

IX. CONCLUDING REMARKS

S.B. Chua
Asian Development Bank Institute

I am sure that you will agree with me that we have tremendously enjoyed the past three days, all made possible by Mayor Kamil and his dedicated officers. We are grateful for all the excellent arrangements, not just for the Forum but for the wonderful dinner and the rich cultural entertainment as well. I would also like to thank the resource speakers, our co-sponsors, and the participants for their collective efforts in making this Forum a success.

I have listened with great interest to our speakers, and studied the papers on public-private sector partnerships and residents' participation as a means of improving service delivery. I noticed that everybody participated in one way or another, and the breakout sessions were well conducted. The open discussions aroused a lot of interest, and although we had an exhausting Forum, nobody fell asleep. I think we have achieved our objectives and we did it very well.

I am sure we will be going away enriched with the friendships that we established here. With the knowledge that having met face-to-face through this Forum, we can now communicate and exchange views with one another, and help contribute to solving one another's problems, especially through E-mail. If you do this on a sustainable basis, you will have contributed to

meeting one of the key objectives of the Mayors' Forum.

Finally, our resource speakers would like us to carry the following messages back to our respective cities:

- The Honorable Minister Mowlana conveyed to us that in today's world where we are fast becoming integrated into one globalized environment, we need to share our experiences and learn from one another so that we can contribute to the collective upliftment of cities in the Asian region.
- Mr. Jayasuriya, former Mayor of Colombo, and Dr. Masaru Yoshitomi, Dean of the ADB Institute, would like us to take note that we need to establish partnerships with others, such as NGOs, the private sector, and the international community, in order to be able to serve our people better.
- A message from Mayor Kamil is that we must continue to interact on issues that confront us in our work and share our experiences through electronic and other means to help one another in solving urban management problems.
- Dr. Sarat Chandran, Secretary General of the Colombo Plan Secretariat, together with Dr. Masaru Yoshitomi, stressed the importance of governance as an issue we must address.
- We must connect with people, engage in consultations with them, and establish a mechanism where people can participate in the affairs of local government. This is the message that the mayors from Penang and

Kuantan of Malaysia, and Mandaluyong, Philippines, have conveyed to us.

- According to Mr. Terry Barnes, Chief Executive Officer of Fairfield City Council, Australia, we should establish a vision and focus on outcomes, not on activities. We should be customer-focused so that we can deliver the required services to our citizens in the most efficient and effective way.
- Congressman Bunye of the Philippines wanted us to remember how to achieve metropolitan coordination and cooperation through the continuing search for an appropriate organizational structure.
- Mayor Chatterjee told us that megacities have “megaproblems.” He emphasized with a firm conviction, however, that megaproblems could be solved in simple ways. Federal governments can establish the framework but local governments must handle the implementation.
- Mr. Keshav Varma from the World Bank and Mr. Preben Nielsen from ADB, who speak from the donors’ perspective, told us that if we need their financing, we need to go through a consultative process with them so that they can tell us when and how they can lend money to us.
- Mayor Garcia replied with his innovative ways of attracting financing. He told us how to get things done with other people’s money without getting too much into debt. We certainly have to remember him for this.

- Mr. P. U. Asnani, Director, US-Asia Environmental Partnership Programme, was optimistic when he told us that we must not give up hope. If Ahmedabad has been able to turn around its financial position from hopelessness to profitability within a month, so can we. We can learn from the strategies that they have adopted and, if we succeed, he has demonstrated his point. If we fail, we must have slept during his presentation.
- Mr. Von Einsiedel from UNDP/UNCHS told us how to handle our solid garbage. He emphasized the importance of striking a balance in the consideration of critical factors for handling and managing solid wastes.
- Our Benchmarking Coordinator from Cebu, Ms. Suzanne Ardosa, spoke to us on the use of best practices for continuous improvement of service delivery.
- The presentation by Fuzhou City in the PRC impressed us a great deal. It showed how good management can produce many improvements very quickly and effectively.
- The session on good practices for resolution of complaints and grievances given by Mr. Asnani, Vice President, City Managers' Association of Gujarat, and Mr. Aradhya, Benchmarking Coordinator, Bangalore, was much appreciated by all because the advice was practical. In different ways, they have identified very practical ways for us to follow to handle public grievances and complaints successfully without going through a shouting match.

- On municipalities in the next millennium, Mr. Varma informed us that we will have to face new challenges—challenges that will be very different from those of today, given the expected rapid pace of urbanization and integration of the world into a globalized economy. Cities will be the engines of growth.
- Mayor Garcia noted that in the next millennium, cities will be competing with one another for the same resources and in the same areas, e.g. for foreign direct investment and tourism.

The next question we need to ask ourselves is “What’s next?” Cebu lit the torch in 1998 and passed it to Colombo. Colombo is obviously looking for someone to carry the torch into the next millennium. In our co-sponsors’ meeting yesterday, all indicated their continuing support for the next Forum. With regard to timing, perhaps the event should coincide with Mayor Kamil’s birthday to keep up a tradition that we have now established by coincidence, but which has proven to be well-timed for us all.

There is a lot of information to carry back and a lot of good practices to practice. May you all act in a way that will enable you to deliver good and effective services to the 100 million people that, as a group, you represent.