

Cities and Regions together towards Paris 2015

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About UCLG: Created in May 2004, United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG) is the united voice and global advocate of democratic local self-governance. Representing over half of the world's population, members of UCLG are present in 140 of the United Nations member states and in all regions of the world: Africa, Asia-Pacific, Europe, Eurasia, Middle-East West Asia, Latin and North America – organized into seven continental sections and one metropolitan section. UCLG has more than one thousand cities in regions that are direct members and 155 member associations of local governments. Among the key areas of political interest for UCLG are: Local democracy, climate change and environmental protection, achievement of the Millennium Development Goals, local finance, urban development and city diplomacy in peace building.

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Barcelona, 26 November 2013 – *Local and regional governments take action to address 50% of the global emissions of CO2 linked to the daily running of their communities. As the level of government closest to citizens, they have the ability to play a substantial role in issues as diverse as urban planning, consumption, transport and housing quality. Their participation cannot therefore be overlooked. By including a segment on local government, the COP in Warsaw was an important moment this recognition of the key roles of cities and regions in reducing global greenhouse gas emissions through implementation in their territories. This step forward should therefore be further confirmed and developed during the Conference of Parties (COP) in Paris 2015.*

Welcomed by the Secretary General of the United Nations, Ban Ki-moon, and the Executive Director of the UNFCCC, Christiana Figueres, Mayors and Regional Leaders met with their ministerial counterparts on Thursday 21st November in Warsaw. This meeting was part of the first "**Cities Day**" organized in the framework of the COP and aimed to facilitate the much needed debate on possible local solutions to climate change.

Presenting the Nantes Declaration, endorsed by the main local and regional authorities' networks, among which ICLEI, UCLG and its Regional Sections, Ronan Dantec, stressed the capacity of local and regional governments to engage in the process with one united voice. Furthermore, he advocated for bridges to be sought between the climate and the development agendas that both include the same challenges and require joint solutions. He also recalled the initiative set up by UCLG through the "**Global Taskforce of Local and Regional Authorities**", which coordinates interventions in the current international negotiations.

Referring to the difficulties for States to reach an agreement, Gustavo Petro, Mayor of Bogota and host of the next UCLG World Congress in 2016, called for cities to take the lead in the fight against climate change.

While the inclusion of local and regional governments in the agenda is a positive step forward, nevertheless, as the Conference drew to a close, a great number of difficulties were still visible and lay before us to reach a universal and strong agreement.

Let us hope that by finding the means to create new dynamics, by further recognizing all actors (including the local and regional levels), by highlighting the multiplying positive realities, by taking support from the determination of civil society, by better linking to the 2015 development agenda, the COP agreement in Paris may just be able to secure a greener future with less risk for all.

For further information, please consult www.uclg.org.