



UNACLA  
UNITED NATIONS ADVISORY COMMITTEE OF LOCAL AUTHORITIES

## REPORT OF ACTIVITIES

2015 – 2016



UN HABITAT  
FOR A BETTER URBAN FUTURE

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## INTRODUCTION

The United Nations Advisory Committee of Local Authorities (UNACLA) was established in 1999 by the Governing Council Resolution 17/18 as **“an advisory body that would serve the purpose of strengthening the dialogue with local authorities from all over the world involved in the implementation of the Habitat Agenda”**. UNACLA was created in the aftermath of Habitat II (1996) to materialize the special relation of local authorities as “our closest partners” as stated in the Istanbul Declaration.

The Secretariat of UNACLA is co-hosted by UN-Habitat and UCLG (United Cities and Local Governments), the major association of local governments, globally.

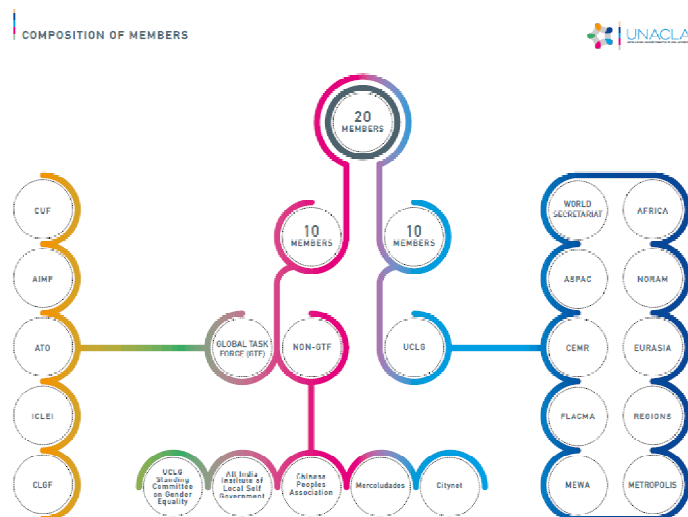
### Purpose

The main purpose of UNACLA is to bring the local and regional voice and perspectives to the United Nations System, to increase awareness of their important role in achieving sustainable development, and to contribute to the implementation of the global development agendas within their local dimension.

### Membership

**UNACLA represents around 323.000 institutions at all levels**, from small towns to intermediate cities, provinces to regions, authorities in small island states to big metropolises.

The Committee is composed of **20 members**, in which 10 members represent the metropolitan and regional sections of UCLG. The remaining 10 members are appointed within the membership of the Global Taskforce of local and regional governments and the other most representative networks that remain. The President of UNACLA is proposed by the UCLG World Secretariat, and is currently held by Mr. Kadir Topbas, Mayor of Istanbul (Turkey). UCLG was instrumental in the creation of UNACLA and plays a major role in bringing together the messages of local government networks as facilitator of the Global Taskforce of local and regional governments today.



**UNACLA works in a representative manner**, where the members deliver the messages that have been previously endorsed by their respective decision making mechanisms.

## UNACLA'S MISSION IN A RENEWED GLOBAL DEVELOPMENT ARCHITECTURE

**UNACLA gathers the views and perspectives of local and regional governments and conveys them to the global discussion in an organized and representative method.** It supports the dissemination of key messages to Member states and other partners through **advocacy and advisory work**. In line with the Global Agenda 2030 and the approval of the most recent global development agendas (such FFD, COP or the New Urban Agenda), UNACLA has entered a new dynamic phase where its work follows three main initiatives.

### Foster the dialogue between national and local governments

The global agendas call for an increase in **dialogue amongst all levels of government** - local, regional and national - **to improve the necessary, enabling environment** that would allow each country to fulfill their global development commitments. UNACLA builds on the “International Guidelines on Decentralization and Strengthening of Local Authorities” (2007) as well as in the New Urban Agenda, particularly on the Art. 85 -92 (Urban governance structure). Today, UNACLA **promotes good public governance and a fair distribution of resources and responsibilities. This helps** improve the capacity of local governments in order to contribute to fighting poverty and ensuring inclusion for all.

Art. 89 We will take measures to...ensure appropriate fiscal, political and administrative decentralization based on the principle of subsidiarity  
New Urban Agenda, 2016.

### Promote the local dimension of development in the global agendas

UNACLA works to ensure that the local dimension of development is present in all new global agendas. Many of the responsibilities regarding a number of global objectives are already in the hands of local governments. Local leadership and uniting local stakeholders, private and social, are essential for the global development agendas to become a reality at local level. UNACLA believes that the new development agendas cannot be possible without the establishment of wide local partnerships, under the leadership of local governments. UNACLA contributes **to the new approach to development that has been established by the SDGs**, leaving behind the sectorial approach and connecting the different goals and targets under the broader question of **local governance, effectiveness of the public sector and citizen's trust**.

Art. 76. We recognize that effective governance at the local, subnational, national, regional and global levels representing the voices and interests of all is critical for advancing sustainable development.

UN Conference on sustainable development 2012 (Rio +20)

UNACLA **brings local government inputs to the global processes**, an essential step to ensure local implementation. UNACLA works to bring local voices and perspectives, as well as to create awareness within local and regional governments about the importance of the global agendas and how to implement them at local level.



Second World Assembly of local and regional governments, Quito, 16<sup>th</sup> October 2016

## ACHIEVEMENTS IN 2015 AND 2016

### UNACLA, a representational body of the world local governments

In September 2015 UNACLA approved a new membership structure to improve representation and decision making. The new membership is represented by approximately 323,000 institutions. Each of the 20 seats is now assigned to a local government network, in contrast with the previous modus operandi where individual Mayors were represented in their individual capacity. Representation follows the structure of the Global Taskforce of local and regional governments, which is a group gathering the entire local constituency that organize the World Assembly of Local and Regional Governments, as recognized by the New Urban Agenda.

Art. 169 We note the importance of continuing to engage in the follow-up and review of the New Urban Agenda with subnational and local government associations represented at the World Assembly of local and regional governments.

This new structure has been key to ensuring the presence of Mayors and political representatives in UNACLA. It is worth mentioning that all UNACLA members have to respond to their own governing structures, where decisions and messages are generated by consensus or by vote. In this way, the Mayors or Governors sitting in UNACLA meetings no longer represent their own city or territory but instead represent all members of their own network.

### A local voice in the UN



UNACLA worked closely with the Global Taskforce of local and regional governments, hosted by United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG), to ensure the presence of local and regional governments in many of the global events that now shape the recently approved global agendas. UNACLA supported local government delegations and contributed to create dialogue with the multilateral system, as well as member states. As such, UNACLA was involved in the following:

### [Financing for Development Conference in Addis Ababa,](#)

#### [July 2015](#)

UN-Habitat, in coordination with UCLG and the United Nations Capital Development Fund supported the Delegation of 90 local government representatives to Addis, co-organized a total of five official side events and a one-day full side event on “Local financing for development: Innovation in municipal finance for inclusive growth” together with the African Union. The main results of the work of the Delegation can be found in Art. 34 of the Addis Ababa Action Agenda

34. We further acknowledge that expenditures and investments in sustainable development are being devolved to the subnational level. We therefore commit to scaling up international cooperation to strengthen capacities of municipalities and other local authorities. We will strive to support local governments in their efforts to mobilize revenues as appropriate.

### [Habitat III process, 2016](#)

UNACLA **supported the organization of the second World Assembly of Local and Regional Governments** that took place back to back with Habitat III conference, as noted by the General Assembly in its resolution A/RES/70/210 “in recognition of the role of



local authorities and communities in sustainable urban development and in the implementation of the New Urban Agenda”.

The World Assembly held three sessions in 2016 (New York, 15th May, Bogota, 14th October and Quito, 16th October). During the Habitat III Conference, members endorsed the “[UNACLA Quito Declaration](#)” including recommendations and the local government vision for sustainable cities and territories for all.

### UNACLA and the localizing of the global development agendas

UNACLA’s most concrete contribution is probably the advocacy work it has done to raise awareness among local and regional governments in order to understand the importance of global agendas as a mechanism to support their daily job in improving the quality of life of their citizens. UNACLA was created to support the implementation of the 1996 Habitat Agenda. Today it supports the **localization of the global agendas to bring concrete and tangible outputs for the local and regional governments and the people they represent**. One of the main focuses of UNACLA is the Localization of the Sustainable Development Goals, as a big part of the Agenda 2030 needs to be achieved at local level. Local and regional governments are essential to implement the SDGs, but this won’t be possible in the absence of an adequate legal framework; the necessary capacity, resources and local leadership.

The ‘Localizing the SDGs’ initiative [www.localizingthesdgs.org](http://www.localizingthesdgs.org) is a common effort by UN-Habitat, UNDP and the Global Taskforce of local and regional governments to develop awareness about the importance of the SDGs for local government all over the world. It was conceived during the 2014 consultation on Means of Implementation of the post-2015 Agenda, as mandated by the United Nations Development Group, which informed the “Delivering the post 2015 development agenda: Opportunities at the national and local levels”. UNACLA is ideally positioned to bridge **solutions and commitments from local governments to implement the SDGs**, as many are already allocated to them by the appropriate national legal framework.

The localization process wants to support local and regional governments in playing their full role in the achievement of the SDGs at local level and encourages local leaders to make the SDGs their own.


### SUMMARY OF ACTIVITIES 2015-2016

Event	Date & place	Results
UNACLA regular meeting during the 25th session of UN-Habitat 25th Governing Council	15 <sup>th</sup> April 2015 Nairobi, Kenya	<a href="#">Discussion</a> about the strategic role and position of UNACLA in relation with UN-Habitat Governing council and Habitat III
Third Conference on Financing for Development	13 – 15 <sup>th</sup> July 2015 Addis Ababa, Ethiopia	Reference in the <a href="#">final declaration</a> to the need to strengthen municipal finance (para. 34 of the Addis Action Agenda)
UNACLA meeting during the United Nations Sustainable Development Summit	September 2015 New York, USA	Renewal of membership structure Publication of the report <a href="#">Dialogues on implementation: Localizing the Post-2015 Development Agenda</a>
1 <sup>st</sup> session of the II World Assembly of local and regional authorities.	15 <sup>th</sup> May 2016 New York, USA	<a href="#">UNACLA Statement on Habitat III zero draft</a> endorsed by UNACLA members Creation of spaces of dialogue with member states. Agreement about the objectives and rules of procedure of the World Assembly of local governments. Approval of the 2016 workplan.



High Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development	July 2016 New York, USA	Local and regional government delegation Side event presenting the <a href="#">Roadmap for Localizing the SDGs: implementation and monitoring at subnational level</a>
Creation of the new UNACLA identity logo	August 2016	New identity and communication strategy.
UNACLA regular meeting World Summit of local and regional leaders.	13 <sup>th</sup> October 2016 Bogotá, Colombia	Adoption of UNACLA Quito Declaration Approval of the 2017 workplan.
III Session of II World Assembly of local and regional authorities	16 <sup>th</sup> October 2016 Quito, Ecuador	Issue of the <a href="#">UNACLA Quito Declaration</a>
III UN Conference on housing and sustainable urban development	17-20 <sup>th</sup> October 2016 Quito, Ecuador	Recognition of the key role of local and regional governments in implementing the <a href="#">New Urban Agenda</a> and para 9 on the localization process
II High-Level Meeting of the Global Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation	1 <sup>st</sup> December 2016 Nairobi, Kenya	Local and regional government delegation Side event presenting the <a href="#">Toolbox for Localizing the SDGs</a>

## CONTACT

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