

**24th Conference of the International Observatory on Participatory Democracy
(OIDP)**

**“Connect, Integrate and Humanize: Cities facing the challenge of generating
Community”**

CONCEPTUAL NOTE

Session 9

Metropolitan Areas: Towards a New Governance

Date: 22 May 2025

Time: 14:00 - 15:30

Place: Auditorio UNC, Córdoba, Argentina

Thematic Area: Community Building

CONTEXT

Metropolitan areas today represent one of the **most complex and dynamic forms of territorial organization**. The steady growth of the urban population, rural exodus, the expansion of urban sprawl, real estate pressure, and the interdependence between central cities and surrounding municipalities have generated new challenges for **territorial planning, governance, and equity in access to services and rights**.

In many cases, this growth has occurred disorderly, with the proliferation of **informal settlements** and neighborhoods located in peripheral areas, far from decision-making centers and basic infrastructure. These areas often concentrate the **most vulnerable populations**, facing living conditions marked by **poverty, lack of essential services, inadequate housing, and social exclusion**.

In this context, **traditional models of centralized management show limitations** in responding to the demands of increasingly diverse and expansive territories. Metropolitan management requires comprehensive approaches that acknowledge the diversity of the territory and promote **social and territorial inclusion**. It is therefore essential to rethink metropolitan governance from a co-governance perspective that promotes decentralization and strengthens interjurisdictional coordination spaces. But planning **cannot be limited to technical-administrative models**: it must serve urban justice, ensuring that all people – regardless of where they live – have access to a dignified city.

Within this process, citizen participation plays a central role. **Decisions about the present and future of metropolitan areas must incorporate the voices of those who live in, travel through, and transform these territories on a daily basis**. Participation not only legitimizes public policies, but also enriches their design and implementation with situated knowledge and diverse perspectives.

This session will address the present and future challenges of metropolitan areas in the field of planning and governance from a perspective of territorial, fair, and participatory decentralization. Metropolitan planning cannot be conceived without citizen involvement: only a metropolis built with its people can move toward more fair, sustainable, and democratic development.

OBJECTIVES

- **Analyze the main challenges faced by metropolitan areas** in the context of urban growth, with special attention to its impacts on the most vulnerable populations.
- **Discuss the need for comprehensive and decentralized metropolitan planning** that promotes social and territorial inclusion.
- **Explore metropolitan governance models based on co-governance, decentralization, and interjurisdictional coordination** as key strategies to address the complexity of metropolitan territories.
- **Promote citizen participation as a central axis of metropolitan development**, enabling the inclusion of community voices and experiences in decision-making processes.

METHODOLOGY

This **90-minute panel** will begin with an introduction to establish the foundations of the current context of metropolitan areas. Following this, **a panel of representatives from local governments will share their perspectives on metropolitan planning and**

governance, addressing issues of decentralization and citizen participation. The speakers will have the opportunity to share their experiences, discuss practices, and explore solutions to advance territorial justice and new models of urban governance. An interactive question-and-answer session will follow, encouraging audience participation.

GUIDING QUESTIONS

- What are the main challenges currently faced by metropolitan areas in terms of planning, governance, and equitable access to services?
- How should metropolitan governance be rethought to address the current complexity of the territory?
- What role do decentralization and interjurisdictional coordination play in building more efficient and inclusive management?
- What mechanisms can strengthen the voice of communities in shaping public policies and building a more just and democratic city?

SPEAKERS (Preliminary)

- **Gabriel Fernández Arjona**, Metropolitan Citizenship – Buenos Aires (Argentina)
- **Renata Sene**, President of the Brazilian Republican Foundation São Paulo – Former Mayor of Francisco de Morato (Brazil)