Chapter 7

Local Governments and the Value of Sustainable Urbanization

Local governments are the prime movers of sustainable urbanization. As the unit of government closest to everyday citizens, they are the most attuned to the needs and desires of urban residents. The successful implementation of the global development agendas and effectively unleashing the value of sustainable urbanization thus depends on the democratic, efficient and inclusive functioning of this level of urban governance.

Quick facts

1. There is a growing movement of local and regional governments advancing the localization of the global agendas to harness the value of sustainable urbanization.
2. There is global progress on decentralization with local governments increasingly playing a significant role in governance as decentralization processes get implemented across various regions.
3. Weak institutional environments—the powers, capacities and resources devolved—are hindering local action, and consequently, the realization of the value of urbanization.
4. Cities are playing the role of experimental hubs in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the New Urban Agenda, and their experiences can be used to scaled up polices at the national level.
5. Cities are increasingly integrating the SDGs in their policies and strategic plans, which in turn enhances the value of urbanization. Cities are also institutionalizing their engagement with local stakeholders as the basis for more inclusive decision-making.

Policy points:

1. Galvanize the forces of localization of the 2030 Agenda and the New Urban Agenda in cities and territories by mainstreaming localization strategies in all plans, programmes and budgets from national to local levels.
2. National governments should strengthen local governments' involvement in the definition, implementation and monitoring of national urban policies and the SDGs.
3. Countries should create enabling institutional environments for local governments to operate in order effectively unleash the value of sustainable urbanization.
4. Strong multilevel governance frameworks are key to foster vertical and horizontal cooperation between different levels of government and between local governments. Additionally, strong metropolitan governance that responds to the realities of economic and social geographies should be enabled.
5. Cities must track the localization of the global agendas to ensure that planning processes at all levels are founded on realistic targets.

Local governments are at the forefront of urban governance and are recognized as key players for progress toward the global development agendas. This acknowledgment is embedded in international agreements and supported by the proven commitment of local governments and their organizations to the realization of these agendas. Local governments have not only widely embraced these agendas as they seek to implement them, but they were also actively involved in their negotiation. Indeed, the New Urban Agenda explicitly recognizes the proactive role played by local leaders and the World Assembly of Local and Regional Governments during the Habitat III process. The highly symbolic gathering of this constituency's political voice in Quito was facilitated by the Global Taskforce of Local and Regional Governments (GTF), which was created in 2013 and brings together the main global and regional networks of local and regional governments to contribute to the post-2015 process.[1] Their engagement has since been reaffirmed and reinforced through the ongoing efforts by local governments to "localize" these global agendas.[2]

The global agendas are intrinsically interlinked and cannot be achieved in isolation: all actions in pursuit of sustainable development impact the highly interrelated challenges affecting cities and territories

From the perspective of local governments, the global agendas are intrinsically interlinked and cannot be achieved in isolation: all actions in pursuit of sustainable development impact the highly interrelated challenges affecting cities and territories. The New Urban Agenda contributes to catalysing and complementing the SDGs, yet it will not be possible to fully realize either the New Urban Agenda or the SDGs without fulfilling the objectives set out in the Paris Agreement on climate change and the Sendai Framework on Disaster Risk Prevention.

Moreover, although harnessing the potential of urban systems to promote sustainable development is a decisive measure to achieve the global agendas, the current reality

Street cleaning to prevent the spread of Covid-19 in Santa Marta favela, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. © Photocarioca/Shutterstock

of cities, as shown in previous chapters, is particularly challenging. Often, cities and their local governments are constrained in how they can respond to these challenges. Placed on the frontline of the COVID-19 crisis, the pandemic's critical impact is also shaping the modalities of the next phase of local governance for sustainable development. The successful implementation of the New Urban Agenda and the effective value of sustainable urbanization will depend on the development of appropriate, democratic, efficient and inclusive urban governance and institutional frameworks.

This first section of the chapter provides examples of visionary local leadership promoting bottom-up transformation and advancing initiatives to create more sustainable and inclusive futures for cities, including some brief references to cities' ongoing responses to the COVID-19 pandemic. The second section gives an overview of the governance challenges facing cities with a particular focus on the evolution of decentralization processes to explain local government's institutional frameworks in different regions of the world. The third section discusses the role of local governments' in bringing together the social and economic forces that operate at the local level, creating synergies that allow for the development of urban governance systems that are able to steer the transformation

of urban development patterns. The section identifies the different instruments available to achieve this goal, namely: planning, participation and multilevel governance. This section further discusses the involvement of local governments in national urban policies and in national coordination mechanisms for SDG implementation. Lastly, the chapter outlines the necessary changes for local governments and their institutional environments to leverage the value of sustainable urbanization.

7.1. The Emerging Urban Alternatives for a Sustainable Future

Cities on different continents are emerging as significant examples of new urban development paths, enhancing the transformative forces of urbanization and reshaping urban-rural linkages.[3] Ambitious local leaders, supported by their networks, are pushing societal change forward, increasingly embracing innovation and leading the way towards solutions to global challenges. Their actions have both direct and indirect impacts on the wellbeing of their inhabitants, as well as on the safeguarding of many of humanity's common goods. Cities from all size and their organizations are, as mentioned earlier, leading the "localization" of the global agendas (Box 7.1).[4]

Box 7.1: The localization of the global agendas for sustainable development

Since the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the local and regional government movement for the localization of the SDGs has been progressively expanding to all parts of the world, albeit at a different pace within and between regions. Progress is most noticeable in Northern and Western European countries.

In North America, an increasing number of pioneering high-profile cities and states are demonstrating their commitment. For example, New York City and Los Angeles prepared Voluntary Local Reviews (VLRs) to monitor their respective progress toward meeting the SDGs. Progress has been more varied in Latin America, driven mainly by local governments associations in Brazil, Costa Rica, Colombia, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, and by regional governments and large cities in Argentina and Mexico. In Brazil, for instance São Paulo adopted the 2030 Agenda as a framework for public policies in 2018. Further, the cities of Barcarena, Niterói and Santana de Parnaíba presented the outcomes and results of the localization of the SDGs through VLRs.

In Africa, significant efforts have been made towards the development of local plans and strategies aligned with the SDGs in countries such as Benin, Kenya, Rwanda, South Africa and Togo. In Benin and Kenya, local governments associations developed several voluntary subnational reports to contribute to their country's respective VNRs. In Rwanda, the Rwanda Association of Local Government Authorities (RALGA), in partnership with the national government and development partners, is strengthening local government capacities to effectively adapt the SDGs to local contexts. Similarly, the South African Local Government Association (SALGA) is promoting the alignment of local plans with national strategies and the SDGs.

In the Asia-Pacific region, local governments are advancing in the alignment of their policies and plans with the SDGs (Japan, Republic of Korea, China and Indonesia, followed by Australia, the Philippines and New Zealand and at the federated state level in India). Meanwhile, progress in Eurasian, Middle Eastern and Western Asian countries remains incipient (with the notable exception of Turkey and with recent acceleration in the Russian Federation). In the Philippines, both the League of Cities (LCP) and the League of Municipalities (LMP) are leading the charge on SDG localization.

Voluntary Local Reviews
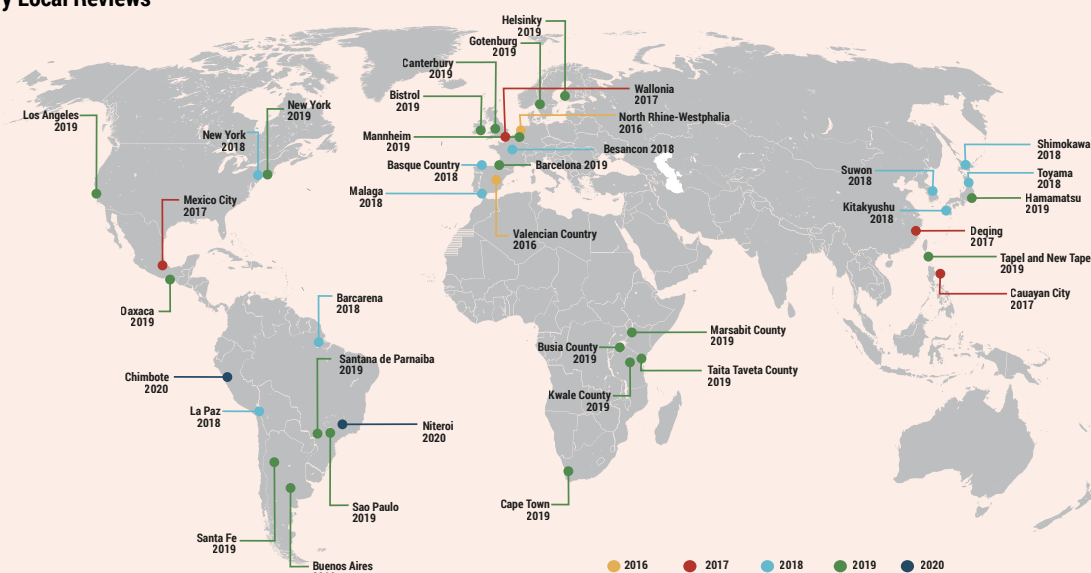
Source: GTF and UCLG, 2020, GTF and UCLG, 2019; GTF and UCLG, 2018; GTF and UCLG, 2017; UCLG 2019.

The COVID-19 pandemic has brought to the fore the critical role local governments play as front-line responders in crisis response, recovery and rebuilding

The COVID-19 pandemic has brought to the fore the critical role local governments play as front-line responders in crisis response, recovery and rebuilding.[4] They have been at the forefront of addressing the cascading public health, economic and social impacts of this crisis. Local governments are stepping up to help their communities and rapidly implement responses, focusing mostly on the interlinkages between access to public services, poverty, social inclusion, economic development and environmental protection. As cities innovated and developed new policy responses to this unprecedented crisis, UN-Habitat in collaboration with United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG) and Metropolis established Cities for Global Health, a knowledge-exchange platform and database for mayors and local leaders in which cities across the world are sharing their protocols, plans and initiatives.[5]

7.1.1. Environmental actions

A significant number of cities are at the forefront of climate action and resilience strategies. In 2019, more than 10,000 cities from 139 countries made commitments to take measurable climate action through the Global Covenant of Mayors for Climate and Energy (Box 7.2). Many cities are developing renewable energy systems, divesting from fossil fuels, making efforts to develop cleaner and more inclusive public mobility systems through multimodal transport systems, promoting active mobility and including distant and deprived neighbourhoods in the formal economic fabric (e.g. Medellín's *Metrocable*). In 2018, Guangzhou, China, electrified its entire 11,220 bus fleet and installed 4,000 charging stations.[6] Many leading cities have stepped up their actions for achieving zero waste, reducing waste generation, moving away from landfill and incineration practices towards transforming waste to energy and adopting zero-plastic policies. For example, the Accra Metropolitan Authority in Ghana integrated informal waste collectors into the city's waste management system in 2016 and increased waste collection from 28 to 48 per cent in two years.[7]

An increasing number of cities are developing tools for monitoring air pollution and adopting air quality action plans with policy tools like London's Ultra Low Emission Zone.[8] At the same time, cities are also seeking to expand public and green spaces[9] to improve their urban tree canopy, like Edmonton, Canada, which has developed an ambitious Urban Forest Management Plan. Some cities of the Global South are moving towards promoting the use of modern cooking fuels and renewable energy to reduce indoor and outdoor air pollution, as is the case with Dakar's Territorial Climate Energy Plan to reduce pollution in Senegal.

Box 7.2: Global Covenant of Mayors for Climate and Energy (GCoM)

The Global Covenant of Mayors gathers over 10,200 cities from 139 countries on all continents committed to reduce, by 2030, 24 billion tons of CO2 emissions in line with SDG 13 and the Paris Agreement. The covenant is supported by a global alliance of local government networks—C40, Climate Alliance, Eurocities, Council of European Municipalities and Regions, Energy Cities, ICLEI and UCLG—and international institutions—the European Commission, the European Committee of Regions, UN-Habitat, Bloomberg Philanthropies and the European Federation of Agencies and Regions for Energy and the Environment.

GCoM members commit to prepare a baseline emissions inventory; submit a sustainable energy action plan; carry out regular reporting for evaluation, monitoring and verification purposes; and share experiences and know-how. Global networks have also promoted other collaborative climate actions, such as ICLEI's partnership with the Carbon Disclosure Project (CDP) to develop a carbon climate registry to support subnational climate action reporting. In addition to the global networks, numerous climate leadership networks have emerged at country and regional levels (e.g. Climate Mayors in the US, Climate Alliance in Europe).

Source: https://www.globalcovenantofmayors.org/our-cities/; https://carbonn.org.

Confronted with increasing disasters, cities are progressively mainstreaming disaster risk prevention and climate change adaptation programs into their urban and territorial planning strategies. In partnership with UN-Habitat and other international organizations (such as the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction and the now-defunct 100 Resilient Cities and its successor, the Global Resilient Cities Network)[10] many local governments are designing and implementing more innovative and comprehensive resiliency strategies, making use of new technologies, promoting the involvement of communities and the most vulnerable populations through comprehensive planning processes and mainstreaming resilience into neighbourhood upgrading plans. Cities of all sizes are assessing their sectoral interdependencies to identify the critical points in their infrastructure and inform their planning processes, while involving their communities in the development of resilient strategies.

7.1.2. Local economic development initiatives

Local governments bear a large responsibility to promote economic development and employment generation, as highlighted in Chapter 3. In response to the increasing inequality brought about by unsustainable economic development, cities are supporting alternative economic models to develop decent jobs in line with SDG 8 and the NUA.[11] They are building specialized networks to promote the social, collaborative, circular, green, creative and cultural economies while also fostering small, medium and micro enterprises.[12] Examples of circular economy initiatives abound, from Cape Town, South Africa's industrial symbiosis programme or Circular Gothenburg in Sweden to initiatives in Geneva (Switzerland), Maribor (Slovenia), Phoenix (US) or Quezon (Philippines), among others, that aim to increase efforts at reducing and recycling waste through reuse and repair.[13] At the same time, many cities in developing countries are fostering the integration of informal sector (such as waste collectors, informal transport and street vendors) into the formal economy in an effort to improve labour conditions and public space use, as is the case in Belo Horizonte (Brazil), Dhaka (Bangladesh) and

Cities are supporting alternative economic models to develop decent jobs in line with SDG 8 and the NUA

Manila (Philippines). In Qalyubeya Governorate (Egypt), for instance, integrated community-based solid waste management system is improving waste collection while advancing the working conditions the informal workforce.[14]

Additionally, as mentioned in chapter 6, cities are giving increasing importance to the leading role that technological innovation plays in sustainable development, particularly in increasing productivity, employability and urban governance, which has fostered the growth of "smart city" solutions.[15] Many cities, of all size and regions, stand out in the use of new technologies for urban development and management. Examples of this trend include Lahore's deployment of surveillance technology to manage public safety and Seoul's innovative use of mobile data to plan public transport routes.[16] Networks like the Cities Coalition for Digital Rights have also emerged to address the multifaceted nature of the digital divide and advocate for the recognition of big data for public services as a common good.[17]

Beyond just the digital divide, broader socio-economic inequalities are growing both within and between cities (for example between metropolitan areas and peripheral cities and growing and shrinking cities), and between urban and rural territories. To reduce inequality in line with SDG10 and the NUA, local governments are advancing inter-municipal cooperation and forging new partnerships to foster smart specialization that promotes the sustainable development of rural and peri-urban areas located on urban fringes.[18] Key components of these partnerships usually include shared development strategies like eco-tourism, promotion of local food systems and urban agriculture, provision of access to social services for peri-urban and rural areas and the protection of environmental resources that are critical for urban systems (e.g. watershed management, wetland conservation, coastal protection and reforestation). These partnerships exist among various national and international networks.[19]

7.1.3. Inclusiveness policies

Although extreme poverty has decreased in recent years, urban poverty has persisted and even worsened in many cities and territories, with the COVID-19 pandemic expected to exacerbate the issue. Given the multi-dimensional nature of poverty in cities, local governments are fostering inclusive social policies to support their most vulnerable

populations in accessing basic public services, which are core local government commitment to the 2030 Agenda and the NUA.[20] Although access to piped water has improved overall at the global level, challenges remain in many cities, particularly in Sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia. In the face of increasing water stress, many cities are developing renewed water management strategies from integrated approaches inspired by the global agendas (e.g. Brisbane, Australia; Cape Town, South Africa; and Quito, Ecuador) while others are developing water management strategies to reduce flooding (e.g. Jakarta, Indonesia) and innovating to overcome sanitation challenges (e.g. Rajkot, India).

Informality and the expansion of informal settlements are two of the more salient issues related to urban poverty, as well as a prominent characteristic of urban settlements particularly in African, Latin American and Asian countries. Local governments are implementing incremental upgrading programs with the participation of civil society and revisiting land-titling procedures. Some local governments such as Rosario (Argentina), Nairobi (Kenya) or Harare (Zimbabwe), have developed participatory, inclusive schemes for slum and neighbourhood renovation or upgrading. In Nairobi, for instance, a comprehensive approach to slum upgrading that includes various stakeholders is being undertaken in Mukuru slums through the development of an inclusive integrated development plan. This effort follows the declaration of the slum as a "Special Planning Area" by the Nairobi City County in 2017.[21] Although local governments' responses to informal settlements increasingly tend towards in-situ upgrading, there are still cases where settlements face eviction. Local authorities are assigned the responsibility to relocate the settlements' inhabitants, which is a highly complex issue requiring forward-thinking policy innovation to ensure respect for human rights.

In the framework of the global housing crisis, the right to affordable and adequate housing is increasingly prominent in

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local and global development agendas. Leaders of the largest cities, both in developing and developed countries, launched a global initiative in 2018 to advance their populations' right to housing in an effort to address the effects of the commodification of housing, market deregulation and skyrocketing prices of land and houses (**Box 7.3**). Nevertheless, action stemming from various regions is still far from the scale needed, given the magnitude of the housing crisis. Cities are also building multi-stakeholder alliances to facilitate access to housing, like encouraging cooperative housing in Montevideo (Uruguay) and Bologna (Italy) and community land trust initiatives in Brussels (Belgium) and Burlington (US).

View of low cost house apartment in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. © Hafiz Johari/Shutterstock

Box 7.3: Cities for Adequate Housing Initiative

The global housing crisis led several cities to bring to the 2018's United Nations High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF) a firm pledge for the right to adequate housing in the form of the Cities for Adequate Housing declaration.[22] This action builds on the Make the Shift initiative promoted by the UN Special Rapporteur on adequate housing.

With this declaration, a growing number of cities have committed to promote renewed housing strategies to overcome the obstacles to the realization of the right to adequate housing, such as the lack of national funding, market deregulation and housing commodification.

The declaration calls for more powers to better regulate the real estate market, more funds to improve public housing stocks, more tools to co-produce affordable housing between the public and private sectors, urban planning that combines housing with inclusive and sustainable neighbourhoods and the adoption of municipalist cooperation in residential strategies.

Source: Cities for Adequate Housing, 2018 (https://citiesforhousing.org/).

The COVID-19 crisis has highlighted the critical dimensions of inequalities and the role city governments need to play in ensuring social assistance as well as access to food and shelter for vulnerable populations like older persons, persons with disabilities and people experiencing homelessness. During lockdown, many local governments took extraordinary measures to maintain essential public services at an adequate level and ensure the livelihoods of both formal and informal workers despite strong restrictions, so as to prevent the health crisis from dramatically exacerbating their vulnerabilities. Cities are increasingly appreciating the role of the communities living in informal settlements, and the informal economy, in have recovery from of the pandemic. Cities such as Subang Jaya (Malaysia), Cali (Colombia) and Freetown (Sierra Leone) are working with informal networks in such communities to both raise awareness about the pandemic and include these communities in the recovery phase.

7.1.4. Strengthening right-based approaches

As progress is made in increasing female representation in elected government, local agendas are increasingly cognizant of gender-based discrimination. In turn, local governments are now seeking to mainstream gender-specific approaches to urban management and policymaking through programmes whose goals include addressing gender-based violence, acknowledging women's role in the informal economy and developing targeted initiatives to promote equality for women and girls in line with SDG 5 and the NUA.[23] Many cities are taking preventive and policing measures against domestic violence and harassment in public spaces, such as in parks or on public transport.[24]

Following SDG and NUA principles, local governments are also choosing to mainstream rights-based approaches into their development strategies to tackle all forms of discrimination and support diversity and social inclusion

Following SDG and NUA principles, local governments are also choosing to mainstream rights-based approaches into their development strategies to tackle all forms of discrimination and support diversity and social inclusion (such as extreme poverty, youth, minorities, persons with disabilities and immigrants). Within the framework of the preparation of Habitat III, local governments and civil society organizations developed a joint initiative to support the "right to the city" approach that was included in the outcome document. It recognizes "the right of all inhabitants ... to inhabit, use, occupy, produce, govern and enjoy just, inclusive, safe and sustainable cities, villages and human settlements, defined as commons essential to a full and decent life."[25] More than 400 mayors from all regions have signed the Global Charter-Agenda for Human Rights in the City and implemented awareness-raising campaigns and education programmes, as well as created human rights commissions and offices, ombudspersons or *mediateurs*.[26] These networks have also taken an active role in the process opened by the United Nations Human Rights Council to recognize local governments' role in the promotion and protection of human rights.[27]

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Cities are also working to protect migrants during a time when more people are displaced worldwide than any time since World War II. More than 500 jurisdictions in the US describe themselves as "sanctuary cities." More than 80 European cities and towns formed the Solidarity Cities network to welcome refugees and asylum seekers. In December 2018 the Marrakech Declaration of Mayors—adopted at the Fifth Mayoral Forum on Human Mobility, Migration and Development—acknowledged the role of cities in the implementation, follow-up and review of both the Global Compact for Safe,

Cities are also taking the lead in promoting culture and respect for diversity through local policies (e.g. Belén, Costa Rica) as well incorporating culture as a priority component in urban plans and strategies (e.g. Bilbao in Spain and Canoas in Brazil).[28] More than 500 local governments have adopted the Agenda 21 for culture which elevates cultural rights and policies as one of the pillars of sustainable strategies fostering diversity and inclusion.[29]

7.2 The Evolution of Local Governments' Institutional Frameworks and its Relevance to Harnessing the Potential of Sustainable Urbanization

Despite these encouraging examples, there remain important gaps between more dynamic local governments and many other less economically developed and fragile cities whose ability to address urban challenges is hampered by weak local capacity, minimal resources, inadequate national institutional frameworks and national or international crises.

The transformation of the urban landscape—with the expansion of borderless metropolitan areas and urban regions as well as the expanding role of intermediate cities—poses incremental challenges to both local and national urban governance. At the same time, globalization has

reshaped the political economy of urban governance. While globalization has created unprecedented opportunities and revitalized the role of cities and territories, it has also fostered the financialization of urban assets and the commodification of public services. This trend has stressed urban systems and increased social and territorial inequalities and environmental challenges. Rising civil society discontent with political systems and public institutions should also be considered in the list of the key policy challenges facing future urban governance.

Within this global context, national institutional development along the lines of decentralization, the evolution of urban legislation and the political economy of these reforms all determine the ways in which local governments' actions can contribute to leveraging the opportunities brought about by sustainable urbanization.

7.2.1. Global decentralization trends by region

Since the 1980s, and particularly over the last decade, major reforms of local governments' legal, fiscal and administrative frameworks have ranked high on national policy agendas. A majority of countries have implemented decentralization processes that have resulted in locally elected governments with management authority over cities and territories, including the delivery of basic services to respond to local communities' needs. In all regions, local governments play an increasingly significant role in urban governance. On average, they represent 24.1 per cent of general government public spending, 25.7 per cent of general government public revenue and 36.6 per cent of general government public investment (Figure 7.1).[30]

Similarly, many metropolitan areas have been increasingly endowed with more powers to address the challenges of complex, diverse and vast urban areas covering multiple jurisdictions. Globally, urban laws remain highly segmented and not well articulated to the evolving reality of urban

Globally, urban laws remain highly segmented and not well articulated to the evolving reality of urban settlements and the realities in which local governments and agencies operate, for example with limited funding

Figure 7.1: Average of local governments expenditures, revenues and direct investments as a share of total public expenditures, revenues and direct investments by regions, 2016
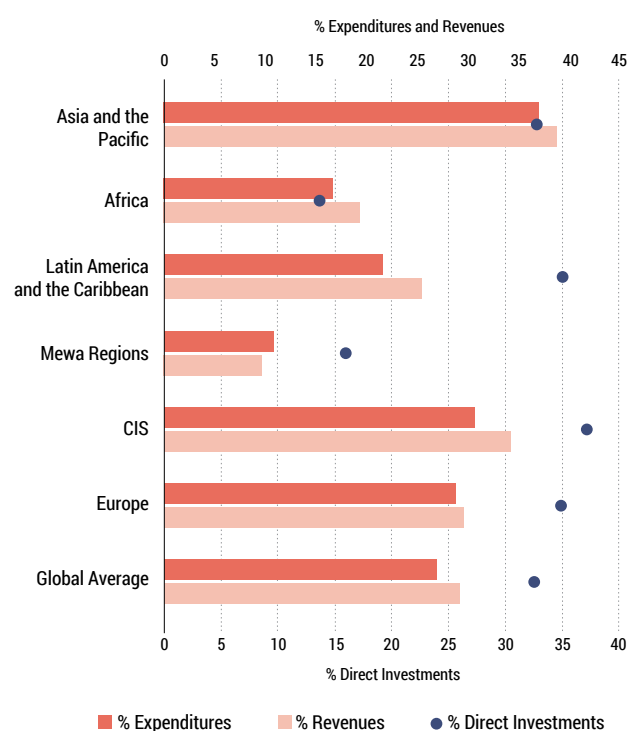
Source: Based on Subnational Government Finance and Investment (SNG-WOFI) data base (http://www.sng-wofi.org/data/).

settlements and the realities in which local governments and agencies operate, for example with limited funding.[31] The analysis of these reforms, and particularly of decentralization, shows that implementation has been complex and varied across regions with direct impact on the ability to achieve the global agendas.

Most European and Northern American countries, for example, have a long-established tradition of local self-governance. Local governments have primary responsibility for urban management, public services delivery and key infrastructure (SDG 11). They also ensure local economic development (SDG 8) and influence territorial cohesion and the protection of ecosystems (SDG 10 and SDG 15). As most European countries (particularly Northern and Western Europe) are highly decentralized, local

governments typically account for a significant share of public revenue and expenditure (25.7 per cent on average but up to 52 per cent in Northern countries) and play a crucial role in public investment (40 per cent).[32]

In Latin America, decentralization has progressed significantly since the 1980s. Local governments represent on average 19 per cent of public expenditure and 23 per cent of public revenues and play an important role in public investment (39 per cent, albeit with great variations between countries and cities). However, in many countries, decentralization has experienced periods of stagnation and setbacks, while in others evolution has been slow. Overall, local governments have been important players in improving the coverage of basic services, either directly or in partnership with other levels of government, the private sector and communities. Although inequalities in cities have decreased globally during the past decades, they persist or have worsened in some cities of the region, impacting access to and the quality of public goods and services by poor households.[33]

In the Asia-Pacific region, urbanization has helped millions escape poverty and rapid urbanization is putting the region at the forefront of urban innovation. Urban development processes advanced during the past three decades in parallel with decentralization processes. In 2016, local and regional governments represented approximately 33 per cent and 34 per cent of public expenditure and revenue, respectively, and 37 per cent of public investment, but with huge differences according to each country's economic development levels. Countries with higher economic development correlate with more favourable institutional environments for local governments, as well as with higher quality of local public services and wellbeing outcomes. In emerging countries like Indonesia and the Philippines, decentralization processes are more recent yet relatively advanced. In China, taking advantage of their relative autonomy and national support, local governments have boosted rapid urban development and succeeded in delivering key infrastructure and services. In the rest of the region, local government reforms are still at an early stage, and in many cases, local administration could more effectively be described as "deconcentrated" rather than decentralized. The progress made in the promotion of access to public

services has been impressive, although middle- and low-income countries are still lagging behind.[34]

Waves of decentralization have periodically swept across Africa since the 1990s, yet levels of decentralization vary between as well as within countries. As of 2019, 17 countries had signed the 2014 African Charter on Values and Principles of Decentralization, Local Governance and Local Development, but a significant gap remains between de jure decentralization and the reality on the ground. The participation of African local governments in public expenditures and revenues is among the lowest levels of all regions. They represent on average 15 per cent and 17 per cent of public expenditure and revenue respectively, and only 15.5 per cent of public investment. The 2018 UCLG Africa assessment shows that only 14 countries appear to have a stable "enabling institutional environment" or a "rather enabling" environment for their local governments. Meanwhile, 33 countries either still require significant reforms to achieve a favourable environment for their local governments or show stagnant or regressing reform policies.[35] Most African cities have serious deficits in access to quality public services, while access remains limited in informal settlements.[36]

Since the end of the Soviet Union, the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) underwent several reforms that have either strengthened or reduced local government's autonomy, leading to strong spatial inequalities. The region's intermediary cities face big challenges, including the "shrinking cities" phenomenon, while they have little control over market-driven urban development. Local and regional governments have made significant efforts to improve public services that degraded in the 1990s. The level of decentralization varies from highly centralized systems in Central Asian countries to relatively autonomous local self-government in Caucasus countries at the municipal levels to the two-tiered system of local self-government in Russia. Subnational governments in the region have substantial budgets and investment capacities (41.9 per cent of public investment on average). However, in practice, they have rather limited control of their expenditure policy.[37]

The countries of the Middle East and West Asia are also characterized by a high degree of centralization, except

Turkey and to a lesser extent Palestine (where local governments account for 10.1 per cent and 10.8 per cent of total public spending respectively, and 18 per cent of public investment).[38]

7.2.2. Uneven fiscal decentralization and evolution of services delivery models

Notwithstanding overall global progress on decentralization, however uneven, financing remains the dimension where progress is more constrained, raising several paradoxes. One is that cities concentrate around 80 per cent of global GDP, but many rapidly growing cities fail to capture the wealth they create and continue to struggle with insufficient budgets and accumulate infrastructure deficits.[39] A second paradox stems from the disconnect between the considerable amount of funds "available" at the global level and the increasing investments being made in global cities despite the lack of financing reaching those cities and territories most in need.

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Across all regions, there is a critical mismatch between the increase of transferred responsibilities and the revenues allocated to local governments. Effective financial empowerment of local governments for the achievement of the SDGs and the NUA is the commitment corresponding to paragraph 34 of the Addis Ababa Action Agenda adopted by United Nations Members States. Therefore, current local fiscal systems should be adapted to foster an incremental approach based on a dynamic and buoyant local tax system that ensures a fairer share of national fiscal revenues through regular and transparent intergovernmental transfers and enhances responsible borrowing to allow local governments to deliver quality public services and support sustainable development.

However, this scenario is far from reality. For example, local governments' access to borrowing, although formally allowed, is in practice strictly limited for most local

A street scene from Georgetown, Guyana. © UN-Habitat/Kirsten Milhahn

governments, especially in developing countries. A global study identified only 22 countries where municipalities are allowed to borrow without very restrictive controls.[40] Reforms that improve the rationality of assigned powers, capacities and resources to local governments are one of the most critical dimensions that can boost urban governance. Local governments must be empowered to take proactive decisions on urban development and infrastructure investments, rather than perpetuating the status quo. Local

Reforms that improve the rationality of assigned powers, capacities and resources to local governments are one of the most critical dimensions that can boost urban governance

policy priorities need to be included in an enhanced and coordinated financing strategy that incorporates other tiers of government and the international sphere in order to diversify sources of development finance.[41]

In recent years, different local government initiatives have advanced better ways of mapping and matching projects with financial opportunities. Numerous city-focused project preparation facilities have supported cities' climate project pipelines to meet bankability standards. Among these facilities are the C40 Cities Finance Facility and ICLEI's Transformative Actions Programme. The African Territorial Agency championed by UCLG Africa and the International Municipal Investment Fund, set up by the UN Capital Development Fund (UNCDF) and UCLG in collaboration with the Global Fund for Cities Development

(FMDV), are also in the process of development. The Global Covenant of Mayors and the European Investment Bank have come together to help "prepare and fast track financing of urban climate action projects."[42]

Facilitated by limited local resources, market deregulation and the primacy of financial economy, public service delivery models have evolved to respond to urban expansion and the accompanying demand for infrastructure. This evolution has also been supported by the continual expansion of private sector participation in service provision (e.g. in water and sanitation, waste management, transport and energy). This expansion has occurred through different externalization models, such as concessions, public-private partnerships (PPPs) and privatization that have, in effect, transitioned from a system of universal service provision (often with a publicly-backed operator monopoly) to a more fragmented market for access with different distribution modes (from public utilities, using a large number of subcontractors, to small private operators, NGOs and informal delivery).

Once most prevalent in developed countries, this process has since expanded to developing countries, particularly large cities.[43] Results vary widely, with positive and negative outcomes depending on the sector and context. In reaction to some negative experiences with service accessibility and the necessity to foster multi-service synergies and multi-stakeholder equalization, many cities and communities are seeking alternatives by bringing essential public services back in-house through a process referred to as "remunicipalization." Research from 2019 listed 1,408 such cases since 2000 that involve 2,400 municipalities in 58 countries in relation to water, energy, waste, telecommunications, transport, health and social care, education and other local government services.[44]

7.2.3. The metropolitan challenge

The context of metropolitan areas, in the so-called "metropolitan century," demands special consideration. Despite the above-mentioned recent reforms in metropolitan governance in many regions (e.g. Australia, Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, France, Italy, Japan, South Africa and the UK, among others), their pace has not followed the speed of metropolitan expansion and socioeconomic transformation. Today, metropolitan governance is becoming more complex; large cities are usually governed through power-sharing schemes that involve different levels of government, agencies and utilities, both public and private, who operate with varying levels of legitimacy and transparency, all while competing for resources. This convoluted governance landscape poses daunting problems for spatial, political and social integration, which is reflected in the often fragmented way that urban areas are managed and services are delivered.[45] As highlighted in Chapter 3, such inefficient governance systems impacts urban economies negatively.

Paradoxically and with few exceptions (e.g. South Africa), top-down attempts to create new metropolitan governments have frequently been politically and operationally cumbersome, with voluntary cooperation between municipalities in many cases proving more effective. Depending on how it is implemented or applied, metropolitan governance can pose challenges to local democracy if institutional legitimacy and accountability are not well addressed. It can also perpetuate socioeconomic fragmentation and inequalities or aggravate environmental sustainability. It is therefore to important implement appropriate and effective metropolitan governance arrangements—such as metropolitan government or stronger coordination mechanisms that cover the full metropolitan functional area, depending on the local and national context. These arrangements should be transparent, accountable and have institutions that enable citizen participation, all of which are important elements in delivering an integrated vision of sustainable urbanization.

In the UK, the Cities and Local Government Devolution Act 2016 provides for the election of mayors for the areas of, and confers additional functions on, combined authorities.[46] Eight combined authority areas—made up of 44 local authorities and covering nearly 12 million people—now have elected metro mayors.[47] In Chile, Santiago has consolidated into a metropolitan government. In the US, debates have also played out over proposals for city/county consolidation in Syracuse, New York. Across the world, the

Existing institutional environments and local governance systems are currently not fit for purpose. Further evolutions are needed to unlock local government's potential to build a sustainable future.

boundaries of city governance are in flux and the way these examples, among others, adapt to their new governance structures has broader relevance for cities grappling with similar shifts.[48]

As shown in this section, the varied power dynamics—including the type of institutional environments in which local governments operate—define local autonomy in the management of cities. In general terms, existing institutional environments and local governance systems are currently not fit for purpose. Further evolutions are needed to unlock local government's potential to build a sustainable future. These reforms, including the revision of legislative, regulatory and fiscal frameworks, will have to go beyond sectoral policies; foster a balanced distribution of powers, capacities and resources; and enhance cooperation between different spheres of government as well as the involvement of non-state actors to support a policy environment that enables the adoption of a truly sustainable approach to development.

7.3. Local Governments as Pillars for the Coalescence of the Transformative Local Forces

The existing legal and institutional frameworks for local governance and urban planning, a key local government competence, are entry points for stronger citizen participation and collaborative governance. The latter, in particular, is a key determinant for cities to drive the coalition of forces needed to deliver on the New Urban Agenda and realize the added value of sustainable urbanization.

7.3.1 Planning and the global agendas: Contradictory trends

In the NUA, urban and territorial planning are introduced as key levers to promote sustainable urban development.[49] The global agendas recognize planning's ability to spur necessary changes and drive towards sustainable development, which has led to a planning resurgence in public policy.[50] During the past decade, UN-Habitat has supported the reinvention of urban planning principles and methodologies to foster a more integrated and participatory approach.[51] The *International Guidelines for Urban and Territorial Planning*
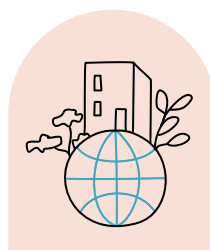
The global agendas recognize planning's ability to spur necessary changes and drive towards sustainable development, which has led to a planning resurgence in public policy.

recognize the political dimension of planning and its central relevance for local decision-making and long-term development agreements. In the NUA, planning is acknowledged as the lever to promote economic growth, environmental sustainability and social equity, and as a key local competence to address the different challenges that cities face, such as the need to reduce urban sprawl, strengthen resilience, foster mitigation and adaptation to climate change and improve quality of life.

Certain cities are on the vanguard of revising their policies or developing strategic plans in order to localize the global development agendas. In doing so, they have been effective at breaking down existing silos between entrenched city government departments by encouraging collaboration through consultative processes. Mexico City, for example, involved members of the government, officials and representatives of the city's main institutions to introduce the SDGs as the roadmap for the new planning process that began after the 2018 municipal elections.[52] The Berlin Strategy/Urban Development Concept Berlin 2030 provides an inter-agency model for the long-term sustainable development of the capital and was developed following the participative process "Shaping the City Together," which involved more than 100 associations, local authorities and institutions from the Berlin-Brandenburg region.[53] In eThekwini, South Africa, the alignment of the 2030 Agenda with the metropolitan plan was carried out using a bottom-up approach as part of the city's strategic approach to sustainability and has focused on four main pillars: human rights, people, the planet and prosperity. In 2019, New York City released its "OneNYC 2050" strategic plan that outlines eight goals and 30 initiatives aligned with the SDGs.[54] Similarly, Kitakyushu (Japan), Santana de Parnaíba (Brazil) and Seoul (Republic of Korea) —as illustrated in Box 7.4— are among other cities that have aligned their planning processes with the global development agendas.[55]

Box 7.4: Seoul: Urban planning and the global agendas

Since 1995, after the first mayoral election, the Seoul Metropolitan Government has led sustainability actions in many areas: participatory urban planning, new technologies, social inclusion and climate change mitigation. In recent years, it has aligned those efforts with the global agendas. In 2015, the city established the Master Plan for Sustainable Development (2016–2035) and also adopted a comprehensive strategy to fight climate change, "The Promise of Seoul, Taking Actions against Climate Change," which outlines efforts around energy, air quality, transport, waste, ecology, urban agriculture, health, safety and urban planning. In 2017, the 2030 Seoul Plan for the implementation of the SDGs was adopted using a bottom-up approach. To realize this 2030 vision, five core issues were identified: "people-centred city without discrimination; dynamic global city with a strong job market; vibrant cultural and historic city; lively and safe city; and stable housing and easy transportation, community-oriented city."

(Source: Seoul Metropolitan Government, 2015; Seoul Metropolitan Government, 2018.

However, the existence of planning instruments and capacities, although vital, does not necessarily guarantee the achievement of local public goals. UN-Habitat has established that local governments face numerous barriers when using conventional urban management and planning tools. Moreover, in many countries, particularly in developing ones, cities' capacities and tools to promote adequate planning are deficient or non-existent. Planning tools need to be linked and backed up to financial and legal frameworks. The dominance of informality further determines the capacity of local institutions to guide urban development forms. At the same time, the study calls for a transformation of the approach to urban planning: learning to work with informality. For instance, tapping informality as a development force and guiding it towards the making of better cities means, in essence, taking advantage of alternative "non-formal" modalities created by communities in their neighbourhoods.[56]

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Regional differences in planning approaches are significant. In Europe and North America, and to some extent Latin America, planning systems are generally mature.[57] An important stimulus to positive reforms and cultural change in planning came to these regions during the past decades in the form of strategic and integrated planning, promoting integrated development by combining urban policies with economic development, inclusive policies and management strategies.[58] Nevertheless, not all strategic plans are successful, neither in formulation nor in implementation. Oftentimes, development priorities are contested and there is the risk of meaningful citizen participation being jeopardized by some government decisions or private investment interests (e.g. by elites). In addition, "splintered" urban fabric is evident across many cities of the world, with serious implications for urban governance and contradictory impacts on sustainability.[59]

In Latin America, some cities are at the frontline of strategic planning approaches with the support of international agencies like the Inter-American Development Bank, which has assisted 61 secondary cities with the preparation of city action plans.[60] Such multilateral support is necessary because in smaller cities and middle-sized towns there is often a lack of human resources and funding to plan effectively. Social exclusion and inequalities often undermine the adoption of inclusionary planning processes. Contrasts between residential and gated communities and marginal neighbourhoods are aggravated, fuelled by social crises and the expansion of urban violence.

In Asia, although traditional top-down planning approaches are still present, new approaches such as those favouring urban renewal are now emerging in the region. Countries in the region are moving forward with national spatial frameworks, city-region planning and local planning for

urban regeneration. At the same time, cities are incorporating strong environmental and resilience dimensions to their long-term visions.[61] China has moved rapidly to decentralize certain planning functions, although state control remains. In India, planning tends to concentrate at the state rather than the local government level.[62] Less economically developed countries are slowly transitioning from older systems with top-down approaches to newer decentralized systems for development policy and planning.

In CIS countries, the role of both local government and civil society in the actual planning of urban development is quite limited. With few exceptions, there is a persistence of top-down master planning, weak plan implementation at the local government level and little control on market-driven urban development. In the Middle Eastern and Western Asia Region, urban plans are often developed by central governments or district commissioners, assigning consultative or follow-up roles to local government, as is the case of Lebanon and Iran, respectively.

In Africa, urban planning systems remain highly centralized in most countries, with cities being under-resourced and oftentimes operating within outdated or inappropriate urban legal frameworks. While larger cities such as Dakar (Senegal), eThekwini (South Africa), Johannesburg (South Africa), Lagos (Nigeria), Maputo (Mozambique), Marrakesh (Morocco) and Nairobi (Kenya) are bright spots, overall, there is a lack of planning professionals and tools to enforce planning and land-use regulations. In the midst of these challenges, collaborative partnerships with slum dweller organizations and communities have emerged.[63] A critical urgency in Sub-Saharan Africa is to develop new planning modalities and capacities to accommodate rising numbers of urban dwellers.

It is worth noting that, in the framework of the SDGs, local governments in all regions are being encouraged to design local development plans aligned with the SDGs, including SDG 11. In Colombia, for example, local governments have been required to develop local management plans since 1997. Consequently, the majority of provincial capitals have since aligned their plans with the SDGs.[64] In other Latin American countries, efforts to align the SDGs with local development plans have also intensified in recent years with the adoption of more integrated urban and land management approaches (e.g. Bolivia's Participatory Municipal Planning System and Ecuador's Decentralized Participatory Planning System).[65]

Similarly, in Africa, where local development plans are also mandatory, countries are revising their national planning systems to support local governments' alignment efforts (e.g. Benin, Burkina Faso, Ghana, Rwanda and South Africa). In Asia, alignment processes are also advancing in countries such as Australia, China, Indonesia, Japan, Republic of Korea, New Zealand and the Philippines.[66] In China, for example, pilot cities have been selected— Guilin, Shenzhen and Taiyuan—to promote innovation and drive policy learning and change, while many others are also updating their sustainability policies.[67] Some cities adopted the SDGs as a reference framework to revise their development strategies and plans, for example, eThekwini (South Africa), Mannheim (Germany) and Seoul (Republic of Korea) among others. This effort is expected to have a positive impact on planning processes.

Although enabling institutional environments determined some degree of planning outcomes, the capacity of cities to plan in a participatory and inclusive way depends strongly on their local leadership and their ability to bring together heterogeneous local interests in a shared vision, then mobilize the means to implement that vision. Local leaders that adopt strategic approaches accounting for the systemic tensions between inclusion and sustainability are better positioned for success. The likelihood of achieving the expected outcomes is maximized if such visionary leadership is underpinned by strong urban governance, institutional coordination and broad coalitions that support and ensure continuity of execution and implementation. As argued in the World Cities Report 2016, "a city that plans" allows local actors to learn and adapt on a continuous basis to face uncertainties and risk, as well as to support innovation

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systems that connect institutions, businesses, academia and social movements, while embracing the views of various stakeholders in the quest to build the collective citizens' preferred future.[68]

7.3.2 Participatory policies

Participatory approaches to policymaking can create virtuous circles of engagement between citizens and local institutions that foster positive social forces and drive sustainable urban development. Worldwide, many cities have institutionalized different forms of citizen, private sector and community participation, and these modalities are being expanded as part of the localization efforts for the global agendas. In almost all regions, local governments are developing consultations, workshops and labs to involve citizens in localization plans.

Bogotá, for example, used the SDGs to open up new platforms for citizen participation. Amsterdam hosted a two-day Global Goals Jam in 2017, which brought together local creative teams of designers and developers alongside the council's technical staff to work on innovative ideas to contribute to the SDGs. Jakarta has integrated the priorities of Indonesia's national plan and the SDGs into its mid-term plan (RPJMD), supported by a participatory electronic budgeting and planning approach known as *e-Musrenbang*. Latin America has a longer and more consolidated tradition of citizen participation, most notably Porto Alegre's pioneering work with participatory budgeting. In Africa, citizen participation in municipal planning is more incipient, although city development strategies in Ouagadougou (Burkina Faso) and Douala (Cameroon), as well as Uganda's municipal development forums, are some

On-site meeting with Saida Municipality's technical office for data validation. © UN-Habitat

examples of dynamic participatory mechanisms that have been established. The approach remains very limited in the Middle East, West Asia and the CIS region. On the whole, the International Observatory on Participatory Democracy—which collects experiences developed by local governments across different continents through different modalities—has established that there is notable progress in participatory experiences across the world. For example, various jurisdictions have adapted and reconfigured "participatory budgets" or developed a broad set of mechanisms to involve inhabitants in local decision-making processes.[69]

Some countries are going one step further and mandating participatory planning, like Dominican Republic. Meanwhile, citizen participation modalities are evolving to new techniques like score cards for community-based monitoring in different cities in Africa and Asia, with the support of United Nations agencies and international cooperation. E-democracy has also transformed participation in the past two decades by supporting citizen involvement in different stages of decision-making through channels such as *Smart Citizen* and *Digital Civics*, among others.[70] In that vein, Argentina, Estonia, Italy, Indonesia, Philippines and Mexico are among the countries where open government practices are being promoted in partnership between local governments and NGOs.[71] Private sector involvement in local forums and dialogues on policymaking, planning and implementation can also help to stimulate sustainable changes in business behaviour. Their engagement in efforts like the United Nations Global Compact Cities Programme creates incentives to adopt more socially responsible and sustainable principles, promote decent work and ensure access to financing to support the transition towards sustainability.[72]

The integration of multiple participation channels is a way of diversifying citizen engagement, accommodating different interests and increasing the number of participants. For example, Canoas developed 13 innovative tools to encourage public participation through its Citizen Participation System, which have since engaged over 185,000 residents. In Seoul, the metropolitan government recently promoted the Citizens' City Hall Programme that combines an open-door policy for ideas and opinions with site visits, allowing the public administration to discover solutions through direct community engagement.[73]

Participatory and rights-based approaches are developing a new framework for the co-creation of cities and territories in terms of urban design and service delivery—for example, housing policies in partnership with NGOs such as the Asian Coalition for Housing Rights or the Know Your City initiative developed by Slum/Shack Dwellers International to integrate slums in local planning processes.[74] The notion of participation, however, is not a panacea. Participatory budget experiments, for example, span a broad spectrum from symbolic participatory gestures with little transformative impact to meaningful generators of structural change in urban governance systems that allocate significant sums of public money to address different groups' needs.[75] Some experiences have been criticized for limiting citizens' sphere of engagement, favouring already privileged social groups instead of those most excluded from public discourse, creating or strengthening clientelist networks, weakening popular organizations and risking political manipulation.[76] In other cities, participatory budgeting driven by a good governance logic have contributed to reconfiguring relationships and responsibilities among actors and institutions in the public domain, leading to measurable improvements in the overall quality of life of their citizens.[77]

The concept of participation in urban governance is changing as it moves beyond simple consultation to the co-creation of a space that will contribute to rebalancing the distribution of decision-making powers in society

The concept of participation in urban governance is changing as it moves beyond simple consultation to the co-creation of a space that will contribute to rebalancing the distribution of decision-making powers in society. This shift requires local governments to respect some basic conditions, such as the empowerment and autonomy of social movements and local stakeholders. Enablers of citizen engagement need to be simple, reciprocal, representative, inclusive and people-oriented. They need to recognize formal participation procedures with transparent and shared rules that are complemented by collaborative partnership, take privacy rights and citizens' initiatives seriously and endow citizens with real decision-

making powers. Furthermore, local governments must develop an increasing number of participatory processes, online and offline, which are balanced and implemented with regularity and continuity. Alongside an active participatory democracy, transparency and accountability are the key pillars for new urban governance.[78]

7.3.3 Multilevel governance

While it is the responsibility of local governments to ensure the effective leadership and coordination of development policies in their cities and territories, functions relevant to urban governance and planning are usually spread across several departments and spheres of government, as well as across private and civil society sectors. Vertical and horizontal policy collaboration between different levels of governance (local, regional and national levels) and across institutions at the same level (e.g. inter-municipal cooperation) are vital to ensure the coherent development of urban areas. Policy coherence and collaboration lie at the core of the NUA and are critical to achieve the "whole of government" and "whole of society" approaches called for by the SDGs. In recent times, public health crises that have a strong territorial dimension and require an effective integrated response (like the COVID-19 pandemic) have increased the necessity for multilevel governance approaches.

Multilevel governance arrangements are instrumental for the effective localization of the global agendas, as well as for creating synergies, reducing overlapping and critical gaps between institutions, and promoting trust and accountability that enhance policy coherence. The progress in decentralization processes that has been observed across the different regions has led to greater administrative, financial and socio-economic interdependence between central and sub-national governments. Yet it has also increased the complexity of decision-making and consensus-building, as more actors and initiatives have become part of the process. Well-tailored multilevel governance arrangements can

Multilevel governance arrangements are instrumental for the effective localization of the global agendas, as well as for creating synergies, reducing overlapping and critical gaps between institutions

facilitate the involvement of local institutions and actors, and create local ownership, while fostering innovation and experimentation that allows for the adapting of national strategies to local realities.[79]

In this regard, national urban policies (NUPs), understood as "a coherent set of decisions through a deliberate government-led process of coordinating and rallying various stakeholders to maximize the benefits of urbanization," are a critical part of the process of building multilevel governance systems, as recognized in the NUA.[80] The implementation of the NUA and the 2030 Agenda undoubtedly represents an opportunity to extend the processes of change and tackle many of the existing challenges in relation to strengthening and expanding multilevel governance.

The evolution of the institutional frameworks to facilitate multilevel governance follows many of the patterns described above regarding decentralization processes. In Europe, multilevel governance is especially well-developed in countries showing a high degree of decentralization and includes long-standing structures for dialogue between central and local/regional governments in a wide range of areas such as spatial planning, environment, infrastructure, transport, technology and development, as well as multilevel fiscal coordination. European countries also have a tradition of NUPs as levers to improve coordination and ensure policy coherence.[81] Europe is also the region where local governments are most involved in national coordination mechanisms for the implementation of the SDGs (a trend observable in 20 of the over 37 European countries that have reported to the HLPF since 2016).[82] Finally, the European Union places particular emphasis on the concept of multilevel urban governance. The Urban Agenda for the EU (Pact of Amsterdam) was adopted in 2016, taking into consideration the New Urban Agenda and the SDGs, with the objective of addressing the adoption of an integrated and sustainable urban development approach in a broad multilevel framework.[83]

In Latin America, progress toward multilevel governance has often been challenged by political cycles and instability. Brazil developed a sophisticated multilevel approach in the 2000s through the creation of the Ministry of Cities and the National Conference of Cities, although following recent political changes both of those pioneering efforts

In Latin America, 14 out of 19 countries have NUPs in the implementation stage, with different levels of local government involvement in their definition

have faced increased headwinds.[84] Other countries developed mechanisms for dialogue, planning and cooperation and made progress in framing national urban policies (for example, Bolivia, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Guatemala, Mexico, Peru and El Salvador). The examples of Colombia and Ecuador illustrate the complexity of developing multilevel governance systems. The two countries face coordination problems—not only between national and local governments, but also between local governments—that range from political sensibilities to important gaps in capacities and access to financing. In the region, 14 out of 19 countries have NUPs in the implementation stage, with different levels of local government involvement in their definition.

At the regional level, ECLAC, in cooperation with national governments and UN-Habitat, has adopted a Regional Action Plan for the Implementation of the New Urban Agenda in Latin America and the Caribbean (RAP), and proposed the creation of the Latin American and Caribbean Urban and Cities Platform to facilitate the follow-up and monitoring processes. However, local governments' involvement is still limited in both this regional initiative and the national coordination mechanisms for the implementation of the SDGs (only 6 out of 17 Latin American countries have reported on their progress to the High Level Political Forum since 2016).

In the Asia-Pacific region, a few countries have developed systematic multilevel governance mechanisms, like the Council of Australian Governments, the Local Government Commission in New Zealand and the Union of Local Authorities in the National Economic and Development

As of 2018, 24 out of 43 countries in the Asia-Pacific region have NUPs in the implementation stage or beyond

Authority in the Philippines. Others, like Indonesia, have promoted coordination mechanisms at provincial or regional levels. In China, multilevel governance arrangements are critical in many dimensions, for example, in addressing the rights and living conditions of the more than 200 million internal migrants that move between rural and urban areas under the *hukou* system.[85]

At the same time, countries are developing dedicated policies to strengthen coordination with cities and local governments to implement the global agendas. For example, the Government of Japan involved local governments in its multi-stakeholder SDG Promotion Roundtable. It also provides intensive support to selected local governments in their implementation of the SDGs and the NUA through different programs, such as the Future City and Ecomodel City.[86] In the Republic of Korea, the new government designed a roadmap in 2018 to implement the SDGs and launched a five-year Urban Regeneration New Deal; while a handful of cities—such as Seoul, Gwangju, Suwon and Daegu—are concurrently advancing in their localization efforts. Indonesia and the Philippines also strengthened vertical coordination between different levels of government and non-state actors for SDG implementation and monitoring.[87] In both countries, there are obstacles and gaps to harmonizing these different processes, such as overlapping roles between agencies and local public enterprises, different planning timelines, insufficient technical support, weak local capacities, problems with data and indicators and financing issues. Coordination is particularly arduous in the main metropolitan cities, resulting in weak planning and delivery of services in places like Jakarta (Indonesia) and Manila (Philippines).[88]

It should be noted that as of 2018, 24 out of 43 countries in the Asia-Pacific region have NUPs in the implementation stage or beyond. Participation by stakeholders has been highly uneven across the region—reflecting diverse political arrangements.[89] Each country determines its own approach to improving its multi-level urban governance, but very few make the connection between urban strategies and the global agendas.

In Africa, multilevel governance approaches, although incipient, have made progress. Countries across the African continent, such as Benin, Kenya and South Africa,

21 out of 38 African countries have NUPs in the implementation stage or beyond, but many countries lack the resources and technical capacity to deploy comprehensive NUPs

have started promoting an "all of society" approach to the implementation of the SDGs and the NUA through the creation of multilevel governance frameworks. While some challenges have emerged, like incomplete fiscal decentralization accompanied by a lack of coherence between local policy guidelines, the different global agendas and their follow-up and review mechanisms, it is notable that all of these countries have NUPs in place. Following a consultative process, the South African national government adopted the Integrated Urban Development Framework in 2016 to coordinate and guide urban management.

Multilevel collaboration is also making progress in terms of climate adaptation policies. In the eThekwini area, coordination is envisioned vertically and horizontally between contiguous local governments and involving local stakeholders.[90] Various countries are taking advantage of national coordination mechanisms created for the SDGs to ensure greater collaboration between national and subnational levels. Benin, for example, involved local governments in the National Steering Committee for Planning and Development for the SDGs and made significant strides in the integration of the SDGs in national and local plans in 10 of the country's 12 departments. In Kenya, the secretariat of the Council of Governors established an SDG liaison office and focal points in all 47 counties to improve coordination between the two levels of government. Ghana and Burkina Faso, among other countries, are taking advantage of their decentralized planning system to ensure better coordination of the SDGs, strengthen regional coordination and support the alignment of local plans with national ones, while also focusing on specific

Houses built on the ruins of South Africa's oldest slums, Cape Town, South Africa. © Authentic Travel/Shutterstock

local priorities. Efforts to adopt and implement NUPs are underway across the continent (21 out of 38 African countries have NUPs in the implementation stage or beyond), but many countries lack the resources and technical capacity to deploy comprehensive NUPs.[91]

7.3.4 Monitoring urban policies

Admittedly, there are still significant problems in many countries in the production of disaggregated data as well as joint indicators for national and local governments. Both of these factors make it difficult to monitor the implementation of the SDGs and the NUA, and to ensure national and local planning processes are founded on realistic targets. Many local governments currently have no access to localized data and thus do not have the capacity to make informed decisions that allow them to better prioritize local policies, as well as ensure effective implementation.

This limitation, combined with the difficulties that local governments in all regions have encountered in being included in reporting processes at the national level, makes monitoring and reporting one of the core, urgent challenges for localization. UN-Habitat, international organizations, and countries including Belgium, Colombia, Indonesia and South Africa are developing solutions. UN-Habitat's City Prosperity Index, for instance, provides a flexible monitoring framework for the SDGs, applied in more than 400 cities in all regions.[92] In addition, UN-Habitat has developed the New Urban Agenda Platform, an online platform to facilitate monitoring, reporting and information sharing on progress on the implementation of the NUA and SDGs (Chapter 9). In parallel, local governments and their networks are also promoting initiatives to support monitoring. For example, in Germany, a coalition of public and private partners built a national platform to collect SDG data from municipalities. In Brazil, the National Confederation of Municipalities developed an SDG dashboard called *Mandala ODS*. In Africa, the *Know Your City* initiative has long collected data across informal settlements that can now inform local monitoring efforts.[93] More than 40 local governments have devised their own Voluntary Local Reviews that complement their countries' Voluntary National Reviews with local on-the-ground information, oftentimes including different sets of indicators (Box 7.1).[94] The European Commission and the

OECD have also developed different proposals to support local data and indicators to monitor the SDGs and facilitate benchmarking.[95]

The task of monitoring and evaluating the implementation of the SDGs and the New Urban Agenda will require the support of national statistical offices in collaboration with local governments, stakeholders and international organizations to ensure the follow-up of public policies. National governments should promote the involvement of local governments and stakeholders in the definition, implementation and monitoring of urban policies and plans, as well as in the disaggregation of data and indicators.

Finally, despite the notable progress highlighted in this section, much more work remains to be done as there is still a long way to go in achieving the effective transformation of urban governance. Many urban areas suffer from inadequate multilevel governance schemes, unclear distributions of responsibilities between different spheres of government and weak cooperative mechanisms. It is also worth noting that the participation of local governments in the national coordination mechanisms for SDG implementation is still limited and their involvement varied in the definition and development of national urban policies.[96] Such ineffective multi-level governance systems compromise planning processes and hinder the engagement with civil society and key stakeholders. Creating a culture of co-operation is thus crucial to achieving effective multilevel governance and paving the way for the effective implementation of the NUA and the SDGs.

Creating a culture of co-operation is thus crucial to achieving effective multilevel governance and paving the way for the effective implementation of the NUA and the SDGs

7.4. Concluding Remarks and Lessons for Policy

This rapid review of local governments' initiatives, opportunities and challenges to contribute to leveraging the potentialities of sustainable urbanization offers a

promising but heterogeneous picture. This timely review comes at the onset of a decade that is marked by an ambitious call for action to deliver the SDGs by 2030, the Decade of Action. The discussions in this chapter indeed show that local governments and their associations have a pivotal role in mobilizing actions to accelerate sustainable solutions, particularly on the three fronts of this ambitious call: global, local and people action.

Local governments have been leading the efforts to localize the global agendas. Cities on the forefront with visionary leaders and local government networks are contributing to shifting development patterns along many dimensions, such as climate change mitigation, urban resilience, alternative economic models, social inclusion policies and mainstreaming human rights-based approaches. They have been, and continue to be, on the frontlines during the COVID-19 crisis to ensure the continuity of essential public services and respond to emergencies by providing the public with necessary information and protection as well as facilitating provision of food and transitory shelter to those in need. In the aftermath of the pandemic, their role will also be critical to pursuing a resilient, inclusive, gender-equal and green economic recovery that is indispensable to achieving the SDGs.[97] Cities are already playing a crucial role as experimental hubs and their experiences can be used to inform policies that are scaled at the national level.

Yet from a global perspective that takes into account the magnitude of the challenges, the scope of local government's actions could be perceived as piecemeal, geographically concentrated and subjected to conflicts and adverse economic cycles. Clearly, the global movement that local governments are leading has made important progress in the last four years, yet this progress is still partial and should be reinforced. At the same time, in many regions the institutional environments are not fit for achieving this purpose, hindering local governments' capacity to expand and scale up the most ambitious and innovative actions. Local governments cannot act alone, but they can be the pillars that support coalescing transformative forces that advance sustainable urbanization.

Thus, the need is urgent to strengthen efforts to **galvanize the forces of localization of the global agendas in**

cities and territories. Localization strategies should be mainstreamed in all plans, programmes and budgets from the national to the local level. Cities need to adopt the SDGs and the New Urban Agenda as reference frameworks to guide their policies and plans, as well as ensure coherent and integrated implementation. Countries need to integrate or strengthen robust localization approaches into their sustainable development strategies and action plans to expand the involvement of local governments and actors, accelerating and scaling up sustainable urban development. Coordinated strategies for the global agendas—New Urban Agenda, SDGs, Paris Agreement and Sendai framework—are an imperative. No single agenda can be addressed in isolation.

Strong and capable local governments are key levers to unleash the value of sustainable urbanization. To enhance their involvement in these efforts and strengthen their capacities, local governments and their networks, international organizations and national governments should **join forces to strengthen the dissemination of the global agendas, boost knowledge-sharing and training and take advantage of peer-to-peer learning and decentralized cooperation** in order to assist local governments and local actors in the development, implementation and follow-up of localization strategies.

To harness the transformative potential of local governments' actions and adequately leverage the possibilities of urbanization, countries should ensure an **enabling institutional environment for local action.** Effective decentralization policies strengthen local authorities' capacities to effectively contribute to sustainable urban development. These policies are particularly urgent in developing countries where urban growth will concentrate in the coming decades, so as to allow local governments to contribute to improving access to basic services as essential rights and manage urban expansions in a sustainable way, thus preventing the derailment of the global agendas.

As part of the empowerment of local governments, special attention should be given to **fiscal decentralization and adequate financing flows to support urban investments.** As acknowledged by the Addis Ababa Action Agenda (paragraph 34) and already stressed in previous chapters of this report, local governments need strengthened local

tax systems, including the power to capture part of land and property added-value, a better allocation of national fiscal revenues through intergovernmental transfers and access to responsible borrowing. Equalization funds are also necessary to ensure the adequate redistribution of resources to support intermediary cities and small towns so as to avoid leaving any territory behind. A suitable spectrum of debt finance options needs to be adapted and made accessible to cities of different sizes and financial capacities, contemplating multiple sources of financing and innovative financial instruments.

Sustainable participatory urban and land planning are critical to harness the co-creation of cities and support the momentum for sustainable urban transformation. An integrated planning approach, as reflected in the New Urban Agenda, is imperative to strengthen the inclusive dimension of cities, facilitate climate adaptation and mitigation and strengthen urban resilience strategies, thus multiplying the benefits of existing interlinkages between urban and territorial areas. Inclusive and participatory planning are key levers to involve local actors in the definition of a shared vision and support the coalescence of transformative local forces. Deep reforms of planning regulations and frameworks are a critical part of SDG localization and the New Urban Agenda. Urgent actions to boost urban planning are needed in regions where rapid urban growth will be concentrated (Sub-Saharan Africa, South Asia and South-East Asia).

It is also of great importance to create strong **multilevel governance frameworks as one of the pillars of the New Urban Agenda,** built around institutionalized mechanisms for vertical and horizontal collaboration and coordination and enshrined in broad consultative processes. Effective multilevel governance requires clear legal and institutional structures, which are based on the principles of subsidiarity and decentralization, as well as the adequate intergovernmental allocation of financial resources. Effective multilevel governance is essential to build robust national urban policies that are well-articulated with the SDGs and national and territorial policies that promote balanced and polycentric urban systems.

Strong metropolitan governance is a key component of new urban governance. National governments should enable metropolitan governance, ensuring the involvement of both local and regional governments in the reform process. At the same time, the lack or the inadequacy of policies for intermediary cities prevents the creation of strong systems of cities and, thus, balanced regional socioeconomic development.

A new culture of participation involves the clear recognition of citizens' rights and, more specifically, of their right to the city. Local governments should promote an increasing number of participatory processes, both online and offline, that manage to engage organized civil society in all its forms (grassroots organizations, NGOs, private sector, social partners, academia, etc.) and that pays special attention to specific groups (e.g. women, the youth, the elderly, people with disabilities, vulnerable minorities and the urban poor). These processes should be based on transparent and shared rules, endow citizens with real decision-making power and be implemented with regularity and continuity. Formal participation procedures should be complemented by collaborative partnerships which go beyond formal consultation, recognizing civil society groups as active partners in new urban governance. This mindset requires public institutions to respect some basic conditions, such as the empowerment and autonomy of social movements and local stakeholders.

The effective involvement of local governments is critical to **strengthen the participatory governance of the New Urban Agenda and the SDGs** and contribute to the value of sustainable urbanization. At the national level, there is much to do in terms of effectively involving local governments and stakeholders in the national coordination mechanisms for the implementation of the SDGs, as well as in terms of strengthening their involvement in the definition, implementation and monitoring of national urban policies. Limited consultations and uncoordinated decision-making presently hinder the policy coherence necessary to achieve the SDGs and the New Urban Agenda and reduce local ownership. The **production and dissemination of disaggregated data for monitoring, evaluation and impact evaluation of the localization of the global agendas** is key to ensuring that planning processes at all levels are founded on realistic targets and that effective implementation can be monitored, as well as to ensure accountability and citizen follow-up.

Endnotes

1. The GTF brings together the main 25 global and regional organizations of local and regional governments. The GTF supports to the strong engagement of local leaders in the preparation of the Post-2015 Agenda, as well in during the COP process. UCLG President, the Mayor of Istanbul, was nominated by Ban Ki-moon as member of the High-Level Panel of Eminent Personalities for the Post-2015 Agenda in 2012. For more information, visit: https://www.global-taskforce.org/.

2. Localization is described as 'the process of defining, implementing and monitoring strategies at the local level for achieving national, regional and global sustainable development goals and targets.' More specifically, it takes into account sub-national contexts in the achievement of the 2030 Agenda, from the setting of goals and targets to the determination of the means of implementation and the use of indicators to measure and monitor progress. See: GTF and UCLG (2019); UNDP, UN-Habitat and GTF (2016), Roadmap for Localizing the SDGs: Implementation and Monitoring at Sub-national Level; UN Development Group (2014), Localizing the Post2015 Agenda (the outcome of the global UN dialogue process that took place from June 2014 to October 2014

3. Urbanization is not only the result of the expansion of cities but also the result of the transformation of former small towns and rural areas, called 'in situ urbanization'. Half to two thirds of urban population growth from 1980 to 2000 in China and roughly 30 per cent of China's GDP was produced in these in situ urbanized areas at the peak of their development at the end of 1990s (Yu Zhu, 2017

4. United Nations, 2020.

5. Cities for Global Health (https://www.citiesforglobalhealth.org/).

6. The C40 Knowledge Hub, 2019a.

7. The C40 Knowledge Hub, 2019b.

8. NUA 63-64; SDG 11.6.

9. NUA 13, 37, 53, 67, 100; SDG 11.7.

10. In 2020, Members of the 100 Resilient Cities program officially reunited under a new city-led network, the Global Resilient Cities Network (GRCN).

11. NUA 43-62; NUA 59, 100.

12. Several sharing economy networks have emerged like the Sharing Cities Alliance that started in 2012. A global social and solidarity economy network emerged from the 2013 Global Social Economy Forum (GSEF) held in Seoul. In 2016, the GSEF launched the International Center for Innovation and Knowledge Transfer on the Social and Solidary Economy. See: https://sharingcitiesalliance.com; http://www.gsef-net.org/en

13. C40 and EIT Climate-KIC, 2018.

14. Urban Sustainability Exchange, undated.

15. This is in line with NUA 156, SDG 8 & 9; UCLG Committee Digital and Knowledge-Based Cities and Bilbao, 2017.

16. ARUP, undated.

17. Cities Coalition for Digital Rights (https://citiesfordigitalrights.org).

18. NUA 5 and 136.

19. See, for example: Sustainable Food Cities in the UK, Red de ciudades por la Agroecología in Spain, Rete Città Sane in Italy, City Deal: Food on the Urban Agenda in the Netherlands, BioStädte network in Germany, AgroEco Cities European Network and ICLEI-RUAF CITYFOOD network. One of the most meaningful initiatives is the Milan Urban Food Policy Pact, with 203 signatory cities from every continent representing 450 million inhabitants since 2015.

20. NUA 14.a, 25-42, 70, 91 and 99; SDGs, particularly 1, 6 and 11.

21. Mejoramiento Integral de Barrios Project (http://isvimed.gov.co/programa/mejoramiento-integral-de-barrios); Mukuru slum project, (https://www.iied.org/special-approach-slum-upgrading-special-planning-area-mukuru-nairobi).

22. The declaration was signed by: Amsterdam, Barcelona, Berlin, Birmingham, Buenos Aires, Durban, Geneva, Jakarta, Lisbon, London, Mexico, Medellin, Montreal, Montevideo, New York, Paris, Seoul, Strasbourg, Taipei and Vienna.

23. NUA 13.b, 14.c, 92.

24. Metropolis, 2018.

25. United Nations, 2017.

26. https://www.uclg-cisdp.org/en/right-to-the-city/world-charter-agenda. The European Coalition of Cities Against Racism (ECCAR) gathers more than 100 European local authorities and has worked on non-discrimination issues over more than a decade. Similar regional coalitions exist in different continent after the umbrella of ICCAR, a partner entity of UNESCO whose name was recently transformed to that of International Coalition of Inclusive and Sustainable Cities (See: https://www.eccar.info/).

27. Role of local government in the promotion and protection of human rights – Final report of the Human Rights Council Advisory Committee [A/HRC/30/49 (2015)]; Local government and human rights [A/HRC/RES/33/8(2016)].

28. NUA 10, 26, 124; SDG 4, 11.4.

29. Culture 21: Agenda 21 for Culture (http://agenda21culture.net/sites/default/files/files/culture21-actions/c21_015_en.pdf); A database with case studies is available at (http://obs.agenda21culture.net/en/home-grid).

30. OECD and UCLG, 2019; These figures are based on a sample of 106 countries for expenditure, 104 countries for revenue and 99 countries for direct public investment.

31. UN-Habitat, 2016.

32. OECD and UCLG, 2019.

33. UN-Habitat, CAF and Fundación Avina, 2014; ECLAC Stat: Gini coefficient in urban areas move from 0.51 in 1990 to 0.46 in 2014(see: https://cepalstat-prod.cepal.org/cepalstat/tabulador/ConsultaIntegrada.asp?idIndicador=250&idioma=i).

34. UCLG ASPAC, Cities Alliance, UNDP, 2018.

35. UCLG Africa, Cities Alliance, 2018.

36. UCLG, 2019a.

37. UCLG, 2019a.

38. UCLG, 2019a.

39. OECD and UCLG, 2019.

40. Ivanyna,. and Shah, 2014, p. 14. The study includes 160 countries. Local borrowing rules are more accommodating in Europe and Latin America.

41. Inter-agency Task Force on Financing for Development, 2018.

42. Contribution of C40 to GTF and UCLG, 2019; European Investment Bank "Global Climate City Challenge.2019"

43. UCLG, 2014.; Villes en Développement n. 111 (2019).

44. S. Kishimoto et al, 2019.

45. OECD, 2015; Gómez Álvarez et al,2017.

46. Combined authorities may be set up by two or more local authorities. They may take on statutory functions transferred to them by an Order made by the Secretary of State, plus any functions that the constituent authorities agree to share (https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/research-briefings/sn06649/)

47. Local Government Association, undated; Centre for Cities, 2019.

48. Harkness. and Katz, 2017.

49. UN General Assembly (2017), particularly section "Planning and managing urban spatial development", par. 93-103; UN-Habitat, 2016.

50. Bhan et al, 2018.

51. UN-Habitat, 2009; UN-Habitat, 2015a.

52. See: https://proyectoallas.net/2018/03/02/fortalece-cdmx-trabajo-de-la-agenda-2030-de-desarrollo-sostenible/

53. Senate of Berlin, 2018.

54. OneNYC 2050 (https://onenyc.cityofnewyork.us/).

55. UCLG,2019; GTF and UCLG (2018, 2019).

56. UN-Habitat, 2010c.

57. UN-Habitat, 2016; Bhan, et al, 2018; In OECD countries national governments provide enabling legislation for planning and carry out strategic spatial national and regional planning, with local governments undertaking land use planning. In federal countries (especially the US) planning operates primarily at state and local level.

58. UN-Habitat, 2016; Strategic plans have flourish in cities in all regions, such, Barcelona (since the 90s), Dar-es-Salaam, Johannesburg, Lima, London, Melbourne, Nairobi, New York, Quito, Seoul, Shanghai or Tokyo and in cities from all sizes. Strategic planning and Cities Development Strategies were also propelled by cities networks and international agencies with the aim to give a voice to residents on the future of their cities (e.g. Cities Alliance or currently by different partners, for example, the Medinatouna project in nine middle-size cities in Tunis).

59. UCLG, 2016; Graham and Marvin. 2001; Sassen, 2018.

60. https://www.iadb.org/es/desarrollo-

urbano-y-vivienda/programa-ciudades-emergentes-y-sostenibles: Programa de ciudades emergentes y sostenibles

61. UNESCAP and UN-Habitat, 2019.
62. V. Watson, Contribution to the local and regional governments report to the HLPF in 2018 (unpublished)
63. SDI and Know Your City, 2018.
64. POT, which include spatial and environmental development, land use, risk prevention, infrastructures and housing, etc. Gobierno de Colombia (2017 and 2019); UCLG, 2019a; In order to encourage the implementation of the SDGs, the government proposed to strengthen the use of various mechanisms such as plan contracts (to encourage co-financing from central and local governments and private sector) and projects financed through the General System of Royalties (UN-Habitat, 2017).
65. https://observatorioplanificacion.cepal.org/es/territorial-planning, Countries with territorial and urban mandatory plans at local levels: Bolivia, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Guatemala, Honduras, México, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Uruguay, Venezuela). See also UN-Habitat, 2017.
66. Republic of Indonesia, 2019
67. UCLG, 2019a.
68. UN-Habitat, 2016.
69. The International Observatory on Participatory Democracy collects thousands of experiences developed by local governments across different continents through different modalities (e.g. neighbourhood committees and assemblies, open town council meetings, councils for the elderly and the youth, participatory budgeting and planning, referenda and e-democracy, among others) [IOPD (https://oidp.net/en/)]; These experiences are in Brazil, China, Republic of Korea, Russia,

the US, as well as African, Arab and European countries (Cabannes, 2018).
70. UN-Habitat, 2015b.
71. https://www.opengovpartnership.org/stories/new-approaches-new-opportunities-expanding-the-reach-of-local-open-government/; https://opengov.uclg.org/
72. See. UN Global Compact.
73. More information on the Voice of the Mayors programme, the Seoul case, and the activities of Metropolis are available online: http://www.metropolis.org/voice-mayors. https://www.uclg.org/en/media/news/citizen-participation-part-everyday-life-city-canoas
74. Asian Coalition for Housing Rights (ACHR), Report on Housing Policies in Asia Region, (report prepared for UCLG-GOLD); https://knowyourcity.info/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/SDI_StateofSlums_LOW_FINAL.pdf.
75. A large number of innovative solutions have been experimented to include and benefit specific excluded and disadvantaged social groups: homeless (i.e. Paris, São Paulo), LGBT+ (various Brazilian experiences), migrant workers (i.e. Taoyuan, Taiwan Province of China), youth (multiple experiences, e.g. Valongo, Portugal), women (e.g. Solo/Surakarta, Indonesia, Seville, Spain), ethnic minorities in cities (i.e. São Paulo, Brazil or Rosario, Argentina), extreme poor (i.e. Yaoundé, Cameroon), disabled (i.e. Sanxia district, Taiwan Province of China; La Serena, Chile); rural communities in cities (i.e. Quito or Cuenca, Ecuador; Chengdu, China) etc.
76. S. Langelier, 2011; Ghertner (2011; Allegretti et al, 2016; UN-Habitat,2016, p.110
77. Cabannes and Lipietz, 2017.
78. Allegretti et al,2016; EIP-SCC,2015.
79. UNDESA, 2018.
80. NUA paragraphs 89 and 149; UN-

Habitat (2016), p.117
81. OECD, 2017; UN-Habitat and OECD,2018; 10 countries in Europe and North America adopted explicit NUPs and 23 partial NUPs.
82. GTF and UCLG, 2019.
83. For more information, see: Urban Agenda for the EU (https://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/sources/policy/themes/urban-development/agenda/pact-of-amsterdam.pdf); The Belgian Presidency of the EU in 2010 published a handbook for multilevel urban governance in Europe (http://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/TA-8-2018-0273_EN.html)
84. Based on the legal frame created by the Statute of Cities (2001) and supported through the Ministry of Cities, Brazil promoted a national participatory dialogue - through the National Conference of Cities—comprising national and local governments and civil society organizations to support national urban development and promote multilevel cooperation. But in 2017, the national government limited the powers of the National Council of Cities and postponed the national conference (Decree 9076/2017. See: UN-Habitat (2016) p. 106; E. Fernandez, "Urban Planning at a crossroads, A critical assessment of Brazil's City Statute, 15 years later," in Gautam Bhan et al (2018), pp. 48-57.
85. For more details see Zhu and Lin, 2011; Multilevel arrangements are necessary for the design of policies concerning their rights, social security and public services provision and financing.
86. See: https://www.mofa.go.jp/policy/oda/sdgs/pdf/about_sdgs.pdf
87. UCLG, 2019a.
88. UN-Habitat, 2015c.
89. UN-Habitat and OECD,2018.
90. Leck and Simon ,2013.
91. UN-Habitat and OECD, 2018; Cartwright et. all. (2018) identify the following 18 African countries

as having dedicated urbanization strategies in their NUPs: Algeria, Benin, Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Ethiopia, Ghana, Gabon, Kenya, Malawi, Mali, Morocco, Niger, Nigeria, Rwanda, Senegal, South Africa, Swaziland and Uganda.
92. UN-Habitat (http://urbandata.unhabitat.org/partners).
93. For more information, see for Germany (https://sdg-portal.de/); for Brazil (http://ods.cnm.org.br/mandala-municipal); for Africa (https://knowyourcity.info/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/SDI_StateofSlums_LOW_FINAL.pdf.).
94. See: https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/sdg11/local; The first VLRs were elaborated by New York, and the Japanese cities of Toyama, Kitakyushu and Shimokawa. Buenos Aires, Barcelona, the Basque Country, Bristol, Canterbury, Helsinki, La Paz, Los Angeles, Mexico City, Málaga, Mannheim, Oaxaca, Santana de Parnaíba, Sydney, Suwon, Taipei, Valencia followed suit.
95. OECD ,2020; EC-JRC, 2020.
96. GTF and UCLG,2019; Only in 47 countries out of the 142 countries that presented their VNR to the HLPF between 2016 and 2919, local governments are associated or consulted by the national coordination mechanisms for the SDGs follow-up. With regard NUPs, a survey realized by UCLG IN 2016 show some involvement in Latin American countries, but limited involvement in Asia and in Africa.
97. United Nations, 2020.