

**Sixth Regional Workshop on Integrated Resource Management in Asian Cities:
The Urban Nexus
22-23 June 2016, Santa Rosa, Philippines**

WORKSHOP SUMMARY

The Sixth Regional Workshop on Integrated Resource Management in Asian Cities: The Urban Nexus was organized by ICLEI – Local Governments for Sustainability Southeast Asia Secretariat in partnership with Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ), United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), and the City Government of Santa Rosa from June 22 to 23, 2016. This two-day workshop was conducted within the context of the project, Integrated Resource Management in Asian Cities: The Urban Nexus (hereafter called “Urban Nexus”), financed by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ).

Drawing more than 130 local and international participants, the regional workshop marked the beginning of the project’s second phase (2016 to 2018) and served as a platform for participating nexus partner cities to review and discuss experiences from the project’s first phase (2013 to 2015). Attending the regional workshop were nexus partner cities including Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia; Santa Rosa and Naga City in the Philippines; Chiang Mai and Korat in Thailand; and Da Nang, Vietnam. Indonesia, a participating nexus country, was represented by officials from national ministries. In addition, representatives of national ministries from participating nexus countries, academic institutions, city networks, international organizations, and the private sector also joined the regional workshop.

The Workshop was formally opened by Hon. Arlene Arcillas, City Mayor of Santa Rosa City; Hon. Michael Hasper, Deputy Head of Mission at the German Embassy of the Philippines; Dr. Donovan Storey, Chief of the Sustainable Urban Development Section of ESCAP; and Mr. Vic Aquitania, Regional Director of ICLEI – Southeast Asia Secretariat.

Ms. Ruth Erlbeck, Regional Project Director, GIZ opened the discussion by presenting the Urban Nexus Phase 1 accomplishments and providing an overview of the objectives of Phase 2. She noted that a total of 24 “nexus initiatives” (cross sectoral infrastructure project proposals) have been elaborated during the first phase with an investment amount of USD 320 million including pre-feasibility studies, with cost estimations. She also highlighted that the “nexus concept has been increasingly taken up by partner cities” through continued capacity building and provision of technical assistance especially in the areas of infrastructure development. The Nexus project intends to promote “circular economy” approach where resources such as water, food and energy, are used more efficiently and effectively, including reuse. Phase 2 of the Nexus takes into account important global frameworks, such as the recently approved Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the upcoming United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development (Habitat III). Habitat III will take place in Quito, Ecuador this October; the outcomes of which will outline the world’s New Urban Agenda.

Mr. Donovan Storey noted several significant global agreements over the past 18 months and reflected on how urban nexus as a concept and policy practice could support global and regional

agendas, especially with regard to integration. He further noted that the outcomes of the Sixth Asia-Pacific Urban Forum specifically highlighted urban nexus as an important catalyst for implementing both the SDGs and New Urban Agenda (NUA) of Habitat III. In his presentation, Mr. Storey emphasized that implementation of the SDGs will fundamentally depend upon what happens in cities in relation to their resource use. He highlighted SDG 11 (Make cities inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable) as an example of cross-cutting goal which could serve to integrate sectors, resources and stakeholders. In implementing the Urban Nexus project, ESCAP will continue to forge linkages with the 2030 Agenda and the NUA and through its role as a regional platform. In support of this, Mr. Storey specifically noted ongoing development of regional knowledge sharing platforms in which integrated strategies such as urban nexus might be highlighted. Finally he reflected on the importance of effectively documenting benefits of urban nexus solutions and policies, including creating an evidence base for policy makers.

Next Ms. Johara Bellali from ADELPHI think tank was able to complement Dr. Storey's presentation by updating the SDGs and NUA processes that were taking place. Ms. Bellali noted that 65 per cent of the SDGs are reliant on implementation at the local level and that local urban actors must be suitably involved. She explained that the draft NUA was undergoing thorough scrutiny by a wide-ranging stakeholder groups and that negotiations on key concepts and terms were taking place. Ms. Bellali shared that the Philippines is one of the co-facilitators together with Mexico in finalizing the draft NUA. She also poignantly pointed out that 60 per cent of projected urban areas still need to be developed by 2030, and many opportunities remain for innovative approaches and solutions. In order to implement the SDGs, urban planners can set the appropriate frameworks to take a balanced approach on all 17 SDGs and focus on particular SDGs that match their local concerns.

Representatives from the Philippine National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA) and Housing and Urban Development Coordinating Council (HUDCC) elaborated on the SDGs and Habitat III, respectively, within the Philippine context. The NEDA representative explained that his government had learned valuable lessons from their MDGs experience and were prepared to apply them to SDGs. Already the government has set up a work plan to develop the SDGs indicators by the end of 2016. NEDA shared that the country will develop a roadmap for mainstreaming the SDGs in the next Philippine Development Plan (to be developed for the new administration) as well as an advocacy and campaign model, and a stakeholder engagement plan. The adoption of the SDGs associates closely with NEDA's *AmBisyon Natin 2040* which envisions a Philippines "where all citizens are free from hunger and poverty, have equal opportunities, enabled by fair and just society that is governed with order and unity. A nation where families live together, thriving in vibrant, culturally diverse and resilient communities."

HUDCC presented the preliminary Philippine National Report to Habitat III. The report focused on six thematic chapters, namely: urban demography, land and urban planning, environment and urbanization, urban governance and legislation, urban economy, housing and basic services. Nexus approaches and principles were embedded in the report including a provision for reinforcing metropolitan governance to encourage efficient spatial and functional interrelations between cities, settlements, and their surrounding areas; as well as addressing problems on water supply and sanitation including sewerage and septage, energy access, and climate-resilient housing.

Both NEDA and HUDCC representatives highlighted the crucial role of cities in localizing these two important global frameworks. This point was further illustrated during the panel discussion with the two Philippine cities, Naga City and Santa Rosa as well as the Bicol State College for Applied Sciences and Technology (BISCAST), an academic institution in Naga City.

Santa Rosa's nexus pilot project is a two-phase low-cost housing which offers a first-of-its-kind sanitation feature in the city's residential areas adopting a vacuum sewerage system for wastewater management. Treated water will be used for urban agriculture and the wastewater has a potential to generate energy, where economically feasible. Apart from the housing project, the City is also working towards the implementation of an Integrated Watershed Management Framework.

Naga City's nexus initiatives are centered on addressing sanitation issues in the city, both in terms of solid waste and wastewater. The Urban Nexus project supported a household survey on wastewater services as a baseline for developing the vacuum sewerage system. Concurrently, the City had conducted a study on the Sustainable Sanitary Landfill to Energy System (SSLTES) with regard to the closure of Balatas dump site and preparation of the new San Isidro sanitary landfill and application of suitable waste-to-energy technology.

The involvement of BISCAST in the Urban Nexus project started out as an experimental approach to test how an academic institution could be used as a multiplier of the nexus concept. BISCAST is an active partner of Naga City. At present, BISCAST receives technical assistance from the Nexus project in terms of developing tangible nexus projects which also serve as training ground for its students. A climate-resilient pilot house was inaugurated at BISCAST after the regional workshop. As the only academic partner of the Urban Nexus project, BISCAST's experience reiterated the huge potential of academic institutions especially in the areas of research and technology transfer.

The panel discussion with Philippine cities and BISCAST concluded with a call to the national governments to review fund allocation for local governments especially for emerging cities which are starting to experience the adverse impacts of urban sprawl and pressures to support the increasing population under their administration. The Urban Nexus project recognizes national governments as important stakeholders in implementing the project. While the project started out as a bottom-up initiative, legal, regulatory, and policy frameworks at the national, regional, and provincial level are crucial determinants for local decision-making with regard to nexus initiatives.

National-local dialogues have been used as a platform to address issues concerning financing, mandates, and other matters. Such dialogues helped bridge the gap across levels of government particularly in the areas of water including wastewater, energy, and land use as well as cascading finance to the local level. The organization of national-local dialogues was piloted in the Philippines and was replicated in other nexus countries including Indonesia, Mongolia, and Thailand.

To address issues raised through nexus dialogues held in the Philippines, a panel discussion was conducted with the participation of Philippine national government agencies. Panelists included the National Water Resources Board (NWRB), Department of Energy (DOE), and the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH). Some issues tackled included institutional and policy mechanisms on water governance particularly those concerning groundwater extraction,

challenges concerning the piloting of waste-to-energy projects as well as feed-in-tariff for biomass, and the National Sewerage and Septage Management Program (NSSMP).

The NSSMP is a grant managed by the DPWH and aims to improve water quality and protect public health in urban areas of the country by 2020. It provides a 40 per cent cost sharing by the national government made available for sewerage projects. To date, only 17 highly-urbanized cities (HUCs) outside of Metro Manila are eligible to apply for the grant. Both Santa Rosa and Naga City are interested to access the grant but remain ineligible to apply.

The Urban Nexus project also tries to involve the private sector as an important actor, especially in terms of urban infrastructure planning and development. Santa Rosa, classified as one of the bustling suburban areas south of Metro Manila, is known to host numerous industrial estates, commercial, and housing developments. As a result, land is now becoming a scarce resource and land access is problematic in the context of rapid population growth and infrastructure gaps.

As one of the prime properties of the Ayala Land Incorporated in Santa Rosa, the Nuvali land development project envisions itself to be the first large-scale integrated eco-community in the Philippines. Nuvali, referred to as the 'new city', applies mixed land use scheme, integrating commercial, residential, and green spaces into its development.

Laguna Water is a semi-private company which provides water supply to the local governments of Santa Rosa, Biñan, and Cabuyao in Laguna for the past five years. Laguna Water is obliged to provide the following primary services to its consumers: 1) develop new water sources, 2) network maintenance and expansion, 3) customer service, and 4) water loss management. In addition to these, Laguna Water also extends environmental services such as sludge removal, septage, and wastewater management services, close to 1 million population (as of March 2016).

Following key presentations on day one, the second day of the workshop utilized working groups where participants were divided into their respective countries. The first working group looked at each country's accomplishments and challenges during the Urban Nexus project's first phase. Presentations revealed that the most notable accomplishment common across participating countries is the increased understanding of the nexus concept as well as creation of the Nexus Task Forces, which allowed for multiple departments within the city government to work together. The participants also highlighted peer-to-peer learning and enhanced vertical integration as important project accomplishments. Furthermore, one challenge shared by all is the lack of financing to fully

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