

Concept note

Metropolitan Assembly

Durban, 14th November 2019, 14:00 – 16:00

About the Metropolitan Assembly

The Metropolitan Assembly, organized by Metropolis as metropolitan section of UCLG, is designed as the space for exchange on the challenges of the upcoming metropolitan era, and the role large metropolises play to find solutions. In particular, the session will address ideas to rethink city borders and jurisdictions to improve quality of life for all.

Context

Our planet is advancing towards a metropolitan era characterised by major conurbations of unprecedented complexity and diversity. The challenges raised by the urbanisation process are becoming plain to see in metropolitan areas. Today, more than 1.6 billion people live in these large metropolitan areas, which are expected to account for 40% of the total world population by 2050.

In addition to the demographic aspect, major metropolises are focal points for much of the world's well-being, economic activity and innovation. They are home to a wide range of agencies and institutions and nucleuses attracting talent and creativity, technological innovation and artistic output worldwide. However, metropolitan spaces must deal with serious threats. The increasing pressure to achieve economic growth and competitiveness is giving rise to negative externalities that are having an adverse impact on sustainable urban development. While the benefits generated in a metropolis are not fairly distributed among all its dwellers, the inequalities between and within metropolitan spaces are intensifying. In almost every metropolis, it is possible to see growing social, economic and ethnic segregation.

The lack of coordination between the different levels of governments affects the accomplishment of the SDGs set out in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Research on 58 metropolitan spaces where 69 members of Metropolis are located shows that less than half (43%) count on a metropolitan governance structure. When complexity of layers of local governments operating in the same metropolis generates competition for resources among them, it becomes more difficult to create an enabling environment.

Key policy priorities

To address the global challenges facing metropolitan areas, it is required to define and implement innovative, holistic and efficient solutions. This means a renewed appraisal of at what scale they should be addressed and with which partners.

In fact, metropolitan governance is based on legitimacy through results, meaning the ability to make policies and provide solutions to problems. New and improved **governance arrangements and structures** for the **cross-level coordination**, adequate distribution of **competences**, better **allocation of resources**, as well as the development of instruments to encourage greater **participation** by social partners in order to enhance the legitimacy of policies would dramatically help reduce territorial inequalities and promote more polycentric and integrated corridor approaches to metropolitan governance.

Approaches to sustainable urban development should guarantee an adequate coordination across levels of government and between territories while enhancing **transparency and accountability**, improving **citizen participation** and the involvement of **local stakeholders** in governance, addressing the **climate change**, fostering **gender equality**, and strengthening **social cohesion** and egalitarian societies, particularly by taking responsibility for the safety of all in **public space** and the **defense of digital rights**.

Key ideas for the debate

The following questions are presented as starting points for discussion and dialogue:

- There are many models of metropolitan governance. Which is the model to govern your metropolis? Which type of institutional arrangements have been made? How are political representatives elected? How is it financed?
- What mechanisms do you propose or implement in your metropolis to improve transparency and accountability?
- What actions should be carried out to handle the arrival of a large number of refugees and migrants? How can we, from our metropolises, facilitate their integration?
- What proposals do you make to defense digital rights in our metropolises and, therefore, contribute to egalitarian societies?

Metropolis invites its political leaders to contribute to the debate by bringing up concrete practices from their metropolises and local governments.

Speakers*

- Sawsan Chebli, State Secretary for Citizenship and International Affairs of Berlin, Metropolis President
- Ada Colau, President of the Metropolitan Area of Barcelona and Mayor of the Barcelona City Council, Metropolis Co-president
- David Makhura, Premier of Gauteng, Metropolis Co-president
- Valérie Plante, Mayor of Montréal, Metropolis Co-president
- Christian di Candia, Mayor of Montevideo, Metropolis Co-president
- Guohui Wen, Mayor of Guangzhou, Metropolis Co-president

** Pending confirmation or delegation of deputy*

Contacts

For more information, or any questions you may have regarding the political dialogue please contact Ms Teresa Oliver (toliver@metropolis.org) or Mr Guillaume Berret (gberret@metropolis.org) from the Metropolis Secretariat General.