

UN-HABITAT IN ASIA & THE PACIFIC



Issue #4 | 1 January 2026

LEADERSHIP MESSAGE **Anacláudia Rossbach, Under-Secretary General and Executive Director of UN-Habitat**



Happy New Year to all,

The year ahead offers an important moment for reflection – and for renewed commitment to action.

Throughout 2025, we laid the groundwork for a stronger focus on housing, land, and basic services, anticipating the launch of UN-Habitat's Strategic Plan for 2026–2029. This plan will guide our work in advancing sustainable urban development globally, in line with SDG 11 and the New Urban Agenda (NUA).

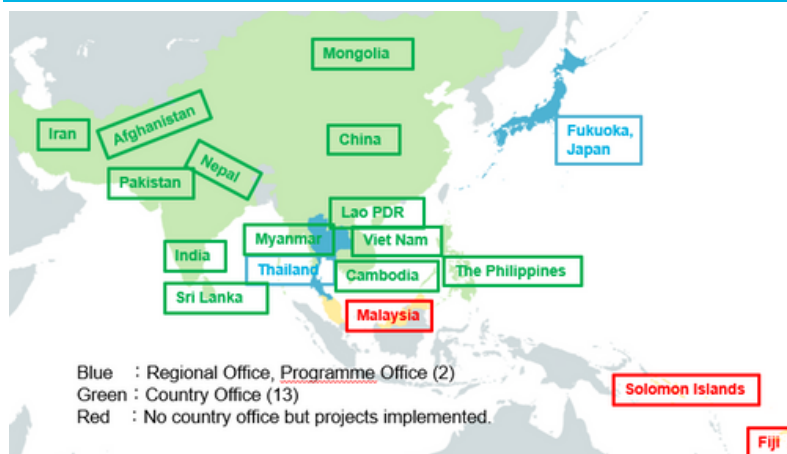
The year 2026 also marks the mid-term of the implementation of NUA, as well as the global review of progress on SDG 11. The UN General Assembly will also convene a High-Level Meeting on the New Urban Agenda from 16 to 17 July 2026. This is a moment to take stock of what has been achieved, but more importantly, to accelerate action in the decade ahead – towards the full implementation of NUA and the 2030 timeline of the Sustainable Development Goals.

I look forward to engaging with many of you at the thirteenth session of the World Urban Forum in Baku, Azerbaijan, from 17 to 22 May 2026 on the theme "Housing the world: Safe and resilient cities and communities." I also anticipate further opportunities throughout the year to visit the Asia-Pacific region, observe its dynamic urban transformations, and engage with partners on pathways towards adequate housing for all and sustainable urban development.

REGIONAL OFFICE FOR ASIA AND THE PACIFIC



Presence in 15 countries



Message from Regional Director

Kazuko Ishigaki

Happy New Year to all!

Thank you very much for your support in 2025.

This year we need to move forward the implementation of new Strategic Plan 2026-2029. Asia-Pacific region has many challenges such as expanding slums/informal settlements, frequent disasters, and classic urban problems such as traffic congestions and pollutions. However, the region also has many opportunities such as economic development, accelerating digital transformation, and enhanced awareness for climate change.

We will engage more partners in the path toward the World Urban Forum in May, and strengthen our capacity to support people, city and countries in Asia Pacific Region.

I appreciate your continued strong support in 2026.

We appreciate support from the following countries/organizations

Adaptation Fund Board/ ASEAN/ ATOM Myanmar Ltd./ Beijing Chaoyang Environment Group Co. Ltd/ Beijing Future Science City Management Committee/ Botnar Foundation/ C Team/ CDHT/ CDRI/ China Centre for Urban Development, Government of China/ China/ Citizens Net for UN-Habitat Fukuoka (CNHF)/ Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ)/ Dinghai District/ District Collectorate, Jaipur, Government of Odisha/ FCDO/ GCF/ IDF/ IFENG.com/ India/ IRAF/ ISoftStone Smart Technology Company Ltd. (ISSTECH)/ Japan/ Japan Habitat Association (JHA)/ JICA/ KOICA/ Luxembourg/ Nanjing Planning and Natural Resources Bureau/ Norwegian Retailer's Environment Fund (NREF)/ Malaysia/ Netherlands/ Raikela Iron Ore Mines, M/S Geetarani Mohanty/ Republic of Korea/ Shenzhen Institute of Building Research Co., Ltd/ Shuangjing Sub-district of Chaoyang District, Beijing/ TMF/ UK-PACT/ UNDP/ UN Peace and Development Trust Fund/ UNOPS/ USAID/ Wanxiang/ Weihai Municipality/ WLSP/ WPD/ Xinchao Media/ Xuzhou Housing and Urban & Rural Construction Bureau/ Xuzhou Urban Planning Bureau

Projects in Asia and the Pacific



India - Engaging youth for transforming the Public Places



Donor: Fondation Botnar

Under the **Young Gamechangers Initiative (YGI)** project, UN-Habitat is committed to promoting the health and wellbeing of Jatni youth and communities by actively engaging them in urban governance, digital upskilling, and co-design of inclusive public spaces. Together with the municipality and recruited Young Gamechangers, 20 public spaces have been spatially analyzed; over 300 community members have been consulted and interviewed using Kobo Toolbox and Inhabit Place; comprehensive Minecraft models and pitch videos have been co-designed to refine site Masterplans with architecture experts; and a youth-led participatory budgeting campaign was organized with involvement of over 2000 residents to identify urgent upgrades for 2 prioritized public spaces.

"Working side by side with architects showed me the power of thoughtful design to shape entire communities. It has inspired me to study urban planning, so that I can help create healthier, more inclusive spaces for everyone."

- Rupali Nayak, 21 years old, Jatni Young Gamechanger

Cambodia - Building Resilience in Coastal Informal Settlements

Since 2021, UN-Habitat and the National Council for Sustainable Development, Cambodia, have been implementing the project **"Climate Change Adaptation through Small-scale and Protective Infrastructure Interventions in Coastal Settlements of Cambodia"** with financial support from the Adaptation Fund. The project strengthened climate resilience and adaptation in the most vulnerable coastal settlements in Kep and Preah Sihanouk Provinces. The project rehabilitated small-scale infrastructure, such as drainage systems, water gates, early warning system, and resilient houses, as well as capacity building activities. On 28 October 2025, the project celebrated the achievements and shared experiences and lessons learned with 90 representatives of national/ sub-national officials, Development Partners, and communities.



Donor: Adaptation Fund

"I have been selling fruits at Veal Renh Market for more than 20 years and have suffered from flooding up to my knees during heavy rain. It forced me to relocate the selling location and affected the sales. However, we didn't experience any flooding in the market this year because of the rehabilitated drainage system."

- Ms. Prom Tha, seller at the Veal Renh Market

Afghanistan - Improving Living Environment in Poor Urban Areas



Donor: Government of Japan

The Project for the Improvement of Living Environment for Vulnerable People in Urban Areas, funded by the Government of Japan through the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), was launched in October 2024 and will run until October 2027.

The project supports vulnerable communities in Kabul and Herat by rehabilitating and upgrading essential community infrastructure—including health centres, water supply systems, and roads—while also providing livelihood support through Cash-for-Work opportunities and vocational training programmes. The project aims to reach over 100,000 people across the Health, WASH, and Livelihood sectors, contributing to safer, healthier, and more resilient urban communities.

For the first time in months, my family had enough food to eat without borrowing money from neighbours. Now, I feel an overwhelming sense of relief and happiness. I proudly brought home flour, rice, stationery, and clothes for my children. That work and the salary I received gave me hope, dignity, and a renewed belief that hard work still has value.

- Jan Mohammad, a person with disabilities and a Cash-for-Work participant in Kabul

Voices from Country Offices

Philippines

The Philippines has ranked number 1 in the World Risk Index for the fourth straight year since 2022 with climate change among the main factors of vulnerability. With more than 50% of its population living in urban areas, the country faces a need of more than 6 million houses for its growing population.

Since 2003, UN-Habitat has worked directly with national government and over 60 local governments and communities across the country in localizing global development goals with focus on slum improvement, housing recovery and reconstruction in post-disaster and post-conflict contexts, urban planning and design, urban policy, climate action and environmental sustainability particularly marine plastic reduction.



UN-Habitat Philippines Team Photo

Nepal

UN-Habitat Nepal, established in 2007, works in four priority areas: Disaster and Climate Resilience; Land Reform and Management; Water, Sanitation and Hygiene; and Localizing Inclusive Urban Planning.

Through policy support, capacity building, advocacy and demonstration projects, UN-Habitat Nepal supports translating national policies and priorities into local action—strengthening land and housing rights, expanding city-wide inclusive sanitation, mainstreaming gender-responsive planning, and building resilience through local and innovative climate actions. Guided by evidence and in collaboration with the government, academia, development partners, and civil society, UN-Habitat Nepal takes people-centered approach to empower communities, ensure urban poor, women, youth, persons with disability and landless households realize safe, inclusive and sustainable development.



UN-Habitat Nepal Team Photo

Regional and Country Events

Date	Location	Event
28-30 January 2026	Fukuoka Japan	UN-Habitat Asia-Pacific Strategic Meeting of Head of Country Offices
29 January 2026	Fukuoka Japan	The 4th Networking Seminar of Fukuoka Platform for Sustainable Cities in Asia the Pacific (Fukuoka – SUSCAP)
24-27 February 2026	Bangkok Thailand	The 13 th Asia-Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development (APFSD)
16-19 March 2026	Savannakhet Lao PDR	Official Handover of Citywide Water Supply Systems

The Science Council of Japan Forum on DRR in Megacities (9 December 2025) and the Asian Conference on Disaster Reduction 2025 (17 December 2025)

Ms. Ishigaki stressed the importance of collaboration between urban and DRR experts in both Asia-Pacific Forums.



High-level events in Shanghai & Chongqing, China 25-30 October 2025

UN-Habitat Regional Director Ms. Ishigaki joined high-level events in Shanghai (SDG Cities Global Conference 2025) and Chongqing (2025 World Cities Day China Observance), reinforcing collaboration between UN-Habitat, the Ministry of Housing and Urban-Rural Development of China (MoHURD), and local governments to accelerate progress on the 2030 Agenda and the New Urban Agenda.



Executive Board of UN-Habitat in Nairobi, Kenya 25-26 November 2025

In the agenda item “Normative and operational activities of UN-Habitat” in the Executive Board meeting, Ms. Ishigaki introduced projects in the Philippines where UN-Habitat has implemented a wide range of activities, from hard to soft, including post-disaster rehabilitation of housing, solid waste management and marine plastic pollution reduction, and SDGs review at various levels, such as the state, city, and community levels.



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Voices from Japan Team - Actions with Japan

Partnership



On 14-16 October 2025, UN-Habitat co-hosted the International Mayors Forum in collaboration with the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA) and Toyota City. During the forum, UN-Habitat ROAP organized a session under the theme "Safe and Resilient Housing, Cities, and Communities" to chart a path toward the upcoming World Urban Forum (WUF13) scheduled for May 2026 in Baku, Azerbaijan.

Partnership



UN-Habitat ROAP organized the third Networking Seminar of the Platform for Sustainable Cities in Asia and the Pacific (SUSCAP) in Fukuoka on 18 December 2025, in collaboration with the Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism on the 8th Spatial Planning Platform Meeting and with JICA Kyushu on South Asia Co-Creation Networking Session. More than 180 persons attended in-person and online.

Townscape



The 16th Asian Townscape Award Ceremony and Symposium were held on 27 November 2025 in Hong Kong, attended by academic experts from Fukuoka, China and Korea. This year's award recognized 11 projects from 6 countries across Asia, including from UN-Habitat partner cities and projects from Bangladesh, India, Jordan and Philippines.

Smart City



UN-Habitat participated in the 14th Asia Smart City Conference (ASCC) held in Yokohama, Japan from 25-26 November 2025. The conference focused on accelerating the shift to an eco-friendly, circular society under the theme "Towards a Circular Society: Promoting the Circular Economy, Carbon Neutrality, and GREEN×EXPO 2027." 59 cities from 18 different countries in Asia and Netherlands as well as 9 international organizations including ADB, World Bank, UNDP, UNESCAP and UN-Habitat attended the event.

Waste Management



A Japan-funded emergency rehabilitation project applying the Fukuoka Method is being carried out in Kampala, Uganda, under the technical guidance of the NPO SWAN-Fukuoka. In December 2025, UN-Habitat team welcomed Ambassador Sasayama of the Embassy of Japan in Uganda and Minister Kabanda of the Ministry of Kampala Capital City and Metropolitan Affairs (KCCMA) to the project site.

Youth



UN-Habitat ROAP and the Executive Committee for WHD 2025 in Fukuoka organized the 24th WHD Children's Drawing Contest with the theme My "Home" and My "City." There are 594 applications from 9 countries in Asia and the Pacific Region. On 5-8 December 2025, ROAP conducted a drawing exhibition and held an award ceremony for the winners in Japan.