



USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

‘Coastal cities must plan and implement risk management strategies to combat climate change and natural disasters’

Three new path-breaking reports throw light on how to deal with the impact of sea level rise and other climate parameters like rainfall and storms on the infrastructure and the well-being of people living in coastal cities

New Delhi, October 10: Coastal cities in India need to plan and implement climate risk management strategies as an integral part of city development to overcome the risks posed by climate change, natural disasters and other extreme events. These were among the findings of three reports released today at a National Conference on ‘Climate Resilient Coastal Cities’, where participants reinforced the need to generate awareness and initiate dialogue on climate change issues and climate resilience planning of coastal cities in developing countries.

The newly-released reports include Case Studies on Panaji and Visakhapatnam, and a Working Paper ‘*Planning Climate Resilient Coastal Cities: Learnings from Panaji and Visakhapatnam, India*’. The reports focus on the impact of sea level rise and other climate parameters like rainfall and storms on the infrastructure of coastal cities, as an estimated 320 million people in India today live in coastal areas. The conference was

organized by The Energy and Resources Institute (TERI) in association with the US Agency for International Development (USAID).

In his video address, **Dr R K Pachauri**, Director General, TERI, said: “India’s coastal cities are particularly vulnerable on account of sea level rise as an impact of climate change, as well as the increase in frequency and intensity of climate related extreme events which in recent years have caused substantial damage to life and property. The National Conference on ‘Climate Resilient Coastal Cities’ has focused on the growing need for creating climate resilient coastal cities and steps by which a transformation of current cities in this direction can be achieved.”

Mr Vinod C Menon, Former Member, National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA), said: “India’s coastal areas are spread over eight per cent of the geographical area in 84 districts falling within 13 states and Union territories, and accommodating an estimated population of about 320 million people (which roughly accounts to about 40 per cent of the country’s population). In the last 270 years, 21 of the 23 major cyclones with casualty figures of about 10,000 lives or more worldwide occurred mostly in India and Bangladesh, over the area surrounding the Indian subcontinent.”

“The insights from TERI’s studies on climate resilience in Visakhapatnam and Panaji will help address the threats posed by storm surges, cyclones, cloud bursts, floods, tsunami, climate change and sea level rise and other hydro-meteorological disasters in the coastal areas, as increasing trends of urbanization are putting high density clusters at risk in the newly-emerging coastal cities in the country,” Menon added.

The report makes far-reaching recommendations and steps to be undertaken in the areas of ecologically-sensitive zones, solid waste management, heritage and tourism, water supply and sewerage and drainage, and how coastal areas can adopt structural and non-structural measures to deal with the risks posed by climate change.

Mr Christopher Evans, Deputy Program Manager, CRIS Program, said: “Climate resilience is an increasingly important requirement for urban infrastructure. Cities face significant challenges in meeting the needs of

growing urban populations, and infrastructure investments being made today will last for decades. We need to make sure those investments can endure the impacts of long-term climate change to have a lasting benefit for citizens.” As part of its ‘Climate Resilient Infrastructure Services’ (CRIS) Program under the larger ‘Climate Change Resilient Development (CCRD)’ Project, USAID is supporting low-lying and coastal cities in developing countries to increase climate resilience of their infrastructural services. In India, USAID is supporting TERI under the CRIS program in helping the cities of Panaji and Visakhapatnam to plan and implement climate risk management strategies as an integral part of city development.

The conference enabled the exchange of peer knowledge and dissemination of experiences and learning from the CRIS program as part of the larger CCRD project in India and beyond, as well as to scale up and replicate such initiatives. The conference played host to top policymakers, practitioners, academicians, multilateral/bilateral organizations, stakeholders from Central and State governments, peer organizations, and networks working in the field of climate resilience and cities.

Eminent experts who spoke at the conference included **Dr A S Unnikrishnan**, Scientist, NIO and Author, IPCC, **Mr G Padmanabhan**, Emergency Analyst and Officer in Charge DM Unit, UNDP, **Dr P K Mohanty**, Professor, Department of Marine Sciences, Berhampur University and **Mr Md Sarafat Hossain Khan**, Project Director, PMU, Coastal Embankment Improvement Project-I, Bangladesh Water Development Board, Dhaka.

The speakers analyzed available knowledge on sea level rise and discussed concepts and approaches being tested and applied in various coastal cities to make them climate resilient. A panel discussion, held during the conference, focused on key drivers, including implementation, policy and governance issues in managing built and natural ecosystems in coastal cities in the wake of climate change and sea level rise. A documentary by TERI’s Film and Television Unit on the impacts of climate change on infrastructure and assets in coastal cities was also released on the occasion.

ABOUT TERI:

The Energy and Resources Institute (TERI) is an independent, not-for-profit research organization deeply committed to every aspect of energy, environment, and sustainable development. From providing environment-friendly solutions to rural energy problems, to helping shape the development of the Indian oil and gas sector; from tackling global climate change issues across many continents to enhancing forest conservation efforts among local communities; from advancing solutions to growing urban transportation and air pollution problems to promoting energy efficiency in Indian industries, the emphasis has always been on finding innovative solutions to make the world a better place to live in. All activities at TERI move from formulating local and national-level strategies to suggesting global solutions tackling critical energy and environment related issues.

Headed by Dr. R.K. Pachauri, also the chairperson of the Nobel Peace Prize winning climate change body, IPCC, TERI has emerged as an institution of excellence for its path-breaking research, and is a global brand widely respected by political leaders, policy makers, corporate entities as well as the civil society at large.

For more information, please contact:

<u>TERI</u> Zainab Naeem: 8800286575 S S Jeevan: 9717324802	<u>Ketchum Sampark Pvt Ltd.</u> Prashant Gunjan: 9650026623 Varun Chopra: 9811241427
--	---