

**REPORT ON THE VISION
OF EURASIA LOCAL AND REGIONAL GOVERNMENTS
“THE FUTURE WE WANT – 2045”**

PREAMBLE

This year the United Nations has celebrated its 75th anniversary and on this occasion has launched a global conversation dedicated to the theme “The Future We Want in 2045 – the Year of the UN’s 100th Anniversary”. The Secretary-General has requested UCLG to form the vision of local and regional governments of the future. For this purpose, in April 2020, the Eurasia Regional Section of UCLG held two discussions.

Mayors of cities and their deputies, representatives of regions’ leadership, as well as heads of associations of local and regional governments took part in these debates. Cities that could not attend discussions participated in absentia by sending their vision in a written form.

This Report on the vision of Eurasia local and regional governments of the future in 2045 has been prepared on the basis of the opinions expressed. It has been approved by the Council of UCLG Eurasia.



I. CURRENT TRENDS AND CHALLENGES IN 2020

1. Main current global trends and challenges and their impact on local and regional governments' activities. Three key traits of the current international system.

“The modern world defines new challenges for us. These are an economic crisis, pandemic, the closure of borders and the breakdown of sustainable economic ties. It is necessary to consolidate efforts of all branches and levels of government to address this issue,” Alena Gubanova, Mayor of Astrakhan, Vice-President of UCLG-Eurasia noted.

The coronavirus pandemic occurred in 2020 is a threat to the globalization process and will undoubtedly leave its mark. Countries have been isolated from each other for several months, the international trade in many sectors has been suspended. The world economic crisis will further increase a gap in the well-being of different countries, as well as in the well-being of different social groups of the population. Poverty eradication is SDG 1 of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and it has been achieved nearly in most countries of the Eurasian region. However, the pandemic has caused a wave of unemployment and poverty which would take years to be addressed.

Municipalities nevertheless do not give up and are on the front lines combating hunger and poverty. Head of Leninsky District of Bishkek Toktosun Sultanov shared how the metropolitan municipality in cooperation with business had supported about 100,000 families in Bishkek in the difficult period of coronavirus. Large and poor families, citizens who have lost their daily earnings, people with disabilities and elderly people receive food assistance. Such supportive measures are taken everywhere, in all cities of the Eurasian region.

“The preservation of many forms of poverty and growing inequality remain one of the major obstacles towards ensuring the sustainable development worldwide, and

social and economic exclusion is an undeniable reality in cities and other human settlements,” Vice-Mayor of Osh Zhasur Azimov highlighted. In this regard, the next decade will see the trend towards combating **economic inequality**.

As Chairman of the Omsk City Council Vladimir Korbut noted: “If one virus is able to destroy the economy within several weeks, this shows that it is necessary to consider a long-term perspective taking into account possible risks and a scenario of their development. After the pandemic the world will never be the same. The labour market is changing its structure, instruments of influence, methods of attraction and impact. This forced global experiment is most likely to be successful, and this will lead to radical reformatting of the labour market and consequently to new social challenges”.

The participants of the meetings focused their attention on **the global trend towards forming a solid urbanizing world**. Besides, a city strives for growth, transformation into an agglomeration and megalopolis.

“By 2045, the urban population of the world will almost double, thus, urbanization will be one of the most significant transformative trends of the 21st century. Population, economic activity, social and cultural interactions, as well as environmental and humanitarian impacts are increasingly concentrated in cities, and this poses great problems for sustainability in terms of housing, infrastructure, basic services, food security, health, education, decent work, safety and natural resources ”, Vice-Mayor of Osh Zhasur Azimov emphasized.

Kamil Nugayev, Deputy of the State Council of the Republic of Tatarstan, who has served over 25 years as Head of Spassky Municipal District, highlighted the problem of a dichotomy between a village and a city. “A reverse side of urbanization is the outflow of population from villages to cities. Mostly young, able-bodied people of reproductive age leave. In this regard, the mortality rate increases in villages, and the birth rate decreases. I am afraid and not only me, many people are afraid that over time there will be no rural population at all. This is a very urgent issue not only for our country, but for the whole world. **If everyone lives in cities, who will produce agricultural products?** ”

According to the leadership of Yekaterinburg, one of the consequences of urbanization is the issue of waste. Cities should learn to enhance the level of waste treatment, otherwise they will turn into a dump.

The problem of environmental pollution is very acute for humanity. It is necessary to take measures to reduce exhausts and emissions of harmful substances, and to recycle waste. However, all these issues are not the responsibility of local and regional governments. The Republic of Sakha, through its efforts, has transferred the municipal transport to more environmentally friendly gas fuel. In Bishkek, thanks to joint efforts of citizens and the municipality, thousands of trees are constantly planted. Separate garbage collection is introduced everywhere. But all this cannot address a common global ecological issue.

The participants of the meetings stressed the issue of climate change which is now visible to unaided eye. This April, we saw that, in Novosibirsk, it was abnormally hot 29C, and, in Mecca, it snowed. In Yakutia, where glaciers are melting, global warming is felt.

“Cities and regions located in the subarctic zone are extremely dependent on the natural environment. Fragile northern ecosystems depend on growing urbanization as well. All this makes us perceive the problem of global climate change in a special way. According to meteorological observations, over the past 50 years, the average annual air temperature in Yakutia has increased by 2 degrees, and in large settlements - by more than 3 degrees. In densely populated parts of the region, global warming has a negative impact on permafrost," Minister of External Relations of the Republic of Sakha (Yakutia) noted.

The problem of climate change requires an urgent solution. Cities and regions are ready to act, but we need powers and finances.

High centralization of power has an impact on local democratic self-governance and hinders the engagement of local governments in determining the global

development. A top-down approach to governance considers local and regional governments as secondary actors.

To date, the issue of **empowerment of local governments is urgent**. Subnational governments seek to strengthen their positions. By sharing experience and successful practices, they develop a common strategy to influence changes taking place in the world - from climate change to geopolitical changes on the world stage – for the purpose of ensuring the sustainable development of cities for the benefit of their residents. Urban diplomacy and inter-municipal relations continue to develop. Local and regional governments try to participate in addressing global issues and in global negotiations. Considering that all national and global decisions have to be implemented by local governments, it makes sense that they should take part in developing these decisions as equal partners.

The participants of the meetings mentioned **the issue of gender equality** as well. According to Deputy Head of Nizhnekamsk District Elvira Dolotkazina: “Russian women have equal rights to receive a free education, apply for a job, and participate in elections. Russian women even have a number of privileges over men. Family law restricts the husband’s right to divorce during the pregnancy of his wife and within a year after the birth of a child. The criminal law provides for a ban on life sentences for women in prison.”

At the same time, such problems as “glass ceiling”, the difference in incomes of men and women not in favor of women, and domestic violence still remain. Men predominate in the leadership positions. Senior municipal and state posts are also held mostly by men.

A study conducted by UCLG-Eurasia on 48 major cities of Eurasia shows that in only 6% of cities, women run the executive branch. City councils are headed by women in only 9% of cities. The average rate of women’s representation in the leadership of executive bodies of Eurasian cities is 18.6%, and in city councils - 19.6%. This demonstrates that the problem of gender equality remains relevant.

An important modern trend that will definitely increase by 2045 is **digitalization and virtualization**. Today, the work on digitalization of life in cities in such key areas as education, healthcare, security, utilities, transportation and others is being carried out. In Eurasian cities, systems allowing to apply for a kindergarten, school or college have been introduced. Health organizations have access to the Internet, and the online queue system in city hospitals is also working efficiently. In Nur-Sultan, online surveillance has reduced the number of serious crimes by 39%, and especially serious crimes by 18%.

The coronavirus pandemic has enhanced the application of digital technologies. Now, conferences, meetings of city councils are held online. Students, schoolchildren and even pre-school children study remotely. All this demonstrates that, in the future, the world will be even more virtual.

2. What is the role of local governments in delivering global agreements. Is it up to local and regional governments, together with member states of the UN, to deliver the global agreements?

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development does not properly take into account the role of subnational governments. The same concerns the Paris Climate Agreement, the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction and many other global agreements. However, it is local and regional governments that in their day-to-day activities make a contribution to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. Some cities are well informed of the SDGs and implement them consciously. Others without thinking of agendas just do what they are to do, namely, improve the quality of life of people.

As Minister of External Relations of the Republic of Sakha (Yakutia) Gavril Kirillin noted: “To date, local and regional governments being in close contact with citizens are well placed to raise awareness of the importance of the SDGs and their relevance for local communities. In this regard, every region can identify its own

priorities in achieving the SDGs and develop targeted actions of regions to adapt and distribute the 2030 Agenda.”

Eurasian cities and regions are gradually being engaged in achieving goals of the 2030 Agenda. For instance, in 2019, Rostov Region published an informative report on implementing the Sustainable Development Goals in the region. In February 2020, the Republic of Tatarstan presented a report on the SDGs implementation in the region to Antonio Guterres. Besides, the cities of Rostov-on-Don, Kazan and Turkestan have joined the New York Declaration on preparing a Voluntary Local Review of the SDGs, and Moscow and Bishkek consider the possibility of preparing reports on SDGs. All this demonstrates the active position of Eurasian cities and regions and their willingness to act to address global issues.

This year, Armenia, the Kyrgyz Republic, the Russian Federation, Ukraine, Uzbekistan will present their voluntary national reviews of the SDGs in New York. In Russia, UCLG-Eurasia and a number of associations of local governments have been engaged in preparing the review. Thanks to this, local and regional projects have been included into the report as case studies.

However, most countries do not involve local and regional governments in preparing voluntary national reviews of achieving the SDGs, as well as do not reflect the work of local and regional governments in the review. National governments do not inform regional and local governments about the need for the implementation of the SDGs and present it in the form of national programmes. Besides, cities and regions learn about the SDGs and other international agreements on their own and try to make a contribution to achieving these goals. It turns out that each level of government works on achieving the SDGs on their own. Cooperation between all levels of government in this area could lead to better results. The development of the agreed programme of action related to the implementation of priority for a given area SDGs taking into account individual peculiarities of a region would significantly accelerate the process of achieving the well-being for all.

The participants of the meetings announced their commitment to promote fundamental changes in the urban environment, as well as their solidarity with the New Urban Agenda according to which:

- ways of planning, financing, development, governance and management of cities and other human settlements should be revised;
- the leading role of national governments, as appropriate, in developing and implementing efficient measures of urban policy and law to ensure the sustainable urban development, as well as a significant contribution of local governments, civil society and other stakeholders based on the principles of transparency and accountability should be acknowledged;
- sustainable, gender aspects and integrated approaches to urban and territorial development through implementing policy measures, strategies, capacity-building and taking measures at all levels based on key factors for changes should be adopted.

II. THE WORLD WE EXPECT IN 2045

1. How will the world change by 2045? Will the main global problems of 2020 be solved? How will the world be like in 2045? How would we like to see the role of local and regional governments in 2045?

For our Eurasian region, the 75th anniversary of the UN is, first of all, the 75th anniversary of the Great Victory in the Second World War. This is a milestone day for every citizen of the countries of the Eurasian region. The whole world fought against the Nazi regime, and the Soviet Union (its countries are now represented by UCLG-Eurasia) played a decisive role in winning the victory over the fascist plague. It is the Soviet Union that bore the brunt of an attack by Germany and its allies, repelled it and then crushed fascism. The war concerned all citizens of the Eurasian region – every family has grandparents and great-grandparents who

were affected by this brutal tragedy and contributed to achieving the Great Victory!

The price of these seventy five years of peace is immensely high! Therefore, first of all, in 2045 and further in the future, we would like to see a peaceful sky above our heads. We wish that in the near future all conflicts would be resolved, and peace and well-being would prevail around the world.

“We are obliged to remember tragic lessons of history, and on no account should we allow historical events to be falsified and the outcomes of the Second World War to be reconsidered. I am convinced that the preservation of historical memory and joint action of municipalities of different countries will make the world safe and prosperous in 2045,” Vitaly Likhachev, Mayor of Volgograd, considers.

In 2020, the world has faced another enemy. This time the war with a virus has broken out. We think that we should be ready for new challenges. We propose to announce a moratorium on the development of new types of weapons and to direct funds to develop new vaccines against infection.

“COVID-19 has become a kind of a test indicator of the sustainability of the globalization process, which implies certain specialization of labour between countries. Undoubtedly, this model enhances the efficiency of economic activity, but at the same time leads to the unprecedented vulnerability of the national economy. It is the pandemic that has identified all contradictions of this current global system.

We consider that the modernization of globalization processes associated with shifts in world politics and economy, changes in international relations, information space that will lead to the right balance between globalization and sovereignty of national systems, as well as to creation of new integration opportunities for many countries of the world and new inter-state entities, regional markets, and further – interregional and inter-urban collaboration systems, is essential” Georgy Kolyagin, Chairman of the Stavropol City Duma highlighted.

“Borders between countries, visas and bureaucracy pose problems for cooperation between countries. In the future, the interaction between cities and countries should be simplified,” Mayor of Comrat Sergey Anastasov highlighted.

We would like to see the world in 2045 decentralized. The role of local and regional governments should be acknowledged at the global and national levels. Local, regional and national governments should be equal partners. We consider it essential to shift from directive regulation to equal partnership and multilevel governance. Powers of local governments should be broadened, in particular, the provision of basic services should be transferred to the local level.

Taking into account the increasing role of cities, we consider that a contemporary inter-national system should transform into an inter-urban one by 2045. As it is cities that ensure most of the economic growth of a country, as well as the realization of main human rights.

Mayor of Comrat Sergey Anastasov proposed to organize clear allocation and collection of taxes and finances. Today, over 40% of problems are problems of local governments, while revenues are 15-20%. In the future, we would like more funds to be allocated for addressing local issues. The percentage of the national budget to be allocated and its purpose should be enshrined in law. Besides, at least 30% should be allocated to local governments. This will allow to solve many problems. **Local governments should not beg for finances from regional governments.** This is a matter of global importance, especially concerning countries with the average level of development.

We regard that urbanization is unavoidable, and therefore we wish it to be sustainable. It is important to ensure the right to city for everyone. Urbanization should take place as follows:

- 1) Every citizen is provided with decent housing and job;
- 2) Cities cope with the burden such as waste treatment, transport and infrastructure, environmental footprint, etc.;

- 3) There are employment opportunities in villages and people to work. Life and remuneration in a rural area are decent.
- 4) Search for work is not a reason for the move. Every city has the potential for creating new jobs, and every city should create them.
- 5) Villages can provide cities with necessary agricultural products, and entrepreneurship in villages is well developed.
- 6) Life in villages is good enough so that the youth having obtained an education in a city comes back to work in a village.
- 7) Urbanization occurs not only due to the mass influx to metropolises, but due to the growth and development of small and medium-sized cities.
- 8) High-quality transport connections between rural and urban areas are established.

According to First Deputy Governor of Ulaanbaatar Zhantsan Batbayasgalan: “A city with a favourable living environment should be characterized by stability, compactness, accessibility, thrift, adaptedness and activity”.

By 2030, it is necessary to end poverty and hunger, in all their forms and dimensions and reduce inequality. In 2045, the sustainable economic growth should be achieved around the world.

We wish the ecological issue to be addressed by 2045. We want to live in green cities with fresh air, a large number of parks and biodiversity. We wish to achieve wasteless production when garbage is entirely recycled. We wish to reach zero emission by 2045. The problem of depletion of fresh water resources should be solved as well. Probably, we will be able to get fresh water from atmosphere.

“What will the world be like in 25 years? A quarter of a century is quite a long period of time. At the current rate of development it is enormous. New technologies in science, medicine, space and other spheres will serve people. And if they are used rationally they will really improve our lives. An then the world undoubtedly will become better,” Yury Sapozhnikov, Mayor of Vologda, official representative of the

Russian Federation in the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Congress of Europe, thinks.

We think that digitalization will have a great impact on the future. A virtual reality will be used in production industry, health, transport and even in military affairs. Robots and entirely automated systems functioning without human involvement are also digital technologies of the future. Remotely piloted vehicles doing delivery and having other functions will be introduced soon. Systems of energy storage, as well as the usage of cosmic energy systems are awaited in 25 years.

Indeed, we hope that **digital technology will significantly facilitate the exchange of experience.** Automated systems in a split second will find the best solution to specific problems. And virtual reality will allow to visit cities and countries in real time.

In the future, breakthroughs in medicine will be necessary so that terrible diseases such as AIDS and cancer will become easily treated. Life expectancy should increase, and mortality should decrease. Transplantation of artificial organs should reach a new level and be affordable for everyone. Governments should be ready to quickly cope with any disease and epidemic.

Undoubtedly, the most important are human rights and needs, which should be at the heart of politics at all levels. Economic racial, gender equality, civil, political, social and cultural human rights must be respected. “A human-centered city development policy to raise qualified, highly educated, moral, and responsible citizens should be adopted; equal participation of every citizen, support for businesses of all levels through state policy and creating new jobs should be ensured in the coming years,” Zhantsan Batbayasgalan, First Deputy Governor of Ulaanbaatar, said.

Culture is an integral part of our lives. Globalization processes, on the one hand, allow to study the world culture, and, on the other hand, destroy identity. Mixed marriages, migration, atheism, forgetting a mother tongue obliterate national peculiarities of peoples and countries. Natural disasters and wars destroy heritage sites. In this regard, in the coming years the development direction should be aimed at

preserving culture and heritage. We should revive national ornaments in modern clothing, speak a mother tongue and teach our children to speak it, create conditions for the development of culture. Even small-numbered peoples should have an opportunity to obtain an education in their mother tongue.

For example, in 2011, the Republic of Sakha (Yakutia) initiated the project “the International Arctic School”. It aims to achieve SDG 4 and reduce inequality concerning the availability of high-quality education for indigenous peoples that meets international standards while preserving linguistic and cultural diversity. This project was presented at the UN at the meeting with Secretary-General of the UN Mr. Ban Ki-moon as part of the presentation of regions in the report of the United Nations Association of Russia. The International Arctic School will open in September 2020.

Preserving the heritage of our ancestors, it is necessary to create heritage for future generations as well. The architecture of the city of Abu Dhabi is a good example. There magnificent palaces that have already become the heritage are being constructed. Among the cities of the Eurasian region there are those creating unique cultural sites. For instance, the Palace of Peace and Reconciliation in Nur-Sultan, the Palace of Farmers in Kazan, the Heart of Chechnya mosque in Grozny and others.

Whatever the future is it is important that all levels of government within each country, as well as countries between each other should act in concert as equal partners with a common goal – to ensure the well-being for everyone.

2. Are local and regional governments seeing and imagining themselves and drivers of changes? Is city diplomacy able to become transformative diplomacy?

This year the UN celebrates its 75th anniversary, and last year we celebrated the 75th anniversary of the sister cities’ movement. City diplomacy began in 1944 when the British city of Coventry and Stalingrad concluded the first agreement on sister relations.

The role of cities as members of the international community is steadily increasing in the process of strengthening democracy, the rule of law and human rights. The active development of city diplomacy stresses the paramount importance of local governments' actions in enhancing the unity, peace and civil society.

Moreover, the situation of the pandemic has shown the defining role and the importance of local governments in ensuring epidemiological and biological well-being of citizens within a specific territory. It is the efficient actions taken on the ground that for the time being largely determine the morbidity rate of the population. The evidence from practice shows that even if digital technologies that can manage large systems are introduced, there will be situations requiring immediate response to external circumstances and coordinated actions under the leadership of representatives of local governments.

In the near future, local and regional governments will face a number of challenges caused by a viral infection, among which are the decrease in tax proceeding to municipalities' budget, growth of unemployment, changes in the labour market, the reduction in the number of small and medium businesses, etc. The solution to these problems will be prompter and more efficient based on the exchange of best world practices at the inter-urban level.

In view of this, **the further decentralization of state governance will take place**. On the one hand, it will enable the empowerment of local governments to successfully address issues of citizens who elected them, on the other hand, it will allow to ensure the uncompromising responsibility of local governments for final results of their activities and a reasonable balance between own and national (system) analysis.

Cities will receive greater freedom of action, including through empowering them to expand the list of local issues addressed by them, develop a tax base of local budgets, capacity of their territorial growth that will promote their financial independence and resources.

“I consider that **the most important factor for successful addressing emerging issues and developing the local self-governance system remains its further democratization** characterized by the engagement of citizens in solving local problems, interaction between local government and citizens, involvement of the public in intensification of city diplomacy processes as a basis for long-term mutually beneficial relations, sharing opinions, establishing business connections, strengthening mutual trust,” Georgy Kolyagin, Chairman of the Stavropol City Duma, said.

In the coming years the role of city diplomacy will increase taking into account emerging trends of certain states towards national sovereignty, and, in the future, **city diplomacy will be an instrument to establish new international forms of cooperation** between states in future modernized global systems.

In the context of localization of global processes, a new quality of municipalities as economic actors of the world economy, equal (but not having equal potential), independent (but not self-sufficient), having specific means to realize their own potential and adapt global agreements to peculiarities and needs of specific territories, will be formed.

The role of local governments will increase every year, and in the future it is local and regional governments who will define the global human development.

III. GLOBAL GOVERNANCE FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

1. **What is the new model of global governance that will allow to achieve the well-being for all and sustainable development?**

To date, the number of global problems is increasing, and a time frame to address them is being repeatedly postponed. This demonstrates the incompleteness of the world order and the need to renew global governance.

“The ideal governance is the governance that ensures the realization of human rights and freedoms, and certainly the efficient exercise of powers of all levels of government,” Chairman of the Ulyanovsk City Duma Ilya Nozhechkin noted.

The participants of the meetings presented main principles according to which global governance should be built.

The participants of the meeting mentioned the need for local governments’ engagement in the decision-making process as a priority of a new model of global governance. Local and regional governments should be provided with **a seat at the global table**. They should act as important partners in the global decision-making process, as well as in the development of global agendas.

Local governments should be well represented in the United Nations governing bodies. This could be, for instance, a special unit for local governments. Or a chamber of local and regional governments under the UN General Assembly that would include representatives of local governments from all countries of the UN. Another variant could be the formalization of the UCLG’s official status in the UN, provided that UCLG is represented by mayors from all regions.

The role and powers of local governments should be indicated in all global agreements that are adopted. Besides, **global agreements should be developed and concluded in consultation with local and regional governments**. As, to this date, the situation is that it is we who implement, but we have not been asked whether we are able to do this, as well as what resources we need.

In addition to the issue of the implementation of global agendas, the leadership of the Republic of Sakha (Yakutia) added that national governments should engage a wide range of representatives of local and regional governments and their associations in preparing voluntary national reviews of the SDGs. These reviews should reflect actions of local and regional governments towards the SDGs. National governments should encourage the development of voluntary local and regional reviews of the SDGs.

Chairman of the Stavropol City Duma Georgy Kolyagin considers that **municipalities should be included into the decision-making system at the national level**, directly in Russia – through the creation of a specific municipal working group in the Russian Federation State Council, special commissions in regional public chambers and public chambers of constituent entities of the Russian Federation, strengthening the role of networks of municipalities and municipal communities.

“The focus in the new global governance should be made on shifting to the bottom-up approach and empowering local governments. Moreover, this is not about the top-down delegation of additional authority, but about strengthening responsibility and independence of local governments. **We should move from directive governance to the multilevel one, where local, regional and national governments should act as equal partners and work in dialogue,**” Emin Eritsyian, President of the Union of Communities of Armenia, member of the Parakar Municipal Council, head of the Armenian delegation in the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Congress of Europe highlighted.

The principle of subsidiarity will promote the achievement of the sustainable development as well. All issues that could be efficiently addressed on the ground should be assigned to municipal bodies as closest to citizens. Only in the event that there is no such an opportunity, relevant issues should be addressed by higher levels of government. Thus, every higher level of government is subsidiary in relation to the lower level.

Citizens, businesses and non-governmental organizations should be engaged in multilevel governance. Creating mechanisms of collaboration with citizens everywhere and involving them into addressing issues, we are implementing the principle of the UN ‘to leave no one behind’. In order to avoid the problem of the abundant number of participants with different interests engaged in the discussion, an incremental approach can be used. At the first stage all stakeholders are invited to take part in the discussion, and interests, positions of participants, their approaches to solving an issue are

identified. This is a kind of ‘brainstorming’. Further, participants of the second stage of the negotiating process are determined – those who are really willing and are able to take a decision on an issue. However, making a decision they should take into account opinions and positions of other participants formulated at the first stage.

Continuing to talk about strengthening the role of local and regional governments, Chairman of the Ulyanovsk City Duma Ilya Nozhechkin stressed: ‘Nothing can be done unless you have resources, unless there is a structured budgetary system allowing local governments to be strong and relatively independent concerning the issues under consideration. Therefore, common standards of budgeting municipalities, building a tax system should be enshrined at the international level’.

It is **increased funding for local governments’ activities** that became the cornerstone of the negotiations. The participants of the discussions unanimously agreed that minimum standards of budgeting should be prescribed at the international level. **This should be enshrined in the countries’ constitutions as well.** Financial resources should be fairly distributed among levels of government. This is a global issue, and we must respond to this issue globally.

As Mayor of Comrat Sergey Anastasov proposed: “In the future **the UN should monitor the observance of member states’ constitutions**”.

During the coronavirus pandemic, measures to support entrepreneurs have been taken. This is the reduction in the tax burden. However, this reduction is not due to the taxes coming to the national budget, but it is regional and local taxes that are reduced. This leads to the reduction of the already scarce tax base. In the future, **measures to support citizens should be implemented through national funds, not municipal budgets.**

During the discussions local and regional governments highlighted **main principles of horizontal governance** as well. Today a considerable number of countries remain aside from global processes. Besides, it is those countries that most need assistance. In this regard, in the future we would like to see such a collaboration

between countries when decisions are made not only by the strongest and most economically developed governments, but in dialogue with all countries concerned. Interests of each state should be considered, and the global governance should become polycentric.

Taking into account the increasing role of cities, we consider that a contemporary inter-national system should transform into an inter-urban one by 2045. As it is cities that ensure most of the economic growth of a country, as well as the realization of main human rights.

Global cities account for 60% of the world GDP. At the same time, they are facing such significant problems, as uncontrolled urbanization, gridlocks, epidemics, environmental deterioration and others. Eventually, there will come a moment when metropolises will not be able to cope with the constant growth in the population. In this regard, within the next 25 years, **the development direction should be shifted towards small and medium-sized cities.** Nowadays, it is they who suffer more. Enterprises providing employment opportunities should be established in small and medium-sized cities. It is important to create an efficient transport connection. This will allow to lessen the burden of metropolises and to build capacity for the sustainable development in different territories.

Relations between cities should be built on cooperation and mutual interest, not on competition. Both national and regional associations and international organizations play a significant role in this.

The preferable and mutually beneficial cooperation between cities and villages is the increased intensity of the level of any interaction, as well as the development of logistical capacities for this purpose: strengthening communication capacities such as connection, road construction for natural resources consumption, enhance production and business opportunities outside a city, promote cultural exchange.

A rural area plays a life-supporting role for cities. Thus, in the coming years, governments should make efforts to create an enabling environment for life, work and entrepreneurship development in villages.

As for the governance between different subdivisions, an integrated approach to planning should be adopted. This is recommended by the New Urban Agenda adopted during the UN-Habitat as well. The transformation of the urban environment should be made in cooperation between different subdivisions – considering economic benefits and the environmental impact. Preference should be given to the projects benefiting the largest number of people and in the maximum possible spheres.

How do we imagine the place of local governments in the renewed UN system? What are the tools set in place for local governments to carry out our role in the new system?

To date, local and regional governments are not represented in the UN structure. All key resolutions are adopted by the UN General Assembly that includes only national governments.

As the number of issues considered by the Assembly is very high, the Assembly distributes agenda items depending on their topics among the six main committees which discuss them trying, if possible, to agree different approaches of states and then submit draft resolutions and decisions to the Assembly at one of the plenary sessions. The work of the UN is based largely on resolutions of the General Assembly and is carried out by committees and other bodies established by the Assembly for the purpose of studying specific issues, as well as by the UN Secretariat – the Secretary-General and its staff as part of international civil servants.

New times generate new challenges and require new approaches to the work. Especially today, when the coronavirus pandemic has affected the whole world, and mayors of cities are often face to face with problems of their citizens, we clearly

understand the importance of municipalities. And this importance should be reflected in the UN structure.

“To represent the vision of local and regional governments in the decision-making process **in the renewed UN system it is proposed to include a new body into the UN structure consisting of representatives of local and regional governments and reflecting their interests,**” First Deputy Mayor of Kazan Evgeniya Lodvigova highlighted.

For instance, such a credible and influential organization as the Council of Europe has such a body. In 1994, under the resolution of the Committee of Ministers, the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe that actively works along with the Parliamentary Assembly was established. Today it is an integral part of the Council of Europe and an important tool in achieving goals and objectives faced by the European community.

This form of organization allows to submit issues for discussion and take decisions on them without considering countries’ political interests. Non-interference in world politics is one of the UCLG’s main principles. However, under the current UN structure, when only countries are represented in the General Assembly, it is impossible.

At the present moment, the only body, which is a part of the UN structure responsible for matters relating to cities, is UN-Habitat. It was founded in 1978, and over 40 years have passed since then.

The creation of a new consultative body interacting directly with the UN General Assembly will enable not only to inform the world community of current and emerging issues of cities in the shortest possible period, but to find solutions to these issues. This will enhance the activity and highlight the importance of the leadership of municipalities as equal participants of a global agenda and catalysts for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals.

Our strong belief is that local governments are able to convey to the whole world voices of people from different cities who regardless of the color of their skin, religion and gender have the same problems, and to contribute to solving them.