Discussion in Plenary

Thank you dear hosting cities and conveners. Thank you, dear colleagues en and especially, thank you, Mr. Kassis - Mayor of Ramallah -, for representing your city and Palestine at such a horrific moment in your history.

My name is Femke Halsema and I am mayor of Amsterdam.

The point was raised, rightly, this morning by mayor Moya, that G20 does not seem to take U20 seriously. The lack of response we get from G20 is quite amazing and, since we are talking openly here, in a way an insult. National leaders cannot implement their policies without the local level.

A question that is discussed within U20 most every year is the follow-up of what we as cities discuss. We manage to come up with compromises on difficult issues, compromises that we are convinced will contribute to democratic, equal, resilient and thriving cities. The main responsibility of mayors. Therefore Amsterdam is happy that social issues have an increasingly prominent place in this year's communique.

We have to find new and creative ways of cooperating on a national and international level.

Let me give you an example. With many of the cities present here we have started a coalition on affordable housing geared toward creating more awareness at European level. The same we do in several networks on rule of law, cities being the pillar of democracy and rule of law in the current geopolitical situation. - Pact of free cities

In that context I once again want to express Amsterdam's support for those mayors that are in prison or being threatened because of their work in ensuring democracy and peace in their cities.

Amsterdam has always been an international city. We remain committed to enhancing multilateral cooperation. In the realistic way referred to by Aissata from new york. We thank U20 for facilitating that.