

Manifesto on Open Government and Transparency

From transparency to Open Government: Regaining trust from the bottom up

As our world has become more complex with a growing loss of public confidence in the institutions that represent citizens and governing systems being constantly challenged, the role of local and regional governments as defenders of democracy has become more imperative.

The local and territorial level is critical to advance in this objective as we continue to be the closest representatives to the public and the last line of defense against the widespread rejection of political representation.

In this goal, we need to connect with our communities in a different, deeper and more consistent way. We need to regain their trust by opening the discussions, the decisions and the governments to citizens and by facilitating spaces for them to be a key part of the policy-making processes. In consequence, the tools offered by open government, such as transparency, accountability, integrity, participation, innovation and co-creation, will allow us to advance in this goal while strengthening our institutions and deepening our democratic systems; requirements without we will not be able to advance in the successful delivery of any development agenda, including the 2030 Agenda and the sustainable Development Goals.

The future of open government and transparency will imply to go beyond an isolated notion of transparency and participation, and move forward to an integrated approach of open government to help us empower citizens and institutions and renew our governance models so their truly respond to citizens' needs and aspirations and become a space for the co-creation of common projects.

Co-creating sustainable territories

Several local and regional governments around the world are developing new frameworks for the 'co-creation' of territories and promoting the inclusion of diverse voices in public policies, fostering the respect of human rights, fighting discrimination and deepening participatory democracy. We are also improving transparency and accountability by making data and information accessible and by creating new channels for citizens to follow our actions, to help us improve the quality of services and to contribute with their talent to shape and implement local solutions to local and global challenges.

As local and regional governments, we are advancing and shaping a hopeful path towards more democratic and sustainable societies and territories. But we need to go further, the future of open government and transparency need us to continue working on this line and reflecting on the way governance is conceived and how we understand citizen's contribution and role. We need to work harder to put citizens at the center of political action, at the heart of government. We need to develop spaces and tools for citizens to shape policies and services and to have an impact in the decisions that affect their lives. In this process, we will be able to build a culture that values and rewards innovation, understood not just as the use of technology but as a collaborative process based on the participation generosity, talent and ideas of communities and institutions to find and implement better development solutions.

Stronger alliances for the delivery of the global agendas

The achievement of global agendas requires legitimate institutions, citizen trust and commitment and co-responsibility from all to jointly build a common project for the present and the future. Citizens, and other stakeholders, such as private sector and academia, must take responsibility, get involved, be auditors, and fight apathy to be part of the development solutions and shape the decisions that affect them the most. Local and regional governments must respond with projects capable of including and empowering them for this purpose to guarantee the ownership and sustainability of our strategies.

The future of open government and the successful delivery of the development agendas can only be understood as a shared responsibility and commitment of public, social and private actors and will mainly depend on our willingness to work together to solve collective problems. For this reason, our challenge goes beyond empowering us and others, the challenge goes forward to create, facilitate and empower informal and institutional spaces, alliances and channels for engagement and collaboration, to ensure understanding and appropriation of our actions and policies. Furthermore, we need to take responsibility and exemplify the values of transparency, participation, accountability, and collaboration in our actions and policies and understand them as crucial accelerators of development agendas.

Our Calls: collective actions to engage citizens and strengthen democracy

Local and regional governments need to strengthen our coalitions to avoid setbacks and defend democracy as a system. The future of open government and transparency needs committed local and regional governments that continue forging a movement that multiplies collective strength and supports each other against the challenges we see coming. The collective strength of the local represented by us as leaders and by our national, regional and global networks must continue to strengthen us to create spaces and local knowledge to have a strong impact on the revitalization of democracy.

The above is why **we call** on the local and regional governments around the world, gathered within our municipal movement, **to foster elements of open government** not in just our institutions, but in our ways of co-creating policies and solutions and mobilizing citizens and to generate complicity and alliances so regain trust and to guarantee ownership and sustainability of our actions and policies.

We call on our constituency to **build strong links and partnerships** with communities, civil society, national governments, the international community and other stakeholders; focusing in on vertical, horizontal and cross-sectoral cooperation and fostering constant and constructive dialogue and complementary actions to ensure efficient and accountable institutions at all levels.

We call for the fostering of policies that **encourage a culture of innovation** among local and regional governments and their partners based on the talent of society using technology as a tool to enhance stakeholder contributions and guarantee equal opportunities for all.

We also call national governments and international institutions to **create enabling conditions and enhance our capacities** to implement transparency and open government policies in our territories that allows us to pursue sustainable development more effectively. Finally, we call all local and regional governments to **strengthen our partnerships and networks** and facilitate and promote open government reforms to build open, transparent and inclusive territories.