

## NEWS



## Preparing Cities for the Global Stage

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# My Experience of the Metropolis Diploma in Internationalization for Local Authorities

*A participant's reflection from the 2nd edition (2024) of the course.*

**By Thuthuka Mzimela, City of Johannesburg, South Africa**

In November 2024, I attended the Metropolis Diploma in Internationalization for Local Authorities, hosted in Barcelona by Metropolis and CEI International Affairs. The course brought together city officials, planners, and international practitioners from around the world to strengthen the role of local governments in international relations.

The timing was significant: **Johannesburg and Tshwane are co-hosting Urban 20 (U20) meetings in 2025**, and South Africa will host the **G20 Summit later this year**. This training sharpened my ability to engage in global dialogue, anticipate diverse interests, and represent my city internationally.

Over the week, we explored city diplomacy, international financing, multi-stakeholder partnerships, communication strategies, and monitoring and evaluation. Delivered through interactive presentations, case studies, and peer exchange, the program showed that cities are no longer passive in global governance—they can shape their futures by actively engaging in the global value chain.

We examined how urbanization, climate action, migration, and geopolitical shifts have made cities key players in international policy. Cities like Barcelona, Busan, and São Paulo demonstrated how leveraging networks and funding delivers strategic urban outcomes. Site visits showed how gentrified and repurposed precincts driven by public-private partnerships and cultural initiatives address deep-rooted challenges.

This experience is especially relevant as Johannesburg prepares for U20 engagements in June and September 2025, culminating in a communiqué for the G20 Summit in November. These events will bring heads of state, global organization leaders, and mayors together to tackle pressing urban and development challenges. The training equipped me to contribute meaningfully by balancing diverse perspectives, fostering collaboration, and advocating for communities through informed diplomacy.

The cohort's diversity was a particular highlight. Participants from cities like **Brussels, Taipei, and Mersin** shared experiences and solutions that mirrored our challenges and offered blueprints for progress, reinforcing how networks amplify local solutions globally.

In an era of global tensions and urgent calls for collective action, the role of cities is more vital than ever. Hosting the **G20 and U20 offers South Africa a historic chance to strengthen its global standing and showcase the transformative power of cities**.

As Johannesburg steps onto the global stage, I am equipped with tools, strengthened by networks, and inspired to represent my city and country with purpose and pride.



*Thuthuka Mzimela at the November 2024 edition of the course.*

## Want to learn more about the Metropolis Diploma in Internationalization for Local Authorities?

**Click here** to register your interest today.

Register your interest by 14 August to access the **10% early bird discount**. (Other discounts may also apply.)

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