

METROPOLISES AND CITIES IN TRANSFORMATION: BUILDING VIBRANT COMMUNITIES

- CONCEPT NOTE -



**13th METROPOLIS WORLD CONGRESS
GUANGZHOU: GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

metropolis ●



30 November 2020 : VIRTUAL

Virtual Statutory Meetings

**(Tentative Date to be Confirmed)
May 2021: GUANGZHOU, China**

13th Metropolis World Congress
Global Mayors' Forum
Guangzhou Award



13th METROPOLIS WORLD CONGRESS: A TWOFOLD INTERNATIONAL EVENT

METROPOLIS IN A NUTSHELL

It is often said that our planet is headed towards an urban future. We also are advancing towards a metropolitan future, characterised by large cities surrounded by spread-out suburbs forming urban agglomerations of unprecedented complexity and diversity. For this reason, for 35 years now, the World Association of the Major Metropolises (Metropolis) has continuously connected metropolises around the world, helping them find collective answers to the challenges they face and providing them with tools for sound metropolitan governance **in order to capitalise on the benefits of urban growth and minimise the negatives**. Today, as the global network of major cities and metropolitan areas, we bring together the governments of 141 urban agglomerations worldwide.

Every three years, Metropolis organises a World Congress in order to facilitate face-to-face encounters and fruitful exchanges, not only between the political leaders of major metropolises—mayors, governors and their counterparts—but also between different levels of government, city managers, public officials, urban experts, academics and representatives from international NGOs, multilateral cooperation agencies, and civil society.

How will this year's Metropolis World Congress be run?

In response to the needs arising from the international Covid-19 pandemic, Metropolis will organise a twofold Congress to ensure this vital event for the association—the 13th Metropolis World Congress—runs smoothly.

The first part of our twofold Congress will consist of a **live broadcast event to renew our statutory bodies (30 November 2020)**, and a second face-to-face part that will include the Global Mayors' Forum and the ceremony for the **5th Guangzhou International Award for Urban Innovation**.

Read on for more details about this event!



**Difficult times require creative and courageous solutions, which may also open new avenues to a better metropolitan future.
Mark the dates on your calendar and join us!**

OUR STATUTORY MEETINGS GO VIRTUAL!

In Ancient Greece, the Agora was the centre of civic life in the city and the place where political discussions took place. We hope that Metropolis' Agora becomes a focal point for our leadership!

According to our statutes, our current statutory bodies will finish their term and new representatives will be elected. Held every three years, the General Assembly is the sovereign body of our association and it hosts a unique forum for members to build the strategy for the coming 2021-2023 period together. It is also the Agora where our active members will elect a new Board of Directors for the next three years.

For the first time in the Assembly's 35-year history, local leaders of member cities and regions will not meet in person, due to the Covid-19 pandemic. The meeting **will therefore be conducted online on Monday, 30 November 2020.**



Haizhu Lake, Guangzhou





THE 13th METROPOLIS WORLD CONGRESS – IN PERSON

Under the tagline “**Metropolises and cities in transformation: building vibrant communities**”, the face-to-face part of the 13th Metropolis World Congress will be jointly organised by Metropolis and the People’s Government of Guangzhou Municipality. This international gathering will bring us back to China’s Southern Gateway eight years after the 2012 Metropolis Annual Meeting, which was also hosted by Guangzhou.

The impact of metropolitan spaces goes far beyond city borders. In a globalised world, where people, goods, capital, information and even diseases are travelling faster than ever, no doubt remains that the solutions to global challenges must be found through multiple levels of cooperation.

It is in this spirit that Metropolis and Guangzhou invite the citizens of the world to join us at our 13th Metropolis World Congress during four days in April 2021 to reflect, debate, learn from each other, and formulate innovative responses to the crucial questions of our metropolitan era. **During the meeting we will also seize the opportunity to help member metropolises adopt a more forward-looking approach to global metropolitan challenges.**

As mentioned above, the 13th edition of the World Congress will also host the **Global Mayors’ Forum** and the **5th Guangzhou International Award for Urban Innovation**. An important three-in-one event that will promote the development of policies in the fields of: safe and healthy public spaces, mobility strategies, energy transition, affordable housing, work and technology, innovative urban management, green infrastructure, and basic social services.

As a result, the 13th Metropolis World Congress seeks to present a bold statement for global agendas: that thinking and acting on a metropolitan scale is key to fostering social inclusion, economic development and environmental sustainability, ensuring quality of life and leaving no one behind.



Momentum towards healing our communities

By the time our Congress is held, the Covid-19 pandemic is likely to have evolved. Nonetheless, the damage has already been done, and cities and metropolises have paid a heavy price. We want this Congress to spark momentum towards healing our communities and move towards greater cohesion between city policy makers, leaders and thinkers. Together with Guangzhou, our members and partners, we aim to mobilise novel solutions that can transform metropolitan spaces in the long term. Our shared vision is a Congress that has outcomes that will accelerate the changes in our [\(re\) thought metropolises](#) by:

1. Redesigning public space, making it more welcoming, accessible and functional
2. Developing new and climate-friendly mobility patterns
3. Facilitating the transition to more inclusive and sustainable economic models
4. Accepting innovative technology, allowing more decentralized patterns of work and leisure
5. Implementing nature-based solutions and protecting biodiversity
6. Reducing our carbon footprint
7. Enhancing healthcare services
8. Mainstream gender issues and better protect citizen rights

Thank you in advance for your support in making the 13th Metropolis World Congress a success!

ABOUT GUANGZHOU

The city of Guangzhou is one of Metropolis' champion members, as it operates our **Urban Innovation program** and Regional Secretariat, and acts as Co-President of our association. A Metropolis member since 1993, Guangzhou took a great step forward in boosting its leadership on urban innovation through the launch of the Guangzhou International Award for Urban Innovation. With its commitment to promoting urban innovation as one of the pathways to sustainable urban development, Guangzhou is a global leader in facilitating exchanges of experience and knowledge on innovative urban practices that are designed to meet the needs of the urban population.





What else should you know about the city?

As one of the planet's 33 megacities with at least 10 million inhabitants, Guangzhou embodies the metropolisation process—a phenomenon that is taking place worldwide and is unprecedented in the history of humanity. Guangzhou is a city noted for its profound history and rich culture. As one of China's central cities, it's also an international trade and commercial centre and integrated transportation hub. With 2.36 trillion yuan gross regional product in 2019, the city characterises one of the most open, prosperous and market-oriented metropolitan areas in China, serving a population of more than 22 million. In over 2,200 years of history, Guangzhou was a stop on the ancient Maritime Silk Road, and was home to Lingnan culture as well as China's modern revolution, and stands in the forefront of Chinese Reform and Opening-up. In 2016, Guangzhou topped the list on the Human Development Index of the UNDP among all cities on the Chinese mainland.

The city is a gateway for science, research and development, as an educational and cultural hub in the Southern China Greater Bay Area (GBA). As such, Guangzhou is seizing significant historical opportunities to carry out innovation and improvement in areas such as urban functions, cultural strength, the service industry and international business. Along with Shenzhen, seven neighbouring cities, and the Hong Kong and Macau Special Administrative Regions, Guangzhou has been consolidating a spatially coordinated model for sustainable development, over a total area measuring 56,000 km².

Furthermore, the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macau Greater Bay Area is one of the most open and economically dynamic areas in China. It is likely that Guangzhou will make full use of the opportunity to build a world class bay area, enhancing its role as an international business centre and integrated transportation hub, while cultivating its position in science, technology, education and culture, and focusing on building an international metropolis.

The development of the Greater Bay Area and much more will be addressed during the Congress in 2021.

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