



## EVENT



# **GCoM South Asia holds Cluster Meet in Mumbai**

MUMBAI, India: All India Institute of Local Self-Government (AIILSG), Networking and Governance Coordinator of the Global Covenant of Mayors South Asia (GCoM SA), organized a Regional Cluster Meeting on October 26, 2023 at the Jio Convention Centre in Mumbai, India. The session was attended by several Indian cities, including representatives from a few GCoM signatory cities, such as Kochi, Thiruvananthapuram, Shimla, Pune, Mumbai, and more. There were a total of 30 participants. The Cluster Meet began with an introductory session on the Global Covenant of Mayors (GCoM) for Climate and Energy by Mr Abhishek Pandey, Team Leader, Networking, and Governance Coordinator, GCoM South Asia. He provided updates on GCOM Activities and upcoming regional workshops in Kathmandu. He informed how GCOM South Asia is assisting cities in developing climate actions and providing them with technical and financial assistance to accelerate climate initiatives.

This was followed by an update session on the activities of GCoM in South Asia by Mr Ashish Verma, Country Coordinator, GCoM South Asia. He discussed the recruitment of key partners (AIILSG and ICLEI SA) to perform secretariat activities and the inclusion of NIUA as the official technical partner for organizing capacity-building events. National and regional workshops to discuss climate change concepts, policies, international targets, the role of cities, and hands-on training for climate action planning and reporting were also covered. Emphasis was placed on financing climate actions, with experts who could share innovative measures. He informed the participants about the preparation of Climate Action Plans (CAPs) for four pilot cities, namely Junagarh, Jamnagar, Pune, and Leh. It was also mentioned that a national-level guideline document would be released to assist other cities in preparing their CAPs. Next in line was the analysis of the case study on the "Transformation of an Indian City," which was shared by Dr Binu Francis, Secretary, Thiruvananthapuram Corporation. Thiruvananthapuram showcased the 'Centralized Digital Pass Issue' System for Septage Collection, Transportation, Disposal, and Payment. Lastly, the member cities were asked to share their existing challenges and specify the support they need from the project to address those issues. Dr Sudhir

Krishna, Chairman of the Smart Cities Technical Committee of the Bureau of Indian Standards, and former secretary, Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs, Government of India, suggested that there should be a mechanism for vertical knowledge sharing among cities. He added that cities that have already implemented CAPs should be encouraged to provide training to other cities, and vice versa for chosen sectors. It was also suggested that there should be diversity in selection of cities as pilot cities for the preparation of CAPs. The workshop concluded with the assurance that the cities would receive the required support through strategic and focused GCOM activities to intensify climate actions at the local level. It was suggested that eminent experts and a larger group of urban luminaries could be engaged to guide the activities of the GCOM coordination group.

Way Forward: Detailed information on GCoM to be shared with the group that we engaged with during the event, including Dr O P Mathur, Dr Amitabh Kundu and Mr Sudhir Krishna. They can potentially guide GCoM activities. So we gradually target to include them as part of the coordination group, more like a national steering committee on GCoM. ■



GCoM South Asia Cluster Meet on October 26, 2023, in Mumbai, India

## ARTICLE

# Institutionalising Climate Action Planning in Indian Cities



Launch of the Chennai Climate Action Plan by Thiru. MK Stalin, Hon' Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu

Pic credit: Tamil Nadu CM's Office

CITIES CAN SPEARHEAD innovations to bridge the inequalities gaps, deliver climate action and ensure a green and inclusive recovery from the pandemic.

The pace of urbanisation is constantly accelerating and is expected to increase over the next three decades—from 56% in 2021 to 68% in 2050. This translates into an increase of 2.2 billion urban residents, living mostly in Africa and Asia. (World Cities Report, 2022). Building economic, social and environmental resilience, including appropriate governance and institutional structures, must be at the heart of the future of cities.

The Global Climate Risk Index 2021 ranks India as the seven most affected country from climate related extreme weather events (storms, floods, heatwaves etc.). Further, studies indicate that poor planning and urban management are expected to cost Indian cities somewhere between \$2.6 and \$13 billion annually. This impact is only expected to worsen in the future underscoring the importance of stepping up efforts to build a more sustainable and equitable urban future.

Cities are playing a leading role in tackling both urbanisation and climate change. To strengthen climate-sensitive urban development, it is essential to have a comprehensive understanding of urban development from a climate perspective. This is where Climate Action Plans can play a strategic role. City Climate Action Plans (CAPs) are an evidence based, data driven, and inclusive tool to bring together a holistic approach to urban development, bringing the entire range of urban development challenges under one umbrella.

City governments and their partners can use climate action planning to develop and implement strategies to address climate change while also meeting other long-term goals, such as socio-economic development and environmental protection. Climate action plans help cities to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, transition to low-carbon development, adapt to climate change impacts, and build resilience, all the while aligning with local development goals and plans.

A Climate Action Plan is a tool that local governments can use to address both climate change adaptation and mitigation challenges simultaneously. Climate action planning is based on the idea that it is important to integrate climate action into all aspects of city development in order to create a climatesafe city. The success of a climate action plan depends on the implementation of prioritised actions, which also helps to mainstream environmental sustainability into city development.

In 2015, India released its Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs), wherein the key targets were mainly to increase the cumulative electric power installed capacity from nonfossil sources to 40%, and reduce the emissions intensity of GDP by 33% to 35% compared to 2005 levels, by 2030.

Responding to the call for increased ambition in its 2030 climate targets, India updated its Nationally Determined Contributions in August 2022. At COP27, India submitted its Long-Term Low Emission Development Strategy (LT LEDS) to UNFCCC, which included plans for rapid expansion of green hydrogen production, three-fold increase in nuclear capacity by 2032, 20% ethanol blending in petrol by 2025, and more. With this, India joins the select list of fewer than 60 parties that have submitted their LT LEDS and shows India's readiness to fulfil its climate pledge.

## Towards climate resilience

The Tamil Nadu government launched Chennai's first Climate Action Plan (CAP) on June 13, 2023 making it only

the second Indian city to have a Paris Agreement aligned Climate Action Plan. The CAP has been designed to serve as a roadmap for the city to become carbon neutral by 2050 with tangible targets and actions in short, medium and long term.

The preparation of the CCAP was anchored by the Department of Environment, Forests and Climate Change and the Greater Chennai Corporation with strategic support from C40 Cities. The project commenced in September 2021 with an official kickoff meeting. The plan is structured on a robust data driven baselining exercise which includes a Global Protocol for Community-Scale Greenhouse Gas Emission Inventories (GPC) compliant Greenhouse Gas (GHG) inventory and a Climate Change Risk Assessment. Further decarbonisation pathways were developed with actions linked to a monitoring and evaluation framework. Over 200 consultation meetings were held over a period of 1.5 years of the plan preparation process with a wide group of stakeholders (government officials, CSOs, technical experts, NGOs, academia and citizens). Consultations were held at three different stages of the plan preparation process namely:

- Preparation and finalisation of the baseline outputs
- Formulation of CAP targets and actions
- Finalisation of the CAP document

At the stage of finalising the CAP document, a draft notification inviting comments was framed and uploaded on GCC's website. Over 300 comments were received and duly incorporated into the final plan.

Some of the key learnings from the consultation process for us were:

- Need for climate communications in local language at the ground level with local communities, government officials and elected representatives to demystify current terminology being used around climate change and its impacts.
- Citizens prioritised adaptation related actions over mitigation as the effects of climate change such as urban flooding, heat island effects are being experienced on ground in Chennai.
- Citizens of Chennai showed a lot of willingness to engage with GCC and other stakeholders during the CAP preparation process and further on its implementation.

## Institutional strengthening for climate action

Climate change is not a sectoral subject to be dealt with on a standalone basis by any one department or approach. It deals with a multitude of aspects that affect the survival of the city. Specific efforts have been taken up in aligning the Chennai Climate Action Plan with the larger Tamil Nadu State Action Plan on Climate Change. This has been a crucial step in ensuring a coordinated and effective approach to addressing climate change. The Chennai CAP sets out a vision for Chennai to achieve carbon neutrality and water balance by 2050, underpinned by the principles of inclusivity, data-driven decision-making, citizen engagement, and collaboration with on-ground institutions. In order

to create fundamental change in our cities, we need to mainstream climate action and develop governance structures to translate climate actions into implementable projects with clear roadmaps. Thus what is key towards institutionalising climate action implementation is mainstreaming the identified climate actions into the city's building bye-laws, master plan and the city budget.

Approximately 71% of Chennai's overall greenhouse gas emissions stem from the energy and buildings sector which includes residential, commercial, institutional buildings and the industries. This also includes emissions originating from electricity generated outside the city but used within its boundaries. Given that these sectors are the primary sources of the city's emissions, it is crucial to pinpoint and execute robust climate mitigation measures in these areas. Among the many actions listed in the action plan, increasing the share of renewable energy in the energy mix has been perceived to be a high-impact project. Completely transitioning Chennai's electricity grid to renewable energy itself will bring about a 38% reduction in carbon emissions by 2050. This transition also means multiple stakeholders at both city and state level working together across policy and climate action implementation. Chennai through multiple initiatives is currently exploring the potential of installation of solar panels on public buildings, incentivizing rooftop solar for residential and commercial properties, and encouraging uptake of energy efficient features in buildings.

For more information, please visit: https://tngreencompany.com/resource

## Fostering collaborations for Unlocking Climate Solutions



All India Institute of Local Self-Government (AIILSG), the Governance and Network co-ordinator for Global Covenant of Mayors South Asia, is hosting the much anticipated GCoM SA Regional Workshop in Hotel Soaltee, Kathmandu, Nepal on December 5-7, 2023. The workshop marks a continuation of the insightful gathering that took place in Mumbai in May 2023. The upcoming workshop aims to build upon the knowledge acquired by participating cities in Mumbai. The cities will receive hands-on training on drafting clear and compelling Expressions of Interest (EOI) for their project proposals. This activity will serve as the foundation for their discussions with EU businesses. A couple of sessions will be dedicated to business matchmaking with signatory cities to support them in implementing their actions based on their urgent requirements. Simultaneously, it will enhance their chances of securing support from the GAP Fund and TAP Fund as well.

## CASE STUDY

# Indore strives to become a 'zero plastic city'

INDORE MUNICIPAL CORPORATION (IMC) successfully managed to make the city Open Defecation Free (ODF) and landfillfree under the Swachh Bharat Mission. It has already established four waste free zones. With Manual Composting Units, Waste Processing Plants and Energy Plants, the IMC has managed to treat waste at the source. It has also taken steps to make the whole process feasible, organised and sustainable.

With its vast land area and mammoth population, Indore was one of the biggest plastic waste generators in Madhya Pradesh back in 2013. However, the city has continued to secure the top spot in the Cleanest Cities of India list in a row, for the past six years (2017 to 2022) under the Swachh Bharat Mission. The first step under the mission was introdution of a six-bin system for commercial and household waste, right at the source. Separate bins are provided for dry waste, wet waste, plastic waste, e-waste, domestic sanitary waste, and domestic hazardous waste.

A Centralized Processing Unit (CPU) has been established in Devguradia, Nemawar Road, by the IMC at the cost of INR 23.43 million (USD 378,030).

Indore's entire waste reaches the Devguradia processing site. First, the garbage is collected through the sixbin system. The waste collected from the garbage transfer stations is then weighed and compressed at the site area which is around 146 acres. It is further moved to the Devguradia processing site for final processing.



### Centralised Organic Wet Waste Processing Unit

The CPU consists of a Centralised Organic Wet Waste Processing Unit where the bulk wet waste (30 kg and above) is processed. The Nepra Resource Management Private Ltd under the PPP model, Aavishkaar, has pumped in INR 156.25 million (USD 2,520,200) for Material Recovery Facility (MRF). Manual segregation of dry waste (through kabadiwalas) into various components such as metal, rubber, board, plastic takes place here. The recyclable waste is sold to 14 kabadiwalas which are registered and authorised by the IMC. The inert waste recovered at MRFs is then transferred to the sanitary landfill located near the premises in covered containers.

#### Plastic Waste Collection and Processing Unit

Set up by IMC, this unit helps in the reuse and recycling of the city's



plastic waste. Waste pickers manually segregate and sell the recyclable plastic. IMC has also installed a plastic cleansing machine known as a 'Phatka Machine', where the rest of the waste is sent. Another innovative idea is the use of Reverse Vending Machines, which reduces the plastic bottle waste and also limits the transportation cost of bottles. So far, the machine has been installed in ten different public locations in the city.

## Plastic Waste Fuel Converter unit

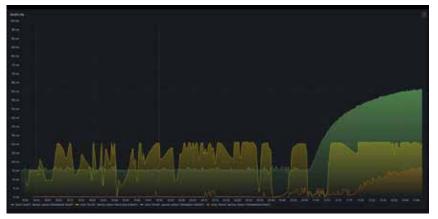
Then comes the Plastic Waste Fuel Converter unit which works on the reverse polymerization process. With 10 tonnes of scrap plastic waste, it can produce at least 3,000 litres of fuel per day. Bioremediation of old dumpsites help in the treatment of old garbage through biomining. There is also the Construction and Demolition (C&D) Waste Plant, set up by IMC, working on the construction and demolition debris waste processing facility with the PPP model. Last but not the least, there is also the Scientific Landfill Site which are two engineered landfills of 6.25 acres up for use.

The journey of Indore transforming from one of the biggest waste producing cities in Madhya Pradesh to emerging as the cleanest cities has been achieved through breakthrough and inventive approach. The success of Indore's waste management plant can now act as an exemplary model and example for other cities dealing with the waste menace. ■

# Messina lends flood alert system to Kochi under IURC

KOCHI NOW HAS a flood alert system in place which operates from Messina in Italy. Under the IURC Programme, five water level sensors were set up in Kochi, India, in collaboration with the Kochi Municipal Corporation, Centre for Heritage, Environment and Development (C-HED), City of Messina, and the University of Messina. Installed from November 13-16, 2023, in locations such as KSRTC Bus Stand, Panampilly Nagar, Kala Bhavan Road, Ambedkar Nagar, and Vivekananda Road, these sensors were developed by the University of Messina and deployed by Dr Antonino Galletta, Assistant Professor at the University.

Functioning as IoT devices, these water level sensors facilitate real-time monitoring with a sampling frequency of 30 seconds. Moreover, they are equipped to operate using solar panels in areas without electricity. The collected data is transmitted to a



User friendly dashboard to monitor water levels



Water Level Sensors installed in Kochi

user-friendly dashboard that allows live monitoring of water levels. In the event that water levels surpass pre-defined thresholds, automatic notifications are sent to the Kochi Municipal Corporation and registered recipients via the "Telegram" application. Although the dashboard is currently accessible at C-HED, plans are underway to integrate it with Kochi's Integrated Command and Control Centre and Urban Observatory.

On November 16, 2023, all five sensors were successfully installed, with the Mayor of Kochi Municipal Corporation, Adv. M Anilkumar, personally inspecting the KSRTC Bus Stand sensor. Concurrently, a workshop on water level sensors and monitoring took place at the Kochi Municipal Corporation Council Hall, chaired by the Mayor. City officials, including Ms K A Ansiya, Deputy Mayor, and Mr Shibu V P, Secretary in charge, were present at the workshop.

M Anilkumar speaking to a newspaper said, "We are devising a system that will enable us to collect data directly from the Messina dashboard. Work has begun on creating an integrated command and control centre and urban observatory for the city."

Soon after the sensor installation, Kochi experienced heavy rainfall, triggering anticipated alerts. This allowed engineers in the Kochi Municipal Corporation to closely monitor ground conditions and activate pumps as needed. The implementation of this user-friendly system has significantly enhanced the city's efficiency and effectiveness in responding to flooding events.

Kochi's 'flood management' system is part of the European Union's (EU) International Urban and Regional Cooperation (IURC) project. Kochi and Messina were identified as twin cities as part of the project. ■

## NEWS

# Bhutan initiates National Adaptation Plan



THIMPHU: The Royal Government of Bhutan, supported by the Green Climate Fund and UNDP, initiated a \$2.9 million project in 2019 to formulate a National Adaptation Plan (NAP). This extensive, integrated plan, developed over four years, addresses priority sectors, climate risks, required skills, and vulnerable regions. It reflects collective engagement, fostering awareness from the national to the community level, emphasizing transparency, inclusivity, and consideration of climate change's disproportionate impacts. Linked with past and ongoing climate initiatives, including the National Adaptation Programme of Action and the Climate Change Policy, the plan prioritizes resilience, sustainability, accountability and through robust monitoring and evaluation mechanisms aligned with the global Paris Agreement.

Bhutan is one of only three nations globally that is carbon negative, absorbing more carbon dioxide through its forests than it emits. Despite this environmental success, the country faces increasing vulnerability to climate change. Challenges include glacial lake outburst, floods from melting glaciers, erratic rainfall leading to landslides, impacting critical sectors like hydropower and agriculture. ■

## UNESCO and UNICEF Partner with Norway for Enhancing Nepal's School System in Response to Climate Change

KATHMANDU: **UNESCO** and UNICEF, with the backing of Norway, have launched a collaborative threeyear initiative to bolster Nepal's school education system in addressing the challenges posed by climate change. This joint effort signifies a significant stride towards addressing the local impacts of climate change, aiming to build resilience in schools and equip children and youth with the knowledge and skills essential for steering the country towards a sustainable future. Financed by the Norwegian Embassy, this initiative focuses on integrating targeted climate action into the education system, recognizing it as a key strategy to reduce and eliminate the effects of climate change. The joint project underscores the ongoing commitment of the United Nations

## Asian-Pacific Ministers Unite Against Climate Change

COLOMBO: Ministers and senior officials in the Asia-Pacific region pledged collaborative efforts to combat climate change, biodiversity loss, and pollution at the Fifth Forum of Ministers and Environment Authorities of Asia Pacific. The conference, held both inperson and online from October 4-5, 2023, in Colombo, Sri Lanka, brought together representatives from 30 Member States. Co-organized by the Ministry of Environment of Sri Lanka and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the forum aimed to restore planetary balance and protect people. Key outcomes included Japan's presentation of a draft resolution on addressing the triple planetary crisis, Sri Lanka's draft resolution on climate justice, Nepal's concept on the Hindu Kush Himalayas, and India's consideration of a resolution on sustainable lifestyles for the upcoming UN Environment Assembly session.



Fighting Climate Change through education

and Norway to confront and mitigate the climate crisis, aiming to leverage education as a powerful tool to address climate change and mitigate its impacts on education and children's learning. Commencing at a crucial juncture, the project aligns with the growing global and local recognition of the intricate links between climate change, poverty reduction, health, food security, and economic development.

# COP28 to discuss coastal resilience in Bangladesh

DHAKA: Climate adaptation in the Asia-Pacific region is a critical response to the escalating impacts of changing climatic conditions, such as intensified monsoons and rising sea levels in the Bay of Bengal. The COP28 meeting "Climate Adaptation in Asia-Pacific: Enhancing Coastal Resilience in Bangladesh and Vietnam" serves as a valuable platform for networking and building relationships with other nations, public and private entities, and international activist movements. With the Earth's atmosphere heating up, the side event emphasizes the urgency of climate change adaptation to protect ecosystems, human lives, and infrastructure. Focusing on Bangladesh and Vietnam, the objective is to discuss coastal adaptation priorities, address challenges in securing larger financial packages, and establish a sustainable model for channeling increased finance to mitigate climate change hazards.

## **EU-Funded GCoM advances CAPs for Indian Cities**

DELHI: Preparation of Climate Action Plans (CAPs) is underway for five cities under the EU-funded Global Covenant of Mayors (GCoM) project. These plans are integral for cities to comprehend their current energy consumption, emissions inventory, and climate vulnerability. Additionally, the CAPs aim to forecast key indicators and propose solutions, projects, and strategies to address future climate change challenges.

#### Pune

The City CAP Data Validation, First Stakeholder Consultation and Development and analysis of GHG Emissions Inventory/Vulnerability Assessment were completed before October 2023. Second Stakeholder Consultation and Recommendations Development took place during Oct-Nov 2023. Currently, Validation and Report Development activities are ongoing. Pune aims to launch CAP Report by March 2024. The Pune Municipal Corporation (PMC) intends to publish the draft report for public suggestions approximately one month before the official launch.

## Leh

Leh completed the City CAP Data Validation and First Stakeholder Consultation Activities during August 2023. Following a strategy similar to Pune, Leh has released a form for public suggestions. The subsequent stages of development, analysis, and validation of GHG Emissions Inventory and Vulnerability Assessment, along with the Second Stakeholder Consultation, Recommendations Development, and Report Development, are underway.

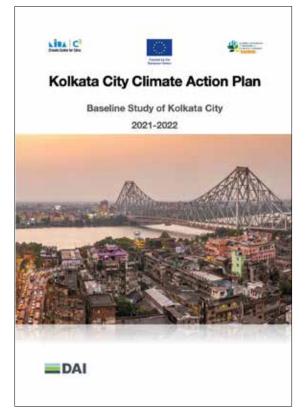
## Junagadh

Junagadh completed City CAP Data Validation and First Stakeholder Consultation during October 2023. Currently, data gaps are being collected to finalise the second stakeholder consultation. Development and analysis of GHG Emissions Inventory and Vulnerability Assessment, along with the subsequent stages of the Second Stakeholder Consultation, Recommendations Development, Report Development, and Validation and Launch of CAP Reports, are in progress.

## Jamnagar

City CAP Data Validation and First Stakeholder Consultation were completed during October 2023. Data gaps are being collected to finalise the second stakeholder consultation. The ongoing stages include the development and analysis of GHG Emissions Inventory and Vulnerability Assessment, along with the Second Stakeholder Consultation, Recommendations Development, Report Development, and Validation and Launch of CAP Reports.

## GCoM hands over data for Kolkata's City Climate Action Plan



KOLKATA: The GCoM team has officially handed over all the data, including the Baseline Study of Kolkata City Climate Action Plan, to the Kolkata Municipal Corporation on November 9, 2023. This significant study was a collaborative effort with the National Institute of Urban Affairs (NIUA) and received full support from the European Commission.

The Baseline Study reveals that Kolkata's population, along with its urban agglomeration, is estimated to reach 20 million in 2023, making it India's third most populous metropolitan area. Kolkata, being one of the major metropolitan cities in India is also a major contributor to  $CO_2$  emissions. The study calculated Kolkata's total emissions at 16.97 million tons

of CO<sub>2</sub> per year, sourced from stationary energy, transport, and waste. Notably, the East Kolkata Wetlands (EKW), spanning almost 12,000 hectares, play a crucial role as a natural sponge, absorbing excess rainfall and contributing to pollution reduction. The EKW includes intertidal marshes, salt marshes, salt meadows, sewage farms, and settling ponds. The oxidation basin within the wetlands is a rare example where environmental protection and development management have combined, showcasing a complex ecological process adopted by local farmers for resource recovery activities.

For those interested in further details, the GCoM Asia Project team can be contacted for more information on this comprehensive report.

## NEWS

# TERI Supports DMRC spread awareness about cutting emissions by metro travel



Metro ticket in Delhi now displays per capita emissions saved by opting for metro

DELHI: TERI supported DMRC in conducting an awareness-building initiative to educate passengers about the carbon emission reductions achievable by choosing the metro over motorised road transport in Delhi. Mr Sharif Qamar, Associate Director, Dr Rahul Chakraborty, Fellow, and Ms Viral Joshi, Research Associate, contributed to the project. TERI has estimated the per passenger kilometre emission from the metro and five motorised modes of road transport and provided DMRC with the detailed  $CO_2$  emissions saving impact of Delhi metro vis-à-vis motorized modes of road transport. DMRC, on August 9, 2023, rolled out the project with due credit to TERI. This initiative has greatly received media attention, highlighting its positive impact.

## Four in five cities report facing climate hazards: CDP

DELHI: Following months of wildfires across the world, CDP published cities' heat-related data from 2022, showing that extreme heat is the worst climate hazard for the world's cities. This was covered by leading environmental and citypublications, such as Business Green, Smart Cities World, edic and national publications, such as Handelsblatt and the Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung in Europe. Some of the key takeaways include:

- ♦ 4/5 of disclosing cities (80%) report facing a climate hazard to CDP in 2022;
- 70% of disclosing cities expect hazards to be more intense in future;
- Extreme heat was most reported (51%) climate hazard in cities;
- Heat-related hazards also include drought (35%) and risk of wildfires (19%).

## TERI launches Visakhapatnam's first Urban Living Lab



VISAKHAPATNAM: Energy The Resources Institute (TERI) and launched Visakhapatnam's first Urban Living Lab (ULL) under project Transformative Climate Action using Participatory data-driven decisionmaking platforms (T-CAP) on May 17, 2023, in the presence of the Vishakhapatnam's Mayor Ms G Hari Venkata Kumari and Commissioner of Greater Vishakhapatnam Municipal Corporation Mr CM Saikanth Varma, IAS. On the occasion, Mayor highlighted the mitigation and adaptation measures taken in the city and how introducing ULL in city management will help bolster climate action. Mr Varma reiterated the need to prepare a comprehensive climate planning framework to make Visakhapatnam resilient. The launch witnessed the participation of targeted as well as affected stakeholders under the project and encouraged them to engage in problem-solving exercises that were conducted at the end of the event. The event provided an ample platform to showcase joint efforts to the people of Visakhapatnam and gather their support to make the project successful.

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