

Concept Note for International Symposium on Climate Change and C40 Mega Cities, April 22nd, 2015

The Prime Minister of India, Mr. Narendra Modi has called for a Saffron Revolution with a focus on renewable energy sources to meet growing demand. "I know when I say saffron, people here become alert. But saffron is a symbol of energy," he said, noting further that "we plan to build 100 smart cities." Similarly as outlined in various speeches over the last year, United States Secretary of State John Kerry has pointed out that controlling Climate Change and Greenhouse Gas Emissions requires dramatic transformations in policies and practices pertaining in particular but not restricted to sources and usage of Energy, Water and Food. It is no small wonder then that this has been highlighted as a key area of partnership between the US and India.

Cities and other urban centers have to be key geographical clusters of emphasis if such efforts are to succeed. The former Mayor of New York city, Michael Bloomberg pointed out upon his recent appointment as their special envoy on cities and climate change by the United Nations that "Cities account for more than 70 percent of global greenhouse gas emissions and two-thirds of the world's energy use today, and their total population is projected to double by 2050. So the steps they take now to combat climate change will have a major impact on the future of our planet. Cities have shown they have the capacity and the will to meet this challenge,"

This is one day Global and Local Knowledge Conference on Climate Change and the Environment will be held in three major cities of Eastern and Northeastern India: Kolkata, Patna and Gauhati. The goal of the program is to encourage the three cities to develop their own goals to address environmental/climate change concerns and hence find a place among the C40 group of cities. The C40 Cities Climate Leadership Group (C40) is a network of the world's megacities committed to addressing climate change.

Experts invited to the conference including experts from neighboring C40 cities such as Dhaka, will address world environmental issues highlighting the challenges faced by the local population in the region. It will be a one day event with a half day conference in Kolkata where the other two cities will be connected electronically. In the second half, each city will organize activities that can effectively address local issues. The primary focus of the presentations will be on current status of climate change policies including waste management, energy and water

and local governance issues affecting each of the three cities, case studies of successful policies that are being adopted by these cities and elsewhere and recommendations for future implementation.

Results from the symposium will help lead the participating cities into the league of the C40 Climate Leadership Group.