



## Press Release

### **Plan for sustainable cities must include weaker sections of society: TERI Regional Dialogue on Coastal Cities**

**Mumbai, August 12, 2016:** The rapid pace of urbanization coupled with an ever-increasing population burden, has significantly led to an increase in the vulnerability of our coastal cities, to climate risks, such as Mumbai. In this context, **The Energy and Resources Institute (TERI)**, an independent, not-for-profit research institute, brought together multiple stakeholder groups to deliberate on the need for collaboration between public, private and non-profit sector and encourage long-term investment in sustainable and climate resilient infrastructure. The dialogue was attended by senior representatives from government organizations, think tanks and top Indian conglomerates and saw deliberations that focused on the theme, **“Building Sustainable, Climate Resilient and Smart Cities – Implications for Coastal Cities”**.

Mumbai has witnessed an increase of twelve times in population in the last century and today, it is home to 22 million people. Over the years, Mumbai has been encountering issues of increased flooding during seasonal monsoons, storm surge and saltwater intrusion. These make the city vulnerable to several risks in terms of economy and health. Some of these include infrastructural damage to high-rise buildings, crippling of transport and communication services, power outages and serious impact on the livelihoods of the coastal communities. It is also projected that by 2050, Mumbai will witness a significant increase in vector-borne diseases such as malaria, diarrhoea and leptospirosis cases.

The Dialogue today aimed to address some of the above issues and suggest certain key recommendations. It urged greater action to address existing policy gaps, mainstreaming climate resilience planning and methodologies for drainage, waste water management and urban transport, and any other steps which sectors can adopt to implement resilient, clean and green technologies.

Highlighting the sensitivity of coastal areas to human actions, **Mr. G. S. Gill, Distinguished Fellow TERI & former Managing Director, CIDCO** said that coastal cities have fragile eco-systems particularly along the marginal lands. These can be preserved as well, harnessed for common good through innovative planning and technical solutions.

**Shri Jayant Banthia, IAS, Former Chief Secretary, Government of Maharashtra** commented during his keynote address that the big question is whether the cities we’re building are sustainable. Health hazards, both water borne diseases and temperature related, are staring at us unless quick intervention is planned. Governments and corporates need to make people aware of these

challenges on one hand, and on the other, be more accountable to the public to ensure plans are properly implemented in public interest. Our implementation processes must include the weaker sections of our society.

A key session as part of the Dialogue was “Fostering Partnerships and Innovation for Smart and Resilient Urban Solutions”. It reflected on how climate change impacts increase in severity, why there is an urgent need to promote action through collaboration between the government, private sector and NGOs. While many of the partnerships invariably focus on large-scale projects, it is important for stakeholders to keep in mind the huge importance of providing services and support to the most vulnerable populations. This can be addressed by ensuring that there are provisional requirements to improve services, access and engagement of marginalized communities within the framework of a larger, resource-intensive project.

**Dr. Annapurna Vancheswaran, Sr. Director, TERI**, remarked that the high level of attendance at the regional Dialogue affirms the need for greater participation and integration of civil society with other stakeholders in planning climate resilient cities. The experience of the Dialogues at Bengaluru and Mumbai will be of enormous significance for the global discussions during WSDS in October in New Delhi.

Other eminent speakers who participated in the discussions at the Dialogue today are as follows – Ms. Rupa Naik, World Trade Centre, Mumbai; Mr. Vijay Kalantri, President of AIAI, Vice Chairman of World Trade Centre, Mumbai; Mr. Vijay Kalantri, All India Association of Industries & World Trade Centre, Mumbai; Mr. Anand Krishnamurthy, GE Water & Process Technologies; Mr. Shishir Joshi, Mumbai First; Mr. Hemanshu P. Pathak, Aamby Valley Limited; Ms. Abha Mishra, UNDP; Ms. Lubaina Rangwala, WRI; and Dr. Dhar Chakrabarti, Distinguished Fellow, TERI.

In the run-up to WSDS 2016, TERI is hosting a series of regional dialogues across the country – Bengaluru, Mumbai and Guwahati. The WSDS 2016 carries forward the legacy of Delhi Sustainable Development Summit (DSDS). WSDS 2016, themed 'Beyond 2015: People, Planet & Progress', 5-8 October, will be among the first international platforms to discuss the new development agenda post the adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) and the signing of the Paris Agreement at the 21st Conference of Parties (COP21). The attempt will be to initiate discussions on methodologies that need to be adopted to chalk a path to realize the SDGs beyond 2015.

### **About TERI**

The Energy and Resources Institute is an independent, not-for-profit research institute focused on energy, environment, and sustainable development and devoted to efficient and sustainable use of natural resources. Since its inception in 1974, 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.

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