

FOREWORD

Emerald islands more popularly known as Andaman and Nicobar Islands on the eastern side of India has a history dating back to 2nd century A.D., as a land of primitive tribes. The islands played a major role during the colonial periods of Indian history. What started as a penal settlement before India's independence, these islands witnessed urbanization with tribes, islanders, patriots and settlers from the mainland. The earliest and fastest growing settlement in these islands PORT BLAIR, named after the British Colonel, serves as the catalyst for the growth of the islands. Port Blair with a population of 99,984 (as of 2001) and extending over an area of 17.74 sq.km., has exhibited signs of haphazard development along with problems of urbanization. The emergence of Port Blair and the surrounding islands as a tourist spot, coupled with all issues and challenges of the ecologically fragile environment throws many challenges for future development.

Several planning efforts had been undertaken in the past in guiding the future development. The Outline Development Plan for Port Blair prepared by the Town and Country Planning Organisation, New Delhi in 1994, State Development Report prepared by National Institute of Public Finance and Policy in 2004, Andaman Islands Coastal Area Assessment Report by Equations, Ecological Sensitive Architecture Report by Expert Committee constituted by Ministry of Urban Development, Government of India, and Sustainable Development of Tsunami Affected Areas Report by School of Planning and Architecture, New Delhi have all studied the problems and potentials of the ANI and Port Blair. They have brought out the issues confronting the development and have suggested several recommendations.

Realizing the complexity and interrelationships of the issues concerning development, and the need to have an integrated approach towards sustainable urban development, the Town Planning Unit of the Andaman Public Works Department (APWD) has taken the lead in preparation of a Master Plan for Port Blair and its environs under Section 6, Chapter III of the Andaman and Nicobar Islands Town and Country Planning Regulations 1994. The School of Architecture and Planning, Anna University Chennai was entrusted with the task in the year 2006.

To evolve a most appropriate physical development strategy with the aim of developing Port Blair and its environs into a self sustaining entity, the consultancy team studied the development issues, their causes and consequences. The conceptual proposals were presented to the Coordination (Integration) Committee and the Advisory Council during May 2007, which were widely accepted. Thereafter, detailed field investigations were carried out and sectoral analysis were made in order to detail the conceptual proposals. To translate these into realities, an effective zoning and land use plan is conceived with appropriate development regulations. These were also presented to the Coordination (Integration) Committee and the Advisory Council in April 2008. The suggestions of the committee have been incorporated in this report and the same is submitted for inviting objections and suggestions from any person and to every local authority to make representations or suggestions as per Section 7 (1) and (2) of Chapter III of Andaman and Nicobar Islands (Municipal) Regulations 1994. After duly considering all objections, suggestions and representations received the final Master Plan will be prepared and submitted to the Administrator of ANI.

It is hoped that the proposals envisaged as part of this draft report which is presented in two volumes (volume I containing the study part and the volume II containing the development proposals) would meet the aspirations of the people and enable Port Blair to achieve sustainable growth taking into account, the fragile ecology of the region.