



1. The future is local: local governments are essential, accountable, democratic leaders and agents of development

- In a context of increasing **urban growth and decentralisation**, LG are ideally positioned to understand and respond to challenges facing citizens and their communities.
- LG perform three broad roles: (i) they provide voice, **leadership and ‘strategic vision’** for their community (i.e. through public participation systems, they enable citizens to get involved in local decision making and take greater ownership over the development process); (ii) They **provide or organise local public services** essential for people’s well-being; and (iii) They act as **catalysts and drivers for the local development** process, convening the multiple partners in the community (e.g. civil society, policy makers, the private sector, etc.).
- Yet, they frequently lack the resources to perform these roles effectively.

2. Local governments are significant public “actors for development” in international cooperation

- Worldwide, LG and their associations (LGA) have built a strong track record in development cooperation and are involved in **many forms of partnership and cooperation**. These many forms demonstrate that they have unique skills, responsibilities and resources that they can contribute to development cooperation.
- LG development cooperation needs to be recognised as a **positive local public policy**, requiring support between all levels of government and clear legal frameworks.
- On the basis of the principle of “ownership”, Southern local governments **need to be brought on board** in the processes of planning and delivering development assistance.
- Yet, LG and LGA engagement as partners in development discourse and policy dialogue with donors and international organisations is recent.

3. National governments, bilateral donors, multilateral financial institutions and international organisations are called on to:

1. Further **recognize LG and LGA as key development actors** and support their fully-fledged participation, consultation and engagement in national and sectoral policy dialogues on development cooperation;
2. Provide **adequate funding for LG and LGA** to participate in development cooperation (i.e. 20% of international development assistance to be earmarked to support decentralization processes and the capacity-building of LG and LGA); and
3. Ensure that **enabling legal frameworks** and programming mechanisms are in place to allow LG and LGA take part in the decision-making processes around development policies that affect them and their communities. The frameworks should also enable LG and LGA to lead and manage international cooperation programs, focusing on priorities relevant to them.

4. Local governments and local government associations are called upon to:

1. Strengthen their capacities and engage in a **dialogue with donors and national governments** to ensure that their needs and concerns are clearly understood and supported;
2. Ensure that all **LG development cooperation initiatives are well coordinated** and developed within the **framework of country development strategies** that take into account the national socioeconomic, political and cultural contexts;
3. Promote participatory development processes to ensure that the full diversity of the community voices is heard; and
4. **Explore and develop long-term partnerships** with other development actors (e.g. bilateral and multilateral donors, CSOs, private sector, etc.)