

PRESS RELEASE

United Cities and Local Governments of Africa (UCLG Africa) held its **West Africa Regional Seminar in Dakar, from Monday 03 to Wednesday 05 August 2015 at King Fahd Palace Hotel.**

The deliberations were presided over by **Mr. Khalifa Sall**, Mayor of Dakar, President of UCLG Africa, Vice President for the West Africa Region; and moderated by **Mr. Jean Pierre Elong-Mbassi**, Secretary General of UCLG AFRICA.

Placed under the theme: **“African Local Governments - Contribution to the Unity of Africa,”** the seminar witnessed the participation of fifteen countries of the West Africa Region represented by the Chairmen of National Associations of Mayors and their Permanent Secretaries as well as the major cities in the countries that do not have national associations of Local Governments.

The first day of the seminar helped to upgrade the knowledge of the participants regarding the evolution of the environment for the action of local governments, both in Africa and at the world level.

The second day was devoted to the review of the place of local governments of West Africa in the network of United Cities and Local Governments of Africa (UCLG AFRICA) and in the network of the world organization of United Cities and Local Governments.

The third and last day addressed the issue of participation of West Africa in the 7th edition of the Africities Summit to be held at the Sandton International Convention Center, in Johannesburg, South Africa, from 29 November to 03 December 2015.

This meeting provided to the local elected officials an opportunity to be informed and armed, regarding the elaboration and evaluation the development programs of UCLG AFRICA, notably the **Governance, Advocacy and Decentralized Development Program (GADDEPA)** and the strategic partnership **“Framework Partnership Agreement” (FPA)**, concluded between UCLG AFRICA and the European Commission (EC).

The local elected officials also addressed the participation of West Africa in the **AFRICITIES 7 Summit** scheduled to take place from **29 November to 03 December 2015 in Johannesburg**, South Africa, on the central theme: **“Building the future of Africa with its people: the contribution of local authorities to the Agenda 2063 of Africa.”**

Thus, the participants addressed during the first day the following topics:

❖ **Inclusion of African local governments in the dynamics of regional integration.**

Local elected officials were briefed about the African Charter on the Values and Principles of Decentralization, Local Governance and Development adopted by the Conference of Heads of State and Government at its meeting held in Malabo, Equatorial Guinea, in June 2014. The charter has been signed, since its adoption, by only two countries (Guinea Bissau and Mauritania) and no country has

ratified it. As the first interested parties in the implementation of decentralization policies, the participants were sensitized on the need for each national association of local governments and its members to mobilize themselves immediately so as to obtain the signing and ratification of the Charter in their respective countries. We recall that the Charter will become a legal instrument of the Union only after its signing, ratification and the deposit of these instruments with the Commission of the African Union, by at least 15 Member States of the African Union.

Regarding the steps leading to the signing and ratification of the Charter, the participants were given the experience of Transparency International, which was very active for the ratification of the African Convention against corruption. This experience shows that it is necessary to: (i) know the stakeholders involved in the signing and ratification of the instruments of the African Union, (ii) launch an information campaign on the charter to mobilize the attention of the citizens and the media, and (iii) ensure a close monitoring of the steps of signing and ratification, without forgetting to congratulate the countries that have signed and ratified the charter.

The participants were also informed that during the same conference of June 2014 in Malabo, the Heads of State and Government also accepted the request made by President Macky Sall and adopted the establishment of a High Council of Local Authorities (HCAL) as an advisory body of the African Union. The HCAL will have 162 members, three (3) per each Member State of the African Union. The three members shall be chosen on the initiative of the national association of local governments (or the Ministry in charge of Local Government where a country does not have a national association) in compliance with the following requirements: have at least one woman among the members, have at least one member of the opposition among the members. The procedures for the setting up of HCAL now depend on the choice of the host country of its Headquarters, for which Senegal was the candidate. The final decision on the choice of the Headquarters will be made at the next meetings of the Conference of Heads of State and Government of the African Union.

Lastly, a paper was presented to the participants on the CCT (The Council of Local Governments) of UEMOA, the first regional integration institution that set up a representation of local authorities within its midst. Based on this positive experience, the local elected officials in the region expressed a wish for a local government council to be also established at the ECOWAS level. A memorandum was drawn up for this purpose, which the elected officials of the region directed the Secretary General of UCLG AFRICA to forward to the ECOWAS authorities.

The place of African local governments in the international agenda.

This component addressed the local governments of the region in the strategic partnership with the European Commission, the place of local governments of the region in the Africa Agenda of Cities Alliance, the place of the local governments of the region in the Urban Strategy of the African Development Bank (ADB), and finally the role of African local governments in the global agenda for which 2015/2016 are the transition years during which the international community will develop agendas that will impact on the future of the world over the twenty (20) years ahead: post 2015 agenda of sustainable development goals, climate change agenda, development funding agenda, international urban agenda within the framework of the Habitat III Conference scheduled to take place in Quito, Ecuador, in October 2016.

The second day of the deliberations addressed two topics:

The local governments of the **region within the UCLG AFRICA and UCLG networks.**

The Local elected officials were briefed about the networks developed by UCLG AFRICA, the committees and working groups of UCLG, and all the programs implemented within the framework of the long term perspectives of the organization, adopted in October 2007, for a period of 15 years, also known by the acronym GADDEPA (Governance, Advocacy, Decentralized Development for Africa). This session was also used to update the database of the local governments of the countries of the region.

Priorities of local governments.

To define the priorities of the local governments in the region, the participants were divided into two groups: one group to identify policy priorities, composed mainly of local elected officials; and a second group responsible for defining the technical priorities. This second group is made up primarily of the permanent secretaries of the national associations of local governments and staff of local government administrations. On this issue the participants were divided into two groups.

The feedback from the group works helped to define an action roadmap of national associations for an advocacy in favor of the signing and ratification of the Charter; the appointment of local authorities within HCAL; actions to be conducted for the creation of a council of local governments within ECOWAS; the commitment of local governments to the UCLG AFRICA programs and the committees and working groups of UCLG; the role of local elected officials in the prevention and management of conflicts, ...

The last day of the seminar focused on:

- ❖ **The participation of the members of the Region in the Africities Summit from 29 November to 03 December 2015 in Johannesburg and the Elective General Assembly of UCLG AFRICA.**

Under this chapter, the participants received comprehensive information on the state of preparation of the Summit, the logistic conditions of participation, as well as what is expected from the delegates to the Africities 2015 Summit, whose theme is "Shaping the future of Africa with its people: the contribution of local governments to the Agenda 2063 of Africa." It was recalled that each local government should identify the three priority issues for which it wishes to have solutions at the Johannesburg Summit; that each association should present in a page its point of view on Agenda 2063, its commitments to contribute to its realization, and the partnerships it wishes to develop to make credible the realization of Agenda 2063. The participants were also informed of the organization of special events, especially the meetings between the local elected officials of Africa and the local elected officials of China, Turkey, Latin America and Europe. The participants finally received accurate information on the Africities Exhibition organized concomitantly with the sessions of the Summit.

For the participation component of the members of the Region in the Elective General Assembly of UCLG AFRICA, the local elected officials were reminded of the rules and procedures of the Elective General Assembly. A regional caucus met subsequently to identify and propose the candidates of West Africa for the various responsibility positions within the management bodies

of UCLG AFRICA whose election will take place during the Elective General Assembly scheduled to be held on 02 December 2015 in Johannesburg within the framework of the Africities Summit. The regional caucus thus reached a consensus and presented the following nominations:

- The candidate for the office of President of UCLG AFRICA, **Mr. Khalifa Sall was unanimously re-nominated for a second term as the candidate for the Vice Presidency of the West Africa Region;**
- The candidates of West Africa for the Pan-African Council of Local Governments (the body representing the local governments of Africa, made up of 45 members, 9 per region of Africa, and which is to represent the continent at the World Council of United Cities and Local Governments), are:
 - City of Dakar
 - Association of Municipalities of Mali (AMM),
 - Association of Local Governments of Nigeria (ALGON)
 - Côte d'Ivoire (The three existing associations in the country are to agree on the nomination of a representative)
 - National Association of Local Authorities of Ghana (NALAG)
 - Local Communities Association of Sierra-Leone (LoCASL)
 - National Association of Local Governments of Benin (ANCB)
 - National Association of Mayors of Cape Verde (ANMCV)
 - National Association of Local Governments of Guinea (ANCG)
- Candidate of West Africa for the Financial Commission of UCLG AFRICA: the association of Côte d'Ivoire representing the local authorities of this country within the Pan-African Council;
- Representative of West Africa within the Electoral Commission set up for the organization of the Elective General Assembly of 02 December 2015 in Johannesburg: National Association of Local Governments of Benin;
- Candidates of West Africa for the Executive Committee of UCLG AFRICA (political management body of UCLG AFRICA composed of 15 members, 3 per region of Africa, representing the continent at the World Council of UCLG)
 - * City of Dakar
 - * National Association of Local Authorities of Ghana (NALAG)
 - * National Association of Mayors of Cape Verde (ANMCV)

- The Caucus favored a candidacy of Africa for the World Presidency of UCLG, and proposed that the nomination of the candidate of Africa be made in consultation with the other regions of the continent.
- **The four commissions** created by the regional caucus of West Africa are:
 - ✓ The **Decentralization and Local Democracy** Commission. This commission is chaired by the Association of Mayors of Senegal. The Association of Municipalities of Niger holds the Vice-Presidency. The National Association of Local Governments of Benin is the Rapporteur.
 - ✓ The **Humanitarian and Responses to Disaster** Commission. It is chaired by the Association of Municipalities of Liberia. The Vice-Presidency is held by the Association of Local Authorities of Guinea-Bissau (AALGB). The Rapporteur is the Local Communities Association of Sierra-Leone (LoCASL)
 - ✓ The **Environment and Sustainable Development** Commission. The Presidency is held by the Association of Municipalities of Burkina –Faso (AMBF). The Vice-Presidency is held by the City of Banjul and the Rapporteur is the National Association of Local Governments of Guinea (ANCG)
 - ✓ The **Integration, Peace and Conflict Prevention** commission. It is chaired by the City of Bamako, the Vice-Presidency is held by the Association of Local Governments of Nigeria (ALGON) and the Rapporteur is the Association of Municipalities of Côte d'Ivoire.

Furthermore, the caucus demanded that the experience UEMOA Local Government Council (CCT) be extended to ECOWAS, a procedure which will be initiated with the signing of a Memorandum by the elected officials, that will be forwarded to the authorities of ECOWAS by the Secretary General of UCLG Africa.

The caucus also recommended a speedy setting up of the Regional Office of UCLG AFRICA for West Africa, and requested the Secretary General of UCLG AFRICA to conclude quickly the Headquarters Agreement with the Government of Ghana for the installation of the Regional Office in Accra.

Finally, the caucus directed the Secretary General of UCLG AFRICA to set up quickly a communication and information exchange platform to accelerate and deepen networking among the members of UCLG AFRICA.

At the end of the three-day seminar, the local elected officials of the West Africa region committed themselves to:

- ✚ Produce a report on the works of the regional seminar of Dakar, especially on the occasion of the celebration of African Decentralization Day which the African Union set on 10th of August of every year.
- ✚ Mobilize themselves to launch a powerful advocacy with their respective central governments for the signing and ratification of the African Charter on the values and principles of decentralization, local governance and local development..

- ✚ Identify the GADDEPA programs in which their local governments wish to be involved actively; join the working committees set up by the caucus; and participate in the UCLG committees and working groups.
- ✚ Ask the local governments, members of the associations to provide their answers for the survey on the priority issues for which they wish to find answers during the Africities 2015 Summit.
- ✚ Contribute to the structuring of the networks of the professionals of local government administrations, by facilitating notably the creation or strengthening of the African Network of Local Government City Clerks, the African Network of City Chief Engineers, and the African Network of City Chief Financial Officers, Africa FINET.
- ✚ Participate massively in the Africities Summit and the Africities 7 Exhibition.
- ✚ Inform their associations of the imminent opening of the second edition of the election of the best African mayor with a view to urge them to participate.
- ✚ Prepare the participation of the elected officials of their respective countries in the Africities special events, notably the meetings between the African elected officials and the local elected officials of China, Turkey, Latin America and Europe.