



Joint PSI-UCLG Statement at ICLS 2018

15 October 2018

Public Services International (PSI) is the global union federation bringing together 20 million women and men delivering public services represented by over 700 unions in 157 countries and territories, including local and regional government workers.

United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG) represents over 240,000 cities, regions and metropolises as well as more than 175 local and regional government associations worldwide.

Thousands of different local and regional government professions exist, making up the bulk of public employees worldwide, running essential services in cities, metropolitan areas and territories serving millions of people and communities every day.

They work in public administration; in public utilities such as water and sanitation; electricity, and solid waste management. They operate public transport and maintain public spaces; they deliver social, culture and education services. They are health and social services workers. Firefighters, emergency workers, medical first responders and municipal police are also among them.

A 2016 joint study from the OECD and UCLG counted over 500,000 local and regional governments around the world: inevitably, the professional paths, recruitment, financing and pay systems, and working conditions vary significantly from one country to another, as does the actual work performed.

But we know very little about them. Qualitative and quantitative information and data on subnational government employment remains patchy, incomplete or undisclosed. There are few reliable statistics about these professions; most remain basically invisible to policy analysis.

To date, ILOSTAT only manages partial local government employment data for 49 countries, representing only a quarter of the world's labour force. Most local and regional government professions, moreover, are not separately identified under ISCO, nor does any ISIC category describe all activities carried out by government.

These gaps undermine any proper assessment of subnational governments' ability to deliver quality public services and fulfil their competences. This deficiency has the potential to jeopardize the implementation of global development agendas such as the SDGs and the Decent Work Agenda, which are ultimately to be implemented at the local level.

Filling this knowledge gap would make an important contribution to the ILO Decent Work Agenda as a building block towards decent work and conditions in the local and regional government sector.

As part of our ongoing dialogue and cooperation, PSI and UCLG recognize their mutual interest to fill this data gap, to build and provide deeper knowledge of this area, and unravel the inherent complexity of local and regional government workforce worldwide.

As partners, we believe that the improvement of local and regional government labour data collection, and the identification of non-national public sector employment profiles is a necessary step to promote decent work in the local and regional government sector.

We urge the ICLS to reflect on how to fill this major gap and to put the issue high on its work plan for the coming years.

PSI and UCLG are ready and willing to help. We recommend that we engage and work together on the topic, with progress reported at the next ICLS.

PSI and UCLG would gladly support quantitative and qualitative pilot projects in selected local and regional governments, always in open cooperation with our constituencies.

We ask that our joint call is included in the record of the 20th ICLS.

We thank you very much for the opportunity to participate in your conference and wish it every success.

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