

# Keshav Varma

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## Leadership In Urban Development

**Sector Director** of East Asia Urban Development and Disaster Management and **Head of Global Urban Programs** for capacity building, knowledge, leadership, innovation and training

Between 1997 and 2013, Mr. Varma positioned the World Bank as a global leader in the Urban and Infrastructure agendas, built a robust and diversified US\$1 billion/year lending program, and led the tsunami reconstruction work in Aceh and the Bank's responses to the Sichuan earthquake and the Myanmar cyclone. He also led the World Bank's support to the Government of China in the formulation of their Urban and Disaster Risk Management policies and led and supported multi-billion dollar projects in major cities of East Asia.

**Municipal Commissioner** of Ahmedabad, India

In a city of over six million, Mr. Varma is credited with rejuvenating the organization with a much enhanced public image, high staff morale, and a well-defined strategic approach. During his tenure, he was able to elevate Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation from being bankrupt to an AA (SO) credit rating, and issued the "Ahmedabad City Bond", the first municipal bond issued in South Asia without central or state government guarantees. The framework for credit rating of cities evolved and was established during this time.

Mr. Varma is part of important think tanks in urban policy and well networked with important universities such as Harvard, MIT, Duke where he teaches urban practice. He is also the Founding President of the International City Managers Association of India.

## Leadership in Conservation

**Founding Director** - Global Tiger Initiative (GTI), World bank

Based on his track record, entrepreneurship, and passion for balancing the needs of conservation and development, Mr. Varma conceived and mobilized a broad coalition of partners for the Global Tiger Initiative, which quickly became a special program stimulating a partnership of 13 tiger range countries and international partners on the conservation of wild tigers. He directed the international process that resulted in November 2010 in the unique and historic St. Petersburg Tiger Summit of heads of government hosted by Prime Minister Putin and chaired by the World Bank President.

Mr. Varma's main focus has been to change the conversation about conservation and introduce innovative ideas in the field of biodiversity and conservation. He has worked to create convergence and alignment among the strategies and needs of governments, business and communities through the development of Wildlife Business Councils (WBC) such as the Indian Wildlife Business Council.

**Senior International Advisor** - Global Snow Leopard And Ecosystems Protection (GSLEP) Program

In 2013, Mr. Varma broadened the scope of GTI, to offer advisory services to the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic for an initiative for conservation and protection of the Snow Leopard launched by President of Kyrgyz Republic and involving 12 range countries. He has been appointed as the senior international advisor to the GSLEP program ever since.

Mr. Varma guided and coordinated the formulation and development of projects with the World Bank, GEF and other IFIs, raising over US\$225 million for implementing the incremental demands under the GTRP. He is now escorting the process of effective implementation of the projects to ensure impact in the front lines of tiger and snow leopard conservation.