

## NEWS



## World Metropolitan Day 2024: A Global Call for a Just Transition across the World's metropolises

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**World Metropolitan Day 2024** marked a significant milestone in the global conversation on metropolitan governance, highlighting issues like climate action, sustainable urbanization, and equitable economic transitions. This year's theme emphasized a "**Just transition**"—ensuring that sustainable development benefits everyone, especially vulnerable communities. Through a mix of panel discussions, workshops, and city-specific events, World Metropolitan Day 2024 became once more a powerful platform for voices from across the globe to share their visions and strategies for resilient urban futures.

Bringing together leaders from ten African metropolises, this year's standout event took place in **Dakar**,

Senegal, on October 14. Presiding the event was **Barthélémy Dias**, Mayor of Dakar and President of Metropolis, who spoke passionately about the African perspective on climate resilience and metropolitan governance, reminding that African cities must lead the way. "Africa's cities are on the front lines of the climate crisis," Dias said. "If we don't act now, the burden will fall hardest on our youth and our marginalized communities."

Dakar's event gathered influential voices, including **Zandile Myeni**, Deputy Mayor of Durban; **Vuyiswa Ramokgopa**, Regional Minister for Agriculture and Rural Development for Gauteng Province, South Africa; and **El Hassania Ghaich**, Vice Mayor of Rabat, Morocco. Moderated by Metropolis Secretary General **Jordi Vaquer**, the panel discussed African-led solutions for a green economy, highlighting innovations already in progress that could serve as models worldwide.

## Creating opportunities for young people and women

Key topics included promoting green jobs, especially for women and young people, and fostering collaborative networks that span across traditional urban and rural boundaries. Myeni underscored this point, saying, "We cannot view sustainability and development as urban-only issues. These are metropolitan issues that affect our cities and the regions surrounding them."

The discussion in Dakar also brought to light Africa's potential as a driving force in climate action, given that it has the world's youngest population. Many African leaders stressed that the continent's youth bring energy, innovation, and resilience to sustainability efforts, even as they confront severe climate-related adversities. The need for partnerships—among cities, countries, and regions—was highlighted as essential for sharing best practices and bolstering support for the Global South. As Dias noted, "The climate crisis does not respect borders; our solutions must not either. African cities are stepping up, but we need global accountability and fair partnerships to sustain our efforts."

This year's World Metropolitan Day was also commemorated in cities around the world with diverse events that echoed the themes of Dakar's discussions. In **São Paulo**, Brazil, leaders focused on water resilience in metropolitan areas, exploring solutions for equitable water distribution amidst growing shortages. In **Barcelona**, Spain, experts and citizens participated in a workshop addressing circular economy practices aimed at reducing waste and promoting sustainability in urban design. Meanwhile, in cities like **Bangkok** and **Toronto**, forums tackled the urgent need for climate adaptation strategies and emphasized the importance of local government empowerment in making impactful, community-driven decisions.

These global events served as powerful reminders of how metropolitan regions, with their ability to coordinate policy and resources across urban and rural divides, are well-positioned to address today's multifaceted urban challenges. As World Metropolitan Day 2024 comes to a close, the collective efforts displayed highlight that metropolitan governance is not simply about managing cities; it is about inspiring resilient, inclusive societies. This year's edition also reminds us how, through shared commitment and action, cities can—and must—be at the forefront of global change.