

INFORMAL SPOTLIGHT SESSION

**ACHIEVING THE SDGs AND A SUSTAINABLE AND INCLUSIVE RECOVERY FROM THE
COVID-19 PANDEMIC THROUGH PARTNERSHIPS AND SOUND GOVERNANCE: THE
VITAL ROLE OF LOCAL AND REGIONAL GOVERNMENTS**

2 February 2022, 18:00-18:50 CET

Concept Note

Organizer: Local Authorities Major Group

Background

Local and regional governments are vital to guaranteeing that the global agendas become a reality and that no one and no place is left behind. Throughout the years of the COVID-19 pandemic, the crucial role that local public service provision plays in ensuring that people and the planet are protected has become clearer than ever before. It has underlined that our communities' health spans way beyond healthcare and that our response to the achievement of the SDGs is rooted in the provision of services, sound governance, the development of a society of care and a sustainable environment.

Multilevel governance and partnership among different actors allow for informed bottom-up policy-making that listens to communities ensuring no one and no place is left behind. This in turn contributes to strengthening local democracy and open governance as various facets of society are fully included within decision-making processes. Local and regional governments are key to forming these partnerships between people and government and to forming the building blocks to increase transparency and accountability.

Looking towards the COVID-19 recovery, it is clear that local and regional governments and their associations must be empowered and fully included in decision-making and that a more inclusive and networked multilateral system is needed to achieve the global agendas. This has been especially highlighted in the United Nations Secretary-General's "Our Common Agenda" report which includes a recommendation to create an Advisory Board on Local and Regional Governments to strengthen the relationship between the United Nations and local and regional governments, and which recognizes the importance of local and regional governments in international policy making processes and calls for the strengthening of Voluntary Local Reviews (VLRs) in UN processes. Moreover, to fully recover from the pandemic and ensure the global goals are met, partnerships and sound governance must be at the forefront and open governance, local democracy, transparency and accountability must be at the center of decision-making.

Building a resilient and inclusive recovery needs close cooperation with an emphasized multilevel and multi-stakeholder approach to find sustainable and comprehensive solutions to global challenges. Towards recovering better, a strategic focus based on innovation and sustainability should be key elements for local and regional governments, bringing together lessons-learned and best practices inspiring initiatives and public policies aligned with the sustainable development goals.

This spotlight session organized by the Local Authorities Major Group, gathered within the Global Taskforce of Local and Regional Governments and in partnership with Open Government Partnership and International IDEA will count on the participation of representatives of local and regional governments, and their networks, representatives of civil society and other actors from around the world to share how, through their experiences, the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) is strengthened by putting communities, local public service provision, establishing solid partnerships, and sound governance at the centre.

The session will particularly illustrate innovative partnerships formed between local and regional governments and civil society and how other actors can contribute to strengthening them towards the implementation of the SDGs and the achievement of greater transparency and accountability.

Guiding Questions

1. What is the role that partnerships play in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and how can they be strengthened at sub-national level?
2. How do partnerships among different actors strengthen local democracy, transparency and accountability? What is the role of open government in strengthening partnerships and participatory democracy?
3. What spaces need to be further developed at the international level to ensure participation by LRGs and civil society is mainstreamed? How do you imagine the multilateral system of the future?

Draft Agenda

- **Opening Remarks**
 - **José Manuel Ribeiro**, Mayor of Valongo
- **Panel Discussion**
Moderated by Fabiana Goyeneche, Director of International Relations and Cooperation, City of Montevideo
 - **Joanne Vanderheyden**, Mayor of the Municipality of Strathroy-Caradoc, President of FCM
 - **Themisile Nkadimeng**, Deputy Minister of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs, South Africa
 - **Jonan Fernández**, General Secretary for Social Transition and 2030 Agenda of the Basque Government
 - **Alberto Fernandez Gibaja**, Senior Programme Officer, International IDEA
- **Wrap up and Next steps**
 - **Thomas George**, Global Lead, Urban, UNICEF
 - Representative of Open Government Partnership