

## Declaration of Networks Against Hate

Cape Town, South Africa  
4 December 2024

*We*, the representatives of local government, city and mayoral networks and associations gathered in Cape Town, South Africa, for the Strong Cities Network Fifth Global Summit, and those networks and associations otherwise engaged in the important work of supporting and empowering local governments and officials:

*Recognising* that throughout history, hate has been used to sow seeds of discord, deepen divisions and exploit vulnerabilities, fomenting prejudice and violence, dehumanising individuals and communities, and enabling environments for widespread human rights violations.

*Understanding* that the proliferation of hate, disinformation, misinformation and conspiracy narratives – in both online and offline environments – causes emotional and physical harms and undermines social cohesion.

*Reaffirming* our obligation, both as members of our respective communities, and as representatives of networks and associations with missions to empower and support local leaders and governments, to confront hate in all its forms, recognising that its unchecked presence threatens individual and community well-being, and weakens the foundations of peace, justice and democracy.

*Acknowledging* the pivotal role of mayors and other sub-national leaders, governments and civil society in preventing and responding to hate and intolerance, including faith, cultural and identity-based animosities, and the unique opportunities that exist at the local level to foster dialogue and promote a culture of tolerance, empathy and belonging, and inclusivity where diversity is celebrated, inequality is reduced and communities thrive.

*Expressing* unwavering support for local leaders, civil society organisations and communities who champion the rights of vulnerable and targeted individuals and communities, including youth, women, migrants and other often marginalised groups, especially during times of crisis and instability.

*Underscoring* the increasingly important roles played by local, national and international associations and networks working to support local leaders and governments, including through peer-to-peer learning and knowledge exchange, the sharing of good practices and lessons learned, and amplifying the voices of local leadership to catalyse city-led action against hate.

*Concerned* by the rising levels of hate and intolerance, which are increasingly fuelled by disinformation, misinformation and conspiracy narratives, and impacting local communities, *declare* our commitment to, and *call on* all local government, city and mayoral networks and associations to join us in:



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1. Unequivocally denouncing hate in all its forms, including in public discourse, online platforms and interpersonal interactions.
2. Championing diversity and inclusion, including by fostering environments that celebrate diversity and mutual understanding, ensuring that all individuals feel they belong in the cities in which they reside.
3. Advocating for equitable policies and supporting the development of local policies that prevent and address hate, safeguard vulnerable populations, and educate communities about its harmful impacts.
4. Empowering communities, and working alongside local governments and civil society organisations, leaders and residents, to build resilience against hate while amplifying voices that promote unity, inclusivity and respect.
5. Supporting local action to establish transparent and fair mechanisms for reporting, responding to, and addressing hate crimes and other incidents of hate, ensuring accountability and support for victims.
6. Promoting and supporting local, human rights-based initiatives that equip communities with tools to recognise, challenge and prevent hate, and build empathy and critical thinking.
7. Supporting efforts that position cities as champions of inclusivity, emphasising that community and individual safety, well-being and resilience begin with fostering a sense of belonging for all residents.
8. Advocating for the active participation of all residents, particularly marginalised groups, in local governance to build representative and resilient communities, and strengthen democratic institutions.
9. Encouraging investments in relationships within and across communities to pre-emptively address tensions, rectify historical injustices, enhance long-term social cohesion and facilitate safe spaces for community conversations – including on challenging topics like racism, hatred and injustice – to build understanding, empathy and solidarity.
10. Advocating for the perspectives of local leaders and cities to be integrated into national, regional and international efforts to combat hate.
11. Strengthening partnerships and collaborative efforts with other relevant networks and associations to empower mayors and other local leaders and sub-national governments to play a leading role in preventing and responding to hate.

*Affirm* a collective responsibility to uphold the principles of dignity, equality and respect in our communities, to strive to eradicate hate and to build a future rooted in compassion and solidarity.

*Express* our further commitment to share with the Strong Cities Network on an annual basis the actions we have taken to implement this declaration.



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Signed on 4 December 2024, on behalf of the endorsing networks and associations:



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