

Welcome and Opening Remarks

David Jackson initiated the meeting and welcomed those in attendance. He invited *Amadou Sy* to present the agenda, which was unanimously approved, paving way for a broader discussion.

DeLoG Secretariat Updates

Nan Zhang presented the concept note and agenda of the 20th DeLoG Annual Meeting, which was being organized concurrently with the Annual Meeting of the UCLG Capacity and Institution Building (CIB) Working Group. She pointed out that the emphasis of the annual meeting would be placed on the role of Development Partners in the current context, its strategy path in the next four years and DeLoG's contributions to key international agendas such as the Pact for the Future (2024), the outcome document of the Fourth International Conference on Financing for Development (2025) and the 2030 Agenda. Further, *Nan* mentioned that DeLoG members will also have the opportunity to network with each other and CIB members and explore possibilities of cooperation with other organisations. *Nan* then handed the floor to *Amadou Sy*, who brought participants up to speed with the Working Groups.

Amadou announced *Suzana Fatah* as the new lead for the local democracy working group, while seeking leads for the gender and crisis/post conflict resolution groups. He informed the meeting that the quarterly DeLoG in DiaLoGue webinars had been relaunched, and experts were invited to showcase an approach, concept, project, and policy members of the network. He added that interviews would also be conducted, with local transformers particularly in the Global South, in the Secretariat's knowledge sharing component known as the Local Heroes. Finally, he highlighted the newsletter would be availed every six weeks, to share updates related to DeLoG with subscribers that were interested in local governance and decentralization.

Guest Speaker: U.S. State of Department Subnational Diplomacy Unit

David introduced *Ayse Kaya* (*Kaya Orloff*), Ph.D., Senior Advisor to the Special Representative, who also leads the climate portfolio at the US State Department's Subnational Diplomacy Unit, to discuss their work and goals. He mentioned upfront that the DeLoG Secretariat would abide by the Chatham House Rule, and as such the interview would not be recorded.

The discussion focused broadly on the respective roles of the Subnational Diplomacy Unit and DeLoG's respective roles in promoting local governance, sustainability, to include the potential for inter-network collaboration. *Ayse* focused on local finance for sustainability, highlighting the crucial role of local levels in addressing the climate crisis, while *Elton Stafa* from the Network of Local Government Associations in Southeast Europe highlighted the challenges local governments face in financing climate actions. In the same vein, *Lucy Slack*, Secretary-General of the Commonwealth Local Government Forum, shared her thoughts on the need for a more holistic approach in government, highlighting the importance of inter-ministerial collaboration. Participants endorsed the emphasis made on peer-to-peer learning in achieving global goals, to include the role of local government associations in advocacy. *David* proposed the idea of inviting a guest speaker from a different country for future meetings, suggesting potential speakers from

South Africa and the European Union (EU). The possibility of a speaker from Brazil was also considered.

- Actions needed: Ayse will follow up with NALAS to analyze their work on local government finance and fiscal decentralization in Southeast Europe.
- Actions needed: Elton will reach out to DeLoG colleagues for bilateral meetings prior to the next DeLoG meeting.
- Actions needed: The DeLoG Secretariat to consider inviting a guest speaker from South Africa or Brazil, for the next meeting to share their experiences and perspectives in thematic areas aligned to the network.

CIB/DeLoG Annual Meeting

Neila Akrimi informed the meeting about the upcoming annual meeting in Barcelona from the 27th to the 30th of May 2024. Themes of common interest were being explored such as democracy, post-conflict reconstruction, crisis fragility, and democratic resilience. She pointed out that the venue had been secured, and a first draft of the program, to include logistical details would be shared with members in due course. *Finn Speulman* echoed *Neila's* appreciation for the collaboration between DeLoG and UCLG's Working Group on Capacity and Institution Building (CIB), and the benefits gained from it.

- Actions needed: Members invited to suggest topics or issues for discussion in the annual meeting to enable the agenda to be shaped.