

The United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) actively supports various levels of government and other stakeholders in promoting integrated land-sea planning. This is essential for fostering a sustainable blue economy and enhancing the resilience of rapidly growing urban coastal populations. Cities and regions have the potential to play a pivotal role in advancing integrated planning approaches that enhance the resilience of both urban settlements and coastal or marine ecosystems. However, they require appropriate enabling frameworks at both national and international levels. One of the key enablers of UN-Habitat's Strategic Plan 2026-2029 is Integrated Urban and Territorial Planning that includes the protection of ecological assets, further ensuring that cities protect, conserve, restore, and promote the ecosystems in and around them, encompassing both land and water environments. Crucial strategies to achieve this include improving waste and water infrastructure, and promoting strategic urban compactness through better planning. These measures are vital for creating connected, integrated, and sustainable coastal urban settings.

UN-Habitat endeavours to drive connections and action within the global environmental arena, bridging global actors and policies with local and national contexts. The organization's policy advice, technical support, knowledge production, and practice sharing are increasingly sought after by rapidly growing coastal cities worldwide. To support these cities in enhancing their interaction with the ocean, UN-Habitat has intensified its collaboration with specialized agencies and multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs). This collaboration aims to meet the cities' needs and promote nature-based solutions to achieve climate and sustainability objectives. Moreover, UN-Habitat actively participates in various platforms to foster knowledge exchange among coastal cities and to catalyze funding. Notable platforms include the Cities with the Ocean initiative, launched by UNESCO's Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC) at the Ocean Decade conference in Barcelona in April 2024, and the Ocean Rise and Resilience Coalition, launched at the third United Nations Ocean Conference in Nice in 2025.

Under the framework of the Global Partnership for Marine Litter and in cooperation with UNEP, UN-Habitat's Waste Wise Cities programme and African Clean Cities Platform are addressing marine litter and plastic pollution by improving municipal solid waste management in coastal cities. In 2021, the programmes launched the [Waste Wise Cities Tool \(WaCT\)](#), a monitoring methodology of Sustainable Development Goal indicator 11.6.1, which allows for rapid assessment and quantification of the municipal solid waste (MSW) generated, collected, and managed in controlled facilities. Collected data with stakeholders consultations are utilized for the formulation of WaCT city profile (see example [here](#)), highlighting infrastructure and policy gap in the MSW system as well as desired future MSW flow, and of MSW strategy and action plan (see example [here](#)). Furthermore, it allows for the estimation of the quantities of plastic leaking into the wider marine ecosystem and to identify sources of such leakage within the municipal solid waste management chain. The tool has been applied and data was collected in almost 50 cities, globally. Collected data through WaCT are available at [this portal](#). GIS modelling was further used through the Spatio-temporal Quantification of Plastic Pollution Origins and Transportation (SPOT) model to generate global estimates on SDG indicator 11.6.1 and identify plastic pollution hotspot that need urgent interventions.

The initial estimated datasets were integrated into [GPML Data Hub](#) and also utilized for further modelling contributing to [OECD's Global Plastic Outlook Policy Scenarios to 2060](#). The SPOT model's estimate currently being updated with newly collected SDG indicator 11.6.1 data and will be published in SDG 11 Synthesis report among others. The estimated data on plastic pollution has a potential to provide a baseline for plastic pollution inventory for parties to the prospected plastic treaty. In relation to this, UNEP and UN-Habitat collaborated and organized an Expert Group Meeting (EGM) on harmonization of various plastic pollution monitoring and modelling methodologies that resulted in the creation of a Community of Practice, which works towards the harmonization of various plastic pollution monitoring and modelling

methodologies. Actions to be taken for the methodological harmonization among different plastic pollution monitoring and modelling methodologies were suggested as an outcome of the EGM. This was adopted as a Terms of Reference for Community of Practice of Methodology Harmonization under the GPML, voluntarily participated by the key monitoring and modelling methodologies developers.

Furthermore, UN-Habitat works with Small Islands Developing States (SIDS) to address their high exposure and vulnerability to climate change. At the global level, UN-Habitat is implementing a project funded by UN DESA to accelerate green, resilient, and pro-poor pandemic recovery towards sustainable urban development in African, Caribbean and Pacific SIDS. The project is a part of the flagship program, 'Resilient Settlements for the Urban Poor' (RISE UP), which aims to mobilize significant investment for urban adaptation, focusing on informal settlements and integrating consideration of layered urban, climate and biodiversity vulnerabilities. Targeting two countries in each region, the project involves concrete actions, tailored to the most striking resilience gaps identified. In Comoros, for example, the program drew on the lessons learned after Cyclone Kenneth and focused on strengthening national regulatory frameworks for land management, to improve urban planning and post-disaster recovery in the future. Apart from tailored measures implemented in the target countries, the global dimension of this programme has allowed for the organization of exchange platforms between key urban resilience stakeholders in SIDS.

In partnership with UNDP, UN-Habitat has launched its global programme for "Integrated Urban Resilience in SIDS and Coastal Cities (IUR-SIDS)". This initiative supports national, regional and local governments in adopting multi-risk analysis and resilience diagnostics to assess vulnerabilities, identify priority actions, and strengthen urban systems against shocks and stresses. Specifically, the programme will diagnose urban resilience through a multidimensional, intersectional, and multi-stakeholder approach, guide governments in implementing inclusive resilience strategies and facilitate knowledge and tools for coastal and SIDS cities to integrate risk reduction, adaptation, and equity into urban planning.

UN-Habitat also supports integrated, resilient, and inclusive urban planning and design across coastal regions worldwide, with initiatives ranging from neighbourhood to city and regional scales. Notable examples include the "Parque de la Equidad" project in Cancún, Mexico, and the Greater Conakry Regional Master Plan in the Republic of Guinea.

Another key initiative is the Water as Leverage programme, a global effort to enhance urban water resilience. Supported by the Government of the Netherlands and implemented through a collaboration with the Netherlands Enterprise Agency (RVO), UN-Habitat, and Deltares, the programme builds the resilience of coastal communities, including in:

- Semarang, Indonesia – project on integrated water planning in a harbor city context
- Chennai, India – the "City of 1,000 Tanks" initiative with a focus on the use of nature-based solutions
- Cartagena, Colombia – a collaboration focusing on coastal resilience through "building with water" strategies

In Africa, UN-Habitat has a special focus on SIDS and coastal cities, and fosters coordination, knowledge exchange and disaster risk management among these high-risk countries and urban areas. To tackle climate vulnerabilities in African SIDS, capacity building approaches focused on urban resilience planning and risk mapping have proven particularly relevant. Both at the local and national level, strengthening knowledge and skills in a participatory manner has helped governments and communities reach a better understanding of climate and disaster risk in highly exposed and vulnerable urban contexts. UN-Habitat has applied its participatory planning and urban resilience building tool, CityRAP, in more than 40 cities across the African continent, including an important number of SIDS and coastal cities. For

instance, in the past years, fifteen municipalities from Guinea Bissau (6), Sao Tome and Principe (2), Cape Verde (3) and Comoros (4) have successfully undertaken CityRAP implementation, and more should add to the list in the coming months. In all these cities, the CityRAP participatory process has led to the creation of Resilience Action plans, articulating the priorities identified by the communities and local stakeholders. With the political support of municipal councils and authorities, these plans are now being implemented and feature integrated resilience interventions including green and grey infrastructure such as roads and drainage, nature-based solutions such as mangrove rehabilitation and rainwater harvesting, solid waste management, and disaster preparedness measures such as evacuation centres and flood early warning systems, complemented by awareness-raising and community mobilisation activities.

As part of the EU-funded Go Blue project, UN-Habitat and UNEP have advanced integrated land-sea planning in Kenya's coastal region (covering 6 counties) through the development of comprehensive land-sea planning guidelines. The project supported the development of a regional data system with hubs in each county, facilitating more integrated planning and evidence-based decision-making. Additionally, the project has supported the ongoing national government efforts of formulating a National Marine Spatial Planning Framework and further assists county-level integration of land and sea planning into the respective County Spatial Plans. This integrated approach is being piloted at several sites, where the project enhanced municipal waste systems by constructing a Material Recovery Facility, revitalized coastal public spaces, and built capacity in Marine Protected Areas. Go Blue also piloted a 'Blue Carbon' initiative aimed at restoring thousands of hectares of coastal mangrove forest in Lamu County, generating resources for local communities through carbon credits. In Mombasa, the project implemented a constructed wetland in an informal settlement to address wastewater management challenges and preventing discharge of raw sewage into the ocean. By engaging resident communities and local governments, the Go Blue project not only addressed environmental concerns but also created jobs in waste recycling and other sectors.

In addition, UN-Habitat is currently implementing an Adaptation Fund project in Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana, aimed at strengthening the resilience of small- to medium-sized coastal settlements. A key objective of the project is to foster greater cooperation between the two countries in addressing shared climate challenges. The project is structured around three main components: (1) Spatial planning for coastal climate adaptation at local, sub-national, and transboundary levels; (2) Concrete adaptation interventions in 21 coastal communities, including early-warning systems, nature-based solutions, and climate-resilient agriculture; (3) Strengthened regional cooperation and knowledge exchange between Ghana and Côte d'Ivoire, as well as with other coastal countries in West Africa.

UN-Habitat's Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific places particular emphasis on supporting Small Island Developing States (SIDS) in the Pacific. As chair of the Pacific Urban Partnership, UN-Habitat plays a key role in advancing the regional urban agenda and regularly convenes the Pacific Urban Forum (PUF). The 6th Pacific Urban Forum, held in 2023, was organized in collaboration with the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat to ensure alignment with the 2050 Strategy for the Blue Pacific Continent. The 7th Pacific Urban Forum is scheduled to take place in Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea, in October 2025.

Several informal settlements upgrading programmes, including the Climate Resilient Honiara initiative and the Fiji Resilient Informal Settlements project, contribute directly to strengthening the resilience of urban communities particularly vulnerable to climate change through integrated approaches that combine climate resilient infrastructure, community-led planning, ecosystem-based adaptation solutions, and capacity-building for local and city-wide governance.

In the Philippines the [Healthy Oceans Clean Cities Initiative](#) provided policy support, in particular the development of local actions plans on marine plastic litter reduction in six cities. The project further supported concrete solutions in these cities as well as community solutions in urban poor “Barangay” (wards).

The [Supporting Blue-Green Recovery, Strengthening Resilience, and Promoting Sustainable Growth in Philippine Cities and Communities through Nature-Based Solutions and Circular Economy](#) (RRSG thru NBS-CE) project, strengthen capacities of government to provide support to vulnerable populations displaced by natural disasters. Alternately called Huy-anan nan Badjao sa Surigao (Home for Badjaos in Surigao), the project supported the implementation of culturally-appropriate nature-based solutions and circular economy for sea-based indigenous Bajau people, with improved housing and sea-based livelihood ensuring sustainability of the marine environment and adaptation to climate change as the new community remained anchored on the sea.

In Sri Lanka, the [Build resilience to climate change and climate variability of vulnerable communities in Mullaitivu District of Sri Lanka](#) project supports vulnerable fisher and farmer communities to adapt to the impacts of climate change through the provision of concrete solutions. These include minimizing saltwater intrusion into freshwater bodies and agricultural land, increasing incomes through higher yields from climate resilient crops, value-added fish processing and restoration of mangroves to improve lagoon fishing, renovation of evacuation routes and building the capacity of communities and local authorities to mainstream community-based climate change adaptation in local development plans.