

Opening Remarks at the National Dialogue on Urban Nexus in Thailand,

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DRAFT SPEAKING NOTES ONLY

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Distinguished guests, participants, ladies and gentlemen.

It gives me great pleasure, on behalf of the Economic and Social
Commission of Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) to welcome you to this National
Policy Dialogue on Urban Nexus in Thailand.

At the outset, I would like to recognize the critical support provided by
the German Government, and I am grateful for the time given to this workshop
by Ms. Christine Falken-Grosser.

Of all natural resources, energy, water and food are the most essential
to sustain development efforts – but they are also the most vulnerable to
future demand. The 2012 report of the United Nations Secretary-General’s
High-Level Panel on Global Sustainability, for example, has warned that by
2030 the world will need at least 50 per cent more food, 45 per cent more
energy and 30 per cent more water. Much of this demand is being driven by
cities, and their urbanising regions. The Asia-Pacific region faces specific
problems resulting from its energy and resource-intensive growth patterns.

To respond to these challenges, GIZ and ESCAP, in partnership with ICLEI,
are implementing the project “Integrated resource management in Asian
Cities: the urban nexus”, with financial support from the German Federal
Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ). The project

supports ten cities in six countries, namely: China, Indonesia, Mongolia, Philippines, Thailand and Viet Nam. Chiang Mai and Korat are our two partner cities in Thailand.

In Thailand, during 1990 to 2012, the domestic water withdrawal increased from 26.4 to 40.7m³ per capita per annum, while the total primary energy supply increased from 741.3 to 1895 kg of oil equivalent. We need to address the gaps between how we manage those resources today and where we need to be in the future. In this regard, the commitment of the Ministry of Energy by setting a target of 25% of Renewable Energy in total energy consumption by 2021 reflects a shift towards sustainability. Mr. Sorawit Nanjaruwong will illustrate some energy solutions for urban development in his presentation.

In addition to sectoral policies, there is broad recognition that there is a need for integrated approaches to address the growing gaps between resource use and sustainability. In this regard it is worth highlighting that the Eleventh National Economic and Social Development Plan of Thailand integrates various dimensions, including the management of natural resources and the environment toward sustainability, as well as the linkages between agriculture, food and energy.

The urban nexus approach aims at integrated planning and management of natural resources, and in particular energy, water and food, for the long-term sustainable development of rapidly growing cities in their regions.

But the implementation of urban nexus can be limited by lack of policy coherence, weak governance, lack of capacity and limited financial resources. Enhanced cooperation between national and local governments as well as the cooperation of multiple stakeholders to engage in constructive local governance is critical.

This national dialogue aims to provide a platform for exchange between and among local governments and the national government, identify solutions to specific challenges and issues arising from city-level nexus implementation using the cases of Chiang Mai and Korat, and highlight existing and planned initiatives at the national level that cut across the nexus sectors.

I hope this national dialogue can further strengthen both the understanding of and commitment to the urban nexus in Thailand, and provide useful policy recommendations for Asia-Pacific as a whole.

Thank you, and I look forward to a very lively and productive dialogue.