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Strengthening of the United Nations system

Recommendations on how engagement with local and regional authorities could advance the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, in particular the localization of the Sustainable Development Goals

Report of the Secretary-General*

Summary

Pursuant to action 55 (e) of the Pact for the Future, the present report provides recommendations to enhance engagement with local and regional authorities in advancing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, in particular the localization of the Sustainable Development Goals. Mandated for submission by the end of the seventy-ninth session of the General Assembly, the report builds on the work of the Advisory Group on Local and Regional Governments and contains recommendations on options for strengthening United Nations institutional mechanisms for engagement with local and regional governments.

The present report outlines the consultative process undertaken with Member States, United Nations system entities, and local and regional government networks and coalitions, including the Global Task Force of Local and Regional Governments, following review of the recommendations of the Advisory Group.

The recommendations are intended to strengthen engagement with local and regional authorities, reinforcing a more agile, effective and coordinated United Nations system, while identifying synergies across existing United Nations mechanisms to support national implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals through local action.

* The present report was submitted after the deadline to include the most recent information, and to allow for comprehensive review by the Executive Office of the Secretary-General.



I. Introduction

1. Collaboration among United Nations agencies, Member States and other actors, including local and regional authorities, is essential to deliver on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, accelerating progress towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals and ensuring that no one is left behind. Therefore, pursuant to action 55 (e) of the Pact for the Future,¹ the present report contains recommendations on how engagement with local and regional authorities could advance the 2030 Agenda, in particular the localization of the Goals. The report was mandated to be presented for the consideration of Member States by the end of the seventy-ninth session of the General Assembly.

2. Building on the work of the Advisory Group on Local and Regional Governments, established in October 2023 for a one-year term, the present report transmits the recommendations of the Advisory Group on options for enhancing United Nations institutional mechanisms for the engagement of local and regional governments.

3. In the report, the Secretary-General describes the consultation process undertaken with the United Nations system, local and regional government networks and coalitions, including the Global Task Force of Local and Regional Governments, and Member States, following review of the recommendations of the Advisory Group.

4. The recommendations are intended to strengthen engagement with local and regional authorities, reinforcing the vision of the United Nations of a more agile, effective and coordinated Organization. In addition, the Secretary-General identifies potential synergies among existing United Nations mechanisms that involve the participation of local and regional governments, to ensure broader impact across the United Nations system for national-level implementation to accelerate progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals.

II. Global strategy on local and regional governments

5. In October 2023, the Secretary-General established the Advisory Group on Local and Regional Governments,² rooted in his vision of “Our Common Agenda” (A/75/982) for inclusive, networked and effective multilateralism. The Advisory Group convened 15 representatives from local and regional governments, proposed by the networks gathered under the Global Task Force of Local and Regional Governments, and five representatives with experience in multi-level governance at the national level. Discussions were supported by the Executive Office of the Secretary-General, with the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) serving as secretary and principals of the United Nations playing a supporting role, subject to the issues under discussion.

6. The Advisory Group’s objective was to advise the Secretary-General on the engagement of and action by local and regional governments. Over the course of one year, the Group systematically developed and delivered four key reports to the Secretary-General, each addressing crucial aspects of the engagement of such governments within the United Nations system:

¹ General Assembly resolution 79/1.

² See <https://unhabitat.org/news/26-aug-2024/secretary-generals-advisory-group-on-local-and-regional-governments>.

(a) **Defining key priorities.** The first report, “Input to the Summit of the Future”, outlines foundational priorities for local and regional governments in the context of global sustainable development challenges;

(b) **Enhancing institutional mechanisms.** The second report, “Guidance note on modalities and means to enhance institutional mechanisms to strengthen engagement of local and regional governments in intergovernmental processes”, provides recommendations on enhancing engagement structures for local and regional governments within intergovernmental processes. It also includes a catalogue of options for mechanisms to strengthen the engagement of such governments in United Nations intergovernmental processes (see annex to the present document);

(c) **Strategic solutions.** The third report, “Policy Brief on strategic guidance and policy advocacy, to strengthen cooperation between national and local governments, and the United Nations country teams, to advance national planning processes”, focuses on enhancing collaboration between United Nations country-level operations and local and regional governments for accelerated implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals.

(d) **Global strategy.** The final report, “A United Nations global strategy for the engagement of local and regional governments in intergovernmental processes”, synthesizes insights from the previous deliverables and provides recommendations to reinforce structured engagement within the United Nations system. The report emphasizes the constituency’s vision of recognizing and integrating local and regional governments into intergovernmental processes by highlighting their essential role and contributions to sustainable development. Core messages from the global strategy are set out in paragraphs 7 to 10 below.

A. Local leadership for transformative change

7. Anchored in care for people, planet and democracy, local and regional governments prioritize energy, housing and caring cities as central to sustainable development. By strengthening local public services, these governments are helping to deliver the six Sustainable Development Goal transitions, reduce inequalities and advance governance that is both inclusive and effective, ensuring that no one is left behind. Gender equality, human rights and education also emerge as powerful cross-cutting drivers deeply embedded in local realities, while local financing is recognized as a critical enabler for translating ambition into action. Through bold and strategic initiatives and advocacy, in particular around the Fourth International Conference on Financing for Development and the Second World Summit for Social Development, local and regional governments also show local governance as central to realizing a just, equitable and sustainable future.

B. Vision for inclusive multilateralism

8. By 2050, the world will welcome 2.4 billion more people – most of them in cities – bringing urban populations to 6.5 billion and transforming markets, societies and the very fabric of global governance. This urban shift will place unprecedented demands on local and regional governments, which often operate with limited capacity and resources. Nevertheless, such governments have proven themselves as first responders to global challenges, offering practical, innovative solutions rooted in local realities. The global strategy recognizes this leadership and calls for a bold shift to a formal, permanent and differentiated role for local and regional governments in United Nations intergovernmental processes. Reflecting the proximity of such

governments to people, the global strategy advances a shared vision anchored in three key criteria:

- (a) **Permanence.** Secure lasting mechanisms of engagement;
- (b) **Structure.** Embed local and regional government participation in a systematic and predictable way;
- (c) **Distinct recognition.** Acknowledge local and regional governments as government actors, separate from civil society.

The global strategy also urges a pragmatic, layered approach, drawing on complementary recommendations from the Advisory Group to ensure a robust, cooperative and inclusive multilateral system.

C. Territorial collaboration for impact

9. The global municipal movement, built as a self-organized constituency uniting local and regional governments and facilitating their representation in international processes from the 2030 Agenda to the New Urban Agenda, has long collaborated with the United Nations. To accelerate progress, the global strategy calls for leveraging United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Frameworks to align policies, plans and investments with local needs. Mechanisms such as the Joint Sustainable Development Goals Fund and the Local2030 Coalition could be mobilized to direct resources to the local level. United Nations country teams, guided by resident coordinators, are also encouraged to foster alignment, ensuring an integrated territorial approach to the Sustainable Development Goals. This vision reinforces territorial collaboration as essential to achieving a just, resilient and people-centred development pathway.

10. Institutional mechanisms to strengthen the engagement of local and regional governments in United Nations intergovernmental processes that were proposed in the second report of the Advisory Group are briefly distilled in the annex to the present document.

III. Action 55 (e) of the Pact for the Future

11. The Pact for the Future is a landmark agreement adopted by Member States at the Summit of the Future on 22 September 2024. The Summit recognized how every voice matters in shaping solutions that drive meaningful, lasting change. Throughout the Summit process, numerous stakeholders from around the world shared their priorities, concerns and innovative strategies, strengthening a vision for transformed global governance. Now, as the journey continues, these partners remain committed to action, leveraging their collective expertise to create systemic change that accelerates progress towards the implementation of the Pact.

12. The Pact is designed to strengthen global cooperation and ensure that international institutions can effectively address new and emerging challenges while also delivering on existing commitments such as the 2030 Agenda. Setting out a clear vision of an international system that is more representative of today's world and draws on the energy and expertise of a wide range of stakeholders, the Pact affirms the role of partnerships as a driving force for global progress. Tackling today's challenges and preparing for future demands will require a whole-of-society approach, fostering deeper collaboration across diverse sectors and with different partners. Such collaboration will span national Governments, parliaments, the United Nations system and international institutions, alongside such partners as local and

regional authorities, Indigenous Peoples, civil society, business and the private sector, faith-based organizations, and the scientific and academic communities.

13. Central to this effort is action 55: “We will strengthen our partnerships to deliver on existing commitments and address new and emerging challenges”. In paragraph 83 of resolution 79/1, the Secretary-General stated that:

We recognize the importance of the United Nations engagement with national parliaments and relevant stakeholders, while preserving the intergovernmental character of the Organization. The challenges we face require cooperation not only across borders but also across the whole of society. Our efforts must involve Governments as well as parliaments, the United Nations system and other international institutions, local authorities, Indigenous Peoples, civil society, business and the private sector, faith-based organizations, the scientific and academic communities, and all people to ensure an effective response to our common challenges. We decide to ... [r]equest the Secretary-General to provide recommendations on how engagement with local and regional authorities could advance the 2030 Agenda, in particular the localization of the Sustainable Development Goals, by the end of the seventy-ninth session for Member States’ consideration.

14. After the Pact’s adoption, the Secretary-General established a steering committee to oversee its implementation, supported by six internal United Nations working groups. One of them, the working group on United Nations governance reform, is responsible for advancing action 55 (e). UN-Habitat was designated as the United Nations supporting entity to the Secretary-General to implement action 55 (e). Its role was to engage in consultations building on the recommendations outlined in the global strategy developed by the Advisory Group on Local and Regional Governments and propose a way forward.

IV. Consultations on institutional mechanisms to enhance local and regional government engagement in the United Nations system

15. Between March and May 2025, UN-Habitat facilitated dialogues with three key groups: (a) United Nations entities, including members of the Local2030 Coalition and representatives from the regional economic and social commissions; (b) the local and regional governments constituency; and (c) Member States. The perspectives gathered from these dialogues are summarized in paragraphs 16 to 31 below.

A. Dialogue with United Nations entities, members of the Local2030 Coalition and representatives from regional economic and social commissions

16. The dialogue reaffirmed the central role of local and regional governments in implementing the 2030 Agenda, with evidence showing that they were responsible for implementing roughly two thirds of Sustainable Development Goal targets. Representatives of United Nations entities agreed that existing institutional mechanisms did not adequately reflect local and regional government engagement, making it crucial to strengthen their participation within the United Nations system.

17. Members of United Nations entities agreed to take a pragmatic approach to strengthening institutional mechanisms, advocating complementary and non-mutually exclusive steps to advance the inclusion of local and regional governments. While

their views aligned with the recommendations contained in the global strategy for the engagement of such governments in intergovernmental processes, they proposed prioritizing the most feasible and impactful options, rather than focusing solely on the six mechanisms outlined in the strategy.

18. The discussion emphasized regional-level mechanisms as scalable models for the deeper involvement of local and regional governments. Among the mechanisms identified, the Forum of Mayors, the Asia-Pacific Urban Forum and the regional forums on sustainable development were recognized for their potential. The Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, for example, noted a recent resolution on regional cooperation for resilient and sustainable urban development in Asia and the Pacific, highlighting the engagement of subnational and local authorities in its sessions and the Asia-Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development.³ However, across regions, each mechanism had a distinct institutional status, with some featuring mandates and formal governance models that could inform policy, while others operated under informal structures that limited participation, thematic scope and reporting mechanisms, for example. Understanding those differences was critical in shaping engagement pathways for local and regional governments within the United Nations system.

19. In addition, informal local and regional government platforms within the United Nations system were acknowledged as spaces for advocacy and awareness-raising, yet it was important to be mindful that their informal governance structures limited their impact on decision-making. In view of the role of local and regional governments in facilitating policy coherence between the local and national levels, participants expressed the need for enhanced engagement with United Nations country teams. They proposed streamlining internal United Nations processes, improving operational policy tracking and integration, and optimizing financing mechanisms to strengthen institutional impact. Taking that into consideration, representatives of United Nations entities underscored the importance of the systematic inclusion of local and regional governments across key thematic processes, ensuring that their contributions meaningfully addressed discussions on gender equality, climate resilience and forced displacement.

20. The dialogue reinforced the point that strengthening institutional mechanisms across multiple levels would be essential to ensuring the effective contribution of local and regional governments to intergovernmental processes on sustainable development.

B. Dialogue with the local and regional governments constituency

21. As a direct outcome of the recommendations of the Advisory Group on Local and Regional Governments and consultations with the Global Task Force of Local and Regional Governments, as the recognized self-organized platform of the local and regional governments constituency, a dialogue with the constituency was held to discuss institutional mechanisms. This dialogue included representatives of local and regional government associations at various levels, including global, regional and thematic associations. The dialogue reaffirmed a complementary and non-mutually exclusive approach that enhances the institutional engagement of local and regional governments in United Nations intergovernmental processes.

22. The local and regional governments constituency emphasized that the global strategy created the architecture for strengthening the participation of local and regional governments in the United Nations system, in alignment with the vision of

³ [E/ESCAP/RES/81/2](#).

the Secretary-General for networked and inclusive multilateralism and the mandate of the Pact for the Future and its action 55 (e). The constituency expressed support for an incremental approach that delivered a coherent system-wide architecture to formalize the engagement of such governments across the United Nations system, through their permanent and distinct participation within the United Nations.

23. Guided by the recommendations of the Advisory Group, the constituency expressed its support for the following mechanisms to translate the vision of the Pact for the Future into actionable steps:

(a) The establishment of an annual hearing of local and regional governments and authorities under the General Assembly, modelled on the precedent of the IPU annual hearing.⁴ A new resolution would institutionalize the annual hearing as a formal, recurring feature on the Assembly's agenda. The mechanism could provide a structured, high-level platform for such governments to present their priorities, challenges and proposals directly to Member States. It could create a direct channel for political dialogue between the local and regional governments constituency and Member States at the highest level of the United Nations system, aligned with the call in the Pact for the Future for enhanced engagement. It could function through the convening of the Global Task Force of Local and Regional Governments, through the World Assembly of Local and Regional Governments, ensuring self-organization and legitimacy. Moreover, the process could channel input from formal regional processes, including the Forum of Mayors, and other mechanisms;

(b) The institutionalization of the local and regional governments forum as a formal mechanism within the Economic and Social Council, as part of the 2026 reform process. That would build on the legal and political framework established by the General Assembly in its resolution [67/290](#).⁵ By institutionalizing the forum, the United Nations could ensure the formal, permanent and distinct participation of local and regional governments in sustainable development processes. Moreover, it could ensure inclusive representation across government levels, gender, geography and marginalized voices. That mechanism could also organize the annual convening of the forum, during the high-level political forum on sustainable development under the auspices of the Economic and Social Council, and the convening of the World Assembly of Local and Regional Governments when the high-level political forum on sustainable development met under the auspices of the Assembly;

(c) The revitalization of the United Nations Advisory Committee of Local Authorities, established by the Commission on Human Settlements in its resolution 17/18 in 1999 as an advisory body to strengthen dialogue between the United Nations system and local authorities for the implementation of the Habitat Agenda. The option could equally expand the Advisory Committee into a core institutional mechanism for structured engagement between local and regional governments, Member States and the United Nations system. An expanded Committee could advise the Secretary-General through the Executive Director of UN-Habitat, thereby creating a channel for policy input from local and regional governments, reporting its outcomes through the UN-Habitat Assembly to the General Assembly, to ensure visibility and accountability at the highest political level. The modalities of the Committee entailed close convening with the Global Task Force of Local and Regional Governments, ensuring democratic, diverse and legitimate participation. With the revitalization of the Committee, local and regional governments could play a strategic role in advancing

⁴ See General Assembly resolution [59/19](#).

⁵ In paragraphs 8 (c), 13–16, 22 and 24 of that resolution, the General Assembly explicitly recognized the role of major groups and other stakeholders in all activities of the high-level political forum on sustainable development, including the formal engagement of local and regional governments.

the implementation of global issues, fostering dialogue with Member States and the United Nations system, to align with the call of the Secretary-General for inclusive, networked multilateralism. That mechanism could require dedicated secretariat services, ensuring continuity and institutional support for the engagement of local and regional governments.

24. Further to those three options, the constituency mentioned existing barriers, including limited access to finance and insufficient legal frameworks. The urgency of reforming the global financial architecture to respond to local needs and challenges was underscored. That included calls to scale up access to climate and development finance at the local level, develop regulatory and fiscal environments conducive to subnational action, and unlock the capacity of local governments to raise and manage funds. Emphasis was placed on modalities that could generate direct access to financing mechanisms for subnational authorities, while respecting the principle of complementarity with national government frameworks.

25. Data localization and the establishment of common standards for collecting, analysing and utilizing local data were also noted. Discussions emphasized that improved data systems were essential for measuring progress and ensuring accountability at all levels. The role of voluntary local reviews was highlighted as a tool to promote peer learning and alignment with national development plans. Suggestions also focused on enhancing coordination between United Nations entities and local and regional governments through structured partnerships, and expanding existing mechanisms such as United Nations regional forums. The importance of aligning existing mechanisms with broader United Nations reforms and global frameworks, including the Pact for the Future, was emphasized as essential to ensuring institutional coherence and sustainability.

C. Dialogue with Member States

26. The Permanent Representatives of Poland and Zimbabwe, serving as co-chairs of the Group of Friends of UN-Habitat, Sustainable Urbanization and the New Urban Agenda, convened Member States for the dialogue to discuss the engagement of local and regional governments through various institutional mechanisms. The session informed representatives of Member States of the process and substantive aspects of the discussion. Member States recognized the critical role of such governments in advancing the Sustainable Development Goals, emphasizing their proximity to communities, responsibility for basic services and capacity to mobilize local knowledge. Those attributes positioned those governments as essential partners in integrating solutions to accelerate and monitor progress towards the Goals.

27. The dialogue identified existing mechanisms that were concrete, practical and cost-effective for enhancing the participation of local and regional governments in United Nations processes. Regional mechanisms, in particular the Forum of Mayors, the Asia-Pacific Urban Forum and regional forums on sustainable development, were highlighted as effective and scalable options for strengthening the institutional engagement of such governments.

28. Member States also underscored the strategic value of reinforcing established platforms. The 24-year existence of the Advisory Committee and its formal linkage to the governance framework of UN-Habitat through rule 64 of the rules of procedure of the Governing Council of UN-Habitat⁶ was mentioned. The World Urban Forum was also recognized as a platform for the engagement of local and regional

⁶ General Assembly resolution [58/227](#).

governments, in particular through its assembly of mayors, officially known as the World Assembly of Local and Regional Governments.

29. Throughout the discussion, United Nations country teams and resident coordinators were acknowledged as key bridges between national and subnational actors, ensuring greater alignment and coordination in implementation efforts. Member States noted the systematic incorporation of voluntary national reviews and voluntary local reviews into national reporting processes and their alignment with major United Nations events, in particular the high-level political forum on sustainable development, to ensure policy coherence.

30. On financing mechanisms, the dialogue explored pathways to integrate local and regional governments into forthcoming global processes, including the International Conference on Financing for Development and the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.

31. The dialogue offered views for consideration, including strengthening the United Nations Advisory Committee of Local Authorities, establishing an annual mechanism for the structured engagement of local and regional governments within United Nations processes, and institutionalizing voluntary local reviews within Sustainable Development Goal monitoring frameworks.

V. Conclusions and recommendations

32. Local and regional governments are integral to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and will remain essential beyond the 2030 milestone. Their inclusion should be institutionalized, strengthened and scaled to advance on shared global commitments, building on the vision for inclusive, networked and effective multilateralism. Enhancing such engagement meaningfully within United Nations processes will require the support of Member States.

33. The contributions of local and regional governments, as frontline partners, in policy innovation, inclusion, equity and resilience have remained essential in transforming global aspirations into tangible localized impact. Moreover, their proximity to communities and their ability to shape inclusive policies and direct the delivery of services position them as essential partners in advancing on the full spectrum of the Sustainable Development Goals and broader development objectives to 2030 and beyond.

34. Building on the work of the Advisory Group on Local and Regional Governments and the consultations highlighted in section V above, a complementary analysis of non-mutually exclusive options for cost-effective and actionable pathways to deepen the engagement of local and regional governments in United Nations intergovernmental processes has been prepared. These options differ significantly in terms of mandates, structures, scope, participation, scalability and outcome documents, as well as suggested timelines for options proposed.

35. As the options outlined are complementary, they could be considered simultaneously, aiming at a progressive process of implementation. The potential to further examine existing institutional mechanisms, such as the Local and Regional Governments Forum under the Economic and Social Council, together with the Forum of Mayors, could, for example, lead to a special forum, such as an Economic and Social Council forum of mayors. Member States are therefore invited to review this matter in the context of discussions at the high-level political forum on sustainable development and the Economic and Social Council. Further opportunities could emerge for reporting to the General Assembly, through the Council, thus partly addressing the issue of institutionalized hearings. Member States could also consider

steps to work with the local and regional governments constituency towards dialogues to exchange views on modalities for obtaining annual hearings and permanent observer status under the Assembly. In addition, the revitalization of the United Nations Advisory Committee of Local Authorities could be considered.

36. As the United Nations nears its eightieth anniversary, fostering synergies among existing United Nations mechanisms that engage local and regional governments will be essential for greater coherence, collaboration and national-level impact in accelerating progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals. Systematic engagement with local and regional governments in the common country analysis and the design and implementation of Cooperation Frameworks could also strengthen development programming, reflecting territorial diversity, inclusive governance and accelerated implementation of the Goals at the local level. United Nations country teams are encouraged to continue expanding the participation of local and regional governments in voluntary national reviews and voluntary local reviews and other national reporting mechanisms, to strengthen accountability across all levels of government, fostering localization of the Goals.

Annex

Highlights from the catalogue of options for mechanisms to strengthen LRG engagement in UN intergovernmental processes*

a. Enhancing the role of UNACLA and extending it to the United Nations System as a whole

The **UN Advisory Committee of Local Authorities (UNACLA)** was established as an advisory body for strengthening the dialogue of the UN System with local authorities involved in the implementation of the UN-Habitat Agenda. The mandate of the UN Advisory Committee of the Executive Director of UN-Habitat could be extended to an Advisory Committee of the UN system.

This is an existing mechanism which has previously had an important role in advising UN-Habitat. It could be revitalized at relatively low cost and expanded to benefit the UN system and the Secretary-General through the engagement of views of LRGs in development dialogues.

While not resulting in immediate change of status for LRGs nor their direct engagement with the Member States, it would be a steppingstone for gradual change over time.

The committee could build upon the practices that led to previous achievements, such as the adoption of International Guidelines on Decentralisation and Access to Basic Services for all.

This solution on its own neither addresses the request by the LRGs' constituency for a shift in its formal status at the UN nor gains a respective acknowledgement of LRGs as spheres of government.

Strategy to expand UNACLA to the UN system: **Requires discussion with Member States**

Recommendation by the Advisory Group:
Feasible to pursue

b. Gaining Observer Status before the UN General Assembly (GA) to allow a representative of the LRGs constituency to attend GA meetings

Recognition before the GA amplifies the visibility and voice of the concerned constituency. The Inter Parliamentary Union (IPU), which had consultative status under ECOSOC since 1947, spent several decades of advocacy efforts to obtain observer status under the GA. National groups were urged to approach their Ministries of Foreign Affairs to seek support for this initiative. In 1996, the IPU negotiated a cooperation agreement with the UN, and subsequent formal cooperative arrangements with several UN bodies, such as UNESCO, the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights and the United Nations Development Programme. After six decades, in 2002, the UN General Assembly granted permanent observer status to the IPU, along with the right to circulate its official documents ([A/RES/57/32](#)). Also, the International Chamber of Commerce gained its permanent observer status under the GA in 2016 after a long process.

Building on examples such as the IPU, members of the LRG constituency group could seek support from their respective Ministries of Foreign Affairs to consult, advocate and garner support towards a resolution before the GA^a.

Observer status would recognize the governmental character of the constituency, enable its participation in the work of the GA, and allow circulation of official documents of the constituency in the GA.

This option will require time. In the case of the IPU, the process of switching from consultative to observer status took several decades.

Strategy to achieve an observer status: No legal reform is required to activate the process, yet a definition of the organization eligible to attain the GA Observer Status would be needed.

* The present annex is being issued without formal editing. See <https://unhabitat.org/news/26-aug-2024/secretary-generals-advisory-group-on-local-and-regional-governments>.

Mobilization of broad political support is necessary to table and negotiate resolutions for recognition and status change.

Recommendation by the Advisory Group:
Feasible to pursue

c. Holding an annual hearing in the UN

The current practice based on Resolution 66/261 which institutionalizes an annual hearing between the UN, national parliaments and IPU^b could be the model for a request a resolution to hold an annual hearing between the UN, national governments and the LRGs' constituencies. This practice allows mobilizing the LRGs constituencies to directly inform Member States negotiations on annually selected topics. This would work towards better awareness among multilateral collaboration platforms on subnational authorities' development issues and their contributions as well as create spaces for dialogues on evolving development challenges and threats. Through a new resolution for LRGs to hold an annual hearing, the constituency could work with the Office of the President of the GA to identify and propose themes for the hearing and connect to complementary networks, including the World Assembly of Local and Regional Governments (acknowledged by the article 169 of the NUA).

It would enable LRGs to organize and hold dialogues with Member States in a more institutionalized manner than before, therein showcasing the work of local governments across the multiple pillars of the UN and their contributions at different levels of governance. Annual hearings would provide LRGs with an opportunity to prioritise closer engagement in major United Nations processes, including providing views to inform preparations of global conferences from local and regional perspectives.

This solution on its own neither addresses the request by the LRGs' constituency for a shift in its formal status at the UN nor gains a respective acknowledgement of LRGs as spheres of government.

The process requires support from Member States to pass a resolution for annual hearings.

Strategy to achieve an annual hearing: This option would require building a coalition of friendly Member States and introducing language into the Summit of the Future – Pact for the Future for the President of the GA to convene annual hearings.

Recommendation by the Advisory Group:
Feasible to pursue

d. Establish a Committee of Local and Regional Governments linked with ECOSOC

A Committee of Local and Regional Governments could be developed as a subsidiary body under ECOSOC, situated at the same level but separate from functional and regional commissions.

Membership in the committee could be modelled from UNACLA, which works in a representative manner. Members deliver the messages that have been previously endorsed by their respective networks, which have democratic decision-making mechanisms. Each seat is assigned to a local government network, not individual mayors or city leaders – half of the members represent the metropolitan and regional sections of UCLG, another half is appointed within the membership of the Global Taskforce of Local and Regional Governments and the other most representative networks. All UNACLA members respond to their own governing structures, where decisions and messages are generated by consensus or by vote. In this way, the representatives sitting in UNACLA meetings no longer represent their own city or territory but instead represent the consensus view of members of their respective networks. Additional observer seats could be granted to other related representatives, such as Member States and other UN entities on a rotational basis.

Such Committee could enhance regular political dialogue between LRGs and Member States, for example as is the case of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues and could allow institutionalization of LRGs within the UN System.

This option would require a GA support and subsequent decision and entail amendments in the Rules of Procedure of ECOSOC.

It could face resistance by Member States due to cost implications and concerns over a further increase of the complex and fragmented nature of ECOSOC, as well as over institutional proliferation.

Strategy to establish a committee: Support is required from the President of ECOSOC and from the ECOSOC Committee on NGOs.

Recommendation by the Advisory Group:

Feasible to pursue

e. Local and Regional Governments Mechanism (LRGM) under the HLPF

This would function autonomously on the mechanism of the Global Taskforce of Local and Regional Governments and build on the General Assembly Resolution [67/290](#) (2013) which established the HLPF to ensure a special, formal and permanent status for the self-organized constituency of LRGs before the UN's principal policymaking bodies.

The existing Local and Regional Government Forum under the auspices of HLPF could provide the institutional establishment for the mechanism.

This option would be managed under DESA. It would not necessarily entail a Member State resolution nor amendments to UN rules and procedures.

This solution is less ambitious in comparison to the other proposed mechanisms and on its own neither addresses the request by the LRGs' constituency for a shift in its formal status at the UN nor gains a respective acknowledgement of LRGs as spheres of government. It does not grant a status under the GA, only under HLPF where LRGs would continue to speak under the Major Groups and other Stakeholder constituency.

Nesting an institutional mechanism under the HLPF runs the risk of limiting its scope to sustainable development issues (thus excluding formal consultations with GA and other UN processes) and its timespan to the remaining Agenda 2030 duration (depending on the possible reform of the HLPF). It could also involve the risk of limiting LRGs' engagement to the HLPF and sustainable development.

Strategy to achieve LRG Mechanism: Procedures and legal aspects to be confirmed.

Recommendation by the Advisory Group: **Feasible to pursue**

f. Local and Regional Government's Forum under ECOSOC

The forum would fall under the category of informal ECOSOC meetings but could obtain an intergovernmental approval for its formal position and arrangements in the ECOSOC calendar, comparable to the Youth Forum. This informal body could send its report to the summary or conclusions of the Local and Regional Governments Forum formalized under the HLPF and keep feeding into the ongoing HLPF program.

The less formalized nature of the forum would have the advantage of creating a space within which states might be willing to give a direct representation for local government representatives and refrain from nominating participants.

This option would be managed under DESA. It would not necessarily entail a Member State resolution nor amendments to UN rules and procedures.

This solution is less ambitious in comparison to the other proposed mechanisms and on its own neither addresses the request by the LRGs' constituency for a shift in its formal status at the UN nor gains a respective acknowledgement of LRGs as spheres of government. It does not grant a status under the GA, only under HLPF where LRGs would continue to speak under the Major Groups and other Stakeholder constituency.

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Strategy to achieve LRG Mechanism: Procedures and legal aspects to be confirmed.

Recommendation by the Advisory Group: **Feasible to pursue**

^a The GA has granted an observer status to international organizations, entities, and non-member States, to enable them to participate in the work of the GA, however with limitations. The GA determines the privileges it will grant to each observer, beyond those laid down in a 1986 Conference on treaties between States and international organizations. The grant of observer status is made by the GA only. Non-Member States of the UN, which are members of one or more specialized agencies, can apply for the status of Permanent Observer. The practice is to distinguish between State and Non-State Observers. Non-state Observers are the international organizations and other entities. Permanent Observers have free access to most meetings and relevant documentation. Many regional and international organizations are also observers in the work and annual sessions of the GA.

^b Resolution adopted by the GA: [66/261](#) Interaction between the United Nations, national parliaments and the Inter-Parliamentary Union.