

**Interactive Dialogue 1 - [Revitalizing small island developing States economies for accelerated and sustainable growth](#) – 28 May, 11 a.m. – 1 p.m.– Interactive Dialogues Room**

Name of Organization: United Cities and Local Government (UCLG)

Name of presenter: Joseph Wagner

Title of presenter: Mayor

**I am Mayor of Belize City, and Chairperson of the Commonwealth Local Government Forum. Today I am representing the Global Taskforce of Local & Regional Governments, as part of the Local Authorities Major Group.**

**Local and regional governments play a critical role in governance and self-determination in SIDS, many of which struggle with remoteness between citizens and government, especially in the case of atoll and multi-island communities. As countries urbanise rapidly across the world, including in SIDS, there is an increasing role for cities as the engines of growth and economic opportunity for our citizens. To ensure no one and no place is left behind and guarantee a sustainable and inclusive future for SIDS, holistic strategies are imperative, reflecting the interconnectedness of urban and rural areas, marine and terrestrial ecosystems, and SIDS, coastal and landlocked states. It is vital to invest in economic opportunities in rural and remote island areas, which maximise the use of locally available resources, including ocean resources, to support families, to maintain food security and adequate public services.**

**Local and regional governments play a critical role in creating an enabling environment for economic development and supporting MSMEs. They understand the local value chains and can convene all actors in a community, including the private sector, to develop strategies for sustainable economic development. Addressing Inequalities, building climate resilience and equitable economic development are interlinked at the local level. 70% of all emissions are produced in cities and they must plan for and drive adaptation and mitigation, as well as promote green jobs and climate-smart infrastructure.**

**We call for city, and local and regional governments' role in enabling and supporting economic development, and in underpinning trade to be recognised. Multi-level governance and localisation are key to achieving accelerated growth. Investment must be targeted and respond to the needs of local communities, and legislation and capacity should be put in place to enable local and regional governments to access private finance and green funds to support this work. Cities and LRGs are ready to be an active partner in revitalising and diversifying economies across SIDS and accelerating sustainable growth.**