13TH METROPOLIS WORLD CONGRESS

METROPOLISES AND CITIES IN TRANSFORMATION

Rethinking our future together

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13TH METROPOLIS WORLD CONGRESS
GLOBAL MAYORS’ FORUM
GUANGZHOU AWARD
BUILDING A STRONG CASE FOR THE IMPORTANCE OF SOUND METROPOLITAN GOVERNANCE

Metropolis (www.metropolis.org) has been an independent association since 1985 and is a platform for the most prominent metropolises in the world to connect, share experiences and respond deftly to emerging local and global challenges. With 140 local and regional government members from over 60 countries, gathering more than 600 million people living in those metropolitan spaces, our organization fosters global cooperation, dialogue, and sharing knowledge and solutions, grounded in the experience and empathy of its members.

Since its creation, Metropolis has provided support to more than 140 mayors and political leaders from cities around the world by building a strong case for the importance of sound metropolitan governance.

This collaboration is based on three action lines:

- **Strengthening global leadership on metropolitan diplomacy and advocacy.**
- **Building adaptive capacities for metropolitan governance.**
- **Fostering within the association an accountable and sustainable internal governance culture.**

Every three years, Metropolis organises a World Congress to facilitate networking and productive 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?

Covid-19 has been a game-changer in the terms of how global gatherings are organised. New opportunities have emerged for innovative knowledge-sharing formats and for more sustainable events in terms of mobility and access. However, new challenges have also arisen, such as how we can still create a global meeting point for urban thinkers and local leaders.

For the next congress, we are committed to continuing the process we started last October 2020 through statutory meetings and the General Assembly, which resulted in the election of a new board of directors (for first time in our 35-year history, the election was not held in person). This process also resulted in a new Strategic Action Plan 2021-2023 and an updated internal governance structure, to take advantage of everything we could accomplish virtually while maintaining the legitimacy of the elections.

THE FRAMEWORK OF OUR WORLD CONGRESS IN UNCERTAIN TIMES

Over the last few decades, we have witnessed the continuous expansion of urban agglomerations. Cities in the 21st century are home to 60% of the world’s population. They are important centres of innovation, employment and economic development, and their impact is felt beyond their own boundaries.

Since the Covid-19 pandemic was formally declared by the World Health Organization, the impact and diversity of the responses implemented by local and regional governments across the globe pushed local and regional leaders to confront the challenges, contradictions and vulnerabilities in our urban communities head-on. On top of this crisis, local and regional governments also had to keep an eye on the inevitable emergencies created by natural or human-based hazards, and on essentially political, complex emergencies that can erode the cultural, civil, political and economic stability of society.
This 13th Metropolis World Congress will be a unique and exceptional opportunity for the metropolitan ecosystem to build collectively actionable strategies, get inspirational ideas and debate on how urban leaders can implement projects and policies aligned to the following aspects of metropolitan spaces:

- Urban growth.
- Digitalisation.
- Citizen participation.
- Resilience (environmental, economic, and in public service provision).

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 and allowing more decentralised patterns of work and leisure.
5. Implementing nature-based solutions and protecting biodiversity.
6. Reducing our carbon footprint.
7. Strengthening healthcare services.
8. Mainstreaming gender issues and better protecting citizen rights.
ABOUT GUANGZHOU

As one of the planet’s 33 megacities (a city 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 rich and colourful history and culture; as one of China’s central cities, it’s also an international trade and commercial centre and integrated transportation hub. With a 2.36 trillion-yuan gross regional product in 2019, the city is one of the most open, prosperous and market-oriented metropolitan areas in China, serving a population of more than 22 million. During its 2,200 years of history, Guangzhou was a stop on the ancient Maritime Silk Road, was home to Lingnan culture as well as China’s modern revolution, and stands at the forefront of Chinese reform and opening-up. In 2016, Guangzhou topped the list on the UNDP’s Human Development Index out of all the cities on the Chinese mainland.

A LONG FRIENDSHIP BETWEEN GUANGZHOU AND METROPOLIS

The city of Guangzhou is one of Metropolis’ champion members, as it operates our Urban Innovation programme, acts as Regional Secretariat for Asia Pacific, and is currently President of the 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 in 2012. 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.
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