**"Re-invigorating the African metropolitan cities network: towards the Habitat III Agenda"**
**SA-18, Johannesburg, Africities, 30th of November 2015, 2.30 pm – 6 pm**

A quarter of the 100 largest cities in the world are now in Africa. In 2015, approximately 42% of Africa's population lives in cities, among which 36% spread across 52 cities of more than one million inhabitants (174 million people, 15% of Africa's total population). Among these cities, which population should almost double by 2035, 7 count more than 5 million inhabitants and 3 count more than 10 million (Lagos, Cairo and Kinshasa).

The spatial expansion of metropolises leads to new configurations characterised by the emergence of large areas or metropolitan regions, or the appearance of large urban corridors, for example along important coastal arteries.

Urban development constitutes a major engine of Africa's growth. African metropolises account for 36% of the continent's GDP ($700 billion), a figure that should more than double by 2030 to reach $1700 billion.

Paradoxically, despite their leading role as economic engines, Africa's metropolises are struggling to create jobs and offer opportunities for all within the formal sector, which is partly due to the secondary sector's (industry) weak development, stagnant employment in the public sector and a general delay in the modernisation of public services.

As a result, we witness widespread underemployment and high levels unemployment, particularly among the youth (60% of the unemployed population) as well as an increase in informality (approximately 66% of urban employment). This "urbanisation of poverty" leads to a deterioration of living conditions for a large part of the population.

The speed at which most metropolitan areas are growing has exceeded their capacity to provide adequate basic services to their citizens. Characteristics that are common to these cities are strong social polarization and spatial fragmentation, coupled with a rapid growth of informal settlements and insufficient access to basic services.

These phenomena result in an unmanaged urban sprawl and spatial fragmentation: with small islets of wealthier settlements with infrastructures, surrounded by expanding informal settlements or slums that have little or no access to essential public services. Access to these basic public services remains a major and overarching problem across African cities.

Regarding the environment, metropolises are highly exposed to climate change and natural disasters, due to the density of their population and the accumulation of material goods, among others. Some cities are already experiencing scarcity of water, floods, or a general increase in extreme weather events. Aside from cities' competitiveness, a key dimension for Africa's success or failure in the 21st century are cities' adaptation and resilience capacities.

However, African local governments are not adequately empowered to deal with the challenges faced by African metropolises, which political and economic role is not supported by commensurate policies and reforms. An often fragmented metropolitan governance, a lack of urban planning and low levels of political cooperation between different levels of government hinder collective action to face these problems. The means at the disposal of local authorities remain largely insufficient.

The success or failure of the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as well as the future of the New Urban Agenda that will be adopted in Habitat III and of the African Agenda 2063 will largely depend on Africa's capacity to build cities that are more inclusive and sustainable.

**Objectives of the session**
1) Debate on the challenges and propositions for African metropolitan areas in order to identify key messages for Habitat III and for the African Agenda 2063.
2) Strengthen the African metropolitan cities network and their cooperation within Africa as well as on the international level.

**Structure of the session**

The session will be chaired by:
- Mr. Khalifa Sall, Mayor of Dakar and President of UCLGA
- Mr. Parks Tau, Mayor of Johannesburg and Co-President of Metropolis

**2.30 pm – 4.30 pm – First part**
**Presentations and debate on the Agenda of African metropolitan areas for Habitat III**

- Presentation of the general recommendations for the agenda of African metropolitan areas: Ms. Rahmatouca Sow Dieye, Deputy Director of Cabinet of Dakar's Mayor, Regional Secretary for Metropolis Africa, and Mr. Edgardo Bilsky, Research Coordinator, UCLG

- Intervention on African metropolitan cities' governance: Mr. Khalifa Sall, Mayor of Dakar (Senegal), President of UCLGA

- Intervention on local economic development in African metropolitan areas: Mr. Geoffrey Makhubo, councilor member of the finance committee, City of Johannesburg, South Africa

- Intervention on planning, access to basic public services and housing in African metropolises: Mr. Bernard Manyenyeni, Mayor of Harare, Zimbabwe

- Intervention sur le financement des villes métropolitaines : M. Mohamed Sadiki, Maire de Rabat, Maroc, President of UCLG Committee on Local Finance

- Intervention on Metropolis and the African Common Position for Habitat III: Ms Jacqueline Moustache-Belle, Mayor of Victoria, Co-president of UCLG

Comments: Alioune badiane, Project office Director, UN Habitat

**Open debate**

**4.30 pm – 6 pm – Second part**
**Presentations and debate on strengthening the African metropolitan cities network**

- Presentation: Ms. Rahmatouca Sow Dieye, Deputy Director of Cabinet of Dakar's Mayor, Regional Secretary for Metropolis Africa

- Intervention on the political implication of African cities in the Metropolis network: Mr. Mpho Parks Tau, Executive Mayor of Johannesburg and Co-President of Metropolis

- Intervention: Metropolis as a tool to include African cities in the global agenda, Ms. Rose Christiane Ossouka Raponda, Mayor of Libreville

- Ms. DJE Lou Epouse Tie Bi, Vice-Governor of Abidjan (TBC)

Comments: Mr. Josep Roig, UCLG's Secretary General

**Open debate**