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LOCAL GOVERNMENTS

NEWSLETTER

UCLG ASPAC
United Cities and Local Governments Asia-Pacific

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FOREWORD

In Loving Memory

Governor Dakila Carlo "Dax" Cua
Governor of Quirino Province,
President of Union of Local Authorities of the Philippines (ULAP)
President of UCLG ASPAC

His wisdom, guidance, and unwavering support will forever echo in our hearts and continue to inspire us.

As climate hits its ultimate urgency, UCLG ASPAC stepped into the paths by encouraging cities to optimise its climate ambition while at the same time supporting its local economy development. This is our vision in taking the theme "Leveraging the Free Trade Port: Building a Green, Smart, and Inclusive Future for Asia-Pacific Cities" in our Council Meeting 2026. As we approached the end of year, we, at the Secretariat Office, are deeply shocked with the passing of Governor Dax. We will forever cherish his spirit and enliven what he believes that "Future is Local". In parallel, we are also proud to be able to facilitate collaborations among members: Innovation Labs for Sustainable Waste Management, Indonesia-China Local Partnerships, Solutions Lab involving Youths, as well to share progress on our role to support the Localisation of ASEAN Community Vision (ACV) 2045.

Collaboration is always at heart of what we do. Join us to make the impacts much stronger!

Dr. Bernadia Irawati Tjandradewi
Secretary General, UCLG ASPAC

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UCLG ASPAC
United Cities and Local Governments Asia-Pacific

HAIKOU: A GLIMPSE OF A SUSTAINABLE URBAN FUTURE IN HAINAN

Haikou is the capital and largest city of China's southernmost island province, Hainan. The city also serves as Hainan's primary seaport and shipping hub, handling more than half of the island's trade. As an important economic centre, Haikou is charting a course toward a more sustainable future, combining industry with creative approaches to drive green transition. We've rounded up some of the must-see sites you won't want to miss when you visit this vibrant city!

The Dongzhai Harbor Mangrove Natural Reserve Area

Also known as Haikou Mangrove, it is a hidden eco-paradise in Hainan. The site has been a focal point for ecological conservation, playing an essential role in supporting a wide variety of species and ecosystems, including mangrove forests, waterfowl habitats, and marine life. It has also been included in the UNESCO World Heritage Sites Tentative List.

Qilou Old Street

It is one of the Chinese famous historic streets, featuring a stylish fusion of European and Asian architecture, as well as Indian and Arabic influences. This is a must-have visit it is the most impressive example of arcade architecture in all of China and, to some extent, is also the symbol of Haikou. It is expected to become a new popular spot in Haikou.

Temple of Five Lords

Wu Gong Ci, or the Temple of Five Lords, are an attractive ancient architectural complex that mainly includes Five Lords Ancestral Hall, the Sugong Memorial Temple, Hairui and Fubo memorial temples, Guanjia Tang (Watching Crop Hall) and Xuepu Tang (Studying Hall). The place is a comprehensive tourist scenic spot integrated with ancient buildings, historical sites, and gardens.

Leiqiong Haikou Volcanic Cluster Global Geopark

Boasting a diverse range of volcanoes, the park resembles a natural geological museum. From the highest point of the crater, visitors can enjoy panoramic views of Haikou City and the Qiongzhou Strait, with captivating scenery.

Hai Rui Tomb

Developed as a cultural park, the tomb stands as a memorial to Hai Rui, a man of great virtue, as well as a symbol of Haikou's deep historical and cultural heritage. The tomb is seen as a reminder of timeless values of integrity, justice, and dedication to the greater good.

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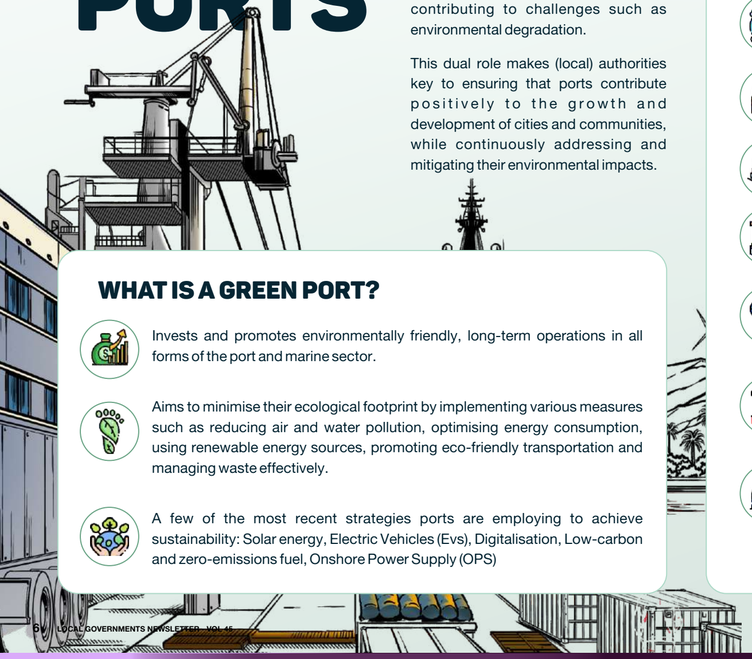
GREEN PORTS

PORTS are gateways to development *(worldbank.org)*. By facilitating trade and supporting supply chains, they serve as catalysts for economic growth and generators of employment. At the same time, ports can put pressure on ecosystems and communities, contributing to challenges such as environmental degradation.

This dual role makes (local) authorities key to ensuring that ports contribute positively to the growth and development of cities and communities, while continuously addressing and mitigating their environmental impacts.



WHAT IS A GREEN PORT?

Invests and promotes environmentally friendly, long-term operations in all forms of the port and marine sector.

Aims to minimise their ecological footprint by implementing various measures such as reducing air and water pollution, optimising energy consumption, using renewable energy sources, promoting eco-friendly transportation and managing waste effectively.

A few of the most recent strategies ports are employing to achieve sustainability: Solar energy, Electric Vehicles (Evs), Digitalisation, Low-carbon and zero-emissions fuel, Onshore Power Supply (OPS)

DID YOU KNOW?

A Green Port embodies eco-friendly practices that minimise environmental harm, optimise energy use, and protect ecosystems while supporting economic growth. *(bureauveritas.id)*

Maritime transport accounts for approximately 2.89% of global CO_2 emissions annually. *(bureauveritas.id)*

80% of global trade volume is transported by sea. *(Infrastructure Asia)*

Asia-Pacific alone accounting for approximately 54% of global seaborne cargo. *(Infrastructure Asia)*

Nine of the world's busiest ports are concentrated in Asia, seven of them located in China. *(qazinform.com)*

Maritime traffic is projected to increase significantly by 2050 – with some estimates suggesting growth of between 240% and 1,200% *(Infrastructure Asia)*

Ports with sustainable practices experience 15-20% operational cost reductions while gaining a competitive edge in global trade networks *(bureauveritas.id)*

The International Maritime Organization (IMO) has committed to reducing greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions from international shipping by at least 50% by 2050 (compared to 2008 emissions), with a strong emphasis on reaching zero emissions. *(u-mas.co.uk)*

WHAT IT TAKES TO BECOME A GREEN PORT

Key criteria include

Energy Efficiency
Ports adopting renewable energy sources such as solar and wind power report energy savings of up to 30%, reducing operational costs and reliance on fossil fuels.

Emission Control
Shore power facilities can cut greenhouse gas emissions from docked ships by up to 90%, contributing significantly to cleaner air quality.

Waste Management
Ports employing modern waste systems have reduced marine waste dumping by as much as 40%, protecting aquatic biodiversity.

Biodiversity Preservation
Initiatives like mangrove planting around port areas reduce coastal erosion and absorb CO2 emissions.

Technology Integration
Digitalised operations enhance efficiency, with some ports reporting up to 20% faster cargo handling while reducing resource wastage.

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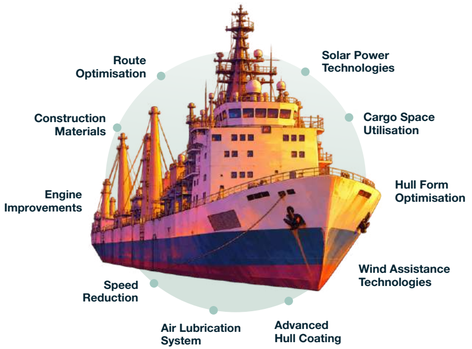
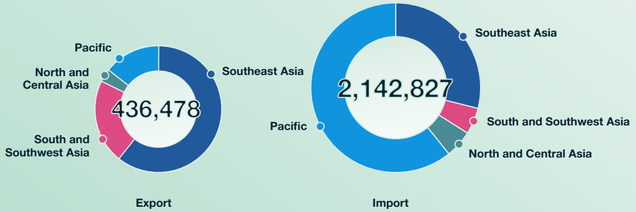
SHIPS AND POSSIBLE EMISSION REDUCTIONS



TOTAL INTRA-REGIONAL SEABORNE TRADE IN THE ASIA-PACIfIC



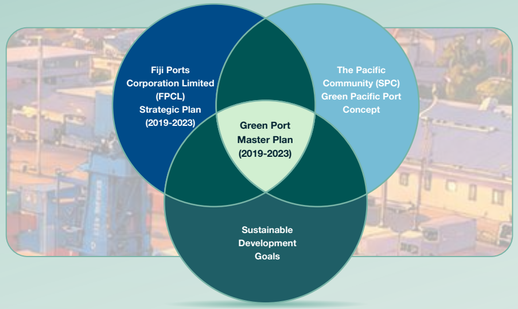
Source: https://www.unescap.org/sites/default/d8files/event-documents/1.2ESCAP.pdf

LEADING GREEN PORT IN THE PACIFIC

FIJI envisions its ports to become “Smart, Green Gateway for Trade in the Pacific region”. To achieve this, Fiji Ports strive to reduce its energy consumption, air pollution, water pollution, environmental pollution and its carbon footprint. *(fijiports.com.fj)*

- **Feature:** The first port in the Pacific to undergo an energy audit in 2016.

STRATEGY



Operations

Improving port operations efficiency

- Quality Management
- Legal Framework
- Climate Resilience

Energy

Reducing port carbon footprint

- Energy Management
- Energy Audits
- Energy Conservation

Environment

Preventing port marine pollution

- Environmental Management
- Waste Management
- Pollution Response

FOCUS AREAS

ENVIRONMENT

- GHG Emissions
- Air Pollution
- Water Pollution
- Land-based water and litter
- Resource usage
- Cleaner port
- Well maintained green spaces in port areas

STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

- Raising awareness of green port issues and environmental concerns
- Enforcement of regulations
- Enabling assistance – helping stakeholders reduce their own environmental footprints

ASSESSING AND REPORTING

- Carbon footprint
- Air quality index
- Water quality
- Land based waste and litter
- Port cleanliness measured
- Port green space growth

RESULTS

- **3,607 MWH**
  FPCL’s average energy consumption per annum
- **11%**
  Average reduction of energy consumption over t he last five years
- **1,291 TCO2-E**
  FPCL’s carbon footprint per annum
- **11%**
  average car bon footprint reduction over the last five years
- **$1.1M**
  Total invested
- **13**
  Key projects implemented

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HAIKOU: ZERO CARBON PARK

Haikou National High-Tech Industrial Development Zone has recently been selected as Hainan's sole pilot for a national-level-zero-carbon-park. The selection is the implementation of the commitment made by the Chinese government to foster green manufacturing through creating more than 6,400 national-level green factories and 491 green industrial parks, a national effort to shift toward low-carbon industrial development. The Haikou zone, with a total planned area of 85.42 km^2, aims to build a "model room" for a zero-carbon park with Hainan Free Trade Port characteristics within five years. This high-tech, eco-friendly vision is part of Hainan's goal to create China's first pilot zero-carbon park, blending cutting-edge technologies with smart systems to reduce carbon emissions.

DEVELOPMENT GOALS:

Development of the "3+X" industrial mix

- "3" referring to biopharmaceuticals, high-end food processing, and eco-friendly industries
- "X" referring to advanced manufacturing.

Encompassing all three industrial pillars of tourism, modern services, and high-tech industry.

- For tourism, priorities are given to "tourism + sports," film and television performances, duty-free shopping and sports.
- For modern services, the development of culture, sports, tourism, and film services, as well as professional services, are prioritised to create a demonstration zone for service industry cooperation among Hainan, Hong Kong, and Macao.

THE SEVEN PARKS IN ONE ZONE

Mei'an Eco-Tech New City

- Planned area of 39.34 km^2,
- Focused on pharmaceuticals and medical devices and advanced manufacturing, and focuses on the production, R&D, and certification of pharmaceutical products, the production and R&D of medical devices, and new industries integrated with pharmaceutical products, advanced manufacturing, modern services, etc.

Medicine Valley Industrial Park

- Planned area of 6.52 km^2
- Focused on the manufacture of biomedical and healthcare products, and focuses on the production and R&D of pharmaceuticals and healthcare products and the development of the Li medicine industry, etc.

Shiziling Industrial Park

- Planned area of 5.82 km^2
- Focused on food processing and new materials, high-end food processing, the development and application of new energy technologies, electrical equipment, electronic information and light industry packaging, etc.

Haima Industrial Park

- Planned area of 1.85 km^2
- Focused on the automobile industry, and the production and R&D of environmentally-friendly new energy vehicles, automobile part production, automobile logistics, etc.

Yunlong Industrial Park

- Planned area of 3.35 km^2
- Focused on advanced manufacturing encompassing energy saving & environmental protection industries, the development and application of new biodegradable materials and environmental protection technologies, etc.

Mission Hills Resort

- Planned area of 26.03 km^2
- Focused on sports and leisure tourism, and focuses on the development of sports events (golf, football, etc.), film and television performances, duty-free shopping, business and leisure, culture, sport, etc.

West Coast Headquarters Economic Zone

- Planned area of 2.51 km^2
- Focused on creating headquarters economy, information technology and modern services clusters.

Results Expected

- Creating a "model room" for a zero-carbon park with Hainan Free Trade Port characteristics within five years
- Create China's first pilot zero-carbon park, blending cutting-edge technologies with smart systems to reduce carbon emissions.

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"We are turning buildings into power generators. With real-time dispatch capabilities, we are reducing carbon emissions and ensuring the park remains self-sustaining,

Mr. Zheng Yuhua,
General Manager of
Hainan Special Economic
Zone Donghu High-tech
Investment Co.

LONG AN INTERNATIONAL PORT

Long An Province (Viet Nam), from its inception and throughout its development, has aimed for green and sustainable growth. The province has also envisioned to transform Long An International Port into a logistics hub, to serve the eastern and western regions of the Mekong Delta and the southern economic zone.

THE VENTURES TOWARD SUSTAINABILITY

Promoting a Green Port

- Container bus project is designed to enhance inland waterway transportation, reduce costs, and minimise emissions.
- Regularly conduct training sessions for staff on environmental protection awareness and resource conservation.

Clean Energy

- Warehouse system installed with solar panels, with a capacity of over 10 MW.
- Aiming (towards 2030) for the use of shore power.

Green Energy

- Employ energy-efficient LED lighting solutions (saving 75% of energy, lasting 25% times longer than incandescent bulbs), solar lighting for landscaping, architecture, and illumination.
- Optimise operational efficiency of the port with modern equipment, infrastructure, and advanced technology (CATOS, MOST).
- New fleet trucks meet Euro 5 standards (world standards for reducing emissions).
- Cranes are 100% electric-powered (the full cycle of one RTG crane results in 5,400 tons of CO_2 emissions if diesel-powered).
- Exploring the use of operating equipment powered by electricity or renewable energy sources.

IT Applications

- Utilise autogate software for port entry and exit registration.
- Online connectivity for organisational management, meetings, etc.

Resource Utilisation

- Prioritise the use of environmentally friendly and recyclable materials.
- Practice water conservation.

Environmental Protection

- Adopt solutions to prevent air pollution.
- Vehicles entering the port must meet state emission standards.
- Greenery is spread throughout the premises to create a pleasant environment, provide shade, and promote environmental friendliness.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The first Vietnamese enterprise to receive “Smart Green Port Company of the Year 2026” award from Frost & Sullivan under its Asia-Pacific Best Practices Awards 2026

Highlights:

- An integrated digital ecosystem linking enterprise management and port operations through platforms including SAP S/4HANA, Terminal Operating System (TOS), E-Port and Warehouse Management System (WMS). The system connects port terminals, warehouses, transport services and customers, helping improve operational efficiency, increase transparency and optimise logistics operations.
- Implementation of green initiatives, including rooftop solar power systems, electrification of cargo-handling equipment, the use of electric cranes and energy-saving technologies, contributing to Vietnam’s commitment to achieving net-zero emissions.
- Digital transformation and the development of an integrated port-industrial-logistics ecosystem.

PARTNERSHIP WITH PORT OF KOBE: DRIVEN BY SUSTAINABILITY, PURSUING FOR DEVELOPMENT

Long An International Airport signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) in November 2025, with Port of Kobe to establish a Strategic Port Partnership focusing on:

- Joint development of green port and smart port models
- Enhancing maritime transport capacity and expanding cargo throughput at both ports
- Sharing best practices in port governance, operations, and modern terminal management
- Facilitating connections with global partners and customers
- Applying advanced management technologies to reduce carbon emissions
- Training and exchanging high-quality logistics professionals in line with international standards and practices

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VOC PORT - MODEL FOR GREEN AND SUSTAINABLE PORT INITIATIVE

The V.O. Chindambaranar (VOC) Port is one of major ports in India. The port authority has successfully transformed VOC, enabling it to contribute to India's National Green Hydrogen Mission (NGHM), that expects ports to play a pivotal role in the emerging hydrogen economy, functioning not merely as logistics gateways but as integrated energy hubs. The port serves as a production and distribution hub for green hydrogen and its derivatives like ammonia and methanol, strengthening India's clean energy transition.

INITIAL MOVE

In September 2025, the Port Authority commissioned India's first port-based green hydrogen pilot project, with a modest production capacity designed to power internal applications such as street lighting and electric vehicle charging within the port premises. While limited in scale, the pilot served as a proof of concept, enabling the port to build operational familiarity with hydrogen production and integration in a maritime setting.

The port was formally designated as a Green Hydrogen Hub by the Ministry of New and Renewable Energy, placing it among a select group of ports prioritised for infrastructure development and policy support. This recognition facilitated access to incentives, enhanced investor confidence, and signalled the port's intent to evolve from a conventional cargo-handling facility into a broader energy and industrial platform.

STRATEGIC ASSETS

- Geographic positioning
- Land availability
- Resource proximity
- Operational stability

a combination of physical and institutional advantages that are not easily imitated by competing locations.

BUILDING THE HYDROGEN ECOSYSTEM

- **The Industrial Scale-Up**

It was driven by the entry of large energy developers seeking to establish production facilities for green hydrogen and its derivatives. Companies such as Green Infra (SembCorp) along with many domestic and international companies have expressed interest through Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs) and land allocation proposals representing planned investments up to 50,000 crore

- **Infrastructure Convergence: Power, Water & Policy**
- **Development of the Kandla–Tuticorin Coastal Green Shipping Corridor, a pilot route for low-emission maritime transport**.

This initiative involves collaboration with other port authorities and shipping entities to promote the use of alternative fuels such as green methanol and green ammonia. To support this transition, VOC Port has initiated the development of methanol bunkering infrastructure, including facilities for storing and supplying green methanol to vessels. The corridor is expected to serve as a "living laboratory," enabling stakeholders to test technologies, operational models, and regulatory frameworks associated with green shipping.

The VOC Port Authority still continues to navigate the challenges facing the port and, at the same time, optimising its potentials. VOC Port has already recorded impressive achievements.

PORT CONTRIBUTIONS

- Reducing net carbon emissions by 45%
- Renewable energy now offsets nearly 94% of the port's energy-consumption equivalent

AWARDS AND RECOGNITIONS

- Winner of the prestigious 25th Environment & Sustainability Award 2026 under the category "Environment Protection".
- Green Port of the Year and Smart Port & Digital Transformation Project of the Year awards.
- Green Gateway Awards 2026: Green Port of the Year, Excellence in Clean Energy Integration, Digital Innovation in Port Operations
- Scope-2 Emission Free Port by Bureau Veritas (the first major port in India to receive this recognition)
- "Excellence in Motion: Re-defining the Future of Logistics in India" Award 2026 under the category "Green and Sustainable Logistics – Decarbonisation Champion" presented by the Indian Chamber of Commerce (ICC), 2026, in New Delhi.
- Gold Award at the Greentech Energy Management Excellence Award 2026 ceremony held on 12 May 2026 in New Delhi, in the category of Excellent Energy Management.
- Silver Award at the Greentech Energy Management Excellence Award 2026 ceremony held on 12 May 2026 in New Delhi, in the category of Renewable Energy Integration.
- Gold Award at the Greentech Energy Management Excellence Award 2026 ceremony held on 12 May 2026 in New Delhi, in the category of Measurable Energy Savings & Impact.

Sources:
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URBAN CLIMATE FORUM 2026: ADVANCING URBAN TRANSFORMATION THROUGH CLIMATE ACTION AND GOVERNANCE

UCLG ASPAC, in close partnership with several Ministries in Indonesia and partners, organised the Urban Climate Forum 2026, bringing together more than 300 participants, representatives from 15 ministries and government agencies, and delegations from 13 countries across the Asia-Pacific region to strengthen collaboration on sustainable, inclusive, and climate-resilient urban development.

INSIGHTS FROM ESTEEMED SPEAKERS

Agus Harimurti Yudhoyono (AHY), Coordinating Minister for Infrastructure and Regional Development of the Republic of Indonesia, stated, “Urban development should not merely pursue progress and prosperity; it must also be liveable, inclusive, green, and resilient.”

Febrian Alphyanto Ruddyard, Vice Minister of National Development Planning/Deputy Head of the National Development Planning Agency of the Republic of Indonesia, stated, “Cities will determine our productivity, the quality of jobs, and how people access housing, transport, education, healthcare, clean water, and public spaces. Increasingly, cities will also determine Indonesia’s ability to address climate change.”

Bima Arya Sugiarto, Vice Minister of Home Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia, stated, “Local governments stand on the front line, as they possess the deepest understanding of their territories and play a critical role in translating national policies into actionable measures.”

Diana Kusumastuti, Vice Minister of Public Works of the Republic of Indonesia, stated, “ … urban growth must go hand in hand with resource efficiency and emissions reduction.”

Fahri Hamzah, Vice Minister of Housing and Settlement Areas of the Republic of Indonesia, stated, “Adequate housing represents the front line of climate resilience, and the urban climate crisis is fundamentally a humanitarian housing crisis.”

Diaz Faisal Malik Hendropriyono, Vice Minister of Environment of the Republic of Indonesia, “With growing populations and finite land, urban development must prioritise efficiency, adaptability, and sustainability.”

Bernadia Irawati Tjandradewi, Secretary General of UCLG ASPAC, stated, “As an organisation headquartered in Jakarta, UCLG ASPAC remains dedicated to supporting cities and local governments in Indonesia and beyond through capacity building, knowledge exchange, and regional cooperation.”

THE THOUGHT BEHIND

Climate change cannot be addressed separately from urban development. The way cities are planned, financed and managed today will shape their ability to cope with future climate risks while supporting inclusive economic and social development. This requires climate considerations to be integrated into spatial planning, infrastructure investment, housing, mobility, water management, waste management and other areas of local development.

HIGH-LEVEL DIALOGUE

The first High-Level Dialogue drew on the experiences of East Java Province (Vice Governor Emil Dardak), Semarang City (Mayor Agustina Wilujeng Pramestuti), and Bogor City (Mayor Dedie A. Rachim), underlining that public transport should be treated as a public service rather than a profit-driven enterprise, supported by consistent public funding and policies that promote accessibility, particularly for vulnerable groups.

The second High-Level Dialogue explored experiences from Surabaya (Ms. Tri Rismaharini, Ambassador, United Cities and Local Governments Asia-Pacific), Padang (Mayor Fadly Amran), and Medan (Mayor Rico Tri Putra Bayu Waas): approaches to addressing climate-related challenges through flood mitigation, coastal resilience, spatial planning reforms, river revitalisation, urban greening, waste management, and low-emission transport initiatives. National government representatives (Deputy Minister Teguh Sambodo of Bappenas, and Director Franky Zamzami of Ministry of Environment) reaffirmed support through regulatory frameworks, technical assistance, and access to international climate financing mechanisms, while the handover of Padang City’s Voluntary Local Review (VLR) underscored the role of local governments in advancing sustainable development.

KEY KNOWLEDGE PRODUCTS AND NEW INITIATIVES

The Urban Climate Forum 2026 marked the launch of several strategic knowledge products and initiatives: the Mapping Report of Urban Practices within the National Urban Policy (KPN) 2045 Framework, the APLG Learning Platform, announcement of the Urban Mobility Governance Award, a new initiative designed to recognise and promote leadership in integrated, inclusive, and sustainable urban mobility governance across Indonesia, and sharing the results and progress of Urban-Act project implementation in Indonesia.

WHERE THE FORUM LANDED

The Forum called for greater attention to urban development and climate action across all levels of government: pushing through stronger coordination across ministries and levels of government, better integration of urban and climate priorities into local development and spatial planning, greater attention to inclusion and urban equity, and collaboration across administrative boundaries to strengthen the implementation of the national urban policy and ensure that urban climate issues remain part of the broader development agenda.

UCLG ASPAC highly appreciates the involvement of various Ministries and partners in making this event a great success and welcomes follow-up actions to further its impacts.

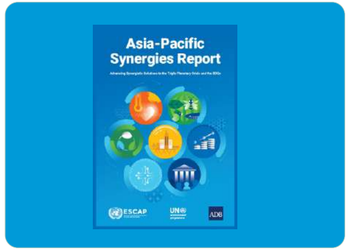
CLIMATE AND SDG SYNERGIES, LOCAL GOVERNMENTS' VOICES, SUPPORT TO CITIES

UCLG ASPAC brought the perspectives of Asia-Pacific's local and regional governments to key discussions on climate–SDG synergies, urban resilience, digital transformation, climate finance, and regional cooperation through its participations in the 7th Global Conference on Strengthening Synergies between the Paris Agreement and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, held back-to-back with the Ninth Session of the Committee on Environment and Development at the United Nations Conference Centre (Bangkok, June 29 – July 3, 2026).

UCLG ASPAC, represented by Secretary General Dr. Bernadia Irawati Tjandradewi, advocated for cities and local governments to move beyond being viewed as mere implementers of national policies. She highlighted the transformations and enabling environments required to achieve this vision and outlined one of UCLG ASPAC's approaches to leveraging artificial intelligence among cities and local governments in response to the discussions.

SHE EMPHASISED THAT:

1. The main challenge is no longer a lack of commitments, but rather a delivery gap. Global climate and SDG ambitions must be translated into integrated local mandates, plans, budgets and implementable projects.
2. Cities serve as essential delivery platforms, and local governments should not be treated merely as the "last mile" of implementation.
3. Localisation without adequate resources is ineffective.
4. Cities must move beyond isolated pilot projects towards institutional transformation. Successful approaches should be integrated into municipal planning, budgeting, procurement and service delivery systems, supported by multilevel governance, regional cooperation and city-to-city learning.
5. Improving cities' access to climate finance requires more than simply increasing available funds. Local governments need predictable fiscal resources, enhanced financial capacity, technical assistance and stronger linkages with development partners and financing institutions.
6. Digital innovation is an enabler, rather than an end in itself. Smart city initiatives should be assessed based on their ability to improve services, reduce emissions, strengthen resilience, and address community needs, rather than by the number of technologies deployed.
7. Regional city networks are implementation platforms that connect cities, facilitate the exchange and adaptation of proven solutions, strengthen institutional capacity, and help ensure that successful local approaches inform national and regional climate policies.



LAUNCH OF THE ASIA-PACIFIC SYNERGY REPORT

UCLG ASPAC Secretariat is also proud to contribute to the development of the Asia-Pacific Synergy Report, a collaborative initiative involving ESCAP, UNEP, UCLG ASPAC, the World Bank and the Institute for Global Environmental Strategies (IGES), with financial support from the Ministry of the Environment, Japan. The report provides recommendations for advancing climate–SDG synergies through pathways focused on cities and resilience, the circular economy, nature-positive approaches, and health-centred climate action.

The report provides recommendations for advancing synergies in addressing tripple planetary crisis - climate change, biodiversity loss, and polution and waste. It can be done through pathways focused on cities and resilience, the circular economy, nature-positive approches, and health-centred climate action.

2026 HIGH-LEVEL POLITICAL FORUM

UCLG ASPAC attended the 2026 High-Level Political Forum (New York, July 14-16, 2026) and made interventions in various sessions, including the Local and Regional Government (LRG) Day, SDG 11 Side Event, as well as shared recommendations for the post-2030 development agenda during the Future of Education and the Post-2030 Agenda session and the Bridging Science, Policy, and Practice to Address the Triple Planetary Crisis: Strengthening Synergies for the SDGs and a Sustainable Post-2030 Future session.

SDGS LOCALISATION - SUPPORT TO SUB-NATIONAL GOVERNMENTS

UCLG ASPAC, in partnership with the National Secretariat for SDGs of Indonesia's Ministry of National Development Planning (Sekretariat Nasional/Seknas SDGs) and Tanoto Foundation, supported Central Java, Riau, East Kalimantan, and North Sumatra in developing their Regional Action Plans (Rencana Aksi Daerah/RAD) for the SDGs (RAD SDGs) 2025–2030 between January and May 2026.

INNOVATION LAB IN DEPOK: CITIES EXCHANGING SOLUTIONS FOR SUSTAINABLE WASTE MANAGEMENT

UCLG ASPAC, in collaboration with the Government of Depok City, convened a City-to-City Learning and Innovation Lab: Waste Management Practices (July 28-29, 2026). More than 100 participants, including governors, mayors, senior government officials, environmental practitioners, and development partners, to exchange practical experiences, innovative technologies, and financing approaches to accelerate sustainable waste management and advance the transition towards a circular economy.

POLICY, GOVERNANCE, AND PRACTICAL SOLUTIONS FROM CITIES

Panel session on policy and governance called for a shift in perspective—from treating waste primarily as a disposal problem to recognising it as a valuable resource. Representatives from cities and regions shared a range of good practices and innovative approaches.

Southeast Sulawesi Vice Governor Hugua shared Wakatobi's community-based approach to changing public perceptions of waste; Depok highlighted its integrated efforts combining neighbourhood-based waste banks, maggot cultivation, and Climate Village (ProKlim) programmes, alongside the exploration of artificial intelligence to support downstream processing. Banda Aceh Mayor Illiza presented its community-based solid waste management initiatives, including methane utilisation and women's participation in circular economy activities. Makassar Mayor Munafri outlined its vision of achieving a Waste-Free Makassar by 2029 through waste segregation, composting, and urban farming. Bogor, meanwhile, highlighted the importance of regional cooperation in advancing waste-to-energy development.

FINANCING AND GOVERNANCE FOR LONG-TERM IMPACT

Site Visit 1
Smart Farming Programme Bakti Jaya

Site Visit 2
Biomagg

In the second panel discussion, Jambi Mayor Maulana promoted the model implemented by Operator Pengelola Bentor Mandiri (OPBM/Independent Motorised Pedicab) which reduces the volume of waste sent to landfill while creating new livelihood opportunities. Bontang shared policies aimed at strengthening the Reduce, Reuse, and Recycle (3Rs) Waste Management Facility (Tempat Pengolahan Sampah 3R/TPS3R) and reducing food waste. Banyumas presented its transition away from landfill dependency towards decentralised, community-managed waste processing, producing refuse-derived fuel (RDF), biomass, and other value-added products. Kendari discussed plans to expand integrated waste processing through partnerships with industrial off takers, while Malang Regency showcased digital monitoring systems and Material Recovery Facilities (MRFs) to enhance operational efficiency and resource recovery. Discussion concluded with agreement that technical innovation alone is insufficient without investment-ready projects, strong governance, and sustainable financing.

Two parallel thematic group discussions were also held, focusing on Technical, Technology, and Waste Management Practices and Governance, Policy, and Waste Management Financing. Participants concluded that successful urban waste management requires a balanced approach that strengthens waste reduction and segregation at the upstream level while investing in downstream processing solutions tailored to local contexts. Effective governance also requires enabling policies, strong institutional coordination, diversified financing mechanisms, and well-prepared investment proposals. Participants further emphasised the importance of integrating informal waste workers — including waste pickers — into formal waste management systems through cooperatives, appropriate institutional arrangements, and inclusive policies.

Participants also had the opportunity to explore local initiatives firsthand through a series of site visits, gaining practical insights into community-level approaches to integrated waste management and the circular economy.

CONCLUSION: STRENGTHENING COLLABORATION FOR SUSTAINABLE CITIES

The Lab concluded with a shared commitment among participating cities and local governments to strengthen collaboration through the UCLG ASPAC network and continue exchanging practical solutions for sustainable urban development. By bringing together policy innovation, appropriate technology, innovative financing, active community participation, and the mainstreaming of Gender Equality, Disability, and Social Inclusion (GEDSI) considerations, the programme reaffirmed the importance of ensuring the meaningful participation of women, children, and other vulnerable groups in sustainable urban development.

LOCALISING ASEAN COMMUNITY VISION (ACV) 2045: VALIDATION MEETING

UCLG ASPAC, under the framework of the ASEAN Governors and Mayors Forum (AGMF), convened a validation and consultation session on the draft Localisation Package for the ASEAN Community Vision (ACV) 2045 on September 16, 2026, bringing together representatives of the Committee of Permanent Representatives to ASEAN (CPR), the ASEAN Secretariat, local governments, and academic and research institutions.

The session introduced the key components and functions of the proposed package, including the framework, guideline, indicator matrix, and monitoring tools, and invited participants to discuss how the package could be practical and applied in different local government contexts across the region. Their feedback will help further refine the package ahead of its formal launch at the AGMF 2026 in Manila on November 18–19, 2026. The event was attended by Dr. Bernadia Irawati Tjandradewi, Secretary-General of UCLG ASPAC, and H.E. Ambassador Evangeline T. Ong, Permanent Representative of the Republic of the Philippines to ASEAN.

UNDERSTANDING THE LOCALISATION PACKAGE

The AGMF Secretariat, hosted by UCLG ASPAC, introduced the proposed Localisation Package, which seeks to address gaps between regional ambition and local action. The package brings together complementary tools to support the ACV 2045 translation through the Framework, implementation through the Guideline, and Evidence through the Monitoring Tool. Together, these components seek to connect ACV 2045 with the priorities and actions of cities and local governments, identify the support, resources and capacities that may be relevant to them, and make local contributions visible to support peer learning and regional policy discussions.

The indicators form an important part of the monitoring approach, providing a way to capture both local conditions and local contributions. They are intended to provide the basis for how local progress and contributions can be reflected and visualised through the proposed monitoring platform, helping to build a clearer picture of how local action relates to the broader objectives of ACV 2045.

In general, the package allows local governments to identify actions relevant to their own priorities and context before considering which indicators are most appropriate to reflect them, while allowing for differences in local mandates, priorities, and capacities.

It also builds on existing local plans, budgets and reporting systems. Participation is voluntary, mandate-sensitive and selective, which the presenters described as reflecting "the ASEAN Way".

The discussion focused on how the proposed package is strategically sound, coherent, and feasible for governments at different levels. Participants considered how localisation could complement existing frameworks such as SDG localisation, national, provincial, and municipal development plans, while also providing value to local governments.

Experiences from Southeast Sulawesi, Viet Nam, Dili Municipality, Jakarta, Kendari, and Pursat Province highlighted the different institutional and governance contexts in which local governments operate. Dr. Ha Thi Minh Duc, Counsellor of the Permanent Mission of Viet Nam to ASEAN, shared the country's experience in translating the ASCC Blueprint through national and provincial planning processes, reflecting a context where coordination across levels of government plays an important role. Other participants shared perspectives from local governments working within their respective mandates and authorities, underscoring the need for the localisation package to accommodate diverse governance arrangements.

Participants also raised questions about how local contributions could be recognised at the regional level and how the localisation process could remain manageable for local governments. Experiences from Jakarta and Kendari drew on existing SDG localisation practices, where local priorities are identified according to their respective contexts and mandates. These exchanges provided further perspectives to inform the continued refinement of the proposed package.

On a more operational level, the second session introduced the Localisation Web Platform to support local government participation and make local contributions more visible. The platform is envisaged to bring together information, local contributions, and relevant resources in one place, while providing a potential connection between local action and regional-level discussions. The AGMF Secretariat highlighted the platform's potential connection with the ASEAN Smart Cities Network and reaffirmed AGMF's facilitative role in supporting local governments as key actors in localisation.

Local government representatives, country representatives, and academic institutions sharing their perspectives and feedback.

TURNING THE HEAT INTO ACTION: HOW ILOILO CITY AND COX'S BAZAR ARE RESPONDING TO URBAN HEAT

URBAN HEAT AS A LOCAL CHALLENGE

Extreme heat is becoming an increasingly pressing concern for cities across Asia and the Pacific. Rising temperatures, changes in land use, expanding built-up areas, and increasing exposure can affect public health, livelihoods, productivity, infrastructure, and how people use public spaces. For local governments, responding to heat is not only about managing individual heat events. It also requires understanding where heat risks are concentrated, who is most exposed, how people experience heat in their daily lives, and what local institutions can realistically do before and during periods of extreme heat.

The Urban Heat Action Plan (UHAP) can help cities translate heat-risk information into a clear set of priorities, actions, and responsibilities. The focus therefore shifts from simply identifying heat risks to determining what can be done, who needs to be involved, and how responses can be integrated into the systems and mechanisms that cities already have in place.

UCLG ASPAC as an implementing partner of the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) under the Climate Action for a Resilient Asia (CARA) programme, supported by the United Kingdom's Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (UK FCDO), provided technical assistance to strengthen urban heat resilience in Iloilo City (the Philippines) and Cox's Bazar (Bangladesh).

FROM PLANNING TO COLLECTIVE ACTION

ILOILO CITY

About: Residents have experienced heat index levels of up to 47°C, heightening concerns about the impacts of extreme heat. The city has already introduced a range of measures, including heat-index advisories and class-suspension thresholds, heat-safety protocols, temperature-regulated facilities, automated weather stations, heat-vulnerability mapping, water distribution, urban greening, rainwater harvesting, cooling hubs, and public information campaigns.

During the workshop: Review of the city's heat-risk assessment and identification of several inland and coastal areas with particularly high levels of heat exposure.

Next Step: Focus on urban pocket gardens as a place-based cooling intervention. Building on the city's interest in urban greening, the pilot responds to the need for more accessible green spaces that can provide shade, improve thermal comfort, and contribute to more climate-responsive public spaces. It will also explore how nature-based measures can be applied at the local level to address identified heat risks.

COX'S BAZAR

About: The city's coastal setting and warm, humid climate can intensify physiological heat stress, particularly when high temperatures coincide with high humidity and warm nights. The city recorded a monthly maximum temperature of 40.2°C in April 2024, while very high land-surface temperatures have also been identified in some built-up areas. These have implicated people whose livelihoods involve prolonged outdoor exposure, including those working in tourism, fisheries, salt production, construction, transport, and humanitarian activities.

During the workshop: Emphasis on the capacity to anticipate, monitor, communicate, and respond to extreme heat. Considerations on temperature levels, preparedness, access to information, working conditions, public facilities, and institutional capacity.

Next Step: Focus on strengthening local heat preparedness and early action, responding to the need for improved monitoring of heat conditions, timely access to heat-related information, and places where people can seek relief during periods of extreme heat.

As heat becomes an increasingly pressing urban concern across Asia and the Pacific, the experiences of these two cities highlight the importance of starting with the realities of each place. Effective heat action depends on understanding local risks, listening to the people who experience them, working across institutional boundaries, and translating this understanding into practical measures that cities can implement, sustain, and build upon over time.

STRENGTHENING INDONESIA–CHINA LOCAL PARTNERSHIPS FOR A SHARED FUTURE

UCLG ASPAC, together with the Chinese People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries (CPAFFC), the Consulate General of the People's Republic of China in Surabaya, and the Yogyakarta City Government, co-organised the China–Indonesia Dialogue on Local Government Cooperation 2026, under the theme "Set Sail on a New Voyage: Local Cooperation for Building a China–Indonesia Community with a Shared Future" in Yogyakarta, August 11, 2026. The dialogue directly connected local governments in Indonesia and China, facilitating firsthand discussions on potential areas of cooperation and bringing collaboration opportunities closer to implementation.

The Dialogue was also positioned within the broader effort to localise the ASEAN Community Vision 2045, recognising that cooperation among cities and local governments is essential to advancing inclusive and sustainable regional development.

This dialogue commenced with insightful remarks from Mr. Yang Wanming, President of CPAFFC; Dr. Bernadia Irawati Tjandradewi, Secretary General of UCLG ASPAC; H.E. Mr. Ye Su, Consul General of the People's Republic of China in Surabaya; Mr. Wawan Harmawan, Vice Mayor of Yogyakarta; and Mr. Ghofar Ismail, Head of International Affairs and Investment Office, Government of the Special Region of Yogyakarta.

SEVEN SHARED COMMITMENTS

Commitment of cities and local governments was further formalised through the signing of the Board of Commitment and Cooperation, which articulated seven shared commitments: strengthening friendship and mutual trust; fostering practical cooperation; advancing sustainable development; promoting good local governance; encouraging people-to-people exchanges; building a shared future; and sharing knowledge and best practices.

CONNECTING LOCAL GOVERNMENTS WITH BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES

Through the Interactive Thematic Matchmaking Session, Indonesian and Chinese local governments, businesses, and investors came together to explore cooperation opportunities across several areas, including trade and investment, tourism and culture, and agribusiness and healthcare. Participants moved freely between thematic cooperation tables, engaging directly with cities and enterprises that aligned with their interests.

The discussions also explored prospective cooperation between Yogyakarta and Urumqi across a range of areas, including investment, education, culture, tourism, the creative economy, technology, and scholarships.

BRINGING CITY-TO-CITY PARTNERSHIP CLOSER TO REALITY

Through two thematic sessions, participating cities and local governments from both countries highlighted their respective regional strengths and explored potential areas for collaboration.

Thematic Sessions	Participating Cities from Indonesia	Participating Cities from China
Expanding practical cooperation and promoting mutually beneficial outcomes for local development	Probolinggo, Klaten, North Minahasa	Changsha, Yunnan, Bayannur (together with the One-Stop Overseas Service Base Northern China)
Strengthening people-to-people exchanges and cooperation in culture, tourism, and environmental sustainability	Jambi, Kendari, Pangkal Pinang, Malang	Dezhou, Nanchong (together with the Indonesia–China Friendship Association, Asian Affairs of the Beijing People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries)

ASIA-PACIFIC MAYORS ACADEMY ON ITS 7TH YEAR

UCLG ASPAC plays an active role in the Asia-Pacific Mayors Academy as a permanent member of its Advisory Board. 2026 marks the 7th year since the Academy was established by the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat), and UCLG ASPAC, in cooperation with United Nations University, Institute for the Advanced Study of Sustainability (UNU-IAS), the Association of Pacific Rim Universities (APRU), and Institute for Global Environmental Strategies (IGES).

The Asia-Pacific Mayors Academy is a regional undertaking that provides capacity building for newly elected or appointed mayors in support of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the New Urban Agenda. Mayors undergo a comprehensive and intensive online training with experts and are expected to develop a concrete initiative that will address a specific challenge in their city or municipality. The modules cover the areas of leadership, crisis management, urban and territorial planning, urban resilience, smart cities, and urban finance.

The 7th cohort of Mayors is set to complete the Academy this November 2026. Candidates for graduation include 10 Mayors from four countries in the Asia-Pacific region: Indonesia (Kendari City), Nepal (Barekot Rural Municipality), the Philippines (Bacoor City, Iloilo City, Lapu-Lapu City, Magaro Municipality, Makati City, Pilar Municipality, and Viga Municipality) and Sri Lanka (Puttalam Municipal Council). UCLG ASPAC led the module on Navigating a Multi-Crisis Context highlighting how integrated solutions can strengthen local responses to the triple planetary crisis and future shocks.

THE MAYOR'S COMPASS

UCLG ASPAC Podcast captures the voice of local governments leaders, innovators, and young changemakers shaping the future of Asia-Pacific. Led by the UCLG ASPAC Secretary General, the series features a 15-minute, casual-conversation format and is scheduled for release every two months, ideally in English while remaining open to other languages to ensure broader accessibility.

Episode 3: Governor Jake Vincent S. Villa of Siquijor Province (the Philippines). This episode explored the province's efforts to balance sustainable tourism, environmental preservation, and community development.

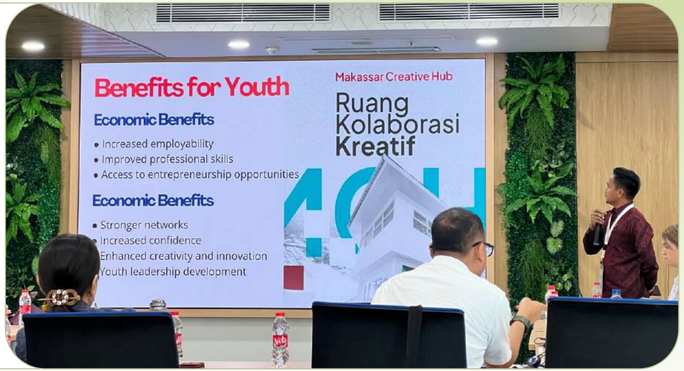
Episode 4: Mayor Illiza Sa'aduddin Djamal of Banda Aceh (Indonesia). This episode reflected on women's leadership in local government and Banda Aceh's approach to developing human capital and local economic opportunities.

Episode 5: UCLG ASPAC Ambassador Tri Rismaharini, Mayor of Surabaya (2010-2020), Minister of Social Affairs (2020-2024), and the first female President of UCLG ASPAC (2018-2020).

Interested in being featured on The Mayor's Compass?

Members of the UCLG ASPAC Network who are interested in being featured on The Mayor's Compass may contact the Secretariat for further details and availability.

GLOBAL COLLABORATION IN JAKARTA: SOLUTIONS LAB 2026 SHAPES THE FUTURE ECONOMIC VISION FOR YOUTH



UCLG ASPAC, in close collaboration with the Metropolis, organised "Solutions Lab: Creating Economic Opportunities for Youth" forum. Proudly hosted by the Jakarta Provincial Government (June 11-12, 2026), this prestigious two-day summit was organised in response to the need for actionable, cross-border strategies resulting from the escalating challenge of high youth unemployment faced by cities. It was attended by youth representatives from Jakarta, Bangkok, Bogor, Palembang, Tangerang, Makassar, and Bandar Lampung actively forging scalable solutions.

YOUTH AT THE CENTRE OF URBAN STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT

"This step aims to break down the formidable visa and relocation cost barriers that so often become stumbling blocks for our high-potential youth. We want to ensure that financial limitations do not stifle global talent," Ms. Tona Hutauruk, Head of the Regional Cooperation Bureau of the Jakarta Provincial Government explained to the assembly.

"The aim of our discussion here is not merely to compile a list of problems or to complain about the current state of the labour market," asserted Dr Bernadia, Secretary General of UCLG ASPAC.

EXCHANGING BLUEPRINTS: FROM BLOCKCHAIN TO INTEGRATED ECOSYSTEMS

A core pillar of the Solutions Lab was the intensive city-to-city policy exchange, where municipalities pitched their flagship programmes and received inputs from the public policy experts. Bangkok captured the delegates' attention by outlining a transformative, large-scale initiative that involves over 1,000 young people acting as direct policy co-creators. This highly inclusive approach is further modernised by the city's implementation of a blockchain-based district election system, ensuring transparency and deep civic engagement among the younger demographic.

EXPERT INSIGHTS: MOVING FROM VISION TO EXECUTION

Following the city presentations, Dr. Marcelino Pandin provided a comprehensive maturity assessment and crucial recommendations for all participating cities. Summing up the overarching strategy for success, the general idea is that cities must bridge the gap between ambitious planning and practical execution by strengthening implementation capacity and adopting evidence-based approaches. To achieve this, Dr. Marcelino strongly recommended integrating robust risk management into all youth programmes and establishing Project Management Offices (PMOs) equipped with clear dashboards, milestones, and performance indicators.

THE CRUCIAL ROLE OF SOCIAL PROTECTION IN A DIGITAL AGE

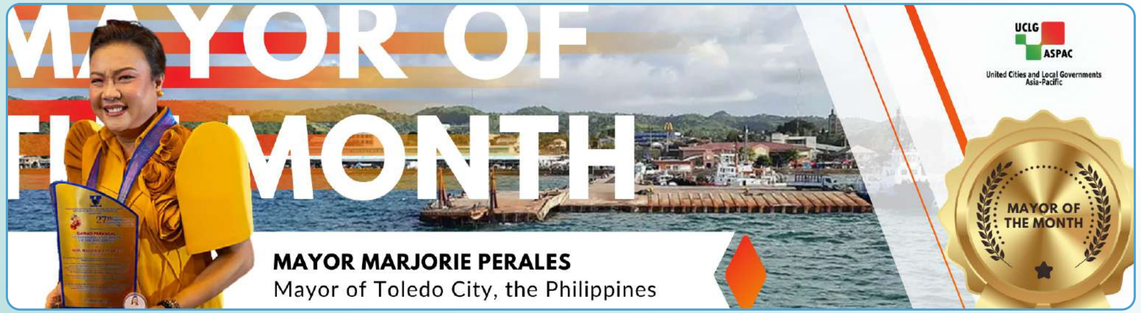
The forum was not solely focused on enterprise and digital innovation; it also tackled the precarious nature of modern employment. Representatives from the ASEAN Youth Forum (AYF) Secretariat provided critical thematic insights. They delivered a poignant reminder to local governments that the pursuit of a digital economy must not outpace the establishment of robust social safety nets. The AYF representatives stressed that any future-proof economic vision must include comprehensive social protection for these informal and gig workers, ensuring that economic growth does not come at the cost of human rights and security.

DIVING INTO JAKARTA'S CREATIVE ECOSYSTEM

To bridge the gap between theoretical policy and tangible execution, an extensive site visit was conducted to the Jakarta Creative Hub (JCH) and the bustling Blok M creative district. At the Jakarta Creative Hub, the participants observed the remarkable operational efficiency of the facility. To bridge the gap between theoretical policy and tangible execution, an extensive site visit was conducted to the Jakarta Creative Hub (JCH) and the bustling Blok M creative district.

The Solutions Lab culminated in a highly interactive and collaborative final workshop facilitated by Metropolis. Together, they drafted a comprehensive Vision 2040 Blueprint. Cities mapped out vital, actionable milestones for the years 2028, 2032, 2035, and ultimately 2038, unifying regional approach to building a resilient, inclusive, and highly adaptive youth economic ecosystem.

MAYOR MARJORIE PERALES OF TOLEDO: MAKING LIFE BETTER



One of the simplest ways to measure the impact of leadership is to ask how people's lives have changed under a new administration. For the people of Toledonhon/Toledonanon, the answer is clear. They not only have a multi-awarded Mayor, but have also experienced meaningful improvements under the administration—from better health, education, and social services to stronger infrastructure and economic development.

In the area of education, Mayor Perales implemented various programmes and initiatives to support students and strengthen local schools. These included the distribution of scholarship grants to more than 50 scholars, with each recipient receiving P30,000 per semester. The administration also invested in improving school buildings and facilities. Under her leadership, at least 12 schools received upgrades to their teaching facilities, including laptops, desktop computers, and LED Tvs.

Mayor Perales also made healthcare a priority of her administration. Under her leadership, the hospital was upgraded to Level 1 status, with additional equipment and expanded services to provide care to more beneficiaries. Her administration also established the city's first operating room, serving Obstetrics and Gynaecology, Surgery, and Orthopaedics. In 2023 alone, 1,115 major surgeries were performed.

The administration likewise prioritised the acquisition of advanced medical equipment and technology, such as a mammogram, CT scanner, and ultrasound machine. The city of Toledo also constructed its first dialysis centre, further expanding access to essential healthcare services for residents.

MAYOR DATUK ZABIDAH SAFAR OF SHAH ALAM: PRIORITISE TOURISM, INFRASTRUCTURE, AND PUBLIC SERVICES

Shah Alam, the capital of Selangor, has made history by appointing its first female mayor. Datuk Zabidah Safar was sworn in as the city's 13th mayor on February 20, 2026. Tourism, infrastructure, and public services are among her priorities.

Under the leadership of Datuk Zabidah Safar, the Shah Alam City Council developed a tourism roadmap under Shah Alam Tourism Action Plan 2026–2030 to strengthen the local tourism industry.

The plan aims to encourage visitors to stay longer in Shah Alam, leading to higher local spending. "This will allow economic activity to circulate within the MBSA (Majlis Bandaraya Shah Alam/Shah Alam City Council) area and benefit local businesses," she said. She also highlighted plans to enhance tourism offerings through 20 action plans and 65 initiatives, with a strong focus on digital integration. *(thestar.com.my)*

Shah Alam City Council (MBSA) has also been working to improve the city's mobility system. The local authority is now formally integrating e-scooters and electric bicycles into its urban development framework. The initiative also supports integrated zoning and traffic planning for upcoming LRT3 stations, including Stadium Shah Alam, UiTM Shah Alam, Dato Menteri, and Section 7. "This serves as a testing ground for the Malaysian Institute of Road Safety Research (Miros) to develop guidelines for the use of micromobility vehicles on public roads," she said after MBSA's full board meeting. *(www.thestar.com.my)*

To improve water services in Shah Alam, the local authority has strengthened its collaboration with Air Selangor, one of Malaysia's water supply providers. Through this collaboration, Shah Alam City Council (MBSA) aims to ensure the delivery of sustainable water services in the area.

SUB-REGION UPDATES

East Asia

Jinju's Seungsan Nominated for UN Best Tourism Villages Programme

The village of Seungsan in Jinju, South Gyeongsang Province, has been nominated for Best Tourism Villages, a UN Tourism programme. The village has strong historical and cultural significance, with the founders of several of Korea's influential conglomerates and companies coming from the area, earning it a reputation as a "hub of K-entrepreneurship." UN Tourism is set to select the Best Tourism Villages in October, following further evaluations. Villages that make the final list will receive official recognition from the organisation, along with access to international networks and other benefits to help enhance global visibility and attract more foreign visitors.

Source: https://www.koreatimes.co.kr/southkorea/society/20260412/jinjus-seungsan-nominated-for-un-best-tourism-villages-program

South-south West Asia

Convocation Ceremony 2026

The All India Institute of Local Self-Government (AIILSG) awarded diplomas and certificates to successful students of the courses of the institute for the preceding academic years on August 31, 2026. The ceremony began with the singing of the national song Vande Mataram, the national anthem Jana Gana Mana and the Maharashtra State Song Jai Jai Maharashtra Majha. After the welcome speech by Dr. Jairaj Phatak, the Director General, and speech by Shri Ranjit Chavan, President, the H.E. Shri Jishnu Dev Varma delivered his Convocation Address. The successful candidates were presented with their diplomas at the hands of the Chief Guest.

Source: https://www.aiilsg.org/convocation-ceremony-2.html

Southeast Asia

Capacity Building for Women and Youth

On September 4, 2026, APEKSI Muda/APEKSI Youth held Cerita Kota Cerita Kita (CKCK)/ urban story, our story, a space for youths to share their stories, challenges, as well as initiatives on various urban issues. The event gathered around 100 youths in Surakarta, presenting a sharing session with Surakarta's Mayor, Mr. Respati Ardi. This is part of the efforts made by APEKSI Muda to create a more inclusive room for dialogue engaging youths and city government, so that voices of the youth will have more rooms for realisation.

Source: https://apeksi.id/apeksi-muda-hadirkan-cerita-kota-cerita-kita-ruang-anak-muda-berbagi-gagasan-untuk-kota/

Pacific

Mayors Taskforce for Jobs

Under the framework of the Mayors Taskforce for Jobs (MTFJ), a nationwide network of New Zealand's Mayors working with the Ministry of Social Development (MSD), more than 1,000 opportunities were unlocked for young jobseekers. MTFJ works on a shared vision of all young people aged 16-24 engaged in employment, education, training, or other positive activity in their communities. The MTFJ programme is facilitated by Local Government New Zealand and the Ministry of Social Development. The programme has secured government funding to continue. In the year ending June 30, the programme helped 1,084 people into employment or training, well exceeding its original target of 900.

Source: https://www.lgnz.co.nz/news/media-releases/success-of-mayors-taskforce-for-jobs-highlights-the-power-of-local-leaders/

NEW MEMBERS

UCLG ASPAC Secretariat welcomes new members to be approved in the UCLG ASPAC Council Meeting 2026.

Bandar Lampung City

Mayor : Hj. Eva Dwiana, S.E., M.M., M.H.
Website : bandarlampungkota.go.id

Bandar Lampung City, or Kota Bandar Lampung, is the capital of Lampung Province, situated at the southern tip of Sumatra Island, Indonesia. Located along Lampung Bay, the city serves as an important gateway connecting Sumatra with Java and other parts of the Indonesian archipelago. Its strategic position supports the development of trade, transportation, education, industry, and tourism. The city's diverse landscape includes coastal areas, hills, and urban settlements, offering opportunities for economic growth alongside environmental conservation. Bandar Lampung continues to play a significant role in regional connectivity and the development of southern Sumatra.

Cirebon Regency

Regent : Drs. H. Imron Rosyadi, M.Ag.
Website : cirebonkab.go.id

Cirebon Regency is in the eastern part of West Java Province, bordering Central Java. Its strategic position along Java's northern coastal corridor supports agriculture, trade, fisheries, and regional connectivity. The regency is also known for its rich cultural heritage associated with the historical Cirebon Sultanate, including traditional arts, Cirebon batik, mask dances, and historical sites that contribute to its tourism potential. Alongside preserving its cultural identity and developing its local economy, Cirebon Regency continues to support industrial growth and local business competitiveness. In recognition of these efforts, the regency received **Third Place in the Government Institution Category** at the Indonesia Halal Industry Awards (IHYA) 2026, organised by Indonesia's Ministry of Industry, for its support of halal industry development and programmes that strengthen the competitiveness of local products.

East Java Province

Governor : Dr. (H.C.) Dra. Hj. Khofifah Indar Parawansa, M.Si.
Website : jatimprov.go.id

East Java Province, or Jawa Timur, is in the eastern part of Java Island, Indonesia, with Surabaya serving as its provincial capital. The province is an important economic centre, supported by its diverse industrial, agricultural, fisheries, and trade sectors. East Java is also known for its rich cultural heritage and natural attractions, ranging from the volcanic landscapes of Mount Bromo and Mount Semeru to coastal destinations and traditional communities. With its strategic location and diverse economic potential, East Java plays an important role in regional development, connectivity, and sustainable economic growth in Indonesia. In 2025, East Java Province achieved a Public Service Performance Index score of 4.75 (Category A – Prima), reported as the highest among provincial governments in Indonesia, reflecting its commitment to improving public service quality and governance.

Tangerang City

Mayor : Drs. H. Sachrudin
Website : tangerangkota.go.id

Tangerang City, or Kota Tangerang, is in Banten Province, Indonesia, and forms part of the Greater Jakarta metropolitan area. Its strategic location and supporting infrastructure make it an important centre for industry, trade, services, and regional connectivity. The city has demonstrated its commitment to improving urban governance and public services through various initiatives and achievements. In 2025, Tangerang City received the **first-place award in the Minimum Service Standards (SPM) Awards for the city category,** recognising its performance in delivering essential public services. The city also received recognition for government innovation and digital public service delivery. These achievements reflect Tangerang City's ongoing efforts to strengthen public service quality, institutional innovation, and inclusive urban development.

NEW TAIPEI'S SUSTAINABLE GOVERNANCE WINS EU ACCLAIM BY BLENDING CIRCULAR ECONOMY WITH SOCIAL INNOVATION

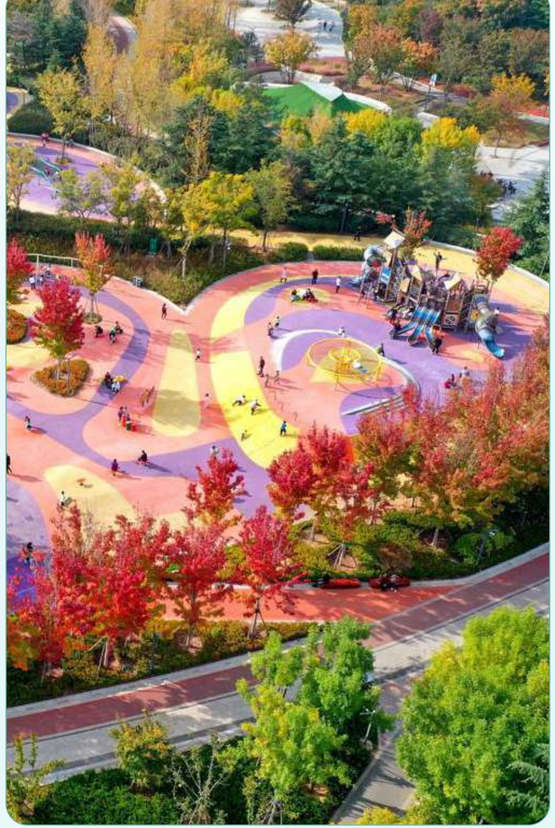
As cities globally seek scalable net-zero solutions, New Taipei City continues to drive environmental sustainability through social innovation. From June 10 to 13, 2026, an expert delegation from the European Union's International Urban and Regional Cooperation (IURC) programme visited New Taipei to examine its Public-Private Partnership (PPP) model and dual-track approach combining sustainability with social welfare.

The delegation began at the Wugu Resource Recycling Education Base and the New Taipei City Government's Smart Energy Management Centre to see AI-powered waste sorting and smart energy management in action. They then visited Singtex® Industrial Co., Ltd. to observe spent coffee grounds upcycled into functional textiles, and H.Y.T. in Yingge to learn how reservoir silt is transformed into ceramic art. At an exchange workshop, the Environmental Protection Department highlighted its food waste bioconversion using black soldier flies, sparking lively discussions on EU sustainability concepts like the "Right to Repair" and community engagement.

Next, the delegation visited the Banqiao Toy Bank to explore its groundbreaking toy circularity model. Adopting a cross-departmental approach in partnership with various parties, New Taipei has collected over 280 metric tons of second-hand toys. It maintains a full "collection, logistics, sorting, repair, and upcycling" pipeline, converting discarded toys into educational assets and low-carbon recycled furniture—directly advancing UN SDGs 11 and 12.

Furthermore, mobile toy vans deliver refurbished toys to remote communities to foster intergenerational inclusion, ensuring environmental action works hand-in-hand with social care. The Social Welfare Department noted that the Toy Bank has long attracted international attention, hosting organisations and institutions like Toy Libraries Australia and Japan's Tamagawa University.

Looking ahead, New Taipei will continue leveraging international cooperation platforms like IURC to foster global partnerships for resilient, inclusive, and sustainable urban development.



QINGDAO'S '15-MINUTE COMMUNITY LIFE CIRCLES' BRING CONVENIENCE TO DOORSTEPS

Qingdao is developing a number of convenient "15-minute community life circles" to bring everyday services right to residents' doorsteps. So far, 195 such circles have been completed across the city, covering more than 3.2 million residents with over 19,000 service outlets. These circles provide a wide range of basic and quality-of-life services, including healthcare, elderly care, education, shopping, dining, and recreation.

For residents like Li Li from Licang district, Qingdao, the convenience is tangible. She orders groceries via an app for delivery right when she arrives home, and on weekends, she walks to a nearby community supermarket for fresh meals.

At the Luohulu community in Laoshan district, a summer daycare programme keeps children engaged with calligraphy and crafts, easing the childcare burden for working parents. In Shinan district, the Badahu Community Centre – renovated from an idle building – now hosts more than 60 merchants serving over 90,000 residents within a 15-minute radius. It also offers elderly dining and free summer study spaces for children.

With plans to expand to 230 circles by the end of this year, Qingdao is integrating smart platforms and one-stop services to make community life more efficient, inclusive, and vibrant.

BUILDING GLOBAL PARTNERSHIPS FOR AI AND HEALTH INNOVATION

Cities today face increasingly complex healthcare challenges that cannot be solved by a single institution or country. Recognising this, Goyang Special City, Republic of Korea, is strengthening international partnerships to advance AI-driven healthcare and biotechnology through collaborative research and innovation.

In July 2026, Mayor Min Kyung-seon visited the Korea Representative Office of the Luxembourg Institute of Health (LIH) and met with international partners participating in the International Health Data Space Initiative (IHDSI). The visit provided an opportunity to exchange progress on ongoing international research and reaffirm Goyang's commitment to expanding global cooperation in health innovation.

IHDSI is a collaborative initiative led by the National Cancer Centre of Korea and LIH, bringing together public institutions, universities, research organisations, and technology companies. The initiative focuses on AI-powered health data analysis, secure cross-border health data sharing, privacy-enhancing technologies, and international clinical research infrastructure. As the host city of the LIH Korea Representative Office, Goyang is committed to facilitating collaboration among these partners and supporting an open innovation ecosystem.

Goyang believes that local governments can play an important role in connecting global expertise with local innovation. By providing a platform where researchers, healthcare institutions, governments, and industry can work together, cities can accelerate medical innovation while creating lasting public value. Through this initiative, Goyang hopes to strengthen partnerships with cities, research institutes, universities, and healthcare organisations across the UCLG ASPAC network. We welcome opportunities to exchange policies, develop joint research, and build international partnerships that contribute to healthier, more innovative, and resilient communities.

XI'AN ENHANCING INBOUND TOURISM THROUGH VISITOR-FRIENDLY SERVICES

As inbound tourism and cross-border consumption grow, Xi'an is emerging as a popular destination for international visitors, supported by its rich cultural heritage, strong innovation and improved visitor services. Recent data from Fliggy show that Xi'an ranks among China's top summer destinations for inbound tourism. Trip.com's overseas platform, covering travelers from 24 countries, has also recognised Xi'an as a preferred destination for international visitors and a leading city for inbound tourism and consumption.

According to the Shaanxi General Station of Immigration Inspection, international visitors accounted for 30.7% of inbound travelers through Xi'an ports this year, highlighting the city's growing international appeal. To meet visitors' diverse needs, Xi'an is continuously improving tourism, shopping and payment services. At the Xi'an City Wall, AR cycling glasses integrate historical and cultural information with real-world surroundings, providing an immersive digital tour experience. Qualified retailers, including the Huawu·Tang Paradise Cultural and Creative Flagship Store, offer departure tax refunds, making it easier for visitors to purchase distinctive cultural and creative products. Xi'an Joy City has introduced cash withdrawal services that support major international bank cards and foreign currencies, along with bilingual customer service and signage, making payment and shopping more convenient for international visitors.

Xi'an has further expanded its departure tax refund network and streamlined refund procedures, extending services from major commercial districts to specialty shops and independent brands. By the end of April 2026, the city had 194 registered tax-refund stores, covering key commercial areas and tourist attractions.

Through digital tourism services, convenient payment and streamlined tax refunds, Xi'an is enhancing the experience of international visitors, unlocking the potential of inbound consumption, and improving the tourism and consumer environment for international visitors.

WHAT'S NEXT 2026

7-9 October
10th Board Meeting of the Fund for Responding to Loss and Damage (FRLD)
Philippines
UNFCCC

12-13 October
2026 Beijing Forum on Swift Response to Public Complaints
Beijing
The Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, The China Media Group, The CPC Beijing Municipal Committee, The People's Government of Beijing Municipality

16 October
Marine Biomedicine and Blue Economy Development Forum
Fuzhou
21st Century Maritime Cooperation Committee, Fuzhou Municipal People's Government

15-17 November
World Toilet Summit
Bangkok
World Toilet Organisation, UCLG ASPAC

18-19 November
2026 ASEAN Governors and Mayors Forum
Manila
UCLG ASPAC, Manila City

25-27 November
3rd World Mayor Forum and 7th Asian Cities Summit
India
AIILSG

20-22 October
The 2026 China International Friendship Cities Conference
Xi'an
CPAFFC, CIFCA, Xi'an Municipal People's Government

28-30 October
2026 UCLG ASPAC Council
Haikou
UCLG ASPAC, Haikou

9-20 November
COP 31
Antalya
UNFCCC

12-15 November
Logistics Dialogue Salon & 2026 Zhejiang International Friendship Cities Exchange Exhibition
Yiwu
Yiwu City

8-10 December
The 2026 UN Water Conference, SDG6
Abu Dhabi
UN, United Arab Emirates, and Senegal

9-11 December
2026 Global Mayors' Forum (GMF) and the Award Ceremony of the 7th Guangzhou International Award for Urban Innovation (Guangzhou Award)
Guangzhou
CPAFFC, Guangzhou Municipal People's Government, UCLG, and Metropolis

We would like to thank our members and partners for contributing photos and materials used for this publication.

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