



The Global Parliament of Mayors Resolution

Resolution Empowering Cities to Cope with Global Challenges

At the occasion of the First UN-Habitat Assembly: Nairobi, 29 May 2019

We, the Global Parliament of Mayors, represent 42 cities at the occasion of the First UN-Habitat Assembly,

- Having agreed during its Virtual Plenary Session in May 2019¹
- A. Globalization is urbanisation. In the last decennia of the XXst century not only globalization occurred, but the demographic boom has been concentrated in urban areas. The New Urban Agenda and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development were adopted in times of these profound global changes. The Kuala Lumpur Declaration on Cities 2030, adopted in 2018 at the ninth session of the World Urban Forum, acknowledged several trends and challenges in our increasingly urbanized world that have transformative implications for the implementation of the New Urban Agenda and other global development agendas.
- B. Cities grow bigger. The world continues to experience an increase in its urban population. When the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development was adopted in 2015, 54 per cent (4 billion) of the world's population lived in urban areas; by the end of the 20-year period (2036) covered by the New Urban Agenda, 62 per cent (5.4 billion) of the world's population are expected to reside in urban areas. Cities have also grown bigger. In 1900 there were only 11 cities of more than a million inhabitants, only London and New York had more than 8 million. Today near to 600 cities have more than a million inhabitants, with nearly 30 mega poles of more than 10 million. In the same trend cities have also become the centres of economic activity and innovation.
- C. A changing world system. Globalization has fundamentally changed the structure of the world system. Cities are not just localities in countries. They have become the nodal points of trans border networks. Throughout the increase of international collaboration, globalization and the world market have been increasingly regulated through international bodies, treaties and institutions. But the space of flows has led to yet another geography of networks between nodal points. That space structures the urban interconnectedness. The world system has become a triangle with the global, the system of nation states and the system of urban networks. They have each particular dynamics and cannot be contained in one hierarchical structure. That systemic feature has not yet been recognized in the distribution of competences and the organization of regulatory bodies. UN Habitat is still governed through a collaboration of international organizations and representatives of national governments. Cities are only included as observers or advisors and considered as local authorities within their State.
- D. Urban agency is essential. The New Urban Agenda recognizes urbanization as a transformative trend of twenty-first century². It thus recognizes the centrality of cities and urban areas in addressing social cohesion and governance.
- E. Planetary challenges. All scientific reports and policy documents do recognize the main challenges of the world system. Climate change is the pregnant aspect of a deeper ecological crisis including way to high ecological footprint of the existing economic system, the crisis of

¹ First voting round: 15-17 May 2019. The second voting round on the amended resolution: 22-24 May 2019

² Progress in the implementation of the New Urban Agenda and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (Report of the Executive Director)

biodiversity, the exhaustion of natural resources and the destructive land use. Social inequality is increasing and putting in jeopardy the basic economic and financial balances. Humanity becomes more and more multicultural and hybrid challenging the monocultural traditions of managing territories. Cities are both at the origin and the solution for those challenges. That fact has been recognized by the international policies.³

- F. Ecological challenge. Climate change is one of the greatest challenges that cities must contend with. Cities account for 60–80 per cent of energy consumption and generate as much as 70 per cent of the human-induced greenhouse gas emissions. Cities are also highly vulnerable to the effects of climate change and extreme weather events. In addition to being a global issue, climate change is thus also a local issue, and cities have a crucial role to play in addressing climate change and meeting the target of the Paris Agreement.
- G. Social inequality. Inequality has become a major trend that has implications for achieving both the New Urban Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals. The gap between the rich and the poor is presently at its highest level in the past 30 years. The top 1 per cent of earners has captured twice as much of the global growth since the 1980s as the poorest 50 per cent. At the urban level, 75 per cent of the world's cities have higher levels of income inequality than they did two decades ago. Inequality is more visible in cities than in rural areas, with women, young people and the aged especially affected by inequality. The New Urban Agenda and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development address inequality.
- H. Multicultural cities. Migration is the main factor driving much of the increase in urbanization and, in the process, making cities diverse places in which to live. There are 258 million international migrants in the world up from 220 million in 2010 and 173 million in 2000. Most of these migrants are found in urban areas.
- I. Recognizing urbanity. These urban challenges request to reconsider the distribution of power and competences at the right level, giving cities and urban areas the means to act and initiate the necessary systemic transitions. Not only such institutional and legal changes are barely considered, the reports even state a reduction of means: "The New Urban Agenda and other development agendas are being implemented within the context of stagnation or even possible decline in the share of development assistance available for urban programmes". This lack of recognition of the centrality of urban governance to positively cope with the global challenges increases the tension between cities and the suburban hinterland, between urbanity and the national governments. This tension is even more tangible when national governments opt for protective nationalist orientations.
- J. Multilevel governance. It is thus urgent to reorganize democratic government, recognizing the interdependence of different levels and scales and allowing cities and urban areas to take up their responsibilities in answering the systemic challenges before us. Empowering cities, giving them the competences and the means, is a necessary condition to making the new policies successful.
- K. Interdependence. The global system has become interdependent on all levels. The idea of independence and autonomy on the national territory is bypassed by the global planetary challenges that involve the whole world in all its aspects. Not only international agreements and treaties are necessary, they need to be implemented at the right scale and with the right pace. The necessary regulation needs a multiscalar, a multilevel governance with a redistribution of competences at the right scales and with more developed collaborative structures.
- L. At the global level. As a democratic world government is out of reach, the global system will be governed and regulated through agreements and treaties, with their own legitimation. It is necessary that all levels included in implementation and conditions for success are partners in decision making. It is thus of utmost importance that cities, in the first place the biggest metropolitan areas, have a voice in elaborating and agreeing on the international planning where they are the main operators.

³ Progress in the implementation of the New Urban Agenda and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (Report of the Executive Director)

- M. Continental collaboration. As the planetary challenges have to be dealt with on different scales, continental collaboration and integration is an important of it. Continental federation of nation-states is underway. But the infrastructure of urban networks and connections is underrepresented.
- N. Functional urban areas. To be able to really make a sustainable and social transition successful it is necessary to integrate policies at the lowest level of a local ecosystem. It is at that level of proximity that ecosystemic services, mobility and circulation plans, housing and economic innovation schemes, etc. have to start. That local ecosystem has in most cases to be combined with the functional urban area. That level needs a governmental architecture based on collaboration of the city and surrounding municipalities, of city-regions and metropolitan areas, with the means and competences of integrating transversal policy domains.
- O. From government to governance. A redistribution of legitimate power at the right scale involves not only an interdependent redistribution between levels from the global to the local to regulate the global-local nexus, it also implies a shift in local government from top down ruling to collaborative coproduction.
- P. Legitimate local authority. Empowering cities involves deepening democratic local government. At the level of representative democratic bodies and councils urban democracy has to be broadened. UN Habitat could be a leverage to develop the importance of local elections and representation, elected mayors, local competences and relative autonomy from the central state, etc.
- Q. Civil society. The urban system at the level of the functional urban area is too complex to be governed solely by elected bodies and administrations. Consultation, participation of and coproduction with the private sector and civil society is necessary. A shift from government to governance is needed and different modes of participatory democracy and co-deliberation need to be gradually introduced in regulating the local.
- R. From linear to circular. Coping with the planetary challenges and enhancing a sustainable and social transition will involve developing an urbanity shifting from a linear relationship with the environment to a more circular and rooted domestic economy with shorter production and distribution circuits, recycling and shared economies, developing urban commons and public services, etc. Urban governance needs to include the competences and capacities to develop these transitions.

– Taking this assessment into consideration the Global Parliament of Mayors

1. Stresses that Cities and their public representatives must be represented both in relevant international agreements and in relevant international and global bodies and institutions.
2. Calls on a structural representation of the metropolitan and city-networks in regional bodies and institutions as well as international bodies and institutions to advocate for appropriate policies that maximize effective solutions.
3. Recommends that “functional urban area” as defined for the OECD metropolitan database is an appropriate definition of “cities” and entry-point for concrete interventions. It defines best the multiple interactions between the city and its hinterland and indicates an effective level of local governance.
4. Recommends empowering cities by deepening local representation, expanding participation of citizens and shifting towards more circular and domestic economy.
5. Stresses the necessity to redistribute power and autonomy to cities to improve multi-level governance.
6. Instructs its Executive Committee to present this resolution to the Executive Director of UN-Habitat during the 1st UN-Habitat Assembly to be held in May 2019 in Nairobi, Kenya, and forward it to the UN Secretary-General, international institutions and to continental parliaments

and regulatory bodies, as well as to national governments and parliaments. Other urban networks and organisations, as well as the media, will also be informed about this resolution.

Written resolution is supported by the following Mayors and Cities

Agree

- Ahmedabad, India: Mayor Bijal Patel
 - Amritsar, India: Mayor Karamjit Singh Rintu
 - Asbury Park, United States: Honorary Member Ed Johson
 - Banjul, The Gambia: Deputy Mayor Alpha Khan
 - Braga, Portugal: Mayor Ricardo Rio
 - Brikama, The Gambia: Mayor Sonko Shriffo
 - Bristol, United Kingdom: Mayor Marvin Rees
 - Cape Town, South Africa: Mayor Daniel Plato*
 - Clarkson, Georgia USA: Mayor Ted Terry
 - Cluj-Napoca, Romania: Mayor Emil Boc
 - Durban, South Africa: Mayor Zandile Gumede
 - El Qrayeh, Lebanon: Mayor Maroun Antoun
 - Florence, Italy: Mayor Dario Nardella
 - Gaborone, Botswana: Mayor Haskins Nkaigwa
 - Gagra, Pakistan: Mayor Syed Salar Jehan
 - Ghent, Belgium: Former Mayor Daniël Termont
 - Heidelberg, Germany: Mayor Eckart Würzner
 - Hoima, Uganda: Mayor Grace Mary Mugasa
 - Kampala, Uganda: Mayor Emmanuel Serunjoji
 - Kiel, Germany: Mayor Ulf Kämpfer
 - Kuntaur, The Gambia: Mayor Jawara Saihu
 - Ljubljana, Slovenia: Mayor Klement Cepon
 - Mannheim, Germany: Mayor Peter Kurz*
 - Menieh, Lebanon: Mayor Imad Matar
 - Mbale, Uganda: Mayor Mutwalibi Zandya Mafabi
 - Mogadishu, Somalia: Mayor Abdirahman Omar Osman
 - Nansana, Uganda: Mayor Regina Bakitte
 - Njikwa, Cameroon: Mayor Itambi Tagyen Andrew
 - Palermo, Italy: Mayor Leoluca Orlando
 - Pittsburgh, United States of America: Mayor William Peduto
 - Puerto Morazan, Nicaragua: Mayor Raul Ruiz
 - Pristina, Kosovo: Mayor Shpend Ahmeti*
 - Quelimane, Mozambique: Mayor Manuel de Araujo
 - Sadao, Thailand: Mayor Suriya Yeekhun
 - Sao Paulo, Brazil: Mayor Bruno Covas
 - Sindelfingen, Germany: Mayor Bernd Vöhringer
 - Sintra, Portugal: Mayor Basilio Horta
 - Stuttgart, Germany: Mayor Fritz Kuhn
 - Tegucigalpa, Honduras: Mayor Nasry Asfura
 - Vyas, Nepal: Mayor Baikuntha Nath Neupane
 - Wilksburg, Pennsylvania, USA: Mayor Marita Garrett
- *Agree with the original resolution the first voting round