



The 8th Spatial Planning Platform (SPP) Meeting

18 December 2025

Fukuoka, Japan

Summary Report

The 8th SPP Meeting Programme

What is SPP?

Unplanned development and rapid urban growth are major issues in developing countries and require improved urban and territorial planning. The Spatial Planning Platform (SPP) was established by the Government of Japan and UN-Habitat's Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific in 2018 as a network of stakeholders aiming to achieve the formulation and implementation of more effective spatial plans, at all territorial levels. SPP contributes to the sharing of experiences and knowledge, complementing UN-Habitat's global engagements as focal point for the implementation the New Urban Agenda (hereinafter referred to as NUA) in general and the International Guidelines for Urban and Territorial Planning in particular.

Programme

Opening Remarks and Keynote Speech

Mr. Kazuhiro Miyaki

Senior Director, General Affairs Division, National Spatial Planning and Regional Policy Bureau,
MLIT

Keynote Speeches

Prof. Mihoko Matsuyuki

Faculty of Urban Innovation, Division of Urban Innovation, Yokohama National University

Panel Discussion

Panelists

Mr. Ryo Kawano

Deputy Director-General, Kyushu Regional Development Bureau, Ministry of Land,
Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism, Japan

Mr. Mohammad Abdul Awal

Deputy Secretary, Ministry of Housing and Public Works, Bangladesh

Ms. Vibhu Jain

Urban Development Consultant, Nippon Synergy

Mr. Eng. R.A. Sujeewa Ranawaka

Director General (Engineering-Housing and Construction), Ministry of Housing, Construction
and Water Supply, Sri Lanka

Moderator

Prof. Mihoko Matsuyuki

Faculty of Urban Innovation, Division of Urban Innovation, Yokohama National University

Closing Remarks:

Mr. Kazuhiro Miyaki

Senior Director, General Affairs Division, National Spatial Planning and Regional Policy Bureau,
MLIT

Acknowledgement

The 8th Spatial Planning Platform (SPP) Meeting
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Opening Remarks for the 8th Spatial Planning Platform (SPP) Meeting

Message from Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism, Government of Japan

Mr. Kazuhiro Miyaki, Senior Director, General Affairs Division, National Spatial Planning and Regional Policy Bureau, MLIT

At the opening of the 8th Spatial Planning Platform (SPP), I would like to say a few words of greeting to everyone. First of all, I would like to extend my heartfelt welcome and gratitude to the representatives of Japanese companies, government officials, and academic experts participating both here at the venue and online today. I would also like to express my sincere appreciation to UN-Habitat and JICA for co-hosting “The Third Network Seminar of the Fukuoka Platform for Sustainable Cities in Asia and the Pacific,” which includes this SPP meeting.

The Spatial Planning Platform, commonly known as SPP, is an international platform jointly established by the Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism (MLIT) and UN-Habitat in 2018 to support the development and promotion of national and regional land planning. Since the first meeting was held here in Fukuoka in August 2018, we have held meetings every fiscal year, including through online formats. To date, a total of seven conferences have been held with the participation of various countries, primarily from the Asia-Pacific region, as well as international organizations such as the OECD and the World Bank, and academic experts.

At this 8th SPP meeting today, we would like to deepen our discussions under the theme of "The Role and Effectiveness of Regional Planning." We hope that this meeting will help us consider the direction of Japan's international cooperation in the field of land and regional planning, as well as infrastructure and urban development more broadly. Japan will continue to deepen its cooperation with all of you in supporting the formulation of national and regional plans.

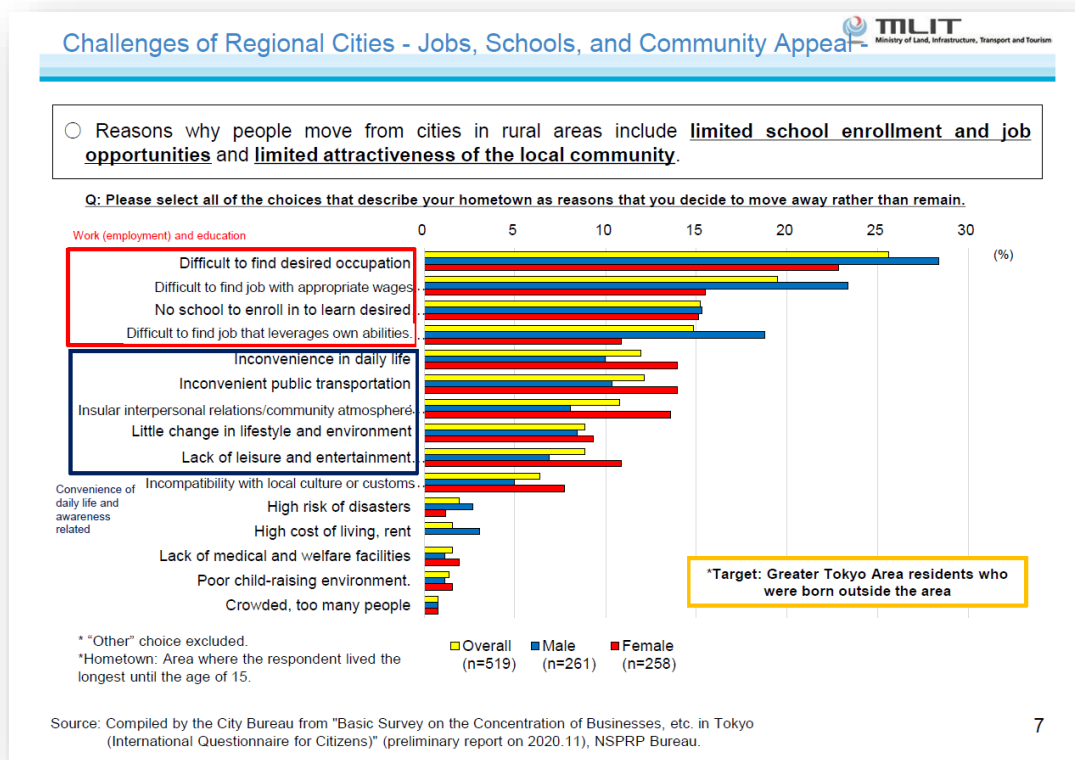


Keynote Speeches

1. Japan's National Land Planning — Introduction to the National Spatial Strategy (National Plan and Greater Regional Plans) —

Mr. Kazuhiro Miyaki, Senior Director, General Affairs Division, National Spatial Planning and Regional Policy Bureau, MLIT

Japan is surrounded by the sea on all sides and consists of the five main islands and approximately 14,000 remote islands, with about 120 million people living amidst its rich natural environment. Japan's population peaked in 2008 and has since begun to decline, with a rapid decrease expected in the future. Meanwhile, the excessive concentration of population in the Tokyo Metropolitan Area has become a major challenge. In particular, the inflow from rural areas to the Tokyo Metropolitan Area is higher among women, driven by regional disparities in employment environments and perceptions of gender roles. Therefore, it is essential to emphasize creating opportunities for women to play active roles in regional areas.



In response to the changing social landscape of rapid population decline, the Government of Japan fundamentally revised its plans, which had previously focused on quantitative expansion based on development, and enacted the National Spatial Planning Act in 2005. Currently, to promote qualitative improvement of the national land and decentralization, we are advancing national land development through a two-tier system: the "National Plan," which serves as a

national guideline, and "Greater Regional Plans," which are formulated for each of the eight blocks nationwide. Most recently, in July 2023, the third National Plan was formulated. As a spatial structure to realize a "National Land Combining the Potentials of the Regions in the New Era," it advocates for the formation of a "National Land with a Seamless Connection of Hubs."

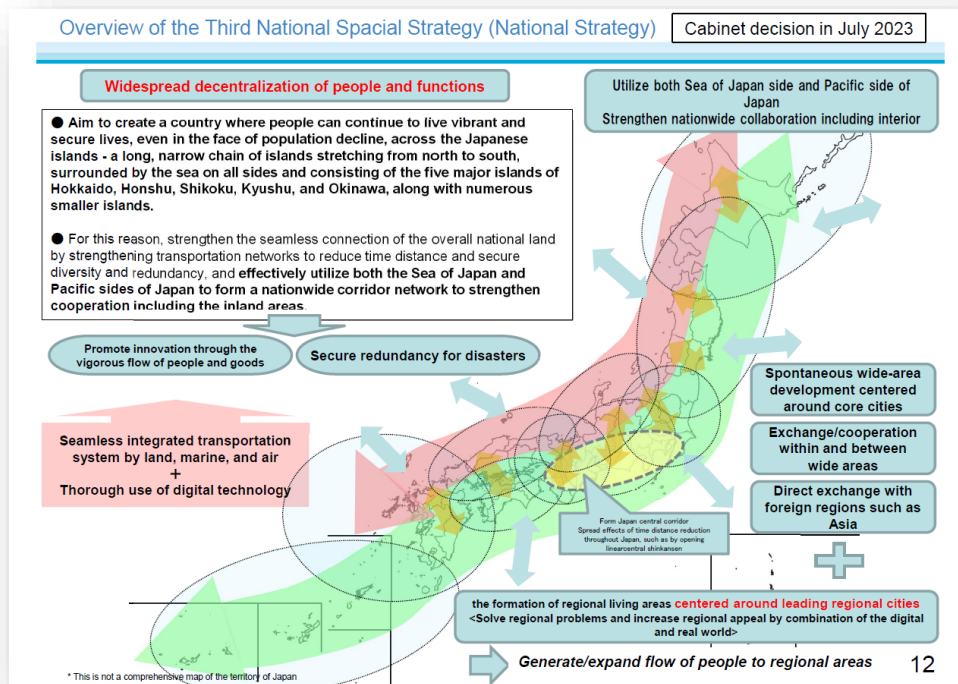
To realize this new spatial structure, the Government of Japan aims to rectify the over-concentration in Tokyo while forming a national corridor network that effectively utilizes both the Sea of Japan and Pacific sides to ensure redundancy during disasters. Furthermore, to enable sustainable daily life in rural areas, we are working on the formation of "Regional Living Areas." These areas transcend traditional municipal frameworks and maintain essential services through private-sector leadership and public-private partnerships. Through these efforts, we are building a society where Regional Living Areas are seamlessly connected, allowing everyone to live conveniently and comfortably anywhere in the country.

Key Points of the New National Spatial Strategy (National Plan)



- National land vision: "National Land Combining the Potentials of the Regions in the New Era"
- National land structure to achieve: Build a "National Land with a Seamless Connection of Hubs"
- (1) Aim to correct the population concentration in Tokyo while decentralizing population and associated functions over a wide area.
- (2) Effectively leverage both sides of Japan facing the Japan Sea and the Pacific Ocean, and formulate a national network of corridors to achieve the connection and ensure the vigorous flow of people and redundancy in the times of disaster.
- (3) Focus on the formation of regional living areas through by citizen-led public-private partnerships, without being limited to municipal borders.

As specific measures, we are promoting the formation of the "Japan Central Corridor" through the development of the Linear Central Shinkansen, treating the three major metropolitan areas as a single integrated metropolitan unit, while revitalizing exchange through the fusion of digital and real elements. By maximizing the use of digital technology in rural areas, we intend to improve the convenience of services and revitalize regional economic cycles, leading to an expansion of the "related population" and enhancing the attractiveness of these regions. Through these initiatives, we will suppress population outflow to major metropolitan areas and work to resolve regional challenges.



In the Greater Regional Plans, we are promoting projects that maximize the characteristics of each region through Councils participated in by the national government, prefectures, municipalities, and the local business community. For example, in the Tohoku region, plans are underway to form a research and development network centered on the next-generation synchrotron radiation facility "NanoTerasu," with public-private collaboration enhancing the effectiveness of these plans in each region. The Government of Japan will continue to follow up on these plans with a view toward the next 10 years, providing strong support for national land formation tailored to the characteristics of each region.

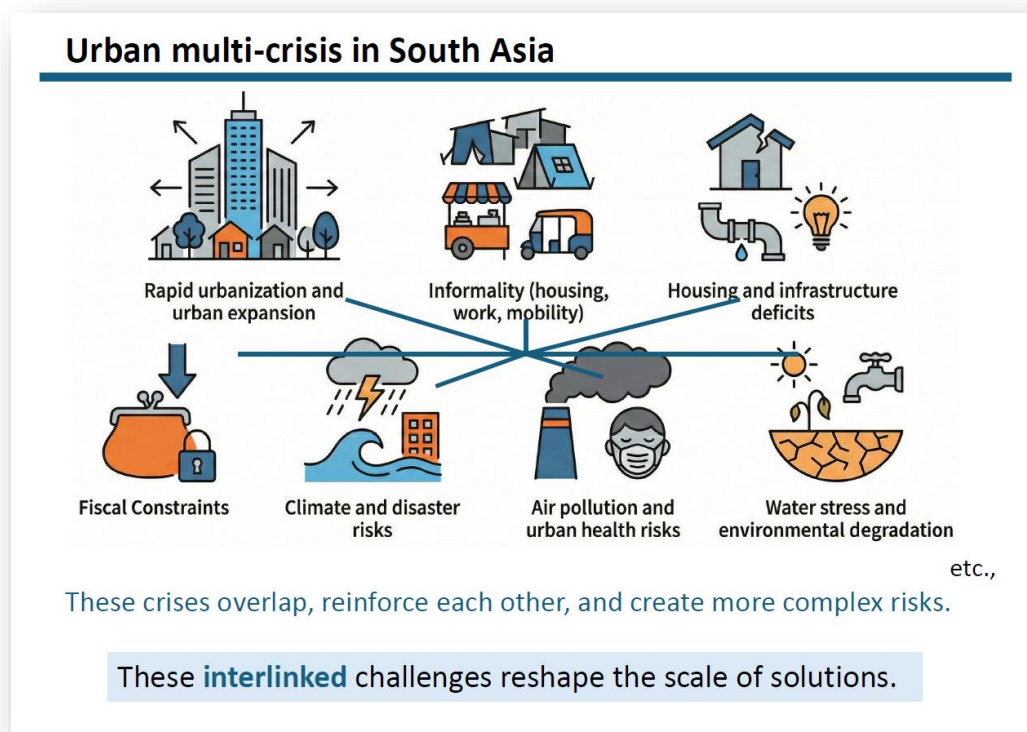
<Examples of Project Images>

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2. South Asia's Interlinked Urban Multi-Crisis: From Fragmented Responses to Coordinated Action

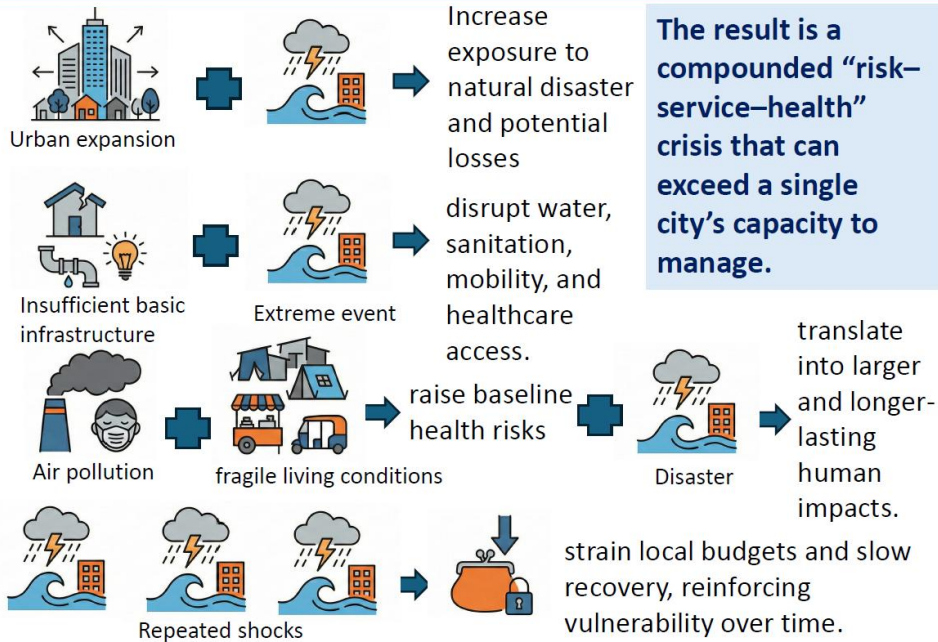
Prof. Mihoko Matsuyuki, Ph.D., Faculty of Urban Innovation, Division of Urban Innovation,
Yokohama National University

This keynote presentation focused on the challenges of interlinked urban crises in South Asia, while emphasizing the relevance of these issues and frameworks for other emerging regions. Rapid urbanization, the expansion of informal settlements, infrastructure deficits, climate and disaster risks, environmental degradation, and health challenges all present critical and pressing issues for cities in the region. These crises rarely exist in isolation; rather, they overlap and reinforce one another, resulting in complex, compounded risks that demand integrated and scalable solutions.



The interconnection of urban challenges in South Asia can be seen through specific examples. Rapid urban growth, for instance, leads to increased water demand, which strains existing infrastructure and accelerates environmental degradation, particularly in the context of climate change. Similarly, inadequate infrastructure, high disaster exposure, and poor living conditions together heighten the impacts of natural disasters on urban populations, resulting in long-term social and health crises. Such dynamics make it clear that today's urban crises cannot be addressed by single cities, sectors, or actors working alone.

Interlinked Multi-Crisis



Effective responses to these urban crises require a combination of regional coordination, cross-sector integration, multi-stakeholder collaboration, and alignment among different levels of government. However, significant barriers often impede collaboration, including inconsistent data, mismatched priorities, capacity gaps, lack of trust, and misaligned incentives or mandates. In addition, each form of collaboration—whether regional, cross-sector, multi-stakeholder, or multilevel—faces unique difficulties, such as institutional weaknesses, siloed operations, or mismatched authorities.

Barriers to Collaboration

Barriers for each type of collaboration



Regional coordination

suffers from benefit–burden mismatch and weak metro or basin institutions.



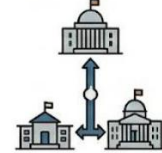
Cross-sector integration

is blocked by siloed budgets and conflicting standards and KPIs.



Multi-stakeholder collaboration

faces unclear risk-sharing and misaligned incentives.



Multi-level government alignment

struggles with misaligned mandates, fiscal gaps, and authority gaps.

Collaboration across South Asia, and indeed other emerging regions, can advance only if certain minimum enabling conditions are met. These include shared data, aligned procedures and priorities, balanced benefit-burden sharing, capacity support, and strong foundations of trust and accountability. Since urban challenges are interlinked in reality, holistic and coordinated action at the appropriate scales becomes essential. The key question, therefore, is not whether collaboration is necessary, but rather how and at what scale it should be pursued to ensure practical and effective urban solutions across diverse contexts.

Overcoming the barriers to Collaboration

Minimum enabling conditions

- Minimum shared data & indicators
- Shared ways of working (common procedures & priority criteria)
→ different actors can plan and act together
- Benefit–burden alignment to make joint action politically and financially realistic.
- Capacity support across jurisdictions and partners
- Strong foundations of trust, transparency, and accountability



Panel Discussion

During the panel discussion, each panelist first introduced their country's regional planning initiatives, followed by a discussion centered on the theme.



1. Regarding the Kyushu Greater Regional Plans

**Mr. Ryo Kawano, Deputy Director-General, Kyushu Regional Development Bureau
Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism, Japan**

In Japan, Greater Regional Plans are established based on the National Spatial Planning Act, with the National Plan (National Spatial Strategy) as the basis, to serve as guidelines for each region. In the Kyushu region, following the formulation of the Third National Plan in July 2023, the development of the Third Kyushu Greater Regional Plan is currently underway. This plan serves as a guideline for approximately the next 10 years with a vision toward 2050. Discussions have been conducted from various perspectives within the Kyushu Greater Regional Plan Council and meetings of academic experts, involving a total of 30 institutions, including the nine prefectures (the seven prefectures of Kyushu plus Yamaguchi and Okinawa), ordinance-designated cities, and economic organizations. As the region closest to the Asian continent, Kyushu expects growth in trade and inbound tourism. However, it faces challenges from a declining birthrate and aging population, with the population beginning to decline 10 years earlier than the national average. Consequently, plan development must consider regional characteristics, such as the strengths of key industries like semiconductors, automobiles, and agriculture, forestry, livestock, and fisheries, as well as responses to frequent natural disasters.

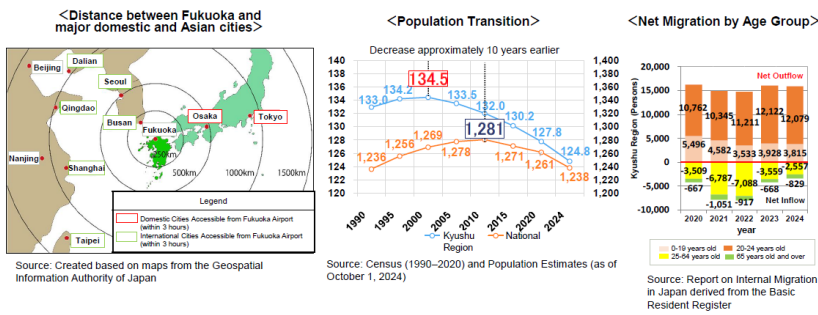
Current Status and Challenges in the Kyushu Region

【Position】

- Kyushu is the region closest to the Asian continent and is adjacent to major Asian cities.
- Trade and inbound tourism are expanding as a gateway to Asia.
- The number of foreign workers is increasing.

【Population Trends】

- Population decline, low birthrate, and aging are advancing, leading to a shortage of workers and successors
- Young generations aged 24 and under, corresponding to high school and university students, are moving to other regions (out-migration excess).
- The total fertility rate is higher than the national average.

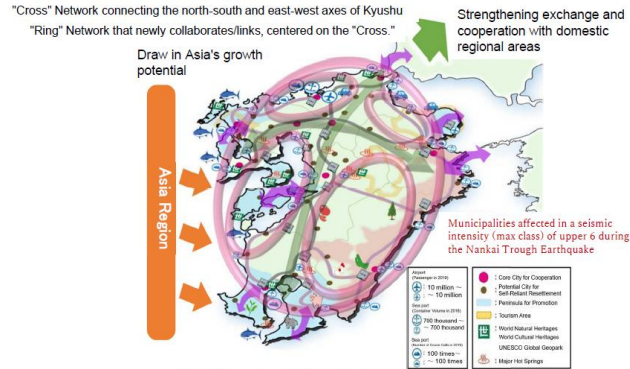


Based on this situation, three future visions for Kyushu have been established: "Growth Engine Island Kyushu," "Self-Sustaining Regional Collaboration Island Kyushu," and "Strong and Beautiful Island Kyushu". We aim to strengthen international gateway functions to foster new industries and economic growth while fusing digital and physical worlds to form "Regional Living Areas," where urban convenience and regional comfort coexist. This approach ensures that growth reaches remote islands, peninsulas, and mountainous areas. Furthermore, we intend to build a resilient region against natural disasters such as earthquakes, torrential rains, and volcanic activity, and lead the way in carbon neutrality while preserving the rich environment. To achieve these goals, we will promote seven specific Wide-Area Collaboration Projects, including the "Project for Exchange Hub, Collaboration, and Growth Between Asia, the World, and Japan" and the "Forming Regional Living Areas Connecting Remote Islands, Peninsulas, Mountainous and Rural Areas, and Cities Project".

Wide-Area Collaboration Project [PJ2]

2. A Project for Exchange and Collaboration that Unites and Creates Vitality

- Seamlessly connecting central core cities with Urban/Regional Areas and settlement living areas by land, sea, and air transportation networks to generate vitality across the entire Kyushu region.



(Project Examples)

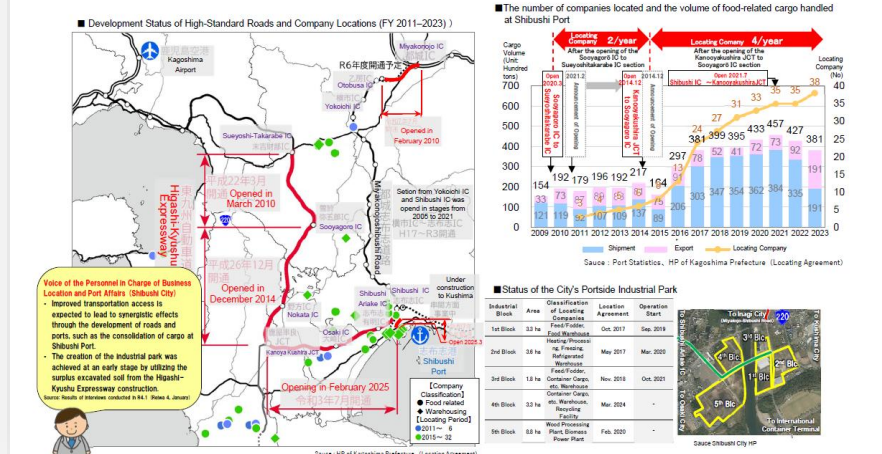
▲ Initiatives for network quality enhancement

Enhancing convenience through expanding and strengthening expressway network and installing smart interchanges, promoting traffic smoothing in core cities, and improvement of traffic congestion utilizing big data, etc.

Regarding specific measures, we emphasize public-private collaboration, such as strengthening urban functions through the "Tenjin Big Bang" in central Fukuoka City and maintaining Regional Living Areas through the use of drone delivery and telemedicine. Successful examples of integrating infrastructure development and industrial promotion include Kumamoto Prefecture, where the entry of the world's leading semiconductor manufacturer has triggered significant corporate investment and job creation, and the Osumi region of Kagoshima Prefecture, where road network improvements have led to the clustering of food-related industries. By envisioning the future of the Kyushu region from such long-term and comprehensive perspectives, we will treat planned infrastructure development and industrial clustering as the two inseparable wheels of a cart, working toward the formulation and steady implementation of the Third Kyushu Greater Regional Plan for the sustainable development and resilient national land of the entire Kyushu region.

Support for Vitalization of Regional Key Industries through the Collaboration of High-Standard Roads and Shibushi Port

- The Osumi region, after the announcement of the opening of the Higashi-Kyushu Expressway in fiscal year 2014 and the prospect of the opening to Shibushi, the number of company locations and the volume of cargo handled related to food products increased.
- The sale of industrial parks and the entry of food-related companies are favorable.
- By continuing the collaboration between road and port development and further promoting maintenance, we will continue to support the region's key industries in the future.



2. Strategies for Effective Spatial Planning in Bangladesh

Mr. Mohammad Abdul Awal, Deputy Secretary, Ministry of Housing and Public Works, Bangladesh

Bangladesh has made significant strides in spatial planning and building urban resilience in response to rapid urbanization and ongoing challenges from both natural and man-made hazards. With a population of approximately 180 million and more than 33% now living in urban areas—a proportion expected to reach 50% by 2040—cities like Dhaka face mounting pressures. Addressing these issues requires robust strategies, and today's focus lies on the key milestones the country has achieved with an integrated legal and institutional spatial planning system, advancing sustainable urban development, resilience-building, and environmental protection.

Urbanization of Bangladesh



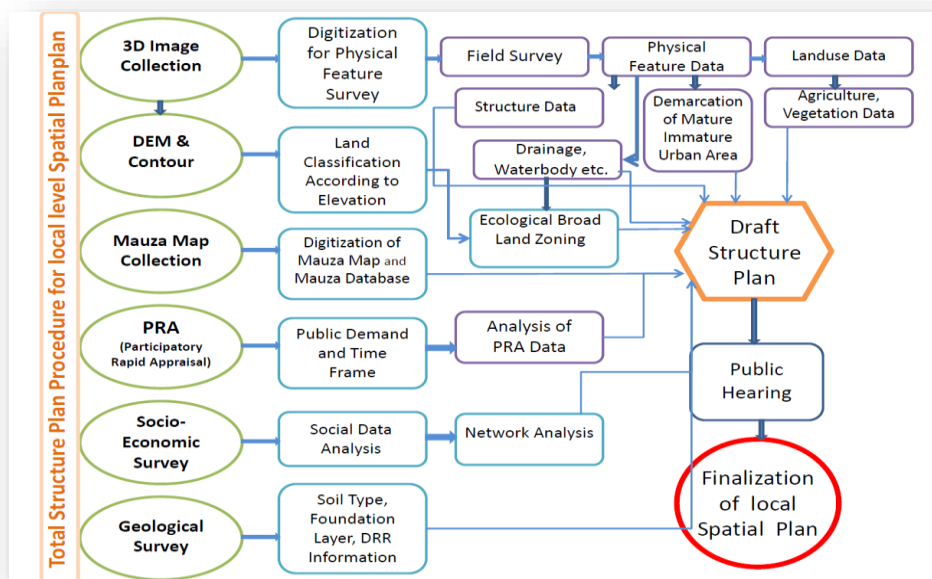
Urbanization Snapshot

- 38% urban population;
- projected >50% by 2040
- Dhaka among fastest-growing megacities
- Pressure on land, housing, transport
- High climate vulnerability

Urbanization Challenges

- Rapid urbanization exceeds infrastructure capacity
- Housing shortages
- Weak land-use regulation
- Limited basic services

The Spatial Planning Act, adopted in November 2025, marks a critical advancement by providing a legal foundation for coordinated urban growth, infrastructure development, and climate adaptation across Bangladesh. Prior to this legislation, urban management relied on a patchwork of policies and guidelines. Now, comprehensive spatial plans, including the National Perspective Plan 2041, Delta Plan 2100, and detailed digital mapping projects, work together to strengthen land use regulations, optimize housing, and promote environmental sustainability. Advanced geospatial technologies, such as three-dimensional imaging and digital elevation models, facilitate real-time surface and drainage analysis, with participatory data collection methods involving local communities and vulnerable groups in the planning process.



Despite these advancements, the urban landscape in Bangladesh continues to confront challenges similar to those in many South Asian countries. Issues such as rapid informal growth, institutional fragmentation, inter-agency coordination difficulties, limited financial resources, climate risks, and monitoring data gaps hinder effective planning. There are also persistent capacity gaps within local governments, especially a need for trained personnel and sufficient land and resources to implement plans effectively. Nevertheless, the Spatial Planning Act—supported by alignment with the Delta Plan and national development strategies—provides a robust platform for fostering resilient and sustainable urban growth. Through effective implementation, Bangladesh aims to develop cities like Dhaka into models of resilience and sustainability capable of meeting urban and environmental challenges in the coming decades.

Key Challenges in Implementing Spatial Plans for Achieving SDG-11



- **Climate and Hazard Exposure:** Floodplains, low-lying coasts, and cyclone-prone regions face high vulnerability, making poorly sited development risky and expensive to retrofit.
- **Data and Monitoring Limitations:** Insufficient geospatial integration, outdated cadastral data, and weak SDG-11 indicator tracking hinder adaptive planning.
- **Local Government Capacity Gaps:** Many local authorities lack trained personnel and resources to translate structure plans into implementable local regulations and projects.

3. Institutional Mechanism for Regional Planning: The Case of the National Capital Region Planning Board (NCRPB), India

Ms. Vibhu Jain, Urban Development Consultant, Nippon Synergy

Regional planning in India has a long and evolving history that traces back to the country's independence in 1947. At that time, India faced significant challenges—including haphazard urban development, rapid urbanization, and the rehabilitation of refugees due to the partition of India and Pakistan. These early issues prompted the first efforts in developing regional plans. The Mumbai Metropolitan Region Plan in 1951 marked the beginning of a more systematic approach to regional planning, supported by the introduction of Five-Year Plans. In the decades that followed, other metropolitan areas such as Kolkata and Chennai also initiated their own regional plans, and by the 1980s and 1990s, comprehensive national strategies like the National Perspective Plan and the National Urban Development Strategy were launched. While these national plans have been discontinued since the last Five-Year Plan (2012–2017), the approach

to regional planning has become increasingly multifaceted, expanding beyond urban planning to include physical, social, economic, and environmental factors, and a growing recognition of the need for local participation and decentralization.

Regional Planning in India

Evolution of Regional Planning

- **Approach:** extension of urban planning, evolved to integrate physical, social, and economic components, focused on decentralization and local participation.
- **Initial Focus (1947-1951):** to address challenges of urbanization and the rehabilitation of refugees. First regional plan – Mumbai Metropolitan Region in 1951, marking the beginning of regional planning.
- **The first and second Five-Year Plans (1951-61)** emphasized on urbanization and industrialization and led to the development of regional plans for various metropolitan areas, including Kolkata and Chennai.
- **The 1960s and 1970s** saw the development of regional planning at the state level, with several states preparing their own regional plans.
- **The 1980s and 1990s** saw the development of regional planning at the national level - the National Perspective Plan in 1988 & the National Urban Development Strategy in 1990.

Focusing on the National Capital Region (NCR), which centers on New Delhi, offers a unique example of interstate regional planning in India. Unlike other metropolitan regions, which are usually contained within single states, the NCR spans Delhi and parts of Haryana, Rajasthan, and Uttar Pradesh. The National Capital Region Planning Board (NCRPB), established in 1985 under the Ministry of Urban Development, functions as the primary institution responsible for preparing and overseeing the regional, sub-regional, and sectoral plans for the NCR. Its core tasks include drafting master plans related to land use, infrastructure, and the environment—two major plans (for 2001 and 2021) have already been implemented, with a new plan for 2041 underway that increasingly emphasizes climate change and disaster risk management. Financing for major projects is provided by the NCRPB through soft loans (with a 75-25 split between NCRPB and participating state contributions), state government agencies, central ministry grants for projects of national significance, and private sector investment. The board also plays a central role in coordinating, monitoring, and supporting plan implementation across the NCR's vast 55,000 square kilometer area.

National Capital Region (NCR) Planning

- **National Capital Region (NCR)** is a unique example of inter-state regional planning and development, covering the entire National Capital Territory of Delhi, fourteen districts of State of Haryana, eight districts of State of Uttar Pradesh and two districts of State of Rajasthan, with the Nation Capital as its core.
- NCR was constituted under the NCRPB Act, 1985, is a statutory body functioning under the Ministry of Urban Development, Government of India. Key rationale is to systematically develop the NCR to avoid any haphazard development in the region.

Key Role

- Developing regional and sub-regional plans in coordination with participating states.
- Financing infrastructure projects.
- Project monitoring and coordination.



Despite notable achievements, several challenges hamper the effectiveness of regional planning efforts in the NCR and across India. Coordination between participating states is often weak, owing to the scale and diversity of physical and financial conditions within the region. Enforcement and implementation are also inconsistent, as financially independent states sometimes fail to adhere fully to the regional plans—especially regarding land use. Lastly, limited community and private sector participation in the planning process, due to a predominantly top-down approach, has restricted local ownership and stakeholder engagement. Overcoming these challenges is crucial for improving integrated planning, project execution, and inclusive development in the National Capital Region and throughout the country.

Key Challenges

- **Statutory body under the NCRPB Act but weak implementation.** With its limited powers and jurisdiction, the NCRPB cannot take up the task of comprehensive management of implementation of the Regional Plan. It, therefore, requires the support not only from the Ministry of Urban Development but also from other Central Ministries, Planning Commission and constituent State Governments, their local bodies etc. who are having power under their own jurisdiction.
- **Lack of Community Participation.** Top-down approaches to regional planning often suffer from a lack of community participation, leading to a lack of ownership and sustainability of the development interventions.
- **Limited Coordination.** Regional planning requires coordination between different levels of government and with the private sector, and often there is limited coordination between these entities. Regional plans need the physical verification of the change of land use cases approved by the Board and monitoring of the projects funded by the NCRPB, which is typically difficult given the multiple jurisdictions involved.

4. Adequate housing, land and basic services with “National Physical Plan” focusing on Natural disasters

Mr. Eng. R.A.S. Ranawaka, Director General (Housing and Construction), Ministry of Housing, Construction and Water Supply

Sri Lanka has a long history of planning, dating back to 1946. The National Physical Plan, developed by the National Physical Planning Department, is the key agency responsible for overseeing spatial development at the national level. The plan’s hierarchy consists of three levels: the national level, the regional or provincial level, and the local level, which focuses on site-specific projects. The National Physical Plan aims to guide the establishment and expansion of human settlements, determine optimal locations for economic activities, and ensure disaster resilience. The current National Physical Plan was first enacted in 2011 and subsequently updated in 2019, with ongoing revisions to address emerging issues such as the COVID-19 pandemic, climate change impacts highlighted by the IPCC, the need to incorporate Sri Lanka’s Exclusive Economic Zone, and recent extreme weather events.

Updating of the existing National Physical Plan - 2050

The National Physical Plan – 2050 has been updated as per the decision of the Cabinet Ministers dated on 02.01.2020 to incorporate some elements to the urban hierarchy.

This was used as an opportunity incorporate the following unforeseen situations

1. The **Covid-19** world pandemic which affected Sri Lanka necessitating dramatic changes to be done in transport, education, employment and other sectors
2. The **Inter-governmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC)** of the United Nations in 2021 highlighted new predictions due to climate change with the potential to affect Sri Lanka
3. The **Exclusive Economic Zone** of the country which is incidentally 23 times the land mass of the country needs to be dealt with in more detail
4. The need to redefine the urban hierarchy based on functions of settlements
5. The need to include updated data and information
6. The need to strengthen the implementation strategy
7. **Recent Natural Disaster “Ditwah” cyclone (27th November to 30th November 2025) ????**

Four guiding policies shape the plan: conservation of unique and critical environments; promotion of livability; optimization of resource use; and unlocking the country’s international development potential. As an island nation, conservation—particularly of water resources, forests, and fragile coastal and central areas—is a primary concern. The plan identifies environmentally sensitive areas, settlement hierarchies, and city networks, including the designation of four major commercial cities, twenty-one national cities to be developed as smart cities, and several urban agglomerations and rural clusters. Strategic targets include increasing national forest cover from 29% to 32%, raising the urban population from 18% to 70%, achieving 100% renewable energy by 2050, and achieving nationwide digital connectivity. Implementation strategies are currently underway at national, provincial, and divisional levels, with ongoing work in all nine provinces and physical plans tailored for regions such as the environmentally fragile Eastern Province.

National Physical Planning Policy: Four Guiding Policies

1. Conservation of the 'Critical' and the 'Unique'

Considered the sensitive settings, water resources and the natural ecosystems for the long sustaining economy and the socio-cultural environment

2. Promotion of the 'Livability' for 'Human'

Considered the environments most appropriate for human habitation in terms of climate, availability of resources for basic needs and essential services

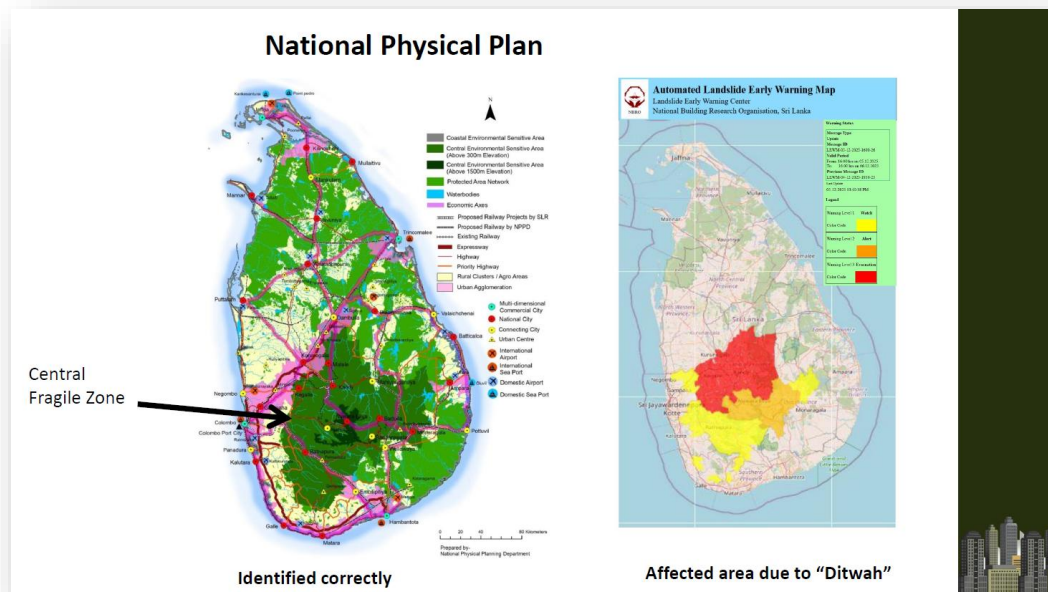
3. Optimization of the 'Utility' of the 'Available'

Considered the optimum use of the available resources and infrastructure for future development and in view of the Sustainable Development Goals

4. Exploration of the 'Potentials' and the 'Enhancement' of the use

Considered the Human Resource locations: where populations with various skills and education levels are located,
Resource locations: such have potentials for diversified developments

Sri Lanka's recent experience with severe cyclones, such as the destructive 'Ditwah' cyclone, has demonstrated the urgent need for well-integrated physical planning and disaster risk reduction. The cyclone caused catastrophic damage, with over 6,000 houses completely lost and more than 110,000 partially damaged, especially in the most environmentally fragile central zone. The National Physical Plan had already identified this area as especially vulnerable. Major challenges remain: public reluctance to relocate from hazard-prone areas, increased frequency and severity of extreme weather events linked to climate change, ongoing environmental degradation, and pressures arising from high population density and limited land resources. Key lessons highlight the importance of integrating disaster preparedness into spatial planning, carrying out planned relocations effectively, and facilitating land use optimization to mitigate risks. Continued commitment to these policies and practices is essential for building resilience and sustainable development in Sri Lanka.



Summary of Discussions

Prof. Matsuyuki (Moderator):

Thank you to all the speakers for your insightful presentations. We observed three common points across your talks: the importance of having a clear spatial vision, the value of stronger regional coordination, and the necessity for realistic implementation methods, including project finance and monitoring. Across all four presentations, there was also a strong emphasis on building the right legal and institutional frameworks, aligning with broader national development priorities, and making disaster risk a central part of regional planning. For this panel discussion, **we would like each speaker to revisit the main challenges they have encountered in preparing and implementing regional plans.**

Mr. Kawano (Japan):

In Japan, we face several major challenges: population decline, an aging society, labor shortages, digital transformation, the pursuit of carbon neutrality, and the need for effective disaster prevention and mitigation. Each region—urban centers, remote islands, peninsulas, and mountainous areas—has unique characteristics that require tailored approaches for sustainable development. Building consensus among the many stakeholders involved is often difficult, but it is crucial. In our recent regional plans, we are working to clarify the specific roles and functions of central cities, regional hubs, and even the smallest village communities. We believe

strengthening inter-regional coordination via transportation networks and digital technologies is key. As demonstrated by the example of Kumamoto's semiconductor industry, infrastructure planning should facilitate strategic industry location, and this is seen as the true role of wide-area regional plans.

Mr. Awal (Bangladesh):

In Bangladesh, we encounter challenges similar to those faced by other South Asian countries. One of the biggest issues is the lack of coordination among government agencies and ministries. Each agency tends to pursue its own interests, leading to unregulated and sometimes reckless development. With the introduction of the new Spatial Planning Act, all projects now require higher-level approvals, and violations attract penalties. Another major obstacle is the lack of comprehensive and coordinated geospatial data, which makes project planning difficult. The transportation systems also struggle, especially with issues like unregistered or informal traffic, complicating efforts to improve mobility and urban safety. Natural disasters, including cyclones and landslides, frequently impact cities, so Bangladesh is focusing on capacity building, seeking international support, and learning from global expertise to help make its cities more resilient and climate-adaptive.

Ms. Jain (India):

While working on regional planning in India's National Capital Region, we consistently encounter three main challenges. The first is weak coordination among the participating states; it often takes a long time to reach consensus, delaying implementation and making it difficult to keep up with changing demographic and economic realities. Second, even though there is a statutory planning board, it lacks adequate enforcement authority, which makes it difficult to ensure states follow through on plans, especially regarding land use. Third, there is a lack of participation—not just by the general public but particularly from the private sector. Because the process is predominantly top-down, many stakeholders are not invited to participate early, which leads to a lack of ownership and makes it much harder to bring plans to life.

Mr. Ranawaka (Sri Lanka):

In Sri Lanka, several challenges are encountered in implementing regional and physical plans. One is public reluctance to relocate from hazard-prone areas, generally due to strong social ties, livelihoods, or issues of land ownership. Even when resettlement is identified as a necessity, there is often unwillingness to move. Another significant problem is the destruction of the environment through unplanned development—deforestation, wetland loss, and coastal damage—which undermines sustainable planning efforts. High population density, especially in certain districts and hilly regions, remains a concern, as does the poverty that makes compliance with development controls difficult. Institutionally, there is a lack of enforcement power to back

up well-crafted national plans, and sometimes political priorities at the regional level do not align with broader planning goals.

Prof. Matsuyuki (Wrap-up):

Thank you very much for your answers. We realize that despite having different contexts, all represented countries face similar regional planning challenges. By learning from each other's experiences, we can discover practical solutions for overcoming these issues. There is a strong belief in the value of continued exchange and collaboration to strengthen the implementation of regional planning.