



7th High Level Seminar on Environmentally Sustainable Cities

Redesigning toward the 2030 Agenda

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– Redesigning toward the 2030 Agenda –

The 7th High Level Seminar on Environmentally Sustainable Cities (HLS ESC) was organised by the Governments of Viet Nam, Cambodia, Japan and the United States, the ASEAN Working Group on Environmentally Sustainable Cities (AWGESC) and the ASEAN Secretariat in Ha Noi, Viet Nam, on 3-4 March 2016 under the framework of the East Asia Summit Environment Ministers Meeting (EAS EMM) with more than 160 participants comprising representatives of 13¹ national governments, 34² local authorities, 27³ supporting organisations, including international organisations, bilateral organisations, non-governmental organisations, research institutions, private companies and others. The key messages here will be reported to EAS Environment Ministers and relevant ASEAN meetings.

This seminar took place at an important juncture of multilateral collaboration and national commitments as follows:

- The percentage of urban population has currently reached 47% in Southeast Asia and 59% in East Asia⁴;
- ASEAN was proclaimed a Community through a Declaration signed by ASEAN Leaders at their 27th Summit in Kuala Lumpur on 22 November 2015 together with the endorsement of the *ASEAN 2025: Forging Ahead Together* which charts the path for ASEAN Community building over the next ten years. *ASEAN 2025: Forging Ahead Together* consists of the Kuala Lumpur Declaration on ASEAN 2025: Forging Ahead Together, the ASEAN Community Vision 2025, the ASEAN Political-Security Community Blueprint 2025, the ASEAN Economic Community Blueprint 2025 and the ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community Blueprint 2025;
- Approval of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the promulgation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) framework, including SDG11, to ‘Make Cities Inclusive, Safe, Resilient and Sustainable’;
- Approval on the Paris Declaration on climate change, supported with Intended Nationally Determined Contributions (INDCs) of all ASEAN Member States and other EAS participating countries; and
- Preparations towards Habitat III, the 3rd United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urbanisation, which will result in the global New Urban Agenda commitments.

¹ China, Cambodia, Indonesia, Japan, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Republic of Korea, Singapore, Republic of Korea, United States and Viet Nam.

² Cambodia – Phnom Penh, Siem Reap; Indonesia – Bogor, Malang and Sidoarjo; Japan – Kanagawa (Prefecture), Kitakyushu, Osaka and Yokohama; Lao PDR – Luang Prabang; Malaysia – Iskandar Regional Development Authority (IRDA); Myanmar – Yangon and Mandalay; Philippines – Dipolog, Tacloban and Quezon City; Republic of Korea – Damyang and Suwon; Thailand – Chiang Kian, Kohkha, Krabi, Nonthaburi, Prik and Nong Reua; Viet Nam – Dong Thap, Can Tho, Ha Noi, Ha Tinh, Ho Chi Minh, Hue, Nghe An, Thai Nguyen, Quang Ninh and Vinh Phuc.

³ Asian Cities Climate Change Resilience Network (ACCCRN), The Association of Cities Vietnam (ACVN), ASEAN Secretariat, Asian Development Bank (ADB), Clean Air Asia, Cities Development Initiative Asia (CDIA), CDP, C40 Cities Climate Leadership Group, CityNet, Global Environmental Facility (GEF), German International Cooperation (GIZ), Institute for Global Environmental Strategies (IGES), Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), ICLEI, Korea Environment Corporation (KECO), Korean Local Information Research & Development Institute (KLID), Mahidol University (Thailand), Microsoft, National Institute for Environmental Studies (NIES) (Japan), Organisation for Economic Co-operation & Development (OECD), United Cities & Local Governments – Asia Pacific (UCLG-ASPAC), Toyota Foundation, United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), UN-Habitat, United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and World Resources Institute (WRI).

⁴ Source: United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) and the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), 2015. State of Asia and Pacific Cities Report.

The seminar recommends the following actions to each stakeholder:

1) Local Governments, especially 'fronrunner' cities to:

- Incorporate the SDGs, the forthcoming New Urban Agenda⁵ and low carbon principles and strategies into city's long-term vision, development plans and projects for implementation. Involve citizens throughout the process, both formally and informally. Track and publicly share progress with indicators and data.
- Set up transparent decision-making processes on investment prioritisation, planning and budgeting. Improve the city's financial and data management, and establish social and environmental standards for the investments.
- Promote city-to-city cooperation as a tool for learning plus sharing expertise and experiences.
- Establish a Mayoral multi-department, multi-stakeholder sustainable city committee (including an international cooperation focal point) which convenes regularly to spearhead innovative activities to translate global agenda into local implementation.
- Establish or enhance the existing 'Model Spaces' in the city – such as 'Model' green homes/villages, schools, markets, buildings, parks, libraries and other kinds of public spaces – to demonstrate transformative and pioneering policies/practices for scaling up, as well as to host learning visits by other cities and tourists.
- Participate in membership/award schemes and relevant platforms of national/regional/international city networks to share city's achievements and learn from others.

2) National government agencies responsible for promoting ESC to:

- Enhance (or establish, if they do not yet exist) national cities platforms⁶ (e.g. sustainable city awards programmes, national city associations/leagues and national city networks) with a domestic budget.
- Incorporate the SDGs, the forthcoming New Urban Agenda and related international goals into your country's national urban policies, strategies and assistance programmes targeting cities.
- Facilitate and capacitate the establishment of decentralised and disaggregated data as well as monitoring systems for the tracking progress on the SDGs, all the way down to the local government level.
- Provide an enabling environment (legal, administrative, and financial) necessary for local governments to carry out their roles and responsibilities, including measures in line with decentralisation.
- Collaborate with other line ministries and supporting organisations (including the private sector, local government networks and NGOs) to: (i) mobilise substantial support to cities; (ii) have good networks with cities/local authorities in the country; and (iii) improve knowledge/education on sustainable development at the local level.
- Provide opportunities for broader participation of cities and municipalities in relevant international discussions.

3) Supporting Organisations and Other Stakeholders (including the private sector) to:

- Take a lead and/or provide additional support⁷ to national and local governments in implementing the SDGs in line with national and local priorities and needs.

⁵ The Third United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urbanization's outcome document 'the New Urban Agenda', Quito (Ecuador) October 2016.

⁶ These platforms shall: (i) recognise the country's 'fronrunner' and motivated cities who have good practices; (ii) provide cities with a regular platform to exchange knowledge and report their successes/progress; (iii) provide assistance and national guidelines to help facilitate the implementation of measures towards sustainable development; (iv) intensify and formalise regular cooperation and consultation processes between cities and other stakeholders; and (v) promote international city-to-city cooperation and networking with international stakeholders.

⁷ Recommended types of supports at the national level are: (i) 'hands-on' assistance for fast growing small- and medium-sized towns to learn from past experiences and develop their institutional systems and capacity in providing for their citizens; (ii) enable the participation of 'fronrunner' cities in high-level national and international events and conferences to promote the ESC champions; and (iii) training plus other kinds of practical support for ground projects.

Recommend support at the regional level is for enhancing cross-sectoral coordination to promote integrated approaches for sustainable urban development at ASEAN and ASEAN Secretariat level.

- Target 'fronrunner' cities and high-motivation government agencies when providing assistance to them, so that cities shall be 'testing grounds' for new kinds of actions that challenge the *status quo*.
- Collaborate with other supporting organisations to synergise the activities and outputs.

4) Based on the above, the seminar agreed to recommend to the EAS Environment Ministers the redesigned HLS format, 'New HLS', which is proposed to be held regularly starting in Thailand in early 2017 with the following features:

- **Title:**
 - Rename it as:
 - EAS High-Level Seminar on Sustainable Cities
- **Theme:**
 - Each seminar will have a theme to reflect particular focuses or trends.
 - The proposed theme for the 8th HLS could be 'Towards Achievement of the SDGs'.
- **Objectives:**
 - To organise as ASEAN and East Asia's key multi-stakeholder platform for highlighting excellence and innovation in local government's contribution to realise the ASEAN Community Vision 2025 and the SDGs, monitoring the progress and facilitating collaboration and mutual learning among various participants.
 - To focus on developing partnerships with other committed organisations/agencies (not limited to those members under EAS framework) on potentially organising back-to-back events or complementary activities with the 'new HLS', AWGESC and the ASEAN ESC Model Cities Programme.
- **Framework:**
 - Continue to report to the EAS EMM.
- **Participants**
 - Allow non-EAS participating countries to join as 'Observers'.
 - Enable self-funded participation of a broader range of stakeholders, especially youths/schools, civil society organisations and the private sector with outstanding potential to contribute to the theme.
 - Establish eligibility criteria for participation to yield diversity and relevant contributors to the seminar.
- **Partnerships/sponsorships**
 - Introduce a framework to accept partnerships with, or accept financial sponsorship from interested parties with the objectives of: (i) increasing the number of travel sponsorships for deserving participants; (ii) expanding opportunities to involve relevant stakeholders and; (iii) enriching the topics of discussion.

5) ASEAN Secretariat and IGES

Report the main outputs and outcomes of the 7th HLS ESC to the upcoming relevant meetings including:

- 14th Meeting of the AWGESC (26 – 28 April 2016, Brunei Darussalam);
- 27th Meeting of the ASEAN Senior Officials on the Environment (ASOEN) tentatively in August 2016
- 11th ASEAN Plus Three Senior Officials Meeting on Environment (SOME) tentatively in August 2016; and
- Other relevant major meetings and seminars pertaining to ESC.

Attachments:

1. Programme

2. Participants List
3. Summary of Plenary 1, 2, 3 and 4
4. Summary of Thematic Session A1, A2, A3 and A4
5. Summary of Thematic Session B1, B2, B3 and B4