

## **4<sup>th</sup> UCLG World Congress**

**1 – 4 October 2013**

### **Meeting with the African Diplomatic Corps**

**Rabat, 8 July 2013**

On 8 July 2013, 10:00 o'clock, the UCLG-A secretary general participated in a meeting of the African diplomatic corps represented in Rabat held at the City Hall. The main agenda item of the meeting was centered around the organization of the 4th UCLG Congress in Rabat on 1-4 October 2013, on the theme "Imagine society, Build democracy".

The meeting was attended by the diplomats of the following countries: Algeria, Angola, Benin, Cameroon, Central Africa Republic, Djibouti, DRC, Gabon, Ghana, Mali, Nigeria, Senegal, Tunisia

The meeting was introduced by Mr. Fathallah Oualalou, Mayor of Rabat, President of the Association set up to prepare the congress locally, named "Rabat 2013". He reminded the audience with all steps taken for the hosting of the 4th UCLG Congress in Rabat (United Cities and Local Governments). The process started in Cairo on 2-3 November 2010, at the meeting of the Pan African Council of local governments, where and when the candidature of Rabat to host the 4th congress was endorsed, and the decision was made that Rabat will candidate on behalf of Africa as a whole. The process continued at the 3rd UCLG world congress in Mexico City on 28-30 November 2010 where the decision to allocate the 4th congress to Africa in the City of Rabat was unanimously taken after the kind withdrawal of the two other candidates, Florence, Italy, and Lyon, France. In June 2011, the City of Rabat hosted the UCLG World Executive Bureau meeting where the theme of the congress, "Imagine society, Build democracy" was adopted. A program of the event has then been defined with the support of the UCLG world secretariat. From then on the Congress was granted the Distinguished Patronage of His Majesty King Mohammed VI. An association called "Rabat 2013" was established to take care of the logistic aspects of the event, whilst the scientific and content aspect is handled by the by the UCLG world secretariat and its regional sections, including UCLG-Africa (UCLG-A). The expected number of participants is around 3,000, half of which should be Africans; hence the importance of a strong mobilization of African local authorities with the support of the African diplomatic

corps assigned in Rabat.

After the Mayor's presentation, the UCLG-A secretary general highlighted the role played by Africa in the process of uniting the world movement of local governments. He informed the audience that it is only when two African born leaders became heads of the two main organizations that were uniting that progress towards unity made headways. The two Africa leaders were Max N'Gandwe, from Zambia, then Mayor of Kitwe and President of IULA (International Union of Local Authorities) and Daby Diagne, from Senegal, then Mayor of Louga and President of UTO (the United Towns Organization). As in October 2013 in Rabat, we will be celebrating one century anniversary of the world municipal movement, it will make a lot of sense to also celebrate these two African born leaders for their invaluable contribution. He added that it is the intention of the UCLG-A to take advantage of the coming world congress to organize a meeting of the main cities of Africa which connection is so key for the unity of the continent. This meeting targets 30 to 45 cities across the continent which shall be the engine of growth and development of Africa. Networking the leaders of these cities in order that they have a sense of what is expected from them is what we are aiming at. Associated to this meeting, we also would want to have an African Night, where Africa offers to the rest of the world a taste of African dishes, as well as entertainment.

Some diplomats raised a concern about the upfront distribution of the documentation of the congress, to which the response was that all documents are accessible via the website of the congress. They insisted however to also use the channel of the embassies for a two way distribution of information. For the Africa Night, it was agreed that the UCLG-A should pursue the contacts with the different embassies to know which ones accept to engage in this endeavor. The president of the Diplomatic circle gathering the wives of African Ambassadors is chaired by Mali. A formal letter of request for participation should therefore be sent to her in order to start gathering good wills to contribute to the gastronomy show.

The Mayor of Rabat then informed the audience that a larger meeting is scheduled on Wednesday 10 July at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs with all the Ambassadors accredited in the Kingdom of Morocco, and that he counts on the presence of African Ambassadors in this larger encounter.

The meeting was closed at 13:00.

**Rabat, 8 July 2013**  
**Jean Pierre ELONG MBASSI**  
**Secretary General, UCLG-A**