



Item 8 – Annex 1

REPORT OF THE PRESIDENCY FOR 2023

**I. Introduction: Bringing to life the Pact for the Future - Daejeon Political Declaration**

1. The year 2023 has continued to be marked by the blowback of the conflicts that we are living through. The invasion of Ukraine, the economic crisis that has ensued in many parts of the world, compounded by the situation of policrisis has been the instigator of our work. The context that we live in, and the commitments of the Pact, have become the guides for its unfolding.
2. In this context, the World Organization remained committed to working towards a renewed future, one that builds bridges between communities and peoples, that puts us in harmony with our planet, and that rebuilds trust with governments. 2023 has been the first year since the adoption of the Pact for the Future - Daejeon Political Declaration, which is transforming how we present ourselves to the World. The three axes that structure the Pact -People, Planet, and Government- have been a key part of the Work Plan, and are setting the priorities of the municipal movement for years to come.
3. Through four entry points (trust, governance, commons, and finance) that build on the three axes of the Pact, UCLG has aimed at developing the conditions for the renewal of the social contract, compounding on the knowledge of local and regional governments and building high-impact partnerships.
4. During 2023, we have advocated for a world in which local and regional governments, and the communities that they represent, are a part of the decision-making table to bring about transformation. The SDG Summit has been one of the critical milestones. We have also listened to, and built strengthened partnerships with the international community in key policy priorities built around People, Planet and Governments. The "Power of We", which inspired the adoption of our Pact, has ensured that care is at the centre of our efforts.
5. **We care** is the core of our values as a movement. Through solidarity, people-centred planning, and a feminist way of doing politics, the value of care has been the heart of the World Organization. Our statutory gatherings, but also our debates around peace and our advocacy towards the UN has care at the centre, including but not limited to our commitment to nurturing the Global Alliance of Care, and the transformation of our policymaking mechanisms to ensure they respond to the care paradigm.
6. **We advocate**, in 2023, for a world in which local and regional governments, and the communities that they represent, are a part of the decision-making table to bring about transformation. At the UN SDG Summit and the HLPF we have claimed for a more inclusive multilateral system, one in which communities are not an afterthought, but the driving force of global decisions.
7. **We research** to develop pathways for an equitable and sustainable future. Our 6th Global Report on Local Democracy and Decentralization, has been disseminated over the years, aiming to build the "pathways to urban and territorial inequalities" for a

more egalitarian world that cares. The VII GOLD Report has begun its conceptualization, including the necessary idea of hope back into the picture, after years focusing on the causes of inequalities.

8. **We learn** by developing tools, activities, and modules to learn together and re-embrace localization, with the on-line Platform #LearningwithUCLG at the centre, developing over 50 learning courses, four modules on SDG localization and three modules on the localization of the Sendai Framework, and counting on more than 500 people registered.
9. This work around care has been also mainstreamed in how we communicate, with our teams' new platforms that will allow enhanced communication among members and renewed visibility towards partners. The development of the #PowerOfWe, as the UCLG as Platform of Platforms have been critical.
10. The Pact for the Future - Daejeon Political Declaration is also the cornerstone of the renewed consultation mechanisms of UCLG. The renewed Policy Councils that will be adopted at the UCLG World Council will be built and the inputs of our partners of the Town Hall Process and our regional sections.

### **An all-of-UCLG approach to bring the Pact to life**

11. The beginning of 2023 saw the World Organization adopting the discourse, the narrative behind the Pact, and the work plan for 2023, related to its axes. The unfolding strategy aims at permeating all principles and commitments undertaken in the work of the World Organization as a whole, starting with the processes driven from the World Secretariat to those lead by Sections, Consultation Mechanisms and members at local and territorial level.
12. The Pact involves the **development of High Impact Partnerships for Transformation**: a critical milestone to foster innovation and impact of our movement in the coming years. As our capacity to amplify voices of the membership deepens, renewed partnerships will be critical in forging far reaching transformative visions articulated through co-creation and localization and driven by the core values reflected in The Pact for the Future - Daejeon Political Declaration. The Organization is working to establish partnerships with organizations that allow us to enhance our strategy by looking at future trends, and overcoming together the challenges that the future brings. In this regard, agencies such as the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) are a prime example.
13. An **empowering monitoring**, where evaluation becomes a culture into the Organization. A new system of monitoring should allow to reflect the real dynamic of the World Secretariat, based on a systemic evaluation of the work delivered in time, quantity, quality and human resources implication, be it from the staff or from the municipalities. This new empowered monitoring will also allow to keep high the meaningfulness of the work delivered by the World Secretariat internally, through capacity building for data collection to better reflect the work done.
14. An **exercise of Knowledge Co-creation**, that involves both the generation of knowledge within UCLG to unfold the pact. In this exercise knowledge is understood from a broad perspective and not only related to academic research which will continue to be critical to the work of the Organization. It also aims at going further than knowledge sharing and management. It is enabling us to develop positions including all dimensions of work and areas of the organization.
15. Unfolding the Pact will also imply innovating the type of services available to the membership. Renewed tools, platforms and joint activities but also new opportunities for interaction and partnerships are being put in place.

## **The Future Envisioning Exercises**

16. The Future Envisioning Exercises, mandated by the UCLG Policy Councils, are a mechanism to **unfold the Pact for the Future - Daejeon Political Declaration**. They are the common point of arrival of the present Policy Councils and Town Halls, building up on the outputs and outcomes of both processes, the UCLG World Congress and the 2023 Retreat. While, simultaneously, they are **a common point of departure**: they are a space of dialogue and co-creation in which the UCLG political leadership, together with organized civil society and partners articulated in the UCLG Town Halls, will aim to reach real and tangible conclusions through forward-looking consultations around 4 Entry Points to unfold the Pact for the Future - Daejeon Political Declaration: **Reclaiming the Commons, Redefining Finances, Regaining Trust and Rebuilding Governance Architecture**.
17. These Exercises are the common point of arrival of the present Policy Councils and Town Halls. They are a space of dialogue and co-creation in which the UCLG political leadership, together with organized civil society and partners articulated in the UCLG Town Halls, will aim to reach real and tangible conclusions through forward-looking consultations around four Entry Points:
  - a) **Reclaiming the Commons**
  - b) **Redefining Finance and Economy**
  - c) **Regaining Trust**
  - d) **Rebuilding Governance Architecture**

### ***The first wave of the Future Envisioning Exercises***

18. In practice, the Future Envisioning Exercises are a policy process articulated as a series of online live sessions that followed a methodology of co-creation. An introductory Future Envisioning Exercise was held in the framework of the UCLG Retreat, in which focal points for each of the entry points (María Fernanda Espinosa, Lorena Zárate, Carlos de Freitas, and Katy Rubin) as well as UBUNTU Advisors, gathered to kick off the experience and set the grounds for the exercises to come.
19. Between 4 and 11 May, four online sessions were organized around each of the entry point mentioned above, and participants were invited to exchange inspiring keynote speeches, gather key insights through interactive exercises, bring forward different contributions, and participate in an online agora.

### ***Reclaiming the Commons***

20. In an era of global and interconnected crises, growing inequalities and rampant distrust, governments at all levels face the urgent need to rebuild their relationship with the communities, with nature and among themselves.
21. As defined by the UCLG Town Halls, the commons are “material and immaterial good resources, services and social practices. They are considered fundamental for the reproduction of life. Thus, they cannot be commodified but have to be taken care of and managed in a collective way, under democratic principles of direct participation, radical inclusion and intersectional equity and justice.”
22. Speaking of the commons is to speak of local democracy, trust, care, equity, co-creation and accountability. Regulating the Commons is necessary to protect them, but it requires solid resources, actors and principles that embrace and promote the needs, aspirations, memories and material conditions of all territories and their inhabitants. This includes people and ecosystems, nature and culture.
23. The outcome document of the Future Envisioning Exercise on the Commons identified key policy recommendations on the need to **redefine the new essentials; strengthen the commons and the link with the human rights agenda;**

**reshaping multilateralism to place finance at the centre of common goods; and place feminism at the centre of action.**

***Redefining Finance and Economy***

24. Finances are a means of implementation for any intended goal. Ensuring sustainable finance is a necessary condition to sustain our livelihoods and implement the global agendas to bring about the urgent transformation to face the social, democratic, ecological and other crises our societies are going through. Redefining finance and economy requires increasing financial flows but also rethinking the sources of revenue and resource allocation. International binding agreements and effective tax cooperation are among the components needed in a new international financial framework with improved regulations, while promoting progressive taxation and equalization mechanisms at the national level.
25. We must work to ensure that all progress is at the service of humanity and in this sense, restrain the competitive impetus to specific regulated markets and de-commodify the objects, spaces and practices linked to basic needs. Going further, we propose to build on the existing tools of the social and solidarity economy to design an institutional, cultural and social system where basic public services are continuously provided for under a feminist perspective and a guarantee of universal accessibility.
26. The outcome document of the Future Envisioning Exercise on Finance and the Economy identified key policy recommendations on the need to adopt the care approach for investments; guiding financial decisions on the needs of communities; measuring finance with wellbeing criteria; and fostering inclusive participation in global governance.

***Regaining Trust***

27. Trust is understood as an essential element for the healthy functioning of complex societies. Trust is the belief in the ability, reliability or truth of other people or institutions. As human beings, we need trust in our peers to survive and in other people to thrive and live in community. Likewise, in the complex and diverse societies that make up the world in the 21st century, trust is necessary to maintain peace, solidarity, trade, and other scientific, economic, and social institutions. Unfortunately, in many areas—politics, media, science, or academia—distrust is increasing in a polarized world divided into bubbles of values and information.
28. Regaining trust is an enabler for the global agenda's implementation and is very related to the success of the commons agenda and the governance architecture to be implemented. Trust, based on greater transparency and co-creation of institutions, is an opportunity to strengthen a more sustainable and fairer economy.
29. The outcome document of the Future Envisioning Exercise on Regaining Trust identified key policy recommendations on the importance of developing participatory tools and govern in a people-centred manner. Feminist governance needs to be at the centre, and aspects such as relations with the media and rethinking journalism were identified as essential to rebuild trust.

***Rebuilding Governance Architecture***

30. The escalation in conflicts between countries, and within countries, is a sad reminder that current global governance architecture is being challenged. The institutions that have withheld the current world order are questioned, and the context of poly-crises has overwhelmed our sanitary, governance, and social systems. The current financial order does not work for lower-income countries, that are in debt distress.

31. The Common Agenda calls for an update on governance arrangements to protect the commons, delivering public goods and ushering in a new era of universal social protection (health, education, skills, decent work, housing and digital rights). All spheres of government should be involved in the protection of the interest of future generations and the new government architecture should understand and assess the future. In times of overlapping crises, all public spheres must be ready to be convened in response to complex global crises.
32. The call for rebuilding governance architecture is understood as the need to foster renewed impulse to well-resourced decentralization and subsidiarity and active and informed civic participation; promote inclusive, participatory, responsible and accountable multilevel governance leading to global action; protect and promote all public institutions, ensure the integrity of the justice system, and ensure equal access for all citizens.
33. The outcome document of the Future Envisioning Exercise on Governance Architecture identified key policy recommendations on the need to establish a local-global coalition for a more inclusive multilateral system; a renewed financial ecosystem that finances common goods; a renewed global framework for governing emergencies; and the importance of developing multilateral institutions under the principle of subsidiarity to ensure cooperative governance.

### **The Future Envisioning Exercises at the UCLG Executive Bureau**

34. The fifth **Future Envisioning Exercise**, organized as part of the Executive Bureau session, was the culmination of the four previous thematic exercises. The learnings and aspirations shared throughout the four exercises reached the heart of the Organization and were debated, interpreted and expanded, in particular through an open conversation with journalists and civil society. The session in Brussels allowed to share the main outcomes, including gaps and opportunities, that the previous exercises brought to the table of our constituency.
35. The Future Envisioning Exercise in Brussels brought together the UCLG Leadership, in particular the UCLG Presidency, together with partners from the UN Population Fund (UNFPA); UN-Habitat, and the Coalition for the UN We need, who brought the themes of population and human development at the heart of transformation; driving change from the territories; and what a renewed networked multilateralism will look like.
36. The Agora brought together journalists, as part of the **Media for Cities** campaign, and the importance of the media in building consensus and ensuring people take part in democratic processes. Partnerships between media and local and regional governments are essential to ensure that trust is rebuilt between communities and the institutions that represent them.
37. Additional Future Envisioning Exercises will be organized throughout 2024, deepening the debate around the critical issues identified in the initial series. A full report of the Future Envisioning Exercise at the UCLG Executive Bureau is included in the Report of Key Decisions of the Brussels Executive Bureau.

## **II. UCLG for People**

### **The Feminist Municipal Movement**

38. Feminist leadership, driven by equality, care and empathy, is at the heart of the Pact for the Future - Daejeon Political Declaration. As such, UCLG, guided by its Standing Committee on Gender Equality, has a mandate to monitor, catalyse, amplify and

provide inputs to the inclusive and diverse gender dimensions and feminist political agenda of the international agenda, as well as to ensure the mainstreaming of gender equality and the empowerment of women and diverse groups in local leadership, policy and programs, and throughout the UCLG network.

39. Attaining gender equality and striving for equitable gender participation is a shared responsibility for all leaders. In particular, men in leadership positions must recognize their responsibility as allies and supporters to ensure all people can be represented in leadership.
40. Globally, there is an increase of anti-gender equality movements and attacks, intertwined with threats to democracy and as a backlash to years of progress on women's rights and public engagement as well as that of feminist movements and LGBTQIA+ communities. This must be acknowledged and actively countered.
41. The perspective of care has been increasingly present in the framework and the international advocacy of local and regional governments. Cities and territories consider the relevance of a feminist municipalism, which focuses on the promotion of gender equality, and on tackling the persistent inequalities in the uses of time, around valuing care work and equitable access to local public services and decision-making.
42. UCLG holds two formal **Generation Equality Commitments**: the first committing to support and facilitate the Global Feminist Movement, and the second to advocate for and nurture the Global Alliance for Care. As part of this, UCLG is a leader in, and the UCLG Secretary General serves as **Co-chair for Action Coalition (AC) #6 on Feminist Movements and Leadership**.
43. In February, UCLG hosted the Coalition's 2-day in-person strategic visioning workshop. UCLG seeks to ensure the constituencies of the AC are given voice in spaces UCLG convenes, such as hosting an AC segment in its CSW67 Local and Regional Governments' Day in March; creating a space for Women Enabled international and IGEC to discuss the Feminist Accessibility Protocol at the Briefing of the UCLG Community of Practice on inclusive and accessible cities and territories in the event of Global Accessibility Awareness Day in May; and inviting speakers from the AC during the HLPF in June; as well as co-sponsoring and advocating for the events and campaigns of AC leaders, such as during the Conference of State Parties (COSP). In August, the AC hosted a Commitment Makers engagement to share and build solidarity between commitment makers. During the Generation Equality Midpoint Moment / SDG Summit, the AC will collectively host an official Side event in the UNHQ entitled: 'Youth and Adolescent Girls Driving the 2030 Agenda: Building Collective Power, Securing Sustainable Funding, and Demanding Accountability'.
44. As part of its commitment to its work with the Action Coalition, nurturing and promoting feminist movements and leadership, UCLG has been looking internally at ways to implement the Feminist Accessibility Protocol, a set of recommendations for how organisations and events can ensure the highest level of inclusion. Moreover, as a feminist municipal movement; as an organisation with a strong accessibility agenda; as a means to unfold the Pact for the Future - Daejeon Political Declaration, putting care at the centre and ensuring no one is left behind, UCLG urges the Presidency to consider signing the Protocol as a show of our full commitment towards more inclusive, feminist, and caring accessible cities and territories.
45. At the end of 2022, UCLG formally accepted its role on the Management Committee of the **Global Alliance for Care** with its term running from October 2022 to September 2024. The Alliance is a global multi-stakeholder initiative launched by the National Institute of Women in Mexico (INMUJERES) and UN-Women in the context of the 2021 Generation Equality Forum. It is a platform for cooperation and collaboration, to share practices, articulate dialogues and generate advocacy and inter-institutional action, which considers the different roles of its members in implementing the care agenda at the local to the global level.

46. Each year, UCLG gathers the constituency of local and regional governments, partners and civil society to collectively amplify the work of the feminist municipal movement, and reflect on our role and progress in localizing SDG 5, at the **Commission on the Status of Women (CSW)**. The 67th Session of CSW took place between 6-17 March 2023, focusing on the priority theme: Innovation and technological change, and education in the digital age for achieving gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls. UCLG led the Local and Regional Governments Day, as well as two CSW NGO Parallel sessions. In the second week, the voices of the constituency of local and regional governments were further amplified in the official General Discussion as well as the Interactive Dialogue on the priority theme, which took place within the UN Headquarters.
47. In the run-up to the 2023 Conference of the International Observatory on Participatory Democracy (IOPD), the IOPD, with the Municipality of Rio de Janeiro and UCLG Women co-organised the **webinar 'Towards women's political participation in all its diversity'** with representatives of local governments, civil society and experts on the issues addressed. It took place on 31 March and was followed by the publication of a policy paper bringing together the expertise and lessons collated from the webinar.
48. In June 2023, UCLG was a co-organizer for the **Forum on Cities and Territories of Peace**, held in Bogota. Two of the key axes of the conference were: 'Women, Peace, and Security', and 'A new social contract for care', and feminist municipalism reflected strongly across the Conference's plenaries, labs and fieldtrips. UCLG Committee on Social Inclusion, Participative Democracy and Human Rights was a co-organiser a number of sessions, such as the 'Laboratory 1: Towards feminist municipalism: institutionalization of women's rights and eradication of gender-based violence' alongside the Iberoamerican Forum of Women Mayors and Elected officials, and the UN Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women and Girls; and sessions saw the strong participation of UCLG's feminist leaders and Presidency. UCLG's Secretary General furthermore was invited to open a key session in the **Women Deliver Bogota** Conference which took place directly after the Forum.
49. As part of the Commemoration of the 75 years' anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights UCLG was featured in their podcast series "Dignity, Freedom and Justice for All", alongside UN Human Rights Assistant Secretary-General Ilze Brands Kehris and Professor Rebecca Adami. The episode discussed what is meant by municipal feminism and the meaningful participation of women and girls in leadership.
50. Between July 3 to July 23, 2023, the Seoul Human Resources Development Center (SHRDC) of the Seoul Metropolitan Government, together with Metropolis, the World Association of the Major Metropolises, United Cities and Local Government (UCLG), and UCLG-ASPAC organized an online training program focusing on the Caring City, covering topics including health and wellbeing in cities, public spaces, social mobility and caring city services.

## **Human Mobility**

51. In an era of global and interconnected crises, growing inequalities and rampant distrust, governments at all levels face the urgent need to rebuild their relationship with the communities, with nature and among themselves.
52. The adoption of the Lampedusa Charter on Dignified Human Mobility and Territorial Solidarity at the Daejeon Congress in October 2022 marked a milestone in our global organization. With this political declaration, our membership demonstrated its commitment to fairer and more effective migration governance, while setting out a clear roadmap with thirty-five thematic priorities divided into seven core principles

that summarize our vision: dignity, equity, recognition, participation, community, solidarity and resilience.

53. This commitment has been translated into concrete actions. Within the framework of global dialogues addressing human mobility, our membership has increased its active involvement in the UN Migration Network in the following areas:
  - a) as co-chair of the Work stream on Access to Basic Services with the World Health Organization (WHO) and the Migration Youth and Children Platform (MYCP);
  - b) as a member of the Work stream on Alternatives to Detention group;
  - c) as a member of the Working group on implementation of the Global Compact on Migration (GCM) at country level, being an active part of the global team of facilitators in UN Country Teams.
54. Furthermore, in the area of partnerships, UCLG has continued to strengthen the work of important coalitions such as the Mayors Mechanism (UCLG, MMC and IOM) and the Global Task Force for Migration. In coordination with them and the Global Taskforce of Local and Regional Governments (GTF) UCLG has joined efforts to raise and amplify the voices of local governments in multilateral processes that will be of particular relevance in 2023: The Global Forum for Migration and Development and the Global Refugee Forum.
55. Through the Call to Local Action on Migrants and Refugees, our organization and the Mayors Mechanism, in cooperation with the United Nations Refugee Agency (UNHCR), have collected around 100 local actions that contribute to the commitments of the Global Compact on Migration and Refugees and the 2030 Agenda. In addition, this year Call to Action members will have access to learning activities on topics of increasing priority on our membership's global agenda: climate and human mobility, migration narratives and racism, and migrant and refugee participation in public policy.
56. As a strategic partner of the Global Cities Fund (GCF) led by the Mayors Migration Council (MMC), UCLG has supported applications from members of all sections to open processes for local projects related to child protection. This latest call follows up on efforts already initiated in 2021 to support local actions in the context of the pandemic and also in relation to climate.
57. Finally, UCLG has continued to work on the strategic partnership it maintains with the MC2CM consortium, formed by the International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD), UCLG and UN-Habitat, to support local projects in Moroccan and Tunisian cities.
58. Building on the outcomes of the Lampedusa Charter, UCLG has established a **human mobility lab** led by Lampedusa to gather stakeholders and practitioners around specific territorial realities to co-create pragmatic responses and policy outcomes through cooperation and solidarity.

### **The UCLG health agenda**

59. Health goes much further than health services: local service provision affects health, we need to rethink deliverables at local level to make a difference. We defend an understanding of health in our territories that goes beyond healthcare, through the promotion of equal access to health services, the involvement of local and regional governments, and an ecosystem of basic services that allow equal access to safe, green public spaces that can sustain health services.
60. 2023 has been a critical year for the health agenda of the World Organization. The High-Level Meetings on Universal Health Coverage, and Pandemic Preparedness and Response took place on 21 September 2023, marking the first time in national



governments review the commitments undertaken in 2019 on the first high-level meeting on Universal Health Coverage.

61. UCLG was engaged in the preparations towards the High-Level Meeting on Universal Health Coverage, being part of the Taskforce that developed the UHC Action Agenda, and a part of the Multistakeholder Hearing that delivered recommendations to the UHC High-Level Meeting.
62. The Action Agenda from the UHC movement is a set of action-oriented policy recommendations, that aims to rally countries and stakeholders behind a set of concrete actions and milestones and strengthen coherence in political processes related to health in 2023, including the high-level meetings on pandemic prevention, preparedness and response, and on tuberculosis, the SDG Summit as well as the G7, G20, and the Intergovernmental Negotiation Body (INB) on a pandemic accord.
63. UCLG is part of the Taskforce that is developing the State of Universal Health Coverage (UHC) Progress Report in 2023, in partnership with the Universal Health Coverage 2030 Movement.

### **Accessibility**

64. As a follow-up to the memorandum of understanding with the World Blind Union at the UCLG Retreat in 2023, UCLG has developed concrete action in line with the agreement and goals of fostering cities and territories that promote equal opportunities and justice for everyone. These initiatives include the development of the "Localization to Solve the Accessibility Crisis" policy brief, presented to the Member States of the UN during the Conference of States Parties to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in June 2023, and the launch of the Global Survey of Accessibility and the Engagement with Persons with Disabilities during the SDG Summit in September of 2023.
65. To amplify our policy dialogue and priorities on accessibility and localization, our partnerships with the Office of the UN Secretary General's Special Envoy on Accessibility and Disability, World Enabled, G3ict, World Blind Union and the Office of the High Commissioner of Human Rights (OHCHR) continue to measurably increase Global recognition of the role of local and regional governments towards the protection of human rights. We have begun dialogue with the Permanent Mission of Chile to the UNHQ in NY, which also presides the Group of Member States Friends of the CRPD, and is interested to support our priorities a work on accessibility and universal design.
66. Additionally, through renewed partnerships, we aimed at enhancing the knowledge of Member States, UN Agencies, the private sector and civil society on the Pact and its implications for global agendas during the Conference of States Parties to the UNCRPD, the High-Level Political Forum, the M-enabling Summit and the UN Celebration on the International Day of Persons with Disabilities.
67. To strengthen the policy agenda on Accessibility, the World Secretariat continues to support the growth of the Global Community of Practice on Inclusive and Accessible Cities and Territories through capacity building tools and pilot programs aimed at championing the implementation of the Pact. In continuation of the work with G3ict on the Inclusive Public Procurement Launchpad Project the municipalities of Sao Paulo & Kisumu have completed the program and have adopted the model policy on Inclusive Procurement of Accessible ICTs, joining Quito, Istanbul and Los Angeles as the first pioneer local authorities around the world to adopt such policies. Valongo is in currently completing the program and will be the last municipality for this first phase, which will have a total of 6 cities represented from Africa, Europe, North & South America, and West Asia. Additional advocacy opportunities came up in October

and November of 2023 to share the learnings of the project and engage with stakeholders interested to support the second phase of implementation of the project.

68. Additionally, the MOOC on Building Cities for All's first chapter has been published on the learning platform, and the remaining 6 chapters will be published on the platform before the end of in 2023. These activities will nurture the capacity of the UCLG World Secretariat and members to address the mandate of the Pact for the Future - Daejeon Political Declaration of Humanity; caring for and recognizing the human rights of all.
69. To enhance our work on age friendly cities, we are in dialogue to have a structured engagement through training, research and knowledge co creation with the World Health Organization through its Age Friendly Cities and Communities Framework.

## **Inclusive Digitalization**

70. UCLG is engaged in protecting digital rights, promoting equal access to technology, and developing a public approach to technology. Digital technologies and digital rights are critical components of the UCLG agenda. UCLG is a core partner of the Cities Coalition of Digital Rights led by the cities of Amsterdam, Barcelona and New York, which advocates for the protection of digital rights for all including the right to privacy and right to open data, the need for equitable access to technology and broadband for all residents, and open governance mechanisms.
71. UCLG as part of the core-team of the Coalition works towards making the connection between global policy processes and the work of the Coalition on digital rights. These global policy processes go beyond just technology to ensure that in important processes, such as the HLPF or the U20, the importance of digital technologies and digital rights is considered. In 2023, UCLG contributed to the Cities Coalition for Digital Rights' publication entitled: "Mainstreaming human rights in the digital transformation of cities – A guide for local governments" which addresses how digital rights should be mainstreamed within digital transformation processes of cities.
72. UCLG has also contributed to making the link between digital rights and accessibility by connecting the work of UCLG's Community of practice on Accessibility and the Coalition of Cities for Digital Rights to further advocate on the link between digital rights and cities for all.
73. Within the context of the 2023 Smart Cities World Expo Congress, UCLG will make a concrete connection between its activities related to the constituency and its work on digital technologies as well as within the Cities Coalition for Digital Rights which traditionally holds its member meeting at Smart Cities.

## **The UCLG Committees, mainstreaming the Pact for the Future - Daejeon Political Declaration**

### ***UCLG Committee on Culture***

74. As the preamble to the 2020 Rome Charter states, "Culture is the expression of values, a common, renewable resource in which we meet one another, learn what can unite us and how to engage with differences in a shared space". Culture enriches our lives, shapes our actions, and shapes how we see the world. Culture that is people-centred, that is built through cultural democracy, that builds new ways of thinking for current and future generations.
75. The **fifth UCLG Culture Summit** will be held in **Dublin** (Republic of Ireland) from **28 November to 1 December 2023**, hosted by the Dublin City Council and the Dublin City Council Culture Company. The UCLG Culture Summit is the main meeting point at global level of cities, local governments and organisations that are committed

to the effective implementation of policies and programmes on culture and sustainability.

76. Under the title "Culture. Future. Goal. We Act to Bring Local Visions to Global Tables", the Summit is conceived as a co-creation space to shape the future we want, with culture at the centre, and as a key contribution to unfold the UCLG Pact for the Future - Daejeon Political Declaration of Humanity.
77. It will include sessions devoted to the relation between cultural policies and, respectively, climate action, gender equality, tourism, health and well-being, and the localisation of the SDGs, among other topics. It will also devote specific sessions to Cultural Rights and to the Advocacy for a Culture Goal in development agendas.
78. The [programme](#) has been released, and the [website](#) of the Summit offers all the information required, including [registration](#).
79. The UCLG Culture Committee is part of the **Culture 2030 Goal campaign**, together with six global cultural networks that are united to advocate for the role of culture in sustainable development. The campaign aims for a stronger place for culture throughout the implementation of the UN 2030 Agenda; the adoption of culture as a distinct goal in the post-2030 development agenda, and the adoption of a global agenda for culture. The campaign released the proposal "[A Culture Goal is Essential for Our Common Future](#)" in September 2022, with one concrete Goal and 10 specific Targets.
80. In 2023, the campaign has widely disseminated this proposal and has called the international community to unfold the call of MONDIACULT+40 (the Global Conference on Cultural Policies held on 28-30 September 2022 in Mexico City), which promotes a stand-alone Culture Goal. On 1 February 2023, the campaign released the communiqué "[Commitment to an explicit Culture Goal in Mondiacult Declaration Welcome: Now is the time to deliver](#)". The campaign organised the side-event "[The Missing Goal? The place of culture in SDG implementation today and tomorrow](#)" in the High-Level Political Forum (HLPF) on 12 July 2023. The campaign has been actively promoting coherent wording in the G20 Leaders Declaration and in the UN SDG Summit.
81. The Lord Mayor of Dublin, Mr. Daithí de Róiste, spoke at the Local and Regional Governments Forum, organised by UCLG and partners at the United Nations Headquarters on Saturday the 16<sup>th</sup> of September, "Mobilisation Day", in the frame of the UN SDG Summit. He highlighted culture-based high-impact localisation policies and presented the work of the Culture 2030 Goal campaign.
82. Finally, the campaign has published a brief document on "[Culture in the Voluntary National Reports: an Overview of the 2023 Reports](#)", which highlights some of the different ways in which culture is addressed in these reviews, celebrates good practices, and indicates areas for further focus.
83. The **International Award "UCLG - Mexico City - Culture 21"** recognises leading cities that have distinguished themselves through their contribution to culture as a dimension of sustainable development. The Award reaffirms the leadership of Mexico City and the commitment of UCLG to place culture as a fundamental dimension of sustainable cities.
84. In 2023, the Committee added the 79 new initiatives (identified during the 5<sup>th</sup> edition of the Award) to the OBS database of good practices.
85. The 6<sup>th</sup> edition of the International Award UCLG - Mexico City - Culture 21 will be launched in November 2023. It will be an exceptional opportunity to place cultural policies and programmes within the **UCLG Pact for the Future - Daejeon Political**

**Declaration**, and the framework of protection and promotion of **cultural rights**, as well as to ensure that no-one, and no territory, is left behind.

86. The UCLG Culture Committee has begun the preparatory work to approve (in 2025) a new version of its global toolkit on cultural rights and sustainability, with the provisional name of "**Culture 21 PLUS**". The document will contain options for (a) a complete self-assessment on the state of local policies through a cultural perspective, and (b) the design of concrete local policies, programmes or actions. The toolkit has been tested in Jinju (July 2023) and Mexico City (September 2023). The Committee is open to receive expressions of interest from cities willing to host a workshop.
87. The UCLG "**Seven Keys**" programme offers to cities, municipalities and regions the opportunity to organise a local workshop that gathers participants to jointly identify and co-create seven "keys" or specific actions that they can commit to in order to localise the SDGs through cultural policy making in their city. The UCLG Culture Committee has published [a concise report](#) with the experiences of the ten cities that have finished this programme: Bulawayo (Zimbabwe), Burgos (Spain), Concepción (Chile), Izmir (Turkey), Lilongwe (Malawi), Lisbon (Portugal), Puerto de la Cruz (Spain), Saint Louis (Senegal), Xi'an (China) and Yoff (Senegal).
88. UCLG is unfolding the programme "**Capitals of Culture: Share, Learn and Advocate Together**", in order to connect the initiatives and the experiences of towns in several continents (starting with Africa and Europe).
89. In the frame of the High-Level Political Forum, UCLG released the chapter "**A cultural boost in the achievement of the SDGs**", included in the 7<sup>th</sup> GTF report on "Towards the Localisation of the SDGs". The chapter includes [an exhaustive analysis](#) of the relationship between culture and all the SDGs, using the "analysis of the interaction".

### ***Social Inclusion, Participatory Democracy and Human Rights***

90. Launched by the UCLG Committee on Social Inclusion, Participatory Democracy and Human Rights in 2022, the Global Campaign "**10, 100, 1000 Human Rights Cities and Territories by 2030**" received more than 120 pledges and 80 forms from Cities and Territories worldwide. Following exchanges with the cities and territories participating in the campaign, the Committee developed a roadmap which invites the members of the Campaign to promote the following activities:
  - a) Implement local policies or initiatives on human rights;
  - b) Promote exchange and working groups on specific themes related to human rights, which could also feed the ongoing update process of the UCLG Global Charter Agenda on Human Rights in the City;
  - c) Participate in the UN Human Rights 75 initiative for the commemoration of the 75 anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights;
  - d) Participate in the broader activities of the Committee and promote a "snowball effect" to involve more local and regional governments in the Campaign.
91. In August 2023, one year after the launch of the Campaign, at the occasion of the 75th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the Committee launched a second wave of the Campaign.
92. The Committee promoted links with Caring Cities and the agenda of Equality, through the 2023 meeting of Mercociudades in Montevideo together with the regional director of OIM to discuss local challenges in relation to gender, inclusion, human rights and care.
93. The UN Human Rights office and UCLG have invited Local and Regional Governments (LRGs) to commemorate this anniversary through the UN Human Rights 75

initiative. A letter co-signed by the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights and the Secretary General of UCLG was sent to invite LRGs to join the initiative and to explain the type of activities to be promoted at local level to enhance progress and engagement towards human rights. The initiative will be an important opportunity to further recognize the role of LRGs for the promotion of human rights in the UN ecosystem; as well as to the implementation of the UCLG Pact for the Future - Daejeon Political Declaration. UCLG-CSIPDHR will also participate in a high-level event on the 75th anniversary of the Declaration in Geneva in December; and will support the City of Vienna in the organization of an international conference at the occasion of the International Human Rights Day (10 December) to celebrate the anniversary of both the Vienna World Conference on Human Rights and the Universal Declaration for Human Rights.

94. The UCLG-CSIPDHR kicked-off a participatory process to update the narrative, vision and content of the **Global Charter-Agenda for Human Rights in the City**. The update consists of different phases: the first phase (2023) is dedicated to the update of the structure of the document; which consists in revising the structure of the 12 rights currently included in the Charter-Agenda (title, formulation and possible re-grouping). In order to do this, the UCLG-CSIPDHR has set up a Steering Board of experts and civil servants of Local and Regional Governments - all active members of the UCLG-CSIPDHR - to coordinate this endeavour. The Steering Board met three times between July and September 2023 to outline a new draft structure, which was presented to the members of the Global Campaign on Human Rights on 12 September by Ms. Linda Voortman, Co-Mayor of Utrecht and Co-President of the UCLG-CSIPDHR. The meeting of 12 September represented an initial step to foster ownership of the document; and to encourage the participation of the members of the Campaign in the process.
95. Regarding the key areas of focus, such as violence against women, the Committee has worked on the finalization and dissemination of the deliverables of the international training regional on "*Fight violence against women in public and private spaces*" co-organized with the Department of the Seine-Saint-Denis in the context of the international programme on violence against women, and the Municipality of Iztapalapa. The training was organized from 13 to 17 December 2022 and gathered around 30 participants from 11 Local Governments of Latin America; Seine Saint Denis (France) and Jenin (Palestinian Territories); as well as academia, UN Representatives and civil society to share their experiences and build capacities on local public policies against gender-based violence. The event concluded by the adoption of a Declaration of Commitment signed by Local Representatives to fight gender-based violence at local level. A short video of the training; and a detailed report of the activities were produced and promoted in a special newsletter for 8 March, the International Women's Day. A webinar on "Local Governments against Sexual Violence" was organised in May 2023 and attended by approximately 40 participants, among which local governments and CSO from Africa and Latin America, with the objective to foster dialogue between civil society and local authorities on issues such as sexual violence or FGM; which will be further explored in a regional training in the African region to be held in early 2024.
96. Regarding **housing**, the Committee developed a strategy to revamp international cooperation and exchanges at local level on housing through a series of initiatives and event, especially in light of the positive outcomes of the special session on Housing of the UCLG World Congress in Daejeon and of the 5 years' anniversary of the 2018 Municipalist Declaration of Cities for the Right to Adequate Housing and the Right to the City. This translates, among others, into the co-organization of the Housing Track of the 2023 Cities Summit of Americas in Denver, in particular of the session "Cities for Adequate Housing: Joining Forces Towards Local Housing Systems that Care for All". The exchanges on housing were also continued in the framework of the Barcelona Social Housing Festival.

97. Furthermore, the Committee organized an online consultation in September on **homelessness and poverty** between the with the participation of the UN Special Rapporteur on Housing and the UN Special Rapporteur on Extreme Poverty. This consultation will serve as the contribution of the organized constituency of local and regional governments to the next report to be presented at the Human Rights Council. The report will be entitled "Decriminalization of homelessness and extreme poverty," and will be published on the UN website. Poverty and Inequalities will also be at the centre of the 13th Gwangju World Human Rights Cities Forum 2023 (WHRCF), which took place from October 4-7 in Gwangju (Co-president of the Committee); in which the CISPDHR will organise the plenary session on the impact of poverty on cities; a workshop on the Charter-Agenda on Human Rights in the City; as well as a joint session with the OHCHR on Human Rights Economy.
98. The Committee has also kicked-off a collective reflection on **anti-racism** at local level, under the aegis of the City of Barcelona, involving cities such Rio de Janeiro or Malmo. This subject will be further explored in the upcoming month, including in the IOPD conference of Rio de Janeiro, in which CISIPDHR will participate as a member of the Jury of the IOPD award.

## **We Research**

### ***Capitalization of the VI GOLD Report***

99. UCLG is working to capitalize the findings of the GOLD VI Report, launched at the UCLG World Congress in October 2022 and which focuses on "Pathways to urban and territorial equality: Addressing inequalities through local transformation strategies". As part of these efforts, GOLD VI has been translated into Spanish and French, to be published, and its key messages to be echoed and debated, during the UCLG 2023 World Council. Moreover, the translated contents will also be made available in the dedicated GOLD VI website that was created to improve the report's accessibility and navigation.

### ***GOLD VII***

100. Work on the next edition of the Global Observatory on Local Democracy and Decentralization's report has started with the exploration of new approaches to knowledge management. The objective has been to leverage the GOLD VII process to produce knowledge in direct conversation with the organization's advocacy processes and the needs of the members. This entails ongoing work on the exploration of new formats and new approaches to action-oriented research co-creation processes. The research co-creation instruments that have been developed over the course of the GOLD VI process and the first edition of the Research Forum, as well as other channels, will be mobilized to articulate the exploratory work, and leverage dialogues within the different parts of the network, the membership and key partners.

### ***Research Forum***

101. The first-ever meeting of the expanded UCLG research community, articulated around the work of UCLG's Global Observatory on Local Democracy and Decentralization (GOLD) was held in the framework of the UCLG World Congress in Daejeon. Currently, the outputs of the session are guiding the next steps in the development of the Research Forum as a space in which to further develop partnerships between academia, civil society, local actors, international organizations and local and regional governments articulated around shared research and knowledge co-creation endeavours, grounded on the Pact for the Future - Daejeon Political Declaration and contributing to its unfolding.

102. Conceptualization work is being developed in a collaborative and transversal manner towards the next edition of the Research Forum.

### ***Localizing the SDGs: reporting to accelerate transformation***

103. From December 2022 to July 2023 UCLG worked to facilitate the elaboration of the seventh "Towards the Localization of the SDGs" report, on behalf of the Global Taskforce of Local and Regional Governments. The report was launched during the High-Level Political Forum (HLPF) Local and Regional Governments' Forum in July 2023 and was part of the package of reports and other SDG-related materials that were handed in to the UNSG in the framework of the UN SDG Summit in September 2023.
104. The report shows how local and regional governments are taking vital actions to promote transformative recovery processes for sustainable local development. In particular, it analyses LRGs' strategic roles in the coordination mechanisms for SDG localization, in the Voluntary National Review (VNR) processes, and in the implementation of local-level actions. It further provides recommendations at different levels to accelerate action towards the SDGs. It was based on the 200 responses to the GTF/UCLG annual global survey on the Localization of the SDGs, as well as the analysis of the Voluntary National Reviews presented at the 2023 High Level Political Forum and the VLRs and VSRs published since July 2022.
105. The report importantly focuses on SDG 11 on sustainable cities and communities and its interlinkages with other SDGs reported this year (6, 7, 9, 17) and the rest of the 2030 Agenda. The analysis of SDG 11 localization revolves around five main issues: housing and basic services (SDGs 11.1 and 11.c), [participatory urban planning](#) building on the pillars of feminism, accessibility and citizen participation (SDGs 11.2, 11.3 and 11.7), environmental sustainability and resilience (SDGs 11.5, 11.6, 11.7 and 11.b), culture (SDG 11.4) and multilevel governance and finance for sustainable development (SDG 11.a). To ensure broader dissemination of the findings in different arenas and policy debates, five stand-alone papers were produced following the issues identified above. The report and stand-alone papers' capitalization process will continue throughout the year, and will be followed by a new edition of the report in 2024.
106. 44 new Country Profiles on SDG localization were published at the 2023 HLPF, in addition to the 137 profiles published last year. They offer a brief, country-by-country analysis of the national strategies, coordination mechanisms and reporting processes related to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Most importantly, they highlight the involvement and, in many cases, the leading role of LRGs towards SDG localization.
107. Finally, in this fourth year of supporting the development of Voluntary Subnational Reviews (VSRs), eleven new VSRs were produced in 2023 and presented during the HLPF: Cambodia, Chile, Comoros, Ecuador, Flanders (Belgium), Iceland, Kenya, Romania, Rwanda, Tanzania and Zambia. The process has been supported through bilateral meetings and collective workshops co-organized by UCLG and the CIB Working Group since the beginning of the year with the support of the UCLG regional sections of Latin America, Africa and Asia-Pacific.

### ***Emergency Governance Initiative (EGI)***

108. UCLG, Metropolis and the London School of Economics - LSE Cities published the 6th Policy Brief (July 2022) and Analytics Note (April 2023) of the EGI, on local democracy in emergency contexts. These documents present insights on the democracy domains of participation, deliberation and good governance and the degree to which these are underpinned by digital era governance.

109. Coming to the end of this first phase of the Initiative, which has resulted, since 2020, in the publication of 6 Policy Briefs and 6 Analytics Notes, the definition of a new phase for the Initiative is being discussed. It will be based on the findings of the previous research process and will continue to explore them in relation to the international political agenda and the current context, with the objective of contributing to the reflections and proposals that will guide the implementation of the Pact for the Future - Daejeon Political Declaration of UCLG. In particular, it will relate to the renewal of the governance architecture, necessary for more democratic, collaborative and inclusive responses to the crises to which we will increasingly be confronted. Discussions also took place during events on the political agenda of UCLG, such as the Future Envisioning Exercises.

### ***NextGenC***

110. UCLG as a praxis partner, together with three distinguished academic institutions (ICESI University, Los Andes University and the London School of Economics and Political Science) and another praxis partner (Espacio), have joined forces to launch a new internationally embedded, comparative project focusing on Colombia, called *NextGenC*.
111. The project proposes to investigate the way youth actors engage in urban governance in intermediary cities in Colombia, how digital technology and datafication changes this engagement, and how both relate to the momentous shifts in democratic practices in the country. Acknowledging the momentous youth-led democratic and political transition of Colombia, the considerable global interest in learning from the country's city development and urban governance, and the established in-country research excellence, this proposal foregrounds a comparative case study of a selection of Colombia's as well as other international intermediary cities.
112. In this regard, UCLG will be participating mainly in two work packages. Work package 2, "Context analysis, case study selection and international reference cases", will include an analysis of three Colombian and five international case studies (in this case, led by UCLG) with an overview on technological and data innovations that have changed the agency of youth actors in urban governance and document prominent outcomes of more influential youth leadership. In the framework of Work package 8, "Impact and Engagement", UCLG will amongst others organize international workshops and sessions include international knowledge sharing and learning workshops with city officials and technical staff, and youth leaders; sessions at UCLG events with mayors and political leaders, civil society organisations and youth representatives, etc.
113. The project will contribute to the Pact for the Future - Daejeon Political Declaration inasmuch as it will contribute to regaining trust in local governance and democracy, placing all citizens and communities, particularly the youth, at the core of local decision-making, and stressing the importance of representation and participation; inclusivity and empowerment in decision-making instances. This cross-sectoral project will chiefly involve the work and engagement of the UCLG Research team, together with International Observatory on Participatory Democracy (IOPD), the UCLG Forum on Intermediary Cities and the Youth Caucus engaged in the UCLG Town Hall processes, and in articulation with the UCLG regional sections.

## **III. UCLG for Planet**

### **Ecological Transformation**

114. UCLG's efforts are geared towards implementing a more horizontal approach to Ecological Transformation, nurturing the Planet Axis of the Pact for the Future - Daejeon Political Declaration that will trigger enablers of: the rehabilitation and



restoration of ecological systems and biodiversity; mitigation of carbon emissions; adaptation to climate change; and the relationship between production and consumption models and the environment in a concerted effort to safeguard the long-term viability of the planet.

115. The key focus during the year has been the following:
  - a) The Mediterranean COP (MedCOP), by unfolding the Pact in a regionalised context.
  - b) The 3 Basins Summit, working with the sections to elevate concerns and solutions around the three largest forest basins, the Amazon(FLACMA), Congo (UCLG Africa) and Borneo-Mekong (UCLG ASPAC).
  - c) Global Covenant of Mayors, where UCLG holds a seat at the Strategic Advisory Committee, by participating through the Technical Working Groups.
116. In 2023, COP28 will focus around the dynamic of the Global Stock take, which lies at the core of the COP, and will assess the extent of global, institutional and territorial climate action.
117. As a recurring process that will be undertaken every five years, this stock take sees the **rising of Loss and Damage as a new structural pillar** that will require a mechanism to monitor the implementation of climate actions by the world community.
118. Building on the notion of loss and damages, UCLG has developed a dynamic based on informal hearings and consultations with experts and members to ensure that all voices have been considered and brought to the related institutions. Members have called for a clear positioning of UCLG towards this matter.
119. The transactional inequalities that have led to the losses and damages faced today by the territories are structural in nature. Addressing these root causes calls for a new phase of **transformative action** and for an equitable redistribution of benefits and burdens of climate, energy access and biodiversity that puts local and regional governments at the core of **climate multilevel governance**.
120. In the coming months and as we head into 2024, UCLG will see an increased impact of its advocacy efforts throughout UN processes such as UNEA-6, the UN Climate Ambition Summit, and of course the COP 28 and COP 29 processes.

## **Water and sanitation**

121. The UN 2023 Water Conference was held from 22-24 March at UN Headquarters co-hosted by the Government of Tajikistan and the Kingdom of the Netherlands, for the first time since 1977. It acted as a Midterm Comprehensive Review of the implementation of the Objectives of the International Decade for Action on Water which was declared by the United Nations General Assembly for 2018- 2028 in order to accelerate efforts towards achieving SDG 6 and other water-related goals.
122. The Conference provided an opportunity for local and regional governments, national governments, civil society and other stakeholders to ensure that their actions move towards protecting access to water and sanitation as a human right and can be scaled and replicated in the years to come. The actions and commitments stemming from the conference were compiled in the Water Action Agenda as a key outcome of the Conference.
123. UCLG, as facilitator of the Global Taskforce, mobilized a delegation of around 100 local and regional leaders and practitioners from all world regions, counting with the support of networks of the GTF including ICLEI, C40, Resilient Cities Network and Regions4.

124. UCLG, in close consultation and coordination with the members of the Global Taskforce, and with direct inputs from members, put together a Statement on Water and Sanitation, which was released on 22 March, and focusing on concrete recommendations to all actors to implement the human right on water, the governance of water, and linking with key policy priorities around water on ecological transformation, gender, resilience and peace.
125. UCLG, through its role of facilitator of the Global Taskforce, and with the support of the World Water Council and UCLG Regional Sections and members of the GTF, held a Local and Regional Governments Day. The LRG Day showcased successful experiences, challenges felt, and solutions found from local and regional governments regarding the implementation and follow up of SDG 6 and the relationship between all SDGs and water.
126. The World Organization co-organized the Special Event of the UN Water Conference together with the Global Commission on Water, part of the formal programme of the Conference, and focusing on the Economics of Water, producing direct proposals to feed the Water Action Agenda with the involvement of local and regional governance and governments.
127. The UN Secretary General held a 40 minutes meeting with the local and regional governments constituency and that UCLG was represented during the official Closing Plenary of UN Water Conference and that the constituency including UCLG-Africa held a number of side-events including on nature-based solutions, on resilience, on city-basin approach, on blue economy and on financing.
128. A Memorandum of Understanding was signed between the World Organization, the World Water Council and the Ministry of Environment of Indonesia to materialize the preparations and involvement of local and regional governments through a Special Political Process towards the 10th World Water Forum to take place in Denpasar, 18 to 24 May 2024.

## **Proximity**

129. With proximity increasingly gaining traction among urban planners and policy leaders, UCLG, alongside UN Habitat, C40 and Smart Cities World Congress, became in 2022 a founding partner of the Global Proximities Observatory, led by the Sorbonne ETI Chair, which is run by the special advisor to the Mayor of Paris Professor Carlos Moreno. The Observatory was presented in the context of the World Urban Forum 2022 in Katowice and officially launch during the Second UN Habitat Assembly in June 2023 in Nairobi.
130. Among other topics, the observatory promotes research and practice on global land-use, planning & urban design through inclusive and sustainable urbanization; local economy & services through safe and affordable housing and basic services; mobility and transportation, by promoting affordable and sustainable transport systems; social inclusion & participation through providing access to safe and inclusive green and public spaces and protect the world's cultural and natural heritage; and nature & biodiversity by reducing the adverse effects of natural disasters and reduce the environmental impacts of cities Promoting proximity-led public services, models of transport, production and consumption is crucial to preserve our planet, develop urban and territorial quality of life, harness inclusive innovation, and provide the conditions to enable human and collective development and city liveability.
131. The Global Observatory of Sustainable Proximities serves as a global go to knowledge and capacity building platform to collect information about local initiatives while supporting and promoting urban proximities at a global scale to drive large-scale change by informing urban strategies, in cities worldwide. Besides this, the Observatory is working to develop a globally applicable concept based on proximity;

related official measures and indicators that can be tailored to specific context and scaled up; and a global go-to network to support cities in implementation.

132. In addition, the Observatory is boosting international scientific research in related fields. Throughout the year, the Observatory developed its activities through four lines of work, led by four working groups composed by representatives of the four founding partners. Each of the working groups met once per quarter. In May 2023, as part of its activities the GOSP held a coordination meeting of its executive team in the context of the Biennial of Public Space of Rome, which had proximity as its central theme. The GOSP was identified as one of the ten high-impact coalitions accelerating the 2030 Agenda through localization that composed the UCLG Decalogue presented on the occasion of the 2023 SDG Summit. In November 2023, the GOSP will organize a series of sessions in the context of the Smart City Expo World Congress in Barcelona, to present some of the tools developed by the GOSP's partners.
133. On 18 December 2023, the board of the GOSP, composed by the leadership at the principal level of the four founding partners, held its first-ever annual meeting. The gathering served to take stock of the activities of the year and define the strategy and work plan for 2024.

### **Food security**

134. With food security and the right to food increasingly recognized as a political priority for the constituency, and as emphasized in the Pact for the Future - Daejeon Political Declaration, during the UCLG World Congress in October 2022, they have emerged as a key priority for the world organization and is also brought forward through a Special Envoyship.
135. UCLG is part of the Advisory Bureau and Group of the Committee on World Food Security (CFS) which is holding its 51st session in October 2023. As part of the Bureau, UCLG advises the CFS on its policy decision-making processes together with other member civil society organizations. UCLG also contributes to CFS policy debates, outcomes and decisions taken by the CFS Bureau. In 2023, UCLG contributed to the CFS' 2024-2027 work program which is set to include a specific proposal on "Localizing SDG2 and multilevel governance" and a report on urban issues and food which is set to be adopted at the CFS' 51<sup>st</sup> session.
136. UCLG is a secretariat member of the Urban Food Systems Coalition, a coalition led by the constituency together with FAO, the Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition (GAIN), and ICLEI with the aim of mainstreaming food systems policy at all levels of government by engaging in multi-stakeholder dialogue. The coalition was launched in 2023.
137. UCLG is also engaged in the political mobilization and advocacy of the constituency of local and regional governments related to food systems policy. In July, 2023, UCLG's Special Envoy for Food Systems participated within the UN Food Systems Summit Stocktaking Moment at the FAO Headquarters and brought the voice of the local and regional government constituency within the special session on urban food systems highlighting the key role local and regional governments play in fostering inclusive and sustainable food systems. The constituency is now looking towards CFS 51, and UNFCCC COP28.
138. Food has also been high on the agenda of territorial cohesion, metropolises and intermediary cities. UCLG is part of the Core Group of the FAO's Urban Food Systems Working Group made up of local governments, city networks, food policy focused organizations, among others. The Working Group's purpose is to drive commitments and engagement by urban food systems actors as well as to increase participation and give a voice to local governments in all processes related to food. UCLG is also part of an Ad-hoc Working Group on Territorial Governance led by UN Habitat, FAO,

and the OECD, established to highlight the role of local and regional governments in strengthening multilevel governance and enhancing coordination and collaboration of relevant actors to transform food systems.

## **Sendai Framework on Disaster Risk Reduction**

139. Agreed in 2015 in Sendai, Japan, the Sendai Framework provides the framework for an all-of-society and all-of-State institutions engagement in preventing and reducing disaster risks posed by both natural and man-made hazards and related environmental, technological and biological hazards and risks.
140. 2023 marks the midpoint in the Sendai implementation cycle and its Midterm Review (MTR SF). The MTR SF political consultations started in January 2023 and culminated in a High-Level Meeting convened by the President of the UN General Assembly in May 2023. The High-Level Meeting adopted a Political Declaration to renew commitments and accelerate the implementation of the Sendai Framework and inform the quadrennial review of the SDGs at the HLPF, as well as the SDGs Summit and Summit of the Future.
141. The Political Declaration contained high acknowledgement of local and regional governments, including calling on Member States to enhance enabling resources for risk governance at the local level, developing national and local disaster risk reduction financing strategies, and further multilevel coordination for disaster risk reduction, climate change, sustainable development and economic policy.
142. The High-Level Meeting provided a multistakeholder platform to reflect on the findings and recommendations to more effectively address the systemic nature of risk. The meeting allowed to realize the outcomes and goals of the Sendai Framework linked to the 2030 Agenda, the Paris Agreement and other agreements, frameworks and conventions including the migration agenda.
143. UCLG represented the constituency of local and regional governments at one of the key moments for stakeholder engagement, on the occasion of a high-level panel discussion on risk governance in the 21st century.
144. For the last two years and until last March, UCLG has co-chaired alongside UNDRR the global coordination committee of the Making Cities Resilient 2030 initiative (MCR2030).

## **IV. UCLG for Government**

### **Urban 20 under the presidency of India**

145. The Urban 20 (U20) initiative was launched in 2017, seeking to coordinate a joint position among the mayors of G20 major cities, to inform and nurture the discussions of national leaders at the G20. UCLG is, together with C40, the co-convenor of the initiative, and has an active role in supporting the U20 chairs in delivering the objectives, meetings and outcome documents.
146. During the previous editions of the initiative, U20 cities came together to deliver to the Chairs of the G20 action-oriented communiqués including their recommendations to national governments on social inclusion, climate action, and sustainable economic growth.
147. The 2023 cycle of the U20 was chaired by the city of Ahmedabad and the 2023 U20 Summit took place in Ahmedabad from 7-8 July 2023. Ahmedabad has adopted 6 key priority areas for this year's U20 cycle: Encouraging Environmentally

Responsible Behaviours, Ensuring Water Security, Accelerating Climate Finance, Championing Local Identity, Reinventing Frameworks for Planning and governance, and Catalysing Digital Urban Futures. The U20's priorities are directly linked to the G20 India's priorities which are: Technological Transformation & Digital Public Infrastructure; Women-led Development; Multilateral Institutions for the 23rd century & 3Fs - Food, Fuel and Fertilisers; Accelerating Progress on the SDGs, particularly on Health and Education; LIFE Green Development, Climate finance; Accelerated, Inclusive & Resilient Growth.

148. Particular importance throughout the cycle was given to urbanization, health and education through the achievement of the SDGs, city disaster risk reduction and climate finance. The U20 Summit included the official presentation of the U20 Communique to the Minister of Housing and Urban Affairs of India and the G20 Indian Sherpa and included the participation of mayors from around the world, partners and G20 engagement groups. With regard to climate finance, a working group was formed led by the cities of Buenos Aires and Rio de Janeiro and, within the context of the UN SDG Summit and Climate Ambition Summit, a statement on climate finance was presented to identify the most common challenges that prevent U20 cities, especially in the Global South, from accessing finance, opportunities for investment, and formulate solutions and specific recommendations for multilateral development bank reform. The U20 will continue with its advocacy in 2024 which will see the G20 presidency with Brazil and the U20 chairship with a Brazilian City.

### **High-Level Political Forum and the SDG Summit: Spaces for SDG Localization**

149. The 2023 High-level Political Forum (HLPF) was held from 10-19 July 2023, under the theme "Accelerating the recovery from the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) and the full implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development at all levels". Five Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) were in review this year: 6 on clean water and sanitation, 7 on affordable and clean energy, 9 on industry, innovation and infrastructure, 11 on sustainable cities and communities, and 17 on partnerships for the Goals.
150. At the 2023 HLPF, the Global Taskforce launched the constituency's report to the High-Level Political Forum and presented it during the Local and Regional Governments Day, a dedicated event of the constituency held within the UN Headquarters with participation from local and regional governments, UN Agencies and partners. The flagship report focused on all SDGs in review this year analyzed from a local and regional government perspective through the lens of SDG11.
151. Furthermore, to accelerate the commitments made by the constituency, local and regional governments worldwide are developing high-impact policies that localize the 2030 Agenda and will serve as a blueprint to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. They were gathered within the platform High-Level Localization Policies to Close the Gap, powered by UCLG on behalf of the Global Taskforce of Local and Regional Governments. The platform allowed to showcase how local and regional governments worldwide are accelerating the commitments made through High-Level Localization Policies to Close the Gap.
152. In 2023, the 2030 Agenda entered its year of mid-term revision culminating at the SDG Summit on 19 and 20 September in the framework of the United Nations General Assembly. Within this context, the United Nations is viewing the 2023 HLPF as a preparatory meeting leading up to the SDG Summit and the SDG Summit as a meeting contributing towards the UN Summit of the Future in 2024 and finally on to the World Social Summit in 2025.
153. The Local and Regional Governments Forum, the key political moment of the constituency within the HLPF, jointly organized by the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA), UCLG and the Global Taskforce of LRGs, the UN Human

Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat), the UN Development Programme (UNDP), and Local 2030 took place on 12 July, 2023 at the United Nations Headquarters. The Forum illustrated the importance of localizing action and partnerships among spheres of government and stakeholders towards achieving the SDGs under review in 2023 with a special focus on SDG 11, as the SDG for the world, touching upon all SDGs.

154. The Local and Regional Governments Forum gathered over 80 local and regional leaders, and over 120 elected officials for the SDG Summit at the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA), as an official part of the intergovernmental process, to ensure localization and the role of local and regional governments in the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) were front and center of the discussions.
155. This effort included the SDG Action Weekend of the SDG Summit with the holding of the Local and Regional Governments Forum. The Forum was the stage to present the [statement](#) of the Global Taskforce to the SDG Summit Political Declaration, together with the [UCLG Decalogue](#) of High-Impact Coalitions aimed at scaling-up action with global impact, the presentation of the seven years of the “Towards the Localization of the SDGs”, an unparalleled exercise of reporting on the state of Localization worldwide.
156. The SDG Summit offered a space for local and regional governments in the formal session of the Summit at the UN General Assembly, with President of UCLG Carolina Cosse setting the scene of the opening day of the Summit in a conversation with Mia Mottley, Prime Minister of Barbados and co-Chair of the Sustainable Development Goals Advocates group, and Ajay Banga, World Bank President. With the SDG Summit political declaration making strong emphasis on accelerated action for the SDGs through facilitating partnership with all actors towards the SDGs, ambitious social and climate action, and international financial system reform, the conversation was a relevant moment for our constituency, bringing together an elected local and regional government official with two of the most relevant actors dealing with the challenges and opportunities stemming from the Political Declaration, and ahead of the important meeting between the World Bank and the IMF in October 2023, which the UNSG is calling for not to be “business as usual”.
157. As a prelude, the discussion in the General Assembly evolved around the importance of addressing the six key SDG transitions — food, energy, digitalization, education, social protection and jobs, and biodiversity — with more efficient, affordable and enabling funding, easing the access to financing for the SDGs by aligning the mission of MDBs with the 2030 Agenda, accelerating global debt restructuring so it’s not an unbearable burden for LDC countries, and translating the commitments made in the political declaration into concrete policies on the ground.
158. Also, within the framework of UNGA78 High-level Week, our constituency had an active engagement at the UN Climate Ambition Summit, with high moment interventions by several Mayors representing the networks and the organized constituency, including at the opening plenary.

### **Localizing the SDGs: reporting to accelerate transformation**

159. UCLG facilitated the elaboration of the seventh “Towards the Localization of the SDGs” report, on behalf of the Global Taskforce of Local and Regional Governments. The report will be launched during the High-Level Political Forum (HLPF) Local and Regional Governments’ Forum in July 2023 and will be part of the package of reports and other SDG-related materials that will be handed in to the UNSG in the framework of the UN SDG Summit in September 2023.

160. The report shows how local and regional governments are taking vital actions to promote transformative recovery processes for sustainable local development. In particular, it analyzes LRGs' strategic roles in the coordination mechanisms for SDG localization, in the Voluntary National Review (VNR) processes, and in the implementation of local-level actions. It further provides recommendations at different levels to accelerate action towards the SDGs. It will be based on the responses to the GTF/UCLG annual global survey on the Localization of the SDGs, as well as the analysis of the Voluntary National Reviews to be presented at the 2023 High Level Political Forum and the VLRs and VSRs published since July 2022. A more in-depth summary of the Report can be found under the "We research" title.
161. The SDG Summit offered a moment to bring the unparalleled exercise on reporting to the Summit, with the seven *Towards the localization of the SDGs* reports highlighted, showing the seven years of subnational reporting.

### **New Urban Agenda**

162. The Habitat Assembly is the universal body composed of the 193 Member States of the United Nations and that is convened every four years by UN-Habitat. The Second Habitat Assembly was held in Nairobi, from 5 to 9 June 2023.
163. The Second Habitat Assembly saw an increasing part of the programme dedicated to SDG Localization, Financing and included for the first time the World Assembly of Local and Regional Governments as part of the official programme.
164. For the first time in a Habitat Assembly, the World Assembly of Local and Regional Governments convened for a formal session. The deliberations focused on the challenges of the implementation of SDG11 and the New Urban Agenda, and the enhancement of the participation of local and regional governments and other stakeholders in the renewed governance structure of the United Nations, and of UN-Habitat in particular, building on the recommendations of Habitat III.
165. The presidency of UCLG and representatives from the Global Taskforce were engaged in the Plenary Sessions of the UN Habitat Assembly, as well as in the thematic sessions on housing; the High-Level Interactive Strategic Dialogues, and other critical sessions of the UNHA.
166. A resolution was adopted focusing on the localization of the SDGs which was, in itself, is a big step towards recognizing localization as the necessary process of implementing the SDGs in different territories, taking into account their specific contexts.
167. While the resolution is a step forward, it only partially meets the expectations of our constituency. It does not recall the historical and current role played by city networks in promoting localization, understood as a political process ranging from decision-making to monitoring and reporting, and acting as a testament of the political will of local and regional governments to meet the Goals.
168. The critical importance of the New Urban Agenda as catalyzer of the implementation of all other global agendas still needs to be further emphasized to meet its potential. We will therefore continue to advocate for renewing multilateralism and multilevel governance, to make them more inclusive and representative, based on decentralization and subsidiarity, and therefore fit for purpose for the challenges and opportunities lying ahead.

## Global Partnership on Effective Development Cooperation

169. In October 2022, the UCLG World Council adopted the new Policy Paper on Development Cooperation. This Policy Paper, prepared by UCLG Working Group on Capacity Institutional Building, demonstrates the new trends and the new role of local and regional governments in development cooperation. The Policy Paper includes a series of recommendations addressed to the international community, development agencies and banks and partners of local and regional governments for more effective development cooperation policies. The recommendations of the Policy Paper were effectively transmitted to the international community during the 3rd High-Level Meeting on Development Cooperation Effectiveness that took place on 12-14 December.
170. UCLG, as representative of local and regional governments in the Global Partnership on Development Cooperation Effectiveness, together with ORU-Fogar, coordinated the presence of local and regional governments towards the 3rd High-Level Meeting on Development Cooperation Effectiveness, that was hosted by the Government of Switzerland and the Chairs of the GPEDC.
171. The Mayor of Oss, the Deputy Mayor of Libreville, the Secretary General of EALGA, the Secretary General of Metropolis and UCLG World Secretariat constituted the delegation of local and regional governments to the High-Level Summit. Together with ORU-FOGAR, UCLG held a special spotlight session focusing on local and regional monitoring and finance gaps at local and regional levels.

## The Agenda for Peace

172. After the Third World Forum on Cities and Territories of Peace held in 2021, UCLG has taken a stronger role hosting the Secretariat of the Forum. The Fourth edition of the **World Forum on Cities and Territories of Peace** took place under the auspices of Bogotá in 2023.
173. Forum of Bogotá has presented the thematic axes of the fourth World Forum:
  - a) Territorial Peace
  - b) Environmental Peace
  - c) Women, Peace and Security
  - d) Transitions to citizenships of peace
  - e) A new contract for care
174. The Forum in Bogotá gathered over 200 speakers in two days of debates. The aspect of city and transformative diplomacy was present throughout the entirety of the Forum, which opened with a message by Amina Mohammed, Deputy Secretary-General of the United Nations praising the work of local and regional governments and the development of peacebuilding initiatives between local and regional governments.
175. With the mandate adopted from the Pact for the Future - Daejeon Political Declaration and building on its own agenda on peacebuilding and city diplomacy, UCLG led some of the key sessions of the Forum. The opening plenary took the form of a **UCLG Municipal Peace Talks**, involving the UCLG Presidency and international experts to bring local diplomacy to the forefront of the Forum. The session included, as well, representatives of national governments such as Special Representative for Subnational Diplomacy Nina Hachigian discussed the role of local governments in peacebuilding, and the transformations needed at the national and supranational levels to develop a more peaceful world.
176. The central plenaries of the Forum were dedicated to **Care** and the role of feminism and caring policies in peacebuilding. Together with Claudia López, Mayor of Bogotá



and UCLG Vice President, the sessions gathered President of UCLG Carolina Cosse, Vice President of UCLG Carola Gunnarsson, and Vice-President for the Forum of Regions and Prefect of Pichincha Paola Pabón, as well as other key local and regional leaders, who shared strategies for including marginalized populations, strengthening citizen participation, and overall ensuring that local peace is built through the delivery of basic services.

177. UCLG was also a co-organiser a number of sessions, such as the 'Laboratory 1: Towards feminist municipalism: institutionalization of women's rights and eradication of gender-based violence' alongside the Iberoamerican Forum of Women Mayors and Elected officials, and the UN Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women and Girls.
178. The **UCLG Peace Prize** was awarded to the city of Palmira in 2022 at the UCLG World Summit of Local and Regional Leaders. Palmira, as an awardee of the Prize, was involved in the World Forum on Cities and Territories of Peace, bridging two key axes of the UCLG Peace Agenda.
179. The Closing of the Cities and Territories of Peace Forum provided an opportunity to pass the legacy, and the baton of the Forum, between the city of Bogota and the city of Montevideo, who will host the Forum in 2025. The mayors of Bogota, Claudia Lopez, and Montevideo, Carolina Cosse, discussed the conclusions of the Forum, the importance of keeping care at the center of peace-building cities. Both noted the importance of continuing to build strong institutions, built on the collective action and solidarity of communities, to be able to sign peace between people, for the planet, and with governments.
180. UCLG is continuing building on our linkages with the UN Alliance of Civilizations, after being engaged in the Group of Friends meeting in 2022, building on our relationship with Special Representative Miguel Ángel Moratinos.

## **Local Finance**

181. At the 2022 UCLG World Congress, the special session on finance co-organized by UCLG and its consultation mechanism on local finance, FMDV, allowed us to take stock of the progress achieved since the renewal of the strategy on localizing financing for The World Observatory on Subnational Government Finance and Investment (SNG WOFI) had its Third Edition published at an official international conference co-organized by UCLG and OECD in Paris on 24 October 2022.
182. With 135 countries covered, the SNG WOFI is now recognized as the largest international knowledge repository on subnational government structure and finance and provides systematized information and data on subnational expenditure, investment, revenue and debt. The 4th Steering Committee of the SNG WOFI, planned for January 2024 will serve to bring together and commit the long-standing and new partners, as well as other stakeholders and organisations that make use of the research provided by the SNG WOFI to set the path towards the next edition.
183. The signature of a new partnership in 2023 between UCLG and the French Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs (MEAE) has paved the way for a new collaboration allowing to launch a call for projects on May 17th to develop decentralized cooperation in the field of local finances between French LRGs and their partners from around the world. This initiative aims at improving their respective local fiscal space and financing environment. The partnership with the MEAE has also served to initiate the translations of some products and outputs of the SNG WOFI, an effort which is expected to facilitate and amplify the dissemination of the work and results of the Observatory to a wider public from different regions.
184. At the "Finance and Economy" Future Envisioning Exercise in May and in the following steps with the output "Vision Document", the Future Envisioning Exercise of the

Executive Bureau in Brussels in June and the consequent renovation of the new Policy Councils including that of “Opportunities for All: Redefining Finance and Economies of Equality”, numerous exemplary case studies and experiences from members as well as inputs from high-impact partnerships including civil society were shared, valued in the debate and were involved in compiling key messages to create a guiding path for local finance for the year.

185. UCLG, as a co-convenor of the U20 has followed and taken part in the creation of the U20 Climate Finance Working Group led by the cities of Buenos Aires and São Paulo, acknowledging the fact that accelerating climate financing for local and regional governments is a pressing local finance issue, high on the international agenda and in that of the constituency, partners and city networks. The working group, allied with its satellite Advisory Partners that include the FMDV, consultation mechanism of UCLG, the GCoM, CCFLA and the OECD, has prepared a Statement announced and divulged at the New York Climate Week in September 2023, summarizing the principle asks from the U20 cities and the constituency to national governments and international finance institutions that could help accelerate and channel additional financing opportunities for local and regional governments to implement adaptation, mitigation and other actions for ecological transitions in the face of climate change.
186. For the first International Innovation Awards on Urban Climate Finance, the first half of the year allowed for the development of a website, flyers and communication materials, the constitution of a jury, work on the selection criteria and on a questionnaire for application, by the multi-stakeholder partnership led by the FMDV and of which UCLG is a part of alongside the French Agency for Ecological Transition (ADEME) and the French Ministry of Ecological Transition and Territorial Cohesion (MTECT). The call for proposals is planned for May 2024 to capitalize and gain momentum after one year of building up the strategy and the dissemination, in order to start in a timely moment and with a well matured pioneer initiative.
187. The Third International Conference and High-Level Policy Dialogue of the Malaga Global Coalition for Municipal Finance entitled “Accelerating Progress Towards a Financial Ecosystem that Works for Cities, Local and Regional Governments” will be held on October 5 and 6. It is organized by the United Nations Capital Development Fund (UNCDF) and UCLG in collaboration with the FMDV, and hosted by the Municipality of Málaga. The objective of this event is to showcase innovative approaches, mechanisms and instruments developed or implemented by Coalition members and discuss concrete solutions to deepen progress towards a financial ecosystem that speeds up inclusive development through local and regional governments.
188. The International Municipal Investment Fund Technical Assistance Facility (IMIF-TAF) that emanated from the Malaga Global Coalition in 2018 aims to facilitate and channel capital investment for cities and regions through technical support on the requirements of private investors. The IMIF TAF has been consolidating its standard operation procedures, the application questionnaire, selection mechanism and criteria for projects, as well as the tripartite work and processes among the manager UNCDF, supported by UCLG and its consultation mechanism FMDV.

### **Financing care systems**

189. Local and regional governments are strengthening worldwide local care systems that redistribute care work and make it inclusive and accessible to all. This (re)prioritization of care in local political agendas puts at the forefront the changes needed for a new economy of care that, beyond the recognition of unpaid and informal care work, paradigmatically reconsiders local public services as commons and their provision as central in the fostering of caring societies.

190. Advancing a feminist agenda driven by the right to the city and equality, local development plans and policies articulated around care are revitalizing rights-based public service provision, and are promoting a new social contract to guarantee equal opportunities for all, empower local communities, and make the wellbeing of people and planet the highest priority. Since this needs to be based on shift in what is prioritized in local and urban finance, research and advocacy work will be conducted on what are the finance mechanisms necessary for this development model to develop and be scaled up.
191. This will first be based on the analysis of a set of 10 cities, metropolises and regions worldwide illustrating recent changes in the role of urban regions in national economic growth. Rather than appealing for financial resources, this proposed work with UCLG Ubuntu Advisor Aromar Revi (Indian Institute for Human Settlements) and Michael Cohen (The New School), will focus on the financial enabling environment as well as the potential costs and benefits of a care-centered model for development, with the aim of opening new reflections on the economic and financial systems needed and the role of local public service provision.

### **Participatory Democracy**

192. The International Observatory on Participatory Democracy (IOPD), as a consultation mechanism for local democracy and participatory governance of UCLG, has a work plan organized around its annual conference, the best practices award and different activities with the UCLG work plan.
193. In the first months of the year, UCLG disseminated the work carried out at the 21st Conference that took place from 7 to 10 December 2022 in the city of Grenoble. Both the political declaration adopted and the debates have been published and disseminated. On the other hand, and based on the debates of the General Assembly, the steering committee of the Observatory has been renewed with the incorporation of Bogota, the Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions (SALAR) and São Paulo.
194. With a view to the 2023 Conference, which will take place from 6 to 8 November in Rio de Janeiro, the organizing committee has been set up with the teams of the Municipality of Rio de Janeiro and the Technical Secretariat of the IOPD. The theme will be "Participatory Democracy for Diverse, Inclusive and Transparent Cities" and will seek to deepen the implementation of SDG 11 and 16, as well as the aspects of the Pact for the Future - Daejeon Political Declaration linked to local democracy and rebuilding trust.
195. A series of thematic virtual sessions are being planned to introduce the themes of the conference including Towards women's political participation in all its diversity with representatives of local governments, civil society and experts on the issues addressed.
196. As for the IOPD Best Practice Award for Citizen Participation, in 2023 the technical secretariat launched the seventeenth edition with the categories on deliberation, decision and citizen empowerment; and a second category on the size of the municipalities or regional governments that apply. This year a record was set up with **149 nominations** from 35 countries, with **40 finalists** selected.
197. The 40 finalists are evaluated by a jury of experts and an open vote will take place between 1 and 12 September. The results of the award will be announced at the IOPD Conference in Rio de Janeiro on 7 November, 2023.
198. The technical secretariat participated in the Global Forum on Modern Direct Democracy 2023 that took place in Mexico City from 1 to 4 March and in the World Summit of Democratic Cities organized in Merida on 5 and 6 March. In these

developments, progress has been made in strategic alliances to implement the political agenda and concrete projects of the Observatory.

199. The 2023 IOPD conference will take place in the city of Rio de Janeiro from 6 to 8 November. Throughout these past months, the IOPD's secretariat has been collaborating with the Rio de Janeiro's Municipality to prepare this event. The website of the event is set up by the IOPD Secretariat and some of the sessions., like the general assembly and the award ceremony will also be facilitated by the team. We are working permanently and virtually to advance in the preparation of the event.

## **We Learn**

200. In 2023, the collaboration with the Human Mobility agenda continued. The peer Learning note and findings on "Migration and displacement amidst crisis "are documented and available in English and Spanish. The MOOC based on this peer learning process during the MC2CM project counts on more than 200 participants so far. Continued methodological support to exchanges among cities is piloted with empirical methodologies, such as creative storytelling and policy development exercises.
201. The first fully accessible online course on #CitiesForAll was launched on May 18, during the International Accessibility Day.
202. Under leadership of the city of Seoul, in collaboration with Metropolis and UCLG-ASPAC, a virtual Peer Learning on Caring Cities "leaving no one behind and working with the socially neglected" is currently prepared to be implemented in June 2023, using the principle of the Global Compact on Inclusive and Accessible cities as guide.
203. In the LearningwithUCLG platform, a live session webinar supported the two online courses on Culture (Gender and Climate Change, developed by the Committee on Culture), with webinars gathering participants. The MOOCs on Local Economic Development (developed by the Committee on Local Economic and Social Development) were updated, and a webinar is scheduled for fall 2023.

## **Learning Forum**

204. The Learning Forum has been gathering in Daejeon and the outcomes and expectations are continuously updated on the website. The Forum provides opportunities for members to consult and align work plans and strategies of modules, tools and learning activities. Cooperation and teamwork spans from supporting and adaptation of learning modules, to supporting and advising partnerships for enhanced learning, members connecting with an increasing number of focal points or programmes for learning in the regional sections. The virtual learning activities strengthened the Learning Forum and possibilities for members into virtual learning activities with global outreach.
205. The Learning Forum allowed expert inspiration for networks. For a deeper reflection on methodologies, the OECD driven platform EIP/OECD made a study on the peer learning modalities as part of development cooperation and chose UCLG's contribution to the MC2CM project on migration to reflect on impacts and suggest monitoring mechanisms. Also this year, UCLG will collaborate with the UNESCO Learning cities network to review practices and develop conceptual knowledge.
206. Finally, the Learning team has been increasingly developing tailor made methodologies for UCLG gathering. Besides the Learning activities, also supporting the strategy, in particular during the UCLG Retreat and the Future Envisioning Exercises. The CIB Meeting in Marrakech saw joint reflection for decentralized cooperation and co-creation, with the CIB knowledge gender hub being a solid basis for future tool development. A Support strategy to learn from Local4Action HUBs is

in development, a pilot on gender learning envisaged with Barcelona provincial council.

### ***Learning tools for resilience, online courses and modules***

207. The partnership with INTERLACE connects Latin American and European municipalities and networks, such as Climate Alliance, Ecologic, Humboldt Foundation and FLACMA to develop knowledge and learning tools around Nature-Based Solutions. This year, UCLG has been preparing learning activities around green gentrification (virtual) and nature-based restoration (Chemnitz), and reached out to Spanish cities, such as Lleida. UCLG will lead a Peer Learning event in Envigado, Colombia, in November 2023.
208. A Peer learning on storm water management was carried out in Cologne supporting the German Association, with Engagement Global and Connective cities. The event particularly allowed African and German city practitioners to form peer groups that now look into continued cooperation through connective cities or GIZ.
209. The resilience module continues the successful path of implementation, in partnership with other networks, as the ongoing roll out with CIDEU and the UCLG Committee on Urban Strategic Planning.
210. Also in cooperation with the Committee on Urban Strategic Planning and UCLG-Africa, building on the findings of GOLD 6, a joint activity on Evidence-based strategies is in preparation with the UK Universities network "Tomorrow Cities".
211. The Modules on Resilience and the localization of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction continue to be rolled out successfully together with the UCLG regional sections, such as the learning event during the UCLG-MEWA Council meeting in June 2023 in Tranzon, Türkiye.
212. In this sense, UCLG is discussing how to expand the collaboration with UNDRR and UN-Habitat for the Making Cities Resilient 2030 initiative.
213. The online course on Localizing the SDG developed between UCLG and the Provincial Council of Barcelona continues with its 5th edition, after certifying 75 new trainers in 2022. The course, based on the first three learning modules for localizing the SDGs, has been updated with new cases from cities, updates on VLRs, as well as the important role of LRGs in the HLPF.
214. New MOOCs on VLR and VSR have been launched and are co-managed by colleagues of CIB and UCLG Research team. As in all online courses, the MOOCs are supported by live sessions, providing opportunities for interaction with the staff of the UCLG World Secretariat, CIB members and UCLG Regional Sections.
215. The Learning Module 4 on the Localization of the SDGs, with a focus on decentralized cooperation and the SDGs, has also been multiplying trainers, and the regional section roll out continues with virtual short trainings during the UCLG-Eurasia Council meeting, and preparation for a new first of roll out with FCM in 2023.
216. The Module 4 was also adapted with contents and best practices into a new moderated online course, organized with Platforma on the #LearningWithUCLG platform, from June to August 2023. The online course will select 105 participants in 3 courses (English, French and Spanish), with more than 65 teaching hours, new videos and live webinars, and was also held for the first time in Arab, together with UCLG MEWA, Amman and UN-Habitat.
217. In partnership with UN-Habitat, UNECE and UNDESA, UCLG is refining complementary training tools for recovery in Eastern Europe. The Module 2 is currently updated with extensive feedback of the project partners (UN DA). This is in response to maximizing

the value of the VLR in urban and strategic planning and budgeting, and in new opportunities developed by initiatives like the observatory of proximity. The team looks for cities that pilot that deeper relation between continuous VLR related reporting and management.

### **Member-driven initiatives: The Local4Action HUBs Facility**

218. The Local4Action HUBs initiative aims to recognize and amplify high-impact policies that, through local action, are driving global transformation and localizing the SDGs. It connects, showcases and further enables the role of local and regional governments and their associations to accelerate the global development agendas and renew the social contract from the bottom-up through the power of collective action, shared ownership, and international cooperation.
219. The World Secretariat led an intensive outreach strategy with UCLG sections, consultation mechanisms, and the broader membership of the Organization, resulting in a record response of **27 proposals received**.
220. In addition to the approach based on the local-global connection of the different global agendas and in particular the 2030 Agenda, the strategy of the 2023 call was also based on an approach to encourage the identification of High-Impact Localization Policies, initiatives and strategies that would show progress in the effective implementation of the Pact for the Future - Daejeon Political Declaration – Daejeon Political Declaration.
221. Building on the scaling up strategy presented at the UCLG Executive Bureau in 2023 in Brussels, the Local4Action HUBs programme has completed a renewed call for proposals that allowed it to identify **seven new Local4Action HUBs**, bringing the overall number of **20 active Local4Action HUBs**.
222. In the ongoing process, teams are actively working with the following LRGs and LGAs to develop key initiatives as Work is ongoing around potential new Local4Action HUBs in the months to come:
  - a) Catbalogan City
  - b) Association of Palestinian Local Authorities (APLA)
  - c) City Government of Baguio
  - d) San Pedro Garza García
  - e) Sao Paulo
  - f) Union of Cities and Municipalities of Côte d'Ivoire (UVICOCI)
223. Together with the current and projected Local4Action HUBs, an individualized assessment is taking place to identify the next steps of the Local4ActionHUBs that have undergone various editions. The goal is to carry on the legacy of some of the original Local4Action HUBs, under the name **Local4Action HUBs 2.0**.

### **The Local4Action HUB Facility**

224. In the wake of the SDG Summit, held during the 78th UN General Assembly and as part of the efforts to advance the 2030 Agenda rescue plan, the next phase of the initiative aims to bolster and transform it into the **Local4Action HUB Facility**. The goal is to harness collective potential and accumulated knowledge to accelerate the local implementation of the 2030 Agenda by means of both localizing the global goals and unfolding the UCLG Pact for the Future of Humanity – Daejeon Political Declaration.
225. The Local4Action HUB Facility will hence expand and go beyond the HUBs action to evolve into collective spaces allowing to build and renew strategic partnerships, co-

create knowledge, and elevate our members' visions. The facility will gather the high-impact localization policies (the HUBs) and transform our alliances and coalitions through joint advocacy, learning and research.

## V. We Meet: Our Statutory Gatherings

### The UCLG Retreat: From Vision to Collective Action

226. Over 300 local leaders and partners met in Barcelona, in the framework of the UCLG Retreat in 2023, to set the stage for the first year of the unfolding of the Pact for the Future through the power of collective action, empowerment, shared ownership, co-creation, international cooperation and solidarity.
227. The UCLG Retreat served as a moment to open the “kitchen” of the World Organization, building on the concept of the “Power of We”, the collective effort to see, understand, and act on global issues in their totality. Through the commitment to the Power of We, the UCLG Reterat aimed to open the concept of the revolutions of care and the revolution of emotions to the totality of the World Organization.
228. The unfolding of the Pact took centre stage during the week of the Retreat, with UCLG Sections, Working Groups, Committees, and partners from the civil society such as **Adriana Allen**, President of the Habitat International Coalition, **Mami Mizutori**, Special Representative of the UN Secretary General for Disaster Risk Reduction and Head of the UN Office of Disaster Risk Reduction, **Lorena Zarate**, Global Platform for the Right to the City, **Katy Rubin**, Representative of the Legislative Theater, **Andrea Ferrari Bravo**, Local Authorities Team Leader for the European Commission, and representatives from the UBUNTU Advisory Panel brought to the table the need to strengthen local resilience, work as a feminist municipal movement to build a true care movement, and bring participatory approaches to the local level to ensure that the civil society are mainstreamed in UCLG Processes.
229. One of the key exercises held during the Retreat was the first of the **Future Envisioning Exercises**, which would also be held later in the year and in which the four entry points of the Pact for the Future – Daejeon Political Declaration (Commons, Finance, Trust, Rebuilding Governance Architecture) were presented through Sherpas. The exercise aimed at placing these key issues at the heart of the policymaking of UCLG during the year. The exercise discussed why and how these four entry points are critical to the municipal movement, including the need to finance the commons to ensure their protection; rebuilding trust by encouraging difficult conversations between different partners; rebuilding governance architecture by building dialogue among spheres of government and avoiding working in siloes; and transforming finance not just in terms of which sphere of government receives the funds, but more importantly **what** we fund and **who** are the communities and ecosystems that can benefit from this structure.
230. The issue of trust was further explored in a conversation in which journalists and mayors, including President of UCLG **Carolina Cosse** and UCLG Special Envoy for the New Urban Agenda **Carlos Martínez**, engaged in a debate with journalists on how to communicate urban issues, and how to rebuild trust between institutions and communities.
231. The Secretaries General of the Global Taskforce of Local and Regional Governments met at the Annual Meeting of the Global Taskforce in the framework of the UCLG Retreat to review the roadmap for the year and, most importantly, the joint strategy to present ourselves ahead of the SDG Summit and other events, ensuring we call for a seat at the global table. Among others, the GTF Meeting addressed the role of the constituency at the HLPF and SDG Summit, the UN Water Conference, the UN-Habitat Assembly, the Urban20 and Urban7, and COP28. Local multilateralism took

the stage in the meeting, with the representatives of the GTF highlighting the need to harness the upcoming SDG Summit as a critical moment for the constituency to reinforce its presence in decision-making mechanisms and bringing the voice of communities to the forefront.

### **Meeting of the Presidency in the framework of the Retreat**

232. The Presidency of UCLG met in the framework of the Retreat to discuss, among other key issues, the strategy of the Organization ahead of the Summit of the Future, and present the UCLG Executive Bureau and Culture Summit, with representatives from Brussels and Dublin respectively. Further, the meeting included a moment to discuss the renewal of the Policy Councils, whose new thematic and composition would be further presented in the Executive Bureau, and adopted in the World Council.
233. The Presidency meeting further saw the adoption of two Declarations: A Call to Peace and Solidarity, adopted one year after the call issued in 2022 and one year after the start of the war on Ukraine, in which the World Organization issued support to local and regional governments and communities that were under conflict. The World Organization further reiterated its call of support for the people affected by the earthquake in Türkiye.

### **Meeting of the UCLG Standing Committee on Gender Equality**

234. The Standing Committee on Gender Equality of UCLG met in September 2023 to discuss the next steps of the Feminist Municipal Movement, including the key issues that the World Organization needs to tackle both in its advocacy, as well as internally. Violence against women, the role of the media and women in local governments, and **sorority** were highlighted as key issues, and the need to scale-up UCLG Women to promote learning and advocacy, the need to link the work of the Committee and the Policy Councils and, ultimately, to strengthen the Committee itself and to visibilize the women who are spokespersons is critical to ensure its recommendations strengthen the gender equality agenda of the World Organization.
235. Chaired by **Fatimetou Abdel Malick**, Chair of the UCLG Standing Committee on Gender Equality and UCLG Co-President, the meeting brought to the table the need to ensure the participation of women within UCLG, ensuring thus that the care agenda of the World Organization is also one that is maintained in its internal work.

### **Online meeting of the Vice Presidency**

236. In October 2023, the **first meeting of the Vice Presidency** took place to share the work priorities from the perspectives of the UCLG Sections, and working to align the work of the organization. The meeting addressed, among other key issues, the roles that the Vice Presidency will take in the implementation of the Pact and, fundamentally, when it comes to the outreach of the movement (including but not limited to regional outreach and membership campaigns), as well as exploring the synergies between the regional sections.

### **Local and Regional Governments driving high-impact actions to accelerate common goals: The UCLG Executive Bureau**

237. Under the theme "Local and Regional Governments driving high-impact actions to accelerate common goals", the Executive Bureau met in Brussels on 12-15 June in a hybrid format, in the framework of the Brussels Urban Summit. The Summit also brought together the 14th Metropolis Congress, the Eurocities Annual Conference and the 6th OECD Champion Mayors Summit for Inclusive Growth.



238. The meetings of the Executive Bureau gathered around **300 participants**, among whom 200 attended in-person. The gatherings discussed the unfolding strategy of the Pact for the Future – Daejeon Political Declaration, the renewal of the UCLG Policy Councils and the Future Envisioning Exercises, the fifth edition of which took place as political debate of the Executive Bureau.
239. The learnings and aspirations shared throughout the four exercises reached the heart of the Organization and were debated, interpreted and expanded, in particular through an open conversation with journalists and civil society. The session in Brussels allowed to share the main outcomes, including gaps and opportunities, that the previous exercises brought to the table of our constituency.
240. The UCLG Executive Bureau and the Brussels Urban Summit brought together key partners for our World Organization, such as Marlene Holzner, Head of Unit at the Directorate-General for International Partnerships of the European Commission; Thembisile Nkadimeng, Minister of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs of South Africa and Honorary Co-President of UCLG; Greg Munro, Director of Cities Alliance; Alicia Londoño, Human Rights 75 Secretariat at the Office of the United Nations High-Commissioner for Human Rights; Diane Keita, Deputy Executive Director of the UN Population Fund; Raf Tuts, Director of the Global Solutions Division of UN-Habitat; Daniel Perell, Chair of the Coalition for the United Nations We Need; Jessica Bridger, Journalist and Urbanist; Tracy Metz, Journalist at John Adams Institute; Aitor Hernández-Morales, Reporter for POLITICO; and Tim Weber, Executive Director of Edelman.
241. The UCLG Executive Bureau issued a call stating that UCLG unreservedly condemns any law or act that incites discrimination, inequality, hatred, or any initiative that goes against human rights in any way.

### **Renewing the UCLG Policy Councils to deliver the Pact for the Future – Daejeon Political Declaration**

242. After agreeing in Daejeon to renew the UCLG Policy Councils and make sure the Organization delivers the commitments of the Pact for the Future – Daejeon Political Declaration, members of the Executive Bureau agreed to the initial proposal aiming to include representatives of the international organized civil society, and to take inspiration from the enablers of the Pact, which were also the object of the first Future Envisioning Exercises:
- a) Right to the City and Inclusive Territories would become: Right to the City: Reclaiming the Commons
  - b) Opportunities for All, Culture and City Diplomacy: Keys to Sustainable Development and Peace would become: Opportunities for All: Redefining Finance and Economies of Equality
  - c) Territorial Multilevel Governance and Sustainable Financing would become Multilevel Governance: Regaining Trust
  - d) Safer, Resilient and Sustainable Cities, Capable of Facing Crises would become Resilient and Regenerative Territories: Renaturing
243. The renewed Policy Councils will gather at the UCLG World Council in Konya, setting up the second stage of these policymaking mechanisms and the unfolding of the Pact.

### **World Forum on Intermediary Cities**

244. The Intermediary Cities Forum has been preparing the new strategy towards the World Forum of Intermediary Cities to be held in Cuenca, Ecuador in 2024. This UCLG consultation mechanism has always been powered by the voices and hearings from the Local Governments. The strategy chosen by the president of the Forum has been

to have different regional hearings supported by the UCLG Sections, as it has been the case when launching the first World Forum in Chefchaouen in 2018. For its presidency, taking back the spirit of the Forum after COVID-19 goes through listening and mobilizing the intermediary cities and their leaders around the world, with key global agendas and challenges considered for each of the regions, with the final objective of implementing the Pact for the Future of Humanity.

245. The first region to develop a consultation has been Latino-America, with the support of Mercociudades and FLACMA, and organized by the city of Tandil, Argentina on 29<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup> of May 2023. This consultation was centered around the Food Systems agenda, powered by the key objectives of the Local4Action HUB Tandil: Talent and Digitalization. The result is taking these key issues of the Pact, and seeking for solutions to think transformational models of development.
246. The event received more than 25 local governments and national associations from Latino-America, and resulted into a Declaration of the Intermediary Cities of Latin America, that will be part of the legacy that will build the World Forum in 2024.
247. The final Declaration also takes into consideration the creation of a FabLab as a result of the Local4Action Hub of Tandil, and as an instrument that will accompany in the future the World Forum of Intermediary Cities, to deepen key themes and challenges for Intermediary Cities.
248. Next steps of this roadmap will be UCLG-ASPAC in November 2023 and UCLG Africa. The objective is to arrive to the World Forum with regional Declarations that will be the support to build the Global Declaration, and re-gather the key partners and dynamics that allowed to have for instance the Intermediary Cities included in the G20 work plan and development for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

### **Empowering Monitoring**

249. As monitoring has appeared to be a key stake throughout the assessment report, the UCLG World Secretariat has developed an in-designed instrument to monitor to better capture the life of the organization and reflect the real dynamics of the world secretariat, while bringing to another level the evaluation of the relations with membership and partners. Designing a common storytelling process where the uniqueness of the work delivered through is valued and understood as part of a process that achieves goals and generates impact.
250. It is also a necessity to evaluate the impact of the new strategy brought by the Pact for the Future – Daejeon Political Declaration: the impact generated not only by the work done internally, but also the work developed by the political implication and its content, revealing a different way of advocating. Other dimensions were also to be taken into account in the future in this monitoring system as is the political and technical participation, and the efficiency of the developments the different parts of UCLG, including the sections and the nodes.
251. The strategy developed has embedded the design into an Empowering Monitoring, with the aim of introducing the notion of added value of the work delivered, and the people behind the work delivered. It has the aim to bring a stronger meaningfulness to the work done by the team members, as well as for the ecosystem components.
252. The design of this system has been up taken with a strong participatory approach from the World Secretariat as well as from the ecosystem components, allowing a definition that goes beyond the monitoring of numbers, and integrates a qualitative approximation that can deliver a visibility in terms of impact throughout the 3 pillars of the Pact: People, Planet and Government.

253. The methodology used for this Empowering Monitoring is the Storytelling of the Power of We and covers three key components: the Outreach, the Impact of the Pact and the Governance. The aim is to develop a new culture of work that is oriented towards thinking the impact of the actions developed by the secretariat teams and their partners, while looking at the implications of the membership and other parts of the network.
254. Throughout the year, the design has been based on a participatory driven-approach implicating the world secretariat teams and our ecosystem:
- a) A systemization was conducted based on the responses collected, that allowed the unfolding of a series of indicators, structured around the Narrative, the Resources, the Activities and the Impact generated at short and long term, to collect data for the Storytelling to appear.
  - b) The state of the advancement is at the consolidation of the indicators, before implementing the system of monitoring throughout the teams.
  - c) Next steps will be the implication of the digital tools to ensure that we do offer the most of the potential given by this strategic tool: from a new storytelling that tells the story of the Pact for the Future, to make of this tool as source of trust and credibility in a constant changing world, for our membership and for our partners that accompany our endeavors.
  - d) The aim is to be ready before the retreat, to present the results to the ecosystem that participated to the making of this design, and mobilize them to join the evaluation processes.