

Global Taskforce initial reaction to the zero draft of the New Urban Agenda

*The **Global Taskforce of Local and Regional Governments** is a coordination mechanism set up in 2013 at the initiative of UCLG President and Mayor of Istanbul, Kadir Topbaş. It brings together the major international networks of local governments to undertake joint advocacy relating to international policy processes, particularly the climate change agenda, the Sustainable Development Goals and Habitat III.*

Local and regional government networks of the Global Taskforce welcome the inclusion of many of our **key recommendations** in the zero draft of the New Urban Agenda, especially those relating to financing, legal frameworks, governance, and the need for effective decentralization. We particularly celebrate the text's reference to the "**fundamental role**" of regional/subnational governments in "ensuring the (...) wellbeing of our communities." and the need for a "renewed local-national partnership" based effective decentralization, respect for the "**principles of subsidiarity and the recognition of local self-governance.**"

The zero draft's call for a more integrated and strategic **territorial approach** to national urban policies is most welcome, as is its strong support for a leading role for local government in **local economic development**, and recognition of the key role of local government in promoting the participation of all actors at sub-national level.

We welcome the commitment to the achievement of "**cities for all**", as well as the reference to the concept of the "**Right to the City**". However, we hope that this element will be more far reaching in the action part of the document. Overall, the renewal of the new social contract with citizens and the notion of co-creating could still be developed in the text. There should also be a clearer commitment to the universal provision of public services and the protection of the commons.

We welcome the text's intention to put **culture** at the heart of sustainable development through its recommendation to place "**urban culture and heritage as a priority component of urban plans and strategies.**"

We welcome the zero draft's call for **gender-responsive policy-making** and support its call for training programs and government initiatives to tackle exclusion "**with particular attention to women's effective participation in decision-making for urban development.**"

We warmly welcome the acknowledgement of the importance of **capacity-building and development cooperation**, as well as the tone of the parts of the text that relate to **partnerships**, including local and regional governments. The New Urban Agenda must achieve inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable urbanization through the design and implementation of sound multilevel, participatory policy-making mechanisms between national governments and other spheres of government, as well as with all stakeholders, in particular the private sector, research community, and non-governmental sectors.

The GTF welcomes **the link made between the New Urban Agenda and the SDGs** in the zero draft. We also strongly recommend that the New Urban Agenda

fully joins up with, builds upon and strengthens the many sustainability efforts that have been undertaken by local and subnational governments worldwide in LA21 and similar sustainability planning processes that have contributed to advance and support global multilateral processes on climate, biodiversity, disaster risk reduction and the adoption of the sustainable development goals, e.g. SDG 11.

As one of our major concerns is the **financing** of urbanization and New Urban Agenda, we welcome the acknowledgement of the need for an "**innovative and effective financing framework**" to strengthen municipal finances and local tax powers. In the Quito Declaration we would like to see a more ambitious call in the Quito Declaration for multilateral organization, financial institutions and development banks to explore how to develop a specific initiative for financing urban infrastructures and essential services to respond to the dramatic needs in the coming decades. This should build on the commitments made by the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, in which the massive investments needed to face the challenges of urbanization are hardly addressed. We are ready to play our part in this initiative.

We are glad to see the acknowledgement of the contributions of local government associations to the Habitat III process, particularly through the **2nd World Assembly of Local and Regional Governments**, though we regret the lack of an explicit mention of the **Global Taskforce**. We trust this recognition will be achieved as negotiations progress, given our role as a key partner in the process of follow-up and review of the New Urban Agenda. In this regard, we welcome the reference to the **Global Assembly of Partners**.

We welcome the intention to **improve dialogue** with local authorities through mechanisms such as **UNACLA** but would like to see this intention extended beyond mere dialogue to include a role in policy definition. We hope that the call for the strong involvement of local and regional authorities in the **implementation** of the New Urban Agenda will be reflected in the consultation and participation mechanisms open to us in the governing bodies of UN Habitat. We would like to see this go beyond the "observer" status established by Rule 64 of the rule of procedures, to a **special status for local authorities** that will allow us to play our full role as active partners.

We welcome the expression of the will to strengthen UN Habitat and to commission **follow-up** reporting on the New Urban Agenda. We would, however, like to see more details on how the system-wide implication and coordination will be guaranteed and, particularly, how local and regional governments will be involved in this process through the Global Taskforce and their networks. The Global Taskforce would be delighted to support a response to the call on local governments to develop implementable mechanisms to follow-up and review the achievements of the New Urban Agenda at local level.

