

## Item 3.2

✓ For information

### OPPORTUNITIES FOR ALL, CULTURE AND CITY DIPLOMACY: KEYS TO SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND PEACE

#### Summary and recommendations

The Policy Council on Opportunities for All has gathered discussions around urban violence and ensuring cities of peace, which bear a strong link with the issue of city diplomacy. It has also been the place in which the 2020 Rome Charter could be fostered, working to strengthen cultural rights within the broader aspect of our agenda on new human rights. The challenges that have been identified in the past years have laid the direction for the Policy Council in the coming years, strengthening its linkages with the Culture Committee, renewing the UCLG Peace Prize as well as what "Opportunities for all" means in the current context.

This document features the results of the discussions of this Policy Council, which will also feed the contents of the Pact for the Future, the renewed strategy for the World Organization as from 2022 onwards.

#### The General Assembly is invited to:

1. **Take note** of the Report of the Policy Council on Opportunities for all, culture and city diplomacy.
1. The local and territorial level is critical to rethink and reshape governance systems into more inclusive ones. Responding to these calls and rebuilding trust between citizens, institutions and communities, at all levels, are determinant elements to achieving the global agendas. Citizens, and citizenship, through social movements and civil society, are increasingly calling for the transformation of governing systems. The UCLG Pact for the Future will be based on three axes: People, Planet, and Government. The axis on people calls for placing people at the centre of all policymaking endeavours.
2. Up until now, the Policy Council on Opportunities for All, Culture and City Diplomacy has addressed, apart from the titular issues, issues such as transparency, accountability, and Local Economic Development, all of which play a particular role in ensuring opportunities for all. With GOLD VI focusing around inequalities, the Policy Council has also been critical to address its growing importance within the World Organization.



3. The Policy Council has also brought the views on culture as the fourth pillar of sustainable development, protecting its core value, and fostering city diplomacy and dialogue as a way to promote peace. The work done through the UCLG Culture Committee on the Rome Charter on cultural rights will be a key supportive policy document to drive the change in many different aspects of our life post-COVID and for the agenda of the Policy Council.
4. The Policy Council is co-chaired by **Souad Ben Abderrahime**, Mayor of Tunis, **Li Mingyuan**, Mayor of Xi'an and Co-President of UCLG, and **Jan van Zanen**, Mayor of The Hague, President of the Association of Dutch Municipalities (VNG) and Co-President of UCLG, and counts with 14 additional councillors.

### **Renewed priorities and objectives**

5. The Policy Council met in February 2021 to exchange on its priorities and discuss concrete proposals of its renewed agenda, based on the growing inequalities since the pandemic, and the growing mistrust between communities and their institution. The importance of equality as a pillar of building peace in our cities and communities was also highlighted as critical.
6. The Policy Councillors emphasized the importance of having a symbiotic relationship between different spheres of government, based on the principles of subsidiarity and proportionality, as well as co-governance mechanisms, to promote an enabling environment with a view to achieving aligned goals.
7. Addressing the rural-urban symbiosis and territorial approach as important bases for grasping demographic changes and the digital divide, and guaranteeing cohesion by working within the framework of systems of cities, was also highlighted.
8. Among the priorities highlighted, it is worth mentioning the importance of ensuring decent work for all, facing the challenges of the technological transition, exploring what the right to work means in the post-COVID era and how to harness automation and innovation to ensure it benefits communities, in line with the need to strengthen the role of culture as the fourth pillar for sustainable development.
9. Reflecting on the need to broaden the mantle of "Opportunities for all" to address the growth of inequalities in the COVID-era, is key to develop a broader understanding of **time poverty** and equal access to time as a way to foster equality. The Council also addressed the importance of renewing the linkages between the pillars of the UCLG Peace Agenda, evolving our peace narrative ahead of the 2022 Congress in Daejeon.
10. The Policy Council has also focused on intergenerational dialogue as a vital element to address conflict mitigation, and understanding that dealing with peace issues means looking at climate risk and disaster preparedness in relation to infrastructure challenges.

### **Urban October and the Policy Council on Opportunities for All, Culture and City Diplomacy**

11. The Policy Council met in the framework of Urban October and introduced critical topics for the development of the UCLG Pact for the Future, building on previous meetings held in early 2021.

12. The session revolved around the issues of solidarity in connection to international action and to development cooperation, as well as city diplomacy as vital for peacebuilding, based on values and dialogue between different spheres of government. Participants also deepened the challenge of loneliness in relation to the use of public space, digital accessibility to ensure equal opportunities, and the new concept of “circular culture” included in the [Izmir Declaration](#) to protect rights and trigger society building in harmony with nature.
13. **The meeting also provided insights on the interlinkages with the work of other Policy Councils**, such as “Safer, Resilient and Sustainable Cities, Capable of Facing Crises”, and “Territorial Multilevel Governance and Sustainable Financing”.

### **The Policy Council in the 2022 UCLG Executive Bureau and the relation with the UCLG Peace talks**

14. In the framework of the 2022 Executive Bureau, the Policy Council co-led the session on “Municipal Peace Talks: Local Governments’ Roles and solidarity in times of international crisis”, in cooperation with the World Human Rights Cities Forum of Gwangju and the UN Special Rapporteurs.
15. On this occasion, the Policy Councillors and participants addressed the migration crisis, stating that it is local and regional governments who are on the frontline to support and integrate refugees. Humanitarian crisis, such as the one in Afghanistan, should not be forgotten on the international stage.
16. The Policy Council will continue to be engaged in the development of the UCLG Municipal Peace Talks. In particular, co-chair Jan Van Zanen hosted a session of the Talks in The Hague, with the conversation focusing on local approaches to peacebuilding, and bringing together the UCLG Regional Sections to debate about how to ensure the UCLG Peace Agenda is adequately reflected in the UCLG Pact for the Future.

### **UCLG Pact for the Future and Meetings with the Town Halls**

17. In September 2022, the UCLG Policy Council met with the UCLG Town Halls to learn from the perspective of local and regional governments prior to finalizing the policy papers before Daejeon. The Policy Council discussed with the Town Halls of the Global Commons and Caring Systems to provide feedback on their policy papers, and reflect on the issues of the global commons as a cornerstone for equality, and the role of peace in the framework of developing a sustainable peace, together with the partners of the Town Hall, which include the Global Platform for the Right to the City as well as Town Hall organizations including Cities Coalition for Digital Rights, Open Society Foundations, ACCORD, FAO and UNICEF.