



## Blog

- All news
- Announcements
- Blog
- In press

### **Interview: 3 questions with Kadir Topbaş, Mayor of Istanbul and President of UCLG**

6.08.2013

#### **1. What are your expectations for the Rabat 2013 World Summit?**

For us, 1996 (Habitat II in Istanbul) was an important milestone. This event marked the beginning of the unification process of the global movement that culminated in 2004 in the birth of UCLG becoming the unified voice of local and regional governments. In 2013 the Rabat summit also represents an important date because we are on the verge of two crucial deadlines for local and regional governments. The first being 2015 with the revision of the United Nations' Millennium Development Goals (MDG), and the second being the Habitat III Conference in 2016, this is demonstrated by our presence on the High Level Panel on Development agenda, established by Ban Ki-Moon, the UN Secretary General. In Rabat we must lay the foundations of our own development agenda. In view of this, we ask all our members and partners to be present in Rabat for this great landmark event that will mark the history of our movement.

#### **2. As President of UCLG, what is your role in the High Level Panel on the Post-2015 Development Agenda?**

In the last few years, local and regional governments have taken very important steps in recognizing their key role in the global development agenda. In July 2012, the UN Secretary General, Ban Ki-moon created a High Level Panel in which I represent the voice of cities and regions for a unique and universal agenda of development that focuses on human development. In that regard, we put in place within UCLG, the international Taskforce of local and regional governments with a view to strengthening cities and regions in the post-2015, Rio +20 and Habitat III processes. At our last meeting in New York in May, the statement of the Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon was very positive regarding us. I quote: "As the world struggles to define a more sustainable path for the coming years, particularly for the post-2015, the local voices and actions will represent crucial elements in this quest. It is important to preserve and encourage political spaces where local authorities may have an impact on decision-making at the global level."

**3. “Strengthening Solidarity among Territories” will be one of the main themes of Rabat 2013: is it an attainable goal in this context of global economic crisis and therefore, of increased territorial competitiveness?**

Competitiveness and solidarity are not antinomic notions. In these times of crisis that strongly affect local governments in certain regions of the world, we need positive competitiveness that generates resources and also solidarity between territories. Cities and regions are the engines of economic and development dynamics. In certain regions of the world, more than 65% of public investment is financed by local and regional governments. Therefore, the development dynamics lie in the territorial level. The economic crisis has deeply affected the local and regional governments and has disturbed priorities, this urges us to innovate, to seek other solutions and strengthen solidarity. This theme imposed itself and we will undertake to debate it in Rabat.

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