Snapshot of Thematic Sessions

7th High Level Seminar on Environmentally Sustainable Cities

DAY 1 (Thu, 3 Mar 2016)

	A1. Environmental Education in the Wired Age	B1. Green Buildings
1330 - 1500	**Concept/Objectives:** This session is related to Goal 11 of the SDGs, particularly to the target of making cities inclusive and sustainable (with the use of innovative technologies). Bottom-up stakeholder engagement, participation, education, raising environmental awareness and implementing smart technologies are crucial to create sustainable cities. This session will highlight a few examples from cities in the Asia-Pacific region that have successfully implemented projects, using innovative technologies to develop urban solutions through an inclusive process. **Key Discussion Points:** • Cities are aware of the urban challenges they are facing but often lack the capacity to develop and implement technology-based solutions. Initiatives such as CityAPP are excellent examples of bottom-up stakeholder engagement and develop ICT solutions (apps) for urban challenges. • Environmental education is often not a political priority. So how do we raise awareness, show opportunities of green growth, and share and replicate sustainable practices? • ICT infrastructure is crucial for e-learning and bridging the information gap. How can ICT infrastructure be developed in cities that lack it? • Urban and environmental challenges are interconnected and complex, requiring a new mode of partnerships. However, building sustainable partnerships has its own set of challenges. A key area is how to engage the region's next generation as proactive stakeholders.	**Concept/Objectives:** Globally, buildings use about 40% of the world's energy, 25% of water, 40% of resources, and they emit about 1/3 of global GHG emissions, which is the largest contributor among other sectors according to UNEP. Existing buildings have significant energy saving potentials by retrofitting energy efficient equipment and insulating building envelopes. Rapidly urbanising Asia with numerous new building constructions has enormous opportunities to yield the benefits too by introducing proper policies, regulations and incentives. As the usage of renewable energy and energy efficiency as well as resource-use efficiency and clean and environmentally sound technologies are stressed in the Goal 7 and 9, this session focuses on the ways to promote green buildings in Asian cities. **Key Discussion Points:** • How cities are promoting green buildings? What incentives do cities provide? What can be done more? What are the barriers? • Introducing a mandatory energy reporting system targeting large buildings clearly has a positive impact on promoting energy efficiency. What are the conditions for success? Is it applicable in Asian cities?

1330 – 1500   *Coffee Break*

	A2. Public Green Spaces forboth Tourists and Citizens	B2. Transport and Green Mobility
1530 – 1700	**Concept/Objectives**: Public green spaces are essential for improving health and the quality of life for urban citizens. In many cities, these spaces are of high value and are often local heritage and cultural sites. They are also visually attractive destinations for both tourists and citizens. Goal 11 of the SDGs has set a target of providing places for people to be physically active. In addition, this target also contributes to other SDGs: Goal 3 (Ensuring Healthy Lives) and Goal 7 (Ensure energy for all), as well as Goal 8 (Economic growth). Furthermore, 'urban biodiversity' is recognised as an emerging theme for urban planning. However, in spite of their important functions, public green spaces are often threatened by competing plans to convert these spaces into residential housing and commercial buildings. This session will discuss how cities could further their economic and environmental goals by creating multi-use spaces in an innovative way that is attractive to both citizens as well as tourists and other visitors. **Key Discussion Points:** • What are the existing public green spaces and parks in your cities? How do you design and maintain them? What are the challenges you face when designing and maintaining these spaces? • What strategies do you have to promote public green spaces and parks, both for citizen well-being as well as for tourism? • What good practices and insights would you like to share with other cities? • How can concepts such 'urban biodiversity' be interpreted in policies and practices related to public green spaces and parks?	**Concept/Objectives:** Target number 2 of Goal 11 under the SDGs states: "By 2030, provide access to safe, affordable, accessible and sustainable transport systems for all, improving road safety, notably by expanding public transport, with special attention to the needs of those in vulnerable situations, women, children, persons with disabilities, and older persons." Transport also plays an important role for achieving other SDGs, among them Goal 7 (energy) for energy efficiency and Goal 3 (health) for traffic accidents. This session will explore how these targets can be achieved. **Key Discussion Points:** • What do cities need to do? • What are cities doing already? • What are the enabling conditions needed and obstacles faced in achieving sustainable mobility for passengers and freight in the urban context?

DAY 2 (Fri, 4 Mar 2016)

A3. Localising SDGs	B3. Sustainable City Planning
Concept/Objectives: In September 2015, 193 UN member states adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its 17 global SDGs along with 169 related targets. The importance of cities was highlighted in the adoption of a dedicated goal on cities (Goal 11). Cities will play a critical role in the implementation of the majority of the SDGs and targets as most of the action required will have to take place at the local level. This session will discuss how cities could provide leadership in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and what sort of innovative approaches are required to make effective implementation and sound data collection possible. **Key Discussion Points:** • How do local governments interpret the SDGs in a way that is meaningful for local stakeholders? What is the gap between expectations and ground reality? • What can we learn from experiences with promoting sustainable development and the MDGs at the city level, including in terms of awareness raising and multi-stakeholder, participatory approaches to city planning and project implementation? • How can data collection capacities and incentives at the local level be strengthened? • What are the recommendable strategic actions for various stakeholders (national agencies, cities and supporting organisations) for the way forward? • What role can regional and city-to-city cooperation play in facilitating such actions?	**Concept/Objectives:** Asian cities are rapidly urbanising. People are moving to cities and it is estimated that as much as 44 million new urban residents move into Asian cities every year, according to an ADB report. Rapid urbanisation has also been the key driver of Asia's dynamic growth as the same report estimates over 90% of wealth is produced by the urban population in East Asia and over 70% in Southeast Asia and South Asia. However, as cities grow, they inevitably create suburbs often in an uncontrolled way causing traffic congestion and environmental problems. As Goal 11 highlights the necessity of making cities sustainable, this session focuses on how to ensure the quality of urbanisation in Asian cities. **Key Discussion Points:** • How to ensure timely infrastructure investment in cities along with the pace of urbanisation? (urban form endures, so getting it right as cities urbanise will be dramatically easier and cheaper than fixing things later) • Role of financing? Innovative instruments to raise local revenues (considering ASEAN cities' lack of own revenues and financial capacities) • Role of city planning? Can urban density and mixed land use be a sustainable solution for ASEAN cities?

0915 – 1045

1045 – 1100	*Coffee Break*

A4. Better City-to-city Cooperation	B4. Resilient City Development
Concept/Objectives: City-to-city cooperation is widely adopted as a practical means to transfer environmental management know-how and experiences from one city to others. Goal 17 of the SDGs also promotes global partnership for sustainable development with particular focus on knowledge sharing, diffusion of environmentally-sound technologies and targeted capacity-building through North-South, South-South and triangular cooperation. This session examines how intercity cooperation functions and how it can be further enhanced. **Key Discussion Points:** • Demand side: What do you want to learn from other cities? How do you want to learn it? • Contents: What can be transferred from one city to others? What worked and what did not? • Supply side: What are the interests and incentives of the mentor cities? What were the costs and benefits by engaging in intercity cooperation? What do you require to the recipient cities? • Facilitation: What are the required roles of the intermediator and network managers? How can the knowledge sharing and capacity-building be best facilitated?	**Concept/Objectives:** Urban resilience has become an increasingly important concept in recent years as cities are experiencing both new opportunities and challenges that come with the rapid urbanisation.While city managers are working to spur the economy of their cities and ensure uninterrupted basic urban services (for example, water and transport), they are also faced with new challenges, such as 100-year floods, tidal inundation, coastal erosion, and water shortage, among others, which result in serious damage to cities and cause ripple effects to the country's economy, and sometimes even to the region and the world. Goal 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities of the SDGs – to make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient, and sustainable – provides a good opportunity for cities and those who work with cities to focus their resources and investment on how to make cities more resilient to unexpected stresses and shocks. The session aims to learn what 'urban resilience' means to different stakeholders; how it is being implemented in practice; and draw lessons for one another to help cities achieve their resilience goal. **Key Discussion Points:** • What does urban resilience mean to different stakeholders? • What is required for cities to become more resilient? • What benefits are there for cities to become more resilient? • What major challenges are there; and how to overcome them? • What lessons can be shared with other cities? • What progress was made and will be made in response to Goal 11??

1100 – 1230