

## **Localizing the SDGs: Achieving Global Goals through Subnational Action**

**HLPF for Sustainable Development - Side Event  
19 July 2016, 1.15pm - 2.30pm  
Conference Room 3, UN Conference Building**

### **CONCEPT NOTE**

#### ***Summary***

This concept note describes a high-level side event, to be co-convened by the Sustainable Development Solutions Network (SDSN), the Global Task Force of Local and Regional Governments (GTF), the Office of the Mayor of New York City, 100 Resilient Cities (100RC), United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG), nrg4SD (organizing partners of the Local Authorities Major Group), UNDP, and UN Habitat. This 75 minute side event, which will feature several high-level speakers, will be convened during the Ministerial Segment of the High Level Political Forum for Sustainable Development (from 18<sup>th</sup>-20<sup>th</sup> July 2016). The primary objective of this event is for local government representatives to showcase their efforts towards implementation of the SDGs and to encourage dialogue between national and local governments. This side event also features the launch of two new products; a *ROADMAP TO LOCALIZE THE SDGS: IMPLEMENTATION AT THE SUBNATIONAL LEVEL* prepared by GTF and *GETTING STARTED WITH THE SDGS IN CITIES: A GUIDE FOR LOCAL STAKEHOLDERS*, prepared by SDSN to support governments in achieving localization.

#### ***Background***

At the 2015 United Nations General Assembly, 193 UN member states unanimously adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, a global development agenda that lays out 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to be achieved by 2030. The SDGs, which came into effect in January 2016, are a universal set of goals, targets and indicators that set out quantitative objectives across the social, economic, and environmental dimensions of sustainable development. Addressing critical sustainability issues such as poverty, climate change, inequality, economic development, and ecosystem protection, the SDGs will be implemented in all countries, across different territorial scales.

Cities and human settlements will be key to achieving the global SDGs. The SDGs come into effect in a world that is increasingly urban, with a little over half the global population now living in cities. Urbanization has thrown up some of the world's greatest development challenges, but it also has tremendous opportunities for advancing sustainable development. SDG 11 recognizes the central role of urbanization in sustainable development, and calls for '*mak[ing] cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable.*' As one of the 17 SDGs that will shape public policy priorities and guide development finance flows for the next fifteen years, the 'urban SDG' provides a tremendous opportunity for cities to build robust partnerships and gain additional resources for advancing sustainable urban development.

For mayors and subnational leaders that are working to improve the quality of life in urban environments, the SDGs provide a roadmap for more balanced and equitable urban development. All cities aim to increase prosperity, promote social inclusion, and enhance resilience and environmental sustainability. In this way the SDGs capture large parts of the existing political agenda in virtually every city and territory. When aligned with existing planning frameworks and development priorities, they can strengthen development outcomes and provide additional resources for local and regional governments.

Localization refers to the process of adapting, implementing, and monitoring the SDGs at the local level, whilst ensuring we leave no one and no place behind. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) provide an opportunity to address these profound challenges at the local level through clear and compelling goals, participation of all stakeholders, targeted long-term policies, and public-private investments. Furthermore, local and regional governments (LRGs) should be empowered to initiate a bottom-up approach to address global phenomena at a local level by participating in balanced systems of cities that can leapfrog traditional development trajectories and by advocating for the unique needs of its constituencies to national governments.

**This event will provide a platform for local and regional government leaders to showcase their advances towards implementation of the global SDG agenda; to show what practical action they are taking on sustainable development; and to dialogue with national government representatives on what support is needed from the national or federal level to empower them to fulfil this ambitious agenda.**

Representatives from New York, Istanbul and many other cities and regions will share lessons from their sustainable development processes and layout their hopes and expectations from national governments and from the Habitat III process which will take place this October. Habitat III is the third United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Development, which will take place in Quito, Ecuador from 17-20th October 2016. It will be a crucial opportunity to reflect, in detail, upon the sustainable development challenges faced by cities and regions and the means of implementation for achieving the SDGs at the subnational level.

This event will feature the release of two key resources for mayors and local leaders. SDSN will launch *GETTING STARTED WITH THE SDGS IN CITIES: A GUIDE FOR LOCAL STAKEHOLDERS*. This guide provides a snapshot of how to kickstart a localisation process and how to engage with national and local stakeholders. GTF will launch another useful resource; *ROADMAP TO LOCALIZE THE SDGs: IMPLEMENTATION AT THE SUBNATIONAL LEVEL*. The publication will propose basic steps and elements that should be considered by LRGs to establish an overall architecture required by the SDGs.

### ***Objectives***

The key objectives of this high level side event are to:

- Demonstrate how national governments can work with local and regional governments to promote SDG implementation,
- Show how an international mandate can be promoted through multi-level government action,
- Demonstrate the leadership potential of local and regional governments,
- Invite specific cities (like New York City) to showcase lessons and to serve as a model for getting started with SDG localization,
- Create a high-level forum within the UN to discuss progress on local and regional implementation of the SDGs and to encourage peer to peer learning amongst local, regional and national government representatives.
- To launch *ROADMAP TO LOCALIZE THE SDGs: IMPLEMENTATION AT THE SUBNATIONAL LEVEL* and *GETTING STARTED WITH THE SDGs IN CITIES: A GUIDE FOR LOCAL STAKEHOLDERS*.

## **Agenda**

**1.15:** Welcome

**1.20:** Opening remarks: Professor Jeffrey Sachs, Director of SDSN and Special Adviser to UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon - 'The Role of Local and Regional Governments in Implementing the SDGs'

**1.30:** Opening remarks: Minister Luis Felipe Henao Cardona, Minister of Housing, City and Territory, Colombia - 'Encouraging cooperation between national and local government in support of SDG implementation'

**1.40:** Panel discussion amongst local and regional government representatives, moderated by Michael Berkowitz of 100 Resilient Cities

Panellist will include (tbc):

- First Deputy Mayor Anthony Shorris, New York City, USA
- Mayor Célestine Ketcha Courtes, Mayor of Bangante, President of REFELA (African local elected women network)
- Mayor Sam Liccardo, Mayor of San Jose, USA (via VC)
- President Adama Diallo, President of the Regional Council of Government of Gossas, Senegal
- Mayor Betsy Hodges, Mayor of Minneapolis, USA
- Lina Liakou, Deputy Mayor and Chief Resilience Officer of Thessaloniki

**2.10pm:** Q&A with the audience

**2.25pm:** Closing remarks: H. E. Ambassador Xavier Lasso of Ecuador - 'What recommendations can we advance through Habitat III?'