The 12th meeting of the UCLG-A Executive Committee took place in Tangiers, Morocco, on 6 April 2015.
The meeting was attended by all members of the executive committee, except the Federation of Tunisian Cities, which sent apologies (The list of participants is in annexure). The meeting started with an official ceremony held in the morning.

In his opening statement, the representative of the Minister of Interior, Mr. Wali Bencherifa, Director General for Local Government, extended the congratulations of the Moroccan government to UCLG-A for the important work the organization is fulfilling to promote decentralization and good local governance in Africa. He pledged continuous support to the UCLG-A and its secretariat so that the organization better serves its constituency. He highlighted the importance of the 12th UCLG-A executive committee meeting as it takes place at a moment when the Kingdom of Morocco is about to launch the advanced regionalization process next September 2015; and is en route for the 7th Africities Summit from 29 November to 3 December 2015, where the leadership of the organization will be renewed. Finally he confirmed the resolve of the government to accompany Moroccan local governments to participate in the proceedings of the next Africities Summit.

In his welcoming speech, the Mayor of Tangiers, Mr. Fouad El Omari, President of the National Association of Local Government of Morocco (AMPCC), expressed his feeling of pride for the UCLG-A to have accepted that Tangiers be the host city for the meeting of UCLG-A executive committee. Tangiers is happy to show the new generations of projects being implemented to address the challenge of rapid urbanization of the city. Cities of Africa should become reference places for translating African sense of brotherhood into concrete win-win partnerships. The Kingdom of Morocco and Tangiers want to play a key role in promoting these south/south partnerships as testified by the signing of partnership agreements between local governments of Sub Sahara countries and those of the Kingdom of Morocco during the 2009 Africities Summit in Marrakesh. He expressed the wish that same kind of south/south partnerships agreements are concluded during the Africities Summit in Johannesburg this year. Cities should be at the forefront in championing African solidarity. This is why Tangiers is associating herself with all those who, across Africa and the world, strongly condemned the terrorist attack on innocent students in Kenya. A minute of silence was then observed for the memory of the victims.

On behalf of Ms. Maty Mint Hamady, UCLG-A vice president for North Africa, M. Satigui M'Barek, Deputy Mayor of Nouakchott, presented apologies of the Mayor of Nouakchott who could not make it to Tangiers due to unforeseen circumstances. He confirmed the willingness of the city of Nouakchott to develop south/south cooperation, which is translated in a Memorandum of Understanding being negotiated between Nouakchott and Tangiers. For the city of Nouakchott, this is the kind of initiatives that will best reinforce the role of local government in building the unity of Africa.

President of UCLG-A, Mr. Khalifa Sall, Mayor of Dakar, Senegal, said his genuine pleasure to be in Tangiers the Gate of Africa, and congratulated his Majesty the King for His resolve to launch the process leading to the implementation of advanced regionalization, thus showing His political will to build the development of Morocco starting from the local governments level. He asked the Wali Director General for Local Government to be the mouthpiece of the executive committee and extend to His Majesty the King the appreciation and greetings of the
UCLG-A for the support so far provided by the Kingdom of Morocco to the organization. He highlighted the fact that the executive committee meeting will be discussing the preparedness of the UCLG-A to provide valuable inputs to the Vision 2063 of Africa which is the theme of the coming Africities Summit. Among the agenda items of the meeting is also the discussion on the way to operationalize the African Cities Development Fund (ACDF) which was created during the Resolutions Africa Conference held in Marrakesh on 11-12 December 2014, on Financing African Cities.

The official opening session was followed by a Press conference attended by local and national media.

The proceedings of the executive committee meeting went on in the afternoon with the following agenda items:

1. Adoption of the report of the 11th session of the executive committee held on 13 October 2014 in Johannesburg and on the implementation of its resolutions and recommendations
2. Activity report of the general secretariat from October 2014 to March 2015
3. Approval of the 2014 accounts
4. Report on the preparation of the 7th Africities Summit in Johannesburg
5. Report on the preparation of the UCLG-A general assembly
7. The status of the strategic partnership between the European Union Commission and UCLG-A
8. Any Other Business

**On agenda item 1. Adoption of the 11th meeting of the executive committee**

The executive committee adopted the report of the 11th meeting of the executive committee without any reservation. On the implementation of the resolutions of the 10th meeting of the executive committee held in Victoria, Seychelles on 12-13 May 2014:

- the executive committee endorsed the choice of the city of Banjul, Gambia, as the 3rd member representing West Africa on the executive committee, following the mediation effort of the UCLG-A president and the decision of the UCLG-A West Africa members caucus on this matter;
- the executive committee received the ruling of the president that voluntary contributions by executive committee members should be paid as follows: president, 20 000 €; vice presidents, 15 000 €; other member: 5 000 €. The payment of these contributions would demonstrate the will of the leadership of UCLG-A to address seriously the funding problem of the organization. On that topic, vice president Manyoni from SALGA agreed on the proposal and recommended that a formal letter be sent by the secretariat in support to the mobilization of these contributions. Reverend Mpho from the Botswana Association of Local Authorities disagree
with the voluntary contributions and advised that this issue be dealt with in a broader scope of the review of membership dues by the task force on membership fees chaired by vice president Manyoni. Cllr Loukakou from Brazzaville reminded that the decision on voluntary contributions was formally endorsed by the executive committee at its Brazzaville meeting in February 2013 and confirmed at the Victoria meeting in May 2014. Therefore it should no longer be a matter of discussion within the executive committee. What should be an issue is the way this decision shall be implemented.

Mayor Oualalou of the city of Rabat said that political autonomy goes hand in hand with financial autonomy which is a testimony of credibility. He advised therefore that voluntary contributions should be paid the soonest by all executive committee members.

In conclusion the president recommended that the secretary general issue a formal letter to executive committee members calling for payment of voluntary contributions according to the agreed rates. He insisted on the need to expedite this process in order that dues and voluntary contributions are paid no later than end of October 2015, bearing in mind that no member will be voting member or eligible at the next general assembly of UCLG-A unless he is in order in the organization's books for the payment of its membership dues for the years 2013, 2014, and 2015.

On Agenda item 2. Activity report of the General Secretariat

The report was adopted by the executive committee without comments.

On Agenda item 3. Approval of the 2014 Accounts

Members of the executive committee considered remainder still due revenues of the 2012 Africities Summit and asked for more information before they can decide on what to do about them. In response, the president said that the situation is clear. Due to the regulations on the use of public funds in Senegal, it was decided to set up a Africities management unit in Dakar through which the funds originating from the Senegalese national budget and the budget of the city would be channeled. The UCLG-A secretariat accounted for the resources it managed; an audited report was tabled to the executive committee and was already adopted. What remains to be done is the consolidation of the audits done for the Africities funds managed by the UCLG-A secretariat in the one hand, and those managed by the Africities management unit in Dakar, on the other hand. The audit consolidation report shall be done no later than end of June 2015, which will then allow the executive committee to get full clarity on the situation and make well informed final decision on whether to consider these remainder still due Africities revenues as recoverable or not. This decision shall be made at the next meeting of the executive committee.

A question was raised about who has the intellectual property rights on Africities for which franchise fees are paid. The secretary general clarified that the intellectual property rights of Africities is the ownership of UCLG-A, which is the beneficiary of the franchise fees.
The executive committee also considered the arrears due by the UCLG-A to the social security fund (CNSS) and to the income tax administration of Morocco since 2008. On this issue there was a consensus among executive committee members that given the current financial situation of the organization inherited from its former divide, the only credible solution is to request that the government of Morocco helps our organization to settle these arrears or negotiate a waiver. The executive committee asked therefore the president and secretary general to present this request for support to the minister of the Interior of Morocco.

After having considered the report and opinion of the external auditors, the executive committee approved the 2014 UCLG-A audited accounts and gave quitus to the secretary general for his management of the 2014 UCLG-A accounts.

On agenda item 4. State of the 2015 Africities Summit preparation

Cllr Geoffrey Makhubo from the city of Johannesburg presented the state of the preparation of the Summit. All commissions are set up, including the operational commission and the executive commission lead by the executive mayor of Johannesburg. Committees are also in place for content development and logistic arrangements. The program architecture was developed with 24 indicative content themes, leading to no less than 60 sessions to be organized during the Summit. A Professional Conference Organizer has just been hired, and the venue has been secured at the Sandton International Convention Centre. A bit of delays was observed in the setting up of the Africities website, but it is now up and running. Members of the executive committee are encouraged to register as soon as possible. Delays are also observed in the treatment of the issue of visas. Contacts have been taken with the department of home affairs to sort out this matter. Official invitations will be sent shortly by the executive mayor of Johannesburg to his colleagues from Africa and abroad, and same will be done by the president of SALGA targeting his African counterparts, whilst the minister for cooperative governance and traditional authorities will invite the ministers. Mobilization for the Summit is also on going, taking advantage of various missions and meetings where officials and officers of the city of Johannesburg participate. All contacts and channels must be used to disseminate information about Africities, including social networks.

The executive committee congratulated the city of Johannesburg for its preparedness and encouraged the city of Johannesburg and the UCLG-A secretariat to build strong collaborating teams to ensure a successful Africities 7 Summit.

On agenda item 5. Elective General Assembly

The secretary general reminded that rules of procedures were circulated to all members explaining the process to follow for the elections that will be held during the general assembly of UCLG-A on 2 December 2015. Each region is expected to nominate one representative to sit on the electoral committee. These names are received at the secretariat no later than 30 November 2015 at 17:00.
It is also expected that each region hold caucus in order to agree on the candidatures they wish to submit for the Pan African council (9 nominations), for the executive committee (3 nominations), and for the Presidency (either as vice president for the region, or as president of UCLG-A. Everything possible should be made to have at least 40% of women among the nominees.

The Secretary General alerted also the members of the UCLG-A Executive Committee that Africa can have the ambition to present a candidate to serve as UCLG World president, to be elected during the UCLG World Congress in Bogota, Colombia, in October 2016. The announcement for UCLG president candidature will be made soon. There are arguments in favor of an African candidature for this prestigious position. Following the rotation principle, it is just appropriate that the next President of UCLG comes from Africa, after the first one (Marta Supplicy) being from Latin America, the second one (Bertrand Delanoë) from Europe, the third one (Kadir Topbas) from West Asia. The members of the executive committee are expected to reflect on this possibility and come up with proposals so that lobbying and advocacy activities can start straight away.

The President asked the vice presidents to organize regional meetings in order to reach a consensus on nominations. The calendar of such regional meetings should be communicated to the UCLG-A secretariat general.

**On agenda item 6. Outcomes of the Resolutions Africa conference in Marrakech on 11-12 December 2014**

Cllr Geoffrey Makhubo, Vice President FMDV, presented an oral report of the Resolutions Africa conference which main outcome was the creation of African Cities Development Fund (ACDF). The ACDF is meant to facilitate access of African cities to the financial market. The mayor of Rabat said that 2015 is a critical year for both the global and Africa's development agendas. He mentioned among others, the UN Habitat governing council meeting in April 2015 in Nairobi, the UN conference on Financing for Development to be held in July 2015 in Addis Ababa, the UN conference on post 2015 Sustainable Development Goals scheduled in September 2015 in New York, the Africities Summit on 29 November to 3 December in Johannesburg, the COP 21 on Climate change in December in Paris, not forgetting the preparatory meetings to be held during this year for coming third UN Conference on Human Settlements scheduled in Quito, Ecuador, in October 2016. In all these conferences, African local government voice should be heard. It is the duty of the UCLG-A to mobilize African local authorities and equip them with convincing advocacy messages and position papers in order that they can influence these different but convergent agendas.

Coming back to the ACDF the UCLG-A president proposed that the Fund should start with the contributions of African cities themselves. He suggested to kick start the process by mobilizing a minimum of 10 African Cities releasing each, 100 000 euro. On this basis the executive committee asked the secretary general to accelerate technical papers work on the feasibility studies, and launch sensitization and mobilization campaign targeting African cities and
potential parties interested in the ACDF. The objective is to hold a first meeting for the operationnalization of the ACDF by end of June/July 2015.

On agenda item 7. Strategic partnership with the European Union Commission

The Secretary General informed the executive committee about the signing of a strategic partnership between the EU commission and the UCLG-A. The signing ceremony took place on 30 January 2015 between EU Commissioner for Development, Mr. Mimica, and the UCLG-A President, Mr. Khalifa Ababacar Sall. During the same ceremony agreements were also signed with UCLG, CEMR, CLGF, and AIMF. The president mentioned that UCLG-A is challenged in its absorption capacity since it was granted a sum of around 7 millions euro to be spent over 3 years. In order to mobilize these funds our organization should show the willingness of its members to ensure its sustainability; hence the obligation for UCLG-A members to pay their membership dues so that our partners can confidently support us. The president also made an appeal to the vice presidents for their respective regions to provide inputs for the programs of actions so that the implementation of the provisions of the partnership is expedite.

One of the key outcomes expected from the partnership is to operationalize the UCLG-A regional offices. In that regard the president raised the issue of the UCLG-A/SARO for which the government of South Africa has provided support since FY 2013/2014 and which is still not operational. He asked vice president Manyoni to work with the secretary general in order to clarify the situation and report to COGTA on the use of the grant received for SARO. He also called on East Africa and West Africa regions to liaise with the secretary general in order to launch the operationnalization of their respective regional offices.

Reverend Mpho from BALA mentioned the availability of a UCLG-A office in Algiers that could serve as the UCLG-A North Africa Regional Office. He suggested that a mission of the secretary general be organized in Algiers in order to ascertain the suitness of the office for UCLG-A/NARO.

The mayor of Rabat reminded the executive committee members that at its meeting held in October 2010 in Cairo, the Pan African Council of local governments endorsed the decision made by the North Africa members of UCLG-A to establish the North Africa office of the UCLG-A in Cairo.

The president concluded this matter by asking that a meeting of the North Africa members of the UCLG-A be called the soonest by the UCLG-A North Africa vice president in order that a final decision is taken on the location of UCLG-A/NARO. He also reminded that the hosting of a UCLG-A supposes the negotiation of a Headquarters Agreement that secures certain immunities and privileges given the fact that UCLG-A Head Office in Morocco has been accorded a diplomatic status. He therefore recommended that the vice president in each region should assist the secretary general in the negotiation of the Headquarters Agreement with the host country.

On item 8. Any Other Business
The mayor of Bamako, Mr. Adama Sangare, wanted to know more about the relations between UCLG-A and the Council of Local Government of the West Africa Economic and Monetary Union (CCT/UEMOA by its French acronym). The secretary general explained that it had always be a request by UCLG-A members that local authorities have a representation at all levels of public governance on the continent. This is why the organization is striving that there be local government bodies among the institutions put in place at regional and continental level to define policies and strategies for sustainable development. The UCLG-A played an important role in the creation of CCT/UEMOA and is involved in the promotion of its development. CCT/UEMOA Is the first of its kind on the continent. It is the wish of UCLG-A that every regional economic community create a body within its institutions to represent the voice of local authorities so that the concerns of the local people are duly taken on board when defining regional development policies and strategies. UCLG-A secretariat is busy disseminating this good practice in the other African regions with the hope that this example will be followed soon.
The closing ceremony that took place at 18:00 was chaired by the minister of the Interior of the Kingdom of Morocco, Mr. Hassad.

In his remarks, minister Hassad said that Morocco is proud to belong to the African continent and is determined to make sure that Africa plays its rightful role in today’s and tomorrow’s world. He said that the UCLG-A executive committee meeting takes place at a moment when Morocco is discussing and adopting a very important local governance reform. At the level of regions and communes, the choice of councillors will be done from now on through universal vote and not any more following indirect vote. The region will have total autonomy in its functioning. The only remaining controls are about actions that can have long term impact on the sustainability of the region (debt, long term investments). The decision on expenditure is from now on the responsibility of the president of the region and no longer that of the representative of the administrative authority as it was before. Regions are granted universal competence. A minimum annual allocation of 1 billion euro is granted by the national government to each region. The control is done a posteriori by the Accounting Courts. Another major improvement is that the law gives to the citizen the right to put any of their concerns among the agenda items of the regional council proceedings. Local elections are scheduled in September 2015, which is also the point of departure of the implementation of the new policy on advanced regionalization. The minister lastly invited the executive committee members to visit Morocco and be back frequently as he considers that every African is at home in Morocco.

In his closing remarks, president Khalifa Sall asked the minister to extend the greetings of the UCLG-A family to His Majesty the King Mohammed VI for the continuous support our organization is enjoying in Morocco. He asked the minister to inform the King of the courageous initiative local authorities have taken to set up last December 2014 in Marrakesh, an African Cities Development Fund (ACDF) for which a backing by the Kingdom of Morocco
and other African states is welcome. He urged the minister to have confidence in local authorities and provide them with more means for their action. This because either development is witnessed at the local level, or there is no such thing as development for normal citizens. In other words, the legitimacy of the public authorities at all levels, is more and more related to the way local authorities deliver on their mandate, in particular the provision of basic services to the people, including the poor. He insisted that the government of Morocco support Moroccan local authorities’ participation in the coming Africities Summit in Johannesburg as well as their presence at the COP21 in Paris. He finally wished that the government of Morocco maintain and improve its support to the UCLG-A secretariat by helping it to solve some pending problems, particularly those in relation with arrears due to social and fiscal administrations of Morocco.

In his closing statement, the mayor of Tangiers, Mr. El Omari thanked the minister for his presence and UCLG-A executive committee members for the work well done. He once more insisted on the need for local governments to learn from one another, and to think together as Africans in order to avoid copy and paste solutions from abroad, outside the realities and constraints of our continent. Africa is first and foremost in need of south/south cooperation and we want UCLG-A to be instrumental in the development of these south/south partnerships. He finally wished a good return back home to those who came from far.

The meeting was closed at 18:30 with a Group photo.

Done in Tangier, on 8th April 2015

Jean- Pierre ELONG MBASSI
Secretary General, UCLG-Africa