

# Population Data Booklet

GLOBAL  
STATE OF  
METROPOLIS

2020

UN HABITAT  
FOR A BETTER URBAN FUTURE

## **Global State of Metropolis 2020 – Population Data Booklet**

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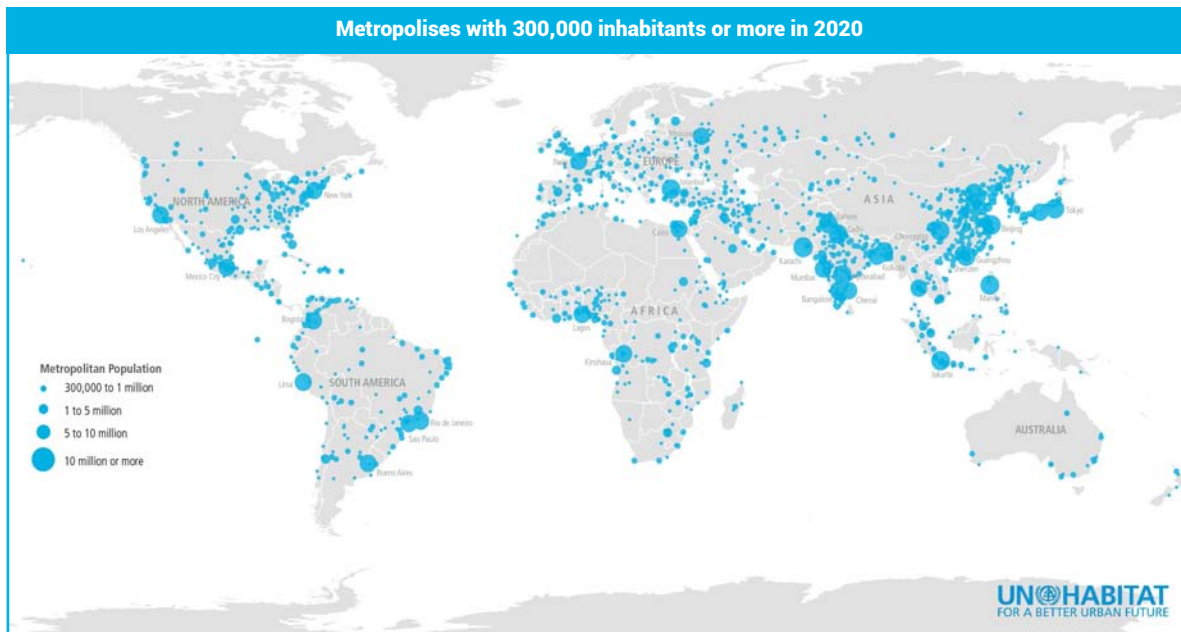
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## The World's Metropolises in 2020



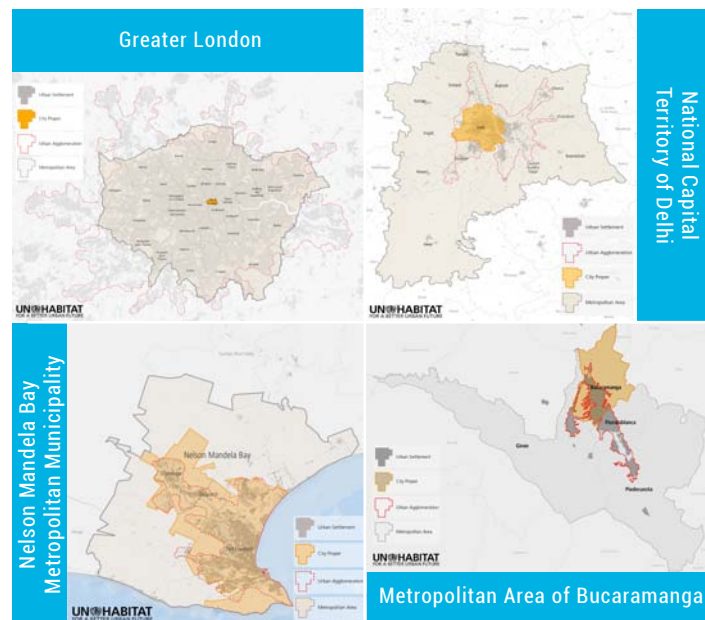
**In 2020 there are 1934 metropolises with more than 300,000 inhabitants representing approximately 60% of the world's urban population.** At least 2.59 billion people live in metropolises in 2020 which is equivalent to one third of the global population. 34 metropolises have surpassed 10 million inhabitants; while 51 have a population of 5 to 10 million; 494 of 1 to 5 million; and 1355 of 300,000 to 1 million.

## The metropolis of the 21st century

Urban land expansion has surpassed urban population growth all over the world. Between 1990 and 2015, **urban land expansion rates were almost double compared to urban population growth rates worldwide**. Rates of 1.8 vs 1.2-fold and 3.9 vs 2.0-fold were reported in developed and developing countries respectively (UN-Habitat, 2016).<sup>1</sup>

This phenomenon has been responsible for the rise of a new typology of cities, **namely metropolises, also known as urban agglomerations**, large coalesced cities, metropolitan areas, metropolitan zones, metropolitan regions, functional cities, megacities, among other names and definitions which vary depending on legal, administrative, political, economic or cultural criteria in the respective countries and regions. Although there is an ongoing debate on how to better define metropolises, most metropolitan authorities and experts agree that these areas share a common characteristic: they are all territories with multiple centralities which are connected rather than operating in isolation.

The United Nations World Urbanization Prospects (WUP) uses the term **urban agglomeration** to refer to those human settlements whose contiguous urban areas have surpassed the “city proper” or local administrative boundaries. Furthermore, WUP adopts the term **metropolitan area** to include not only urban but also peri-urban and nearby rural territories and recognizes their economic and social interconnectedness. This Population Data Booklet uses the urban agglomerations’ size classes and urban agglomerations’ datasets from the 2018 revision of WUP to analyse both global and regional metropolitan trends among the United Nations Regional Groups.<sup>2</sup>

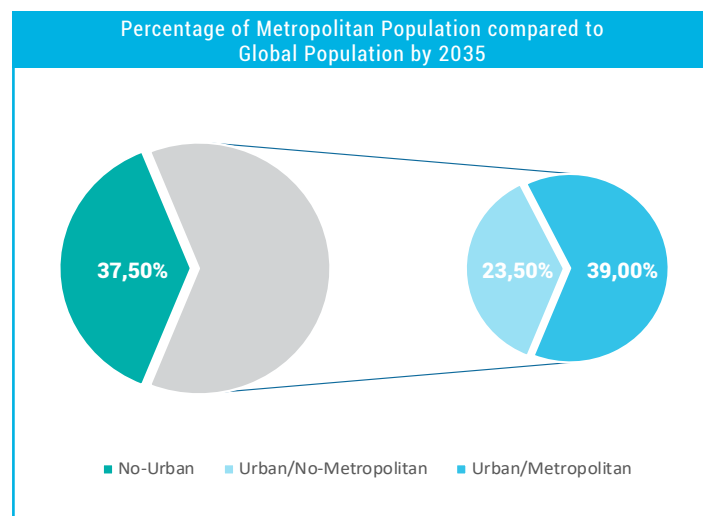
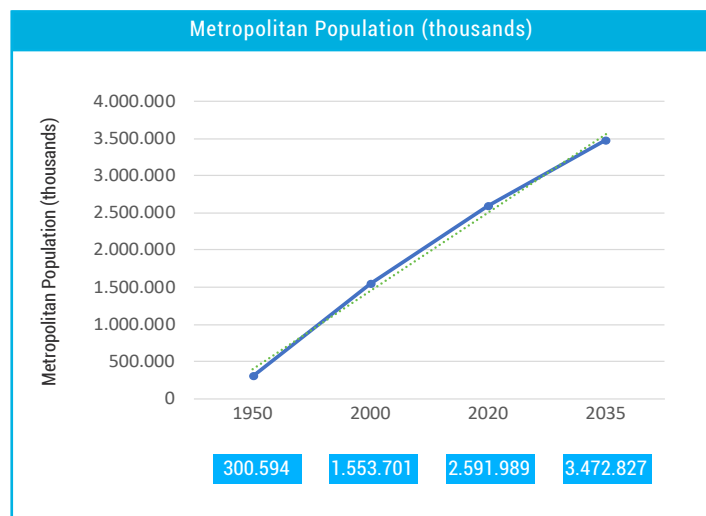


1. UN-Habitat. (2016). The Fundamentals of Urbanization: Evidence base for Policy Making.

2. WUP indicated that there is not enough available information for having all population prospects at urban agglomeration or metropolitan level, thus, “city proper” statistics were included for those agglomerations without accurate information. Therefore, the numbers in this Data Booklet must be understood as minimum figures which could be larger to the extent that new information from urban agglomerations be reported to or analysed by the United Nations Population Division.

## Metropolitan population will grow rapidly

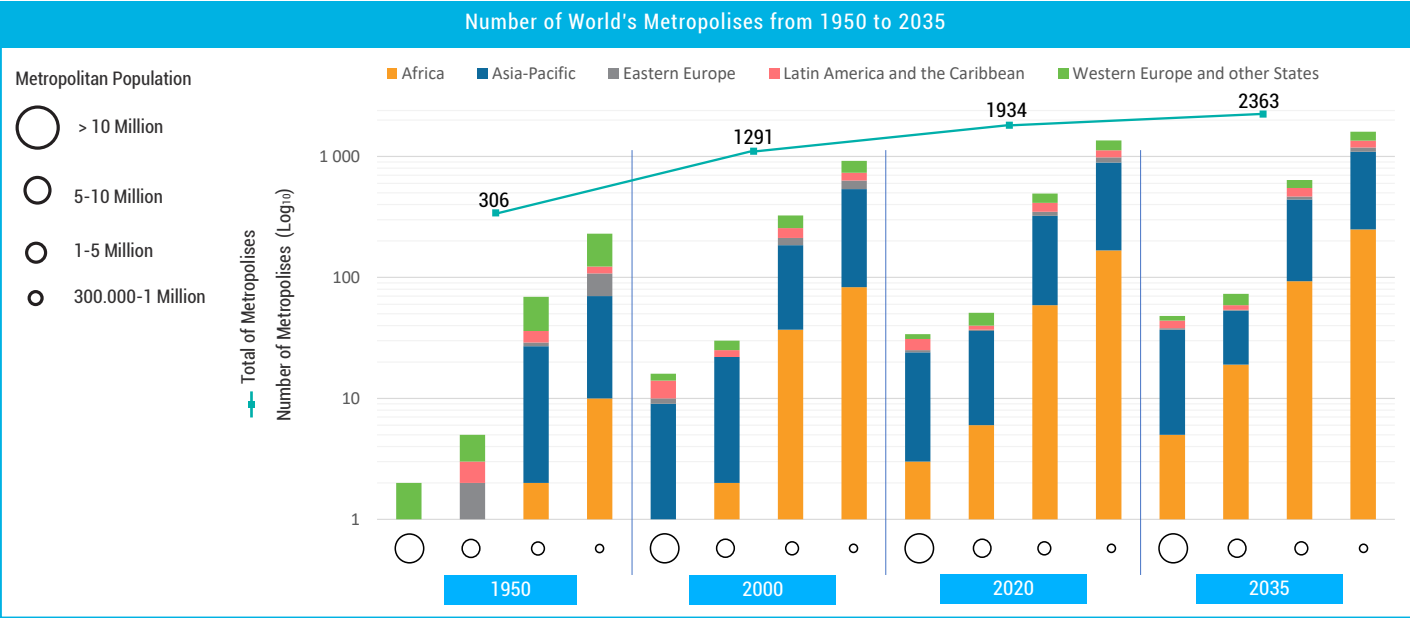
It is projected that the number of **people living in metropolises in 2035 will increase to 3.47 billion** representing 39% of the global population and 62.5% of the world's urban population. Almost 1 billion people will become metropolitan inhabitants in the next fifteen years.



Metropolises will represent the human settlements typology with the largest population worldwide, followed by rural settlements and other urban settlement configurations. On their part, non-agglomerated cities with less than 300,000 inhabitants will represent almost a quarter of the world's population and 23.5% of the urban population, equivalent to 2 billion people.

# The number of world's metropolises will continue to increase in the coming years

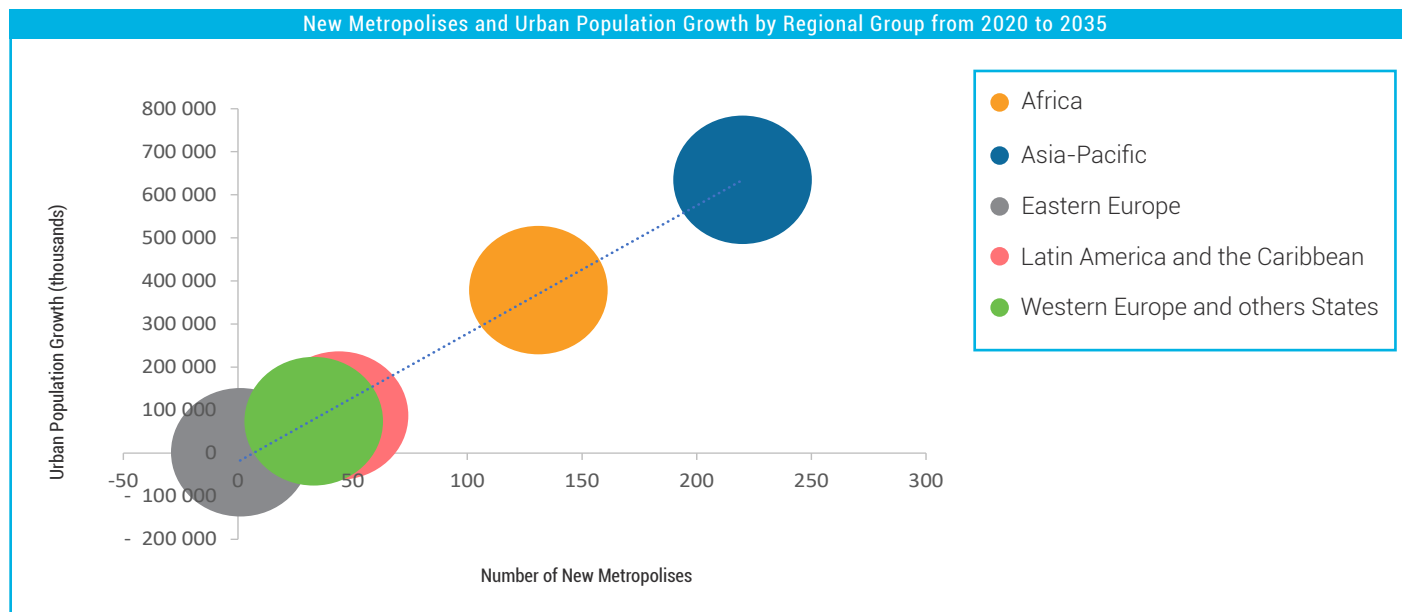
A new metropolis will arise every two-weeks in the next fifteen years for a total of **429 new metropolises**.



**2363 metropolises are projected to exist by 2035.** Out of these, there will be 14 new metropolises with more than 10 million inhabitants and 22 new metropolises with a population of between 5 and 10 million.

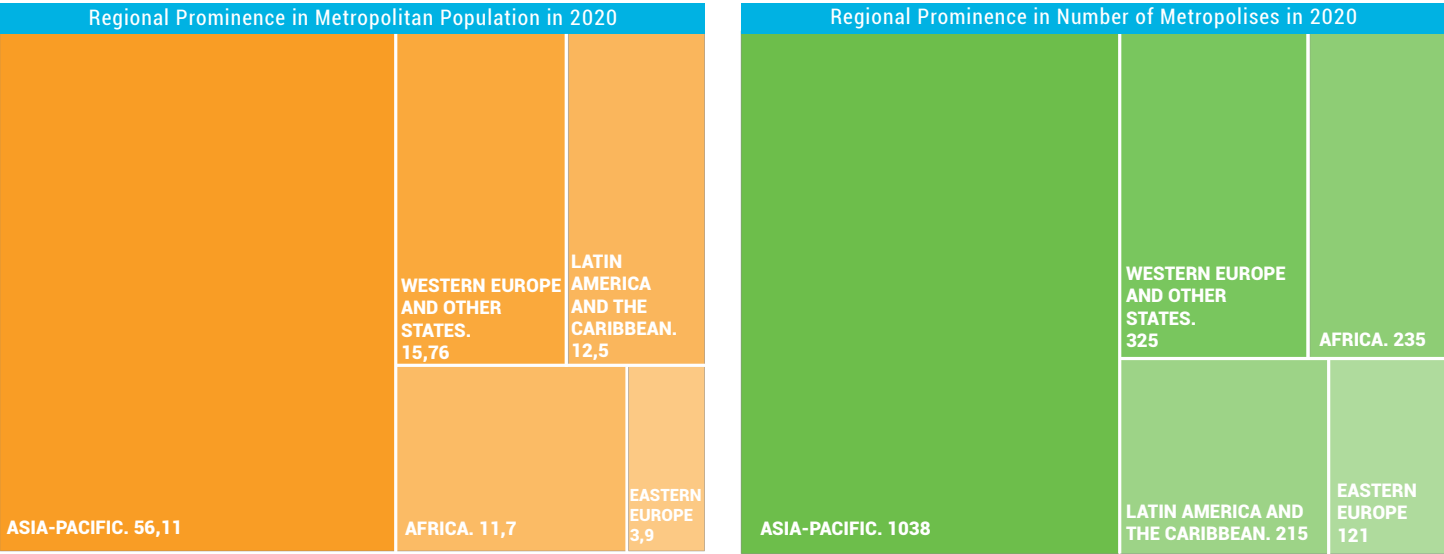
## Urban population growth and the emergence of new metropolises are related

There is a **positive relationship between urban population growth and the emergence of new metropolises** among the Regional Groups. All the regions will exhibit an emergence of new metropolises along with the rise in urban population.



Asia-Pacific and Africa will lead the growth while Eastern Europe will remain stable. Latin America and the Caribbean as well as Western Europe and other States will show an increase in numbers albeit at slower rates.

# Asia-Pacific is the most prominent Regional Group with regards to metropolitan figures while Eastern Europe is the least in 2020



Asia-Pacific accounts for **56% of the world's metropolitan population** living in 1038 metropolises while Eastern Europe accounts for 121 metropolises in which 3.9% of the world's metropolitan population lives. Western Europe and other States and, especially, Africa, and Latin America and the Caribbean have comparable prominence in both metropolitan population and number of metropolises.

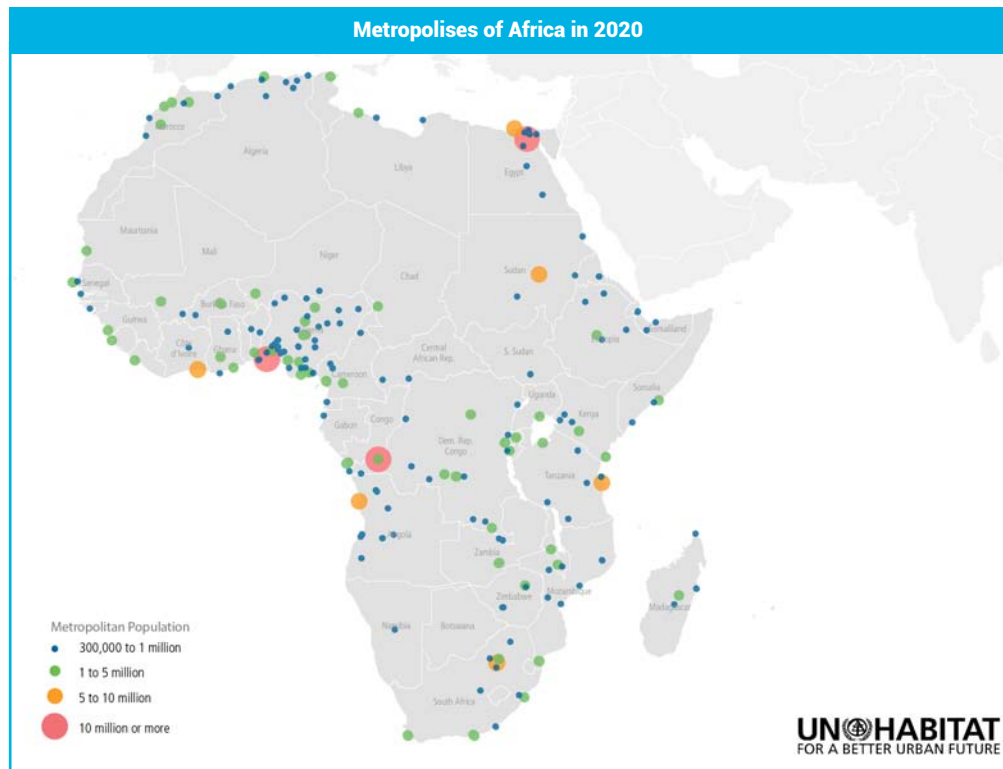


## African Metropolises in 2020

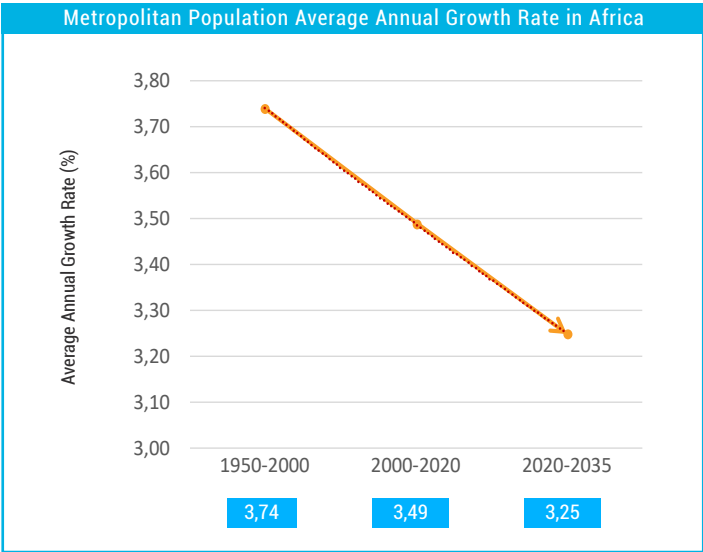
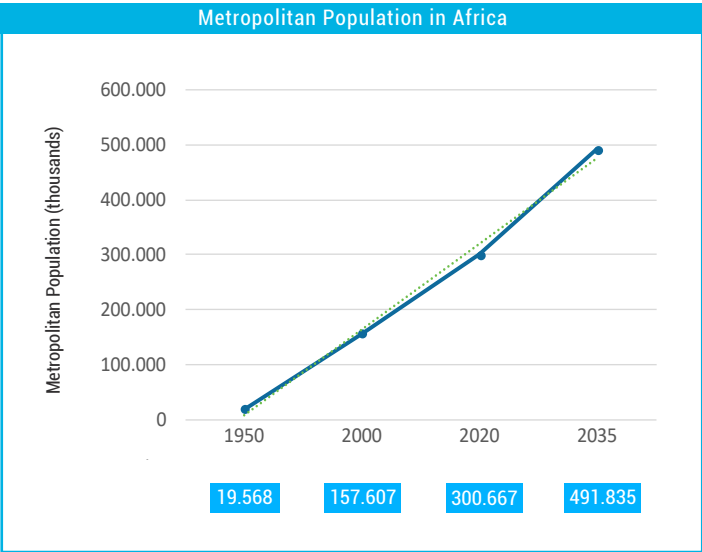
**The African Region has 235 metropolises distributed as follows:**

- 3 metropolises have more than 10 million inhabitants;
- 6 metropolises have between 5 and 10 million inhabitants;
- 59 metropolises have between 1 and 5 million inhabitants; and
- 167 metropolises have between 300,000 and 1 million inhabitants.

Nigeria (54), Democratic Republic of the Congo (17), South Africa (15), Egypt (14), Morocco (11) and Angola (10) are the countries with the most metropolises in Africa. They have a polycentric system of cities. In contrast, there are 16 countries with only a single metropolis and 8 countries with two metropolises.



# African Metropolises in 2020



In 2020, over **300.6 million people** lived in African metropolises and between 2020 and 2035, that number is projected to increase by more than 191 million. The metropolitan population in Africa will grow at an **average annual rate of 3.25% between 2020 and 2035** which is only a slight reduction to the average rate of 3,49% in the last twenty years (2000 to 2020). Most of the African metropolises grew at above the regional average (3.49%), however, 82 will grow below the new average (3.25%) during next fifteen years. No metropolises will decrease population in this region by 2035.

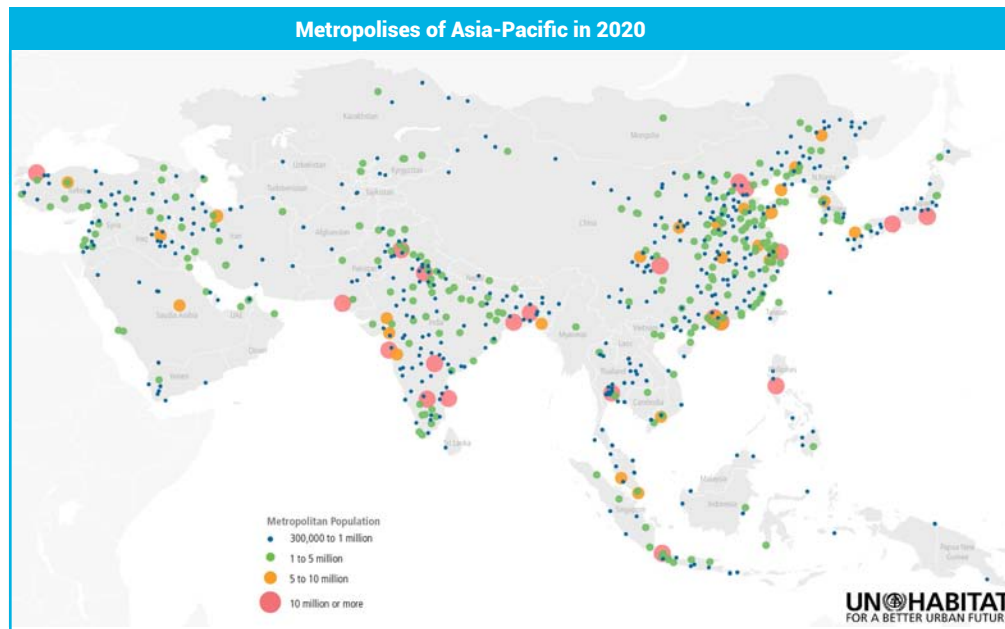
## Asia-Pacific Metropolises in 2020

**Asia-Pacific Region accounts for 1038 metropolises with the following distribution:**

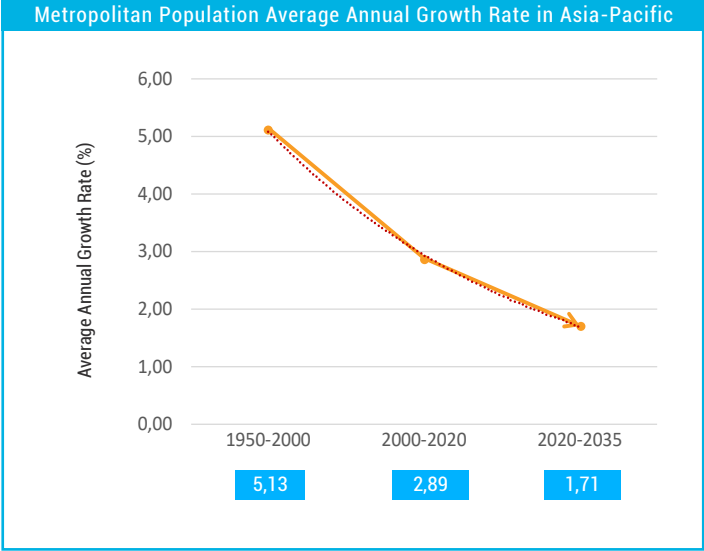
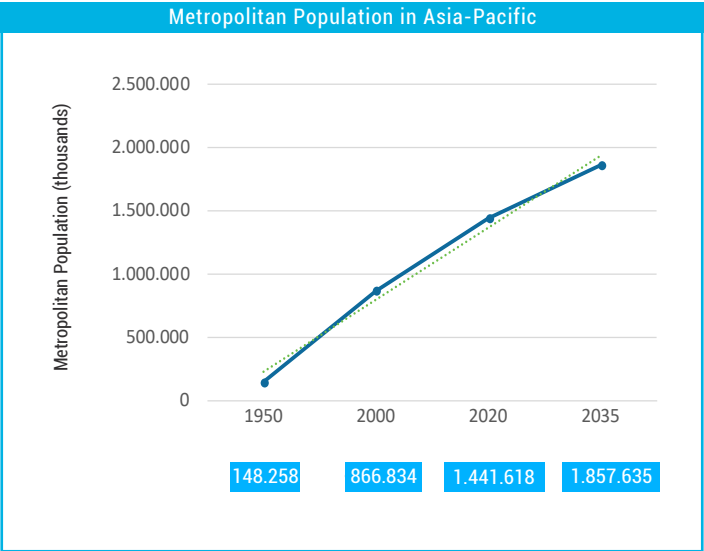
- 21 metropolises have more than 10 million inhabitants;
- 30 metropolises have between 5 and 10 million inhabitants;
- 264 metropolises have between 1 and 5 million inhabitants; and
- 723 metropolises have between 300,000 and 1 million inhabitants.

China (444), India (191), Indonesia (34), Japan (33) and Philippines (32) are the countries with most metropolises in Asia-Pacific. with only a single metropolis and 4 countries with two metropolises.

There are an additional 11 countries with polycentric systems of cities that have between 10 and 30 metropolises. In contrast, there are 12 countries with only a single metropolis and 4 countries with two metropolises.

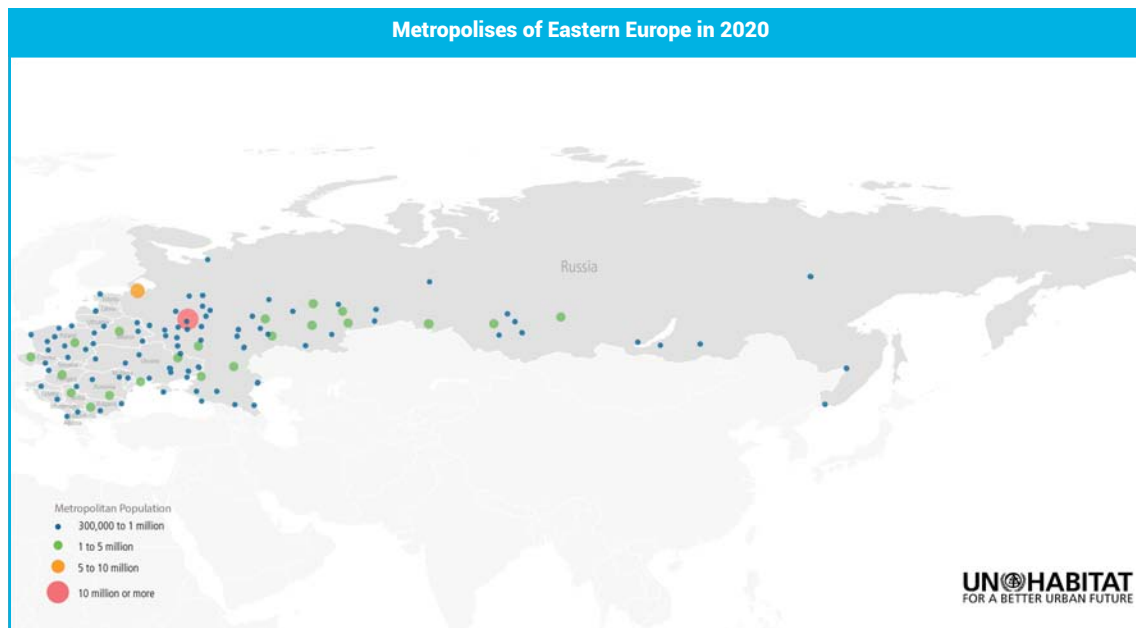


## Asia-Pacific Metropolises in 2020



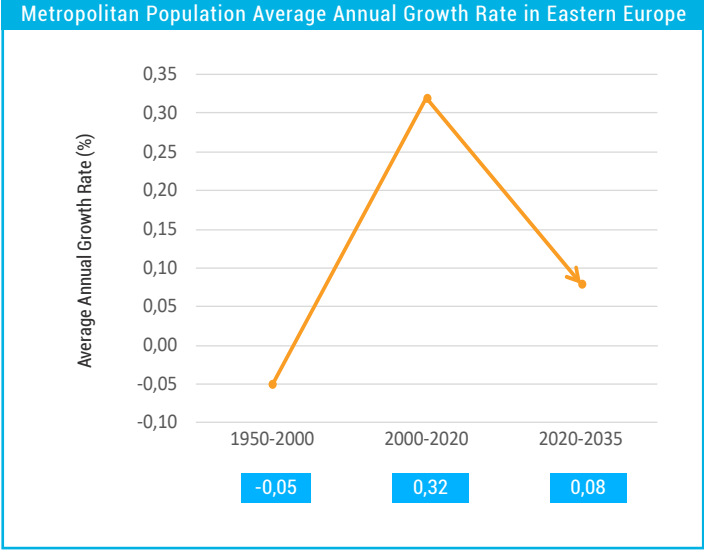
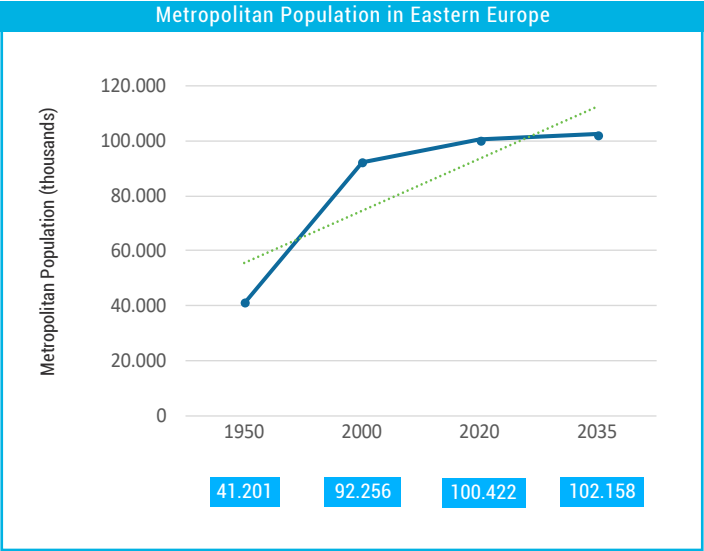
In 2020, **1.44 billion people** lived in Asia-Pacific Metropolises and between 2020 and 2035, that number is projected to increase by more than 416 million. Metropolitan population in Asia-Pacific will grow at an **average annual rate of 1.71% between 2020-2035** with a significant reduction from the average of 2.89% in the last twenty years. From 2000 to 2020, most of Asia-Pacific metropolises grew at a rate above the regional average (2.89%). However, 454 will grow below the new average (1.71%) in the next fifteen years. 33 metropolises in Japan and 1 metropolis in Lebanon will decrease in population by 2035.

## Eastern European Metropolises in 2020



**The Eastern European Region has 121 metropolises with the following distribution:** 1 metropolis has more than 10 million inhabitants; 1 metropolis has between 5 and 10 million inhabitants; 26 metropolises have between 1 and 5 million inhabitants; and 93 metropolises have between 300,000 and 1 million inhabitants. Russia (67), Ukraine (15), Poland (9) and Belarus (6) are the countries with most metropolises in Eastern Europe. They are also the countries with a polycentric system of cities. In contrast, there are 12 countries with only a single metropolis and 1 country with two metropolises.

# Eastern European Metropolises in 2020



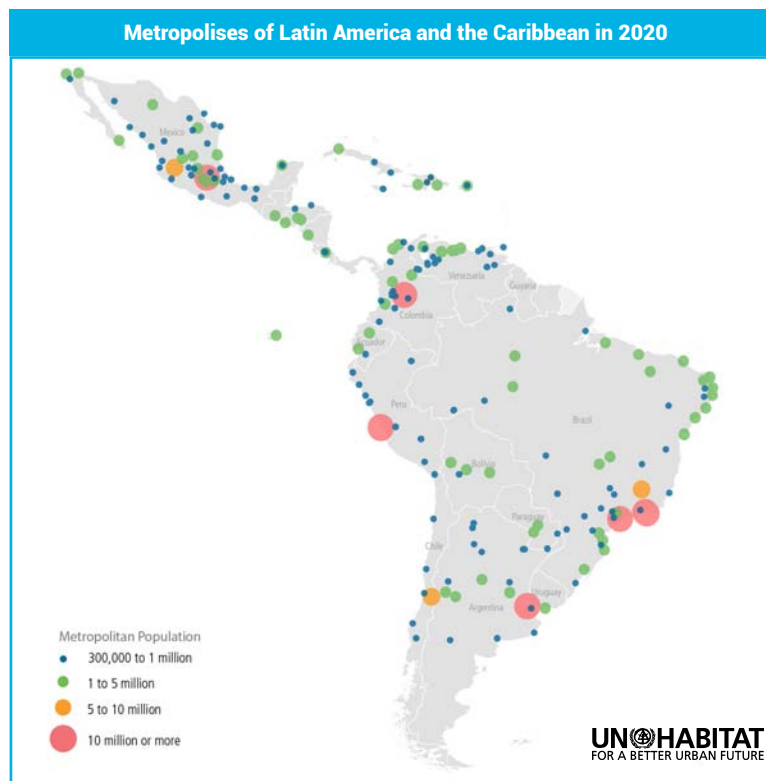
In 2020, **100.42 million people** lived in Eastern European metropolises and between 2020 and 2035 that number is projected to increase only by 2 million. Metropolitan population growth in Eastern Europe will remain stable between 2020 and 2035 with a projected **average annual rate of 0.08%**. From 2000 to 2020, 43% of Eastern European metropolises grew above the regional average (0.32%), while 27 metropolises will grow below the new average (0.08%) in the next fifteen years. 18 metropolises in Russia and 25 metropolises in other 6 Eastern European countries will decrease population by 2035.

## Latin American and the Caribbean Metropolises in 2020

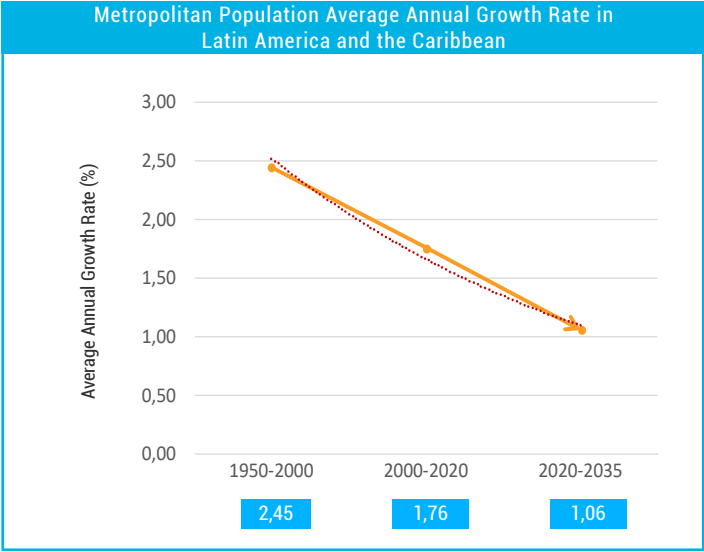
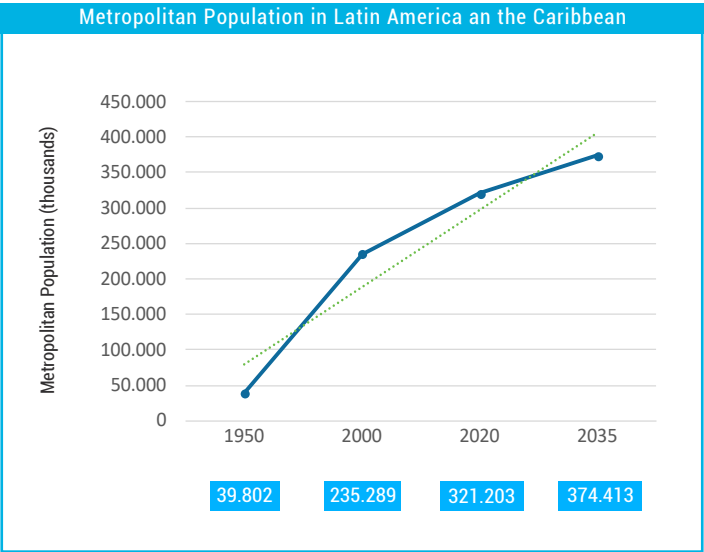
**Latin American and the Caribbean Region accounts for 215 metropolises distributed as follows:**

- 6 metropolises have more than 10 million inhabitants;
- 3 metropolises have between 5 and 10 million inhabitants;
- 65 metropolises have between 1 and 5 million inhabitants; and
- 141 metropolises have between 300,000 and 1 million inhabitants

Brazil (61), Mexico (54), Colombia (18), Argentina (17), Venezuela (17) and Peru (11) are the countries with the most metropolises in Latin America and the Caribbean. They are all countries with a polycentric system of cities. In contrast, there are 8 countries with only a single metropolis and 3 countries with two metropolises.



# Latin American and the Caribbean Metropolises in 2020



In 2020, **321.2 million people** lived in Latin American and the Caribbean metropolises and between 2020 and 2035, that number is projected to increase by 53 million. Metropolitan population in the Region will grow with an **average annual rate of 1.06% between 2020-2035** exhibiting a reduction of 0.7% from the last twenty years growth average. From 2000 to 2020, 47% of Latin America and the Caribbean metropolises grew above the regional average (1.76%), while 110 metropolises will grow below the new average (1.06%) in the next fifteen years. 2 metropolises in Puerto Rico will see a decrease in population by 2035.



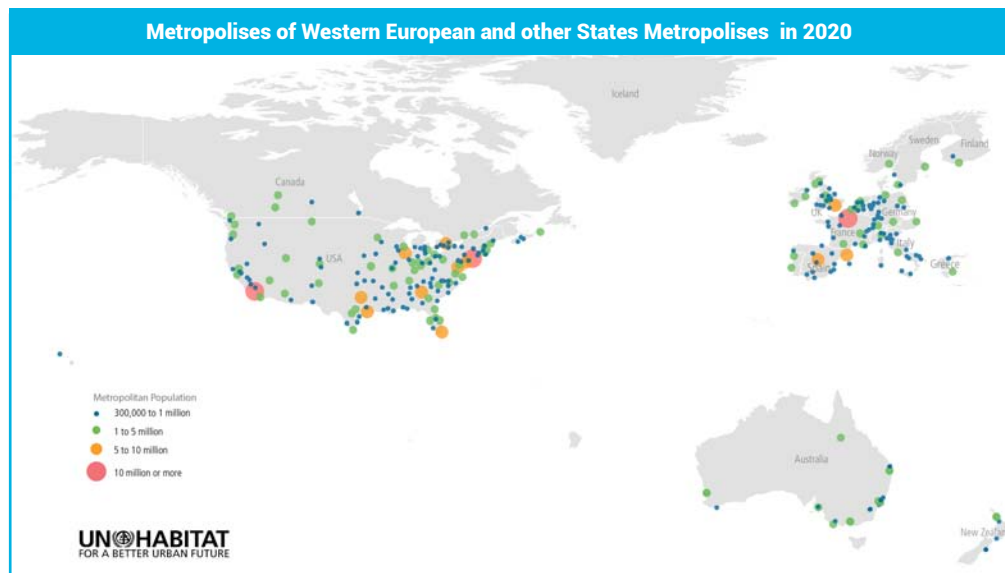
## Western European and other States Metropolises in 2020

**Western European and other States Group accounts for 325 metropolises with the following distribution:**

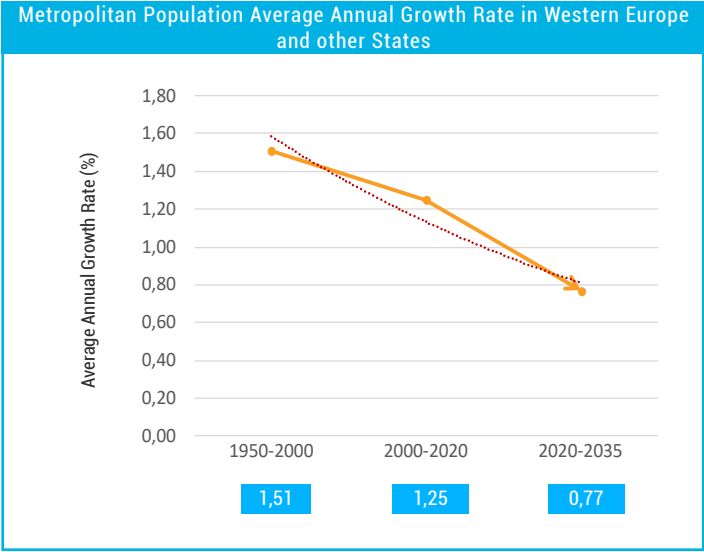
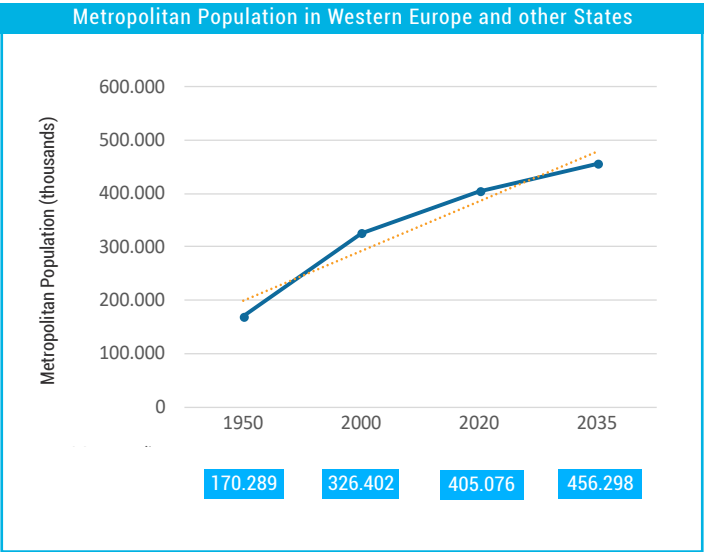
- 3 metropolises have more than 10 million inhabitants;
- 11 metropolises have between 5 and 10 million inhabitants;
- 80 metropolises have between 1 and 5 million inhabitants; and
- 231 metropolises have between 300,000 and 1 million inhabitants.

United States of America (144) and Canada (17) in North America; Italy (32), United Kingdom (28),

Germany (23), France (20) and Spain (14) in Western Europe; and Australia (11) in Oceania are the countries with more metropolises in this group. They are all countries with a polycentric system of cities. Contrary, there are 5 countries with a single metropolis and 3 countries with two metropolises in Western Europe.



## Western European and other States Metropolises in 2020



In 2020, **405.07 million people** lived in Western European and other States' metropolises. Between 2020 and 2035, that number is projected to increase by 51 million. Metropolitan population in this group will grow at an **average annual rate of 0.77% between 2020-2035** being the group with the second least growth rate after Eastern Europe. From 2000 to 2020, the 37% of Western European and other States metropolises grew above the group average (1.25%), while 161 metropolises will grow below the new average (0.77%) in the next fifteen years. No metropolises in this group will decrease in population by 2035.

# Global Aggregates

Size class of urban agglomeration	Type of data	Urban Agglomerations Aggregates			
		1950	2000	2020	2035
10 million or more	Number of Agglomerations	2	16	34	48
10 million or more	% of the Urban Population Residing in Agglomerations	3	9	13	16
10 million or more	Population Residing in Agglomerations (thousands)	23 613	245 386	556 770	862 082
5 to 10 million	Number of Agglomerations	5	30	51	73
5 to 10 million	% of the Urban Population Residing in Agglomerations	4	7	8	9
5 to 10 million	Population Residing in Agglomerations (thousands)	32 172	213 794	348 132	492 677
1 to 5 million	Number of Agglomerations	69	325	494	639
1 to 5 million	% of the Urban Population Residing in Agglomerations	17	22	22	23
1 to 5 million	Population Residing in Agglomerations (thousands)	127 484	625 857	976 786	1 262 974
300 000 to 1 million	Number of Agglomerations	230	920	1 355	1 603
300 000 to 1 million	% of the Urban Population Residing in Agglomerations	16	16	16	15
300 000 to 1 million	Population Residing in Agglomerations (thousands)	117 325	468 664	710 300	855 094

Number of Agglomerations			
1950	2000	2020	2035
306	1 291	1 934	2 363

% of the Urban Population Residing in Agglomerations			
1950	2000	2020	2035
40	54	59	63

Population Residing in Agglomerations (thousands)			
1950	2000	2020	2035
300 594	1 553 701	2 591 989	3 472 827

Urban Population at Mid-Year (thousands)			
1950	2000	2020	2035
750 903	2 868 308	4 378 994	5 555 833

## Methodological Notes

This Data Booklet was drafted from information included in the **UN-Habitat Global Database of Metropolises 2020** available in [https://qrco.de/UN-Habitat\\_GlobalDatabaseOfMetropolis2020](https://qrco.de/UN-Habitat_GlobalDatabaseOfMetropolis2020)

The UN-Habitat Global Database of Metropolises 2020 compiles several micro-data sheets from the **UN DESA World Urbanization Prospects: The 2018 Revision**. Specifically, following datasets were used:

- *Files 3, 12, 14, 15, 16, 17a, 18.*
- *Sources for Urban Agglomerations and Capital Cities.*

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