

**Summary of discussion on Urban and Peri-Urban Development  
held on 7th April 2020 in preparation for the 7th Asia Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development  
(APFSD)**

Any Asia-Pacific country committed to accelerating its actions to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals will find the path to sustainable development runs through its cities, towns and human settlements. Key to addressing urban poverty and inequality in all its forms is recognizing the barriers to social inclusion and equity that prevent the upgrading of informal settlements at scale and livability for all urban communities. Integrated urban and territorial planning that is participatory and inclusive is necessary for communities to address institutional inequalities such as lack of affordable housing, basic services, access to land and participation in governance, and structural inequalities, including on the basis of gender, age, ability, orientation, ethnicity and origin. Rethinking planning processes to better manage long-term city development in an equitable and sustainable manner, utilizing people-centred smart technologies, will break down barriers to accelerating achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. To rise to this challenge, local governments should integrate a systems approach into their planning to be able to manage long term city development in an equitable, more sustainable manner to accelerate progress.

Planning also allows for leveraging sound investments when considering urban finance needs. A broad policy agenda including deepening fiscal devolution processes, valuing green infrastructure and prioritizing participatory budgeting is necessary for cities to deliver on the Sustainable Development Goals. Securing investments in a low-carbon, resource-efficient and resilient urban future that works with both built and natural systems requires concrete and coordinated national and municipal policies which co-produce solutions with all urban citizens. An expanded focus on urban resilience is ever more critical given that Asia-Pacific cities and local governments are at the forefront of the COVID-19 crisis. Efforts to build resilience need to focus on interventions that include long term responses to COVID-19 which yield multiple co-benefits and target the most vulnerable communities. By acting now and synchronising collective efforts, Asia-Pacific cities will create an urban future that will leave no one and no place behind.

*This webinar and associated entry point profile was organised by ESCAP, in coordination with UN-Habitat, UNOPS and UNDRR.*