



Preparatory Forum of African Local and Regional Councillors at COP22 PRE-COP22

Cities and territories, unavoidable stakeholders for the implementation of the international Agenda on Climate

Cotonou, Benin, September 8-10, 2016

COTONOU DECLARATION

We, African local councillors and regional leaders, meeting on September 8-10, 2016 in Cotonou, Benin, in order to contribute to the deliberations and outcomes of the Conference of Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change scheduled to be held on November 7-18, 2016 in Marrakesh, Morocco (COP22), and more specifically, to prepare the common position of local governments in Africa to be presented at the Summit of Local and Regional representatives that will be held on 14 November, 2016 that will feed into the framework of COP22,

Adopt the following Declaration:

1. We appreciate the universal scope of Paris Agreement concluded in December 2015 during the last Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the significant step that the Agreement made towards raising awareness on the common destiny of humanity facing the negative impacts and acceleration of risks-related climate disturbances and disasters, if the global warming is not kept below 2°Celsius and possibly 1.5°Celsius. We encourage all African States to ratify the Paris Agreement prior to December 2016.
2. We support and we adhere to the commitments made by local governments in their successive statements in the course of the Climate negotiations, including the Durban Adaptation Charter (December 2011), the Declaration of the Summit of Cities and Regions of Africa in Yamoussoukro (June 25, 2015); the Declaration of the World Summit Climate & Territories of Lyon (July 2, 2015); the Declaration of the City of Paris during the Local Leaders Summit on Climate (December 4, 2015).
3. We pledge to adhere massively to the World Convention of Mayors for Climate and Energy, and to implement its recommendations and prescriptions, to mark our determination to take an active part in the international campaign against climate change. We request however that in this initiative Africa is treated as one, and accordingly, that there be only one African chapter of the Convention.
4. We recall, however, that Africa, which accounts for 15% of the world population in 2015 with a forecast of 40% by 2100, currently uses only 3% of global energy consumption. We urge that the issue of energy divide of Africa be an integral part of the priorities of the agenda of the COP 22, because energy is essential for the transformation of local economies in order to build resilient local and regional governments as well as low carbon and sustainable economic development, and improving life in our cities and regions, but also to reduce their carbon footprint. That is why we commit to contribute to the implementation of the African Renewable Energy Initiative through our local plans and budgets.
5. In order to translate the National Determined Contributions (NDCs) presented by the States and considered as the implementation pillars of the Paris Agreement into actions on the ground, we highlight to States and the International community the indispensable role of city and regional governments. We insist on the necessity to localize climate change mitigation and adaptation programs and projects under the auspices of African local and regional leaders, in order to improve ownership by the populations, which is an essential condition for resilient territories and ecosystems leading to the sustainability of local and regional economies. The frequency and harshness of climate hazards speed up transhumance and cross-borders migrations, source of conflicts. Their sustainable handling calls for the development of decentralized cooperation partnerships between local governments in border areas; with appropriate climate-related mechanisms and financial resources.



6. We confirm that it is at the level of cities and local communities that potential stakeholders (including the private sector) can easily be mobilized and engage in the energy and ecological transition in order that our cities are involved in a resilient, interdependent and sustainable development trajectory. Regions, cities and local communities are the level of government that can effectively integrate and coherently implement the Sustainable Development Goals, the Climate Agenda, and the New Urban Agenda.

7. We are aware of the pressing need to contain urban sprawl in order to reduce energy consumption, improve access to services for the population and reduce the ecological footprint of cities and local communities. We commit to include all these issues in our urban and rural planning policies, and to promote modes of organization and processes of production, consumption, and exchanges in line with a circular economy approach. In the light of this, we request the State to create an enabling legal and institutional environment to support our initiatives.

8. COP 22 of Marrakesh has to be that of Solutions for Action after the Paris one that was about Commitments. We expect concrete proposals to come out of Marrakesh for the implementation of the Paris Agreement, particularly finance mobilization, and access to finance for local government and other local operational stakeholders. We ask that clear and simplified procedures are developed to facilitate access to climate financing.

9. We request that a dedicated funding stream be provided for within the Green Climate Fund to finance programs and projects submitted by sub-national governments, and that national and regional associations of local governments be recognized as implementing entities of the Fund. We recall that the African local governments have benefited very little funding under the Kyoto Protocol, notably the Clean Development Mechanism, because of their lack of capacity to complete bankable proposals. This is why we request that a massive capacity building programme for African sub-national governments and their associations be set up for the 2017-2019 period. The action of African local governments can also rely on the mechanisms of decentralized South-South, North-South, or Triangular cooperation, supporting the international action of local governments, such as 1% for water or 1% for waste and energy.

10. We charge the secretariat of UCLG-Africa, the representative and united voice of local governments of Africa, to take all necessary initiatives to guide and facilitate the design of programs and projects for finance mobilization, as well as define and implement capacity building programmes, especially through the African Local Government Academy (ALGA). In that regard we mandate the UCLG-Africa secretariat to develop partnerships with specialized institutions such as ICLEI Africa, IFDD, UNCDF-LoCAL, the Red Cross and Red Crescent movement, private sector partners, or any other relevant partner who is capable to facilitate the rapid operationalization of these programs and projects. We insist on the need for cities and local governments of Africa to have access to significant investment financing during the period of implementation of the commitments from 2020.

11. We call on our colleagues local councillors and regional leaders of Morocco be our mouthpiece to the President of COP 22 for him to support the presentation of this Declaration during the Summit of the Local and Regional Councillors scheduled to be held on November 17, 2016 as a side event of the COP22, and accept its dissemination to the Negotiating Parties to the UN Convention on Climate Change during their gathering in Marrakesh, November 7-18, 2016.

12. Given the importance of holding COP 22 on the African Soil, we stand to mobilize our colleagues local councillors and regional leaders from all over Africa, to ensure a large African participation in the Marrakesh Conference, taking advantage of the unique opportunity that the Conference offers to African local governments to strongly have their united voice heard.

Done in Cotonou, September 10, 2016

The Forum