

March 2026

Evaluation Report on the 6th MOU between UN-Habitat ROAP and Partners in Fukuoka

Introduction

This report presents a comprehensive evaluation of the activities of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific (hereafter UN-Habitat ROAP) during the 6th Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) period (1 July 2022 – 30 June 2027, this report covers activities up to February 2026). It reviews the activities of UN-Habitat ROAP in both the Asia-Pacific region and Japan. The evaluation committee, composed of external experts, reviewed these activities from an objective and constructive perspective at two meetings held on 19 February and 12 March 2026 and summarized the results in this report.

We hope this report will serve as a useful reference for all stakeholders.

1. UN-Habitat Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific

(1) Overview of UN-Habitat

The United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) is a United Nations agency established in 1978 in Nairobi, Kenya, to address urban sustainable development, human settlements, and housing issues. It operates globally across four regions, Asia and the Pacific, Africa, the Arab States, and Latin America and Caribbean, implementing projects aligned with regional contexts.

UN-Habitat plays a key role within the United Nations system in promoting and monitoring SDG11 “Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable.” Recognizing that urban development is primarily the responsibility of local governments, UN-Habitat also promotes the SDGs localization, supporting their implementation at the municipal level.

Under the leadership of Executive Director Ms. Anaclaudia Rossbach, who assumed office in August 2024, UN-Habitat is implementing its Strategic Plan 2026–2029, approved by Member States in June 2025. While urban challenges are diverse, the plan places strategic focus on ensuring access to adequate housing, land, and basic services for all, with particular emphasis on the urgent upgrading of informal settlements and slums.

Through this strategic focus, UN-Habitat aims to contribute to three impact areas: poverty reduction, response to humanitarian crises (including post-disaster recovery), and climate and environmental action.

UN-Habitat also actively conducts advocacy activities. Globally, it provides policy guidance through participation in high-level international meetings such as the G7 Urban Ministers' Meeting, the Asia-Pacific Urban Forum, and the Conference of the Parties (COP). Since October 2025, it has also convened “Open-ended Intergovernmental Expert Working Group on Adequate Housing for All (OEWG-H)”, the only UN meeting dedicated specifically to housing issues.

The World Urban Forum (WUF), convened by UN-Habitat, is one of the world's largest global conferences on sustainable urbanization. The most recent session was held in November 2024 in Cairo, Egypt, with approximately 25,000 participants from 182 countries. Participants from Japan included the Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism (MLIT), the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), and Ms. Yuriko Koike, Governor of Tokyo. From Fukuoka, where UN-Habitat ROAP is located, Mr. Soichiro Takashima, Mayor of Fukuoka City, as well as Mr. Katsuji Kohara, then Chair of the Fukuoka Prefectural Assembly, and other members of the Assembly, including Mr. Isao Kurauchi, President-elect of the World Veterinary Association, participated. The next forum is scheduled to take place in May 2026 in Baku, Azerbaijan.

(2) Overview and Roles of UN-Habitat ROAP

UN-Habitat ROAP serves as the regional office overseeing activities in 42 countries. It operates offices in 15 countries and implements a total of 71 projects across 19 countries and areas (as of the end of 2025), with approximately 300 personnel engaged in these activities. It also serves as the country office in Japan.

UN-Habitat ROAP has four main roles. First, it serves as a regional strategic hub, responsible for formulating and implementing strategies across Asia and the Pacific, including strengthening internal governance and human resource development of the region. Second, it functions as a knowledge hub, sharing and disseminating expertise in areas such as waste management and climate change adaptation. Third, it strengthens coordination with headquarters and other regions and promotes interregional cooperation, including with Africa, the Arab States, and Latin America. Fourth, it promotes collaboration with other UN agencies and other organizations, supporting integrated project implementation through cooperation with UN Country Teams and other UN agencies in specialized areas.

Through these roles, UN-Habitat ROAP serves as a regional hub for sustainable urban development, knowledge-sharing, and capacity development in Asia and the Pacific.

(3) Major Activities of UN-Habitat ROAP

a) Activities in Asia and the Pacific

UN-Habitat ROAP implements a wide range of projects across the region, including post-disaster and post-conflict recovery, housing reconstruction, and climate-resilient urban development. The key principle and approach are the “People’s Process,” which places people and communities at the center of decision-making and action, supporting locally driven development.

In the disaster-prone Asia and the Pacific region, UN-Habitat ROAP implements inclusive and gender-responsive projects that promote “Build Back Better” reconstruction, ensure consideration of vulnerable and marginalized groups including women and provide capacity building for local residents, as well as livelihood support through creating employment opportunities. In addition, the projects incorporate local construction materials and methods to support development that can be sustained at the community level. A particular strength of UN-Habitat ROAP is its ability to engage closely with communities through national staff, including female staff in country offices, who are able to reach deeply into communities and carefully listen to local needs and perspectives.

(b) Activities in Fukuoka and Japan

i. Cooperation with national ministries

UN-Habitat ROAP contributes to the promotion of sustainable urban development and technology transfer through collaboration with ministries of the Government of Japan. In cooperation with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA), it has organized the “Expert Group Meeting on Environment Friendly Technologies (EGM)” since 2009, facilitating matching of environmental technologies of Japanese companies with cities and countries in Asia and the Pacific, and supporting the formulation of pilot projects in the region. While the conference was held mainly online over the past five years due to COVID-19, it has produced concrete outcomes, such as pilot projects using permeable recycled brick paving materials and the use of solar lanterns in Nepal. In 2025, the EGM was held in Nagoya City for the first time outside Kyushu. Some of the technologies introduced have further been upscaled and replicated in other cities and beyond Asia region.

In addition, through the “SUBARU Initiative”, launched in cooperation with the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry (METI) in 2022, it has contributed to expanding opportunities for small and medium-sized enterprises and building partnerships.

Cooperation with the Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism (MLIT), the line ministry for UN-Habitat ROAP, has also been strengthened. In collaboration with its National Spatial Planning and Regional Policy Bureau, the Spatial Planning Platform (SPP) Meeting has been held annually since FY2018 to share Japan’s spatial planning and policy expertise with countries in Asia and the Pacific. With its City Bureau, cooperation has been strengthened in areas such as transit-oriented development (TOD) and the use of digital technologies through G7 Urban Ministers’ Meeting and the World Urban Forum. ROAP’s participation in the International Horticultural Expo 2027 (GREEN×EXPO 2027) in Yokohama is also being considered.

Furthermore, in cooperation with the Ministry of the Environment (MOE), waste management method, called “Fukuoka Method”, is being promoted. In collaboration with Fukuoka city and NPO Solid Waste Management Adviser’s Network Fukuoka (SWAN Fukuoka), this method is being expanded not only in Asia but also in Africa. The Fukuoka Method has attracted strong interest from Asia and other regions and represents an important asset for UN-Habitat ROAP.

ii. Cooperation with local governments

Cooperation with Fukuoka Prefecture and Fukuoka City continues to be actively promoted. With Fukuoka Prefecture, the “International Human Resource Development Programme” has been implemented annually since 2013 for university students, graduate students, and young professionals, including field visits to UN-Habitat project sites and exchanges and learning opportunities in Asia- Pacific region. In the field of One Health, an MoU was signed with the Federation of Asian Veterinary Associations (FAVA) One Health Fukuoka Office (hereafter FOF) in August 2025, and cooperation has been strengthened since, including the participation of the Head of the UN-Habitat Lao PDR Office in the 6th One Health International Forum in Fukuoka in February 2026.

With Fukuoka City, UN-Habitat ROAP has co-organized the Asia-Pacific Cities Summit when held in the city since 2018 to strengthen regional city-to-city networks. In addition, in cooperation with the Fukuoka Asian Urban Research Center (URC), the Asian City Townscape Award has been organized annually since 2010, recognizing and promoting urban development good practices in cities in Japan and abroad.

Over the past five years, collaboration has steadily expanded to other prefectures in Kyushu. The Asia-Pacific Cities Summit in 2024 was held in Kagoshima City, expanding opportunities for regional cooperation with Asian partners. With Saga Prefecture, which plans to establish the World Ocean Plastic Planning Center in 2026, practical cooperation has progressed, including mutual participation in seminars.

In addition, UN-Habitat ROAP staff has participated in Oita Prefecture's Global Leader Development Programme for high school students since FY2024, and high school students from Nagasaki Prefecture have been attending lectures in Fukuoka annually since FY2023, contributing to learning opportunities across Kyushu regions. Cooperation with Okinawa Prefecture has also been expanded through exchanges of opinions under the platform described below.

Cooperation has also expanded beyond Kyushu. With Tokyo Metropolitan Government, cooperation has been strengthened through the participation of Governor Ms. Yuriko Koike in the WUF held in Cairo in November 2024. With Yokohama City, cooperation has progressed through initiatives in waste management under the African Clean Cities Platform (ACCP) and holding a seminar at Kanagawa University in August 2025 during the visit of the Executive Director. Further collaboration is expected for the GREEN×EXPO 2027 and the Asia-Pacific Urban Forum.

In addition, Shizuoka City, as the first SDGs Local Hub in Asia, plays a leading role in promoting and disseminating SDGs localization and collaborates with UN-Habitat in this field. With Toyota City, UN-Habitat co-organized the "2025 International Mayors Forum" in October 2025 together with the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA). Collaboration with UN-Habitat ROAP is expanding across Japan.

iii. Support from the National Diet and local assemblies

Support has been provided by the Parliamentarian's League on UN-Habitat, the members of which have expanded over this period. In particular, under the leadership of H.E. Mr. Makoto Oniki, the Chair of the League since August 2022, meetings were held during visits to Japan by senior UN-Habitat officials, including Mr. Erfan Ali, then Chief of Staff in August 2024 and Executive Director Ms. Anaclaudia Rosbach in August 2025. In the same month in 2025, a delegation of members of the House of Representatives, led by H.E. Mr. Koichiro Genba, then Vice-Speaker, visited UN-Habitat headquarters in Nairobi and exchanged views with the Executive Director, further deepening mutual understanding.

Cooperation with local assemblies in Fukuoka has also progressed. With the Fukuoka City Assembly, exchanges have been conducted, including a meeting between Mr. Motoyasu Uchikoshi, then Chair and Regional Director (hereafter RD), Ms. Kazuko Ishigaki, in January 2025 and participation of Chair in a UN-Habitat Fukuoka SUSCAPseminar in August. With the Fukuoka Prefectural Assembly, cooperation has also deepened. In April 2024, assembly members visited UN-Habitat headquarters in Nairobi, and in November participated in the WUF in Cairo. In August 2025, an MoU was signed with the FOF led by Mr. Isao Kurauchi, the Chair of the Assembly. In addition, RD delivered a lecture at the Kyushu Association of Chairpersons of Prefectural Assemblies, further expanding engagement with local assemblies.

iv. Cooperation with the Cooperating Committee, media, and civil society

Cooperating Committee of UN-Habitat ROAP, composed of local private companies and organizations, currently has 32 members and is expected to further expand its activities with the support of Fukuoka Prefecture as the secretariat. Since the appointment of Ms. Ishigaki as RD in 2024, media exposure has increased, particularly with the support of RKB Mainichi Broadcasting, a member of the committee, contributing to raising awareness of UN-Habitat ROAP through TV, radio, and newspapers.

Cooperation with civil society organizations, including Citizens Net for UN Habitat Fukuoka and the Japan Habitat Association, has also deepened, through provision of their continuous support for UN-Habitat ROAP activities across Asia. In response to the Myanmar earthquake and Sri Lanka cyclone in 2025, funds raised by these societies enabled project implementation on the ground, demonstrating the value of collaboration between local civil societies and UN-Habitat ROAP.

v. Cooperation with the private sector and organizations (Fukuoka and Tokyo Platforms)

In March 2025, UN-Habitat Fukuoka/Tokyo Platform for Sustainable Cities in Asia and Pacific (Fukuoka/Tokyo-SUSCAP) were established in both Fukuoka and Tokyo. As of the end of February 2026, the Tokyo-SUSCAP has held two seminars and includes four partner organizations and 81 members. It serves as a platform for dialogue, with diverse stakeholders, including ambassadors, central government officials, private companies, NGOs/NPOs and university students, participating in the seminars, where strong expectations were expressed for collaboration with UN-Habitat ROAP.

The Fukuoka-SUSCAP has organized four seminars, including one held in conjunction with the visit of the Executive Director, during which an MoU was signed between RD of ROAP and the

FOF led by Mr. Isao Kurauchi, the Chair of the Prefectural Assembly, in the presence of the Governor of Fukuoka Prefecture. Additional seminars include a joint seminar with MLIT and JICA Kyushu, as well as a seminar held in the occasion of visits of Heads of UN-Habitat country offices. The platform currently comprises 14 partners and 77 members, fostering new opportunities for collaboration and reinforcing Fukuoka's role as an "Asian gateway."

vi. Human Resource Development Initiatives and Cooperation with Educational Institutions

In March 2025, UN-Habitat ROAP launched the "Kyushu Global SDGs Human Resource Development Initiative", consolidating its existing activities in a more strategic manner. For primary school students, activities such as World Habitat Day Children's Drawing Contest promote understanding of diversity. For junior high school students, SDGs workshops provide learning opportunities. For university and graduate students, lectures, overseas study tours, and career guidance support the development of practical skills and global career pathways. Further expansion of these programmes is planned.

The World Habitat Day Children's Drawing Contest has been held annually since 2001 (except in 2020 due to COVID-19) in collaboration with local governments and other partners, receiving 594 applications from nine countries in 2025. These activities contribute to enhancing awareness of diversity through children's perspectives across Asia and the Pacific.

In addition, UN-Habitat ROAP staff conduct SDGs lectures for audiences ranging from primary school students to university students and the general public. Despite the impact of the COVID-19, across various locations in Kyushu, approximately 30 lectures were delivered annually, reaching over 6,000 participants over the past four years. Especially, UN-Habitat ROAP concluded a comprehensive agreement with Kyushu Sangyo University in September 2020 and has contributed to its Global Leadership Programme through intensive lecture series conducted annually.

Furthermore, internships are offered to graduate students and young professionals from around the world. Since 2022, 18 interns have been accepted, including seven from Japanese universities (two from universities in Kyushu, and two Japanese nationals), contributing to the knowledge and capacity development of young professionals.

2. Strategic Directions of UN-Habitat ROAP

(1) Strategic Engagement in Asia and the Pacific

To operationalize the Strategic Plan 2026–2029 in the Asia-Pacific region, UN-Habitat ROAP formulated the Implementation Strategy 2026 - 2029 in January 2026, based on regional needs and challenges. Within this strategy, five thematic entry points have been identified as the pillars of activities, aiming to address challenges such as housing and slum upgrading, poverty and climate change in an integrated manner.

1. Resilient, risk-informed and climate-sensitive housing and community for all
2. Universal access to resilient, risk-informed and climate-sensitive basic services and infrastructures
3. Urban management transformation through integrated planning, participatory governance and advanced technology
4. Response to demographic shifts: aging, migration, and youth-driven growth
5. Harmonized co-existence of cities and nature, and preservation of cultural diversity

(2) Strategic Engagement in Japan

UN-Habitat ROAP aims to strengthen collaboration with stakeholders in Japan by advancing from individual partnerships to more integrated and structured cooperation through the Fukuoka/Tokyo SUSCAP. In Particular, UN-Habitat ROAP will explore concrete opportunities for collaboration to enable the practical application of technologies and expertise of Japanese companies and organizations across the Asia-Pacific region.

In addition, human resource development will be further strengthened. The presence of UN-Habitat ROAP in Fukuoka provides unique opportunities to directly convey global situations and challenges to local students and young professionals. UN-Habitat ROAP will expand its efforts, through both online and in-person lectures, workshops and study tours, to provide greater exposure to international issues and to foster globally minded youth.

3. Evaluation of UN-Habitat ROAP by the Committee

(1) Evaluation of Human Resource Development initiatives

The Committee highly commend the human resource development initiatives implemented by UN-Habitat ROAP. Amid declining opportunities for young people to travel abroad due to global instability and Japanese currency depreciation, opportunities for on-site learning are particularly important. Exposure to UN-Habitat's field activities enables young people to understand the importance of basic services such as water and sanitation in everyday lives and how Japanese technologies are applied abroad, which is expected to contribute to the development of youth with a global perspective.

For example, the International Human Resource Development Programme implemented by Fukuoka Prefecture, in cooperation with UN-Habitat ROAP, includes site visits and exchanges with country offices, which are made possible by the presence of UN-Habitat ROAP. Beyond this programme, opportunities for students to visit UN-Habitat country offices and engage in direct exchanges in English with UN-Habitat staff provide valuable learning experiences. Such initiatives demonstrate the significance of the presence of UN-Habitat ROAP in Fukuoka, and it is highly desirable that these initiatives be continued. Practical field-based learning through site visits is particularly important, and further expansion of such opportunities for young people is expected.

The expansion of collaboration with universities is also highly valued. Continuous lecture requests from more than ten universities across Kyushu, including intensive programmes with Kyushu Sangyo University, reflect the high educational value of UN-Habitat ROAP. It is expected that this initiative will be further developed. Furthermore, workshops targeting younger age groups should be expanded to the extent possible. Fostering interest in global issues from the primary school level is important, not only to raise awareness of UN-Habitat's activities, but also to encourage students to view social challenges as their own and to consider what actions they can take towards achieving the SDGs.

In implementing lectures and human resource development programmes, it is expected that further enhancement will be achieved through more strategic approaches, including the formulation of annual plans and the incorporation of feedback from the beneficiaries, under the framework of the "Kyushu Global SDGs Human Resource Development Initiative."

In addition, internship opportunities at UN-Habitat ROAP are highly valued for their significant educational benefits to students. They can serve as a catalyst for pursuing careers in the international field and play an important role in developing young talent. Japanese students are also expected to actively take advantage of these opportunities.

(2) Evaluation of Partnerships with Stakeholders

The active engagement of UN-Habitat ROAP in collaborating with local governments, private companies, and other organizations, both domestically and internationally, to address challenges in cities and communities across the Asia-Pacific region is highly valued. In particular, the ability of UN-Habitat ROAP to create opportunities, through the organization of various seminars, for companies in Japan to apply their technologies and expertise to address challenges in cities across Asia and the Pacific represents a distinctive strength of the office.

For example, the EGM, held since 2009, has facilitated the overseas application of technologies from companies including those based in Fukuoka, and is highly regarded as an initiative that both promotes the international expansion of the private sector and contributes to solving local urban and environmental challenges. In addition, at the Asia-Pacific Cities Summit, where Fukuoka City serves as the secretariat, UN-Habitat ROAP has provided support in efforts to strengthen regional cooperation. This serves as examples of how the presence of UN-Habitat ROAP contributes to enhanced collaboration among partners.

Furthermore, the active promotion of new partnerships among government, the private sector, academia, and civil society through the Fukuoka/Tokyo-SUCAP is also highly valued. These efforts have expanded collaboration beyond Fukuoka to the wider Kyushu region and across Japan. They provide an important foundation for utilizing Japan's expertise, including that of Fukuoka, in practical ways and for promoting collaboration among stakeholders both in Japan and internationally.

(3) Evaluation of Media and Civil Society Engagement

The focus on public outreach of UN-Habitat ROAP, including collaboration with media and the use of SNS, as well as its efforts to strengthen information sharing, are highly valued. By disseminating global situations and challenges through the media, these efforts contribute to raising awareness and fostering interest among citizens in Japan, particularly youth.

In addition, active use of Facebook is also valued. For example, in 2025, 198 posts generated approximately 123,000 views, demonstrating steady progress. The use of SNS is particularly important in engaging young people, and continued dissemination of information is expected to further enhance public understanding and interest. Such efforts to encourage participation in international cooperation activities are highly significant in terms of both educational impact and social impact.

Collaboration with civil society organizations is also highly valued. Initiatives supported by donations such as "Water for Life," Campaign, which contribute to projects in the water and sanitation field and disaster recovery in Asia and the Pacific, play an important role in sharing Japanese technologies and expertise and in promoting social contributions. These efforts also contribute to enhancing Japan's international reputation and fostering a sense of civic pride in country, and are recognized as a unique strength of UN-Habitat ROAP

UN-Habitat ROAP is expected to continue actively disseminating information on its activities, including collaboration with civil society, through media and SNS. In a context where global instability makes it increasingly difficult for people to directly access overseas project sites, the importance of its communication efforts is growing. UN-Habitat ROAP is expected to further play its role as a “window to the world for citizens”.

(4) Significance of Hosting UN-Habitat ROAP in Fukuoka

The Evaluation Committee highly values the significance of hosting UN-Habitat ROAP in Fukuoka. The Office is not merely a country office, but the regional office for Asia and the Pacific. By leveraging its domestic and international networks, it has strengthened Fukuoka’s role as a hub for collaboration with diverse stakeholders, including private companies, NPOs/NGOs, academia and civil society. It has also increased opportunities for local people and students to engage with global issues, thereby raising Fukuoka’s international profile. Furthermore, cooperation has expanded not only in Fukuoka, but across Kyushu, creating opportunities to engage with international issues through conferences and lectures, and contributing to the internationalization of entire Kyushu.

Fukuoka was selected as the only city in Japan as a model for “Compact Principles for Quality of Life” in the International Guidelines on Urban and Territorial Planning (IG-UTP) adopted by UN-Habitat in 2016. The city offers high accessibility, with the airport located close to the city center and well-developed public transportation. It also has experience in disaster risk management and water management, having faced floods and droughts in the past. In addition, Kyushu as a whole has accumulated knowledge in environmental management based on its experience in overcoming pollution. In particular, the “Fukuoka Method” for waste management has been transferred to many countries in Asia and Africa and is internationally recognized as an important asset. Moreover, the high quality of life, including international schools and advanced medical services, is a major advantage for international staff.

UN-Habitat ROAP implements many projects related to climate adaptation and resilient urban development, particularly in response to floods and storms. Water infrastructure and public health are central components of these efforts. In this context, there is strong potential for collaboration with the One Health approach, and synergies are expected with Fukuoka, which is a forerunner in this field. Given these characteristics, the presence of UN-Habitat ROAP in Fukuoka is highly significant.

The fact that UN-Habitat ROAP is based in Fukuoka, rather than Tokyo, has enabled diverse and close partnerships with local governments, private companies, organizations, and educational institutions in Fukuoka and Kyusyu area. Its strength as a highly accessible and “locally rooted UN entity” is particularly noteworthy. Building on this unique position, UN-Habitat ROAP is expected to further strengthen its role as a hub connecting Fukuoka and Kyushu with Asia and the Pacific, and the wider world.

In addition, as Fukuoka serves as a gateway to Asia and promotes exchanges with countries across the region, it helps foster civic pride as a host city of a UN regional office and provides an important foundation for encouraging greater international engagement among citizens. Building on this momentum, Fukuoka is well positioned to further advance its international role.

Evaluation Committee of the 6th MoU between UN-Habitat ROAP and Partners in Fukuoka
List of Members

(◎: Chair, ○: Vice-Chair)

◎ Mr. Yasushi Matsufuji	Emeritus Professor, Fukuoka University / President, NPO SWAN Fukuoka
○ Mr. Hiroshi Hoshino	Specially Appointed Professor, Nakamura Gakuen University / Professor Emeritus, Kyushu University
Mr. Kenji Tsugami	Senior Advisor, Nakamura Sangyo Gakuen / Senior Advisor, Kyushu Sangyo University
Mr. Tsuyoshi Ohira	Professor, Kitakyushu University
Ms. Ayako Kobayashi	Secretary General, Federation of Asia Veterinary Association (FAVA) One Health Fukuoka Office)
Mr. Fumiaki Miyagawa	Executive Director, Fukuoka Asian Urban Research Center
Mr. Ko Goto	Director General, Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) Kyushu Center
Ms. Akiko Takato	Director of Digital News, Commentary Editor and SDGs Promotion Officer, RKB Mainichi Broadcasting Corporation
Mr. Yoshiro Satake	Representative, Citizens Net for UN Habitat Fukuoka