

Madame Chair, Madame Co-chair, Dear Delegates,

It is a moment of great happiness and pride to hear so many good words towards cities and local governments and allow me to give tribute for this accomplishment to those who have advocated for many years to achieve this level of recognition by International organisations as well as by National Governments.

This would not have been possible without the involvement of forward looking leaders and all those participating in the Global Task Force of Local Governments under the leadership of UCLG.

But as everyone seems to recognize the role of cities in answering the challenges of our time, one should also ask himself why is it so, would it be also because at a time of growing dissatisfaction from the citizens, the governments are turning to those who might help them find the right answers. The challenges are numerous and we know them, from economic to human challenges, cities have to answer the needs of the local population as well as organising their own development capacities. This will only be possible if the partnership between all levels of governments is well organised, cities are the best partners of national governments but they will be able to deliver only if they are empowered and financially equipped to tackle the challenges they face.

I want to address the question of governance, we need to rethink the governance and the relations between all levels of governance to be more efficient and answer the needs of the citizens. As Secretary General of the European Umbrella organisation of Municipalities and Regions, I have no intention to impose a European model, we have promoted tools to ensure the autonomy of local self-governments since already many years. But if the Conference Habitat III could agree a code of conduct to ensure a good cooperation between national governments and local governments this would certainly serve our objectives and the achievements of the SDGs and conclusions of the conference itself.

Frédéric Vallier
Secretary General
Conseil des Communes et Régions d'Europe
Council of European Municipalities and Regions
valerie.solle@cce-cemr.org
+32 2 500 05 32
www.ccre.org
[Twitter @cce-cemr](https://twitter.com/cce-cemr) / [#myEUvoice](https://twitter.com/myEUvoice)