Local economic development is a locally managed process, whereby local stakeholders from the public and private sectors and civil society work together to support the sustainable economic development of a community.

The purpose of local economic development is to strengthen the economic capacity of a place and improve the quality of life of all its inhabitants.

Recent decentralization policies in many countries have led local governments to play an increasingly significant role in the process of economic development. The task of creating solid economic environments, which in the past was the sole responsibility of national governments, has passed into local hands: governments, social and educational institutions and companies. Although, these initiatives must be covered with economic resources and accompanied by the necessary administrative competencies that allow effective action by local governments.

In addition, local government associations are fulfilling the important role of coordinating these efforts and supporting their members by formulating strategies, policies and training.

At national level, governments have the responsibility to create policies to support economic development through programs and services that local governments can provide for their respective communities. They are also responsible for determining the level and type of investment and the social profitability of these investments.

The reality of Africa is both complex and diverse at the same time; with ongoing decentralization processes, although incipient in some cases, and with a high potential for regional cooperation and good practices knowledge transfer. It is also a space of great challenges, where internal and external migration phenomena have special significance.

On the subject of the learning workshop, and the key issues of local economic development, a range of recommendations are proposed as starting points:

To the local and regional governments (LRGs) and their associations (AGLs), so that they:

- Engage in dialogue with national and supranational governments to ensure that the needs and concerns of LRGs are clearly understood and supported by the relevant policies and programs;
- Ensure that their local economic development strategies, plans and initiatives are well coordinated and developed within national development strategies that take into account the cultural context and national priorities;
- Ensure that the full range of community voices is heard through the promotion of participatory processes in their approaches to economic development.
- Uphold decentralization processes and demand clear competences in the promotion of local development in their territories, from being administrative managers to promoters and local development directors.
- Improve and develop their internal capacities, consolidating technical structures in local governments that support local political strategies in favour of local economic and social development.
• Enhance the cultural, historical, organizational and community diversity of Africa and its territories, avoiding importing development models and promoting sustainable development based on community values and solidarity.
• Participate in spaces for the exchange of knowledge, good practices and cooperation between territories between African countries and triangulate these experiences with other territories and continents. The global partnership for development must be pursued in the territory, where civil society, private sector, knowledge management entities (university, research centres, etc.) and the public sector (especially local government) must converge on joint strategies that furthermore exchange, nurture, cooperate and contribute to and with other territories.

To national and supranational governments, so that:

• They ensure that clear legal frameworks are in place to allow LRGs to provide leadership in the economic development of their communities;
• They provide LRGs with access to sufficient funding sources to play an effective role as initiators, catalysts and drivers of local economic development in their communities;
• They provide LRGs with support to develop institutional capacities and skills to perform their roles in economic development effectively.
• They recognize local and regional governments (LRGs) as key actors for development and support their full participation, consultation and engagement in national and sectoral policy dialogues on economic development.

To the international development partners, so that:

• They support LRGs and their LGAs in their efforts to develop institutional capacity and skills in all aspects of their roles in DEL;
• They include LRGs and LGAs in international forums and dialogues on economic development.
• They promote or participate in spaces of triangular cooperation, promote South-South cooperation and value good practices, experiences and African realities, respecting the different cultural realities and their local dynamics.

To the actors of organized civil society, so that:

• They recognize the LRGs as key players in the promotion of LED strategies in the territory, seeking coordination and complementarity in their actions.
• They support the LRGs in their advocacy work through the AGLs to promote national and international policies that support DEL.
• They participate actively in the development of participatory strategic plans at the territorial level and take a stand on providing services to the community together with the LRGs.

To the knowledge management authorities (research centres, teaching centres, universities, media), so that:

• They build the necessary partnerships with the GLRs for the achievement of the necessary skills in the population in order to face the challenges of LED: innovations, improvements in production and competitiveness, the sustainability of their actions, social inclusion.
• They foster in their own networks the impact in other authorities so that research, training and outreach programs that strengthen DEL strategies are supported.
UCLG and its local economic and social development commission, as well as UCLG - Africa, want to draw attention to the vital role that LRGs play in local economic and social development.

It is essential to place value on this kind of policies and tools widely used by LRGs around the world also in Africa, respecting the identity and culture of each African country and its people.

We recommend a broad global incidence to identify the policies that need to be developed by national and supranational governments, international development partners and the LRGs themselves and their associations of local governments, in order to enable the LRGs to perform this role more effectively together with its citizenship and the rest of the actors of the territory.