

**Statement of Local and Regional Governments
Habitat III - Open-Ended Informal Consultative Meetings
26 April 2016
Delivered by nrg4SD**

Contributions on Civic Engagement

Thank you for this opportunity to speak. This statement is on behalf of the Global Task Force of Local and Regional Governments, also participating in the Local Authorities Partner Constituent Group of the General Assembly of Partners, and finally, it is aligned to the paper with Key Recommendations of Local and Regional Governments towards Habitat III. We also would like to state our support to the interventions made by the GAP this afternoon.

Because of their proximity to the people and local communities, local and regional governments will be fundamental partners in enabling innovative and effective forms of civic engagement. The localization of the 2030 Agenda will be crucial to address, on the ground, the specific needs and gaps of cities and territories.

LRGs are in a unique position to promote autonomous citizen participation, particularly the inclusion and empowerment of women in local public life. They can immediately respond to new pressing issues and also facilitate the participation of young people, minorities, immigrants and other marginalized groups. Based on that, we urge that all levels of government take action in order to **renew the social contract putting the Right to the city at the heart of the urban agenda.**

Our constituency has competences in key areas required for the success of the new urban agenda. Just to mention a few, we should emphasize the promotion of human rights and the provision of public services, as on education, health, housing, environmental services, the right to water and to culture; all these areas should be developed in close coordination and cooperation with multi-stakeholders at the local level.

LRGs are strategically positioned to strengthen governance through a bottom-up process, leading to greater transparency and true civic engagement. Provided the necessary support and capacity-building from national governments and international institutions, governments at the subnational level can promote dialogue and other mechanisms for the participation and direct input of multi-stakeholders and citizens in general – thus putting people at the center of the development agenda. Through the principle of subsidiarity and vertical integration, LRGs can be the vehicles through which the 2030 Agenda and other critical sustainable development frameworks can be operationalized.

It is important, though, that Habitat III recognizes that many LRGs have existing actions and modalities for civic engagement, which should be assessed and strengthened for more efficient results. Through decentralization and improved capacities, many of these successful practices could be scaled up and even replicated in other cities and territories.

As policy-makers, and governmental stakeholders, LRGs can design urban and territorial plans to improve the access to the city, including the conditions on mobility and housing discussed this afternoon. By organizing public campaigns and events, LRGs can promote ownership, accountability and raise-awareness. Such democratic and participatory principles should be at the forefront of all efforts building towards a sustainable urbanization path.

Once again, we would like to reiterate our commitment to collaborating with Member-States and multi-stakeholders to ensure a successful Conference in Quito. And even beyond, to ensure the concrete implementation of the New Urban Agenda.

I thank you.

