

Intervention by the Hon'ble Chairperson of APMCHUD during the Ministerial session in the World Urban Forum-VII at Medellin, Colombia on 8th (Forenoon) April, 2014

APMCHUD's Views, Vision and Perspectives on Urban Equity in Development – Cities for Life

Excellencies, Dignitaries, and all the Participants,

On behalf of the Asia Pacific Ministerial Conference on Housing and Urban Development (APMCHUD), I would like to **thank the UN-Habitat** for this opportunity to share the views, vision and perspective of APMCHUD on the theme of **Urban Equity in Development – Cities for Life** during this World Urban Forum event.

Asia-Pacific is a rapidly urbanizing region. The urbanisation level in Asia will increase from about 40 percent now to about 60 percent in the next two decades. Nearly 90 percent of the population growth will be absorbed in the urban centres of Asia. This transition is associated with substantial improvements in the income levels and living standards of millions of people. However, this increasing urbanisation is also associated with problems of poor infrastructure, lack of basic services, increasing pollution, and growing numbers of poor people. Assessments indicate that in the Asia-Pacific region alone, more than 650 million people live on one dollar-a-day or less. This account for almost 65% of the world's ultra-poor. Asia also is home to half the world's slum population. And despite economic growth and the contribution of cities in this growth, the slum population is rising. The countries of Asia Pacific Region are aware of the significant negative impacts of the urban growth, and that the urban poor are particularly vulnerable to disasters.

It is in this context, Asia Pacific Ministerial Conference on Housing and Urban Development (APMCHUD), the Inter-Governmental Forum recognizes the need for a new thinking to treat their cities as living eco-systems. Towards the same, APMCHUD has evolved an Enhanced Framework of Implementation for Sustainable Urbanisation in Asia-Pacific Region. APMCHUD recognizes the need for strategic, integrated planning, capacity building, as well as strong regional co-operation,

knowledge sharing, networking and monitoring for promotion of balanced and sustainable urbanisation. Accordingly, the framework aims to identify and suggest measures for more effective urban development policies and strategies in Asia-Pacific so as to guide the actions of all stakeholders (government and non-government) and help steer them towards the achievement of the common urban vision. The framework also aims to identify linkages between land policies and urbanisation.

The Enhanced framework for Sustainable Urbanisation recognizes the need for **pro-poor urban governance and planning** as a critical requirement to address the challenge of sustainable urbanisation. Adoption of inclusive process for decision making, improved institutional capacity to deal with the developmental needs of the urban poor, spatial planning including rural-urban continuum, peri-urban areas, physical provisions for the urban poor, adoption of innovative practices of land development, and inclusive urban governance have been identified as critical requirements. A pro-poor orientation has been emphasized on all efforts, which include: an enabling condition for the poor, increased space for engagement, empowerment as well as the prevalence of inclusive systems. The poor contribute richly to the social economic development and GDP.

Towards ensuring urban equity in development, a special focus is advocated to **slum upgradation and prevention initiatives**. Formulation and adoption of a national policy on slum upgradation and prevention has been emphasized as an important requirement. Implementation of progressive policy reforms with equal opportunities for addressing the requirements of women, youth and the disabled is a core identified strategy. Facilitating delivery of affordable serviced land and exploring possible public-private partnership to implement slum improvement and or redevelopment are critical areas identified for this component. Security of tenure, adequate housing finance, promotion of self-help groups are some of other associated critical inputs identified for achieving this objective.

Availability and access to critical services of **water and sanitation** to all the segments of population is another core strategy for ensuring sustainable urbanisation in the Asia Pacific region. Focus on women and disadvantaged sections, improved investments, sharing of resources among stake-holders, engagement of civil society

organisations, and also adoption of appropriate technologies for water supply, solid waste management and including promotion of green technologies for sustainable environment management have been urged.

Towards enabling an acceptable level of **financing sustainable urbanisation**, recognizing that Asia's mortgage sector is one of the least developed in the world, the Enhanced Framework for implementation advocates for utilizing the strong movement of self-help groups. Adoption of innovative practices to improve the governance and bankability of cities to evolve as competitive on global scale both in terms of quality and cost efficiency of urban management, is another requirement being accorded importance. Promotion of community-led development process and civil society participation, enhancement of the financial capacity of local Governments, role of private sector and general financial services industry and support of governments on both financial and non-financial fronts have been identified as critical for achieving sustainable urbanisation.

Towards ensuring the above, the Asia Pacific Ministerial Conference on Housing and Urban Development (APMCHUD) had interacted extensively during the four Conferences held at New Delhi, Tehran, Solo and Amman, and evolved operational mechanisms. **Sub-regional Working Groups** have been constituted with lead countries for each group on the themes of **Rural and Urban Planning and Management led by the Republic of India, Slum Upgradation led by the Islamic Republic of Iran, Financing led by the Republic of Korea, and Community Participation including Disaster mitigation led by the Republic of Indonesia**. The APMCHUD, as an inter-governmental mechanism for experience sharing, information exchange and collaboration, has been successful in promoting visits to innovative and successful experiments on critical aspects of sustainable urban planning, management and governance in member countries to all the member countries of the Asia Pacific region.

We are confident that through this joint and collaborative mechanism, we, the countries in the Asia Pacific region, would be able to address our region specific

special characteristics of urbanisation and move systematically towards achieving sustainable urbanisation in our region.

On behalf of the Asia Pacific Ministerial Conference on Housing and Urban Development, I once again thank the UN-Habitat for this opportunity to share the views, vision and perspective of APMCHUD on the theme of **Urban Equity in Development – Cities for Life** during this World Urban Forum event at Medellin.

Thank you.