

## NEWS



## Metropolitan voices are heard at the World Assembly of Local and Regional Governments

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**Metropolis members brought the metropolitan approach to the World Assembly of Local and Regional Governments of the 10th World Urban Forum in Abu Dhabi**

Metropolis marked its political presence at the **10th World Urban Forum (WUF10)** held in Abu Dhabi, with the representation of our members in the World Assembly of Local and Regional Governments last February 8 - **Barcelona (city and metropolitan area), Bogotá, Cairo, Madrid, and Tunis.**

This edition of the World Assembly of Local and Regional Governments focused on how urbanization shapes

and is shaped by culture and heritage. The discussions started looking at global partnerships and initiatives for sustainable urbanization and then revolved around **how urbanization affects and is affected by culture and innovation**. Speakers debated the role that urban and territorial policies can play in promoting the relationship between local governments and citizens, the relationship between tradition,



**Laia Bonet**

Deputy Mayor of  
Barcelona

***States must trust local governments, giving them greater decision-making capacity and more resources. Companies must also get involved, investing in projects led by cities in the service of the common good***



**Elisenda Alamany**

Member of the Governing Council of the  
Barcelona Metropolitan Area

***We are committed to offering good public space to all of the citizens, and this is not only about one city, but about all 36 municipalities in the metropolitan area. Working in public space is a way to deliver cultural innovative policies for all***



**Luz Amparo Medina**

International Relations Director  
Bogotá

***Culture is a set of values, beliefs, and attitudes. Innovation is needed to achieve sustainability, so it must include the empowerment of citizens***



**Khalel Abdel-Aal**

Governor of Cairo

***To achieve SDG11, we focus on the process of slum upgrading, improving both the physical and social environment. The empowerment of citizens is crucial for the prosperity of our society***



**Begoña Villacís**

Deputy Mayor of Madrid

***We are promoting a type of tourism that is attracted by our culture, our historical heritage and that discovers the multiculturalism that defines us as a major city***



**Souad Abdelrahim**

Mayor of Tunis

***We need to focus on culture, preserve human rights and the SDGs. We need to have a fight inequality and promote societies***

The Metropolis Secretary General, Octavi de la Varga, also joined the Assembly, as the facilitator of the round table about the role of local regional governments in maximizing the relationship between tradition, culture, and sustainable urbanization: ***“Culture and tradition play a key role to plan sustainable urbanization”***, he remarked, opening the floor to the speeches of Rashid Ayupov, Mayor of Turkestan; Pilar Diaz, Deputy Councillor for International Relations of the Barcelona Provincial Council, Mayor of Esplugues de Llobregat; Ulrich Sierau, Mayor of Dortmund; Jānis Vilnītis, Vice Mayor of Liepāja; Rene Peter Hohmann, Head of Global Programmes at Cities Alliance; Peter Phillips, Secretary General of the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS); Stephen Weir, Vice president for Global Development and Support at Habitat for Humanity International; Stephen Wyber, Policy and Advocacy Manager of the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions.

The main statements and consensus of the Assembly were:

- Sustainable urbanization can't work if it is not sensitive to culture
- Integrated urban planning means incorporating culture too.
- We can learn from past solutions for current urban problems.
- Heritage is not a constraint, it is an opportunity.
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Cultural diversity is a source of innovative solutions.

- Culture can also give answers to global challenges at a local level.
- Cities have always been melting pots that facilitate innovation and changes. There is a need for giving value and voice to the existing diversity of our cities.

The Assembly resulted in a **joint statement from the constituency of local and regional governments**, which can be downloaded **here**.

Ms. Maimunah Mohd Sharif, Executive Director of UN-Habitat, who made opening and closing remarks for the Assembly, called all local and regional governments present to commit not only to declarations but mostly to **declare actions and bring back concrete experiences in the next edition of WUF**, which will take place in Katowice (Poland) in 2022.