



## **Meeting with the diplomatic corps accredited in Morocco**

Rabat, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation

10 July 2013

The secretary general, UCLG-A attended an information meeting of the diplomatic corps accredited in Morocco held on 10 July 2013, 14:00, at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of the Kingdom of Morocco. This meeting follows a previous one held on 8 July 2013 at the Rabat City Hall with the African Ambassadors.

After the welcoming words by the secretary general of the Ministry, the mayor of Rabat explained the reason of the meeting, which is the hosting by the City of Rabat of the 4th World Congress of the United Cities and Local Governments. He went on presenting this organization which membership is found in over 140 out of the 192 UN member states, with more than 1,000 cities direct members, and 112 national associations of local governments, and which altogether represent half of the world population.

He recalled the process that led to the choice of Rabat as the host city for the congress out of the 3 nominees that were Florence, Italy; Lyon, France; and Rabat, Morocco. The City of Rabat then signed a partnership agreement with the UCLG President and with the Government of Morocco for the organization of this World-class event.

The congress expects to host 3,500 participants from 1-4 October 2013. The theme of the congress is "Imagine society, Build democracy". This theme will be developed around two plenaries and 5 roundtables. The congress will also be an opportunity to celebrate one century of the world municipal movement. A business fair is also organized as part and parcel of the event.

M. Bousraoui from UCLG secretariat explained the partnership approach. So far 40 countries have already registered. Two main locations are chosen for the Rabat congress: 1. The Rabat 2013 Congress Village around the Sofitel Hotel Area; and 2. The ISESCO premises. But some sessions will be also held in other locations.

The congress will have an introductory plenary, two strategic plenaries on the MDGs and Post 2015 agenda; and the 2016 UN HABITAT III Conference, and the closing plenary scheduled on 4th October 2013.

Six major challenges will be addressed on the following issues:

1. Tackling the major changes of our era from our Cities and Regions: how to face and adjust to the irreversible ruptures brought about with environmental, economic and social crisis of cities and territories throughout the world?
2. Fostering wellbeing: what dimensions should governance and democracy take in the Post 2015 and Habitat III debates?
3. Strengthening solidarity among territories: how to bridge the rural-urban divide and ensure coherence between sub-national levels of governance and national dynamics?
4. Supporting new local governance and dynamics of change: which responses local and regional authorities should bring to citizens?

expectations, and how to build new models of local governance that give the appropriate space to civil society and the business sector?

5. Promoting diversity: how to make sure that the city or region is fully inclusive and takes necessary measures to reflect its political, social, cultural, gender and inter-generational diversity?

6. Shaping the urban future: What future do we want for cities and regions in the coming years? How are we going to make this future considered in the UN Post 2015 Agenda and the Habitat III debates?

Mr. ElongMbassi, secretary general, UCLG-Africa, emphasized that the congress is held in Rabat on behalf of all Africa. He therefore insisted that the Ambassadors from the continent make efforts in order that as many African local governments as possible attend the 4th UCLG congress in Rabat on 1-4 October 2013. He informed the audience that a special meeting of the main African cities will be organized, and that at the occasion, a gastronomy African dishes tasting cocktail is envisioned with the support of the Ambassadors ladies. He therefore call on the other Ambassadors from outside Africa to convince their local governments as well to come in Rabat and meet the local Africa's culture, and insisted on the role of these kind of cultural encounters in building a more equitable and peaceful world.

Mrs. Berrada from Jeune Afrique then presented the information and support material available for those who are interested in sponsoring the event.

And finally, the service provider in charge of the Business Fair gave information on the way this will be organized and on how to register. The Business Fair is an international fair open to all business companies interested in the booming market of basic services and infrastructures of African cities and regions. He asked the diplomatic corps to make necessary and timely communication for a good participation of companies of their respective countries.

After the closing remarks by the secretary general of the ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation, the meeting was closed at 15:00.