

## Experts Urge Rethinking of India's Urban Strategy

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New Delhi, Delhi, IND, 2008-06-11 15:13:25 (IndiaPRwire.com)

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Urbanisation in India is slowly but surely emerging as a significant trend challenging the classic perception of an India of villages. **30 % of the Indian populace lives in urban areas and contribute to over 90 % of the GDP. Over the last fifty years, while the country's population has grown by 2.5 times, in the urban areas it has grown by 5 times.**

Kiran Karnik, President, India Habitat Centre laid down the agenda of Urban Habitat's Forum and discussed the implication of urbanization in India. 'I feel very passionately about how cities are today and what they can be tomorrow. I hope that Urban Habitats Forum serves as a platform that can make our cities more liveable and also play a larger role in shaping India's emerging urban centres thus India's future.' said Mr.Karnik.

Sanjeev Sanyal, Regional Chief Economist, Deutsche Bank and founder Urban Habitats Forum emphasized on the soft aspects of urbanisation. 'I think great cities are about human interactions and clusters. So the critical need is to create urban spaces where people can interact and lead a good life. Successful urban planning is therefore about organically integrating the hard and soft infrastructure. There cannot be a 'mechanical' approach but one that explicitly thinks of the city as an evolving eco-system.' he said.

Philipp Rode, Executive Director, Urban Age; Associate, Cities Programme, **London School of Economics & Political Science** spoke on 'Shaping Cities of Our Future'. He revealed the findings of the Urban Age India Conference held in Mumbai last year and released the Urban Age India Report. 'India's urban agenda is clearly a global issue given that India is the second most populous country in the world. Indian cities are faced with issues of social equity, of overloaded infrastructure and environmental sustainability. The way these cities will deal with these problems and how the upcoming cities will be planned can have a decisive impact on the world at large.' said Mr.Rode

Anupam Yog Founder & Managing Director of Mirabilis Advisory who anchored the discussion concluded that building successful cities which drive economic growth while reducing poverty will be critical to the future of India.

Historically India has been averse to the phenomenon of urbanization. The current response towards urbanization is also marked by short-term and quick-fix solutions. But, there is a critical need to develop innovative ideas for future cities with a long term view. The symposium attempted to better understand the opportunities and challenges that existed in shaping that vision and implementing it.

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### **About Urban Habitats Forum**

'Urban Habitats Forum' is a public private partnership between India Habitat Centre and Mirabilis Advisory. It provides a collaborative platform for a network of multidisciplinary thinkers and change-makers to push for innovation in shaping the next generation of cities in India. UHF aspires to influence by creating a platform for intelligent discourse through a variety of events, pioneering research along with result-driven advocacy.

### **About India Habitat Centre**

The India Habitat Centre was conceived to provide a physical environment which would serve as a catalyst for a synergetic relationship between individuals and institutions working in diverse habitat related areas and therefore, maximise their total effectiveness.

### **About Mirabilis Advisory**

Mirabilis Advisory is a strategic consulting firm that facilitates global exchange between cities, regions and countries by building partnerships across the public and private sectors. Mirabilis' patrons are institutional brands that include city and regional governments, public-private partnerships, cultural and academic institutions, chambers of commerce, foundations and global event-owners.

### **About Urban Age Project:**

Urban Age project, a worldwide investigation into the future of cities was jointly initiated by Deutsche Bank's Alfred Herrhausen Society and the London School of Economics and Political Science. Urban Age is structured around an international outreach program supporting the creation of a new urban agenda for global cities. Its worldwide interdisciplinary network of urban experts lead an 'on the ground' investigation of policies, developments and projects with up-to-date insights collected and shared through conferences, workshops, seminars and publications.

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