

GLOBAL GOALS

LOCAL FOCUS

Local governments are committing to sustainable development goals

We underwrite that we, as local governments, accept the responsibility of sustainable development on our territory. We share this responsibility worldwide: in Flanders, in Africa and in Latin-America we have the same duty, even though the local context for action can be quite different. Sustainable development is about economic, ecological and social aspects, everywhere in the world.

We welcome, as political representatives of local governments in Latin-America, Africa and Flanders, the 17 sustainable development goals (Global Goals for Sustainable Development). After a world-wide participatory consultation process 193 countries committed to accomplish this international agenda on 27 September 2015 in the context of the United Nations. The current global challenges increasingly require local actions within an interdependent world. We are aware that these sustainable development goals are one and offer an indivisible response to global challenges.

We reflect on the role to be played by local governments worldwide in accomplishing sustainable development goals and emphasise that a strongly developed local global policy (which aims for international justice through several fields of action) can therefore make a major contribution.

We realise that our present world is still far from perfect and that inequality lies at the basis of poverty and injustice. Besides, the world is getting smaller and smaller. Global challenges are interdependent, are increasingly becoming apparent in local communities and therefore the systems must change.

We aim for solidarity and unity between nations as a basic attitude. For us, sustainable development means that everyone must get the same rights and opportunities, now, but also in the future. At the same time we do not want to irreversibly endanger the earth's capacity.

We underwrite the importance of these goals as the inclusive and universal agenda for sustainable and integral development processes up to 2030. In order to achieve these global goals, we develop local actions.

We are convinced that local governments worldwide play a crucial and similar role in local processes of sustainable development. Being the government level which is most closely involved with the citizens, we have the democratic legitimacy to develop a local policy in this respect. This closeness of the local government's sphere puts local authorities in the perfect place to adequately and efficiently respond to what the population in our territory needs. In this context we also promote the international recognition of our territorial role in this universal agenda until 2030.

We are glad that the specific role of cities and municipalities in sustainable development is recognised in the formulation of the eleventh goal (SDG 11: inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable cities and local communities). This sustainable goal fits cities and municipalities worldwide like a glove.

We recognise that as local authorities we have to enter into global alliances. We are convinced that an effective sustainable development is only possible through cooperation. This means first of all mutual cooperation, within intermunicipal relations and learning networks on a regional, national and international level. This also includes, on an intermunicipal level, a cross-sector vision which requires a transversal, integral and multidisciplinary approach. Through international cooperation we see a lot of potential in exchanging knowledge and experiences between colleague-officials and politicians.

We also recognise that all 17 sustainable development goals, without exception, touch upon (partial) aspects of our local competences, ranging from fighting poverty, over well-being and gender equality for young and old, and local economy, education and consumption to energy and climate policy. Many of these themes have already

been adopted by us, the local authorities. We also realise that during the next fifteen years we will be able to take additional steps and to make additional efforts.

We call out for a local translation of these global goals, adjusted to everyone's local context. These sustainable goals are so fundamental that the perspective of the local authorities cannot and should not be left out. The local focus from a municipal perspective is, in our opinion, indispensable to reach the universal agenda in 2030.

We investigate the potential of these goals as an important reference standard to draft a coherent municipal policy for sustainable development. By conducting local policy coherence, we are an example to our citizens when we raise their individual and collective awareness and encourage them to take action. We commit to accept and translate the sustainable development goals in our municipal policy and do not restrict ourselves to a statement of intent, but we also want to effectively measure, monitor and adjust this where necessary.

We handle a specific director's role towards other actors in our territory. First of all we address the civil society and the private sector. We are convinced that the participation of citizens (either or not organised) to the municipal policy is a major condition for good local governance. Municipalities can help both the civil society and the private sector to raise their sustainability awareness. We are convinced that local authorities can play a pioneering role in applying a multi-stakeholder approach to sustainable development.

We request that the central governments explicitly and actively involve us, the local authorities, in the plans and achievements in the context of this universal development agenda on a national and regional level, both directly and through the national organisations of local administrations. The sustainable development goals may not only be approached from a national or regional perspective. On the other hand, we are aware that - as a local authority - we cannot achieve this alone and that this will only be possible via an adequate and balanced synergy of several government levels. We handle the subsidiarity principle as a fundamental principle.

We request that the central government bodies guarantee or continue to guarantee the resources required for our tasks, to make sure that the local authorities can make their crucial contribution to the sustainable development goals. We do not only request this for our local competencies but also applied to the most recently formulated goal for sustainable international partnerships between local administrations worldwide.