

**SPEECH BY JOAN CLOS, PRESIDENT OF METROPOLIS, MAYOR OF BARCELONA  
OPENING CEREMONY, 8<sup>TH</sup> METROPOLIS WORLD CONGRESS  
BERLIN, 12 MAY 2005**

“GUTEN MORGEN UND WILLKOMEN IN BERLIN”

YOUR EXCELLENCY PRESIDENT HORST KÖHLER; THE HONORABLE KLAUS WOWEREIT, MAYOR OF BERLIN; ANNA TIBAIJUKA, EXECUTIVE-DIRECTOR OF UN-HABITAT AND KLAUS TOPFER, EXECUTIVE-DIRECTOR OF UNEP, MAYORS AND REPRESENTATIVES OF METROPOLIS MEMBER CITIES, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

IT IS A MATTER OF GREAT SATISFACTION TO SPEAK TO YOU HERE TODAY AS PRESIDENT OF METROPOLIS AND SPOKESPERSON FOR THE METROPOLITAN GOVERNMENTS AND LARGE CITIES OF THE WORLD.

I WOULD LIKE TO BEGIN THIS SPEECH BY THANKING, ON BEHALF OF OUR ASSOCIATION, THE CITY OF BERLIN, THE MAYOR, KLAUS WOWEREIT, AND ALL THE PEOPLE OF BERLIN FOR THE OPPORTUNITY THAT METROPOLIS MEMBERS HAVE BEEN GIVEN TO MEET IN THIS GREAT CITY.

SINCE 1984, CITIES HAVE BEEN MEETING IN THE TRIENNIAL CONGRESSES THAT HAVE TAKEN PLACE IN PARIS, MEXICO, MELBOURNE, MONTREAL, TOKYO, BARCELONA AND SEOUL.

A YEAR AFTER THE FIRST CONGRESS IN PARIS, FOURTEEN MAJOR CITIES MET IN MONTREAL TO FORMALLY ESTABLISH METROPOLIS, THE WORLD ASSOCIATION OF THE MAJOR METROPOLISES. THE AIM WAS TO RESPOND TO THE GROWING IMPORTANCE OF MAJOR URBAN AGGLOMERATIONS AND TO HAVE POINTS OF COLLABORATION BETWEEN THEM.

TODAY IN BERLIN WE ARE OPENING THE EIGHTH METROPOLIS CONGRESS AND ALSO CELEBRATING THE 20<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY OF OUR ASSOCIATION.

[PAUSE]

SINCE ITS FOUNDATION, METROPOLIS HAS AIMED TO DEFEND THE INTERESTS OF THE WORLD’S URBAN REGIONS BY PROMOTING EXCHANGE AND COLLABORATION BETWEEN THE INSTITUTIONS THAT GOVERN THEM TO IMPROVE THE QUALITY OF LIFE OF THEIR PEOPLE.

THE VISION THAT METROPOLIS’ FOUNDERS HAD IN 1985 CONTINUES TO BE REINFORCED WITH THE PASSING OF TIME AND WOULD NOT HAVE

BEEN POSSIBLE WITHOUT THE ACTIVE PARTICIPATION OF A SIGNIFICANT NUMBER OF CITIES.

TWENTY YEARS AFTER ITS CREATION, OUR ASSOCIATION HAS CLOSE TO 90 MEMBERS, EQUALLY DISTRIBUTED ACROSS ITS FIVE REGIONS: AFRICA, NORTH AMERICA, LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN, ASIA-PACIFIC AND EUROPE.

PARALLEL TO THE RISE OF METROPOLIS, THE NUMBER OF LARGE CITIES HAS GROWN RELENTLESSLY. TODAY, MORE THAN 430 CITIES HAVE OVER A MILLION INHABITANTS AND THEIR TOTAL POPULATION EXCEEDS 1.2 BILLION PEOPLE ACROSS THE WORLD. THIS MEANS THAT ONE IN EVERY FIVE PEOPLE LIVES IN ONE OF THESE CITIES.

[PAUSE]

AT THIS EIGHTH WORLD CONGRESS OF METROPOLIS WE WILL BE LOOKING INTO THE FASCINATING DEBATE BETWEEN TRADITION AND TRANSFORMATION, A QUESTION THAT STRIKES ME AS PARTICULARLY SUITABLE HERE IN BERLIN. FEW CITIES HAVE UNDERGONE GREATER TRANSFORMATIONS THAN THOSE BERLIN HAS EXPERIENCED OVER THE PAST TWO DECADES. I AM SURE THAT THE PARTICIPANTS WILL TAKE THE CHANCE TO SEE THE SIZE OF THESE CHANGES FOR THEMSELVES OVER THE NEXT FEW DAYS.

AT THIS CONGRESS, THE RESULTS OF THE STANDING COMMISSIONS ESTABLISHED AT THE SEOUL CONGRESS IN 2002 WILL BE PRESENTED. OVER THE NEXT FOUR DAYS, METROPOLITAN GOVERNANCE, THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN POVERTY AND THE ENVIRONMENT, URBAN WASTE MANAGEMENT, MOBILITY, PERFORMANCE INDICATORS AND WATER MANAGEMENT WILL BE DEALT WITH BY EXPERTS AND CITY GOVERNMENT REPRESENTATIVES.

AS WELL AS THE SIX STANDING COMMISSIONS, ANOTHER ENTRY ON THE CONGRESS PROGRAM IS THE MEETING OF THE METROPOLIS WOMEN'S NETWORK AND A SPECIAL MEETING OF YOUNG PEOPLE BORN IN 1985, THE YEAR OUR ASSOCIATION WAS ESTABLISHED.

METROPOLIS WILL LEAVE BERLIN WITH A NEW ACTION PLAN 2005-2008 AND NEW STANDING COMMISSIONS. AT THE SAME TIME, THE TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE AND TRAINING PROGRAMS WILL TRANSFER THE KNOW-HOW GENERATED BY THE COMMISSIONS TO THE REALITY OF THE METROPOLISES.

[P A U S E]

AS YOU ALL KNOW, LOCAL AUTHORITIES HAVE BEEN ACQUIRING AN INCREASINGLY SIGNIFICANT RECOGNITION ON THE PART OF THE LEADING INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS OVER RECENT YEARS.

THE ROLE PLAYED BY METROPOLIS HAS BEEN WIDELY RECOGNIZED IN THIS CONTEXT.

IN MAY 2004, CITIES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENTS BEGAN A COORDINATION PROCESS TO ORGANIZE UNITED CITIES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENTS (UCLG) WITH THE AIM OF SHORING UP THE DEFENSE OF THE INTERESTS OF CITIES AND THEIR PEOPLE.

SINCE THEN, METROPOLIS, AS THE REPRESENTATIVE OF THE WORLD'S MAJOR URBAN REGIONS, HAS ALSO TAKEN ON THE RESPONSIBILITY FOR MANAGING THE METROPOLITAN SECTION OF UCLG.

IN THE FUTURE, OUR ASSOCIATION WILL CONTINUE TO PROMOTE THE RECOGNITION OF A LEGAL FRAMEWORK THAT GUARANTEES LOCAL DEMOCRACY AND THE AUTONOMY OF LOCAL GOVERNMENTS IN THE INTERNATIONAL SPHERE.

WITH UCLG, WE PROPOSE TO LOCAL GOVERNMENTS AND INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATIONS TO CREATE THE BANK OF CITIES, WITH THE AMBITIOUS AIM OF GATHERING THE NECESSARY RESOURCES TO FUND THEIR DEVELOPMENT.

FINALLY, AS THE MAYOR OF BARCELONA, PRESIDENT OF METROPOLIS AND VICE-PRESIDENT OF UCLG, I WOULD LIKE TO INVITE ALL THE GOVERNMENTS OF THE WORLD'S CITIES AND METROPOLITAN REGIONS TO JOIN OUR MOVEMENT:

ABOVE ALL, I HOPE THAT WITHIN ANOTHER TWENTY YEARS OUR ACTIVITIES MAY CONTINUE TO HELP IMPROVE THE QUALITY OF LIFE IN METROPOLISES, AS PART OF A DECENTRALIZED WORLD WHERE METROPOLITAN GOVERNMENTS HAVE A GREATER ROLE.