



EVENT

Seven more cities join GCoM South Asia Network

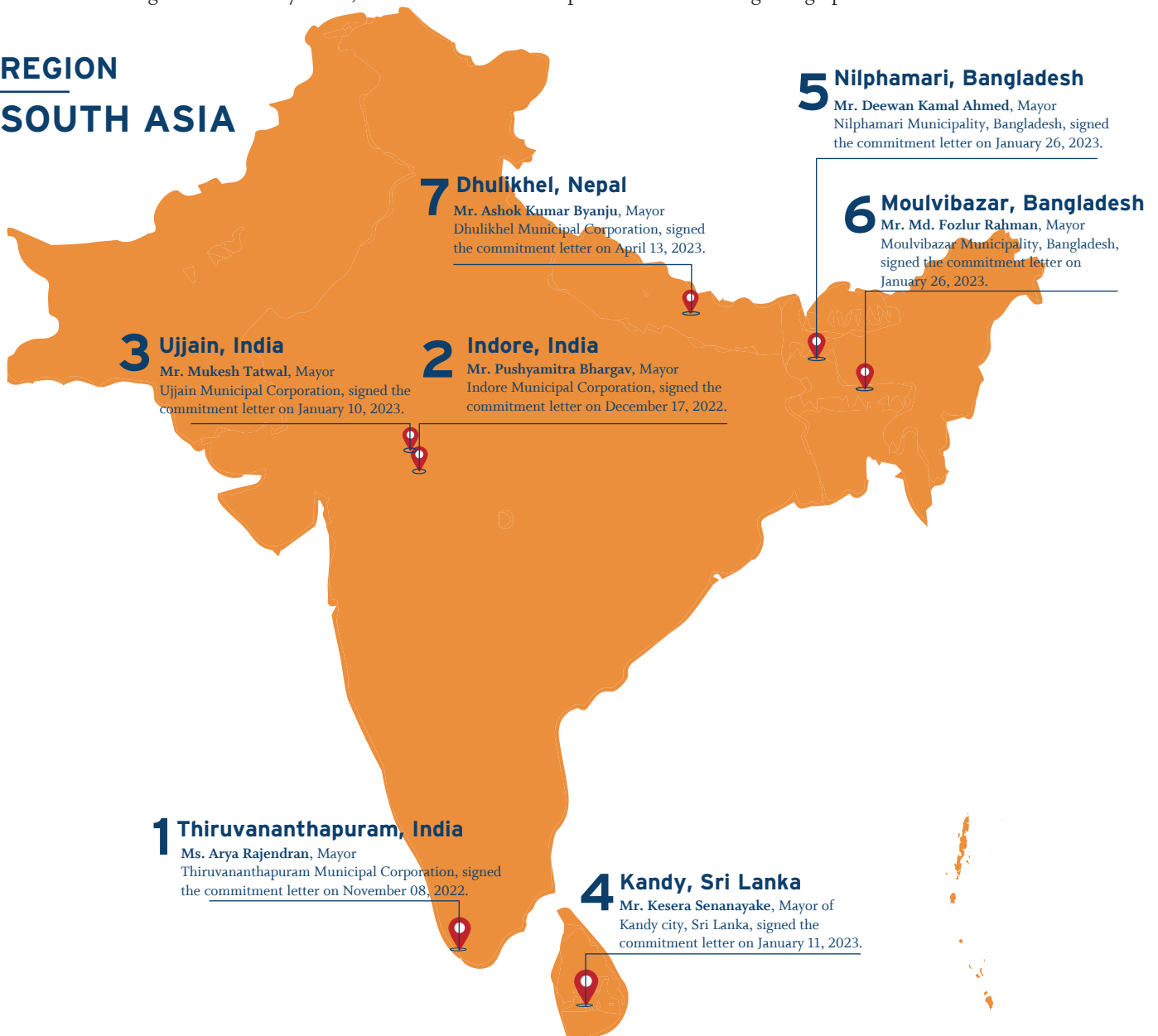
GLOBAL COVENANT OF Mayors (GCoM) for Climate & Energy funded by European Union (EU), is an international alliance of cities and local governments with a shared long-term vision of promoting and supporting voluntary action to combat climate change and move to an inclusive, just, low emission, resilient society.

GCoM is the largest global alliance for city climate leadership, built upon the commitment of over 12,500 cities and local governments. By 2030, Global Covenant

cities and local governments could account for 24 Bn tons CO2e of annual emissions reduction. These cities hail from 6 continents and 140 countries, catering to about 1 billion people.

GCoM South Asia helps systematise and support engagement with 48 signatory cities in India, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka. Since November 2022, seven cities have joined the GCoM network, as depicted in the following info graph.

REGION SOUTH ASIA



GCoM SA Session during 6th Asian Cities Summit

Indore mayor endorsed as GCOM Board Member representing South Asia



Mr Pushyamitra Bhargav, Mayor of Indore speaking in GCoM SA Session

NEW DELHI: The Global Covenant of Mayors South Asia (GCoM SA) session was conducted during the 6th Asian Cities Summit with the theme 'Local Actions and Global Collaboration' on April 07, 2023. The session recorded the participation of over 20 South Asian city mayors, of which 15 mayors represented the GCoM SA signatory cities, including cities of Bangladesh, Bhutan, Sri Lanka, India and Nepal.

Mr Pushyamitra Bhargav, Mayor of Indore; Mr Piero Remitti, Co-managing Director at GCoM for Climate Change and Energy; Mr Ravi Ranjan Guru DDG, AIILSG - Networking and Governance coordinator GCoM SA; Mr Ashish Verma, Country Coordinator India, GCoM South Asia Project; Mr Keshav Jha, Manager Research and Advocacy ICLEI SA- GCoM SA Technical Coordinator spoke during the session on various issue of climate change impacts and local level actions. Mr Abhishek Pandey, Team Leader, GCoM SA AIILSG, and Editor of Urban Update magazine, moderated the discussion. Mr Remitti delivered the keynote address. Briefing about the Global Covenant of Mayors Alliance, its global presence and knowledge exchange opportunities, he discussed the benefits of joining the GCoM Network along with an overview of the Climate Action Plan (CAP) development process. The following presentation was by

ICLEI SA - Technical Coordinator GCoM South Asia, about the update on technical support activities to GCoM signatory cities in South Asia. The process and importance of the Climate Action Plan was highlighted, along with the opportunities for knowledge exchange through webinars, conferences etc. The GCoM SA Coordinators - All India Institute of Local Self-Government (AIILSG), ICLEI South Asia, and GCOM Country Coordinator, endorsed Mayor of Indore, Mr Pushyamitra Bhargav, as the GCoM Board member representing South Asia region. and he took the stage to share his views on the benefits of international platforms such as GCoM. Mr Pushyamitra Bhargava pointed out the importance of preparation of Climate Action plans for Asian cities and the collaborative actions required to tackle climate-related issues in cities.

Several mayors from signatory cities actively participated in the Tour de Table focused on three key points: The Need for accelerating Local Climate Actions in South Asia; Sharing their core challenges and actions taken in their cities; and the GCoM support they require.

The session was concluded by quoting the famous dictum - 'If you want to go fast, go alone; if you want to go far, go together'. ■

CDP launches snapshot report on climate finance for Asian cities

THE ASIA-PACIFIC region is home to some of the world's fastest-growing cities, which are also among the most vulnerable to the impacts of climate change. In March 2023, CDP launched a snapshot report on climate finance, which shows that cities in the region are aware of this challenge and are

making efforts to mobilize finance to tackle it. However, the report also reveals that more needs to be done to scale up climate finance and unlock private sector investment to achieve the ambitious targets set by cities in the region. The report highlights successful examples of cities leveraging innovative

finance mechanisms, such as green bonds and public-private partnerships, to fund climate projects. Additionally, it calls for greater collaboration between cities, financial institutions, and national governments to create an enabling environment for climate finance to thrive in.

Key takeaways

- More than one third (35%) of Asia Pacific cities have set an adaptation goal, while 41% have set an emissions reduction target, with a further 10% planning to introduce one in the next two years. These goals/targets are backed up by more than half (56%) of cities reporting a climate action plan or strategy, and a further 15% currently developing or planning to develop one.
- 33% (56) of the projects disclosed by Asia Pacific cities do not have estimated costs, highlighting the gap faced by cities in the region when it comes to understanding financing needs.
- Southeast Asia was the subregion with the highest

number of reported projects (58) among the subregions, followed closely by East Asia (54), South Asia (29) and Oceania (28).

- 40% of projects are reported as being at early stages of development (scoping, pre-feasibility/impact assessment, or project feasibility), requiring further technical assistance to advance towards implementation. Almost 70% (47) of these are in South and Southeast Asian cities, with all subregional projects seeking funding.
- Renewable energy has the highest financing demand, with total financing needs equal to US\$4.6 billion, followed by buildings/energy efficiency and transport.

WRI India, EPCO join hands to develop climate action plans for seven smart cities of MP

WORLD RESOURCE INSTITUTE (WRI) India, in partnership with Environment Planning & Coordination Organisation (EPCO), Department of Environment, Madhya Pradesh (MP) is providing technical support to Department of Urban Development & Housing of MP and the seven smart cities, namely, Bhopal, Indore, Jabalpur, Sagar, Satna, Ujjain and Gwalior, in developing city-level inclusive climate action plans.

The plans would include a baseline greenhouse gas inventory for each city, a sectoral assessment across the five thematic sectors under the Climate Smart Cities Assessment Framework

(CSCAF), a vulnerability assessment of MP cities prepared by EPCO and a comprehensive list of inclusive mitigation and adaptation strategies with an implementation plan and governance framework. The project kickstarted with a planning-cum-launch workshop in Bhopal with participation from state and city officials, academicians, and civil society organisations across the seven cities to discuss some of the challenges faced by urban areas in MP and establish the local context and buy-in for the climate action plans.

This was followed by stakeholder consultations in each city to discuss the draft actions. These consultations saw



participation from city departments, NGOs, parastatal agencies & academia.

The project will conclude with an official launch of these plans in each of the seven cities, followed by the implementation of actions through multi stakeholder-driven pilot projects .

Capacity Building of Indian Cities on Low carbon, Climate Resilient Development

CITIES PRODUCE more than 60 per cent of the global CO₂ emissions and face severe negative impacts of climate change, such as floods and drought. These events adversely impact urban services and infrastructure. Cities need to adopt an integrated approach to climate action planning and implementation. Such an approach should identify and prioritize the implementation of low-carbon and climate-resilient development actions.

CapaCITIES and Climate Resilience Planning in Cities: The Capacity Building for Low Carbon and Climate Resilient City Development project (CapaCITIES) Phase II project is funded by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation under their Global Programme for Environment and Climate Change. The project envisages strengthening the capacity of Indian cities to plan and implement climate-resilient actions at the local level and mainstream climate change adaptation and mitigation interventions in their urban planning processes. The CapaCITIES project implementation agency comprises ICLEI -Local Governments for Sustainability, South Asia, South Pole AG and econcept AG. The National Institute of Urban Affairs (NIUA) is a knowledge partner of the CapaCITIES project. The project is being implemented in selected Indian cities and states.



During Phase I, the project developed the comprehensive Climate Re-

silient Cities (CRC) methodology that integrates climate change mitigation and adaptation aspects of climate actions and conforms to the GPC and GCoM Common Reporting Framework requirements and other international standards. The methodology also guides the cities through the process of prioritization of climate actions, implementation and monitoring of actions, and reporting the actions at the global level. The four project cities, Coimbatore, Rajkot, Siliguri and Udaipur, developed the Climate Resilient City Action Plans (CRCAP) in 2018 using this methodology, and implementation of the plans post approval by the city councils is ongoing.

In Phase II, the project is engaging with four additional cities, Ahmedabad, Vadodara, Tiruchirappalli, and Tirunelveli, and with the states of Gujarat and Tamil Nadu to mainstream climate change mitigation and adaptation interventions as part of their urban planning processes. The CapaCITIES project is currently developing the comprehensive CRCAP in the four new project cities while revising the existing CRCAPs in Phase I cities. In addition, the project is conducting training workshops at the state and city level on climate action planning processes and their implementation and on climate financing, including financial structuring and bankable project development.

Simplifying the Climate Resilience Planning Process

Considering the resources and the time involved in the adoption of the comprehensive CRC methodology by the cities, the project in Phase II has developed the Simplified ClimateResilientCities methodology, based on the “Basket of Solutions” tool built along the lines of the European Energy Awards program. This simplified CRC methodology can help cities to do a quick baseline assessment of their climate performance, identify climate actions and set targets.

Thus, it can fast-track the implementation of climate actions and support a city’s initial foray into local climate action planning and implementation. In the state of Tamil Nadu, this methodology and especially the “Basket of Solutions” tool, has evolved into an assessment tool, the “Tamil Nadu Urban Ranking Framework”, which the state intends to use to assess the performance of ULBs across the state in 13 thematic areas including climate resilience, transport & mobility, energy, planning, etc.



CapaCITIES Pilot Interventions and Support to bankable project development

CapaCITIES project extends technical support to cities based on their needs and provides handholding support to identify and implement pilot demonstration projects to build the capacity of the cities in implementing climate actions. The pilot interventions are either funded entirely by the project or are co-funded by the city/state government or private sector.






The pilot interventions under implementation across Indian cities in Phase II of the project are listed below sector-wise in the adjacent table. The project also extends technical support for bankable project development, such as identifying partners for the PPP model and linking the project to financing platforms such as the Transformative Action Programme (TAP) platform of ICLEI. The project has also developed guidelines for developing and maintaining Miyawaki Forests by

urban local bodies. The same can be easily adopted and followed by cities to improve their green cover.

In Phase I, the project implemented a 1.5 TPD biomethanation plant in Coimbatore and a 2 TPD biomethanation plant in Udaipur. As a scale-up to these pilot interventions, in Phase II, Udaipur City has implemented a 20 TPD biomethanation plant while Coimbatore is developing a 100 TPD Bio-CNG project under the PPP model. CapaCITIES project is providing technical assistance to develop these 100 TPD Bio-CNG plants in Coimbatore, which have the potential to be scaled up to a 200 TPD capacity plant. Based on this assistance given to the Coimbatore Bio-CNG project,

the state government of Tamil Nadu is interested in scaling up the Bio-CNG project across urban clusters in the state. The project is currently supporting the development of a roadmap for the same.

For more details on the project, please visit <https://www.capacitiesindia.org/>.

SECTOR	PILOT INTERVENTIONS
 Renewable Energy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 25 kW Rooftop Solar PV off-grid plant with battery storage for municipal office building, Siliguri 140 kWp (DC) floating solar PV plant in Periyakulam lake of Coimbatore
 Energy Efficiency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Technical support for development of 2 knowledge and study centres as Green Buildings, Tiruchirappalli and to get Green Building Certification for the office building of Director of Municipal Administration
 Electric Mobility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deploying Electric Vehicle Charging station for public buses in Ahmedabad and for public use in Vadodara Subsidizing 100 e-autos for last mile connectivity in BRTS system, Rajkot Implementation of pilot interventions under Green Mobility Zone program, Udaipur
 Biodiversity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Design and development of Miyawaki Urban Forest in Channi Lake area (Vadodara), Mohta park (Udaipur), and in Lower Bhanu Nagar (Siliguri)
 Stormwater Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Watershed assessment, feasibility study and deployment of Early Warning System for flooding in Tamirabharani river, Tirunelveli Watershed assessment and design and implementation of stormwater infiltration / Groundwater recharge system, Tiruchirappalli

Low Carbon Development Pathways for Bihar

WRI INDIA has joined hands with UNEP, CEEW and Shakti Sustainable Energy Foundation to support the Government of Bihar in formulating strategies for long-term climate resilience and low-carbon development. Under the partnership, WRI India is supporting the Bihar State Pollution Control Board (nodal agency) in preparing sectoral climate impact vulnerability assessments and enhancing the capacity of government departments in Bihar to deal with climate change impacts. WRI India also supports the entire strategy development process by providing secretariat support and project management services while stressing local partnerships, dissemination, and allied activities.

Assessment of the climate adaptation landscape in Bihar and identification of gaps in major adaptation-oriented policies and programs across key sectors like Agriculture, Water, Disaster, Forest, and Health has been undergoing through a data-driven approach while also conducting field visits, and local stakeholders' engagement to make the process more inclusive and participative. The strategy development process is in the advanced stages of completion.

This study from the state of Bihar can serve as an example of how data-driven, inclusive and participative interventions at the sub-national level can help accelerate climate action. The model can be an example for other Indian states and beyond.



Eero stresses on top-down bottom-up strategy in policy making

Abhishek Pandey, Editor, Urban Update spoke to Eero Ailio, Advisor, European Commission DG Energy, on a variety of issues specifically related to urban climate actions in different parts of the world, role of the European Commission (EU)



Recently in COP27, António Guterres, Secretary-General of the United Nations, said that “we are on a highway to hell with a foot on the accelerator”, a very bold statement in terms of urgency of this particular issue. I want to know from you the importance of this issue particularly when there is a war going on, there is an energy security crisis, affordability issue. What is European Commission doing in this regard?

Let me start with a little explanation on just how we operate in the EU because it's not always straightforward. The way EU works is that you have three key players, one is the European Commission which is the executive that prepares legislation, ideas and so on. Then we propose that to the European Parliament and the European Council as they are the lawmakers. So, whatever we propose as a draft law for example, we negotiate it with the lawmakers. And these European laws are what I would call framework laws or directives and then these are later sent to the national legislature of each of the 27 countries. Then you have another set of laws, which are regulations, which go directly as they are written and added to some sort of legal libraries of EU countries. So that's roughly the way it works.

Energy, climate and also environmental policies are the kind of policies where the EU and the European Commission as the executive has quite a lot of competence, meaning that we initiate the legislation and ideas according to the process I just mentioned. EU has quite a large mandate which makes it very different from any other international organisation. So, back to the topic of energy and climate. So, the European Union, meaning this common part that the Commission represents, and then the individual parts of the member states; if you put that all together, it

has a very large economic weight in the world and it's also the world's largest financiers of development, cooperation or climate finance and so on. We have a development bank, the European Investment Bank which is the world's largest development bank. Now the commission has adopted the European Green Deal, which is actually a growth strategy from our perspective and that's a bit of a change from the past, which shows how important climate issues and energy, the biggest sector affecting climate, have become. So now all the policies that the European Commission leads are adjusting or are making sure that those policies all contribute to the climate targets of the EU. And what is the climate target of the EU? We have the ambition to become a climate-neutral group of countries by 2050 and we have also an interim target of 2030.

In crises like Covid-19 or recession, the countries that are not very well developed, climate action becomes a vicious cycle. They are dependent on fossil fuels because new technologies are expensive. How do you handle these countries outside Europe because, in GCoM, EU is supporting many cities in their projects through gap funding and other kinds of funding support? How do you look at this particular issue and how this can be resolved?

Of course, there are some limits to what we can do. Those countries are sovereign and they take their own decisions. What we do is we use our development budget and money with which we help the transition outside Europe. So that's clear. Well, one thing I want to say is that the International Energy Agency (IEA) is following energy markets and they have already said that we are at the stage where renewable energy is the cheapest energy in the world. It's way cheaper

than coal, gas and so on. So, from an economic point of view, it's clear that you're better off if you go there and yes, there's a need for upfront investment and that's the big hurdle. But after that, operational costs are much lower and then you have all the environmental and health benefits and so on. This is the one thing we are seeing happening. Last year was also the first year when investment in renewables surpassed global investment in fossil fuels.

In regions under the jurisdiction of the EU and Commission, many countries are also making their climate action plans. They also have their national plans. So how do you blend them? Do you have any platform for knowledge sharing with each other on a regular basis?

Well, the EU is quite simple in the sense that we have structures for that. We have all these platforms, committees and forums, and since we do the legislation together, we meet regularly and discuss climate issues, energy issues and environmental issues. So we have all the time and platform to discuss this and that clearly helps. That also goes for energy security, now with the war. We have gas coordination groups, and electricity coordination groups, we have lots of different places where the experts meet at the political level, including government civil servants, NGOs and civil society organisations. There are many tools for that and then, of course, you have to share data. So, the commission is putting a lot of data on the internet and we put that openly.

That connects a little bit to the global covenant as well. I mean we have several initiatives that we call bottom-up initiatives. There are sub-national entities, particularly for cities regions and also companies, where we sponsor these kinds of initiatives like for

instance cities in the context of global covenant commit to certain emission targets, plans, and so on.

Since you spoke about the GCoM, I just wanted to know what is the role of European Commission in that. Could you talk a little about GCoM, how it started, and what are its objectives?

Sure. It goes back to what I would call a top-down bottom-up strategy of the European Commission in policymaking. It means that top-down is of course the law-making, all this traditional stuff. But the law is as good as its implementation and to implement something you have to think what can we do about that? So, one way is indeed that you talk to the cities, which is where the action is actually happening. I mean 70 to 75 per cent of all the legislation is actually implemented at the city level. Without cities, you can't get anything done, so it is better to talk to them and that's what we do. That's why we have initiatives like the Global Covenant of Mayors which actually started in Europe. There is the European Covenant of Mayors. It's

already 13 years old where we started helping cities to try out new possibilities in energy efficiency, heating, renewable energy, urban transport, waste management and things like that. So, helping them [cities] to develop plans, implement them and then monitor them is the bottom-up part.

But you were asking about the history. In 2008, we started the European Covenant of Mayors and it was a success. So we got close to 10,000 cities joining over the years and many cities including cities from Argentina, and New Zealand contacted us to be part of this. So, we had already started preparing for what we call the Global Covenant of Mayors back in 2014-15. Then at the time of the Paris Climate Agreement, Michael Bloomberg had an initiative called the Compact of Mayors similar to the Covenant but already working globally as well. So, we merged those two which is today's Global Covenant. Since then, the commission has and is currently financing what we call Regional Covenants around the world in Asia, Africa, America, and

of course Europe. That means we set up Secretariat and help desks in those countries which help local cities to try out the same methodology but in their own regional context. On top of that, we have set up what we call a Global Secretariat like a Central Secretariat here in Brussels and this Secretariat is bringing together the partners of the Global Covenant.

Then we have city networks and there we have ICLEI, C40, Euro Cities, Energy Cities, Climate Alliance, and so on, and the city networks, which, of course, keep partners in this. We are discussing with them what we can do, concretely, be it about finance, research, regional cooperation, best practice sharing and so on. So we manage this kind of working group and we have global representation from all those regions, including India. Now we are a family of about 12,700 cities.

For reading the full interview, please refer to 'One on One – Eero Ailio, Adviser at European Commission DG Energy' Urban Update, March 2023, Page number 42. ISSN 2349-6266, RNI No DELENG/2014/57384

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GCoM South Asia holds 14th coordination group meeting

NEW DELHI: The 14th Coordination group meeting for GCoM South Asia was held on November 28, 2022 in New Delhi, India. Ms Kamilla Kristensen Rai, Counsellor EUD India, emphasized that this meeting serves as a knowledge-sharing platform for all GCoM coordination group members working towards making cities resilient and climate-smart.

Mr Edwin Koekkoek, First Counsellor EUD India, pointed out that this platform can play not only as a knowledge-sharing platform but also in steering actions in areas such as climate agenda, the energy efficiency of buildings, smart-readiness of buildings, and renewable energy. An exhaustive review of all activities of 2022 in the GCoM Asia project and the action plan for the next year was provided by Ms Asih Budiati, Team Leader GCoM Asia. Mr Ashish Verma, Country Coordinator GCoM SA elaborated on the activities that the project will be focusing on next year and progress on the process of information collection from the cities.

All the participants were invited to share inputs during Tour-de-table on three points – first, concrete



activities and synergy; second, from climate action plan to implementation, and lastly suggestions on engaging new members in India to the Coordination Group. Valuable inputs during the tour-de-table were noted from Mr Anshul Abbasi, NIUA; Mr Pashim Tewari, AIILSG; Mr Sharif Qamar, TERI; Mr Keshav Jha, ICLEI SA; Mr Subrata Chakrabarty, WRI; and Mr Zainab Agha, Climate Group. Mr Ravi Ranjan Guru, DDG AIILSG shared a proposed list of targeted cities with the group and the 'Technical Working Groups' update was shared by ICLEI. ■

Regional GCoM Covenants meet in Brussels

BRUSSELS (BELGIUM): Global Secretariat of Global Covenant of Mayors for Climate and Energy organised a five-day Open House at International Press Centre and Hotel NH Berlaymont in Brussels from Jan 23-27, 2023. Representatives of regional covenants, country representatives, and delegations from partner organisations, including the European Commission, Bloomberg Philanthropies, GIZ, ICLEI, DAI, and UCLG Global, among others, were present in-person to participate in a series of meetings, knowledge-sharing sessions, technical working group presentations, and interactive city-to-city exchange sessions. During the five-day event, one day was dedicated to the Common Reporting Framework (CRF) Academy, which enabled participants to understand the latest reporting platform's updates, common mistakes, energy access and poverty pillars, data challenges and progress tracking. A delegation from GCoM South Asia was also present.

The main objective of the Open House was to exchange updates on the activities and work that the GCoM is implementing at the global level and to collect feedback, experiences, and input from the partners engaging in and promoting the GCoM across regions. On day one, Eero Ailio, Adviser: Energy transition and local governance, European Commission, spoke on the impor-

The main objective of the Open House was to exchange updates on the activities and work that the GCoM is implementing at the Global level and to collect feedback, experiences, and input from the partners engaging in and promoting the GCoM across regions

tance of collective actions of cities, covenants and the urgency of the issue. He began his speech with inputs from an AI tool and underlined the importance of modern technology and climate actions at the local level. Piero Remitti and Andy Deacon explained the works of the GCoM.

Giorgia Rambelli and Gisela Garrido Veron, in the Back to Basic-GCom Governance Structure, provided the details of governance structure in the regions and policy decisions process. Benjamin Jance and Vanni Puccioni presented the details of Technical Working Group Research and Innovation working towards a simplified reporting platform and data collection methods in collaboration with CDP, ICLEI, and JRC. There are three energy pillars: climate change mitigation, adaptation, and access to energy. Other TWG presentations during the event included Finance, Communication, and Regional Strategy.

On day two, the next Interactive Regional Session focused on the activities undertaken by Eastern Europe and Central Asia, South Asia, Southeast Asia, Japan, Korea, and Latin America. Giving details about the activities of the South Asia region, Ravi Ranjan Guru, Deputy Director General of AIILSG, Networking and Governance (N&G) Coordinator, GCoM South Asia, said that the cities in the region are showing interest in joining the covenant and taking local climate actions. In the last seven months, five Indian cities and three cities from the region have joined the covenant. He informed that the GCoM SA is focusing on increasing activities at the city level and engaging partners

through the India coordination group led by the EU Delegation to India. Asih Budiati, Team Leader, GCoM Asia, spoke on the series of training program workshops executed in the previous year and the upcoming events, as well as the deepening understanding of climate change issues among city representatives.

Justine Audraine provided the details of avenues available to cities for accessing finances for their local projects. GCoM Global secretariat also provided details of technical assistance they have been providing to regional covenants. These included assistance to cities through Urban Transition Mission, City Climate Gap Fund, Bankable Climate Project Initiative, Business Matchmaking, and Expert Exchange Programme. In a bilateral meeting, GCoM Asia Project team members had the opportunity to meet with GCoM Global, JRC, with Global-Regional Coherence TWG and Gap Fund to discuss potential collaboration for GCoM signatories in the region. The third day of the GCoM Open House was focused on the importance of a simplified Common Reporting Framework (CRF) linked to the CDP-ICLEI Track and My Covenant. It was informed that CDP-ICLEI Track had been simplified to 60 per cent fewer questions from the previous version. And, My Covenant will introduce a simplified version by reducing and replacing indicators. It will also develop a dashboard to make data comparisons between cities visible.

The fourth day focused on providing details on badging for signatory cities and the aggregation report launched



last year and available on the GCOM website. The participants visited Leuven city and learnt about the sustainable practices implemented at the local level in the city and 'Leuven 2030', a citizen co-creation platform. Leuven 2030 is a non-profit organisation founded

in 2013 by 60 members, including the city and committed citizens. In 2018, Leuven 2030 developed a Roadmap for 2025 – 2035 – 2050 with the help of the urban-planning agency and over 70 local experts. As the N&G Coordinator for GCoM South Asia, the AILSG's

Urban Update team conducted two interviews with the senior officials from the European Commission — Eero Ailio and Tomasz Gawlik. The five-day event ended on a positive note with a focus on accelerating collective climate actions at the local level. ■

C-Cube at National Youth Conclave

NIUA hosted the National Youth Conclave with support from the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs and the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports under the aegis of India's G20 presidency. The two-day event was held on March 13-14, 2023, bringing together young minds to deliberate on the U20 and Y20 priority areas and foster bright leaders of tomorrow.

CPIN Talks

CPIN Talks was a forum where changemakers showcased innovative solutions that have worked in the field of climate and sustainability. The C-Cube team - Mr. Anshul Abbasi, Mr. Punit Gandhi and Ms. Kaveri Bahure hosted the talks on March 13, 2023. Introduction to CPIN talks was followed by outstanding speeches by the seven key speakers - Mr. Ramveer Tanwar, Say Earth; Ms. Maitreyee Kamble, Svara-Sanitech and DICCI; Mr. Anshu Sharma, SEEDS; Mr. Ranjan Panda, Youth4WaterIndia; Dr. Ruby Makhija, Why Waste Wednesdays Foundation; Mr. Shiekh Intekhab Alam, EMARA and Ms. Vedika Nair, student.

The talks emphasized the need to preserve local knowledge in maintaining natural systems, importance of collaboration within communities and potential of technology & green entrepreneurship in creating



sustainable change. The takeaway of the session was that not just degrees but passion is necessary to bring about change.

CLAP Now game session

The C-CUBE team - Ms Pallavi Thool, Mr Anshul Abbasi and Mr Punit Gandhi moderated the CLAP NOW interactive session. Through an interactive exercise, the moderators prompted



participants to reflect on urban climate concepts related to their hometowns. The event facilitated positive interaction among the 100+ attendees, including undergraduate and graduate students, school children, and professionals. The session generated interest through exchange of ideas, discussions, and polls. It aimed to increase young participants' awareness of climate issues and prioritize interventions for a sustainable future with community support.

The session concluded with a presentation by Ms Astha Jain and Mr Aman Randhawas, RTI International on a knowledge product - Sustainable Urban Networks for Dynamic and Resilient (SUNDAR). It is built from key findings from five cities and focused on the need for interdepartmental conversions for infrastructural planning and resilience in Indian cities.

Climate Cafe

The Climate Cafe was designed as an interactive space focused on "Learning by Doing Climate Action", where the C-CUBE team helped participants to experience the fragility of Himalayan ecosystems and the aftermath of Chennai floods by using VRX technology. More than 500 participants pledged to make individual lifestyle changes for climate action, which

they recorded in simple activities with the hashtag #lifestyle. The Climate Cafe team was delighted to have inspired participants to make informed decisions regarding city management through the use of the "Stop Disaster Game," which was developed by the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction and allowed for experiential learning. ■

THIMPHU CITY, BHUTAN

Initiatives to Reduce Climate Change Impacts

THIMPHU CITY is the capital as well as the largest city in the country of Bhutan. Being the kingdom's. It is also the most vulnerable to Climate change. Over the years, several initiatives have been taken to bring down the impacts of Climate Change in Thimphu City. Five of these initiatives are discussed below.

Waste DOCs and TT Waste App

The Drop-off Centers (DOCs) are temporary storage facilities that store segregated wastes in separate compartments - wet, dry, household hazardous, etc. The DOCs are a convenient solution for citizens who cannot meet the regular waste collection schedule and encourage the public to be mindful of their waste by not engaging in illegal dumping and littering of garbage.

Nine DOCs were constructed across the City in Chubogang, Tshalumaphey, Bebena, Lungtenphu, Changbangdu, Changzamtog, Mothithang, Jungshina and Dangrina. Several awareness programs were also held for the public in all the DOCs, with over 350 participants from the various institutions by the Thromde Thuemi's (people's representatives) and the City Environment Division.

A mobile application has also been developed called TT Waste App. With this App, people can track garbage trucks in real-time and check the waste collection schedule for their locality. The App also has detailed information on the Drop-off Centers, segregation information, and space for citizens to leave feedback or complaints.

Home Composting

The area available for household gardens

is small in many locations, so the use of organic composts could help increase the yield. Moreover, compost preparation is also fairly simple, called the Takakura method.

With training, the participants learned how household waste can be used productively. This has helped reduced waste at source by engaging the public.

Open Space & Riverfront Development

The riverbank along the Wangchu River, which flow right through the city, has been identified as a flood-prone area. Flood-resilient trees were planted along the river stretch from the crematorium in Hejo to the traditional Bazam in Tashichho Dzong to protect the riverbank. This is expected to stabilize the slopes along the river, acting as a natural buffer against flooding and increasing water retention. It also

adds aesthetic value to the area, promoting a clean and green environment.

Thimphu City also initiated the development of open spaces into recreational areas.



Slope Stabilization

A hybrid treatment has been designed for the unstable slope in those areas where road formation cutting has been done. Structural measures such as grouted

anchor bolts and drainage holes are being placed at regular intervals to reduce water pressure.

At the base, a 3-meter-high gabion fascia is also being constructed. After anchor installation and gabion walls are completed, an erosion control mat will be placed at the slide surface to prevent



surface erosion. A biotic soil media will then be applied to enable vegetation growth. The location of the parent rock and the slide mass interface will be filled to prevent sub-surface accumulation of water. This initiative has prevented the sliding of the slope and, at the same time, the greening of the areas through the development of medium enabling vegetation growth.

Micro Gardening

Thimphu City has initiated the concept of micro-gardening. Any agency or organization that is willing to adopt certain areas within their premises and develop them into parks and flower gardens are being encouraged.

Conclusion

Thimphu City has taken significant steps to tackle the impacts of Climate Change at the community level and prompts individual citizens. Such initiatives bring about substantial positive results, elevating the environment of the whole city. Building the systems of Waste DOCs is a beneficial step as it provides responsibility and liberty to people in helping manage waste in the city. This, followed by technological aid like that of the waste tracking mobile App, makes it easier to adjust to the everyday life of people. Putting in collective efforts through community participation and engagement empathetically develops the region's way of life, which is the need of the hour.

EVENT

Cities of Gujarat discuss climate actions in GCoM SA Cluster meet



AHMEDABAD: A cluster meeting for Global Covenant of Mayors South Asia (GCoM SA) signatory cities was organised by the Networking and Governance Coordinator, AIILSG on February 08, 2023, at AIILSG Office in Ahmedabad. The objective of the meeting was knowing the city activities, their challenges and provide them with feasible solutions through the technical and financial assistance available.

The meeting was attended by over ten municipal officials and elected representatives, including Mayors, Commissioner, and Councillors from three GCoM signatory cities – Gandhinagar, Surat, and Vadodara. The purpose of the cluster meeting was to evoke the advantages of being part of the GCoM network and to learn from the experiences of the participating cities.

This cluster meeting was a means of knowledge exchange and a platform for the potential expansion of the network. Mr. Ravi Ranjan Guru, Deputy Director General, AIILSG

initiated the meeting with welcome remarks followed by a presentation informing participants about the GCoM South Asia project and the activities carried out by AIILSG along with the future schedule. Mr. Abhishek Pandey, Team Leader GCoM SA, AIILSG moderated the meeting and Mr. Mayank Meena, Project Officer GCoM SA, facilitated the introduction of all participating delegates. Ms. Hansa Patel, Executive Advisor, AIILSG shared the video presentation for G20 logo design ensuing introduction of Global covenant of mayors for Climate and Energy, South Asia and its focus areas of Climate change and action.

Mr Ashish Verma, National Coordinator of GCoM SA, presented the major updates and activities undertaken within GCoM and an overview of climate action and the city journey of five pilot cities. This was followed by discussion and remarks by Mr Hitesh Makwana, Mayor of Gandhinagar city of Gujarat, on how creative and innovative ideas help cities grow and learn by exchanging these ideas.

Mayor Hitendra Patel, on behalf of Vadodara Municipal Corporation, displayed the project brief of the rooftop solar power plant in Vadodara along with the project idea of the Vishwamitri riverfront project for creating a healthy ecosystem for crocodiles. Ms. Hemali Boghawala, Mayor of Surat Municipal Corporation shared her thoughts on the significance of cities' collective actions and focus on climate change.

Mr Pablo Fernandez, Chief of Staff UCLG, highlighted the importance of such meetings and knowledge exchange. Mr Keshav Jha, Project Manager, ICLEI SA, presented the technical support provided to GCoM cities. The compatibility of climate action plans and capacity building done in South Asian cities were discussed, along with key activities planned for 2023. ■

Mumbai becomes first Indian city on CDP's A List in 2022

CDP PUBLISHED its fifth annual 'Cities A List' in November 2022, recognizing 122 cities globally that have demonstrated the highest score for transparency and action to mitigate and adapt to climate change. CDP's A List is based on environmental data disclosed by cities to CDP-ICLEI Track.

A clear momentum in city climate disclosure and action is building – for the first time, 1002 cities received a rating for their climate action from CDP in 2022, a rise on the 965 cities scored in 2021. In 2022, just over one in ten cities scored by CDP (12%) received an A. Mumbai has become the first Indian city to receive CDP's A-score (Leadership level) for its leadership in environmental action and transparency. It is the most populous city in India, and, globally, the seventh largest in terms of

population. Surrounded by the sea on three sides, Mumbai is separated from the mainland by the Thane Creek and Harbour Bay. The city is vulnerable to climate change induced hazards including sea level rise, heavy rainfall, storm surges, increasing heat and tropical cyclones. It is also susceptible to landslides, due to heavy rain that causes many fatalities and physical damage each monsoon season.

The city released its first-ever Climate Action Plan in 2022, called 'Towards a Climate Resilient Mumbai'. It outlines the city's aims to reach net-zero carbon neutrality by 2050 – the most significant step taken in its climate journey thus far. The Climate Action Plan has laid down a 30-year roadmap for the city to tackle the challenges of climate change, by adopting inclusive and

robust mitigation and adaptation strategies. The action plan sets short, medium, and long-term climate goals aimed at achieving zero emission of GHGs or a net-zero target for 2050 – which means it will incorporate just transition methodologies (towards net zero pathways); sizeable investments; and coordinated and robust governance.

The A List cities are taking twice as many mitigation and adaptation measures as non-A List cities, demonstrating their climate leadership through concerted and effective action, just as national governments were asked to do at COP27. The cities on the A List, including Mumbai, are celebrated for showing that impactful climate action is achievable at a global level, and in cities with different climate realities and priorities.

WRI India conducts a study to assess GHG mitigation potential of Indore, Surat and Ujjain

WRI INDIA conducted a study to assess the GHG mitigation potential of three cities: Indore, Ujjain and Surat. Given the increased momentum for climate action from cities across India, there is a need to build capacity around science-based target setting and action development for mitigating climate change.

In this context, the study uses the Climate Action for Urban Sustainability (CURB) tool to generate sectoral emission reduction targets, analyse different action packages and evaluate their cost, feasibility, and impact on emissions and energy reduction. WRI India piloted this tool across the three cities, using primary data from city-level departments and parastatal agencies along with secondary literature to develop long-term emissions reduction scenarios and quantify the mitigation potential of different sectoral actions spanning energy, buildings, mobility, water and waste management.

The project culminated in a hybrid dissemination event in Indore, with participation from distinguished policy experts across organisations like Jimmy McGilligan Centre for Sustainable Development, Indore Smart City, EPCO, Surat Municipal Corporation, NIUA, CDP India, Global Covenant of Mayors for Climate and Energy, and SPA Bhopal to name a few. The speakers highlighted the importance of such data-driven exercises and tools to quantify the emissions reduction potential of cities and help them direct mitigation efforts and investments.

They also stressed the need for institutional arrangements and capacity building along with monitoring, reporting and verification frameworks to assess the progress of climate actions, develop climate action budgets, and create data repositories and dashboards that would serve the national reporting requirements.

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