhoods, and peripheral and central areas; this aggravates economic and social segregation in all cities. Unbalanced development within countries also poses new challenges for LRGs, and particularly for those located furthest from most dynamic areas, which already have declining local economies, or that are least integrated into the national and global markets.

Cities can develop urban policies and designs to reduce neighbourhood-level inequalities and promote greater social mixing and thereby contribute to SDG 10.2 and SDG 11. More inclusive local planning and policies have the potential to promote a more integrated and inclusive type of city and prevent, urban fragmentation and segregation. The existing urban fabric is the result of centuries of development and the materialization of exclusionary trends. One way in which LRGs are currently fighting against urban segregation and promoting greater social integration is through promoting more inclusive urban economic policies in order to strengthen Micro and SMEs (see SDG 8). Another way is through neighbourhood regeneration and public service delivery schemes, and particularly those focusing on the most marginalized urban areas. Latin America has provided several flagship experiences of neighbourhoods being upgraded in the run-up to the New Urban Agenda; examples of this include **Rio de Janeiro's Favela-Bairro** programme, and **Medellín's Mejoramiento Integral de Barrios**. In both of these cases, the specific topographic context (with informal settlements built on mountain slopes or wetlands) remains one of the key determinants of unequal access to the city and exposure to risk. These programmes sought to introduce urban infrastructure, services, public amenities and social policies, complemented by schemes to promote economic development, in an integrated and participatory way. Both were also planned and financed under the leadership

of their respective municipal authorities. They have also been successful in linking with other social and mobility programmes, such as the 'metrocable' project in Medellín. In Asia and Africa, there are relevant examples of slum dweller-led upgrading process, which have succeeded in scaling up settlement renewal, involving consolidated patterns of multi-level and multi-stakeholder collaboration.⁸¹

Innovations in urban law and local regulations have made incremental adjustments to existing practice with the aim of reducing social and gender gaps and fighting against discriminatory practices (related to SDG 5 and Targets 10.3, 1.4 and 11.1).⁸² Changes in urban property regulations and land tenure could, for instance, serve as critical levers to help two thirds of the 860 million slum dwellers, most of who do not have any legally recognised property rights. In many countries, women and female-headed households are particularly vulnerable due to legal discrimination (with no legal right to inheritance and high vulnerability in the event of divorce or widowhood, etc.). Problems of access to titling/tenancy rights have recently been addressed in legal reforms relating to urban property, building codes, and land regulation, in many countries in Africa, Asia and Latin America. Some countries have chosen to distribute property titles, while others have extended usufruct rights. However, to be really effective, it is necessary to officially recognise the social function and value of the use of housing in urban regulations and planning needs to be complemented by local policies that also ensure the provision of adequate local public services.⁸³ Access to basic services (such as water, sanitation and transport) remains a major problem in many cities, particularly in the least developed countries where LRGs suffer from limited resources and capacity for effective action. Even so, recent examples show that they are trying to innovate and establishing partnerships with the private sector and with local communities to co-produce basic services.⁸⁴

As stressed in our previous 2018 report to the HLPF, "access to land rights and the right to housing and basic services are generally the first line of protection and resilience-building against extreme poverty, creating a strong fabric and solidarity between cities." However, **achieving equality and inclusiveness is not strictly about improving deprived urban areas**; it is about fostering sustainable social diversity and "promoting social, economic and political inclusion" (SDG 10.2). Speculative practices are also increasingly commonplace

⁸⁰ Madden, D., & Marcuse, P. (2016) In defence of housing: the politics of crisis. UN Habitat, World Cities Report 2016, Urbanization and Development Emerging Futures; UCLG (2016) GOLD IV Report.

⁸¹ See the Asian Coalition for Housing Rights www.achr.net and the Slum Dwellers International Know your City initiative www.knowyourcity.org.

⁸² See Raquel Rolnik, former UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Adequate Housing, for reports from 2013 on two alternative housing policies (rental and collective housing) (A/68/289) and from 2014 on the Guiding Principles of security of tenure for the urban poor (A/HRC/25/54).

⁸³ See T. Coggin, Informal Work and the social Function of the City, WIEGO Working Paper (law) N°39.

⁸⁴ See GTF (2018) Towards the Localization of the SDGs and UCLG (2013), Basic Services for All in an Urbanizing World.

Achieving equality and inclusiveness is not strictly about improving deprived urban areas, cities can develop urban policies and designs to reduce neighbourhood-level inequalities.

⁸⁵ Madden, D., & Marcuse, P. (2016); Perry F. "Building the way to hell – tales of gentrification around the world" The Guardian (October 2016).

⁸⁶ See GTF (2018) and the Cities for Adequate Housing website at <https://citiesforhousing.org>. Since 2018, this declaration has defended the right to housing and the Right to the City against housing commodification.

⁸⁷ In New York City, the Mandatory Inclusionary Housing (MIH) law, enacted in March 2016, requires a share of any new housing to be located in medium- and high-density areas. These must be rezoned to promote new housing production—whether as part of a city neighbourhood plan, or of a private rezoning application—which is to be permanently affordable. For more information, see NYC Housing Preservation & Development website.

⁸⁸ In Barcelona, a measure of reserving 30% of new developments for public housing was enacted in December 2018. It is expected that the stock of affordable housing will increase by around 330 new flats per year. In London, Chapter 4, dedicated to Housing, of the Draft Plan for a New London provides several regulations about delivering affordable housing, implementing a mandatory threshold approach and ensuring affordable housing tenure.

⁸⁹ See Simonneau C. and Salenson I. (2017) Holding Land in Common with Cities, AFD research paper. The paper compares experiences in Kenya, Namibia and Uruguay. In Uruguay, a 2001 South-South Cooperation project transferred and adapted the Uruguayan Federation of Mutual Aid Housing Cooperatives' model to 15 other countries across Latin America. The FUCVAM won the 2012 World Habitat Award.

⁹⁰ See the case studies on Seoul which are available on the Urban SDG platform: www.urbansdgplatform.org. See also UCLG CISDP: <http://tiny.cc/33118y>.

⁹¹ See the UCLG CISDP interview with Pam McConnell, Toronto's Councillor on Social Equity. Available here: <http://tiny.cc/mwbh7y> (July 12, 2017).

⁹² After celebrating the regional forums of intermediary cities in Odienné (Africa), Nevşehir (Middle East and West Asia), and Terrassa (Europe), intermediary cities from around the world came together in Cuenca, in 2018, to voice their collective message. See also UCLG Committee on Peripheral Cities.

in highly-valued areas in which informal settlements are located. People are excluded from what are now unaffordable centrally-located and well-serviced areas,⁸⁵ resulting in urban segregation and exclusionary practices. Such displacements then result in growing tensions in many regional contexts.

As highlighted by "Cities for Adequate Housing", which was signed by more than 40 metropolises across the world, in 2018, it is a matter of "*planning mixed, compact and polycentric cities where housing benefits from a balanced context and contributes to the social, economic and environmental sustainability of the urban fabric*".⁸⁶ Urban planning policies like Inclusionary Zoning, as applied in the United States, have helped to create affordable housing, located in otherwise middle-to-high income neighbourhoods, for low-income households, many of whom belong to minority groups.⁸⁷ Similar policies are currently being implemented in many European cities, including **London** (UK) and **Barcelona** (Spain), albeit with varying levels of success.⁸⁸ Other innovations towards collective tenancy and mixed neighbourhoods, such as housing cooperatives, community land trusts and other collective forms of housing tenure, although somewhat limited in scope, are currently being developed in a number of regions, including **Brussels** (Belgium) and **New York** (USA), but also Kenya, Namibia and **Uruguay**.⁸⁹ To keep its social mix, Seoul's Type Housing Voucher Program (which was redefined in 2013) provides subsidies to low income citizens and also offers them other options through its Public Lease Housing Policy. These housing strategies help to protect inhabitants in urban areas where inequalities are growing, and/or in places where people are being evicted as part of gentrification processes.⁹⁰

Integrated planning and governance in metropolitan areas, where 41% of world urban inhabitants live, can contribute to more inclusive

policies and help ensure a better provision of public services and infrastructure to reduce disparities. Horizontal fiscal equalization schemes have been developed to combat the negative impact of externalities and to reduce inequalities and the marginalization of poor neighbourhoods and peripheral areas. The examples of **Copenhagen** (Denmark), **Johannesburg** (South Africa) and **Minneapolis-St Paul** (USA) are all worth mentioning, as they have implemented different models and fiscal equalization programmes to redistribute tax revenue as part of a more collaborative approach to dealing with territorial inequality and social cohesion. In **Toronto** (Canada), the city administration has developed a cross-cutting strategy against poverty that focuses on providing food security, health care and employment for the most marginalized.⁹¹ "**Ciudad Sur**", a municipal association that gathers together seven metropolitan municipalities in the southern part of **Santiago de Chile**, has created conditions for achieving greater territorial equity and social inclusion, and provided more opportunities for local inhabitants, through exchanging good practices, organizing inter-communal projects and undertaking strategic planning. In doing so, many LRGs have adopted right to the city-related approaches for peripheral cities and assessed the ways in which social and spatial inequalities are often linked in metropolitan contexts.⁹² Weak metropolitan governance and planning undermine sustainable development and aggravate inequalities.

Civic participation is also a critical lever for promoting the inclusion of more vulnerable groups (see SDG 16). LRGs can involve local communities and harness local knowledge to develop well-rooted diagnoses and co-produce solutions with communities. For instance, in order to fight energy poverty, the **Territory of Plaine Commune** adopted a "Climate and energy Plan" which helps



⁹³ Yves Cabannes (2019) Participatory Budgeting: a powerful and expanding contribution to the achievement of SDG.

⁹⁴ ESPON EU (2017) Policy Brief Shrinking rural regions in Europe; K.M. Johnson and D.T. Lichter (2019) "Rural Depopulation: Growth and Decline Processes Over the Past Century" Rural Sociology; UCLG (2016), GOLD IV.

⁹⁵ See Pavel A. and Moldovan O. (2019) Determining Local Economic Development in the Rural Areas of Romania. Exploring the Role of Exogenous Factors in Sustainability 2019, 11, 282.

⁹⁶ Since 2016, the Provincial Council of Gipuzkoa has promoted peer-to-peer exchanges of knowledge between technical managers and municipal politicians working in the field of diversity and migration. A specific network was created for this purpose: the Elkarbizi network.

inhabitants to reduce their electricity/gaz invoices via workshops on eco-actions, housing diagnoses on thermal insulation and financial support for renovation work, creation of a local office to raise awareness. In addition, participatory budgeting has, for example, contributed to greater social and spatial justice by channelling more resources to the most disadvantaged districts of cities, as in the cases of **Rosario** (Argentina) and **Belo Horizonte** (Brazil). Under certain specific modalities, participatory budgeting processes can focus on identifying and helping certain deprived areas. Examples of such practices include: low-income housing rental in **Paris** (France) and **Penang** (Indonesia) and in rural districts lying within municipal boundaries, as at **Chengdu** (China) and **Cuenca** (Ecuador), or in remote, and often poor, villages, such as those in the Arzgir district of the **Stavropol region** of Russia.⁹³

In the case of achieving more balanced territorial development, LRGs have supported initiatives to develop greater urban-rural cooperation (e.g. to facilitate access to services and/or promote sustainable local food systems, see also SDG 8). In addition, LRGs in small towns and rural municipalities that are "shrinking" – or depopulating – are finding innovative way to support communities by introducing 'one stop' offices that gather together the main

public services provided in the municipality, or by encouraging greater inter-municipal cooperation.⁹⁴ In Romania, for example, about 400 communes have focused on local economic programmes to fight social exclusion and maintain the economic activity within their respective territories.⁹⁵ The municipality of **Goicoechea** (Costa Rica), which is divided into seven different districts, has focused on mainstreaming the social development of some of its most deprived areas (especially the most rural ones) by promoting participatory democracy and fostering the sharing of civic responsibility in the provision of public services (see SDG16). The role of the Diputación Foral de **Gipuzkoa**, a territorial government between the local and regional levels, which includes 88 municipalities and is located in Spain's Basque Country, has been key in supporting small LRGs and helping them to develop non-discrimination policies and ones that promote the social inclusion of migrants through training and capacity building initiatives, within the framework of the Elkarbizi network.⁹⁶

However, the fundamental component in sound national and local strategies to combat inequalities is the use of fiscal policies (SDG 10.4). In **Cameroon**, for instance, the Special Fund of Equipment and Mutual Assistance (FEICOM) is financed via a tax-sharing system.



Residents of the San Eugenio district in Santiago de Chile attend an open mic meeting with the Mayor (photo: Santiago City Hall, <https://is.gd/4i2Qvg>).

In 2016, three quarters of local council revenue was allocated via the FEICOM. In 2018, the FEICOM was reformed to broaden its sources of financing. It now supports local and regional councils and helps them by equalizing the allocation of revenue to local councils in priority areas, based on a Local Development Index. While LRGs seldom create new taxes, or tax bases, they are anchors that can help to formulate and implement sound progressive local tax policies (e.g. property taxes) and provide fees to support access to public services for the most vulnerable in society and prevent otherwise discriminatory policies (relating to such issues as water supplies, transport and/or energy). Implicit forms of discrimination as a result of fiscal rules are also a matter of concern.⁹⁷ The International Center for Tax and Development has pointed to ways forward for city governments to solve current gender-based discrimination against local traders in both formal and informal markets, in **Nigeria, Zimbabwe and Sierra Leone**.⁹⁸ LRGs have developed many innovative solutions, operating within an evolving institutional framework, to promote greater solidarity by financing previously unfunded public services and infrastructure (e.g., schools, assistance for the elderly and children, the provision of leisure/sports facilities, etc.).

Human rights-inspired local and regional governments initiatives on social inclusion and non-discrimination

LRG initiatives to guarantee a rights-based approach in the fight against discrimination, and more inclusive policies towards migrants (SDG 10.3) have been a key feature of policy innovation in the field over recent years. With the support of civil society, LRGs have become increasingly aware of what their obligations are with regard to respecting human rights and taking action to prevent discrimination in the delivery of public services. They have also promoted affirmative action to protect city dwellers from human rights violations in both public spaces and the private sphere. For instance, **Seoul** (Republic

of Korea) has promised to protect the victims of enforced evictions from developer-induced violence and to offer them legal assistance through a specialized team of lawyers and municipal officers.⁹⁹ Likewise, the Spanish city of **Móstoles** has committed to protecting the rights of homeless people with respect to access to public space, providing them with official addresses and reinforcing the provision of emergency shelters.¹⁰⁰ In **Bologna** (Italy), the city administration has developed the *Protocollo stratti* to prevent evictions; this resulted in the number of evictions falling by more than half between 2015 and 2017.¹⁰¹ The circumstances that make families eligible for municipal support include: job loss; incurring major medical expenses; or the death of a family member who was in charge of providing the family's income.

The range of LRG policies in the field of non-discrimination is wide and well-consolidated, ranging from raising awareness and educating citizens (see SDG4) to training local public workers (see SDG 8) and running programmes to help guarantee human rights (see SDG 16). The current rise in racism and xenophobia has triggered innovative moves in local policy to prevent discrimination and raise awareness of human rights (local ombudsmen, education programmes, human rights offices, campaigns against hate speech). Initiatives relating to this topic range from LRGs providing attention, welcome and advice services for undocumented migrants (e.g., **Pichincha**,¹⁰² Ecuador, and **Pikine**,¹⁰³ Senegal, have Human Rights Offices) to fostering the social inclusion of vulnerable groups via vocation training and promoting the socio-economic empowerment of migrants, as in **Vienna** (Austria).¹⁰⁴ In all these cases, this innovation also relies on creating more inclusive and responsive policy decision making processes.

In 2017, the city of **Grenoble** (France) developed a comprehensive guide aimed at raising the awareness of foreign residents of their fundamental rights to nationality, asylum and housing.¹⁰⁵ In Latin America, the participation of **Mexico City, Montevideo, Quito and Medellín** in a global coalition of cities against discrimination and racism has led to these four local government organizations adopting transversal plans for this policy area. These involve embracing respect for and the protection of human rights as overarching principles and also focus on other issues such as women rights, LGBTIQ+ rights, and the rights of indigenous peoples.¹⁰⁶ Similar actions are also being promoted by cities on other continents (e.g. the European Charter

⁹⁷ Many implicit cases of gender discrimination have been identified in recent reports, including the 2019 European Commission report on gender equality and taxation policies in the EU; UN Women; K. Lahey (2018) Gender, Taxation and Equality in Developing Countries.

⁹⁸ For more information, see <https://www.ictd.ac>.

⁹⁹ See the UCLG CISDP interview with Human Rights Department of Seoul's Metropolitan Government: <http://tiny.cc/zqch7y> (January 16, 2019).

¹⁰⁰ See the UCLG CISDP interview with Gabriel Ortega, Deputy mayor of Móstoles: <http://tiny.cc/nkbh7y> (January 25, 2019).

¹⁰¹ For more information, see the project description on the UCLG CISDP website, (March 9, 2019).

¹⁰² See the Pichincha website, accessible at <https://www.pichincha.gob.ec/servicios/legal/item/12-atencion-acogida-y-asesoria-para-migrantes>.

¹⁰³ More information available from http://femmesjuristes.org/?page_id=680.

¹⁰⁴ See the UCLG CISDP interview with the Human Rights Commissioner, Shams Asadi, at the Gwangju 2018 World Human Rights Cities Forum: <http://tiny.cc/k8ah7y> (April 4, 2019).

¹⁰⁵ See UCLG CISDP interview with Grenoble's Deputy Mayor, Bernard Macret, on International Solidarity: <http://tiny.cc/u2ih7y> (December 4, 2017).

¹⁰⁶ The regional Coalition of Inclusive and Sustainable Cities benefit from the support of UNESCO and has been launched in Africa (2004), the Asia Pacific area (2006), the Arab states (2008), Europe (2004) North America (USA in 2013 and Canada in 2015) and Latin America (2017).



A participant at the Humanity March in Philadelphia, United States, February 4, 2017, asking for sanctuary status for the city (photo: Bob Bruhin, <https://bit.ly/2LxYe8D>).

for Safeguarding Human Rights in the City, (see SDG 16). LRGs in several parts of the world are therefore instrumental stakeholders in fighting discrimination and strengthening local policies to protect women, children, the elderly, minorities and migrants, in line with both the 2030 Agenda and the recently adopted Global Compact for Migration (2018).

Indeed, **LRG policies to reduce inequalities have responded to the specific challenges and opportunities associated with current migratory phenomena (SDG 10.7). Migration has undeniably become a key human rights topic for LRGs** (e.g. Sanctuary Cities, Refuge Cities, Solidarity Cities)¹⁰⁷ and they have strived to position themselves both within the process

that led to the approval of the Global Compact for Migration and its subsequent monitoring and implementation. Building on the Mechelen Conference on “Cities and Migration”, in September 2018, the Global Forum on Migration and Development (GFMD) adopted a proposal to create a Mayors’ Mechanism through which to facilitate the substantial, and on-going, engagement of LRGs in the activities and deliberations of the GFMD. In December, the Marrakech Declaration of Mayors at the Mayoral Forum 2018 acknowledged the role of cities in the global governance of migration and accepted the challenge of enhancing the role given to them in the process of defining and implementing the Global Compact.

¹⁰⁷. See Leave no one behind in GTF (2018). See also Garcès-Mascreñas B. “Ciudades refugio: ¿una alternativa?” published online in Barcelona Metropolis.

Migration has undeniably become a key human rights topic for LRGs and part of their policies to reduce inequalities (SDG 10.7).

The way forward

To tackle the multidimensional complexity of growing inequalities and propose local solutions that take into account both people and territorial issues, local governments and civil society stakeholders need to strengthen the collaboration initiated within the framework of Habitat III and promote the Right to the City as a useful framework. The following recommendations reflect some of these considerations.

LRGs have enormous potential to identify, assess and develop tailor-made policies for tackling inequalities within their territories. LRGs, together with local civil society, can embolden local policies and promote social inclusion based on the diversity and creativity of their communities, ensuring a greater role for women, the most affected minorities, and any vulnerable groups. As the level of government closest to their communities, LRGs can promote local coalitions and facilitate coordination with national agencies and programmes already working in their territories to combat inequalities.

LRGs possess a broad range of tools and policies – including urban and territorial planning, land use management, neighbourhood regeneration, basic service delivery, fair local taxation, social assistance policies, and local economic development – that need to be better shaped and supported (with appropriate regulations, capacities and resources) to tackle the multidimensional causes of inequalities and must work with local stakeholders to co-create more inclusive cities and territories.

To promote the principle of ‘leaving no one and no territory behind’, it is necessary to mainstream policies to reduce inequalities at all levels: at the municipal level – going beyond municipal jurisdiction, fostering inter-municipal cooperation and inclusive metropolitan governance (to reduce core-periphery divides in cities); – at the province/state level – propelling

urban-rural cooperation and regional-municipal cooperation; - and at the national level – ensuring territorial cohesion and a more balanced city system in order to reduce the polarization between expanding metropolitan areas and cities in decline, and between dynamic and stagnant regions, which fuel territorial fracture.

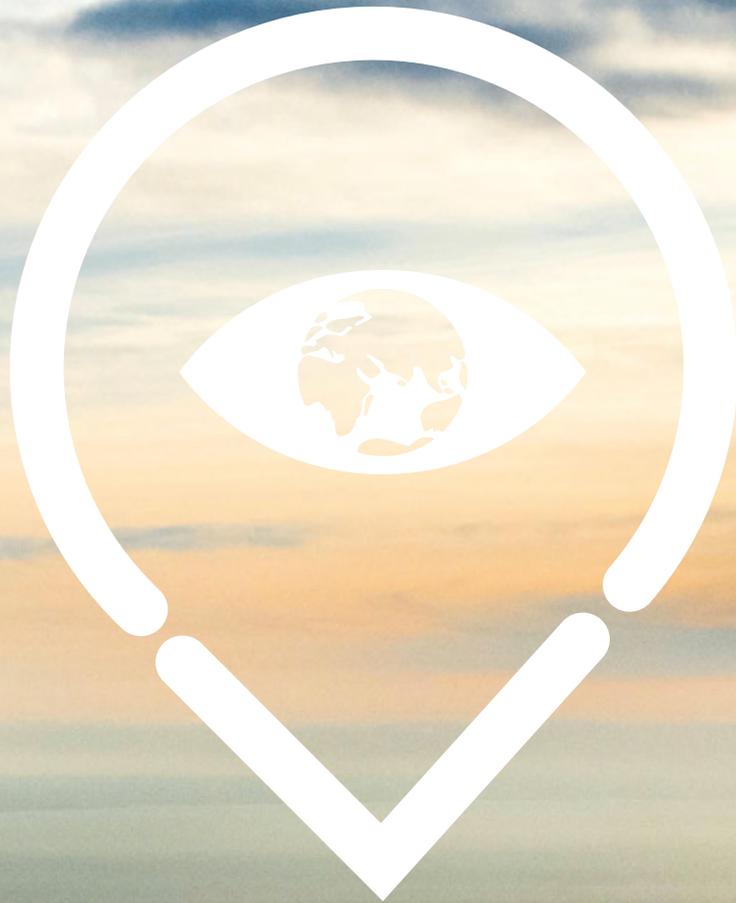
To achieve more harmonious and inclusive territorial development, LRGs should have a bigger say in decision-making and in policies and financing strategies at the national level: They should also have fairer/more equitable access to fiscal, human and technical resources commensurate with their responsibilities.

LRG experiences that have proved effective for tackling inequalities, such as community participation projects (e.g. participatory budgets) should be scaled up and disseminated through direct exchanges and peer to peer learning between LRGs and local stakeholders. LRG networks, national governments and international agencies should promote these experiences and mobilise the necessary means to foster exchanges of know-how.

LRGs and other local/regional actors realize that Human Rights and Right to the City commitments and standards constitute a fundamental framework through which to understand and address the complex, and urgent, challenges associated with increasing inequalities. They should catalyse awareness and educate their citizens, providing concrete tools (such as local ombudsmen and human rights offices), and take measures to reduce social, economic and political inequalities, prevent discriminatory practices and xenophobia, better protect women’s rights, and facilitate the integration of minorities and migrants.

In order to facilitate the monitoring of SDG 10 and ensure that the localised dimensions of inequalities are taken into account, LRGs and local actors must play a key role in adapting and disaggregating indicators and also help to identify and catalogue innovative initiatives and measures with which to achieve more equal and inclusive societies. ❖

LRGs, together with local civil society, can embolden local inclusive policies and promote the diversity and creativity of the communities.



SDG 13

Take urgent climate action ¹⁰⁸

SDG 13

Cities and regions driving the implementation of SDG 13, with urgency and ambition

In October 2018, the IPCC Special Report on Global Warming of 1.5°C sent out a strong and unequivocal message: without rapid and far-reaching transformations in four systems (energy, land, urban areas and infrastructure - including transport and buildings, and industry) within the same timeframe as the 2030 Agenda, it will soon be too late to avoid the impact of further, and more severe, or even catastrophic climate change.

Indeed, climate-related risks to health (SDG 3), livelihoods, food security (SDG 2), water supplies (SDG 6), human safety (SDG 16), and economic growth (SDG 8) are projected to increase with global warming of 1.5°C and to increase even further if temperatures rise by 2°C.¹⁰⁹ On the other hand, science shows that 1.5°C pathways have robust synergies, particularly for SDG 3 (health), SDG 7 (sustainable energy), SDG 11 (cities and human settlements), SDG 12 (responsible consumption and production), and SDG 14 (oceans, seas, and marine resources). SDG13 focusses on strengthening resilience and the adaptive capacity of cities and regions (target 13.1), integrating climate action into local and regional planning and management (target 13.2), and developing effective financing for ambitious climate action in cities and regions (13.a). While sustainable development supports, and should also enable, the fundamental transformation of society and its systems and help to limit global warming to 1.5°C, climate-resilient development pathways can help to achieve ambitious mitigation and adaptation targets, together with the eradication of poverty and a reduction in inequalities.

However, as the climate crisis becomes clearer, national-level political leaders seem worryingly incapable of tackling it. According to the Climate Action Tracker, only five of the Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) currently registered under the UNFCCC are compatible with a 2°C temperature increase scenario, and only two are currently in line with the 1.5°C target.¹¹⁰ Increasing ambition every five years is a central mechanism to the

Paris Agreement, and each country is expected to present more ambitious NDCs by 2020; however, to date, only one (the Marshall Islands) has formally submitted a revised and more ambitious NDC.¹¹¹ In the meantime, the increase in global carbon emissions in 2018¹¹² has made it even more urgent to peak global GHG emissions in 2020.

Fortunately, **local and regional governments have been at the forefront of climate action and have been driving for change in global negotiations for over two decades.**¹¹³ Their collective mobilization was a key factor in the adoption of the Paris Agreement; in 2018, they organized more than 60 sessions during the year-long Talaona Dialogue.¹¹⁴ In 2019, more than nine thousand cities, from 129 countries, made a commitment to take measurable action through the Global Covenant of Mayors for Climate and Energy (GCoM).¹¹⁵ In Africa, after encouraging results in 13 pilot cities,¹¹⁶ 130+ cities in 34 countries signed the agreement. Also in 2018, 180+ cities signed it in North America, 130+ in the Asia-Pacific region and 60+ in the MEWA region. At the Global Climate Action Summit in September 2018, 27 major cities announced that they had already peaked their carbon emissions, 72 cities committed to carbon neutrality by 2050, and hundreds of other cities, as well as a number of regional governments, committed to new, more ambitious targets, for zero-emission transport, the use of 100% renewable energy, net-zero carbon buildings, and zero-waste by 2030, while also pledging to implement these goals in an equitable and inclusive manner.¹¹⁷ Businesses and investors are also engaged in the transformation of the 'real economy' at a pace that had never been known before. The transition to a zero-emission regime called for by scientists is now underway, but it is fragile and will require decisive political leadership at all levels of government.

¹⁰⁸ This section was organized under the coordination of C40 and with contributions from ICLEI, Regions4, UCLG, and Climate Chance (2018), The mobilization of the local and subnational governments; BOOK 2 of the Annual Report of the Global observatory of Non-State Climate Action, France, Climate Chance.

¹⁰⁹ IPCC Special Report on Global Warming of 1.5 degrees: Summary for Policymakers, D4.1.

¹¹⁰ For more information, see: <https://climateactiontracker.org/countries>.

¹¹¹ NDG Interim Registry: Marshall Islands country page [consult: www4.unfccc.int/sites/NDCStaging/pages/Party.aspx?party=MHL].

¹¹² See the Global Carbon Project, established in 2001, available at www.globalcarbonproject.org/carbonbudget.

¹¹³ Since the first Conference of Parties (COP) in 1995, the Local Governments and Municipal Authorities (LGMA) constituency has been one of the major stakeholder groups representing local and regional governments under the UNFCCC. ICLEI has acted as the LGMA Constituency Focal Point since its inception. Its function is to facilitate dialogue and the collaboration of the constituency with the UNFCCC Secretariat, Parties and other stakeholders. Since 2013, LGMA has been closely connected to the work of the Global Task Force of Local and Regional Governments. As of 2019, the LGMA Constituency includes more than 25 national, regional, global and thematic networks of local and regional governments, which have all been admitted to the UNFCCC Secretariat.

¹¹⁴ See ICLEI (2019) FromTalaona Dialogue to NDCs: Shifting Climate Ambition Through Multilevel Action and its Annex I [Consult online]

¹¹⁵ For more information, see the website of the global covenant of mayors. www.globalcovenantofmayors.org.

¹¹⁶ Bangui, Bissau, Bouaké, Dakar, Kampala, Lubumbashi, Monrovia, Nouakchott, Pikine, Tsévié, Yaoundé (districts III and IV), urban commune of Zou.

¹¹⁷ The outcomes of the Global Climate Action Summit are available online at www.globalclimateactionsummit.org/summit-outcomes.



SDG 13
Take urgent
climate action

What are cities and regions doing for local transformative actions

Only in the first half of 2019, many cities and regions have suffered an increased intensity and frequency of catastrophic events, ranging from heat waves in **Delhi** (India) and **Melbourne** (Australia), to back-to-back hurricanes in Mozambique and the Caribbean, and floods in the Mid-West of the USA and in 26 of the 31 provinces of Iran.¹¹⁸ These events have had a cascading impact on the infrastructure of various community systems and have affected services in many cities and regions. Cities –both big and small- such as **Cincinnati, Melbourne, Johannesburg, Toronto** and **Amsterdam** have responded by mainstreaming disaster risk prevention and climate change adaptation programmes within their urban and territorial planning. They have also assessed their sectoral interdependencies in order to identify critical points in their infrastructure and to update their planning processes. Regional governments and federal states around the world, including those of **Catalonia, Izmir, Jalisco, São Paulo** and **Québec**, amongst others, have been identifying key areas of vulnerability and stepping up adaptive action.

Apart from making their systems climate safe, and reducing the vulnerability of their citizens, adapting these cities and regions to climate change also provides wider benefits, related to other SDGs, such as creating jobs (for example through cool roof programmes, as in **New York City**). Local actions are also ensuring food and water security, reducing the risk of disasters, improving health conditions, maintaining ecosystem services and reducing poverty and inequality.¹¹⁹ As with many others, the city of **Seixal** (Portugal) has shown the importance of raising awareness and adopting a participatory approach when formulating and implementing climate plans aimed at reducing its energy consumption and adopting climate-sensitive consumption behaviour. Even so, it is crucial to ensure that these benefits are coherent and equitable and that they are well-distributed amongst citizens and territories, and especially the most vulnerable ones. This concern may pave the way for novel means of collaboration between the scientific community, governments, and social and economic actors, aimed at both increasing social resilience and better understanding the

socio-economic benefits of doing so. Engaging with young people to tackle climate-related issues has become another area for action.

Linking urban planning to regional development, through integrated urban and territorial planning and development, is a necessary way to ensure these systemic changes.¹²⁰ It enables cities and regions to develop land use plans that recognize the importance of protecting ecosystems, inhibit urban sprawl and encourage liveable density near transit. This will prevent the long-term carbon lock-in effect caused by inefficient urban development patterns, which is a particularly crucial issue in fast-growing countries. One example of this is the city of **Accra** (Ghana), which has been a pioneer, in Africa, in building its capacity to transform commitments into concrete plans and to become more resilient and carbon-neutral. Another example is **Buenos Aires** (Argentina), which adopted a brand-new zoning code, at the end of 2018, which strongly promotes urban infill development and higher densities in the centre of the city.

Many cities are now transitioning towards renewable energy. **Reykjavík** (Iceland) is using geothermal energy to achieve its 2040 neutrality target; **New York City** (USA) is divesting from fossil fuels, and the **Australian Capital Territory** intends to hit 100 percent renewable electricity by 2020. The new eco-city of **Yennenga** (Burkina Faso), which is currently being build 15km from the capital of Ouagadougou, has been planned paying specific attention to the Harmattan winds, solar energy and the collection of rainwater. Climate neutrality is a holistic process that includes ambitious climate change mitigation and adaptation schemes at home, as well as making collective contributions to global climate change processes and mechanisms. In doing so, local and regional governments should also be sensitive to calls from autochthonous peoples and their recognized right to protect and preserve their heritage and the land resources where they live.¹²¹

Similarly, **transitioning to cleaner mobility is a matter that many local, metropolitan and regional governments have taken in their own hands.** This is logical as transportation accounts for about a third of all urban GHG emissions,¹²² and this share continues to rise. As reported last year, SDG 11.2 still remains a distant goal, particularly when it comes to meeting the increasing demand for public transportation. In many cities, informal and formal transit are in constant competition, which often leads to more congestion and pollution.

¹¹⁸. These are: Fars Province, Lorestan, Golestan Province, Mazandaran, Hamadan, North Khorasan, Rasht/Qazvin, Kohgiluyeh and Boyer-Ahmad, Khuzestan, Kermanshah, Semnan Province, Qom, Razavi Khorasan, Chaharmahal and Bakhtiari, Isfahan, Sistan and Balochistan.

¹¹⁹. IPCC Special Report on Global Warming of 1.5 °C: Summary for Policy Makers, D3.1.

¹²⁰. See GTF (2018), pp. 42-75.

¹²¹. According to ILO (2017) Indigenous peoples and Climate Change.

¹²². C40 Deadline 2020 report, (2016).

This has a major impact on safety, health and socio-economic inclusiveness in some regions, and particularly in the Global South. In Africa, where 80% of public transport users depend on informal transport systems, cities are bridging the formal-informal divide.¹²³

Globally speaking, moving towards electric vehicles, reducing automobile travel, and promoting active mobility are some of the objectives being pursued to decarbonize transportation and improve air quality in urban areas.¹²⁴ The city of **Copenhagen** (Denmark) provides a compelling example of how focusing on the transport system and changing citizens' transport habits can accelerate the journey towards carbon-neutrality. Since as early as 1956, many cities have also promoted car-free days in order to raise the awareness of their citizens. Examples include **Bogotá** (Colombia), **Kigali** (Rwanda) and **Jakarta** (Indonesia); this has emboldened cities and their respective regions to join the movement.¹²⁵ Moreover, to accelerate this transition, 27 leading cities have committed to the use of only zero-emission buses from 2025 and to ensuring that the majority of the areas in their respective cities have zero emissions by 2030.¹²⁶

Waste management is another of the key service areas in which city and regional authorities exercise significant power. Waste generation is growing faster than any other source of environmental pollutant, especially in developing regions, where the relative contribution from municipal solid waste to overall GHG emissions is largest. In fact, although low-income countries generate relatively little household waste, the median

municipal coverage is around 50% and dumpsites remain largely uncontrolled and open burning is common. There are, however, several cities and regions that have improved their solid waste management and thereby contributed significantly to reducing emissions. They have achieved this through: methane abatement and avoidance; capturing and using landfill gases; diverting organic waste away from landfill sites; and reducing embedded CO₂ emissions. For example, the city of **Addis-Ababa** (Ethiopia) has recently inaugurated a waste-to-energy station, which collects the heat emitted during incineration to produce energy. Methanization has made it possible to produce biogas from the anaerobic digestion of organic waste and to supply the resulting energy to homes. Other cities have experimented with recycling and reducing the availability of single-use and non-recyclable materials and products. One example of this policy is the city of **San Pedro** (Guatemala), which recently made headlines for its zero-plastic policy which aims to preserve the nearby the laguna.¹²⁷ Such actions, which include offsetting fossil fuels and chemical fertilizers through organic treatments, have the potential to transform this sector from being a source of emissions to an emissions sink, as well as deliver significant local benefits in terms of improved public health, air quality, surface and groundwaters, and the economy. **In 2018, 25 leading cities and regions stepped up their actions towards achieving zero waste; this involved a commitment to significantly reduce waste generation and increase diversion away from landfill and incineration.**¹²⁸

¹²³ UCLG (2016) GOLD IV and GTF (2018) SDG 11.2, with the contribution of UITP.

¹²⁴ For more information and examples, see SDG 11.2 and SDG 11.6 in GTF (2018).

¹²⁵ Climate Chance (2018) Book II, Mobilisation of the local and subnational governments: Around the World in 80 initiatives.

¹²⁶ C40 Green and Health Streets Declaration [Consult online] signed by the Mayor of Paris; the Mayor of London, the Mayor of Los Angeles; the Lord Mayor of Copenhagen; the Mayor of Barcelona; the Mayor of Vancouver; the Mayor of Mexico City; the Mayor of Milan; the Mayor of Seattle; the Mayor of Quito; the Executive Mayor of Cape Town, the Mayor of Auckland.

¹²⁷ Climate Chance (2018) Book II. For more information on Addis-Ababa see africawte.com; and for San Pedro La Laguna, see UN environment "This Mayan village is winning the fight against plastic pollution" (May 2018) available here <http://tiny.cc/6jvn8y>.

¹²⁸ C40 Towards Zero Waste Declaration; signatories San Francisco; Auckland; Copenhagen; Dubai; London; Los Angeles; Milan; Montreal; New York City; Paris; Philadelphia; Portland; Rotterdam; Sydney; Tel Aviv; Tokyo; Toronto; Vancouver; Washington D.C; Catalonia; Navarra Newburyport San Jose Santa Monica Wales.



A family washes clothes in the waters of the Atitlan lake, San Pedro La Laguna, Guatemala (photo: Bradford Duplisea, <https://bit.ly/2LxRrMd>).



Raising awareness on climate change, equity, and climate justice

The climate crisis does not treat everyone equally. The interlinkages between climate change (SDG 13), consumption and production (SDG 12) and inequalities (SDG 10) are particularly visible at the urban and regional levels. As already noted in 2018, a consumption-based approach makes it possible to capture the life-long cycle of GHG emissions associated with goods and services and to allocate these emissions to the final consumers rather than to the original producers. Given the complexity of global supply chains, emissions attributable to services in the cities of the Global North actually increase by as much as 400% when we apply the consumption-based accounting. Globally speaking, the actions and consumption of 10% of the world's population are responsible for 50% of global emissions, while the poorest and most vulnerable members of society are disproportionately put at risk by rising sea levels, unprecedented droughts and other climate-related disasters. Furthermore, women and children tend to suffer most. Migrants are also among the most vulnerable to the impacts of climate change. Climate-forced migration is a growing concern for cities as climate change is fast becoming a major cause of displacement. In fact, the World Bank estimates that it be responsible for as many as 143 million people being displaced by 2050, in only three regions of the world. Examples of climate-induced migration are already visible: growing desertification in Jordan has put more pressure on the infrastructure of its cities,

which are under severe strain to support the local refugee population; tens of thousands of Puerto Ricans arrived in American cities, seeking shelter, after Hurricane Maria; many people are currently being displaced in the South Pacific due to rises in sea level, etc. Cities both bear the brunt of climate change and of migration-related challenges and are the main actors responsible for finding innovating solutions to address them.

At the same time, cities must also deal with rising inequality. For example, in many of the world's fastest growing cities, in the Global South, one billion people now live in vast sprawling slums without access to land, housing or basic services.¹²⁹ In this context, the benefits of climate action are not distributed equitably and the response to climate change may be equally unfair. For example, access to low-carbon transportation and more efficient waste management services tends to be greatest in the high-income districts and to only improve air quality and public health for the residents of these areas. **Avoiding trade-offs and ensuring that climate action benefits everyone is a fundamental principle when implementing both the Paris Agreement and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in cities and regions.** The need to feed cities lies at the core of this question. Territorial food systems, urban agriculture and other systems that promote rural-urban interdependency and cohesion are crucial to achieving more inclusive and equitable climate action.

Several local and regional leaders around the world have paved the way towards addressing these issues and pursuing both social and climate-related goals; they have achieved this by applying a range of different policies and practices. The **Welsh** "Well-being of Future Generations Act", for example, includes long term planning to meet goals such as resilience;

Cities and regions pave the way to more inclusive climate-related initiatives that will not only address climate challenges but also issues such as socio-economic inequality.

¹²⁹ For more information, see SDGs 11 and 12 in GTF (2018).



The basin of the Theewaterskloof Dam, the largest water supply system of the city of Cape Town, at one of the lowest critical levels during the 2015-2018 drought (photo: 6000.co.za, <https://bit.ly/2LzLwX4>).

this is a requirement for public bodies in Wales. In Spain, the Basque government includes climate change as a major topic in its territorial plan to increase the quality of life of citizens living in the **Basque Country**, while the autonomous government of Catalonia passed a law in 2017 that included a provision to protect vulnerable populations from energy and water poverty. The city of **Cape Town** has focused on retrofitting ceilings in low-income communities to achieve multiple benefits, including improving public health and the energy efficiency of buildings. The city of **Barcelona** published a new climate plan in 2018 which included a strategic focus on environmental justice and the co-production of energy by local citizens. This opens the way to more inclusive climate-related initiatives that will not only address climate challenges but also issues such as socio-economic inequality, and also provide benefits for all Barcelona's residents. To mitigate flooding, the city of **Buenos Aires** is currently involved in an extensive programme to update and improve its river basin so that it can better handle flood events and protect low-income communities, which are most at risk to flooding, while also extending access to drinking water. Finally, the city of **Los Angeles**, in California, has just launched an ambitious and pragmatic "green new deal" that aims to drastically reduce emissions. It will do this through programmes and initiatives that will also tackle inequality, alleviate the financial burden on the most vulnerable members of society, improve health in disadvantaged communities, and invest in social housing and services for low income families, homeless people and the elderly.

Localizing sustainable and continuous financing: getting to the heart of the matter

The availability of funding and finance for low-carbon development and resilience projects in cities and regions is crucial to achieving the overlapping objectives of the Paris Agreement and the 2030 Agenda. **Over the coming decades, the pace and scale of investment needed to meet these climate/development challenges in cities and regions will be unprecedented.**¹³⁰ The Global Commission on Economy and Climate (2014) forecasts that for a low-carbon scenario, at the global scale, it will be necessary to invest \$93 trillion in infrastructure by 2030.¹³¹ An estimated 70% of this infrastructure would relate to urban areas – with annual investments of \$4 trillion, plus an additional \$0.4 trillion to \$1.1 trillion to make these investments low carbon and climate resilient. In total, this would imply an aggregate cost of approximately \$5 trillion per year for low-carbon, climate-resilient infrastructure in cities. According to the CCFLA, current infrastructure spending stands at \$2.5 trillion to \$3 trillion per year, approximately half the amount needed for a sustainable future.¹³²

While there are a number of initiatives at the forefront when it comes to financing innovative solutions to combat climate change, there is often a complex web of constraints. These include: legal and regulatory barriers, underdeveloped markets, asymmetries in

¹³⁰ IPCC Special Report on Global Warming of 1.5°C.

¹³¹ For more information see <https://newclimateeconomy.net/publications>.

¹³² Cities Climate Finance Leadership Alliance (2015) The State of Climate Finance available at <http://tiny.cc/nvp37y>.



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information, insufficient expertise, lack of creditworthiness, and inadequate stakeholder coordination.¹³³ All of these factors impede efficient financial flows between the international, national, subnational and local levels, and also between the public, civil society and private sectors, which are needed to support the necessary climate-smart investment.

Overcoming financing barriers and putting critical enabling conditions in place requires a multi-pronged approach. In recent years, numerous city-focused project preparation funds and facilities have been established to provide pipelines of bankable climate projects. These facilities include: the Cities Development Initiative for Asia, C40 Cities Finance Facility, and ICLEI's Transformative Actions Program. These project preparation initiatives also foster matchmaking opportunities, either via specific funds or by establishing connections with potential financiers. For example, the Global Covenant of Mayors and the European Investment Bank (EIB) have joined together to help "prepare and fast-track the financing of urban climate action projects".¹³⁴ The aim is for city-led climate projects to then be supported in both their project preparation and in any subsequent borrowing from the EIB or other financial intermediaries. It is clear, however, that there is a greater need for overall access to funding and financing for climate-focused planning and infrastructure development. Initiatives like the Green Bonds issued by the government of **Québec** are essential to raise capital for specific projects that generate tangible environmental benefits, such as the state-of-the-art electric metro transit system that will be built in the city of **Montreal**.

¹³³ Cities Climate Finance Leadership Alliance (2018) Summary of good practice of successful project preparation facilities available at <http://tiny.cc/i1p37y>.

¹³⁴ European Investment Bank (2019). "Global Climate City Challenge." www.eib.org/en/projects/sectors/urban-development/city-call-for-proposal/index.htm.

¹³⁵ Based on several advocacy pieces produced by Global Task Force members in 2016-2019: C40 Call for Action on Municipal Infrastructure and Finance (October 2016), Bonn-Fiji Commitment of Local and Regional Leaders to Deliver the Paris Agreement at All Levels (November 2017), GCAS Call to Action (September 2018), IPCC SR 1.5 (October 2018), Summary for Urban Policymakers: what does IPCC SR 1.5 mean for cities? (December 2018), Cities and Regions Talanoa Dialogues: Leveraging Subnational Action to Raise Ambition (December 2018), From Talanoa Dialogue to NDCs: Shifting Climate Ambition through Multilevel Action (April 2019).

¹³⁶ ICLEI Calls for Climate Neutrality [Consult online].



Participant at the Climate March in Brussels, Belgium, on February 21, 2019 (photo: Greens-European Free Alliance, <https://bit.ly/2xtwvOc>).

The way forward

A race we can win together

In conclusion, there are policy recommendations to national governments and to the UN system to advance the implementation of SDG 13 at all levels of government.¹³⁵ Science tells us that urgent action to combat climate change means engaging rapid and far-reaching transitions in four systems, ensuring deep emission reductions in all sectors, and undertaking a significant upscaling of associated investments. Bold policy choices must be made immediately to ensure that these systems are transformed by 2030, such as.

Divest, invest, offset: achieve climate neutrality by divesting from fossil fuels and freeing up resources for sustainable investment; actively implementing sustainable public procurement; and offsetting any emissions that cannot be further reduced or avoided.¹³⁶

Transition to 100% renewable energy and net-zero emission buildings, by decarbonizing the electricity grid, using 100% renewable electricity by 2030, and 100% renewable energy by 2050,¹³⁷ and ensuring that new buildings operate at net-zero carbon by 2030 and that all buildings achieve this by 2050.¹³⁸

Create green and healthy streets, by discouraging the use of private cars; introducing clean air or zero-emission zones; spreading the use of zero-emission vehicles; and encouraging more walking and cycling and the greater use of public and shared transport.¹³⁹

Promote a resource-efficient, circular and waste-free society, by reducing consumption-based emissions from the construction, food, automobile, aviation and apparel sectors; phasing out single-use plastics; diverting at least 70% of waste away from disposal or incineration by 2030;¹⁴⁰ recognizing the social value of good waste management; halving per capita food waste; and promoting changes in human behaviour and lifestyles.

Increase resilience and adaptive capacity in cities and regions by strengthening urban-rural linkages, building more resilient infrastructure, decentralizing energy supplies, conserving and restoring ecosystems, developing sustainable food systems, and ensuring people's health and livelihoods, giving special consideration to the most vulnerable people and vulnerable zones, such as coastal areas.

Strengthen the urban-climate nexus, by incorporating sustainable low-carbon urban and territorial development and putting it at the heart of national economic plans; also introducing it into the implementation of current NDCs and ensuring policy coordination and coherence in plans and actions at all levels of government; promoting compact, connected cities and regions; mainstreaming climate

action in all public budgets and ensuring that any investment and ODA is compatible with the Paris Agreement's objectives.

Promote inclusive climate action: support participatory and inclusive climate planning; ensure inclusivity and the equitable distribution of opportunities and benefits, including universal and affordable access to resources, health and opportunities.

Build accountable and effective multi-level climate governance, by strengthening the institutional capacity, policy instruments, technological innovation and by transferring and mobilizing finance to national, subnational and local authorities and communities. In addition, all cities, regional governments and communities should be supported to develop their own climate action plans by providing technical and financial assistance, resources, data, tools and connections to international networks; developing, or making, easily-available, nationally-held, locally-relevant datasets and/or downscaled climate science. Furthermore, a platform, or mechanism, should be created to permit ongoing dialogue and "collaborative action", and also vertical integration based around the NDCs/Paris Agreement.

Improve finance for local climate action, by: developing banks that respond to the needs of cities and regions; devolving financial authority to cities and regions; creating a stable policy and national regulatory environment; supporting Transformational Projects through promoting innovation, standardization, pooling and pipelines; developing the capacity to prepare and execute projects; adopting vertically-aligned NDC investment plans; investing, through specific instruments already present in the country, to support project implementation; and facilitating direct access for cities to UN climate funds and to the Adaptation Fund.¹⁴¹ ❖

¹³⁷ Global 100% Renewable Energy campaign.

¹³⁸ Net Zero Carbon Buildings Commitment.

¹³⁹ C40 Green and Healthy Streets Declaration.

¹⁴⁰ C40 Towards Zero Waste Declaration.

¹⁴¹ ICLEI –C40- GCoM- CCFLA proposal for the SCF Forum on sustainable cities.

Strengthen the urban-climate nexus, by incorporating policy coherence in sustainable low-carbon urban and territorial development and adopt vertically-aligned NDC investment plans.



SDG 16

Peace, justice and inclusive institutions at all levels¹⁴²

SDG 16

Building inclusive and effective institutions and violence-free environments at the local level

Strong local democratic, accountable and transparent institutions are a precondition for achieving sustainable peace and justice for all. This is one of the key messages voiced by local and regional governments (LRGs) in the SDG16+ Technical Consultation process for the preparation of the report to the HLPF.¹⁴³

LRGs operate at the level of government which is closest to citizens and, as such, have direct responsibilities in the achievement of the different dimensions of SDG 16, which is an enormous task. According to the Taskforce on Justice, 1.1 billion people currently lack legal identity and one third of children under five were not registered at birth.¹⁴⁴ Two-thirds of the world population currently lack meaningful access to justice. Conflicts and tension in cities and surrounding territories include violence resulting from exclusionary processes (e.g. discriminatory policies and evictions), interpersonal violence, hate crimes, and organized crime.¹⁴⁵ According to recent data, 82% of violent deaths occur in “non-conflict zones” and particularly urban centres. Numerous public campaigns led by civil society and different media have demonstrated the disproportionate exposure to violence of black, young and marginalized groups. Women and LGBTIQ+ communities also experience aggression, hate crimes and harassment on a

daily basis. Worldwide, all levels of government are called upon to act against gender-based violence and crime, and to take more preventive measures to protect children and young people.

As the first level of public administration, local governments are where transformations towards more effective, accountable and transparent institutions must begin. The most fundamental contribution of LRGs to SDG 16 lie in: the daily task of including all inhabitants on civil registers, particularly at birth; providing basic services; and taking pro-active measures to combat local violence and discriminatory policies. LRGs also implement mediation strategies both between different communities and between communities and themselves. This requires collaborative models of governance, well-capacitated human resources, adequate financial resources and access to affordable and adaptable technology. The following pages highlight some the local government initiatives undertaken to fight against violence and in favour of peace. They seek to promote more open government, greater civic participation and basic rights, with the aim of fostering more inclusive societies.

¹⁴² This section includes input from the UCLG community of practice on Transparency and Open Governments, the UCLG Committee on Social inclusion, Participatory Democracy and Human Rights and UCLG. Additional contributions from Yves Cabannes.

¹⁴³ In March 2019, UNDP, the Tunisian Republic and the Global Alliance for SDG 16 co-organized a technical consultation on the establishment of Inclusive Local Institutions with UCLG. The event, which was held in Tunis, hosted representatives from national and local governments and civil society from the Arab Region and also from several European states.

¹⁴⁴ According to the 2019 Report of the UN Secretary-General, the proportion is more than half (54%) in sub-Saharan Africa.

¹⁴⁵ See also Saskia Sassen (2018) “Welcome to a new kind of war: the rise of endless urban conflict” in *The Guardian* (January 2018).



Steps taken to end violence, promote peace and foster more inclusive cities and territories

Even in the absence of direct violence and exclusion, justice and peace are incomplete if it is still possible to identify cases of structural and/or cultural violence. While this task does not always fall under the responsibility of LRGs, several cities and regions have developed collaborative preventive strategies and responses, often in collaboration with local civil society and businesses. These thrive on diversity and reciprocity, which are essential components of peaceful coexistence between communities and individuals.

Many LRGs are also on the front line when it comes to increasing preventive and policing measures against domestic violence as well as harassment in schools and gender-related violence in public and collective spaces, such as in parks or on public transport. Policies range from campaigns to raise public awareness, the involvement of local stakeholders in preventive policies, improving responsive health initiatives (including more integrated approaches to drug-users), training local police, developing mediation to solve conflicts, and providing social assistance.¹⁴⁶ **Seoul's** Crime Prevention through Environmental Design Project (CPTED) targets troubled neighbourhoods, involving communities, schools, the private sector, the police, and district offices in selected areas, in its effort to find innovative ways to tackle crime.¹⁴⁷ After being one of the most violent cities in the world in the 1990's, by 2000, **Medellin's** local government succeeded in reducing its murder rate ten-fold, thanks to participatory and inclusive policies involving all sectors of its society. However, in recent years, violence has increased again and the city is now looking to develop new alternatives.¹⁴⁸ Several frontrunner cities are making efforts to adopt target policies to support local associations, young people and the most vulnerable groups.

In times of war, LRGs are concerned with supporting communities which are the immediate targets in conflict zones (e.g., Syria or Mali, where LRGs were the only public institutions that ensured the continuity of the state). Other LRGs must react as first respondents to nearby conflicts, as in the case of the Jordanian, Greek, Lebanese and Turkish

municipalities which had to cope with a large influx of migrants and refugees fleeing from the war in Syria, with relatively limited resources.¹⁴⁹ Local governments and communities ensured the integration of child refugees in schools, gave them access to health services, covered basic needs, and helped to build shelters or find alternative ways to house these refugees. In the case of the Tunisia-Libya transnational displacement, the support provided by democratic LRGs (through the PAGUDEL programme) provides a compelling example of decentralised cooperation to bolster the administrative capacities of 18 Tunisian municipalities within the context of a fragile state. This support included the creation of a municipal charter protecting young people and gender-related rights.¹⁵⁰

LRGs and their networks can collaborate to develop city-based initiatives for peace. In 2016, the UCLG Peace Prize was awarded to the city of **Kauswagan** (Philippines), for overcoming the fallout from armed internal conflict in its region through more inclusive socio-economic policies.¹⁵¹ Other candidates for the prize included measures to overcome the legacy of ethnic war via co-owned grassroots institutions (e.g. the Permanent **Peace Committees in Shabunda**, Democratic Republic of the Congo).

Rooted in recovering from and preventing atomic bombings and the atrocities of World War II, **Mayors for Peace**¹⁵² is a network of cities that work for global disarmament. Since 1991, it has also included multi-dimensional advocacy work on poverty and famine, migration and refugees, human rights, and environmental protection. Led by the Japanese cities of **Hiroshima** and **Nagasaki**, the network includes 7,700 cities from 163 countries and represents over 1 billion citizens worldwide. The member cities develop local action plans and cooperate to promote the right to peace and the values of democracy, global justice, equity, gender equality, inclusiveness and transparency. Moreover, for two years in succession, the **City of Madrid** (Spain) has hosted the World Forum on Urban Violence, which promotes education for co-existence and peace. The participants and co-organizing partners issued a Commitment to the Agenda of Cities for Coexistence and Peace.¹⁵³

Culture is also one of the main levers of sustainable development supported by the global network of cities within Agenda 21. This initiative celebrates diversity and education for peace, promoting mediation and dialogue

¹⁴⁶. See policies implemented by the 22 cities that are members of UCCI. Available in Spanish at UCCI (2018) *Avances hacia la erradicación de la violencia de género de las ciudades iberoamericanas*. See also Metropolis (2019) Safety and public spaces: mapping gendered policies.

¹⁴⁷. Citynet, City Voices, spring-summer 2016. The 1st project was launched in 2012. For example, the robbery rate on the Salt Way has dropped by as much as 12% and there have been no reported cases of rape.

¹⁴⁸. Medellín Cómo Vamos, *Violencia y crimen en Medellín: pasado, presente y futuro*, published online (Feb. 2019).

¹⁴⁹. For more information, case studies and migration profiles for 9 cities, see Mediterranean City2City Migration programming the International Centre for Migration Policy Development.

¹⁵⁰. This example was presented by Henda Gafsi, senior advisor of the Center for Innovation Local Governance, during the SDG16+ Technical Consultation for Inclusive Institutions at the local level, held in Tunis, in April 2019.

¹⁵¹. The UCLG Peace prize is supported by the Provincial Council of Barcelona, the City of Tromsø, the Province of Gipuzkoa, VFonds, PAX and VNGi.

¹⁵². For more information see www.mayorsforpeace.org.

¹⁵³. See thSpaz.com and the Commitment (2018) available here: <http://tiny.cc/jfy7y>.

across all boundaries to help overcome inter-ethnic, religious and socio-economic inequalities, discrimination and segregation.¹⁵⁴ The **City of Mexico**¹⁵⁵ issued a Declaration on Culture and Peace calling for local strategic plans that build on Culture as a fundamental pillar of peaceful societies. This is precisely one of the fundamental messages of the city of **Bethlehem** for building local policies for peace and dignity.

It is also relevant to highlight the role that LRGs have played in integrating migrants, preventing discrimination and creating opportunities for them to participate in local decision-making processes. At many places affected by significant migration flows – such as the Mediterranean basin, South-East Asia, the USA-Mexico border, and sub-Saharan Africa –, several LRGs have helped to host migrants and facilitate their integration into the local urban fabric (e.g. Sanctuary cities, in the USA, Integrating Cities, in Europe, and partnerships with the UNHCR Cities of Light).¹⁵⁶

In other regions, cities have also developed initiatives to facilitate migrant integration and involvement in local life. The city of **Taoyun**¹⁵⁷ has introduced an award winning Participatory Budgeting for Migrant Workers; the city of **Sao Paulo** has created a consultative municipal council of migrants.¹⁵⁸ Likewise, the city of **Grenoble** has established a Consultative Council of Grenoblois Foreign Residents, which has produced a municipal guide on access to human rights for foreign residents.¹⁵⁹

¹⁵⁴ See the Culture 21 website www.agenda21culture.net and good practices database <http://obs.agenda21culture.net/en/home-grid>.

¹⁵⁵ Mexico City also has a consolidated programme for voluntary disarmament in order to promote a local culture of peace.

¹⁵⁶ See www.integratingcities.eu and www.unhcr.org/cities-of-light.html.

¹⁵⁷ See the OI DP website, the practices won the "Best Practice in Citizen Participation" award, available here: <http://tiny.cc/4spw7y>.

¹⁵⁸ The Municipal Council of Immigrants was created by Municipal Law 16.478/2016. Its members are of 22 different nationalities and were officially invested in last August to serve the 2018-2020 term. The Council is linked to the Municipal Secretariat of Human Rights and Citizenship. The Immigrant Council is the result of the need to give opportunities to refugees and migrants to participate in political actions, as they do not have the right to vote in Brazilian elections.

¹⁵⁹ See UCLG CISDP interview with the Deputy Mayor of Grenoble on International Solidarity, available at: <http://tiny.cc/rcqw7y> (December 2017).

¹⁶⁰ In 2017, 12 out of 63 VNRs reported on this target of SDG5. Peru was the only country to report the proportion of women in its national and local parliaments and mayoralities.

¹⁶¹ See SDG5 in GTF (2017) National and subnational governments on the way towards the localization of the SDGs.

¹⁶² Djibouti; Rwanda and Tunisia have implemented 3 out of the 4 following mechanisms: 1. Lists in local elections have a certain quota of women to be eligible, and these lists are rejected in the event of non-compliance with quotas. 2. Acceptance of the lists in local elections is assessed by considering the quota of eligible women. 3. Demands for at least 30% of seats to be reserved for women in local government assemblies. 4. The leadership of the territorial community should include at least one woman (for example as mayor or deputy mayor).

¹⁶³ See the CLGF country profiles; CEMR (2019) Women in politics; and UCLG Africa and Cities Alliance (2018), Assessing the Institutional Environment of Local Governments in Africa, and UCLG ASPAC and Cities Alliance (2018) City enabling environment rating.

¹⁶⁴ The Tunisian municipalities are Nabeul and Fondouk Jedid-Seltan (Nabeul), Tabarka and Ain Sobh-Ennadhur (Jendouba), Sidi Bourouis (Siliiana), Marja (Kef), Hammam chott (Ben Arous) and Menzel Abderrahmane (Bizerte).

¹⁶⁵ Brazil, Guatemala, Panama and Antigua & Barbados. Data on "Autonomy in decision making" were provided by the Gender Equality Observatory for Latin America and the Caribbean - CEPAL, latest available data 2018. See <http://tiny.cc/83u27y>.

Box 9

Interlinkages between SDG 5.5 and 16.7

As reported in 2017, few VNRs have so far included data on the proportion of women elected to local offices.¹⁶⁰ In 2017, UCLG estimated that around 20% of the world's local councillors and 5% of its mayors were women.¹⁶¹ LRG associations and networks started to monitor and report on legal frameworks conducive to reducing gender-based inequalities in local governments. In Africa, only six out of 49 countries assessed¹⁶² have implemented more than one gender-responsive electoral policy.¹⁶³ Among these, the case of Tunisia is particularly compelling. Following amendments to the new electoral law and municipal code, 47% of local councillors elected were women. Even so, gender-based discrimination continues to limit women's involvement in local politics. With this in mind, the national association of cities (FNVT), together with the Canadian Federation of Municipalities and VNG International, has designed a decentralised cooperation Programme to support Inclusive Municipal Leadership and a new network of female local elected representatives.¹⁶⁴ In Latin America, now women hold 28.8% of municipal council seats, an increase of 6.5% in ten years; however, this percentage remains below 15% in four countries.¹⁶⁵ At the national level, progress has neither been continuous nor homogeneous and over half of these countries have elected women holding fewer than 30% of the seats contested. There has been stagnation (Brazil and Guatemala) or even reversal (Costa Rica and Venezuela) in previous trends. This was despite national and regional campaigns, by the likes of the Cidada 50-50 platform promoting parity during the 2016 municipal elections in Brazil. In fact, there has been a slow increase in the number of female mayors since 1991, but the national average remains below 20% in most Latin American countries, with only six countries having higher rates.

In Europe, 16% of mayors and 31% of local councillors are women; slightly more than ten years ago.



What are LRGs doing to address the growing demand for effective and transparent institutions and for participative decision-making in local governance?

The leading LRGs around the world are currently working to reconnect with their citizenry in new ways: increasing transparency and accountability, preventing crime and fighting against corruption, and innovating with participatory decision-making processes. The key objective is to increase trust in, and satisfaction with, the local public sector and also in LRGs' capacity to deliver public services. To this end, they have promoted local accountability within the decision-taking process and explored new ways to co-create and co-produce local solutions to meet consensus priorities.

In several global events, such as the SDG16+ Consultation held in Tunis, LRGs have also echoed their communities' call to be granted a new social contract. Over the past decade, LRGs have developed new participatory mechanisms with the objective of providing their citizens, civil society, private sector and other local stakeholders with the opportunity to have a say in local decision-making processes and to take charge of local priorities and development strategies. These experiences allow leeway for innovative participative models, to involve communities in the co-production of the city, and to make local governance more responsive to vulnerable groups and minorities.

Participatory Budgeting (PB) is well known and powerful way to involve local communities in local decision-making and increase trust in LRGs. This is a process through which people can participate in decisions relating to priority spending and shaping local development strategies. Over the past thirty years, since the first experiences in Porto Alegre (Brazil), in the 1990s, the spectrum of LRG experiments with PB has grown ever wider, ranging from symbolic participatory gestures with little transformative impact to vectors of structural change in city governance systems. Around the world, more than 6,000 experiences have been recorded in over 40 different countries.¹⁶⁶ One example is **Dondo** (Mozambique), the first

generally recognised example of PB in Africa, where the destination of up to US\$ 2.6 million of public spending was discussed by 51 local communities, debating within local fora. The Municipal Council subsequently decided to invest these funds in priority public works such as access to clean water and drainage (2007-2009). This experience was later supported by the national development cooperation and the national LGA and replicated by other municipal governments, such as Inhambane, during the following legislature (2011-2014).¹⁶⁷

The success of this process is mainly due to its ability to transform local democracy and make local government institutions more accountable and responsive to their respective communities. One unique feature of PB, which clearly meets SDG 16.7, is that it can be applied from the lowest street or neighbourhood level, up to the regional level. At sub-municipal levels, experiences vary from wards in **Chicago** to *Communes d'Arrondissement* in **Yaoundé** (Cameroon) and parishes in **Lisbon**. At the regional level, experiences may involve upscaling existing local government practices, such as the gender-responsive participatory budgeting process of **Penang state** (Malaysia), or political decision-making at Regional level, as in the case of the **Los Rios Province** (Chile). In the case of the Russian regional governments, there is a top-down process in which the region organises the process at the district, village, town and city levels, with the support of the national Ministry of Finance. The International Observatory on Participatory Democracy gathers information about such practices and has created a database relating to the 12 editions of the *OIDP Award for "Best Practice in Citizen Participation"*.¹⁶⁸

In recent years, an increasing number of **LRGs around the world have committed to advancing reforms in line with the principles of open government:**¹⁶⁹ by incorporating this new model for governance into their administrations and political agendas. They are developing new tools and solutions to help access local information and engage citizens, civic organizations and the private sector as strategic partners with whom to work towards achieving more effective and accountable local institutions. In **Aragon** (Spain), innovative solutions have been introduced to reduce costs in the short term and gain trust and democratic legitimacy in the longer term. Elsewhere (as in **Berlin** and **Tshwane**) LRGs are promoting the use of open data and new technologies to improve the quality of public services and access

¹⁶⁶ See Y. Cabannes (2019) *Participatory Budgeting: a powerful and expanding contribution to the achievement of SDGs and primarily SDG 16.7* (forthcoming).

¹⁶⁷ Y. Cabannes (2019). Moreover, the city of Dondo and Beira were ravaged by cyclone Idai in March 2019. According to the Red Cross, 90% of Beira was destroyed by the cyclone and subsequent outbreaks of malaria and cholera.

¹⁶⁸ In 2018, 65 submissions were received from 26 countries and added to the database that is available at: <https://oidp.net>.

¹⁶⁹ The principles of transparency, accountability, citizen engagement and collaboration form an integral part of the Open Government approach and are recognized by SDG16. Several of the examples given below were selected by the UCLG Community of Practice on Transparency and Open Government.

As the level of government the closest of the citizens, cities and regions are where transformations towards more effective, accountable and transparent institutions must begin.

to them. In the case of **Tshwane**,¹⁷¹ the city administration has improved its collaboration with informal transport providers, leading to improvements in local economic development (SDG 8), which has accelerated the rate of social change and had a direct impact on the lives of the poorest citizens.

As previously reported in 2018, with regard to SDG 11, Urban Labs have been established with the support of municipalities to find innovative and collaborative ways of forming partnerships and unlocking the potential of local public management. Relevant examples include **Buenos Aires**, where – working in collaboration with the Huésped Foundation – the city administration developed an online tool: the #DÓNDE digital platform, to collect feedback from citizens, improve the quality of service delivery and improve access to vital health services (particularly sexual and reproductive health services) for vulnerable citizens, and particularly adolescents and other young people. **Montevideo** was one of the pioneers in Latin America in developing an open data strategy. Its local government also collaborated Uruguay's Electronic Government and Information Society Agency to define the 2018-2020 Open Government National Action Plan.

One critical dimension of open government and accountable institutions is open public procurement. **On average, LRGs account for around 37% of the world's public investment.**¹⁷² Examples to highlight are the *Sustainable procurement policies* of the city of **Ghent** (Belgium), which build on award winning

¹⁷⁰ The Aragon Participa project was presented at the 8th ODP Award, in 2014. A new edition of Open Data Strategies (2019-2022) is currently being organized, see <https://opendata.aragon.es>.

¹⁷¹ Open Government Partnerships and UCLG (2018) Urban 20 White paper on Transparency and Open Government.

¹⁷² OECD-UCLG, World Observatory on Subnational Governments Finance and Investments, www.sng-wofi.org. Based on a sample of 99 countries from all regions and income levels.

¹⁷³ The City is the first winner of the first "EU Cities for Fair and Ethical Trade Award". A total of 19 LRGs participated, with seven being selected and four receiving special mentions: Madrid (Global Partnerships), Lyon (innovations), Saarbrücken (Inspiring Procurement Practices), Dortmund (Education and Community Participation), Vitoria-Gasteiz and Ghent.

¹⁷⁴ Over 15 cities attended the workshop on "European local governments for human rights" convened by Barcelona, Madrid and Plaine Commune and held at the UCLG CISDP. It was followed by the International Conference "Cities for Rights", held in Barcelona, in December 2018.

¹⁷⁵ For more information, see 2017 Granollers guide for public procurement, available in Catalan at <http://tiny.cc/yzg27y>.

¹⁷⁶ For more information, see UCLG CISDP (2017) report on Barcelona's Office for Non-Discrimination, available at <http://tiny.cc/6pt27y>.

practice,¹⁷³ and the promotion of criteria based on human rights to govern local public procurement by cities such as **Sabadell**¹⁷⁴ and **Granollers**¹⁷⁵ (Spain).

A growing number of LRGs (as diverse as the Barcelona Provincial Council, Petaling Jaya City, Sekondi-Takoradi, Tblisi and Ramallah) have taken important steps to promote greater **transparency, accountability and efficiency** in service delivery, based on the use of practical and accessible tools. In some cases, LRGs have experimented with innovative solutions to reach out to the most disadvantaged and/or excluded social groups (see also SDG 10). In **Sekondi-Takoradi** (Ghana), citizens have access to scorecards to assess their satisfaction with the quality of public service delivery to the poorer communities. With the support of the Open Government Partnership, the metropolitan assembly of these twin-cities has made considerable progress in obtaining better sanitation, access to toilets, and street-lighting (which has resulted in a reduction in night-time crime).

LRGs are embracing the principles of human rights in their local plans and policies. They are running campaigns and education programmes to raise awareness of human rights-related issues and promote a culture of non-discrimination with official charters and protection mechanisms. Many cities have established dedicated offices and commissions to put their non-discriminatory policies and inclusive strategies into practice at the local level. For example, **Barcelona's**¹⁷⁶ Office for Non-Discrimination is a mainstream example



Delivery of coal in Chengdu, China, in 1991 (photo: Gary Todd, <https://bit.ly/2Ly6TYT>).

of comprehensive local action in favour of non-discrimination, based on offering mechanisms to guarantee and promote human rights. **Nuremberg**¹⁷⁷ and **Venice**¹⁷⁸ have similar policies, while **New York City**¹⁷⁹ has a Human Rights Commission responsible for enforcing the NYC Human Rights Law and fighting against discrimination. Other cities have introduced similar local mechanisms for guaranteeing human rights and making LRGs more accountable to the Justice System. For instance, the metropolitan government of **Gwangju**¹⁸⁰ has several ombudspersons who work in fields like gender equality and labour policy, while **Bogotá**¹⁸¹ has a *Veeduría distrital* whose duty is to promote transparency, more accountable government and human rights. Other initiatives include acknowledging the rights of homeless people (e.g. the Homeless Bill of Rights adopted by four cities in Slovenia and two in Spain) and tackling discrimination against Roma people, those of African origin, LGBTQIA+ communities (e.g. **Lisbon**), young people (e.g. **Valongo**, Portugal, and **Yopougon**, a suburb of Abidjan), people with disabilities (e.g. **Sanxia district; La Serena**) and rural migrants living in cities (e.g. **Quito** and **Cuenca; Chengdu**), etc. Metropolis has launched a project to learn lessons from the experiences of Barcelona, Berlin, Buenos Aires, Mexico City, Medellín and Montevideo and promote "Intersectionality in metropolitan LGBTI policies" in order to help fight discrimination and hate crimes.

Various networks (such as the Global Charter-Agenda for Human Rights in the City, and the European Conference Cities

for Human Rights, both with more than 400 cities).¹⁸² Within the framework of Habitat III, local governments and civil society built a joint global platform on the Right to the City, to build "just, democratic and sustainable cities".¹⁸³ Decentralized cooperation and the collaboration of national governments with national associations of LRGs have been key to building up the local-level capacities of public employees.¹⁸⁴

LRGs have created organized constituencies to voice their message of peace and respect for human rights, share their experiences within their respective communities, and build up their capacities through peer-to-peer exchanges. **In all cases, LRGs are interested in building local alliances with NGOs, civil society, academia and businesses to remove the causes of violence and discrimination from urban environments.**

Such policies, which are decisive for progress towards achieving the SDGs, rely on coherent institutional frameworks that give LRGs the power to act. Citizens' aspirations to play a new role in local governance and to work alongside with local elected governing bodies have been an important driving force behind many of these processes in the last decade. However, building strong local institutions requires local governments that have the powers, capacities and resources to ensure that they can meet their responsibilities and be accountable to their communities. The development of effective and accountable institutions at the local level can therefore only be achieved if supported by tailored and effective decentralization policies.

¹⁷⁷ See the Nuremberg Human Rights Office website https://www.nuernberg.de/internet/menschenrechte_e/.

¹⁷⁸ See the website of the Commune of Venice. <http://tiny.cc/xut27y>.

¹⁷⁹ See the website of the NYC Office of Human Rights www1.nyc.gov/site/cchr/about/inside-cchr.page.

¹⁸⁰ See the UCLG CISDP website. During the Cities for Rights International Conference held in Barcelona, a delegation from the local administration of Gwangju met Barcelona's Síndica de Greuges (local ombudsperson), to discuss common areas of work, such as the right to work and gender equality.

¹⁸¹ See UCLG CISDP interview with Bogota's Veedor Distrital (Ombudsman), Jaime Torres Melo, July 2017, available here: <http://tiny.cc/kqtw7y>.

¹⁸² See UCLG CISDP Global Charter-Agenda for Human Rights in the City.

¹⁸³ See also www.righttothecityplatform.org.br.

¹⁸⁴ The IDEAL program (2017-2021) is financed by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands and has been implemented in Burundi, Mali, Palestine, Rwanda, Somalia, South Sudan and Uganda.

The way forward

From this perspective, there are six fundamental elements that will facilitate and accelerate the results of SDG16 at the local level:

Promoting strong partnerships between LRGs and local stakeholders to work towards the achievement of SDG16. Open, transparent and inclusive institutions can only be established based on the strong will and commitment of political actors, citizens and institutions. LRGs must assume responsibility for advancing "social pedagogy" and exemplifying the values of transparency, accountability and combatting corrupt practices. It is important to involve stakeholders –civil society, NGOs, and the private sector, etc.– in the local decision-making process, through institutional channels that facilitate their engagement, interaction and collaboration. Citizens must benefit from participatory spaces, access to information, and having tailored support to promote their commitment to, and ownership of, the 2030 Agenda and other development strategies.

Strengthening the capacities of local and regional governments to foster more accountable and inclusive local institutions. To strengthen the trust of local inhabitants in their public institutions, LRGs need to be empowered to achieve open government, meet citizens' demands (e.g. for the provision of basic public services, and safe and peaceful communities), create solid and transparent institutions, and develop a range of participative mechanisms to foster the involvement of their citizens in local processes. LRGs shall benefit from having adequate powers and resources, and also favourable legal and institutional frameworks ("enabling environments"). Effective decentralization is critical for making local and regional authorities accountable to the people who elect them.

Ensuring that an appropriate human rights approach is mainstreamed in local policies to promote equal rights, effective civic registry and access to justice for all women, men and children. In line with LRGs' commitment to Habitat III, particularly the Right to the City, and to supporting human rights-based policies,

LRGs should foster partnerships with relevant stakeholders to prevent discriminatory policies against vulnerable groups, such as migrants. Fruitful mediation to promote respect for diversity should be enrooted in the territories to put a stop to violence and conflict within their respective communities.

Fostering multilevel and multi-stakeholder governance to ensure cooperation and coordination between all levels of government and local stakeholders. Inclusive and sustainable 'whole-of-society' and 'whole-government' approaches are fundamental for achieving SDG 16. Coherence between national, regional and local policies that promote peace, justice and more effective institutions must be enhanced. There is no zero-sum game: national SDG strategies will benefit from innovative local initiatives to reduce violence and promote diversity and inclusion. LRG policies need support from effective coordination and follow-up mechanisms that facilitate responsive decision-making processes and involve all levels of government. With local traction and multi-level support no one and no territory will be left behind. Providing localized data and indicators is another important issue that needs to be resolved to ensure the effective monitoring of SDG16 at all levels.

Supporting LRG initiatives to build peace and promote participatory democracy, developing cooperation between people and local institutions to share, learn, and exchange. LRGs have a long tradition of city-to-city and decentralized cooperation exchanges that has built bridges between people, cultures and local institutions. Several initiatives developed by LRG networks can contribute to SDG16+, and SDGs in general, and this could serve as a reference for international peer-to-peer learning for peace and participative policies.

Acknowledging local and regional government voices and representatives and their contributions to SDG16 within the global process. LRGs have experience informing about, and supporting, localized strategies to help achieve SDG 16 and need to be included in global and regional-scale dialogue to promote the localization of the 2030 Agenda. ❖

Effective decentralization is critical for making LRGs accountable to the people who elect them.

5. Means of implementation



This section analyses the initiatives reported by countries in 2019 to foster the implementation of the SDGs at the subnational level. It considers the coherence of the institutional and financing framework, the reforms envisaged to strengthen local resource mobilization and investment, and capacity-building initiatives to improve local government data production and monitoring from local territories.

5.1 Policy Coherence and financing frameworks

Looking back at the commitments of 2016, it was highlighted that up to 65% of the SDG targets would be put at risk should the LRGs not be assigned a clear implementing role. In addition, it was shown that 68% (113 of 164) of the NDCs presented to the UNFCCC before August 2016 mention the urban context. The New Urban Agenda, adopted by the United Nations, highlights the catalysing role of LRGs in building convergence and maximizing the impact of public action towards the Global Agendas. As acknowledged in paragraph 34 of the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, LRGs have been assigned an increasing level of responsibility for sustainable development and devolved functions and this should be matched by an equivalent provision of financial and human resources. LRG participation in the national coordination and follow-up mechanisms should also contribute to policy coherence.

As shown in sections 3.3 and 3.4, progress has been made in LRGs localization efforts to tighten the links between planning, policy-making, budget allocation and monitoring in a responsive manner. Section 4 of this report provides compelling evidence that with sufficient autonomy to act on development-related issues, **LRGs are potential game changers in co-creating local innovative solutions with their communities.** In fact, on average, LRGs account for 37% of total public investment throughout the world. They are also key players in maintaining the daily operation of municipal infrastructure and amenities that deliver basic services and sustainable development.

Mentioning LRGs in national strategies does not, however, automatically result in their effective implementation. **As pointed out in section 3.2, throughout the first HLPF quadrennial cycle, the average level of LRG**

participation in coordination mechanism is just 34%. Furthermore, only 17 of the 47 countries reporting in 2019 have involved LRGs in their national coordination mechanisms.

This report echoes a call for more ambitious and vertically-aligned investment strategies for climate action (see SDG 13) and strengthen the urban-climate nexus. According to the latest evaluation of the 108 National Urban Policies in the world, 56 countries gave low levels of attention to climate resilience. Likewise, 28 gave low attention to environment sustainability at the formulation stage or beyond.¹ In all cases, LRGs are not being fully involved as development partners in the formulation and implementation of national urban policies and nationally determined contributions. UCLG and UN-Habitat are developing a new guide to monitor and assess National Urban Policies.

National, regional and local financial strategies do not work in isolation from one another. In previous years, LRGs from different reporting countries have highlighted a series of key challenges that tend to face them. These include: a lack of assessment relating to the real impact of reforms; delays in receiving financial transfers; insufficient support for implementation; and/or a lack of implementation resulting from the overlapping of different political mandates.

In line with the follow up to the ECOSOC Forum on Financing for Development, national governments have reported on their efforts to design integrated National Financing Strategies. Some countries (such as Serbia), have raised the alarm as to the need for international financing support or (as in the cases of Mauritius and the Republic of Congo), for support from ODA. It should, however, be remembered that ODA financing has not increased to the levels initially expected and that it rarely extends to LRGs.

¹ UN-Habitat/OECD (2018) Global State of National Urban Policy.

There is a missed opportunity in not building up coherent policy or tightened planning, budgeting, implementing and monitoring mechanisms to help coordinate initiatives between levels of government.

On the other hand, looking at this more generally, the reported financing strategies mainly been oriented towards improving and reforming existing frameworks in order to increase the mobilization of domestic resources. It should also be underlined, however, that VNRs seldom refer to specific challenges or opportunities to unlock sub-national public finance, as part of the domestic resources mobilization efforts. There is a missed opportunity in not building up coherent policy or tightened planning, budgeting, implementing and monitoring mechanisms to help coordinate initiatives between levels of government.

The data suggest that LRGs are key actors for helping to achieve the SDGs in terms of maintenance and investment. An overview of LRG finance, from a sample of 18 of the 47 countries reporting this year (from which data were collected), has shown that – on average – LRGs account for 16.5% of total global public spending and 17.5% of total global public revenue.² However, the range of LRG spending is tremendous, representing 2.2 % of general government expenditure in Azerbaijan as opposed to 47.8% in Indonesia.

Several of the VNRs presented in 2019 show how the financial costs of implementing the SDGs have been audited within National Developments Plans aligned with them (e.g., **Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Chad, and Rwanda**). As expected, the financial gap was significant. In Burkina Faso,³ for instance, projections based on PNDES funding revealed an estimated financial gap of \$15,500 million PPP (or \$772 PPP per capita).⁴ The main source of revenue for the financial strategy is based on each country's own resources, yet according to the

information available, the collection rate at the local level was only 13% (2016-2018). At the same time, between 2016 and 2018, financial transfers to municipalities, which help to improve basic services, were expected to increase from \$73.3 million PPP in 2016 to reach \$216 million PPP in 2018. The target of 10% of national resources, for 2018, set as part of the PNDES, has not yet been achieved: the rate currently stands at around 5%. It could be argued that the gap at the national level tends to be underestimated when LRGs are not involved in the cost-estimation exercise.⁵ In Rwanda, the total cost of delivering the priority targets for the first half of the SDG period [by 2022] has been estimated at between 43% of GDP in FY16/17 to 47% of GDP in FY23/24. In comparison, in 2016, it was reported that local own resources were about 20% less than its revenue potential and its collection efficiency was estimated to reach 30%.⁶

Similarly, Mongolia has identified the "lack of a cost estimation" as an early challenge in its localization strategy. In Algeria and Mauritania, new Organic Laws on Finance were recently introduced to ensure a better allocation of resources between different levels of government and to help link together budgeting and policy-making.⁷ Likewise, Bosnia and Herzegovina introduced a series of important local government reforms in 2015-2016, which also affected its fiscal system.

As well as carrying out cost estimation exercises, countries also assess the processual challenge of mobilizing additional public and private funding during existing policy and budget cycles. In this respect, in 2019, the Icelandic and Flemish (in Belgium) governments have stood out for adapting their national fiscal strategy policy objectives in a responsive way. In Iceland, the selection of priority targets is to be reviewed once every two years in order to adapt them to the targets furthest from being met at any given time.

Assessing the financial costs associated with implementing the SDGs, or National Development Plans aligned with them, will be determinant at all levels of government. This is an exercise that should be included in all the VNRs, as part of the analysis of the means of implementation. As many VNRs have highlighted, the SDGs will be implemented at both the national and LRG levels in accordance with, on the one hand, the financial means available, and on the other, the political will to take the risk of long-term investments in those communities and territories where this is most urgently needed. ❖

² OECD- UCLG (2019), *World Observatory of Subnational Finances and Investment, 2019 Report*.

³ UCLG (2019) Burkina Faso country profile in OECD/UCLG 2019.

⁴ Authors' own calculation based on the data provided by the VNR of Burkina Faso and the conversion rate of the World bank for 2016.

⁵ The estimated cost of SDG Localization has also been evaluated with the participation of local governments in Colombia, Mexico and Uruguay. GTF (2018)

⁶ The VNR of Rwanda 2019 and UNCDF (2019) Rwanda Country profile in OECD/UCLG 2019.

⁷ Following recommendations from the Association of Mayors of Mauritania, since 2016, 60% of the revenue from the Regional Development Grant has been allocated to operating expenses and 40% to investment.

5.2

Strengthening multi-level governance to bridge the SDG-investment gap

Urban infrastructure requirements, climate-response investment and meeting citizens' aspirations are all issues of growing importance that need specifically-adapted answers. The financing options available to LRGs in most countries, and particularly developing countries, have not kept pace with urbanization rates, the challenges and opportunities associated with migration, or the need to mitigate climate change and limit the increasingly frequent risk of disasters. However, not all territories and local government bodies are equal when it comes to facing up to these transformations. Intermediary cities, in particular, have been left behind in the task of designing financial schemes and allocating both human and financial resources. When addressing these gaps governments should pay particular attention to structural imbalances in the delivery of local services and to providing sustainable infrastructure. It is also necessary to bear in mind the need for increasing accountability and transparency and for LRGs to show greater commitment, as explained in SDG 16.

At the national level, several countries have reported on **performance based financial strategies**. The objective here has often been to optimize the mobilization of fiscal revenue at the national level by focusing on the tax base and collection services, as well as improving the governance of tax regulation and anti-fraud measures (e.g. **Cambodia, The Republic of Congo, Ghana, Indonesia** and the **Philippines**). In the **Philippines**, for instance, the national government has set itself the clear objective of improving the financial performance of local government bodies by tapping into local sources of revenue and devolving certain

functions. The aim of the national strategy is to ensure the passage of ongoing administrative reforms. In other countries, strategies include door-to-door taxation (e.g. **The Republic of Congo**); and improving the regulation of domestic taxation (e.g., **Ghana** and **Mauritius**). In **Ghana**, the part of the domestic budget funded by taxes increased from 49.6% in 2015 to 64.3% in 2018. Yet, for the same period, 94% of revenue received by 155 local government organizations (with available data) was from grants, with 84% of this coming from international donors.⁸

In most countries, LRGs are heavily reliant on government transfers; these are not always predictable or based on any clear criteria. In **Mali** and **Burkina Faso**, for example, local government bodies are dependent on the quality of intergovernmental transfers. Contracts and protocols have been signed between different levels of government to increase the flow of funding from the state to its local government organizations. LRGs could still, however, participate more actively in efforts to improve domestic resource mobilization, if they had greater financial autonomy. In **Mali**, the Local Government National Investment Agency is a key actor when it comes to encouraging local government bodies to improve their performance in mobilizing revenue; it also supports them to guarantee loans and access capital markets. In **Uganda**, the Kampala Capital City Authority was able to increase revenue collection by 89% over a four-year period (from 2010/11 to 2014/15), as part of a larger strategy to improve revenue efficiency. The financing capacity of LRGs is essential for improving their access to borrowing.

⁸ UNCDF (2019) Ghana country profile, in OECD/UCLG (2019).

These strategies should include LRGs and seek to improve both the availability and reliability of fiscal data. All stakeholders consider having reliable data and trust as being key to improving the access of LRGs to financing. Greater attention has recently been put on reforming **municipal development funds** in both the developed and developing world. To avoid trade-off and support policy-coherence, it is particularly important that these funds are aligned with the SDG framework, beyond sectorial siloes. Moreover, the aim of improving both conventional and innovative methods of financing is to increase the funding available to intermediary cities and to regions whose territories are currently lagging behind.

To offset regional disparities, some VNRs report efforts to allocate funding through an equalization fund (e.g., Cambodia, the Philippines, Pakistan, and Indonesia). In the **Philippines**, the Assistance to *Disadvantaged Municipalities and the Local Government Support Fund Assistance to Municipalities* help poorer LRGs to obtain access to services and infrastructure and to address gaps in policy and governance, including territorial cooperation. **Indonesia** has been innovating to diversify its sources of finance in order to fund SDG implementation and to expand the access of its LRGs to subnational-level loans for investment in infrastructure. To date, however, none of its LRGs has issued its own bonds.⁹ The current financing infrastructure includes mechanisms that allow LRGs to borrow money via the Ministry of Finance. The national government acknowledges the urgent need to finance the LRGs' need for capital and has created the Regional Infrastructure Development Fund (RIDF). Similarly, a Subnational Investment Fund in **Cambodia** will provide grants (but not initially loans) to fund public infrastructure and services. This Fund prioritizes providing

support for decentralized sectors and services and promoting the ongoing reform process. It receives support from the Asian Development Bank and will provide different types of support to each level of government, according to its context, on a competitive basis.

Building-up the technical and financial capacities of LRGs has also been a priority and decentralized cooperation continues to play an important role in this. LGAs working in partnership with their members and national governments, and with the support of international cooperation (including their peers), are currently developing adapted guides and also multiplying the number of action-oriented training sessions and peer to peer exchanges that they organize. There are examples of sister-cities cooperating with LRGs within the *G5 Sahel Alliance* (which includes **Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania and Niger**); this is particularly relevant with regard to providing technical assistance to help improve financial management, as well as that of water and sanitation. In Tanzania, a total of 177 investment committee members, from 60 LRGs, have been trained to improve the project management of Public Investment.¹⁰ The UNCDF has also provided technical guidance to investment committee members and council management teams from four pilot LRGs. It has helped LRGs to identify 30 potential revenue-generating infrastructure projects, related to the potential issuing of municipal revenue bonds. This has contributed to Tanzania's efforts to improve the capacity of its LRGs to develop and deliver investment projects.

As previously mentioned (see SDG 13 in this report), many LRG networks have been involved in setting up project financing and project preparation facilities (PPF), with the support of their development partners and donors. These include C40 Cities Finance Facility, ICLEI's Transformative Action Program. In a recent

⁹ Smoke P. (2019) Improving subnational government development finance in emerging and developing economies: towards a strategic approach. ADB working paper series

¹⁰ The VNR of Tanzania 2019. The Government developed a Public Investment Management-Operational Manual (PIM-OM), to serve as guide to Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs), Regional Secretariats (RSs) and Local Government Authorities (LGAs) on matters related to Public Investment Management.

————— **Many LRG networks have been involved in setting up project financing and project preparation facilities with the support of their development partners and donors.**

Box 10

The Seville commitment



In February 2019, national governments, LRGs and LGAs, civil society, academia, private sector and the United Nations gathered in Seville (Spain) to review progress and lessons

learned of implementing the 2030 Agenda and chart new pathways to accelerate and scale up action at the local level. The High-level Dialogue was convened by the Governments of Spain, Ecuador and Cape Verde in collaboration with Local 2030 and culminated in the Seville Commitment.

Participants agreed on the need to make the 2030 Agenda a reality and leave no one and no place behind. They also celebrated the significant localization process taking place globally and welcomed the coordinated and coherent support from the UN System to LRGs and national governments. Participants further committed to build this local-global movement to accelerate and scale up SDG localization, encouraged Local 2030 to be the catalyst of the emerging movement, and called on UN Member States and all stakeholders to facilitate participation of institutions championing the localization at regional fora on sustainable development and the HLPF as well as to convene high-level gatherings on SDG localization on a biennial basis.

study, the CCFLA mapped 27 PPF supporting LRGs in Asia and Latin America.¹¹ Besides the technical assistance provided by development partners, a new **Territorial Africa Agency** has been designed by UCLG Africa to serve as a cooperative mechanism for raising seed capital in African cities and for supporting grantees and helping to fund urban and municipal investment projects. It is also supported by the African Development Bank. With the support of FMDV, and working in close collaboration with UNCDF, UCLG has also launched an **International Municipal Investment Fund**. Its two key innovations are its bottom-up approach to identifying revenue generating projects and its ability to create leverage so that LRGs can access capital markets.

Overall, the access of LRGs to capital markets has remained quite limited. Bonds and securities only represented 12% of subnational government debt in the 58 countries for which data were available in 2016. As a financial instrument, local and regional government bonds were insignificant in the lower and middle-income countries featured in the sample. Interestingly, bonds were slightly more common in the upper-middle income countries than in high income countries (16% vs 14%).

This information sheds new light on the momentum behind the climate finance. In the framework of the New Urban Agenda,

Subnational Green Bonds and Subnational Pooled Financing Mechanisms have been identified as potential catalysers that could be used to finance implementation of the Global Agendas at the local level. Some VNRs mention similar mechanisms. For example, since 2009, the **Indonesia** Climate Change Trust Fund (ICCTF) has supported a total 76 project at 99 locations across Indonesia, in line with national efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Moreover, in 2017, the national government of the **Philippines** launched the 'Green, Green, Green' programme, which was funded, under the Local Government Support Fund – Assistance to Cities, to promote the development of public open spaces and to create greener, and more sustainable, cities all over the country. In **Ghana**, a Green Fund was established to support the scaling up of interventions in the renewable energy sector. Other reported initiatives include the 2014 reforestation plan undertaken in **Pakistan** (10 Billion Tree Tsunami, PKR 13 billion) in which LRGs actively participated. They are potential accelerators that can help to mobilize the capital markets to finance the transition to low-carbon cities. While LRGs' Green Bonds and SDG Bonds¹² have been launched in North America and Europe; it is unfortunately possible to count on the fingers of one hand the examples in Asia, Latin America and Africa.¹³ ❖

¹¹. CCFLA (2018) Summary of Good practices of Successful Project Preparation facilities.

¹². Specifically, in the Basque Country and Navarra (Spain).

¹³. See examples in GTF (2018).

5.3

Local and regional monitoring for responsive policy action

Monitoring progress to SDG achievement is central for mobilization and awareness raising. Data disaggregation is essential to build tailored indicators of progress and involve local actors in the monitoring process. However, local contributions to monitoring, so far, have been largely hindered by the capacity of LRGs and stakeholder to access and take advantage of the system of official indicators of the UN. National Statistics Offices are also confronted with the difficulty to 'localize' selected national indicators, which can seldom be easily articulated at the territorial level. It is against this backdrop that several VNRs report significant efforts to strengthen the statistical departments of their institutions (among others, the reviews of Chad, Indonesia, Pakistan, Philippines, Tunisia, Tonga and South Africa) in the attempt to better disaggregate their available data. Others, such as Algeria, signal the need to 'territorialize' indicators. These efforts inevitably have an impact on actual policy response. With localized indicators and participatory approaches, public action receives, as it is the case in Tunisia, "local operation content to inform Local Development Plans" to act in favour of marginalized groups. In Tonga, existing designs were improved to include the 'small area estimation' technique: collected information is now disaggregated at the main island level, as well as all rural islands, and by villages, districts and constituencies.

Top-down processes, moreover, have clear limitations in terms of local buy-in and effective roll-out. The **Philippines** launched in 2018 its Guidelines for Localization and a 'result matrix' for LRGs to adopt. These tools were presented

to regional development councils with too little time left and inadequate support for local elected and administrative officials to build capacities accordingly and use them effectively. Similarly, in **Indonesia**, technical guidelines and a set of metadata indicators were developed as part of the provincial and local government's vertical reporting process. Yet, the LOCALISE project (see Section 3 of this report) sent out a survey on the status of SDGs implementation, concluding that the requested indicators, in many cases, do not match the available data.

As the Sustainable Development Solutions Network (SDSN) reports ask, 'How do Sub-National Data Efforts Support SDG Achievement?'¹⁴ In response to these challenges, many LRGs and LGAs have come together, joined forces or built institutional alliances to explore alternative frameworks of indicators, scoreboards and dashboard. Bottom-up experiments by LGAs were presented in Sections 3 and 4 of this report, both at national (e.g., in Germany, Brazil, or New Zealand) and local level, where they combined with efforts to develop Voluntary Local Reviews (e.g. the State of Oaxaca, the cities of Buenos Aires, Barcelona, Helsinki or Sydney, among others). China is developing a comprehensive system of indicators at local level with the support of statistical and geospatial information, with a pilot experience in the county of Deqing.¹⁵ Other institutions, such as SDSN,¹⁶ have continued to support local initiatives worldwide to collect urban indicators (for instance scoreboards for 45 European cities in 2019). Similar initiatives have been developed for Brazil, India, Spain and Italy.¹⁷

¹⁴ See SDSN report on the Thematic Research Network on Data and Statistics (TReNDS) webpage: <http://tiny.cc/ijjs68y>.

¹⁵ Deqing's Progress Report in Implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development 2017. A comprehensive Measurement with Statistical and Geospatial Information.

¹⁶ See the Sustainable Development Solutions Network's report available at: <http://tiny.cc/udl68y>.

¹⁷ In Spain see: <http://tiny.cc/njl68y>; In India see: <http://tiny.cc/1kl68y>.

In doing so, LRGs **highlight their commitment to develop more Research and Development and Science and Technology strategies at the city and territories level.**

The results of such efforts to produce science-informed solutions has been most visible in improving systems and databases to monitor LRG's carbon emission and footprint. Moreover, working with CSOs has also led to transformational practices in co-producing data – also with the support of mobile technology – in unmapped or rapidly evolving rural and peri-urban areas. Partnerships with Slum/Shack Dwellers International members have, for instance, led to demonstrating the benefits of fostering women and youth leadership in co-producing information, for example in Kenya and South Africa.

Stronger participation of local governments in monitoring and reporting on SDG implementation will require additional efforts from all levels of governments to empower local actors to share their initiatives, learn mutually, and understand the impact of their own experiences on global monitoring efforts. New cross-border and cross-level alliances will be needed to provide enough knowledge, resources and incentives for local governments to access better designed and more disaggregated local indicators of performance. ❖

Stronger participation of local governments in SDG implementation will require efforts from all levels of governments to empower local actors to share their initiatives and learn mutually.



6. Conclusions and way forward

Four years into the 2030 Agenda, at the end of the 1st cycle of the SDGs, many positive trends have emerged.

Notwithstanding, the world is not advancing at the speed and scale required to produce the transformations expected by 2030.

LRGs share the concern of the international community regarding the need to embolden ambitions and accelerate the pace of transformations to meet the Global Agendas. They share the vision that the SDGs will not be met and the climate emergency will not be addressed unless the call of the New Urban Agenda for empowered LRGs becomes a reality.

This 3rd report summarizes the various actions that LRGs are leading to contribute towards the localization of the SDGs, carrying out awareness-raising, learning and monitoring activities all around the world that put the commitments of the 2030 agenda at the heart of their action and strategy. This report focuses on the five SDGs assessed by the HLPF this year. It completes the analysis on the 17 SDGs initiated in 2017 and developed in the two previous reports. Local stories demonstrate how LRGs are potential game-changers in co-creating innovative solutions with their communities in order to leave no one and no place behind. The report also makes a strong point regarding integrated policymaking and institutional frameworks, which it identifies as a prerequisite to develop the “whole-of-government” and “whole-of-society” approaches that are necessary for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

01.

LRGs commitment continues to grow in all regions, yet such commitment is not matched by their participation in the VNR process

Despite progress made, taking a qualitative leap forward is increasingly urgent to ensure that the 2030 Agenda commitments are met. LRGs’ involvement in this process has expanded during the past year at different paces and intensity. European LRGs continue to lead the movement for the localization of the SDGs, particularly in Northern and Western Europe and increasingly in the rest of the regions of Europe. Similarly, the number of mobilized LRGs in Canada and USA is also expanding. In Asia Pacific, beyond Asian OECD countries, a number of LRGs are involved in China, Indonesia and the Philippines, as are provincial governments in India and Pakistan. LRGs in other countries have also begun to take action. In Africa, LRGs in Kenya, Benin, South Africa, Rwanda and Togo were among the frontrunners. LRGs in other countries are now following suit, as is the case in Burundi, Cape Verde, Côte d’Ivoire, Ghana, Mali, Mozambique, Tanzania and Uganda, among others. In Latin America, frontrunners include LRGs from Brazil, Costa Rica, Colombia, Dominican Republic, Ecuador and regional governments from Argentina and Mexico. In Eurasia and MEWA,

progress is sluggish (with the exception of Turkey). Globally, metropolises, big cities and some regions are at the frontline of action.

The majority of LRGs are at the stage of aligning the SDGs with their local and regional development plans. Many of their programs and projects initiated during the past years contribute directly or indirectly to the SDGs, even if they are not labelled as so. This progress, although impressive, is not adequately reflected in the participation in of LRGs in the VNRs process. As highlighted in the report, **the level of LRGs' involvement has not varied much over the 1st cycle of the HLPF, remaining between 40%-46%.**

These percentages in fact reflect the limited priority given to subnational implementation strategies in many countries, as well as the insufficient acknowledgment of LRGs' roles in the reporting process. A dedicated section on the involvement of LRGs in the VNRs could give greater focus to their role as well as greater value for their actions.

If the SDGs are to be achieved, it is critical to revise the strategies to mobilize and involve LRGs in the VNR process in order to create more traction and ownership of the Goals. **LRGs' organizations, national governments and international institutions need to join forces to create a strong force to integrate subnational governments in the process.**

02.

Bold LRG-led local responses need to be scaled up

Many of the major challenges that our societies face may only be effectively tackled with tailored policies:

With respect to **climate action (SDG 13)** and in contrast with the insufficient ambitions of the NDCs currently registered under the UNFCCC, LRGs have adopted resolute policies. More than nine thousand cities from 129 countries made a commitment to take measurable action through the Global Covenant of Mayors for Climate and Energy. In September 2018, 27 major cities announced that they had already peaked their carbon emissions, 72 cities committed to carbon neutrality by 2050, and hundreds of other LRGs committed to more ambitious targets, including the adoption of zero-emission transport systems,

and the use of 100% renewable energy, net-zero carbon buildings, greener and healthy streets, and zero-waste generation by 2030. LRGs are also mainstreaming disaster risk prevention and climate change adaptation programmes within their urban and territorial planning strategies.

Quality education (SDG 4) is a one of the main public services provided by LRGs (globally, LRGs spend an average of 23.6% of their budgets in education). They work to create learning environments and provide long-life education opportunities in cities and territories in order to foster inclusion, human rights and peace values. LRGs support schools, extracurricular activities, vocational education, arts and culture, and aid an organized civil society to enhance local creativity. They are currently mobilizing, articulating and forging partnerships between different local actors. Together pushing for innovative initiatives that are both transforming cities and contributing to the 2030 Agenda.

With respect to **economic growth and decent work (SDG 8)**, LRGs are taking bold initiatives to invigorate local economies (e.g. development districts, business incubators, etc.), promote technological innovation (e.g. smart cities, local clusters, etc.), propel the green and circular economy (e.g. green buildings, waste management) and facilitate the sharing and social economy (e.g. Global Social Economic Forum). Moreover, they are also taking action to integrate the informal sector into the urban fabric (e.g. waste-pickers cooperatives and street vendors), and to develop stronger urban-rural partnerships (e.g. regional food systems). LRGs, as employers, are also responsible for ensuring social dialogue and enforce labour rights through the application of viable and sustainable procurement policies.

In order to **reduce inequalities (SDG 10)**, LRGs are designing more inclusive and participatory urban neighbourhoods and more mixed-use and multifunctional urban districts. LRGs are securing tenancy rights, adopting policies responsive to gender inequalities and improving access to basic services for the most vulnerable. Moreover, they are implementing fiscal equalization policies to foster solidarity between territories, as well as improving urban-rural cooperation. In order to avoid discriminatory policies, LRGs are mainstreaming human rights in local policies and plans with the support of civil society (e.g. the Global Platform on the Right to the city). LRGs are also taking action for the protection of migrants and refugees' rights (e.g. Sanctuary Cities, Refuge Cities, Solidarity Cities) – a commitment that

they have consolidated in the Global Compact for Migration.

LRGs' contribution to promoting **peace, justice and strong institutions (SDG 16)** lies in the fulfilment of their daily tasks. LRGs contribute to SDG 16 by ensuring universal access to quality public services (including civil registers), taking pro-active measures to combat domestic and street violence, building transparent and accountable institutions and protecting peace and promoting coexistence in local communities. Over the past decade, a number of LRGs have explored new ways to co-create and co-produce cities. They have done so by partaking in global peace initiatives and by implementing participatory processes and Open Government policies, as a means to strengthen the basis of their governance systems (e.g. 6,000 experiences of participatory budget processes recorded in over 40 different countries).

03.

Urgency for collaborative governance and integrated policymaking

Improved policy coordination and collaboration across levels and spheres of government and between institutions continues to lag, hindering the effective implementation of the agendas. Policy coherence is a structural requirement of the SDGs and a catalyser with the potential to boost integrated policies and promote joint implementation. Iceland's VNR makes an interesting point: "the introduction of SDGs is approached as a joint project of the state and municipalities".

However, the involvement of LRGs in national coordination mechanisms is insufficient. **Only 49 countries (out of 143, 34%) that reported to the HLPF since 2016 included LRGs in these mechanisms or regularly consulted with them for coordination.** This deficit is also reflected in the limited attention paid in VNRs to the assessment of subnational means of implementation as well as to the financing strategies directed for said local implementation.

Furthermore, as stressed by LRGs in their reports and the New Urban Agenda, bold local innovative actions could be levers for transformative policies that accelerate the pace of SDG implementation. Going beyond the LRG

level is crucial to effectively connect and integrate SDG actions across levels of government and embed them within national development strategy. Enhanced collaboration between all levels of government and local stakeholders will help strengthen these linkages. However, such a paradigmatic change in governance culture would need to be given more priority in order for it to translate into institutional transformation driven by the process of implementing the SDGs. The coordination between national and local planning systems and budgeting processes needs to be strengthened, yet with respect for the principles of subsidiarity.

04.

Unlock LRGs' means of implementing the SDGs at the local level

Pressure derived from urbanization, climate change and increasing inequalities is mounting. Consequently, citizens demand innovative answers and climate-responsive investments. National, regional and local financial strategies need to optimize the use of domestic resources and make progress in estimating the cost of implementing the SDGs at all levels, especially since LRGs account for 37% of total public investment worldwide. LRGs are key players in charge of the maintenance and daily operation of municipal infrastructure that delivers basic services, as well as the implementation of sustainable local policies. These strategies do not work in isolation from one another, however, VNRs seldom refer to specific challenges or opportunities to unlock sub-national sources of public finance. Enhancing LRGs' ownership and providing them with the capacity to inform financial strategies has a direct impact on the policy responses they can provide: LRGs, in this way, could better steer inclusive climate action, promote decent work and fair trade, build territorial and social cohesion and mainstream inclusion and visibility for vulnerable groups in a bottom-up manner.

This report highlights that institutional arrangements are not static and have indeed been evolving. The outcomes of this process are a bold call for national government and development partners to significantly improve vertically-aligned investment strategies and

integrate them with the different international agendas (SDGs, Climate Agenda and New Urban Agenda). Reported local practices and national reforms are performance-based and have promoted equalization mechanisms to offset regional disparities. Reforming municipal development funds in both the developed and developing world is also necessary to increase financing, especially towards intermediary cities or regions whose territories are lagging behind. In addition, scaling up LRGs technical and financial capacities has been a priority in many national contexts. Decentralized cooperation continues to play an important role in this respect (for instance, in the Sahel countries that have reported in 2018 and 2019). Overall, LRGs' access to capital markets remains very limited. This restrains the potential of Subnational Green Bonds and Subnational Pooled Financing Mechanisms as catalysts to finance implementation at the local level. While some VNRs (Indonesia, Philippines Ghana, Pakistan) mention similar mechanisms, sub-national green bond initiatives in Asia Pacific, Latin America and Africa are still limited.

05.

Monitoring progress at the level of the territories

The local level, their institutions, territories and communities, stakeholders, residents and organizations, all must contribute to the monitoring of the localization process: they can be invaluable sources of data, good practices, results and outcomes. The surveys submitted

by LRGs and LGAs were crucial for the realization of this report. Initially pioneered by a core of large cities, **an increasing number of LRGs in all continents are now drafting their own VLRs** thus participating as peers in the global conversation on localization. Many other web-based platforms are sprouting across the world, such as the Local2030 portal, which was initially developed by the GTF, UNDP and UN-Habitat, and that now hosts over 670 publications and 300 'stories' related to the localization of the SDGs.

National Statistical Offices are in the process of developing the means to reach their local territories and trying to disaggregate indicators. In parallel, LRGs and LGAs have come together to explore alternative frameworks of indicators, scoreboards and dashboards. Sections 3.3 and 3.4 showcase the magnitude of efforts directed at scaling up LRGs' impact-assessment capacities by adapting SDG indicators to the local level.

Monitoring frameworks should also constitute a multi-level dialogue, so that progress indicators match available data and involve local actors. The efforts to elaborate Science and Technology strategies at the urban and territorial levels must also be leveraged upon in order to advance inclusiveness: participatory practices (for instance those including women and youth) have resulted the most effective in co-producing data and refocusing policies' responsiveness to leave no one and no place behind.

New cross-border and cross-level alliances will be needed to design disaggregated and locally-relevant indicators of performance in order to ensure that all levels of government empower local actors and acknowledge their importance in enhancing global monitoring efforts.

Aware of the crucial role played by LRGs and the centrality of localization efforts to the implementation of the Global Agendas, key development agencies, such as UNDP and UN Habitat, EOSG Local2030 initiative and other major international institutions like the EU and the OECD are all devoting increasing efforts to support the localization process. Another step forward is the Seville Commitment, convened by the Governments of Spain, Ecuador and Cape Verde in February 2019 to call for multilevel dialogue to embolden the local-global leadership.

Build the local-global movement to accelerate SDG localization.

Way forward

Strengthen the involvement of LRGs in the localization of the SDGs: harnessing the power of local and territorial pacts is essential to enhance national commitments and place-inclusive initiatives, in order to 'co-create' at all levels the transformations that the territories need.

Accelerate LRGs' involvement in Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs) processes, as well as in Regional Forums on Sustainable Development: LRGs can contribute to many other relevant mechanisms in the framework of the global agendas on sustainable urban development, climate change, disaster risk reduction, financing for development and migration.

Support Voluntary Local Reviews (VLRs) and LRGs' efforts to monitor and report: it will be crucial to improve the collection of disaggregated and localized data, to feed into national indicators systems and contribute from the bottom-up to the follow-up of the global agendas and their implementation. In order to scale up LRGs' reporting efforts, the HLPF could dedicate a space for the presentation of the VLRs.

Ensure that the efforts to align national and local development plans with the SDGs are supported with adequate coordination and collaborative mechanisms: it is important that these are based on the principle of subsidiarity and backed by suitable incentives to guarantee effective 'whole-of-government' and 'whole-of-society' approaches.

Integrate LRGs in present and future national SDG-cost assessments: this is key for LRGs' needs to be taken into consideration in the localization process, while developing joint strategies to feed the financial stream in support of sustainable projects in cities and territories.

Promote the necessary reforms to strengthen municipal funds and innovative financing mechanisms: these plans need to be complemented with adequate fiscal and borrowing regulatory frameworks, in order to diversify sources of financing and support local initiatives aligned with both national and local plans.

In this report's foreword, the organized constituency of local and regional governments gathered at the 2019 HLPF has presented its commitments and hopes to continue moving forward.



A meeting of the 2018 UCLG Executive Bureau, hosted at the European Parliament by the city of Strasbourg (photo: <https://tinyurl.com/y24ffms2>).



———— The members of the GTF further commit to continue to contribute to the mapping of LRGs' initiatives and perspectives that will enhance the collective Annual Report of LRGs to the HLPF.

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