

Ningbo Initiative

APEC High-Level Urbanization Forum 2016

Urbanization is a necessary path toward modernization as well as a key engine for sustainable economic growth. Against the sluggish global economic recovery and rising challenges and risks, the sound, sustainable and people-oriented urbanization among the Asia-Pacific economies will not only be conducive to the creation of new supplies, greater domestic demands, innovative development, economic transformation and upgrading, and new engines of economic growth, but also help achieve wider coverage of public services, enhanced food security, better environmental protection, narrower urban-rural gaps and inclusive economic growth.

The Asia-Pacific region's rapid urbanization offers both tremendous opportunities and challenges. In 2014, the urban population of APEC member economies hit 1.77 billion, 61% of the total. According to estimates of the World Bank, urban populations are expected to reach 2.38 billion in 2050, 77% of the total. The Asia-Pacific economies are in different urbanization stages, yet enjoy huge potentials for complementary development and cooperation. Therefore, urbanization has been recognized as a frontier for regional cooperation.

Notably, the APEC Economic Leaders endorsed *the APEC Cooperation Initiative for Jointly Establishing an Asia-Pacific Urbanization Partnership* in Beijing in November 2014, to deepen urbanization partnership through collective efforts and concrete actions. Under such guidance, steady and positive progress has been made, including at the 2015 APEC City Mayors Forum on "Building Better Cities".

The First APEC High-level Urbanization Forum, announced by Chinese President Xi Jinping and welcomed by APEC leaders last year, was hosted by the National Development and Reform Commission of the People's Republic of China in Ningbo, China on June 2-3, 2016. We, representatives of APEC member economies gathered together to discuss urbanization cooperation in this region under the theme of "Urbanization and Inclusive Growth". To encourage member economies to deepen the Asia-Pacific urbanization partnership and realize Asia-Pacific goal of common development, prosperity and progress, **we put forward proposals as follows:**

- I. **Promote inclusive and dynamic urban growth.** Explore new urbanization pathways that suit local conditions and respect the different urbanization stages among the APEC member economies. Build an open and inclusive environment for urban development. Adopt policies conducive to employment, including enhancing the protection of rights and interests of laborers. Deliver basic public services to all urban dwellers including new and existing migrants and guarantee opportunities for all groups to live and develop in the cities, with focus on improving people's sense of gain and happiness. Facilitate the coordinated development of small and medium-sized cities and small towns to narrow the gaps in levels of development between urban and rural areas and among regions.
- II. **Improve urban infrastructure.** Scale up Public-Private Partnerships (PPP) with larger public and private investment to strengthen the development and management of infrastructure such as

clean, renewable and sustainable energy, communication and broadband/Internet access, transportation, urban waste management, water supply and drainage and other facilities. Enhance the role of cities in helping promote connectivity of regional infrastructure, facilitate the flow of economic factors and people, and implement the *APEC Connectivity Blueprint for 2015-2025*. Attach importance to quality of infrastructure development, and promote application of good practices and people-centered approaches into infrastructure planning and development. Create conditions favorable to the positive role of the private sector in investing, building and operating infrastructure, including by addressing regulatory environments, and encourage the member economies to share experience in infrastructure construction, management and market operation.

- III. **Build smart cities.** Share best practices in smart urban planning and the development of liveable and sustainable cities. Join hands to promote the application of smart technologies into urban management, governance and construction, and improve people-oriented services by fully tapping the advantages of digital connectivity. Encourage city governments' efforts on open data and promote innovative use of data by governments, businesses and the society. Achieve systematic integration of smart homes, buildings, communities, transportation and cities. Strengthen exchanges and cooperation among APEC member economies to explore diversified paths to build smart cities.
- IV. **Develop green cities.** Promote the transition of cities towards green, environment-friendly, dynamic, resilient and sustainable communities. Encourage city development that reduces resource and energy consumption. Develop low-carbon economies centered on new energies, new energy smart technologies and new industries, build energy efficient and low-carbon cities and towns, advocate a green lifestyle promoting low energy consumption, low greenhouse gas emission, and conservation. Promote green industries and help SMEs take advantage of green growth opportunities. Promote policy communication, joint research and project cooperation among cities of APEC member economies in protecting the environment, addressing natural disasters and climate change, and increasing resilience of cities.
- V. **Encourage urban regeneration and retrofit.** Renovate the aging urban areas, rural-urban fringes, and concentrated dilapidated housing, and renew the old urban areas with modern infrastructure. Promote a city layout with an organic integration of residential, business, office, culture and other functional quarters. Encourage transit-oriented development (TOD) to raise the share of public transportation, public facilities and open spaces in the city. Highlight the characteristics of cities to preserve their traditions and cultural diversity.
- VI. **Drive innovative urban development.** Promote innovative concepts, models and mechanisms of urban planning, design, construction and management that respect the landscape, history and cultural heritage of different cities and towns. Improve the ecosystem for urban innovation and entrepreneurship to make innovation the primary driver of urban development, including through the promotion of intellectual property protection.
- VII. **Advocate for good urban governance.** Increase capacity for governments, and other

stakeholders to share best practice on good urban governance. Innovate urban governance by creating open and transparent channels of dialogue between governments and citizens to enhance public engagement in urban planning and management. Develop norms that can be operationalized, based on best practices and experience.

VIII. **Boost APEC cooperation on sustainable urban development.** Under the guidance of the SOM Friends of the Chair on Urbanization, member economies are encouraged to establish a cooperative network of sustainable cities, with each economy voluntarily nominating cities interested in sustainable development, to share best practices, experience and lessons on sustainable development, and carry out demonstration projects among APEC cities.