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# LOCALIZING THE POST-2015 DEVELOPMENT AGENDA

DIALOGUES ON IMPLEMENTATION



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# LOCALIZING THE POST-2015 DEVELOPMENT AGENDA

## DIALOGUES ON IMPLEMENTATION



The contents and recommendations of this report do not necessarily reflect the views and positions of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme, the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations, or the Global Task Force of Local and Regional Governments. They are the outcomes of an extensive dialogue process with key governance stakeholders and constituencies, which took place from June 2014 to October 2014.



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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

“Most critical objectives and challenges of the Post-2015 Development Agenda will certainly depend on local action, community buy-in and local leadership, well-coordinated at and with all levels of governance... Accountable local governments can promote strong local partnerships with all local stakeholders – civil society, private sector, etc. Integrated and inclusive local development planning that involves all stakeholders is a key instrument to promoting ownership and the integration of the three dimensions of development –social, economic and environment.”

**Helen Clark, *Chair of the United Nations Development Group***

This report is based on a dialogue process through 2014, whose purpose was to respond to the following questions: how will the Post-2015 Development Agenda be implemented at the local level?; what local governance processes, tools, institutions, mechanisms, and other means of implementation are needed to achieve the future sustainable development goals (SDGs)?; and how can the voices of local stakeholders be amplified and their inclusion in intergovernmental processes be supported? Localization is an important element of effective multi-level governance, and provides the means to make the Post-2015 global discussions relevant to local populations in a framework of greater ownership.

Dialogues took place nationally and locally, in 13 countries around the world, to ensure the widest and most representative participation. Local dialogue participants were asked to identify priority areas for the Post-2015 Development Agenda, while national dialogues were held to allow a wider discussion on the entire localization process and its impacts on the domestic reality.

The key role of local and regional governments in development was underlined as part of the consensus of the entire dialogue. Effective decentralization and subsidiarity form the basis of development in almost all the countries consulted. However, the devolution of power should be accompanied by an appropriate environment that allows local and regional governments to fulfil their responsibilities. Participants in all countries agreed on the importance of strengthening transparency to allow people to access and manage public information and as a way of increasing the accountability of governments and public managers. The dialogue also addressed sustainable development and resilience to reduce the impact of natural disasters, protect natural resources, and preserve cultural heritage. Emphasis was given to mechanisms that facilitate stronger intergovernmental coordination, allowing the full participation of all levels of government.

The dialogue resulted in a strategic global coalition of partners, including regional/local government representatives, civil society groups,



*Consultation in Ecuador ©UNDP Ecuador*

democracy advocates, United Nations agencies and Member States. The process illustrated the need – and potential – for national and local governments to work together in localizing the Post-2015 agenda. Preliminary results suggest a position to improve local governance processes and local institutional capacity, and confirm the importance of territorial development as a strong base for global development. Achievement of many of the MDGs depended on local governments and local stakeholders. The Post-2015 Development Agenda will need national commitment to provide an appropriate legal framework, plus institutional and financial capacity to local governments.

The active role of local government in international development cooperation is crucial to achieving development results, democratizing the aid effectiveness agenda, and promoting inclusive ownership. Decentralization, subsidiarity and good governance at all levels are essential to implementing the Post-2015 Development Agenda. The global agenda should be inspired and implemented by

local institutions, responding directly to citizens' needs. It should be transformative.

The report makes a number of recommendations and suggests ways of collaboration to facilitate the road journey ahead. UNDP, UNHABITAT and the Global Taskforce of Local and Regional Governments for the Post-2015 Development Agenda and towards Habitat III are fully committed to continuing their collaboration on the localization of the Post-2015 Development Agenda.



## BACKGROUND: THE POST-2015 DEVELOPMENT AGENDA

Since 2012, the United Nations Development Group (UNDG) has spearheaded an unprecedented, multistakeholder outreach to facilitate a global conversation on the framework agenda that will succeed the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) after 2015. The process has involved many people, including policymakers, academics, experts, business people and interested citizens. While the first phase of the dialogue in 2012-2013 focused on potential issues and areas to be included in the agenda, the second phase concentrated on the means of implementation, with dialogue organized around six main areas of discussion:

The need to discuss the 'what' but also the 'how' to ensure the effective implementation of the future SDGs was strongly emphasized in the thematic and national dialogues, as well as in the HLP<sup>1</sup> and other reports. A key issue here was the need to discuss how to 'localize' the framework, assessing the local impact of the future SDGs and ensuring a local dimension.

This localization tries to go beyond national or regional implementation to understand how the future agenda will be implemented locally, plus the local implications. In contrast to the 'localizing the MDGs process', which began in 2005, the current effort aims to consider the issue of local

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