UN-ESCAP 81ST SESSION OF THE COMMISSION
Bangkok. 12:45-13:45 24 April 2025 CONCEPT NOTE

Side Event Title: Disinformation in the City: Local and Multi-level response
Disinformation has been named the top global threat of the immediate term by the World Economic Forum (2025). This side event focuses on local and multi-level cooperation to address disinformation at the city level across member countries. This reflects the 81st Commission theme: Regional cooperation for resilient and sustainable urban development in Asia and the Pacific.

Global disinformation response has never been more critical. At a time when national governments and supranational entities rapidly develop response capabilities, cities are also increasingly impacted by, and responding to, disinformation. As all levels of government seek novel and effective ways to restore information integrity, social cohesion and institutional trust, this shared challenge demands new thinking about the ways that national and city level governments can work together to address disinformation and build resilience at the local level.

This event will bring together key regional city networks and actors with national governments to discuss local and multi-level responses to disinformation. The session will begin with a briefing based on research from the Disinformation in the City project of five Australian universities. This explicitly international, multi-sector and multi-level research project produced the 2024 Disinformation in the City Response Playbook, co-created with 40 experts from across sectors.

The briefing will be followed by introductory remarks and insights from key city network and urban development representatives about disinformation from their respective geographies and cities, and the unique capacities and challenges facing cities in response.

An interactive roundtable discussion with participants will then enable sharing of expertise within the room focused on how structures, knowledge, and capacities can best be developed to enable appropriate and effective local and multi-level responses to disinformation across member states.

Speaker bios overpage.

For more information please contact Ika Trijsburg at itrijsburg@mav.asn.au

SPEAKER BIOS

Omar Siddique
Lead, SDG Localization, UN-ESCAP

Omar Siddique is an urban development expert with over 20 years' experience in managing sustainable urban development technical assistance programmes across a range of multilateral institutions. Omar is based in Bangkok, Thailand as an Economic Affairs Officer with the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia Pacific (UNESCAP) Sustainable Urban Development Section, where he coordinated intergovernmental support to Member States and cities in localizing the 2030 Agenda, Paris Agreement and New Urban Agenda.

Before joining UNESCAP, Omar was Chief Technical Advisor and Head of Office for UN-Habitat in Kosovo, a Senior Urban Specialist for four years at the Cities Alliance based in Brussels, Belgium. Prior to joining the Cities Alliance, Omar worked for nine years as Programme Specialist at the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). Before joining the UN system, Omar worked in microfinance at the Grameen Bank in Dhaka, Bangladesh, as special assistant to Nobel laurate and founder, Dr. Muhammad Yunus.

Dr. Bernadia Tjandradewi
Secretary General, United Cities and Local Governments Asia Pacific

Dr. Bernadia Tjandradewi is the Secretary General of the United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG ASPAC). She is the first woman Secretary General of the UCLG's regional section. She has been working in urban development and related fields for more than 25 years. She was selected as one of prominent women whose work makes impacts in Asia Pacific in 2018 by GovInsider Asia. Her interests are on strategic urban planning, climate change, disaster management, water management, women empowerment, and local governance. Dr. Bernadia received her PhD in urban engineering from the University of Tokyo, and two master's degrees in Atmospheric Physic from Nagoya University, Japan and in Public Policy from National University of Singapore.

Jessica (Ika) Trijsburg (Chair)
Director Urban Analytics, Institute for Infrastructure in Society, Crawford School of Public Policy, Australian National University
Head of Democracy and Diplomacy, Municipal Association Victoria

Ika Trijsburg is Director of Urban Analytics at the ANU Institute for Infrastructure in Society in the Crawford School for Public Policy, where she holds the Disinformation in the City Research Fellowship. She is also Head of Democracy and Diplomacy at Municipal Association of Victoria, working with local governments to build and maintain robust and thriving local democracy. Ika holds a Visiting Fellowship with the German Marshall Fund of the United States and is a Research Associate with the Initiative for Peacebuilding at the University of Melbourne. Ika leads the Disinformation in the City project with collaborators across five Australian universities with partners and collaborators globally.