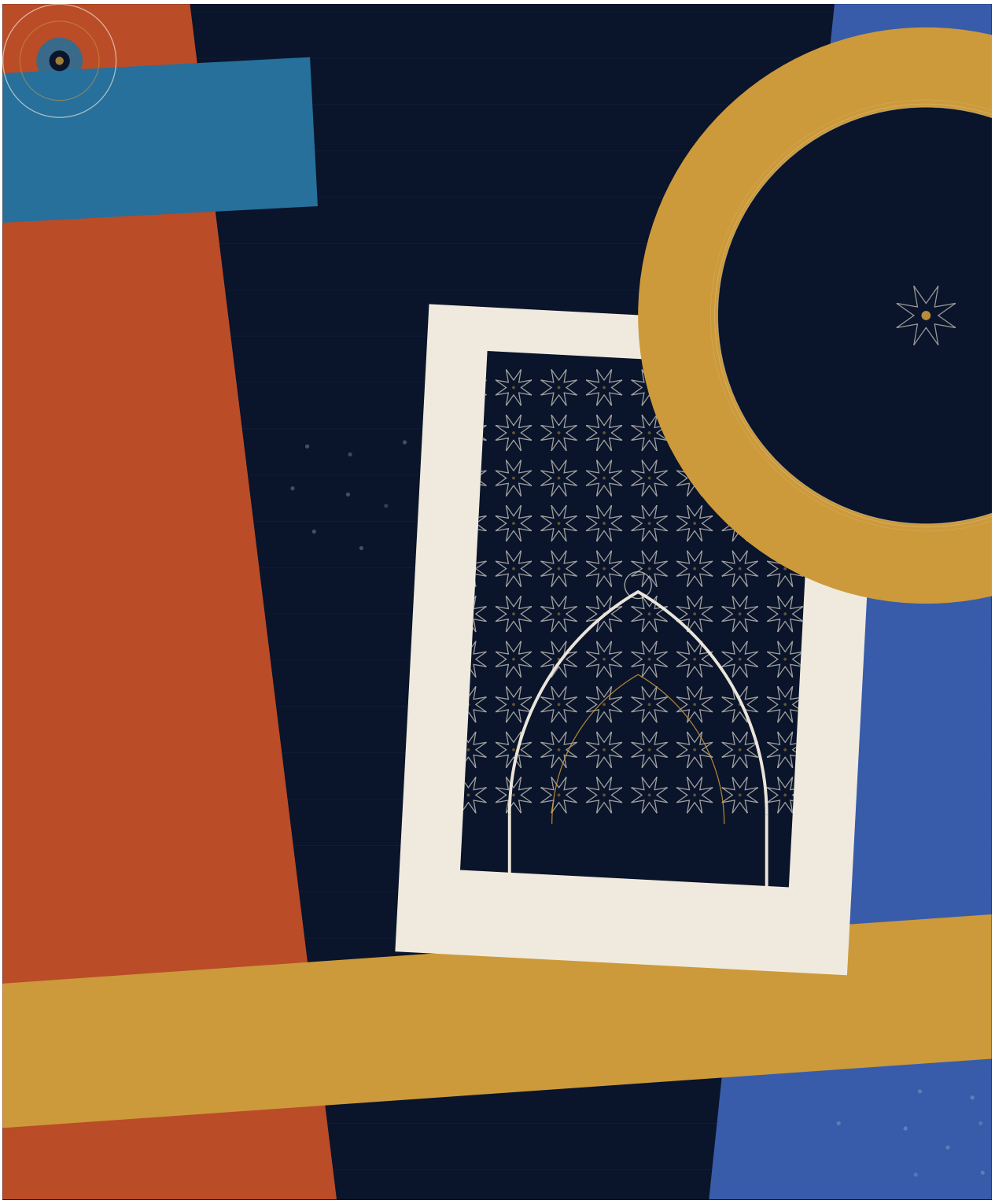
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UJI Urban Journalism Institute
ONCITIES2030 Communities Territories Sustainability
Developed with UCLG CGLU

Editorial

The most important political conversations of our time are not always taking place where we expect: They often unfold in neighbourhoods, towns, cities and regions, not just in national capitals, international organisations or global summits. These are the places where climate change impacts are managed, housing pressures are felt, care needs are organised, public services are delivered and trust in institutions is tested and built every day.

Local stories remain underrepresented in the broader public conversation. For more than a century, the international municipal movement has defended local self-government, decentralisation, proximity and the need for local authorities to have the powers and resources required to serve their communities. Its roots reach back to the early twentieth century, long before today's language of localisation and multilevel governance became common in global policy debates. The conviction that local governments matter is not new, but the world around it has changed.

Over the past decade, and particularly through the collective advocacy of the Global Taskforce of Local and Regional Governments, the municipal movement has become increasingly visible in global debates on development, climate, migration, housing, peace and human rights.

Local and regional governments are no longer only asking to be recognised as implementers of global agendas, but they are instead claiming their place as political actors capable of shaping them.

That is also where *The Municipal Times* comes from. Created by the Urban Journalism Institute, an initiative of the non-profit organisation OnCities2030, with the support of UCLG, *The Municipal Times* was born from the simple belief that local and regional governments deserve stronger journalistic attention. After all, they are central to the future of our societies.

The first edition was published during the UCLG World Congress in Daejeon in 2022, when the municipal movement adopted the Pact for the Future of Humanity and sought to articulate a common vision after a period marked by crisis, recovery and uncertainty.

Four years later, the movement gathers again — this time in Tangier. But the world we face has changed.

Housing has become one of the defining political pressures in cities of every size. Climate emergencies are no longer future scenarios but local budget lines, emergency responses and planning decisions. Care has moved from the private sphere into the centre of public debate. Public services are under strain and democratic trust is fragile. Meanwhile, the international community is already beginning to look beyond 2030.

Against this backdrop, the UCLG World Congress and World Summit of Local and Regional Leaders takes on a particularly important role. Mayors, governors, and local officials come together to take stock of what has changed since Daejeon, to renew the leadership of the movement, and to define how to shape the next political cycle.

Tangier will bring together statutory debates, political assemblies, public service dialogues, discussions on housing justice, care, climate resilience, peace, feminist municipalism, local finance, and the future of global agendas. But behind the programme lies the larger debate of what communities can expect from public institutions in a time of profound transformation.

That question is at the centre of the Local Social Covenant, and *The Municipal Times Outlook* — this special edition ahead of the Congress — is conceived as a companion to that conversation. It is an invitation to understand what is at stake before the Congress begins: the ideas gaining momentum, the tensions shaping the agenda, the city hosting the debate, and the answers local and regional leaders will carry home when the sessions end.

As readers move through these pages, we hope they encounter not only Tangier, but also a movement in transition — from the Pact for the Future adopted in Daejeon to a Local Social Covenant rooted in rights, services, care, dignity and everyday life.

Because if the challenges of our time are increasingly experienced locally, the voices of local and regional governments need to be heard more clearly. That was true in Daejeon and it remains true in Tangier. These voices will matter long after the Congress concludes.

Emilia Sáiz

Secretary-General of United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG)



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Welcome to Tangier.

Welcome to the UCLG World Congress 2026, a gathering that takes place at a defining moment for local and regional governments and for the future of multilateralism itself.

As the world faces growing uncertainty, every day there are spheres of government that make rights tangible through the delivery of public services. The governments of proximity that UCLG represents are well placed to strengthen communities, foster inclusion, and respond to the dreams and aspirations of people building trust in public institutions.

The theme of this Congress, **"A New Generation of Universal Local Public Services,"** is both a call and a commitment. At a time when confidence in collective action is being tested, when development and rights seem trade-offs, local public services remain one of the most powerful expressions of solidarity, democracy, and care. They are the means through which housing, health, food, mobility, culture, education, and care become realities rather than aspirations. They are also the foundation upon which a renewed and more effective multilateralism can be built.

Gathering in Tangier, at the heart of the "100 Days of Local Multilateralism," we have an opportunity to advance a shared vision for the future, based on concrete actions that impact our daily lives everywhere. This Congress is a moment to demonstrate that Local and Regional Governments are willing to design their collective agenda with civil society, to acknowledge that caring for the neighbours in our cities and towns implies caring for the rest of the world, that sometimes responsibilities go beyond competences and that transformations in our societies go faster than our governance systems.

The UCLG membership and partners are ready to put to the test the transformative power of territories, of a Local Multilateralism that works, anchored in public service delivery, the protection of the commons and the vision of communities ready to reshape societies. Across the world, local and regional governments are already pioneering innovative approaches to service delivery, strengthening partnerships with communities, and showing how public action can reconnect global ambitions with local realities.

Our Congress comes at a time of great responsibility: we need to reconquer our humanity at a time when artificial intelligence is questioning our value. We need to understand solidarity when fear might drive us to put ourselves first. We need to renew without forgetting what we have learned.

We come to Tangier convinced that we can make a difference and that our diversity continues to be our strength. May this Congress drive the movement into a next frontier: with people, driven by solidarity, and capable of delivering meaningful change. Welcome to Tangier. Welcome to the home of local multilateralism and to the collective effort to build a new generation of universal local public services.

Mounir Lymouri
Mayor of Tangier

MAYOR, WHAT DOES IT MEAN FOR TANGIER TO HOST THE UCLG WORLD CONGRESS?

It is a great honour, and also a responsibility. Tangier will become a meeting point for thousands of mayors and territorial leaders from around the world at a key moment for the future of the international municipal movement.

WHAT WILL PARTICIPANTS FIND WHEN THEY ARRIVE IN THE CITY?

They will find a city open to the world, situated between continents and cultures, and shaped by dialogue, cooperation and innovation. We want Tangier to be a place of encounter, where local solutions can inspire global responses.

WHAT DO YOU HOPE WILL BE THE MAIN POLITICAL OUTCOME OF THE CONGRESS?

The Congress comes at a decisive moment for building a new stage of local multilateralism. We want to contribute to a common agenda based on strong public services, cooperation among territories and a renewed relationship between governments and citizens.

WHAT IS YOUR WELCOME MESSAGE TO PARTICIPANTS?

Welcome to Tangier. This city will be the home of the global municipal movement. We hope every participant will find a space to build alliances, share experiences and strengthen the role of local governments in shaping a more sustainable, inclusive and peaceful future.



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The politics of proximity

WHY TANGIER IS AT THE HEART OF GLOBAL GOVERNANCE

Local governments are on the front lines. They are the first to receive complaints when the bus does not arrive, when housing becomes unaffordable, or when heatwaves, floods or fires move from climate models into streets, schools and emergency rooms. They are the first to navigate the daily negotiation between what communities need and what institutions can actually deliver.

This is what makes mayors, governors and local leaders politically different. They govern from close at hand rather than from afar, and they make an impact where politics becomes visible.

Local and regional governments have never seen themselves merely as implementers of decisions made elsewhere. They raise taxes, manage budgets, deliver services, regulate territory, convene communities, respond to emergencies, negotiate with citizens, and make political choices every day. From their point of view, the argument that they "matter" was settled long ago by the act of governing itself.

Multilateral institutions and national political systems have often treated local and regional governments as delivery arms rather than as political actors, and therein lies the problem.

They are asked to implement agendas they did not fully shape, absorb pressures they did not create, or respond to crises with powers and resources that rarely match the scale of expectation. That mismatch has become one of the central questions of contemporary governance.

A survey of OECD countries shows that trust in public institutions remains fragile. Government at a Glance 2025 reports that 39 per cent of people express high or moderately high trust in their national government, while 44 per cent report low or no trust. Local government performs better, at 45 per cent, the same level as the civil service and above national parliaments, which stand at 37 per cent. The OECD also points to a deeper issue: political agency. Among people who feel they have a voice in government decisions, 69 per cent report high or moderately high trust in national government; among those who feel they lack a voice, the figure falls to 22 per cent.

These figures do not suggest that local governments are immune from distrust. Proximity does not automatically produce legitimacy. In fact, sometimes it produces the opposite: residents know exactly where to direct anger when services fail, neighbourhoods change or public promises remain unmet. But the data help explain why local democracy remains so politically important: the closer institutions are to daily life, the more they depend on participation, responsiveness and the feeling that people can shape decisions that affect them. This is where many of the defining political battles of the next decade will be fought.

Housing is no longer only an urban planning issue; we are talking about security, inequality, displacement and belonging. Climate change is no longer only a diplomatic file. It is drainage, shade, heat, water and public budgets. Migration is not only



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border policy; it is schooling, housing, work and local inclusion. And care is not only a private matter. It is time, labour, gender justice and social organisation.

Public services sit at the centre of this shift. They are where the promise of government becomes measurable. A service either arrives or it does not. A neighbourhood is connected or it is not. A child has a place to learn, an older person has support, a family has water, a woman has safe transport, a young person has somewhere to participate — or they do not.

The debate on a new generation of universal local public services is therefore political rather than technical. It asks what communities should be able to expect from public institutions in a period of climate instability, social fragmentation, demographic change and democratic uncertainty. It also explains why the current backlash against pluralism, equality and rights matters so deeply for the municipal movement.

Local democracy is not only about administration. It is about how communities define who belongs, whose needs are visible, who is safe in public space, who is heard, and which forms of solidarity remain possible.

The values of the municipal movement have always been rooted in the idea of community — a concept that is not neutral. It can be used to include as well as exclude, to protect or police, to open institutions or close them. In the coming years, local and regional governments will not only be judged by whether they deliver services, but also by what kind of public life they defend.

UCLG enters this debate with a particular history. Created in 2004 through the unification of the International Union of Local Authorities (IULA) and the World Federation of United Cities (FMCU), it has tried to give form to a claim that is simple in principle but difficult in practice: local and regional governments are part of governance, not outside it.

They localise decisions and thereby govern societies. This is what makes UCLG complex, as well as significant.

The push for the inclusion of local and regional governments became particularly visible during the negotiations around the Sustainable Development Goals and the New Urban Agenda. Through the Global Taskforce of Local and Regional Governments, the municipal movement worked to ensure that local and regional authorities were recognised in global agendas not as decorative partners, but as necessary actors. In 2016, the New Urban Agenda recognised the World Assembly of Local and Regional Governments in its follow-up and review process.

While this recognition was an important step, it did not solve the problem. The multilateral system remains overwhelmingly state-centred. National governments still decide the formal rules of global negotiation. Local and regional governments may be invited, consulted, showcased or acknowledged, but they are not yet structurally embedded in the way global decisions are made.

The United Nations has moved in recent years, including through the Secretary-General's Advisory Group on Local and Regional Governments. The initiative signalled that the UN system understands the gap, but it still remains.

This is the political context in which the UCLG World Congress and World Summit of Local and Regional Leaders will take place in Tangier.

Local governments have wanted to influence global affairs for decades. As the gap between what local and regional governments are asked to do and how little they currently shape the systems around them is becoming harder to ignore, Tangier arrives at a crucial time.

It comes ten years after the adoption of the New Urban Agenda. It follows the Pact for the Future adopted by UCLG in Daejeon





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in 2022. It takes place after the United Nations adopted its own Pact for the Future in 2024. It sits inside the 100 Days of Local Multilateralism, a sequence connecting the World Urban Forum, the UCLG World Congress, the High-Level Political Forum and the review of SDG 11, as well as the ten-year review of the implementation of the New Urban Agenda. And it looks ahead to the post-2030 debate, where the next global development agenda will begin to take shape.

In Tangier, UCLG will also elect its leadership for the next cycle and is expected to approve the Local Social Covenant. That combination — leadership renewal, a new political framework and the post-2030 horizon — is what gives the Congress its weight.

The Pact for the Future gave the municipal movement a shared horizon built around care, the planet and government. The Local Social Covenant tries to move that discussion into a more concrete phase.

Prepared through a process involving elected leaders, organised civil society, UCLG Policy Councils and the Town Hall, the Covenant addresses housing, local finance, public health, food systems, conflict prevention, climate justice, culture and new essentials, with care, anti-racism and youth running across the process.

The Covenant is being shaped through dialogue with civil society partners, public service actors, thematic networks and local leaders. It reflects UCLG's ambition to make the municipal movement a space where diverse voices enter political debate, even when the concepts are complex and the achievements are difficult to translate into simple headlines.

Much of the municipal movement's work happens far from public view. A mayor responding to a flood is easy to understand. A local government network trying to influence the design of the post-2030 agenda is harder to communicate.

The architecture matters because it shapes whether local governments will have the mandate, finance and recognition to respond when crises arrive.

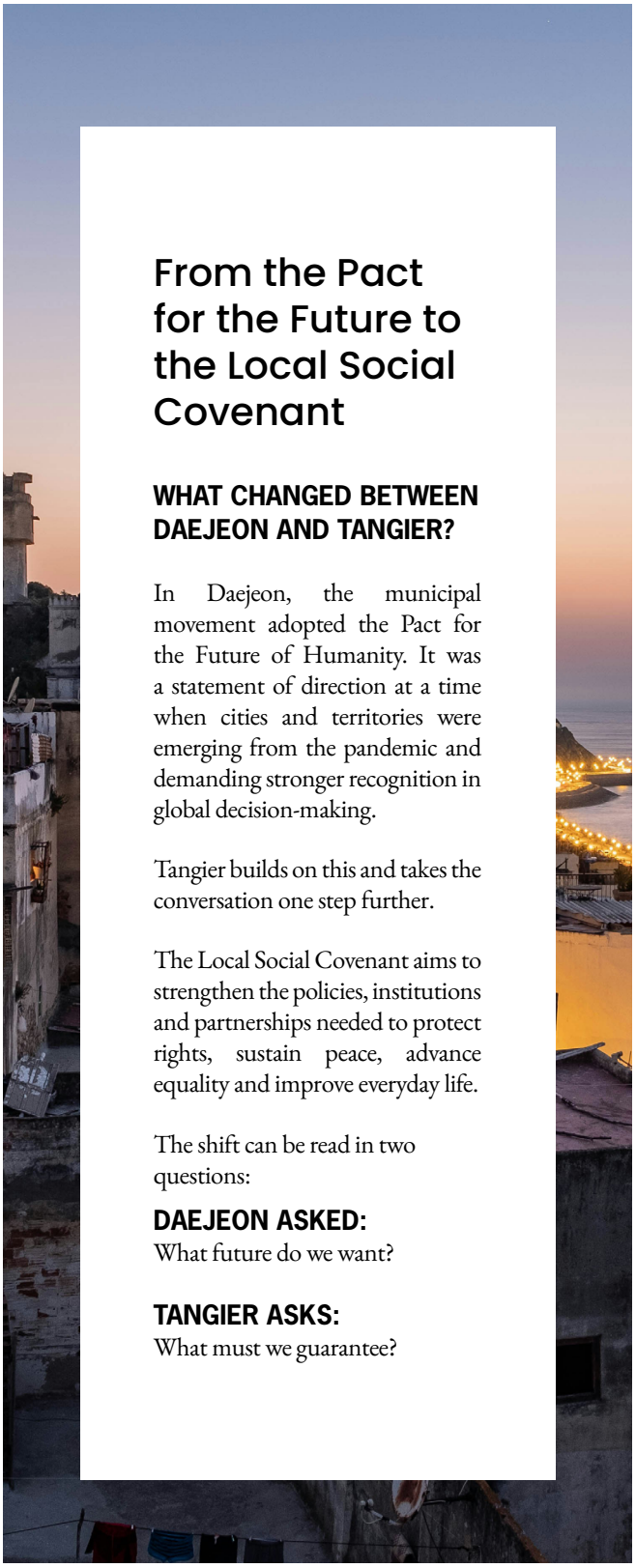
The same is true of political representation, which has often been an entry point for women's political participation, but is also a place where inequality, violence and exclusion remain visible. Within UCLG, the feminist municipal movement has gained stronger political space. The Congress in Tangier will include the first UCLG Women Assembly, bringing together women mayors, governors and local leaders to advance equality, leadership and feminist municipalism.

A movement that speaks about care, public services, anti-racism, youth participation and everyday essentials cannot treat equality as an add-on. It has to ask who governs, whose experience shapes policy, whose safety is protected, and whose labour is recognised.

Tangier will not answer all these questions, but it will bring them into the same political space: statutory meetings, regional assemblies, Town Hall processes, Local4Action sessions, public service workers, the Tangier-Morocco Track, civil society partners, women leaders, youth engagement, housing justice, care, finance, climate, culture and post-2030.

This defining feature of a coalition of coalitions makes the Congress politically interesting and highly relevant. Beyond discussing global challenges, participants will try to define a collective voice before the next global agenda is written.

So, the question is not whether local and regional governments matter. They already govern. The question is whether the systems around them — national, regional and multilateral — are ready to treat them accordingly.



From the Pact for the Future to the Local Social Covenant

WHAT CHANGED BETWEEN DAEJEON AND TANGIER?

In Daejeon, the municipal movement adopted the Pact for the Future of Humanity. It was a statement of direction at a time when cities and territories were emerging from the pandemic and demanding stronger recognition in global decision-making.

Tangier builds on this and takes the conversation one step further.

The Local Social Covenant aims to strengthen the policies, institutions and partnerships needed to protect rights, sustain peace, advance equality and improve everyday life.

The shift can be read in two questions:

DAEJEON ASKED:
What future do we want?

TANGIER ASKS:
What must we guarantee?

The Local Social Covenant in Five Questions

1. WHAT IS IT?
A political framework to rethink the relationship between people, communities and public institutions from the local level. It places rights, services, care, dignity and participation at the centre of the municipal agenda.

2. WHY NOW?
Because communities are facing pressures that can no longer be addressed through isolated policies. Housing, care, climate, food, health, culture, safety and trust are increasingly connected. The Covenant responds to that interdependence.

3. WHAT DOES IT MEAN FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENTS?
It recognises local and regional governments not only as service providers, but as democratic institutions capable of convening communities, defending rights and shaping global debates from territorial realities.

4. WHAT DOES IT MEAN FOR PEOPLE?
At its best, it means that rights become visible in daily life. A home that is not out of reach. Care that is recognised and supported. Public services that are accessible and reliable. Food, health and culture treated as part of dignity. Participation that is not symbolic. Local institutions able to respond when daily life becomes harder.

5. WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?
The Local Social Covenant will inspire the Tangier Outcome Document. Everyday essentials and the governance of proximity will provide the framework for the next UCLG mandate, the Triennial Work Plan, the post-2030 debate and the work of cities, regions and territories.

The 100 Days of Local Multilateralism



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Since 21 April 2026, the municipal movement has been moving through the 100 Days of Local Multilateralism: a political cycle designed to connect key global moments and sharpen the collective voice of local and regional governments.

The process will conclude on 30 July 2026. Between those two dates sit some of the most important international debates of the year: the World Urban Forum, the UCLG World Congress and World Summit of Local and Regional Leaders, the High-Level Political Forum and the review of SDG 11 on sustainable cities and communities, as well as the ten-year review of the implementation of the New Urban Agenda.

At first glance, it may look like a sequence of events. But the point is not the calendar itself. It is what local and regional governments do with it.

The 100 Days process tries to change the order of the conversation. Instead of arriving at each global forum with separate messages, the municipal movement is seeking to build continuity between debates that are too often treated apart: public services, care, housing, gender equality, climate action, migration, local finance, urban development and the post-2030 agenda.

Tangier is the political centre of that journey. By the time delegates gather in Morocco, many of these conversations will already have been underway for months.

The Congress will therefore do more than host sessions and adopt decisions. It will bring different strands of the 100 Days together and help define what the municipal movement wants to carry into the global conversations that follow.

The 100 Days should not be read as a countdown, but rather as a relay: each milestone carries something forward, and each gathering tests whether local and regional governments can move from visibility to influence.

{ 100 days of local multilateralism }

The global questions inside Tangier

FIVE PRESSURES SHAPING THE CONGRESS CONVERSATION

The Congress in Tangier takes place at a time of international instability, marked by wars, geopolitical tension, economic uncertainty, climate pressure, democratic fatigue and growing demands for institutions to respond more visibly to everyday life.

The programme should not only be read as a municipal agenda. It can also be read as a local reading of global pressures.

1. Cooperation in a harder world

The language of local multilateralism sounds different when international cooperation is under strain. Debates on peace, decentralised cooperation, city diplomacy, South-South cooperation and the post-2030 agenda all point to a practical question: how can local and regional governments keep channels of cooperation open when national and global politics become more fragmented?

2. The cost of daily life

Housing, care, food, health, transport and public services are not separate concerns for residents. They are the conditions through which people experience security, dignity and trust. In Tangier, the discussion on everyday essentials brings the social agenda closer to the pressures felt by communities: the cost of living, access to services, time, care responsibilities and the ability to remain in place.

3. Climate as accountability

Climate is no longer only a question of targets. For cities and territories, it is becoming a question of responsibility: who pays for loss and damage, who protects communities from heat and floods, who plans for adaptation, and who is left exposed when climate impacts arrive? Tangier brings this accountability question into the local governance debate.

4. Democracy where people live

Trust, participation and representation are not abstract democratic values. They are tested locally: in public space, in services, in safety, in housing, in whether people feel heard and in who gets to lead.

The Women Assembly, Town Hall, youth engagement, diaspora debates and civil society spaces all point to a broader concern: democracy will not be renewed only through institutions. It will also be renewed through everyday inclusion.

5. The next development agenda

The world is still working towards the Sustainable Development Goals, but the post-2030 conversation has already begun. Tangier gives local and regional governments a chance to enter that debate before the next agenda is fully written. The goal is to ensure that realities from communities shape this agenda.





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How to read the Tangier Congress

A guide to the week behind the programme

The Tangier programme is dense by design.

Meetings begin before the official opening. Sessions overlap. Regional caucuses, statutory meetings, assemblies, Town Hall working sessions, Local4Action dialogues, launches, partner-led conversations and the Tangier-Morocco Track all unfold across the same four days.

A Congress of this scale is best understood by looking at how the week is built: some spaces prepare positions, some take decisions, some open political debates, some connect partners, and some show how the host city and country enter the global conversation. For readers arriving in Tangier, or following from elsewhere, the first task is to know where to look.

Start before the opening

The official opening will take place on 23 June, but by then the Congress will already have begun.

On 22 June, regional caucuses from MEWA, Africa, Europe, ASPAC and LATAM will meet. Town Hall working sessions will begin. Local government representatives and public service workers will discuss the future of local public service provision. Development cooperation, metropolitan inequality and territorial solidarity will also enter the week before the formal ceremony.

Follow the tracks, not every session

The programme can look overwhelming if read session by session. If you read it by track, it will be easier to understand.

The **Statutory Track** is where UCLG's institutional decisions are made.

The **Assembly Track** is where regions and constituencies organise their voices within the world organisation.

The **Town Hall** brings civil society and partners into the policy process.

The **Local4Action** spaces show how local practice, partnerships and experimentation feed into political debate.

The **Tangier-Morocco Track** gives the host city and country a substantive role in the Congress conversation.

The tracks also help participants make choices. A mayor interested in institutional direction may follow the statutory meetings. A civil society partner may look closely at the Town Hall.

The programme is not asking everyone to attend everything. It is offering different ways into the same political week.









Know where decisions happen

The Executive Bureau, General Assembly and World Council are part of UCLG's statutory life. They are also where Tangier becomes more than a gathering of local leaders.

The Executive Bureau will meet on 23 June. The General Assembly follows later that day, and the World Council meets on 24 and 25 June.

These meetings matter because they connect the Congress to the organisation's next mandate. They are where the movement reviews the previous cycle, discusses political direction, adopts priorities and prepares leadership renewal.

The final day will be especially important. The World Council is expected to take up the adoption of the Local Social Covenant, the Triennial Work Plan and the elections of UCLG leadership.

For anyone trying to understand the political weight of Tangier, this is where to focus.

The Congress will produce many conversations. The statutory track shows which ones are turned into mandate.

Watch the host city

Host cities often appear in congresses through welcomes, visits and official photographs.

The Tangier-Morocco Track brings the host territory into the substance of the programme, with sessions on port city ecosystems, green growth, climate loss and damage, urban engineering, diaspora representation, food security, South-South cooperation and democratic transformation from the perspective of the Global South.

These debates resonate differently in Tangier, a city shaped by movement, geography, infrastructure, diplomacy and proximity between Africa and Europe. The host city is more than a backdrop to the Congress.

Read the week in four movements

Each day has a different function.

22 June is about preparation.
Regional caucuses, Town Hall sessions, public service workers, cooperation actors and metropolitan voices begin aligning messages before the Congress opens formally.

23 June is about institutional direction.
The Executive Bureau and General Assembly review the previous cycle and look towards the next one. The official opening brings the Congress into public view.

24 June is about representation and everyday essentials. The first UCLG Women Assembly places women's leadership and feminist municipalism inside the Congress week. The World Council brings core social priorities into the institutional debate.

25 June is about decisions and handover. The World Council is expected to adopt the Local Social Covenant and Triennial Work Plan, and to elect UCLG's leadership. The closing ceremony marks the transition to the next mandate.

26 June extends the conversation to metropolitan leadership. The Metropolis Assembly brings the metropolitan agenda into the final stretch of the week.

That is the basic rhythm of the week: preparation, direction, representation, decision.

Do not try to hear everything

The most useful way to follow Tangier is to look for the connections, instead of listening to every session.

Where do public services appear? Where does housing move from policy concern to political priority? Where does care connect with gender, ageing, public work and community life? Where does the post-2030 agenda enter the discussion? Where does the host city change the way the Congress speaks about Africa, the Mediterranean and the Global South?

Those connections will tell the story of the Congress more clearly than any single session.

Seven Signals to Watch in Tangier

1. Leadership renewal — UCLG enters a new mandate.

2. Universal local public services — the Local Social Covenant begins with services.

3. Public workers — the renewal of the UCLG–PSI agreement brings labour into the debate.

4. Housing justice — the Housing Justice Academy moves housing into the political centre.

5. Women's leadership — the first UCLG Women Assembly signals a stronger feminist municipal agenda.

6. Post-2030 — local governments want to shape the next global agenda early.

7. Tangier-Morocco Track — the host city brings Africa, the Mediterranean and the Global South into the Congress conversation.



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Voices from local leaders

Uğur İbrahim Altay *on Cities Countdown to 2030 and the road to COP31*

YOU HAVE LED THE CITIES COUNTDOWN TO 2030 INITIATIVE SINCE ITS INCEPTION. WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

Cities Countdown to 2030 is much more than a monitoring mechanism. It is a platform that showcases transformative projects led by cities and regions, and demonstrates that localisation is one of the main engines of sustainable development.

As we move closer to 2030, the initiative is helping to accelerate SDG localisation, promote concrete and scalable solutions, and connect local political leadership with global ambition.

Cities and regions are on the front lines of many of today's challenges — from climate change and urban resilience to social inclusion and economic transformation. Through Cities Countdown to 2030, local and regional governments can share experiences, demonstrate progress, mobilise partnerships and inspire replication across regions.

HOW DOES THIS INITIATIVE CONNECT WITH THE ROAD TO COP31?

The Cities Countdown process is directly linked to the implementation of the SDG transitions at local level. Local and regional governments are already leading efforts on climate adaptation, resilience, sustainable mobility and inclusive urban development.

But to close the implementation gap, they need adequate access to finance, stronger multilevel governance and formal recognition within international decision-making processes.

The road to COP31 is an opportunity to strengthen the role of local governments in global climate action. Through Cities Countdown to 2030, we are highlighting practical solutions that are already delivering results on the ground and showing that climate and development goals require empowered local leadership and effective partnerships across all levels of government.



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WHAT MESSAGE WILL YOU BRING TO TANGIER?

My message is clear: local and regional governments are where societal needs are first felt, crises are first observed and solutions are first developed.

Global challenges such as climate change, inequality, migration, social cohesion and infrastructure needs become visible first in our cities. That is why global goals can only be achieved locally, through strong commitment, effective capacity and close engagement with communities.

A one-size-fits-all development model is no longer sufficient. Each society has its own priorities, each region its own needs and each city its own realities. The post-2030 agenda must therefore be more flexible, inclusive and responsive to local contexts, while maintaining a shared commitment to global objectives.

In Tangier, we will emphasise the need to strengthen the role of local and regional governments within global governance architectures, so that local realities are systematically reflected in the international decisions shaping our shared future.

Clara Brugada *on caring cities and the Local Social Covenant*

YOU HAVE SAID THAT CITIES MUST BECOME "CARING CITIES". WHAT DOES THAT MEAN IN PRACTICE?

A caring city is a city that recognises that all of us need care at some point in our lives — and that this responsibility can no longer fall only on families, and even less on women.

It is a city that places the wellbeing of people and communities at the centre. It cares for those who need care, and also for those who provide it.

In Mexico City, we are turning that vision into reality. In 2025, we launched the country's first Public Care System. Its main expression is the UTOPIAS: large public spaces that bring free care, wellbeing, culture, sport, education, health and recreation services closer to communities.

These are spaces designed for people and families. They allow residents to exercise the right to care, to be cared for and to practise self-care close to home. They include laundry services, dining rooms, childcare, day centres for older people, rehabilitation, hydrotherapy and spa facilities, full health services and spaces for carers to rest.

Today, Mexico City has 20 UTOPIAS, representing more than 750,000 square metres of recovered public space transformed for people's wellbeing. Our goal is to build 100 UTOPIAS by 2030, bringing care services to more and more communities.

This effort is complemented by the Casas de las Tres R — Revalue, Redistribute and Reduce care work — specialised spaces that support carers, promote shared responsibility between women and men, and help transform the way care is organised in society.

WHY IS THIS AGENDA SO IMPORTANT GLOBALLY?

Many revolutions have taken place in the world, but one thing has remained almost intact: the social organisation of care. Throughout history, cities have built avenues, airports, economic centres, financial districts and major infrastructure. But they left pending a fundamental transformation: building the public care infrastructure needed to sustain life and guarantee people's wellbeing.

Care was treated as a private responsibility of families, and above all of women. We think differently. We believe care must become a collective responsibility and a central focus of public policy.

We need cities that care for women, children, older people, persons with disabilities and all groups that have historically experienced exclusion and inequality. Care work sustains life, communities and cities, but it remains one of the most invisible activities in our societies — outside economic indicators and outside public priorities.

That is why we are advocating for care to occupy the same place in public priorities as mobility, the environment or education. Care is not a private matter. It is a collective responsibility. A city that cares is a more equal city. It acts for social, territorial and gender justice.

This is one of the great transformations we are advancing in Mexico City, and one we want to share with the world in spaces of dialogue and exchange, including the World Urban Forum, which we will have the honour of hosting in 2028.

HOW DOES THIS VISION CONNECT WITH THE LOCAL SOCIAL COVENANT PROMOTED BY UCLG?

I see a very clear connection. The Local Social Covenant seeks to rebuild the social contract from proximity, by strengthening public services and rights. Care as infrastructure, budget and public service are powerful tools to achieve that. To speak about care is to speak about equality, social cohesion and local democracy.

HOW DO YOU HOPE TO CONTRIBUTE TO THE WORLD CONGRESS IN TANGIER?

The experience of Mexico City shows that it is possible to move towards an urban transformation based on care, social justice and full rights. Cities can lead a new global agenda that is more human, more inclusive and more rooted in people's everyday lives.



The many lives of Tangier

Tangier has a habit of becoming whatever history asks of it.

A gateway, a refuge, an artists' sanctuary, an industrial powerhouse... Few cities have changed identities so many times without ever losing their own.

From the terrace cafés overlooking the Strait of Gibraltar, Europe appears deceptively close. Proximity has always been Tangier's business; for centuries, the city has occupied a narrow strip of geography where continents, languages and cultures meet. The result is a city that rarely sits still.

Tangier's told through movement: people arriving, leaving, trading, working, returning and imagining new lives across the Strait. Beyond a place of passage, Tangier is a city where local identities, languages, economies and everyday practices have continually adapted without disappearing.

Unlike many historic port cities that might have been tempted to live on memory alone, Tangier has undergone one of the most significant urban and economic transformations in the Mediterranean over the past two decades. One of the driving forces behind this has been the arrival of Tanger Med, which changed the landscape.

What was once a city looking towards its past became a city looking decisively towards the future. The port complex transformed northern Morocco into a strategic logistics and industrial hub. With it, new industries arrived, infrastructure expanded and investment followed.

Yet the old Tangier remains stubbornly present. Walk through the Medina in the early morning and traders still open shops beneath centuries-old walls. In the Grand Socco, conversations drift between Arabic, French, Spanish and Darija. Families gather on the seafront promenade in the evening. Young people claim public space with an ease that feels distinctly Mediterranean. This coexistence of old and new may be Tangier's defining characteristic.

The city has never chosen between heritage and transformation because it has learned to live with both, and that balancing act is visible across the urban landscape. Historic neighbourhoods overlook new districts, traditional markets coexist with modern logistics platforms, and international investment meets deeply local identities.

Cities often speak about resilience, but Tangier embodies this concept through its history of continuous negotiation with change. Many of the questions shaping urban debates today are questions Tangier has been confronting for decades:

How do cities remain open without losing their identity? How do they benefit from globalisation without becoming dependent on it? How do they embrace transformation while preserving a sense of place?

Visitors will find different answers depending on where they look: in the Medina, on the waterfront, in cultural spaces, or in the debates taking place throughout the Congress.

The best way to understand Tangier may not be to read about it. It may be to explore it — and join the conversations that the city is hosting this week.





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Urban Walk

Tangier: Reinvention at the Edge of the World

Distance: 4 km walking route
Duration: Half day
Starting point: Palais des Arts
Ending point: Kasbah overlooking the Strait

Most visitors discover Tangier through its history. This walk explores the city through seven places that reveal how Tangier is reinventing itself today: through culture, public space, care, heritage and territorial transformation.

Stop 1

Palais des Arts -
The new civic stage

The Congress begins here. Located along Tangier's expanding waterfront, the Palais des Arts reflects a city increasingly positioning itself as a cultural and international hub. More than a venue, it symbolises a city investing in civic and cultural life alongside economic growth. Before heading towards the Medina, take a moment to observe the surroundings.

Look for: the contrast between the modern waterfront and the historic city rising above it.

Address: Tangier Waterfront District

Stop 2

The Corniche and Marina -
Tangier turns back towards the sea

Like many port cities, Tangier once turned its back on the waterfront. Today, the Marina and Corniche have reconnected the city with the sea, creating one of its most vibrant public spaces. Families, runners, visitors and residents share the same promenade, particularly at sunset. The success of the project lies less in the architecture than in the life it attracts.

Question to take with you: Who is public space designed for?

Location: Avenue Mohammed VI, Marina Bay

Stop 3

Think Tanger Kiosk -
The city as a conversation

Founded as a civic innovation platform, Think Tanger has become one of the city's most interesting spaces for reflecting on urban change, public participation and sustainable development. Through research, exhibitions, debates and community engagement, it encourages residents to think critically about the future of their city. For visitors, Think Tanger offers a different perspective on Tangier.

Question to consider: Who gets to imagine the future of the city?

Address: 14 Rue Khalid Ibn El Oualid

Stop 4

Cinema Rif and the Grand Socco -
Culture as urban infrastructure

At the edge of the Medina, facing the Grand Socco, stands Cinema Rif — one of Tangier's most beloved cultural institutions. Facing the Grand Socco, Cinema Rif is one of Tangier's most important cultural institutions. More than a cinema, it is a gathering space, a platform for dialogue and a symbol of the city's contemporary creative scene. Around it, one of Tangier's busiest public squares continues to bring together residents, artists, students and visitors. This place proves that cities need cultural as much as physical infrastructure.

Look for: how different communities occupy and share the same space.

Address: Place du 9 Avril 1947 (Grand Socco)



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Stop 5

The Medina -
Adaptation as an urban strategy

The most remarkable thing about Tangier's Medina is not its age. It is its ability to adapt. For centuries, the district has absorbed new residents, new economies and new visitors while maintaining a strong sense of identity. The Medina is not a preserved relic; it is a living neighbourhood. Many cities speak about resilience. Tangier's historic core demonstrates that resilience often comes through adaptation.

Look for: local commerce, workshops and everyday life thriving alongside tourism.

Access: Enter from Grand Socco and continue towards the Kasbah.

Stop 6

Association DARNA -
Where care becomes visible

Founded in 1995, DARNA works with women and young people through education, vocational training and social inclusion programmes. For visitors interested in the growing prominence of care in urban policy, this is an opportunity to see what the concept looks like beyond strategies and declarations. Here, care becomes opportunity, skills and participation.

Question to consider: What would happen if cities measured care as seriously as they measure infrastructure?

Address: 9 Rue du Détroit, Marshan

Stop 7

The Kasbah -
Looking in every direction

Finish the walk at the Kasbah. From here, Tangier reveals itself all at once: the Strait, the port, the Medina, Europe, the Atlantic and the Mediterranean. Old and new. Local and global. Past and future. Few viewpoints explain the city more clearly. Tangier's history has never been about choosing between identities. It has been about connecting them.

Address: Place de la Kasbah

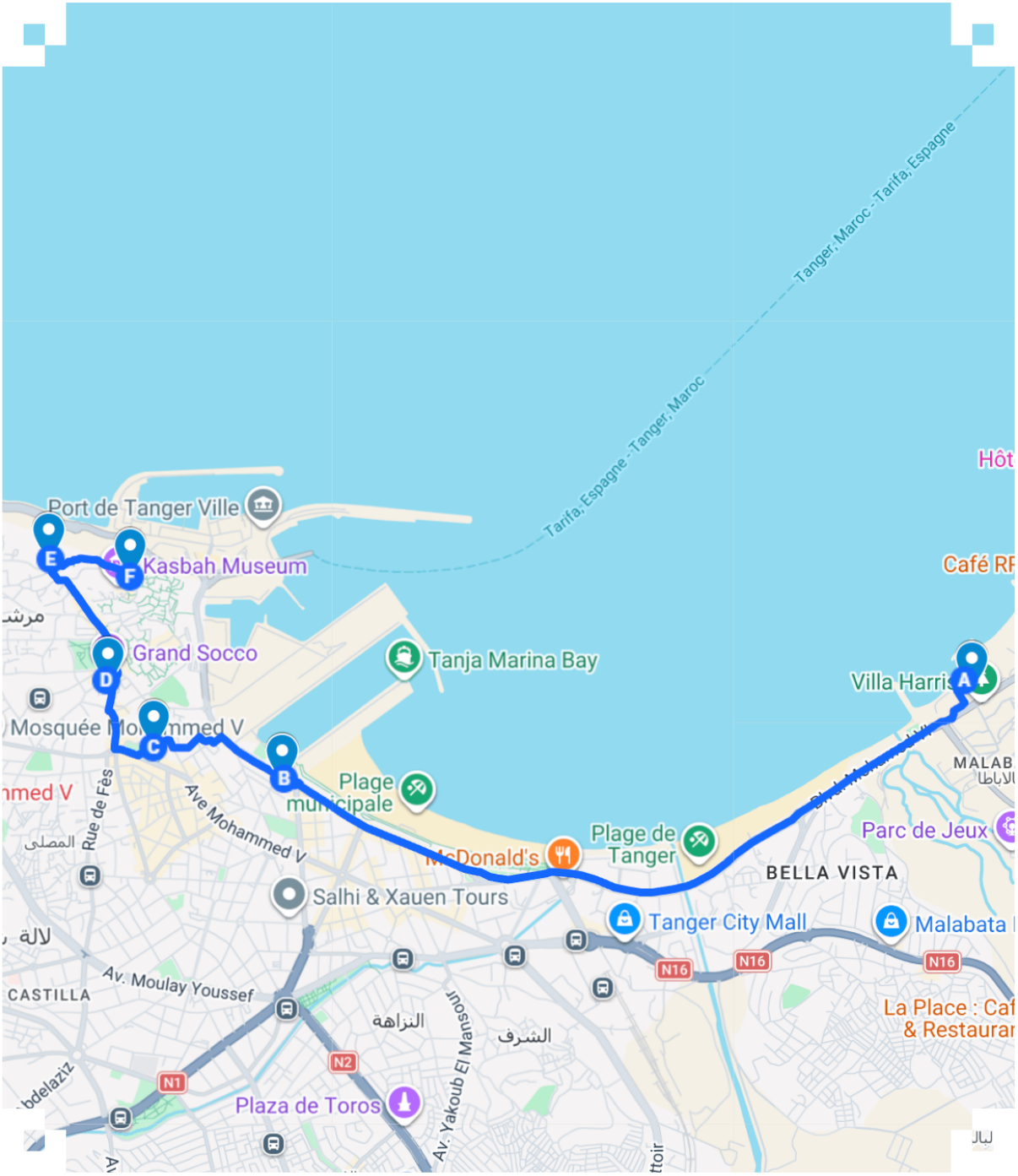
Optional Excursion

Tanger Med

If the Kasbah explains Tangier's past, Tanger Med explains its future. Located around 40 kilometres east of the city, the port complex has transformed northern Morocco into one of Africa's most significant logistics and industrial hubs. Its impact extends well beyond shipping, influencing employment, investment, infrastructure and regional development. For delegates interested in territorial transformation, few places illustrate the power of infrastructure, connectivity and long-term planning more convincingly.

Location: Ksar Sghir, approximately 40 km east of Tangier




Tanger, Maroc - Tarifa, Espagne
Tarifa, Espagne - Tanger, Maroc
Port de Tanger Ville
Kasbah Museum
Grand Socco
Tanja Marina Bay
Mosquée Mohammed V
Plage municipale
Ave Mohammed V
Rue de Fès
McDonald's
Plage de Tanger
Parc de Jeux
BELLA VISTA
Salhi & Xauen Tours
Tanger City Mall
Malabata
CASTILLA
Av. Moulay Youssef
Av. Yakoub El Mansour
Plaza de Toros
N1
N2
N16
A
B
C
D
E
F

Tangier in the programme

Where to find the host city inside the Congress

Tangier has a lot to offer to the 2026 UCLG World Congress participants. Through the Tangier-Morocco Track and a number of partner-led sessions, the host city and its institutions are bringing their own perspectives to the global municipal conversation.

Ports and logistics. Migration and city diplomacy. Climate resilience. Territorial development. Green growth. Food systems. Citizen participation.

Together, these discussions offer a glimpse into the challenges, ambitions and transformations shaping Tangier, Morocco and many territories across Africa and the Mediterranean.

If you want to understand the city beyond the Congress venue, these are some of the sessions worth following.

Tangier-Morocco Track

Port-City Ecosystems: Artificial Intelligence in the Service of Territorial Multilateralism
Organised by TangerMed
Tuesday, 23 June 2026, from 10:00 to 11:30h
Room Tingis

Growing Green by Solving Challenges
Organised by Caisse de Dépôt et de Gestion (CDG)
Tuesday, 23 June 2026, from 11:30 to 13:00h
Room Tingis

Losses and Damages induced by climate change: A perspective from Morocco and the Global South
Organised by the Ministry of Environment
Tuesday, 23 June 2026, from 15:00 to 16:30h
Room Tingis

Innovation in urban engineering is central to reducing social disparities
Organised by the Ministry of Housing, Urban Planning and City Policy
Wednesday, 24 June 2026, from 09:30 to 11:00h
Room Tingis

What challenges and opportunities exist for the elected diaspora?
Organised by the City of Tangier
Wednesday, 24 June 2026, from 11:30 to 13:00h
Room Tingis

The health approach at the heart of urban sustainability and food security – Perspectives from the Global South
Organised by OCP
Wednesday, 24 June 2026, from 16:45 to 18:15h
Room Tingis

An incubator for South-South development
Organised by the African Fund for International Decentralised Cooperation (FACDI)
Thursday, 25 June 2026, from 09:30 to 11:00h
Room Tingis

Human capital and democratic transformation: What is the future for the Global South?
Organised by Open Government Partnership (OGP)
Thursday, 25 June 2026, from 11:30 to 13:00h
Room Tingis

Questions to pack for Tangier

A traveller's notebook for the municipal movement

Before every Congress come the presentations, the speeches, the resolutions and the photographs. Before every Congress come the flights, the train journeys, the airport lounges, the last-minute emails and the unread briefing notes.

And somewhere between departure and arrival, there is a moment that matters just as much. A moment to think.

As local and regional leaders, public servants, urban practitioners, civil society representatives and partners travel to Tangier, they bring with them different realities, different priorities and different hopes for the future.

The Municipal Times Outlook invites participants to carry these questions with them.

Not because there are easy answers. But because the future of local governance may depend on how we answer them together.

1. What is the one issue people mention most often when they stop you on the street?

2. What is the biggest thing local governments are expected to do without being given the tools to do it?

3. What is the first thing you would fix tomorrow in your territory if money were not the obstacle?

4. Which public service would your residents fight hardest to protect?

5. Who keeps your community running but is rarely recognised for it?

6. Who is still missing from the conversation?

7. What challenge in your territory has become harder to explain to residents over the last four years?

8. What is one problem everyone agrees exists, but nobody can solve alone?

9. What is one idea from another city you wish you had tried sooner?

10. What conversation do you hope to have in Tangier that you cannot have anywhere else?

One last question

When you return home, what do you want to bring back?

An idea? A challenge? A new ally?

Keep this page with you!

The Municipal Times near you

During the four days of the Congress, we hope to spark many conversations that you will still think about after Tangier.

From 22 to 25 June 2026, Tangier will become the meeting point for thousands of local and regional leaders, practitioners, researchers, civil society representatives and partners from around the world. Together, they will debate the future of public services, democracy, care, climate action, human rights, local finance and the role of local governments in shaping the next chapter of global development.

But the story does not begin when the Congress opens, nor does it end when delegates return home.

This is where *The Municipal Times* comes in.

The Municipal Times was born during the UCLG World Congress in Daejeon in 2022 with a simple ambition: to document the ideas, experiences and debates shaping the global municipal movement. Four years later, it returns to accompany the conversations unfolding in Tangier and beyond.

The Congress will be covered through a continuous editorial journey.

Before
The Municipal Times Outlook

You are reading it.

Published ahead of the Congress, the *Outlook* explores the questions, tensions and emerging debates that will shape the days in Tangier.

Rather than explaining the programme session by session, it seeks to understand what is at stake, why these discussions matter, and how they connect to the broader transformations affecting cities, territories and communities around the world.

The *Outlook* is an invitation to arrive prepared—not only to participate, but also to reflect.

During
The Municipal Times Journal

Each morning during the Congress, the *The Municipal Times Journal* will offer a journalistic look back at the previous day's discussions, debates and encounters.

Published online throughout the Congress, the *Journal* will go beyond meeting summaries to identify the ideas gaining momentum, the voices shaping the agenda and the stories emerging from Tangier.

From political announcements, keynote debates and side events, the *Journal* will capture the evolving narrative of the Congress one day at a time.

For participants, it will be a daily companion. For those following from afar, a window into the Congress as it unfolds.

After
The Municipal Times Insights

When the Congress concludes, the work continues. *The Municipal Times Insights* will look beyond the headlines to identify the key messages, emerging trends and strategic reflections that deserve to travel further.

Rather than serving as a final report, it will explore what Tangier means for the future: for the Local Social Covenant, for the evolution of local multilateralism, and for the role of local and regional governments in shaping the post-2030 agenda.

Because the most important outcome of a Congress is rarely a declaration but what continues afterwards.

From the *Outlook* to the *Journal* to *Insights*, *The Municipal Times* follows the ideas, debates and relationships that connect the local realities, global agendas and the people working every day to bridge the two.



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Join the conversation

Whether you attend the Congress in person or following from elsewhere, *The Municipal Times* invites you to stay connected through its digital platforms, daily publications, interviews and special features.

From Daejeon to Tangier, *The Municipal Times* continues to document one of the defining political stories of our time: how local and regional governments are helping shape the future from the ground up.

The Congress takes place in Tangier.

The conversation belongs everywhere.

Follow *The Municipal Times*

urbanjournalism.institute/municipaltimes/

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