

## GCoM South Asia Cluster Meet

26<sup>th</sup> October, 2023 | Mumbai, India

Mumbai, India: 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 Abhishek Pandey, Team Leader, Networking, and Governance Coordinator, GCoM South Asia. He provided updates on GCoM Activities and upcoming regional workshops. He discussed 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 at Thiruvananthapuram Corporation. The Municipal Corporation of Thiruvananthapuram showcased the 'Centralized Digital Pass Issue' System for Septage Collection, Transportation, Disposal, and Payment.

Last but not least, member cities were asked to share their existing challenges and specify the support they need from the project to address those issues. Cities expressed their desire to continue participating in such sessions to stay informed about the developments within the GCoM network.

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 the diversity of cities for selection as pilot cities for the preparation of CAPs.

There should be cities from all the geographic locations rather than focusing on one state. Prof. Om Prakash Mathur, Dr. Amitabh Kundu, Prof. Sneha Palantikar among many prominent urban experts of India attended the session. 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.

