



3rd World Forum of Local Economic Development

Turin, 13 -16 October 2015

Final Declaration

The World Forum of Local Economic Development (LED) is part of a long-standing process that has been consolidating a *global alliance* for enhancing the policy debate and a shared vision on LED, deploying synergies and instruments to operationalize it as effective means to achieve sustainable development.

This 3rd edition of the Forum came at a very crucial moment – as ***the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development***, including a set of new global *Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)* - has been officially launched in September 2015.

The new agenda stresses the importance of ‘building strong economic foundations for all countries’, through ‘sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth [...], ‘dynamic innovative and people-centred economies, promoting equal access to income, ‘full and productive employment and decent work for all’.

LED has gone a long way through a path of experiencing and testing approaches and practices in a multiplicity of contexts. LED constitutes today **a consolidated set of diverse and widely applied practices and tools, directed at enlarging equal opportunities for income and decent work through improved economic governance based on strategically planned and locally driven partnership processes.**

Local economic systems are more and more interconnected and globally integrated. There is an urgent need to develop and adopt comprehensive approaches and tools to address the conditions upon which they thrive or decline. This entails dealing with increasingly complex, multidimensional





and transversal dynamics, and alternative models for the sustainable mobilization and use of scarce resources on a 'more with less' basis.

The Forum has discussed and reaffirmed the strong relevance of LED as a people-centred and territorial response to major global trends and challenges, including growing inequalities, widespread unemployment, and increasing pressure on natural resources.

In order to address such challenges, the SDGs are designed as integrated and indivisible, and balance the three dimensions of sustainable development (economic, social, and environmental). Moreover, the SDGs are universally applicable, taking into account different national realities, capacities and levels of development and respecting national policies and priorities.

A key challenge associated to the SDGs is the definition of effective means for their implementation. This requires a renewed global partnership bringing together development partners, governments, the private sector, civil society, and the mobilization of adequate resources and capacities.

The local level is where people live and express their needs and aspirations. The SDGs become 'real' and have an impact on people's life when they are 'embodied' in territorial settings. The localization of the SDGs constitutes therefore a recognized priority for their effective implementation. This requires in turn conducive, well-coordinated policy frameworks and open, inclusive governance systems. Local and regional governments (LRGs) can play a crucial catalytic role as initiators and drivers of effective LED processes, building ownership and consensus on the development potential of the territory, promoting wide partnership arrangements and facilitating coordinated action and synergies.

LED is fully rooted in the specificity of territorial contexts, and driven by the joint vision and interaction of a diversity of local actors. As such, it offers a comprehensive **framework for 'integrating' and 'localizing' the SDGs,** leveraging and materializing the new **global partnership in the form of organized communities** joining forces to find local solutions for global challenges and achieve related universal goals.

The Forum therefore recognizes and values the LED approach as a valid means for the effective and sustainable implementation of the SDGs at the local level.

LED sets to achieve more **inclusive, equitable and environmentally sustainable development outcomes,** through dialogue and direct engagement of local stakeholders, horizontal and vertical policy coherence, integrated planning frameworks. Small businesses in particular do play a



fundamental role in income and employment generation at the local level thus strengthening territorial competitiveness while promoting a more equal access to economic opportunities.

Moreover, fostering participation, **decent jobs creation and the economic empowerment of women, youth, and vulnerable groups**, LED contributes to social trust and cohesion, building **societies that are more stable and resilient** to growingly complex and widespread crisis scenarios, contributing to **conflict prevention** and bridging transition from humanitarian response to **peacebuilding** and sustainable development.

For further enhancing and enforcing the potential of LED in the implementation of the SDGs at the local level, **the Forum calls and urges supranational and international organizations, global networks and associations, national and subnational governments, civil society as well as the scientific community, the private sector and foundations to join forces in their respective functions and capacities, in order to:**

1. Continue and intensify their policy dialogue and global partnership building efforts in order to further **positioning** LED as a valuable paradigm for the successful implementation of the 2030 agenda.
2. Further **harmonize and join** their **actions** and initiatives in support to LED capacities and processes at sub-national, national and regional level, **aligning** them with national and subnational policy and planning frameworks.
3. Promote LED as a specific approach for enabling the localization of the SDGs through strengthened **regional and territorial cooperation frameworks**.
4. Introduce conducive **policy frameworks for effective LED systems** at national and subnational levels, including multi-level governance and planning frameworks integrating LED competencies and functions at different levels.
5. Further recognize and enhance the pivotal **role of Local and Regional Governments (LRG) and their associations** in promoting and driving effective LED processes, strengthening their mandate and ensuring that they dispose of the adequate capacities and resources to fulfil it.



6. Support **sustainable entrepreneurship development** at the local level, improving the business environment, strengthening and empowering civil society and business networks, providing policy support and incentives to formalization and access to quality financial and non-financial services.
7. Foster **urban-rural integration**, specifically acknowledging and reinforcing the crucial role of cities and in particular intermediate **cities** in driving **sustainable production, marketing and consumption patterns** in synergy with rural areas.
8. Explore and pursue alternative and more **sustainable resources mobilization mechanisms**, through innovative and inclusive financial mechanisms, knowledge sharing and technology transfer platforms.
9. Promote effective and **responsive capacity building systems**, strengthening peer-to-peer learning mechanisms and better reflecting the specific needs, vocations and values of local communities and territories.
10. Promote stronger and innovative **public-private partnerships** as basis for an inclusive and environmentally sound economic development. This entails engaging **'new' economic actors** like foundations, social entrepreneurs, informal economy actors, and tools such as the social and solidarity economy (SSE), corporate social responsibility (CSR), migration and development schemes.
11. Introduce and implement comprehensive **data collection and monitoring systems** at the subnational level, including LED-specific sets of targets and indicators, as a way of fostering more responsive and accountable management systems.

Moreover, in order to ensure the appropriate follow-up to the Forum conclusions and achievements, and translate them into concrete measures for joint action, the participants to the Forum **renew their commitment and collectively pledge to** carry forward their cooperation, with a view at:



- Continuing **dialogue and joint advocacy** for LED as effective means to implement the SDGs, fostering the direct and active engagement of different relevant actors, in cooperation with international organisations and national governments.
- Exploring options to **consolidate and institutionalize the Forum** as a permanent tool for continued dialogue and cooperation between LED stakeholders.
- Promoting and developing further agreements for concrete **synergies and cooperation in the territories - and between territories** including South-South and triangular cooperation frameworks, facilitating and coordinating efforts ensuing from the Forum, and facilitating the continuation of dialogue among interested parties and its translation into concrete options for joint initiatives.
- Support and combine **capacity building** sources and initiatives for LED, including the possible establishment of ad-hoc mechanisms for global knowledge management and brokering as global/regional and/or thematic platforms for knowledge sharing and dissemination.

Torino, October 16th 2015