Statement of India

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Agenda Item 3: "Regional cooperation for resilient and sustainable urban development in Asia and the Pacific"

Mr./Madam Chair,

Inclusive and sustainable urban development is crucial for building resilient, equitable, and prosperous societies. As urban areas continue to grow rapidly, they are fast becoming centers of innovation and opportunity, yet face challenges like rising inequality, environmental degradation, and inadequate infrastructure. Ensuring that urban growth benefits all people, protects the environment, and fosters resilience is key to achieving sustainable development goals.

India's demographic landscape presents both significant challenges and vast opportunities. India is experiencing a steady shift from rural to urban living. By 2047, nearly 50% of India's population will live in urban areas, which are expected to contribute over 80% of the GDP. Effectively managing this urban transition is crucial for inclusive growth, innovation, productivity, and sustainability.

India's urbanization is decentralized, driven not only by growing metropolitan cities but also by the development of smaller towns and the

transformation of villages into urban hubs. In the Union Budget 2025-26 tier-2 cities have been recognized as "Growth Hubs" by the Government of India, focusing on economic planning, transit, and sustainable development of peri-urban areas. To address the challenges of uncoordinated growth in metropolitan cities, India has invested in GIS-based master plans for 231 towns, with plans for 675 more towns in progress.

Another significant initiative for sustainable urbanization taken by Government of India is the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana-Urban (PMAY-U), providing affordable housing to urban poor and middle-income households. PMAY-U promotes sustainable, disaster-resilient construction technologies, focusing on regional differences and vulnerabilities. With the introduction of PMAY-U 2.0 in September 2025, the scheme will add 10 million houses while incentivizing municipalities to increase tax revenue through land value capture. The Smart Cities Mission has further enhanced service delivery by setting up Integrated Command and Control Centres (ICCCs) in every smart city, allowing for real-time management.

Indian cities and urban economies rely heavily on the work of the urban poor, many of whom are rural-to-urban migrants. In addition to nearly 2,000 shelters for the homeless, PMAY-U 2.0 includes a rental housing component for migrant populations. India is also addressing urban poverty through skills training and job placements for 4 million urban poor and providing

interest-free loans to 6.8 million street vendors. A new Mission targeting vulnerable occupational groups like domestic and gig workers is underway to build economic resilience.

The Atal Mission for Rejuvenation and Urban Transformation (AMRUT) has made strides in providing universal water supply, with 18.9 million household tap connections, 65,000 km of water pipelines, and 4,734 MLD of water treatment capacity since 2015. It has also improved sanitation, adding 14.9 million sewer connections and 19,600 km of sewer lines. The AMRUT 2.0 Mission aims to rejuvenate over 3,000 water bodies, enhance shallow aquifer management, and significantly improve water recycling capacities.

Urbanization in India amplifies climate risks, with cities increasingly vulnerable to heatwaves, floods, and water scarcity. Regional cooperation is essential for developing effective strategies for urban climate adaptation and resilience. India is committed to the principles of reduce, reuse, and recycle (3R), with Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition (SCADA) systems implemented in 258 water supply schemes to reduce water loss. Additionally, 1,437 MLD of treated wastewater is being reused in industries, agriculture, and to rejuvenate water bodies. The Swachh Bharat Mission–Urban focuses on waste management, recycling, and promoting circular economy principles. The mission encourages waste-to-wealth initiatives, such as waste-to-electricity projects, Bio-CBG, and decentralized water

management solutions. The AMRUT 2.0 Mission further aims to enhance recycling capacities and rejuvenate urban water systems.

As host to the 'High-Level 12th Regional 3R and Circular Economy Forum in Asia and the Pacific' at Jaipur in March 2025, India played a crucial role in fostering dialogue and bringing a joint declaration to fruition, under which the Asia-Pacific countries committed to advancing circular economy goals to achieve resource efficient, circular and resilient societies. As a participant in the Urban-Act project, India supports low-carbon, resilient urban development in the Asia-Pacific.

Given the region's vulnerability to disasters, India prioritizes risk reduction. In July 2024, India assumed the chairmanship of the Asian Disaster Preparedness Center (ADPC), an intergovernmental organization focused on disaster resilience in the Asia-Pacific. As part of its disaster response efforts, India, acting as a first responder, launched Operation Brahma in March 2025 to provide search and rescue, humanitarian aid, disaster relief and medical aid to victims of the earthquake in Myanmar.

Infrastructure development and connectivity improvement are key to urbanization and important for regional economic development. India has enthusiastically participated in a number of regional partnerships initiatives like BIMSTEC, IORA and IMT-Trilateral Highway that foster these goals.

Tourism, an important growth sector, has also been a focus of regional cooperation. India, together with ASEAN, reaffirmed its commitment to the ASEAN-India Comprehensive Strategic Partnership in October 2024. The year 2025 has been designated as the ASEAN-India Year of Tourism to promote sustainable development, economic prosperity, and people-to-people ties.

Under India's Presidency of G20, the New Delhi Leaders' Declaration in September 2023, emphasized on low-carbon, climate-resilient development and the inclusion of women as decision-makers in the economy. This declaration underscored the collective responsibility of all nations to achieve the SDGs.

By working collaboratively across sectors and member states of the Asia-Pacific region, India aims to strengthen frameworks and interventions that will improve climate resilience, regional connectivity, and sustainable urban development in the Asia-Pacific region.

Thank you, Chair.