SUMMARY OF THEMAIC SESSIONS TRACK A (A1, A2, A3 & A4)
"NEW INITIATIVES, THEORIES AND FRAMEWORKS FROM DEVELOPMENT PARTNERS"

THEMATIC SESSION A1
"CITIES FOR CLEAN AIR"

Background

Everyday decisions about a city's development can have unintended adverse consequences. Energy use, cost of living, provision of services and quality of life vary widely between cities with similar income levels depending on past infrastructure and planning decisions. Air pollution is such a problem. This session highlighted the opportunities for cities to promote clean air through Clean Air Certification and encourage synergies between city initiatives contributing to sustainable urban development.

List of Speakers

No.	Name	Title	Affiliation
Moderator			
1	Ms. Kataharine Thoday	Director	Clean Air Asia
Panellists			
2	Mr. Arif Dermawan	Focal Point and Project Coordinator	City of Malang, Indonesia
3	Atty. Zuleika T. Lopez	City Administrator	City of Davao, Philippines
4	Ms. Julia Nagel	Advisor, Transport and Climate Change Project	GIZ

Key Discussion Points

- Many environmental issues, like air pollution, are cross-cutting. It is important to do a 'baseline stocktaking' to identify all key policies, stakeholders (both direct and indirect stakeholders) and offices relevant for air pollution. As far as possible, the important stakeholders need to be involved in any process as early as possible.

- The city's leader needs to establish a clear mandate to promote air quality and integrate this into development decisions and link to issues of mobility, jobs and investment. .
- It is important to identify and present clear incentives for different stakeholders to join any initiative on air pollution/improving air quality. In many cases, the 'co-benefits' may slowly develop into the main benefits. Poverty cannot be ignored – it is unrealistic to expect the lower-income groups to comply with actions in a way that the higher-income would.
- Other useful mechanisms for promoting air quality include: (i) multipartite monitoring for ensuring transparency and credibility for action; (ii) public awareness campaigns and awards for compliance to create a sense ownership and incentives (making the health case is very important).
- It can be important to link air quality campaigns with schools and universities to harness their data collection capacity as well as undertake education campaigns (case study of Malang City, Indonesia). Where possible, data needs to be disaggregated so that enough details are revealed to inform policymaking and decisions.
- Do not wait for the 'perfect storm'. Cities may 'start small' by compiling its existing data and gradually build up data quality over time. Cities that want to go beyond national legislation may pro-actively seek assistance from international initiatives and organisations.

THEMATIC SESSION A2
"KNOWLEDGE PLATFORMS FOR CITIES AND CITY-TO-CITY COOPERATION"

Background

As cities assume a greater role within global development paradigms, inter-city cooperation becomes more important, as underscored by SDG17 (partnerships for the goals). Online platforms can play an important role to link cities, provide information and share experience. This session shared the new Urban SDG Knowledge Sharing Platform by UN-ESCAP, Seoul Metropolitan Government and CityNet aims to promote the sharing of information, experiences and knowledge among cities who localise the SDGs. Besides that, it also identifed links and synergies among other new/existing knowledge platforms and discuss potential areas of cooperation.

List of Speakers

No.	Name	Title	Affiliation
Moderator			
1	Ms. Natalja Wehmer	Associate Environmental Affairs Officer, Sustainable Urban Development Section, Environment and Development	UN-ESCAP

		Division	
Panellists			
2	Mr. Jarupong Pengglieng	Environmentalist, Senior Professional Level	Bangkok Metropolitan Authority
3	Mr. Felix Kalkowsky	Programme Officer	CityNet
4	Ms. Katharine Thoday	Director	Clean Air Asi
5	Mr. Arif Mulya Ramadhian	Programme Development Specialist	UCLG-ASPAC
6	Mr. Augustine Kwan	Programme Manager, Knowledge Management and Outreach	IGES

Key Discussion Points

- Although face-to-face meetings are invaluable, online knowledge sharing platforms are a cost-efficient way to innovate new solutions, leverage technical assistance, catalyse market transformation, provide trusted advice among peers, discuss emerging issues and help replicate good ideas in a demand-driven way. A good secretariat (with long-term funding) is important to develop a 'community of practice' (CoP) and encourage the 'champions' within the CoP to spearhead discussions. Language used in discussions should be as simple and jargon-free as possible.
- Cities who are keen to develop effective partnerships to need have shared objectives, clear timelines of cooperation, agreed level of complexity for collaborative actions and be well-matched in terms of the transferability of their knowledge and practices.
- Many cities already address climate and other urban challenges, but they are not as good at documenting and sharing the information. Appropriate incentives and technical assistance will be helpful.

THEMATIC SESSION A3
"KEY CONSIDERATIONS FOR LOCALISING THE SDGS"

Background

Cities and regions have a crucial role to play in SDGs implementation, despite the fact that the global framework was not designed specifically for or by them. There are many valuable lessons learnt from implementing the precursors of SDGs (the MDGs). Localising SDGs is not only critical for monitoring and supporting the implementation of national and global goals, it is a powerful tool for cities and regions to (re)think sustainability and well-being at the local level. This session held a detailed discussion on key

considerations for localising the SDGs, in particular in three areas: i) goals and targets most essential for cities and regions, ii) current data and information gaps, and iii) governance and financing mechanisms to be put in place to translate the SDGs into local contexts.

List of Speakers

No.	Name	Title	Affiliation
Moderator			
1	Dr. Tadashi Matsumoto	Senior Policy Analyst, Sustainable Urban Development	OECD
Panellists			
2	Mr. Thit Lwin	Committee Member, Mandalay City Development Committee	City of Mandalay, Myanmar
3	Mr. Pak Sokharavuth	Deputy Director General, Ministry of Environment	Cambodia
4	Ms. Hanah Paik	Cities Programme Asia Pacific Lead	Ho Chi Minh City, Viet Nam
5	Dr. Do Nam Thang	Deputy Director General, Department of International Cooperation and Operational Focal Point of Global Environment Facility of Viet Nam, Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment	Viet Nam

Key Discussion Points

- The process of localization of the SDGs differs across countries. In two contrasting experiences from Mandalay and Cambodia, the City of Mandalay noted that global concerns are not well-perceived at the grass-roots level. The SDGs is not well-promoted at the national level and communities need to be more proactive in implementing the SDGs.
- Cambodia, on the other hand, has a national council on SDGs under its Ministry of Environment. But while local governments have different reasons to pursue development, they can still use the SDGs as a meaningful tool to help and guide their activities.
- The need for data, and the subsequent monitoring of that data, is important for cities to achieve the SDGs. Data availability and data quality, however, continues to be a challenge in many ASEAN cities. In addition, given regional disparities, the comparability of data is also a concern.
- To help cities, technical assistance on data collection is available through organizations like C40 and ICLEI. Cities that report data also tend to identify opportunities and take more climate action.

The involvement of the private sector – not just big corporations, but small businesses – is also critical to assess environmental performance and help cities achieve the SDGs.

- Every level of government needs to work together to implement the SDGs. Cities should be incentivized to pursue the SDGs, including through recognition awards, highlighted in Viet Nam's Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment's experience. Commitment is key and a strong demand from the community to implement sustainable development practices is also important.

THEMATIC SESSION A4
"THE NEW URBAN AGENDA: OUTCOMES AND TAKEAWAYS"

Background

The New Urban Agenda (NUA) the outcome document agreed upon at the Habitat III cities conference in Quito, Ecuador, in October 2016. It will guide the efforts around urbanisation of a wide range of actors — nation states, city and regional leaders, international development funders, United Nations programmes and civil society — for the next 20 years. This session shared how the NUA could be reflected in national urban policies and linked to ground actions, as well as discussed NUA-SDGs linkages, and potential partnership/networking opportunities.

List of Speakers

No.	Name	Title	Affiliation
Moderator			
1	Dr. Dato' Dolbani Mijan	Director General, Federal Department of Town and Country Planning, Ministry of Urban Wellbeing, Housing and Local Government	Malaysia
Panelists			
2	Ms. Eka Rahayu Normasari	Chief, Section of Environmental Recovery	City of Banjarmasin, Indonesia
3	Mr. Hiroaki Matsumoto	Director, Environmental Strategy Division, Environmental Policy Bureau, Ministry of the Environment	Japan
4	Ms. Mariko Sato	Bangkok Chief	UN-Habitat
5	Mr. Arif Mulya Ramadhian	Programme Development	UCLG-ASPAC

		Specialist	

Key Discussion Points

- Cites are the engines of growth for countries. Local action, or localization, is critical to the implementation of any global agreements. Localization often refers to how local government translate global agreements into their programmes.
- The New Urban Agenda helps guide local action by setting a new global standard for sustainable urban development for the next 20 years. Unlike the Paris Agreement, however, the agenda is not legally binding. It only provides guidance to national governments, city authorities, NGOs, and others in thinking about urbanization.
- The SDGs is a good way of organizing many global goals under one framework. However, the fact remains that not many local agendas are being developed. National-level policy is, therefore, also a key instrument to implementing the SDGS; for example, by encouraging local governments to formulate local action plans for GHG emissions reduction through information and financial support via subsidies.
- In implementing the New Urban Agenda, there needs to be continued and increased participation of all people. The agenda also needs to be "demystified", translated and disseminated to all stakeholders. In addition, cities should move away from being only for-profit. Instead cities should be for people and partnerships, focusing on long-term goals to becoming more liveable and sustainable.