



Ministry of Local Development

Closing session

“African Cities: Engines for sustainable development” Conference

On Thursday, 20 June 2018

Conrad Hotel - Cairo

Speech of H.E. Major General Mahmoud

Shaarawy

Minister of Local Development,

Arab Republic of Egypt



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Ladies and Gentlemen, Distinguished Guests,

First, I would like to express my thanks and appreciation to you for your active contribution to the success of the "**African cities - Engines for Sustainable Development**" conference organized by the Egyptian Ministry of Local Development in partnership with UCLGA and in the presence of the Prime Minister. Several meetings were held, with valuable contributions from Ministers of Planning and monitoring and administrative reform, Social Solidarity, Housing, Utilities and Urban Communities, Transport, Environment and the Governor of Cairo about Egypt's embarking on a comprehensive and planned urban, economic and social renaissance during the past five years. We are keen to inspire others as we move towards cooperation and draw a common future with the peoples of the African continent under the umbrella of Africa 's sustainable development strategy 2063.

I would also like to thank the colleagues of UCLGA and UN Habitat, GIZ and all the regional, international and national partners who have enriched the discussions of the conference and presented inspiring models of local development in Africa and contributed to the recommendations of the conference over the past three days.

This conference, hosted by the Ministry of Local Development in Egypt, was of great importance. It focused mainly on discussing the challenges faced by African cities, their opportunities, ways to increase their efficiency and to optimize their resources for achieving sustainable development in its three dimensions: economic, social and environmental. In addition, sustainable development at the local level, as well as the best regional and international experiences and lessons learned on promoting local development, economic growth, urbanization and the numerous opportunities that African cities have to overcome the challenges were discussed to turn them into opportunities for growth and prosperity to improve the standard of living and attract investment.

The conference discussed several issues that reflect the aspirations and concerns of local development in the Africa, and reviewed the environmental challenges and opportunities faced by African cities and ways to overcome them and how to increase the efficiency of the many and varied resources enjoyed by the African continent and how rural areas benefit from increasing urbanization rates. In addition, the conference addressed the environmental challenges faced by African cities, especially climate change and how to overcome them.



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The conference also presented African success stories in the field of investment in infrastructure for sustainable development, as well as the discussion of the opportunities and challenges in Africa - economic and social, the role of planning in sustainable development in Africa and finally the issue of twinning and decentralized cooperation among African cities.

I had the honor to attend all meetings and discussions of the Conference and the recommendations that have been affirmed in the belief of its importance in enhancing the integration and cooperation among African countries in achieving comprehensive local development that meets the aspirations of their peoples. **I have the honor to share with you the most important messages of the various sessions of the Conference:**

1. The African continent faces a number of urban and environmental challenges, including unplanned urbanization; the spread of informal areas; encroachment on agricultural land; water scarcity and climate change; these challenges have a significant impact on Africa's sustainable growth and development.
2. Central and local governments share the tasks of achieving sustainable urban development and preserving the environment. Citizens also play an important role in this field, which requires the implementation of programs to raise awareness of the importance of the effects of climate change on urbanization and population.
3. Major national projects play an important role in achieving sustainable development through the provision of advanced infrastructure, especially in the areas of roads, building cities and sustainable urban communities, which will lead to increasing communication and connectivity between different African cities and enhancing their universality, in partnership with international development institutions, civil society and the private sector.
4. Adopting social programs is crucial for the protection and social welfare of disadvantaged groups in African cities and to address the effects of high rates of population growth, poverty and malnutrition. Special attention must be paid to those with special needs and women.
5. African cities play an important role as engines for growth and sustainable development, especially given the high rates of urbanization, rural-urban migration and increased demand for jobs and sustainable infrastructure.
6. Coordination and exchange of experiences among African countries is supporting the development of local planning system and local economic development and the transfer of successful experiences in the strategies of citizen involvement taking into account the environmental and social aspects in the planning and implementation of local development



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programs to activate the system of economic, social, urban and local planning to develop African cities to become poles for development. The Egyptian Ministry of Local Development will initiate a new integrated local development program that implements this comprehensive development approach in cooperation with the World Bank. This could be a huge success for partners and colleagues in all African countries to benefit from.

7. Coordination and exchange of experiences is important in the field of strengthening local governance and supporting administrative and financial decentralization and activating communication platforms and engaging citizens.
8. The local development academy in Saqqara will be set up as one of the training and excellence centers at the African level, expanding opportunities for cooperation in building capacities of African local cadres.
9. We will coordinate with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in order to ensure the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding between UCLGA and the African Union so that the Organization has the status it deserves to support joint African action in cooperation with the African Union.
10. The Ministry of Local Development shall complete the executive and constitutional procedures necessary to start the process of signing and ratifying the African Charter of Principles of Decentralization, Local Governance and Local Development in close cooperation with the competent departments of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.
11. The introduction of Arabic as one of the most important languages in the world, one of the languages adopted by the United Nations and international forums, in addition to English and French.
12. Support the "Silencing Guns in Africa" initiative to achieve stability and tranquility and achieve cooperation between cities to contribute to accelerating the achievement of the desired development goals.
13. The need to support investment and integration between all African cities and to benefit from the raw materials available in the cities of the continent and their important role in achieving an investment boom.
14. The need to develop a common vision for the development of African cities based on youth and women, and to take advantage of African women's capacity to face many challenges, including population increase, health problems, social and cultural context.
15. Provide the necessary resources to finance development efforts.
16. Promote African-European partnership and cooperation for regional sustainable development.



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17. Allocate a budget from the United Cities and Local Governments of Africa to the Network of Local leaders and elected Women for Africa (REFELA).

Ladies and Gentlemen,

At the end of this conference, I would like to emphasize that we intend to turn it into an annual conference hosted by Cairo to follow up on the recommendations and the ongoing consultations and discussions on the future of local development in Africa.

I also look forward to the establishment of a continuous monitoring mechanism to the recommendations of the Conference through the establishment of a committee of representatives of the Ministries of Local Development, the United Cities and Local Governments of Africa (UCLG Africa) and the Network of Local leaders and elected Women for Africa (REFELA), to be in constant communication and monitoring on the operational status of the recommendations and support to all African governments and partners in integrating these recommendations into their national policies, as well as the responsibility of this committee to prepare for the annual conference.

In conclusion,

I would like to thank you, the participants, for your generous attendance. I hope that the spirit of cooperation and coordination will continue in this conference, which will lead to more initiatives and successes to be added to the balance of development work in the promotion of local development in Africa.

Recommendations:

- 1- **To strengthen the orientation towards decentralization and to take the necessary measures to achieve this in a systematic and gradual manner.**
- 2- **To stimulate the role of local administration in providing the necessary financial resources to achieve sustainable development.**
- 3- **The importance of capacity building through training and rehabilitation programs for African youth, sharing experiences, building on successful regional experiences and intensifying the use of information and innovation technology in building effective systems to enhance the role of local administration in finding quick and effective solutions to the challenges facing them.**
- 4- **Promote the principles of participatory transparency and local governance, develop the local planning system and provide the necessary information and data for**



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monitoring, evaluation and impact measurement, which also allows citizen participation.

- 5- To promote synergies between African cities on the one hand and international development institutions.
- 6- Encourage the participation of the private sector and civil society in the provision of infrastructure and public utilities and regulate the work of the informal sector to contribute to the competitiveness of African cities and to increase their resilience, adaptation and the effects of climate change.
- 7- Providing the necessary resources to enhance the role of African women and empower them politically, socially and economically for their important and fundamental role in achieving sustainable development.

A detailed report of the Conference, its various sessions, the most important topics discussed and the recommendations made will be prepared and distributed to you.

Finally, I would like to express my thanks and appreciation for all the organizations and institutions that participated in this important event.