

**Inputs for Copresident Thembisile Nkadameng,
Mayor of Polokwane
Special Event on SDG Acceleration Actions
“SDG Acceleration Actions to Build Back Better”
14 July 2020, 08:00 ET (14:00 CEST)
The Local4Action Hubs**

Your Excellencies, President of the Economic and Social Council, Y.E. Under-Secretary General, Excellencies from National Governments, dear representatives of the private sector:

Allow me to start by thanking your excellencies Ms. Mona Juul, and Mr. Liu Zhenmin for inviting us to this session to share our acceleration actions. As the Ministerial Declaration states, it is time for concerted, accelerated action to achieve the 203 Agenda.

As Copresident of UCLG, and as Mayor, I would like to express our full commitment to carry out the acceleration of the Universal Development Agendas, and to present our acceleration action, an innovative initiative that aims to connect the global goals with the local sphere, and to raise and amplify our local voices to leave no-one behind.

In UCLG, localization has been at the core of our political priorities and our daily work, and at the heart of our ambitions. Our cities, and our regions, are already tackling the challenges of sustainable development and working to develop initiatives and policies related to the SDGs.

It has been our cities and our regions the ones that have worked to ensure the functioning of basic services as we have traversed the pandemic. Even further, they are working to curb the climate emergency, to ensure equal access to services, to foster growth and inclusion and to ensure that no one is left behind.

In the midst of the most daunting challenge that we have faced as a humanity in 75 years, we are already walking the walk. We need to make this clear, and we need to call for a better collaborative governance, for a better understanding among spheres of government and, of course, to reinforce our means of implementation to successfully support the SDG implementation process at the local and regional levels.

We are, slowly but surely, being more heard. Local and regional governments have been asked to participate in 55% of the VNRs submitted to this year's HLPF, and we are seeing more and more recognition of local and regional efforts in subnational reporting through Voluntary Local Reviews. Our movement for localization is growing, ownership for the universal agendas is there at the local level, and our members, local and regional governments from all over the world, are showing us, day by day, the efforts that they are undergoing.

As the World Organization of United Cities and Local Governments, we are all about identifying, encouraging and showcasing as much of these experiences as possible to showcase the strength of our commitment to achieve the 2030 Agenda.

We are convinced that change at a global level is already taking place: Bottom-up ownership is already happening. Our aim now is to identify and share at global level:-this action aims to bring local experiences to the global level, and provide the global goals with local ownership.

This is the reasoning behind our very own **Local4Action HUBs**, which will allow us to identify as many experiences as possible of implementation at local and regional levels. As UCLG, we will accompany the cities and regions that submits an initiative in developing a reflection that can allow the successful experiences to be systematized, scaled-up and thus become true mechanisms

for implementation. The final step will be to synchronize actors and partners around the development of the Local4Action HUBs initiatives.

Your Excellencies, dear colleagues: The key innovation of the HUBs is in their triple impact:

- 1) they will be truly driven by cities and regions.
- 2) we will offer a global platform to generate synchronization between these experiences and partners to replicate and develop the critical themes coming from the local level
- 3) identifying the experiences will allow us to generate evidence-based knowledge, thus impacting the acceleration and informing our own reporting.

The recovery needs to be mindful of the needs of our communities, and needs to include all stakeholders in the conversations to build back in a way that is more resilient and leaves no-one behind. The Local4Action HUBs provide, at the core, the opportunity to bring local approaches to sustainability at the forefront of the international conversation, and will be critical in fostering a bottom-up approach to the localization of the SDGs.

We are convinced that the Hubs will allow us to rethink the way in which we develop policies and implement the global agendas, and that local efforts remain instrumental to the localization agenda, building on the collective knowledge of local and regional governments from all over the world.

Thank you.