

## **PRESS STATEMENT**

**3 FEBRUARY 2016, NEW DELHI**

The Government of India has just released a list of 20 cities that have been selected for the first round under the Smart Cities Mission. The New Delhi Municipal Council (NDMC) finds a place in this list.

As members of the Delhi Housing Rights Task Force – a collective of individuals and organizations concerned with, and working to protect and promote the human right to adequate housing in Delhi and across India – we wish to mark our concern on the process and implementation of the Smart Cities Mission in the capital city, New Delhi.

The Smart Cities Mission outlines two main tenets. The first is a *challenge mode of functioning* where proposals from within states will compete to be selected in order to foster innovation. The second is a *commitment to transparency and citizen participation*, detailed in the Office Memorandum issued by the Ministry of Urban Development (**No.K.14012/101(28)/2015-SC-III-A**), dated 23 September 2015. Yet in the capital city, the actual process on the ground differs from mandatory requirements for both these tenets.

The National Capital Territory of Delhi (NCT) has five municipal bodies: Municipal Corporations of North, South and East Delhi; the New Delhi Municipal Council (NDMC); and the Delhi Cantonment Board. To our knowledge, only one proposal has been considered, from NDMC. We note that:

- **No other proposals seem to have been considered** from NCT. This represents a significant lost opportunity to seek central support in areas that reflect the pressing needs of the city. No information exists in the public domain explaining why no other proposals were developed.
- **No adequate citizen consultation**, as laid out in the Smart Cities Mission, was carried out on the proposal that was submitted in our names as citizens of Delhi. We note particularly:
  - The submitted proposal for consideration **is still not available on any public website** – of NDMC, NCT or Government of India – for citizens to read and provide comments and feedback.

- While claims have been made of consultative meetings in different areas, including in JJ clusters and informal settlements, investigations by members of the Delhi Housing Rights Task Force in about 30 informal settlements in the NDMC area **could not find a single locality where such a consultation had taken place.** No one had seen or heard of the NDMC Smart City proposal.
- Given that NDMC is one of the richest municipalities in Delhi and given that other areas in Delhi face serious problems of poverty, housing shortage, homelessness, inadequate living conditions, and the absence of basic services, including water, sanitation, and regular electricity supply, both NDMC and the centre need to explain the selection of NDMC over other parts of Delhi under the Smart Cities Mission.

***We submit that the absence of adequate and inclusive citizen participation in the NDMC's submission, as well as the absence of submissions from other municipal bodies in NCT, compromise both the challenge and transparency commitments of the Smart Cities Mission.***

We have raised this issue on previous occasions, to no avail. In light of the announcement of the list of 20 selected cities, we demand that:

- All proposals, submissions and documents made on behalf of the NDMC as part of the selection process under the Smart Cities Mission be made public and open to scrutiny;
- The entire process of submission of NDMC's proposal under the Smart Cities Mission, to the exclusion of other municipal bodies within the NCT, be made public;
- The implementation of the Smart Cities Mission in NDMC be kept in abeyance till the resolution of the issues highlighted above.

Delhi Housing Rights Task Force  
New Delhi, 3 February 2016