

# Cities as bridges between SDGs and citizens in a post-COVID-19 world: elements for socio-economic recovery

## High Level Political Forum 2020

Online Side Event, New York, dates TCB

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Co-organized by:



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### Background

The Venice City Solutions Series is a yearly event addressing issues that are central to the implementation of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) at local level, with specific focus to the role of local and regional governments as key drivers of the 2030 Agenda. In 2019, the event focused on how the SDGs can be an instrument to create citizenship and to promote the values of the Agenda as well as on strategies to bring the SDGs closer to the people.

Promoting ownership and the sense of belonging are essential elements of citizenship. Active citizenship is key to reinforce the social contract and the overall trust towards public institutions. While the SDGs benefit from citizens' engagement and participation, they can work as a common



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framework to drive the citizenship process.

Within the new situation created by COVID19, the importance to reach citizenship has been highlighted. Cities and territorial governments have played a key role in dealing with the emergency, they will also be key to make recovery possible and they will need to bring citizens on-board to do so. The crisis has also manifested the opportunities to do things differently, “turning around” many individual, government and business behaviours and reimagining societies, economies and governance towards a more sustainable way. The 2030 Agenda and the SDGs can be leveraged in this emerging new reality as the roadmap for a transformative socioeconomic recovery grounded on the principals of global solidarity and cooperation and driven by local governments and local communities.

### Summary of the side event

As the COVID-19 global health crisis has demonstrated, we live in an uncertain world; and recovering from the current crisis is going to require both strong individual action and a monumental collective effort. The contribution and collaboration of citizens in the recovery phase of the pandemic is going to be even more relevant than in our recent past. Local and regional governments are responding to the emergency by keeping essential services going, caring for the most vulnerable and finding rapid solutions to adapt to changing and unpredictable needs. Socio-economic recovery, with a global economy that has come to a sudden stop, is going to require local development and a lot of local action. Local and regional governments are going to play a substantial role in bringing the citizens along, on one end, and to support local businesses and local economic action, on the other. Within this new context, coordination between spheres of government and policy coherence between central and local governments will be more important than ever. Multi-level governance needs to be strengthened both vertically and horizontally.

Local governments have made the 2030 Agenda their own, recognising its potential as an instrument for public management. The COVID-19 global crisis has crudely demonstrated that the SDGs are not an abstract proposition but top priorities for citizens and societies across the world. The SDGs at local level can be used to prioritize certain development areas, they are useful mechanisms to monitor progress and follow up local policies, but they are also an excellent instrument to connect with citizens, to communicate public action better and also to rebuild trust between the citizen and the public institutions.

This unique “bridge” provided by local governments is going to be critical to fuel the social and economic recovery post COVID-19. Cities and territories are also rethinking their economic models and taking the opportunity to do “things differently” and in a more sustainable way as the sudden halt in the global economy has showed its more terrible effects in employment and production, but also how we need to turn around many unsustainable patters and their worse effects in environment and climate change.



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The *social contract* – the agreement among individuals and public institutions by which organized society is brought into being – represents the basis of our society and the key to a sustainable future. Without effective and inclusive public institutions, able to promote ownership and active citizenship, distrust can grow and endanger development processes.

This trend relates also to access to information. Nowadays, citizens have the same level of information than organized stakeholders or institutions, but the way this extensive amount of information is “digested” can be misleading and endanger the stability of the social contract. People have difficulties to understand where and how decisions are taken and which is the effect on the own lives. Common perceptions tend towards a general distrust in decision-making processes and therefore towards public institutions. Public communications remain a pending task for many governments at all levels, this crisis has demonstrated once more the need to improve communication strategies and overall transparency in government action.

The SDGs offer a unique global framework to address these challenges and to build citizenship. The importance of the Goals and the priorities they embody has become more evident than ever in the wake of the COVID-19 global health crisis, and issues such as decent jobs, social protection, health services, climate action and clean water are top imperatives. At the same time, the measures required to mitigate the pandemic such as physical distancing and confinement have shown the power of individual action and behavioural change, and the butterfly effect it can generate. And finally, the pandemic has shown that global solidarity is not just an enabler but also a powerful driver of development, and a key ingredient to build a more resilient and sustainable future for people and planet.

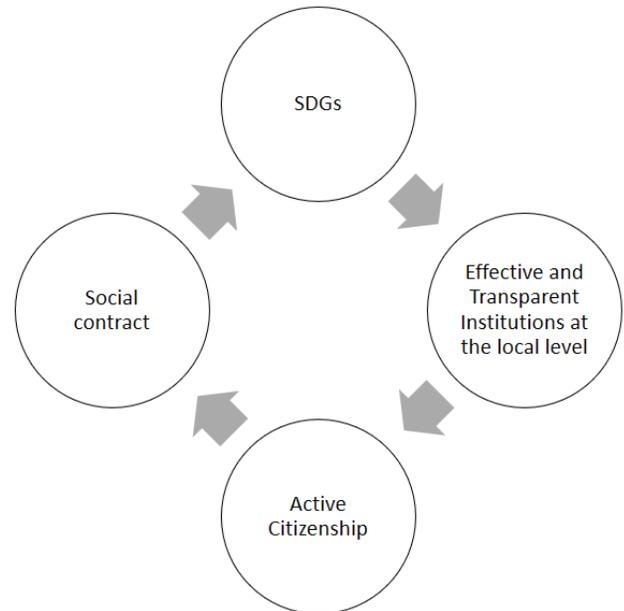
By catalysing these opportunities, through the SDGs, public institutions have therefore the opportunity to (re)position themselves vis-à-vis citizens as drivers of change and development, and build the foundation for a renewed social contract.



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Local and Regional Governments (LRGs) have a key role and responsibility in enhancing the sense of belonging to the community, citizenship and therefore the trust in public institutions. Supporting a turnaround effort and socioeconomic recovery putting the SDGs at the center means supporting the creation of citizenship while contributing at the overall success of the Agenda 2030.

Building on the discussions and conclusions of the 2019 edition of the Venice City Solutions Series the HLPF side event will be the opportunity to discuss how local governments can keep using the SDGs as a tool to engage citizens in a more sustainable recovery post COVID 19.



### Objective

The event will gather representatives of local and regional governments, their associations, Mayors, Governors and other governmental representatives and selected partners to discuss the way ahead for SDG implementation at local level.

The event will also serve to report to the HLPF the conclusions and recommendations of the Venice City Solutions 2019 edition, entitled “Creating citizenship: the SDG as an opportunity for all”

The event is addressed to the following participants:

1. Representatives of National Governments
2. Mayors, Governors or representatives of their national local government associations.
3. Civil society and community representatives
4. Other partners able to contribute to the debate.

### APPLICATION FORM – DEADLINE 29<sup>th</sup> MAY

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/2020HLPF>

\*1. Organization Name

UN SDG Action Campaign

\*2. Type of organization



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UN System

*\*3. Complete name of the contact person*

Diana Lopez Caramazana

*\*4. Your official work e-mail*

Diana.lopez@un.org

*\*5. Cellphone*

+254717353888

Organizers not based in NYC, please specify a NYC contact for your event

*6. NY Contact Complete name*

Renata Rubian

*7. NY Contact Official work e-mail*

Renata.rubian@undp.org

*8. NY Contact Cellphone*

+1 (646) 944-1468

*\*9. Topic*

How local action led by cities and local communities can drive SDG-centered socioeconomic recovery and transformative change in a post-COVID-19 world.

*\*10. Name of Organizer and co-organizers*

UN SDG Action Campaign + United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) + UN-Habitat + United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG) + Italian Association of the Council of European Municipalities and Regions (AICCRE)

*\*11. Event Title*

Cities as bridges between the SDGs and citizens in a post-COVID-19 world: elements for socio-



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economic recovery

*\*12. Short Title*  
*Cities as bridges*

*\*13. Expected number of participants*

600

*\*14. Brief description of the event (max 100 words)*

Local and regional governments are key for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. The SDGs have become a tool for many cities to rebuild trust and communicate with their citizens. Within the situation created by the COVID-19 pandemic, local action is going to be key to “turn around” economic and social behavior to create opportunities for socio-economic recovery under a new light for the 2030 Agenda. The event will also bring the recommendations of the Venice City Solutions 2030 organized in October 2019 focusing on the role of the SDGs to create citizenship.

### **Costs:**

Please be aware that a full cost recovery mechanism for meetings, conferences and events, has been established. After the application process closes on 29 May, we will contact you on the proposed format and related costs of the approved side event. Until the date, time and location-physical or virtual- of the side event is confirmed by the Secretariat, there will be no obligations on the organizers.

*\*15. Audio*

Yes

*\*16. Projector and screen*

No



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### \*17. Preferred Dates and Times

(please select a maximum of 3 options)

	8.30 - 9.45 am	1.15 - 2.30 pm	6.15 - 7.30 pm
Tue 7 July 2020	Tue 7 July 2020 8.30 - 9.45 am	Tue 7 July 2020 1.15 - 2.30 pm	Tue 7 July 2020 6.15 - 7.30 pm
Wed 8 July 2020	Wed 8 July 2020 8.30 - 9.45 am	Wed 8 July 2020 1.15 - 2.30 pm	Wed 8 July 2020 6.15 - 7.30 pm
Thu 9 July 2020	Thu 9 July 2020 8.30 - 9.45 am	Thu 9 July 2020 1.15 - 2.30 pm	Thu 9 July 2020 6.15 - 7.30 pm
Fri 10 July 2020	Fri 10 July 2020 8.30 - 9.45 am	Fri 10 July 2020 1.15 - 2.30 pm	Fri 10 July 2020 6.15 - 7.30 pm
Mon 13 July 2020	<b>Mon 13 July 2020 8.30 - 9.45 am</b>	Mon 13 July 2020 1.15 - 2.30 pm	Mon 13 July 2020 6.15 - 7.30 pm
Tue 14 July 2020	<b>Tue 14 July 2020 8.30 - 9.45 am</b>	Tue 14 July 2020 1.15 - 2.30 pm	Tue 14 July 2020 6.15 - 7.30 pm
Wed 15 July 2020	<b>Wed 15 July 2020 8.30 - 9.45 am</b>	Wed 15 July 2020 1.15 - 2.30 pm	Wed 15 July 2020 6.15 - 7.30 pm
Thur 16 July 2020	Thur 16 July 2020 8.30 - 9.45 am	Thur 16 July 2020 1.15 - 2.30 pm	Thur 16 July 2020 6.15 - 7.30 pm



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