The secretary general of UCLG Africa participated in the statutory affairs meeting chaired by UCLG’s President, Cllr Parks Tau and held at the FEMP Headquarters in Madrid, Spain on 18 April 2017.

The meeting raised concerns about the UCLG electoral process and selection of candidates for the choice of office bearers. It was agreed that this issue be clarified at the next World Council of UCLG in October/November 2017.

The committee received submission to host the next World Council from the cities:
- Zhengzhou, capital of Henan Province, China
- Hangzhou, presented by China's People's friendship Association with foreign countries

The committee on statutory affairs resolved to recommend to the Executive Bureau that the next World council in October/November 2017 be held in Hangzhou, China. The committee further resolved to recommend that there be a new call for formal applications for hosting of the next UCLG World Congress in 2019. At this juncture the committee also acknowledged the expression of interest from the City of Strasbourg and made the same recommendation for a formal application, whilst the call could still receive other candidatures. The committee recommended that the decision be made at the next UCLG World Council in October/November 2017.

**Outcomes of the meeting for the UCLG Presidency, February 2017**

The following progress was noted:

**Lebanon**
A meeting will take place today in Madrid between Co-President Ries, Mayor Sefiani and MEWA secretariat to bring the result to the Committee on Statutory Affairs.

**Gender Equality**
Standing committee is still being discussed

**Ukraine**
Meeting possible on 19 April upon arrival of Mayor of Kazan and President of CEMR

**North America section (Noram)**
Discussion ongoing but status quo for the time being

**Formal agreement with regional sections**
Preliminary talks will be taking place for the submission of a preliminary report at the next world council.

The committee ruled that all regions should be consulted on all issues to be discussed during World Council and Congress prior to its holding.

The committee recommended that efforts continue to improve the presence of local authorities at the global table. UCLG is the organization well placed to do this. The general objective is to recognize the political dimension within the UCLG, although it was also recognized that bureaucrats are also important for the voice of politicians to be competent on concrete matters falling under the mandate of local governments.

To improve on the participation and contribution of UCLG political leadership the committee agreed on the proposal to set up Item 4: Renewal of UCLG Policy Development’s 4 policy councils; 1. The right to the city and inclusive territories: 2. Opportunities for All: Culture and City Diplomacy key for Development and Peace: 3. Territorial and multi-level governance and sustainable financing: 4. Safer, resilient and sustainable cities
Each policy council will be composed of up to 15 members from different parts of the organization. Each region is asked to complete membership for each of the policy councils. The committee received the first proposals for nominations in each as following:

**Right to the city:**
Ada Colau, Mayor of Barcelona; Patrick Braouzec, President, Plaine Commune; Hang-hyun Yoon, Mayor of Guangzhou; Daniel Martínez, Mayor of Montevideo; Khalifa Sall, Mayor of Dakar;

**Opportunities for all:**
Tahir Akyurek, Mayor of Konya, co-president of UCLG; Eduardo Vasquez, secretary of culture, city of Mexico; Celestine Ketcha Courtès, Mayor of Bagangte; Juan Mari Aburto, Mayor of Bilbao; Won Hee-Ryong, Governor of Jeju province, South Korea; Monica Fein, Mayor of Rosario; Manuela Carmena, Mayor of Madrid; Jan van Zanen, Mayor of Utrecht, President VNG; Carlos Martínez Minguez, Mayor of Soria, Vice President CEMR

**Territorial governance and sustainable financing**
Merce Conesa Pages, President, Provincial Council of Barcelona; Mohamed Sefiani, Mayor of Chefchaouen, President from intermediary cities Forum; Denis Coderre, Mayor of Montreal, Vice President Metropolis; Rose Christiane Ossouka Raponda, Mayor of Libreville, UCLG Vice President for Africa; Stefano Bonaccini, President of Emilia Romagna, President CEMR; Patrick Jarry, Mayor of Nanterre, President of the UCLG Forum of peripheral cities; Marcelo Crivella, Mayor of Rio de Janeiro; Jamel Itami, Mayor of Beirut; Gustavo Barroja, President of the association of provincial governors of Ecuador; Dina Ogunyena, Mayor of Kyzyl, Turkey; Edgardo Pamintuan, President of the national league of cities of Philippines.

**Safer, resilient and sustainable cities**
Roland Ries, Mayor of Strasbourg, Co-President UCLG; Mauricio Rodas, Mayor of Quito, Co-President UCLG; Ronan Dantec, Senator, President of Climate Change; Basuki Tjahaja Purnama, Governor of Jakarta, Co-President of UCLG community of practice on mobility; Fatimetou Mint Abdel Malick, Mayor of Tevrzgh-zeina, Vice President of REFELA for North Africa; Jean-Claude Gaudin, Senator and Mayor of Marseille; Ivan Arciénega, Mayor of Sucre, Vice President UCLG for Latin America; Zandile Gumede, Mayor of eThekwini; Wen Guohui, Mayor of Guangzhou, Co-President UCLG; Francisco Toajas, Mayor of Las Cabezas de San Juan, Secretary for Local Development, FAMSI, co-President of UCLG committee on local economic development; Fatma Sahin, Mayor of Gaziantep, Vice President, UCLG Mewa

Following a report on the visit paid to Mayor Khalifa Sall of Dakar who is being detained in the Rebuss prison in Dakar, the committee recommended that a task force be set up that will act as a watchdog on what is happening to mayors and local authorities around the world and alert UCLG members on the situations they are facing; raise the awareness of local and regional leaders of the world on the problems and threats faced by their colleagues in other parts of the world; and mobilize their solidarity to assist and support them where and when appropriate.

The meeting of the committee on statutory affairs was followed by a Policy Discussion on Local Governments facing the challenges of localizing the SDGs.

In his opening remarks, the UCLG President, Cllr Parks Tau emphasized the political dimension of the SDGs localization agenda. Democratic processes and political leadership are needed to arbitrate among conflicting interests. We need to identify and share improved
solutions that local governments are implementing globally. To make localization a reality we need to act through the sustained action of the Global Task Force. Let's show what we can do together to convey the message that the local authorities have a common purpose for solidarity and outreach to the people.

Panel discussion 1 insisted on the unavoidable role of local governments in the implementation of the SDGs. It recommended adopting a subsidiarity principle in defining public policies that ensures that people have access to most of the SDGs. This requires that local government leaders are familiar the 17 SDGs; that baseline information is gathered on the situation for each of the SDGs; and that appropriate statistics are gathered in order to be able to measure progress in the process of SDG achievements. The panel also insisted on the role of umbrella organizations of local governments to engage in dialogue with the national governments and other stakeholders and to organize these into exchanges of experiences and lessons learnt.

Panel discussion 2 addressed the issue of efficiency in SDG delivery at the local level and the enabling environment and partnership required to develop this agenda. It was recognized that the failure in the implementation of Habitat II and the MDG agendas was the lack of attention for localization and recognition of the key role of local governments. Local governments will however not be successful if they don't build a partnership with citizens from definition, implementation and evaluation. For the citizen to be full actors, they should know and own the SDGs. Comprehensive development plans should be done according to the SDGs. To have a buy-in, local governments should prioritize the marginal groups, those who cannot talk of and for themselves. Direct and participatory democracy is the only way to build this ownership of the SDGs at the local level. It is important to put these marginalized groups in the presence of the other stakeholders so that the latter are fully aware of the scope of different interests they need to accommodate for living together. The dialogue should certainly be inclusive. The credibility of institutions lies in their capacity to deliver on their promises. Local governments should learn how to do this with others; try to find coalitions for the SDGs narrative of healthy and harmonious living. If we give space to local situations and initiatives only then are we be able to deliver on the SDGs efficiently. The challenge we face is the quality of life and economic sustainability of our cities. Citizens must be listened to. We are not solely about achieving the SDGs and new governance. People want to take the lead in the definition and evaluation of policies and this differs from city to city. You need appropriate partnerships with universities and private sector. Technology allows better accountability to citizens on what is delivered. We also need good funding systems. The panel pointed to the persistent lack of communication because of the difficult economic situation many local governments are facing. Planning without implementation has no meaning for citizens. Governments, national or local, should be accountable to its citizens, but trust will come only if governments are trustworthy; their credibility will only stem from delivery in an inclusive way, leaving no one behind. Tolerance is a quality that is key in building win-win partnerships.

A closed meeting was then held with political leaders to define the process to be followed for the selection of the next Secretary General of UCLG, due to start by the end of 2017. Reporting on the meeting, the UCLG President said the process will be open with the call clearly displayed in all sections of UCLG; a recruitment consultancy firm will be hired to select the candidates; the best candidates will be interviewed with the support of the secretaries of the UCLG sections; the recommendations of the interview team will be considered by the members of the UCLG Presidency for a final decision.
Madrid, 18 April 2017

Jean Pierre Elong Mbassi
Secretary General, UCLG Africa