



Global Cities Hub

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Contribution by the Global Cities Hub to:

Chapter V. Transforming global governance

To be able to face today's and tomorrow's global challenges we need an efficient global governance system based on the principle of inclusive multilateralism. Inclusive and effective multilateralism requires a whole-of-governance approach where the different levels of government complement and strengthen each other.

Given the urbanization of the world, future generations will be predominantly urban, and their needs will increasingly be met by the local governments leading the development of urban areas. For this to happen, a meaningful dialogue and exchange with local governments must take place at the international level.

Local and regional governments (LRGs) have the ability to connect international policy debates to action on the ground, because they are close to their population, know the local and regional environments in which they operate, and are responsible for implementing many of the global policies and agreements approved by States. For instance, local/regional leaders can help address global challenges by raising public awareness and encouraging behavioral change through consultations and participatory processes at their level.

LRGs need to participate in international agenda-setting because implementation also ends up at their level. Indeed, LRGs are on the frontline in managing the fallout from transnational issues. They want to contribute to forming the policy environment in which they are required to operate. Thus, their role should not be solely limited to that of implementer. LRGs can also be partners that are agile and quick and have the capacity to respond in times of crisis. LRGs' actions can complement and extend the actions of central governments, and help to deliver key global goals, such as the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) or the Paris Agreement.

However, LRGs have no formal standing at the UN. They can participate to UN meetings if they are invited as a guest speaker for a specific event, are accredited through a city network that has NGO ECOSOC status or are invited to join a national delegation of their State. The Global Cities Hub has encouraged States to include LRGs in their delegations, for instance to the UPR or at the Global Refugee Forum.

In order to enable sustainable engagement of LRGs and therefore achieving effective and inclusive multilateralism, the Global Cities Hub suggests two important steps:

1) establishing a specific UN status for LRGs, enabling them to take part in specific meetings on their own rights, with their own voice. States might thus reflect upon the creation of a general status for LRGs, enabling them to participate in the work of the UN on terms similar to the NGO ECOSOC status. This option would imply the adoption of a UNGA or ECOSOC resolution.

2) considering elevating the Forum of Mayors in the UN hierarchy and to consolidate and develop this Forum as the main entry point for mayors worldwide in the UN system. While the Forum of Mayors is currently a subsidiary body of the UNECE Committee on urban development, housing and land management, it could be transformed into a subsidiary body of the GA/ECOSOC and become global in nature. Currently being a platform for exchange and mutual learning between Mayors, the Forum has the potential to develop into a permanent body with an advisory function to the UN and the main institutional channel to engage LRGs in the work of the UN.