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## **Yangon Heritage Trust won an Award on Outstanding Contribution**

**YANGON:** Yangon Heritage Trust received the “Global Human Settlement Award on Outstanding Contribution” award of “Sustainable Cities and Human Settlements Awards 2018 (SCAHS 2018)”, at The Sustainable Cities and Human Settlements Award 2018 Ceremony, organized by Global Forum for Human Settlements (GFHS) today in Bangkok, Thailand.

The Appraisal Committee indicated that the outstanding contributions of Yangon Heritage Trust are showed in the following aspects: a) great efforts and committed to maintain the unique built environment and cultural heritage of Yangon; b) engaged with all relevant stakeholders to work together on the heritage protection and focused on the best approach on connecting preservation to urban planning; c) great achievements made by a strong team who overcame a series of challenges and will continuously make efforts for a better and more livable Yangon, and among others.

“Sustainable Cities and Human Settlements Awards” is an annual worldwide prize, started in 2005. The Sustainable Cities and Human Settlements Award 2018 Ceremony will be held as a highlight of Annual Session of Global Forum on Human Settlements (GFHS 2018), which will take place on 30-31 October 2018 in Bangkok, Thailand.

The forum focuses on United Nations Sustainable Development Goals 11 (SDG 11) in which is to make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable. The forum discusses many issues facing global cities that range from transport accessibility, affordable housing to job creation and equitable access to work opportunities.

In localizing the SDG 11, central theme of discussions was good governance that listens and responds to local citizens and infrastructure that serves multiple purposes for various stakeholders. Shared responsibility is a topic widely discussed for public space, disaster preparedness and urban amenities for the wellbeing of citizens. Data-driven policies are also fundamental in carrying out the work that meets the needs of local residents: housing, transportation, job opportunities. For example, Santa Monica, California has well-being index that harness the power of data to provide a shared understanding of communities’ strengths and needs, to encourage collaboration among city leaders and residents to improve collective well-being.

Many experts also urge to conserve the characters of different cities and acknowledge the challenges that urban centers face. An expert explicitly warned about over standardization in

China where many cities lose their characters because of its uniform development policies. Cities should avoid building concrete boxes that replace and erase history and cultural heritage. Any new development must look for shared prosperity but not to strain the existing communities. A unanimous agreement is that heritage buildings and characters are what make each city unique and they will continue to generate economic values through job creation, innovation and tourism.

Global warming and climate change will impact many vulnerable communities and cities must prepare to face disasters and allocate resources to the most needed population. Coastal cities with frequent storms must build houses that can withstand winds at historic levels. To make cities sustainable and resilient, governments, civil society organizations, community organizations and stakeholders, must all work together to identify challenges, create consensus for efficient and effective solutions that are beneficial to the people.