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NIUA AT THE 12TH WORLD URBAN FORUM (WUF12) IN CAIRO, EGYPT

The NIUA team participated in multiple discussions at the 12th World Urban Forum in Cairo, showcasing innovative strategies and actionable solutions to create climate-resilient, sustainable cities. Through the panels, NIUA highlighted the transformative potential of Nature-based Solutions (NbS) in urban growth and climate mitigation advocating for integrating green spaces, urban forests, and water systems to enhance resilience, air quality, and community well-being; stressed robust urban climate governance innovations, inclusive access to digital tools, capacity-building initiatives, and the transformative potential of participatory data tools; introduced interactive games 'Clap Now', 'Debatable Urbs', and 'Urban Sanitation Assembly Board Game' to tackle urban challenges; capacity-building initiatives for sanitation, and how India has been overcoming these challenges in the Swacchh Bharat mission from ODF to ODF+, facilitated a training on 'Gender and Disability Inclusion in Urban Infrastructure - Accessibility Audit Toolkits for Urban Practitioners'. At WUF12, NIUA launched an 'Urban Climate Action Training Program'; MOOC-based training programme on the National Urban Learning Platform (NULP) with practical knowledge across 26 modules aligned with the National Mission for Sustainable Habitat (NMSH) and 'Climate Considerations in City Plans: A Study of 20 Global and Indian Cities'.

C-CUBE LEAD PARTICIPATES IN CSE CLIMATE WEEK 2024

Anshul Abbasi, Lead (Policy & Planning) at C-Cube, spoke at the Centre for Science and Environment (CSE) Climate Week, focusing on the theme of 'Building Heat Resilience in Cities.' The event, held in Nimli, Rajasthan, from 15 to 18 October 2024, brought together experts to discuss the urgent challenges of urban heat and its broader implications for climate change.

NIUA HOSTED NATIONAL ROUNDTABLE ON PARTICIPATORY CLIMATE ACTION (#PCA) FOR URBAN RESILIENCE UNDER THE T-CAP PROJECT

On 04 October 2024, NIUA successfully hosted the National Roundtable on Participatory Climate Action for Indian Cities, bringing together 25 experts from diverse sectors, including government, civil society, academia, and businesses. This roundtable was part of the Transformative Climate Action through Participatory Data-Driven Decision-Making Platforms (T-CAP) project, which aims to incorporate participatory approaches into localising climate action plans in India.

NIUA - TEAM PARTICIPATE AS EXPERT REVIEWER FOR MIRA BHAYANDAR CLIMATE ACTION PLAN

The team comprising Dr Mandvi Misra, Nidhi Rai Jain, and Kaveri Bahure, participated in the expert peer review of the Mira Bhayandar Municipal Corporation Climate Action Plan, being developed by the Aga Khan Agency for Habitat India.

NIUA AT THE 12TH WORLD URBAN FORUM (WUF12): ADVANCING CLIMATE-RESILIENT URBAN FUTURES

NIUA made a significant impact at the 12th World Urban Forum (WUF12) in Cairo, showcasing innovative strategies and actionable solutions to create climate-resilient, sustainable cities. NIUA's C- Cube team participated in various panels, including 'Nature-based Solutions for Climate Resilience' focusing on NbS potential in urban growth and climate mitigation, 'Empowering Local Climate Action Governance: Data and Contextual Insights from Cities in the Global South' exploring inclusive digitalisation for transformative climate action drawing on insights from the IKI-funded T-CAP project, 'Urban Solutions Lab: Interactive Games for Climate-Resilient and Livable Cities' workshop introducing 'Clap Now; and 'Debatable Urbs' games to tackle urban challenges. C-Cube unveiled a MOOC-based training program on the National Urban Learning Platform (NULP), empowering urban professionals with practical knowledge across 26 modules aligned with the National Mission for Sustainable Habitat (NMSH); and 'Climate Considerations in City Plans: A Study of 20 Global and Indian Cities' offering strategic insights for integrating climate goals into urban planning.

NIUA AT THE 29TH CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES (COP29)

At COP 29, Anshul Abbasi, Lead for Policy and Planning C-Cube, NIUA, took centre stage in seven high-profile panels, representing India's cutting-edge approach to climate resilience and urban sustainability. Through his engagements, Abbasi highlighted the pivotal role of urban planning, financial innovation, capacity building, and multilevel governance in combating the global climate crisis. His insights reflected the challenges and the opportunities for rapidly urbanising nations like India.

URBAN ACT HOSTS VIRTUAL ANNUAL TEAM PLANNING WORKSHOP & NATIONAL PLANNING WORKSHOP

The Urban Act Annual Strategy Meet convened partners from five countries to advance climate-focused urban initiatives. Key discussions included climate-urban policy updates, strategic work plans, and 2025 priorities. Highlights centred on digitisation in spatial planning, climate-sensitive urban strategies, and leveraging China and India as knowledge leaders. The meet also emphasised institutionalising regional training and strengthening Urban Act's unique capabilities, reaffirming its dedication to sustainable urban development.

CITIIS 2.0 PANEL DISCUSSION AT WUF12 IN CAIRO

The CITIIS program was showcased at the 12th World Urban Forum in Cairo during a panel discussion titled 'Urban Innovation for Climate Action: Sub-National Climate Financing for Building Sustainable Cities'. The session explored blended financing models for sustainable urban development, state capacity building, and circular economy initiatives. Panellists included Ms Clemence Vidal de la Blache (Country Director, AFD Egypt), Dr Johannes Salzgeber (Sector Economist, KfW), Ms Monika Bahl (Deputy Project Director, GIZ), and Dr Debolina Kundu (Director, NIUA), with Mr Naim Keruwala (CITIIS Program Director, NIUA) moderating the discussion.

CITIIS 2.0 CIRCULAR ECONOMY INDUSTRY WORKSHOP

The CITIIS 2.0 Circular Economy Industry Workshop took place on 21–22 November 2024 at the Panaji Smart City headquarters, Goa, attracting over 150 participants. The event featured panel discussions, peer learning sessions, company presentations, an industry exhibition, B2G opportunities, and site visits to the Hindustan Waste Treatment Pvt. Ltd plant in Saligao and waste management projects in Panaji.

The inaugural session was graced by Dr V. Candavelou (Chief Secretary of Goa), Mr Sanjit Rodrigues (Managing Director, Panaji Smart City), Mr Manoj Sharvar (Director, Smart Cities Mission, MoHUA), and Ms Smita Singh (Senior Project Manager, European Union).

INAUGURATION OF DASHAMI GHAT IN AGARTALA BY TRIPURA CM

Hon'ble Chief Minister of Tripura Dr Manik Saha inaugurated the Dashami Ghat component of the Haora River Front Development Project (HRFD) under the CITIIS program on 07 October. The Hon'ble Mayor, Deputy Mayor, and other dignitaries also attended the event. Residents of Agartala also used the newly inaugurated ghat and facilities for the immersion of idols on the occasion of Vijayadashami and Dussehra.

LEADERSHIP WORKSHOP AND POSH TRAINING FOR WOMEN EMPLOYEES IN ODISHA

The Housing & Urban Development Department, Odisha (H&UDD), in collaboration with the CITIIS program and the Odisha Urban Academy, organised two workshops on leadership and POSH. Through activities and discussions, the workshops enhanced theie communication and leadership skills of women engineers, officers of 115 ULBs and parastatal bodies of H&UDD, and sensitised them to the provisions of the Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition, Redressal) Act, 2013.

MISSIONS TO CITIES SELECTED UNDER CITIIS 2.0

A delegation from the German Development Bank (KfW) and NIUA visited Madurai and Thanjavur on 03-04 October. The French Development Agency (AFD) also visited Rajkot on 17 October. The delegations held meetings with key officials, conducted site visits, and reviewed the integrated waste management interventions proposed by these cities under CITIIS 2.0.

STAKEHOLDER CONSULTATION WITH BULK WASTE GENERATORS IN JABALPUR

A consultation was organised in Jabalpur to discuss the city's project proposal for CITIIS 2.0 and address critical wet waste management issues. Over 100 stakeholders participated, including representatives from the hospitality sector, members of the District Food Safety Department, officials from the Jabalpur Municipal Corporation, and the CITIIS 2.0 team. The open discussion provided valuable insights, which will play a key role in refining Jabalpur's project proposal and enhancing its design for CITIIS 2.0.

CENTRE FOR SUSTAINABLE URBAN LIVELIHOODS (CSUL) LAUNCHED AT WUF12

The Centre for Sustainable Urban Livelihoods was officially launched at India pavilion panel discussion at World Urban Forum-12. The discussion explored strategies and innovative models to enhance sustainable urban livelihoods and strengthen poverty alleviation efforts in low and middle-income countries. Panel members included Dr Debolina Kundu, Director (AC), NIUA, Ms Kanta Singh, Deputy Representation, UN-Women, India, Smt Kavitha Padmanabhan, Hon'ble Secretary, Urban Development, Assam, and Dr Kalpana Viswanath, CEO, Safetipin. A key discussion point was the need for gendered and inclusivity lens to livelihood generation and poverty alleviation.

CASE CLINIC AT WUF 12 'DIGITAL GOVERNANCE: EMPOWERING LIVELIHOODS THROUGH TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION'

The "Digital Governance: Empowering Livelihoods through Technology and Innovation" session at the World Urban Forum 12, presented National Urban Digital Mission's UPYOG platform as a case clinic showcasing how technology and digital governance could support poverty alleviation and sustainable livelihoods. Mr Manpreet Singh, NUDM conversing with Mr Utsav Choudhury, discussed how platform is enabling digital transformation across towns and cities by bridging citizens-government bodies interactions, and convergence of NUDM with PM SVANidhi and other schemes to promote/support livelihood generation.

WUF12 EVENT 'INCLUSIVE URBAN DEVELOPMENT AND SOCIAL EQUITY IN CLIMATE ACTION - STORY FORM BOGOTA' BY MS CLAUDIA LOPEZ IN CONVERSATION WITH UTSAV CHOUDHURY

In a 'Chat with Expert' session at India Pavillion, CSUL's Utsav Choudhury engaged with Claudia Lopez, the former mayor of Bogota. Bogota has been championing Inclusive Urban Development (care infrastructure and community) & Social Equity in Climate Action and has received multiple recognition in the regard. This informal and heartfelt interaction focused on some of the key initiatives by Bogota, including the Home Solidarity City System and the District Care System

NIUA ORGANISES A WEBINAR PRECEEDING THE URBAN LIBRARY EVENT AT INDIA PAVILLION, WORLD URBAN FORUM 12

NIUA hosted a webinar titled "Building Inclusive Cities - Innovative Pathways to Inclusion through Technology and Youth Engagement," bringing together three critical verticals: technology-driven urban service delivery, youth participation, and disability inclusion. This 3-hour event served as a precursor to NIUA's Urban Library at WUF12.

The webinar commenced with Shombi Sharp, UNRCO, framing the discussions to explore synergies between these themes. The event featured three parallel breakout sessions for deeper engagement on Assistive Technology for Disability Inclusion, Youth Participation for Inclusive Urban Futures, and The Role of Technology in Urban Services.

NIUA PARTICIPATES IN WUF12 NETWORKING EVENT: 'ACCELERATING INCLUSION AND RESILIENCE FOR ALL THROUGH CLIMATE FINANCE AND PARTICIPATORY ACTIONS IN CITIES: PARTNERSHIPS FOR DISABILITY INCLUSION TO LEAVE NO ONE BEHIND'

Utsav Choudhury and Kanika Bansal represented NIUA at the World Urban Forum 12 Networking Event on 'Accelerating inclusion and resilience for all through climate finance and participatory actions in cities: Partnerships for disability inclusion to leave no one behind' as speakers for Community Participation networking roundtable and a panel member, respectively. The event brought together various stakeholders to commit to multi-partner collaboration, knowledge exchange, and building partnerships to leverage cities as the site of transformative action on inclusive resilience.

NIUA CO-ORGANISES TRAINING EVENT AT WUF 12: 'GENDER AND DISABILITY INCLUSION IN URBAN INFRASTRUCTURE - ACCESSIBILITY AUDIT TOOLKITS FOR URBAN PRACTITIONERS'

Utsav Choudhury and Kanika Bansal conducted a training session on "Gender and Disability Inclusion in Urban Infrastructure: Accessibility Audit Toolkits for Urban Practitioners" at the World Urban Forum 12. Organised in collaboration with UN in India and UN Habitat, the session attracted participants from diverse regions, including Europe (France, Belgium), the UK, Egypt, Nairobi, India, and Colombia. Participants shared unique perspectives and challenges from their regions. The session was particularly well-received for its focus on: project cycle approach, digital toolkit for accessibility audits, and accreditation frameworks such as ABLE India. Attendees highlighted the importance of replicating such accreditation frameworks and strongly demanded similar training sessions to enhance inclusivity in urban infrastructure.

Spotlight

CELEBRATING IDPD 2024: AMPLIFYING INCLUSION AND ACCESSIBILITY IN URBAN DEVELOPMENT

NIUA marked the International Day for Persons with Disabilities (IDPD) 2024 with an outreach campaign on disability inclusion in urban development. Through a month-long series of posts, key initiatives such as the WUF12 training on gender and disability inclusion, accessible infrastructure under the CITIIS program, and capacity building through the National Urban Learning Platform (NULP) were showcased. By amplifying the voices of practitioners and showcasing real-world impact, the campaign reinforced NIUA's commitment to creating accessible and inclusive urban environments.

FIRST SLIC MEETING IN PUNJAB

Punjab's State Level Implementation Committee (SLIC) meeting for the National Urban Digital Mission (NUDM) occurred on 07 November in Chandigarh. Chaired by Shri Tejveer Singh, IAS, Additional Chief Secretary, Department of Local Government, and con-vened by Smt. Deepti Uppal, CEO, PMIDC, and representatives from key municipal corporations, DGR, mSeva, NUDM, and KPMG. Discussions focused on NUDM's progress in Punjab, strategies for Self-Certification OBPAS, the launch of UPYOG mobile apps, and enhanced grievance redressal mechanisms.

FSM MODULE UNVEILED ON WORLD HABITAT DAY 2024

On World Habitat Day 2024, the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs launched the Faecal Sludge Management (FSM) module developed on the Urban Platform for deliverY of Online Governance (UPYOG) by the National Urban Digital Mission. The module is desig-ned as a digital public infrastructure (DPI) to tackle issues like the broken chain of waste management and the lack of verifiable data, resulting in improved sanitation systems. By generating real-time data, FSM will provide visibility into the sanitation value chain.

MEETING WITH SECRETARY URBAN DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT, BIHAR

A high-level meeting led by Shri Abhay Kumar Singh, IAS, Secretary of Urban Development & Housing Department (UDHD) and IT, Bihar, focused on integrating urban services onto the UPYOG platform. Key participants included

Shri Yogesh Kumar Sagar, IAS, Managing Director of BUIDCO, Shri Mritunjay Kumar, Officer on Special Duty, UDHD. Representatives from the National Urban Digital Mission (NUDM), including Mr Pankaj Sharma and Mr Nukul Sodhi, reviewed progress and outlined next steps. This integration aims to unify Urban Local Bodies (ULBs) across Bihar, enhancing digital governance, transparency, and efficiency.

NUDM ADVANCING DIGITAL PUBLIC SERVICE DELIVERY IN ANDHRA PRADESH

NUDM team visited the Commissioner & Director of Municipal Administration (CDMA) office in Vijayawada to evaluate Andhra Pradesh's urban eGovernance systems and digital service delivery. They met Shri Hari Narayanan M, IAS, Director of Municipal Administration, to discuss strategies for advancing urban eGovernance and adopting the UPYOG portal. A meeting with Shri Kanna Babu, Principal Secretary (MA&UD), highlighted the state's dedication to digital innovation, supported by its MoU with NUDM and MoHUA and a robust framework for monitoring progress.

NUDM ADVANCING DIGITAL PUBLIC SERVICE DELIVERY IN RAJASTHAN

NUDM held in-depth consultations with Shri Kumar Pal Gautam, IAS, Director cum Joint Secretary, Local Self Government Department, Rajasthan, to share Rajasthan's progress under the NUDM, strategise approaches to enhancing citizen-centric services through digital platforms. The discussions have been aligned to strategise the agenda for State-Level Implementation, paving the way to strengthen Rajasthan's urban future with transformative digital solutions.

NUDM ADVANCING URBAN PUBLIC SERVICE DELIVERY IN UTTARAKHAND

A pivotal meeting, chaired by Shri Nitesh Jha, Principal Secretary, Urban Development Department (UDD) and IT, Uttarakhand, convened key stakeholders, including UDD heads, Dehradun Smart City, ITDA, and NUDM representatives. Led by Mr Pankaj Sharma and Mr Vardan Mehrotra, the session reviewed progress and outlined next steps for Uttarakhand's digital transformation. The state will integrate all urban services onto the UPYOG platform, establishing a unified system for Urban Local Bodies (ULBs). This initiative aims to enhance service efficiency for citizens and strengthen digital governance.

NUDM HOSTS WORKSHOP ON EXCHANGE OF GOOD PRACTICES

On 18 December 2024, the National Urban Digital Mission (NUDM) held a Workshop on Exchange of Good Practices at India Habitat Centre, New Delhi, under the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA). The event brought together MoHUA officials, experts, and implementation partners to discuss strategies for advancing digital governance across India's 4,800+ Urban Local Bodies (ULBs).

Key discussions covered the Digital Readiness Assessment Framework to benchmark ULB performance, the UPYOG platform showcasing service modules, and the UMEED Dashboard for real-time urban monitoring. Emerging technologies like AI, IoT, and data analytics were explored for their role in enhancing transparency and equity, along with deliberations on unified service standards for smaller towns. The workshop's insights and recommendations aim to fortify the national framework for urban digitization, driving sustainable and efficient growth in Indian cities.

TWO-DAY TRAINING SESSIONS BY NUDM IN COLLABORATION WITH THE DIRECTORATE OF MUNICIPAL ADMINISTRATION (DMA)

On 14-15 October 2024, NUDM conducted training for newly appointed Assam Urban Financial Service (AUFS) and Assam Urban Engineering Service (AUES) officers. The sessions covered NUDM's origins, municipal finance, finance and accounting principles, and the UPYOG-based digital solutions being implemented in Assam. The initiative highlights Assam's cadre-based reforms, aiming to strengthen municipal governance and financial management across the state.

CIRCULAR CITIES SUMMIT AT IFAT INDIA 2024

In collaboration with NIUA, IFAT India hosted the 'Circular Cities Summit', a two-day program for urban local bodies, during the 11th edition of IFAT India at the Bombay Convention & Exhibition Centre. The summit spotlighted unique WASH challenges faced by cities in the Indian Himalayan Range, showcasing innovative solutions and fostering knowledge exchange. It also provided cities across diverse geographies an opportunity to engage with sector partners and stakeholders. A panel session on waste management in the Himalayan region featured representatives from Darjeeling, Shimla, Lunglei, Leh, and Dehradun Municipal Corporations, highlighting their approaches to sustainable urban development.

SCBP AT THE 'NATIONAL DIALOGUE ON EMERGENT INITIATIVES: INDIAN HIMALAYAN REGION'

A roundtable discussion, organised by Development Alternatives and the Club of Rome, convened representatives from organisations working across the Indian Himalayan Region to address critical challenges and identify collaborative opportunities. Discussions highlighted region-specific issues in the Northwestern and Northeastern Himalayas, focusing on the fragile ecosystem and its vulnerabilities.

SCBP LAUNCHES KNOWLEDGE PRODUCT ON WORLD HABITAT DAY

On the occasion of World Habitat Day, the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs launched a policy primer document developed by NIUA with the support of the Urban Development Directorate of Uttarakhand under 'Swacch Evam Sugamya Uttarakhand'.

The Policy Primer document 'Building a Roadmap for Inclusive Sanitation Facilities for the State of Uttarakhand' pursues the goal of promoting "Swachh Evum Sugamya'' Uttarakhand, which embodies the essence of the state's commitment to inclusive public sanitation in the urban areas of Uttarakhand, recognising the unique needs of diverse groups of people.

SCBP ORGANISES CAPACITY BUILDING SESSION FOR FIELD-LEVEL ENGINEERS OF PEYJAL VIBHAG ON PREPARATION OF DPRS OF FSTPS AND CO-TREATMENT FACILITIES

The SCBP conducted a three-day training at the Uttarakhand Academy of Administration (ATI), Nainital, to enhance the technical skills of 26 engineers from Uttarakhand, with participants also from Nagaland and Jammu & Kashmir.

The program focused on preparing Detailed Project Reports (DPRs) for Faecal Sludge and Septage Management (FSSM) and co-treatment facilities. Through practical exercises, site visits, and evaluations, participants gained the expertise to create and review accurate and compliant DPRs, critical for implementing successful FSSM projects in the state.

SCBP HOSTS TWO DAY EXPOSURE VISIT FOR 25 NEWLY ELECTED ULB & OFFICIALS FROM NAGALAND

A field visit provided officials with first-hand insights into sustainable urban practices across Uttarakhand. Key sites included a PPP-based pink toilet in Nainital, a 28 MLD STP in Haldwani, a compressed biogas plant converting household waste to electricity, dry waste processing at an MRF, and a 125 KLD FSTP in Rudrapur. Additionally, slope stabilization efforts on Nainital's outskirts and a 125 MLD water treatment plant in Ramnagar were explored.

Engaging sessions with Mr. Vishal Mishra (IAS), Municipal Commissioner of Haldwani, offered insights into Urban Local Body (ULB) operations. He also showcased the "Baini Sena" project, a community-driven initiative aimed at enhancing service delivery and user charge collection.

SCBP ORGANISES TWO DAY CAPACITY BUILDING PROGRAM ON OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY: SAFE SANITATION PRACTICES

SCBP, in collaboration with the WASH Institute, organised a two-day training program on "Occupational Health and Safety: Safe Sanitation Practices" at the Dr. R. S. Tolia Uttarakhand Academy of Administration, Nainital. The program targeted sanitary inspectors from various ULBs and junior engineers from Jal Sansthan, Government of Uttarakhand, responsible for overseeing sanitation activities. Sessions covered OSH fundamentals, legal frameworks, safety protocols, mechanised cleaning practices, using Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and emergency response procedures to ensure safer operations.

SCBP CONDUCTS SANITATION ASSESSMENT IN HARIDWAR FOR CITY SANITATION PLAN

A five-member SCBP team conducted a six-day field visit in Haridwar, engaging with key departments such as the Haridwar Municipal Corporation, Haridwar Development Authority, Peyjal Nigam, Jal Sansthan, and the Tourism Department. The team conducted tourist surveys, focus group discussions (FGDs), and key informant interviews (KIIs) to evaluate the city's sanitation scenario. The study focused on five critical components of water supply, wastewater management, solid waste management, stormwater management, and access to toilets. This comprehensive assessment will inform the development of a City Sanitation Plan (CSP) to address Haridwar's unique needs and challenges.

SCBP LEAD ADJUDICATES FOR URBAN INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS AT CEPT UNIVERSITY

Dr Mahreen Matto served as a jury member for the monsoon semester evaluations on 15 November 2024. The semester featured proposals from Master's students focusing on stormwater management, water supply systems, wastewater and sanitation solutions, and solid waste management. These projects, centred on Rajkot, aimed to develop resilient and sustainable urban infrastructure to enhance quality of life.

The Master's in Urban Infrastructure program at the Faculty of Planning, in collaboration with RMC and UNICEF Gujarat, is at the forefront of shaping impactful solutions for water and sanitation.

SCBP AT THE WORLD URBAN FORUM 12

The SCBP team from NIUA actively participated in multiple sessions and activities at the 12th World Urban Forum (WUF12) in Cairo, Egypt, held in November 2024. Dr Matto presented during the sanitation-focused session of the Global Water Operators' Partnerships Alliance (GWOPA). She discussed capacity challenges particularly in India's Urban Local Bodies (ULBs), lessons from India's Swachh Bharat Mission, showcasing progress from ODF to ODF+ achievement, and the importance of operator partnerships and peer learning for addressing service gaps.

In a session led by KIWASCO on South-South Partnerships, Dr Matto explored Water Operators' Partnerships (WOPs) and Sanitation-focused WOPs (SWOPs) as mechanisms for capacity building.

Mr Shantanu Kumar Padhi participated as a speaker in the Networking event titled- 'Empowering Local Climate Action - Governance, Data, and Contextual Insights from Cities in Asia and Africa'. He presented NIUA's Parvat Manthan Forum, addressing challenges faced by Indian Himalayan Region cities due to climate change and rapid urbanisation, and focused on inclusive, resilient water and sanitation practices in hill cities.

Mr Padhi showcased an innovative gamification tool for Faecal Sludge and Septage Management (FSSM). The Urban Sanitation Assembly Board Game is an innovative tool designed to introduce a hands-on approach to capacity building in Faecal Sludge and Septage Management (FSSM). Through gamification, participants can engage directly with the complex aspects of urban sanitation planning, infrastructure development, and operational strategies. The goal of the game is not only to disseminate knowledge but to create an immersive learning experience where participants can "play and learn" about sanitation management practices, making it an effective method for skill development in a short timeframe.

17 Spotlight

MASTERCLASS ON CWIS M&E FRAMEWORK

NIUA, in collaboration with AIT Bangkok, GWSC, and SCi-Ai, co-hosted a masterclass for BMGF-supported states to enhance capacity in the CWIS (Citywide Inclusive Sanitation) M&E approach tailored for South Asia, with Odisha, India as the pilot. The masterclass introduced efforts to incorporate CWIS indicators into India's monitoring frameworks, including the Swachh Bharat Mission (SBM), shared insights from Odisha's state-level policies and data systems to provide practical examples, and develop capacities of participants to conduct CWIS M&E analysis, design and strengthen state-level data systems, operationalize state-specific M&E frameworks.

URBAN DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT, SIKKIM AND NIUA JOIN HANDS TO ENHANCE URBAN SANITATION

In efforts to enhance urban sanitation and used water management in Sikkim, a MoU was signed between the Urban Development Department (UDD), Government of Sikkim and the National Institute of Urban Affairs (NIUA) as a partner of the NFSSM Alliance on 25 November 2024.

Shri Jitendra Singh Raje, the Commissioner cum Secretary of the Urban Development Department, Government of Sikkim and Dr Debolina Kundu, Director (AC), National Institute of Urban Affairs (NIUA) signed the document on behalf of the respective parties. This collaboration is integral to the "Parvat Manthan" initiative, which focuses on sustainable development of mountain states in India.

SCBP HOSTS THE FIRST PARVAT MANTHAN REGIONAL CONCLAVE AT INDIA HABITAT CENTRE, NEW DELHI

The conclave brought together various stakeholders, including international delegates from Bhutan and Nepal, whose regional perspectives enriched the dialogue. Five international development organisations and 19+ government bodies participated in the conclave, which bridged global expertise and policy insights. Nine academic institutions contributed valuable perspectives, while over 28 NGOs and community-based organisations (CBOs) highlighted community-driven approaches to sustainable solutions. Over 180 participants gathered for two days, engaging in six impactful sessions with over 25 distinguished panellists.

Fifteen technology exhibitors presented transformative innovations, underlining the critical role of technology in advancing water, used water, and waste management systems tailored for hill cities. These solutions showcased the importance of scalable innovations in improving service delivery. The conclave also featured over 20 poster presentations, offering fresh ideas and regional best practices. A key highlight was the launch of 5 new knowledge products, which will drive impactful action and policy-making for the Himalayan cities.
As an end-of-the-year landmark event, this conclave marked a pivotal step forward, carrying regional impact across hill cities in the Himalayan region. It reinforced the belief that collective action is the foundation for building cleaner, more inclusive, and sustainable communities.

The conclave saw the launch of knowledge products viz. Compendium on 'Untold Stories from the Himalaya: 20 solutions for water and waste management', Compilation of Guidelines for Inclusive Public Toilets, Desludging Fee Calculator Tool, Four Training Courses on Wastewater and Septage Management.

SCBP TEAM HOSTS A WEBINAR ON 'ACCELERATING THE TRANSITION OF USED WATER TOWARDS CIRCULAR ECONOMY IN INDIAN CITIES'

The SCBP team hosted a webinar on 30th December 2024 titled "Accelerating the Transition of Used Water Towards a Circular Economy in Indian Cities". The session was conducted for bachelor's and master's students of Planning under the National Organization of Students of Planning (NOSPLAN). The webinar engaged students from 28 colleges across India. Over 50 participants attended, exploring strategies for sustainable water management and circular economy principles in urban planning.

SCBP AT THE 7TH RST FORUM: EMPOWERING YOUTH FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Anant Mitra spoke at the 7th RST Forum on "Networking for Sustainable Development and Youth Empowerment in Uttarakhand". He presented SCBP's initiatives, showcasing their impact on youth engagement and empowerment. He further emphasised how these initiatives enable urban youth to contribute meaningfully to urban development while gaining skills and experience.

FINDINGS FROM SARAL PRESENTED AT CDRI 360 EVENT

Kanika Bansal and Utsav Choudhury from NIUA presented findings from the Strategic Actions to Build Resilience for All (SARAL) study at the Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure (CDRI) 360 meeting to the CDRI staff. The aim of the presentation was to understand the possibility to scale up the results and integrate them in other CDRI projects.

C40 ADAPTATION FINANCE ACADEMY FOR INDIAN CITIES

Sarika Chakravarty contributed as a key speaker at the C40 Adaptation Finance Academy for Indian Cities, held in Ahmedabad from 22 to 24 October 2024. During the session titled "Accelerating Climate Adaptation Investments in Indian Cities," she emphasised the importance of sustainable and equitable transportation systems, the need for institutional, spatial, and operational integration to improve transportation efficiency, and advocated for public transport and shared mobility options to function in a complementary, rather than competitive, manner.

CSE CLIMATE WEEK PANELLIST

During the CSE Climate Week, held from 15 to 18 October 2024, Sarika Chakravarty contributed as a distinguished panelist. She shared valuable insights on enabling city-based solutions for scalable implementation, emphasising that Transit-Oriented Development should encompass not only high-rise development but also prioritise walking and cycling infrastructure.

EVALUATION OF THE URBANSHIFT COUNTRY PROJECT BY GEF

The Global Environment Facility (GEF), a Washington DC-based trust fund, funds UrbanShift Country Project activities across several Indian cities under its Sustainable Cities Impact Program. From 18 to 22 November 2024, Mr. Neeraj Kumar Negi, Senior Evaluation Officer at the Independent Evaluation Office (IEO) of the GEF, visited India to assess the progress, impact, and challenges faced during project execution, and ensure the alignment of project activities with the overarching goals of the global UrbanShift program.

FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSIONS FOR FORMULATION OF NON-MOTORISED TRANSPORT (NMT) POLICY GUIDELINES AND NMT NETWORK PLANS

As part of the project deliverable for the formulation of NMT Policy Guidelines and NMT Network Plans, Arcadis and ITDP India GDs organised focus group discussions between 12 to 14 December 2024 to comprehensively understand NMT challenges and opportunities. The panel of distinguished experts contributed significantly by highlighting the importance of integrating NMT infrastructure into planning frameworks. They further stressed the need for equitable and sustainable solutions to promote walking and cycling while ensuring their alignment with the broader urban mobility ecosystem.

PROGRESS REVIEW OF DUMAS SEA FACE DEVELOPMENT PROJECT, SURAT

The UrbanShift PMU at NIUA along with the team from the GEF Climate Mitigation Unit - UNEP, Bangkok visited Surat to review the progress of implementing the Dumas Sea Face Development Project about. During the visit, meetings were also organised with Executive Engineer (WRRC Dept.), Executive Engineer (BRTS Traffic Cell, SMC) and CEO, Surat Smart City Development Ltd. to discuss the status of the project activities in Surat and other probable areas of future collaboration.

SECOND PROJECT STEERING COMMITTEE (PSC) MEETING

The second PSC meeting of the GEF 7-Funded UrbanShift Country Project was chaired by Shri Rahul Kapoor, Joint Secretary (Smart Cities Mission), MoHUA. The PSC meeting provided NIUA (the Executing Agency) an opportunity to inform the forum about the project's progress and implementation status, receive guidance on key strategic areas and discuss the way forward.

SESSION ON URBAN MOBILITY FOR DANICS PROBATIONER'S TRAINING

A training session was organised by NIUA for DANICS probationers (60th & 61st batch) with Union Territories Civil Services (UTCS) on 13 September 2024 at the NIUA Office, focusing on Urban Mobility as part of the UrbanShift Country Project. The full-day session aimed to enhance participants' understanding of sustainable urban transport systems and mobility solutions through a series of presentations and hands-on exercises led by experts in the field of Urban Mobility.

WORKSHOP ON TRANSIT-ORIENTED DEVELOPMENT

As part of the UrbanShift Country Project, NIUA and UNEP conducted a 1.5-day workshop in Ahmedabad on 18 & 19 December 2024, supported by HCP Design, Planning, and Management Pvt. Ltd. The session aimed to enhance understanding of Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) principles and explore strategies for effective implementation.

Discussions covered topics such as integrating land use and transit for sustainable urban development, developing context-sensitive Local Area Plans (LAPs), financing mechanisms for TOD, and insights from successful TOD projects, including a site visit. The Ahmedabad TOD Plan, highlighted under the 'Smart City Program,' served as a key example. The event brought together 30 officials from 13 organisations across nine cities, including Pune, Surat, Chennai, and Delhi. Feedback was also sought on TOD Station Area Planning Guidelines (Draft), a critical resource developed under the project by UMTC.

17TH URBAN MOBILITY INDIA CONFERENCE AND EXPO

Sarika Chakravarty participated as a panellist at the 17th Urban Mobility India Conference and Expo, held in Gandhinagar. Speaking in in the "Building 15-Minute Cities: A Pathway to Sustainable Urban Mobility," she highlighted the importance of contextualising the 15-minute city concept to suit individual cities, using Delhi as an illustrative example, and the need to transition from single-use to mixed land-use zoning to accommodate diverse user needs effectively.

SCBP PODCAST SERIES UNDER 'SWACHHATA HI SEWA' TO MARK 10 YEARS OF THE SWACHH BHARAT MISSION

EP01: Her voice, Her Change- Women-led initiatives under Swachh Bharat Mission with SEWA Bharat delves into the stories of trailblazing women who are transforming their communities through sustainable sanitation practices impacting public health.

Podcast ⬏

EP02: Swachh Parvat, Swasth Paryavaran with Pradeep Sangwan looks into remarkable journey of the Swachh Bharat Mission and its significant role in promoting waste management across India.

EP03: Our Himalayas, Our Responsibility with Roshan and Priya (IMI and Zero waste Himalaya) looks into 'The Himalayan Cleanup' initiative, active since 2018 in the hill states and cities of Darjeeling, Sikkim and Ladakh.

EP04: Achieving SBM objectives through a community-centred approach with Akhila Sivadas (CFAR) delves into the impactful community-driven gender-inclusive sanitation initiatives (including innovative use of QR code for desludging services) that have emerged over the past decade, featuring insights from the Centre for Advocacy and Research (CFAR).

SCBP LAUNCHES 4 COURSES

The courses are available on the National Urban Learning Platform (NULP):
- Integrated Wastewater and Septage Management (IWSM)- Design
- Integrated Wastewater and Septage Management (IWSM)- Planning
- Faecal Sludge and Septage Management (FSSM)- Orientation
- Co-treatment of Faecal Sludge and septage with sewage in STP

SWACHHATA HI SEWA PUBLICATIONS

SCBP compiled two documents under the 'Swachhata Hi Sewa' to mark 10 impactful years of the Swachh Bharat Mission

- *Swachhata Catalogue:* A collection of Reports, Guidelines, and IEC materials designed for sanitation and solid waste in urban India to help ULBs reach the targets under the Swachh Bharat Mission.
- *Our Collective contribution towards Swachhata: A repository of publications* focusing on Swachh Bharat Mission in waste management over the years.
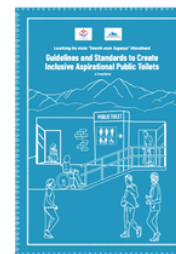
Publication

SCBP LAUNCHES KNOWLEDGE PRODUCTS

- *Compendium on 'Untold Stories from the Himalaya: 20 solutions for water and waste management'*

- *Compilation of Guidelines for Inclusive Public Toilets*

Publication ⬀   ⬀

LAUNCH OF SARAL COLLATERALS

Localised strategy for disability inclusive and community led DRR, checklist for accessible permanent and temporary shelters- at World Urban Forum 12 Networking Event on 'Accelerating inclusion and resilience for all through climate finance and participatory actions in cities: Partnerships for disability inclusion to leave no one behind'
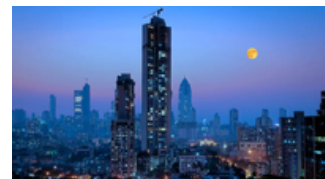
Publication ⬀

NIUA LAUNCHES CLIMATE ACTION PLANS FOR LEH, JUNAGADH, AND JAMNAGAR ON INTERNATIONAL DAY FOR CLIMATE ACTION

On the occasion of the International Day *Framework* ⧉

for Climate Action, the C-Cube at the NIUA released Climate Action Plans (CAP) for Leh, Junagadh, and Jamnagar cities. Developed in partnership with the Global Covenant of Mayors for Climate & Energy (GCoM) and with funding from the European Union. These were officially released by Mr Nalin Srivastava, National Mission for Clean Ganga (NMCG); Dr Debolina Kundu, Director (AC), NIUA; and Dr Victor Shinde, Head of C-Cube, NIUA. These plans aim to address urban climate resilience and align with India's ClimateSmart Cities Assessment Framework (CSCAF).

URBAN ACT PUBLICATION LAUNCH: CLIMATE CONSIDERATIONS IN CITY PLANS AT WUF 12

The compendium Climate Considerations in City Plans: A Study of 20 Global and Indian Cities highlights how integrating climate strategies into city *Publication* ⧉

plans can help address climate change challenges while advancing India's Paris Agreement commitments. Key insights include prioritising low-carbon mobility, energy-efficient systems, climate-aligned targets, data-driven planning, and water resilience strategies. This study underscores the transformative role of strategic urban planning in fostering sustainable, climate-resilient cities.

MUNCIPAL CORPORATION OF DELHI (MCD) - ACCOUNTING ASSESSMENT

The report identifies key challenges in urban governance, including accounting gaps due to reliance on cash-based systems and insufficient IT integration, inadequate asset management and financial tracking practices. Revenue collection issues arise from unlinked property tax and trade licenses, as well as missed opportunities in advertisements and municipal works.

Technology deficits highlight the absence of unified financial tracking modules and weak monitoring systems for investments and employee-related funds. Governance weaknesses include limited institutional frameworks for accountability, compliance, and a lack of strategic planning for financial and technological reforms. To address these challenges, targeted recommendations focus on enhancing property tax systems, licensing, municipal works, IT integration, and employee management.

REIMAGINING URBAN FUTURES: INSIGHTS FROM COP 29

COP 29 held in Baku, Azerbaijan, marked a pivotal chapter in global climate negotiations. As nations gathered to address the escalating climate crisis, the event highlighted critical gaps in climate finance while presenting new opportunities for sustainable urbanisation. Among the outcomes was adopting a new $300 billion annual finance goal for developing nations, with a long-term target of scaling this to $1.3 trillion annually by 2035. However, these commitments fall short of the $1.3 trillion demanded annually by developing countries, exposing critical gaps in global climate finance frameworks. This limitation is particularly pronounced for rapidly urbanising nations like India, where cities bear the brunt of climate impacts and require robust financial and governance frameworks. **Anshul Abbasi, representing the National Institute of Urban Affairs (NIUA)**, emerged as a key voice in shaping the discussions stressing financial innovation, governance alignment, and integrating technology with traditional knowledge for resilient, inclusive cities.

Abbasi's contributions at COP 29 emphasised the role of innovative financial instruments such as green bonds and credit guarantees. These tools can unlock private-sector investments, bridging the gap between global funding commitments and local needs. Public-private partnerships (PPPs) were identified as a critical pathway for cities to access resources while ensuring profitability for investors. Aligning these financial mechanisms with urban resilience goals is paramount to securing sustainable development.

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Building Urban Resilience Through Multilateral Cooperation

Speaking at the "Perspectives for Urban Climate Action in BRICS and the Emerging Global South" session, Abbasi outlined a structured approach for cities to integrate

disaster resilience into planning frameworks. His advocacy for collaboration among BRICS nations highlighted the importance of knowledge sharing and policy integration to address shared vulnerabilities. He called for embedding climate mitigation and resilience into master plans and urban development policies, ensuring local goals align with national and international agendas.

India's ClimateSmart Cities Assessment Framework (CSCAF) and Climate Action Plans (CAPs) were showcased as pioneering tools empowering cities to assess vulnerabilities and incorporate resilience into urban planning. Abbasi's insights at the Resilience Hub reinforced the significance of such frameworks in driving global efforts to scale climate resilience initiatives.

Disaster Management and Nature-Based Solutions

Abbasi presented a compelling case for integrating disaster resilience into urban governance at the South Africa Pavilion. Drawing from India's experience with the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA), he advocated aligning local strategies with the Sendai Framework. By promoting nature-based solutions (NbS) and ancestral practices, Abbasi highlighted cost-effective approaches to disaster mitigation that balance innovation with tradition.

Strengthening multi-level governance systems was another critical focus area. Abbasi underscored the need for responsive local governments to effectively manage climate and disaster risks. Capacity building for municipal officials, mainly through training programmes like the National Urban Learning Platform (NULP), emerged as a cornerstone of resilient urban governance.

Cooling Solutions for Climate-Sensitive Urban Planning

Urban heat islands and rising temperatures pose significant challenges to sustainable urbanisation. The session on financing passive cooling strategies session emphasised the importance of sustainable materials, energy efficiency, and heritage conservation. Sharing NIUA's contributions to India's Long-Term Low Emission Development Strategy (LT-LEDS) , Abbasi showcased how vernacular architecture, solar-oriented building designs and non-motorised transport corridors can offer cost-effective, climate-sensitive solutions.

Cities can mitigate climate-related losses by integrating cooling strategies into urban planning while enhancing liveability. Abbasi's call for private-sector investments to scale these technologies demonstrated the potential for innovative financing to drive sustainable urban transformation.

Governance Alignment for Climate Goals

Abbasi introduced NIUA's "3I Approach"—Inquiry, Investment, and Incentives —as a roadmap for advancing urban climate action. This approach emphasises:

- Inquiry: Robust data collection to assess climate impacts on urban areas, validating traditional practices through scientific research.
- Investment: Creating ecosystems that encourage public-private partnerships (PPPs) and credit guarantees mechanism to ensure climate actions remain financially viable.
- Incentives: Encouraging community-led initiatives by offering rewards for adopting sustainable practices.

Abbasi's advocacy for multilevel governance to achieve the 1.5°C climate target underscored the necessity of aligning local, national, and international efforts. He highlighted the economic stakes of poor urban planning, noting that India faces potential annual losses of $165 billion from climate-related disasters by 2030.

Resilient Housing: An Overlooked Climate Priority

One of Abbasi's key takeaways from COP 29 was the urgent need to prioritise resilient housing within the global climate agenda. Speaking at the SDG Pavilion, he called for housing to be recognised as a standalone Sustainable Development Goal (SDG), particularly for vulnerable communities in coastal and island regions. Abbasi highlighted NIUA's efforts to equip city officials with the skills necessary to implement urban resilience strategies under the CSCAF framework, through NULP.

A Vision for Future

Abbasi's insights at COP 29 resonate as a clarion call for urgent action. From advancing climate finance to promoting resilient housing, his contributions underscore the need for a collaborative, multi-pronged approach to urban resilience. As the world grapples with the twin challenges of urbanisation and climate change, COP 29 serves as a reminder of the potential of innovation, governance, and community engagement.

For rapidly urbanising nations like India, the road ahead is fraught with challenges but also brimming with opportunities. By leveraging financial innovation, aligning governance structures, and embracing a balanced approach to adopting artificial intelligence and ancestral intelligence, cities can build a sustainable and inclusive future.

LIVING IN DATA FALLACY: *WHOLE NUMBERS AND HALF TRUTHS*
Rukmini S.

Whole Numbers and Half Truths: What Data Can and Cannot Tell Us About Modern India by Rukmini S. provides a very strong engagement with how data reflects, moulds, and shapes our sense-making of contemporary India. Directly targeted at policymakers, this book is as much a critique of the present narratives as it is an instruction on how to deploy data responsibly for wise policy decisions. The author who is a well-known data journalist, gives her analysis from a rich repository of official statistics, independent surveys, and personal reportage to guide us with the complexities of Indian society, its contradictions, and the nuanced stories hidden in numbers.

Rukmini S. takes a close look at India's detailed systems for collecting and organizing data through Census and surveys by the National Statistical Office. She compares this to how false stories and misleading information most often shape public opinion and government decisions. Taking the case of election statistics, electoral data contradict common beliefs about vote banks and voter motivations, revealing that actual political behaviour often is not what many people assume it to be.

In another example, the author stresses that data without context and critical interpretation cannot drive policies. For example, high crime rates in states like Kerala might be due to better reporting mechanisms rather than an actual increase in crime.

Rukmini uses over 350 meticulously documented sources, combines quantitative data with qualitative insights and is, therefore, a robust source for evidence-based policymaking.

The book calls for systemic reforms, such as initiating victimization surveys, modernising crime reporting, and increasing transparency in data sharing.
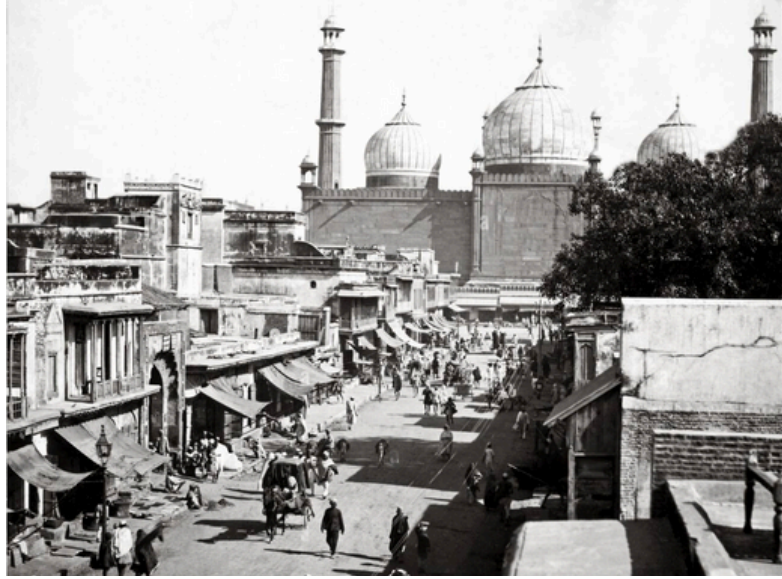
From the lens of policy and decision-making, the book calls forth the need for system restructuring by developing an improved statistical framework offering accuracy, timeliness, and data accessibility. Higher reliability accompanies the use of technology and the practice of best-in-class at the international level. At the same time, there is a need to strengthen bureaucratic capacity in terms of data analysis and interpretation. Training programs can be used to connect statistical insight with actionable policies.

The book underlines the use of data to change issues such as caste discrimination, gender inequality, and health inequalities. Such policy insights will help policymakers develop targeted interventions. Furthermore, institutions of transparent data practices should be undertaken to mitigate political interference and restore public confidence in official statistics.

An imperative read for policymakers in India, *Whole Numbers and Half Truths* unfolds the stories that statistics conceal and exhorts officers to interrogate data critically and contextually as India looks to forge a path forward in its own development journey.

Ankita Raman
Environmental Specialist

SPOT THE DIFFERENCE

Jama Masjid, New Delhi

ANSWERS: POLICY CROSSWORD

DOWN: 1. Bill; 3.Beneficiary; 5.Agenda; 7.Governance; 8.Memorandum
ACROSS: 2. Public Good; 4.Externalities; 6.Policy; 9.Incentive; 10.Moral Hazard

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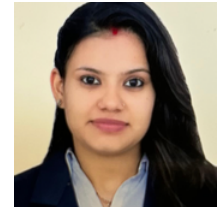CITIIS 2.0

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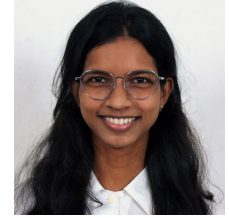Driver cum Office Assistant
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39

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