

# H III

**THEMATIC MEETING**  
METROPOLITAN AREAS  
MONTREAL 6-7 OCT. 2015



Fostering metropolitan cooperation for  
sustainable urban development

## THE MONTRÉAL DECLARATION ON METROPOLITAN AREAS

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# Fostering metropolitan cooperation for sustainable urban development

## THE MONTRÉAL DECLARATION ON METROPOLITAN AREAS

### GLOBAL METROPOLITIZATION

*An increasingly urban world*

1. We live in an increasingly urban world. For the first time in history, more than half of the world's population lives in cities. By 2050, this proportion will reach nearly 70%. At the time of Habitat II, which took place in Istanbul in 1996, the world had 2.6 billion urban residents. It is estimated that by the time the global community meets in Quito for Habitat III in 2016, the number will have risen to 4 billion. According to the OECD, by the end of this "metropolitan century", most of the urbanization on our planet will likely be completed, with around 85% of the world's population living in cities by 2100. This rapid urban growth will be especially observed in the Sub-Saharan, Asian and Latin American countries.

*The rise of metropolitan areas*

2. Amid growing urbanization and suburbanization, cities are now often part of larger metropolitan areas with high population densities and where the development of transportation infrastructure has boosted trade, as well as commuting distances. Social, geographic, economic, cultural and institutional context help define metropolitan areas which vary worldwide. Metropolitan areas are usually made up of one or more central cities with high population densities and large pools of jobs. These areas form a large labour pool where most of the population lives and works. Relatively autonomous, they nevertheless interact with other metropolitan areas and other communities. The population living in these areas is continuously growing. According to the latest UN population estimate, 50% of urban residents live in agglomerations of 500,000 people or more.

*Socio-spatial and socio-economic inequalities*

3. The emergence of metropolitan areas is transforming our landscapes and is taking different forms depending on the areas. Growing urbanization sometimes leads to socio-spatial and socio-economic inequalities, notably because of the absence of well-planned urban development as well as inadequate investments, which sometimes causes an imbalance between city centers and the periphery.

*Hubs of the globalized economy and culture*

4. Now more than ever, metropolitan areas play a key role, due to the concentration of population and activities, in the social, cultural, environmental and economic development of nations. In most countries, metropolitan areas have become the main hubs of globalized economy and culture, as well as key drivers of economic growth and innovation. Accounting for a high share of the gross domestic product (GDP), and a dominant factor in trends of human development, they also attract qualified workers and migrants seeking better job opportunities, including workers in the informal sector. These areas attract people in hope of better quality of life. In most cases, higher-level economic functions are concentrated in metropolitan areas.

## METROPOLITAN CHALLENGES

### *Significant challenges*

5. The wave of urbanization in the 21st century can benefit individual residents, communities, countries and the planet as a whole. At the same time, however, significant challenges will have to be addressed through better planning and management, particularly for future generations.

### *Challenges facing metropolitan areas*

6. More than ever, the challenges facing cities around the world in terms of urban planning, encompassing transportation, safety, urban revitalization, social inclusion and cohesion, environmental protection, water, air, energy, sanitation and climate change, are extending beyond local boundaries and are challenging production and consumption patterns in view of our limited resources. As more people move into the metropolitan areas surrounding central cities, local governments must innovate in democratic decision making and supra-local governance matters and develop new interterritorial coordination strategies and mechanisms in order to face metropolitan wide challenges and to enhance inter and intra cooperation for attractiveness, competitiveness and social inclusion and cohesion.

### *Disparities of urban growth*

7. The accelerated pace of urban growth can magnify economic, social and territorial disparities and, in certain areas, exacerbate shortages of basic goods and services essential for urban life, accelerate environmental and health degradation and result in significant cost increases. In developing countries, rapid urban growth leads to transportation and mobility issues, land-use issues where in some areas control over land value is difficult, employment issues and can lead to increasingly precarious housing and slum conditions, as people migrate massively to urban centres or the outskirts of big cities seeking better job opportunities.

### *Revising funding models*

8. Globalization and financialization of the economy, particularly urban economies, challenge established funding models in many large cities. Based on recent experience, the investments required in urban areas could increase significantly over the next decade. The funding of metropolitan areas should be adapted to this reality in order to mobilize the massive investment needed to meet metropolitan challenges and increased responsibilities.

## TRANSFORMING OUR METROPOLITAN WORLD

### *Goal 11 of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*

9. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development has identified a series of goals related to the challenges facing cities. Goal 11 seeks to make cities and other human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable. Among other things, the targets for 2030 address access to affordable housing; safe, affordable and sustainable transport systems; open green, public and natural spaces; good water quality and clean and renewable energy. They also focus on protecting of cultural and natural heritage and fostering balanced economic, social, cultural and environmental links between urban, peri-urban and rural areas by strengthening national and regional development planning and by promoting social, territorial and technical innovations.

### *Metropolitan planning in support of sustainable communities*

10. If metropolitan areas are well planned and developed, e.g. through integrated participatory planning, solidarity and management approaches, they can help promote local, regional and national communities that are economically, socially, culturally and environmentally viable.

*Integrated and inclusive approach*

11. In this regard, we need to take an integrated and inclusive approach to metropolitan development and human settlements that provides for affordable and adequate housing, for cultural and social services including education, healthy environments, for infrastructure and that prioritizes slum upgrading, urban regeneration and measures to ensure the rights of existing population.

Therefore:

*Promoting sustainable metropolitan development policies*

12. We undertake to promote integrated sustainable metropolitan development policies that support inclusive housing, social services, gender equality, cultural heritage and a safe and healthy living environment for all (particularly children, youth, women, the elderly, indigenous, and the disabled), green spaces, clean air and water, a wide range of employment opportunities as well as affordable and sustainable transportation and energy policies.

*Responding effectively to growth*

13. We recognize the importance of increasing the number of metropolitan areas that implement policies for sustainable urban planning and development in order to meet effectively the expected growth of urban populations in the coming decades.

*Sustainable mobility*

14. We recognize that transportation and mobility are central to the sustainable development of metropolitan areas. Sustainable mobility can enhance economic growth, improve accessibility, stimulate revitalization and foster better economic and social inclusion while respecting the environment. Therefore, we must work to facilitate the free movement of people and goods, along with access to environmentally sound, safe and affordable transportation infrastructure with a view to improving social equity, health, city resilience, urban-rural linkages and productivity of rural areas. Furthermore, we must promote active transportation that contributes to reduce congestion and increase community well-being.

*Compact and mixed-use development*

15. We recognize that compact and mixed-use cities foster sustainable urban development, notably by creating jobs, reducing infrastructure spending, increasing equity in access to public services, improving air quality, reducing congestion and mitigating urban sprawl.

*Waste management*

16. We support the sustainable and cooperative management of waste through the application of the "3 Rs" (reduce, reuse and recycle) in order to meet spatial, technical, and economic waste management challenges.

*Disaster risk*

17. We recognize the importance of integrating natural and man-made disaster risk reduction in metropolitan planning and management, in order to increase community resilience to such events.

*Climate change*

18. We recognize the key role of metropolitan areas in the fight against climate change and in policies put in place to adapt to the impacts of global warming and as leaders to embark on the road to a low carbon urban development.

*Rural-urban balance*

19. We recognize the interdependence between rural and urban regions and the need to achieve a balance between both regions in promoting equitable, managed and mutually reinforced development.

*Eradicating poverty*

20. We undertake to work towards improving the quality of human settlements, including living and working conditions with a view to eradicating poverty so that all people have access to basic services, housing and mobility.

*Sustainably conserving and enhancing natural and cultural heritage, biodiversity and landscapes*

*Promoting diversity and creativity*

*Integrated planning approach*

*Citizen participation*

*Involving multiple stakeholders*

*The right to the city*

*Role of national, regional and local governments*

*Metropolitan cooperation through partnerships*

*Suitable financing*

21. We recognize the important role cultural and natural heritage including biodiversity and landscapes, play in defining the metropolitan identity of citizens and human settlements as well as the need to protect, to rehabilitate and to promote resilient ecosystems.
22. We recognize the importance of cultural and ethnic diversity and are committed to providing resources and opportunities for the development of creativity.
23. We undertake to promote an integrated approach to planning and building sustainable cities and metropolitan areas, e.g. by supporting local, regional and metropolitan authorities, by increasing public awareness and enhancing the participation of citizens, including the most vulnerable people and marginalized communities, in decision-making through the use of collaborative processes accessible to the whole community and by relying on the contribution of academia.
24. We recognize the importance of citizen participation in the decision-making process that leads to investment choices and in urban and metropolitan planning as well as the contribution of public and institutional spaces of participation to foster a common understanding of local and metropolitan issues.
25. We recognize that urban and metropolitan planning benefits from the involvement of multiple stakeholders, as well as from the full use of disaggregated data, segregated by age, gender and territory, on socio-demographic and economic trends, etc.
26. We recognize the importance of placing the right to the city for all in the center of metropolitan policies, to combine citizen participation with the right to education, health, housing and work, and the recognition and respect of differences in order to promote cohabitation, conviviality, a strong metropolitan identity and a strong sense of belonging.
27. We recognize the legitimacy of municipalities and other levels of governments, within their jurisdictional boundaries, in setting out a coherent vision for metropolitan areas.
28. We recognize that partnerships among cities, communities and national governments play an important role in promoting sustainable metropolitan development. In this regard, we underscore the need to strengthen existing cooperation mechanisms and platforms, such as partnership arrangements and other tools that advance coordinated implementation of metropolitan cooperation, in accordance with the Habitat Agenda. This will be achieved with the active involvement of all United Nations partners and with the overall aim of achieving sustainable urban development and a balance between urban and rural regions.
29. We recognize the importance of promoting financing suited to the challenges of metropolitan areas, encouraging better sharing of available resources between local communities and other levels of government and, in view of our limited resources, improving management efficiency.

## IMPLEMENTING METROPOLITAN MECHANISMS

*Metropolitan areas contributing to the SDGs and the New Urban Agenda*

30. The Habitat II Declaration recognized local authorities as key partners for sustainable urbanization. Therefore, the New Urban Agenda to be discussed at Habitat III must reiterate the importance of empowering local authorities and now take into account metropolitan areas and the mechanisms required to meet metropolitan challenges.

*Metropolitan cooperation and governance*

31. Amid increasing urbanization, metropolitan cooperation may help to address issues extending over local boundaries in several strategic areas with a view to ensuring the competitiveness, attractiveness and social inclusion and cohesion of the entire metropolitan area, in keeping with sustainable development principles.

Metropolitan governance requires a clear legal and institutional framework, based on principles of democracy, respect for local autonomy and subsidiarity. This framework must be provided with appropriate funding, which involves coordination mechanisms and sectorial policies (infrastructure, economic development, environmental, social and cultural policies). Cooperation at the metropolitan level should be based on the representation of all citizens and stakeholders, despite their different mobilization, resources and engagement capabilities.

This framework and cooperation would facilitate land use planning including the construction and operation of public transit, reduce disparities in public service provision, help manage urban growth, facilitate land use coordination with transportation projects and protect and enhance natural assets.

*Metropolitan policy and resource distribution*

32. Therefore, metropolitan policy must become the cornerstone of international and national economic policy since metropolitan areas are the drivers of innovation and productivity worldwide. Metropolitan areas can also produce and distribute resources so as to foster better livelihoods for urban and rural residents alike.

*Metropolitan financing*

33. To achieve the full potential of the planning process, metropolitan financing mechanisms must also be implemented, to achieve metropolitan goals, such as transportation, social housing, protection and enhancement of natural environments and other related amenities.

*New partnerships for metropolitan governance mechanisms*

34. National governments, together with local, regional and metropolitan officials, must develop cooperation mechanisms to meet the urbanization and sustainable development challenges they face. Such partnerships may include metropolitan governance mechanisms aimed at reinforcing metropolitan management capacity, managing sustainable urban growth, coordinating land use and transportation projects, strengthening the control of speculation and security of land tenure, promoting economic development, supporting social and cultural diversity, fighting against social exclusion, fostering resilience to disasters and protecting and enhancing natural environment and heritage, for example. This will entail higher levels of democracy, public participation and decentralization policies.

*Effective leadership for metropolitan prosperity*

35. The success of metropolitan areas depends on effective public, private and civic leadership. Local, regional and metropolitan democratic and accountable institutions, together with elected officials from cities and national governments, must be committed to coordinated action and embrace a shared vision aimed at accommodating diverging viewpoints. A strong framework is required to support urban areas and concerted action is needed from all levels of government.

## A NEW MULTILEVEL METROPOLITAN COOPERATION PARTNERSHIP

- Metropolitan cooperation* 36. The Montréal Declaration on Metropolitan Areas recognizes the importance of increasing the number of accountable, capable, inclusive and socially just metropolitan areas that implement policies for sustainable urban planning and development in order to meet effectively the expected growth of urban populations in the coming decades. Sustainable urban planning must engage multiple stakeholders and suitable financing. Metropolitan cooperation plays an important role in setting out a vision for sustainable and cohesive urban regions, from the very outset of the metropolitan planning process through to the revitalization of older cities and neighbourhoods, e.g. by adopting energy efficiency programs for building management, adopting food security programs, ensuring connectivity of green spaces and developing sustainable and locally appropriate transportation systems. We further recognize the importance of mixed-use planning and of encouraging non-motorized mobility, e.g. by promoting pedestrian and cycling infrastructure. Furthermore we recognize the necessity to promote gender equality.
- Contribution to the New Urban Agenda* 37. The Montréal Declaration on Metropolitan Areas proposes that the following contribution be considered in the New Urban Agenda to be adopted at the Habitat III Conference in Quito in 2016:
- Shared vision and multi-level collaboration* 38. The Montréal Declaration on Metropolitan Areas recognizes that, to meet challenges and opportunities of global urbanization, all levels of government will have to share a common vision in order to establish coherent strategies aimed at implementing the right to the city and improving the quality of life in urban, peri-urban and rural areas.
- Relationship with all levels of government* 39. If we are to meet these many challenges, we must step up our relationships with all levels of government. This is a necessity because economic, social, cultural and environmental development is governed by interdependent public policies. Metropolitan areas thus require cooperation, integration, solidarity and concerted action from all levels of government.

*Comprehensive partnership agreements*

40. The Montréal Declaration on Metropolitan Areas recognizes that multi-level metropolitan cooperation partnerships (MMCPs) should be implemented to promote the benefits of metropolitan cooperation. MMCPs are intended to improve the standard of living and quality of life of metropolitan citizens. They also aim to:

*Role of metropolitan areas*

a. Recognize the role of metropolitan areas in the sustainable economic, social, cultural and environmental development of urban and rural areas and countries.

*Importance of business, labour and community stakeholders*

b. Recognize the importance of business, real-estate sector, labour and community stakeholders, particularly from the education, civil society, social, cultural and environmental sectors, as well as from urban networks, as partners in implementing MMCPs.

*Effective metropolitan governance*

c. Implement effective metropolitan governance structures, mechanisms and arrangements aimed at facilitating the adoption and monitoring of successful policies that meet the challenges of sustainable, safe and equitable urbanization, in particular access to water, energy and sanitation as well as the fight against and adaptation to climate change.

*Research-based knowledge*

d. To invite local, national and international authorities to work with universities to transform their knowledge and innovation capacities into concrete action to benefit citizens and help authorities in their search for better governance.

*Governance, democracy and international cooperation*

These multi-stakeholder partnerships should be based on principles of good governance and democracy that ensure citizen participation, access to information, transparency and accountability, either in formal and informal arrangements. They must also be part of a commitment to international cooperation between metropolitan areas to ensure better sharing of expertise, to promote social innovation and access to new technology, to strengthen their management capacity and to increase solidarity.

## FOLLOW-UP, MONITORING AND RESEARCH

*International observatory for the advancement of metropolitan cooperation*

41. Knowledge and research on metropolitan areas should be strengthened through existing and new platforms such as an international observatory for information exchange as well as for advancement of cooperation for sustainable metropolitan development.

*Promotion and Follow-up Committee*

42. Following the Montréal Meeting on Metropolitan Areas, a committee composed of the Chairs and Co-Chairs representing national governments, local authorities and civil society that attended the conference will promote the principles and actions proposed by the Declaration in the context of the upcoming formulation of the New Urban Agenda at the Habitat III conference in Quito 2016.

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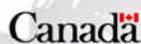


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