



#UCLGMeets

Welcome to the Centenary Movement of Local and Regional Governments

Basic Guide for active participation
in UCLG's governing bodies



UCLG

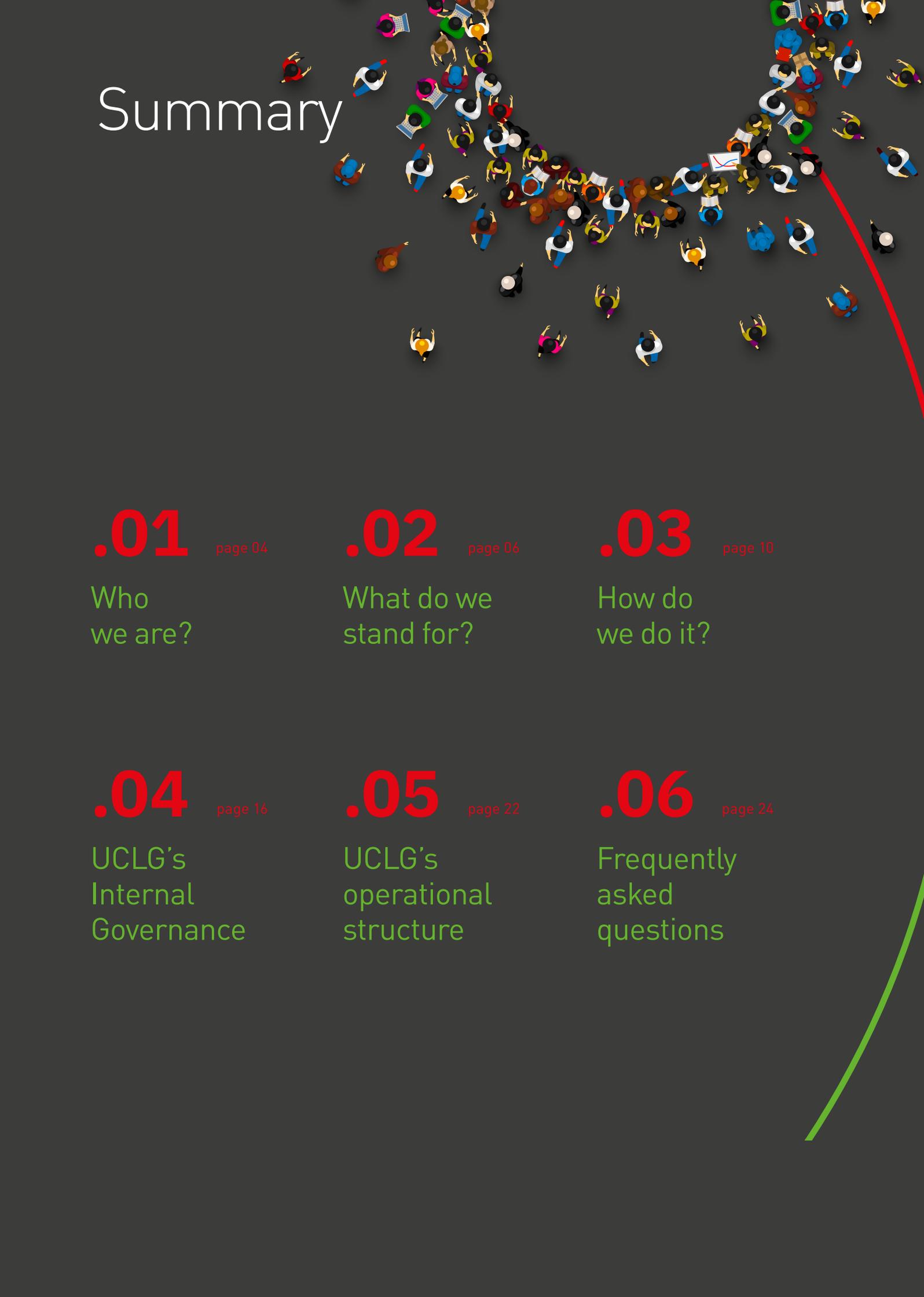
United Cities
and Local Governments



Basic Guide for active participation in UCLG's governing bodies

This document aims to introduce new members of the UCLG governing bodies to the proceedings and practical aspects of the statutory meetings of the World Organization. Far from outlining a formal procedure, it is to be seen as a practical tool that provides an overview of the main rules that the meetings take into account and that gives, at the same time, a sense of what to expect from the Executive Bureau and World Council meetings. In summary, the document tries to address the most frequently asked questions by members and their teams in preparation for the meetings.

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.01 Who we are?

The World Organization of United Cities and Local Governments would like to welcome you to the **largest organization of local and regional governments** in the world. You now stand on the shoulders of countless women and men who have built the movement over the years, empowering each other and lifting their communities. This is what we call the **Power of We**, the desire and the method of the municipal movement to contribute to a better, safer and more equal future.

The organization that you are a part of is the result of these collaborations that began more than a century ago, far ahead of its time, sparking a movement that now spans the globe, a movement that works every day to better integrate local and regional governments' role in addressing challenges being faced across the world, challenges that cannot be faced by just one sphere of government or stakeholder alone, challenges that call us to work together.

At the turn of the 20th century, the world as we know it was far different than the way in which we live today, with vast advancements in technology, communication, travel, and more in what is often coined as "globalization". For centuries, though, communities and local and regional governments have been a constant – withstanding global crises, natural disasters, conflict, disease, and a myriad of other issues that have threatened our very existence. Municipalities have survived, and must continue to work together to do so. Reaffirming our common humanity, we choose to place **caring** at the very heart of our work.

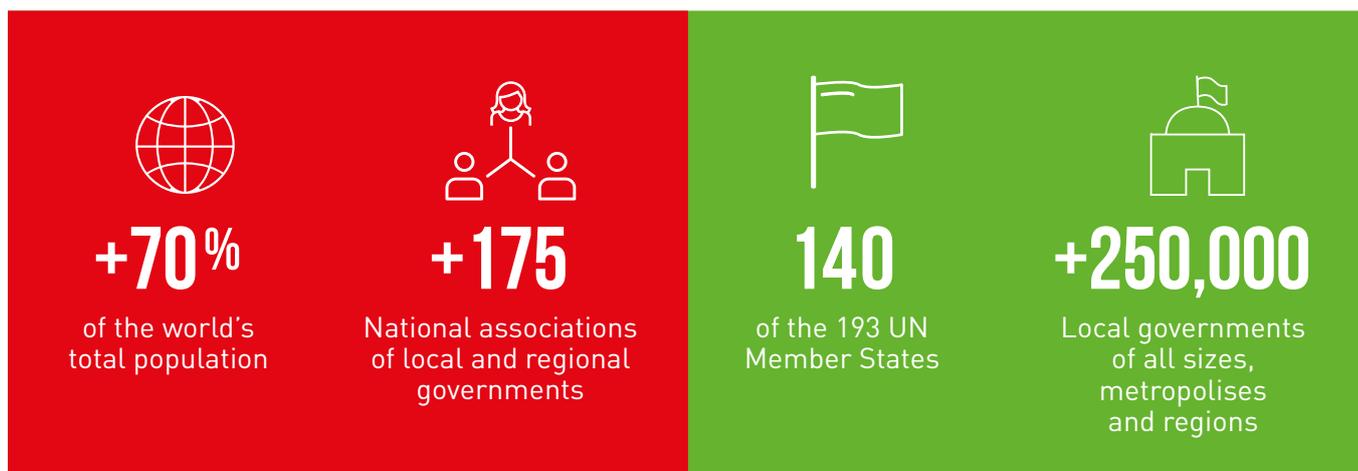
The first traces of what we know today as United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG) can be traced back to 1913, with the launch of Union Internationale des Villes (UIV) at the World Fair in Ghent (Belgium).

UCLG is a convener of the whole global local and regional governments constituency and of the World Assembly of Local and Regional Governments, the mechanism through which our constituency deliberates and agrees upon its political voice in the international agenda.

UCLG, as a global network of cities and local, regional, and metropolitan governments and their associations, is committed to **representing, defending, and amplifying the voices of local and regional governments** to leave no-one and no place behind. We invite you to share your expertise, to contribute, and to collaborate, for with every additional voice our organization becomes stronger. Together we are the sentinels of the hopes, dreams, and aspirations held by individuals in communities around the world –searching for a life in which the ideals of the SDGs are breathed

UCLG promotes fair and sustainable societies characterized by solidarity and based on local democracy, self-government and decentralization

(UCLG, the key figures)



Through collaboration, dialogue, cooperation, and knowledge-sharing, we as a World Organization walk the talk, working to advance global response and action through ground breaking commitments and agreements that become common threads that transcend borders and the communities together, to uplift and empower the local level.

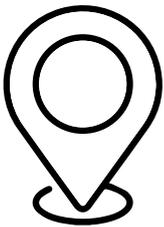
The document that you have in your hands offers the information you will need to understand how our organization operates, and will provide the information you need on how, by taking part in the meetings and the consultation mechanisms of UCLG, you can help shape and guide the policy and the future of the movement.

UCLG is the amplified voice of local governments before the international community



.02

What do we stand for?

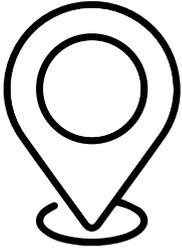


Local and regional governments demonstrate every day the potential of action based on proximity to contribute to solving major global challenges, and this is why UCLG believes that that development and improvement of people's living conditions should be undertaken primarily at the local level. We strive to achieve decentralization as a way to democratize public governance at all levels.

United Cities and Local Governments is your voice. Through our strong political leadership, we aim to ensure that our values are shared among our members, and this strength is the driver of our aim to secure a seat at the global table, to ensure the local perspectives and points of view of local and regional governments play a part in the global decision-making processes, and in the implementation on the ground of the global agendas. The global goals that we adopted can only be achieved with a global point of view on our local programmes and impacts.

Our organization is also fully committed to the full realization and the renewal of local democracy, to empowering local and regional governments to play their role in the future of humanity. Only if we equip local governments with the powers and necessary resources –human and financial– will we be able to guarantee that the basic services that they provide –such as access to housing, basic services, and human rights– are fully carried out.

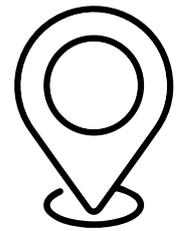
A network committed to the achievement of the Global Agendas



The major global development agendas cannot be separated from one another at local or regional level; they can only be achieved if they are integrated into all planning, policy-making and action. Global solutions need to be built upon these local experiences and approaches to ensure a future for our community.

Local democracy, local leadership, and local service provision are vital tools to drive development in a way that is rooted in the cultural, social, environmental and economic realities of each territory. That's why UCLG advocates for a greater role of local and regional governments in international policy development, implementation and reporting. That's what we call 'localizing' the global goals.

When the Secretary General of the United Nations published his report "Our Common Agenda", he stressed that humanity was facing an urgent choice: breakdown or breakthrough. Responding to this call, UCLG reiterated its commitment to enhance the role of local and regional governments in international policy making. Aware that failing future generations is not an option, the municipal movement has adopted the motto "Local and regional governments breaking through as one", to ensure that it is fit for purpose to deliver the "Common Agenda" and to set the implementation decade into full motion.



PEOPLE

The **PACT** for the
FUTURE of Humanity

This intent will crystallize in the Pact for the Future of Humanity that UCLG is developing around three principles: people, planet and government. The Pact for the Future builds on the notion that local and regional governments have a critical role as political actors, whose main objective is to safeguard the dreams and aspirations of their communities, while balancing the needs of current generations with those of generations to come. The Pact understands equality as the indispensable building block of any sustainable society and underpins the need for a changed relationship with nature, which necessitates renewed governance with trust between actors. People, planet and government.

The Pact also identifies the paths for local governments to promote caring societies, ensured by innovative service provision that take into account new essential services, powered by strong and accountable governance systems at all levels and from a universal perspective.

PLANET

GOVERNMENT

Holding ourselves accountable

UCLG is an organization that values local democracy and takes pride in holding itself accountable to its members, which is why we adopted a Code of Conduct that put into paper our anti-corruption policies and the struggle for transparency of the World Organization.

In the life of a global and diverse organization such as UCLG, the values of solidarity, consensus and unity are critical to its resilience and effectiveness. The electoral process for the Governing Bodies of the World Organization is managed through the UCLG Sections, in close coordination with the World Secretariat. The Conduct of Elections sets the guidelines for how the elections for our Governing Bodies need to be organized.

Further, the efforts and will of UCLG to ensure gender equality and mainstreaming as the backbone of the municipal movement have also been developed into an All-UCLG Gender Equality Strategy, based on two pillars: an institutional one, aiming at developing gender mainstreaming and promoting gender equality activities within UCLG; and a political pillar, aiming at raising the participation of women in governing and decision-making bodies at the local level.

For more information on our Code of Conduct, our Conduct of Elections, and our All-UCLG Gender Equality Strategy, see our bibliography.

How we amplify the voices of local governments and use the Power of We

We care for the network

We aim to enhance political participation, creating new tools for synchronized action, renewing partnerships with different actors and ensuring shared ownership by the different parts of the membership, and enhance our transparency, democratic participation, and accountability.

We advocate

We strive to amplify the voices of territories internationally. This includes making proposals concerning the role and perspective of local and regional governments on the definition of the next phase of the global development agendas, and increasing national and international support and recognition for the role of local and regional governments in the implementation process.

We act

Our aim is to identify and foster efforts by our membership to achieve the global agendas at the territorial level.

We learn

Through training, we are creating a learning culture throughout the organization and promoting decentralized cooperation as a key tool of international cooperation and development programmes.

We research

Our aim is to ensure that local and regional experience influences the implementation and assessment of the global agendas, by contributing to local and regional governments' storytelling, and informing the reporting done by national governments.

Strengthening the representation of our constituency

The hopes and dreams of our communities can only be realized if we bring everyone on board. This is why, together with the major international networks of local and regional governments, a consultation mechanism -The Global Taskforce of Local and Regional Governments (GTF)- was set up to develop joint advocacy work, to bring the perspectives of local and regional governments to the SDGs, climate change agenda and New Urban Agenda, and to amplify the voice of the local and regional government constituency.

UCLG facilitates the Global Taskforce, which represents a landmark achievement for the international municipal movement. Local and regional governments are the only UN non-state stakeholder to have such a mechanism to develop and coordinate inputs into all policy processes. The GTF also convenes elected local and regional leaders from around the world in the World Assembly of Local and Regional Governments to follow-up and monitor the New Urban Agenda, as recognized in the Quito Outcome Document.



Telling the local Story - The GOLD Report

Global policies and the story of development needs to go beyond the national perspectives and consider the needs, experiences and skills of communities. Our organization works to establish a framework for the monitoring and reporting of activities on the global development agendas through the Global Observatory on Local Democracy and Decentralization (GOLD), and is developing and will continue to develop its capacity to provide the local version.

The GOLD Report is the quintessential publication for this work, and is complemented by our ongoing reports on the involvement of local and regional governments in the monitoring and reporting of the global agendas and the reports of the World Observatory on Subnational Governments' Finance and Investment.

Published every three years, the GOLD reports are an important part of UCLG's endeavour to become an international reference for information about local and regional governments, local democracy and decentralization worldwide. Since the publication of its first edition in 2008, GOLD has become an international benchmark in the analysis of local and regional governments.



.03 How do we do it?

The membership of United Cities and Local Governments believes in the power of its network and supports the sharing of expertise among UCLG members on specific themes that are considered priorities of the global agenda of the World Organization.

(This is where you come in.

Through participating in our Policy Councils, our Committees, our Communities of Practice and our Working Groups, you can make a difference in the policymaking of the World Organization, enrich our perspectives and ensure that what matters to your community reaches the global stage.

Policy Councils

The UCLG Policy Councils are groups of up to 15 representatives with a political mandate, including at least one member of the Presidency.

The Councils provide an opportunity for political representatives to participate in policy making and to have their views raised before the Organization's governing bodies. The Councils are considered as part of the decision-making process.

They aim to enhance political participation in UCLG discussions, improve the ownership of policy recommendations, foster members' engagement in activities resulting therefrom and develop policy recommendations in relation to strategic topics. They also improve the links among consultation mechanisms, as well as between these groups and the governing bodies of the Organization.

The Policy Councils report to each session of the Executive Bureau.

The World Secretariat functions as the Secretariat of the Policy Councils, facilitating their work in collaboration with other parts of the membership relevant to the issues to be covered. The UCLG Sections' Secretariats and Leadership are invited to all meetings of the Policy Councils, Committees and Working Groups and will make the link between these mechanisms and the Section's Governing Bodies¹.



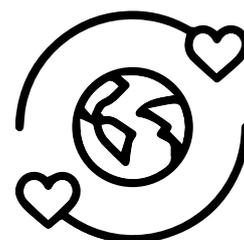
Policy Council on “Right to the city and inclusive territories”

This Policy Council brings to the debate views on how to support inclusive housing policies and ensure the full and progressive realization of the right to adequate housing for all, work with communities to upgrade slums and regenerate poor neighbourhoods, and support the social production of habitat.

It also discusses targeted social policies with the recognition of the indivisibility and universality of human rights, including a strong gender perspective on the particular needs, resources and opportunities of women and girls, as well as a reflection on changing the discourse on migration and create a balanced narrative.

Policy Council on “Opportunities for all, culture and city diplomacy: keys to sustainable development and peace”

This Policy Council debates how to protect the core values of culture, foster city diplomacy and cooperation through capacity development, and promote solidarity and peace as the bases for sustainable development. Municipal international cooperation and decentralized cooperation are vital to the construction of a peace and sustainably-developed world. In this sense, the protection of heritage, the understanding of diversity and the fostering of creativity are key elements of dialogue to force peace from the bottom up.



Policy Council on “Territorial multilevel governance and sustainable financing”

This Policy Council debates how to boost effective territorial and multilevel governance, and re-think and strengthen sub-national and public financing

¹ See bibliography for the terms of reference

systems to reconcile financing with sustainability. The discussion further feeds the work of UCLG's flagship publication, the GOLD report, geared towards the establishment of follow-up and reporting by local and regional governments on the implementation of the global agendas.

Deepening the roots of local democracy and involving inhabitants in the co-production of our cities and territories are key in our transition towards a sustainable future. To this end, we need to govern in partnership, build governance capabilities, implement effective partnerships with multiple stakeholders, and ensure accountable and transparent local governance.



Policy Council on “Safer, resilient and sustainable cities, capable of facing crises”

This Policy Council debates how to implement local actions that can help to protect the climate, reduce the risk of disasters, enable social and economic vibrancy in urbanization and renewal, and build resilience. This exchange further refers to the contributions of the local and regional government constituency to the relevant ongoing discussions and mechanisms, in support of the implementation of the key global agendas.

The roadmaps for ecological transition requires the involvement of all relevant stakeholders and local governments' capacity to mobilize the human, financial and technical resources available to them. Local governments are on the front line when crises strike, but they are also uniquely placed to experiment and capitalize on the resources and potentialities inherent to their locations and populations.



Policy Council on the “Implementation of the New Urban Agenda”

This Policy Council, launched at the UCLG World Council in November 2020, aims to look at the challenges and opportunities associated with the implementation of the New Urban Agenda, a critical corner stone for the development agenda and for the achievement of empowered, inclusive and resilient cities and territories.

Cities and territories, which are open and accountable to their citizens, are indeed critical to the achievement of the 2030 Agenda and all Global Goals. The capacity to deliver and the evolution of national and international urban policies will be critical both for the role of local governments in development but also for the space provided to the international municipal movement in development policies. In the phase of reporting from member states on the New Urban Agenda to the United Nations, UCLG will need to play a critical role in monitoring the state of implementation but also in providing inputs to UNACLA and UN Habitat. As convener of the World Assembly of Local and Regional Governments, UCLG will need to stand ready to contribute to the international discussions.

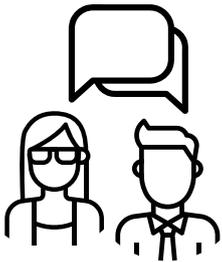
Consultation mechanisms

UCLG has several consultation mechanisms working on specific thematic areas and approved by the World Council².

Committees

Committees are organized groups of local government members represented by politicians that get together to work on a specific policy area. A Committee has a dedicated Secretariat and a group of members coming from all sections of the Organization.

They develop background on specific policy areas that can serve as bases for formal policy positions to be adopted by the governing bodies of the World Organization. These policies are embedded in the thematic areas defined by the Executive Bureau and they are in line with the strategic priorities for the period in progress.



What our Committees work on:

- Culture
- Local economic and social development
- Social inclusion, participatory democracy and human rights
- Urban strategic planning

Working Groups

Working Groups gather practitioners with specific skills and expertise that are mobilized around specific topics and projects. Their aim is to implement joint actions and support the implementation of specific parts of UCLG's core programme.

The local government members of Working Groups may be represented by advisors, with or without a political mandate.

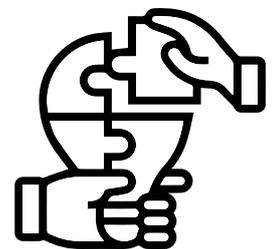
What our Working Groups work on:

- Capacity and institution building
- Territorial prevention and management of crises

Communities of Practice

Communities of Practice are groups of UCLG local government members represented by technical staff and practitioners, convened at the initiative of a UCLG member around a specific topic.

They call learning meetings, suggest studies or programmes and contribute to the different parts of the UCLG network, informing on specific topics. Communities of Practice can develop groundwork for Committees or Policy Councils in close collaboration with the World Secretariat.



²For links to the full documents, please reference the bibliography at the end of this publication.

What our Communities of Practice work on:

- Digital cities
- Migration
- Housing
- Inclusive and accessible cities and territories
- Local finance
- Social and solidarity economy
- Transparency and open government
- Urban innovation



Fora

Fora are consultation and policy development processes that culminate in an event every two years. They aim to gather political representatives of a specific constituency from the membership.

A forum may also gather political representatives around a specific topic of critical importance for the agenda of the Organization, and produce policy guidance related to the constituency represented therein and should foster visibility for the issue concerned.

A forum process is led by a member and supported by a reduced group of members from different regions.

What our Fora work on:

- Intermediary cities
- Local government associations
- Peripheral cities

(Local4Action HUBs)

The Local4Action HUBs is a project aimed at anchoring UCLG's international strategy on the localization of the SDGs in members' practices and initiatives. The HUBs provide a platform for showcasing, recognizing and scaling-up local policies and processes, fostering synchronization between activities and parts of the network, while accelerating the constituency's impact over the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

The Local4Action HUBs represent a strategic opportunity for members to bring local approaches to sustainability at the forefront of the international conversation. They further ensure that the Organization's advocacy and policy recommendations are built on true local practices, strengthening its voice and capacity to demonstrate the key role that local and regional governments have to play in achieving the global goals.

More than 20 Local4Action HUBs are currently active and cover topics such as culture, defence of public services, gender equality, intergenerational transformation, shared values, youth, among others.



Global Awards for Local Action

The UCLG awards reward projects and actions implemented by cities that stand out for their innovation and contribution to making the world a better place. The UCLG Peace Prize, Guangzhou Award, and International Award UCLG - MEXICO City - Culture 21 value the work of cities through their contributions to Peacebuilding, Urban Innovation, and Culture.

UCLG Peace Prize

The UCLG Peace Prize creates momentum for local governments that implement strategies for conflict prevention, peacebuilding and post-conflict reconstruction. The Prize will celebrate successful initiatives and stimulate others to follow suit and generate international public attention for the role local governments play in ensuring sustainable peaceful development. Local governments that have implemented an innovative and high impact approach towards peacebuilding and the creation of dialogue are eligible for nomination.

More information available at: www.peaceprize.uclg.org

Guangzhou Award

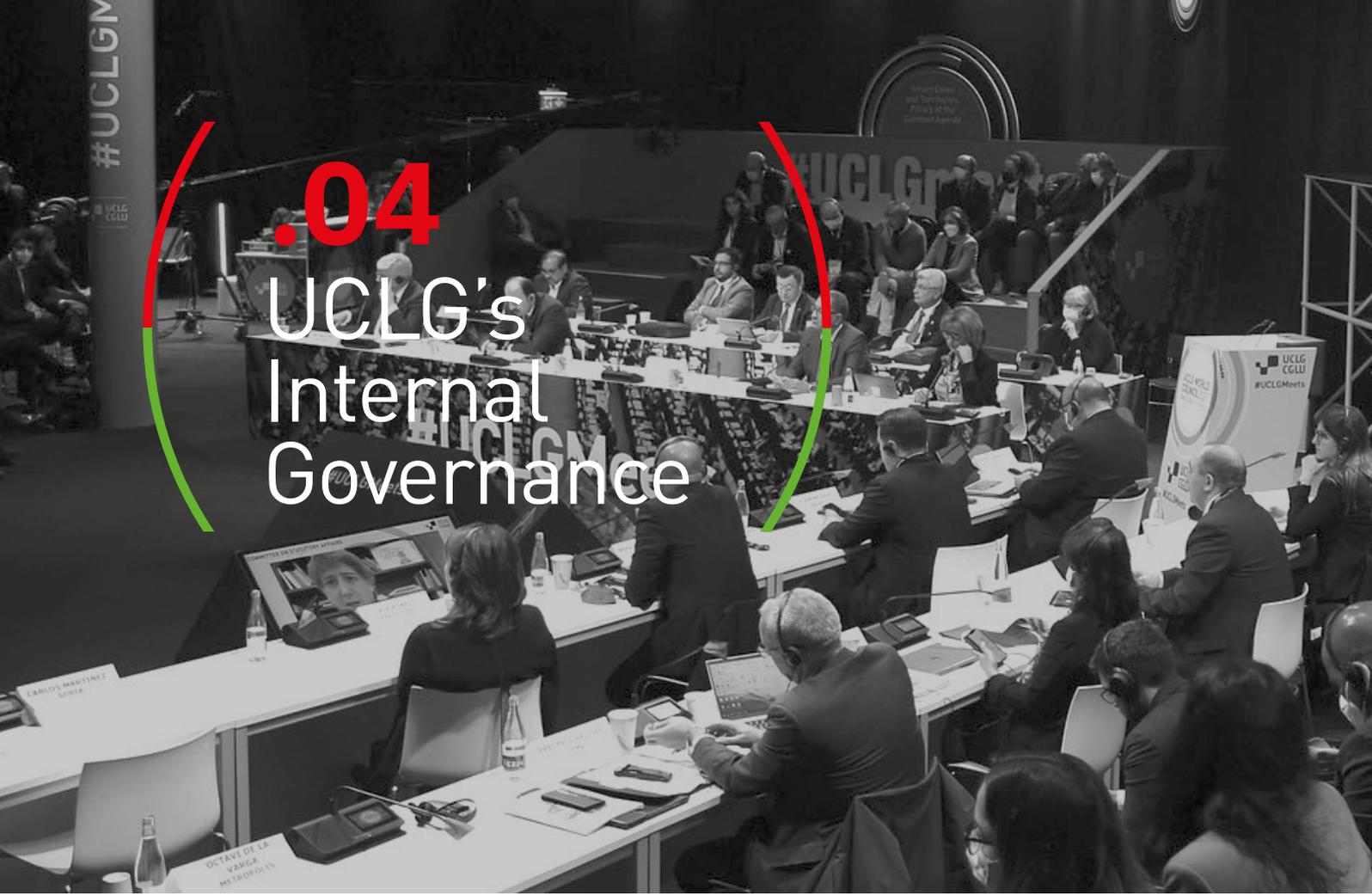
The Guangzhou International Award for Urban Innovation (abbreviated to Guangzhou Award) is co-hosted by UCLG, Metropolis, and Guangzhou Municipal Government. The Guangzhou Award aims to reward innovations to improve the socio-economic environments in cities and regions, promote sustainability, and hence advance the livelihood of their citizens. Presented biennially, the award will encourage and recognize outstanding innovative projects and practices in the public sector.

More information available at: www.guangzhouaward.org

International Award UCLG - MEXICO City - Culture 21

The objective of the “International Award UCLG - MEXICO City - Culture 21” is to recognize leading cities and people that have distinguished themselves through their contribution to culture as a pillar of sustainable development. The Award is expected to contribute to the dissemination and implementation of the Agenda 21 for culture. The Award proves the leadership of Mexico City in the area of culture and sustainable development.

More information available at: www.agenda21culture.net/award

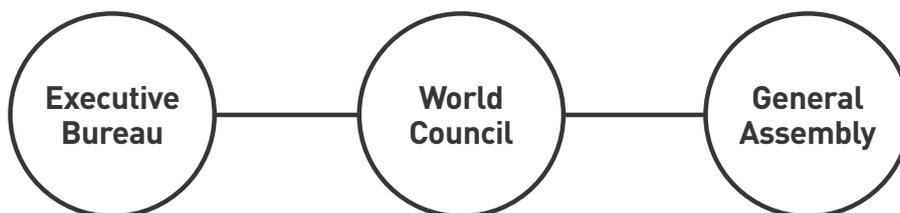


.04 UCLG's Internal Governance

The governing bodies

As any association or organization of this kind, UCLG's overall functionality is managed by a group of members that gather in decision-making entities, as defined by the Constitution of the Organization. These entities are our governing bodies and they are responsible for both internal matters, and international policy and advocacy decisions, guiding and leading the Organization.

UCLG counts on three main governing bodies: the Executive Bureau, the World Council and the General Assembly. Additionally, there are two committees dealing with the financial and administrative functionality of the Organization, and one standing committee dedicated to gender equality. The meetings of these bodies are referred to as the statutory meetings.



Executive Bureau

[Art. 48-57 of the Constitution]

The Executive Bureau, which gathers twice a year, is responsible for initiating proposals and carrying out the decisions of the World Council. It is in charge of the World Organization's administrative and financial management. It prepares the ground for the content of the meetings of the World Council and the General Assembly. Members are nominated by the sections from among members of the World Council and are ratified by the General Assembly.

A complete list of members can be found on the UCLG website.



World Council

[Art. 39-47 of the Constitution]

The World Council is the principal policy making body of the World Organization. It meets once a year to decide the World Organization's policies and ensure that general policies are implemented. Members are nominated by the sections and are ratified by the General Assembly.

A complete list of members can be found on the UCLG website.

116
members

Getting ready
to participate:



TWICE

A YEAR
—APRIL-JUNE / OCTOBER-
DECEMBER—



2-3

WORKING DAYS



250

APPROX.
PARTICIPANTS

342
members

Getting ready
to participate:



ONCE

A YEAR
—OCTOBER-DECEMBER—



3-4

WORKING DAYS



550

APPROX.
PARTICIPANTS

General Assembly

[Art. 33-38 of the Constitution]

The General Assembly, which meets on a triennial basis, gathers all members of UCLG. It has the responsibility for the overall policy, direction and oversight of the Organization. It receives the report of activities and financial report submitted to the World Council and adopts any revisions to the Constitution. Every three years, during the Congress, the General Assembly appoints members of the World Council and Executive Bureau, based on the elections that take place at regional and metropolitan levels.

ALL
members
of UCLG

Getting ready
to participate:



ONCE

EVERY 3 YEARS
—DURING THE UCLG
CONGRESS—



4-5

WORKING DAYS



3,000

APPROX.
PARTICIPANTS

UCLGMeets

At the very beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, UCLG understood the importance of taking a big step forward in virtual technologies. This is when the UCLGMeets platform was born, based on an award-winning project developed by the Municipality of Barcelona.

The UCLGMeets platform is now the main virtual space during the statutory meetings and the Retreats of UCLG, offering participants the possibility to access the interactive programmes of the meetings and find all useful resources, links and materials, including the background documents of the statutory meetings. UCLGMeets also functions as a digital archive, through which members can consult the background documents of past meetings.

The platform also offers the possibility to organize interactive participatory processes, which are already being used in the framework of consultations on the Lampedusa Charter for dignified human mobility and territorial solidarity, the Global Charter-agenda for human rights in the city, the 2022 Town Hall process, and the Pact for the future of humanity.

The links between the Governing Bodies and the Policy and consultation mechanisms

As mentioned, the Policy Councils aim to enhance political participation in UCLG discussions and improve the ownership of policy recommendations by the membership, beyond the Governing Bodies. They are the mechanisms that develop policy recommendations in relation to strategic topics, following the mandate of the Organization's overall strategic priorities and, at the same time, feeding the policy agenda of the Organization. Their proposals and recommendations are presented to the Executive Bureau twice a year, thus helping the governing bodies to orientate the advocacy and policy work of UCLG.

The Committees, who can also develop background on specific policy areas, act as the mechanisms that can help define policy positions to be adopted by the governing bodies of the World Organization. The results of their work is usually presented to the Policy Councils for further recommendation to the Executive Bureau and/or World Council.

Institutional committees

Financial Management Committee

[Art. 68-69 of the Constitution]

The Financial Management Committee is appointed by the Executive Bureau, chaired by the elected Treasurer and composed of representatives of the six members paying the highest membership fees and six elected representatives from among other members, taking into account the geographical diversity and representation of the local government membership. It meets twice a year as part of the statutory meetings and advises the Treasurer and Executive Bureau on financial matters. It advises on the preparation and execution of the budget.

21

members

Committee on Statutory Affairs

The Committee on Statutory Affairs is appointed by the Executive Bureau and is in charge of reviewing any issues concerning the institutional work of the Organization. It also oversees the electoral process. It is composed of the President, the past President, the Co-Presidents, the Treasury, three political representatives of three member organizations and the host of the World Organization. The Secretaries General of the regional sections are invited to participate in the meetings as observers. The Committee meets twice a year as part of the statutory meetings.

13

members

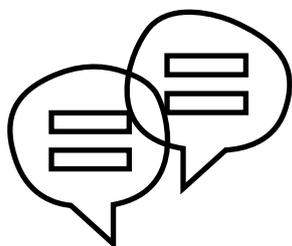
Standing Committee on Gender Equality

Gender Equality is, and has been, a long-standing objective for both UCLG and the associations that preceded us. We have a track record in global advocacy to enhance gender equality policies among membership and to foster the participation of women in local decision making.

The UCLG Standing Committee on Gender Equality aims to promote and monitor the participation of women at the local level across the world. It is chaired by a member of the UCLG Presidency, and works with locally elected women and grassroots organizations to build their capacities and increase the representation of women.

From an institutional perspective, the Committee is the main body representing women in the Organization. It sets the priorities of the UCLG agenda on gender issues, as well as the working methods, facilitates the debate and ensures the decisions and monitoring of UCLG on any issue and process regarding gender equality.

From a political perspective, the Committee is the motor behind UCLG Women, the network acknowledged as the global voice of local elected women by national agencies and the United Nations.





Presidency

The Presidential team of UCLG is elected by the World Council every three years on the basis of a simple majority to ensure they have a full democratic mandate conferred to them by local elected officials from across the world. According to the UCLG Constitution, the members of the Presidency shall hold a local electoral mandate; they must also be at the head of:

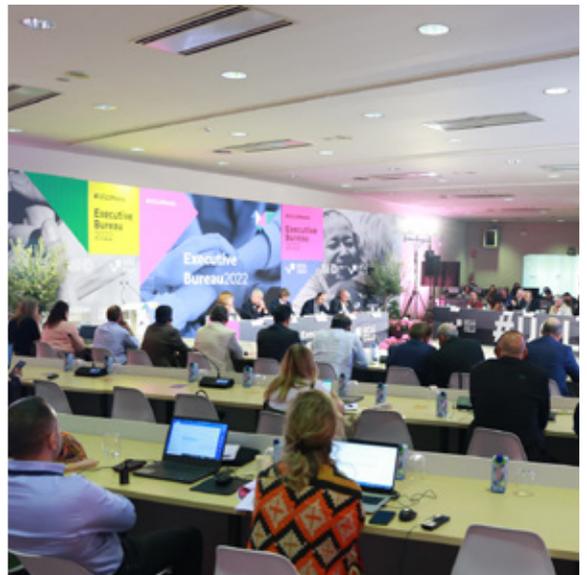
- a) a local government or**
- b) a national association of local governments**

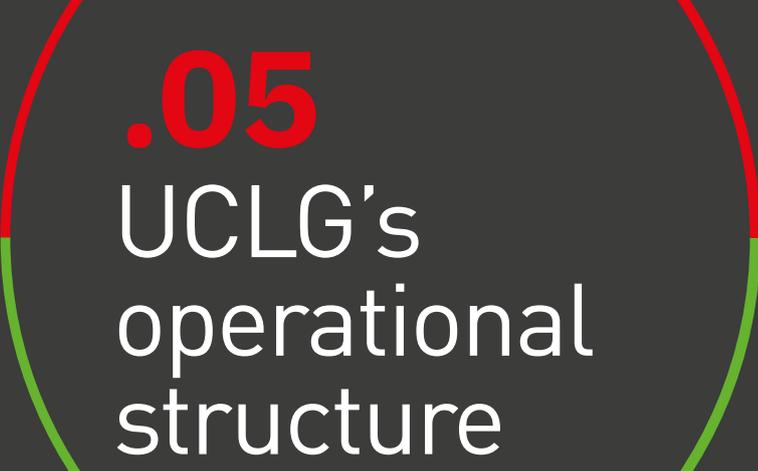
The election of the full Presidential team is a global process, responding to a call for candidatures. The Presidency of UCLG represents the World Organization as a whole.

Vice-Presidency

UCLG has Vice-Presidents, nominated by each of its sections to represent the regional interests of members of the Organization. Although each Vice-President represents a specific section, the Vice-Presidency can also represent the World Organization when appropriate.







.05

UCLG's operational structure

Regional Sections

The Organization is represented through **7 regional sections**: UCLG Africa, UCLG-ASPAC, UCLG Eurasia, the Council of European Municipalities and Regions (CEMR), the FLACMA General Secretariat and Mercociudades Adjunct Secretariat for Latin America, UCLG-MEWA and UCLG-NORAM; as well as **1 metropolitan section**, Metropolis, and **1 section dedicated to regional governments**, the Forum of Regions (UCLG Regions).

These sections establish their own constitutions and governing bodies and may be set up as independent legal entities. They are part of the World Organization's operating structure. Regional sections coordinate and facilitate membership and provide the World Organization with institutional support to pursue its mission and objectives within their agreed geographical or thematic area.

World Secretariat

The headquarters of UCLG, the **World Secretariat**, is based in Barcelona (Spain) and headed by the Secretary General. The World Secretariat is the executive arm of the Organization. Within the mandate given by the members of the governing bodies and in close consultation with the membership, it has a creative role in inspiring the agenda of the deliberative and decision-making bodies, and in the implementation of the decisions of these bodies. It provides the governing bodies and the membership with studies, proposals, and research that can influence their actions. The World Secretariat is further responsible for communication with global partners, publishing the work of the World Organization and facilitating contact among the membership.

Local and Regional

Local governments of all sizes,
metropolises and regions

Global

United Cities and Local
Governments

National

National associations
of local and regional
governments

Continental

Africa · Asia-Pacific ·
Eurasia · Europe · Latin
America · Middle East
and West Asia · North
America · Metropolitan
Section · Forum of
Regions



.06

Frequently asked questions

.01

Who can be part of the governing bodies?

Every three years, on the occasion of the World Congress, UCLG renews its governing bodies. The electoral process is carried out via the regional sections (see operational structure), who present a list of nominations. More details are included in our Electoral Procedure Rules, available on our website.

There are two conditions in order to be eligible to become a member of the governing bodies:

- Hold a political mandate from a city (or individual local government) or from a national local government association;
- Be up to date with the payment of membership fees.

.02

What kind of decisions are taken during the statutory meetings?

The governing bodies are responsible both for the general policy orientation of UCLG and for internal matters. Hence, the decisions that members are invited to take can be very diverse.

It is important to note that members always receive documents ahead of the meetings of the governing bodies, in which they find useful information on the decisions they will be invited to take.

Usually, these decisions are divided in the following categories:

- **For information:** this applies to files, programmes or policies that are already being developed by members or by the World Secretariat, following a mandate granted by the governing bodies. These items are presented to share updated, relevant information and pursue the work in the same direction.

Example: Activities report from the Presidency, updated information on the advocacy agenda or specific policy agendas, updates on Committees' work plans, etc.

- **For decision:** contrary to the previous point, this entails a choice or a change in the working perspective of a file. These decisions are taken by consensus, after offering members time to debate.

Example: Selection of a host for a statutory meeting, updates to a strategy for the Organization as a whole, etc.

- **For adoption:** these are decision-making issues that have an impact on the organization of work and/or on the orientation of the policy agenda for UCLG as a whole.

Example: Work plan of the Organization, strategic priorities, reports presented by the Financial Management Committee or the Committee on Statutory Affairs, policy documents presented by members, etc.

- **For election:** every three years, the members nominated to the governing bodies are called to elect the new leadership of the Organization. More specifically, members of the World Council elect: the President, the Co-Presidents and the Treasurer.

.03

What kind of specific decisions do the different governing bodies take?

The **Executive Bureau** approves and submits the annual budget, accounts and reports to the World Council. It appoints the Committee on Statutory Affairs and the Financial Management Committee, as well as the independent external auditors for the organization. The Executive Bureau can also make recommendations about international processes and policies, for example the involvement of UCLG in the climate agenda, participation in UN Conferences or the production of policy papers.

The **World Council** approves the annual budget and accounts submitted by the Executive Bureau. It decides on issues related to membership. Every three years, during the World Congress, the World Council elects the President, Co-Presidents and Treasurer of the organization, and ratifies nominations for the Vice-Presidents. It appoints the members of the Executive Bureau from among its members. The World Council also takes decisions on internal affairs, such as the annual work plan and the strategic priorities of the organization. As per the recommendations of the Executive Bureau, it might also be called upon to approve policy papers and publications produced by members of UCLG, and it is informed of any relevant international processes.

The **General Assembly** appoints members of the World Council. It receives the report of activities of the three-year mandate presented by the Presidency, as well as the continental priorities presented by the sections. It can be informed of the policy-making process of the Summit part, namely the declaration or policy recommendations that are foreseen to be the outcome documents of the event. The Assembly can also be called to officially appoint the Vice-Presidents nominated by the sections.

.04

How are decisions taken?

Usually, decisions are taken by consensus. As mentioned above, some items are only for the information of members. Members are easily able to see this in advance, as it is indicated on the first page of each item included in their working documents.

.05

When do the Governing Bodies have to vote?

The governing bodies of UCLG might be called to vote on some decisions, for example the election of the Presidency and the election of the host of the next World Congress. Exceptionally, voting might also be called for specific policy decisions.

.06

Who can vote?

Only members officially appointed to the statutory bodies and up to date with their membership fees have the right to vote. Should the official member not be able to attend, their official substitute, duly appointed to the World Council, will have the right to vote.

There are no proxies and therefore only members in the actual representation lists, adopted by the General Assembly, are able to vote.

.07

Who elects who?

The World Council is appointed by the General Assembly from the list previously agreed and recommended by the Committee on Statutory Affairs at the advice of the Sections.

The Executive Bureau is appointed by the World Council within its members, according to the list agreed at the General Assembly.

The election of the Presidency takes place at the World Council.

.08

How does the voting process work?

The UCLG Constitution and Electoral Procedure Rules are the reference documents for the organization of elections, together with the recommendations of the Committee on Statutory Affairs. Due to the great reach and diversity of its network, UCLG usually seeks broad consensus in the appointment of its representatives. However, its vocation of inclusivity and transparency also envisages the possibility of several candidatures for a single post or event.

In this sense, UCLG approved in 2019 its Conduct of Elections, which is an overview of how the rules stated in the Constitution and the Electoral Procedure Rules are applied, on the basis of good practices and experiences developed by the Organization during its previous electoral processes.

The Conduct of Elections describes the voting process in situ, including the distribution of voting ballots and the organization of electoral tables, as well as the casting and counting of votes.

.09

Who can present a candidature for the Presidency?

Candidatures to the Presidency, Treasury and Chairperson of the Standing Committee on Gender Equality are personal candidatures from individuals, and must comply with the following criteria:

- Candidates should represent a paying local government member of UCLG.
- The member represented by the candidate must be up to date with the payment of its membership fees.
- According to the UCLG Constitution, the members of the Presidency shall hold a local electoral mandate; they must also be at the head of a) a local government or b) a national association of local governments.

.10

Are the meetings of the governing bodies only about UCLG's internal affairs?

There are usually other meetings taking place on the occasion of the Executive Bureau and World Council, taking advantage of the presence of members, such as meetings of committees, sections, interregional initiatives, etc. Due to the size of the events and the limited number of days available, members are requested to inform the World Secretariat of their interest or intention to organize meetings in conjunction with the meetings of the governing bodies well in advance.

Side events can be proposed by the host city in order to showcase programmes or specific policies they are implementing. These parallel events usually provide members with interesting opportunities for networking and exchanges.

The formal sessions of the Executive Bureau and the World Council are usually preceded by an open political debate on a topic of interest to the agenda of the World Organization. UCLG members that are not members of the governing bodies are invited to participate in these sessions, which are often organized in the form of round table discussions.

The themes of the political debates are defined in collaboration with the Presidency, the host local government or association and the UCLG sections. Members of the governing bodies may also put forward

proposals well in advance of the sessions. Members are informed of the themes at least one month before the session.

Meetings of committees closely related to the functioning of the World Organization, such as the Financial Management Committee and the Committee on Statutory Affairs, take place before the formal sessions. Participation in these meetings is by invitation only

.11

How is the policy agenda of the statutory meetings defined?

The policy agenda is also defined together with the Presidency, the host local government or association and the UCLG sections. Members of the governing bodies may also put forward proposals by writing to the World Secretariat. Members receive the agenda of the statutory meetings at least one month before the session.

.12

Can I take the floor during a statutory meeting?

Intervening during a session. During the session, all members are welcome to take the floor during the debate on the different points. The procedure is for members to raise their hands and wait for the Chair to give them the floor.

Time constraints are quite considerable given the large number of members who ask to intervene. The Chair will explain the procedure to be followed concerning interventions at the beginning of each session and also highlight the time limit for interventions (normally 2 to 3 minutes).

Making a presentation. Presentations from members of the governing bodies may be arranged in advance, according to the agenda of the meeting. For example, members can prepare a short presentation on a specific item of the agenda that they have been actively involved in developing. These requests should be addressed to the World Secretariat at least one month before the meetings.

Proposing a declaration, statement or motion. Members of the World Council can also propose the development of declarations, statements or motions on a relevant topic for the World Organization. These motions should be presented to the Presidency well in advance of the meeting and should count on the support of at least two members of the Executive Bureau.

.13

Who can organize statutory meetings?

Any member of UCLG can propose to host a meeting. This can be a city or a local government association. The proposals will be submitted to the Committee on Statutory Affairs, which guarantees that the

prerequisites are met and presents recommendations to the Executive Bureau for approval.

When no prior manifestation of interest is expressed, the World Secretariat launches a call to UCLG's members, including the terms of reference for the organization of statutory meetings. The abovementioned approval process also applies to proposals received following a call.

.14

Who can attend these meetings?

These meetings are designed for the members who have been officially appointed to the governing bodies (local elected officials). Said members are usually accompanied to the meetings by a small delegation composed of advisers and technical staff. The meetings are also open to Mayors or Deputy Mayors and Presidents or Vice-Presidents of local and regional authorities that are members of UCLG.

The large number of participants and the different cultures and languages that are gathered around the table make these meetings a unique experience.

.15

What happens after the meetings?

After each session, a summary of the key decisions taken is sent to all members of the World Council or Executive Bureau. These decisions serve as references for work to be carried out during the year. These documents are based around the principal theme of the session and detail the specific actions to be undertaken.

These decisions are distributed to members by email in the three official languages of UCLG. Members are invited to send their suggestions or amendments to the World Secretariat.

Detailed reports of the statutory sessions are presented to the relevant bodies during their next meetings.

Should you have any questions or doubts regarding your preparation for these meetings, please remember that the statutory affairs team of the World Secretariat is here to help you. Don't hesitate to write to us at **UCLGExBu@uclg.org**

Useful Online Documents

The following documents can be found online at **uclg.org/ResourceDocuments**

- Constitution
- Electoral Procedure Rules
- UCLG Code of Conduct
- Conduct of Elections
- TOR of Policy Councils
- TOR of Presidency
- TOR of Committee on Statutory Affairs (CSA)
- TOR for the Logistical Organization of UCLG Statutory Meetings
- Composition Document on the Financial Management Committee

The world advocate of
democratic local and
regional self-government,
promoting its values,
objectives and interests,
through cooperation
among members and with
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UCLG Metropolitan
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