

Item 3.4

✓ For information

SAFER, RESILIENT AND SUSTAINABLE CITIES, CAPABLE OF FACING CRISES

Summary and recommendations

The Policy Council on Safer, Resilient and Sustainable Cities, Capable of Facing Crises has promoted the role of local governments in creating the Global Alliance on Urban Crises, and has worked to highlight the role local and regional governments can play in carrying out an ecological transition towards global resilience. The Declaration on Humankind Rights, adopted by the World Council in Durban, was first debated by the Policy Council.

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 Organisation as from 2022 onwards.

The General Assembly is invited to:

1. **Take note** of the Report of the Policy Council on Resilient Cities.

1. The Policy Council on Resilient Cities is co-chaired by **Fatimetou Abdel Malick**, President of Nouakchott Regional Council and President of UCLG-Africa, by **Johnny Araya**, Mayor of San José, President of FLACMA and Co-President of UCLG, and by **Sami Kanaan**, Mayor of Geneva and Chair of the UCLG Permanent Working Group on Territorial Prevention and Management of Crises, following their nomination at the UCLG World Council in 2020.

Ground work in the initial launch phase

2. The Policy Council has promoted the role of local governments in responding to periods of instability, including the sanitary crisis, but also the ecological, social and economic crisis, and has worked to highlight the role local and regional governments can play in carrying out an ecological transition towards global resilience.
3. In face of the COVID-19 pandemic, the world has shifted from the traditional understanding of resilience in cities and territories, towards a wide and urgent concept regarding the capacity of local and regional governments to prepare and respond to periods of distress, and particularly to improve the continued care and attention provided to the communities. The Policy Council has looked into different pathways to an ecological transition, which sets local and regional governments as transformative actors to develop global resilience.



4. The need to develop strong and sustainable local service provision has been a constant of the Council, strengthening partnerships with **UITP** on sustainable transport; and drive the way towards our advocacy on critical milestones such as COP26 or COP15.
5. During the meetings of this Policy Council in 2020 and 2021, Sherpas and Policy Councillors emphasized how the world is facing combined emergencies, as on **climate and health**, which confirms the fragility of existing systems and the perils of continuing to ignore accumulated and persistent inequalities and gaps. The current context adds a sense of urgency to act and compensate for the lack of structural resilience today, while building on the lessons and sacrifices of current generations to secure lasting endurance and the right of future generations to enjoy a safe, fair and resilient world.
6. In its initial phase, the Councillors have particularly stressed the following issues:
 - a) **Local service provision**, as the access to water, energy, internet, mobility, and others, is crucial for building resilience through a holistic lens, for example considering its direct linkage to the health system, as exposed by the pandemic.
 - b) **Food systems and security**, as well as **sustainable tourism**, as motors of local development and economic recovery.
 - c) **Global climate emergency**: floods, droughts, storms, hurricanes, ocean acidification, forest fires, etc., are expected to increase in intensity and frequency. Efforts at all levels will need to combine short- and long-term actions, targeting both mitigation and adaptation, observing the risks and differentiated impacts across continental regions and to those further behind.
 - d) Fostering the **collaboration with international organizations and humanitarian agencies** is welcomed to be stimulated by members of the Council, since it can help cities and territories to prepare and respond to crises, and also contributes to galvanizing the acknowledgement of cities and regions' role in crises prevention, management and recovery.
 - e) **Transportation and mobility** should be further considered on its unique function in response to crises, for example concerning logistics, access to food and services, leisure or the connectivity among cities and territories.
 - f) Building resilience in the aftermath of COVID-19 and other emergencies will require investments on **green infrastructure** and **nature-based solutions**, a unique opportunity to generate **decent jobs**, providing alternative to young generations and transforming the humankind relation with nature.

The Policy Council in the 2022 UCLG Executive Bureau

7. Over the 2021-2022 period, the Policy Council made a leap forward in UCLG advocacy and strategy on ecological transition for global resilience, with the inclusion of a renewed approach and messages on nature, living systems and climate, as well as models of development, especially in the post-COVID era.
8. During the Executive Bureau on June 2022 in Seville, the Policy Council co-organized, with the UCLG Committee on Local Economic and Social Development, a session on "Local Economic Development for an Equitable Recovery". Councillors and participants called on the need to promote policies, especially at local and regional level, that reorient economic and productive models towards progressive systems and the strengthening of public services that guarantee equality, while designing and implementing equality policies aimed at eradicating inequalities and promote equal access to enjoyment of fundamental resources, notably through the improvement of care systems and public service provision.

9. Political will and knowledge of the territory were identified as key enablers to leave behind barriers that perpetuate situations of inequality and prevent progress towards a cohesive society, notably related to gender-based inequality.
10. The Policy Council recommended investing in social capital, in human capital, to generate more cohesive, strong, and sustainable societies and territories, as it is people who form the basis of the economy, employment and territorial growth.

UCLG Pact for the Future

11. The Policy Council has already identified the triple environmental crisis of climate, extinction and pollution as reaching a point of no return. This Policy Council stressed in the previous years the need to completely transform our collective relationship with nature, and for local and regional governments to spearhead the development of a new vision for our common future where we re-analyse the values that shape our understanding as beings and development pathways are nature-positive and seriously address transactional inequalities.
12. The issue of Resilient and Sustainable Cities is expected to be one of the major cornerstone of the Pact, particularly in the redefinition of patterns of production and consumption that are currently unsustainable, and the need to urgently to be replaced by circular, regenerative and proximity models.
13. The climate emergency and resilience systems will also be high on the agenda of the Council, through whole-of-society approaches and for a transition to alternative energy systems needs to be a priority as a vital route to a more sustainable and just future.

Input to the UCLG Town Hall process

14. 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 on Safer, Sustainable and Resilient Cities met with the Town Halls of Trust and Government and Climate and Culture to provide feedback on their policy papers and reflect on the issues to advance an ecological transformation towards local-based global resilience and development models in harmony with our environments, within their Town Halls in preparation for the UCLG World Congress.
15. The Town Hall on Climate and Culture specifically highlighted how culture is a missing force in climate planning despite its transformative force as an enabler of social imaginaries and to strengthen resilience. They further recalled the unique position of LRGs to approach climate planning through collaboration with cultural voices and civil society.