

Inputs for UCLG Vice-President W. Schuster, Mayor of Stuttgart

OECD Ministerial Meeting 30 March 2012, Paris

Local and Regional Authorities Messages to the Earth Summit, Rio+20

Dear Ministers, OECD Secretary General, Dear colleagues,

First of all I would like to congratulate and thank the OECD for its growing acknowledgement of the role that local and sub-national authorities need to play in the international agenda.

In my capacity of Vice-President of UCLG and President of the European Council of Communities and Regions, I would like to convey the commitment of our World Organization to contribute to your agenda bringing you the views of local and regional authorities worldwide on international policy topics such as development and sustainability but also on job creation, innovation and addressing urbanization.

I am very glad to discuss the follow up of the 4th round table of Mayor and Ministers in Chicago, which was held earlier this month. The results of Chicago made clear: A sustainable world is not possible without sustainable cities. The challenges we are facing are global, but the solutions are local, too. Therefore partnerships between cities and national governments are crucial. For these partnerships we do need a multi-level governance system. On one hand with horizontal networks including the private sector, companies, universities, research institutes and the engagement of the civil society, particularly the NGO's, to develop and promote integrated solutions on local level. On the other hand we need vertical networks to achieve comprehensive solutions for sustainable development by all political levels.

As we all know, the Earth Summit taking place in Rio next June will be an important moment where, multilateralism and our ability to take decisions

together towards a common future will be put to test in a world marked by the economic crisis and by important shifts in our realities.

To continue the progress that has been made since the first summit organized in 1992 in Rio, we will need to renew the political commitment to sustainable development and to address emerging challenges.

In the era of urbanization, metropolization and regionalization, the concept of sustainable cities cannot be looked at in a separate silo. It can also not be analysed from a merely environmental perspective. **It is our role as local leaders to ensure that inhabitants of territories, our citizens are put at the centre of our decisions.** Many decisions need to be taken at the level where citizens can exercise their influence. The specific perspective of local and sub-national governments deriving from their proximity to citizens is crucial to sustainability and to the implementation of good governance mechanisms, based on transparency, participation and accountability. And we welcome the opportunity to share and build governance structures that are both horizontally and vertically conscious of local needs and decisions.

Cities and regional governments are part of the same governance. A balanced territorial development is rarely only urban or rural-based and does very often depend on the complementary and synergy of all its assets. The inter-linking of territories and their economic, environmental and social interdependence do require the use of integrated approaches. For these reasons local and regional governments intend to bring forward joint proposals to Rio+20 and promote a development approach based on territories and driven by their inhabitants.

Next to a green economy, we wish to work together towards a « green society ». As general objective we should move from a structure of global government to a multi-level governance and define strategies to achieve the Millennium Development Goals and Sustainable Development Goals.

We are calling for an **integrated framework to define sustainable development**, in particular in the areas of:

- **Basic services,**
- **Social inclusion and equity,**
- **Environment and in particular on the adaptation to climate change, disaster risk reduction and a resilience planning.**

We will bring these messages forward to the United Nations Secretary General on 23 April 2012 during a session at the UN headquarters in New York.

We hope to be able to count with your support to include some of these perspectives in the outcomes of Rio+20.

Rio+20 is an important opportunity to demonstrate our capacity to address challenges together. It can provide a new broader vision on both more inclusive governance at global level and the need for innovation at local and regional level.

On behalf of UCLG we would like to work together with you in seven fields:

- To define Sustainable Development Goals that will enhance and compliment the Millennium Development Goals.
- To address social inclusion and equality through strong and accountable local governance as a mean to work towards sustainable development.
- To enlarge new National and international financial mechanisms to support sustainable development and make them more accessible to local and regional authorities (such as carbon finance), building at the same time more revenue sources for sustainable development (to reduce pollution, to encourage a more responsive use of water and waste services, etc.)

- To support the acknowledgement of culture and education as an important pillar of sustainable development.
- To advocate for the inclusion of a specific chapter relating to local and regional authorities and to a renewed Agenda 21.
- To support the establishment of a World Council on Sustainable Development that will include non-state actors in the deliberations, providing a particular role to political representatives such as local authorities and parliamentarians.
- To acknowledge decentralized international cooperation and the networks of local and regional governments, for example sister city ship, specialized networks like Cities for Mobility as an important instrument for the achievement of sustainability.

For all these seven fields, National-local cooperation is essential for developing access to new forms of sustainable development and financing. We all know the importance of the national governments for more sustainable development.

We all know that our personal life style is not sustainable and therefore not fair to the poor people today and to the next generations. We have to change our living patterns to reduce our CO₂ footprint. Business as usual is no longer an option. We share a special responsibility to use our possibilities for a fairer, greener future. Let's work together by governing in partnership!

Wolfgang Schuster
Mayor of Stuttgart
Vice-President of UCLG
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