CITYNET Yokohama Project Office
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Thank you for attending the First Asia-Pacific Circular Cities Forum (APCC Forum) 2026!

A new step toward realizing circular cities, with a brand-new name from the former Asia Smart City Conference (ASCC)

The City of Yokohama co-hosted the "Asia-Pacific Circular Cities Forum (APCC Forum) 2026" at PACIFICO Yokohama North from September 3 to 4, 2026, in collaboration with ICLEI Japan (the Japan office of ICLEI – Local Governments for Sustainability) .

This forum is an international conference that has been rebranded from the "Asia Smart City Conference (ASCC)," which has been held 14 times since 2012, to the "Asia-Pacific Circular Cities Forum (APCC Forum)" starting in 2026, and this was its inaugural meeting. The major feature of this annual meeting is that it was developed as a forum to discuss the future of circular cities where the environment and economy coexist, focusing on the circular economy.

The Journey So Far: From ASCC to APCC

With the cooperation of international organizations such as the World Bank, the Asian Development Bank, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), and CITYNET, the ASCC has been held annually, bringing together representatives from various Asian cities, governments, academic institutions, and private companies to aim for the realization of sustainable urban development that balances economic growth with a good urban environment.

At the 14th ASCC held in November 2025, the "Asian Circular Cities Declaration (ACCD)," a new international framework to promote circular cities in Asia, was announced, and the City of Yokohama signed as the first city. In March 2026, 21 cities from seven countries (with a total population of over 53 million) joined as founding cities, and the system officially launched. In response to this trend, the APCC Forum is positioned as a platform where the ACCD signatory cities gather to share their knowledge.

Overview of the First APCC Forum

The forum brought together city leaders from various countries, including the Philippines, Indonesia, Malaysia, and Nepal,

as well as representatives from international and specialized organizations such as ESCAP, the World Economic Forum (WEF), the Ellen MacArthur Foundation, CITYNET, and ICLEI Japan. A total of 52 municipalities and organizations from both Japan and abroad participated, and 16 sessions held from September 3 to 4 were attended by a diverse range of stakeholders, including municipal officials, companies, research institutions, and students. Discussions were held on the design of systems that support resource circulation, public-private partnerships, and the roles of citizens and communities. Furthermore, beyond just sharing knowledge, directions were indicated to accelerate the transition to circular cities through specific urban practices and City-to-City Collaboration. Furthermore, at this forum, it was announced that the number of signatory cities for the Asian Circular Cities Declaration (ACCD) has expanded to 43 cities, and the first ACCD action plan, "ACCD Action 2026," was presented.

In addition, a session was held looking ahead to the International Horticultural Expo 2027, "GREEN×EXPO 2027" to be held in Yokohama next year, where information was shared regarding the social implementation of sustainability through the exposition and its potential for expansion into the Asia-Pacific region.

An Overview and recorded videos of the two-day event are scheduled to be released on the website (https://apcc.city.yokohama.lg.jp/en/archive/index.html) at a later date. For those who were unable to attend in person, please be sure to watch it.

1. Site Visit Program

On September 2, an excursion (city tour) was held for representatives from overseas cities. Leaders and practitioners from the participating cities had the opportunity to visit advanced facilities in Yokohama related to circular city development and decarbonization, where they could experience Japan's initiatives, latest technologies, and solutions.

Site Visit Locations and Overview

Ten representatives from invited cities and organizations participated in the site visit program, which was conducted under the theme "Food Loss Countermeasures in Yokohama." First, we visited the "SDGs Locker" installed in the city hall and the collection station for used oil, which serves as the raw material for Sustainable Aviation Fuel (SAF). The SDGs Locker is an automatic vending machine that sells items such as bread that can no longer be sold in stores because they are close to their expiration dates. Also, SAF is a next-generation aviation fuel produced from cooking oil, which has been attracting attention in recent years as a decarbonization technology. During the tour, specific questions were asked to the City of Yokohama officials regarding the project scheme of the SDGs Locker and the amount of used oil collected.



Tour of the SDGs Locker



Tour of the SAF collection station

Next, we visited the "Yasaicle" (coming from “Yasai” = Vegetables and the English word “Cycle”) food recycling initiative at the Yokohama Bay Sheraton Hotel & Towers. Since 2008, the hotel has been composting food waste from its restaurants using a machine and providing the resulting fertilizer to contract farmers in Kanagawa Prefecture. Vegetables grown by contract farmers are used again in the hotel's restaurants, implementing a resource-circulating initiative. On the day, the officials directly explained the overview of the initiatives, and an active Q&A session was held regarding the equipment installation costs and the types of food waste that can be processed. Participants showed high interest, with comments such as, "Food loss is a common issue for all countries, and we would like to use it as a reference for our own cities," and "We want to introduce similar initiatives."



Explanation of Yasaicle



Tour of the food waste processor



Group photo

2. CITYNET SDGs Cluster Seminar 2026

On September 3, the CITYNET Cluster Seminar was held under the theme "**Actionable Circularity and Zero Waste: Scaling through Resilience**," where speakers from cities in the Asia-Pacific region and international organizations presented practical examples and issues regarding the promotion of a circular economy and participated in a panel discussion. A total of 197 people participated in this session, including CITYNET members, representatives from international organizations such as UN-Habitat, and general participants from both Japan and abroad, with many attendees following the presentations and the panel discussion.

Seminar Overview

Session name	Actionable Circularity and Zero Waste: Scaling through Resilience (CITYNET Cluster Seminar 2026)
Date and time	Thursday, September 3, 2026, 15:00–17:00
Venue	PACIFICO Yokohama North G2 (GREEN STAGE)
Opening remarks	Jun Matsuura, Deputy Mayor, City of Yokohama Vijay Jagannathan, Secretary General, CITYNET Secretariat
Presenters	・Jun Sakakibara, Executive Director of Housing Division, Housing and Architecture Bureau, City of Yokohama ・Mat Nasir bin Hassan, Executive Director of the Valuation and Property Management Department, Seberang Perai City Council ・Neil Ravena, Department Head II, City General Services Office, City of Iloilo ・Oddy Angelo Barrios, Human Settlements Officer, Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific, United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat)
Panel discussion	・Tomomi Yamashita, Director General for Global Initiatives, Policy Administration and International Affairs Bureau, City of Yokohama ・Benjamin B. Magalong, Mayor, Baguio City ・Neil Ravena, Department Head II, City General Services Office, City of Iloilo ・Ashok Kumar Sunar, Planning Director, Pokhara City (via video presentation) ・Moderator: Vijay Jagannathan, Secretary General, CITYNET Secretariat
Closing remarks	Jae-Bok Chang, CEO, CITYNET Secretariat

*The seminar video will be released later. You can view it from the link below.
https://apcc.city.yokohama.lg.jp/en/archive/index.html
The presentation materials for the day can be viewed at the following link (until March 31, 2027).
https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/12TOSbi3dDnvnHrD5UV9t-SprOkIxHbTm



Group photo of the speakers



Introduction of presenters and panelists



Opening remarks by Jun Matsuura, Deputy Mayor, City of Yokohama



Opening remarks by Vijay Jagannathan, Secretary General, CITYNET Secretariat



Closing remarks by Jae-Bok Chang, CEO, CITYNET Secretariat

Seminar Highlights

In this seminar, opening remarks were made by Deputy Mayor Matsuura of City of Yokohama and Secretary General Vijay Jagannathan of the CITYNET Secretariat, followed by presentations from each participating city on their initiatives toward a circular economy and zero waste, based on their respective regional characteristics and challenges.

The City of Yokohama introduced its initiatives for the circular use of housing stock. The city explained that it promotes circular housing policies that treat vacant houses not as "waste" but as urban resources (housing stock) to be reused, and that it seeks to reduce the number of vacant houses and encourage energy-efficient housing by integrating three approaches: prevention (support for inheritance procedures and consultation), utilization (support for renovation and matching), and management (measures against hazardous vacant houses). It was also presented that, by linking the circular use of housing stock to community revitalization, disaster resilience, and decarbonization, the city is building a resilient circular city that engages a wide range of stakeholders, including elderly residents and households with children. The presentation emphasized that the municipal government advances these policies through collaboration with citizens and businesses.

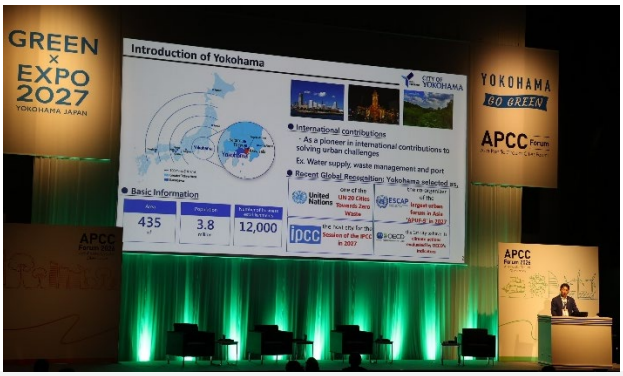
In addition, the City Council of Seberang Perai, Iloilo City, and UN-Habitat shared practical examples of the circular economy in their respective regions, along with their prospects.

The City Council of Seberang Perai presented how, under its Circular Economy Roadmap 2020–2030, it is developing anaerobic digestion and biogas facilities for food waste as well as integrated waste management centers equipped with material recovery facilities (MRFs), thereby expanding circular measures across a wide range of resources including food waste, construction waste, waste cooking oil, glass, and electronic waste. It was also emphasized that the city places importance on citizen participation, advancing environmental measures together with the local economy and community building through upcycling parks, community recycling centers, recycling incentive schemes, and unmanned recycling facilities utilizing IoT.

Iloilo City presented its response to rapidly increasing urban waste, combining the introduction of a digital waste

management system, awareness-raising activities for residents, and recycling buyback schemes (such as Trash to Cash) to promote zero-waste resource circulation across all 180 districts. The city also introduced its circular economy model, which integrates the composting and biogasification of food waste, the production of refuse-derived fuel (RDF), upcycling, and the social inclusion of informal waste collectors, achieving environmental improvement alongside job creation and enhanced local welfare.

UN-Habitat gave a presentation on positioning zero waste as the entry point to the circular economy. Rather than treating it as a mere waste project, UN-Habitat promotes the transition to a "resilient circular city system" capable of withstanding climate-related disasters and market fluctuations through data analysis, public-private partnerships, investment development, and monitoring. It was also emphasized that UN-Habitat combines diagnostic assessment using tools such as the Waste Wise Cities Tool (WaCT) with inter-city learning, capacity development, and financing support, enabling cities across the Asia-Pacific region to implement and scale up circular economy initiatives.



Presentation by Jun Sakakibara,
Executive Director of Housing Division, Housing and Architecture Bureau, City of Yokohama



Presentation by Mat Nasir bin Hassan,
Executive Director of the Valuation and Property Management Department, Seberang Perai City Council



Presentation by Neil Ravena,
Department Head II, City General Services Office, City of Iloilo



Presentation by Oddy Angelo Barrios,
Human Settlements Officer, Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific, UN-Habitat

In the panel discussion, representatives from Iloilo City, Pokhara City, Baguio City, and the City of Yokohama participated and exchanged views on practical experiences and challenges in building circular cities.

From Pokhara City, a presentation was given on its efforts to promote waste management that integrates both circular economy principles and disaster resilience, based on mandatory source segregation by residents and a resource recovery system operated in partnership with private sector service providers. The city also highlighted its initiatives to promote environmental protection and local economic development through infrastructure projects utilizing recycled plastics and the incubation of green businesses.

From Baguio City, a presentation was delivered on the development of a circular economy model rooted in indigenous values, aimed at moving away from the traditional "take-make-throw" pattern of production, consumption, and disposal. The city explained how it is fostering behavioral change among residents and advancing a resource-efficient urban model through community-led materials recovery facilities, circular tourism initiatives, environmental education programs for students, and collaboration with the Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) system.

The discussion covered key themes such as "citizen and stakeholder participation and behavioral change", "utilization of public-private partnerships (PPP)", "integration of resilience and disaster prevention", "next-generation education" and

"financing and incentive design".

In particular, the importance of positioning citizens not merely as recipients of services, but as active participants in shaping society, and the role of the administration in visualizing advanced initiatives by citizens and companies and promoting their horizontal expansion, were emphasized. It was also pointed out that to make the transition to a circular economy sustainable, resilience must be integrated from the initial design stage rather than being added as an afterthought.





The panel discussion in progress





Q&A session

On the day of the event, an online question submission tool, "Slido," was used to allow participants to submit questions via smartphones and other devices. In addition to questions from the venue, submitted questions were also addressed, leading to an active discussion on the success factors for implementing a circular economy and building sustainable cities.

Baguio City explained that the biggest challenge in promoting a circular economy is citizen behavior, and that continuous education and engagement of citizens, especially through the tourism industry and school education, are important for behavioral change.

The City of Yokohama explained that despite the population increase, the significant reduction in waste generation was largely due to the activities of citizen briefing sessions and local volunteers. It was also emphasized that rather than just providing solutions led by the administration, it is important to create mechanisms that identify and share initiatives already being practiced by citizens and companies to encourage behavioral change.

Iloilo City identified the following as success factors for realizing a circular city: (1) utilization of the private sector, (2) appropriate operation of legal systems and recycling technologies, (3) sharing of resources between the public and private sectors, and (4) integrated cooperation among stakeholders. It was also noted that PPP (Public-Private Partnership) plays an important role in promoting sustainable initiatives.

Secretary General Vijay Jagannathan, who served as the moderator, presented three common messages for this seminar: (1) practical initiatives are crucial for circularity, (2) resilience should be integrated from the initial design stage of system development, and (3) partnerships with diverse stakeholders, including companies and citizens, are essential.

Due to time constraints, many questions submitted on the day could not be addressed. For example,

- How will the cities selected for the UN "20 Cities Towards Zero Waste"* leverage their title to establish new projects and partnerships?
- What kind of private funds and investors should cities collaborate with to promote a circular economy?
- What conditions and mechanisms are necessary to sustain circular economy initiatives in the long term?
- How should resource circulation and chemical substance management be balanced in the recycling of building materials and electrical products?

These questions were raised, reflecting the high level of interest among participants.

**The "20 Cities Towards Zero Waste" is a program in which the UN Secretary-General's Advisory Board on Zero Waste selects 20 cities that are taking advanced initiatives in waste reduction and promoting the circular economy worldwide and disseminates their best practices to the world.*

Finally, after the closing remarks by CEO Chang of the CITYNET Secretariat, a commemorative photo session was held, bringing the session to a close.



Group photo of the speakers and CityNet members

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CITYNET Yokohama Project Office supports the SDGs.