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Investing in Asia's Urban Future

Chairperson's Summary 6 February 2006

Representatives from national and local governments, civil society, private sector, academia, international organizations, donors and established networks met on February 06 + 07, 2007 at the International Conference on "Investing in Asia's Urban Future" to discuss strategies and approaches to enhance poverty reduction and sustainable development of cities in the Asia and Pacific region.

1. The Conference participants confirm the huge challenges that come along with the ongoing urbanization, and acknowledge that cities in the Asia and Pacific region play a crucial role towards economic growth and poverty reduction. Cities contribute substantively to the national product, being centres of innovation, social progress and economic growth and provide employment to a growing population. At the same time, cities determine to a large extent how efficiently resources are being used and determine the quality of the natural environment within and beyond their city boundaries. Their success has often come at a high social and environmental cost, the results of which are becoming increasingly apparent – both locally and globally as slums proliferate and rivers are becoming increasingly toxic.
2. The conference participants stress the importance of the conclusion drawn on this conference that future collaboration in urban development should be based on principles of resource-efficient economic development and social inclusion.
3. The conference participants are committed to progress in streamlining and coordinating future investments in urban development activities in order to accelerate development achievements which aim at sustainable urban growth and urban poverty reduction as outlined in the MDGs.
4. As a first step in the follow-up of this conference, ADB and the German Government will establish an "**Cities Development Initiative for Asia (CDIA)**". The German Government (BMZ) and ADB will provide support to strategic and coordinated action and capacity development for sustainable urban development activities and closer cooperation among Asian cities.
5. The conference participants have indicated their support for the CDIA and its future development into an institutionalized network targeted towards medium sized Asian cities. The cities have indicated their willingness to work together and with donors within newly established institution.

6. Further donors, national and city governments are willing to actively join the CDIA in supporting the common regional task of investing in Asia's urban future.
7. The conference participants appreciate the inception of the Cities Development Initiative for Asia by ADB and the German government (BMZ) in order to strengthen development activities by collaborating in programs which combine elements of integrated and multi-sectoral urban development approaches, to promote sustainable urban investments and such create synergies among the various urban actors. This is to be achieved by:
 - better design of cohesive development programs fostering local economic and social development and inclusion of the poor in the development process, drawing on regional and local expertise and manpower whenever possible,
 - more effective capacity building with focus on good governance, efficient service delivery, fiscal management, encouragement of city-to-city cooperation, organizational change,
 - larger and more flexible financing of required economic and social infrastructure investments,
 - better engagement with the private sector, both international and local, and the use of Public Private Partnership in the implementation of urban development programs.
8. It is hoped by the representative cities assembled here that the initiative will address the key constraints to the sustainable development of Asian cities. In particular, that it will provide:
 - Advice on the implementation of existing development plans and strategies at local level with focus on urban environment
 - Capacity development of implementing local agencies
 - Support of knowledge management and dissemination of experience to improve environmental quality, in particular through support to existing networks of local governments, both at the regional and national levels
 - Support of the development and implementation of national urban strategies and regulatory frameworks to facilitate the development of sustainable cities and to address urban poverty.
9. In view of the fast and dynamic process Asia is facing in urban growth, the conference participants strongly advise to continue the regional strategic dialogue between development partners and to feed challenges, results and expectations into international for a and other avenues for dissemination.
10. With the positive feedback on the CDIA from this conference, the organizers can now work to define the detailed mechanisms that will define the architecture of this Initiative. In the process, they will be consulting with a number you. Once this is established, information on the services that will be provided by CDIA will be widely disseminated in conjunction with regional and national city associations.