Reimagining private sector engagement for urban development in Asia and the Pacific

Side Event: 81st session of the Commission
22 April, 12:45-13:45 GMT+7
CR-2, United Nations Conference Centre &
Zoom link: https://zoom.us/j/91079961188
Meeting ID: 910 7996 1188, Passcode: 42j*Kj

Organizer(s)

ESCAP Sustainable Business Network

Registration

To attend the side event, all registrants must also register on Indico to attend the 81st Session using the link here: https://indico.un.org/event/1013539/

Please register using the option "Registration for Others (Side events, Exhibition, etc.)" Those who do not register on Indico will not be able to access the United Nations Conference Center.

Background

The eighty-first session of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) will be held from 21 to 25 April 2024 at the United Nations Conference Centre in Bangkok, under the theme "*Regional cooperation for resilient and sustainable urban development in Asia and the Pacific*". It provides an opportunity to strengthen region-wide cooperative action on reimagining private sector engagement for sustainable urban development and committing to achieving net-zero emission targets.

In the Asia-Pacific region, the SDGs progress is still not on track to achieve by 2030. Disparities in sustainable development outcomes are evident in urban areas in the region. These disparities are especially pronounced in countries in special situations. The private sector engagement and their initiatives are critical in scaling up action through a whole-of-society approach.

For resilient and sustainable development, business-friendly and forward-looking solutions are essential to create opportunities and leverage the innovative and creative spirit of businesses in the private sector. The private sector has a role to play in initiatives and partnerships at all levels of governance, including to transition to a low-carbon and climate-resilient development pathway, especially in and around the densely populated mega-cities in the Asia-Pacific region.

In this context, governments are in a best position in advancing overall national development priorities and engage businesses to invest in solution-focused projects and programmes. Private sector engagement strategies are increasingly being aligned to transform socioeconomic drivers by creating and mobilizing new forms of financial resources and strategic expertise. More balanced, inclusive and greener urban growth can only be achieved if there exists a synergistic relationship between governments and private sector strategies.

This 81st session of the Commission is an important platform to reflect on the urban development policies and its implications for the socio-economic prosperity and partnerships in the Asia-Pacific region. In line with the theme, the ESBN-led side event will further examine the critical role of the private sector and business leadership in enhancing collaboration between the public and private sectors.

Furthermore, the side event aims to provide development partners and stakeholders the opportunity to better understand as to how governments need to address the development aspirations of urban centres and prepare action-oriented initiatives and innovative institutional arrangements in close partnership with the private sector entities.

Key Questions and Outcomes

In the Asia-Pacific region, it is important to build partnership with the private sector to adopt strategies and policies in advancing urban development in the region. There has been growing attention on utilizing Private sector solutions in accelerating the energy transition, technological innovations, financing infrastructure development and circular economy models are creating a new set of opportunities for the Asia-Pacific region.

Increased scaling up of private sector participation in the urban development process, coordinated and concerted efforts are needed to strengthen public-private dialogue and cooperation through policy dialogue, knowledge sharing and the bolstering of existing platforms such as the ESCAP annual Commission session.

This ESBN-led side event will examine the following key guiding questions:

1. What are the key dimensions of the private sector engagement that are linked to the resilient and sustainable urban development?
2. How can different pillars, such as that of energy, financing, infrastructure, innovation and circular economy approaches, of the private sector be leveraged for enabling business environment for megacities?
3. What are the best practices and lessons learned from the private sector partnerships that can be emphasized in the Commission session for consideration of governments and other partners?

Bringing together a *diverse panel*, this side event aims to draw attention to the emerging opportunity among multi-stakeholders to review and refine the Asia-Pacific regional private sector agenda through the regional cooperation. The discussion will highlight issues that are critical to advance the private sector engagement that will chart a new model of partnerships and solutions towards resilient and sustainable urban development.

With the engagement of policy makers and other stakeholders, the discussions will identify pathways forward for the private sector tole in accelerating the advancement. By the conclusion of the event, participants should be able to advance the urban development agenda and synergise with the 2030 Agenda for sustainable development and the advancement of the SDGs target by accelerated engagement of the private sector in the Asia and the Pacific.

Draft Programme

Time	Description
12:45-12:53	**Welcome remarks** • **Ms. Armida Salsiah Alisjahbana**, Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations and Executive Secretary of ESCAP **Introductory remarks** • **Ms. Shinta Widjaja Kamdani**, Chair of the ESBN, Chief Executive Officer of Sintesa Group, and Chairman of the Indonesian Employers Association (APINDO)
12:53:12:58	**Introductory presentation** • **Mr. Sudip Ranjan Basu,** Chief of Sustainable Business Network, UN ESCAP (*Moderator*)
12:58-13:43	**Panel discussions** • **Mr. Piyachart Isarabhakdee**, CEO, BRANDi and Companies, Thailand • **Mr. Anthony M Watanabe,** Chief Sustainability Officer, Indorama Ventures Limited, Thailand • **Mr. Aniruddha Mukerji,** Managing Partner & Sr. Director, Tata Consultancy Services (Thailand) Limited • **Mr. Simon Mak**, CEO and Founder, Ascent Partners, Hong Kong, China • **Ms. Esther An,** Chief Sustainability Officer, City Developments Limited, Singapore • **Mr. Ankit Todi**, Chief Sustainability Officer, Mahindra Group, India • **Ms. Liuba Yaroshenko,** Associate Director of En+, Russian Federation • **Mr. Asif Ibrahim,** Vice Chairman, Newage Group of Industries, Bangladesh • **Mr. Oliver Chan,** Senior Vice President and Chief Sustainability Officer, Arthaland, Philippines **Open discussion** • Interventions from audience
13:43-13:45	**Closing remarks** • **Ms. Rupa Chanda,** Director of Trade, Investment and Innovation, UN ESCAP

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