

Congratulatory Message to the World Smart Sustainable Cities Organization WeGO

June 17th, 2021

Greetings:

- Dear friend, Ambassador Lee Kyongyul, WeGO Secretary General
- Dear Ambassadors of Latin American Countries to the Republic of Korea
- Honorable Mayor's and government representatives from the Latin American region.
- Distinguished guests:

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On behalf of the people and the government of Costa Rica, it is a great honor to send my warm greetings to the World Smart Sustainable Cities Organization, on this Latin America Smart Cities Network Pre-workshop, and to all Smart City leaders from our region.

Since its inception in 2010, WeGO has played a vital role in the transformation of cities into smart sustainable cities. WeGO, as the leading platform for local government smart city development, has established innovative and effective ways to collaborate with its members, creating a cooperative network among local governments for the benefit of local communities. As Secretary General Lee always remarks: "*A smart city is a healthy and happy city for smart people*".

In fact, cities are the main driving force towards a digitalized and sustainable development, which begins with the transformation of cities into Smart Sustainable Cities, a common goal that Costa Rica shares with WeGO.

For Costa Rica, these values guide our commitments to exchange knowledge and good practices, as well as to promote projects and programs that encourage greener, more sustainable, and digitalized solutions to economic, social and environmental challenges for the post-COVID-19 era.

The current times have shown the key role of cooperation in overcoming

global challenges, together. Smart City Development is no different from that; joining forces and aligning development strategies will greatly accelerate, not only the individual development of the cities, but, more importantly, the development of regions. Smart City Development is a technical process that has been gaining strength globally, with significant social, economic and environmental impacts.

In that regard, I am proud to share with all of you that this year, two Costa Rican local governments will become members of WeGo: the Municipality of Buenos Aires, in the Province of Puntarenas, and the Municipality of Nicoya, in the Province of Guanacaste. In addition, other Costa Rican local governments are in the process of discussing their possible membership to WeGO.

We are convinced that this is the right way to build up prosperous societies and a better world, particularly when we face global challenges such as the COVID-19 pandemic, Climate Change, social and economic inequalities, as well as economic growth with social exclusion, among others.

Costa Rica welcomes this WeGO's Latin America Smart Cities Network Pre-workshop, which may increase the number of cities and local governments in Latin America that would enjoy the opportunities provided through the WeGO network, and benefit from its knowledge-sharing initiatives, capacity-building programs, as well as feasibility studies.

Today, by expressing our appreciation to the World Smart Sustainable Cities Organization and to the Secretary General, Ambassador Lee, we would like to renew our commitment to continue working together promoting discussions, exchange of views, as well as projects and programs aimed at making cities more resilient, safer, and more sustainable, in order to improve the quality of life of our population.

I am confident that this Pre-workshop, the cornerstone in the establishment of the Latin America Smart Cities Network, will allow all of the participants to discuss smart city action plans and implementation, in order to share best practices and foster regional cooperation in Smart City Development.

Thank you very much!