

The Pact for the Future: Our Declaration of Intent

The need for the Pact

United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG) was launched in Paris in 2004 and is the inheritor of a worldwide movement initiated in 1913 with the first international conference of cities that took place in Ghent. The century-old municipal movement has been organised in a federative structure that has worked tirelessly to enhance capacity and collective learning, solidarity and promoted the role and influence of local and regional authorities globally to ensure no one and no place would be left behind. Since its inception UCLG, has become the main source of intelligence, best practices and support for democratic, effective and innovative local and regional governance. It is also the largest most representative World Organisation of local and regional governments organised in a democratic structure. UCLG is now preparing for the 7th World Congress and Summit of Local and Regional Leaders, scheduled to take place in Daejeon in October 2022.

As it has done in the past, the World Congress will be challenged with assessing the current realities facing the local and regional governments globally and providing leadership and direction. There is little doubt that, in 2022, we are confronting an unprecedented set of challenges.

Over the past two years, a global pandemic has simultaneously reinforced both the interdependence - and the vast separation - that exists within and between societies. New vulnerabilities have emerged to deepen the two existential but linked crises that threaten our very survival: the rampant growth of unprecedented levels of inequality and the climate change emergency. Reinforced by systematic attacks on peace and democracy and entrenched racism and sexism, in too many parts of the world universal human rights have been weakened, removed, or denied. People have been discriminated against using race, gender, religion, ethnicity, culture, sexual orientation and more, often exacerbated through unaccountable funding distorting the political sphere and the power and anonymity of social media.

For the constituency that the membership of UCLG represents, these are all dangerous trends that require an honest assessment and a decisive response, with consistent actions based on a renewed and inclusive narrative that reaffirms our common humanity, and purpose. There are also positive developments that we experience every day in our neighbourhoods and territories. Unwavering solidarity, the creativity and aspirations of our youth, unprecedented knowledge and scientific capacity mixed with an unparalleled capacity of communicating within our planet and beyond. These are the strengths that we want to build on.

In presenting this ***Pact for the Future***, UCLG members restate their commitment to the power of collective action, empowerment, ownership and co-creation, which we firmly believe to be the essential foundation of harmonious and sustainable societies. Building on the legacy of our century-old movement and standing on the shoulders of the women and men who have built the movement over the years, we celebrate the ***Power of We*** to drive our undertakings and inspire our vision.

The ***Power of We*** encapsulates both the desire and the method of the municipal movement to contribute to a better, safer, and more equal future.

Reaffirming our common humanity, we choose to place **Caring** at the very heart of our Pact for the Future.

We, local and regional government leaders

Recognise that our world faces a series of crises that we do not only need to address but also take responsibility for. Current approaches to economic growth and resource extraction drive unsustainable systems of production and consumption that have placed our planet on the brink of collapse. Conscious social exclusion and rampant inequality have increased to such an extent that peace, democracy, security, and our universal wellbeing, are all threatened. We are destroying the prospects for future generations. We are aware that economic, social and political powers concentrated in the hands of a limited number of people, organisations and/or elites are both causing and increasing the crisis. We further recognise that there is a possibility for the reimagining of the future through a realignment of our global relationships and challenging our belief systems. To achieve prosperity for all, we need new development paradigms: a shift of powers focusing on the protection of the commons and those in vulnerable positions is an essential pre-condition to address these crises;

Acknowledge our unique position and willingly assume our responsibility for bold and transformative actions. In so doing we will be guided by our humanity and the aspirations of our communities while harnessing new ideas and technologies to provide solutions, adopting policies and actions that unequivocally promote quality of life for all, otherness, care and respect for each other and the planet at the centre of our mission;

Understand that no actor and no sphere of government can do this alone. We recognise and commit to the need for a wholly new and positive relationship with other spheres of government that also emphasise our role as public and political actors. Reaffirming the importance of a freedom of expression, agency and critical thinking, we will create an enabling environment of informed and empowered inhabitants, welcoming civil society, the private sector and other stakeholders as essential partners in ensuring progress and stability of our towns, cities and regions; and

Pledge to expand and ensure universal access to local and regional services and to foster the aspirations of our neighbours. We acknowledge that this will require transformational policies at all levels to deliver a new era of care where collective actions and knowledge are made equally available to all citizens.

Aspirations of the Pact

In promoting this **Pact for the Future: People, Planet and Government**, we affirm that local and regional governments have a critical role and responsibility to safeguard the needs of individual citizens and communities alike, protecting their rights to common goods while protecting the needs of future generations;

Throughout history, our towns, cities and regions have thrived through the creativity of ordinary people shaping our streets, culture and society. Our Pact is animated by a leadership committed to equality, empathy, and solidarity.

In identifying the three axes of the Pact, we identify **equality** as the indispensable building block of a **transformed relationship with nature** which requires **responsive and accountable** government. These three elements can only be held together through a common purpose built on a foundation of mutual respect and, above all else, on **mutual trust**. Both local neighbourhoods and whole cities thrive on a range of local realities, relationships and proximities that are geographical, temporal, social,

emotional, cultural and digital. The above will be the building blocks of the actions fostered by the Pact; actions that do not deny conflict but seek providing the framework for the resolution of conflict in a peaceful manner.

This Pact identifies the paths for local governments to promote caring societies for informed and empowered citizens, **enshrining and guaranteeing the right to the city for all**. Central to this right is the commitment to welcome and build upon the diversity that is the very strength of our communities, challenging ignorance and prejudice through open dialogue, education and a culture of sharing.

Our commitment is universal, and reaffirms the commitment of our constituency of local and regional governments with multilateralism, and the realisation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Paris Climate Agreement and the New Urban Agenda.

In summary, through the Pact we seek to unleash a new generation of public goods, co-planning and reshaping our cities and lives to fully realise our shared potential by caring for our neighbours, who will be fully citizens, and for our planet.

During the last few years, UCLG has deliberately and purposefully consolidated its role as a platform, galvanising its membership to create strategic partnerships that will play a central role in driving the Pact for the Future.

In particular, we envisage that our Global Feminist Municipal Movement will play a decisive role in placing caring at the centre, not only in our programme, but also by providing inspiration and leadership for ***Our Common Agenda*** of the United Nations.

1. People

Our Pact seeks to deliver fairness and justice for everyone and for every place. We need to have an open, healthy, and liveable environment for a humanistic sense of our cities and territories. The pandemic shows the importance of rethinking contemporary life, through more care, social life and proximity for each of us. Citizens that are informed and empowered, environments that are friendly and healthy, and institutions that serve with care and quality will generate hope, solidarity and optimism, liberating our collective imaginations, and instilling a new sense of what is possible.

Central themes:

1. Equal treatment and opportunities for all disregarding status, gender, origin, ethnic group, culture or worship;
2. Recognising mutual rights, accountability and responsibilities;
3. Universal access to public / basic services, including housing, health, education and cultural life;
4. Ensure political voice, allowing for freedom of speech and conscience;
5. Respect and celebrate diversity;
6. Focus on human development with culture, peace, creativity and quality of life at the core;
7. Equal and fair pay for equal work;
8. Healthier longer lives as a key goal for all spheres of government and for society as a whole;
9. Foster the role of technology as a tool for inclusion, which has to be accessible to all;
10. Respect for planetary health the well-being of and future generations.

We, local and regional government leaders

Acknowledge the impact of growing inequalities within and between cities and regions. The needs of marginalised communities, especially women and the urban poor, have not been sufficiently addressed resulting in a sharp acceleration of social exclusion. Specifically, we have witnessed the return of forced evictions, displacement and dispossession setting us back many years from achieving our shared goals.

Understand that to address the roots of inequality, the movement needs to be built on solid grounds that challenge the implicit acceptance of inequality, putting gender equality at the heart of policies and actions, and fostering equality and special care for those that need it most by ensuring their access to public spaces and services.

Recognise the universal development agendas already provide the framework to ensure access to basic services, co-creation with our communities, and the defence of universal human rights which are at the core of our renewed strategy, and which reaffirms our commitment to citizenship, suffrage, dignity, decent work, social identity and human rights.

Pledge to address the very roots of inequality placing equity, gender equality access to basic services and public spaces at the heart of our strategy. We also pledge to actively promote universal housing rights, paying particular attention to the needs of informal settlements by addressing homelessness and preventing forced evictions.

Long-Term considerations

Facilitating access to basic services and the redefinition of essential services by incorporating the **right to the city as a universal citizenship with renewed sets of cultural rights as a building block of peace and wellbeing** in all cities and regions. Putting people at the centre in all circumstances and putting science, technology and advances in computing and artificial intelligence at the service of humanity.

2. Planet

It is a sobering fact that, even as the world exceeds its planetary boundaries, billions of people still do not have access to even the most basic services. Our current systems are both unsustainable and inefficient and are widening inequalities. The situation is rapidly deteriorating, and acting is ever more urgent. The triple environmental crisis of climate, extinction and pollution, are reaching a point of no return. The Pact for Planet stresses the need to completely transform our collective relationship with nature, and for local and regional governments to spearhead the development of a new vision for our common future where we re-analyse the values that shape our understanding as beings and development pathways are nature-positive and seriously address transactional inequalities.

Central Themes:

1. Current patterns of production and consumption are unsustainable, and need urgently to be replaced by circular, regenerative and proximity models;
2. Local and regional governments have a critical role to play in food systems;
3. Economic models need to be both distributive and regenerative by design. Local Economic Development connecting systems of cities (rural towns and territories, intermediary cities, and big metropolises) will be critical;
4. Empowered local communities and indigenous peoples can play a central role in protecting biodiversity, the environment and the planet;
5. The transition to alternative energy systems needs to be a priority as a vital route to a more sustainable and just future;
6. Resilience systems need to be co-created through whole-of-society approaches;
7. The climate emergency requires us to act very radically here and now.

We, local and regional government leaders

Acknowledge that local and regional governments urgently need to shift from the over-extraction of natural resources to protecting biodiversity: the oceans, its land and subsoil and our atmosphere. At the start, local and regional governments will play a decisive role in raising awareness, and co-creating new patterns of production and consumption;

Understand that the economy is simultaneously embedded within society and within nature. New approaches are required to balance the needs of the market and the state, while recognising that informed and empowered people can be vectors of transformation. However, this is all predicated on the identification and protection of the global commons. Local and regional governments have a decisive role in formulating new policy approaches paying particular attention to the role of intermediary cities within an overall system;

Recognise that current modes of production, consumption, travel and lifestyles are already unsustainable. Faced with the challenge of the climate emergency, environmental degradation and biodiversity, the urgent co-creation of new forms of production, consumption and daily living are

essential, all predicated on understanding and protecting biodiversity, the oceans, fresh water, air, land and subsoil, and the need to emotionally reconnect people with nature.

Pledge to reinvigorate the economy through sustainable, inclusive, and environmentally-aware models of production and consumption once we enter the recovery phase, and foster a fair and equal distribution of the benefits of climate action and resilience building.

Long-Term considerations

How to transcend business as usual in the transition towards being zero carbon and fostering local resilience and how to drive radical change in the building of sustainable, equitable and resilient cities and communities must be the priority. We are committed to developing a vision that conceives these measures for our cities and territories both from an emergency and a long-term perspective considering the rights of nature as our own.

3. Government

The *Pact for Government and Democracy* calls for, at its core, redefining governing in Partnership. It seeks to place ordinary citizens and communities at the core of the decision-making mechanisms, progress indicators alternative to GDP, building peace and prosperity starting from towns, cities and our regions, ensuring a world of well-informed and empowered citizens that are treated equally across all jurisdictions.

Rebuilding trust between citizens, institutions and communities, at all levels, is an essential precondition to achieve the global agendas. The Pact for Government places local democracy at the heart of actions, stressing the importance of participatory local governance, the urgent need to restore transparency, honesty and accountability to governance at all levels. This can be achieved through the systematic development of local and regional capacity, supported by access to adequate finance and resources along with decisive policy aimed at removing those obstacles that prevent equal access to rights and opportunities.

Additional central themes:

1. Fostering co-creation and truly inclusive policy and decision making;
2. Promoting governance with a holistic, cross-cutting approach, leading to global action;
3. Structurally involving the scientific-community in the process of policy and decision making.;
4. Promoting truthful independent and accountable information sources;
5. Strengthening institutions and enhancing the protection of global commons;
6. Fostering new mechanism of multilevel governance;
7. Strengthening local finance and rethinking fiscal architecture to ensure secure revenue streams for improved planning and establishing enabling conditions to support investment at the local level;
8. Commit to the universal global agenda though the contribution to the renewal of multilateralism.

We, local and regional government leaders

Acknowledge there remains a clear lack of trust between our communities in the institutions that represent them, and governing systems and mainstream institutions are being contested. That, in this foundational moment, renewing democracy and citizenship largely depends on the rule of law and

multilevel governance needs to be at the core of our efforts in order to develop a transparent system that responds to the aspirations of our communities.

Understand that local and regional levels of government have a critical role to play in reshaping more participatory, accountable and transparent systems of governance.

Recognise that this is a process that needs to be purposefully co-created with citizens, social movements, civil society and the private sectors as partners.

Pledge that we will renew democracy and citizenship, and place it at the core of the renewed international system. We will mobilise for the development of local and regional government capacity;

We further pledge to pursue an open, constructive and positive structural dialogue with national governments to ensure joint delivery for all citizens, and all communities. We will push for the revitalisation of the multilateral system and the development of an interurban system of small, intermediary and large cities and metropolises, strengthening the urban-rural continuum, to ensure that the next generations benefit from placing local democracy at the centre of development.

Long-Term considerations

Local and global democracy, cooperation among spheres of government in a renewed, networked multilateral system built on cities and driven by solidarity. The role of citizen participation and ownership of these systems.

Particular attention is needed for cross-border localities that impact the lifestyles of many people in many cities and communities around the world.

Principles / the new Decalogue

A first Draft collected by the external drafting committee and for consideration

We are traversing an era of uncertainty, and we need to stand ready to define the principles for transformation. The Pact for the Future is looking at the world beyond 2030, bringing to the table the guiding principles for our movement in this era.

We aim to transform the current power relations to deliver a fairer, healthier, and more democratic world, to identify the new global common goods, to redefine what makes us human and to deliver hope to our communities.

To achieve this will require a fundamental realignment of political and economic power, generally away from patriarchy / the wealthy / political / economic elites to those who currently have the least power.

Below you will find a list of principles, guiding recommendations for a world that meets the expectations of our neighbours.

People

Human Rights, human dignity and well-being should be at the center of any prospects of the future we deserve.

Eradicate poverty and all forms of inequality, discrimination and injustice.

Intergenerational justice: leave future generations with a liveable, peaceful and sustainable world where a life with dignity and rights for all exists and ensures that our earth system is healthy and its integrity maintained.

Caring societies, ensuring that all rights for care workers, especially women are guaranteed, and that investment in care infrastructure is considered a strategic, core component of COVID-19 related recovery packages

Feminist cities and societies where women's rights and gender equality are the building blocks for a fairer and more equal future.

Promote cultural rights for all, based on heritage, creativity, diversity and shared knowledge.

Planet

We need to coexist with nature in a way that does not harm and respects it. Healthy ecosystems are key to human wellbeing and the basis for sustainable and fair economies. Nature is not a repository of unlimited resources but a complex web of life with boundaries that need to be respected.

Restore and protect degraded ecosystems: through the conservation of biodiversity and ecosystem services as critical life supporting systems.

Foster nature positive and carbon negative development pathways: this implies a drastic shift in production and consumption patterns, a new energy matrix, and rebalancing waste and overconsumption with scarcity and poverty.

Use the principle of do no harm: When a human activity, decision or behaviour has the potential of harming nature by pollution, extinction, or irreversible damage, the said activity should be paused or suspended.

Government

Subsidiarity, decentralization and a multi-scale approach to government.

The critical importance of collective action in addressing local and global challenges through meaningful citizen's participation in decision-making.

Transparency and Accountability: of decisions, policy and practice.

Trust and co-responsibility as an engine for transformative and responsible leadership.

Feminism as the force and approach to fix power imbalances and the culture of privilege: feminist municipalism, feminist leadership.

Solidarity, empathy and cooperation as the key principles for transformative change.