

Statement of UCLG ASPAC, Secretary General at the Asia-Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development

3-5 April 2016, Bangkok

Good afternoon,

I am Bernadia Irawati Tjandradewi, Secretary General of UCLG ASPAC, United Cities and Local Governments Asia Pacific, the largest regional section of UCLG.

By now, we all should know that the SDGs are local. 65% of 169 targets relate to local governments and local actors. What does this mean? It means SDGs will fail if those actors are not involved, or do not engage in meaningful ways.

The SDGs and New Urban Agenda reflects the role of cities and local governments and we must ensure that urbanization contributes to sustainable development – *that growth now will not take away from future generations. We must take up our responsibilities right now to implement the measures needed to restore the environment we rely on, and which we have endangered.*

At the global level, the creation of Global Task Force of Local and Regional Governments for Post 2015 Development Agenda initiated by UCLG and comprised of 30 networks and institutions has played an important role in bringing the voices of cities and local governments in formulating SDGs and now the New Urban Agenda. *UCLG is also the coordinating body for Local Authorities Major Group in the UN.*

Comparing the process of formulation of MDGs and SDGs, the SDGs are hailed to be the most participatory. I congratulate the United Nations and Member States for their hand in what is in the end the people's agenda.

Now, the key issue is how we can implement the SDGs in the next 15 years. Wakatobi Declaration on the New Urban Agenda adopted by Mayors, Local Governments Associations and partners in Asia-Pacific region last year stated our commitments to work together in SDGs and New Urban Agenda implementation. These local leaders agreed on several points:

- To work with national governments (and international agencies) towards creating enabling environments. This includes sharing knowledge and good and SMART practices, enhancing skills, and capacity building across thematic areas. UCLG ASPAC with partners is now working on EE rating for cities and LGs in most ASPAC countries.
- To strengthen and expand access to the different sources of funding (such as land capture value).
- To guarantee inclusiveness and ensure that all sectors and groups of society (particularly women and children, and persons with disabilities) effectively participate in planning and implementing activities, utilizing their full potential.
- To redefine leadership and stand for accountability and gaining the public's trust.
- To strengthen existing local government associations to cascade and guide the members to achieve the priorities and commitments set in this declaration.

Moreover, we want **the potential of territories to promote sustainable local economic development and environmental policies to be unlocked.** Central governments should develop national policies to support a 'territorial approach to development' to promote more balanced territorial development and equitable urban-rural linkages – a step we see is vital to make sure no city / local government is left behind.

We are also ready to be involved in **“driving bottom-up national development”**: as local and regional governments are strategic partners of national governments to build strong national system of cities and more balanced territorial development. National Urban and Territorial Policies and effective decentralization should be the pillars of an adequate multi-level governance framework and the recognition of local-self-government. Integral in this approach and throughout the process is placing the people and all civil society actors at the center of development.

We hope that a participatory follow-up and monitoring process is ensured: Establish regular monitoring systems of urban and territorial policies at national and local levels, with multi-stakeholder involvement and agreed quantitative and qualitative indicators. The systems allow the gathering and availability of comparable statistical data and information. Create local and national reporting mechanisms with representatives from national and local governments, academia, civil society, completed by peer-to-peer reviews, citizen satisfaction surveys or report cards and community-based monitoring.

It is critical that we all boost our efforts in **“Building a spirit of solidarity”**: local and regional governments are committed to build on our legacy of decentralized cooperation including south-south cooperation, and international solidarity. The links between local and regional governments are strengthened and citizens gain shared values and understanding of the importance of peace, human dignity, cultural diversity, and respect for one another.

✓ Lastly, localizing SDGs is a must. However **“Localizing” development should not be seen as a translation of global policies within local contexts, but rather as a process based on the empowerment of local stakeholders**, to make sustainable development more responsive and relevant to local needs, aspirations and lives through sustained exchanges between global, national and local actors.

Thank you!!