

# UN-HABITAT IN ASIA & THE PACIFIC



Issue #5 | 1 April 2026

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



Asia and the Pacific is at the forefront of global urbanization, with decisions made today shaping the region's cities for generations to come.

In February, I visited India, where more than 200 million people are expected to be added to urban areas between 2025 and 2050. The dynamism of its cities and the engagement of national and local leaders highlighted both the opportunities and the scale of the challenges ahead.

Across the region, rapid urban growth continues to put pressure on housing, infrastructure and basic services. With 9 out of top 10 megacities located in Asia, the need for effective urban planning is clear. Without it, growth risks deepening inequalities, straining resources and expanding informal settlements, which already house over 1.1 billion people globally.

UN-Habitat is working with over 90 countries, including many across Asia and the Pacific, to support adequate housing and more inclusive, resilient and sustainable urban development, with a dedicated focus on housing, land and basic services from 2026 to 2029.

Looking ahead, the World Urban Forum (WUF13), to be held in Baku, Azerbaijan, from 17 to 22 May 2026, will be an important platform to share solutions and strengthen partnerships for action.

I look forward to seeing many of you in Baku.

## REGIONAL OFFICE FOR ASIA AND THE PACIFIC



### Presence in 15 countries



### Message from Regional Director **Kazuko Ishigaki**

From February to March, I visited (a) Pakistan to attend a signing ceremony of new Japan funded project, (b) Thailand to participate in Asia Pacific forum on Sustainable Development, (c) Lao PDR for hand-over ceremony of water infrastructure supported by Adaptation Fund and (d) Papua New Guinea to attend the 7th Pacific Forum.

The visit of four Asia Pacific countries, especially the field visit, reconfirmed the importance of participatory approach and tangible results on the ground while two forums reminded me of the need of strengthening regional collaboration for promoting SDG 11 & New Urban Agenda.

Listening to the voices of many people from diverse standpoints in different countries widen our perspectives and deepen our understandings on urban issues. We would like to work with all of you who are working on urban challenges.

### 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/ FIDO/ 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



## Lao PDR - Climate-Resilient Water for Small Towns



Donor: Adaptation Fund

**Building Climate and Disaster Resilience Capacities of Vulnerable Small Towns** in Lao PDR supports climate-resilient water infrastructure and urban planning in small towns along the East-West Economic Corridor. Implemented from June 2020 to June 2026, the project integrates climate change adaptation into urban master plans and delivers city-wide water systems. By improving access to safe, reliable water, the project strengthens resilience, reduces climate risks, and enhances dignity and quality of life for vulnerable communities.

*"For most of my life, I carried water every day. Now, clean water comes directly to my home. I never imagined this would happen. This project has changed my life and given me hope for the future."*

- Grandmother Kai, age 77, a beneficiary at Ban Thadane, Sayphouthong District, Savannakhet

## Pakistan - Building Back Better - Disaster-Resilient Schools for Safer Futures

Repeated natural disasters in Pakistan damaged school infrastructure, disrupted education, and reduced attendance, particularly among girls due to safety concerns and inadequate facilities. The schools which were not damaged, are not seismic resistant and vulnerable to future earthquakes. In response, UN-Habitat in collaboration with UNDP and KP Education Department implemented the **Disaster Resilient School Infrastructure Project in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa**, funded by JICA. Under this initiative 150 schools have been retrofitted in the earthquake-prone areas including 66 girls' schools, by reinforcing walls, repairing roofs, improving ventilation, and strengthening structures against future risks, improving accessibility and energy efficiency. Gender-responsive WASH facilities were installed in 300 schools, benefiting over 13,000 girls. Guided by the Sendai Framework and the Build Back Better approach, the project enhanced safety, restored community confidence, and increased enrollment.



Donor: JICA

*"We used to have only a few students in the classroom. Now, attendance is improving every week. The school is a safer place for both students and staff."*

- Ms. Tabassum, teacher at one of the upgraded schools in Peshawar

## Pacific / Papua New Guinea - 7th Pacific Urban Forum



Donor: Government of Papua New Guinea and National Capital District Commission (City of Port Moresby)

From 24–26 March 2026, the **7th Pacific Urban Forum (PUF7)** convened in Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea (PNG), hosted by the Government and the Port Moresby National Capital District Commission, in collaboration with the Pacific Urban Partnership, chaired by UN-Habitat.

With the attendance of Prime Minister and Vice Prime Minister of PNG as well as more than 120 delegates including 8 Ministers from PNG, Fiji, Kiribati, Samoa, Solomon Is., Tonga, Tuvalu, and Vanuatu, the Forum gathered leaders region-wide. The ministers, national and local government officials, civil sector, academic experts, and important stakeholders across the region focused on discussion on adequate housing, informal settlement upgrading, customary land ownership, basic services and climate change/resilience. The region's strong leadership and strong communities in the region are calling for capacity building and access to finance to achieve sustainable urbanization in cities and towns.

*"We need to integrate urban issues into Pacific policies and elevate the urban agenda to the level of the PIF (Pacific Islands Forum) the highest regional decision making platform. Regional and global partnerships can then support, with research and methodology, as well as to mobilize funds."*

- Hon. Dr Kobby Bomareo, Minister for Housing, Papua New Guinea, and PUF7 Chair

# Voices from Country Offices

## Viet Nam

Since 2007, UN-Habitat Viet Nam has supported inclusive, resilient and sustainable urban development in one of Asia’s fastest-urbanising countries.

Through partnerships with government, local authorities and other stakeholders, UN-Habitat Viet Nam provides policy advice and technical assistance, contributing to major legal and strategic frameworks, including the Planning Law, National Housing Development Strategy, Urban and Rural Planning Law, and the draft Urban Development Law. UN-Habitat Viet Nam also translates the New Urban Agenda and SDG 11 into local action through community-based pilots, from climate-resilient infrastructure in the Mekong Delta to more inclusive planning processes that strengthen the voice of women and youth across cities.



UN-Habitat Viet Nam Team Photo

## India

UN-Habitat India is currently supporting transformative projects for community-led design of solutions, and the water and waste management sectors. Key highlights include, signing of MoU with the Government of Odisha (2025), to support development aligned with Odisha@100 and Vision 2047 and implementation of the Shelter Academy (Dec 2025) for strengthening capacities towards urban resilience. Our flagship “Young Gamechangers initiative” is demonstrating strong youth engagement for public space development. UN-Habitat is also supporting Prayagraj under the Water as Leverage initiative (Indo-Dutch Partnership) to develop river management projects.

Mr. Nilesh Rajadhyaksha took his post as Country Project Manager in March 2026. Nilesh is an urban development specialist and has contributed to key projects like Master Plan Delhi 2041 and Liveability Standards for Cities, while supporting flagship missions like AMRUT and Smart Cities.



UN-Habitat India team project photo



Nilesh Rajadhyaksha (speaking),  
Country Programme Manager

## Regional and Country Events

| Date             | Location            | Event                                            |
|------------------|---------------------|--------------------------------------------------|
| 20-24 April 2026 | Bangkok Thailand    | The 82nd session of UNESCAP                      |
| 21-22 April 2026 | Nairobi Kenya       | Executive Board of UN-Habitat                    |
| 23 April 2026    | Bangkok Thailand    | The 18th Annual Global CSR & ESG Summit & Awards |
| 29-30 April 2026 | Phnom Penh Cambodia | Cambodia National Urban and Housing Forum        |
| 17-22 May 2026   | Baku Azerbaijan     | The 13th World Urban Forum                       |
| 14-16 June 2026  | Singapore           | The 10th Edition of the World Cities Summit      |

### The 13th Asia-Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development (APFSD), Bangkok, Thailand 24-27 February 2026

UN-Habitat took center stage at the 13th Asia-Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development (APFSD) in Bangkok. Convened by ESCAP, the forum served as a critical platform to review progress on the 2030 Agenda. Our Executive Director Anacláudia Roszbach in her pre-recorded remarks emphasized that "At UN-Habitat, we view SDG 11 as the docking station for all SDGs. Cities are essential to unlocking progress on water, energy, and infrastructure. "During the SDG 11 Round Table, Regional Director Ms. Kazuko Ishigaki highlighted, in her opening remarks priority areas emerging from the regional discussions on SDG11: multilevel governance, future-ready urban planning, and resilient infrastructure. Given the slow progress of SDG Goal11, the Forum reconfirmed the need to accelerate implementation for sustainable urban development in Asia and the Pacific.



# Voices from Japan Team - Actions with Japan

## Partnership



UN-Habitat Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific convened a strategic meeting from 28-30 January 2026, inviting 15 Heads of Country Offices to Fukuoka. We developed implementation plan at regional and country level to implement the UN-Habitat Strategic Plan 2026-2029, adopted by the UN-Habitat Assembly in May 2025.

## Partnership



On 29 January 2026, the Fukuoka Platform for Sustainable Cities in Asia and the Pacific (Fukuoka-SUSCAP), a networking seminar was held with 15 heads of country offices under ROAP. At the World Café-style discussion with the participation of 8 Japanese companies and organizations, participants deepened their understanding of Japan's advanced technologies and international collaboration initiatives, shared challenges and needs, and explored possibilities for co-creation. The event was particularly lively, with country heads posing numerous questions to the presenters.

## Partnership



On 11 February 2026, the Government of Japan, UN-Habitat and the Japan International Cooperation Agency signed an Exchange of Notes and a Grant Agreement, for the project on 'Strengthen the disaster resilience of educational infrastructure in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Province,' Pakistan. On 20 February 2026, Japan and UN-Habitat also signed an Exchange of Notes on the project "Strengthening Disaster Resilience of Critical Medical Infrastructure (BEHTAB III)" in Iran.

## Partnership



The 1st and the 2nd Evaluation Committee meetings for the 6th Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) were held on 19 February and 12 March 2026. The purpose of this Committee is to evaluate the activities of UN-Habitat ROAP during the 6th MoU period (1 July 2022–30 June 2027). Experts from academia, international organizations, JICA, media, and civil society highly evaluated the activities of UN-Habitat ROAP during the term as an UN organization close to the local community" and expressed expectation for strengthening capacity building initiatives for the youth.

## Water



In February 2026, UN-Habitat installed an underground rainwater storage tank ("Tamtotto") in Saravane Province, Lao PDR, funded by TOTO Water Environment Fund, with technical guidance provided by Daiken Corporation. Together with the local community, UN-Habitat aims to promote the sustainable access to clean water. The project is expected to contribute to improving the water environment of the community and enhance resilience against climate change.

## Youth



UN-Habitat ROAP supported Fukuoka Prefecture's "Global Human Resource Development Programme." During the site visit in Viet Nam in February 2026, with the support of the UN-Habitat Viet Nam Office, 10 students visited a disaster recovery project and exchanged views with local communities. Based on what they learned and experienced on site, the students developed their own proposals to address social challenges such as disaster response (e.g., floods) and waste management.