

Opening remarks	Graduation Ceremony Mayors Academy (Class of 2020-2021)	Tuesday, 22/06/21 8:30-9:30am (EAT/Nairobi) Zoom meeting
----------------------------	--	---

Warm greetings to all, from Nairobi, Kenya!

My dear Mayors Academy organizing partners,

- Dr. Armida Salsiah Alisjahbana, Executive Secretary of UNESCAP
- Dr. Bernadia Tjandradewi of UCLG ASPAC
- Prof. Yamaguchi of the United Nations University, Institute for the Advanced Study of Sustainability (UNU - IAS)
- Dr. Tremewan of Association of Pacific Rim Universities (APRU); and
- Mr. Takahashi of Institute for Global Environmental Strategies (IGES)

Honourable Mayors, it is my great pleasure to join with you today, and **offer my congratulations on your achievement!**

Looking back at my time as the Mayor of Penang in Malaysia, I am sure balancing both professional development, and the never-ending challenges of managing your city, **is no easy task**. Now that cities need inspiring leaders, **let me commend you**, on your commitment, to serving your cities **against all possible odds**, presented by the pandemic.

I am informed by my team, that **close to 50 hours of modules** were undertaken over the past 6 months. Adding the coursework involved and preparation required, your personal time dedicated has often been many times

greater.

Through the Mayors Academy, I sincerely hope that you have found **renewed purpose and a sense of support**, hearing from the experiences of other fellow mayors and advice offered from the Advisory Board and network of professors and practitioners. I recall fondly, such similar networking and training opportunities, that have helped to **shape my outlook even until today**.

Collectively as humanity, we face one of our biggest threats in the form of climate change, in what has been described in 2021, as a **“make or break year”** by the UN Secretary-General, in confronting the global climate emergency. Increasingly, cities are committing to concrete and verifiable climate action that will reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 45% by 2030 from 2010 levels, and to net zero by 2050.

We need to start the Green, Resilient and Just recovery now. Through your personal leadership and direct actions at the city level, let me urge you to join forces with over 1,000 city leaders, scientists, researchers, innovators, academics, youth and business people, expected to converge at our **Innovate4Cities Conference in October 2021**, organized by UN-Habitat and the Global Covenant of Mayors for Climate and Energy (GCoM).

In addition, as the pandemic has already delayed the implementation of SDGs and New Urban Agenda, let me stress again the importance of Voluntary Local Reviews, as a way to accelerating the implementation at local and community levels. UN-Habitat together with many partners such as ESCAP and UCLG, are ready to support your cities.

Furthermore, as champions for sustainable urban development in the Asia-Pacific region, I look forward to hearing from you and your projects, advancing the voice of local governments at the 11th **World Urban Forum (WUF11)** to be held in Katowice, Poland in 2022.

In sharing my remarks, I would also like to offer my **deepest condolences** to Puttulam Urban Council colleagues, grieving for the loss of late **Chairman Abdul Baiz Kamardeen**. Mayor Kamardeen was a great source of inspiration for his community and the country of Sri Lanka, as well as a friend and colleague to many in our cohort this year.

Together we will remember his heartfelt smile and outstanding devotion, with which we will hold unto ourselves, as a standard in carrying forth our own endeavours.

Once again, let me offer to all of you as Honourable Mayors, my warmest congratulations in graduating from this Asia-Pacific Mayors Academy for Sustainable Urban Development and wish for you **continued courage and blessings** in all your work!

Thank you.

Prepared by	Edited by	Status	Version	Word Count	Estimated Time (125 words/min)
Tam Hoang	Atsushi Koresawa, Bernhard Barth; Neil; Runze	Finalized	Mon 21 June 19:36	586	4 mins 30 secs