

Stakeholder Engagement and Participation Plan for WUF13

Stakeholder Category	Local and Regional Governments
UN-Habitat Focal Point	Sébastien Vauzelle / Martino Miraglia
Stakeholder Focal Point	Global Taskforce of Local and Regional Governments

Background

The 13th session of the World Urban Forum (WUF13) will take place 17–22 May 2026 in Baku, Azerbaijan, under the theme “Housing the World: Safe and Resilient Cities and Communities.”

Towards the Forum, UN-Habitat is launching a global stakeholder engagement process to guide inclusive and strategic engagement across all stakeholder groups. It aims to enable meaningful stakeholder contributions to inform the Forum’s content and outcomes while strengthening collaboration on priorities and solutions to advance adequate housing for all, as per the theme of WUF13.

This process further supports the implementation of UN-Habitat’s Strategic Plan 2026–2029 and will also inform reporting on the New Urban Agenda and SDG 11 in 2026. Facilitated by UN-Habitat, stakeholders will organize themselves across the 11 groups listed below, guided by the principles of transparency, accountability, results orientation, ownership and self-organization, inclusivity, innovation, co-creation, and meaningful engagement.

1. Local and regional governments
2. Civil Society Organizations and Grassroots
3. Professional Organisations
4. Parliamentarians
5. Private Sector
6. Academia and Research
7. Children and Youth
8. Women
9. Indigenous Peoples
10. Older Persons
11. Persons with Disabilities

This concept note provides a framework for engaging local and regional governments (LRGs) in the lead-up to WUF13 to enhance the global outcomes and impact of the Forum. As a stakeholder constituency specifically recognized as distinct from other non-governmental participants under Rule 67 of the Rules of Procedure of the United Nations-Habitat Assembly, LRGs (or “local authorities” as they are referred to in the Rules of Procedure) hold a unique status within UN-Habitat’s governance framework. It aims to guide structured consultations, co-creation of sessions, and sustained collaboration before, during, and after the Forum.

Local and Regional Governments, UN Habitat, and the World Urban Forum

Local and regional governments (LRGs) play a central role in sustainable urban development, leading territorial transformation. They are the primary level of government closest to people's daily lives, responsible for the fulfillment of the social contract through basic rights provision such as land use planning, services delivery, housing policy implementation, and climate resilience. They are also catalysts for participatory governance and multi-level collaboration. Their engagement is essential to advance the New Urban Agenda and the 2030 Agenda, particularly as cities and territories are the spaces where global challenges converge—and where solutions take shape.

UN-Habitat has long-standing collaboration with LRGs, anchored in key mandates such as UNHA resolution 2/6 on SDG localization. Through both normative and operational initiatives, the agency supports LRGs by building capacities, strengthening multilevel governance, generating localized data, promoting city-to-city cooperation, and elevating local voices in global fora. These efforts are central to the Strategic Plan 2026–2029, which positions SDG localization and participatory multilevel governance as key means of implementation to deliver for adequate housing, land, and basic services for all.

UN-Habitat's cooperation with LRGs is visible across multiple fronts:

- Enhancing coherence, efficiency, and the local impact of UN action through the Local2030 Coalition, the UN system's platform to accelerate the SDGs through the localization of the 2030 Agenda, permanently co-chaired by UN-Habitat. The Coalition provides the unified contribution of the UN system to the WUF through the and member entities' localization initiatives and solutions. LRGs are one of the key constituencies of the Coalition.
- Supporting cities' and communities' transformation development through SDG Cities – a partner-driven and impact-focused initiative offering and integrated approach to strengthen cities' data, strategic planning, and investment capacities for systemic change and prosperity at the local level.
- Through SDG Cities, advancing SDG monitoring and planning through Voluntary Local Reviews (VLRs) and Voluntary Subnational Reviews (VSRs), now exceeding 400 worldwide.
- Working closely with the self-organized constituency of local and regional governments gathered within the Global Taskforce of Local and Regional Governments, fostering representation of local and regional governments within UN-Habitat proceedings and activities, co-convening advocacy strategies and events such as the Local and Regional Governments Forum of the HLPF, the World Assembly of Local and Regional Governments, officially recognized within Paragraph 169 of the New Urban Agenda, among others.
- Supporting national governments in operationalizing effective multilevel governance through the design of National SDG Localization Frameworks. The Frameworks are the operational cornerstone of the Partnership Platform on Localizing the SDGs, an

initiative co-implemented by the Italian Ministry of Environment and Energy Security and UN-Habitat, anchored within the Local2030 Coalition.

- Innovating on financing via tools such as the SDG Localization Marker and the Bilbao Blueprint, developed with partners for the co-creation of multi-level multi-stakeholder strategies and projects for territorial transformation. With a systemic approach, these innovative projects can mobilize blended finance solutions for local priorities, and city-to-city partnerships. Through complementary initiatives such as the Bilbao Design Sprint/Bilbao Bootcamp these innovations can act as catalyzers and integrate local financing into national and global strategies.
- Strengthening and innovating cities' data capacities through the Quality of Life Initiative (QoLI), which combines global metrics with local perceptions to inform evidence-based planning – contributing to measuring and implementing the Global Urban Monitoring Framework.
- Building resilience and investment readiness through initiatives such as the City Resilience Global Programme and the Cities Investment Facility, linking municipalities with private investors for sustainable infrastructure.
- Through the Local2030 Coalition, working in synergy with its constituencies, connecting LRGs with researchers, community networks, innovators, and investors ensuring that territorial priorities are informed by evidence, enriched by diverse perspectives and partnerships that can scale solutions globally.

Despite this progress, LRGs continue to face challenges in financing, data, and coherence with national policies. These gaps underscore the importance of deepening their engagement in global platforms such as WUF13.

The “Road To(s)” processes partially bridge this gap. Recognized across Constituencies as a signature flagship of the Local2030 Coalition, they have proven highly effective in mobilizing diverse actors - Member States, local and regional governments, civil society, youth, academia, and the private sector -, ensuring that local perspectives feed into global processes. The “Road to Seville” towards FFD4, co-led with Spain and the Global Task Force of Local and Regional Governments, ensured the engagement of 1000+ participating organizations in 20 countries, all over the World. Based on wide demand from participants, the Coalition expanded this approach through the Road to WSSD2, the Road to Belém towards COP30, and an incipient Road to Baku towards WUF13.

This continuous engagement of local stakeholders to feed in the design and implementation of global agendas will channel locally rooted territorial solutions with proven transformative, systemic impact, into WUF13 discussions and outcomes. This will ensure that debates at the Forum build on prior consultations and evidence. The LRG engagement process outlined here will thus contribute to, and benefit from, the “Road to Baku” while highlighting the unique leadership role of local governments.

Goal

To strengthen collaboration with local and regional governments in the design, implementation, and follow-up of WUF13, and to ensure their contributions feed into the broader “Road to Baku: The Local Way” process—advancing solutions and partnerships that promote adequate housing for all towards safe and resilient cities and communities.

Objectives

- A. **WUF13 Preparations:** To scale and leverage the contribution of local and regional governments together with the GTF to the preparations for WUF13 in a sustained manner before, during, and beyond the Forum, including through the “Road to Baku: the Local Way” engagement process.
- Engage local and regional governments in the preparations for WUF13 stakeholder events (e.g., assemblies, roundtables, dialogues), ensuring alignment with their contributions to other global agendas and processes, including the Financing for Development process and the “Seville Platform for Action”, the “Road to WSSD2: the Local Way”, the “High-Level Political Forum” (e.g., the Local2030 HII Special Event and the LRG Forum), COP30 and its Ministerial Meeting on Urbanization, among others.
 - Facilitate discussions on the key topics of WUF13 as defined in the background paper and main dialogues, enabling local and regional governments to articulate territorial priorities and exchange best practices.
- B. **WUF13 Call to Action:** To systematically harness the perspectives, practices, and policy recommendations of local and regional governments in the development and dissemination of the WUF13 Call to Action and other outcomes, ensuring inspiration with the inputs of the multi-stakeholder “Road to Baku: the Local Way” process, processes led by the GTF, and the alignment with national agendas.
- Gather local and regional government inputs to the Baku Call to Action as a main outcome of WUF13, ensuring that territorial perspectives and priorities inform the Forum’s declarations and follow-up, through both offline and online consultations co-organized with the GTF.
- C. **UN-Habitat Strategic Plan and Resolution 2.6:** To engage local and regional governments in implementing UN-Habitat’s Strategic Plan 2026–2029, with a focus on SDG Localization and multilevel governance as a means to deliver adequate housing, land, and basic services. To strengthen UN-Habitat operational support toward LRGs by fostering their engagement in SDG Cities – contributing to advancing Resolution 2.6
- Facilitate dialogues and concrete local and regional government recommendations towards the implementation of UN-Habitat’s Strategic Plan 2026–2029, particularly in advancing SDG localization, multilevel governance, financing, resilience, and adequate housing for all.

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- To continue engagement of city partners within the SDG Cities flagship initiative – with the specific objective of fostering peer technical exchanges, continuous learning and capacity building.
- D. New Urban Agenda:** To enhance and deepen the contribution of local and regional governments to the implementation, monitoring, and review of the New Urban Agenda and SDG 11 in 2026, informed by the World Assembly of Local and Regional Governments.
- To gather inputs for the mid-term review of the New Urban Agenda and the SDG 11 reporting in 2026, closely following the World Assembly of Local and Regional Governments as an officially recognized mechanism for reviewing progress and elevating local voices in global reporting.
- E. Local2030 Coalition:** To ensure the unified contribution of the UN system to WUF13 through the Local2030 Coalition, by leveraging its localized initiatives and solutions to enhance coherence, efficiency, and the local impact of UN action before, during, and beyond the Forum.
- To facilitate the submission of practices and solutions from local and regional governments that promote adequate housing for all, sustainable urbanization, resilience, and SDG localization, building on the outcomes of the “Road to Baku: The Local Way” process, and illustrating through the Local2030 Coalition how this engagement contributes to the UN80 process by enhancing the coherence, efficiency, and impact of UN system action.
- F. 100 Days of Local Multilateralism:** To frame the World Urban Forum and the UCLG Congress in June 2026 and the HLPF’s SDG 11 review within the ongoing 100 Days of Local Multilateralism, ensuring coherence and continuity across global processes on sustainable development and social transformation. To align mobilization, advocacy, and political dialogue throughout this sequence, consolidating the outcomes of WUF13 and shaping the collective priorities that the municipal movement will bring to Tangier and beyond.

Engagement Modalities

- Virtual consultations convened by the Global Taskforce of Local and Regional Governments with LRGs, their associations and networks, facilitated to gather feedback, share updates, and co-develop contributions to the WUF13 process.
- Decentralized local, national and regional workshops, organized in collaboration with Local2030 Hubs, SDG Cities, LRGs networks, and partners, to identify transformative territorial practices and priorities.
- Regional consultations in Africa, Asia, Europe, and the Americas to synthesize lessons and consolidate LRG positions ahead of WUF13.

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- Contribution to surveys, reports, and policy briefs, including the Local2030 Coalition’s planned “Road to Baku”, ensuring LRG priorities and solutions are systematically captured.
- Engagement in multi-stakeholder dialogues, alongside youth, civil society, academia, and private sector actors, while ensuring LRG priorities and solutions are articulated clearly and prominently.

Expected Outcomes

- WUF13 outcomes reflect local and regional government inputs in an inclusive and comprehensive manner.
- More meaningful local and regional government engagement modalities at WUF13 through co-curation with the organized constituency of LRGs gathered in the GTF.
- Strengthened multi-stakeholder partnerships and networks towards WUF13, fostered through Local2030’s “Road to Baku: The Local Way” engagement process.
- Expanded data and knowledge base relevant to the theme of WUF13, with local and territorial perspectives contributing evidence, practices, and solutions.
- Enhanced monitoring and reporting of SDG 11 and the New Urban Agenda, in close alignment with the World Assembly of Local and Regional Governments as a key mechanism for global review.
- Fostered local and regional government engagement in SDG Cities and related UN-Habitat initiative to advance the implementation of UN-Habitat’s Strategic Plan 2026–2029.
- Sustained and meaningful local and regional government engagement beyond WUF13, building continuity with other global agendas and processes – through Local2030 and UN-Habitat initiatives such as SDG Cities.

Expected Outputs

- Consolidated inputs from LRGs to the WUF13 Call to Action and other outcome documents, ensuring territorial perspectives are fully reflected.
- Policy Brief (TBC), developed in coordination with Local2030 Coalition member entities, aligning LRG inputs with WUF13 objectives and the New Urban Agenda, and serving as the UN system’s joint contribution on SDG localization to WUF13.
- Reports from local and regional workshops and consultations, compiling evidence, practices, and solutions that advance sustainable urbanization and SDG localization.
- A repository of local development solutions with proven transformative power to feed in the WUF13 process, including by showcasing LRG-led practices and solutions at WUF13 through side events, dialogues, and exhibitions, demonstrating impact in areas such as climate action, housing, governance, and financing.
- Recommendations from LRGs towards the mid-term review of the New Urban Agenda and SDG 11 reporting in 2026.

- SDG Cities’ report on priorities for cities’ engagement in advancing UN-Habitat Strategic Plan with region-oriented recommendations for shaping operational support and partnerships.

Key Priorities Emerging from the Kick-Off Consultation

The initial consultation with Local and Regional Governments (LRGs), held on 10 October 2025, identified five priority areas.

1. **Localizing financing for housing:** Repeated calls to rethink fiscal architecture so cities and metropolitan governments can plan and invest across the full housing value chain (municipal creditworthiness, blended finance, municipal bonds, climate funds, etc.).
2. **Multi-level / metropolitan governance:** —The metropolitan dimension needs to be elevated in discussions on urban challenges. Many urban issues unfold at this scale, yet it often receives limited attention compared to local, regional, or national levels. Strengthening metropolitan governance and identifying solutions suited to this interconnected scale will be essential.
3. **Territorial/regional lens (urban–rural links, mid-sized territories):** Calls to include urban–rural linkages, mid-sized territories and regional regeneration in housing debates (e.g., reuse of abandoned built spaces, territorial regeneration).
4. **Integrated planning and digital/knowledge tools:** Demand for integrated “One Plan, One Budget” approaches, digital planning tools, urban observatories and project preparation support to align planning and finance.
5. **Climate-proof, resilient housing:** Emphasizing the importance of housing and planning practice as a key instrument for mitigation, community led adaptation and resilience. The focus should align with energy efficiency, regenerative building practices, resilience and nature-based solutions.
6. To be completed by the GTF.

Coordination modalities

UN-Habitat and the Global Taskforce of Local and Regional Governments will facilitate local and regional government engagement towards WUF13 by providing an overarching framework and facilitating the definition of outcomes by the representatives of LRGs, ensuring coherence through the Local2030 Coalition structures to ensure inter-agency coordination and alignment with other UN processes.



UNITED NATIONS HUMAN SETTLEMENTS PROGRAMME
P.O. Box 30030, Nairobi 00100, Kenya
unhabitat-info@un.org | www.unhabitat.org

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UN-Habitat will also facilitate programing and operational matters including scheduling, reporting and follow up. Digital tools will be deployed to streamline contributions, and internal focal points will support consistency, documentation, and feedback mechanisms.

Stakeholders are invited to self-organize, coordinate the proceedings and outcomes of the process and to take substantive leadership roles in defining the content, priorities and recommendations emerging from the engagement process, while maintaining a focus on enhancing the impact of WUF 13. Stakeholder roles will be defined through different channels as appropriate, including working with existing UN-Habitat and Local 2030 Coalition stakeholder groups, expressed interest by relevant stakeholder groups to undertake coordination roles and consideration of stakeholders with a direct relevance to the theme of WUF 13.

Roadmap

	Step	Dates (proposed)	Lead / Owner	Key outputs	Tools
1	Kick-off	Oct 7–Nov 5, 2025	UN-Habitat focal point + LRGs	Kick-off notes (completed)	MS Teams,
2	Report-back & engagement plan	1st week Nov (Nov 3–7)	Focal Point + UN-Habitat Stakeholder Engagement Team	Consolidated report + engagement plan draft	Engagement plan
3	Working group establishment + meeting	2nd week Nov (Nov 10–14)	Focal Point + UN-Habitat Stakeholder Engagement Team	WG ToRs (or Main group TOR), calendar	MS Teams, shared Drive
4	WUF Assemblies & roundtables concept notes / consultation on engagement plan – online meeting	End Nov (Nov 24–30)	Session co-leads + GTF + UN-Habitat Stakeholder Engagement Team	Inputs to Call draft; draft assembly concepts	Collaborative drafting (Docs/Padlet)
5	Global Dialogue with ED	TBC (Dec 1–10 window)	SE Team/WUF13 core team / OED	ED dialogue summary; prioritized asks	Virtual plenary
6	Thematic dialogues	Dec 2025 – Mar 2026	Regional Heads/ Thematic leads / WGs + UN-Habitat Stakeholder Engagement Team	Thematic summaries; drafts for background papers/outputs	Breakout sessions, Padlet
7	Consultation on Baku call to action and feedback on thematic dialogues	April 2026 (April 1–30)	Session leads + GTF + UN-Habitat Stakeholder Engagement Team	Finalized inputs for assemblies/roundtables; pre-WUF alignments	MS Forms; final editing
8	WUF13 participation	17–22 May 2026	All	Roundtables, assemblies, expo contributions	On-site/virtual
9	Post-WUF debrief, continued dialogue & monitoring report	Jun–Aug 2026	WUF13 coordination + stakeholders	Monitoring report; follow-up commitments	Survey; shared report template

