

ASIA-PACIFIC URBAN YOUTH ASSEMBLY AT APUF-6 IN JAKARTA (APUFY)

CONCEPT NOTE

Dates: 17-18 October 2015
Venue: Shangri-La Hotel, Jakarta, Indonesia

Youth is a time of idealism. Young people are a force for transformation. These are timeless qualities. But today's younger generation has a new advantage. You have the Internet. –UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon¹

Youth citizenship and engagement in governance is about more than political engagement. It is as much about dealing with limited access to economic resources and socio-political assets. This begins with engaging youth as equal partners, recognizing their rights to participate in decision-making processes and to productively use their knowledge, perspectives, and experience. –UN-HABITAT Executive Director Joan Clos²

INTRODUCTION

As an official side event of the 6th Asia-Pacific Urban Forum (APUF-6) in Jakarta, Indonesia, the Asia-Pacific Urban Youth Assembly at APUF-6 (APUFY) provides a regional platform for Asia-Pacific's youth to articulate urban issues and solutions impacting their lives and communities. As the first gathering of diverse organizations and groups representing youth in discussions of urban agenda at the regional level, APUFY offers a step towards strengthening constructive partnership with youth as key stakeholder in issues facing Asia-Pacific cities.

¹ "UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon's Keynote Address to the Global Colloquium of University Presidents at Columbia University."

² Clos, "Preface."

By way of summary, APUFY will be:

- Held in Jakarta, October 17-18, 2015, back-to-back with APUF-6 and Asia Pacific High Level Meeting (HLM) for Habitat III, which will take place during October 19-22
- Co-organized by the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) the Asian Development Bank (ADB) and UN Major Group for Children and Youth, hosted by the Government of Indonesia, and supported by multi-stakeholder partners including youth organizations, civil society, knowledge institutions, and private sector financial sponsors
- 1.5 days of highly interactive program contents consisting of opening and closing plenary sessions, 12 parallel sessions of thematic debates on urban issues and solutions impacting the region's younger generation, optional workshops and side events, and cultural evenings
- For up to 300 youth participants from Indonesia and Asia-Pacific countries with balanced representation, and also open to APUF-6 and HLM attendees
- The first platform to strengthen youth participation and voices in urban agenda debates in Asia-Pacific at regional level, whose outcomes will link to the global Habitat III process and beyond

This document outlines the key information on the objectives, background, contents, target participants, and partners and support for the proposed APUFY.

OBJECTIVES

APUFY seeks to achieve the following objectives:

1. **To articulate priority issues and strategies for further strengthening youth participation in governance in Asia-Pacific cities**
2. **To facilitate capacity building based on a variety of successful youth leadership models and youth-led solutions for sustainable and inclusive urban development**
3. **To demonstrate youth's ability and knowledge by having a high degree of volunteer-led design, management, and participation in a diverse and innovative set of activities**
4. **To strengthen voices of Asia-Pacific youth in regional and global urban policy dialogues by linkages with APUF-6 and the Habitat-III process, and beyond**

BACKGROUND

YOUTH, CITIES, AND ASIA-PACIFIC

Young people in Asia-Pacific represent more than half of global youth population³, and increasingly dwell in cities. Around 717 million young women and men live in the Asia-Pacific region. Urbanization will continue to be Asia-Pacific's engine of economic growth and social transformation for decades to come, affecting many youth. The region is already home to the world's largest urban population. Yet with all the rapid urbanization, Asia is still the second least-urbanized region after Africa.⁴ Urbanization in Asia and the Pacific will continue rapidly, buoyed by migration and youth population rise. The latter phenomenon is known as youth bulge or demographic dividend. From spiked urbanization concentrated in megacities, Asia's urbanization is moving towards broad-based patterns. New economic opportunities will increasingly arise in numerous small- and medium-sized cities, in addition to the region's well-known megacities like Delhi, Jakarta, Karachi, Manila, and Shanghai. Asia's urban future will impact places such as Foshan, Surabaya, and Surat, impacting numerous communities and touching the lives of millions of more youth.⁵

Globally, urbanization is the engine that propels the world towards prosperity in the 21st century, and youth are the engineers. There are more people under the age of 25 today than ever, totalling nearly three billion; 1.8 billion of that total are between the age of 12 and 24. These youth live increasingly in cities and towns. The cities of the developing world account for over 90% of the world's urban growth, and youth account for a large percentage of those inhabitants. It is estimated that approximately 60% of all urban dwellers will be under the age of 18 by 2030.⁶

Youth should be empowered as stakeholders, caretakers, and leaders for Asia-Pacific's sustainable urban development. Youth can participate to enhance inclusive urban governance, ensure protection of urban environment, and lead innovative and entrepreneurial approaches in doing so. Young women and men from the region care deeply about good education and jobs. Moreover, they are keen to engage in governance processes. According to the United Nations My World Survey that collected over 7 million responses worldwide on Post-2015 development goals, youth aged 16-30 from Asia and Oceania voted for "a good education" as the highest priority.⁷ At the same time, "an honest and responsive government" came in second with over 1 million votes.⁸

³ For statistical purposes, youth as a population segment can have different definitions depending on the source of data. When the UN says "young people," it generally means women and men aged 15 to 24. UN-Habitat (Youth Fund) identifies people aged 15-32 as youth.

⁴ UN-Habitat, *The State of Asian Cities 2010/11*.

⁵ Ibid.; Dobbs, Manyika, and Woetzel, *No Ordinary Disruption*.

⁶ UN-Habitat, *Cities of Youth, Cities of Prosperity*.

⁷ United Nations, "My World Analytics."

⁸ Ibid.

While urbanization and lifestyle in cities can lead to wasteful consumption or vulnerability to social and environmental risks, including disaster and climate change, Asia-Pacific's younger generation also holds the key to steer their cities to inclusive and sustainable development paths.⁹ Urban youth face relatively high levels of unemployment and vulnerable work conditions in informal sector, particularly if they are less educated.¹⁰ The region's culture of respect for elders could also at times hold back participation of youth in formal decision making situations. But youth have brought their leadership, organization, skills and volunteerism to tackle the most difficult challenges faced by their community in cities. The recovery efforts at the tragic earthquake in Nepal have shown this most recently.¹¹

Youth engagement today is investment for tomorrow when it comes to sustainable and inclusive development. Today's younger generation in Asia-Pacific is expected to be at the forefront of aging society as middle-income countries mature rapidly in the region. Asia-Pacific's young women and men have much to offer to debates on urban challenges, opportunities and solutions.

APUF-6 AND HABITAT III PROCESS IN ASIA-PACIFIC

APUF-6 will take place in Jakarta, Indonesia, October 19-21, 2015, organized by United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) and hosted by the Government of Indonesia. The Asia-Pacific Urban Forum (APUF) is a large-scale multi-stakeholder forum organized periodically with the aim to provide a regional platform for urban actors to: (i) discuss emerging and critical urban development issues from the perspectives of diverse stakeholders, (ii) share experiences on good practices and approaches, and (iii) explore cooperation opportunities and links to regional and global processes and development objectives.

This year's APUF-6 is scheduled back-to-back with the High-Level Preparatory Meeting for Habitat III for Asia and the Pacific, which the Government of Indonesia will convene on October 22-23, 2015. With inputs from Asia-Pacific, the global conference, Habitat III, calling for "A New Urban Agenda," will then take place in 2016 as one of the first summits after the adoption of the Post-2015 development agenda. The outcomes of APUFY will thus contribute to APUF-6 and the Habitat III process, and beyond as an official side event of APUF-6.

Until this year, APUF has not focused on urban youth as stakeholder. APUFY in Jakarta will be a new model of youth participation for urban agenda in the region, building on the successful global Urban Youth Assemblies held during the World Urban Forums since 2004.¹²

⁹ United Nations, *UN Youth Report for Asia-Pacific [forthcoming]*.

¹⁰ Mathur, *Urban Poverty in Asia*.

¹¹ "Generation next."

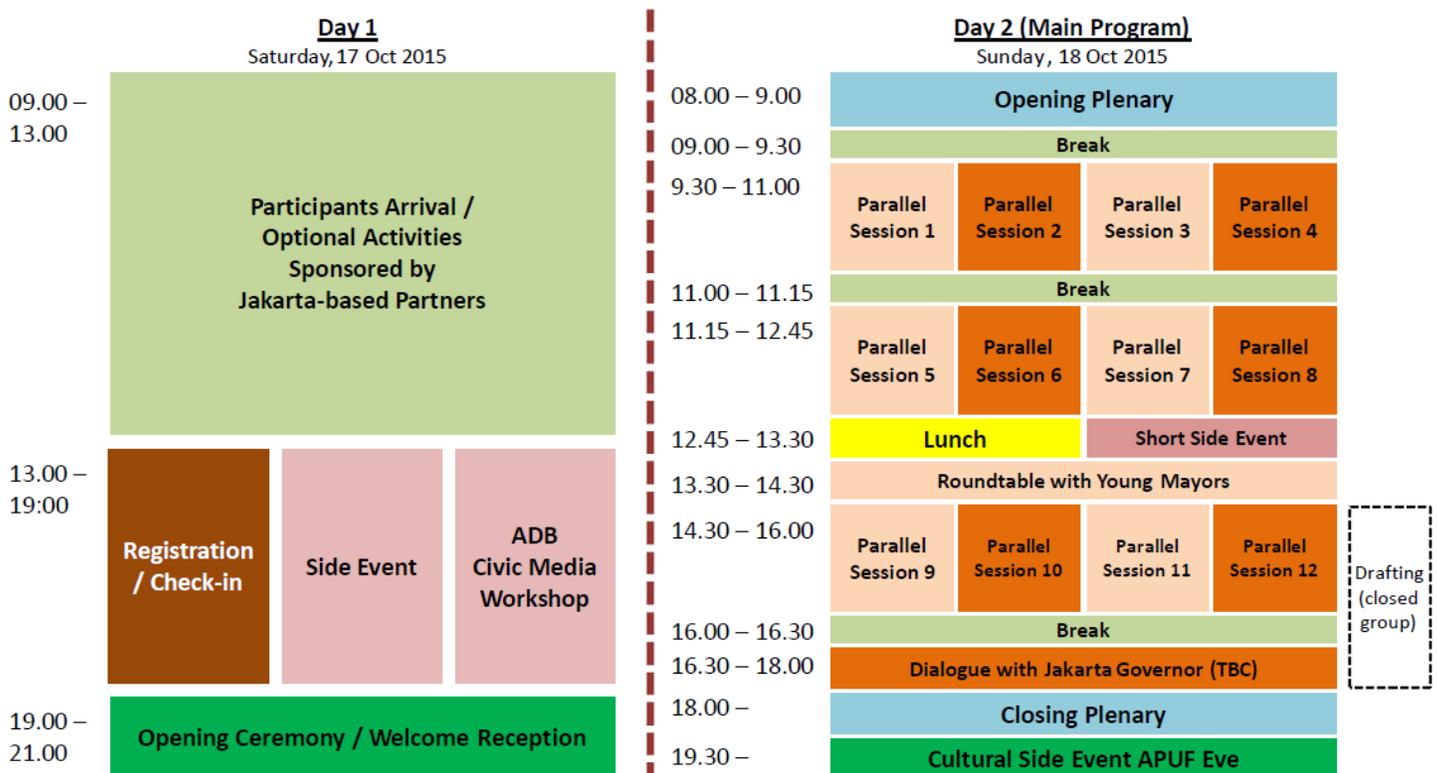
¹² The most recent example was World Urban Youth Assembly at the 7th World Urban Forum (WUF7) in Medellin, Columbia, held in April 5-11, 2014. See: <http://wuf7.unhabitat.org/Youthassembly>

PROPOSED CONTENTS

APUFY'S PROGRAMS

APUFY will offer programs designed around leadership strengthening, technical skills training and capacity building, and culture, technology and media. The program contents as a whole will address the theme of youth's potential as leaders and empowered agents of change in Asia-Pacific urban contexts. The plenary sessions will ensure that the voices of youth are expressed in clear message for a New Urban Agenda, while the other program contents will showcase the youth's key ability and role in implementing a New Urban Agenda.

The 1.5-day provisional schedule:



APUFY'S LINKAGES TO APUF-6, HABITAT III AND BEYOND

APUFY will also offer direct linkages to APUF-6, which will take place immediately following the Urban Youth Assembly. APUFY's objectives and scope mirror the main APUF-6 in representing and engaging with multi-stakeholders in the region, including sub-regional diversities and many sectors that have a stake in sustainable urban development.

APUFY's linkages to the regional and global policy dialogues will be ensured by: (i) youth participation at APUF-6 main events, (ii) a team of youth civic media reporters using social media to report on APUFY itself and APUF-6, after receiving training during APUFY, (iii) interested APUF-6 participants observing APUFY events, thus facilitating intergenerational dialogues, (iv) APUFY roundtable or panels inviting key persons attending APUF-6 such as young mayors, entrepreneurs, and urban planning professionals and researchers to exchange ideas with youth participants.

APUFY aims to strengthen Asia Pacific youth voices to the UN Habitat III-MGCY Working Group.

PARTICIPANTS, PARTNERS, AND SUPPORT

PARTICIPANTS

Participants are expected up to 300, comprising a mix of local participants from Jakarta and other Indonesia cities, and from countries in Asia and the Pacific. By relying on network of partner organizations, the organizers and their partners and supporters will work to attract a balanced participation of diverse youth groups to reflect regional, sectoral, development phase, thematic, as well as demographic representativeness of the urban youth in Asia-Pacific.

Participants are expected to commit to actions and continue engagement both with the global Habitat III process as well as in their activities in their communities, cities, and countries of origin and at Asia-Pacific regional-level, following their participation at APUFY.

ORGANIZERS

The Urban Youth Assembly in Jakarta is to be co-organized by UN-Habitat (Bangkok Office, Regional Office for Asian and the Pacific (Fukuoka), Youth Unit (Nairobi) and ADB (NGO and Civil Society Center), UN Major Group for Children and Youth (UN MGCY), hosted by the Ministry of Public Works and Housing of the Government of Indonesia, in close coordination with UN ESCAP (Sustainable Urban Development / Environment and Development Division).

UN-Habitat and ADB have worked extensively to empower youth. For example, each year UN-Habitat's Youth Fund receives applications from around 8,000 youth-led organizations that have developed projects focused on sustainable urbanization. Since its inception in 2009 as the first Fund within the UN system to support youth-led agencies, UN-Habitat Youth Fund has selected 275 groups from 63 countries and 175 cities for grants and capacity building support. UN-Habitat has found through its analysis of these groups that they are both efficient and effective in undertaking projects, while as well leading in innovation in

critical fields such as youth, ICT and governance.¹³ UN-Habitat has also successfully organized Urban Youth Assemblies held during the World Urban Forums since 2004.

ADB has facilitated leading initiatives for youth engagement in Asia, including Greater Mekong Sub-region Youth Forums, Youth Debates (jointly organized with Plan International), youth delegate participation at Annual Meetings, and many social media workshops and hackathons.

APPENDIX: REFERENCES

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¹³ UN-Habitat, "ICT, Urban Governance & Youth."