Title: Smart Cities for a Shared Future: Regional Cooperation for Sustainable and Inclusive Urban Innovation & Launch of Asia-Pacific Regional Guidelines for Smart Cities

Date & Time Options:

14:00-15:15 hours on Wednesday, 23 April 2025 (1hr 15 mins)

Mode of Meeting: Hybrid (Microsoft Teams Link)

Room: Meeting Room H (MR-H)

Expectation Number of Participants: 30 –50

Interpretation: Not required

Participants: Open to all participants

Organizer: Permanent Mission of China to ESCAP

Co-organizers: ESCAP & UN- Habitat

Background

This side event is organized by the Permanent Mission of China to ESCAP, in collaboration the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), and the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat). It provides a platform for knowledge exchange on sustainable and inclusive smart city development across the region. The event will also mark the launch of the Asia-Pacific Regional Guidelines for Smart Cities.

Urbanization in Asia and the Pacific is advancing at an unprecedented rate, presenting challenges related to infrastructure, basic services, housing, environmental sustainability, and climate resilience. Smart city solutions offer transformative opportunities by integrating technology, people, and the environment to enhance service delivery, sustainability, and inclusivity. However, barriers such as fragmented governance, the digital divide, and inadequate regulatory frameworks must be addressed to ensure that digital innovation benefits all urban residents equitably.

Aligned with the Commission session theme, **"Regional Cooperation for Resilient and Sustainable Urban Development in Asia and the Pacific,"** this side event will showcase smart city initiatives and innovations across the region. It will emphasize digital transformation and multi-stakeholder collaboration in strengthening urban resilience, reducing vulnerabilities, and advancing the Sustainable Development Goals

(SDGs). The event will explore how governments can leverage smart solutions and enhance governance and service delivery to promote inclusive growth, environmental sustainability, and climate resilience.

This gathering will convene policymakers, urban practitioners, experts, and development partners to share experiences on digital innovation and transformation for sustainable urban development. The discussion will highlight successful smart city strategies, innovative digital solutions, and policy frameworks that promote people-centered, sustainable, and climate-resilient urbanization.

Objectives

The event aims to:

1. **Showcase Innovative Smart City Practices** – Present real-world examples of cities leveraging technology and data-driven governance to enhance public service delivery, housing, urban resilience, and sustainability.
2. **Launch the Asia-Pacific Regional Guidelines for Smart Cities** – Introduce key principles and recommendations in the Guidelines, supporting governments in developing smart, inclusive, and climate-adaptive urban strategies, plans and initiates.
3. **Promote Policy Dialogue** – Facilitate discussions on policy gaps, opportunities, and best practices for integrating smart city strategies into national and subnational urban planning frameworks and promoting more comprehensive approaches.
4. **Encourage Inclusive and People-Centered Smart Cities** – Explore approaches to bridging the digital divide and ensuring that smart city initiatives are gender-responsive, equitable, and aligned with sustainable development goals.

Tentative Programme

Time (1hr 15 mins)	Agenda Item	Speaker(s)
5 mins	Opening Remarks	Ms. Lin Yang Deputy Executive Secretary for Programme, The Economic and Social

		Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP)
10 mins	High-Level Presentation on Smart City Initiatives	Ms. Zhang Wei, the President of the Hangzhou Research Institute of Development Planning
15 mins	Presentation on International Guidelines on People-Centred Smart Cities UN-Habitat (5mins) Presentation & Official Launch of the Asia-Pacific Regional Guidelines for Smart Cities (10mins)	Ms. Isabel Wetzel, Programme Management Officer, UN-Habitat), Nairobi, Kenya (Online) Sanjeevani Singh, Economic Affairs Office, ESCAP
40 mins	Panel Discussion: Harnessing Smart City Strategies for Urban Sustainability & moderated Q & A session	National Policymakers & Local Governments, Networks & Experts Panel Moderated by Curt Garrigan, Chief of Sustainable Development Section, ESCAP 1. H.E Mr. Vorin Sor, Under-Secretary of State, Ministry of Interior, Royal Government of Cambodia (Online) 2. Ms. Kasama Kongsmak, Executive Vice President, Digital Strategy and Security Promotion Unit, DEPA, Thailand 3. Mr. Gregg McDonald, National Director, Habitat for Humanity International (HFHI)
5 mins	Closing Remarks & Key Takeaways	Mr. Sangmin Nam, Director, Environment and Developemnt, ESCAP

Key Discussion Themes

1. **Leveraging Smart Solutions for Urban Sustainability** – Smart city innovations in mobility, energy, housing, climate adaptation, and public service delivery.

2. **Smart Cities as Drivers of Climate Action** – Integrating digital tools to enhance urban resilience and reduce environmental impacts.
3. **Inclusive and People-Centered Smart City Development** – Addressing the digital divide, ensuring gender inclusivity, and fostering citizen engagement.
4. **Smart Housing and Digital Urban Planning** – Exploring China's advancements in affordable, technology-driven housing solutions and intelligent infrastructure planning.
5. **Regional and Multi-Stakeholder Cooperation** – Examining partnerships and financing mechanisms for scaling up smart city initiatives across Asia-Pacific.

Expected Outcomes

- **Official launch of the Asia-Pacific Regional Guidelines for Smart Cities** and dissemination to national and subnational governments, urban practitioners, and development partners.
- **Increased awareness and adoption** of successful smart city policies, technologies, and governance models to enhance resilience, sustainability, and inclusivity.
- **Opportunities for future collaboration** on financing, capacity-building, and technology exchange to support sustainable urban transformation.

Contact Information

For further inquiries, please contact:

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Description for posting on the Commission website:

This side event will bring together policymakers, urban practitioners, experts, and development partners to exchange experiences on smart city solutions for sustainable urban development. It will highlight digital innovations, governance frameworks, and

collaborative approaches that enhance urban livability, strengthen climate resilience, and improve access to efficient urban services. The event will also feature the launch of ESCAP's Regional Smart City Guidelines, providing key recommendations to support governments in advancing inclusive, resilient, and sustainable smart city development across the region.