



Opening Ceremony Address by the UCLG President, Parks Tau, at the 4th World Forum on Local Economic Development,

Theme: “Inclusive and Sustainable Economies as Tools to Transform Inequalities and Inequities”

Praia Cape Verde, 17 October 2017

Programme Director,
President of the Republic of Cape Verde, His Excellency Jorge Fonseca
Prime Minister of Cape Verde, His Excellency Ulisses Correia e Silva,
Honourable Mayor of Praia, Oscar Evora Santos,
Distinguished Representatives of the UN, and
Dear Partners and Friends:

Introduction

It is a great honour to stand before you today, here at Praia in Cape Verde, with representatives from around the world, of over two-hundred-and-fifty-thousand (250.000) United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG).

Allow me to begin by thanking the Mayor of Praia and the Government of Cape Verde for graciously hosting this World Forum. Your generous hospitality highlights the meaning and practice of the spirit of Ubuntu that we are human only through the humanity of other human beings.

I am also grateful to the important partnership that UCLG has established with UNDP and ILO on this important topic of inclusive and sustainable economies. Needless to say, we are most grateful to all the UCLG members and sister networks to ensure this World Forum takes place.

This Forum is necessary for implementation, at the local level, of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (SGDs). Local government is prioritised

for bringing about socially inclusive development since it is the closest level of governance to the people.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Inclusive and Sustainable Economies

Precisely what is meant by “inclusive and sustainable economies”? Inclusive and sustainable economies are synonymous with shared inclusive growth.

As you know, the concept of ‘inclusive growth’ is identified in goal number 8 of the 17 SDGs which speaks of promoting “sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all”.

In simple words, inclusive and sustainable economic growth is about expanding the national economy and expanding the opportunities to reach all people. It is about ‘the equality of opportunity’ and the ‘participation in growth by all’.

This is what the Nobel laureate in economics, Amartya Sen, spoke of when talking about the capability approach which views development as driven to expand the people’s capabilities, their overall well-being, and their freedom of choice.

Distinguished guests,

Local Economic Development (LED)

Since the very first edition hosted by our member FAMSI, this Forum has built on the notion that meaningful development needs to be based on respect for local and regional particularities and commonalities.

Only by fostering the development of local potential, identity and culture, will we be able to create an environment where people are empowered. It is by encouraging development premised on local development that our people will have a direct sense of ownership. It is in prioritising local specificity that we can contribute practically to transformation in the consumption and production patterns that are indispensable for global sustainability.

As you would surely agree, locally-rooted economies and services, based on the specificity of the territories, provide immeasurable opportunities.

In this regard, our role as local and regional governments is crucial. We need to foster the development of strategies that will gather all actors and ensure adequate interlocution with all levels of government as well as employers, procurers and employees.

This is why I would like to call on you to ensure that we dedicate this Forum, not only to exchanges on best practices but also to promote a new international narrative leading to development of concrete political and policy frameworks for building a locally-rooted, inclusive and sustainable economic growth.

Ladies and gentlemen,

We live in an interconnected global economy and have learned that growth does not necessarily imply a bridging of inequalities. On the contrary, we have seen how economic growth often goes hand in hand with unbalances between territories, between regions, between cities, and between neighbourhoods.

We need to call for a different approach when we find that our local workforces face uncertainties due to the mobility of global capital and businesses. We need a new paradigm when we witness the negative effects of lack of adequate training and transformation in the job market.

Promoting inclusive and circular economies can allow us to involve all actors, all producers and consumers in generating awareness about sustainable usage of natural resources. Promoting inclusive and shared economic growth is a gateway to shared responsibilities and greater ownership over our collective future.

In this endeavour, the main challenge is to continue strengthening local authorities in order for them to deliver accountable and effective governance. Local authorities and their associations can only be of value if they are adequately resourced and capacitated to fulfill this role.

In this respect, the commitment of national governments and the international community to implement the New Urban Agenda (NUA) will be key. Similarly, so will be the localisation of the 2030 Agenda.

This is a reason in my acceptance speech, at Bogota Columbia in October 2016, I emphasised, that we need to ensure that we locate local government at the centre of a changing world and ensure that local government has a seat the global table and participates at multilateral bodies as a central partner.

Distinguished guests,

Localising of the Future

I am very pleased to see that localisation, in the coming three days, will have an important role in the agenda of this World Forum. As we say in UCLG, localising is not the parachuting of global goals into local contexts but rather, it is about contributing to addressing global challenges through local solutions.

Localising of the future, therefore, is a political programme as well as a technical issue which needs to be linked with strong governance systems and accountability.

Localising of our future through inclusive and shared growth has certain features. The UNDP chief economist, Thangavel Palanivel, says: “Growth is inclusive when it takes place in the sectors in which the poor work (e.g., agriculture); occurs in places where the poor live (e.g., undeveloped areas with few resources); uses the factors of production that the poor possess (e.g., unskilled labour); and reduces the prices of consumption items that the poor consume (e.g., food, fuel, and clothing)”.

Peer-to-peer Learning in LED

Local and regional governments are already undertaking pioneering initiatives that are related to SDGs related to local economic development and on responsible consumption and production.

One of the greatest challenges and opportunities is to share, with our peers, this vast reservoir of local knowledge. UCLG is convinced that peer-to-peer learning is critical to developing a worldwide learning culture that will help us to move forward to a higher trajectory.

We are particularly proud of the leadership demonstrated by the Andalusian Municipal Fund FAMSÍ and the Canadian Federation of Municipalities for putting this topic at the heart of our policy and learning agenda.

Let us also use the opportunity of this Forum to strengthen the learning activities among all actors.

Dear friends,

Conclusion

Allow me to start my conclusions with the following message. The development of local economic development strategies are part and parcel of a sound governance systems. From our perspective such strategies need to answer to four (4) important criteria:

1. They need to be rooted in the cultural, social, environmental and economic realities of each territory.
2. They need to contribute to developing decent jobs.
3. They need to promote sustainable patterns of consumption and production.
4. They need to contribute to bridging inequalities and promote cohesion and solidarity.

While calling for local and regional leaders to assume their above responsibilities, I would request that this Forum also challenge the international community and national governments to also play their part, in the following manner:

1. All levels of government need to be empowered.
2. Multilevel governance instruments need to be developed.
3. The international financial system will need to be renewed.

Our lack of capacity in some cases cannot be the pretext to ignore our rightful role. After all, ignoring local governments is ignoring local communities.

My message today, then, is that you can count on the UCLG to offer both political and strategic leadership. You can count on the UCLG as a partner in the battle for inclusive and fair sustainable development. You can count on the ULGC to promote collaborative local governance. You can count on the UCLG to enhance organisational consolidation and renewal.

As local and regional governments, we have a long history of international cooperation stretching back to 1913. Therefore, let us put our knowledge and experience to supporting new modalities of development.

I wish you very productive discussions in the coming three days.

I thank you.