

Wellington Declaration

On August 25, 2020, we, mayors, local government officials, and United Nations partners attended the 2020 UCLG ASPAC Executive Bureau Meeting and International Forum “Getting to the New Normal: The Role of Local Government in Building Sustainable Communities in a Post COVID-19 World” hosted virtually by the Local Government New Zealand (LGNZ) and the City of Wellington.

At the Meeting, we had extensive and in-depth exchanges of visions and views on local government’s role in the post-COVID-19 recovery and the importance of not losing sight of building safe, inclusive, resilient and sustainable towns, cities and regions. Looking ahead, the leaders of local and regional governments in Asia Pacific reached the following consensus:

1. We acknowledge that mutual cooperation amongst cities and local governments, and with national governments, is essential to tackle the COVID-19 pandemic. Upholding the spirit of mutual cooperation at the local level, we identified, by sharing experiences, several approaches for adapting to the pandemic. The adoption of physical distancing and/or lock down policies has resulted in social and economic impacts that are affecting the way we work and live and creating a new normal. The ‘New Normal’ involves enabling communities to live fulfilling lives while breaking the chain of transmission with new norms of behaviour.
2. We believe that the 2030 global agenda (SDGs, Sendai Framework, New Urban Agenda, and Paris Climate Agreement) have the potential to strengthen the capacity and knowledge of cities and countries to address the COVID-19 challenge by investing in resilience. To this end, UCLG ASPAC has organised a range of activities, including development of guideline, web-share sessions, and virtual capacity building programmes. Our approach is multi-sectoral and our activities are conducted in cooperation with local governments, national governments, local governments associations, United Nations partners, and other related stakeholders.
3. We stand for introducing a green economy and enhancing community resilience in order to thrive as we battle with COVID-19 and build a new world in the aftermath. We are committed to developing capacity in the form of an online platform, resilience in supply chain, and food,

energy and water resiliency while promoting a circular economy approach. Local governments serve as the core of the response against and recovery from the COVID-19 outbreak. We promote multi-partnership approaches for resilience including – the Making Cities Resilient 2030 (MCR-2030) initiative to be launched this year to galvanise local action for the SDG “Decade of Action.”

4. It is in our communities that we implement preventive measures to curb the spread of the disease. It is also through our cities and regions that assistance has been given to vulnerable populations and small businesses to lessen the economic impact of the pandemic. As local governments, we are committed to support the micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) through digital platforms, economic incentives, stimulus package and training.
5. We are committed to extend partnerships by applying penta-helix's principle that local government cooperates and partners with various stakeholders, community, media, private sector, university for effective responses and recovery.
6. Cities and local governments will work together to implement the commitments made above to create a more prosperous Asia-Pacific region and adjust to the “New Normal” in which we act beyond business as usual.
7. We applaud cities and regions in the Asia-Pacific region for demonstrating successes in controlling the COVID-19 pandemic by building effective partnerships with communities and multiple stakeholders. UCLG ASPAC is committed to promoting multi-stakeholder cooperation and civic leader capacity building.

- **We propose that cities and local governments across the Asia Pacific should create efficient platforms for knowledge sharing and partnerships to deal the ongoing coronavirus pandemic.**
- **We commit to use the new innovation and technology to deal the global pandemic challenge**

Cities must utilise technology and innovation to give a boost to sustainable development practices. This will not only ease people’s lives and make urban management efficient, it will also make it easier for local governments to achieve targets under SDGs.

Cities and local governments will work together to implement the above commitments to create a more prosperous Asia-Pacific region by adapting the “New Normal” where we act beyond business as usual.

Wellington, 25 August 2020