COVID-19 Urban Thinkers Campus (UTC) Series #2
30 July 2020, 12.30 to 14.00 GMT/ 18.00 to 19.30 IST

Role of multi-level governance for managing pandemics and building resilience of Indian cities

Background

The COVID-19 outbreak has severely impacted cities across the globe. In India, 10 cities including Mumbai, Ahmedabad, Delhi, Indore and Pune have the highest number of people affected by the outbreak and account to more than half of the total number of people affected across the country. Besides the public health impact, the lockdown measures to prevent the spread have also resulted in large scale socio-economic impacts and affected the overall economic activities in our cities.

At the same time, multi-level and inter-departmental coordination has proven to be the key to both addressing the pandemic and managing the impacts of the lockdown. While the national government has been providing overarching guidelines, standard operating procedures (SOPs), and financial resources, the city governments (ULBs) have been at the frontline, monitoring on-ground health services, providing relief and response as well as maintaining supply of essential services. Besides, the non-government sector, local area/ ward committees and community level organizations such as residents' welfare associations have played a key role at the grassroots, ensuring on-ground implementation of national and state-level guidelines on physical distancing, creating awareness and mobilizing community resources for response and relief. It is clear that this multi-level and cross-sectoral model of governance needs to be strengthened for driving the recovery efforts and also future-proofing our cities to pandemics and other risks such as that emerging from climate change impacts.

NIUA, through its Climate Centre for Cities, is working towards multi-stakeholder coordinated efforts for strengthening resilience to climate change & public health risks in India's Smart Cities. With this intent, NIUA is organising the Urban Thinkers Campus (UTC) to bring together experiences from various cities across the globe and reflect on the collective learning for managing pandemics and building urban resilience through multi-level governance. The UTC is being organised in partnership with Sushant School of Planning and Development at Ansal University, US Green Building Council, European Urban Knowledge Network, Regional Studies Association, Madras Chamber of Commerce and Industry, and Bombay Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

Objectives

1. Bringing together national and international experiences and learnings on multi-level urban governance, and identifying the key stakeholders and linkages – both at vertical and horizontal levels (across sectors) of governance - for responding to the pandemic and managing future risks.

2. Understanding the role and response of governments, institutions & stakeholders in managing the pandemic and how they can be further strengthened for better preparedness & response

3. Leveraging information, education and communication (IEC) for better management and informed decision-making to address the response, relief, recovery and preparedness efforts

4. Exploring options for partnerships and building capacities

Programme:

Opening Remarks: Mr. Hitesh Vaidya, Director, NIUA

Part I: Cities' Response to the Pandemic (40 minutes)

Moderator: Ms Raina Singh, Senior Fellow - Urban Resilience, NIUA
Panellists:
1. Prof Santosh Kumar, Professor, National Institute of Disaster Management, India
2. Dr Panagiotis Karamanos, India Programme Lead, International Urban Cooperation
3. Mr. Mahesh Harhare, Chief Resilience officer (Pune), Global Resilient Cities Network

Part II: Leveraging Multi-level Governance for Strengthening Urban Resilience (40 minutes)

Moderator: Dr Umamaheshwaran Rajasekar, Chair – Urban Resilience, NIUA
Panellists:
1. Mr O.P Agarwal, CEO, World Resources Institute, India
2. Mr Amit Prothi, Managing Director, APAC Region, Global Resilient Cities Network
3. Ms Charu Chadha, Policy Programs Manager, India and South Asia, Facebook *(TBC)*