

# I. INTRODUCTION

Over the past two decades, many countries in Asia have experienced rapid economic growth. This has led to a rapid rise in their urban populations. However, in spite of a significant increase in national wealth and personal incomes, the quality of life of an average urban resident remains low. Squalor, slums, traffic congestion, and shortages of water and power characterize urban centers in Asia. While the national governments pursue the goals of economic development, it is generally left to local governments to manage rapidly growing urban areas and provide basic services for their residents. Given the limited resources and capacities of urban local governments, they have to meet the challenges of urban growth in partnerships with other stakeholders. As a result, the concept of urban management has evolved from its narrow meaning of the functioning of municipal government to the broader theme of partnerships among urban government, private sector, and civil society.

The Asian Mayors' Forum has provided a platform for urban leaders of Asia to share their experiences and learn from each other. The first forum was held in Cebu City, Philippines, in December 1998. At that forum, mayors and senior representatives of 10 Asian municipalities shared their views on key issues affecting municipal performance, and established a small network of Asian mayors for continuous exchange of information to help advance the performance of municipal service.

This volume presents the proceedings of the second Asian Mayors' Forum held in Colombo, Sri Lanka, attended by 75 participants representing 31

cities in ten countries: the People's Republic of China (PRC), India, Indonesia, Lao People's Democratic Republic (Lao PDR), Malaysia, Pakistan, Philippines, Sri Lanka, Thailand, and Viet Nam. The Forum was the result of collaboration among the Asian Development Bank Institute, the Asian Development Bank (ADB), Colombo Municipal Council, Colombo Plan Secretariat, German Agency for Technical Cooperation (GTZ), Konrad Adenauer Foundation, Regional Urban Development Office South Asia of the US Agency for International Development (USAID), US-Asia Environmental Partnership Program, and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)/United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (UNCHS) Urban Management Programme.

The increased participation of municipal leaders and sponsors in the Colombo Forum was indicative of the growing need for exchange of information and experiences on urban governance and a search for a mechanism for fostering and enhancing networking among municipalities in Asia. Thus, from Cebu to Colombo, the Asian Mayors' Forum has clearly established itself as a platform for interaction among municipal leaders of Asia. The key objectives of the present Forum were to provide an opportunity for municipal leaders to share their experiences and to build a network of city leaders of Asia. To achieve those objectives, the Forum was designed around the following principles:

- **Building** a relationship among participant municipal leaders so that through the contacts established at the Forum, they will be better able to help one another manage the many challenges facing mayors and city administrators throughout Asia.
- **Sharing** information and experiences on strategic and municipal service issues that can

be applied by municipal leaders to enhance the level of municipal services.

- **Supporting** ADB's concurrent project on benchmarking selected municipal services, which is taking place in ten of the municipalities represented at the Forum. This project aims to demonstrate that municipalities can achieve better services for their citizens by comparing their service performances with one another and then using this information to improve selected services to their citizens. It was also expected that other municipalities and development agencies would learn from these experiences and adopt similar activities in their own programs.

The Forum began with an exhibition on *Innovations in Municipal Governance*. This exhibition provided an opportunity for the participating municipalities and partner development agencies to highlight their most important innovations in city management and urban governance including, among others, city planning, law enforcement, urban renewal, computer systems application, and parking (Box I.1). The exhibition stimulated useful discussion among the participants outside the Forum sessions. For additional information on individual projects/innovations, see the list of participants for contact details.

The Forum discussions were organized on the following themes and presented as chapters in this volume:

- Changing Institutional Culture of Asian Municipalities
- Public-Private Sector Partnerships for Municipal Development
- Coordinating Local Governments in Megacities

- Cities and Development Agencies Working Together to Fund Infrastructure Development
- Serving Citizens: Improving Delivery of Municipal Services
- Meeting Challenges in the Next Millennium

The discussion on each theme consisted of presentations by one or more resource persons and breakout group sessions. The discussions in the breakout groups revolved around three key questions: the major issues and challenges faced by city leaders; the actions taken by city leaders to resolve the issues; and the important success factors/lessons of their experience.

In addition, hands-on sessions using the World Wide Web were organized to familiarize participants with this powerful tool for accessing updated information, improving knowledge and communication, and establishing partnerships.

## **CHANGING INSTITUTIONAL CULTURE OF ASIAN MUNICIPALITIES**

The decentralization efforts in Asia are at an initial stage. There is a lack of empowerment of urban local governments and excessive controls are still being exercised by higher levels of government on the functional and financial responsibilities of local governments. There is a mismatch between the functional powers of urban local governments and their financial resources. As a consequence, local governments are unable to meet citizens' expectations.

Rapid growth of cities and the inability of local government to cope with the increased demand for services have in many cases led to the takeover of a number of local government functions by parastatal agencies. This has eroded the

### **Box I.1. List of Exhibition Participants**

#### **MUNICIPALITIES**

Bangalore, India	Customer Complaint System
Cebu City, Philippines	GIS Application Development on Fire Hydrant Inventory and Tax Map Control Roll
	Business Permit Renewal: One Stop Shop
Fuzhou, PRC	Overall City Planning
	"110" Social United Service Network
	Intensifying the Afforestation and Construction of a Garden-Like City
Ho Chi Minh, Viet Nam	The Program of Drainage for Ho Chi Minh City
Ipoh City, Malaysia	Law Enforcement Management
Kuantan, Malaysia	Movable Parking Booth
	Usage of a Filter in a Toilet Bowl
Mandaluyong City, Philippines	The Marketplace: First BOT Project in the Philippines
	"Pamahalaan sa Pamayanan" (Bringing Government to the Grassroots)
	"Oplan-Lingap" (Anti-Drug Abuse Drive)
Peshawar, Pakistan	Rehabilitation and Upgrading of Vendor Cabins and Kiosks
Semarang, Indonesia	Housing Urban Renewal and Development
Colombo City and other neighboring municipalities in Sri Lanka, including Kandy City, Negombo Municipality, Badulla Municipality, and Nuwara Eliya Municipality	

#### **DEVELOPMENT PARTNERS**

Asian Development Bank	Sustainable Cities: Environmental Challenges in the 21 <sup>st</sup> Century
	The Benchmarking Project
Colombo Plan Secretariat	The Colombo Plan
German Agency for Technical Cooperation (GTZ)	Garbage to Gold and Dialogue for Democracy: "Urban Development and Public Participation in Bandung, Indonesia"
	Integrated Slum Improvement Project (Nagpur, India)
Regional Urban Development Office-South Asia (USAID)	Indo-US Financial Institutions Reform and Expansion (FIRE) Project
UNDP's The Urban Governance Initiative	The Urban Governance Initiative
UNDP/UNCHS Urban Management Programme	Overview of UMP's Program Activities in Asia, Along With Two Case Studies in Lalitpur (Nepal) and Phuket (Thailand)
UNDP-World Bank Water & Sanitation Program	Water and Sanitation Program-South Asia
US-Asia Environmental Partnership Program	The US-Asia Environmental Partnership Program

importance of local governments in Asia. At the city level, government organizational structure is highly centralized and the management style is very bureaucratic, with a lack of vision and customer orientation. An important challenge to municipal management in Asia is to change the institutional culture of the municipalities.

The keynote address by Mr. Karu Jayasuriya highlights the shift from a reactive bureaucratic system to a managerial and proactive system of governance in Colombo during the past two years. Through various examples, he demonstrates the “people-friendly” nature of the Colombo Municipal Council, the various public-private sector partnerships, and the involvement of citizens in planning and decision making.

### Key Issues and Challenges for Changing Institutional Culture

- Centralized organizational structure—no delegation of authority
- Bureaucratic management style—lack of vision, no customer orientation
- No empowerment—control by higher levels of government, e.g., personnel appointments, functions
- High expectations of citizens and elected officials
- Fear of change among municipal staff resulting in maintenance of status quo
- Conflict of interest between elected leaders and civil servants
- Weak governance, characterized by poor enforcement of rules and laws

In the discussions that followed, the participants identified a number of actions that municipal leaders in Asia have taken to change the culture of municipal organizations. Many leaders

have focused on building the capacity of municipal staff through a human resource development strategy. Specific training was given to staff on the introduction of the new management culture, e.g. customer orientation. Greater devolution of authority and responsibilities was also key to changing the culture of the organization. Bringing the local government closer to the people through decentralized administration at the ward/zone level has also enabled creation of citizen-friendly municipal governments. In a few cities, partnerships with the private sector and civil society stakeholders have also helped to bring about changes within municipal organizations. Development of municipal charters and assessment of the municipal performance by citizens' report cards have also made local governments more responsive.

The key lesson that emerged from the discussions of the success stories in Asia was the quality of leadership. It was seen that a good municipal leader was one who built trust among the staff and elected members of the organization, provided encouragement by shifting the focus of the organization to a "can do" approach, increased the credibility of the organization by strict enforcement of existing rules and laws, and built partnerships with the private sector and civil society. There was also a general consensus that the initiatives of municipal leaders need to be institutionalized so that the process of changing the organizational culture is sustained.

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## **PUBLIC-PRIVATE SECTOR PARTNERSHIPS FOR MUNICIPAL DEVELOPMENT**

A UNDP policy document [Governance for Sustainable Human Development, January 1997] states that:

*Governance includes the state, but transcends it by taking in the private sector and civil society. All three are critical for sustaining human development. The state creates a conducive political and legal environment. The private sector generates jobs and income. And civil society facilitates political and social interaction— mobilizing groups to participate in economic, social and political activities. Because each has weaknesses and strengths, a major objective of our support for good governance is to promote constructive interaction among all three.*

The term “governance” is now used to describe various processes of participatory development in which the governments are just one of the many actors. This broader meaning of the term largely stems from the fact that the governments, by themselves, have not been able to fulfill the goals of human development. In the context of the urban areas of the developing world, the inability of local government to cope with the provision of basic services and infrastructure is starkly visible. In many cities in Asia, public-private sector partnership projects have been initiated to deal better with these problems.

Councilor Rhina Bhar presents the case of *The Sustainable Penang Initiative (SPI)*. SPI is the first community indicator project in Malaysia, and possibly in Asia. It represents an initiative of the civil society that has now become an important partner with local government. Launched at the end of 1997, the SPI has organized various public forums and roundtables. This initiative has led to the formation of new citizens’ groups related to water, transport, and the disabled. A citizens’ report card called the Penang People’s Report, which contains

the performance of 40 indicators identified by the various roundtables, was also prepared.

Dato' Mohamad Bin Saib discusses Kuantan Municipal Council (MPK) experiences with public-private sector partnerships. Kuantan City is the administrative, financial, and investment center of Pahang State, Malaysia. In order to strengthen and broaden these functions, a vision for Kuantan was formulated. A participatory approach to fulfill the vision evolved, involving the people and the private sector. Strategic plans were formulated and improvement of MPK's administrative system was undertaken judiciously. This resulted in the award of the ISO 9001 last year and MPK gained international recognition for its working procedures. The city is confident that MPK as the local authority will play its role to achieve its visions through closer partnership with the private sector.

Mayor Benjamin Abalos Jr. describes how the build-operate-transfer (BOT) arrangement enabled his city, Mandaluyong, Philippines, to rebuild the public market after it was destroyed by fire in 1991. He emphasizes the challenges faced by the city, which is a part of a larger metropolitan area, and advocates a mechanism for smaller cities to take independent initiatives.

Congressman Ignacio Bunye, Muntinlupa, Philippines, talks about the need for residents' participation as a means of improving service delivery. The key to his success was due to a participatory strategy, recognizing that nongovernment organizations (NGOs) and people's organizations are important partners in development. People participation in governance or the "bottom-up" approach maximizes the potential of the "governed", enabling them to become effective and active partners in the search for solutions to the challenges they face in their socioeconomic environment.

Mayor Phummisak Hongsyok discusses the experiences of Phuket in promoting a participatory

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approach to urban environmental management. The tropical island of Phuket is Thailand's premier tourist destination and is visited by about 3 million tourists every year. The sudden drop in European tourists, following reports in the European media about Phuket's environmental problems, caused the city to evolve a participatory approach to environmental management. Since 1994, the city has embarked upon developing a collective vision, and has generated the support of the business community, NGOs, and local communities toward environmental improvement.

### Issues and Challenges for Public-Private Sector Partnerships

- Maintaining a balance between the social-service objective of the public sector and the profit motive of the private sector
- Need for transparency in partnership arrangements due to lack of mutual trust among the partners
- Consistency of macropolicies of national governments with local policies of privatization and partnerships
- Special focus on the poor, who may be adversely affected by public-private sector partnerships
- Poor contract management skills with local governments
- Threat to municipal staff due to private-sector participation

These experiences of successful public-private sector partnerships highlight the efforts of city leaders to overcome many challenges associated with partnership initiatives. Through these experiences, one can see a distinct paradigm shift among the stakeholders. The local governments see a shift in their role from provider or doer to enabler/facilitator and initiators of partnerships. The NGOs and community-based organizations (CBOs)

in the city have begun to move away from confrontation (activism) to collaboration with the city government. The private sector has also begun to consider partnerships in city development not from the pure profit motive but from a sense of corporate citizenship. These paradigm shifts are quite important in ensuring partnership of stakeholders in city development.

### Lessons for Initiating Public-Private Sector Partnerships

- Increased transparency is necessary in dealing with the private sector, through public consultations and use of open bids
- Strong local government is a necessary condition for successful partnership; this has often been done by increasing the resource base of the local government
- Good corporate citizenship is essential for private–sector participation
- It is important to recognize the need to “connect with people” and realize that “governance is not a one-person show”
- Forums for sustainable consultative processes should be established
- A long-term vision needs to evolve collectively, with action programs in which people can participate

From the discussions, it became clear that successful partnership initiatives resulted when projects chosen for partnerships demonstrated a “win-win” situation for all partners and reduced the chances of incompatibility of objectives among the partners. The city governments also took care to win the confidence of the municipal staff by consultations with them. Care was taken to ensure that the poor residents in the city were not adversely affected by the partnership arrangements. New

procedures and systems were introduced to reduce bureaucratic delays and to institutionalize partnership arrangements.

These innovative public-private sector partnership cases provide some important lessons. The foremost among these is that a strong local government is important in order to provide credibility with the partners. Cities also need a long-term vision that is collectively evolved by all stakeholders. This enables commitment and ownership among the stakeholders. A transparent process of engaging the partners and provision of a proper system of accountability are also crucial to sustaining partnership arrangements.

## COORDINATING LOCAL GOVERNMENTS IN MEGACITIES

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One of the important features of Asian urbanization is the emergence and rapid growth of megacities. Management of these megacities, especially those that have multimunicipal structure, has confounded policymakers. With rapid growth of services provision, particularly water supply, sewerage, transportation, and waste disposal that have metropolitan character, the question arises whether there should be a single metropolitan-level government to provide all municipal services or can each individual authority in the metropolitan region provide these services? Should the functions of a local authority in a metropolitan context be different from those of other local governments? What are the experiences of metropolitan management in Asia? These are some of the issues discussed by Congressman Ignacio Bunye of the Philippines.

Congressman Bunye describes the Manila situation, where an attempt was made to have a

centralized government for this megacity through the Metropolitan Manila Commission. This was, however, in sharp contrast to the avowed goal of local autonomy. According to Congressman Bunye, while there is a need to evolve a structure for coordination of metropolitan services and problems that transcend political boundaries, the autonomy of the local governments has to be retained.

The forum participants emphasized that when local governments perform their assigned functions effectively and coordinate their activities with other local governments, the task of metropolitan management becomes easier. It was also concluded that while the autonomy of local governments should not be removed, in a metropolitan context, certain functions related to metropolitan planning and development, metropolitan transport, water supply, and sanitation required a coordinated effort. It was also felt that these functions were best carried out by an independent agency that worked closely with local governments.

## **CITIES AND DEVELOPMENT AGENCIES WORKING TOGETHER TO FUND INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT**

The role of the development agencies has undergone change in recent years. With globalization and relatively free flow of capital across the nations, more funds are available to cities now than ever before. External support agencies have also begun to recognize a shift in their role from being a mere provider of finance to an enabler for cities to access the global capital market. The city governments, in turn, have to prepare themselves to compete with the private sector and national governments in tapping this vast capital market.

Mr. Keshav Varma of the World Bank highlights the new challenges facing international institutions. These, according to him, are increasing their involvement through decentralization, simplification, innovation, and creation of new lending instruments. The World Bank now promotes the philosophy of making cities livable, competitive, manageable, and bankable. This is being done through city development strategy preparation, capacity building of local governments, and replication of best practices.

Mr. Preben Nielsen of ADB discusses the challenges of urbanization in Asia, the financial requirements, and the need for donor coordination and partnerships. He notes that ADB can provide advice as well as funds and provides examples that illustrate ADB's views on poverty-related issues and means of service delivery. He suggests that the role of international development finance institutions is to promote reforms and policy changes for better urban management.

Mayor Alvin B. Garcia of Cebu City, Philippines, illustrates the process of evolving a long-term vision, encouraging private business to promote tourism, engaging in public-private sector partnerships through BOT projects, joint ventures, and the use of promissory notes as instruments to raise funds.

Mr. P. U. Asnani, Director of the US-Asia Environmental Partnership Program, Ahmedabad, India, describes the dramatic turnaround in the financial situation in that city. The city's tax revenues doubled in one year, not because the city raised taxes, but through plugging leakages, reducing corruption, and professionalizing the administration. He also explains the efforts of the city in raising Rs1,000 million (US\$25 million) through municipal bonds.

These presentations illustrate the paradigm shift in the traditional role of the donor agencies. They see

themselves more as partners of city governments for financing infrastructure, than as the sole provider of fund. External support agencies are moving toward flexible lending instruments like infrastructure fund and municipal development facilities. There is also a greater emphasis now by donor agencies on policy reform in the urban sector and capacity building of local governments. As the examples of Cebu and Ahmedabad demonstrate, it is possible for cities to obtain resources through partnership arrangements and domestic or international capital markets, provided the governments establish their credibility through improved performance.

## **SERVING CITIZENS: IMPROVING DELIVERY OF MUNICIPAL SERVICES**

Responsive municipal government is a key to improved governance. Municipal institutions can no longer be considered a traditional governmental system but must be viewed as service organizations with customer orientation. Within this perspective, municipal organizations need to shift their focus to customer orientation and consider the taxpaying citizens as their consumers. Such a shift in approach would enable municipal institutions to be responsive to citizen demands, improve services, and recover the cost of provision of municipal services.

Mr. Naved Hamid describes ADB's on-going Benchmarking Project in which 10 Asian municipalities are participating. This project provides an opportunity for the participating municipalities to compare their service delivery and establish a program for enhancing the level of their service. At present, the project is focused on two services: resolution of complaints and public grievances and solid waste management.

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## Citizen Complaints-Resolution System: Key Issues and Challenges

- No clear delineation of responsibilities
- Lack of technology, e.g. computerization for handling complaints
- Corruption and inefficiency among staff
- Weak mechanism for action on complaints received
- Problems of classifying/filtering complaints
- People want to complain to the “big-boss”

### Complaint Resolution

Complaint resolution and customer orientation are two sides of the same coin. Mr. P. U. Asnani advocates the use of a citizens’ charter, which clearly delineates the responsibilities of the municipal government and lays down the service standards and mechanism for resolution of complaints and grievances. He believes that the key to a successful complaints-resolution system is to keep it easy to access and well-publicized. It should also deal with complaints with reasonable speed. It should be simple, both to understand and use, and there should be fixed time limits for action. The complaints should be kept confidential to protect staff and the complainants. The system should provide information to management so that services can be improved.

Mr. H. B. S. Aradhya, representing the Benchmarking Project coordinators, notes that in many cities a systematic approach to handle grievances is lacking. A few cities have a dedicated unit, while others have a “day-in-the-week” when all complaints are received and resolved. Through the Benchmarking Project, Bangalore realized the importance of a one-stop approach for dealing with complaints, increasing the number of receiving

points, monitoring complaint performance by middle management, and sending unresolved complaints to higher levels of management.

In developing an effective citizen complaints system, municipal institutions face many challenges. In general, municipal staff are averse to being made accountable to the people. In the absence of adequate delegation of powers, complaints may not be resolved. City governments with effective complaint systems have developed procedures for monitoring and prioritizing complaints, and providing effective means of their redressal. In many cities, key municipal staff have mobile phones to enable them to resolve complaints quickly. In some cities, an “open-house” is arranged once a week to enable the citizens to meet top municipal officers.

### **Key Actions for Solid Waste Management**

- Community involvement—separation of garbage in colored bags
- Strict enforcement with on-the-spot fines
- School education; informal education through street plays
- Publicity campaign on the “green city”
- Involvement of the private sector

### **Solid Waste Management**

With growth in urban population, and increase in per capita income and commerce and industry, there has been a rapid expansion in the amount and composition of waste generated in Asian cities. This increase is set to continue for the foreseeable future. Asian cities have a lower rate of waste generation per capita than western cities, but the tropical Asian

climate with high rainfall and humidity aggravates the waste management problem.

Mr. Nathaniel von Einsiedel, Regional Coordinator of the UNDP/UNCHS Urban Management Programme, underscores the need to focus on all the stages of the waste disposal process, viz. generation, collection, transport, disposal, and treatment. He explains the various issues at each of these stages and provides examples of best practices.

On behalf of the Benchmarking Project coordinators, Ms. Suzanne Ardos adds education and enforcement to the list of waste disposal issues. She notes that most Benchmarking Project cities have some ad hoc education programs, and that school education programs are widely implemented. A lesson from the current experience is that multiple channels of mass education are the most appropriate strategy for waste-related education. On enforcement there are varied approaches, with some cities using local law enforcement units and others using the communities. Publicity campaigns with a focus on hot spots and use of mobile enforcement units were the suggested approaches for enforcement.

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The key issues and challenges in solid waste management are the adoption of the principles of reduce, reuse, and recycle. Reduction of waste requires attitudinal and behavioral changes among the residents. If the local community and the private sector are also involved in the waste collection process, the problem becomes more manageable.

## **MEETING CHALLENGES IN THE NEXT MILLENNIUM**

The next millennium is often referred to as the urban millennium, and at the turn of the millennium nearly half of Asia's population resides in urban areas.

According to Mr. Keshav Varma and Alvin Garcia, the coming millennium will bring greater challenges but also more opportunities to improve living conditions in the cities. However, to take advantage of these opportunities in the new millennium a new system of municipal management is imperative—one that fosters true citizenship, builds sustainable institutions, and improves quality of life.

Mr. Terry Barnes outlines the process used by the Fairfield City Council in Australia for improving resource management. The process began with the community's identification of a clear vision that was translated into a series of community outcomes. A major change in the organization structure involved the establishment of a City Outcomes Department. The responsibilities of this department include the effective use of resources to achieve the community outcomes identified through the vision. This is separate from the City Services Department, which is responsible for the efficient use of those resources allocated to the delivery of services. The focus of this improved organizational structure of the Council was effectiveness and efficiency. The supporting systems introduced within the Council have output-based budgets, in which the opportunity cost of each decision is analyzed, and detailed project evaluation is undertaken.

Municipal budgeting and resource allocation are often driven by past expenditure patterns rather than by current and future needs. In the absence of rational procedures, scarce municipal resources are allocated on the basis of the personal preference of a few individuals or external agencies. However, as in the case of Fairfield City Council, if a consultative process is adopted and a clear delineation of functions related to resource allocation is made, it is possible to develop a strategic vision for financing the development of the city. Improvements in the resource situation of cities

are also seen when qualified staff are engaged in resource management activities.

## CONCLUDING REMARKS

Mr. S. B. Chua of the ADB Institute summarizes the Forum proceedings and highlights some of the key messages, i.e.

- share experiences and learn from one another;
- establish partnerships with NGOs, the private sector, and the international community in order to serve people better;
- interact on problems through electronic mail and other means;
- address, in particular, the importance of governance;
- connect with the citizenry and establish mechanisms through which people can participate in local government affairs;
- establish a customer-focused vision that is based on outcomes rather than activities;
- continue to strive for the best organizational structure in metropolitan areas for optimal coordination and cooperation;
- remember that often the megaproblems of megacities can be solved in simple ways;
- engage development agencies in consultations before proceeding with plans for projects that require their assistance;
- seek ways of financing without getting too much into debt;
- be aware that cities will soon face challenges very different from those of today; and
- cities will be competing with one another for resources in similar areas.

Mr. Chua reiterates the need for a continuous dialogue among the municipal leaders of Asia and hopes that the co-sponsors will support the next forum and the activities that will take place in the interim period.