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WOMEN AT THE HEART OF LOCAL DEMOCRACY



A historic milestone for women in local leadership took centre stage in Tangier as UCLG convened its first-ever Women's Assembly. The celebration says a lot about the persistence, leadership and collective efforts of countless women mayors, governors and local elected leaders who have helped shape the municipal movement. It also reminds us that the journey is far from complete. Although women are increasingly leading cities and regions around the world, they remain underrepresented in local political leadership, continue to encounter structural barriers to decision-making and are disproportionately exposed to harassment and political violence.

The first UCLG Women's Assembly was a recognition that the future of local democracy cannot be built while half of its leadership continues to fight for equal space within it.

The symbolism extended to UCLG itself. Since the creation of the World Organization, only one woman has served as its President: Carolina Cosse, then Mayor of Montevideo, who assumed the rotating presidency for one year in 2023 following the Daejeon Congress. With UCLG's leadership to be elected today, the session returned repeatedly to one question: would the result reflect the movement's stated commitment to equality?

Convened under the banner "From representation to transformation" with support from the WYDE Women's Leadership initiative, the Assembly brought women mayors, governors and councillors from every region into the statutory programme for the first time. It was built as an arc: an opening on feminist municipalism, a block on the movement's legacy and the leaders it needs next, and a governance segment broken into six rapid pitches on women's political participation, financing equality, ending violence, local care, climate justice, and inclusion.

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While moderators **Femi Oke** and, later, Secretary General **Emilia Saiz** limited the 31 speakers' interventions to a few minutes each to allow for a broad range of perspectives, demand for speaking time exceeded what the agenda could accommodate.

Fatimetou Abdel Malick, President of UCLG Women and of the Nouakchott Regional Council, opened by declaring that "another way of governing is already being born in our hands" — one that treats care as a central political force — and reminded the room that the body's gender-equality commission became permanent only "thanks to the struggle of African elected women." **Paola Pabón**, the first woman to lead the Prefecture of Pichincha, described building a care system and twelve centres against gender-based violence, and announced her own bid to chair that commission.



The vote was a recurring theme. **Carola Gunnarsson**, Councillor of Sala, noted that the ballot for co-presidents offered only one woman — **Fatiha El Moudni**, Mayor of Rabat — among seven candidates, and that the presidency was being contested by a woman, Clara Brugada, Head of Government of Mexico City, and a man, Uğur İbrahim Altay, Mayor of Konya. Several speakers backed Brugada from the floor: **Sharon Dijksma**, Mayor of Utrecht, invoking Madeleine Albright's line about "a special place in hell for women who do not support other women," urged delegates to vote for Clara Brugada. Emilia Saiz returned the question to the World Council members present, saying the point was "not only about specific candidates" but "the presidency as a whole," and that proposing a way to keep women in the enlarged presidency, whatever the result, was "not against the rules." **Ursula Sautter**, Deputy Mayor of Bonn, asked why UCLG did not simply guarantee a double presidency that always includes a woman.

Myriem Ouchen Noussairi, Head of Office for UN Women in Morocco, set out the global picture. There can be "no inclusive democracy without women's full, equal participation," she said, citing Inter-Parliamentary Union figures: as of January 2026, only 30 women serve as heads of state or government, 27.5 per cent of parliamentarians are women, and just two countries have reached 50 per cent in local governments. Marking the Safe Cities initiative's 15th anniversary, she invited Tangier to become its sixth Moroccan city to join, and called the new Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women General Recommendation No. 40 a parity roadmap for local governments.

Opening the segment on the movement's achievements, UCLG Ubuntu Advisor **Ana Falú** told the room, "This is the hour of women." **Rohey**

Malick Lowe, Mayor of Banjul, insisted that women in local politics "are not guests, we are architects," adding that the legacy being built "is about the girl in Banjul who will never have to ask permission to lead." **Chioniso Michelle Murinda**, of Zimbabwe's Chegutu District Council, distilled the theme: "Representation without transformation is visibility without power." Joining virtually, **Célestine Ketcha Courtès**, Cameroon's Minister of Housing and Urban Development, noted that her country had reached 33 per cent women in Parliament but only 15 per cent locally, and pressed the room: "When we are asked to lead the lists, are we not afraid? Do we have the financial means?"

The governance block turned principles into demands. On participation, **Milka Areba**, President of REFELA-Kenya, called for binding rules "with consequences": enforceable parity, financing for women's campaigns, training for the men who hold procedural power, and a rapid-response fund against political violence. "Let us stop asking for space. Let us govern now," she said. On financing, **Fatiha El Moudni**, Mayor of Rabat, argued that "representation is just the beginning," and that "sustainable financing is what transforms our commitments into realities."

On violence, **Kadhy Niang**, Deputy Mayor of Dakar, set out four fronts: education, enforcement, support services and women's economic autonomy, while **Mayra Mendoza**, Mayor of Quilmes, urged colleagues to "stop naturalising political violence." Further, on care, **Flora Maboa-Boltman**, Deputy President of South Africa's SALGA, argued "care is public infrastructure," and **Illiza Sa'aduddin Djamal**, Mayor of Banda Aceh, noted that "care is a political act."

Inclusion drew some of the sharpest voices. **Patricia Morla**, the first woman with a disability twice elected to municipal office in Villa Carlos Paz, said women like her must "stop being asked permission to exist; our experience is political." **Victoriia Mozgacheva**, Deputy Mayor of Bishkek, said true inclusion "starts much earlier, with access to opportunities." **Sanjoli Padhy** of the YP Foundation described a "deeply gendered polycrisis" and demanded resources reach grassroots actors directly: "Power must be shared." From rural Colombia, **Gil Milena Grueso Romero**, the first woman mayor of Guapi, recalled facing 14 candidates, 11 of them men: "When we are united, no one stops us."

Several speakers turned to the backlash. **Clare Hart**, Vice-President of Montpellier Méditerranée Métropole, warned of an online and offline "manosphere" driving real violence and called on male allies to "stand with us." **Lorena Elvira Ayuso**, Catalonia's Secretary-General for External Action and the European Union, warned that when women leave politics "the democratic quality of our institutions weakens," and called for "more open institutions and safer spaces."

In the closing, the topic returned to the vote. **Nadine Gasman**, Mexico City's secretary for citizen security, called electing a woman president "a historic opportunity"; the newly elected continental REFELA president, **Meyanga Marie Angele**, hoped the two women candidates might yet come together behind "a consensus candidate, to show the world we are united." **Emilia Saiz** closed where she had begun: whatever presidency emerges tomorrow, "it needs to be a presidency that supports equality." The Assembly's next step is institutional: a permanent UCLG Women's Council, a standing political home for feminist municipalism beyond Tangier.

THE INTERGENERATIONAL ALLIANCE ON EVERYDAY ESSENTIALS

How can we redefine access to essential services and rights not only as matters of service provision, but as collective political commitments rooted in equality, dignity, and inclusion? This question guided yesterday afternoon's discussion in the tent. Importantly, the Intergenerational Alliance on Everyday Essentials, unanimously adopted by delegates, will look at how people of different ages can shape their future together. "Co-creation with civil society is not optional," **Femi Oke**, British Nigerian journalist and facilitator of the session, said to set the tone.

Bheke Stofile, President of the South African Local Government Association, chaired the discussion. "Rights become meaningful when they are experienced in everyday life. Our lives are interconnected across time. We are shaped by those before us and through our choices, we shape the possibilities of those who come after us. Local services make this possible. They are not commodities, they are everyday essentials that sustain dignity and make equality possible," he explained.



Drawing on lessons from feminist and disability movements, he stated that everyday essentials are not optional or peripheral, but rather a condition for our collective wellbeing. "Think of generations not as separate groups replacing each other, but as a web of people. We inhabit a world shaped by previous generations and continue building it together. Local public services should enable all people across generations to live and shape the future."



Chioniso Michelle Murinda, Councillor and Chairperson of the Environment Committee, Chegutu Rural District (Zimbabwe), gave an inspiring speech about a new generation of services that demands a new generation of government, "one that is intergenerational by design, not by accident. Inclusion is more than inviting people to existing systems, it is about transforming those systems so that everyone can belong."

Lorena Zarate, Co-Coordinator of the Global Platform for the Right to the City, emphasised that there is a need for a broader and more dynamic mindset to provide everything that everyday life requires for everyone. "The list of everyday essentials is not finished. We see the Local

Social Covenant in combination with the Agenda for the Right to the City as a key tool for bridging the time between now and the post-2030 agenda.”

From the Basque Government, **María Ubarretxena Cid**, Minister for Governance, Digital Administration and Self-Government, introduced the idea that beyond material public services, people need identity, a sense of belonging, participation, and a shared project. “For us, that is Euskara, the language that we share. We see local linguistic diversity as a trigger for development.”

Lauren Banham, Special Advisor to Stop Ecocide International and member of the UCLG Youth Caucus, added the importance of inclusive conversations around the climate crisis. “Climate change is impossible to overlook, and too often, young people feel that the entire weight of the crisis falls on their shoulders.” In her evocative contribution, **Pefi Kingi**, Focal Point for Migration for Pacific civil society, affirmed: “We will not shy away from these themes, these topics of care that require attention, from climate change to conflict.” She called on delegates not to forget the Indigenous Peoples who are often missing at the table. “This is the time to show your courage and your commitment to collectivity. This is the time when we need solidarity.”

Similarly, **Maricela Zurita Cruz**, Councillor for Ecology of San Juan Quiahije and representative of the Generation Equality Forum’s Action Coalition on Feminist Movements and Leadership, spoke about her experience as an Indigenous woman: “With the new essentials, for many of us, this is not so new. We have historically taken care of our territories, our water, our seeds, forests, language, and collective memories.” She stated that there can be no justice if Indigenous women are only invited to talk about the problems but not to shape the solutions. “When our culture is seen as folklore, but not as a basis for building the future, that is exclusion.” She added that intergenerational alliance does not just mean listening to and trusting the young, but also building bridges between the generations, listening to ancestral knowledge, and sharing power.

Antoine Agossou, President of HaZoBiT, made the point that local public services are not only a human right, but also our shared duty. “Together, we can impact our communities. Young people are ready to contribute to our development.” And **Sanjolli Padhy**, YP Foundation, Generation Equality Forum’s Action Coalition on Feminist Movements and Leadership, told the story of a 16-year-old girl in India, asking how she will be impacted by what was discussed in the room. “How can we redistribute the care burden for her, reduce her unpaid labour, and guarantee her safety and health?” She said that simply adding young people to existing patriarchal structures is not going to dismantle them – rather, it is important to write the social contract from the bottom up.

“We are choosing care over transaction. We are choosing rights before profit. We are putting the public good over exclusion. We are committing to transforming the lives of people through concrete, ambitious territorial delivery, to collective action and core responsibility. It’s not only about rights, it’s also about duties, and that goes both ways”, **Emilia Saiz** summed up the goals of the Intergenerational Alliance on Everyday Essentials.



THE HOUSING JUSTICE ACADEMY

*More than a roof,
a fundamental right*

On 24 June, UCLG unveiled the Housing Justice Academy and defined how it should take shape as a collective platform to strengthen leadership, peer learning, and agenda-setting around housing as a human right and public common good, given that housing justice is a core expression of the right to the city. This is grounded in the recognition that the housing crisis is structural, cuts across territories, and cannot be addressed through fragmented responses.

Greg Munro, Director of Cities Alliance, facilitated the session. “Nearly 40 per cent of the world’s population lacks access to safe and resilient housing. We need to construct 100,000 units every single day to meet that demand,” he explained. In the UN-Habitat World Cities Report, recently presented at the 13th Session of the World Urban Forum in Baku, member states affirm that simply building more housing is not enough. “We need large-scale public investment, integrated land-use planning and the prioritisation of human rights,” Greg Munro added. He sees housing as one of the most powerful levers that local governments and cities have for sustainable development, if done the right way.

In India, this looks like lifting 200 million people out of poverty by building houses to give people dignity. They are registered in the name of the woman of the household, an important first that recognises the importance of women’s land rights – in line with the 2019 Durban Agenda that positions housing as a human right and the foundation for dignity, belonging, and climate resilience. **Mario Bergara**, Mayor of Montevideo, explained what successful housing provision looks like in his city: “We recognise that the housing crisis and urban inequalities cannot be solved through isolated interventions. We have come up with an answer that combines different policies around land access, the refurbishment of urban spaces, and neighbourhood improvements while supporting participation and community-building.”

Fatiha El Moudni, Mayor of Rabat, said: “Housing is more than a roof, it is a fundamental right, the foundation of social inclusion, and a key condition for equal opportunities.” Morocco has moved beyond simply providing housing units, she added. Instead, the country has come up with a new development plan and metropolitan masterplan that treats housing as essential for the dignity, safety, and inclusion of all citizens. “The Academy can play a vital role by strengthening local capacities, providing access to data, showcasing successful integrated planning, and demonstrating ways in which women and the elderly, people with



disabilities and vulnerable households can be supported.” She called for making the Academy a practical tool, emphasising that African cities are not only recipients of solutions, but also producers of innovation, knowledge, and experience that can help shape the global agenda.

Giving an input from the UCLG Townhall, **Camila Cocifña** from IIED and co-convenor of the Housing Justice Hub, outlined what housing justice really means. This includes understanding the discriminatory practices of the housing market, preventing forced evictions and displacements, financing systems that support the value of social housing, and placing inclusion at the centre. “We need cities to champion these agendas, to show us the way. Many solutions are already out there but we must upgrade our competencies and understand what is missing. This includes reaching out to grassroots movements and those usually at the margins of housing”, she said about the Housing Justice Academy.

Speaking for local and regional governments, **Lyubov Zaitseva**, President of the Izhevsk City Duma (Russia), shared the strategy her city has for sustainable urban development: “We are aiming to ensure decent living conditions, not just through housing, but also through a comfortable living environment. This summer alone, we are opening five new public spaces and are working on implementing the 15-minute city concept.” She expressed her hope that the Academy will be a space to create practical tools for municipalities around the world to develop housing justice standards based on experiences.

“This is an important step towards commoning. We want to understand housing in a different light with a different type of financial architecture. We see housing not as a commodity but as a human right”, **Emilia Saiz** explained. The audience added valuable perspectives on circular economy and the reconstruction of destroyed cities, for example in Gaza. “There can be no housing justice without inclusion, no inclusive housing without opportunity, and no strong Local Social Covenant without empowering local governments”, **Fatiha El Moudni** summed up the discussion. This conviction will turn the Academy into a vehicle that will operationalise the housing pillar of the Local Social Covenant and make housing justice a shared political priority of the municipal movement.

THE ASSEMBLY TRACK

Where the municipal movement finds its common voice



Away from the public debates, the Assembly Track has brought together the different regional sections of the World Organisation to define the political priorities they will present to the World Council. Africa, Asia-Pacific, Eurasia, Europe, Latin America, the Middle East and West Asia, and North America have each held their own assemblies to debate regional challenges while identifying the common positions that will shape UCLG's next mandate.

These meetings are where the diversity of the municipal movement becomes visible. Although priorities differ across regions—from climate resilience and financing to decentralisation, territorial cohesion or democratic governance—the assemblies all share the same objective: ensuring that regional realities inform the global agenda and that local and regional governments speak with a stronger collective voice.

Alongside the regional assemblies, two strategic forums looked beyond geography to examine how territories themselves are changing.

The **Forum of Intermediate Cities**, chaired by Mohamed Sefiani, Mayor of Chefchaouen, reinforced the political visibility of intermediate cities as essential connectors between metropolitan, regional and rural areas. Building on the Cuenca Declaration and preparing a 2026–2030 Roadmap, participants explored how these cities can drive territorial cohesion, innovation, climate action, public service delivery and access to finance, while translating global agendas into practical local action.

The **Forum of Regions**, chaired by Paola Pabón, Prefect of Pichincha, launched its own strategic reflection for 2026–2030. Anchored in the Local Social Covenant, the discussion reaffirmed regions as indispensable actors linking national strategies with local implementation. Speakers highlighted the growing importance of regional economic diplomacy, territorial intelligence, polycentric development and multilevel governance in responding to increasingly complex social, economic and environmental challenges.



LOCAL4ACTION SPOTLIGHT

FROM LOCAL INNOVATION TO INDUSTRIAL TRANSFORMATION

UNIDO and UCLG brought forward the Global ScaleX Alliance for Cities, one of the initiatives discussed during the Executive Bureau on 23 June. The dialogue explored how cities can act as agents of industrial innovation by aggregating demand, sharing capacity and building “scaling corridors” to move solutions from pilots to implementation. The Western Balkans corridor was presented as the first pilot application of this approach.

More information: <https://scalex.unido.org/>

HOUSING FUTURES: DELIVERING HOMES FOR ALL

Convened by Metropolis, in collaboration with OECD, Housing Futures: Foresight for Cities Delivering Homes for All explored how housing policies need to evolve in the face of demographic, climate and technological change. With experiences from Bogotá, Rabat, Mexico City and Toulouse, the dialogue connected housing affordability with land use, mobility, sustainability and urban regeneration, linking directly with the Congress debate on the Housing Justice Academy.

More information: <https://www.metropolis.org/>

PEACE THROUGH LOCAL ACTION

Convened by Open Society Foundations, with the UCLG Peace Prize and VNG International, the session explored how local governments are advancing public safety and peace through prevention, social policies and partnerships. It also drew on experiences from the finalists of the 2026 UCLG Peace Prize, showing how local governments can turn peacebuilding into everyday practice.

More information: <https://peaceprize.uclg.org/>

WOMEN’S RIGHTS TO A LIFE FREE FROM VIOLENCE

The Observatory on Violence Against Women of the Seine-Saint-Denis Departmental Council and UCLG convened a dialogue on how local governments can prevent and respond to violence against women. The session promoted the International Charter “For Territories That Protect Women Victims of Violence” and the global network of local governments created through the project launched in 2021, with tools including a MOOC, fact sheets and knowledge-sharing materials.

More information:
<https://oivf.seinesaintdenis.fr/en/territories-that-protect-women-victims-of-violence/>



LAUNCHED IN TANGIER

BARCELONA DISTRICT 11: CITY-TO-CITY COOPERATION WITH PALESTINE

Barcelona City Council presented District 11: Cities of Palestine, a new framework designed to provide continuity and strategic direction to the city's cooperation with Palestine. Developed jointly with Cities of Palestine, the Barcelona Provincial Council, Metropolis and the Association of Palestinian Local Authorities (APLA), the initiative aims to strengthen long-term partnerships between municipalities through technical cooperation, humanitarian action and institutional exchange.

Rather than focusing solely on emergency responses, District 11 seeks to reinforce the role of local governments in sustaining public services, supporting local governance and accompanying Palestinian municipalities over the long term. By combining political solidarity with practical municipal cooperation, the initiative reflects a growing commitment among cities to use decentralised cooperation as a tool for peace, resilience and territorial development.

More information: <https://ajuntament.barcelona.cat/relacionsinternacionalsicooperacio/en/district-11>

TOOLKIT ON ADOPTING PROVEN IDEAS IN CITIES

The OECD and Bloomberg Philanthropies launched the Toolkit for Adopting Ideas from Other Cities, a practical resource designed to help local governments move from inspiration to implementation. Based on evidence gathered from 76 city governments across 43 countries, the toolkit provides a structured methodology for identifying successful practices, assessing their relevance, adapting them to local realities and embedding them into municipal policies.

Organised around 14 practical actions, the publication responds to a common challenge faced by city leaders: how to translate lessons learned from peers into effective local action. By strengthening the way cities exchange knowledge and adapt proven solutions, the toolkit seeks to make international peer learning more systematic, strategic and results-oriented, reinforcing collaboration as a driver of innovation in local governance.

More information: https://www.oecd.org/en/publications/a-toolkit-for-adopting-ideas-from-other-cities_a225ac72-en.html

HOW EU DELEGATIONS WORK WITH LOCAL AND REGIONAL GOVERNMENTS

CEMR-PLATFORMA presented preliminary findings from a study on how EU Delegations engage with local and regional governments and their associations under NDICI-Global Europe and Global Gateway. The study offers a snapshot of opportunities and challenges in EU cooperation with local governments, while opening a discussion on the future of EU development policy ahead of the 2028–2034 Multiannual Financial Framework.

More information: <https://ccre-cemr.org/platforma>



SDG CORNER

Opening the door to Sustainable Food Systems in Rourkela

In Rourkela, temperatures during April and May can reach up to 50°C. Compounding this, the lack of storage infrastructure leads to the rapid spoilage of fruits and vegetables. With a population of nearly 691,000, it is the third-largest city in Odisha, located about 1,250 kilometres southeast of New Delhi. But in addition to climate and food waste, Rourkela faces another problem: women's limited access to formal employment.

To address both challenges, the municipal government of Rourkela, in collaboration with the local community, launched a project between 2022 and 2025 centred on solar-powered cold storage facilities managed by women's cooperatives.

The city currently has five interconnected facilities, spread across different markets and powered by solar energy. Based on sound management, these infrastructures have become community centres where, thanks to the women who run them, agricultural products can be preserved for longer periods, significantly reducing post-harvest losses and allowing farmers to negotiate better prices.

To break down the gender gap in access to the labour market, this initiative has given rise to a whole new economic activity led by women of different ages and educational backgrounds. Such has been its success that it has already achieved a 31 per cent reduction in food waste, in addition to its positive impact on the local economy. In the participating markets, the cooperatives directly sell local and organic products, coordinate the supply of fruits and vegetables to schools, and organise home delivery services using electric rickshaws—all to ensure the population has accessible, fresh, and healthy food.

Through this initiative, Rourkela is making simultaneous progress toward several Sustainable Development Goals of the 2030 Agenda, including zero hunger, quality education, gender equality, affordable and clean energy, reduced inequalities, and responsible production and consumption.

For more information on local innovation:

<https://sdglocalaction.org/sdg-corner-in-tangier/>

For more information on Rourkela: sdglocalaction.org/rourkela-2/



CARE CORNER

GOLD VII comes to life: from report to conversation

For more than two decades, UCLG's Global Observatory on Local Democracy and Decentralization (GOLD) has documented how local and regional governments are transforming territories around the world. With **GOLD VII – Economies of Equality and Care**, launched in Tangier, the municipal movement has taken a different path: moving beyond a report to create a living process of dialogue, co-creation and collective learning.

Built over three years with more than 50 partners and drawing on 340 experiences from 200 local and regional governments worldwide, GOLD VII argues that care is not simply another public policy. It is a way of governing that places equality, public services, democracy and the sustainability of life at the centre of local action.

That vision came alive throughout the Congress at the Care Corner, where several contributors to the GOLD VII Multimedia Journal brought their chapters into dialogue with Congress participants.



Public Services International reflected on care systems rooted in workers' rights; **IIED** explored housing as an infrastructure of care; the **Guangzhou Award** shared experiences on caring cities; the **Global Platform for the Right to the City (GPR2C)** examined public-community partnerships and plural multilateralism; **Nourish Scotland** presented public restaurants as infrastructure for the right to food; and **CIDOB** analysed how recentralisation can affect local public services and care systems.

More than a report, GOLD VII represents a collective process of research, dialogue and co-creation. Its central message is simple but ambitious: if cities and territories are to become more equal, democratic and resilient, care must become a guiding principle of public policy.

GOLD VII report: <https://www.gold.uclg.org/reports/gold-vii>

ENJOY A NIGHT AT THE MOVIES!

Few cities have cultivated such a close relationship with cinema as Tangier. For decades, its streets, cafés and landscapes have attracted filmmakers, writers and artists drawn by the city's position between Africa and Europe and by its unique cultural atmosphere. From international productions to independent cinema, Tangier has long been both a setting and a protagonist.

That tradition continues today through spaces such as **Ciné Alcazar**, one of the city's historic cinemas. As part of Photo Tanger, the cinema is launching both the Cinéma Tangérois cycle and the Thursdays of Spanish Cinema, creating a space for exchange between Mediterranean cinemas while reflecting on Tangier as a cinematic territory.

On 25 June, Congress delegates are in for a treat. At Cine Alcazar, there is a showing of the 1953 Spanish satirical comedy film, **¡Bienvenido, Mister Marshall!**, the first film in a Spanish cinema cycle organised in partnership with the Instituto Cervantes de Tanger. The film follows the preparations of a small Castilian village awaiting the arrival of American delegates, convinced that an elaborate display of "Spanishness" will secure benefits under the Marshall Plan.

Directed by Luis García Berlanga, the absurdist comedy is considered one of the masterpieces of Spanish cinema. It playfully explores the stereotypes that Spain and the United States held about each other's culture while also criticising 1950s Francoist Spain. Berlanga delivers a sharp and humorous reflection on stereotypes, political expectations and post-war Spain.

The film was entered into the 1953 Cannes Film Festival, where it received a Special Mention, and proved to be immensely popular in Spain. In 1993, film critic Stephen Holden observed that "although more than 40 years old, this funny compassionate little fable has an ebullience and freshness that transcend its historical context."

From 25 June, Ciné Alcazar will present Spanish films in their original version every Thursday, with screenings followed, whenever possible, by meetings and debates with directors, critics or cinema specialists.



What's on Today?

25 JUNE 2026

DEMOCRACY IN ACTION

The **final day** of the UCLG World Congress will be marked by one of the most important moments in the life of the World Organisation: **the election of its new leadership** and the adoption of key political documents that will guide the municipal movement in the years ahead.

From 10:00 to 17:30 in the Hybrid Tent, the **UCLG World Council** will open the electoral process, appoint the new Presidency and Vice-Presidencies, discuss the 2027 work plan and consider the final political outcomes of the Congress, including the Tangier final document, the New Global Charter-Agenda for Human Rights in the City and gender equality priorities. The day will conclude with the announcement of the election results and the **Official Closing Ceremony** from 18:00 to 19:30 in the Auditorium.

Beyond the statutory track, the Local4Action programme will continue in the morning with the dialogue **Presidium of the BRICS+ Association of Cities and Municipalities** from 9:00 to 10:00 in Room A Mediterranean and the lab Integrating Care into Local Governance and Public Policies from 10:00 to 11:30 in Room C Medina.

At midday, three sessions will run in parallel: Youth Engagement in Urban Governance in Room A Mediterranean, A Culture Goal in the Post-2030 Agendas: From Necessity to Reality in Room B Atlantic, and From Challenge to Practice: How Municipalities Turn Local Plans into Public Services in Room C Medina.

The **Networking Hub** will host launches throughout the day, including presentations on Guangzhou's electrified transportation system, the Public Sector Capabilities Index and MITI Learning, a city-to-city urban diplomacy initiative.

TRENDING NOW! 🗳️

AGAINST THE ALGORITHM

While social media is often one of the most hostile environments for women, the third day of the UCLG Congress in Tangier offered a different picture. For hours, the hashtag #UCLGCongress became a space where female mayors, city council members, activists, and local leaders from around the world shared experiences and proposals through the first @uclg_women Assembly. The feed itself became a map of the global feminist municipal movement.

And this is no minor detail. X is now one of the main platforms for the “manosphere”—that ecosystem of discourse ranging from the crudest anti-feminism to outright misogyny. Within that same environment, the @uclg_women Assembly filled the timeline with proposals, testimonies, data, and voices that didn't need to ask permission to be there.

“Decisions about public services, care, and governance must be made with women and girls in mind,” @UCLG_Saiz.

“The feminist municipal movement is an antidote to misogyny,” @ClareLouHart. That's also what it's about, taking up space. @myrnous, from UN Women Morocco, noted that only two countries in the world have achieved 50 per cent female representation in local governments. The gap isn't just institutional, it's also digital.

For hours, the conference feed served as a collective archive: @PatriciaMoraC highlighting women with disabilities, Sanjolli Padhy recalling the invisible work of previous generations, @serrabucak emphasising that women lead differently—and that matters. @LoweMayor closed the session with an idea that sums up the issue well: “The Legacy we build today isn't about us, it's about the girl in Banjul who will never have to ask for permission to lead.”

In a corner of X that tends to amplify the worst, the #UCLGCongress demonstrated for a few hours that the opposite can also happen. Sometimes the best response to noise is simply more voices.

CREDITS

(of all issues)

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