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#HLPF2025



JOINT STATEMENT TO THE 2025 HIGH-LEVEL POLITICAL FORUM ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

of the organized constituency
of local and regional governments



STATEMENT OF THE LOCAL AND REGIONAL GOVERNMENT CONSTITUENCY TO THE 2025 UNITED NATIONS HIGH-LEVEL POLITICAL FORUM

Organized within the Global Taskforce of Local and Regional Governments (GTF)

Localizing care and rebuilding trust: Towards a renewed global social contract grounded in universal public service provision

1. **As we approach the final stretch of the 2030 Agenda, the 2025 High-Level Political Forum (HLPF) meets at a time of deep global disruption—from persistent poverty and inequality to rising conflict, climate and biodiversity emergency, and democratic erosion.** These converging crises expose the structural gaps the SDGs were designed to address and call for renewed governance models, revitalized social contracts, and more inclusive frameworks for development cooperation.
2. With just five years remaining, **the countdown to 2030 demands bold, coordinated action.** Local and regional governments (LRGs) are already delivering solutions—impacting millions of lives through **rights-based public services**, local partnerships, and grounded community action rooted in proximity, care, and democratic participation.
3. The LRG constituency, organized through the **Global Taskforce (GTF)** and facilitated by **United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG)**, reaffirms its full commitment to the 2030 Agenda. As the democratic level of government closest to people, LRGs translate global goals into local action, **protect human rights**, and co-create solutions with their communities, residents, cities and territories.
4. While national progress on the SDGs remains uneven or stagnant, LRGs are acting across all types of territories—from intermediary and rural cities to coastal and island communities—delivering integrated responses based on solidarity, territorial equity, and democratic participation.
5. **The 2025 review of SDGs 3, 5, 8, 14, and 17 offers a critical moment to place care and cooperation at the center of a renewed global agenda.** This includes elevating local public service provision, feminist care economies, and multilevel governance as essential levers for systemic transformation.
6. To achieve SDG 3, **advancing health equity and care-centered governance**, LRGs are delivering and coordinating essential services such as water, sanitation, housing, mobility, food systems, and urban planning—key determinants of health.

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Their proximity to communities enables inclusive, preventive strategies that address the social, environmental, and economic roots of well-being. Recognizing health as a **public common** and strengthening local public health systems must be central to any renewed global health strategy.

7. **SDG 5, on gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls**, will not be realized without the leadership of LRGs in transforming access to care, safety, mobility, and services that shape women's autonomy and rights. Feminist municipalism, practiced by many LRGs, is embedding gender equality into local institutions and budgeting, redistributing care work, and fostering inclusive governance. Yet persistent barriers to women's political participation and underinvestment in local gender equality must be addressed with institutional and financial support.
8. Territories are also where economies are built and transformed, making **SDG 8 on decent work and inclusive local economies** a fundamentally territorial challenge. LRGs support small businesses, public employment, skills development, and social and solidarity economies (SSE) that prioritize equity and resilience over extractive models. Investing in **local care economies** is essential to advancing employment, gender equality, and community well-being. In the face of global transitions, LRGs are also enabling **just transitions** by protecting vulnerable workers, reskilling local populations, and fostering sustainable innovation.
9. For **SDG 14, the protection and sustainable use of oceans, seas, and marine resources**, LRGs play a vital yet often overlooked role in coastal governance. From managing fisheries and regulating tourism to restoring marine ecosystems and reducing pollution, LRGs are implementing integrated, community-based solutions that link land and ocean systems. Their recognition as actors in ocean governance—and their access to resources and decision-making—will be key to ensuring that **coastal resilience and ocean stewardship** are grounded in justice, sustainability, and local knowledge.
10. Achieving **SDG 17** requires more than partnerships—it requires **renewing governance through multilevel cooperation and inclusive multilateralism**. LRGs must be fully institutionalized as actors of governance, with structured participation in national coordination bodies and multilateral processes. The **Pact for the Future** and **Action 55(e)** provide a mandate for the Secretary-General to advance this recognition, building on the Advisory Group on LRGs and the Global Strategy for UN-LRG engagement.
11. Key instruments for **SDG 17**, such as **Voluntary Local Reviews (VLRs)** and **Voluntary Subnational Reviews (VSRs)**, must be systematically integrated into national **SDG** processes and reporting. Strengthening territorialized and

gender-sensitive data systems is essential for evidence-based policymaking and accountability. Without aligning financing systems with multilevel governance priorities, and without enabling LRGs to access long-term, flexible resources, the global goals will remain out of reach.

12. Across the world, they deliver the services that sustain life—**health, education, housing, water, food, mobility, culture, social protection, and safety**—ensuring that no one and no place is left behind. But their ability to fulfill this mandate requires **adequate mandates, financing, political recognition and structured dialogue**. In this decisive decade, LRGs call for a structural shift anchored in **territorial action, feminist care economies, and democratic public governance**.
13. The multiple global crises we face today are the result of **systemic inequalities**, deepened by decades of disinvestment in public goods, weakened social protection, and the commodification of basic services. A **renewed global social contract** must be grounded in care, equity, and **publicly governed services** as pillars of resilience and sustainability. LRGs are central to this vision.
14. As the UN prepares for the **Second World Summit for Social Development** and the follow-up to the **Fourth International Conference on Financing for Development**, LRGs draw attention to the **Pact for the Future's Action 55(e)**, which mandates the Secretary-General to propose enhanced modalities for LRG engagement in UN processes, particularly to advance **SDG localization**.
15. In line with this mandate, LRGs stress the urgency of **institutionalizing inclusive and multilevel governance** as a foundation for accelerated SDG implementation. As key actors in delivering global agendas, LRGs are ready to help shape a new model of governance rooted in **justice, care, and territorial solidarity**.
16. The multiple global crises we face today are the result of **systemic inequalities**, worsened by decades of disinvestment in **public goods**, weakened **social protection**, and the **commodification of basic services**. A renewed global social contract must be grounded in **care, equity, and publicly governed services** as fundamental pillars of **human dignity, resilience, and sustainability**.
17. **LRGs are central to this vision**. They deliver essential services daily—**health, housing, water and sanitation, education, food, safety, mobility, culture, and social protection**—that uphold human rights and ensure that **no one and no place is left behind**. These **local public services** form the backbone of a **territorialized care infrastructure**.
18. To move forward, the international community must **enable LRGs to realize their transformative potential**. This includes **investing in local care systems**, embedding **feminist municipalism**, ensuring **adequate mandates and resources**,

and **rebalancing power** across all levels of governance. In this decisive decade, LRGs call for a **structural shift toward a renewed social contract**—anchored in **universal public services** and grounded in the **leadership and financing** of **local and regional governments**.

The self-organized constituency of Local and regional governments call for:

Advancing health equity and care-centered governance (SDG 3)

- **Embedding LRGs' role** in national and global health systems through structured participation in governance and policy design.
- **Scaling up investment** in territorial health infrastructure and care-centered public services.
- **Building inclusive subnational data systems** that are disaggregated and equity-focused to guide health strategies.
- **Implementing cross-sector, place-based approaches** that connect health with housing, mobility, environment, and social protection.
- **Positioning LRGs as key actors** in mental health promotion and service provision, especially for youth, older persons, and marginalized groups.

Advancing gender equality through feminist municipalism and women's political leadership (SDG 5)

- **Mainstreaming care-centered and feminist governance approaches** in national and international gender equality frameworks, recognizing LRGs as essential to implementation.
- **Ensuring institutional, legal, and financial support** for women's equal leadership and decision-making power at the local and regional levels.
- **Enabling LRGs to implement intersectional, gender-responsive policies**, with the necessary resources, tools, and partnerships with feminist movements and civil society.

- **Guaranteeing local response systems to gender-based violence**, including safe spaces, survivor-centered services, and integrated protection mechanisms.

Promoting decent work, inclusive local economies and just transitions (SDG 8)

- **Mandating LRGs as key economic actors** with expanded competencies to drive local, inclusive, and care-centered economic models.
- **Financing care economies locally** as a driver of employment, gender equity, and sustainable development.
- **Strengthening social and solidarity economy ecosystems**, backed by legal recognition, financing tools, and local procurement policies.
- **Establishing territorial employment alliances** that bring together local governments, workers, unions, and employers in coordinated strategies.
- **Reshaping financial** architectures to provide LRGs with direct, long-term, and flexible funding for inclusive local economic transformation.

Safeguarding coastal resilience and the ocean as a common through territorial action (SDG 14)

- **Recognizing LRGs' responsibilities** in managing coastal and marine areas by ensuring their meaningful inclusion in national and global ocean governance platforms.
- **Designing multilevel marine governance frameworks** that reflect the voices of territories, Indigenous peoples, and communities.
- **Enhancing LRG capacities through dedicated technical and financial support** for integrated coastal management, marine biodiversity, and resilience.
- **Grounding ocean policies in rights-based, locally-led approaches**, linking biodiversity and climate goals with social and gender justice.

Renewing governance through multilevel cooperation and inclusive multilateralism (SDG 17)

- **Establishing LRGs as integral actors** within national coordination systems and multilateral structures, in alignment with the Pact for the Future.
- **Institutionalizing the use of VLRs and VSRs** within national reporting and SDG planning to reflect territorial realities and ensure local ownership.
- **Developing territorial data ecosystems** that are disaggregated, inclusive, and supported by national and global institutions.
- **Aligning fiscal systems and international financing** with the needs of local and regional governments, ensuring they have sustained access to resources for SDG implementation.

