International Conference on "Implementing Urban Infrastructure: New Approaches to Public Private Partnerships (PPP) and Municipal Finance Innovation" (November 15-16, 2018), New Delhi. Speakers L to R: Mr G V Sanjay Reddy, Vice Chairman, GVK Group, Prof Om Prakash Mathur, Senior Fellow and Chair, Institute of Social Sciences, Dr Junaid Ahmad, Country Director, The World Bank, Mr U P Singh, IAS, Secretary, Ministry of Water Resources, Mr D S Mishra, Secretary, Ministry of Housing and Urban Development, Mr Marco Kamiya, UN-Habitat, Nairobi, Mr Alkesh Sharma, CEO and Managing Director, Delhi-Mumbai Industrial Corridor (DMIC), DC, Dr Rana Hasan, Asian Development Bank.

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Local governments’ challenging agenda

Today, the world is consuming more resources and producing more waste that nature can absorb and replace in the year. The ecological crisis is real as it manifests itself in deforestation, soil erosion, depletion of water resources and accumulation of greenhouse gases. High production and consumption are the major sources of our environmental ills. Excessive extraction and consumption of natural resources, especially of fossil fuels poses grave threats to survival of life on our planet. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, a group of scientists convened by the United Nations, has issued its most alarming report to date about the severe economic and humanitarian crises expected to hit the world by 2040.

The GDP-led growth model uses vast resources and generates enormous waste besides compromising environment standards and norms. The development model that countries, rich and poor, have followed may have resulted in rapid economic growth but it has serious ecological implications. The goal of sustainable development requires that nations collectively and cooperatively address and mitigate the damage done to environment. This is a task which can be undertaken only when we change our development model and bring local governments and local communities at the centre-stage of governance.

A democracy that believes in itself renews itself. Living democracy and dreaming democracy helps recreate democracy. This is possible at the local government level. People’s faith recreates people’s power. People don’t live in national governments; they live in local governments.

Given the importance of natural resource management at a time of unprecedented ecological crisis, national governments have begun to decentralize certain aspects of natural resource governance to sub-national units. Water is becoming a potential source of crisis. Oil has alternatives like natural gas, wind, solar and nuclear energy, but the only alternative to water is water.

However, the role of local governments in environmental governance is changing very slowly. The climate change discourse has prompted only peripheral change. In most developing countries, climate change is perceived only as an environmental issue still being handled by environment departments. Anything being considered an environmental issue still remains somewhat on the periphery of governance in terms of decision making and resource allocation.

The effects of climate change are being experienced globally but felt tangibly at the local level. The local governments and local communities have had little opportunities for their voices to be heard on global platforms. Dialogues and negotiations on climate change are currently influenced by global economics. In many ways, local governments have become victims of a global ‘tragedy of the commons’. In reality, in terms of adaptation and resilience, local governments are best placed to prepare communities for the climate change. Until this critical role of local governments is recognized and they are given the requisite resources and training and, above all, a voice on global platforms, the people will remain vulnerable to the impacts of climate change.

— Ash Narain Roy
What’s New

Future-Ready Cities: Focus of World Cities Summit 2018

Over 130 mayors and city leaders from 128 cities participated at the sixth edition of the World Cities Summit 2018 held in Singapore from 8-12 July 2018. The platform enabled the participants to share learnings and to address challenges and innovations for future-ready cities. In the summit, around 16 Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) and agreements were signed, paving the way for collaborations between cities and stakeholders in the public, private and people sectors.

Deliberations and interactions at this global platform was attended by more than 1,700 delegates and provided opportunities for city leaders, industry experts and leading academics to explore how cities could be made more liveable and sustainable through better urban governance, planning, building resilience and leveraging on innovations. About 24,000 trade attendees (compared to more than 21,000 in 2016) including government officials, industry leaders and city experts, academics as well as representatives from the business community across 110 countries and regions got together in this landmark event.

Going much beyond the broad themes of urban governance and liveable cities, to embracing the future of cities through innovation and collaboration was one of the major highlights of the WCS 2018. The Summit showcased integrated urban solutions necessary to address pressing challenges faced by cities and forged new partnerships thereby bringing together the top stakeholders across the public, private and people sectors. Focusing on creating people-centric cities and combining cutting edge practices of good governance and citizens engagement the discussions centred on how cities could become more inclusive, creative and sustainable along with a high quality of life.

The Lee Kuan Yew World City Prize 2018 Laureate, Seoul, South Korea, shared at the Prize Lecture on how leveraging smart technology and the collective input of its citizens have helped tackle issues associated with rapid urbanization. Four cities were accorded Special Mentions during the event; Hamburg, Kazan, Surabaya and Tokyo as they further demonstrated how they could overcome planning challenges to develop cities of opportunities for their citizens.

The biennial World Cities Summit is an exclusive platform for government leaders and industry experts to address liveable and sustainable city challenges, share integrated urban solutions and forge new partnerships. Jointly organised by Singapore’s Centre for Liveable Cities and Urban Redevelopment Authority, key highlights of the Summit included the Lee Kuan Yew World City Prize, the annual World Cities Summit Mayors Forum and Young Leaders Symposium. The next World Cities Summit would be held in 2020 in Singapore while the World Cities Summit Mayors Forum 2019 will be held in Medellin, Colombia.
South Africa goes green with ‘zero carbon’ buildings

The Green Building Council of South Africa’s initiative of going green with buildings has resonated very well with citizens. The “My Green Home” effort to make buildings more energy efficient with energy saving LED lights, low-flow showerheads, rooftop solar panels and even winter insulation has been welcomed by families in the middle class housing settlements in the country. Some accounts point to energy costs falling by about 90 per cent. South Africa bearing the brunt of climate-change with Cape Town facing drought and Durban seeing rising waters and flooding, four cities have come together to create zero-carbon buildings that does not add to climate change in their use of energy.

These cities in South Africa are working with the G40 Cities Alliance and the plan is that new buildings in Johannesburg, Cape Town, eThekwini and Tshwane to become much more energy efficient, to cut electricity bills and greenhouse gas emissions. The G40 Cities Alliance is a group of major world cities trying to cut climate-changing emissions. Cities that achieve “net zero carbon” would produce very few climate-changing emissions, with those still produced offset by means such as planting carbon-absorbing trees.

Research points out that buildings make up the largest single source of emissions in G40 cities globally, with over half of the total emissions. The answer is to ensure that new buildings are highly efficient and run largely on renewable energy, bring in better building codes and so on by 2020. The cities plan to partner with building experts from Sustainable Energy Africa, an organization that promotes equitable and low carbon clean energy development.

Commonwealth Local Government Conference 2019 on Citizen-centered local government

The theme of the Commonwealth Local Government Conference – CLGC 2019; Citizen centered local government: driving inclusive social and economic change was announced by the CLGF with the partnership of the Ministry of Provincial Councils, Local Government and Sport and the Federation of Sri Lankan Local Government Conference. It was a flagship event that focused on strategies to enable local government to work more closely with citizens to drive the social and economic change required to underpin the work to build the communities that people want for the future. It was for the first time that the conference was being held in Asia and provided an able platform for local governments that are tasked with creating communities that are safe, inclusive, sustainable and prosperous along with the challenges to provide high quality services that would meet the needs of all citizens.

Over 600 senior policy makers from around the Commonwealth including local and national governments, regional local government associations, research pioneers and academics, civil society and the private sector attended the Conference. There were opportunities to learn and share about successes and innovations from Commonwealth countries, including showcasing good practices from the host island nation, Sri Lanka. Moreover, the outcomes would be presented to the 2020 CHOGM in Rwanda. The CLGF conferences result in practical policy recommendations for implementation by many members throughout the Commonwealth. Local Governments play a major role in facilitating the necessary social cohesion and inclusive growth to achieve the UN Sustainable Development Goals.
Global Cities unite against pollution with Tokyo Declaration

Twenty-two megacities around the globe under the Tokyo Declaration have committed themselves to reduce waste and to fight against air pollution through a mechanism of knowledge sharing on technologies and other know-how. This was announced during the Tokyo Forum for Clean City and Clear Sky that was hosted by the Tokyo Metropolitan Government. The event saw governors and officials from Tokyo, Yokohama, Hanoi, Hong Kong, Paris, Singapore, Sydney, Ulaanbaatar, Yangon, Durban and Tomsk sharing information and key knowledge tips on recycling and waste management initiatives implemented by them.

The participants pledged to strengthen recycling systems, promote zero-emission vehicles and increase public awareness as part of the goals that lead to the 2030 agenda for Sustainable Development adopted by the United National General Assembly in 2015. Citing a report that says that about 80 per cent of those living in urban areas are breathing air that is polluted and that exceed the WHO limits the issues for discussion included air pollution, food waste and motivating circular economies to focus on recycling, reducing and reusing waster materials. The G10 Cities Alliance, a network of 96 cities around the world, stressed that the effects of air pollution was resulting in fatalities increasingly in Africa and Asia and that nine out of ten people in the world are presently breathing in polluted air that is unhealthy. Lack of monitoring systems and data is one of the major problems that cities face in the battle against air pollution.

While there are technologies available and means to access meaningful data on environmental problems, huge costs for these systems means less cities can afford them. Tokyo lead the way forward by announcing a two-fold plan to address climate change being an Olympic and Paralympics host city. The Tokyo Metropolitan Government initiated Team Mottainai (Too Precious to Waste) aimed at bringing together volunteers, nonprofit organization and experts on climate change issues to herald a movement and to propose a holistic social approach to tackle air pollution and food waste, while the other strategy was to increase the sales of zero-emission automobiles by 50 per cent by 2030. Tokyo hopes to pass on this legacy to the Paris Olympics in 2024 and to Los Angeles in 2028.

Rwanda hosts CLGF focusing on gender networking in governance

Kigali hosted the 37th Commonwealth Local Government Forum (CLGF) board meeting with member states discussing gender networking in governance. The aim was to bring in perspectives of gender and development through the Rwandan example. The meeting succeeding the last one in Malta in 2017 was officially opened by Minister of Local Government, Francis Kaboneka and attended by over 48 Commonwealth member state representatives from across the globe.

The event focused on adopting CLGFs gender strategy along with capacity building and research programs. The breakthrough work that Rwanda had accomplished in closing the gender divide was one of the main planks on which the discussions were held. The country had managed to implement a policy of 30 per cent representation in leadership roles with more representation in the parliament and women would now occupy over 60 per cent seats in the Fourth parliament. While countries like South Africa and Madagascar had gone ahead and implemented gender policies at about 30 per cent the objective was to see that all member states follow suit and more women are seen in responsible positions in local governments. Notably the CLGF event was held in Rwanda in appreciation of its remarkable commitment to SDG 5 on gender equality and SDG 11 that focuses on sustainable and inclusive cities.
What's New

**European Union should work with Local Authorities to address Migration**

The European Union assembly comprising local and regional politicians expressed their concern about the challenges being faced by islands and coastal regions in the Mediterranean with a call for greater shared European responsibility and investment. A simultaneous call by the European Committee of the Regions pressed the European Union to ramp up support for cities and regions and border countries on the front line of managing the migration challenge. The assembly also called for local and regional authorities to be involved in every stage of framing and implementing the EU’s migration-related policies, in taking care of new arrivals and later integrating them. In addition to asking for more funding, training and technical support for cities and regions, the European Committee of the Regions suggested that the EU should examine the possibility of “transferring responsibility for examining asylum applications from national to EU level”. The President of the European Committee of Regions (CoR) stressed that the EU budget after 2020 should increase with a cohesive policy that supports social inclusion leading the way forward as a strong pillar for Europe’s future.

A radical re-think was mooted in the area of the integration of the migrants in Europe covering important policy arenas at the same time providing access to EU funds for cities and regions. A key area of discussion was the failure of member states in adhering to agreements to relocate asylum seekers equally across EU countries and regions and the need for a comprehensive policy that would make migration manageable in the future. The discussions also focused attention on global trends, the experiences of refugees, and efforts to integrate new arrivals in Europe into the labor market.

**Strong Municipalities can build a strong Ukraine**

In a vibrant push reinforcing Ukraine’s commitment to major decentralization reforms, self-government and pursuing systematic policy dialogue between all levels of governance, a joint day of dialogue took place in Ternopil organized by the Association of Ukrainian Cities on 24 September 2018. The specific forum between Ukrainian central and local authorities was initiated and facilitated by the AUC for discussion and consultation between all relevant stakeholders involved in the reform process. The consultation process saw the participation of over 400 Ukrainian Mayors debating as partners in the multilevel governance systems along with national associations of local and regional authorities. Promoting democratic values and at the same time increasing the pace of development for wellbeing of communities also featured in the discussions.

In the backdrop of the 30th anniversary of the European Charter of Local Self-Government, the “relevance of the Charter as a unique international legal instrument which enshrines the principles of subsidiarity and proximity and protects local self-government” was also highlighted. The commitment of Ukraine to this charter and its values underlined many of its decentralization reform agenda including the ratification of the Additional Protocol on the right to participate in the affairs of a local authority seen as an important indicator of the determination to the implementation of democratic principles at the local level. Discussions also took place on a wide array of approaches related to citizens’ participation and steps to insure transparency in relations between local authorities and its constituencies at a related event earlier.
The Department of Urban Studies and Planning (DUSP) at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Cambridge established in 1968 a Special Program in Urban and Regional Studies (SPURS), with the initial objective of inviting a select group of mid-career planning practitioners from the developing countries to MIT for a year and giving them an opportunity to reflect on how they see their current professional engagements in the context of the evolving future.

The Program was designed to be broad-based, aligned with the mood of the time, and structured to enable the select group to think and reflect, take courses as they considered appropriate to shaping their futures, write papers, attend seminars, and interact with the MIT faculty and students. The Program aimed at professional retooling, leadership development and deepening cultural understanding between the USA and developing nations. SPURS, globally cited as one of the leading programs for mid-career professionals, has hosted thus far about 700 practitioners from about 120 countries around the world.

On 11-12 October 2018, the DUSP at the MIT hosted nearly 100 SPURS fellows to celebrate 50 years of SPURS, holding a Conference of academic leaders and professional planners from across the world.
world to reconsider the role of the reflective practitioners in the world that is now more urban than rural.

The 50 years of SPURS celebration was aimed at reflecting on the future of SPURS, guided by the simple fact that the world is different in 2018 than it was in 1968: the one-way flow of knowledge and expertise from the developed to the developing countries that characterized the 1960s have evolved to a new situation where some developing nations such as China and India are growing at a faster rate than the USA, paving the way to think of SPURS as a two-way learning process, or co-learning to steer urban changes toward socially equitable outcomes.

New opportunities for urban innovations have emerged in the developing world, underscoring the need for innovative thinking in order to address a range of critical challenges - environmental degradation, unemployment and inequalities, lack of mobility, climate change and the like. In a way, problems facing the developing countries have become more complex because of growing violence and insecurity, international migration and rapid urbanization without a corresponding increase in housing delivery, increasing obesity and health problems, calling upon programs like SPURS to rethink its mandate and organization.

SPURS has thus far focused on continuing education of individual mid-career planners with varying sector interests. This individualized and flexible approach has benefitted the SPURS Fellows, but it has contributed little to collective problem-solving efforts and expertise, now considered indispensable for a digitized world. The heterogeneous composition of the Fellows with varying interests make it difficult to put them for such exercises. Also, one of the initial expectations from SPURS was that the fellows and DUSP faculty will jointly create a synergy of “theorizing from practice” – it has not materialized, and the immense potential of the Fellows to work closely with students on a regular basis, remain unmet. It is now poised to change with the impressive number of SPURS alumni serving as a huge intellectual resource and many of the SPURS alumni being engaged in important activities in their own countries.

The DUSP is working on a new business model and a different fund - raising strategy. Professor Bish Sanyal, Director SPURS and Ford International Professor of Urban Development and Planning at the MIT has constituted an International Advisory Board to articulate a new vision for SPURS and advise how to pursue the new goal through integrated efforts between the SPURS at MIT, its faculty and regional resources and activities.

Prof. Om Prakash Mathur, currently a Senior Fellow and Chair, Urban Studies, Institute of Social Sciences, New Delhi who was a SPURS fellow (1970-71), member of the International Advisory Board, representing the Asian Region participated in this meeting.
In Dehradun’s recent elections, women were elected to the post of Parshad (Councillors) in 38 out of 100 wards. The number is barely more than the third of seats reserved for women as per the 74th Constitutional Amendment. The under-representation of women is not due to a dearth of talent or lack of political ambitions. Our research (2015 to 2018) with former women Parshads and aspiring candidates demonstrates that women excel at local urban governance, building strong connections with constituents and getting work completed with limited resources. So why aren’t more of these women elected? We identify five main reasons.

First, despite half of seats in Uttarakhand’s Panchayats (Village Councils) being reserved for women, the number is only a third of seats in Urban Local Bodies (ULBs). To achieve gender justice, transforming the culture of local governance, and ensuring substantive representation of women’s interests, we advocate 50% seats reserved in local governance in both rural and urban areas. Such an increase is required because parties fail to give tickets to women in unreserved seats. Of the 66 seats not reserved for women, BJP and Congress (the two major parties in Uttarakhand) fielded only 6 and 4 women candidates respectively. That 5 of these women won speaks against the notion that women lack electability. Throughout Dehradun we spoke to many disappointed women, who after years, if not decades of social and party related work, were overlooked when it came to giving out tickets. Women complained of new-comers with little public presence and...
no record of work in the area being given preference over them. The public support these women enjoyed was highlighted in several wards, where women put up strong campaigns as independent candidates in general seats, despite not having the party symbol advantage.²

Third, parties still frequently give tickets for reserved seats to the wives of party supporters rather than drawing upon the talent among their women cadre. The stereotype of ‘Parshad Pati’ (where husband is the real and active Parshad) is simplistic. Our research (Jakimow 2017; see also John 2007; Ghosh and Lama Rewel 2005) reveals that women often grow into the role of Parshad, developing their own leadership skills and political ambitions. Most (though admittedly not all) play an important role in family-based teams that undertake the work of Parshad. The argument that reservations don’t work as elected women are inactive or incompetent is a diversion. The issue is rather that competent, active and politically ambitious women are not being given the opportunity to contest elections under a party symbol.

Rotating most reserved seats every five years further hinders women’s chances of being re-elected. Many female elected officials start with relatively lower capacity due to the different opportunities afforded women compared to men throughout their lifetimes. Our research that followed women Parshads during the previous term observed the ways they developed the knowledge, skills, networks and know-how to become exceptionally effective within their five year term (Jakimow 2017). The majority of these women were not given the party ticket when their seats became unreserved in the recent elections. Parties thereby wasted the talent cultivated in the previous term.

Finally, campaign styles of men and women are different. There are advantages to being a woman candidate, such as an ability to connect better with voters in door to door campaigning. At the same time, many expressed frustration that other candidates (including campaign teams in which women were running with their husbands), distributed alcohol to voters, and held alcohol fuelled parties for voters and supporters. In several seats that we followed, these strategies seemingly worked. Due to social norms of gender acceptable behaviour, as well as personal decisions not to encourage male drinking that harms women, women candidates are far less likely to engage in such strategies. The failure to address these illegal campaign strategies adds to the under-representation of women.

None of these are new issues, yet they speak to an ongoing lack of commitment by the government and political parties to seriously support women’s participation in urban local governance. The debates need to stop centring around women’s lack of capacity and the phenomena of Parshad Pati. Rather, we need to examine and address the mechanisms through which highly talented and ambitious women are made to sit on the side-lines.
Preamble:
Local Governments and their elections are not receiving due importance it deserves, from the various stakeholders of democracy including the National & State governments. There is thus an urgent need to bring local governments and their elections to the centre stage of the political discourse, if democracy is to flourish in true spirit at the grassroots level.


Recommendations made by the participants in the conference are:

**PART A**
Outcomes endorsed during the plenary by national and international participants,

1. The benefit of an international platform to focus on local government elections conducting activities such as:
   a. continuous exchange of ideas and good practices; including latest information technology, processes and practices
   b. capacity building (job/operational training, professional development, stakeholder awareness training, peer to peer exchange) for key stakeholders throughout the electoral cycle.
   c. to assess the needs of training and exchange of independent election observers
   d. conducting research and new innovation for local government elections.

2. The benefits of networks between local governments, for advocacy and sharing of good practices and research elections and local governance.

3. In response to 1 & 2 above the State Election Commission of Maharashtra offered to the Institute of Democracy & Elections for Good Governance (IDEGG), to work on key issues relating to local government elections and work as a focal point and convener, at national as well international level.

**PART B**
Outcomes accepted by the Indian participants especially the various State Election Commissions

1. Governments at national and sub national levels are requested to:
(a) devolve funds, functions & functionaries to local governments in a time bound manner
(b) create mechanism for training of both prospective & elected representatives especially women and vulnerable sections at the earliest.
(c) undertake and implement urgent electoral reforms to cleanse the system of corrupt practices, in particular
  - debarring candidates with criminal backgrounds from contesting elections;
  - limit the eligibility of a person to enjoy a maximum 2 terms in a local body;
  - curtail the undue influence of money power and social media.
(d) ensure adequate and timely financial grant for meeting election expenses by electoral authorities

Empower SECs to have full control on election cycle from delimitation, reservation, voter list preparation upto post election settlement of accounts.

2. Election Commissions:
   (a) should use the constitutional powers vested in them, & try to be fiercely independent;
   (b) “having a societal conversation” i.e. between SECs, ECI and other key stakeholders for getting
      suggestions for necessary reforms.
   (c) should fill-in the vacuous areas and gaps in law, wherever possible, for making elections free, fair and transparent;
   (d) evolve innovative methods to enhance preparation of authentic and error free electoral rolls;
   (e) Promote voter/citizen education and awareness for better elections for healthier democracy.
   (f) may consider the following for ‘Transparency’ and ‘Full Disclosure’:
      (i) Constituency Development Plan may be made compulsory for all the candidates, giving their vision for development of that ward, and be displayed in public domain for voters’ information;
      (ii) system of yellow cards / red cards etc for their violations / defaults / misbehaviour during the period of MCC and its display in public domain;
      (iii) Audit of expenditure incurred by candidates and political parties through auditors empanelled with AG;
      (iv) System to gather information regarding contributions made by third parties etc.
The Urban 20 Mayors Summit

The Inaugural U20 Mayoral Summit took place in Buenos Aires. The Urban 20 or U20 is a pioneering diplomatic event that is hosted by C40 Cities and the UCLG. The objective of this forum is to develop messages and solutions in a collective and inclusive manner to address global issues like climate change and action, work and social integration. This was a precursor to the G20 Summit that was held in Argentina in the last week of October and seen as the first initial step of a long-term process for cities to contribute to the G20. The U20 aims to highlight the profile of urban issues on the G20 agenda to finally lead to the Mayors summit in Buenos Aires.

Urban 20 is composed of 25 global cities: Beijing, Berlin, City of Buenos Aires, Chicago, Durban, Hamburg, Jakarta, Johannesburg, London, Los Angeles, Madrid, Melbourne, Mexico City, Milan, Montreal, Moscow, New York, Paris, Rio de Janeiro, Rome, Sao Paulo, Seoul, Sydney, Tokyo, Tshwane. The Urban 20 (U20) was developed in 2017 under the leadership of the mayor of the City of Buenos Aires, Horacio Rodríguez Larreta, and the mayor of Paris and president of the group of cities G40, Anne Hidalgo. It was launched on December 12, 2017 at One Planet Summit in Paris. The initiative is chaired by the cities of Buenos Aires and Paris, and convened by the Climate Leadership Group of G40 Cities, in collaboration with United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG).

Fund Boost for England Councils to address Migration and Integration

In a landmark announcement, councils across England would receive a share of a further £19 million to alleviate pressures on local services resulting from the recent migration. This latest allocation from the Controlling Migration Fund includes more than £16 million for 38 projects. Local authorities have envisaged plans to address local challenges on housing, education and health services arising from recent migration providing benefits to the whole community. It also includes £1.75 million of funding to help new refugees into work and integrate into their new communities after their asylum decision is made. It is hoped that this increase in funding would help in delivering quick results and support local communities in addressing challenges together.

Since the Fund’s launch this new tranche takes the overall funding to £73.5 million. The Fund helps mainly to address issues of increasing English language skills and support networks, providing support for livelihoods and tackle rogue landlords all the while boosting community integration. For example the North Lincolnshire council project which has a rich diverse culture is keen to ensure that all communities have access to key services, support and advice to handhold them in the process of integration. The Fund would bridge the gap and enable existing and new communities, landlords, tenants, businesses, and partners to work together to establish a more cohesive, stronger and settled community. In this endeavor working with critical partners and stakeholders like the Police, Home Office, waste services, safer neighborhoods and environmental health is seen as paramount.

Similarly, a project in Blackburn funded in 2017, saw great success in supporting refugee families into permanent housing thereby opening up temporary accommodation in the area. It was observed that refugees are keen to master the English language in order to find work. A joint project between the Home Office and the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government would also pilot a number of Local Authority Asylum Support Liaison Officers to work with those granted refugee status and provide them with information and support to help transition from Government-provided accommodation to mainstream society. Around 35 officers would work in 19 local authorities to help facilitate those not getting refugee status to return to their country of origin voluntarily.
Examples in Localizing SDGs

The International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD) have documented cases of Hawaii, Kelowna, Baltimore and Winnipeg as working on a system to track how well their citizens are doing against specific indicators. According to an article published by the IISD, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) have promoted the use of indicators to track progress in the fight to end poverty, inequality and to stop climate change and recognize that sustainability is a universal goal in which all countries and communities can play an important role in achieving this agenda. The British Columbia Council for International Cooperation and the Global Empowerment Coalition of the Central Okanagan initiated a SDG Scorecards project to show how communities in the province are progressing towards the SDG targets.

The Scorecards provide a snapshot of progress, helping communities and citizens identify areas where they excel and where improvement is needed. The comparison with other local municipalities also allows communities and groups to share knowledge with each other on how to achieve results. The ratings also go a long way in encouraging participation by governments, local residents and organizations. Similarly, University of Baltimore and the Baltimore Neighborhood Indicator Alliance (BNIA) have been collecting data in local communities since 2000. Since the adoption of the SDGs, BNIA compared their locally developed community indicators to the SDGs to identify overlap and gaps between the two indicator sets. Now the BNIA will be reviewing the City of Baltimore’s Sustainability plan and placing this within the global framework with the aim to frame the existing priorities of a city within a global perspective.

The IISD documents yet another important initiative, the Hawaii Green Growth’s Aloha + Challenge, which is seen as a local framework for SDG achievement. It is a grassroots initiative that has identified locally and culturally appropriate indicators and metrics that are tracked on an online dashboard. Here the SDGs are a framework that reminds Hawaiians that, in their culture, sustainability and holistic thinking are embedded in traditional life and can be revived today to create a more sustainable Hawaii. For an island state like Hawaii, there is an added importance to share the SDG message, as only a global effort can help reduce the island’s risk from rising sea levels and the impacts of climate change. Another remarkable turn was done by a partnership of the International Institute for Sustainable Development and the United Way of Winnipeg with Peg. It is the City of Winnipeg’s community indicator system that tracks and publishes over 60 local indicators—from childhood mortality to recycling rates—to measure the city’s progress.

Global Parliament of Mayors: Empowering Cities as Drivers of Change

The Global Parliament of Mayors hosted around 100 Mayors in one of its largest Annual Summit at Bristol from 21-23 October 2018. The agenda was to focus on an action-focused summit that addressed some of the biggest challenges facing today’s world cities. The theme was empowering cities as drivers of change with deliberations on global governance and the urgent need for the influence, expertise and leadership of cities and linking them with how international policy is shaped. The event provided mayoral delegates with a global network of connections and a space to develop the collective city voice necessary to drive positive change. The program also engaged participants in decision-making, with panels, debate and voting on priority issues including migration and inclusion, urban security and health and at the same time motivated them to influence decisions on the most pressing issues of the times.
Global Cities’ Commitment to Paris Agreement

Mayors of 26 cities have committed to create green and healthy streets and have pledged to procure only zero-emission buses from 2025 and ensure that major areas of their city are zero emission by 2030 reaffirming their zeal to deliver on the ambitions of the Paris Agreement. This step aims to prevent 11,000 premature deaths per year from air pollution amongst others. They also plan to become emission neutral by 2050. Around 815 cities had earlier signed the One Planet Charter to reinforce their commitment and take continued actions to reach a zero emission buildings and zero waste objective.

The Global Climate Action Summit held in San Francisco saw a series of bold pledges with cities committing to the specific climate action and policies needed to keep global temperature rise to below 1.5 degrees. Twelve cities that included Birmingham, Greater Manchester, Honolulu, Medellin, Oslo, Oxford, Rotterdam, Santa Monica, Seoul, Tokyo, Warsaw, & West Hollywood committed to deliver a zero emission mobility future. With the signing of the G40 Green & Healthy Streets Declaration, the pioneering city leaders pledged to procure only zero-emission buses from 2025 and ensure that a major area of their city is zero emission by 2030. These cities join 14 others already committed to Green & Healthy Streets: Paris, London, Los Angeles, Copenhagen, Barcelona, Quito, Vancouver, Cape Town, Seattle, Mexico City, Auckland, Milan, Rome & Heidelberg. The policies are designed to fight air pollution, improve the quality of life for all citizens, and help tackle the global threat of climate change.

The One Planet Charter is a joint initiative driven by G40, the Global Covenant of Mayors for Climate & Energy and ICLEI, highlighting more than 1,700 commitments made by cities around the world to build sustainable and resilient infrastructure, products and services, while at the same time recognizing the importance of working closely with national governments and business sectors to mobilize global climate action. Further by signing the G40’s Advancing Towards Zero Waste Declaration, these cities and regions have pledged to cut the amount of waste generated by each citizen (15 per cent by 2030), reduce the amount of waste sent to landfills and incineration by 50 per cent and increase the diversion rate to 70 per cent by 2030. Thirty-eight cities, regions and businesses have committed to greatly cut greenhouse gas emissions in new and existing buildings as part of the World Green Building Council’s Net Zero Carbon Building Commitment. Cities signing the Net Zero Carbon Buildings Declaration have pledged to ensure all buildings in the cities, old or new, will meet net-zero carbon standards by 2050.

Acknowledging that climate change and issues of poverty and social inequality are inextricably linked mayors of 30 cities, representing close to 100 million citizens, have pledged to deliver inclusive climate action that benefits all citizens equitably.

Cape Town is best municipality in South Africa

The Cape Town metro scored high in an annual study of the best and worst South African municipalities. Compared across different indicators metros of Buffalo City, Cape Town, Ekurhuleni, eThekweni, Johannesburg, Mangaung, Nelson Mandela Bay and Tshwane were considered in the study. Around 2,287 people across the metros were interviewed in issues related to citizen satisfaction and trust were the main measurements in the metro municipalities. The Nelson Mandela Bay is the only metro to see significant change in its score from 59.3 index points in 2017 to 61.9 in 2018. The Cape Town metro was the best-rated municipality in 2017 too. The complaints by the citizens relating to service delivery as well as behavior of municipal officers contributed to the lowering of the scores in the municipalities studied.
**Agenda for City Research and Innovation**

The Global Covenant of Mayors for climate and energy has merged its European and global networks that includes more than 75,000 cities to increase efforts to address climate change. It also launched an agenda to accelerate city research and innovation and facilitate enhanced efforts to realize the goals of the Paris Agreement and build a low carbon future and at the same time help in implementing SDG 11 on sustainable cities and communities and SDG 13 on climate action. The City Research and Innovation agenda aims to address knowledge, data and innovation gaps to help cities undertake accelerated and increasingly ambitious climate action through urban focused research and also by engaging with cities and urban networks including with scientists and research institutions to complement the IPCCs agenda on the science of cities and climate change.

The areas of focus will be on low-carbon infrastructure, smart grids, access to affordable green energy, e-mobility and integrated public transport systems, support for local-level mitigation decisions and resilience measures, provision of city-level data to help local governments and practitioners to use smart data for inclusive governance and financing and better planning. These issues were also part of the agenda during the Mission Innovation Ministerial (MI3) held in Malmo, Sweden in May where a cities roundtable was also organized to discuss climate science, research and innovation. Another meeting in San Francisco in September also discussed these topical issues under the Global Climate Action Summit (GCAS) that built on the February Ceremony of the European Covenant of Mayors that focused on the ramping up of the clean energy transition and also drawing on the Edmonton Declaration of March that called on the scientific community to increase efforts in the support of evidence-based city climate action.

**Wujal Wujal Aboriginal Shire Council in Australia wins 2018 National Award for Excellence in Local Government**

Wujal Wujal Aboriginal Shire Council in Queensland, Australia with a population only in hundreds has won this coveted award for their innovative approach for ensuring emergency lifesaving communications remain active and accessible when natural disasters strike. This winning project was selected from a field of ten other major categories and was typical of many other high quality services that local councils provide across Australia. Specifically, the council’s innovative valley-wide Emergency Management Network and Community Forum provides locals with a wind and rain resistant telecommunications system that turns the valley into a ‘hot spot’ thereby ensuring residents can continue to communicate via the council’s secure network when the commercial systems fail. Further, as it is based on microwave radio link technology, the solar-powered system operates independently of the community’s energy supplier to support a range of devices including smartphones, voice-over IP hardware phones and personal computers. Moreover, the network can also be used, free of charge during an emergency, to call, text and email other network users and to access council-approved websites related to transport, meteorology and energy.
Global News

Climate Change brings together municipalities in Costa Rica

With the aim of supporting the country’s goal of carbon neutrality, municipalities across Costa Rica rallied together under the nationwide ‘Programa País Carbono Neutralidad 2.0’ to measure their greenhouse gas emissions to determine sectors to focus on while developing mitigation measures to be implemented in the future. The Central American country of Costa Rica had been attracting international attention ever since it announced plans to become carbon-neutral in the medium term. It had developed several sector-specific strategies to reduce its emissions, including so-called Nationally Appropriate Mitigation Actions in the coffee and livestock sectors. Importantly, since 2012, the country has been promoting its ‘Programa País Carbono Neutralidad’, a national program that helps companies of all sizes to calculate their carbon footprint, develop and implement greenhouse gas (GHG) mitigation measures and achieve carbon neutrality. Last year, Costa Rica’s Ministry for Environment and Energy (MINAE) announced a new category in the revised ‘Programa País Carbono Neutralidad 2.0’ designed specifically for municipalities.

The new category was aimed at motivating local actors to help the country achieve its ambitious climate goals by determining GHG inventories and potential areas for mitigation at municipal level before carrying out mitigation measures. Following this, twenty municipalities responded to the call for action issued by the National Climate Directorate (DCC) and the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH and submitted their proposals for entering the new category. Around forty officials from 14 municipalities were trained in measuring their communities’ carbon footprint, while six pilot municipalities – Belén, Desamparados, Golfito, La Unión, Monteverde and San José – were selected to receive technical and methodological support for collecting data, identifying priority sectors for implementing mitigation activities, and determining financing mechanisms till June 2018. The inclusion of municipalities in the ‘Programa País’ is a landmark milestone on the road to Costa Rica’s goal of carbon neutrality given the significant potential for reducing GHG emissions at municipal level.

At the same time the initiative is also an opportunity to strengthen dialogue between national and municipal actors, linking mitigation actions with benefits that would be valued by both municipalities and their residents. The technical support for the six pilot municipalities were financed in collaboration with the GIZ-led projects MiTransporte, Acción Clima II and Viclim, that are currently under way in Costa Rica.

Cagayan De Oro City, Philippines in ‘Top 5 Most Competitive City’ list in 2018

Cagayan de Oro City received the honor as the country’s “Top 5 Most Competitive City” in the highly urbanized cities category, notching five ranks higher as compared to its overall ranking in 2017. The city received the recognition during the Sixth Regional Competitiveness Summit organized by the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) held in August. Quezon City maintained its ranking as Philippine’s most competitive city, followed by Manila City and Pasay city followed by Davao City in fourth place. Interestingly, Cagayan de Oro City outranked the country’s top financial center, Makati City, which ranked sixth. The DTI, through its Competitiveness Bureau, held the summit in order to recognize the most competitive Philippine cities and municipalities for 2018 as it highlighted the results of the Cities and Municipalities Competitiveness Index (CMI) by ranking over 1,500 local government units across the country. The selection of the overall ranking was based on the four pillars of resilience, infrastructure, government efficiency and economic dynamism. Cagayan de Oro City made huge strides in the areas of resilience and government efficiency improving upon its rankings from 2017.
Capacity Building workshop for Municipalities on Strategic Planning for Local Economic Development: A regional capacity building workshop on the theme of strategic planning for local economic development in host communities was held in Amman, Jordan. It was organized in partnership with Greater Amman Municipality, the World Bank, UN-Habitat, the German Technical Cooperation (GIZ), with the support of United Cities Local Government – Middle East and Western Asia (UCLG-MEWA). The target audience were local government representatives, local economic development practitioners and experts. The theme was identified as one of the priority areas that needed solutions for host local governments to improve the welfare of their communities in the backdrop of the refugee crisis. It was felt that a strategic planning approach to Local Economic Development could help local governments to better identify their assets and challenges, arbitrate for better integrated actions - such as providing a favorable business environment for investors, facilitating entrepreneurship and home-based businesses - and ultimately better implement these actions. Developing these solutions would also go a long way in supporting host local governments in responding to the forced displacement crisis by enabling refugees and vulnerable populations to contribute to local welfare. The workshop consisted of a four day training and a field visit providing customized methodological tools for host local governments, peer-to-peer exchange of experience, and applied working group session, and was focused particularly on local economic development strategic planning processes developed by local governments hosting refugees. Participants worked on economic planning, and learned together on improving or developing their local economic development strategies in the context of the refugee crisis. Around forty staff and elected representatives of local governments from Jordan, Lebanon, Palestinian territories, Turkey, Iraq, Kurdistan were selected to attend the workshop while a delegation of four representatives from Afghanistan also participated as observers.

Cities and Climate Change Science Conference held in Edmonton, Canada: The Cities IPCC Cities and Climate Change Science Conference took place in Edmonton, Canada, with the objective of creating an enhanced understanding of the impacts of climate change. It also looked at the urban level and the range of possible responses, the role of cities in the implementation of the Paris Agreement and other international global agendas. Important stakeholders working on cities and climate change laid down clear foundations under the theme, “The Science we need for the cities we want”, being better informed by city climate action and decision making with a larger engagement between policy, practice and scientific communities working in urban areas. The Conference was co-organized by UN-Habitat, UN Environment, Cities Alliance, C40, ICLEI, Future Earth, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), the World Climate Research Program, the Sustainable Development Solutions Network, and United Cities and Local Governments.
♦ Conference Focusing on Challenges faced by Migrant, Refugee and Asylum Seeking Women and Girls: An important conference focusing on Migrant, Refugee and Asylum Seeking Women and Girls in the Euro-Mediterranean Region was organized by the European Centre for Global Interdependence and Solidarity of the Council of Europe (North-South Centre) in October at Athens, Greece. It brought together representatives of governments, national parliaments, local and regional authorities and civil society experts from several European countries, as well as from countries of the southern Mediterranean. Crucial discussions centered around the feminist approach to asylum procedures, the integration of women through education, the mobility of refugee and asylum-seeking girls and women in Africa and the Middle East. Due to the different national and regional realities, participants discussed trends and key challenges regarding specific groups. They also debated solutions to strengthen their protection and integration based on concrete examples of good practices. Different institutions highlighted their activities, such as KAFA, a Lebanese women’s rights organization that presented its measures to raise awareness of domestic violence. The grouping has been working for many years on the issue of migrants and refugees at local and regional levels and has adopted several recommendations and resolutions. A recent one being the resolution concerning the role and responsibilities of local and regional authorities towards unaccompanied refugee children.

♦ Localizing the SDGs – Venice City Solutions 2018: In tune with the SDG 11 of making cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable the premier edition of the Venice City Solutions was held from 15 – 17 November 2018 with the objective of making the SDGs a reality for all. The event focused on providing the critical financial resources that was needed through multi-level contributions to address challenges and work on solutions. The event saw the coming together of representatives of central, local and regional governments including mayors, governors, various personnel from government and partners from the private sector to discuss and finalize in the backdrop of experiences, collation of data and for coming with solutions in the light of the financial challenges around the implementation of the SDGs. The Venice City Solutions will feed into the assessment of SDG 16 and 17 and further would be placed for consideration into the Global Sustainable Development Report. According to the organizers, main outputs of the event would include; “assessment of national legislation conducive to the financing of the SDGs at the local level; identification of existing practices and initiatives, both at local and international level; elaboration about a very early set of data collection about municipal budgets dedicated to align to the SDGs at the local level; identification of national strategies already in place to finance the SDGs at the local level; establishment of a dialogue mechanism between central and local governments to achieve the SDGs at the local level; and map untapped financial instruments or practices to finance SDGs at the local level.”
Tunisia Sustains Democracy

By Emir Sfaksi

Despite a low turnout of 35.6 per cent (compared to the 69 percent turnout in the 2014 legislative elections), the results of Tunisia’s May 6, 2018 municipal elections were positive overall. There was large representation for youth and women, local leaders emerged at the head of non-partisan and independent lists, fairness and transparency rules were respected even if minor incidents were reported, and local civil society organizations mobilized to monitor the elections. This provides hope that the only “success” of the Arab Spring can sustain democracy despite a difficult political climate and a suffocating economic situation.

Notably, a new generation of youth leaders is emerging, many of whom were already heavily involved in civil society organizations. Youth under 35 years old won 37.57 per cent of the seats (and those aged 35 to 45 won an additional 25.87 percent). The high numbers of youth elected to local roles shows the increased capacity building and support that international aid and civil society organizations had called for to offer youth fertile ground for political participation. Yet paradoxically, despite high youth representation, there was low youth turnout, and observers raised their concerns about the absence of the youth at the polls.

Furthermore, women were elected to represent 47 per cent of the municipal council seats—even though according to the Independent High Authority for Election statistics, women formed only 29.7 percent of the heads of electoral lists, which must alternate male and female candidates. This will help women take on leadership roles in these councils as well. Souad Abderrahim, head of the Ennahda list for the municipality of Tunis, expressed her willingness to become a mayor following her election. This has generated some controversy, not only because she would be the first woman to become the mayor of the capital, but because Abderrahim faces heavy criticism for her views that single mothers should not benefit from social help.

Other big winners of these elections were the independent lists, which secured 2,367 seats (32.9 percent of the vote). Even though these lists won the plurality of seats, they likely still underestimate the appeal of independent candidates. Ennahda in particular predicted this scenario and brilliantly capitalized on it by opening their lists to independent figures and local leaders to run under their flag and benefit from their financial and logistical support to run their campaigns. This paid off for Ennahda, which came in second with 2,135 seats (29.68 percent of the vote).

However, the low turnout and the favor shown for nonpartisan candidates as an alternative should be taken seriously by leading political parties. The municipal elections could still be considered as a test for the upcoming legislative and presidential elections of 2019. The country seems to be at its lowest point economically, with inflation reaching record levels and the dinar facing continued devaluation, which both limit investment and job creation. If the economy does not recover, dissatisfaction with the status quo will increase voter apathy and make it harder for Tunisian democracy to sustain itself.

Source: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace