

HIGH-LEVEL POLITICAL FORUM ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT – 2018

Local and Regional Governments' Forum

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Panel 3: The importance of integrated territorial planning to achieving SDGs

Speech by Gudrun Mosler-Törnström, President of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities

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Mr President,
Excellences,
Ladies and gentlemen,

It is an honour to address you on behalf of the Council of Europe and its Congress of Local and Regional Authorities. The Congress is an assembly of grassroots elected politicians representing 200 000 territorial communities in 47 European countries, whose primary mission is implementing the European Charter of Local Self-Government across the continent, in defence of the rights of local and regional authorities through permanent dialogue with national governments.

I would like to thank the participants for presenting interesting examples of integrated territorial planning, and to underline several key principles that we believe must be the basis of our action in achieving Sustainable Development Goals through integrated community development in a broader sense:

First, the discussions have reaffirmed that achieving SDGs is a shared responsibility of all levels of government – national, regional and local. The final objective of SDGs is improving the well-being of our citizens and of the communities where they live. **It is impossible to implement a policy nationally if its implementation fails locally.** National governments must therefore establish a constant dialogue with regional and local authorities on implementing SDGs, through proper consultation mechanisms. *In this respect, I would like to highlight the “Police Lab” initiative that the Council of Europe has launched in the frame of its Intercultural Cities network, to set-up a platform for dialogue, co-operation and co-creation of inclusive integration policies targeting all levels of governance.*

Secondly, local and regional authorities must have proper autonomy of action and decision making to achieve SDGs – which includes proper competences, financial and budget autonomy, and freedom to make decisions on the use of local resources and planning local development. In

Europe, this autonomy is ensured through the Charter of Local Self-Government, whose principles have inspired similar instruments elsewhere, including the International Guidelines on Decentralization and Access to Basic Services for all, adopted by UN-Habitat.

Thirdly, citizens must always remain at the heart of our action for achieving SDGs. Local and regional authorities bear the primary responsibility for addressing citizens' needs, as the authorities closest to them. We must therefore engage our citizens in local decision making on the issues of community development. Citizens must be co-owners of the decisions on integrated territorial planning and the use of resources of their communities. Citizen participation mechanisms must be created, involving all groups of local residents, which is the only way to achieving SDG 11. That's why the Local Self-Government Charter was complemented nine years ago with a Protocol on citizen participation.

*Also ten years ago, the Congress adopted a **European Urban Charter: Manifesto for a new urbanity**. The Charter has laid down four 'ambitions' to foster a new model of urban governance, as the basis for integrated community development and territorial planning:*

- building a "town for the people" centred on serving citizens' needs and involving citizens in finding solutions to address those needs;*
- building a sustainable and environmentally friendly town;*
- building a town which is a symbol of modernity, knowledge and creativity;*
- building a town of social cohesion, which actively combats division, exclusion and discrimination.*

I am convinced these key points should be the core of our message to national governments.

And the final point in conclusion: our discussions have reaffirmed once again that SDGs are closely interlinked, and their implementation calls for an integrated approach. Achieving SDG 11 requires good local governance and democratic institutions supporting it – which is SDG 16. It also requires full and equal participation of women in the process, in the spirit of SDG 5. This is also the approach of the Council of Europe, which identified these SDGs as priority for its contribution.

Thank you.