



Press Release

National Conclave on ‘Gender and Disability Inclusion in Indian Cities’

Launch of ‘Smart Solution Challenge and Inclusion Award’ along with a digital toolkit and guidebook on ‘Inclusive, Accessible, Safe, and Resilient Urban Development’

28-30 April 2022 at India Habitat Centre, New Delhi

New Delhi, 27 April 2022: With the aim to mainstream gender and disability inclusion in urban development, the Building Accessible, Safe and Inclusive Indian Cities (BASiIC) programme of the National Institute of Urban Affairs (NIUA) under the aegis of the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA), in collaboration with the United Nations in India, and the Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO), UK, is organising a **3-day National Conclave on ‘Gender and Disability Inclusion in Indian Cities’ from 28th April 2022 to 30th April 2022 at India Habitat Centre, New Delhi.**

Three-day workshop aims to mainstream gender and disability inclusion in the implementation of the SDGs to ensure a more resilient, accessible, inclusive, safe, and sustainable India for all.

The conclave aims to strengthen India's commitment to gender and disability inclusion in urban development in line with the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (RPWD) Act 2016, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD), 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the New Urban Agenda, and the Sendai Framework for furthering the achievement of India's aspirational vision for an accessible, inclusion, safe, and resilient India@2047.

Supported by the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA), the National Conclave will bring together policymakers, academia, the private sector, thematic experts, and implementers from across the country to deliberate on city-level accessibility and inclusion challenges, exchange ideas, share technical expertise and knowledge, and contribute to the discourse on Urban Accessibility and Inclusion.

Madam Lakshmi Puri, former Assistant Secretary-General at United Nations, and former Deputy Executive Director of UN Women will grace the occasion as the keynote speaker. The event will also be attended by Mr. Manoj Joshi, Hon'ble Secretary, MoHUA, Mr. Rajesh Sharma, Joint Secretary, DEPwD, MoSJE, Mr. Shombi Sharp, UN Resident Coordinator in India, Mr. Shantanu Mitra, Head, Infrastructure & Urban Development, British High and Mr Hitesh Vaidya, Director, NIUA.

The opening day of the National Conclave will witness the **launch of the ‘Smart Solution Challenge and Inclusion Award’**, inviting innovative ideas, technologies, products, business solutions and good practices to help resolve complex city-level inclusion and accessibility

challenges. The challenge is open to all students, citizens, innovators, start-ups, social impact organisations, urban practitioners, Urban Local Bodies, SPVs and project teams under the Smart Cities Mission. The application deadline is 6 June 2022. To know more about the challenge, click here: <https://goforchange.org/>.

A digital toolkit and guidebook on ‘Inclusive, Accessible, Safe, and Resilient Urban Development will be launched too, which will serve as a ready reckoner for urban practitioners to help embed the principles of Universal Design and Inclusive Development at all stages of infrastructure projects and services.

Underlining the importance of Inclusivity in the urban landscape, Director NIUA- Mr. Hitesh Vaidya said, *“NIUA has been formulating guidelines, policies, action plans and building capacities of cities to promote inclusion and achieve universal accessibility. I am confident that the launch of the nation-wide ‘Smart Solution Challenge’ will enable us to identify innovative solutions, document and present best practices about promoting accessibility, inclusivity, and safety around the globe”*.

Highlighting the guiding principle of the 2030 Agenda to ‘Leave No One Behind’ and the UN Disability Inclusion Strategy, Mr. Shombi Sharp, UN Resident Coordinator in India remarked, *“Technology is a key enabler for implementing the Sustainable Development Goals. However, it is the socially inclusive innovations designed and formulated on the principles of universal design that help achieve the 2030 Agenda. The ‘Smart Solutions Challenge and Inclusive Cities Awards’ will help build and enhance an ecosystem of socially inclusive innovations in India to address the urban challenges as well as acknowledge and recognize inclusive initiatives and projects being implemented within the Indian cities”*.

An **immersive training workshop** will follow on the 2nd and 3rd day of the conclave where the city stakeholders from all over India will be provided training to enhance their sensibilities, sensitivities, and capabilities on inclusive urban development.

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