



**WORLD SUSTAINABLE  
DEVELOPMENT SUMMIT**  
BEYOND 2015: PEOPLE, PLANET & PROGRESS



## **Achieving Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)** **Challenges and Opportunities for Urban India**

October 7, 2016 | 4.15 – 6.15 pm

**Venue:** Juniper Hall, India Habitat Centre

The theme of the 2016 World Sustainable Development Summit (WSDS) is 'Beyond 2015: People, Planet, Progress', as a contribution to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, adopted by the United Nations in September 2015.

One of the sustainable development goals (SDGs) that are part of the 2030 Agenda, i.e. SDG 11, aims at ensuring the development of sustainable cities and communities, in particular by ensuring access to safe and affordable housing, upgrading slum settlements, investing in public transport, creating green public spaces, and improving urban planning and management in a way that is both participatory and inclusive.<sup>1</sup>

As part of the European Union's (EU) experience with sustainable communities and India's ambition to achieve the SDGs, this workshop will provide a venue for an exchange of views between Indian and European policymakers and experts on how to achieve greater urban sustainability. It will also allow exploring India's and the EU's outlook as to possible joint initiatives. These activities are in line with the joint statement of the 13<sup>th</sup> EU-India Summit of March 2016 which envisions the development of an urban development dialogue and an urban forum.

### Concept Note

More than 40% of India's population India is expected to reside in its urban centres by 2050 (UNDESA, 2014). As of Census 2011, there are 7,935 towns, 475 Urban Agglomerations (UA) and 981 outgrowths in the country. There are 468 Class- I UA/Towns that have a population of more than 100,000 residents and 53 UA/Towns housing a population of one million or above. Among the million plus UA/Cities, there are three 'Mega cities' with more than 10 million population (Census, 2011). While these rapidly expanding urban centres in India are seen as the engines of economic growth, they also face tremendous pressures on their civic infrastructure systems like water supply, sewerage and drainage, solid waste management, etc. Data suggests that

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<sup>1</sup> UNDP, Sustainable Development Goals, <http://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/sustainable-development-goals/goal-11-sustainable-cities-and-communities.html>, accessed on Sept. 9, 2016.

water supply is available for an average of 2.9 hours only per day across cities and towns. The non-revenue water that includes physical and revenue losses, accounts for 40-60 per cent of total water supply. About 30 to 50 per cent households do not have sewerage connections and less than 20 per cent of total waste water is being treated. Solid waste systems are severely stressed with an estimated amount of 1,15,000 MT of Municipal Solid Waste being generated daily in the country (FICCI, 2011). Besides infrastructure deficit, Indian cities are also grappling with environmental degradation, air pollution, and increasing frequency of climate induced events and disasters. There is, therefore, an urgent need to relook the ways in which we design our infrastructure, run our cities, and manage current pressures emanating from urbanization (TERI, 2014; TERI, 2015).

In order to meet these challenges of growing urbanization in the country, the Government of India launched several new urban schemes in 2014 - Atal Mission for Rejuvenation and Urban Transformation (AMRUT), Housing for All (Urban) Scheme and the Smart Cities Mission. The basic aim of these schemes is to recast the urban landscape of the country to make urban areas livable, sustainable, smart and inclusive while driving the economic growth of the country. The Smart Cities Mission focuses on the objectives of enhancing the quality of urban life and providing a clean and sustainable environment through the adoption of smart solutions. The Mission covers 100 cities across the country that were identified through an intra-state selection process based on their existing service levels, institutional and financial capacities, past track record of urban governance and reforms. Thereafter, in the second stage, each of the 100 Smart Cities prepared their smart city proposals (SCPs) for participation in the 'City Challenge'. These proposals were scored on the basis of multiple criteria including city vision and strategy; inclusive planning approach; technical and financial viability of proposals, and the capacity of the urban local bodies to implement the same (MoUD a). The format entails the winning cities in each round to start implementing their SCPs while the remaining cities improve their SCPs for subsequent rounds. AMRUT is an urban renewal mission that has been launched for 500 cities with focus on ensuring basic infrastructure services such as water supply, sewerage, storm water drains, transport and development of green spaces and parks by adopting climate resilient and energy efficient policies and regulations (MoUD b). It includes a project based approach to ensure basic services and infrastructure which will be linked to urban reforms. These reforms as envisioned at present will include e-governance, constitution of municipal cadre, devolving functions and funds to urban local bodies, review of building bye-laws, improvement in assessment and collection of municipal taxes, credit rating, energy and water audit, and citizen centric urban plans (TERI, 2015). The 500 AMRUT cities and towns have been selected primarily on the basis of population i.e. 100,000 and above (Class I cities); while other criteria of selection apply for certain locations like heritage cities and towns under the Heritage City Development and Augmentation Yojana (HRIDAY) Scheme; thirteen cities and towns on the stem of the main rivers with a population above 75,000 and less than 100,000; ten cities from hill states, islands and tourist destinations (not more than 1 from each state).

In many ways, AMRUT and Smart Cities Mission guidelines have similar objectives as outlined in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). For instance, 'Sustainable environment' features as one of the core infrastructure elements of a Smart City as mentioned in the Mission guidelines. The SCPs also address issues pertaining to

provision of basic services including clean water and sanitation, inclusive city planning, development of physical and social infrastructure, recycling and reuse of waste, use of renewables, etc. thereby aligning with the objectives of the Sustainable Development Goal 11 on Sustainable Cities and Communities. However, there is a need for a clear roadmap outlining ways and means for translating these goals into action in cities across India. Moreover, these urban schemes also need to draw linkages and align to other relevant SDGs like: Goal 6 (Clean Water and Sanitation); Goal 7 (Affordable and Clean Energy) and Goal 13 (Climate Action). Goal 13 is especially relevant with reference to India's 'Intended Nationally Determined Commitments' (INDCs) adopted at COP21 which includes reducing the emissions intensity of its GDP by 33 to 35 percent by 2030 from 2005 level. Since the urban areas significantly contribute to the national GHG burdens, there is a need for recognising the importance of integrating the objectives of INDC commitments in India's urban planning and development framework. It can go a long way in helping the country achieve the global targets. Besides, the current government schemes are only focusing on an odd 500 out of the 8,000+ cities and towns in the country. Any efforts towards achievement of Sustainable Development Goals will need replication and scaling up of sustainable urban solutions and development mechanisms to these 'other' urban centres across India.

Based on EU's experience on sustainable urbanization, the EU can be a unique partner for India to achieve the smart city ambition and develop sustainable and livable cities where the challenges of water, waste, energy and mobility are addressed with appropriate policies, planning, governance and infrastructure. Specifically, the EU has been very active in this field in India for several years as part of the Mumbai Partnership, the World Cities program and other initiatives. For example the Mumbai Partnership is a long-term cooperation platform between the EU, Mumbai First, government agencies and other stakeholders to promote smart city development through policy dialogue, policy analysis, study tours, metropolitan labs, conferences/meetings, and exchange of best practices. As of 2017 a new International Urban Cooperation project will be implemented with an aim to strengthen EU-India urban policy diplomacy and cooperation on sustainable urban development and climate actions. Furthermore, in view of an expected EU-India Urbanisation Partnership, it is beneficial to build on the existing work and combine activities in order to harness strengths, competencies and technologies.

In this context, the WSDS Thematic Track on '**Achieving Sustainable Development Goals: Challenges and Opportunities for Urban India**' is being organised in cooperation with the European Union at an opportune policy juncture in India when 33 'winner' smart cities are already in the process of implementation of their Smart City Proposals (SCPs) while the remaining cities are revising their proposals. The session would focus on ways and means to shape sustainable urbanisation process in India, in line with the SDGs and India's INDC, in the 500 Mission cities and beyond. It would also discuss the learnings from the EU and the Mission cities and enablers for scaling up by shifting from a project based approach to a knowledge sharing approach for building sustainable and smart cities. It will also provide the opportunity to explore how India and the EU can work together towards the objective of sustainable urbanisation.

The session would aim to answer the following questions:

- How are city governments aligning their urban development frameworks with international development goals like SDG Goal 11 and India's INDC commitments so as to achieve these targets? To what extent are the existing missions and schemes addressing the issues of SDGs and INDCs?
- What are the challenges and enablers for cities to develop and implement sustainable urbanisation?
- What are the lessons learned from the initiatives of EU cities towards sustainable urbanisation?
- How the EU can contribute towards India's efforts to achieve SDG 11 on the development of sustainable cities and communities?
- How can cities be empowered – policy mandate; institutional and financial support; legal provisions?
- What could be the potential Public Private Partnerships (PPPs) in the context of building sustainable and smart cities, taking note from successful models of PPPs in India? How can the process become more transparent and fair?
- Going beyond the 500 cities for sustainable urbanisation – knowledge transfer/sharing; capacity building. How do we extend the program to other cities and share the knowledge?