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 significantly contribute to more integrated planning efforts. However, they require appropriate enabling frameworks at both national and international levels. One of the key outcome areas of UN-Habitat's Strategic Plan 2020-2025 is the protection of ecological assets. This goal aims to ensure 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 planning to reduce urban sprawl. 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 upcoming Ocean Rise and Resilience Coalition, set to be 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 plastic leakage into the wider marine system and to identify sources of leakage in 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 to organize 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. Targeting two countries in each region, this program 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 program allowed for the organization of an exchange platform between key urban resilience stakeholders in SIDS. Furthermore, in partnership with UNDP, UN-Habitat is launching its global programme for “Integrated Urban Resilience in SIDS And Coastal Cities (IUR-SIDS)” that will support national and city entities in adopting multi-risk analysis and resilience diagnostics to identify resilience building needs at city and community levels and implement multidimensional and inclusive risk resilience actions.

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 are advancing integrated land-sea planning in Kenya's coastal region through comprehensive land-sea planning guidelines. The project supports the development of a regional data system with hubs in each county,facilitating more integrated planning and evidence-based decision-making. Additionally, the project aids national efforts in Marine Spatial Planning and assists county-level integration of land and sea planning into their County Spatial Plans. This integrated approach is being piloted at several sites, where the project enhances municipal waste systems by constructing a Material Recovery Facility, improving coastal public spaces, and building capacity in Marine Protected Areas. Go Blue also pilots 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 is implementing a constructed wetland in an informal settlement to address wastewater issues and prevent raw sewage from being dumped into the ocean. By engaging resident

communities and local governments, the program not only addresses environmental concerns but also creates jobs in waste recycling and other sectors.

UN-Habitat's Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific places particular emphasis on the Pacific SIDS, UN-Habitat chairs the Pacific Urban Partnership and regularly convenes the Pacific Urban Forum. The 6th Pacific Urban Forum collaborated with the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat to ensure that the urban agenda is aligned with the 2050 Strategy for the Blue Pacific Continent.

Several informal settlements upgrading programmes directly contribute to community resilience. The Climate Resilient Honiara Project and the Fiji Resilient Informal Settlements project provide concrete solutions for urban communities particularly vulnerable to climate change.

In the Philippines the Healthy Oceans Clean Cities Initiative provided policy support, in particular the development of local actions plans on marine litter 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, aims to 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 will support the government in implementing culturally-appropriate nature-based solutions and circular economy, favouring the humanitarian-development nexus, environmental sustainability and adaptation to climate change.