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# "WORKSHOP ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE 2030 AGENDA FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN ASIAN AND PACIFIC CITIES"

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30 November – 1 December 2016  
United Nations Conference Centre, Bangkok, Thailand

## CONCEPT NOTE

### INTRODUCTION

January 2016 marked the official launch of the new 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, adopted unanimously in 2015 by all 193 member countries of the United Nations. The 2030 Agenda calls on countries to begin efforts to achieve the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) over the next 15 years. "The seventeen Sustainable Development Goals are our shared vision of humanity and a social contract between the world's leaders and the people," said UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, "They are a to-do list for people and planet, and a blueprint for success."<sup>1</sup>

The SDGs explicitly acknowledge the important role that cities play in the pursuit of sustainable development through Goal 11, which aims to "make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable."<sup>2</sup> However, cities will play a critical role in implementation of the entirety of the 2030 Agenda as all of the SDGs contain targets that will require local action. Recent studies report that successfully achieving about 65 percent of the 169 SDG targets will only be possible through substantive involvement of local actors, including local governments.<sup>3</sup> The important role of cities for the achievement of the SDGs was also highlighted at the 3rd Session of the Asia-Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development, convened by ESCAP in April 2016.<sup>4</sup>

Cities have the capacity to generate new modalities and innovative solutions for the implementation of sustainable development initiatives. At the same time, cities require support to address barriers in terms of capacities, financing, governance, access to appropriate and affordable technologies, and data availability. Sharing best practices among cities will be critical to maximize the impact of the SDGs and create a more sustainable future for all.

The need for knowledge sharing around urban policy and the role of local government in achieving the SDGs were highlighted at the International Forum on Urban Policy for the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) held in Seoul, Republic of Korea, from 8 to 10 June 2016, organized by the Seoul Metropolitan Government (SMG), ESCAP, and CityNet.<sup>5</sup> The Forum's "Seoul Communiqué" reaffirmed the commitment of participating cities to the full implementation of the 2030 Agenda and its SDGs, and recognized the following five principles relevant to the implementation of policies for the sustainable development of cities:

1. Local government leadership and integrated planning for sustainable development
2. Citizen participation is at the heart of sustainable urban development
3. Smart planning for sustainable and inclusive urban development
4. Multilevel partnerships promote implementation
5. Knowledge sharing among cities

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1 United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs - <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/?page=view&nr=1021&type=230&menu=2059>

2 <http://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/cities/>

3 Cities Alliance. Sustainable Development Goals and Habitat III: Opportunities for a Successful New Urban Agenda. 2015. Available at: <http://www.citiesalliance.org/sites/citiesalliance.org/files/Opportunities%20for%20the%20New%20Urban%20Agenda.pdf>

4 <http://www.unescap.org/events/apfsd3>

5 <http://www.unescap.org/events/international-forum-urban-policy-sustainable-development-goals>

The importance of cities in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development was also recognized in the outcomes of the sixth Asia-Pacific Urban Forum (APUF-6) held in Jakarta on 19-21 October 2015.<sup>1</sup> The APUF-6 Jakarta "Call for Action" calls for local government to be more effectively supported and empowered to carry out its mandate and responsibilities, including through broad-based partnerships and an enhanced information base.

The New Urban Agenda, which was agreed upon at the third United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development (Habitat III) in Quito, Ecuador on 17-20 October, offers a new model of urbanization in response to the challenges of rapid urban growth and specifically acknowledges local authorities as key partners in shaping the global agenda.

Against this backdrop, ESCAP, SMG and CityNet have come together to establish the **"Urban SDG Knowledge Platform"** to promote and support regional knowledge sharing and cooperation for sustainable urban development. The Urban SDG Knowledge Platform will be launched and presented at the Workshop.

The Urban SDG Knowledge Platform will support local action for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, including through up-take and replication of successful initiatives and good practices, by:

- a) Providing a repository of policies, initiatives and good practices at the city level by municipal governments and other stakeholders;
- b) Facilitating north-south, south-south, and triangular cooperation by linking cities that have developed specific policies, initiatives and good practices with other cities interested in replicating them;
- c) Facilitate regional follow-up and review implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development by providing a platform for local governments to share progress and lessons learned.

## OBJECTIVES

Building upon the outcomes of the Asian Pacific Urban Forum, the Asia-Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development and the Seoul International Forum on Urban Policy for the SDGs, the Workshop on the Implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in Asian and Pacific Cities will be hosted in Bangkok, Thailand, on 30 November and 1 December 2016.

The Workshop is organized as part of the **"ESCAP SDG Week"**, taking place from Monday 28 November to Friday 2 December 2016.

The Workshop is organized with the following objectives in mind:

- a) Discuss the role of cities in the implementation of the SDGs and share experiences in sustainable urban development;
- b) Provide a venue to share urban policy examples and innovative initiatives by cities on various areas related to the SDGs;
- c) Launch and present the Urban SDG Knowledge Platform to support local action for the implementation of the SDGs.
- d) Explore opportunities for regional cooperation to support the implementation and follow-up and review of the SDGs, and in particular SDG 11, in particular through the Urban SDG Knowledge Platform.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.unescap.org/events/apuf6>