





SDG URBANICE MALAYSIA ACTION STAGE





From Concept to Action: The Journey of the SDG in Action Stage

When first outlined in its concept note, the SDG in Action Stage was imagined as a dynamic, inclusive space within the ASEAN Sustainable Urbanisation Forum (ASUF) 2025, a platform inspired by the WUF Urban Library and SDG Action Zone. Its purpose was to showcase localised solutions, amplify youth and grassroots voices, and connect policy with practice through practical, replicable innovations.

The note envisioned a stage that would:

- Demonstrate scalable SDG solutions emerging from cities and communities.
- Provide a voice to underrepresented actors, including youth, women, and marginalised groups.
- Facilitate peer-to-peer learning and cross-sectoral partnerships.
- Advance local leadership in Voluntary Local Reviews (VLRs) and SDG implementation.

From Vision to Reality

Over three days, the SDG in Action Stage evolved into exactly that, and more. With more than 20 sessions, it brought together city leaders, innovators, youth advocates, academics, private sector actors, and community organisations, offering concrete pathways for SDG localisation.

The six thematic clusters proposed in the concept note of resilient cities, inclusive prosperity, connectivity, governance and data, equity and social inclusion, and food systems, were not only addressed but expanded with new dimensions:

- Resilience & Climate Adaptation: Tokyo's century-scale resilience plan and Shenzhen's ecological corridors.
- Inclusive Prosperity: Sarawak's digital economy for rural communities and Tawau's women empowerment initiatives.
- Connectivity & Mobility: Prasarana's carbon-neutral roadmap and GDCI's Safe Schools.
- Governance & Data: Malaysia SDG Cities' VLR/VSR framework and CityNet's Urban SDG Knowledge Platform.
- Equity & Social Inclusion: Refugee inclusion strategies, youth-led resilience, and design for persons with disabilities (IIUM's 7 Pearl Sanctuary).
- Circularity & Food Systems: Agro-parks, KLCC's zero food waste model, and The Asher's zero-waste-to-landfill technology.

Format and Engagement

The original idea of short, thematic presentations gave way to longer 30-minute solo sessions, enabling deeper dives into practice and policy. This allowed presenters—from final-year students to metropolitan governments—to share data, lived experience, and lessons learned with equal weight. The openness of the stage created unexpected synergies: discussions spilled into Q&A sessions, and partnerships were sparked between cities, organisations, and networks.

Beyond Expectations

While visibility and networking were expected, the stage delivered outcomes that surpassed the concept note's ambition:

- Policy-relevant insights, such as crowdsourced financing models and embedding Safe School guidelines in ASEAN frameworks.
- Quantifiable impacts, including KLCC diverting 556kg of forum waste and Malaysia's progress on 26 VLRs in 2025.
- Empowered voices, where youth, women, and refugee leaders were not token participants but central agents of change.

In reflecting on the journey from concept to delivery, the SDG in Action Stage proved itself as more than a thematic showcase. It became a living laboratory of urban practice, where global cities and local communities stood side by side in advancing the SDGs.

This stage has now established itself as ASEAN's open forum for action-oriented SDG solutions—a replicable model that can travel with future forums, continuing to bridge policy with practice and ensuring that no city, no community, and no citizen is left behind.

SDG in Action Stage at ASUF 2025

The SDG in Action Stage, convened as part of the ASEAN Sustainable Urbanisation Forum (ASUF) 2025 in Kuala Lumpur, served as a dynamic platform for local innovation, grassroots leadership, and city-to-city learning. Over the course of three days, more than 20 sessions brought together municipal leaders, youth representatives, private sector innovators, academics, and community organisations to share concrete, scalable solutions for advancing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in urban contexts.

Day 1 - Urban Resilience, Smart Cities, and Youth Leadership

The opening day explored city strategies for resilience, sustainable mobility, and inclusive growth, drawing lessons from Tokyo, Shenzhen, Kuala Lumpur, and regional networks such as CityNet and the Scout Movement. Highlights included:

- · Tokyo's Resilience Project, a JPY 17 trillion investment in disaster preparedness and climate adaptation;
- Shenzhen's transformation into a global innovation hub with 100% electrified public transport and ecological corridors;
- Prasarana Malaysia's roadmap to carbon neutrality in urban transport by 2050;
- The Lembah Pantai SDG Precinct as a living lab for regenerative urbanism;
- · The Urban SDG Knowledge Platform as a tool for tracking and replicating best practices across cities; and
- · Youth-led resilience efforts, with scouts advocating for co-created urban solutions.

Day 2 - Localising SDGs, Social Inclusion, and Innovative Finance

Day 2 turned the spotlight on community-led initiatives, refugee inclusion, biodiversity, and sustainable finance. Notable sessions featured:

- · Sandakan's Community Agenda 2023–2027, demonstrating localised pathways for SDG delivery;
- Refugee Action for Change, calling for refugee-inclusive urban development;
- Tzu Chi Foundation's compassion-in-action model, linking humanitarian work with resilience;
- Malaysia SDG Cities, where Urbanice Malaysia presented a national framework scaling VLRs and positioning cities as living urban labs; and
- · Crowdsourced financing platforms, enabling communities to directly fund SDG-aligned projects.

The afternoon highlighted city experiences from Kaysone Phomvihane (Laos), Moscow, and Kuala Lumpur's grassroots movement Kerja Jalan, culminating in discussions on digital twins and 3D mapping. The day emphasised that inclusive governance and innovative financing are critical levers for achieving the SDGs in ASEAN cities.

Day 3 – Equity, Conservation, and Regeneration

The final day showcased how digital innovation, biodiversity, women's leadership, and sustainable regeneration intersect to shape the future of ASEAN's cities. Sessions included:

- · Sarawak's digital economy strategy, bridging the rural-urban divide through connectivity and e-commerce;
- Orangutan conservation in Peninsular Malaysia, linking biodiversity with ecosystem resilience;
- · Women's empowerment initiatives in Tawau, advancing gender equality as a driver of inclusive urbanisation;
- IIUM students' 7 Pearl Sanctuary project, reimagining inclusive design for persons with disabilities;
- TRX City's regeneration of central Kuala Lumpur, embedding ESG principles into urban finance;
- Zero-Waste-to-Landfill innovation, showcasing The Asher as a Malaysian technology for circular waste management;
 and
- GDCI's Safe School Programme, scaling child-focused urban design across ASEAN.

Across three days, the SDG in Action Stage amplified practical pathways for implementing the SDGs at city level, proving that transformative solutions often emerge from the intersection of local knowledge, youth leadership, technological innovation, and cross-sector partnerships. The discussions consistently highlighted that no city, community, or citizen should be left behind—a message resonating with ASEAN's collective vision of a sustainable, inclusive, and resilient future.

SDG in Action – Day 1 Report

Participants at the opening day of the SDG in Action Stage explored innovative city strategies for resilience, sustainable mobility, and inclusive urban growth, drawing lessons from Asia's leading metropolitan centers. The programme featured five in-depth solo presentations from leading cities, organisations, and youth representatives, each delivering a 30-minute deep dive into their unique approaches to implementing the SDGs in an urban context.

Across the morning and afternoon, municipal leaders, transport operators, youth advocates, and urban innovators shared concrete examples of how high-density cities can address climate, mobility, and equity challenges through integrated planning and technology-driven solutions.

Co-Creating Resilient Cities: A Youth Movement Perspective

Zairin Adam Abdul Aziz, Asia-Pacific Regional Youth Representative of the World Organization of the Scout Movement, highlighted how a global movement of 57 million young people is shaping communities and contributing to sustainable urbanisation through the Scouts for SDGs initiative. He underscored that Scouting is not only about outdoor adventure, but increasingly about equipping youth to respond to today's urban challenges across four dimensions: environment, peacebuilding, skills for life, and health & wellbeing.

Drawing on stories from across Asia-Pacific, he shared how Scouts have taken action to address urban vulnerabilities and highlighted programmes such as Ticket to Life in Manila, where Scouts reintegrated street children into education and community, and Thailand's prison rehabilitation initiative that uses Scouting to teach life skills to inmates. He also described how Malaysian Scouts are piloting youth leadership and advocacy workshops, enabling young people to design campaigns and mobilise resources on issues that matter to them — from engaging citizens in urban initiatives to raising humanitarian support for Gaza.

Beyond the city, he noted how Scouts have tackled coastal challenges through beach cleanups, microplastic awareness campaigns, and projects promoting sustainable fishing practices, showing how youth-led solutions can connect urban life with broader ecological systems. These examples demonstrated how structured youth networks can combine grassroots service with systemic advocacy, bridging local action with global frameworks such as the SDGs.

Zairin concluded by urging ASEAN policymakers and city leaders to move beyond symbolic youth engagement towards institutionalised participation in city governance, citing models such as UNICEF's Child-Friendly Cities and C40's Youth Climate Councils. Stressing that "resilient cities aren't built by concrete alone, but by neighbours who look out for each other and young people who believe their community's future is worth fighting for," he called on governments, city networks, and youth movements to forge structured partnerships that embed young people as co-creators of ASEAN's urban future.

Sustainability and Inclusivity in Public Transport (Prasarana Malaysia)

Premkumar Paramasivam, Executive Vice President of Rapid Bus, Prasarana Malaysia, outlined the company's Sustainability Framework 2023–2030, targeting a 45% reduction in carbon emissions by 2030 and achieving carbon neutrality by 2050. He explained that "public transport is not just about moving people, it's about moving society towards equity and sustainability."

Prasarana's initiatives include installing solar PV systems at BRT stations, upcycling decommissioned train parts into merchandise, and deploying reverse vending machines at key transit hubs. The operator is expanding first- and last-mile connectivity through dedicated bus lanes, rapid on-demand vans, and the MyRapid Pulse national journey planner app. Services for persons with disabilities (developed in consultation with OKU Sentral) include premium on-demand mobility vans, currently serving around 500 bookings per month.

Vendor ESG training and sustainable supply chain measures are integrated into Prasarana's broader commitment to the UN SDGs, with a focus on equity, inclusivity, and safety in urban mobility. Responding to questions from the floor, he underscored the company's role in supporting Malaysia's goal of achieving a 50% public transport modal share by 2040.



Tokyo's Path to Resilience as a Sustainable City

Kiyotoshi Koga, Director for Project Promotion Planning and Coordination, Tokyo Metropolitan Government, presented Tokyo's vision for 2050 as "the world's most resilient city" a place that balances maturity and growth where every individual can thrive. He framed resilience as a long-term, generational commitment that demands consistent investment, innovation, and public trust.

Koga outlined the JPY 17 trillion (~MYR 530 billion) Tokyo Resilience Project, a comprehensive programme designed to safeguard residents from a spectrum of risks, including storms and floods, major earthquakes, volcanic ash, disruptions to power and communications, and future pandemics. This scale of investment, he emphasised, is not merely about building infrastructure but about securing the safety, health, and continuity of life for Tokyo's 14 million residents.

Key measures include undergrounding utility poles to reduce storm damage, constructing regulating reservoirs beneath roads and parks to temporarily store floodwaters during heavy rain events, and raising seawalls to counter anticipated sea level rise of up to 0.6 meters. Advanced technology plays a central role, Tokyo is deploying Al-based systems for real-time water-level prediction, using drones for structural inspections, and building robust data platforms to support rapid decision-making during emergencies.

"We are designing not for the next decade, but for the next century," Koga stated, noting that climate adaptation requires sustained political will, strong technical capacity, and active community engagement. He stressed that resilience is as much a social contract as it is an engineering challenge, calling for policies that protect all residents equally while fostering public participation in disaster preparedness.

Shenzhen: A Hi-Tech Innovation City with Green and Smart Livability

Xu Songming, representing the City of Shenzhen, recounted the remarkable transformation of China's first special economic zone from a fishing village of 330,000 residents in 1980 to a megacity of over 22 million today. In just over four decades, Shenzhen has evolved into "China's Silicon Valley", home to more than 500,000 technology enterprises, including global leaders in telecommunications, electric vehicles, and robotics. This rapid growth has been anchored in forward-looking urban policy, cutting-edge infrastructure, and a commitment to sustainable development.

Shenzhen's achievements include becoming the first city in the world to fully electrify both its bus and taxi fleets, drastically reducing urban emissions. The city has also pioneered a low-altitude economy framework, enabling commercial drone logistics and cross-sea eVTOL (electric vertical take-off and landing) air transport, setting a precedent for urban air mobility. "We are proof that urban miracles can happen, but they must be guided by green principles," Xu remarked, underscoring the city's philosophy that technology and ecology must advance hand in hand.

He highlighted the "Mountain-Sea Corridor" ecological framework, designed to connect urban residents to nature through 3,600 km of greenways linking homes to parks, beaches, and forest trails. Wildlife overpasses have been constructed to reconnect fragmented mountain habitats, and the city's rich biodiversity is supported by ongoing mangrove restoration projects. Shenzhen also serves as the headquarters for the International Mangrove Center, a hub for global cooperation on coastal ecosystem conservation.

Smart governance underpins these achievements, with a four-dimensional spatial digital infrastructure. Covering aerial, terrestrial, subterranean, and maritime domains and an Al+ industrial policy that accelerates innovation across sectors. These advancements contributed to Shenzhen receiving the 2024 World Smart City Award. However, Xu acknowledged that challenges remain, including acute spatial constraints, ensuring equitable access to resources, and building climate resilience in a city of such scale and density.



Lembah Pantai SDG Precinct (University Malaya Sustainable Development Centre)

Collectively representing Universiti Malaya (UM) - Malaysia's oldest university - Associate Professor Dr. Zeeda Fatimah Mohamad and Dr. Fong Chng Saun from the UM Sustainable Development Centre (UMSDC), Associate Professor ChM. Dr. Noraini Ahmad from the UM Community Engagement Centre (UMCares), and Dr. Azni Yati Kamaruddin from the Ungku Aziz Centre for Development Studies (UAC) jointly presented the recent establishment of the "Lembah Pantai SDG Precinct"

This promising initiative, co-initiated by UM and Urbanice Malaysia aims to integrate place-based action research, community engagement, and living lab approaches to advance SDG localisation in Lembah Pantai, one of Kuala Lumpur's most socio-economically diverse constituencies. Spanning both the UM urban campus and its surrounding neighbourhoods, the precinct repositions the university as not only a hub for knowledge generation but also an active partner in local sustainability transitions and SDG implementation.

The precinct builds upon UM's longstanding sustainability efforts in the area. UMSDC has spearheaded the Campus Sustainability Living Labs Programme - with focus areas ranging from biodiversity conservation, waste and water management to the current emphasis on Just Net Zero. Several of these labs have extended their impact beyond campus borders, offering replicable practices for environmental stewardship. UMCares further complements this work through 37 community-based projects across Lembah Pantai. These include health empowerment, urban community gardens, waste reduction campaigns, and educational programmes for low-income households. Meanwhile, UAC contributes through targeted social interventions, such as addressing learning loss among B40 students and promoting equitable development.

Through partnerships across local government, civil society organisations, and the private sector, the Lembah Pantai SDG Precinct can function as a dynamic testbed for urban sustainability innovation. Promising areas for future initiatives include: advancing zero-waste practices, developing inclusive green mobility corridors, designing climate-resilient public spaces, integrating sustainability education in formal and informal settings and empowering public health. Together, these initiatives underscore UM's evolving role as a university deeply embedded in its local context - championing inclusive, action-oriented, and collaborative pathways toward achieving the Sustainable Development Goal

Tracking Urban SDG Localization with the Urban SDG Knowledge Platform (CityNet)

Chris Di Gennaro, representing CityNet, introduced the Urban SDG Knowledge Platform, a joint initiative of the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), the Seoul Metropolitan Government, and CityNet. Designed to promote knowledge sharing and city-to-city cooperation for sustainable urban development, the platform enables municipalities to develop and adopt innovative solutions to shared challenges.

In addition to the platform, Chris showcased Seoul's digital twin. A high-fidelity, real-time 3D model of the city used for urban planning, disaster simulation, and infrastructure management. He also highlighted how gamification techniques have been applied to engage citizens, making urban data and planning scenarios more interactive and accessible to the public. These tools, he noted, help bridge the gap between technical planning processes and community understanding, ultimately encouraging greater participation in city governance.

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SDG in Action - Day 2 Report

Day 2 of the SDG in Action Stage brought together filmmakers, municipal leaders, humanitarian advocates, community organisations, and urban sustainability experts to explore how the SDGs can be advanced through culture, inclusivity, resilience, and innovation. The six solo presentations offered diverse perspectives, ranging from film as a tool for awareness, to localised SDG action plans, refugee inclusion, community-based resilience, and financing solutions for cities.

Upon the Pond, A Film by Salma K. Achmad

The day opened with the screening of Upon the Pond, a fantasy romance set in a mysterious lake in the land of Sunda. The story follows Arum, a siren who falls in love with Tama, a textile factory worker, in a narrative that intertwines themes of love, self-acceptance, and the search for identity.

Through the symbolism of its characters and setting, the film highlights the delicate relationship between humans and nature, reflecting on the fragile dynamics of ecosystems in the face of unsustainable and environmentally harmful industrial practices.

Director Salma K. Achmad explained that the film is intended as both a cultural and environmental statement: "Stories are powerful because they allow us to feel sustainability, not just measure it. They remind us that ecosystems are not abstract—they are lived, loved, and lost if we fail to care for them."

Participants reflected on how visual storytelling and cultural narratives can complement policy and technical approaches to sustainability, making the SDGs more relatable to wider audiences.

Localising Global Goals Through Sandakan Sustainable Community Agenda 2023–2027

Mohd Kazroy Nizam Bin Sani, Head of Urban Planning and Architecture, Sandakan Municipal Council, presented the city's Sustainable Community Agenda 2023–2027, which is framed under the vision of "Smart, Sustainable, Safe." The Agenda represents Sandakan's first structured effort to align local policies and programmes with the SDGs, tailored to its own urban realities.

He outlined the city's urban challenges, including perceptions of safety following past incidents, urban poverty (affecting 8.5% of residents), and low awareness of cleanliness. The Agenda is structured around three thrusts, low-carbon circular economy, food security, and safe communities and five themes to advance SDG localisation.

Kazroy stressed that the Agenda is not simply a planning exercise but a practical roadmap for SDG localisation: "Localising global goals means translating abstract targets into tangible actions our citizens can see, touch, and benefit from."

He closed by emphasising the need for multi-level collaboration between local councils, state authorities, and federal agencies to ensure initiatives can be sustained and scaled. Participants reflected that Sandakan's integrated approach could serve as a reference model for other secondary cities in ASEAN seeking to bridge local needs with global commitments.



From Shadows to Solutions: Refugee Inclusion in Urban ASEAN

Elise Arya Chen, Deputy Director of Young Lives Malaysia and Board Advisor of Refugee Action for Change (ReAct), opened the session by confronting some of the most entrenched myths about refugees in Southeast Asia, that they are an economic burden, resistant to integration, or too dependent on humanitarian aid. She stressed that these narratives obscure the reality of refugees' contributions and potential, particularly in cities where most of them reside.

Drawing on evidence from Malaysia, Chen highlighted that when refugees are granted access to work, education, and healthcare, they become net contributors to the economy, generating an estimated RM6.5 billion (~USD 1.5 billion) to national GDP annually and creating spillover employment for locals. Rather than draining resources, refugee communities often support urban economies through entrepreneurship, informal labour, and service provision.

Chen argued that the true drivers of xenophobia are invisibility and the lack of legal recognition, which trap refugees in informal systems and leave them vulnerable to exploitation. By contrast, integration reduces social tension, strengthens local economies, and builds more cohesive urban communities.

She called for refugee-inclusive urban development, built on three pillars:

- · Community-based service delivery (health, education, housing),
- · Skills recognition and economic integration, and
- Climate resilience through community innovation.

In closing, Chen offered a compelling reminder: "Trauma doesn't erase competence, our systems erase recognition of competence." She urged ASEAN policymakers and city leaders to move from exclusionary policies to empowerment strategies that treat refugees as partners in resilience and development.

Compassion in Action: Building a More Resilient Community (Tzu Chi Foundation)

Lee Peng Sian, Tzu Chi Foundation Malaysia, presented the organisation's humanitarian model of resilience, anchored in the values of compassion, volunteerism, and community solidarity. He noted that with nearly 10 million members globally and 248 recycling centres across Malaysia, Tzu Chi has grown into one of the region's largest grassroots movements linking social care, environmental protection, and disaster response.

Lee shared compelling examples of disaster relief operations, including the 2021 Sri Muda floods, where more than 9,000 volunteers mobilised within days to prepare and deliver over 40,000 hot meals for affected families. He also recalled the 2025 Bintulu floods and the Putra Heights gas explosion, where volunteers went beyond material aid by conducting home visits, offering emotional support, and distributing blessing funds to restore dignity and hope for victims.

Importantly, Lee framed compassion as both a philosophy and a practical tool for resilience: "We start by doing what's necessary, then possible and suddenly, we are doing the impossible." He stressed that resilience is not only built on infrastructure and policy, but also on trust, empathy, and shared responsibility within communities.

The session closed with reflections from participants on how faith-based and volunteer-driven organisations can complement municipal governance, particularly in rapid emergency response and sustained community outreach, filling gaps where formal systems may be slow or overstretched.



Malaysia SDG Cities (Urbanice Malaysia)

Norliza Hashim, Chief Executive of Urbanice Malaysia, and convener of the SDG in Action Stage, delivered a keynote presentation on the Malaysia SDG Cities programme, positioning it as a national framework to accelerate sustainable urbanisation and localise the SDGs across Malaysian municipalities. She reminded participants that Malaysia is already an urban nation, with 78% of its population living in cities, where urban areas account for 65% of national GDP. This rapid urbanisation, she noted, brings both opportunities for innovation and pressing challenges related to inequality, climate resilience, and environmental sustainability.

The Malaysia SDG Cities initiative provides a structured pathway for cities to align with the 2030 Agenda. It promotes Voluntary Local Reviews (VLRs) and Voluntary Subnational Reviews (VSRs) as accountability mechanisms, enabling cities to assess progress, identify gaps, and integrate global commitments into local action. By 2024, 14 cities had completed VLRs, with 26 more in progress for 2025—a scale of local reporting that has placed Malaysia among the global leaders in SDG localisation. "Cities are the frontlines of the SDGs. Our work ensures no city, no community, and no citizen is left behind," Norliza affirmed.

She elaborated on the programme's principles of regenerative urbanism and climate-proof infrastructure, underscoring the need to "future-proof" Malaysian cities within planetary boundaries. Concepts such as the doughnut economics model were highlighted as tools for rethinking growth in ways that secure social foundations without overshooting ecological limits.

Urbanice Malaysia's leadership, Norliza explained, lies in convening a multi-stakeholder ecosystem—local governments, private sector, academia, civil society, and international partners—around a shared agenda for sustainable development. Through initiatives like Malaysia SDG Cities Roadmaps, urban labs, and partnerships with the KLCC Business Events Alliance, the programme demonstrates how cities can become living urban laboratories for innovation, policy integration, and financing solutions.

As the owner of the SDG in Action Stage, Norliza also reflected on its role as a space for experimentation and dialogue: "This stage is about giving visibility to ideas and practices that can be scaled, replicated, and localised. It belongs to all cities, but it is curated here in Malaysia because we believe our cities can lead by example."

The session concluded with a call to ASEAN peers to expand the practice of VLRs and to view cities not just as service providers, but as drivers of transformation in the global effort to achieve the SDGs.

SDG Crowdsource Funding for Cities (pitchIN, Malaysia)

The final session of the morning was delivered by Lai Kai Bin, Head of Equity Crowdfunding (ECF) at pitchIN, Malaysia's leading digital platform for crowdfunding and investment. Lai introduced a pioneering approach to urban finance: leveraging crowdfunding to support SDG-aligned city projects.

He explained that pitchIN, which began in 2012 as a reward-based crowdfunding platform, has since evolved into a robust marketplace that connects entrepreneurs with investors. By applying this model to city sustainability, municipalities can mobilise resources beyond traditional public budgets. "Financing the SDGs is everyone's responsibility, we must move from dependency to shared accountability," Lai stressed.

Through digital platforms, citizens, philanthropists, and businesses can directly support municipal initiatives such as green infrastructure, renewable energy, and community-based programmes. Case studies demonstrated how small-scale contributions, when pooled, generate significant impact while enhancing transparency, civic ownership, and accountability.

Lai emphasised that the pitchIN approach is not only about raising capital but also about building partnerships and trust. "When citizens invest in their city's sustainability, they become stakeholders in its future. That changes the dynamic from passive beneficiaries to active co-creators of urban resilience," he noted.

Participants discussed the potential for crowdfunding to address fiscal constraints faced by ASEAN cities, particularly smaller municipalities with limited access to large-scale financing. The session concluded with strong interest in exploring public-private-citizen partnerships to accelerate SDG delivery at the local level.

Smart and Sustainable Moscow (Moscow City)

Tatiana Naumova, Department for External Economic and International Relations of Moscow, presented the city's vision of a smart and sustainable megacity that combines cultural heritage, technological innovation, and environmental responsibility. She highlighted Moscow's status as one of the world's greenest megacities and a leading global cultural hub, welcoming over 26 million tourists in 2024 and ranking first worldwide for museums and theatres. At the same time, the city has been investing heavily in infrastructure that enhances quality of life: in 2024 alone, 89 new social facilities including 49 schools, 14 health facilities, and 17 sports complexes were completed.

The Urban Renewal Initiative is one of the largest globally, having relocated over 220,000 residents and aiming to relocate almost 1 million residents into safer, more energy-efficient housing while redeveloping neighbourhoods with improved amenities and open spaces. On transport, Moscow is to triple its metro and city railway lines since 2010, and by 2030, 95% of residents will live within walking distance of a metro station. The city also operates the world's largest metro circle line.

Moscow is advancing rapidly in green and shared mobility, deploying more than 2,400 electric buses, introducing world's first year-round electric river transport that serves 300,000 passengers per season, and managing the world's largest car-sharing fleet of over 40,000 vehicles. Tatiana Naumova also showcased Moscow's Digital Twin system, which integrates more than 5,000 layers of urban data to inform over 2,000 management decisions annually. Citizen engagement is enabled through the Active Citizen platform, which has hosted over 7,000 public votes on urban issues.

"A smart city is not only about digitalization, but about inclusivity, cultural vibrancy, and improving people's daily lives," Tatiana Naumova noted. She explained that Moscow's strategy is to become a testbed for AI, autonomous transport, and sustainable technologies by 2030, positioning the city as both a global cultural centre and a model of urban innovation.

The Power of Slow: Rethinking Speed and Access to Reclaim the City (Kerja Jalan, Malaysia)

Yasmin Lane, founder of Kerja Jalan, delivered a compelling call to rethink urban mobility by challenging car-centric development and the culture of speed in Southeast Asian cities. Kerja Jalan, an advocacy platform for walkable and rollable Malaysian cities, uses community-led walks and cross-sector collaborations to champion safer, more inclusive streets.

Yasmin argued that excessive speeding and unsafe roads are not simply individual choices but the result of urban design, weak enforcement, and entrenched policies favouring cars. She pointed to the cycle of induced demand where building more highways only creates more traffic and sprawlas a key barrier to sustainable urbanisation. "We need to ask: who really benefits from speed, and what do our cities lose in the process?" she remarked.

Yasmin showcased practical solutions such as narrowing lanes, building raised crossings, installing protected cycling paths, and investing in permanent bus rapid transit lanes. She cautioned against superficial transit-oriented development focused only on condominiums near stations, stressing the need for "authentic TOD" that integrates affordable housing, mixed-use density, and equitable access.

She also proposed bold policy reforms: ending fuel subsidies, abolishing minimum parking requirements, halting new highway projects, and reclaiming urban streets for people instead of cars. "Fixing transit is about stitching entire journeys from door to door so we can live well without needing a car," Yasmin concluded.

The presentation resonated strongly with ASEAN participants, many of whom face similar struggles with congestion and sprawl. Discussions underscored the urgency of rebalancing mobility priorities to reclaim liveability, equity, and climate resilience in urban spaces

Kaysone Phomvihane City: Localising the SDGs in Lao PDR

Mr. Vannaleth Phaophongsavath, Deputy Head of Kaysone Phomvihane City Administration Office, shared the city's ongoing efforts to align its rapid urban growth with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Located in Savannakhet Province, Kaysone Phomvihane City is one of the fastest-growing urban centres in Lao PDR, and its leadership has recognised that structured SDG localisation is essential to ensuring sustainable and inclusive development.

Mr. Vannaleth explained that the city is committed to aligning its development with the 9th National Socio-Economic Development Plan (NSEDP) and the 2030 Agenda, with support from UN-Habitat. In July 2024, the city held a Voluntary Local Review (VLR) sensitization workshop to introduce the VLR concept and explore how it could support local planning. Discussions highlighted three priority SDGs: decent work and economic growth (SDG 8), poverty reduction (SDG 1), and quality education (SDG 4).

He stressed that the workshop was not a reporting exercise but an opportunity to learn about the VLR process, capture local perspectives, and understand how it can highlight development gaps, engage stakeholders, and strengthen policy coherence. The event brought together over ten line ministries and diverse stakeholders, enriched by lessons from Thailand's VLR experience, and featured an interactive Mentimeter session.

Looking ahead, Kaysone Phomvihane City expressed interest in continuing the VLR journey, provided there is adequate budget. The city aims to continue its partnership with UN-Habitat and explore collaboration with development partners and local stakeholders. With further support, it hopes to become a demonstration case in Lao PDR for how mid-sized cities can localize the SDGs and integrate them into decision-making.

Digital Twins & Data-Driven Cities: Geospatial Technologies Powering Future-Ready ASEAN Cities (AECA Solutions Sdn Bhd)

Introduction

The panel discussion convened by AECA Solutions explored how geospatial intelligence and digital twin technologies can accelerate sustainable urbanisation, support evidence-based policy, and empower cities across ASEAN to achieve the SDGs. The session brought together leaders from government-linked enterprises, industry innovators, and international geospatial experts, moderated by Kavitha Seras, with panel contributions from:

- · Khairul Ariffin, COO AECA Solutions
- Liew Zi Qing, Head of Digitalisation, Development & Delivery (3D) Sunway Property
- · Fariz Ghazali, CEO Infrasel
- · Maziana Muhamad, Director Woolpert Malaysia

Key Highlights & Insights

Opening Perspective: A Geospatial Vision for ASEAN Cities

- Tengku Erina (AECA Solutions) emphasized that geospatial technologies are no longer a luxury they
 are becoming a fundamental tool in shaping how cities think, plan, and evolve.
- As cities around the region face mounting challenges—from urban sprawl to climate risks, from infrastructure ageing to digital inequality—there is a growing urgency to adopt data-driven and futureready solutions.
- Highlighted AECA's geospatial technologies, including Digital Twins, AI, and UAV-based mapping, are enablers of smarter decision-making.
- Reaffirmed AECA Solutions' commitment, with Urbanice Malaysia, to inclusive, digitally empowered urban futures where technology serves communities and leverages local wisdom.

The Role of Data in Driving Smarter Urban Solutions Moderator

- Kavitha Seras framed the discussion around the SDG Cities approach, stressing data interoperability, governance, and accessibility.
- She emphasized the importance of city-level collaboration with private innovators, such as AECA, to bridge the gap between policy ambitions and on-the-ground implementation

Private Sector Case Study: Integrating Smart Solutions into Urban Ecosystems

- Liew Zi Qing (Sunway Digital) described Sunway's development of a smart and sustainable ecosystem
 powered by Internet of Things (IoT) devices and geospatial platforms, including a three-dimensional
 map of Bandar Sunway. The new integrated command centre will manage this system by monitoring
 temperature data and various facility management parameters.
- Demonstrated how digital twin modelling enhances urban planning, energy efficiency, and green space management, reinforcing the case for public-private collaboration.
- One of the primary challenges encountered during implementation is integrating diverse systems, ranging from facility management to security operations.

Geospatial Intelligence for Infrastructure and Mobility

- Khairul Ariffin (AECA Solutions) presented AECA's cutting-edge work, including 3D aerial mapping of Kuala Lumpur City Centre and Bandar Sunway, as well as mobile mapping of Selangor state roads for road assets, a baseline for parking maintenance using LiDAR, and visual-evidence data collection for tax collection to increase stakeholders' revenue streams.
- Showcased AECA's survey-grade data collection methods and Al-driven analytics, which reduce costs and improve the accuracy of infrastructure audits for local governments.

Smart Infrastructure and Maintenance: Bridging Policy & Practice

- Fariz Ghazali (Infrasel) highlighted the practical challenges faced by infrastructure concessionaires and how data-driven maintenance models can transform service delivery.
- Stressed the value of real-time monitoring technologies to ensure roads, utilities, and public assets meet both safety standards and sustainability goals

Regional & International Perspective: Benchmarking Best Practices

- Maziana (Woolpert Malaysia) brought global geospatial insights, particularly from the projects they have been working on with the Singapore Land Authority, Land Transport Authority, and Building & Construction Authority, highlighting benchmarking opportunities where ASEAN cities can adapt proven models from other regions.
- Accurate and precise data are essential for supporting agencies in their maintenance and development activities.
- Highlighted the need for capacity building and upskilling within city governments to fully leverage digital twin and geospatial investments.
- Data sharing is important for reducing costs across agencies and generating long-term benefits for the broader community. This approach accelerates the adoption and optimization of technology.

Key Outcomes

- 1. Consensus on Digital Twins as Critical Tools The panel agreed that digital twins are the next frontier for cities seeking to operationalise SDGs through data-driven planning and service delivery.
- 2. Geospatial as a Bridge Between Aspirations and Action From climate action to smart mobility, geospatial intelligence enables cities to move from policy concepts to implementable strategies. Public
- 3. Private Partnerships are Essential Collaboration with technology providers like AECA Solutions is vital for costeffective, scalable solutions that governments cannot build alone. Capacity Building and
- 4. Knowledge Exchange Cities must invest in training, standards, and peer learning to keep pace with technological advancements.
- 5. ASEAN Cities as Global Models With the right adoption of geospatial and digital twin technologies, ASEAN cities can become global showcases of SDG-driven innovation.

Conclusion & Call to Action

The session reaffirmed that geospatial technologies are catalysts for sustainable urban transformation. AECA Solutions, together with its strategic partners, stands ready to collaborate with ASEAN and global cities in deploying practical, scalable solutions tailored to local needs.



SDG in Action – Day 3 Report

Participants at the third day of the SDG in Action Stage explored the intersections of digital innovation, biodiversity conservation, gender empowerment, inclusive design, and climate-proof regeneration. The sessions highlighted how technology, community engagement, and cross-sector partnerships can accelerate the localisation of the SDGs in ASEAN and beyond.

The morning programme brought together speakers from Sarawak, Peninsular Malaysia, Sabah, Kuala Lumpur, and the private sector, while the afternoon showcased global and local urban innovations on zero-waste technologies and safe, inclusive public spaces.

From Connectivity to Prosperity: Unlocking Rural Opportunities Through E-Commerce, Entrepreneurship, and the Digital Economy by Sarawak Digital Economy Corporation, Malaysia

Amirrul Rizwan of the Sarawak Digital Economy Corporation (SDEC) opened Day 3 with an account of Sarawak's ambitious push to bridge the rural-urban digital divide under the Sarawak Digital Economy Blueprint 2030. The state, with its vast geography and dispersed rural settlements, faces unique challenges in connectivity. Yet, through an aggressive rollout of over 600 multi-operator telecommunication towers and expansion of Fixed Wireless Access for underserved households, SDEC has begun transforming digital access into an engine for inclusive growth.

Beyond infrastructure, Amirrul emphasised that connectivity must be matched with capacity building and digital entrepreneurship. SDEC has established digital hubs and innovation centres where communities receive training in STEM education, e-commerce, financial technology, and digital marketing. These hubs are designed not only to close skills gaps but also to catalyse youth-led innovation and encourage women entrepreneurs to enter the digital economy.

By 2025, more than 32,000 micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs) had benefited from digitalisation programmes, ranging from onboarding to e-payment adoption and social media marketing. Amirrul showcased examples of rural entrepreneurs using TikTok Shop, Shopee, and Lazada to access national and even international markets. Products once limited to local bazaars—such as Sarawak handicrafts, pepper, and food items—are now finding customers across Malaysia and beyond.

Participants reflected on the regional implications, noting how Sarawak's model could be replicated in other ASEAN contexts where connectivity gaps persist. Lessons included:

- · Public-private partnerships for infrastructure financing;
- Community-based digital hubs to ensure uptake and inclusion; and
- E-commerce platforms as equalizers for rural producers.

The session concluded that digital infrastructure, when paired with entrepreneurship and innovation, can help rural communities leapfrog into the digital economy, turning geographic disadvantage into opportunity.



Reviving Hope: Orangutan Conservation for Sustainable Futures in Peninsular Malaysia (Bukit Merah Orang Utan Island Foundation, BMOUIF)

Dr. Muhammad Fahmi Bin Ramli, Veterinary Surgeon with the Bukit Merah Orang Utan Island Foundation (BMOUIF), presented the Foundation's efforts to safeguard one of Malaysia's most threatened primates. He described the orangutan as a keystone species whose survival is intricately linked to the health of tropical ecosystems, noting that habitat loss, deforestation, and human-wildlife conflict remain critical threats in Peninsular Malaysia.

Dr. Fahmi outlined BMOUIF's integrated conservation model, which combines rescue and rehabilitation of displaced orangutans, habitat restoration, and long-term veterinary care with community-focused ecotourism and education. He emphasised that the Foundation serves as both a research hub and living classroom, engaging visitors, students, and researchers in understanding the complex relationship between biodiversity and human development.

Importantly, Dr. Fahmi highlighted that orangutan conservation is not just about protecting wildlife, but also about safeguarding human well-being. Healthy forest ecosystems maintained in part by orangutans as "forest gardeners" dispersing seeds directly support climate resilience, water security, and air quality for surrounding communities.

"Orangutans are forest ambassadors," he explained, "and their protection is inseparable from the sustainability of our own cities and societies."

Women Empowerment in Tawau (Pertubuhan Inspirasi Kasih Negeri Sabah, PINKS)

Fifi Rafiedah Ariff, Chairperson of Pertubuhan Inspirasi Kasih Negeri Sabah (PINKS), delivered an inspiring presentation on how women in Tawau are advancing the SDGs through grassroots leadership, entrepreneurship, and advocacy. She began by highlighting the structural challenges faced by women in Sabah's east coast, including low female labour force participation, high vulnerability to gender-based violence, limited access to financial services, and gaps in digital literacy.

Against this backdrop, PINKS was established to serve as a community-based platform for empowerment, focusing on three main pillars:

- Economic empowerment providing entrepreneurship training, digital marketplace skills, and start-up support for women-led businesses in areas such as food processing, crafts, and services.
- 2. Social advocacy addressing gender-based violence, reproductive health awareness, and promoting women's rights in collaboration with local agencies and NGOs.
- 3. Youth and digital engagement equipping young women with digital skills and creating mentorship programmes to prepare them for participation in Sabah's emerging digital economy.

Fifi highlighted the impact of partnerships under the All-Party Parliamentary Group Malaysia on the SDGs (APPGM-SDG), which has supported PINKS in piloting women-led community projects, from microfinance initiatives to climate resilience activities. These projects have not only uplifted household incomes but also strengthened women's leadership roles in local governance and SDG localisation.

7 Pearl Sanctuary (International Islamic University Malaysia, IIUM)

Final-year students Airil Hafiy Bin Khairul Faizi, Muhammad Amir Umar Asyraf Bin Abdul Khatab, Muhammad Iyad Fawwaz Bin Muhammad Rushdan, and Ahmad Dannish Haykal Bin Ahmad Junaidi from the International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM) presented their capstone project, the 7 Pearl Sanctuary, a bold and visionary proposal for inclusive and sustainable urban living.

The project was conceptualised as a living township that integrates residential, commercial, educational, and agro-tourism functions within a framework of universal accessibility and environmental sustainability. Designed through extensive research and engagement, the Sanctuary embodies the principle that cities should adapt to people not the other way around.

The students explained that their design was inspired by the concept of "pearls" as symbols of resilience and inclusivity where each "pearl" represented a unique but interconnected element of urban life. They emphasised that persons with disabilities (PwDs) are not an afterthought but a starting point in the design, turning traditional planning hierarchies upside down.

TRX Urban Regeneration and Sustainability (TRX City Sdn Bhd, Malaysia)

Nor Shaharom Mansor, Director of Development at TRX City Sdn Bhd, presented the Tun Razak Exchange (TRX) as one of Malaysia's most ambitious regeneration projects, transforming a 70-acre underutilised parcel in central Kuala Lumpur into the country's International Financial District and a showcase of sustainable urban development.

Anchored by the 492-metre Exchange 106 tower, TRX is designed around transit-oriented development principles, ensuring seamless connectivity to MRT, LRT, and regional transport links. With 23% of the site dedicated to public green space, including Malaysia's largest elevated city park, TRX balances high-density commercial activity with inclusive recreational areas that serve both workers and surrounding communities.

Shaharom explained that sustainability is embedded into the project at multiple levels. TRX has secured LEED and GBI green building certifications, integrates a district-wide stormwater management system, and features water recycling plants to reduce demand on municipal supply. Flood resilience is prioritised through upgraded drainage infrastructure, a critical measure given Kuala Lumpur's exposure to flash floods.

Economically, TRX has attracted over RM8 billion in investment, drawn 90 global brands, and created an ecosystem of more than 20,000 knowledge workers. Shaharom positioned the development as more than just a real estate project, but a catalyst for Malaysia's ESG-driven growth. Central to this vision is Kuala Lumpur's first ESG Centre, hosted at TRX, which will convene investors, regulators, and innovators to mainstream environmental, social, and governance standards in finance and business.

"TRX is not just about real estate, it is an ecosystem builder and an enabler of sustainable finance," Shaharom noted, framing the district as both a national economic engine and a regional model for climate-conscious regeneration.

Audience discussions explored the balance between large-scale investment and community benefits, with participants highlighting the importance of TRX's public spaces, cultural programming, and sustainable mobility connections in ensuring the project serves as a true urban commons rather than an exclusive financial enclave.

Zero-Waste-to-Landfill: Events in Action (JME Group, Malaysia)

The JME Group presented The Asher, a 100% Malaysian innovation designed to transform how cities and corporations manage solid waste. Unlike traditional incinerators, The Asher uses ultra-high temperature heat treatment in the absence of oxygen, a process that breaks down solid waste into just 2% inert ash within hours, requiring no external fuel and producing no harmful emissions. The ash itself can be repurposed as a soil conditioner or filler for construction, creating a closed-loop solution aligned with the circular economy.

The session underscored how this technology enables zero-waste-to-landfill events, offering a scalable and portable model for governments, corporations, and communities. It was showcased live at the ASEAN Sustainable Urbanisation Forum, with KLCC deploying The Asher to manage event waste and divert 556kg of waste away from landfills over the course of the Forum.

Industry leaders joined the discussion, strongly criticising Malaysia's continued reliance on landfills, which remain the destination for 82.5% of the 38,437 metric tonnes of solid waste produced daily in 2021, according to the Malaysian Investment Development Authority.

- Jamie Loh, Director of waste management project GZW Return, stressed: "Building more [landfills] is neither sustainable nor cost-effective."
- Pang Swee Lei, Executive Director of Pamarai Sdn Bhd, added that landfills, while "conveniently out of sight and out of mind," are an unethical option to keep costs low. He highlighted their long-term risks: leachate contamination, methane emissions, and irreversible land degradation. Pang advocated for a treat-at-source model, in which waste is processed directly where it is generated rather than sent to centralised dumps.

Pang described The Asher as a "closed-loop waste elimination system" compact enough to fit on a pickleball court, capable of processing general waste quickly without combustion. He emphasised its potential to be a game-changer for both event management and urban waste systems across ASEAN.

Adding a venue perspective, Zulkifly Shariff, Sustainability Manager at KLCC, reported that the convention centre had sent no food waste to landfills since 2023 after shifting to a composting system, treating 73% of its waste at source in 2024. He announced a target to reach 100% treatment at source in 2025, reinforcing KLCC's ambition to lead by example in sustainable event management.

Safe School Programme in Kuala Lumpur and How It Scaled Up (Global Designing Cities Initiative, GDCI)

Jashwanth Tej Kasala, Program Manager at the Global Designing Cities Initiative (GDCI), closed Day 3 with an engaging session on the Safe School Programme, a child-focused urban design initiative first piloted in Kuala Lumpur in partnership with Dewan Bandaraya Kuala Lumpur (DBKL). Recognising that traffic danger is one of the greatest risks children face in cities, the programme reimagines the areas around schools with speed reduction measures, clearly marked pedestrian crossings, traffic-calming infrastructure, and child-friendly public spaces.

The pilot project demonstrated that simple interventions such as curb extensions, improved signage, wider walkways, and protected drop-off zones can significantly reduce accidents and improve accessibility. It also showed how designing from a child's perspective can reshape entire neighbourhoods for the better, making streets safer not only for students but also for parents, teachers, and surrounding communities.

The session emphasised that road safety is not a transport issue alone, it is a question of equity and sustainability. By protecting children, cities build resilience, support education outcomes, and foster inclusive growth. Jashwanth framed the programme within a broader equity agenda: "Road safety is a cornerstone of urban equity. If a city is safe for children, it is safe for everyone."



Conclusion and What's Next

The SDG in Action Stage at ASUF 2025 has shown that the SDGs are not abstract global commitments, but living practices embedded in the daily work of cities, communities, and people. Over three days, this stage amplified stories of resilience from Tokyo and Shenzhen, inclusive mobility from Kuala Lumpur, biodiversity conservation in Peninsular Malaysia, digital innovation from Sarawak, and youth-led resilience efforts across ASEAN.

What emerged clearly is that solutions are already here, in our neighbourhoods, schools, local governments, and community networks. The challenge ahead lies not in invention, but in scaling, financing, and embedding these practices into governance systems so that they reach every city and citizen.

This proceedings report serves three roles:

- 1. **Reference** documenting innovations, practices, and lessons for policymakers, practitioners, and researchers.
- 2. **Peer Learning Tool** enabling cities and communities across ASEAN to adapt and replicate models showcased on this stage.
- 3. Input to ASUF 2025 Outcomes feeding into the wider Forum's shared knowledge base, including the Kuala Lumpur Resolution on Sustainable Urbanisation, to strengthen regional collaboration and implementation pathways.

Looking forward, the SDG in Action Stage will continue to evolve as an open laboratory of ideas, ensuring that the momentum built in Kuala Lumpur is carried forward into ASEAN's future forums and dialogues. By placing youth, women, communities, and city leaders on equal footing, the stage has demonstrated a new model of urban diplomacy. One rooted in co-creation, accountability, and shared ownership of the SDGs.

As TPr Ts Norliza Hashim reminded us, "No city, no community, and no citizen should be left behind." This remains the guiding principle of the SDG in Action Stage and the collective work of ASEAN towards a sustainable, inclusive, and resilient future.





SDG URBANICE MALAYSIA NALAYSIA SDG SDG SDG SDG STAGE

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