



*Building Competitive and Liveable Cities*

# 3<sup>rd</sup> Asia-Pacific Mayors' Forum

on Environmentally Sustainable Urban Infrastructure



**Suncheon City, Republic of Korea 30-31 August 2011**

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## on Environmentally Sustainable Urban Infrastructure

### INTRODUCTION

The way we design, plan and build our cities and their infrastructure is critical for developing competitive and liveable cities.

Cities in Asia-Pacific are already suffering from severe environmental problems, such as pollution, congestion and excessive waste, while the basic needs of hundreds of millions of urban residents are yet to be met. The unprecedented urbanization of the region imposes an even greater challenge for providing adequate housing, energy, water and sanitation to all.



Cities in Asia-Pacific are at a crossroads. Infrastructure investments in Asia must reach an estimated US\$10 trillion over the next ten years. Choices made in urban infrastructure development today will determine the success of cities in delivering services to everyone while growing competitively within a protected environment for decades to come.

Infrastructure has a long lifespan and once built, it locks cities into consumption and production patterns for decades. These patterns can have positive or negative outcomes, depending on how the infrastructure is designed. Buildings contribute up to 30 per cent of global annual greenhouse gas



emissions and consume up to 40 per cent of all energy. The transport sector accounts for 23 per cent of global energy-related CO<sub>2</sub> emissions, and it is the fastest-growing source of emissions. These are not just environmental problems: higher energy consumption means higher energy bills, which in the long term has a negative impact on energy security and economic competitiveness. Traffic congestion in Bangkok, for example, is responsible for a loss of 6 per cent of its GDP.

Urban governance landscapes and institutional requirements are evolving. Local authorities are now required to cover a broad range of specialties, including housing, infrastructure, social and community services, local economic development, environmental protection and even climate change.

How to turn these challenges into opportunities? How to embark on a low carbon green growth development path? How to adopt eco-efficiency principles? What policy options can be considered? The Forum aims to provide answers to these questions.

## THE ASIA-PACIFIC MAYORS' FORUM

The **Asia-Pacific Mayors' Forum on Environmentally Sustainable Urban Infrastructure** was initiated by the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) to provide a meaningful platform for city mayors, top government officials and decision makers from the region to discuss key challenges, review emerging practices, share experiences and identify priority areas for making urban infrastructure more sustainable.



The 1<sup>st</sup> Forum was held in April 2008 in partnership with the City of Ulsan, Republic of Korea and counted with the participation of 18 cities from 10 countries in the region. The 2<sup>nd</sup> Forum was also held in Ulsan in October 2009 and was attended by participants of 22 cities from 12 countries. In this forum, mayors from participant cities adopted a *Joint Declaration on Urban Green Growth*,



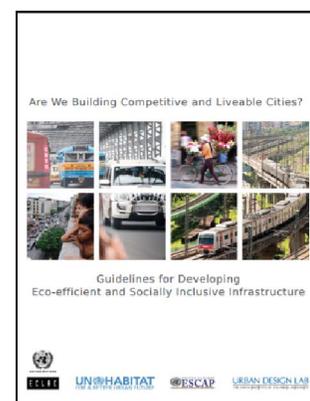
recognizing the need for local governments to promote green growth policies and declaring their commitment to regional cooperation in this regard.

The 3<sup>rd</sup> Forum will be held in **Suncheon City, Republic of Korea, on 30-31 August 2011**, and showcase innovative practices and discuss policy options for promoting low carbon green growth and develop competitive and liveable cities in Asia-Pacific.

At the Forum, ESCAP will launch its new publication, ***“Are we building competitive and liveable cities? Guidelines for developing eco-efficient and socially inclusive infrastructure”***, developed jointly with the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-HABITAT), and the Urban Design Lab, the Earth Institute at Columbia University in the City of New York. ESCAP will also be presenting the policy options for sustainable infrastructure identified in its ***“Low Carbon Green Growth Roadmap”***.

### WHO WILL BE ATTENDING

The Forum will bring together city mayors, top government officials and experts from around Asia-Pacific.



## PROGRAMME OUTLINE

30 AUGUST (Tue)	31 AUGUST (Wed)
<b>MORNING</b> Opening Ceremony Plenary Session <b>“Low Carbon Green Growth for competitive and liveable cities”</b>	<b>MORNING</b> Learning journeys <b>(TBD)</b>
Lunch	Lunch
<b>AFTERNOON</b> Plenary Session <b>“Developing eco-efficient and sustainable urban infrastructure: Guidelines and case studies”</b>	<b>AFTERNOON</b> Plenary Session <b>“Way forward: policies for Low Carbon Green Growth urban development”</b>

## LEARNING JOURNEYS

Site visits will provide participants with practical perspectives on how policies and ideas can be implemented successfully, drawing from the experiences of Suncheon City.

**Suncheon City** on the south coast of the Republic of Korea has demonstrated how investing in ecosystems can stimulate economic growth that is green and sustainable. Suncheon was once regarded as fairly backward compared with neighbouring coastal cities which had reclaimed tidal wetlands to host major petro-chemical complexes and steel mills. Suncheon City has taken the opposite approach.



Since late 1990s, it has turned its undeveloped tidal ecosystem into a source of competitive advantage. The city government and its citizens worked to restore the ecosystem of Suncheon Bay, enabling the city to emerge as a centre of eco-tourism, attracting more than 2.3 million visitors (more than 10 times its population) and creating 6,400 jobs and economic benefits amounting to US\$ 100 million.



Suncheon Bay is one of the world's five largest coastal wetlands and is the first from Korea to be registered to the Ramsar Convention. Suncheon City has also won the silver medal at the International Awards for Liveable Communities (LivCom Awards) for their environmental management and efforts for liveable community.