Concept Note
Side Event on Urban Resilience and Nature
ESCAP 81st Commission Session
11:15 – 12:15 hrs on 23 April 2025
Asia-Pacific Foyer, Ground Floor, United Nations Conference Centre, Bangkok

1. Background and Rationale

Urbanization in Asia and the Pacific is occurring at an unprecedented pace, with cities facing increasing challenges related to climate change, disaster risks, and environmental degradation. The ESCAP's 81st Commission Session, themed "Regional Cooperation for Resilient and Sustainable Urban Development in Asia and the Pacific," provides a strategic platform to discuss solutions for enhancing urban resilience. This side event, co-led by the Asian Disaster Preparedness Center (ADPC), the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), and Department of Climate Change and Environment (DCCE), Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment (MoNRE), Thailand aims to explore innovative approaches and best practices for building resilient cities that can withstand and recover from climate and disaster-related shocks.

2. Objectives

This side event seeks to:

- Highlight urban resilience challenges and opportunities in Asia and the Pacific.
- Showcase best practices in disaster preparedness, response, and recovery for urban areas.
- Discuss nature-based solutions and green infrastructure for enhancing urban climate resilience.
- Explore financing mechanisms for sustainable urban resilience initiatives.
- Strengthen governance and policy coordination for risk-informed urban planning.
- Provide a platform for knowledge exchange among policymakers, urban planners, and practitioners.

3. Target Audience

This side event aims the attendees of the 81st Commission of the ESCAP as follows.

- Government representatives (urban planning, climate adaptation, disaster management agencies)
- Development organizations and UN agencies
- Financial institutions and donors
- Urban planners, architects, and engineers
- Private sector representatives and investors
- Civil society organizations and academia

4. Format (60 minutes)

The side event will feature a Keynote speech followed by a panel discussion.

Panel Discussion

The panel will bring together experts from governments, development organizations, financial institutions, and research institutions to discuss:

- **Climate and disaster resilience in urban areas** – Strengthening preparedness, response, and recovery mechanisms.
- **Nature-based solutions for urban resilience** – Integrating green and blue infrastructure and ecosystem-based adaptation.
- **Financing urban resilience** – Mobilizing investments and partnerships for climate-resilient cities.
- **Urban risk governance** – Strengthening policies, institutional coordination, and multi-level governance.

4.1 Detailed agenda

Introduction (2 mins):

The moderator (ADPC) will welcome all panelists and participants and will provide overview and expected outcomes of the session, including the MoA signing event between ESCAP and ADPC.

MoA Signing and Remarks (3 min each)

Ms. Tiziana Bonapace, Director, Information and Communications Technology and Disaster Risk Reduction Division (IDD), ESCAP
Mr. Aslam Perwaiz, Executive Director, ADPC

[Group Photo]

Keynote Speech (5 min each)

Department of Climate Change and Environment (DCCE), Royal Thai Government (TBC)

Honourable Mr. Tingika Elikana, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Immigration, Government of the Cook Islands

Panel Discussion (25 min)

- Madame Norliza Hashim, CEO, Urbanice Malaysia, Ministry of Housing and Local Government
- Dr. Chalump Oonariya, TMD - Climate Services for improved urban resilience
- Ms. Marlena Kiefl, Advisor, Urban-Act, GIZ Thailand
- Mr. Emani Kumar, Deputy Secretary General, ICLEI South Asia
- Mr. Pakkasem Tongchai, Programmeme Officer, Water and Wetlands, IUCN Asia Regional Office

Q&A (10 min)

Closing remarks (5 min): Mr. Sangmin Nam, Director, Environment and Development Division, ESCAP

The panelists will also be asked to give one word each that best describes urban resilience. After this, the moderator will highlight the salient and innovative findings from the discussion, thank the panelists and the audience.

5. Expected Outcomes

- Increased awareness of urban resilience challenges and solutions among policymakers and practitioners.
- Strengthened regional cooperation on risk-informed urban development.
- Identification of actionable policy recommendations for enhancing urban resilience.
- Enhanced partnerships for mobilizing investments in climate-resilient cities.
- Sharing of innovative tools and approaches for integrating resilience into urban planning and infrastructure development.

6. Organizing Partners

- Asian Disaster Preparedness Center (ADPC)
- United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP)
- Department of Climate Change and Environment (DCCE), Thailand