



PRESS RELEASE 2

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“THE DELHI NULLAHS PROJECT: FORGING A CITIZEN-LED URBAN LEGACY FOR COMMONWEALTH GAMES”

1st HABITAT SUMMIT SHOWCASES ‘URBAN REGENERATION’ POSSIBILITIES

The 1st Habitat Summit will move beyond fostering dialogue to drive the creation of an alternative urban vision for India. The Summit will showcase **tangible, feasible urban regeneration projects** that will help transform the megacity of Delhi to enhance its liveability, sustainability, and competitiveness. One such project is the *Delhi Nullahs Project*. The project aims to transform Delhi’s system of drains (nullahs) into a usable transportation and recreational network.

Delhi’s unplanned and overwhelming urbanisation over the last few decades has driven into decay the city’s vast system of nullahs which once served as carriers of storm-water into the Yamuna River. The most visible consequence of this is the recent chaos witnessed on Delhi’s roads after just a couple of hours of heavy rains. The deteriorating nullahs network, which consists of 18 main drains and approximately 15,000 subsidiary drains, also presents other challenges of public health risks, environmental degradation and water and air pollution.

CONNECTING THE CITY WITHIN

An organisation that sees vast potential in the Delhi nullahs is Morphogenesis, one of India’s leading architectural firms. Morphogenesis has initiated the *Delhi Nullahs Project* (www.delhinullahs.org) to build support for a large scale restoration of the entire Nullah system in Delhi. The *Delhi Nullahs Project* is based on the premise that Delhi’s neglected wastewater system can be transformed to bring about a sustainable change, not only in Delhi’s water management system, but also in its transport sector. This project aims to clean up the nullah system using decentralized in-site wastewater treatment facilities, which would allow for the re-



use of treated water rather than discarding it into the Yamuna. Additionally, it proposes landscaping of the nullahs' embankments with native vegetation and walking/bicycle tracks to enable groundwater recharge, rainwater harvesting, and give rise to an extensive pedestrian-accessible urban network across the entire city, providing "last mile" connectivity to many communities of Delhi. If implemented city-wide, this project has the potential to address some of the major negative externalities of Delhi's urbanisation such as water scarcity, water pollution, groundwater depletion, congestion, air pollution and public health hazards.

URBAN REGENERATION: A CITIZEN LED GAMES LEGACY

Complementing the Government's initiatives to fast-track key infrastructure projects, UHF is facilitating a citizen-led games legacy that aims to catalyse urban transformation in the capital city. Mega events like the Commonwealth Games and the Olympics have been leveraged by cities world over to lead urban renewal. The CWG is an excellent opportunity to re-configure the urban form of Delhi in a sustainable manner, and projects like the revitalization of Nullahs from their current state of delinquency to a network of greenways across the city are an important initiative to achieve this. So far, preparations for the Games have been limited to development of hard infrastructure, and there is a perceptible gap in "urban regeneration and renewal". Note the recent success of the Beijing Games which facilitated the urban regeneration of the "Forbidden City".

As Delhi prepares for the 2010 CWG, Urban Habitats Forum and its partners are working towards the creation of a citizen-led 'Games Legacy' that will make the Games memorable for Delhi citizens. The regeneration of the Delhi Nullahs is a key project embodying this effort. A 3-dimensional installation, conceived by Morphogenesis, depicting the project and its potential will be on view from August 25th 2009 through till September 25th 2009.



The 1st Habitat Summit is a natural platform from which to launch this project, as it will offer expert thinkers, architects, and planners the opportunity to engage with policymakers and public administrators in forging a coalition to carry the project forward.

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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. (www.indiahabitat.org)

Mirabilis Advisory is an international economic development consultancy that works in the area of globalization, urbanisation, sustainability and entrepreneurship.

Urban Habitats Forum is a public awareness platform established by Mirabilis Advisory in partnership with India Habitat Centre, and designed as a collaborative network of multidisciplinary thinkers and change-makers to push for innovation in shaping the next generation of cities in India. The forum aims to mobilise action through intelligent discourse, impactful research and result-driven advocacy.