



## GLOBAL COVENANT OF MAYORS LAUNCHES REGIONAL CHAPTER IN SOUTH ASIA TO HELP BUILD MORE CLIMATE RESILIENT CITIES

**European Union to support participation of key Indian cities through International Urban Cooperation programme**

*The cities of Surat and Gangtok commit to the coalition*

**New Delhi, India, 05 May 2018** – The Global Covenant of Mayors for Climate & Energy (GCoM), an international coalition of city leaders committed to raising the global ambition for climate action, launched today a **regional chapter for South Asia in New Delhi**, India. The Global Covenant of Mayors for Climate & Energy - South Asia (GCoM-SA) aims to support the efforts of cities in India, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and make their communities more resilient toward the effects of climate change. GCoM-SA was launched within the context of the South Asian Cities Summit and through support from the **European Union (EU) funded International Urban Cooperation programme** in India and city network partners.

At today's launch event, GCoM Vice-Chair and former UNFCCC Executive Secretary Christiana Figueres, the architect behind the historic Paris Agreement, and EU Ambassador Tomasz Kozlowski joined mayors, commissioners, key local actors and representatives from across South Asian countries as well as global and local city network partners to share regionally relevant challenges, best practices and lessons learnt, and demonstrate how a shared vision for the future can enhance climate action in the communities and quality of life for their citizens.

GCoM-SA aims to encourage and support South Asian sub-national authorities to promote the economic and health benefits of cities' climate action. To date, 14 cities in South Asia have committed to GCoM, representing a population of more than 36 million. Through their commitments made to GCoM to take action on climate change, **cities in the region could reduce their emissions by 65%.**

The region's overall potential to curb emissions is even greater, and GCoM-SA officially launched today a **campaign to further invite mayors and commissioners from India as well as local governments across the region to join the Global Covenant of Mayors** and commit to transitioning to a low-carbon and climate resilient economy. The Indian cities of **Surat and Gangtok signed a commitment** to join cities across the globe to take action as part of this coalition today.

Through the regional chapter, and as delivered by local and global city network partners, the Global Covenant of Mayors will offer technical support and training and work with signatory cities and sub-national authorities in South Asia to plan and implement climate initiatives more effectively. It will provide access to global city data, research and knowledge, harmonized



reporting standards and technical assistance in preparing climate action plans as well as increased access to finance. It is essential to ensure that one of the world's most rapidly urbanizing continents has the data, tools and technology required to realize ambitious goals. GCoM's global research and innovation agenda on cities and climate change will support Indian cities in developing the science and knowledge needed to help evolve urban areas into transformative agents of change.

GCoM-SA will also aim to facilitate collaboration with multilevel governance actors to allow Indian cities to implement the climate action plan in an integrated way, collectively raising global climate ambition to deliver on the goals of the Paris Agreement.

Indian cities will host 200 million more people by 2030, and two-thirds of India's buildings that will exist by 2030 remain to be built.<sup>1</sup> The country's future urban planning and implementation will have a decisive influence on the global climate impact of international efforts to curb greenhouse gas emissions. In addition, many of India's cities are highly vulnerable to sea level rise, as they are situated along the country's extensive coastline or along major rivers, and are already feeling the impacts of extreme weather events, including heat waves and floods.

Many Indian cities and states are developing climate action plans as part of the national agenda. The cities of Rajkot and Surat have already begun developing urban climate initiatives that serve as examples of global climate leadership.

- The city of **Rajkot**, whose mayor Jaiman Upadhyay is also a Global Covenant of Mayors Board Member, is the 22nd-fastest-growing city in the world and the first Indian city to commit to a climate change mitigation target through a forward-looking development plan that encompasses climate-resilient economic growth and contributes to India's Nationally Determined Contributions (INDCs). The city has committed to reduce GHG emissions by 25% by 2020 from Rajkot city's baseline GHG emissions from 2012-13. Since then, Rajkot city has saved approximately 16million kWh electricity and approximately 13,000 tonnes CO<sub>2</sub>e GHG emission. The successful urban planning and implementation includes interventions in energy efficiency, renewable energy, solid waste management, monitoring water supply and integrated transport planning. Energy efficient affordable housing schemes for informal settlements are currently being developed. As part of one of the projects, "CapaCITIES," which is funded by Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation, Rajkot city has prepared a climate resilient city action plan by using ICLEI's ClimateResilientCities methodology tool, which includes scientific research-based mitigation and adaptation actions for cities to reduce GHG emissions, which will soon be part of Rajkot's regular planning process. The city has also been participating in many awareness campaigns to sensitize its citizens towards the challenges of climate change and encourage their active participation.

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<sup>1</sup> McKinsey Global Institute. 2010. "India's Urban Awakening." Mumbai: McKinsey & Company.  
[https://www.mckinsey.com/~media/McKinsey/Global%20Themes/Urbanization/Urban%20awakening%20in%20India/MGI\\_Indias\\_urban\\_awakening\\_full\\_report.ashx](https://www.mckinsey.com/~media/McKinsey/Global%20Themes/Urbanization/Urban%20awakening%20in%20India/MGI_Indias_urban_awakening_full_report.ashx)



- The city of **Surat** is the eighth largest city and ninth largest urban agglomeration in India, one of the fastest growing cities in the world, and one of the world's most climate change affected cities. Surat is leveraging its engaged citizens to help develop a Resilience Strategy that is designed to articulate solutions that make Surat more resilient not only to physical challenges, such as floods and aging infrastructure, but also to social challenges, such as cohesion and urban health. Specific programs in the Resilience Strategy include mobility and traffic management, affordable energy efficient housing, water management, regulation of the ecosystem and environment, strengthening social cohesion, and upscaling public health infrastructure and training.

With the increased presence and reach of the Global Covenant of Mayors in South Asia, the aim is for more cities to make strong contributions towards building a low-carbon future, working to set carbon reduction targets, and implementing changes that are necessary to propel the world towards reaching the goals in the Paris Agreement.

#### QUOTES:

**Christiana Figueres, Global Covenant of Mayors Vice-Chair, former UNFCCC Executive**

**Secretary:** Tackling climate in South Asian cities is about delivering this centuries' opportunity for economic development, jobs, growth, long-term resilience and improving quality of life. It is also about ensuring that we reach the global climate turning point to bend the curve of emissions downward by 2020 in order to ensure the long-term resilience of our cities and other areas. The leadership demonstrated by cities participation in the South Asian regional chapter of the Global Covenant of Mayors is an essential part of ensuring we take this critical opportunity to create a better world.

**H.E. Tomasz Kozlowski, Ambassador of the European Union:** As one of the founders of GCoM, we are pleased to see the successful launch of the South Asia chapter of this international initiative. Through the EU funded International Urban Cooperation project, the EU will support the South Asian secretariat, develop context-relevant GCoM material, support the technical assistance tools as well as promote scientific assessment processes inspired by best practices from the European Union and city networks. I truly believe that this is an important initiative to implement our common goals in energy, urbanization, waste management and transport.

**Jaimin Upadhyay, Mayor of Rajkot and Global Covenant of Mayors Board Member:**

Cities in South Asia have to cope with a multitude of challenges: rapid population growth, overburdened infrastructure, informal housing, income inequality, and the effects of climate change, to name just a few. These challenges can only be tackled in an integrated manner. The steps we take to address climate change at the local level are also paving the way for a better quality of life and economic development in our communities.



**Vivek Narayan Shaijwalkar, Mayor of Gwalior:** Investments into climate action are an opportunity to build more resilient and livable communities for all cities in India. Through the alliance with the Global Covenant of Mayors of South Asia we will build capacities, know-how and public awareness to tackle this historic challenge.

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#### **About the Global Covenant of Mayors for Climate & Energy**

The Global Covenant of Mayors for Climate and Energy is the largest global coalition of cities and local governments voluntarily committed to actively combatting climate change and transitioning to a low-carbon and climate resilient economy. Led by UN Secretary-General's Special Envoy for Climate Action, Michael R. Bloomberg, and European Commission Vice President, Maroš Šefčovič, in partnership with local, regional and global city networks, the Global Covenant has thousands of city signatories across 6 continents and more than 120 countries, representing over 700 million people or nearly 10% of the global population. By 2030, Global Covenant cities and local governments could collectively reduce 1.3 billion tons of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions per year from business-as-usual – equal to the emissions of 276 million cars taken off the road. Learn more at: [www.globalcovenantofmayors.org](http://www.globalcovenantofmayors.org)

#### **About the Global Covenant of Mayors for Climate & Energy - South Asia**

GCoM South Asia is the South Asian chapter of Global Covenant of Mayors. A total of 16 cities from India, Nepal, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Sri Lanka and Pakistan have so far joined GCoM South Asia. Over the next years, the network is growing to involve a greater diversity of South Asian cities with the goal to become a common platform for cities from South Asia to raise its voice on climate change and energy in international regime. For more information about GCoM South Asia, please visit us at: [www.covenantofmayors-southasia.org](http://www.covenantofmayors-southasia.org). *(This website will be available soon.)*

#### **About the International Urban Cooperation (IUC) programme**

Funded by the European Union, the International Urban Cooperation (IUC) programme supports the achievement of bilateral policy objectives as well as major international agreements on urban development and climate change, such as the New Urban Agenda, the Sustainable Development Goals, and the Paris Agreement. The IUC programme will engage with major international financial institutions and partners to link city decision-makers with potential funders. EU business will be an important partner for activities under the components on sustainable urban development and innovation cooperation for local and regional development. Target countries include China, India, Japan, Canada, Mexico, USA, Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia and Peru. In India, so far 5 IUC Partnership Agreements have been signed by Indian mayors with 7 more partnerships to be established in the course of this year. For more information, please reach us at: [www.iuc.eu](http://www.iuc.eu).