

WUF11 SESSION CONCEPT NOTE

LOCAL AND REGIONAL GOVERNMENTS ROUNDTABLE

Effective Territorial Governance for a Renewed Social Contract

1. List of Partners contributing to the session:

- Global Taskforce for Local and Regional Governments

2. Key Words:

Multilevel Governance, Inter-institutional trust, SDG localization, New Urban Agenda, Renewed Social Contract

3. Objectives of the Session:

- To bring together and foster multilevel dialogues and partnerships among local, regional and national governments, the international community and community stakeholders.
- To organize political inputs into concrete actions and innovation policies on the role of effective multi-level governance structures that revamp the social contract.
- To identify specific and concrete actions that cities and their central governments are implementing to foster inclusion within cities and across territories.
- To showcase best practices and lessons learned on cooperation between levels of governments and across stakeholders.

4. Summary:

The major crises of our time - geopolitical, health, climate, and social emergencies - deserve a holistic response based on cooperation and solidarity among different levels of government and stakeholders. Multilevel governance and territorial coordination between central and local authorities is key to ensure a pathway to development that is sustainable and inclusive.

It is widely acknowledged that the successful implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) will highly depend on local action and local leadership. But local governments and communities cannot act alone, they need support from their national counterparts and coordinate efforts with territorial stakeholders.

The outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic has abruptly disrupted the implementation towards many of the SDGs and turned back years of progress. On the flip side, the recovery from the pandemic is a window for opportunity to explore cross-cutting forms of governance and has unlocked a huge potential for transformative change. Aligning recovery strategies with the SDGs accelerates sustainable development, reduces inequalities, and strengthens the social contract. The implementation of the SDGs must regard whole-of-society and whole-of-government approaches in which collaboration across sectors and levels of governments is underscored.

Multilevel territorial governance is hence a decisive factor for achieving the commitment set on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development of leaving no one and no territory behind. In this sense, the New Urban Agenda acts as an action-oriented framework to speed up the implementation of the SDGs at the national, sub-national and local levels, offering pathways to greener, healthier, and more just societies.

This roundtable aims to foster dialogue between different levels of governments on how to bolster institutional cooperation across levels of governments and sectors of society to drive transformation and strengthen the social contract in line with the commitments of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the New Urban Agenda.

5. Guiding Questions for Discussions:

1. Which are the major urban challenges that need multilevel collaboration in your territory? How could these frameworks be strengthened?
2. As cities and territories recover from the impacts of the pandemics, what kind of new social contract needs to be endorsed based on People, Planet and Government to achieve sustainable urban futures?
3. What legal and financial mechanisms are in place in your country to support local and territorial governments and enable them to appropriately harness their potential?
4. What are the necessary preconditions to establish institutional cooperative frameworks?
5. What policies should be promoted to enhance collaboration across all scales of government and societal groups to guide the implementation of global agendas such as the 2030 Agenda or the New Urban Agenda?
6. What are the roles of the different levels of government and relevant stakeholders in ensuring transformative urban resilience?
7. How to guarantee participative and balanced decision-making in multi-level governance arrangements?
8. What is the role of multilateral institutions in supporting the cooperation between local and national governments? What added value can they bring in the effort to revamp the social contract

6. Expected Outcomes and Impact:

- Providing a dialogue platform on how to revamp the social contract by enhancing vertical and horizontal integration.
- Encouraging governments at all levels to institutionalize channels of dialogue and cooperation.
- Promoting the acceleration of SDG implementation in cities and territories among stakeholders and constituencies.

7. Session Format:

The Dialogue will take place in two sessions of 1h and 15 minutes each. Each speaker will be addressed one specific question, shaped to the nature of the speaker once identified.

The first session will focus on specific levers of action that can promote dialogue and trust across tiers of government. The second session will specifically focus on the role of partnerships and inclusive governance to carry out transformative action.

The first session will assess multilevel governance more generally, and the second session will focus on specific country-based or city-based initiatives.