

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING
BETWEEN
THE UNITED NATIONS ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMISSION
FOR ASIA AND THE PACIFIC
AND
THE UNITED NATIONS HUMAN SETTLEMENTS PROGRAMME

I. INTRODUCTION

1. The United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) and the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) reaffirm their desire to work together in areas of mutual interest in the service of Asia-Pacific countries of common membership through the present Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). This agreement supersedes the MOU signed between the two organizations on the twenty-sixth of February 2004.
2. ESCAP and UN-Habitat aim to support cooperation and coordination on sustainable urban development for implementation of the New Urban Agenda and the localization of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development coherently across regional and sub-regional plans, frameworks and policies in Asia and the Pacific member States. By doing so, both parties actively take forward the outcomes of the 7th Asia-Pacific Urban Forum, informed by the policy pathways of The Future of Asian & Pacific Cities Report 2019.

II. PURPOSE OF ESCAP-UN-HABITAT COOPERATION

3. Both ESCAP and UN-Habitat have mandates to promote cooperation and support effective government policies and multi-stakeholder partnerships for sustainable urban development. ESCAP, as the regional development arm of the United Nations Secretariat in Asia-Pacific and UN-Habitat as a focal point for sustainable urbanization in the United Nations, commit to partner together on further promoting the positive role urbanization play in relation to sustainable development and the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. This renewed cooperation will further strengthen and support the implementation of the New Urban Agenda (2016-2036) and associated frameworks and plans, such as the Regional Roadmap for Implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in Asia and the Pacific (hereinafter referred to as the "Regional Roadmap") and the UN System-wide Strategy on Sustainable Urban Development.

4. ESCAP and UN-Habitat will work together to:

- (a) Advance the implementation of the New Urban Agenda and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, especially SDG11 and other urban and human settlements dimensions, including through providing joint support to the vertical integration of voluntary national reviews complimented by the production of voluntary local review reports from cities;
- (b) Enhance the knowledge base on urban issues by jointly preparing and applying the findings and recommendations of normative products and publications in the region;
- (c) Support increased data availability and understanding of key human settlements indicators in systems of official statistics as well as innovative proxy indicators from local level data producers and users;
- (d) Expand opportunities for capacity development and peer exchanges for policy and decision makers on urban issues;
- (e) Strengthen regional coordination and cooperation among United Nations agencies, funds and Programmes across all fronts of sustainable urban development – analysis, policy, programming, implementation, advocacy, follow up and review;
- (f) Partner with and assist, in consultation with the Development Coordination Office Asia-Pacific, the United Nations Country Teams under the leadership of their Resident Coordinators by providing substantive inputs on sustainable urbanization into the development of United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Frameworks; and
- (g) Strengthen regional multi-stakeholder dialogue, coordination and partnerships for implementation of the New Urban Agenda and 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development through relevant platforms such as the Asia-Pacific Urban Forum and the Penang Platform for Sustainable Urbanization.

III. GENERAL PRINCIPLES FOR ESCAP-UN-HABITAT COOPERATION

5. ESCAP and UN-Habitat will be guided by the following general principles:
- (a) The United Nations delivering-as-one approach is particularly relevant for delivering on crosscutting issues, such as sustainable urban development;
 - (b) The New Urban Agenda reaffirms our global commitment to sustainable urban development as a critical step for realizing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in an integrated and coordinated manner at the global, regional, national, subnational and local levels, in partnership with all relevant actors;
 - (c) The Regional Roadmap notes the opportunities for a 'One UN' approach towards strengthening regional cooperation on priority issues identified by member States; continued and more efficient and coordinated support for member States provided by the United Nations Secretariat and agencies; and more effective knowledge-sharing among countries; and
 - (d) The United Nations Secretary General's First Quadrennial Report on the Progress on the Implementation of the New Urban Agenda which recommended that the United Nations system strengthen the capacities of national and subnational governments to implement, monitor and report on the New Urban Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals as well as strengthen existing multi-stakeholder platforms that facilitate participation and engagement at all levels and support member States in reporting on the New Urban Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals.

IV. FOCUS OF ESCAP-UN-HABITAT JOINT ACTIVITIES

6. Priority areas will be further developed and detailed into agreed joint activities in annual implementation plans and may be amended from time to time with the mutual written consent of the Parties. The Parties will align their focus, *inter alia*, to the four thematic priorities of The Future of Asian & Pacific Cities Report 2019, namely:

- (a) Urban and territorial planning such as analytical and technical cooperation activities to introduce sustainable, low carbon and livability targets into spatial plans as well as strategies along with

deployment of nature-based solutions for climate responsive infrastructure planning and pollution abatement strategies;

- (b) Urban resilience – such as building resilient cities through enhanced geospatial information applications and analytical work on strengthening city resilience plans to mitigate climatic, economic and social shocks and stresses through critical urban infrastructure, service delivery and governance systems;
- (c) Smart and inclusive cities – such as providing technical assistance to regional and national smart cities networks to deliver people centred smart city plans, policies and investment frameworks in partnership with governments and the private sector; and
- (d) Urban finance – such as research and analytical tools to promote effective municipal finance, such as the development of innovative public private partnerships, land based and environmental externality financing approaches.

7. The first annual implementation plan with specific outcomes and expected outputs under each of these priority areas, or additional to be identified, will be agreed upon within three months after the signing of the MOU.

V. EXCHANGE OF INFORMATION

8. ESCAP and UN-Habitat recognize that effective cooperation depends on open, transparent, comprehensive and regular exchange of information at the institutional level. They agree to make appropriate arrangements to:

- (a) provide copies of every relevant publication and all relevant public documents of each organization to the main library of the other organization to be maintained as reference documents; and
- (b) share information, including through information posted on the websites of each organization, of:
 - conferences, seminars, workshops and other events being organized or sponsored;
 - normative policy and strategy documents, tools, guidelines and other publications;
 - evaluations of regional, country and sectoral programmes and project.

VI. RECIPROCAL INVITATIONS

9. ESCAP and UN-Habitat recognize that appropriate representation is important for the purpose of joint positioning and advocacy. They agree that:

- (a) reciprocal invitations will be extended to the other organization to attend and actively participate in key meetings, conferences and mechanisms relevant to sustainable urban development hosted by them, such as the World Urban Forum, the UN-Habitat Assembly, the ESCAP annual commission session, the Asia-Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development and other regular fora in Asia-Pacific such as Asia-Pacific Ministerial Conference on Housing and Urban Development (APMCHUD); and
- (b) invitations to other meetings, conferences, seminars and workshops relevant to cooperation within the priority areas set out in this MOU and the annual implementation plans, will be extended, where appropriate.

VII. PERIODIC CONSULTATIONS

10. ESCAP and UN-Habitat recognize that it is important to convene regular consultations to review what is being planned, what is being implemented, and what is being achieved in terms of results as well as to discuss new challenges, opportunities and issues. They agree to hold such consultations periodically and not less than two times each year.

VIII. FOCAL POINTS FOR MANAGEMENT OF THE MOU

11. ESCAP and UN-Habitat agree to designate as focal points for the follow up activities and communication under this MOU:

- (a) for ESCAP: Director, Environment and Development Division
- (b) for UN-Habitat: Regional Representative, Regional Office of Asia and the Pacific

IX. MONITORING OF THE MOU AND JOINT ACTIVITIES

12. ESCAP and UN-Habitat will prepare an annual implementation plan, which will include:

- (a) a list of all current operational cooperation activities and status of their implementation;
- (b) a list with a brief description of all planned cooperation activities for the next year; and
- (c) an indicative list of planned cooperation activities for the two subsequent years.

13. ESCAP and UN-Habitat agree that:

- (a) the respective focal points will prepare a joint report annually on the status of implementation of the cooperation activities, including an assessment of results achieved;
- (b) the Parties will conduct, at the occasion of a regular scheduled consultation, a more comprehensive mid-term review of the ESCAP-UN-Habitat cooperation two years after signature of this MOU, in consultation with other relevant offices of the respective organizations, which will inform any necessary amendment to the MOU.

X. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS AND USE OF INSTITUTIONAL EMBLEMS

14. ESCAP and UN-Habitat recognize that the involvement of both organizations in joint cooperation activities needs to be publicized. They agree that:

- (a) there will be public acknowledgment of the role and contribution of each organization to cooperation projects in all public information documentation related to such cooperation; and
- (b) the use of emblems of each organization in documentation related to cooperation will be in accord with the current policies of each organization concerning such usage.

XI. MISCELLANEOUS

15. The term of this MOU will be from the date of signature by both Parties until 9 February 2024.

16. Any specific activities under this MOU will be detailed in the annual implementation plan. In the case of any exchange of funds, ESCAP and UN-Habitat would enter into a separate written agreement.

17. This MOU may be amended by mutual written consent of the Parties.

18. This MOU may be terminated by either Party on six months' notice in writing.

Signed on 10th February 2020 at the Tenth Session of the World Urban Forum in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates.

**For the United Nations Economic and
Social Commission for Asia and the
Pacific**

Armida Salsiah Alisjahbana
Under-Secretary-General of the United
Nations and Executive Secretary of
ESCAP

**For the United Nations Human
Settlements Programme**

Maimunah Mohd Sharif
Under-Secretary-General of the United
Nations and Executive Director of UN-
Habitat