

Policy Forum on Development - Brussels, 14-16 March 2016

L'Arsenal, Boulevard Louis Schmidt 1, 1040 Brussels

Speech session 1 - "Welcome"

Monday 14 March, 15:00 -15:30

Speaker: Ms. **Jacqueline Moustache Belle**, Mayor of Victoria, Seychelles, UCLG, PFD LA
Co-Chair

Thank you Chair, distinguished participants, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am pleased to meet all of you again. It is the third time that I have the honor to address you at the inaugural session of the Policy Forum on Development as Mayor of Victoria and on behalf of all the local and regional authorities' networks and organizations represented here.

I would like to thank all the distinguished representatives of the European institutions present today; *Mr. Jean-Louis Ville, Mr. Filiberto Ceriani Sebregondi, Ms. Rosario Bento*, for your commitment to this Forum, and for your support to civil society and local and regional governments.

We are going to once again tackle a very broad and complex agenda that carries high expectations for all of us. This PFD will also be the opportunity to take stock of the past three years of exchanges and collaboration.

[On the revision of the Cotonou Partnership Agreement]

Without doubt, the first point of the agenda, the **revision of the Cotonou Partnership Agreement** has particular resonance on my region, Africa. The final outcome of this debate will have far reaching consequences on all ACP countries as well as on the EU's development policy and external action. Our concern is: What will replace this historic partnership? We certainly need to go "beyond business as usual", but how will the new framework address all the existential questions that have arisen from past experiences, tightening the historical links and partnerships between both European and ACP peoples?

Although the ACP-EU framework provided for the first time ever the recognition of new actors in EU development cooperation, its focus remained largely dominated by the relations with central governments. Therefore, the upcoming and welcomed Post Cotonou framework should consider the need to strengthen and effectively implement the multi-stakeholder approach. The Post Cotonou framework should consider changes that occurred during the past 20 years in the environment of international cooperation, with a higher consciousness on the universal nature of issues such as poverty, inequalities, equal access to human and other rights; as well as shared problems arising from increased migrations, impact of climate change, spreading insecurity; that lead to the definition of global agendas by the international community to provide policy actions goals and targets such the 2030 Agenda on sustainable development goals (SDGs), the Addis Ababa Action Agenda on Financing for Development, the Sendai Agenda on Disaster management, and the New Urban Agenda to be adopted at the UN Conference on Cities and Human Settlements scheduled in Quito, Ecuador, in October this year.

What transpires clearly during the ongoing debates on these global agendas is their **double nature** of being Universal in terms of their objectives and targets, but at the same time contextual in terms of the means of implementation, hence the insistence on the need to “localize” these agendas for any effective involvement of stakeholders and impact on people on the ground at grassroots level. This double nature raises the question of the relevance of the ACP as is, 20 years after the signing of the Cotonou Agreement. But there are also arguments stating that even if the international environment has changed, some common issues characterize ACP countries as a whole: poverty and inequality; problems of peace and security, democracy and good governance; fair trade; exposure to natural disasters threats due to the impact of climate change.

The revision should certainly address these questions and better differentiate between the realities of the three regions that have increasingly divergent needs and challenges. In the same vain, we witness local authorities and other stakeholders (such as civil society) increasingly organized at the continental and regional levels.

[On the revision of EU policies]

The debate on the Post Cotonou should certainly be linked to the discussion on the new EU Global Strategy on Foreign and Security Policy that is currently taking place. We are grateful to the EC for giving us the opportunity to discuss these topics.

Against the background of multiple crises within and outside the EU, we expect from the development of a new EU Global Strategy a repositioning of the EU to contribute to a more peaceful and sustainable world. One of the most dramatic events that clearly illustrate the critical need to rethink the EU foreign and development policy is the escalation of strains in Europe's Neighbourhood and the subsequent refugee crisis.

For future EU cooperation to have positive impact on the living conditions of people and strengthening the institutions and rule of law in partner countries, there is need to ensure a better coherence between the different dimensions of EU foreign policy – security, trade, humanitarian and development policies –, without sacrificing the EU's founding values and the EU's commitments in development cooperation.

In this regard, the Sustainable Development Goals should act as a central point of reference that facilitate the link between the new European development policy and the global agendas of the international community. During the past years, the EU development policies were formulated against the background of the Millennium Development Goals aimed primarily at poverty eradication. The 2030 Agenda has created the necessity to broaden these objectives and integrate other global challenges. Attention should also be paid to new forms of cooperation and approaches required by the SDGs: a multi-stakeholder orchestration and cross-sectoral policy responses to integrate the economic, social, cultural and environmental dimensions in development policies and to mobilize untapped synergies of different actors.

Therefore, as local authorities, we are committed to being active players in the localization of the SDGs, as stated in the Declaration: "All SDGs are Local" subscribed by all the Global Organizations of Local and Regional Governments in New York in September 2015.

For local and regional governments, there is a need for a wider Political Dialogue that involves local and regional governments through their representative platforms in the revision process of the main EU external strategies, the new framework of the EU Global Strategy and the Post-Cotonou Agreement. Following the provisions of the EC Communication on Local Authorities and based on the principles and values that define our partnership agreement signed in 2015 with the EC, local governments will be a demanding partner for the effective implementation of the SDGs and other global agendas. We expect that the new framework will strengthen our partnership, aiming to deepen local democracy and empower local governments to deliver universal basic services and promote local development. The reinforcement of the linkages and cooperation between ACP countries and European peoples will be equally instrumental to this objective.

This brings me to the next item on the PFD Agenda: the global influence.

[Global influence and Habitat III]

After the progress made in 2015 on the Global Agendas, I also would like to quickly explain why 2016 is a crucial year for local governments in view of the organization of the **3rd UN Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development, Habitat III** that will take place in Quito, next October.

In an increasingly urbanised world, Habitat III must be seen as a great opportunity to complete and take further the vision and proposals of the SDGs related to cities and human settlements to foster a more sustainable urban and territorial development and move from declaration to action.

The New Urban Agenda that will be adopted in Quito should be universal and built on the progress of the 2030 Agenda, and define the cornerstones that will guide the implementation of urban policies over the next 20 years.

Within the framework of Habitat III, UCLG will facilitate the organization of the Second World Assembly of Local and Regional Governments and organize the 5th UCLG World Congress in Bogota, back-to-back with the Habitat III Summit, to support the definition

of the New Urban Agenda and promote the **foundation of a new global partnership for sustainable urban development with the UN system and all of our partners.**

Based on our partnership, we expect nothing less than a large and strong EU support to this initiative for the recognition of a new role for local authorities in the development and follow-up of the New Urban Agenda at all levels.

During the debate, we will be sharing our views on the key messages we wish to put forward for Habitat III and particularly our call for a new Urban Social Contract, putting the Right to the City at the center of the urban agenda.

[State of affairs of the PFD]

Finally, after three years, it is time to look back and assess what has been the added value of the PFD if any. We will listen carefully to the report by the two experts appointed by the EC to take stock of what was accomplished and to their propositions for the way forward. We certainly agree that working together during all these years has given all of us the opportunity to get to better know each other. This for sure has been instrumental for enhance multi-stakeholders dialogue. The local governments fraternity expected the PFD to be a Platform where new ideas on development cooperation would emerge, that are informed by the thoughts and practices of stakeholders closest to the people. These new ideas would help take the EU cooperation to another level, so that, as one of the key player on the international development cooperation arena, they would not only mainstream the multi-stakeholders and partnership approach in EU cooperation policies and practices, but also influence the global debates aiming at defining the global agendas and the means of their implementation. Our feeling is however we did not succeed much in this, maybe because the quality of the policy dialogue with European institutions, Members States, Local Authorities and Civil Society Organizations is not at the level we thought it will be in the framework of the PFD. We hope this meeting will shed some light on this critical issue for the relevance and expected outcomes and outputs of the PFD

Ladies and gentlemen,

I want to make it clear that local governments appreciate and value the exchange of ideas and exploration of new cooperation avenues that the PFD has allowed between us. Equally I want to stress that our dialogue can be more useful and productive if it could rise up to a more policy and strategical dimension with as aim to influence both the EU development cooperation streams, and the international community in the framework of the ongoing debates on the definition and implementation of the global agendas.

Once again, we expect from the EU nothing less than the implementation of her commitments to promote an “enabling environment” that would allow civil society organizations and local and regional governments to fulfil their potential and fully be part of the global agendas’ implementation in order to build a world that will be more equitable, peaceful and environmentally friendly for all of us.

Thank you.