

## **The Conference Report**

### **“African Cities: Engines for sustainable development” Conference**

**18th – 20th of June 2019  
Conrad Hotel, Cairo,  
The Arab Republic of Egypt**



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## 1. Objectives and Outputs of the Conference

The conference aims to:

- Provide a platform for all stakeholders to exchange challenges faced by those engaged in local development in African cities as well as opportunities to overcome these challenges and to support sustainable development.
- Exchange of practical experiences of African cities in the area of accelerated urban development, efficient management mechanisms for present and future urban growth, and ways to maximize their return to sustainable development by promoting economic growth, improving people's living standards and addressing environmental challenges.
- Provide a common platform to coordinate efforts to stimulate local development, identify the opportunities and challenges faced by African cities in this field, and emphasize concerted efforts to achieve sustainable development objectives in the short, medium and long term.
- Organizing an exhibition to showcase successful experiences of international and local development institutions and organizations in the context of providing opportunities for common areas of cooperation in African cities.
- Organizing a number of field visits that illustrate Egyptian experiences in the development of informal areas and provision of public services to citizens, and how to benefit from these experiences in other countries.

## 2. Outputs of the Conference will be:

- Deepen the cooperation of Egyptian and African cities in the fields of sustainable development, balanced urban growth and investment in infrastructure.
- Open the way for investors to discuss promising investment opportunities in the African continent and opportunities for joint ventures.
- Development of projects to support the development efforts of African cities by regional and international development organizations and donors

## Proceedings Day 1, Monday June 17, 2019

**SPECIFIC PROGRAM OF THE MEETING OF THE EXECUTIVE BUREAU OF REFELA AND THE OFFICIAL INSTALLATION OF THE NATIONAL CHAPTER, REFELA-Egypt**

## Welcoming and opening Remarks

The Governor of Egypt who was elected for the first time to be the Representative of REFELA, indicated that she is keen to implement the action plan of REFELA. In her speech she highlighted the 3 (three) campaigns , she made reference to the tri-annual action plan for 2019-2021, of which REFELA proposes to launch three campaigns:

1. A campaign on African Cities without street children;
2. A campaign on African cities to zero tolerance of violence against women's ;
3. A campaign on Africa Cities favorable to Women's.

The Governor who was co-chairing the site meeting thank the Egyptian government for housing this event.

this was the first meeting of the Executive Bureau Since its election in 2018, in Marrakech.



Official welcoming of REFELA Meeting in Cairo

## Presentation of objectives and programme

The role of women in the workshop meeting is to work together in the advancement of Northern Africa. The agenda dealt with the Presidential nominations which came as a result of the outgoing President of REFELA , Hon Celestine Ketcha Courtes who was

appointed to her new role as the Minister of Housing and Urban Development in Cameroun. Thus the REFELA Executive Bureau has nominated by consensus the new president of REFELA Mayor of Fombolode (Côte d'Ivoire) Ms. Coulibaly Dao

## Discussion and Adoption of the REFELA Work Plan, 2019-2021

The special advisor in the office of REFELA , Gefrane Malika introduced the year plan, She indicated that we have started with Northern Region in Egypt we will then host our meeting in Lyiba. She spoke about the Introduction of REFELA that it started in Morocco in 2011 in Tangier, and women of local government are elected every 3years. Further indicated that the action plan be adopted and discussed in 2 weeks and all input from the African Regional office must be forwarded on the 5<sup>th</sup> July 2019.

## Representation of REFELA at the UCLG World Congress scheduled to take place in Durban, South Africa, on November 11th-15th, 2019

The special advisor The meeting noted and deliberated on the full meeting programme that will take place in Durban in South Africa, each region will report on the year plan and this meeting is expected to have a full site programme.

## Nomination of the REFELA Presidency for the period 2019-2021

Gabon- Western Africa Region  
Cameron-Western Africa Region  
Ivory Coast – Eastern Africa Region

Ivory Coast was nominated by consensus under the representative of Mme/Ms. Macoura Coulibaly Dao it is important to note that the meeting indicated that there will be a rotation of Presidency of all the Regions.

## Installation of the national chapter REFELA Egypt

REFELA Egypt has been commissioned headed by the Chairperson.



## Closing Remarks of the Meeting

The Minister of Gender of Egypt in her presentation thank the African women for electing the new President of REFELA Mme/Ms. Macoura Coulibaly Dao She also indicated that the constitution in Egypt calls for equal representation for women and decentralization is key to archiving this process. women views are completely diverse to their male counterparts and that If women are not elected in to positions or appointed then we will lose the 50%, women has a unique talent and this network can make a difference and she pledge to work with all Egyptians women politicians.



From the Left President of REFELA Macoura Coulibaly Dao, Fatima Kahiel, Essame, Mayor of Kichien  
Right Ms. Tuyeni Kandume

## Day 2, Tuesday 18th of June 2019

General Mahmoud Shaarawy, Minister of Local Development, receive and welcome senior visitors, officials, ministers and prime minister, who opened the exhibition that took place on the sideline of the conference.

The opening session include a speech by General Mahmoud Shaarawy, Minister of Local Development, stressing the importance of holding the conference in Cairo in light of the chairmanship of Egypt of the African Union and the expected outcomes of the conference.

This was followed by a speech by the Chairman of the United Cities and Local Governments of Africa Organization stating the objectives and scope of the organization and emphasizing the importance of the conference as well as the other events.

The speech of the Minister of Foreign Affairs presenting the Egyptian-African relations and the role of Egypt regarding its chairmanship of the African Union followed by a speech by the chairman of the European Union Delegation to Egypt, and then the Governor of Cairo who will make a presentation of the Northern Africa Regional Office of UCLG Africa.

During this session, the signing of the agreement of Northern Africa Regional Office of the Organization took place. The session concluded with a speech by Dr. Eng. Mustafa Madbouli, Prime Minister, who announce the start of the conference.

The meeting started with noting and emphasizing the need for cooperation for all the African countries, making using of the natural resources and its potential to unlock the African solutions, the need to refocus and divert our investments towards vocational and Technical skills capacity in bringing about change in the local governments.

Suspension of the Members, the meeting deliberated on the suspension of members who has never paid their prescription fee, information as enclosed in the outstanding report indicates that Namibia amongst other countries is behind with payment of USD The office of the Secretary General does not have the power to sanction or suspend thus the Executive Committee is left with this decisions.



The following countries are expected to host the executive meetings in their respective regions. The office should have the ability to provide the financial administration and structure and network of its members may be sourced regionally.

Southern Region hosted by South Africa, Pretoria

Northern Region hosted by Egypt, Cairo

Western Region hosted by Cameroun, Yaoundé

Central Region hosted by Gabon, Libreville

Eastern Region hosted by

The meeting recognized the outcome to the Launch of REFELA action plan and to have their launch operationalized with the assistance of UCLG Africa in providing finance, technical and human resources.

### Day 3, Wednesday 19th of June 2019

The **first plenary session** discussed the challenges and opportunities facing African cities economically and socially, and ways to overcome them for achieving sustainable development.

The focus of the session deliberated on the population growth and high urbanization rates in the African continent, with 472 million urban areas in Africa. The number is expected to double over the next 25 years as a result of the increase in internal rural-urban migration. And by 2030, the majority of Africans will be living in urban areas. The session then discuss efforts to reduce population growth, improve their quality of life.

Since more than 80% of the gross domestic product (GDP) in Africa come from cities, this rapid growth of cities represents a good opportunity if this urban growth if managed well. The session focus on the role played by localities in achieving economic development, how to enhance the competitiveness of cities, attracting domestic and foreign investment and supporting small enterprises as an engine for growth.

The session also review the importance of the role played by municipalities in the development of infrastructure and the provision of public services as a tool to support sustainable development and improve the standard of citizens' living.

The session address the vital role women play in achieving sustainable development, the challenges facing women in general and female local leaders in particular, and the pioneering experiences to address these challenges and lessons learned.

The session also highlights the importance of youth's role in addressing the challenges of sustainable development in African cities and turning them into promising opportunities; as youth are considered as the cornerstone of sustainable development, as well as the main actor to achieve it.



The **second plenary session** was aiming at discussing the environmental challenges and opportunities faced by African cities, ways to overcome them and increasing efficiency in using the many and varied resources of the African continent; in order to achieve sustainable development.

This session discusses how rural areas can also benefit from increasing urbanization rates, making them attractive to the population rather than expulsion areas and sources of rural urban migration, as well as policies and procedures to maximize such use in the fields of urban management, land system development and the construction of new urban communities to accommodate urban expansion. This session presented developments of the new administrative capital project in Egypt.

It also reviews the environmental challenges facing African cities, especially with regard to climate change and desertification and how to overcome them. Speakers at the session discussed mechanisms of cooperation and participation and benefit from successful international experiences in the development of cities to become more flexible.

The session discussed the challenges faced by African cities in the field of solid waste management and dealing with informal settlements, and mechanisms to address these challenges to improve the living standards of citizens.

The session also emphasizes the importance of fruitful cooperation among all parties concerned with sustainable development to overcome the various challenges and achieve the desired sustainable development, while clarifying the factors of successful partnerships and lessons learned from successful experiences in this field.

**Followed by inspiring and successful stories** presented about emerging African cities and integrated local development projects. This included a documentary film about the national road network and the most important developmental projects in Egypt that will also be shown. The attendees then continued to communicate in dialogue informally throughout the conference and its various events.

Following that, the delegation went for a visit and an opening of the Northern Africa Regional Office of UCLG Africa. The day ends by a dinner hosted by the Governor of Cairo.



The city of Cairo slowing being transformed into the new and the old Cairo.

### Thursday, 20th of June 2019

The second day of the conference] begin with **third plenary session** that aims at discussing decentralization, governance, local development and planning. The Ministers of the Specialized Technical Committee 8 of the African Union (STC 8), entitled "Public Service, Local Governance & Decentralization and Urban Development", made contribution to this plenary session.

This session reviews policies to be adopted by African governments to provide a balanced system of cities that limits the dominance of large cities and helps strengthen the role and function of smaller cities. The session also discuss the efforts exerted by Ministers of local development to decentralize and enable local administrations to play an effective role in achieving sustainable development, improving the level of public services provided to citizens, increasing the competitiveness of African cities and increasing their contribution to economic activity. This session also highlighted the role of information technology and the trend towards building smart cities to improve citizens' living standards by taking advantage of technological developments and the Fourth Industrial Revolution as well as the readiness of African cities to cope with these important developments.

This was followed by the special session which took place introducing the concept of twinning between African cities and lessons learned from successful experiences in this area and identifying the conditions for success and sustainability of these conventions. Also, during this session, agreements were signed for twinning between the Egyptian cities and their African counterparts within the framework of decentralized cooperation between African cities. The conference concluded with a plenary session including a speech of General Mahmoud Shaarawy, Minister of Local Development, which addresses the most important recommendations that resulted from the various sessions. The Chairman of the United Cities and Local Governments of Africa Organization then suggest the way forward. Then, General Mahmoud Shaarawy, Minister of Local Development announced the end of the conference.

Following the end of the conference, field visits took place in Al Darb Al Ahmar / Al Azhar Park, Downtown and Maspero. The tour showed how a dumping site was transformed into an open green area serving the local community through cooperation between the government, civil society and international donors. The field tour also provides an overview of the heart of the old city and shows the importance of public places. Following was a dinner at the Citadel hosted by General Mahmoud Shaarawy, Minister of Local Development.

### Closing session



Speech of H.E. Major General Mahmoud Shaarawy Minister of Local Development, Arab Republic of Egypt

Appreciation to all the participants for your active contribution to the success of the **"African cities - Engines for Sustainable Development"** conference organized by the Egyptian Ministry of Local Development in partnership with UCLGA and in the presence of the Prime Minister. Several meetings were held, with valuable contributions from Ministers of Planning and monitoring and administrative reform, Social Solidarity, Housing, Utilities and Urban Communities, Transport, Environment and the Governor of Cairo about Egypt's embarking on a comprehensive and planned urban, economic and social renaissance during the past five years. We are keen to inspire others as we move towards cooperation and draw a common future with the peoples of the African continent under the umbrella of Africa's sustainable development strategy 2063.

I would also like to thank the colleagues of UCLGA and UN Habitat, GIZ and all the regional, international and national partners who have enriched the discussions of the conference and presented inspiring models of local development in Africa and contributed to the recommendations of the conference over the past three days.

This conference, hosted by the Ministry of Local Development in Egypt, was of great importance. It focused mainly on discussing the challenges faced by African cities, their opportunities, ways to increase their efficiency and to optimize their resources for achieving sustainable development in its three dimensions: economic, social and environmental. In addition, sustainable development at the local level, as well as the best regional and international experiences and lessons learned on promoting local development, economic growth, urbanization and the numerous opportunities that African cities have to overcome the challenges were discussed to turn them into opportunities for growth and prosperity to improve the standard of living and attract investment.

The conference discussed several issues that reflect the aspirations and concerns of local development in the Africa, and reviewed the environmental challenges and opportunities faced by African cities and ways to overcome them and how to increase the efficiency of the many and varied resources enjoyed by the African continent and how rural areas benefit from increasing urbanization rates. In addition, the conference addressed the environmental challenges faced by African cities, especially climate change and how to overcome them.

The conference also presented African success stories in the field of investment in infrastructure for sustainable development, as well as the discussion of the opportunities and challenges in Africa - economic and social, the role of planning in sustainable development in Africa and finally the issue of twinning and decentralized cooperation among African cities.

I had the honor to share with you the Conference and the recommendations that have been affirmed in the belief of its importance in enhancing the integration and cooperation among African countries in achieving comprehensive local development that meets the aspirations of their peoples. **I have the honor to share with you the most important messages of the various sessions of the Conference:**

1. The African continent faces a number of urban and environmental challenges, including unplanned urbanization; the spread of informal areas; encroachment on agricultural land; water scarcity and climate change; these challenges have a significant impact on Africa's sustainable growth and development.
2. Central and local governments share the tasks of achieving sustainable urban development and preserving the environment. Citizens also play an important role in this field, which requires the implementation of programs to raise awareness of the importance of the effects of climate change on urbanization and population.
3. Major national projects play an important role in achieving sustainable development through the provision of advanced infrastructure, especially in the areas of roads, building cities and sustainable urban communities, which will lead to increasing communication and connectivity between different African cities and enhancing their universality, in partnership with international development institutions, civil society and the private sector.
4. Adopting social programs is crucial for the protection and social welfare of disadvantaged groups in African cities and to address the effects of high rates of population growth, poverty and malnutrition. Special attention must be paid to those with special needs and women.
5. African cities play an important role as engines for growth and sustainable development, especially given the high rates of urbanization, rural-urban migration and increased demand for jobs and sustainable infrastructure.
6. Coordination and exchange of experiences among African countries is supporting the development of local planning system and local economic development and the transfer of successful experiences in the strategies of citizen involvement taking into account the environmental and social aspects in the planning and implementation of local development

programs to activate the system of economic, social, urban and local planning to develop African cities to become poles for development. The Egyptian Ministry of



Local Development will initiate a new integrated local development program that implements this comprehensive development approach in cooperation with the World Bank. This could be a huge success for partners and colleagues in all African countries to benefit from.

7. Coordination and exchange of experiences is important in the field of strengthening local governance and supporting administrative and financial decentralization and activating communication platforms and engaging citizens.
8. The local development academy in Saqqara will be set up as one of the training and excellence centers at the African level, expanding opportunities for cooperation in building capacities of African local cadres.
9. We will coordinate with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in order to ensure the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding between UCLGA and the African Union so that the Organization has the status it deserves to support joint African action in cooperation with the African Union.
10. The Ministry of Local Development shall complete the executive and constitutional procedures necessary to start the process of signing and ratifying the African Charter of Principles of Decentralization, Local Governance and Local Development in close cooperation with the competent departments of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.
11. The introduction of Arabic as one of the most important languages in the world, one of the languages adopted by the United Nations and international forums, in addition to English and French.
12. Support the "Silencing Guns in Africa" initiative to achieve stability and tranquility and achieve cooperation between cities to contribute to accelerating the achievement of the desired development goals.
13. The need to support investment and integration between all African cities and to benefit from the raw materials available in the cities of the continent and their important role in achieving an investment boom.
14. The need to develop a common vision for the development of African cities based on youth and women, and to take advantage of African women's capacity to face many challenges, including population increase, health problems, social and cultural context.
15. Provide the necessary resources to finance development efforts.

16. Promote African-European partnership and cooperation for regional sustainable development.
17. Allocate a budget from the United Cities and Local Governments of Africa to the Network of Local leaders and elected Women for Africa (REFELA).

## Proceedings Continue

At the end of this conference, I would like to emphasize that we intend to turn it into an annual conference hosted by Cairo to follow up on the recommendations and the ongoing consultations and discussions on the future of local development in Africa.

I also look forward to the establishment of a continuous monitoring mechanism to the recommendations of the Conference through the establishment of a committee of representatives of the Ministries of Local Development, the United Cities and Local Governments of Africa (UCLG Africa) and the Network of Local leaders and elected Women for Africa (REFELA), to be in constant communication and monitoring on the operational status of the recommendations and support to all African governments and partners in integrating these recommendations into their national policies, as well as the responsibility of this committee to prepare for the annual conference.

## Conclusion

I would like to thank you, the participants, for your generous attendance. I hope that the spirit of cooperation and coordination will continue in this conference, which will lead to more initiatives and successes to be added to the balance of development work in the promotion of local development in Africa.

## Recommendations and way forward

- 1- To strengthen the orientation towards decentralization and to take the necessary measures to achieve this in a systematic and gradual manner.
- 2- To stimulate the role of local administration in providing the necessary financial resources to achieve sustainable development.
- 3- The importance of capacity building through training and rehabilitation programs for African youth, sharing experiences, building on successful regional experiences and intensifying the use of information and innovation technology in building

effective systems to enhance the role of local administration in finding quick and effective solutions to the challenges facing them.

- 4- Promote the principles of participatory transparency and local governance, develop the local planning system and provide the necessary information and data for monitoring, evaluation and impact measurement, which also allows citizen participation.
- 5- To promote synergies between African cities on the one hand and international development institutions.
- 6- Encourage the participation of the private sector and civil society in the provision of infrastructure and public utilities and regulate the work of the informal sector to contribute to the competitiveness of African cities and to increase their resilience, adaptation and the effects of climate change.
- 7- Providing the necessary resources to enhance the role of African women and empower them politically, socially and economically for their important and fundamental role in achieving sustainable development.