

Statement of the Global Taskforce of Local and Regional Governments, facilitated by United Cities and Local Governments

Our vision, our contribution: Local and Regional Governments leading the way towards equality

We, the global constituency of local and regional governments, affirm our shared commitment to equality, justice, and care as the foundations of democracy and sustainable development. Local and regional governments are critical to enabling women's leadership and harnessing their full capacity to drive governance transformation, placing communities and their rights at the center.

Across territories, **women leaders are reshaping local public institutions and redefining local public service provision**, to advance equality and collective wellbeing. Their leadership challenges patriarchal models and social norms, bringing collaborative and rights-based approaches that strengthen democracy and advance a new social contract anchored in care, solidarity, and participation.

The participation of women in local political life demonstrates that equality, justice, and democracy are inseparable. Ensuring **women's full participation in decision- and policy-making at the local level** is not only a question of rights but a condition for effective and inclusive governance.

Localizing Justice and Democracy: Guaranteeing Access to Justice and Powering Women's Political Participation

Justice cannot exist where women are excluded from decision-making, and democracy cannot thrive without equal access to justice for all. Local and regional governments localize justice and democracy through **universal public service provision** and **women's full political participation**. Local and regional governments carry the responsibility and the potential to deliver a new generation of public services that not only rise to the challenges faced by present generations but also anticipate the needs and rights of generations to come.

Women's Political Participation: A Cornerstone of Justice

Women's equitable and safe participation in public and political life is both a demand of justice and a condition for democracy – that need to be enabled through:

- **Ensuring parity and inclusion in decision-making:** Institutionalize quotas and parity measures in councils and leadership, and remove barriers in particular for rural, indigenous, migrant, and women with disabilities.
- **Tackling gender-based violence in politics:** Strengthen reporting, redress, and accountability mechanisms.

- **Fostering intergenerational solidarity:** Foster mentorship between experienced leaders and young women.
- **Transforming leadership models:** Promote collaborative, caring, networked, and community-centered leadership.
- **Resourcing women's leadership:** Ensure financing and training for local women leaders, and their networks.

Justice through Inclusive Local Governance and Services

Access to justice means dismantling structural inequalities. For women and girls in particular, it is inseparable from their ability to live dignified lives supported by:

- **Universal local public services:** Guarantee universal access to housing, healthcare, water, sanitation, education, culture, and food security.
- **Local care systems and gender-based violence prevention :** Build equitable infrastructures that redistribute care, prevent and respond to gender-based violence, and value care as central to democracy.
- **Women's economic autonomy:** Expand local policies and services that ensure women's access to decent work, equal pay, financial services, and entrepreneurship opportunities.
- **Commons and climate justice:** Advance a just ecological transition by protecting local and global commons, centering communities in climate action, and ensuring that climate policies at all levels are rooted in the rights of present and future generations.

Our Call to Action: Towards a New Multilateralism Rooted in Equality

Reshaping the Multilateral System for Gender Equality

We call for a **transformation of global governance** to put women's participation and feminist governance at its core, recognizing local and regional governments as democratic actors.

Our demands:

- **Institutionalized representation** of women in local and regional governments within global decision-making.
- **Inclusion of diverse voices**, particularly from the Global South and marginalized communities.

Financing Justice, Democracy, and Local Care Systems

Equality and justice depend on **redistribution, decentralization, and renewed public responsibility for care**.

Our demands:

- **Dedicated financing for local and regional governments** to strengthen local public services and care systems as pillars of equity, and in support of city diplomacy.

- **Support for women's political participation**, including mechanisms to end violence and empower young and marginalized women leaders.
- **Empowering and resourcing women's grassroots organizations**, recognizing them as essential partners in advancing justice, democracy, and equality from the ground up.

The Road Ahead

2026 marks a central moment for **local multilateralism**, as the international community reviews the **territorial agendas**, including the **New Urban Agenda** and **SDG 11**.

The road to equality is paved with local action, women's leadership, and global solidarity. To rebuild trust in democracy and shape an inclusive, networked, and effective multilateral system fit for the future, local and regional governments need to be resourced to deliver equality, justice, and care.

The organized constituency of local and regional governments stands ready to partner with the global community, ensuring no woman, no girl, no community, and no territory is left behind.