Towards Low Carbon, Green and Sustainable Cities

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Global trends since 1980s

- Trade liberalization and globalization
- Greater political freedoms since the fall of the USSR
- Information revolution
Transformation of Asia and the Pacific

- Greater interdependence
- Rapid economic development led by cities
- Migration to cities
- Reduction in poverty
- Growing middle-classes
- Active and organized civil society including the poor
- Increased physical and virtual connectivity
Social costs of rapid growth

- Globalization has increased disparities
  - People who have access to capital and information have benefited
- More vulnerable to global crises because of connectivity and resource constraints
- Health, equity, social welfare often ignored
- Manifested in slums
Environmental costs of rapid growth

- Asia-Pacific already resource poor
- Environmental costs externalized from developed to developing countries
- Consumeristic and throw-away attitudes in cities
  - 300 million tons of wastes per year
- Carbon footprints of Asian cities increasing rapidly
Climate Change

- 50% urban population lives in low lying coastal or river plains
- Extreme weather events increasing intensity and frequency
- Seawater rise
- Poor suffer more
- New driver of urbanization: “eco-refugees/eco-migrants”
Towards sustainable Cities

- Green growth
- Social equity
- Resilience
Development Gaps

Legal and fiscal frameworks

Strategic planning & policy development

Financing

Technology and process innovation

Institutional & human capacities
Legal and fiscal framework

- Giving the right signals to urban market and society to:
  - Internalize social and environmental costs
  - Create jobs
  - Reduce poverty
  - Change attitude
- Fiscal measures
- Regulatory measures
- Advocacy measures
Strategic planning and policy development

- Bridging the gap between long term development goals and short term political cycles
- Looking at the spectrum of urban market and society from formal to informal
- Adopt a “systems” approach
  - Integrating economic, social, environmental & resilience aspects of urban planning and development
  - Coordinating various ministries and levels of government and with other stakeholders
Financing

- Linking formal finance institutions and markets to informal and community-based finance and social entrepreneurship
- Attracting Asian sovereign funds
- Accessing remittance finance
- Climate change related financing
  - Mitigation
  - Adaptation
- Social and environmental impact investment
Technology and process innovation

- Eco-efficiency, affordability and resilience
  - Water and wastewater
  - Buildings
  - Transport
  - Solid wastes
- Need not be high-tech
- Ensure technologies not anti-poor
Institutional and human capacities

- Human capacities
  - Attitudinal change
  - Knowledge
  - Skills
- Responsive and accountable institutions
- Learning organizations
- Institutional space for dialogue and partnerships
Way forward

- Immense challenges
- Immense opportunities
- Cost of doing nothing would be catastrophic
- Partnerships essential
  - Central government
  - Local government
  - Civil society organizations
  - Organizations of the poor
  - Private sector firms