

EVENT REPORT

“Stakeholder Consultation on the Hill City Regions Planning Initiative (HCRPI) for Sustainable Urban Development in the Indian Himalayan Region”

- Organised by: NITI Aayog in collaboration with the North Eastern Council (NEC), Ministry of Development of North Eastern Region (MDoNER)
- Date: 13th July, 2026
- Venue: NEC Auditorium, North Eastern Council Secretariat, Nongrim Hills, Shillong



1. Background:

The North Eastern Council (NEC), under the Ministry of Development of North Eastern Region (MDoNER), in collaboration with NITI Aayog, organised a Stakeholder Consultation on the Hill City Regions Planning Initiative (HCRPI) on 13 July 2026 at the NEC Auditorium, Shillong. The consultation was convened to develop a comprehensive, climate-resilient and terrain-sensitive planning framework for sustainable urban development across the Indian Himalayan Region (IHR).

The initiative recognised the unique challenges faced by hill cities, including rapid urbanisation, fragile ecosystems, difficult terrain, increasing climate vulnerabilities and distinctive socio-cultural landscapes. The consultation aimed to gather valuable inputs from States and Union Territories of the Indian Himalayan Region for preparing a practical planning framework suited to the specific needs of hill regions.

2. Objectives

The consultation was organised with the following objectives:

- To deliberate on sustainable urban planning approaches for hill city regions.
- To seek inputs from States and Union Territories on regional planning priorities.
- To identify challenges and opportunities relating to hill urbanisation.
- To discuss ecological carrying capacity, climate resilience and sustainable infrastructure.
- To identify potential pilot regions and prepare a collaborative roadmap for implementation.

3. Inaugural Session

The programme commenced with a Welcome Address by Ms. Anna Roy, Programme Director (Managing Urbanization), NITI Aayog, who highlighted the vision and objectives of the Hill City Regions Planning Initiative.



This was followed by a Special Address by Shri Satinder Kumar Bhalla, Secretary, North Eastern Council, who emphasised the importance of collaborative planning to ensure environmentally sustainable and economically inclusive development across the Indian Himalayan Region.



4. Technical Sessions

The consultation featured a series of expert presentations covering various aspects of sustainable hill city planning:

- Ms. Anna Roy, Programme Director, NITI Aayog, presented the background and objectives of the HCRPI.
- Shri Jagan Shah, Urban Expert, shared national and international best practices in hill city planning.



- Shri Tikender Singh, Former Deputy Mayor, Shimla deliberated on governance, policy frameworks, spatial planning and the political economy of the Himalayas.



- Prof. Arup Kumar Sarma, IIT Guwahati, presented technical insights on ecological carrying capacity assessment for hill cities.



- Shri Snehit Prakash, BORDA Asia, discussed urban service delivery challenges and infrastructure gaps in the Indian Himalayan Region.



5. Stakeholder Deliberations

Representatives from participating States, Union Territories, Central Ministries, academic institutions and expert organisations actively participated in the discussions. The stakeholders shared their experiences, challenges and recommendations relating to:

- Sustainable urban planning in hill regions.
- Climate adaptation and disaster resilience.
- Infrastructure development.
- Ecological conservation.
- Governance and financing mechanisms.
- Identification of pilot regions for implementation.

An interactive discussion and question-and-answer session facilitated knowledge sharing and exchange of ideas among policymakers, experts and participating institutions.



Pic: Sri Som Kamei, Planning Adviser, NEC



Pic: Delegate from Sikkim



Pic: Delegate from Nagaland



Pic: Delegate from Arunachal Pradesh



Pic: Delegate from Mizoram



Pic: Delegate from Uttarakhand



Pic: Delegate from Himachal Pradesh



Pic: Delegate from Tripura



Pic: Delegate from Meghalaya



Pic: Delegates from Assam



Pic: Delegates from Manipur



Pic: Senior Officials of NEC

6. Key Outcomes

The consultation achieved the following outcomes:

- Collection of valuable stakeholder inputs for preparation of the Hill City Regions Planning Framework.
- Identification of priority interventions for sustainable hill urbanisation.
- Enhanced collaboration among Central Ministries, State Governments, experts and academic institutions.
- Consensus on the need for climate-resilient, environmentally sustainable and economically inclusive planning approaches.
- Identification of future collaborative actions for implementation of the proposed framework.

7. Way Forward

The programme concluded with a dedicated "Way Forward" session outlining the next steps for finalisation of the Hill City Regions Planning Framework. The recommendations received during the consultation will be incorporated into the framework, which will serve as a guiding document for sustainable urban development across the Indian Himalayan Region.

The North Eastern Council reaffirmed its commitment to supporting innovative planning initiatives that promote balanced regional development while preserving the fragile ecology, rich biodiversity and unique cultural heritage of the North Eastern Region and the wider Indian Himalayan Region.

8. Conclusion

The Stakeholder Consultation successfully brought together senior officials, technical experts, academic institutions and representatives from States and Union Territories to deliberate on sustainable urban development in hill regions. The programme provided an important platform for collaborative policy dialogue and is expected to significantly contribute towards developing a robust planning framework for resilient and sustainable hill city regions in the Indian Himalayan Region.
