On behalf of the Republic of India, it gives me immense pleasure to welcome all of you to the Urban20 Engagement Group proceedings for 2023. This year U20 cycle is chaired by the City of Ahmedabad—the modern, progressive, economic and cultural hub of the country. I would like to express my gratitude to Honourable PM for bringing the G20 presidency to India. The theme of India’s G20 presidency is “Vasudeva Kutumbkam”, which means ‘The world is One Family’ with a shared and interconnecting infra. U20 is an important city diplomacy initiative that reinforces the role of cities in taking the sustainable development agenda. Cities are the powerhouses driving global economic role, generating about sixty per cent on the global GDP. India is rapidly urbanising, with the likelihood of it adding population more than the size of entire United States to its urban areas in the next two decades. Urban development has been a top priority for Prime Minister Narendra Modi ji. Since 2014, we have designed and implemented various missions and schemes covering water, sanitation, housing, development of smart cities, urban transport etc. It is fitting that this year India will be hosting this initiative. I see U20 as a great opportunity for global peer-learning and also to showcase the pioneering work being done in Indian cities. We look forward to welcoming mayors, sherpas, representatives from cities around the world to the 2023 U20 cycle chaired by Ahmedabad. My best wishes to all of you.

Hardeep Singh Puri
Minister for Housing & Urban Affairs and Petroleum & Natural Gas, Government of India

Under the visionary leadership of Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi ji, G20 Summit is being organised in India. The G20 theme “One World, One Family, One Future” in real terms reflects India’s culture and its virtue. Be it urban or rural, we are developing with the mantra of ‘everyone’s development, with everyone’s support, faith and efforts. U20 cycle is going to be organised in Gujarat under this central theme. The U20 cycle will begin with the Sherpa meeting on 9-11 Feb, 2023 in Ahmedabad and conclude with Mayors’ Summit in July.

U20 is a unique concept and is totally focused on urban development. For renowned urban leaders, this cycle is an excellent platform for discussion and collective action in urban development domain globally. It’s a reality that the majority of the population will be living in cities. That is why this kind of event becomes important to plan for better urban future. U20 cycle can become the centre of discussion for experts from all over the world on future urban development and need. It is a proud moment for Gujarat to host this prestigious engagement group. Our Ahmedabad is very eager to welcome all of you for the 6th U20 cycle. We are glad that the city of Ahmedabad has joined the list of cities in the world that have successfully hosted the U20 cycle in the past. India has many rich stories of its historical and modern development to share with the world.

We welcome you to come forward and contribute your valuable inputs in finalising our urban priorities. Your suggestions and actions will help in achieving the objectives of U20.

Bhupendrabhai Patel
Chief Minister of Gujarat
First G20 meeting of Infra Working Group discusses city finances

PUNE, MAHARASHTRA: The first G20 Infrastructure Working Group meeting under the G20 India Presidency was held in Pune on January 16-17, 2023.

The two-day meeting covered a variety of topics, including its main theme, ’Financing Cities of Tomorrow- Inclusive, Resilient and Sustainable.’ A total of 64 delegates from 18 member nations, eight guest countries, and eight international organisations were present during the meeting. Under the Indian G20 Presidency, the 2023 Infrastructure Agenda was also debated at the G20 IWG.

The meeting was hosted by the Department of Economic Affairs and the Ministry of Finance, along with Australia and Brazil as the co-chairs.

The meeting included discussions on various facets of making cities economic centres of growth, financing urban infrastructure, building future-ready urban infrastructure, the role of cities in meeting sustainability targets, directing fiscal investments for unlocking private financing for energy-efficient and environmentally sustainable infrastructure and mitigating social imbalances. On the side-lines, the Pune meeting was also complemented by a High-Level Workshop on Financing of Cities of Tomorrow wherein over 15 international experts discussed the issues related to financing of the cities. Solomon Arokiaraj, Joint Secretary, Department of Economic Affairs, Ministry of Finance, said, while briefing the media on the two-day conclave, “There are five major areas on which we are working on (through the deliberations). The first one is how we make cities sustainable. Second and third were about making them resilient and inclusive. The fourth one was about financing needs of cities.” Continuing with other areas of intervention he added, “The funding options are government, private and multi-lateral funding and there are various innovative financing mechanisms that are evolving like land value capture. In addition, we discussed how cities have to plan dynamically with a people-centric approach.”

When asked if there were any success stories that were mentioned and might be repeated, he used Mexico as an example. The government provided a guarantee when a municipality launched bonds in the North American nation. According to Arokiaraj, the benefit of this strategy is that the municipality can raise money based on the guarantee provided by the Mexican government. The drawback of this strategy is that the municipality might lack fiscal responsibility because, in the end, if they default on their commitments, the government would bear the cost.

Song for the Soul

Rise, Mobilise, Catalyse

Hitesh Vaidya | Director, NIUA
Sayli Mankikar | Lead, Climate Alliance

City mayors of the world unite,
Coming together with all their might,
’One Earth, One Family, One Future’ is our call,
Moving to net zero, come one and all.

Ahmedabad city is leading the pack,
Where global cities together will hack,
Urban goals and climate needs,
Ploughing through policies, sowing the seeds.

Responsible behaviours will make our LiFE,
Water security will prevent strife,
Funds and frameworks will pave the aisle,
For digital futures to go the extra mile.

Youth for change, thinkers in sync,
People moving mountains, cities to link,
Charging towards the 2030 agenda,
Sustainable futures will guide the Urban20 referenda.

The Urban20 bugle is blown,
Let us unfurl the city genome,
Innovation and enterprise form their DNA,
Resilient transitions are here to stay.
Orange County becomes water-secure by adopting sustainable practices

WATER SCARCITY AFFECTS more than 40 per cent of the global population, and in the next three decades, the demand for water in cities is expected to rise by 50 to 70 per cent. The need for sustainable, water-secure cities has never been more crucial than now. Orange County in Southern California, USA, is setting up an excellent example of urban water security by reusing wastewater and reducing dependency on imported water. Orange County, located on Southern California’s coast, gets most of its water from a sizable groundwater basin beneath Northern and Central Orange County. The Orange County Water District (OCWD) is a collaborative created to manage the aquifer on behalf of its client agencies. The aim was to reduce the city’s dependence on external water sources for its water needs. This was done by two means – wastewater reuse and groundwater basin governance.

Wastewater Reuse
The OCWD Groundwater Replenishment System (GWRS) recycles reclaimed water that has been treated to exceed federal and state drinking water requirements. It is the biggest planned indirect potable reuse system in the world. To avoid building a second ocean disposal pipeline, the County chose to fund the System with the assistance of the Orange County Sanitation District (OCSD). Community awareness programme was taken up to remove unfavourable impressions around the idea of using recycled wastewater among people.

Groundwater Basin Governance
In addition to safeguarding the aquifer’s water quality from seawater intrusion, OCWDs focus on groundwater basin governance through a diverse recharge approach gradually enhances the basin’s storage capacity. An innovative combination of technology, local source development initiatives, policy, and improved stakeholder cooperation is used in the County case as an example of alternate water management practices.

Best Practice

ENSURING WATER SECURITY

Rejuvenation of Waterbodies in Ayodhya

THE URBAN RIVER Management Plan (URMP) framework developed by NIUA and NMCG is a holistic approach to the sustainable management of rivers and their associated elements in a city. One of the thrust areas of the URMP is to rejuvenate water bodies which play a vital role in ensuring the water security for a city. The Ayodhya Development Authority (ADA) is preparing its URMP to rejuvenate its water bodies. ADA is creating a database of existing water bodies on chemical, physical, and ecological parameters and prioritising these water bodies for rejuvenation using a web-based water body diagnostic tool developed by NIUA, NMCG and UNESCO. The tool is meant to help city officials identify and prioritise actions for the rejuvenation of water bodies within the city. ADA is preparing a plan to rejuvenate eight water bodies from the identified 108 water bodies in the city limit. These are - Lal Diggi (5.15 acres), Vidyakund (1.47 acres), Dasharatha Kund (2.3 acres), Brahma Kund (9.88 acres), Sita Kund (1.55 acres), Agni Kund (0.304 acres), Khir Sagarkund (0.9 acres), and Khajua Kund (0.69 acres).

Rejuvenation is being carried out naturally by simply adopting processes: Removal of impurities like silt and weeds, establishing a natural system for segregating and treating the wastewater coming to the kunds and storing rainwater. Each kund is being developed with a dedicated rejuvenation plan that includes community engagement initiatives to involve local people and give a sense of relatability. This project re-establishes natural opulence by restoring, rejuvenating and re-energising the aura of the identified waterbodies. Restoring these water bodies will help preserve the city’s ecological, cultural and religious significance.

Ayodhya is a city of great historical and religious importance, known for its association with the Hindu epic Ramayana. The kunds being rejuvenated in this project also hold immense cultural and religious significance for the local community.
India’s urban development trajectory has been such that while transitioning into ‘cities of tomorrow’ we have aimed to retain ‘a sense of place’ to preserve the cultural heritage and local identity in connecting the old with the new. Some examples of the same are development projects across cities of Ahmedabad, Varanasi, Ujjain, Bhubaneswar, etc. including the Sabarmati Riverfront, Kashi-Vishvanath Corridor, and more. Hence, these are not only historical sites but also social and economic assets for local communities and national development. As U20 it is important to deliberate on building cities of tomorrow while preserving cultural heritage, promoting lifestyle for environment (LiFE), accelerating implementation of SDGs, and work towards building resilient, inclusive and sustainable futures.

It is essential to inculcate the needs and aspirations of urban population in any global dialogue. The U20 platform allows discussion and knowledge sharing and aims to provide collective representation of cities in G20 negotiations. The city of Ahmedabad is delighted to play a pivotal role as chair of the U20 cycle and welcome all urban stakeholders.

Ahmedabad welcomes City Sherpas from around the world to 2023 U20 cycle. In the spirit of “Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam” which means that the world is one family with a shared and interconnected future, let us all join hands and work together to translate our commitments towards a sustainable global future and move from ‘Intention to Action’.
IMPROVING WATER ACCESS FOR ALL

Studies\(^1\) highlighted that 30 Indian cities could face ‘severe water scarcity’ by 2050. Government of India has intensified its efforts by implementing some major water schemes including providing tap water connections to every household. Over 77 million households have got access to tap water supply since the launch of Jal Jeevan Mission in 2019. Several other key policies are implemented to ensure efficient usage of water resources to match with the continuously growing demands and challenges.

### States with 100 per cent household tap water supply

(Number of households with tap water supply)

- **Haryana**: 30,41,314
- **Goa**: 2,63,013
- **Telengana**: 53,86,962

Source: Jal Jeevan Mission Dashboard

\(^1\) World Wild Fund for Nature

### Households provided with tap water supply

(In 100,000)

- 2019-2020: 82.62
- 2020-2021: 120.61
- 2021-2022: 132.60
- 2022-2023: 175.67

### Key initiatives by Govt of India

[Images of various initiatives related to water management.

Source: Jal Jeevan Mission Dashboard

\(^1\) World Wild Fund for Nature
AS THE CITY Sherpa of Ahmedabad, the chair city for U20 2023 cycle, I am delighted to welcome you to our city and the first edition of the U20 newsletter. We are honoured to have this opportunity to showcase our tradition of ‘Atithi Devo Bhava’ by hosting dignitaries from across the world and to lead the efforts to move from intention to action on the global agenda of sustainable urban development.

Ahmedabad is a vibrant and dynamic city that is known for its rich history, culture, and architecture. It is a major industrial and commercial center, with a thriving textile industry and a growing presence in the technology and automotive sectors. The city is also a popular tourist destination, known for its historic monuments, museums, and traditional bazaars. Ahmedabad is also known for its vibrant street life and delicious food, making it a popular destination for both locals and tourists.

Ahmedabad is also proud to pioneer a number of successful initiatives – that have helped shape the discourse of urban development in India. The city has been implementing sustainable and inclusive urban development policies and programs, with a focus on improving the quality of life for its residents. It has been working towards reducing congestion and pollution by promoting public transportation, including the development of a BRT system, which is considered as one of the best BRT systems of the country and has greatly improved the mobility and connectivity in the city. The city has also been investing in green infrastructure, such as parks, gardens, and bike lanes, to improve the liveability of the city. The Ahmedabad Riverfront is a waterfront development project along the Sabarmati River. It includes recreational spaces, promenades, and parks for the public to enjoy. Ahmedabad was a pioneer in issuing municipal bonds in the country. In addition, Ahmedabad has been promoting affordable housing, slum upgrading, and heritage conservation to ensure that the city’s growth is inclusive and equitable. The city has also been working towards addressing the impacts of climate change by implementing climate action plans, promoting renewable energy and sustainable transportation. We are proud to showcase all these initiatives in the U20 events: the City Sherpa Meeting and the Mayoral Summit to be held in February and July respectively.

Ahmedabad is proud of the work we have done, but we also know that there is still much to be done. That is why we are excited to work with the U20 and our fellow cities to identify best practices, to close the gap between policy and practice at all levels of governance, and to develop a roadmap for global change that will be driven by cities.

I believe that by working together, sharing our experiences, and learning from one another, we can make our cities, and the world, a better place for all. I look forward to productive and inspiring discussions during the U20 cycle, and I am confident that together, we can make a lasting positive impact on the global agenda of sustainable urban development. I look forward to your active participation in all deliberations as we together are committed to the ideals of “Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas, Sabka Vishwas, Sabka Prayas”.

Praveen Chaudhary
Dy Municipal Commissioner
Amdavad Municipal Corporation
U20 Sherpa

Ahmedabad aiming at inclusive & equitable growth
JAKARTA (INDONESIA): Throughout history, cities have proven to be socially and economically resilient. The aftereffects of the COVID-19 pandemic have been compounded by the climate and energy crisis fuelled by the Ukraine-Russia conflict, growing global inequalities, geopolitical instability and the rise of disruptive technologies, which are causing acute challenges in cities, especially in the Global South. Against this backdrop, U20 Mayor’s Summit was held in Jakarta, Indonesia, on 30-31 August, 2022.

Indonesian cities Jakarta and West Java co-chaired the U20 cycle for 2022. Ahmedabad took over the 2023 U20 cycle following the G20 Presidency handover from Indonesia to India on 1 December, 2022. UCLG and C40 are the co-convener of Urban20.

U20 mayors and governors exchanged best practices and discussed solutions to achieve a sustainable economic and social recovery for all. Governor of Jakarta Anies Baswedan said: “City Leaders have similar views and reach a consensus that cities play a tremendous role in development. Cities are facing numerous challenges, however, they are the centre of innovations and economic engine at national level. Therefore, the nexus of economy, ecology, and social equality needs to be underlying principle in all development sectors. These are what we emphasise in the U20 Cycle 2022 Communiqué, in particular raising the topic of Post-Pandemic Cities.”

In line with the objectives of the U20 forum, the official communiqué was released, which was endorsed by 45 cities, 28 participating cities and 17 observer cities. U20 called on G20 national governments to take immediate measures and work with cities towards Paris Agreement commitments and the objective of halving global emissions by 2030 and reaching net-zero no later than 2050. The official communiqué asked the G20 forum, which met in Bali on 15-16 November, 2022, to work on three priority areas. The first key area which calls for investment in health and housing encompasses building resilient health systems to effectively tackle future pandemics and other social and environmental crises through service provision and combat stigma against mental health by creating awareness. It also asks cities to work on social protection systems by collaborating with other cities to address structural inequalities and invest in the social justice sector.

The second key area focuses on clean energy transitions and equal access to sustainable mobility, including a call for phasing out fossil fuels to keep the global temperature rise within 1.5 degrees Celsius, investment in clean energy transition, and reduction of systemic, technological and financial barriers. The third priority area was ‘Provide education and training on the future of work to give all people equitable access to the job market.’

45 Cities endorsed U20 2022 Communiqué, called for investment in health, clean energy transition, and job sustainability.
Upcoming Events

1. **DHARA 2023**
   - **Location:** Pune
   - **Date:** 13-14 February 2023
   - Driving Holistic Action for Urban Rivers. The conference will bring together City leaders from across the country to discuss the way forward for mainstreaming rivers into the planning framework of cities.

2. **CIRCULAR ECONOMY**
   - **Location:** New Delhi
   - **Date:** 01 March 2023
   - Circular cities for our common future: Cities as drivers. The resources of our common future circular(bio) economy driver and implementers: GIZ & UNEP with NIUA.

3. **U20: Y20 NATIONAL YOUTH CONCLAVE**
   - **Location:** New Delhi
   - **Date:** 13-14 March 2023
   - India’s biggest youth summit that will see youth from all over the country, national leaders, experts, & innovators come together to discuss some of the pressing concerns and learn from each other on how to make cities & communities a better place to live & thrive.

4. **CLIMATE FINANCE RESILIENCE & ENVIRONMENT RESPONSIBLE BEHAVIOUR**
   - **Location:** Bengaluru
   - **Date:** 03 April 2023
   - The event will include discussion amongst sector experts covering priority areas of Encouraging Environmentally Responsible Behaviors, Ensuring Water Security and Accelerating Climate Finance.

About the U20 Process

The U20 brings together mayors from G20 cities under a common framework and coordinates a joint position to inform the discussions of national leaders. Contributions from the U20, including the U20 Communiqué, are shared with the G20 Presidency and Heads of State, enhancing the role of cities as global economic and political leaders. The U20 is an independent initiative that is permanently convened by the conveners UCLG and C40. For more information, www.u20india.org

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