Implementation of Transformative Climate Actions in Cities
Asia-Pacific Climate Week 2021 (APCW2021)

Date: 6th July 2021
Time: 13.30 to 15.30 Indian Standard Time | 17:00 – 19:00 (GMT+9 Tokyo Time)
Block 1B – Track 3 (Seizing transformation opportunities)

Summary Report

About the Session:

The session showcased the key successes of selected South Asian cities, enabled by national and sub-national policies, in combating climate change and highlighting the role of cities as agents of change. Senior representatives from agencies at national, sub-national and local levels in South Asia highlighted the initiatives and good practices adopted and undertaken at city levels in the sub-continent as well as the challenges, opportunities and lessons learned with respect to climate action planning and implementation.

Mr Emani Kumar, Deputy Secretary-General, ICLEI - Local Governments for Sustainability & Executive Director, ICLEI South Asia opened the session with words of welcome to the participants, speakers and panellists.

Fostering Climate Smart Cities in India

Mr Hitesh Vaidya, Director, NIUA, briefed the audience on the Climate Smart Cities Assessment Framework (CSCAF) 2.0 process and highlighted the achievement of Indian cities in realising sustainable development targets. He asserted that it is time to move towards action-oriented goals. He also mentioned that it is required to bring together the think tanks and organisations working towards low emission development to support cities in realising climate actions.

Quote: “Capacity building is the biggest tool and based on the data collected from the CSCAF process it will be possible to develop capacity modules, reforms & climate action plans at the local level”
**SDC Support to Climate Resilient Development in India**

*Ms Sakshi C. Dasgupta, Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC)* highlighted SDC’s work towards climate resilient development in India. She provided an overview of the SDC’s Global Programme on Climate Change and Environment (GPCCE) in India and the focus areas of adaptation and mitigation strategies of the SDC. She also highlighted the “elevator approach” with which SDC push for impactful climate change initiatives in India while making sure cities are at the forefront and ensuring technical support is provided within the country.

Quote: “At SDC we plan how we push for impactful climate change initiatives in India while making sure cities are at the forefront & ensure we provide technical support within the country & bring some from Switzerland”

**Introduction to the Asia LEDS Partnership and how it supports climate change actions**

*Ms Soumya Chaturvedula, Deputy Director, ICLEI South Asia* briefed the audience on Asia LEDS Partnership Network, its objectives, platforms, focus areas and support in implementation of climate action in Sri Lanka and Bhutan. She also shared the key results and outcomes of the CapaCITIES project from the cities of Udaipur, Rajkot, Siliguri and Coimbatore, highlighting the bankable projects and interventions and their impacts on city-emissions.
Mr Amit Arora, Commissioner, Rajkot Municipal Corporation provided an overview of Rajkot’s journey towards low emission development. He mentioned that Rajkot is transitioning towards climate resilient planning through implementation of adaptation and mitigation actions under the CapaCITIES project. He highlighted Rajkot’s mitigation targets adopted under the Climate Resilient City Action Plan and the city’s achievements under the CSCAF 2.0. Mr Arora also asserted that it high time that environmental costs and benefits are factored in mainstream financial feasibility study at the local level and environmental planning is integrated with financial planning.
Quote: “It’s high time environmental costs and benefits need to be factored in mainstream financial feasibility study that we have been doing”

Mr Neelabh Saxena, CEO, Udaipur Smart City Limited, provided an overview Udaipur’s emission profile and performance under the CSCAF 2.0. He mentioned that the biggest contributors of emissions in the city now are residential and transport sectors, not industries, and the initiatives undertaken by the city are focused on these sectors. He also highlighted that the biggest challenge in Udaipur in terms of climate action planning is data collection and aggregation.

Ms Tashi Wangmo, Executive Secretary, Gelephu Thromde, briefed the participants on Gelephu’s climate risk and fragile urban system. She highlighted that flash floods are a major problem in the city due to its geographical location and city has taken a number of initiatives such as structuring of storm water drainage networks to tackle the problem. She also highlighted Gelephu Thromde’s commitment to climate resilient development asserting that enhanced carbon neutrality and climate & disaster resilient development is a focus area under the Bhutan’s national development plan.

Mr Hans-Peter Egler, Director-Public Affairs, South Pole Group, provided an overview of CapaCITIES programme in India and briefed the audience on key outcomes of the programme. He asserted that capacity building of cities is crucial at the institutional level, in terms of project designing and implementation. He also mentioned that it is important that cities adopt an inclusive economic recovery model to charge citizens for infrastructure projects.

Quote: “Capacity building of cities is crucial at the institutional level and in terms of project designing.”

Mr. Thushara Sanjeewa, Mayor, Kurunegala Municipal Council highlighted Kurunegala’s commitment to climate action asserting that Kurunegala is the first city in Sri Lanka to prepare GHG emission inventory and climate action plan with support from SDC & ICLEI South Asia. The video message from Mr Sanjeewa can be accessed here.

Webinar Recording can be accessed here.

Session Slide Deck can be accessed here.