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ICLEI South Asia E-News

June 2020



Emani Kumar
 Deputy Secretary
 General, ICLEI and
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Dear readers!

We hope you are all coping well in these uncertain times. I would like to urge everyone to follow the guidelines on social distancing, sanitation and other measures to keep yourselves and your community safe. As we enter a new phase of mitigation of the pandemic, ICLEI South Asia continues to help cities to get back on their feet and to deal with impacts of climate change, biodiversity loss and waste management.

World Environment Day 2020 had a fitting theme of 'Time for Nature', and to mark the day, we organised a webinar and a photo contest on the Significance of Biodiversity Conservation in Sustainable Urban Development and Celebrating the Biodiversity of India, respectively. Both events, featured in this edition, were a huge success and saw enthusiastic public participation. The distinguished panellists at the webinar made critical suggestions for mainstreaming biodiversity, while it was a tough challenge for the eminent jury of the photo contest to decide the winners from the scores of stunning entries that celebrated India's biodiversity.

There are more updates from our projects on biodiversity and water issues, besides links to podcasts on the pandemic in this edition. I am also pleased to disclose that we are in the process of redesigning our website and will be launching it soon.

Happy reading!

Latest developments



Why Nature Matters: Photo Contest, Webinar Spotlight Biodiversity to Mark World Environment Day

The theme for this year's World Environment Day, "Time for Nature," which put the spotlight on biodiversity, was particularly relevant in the context of the ongoing COVID-19 outbreak. ICLEI South Asia organised a series of activities to mark the day, including a webinar on biodiversity conservation to draw attention to the importance of urban biodiversity and to showcase the efforts being taken by government agencies to mainstream biodiversity conservation. The

distinguished panellists at the webinar reiterated the need to mainstream biodiversity into urban planning. An online photo contest was also organised with the theme, 'Celebrating the Biodiversity of India,' as an outreach strategy to convey the significance of biodiversity. **The winning entries, presented in this edition as cover photos, are (from left) "[Predator vs Prey](#)" by Paritosh Sonawane (First Prize); "[A Secret Valley of Life](#)" by Soma Das (Second Prize); and "[Grasslands](#)" by Ajay Hiremath (Second Prize).** ICLEI South Asia also organised a quiz competition for its staff in a very interactive online session. We invite you to test your knowledge by trying our biodiversity quiz, featured below.

[Read more](#)

Pandemic Gives Us Window of Opportunity to Adopt Sustainable Adaptation Practices

Bangladesh lifted a national lockdown of more than two months on the 31st of May 2020, even though the number of coronavirus cases continues to surge in the country. Dr. Md. Munsur Rahman, Professor, Institute of Water and Flood Management, Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology, Dhaka, spoke to ICLEI South Asia about the impact of the crisis on the research work at his institute, the need for sustainable practices to tackle the pandemic and on building climate and health resilience in South Asia.



[Read more](#)



City Biodiversity Index to Help Assess Conservation Efforts in Gangtok

ICLEI South Asia has developed the City Biodiversity Index of Gangtok as part of the INTERACT-Bio project, which is supported by Germany's Federal Ministry for Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety (BMU). This is the only biodiversity index designed specifically for monitoring and evaluating biodiversity in cities.

[Read more](#)

Policy Brief Suggests Integrated Approach for Inclusive Development of Peri-Urban Areas

ICLEI South Asia, under the CDKN Knowledge Accelerator project, is developing a policy brief titled 'Peri-Urban Ecosystems - The Potential for a Planned Approach in India'. The brief, which is currently being peer-reviewed and will be finalised for release soon, highlights the complex challenges of peri-urban areas and why it is important to carefully manage the ecosystems in these areas.



[Read more](#)

New Case Studies on Climate Resilience in South Asia Showcase Best Practices



ICLEI South Asia and CDKN are launching a series of new case studies on examples of best practices in climate compatible development in South Asia. The series explores themes related to finance, climate-smart agriculture, renewable energy and empowerment of women.

[Read more](#)

IAdapt Pilots Introduce Innovative Water Management Initiatives in Solapur

Two pilot initiatives have been undertaken in a micro-catchment of Solapur city under the Integrated Rural Urban Water Management for Climate-Based Adaptations in Indian Cities (IAdapt) project. One of the initiatives has assessed the potential of roof-top rainwater harvesting for groundwater recharge at 25 Solapur Municipal Corporation buildings and a municipal school complex. The other project has helped to treat wastewater entering the Ekrukh Lake from Tale Hipparga village in Solapur.



[Read more](#)



RURBAN Meeting Commits to Continue Integrated Water Management

ICLEI South Asia, Solapur Zilla Parishad and the Solapur Municipal Corporation (SMC) organised the third RURBAN meeting under the IAdapt project in Solapur. The outcomes of the project were presented at the meeting, which was attended by rural (district) and urban stakeholders. They discussed the project achievements and the way forward for implementing the integrated catchment management plan prepared for the Ekrukh lake micro-catchment in Solapur.

[Read more](#)

Podcasts Around Pandemic: Insights from Indian States

Dr. Ramnath Sonawane, Secretary, Maharashtra Water Resource Regulatory Authority, talks about how Maharashtra has been fighting the coronavirus pandemic and the state's plans for the long haul.

<https://bit.ly/2UO3Dwe>

Mr. Shibu K. Nair, Technical Advisory Member, Health, Sanitisation and Waste Management, Thiruvananthapuram Municipal Corporation, discusses Kerala's relative success in tackling the pandemic.

<https://bit.ly/3ejnfzz>

Biodiversity Quiz

There is increasing emphasis on preserving ecosystems and biodiversity to prevent pandemics in the future. Environmental awareness is a critical part of this. We thought it was time to test our knowledge with a staff quiz and shortlisted an interesting set of questions for an interactive online session. Take the quiz at the link provided below, and learn more about nature.

[Biodiversity Quiz](#)

Upcoming events

Daring Cities 2020

In the light of the ongoing developments around the COVID-19 pandemic, ICLEI and the German city of Bonn are transforming Daring Cities 2020 into a virtual, global forum for urban leaders who are tackling the climate emergency. Daring Cities 2020 will run from the 7th to the 28th of October 2020, offering an online array of high-level and visionary speaking sessions, a series of informative workshops and personal networking opportunities.



[Read more](#)

More from ICLEI across the globe

- [Local governments should enable cities to form small, sustainable communities that nourish food, water and land](#)
- [ICLEI Innovation to select Brazilian start-ups to support sustainability in local public management](#)

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About ICLEI-Local Governments for Sustainability

ICLEI – Local Governments for Sustainability is a network of more than 1,750 local and regional governments, supported by a team of global experts, driving sustainable urban development worldwide. Active in 100+ countries, we impact over 25 percent of the global urban population.

ICLEI firmly believes that sustainable cities are the foundation of a just and sustainable world. We create systemic change in urban areas through practical, integrated solutions and spark city-to-city and city-to-region connections. ICLEI brings a strong urban component to national and global sustainability policy and translates global policy into action. Through our collective efforts, ICLEI is building a sustainable urban world to shift the trajectory of global development.

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