

Local and Regional Governments Forum (LRGF) on the 2030 Agenda
“Harnessing high impact localization policies to accelerate the achievement of the Sustainable
Development Goals through SDG 11 and towards the 2023 SDG Summit”
Special High-Level Event on the occasion of the 2023 United Nations High-Level Political Forum on
Sustainable Development (HLPF)
UNDP Administrator Achim Steiner
12 July, 10AM – 1:00 PM - UNHQ CR1

This segment will set the scene presenting SDG 11 as the key enabler of all other the SDGs with high-level contributions of our organized constituency

AS PREPARED FOR DELIVERY

Opening

Honourable Mayors and Governors,

Representatives of the Global Taskforce of Local and Regional Governments,¹

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Today is a moment to **hear a message of hope directly from local and regional governments: how they are innovating, challenging accepted wisdom, and breaking new boundaries to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).**

Shifting Patterns of Change

From our privileged position of supporting UN Member States, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) is also observing **three distinct patterns of change.**

- 1. First, climate change is the defining challenge of our time, requiring new forms of leadership, political will, and investment, including at the local-level.**

As part of these efforts to drive change, UNDP’s **Climate Promise** is supporting over 120 countries to implement their climate pledges, or Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs).

54 of these NDCs feature aspects that now focus on urban, sub-national, or local climate action.²

Moreover, **climate action is being leveraged to attract new investments** including in Côte d'Ivoire, where the **Béliér Region** has established a **planning and investment tool that includes local mitigation and adaptation targets.**

It also involves the increasing use of **nature-based solutions** including **eThekweni Municipality in South Africa** where the **rehabilitation of waterways is also creating new jobs.³**

¹ The Global Taskforce gathers 24 networks of cities and other local govts. and it is the recognized major group representing the constituency. It was set up in 2013 to bring the perspectives of local and regional governments to the SDGs, climate change agenda and the New Urban Agenda.

² https://climatepromise.undp.org/sites/default/files/research_report_document/UNDP-Climate-Action-from-the-Ground-Up.pdf

³ <https://palmietvalley.co.za/projects/palmiet-river-rehabilitation-project>

2. **Second, cities represent the epicentre of innovation and creativity and there is need to support community-based innovators within them.**

For instance, in **Guatemala**, the **UNDP Accelerator Lab** is working with the **Municipality of Comalapa** to roll-out **solar-powered tuk-tuks** that are being used to **connect vulnerable communities with medical assistance and collect waste**.⁴

Cities are also **rediscovering traditional approaches**.

Consider, for instance, **Kathmandu in Nepal** where the **city piloted rooftop gardens with rainwater-harvesting systems, increasing communities' food and water security**.⁵

3. **Third, there is a need for more support to cities to improve service delivery.**

That includes UNDP's support to the **Global Mayors Challenge**, where we are assisting **eight cities to innovate in key areas such as water supply, urban mobility, and food systems**.⁶

Indeed, UNDP recognises the central role of local governance to lay the foundations for resilient recoveries and preparedness for future risks.

To take just one example: in **Mogadishu, Somalia**, UNDP is working to substantially improve service delivery, which is vital in a city that is home to 400,000 people living in a state of protracted internal displacement.⁷

Closing

Honourable Mayors and Governors, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Ahead of the **SDG Summit**, I would like to acknowledge the very active participation of UN Member States to **advance and share the tangible SDG solutions that are now needed**.

I would also like to thank our partners in this event, under the leadership of **UNDESA**; our sister agency **UN-Habitat**; the **Local2030 Coalition** -- and of course, the **Global Taskforce of Local and Regional Governments whose efforts are keeping their constituencies engaged on the 2030 Agenda**.

In tandem, the **UN SDG Action Campaign's** latest "**SDG local action**" initiative is supporting local governments to better communicate their incredible work to advance the 2030 Agenda with a special focus on the **African continent**.

⁴ <https://www.euroclima.org/en/recent-events-urban/news-urban/1693-electric-tuc-tucs-arrive-in-san-juan-comalapa-guatemala>

⁵ <https://wedocs.unep.org/bitstream/handle/20.500.11822/36586/SSRC.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y>

⁶ <https://bloombergcities.jhu.edu/mayors-challenge>

⁷ Also: **data collation and visualisation initiatives** may also pay dividends by helping to identify and mitigate drivers of fragility. UNDP has developed new visualization tools and trackers for subnational governments in countries such as Pakistan and Colombia to help cities to identify fragility – and ultimately help to proactively prevent crises. UNDP is also working with local governments to strengthen their capacities for crisis planning, response, and recovery including through **city-specific databases** on disaster loss and damage in Myanmar, Cambodia, and Lao PDR.

Through all of this support, we are seeing how local and regional governments are not just promising a better world tomorrow -- they are **working with communities to build a better world *today***.

Thank you.

END