

# ICLEI's position on the UN Sustainable Development Summit 2015 and Outcome Document

## SDGs are happening in cities and regions near you – #GetInspired!

- Leave no one behind, and let everyone be inspired by pioneers, particularly those advancing Agenda 21 since 1992.
- Mainstream the ambitions of today to become the norms of tomorrow in every community and jurisdiction.
- Use the SDGs as the floor, not the ceiling!

### Content:

1. Background and Summary
2. ICLEI's position on the UN SD Summit Outcome Document
3. ICLEI's analysis of Strengths-Weaknesses-Threats-Opportunities of the UN SD Summit and Outcome Document
4. Key Findings of ICLEI's Global Review of Local Sustainability 1990-2012, presented at Rio+20
5. ICLEI's visualization of "Transforming the Urban World to Sustainability"
6. Annexes

More information:

<http://www.iclei.org/activities/our-advocacy/sustainable-development-summit-2015.html>

## 1. Background and Summary

Every year in September, Head of States and Governments of Member States of the United Nations convene at the General Assembly to share their views on global issues. This year's 70<sup>th</sup> Session of the United Nations General Assembly will be preceded by the [UN Sustainable Development Summit 2015](#) that will conclude with the adoption of the outcome document "[Transforming Our World: 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development](#)", including a set of 17 [universal goals for sustainable development](#) of which Goal 11 aims for "Making cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable".

This new pathway for sustainable development completes the remaining outcomes of the Rio+20 conference held in 2012, builds on the experiences of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) between 2000-2015, and connects the outcomes of the global intergovernmental processes in 2015, including the 3<sup>rd</sup> World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction in Sendai, Japan in March 2015; and the 3<sup>rd</sup> Financing for Development Conference held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia in July 2015.

ICLEI – Local Governments for Sustainability is actively engaged in these processes, thanks to its role as:

- the oldest Organizing Partner of the Local Authorities Major Group at UN fora on sustainability since 1992, and a UN ECOSOC accredited organization with a special consultative status since 2000,
- the focal point of Local Governments and Municipal Authorities Constituency (LGMA) to the UNFCCC since 1995, co-lead of the Global Public Procurement Programme under 10YFP
- facilitator of the Local Government Climate and Biodiversity Roadmaps since 2007,
- an active member of the Management Committee of the Compact of Mayors and endorsing partner of the Compact of States and Regions, as well as lead member of the Global Task Force of Local and Regional Governments in Post2015 Development Agenda towards HABITAT III, the Urban SDG Campaign, the Communitas Coalition and as partner of the World Urban Campaign.

### **Within this scope, it is ICLEI's position that:**

1. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its 17 Sustainable Development Goals is an essential basis, however, more must still be done;
2. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development can turn into a race-to-the-top with the goal of leaving no one behind, if everyone is inspired by ambitious pioneers;
3. For the 2030 Agenda to achieve global sustainability for all, local governments must be encouraged and supported so that today's ambitious actions become tomorrow's norm.
4. In particular, working towards Goal 11 on cities will leverage the necessary power to ensure the sustainable transformation of our Urban World by 2030;
5. The transformation of the Urban World towards a Sustainable one must now be built on 3 cornerstones: the *spirit and vision* laid out in Chapter 28 of Agenda 21 ("Local Agenda 21") in 1992; the concept of *multilevel governance* established in para.42 of The Future We Want document from Rio+20 in 2012; and now the *transparency and accountability* that we are building through the SDGs for the year 2030, including Goal 11 on sustainable cities and human settlements.

## 2. ICLEI's Position on the UN Sustainable Development Summit 2015 Outcome Document

The adoption of the Outcome Document and the universal set of Sustainable Development Goals demonstrate the willingness of the national governments and the global stakeholders to seize this huge opportunity to ensure the survival of humankind and preserve the balance of the Earth's ecosystems.

ICLEI welcomes the Outcome Document as an achievement and commends all advocacy partners for their extensive collaboration in ensuring that the voices, concerns, visions and proposals of local and subnational governments – as governmental stakeholders of the local, subnational, national, regional, and global processes – are reflected in this outcome to the extent that has been possible.

This strengthened commitment of the UN comes at a time when our world and communities are facing numerous, but in particular ecological crises, bringing us close to a point of no-return. The risk is high of nullifying all the social and economic progress achieved over the past decades as a result of the failure to fully implement all principles of sustainable development since their adoption by the United Nations at the Earth Summit in 1992.

### **ICLEI welcomes the achievements of the global Agenda for Sustainable Development 2030**

ICLEI supports the adoption of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals, as an important effort to ensure prosperity and equality for every citizen while respecting planetary boundaries.

For those that have not been fully engaged in sustainability in the past, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) constitutes an excellent starting point, ensuring that no one is left behind.

However, at ICLEI we know that ambitious local and subnational governments have for years been working on urban sustainability initiatives, thanks to the spirit, vision and experience through "Local Agenda 21" enshrined in the Chapter 28 of the Agenda 21 adopted at the Earth Summit in 1992.

The adoption of Goal 11: "Making cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable" is one of the most powerful outcomes of the 3-year negotiation process. It shall ensure a true transformation, considering the fact that the implementation of the SDSs will take place in an urban world with corresponding challenges and opportunities that have never been faced in the history of humanity.

ICLEI notes that the implementation of Goal 11 and all provisions related to the engagement of local and subnational governments have to be assessed together with para.42 of the Rio+20 The Future We Want document, para 19.e-f and 27.b of the 2030 Sendai Framework on Disaster Risk Reduction, para.34 of the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, para.34 of the UN SD Summit Outcome Document, as well as possible outcomes of the Paris Climate Package at the UNFCCC COP21/CMP11 in December 2015 and the final design of the New Urban Agenda to be presented at the UN's Habitat III Conference in October 2016.

### ICLEI's recommendations and commitment to raise the bar higher

1. The implementation of the Outcome Document and SDGs should be considered as the “floor”, not the “ceiling”, in order to achieve even more ambitious goals and not be considered as “too little, too late”.
2. The transformation of our societies towards a path of sustainability where no one is left behind can only succeed, if these efforts turn into “a race-to-the-top” rather than “seeking the lowest-common-denominator”.
3. Thus, ICLEI encourages all actors to be inspired by those pioneers who have been demonstrating the good practices of sustainable development, in particular at the local level, thanks to the spirit and guidance of the Local Agenda 21, as enshrined in Chapter 28 of the UN's Agenda 21 in 1992. As the largest and the oldest global network of ambitious local governments committed to sustainability, ICLEI is ready to contribute to the success of the Outcome Document and the SDGs by taking its implementation forward, through its membership network, vision through ICLEI's Urban Agendas, experience, capacities and partnerships.
4. On SDGs, ICLEI will provide active contributions for the development and implementation of monitoring and reporting within the indicators framework, with a focus on disaggregation by community and government level and enhanced vertical integration. ICLEI offers its experience with for example the carbonn Climate Registry, Global Protocol for Community Scale GHG Emissions, Cities Biodiversity Outlook, EcoMobility SHIFT Indicators, Sustainable Public Procurement, Local Sustainability Management, and the ISO37120 on Sustainable Development of Communities.
5. As a concrete demonstration of this commitment, ICLEI Members, elected representatives and staff are committed to develop new programs and tools in order to **make today's ambitious actions tomorrow's norm** in the quest for global sustainability. ICLEI expresses willingness to work with all like-minded partners from all spheres and stakeholder constituencies in developing fruitful and respectful partnerships for a wider dissemination and implementation of this endeavor.

### 3. ICLEI's analysis of the Strengths, Weaknesses, Threats, and Opportunities of the UN SD Summit and Outcome Document

ICLEI believes the following to be the strengths, weaknesses, threats and opportunities presented by the UN Sustainable Development Summit and the outcome document "Transforming Our World: 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development":

#### STRENGTHS

**1. Strengthened commitment:** Since 1992, none of the goals defined in Agenda 21 and its conventions (i.e. climate change – biodiversity – desertification – forests) have been met globally. Out of 500 goals defined in numerous multilateral environmental agreements, only 4 of them have been achieved. The 2015 Sustainable Development Summit can help to scale up action and commitment to get back on track regarding global environmental commitments.

**2. Holistic approach:** Although Agenda 21 for Sustainable Development was aiming to make progress in social, economic and environmental pillars, for a long time, it was considered by many actors as only an environmental agenda. The upcoming UN Summit is making an important attempt to synergize all these pillars once again under sustainable development. Connecting sustainable development to peace, ensuring Financing for Development as an element of the Outcome Document Declaration, and the mandating of ECOSOC and General Assembly for the follow-up and review are also positive elements. It is very likely that there will be no more global summits every 10 or 20 years and progress will be assessed more frequently under the High Level political Forum.

**3. Universality:** the Millenium Development Goals were applicable to some countries and on some issues. Sustainable Development Goals are for all countries and all aspects of human civilization, with adjusted implementation pathways based on national priority, capacity and conditions.

**4. Stakeholders** were also actively engaged, tough in different modes in each step and process, throughout the consultation and negotiations, which gives an important ownership.

## WEAKNESSES

**1. Lack of enforcement:** The United Nations have been agreeing on sanctions to nations if they violate certain rules on trade or security. However, no sanctions are considered for violation of agreed goals and rules on sustainable development. Considering that the Kyoto Protocol – the only process that enforces compliance – is also weakened, it is very hard to expect that any national government will be held accountable to a failure of meeting any of the Sustainable Development Goals or other provisions.

**2. Dispersed modalities of implementation:** The Major Groups system for the implementation of the Agenda 21 is dissolved with the transition to the ECOSOC modalities. No system is in place yet but there is a tendency to group all stakeholders under the civil society and business, which creates the *need for a more appropriate engagement of local and subnational governments as governmental stakeholders*. There is also a growing tendency for independent regional, thematic, or global partnerships with various independent structures for governance and accountability.

## OPPORTUNITIES

**1. The Urban World:** Over the past 20+ years, most successful implementations of the sustainable development have been achieved at the local level. 2030 will be an Urban World which presents enormous potential, backed up with additional social, technical, cultural, technological and governance innovations. The HABITAT III Conference in 2016 will be important in this regard.

## THREATS

**1. Climate Change:** The 2030 agenda has no chance of implementation without a rapid, ambitious and global transformation to low-carbon and climate resilient development. An inclusive and ambitious climate regime to be adopted at UN Paris Climate Change Conference is essential and crucial.

## 4. Key findings of ICLEI's Global Review of Local Sustainability 1990-2012 presented at Rio+20

In the lead up to the momentous Rio+20 United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development in 2012 we took stock of the previous two decades of local sustainability work worldwide, the impressive progress that had been made and key priorities moving forward. The following 10 conclusions of the Global Review of *Local Sustainability 2012 – Taking stock and moving forward* (ICLEI, 2012), are highly relevant for the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as the new building blocks of a post-2015 global Agenda for Sustainable Development by 2030:

1. **Local consciousness about global and future impacts of today's action has never been as high**, with an acceptance of both the limits of global ecosystems and the future global effects of local activities.
2. **A good local sustainability process combines various mutually supportive driving forces**, combining the unique energy and quality of: local government, civil society, business, networks, national governments and international partners.
3. **The multi-local movement has prepared the ground for advancing national and international sustainability policies**. The potential of local sustainability processes to prepare radical policy shifts on all levels through political and social innovation must be recognized and further developed.
4. **Local sustainability processes are hubs of social innovation**. By combining classic methods of consultation and participatory policy development with new forms of spontaneous and collective action, local sustainability processes can strengthen their role as test beds of sustainable innovation.
5. **Local sustainability was one of the first open source development processes**, also one of its biggest strengths. Global programs for sustainable development have to combine the variety, creativity and adaptability of local strategies with universal national and international support structures.
6. **Local governments have to deal with the effects of a deregulated globalized economy**. Local sustainability processes are required to address the vacuum between globalized economic activity and insufficient protection of natural and human resources by national and international policy.
7. **Greening the economy is a chance to address the crisis**. Changing the conditions for human economic activities bears invaluable potential for correcting the until now unsustainable development on Earth at the source
8. **'The future we want' requires a new definition of growth and indicators of human development that are easily communicated to the public**, and simply calculated at the local, national, and international level. GDP must be replaced by a development index based on social wellbeing and environmental quality.
9. **Sustainable development needs a multilevel governance system with a multi-sectoral approach**. The UN's institutional framework for sustainable development should include local governments as governmental stakeholders while national and international legislation must support their efforts.
10. **It is time to move from national interests to global environmental justice**.

Further information is available in the following supporting documents:

**Annex PART-I: Mayor's Guide to UN Sustainable Development Summit 2015**

1. Overview of the UN Sustainable Development Summit 2015
2. List of the Sustainable Development Goals and 5 P's of the Outcome Document Preamble ( People, Planet, Prosperity, Partnerships, and Peace)
3. Sustainable Development Goal 11: "Making cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable"
4. Selected 15 targets of other Goals that will have high impact on ICLEI's work
5. Most relevant 5 paragraphs of the Outcome Document related to Cities, Local and Subnational Governments
6. Other key decisions of the United Nations related to Cities, Local and Subnational Governments adopted since Rio+20
7. Achievements of the Sustainable Development advocacy of local and subnational governments 1992-2013
8. Visual presentation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

**Annex PART-II: ICLEI and the SDGs**

1. ICLEI's 10 Urban agendas in relation to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)
2. Selected examples of ambitious activities of ICLEI Members related to 17 SDGs
3. Selected examples of ambitious activities of ICLEI Members related to SDG Goal 11: "Making cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable"
4. ICLEI's engagement in the negotiations since Rio+20 (2012-2015)
5. ICLEI's global advocacy at the intergovernmental processes

**Annex PART-III: Local Authorities Major Group Position Paper March 2015 on SDGs**

Appendix-1: Second urban sustainable development goal campaign consultation on targets and indicators: summary of Bangalore Outcome Document

Appendix-2: Selected indicators to localize SDGs or to embed a territorial dimension

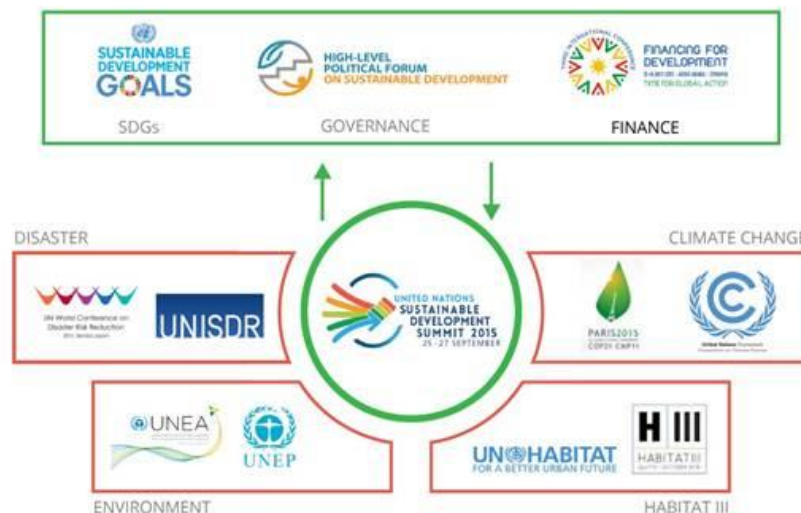
Appendix-3: Selected bottom-up initiatives for monitoring sustainability at the local and subnational level



## Transforming the Urban World towards Sustainability

**Guiding Principles:** 1992 Agenda 21 (Chapter:28) → 2012 The Future We Want (Para.42) → 2030 SDGs (with Goal 11)  
*Spirit & Vision* *Multilevel Governance* *Transparency & Accountability*

**Processes connected to SD Agenda:**



**Advocacy partnerships:**



## Cornerstones of Transforming the Urban World towards Sustainability

