

# FORUM FOR A BETTER HYDERABAD

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(Regd.339/03)

## & Civil Society Organisations

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Date: 19th November 2018

Place: Hyderabad

To  
All political parties contesting in Telangana Legislative Assembly Elections, 2018

### HYDERABAD GREEN MANIFESTO

**Respected Sir/Madam,**

With the next Telangana Legislative Assembly Elections scheduled to take place in December 2018, the civil society of Hyderabad has collaboratively prepared a Green Manifesto to serve as policy guidelines for the different political parties contesting to represent the state of Telangana. The Green Manifesto addresses a plethora of subjects, which are listed below. It is requested that the parties in question include, in their manifesto, policies on the following issues:

Climate Change is a planetary emergency that poses an existential threat to life. Under these circumstances, a state-wide strategy must be developed, along with investments in low-carbon technology and ambitious emission reduction targets. The state must also develop a comprehensive climate-friendly energy policy that prioritises renewable energy such as solar and wind energy and transitions away from conventional sources of energy such as coal.

With the objective of providing clean drinking water to all, efforts must be made to improve the quality of water in surface water bodies, increase groundwater levels and prevent discharge of untreated sewage and industrial effluents. Flood management systems must be put in place and rainwater harvesting must be made mandatory.

Air pollution has serious health implications, which must be countered by an overhaul of industrial and vehicular emission regulations, along with improvements to the public transportation system, thereby reducing dependence on private vehicles. Noise pollution must be similarly controlled through proper traffic management.

A comprehensive waste policy must be developed to manage Municipal Solid Waste generated in the city, which is likely to bring benefits across a wide spectrum of activities such as reducing greenhouse gas emissions by reducing landfill waste and cleaner waterways. Moreover, there must be a focus on limiting waste generation in order to reduce costs of waste management.

Biodiversity loss is an enormous challenge in the state of Telangana. Policies are required to increase the forest cover in the state and protect existing forests of native tress and improve green cover in Hyderabad and other urban areas to tackle air pollution. In addition, built heritage and Deccani Rock formations must also be notified and protected.

With the urban population rapidly expanding, provisions must be made to accommodate the urban poor and eliminate slums. Additionally, an integrated Master Plan must be developed through a regional survey for the regulation of land-use.

When the party comes to power, the Government should invite and involve the civil society and experts in the various fields before implementing their policy decisions on the above issues. We enclose a detailed note.

Thanking you,  
Yours sincerely,

**(M.VEDAKUMAR)**

Chairman, Forum For A Better Hyderabad

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### **Associated Organisations:**

\* APNAWATAN \* COVA \* CHATRI \* APSA \* CONCERNED CITIZENS \* CHETANA SOCIETY \* CITIZENS' FOR BETTER PUBLIC TRANSPORT \* CHILDREN'S EDUCATION ACADEMY (CEA) \* CHELIMI FOUNDATION \* DECCAN DEVELOPMENT SOCIETY \* IAAB, Hyd \* THE RIGHT TO WALK FOUNDATION \* GAMANA \* HYDERABAD ACTION GROUP \* HELP \* INTACH, HYDERABAD CHAPTER \* HUMAN WELFARE FOUNDATION \* INSTITUTE OF ENGINEERS, A.P. \* DECCAN ACADEMY \* JANA VIGNANA VEDIKA \* MOVEMENT AGAINST URANIUM PROJECT (MAUP) \* MMTS TRAVELLERS GROUP \* FORUM FOR A SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT \* PLANETARY SOCIETY OF INDIA \* SAVE ROCKS SOCIETY \* TARNAKA RESIDENTIAL WELFARE ASSOCIATION \* TURAGA FOUNDATION \* UMANAGAR RESIDENT'S WELFARE ASSOCIATION \* UNITED FORUM FOR RTI CAMPAIGN \* DECCAN COMMUNITY COLLEGE \* FORUM FOR A BETTER VISHAKA \* M.V.FOUNDATION \* NAPM \* UNITED FEDERATION OF RESIDENTIAL WELFARE ASSOCIATIONS (U-FERWAS) \* BIRD WATCHERS' SOCIETY \* SOUL (Save Our Urban Lakes) \* SAVE LAKES SOCIETY, Hyd \* ITMC (Its Time to Make a Change) \* APEC GROUP \* HERITAGE WATCH \* V.K.DHAGE NAGAR WELFARE SOCIETY, Hyd \* SAAKSHI (NGO) \* SPEQL \* DECCAN LAND

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Date: 19<sup>th</sup> November 2018

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### **Hyderabad Green Manifesto:**

**To all political parties contesting in Telangana Legislative Assembly Elections, 2018**

#### **Climate Change**

Climate Change has ushered in a new planetary emergency that has serious implications for the future of humanity. A recent IPCC report has given us a mere 12-year period to make a radical shift from business-as-usual. The disruption that climate change currently brings to Telangana includes hotter summers, changing rainfall patterns, intense weather events, more frequent serious droughts, crop failure and climate migration. The environmental and economic costs are becoming increasingly apparent, with major social and public health implications. Under these circumstances, we demand that political parties clearly spell out their policies on dealing with climate change, adopt climate resilience and adaptation measures and make Telangana a pioneer of climate resilience development.

#### **Energy + Renewable Energy**

While the state has proposed a steady increase in its renewable energy capabilities, it is imperative to increase investment in the sector and manage demand more sensibly. We demand a comprehensive climate-friendly energy policy for the state of Telangana to be developed and followed scrupulously, without deviation for short-time gains or proprietary interests. In light of the threat of climate change, political parties have to formulate a policy on the use of fossil fuels, especially coal and other conventional sources of energy.

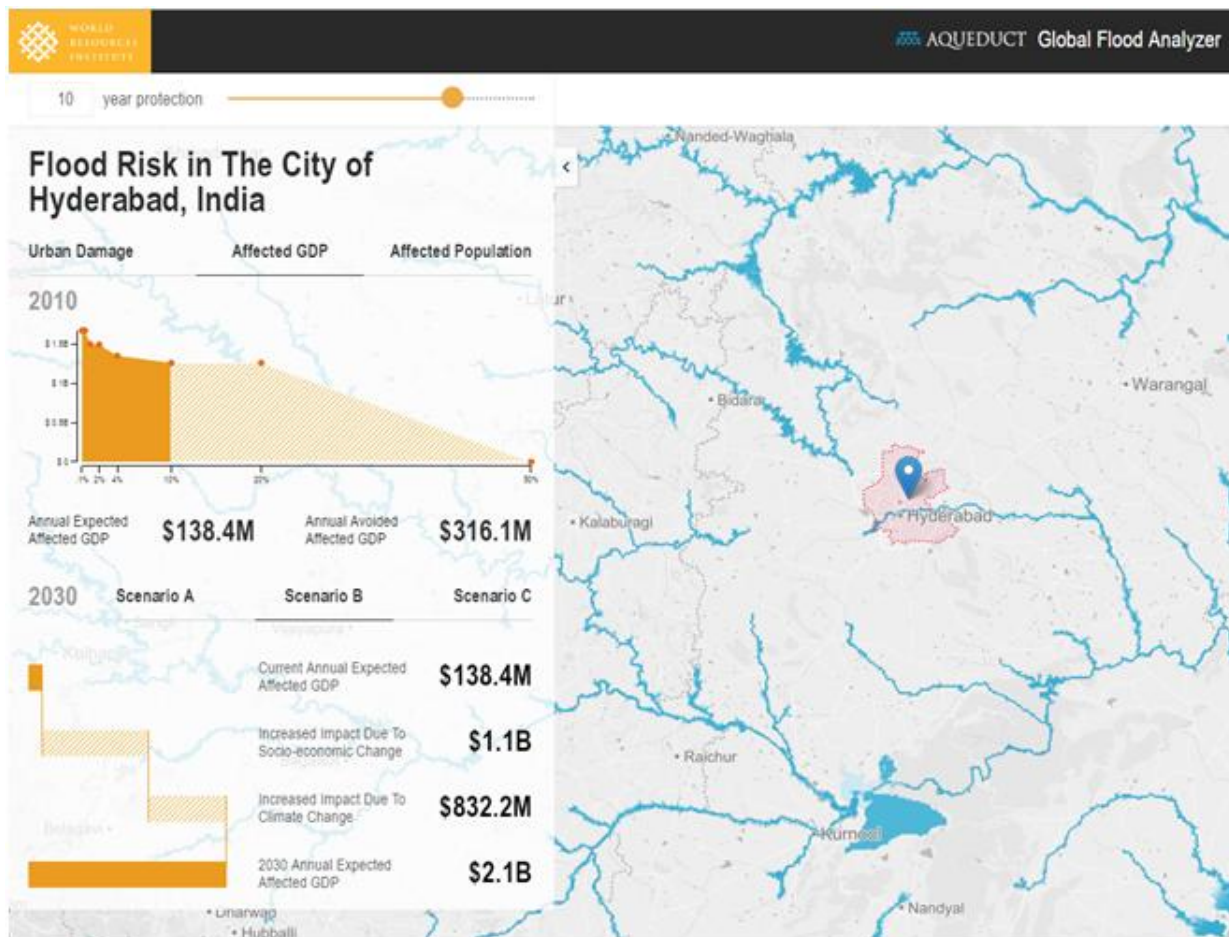
We also expect them to transition to renewable energy by promoting rooftop solar power and net metering in urban areas to reduce the demand from conventional power stations. The state of Telangana is endowed with plenty of sunlight and it must be fully utilized to combat climate change.

#### **Water Resources**

Water is an essential resource for human survival. However, we are entering a period of water insecurity all across the world. Due to climate change, the availability of water in rivers and rainfall patterns are undergoing major changes. In fact, more than half of the entire country is going to face extremely high water stress in the coming years. In view of this, meeting the water needs of a large city such as Hyderabad, with a population of approximately 1 crore, is a major task needing long-term planning. We also need to preserve water bodies in the metropolitan area like Durgam Cheruvu, Hussain Sagar, Osman Sagar, Himayat Sagar and Fox Sagar etc, which have been providing water to

the Golkonda region for more than 4 centuries. Encroachment of water bodies must also be addressed. Moreover, periodic and thorough quality analysis of drinking water available to different residential and commercial localities should be conducted. Drinking water must also be made available to all residents including in slum-dwellings, to ensure equity.

Every monsoon, Hyderabad is flooded even with as little rainfall as 2 cm/day, which is leading to severe traffic congestion, inconvenience to citizens and a Rs. 2000 crore loss to the annual GDP. To eliminate this problem, a city-wide plan of collecting storm water and effectively utilizing it is required. Flood management systems in flood-prone low-lying areas must be improved by increasing drainage capacity and disaster management teams must be on vigil.



Presently, the city's sewage meets the Musi River through various nalas. The capacity of the currently installed Sewage Treatment Plants (STPs) is highly inadequate for proper disposal of this sewage and is leading to severe contamination of ground water and crops grown downstream from Musi. Consumption of this food and water is adding to the spread of diseases. Therefore, immediate action is necessary to properly treat the sewage as per appropriate surface water standards before discharge. Residential apartments and commercial establishments must also have wastewater treatment facilities on-site to facilitate reuse of treated water and reduce burden on existing treatment plants.

Additionally, water bodies in the city are severely contaminated because of indiscriminate and improper disposal of industrial waste water. Therefore, a plan should be developed to take necessary action in this regard, with a mandate for industries to install effluent treatment plants.

Everywhere, groundwater levels are depleted due to extensive extraction for the purposes of irrigation, industrial and domestic use. In Hyderabad, the scarcity of groundwater has reached a crisis point. Rainwater harvesting should be implemented mandatorily, keeping in view the region-specific geology and site-specific conditions. Standardisation based on available evidence is also required. WALTA Act must be implemented with all sincerity to protect groundwater.

## **Water Pollution**

The water and sewage networks of the state are arguably its most important common utility assets, intended to serve its residents in perpetuity. However, water pollution has become all pervasive, leaving no water body, stream or river with clean water. This can be attributed to the heavy use of chemical fertilizers and pesticides in agriculture, the discharge of municipal sewage and industrial waste water into water bodies and use of chemicals for personal hygiene, etc. With the city experiencing severe water shortages, urgent action is essential to preserve water quality, through adequate measures to eliminate the release of pollutants into water bodies.

## **Noise pollution**

While noise pollution was earlier limited to industrial centres, today, it has spread even to residential areas. Vehicular traffic is resulting in continuous exposure to high decibel noise. Social and religious activities also add to this problem through the generation of unregulated noise, especially during night hours when the noise levels should be maintained below 45 decibels.

## **Air Pollution**

Air pollution levels in towns and cities have become a health hazard. The latest WHO report states that 11 out of 12 of the most polluted cities in the world are in India. Industrial and vehicular air pollution is increasing rapidly due to the weakening of regulations to improve ease of doing business. Increasing carbon pollution is also worsening the quality of air. A major overhaul of industrial and vehicular emission regulations is imperative for a reduction in air pollution levels.

## **Transportation**

While the newly inaugurated Hyderabad Metro Rail Project has provided some relief to the city's traffic concerns, there are still several factors contributing to the deterioration of the transport system of metropolitan Hyderabad. Presently, it is inadequate to meet the civic needs of the city and is adding to severe air and noise pollution. An exponential increase of vehicles on the road is also causing traffic

congestion. Addressing these concerns is not simply crucial from the standpoint of traffic management, but also to tackle the emissions resulting from heavy vehicular traffic. Emphasis should be placed on adequately planning public transport services like TSRTC, MMTS, Bus Rapid Transit System (BRTS) etc, to reduce the number of vehicles on the road at any time. Areas, routes and parking facilities must also be identified for mini buses, shuttles and auto rickshaws to operate as feeder services between various road and rail transport stations. Cycling must be encouraged by providing safe cycle lanes and all public roads must be made free of standing structural obstructions, even if they are of a religious nature.

## **Right to walk**

Life has become miserable for pedestrians in urban areas, especially in cities like Hyderabad. A negligible amount of taxpayers' money goes towards the provision of basic safety measures to pedestrians. People are unable to walk on roads due to the lack of demarcated areas for safe movement such as footpaths and road crossings. This highly unjust negligence must be put to an end.

## **Municipal Solid Waste**

Waste is a significant issue for the state of Telangana. A lack of supporting action has constrained effective implementation of policy to address waste issues effectively. Waste is essentially a byproduct of production and consumption systems and a loss of resources. A concerted social movement is necessary to reduce and eliminate waste, without which the scourge of waste cannot be solved. Segregation of municipal waste must be implemented to reduce the burden on current disposal methods such as land filling. Composting of organic and biodegradable waste should be done closer to the source. Landfill disposal must follow strict standards to protect groundwater and soil quality. In addition, the informal e-waste recycling sector must be formalised and restructured by the provision of technical and financial assistance to the sector, establishment of state registry and proper implementation of Extended Producer Responsibility.

## **Biodiversity and Forest Cover**

Biodiversity loss is an enormous challenge in the state of Telangana. Despite major legislative successes such as the Telangana State Biological Diversity Rules, 2015, biodiversity, including the human population, continues to face an existential threat. As per recently published research, 60% of the world's biodiversity has been lost since 1970. Forest cover in Telangana has come down to 24.35% and in the districts of Hyderabad and Ranga Reddy, forests cover 9.48% of the total area, a mere fraction of the national mandate of 33.33 %. We need policies to increase the forest cover in Telangana, with concerted efforts necessary to improve green cover in Hyderabad and other urban districts to reduce air pollution levels and improve groundwater recharge. Agricultural biodiversity needs to be preserved by the promotion of traditional crop patterns, such as the cultivation of millets

that require less water consumption and chemical use. Rural forest clusters neighbouring Hyderabad city must also be protected from diversion and misuse.

## **Built and Natural Heritage and Deccani Rock Formations**

Hyderabad's built and natural heritage must be protected to preserve the city's unique character and distinguish it as a 'global city'. Natural Deccani rock formations should be notified and their destruction should be penalised. Unchecked construction and associated rock blasting must be prohibited to protect rock formations across the city.

## **Housing**

With the rapid migration of people to cities in Telangana leading to 40% of the total population living in urban areas, there is no plan to properly accommodate the poor and disadvantaged sections of society. There must be a provision to house the urban poor by demarcating adequate land to eliminate slums and depraved living conditions. People in existing slums should be accommodated in the proximity of their workplaces to protect their source of livelihoods.

## **Master Plan**

Hyderabad has grown exponentially over the years and has become rather unsustainable in terms of the services needed to support it. The city requires thorough planning with citizen involvement to be able to sustain the current population of approximately 10 million. Moreover, further growth is undesirable as the city has already exceeded its carrying capacity. At a low growth rate of 2% per annum, the city's population could double in 35 years and become unmanageable in terms of civic amenities such as water supply and waste disposal. The existing Master Plans are incomplete and inadequate for the challenges of the future. An integrated Hyderabad Metropolitan Region (HMR) master plan must be prepared through discussions with stakeholders and comprehensive regional surveys. This must be done to clearly designate residential, commercial and industrial areas, open spaces and conservation zones for the regulation of land use and to avoid the dangers of unregulated growth and worsening living conditions in the city.

Thanking you,

**(M.VEDAKUMAR)**

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