

Malaysia-OECD-UNESCP SIDE EVENT PROPOSAL

Title of event:

Promoting low-carbon urban green growth in Asia and the Pacific

Describe the event format, for example, researches presentations, projects of networks, signing of agreements, book launch, etc (Max 100 words)

This is a high level event which convenes policy makers and government representatives to demonstrate that low-carbon urban green growth is a key transformative policy approach in the context of the New Urban Agenda, and to discuss effective strategies to promote low-carbon urban green growth in Asia and the Pacific Region. The event is hosted by the Malaysian government, and depending on the timing, it would also include participation at the highest levels, including the Executive Secretary of UN-ESCAP and the Secretary General of the OECD, both of which strongly support the low-carbon urban green growth agenda in the Region.

(100 words)

Provide a summary of the main theme of your event * (500 words)

Around the world, urban areas contribute tremendously to the economic prosperity of nations. They are hubs for social interaction, employment, innovation and productivity. Yet, negative impacts of urban agglomeration, such as traffic congestion, air and water pollution, CO₂ emission and loss of green areas threaten the effective functioning of not only the urban system but also the natural resources. In Asia and the Pacific Region, where urbanisation is occurring at an unprecedented speed, cities are faced with tremendous opportunities for growth but also challenges. For example, Malaysia facing rapid rate of urbanization, degradation of environmental quality, inefficient urban transportation system, high living cost and decline in quality of living for urban dwellers.

Urban green growth is a policy approach which aims to foster economic growth and development while ensuring that natural assets continue to provide the resources and ecosystem services on which our well-being relies. Low-carbon urban green growth has been increasingly recognised as a key urban development framework. As proposed in the Zero draft, fostering ecological and resilient cities and human settlements is a key transformative action in the New Urban Agenda, and low-carbon urban green growth can be an effective approach to implement the New Urban Agenda.

Among different implementation challenges in fostering low-carbon urban green growth, finance is a paramount issue. Local governments face the challenge of mobilising the finances needed for low-carbon urban green growth in their efforts to implement the New

Urban Agenda. Though local governments are the pivotal points, national governments also have a critical role to play. For example, national governments play a key role in increasing and diversifying local government revenues, both tax revenues as well as non-tax revenues (user charges, fees, etc.). Innovative approaches which enable the mobilisation of private capital at the city level may also require a reform of legal frameworks by national governments.

With these backgrounds, this side event aims to exchange views and experience on low-carbon urban green growth in Asia and the Pacific Region, demonstrate that it is a key transformative policy action to implement the New Urban Agenda, and discuss effective strategies.

Proposed panel composition is as follows:

- Datuk Abdul Rahman Dahlan, Minister of The Ministry of Urban Wellbeing, Housing and Local Government of Malaysia
- Dr. Shamshad Akhtar, Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations and Executive Secretary of ESCAP
- Angel Gurría, Secretary General, OECD
- A representative from one of the Least Developed Countries (LDC) – to be confirmed
- A representative from one of the island states – Fiji
- A mayor from Asia-Pacific Region – to be confirmed

Key questions to be addressed in the side event include:

- How can low-carbon urban green growth promote the implementation of the New Urban Agenda?
- What are most pressing challenges for promoting actions for low-carbon urban green growth in Asia and the Pacific Region?
- What are effective strategies that enable local governments to foster low-carbon urban green growth?
- How can local governments increase their finance capacity to be able to implement actions for low-carbon urban green growth?
- What is the role of international communities in supporting member states in fostering low-carbon urban green growth, as a key transformative action of the New Urban Agenda?

(486 words)

Provide 10 key words describing your event * (Max. 100 Characters)

Low-carbon, green growth, urbanisation, Asia and the Pacific, New Urban Agenda, finance, local government

(7 key words, 92 characters)

Enumerate three expected outcomes when organizing this event *(100 words)

- to exchange different views and experience on low-carbon urban green growth in Asia and the Pacific Region and demonstrate that it is a key transformative policy action to implement the New Urban Agenda
- to discuss and identify effective strategies to promote low-carbon urban green growth in Asia and the Pacific Region
- To discuss how local governments can increase their finance capacity to be able to implement actions for low-carbon urban green growth

(72 words)

Please explain to what extent the event will be relevant to the implementation of the New Urban Agenda (Max. 60 Words)

The New Urban Agenda is committed to fostering ecological and resilient cities and human settlements, driving sustainable patterns of consumption and production, protecting and valuing ecosystems and biodiversity, and adapting to and mitigating the impact of climate change. This side event links directly to this guiding principle and provides a platform for discussion which would serve as input for implementation.

(60 words)