

## MINUTES OF THE MEETING

### GCoM South Asia 14th Coordination Group meeting- India

November 28, 2022

#### A: Attendance

Kamilla Kristensen Rai, EUD INDIA; Edwin Koekkoek, EUD INDIA; Asih Budiati, Global Covenant of Mayors (GCoM) Asia; Ashish Verma, Global Covenant of Mayors (GCoM) South Asia; Anshul Abbasi, National Institute of Urban Affairs (NIUA); Pashim Tewari, All India Institute of Local Self-Government (AIILSG); Sharif Qamar, The Energy and Resources Institute (TERI); Keshav Jha, ICLEI SA; Subrata Chakrabarty, World Resources Institute; Vishnu Rao, AIILSG; Siddharth Thyagarajan, WRI; Zainab Agha, Climate Group; Ravi Ranjan Guru, AIILSG; Emani Kumar, ICLEI SA; and Abhishek Pandey, AIILSG

#### B: Agenda

- Update on GCoM Asia supported project- India
- Update by members of GCoM coordination group
- Update by technical coordinator on activities
- Update by Networking and Governance Coordinator on activities and upcoming events

#### C: Highlights

##### **Kamilla Kristensen Rai, EUD INDIA**

Kamilla Kristensen gave introductory remarks emphasizing that this meeting serves as a knowledge-sharing platform for all the GCOM coordination group members working towards making cities resilient and climate-smart. One of the group's objectives is the implementation of climate action plans in the 29 cities which are a part of GCoM now. Data availability was identified as one of the key tasks in the previous meeting, which remains an important point. Another talking point of the discussion, she suggested, could be recommending measures that can be tracked to measure the impact of the climate action plans. She briefly mentioned GCoM's Urban Transition Mission which aims to find flagship solutions and examples of how to deal with climate change in cities. It has six cities from India. She introduced the participating organizations and specified their roles.

##### **Edwin Koekkoek, EUD INDIA**

COVID-19 and Russia-Ukraine war showed that we need to be wary of being dependent on certain parts of the world. Regional interconnection and cooperation is the key to achieving self-sufficiency. Under the partnership, work is done in all relevant areas like climate agenda, the energy efficiency of buildings, smart-readiness of buildings, and renewable energy. These are the main elements of the city's transition to more sustainable resources. He emphasized the important role this group can play not only as a knowledge-sharing platform but also in steering actions in areas where the cities are active. Implementation is what makes plans concrete. Lastly, he urges the partners to improve all communication channels, especially social media.

##### **Asih Budiati, GCOM Asia**

Asih gave an exhaustive review of all the activities of 2022 in the GCoM Asia project and presented the Action Plan for the next year. Currently, there are 213 Asian cities under the ambit of the project. The project has given training to more than 500 city officials. Unfortunately, in India, there has been a decrease in understanding of climate change since the first training, which isn't an entirely negative result of the training. It has been observed that cities, before coming to the training, think they have a clear understanding of adaptation and mitigation, but only after the training they realize that it's not as simple a concept. It hints at some amount of learning. The results were much improved in the second workshop. According to the global database (data only submitted by the GCoM Asia project), the average GHG reductions for Asia is 49 per cent which is a high number, with major contributions from Japan and China. Asian cities are targeting to remove more than 280 million metric tonnes of carbon emissions. The more cities start to calculate their GHG emissions and submit that data; the more accurate the data can be. And lastly, she shared the timeframe of next year's main activities, including the GCoM Open Global House, Focus Group Discussion, and a regional workshop to be held in March or April.

### **Ashish Verma, GCoM Asia**

Ashish Verma, GCoM Asia, elaborated on the activities that the project will be focusing on next year, like the regional meeting in March, which will majorly focus on the financing of climate action plans. The process of information collection from the cities has started, which is crucial for making the Climate Action Plan. In Pune, for instance, 90 per cent, and in Kolkata, 50 per cent of the data has been collected. In Kolkata, C40 is supporting this process. There was also a presentation by GCoM at COP27, where the Principal Secretary from the Climate Change Department, Government of Gujarat, participated. A report on which will be submitted soon.

### **Tour-de-table**

All the participants were invited to share inputs during Tour-de-table on three points mentioned in the agenda.

- Concrete activities and synergy
- From Climate Action Plan to Implementation
- Suggestions on engaging new members in India to the Coordination Group

### **Anshul Abbasi, NIUA**

Anshul Abbasi, NIUA, began by updating about the contract on the Climate Action Plan, which is underway and is awaiting approval. A methodology is being devised to hold a stakeholder consultation in Pune. About concrete activities and synergy in the larger context, NIUA focusses on capacity building, like training for Climate Smart Cities Assessment Framework (CSCAF) indicators – a government-led initiative – for which modules have been developed, and trainings have been imparted through regional training institutes throughout the country. More than 4,000 officials have been trained so far. Another major focus of NIUA is on involving youth and climate practitioners. There are two initiatives – Climate Practitioners' India Network and Climate Data Observatory – to engage youth and mainstream Climate Action through technology. Communication and outreach are important factors for climate action.

Regarding the same, NIUA is also organizing climate awareness campaigns. The last such campaign received four lakh impressions on social media. Apart from this, they have also contributed to the National

Mission for Sustainable Habitat report, which has recently been revised. So, the major focus is on climate action plans, capacity building and communications.

### **Pashim Tewari, AILSG**

Pashim Tewari, AILSG, summarized All India Institute of Local Self-Government's role in strengthening local urban governments. AILSG has contributed to 30 master plans across India, putting chapters on climate action and energy. AILSG covers 70 cities across India to improve solid and liquid waste management through activities like waste-to-energy conversion, compost energy and biogas making. Similar activities are being done with faecal sludge management in Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh, Assam and Jharkhand. Here, the capacity of ULBs has been increased manifold. Faecal Sludge Management plants have been put up. In a project in Punjab, executed through CSR, about 30,000 metric tonnes of bio-waste was used, which was earlier being burned and is now being converted into fuel pellets which can be used locally. AILSG is supporting 15 states in implementing Energy Conservation Building Code (ECBC) by training the staff in making buildings more energy efficient. The states are now making sure that they include energy efficiency as one of the mandates for the buildings. This is being implemented in commercial buildings specifically, but also in residential houses. Wherever master plans are being proposed, AILSG is also suggesting ways of making transportation more efficient, including incorporating electric vehicles (EVs) for public transportation and allocating land for constructing EV infrastructure. Apart from these, capacity building is also one of the areas of the work of AILSG. Regarding including new members, it was suggested that a better approach would be for the partner organizations to consider the ideas of people and organizations working in the same sector and present them at these meetings. This is an inclusive method without making the group too large to handle.

### **Sharif Qamar, TERI**

Sharif Qamar, TERI presented a summary of their work in the transport sector wherein they work with national government bodies like the logistics division to reduce emissions and improve logistics efficiency. They've developed a tool to capture data for emissions in the freight sector. TERI is also working with the Bureau of Energy Efficiency on fuel economy norms in partnership with the International Institute of Automotive Technology (ICAT). They're also working with private organisations at the city level. For instance, they're partnering with Coca-Cola to reduce carbon emissions in Lucknow. Earlier this year, a study was conducted on EV readiness, and capacity needs assessment for Indian cities and came up with a methodology to rank cities in terms of EV readiness. The report is available online. TERI is also working with Bihar State Pollution Control Board to reduce congestion, a short-term goal at this stage, and introduce decarbonisation strategies in Patna. It will hopefully be rolled on to Muzaffarpur and Gaya. TERI is working alongside Kerala Government to implement policy guidelines for the state's retrofitment of vehicles. In the urban sector, TERI is working with NIUA and United Nations University (UNU) for the GCAP project in Vishakhapatnam to look at the participatory angle of climate change related activities. TERI's role is to create a participatory framework and learn from past activities like establishing the Urban Living Lab (ULL) in Panaji, Goa, with the support of the Danish embassy. TERI is now creating an Urban Living Lab in Vishakhapatnam.

### **Keshav Jha, ICLEI SA**

ICLEI is working actively on the ground with 20 cities out of 29. It is also looking at public-private partnerships and climate financing for Indian cities. Two points must be highlighted here. First, it is

working on long-term strategies (LTS) with NIUA. And it has been included in the LTS document released by the ministry at COP27. Second, ICLEI is part of the committee set up by the Government of India (GOI) and has submitted its input on the municipal infrastructure front to the GOI. Secondly, ICLEI is also part of a high-level committee on urban planning issues set up by GOI, which the Finance Minister announced on February 1, 2022. As part of the committee, they're contributing a chapter on 'urban resilience', which will come into being by early next year. Based on Metropolitan Development Work done by the EU in Mumbai, they're coming out with a model for future cities. As far as joining new members is concerned, the group should establish links with the existing Climate Alliance Group under NIUA.

### **Subrata Chakrabarty, WRI**

WRI has collaborated with states like Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, Assam and Chhattisgarh, to name a few. They've been working with states to revise their State Climate Action Plans. They're supporting states to make their long-term strategies and mainstream climate action. WRI is also collaborating with cities, and in MP, they have formulated climate action plans for seven smart cities. Those action plans will be submitted to the cities soon. On the capacity-building front, WRI has collaborated with ICLEI SA and IUC, wherein over 18 cities have been reached, and more than 200 government officials have been trained.

### **Zainab Agha, Climate Group**

Climate Group is the Secretariat to the Under2 Coalition, which is made up of more than 220 governments worldwide. In India, Climate Group works with state governments. Climate Group also works with corporations from around the world, including working with influential corporations in renewable energy, EVs and energy productivity. It recently concluded a project on states' climate leadership through which a compendium of best practices was published and re-circulated around the states. There's also an ongoing project called State Climate Fellows, professional government fellows in five states. These fellows have supported the states substantially regarding climate action goals. There's a lot of scope for collaborations with other organisations and vertical integration with states and cities. As a suggestion, she said getting a monthly newsletter from organisations can help communicate new developments and also suggest scope for collaborations. Peer-to-peer learning is critical in such a diverse country as India.

### **Ravi Ranjan Guru, AILSG**

A proposed list of targeted cities was shared with the group. AILSG will hold the 6th Asian Cities Summit from April 5 – 7, 2023. The last summit in Goa was hugely successful and witnessed participation from a total of 500 delegates, including over 200 mayors from Indian and global cities. AILSG is expecting 100 speakers in ten technical and parallel sessions. There will be an event on GCoM as well this time. He suggested the GCoM merge their regional workshop to be held in March with this event since they'll be held around the same time.

### **Update by ICLEI on 'Technical Working Groups'**

Currently, the GCOM Secretariat supports coordinating city network partners through five Technical Working Groups, which provide recommendations for implementing the GCoM alliance's main initiatives and areas of support. They are:

1. Global and Regional Coherence

2. Data Management, Monitoring, and Reporting

3. Finance

4. Communications

5. Research and Innovation

Work is currently being done on the difficulties of dormant cities. A set of letters has been drafted to send to those cities and ask them to leave the group if they aren't active on the ground. They're also responding to the cities' call for ideas and tools. It also includes working on partnerships with national and regional covenants for the COP27 events and other international conferences and workshops to ensure that GCoM cities are represented at these events. A set of reports on updates and activities of GCoM cities were mentioned, which were released at COP27.

**Summary:** The event concluded with key suggestion on

- The vision of the group is support the climate smart cities by working in synergy and in same direction
- Mandate of the coordination group is to contribute to climate action of the 29 GCoM cities with vision for the next two years 2022 to 2024
- One of the main objective is to discuss the availability of right Data when needed in coordination among the partners
- Focus on enhancing the timely communications with cites through proper channels and mediums likes reports, newsletter and articles
- Incorporation of the initiatives of European Union and other partners in the upcoming newsletters and Urban Update Magazine

Meeting Photographs

