



## Declaration of the UCLG World Forum of Regions

### *Smart Territories in the Urban Era*

*Regional governments and territories can bring a new perspective to be part of the solution to global challenges.*

The regions, states and provinces gathered at the First UCLG World Forum of Regions in Barcelona from 16 to 18 November 2021, on the occasion of the UCLG World Council, during the Smart Cities Expo World Congress, **take on the commitment and responsibility to generate the opportunities for development that humanity seeks and ensure that these are available to all, in all corners of the territories.**

Regional governments play a key role in responding to essential issues and securing **territorial-based rights**, such as food sovereignty, social justice, digital transformation, migration, resilience, access to water, ecosystem services and other common goods.

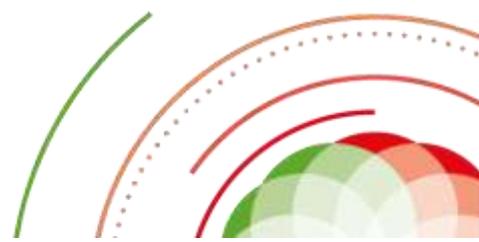
Smart territories offer a unique contribution to global agendas, through their **physical and digital connectivity, territorial cohesion and economic competitiveness, with a differential approach to development, based on cooperation and solidarity.**

As the international community assesses progress 5 years after the adoption of the New Urban Agenda (Quito+5), it is important to recognize the essential contribution of regional governments, and their territorial vision, to global agendas:

The urban agendas are not limited to cities and it is fundamental to contemplate their territorial dimensions, the flows of people, services, goods, infrastructure and common resources throughout the territories. The interdependence between cities of all sizes, metropolitan areas, the rural and natural surroundings, compose complex ecosystems of cities, which produce reciprocal impacts, complementarities, synergies and opportunities at the territorial level.

The COVID-19 pandemic has reminded us of the importance of regional governments in addressing the territorial conflicts, in building social dialogue and securing public services for all. Territorial balance, the defense of the rural world and the need for opportunities to reach all citizens, wherever they live, need to be a priority of our agendas moving forward.

**Regional governments are key to accelerate innovation, digital transformation and to achieve a new relationship with the planet, leaving no one and no place behind - because together, regions are unstoppable.**





## Regions and territories in the Pact for the Future

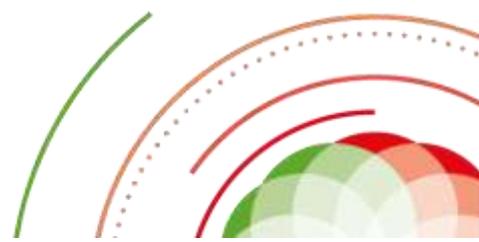
In view of current trying times, our constituency was mandated to define the basis for a new social contract, in which regional governments and their territories will play an essential role.

The relevance of regional governments and territories in the international arena builds on the continued advocacy and contribution of the constituency for the localization of the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals, the Paris Agreement and the Nationally Determined Contributions, the Race-to-Zero and Race-to-Resilience, the Sendai Disaster Risk Reduction Framework, the post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework, the UN Common Agenda, the resolutions of the United Nations Environment Assembly, and many others.

For paving the way to an inclusive and sustainable recovery, which builds resilience against the combined global crises, including the climate emergency, rising poverty and inequalities, biodiversity loss and pollution, the UCLG World Forum of Regions agrees on the following actions and positions:

### Regions & the pact for the People

- Our commitment is to ensure that our efforts, solutions and development reach all parts of the territory, ensuring **all places and people have access to equal opportunities, thus redressing territorial imbalances** and responding to issues of depopulation, or cities and communities that are lagging behind.
- Digital connectivity is a fundamental right in the 21st Century. In leading the innovation and digital transformation, our regional governments will enhance **territorial infrastructure, physical and digital connectivity** of our ecosystems of cities and territories, generating jobs, building capacities of communities and professionals across all sectors, and supporting **migration as a human right**.
- Our regions will place **care at the core of territorial organization**, working to improve public service provision to ensure that all people, especially the most vulnerable, have adequate access to health, mobility, energy, housing, among others. In doing so, we will recognize the **diversity that compounds our territories**, addressing conflicts, intra- and inter-urban, rural-urban disparities, and finding **solutions for the peaceful coexistence** of different realities, by applying intersectionality in all our policies and actions. Among our priorities, we will **respond to the disproportionate impact of the crises** on women and girls in all their diversity, on LGBTQI+ people, migrants, people of color, people with disabilities, older and younger people.





## Regions & the pact for the Planet

- The territorial perspective is essential to **reinvent our relationship with nature**, which takes into account the **intergenerational right** to enjoy a healthy, resilient and just planet.
- The **ecological transformation** of our territories can lead to **zero carbon and sustainable development**. We, as regional governments, promote a series of sustainable practices on energy, agriculture, fishing, tourism, and other fundamental sectors. Regions can address urban-rural linkages, contributing to new food systems, enabling energy transitions, protecting water and other global commons, thus ensuring socio-economic activities and groups thrive with nature.
- Our regions will lead the way and contribute to **reversing biodiversity loss**, halting deforestation, combating desertification, reducing the degradation of natural habitats, preventing invasive species, protecting threatened species, combating illegal trafficking of fauna and flora, for example by establishing protected areas, pursuing nature-based solutions, promoting the **sustainable use of ecosystems**, using georeferenced territorial data, or applying place based plans and policies, in close collaboration with indigenous peoples, traditional communities and local stakeholders.

## Regions & the pact for Governments

- Regional governments can **bridge global and national priorities, and the realities on the ground**, in our cities and territories. The new urban agenda belongs to all and requires the implication of all spheres of government, in coordinated, collaborative and coherent manner.
- In order to comply with all actions above, a **fairer and improved allocation of financial resources** is necessary. Regional governments will require new and better funding sources in correspondence to the necessary public spending, combined with **multi-level governance** and collaboration that apply effectively the principle of **subsidiarity**.
- Our regions will strive to enable **democratic and inclusive principles** across all territorial efforts. Regional governments are strategically positioned to enable a **fruitful dialogue** with communities and stakeholders, as well as to collaborate and support the efforts of both national and local governments, enabling coherent and effective action.

