

## **Key recommendations from the parliamentary breakfast “Local Initiatives – Global Perspectives: Municipalities as the Key to a Strategic Partnership with Africa”**

The efforts of recent governments to strengthen local governments as key players in local development policy were both appropriate and successful. Cities and municipalities are central actors in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. Municipal development policy can have a decisively positive impact on partnerships with actors in Africa. Ideally, the potential for multiplier effects, administrative expertise, a bridging function to the private sector and civil society, as well as decentralisation, all come fully into play. The direct relationships that take effect here save time and reduce bureaucratic effort. At the same time, the prospects for success are high. Regional associations such as metropolitan regions play a key role here: they have the potential to effectively network important stakeholders within a region and serve as local points of contact for building capacity within municipalities. However, they must be supported for a longer period than has been the case so far; otherwise, the loss of funding threatens to undo what has been achieved. We therefore recommend:

- The **direct involvement of local stakeholders in the development of national strategies**. Local governments' role in development policy must become more visible and receive greater public attention.
- The legal **enshrinement of sustainability as a mandatory municipal government responsibility**, in order to secure financial and human resources in all municipalities and to establish binding strategies for effective monitoring. Cities and municipalities are key actors in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. German municipalities learn from their partners in the Global South how to strengthen their own climate resilience and adaptability.
- Permanent or at **least long-term funding for personnel support** for German municipalities and metropolitan regions that carry out development policy projects domestically or abroad, thereby making an important contribution to the localisation of the global Sustainable Development Goals. The extension of funding periods to strengthen municipalities' development policy engagement should be aligned with existing federal funding programmes. For example: six years of funding under the “Federal Programme for Biological Diversity” (BMU) versus two years of funding under the BMZ programme “Coordination of Municipal Development Policy.”
- In this context, consideration should be given to establishing a **dedicated funding programme for regional associations** and metropolitan regions, with the aim of supporting decentralised offices for sustainable development in Germany.
- A **simplified application** process and streamlined billing procedures to enable agile project management and save valuable time (work efficiency).
- The **removal of procedural barriers in the visa issuance process** for African citizens. In the past, visa appointments were repeatedly associated with excessively long wait times, and visa applications were processed too slowly or only in response to pressure from civil society or municipal initiatives.