



CITY OF JOHANNESBURG
METROPOLITAN MUNICIPALITY



Proud co-host of the 2025 U20 and host city for G20 South Africa



Private Office of the Executive Mayor Cllr. Dada Morero

Welcome Address by Executive Mayor, Cllr Dada Morero on the occasion of the Seminar on the Role of Sub-National Governments in the Global Governance Space

10 September 2025 | Johannesburg

Programme Director,

Honourable Premier of Gauteng, Mr Panyaza Lesufi,

Distinguished Members of the Gauteng Provincial Government,

Our colleagues from the Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs,

Partners from Metropolis and the G20 Family

Respected panellists

Esteemed guests

Ladies and gentlemen,

It is an honour and privilege to address you at this important seminar on the role of sub-national governments in the global governance space, hosted here in Johannesburg, the economic heart of South Africa and indeed of the African continent.

Carrying Forward Global Conversations

This seminar does not stand alone. It builds directly on the 4th International Conference on Financing Sustainable Development Goals, which took place in Seville, Spain, earlier this year.

That global gathering reminded us of a sobering truth: across the world, sub-national and regional governments are under rising pressure. We are contending with growing debt, shrinking investment flows, and reduced aid at precisely the time when communities expect us to deliver on ambitious development and service delivery goals. The global financial system, in its current form, is not adequately designed to support the developmental mandates of cities and provinces.



a world class African city



JD House, 27 Stiemens Street.
Braamfontein, Johannesburg, 2001



Tel +27(0) 11 407 7356



lulaM@joburg.org.za



www.joburg.org.za

Yet, despite these constraints, our role is increasingly urgent, because it is at our level—the local, the immediate, the everyday—that global challenges are most acutely felt.

The Local Impact of Global Challenges

Consider this:

- Rapid urbanisation is swelling our cities and towns, stretching housing, services, and infrastructure.
- Rising informal settlements are changing the face of our communities, demanding bold and humane planning responses.
- Climate vulnerabilities—from floods to heatwaves—are intensifying, with devastating impact most visible at community level.

These are not abstract issues. They are daily lived realities for Johannesburg and for cities across Africa. They underline why sub-national governments cannot be mere implementers of national directives. We must be co-architects of global governance, shaping agendas, mobilising, and finding solutions.

The Twin Challenges

But as the invitation to this seminar rightly highlighted, we face twin challenges:

1. Limited space in global decision-making forums, where the voices of cities and provinces are still marginal.
2. Constrained financial resources, which restrict our ability to deliver on mandates and respond innovatively.

Our task, therefore, is to push for deeper participation in global governance while simultaneously finding new pathways for sustainable financing at local and regional levels.

Why This Seminar Matters



a world class African city



JD House, 27 Stiemens Street.
Braamfontein, Johannesburg, 2001



Tel +27(0) 11 407 7356



lulaM@joburg.org.za



www.joburg.org.za

This is why today's seminar matters.

Together with the Gauteng Provincial Government and the Metropolis Secretariat, we are exploring the thematic areas of structural changes, policy dialogue, urban governance, and the role of the Africa Mayors Assembly.

These themes are not academic—they are the building blocks of a new governance architecture that must reflect the complexity of our era. An architecture where cities are empowered, where financing is fair, and where accountability to communities remains our guiding principle.

Johannesburg's Perspective

For Johannesburg, these discussions are deeply relevant.

We are a city of sharp contrasts: the continental hub of commerce and finance, but also a city carrying the weight of unemployment, poverty, and inequality. We are tasked with maintaining world-class infrastructure while simultaneously expanding access to the most basic of services.

Our lived reality tells us one thing: urban governance is central to global stability and prosperity. What happens in cities will determine whether the world achieves the Sustainable Development Goals, whether we meet the climate transition, and whether communities feel the promise of democracy in their daily lives.

The Link to U20

Colleagues, our discussions today are also a prelude to the Urban 20 (U20) Summit, which Johannesburg and Tshwane will proudly co-host from 12 to 14 September 2025.

The U20 is the urban track of the G20. It is our chance to ensure that the voice of cities—especially cities of the Global South—is not just acknowledged, but actively shapes the global agenda.

Hosting the U20 in Johannesburg is an opportunity to:

- Showcase African innovation and resilience.
- Push for financing models that meet the real needs of cities.



a world class African city



JD House, 27 Stiemens Street.
Braamfontein, Johannesburg, 2001



Tel +27(0) 11 407 7356



lulaM@joburg.org.za



www.joburg.org.za

- Align global decisions with the daily lived experience of communities in our urban centres.

In essence, the U20 allows us to say with clarity: global challenges cannot be solved without local solutions, and local governments must be seated at the global table.

Looking Ahead

As Johannesburg, we are committed to pursuing four priorities:

1. Reforming urban governance to build stronger, accountable, and financially resilient cities.
2. Driving climate action and resilience to ensure a just transition that leaves no community behind.
3. Unlocking financing for infrastructure, housing, and inclusive economic growth.
4. Harnessing digital transformation to close service gaps and create smart, connected, people-centred cities.

Closing

Ladies and gentlemen,

The future of governance is urban. The future of sustainability is urban. The future of democracy is urban.

Let us use this seminar to deepen our cooperation, sharpen our policy tools, and prepare a strong, united African voice for the U20 Summit and beyond.

Johannesburg is proud to host you, and we are proud to stand with you in shaping a global governance system that reflects the needs and aspirations of our people.

I thank you.





a world class African city



JD House, 27 Stiemens Street.
Braamfontein, Johannesburg, 2001



Tel +27(0) 11 407 7356



lulaM@joburg.org.za



www.joburg.org.za