

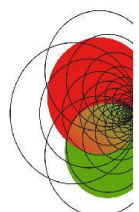


# *Consultations on the Localization of the Post 2015 Development Agenda*

Concept Paper



*Empowered lives.  
Resilient nations.*



GLOBAL TASKFORCE  
OF LOCAL AND REGIONAL GOVERNMENTS  
FOR **POST-2015** DEVELOPMENT AGENDA  
TOWARDS **HABITAT III**

**UN HABITAT**  
FOR A BETTER URBAN FUTURE

## Context

Over the last decade, the development agenda has been considerably broadened with the emergence of a wide range of global challenges while a growing demand for improved access to global public goods has called for innovative institutional arrangements and solutions. It has become evident that the **local dimension of development is increasingly intertwined with global and national issues**. The role of cities will become more and more important in the face of rapid urbanization where 60% of the world population will live in cities by 2030. Currently, issues such as peace, human security, health, employment, climate change, and migration are mainly dealt with at national and international levels, but truly tackling them will require attention to their local dimensions, implications and nuances. The role of the United Nations system is to support countries in preventing the negative externalities of development commonly associated with the lack of planning, participation and good governance.

*"It is often said that, like all politics, all development is ultimately local.*

*As the world strives for a more sustainable path in the years ahead, particularly beyond 2015, local voices and local action will be crucial elements in our quest...*

*it is crucial to preserve and nurture political spaces where local authorities can have an impact on decision-making at the global level...*

*Local authorities have significantly increased their engagement in global processes. The inputs of local leaders and municipal planners have never been more critical to guiding Member States toward embracing policies that achieve green, sustainable and inclusive cities."*

**Ban Ki Moon, UN Secretary-General, Message to the Meeting of the Global Task Force of Local and Regional Governments for the Post-2015 Development Agenda. 28 May 2013.**

One of the noted challenges of the implementation of MDGs is the initial lack of "grassroots support and community buy in".<sup>1</sup> Localizing the MDGs, at least in concept, began only after 2005 when a guideline document was developed by UNDG.<sup>2</sup> The mid-term evaluation of the MDGs in 2008 introduced certain key aspects on localization shared by the United Nations Secretary-General.<sup>3</sup> There was a clear indication that the achievement of the MDGs was not just a pursuit of discrete actions to improve statistics in the respective sectors, but a long-term concerted process that required elaboration of issues on ownership, local accountability, viability of local institutions, and sustainability of gains. This report introduced the phrase 'Localization of the MDGs'.<sup>4</sup> The lesson was that the achievement of critical objectives and challenges of the post-2015 development agenda such as eradicating poverty, reducing inequalities and exclusion, and achieving environmental sustainability, would depend on strong local action, buy-in, and leadership, embedded in a well coordinated multi-level governance system. **Any new development agenda will only impact people's lives if successfully implemented at the local level.** And many decisions that inform the functioning of local level services are taken at regional and national levels in a multi-level governance framework of collaboration.

<sup>1</sup> "Challenges and achievements in the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals for women and girls – the road ahead" - remarks by John Hendra | UN Women - Headquarters

<sup>2</sup> UNDP (2005) TOOLKIT FOR LOCALISING THE MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS: A UNDP Capacity Development Resource, UNDP, New York 2005.

<sup>3</sup> UN (2008) Committing to action: Achieving the MDGs. Background note by the UN Secretary-General to the high level event on the MDGs, 28 September 2008

<sup>4</sup> UNDP (2011) Urban Millennium Partnership: Localizing MDGs for meeting the challenge of MDGs in cities

The importance of local and regional governments in development is widely recognized. Indeed, this was emphasized at the MDGs-5 and Rio+20 summits and in the 2011 Busan Declaration and High Level Panel of Eminent Persons on the Post-2015 Agenda report. Their transformative role as key drivers of development has also been affirmed during the acceleration of the MDG implementation, which underlines the importance of bringing the perspectives of local and regional governments and other local governance stakeholders to the discussion on the renewed global development agenda. Local and regional governments are the primary point of institutional contact for the majority of people and are therefore key in ensuring that any future development policy will focus on individuals and communities. Local governments also have strong legitimacy and representation since they are directly elected by citizens and provide spaces for active public participation. ***People's engagement is not only important for the expression of development aspirations but will also ensure accountability, inclusive representation, quality and sustainability.*** The absence of opportunities and effective mechanisms for people engagement can lead to grievances and conflict; hence the interaction between local governments, civil and civic society, including traditionally excluded groups, informal local groups and private sector partners is of primary importance. The post-2015 development framework needs to intensify the accountability agenda specifically at the local level, given the growing demands of people for responsive policies and accountable governance. Harmonious action among multiple jurisdictions and bodies of government is needed to make things happen, together with the collaboration of the private sector and civil society. While it is true that no service can be completely organized and delivered from one level of government, it is also recognized that different levels have more or less relevance in the provision of services depending on the specific challenges and objectives they have to address. Constant dialogue and communication between all stakeholders is no longer an option but an obligation.

UNDG has advocated for the localization of the MDGs and is rolling out the MDG Acceleration Framework at the territorial levels to address bottlenecks that obstruct progress on MDG achievements. This localization of MDGs has influenced the achievement of three main areas: i) encouraging the different levels of government to work together to improve service delivery; ii) engaging citizens and mobilizing them to participate in and drive their development, and iii) addressing inequalities that hold up achievement of MDG targets. The MDG implementation process has shown that national ownership and local champions are indispensable for success. ***Creating enabling environments at the territorial level is paramount to ensure effective means of implementing any future development agenda.*** Within such an enabling environment local and regional governments together with other local governance stakeholders including informal groups can play a key role in promoting, building and sustaining dynamic and transformative partnerships that could become the means to implement the post 2015 agenda from the bottom up and respond to varied contexts (post crisis, peace building etc.)

***The Rio+20 outcome document emphasized the need for holistic urban development approaches for delivering sustainability.*** The need to focus on the urban dimension of development has recently been put forward by many institutions and networks (<http://urbansdg.org> and [www.unsdsn.org](http://www.unsdsn.org) among others). The OWG technical brief on sustainable cities highlights that *harnessing the positive potential of urbanization can maximize human development and wellbeing, while minimizing environmental impact. This requires intervention at multiple scales, i.e. national, regional and local, with the city-region as geographical key to implementing solutions beyond administrative boundaries. It also requires strengthened dialogue and partnerships with national governments, civil society, community-based organizations, international organizations, academia, and private sector*

*entities in the urban areas. It also calls for a territorial development approach that fosters two-way links across the urban-rural continuum and creates economic opportunities and enhanced quality of life in rural areas.*<sup>5</sup>

Building on the participatory process leading to Rio+20, the major local government associations and their partners constituted in December 2012 the *Global Task Force of local and regional Governments for the post 2015 development agenda towards Habitat III* (Global Task Force) with the objective to bring the voice of local governments into the process as well as to provide solutions that are already being implemented at the local level. *The Global Task Force* rightly claims that the post-2015 process success can only be guaranteed if it develops a sense of ownership and accountability at all levels: international, national, and territorial.

***While the first phase of the consultation was focused on the potential issues and areas to be included in a post-2015 development agenda, the means of implementation are now becoming more relevant.*** There is a growing demand from Member States to obtain ideas and inputs both related to specific themes and on how to make the agenda work. The continuation of the dialogue around the post-2015 agenda will focus on the following six themes: localizing the post 2015 development agenda, strengthening capacities and institutions; participatory monitoring and new forms of accountability, partnerships for implementation with civil society; and partnerships for implementation with the private sector. The call for a policy response to the trend of increased urbanization provides a great opportunity for the transformation and empowerment of the local institutions. The time has come to develop the local level potential to increase democracy and opportunities for equity and poverty reduction.

The need to localize the new framework has also been strongly expressed in the national consultations on the post 2015 development agenda.<sup>6</sup> In responding to this demand, ***it will be crucial to involve a wide range of different actors from outside of the UN in the consultations on how to localize the new agenda.*** This will bring ideas and legitimacy to the intergovernmental processes. The UN can also help to ensure that relevant 'development experiences' inform the post-2015 discussions, so that the set of SDGs finally agreed is actionable at international, national, but also at local levels.

In light of the above, the UNDP and UN-Habitat on behalf of UNDG and together with the Global Taskforce of local and regional governments are planning to deepen the consultation process in 2014 by sponsoring, together with national, regional and local governments (and associations thereof) and key local governance stakeholders, consultations on the means of implementation of the post 2015 agenda at the local level. Such consultations on the localization of a new development agenda will provide a valuable contribution from the local level and support in anchoring the discussions at national as well as international levels.

### ***Objectives and Process***

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The main objective of the consultation process is to stimulate inclusive national and territorial dialogues on the means of achieving the post-2015 development agenda at the

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<sup>5</sup> *The Technical Support Team to the Open Working Group (OWG) on Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) Issued a Brief on Sustainable Cities and Human Settlements. The TST is co-chaired by the Department of Economic and Social Affairs and the UNDP; this issue brief being co-led by UN-Habitat and UNEP.*

<sup>6</sup> *UN Country teams supported 88 countries to convene national consultations on the post 2015 development agenda. These are forums to exchange ideas for a shared vision of "The World We Want", in an open process tailored to country contexts.*

local level<sup>7</sup>. The main point to be made is to identify solutions at local level and to enhance the importance of the local dimension of development. The findings will be fed into different events and validated with relevant stakeholders, and finally presented to key decision-makers and leaders to inform the post-2015 development framework. The proposed consultation process on the localization of the post 2015 agenda will have the following major components:

### **1. National and Territorial Dialogues in at least 5 Partner Countries<sup>8</sup>**

Local and Territorial dialogues: The consultative process on localizing the post-2015 development agenda will start at the local level. Consultations will be led by local and regional governments reaching out to all segments of society, especially traditionally excluded groups (youth, women, persons with disabilities, etc.) and relying on already established participatory and inclusive governance mechanisms.<sup>9</sup> These local level consultations will be carried out at territorial level and will also include municipal level events, depending on the specific context and commitment of the local stakeholders. The discussions will also leverage current external social media platforms that already have heavy usage by millions of people globally, such as Facebook, Twitter, and Google+, and other engagement platforms for post-2015. In all these the focus will be on the specific challenges of implementing the new agenda in the territories, varied development environments and how to involve the population (formal and informal means) but also reflect upon multi-level governance issues, i.e. the linkages with the national level.

National Dialogues: In at least five countries a national event will then follow to consolidate the territorial level consultations' and stimulate a multi-level deliberation between local and national level. It will ensure that localization is not seen in isolation but rather as a key element of a multi-level governance system that links local and national institutions for a more effective means of implementation of the new development agenda. At both levels (local and national) a cross-sector<sup>10</sup> dialogue will be stimulated as a means to break up silos and tackle the main implementation challenges of the post-2015 development agenda in an integrated manner.

### **2. Feeding into Regional and Global Meetings for Dialogues on Localizing the Post 2015 Implementation**

Regular meetings of local authorities, territorial associations, settlement managers, and CSO in local and regional development groups provide the opportunity for discussions of the localization process. Such regional events spanning Europe, North America, Latin America, Africa, Arab States, Asia and the Pacific would be harnessed in support of the consultation. During these meetings segments will be devoted to discussion of the localization of Post 2015 implementation.

### **3. E-discussions and Outreach through Partner Organizations**

E-discussion: An e-discussion will be used to stimulate a multi-stakeholder dialogue bringing together relevant actors from many different backgrounds. It will be designed as part of the consultation process and feed into the other events as well as the final outcome report. It is

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<sup>7</sup> The consultation will be guided by the report of the High Level Panel for Post 2015 <http://www.post2015hlp.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/05/UN-Report.pdf>, A Million Voices: The World We Want | World We Want 2015 and the reports of the Open Working Group of the respective thematic areas.

<sup>8</sup> The territorial dialogues will be organized in accordance with local demands and possibilities and can take the form of seminars, panel discussions, workshops or a mix thereof. The national dialogue will provide the possibility to reconcile local with national views and be organised in an interactive format that stimulates and encourages the local views to be expressed.

<sup>9</sup> For example the Territorial Working Groups (TWGs) that are implemented within the context of the UNDP ART initiative. .

<sup>10</sup> The feedback from the territorial consultations would indicate the sectors to focus on for the "cross-sector dialogue"

hoped that by this virtual discussion the outreach of the consultation process can be further enhanced, including by drawing on the participation of other multilateral partners.

**Outreach:** Further outreach will be achieved through the dissemination of results to key partner organizations and direct engagement in facilitated discussions. This will include the membership of international associations of local and regional governments associated in the Global Taskforce of Local and Regional Governments<sup>11</sup>, African Ministerial Conference on Decentralization and Local Development (AMCOD) etc.), international associations of civil society organizations, private sector associations, Foundations etc.

#### **4. Global Meeting in Two Hosting Countries and New York**

Finally, two meetings will be held in two host countries, one from the North, the other from the South, providing the opportunity to present the outcome of the discussion to the respective constituency of local and regional governments, CSO's and the leadership of countries responsible for local and regional development planning, settlements development, service delivery and local governance. The key outputs of the two meetings would be a validated report for submission to the Secretary General on the localization of the implementation of the Post-2015. Finally in New York, the two host countries would be tasked to facilitate the dissemination of the result of the consultation and organize a Side-Event at the GA meeting targeting mainly representatives of member countries. A major envisioned output of the side-event would be a joint statement capturing the outcomes of the consultation that will accompany the final report to be presented to the UN Secretary-General.

#### **Execution Team**

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The consultation is **co-led by UNDP, UNHABITAT and the** Global Task Force of regional and local governments for the post-2015 development agenda towards Habitat III, co-hosted by two national governments (Yet to be selected).<sup>12</sup> Other key partners would be the relevant international networks of local and regional governments that are not members of the Task Force and other UN Agencies. It is planned to carry out at least 5/6 national consultations (in Africa, Latin America and Asia & the Pacific, Middle East and Europe). The execution team will jointly facilitate the organization of the national consultations, at the local and national levels, mobilize their constituencies and put forward a number of defined elements for discussion and debate for the consultative process.

The consultation process will be guided by an **Advisory Committee** providing a moderating role. Members of the advisory committee would be selected from some of the above mentioned organizations, including other interested UN agencies, civil society, private sector, foundations and academics and most importantly the host and supporting countries. The Advisory Group will guide the consultation process thereby ensuring transparency and inclusiveness of the process. It will also be responsible for determining the most effective way the results of the consultation process could be fed in the post 2015 discussions and how to inform decision-makers on the results.

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<sup>11</sup> See [www.gt2016.org](http://www.gt2016.org)

<sup>12</sup> Other partner organizations might involve relevant international networks of local and regional governments such as UCLG, FOGAR, CLGF, FMDV, etc. as well as international civil society associations such as CONCORD, BEYOND 2015, ALDA, etc.



## Key Content Areas for Exploration

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The consultations will be organized in a flexible way to allow for adjusting to local realities. This refers to the 'format of the consultations' but also to the thematic scope and key areas to be addressed. The overview below presents some key areas providing guidance and overall direction but is by no means to be strictly applied in each national process.

The local and national consultations should support national, territorial and local stakeholders in adapting the post 2015/SDG process and to reflect on their respective local reality. It should allow **i) identifying key local stakeholders for the implementation of any prospected goal or target; ii) analyzing and defining roles and functions of local institutions and stakeholders for working towards the targets; iii) defining mechanisms and processes for facilitating the implementation process' iv) identifying capacity gaps of relevant local stakeholders; v) analyzing participation and inclusiveness for the implementation process including local accountability mechanisms to populations; vi) identifying simple but effective monitoring and reporting systems including identifying data sources, gaps and means of replenishing; vii) discussing the implementation of the principles of development cooperation effectiveness at the local level; viii) linking the process related discussions to specific thematic areas; ix) territorial solidarity and the impact of the rural-urban solidarity in sustainability and x) the effect of increasing urbanization on the access to basic services.**

The following key considerations will help to frame the discussions:

**ad i)** Stakeholder mapping: Territorial and local governments as key actors for accelerating poverty reduction in a context of sustainable development need to be given a prominent role in implementing the Post 2015 agenda. It is therefore important to identify key local governance stakeholders (formal and informal) that are already involved in shaping the development of the territory. It should also involve the tracing of influential informal groups in some cases formed on ethnic, or kinship ties which might not be that explicit. A special effort is required to reach marginalized groups, which may be excluded due to gender, wealth, ethnic and even physiological differences. The stakeholder mapping and further analysis will provide a common understanding of local actors' (formal and informal) relative influence and power, specific interest, roles and functions and relationship with other groups and the local development process.

**ad ii)** Defining local bottlenecks and opportunities for Post 2015 Implementation: Information from the stakeholder mapping and analysis should be followed by a strong interactive process which will identify key impeding factors to localizing the Post 2015 development agenda and opportunities for enhancing the implementation. The factors may be structural, locational, cultural, physical, and vary in stable and post crises situations. Further discussions can be framed by focusing on certain key areas that have proven to be key elements in implementing any development plan at the local level: i) multilevel governance mechanisms, ii) cross sector approach, iii) integrated sustainable development (integration of social, environmental and economic pillars), and iv) territorial approach and dialogue, v) sustainable urbanization, vi) local service delivery vii) relative access to development inputs by marginalized groups etc. During the consultation process respective best practices and/or instruments will be documented.

**ad iii)** People's engagement: This is not only important for the expression of their needs and development aspirations but also to ensure accountability and inclusive representation. The post-2015 development framework needs to intensify the accountability agenda, given the growing demands of people in industrialized and developing countries for responsive policies and accountable governance. Discussion on local accountability systems involving the marginalized groups and the relationship between state and society could be discussed.

It should, however, be noted that one consultation process is solely dealing with “participatory monitoring and new forms of accountability”.

**ad iv)** Monitoring and evaluation mechanisms: This will be of utmost importance to the post 2015 agenda. Models for joint monitoring for all local stakeholders might well be a further stepping stone towards creating trust and a dynamic partnership for development at the local level. The identification of available data sources, gaps and means of replenishing will be an important issue to be addressed as well as the development of relevant indicators.