



METROPOLIS PROGRESS REPORT.

January —————> April 2023

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NOTE FROM THE SECRETARY GENERAL

We have started 2023 with a lot of enthusiasm for the activities to come. In these first months of the year, we have particularly focused on the preparation of the **14th Metropolis World Congress** and its activities to be held from 12 to 15 June in Brussels, Belgium. It will be a very special moment where we hope to see many colleagues from our membership in person again after long years of disrupted travel. We have worked hard to prepare a unique event for our network.

During these early months I have had the opportunity to meet several members and potential members in **Türkiye, Indonesia** and **China** in order to hear their views and thoughts about the Association, and also their hopes and needs in the coming period. I also had the honour to represent Metropolis in the first **Cities Summit of the Americas**, and to meet members from that region.

The **Metropolis Board of Directors** met on 24 February to prepare the documents for the General Assembly in view of the approval of the Strategic Action Plan for 2024-2026 and the reform of our internal regulations.

Our network also benefited from the activities organised within the framework of the **Clearing House Project**, where the first city tandem formed by Mexico City and Belo Horizonte exchanged experiences and activities on green infrastructures. At the end of April we launched the 2022 report by the **Metropolis Learning Forum on Digitalization**, a space for peer-to-peer knowledge-sharing focused on actively listening to the diverse realities of major cities and metropolitan spaces around the world. In addition, the **pilot project on Participatory Democracy**, headed by the municipality of Córdoba, together with the City Councils of Barcelona, Madrid and Montreal came to a successful end.



JORDI VAQUER

Metropolis Secretary General



ACTION LINE 1

Strengthen global leadership on metropolitan diplomacy and advocacy

We have launched a project on MetroGovernance, led by the Policy team at the Secretariat General to **build a common political metropolitan narrative**. The first output of this project is a document taking a holistic approach which summarizes the "state of the art" of metropolitan governance (it is one of four documents addressing the issue), tackling areas such as housing, the environment, the economic fabric, and public services. The four documents will address metropolitan governance as the necessary framework for all urban decision-making.

To **support metropolitan leaders in making their voices heard at global, regional and national levels**, Metropolis and the representative of the Mobility Secretariat of the City of Bogotá presented the AVANTIA project to the first global gathering of actors involved in the EU-supported programme "Partnerships for Sustainable Cities", organized by the European Commission in Brussels from March 7 to 9. The aim of these global meetings is to build a community of practitioners through the "Partnerships for Sustainable Cities", programme. This first gathering involved more than 150 actors, including city representatives from 54 projects, staff from EC/EU institutions and other development cooperation partners.





ACTION LINE 1

Strengthen global leadership on metropolitan diplomacy and advocacy

Among our commitments is to **collaborate with multilateral actors, local government networks, think tanks, international agencies and other stakeholders**. Thus, on the 15 July 2022, during the Board of Directors' meeting held in Bogotá, the Brussels Capital-Region and Metropolis signed an agreement to host the [14th Metropolis World Congress 2023](#). The Congress will be held as part of the Brussels Urban Summit (BUS) hosted by the Brussels-Capital Region in June this year with three international partners: Metropolis, OECD and Eurocities. By holding the partner events under one umbrella, we aim to reduce the dispersion of participating local government representatives, and promote synergies between the members of the

different organizations. Brussels-Capital Region provides substantial support to Metropolis in compliance with statutory requirements, as well as making an important contribution towards giving Metropolis a voice at global level.

In preparation for the [Metropolis World Congress](#), the team at the Secretariat General has been working hard together with the host member, the Brussels-Capital Region, to ensure the smooth running of the event. Apart from weekly meetings between the four partners of the BUS and the operational committees, designated members of staff have also visited the location as part of the preparations.





ACTION LINE 1

Strengthen global leadership on metropolitan diplomacy and advocacy



On the commitment to **influence the global agenda with an impact on metropolitan issues**:

- The Secretary General travelled to meet with four Turkish metropolises, Mersin, Adana, Antalya and Konya, in a prospection strategy to widen the membership base in the region.
- He also attended the first-ever Cities Summit of the Americas, held this year in Denver. The event is part of the U.S Department of State's strategy to bring together democracies.
- Moreover, he gave a public lecture at the Guangzhou Library about the role that large metropolises play in pursuit of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals and New Urban Agenda. The lecture, forming part of the Guangzhou Award Talks series, was a great opportunity to share not only the challenges, but also the fantastic innovations and progress that large metropolitan cities forming part of the Metropolis network are making to contribute to the success of the Sustainable Development Goals.



ACTION LINE 2

Build adaptive capacities for metropolitan governance

We are committed to **fostering peer-to-peer learning, aiming to enhance both the political and technical capabilities associated with metropolitan governance**. On this point:

- Within the framework of the first **International Congress on Citizen Participation and Democratization**, organized by the municipality of Córdoba (Argentina), we managed the closure of the pilot project on Participatory Democracy, headed by the municipality of Córdoba, together with the City Councils of Barcelona, Madrid and Montreal.

At a panel presentation during the closure entitled “Decentralization and a new collaborative agenda between citizens and government”, representatives from the four cities presented the results of the pilot project and good practices for participatory democracy.

- At the end of April we launched the 2022 report by the **Metropolis Learning Forum on Digitalization**, a space for peer-to-peer knowledge-sharing focused on actively listening to the diverse realities of major cities and metropolitan spaces around the world, with the main contributions by the participants in this initiative being in three focus areas:
 - Which are the challenges and opportunities of using information and communications technologies (ICT) in metropolitan spaces?
 - How can local and regional governments better leverage digitalization, particularly in regard to furthering equity, prosperity and sustainability?
 - Has Covid-19 been a turning point in making visible the barriers generated by not having access to the internet?

Learning Station

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Metropolis Learning Forum

DIGITALISATION, THE FUTURE OF METROPOLISES

Where peer to peer learning happens

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ACTION LINE 2

Build adaptive capacities for metropolitan governance



- **Mexico City, Belo Horizonte and Bogotá** have recently been selected to participate in the **first city tandem of the CLEARING HOUSE project**, an opportunity to promote capacity development and peer-to-peer exchange of knowledge and practices in UFNBS. Mexico City and Belo Horizonte decided to exchange views on inner-city afforestation and green infrastructures, which represents a current challenge for their cities.

After a series of online meetings, this City Tandem concluded with personal meetings and visits to the projects in Mexico City and Belo Horizonte by the representatives of the environment departments of each city.

- **Belo Horizonte** presented some of the city's ongoing UFNBS initiatives, such as the "Mini Forests" program, which they are running in a multisectoral partnership with grassroots communities and technical agencies. It aims to create small islands of biodiversity in sparsely vegetated areas, providing people with cooler places and contact with nature.
- **Mexico City** shared details of the "Bosque San Juan de Aragón" project. This initiative is of particular interest, as it has implemented a variety of initiatives for the recovery and creation of wetlands developed by the city over the past four years. The project involves the urban afforestation of a park of 160 hectares, the second biggest urban park in Mexico City, including not only trees but also local plants, bushes, and other species. A special effort has been made to use or reintroduce native plant species.



ACTION LINE 2

Build adaptive capacities for metropolitan governance

- Within the framework of the **CLEARING HOUSE project**, Bogotá was selected for the Task Force mechanism, which offers the opportunity to receive feedback and recommendations by CLEARING HOUSE experts on a topic of the winning city's choice. Bogotá decided to focus the Task Force guidance on a **review of Bogotá's Urban Forestry Policy and its Implementation Plan**, a new policy intended to establish guidelines for the implementation of urban forests in the Capital District of Bogota.

Representatives of the Environment Department of Bogota City worked with the CLEARING HOUSE task force experts from the European Forest Institute, the International Union for the Conservation of Nature, the Berlin Ecologic Institute and UB Brussels and exchanged local administration experiences and case studies on how to successfully implement UFNBS policies at the local level, and how these examples could help Bogotá to implement the new Urban Forestry policy within its territory, which should also engage the participation of the local population.





ACTION LINE 3

Foster within Metropolis an accountable and sustainable internal governance culture

To encourage a nurturing organizational culture that prioritizes the well-being of our members, we employ active listening to understand and respond to their diverse experiences.

During these four months, the Secretary General:

- **Met with representatives from the Lee Kuan Yew Centre for Innovative Cities at the Singapore University of Technology and Design.** The discussions covered their work on urban design that takes into consideration the needs of an ageing population, and their sustained efforts to foster innovation in urban planning and management. The Centre brings together talent from several universities in Singapore, as an international point of reference on urban innovation, which is also at the core of Metropolis' work.
- **Met with Jiang Jiang, Vice-President of the Chinese People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries (CPAFFC).** The points tackled related to the status of CPAFFC and Guangzhou: ensuring that Guangzhou has a preminent role and keeps the Co-Presidency and debriefing CPAFFC on our intention to create in Brussels the role of Associate Member for CPAFFC. Metropolis is committed to uphold the 'One China' principle in relation to Taiwanese cities, i.e. to avoid any reference to Taiwan as an independent country. CPAFFC pledged to help us to continue expanding Chinese membership and took note of our interest in Qingdao (9m inhabitants), Foshan (7.5m), Dongguan (7.5m) and Zhuhai (2.5m), which are not Metropolis members. He also visited the offices of ICLEI and C40 in Beijing.





ACTION LINE 3

Foster within Metropolis an accountable and sustainable internal governance culture



- Participated in an **International Seminar on Multilateral City Diplomacy** where representatives of 19 Chinese cities who are members of Metropolis, and 3 more guest cities from the Greater Bay Area, shared the experience of cities like Guangzhou, Fuzhou, Hangzhou, Qingdao and Xi'an.
- Participated in the **Indonesia Jakarta Investment Forum** meeting, co-organized by UCLG-ASPAC and Metropolis. Most of Metropolis' Indonesian members attended the meeting: Jakarta, Bogor, South Tangerang, Semarang, Bandar Lampung, and Palembang, as well as two potential new members. The aim of the meeting was for the Indonesian members to meet the new Secretary General, and to attend the presentation on funding by FMDV and UNCDF.

Moreover, the Head of Institutional Relations visited eleven projects linked to the **Park City initiative in Chengdu**, specifically: Tianfu New area, Xinlong Lake, Luxe Lakes and the community governance, the Planning Exhibition Hall, Tianfu Greenway, Guixi Eco Park, Xilong lake & wetlands, New Jinniu Park, grey to green projects Fuqing Flyover sports facilities, the Chenghua waterfront project, and the street park of Jinniu.

- As the last activity of the three-year MoU concluded with the Foreign Affairs Office of Chengdu, the city wants to **provide a 3-day study programme related to the philosophy of a new urban park city implemented during the pandemics through the Metropolis Learning Hub project** (linked to the MoU). This visit was a rehearsal of the Study Programme scheduled from 18-22 June 2023 in Chengdu. Chengdu agreed to link this programme to the City Manager Community and jointly with the Metropolitan Region of Barcelona.



ACTION LINE 3

Foster within Metropolis an accountable and sustainable internal governance culture



In line with our priority of fostering transparency, we held a hybrid meeting of our Board of Directors on 24 February within the framework of the UCLG Annual Retreat. At the meeting, the creation of two task forces was approved to carry out the strategic review of the Association for the next mandate:

- The Metropolis Governance Review Task Force, in charge of carrying out a review of the **Statutes and Rules of Procedure** with a view to their modification at the Metropolis Extraordinary General Assembly in June 2023. This Task Force has collaborated with the Metropolis General Secretariat on a work plan to analyse the Statutes and Internal Rules of the Association and to determine which aspects should be reconsidered in order to align the Association with the new strategy and the new challenges it faces. The Governance Review Task Force has issued a proposal to amend the Statutes and the Rules of Procedure which has been validated by the Board of Directors. The final step will be formal approval by the Extraordinary General Assembly on 14 June.
- The Metropolis Strategy Review Task Force, in charge of developing the **2024-2026 Strategic Action Plan**

To **maintain a robust system of accountability**, we began a selection process for providers of project management programmes and a new CRM. We selected Zoho One, a platform that provides a number of modules for project management, CRM, expenses & travel, and others that may provide more efficient and flexible management of Metropolis projects and resources. During 2023 we will be designing and implementing the CRM and Project Management modules.



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