

**Opening Statement by ICLEI – Local Governments for Sustainability, the Advisory Committee of Subnational Governments for Biodiversity, the European Committee of Regions, and the Group of Leading Subnational Governments toward Aichi Biodiversity Targets**

**at Open Ended Working Group 2 Opening Plenary, Rome, Italy**

**on 24 February 2020**

Honourable Co-chairs, and distinguished delegates, we address you on behalf of our **local and subnational government constituency and networks**, including **ICLEI**, the Advisory Committee of Subnational Governments - coordinated by Regions4 and the Government of Quebec, the European Committee of Regions, and the Group of Leading Subnational Governments toward Aichi Biodiversity Targets.

The world is calling for **transformative change and action**. This makes **full participation by local and subnational governments in the post-2020 Framework imperative**. Building on the momentum from OEWG 2, where there was strong support for the role of local and subnational governments in the Post-2020 Framework, we continued to mobilise our constituency. We organized several meetings as part of the local and subnational governments' post-2020 roadmap. This included the:

- **Roundtable on Cities, Local and Subnational Governments: Partnering for a successful COP15 and beyond 2020**, hosted by Mayor Valérié Plante, as ICLEI's Global Ambassador for Local Biodiversity, in November 2019, in Montréal;
- **the BIO2020 event on Brazilian Perspectives for the Post-2020 Framework**, organized by ICLEI, São Paulo State Government, Regions4 and the Post-2020 Biodiversity Framework EU Support Project earlier this month in São Paulo. This culminated in the signing of the **Carta de São Paulo**, and in São Paulo State and all 26 Brazilian state capital cities signing up to CitiesWithNature;
- and there were dedicated sessions on urban nature at the **UCLG World Congress** in November 2019, **UNFCCC COP 26** and the **World Urban Forum**, which recognized all levels of governments' contributions in addressing the global climate and biodiversity emergencies, in other multi-level environmental agreements.

We are also pleased to announce the agreement between ICLEI and **Expertise France**, to support the Local and Subnational Government post-2020 Roadmap

under the **Post-2020 Biodiversity Framework EU Support Project**. This allows us to bring local and subnational governments to key post 2020 events; to partner with the Scottish Government on the **Workshop for Sub-National, Regional and Local Governments**; to implement a communications and awareness campaign; and to **consolidate our constituency's position in calling for a dedicated, significantly stepped-up Decision, and renewed Plan of Action on the role of Local and Subnational Governments in the Post 2020 Framework**.

Through our representation on the Informal Advisory Group on Biodiversity Mainstreaming, and the Extended Consultative Network, **local and subnational governments' role is embedded in the Draft Long Term Approach to Mainstreaming**.

We coordinated and aligned **our submissions to the Co-Chairs** on the role of all levels of subnational governments in the post 2020 Framework. We will present **more detail points on the Zero Draft under item 4 of the Agenda**.

We **appeal** to the Parties not to reinvent the wheel, but to **strengthen existing mechanisms, implement previous commitments - enhancing them with more ambitious ones**, to **strengthen the role of local and subnational governments in NBSAPs** and in monitoring progress against targets; and to **encourage and enable all levels of government to take collective responsibility** by applying the **Singapore Index on Cities Biodiversity**, and to **join each other in collectively committing and reporting on their ambitions and actions for biodiversity through the CitiesWithNature and RegionsWithNature platforms**. These platforms are supported by a wide network of partners and Parties to connect local and subnational governments with each other, and enables them to learn, inspire, raise ambitions and significantly accelerate much needed implementation and action on the ground, in enhancing the delivery of NBSAPs and global targets.

We look forward to ongoing engagement in this process. Thank you.