Key Messages and Process on Localizing the Post-2015 agenda

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Part 1: KEY MESSAGES FROM NATIONAL, REGIONAL, GLOBAL and ONLINE DIALOGUES

“Many of the critical challenges of implementing the Post-2015 Development Agenda will depend heavily on local planning and service delivery, community buy in and local leadership; well-coordinated with the work of other levels of governance. Accountable local governments can promote strong local partnerships with all local stakeholders—civil society, private sector, etc.—Integrated and inclusive local development planning that involves all stakeholders is a key instrument to promoting ownership and the integration of the three dimensions of sustainable development—social, economic and environmental.”

How will the Post-2015 Development Agenda be implemented at the local level? What local governance processes, tools, institutions, mechanisms, and other means of implementation are needed to achieve the future Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)? How can the voices of local stakeholders be amplified and their inclusion in the intergovernmental processes be supported?

National, regional, global and online dialogues on localizing the Post-2015 Development Agenda consultation highlighted a number of issues that need to be considered if the agenda is to be achieved. The key messages and recommendations identified during the ongoing process include:

Ownership and commitment

1. The review of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) demonstrated the need to communicate the objective of a global agenda more efficiently to all actors, and the need for stronger engagement of local stakeholders in the definition, implementation and monitoring of the Post-2015 Development Agenda.

2. A universal agenda should be designed to be adaptable to countries and regions, and efforts made to communicate its relevance to all levels of government. The agenda should also respond to the challenges faced by Small Island Developing States, fragile and least developed states.

3. As experience demonstrates, the achievement of many of the goals and targets of the MDGs depended on local governments and the engagement of local stakeholders. The Post-2015 Development Agenda will require national commitment to provide adequate legal frameworks, institutional and financial capacity to local governments, to promote local partnerships and to enable the achievement of the SDGs at the local level.

4. Local governments play a crucial role in linking key local stakeholders in territorial development. They are a key part of the state and draw their mandate from their local democratic accountability and from working on the front line, close to citizens and communities. Civil society organisations, the private sector, academic organisations are key actors for the implementation of SDGs and their partnership with local governments should be enhanced.

5. Women’s political and social leadership is essential for territorial development and the implementation of the SDGs. More locally elected women will strongly contribute to ensuring women’s full and effective participation in decision-making in political, economic and social development.

6. Distinctive local cultures, particularly of indigenous peoples, migrants and minorities, as well as traditional institutions and authorities, should be seen as a rich resource from which development policies can draw knowledge, legitimacy, participation and enhanced effectiveness. Localization will help to ensure that diversity is embraced.

7. Ethnic, cultural, religious, gender, political and socio-economic diversities of young people have enabled them to contribute positively to the formulation implementation and evaluation of actions for development strategies and plans through their creativity and capacity for innovation. Therefore youth participation in development at the community, local, national, regional, and global levels will be a strong pillar in all current and future development frameworks.

8. The active role of local governments in international development cooperation is crucial to achieving development results, democratizing the aid effectiveness agenda, and promoting inclusive ownership.

9. National governments and multilateral organizations should promote environments that enable local and regional governments and local stakeholder’s to play their full role in development.
Roles and functions in integrated systems of local development

10. Decentralization, subsidiarity and good governance at all levels should be recognized as essential to implementing the Post-2015 Development Agenda. The transfer of responsibilities should be accompanied by appropriate resources and finance; and local capacities should be recognized and harnessed to implement the global agenda at the local level. Sustained inter-institutional dialogue and trust is a crucial element for success.

11. As the level of government closest to the people, local and regional governments are in a unique political position to identify and respond to development needs and gaps and be responsible for a wide range of functional responsibilities that go beyond service provision. Local governments can address development challenges through planned public policies defined, executed and monitored with the participation of citizens and relevant local stakeholders.

12. Implementation responsibilities should be clearly divided among different levels of government, taking into account the distinct comparative advantage of each level, and accompanied by effective coordination mechanisms that harmonize efforts across them.

13. Territorial and urban planning, access to basic services for all, including water, sanitation, health and housing, social safety nets and promotion of economic opportunities for men, women and youth were highlighted as priority areas for local governments in their quest to build more inclusive societies.

14. Local and Regional Governments in close partnership with CSOs and the private sector, play a crucial role promoting territorial planning and local economic development as means of improving the livelihoods of local people and contributing to economic growth and development.

15. Local stakeholders play a crucial role in the promotion of the key values of culture (heritage, diversity, creativity and the transmission of knowledge) as drivers and enablers of sustainable and inclusive development.

16. In concert with national governments and other local stakeholders, local governments can properly plan and manage a local response to the challenges of urbanization, work to upgrade slums and enhance resilience at local and territorial level.

17. The extraction of natural resources should be designed to conserve the environment and local communities. A proportion of the resources generated from such activities should be reinvested locally to improve the quality of life of the inhabitants of the affected localities.

Implementation and monitoring

18. The global agenda should be inspired and implemented by local institutions, responding directly to the needs of citizens. It should: be transformative; include multi-level and multi-stakeholder participation; strengthen local leadership and ownership by citizens; generate a bottom-up approach; and be based on a wide consultative process which identifies solutions and ideas collaboratively; and should provide a framework for monitoring results.

19. National plans and public investment should contribute to localizing the Post-2015 Development Agenda. It is imperative to further connect local and regional governments with national policies and strategies to better respond to the demands and needs of citizens.

20. More efficiency in the implementation of the Post-2015 Development Agenda will be possible with improved intergovernmental and multilevel coordination as well as greater local participation. This will ensure stronger and more responsive accountability. Strengthening of local governments is critical to foster coordination at local level (horizontal coordination) and with national and international levels (vertical coordination).

21. A holistic approach to achieving the SDGs can be developed by defining clear means of engagement to encourage transparency and accountability (e.g. participatory budgeting and planning), and promoting collaboration between local governing bodies, CSOs, the private sector and other relevant stakeholders. Sound measures should be defined at local level to avoid and prevent fraud and corruption.

22. National and regional planning should take into account and strengthen the economic, social and environmental linkages between urban, peri-urban, and rural areas in order to secure balanced territorial development.

23. Financing territorial and urban development is a key challenge for local governments. To strengthen local self-government, efforts must be made to ensure that local government has access to sources of revenue and effective fiscal decentralization should increase local governments’ ability to rely on its own resources.
In parallel, national governments should ensure predictable, regular and transparent transfers commensurate to the functions and responsibilities transferred to local governments. Creative, sustainable and equitable financing mechanisms need to be explored and applied at local level.

24. Strong efforts need to be made to improve local leadership, human resources, and the technical and management capacities of local governments, as well as their ability to mobilize local resources, deliver services, and involve citizens in planning and decision-making, with special attention to strategies to engage the most excluded.

25. Constructive dialogues and partnerships between local institutions and public and private actors are crucial to promoting democratic governance and empowering local stakeholders to own the SDGs.

26. Public private partnerships can support development at local level. However enabling legislation and local accountability mechanisms are essential to their effective implementation. It is recommended to launch initiatives at national level for the creation of a framework to build CSR (Corporate Social Responsibility) policies to better fit local realities and processes.

27. Local level data is often not readily available to support local planning and monitoring of local development. Reforms to official data collection services will be necessary to assist sub-national governments (for instance with data identifying where needs are concentrated within each local jurisdiction) in monitoring progress. Local target setting will require the development of appropriate indicators taking into account the local context and environment. Localization will ensure a more accurate reflection of the wellbeing of populations and provide a more detailed sub-national picture of progress.

**An Agenda for Localising the SDGs**

28. Promote a bottom-up approach to ensure ownership of the Post-2015 Development Agenda at the local level. National governments should undertake concerted and coordinated action to strengthen local stakeholders and put local development at the centre of development. Stronger legal and institutional frameworks with regard to decentralization will support good governance at all levels.

29. Align and embed the global development agenda into national and local development plans, and foster linkages and partnerships with other development actors to harmonize local development activities, avoid duplications and promote effectiveness.

30. National governments and International partners should acknowledge and define the role of local government and local stakeholders in setting, implementing and monitoring the Post-2015 Development Agenda to ensure further accountability and transparency. Implementation should be undertaken by the lowest possible sphere of government, in line with the principle of subsidiarity.

31. National governments and development partners should ensure that the localization of the SDGs is accompanied by the localization of resources, enabling local governments to raise more local revenue and secure allocations of national and international budgets.

32. National governments and the international development community should recognize that local governments are best placed to convene the diversity of development stakeholders at the local level (civil society, including migrants, the private sector, academia, national bodies and international actors) and play an important role in developing and implementing integrated cross-sectoral strategies for local development.

33. Governments at all levels must be held accountable for responding to social inclusion and human security challenges, in their countries and cities, especially in deprived and post-conflict areas.

34. National governments and development partners should support the scale-up, replication and adaption at the national and international levels of good and innovative local practices. There should be adequate funding for local governments and local stakeholders to participate in peer to peer learning initiatives, to reinforce the relevance of the SDGs on the ground.

35. Decentralized development cooperation should be acknowledged and used as a modality to support the implementation of the future SDGs at local level, to facilitate exchange of views and experiences between LRGs and promote south-south initiatives. Where appropriate this should include the involvement of migrant communities in decentralized cooperation to benefit their countries of origin.

36. Strengthen the capacities of national, regional and international associations of local governments to participate in global dialogues, disseminate information and give policy advice and support.

37. Promote transparency and wider access to data and information to local government authorities and communities through ICT, online social networks and community media.
38. The goal Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable in the Post-2015 Development Agenda will contribute to mobilizing local authorities and stakeholders and focus the attention of national governments and other international partners on the potential of urbanization as a key driver for sustainable development.
Part 2: Process for the Localization Consultation

Localizing the Post-2015 Development Agenda

The term “Localization” refers to the process of defining, implementing and monitoring strategies at the local level for achieving global, national and subnational sustainable development targets. It practically involves the various concrete mechanisms, tools, innovations, platforms and processes to effectively translate the development agenda into results at the local level. The concept should thus be read in a holistic way and be understood beyond the institutionalised local government to include all local actors in a community; including civil society, traditional leaders, religious organisations, the private sector and others. An instituted Local government, however, provides a local leadership role in bringing together and coordinating local stakeholders. Localization is thus an important element of a multi-level governance system that links-up national and local institutions to form an effective means of implementation required for the new development agenda; and provides a means to establish the relevance of the Post-2015 global discussions closer to the local population.

The consultation process for “localizing the Post-2015 Development Agenda” was launched to identify and propose critical elements that will facilitate a successful implementation of the new agenda at the local level.

Leading and guiding the process

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat), on behalf of UNDG, together with the Global Taskforce of Local and Regional Governments for the Post-2015 Development Agenda towards HABITAT III were designated to co-lead the process of consultation and dialogue.

The 2015 Secretariat for the Consultation on Localizing the Post-2015 Development Agenda (managed by UNDP, UN-HABITAT and the Global Task Force) supported the UNCTs for national dialogues and the organization of regional and global dialogues.

An Advisory Committee was set up to provide guidance to the process and for determining the most effective way the results could be fed in the Post-2015 discussions. The Advisory Committee is made up of 11 representatives of different stakeholders: national governments (Italy and Ghana), multilateral organizations (the European Commission), local governments (from UCLG ASPAC and from Palestine), global civil society networks (Slum Dwellers International, the Huairou Commission, and the World Conference of Youth), foundations (EFC - European Foundation Centre), the private sector (UN Global Compact) and the academia (UDUAL).

Ecuador, Ghana and Italy are the Co-host countries of the process and are actively involved in the planning, outreach and dissemination of the consultations results among Member States and in providing recommendations that will feed in to the Post-2015 process.

Topline Activities so far

- A governance structure was established: Co-leads secretariat and multi-stakeholder advisory committee facilitated consultations at the National, Regional and Global levels.
- National dialogues carried out in 13 countries: Africa (Burundi, Cameroun, Ghana, Malawi and Tanzania), Asia & Pacific (Philippines, Tajikistan and Vanuatu), Europe (Armenia, Portugal) and Latin America & Caribbean (Ecuador, El Salvador and Jamaica).
- Approximately 4,200 participants from national and local institutions directly participated in the dialogue, 40% of whom represented minorities, marginalized, people with disability groups, young people and women.
- Active participation of civil society organisations, religious organisations, academy, trade unions and the private sector were registered. There were active local leadership by local governments and local governments associations in coordination with national stakeholders in the process at the respective country levels.
Two consultations at global events (UCLG Executive Bureau in Liverpool, FOGAR General Assembly in Cartagena, Colombia) and a side-event at global level (ECOSOC 2014 Integration Segment on Sustainable Urbanization) were organised.

Six regional events (EC Policy Forum on Development in Lima, CLGF Board in Nigeria; Committee of the Regions meeting in Brussels; UCLG-ASPAC, Consultation; Arab Countries with the support of Platforma, Amman, Jordan; CLGF Caribbean Region meeting in Nassau, Bahamas) were also organised.

Global and Regional events involved more than 1000 direct participants from over 80 countries representing different facets and stakeholder local groups and institutions.

Eleven national preliminary reports have been produced; and 10 preliminary reports on the regional and global events produced and available on line.

World We Want web space launched //www.worldwewant2015.org/localising2015: main outcomes and resources available; global concept notes for each dialogue and other background material published; and e-discussions initiated.

A complete and high level set of preparatory documents produced and available on line (concept and guidance notes, localizing leaflet, and newsletters).

Status of localizing the Post-2015 Development Agenda: Progress made so far

- The localizing dialogue has contributed to the universalization of the post-2015 development agenda including territorial and national dialogues in low, middle and high-level income countries.
- Inspired by preliminary results several countries have requested to be involved in the process, including Small Island Developing States (SIDS) in the Pacific and the Caribbean Regions.
- Regional and global dialogues have been held in all the regions of the globe assuring a balanced participation including representatives of countries of all income levels.
- A strategic global coalition of partners has been forged between regional/local government representatives (UCLG, FOGAR, CLGF, etc.) and UN Agencies.
- The consultation process has revealed the capacity of national and local governments working together, and the need to strengthen vertical (multi-level) and horizontal (multi-stakeholder) coordination mechanisms.
- The process has contributed to strengthen multi-stakeholder partnerships, at national and global levels, among national and local governments, civil society organisations, foundations, academia, religious institutions, trade unions and the private sector.
- Territorial, national, regional and global dialogues have been highly inclusive reporting on the active participation of minorities, marginalized, people with disability, youth and women.
- Preliminary results show effective recommendations on improving local governance processes and confirmed the importance of territorial development as a key approach to global development.
- A cross-fertilization approach is being pursued to increase synergies with other ongoing consultations with a special focus on partnership with the private sector, civil society and culture for development.
- Mainstreaming has also been promoted among UN agencies (UNICEF, ILO, UNWOMEN, UNIDO) and in the framework of UN main venues.
- Innovative dialogues and participatory mechanisms were adopted including town hall meetings, focus groups, use of community media, radios and TV, on-line social networks and e-discussions.
- The use of ICT tools has relatively increased over the consultation period to facilitate an open interaction and information exchange among a wide range of stakeholders and has increased the participation of the most traditionally excluded groups.

Upcoming events and final report

The process will culminate in a global meeting to be held in Turin, Italy, on 14-15th October 2014, in which main outcomes of the overall consultation will be presented and discussed. High level participation is expected including Ministers, Mayors, Councillors, Government and Multilateral Officials, UN system, Civil Society Organizations, private sector, Foundations, trade unions and academia representatives as well as experts from around the globe on localization. A final report of the overall localizing consultation will be drafted and presented to UN Secretary General for the preparation of his final report to the UN Assembly in November 2014.