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**Urban Management Programme for Capacity Building of States and Urban Local Bodies launched by NITI Aayog
on 27 April 2016**

NITI Aayog on 27 April 2016 launched the Urban Management Programme in New Delhi. The Programme Launch event was held in Vigyan Bhawan New Delhi. The Launch event was chaired by Vice Chairman of NITI Aayog, Dr Arvind Panagariya. Member NITI Aayog, Dr Bibek Debroy, High Commissioner of Singapore, Mr. Kong Wy Mun, CEO of Singapore Cooperation Enterprise (SCE), Mr. Kong Wy Mun, CEO of Temasek Foundation Mr Benedict Cheong and senior officials from State Governments of Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra, Gujarat, Delhi, Uttar Pradesh and Assam, Ministry of Urban Development, Ministry of Housing and Poverty Alleviation, other Central Government Ministries, NITI Aayog, academic institutions like School of Planning & Architecture, Delhi etc attended the event. The state participation was at the level of Secretaries of Urban Development, Municipal Commissioners and other senior officials of State Government and parastatal bodies. About 150 participants were present in the event.

Mr Alok Kumar, Additional Secretary of NITI Aayog gave an overview of the Urban Management Programme to the participants. The Programme has been designed by NITI Aayog, Temasek Foundation and Singapore Cooperation Enterprise (SCE) under the platform of the Memorandum of Understanding signed between NITI Aayog and the Singapore Cooperation Enterprise (SCE) to tap the expertise of Singapore in urban sector to build capacities in State Governments and ULBs to design efficient solutions to urban problems. Dr Arvind Panagariya, Vice Chairman of NITI Aayog while launching the Programme addressed the participants and gave them a holistic picture of issues involved in urban transformation. He mentioned that as a part of its mandate to promote cooperative federalism, NITI has been reaching out to the States to resolve their issues pending with different Ministries. Recently, NITI Aayog held a meeting of senior officials from the State of Telangana and Central Ministries and sorted out a number of outstanding issues of the State. Dr Bibek Debroy while addressing the participants emphasized on improving governance particularly of the census towns whose number has significantly increased between census 2001 and 2011. He also mentioned that to successfully achieve the vision of urban transformation it would be important to build the municipal cadre and provide stability of tenure to officials in municipalities. CEO of Singapore Cooperation Enterprise and CEO of Temasek Foundation also addressed the participants and emphasized on the importance attached by Singapore to their partnership with NITI Aayog for the Urban Management Programme.

“Collaboration Document” for organising this Urban Management Programme was also signed during the Launch event between NITI and SCE, by Ms. Sunita Sanghi, Adviser, Urbanization, NITI Aayog and Mr. Kong Wy Mun, CEO of Singapore Cooperation Enterprise. The year long Programme would comprise of a series of highly interactive workshops and advisory sessions and focus on Singapore’s and international best practices in areas of Urban Planning & Governance, Water and Wastewater Management, Solid Waste Management and bringing in private sector efficiencies in urban infrastructure and also identify key challenges faced by implementing agencies in these areas. Urban Management experts from Singapore from Surbana Jurong, CH2M

and Pricewaterhouse Coopers would conduct the workshops. Towards the end of the Programme, advisory sessions would be held to develop Strategic Base line Frameworks to address the key challenges in identified areas of Urban Management. The inaugural session of the Launch Programme ended with a vote of thanks by Mr Jeetendra Singh, Director Urbanisation of NITI Aayog.

In the second session a complete overview of the Urban Management Programme was given by SCE and Temasek Foundation. The experts from Singapore explained in detail the structure and content of workshops on Urban Planning & Governance Water, Wastewater and Solid Waste Management and Public Financing (PPP). The participants from the States raised issues related to challenges faced by them in water and sanitation, waste management, structuring and administering PPP contracts etc. These issues would be taken up in detail in the sessions in workshops to be held focussing on individual subjects. The first two day workshop on Urban Planning and Governance would be held on 28 and 29 April 2016 in New Delhi.

Background:

Urbanisation offers an opportunity to India to achieve higher economic growth as cities provide economies of agglomeration. Urbanisation level in India, which was around 31 per cent in census 2011 is estimated to increase and reach 40 per cent by 2030 in percentage terms, the urbanisation level may appear to be modest, however in absolute numbers it is very large. Urban population of India is more than the entire population of United States of America or Brazil. The urban economy has also witnessed significant growth and is contributing to around 60 per cent of GDP. However, to reap the full benefits of urbanisation, it is important that it is efficient and sustainable.

Rapid urbanisation is increasing the pressure on provision of basic services to citizens like water, sanitation and mobility in the urban areas in the country. Infrastructure deficit is increasing the coping costs as well as leading to loss of productivity in the cities. It is also adversely affecting the ability of cities in attracting investment in this globalized world. Governance in urban centres is also emerging as a major challenge particularly with the increasing number of census towns. Further, with the increasing pressure on natural resources, sustainability of cities is emerging as a major concern. A deficiency in processing and scientific disposal of urban waste is resulting in a situation where Indian cities are polluting water bodies, degrading soil and environment at a much larger scale than they use these resources. Environmental sustainability of Indian cities is therefore becoming a major imperative for guiding efficient urbanisation.

Therefore it is necessary to take measures to ensure that the urbanisation is efficient. It is imperative to improve the provisioning of basic infrastructure and governance in our cities so that the cities enable better living and drive economic growth and emerge as 'Engines of Economic Growth' and moreover do so in a sustainable manner. The urban centres have to become areas of intense mobility, socio-economic activity and hope for a large number of population. To transform the urban landscape in the country, the Government has recently launched the Urban Rejuvenation Mission (URM) comprising of Atal Mission for Urban Rejuvenation and Transformation (AMRUT), Smart Cities Mission and Housing for All.

The 74th Constitutional Amendment accorded constitutional status to the municipal bodies by initiating a process

of democratic decentralisation with the objective of making urban governance more responsive. In order to meet the growing aspirations and expectations of people, and to meet the challenges of urbanisation, governance in the Urban Local Bodies (ULBs) needs to become more efficient, effective, responsive, citizen friendly, transparent and accountable. Currently, many Urban Local Bodies (ULBs) do not have sufficient capacity to plan, finance and implement efficient, smart and sustainable solutions for urban problems.

In order to effectively realise the vision of urban transformation, one of the key objectives is to build sufficient capacities in the Urban Local Bodies and State Government in urban management and provide greater financial and functional autonomy to the ULBs. In this backdrop, NITI Aayog has entered into a Memorandum of Understanding with Singapore Cooperation Enterprise (SCE) to tap the expertise of Singapore in urban sector to build capacities in State Governments and ULBs to facilitate in implementation of the Urban Rejuvenation Mission.

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