



## **BRICS Urbanization Forum**

**(11-12 November 2021)**

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Under the Chairship of India, BRICS Urbanization Forum was held in virtual mode on 11-12 November 2021. The theme of the Forum was 'Harnessing Innovation to achieve Sustainable Development Goals'. This two-day event witnessed participation of senior government functionaries, think tanks, and startups associated with various sectors of urban development from Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa. The participants shared their experiences and innovations in sustainable urban development in five thematic sessions of the Forum, i.e., urban mobility, smart and sustainable cities, urban water management, spatial planning, housing and inclusion, and solid waste management.

2. The Secretary of the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs India Durga Shanker Mishra delivered the keynote address of the Forum on November 11, 2021. While welcoming the delegates, he emphasized on the importance of BRICS countries for the growth of the global economy and felt that the development experiences and the nature of challenges being faced by the Member States in urbanization are similar. He recounted various transformative urban development missions launched by India since 2014, under the leadership of our Prime Minister Narendra Modi. He emphasized on the importance of sharing experiences among the Member States to develop innovative solutions for inclusive growth in cities. The Chief Economist of the Ministry of Housing & Urban- Rural Development of China Yang Baojun narrated various urban development experiences of China including the success in developing low rental and high quality housing and the achievement of the country in transforming into a moderately prosperous nation. The Director General, Department of Cooperative Governance of South Africa Avril Williamson emphasized on the importance of transition to green economy and the role of data in promoting equity in the cities. She also shared the ongoing sustainable urbanization efforts of her country through the Integrated Urban Development Framework model. Leandro Gomes Cardoso, Deputy Head of International Affairs of the Ministry of Regional Development stressed on the importance of capacity building of stakeholders in urban development in BRICS countries. The First Deputy Minister of Construction, Housing & Utilities of Russia Alexander Lomakin underlined the need of ensuring highest standards in urban development while focussing on SDGs and felt that the digitization will play a key role in this effort.

3. The thematic session on urban mobility focused on harnessing innovation to improve urban mobility services in the Member States. The countries unanimously agreed on the need to focus on increased investment in greener transport infrastructure. Integrated, smart, sustainable mobility catering to the needs of various sections including the marginalized populations was the main emphasis of the session.



During the discussions in the thematic session on smart and sustainable cities, the participants felt that the BRICS nations are moving towards digitization of their cities to ensure equitable access to basic services by all sections of the cities. While agreeing on the importance of the frontier technologies including big data mining, block chain and cloud computing to help ameliorate delivery of quality services in the cities, they stressed on the importance of preserving the culture and tradition of heritage cities.

4. The discussions in the session on 'urban water management' underscored the importance of a holistic approach by integrating the measures of policy, legislation and financing to achieve water security and resilience in cities. The need of focusing on integrated water management encompassing water, sanitation and solid and liquid waste management was also emphasized. The Member States shared their efforts and experiences in ensuring quality and affordable housing in the thematic session on 'spatial planning, housing and inclusion'. Various policy measures enacted by the Member States including regulation of rental hiring, real estate sector and efforts to revitalize the older residential communities and slum upgradation programmes offered insights into their efforts to ensure affordable housing to all sections of the society.

5. The Member States unanimously felt that implementation of sustainable solutions across the value chain is critical to ensure success in solid waste management. The success stories shared by them provided insights into the technologies and innovations adopted by respective BRICS countries to keep their cities clean and garbage free. They also discussed the efforts being undertaken to involve various stakeholders in urban development including the community. The sessions also emphasized the importance of technology in their quest to transform the cities.

6. The BRICS Urbanization forum, 2021 concluded on November 12, 2021 with the concluding remarks of the Heads of the delegations of the Member States. India, the Chair of the Forum, proposed to create a network of Urban Local Bodies of the BRICS nations to share their experiences and learn from each other and offered capacity building programmes for Member States.

7. The Urbanization Forum played a key role in sharing innovative practices among the BRICS countries and to exchange ideas on developing public-private partnerships, creation of circular economies, achievement of carbon neutrality and to develop resilient cities. The Forum played an invaluable tool for the Member States to learn from each other's trajectory of urbanization.

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