Chair’s Summary

SIXTH ASIA-PACIFIC URBAN FORUM

19-21 October 2015
Jakarta, Indonesia
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Colourful houses rise above the banks of the River Ganges in Varanasi, India, one of the oldest continually-inhabited cities in the Asia-Pacific region.
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(Right to left) H.E. Mr. Basuki Hadimuljono, Minister of Public Works and Housing of Indonesia, Dr. Shamshad Akhtar, Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations and Executive Secretary of ESCAP, Ms. Mary Jane C. Ortega, Chair of APUF-6 and H.E. Mr. Sadat Mansoor Naderi, Minister of Urban Development Affairs of Afghanistan, officially open the forum.
1. Introduction

The sixth Asia-Pacific Urban Forum (APUF-6) was held from 19 to 21 October 2015 at the Fairmont Convention Centre, Jakarta, Indonesia. The forum was organized by the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) and the Ministry of Public Works and Housing of Indonesia together with more than 30 partners. APUF-6 was guided by the theme “Sustainable Urban Development in Asia-Pacific: Towards a New Urban Agenda” and held back-to-back with the Habitat III Regional Meeting for Asia-Pacific convened by the Government of the Republic of Indonesia on 21-22 October 2015.

APUF-6 brought together more than 900 participants, including ministers, mayors and other government officials, representatives from academia, urban professionals, the private sector, civil society, grassroots leaders, older persons, youth, and international organizations, to discuss persistent and emerging issues related to sustainable urban development in Asia-Pacific, and in particular priority issues for the region to be considered in the “New Urban Agenda” to be adopted at Habitat III, and in implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

APUF-6 served as a multi-stakeholder regional platform for participants to share best practices in critical and emerging urban development issues such as governance, planning, financing, land management, housing, resilience, social inclusiveness, poverty alleviation, participatory planning, gender equality and women’s empowerment, climate change, transport, safety in public spaces, waste management and integrated resource management. The Forum adopted the APUF-6 Jakarta ‘Call for Action’ on sustainable, inclusive and resilient urban development, which was presented at the Habitat III Regional Meeting for Asia-Pacific and is included in Chapter 7.

The following Chair’s Summary acts to highlight key recommendations and outcomes from the Forum.
Dancers perform a traditional Balinese dance during the opening ceremony of the forum.
2. Opening
Opening Session
Sustainable Development Goals: Looking ahead to Habitat III

Ms. Mary-Jane C. Ortega, Chair of APUF-6, delivered the welcome remarks, Dr. Shamshad Akhtar, Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations and Executive Secretary of ESCAP delivered the keynote address and H.E. Mr. Basuki Hadimuljono, Minister of Public Works and Housing of Indonesia, delivered the inaugural address on behalf of the Government of Indonesia.

In noting the urban transformation taking place in the region all three speakers emphasized that APUF-6 came at a critical juncture, following the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its sustainable development goals (SDGs). The Forum also was taking place one year before the United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development (Habitat III), and prior to COP-21 of the UNFCCC, to be held in Paris later in the year.

Ms. Mary Jane C. Ortega noted that for a successful implementation of the sustainable development goals (SDGs), efforts of national Governments must be aligned with decisions taken at the level of the city in order to develop a holistic approach to governance. She stressed the importance of partnerships, of multi-stakeholder engagement and south-south and north-south learning platforms, and in particular the value of networks of cities and local government associations. Ms Ortega highlighted the relevance of APUF as a platform for bringing all partners and stakeholders together and urged local governments and civil society to immediately initiate actions in support of the SDGs, through a bottom up approach, and to share these best practices with the international community and national Governments as a basis for crafting policies.

In her keynote address Dr. Shamshad Akhtar presented key trends related to urbanization and highlighted policy recommendations for harnessing the evident opportunities. Dr. Akhtar noted that the pace and scale of urbanization in Asia-Pacific was unprecedented, and called for an extraordinary response. In noting that the response to the urban transformation unfolding in the region had not kept pace with needs and had led to significant gaps, Dr. Akhtar called for concerted efforts to step up action to deliver on the commitments made by world leaders in adopting the 2030 Development Agenda for Sustainable Development. Dr. Akhtar cautioned that, while significant economic and social progress had taken place in many of the region’s urban areas, not all people were benefitting. To unlock the true potential of cities a change in course was needed, including greater investments in areas such as education, social protection, healthcare and the environment. Dr Akhtar emphasized the need for stronger governance and better, more accessible data as prerequisites of sustainable urban development. Critically, a major shift in financing would be required, as current revenue sources of local government are insufficient to
meet the long-term financing needs of sustainable infrastructure. Finally, Dr Akhtar emphasized the importance of multi-stakeholder participation and partnership and urged participants to look firmly towards solutions and an agenda focused on implementation.

In his address, H.E. Mr. Basuki Hadimuljono highlighted the relevance of cities as drivers of economic growth but drew the attention of the Forum to the fact that urban poverty remained a major issue. He emphasized adequate urban infrastructure was a pre-requisite for a better city, and in closing infrastructure gaps, and that there was a need for innovation and deploying lesson-learned from other countries in the region. Mr. Hadimuljono further noted that cities must be developed inclusively, addressing the needs of all citizens, including children, young people and women. Urban development policies should be part of the national development agenda, to ensure that cities develop sustainably and in unison with national development plans. In concluding, Mr. Hadimuljono called on all participants to forge a strong Asia-Pacific voice in support of the New Urban Agends.
The Executive Secretary of ESCAP, Dr. Shamshad Akhtar, together with the Director of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific, Mr Yoshinobu Fukasawa, launched the State of Asian and Pacific Cities 2015 report which called for an urgent response to harness Asia-Pacific’s urban transformation. According to the report, in 2018 the region will mark an historic transition as more than half of its population is expected to be living in urban agglomerations. Through discussing the five substantive chapters of the report, the Executive Secretary highlighted urbanisation challenges and trends in the region, and provided the key findings from the report. A number of these related to changing living and consumption patterns in the region. While population growth provided its own pressures, the growth of urban middle classes was resulting in unsustainable resource demands. The Executive Secretary, in noting the need for effective and coherent policy responses called for an ‘urban data revolution’, in which future planning was more effectively underpinned by accurate, relevant and real-time data.

The Regional Director of UN-Habitat shared key findings of the expert think pieces in the report which identified challenges and opportunities for the region in four key domains: mobility, social inclusion, sustainable cities and finance. Asia-Pacific cities are newly motorizing with limited mass-transit options. Nevertheless, several previously traffic-saturated cities have been able to transform themselves into new transit cites, offering key lessons. Moreover, excluded and marginalized urban groups need to be incorporated into city plans and processes; this may take time, but crafting collective solutions through trust and partnership has been an effective strategy. The region is also seeing a newly emerging green urban agenda, based on the principles of green urbanism. Finally, the current institutional gridlock in urban finance must be resolved. In principle, cities themselves should be able to mobilize most of the necessary revenues, using a number of available financial instruments. But significant institutional reform is also needed to assure better accountability, integrated approaches and long-term time horizons in urban finance.
3. Plenary Sessions
Plenary Session 1
Mayors Round Table
Implementing the SDGs and the New Urban Agenda: The role of local governments

Drawing from the experience in implementing the MDGs, as well as Local Agenda 21 and the Habitat Agenda, the Mayors round table reflected on the role of local governments and local partnerships in the achievement of the SDGs and the implementation of the New Urban Agenda. The session was chaired by Dr. Shamashad Akhtar, Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations and Executive Secretary of ESCAP. Dr. Bernadia Irawati Tjandradewi, Secretary General, UCLG-ASPAC, acted as rapporteur, and the following speakers took part in the round table:

- Mr. Arief Rachadiono, Mayor of Tangerang City, Indonesia
- Mr. Romano Reo, Chief Surveyor & Mayor of Betio Town Council & Chairman of Local Authorities of Kiribati
- Mr. Vinod Chamoli, Mayor of Dehradun & Chair of All India Mayors’ Council
- Mr. John G. Bongat, City Mayor & City Governor of Naga, Philippines
- Mr. Kinlay Dorjee, Mayor of Thimphu, Bhutan
- Mr. Sorogjoogiin Ochirbat, Deputy Mayor, Urban Development and Investment Issues, Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia

The mayors emphasized that local governments are key partners in the implementation of global agendas, including the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the New Urban Agenda, and should participate in decision-making processes on global agendas. The round table noted that in many countries decision-making and resource gaps persisted between national and local governments and that the latter enjoy limited autonomy to perform the functions assigned to them. While it is increasingly recognised that implementation of many national level strategies as well as global commitments relies on action being taken at the local level, local governments are often not provided with the mandates and resources, both human and financial. Importantly, it was noted that the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the New Urban Agenda will critically depend upon stakeholder engagement at the local level.

The session allowed also sharing good practices, such as participatory budgeting in the Philippines, cooperation among neighbouring municipalities to solve shared concerns such as mobility and waste management in Indonesia, public participation in decision-making in Kiribati and Mongolia, raising of local revenues in Bhutan, and national urban programmes in India.
The session formulated the following key recommendations:

- Local government needs to be more effectively supported and empowered to carry out its mandate and responsibilities, including those derived from the 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development. Without concrete actions, capacity, finance and power-sharing gaps threaten to undermine effective responses to the region’s urban transformation.
- There is a need for greater coordination among local governments, across urban agglomerations but also with provincial and rural authorities, as urban patterns of growth in the region increasingly transcend administrative boundaries.
- The role of public participation should be strengthened in urban planning and management, for example through participatory budgeting or community-driven slum upgrading.

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the New Urban Agenda have placed enormous responsibilities on local government capacity and financing. The panel discussed a range of financing options which included land-based financing, revolving funds of various kinds, community financing, private sector financing, public-private partnerships, intergovernmental financing and the like. The session was chaired by Mr. Michael Lindfield, Senior Advisor, SMART Infrastructure Facility; Prof. Om Mathur, Senior Fellow, Institute of Social Sciences, New Delhi acted as rapporteur and the following speakers participated in the panel discussion:

- Mr. Joris van Etten, Program Coordinator, Cities Development Initiative for Asia
- Mr. Irman Boyle, Executive Vice President, Indonesia Infrastructure Financing, Indonesia
- Ms. Tatiana Gallego-Lizon, Director, Urban Development and Water Division, Southeast Asia Department, Asian Development Bank
- Mr. Haifeng Lu, Secretary General, Global Forum on Human Settlements
- Ms. Kamila Muhammedova, Senior Research Coordinator, Center for Economic Research, Uzbekistan
- Mr. K. A. Jayaratne, President, Sevanatha Urban Resource Centre, Sri Lanka

The session formulated the following key recommendations:

- Recognising the importance that intergovernmental transfers would still play in financing the new agenda, the panel identified the need to restructure the current system of transfers...
to facilitate local government borrowing and provide incentives for local governments to maximise their revenue performance.

- In order to diversify financing sources for urban services, local governments need support to design and structure projects so that they meet the documentation, fiduciary and safeguards requirements of financing agencies.
- To encourage private sector financing, urban institutions need to be able to engage on commercial principles including the ability to demonstrate fiscal viability through more realistic credit rating methodologies, and national policy needs to strengthen financial safety systems for lending institutions, including the ability to secure regular transfers and the adaptation of bankruptcy mechanisms for local governments.

Plenary Session 3
Towards a people-centered urban future

The panel represented the views of a variety of stakeholders from across the Asia-Pacific region, including civil society, and in particular youth and women, as well as the private sector and academia. The session was chaired by Ms. Shipra Narang Suri, Vice-President, ISOCARP and General Assembly of Partners (GAP) towards Habitat III. Ms. Karibaiti Taoaba, Regional Director, CLGF - Pacific acted as rapporteur and the following speakers took part in the panel discussion:

- Mr. Wicaksono Sarosa, Founder, Kemitraan-Habitat, Indonesia
- Mr. Joce Timoty Pardosi, Universitas Indonesia (as representative of the Asia-Pacific Urban Youth Assembly at APUF-6 (APUFY))
- Ms. Vincy Abram, UN Major Group for Children and Youth, India (as representative of the Asia-Pacific Urban Youth Assembly at APUF-6 (APUFY))
- Ms. Somsook Boonyabancha, Secretary-General, Asian Coalition for Housing Rights
- Mr. Vijay Naidu, Professor & Director of Development Studies, University of South Pacific
- Ms. Sri Husnaini Sofjan, Senior Programme Administrator & Strategist, Huairou Commission
- Mr. Tony Newling, Senior Director, Government & Public Sector, Microsoft Asia

Throughout the panel discussion there was acknowledgment of the growing social diversity and complexity of the region’s urban population. Despite greater awareness and commitment to social
issues, there remains a growing gap between urban social experiences and what is required for a sustainable, inclusive, safe and resilient urban future in Asia and the Pacific.

The panel noted the growing diversity of urban populations and the complex nature of demands being placed on urban leaders, resources and systems. To manage such demands it was increasingly important to provide stronger mechanisms of communication and exchange. Any solution therefore needs to be tailor-made, and must include key stakeholders, including women and youth, in all stages of the planning process – policy formulation, implementation and monitoring.

A people-centred urban future requires a radical shift in the way cities are conceived, planned and developed, with people seen as change agents rather than beneficiaries or even partners. Women are a critical stakeholder in the achievement of people-centred cities. This includes women at the grassroots level, as well as those in leadership positions. The “right to the city” implies not only a right to stay in the city, for all stakeholders, but also to shape and reshape the city. This requires equitable access to information, as well as building awareness about the means of engagement available. National legislation and policy; innovative financing mechanisms; the use of technology for barrier-free information access and greater engagement in decision-making; and a stronger, more united voice of civil society are critical enabling factors in achieving an urban transformation based on people-centeredness.

The session formulated the following key recommendations:

- A more integrated and balanced approach that engages all key stakeholders is required in order to produce scalable solutions, innovations and multi-stakeholder partnerships that can foster sustainable urbanization.
- Reliable data, local knowledge and broad participation in urban planning and design is necessary to build ownership, enhance the strategic implementation of urban policies and allow government and other stakeholders to measure progress.
- The participation of various stakeholders, including traditional leaders, women, youth and the most vulnerable should be seen as an opportunity to build people-centred development which should underpin decision-making, planning and management processes.
The session looked at how cities can become more resilient and adaptive to climate change, heat waves, flooding, disasters and other hazards, while also mitigating the causes of climate change. It was noted that the way cities are being planned and built will have a critical impact on the contribution to climate change and their vulnerability to its impacts. The session was chaired by Prof. Steffen Lehmann, Independent Consultant, Australia. Mr. Emani Kumar, Deputy Secretary General, ICLEI & Executive Director, ICLEI South Asia acted as rapporteur. The following speakers took part in the panel discussion:

- Mr. Shobhakar Dhakal, Associate Professor, Asian Institute of Technology
- Mr. Nayana Mawilmada, Director-General, Urban Development Authority, Sri Lanka
- Mr. Yap Kheng Guan, Panel of Experts, Centre for Liveable Cities, Ministry of National Development of Singapore and Professor (Adj), Nanyang Technological University (NTU)
- Ms. Suneeta Dhar, Director of JAGORI, India
- Mr. Tony Chan, Associate Director & Team Leader of Planning, Arup, China

It was noted that Asia and Pacific cities were becoming spatially and socially more complex, including thanks to the rise of a fast-growing urban middle class, which provided great opportunities, along with some challenges. Moreover, most of the infrastructure required in Asian and Pacific cities is still being built, which offers a great opportunity for transformational change, but the panel recognised that the window is closing fast to green the urban infrastructure of future generations. The next 2-3 decades were seen as crucial. The session also highlighted the importance of data and evidence-based, market driven monitoring, reporting and verification protocols and action plans for moving towards climate-smart and resilient cities.

The session formulated the following key recommendations:

- Greater attention to planning, physical urban configuration and urban form, is essential to ensure sustainable urban outcomes (e.g. compact, green and walkable city models), and the integration of new technologies (e.g. for energy, transport, water, waste, data flow).
- In meeting future needs there is a need to move away from short-term decision-making and quick fixes to strategic long-term solutions, by mainstreaming climate change into economic decision making and political processes, with a proper planning to implement projects, including community-driven awareness programmes at all levels of government.
Planning, infrastructure and technologies need to take into account people's specific needs and vulnerabilities, including those of the poor, women, the youth, the elderly, people with disabilities and other at-risk groups. Current financial frameworks and market-based mechanisms, coupled with a fragmented architecture of governance, often fail to adequately take at-risk communities into account.
Participants listen to panelists through translation during the Plenary Session 4 ‘Climate smart and resilient cities’
4. Parallel Sessions
Parallel Session 1
Cities and global sustainable development frameworks: How to measure progress

The session was organized by UNEP in partnership with UN-Habitat, ICLEI, OECD and Cities Alliance.

The session focused on the important role of cities in the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its sustainable development goals (SDGs), especially Sustainable Development Goal 11. The panel agreed that the achievement of these goals is closely related to cities successfully utilizing urban metrics to help develop solutions to the environmental and socio-economic issues that they face. The session emphasized the need to use both quantitative and qualitative data in measuring city progress.

Many cities are currently making use of urban metrics; however their influence on policy making remains limited. Barriers to more pervasive and effective use include: (a) limited capacity within cities to identify, select and utilize relevant metrics; (b) difficulty in understanding complex conceptual and technical language; (c) difficulties in the collection and analysis of data, and (d) lack of concrete ways to turn policy to practice.

A key concept discussed during the session was that of ‘urban metabolism’ and the importance of using it as a framework to measure urban sustainability. There was agreement that looking at resource flows is critical to achieving long-term sustainability. To achieve meaningful results, however, the analysis needs to emphasize citizen participation and be relevant to the local context.

The session formulated the following key recommendations:

- There are already a number of metrics available but there continues to be a need to standardize collection, analysis, and monitoring of data, in a manner that can be disseminated across cities.
- For cities to report consistently on the SDGs, national governments have to create incentives for them. Data must be consistently collected and analyzed over time.
- A compelling story needs to be developed by technical staff for indicators of interest to decision-makers, which can relate to priority issues and highlight benefits.
Parallel Session 2
Inter-municipality and multi-stakeholder partnerships for sustainable urban development in the Asia-Pacific region

The session was organized by the Government of Indonesia in partnership with Kemitraan Habitat, UN-Habitat and APEKSI.

Rapid and complex urbanization makes partnership a necessity, in particular vis-a-vis the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the New Urban Agenda. In discussing priorities the session identified the most needed as: (1) “vertical” partnerships between national governments and local authorities, (2) “horizontal” partnerships between local governments, especially within metropolitan regions, and (3) multi-stakeholder partnerships involving diverse urban actors ranging from private sector to academia, and from civil society to public opinion.

While partnership-based urban development brings about many benefits, it can also take more time to implement. Lack of information and shared diagnosis of problems, as well as different perceptions of actors can hinder well-meant partnership initiatives.

Long-term political commitment encompassing multiple governance levels enables successful inter-municipality and multi-stakeholder partnerships. Sub-regional urban forums can complement regional and national ones to create networks that develop into actions. Local academia and knowledge institutions can generate information and knowledge that provide clarity, thereby changing the relationships among parties involved in metropolitan regions. Central governments have a critical role in providing clear rules and incentive structures to overcome competition among parties.

The session formulated the following key recommendations:

• Partnership should arise from collaboration – shared identification of urgent needs, convergence of interests, and purpose; partnership should be action-oriented, and should go beyond mere consultation or token participation.

• Central governments have a critical role in enabling metropolitan partnerships by providing clear rules of the game through national regulations and incentives that compensate for trade-offs in benefits and costs among competing local authorities and urban stakeholders.

• Partners should address interlinked urban challenges by identifying and starting with areas of synergy, being able to compromise, build networks, engage the public, and engage in advocacy.
Parallel Session 3
Towards sustainable and inclusive urban and territorial planning in Asia and the Pacific

The session was organized by ISOCARP and Kemitraan Habitat in partnership with the Government of Indonesia, UCLG-ASPAC and UN-Habitat.

Building on the recently adopted International Guidelines on Urban and Territorial Planning, the session discussed the relevance of the guidelines in meeting urbanization challenges in the region, specifically focusing on compactness, connectivity, integration, inclusion and resilience.

The first panel recognized the universal principles and processes advocated by the guidelines; key governance issues such as devolution, participation, and partnerships. The importance of cooperation between planners and local authorities, or between neighbouring local authorities was emphasized. In the second panel, the discussion highlighted the revival of local planning practices in Surabaya, Indonesia. The role of the guidelines in improving collaboration between planners and other stakeholders, re-asserting the role of planners as protectors of larger public interest and people’s priorities, and creating closer linkages between planning education and practice was discussed. Challenges to implementation for all cities in using the guidelines included short-term political interest, impact of mega-projects, and land use.

The session formulated the following key recommendations:

- As part of their commitment towards implementation of the SDG 11, national governments should enshrine universal principles, as articulated in the International Guidelines on Urban and Territorial Planning, in their national urban policy frameworks.
- Local authorities should use their legitimacy, but upgrade their capacity, to facilitate effective multi-stakeholder planning agreements, including implementation and enforcement, for achieving sustainable and inclusive urban development.
- Civil society organisations should advocate for the adoption of the universal principles as enunciated in the guidelines. At the same time, they must strengthen the contextualization of the guidelines, as well as work towards finding collaborative solutions to the needs of the most vulnerable.
The session was organized by ESCAP in partnership with ISWA and Waste Concern.

The session discussed challenges and opportunities for implementing “waste-to-resource” initiatives in cities in Asia and the Pacific. The session noted the pressing need to harness these opportunities in light of rapid urbanization trends, increasing rates of waste generation and the escalating costs of “end of the pipe” methods, the result of business-as-usual approaches. A paradigm shift is required including strong leadership from policymakers, both nationally and sub-nationally.

Policies in support of “waste-to-resource” approaches already exist in many countries of the region. Indonesia, for example, has an ambitious waste management law in place, which has been effective in supporting grassroots, community-based recycling centers. A good practice was recognized in Sri Lanka’s Pilisaru programme, a government-led initiative that has supported the implementation of more than 100 composting plants nationwide. In Viet Nam, the city of Quy Nhon stands out as a successful example of behaviour change campaigns and community engagement, with waste segregation practices gradually becoming mainstreamed. The session allowed reviewing the experience of Malaysia in effectively outsourcing solid waste management to the private sector through concession agreements. The session called for the need to recognize the contribution of the informal sector, or “micro-entrepreneurs”, by giving them right of first access to recyclable materials, as well as to education and health services.

The session formulated the following key recommendations:

- Policymakers play a key role in supporting “waste-to-resource” approaches, especially in creating markets for the resources that can be extracted from waste, by formulating standards for the use of compost or the setting-up of feed-in tariffs for waste-to-energy initiatives.
- Partnerships are essential to the success of “waste-to-resource” initiatives, and should build upon the resources and capabilities available locally, including those of the informal sector.
- Waste-to-resource initiatives should be accompanied by strong awareness and education campaigns, which should be embedded as part of a strategic, long term plan led by city authorities.
Parallel Session 5
Strengthening commitment towards integrated resource management in cities

The session was organized by ESCAP in partnership with GIZ and ICLEI.

The session highlighted the importance of an urban nexus approach in addressing current and future demands of critical natural resources such as energy, water and food, in cities. The session also emphasized the relevance of the nexus approach for the implementation of SDG 11 and the New Urban Agenda. The unbounded nature of cities was underlined, specifically within the context of their resource footprint and the need to understand the spatial relations of cities. By integrating policies and measures across critical resources the nexus can enhance synergies and reduce trade-offs and ultimately support a transition to sustainability.

It was noted that the nexus approach can act as a guiding principle for the development of sustainable cities and nexus thinking can support the development of smart cities through a systems approach. Nexus thinking can also help guide emerging concepts, such as ‘urban mining’, as a way to recover valuable resource from waste and address shortage of key resources.

The session formulated the following key recommendations:

- Policy responses must consider impacts and relationships beyond urban boundaries and across sectors. Managing the resource footprint of cities across various ecosystems calls for institutional coordination and other forms of collaboration.
- Nexus approaches should be embedded into planning frameworks, at both national and local levels, so they become normative.
- Institutional capacities of local governments need strengthening and their ability to raise local revenues and to access different sources of financing should be raised.
Parallel Session 6
Putting local and regional governments in the driving seat for financing sustainable urban development

The session was organized by CDIA in partnership with UCLG-ASPAC, CityNet, PT Sarana Multi Infrastruktur and the Indonesian Ministry of Home Affairs.

The implementation of the SDGs, the New Urban Agenda and the Paris Climate Change Accord will, to a large extent, happen at the regional and local level. Hence, capacities at the sub-national level must be strengthened and adequate financing mechanisms must be in place to put local and regional governments into the driver’s seat of sustainable development.

The Global Taskforce of Local and Regional Governments for Post-2015 Development Agenda Towards Habitat III called for an inclusive international governance framework and made several key recommendations to support sustainable subnational financing. During the session, local and national governments, financiers, advisory agencies and city networks shared good practices and lessons learned of applying the recommendations to finance local and regional governments in the Asia-Pacific Region. The role of relevant programs and institutions reflected how Asian cities and countries are already working towards these recommendations. It was highlighted which further synergies and collaborations need to be strengthened in the future.

The session formulated the following key recommendations:

- Increase capacities of subnational governments to prepare bankable projects, levy local taxes and tariffs, monitor official flows and improve budget management.
- Provide innovative and responsible ways to allow local and regional authorities to access credit, in particular climate-change funds, and issue bonds in order to raise long-term financing.
- Improve regulatory and legal frameworks (including capacity for public-private partnerships) at the national level to ensure that local and regional governments have appropriate powers and capacities to manage local/urban development.
The session was organized by the Government of Indonesia in partnership with UN-Habitat and UNDP.

The session discussed poverty as one of the main challenges to sustainable urban development. Urban planning and urban policies must promote inclusive urbanization. One way to achieve pro-poor urbanization is by harnessing density to reduce the distance between the poor and jobs, minimizing economic divisions resulting from spatial segregation. Best practices from cities such as Surakarta, Indonesia, through initiatives by a local partnership between the local authorities and civil society organizations, demonstrated that multi-sectoral and multi-stakeholder participatory approaches offered an integrated perspective as a basis for intervention for the urban poor. However, limited resources of local government is one of the main impediments to integrated programs.

Skills development and understanding the source of income for the poor are also critical. The poor work in informality at home, as well as migrant workers abroad. Integrating social services such as education and health for poor communities and households also can help effectively address urban poverty.

The session formulated the following key recommendations:

• Pro-poor urban development should focus on an integrated strategy that harnesses density in ways that captures the benefits of agglomeration while reducing its negative effects; supports the creativity and dynamism of the informal economy; and involves the poor in a participatory process that generates new information and knowledge.
• Participatory urban data and information creation and feedback mechanisms have been successful in narrowing the gap between misdirected top-down urban policies and the actual needs of the urban poor.
• The informal sector requires new policy thinking and a new way of engagement, considering that informal economies have shown considerable resilience in spite of global economic turbulence.
Parallel Session 8
Integrated urban water solutions for sustainable cities in Asia and the Pacific

The session was organized by UN-Habitat in partnership with ESCAP and the Asian Institute of Technology.

The session agreed on the need to upscale the most feasible urban eco-efficient water-infrastructure practices in the region with a special focus on integrated urban water and sanitation services. The leading role of local governments to tackle water pollution was emphasized. Forward-looking practical solutions included: combined centralized and decentralized wastewater management systems; long-term impactful investments; using septage and faecal sludge management.

Case studies from South and South-East Asia were explored. The session discussed that more emphasis should be placed on sanitation management systems rather than provision of toilets and latrines. Effective governance should be in place, including enabling policies that engage public and private sectors, adequate financing, law and regulations with law enforcement mechanisms that also empower communities and households as partners and service providers. The session launched the “Policy Guidance Manual on Wastewater Management”, developed by ESCAP, UN-Habitat and Asian Institute of Technology and its e-learning tool.

The session formulated the following key recommendations:
- A sound enabling environment and good governance in urban water supply and sanitation services with appropriate law enforcement.
- Integrated urban water and wastewater management with more emphasis on decentralized wastewater management facilities and systems.
- Prioritization of wastewater systems that connect toilet and latrine management with resource recovery tools. This would ensure water use efficiency and an increase in the value of water services in different sectors.
Parallel Session 9
Institutionalizing inclusive local economic development

The session was organized by Cities Alliance in partnership with CDIA, UCLG-ASPAC, GIZ, UNDP, Oxfam and UN-Habitat.

There is strong consensus about the need for cities to promote local economic development, and this has become a major objective and function of local governments. Yet there are questions around how values of inclusiveness and equity, as outlined in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, fit into urban economic development. Growth is not a guarantee of equitable access to infrastructure, services, and well-being—and indeed it is clear current economic development patterns in Asian cities do not reflect the values of inclusiveness.

A central illustration of this is informality. Informal employment, enterprises, and services are a structural component and major contribution to urban economies. Earnings are low but cost and risk are high, and informal work is dominated by women. While many formal activities and basic city functions are dependent on informal economies, governments often treat them punitively or restrictively, viewing informality as a temporary and undesirable phenomenon.

To be inclusive, local economic development needs to be steered by diverse coalitions of local actors, including those in the informal sector. There is a need for transparency on urban development plans (given the range of values and interests they claim to represent), with mechanisms for accountability. Strategies will need to be highly local, yet with an eye to global trends and opportunities opened through technologies. There is a need to think beyond market-based approaches, stimulating the social and economic contributions of the local economy (e.g. based on social capital) but also improve regulation and compliance. A range of examples show how local governments can adapt systems to support or protect informal entrepreneurs or workers – one-stop shops for registration services in provision of spaces for street vendors to operate, provision of health care to domestic workers, among others.

The session formulated the following key recommendations:

- Local economic development should engage coalitions of local actors including informal workers and enterprises, in a transparent way that considers the equity of development outcomes.
- Governments must protect the rights of informal workers to decent work (in line with SDG 8) and recognize informal enterprises, and service delivery mechanisms as key agents in local economies, finding ways to make formal systems work for informal sectors and strengthening organizations of informal workers (represented by groups such as SEWA, HomeNet).
- Governments and non-governmental actors should develop accountability mechanisms for local economic development, so that all stakeholders can evaluate and shape its trajectory.
1. Mayor Arief Rachadiono Wismansyah, City of Tangerang, Indonesia, meets Deputy Mayor S. Ochirbat, City of Ulaanbatar, Mongolia, following the Mayor’s Round Table.

2. Urban development in the region sometimes results in informal housing, such as in Khlong Toei, Bangkok, Thailand.

3. Panelists of the Plenary Session 2 ‘Financing the sustainable urban development agenda’ present and discuss ideas.
1. Ms. Somsook Boonyabancha, Secretary-General, Asian Coalition for Housing Rights presents her views during the Plenary Session 3 ‘Towards a people-centered urban future’

2. Dr. Shipra Narang Suri, Vice-President of ISOCARP and Chairperson to the General Assembly of Partners (GAP) towards Habitat III, chairs the Plenary Session 3 ‘Towards a people-centered urban future’

3. Mr. Yap Kheng Guan, Centre for Liveable Cities, Singapore participates in the Plenary Session 4 ‘Climate smart and resilient cities’
Parallel Session 10
Handling land towards the New Urban Agenda in Asia and the Pacific

The session was organized by the Global Land Tool Network (GLTN), UN-Habitat in partnership with the International Federation of Surveyors, the World Bank, ANGOC/Land Watch Asia, Habitat for Humanity, UCLG-ASPAC and FAO.

The new urban agenda must address the critical people-to-place dimension. With increasing population and competing uses of land, it is imperative that urban-rural linkages be pursued for a holistic and equitable urbanization vis-à-vis the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Undeniably, land is fundamental within a people-centric solution in reducing hunger and poverty, adequate shelter and safety, across every human settlement. Narrowly approaching land via a sectoral approach will only exacerbate rural-urban divides and increase vulnerabilities of urban and rural dwellers, especially for the poor and marginalised.

Securing and safeguarding land tenure rights for all improves resilience to the impacts of climate change, provides effective land use planning that mitigates spread of hazard-prone developments, and contributes towards better urban governance. An inclusive and participatory approach, using multi-sided partnerships and platforms, offers higher possibilities of attaining better land governance and overall sustainability. Land is complex and multi-dimensional; hence engagement with all of stakeholders is imperative. Overlapping mandates, fragmented approaches and short-term solutions will continue to exacerbate problems. A fit-for-purpose approach to address this critical people-to-place dimension requires technical, social, economic, and environmental considerations that include addressing power-relationships.

Towards this end, the session highlighted the following needs: (a) Implement global frameworks (such as the SDGs, the Voluntary Guidelines for the Responsible Governance of Tenure) and conventions, articulating a human rights approach to land as opportunities to open barriers, enhance platforms towards better land governance; (b) Implement the continuum of land rights, a global paradigm that recognizes a plurality of tenure types; (c) Implement multi-stakeholder solutions that are appropriate and affordable, in land governance, that recognizes diversities and local complexities. It is more than just handling land, but it is about people-to-land relationships.

The session formulated the following key recommendations:

• The New Urban Agenda must address people-to-place dimensions and record people-to-land relationships towards enhancing well-being of cities and citizens.
• The New Urban Agenda must embrace diversity and complexity in land, and must implement multi-stakeholder and fit-for-purpose solutions, to ensure inclusive progress for all.
• The New Urban Agenda must promote partnerships, capacity development and knowledge-sharing, particularly on land issues.
Parallel Session 11
City-wide upgrading and participatory planning techniques

The session was organized by ACHR in partnership with Indonesia Urban Poor Network (Uplink).

The session drew on the experiences and knowledge of urban poor groups from different countries in Asia and discussed the importance of people-led processes, the existing alternatives to evictions and why city-scale upgrading processes are important. The need for governments to open the space for multiple solutions and community involvement, but at the same time for communities to be organized and pro-active to address their own problems was highlighted. Different countries shared their concrete examples of city-wide surveying and mapping, participatory planning and community-based financial systems as a way for communities to come together, identify their problems, build their collective capacity to address the problems, and negotiate with the government to find together alternative and more effective solutions.

The session formulated the following key recommendations:

- It was important to recognize, support and scale-up existing bottom-up urban development initiatives.
- The development of more inclusive and resilient cities should address issues at city-wide scale.
- The eviction of informal settlements shifts problems and does not lead to effective city development solutions.
Parallel Session 12
Resilience 1: Building disaster resilience in cities in the Asia-Pacific region

The session was organized by UN-Habitat in partnership with UNISRD, Mercy Corps, Oxfam, World Vision and RMIT University.

Across Asia, cities are increasingly investing in measures that increase resilience. This is in response to increased needs on the ground as well as reflecting national government priorities that give greater emphasis to resilience and global frameworks that are designed to support cities, countries and regions to adopt policies and measures that increase resilience. However, without sufficiently inclusive approaches, resilience-building measures could exacerbate inequality.

Panellists representing national and local government, civil society, and donors introduced global frameworks, concepts of inclusive resilience, the challenges cities face, the perspectives of national governments, donors and academia, and shared experience of resilience-building processes. The session especially considered small and medium-sized secondary cities, where population growth is often greatest and capacity to respond is weakest.

The session formulated the following key recommendations:

• Resilience is a long-term participatory process that includes everyone, including women, children and those in the informal sector – not just as beneficiaries, but as partners, working towards equitable social and economic development.
• Access to information is key to resilience; stakeholders should work together to enhance access to information and make use of new technologies that can support planning where information is not available.
• Government has a key role to play in facilitating and safeguarding the building of resilience, including engaging all stakeholders, by balancing top-down and bottom-up approaches to planning and implementing development actions.
Parallel Session 13  
Climate change mitigation in Asian cities:  
Low-emission development, resource efficiency  
and sustainable production and consumption

The session was organized by UN-Habitat in partnership with UNDP, UNEP, GIZ and ICLEI.

The session demonstrated the inter-linkages among three critical concepts in urban environmental management: low emissions development, resource efficiency, and sustainable consumption and production. It explored the application of these at different scales – regionally through the Asia-Pacific Roundtable on Sustainable Consumption and Production (APRSCP), nationally, through Chinese and Indonesian perspectives, and locally through the experience of Bogor, Indonesia.

While growth in the Asia-Pacific region has been transformative in lifting millions of people out of poverty, at the same time it has created a number of complex and pressing challenges. While Asian and Pacific cities occupy only 2-3 per cent of land area, they are home to almost 50 per cent of the region’s population, and contribute 75 per cent of GDP. However, they also generate 60-80 per cent of the region’s greenhouse gas emissions and 75 per cent of its solid waste.

The efficient integration of low emissions development, resource efficiency and sustainable consumption and production was highlighted as important at all levels of implementation. The panellists agreed that cooperation and behaviour change is key to achieving real gains towards resource efficiency at the city level.

The session formulated the following key recommendations:

• Sustainable consumption and production is a strategic approach to reaching Indonesia’s national emissions targets. This can be replicated in other countries through the help of regional networks (such as the APRSCP), and international actors such as the 10YFP HelpDesk hosted by UNEP.

• The change of consumption patterns of major economies such as China is a positive trend that the region can and should capitalize on. China is slowly shifting away from patterns of development based on overproduction and consumption, and focusing on quality economic development in the country. There is also a trend towards more equitable access to urban services. Given the scale and unique nature of China’s growth, this is something that needs to be documented, and the lessons learned disseminated across the region and the world.

• Improvements in a city’s emissions and reduced overall climate change impact can also be done through indirect measures that address socio-economic concerns. In the case of Bogor, Indonesia congestion in the downtown area was addressed through a comprehensive approach - improving mobility and public transport, reducing emissions through a shift to more efficient fuels, and a modest investment in increasing green infrastructure. It is recommended that integrated approaches such as that of Bogor be disseminated and adopted throughout the region. Cities should seek to address not only climate change impacts but also a broader range of socio-economic priorities critical to quality of life.
Parallel Session 14

Sustainable transport and infrastructure in Asia and the Pacific

The session was organized by the Partnership on Sustainable Low Carbon Transport (SLoCaT) in partnership with Clean Air Asia and the Institute for Transportation and Development Policy.

Urban transport and infrastructure will play a crucial role in the development of sustainable cities in Asia and the Pacific. Transport must therefore be incorporated into key global processes and agreements, including in the adoption of a new climate agreement and the Habitat III agenda.

Transport policy is also critical in achieving both inclusive and resilient cities. Many of the region’s rapidly growing urban areas face paralysis and rising emissions because of poor transport and infrastructure choices that have locked them into carbon-intensive urban forms and functions. Bottlenecks relating to financing, implementation and governance are hampering efforts to increase resilience and reduce emissions in the region’s cities.

The session provided an overview of transport challenges faced by cities and targeted best practice solutions such as integrating sustainable transport in national urban policies, improving public transport (such as bus rapid transit), promoting transit oriented development and eco-mobility, and sustainable approaches to motor vehicle parking.

The session formulated the following key recommendations:

- Countries should develop, adopt and implement national sustainable urban transport policies through a participatory process as part of the New Urban Agenda.
- Cities should ensure greater coordination and coherence of implementation of national, local and city level urban transport plans backed up by financing and strong institutional setup.
- Stakeholders from relevant sectors must find effective ways to scale up sustainable, low carbon urban transport policies, tools and best practices in Asia such as those discussed in the session (urban development reform through improved public transport, parking policies, eco-mobility campaigns, and city certification).
Parallel Session 15
Safer cities and public spaces for women’s empowerment

The session was organized by UCLG-ASPAC and the Huairou Commission in partnership with UN-Women.

The session aimed to elevate the discussion on safe cities and women empowerment beyond targets within the SDGs, that is, to have a deeper understanding of how public spaces are meaningful and essential to people living in cities. More than identifying the challenges - particularly the fundamental task of making gender part of society’s consciousness - examples and initiatives by cities and organizations of gender-responsive policies and strategies were shared. These also considered mainstreaming gender and development in the context of disaster risk reduction and resilience, policy frameworks and regulations (i.e. public sexual harassment and violence), and land (i.e. tenure, slum upgrading), in consideration and respect of a city’s local culture.

Marking the commitment of local government and other practitioners towards this goal, the Mayor of Wakatobi underscored a key point in the “Wakatobi Declaration on a New Urban Agenda,” to guarantee inclusiveness and ensure that all sectors and groups of society effectively participate in planning and implementing activities in the local governments, utilizing their full potential.

The session called for actions that recognised the importance of safe cities through the improvement and promotion of public spaces in the Asia-Pacific region. This though remains a challenge. Making cities inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable is connected to the interventions needed to achieve gender equality and to uphold the rights of women, as well as children, who are most affected by the low quality and level of safety in public spaces and infrastructure. Partnership strategies, good practices, approaches and innovations that have made positive impacts in cities around the region should be supported and more investments made to support change.

The session formulated the following key recommendations:

• There is a need to have a deeper understanding on the continuum and progression of violence on women and children in public spaces in the Asia-Pacific region. Bringing about amendments to laws, communicating women’s and children’s rights and removing barriers to women equality and empowering society (men, women and children) towards women’s and children’s safety are some proposed actions that are urgently and strongly needed.

• Mainstreaming women’s and children’s safety in city planning and management, especially in the improvement of quantity and quality of public spaces and child-friendly spaces, requires
good and competent local government. Thematic areas such as disaster risk reduction, infrastructure development, technology particularly ICT, and culture, to name a few, should be aligned in mainstreaming activities to support decision-making.

• Empowering women, men, and children and promoting women’s and children’s safety in public spaces would require collaborative efforts of different stakeholders particularly city officials, police, and society at-large towards the necessary mind-set changes that safety is not ensured by surveillance alone, but by an empowered and aware society.
Parallel Session 16  
Resilience 2: Building resilience and inclusion in Asia’s cities

The session was organized by Asian Cities Climate Change Resilience Network (ACCCRN) in partnership with Mercy Corps Indonesia, the Rockefeller Foundation, 100 Resilient Cities, ADB, USAID, ISET Viet Nam, TARU India and Zurich Insurance.

Across Asia and the Pacific, cities are increasingly investing in measures that increase resilience. This is in response to increased needs on the ground, national government priorities that place greater emphasis on resilience, and global frameworks that are designed to support cities, countries and regions to adopt policies and measures that improve their resilience. However, without sufficiently inclusive approaches, resilience-building measures could exacerbate inequality.

Panellists representing government, civil society, donors and cities introduced global frameworks, the concepts of inclusive resilience, and the challenges cities face as well as the perspectives of national governments, donors and academics and their experiences with the resilience-building process. The session especially considered small and medium-sized secondary cities.

The session formulated the following key recommendations:

• Accountable, transparent and inclusive urban policy and city planning is essential for long term sustainable futures.
• There was a need to reaffirm, build on and implement existing commitments such as “right to the city”, and access rights, resulting in social and environmental justice.
• Financing for cities needs strong regulatory frameworks with the inclusion of all, including the informal sector, in long term strategies and processes to enable equitable urban development.
5. Side Events
The city of Fukuoka, UN-Habitat and the Nishinippon Shimbun hosted the tenth Asia City Journalism Conference, to promote the role of journalists in the consultations towards Habitat III. Journalists that participated in the panel session noted that Asia-Pacific newspapers and media should be able to report on urban issues to their audiences, exposing basic problems and injustices, educating readers on complex city development challenges, mobilizing people for change and when disaster strikes, and challenging perspectives on the big issues of sustainable urbanisation.

The panellists shared a variety of their published city stories: eviction and legal battles in Jakarta, vacant housing in Japan, city planning in Indonesia, economic analysis about new town development and land conversion in India, the impact of social media in Sydney at times of disaster, and the reflections on loss of community values in urbanizing China.

The event formulated the following key recommendations:

- Asia-Pacific journalists should keep abreast of local city issues, problems and challenges, while understanding and referring to the broader and more universal issues of sustainable urbanisation, and should be supported with training and capacity building by media companies and governments.
- National and local governments should encourage media to report on the state of cities comprehensively and should encourage collaboration of media between cities within and across Asia Pacific countries.
- National and local governments should uphold an open and free environment where journalists and urban civil society collaborate as partners for accountability and justice and together as agents of change.
This session was organized by OECD in partnership with Kemitraan Habitat and discussed how to “enable” Asian cities so that they can implement urban green growth, by showcasing policy practices being put in place in cities in Indonesia and beyond. In its introduction, the OECD highlighted current governance challenges including: integrating cities’ actions into national plans and strategies; financing sub-national actions; local co-ordination and community engagement; and lack of capacity.

The city of Makassar aims to maintain its yearly levels of economic growth over 8 per cent, and presented their strategy to stimulate small businesses on environment while addressing social concerns. Makassar had established a network with CSOs and encouraged community-based solid waste management through trash banks. Compliance to regulations is a challenge for the city. The city of Yogyakarta emphasized the importance of kampongs (local communities) and presented the current collaborative initiatives to promote green open space in the city. APEKSI, the association of Indonesian cities, stressed the lack of policy alignment between levels of government and the need for capacity building within and among cities to implement green growth policies.

BAPPENAS underlined that national governments have an important role to play in promoting urban growth, and presented their initiatives including the green city development programme and the recent smart city policy. Greening cities can enhance competitiveness, which will eventually benefit the country. The Fiscal Policy Agency of the Ministry of Finance of Indonesia presented current public investment in key sectors and emphasized the lack of awareness and of financial resources in cities as challenges for fostering urban green growth.

The event formulated the following key recommendations:

- Support the private sector and community-based actions to foster green growth.
- Develop programmes for capacity-building, such as peer-to-peer learning and staff exchange programmes between cities.
- Recognise the role of cities in fostering green growth at the national level, and ensure alignment of policies between levels of government.
- Develop mechanisms for access to international public finance for cities.
The session was organized by FIABCI (International Real Estate Federation, an NGO accredited with ECOSOC) and highlighted the role that FIABCI can play in promoting sustainable real estate development. FIABCI as an international umbrella organisation of both individuals and associations involved in various fields of real estate including development, investment, agency, property management and valuation, has a valuable database of actual projects and case studies of how sustainable development activities are implemented. Four case studies involving affordable housing, green development, sustainable infrastructural development and eco-residential development were presented.

The event formulated the following key recommendations:

- Tap the knowledge and experience of private sector real estate organisations such as FIABCI with valuable examples of sustainable real estate development projects.
- Learn from the experience of private developers and investors in the implementation of sustainable real estate developments.
- Examine successful private sustainable development projects which can provide valuable guidance and direction to those sponsored by government or NGOs. Valuable inputs may include aspects such as design, construction, financing and management of the projects.
This session discussed challenges and opportunities that countries in the Asia-Pacific region face in promoting national urban policies. It was co-organised by the OECD, UN-Habitat and Cities Alliance and the outcome will directly inform the work of Policy Unit 3 of the Habitat III preparatory process on national urban policies, co-led by the OECD and UN-Habitat.

The OECD presented its approach to national urban policies and stressed that they should serve to improve coordination of national-level policies, coherence between national and sub-national policies, and coordination across municipalities within urban areas. UN-Habitat presented its work on national urban policies in Africa and Asia and stressed that they should help to increase coordination across policies at the national level. National urban policies should clearly state national visions on urbanisation and include urban management issues ranging from poverty to cultural heritage. Translating national urban policies into local actions was highlighted as crucial.

The Ministry of Finance, Indonesia noted that although the country has a high degree of decentralization, there are extensive strategies and supporting mechanisms at the national level, including the Policy and National Strategy for Urban Development and the Urban Green Development 2015 Target. The range of sectoral policies underlined the need for an integrated urban policy framework. The Ministry of Construction, Vietnam explained that the government is adopting a national urban policy approach, through the National Orientation for Urban System 2010-2025 and the National Urban Development Programme 2012-2020. The importance of small- and medium-sized cities and “systems of cities” thinking was emphasised. The National Institute of Urban Affairs of India argued that the absence of a national urban policy in India leads to a silo-approach management of infrastructure. While programmes such as JNURM have successfully encouraged urban reform in India, she emphasized the need for private participation.

Cities Alliance reaffirmed that national urban policies should support sectoral/vertical/local convergence of policies. The importance of the legal framework for city based-action and clear definition of jurisdictions and responsibilities was also stressed. National urban policies should be tailored to reflect the diverse contexts of countries. UCLG-ASPAC stressed that local governments should be part of the process of formulation of national urban policies. Capacity building is crucial at all levels of government and community.

The event formulated the following key recommendations:
- Provide narratives on urbanisation and integrate sectoral policies into national urban policies.
- Equip cities with supporting tools including financing mechanisms and private participation.
- Involve local governments in the process of formulation of national urban policies, and improve capacity of all levels of government and community.
Launch events
Launch of publications and initiatives

APUF-6 also provided an opportunity for partners to launch new publications and initiatives, including the following:

- The “State of Afghan Cities 2014/2015 Report”, by UN-Habitat
- “Naturban: A rediscovered relationship between city and nature”, by the National University of Singapore
- “Revitalization Strategies for Informal and Low-income Communities”, by the National University of Singapore
- “Land Tenure Scoping Study in Asia and the Pacific”, by the Global Land Tool Network (GLTN), UN-Habitat
- “2014 CSO Land Reform Monitoring: Towards an Accountable Governance of Land”, by Global Land Tool Network (GLTN), UN-Habitat and ANGOC
6. Associated Events
Associated Event

Asia-Pacific Urban Youth Assembly at APUF-6 (APUFY)

The event was organized by the Government of Indonesia in collaboration with UN-Habitat, ADB and the UN Major Group for Children and Youth in partnership with a broad number of partners.

Young people in Asia-Pacific represent more than half of global youth population, and increasingly live in cities. Youth and children represent more than 50 per cent of Indonesia’s population, and elsewhere the younger generation is at the forefront of demographic, social and economic transformations behind urbanization across Asia and the Pacific. Tomorrow’s leaders are already taking action today in their communities and cities in Asia and the Pacific contributing innovative solutions on urban service delivery, safer and child-friendly cities, disaster response and recovery, urban resilience, enhancing peace in cities, and articulating their perspectives on inclusive urban policies. Young people are often early adopters of disruptive technology and open information, and can also embrace human-centric design thinking and act as community organizers. Transformation of mindset and behavioural change required for sustainable urban development can be effectively addressed through early education to tackle complex problems such as transport. Youth-led social entrepreneurship solutions are sometimes able to revolutionize a field in urban development and decision-makers should see the younger generation of urban thinkers and doers as active partners in creating sustainable and people-centred cities.

The event formulated the following key recommendations:

• Young people and children are capable of offering unique perspectives and ideas in addition to advocating for their priority interests, and should be empowered as stakeholders, caretakers, and leaders for Asia-Pacific’s sustainable urban development.

• Tomorrow’s leaders are already taking action today in their communities and cities, to engage politically and to offer innovative solutions to urban challenges; local authorities and other partners should seek to harness their increased participation, and encourage their active involvement.

• Young people including vulnerable youth should be involved as partners in practical policymaking and implementation of solutions to urban challenges of Asia-Pacific.
APUF-6 also benefited from inputs from the sharing of outcomes of other relevant regional forums held prior or in concomitance to APUF-6.

The Pacific Urban Forum 2015 was held in Nadi, Fiji, on 25-27 March 2015, under the theme of “Towards a New Urban Agenda: Harnessing Opportunities in a Post-2015 Environment”. The Forum adopted an outcome document and a resolution, which called for, among others: (i) social equity to be enhanced, (ii) environment, resilience and urbanization to be more comprehensively addressed; (iii) urban economy to be harnessed, and (iv) urban governance to be strengthened. It also called for the establishment of a Regional Small Island Developing States Coalition on Sustainable Urbanization.

The “Wakatobi Declaration of Local Governments on a New Urban Agenda” was adopted at the UCLG-ASPAC Council Meeting and Conference, held in Wakatobi, Indonesia, on 5-7 September 2015. The Declaration called for the embedding of the principles of good governance, including transparency, accountability, and people’s participation, in the various functions of cities and local governments, as well as the integration of culture in development planning and the harmonization of nature, ecology and development.

The ASEAN Mayors Forum, held in Makassar, Indonesia, on 9-10 September 2015, adopted the “Makassar Declaration on ASEAN Cities and Local Governments”. The Declaration urged governments to provide the enabling environment (legal, administrative, and financial) necessary for local governments and citizens to carry out their responsibilities, including in relation to the implementation of SDG 11 and the New Urban Agenda.

The 4th Asia Smart City Conference was held in Yokohama, Japan, on 20 October 2015 and adopted the “Yokohama Declaration”, emphasizing the role of smart technology in the development of urban solutions, as well as city-to-city cooperation, and the formation of an Asia Smart City Alliance.
Shanghai, China, has experienced some of the region’s fastest urban growth over recent decades.
7. Jakarta ‘Call for Action’
The region’s urban transformation requires an urgent response. United Nations projections show that in 2018 more people in the Asian and Pacific region will be living in urban rather than in rural areas. While considerable progress has been made in the last two decades, there is broad recognition that there are growing gaps between current patterns of urban development and what is required to make cities inclusive, productive and sustainable. In this context the sixth Asia-Pacific Urban Forum (APUF-6) was held, in order to deliberate and contribute action-oriented recommendations to the region’s leaders, focused strongly on an implementation agenda, including scaling up existing successful practices.

APUF-6 brought together more than 900 participants, including ministers, mayors and other government officials, representatives from academia, urban professionals, the private sector, civil society, grassroots leaders, older persons, youth, and international organizations, to discuss persistent and emerging issues related to sustainable urban development in Asia and the Pacific. In particular APUF-6 considered priority issues for the “New Urban Agenda” to be adopted at the United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development (Habitat III), and for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Participants, engaged in a multi-stakeholder dialogue through thirty plenary and parallel sessions and side events, formulated the following key recommendations in the form of a ‘Call for Action’.

- A people-centred urban future is integral to the transformation of cities and human settlements in the Asian and Pacific region. This requires a radical shift in the way cities are conceived, planned and developed, with people, particularly women and youth, as well as older people, indigenous people and ethnic and other minorities seen as change agents rather than just beneficiaries.

- Progressive national legislation and policy; innovative financing mechanisms; the use of technology for barrier-free information access and greater engagement in decision-making; and a stronger, more united and representative civil society are critical enabling factors in realizing people-centred cities.

- To achieve implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the outcomes of Habitat III, it is essential to re-focus attention on the building of effective partnerships spanning national and local government, as well as private sector and civil society.

- Greater balance needs to be found on the responsibilities and roles of different levels of government in the management of urban areas and surrounding towns. Partnerships must be based on the principle of subsidiarity. While national government plays an important role, including in creating an effective legal framework, partnerships must also acknowledge and better accommodate local government and community needs.

- Women are significantly underrepresented in leadership positions at all levels of government in most countries of the region. All levels of government must take action to improve female representation in elected administrative and appointed office, in particular at the local level.
• Urban and territorial planning, based on universal principles, led by sub-national
government visions and needs, enshrined in national urban policy and financing
frameworks, working towards locally-adapted solutions and implemented through
genuine collaboration, can be an effective instrument in the implementation of the
2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the New Urban Agenda.

• Actions should be taken to boost productivity and create opportunities for urban-rural
connectivity to support new regional spatial configurations that will underpin
faster and more balanced economic and social development. Such actions should
enable the creation of stronger linkages between urban and rural areas to reduce the
vulnerability of the urban and rural poor, and enhance prospects for more equitable
development.

• Accountable, transparent and inclusive urban governance, policy making and city
planning is essential for long term sustainable futures. To support policy for sustain-
able urban development, it is important that all levels of government, including
relevant ministries, work effectively together in order to develop coherent and mu-
tually supportive approaches.

• Local governments and national governments should harness density and spatial
economies, use participation and awareness building in partnership with local pro-
poor partners, and involve the poor in urban policymaking in order to achieve
sustainable urban development that effectively eradicates poverty and ends marginal-
alization of the poor.

• Local economic development should engage coalitions of local actors including
informal workers and enterprises, in a manner that is transparent and considers the
equity of development outcomes. This means recognizing the contribution of infor-
mal workers, enterprises and service delivery mechanisms as key actors and agents
in local economies, and strengthening organizations of informal workers.

• Leaders at all levels of government should commit to participatory planning frame-
works responding to local needs. Poverty cannot be eradicated and the 2030 Agenda
for Sustainable Development will not be met if evictions of those living in infor-
mal settlements or other forms of discrimination continue.

• The realization of safe cities through the improvement and promotion of public
spaces in the Asia-Pacific region remains a challenge. Making cities inclusive, in-
cluding for people with disabilities, free of sexual harassment and sexual violence
at all times, is connected to the interventions needed to achieve gender equality and
to uphold the rights of women, as well as children, who are most affected by low
quality and unsafe public spaces and infrastructure. Partnership strategies, good
practices, approaches and innovations that have made positive impacts in cities
around the region should be supported and receive more investment.

• Government at all levels should implement fit-for-purpose programmes that im-
prove land governance, including recording and recognizing people-to-land rela-
tionships in all its forms.
• Local government needs to be more effectively supported and empowered to carry out its mandate and responsibilities, including those derived from the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Without concrete actions, gaps in capacity, finance and power-sharing threaten to undermine effective responses to the region’s urban transformation.

• Cities and their regions face a significant data deficit. In order to support urban planning, greater attention needs to be paid to the information base, including standardized collection, analysis, monitoring, and dissemination. Availability of information for all stakeholders can also strengthen governance through better-informed stakeholders. Academia and think tanks have an important role to play in this regard.

• Reducing the vulnerability and contribution of cities to climate change and natural hazards calls for a reconsideration of the way cities are planned, transformed and infrastructure is developed. This includes through adopting compact, mixed-use urban form, green urban growth and green city development models, as well as resilience strategies that are people-centred, pro-poor and inclusive. These measures, supported by integrated technology and information and respecting heritage, have the potential to improve the health, liveability and competitiveness of the region’s urban areas.

• All levels of government have a responsibility to facilitate and safeguard the building of resilience. Resilience is a long-term participatory process that must engage all stakeholders, including women, children, older persons, people with disabilities and those in the informal sector – not just as beneficiaries, but as actors working towards equitable social and economic development.

• Meeting current and future natural resource demands in cities, in particular for energy, water and food, as well as housing and basic services, requires the adoption of a nexus approach and a shift from sectoral to integrated and ecosystem-based planning. It also requires a shift from competitive to collaborative governance among neighbouring municipalities and across departments, including financing mechanisms.

• Governments need to urgently usher in a paradigm shift in waste management, from downstream and end-of-the pipe to upstream waste-to-resource, by forging partnerships with communities, waste pickers, academia, civil society organisations and the private sector.

• Implementation of water- and sanitation-related development goals requires the adoption of a systems-based framework established on integrated urban water management, inclusive of policy regulations, diverse technologies and financing sources, water and sanitation markets, and with community participation.

• As part of the New Urban Agenda, countries should develop, adopt and implement national sustainable urban transport policies, as an integral part of development strategies, through participatory processes. Cities should ensure greater coordina-
tion and coherence of implementation of national, local and city level urban transport plans backed up by financing and strong institutional setups.

• Financing is a universal issue across the Asian and Pacific region. Finance is a supply (sourcing) and demand (bankable projects) challenge for both national and sub-national government. In considering urban finance needs, a broad agenda including green infrastructure and social inclusion is necessary. Financing options for cities require a coherent intergovernmental financing base and must provide for a range of mechanisms such as land-based financing, revolving funds of various kinds, community financing, private sector financing, and public-private partnerships (PPPs).

• Sub-national governments should be more proactive in the financing of sustainable urban development by strengthening the enabling framework required to prioritize, prepare and finance their urban infrastructure investments.

Participants concluded by urging all levels of government and key stakeholders to take collective action in implementing the outcomes of the Forum as represented through its ‘Call for Action’.

Jakarta, Indonesia, 21 October 2015