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A sustainable urban future through inclusive & effective multilateralism: achieving SDGs in times of global crises

Anh Thu Duong, Co-Director
Geneva Cities Hub

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Effective and inclusive multilateralism, the theme of this Assembly, stands at the heart of the mission of the Geneva Cities Hub. We're working to better connect local and regional governments (LRGs) to multilateralism and are very pleased to collaborate with UN Habitat in that regard.

We've heard it again and again: sustainable urban development is one of the greatest challenges of our times.

Yet, the issue is often discussed at the international level among States which mainly focus on how to achieve sustainable urban development IN cities.

At the GCH, we believe that sustainable urban development should not only be achieved in cities, but also WITH cities, as full-fledged stakeholders.

Cities and other LRGs should be able to share their views, their challenges, their experiences at the international level on issues of particular concern to them.

For that, we believe that a new status at the UN needs to be created by States, enabling LRGs to participate and speak in their own capacity. This is also the recommendation made by the UN SG's High Level Advisory Board on Effective multilateralism in its "Breakthrough report".

Obviously, there are political and logistical challenges to creating a new status for LRGs at the UN. But there are also many opportunities.

To start with, we encourage States to open up multilateral processes to LRGs. Enabling them to contribute to the UN Universal Periodic Review, the Global Refugee Forum or current negotiations on future pandemics or plastic pollution can only improve adherence to the outcome of these processes and facilitate the implementation of these treaties at local level. And this can only lead to enhance the effectiveness of multilateralism, which is a common objective we all share.

I thank you.