

## **New Year's message by the President**

Distinguished Members of the World Association of the Major Metropolises,  
Distinguished partners,

Dear friends:

The year 2021 is arriving. On behalf of the World Association of the Major Metropolises, I extend my best New Year wishes to you all!

2020 was an extraordinary year with cities around the globe facing challenges and difficulties. Facing the sudden onslaught of coronavirus pandemic, the World Association of the Major Metropolises leveraged its role as a platform and bridge for exchanges and cooperation among major metropolises, and remained as a staunch force for international anti-COVID-19 cooperation, co-hosted a series of online meetings with United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) and United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG), launched the Cities for Global Health initiative with UCLG and the Euro-Latin American Cooperation Alliance between Cities (AL-LAs), and promoted comprehensive sharing of anti-pandemic experience. During the hardest time, our efforts to help our member cities build solidarity and cooperation, and to pool mutual support and joint efforts to defeat the pandemic are a testament to the leading role of metropolises in facing COVID-related challenges and pushing forward the global recovery. This has strengthened the consensus and resolve of global cities to support each other through thick and thin and defeat the virus with solidarity.

The year of 2020 also marks the 35th anniversary of the founding of Metropolis. We overcame difficulties and obstacles brought by the pandemic, continued to improve the Association's mechanism and the quality of service for member cities, made strong moves to promote policy debates, focused on conducting cooperation and exchanges in professional fields, and strove for successful launch of the online-platform Urban Sustainable Exchange (USE) and major awards such as the

Guangzhou International Award for Urban Innovation (Guangzhou Award). These efforts have enhanced the role of the Association and member cities in the global governance system. We pooled the efforts and wisdom of our 141 member cities around the world, worked out strategic action plans, and mapped the route and direction for metropolises to improve governance capability and strengthen international cooperation. Through the online meeting of the General Assembly of Members hosted by Guangzhou, we successfully form a new leadership, which will inject new momentum into and galvanize the vitality of the Association.

The year of 2021 will still present uncertainties to cities around the world. The spread of the pandemic continues to aggravate, and the global economic recovery faces multiple headwinds; at the same time, new situation and new issues continue to pop up. However, we should not give up our confidence in solidarity, which is the most powerful weapon in overcoming crises and challenges. We call on all member cities of the Association to take further steps to shoulder international responsibility, fully share their experience in pandemic control and treatment, and provide aids to cities and regions hit hardest by the pandemic to our best ability so that we can truly share the same breath and form the joint branches with joint hands. Metropolis will fully support and participate in the global anti-pandemic efforts, comprehensively promote the implementation of the Cities for Global Health initiative, continuously provide channels for communication and platforms for cooperation between our member cities and their partners, assist cities around the world to walk out of the shadow of the pandemic and economic slowdown, and facilitate the building of a global community of health for all at municipal government level.

The year of 2021 marks the launch of the Three-Year Strategic Action Plan for Metropolis. We should take the pandemic as a mirror to assess ourselves and draw its lessons, optimize the city governance system, strengthen the resilience of city building, improve our ability to react to crises, and store energy and provide momentum for cities' economic recovery and sound social development after the pandemic. Metropolis will take a further step to establish platforms and mechanisms, and through major platforms and channels like the Metropolis Observatory, Guangzhou Award, USE, City Managers Community, Emergency

Governance Initiative and other pilot projects, so that we can promote the development of global city governance towards joint contribution and governance, as well as shared benefits, in doing so to consolidate the important role of metropolises in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals of the United Nations.

The New Year heralds new hopes. With concerted efforts, let us increase the vitality and momentum for city development and ensure the safety and well-being of our citizens. I sincerely hope cities around the world can defeat the virus at an early date, and wish all of you a happy, healthy and prosperous new year!

Yours sincerely,



Wen Guohui

Mayor of Guangzhou

President of World Association of the Major Metropolises