

## **Global Refugee Forum**

**Filippo Mannino, Mayor of Lampedusa**

**Plenary Speech on behalf of UCLG**

**Geneva, Palexpo, 15 December**

**Time 12-13**

Ladies and Gentlemen,

My name is Filippo Mannino and I am the Mayor of Lampedusa.

I stand before you today on behalf of the World Organization of United Cities and Local Governments, UCLG, a network representing over 250,000 local and regional governments and their associations worldwide. I am pleased to share with you that in 2023, UCLG made a historic commitment to place the protection and inclusion of refugees and migrants at the forefront of the global development agendas.

Local and regional governments have been working for decades to ensure that all people living in our territories have access to basic rights and services, regardless of their status. And, regardless of our competencies or resources, we have been addressing the changing needs of people on the move for multiple and increasingly interconnected reasons. Our pledge is to care for people in our neighbourhoods.

It is from this reality that local governments have been demanding for years to be included at the global decision-making table to ensure the well-being of people on the move.

Our organized movement committed in 2018 to pursue the objectives of the Global Compacts for Migration and Refugees in Unison. Now that multilateralism is increasingly challenged, with the call for a renewed, inclusive and networked multilateral system at the core of the global conversation, we want dignified and safe human mobility to be central to this equation.

For this reason, the Call to Local Action for Migrants and Refugees, launched by a partnership by UCLG, the Mayors Migration Council, the International Organization for Migration and UNHCR, became a backbone for the strategy of the local and regional governments constituency at the SDG Summit, emerging as a blueprint to rescue the SDGs.

The Call to Local Action is one of the ten transformative coalitions localizing the SDGs, an initiative championed by UCLG. And thanks to our joint efforts, the Call to Local Action was included as part of one of the 12 High-Impact Initiatives identified by the United Nations as accelerators of the 2030 Agenda at the SDG Summit. As we strive to rescue the SDGs, the Call to Local Action is a testament of how localization accelerates all the global development agendas as one.

Today, I bring to you today our pledge, the commitment from our network to furthering this engagement. As we look towards the Summit of the Future, the Call to Local Action becomes a channel to breathe life into our collective endeavour.

We will make sure to mainstream human mobility towards the Summit of the Future. On top of it, through the recently created Advisory Group of the United Nations Secretary-General on Local and Regional Governments, whose work is supported by UCLG and the Global Taskforce.

Our commitment extends beyond words to action. We will support inclusive local policies for migrants and refugees through capacity building. Initiatives such as the Massive Online Open Course on localizing the compacts and the Call to Action learning pillar will be our tools to foster the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

Let us showcase the indispensable role of local governments in advancing the Global Compact for Refugees, serving as a conduit to implement all global development agendas.

With the spirit of the Lampedusa Charter on Dignified Human Mobility and Territorial solidarity guiding us, we will create a world where the protection and integration of refugees and migrants are not just a goal but a shared reality.

Thank you.