



Fifth Session of the United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA-5.2)
28 February – 2 March 2022
Statement of the Local Authorities Major Group
Drafted by ICLEI, Regions4 and UCLG

At the outset, Local Authorities Major Group aligns itself with the Joint Global Statement adopted as an outcome of the virtual Global Major Groups and Stakeholders Forum 19 (GMGSF) held online 7-10 February 2022.

LAMG also expresses deep concerns on the escalation of war and military conflicts in Ukraine. War is the most unsustainable act of human beings on this planet. Wars and armed conflicts not only bring an unnecessary loss of human lives and strife, but also prevent humanity from addressing the enormous global challenges we face in climate change, general ecosystem crisis and securing a good life for future generations.

Despite it's the crucial role and efforts of the UN Environmental Assembly as the leading global environmental authority in addressing environmental challenges in the past 50 years, local and regional governments are concerned we are not moving fast enough. The severity and emergency of the triple planetary crises of climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution require whole-of-government and whole-of-society responses to guarantee the right of a healthy, clean and sustainable environment.

Stockholm+50 and UNEP@50 comes at a time when UN is considering new ways of inclusive multilateralism under Our Common Agenda of the UN Secretary General including a new advisory body for local and regional governments. Through the Glasgow Climate Pact adopted at COP26 in November 2021, multilevel cooperation is also now fully embodied in the Paris Agreement, building on the recognition of importance of all levels of governments in 2015. Thus, local and regional governments call for greater coherence, coordination and cooperation on environmental governance and law, climate justice and enhanced localisation of the global development agendas, ensuring connections between the 2030 Agenda, the Paris Agreement, the New Urban Agenda, post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework and the Sendai Framework.

Local and regional governments are leaders and partners in many of the necessary transformations. We are governmental stakeholders that are delivering at scale and replicable innovative solutions to live in harmony with nature. We are demonstrating tireless efforts to face the COVID-19 pandemic and contribute to a safe, green, just, and sustainable recovery, while directly contributing to the achievement of the SDGs from the bottom up, hand in hand with local stakeholders.

We need to better explore the benefits of multilevel governance for effective, efficient, and inclusive implementation of the global agendas. The meaningful participation of cities and regions is imperative to implement a territorial approach and secure coherent policies, favoring sectoral coordination and integrating the needs of urban and rural realities. It is critical that the voices of subnational governments are heard and that we have a seat at the table in all negotiations and decisions to ensure that the approach of local and regional governments is taken into account.



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In this regard, we warmly welcome and commend UNEP Medium Term Strategy towards 2025 which has increased references to multilevel cooperation. The 2nd edition of UNEA Cities and Regions Summit convened on 23 February 2022 jointly with UNEP, numerous members of LAMG and other stakeholders is a successful model of practical implementation of multilevel and multistakeholder collaboration. The Summit discussed nature-based solutions to fight extreme heat and limit further global warming; urban and peri-urban gardens in support of sustainable and resilient food systems; and a high-level segment looking into how to scale up solutions to harness the power of nature in cities to protect nature, reconnect urban communities to nature thereby enhancing their health and well-being and cities' resilience.

We sincerely encourage the Cities and Regions Summit to be continued in future UNEAs and explore options to enhance impacts of its outcomes. Networks of cities and regions have great potential as mechanisms for sharing good practices, building capacity, and inspiring higher ambition. Through Regions4, ICLEI, UCLG and other international networks, local and regional governments commit to the Race to Zero and Race to Resilience campaigns to accelerate their work on mitigation, adaptation and resilience. The Edinburgh Process has provided subnational authorities with a voice in the development of the post 2020 Biodiversity framework. The "CitieswithNature" and "RegionswithNature" initiatives are bringing together cities and regions to promote nature-positive development. These networks and initiatives should be strengthened to expand and increase their impact.

LAMG also welcomes the GEO6 for Cities Report released in November 2021 as part of UNEP's Global Environmental Outlook.

Regarding a global deal on plastics, LAMG invites Member States and stakeholders to consider this effort as part of circular economy and sustainable consumption and production and underlines that enforcement and monitoring of global agreements are at least as equally important as their drafting and adoption. We therefore invite UNEP, Member States and all stakeholders to ensure appropriate and effective engagement of local and regional governments in the design of this new treaty as well as its implementation and enforcement.

Local and regional governments reiterate our commitment and readiness to work in collaboration with Member States and the UN system. We therefore encourage UNEP to expand its support for multilevel and collaborative action in these efforts. We offer our experience, know-how, and capacities to implement an integrated approach that tackles interconnected issues in a systemic way and lead us to a more sustainable and resilient future.