

## NEWS



## Groundbreaking participation of Metropolis members at the United Nations

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Metropolis joined the delegation of the Global Taskforce of Local and Regional Governments which attended the 6th High Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF), which took place at the UN Headquarters, in New York, from July 9 to 18. While national states reviewed their performance on the Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development, the Global Taskforce accomplished the bring a remarkable number of leaders of subnational governments, providing an unprecedented opportunity for local and regional governments constituency to call for the inclusion of their perspectives in the assessment of the global agendas.

The HLPF is the official UN platform for the annual follow-up and review of the Agenda2030, and is therefore a vital space for local and regional governments to underline the role of strong local leadership and commitment in the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The theme of the 2018 panel was "Transformation towards sustainable and resilient societies", and focused on the reviews of the

following SDGs:

6. Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all
7. Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all
11. Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable
12. Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns
15. Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss
17. Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development

The events with the most relevant participation of Metropolis members took place between July 15 and 17. On July 15, UCLG and its Committee on Social Inclusion, Participatory Democracy and Human Rights co-organized a special session on the Right to Housing, in partnership with the UN Special Rapporteur on Adequate Housing and the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR). Housing, a fundamental human right and a core issue of metropolization, was debated by the Governing Mayor of Berlin and Acting President of Metropolis, Michael Müller, and Metropolis Co-presidents Ada Colau (Mayor of Barcelona), Daniel Martínez (Mayor of Montevideo) and Valérie Plante (Mayor of Montréal), and also by Metropolis Board of Directors member Manuela Carmena (Mayor of Madrid), who supported the campaign #MaketheShift.

July 16 was the day to convene the first Local and Regional Governments' Forum in the framework of the HLPF. On the panel 1 of the event, Ada Colau, Mayor of **Barcelona** brought up the discussion of housing to the core of her speech: "Real estate speculation makes life more expensive for citizens and results in their expulsion from our cities. We have to act now so as not to lose the people who are the soul of the cities. Without people there is no SDG achieved", she said. Daniel Martinez, Mayor of **Montevideo**, broadened this perspective, taking up the fight against social exclusion and inequality, so that SDGs become "a reality rather than a memory". In turn, Valérie Plante, Mayor of **Montréal**, shared the tools that her city is using to achieve the SDGs and stressed the challenges of migration and our joint efforts in the campaign #WithRefugees. Finally, Michael Müller, Mayor of **Berlin**, recommended the initiatives promoted within our association, such as the Policy Transfer Platform, as tools to localize the SDGs and access the best practices from cities across the world.

In subsequent panels, Lalao Ravalomana, Mayor of **Antananarivo**, underlined mayors' shared responsibility in achieving the SDGs, while Manuela Carmena gave concrete examples of performance indicators that the **Madrid** City Council is taking, stressing her efforts against corruption: "We will never be able to comply with the SDGs if we do not confront corruption". Mauricio Rodas, Mayor of **Quito**, in turn, brought attention to the access to financing: "If a mayor doesn't have a good relationship with the national president, he or she may not receive the resources needed to implement the SDGs. We shall redesign the architecture of international funding schemes", he stated.

The Local and Regional Governments' Forum was closed with the participation of representatives of the networks and associations of local and regional governments that are part of the Global Taskforce. On this occasion, the Metropolis Secretary General, Octavi de la Varga, although acknowledging the importance of bringing local leaders together, called the attention on the need to also strengthen this dialogue with other sectors: "We don't want to talk to ourselves, we want to systematize dialogue with UN Agencies, member states, social organizations and the private sector".

Examples of a more cross-sectoral dialogue were given on July 17, especially by the Mayor of Montevideo, Daniel Martinez, and the Vice-president of the **Barcelona Metropolitan Area**, Alfred Bosch. Martinez was

invited to Uruguay's Voluntary National Review (VNR) presentations at the HLPF, showing how national and local levels can work together, "so that in 20 years our children live in a just and inclusive society". Bosch took part in the SDGs Business Forum which took place at the UN headquarters, joining a panel with diverse stakeholders: "Considering private actors as partners, not as enemies, to deliver better public services to citizens, is part of the attitude we need", he stated.

July 17 was also the occasion to have an all-female panel at the HLPF, as part of the event "Local 2030 Special Event". On this occasion, Ms Carmena shared one of her priorities of her government in Madrid: "Achieving gender equality and do so from a diverse perspective and acknowledging women's effective contribution to human rights". Ms Plante complemented Carmena's viewpoint, underlining the importance of **intersectionality** (which the subject of one of the Metropolis pilot projects): "We have the responsibility to make sure we do not make the same mistakes as before, and that all women are represented".

The next HLPF, in 2019, will be focused on the reviews of SDGs 4, 8, 10, 13, 16 and 17. **For further information, visit the Global Taskforce website.**