



Milan 28, 29, 30 September 2011

*Multilevel governance and civil society
for innovation and growth*

Final Declaration

Preamble

The political leaders and heads of delegation of the World Regions Forum (WRF), gathered in Milan for the plenary meeting of the network of sub-national governments that are seen as playing a driving role both within their nations and at a global level:

- △ aware of the responsibility regions have in leading innovation and development, and of the potential for growth arising from cooperation and strategic alliances among their territorial systems;
- △ supporting the role of the WRF as a flexible, open and inclusive network that can achieve, through cooperation, outcomes that benefit both member regions and less developed partners;
- △ sharing the principles of the 2009 “Carta di Milano” (Milan Charter), which laid the foundations for strategic cooperation in the areas of the knowledge-based economy, sustainable development, welfare and health;
- △ taking into account the cooperation path initiated within the Joint Working Team and, in particular, the thematic focal areas agreed upon during its meeting on 26 November 2010 in Milan;
- △ in light of the outcomes of the workshops “Strengthening Business and Innovation among the enterprises of the WRF: scenarios, conditions and opportunities”, “Researchers’ mobility for innovation”, “Sustainable using and shared management of water”, “Cancer care and bio-banks: current networks and potential for cooperation” held during the 2011 World Regions Forum;
- △ having carried on open and informal consultation about the challenges of and solutions to fostering public goods and innovation processes in multilevel governance frameworks;

Acknowledge

1. The current world crisis cannot be overcome by technical and administrative adjustments. In the era of globalization, this acknowledgment highlights the necessity of a stronger focus on **multilevel governance**, in which regions and metropolitan areas are recognized as **protagonists** and **allies** of traditional state systems.
2. To face the challenges of globalization, governments must restructure and modernize their key economic assets. In this process a **balanced approach is required** to ensure both increased competitiveness and social cohesion.
3. Problems should be tackled at a level **as close as possible to the people**, relying above all on the responsibility of the people and their ability to contribute to a solution. Civic participation should be ensured as early as possible in the political process.

Political commitments

4. The greater role of regions in exchange and the dynamics of economic development should be matched by a strengthening of the **role of regional and sub-national governments in global governance**, including through innovative tools which engage local representatives and citizens from the outset as an indispensable element for democracy and decentralization.
5. Regions, large metropolitan areas and sub-national governments intend to be **protagonists** in the **revival of the world economy** after the crisis.

Innovation dynamics are generated, above all, in the economies of regions and territories.

6. The current economic, environmental and social challenges need new and innovative solutions. Governments strive to ensure sustainable wealth that combines economic growth with the preservation of our natural resources and the promotion of social justice.
7. Sub-national and regional governments, as the public authorities closest to citizens, are prepared to interpret new needs and to try **new policy solutions**, using the flexibility that is typical of such governments in all areas under their jurisdiction.
8. **Energy** is a major topic. The use of renewable energy sources and their local maintenance can help to increase regional value creation and to make regional economies more stable and competitive.
9. To overcome inequality and foster social progress the regions should invest in better **education** and training systems. Active labour market policies should be strengthened to tackle youth unemployment and discrimination against specific groups on the labour market.
10. In the current context, all **welfare** systems are facing era-defining challenges that necessitate solutions where the entire way of conceiving the provision of services for people needs to be changed. In today's world of ever more limited resources, governments need to re-examine the use of technologies and governance models for welfare, seeking both sustainable services and improved quality.

Working and cooperation commitments

11. Sub-national and regional governments commit to **bringing continuity** to the WRF's work by using easy and functional methods of working and communicating, and by **organising a periodic forum** where the progress of the various forms of on-going cooperation can be assessed.

In particular, the members of WRF

12. hope that the **treatment of cancer** and, in general, the protection of health may be ensured and improved, including through exchanges between sub-national entities in accordance with the recommendations from the relevant international organizations. They jointly understand that leading sub-national governments are well positioned to launch high-impact cooperation efforts focusing on comparative analysis and on improving healthcare organizational models. In this, they seek to combine quality care with the efficiency of the healthcare system as a whole. They also see bio-bank networks and collaborative cancer research as areas where cooperation among WRF partners can be further encouraged.

13. agree that the **mobility of researchers** and the sharing of experiences and ideas are essential for the development of the regions and, therefore, of the global economy. As such, these should be facilitated and supported by proactive forms of cross-border collaboration, by adopting innovative and generally accessible forms of open exchange and by urging central governments to grant far-reaching concessions. They believe common efforts by leading regions can help address the needs and demands for high quality higher education and reduce the barriers to human capital mobility.

14. look forward to sustainable **water management** on a regional level that respects water being a symbol of a global public asset for everyone, thus demonstrating that local governments have global issues at heart. They realise the added value of cooperating on environmental aspects that fall directly into the remit of regional governance. They jointly agree with the importance of making available to the World Regions network experiences and tools for the integrated management of water resources and support the idea of further, continued cooperation to achieve a Water Pact that brings together WRF partners.
15. agree to commence joint action to examine the **opportunities to support trade**, especially in relation to strategic market sectors, technological innovation and the optimisation of human capital.
16. are aware of the challenges encompassed in the thematic focal areas of the World Expo to be held in Milan in 2015 with the theme “Feeding the Planet, Energy for Life” and they see the preparation for this as an opportunity to strengthen the World Regions network through joint projects. They welcome the opportunity of a joint participation of the WRF in the 2015 World Expo in Milan, according to a project that will be defined and shared.

Milan, 30th September 2011