

**Opening session : 22 March 2017**

**Donatus Njong Fonyuy**, Mayor of Kumbo, Treasurer United Cities and Communes of Cameroon, Co-Chair of the PFD

Dear Colleagues,

I am grateful to you for having nominated me to serve as co-chair of the Policy Forum for Development on behalf of the networks of local and regional authorities represented here. I would like to start by acknowledging the work done by my predecessors Jacqueline Moustache-Belle and Jorge Balbis as well as Commissioner Mimica who helped guide this PFD process to the stage we are at today. I look forward to working jointly with my co-chair Maria Theresa Nera-Lauron (Tete) from civil society to help guide the process forward.

We are now at a stage where the Multi-Stakeholder Arrangement is adopted as a normal way of doing business with the EU. We are here now in the PFD to deepen this approach and promote Multi-Stakeholder Arrangements as the new model for development cooperation across the board.

Through our joint work, in part within the PFD, local government is committed to implementing this process in our local authorities around the world and we invite CSOs to join us, so as to go together to convince National Governments, with the support of the EU, that this is the way forward.

We are living in unstable times, where populist forces in many countries push both for recentralisation at national levels, and for isolationism in the global sphere. Where the world is challenged by issues, like climate change, which are so critical that even our continued human existence is jeopardised. These

challenges go beyond National Governments, cities or societies and are truly global. Within this context trust building between constituencies is essential. We need a sense of commonality which allows us to go beyond these dividing lines. We need an EU that stays bold in affirming the values of democracy and human rights. These values are at risk if we don't take the right steps towards bringing everyone together in Consensus.

But to do that we need to know, and appreciate what wasn't done right in the past. The MDGs set the goal of eradicating extreme poverty, but the numbers increased. We are now at the point where if we do not drastically change our models of consumption and production, and find a way to keep our global temperature rise under 2 degrees even continued life on earth is at risk. So what we have done wrong must be at the heart of what we do next. All the things which went and continue to go wrong happen at the local level: poverty, maternal deaths, insecurity, environmental degradation... so all issues are local.

As we are now reflecting on the future Consensus and ACP partnership, we need to be open-minded, and bring as many ideas as possible to the discussion. We need to invent new ways of doing business, and ensure there are new mechanisms in place that enable all actors to play their part in achieving our global commitments and truly leave no one behind. The PFD must be guided by these principles.

In the fast changing reality of our increasingly interconnected world, delivering sustainable development can only be done together. Empowered local government is pivotal for the development of territories. We are ready to work

to achieve that development and reach our global goals in partnerships which allow all of us to contribute at all levels. I look forward to working together over the coming days towards ensuring the frameworks, tools and mechanisms that will support us are set.

Thank you