

Draft outcome statement of the 4th Forum of Mayors' meeting

Cities Summit of the Future

30 September – 1 October 2024

Local and regional governments for a renewed and inclusive multilateralism for a sustainable future

Draft as of 19 September 2024¹

Referring to the [Pact for the Future²](#) adopted by United Nations member States in New York on 23 September 2024,

Referring also to the [Geneva Declaration of Mayors](#) of 6 October 2020, the recommendation of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe on “[the UN Pact for the future: the essential role local and regional authorities in global sustainable development](#)” of 28 March 2024, and the Human Rights Council [Joint Statement on local government and human rights](#) of 15 March 2024,

Recalling that the Forum of Mayors was established by decision ECE/EX/2023.L4 as a subsidiary body of the Committee on Urban Development, Housing and Land Management, allowing our de facto participation in the work of the United Nations, to contribute to the intergovernmental work of the Committee and the ECE, as well as to learn from each other's strategies and actions for addressing challenges in relation to the implementation of Sustainable Development Goals at the local and regional level,

Recalling the significant contributions of the Secretary-General's Advisory Group on Local and Regional Governments, established to strengthen the dialogue between local and regional governments and the United Nations, and to ensure that our perspectives and needs are integrated into the UN's work; and *further recalling* that this group has been instrumental in highlighting the crucial role of subnational governments in achieving global development goals and advocating for greater decentralization and local and regional empowerment,³

Concerned by the numerous and complex **global challenges** which pose catastrophic and existential risks to current and future generations, such as poverty, hunger, armed conflicts, violence, forced displacement, terrorism, inequalities, climate change, the risk of pandemics and loss of biodiversity, gender inequality and limited energy and other natural resources and which transcend the capacities of individual States to be addressed effectively and thus require a concerted effort from the international community as a whole, including all levels of government of each State,

Stressing that by 2050, around 70% of the world population will be living in urban areas and that **urbanization** is a mega trend that shapes our living conditions, mobility, work environments, as well as our vision of international relations,

Underlining that as mayors, we represent the **closest level of government** to the population, with a deep knowledge of peoples and expectations, the local and regional issues to be solved, the stakeholders that operate on our territories, the strengths and weaknesses of our local and regional contexts and with the ability to mainstream a multi-stakeholder approach throughout our work, in

¹ Mayors will have an opportunity to finalise and adopt the document during the fourth session of the Forum of Mayors on 1 October from 15:00 to 17:00 (see [programme](#)).

² The latest version of the Pact is available at the following at: <https://www.un.org/en/summit-of-the-future>.

³ The work of the Advisory Group was also supported by the Global Task Force, which is a coordination mechanism of city networks.

particular when it comes to implementing sustainable development agendas at the local and regional level,

Reminding that as mayors, we have the capacity to act flexibly and fast and, therefore, play a crucial role as **first responders** to the numerous and complex global challenges affecting our populations at the local and regional level,

Emphasizing that given our competencies in key areas such as housing, water, land and waste management, energy, health, education, urban planning, we have the responsibility to build the **resilience** of our respective societies and territories,

Emphasizing that our cities act as **incubators of change and innovation** and that, when appropriate, they will help scale up relevant local and regional practices and solutions to the numerous and complex global challenges at the national or international level,

Emphasizing the importance of fostering well-being through the promotion of **culture and sport**, ensuring that these sectors contribute to the creation of inclusive, resilient, and sustainable societies. As we move forward, placing culture at the forefront of development agendas will be key to achieving more holistic, context-sensitive, and equitable outcomes,

Emphasizing also the centrality of our cities to lead a **just and equitable transition** to low-carbon and environmentally sustainable economies that foster liveable, sustainable and inclusive communities, actively promoting social inclusion and gender equality as fundamental pillars of this just and equitable transition,

Recalling that while States adopt international agreements, local and regional governments play a crucial role in effectively fulfilling these agreements and that we constitute **indispensable allies** of our central governments in implementing global agendas, such as the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Paris Agreement and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda,

We, the mayors gathered at the Fourth Forum of Mayors' meeting, the "Cities Summit of the Future", held on 30 September to 1 October 2024, in Geneva, Switzerland:

1. *Welcome* the **adoption of the Pact for the Future** at the Summit of the Future (22-23 September 2024, New York) and *affirm* our strong commitment by supporting its implementation;

Transforming global governance

2. *Strongly support* the Pact for the Future's call to **transform global governance** and reinvigorate the multilateral system so that it better tackles the challenges and seizes the opportunities of today and tomorrow;

3. In alignment with the Pact for the Future and in the framework of our competencies, *reaffirm* our unwavering commitment to realize the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and localize it in our respective territories in line with local realities and citizens' preferences, with a particular focus on the poorest and most vulnerable, ensuring that no one is left behind;

4. *Call upon* States to acknowledge **our significant contribution in fulfilling international obligations** in relation to a broad array of areas, including sustainable economic, social, environmental, and cultural urban development, the protection of the environment, climate change, global health, human rights, gender equality, migration and peace. Consequently, we strongly *encourage* States to invest in the **necessary capacities and resources** enabling cities to act and deliver on these international obligations;

5. *Emphasize* the need for enhanced decentralization to bring the State closer to the people and improve the efficiency and effectiveness of local and regional governance. Decentralization empowers

local and regional authorities, who possess a deeper understanding of their communities' unique challenges and opportunities, to respond swiftly and appropriately to the needs of their constituents. By decentralizing power, resources, and decision-making, we ensure that the voices of local and regional populations are heard and addressed directly, fostering greater transparency, accountability, and inclusivity in governance. This approach not only strengthens the democratic fabric of our societies but also enhances the implementation of global development agendas at the grassroots level, leading to more sustainable and equitable outcomes;

6. *Call upon* States to act on their resolve to make the multilateral system more inclusive of a diverse range of actors beyond States and to provide **formal status for local and regional governments** to participate directly in the work of the UN, as in the case of the Forum of Mayors, and as recommended by the Secretary-General's High-Level Advisory Board on Effective Multilateralism in its report "[Breakthrough for people and planet](#)" of 18 April 2023;

Sustainable development and financing for development

7. *Call upon* States to enhance policy coherence for **sustainable development across all levels of government**. This includes involving local and regional governments in the design and implementation of national SDG action plans, strategies and reports, such as Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs), and encouraging local and regional governments to prepare Voluntary Local Reviews (VLRs) and to connect them with VNRs, recognizing the need to create some incentives for subnational governments to report their progress on the SDGs;

8. *Encourage* States and international organizations to address the **SDG financing gap** by supporting cities and facilitating their access to the global development finance system and other financing opportunities that are usually reserved for States only;

9. *Commit* to combating the interlinked causes and impacts of **climate change and environmental degradation** (including biodiversity loss, pollution, water scarcity, floods, land degradation) by supporting the implementation of the related intergovernmental commitments and multilateral environmental agreements and so to respect planetary boundaries;

10. *Encourage* States and international organizations to support the development of climate change adaptation mechanisms for **disaster risk management** at the local and regional level, including risk transfer and others, to support financial preparation for different types of disaster risk;

11. *Emphasize* the importance of **urban resilience and sustainable urban planning** and decision-making to build resilience against both man-made and natural disasters as well as to promote sustainable mobility, building and lifestyles as well as efficient waste management and circular, cultural and creative economy;

12. *Call on* all relevant stakeholders, in particular States, to prioritize **culture and sport** as essential drivers of well-being, ensuring that these sectors contribute to the creation of inclusive, resilient, and sustainable societies and *urge* the integration of culture in development agendas, recognizing its critical role in achieving more holistic, context-sensitive, and equitable outcomes for all.

Peace and security

12. *Stress* that **peace** takes its roots at the local and regional level and *reaffirm* our commitment to build peaceful and inclusive societies and that a whole-of-government approach is essential to effective conflict prevention and peacebuilding, centred on human rights, the rule of law and good governance;

13. *Highlight* the importance of urban resilience, sustainable urban planning and urban interventions, such as improving housing and land rights, in **enhancing security**;

14. *Acknowledge* that **violence and armed conflict** increasingly occur in urban contexts and *call upon* humanitarian actors to rethink the way they operate in these contexts and to better engage with local and regional governments to protect and assist affected people in the most effective manner;

Science, technology, and innovation, and digital cooperation

15. *Acknowledge* the opportunities presented by **science, technology and innovation, smart technology and artificial intelligence** to empower our cities to better contribute to achieving the SDGs, including through decarbonization, enhancing resilience, promoting equality, in particular gender equality, and social inclusion advancing democratic participation, creating decent employment, and improving public service provision;

16. *Pledge to* responsibly **manage associated risks**, particularly those that may exacerbate inequalities or threaten human rights, by promoting digital literacy, enhancing cybersecurity measures, and fostering innovation that aligns with ethical standards and safeguards human rights;

Youth and future generations

17. *Embrace* the emphasis on **youth** in the Pact for the Future and *pledge* to invest in their health, education and training so that they may contribute to a better future for all, as well as to engage them meaningfully in social, economic, political and public affairs at local and regional level;

18. *Advocate* for a strong **gender equality** agenda at the local and regional government level, because we are better positioned to understand and respond to the specific needs of women on our territories, ensuring that policies and programs are inclusive and address the root causes of gender-based disparities and commit to fostering more equitable and just communities by promoting women's empowerment and safety through local and regional initiatives and innovation;

Forum of Mayors

19. *Encourage* States to consider the **Forum of Mayors** as an effective model for cities from all UN regions to exchange knowledge, best practices and local solutions and to participate in the work of the UN on the localisation of SDGs as well as other global agenda and challenges;

20. *Encourage* cities in cooperation with member States in different UN regions to host the meetings of the Forum;

21. *Request* the secretariat of the Forum of Mayors to transmit this statement to the Secretary General of the United Nations as a contribution to strengthening the engagement of local and regional governments in UN intergovernmental bodies and processes, including through the provision of a formal status for local and regional governments in the United Nations.

List of signatory cities (as of 5 September 2024)

Tirana (Albania), Buenos Aires (Argentina), Gyumri (Armenia), Vienna (Austria), Ganja (Azerbaijan), Ifangni (Benin), Quebec (Canada), San Jose (Costa Rica), Osijek (Croatia), Nicosia (Cyprus), Ostrava (Czech Republic), Pichincha (Ecuador), Tallinn (Estonia), Turku (Finland), Strasbourg Eurometropolis (France), Heidelberg (Germany), Athens (Greece), Debrecen (Hungary), Bat Yam (Israel), Irbid (Jordan), Valmiera (Latvia), Klang (Malaysia), Balzan (Malta), Podgorica (Montenegro), Rabat (Morocco), Utrecht (Netherlands), Turbat (Pakistan), Łódź (Poland), Mafra (Portugal), Bucharest (Romania), Dakar (Senegal), Freetown (Sierra Leone), Novo Mesto (Slovenia), Dushanbe (Tajikistan), Konya (Türkiye), Ashgabat (Turkmenistan), Mykolaiv (Ukraine), London (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland), New Orleans (United States of America), Lusaka (Zambia), Skopje

(North Macedonia), Geneva (Switzerland), Braga (Portugal), Glasgow (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland)