

nrg4SD at the High-level Political Forum 2018

24 July, 2018

nrg4SD Secretariat and several regional governments' representatives attended the High-level Political Forum (HLPF) last 9-18 July, at the United Nations Headquarters in New York City. The Forum is the main global platform for the follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda implementation. This year represented a landmark to the engagement and contribution of local and regional governments, who attended with over 240 representatives, composing the Global Task Force constituency at the HLPF.

The participation of regions was specially reinforced by nrg4SD members, such as Basque Country, Catalonia, Flanders, Gossas, Lombardy, Morona Santiago and Quebec at the level of ministers and presidents. The regions reported different efforts and territorial approaches to the implementation and localization of the SDGs.

During the HLPF, regional governments joined different side-events, such as the official plenary sessions and a full-day dedicated event to the efforts around the localization of the SDGs, the Local and Regional Governments' Forum. Also for the duration of the event, nrg4SD held, together with the governments of Basque Country, Catalonia and Flanders the exhibition "Regions for SDGs: A journey through the territorial implementation of the 2030 Agenda, led by regional governments."



Mr. Rodrigo Messias, nrg4SD Policy Officer and Ms. Natalia Vera, nrg4SD Secretary General

Report "Localizing the SDGs: regional governments paving the way"

On July 13th, nrg4SD organized a side-event at the Belgian-American Chamber of Commerce, in collaboration with OCDE and CIFAL Flanders. During the event, nrg4SD presented the report Localizing the SDGs: regional governments paving the way, which was co-developed with the University of Strathclyde Centre for Environmental Law and Governance, and the support of UNDP, ORU Fogar and CPMR.

Rodrigo Messias, nrg4SD Policy Officer, shared the results of a survey carried out with 47 regional governments in 26 different countries. Among other findings, the report highlighted the most common instruments and actions adopted by regional governments in the implementation of the SDGs. For example, around 70% of the regions who declared to be working towards the localization of the SDGs have adopted a dedicated strategy or action plan for the SDGs. Additionally, nearly 65% have established an internal committee, task force, working group or similar, becoming the second most common instrument adopted by regional governments to enable the realization of the 2030 Agenda.

The full report is [available for download here](#).

Furthermore, the report mapped the existing approaches and mechanisms in regional governments, and thus makes policy recommendations and necessary elements that should be looked upon when defining the process for localizing the SDGs in subnational territories. Although no one-size fits all solutions are

possible, the report emphasizes that the localization process in regions should consider the following elements: (i) defining a vision; (ii) mapping existing; (iii) governance structures, (iv) adopting a policy, (v) enacting laws, and (vi) creating and/or adapting institutions. All of these steps should be based on a comprehensive multi-stakeholder participation and multi-level governance.



“Although the SDGs might not seem transformational if we consider regional governments have been working on these topics since many years, the report confirms the SDGs are generating an inspiring review of how policy is made at the level of regional governments. For example, the SDGs’ efforts are breaking siloes by fostering a greater integration of departments within the same government, as well as boosting the morale of civil servants, now engaged in workshops and sessions about the 2030 Agenda” explained

nrg4SD Secretariat.

Ms. Natalia Vera, nrg4SD Secretary General

The event was moderated by Natalia Vera, nrg4SD Secretary General and included concrete presentations by the regional governments of Basque Country, Catalonia, Cordoba, Lombardy, Southern Denmark and Paraná, in addition to global organizations working with regions, as OCDE, UNDP ART and UNITAR.

As a conclusion, nrg4SD Secretary General affirmed the need for additional coordination among the global initiatives supporting regional governments in the localization of the SDGs. With that in mind, participants agreed to engage a coordination mechanism envisaged to strengthen synergies and communication, while avoiding duplications of the activities ahead.

Local & Regional Governments’ Forum

On the 16th of July, for the first time ever, a full-day event was dedicated to reviewing the progress of the localization of the SDGs, with a special focus on the role and experiences of local and regional governments. The event that was a request in nrg4SD advocacy in the past years was jointly organized by the UN-DESA, UN-Habitat, and the Global Taskforce of Local and Regional Governments, in collaboration with Local2030.



During the opening session, it was reminded that the UN system is under reform and it is also an opportunity to revisit the expertise, knowledge and resources of the UN in terms of also improving the local dimension of the 2030 Agenda. In this regard, the UN Deputy Secretary General, Amina Mohamed, explained that at the UN *“We need the driving force and creative energy of local and regional governments. The SDGs can’t happen without you.”*



*Adama Diallo, President of Gossas' Regional Council.
Credits: UCLG-CGLU/Joel Sheakosk*

Different regional governments intervened along the six panels of the event, emphasizing different recommendations, challenges and experiences in the localization of the SDGs. Adama Diallo, President of Gossas' Regional Council, called for additional partnerships to support the capacities of regional governments. For example, and especially considering the case of Senegal, President Diallo explained the existing resources for the subnational public administrations will not be enough, and thus additional funds should be mobilized to support the localization process.

Considering the need to strengthen the participation of regional governments in the Voluntary National Reviews, Marcelino Chumpi, President of the Morona Santiago province, called for additional multi-level coordination and governance towards a holistic and integrated national approach to the SDGs.

In the discussion about integrated territorial approaches, Raffaele Cattaneo, Minister of Environment and Climate Change of Lombardy reminded how cohesion policies can contribute to a multi-level governance,



Raffaele Cattaneo, Minister of Environment and Climate Change of Lombardy. Credits: UCLG-CGLU/Joel Sheakosk

also building on the principle of subsidiarity, especially if observed the example in Europe, where regions play a crucial role in the implementation of the EU frameworks. On the concrete case of Lombardy, the Minister shared they have *“decided to change the way our regional institute for research and statistics provide the so-called Lombardy Annual Report, a general report on the social and economic situation of Lombardy” a vision of Lombardy through the lens of Sustainable Development, a benchmarking on Lombardy of the 17 Goals and 169 targets.*”

The full recording of the Forum is [available at the UN webtv here.](#)

“We consider the 2030 Agenda an authentic opportunity to build a project for the future of the Basque Country society, aligned to the global agenda” mentioned María Ángeles Elorza, Secretary General for External Action of the Basque Country. In the panel about subnational financing systems, the Secretary General shared the interesting experience of the Sustainable Euskadi Bonds, which combines funds collected through taxes and in the market system to



promote and finance projects that contribute to the achievement of the SDGs.

María Ángeles Elorza, Secretary General for External Action of the Basque Country. Credits: UCLG-CGLU/Joel Sheakosk

Representing Catalonia, Ernest Maragall Minister of Foreign Affairs, Institutional Relations and Transparency, explained the process in Catalonia for the implementation of the SDGs, including the creation of an inter-ministerial commission and the need to involve the parliament, particularly moving forward with the implementation of the plan to [Transform Catalonia and Improve the World](#). In this regard, the Minister reminded “the 2030 Agenda in Catalonia is also the result of the integration of different perspectives, as culture, gender, and others”.

During the conclusion session, Natalia Vera, nrg4SD Secretary General summarized the main topics discussed during the and which require further attention for advancing the localization of the SDGs: multilevel governance; multi-stakeholder engagement; territorial approaches; adequate indicators and monitoring frameworks. Finally, in response to the Deputy Secretary General Call, Natalia Vera replied: “We are here, we are ready, and we engage ourselves to bring our voice, leadership and contributions to complement the efforts of Member States within the UN framework”.

Moving ahead & next steps



On the 17th of July, nrg4SD members and other regional governments gathered at the Flanders House in a lunch hosted by the Flemish Government. After celebrating the great space achieved during the HLPF, it was reminded that a further balance and increased participation of regional governments should be pursued.

Moving ahead, regions attending the HLPF reconfirmed the commitment with the implementation of the 2030 Agenda in their territories. It was welcomed the support and expertise provided by nrg4SD, especially in terms of enabling peer-reviews and learning among regional governments.

For future HLPF editions, it is hoped that the Local and Regional Governments' Forum will become a permanent modality, while at the same time the HLPF carries an internal review, in order to further improve the opportunities for participation and the format of the discussions undertaken.

For a complete coverage of the HLPF, [it is recommended the IISD/ENG daily and summary reports, available here.](#)

For more information on the participation of local and regional governments, [please access the Global Task Force page.](#)