
DECLARATION OF MEXICO CITY

Third Forum of Cities and Territories of Peace

**Building and signing peace between people, with the planet
and with governance; renewing the social contract from our
territories for a future of peace**

- Our cities and our territories are changing and will continue to change. Building a world of peace means rethinking our models, finding new ways of living together, and discovering, together, how to lead the way towards a new model of society. When we talk about a world of peace, we are talking about a world that cares for people. A feminist world that puts life at the centre, and a world that protects its communities. This is the shared horizon that we call for from cities and territories of peace.
- In recent years, the international community has recognised that achieving peace is a necessary condition for transforming our societies. Both the 2030 Agenda, approved in 2015, and the New Urban Agenda, raise the need for sustainable urban development as one of the challenges that humanity will face in the coming years. The United Nations Secretary-General's Common Agenda, meanwhile, places special emphasis on the promotion of peace and peacebuilding from the territories.
- The World Forum on Urban Violence and Education for Coexistence and Peace, held in Madrid in 2017 and 2018, opened a line of work that highlighted the profound interaction between SDGs 11 and 16, as well as the potential of cities as a scenario for advancing towards the joint achievement of the 17 SDGs, through the construction of a culture of peace.
- The renewed energy of the Madrid Forums served to reinforce the necessary interaction between all the SDGs to achieve peace, and to jointly rethink the importance of cities and territories to transform conflict situations. The urban dimension of peacebuilding was reinforced, and the importance of working together at the local and territorial level to ensure that conflict does not spill over into violence was redoubled.



- On the road to the Third Forum of Cities and Territories of Peace, we understood that the world would never be as it was before. The pandemic has laid bare many of the problems of our systems, and this is also a reality when it comes to violence.
- During situations of lockdowns and stay-at-home orders, cases of gender-based violence have increased and we have seen a resurgence of xenophobia and racism in many of our communities. The tensions generated by the alarm situation have been the perfect breeding ground for the development of hate speech or misinformation that generates confrontation.
- Local and regional governments have played a key role in promoting dialogue with civil society to curb racist attitudes, supporting minorities and promoting a culture of peace and inclusion. The recent direction of the Cities and Territories of Peace Forum focused on the eradication of violence against the most vulnerable, the reduction of gaps and inequalities, and the construction of spaces and communities free of any kind of violence, and in all these aspects cities, territories and regions, through policies centred on their communities, have much to say.
- As international conversations begin to address the issue of recovery, this Declaration aims to affirm the importance of a just, equitable and inclusive recovery, with the most vulnerable people and groups in mind. Only in this way can we speak of a peaceful recovery in our territories: we are clear that peace is not an abstract concept or a concept of grand declarations; that it is necessary to build it every day, with our neighbours.
- The process of the Forum of Cities and Territories of Peace and the joint reflection towards a world of peace has only been possible through the leadership and commitment of Mexico City, who took up the baton from Madrid to take the conversations on Peace to the potential of the territories, ensuring a Third edition with renewed strength. The work of the cities and organisations of the International Organising Committee and the Forum's partner organisations has also been essential to disseminate the values of the Forum at a complex time worldwide.



Our tools

- In our role as guardians of our communities, local and regional governments have taken up the challenge of imagining a world free of violence. We do so by thinking about the components of coexistence in our streets, warning against their increasing fragility. It is from proximity and on a daily basis that stories, realities and dreams are forged. Without them, no grand objective treaty will be lasting or transformative.
- Inequality between men and women, between all people, is a form of violence. We believe that access to housing, health, education and decent work and livelihoods must be the way forward to build more just, equitable, inclusive and peaceful societies, and that the development of feminist and nurturing politics is essential to achieve this goal.
- Local and regional governments and institutions can play a key role in promoting peace in all territories, fostering the creation of cultures of peace in cities, channelling the conflicts that may arise in our streets and territories to prevent them from turning into violence and thus promoting the belonging, creativity and cultural development that can save us from the chaos and senselessness of violence.
- Local and regional governments, drawing on the strength of their networks and in particular their World Organisation of United Cities and Local Governments, UCLG, have a unique potential to disseminate good practices and peace initiatives through tools such as the UCLG Peace Prize, which recognises the importance of local and regional governments in promoting peace in conflict situations.
- We must put our people, whatever their origin or status, at the centre of policies. We have been able to protect rights and livelihoods in the biggest crisis of the 21st century. As the world begins to turn, we must continue to protect and guarantee public services and fundamental rights as the most direct path to recovery and peace building.
- Local and regional governments will be open to transformation; to contribute to how we understand peace, beyond situations of armed conflict, and to reformulate our cities and territories to repair situations of fragile coexistence. Only in this way will we be able to achieve the goals we set for ourselves.





Our calls

- As we navigate the second and third waves of the pandemic, and a post-COVID 19 future begins to emerge with vaccination campaigns, we must be clear that there can be no recovery without considering all the people who have sacrificed so much this year.
- We need coordinated responses, we need more multi-level work, we need to ensure presence and territorial recognition in multilateral discussions, from presence to decision-making.
- Nor can there be peace and recovery if vaccination is not universal and in solidarity. We need an effort by all actors to strengthen health and access to vaccination for all people. Not just for our own health but for others.
- The transformation of cultures of violence into cultures of peace is a major challenge we face in cities, which are sometimes obliged to promote policies that undermine the legitimisation and recourse to violence, while promoting the prevention and peaceful transformation of conflicts. A culture of peace requires conflict transformation through dialogue and negotiation on equal terms, using non-violent means.
- Local and regional governments, drawing on the strength of their global networks such as UCLG, are key to leveraging these messages and with their transformative diplomacy co-constructing peace without negotiating it. This diplomacy will be key so that, with the lessons learned during COVID, we can better address future challenges.
- Only decades ago, the greater challenges to peace were found in international conflicts. In the decades to come, however, we will see an increase in national and urban conflicts instigated by existing inequalities.
- It is time to be bold and to sign peace among people by recognising as emergencies the structural flaws in our system; such as lack of housing, access to health and education services, as well as the exclusion of parts of the population because of their origin, religion, sexual identity or physical or mental capacity.



- We must make peace with the planet, recognising that our relationship with nature and with other species cannot be based solely on resource use.
- We have to sign peace with the renewal of governance, recognising that the administrative limits we know fall short in an interrelated world that needs co-creation, co-management more than ever.
- In international municipalism, we place our hopes in the instruments that communities around the world develop every day in their streets, neighbourhoods and towns, living together and building resilience, culture and peace on a daily basis. The solidarity shown by local and regional governments makes it clear that they are vital actors. We are vital in fostering the renewal of the social contract that will serve as the basis for communities where conflict does not lead to violence and where security comes from feeling included and protected by institutions and by the community itself.
- This third edition of the World Forum adopts the Commitment to an agenda for cities and territories of coexistence and peace, approved at the 2nd World Forum, as a detailed working document with concrete proposals for action.

