

NEWS



The voice of the metropolises to be heard at the first Habitat III PrepComm meeting in New York

The METROPOLIS Vice-President, Mr. Michael Müller from Berlin City, will represent the association today during the first Habitat III PrepComm meeting in New York City. Mr. Müller's speech can be followed live through the link: <http://webtv.un.org/> between 09:30 and 10:30 (NYC local time) and 15:30 - 16:30 CEST (Central European Summer Time).

The highlights of Mr. Michael Müller's speech today are:

(1) Generally about the appreciation of the role of cities on the international level:

"It is highly remarkable to see how international politicians and experts stress the central role of cities and of local governance."

(2) Input/questions of Metropolis concerning the Sustainable Development Goals:

"METROPOLIS is very pleased to acknowledge that considerable progress has been made and that an urban goal is now included in the proposal of the Open Working Group for Sustainable Development Goals (OWG).

The goals are very comprehensive in so far as they include lists of urgent matters to be addressed. Nonetheless, I must admit that there is something missing (..). While the goal is inspirational, it also generates questions:

What responsibility and degree of involvement will be expected from cities?

Should this responsibility and involvement focus on the Sustainable Development Goal mentioned above or are cities also expected to share responsibility for the implementation of other Sustainable Development Goals on, for example, poverty, health and education?

Will governments in all Member States adapt national urban policies and provide financial resources to help cities and local authorities to shoulder the workload at the local level?"

(3) Basic claims:

"..I am convinced that decentralisation and subsidiarity are important principles of governance. Therefore, I agree on the decision to develop at an international level the new global goals based on multi-stakeholder consultations and to leave sufficient flexibility for member states to develop their own implementation mechanisms."

".. I am also convinced of the need for the UN system to recognise local authorities. Decentralisation should go hand in hand with an acknowledgement by the international community of local authorities and their democratically elected representatives."

"... It's not clear what a legitimate representation of all metropolises in the world could look like and how this would impact on the current system of multi-level governance.... And this is exactly one of the opportunities provided by the processes leading to Habitat III. While the Sustainable Development Goals provide general goals and while member states develop national targets, it should it be the task of Habitat III to develop the new Urban Agenda in a way that recognises local authorities and re-confirms the principles of decentralisation and subsidiarity."

"It will be essential for the Urban Agenda to include references to planning instruments which are needed to improve housing and urban development. It is essential because good local governance is a pre-condition to achieving all those Sustainable Development Goals that, in one way or another, have a local dimension."