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CONCEPT NOTE

Meeting on Forging Ahead ASEAN Mayors' Work to Localise Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and New Urban Agenda (NUA)

7th Asia-Pacific Urban Forum (APUF), Penang, Malaysia

Boardroom Level 1 Setia SPICE Convention Centre Penang

15 October 2019, at 1.00 pm – 2.30 pm

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS AND ASEAN

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (2030 Agenda) marked a paradigm shift in global development at a time when the ASEAN region experienced (and continues to experience) high economic growth. While many countries have achieved significant poverty reduction, many challenges remain that affect the achievement of the SDGs in ASEAN countries. A number of countries are still falling behind on non-income measures of poverty such as access to health, sanitation, housing and education services. Countries in the region are also facing rises in inequality – not just income inequality but also other kinds of inequality such as spatial and digital inequality. There are also climate-related and geographic risks that are unique to the ASEAN region which increase the vulnerability of poor populations and their risk of sliding into extreme poverty as a result of natural disasters.

SDGs LOCALISATION

Localisation is described as 'the process of defining, implementing and monitoring strategies at the local level for achieving global, national, and subnational sustainable development goals and targets.' Specifically, it includes the 'process of taking into account sub-national contexts in the achievement of the 2030 Agenda, from the setting of goals and targets, to determining the means of implementation and using indicators to measure and monitor progress. This involves promoting local ownership, understanding local needs and trends, and allocating resources to achieve targeted outcomes at the local level. During the discussions leading up to the adoption of 2030 Agenda, which built on the experiences of localising the SDGs, many actors argued for greater active involvement of local governments in achieving the SDGs. The important role of subnational and local governments in shaping and achieving the SDGs is highlighted in the UN Secretary General's Synthesis Report on the Post-2015 Agenda, which states that "many of the investments to achieve the SDGs will take place at the subnational level and be led by local authorities.

This viewpoint is also reflected in the language of the SDGs. Targets of at least 11 of the 17 goals call for more integrated action at the local level. These targets also directly relate to the responsibilities of local and regional governments, specifically their ability to promote integrated, inclusive and sustainable territorial development. Local actors need to fully participate, not only in the implementation, but also in the agenda-setting for, and monitoring of, the SDGs.



URBANICE MALAYSIA



Strong institutions and capacities of local and subnational governments can also facilitate integration of different global agendas such as the New Urban Agenda (NUA) and the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction with the SDGs (as there are commonalities and complementarities between the different agendas) and lead to more integrated programming at the local level.

ENABLERS FOR LOCALISING SDGS AND ACHIEVING SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

a. Enabling Policy and Institutional Environment

This refers to the enabling environment at multiple levels that would allow for effective SDGs localisation – or in other words a “whole of government” approach for SDGs localisation. It includes adoption of laws and regulations to ensure policy coherence, cohesion, as well as coordination and cooperation among all relevant stakeholders.

b. Data Ecosystems

Data and statistical systems are an integral part of the overall enabling policy and institutional framework. However, it warrants a separate focus as data ecosystems of most countries need to be strengthened in order to respond to the additional demands to monitor, track and report on SDGs indicators. Reliable and disaggregated data are imperative for decision-making processes and for ensuring that no one is left behind.

c. Stakeholders Engagement

One of the core principles that underpins the 2030 Agenda is that multi-stakeholder engagement is critical for achievement of the SDGs. No single country or organisation can achieve the SDGs by itself. It will require the sustained efforts of all stakeholders – civil society, the private sector, academia, individuals, countries and multilateral organisations – to work together to develop and implement initiatives for achieving the SDGs.

d. Financing for the SDGs

Achieving an ambitious agenda such as the 2030 Agenda requires enormous amounts of resources, in the order of trillions of dollars per year. The Addis Ababa Action Agenda provides the framework for financing the sustainable development agenda. It calls for mobilizing public resources domestically and aligning private sector investment with the SDGs, as well as promoting equity, efficiency and effectiveness in the use of resources.

e. Innovation

Innovation is a cross-cutting enabler and should be integrated into each of the above building blocks. Innovation refers to both social innovation that promotes collaborative engagement among all stakeholders to address development challenges, and to the use of new technologies to promote efficiency in administering SDGs implementation strategies.



URBANICE MALAYSIA



WHY ASEAN CITIES NEED TO LOCALISE SDGs and NUA?

ASEAN cities need to develop strategies to sustain the momentum of economic activities, provision of housing, healthcare, education, energy services, and mitigate the impacts of climate change, as well as manage various other priorities. The immediate need for cities in ASEAN is to provide adequate and sustainable urban infrastructure to meet the increasing pace of urbanisation. However, urbanisation also poses challenges related to inclusiveness (particularly housing), environmental pollution, economic efficiency (linked to rising traffic congestion), health and cultural heritage.

The 5th ASEAN Mayors Forum (AMF), recently held in Bangkok during 26-28 August 2018, demonstrated Mayors' determination to invigorate their cooperation to fulfil the ASEAN Community's vision on sustainable development. Participating Mayors unanimously adopted the ASEAN Mayors' Declaration on Driving Local Actions for Sustainable and Inclusive Growth, which stresses their shared sense of urgency to work towards achieving the SDGs and calls for their efforts to be complemented by mechanisms to create synergies with national plans and actions. The Declaration further reiterates ASEAN Mayors' resolve to enhance mutual efforts to identify, develop and implement innovative policies and actions to address inequalities and complex challenges presented by rapid urban development.

The upcoming 7th APUF will be a crucial opportunity to follow the outcomes of the 5th AMF meeting and discuss on how regional networks of cities/local governments such as the AMF can accelerate the localisation of SDGs and NUA. The United Cities and Local Governments Asia Pacific (UCLG ASPAC), serving as the AMF Secretariat, and The Urbanice Malaysia are jointly organising a meeting on "Forging Ahead ASEAN Mayors' Work to Localise Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and New Urban Agenda (NUA)", at the margin of the 7th APUF.

The Meeting will be held in the framework of the ASEAN Mayors Forum (AMF), an accredited body of ASEAN as the only local governments association affiliated with ASEAN.

Date, Time and Place:

15 October 2019 (Tuesday) from 1.00-2.30 pm at Boardroom Level 1, SPICE Convention Centre Penang.

Objectives:

This meeting will serve as a platform for discussions among ASEAN's local political leaders, national policy makers, international development partners and other experts on how cities and local governments can collaborate to implement SDGs and NUA as well as other relevant frameworks to address urbanisation challenges. ASEAN's Mayors and Local Government will support ASEAN efforts to accelerate SDGs achievements while ensuring effective management of urbanisation, protecting environment and inclusive growth.



URBANICE MALAYSIA



The purpose of the meeting is to:

- a. Highlight the development context and challenges in ASEAN;
- b. Propose and clarify an integrated programming framework that is applicable across all three pillars (social, economic and environmental) of sustainable development;
- c. Offer an explanation of each of the components or ‘building blocks’ of the integrated programming framework – an enabling policy and institutional environment, a data ecosystem, stakeholder engagement, and financing;
- d. Underline the challenges that countries face in establishing an appropriate policy and institutional framework for the SDGs, strengthening the data ecosystem, supporting meaningful stakeholder involvement, and financing the SDGs;
- e. Presents innovation as a cross-cutting programming priority, and factors that can mainstream innovation into all other programming components.
- f. Share case studies to offer a glimpse at what countries are doing to address challenges and develop more localised and integrated approaches to sustainable development.

Expected Participants

Mayors, representatives from the Ministry of Local Governments in ASEAN Member States and the UN Bodies.
