

Statement delivered by Emilia Saiz, Secretary General of UCLG

On behalf of the constituency of local and regional governments

Session of the UN-HABITAT Committee of Permanent Representatives

June 29- July 1, 2021

Dear Chair, dear Vice-Chairs, dear Executive Director, Madam Mohd Sharif, dear colleagues from UN-Habitat and other constituencies,

Thank you for opening the **Committee of Permanent Representatives** to the local and regional governments constituency to provide its inputs. We would also like to thank you for the informative session earlier today and would like to congratulate UN-Habitat for the work done.

Firstly, the local and regional governments constituency strongly supports UN Habitat's Strategic Plan 2020-2023 and its vision: "A better quality of life for all in an urbanizing world" which truly relies on the efforts of all actors to become a reality. As you well know, local and regional governments and their associations have been at the forefront of protecting communities and the planet during the COVID-19 crisis, working tirelessly at the frontline to safeguard the rights and health of all via local public service delivery.

Secondly, as constituency of local and regional governments, we see the review and implementation of the New Urban Agenda as a key moment to ensure that our constituency is fully involved in the achievement of the agenda's targets and objectives, strongly interlinked with the current UN Strategic Plan and its four domains of change. Guaranteeing the implementation of the New Urban Agenda is an accelerator of the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals and 2030 Agenda and we stand ready to convene the World Assembly of Local and Regional Governments, explicitly recognized within the New Urban Agenda.

Thirdly, we would like to respectfully recall the importance of bolstering local action and strengthening engagement with the local government constituency for the achievement of the global agendas. In this regard, we believe that expressly recognizing the transformative role that Voluntary Local Reviews play in the achievement of the global agendas, their bridge with Voluntary National Reviews, and the importance of engaging with our constituency within Common Country Analyses and the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework will be key. VLRs are not only a reporting tool, they are a tool that strengthens coordination, accountability, transparency, cooperation (horizontal and vertical), and contributes to local ownership of the global goals.

Finally, we would also like to respectfully recall the importance of ensuring capacity building is prioritized both during and beyond the COVID-19 pandemic and urge UN Habitat to strengthen the engagement of local governments in processes led by UN Resident Coordinators at the country level. In a context of unprecedented and universal challenges, guaranteeing that all actors involved in the implementation of the New Urban Agenda have the tools necessary to achieve its goals and targets will be vital.

This pandemic has galvanized the critical role of local and regional governments and brought to light the intrinsic link between local public service provision and the health of our communities and planet. It would be a missed opportunity not to strengthen the existing capacities and to not mandate around our constituency as we are a critical building block of the UN Common Agenda in the making, complementing the work done in the framework of

the UN Taskforce on the future of cities which is indispensable. In alliance with the stakeholders present here, as the constituency of local and regional governments is also part of the General Assembly of Partners, we assume our share of responsibility and the efforts needed to help our societies rebuild better, and remain fully committed to working hand in hand with international actors and Member States. Thank you.