

**Sustainable Development Goals and the United Nations High-level
Political Forum on sustainable development
European regional level briefing and consultation**

**Statement of the Local Authorities Major Group
Brussels, 28 May 2014**

Thank you, chair.

Honourable guests, dear colleagues,

The Council of European Municipalities and Regions, member of the Global Taskforce of Local and Regional Governments, is delighted to address this session on behalf of the Local Authorities Major Group.

We thank UN DESA and the European Economic and Social Committee for organising this consultation, and look forward to a fruitful discussion.

Let us, first of all, recall how the Rio+20 outcome document reaffirmed the role of all levels of government in promoting sustainable development, and the specific progress made at the local and subnational levels in all spheres of policy.

We are glad that Sustainable Cities and Human Settlements has remained at the core priorities of the Open Working Group's agenda, and express our appreciation for the great effort made to include many of the views of the major groups in this process.

As urbanisation arises as one of the major challenges of the 21st century, and the mobilisation of cities and regions will be key in implementing the sustainable development agenda, the Local Authorities Major Group is requesting a stand-alone goal on Sustainable Cities and Human Settlements, complemented by urban targets across other relevant goals.

The objective of an Urban SDG is to build safe, inclusive, productive and resilient cities and territories, with participative, efficient and accountable governance to support sustainable urban development.

An Urban SDG is not only about cities. It entails a territorial approach with due consideration to regional and rural-urban linkages; it allows the development of cooperation among all levels of governments.

Most importantly, it places multilevel and multi-stakeholder approaches at the heart of sustainable development. We emphasise the capacity of local and regional governments to mobilise all actors of sustainable development within their territory; and we thank colleagues from the other major groups that have brought their support to the urban SDG.

Dear colleagues, the new development agenda will be one and universal. It will affect the North and the South, the East and the West. Therefore the question arises: what does Europe want from the sustainable development goals?

Europe has changed over the past 15 years. It has become an urban continent, highly dependent on the state of its towns, cities and regions.

Europe has on multiple occasions shown its commitment to multi-level governance and governance in partnership for sustainable development.

It has implemented policies that promote sustainable *urban* development – examples are the Covenant of Mayors, the URBACT programme, the Reference Framework for Sustainable Cities and the current discussion about an EU Urban Agenda.

Europe also made a huge step in recognising decentralisation and the empowerment of local and subnational governments as a driver of development in its partners of the Global South, and in particular in processes that lead to sustainable urbanisation.

An Urban SDG would positively reinforce these trends and choices. Also we applaud Germany, France and Switzerland for supporting the Urban SDG and invite other European governments to join this effort.

In conclusion,

Local and regional leaders the world round, together with key partners of civil society, the private sector and the international community, are convinced that by giving specific attention to Sustainable Cities and Human Settlements in the new agenda, we will be triggering the type of transformation that will create the basis to integrate economic, social, environmental and cultural dimensions to address inequalities, productivity, and resilience.

The Urban SDG is a default gateway to address the major challenges that we face – particularly social and environmental ones.

Be assured of our willingness to contribute to the definition, implementation and monitoring of the global Post-2015 agenda, as well as to shape societies from the bottom up, and to make them ready to tackle the challenges of our time.

Thank you.