
United Cities and Local Governments Release

World Habitat Day 2012: Changing Cities Building Opportunities

Barcelona, 1st October 2013. Our world is one of global cities with great opportunities and challenges where citizens demand to make their own choices regarding the society they want to live in and request to be included in the decision making process leading to such choices.

UCLG members are convinced that decisions should be taken at the level where citizens can exercise their influence. This is why the theme chosen for 2012 World Habitat Day is so relevant: **Changing Cities, Building Opportunities.**

UCLG calls on partners around the world to acknowledge the potential of cities as hubs of creativity, culture and dialogue. It calls for providing local governments with adequate resources and responsibilities to comply with their tasks. It further calls its members to commit to improving the life of the communities they serve and to contribute to the solution of global challenges through local solutions.

The specific perspective of local and regional governments deriving from their proximity to citizens is crucial to sustainability and to the implementation of good governance mechanisms that will contribute to more equitable societies with transparent and participatory governments.

Working towards Habitat III

A new Habitat development agenda is needed one rooted in the needs of the people and applicable to both developed and developing countries.

UCLG together with the UN and the international community is working in the definition of this new Habitat agenda which will need to distance itself from the dichotomy of rural versus urban. It will need to put cohesion among territories at the forefront, acknowledging the important metropolization processes that are taking place.

As per the theme of the ***Summit of Local and Regional Leaders*** that will take place in exactly one year from now in Rabat we challenge partners to **Imagine Society, Building Local Democracy.**

With growing inequalities reflected in 5% of the world population using 23% of the global energy supply. With 40% of the world's population lacking access to adequate sanitation, and another 1.2 billion people have no facilities at all our commitment to development needs to be greater than ever.

Changing Local and Regional Governments can indeed create opportunities! Happy World Habitat Day 2012 working together towards Habitat III in 2016.

Visit the new UCLG portal at www.uclg.org.

About UCLG. Founded in May 2004, **United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG)** is the united voice and world advocate of democratic local self-government. Representing over half of the world's population, the members of **UCLG** are present in 140 UN Member States across all world regions Africa, Asia-Pacific, Europe, Eurasia, Middle East-West Asia, Latin America and North America –covered by seven continental section and a metropolitan section. Over 1.000 cities and regions are direct members of **UCLG**, as well as 112 national associations. **UCLG's** major areas of policy focus include local democracy, climate change and environmental protection, Millennium Development Goal achievement, local finance, urban development, city diplomacy for peace building.