

**NEWS**



**Eight Member Cities Join Forces to Step Up Gender Equality at UN Women**

Various representatives of METROPOLIS member cities met in New York as part of the 59th session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW59), organized by UN Women from 9 to 20 March. Abidjan, Bamako, Barcelona, Brussels, Dakar, Rio de Janeiro, Santiago de Chile and Seoul met at the UN Women headquarters in the week from 9 to 13 March to celebrate 20 years of the adoption of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, a commitment assumed by the States in 1995 for the advancement of women's rights.

During the event, the member city delegates could share experiences, build on their knowledge and establish and/or shore up contacts between them and the representatives of other organizations such as UN Women, UN Habitat, the Huairou Commission, Women in Cities International, the Latin American Women and Habitat Network, etc.

On 11 March, METROPOLIS, in collaboration with the Brussels Capital Region and Barcelona City Council, organized a round table on the role of the Information and Communications Technology (ICTs) in the empowerment of women as a key element in the real transformation of cities. During the session, jointly presided by Bianca Debaets, State Secretary for Equal Opportunities at Brussels, and Francina Vila, Councilor for Women and Civil Rights at Barcelona, the public could discover good practices carried out particularly in Brussels, Barcelona and Seoul. A report collecting the best practices that featured at the session will be published shortly.

The next day, the METROPOLIS Women International Network held an internal meeting which drew seven of the fifteen antennae in the Network today. The meeting discussed the positioning documents being developed by various antennae as well as the role the Network should take at the next METROPOLIS Board of Directors meeting, which will be held in Buenos Aires from 18 to 21 May 2015.

CSW59, which involved the participation of 1,100 members of NGOs and 8,600 government delegates, analyzed the progress made in the past 20 years. At the closing ceremony, UN Women executive director Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka said: *"Gender equality must be at the core of sustainable development and we must continue to work, systematically and relentlessly, to bring about transformation in our families, societies, economies, and political and public spaces.(...) There is a pressing need to step up the present pace. Women's low representation in political and economic decision-making threatens women's empowerment and gender equality, and men can and must be part of the approach to the solution"*.