



**Opening Ceremony Address by the United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG) and the South African Local Government Association (SALGA) President, Cllr Parks Tau, at the Africities 8 Summit in Marrakech, Morocco**

20 November 210

His Royal Highness, King Mohammed VI,  
Honourable Ministers and Ambassadors,  
Dear partners,  
Dear mayors,  
Colleagues and friends

Greetings to all in attendance,

**Introduction**

It is an honour to address you at this historic Africities 8 Summit, which is convened under the central theme; *'The transition to sustainable cities and territories: the role of local and subnational governments in Africa'*.

On behalf of the UCLG global network, allow me to take a moment to sincerely thank our distinguished hosts, His Royal Highness, the Government of Morocco and our friend and colleague, the mayor of the pearl city of Marrakech, Councillor Mohamed Larbi Belcaid.

To all of you, thank you for enabling this Summit which is really a Pan-African dialogue platform.

I also extend deep gratitude to all of our continental and international partners who have made this Summit possible and for ensuring it will be a roaring success over the next four days.

## **Local governments key for development**

Dear friends,

Cities of all sizes, from megacities to smaller and intermediary cities, are connecting our continent to positive development and transformation to meet the complex challenges that the 21<sup>st</sup> century is bringing to our daily lives.

In the nexus of globalisation, urbanisation, migration, and the fourth industrial revolution, there lies great opportunities in as much as there are significant challenges that will mark the future of humanity.

There is no doubt that, on the whole, local and regional governments are at the forefront in defining the quality of livelihoods of the African citizens and communities.

I am convinced that it is in our collective grasp, and within reach, for our cities and territories, to rise up to the 21<sup>st</sup> century challenges and provide the best possible opportunities for everybody.

In this way, local and global goals are intrinsically linked, and the destiny of the African Continent will also be the destiny of the world.

## **Key agenda for Africa**

Dear colleagues,

I believe that the subjects earmarked for being addressed at the Summit are essential and existential. To adequately address them will require bold discussions and the fostering of innovative solutions to overcome, among other issues:

- migration in Africa and in the world,
- promoting local strategies for institutional strengthening,
- social inclusion for a just Africa, and
- leveraging on our youth dividend and urban bulge.

As representatives of local and regional governments, we need to address critical disabling factors that are limiting our structural ability to deliver services and improve the quality of the lives of all of our citizens and communities.

## **Municipal investment funds**

One of the key disempowering factors we need to address decisively is the renewal of the financial system that is instrumental to enhancing the capacity of local governments.

Of course, we know from experience, that there will be no one-size-fits-all solution to our concerns, and that developing the competencies for unsourced revenues or fiscal transfers alone will not suffice.

We believe that international instruments need to be created or shaped to provide direct access to local governments to the resources they need.

Dear friends,

I hope that the efforts we are making in the creation of municipal investment funds, both at the African and global level, will be successful and so foster the type of transformation that we need for the future of our cities, our continent and the planet.

We need to continue our quest for strong and accountable institutions that stand as inclusive pillars of local democracy. There is no doubt that localising democracy needs to continue being a priority of our organisation, both at the continental and global level.

### **Global compact on migration**

Local and regional governments everywhere, need their rightful role in addressing both national and international migration and population flows that are caused by armed conflicts, social unrest, natural disasters, and the absence of economic opportunities.

While our continent has experienced the positive effects of migration between and within countries, we have, however, also experienced the negative effects of population displacement and inadequate management of population flows.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Migration, largely from under-resourced regions and territories, is not a conversation we can shy away from, and it is also not an issue that can be solved by the national governments alone.

We are well aware of the difficulties that many of our members are facing with limited capacities and resources, but we are also knowledgeable of the positive effects that diversity has in our societies.

Our global network, UCLG, is committed to voice the vision of local and regional governments in the implementation of the Global Compact on Migration, and I am very grateful to see migration taking a strong place in our discussions this week.

## **African charter on gender equality**

Allow me to take a moment to commend our sisters for the important progress they are making in advancing equality everywhere. Our network of locally elected women, REFELA, is becoming a worldwide reference point, not only for the empowerment of women, but also for the promotion of societal gender equality.

Congratulations to our sisters, and always know that you have our full support. The world organisation will support, in every way possible, the endeavour towards an African charter on gender equality.

Honourable Excellencies,

## **Conclusion**

Finally, I would like to take this opportunity to emphasize the importance of putting the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) at the core of our action in the local, national and international levels.

This universal agenda is not only a great opportunity to revitalize local development, but it is also a key instrument to put local and regional governments at the heart of the international development agenda.

The implementation of the New Urban Agenda (NUA) is imperative to achieve these goals and to also achieve the universal development agenda for 2030.

Our efforts to advance these continental and global agendas will continue as we work in concert with our partners in the multilateral bodies like the United Nations (UN), the European Union (EU) and the African Union (AU).

We will steadfastly promote and support these global goals, not only because our efforts and actions deserve attention and resources, but because local realities and visions need to be taken into account in international policymaking that will directly impact our cities, our towns and communities.

It is also noteworthy that the Africities Summit will address metropolisation and respond to addressing informality in our cities. The Summit provides a unique opportunity which will serve to shape our World Congress in Durban, South Africa, in 2019.

We are ready, as UCLG-Africa and as the UCLG world organisation, to facilitate a global discussion and identify solutions for the future of localising and territorialising the SDGs, NUA, Agenda 2063, and the Paris Accord.

I would like to encourage us all to seek new partnerships with all stakeholders, to strengthen our existing collaborations and to face the challenges upfront for the good of our citizens and communities.

And lastly, this presentation acknowledges the former mayor of Dakar and the UCLG-A president, Councillor Khalifa Ababacar Sall. We will continue to work collectively with our partners towards the resolution of his incarceration and the role he can, and will still play in the development of Africa and the world.

I thank you.