

NATIONAL URBAN POLICY PACIFIC REGION REPORT



NATIONAL URBAN POLICY: Pacific Region Report

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ACRONYMS

ADB	Asian Development Bank
CLGF	Commonwealth Local Government Forum
CROP	Council of Regional Organisations in the Pacific
ESCAP	Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific
FSPI	Foundation for the Peoples of the South Pacific International
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
ICPD	International Conference on Population and Development
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
PICs	Pacific Island Countries
PIFS	Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat
PNG	Papua New Guinea
PSUP	Participatory Slum Upgrading Programme
PUA	Pacific Urban Agenda
PUF	Pacific Urban Forum
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SOPAC	Pacific Islands Applied Geoscience Commission (now officially known as the SPC Technical Division)
SPC	Secretariat of the Pacific Community
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UN-Habitat	United Nations Human Settlements Programme
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

There is a growing consensus in the international community about the impact of the transformative power of urbanization. The Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development, containing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), consolidates our vision of urbanization as a tool, and an engine, for development, as reflected in SDG Goal 11: Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable. The New Urban Agenda, the outcome document of the Third United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development held in Quito, Ecuador, 2016, identifies National Urban Policies as one of its key pillars, recognizing them as “drivers of change”.

Urbanization brings changes in the dynamics of the spatial distribution of people and the distribution, flows of goods and services and use of resources and of land. With rapid urbanization come both challenges and opportunities. UN-Habitat promotes the development of National Urban Policies as urbanization is a complex phenomenon and affects an entire country or national territory. A National Urban Policy is an essential tool through which governments can facilitate and guide positive urbanization patterns to support productivity, competitiveness, and prosperity in cities. A National Urban Policy should be able to create the conditions for good urbanization through appropriate legal frameworks, municipal financing and planning and design which articulate horizontal and vertical coordination and understanding of issues to be addressed.

The Pacific Region is very diverse with regard to urbanization. The Region includes countries with urbanization rates below 20 percent (Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands) as well as countries where more people live in cities and towns than in rural villages or outer islands (Cook Islands, Fiji, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Palau). There are large cities (Port Moresby in Papua New Guinea) and growing urban metropolitan areas (Greater Suva, Fiji); whilst some of the smallest capitals in area and population in the world, both in terms of population and area, can be found in the region (for example Funafuti in Tuvalu). Urban growth rates are as varied; with shrinking urban areas in some countries, and very rapid urban growth in others are documented in this publication. Yet, since 2004, Pacific Island countries have been organizing the Pacific Urban Forum to collectively discuss challenges and opportunities of urbanization despite these differences in urbanization dynamics and patterns. As a result of these dialogues, several countries have developed National Urban Policies (or National Urbanization Policies), have established national offices to manage urbanization and minimise development impacts, and have included urbanization in their national development frameworks.

In order to further support Pacific Island countries in their endeavour to address urbanization challenges and to harness its opportunities and challenges, this report takes stock of the urban policy situation and provides recommendations to advance National Urban Policies in each of the countries.



1

URBANIZATION IN THE PACIFIC

Chapter 1 URBANIZATION IN THE PACIFIC

This report provides the background and context of urban policy development in eight Pacific Island countries, with the aim of illuminating the state and condition of urban policy at the national level.

To this end, a brief overview of the history of urban development and recent urban development issues confronting Pacific governments are outlined to provide an understanding of the context within which urban planning and urban policy makers are operating in. National-level urban related policies, and where appropriate, the national development strategies of the respective Pacific Island countries are examined, and an assessment is made of the phases and drivers of National Urban Policy development in the countries.

To understand the context of urban policy development, it is appropriate to first define the concepts of 'urban' and urbanization in the Pacific and describe the broad urban population and migration trends across the region.

Urbanization in the Pacific

How do we know an area is "urban"? A useful definition of urban is:

*"A place-based characteristic that incorporates elements of population density, social and economic organisation, and the transformation of the natural environment into a built environment ... a spatial concentration of people whose lives are organised around non-agricultural activities."*¹

Urbanization refers to the increasing share of a country's national population living in settlements defined and delineated as urban.

The rate of urbanization is the annual growth rate of this urban share at a particular geographical scale.

Urbanization is not unique to the Pacific; it is a global phenomenon. However, the scale of the issues in larger Pacific Island countries may be significant as they cope with managing larger cities. Whether Suva in Fiji, Port Moresby in Papua New Guinea, or Apia in Samoa, there are a range of issues that are common to all. Globally, cities tend to thrive economically while the rural regions go into decline. This is also true for the Pacific which has witnessed a decline in outer island development and rural population growth.

In the larger Pacific Island Countries, there are a number of provincial towns or cities that attract rural and outer island migrants, and these too can be defined as significant urban centres, for example: Mt Hagen, Lae and Madang, in addition to the capital city of Port Moresby in Papua New Guinea; Labasa, Nadi and Lautoka, in addition to Suva in Fiji; Luganville, in addition to Port Vila in Vanuatu, and Auki and Gizo townships, in addition to the capital city of Honiara in the Solomon Islands."

Urbanization in the Pacific is a predictable response to modernization and economic development, with its roots in colonial administrations, and growth directions determined by economic and social development opportunities as well as firm links to rural and outer island conditions. Urbanization is not simply a response the lack of opportunities and economic advancement in rural or remote communities, but a response to modernization and globalization. Urban areas allow resources to be more efficiently deployed, and services to be effectively delivered. As well, economies of scale can be more easily achieved, and countries can plan and regulate their economies and societies.

¹ Weeks, J., 2010, Defining urban areas, in Rashed, T., & Jurgens, C. (eds), Remote Sensing of urban and Suburban Areas, p.34.

In many circumstances, urbanization, once started, is impossible to halt – urbanization stimulates further urban growth, generating its own conditions for further expansion.

A number of Pacific Island countries have reached the point where there are more people living in cities and towns than there are in rural villages or outer islands (Cook Islands, Fiji, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Palau – see Table 1 below for urban population statistics). This urban transition is an inextricable part of the demographic transition and both are related to social and economic development.⁶ The demographic transition is the change from high birth and death rates to low birth and death rates associated with concurrent economic development, effective provision of social services, as well as improvements in agricultural production.

Demographers argue that there are economic dividends that arise from the demographic transition when the dependency ratio decreases (i.e. the number of dependent children or youth and elderly is less than the number engaged in economic activity) with a larger working age group². The ability of a country to achieve this demographic transition is improved as the number of people in urban areas

increases, primarily because health and education services are generally more accessible and economic opportunities are likely to be greater.

There is an important caveat with respect to the official urban counts provided by census data in Pacific Island countries; namely, that most urban growth is taking place in peri-urban areas and nearby communities generally outside the official urban jurisdictional boundaries. Therefore, the greater urban population tends not to be included in the official urban population counts. It is therefore difficult to give an accurate estimate of total urban populations as they should also include both the peri-urban informal settlements as well as nearby 'dormitory villages' where dwellers commute into nearby towns and cities. Growth outside of the official urban boundaries may also account for a slight decline in urban population growth rates in some cities as space for housing declines, and people move to the peri-urban areas. Including peri-urban populations in official urban census surveys may significantly increase the urban population count, particularly in the Melanesian countries, but also including Apia, Samoa. Where the peri-urban areas are included, it can be estimated that in almost all cases urban populations are growing at rates higher than rural populations.

² Kabzekova, Z.G. Impact of the demographic dividend on economic growth <https://populationandeconomics.pensoft.net/article/36061/download/pdf/300693>



Taiperia, Fiji, Mere Rayawa, UN-Habitat conducting community consultations © Bernhard Barth

Table 1: *National population and urban population intercensal changes over the last two census periods*

Pacific Island Country (PIC)	Last two census years		Population as counted at last census		Urban population (%)		Annual intercensal urban growth rate (%)	
Cook Islands*	2001	2011	14,990	14,974	63	74	-1.0	-1.2
Fiji Islands	1996	2007	775,077	837,271	46	51	2.6	1.5
FSM	2000	2010	107,008	102,843	-	22	-	-2.2
Kiribati	2010	2015*	103,058	110,110	54	57	4.4	2.1
Marshall Islands	1999	2011	50,840	53,158	65	74	1.8	1.4
Nauru		2011	-	10,084	-	100	-	1.8
Niue	1997	2011	2,088	1,611	35	-	1.2	-
Palau	2000	2005	19,129	19,907	70	77	2.9	3.2
Papua New Guinea	2000	2011	5,190,786	7,059,693	15	13	4.1	2.8
Samoa	2011	2016**	187,820	192,126	20	18	-0.3	NA
Solomon Islands	1999	2009	409,042	515,870	12	20	3.4	4.7
Tonga	1996	2011	97,784	103,252	32	23	0.8	2.4
Tuvalu	2002	2012***	9,526	10,837	47	57	1.7	3.1
Vanuatu	1999	2009	193,219	234,023	21	24	4.3	3.5

* Kiribati Census 2015: <http://www.mfed.gov.ki/publications/census-preliminary-report-2015-final>

** Samoa Census 2016: <http://www.sbs.gov.ws/index.php/153-uncategorised/76-census-2017>

*** Tuvalu Census 2012: http://prdrse4all.spc.int/system/files/census_2012_preliminary_report.pdf

Source: Secretariat of the Pacific Community: *Pacific Island populations - Estimates and projections of demographic indicators for selected years (2013)*. NB: Asterisk indicates census undertaken recently but information not yet available.

Urbanization Issues and Opportunities in the Pacific

Urbanization produces major social, economic and environmental change. Often, the growth of cities exceeds the capacity of authorities to develop and maintain adequate social and physical infrastructure. One of the most pressing needs is the formation of informal settlements in which urban dwellers lack basic civil rights, and frequently face high levels of vulnerability towards natural hazards.³ As great as the challenges are, they also present a historic opportunity to promote more sustainable and inclusive forms of urbanization.

In many Pacific towns and cities, there is limited land for urban expansion either due to a combination of landowner conflicts, topographical constraints or just a lack of land mass (see Chapter 3, Country Profiles for Fiji, Kiribati, PNG, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu for prominent examples). Urbanization creates competition for land, housing, jobs and services. For housing, this pushes people into particular areas, often in peri-urban lands adjacent to the municipal boundaries which remain under customary ownership and controlled by various tenure arrangements spanning from formal leaseholds to informal agreements (see Housing, Land and Informal Settlements sections in Chapter 3, Country Profiles for Fiji, PNG, Solomon Islands, Vanuatu).

³ United Nations University, 2014, World Risk Report, p.11.

Even though the conditions of life for some urban dwellers may be worse than living in a rural village, it is the hope that cities present including job opportunities and access to improved education and health services that attract people to urban areas. Migration that started with the easing of colonial controls on movement has steadily grown since Pacific Island countries gained independence. What were once considered temporary settlements now house second and third generations urban dwellers.

Pacific Island countries are also highly exposed to climate change impacts including rising sea levels, storm surges and cyclones (as elaborated in Box 1: Climate Change and Urbanization in the Pacific). As urban land becomes scarcer and problems such as land disputes more prominent, new rural and outer island urban immigrants are being forced into more vulnerable urban areas on the coast and river flood plains (see Urban Environment and Climate Change sections under Chapter 3 Country Profiles for country-specific details).

While most informal settlers are affected by poor living conditions, women and girls suffer most. Gender disparities are demonstrated through unequal access to natural resources and land ownership, women's limited opportunities to participate in decision-making and access to markets, capital, training, and technologies; as well as through women's double burden of responsibilities inside and outside the household.⁴

Moreover, rural-urban migration has given rise to identifiable "urban villages" which are rural villages formed within cities with kin from rural areas. People living in urban villages generally associate their place of belonging with their home islands or rural villages, rather than the city. A product of this association with other places is that many people do not feel that they belong to the city, which can in turn can result in urban villages being excluded

from decision-making, and even overlooked by the humanitarian community in the face of disaster⁵. The idea of "belonging" appears differently across different literatures, including as part of a rights discourse which articulates the fundamental claim that people have a right to land on which they have settled and created homes and communities ("right to the city").^{6,7} Enhancing a sense of belonging and identity in urban areas provides an opportunity to create inclusive urbanization, empower citizens in governance, leverage the urban economy for the poor, and increase community resilience in the face of climate change.

The Pacific Institute of Public Policy noted,

Urban settlements continue to flourish despite the lack of planning and services and have become a permanent feature of the Pacific landscape despite the prevalence of temporary dwellings and the informal nature of the relationship between landowners and occupiers. ... Urban growth adds another dimension to the complexity of customary land ownership and development in the Pacific. The absence of clear land policies contributes to the confusion over jurisdiction for 'urban issues' (e.g. defining who is responsible for managing peri-urban areas) and tenure security for urban residents.⁹

Despite inefficiencies in infrastructure and service provision, Pacific towns and cities are engines of national economic growth, some being more dynamic and effective than others. Urban-based economic activities make a significant contribution to gross domestic growth (GDP) in Pacific Island

⁴ Jones, P. The Challenges of Implementing Millennium Development Goal Target 7D in Pacific Island Towns and Cities, Asia-Pacific Development Journal Vol. 19, No. 1, June 2012.

⁵ Day, J. and Bamforth, T., 2019. 'This is our garden now': disasters and belonging in an urban Pacific (Draft).

⁶ Harvey, D. (2003). The Right to the City. International Journal of Urban and Regional Research, 27(4), 939-941.

⁷ Lefebvre, H. (1996). The right to the city. Writings on cities, 63181.

⁸ Yuval-Davis, N. (2006) Belonging and the Politics of Belonging. Patterns of Prejudice, 40.3, 197-214.

⁹ Pacific Institute for Public Policy, 2011, Urban Hymns Managing Urban Growth, Discussion Paper 18, p.3.

countries¹⁰; for example, economic activities in South Tarawa alone account for approximately 60 percent of the GDP of Kiribati.¹¹ Pacific cities will continue to grow, presenting the opportunity to work towards enhancing the robustness of urban policy and planning; the efficiency and dependability of urban infrastructure; the resilience of urban systems

vis-à-vis climate change-related hazards; and the level of participation and coordination between central, provincial and local governments as well as land owners and urban residents, which as demonstrated above, are the major challenges confronting the management of Pacific urbanization.



Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea © eGuidetravel

¹⁰ Asian Development Bank, 2012, *The State of Pacific Towns and Cities: Urbanization in ADB's Pacific Developing Member Countries*, Pacific Study Series, p.xv.

¹¹ Government of Kiribati. 1995. *The Urban Management Plan for South Tarawa*. Ministry of Home Affairs and Rural Development: Government of Kiribati Printer. Bairiki

Box 1: *Climate Change and Urbanization in the Pacific*

Pacific Small Island Developing States (SIDS) have been highlighted as being among the most vulnerable countries to the risks of climate change, facing different vulnerabilities such as droughts, floods, sea level rise, temperature rise and ocean acidification among others. Additionally, it is important to highlight that Pacific Islands have also historically been exposed both to natural extreme climate events and hazards such as earthquakes, tsunamis and cyclones. The phenomena of global warming and El Nino/El Nina, for example, commonly affect all Pacific Island countries examined in this study: Fiji, Kiribati, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu and Vanuatu. In turn, tropical cyclones affect most of the islands, except Kiribati, varying on its frequency of occurrence and display of severe events for each island. Those climatic events are generally predicted to keep increasing in frequency and intensity with projected climatic changes.

In this context, Pacific Island countries face fragility to external shocks and stresses due to existing deficits in urban infrastructure, housing and service provision. These deficits may be originated from many actions, including a weak institutional governance framework and a rapid and unplanned urbanization process. The latter is mainly occurring due the migration of rural people for better access to education, health, employment opportunities and other urban services. Consequently, these actions result in a growth of informal settlements and land tenure issues as well as lack of infrastructure and basic services provision.

It is well known that climate change impacts the lives of women and men in different ways as a result of existing inequalities, responsibilities, and roles. In the Pacific, these differences between women and men are demonstrated through unequal access to natural resources and land ownership, women's limited

opportunities to participate in formal employment and decision-making, and limited access to climate change and disaster risk reduction trainings. Further, in the face of cyclones, floods, and other climate change-related disasters that require mobility, responsibility for children and elderly people may hinder their timely escape, access to shelter or access to health care.

Due to immense climate-related challenges, there is extensive work and research being conducted across the Pacific. These activities have been predominantly focusing on rural/remote areas but with limited focus on urban settings. However, a majority of the Pacific region's urban population currently lives in low-lying coastal areas, located in flood-risk coastal zones susceptible to sea-level rise and cyclone impacts.¹² In this context, these areas are where the most decisive actions must be taken.¹³

Pacific Island countries have been responding to climate change challenges by implementing National Policies and Development Frameworks, and establishing key strategies which mainly focus on adaptation, mitigation and disaster risk management. In most of the cases, the units created to address climate change are distributed under different Ministries across the Islands. A promotion of integrated policy approach for climate-responsive urban development is needed, so it can reach inclusion, resilience and a sustainable development in the future.

¹² UNESCAP and UN-Habitat (2015). The State of Asian and Pacific Cities 2015. <http://www.unescap.org/sites/default/files/The%20State%20of%20Asian%20and%20Pacific%20Cities%202015.pdf>

¹³ Prime Minister of Fiji at the UN-Habitat Assembly (27 May 2019)

The Prime Minister of Fiji stated at the UN-Habitat Assembly (27 May 2019), “Many vulnerable economies are only one severe weather event away from complete decimation. We need new financing mechanisms and new technologies to mitigate that risk, but we also need a new recognition of the opportunities in the adaptation space. No nation, and no economy, will be spared from worsening climate impacts. Those leading the way in funding and implementing adaptation solutions will reap the benefits of that body of knowledge and experiences in the decades to come.”

The links between urbanization and climate change were further reflected in the Declaration generated as the outcome of the Fifth Pacific Urban Forum (Annex 1).

The Declaration reemphasised that climate change is a crisis for the Pacific region and the world, representing a significant threat for sustainable development. As a result, the Declaration highlighted that efforts need to be strengthened to change the way cities are planned, and the manner in which infrastructure is developed so as to reduce the vulnerability and contribution of Pacific cities to climate change and natural hazards.

As such, the Declaration recommended that, in line with efforts to address climate change regionally, the current regional institutional and governance architecture and frameworks should be strengthened to elevate and accelerate efforts to address urbanization- which, like climate change, is a transboundary issue.



Market in Honiara, Solomon Islands © Bernhard Barth

Urban Policy Context in the Pacific

A stocktake of urbanization policies was conducted in 2006 by the Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC). The SPC review found that few countries had developed policies to address urbanization concerns or had articulated urban visions within national strategic plans. Fiji was the only country at that point to have an Urban Policy Action Plan, although Papua New Guinea had a draft National Urbanization Policy and Samoa had established its Planning and Urban Management Agency. Most other Pacific Island governments tackled urban management issues, housing, social services and infrastructure needs through a variety of uncoordinated policies and Ministries.

Some governments in the region had been tackling urban growth issues for many years. As the SPC noted in 2006, some countries had developed national population policies which made specific reference to the need to address urbanization and rural-to-urban migration issues and policies. Other governments referred to the need to address population and urban development issues in their national strategic development plans.

Much of the response to urban planning and development challenges grew from regional discussions and commitments, as well as the recognition on the part of bilateral donors and multilateral agencies that urbanization represented a new level of vulnerability in the Pacific; as well as an opportunity to improve economic growth and quality of life for both urban and rural residents. Bilateral donors have responded through funding studies, services, community and housing development at a country-level. The multilateral agencies (the UN as well as World Bank and Asian Development Bank) have tackled the policy and regulatory issues of urbanization, and supported infrastructure development.

The international and regional responses to urbanization and urban development issues, which provided the frameworks for these initiatives are introduced in the following sections. Moreover, the country-specific context of urban policy development is elaborated in Chapter 3.

International Response to Urbanization

Globally, cities comprise the majority (54 per cent) of the world's population; a proportion that is expected to reach two thirds (66 per cent) by the middle of the century. Around three quarters of economic output (over \$50 trillion) are in urban centres of all sizes, where new investments and most new jobs and opportunities are concentrated. Cities have become arenas of globalization, drawing in finance and large population movements, as people migrate for work as well as having an increasingly large share of economic growth as industries cluster in urban areas.

Meanwhile, the challenges of rapid urbanization are becoming increasingly prominent. Close to 70 percent of greenhouse gas emissions are generated by urban consumers. One billion people live in slums or informal settlements with high levels of overcrowding, mostly lacking piped water connections and poor access to sanitation, drainage, waste collection, clean energy, education and healthcare. The Secretary General of the United Nations stated, "The struggle for global sustainability will be won or lost in cities."¹⁴

The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) provided a wide-ranging set of aims and measurable targets but did not include a specific goal for urbanization. However, some recognition of the challenges facing urban populations was made in Goal 7: Ensure environmental sustainability, and Target 7D which sought to achieve, by 2020, a significant improvement in the lives of at least 100 million slum dwellers.

¹⁴ United Nations, 2012, Press Release: 'Our Struggle for Global Sustainability Will Be Won or Lost in Cities,' Says Secretary-General, at New York Event. Retrieved from <http://www.un.org/press/en/2012/sgsm14249.doc.htm>

Although the target has reportedly already been met, the UN has estimated that by 2012 863 million people were living in slums compared to 760 million in 2000, and 650 million in 1990.¹⁵ Slum dwellings and the growth of informal settlements are increasingly global issues.

The lack of an international framework addressing key urbanization concerns such as housing, access to sanitation, water, energy and other social services have been addressed in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development containing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). These replaced the MDGs in 2015. Sustainable Development Goal 11 (SDG11) focuses holistically on sustainable urban development (see Box 2).

This stand-alone urban SDG provides an opportunity to guide national development and regional priorities, given that SDG11 underlines the salience of cities for global development, promoting international recognition of the challenges faced by cities as well as their potential for transformative change. The SDGs encourage local and national governments to develop integrated development strategies for cities in the hopes of strengthening urban and regional planning and providing a boost to reforms of outdated planning approaches including urban legislation.¹⁶

The Third United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development (Habitat III), held in Quito, Ecuador, in October 2016 was the first United Nations global summit after the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals, and established a New Urban Agenda. The New Urban Agenda sets out a common vision and global standards for urban development in the coming decades

and offers a paradigm shift in the way we think, build, and manage cities. The New Urban Agenda directly addresses specific issues pertaining to Small Island Development States' (SIDS) unique and emerging urban development challenges, their acute vulnerabilities to the adverse impacts of climate change and their specific and interlinked needs emerging from transport and mobility challenges.

The Ninth session of the World Urban Forum (WUF9) held in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia in February 2018, concluded with a strong focus on arrangements and actions for the implementation of the New Urban Agenda with a strong emphasis on the importance of public, private and civil society cooperation. The WUF9 outcome document, the Kuala Lumpur Declaration on Cities 2030, aims to localise and scale up the implementation of the New Urban Agenda as an accelerator to achieve the SDGs.

Other global agreements and programmes that have taken notice of the importance of urbanization include the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction and the Paris Agreement on Climate Change, which recognized the particular vulnerability and responsibility of urban areas with regards to climate change. The Oceans Pathway championed by Fiji at COP23 in 2017 emphasised the special role of coastal cities and settlements in the ocean and climate nexus in support of the Paris Agreement on Climate Change. In Bonn, countries and development partners pledged their support for building resilience, lowering greenhouse gas emissions and protecting ocean health in coastal island cities. These are all important measures elevating the importance of the SDGs, especially SDG 11, and the New Urban Agenda.

¹⁵ UN-Habitat (2014) *The State of Asian and Pacific Cities 2015*, p.77.

¹⁶ Bandi, Clara, Goal 11: Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable, in Markus Loewe and Nicole Rippin (eds.), 2015, *The Sustainable Development Goals of the Post-2015 Agenda: Comments on the OWG and SDSN Proposals*, German Development Institute, p.57.

Box 2: Sustainable Development Goal 11**Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable**

11.1 By 2030, ensure access for all to adequate, safe and affordable housing and basic services and upgrade slums

11.2 By 2030, provide access to safe, affordable, accessible and sustainable transport systems for all, improving road safety, notably by expanding public transport, with special attention to the needs of those in vulnerable situations, women, children, persons with disabilities and older persons

11.3 By 2030, enhance inclusive and sustainable urbanization and capacity for participatory, integrated and sustainable human settlement planning and management in all countries

11.4 Strengthen efforts to protect and safeguard the world's cultural and natural heritage

11.5 By 2030, significantly reduce the number of deaths and the number of people affected and substantially decrease the direct economic losses relative to global gross domestic product caused by disasters, including water-related disasters, with a focus on protecting the poor and people in vulnerable situations

11.6 By 2030, reduce the adverse per capita environmental impact of cities, including by paying special attention to air quality and municipal and other waste management

11.7 By 2030, provide universal access to safe, inclusive and accessible, green and public spaces, in particular for women and children, older persons and persons with disabilities

11.A Support positive economic, social and environmental links between urban, peri-urban and rural areas by strengthening national and regional development planning

11.B By 2020, substantially increase the number of cities and human settlements adopting and implementing integrated policies and plans towards inclusion, resource efficiency, mitigation and adaptation to climate change, resilience to disasters, and develop and implement, in line with the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015, holistic disaster risk management at all levels

11.C Support least developed countries, including through financial and technical assistance, in building sustainable and resilient buildings utilizing local materials

From United Nations General Assembly Resolution, **A/RES/70/1**

Regional Response and the Pacific Urban Agenda

At the regional level, the need for urban policy and programmes to address rapid population growth has been considered since 1999, when the Forum Economic Ministers declared:

... in 1993 the United Nations developed the Habitat Agenda, and ... in 1996 a Ministerial Meeting under the auspices of ESCAP developed an Action Plan to implement the Agenda in the wider Asia-Pacific region, we direct that the Secretariat consult with appropriate regional organizations on the best mechanism for developing a sub-regional plan of action based on the Asia-Pacific Habitat Agenda but reflecting the circumstances of PICs.¹⁷

Forum leaders in 2001 called for the 'localization' of the 1996 Istanbul Habitat II agenda which preceded the New Urban Agenda. The United Nations' Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP) formed a partnership with the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat (PIFS) and UN-Habitat to develop a regional response.

The Pacific Urban Forum (PUF) is a regional event that aims to provide a unique and accessible platform for urban stakeholders to debate the elements that will create a sustainable urban future for the region. The first PUF took place in 2003, giving rise to the Pacific Urban Agenda (PUA) which was endorsed by UNESCAP in 2004 and by the Pacific Island Forum Leaders in 2005.

The PUA was developed in collaboration with Pacific national urban planning stakeholders and key regional organizations, including the Commonwealth Local Government Forum (CLGF), the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat (PIFS), UN ESCAP Pacific Office, the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) and the Asian Development Bank. Other regional organizations engaged in the issue included SPC

¹⁷ Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat

(addressing demographic, community development and gender concerns), The Foundation of the Peoples of the South Pacific (addressing community development needs and concerns), SPC Geoscience Division (formerly SOPAC, addressing spatial planning and disaster risk assessment and planning) and United Nations Population Fund (addressing population policy and migration concerns). For the first time, a wide range of regional organizations collaborated to raise awareness of urban growth issues and seek common solutions amongst Pacific Island governments.

Since its inception in 2003, the PUA has provided a broad framework for Pacific Island countries to address issues associated with urbanization. The PUA was originally organised around three guiding priority themes:

- Serviced shelter for the urban poor;
- Urban environment; and
- Urban security.

It was envisaged that these themes would galvanize governments in the region to the need for planning and decision-making to address the social and environmental impacts of growing urban populations, whilst assisting national and local governments to develop policy.

The PUFs in 2007 and 2011 reaffirmed the region's commitment through review and refinement of the original PUA. Each review called on the experience of governments from around the region to consider the range of issues governments considered were priority and of pressing importance. In recent years, issues of urban governance and capacity as well as climate-related hazards, disaster mitigation, resilience and access to safe and affordable housing have been prominent, reflecting ongoing events in the Pacific.

The Fourth Pacific Urban Forum (PUF4), convened by UN-Habitat and CLGF Pacific from 25 to 27 March 2015 in Nadi, Fiji, focused on sustainable urbanization in the Pacific with a view to develop a New Urban Agenda for the region.

The Forum provided a multi-stakeholder platform to discuss the opportunities for well-managed urbanization and the interlinkages between the social, economic and environmental dimensions of equitable sustainable development. It adopted the Pacific New Urban Agenda (PNUA), highlighting that the specific needs of the Pacific in the process of urbanization must be recognised and adequately addressed following the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

The PNUA continued to emphasise that urbanization is a national issue for Pacific Island governments, and placed urban development at the centre of social and economic national well-being. The discussion moved beyond a mutually exclusive discussion of rural and urban development, to recognising that cities have always maintained close links to villages in the highlands and outer islands, and that the welfare of both is equally important.

It also provided the overall policy framework necessary to organise coordination across a wide range of sectors, drawing in key national, provincial and local stakeholders within and outside of government, and calling for stronger engagement of the PIFS and the Council of Regional Organisations in the Pacific (CROP) on urbanization challenges.

In summary the PNUA framework highlights four priority areas:

- a. Social Equity: Pacific Informal Settlements Upgrading Strategy;
- b. Environment, Resilience and Urbanization: "Ocean Cities";
- c. Urban Economy: Financing Cities and Local Economic Development;
- d. Urban Governance: National Urban Policies and multi-stakeholder partnerships.

At the request of the PIFS Secretary-General, a workshop was hosted by Australia National University (ANU) on 5-6 December 2017 to discuss how to address the rapid urbanization in the Pacific from a regional perspective.

The workshop highlighted the need for a body or mechanism to enable dialogue, knowledge-sharing and to support innovation at a technical level. It further stressed the role of regional organizations such as PIFS in facilitating and leading dialogue and engagement among leaders towards better integration of urban issues in regional policies.

At WUF9 in February 2018, both heads and members of Pacific Island delegations signed a statement reconfirming their commitment to the implementation of the Pacific New Urban Agenda (PNUA) and the New Urban Agenda in their respective countries and urged for remobilization and reinvigoration of regional policy attention to addressing urbanization issues.

Local and national government stakeholders reaffirmed their need for a PUF in Nadi, 11-13 December 2018, stressing the importance of local governments taking a leadership role in building sustainable, safe, resilient and inclusive human settlements in the region. The workshop also reaffirmed the request of PUF4 for a strong regional commitment, particularly in partnership with the PIFS, in order to successfully anchor and implement the PNUA.

The four pillars of the PNUA were still considered to be relevant, with the addition of 'urban infrastructure'. 'Strengthened urban governance' was deemed to be the highest priority given the importance of this cross-cutting pillar as the foundation for all others. Participants also identified the importance of supporting the informal sector given its contribution to the urban economy.

The Fifth Pacific Urban Forum (PUF5) was held in Nadi, Fiji, in the first week of July 2019. Following the adoption of the New Urban Agenda and a renewed recognition of the many opportunities and challenges for the Pacific, PUF5 provided an inclusive multi-stakeholder platform for reviewing the progress towards the PNUA and for exchange and dialogue on further action planning.

Participants of PUF5 included relevant regional organizations, national and local governments, non-governmental organizations, community-based organizations, traditional leaders, professionals, research institutions and academies, private sector, relevant development partners and media.

PUF5 focused on "Accelerating the implementation of the New Urban Agenda to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals in the Pacific", including the development of an Action Plan with concrete country and stakeholder commitments for the implementation of the PNUA as based on its pillars.

The outcome was the successful adoption of a Declaration (see Annex 1) reaffirming the commitment of Pacific Island Countries (PIC) towards the PNUA to achieve sustainable urbanization in the Pacific. The Declaration calls for a 'Pacific specific' version of urbanization, while acknowledging the differences that exist among and within PICs including diversity, a regional approach to address common urbanization concerns would be welcome. As noted in the Declaration, this would provide an opportunity to address urbanization in a coordinated and integrated regional manner, which may entail empowering the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat to coordinate regional approaches, and to elevate efforts to address urbanization at the intergovernmental level.

The Pacific Urban Forum further developed an action plan with concrete voluntary country and stakeholder commitments for the implementation of the Pacific New Urban Agenda along its pillars/goals and related areas, including:

- a. Social Equity and Urbanization
- b. Environment, Resilience, infrastructure and Urbanization
- c. Urban Economy
- d. Urban Governance

Finally, the organizers of the Pacific Urban Forum in July 2019, committed to support urban stakeholders across the region in the implementation of the action plan.



Community members, Kiribati © UN-Habitat



2

NATIONAL URBAN POLICIES

CHAPTER 2 NATIONAL URBAN POLICIES

As discussed in Chapter 1, the phenomenon of urbanization is a necessary condition for national economic growth, having the potential to bring about increased social prosperity, cohesion and more sustainable environmental management. However, if left uncontrolled and unplanned, it can have negative effects, exacerbating socio-economic inequalities, with the rise in unemployment and the spread of informal settlements and environmental degradation.

National Urban Policies constitute a framework through which governments can direct a more sustainable and productive urbanization process, by developing more integrated policies and mobilizing and engaging various stakeholders including all levels of government, civil society, NGOs, service providers, environmental and health authorities, and the private sector in decision-making. The process of National Urban Policy assists cooperation and collaboration between urban stakeholders, increases capacity of subnational governments, whilst aiming for an inclusive and shared national vision for urban development.

National Urban Policies: Global Context

National Urban Policies are defined as “a coherent set of decisions derived through a deliberate government-led process of coordinating and rallying various actors for a common vision and goal that will promote more transformative, productive, inclusive and resilient urban development for the long-term” (UN-Habitat and Cities Alliance, 2014). They are recognized as a primary governmental tool to coordinate key global urban policies and specific national pathways to sustainable development.

The adoption of international agreements such as the New Urban Agenda (NUA) and the 2030 Agenda provides a strong imperative and rationale for countries to develop and implement inclusive and participatory national urban policies and frameworks.

The NUA recognizes the correlation between sustainable urbanization and social, economic and environmental development, and identifies National Urban Policies as “drivers of change”. It outlines the need for a shared vision of urbanization that is based on five pillars: (i) National Urban Policies; (ii) urban legislation and regulations; (iii) urban planning and design; (iv) local economy and municipal finance; and (v) local implementation.

We will anchor the effective implementation of the New Urban Agenda in inclusive, implementable and participatory urban policies, as appropriate, to mainstream sustainable urban and territorial development as part of integrated development strategies and plans, supported, as appropriate, by national, subnational and local institutional and regulatory frameworks, ensuring that they are adequately linked to transparent and accountable finance mechanisms. – Paragraph 86 of NUA

In the preparation leading to Habitat III, National Urban Policies were selected as one of 10 Habitat III policy units, and the accompanying policy paper recommended in its conclusion that “it is necessary to recognize that a National Urban Policy can be a key instrument to measure the achievement of the SDGs and should constitute an important part of any serious attempt to implement the SDGs”.¹⁸

¹⁸ Habitat III Policy Paper Framework 3, National Urban Policies, p.25.

National urban policies are particularly instrumental in achieving SDG11 Target 11.a, which states:

“support positive economic, social and environmental links between urban, peri-urban and rural areas by strengthening national and regional development planning”

A review of the current indicator by experts and partners working on regional development and national urban policies highlighted substantial challenges to implementing and monitoring the indicator.¹⁹ One of these is that indicators are often difficult to measure, can be ambiguous and not suitable for strengthening national and regional development planning. During expert consultations, it was agreed that a good proxy indicator to measure cities’ urban and regional development plans is through the assessment of National Urban Policies.²⁰ This led to a new proposed indicator:

“Number of countries that have national urban policies or regional development plans that: (a) respond to population dynamics, (b) ensure balanced territorial development, (c) increase local fiscal space”.

The Second International Conference on National Urban Policy was co-hosted by the Organization for Economic Co-Operation and Development (OECD) and the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN Habitat) and was the first opportunity following the Habitat III Conference and during the ongoing Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) process to consider, in a global forum, the role of National Urban Policy in implementing the global urban agenda.

UN-Habitat’s National Urban Policies Programme globally contributes to country-level assessments on the state of National Urban Policy development and implementation, advice on establishment of national processes and stakeholder participation, documentation of good practices, analysis of urban planning policies and instruments, facilitation of national and regional dialogues, and capacity development for urban policy across the full range of actors. This report is part of a series of regional reports that consider the state of National Urban Policy at the regional level, which complements the Global State of National Urban Policy Report as prepared by UN-Habitat and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD).

National Urban Policies in the Pacific

In the PNUA, a multi-stakeholder declaration acknowledging the then emerging New Urban Agenda and suggesting ways to improve urbanization in the Pacific includes the following key action point:

“Embark on the development of National Urban or Urbanization Policies where these have not yet been developed and periodically review such policies [...]”

During PUF5, a special session on National Urban Policies was held. With the PNUA listing periodic reviews as a key action point, this special session contributed to this review process by taking stock of National Urban Policies in the region. The session sought to improve National Urban Policies as frameworks in addressing urban challenges, maximizing the benefits of urbanization, and establishing incentives for more sustainable practices. Participants representing UN-Habitat, planning ministries from Kiribati, Solomon Islands and Samoa, and the Commonwealth Local Government Forum were strongly involved in discussions.

¹⁹ UN-Habitat, 2019. How to Formulate a National Urban Policy – A Practical Guide. https://unhabitat.org/sites/default/files/documents/2019-05/how_to_formulate_a_nup.pdf

²⁰ UN-Habitat, 2019. How to Formulate a National Urban Policy – A Practical Guide. https://unhabitat.org/sites/default/files/documents/2019-05/how_to_formulate_a_nup.pdf

The group discussions held during the session highlighted that National Urban Policies are an essential mechanism for PNUA implementation at the national level. It was also noted that National Urban Policies do not have to be one comprehensive

document – a National Urban Policy is also a process of stakeholder involvement and setting strategic urban directions, and the policy framework can be comprised of several urban-related policies.



Housing in Solomon Islands © UN-Habitat

Phases of National Urban Policy Development

UN-Habitat’s “National Urban Policy: A Guiding Framework” outlines 5 phases of National Urban Policy development, which provides the basis of this analysis, as illustrated in Figure 1 and described below.

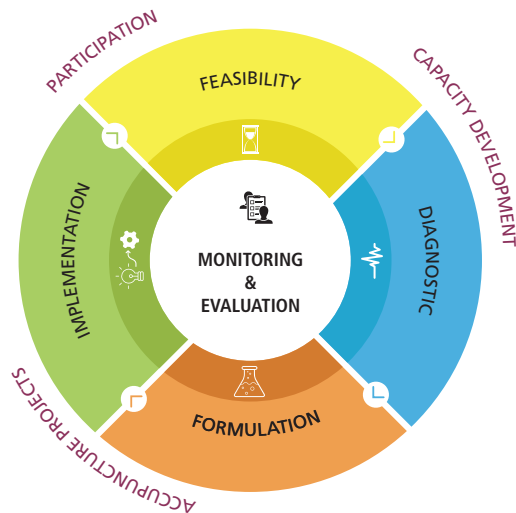


Figure 1. *Phases of National Urban Policy development*
Source: National Urban Policy: A Guiding Framework P.10.

Phase 1: FEASIBILITY²¹

The initial phase aims at making the case for a National Urban Policy and to clarify the following: the solidification of the coordination role of national governments, the benefits for international competitiveness, and the gains that are seen through the process of policy development.

Phase 2: DIAGNOSIS ²²

This is the phase in which key evidence is collected and acts as the foundation for choices and decisions that will be made by policy-makers and stakeholders in the National Urban Policy process. An understanding of the context is developed, problems and opportunities can be identified, policy goals can be defined, and stakeholders can be mapped.

Phase 3: FORMULATION ²³

The formulation phase facilitates a mapping of what will occur between definition of the policy challenges and problem(s) and attainment of the policy goal. It will be the point in the process that will evaluate policy options and make decisions regarding the way in which the policy goals will be achieved.

Phase 4: IMPLEMENTATION

This is the phase in which the policy plan is actioned. The implementation phase should make clear to all stakeholders their roles and responsibilities and ensure that all stakeholders have the capacity (human, financial and institutional) to implement the policy as planned.

²¹ For further information and guidance, see: UN-Habitat, 2018. National Urban Policy Feasibility Guide. http://urbanpolicyplatform.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/28022019_NUP-Feasibility-Note.pdf

²² For further information and guidance, see UN-Habitat, 2014. National Urban Policy: Framework for a Rapid Diagnostic. http://unhabitat.org/ph/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/nup_framework_for_a_rapid_diagnostic_2014_.pdf

²³ For further information and guidance, see: UN-Habitat, 2019. How to Formulate a National Urban Policy. <http://urbanpolicyplatform.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/How-to-formulate-a-NUP-Final-copy-1.pdf>

Phase 5: MONITORING AND EVALUATION²⁴

This should not be considered the “last” phase in the NUP process – rather, monitoring should be undertaken throughout the policy process, with lessons learned from an evolution of outcomes and of process feeding back into the policy cycle promoting systems change and institutional learning. As such, the analysis in Chapter 4 considers Phase 5 as a continuous process that is streamlined into each of the other phases.

It is important to note that as seen in Figure 2, the Phases purposefully overlap with each other, as in practice some steps and actions would be expanded or revisited. They also purposefully form a cycle, as frameworks and policies may need to be reviewed, adapted and updated from time to time to reflect new developments and include learnings from previous policy cycles. This is an important reflection step.

Drivers of National Urban Policy Development

National Urban Policy “drivers” refer to priority areas in the National Urban Policies. In the feasibility phase where countries make a case for the development of a National Urban Policy, the identification of drivers (key urban issues) allows policy makers to strategically consider the policy goals and objectives, providing a clear framework for national development plan implementation at the local level. National priorities (for example security in Vanuatu, and tourism development in Samoa) can provide entry points for National Urban Policy development and may ultimately determine its success. Identifying drivers can also serve to identify key actors who may serve as potential “champions”, such as individuals or institutions that have interest and are willing to take ownership over the process.

²⁴ For further information and guidance, see: UN-Habitat and UCLG (draft, 2020), Monitoring and Evaluating national Urban Policy: A Guide

Figure 2. below outlines the main drivers of National Urban Policies in the Pacific Region,²⁵ which are analyzed and further elaborated in Chapter 4 based on the country-by-country review.

Figure 2. *Main Drivers of National Urban Policies in the Pacific*



Study Methodology

Purpose and Scope of Study

In order to gain a better understanding of the state of urbanization in the Pacific, UN-Habitat initiated a study to take stock of recent and current National Urban Policies and regional dynamics. This process considered Pacific countries which were engaged in the Participatory Slum Upgrading Programme (PSUP) and have contributed to the inaugural Pacific Housing Workshop (Fiji, PNG, Solomon Islands, Tuvalu, Vanuatu). Following the last Pacific Urban Forum (2015), Kiribati, Samoa and Tonga, and have also requested UN-Habitat assistance to support the formulation of sustainable urban development frameworks and policy advice. It was intended that the review should:

- Analyze the National Urban Policy's structure (if it exists), its policy instruments, its scope and implementation timeframes and the priority issues addressed;
- Analyze how urban development is reflected in national sector policies (if no National Urban Policy exists);
- Outline the Policy's context and key historical, political and institutional determinants;
- Identify the Policy's relationship to the long-term national development strategy, whether it promotes or not a system of cities and if it takes into account a supra-national strategy for spatial development; and
- Link this assessment to the Pacific Urban Agenda.

²⁵ Derived from UN-Habitat database on National Urban Policies, 2019.

Process

To this end, a detailed review of urbanization and sectoral issues, as well as policy and regulatory responses was undertaken in the eight selected Pacific Island countries.

The country by country review as summarized in Chapter 3, has been structured to facilitate alignment with the UN-Habitat National Urban Policy Framework for a Rapid Diagnostic (see Figure 3), while covering issues that are of particular relevance to the Pacific context and contribute to the four priority areas of the PUA.

Sectoral challenges are hence categorized into the following sub-sections: Housing, Land and Informal Settlements; Infrastructure and Basic Services; Urban Governance; Urban Economy; Urban Environment and Climate Change;

and where relevant in the country context and sufficient information was available, Urban Planning and Urban Security, Law and Order. The policy response to these urban issues are then examined and analyzed in accordance to the objectives of the study, as outlined above.

An analysis of the country-by-country review is then conducted in Chapter 4 to determine the where each country is (phase) in the National Urban Policy process, as well as the drivers of National Urban Policy development by country. preceding section).

In conclusion, recommendations for possible next steps in the National Urban Policy process are presented for each policy phase in a manner which allows countries the flexibility to select actions that are most applicable to their context and need.

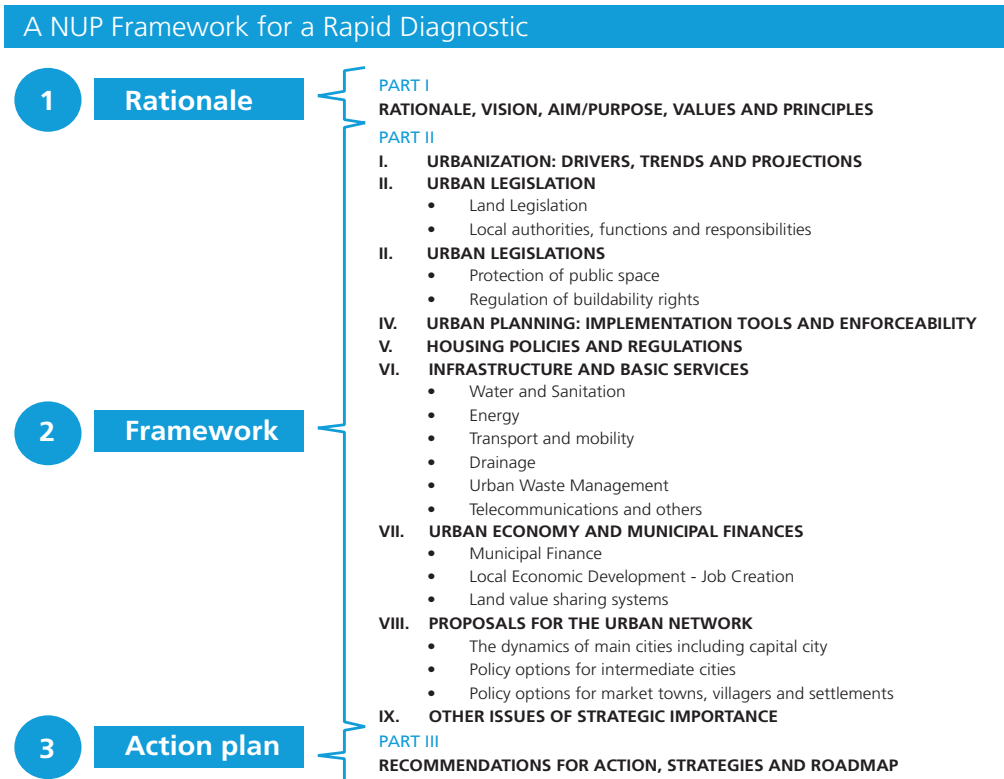


Figure 3. National Urban Policy Framework for a Rapid Diagnostic



Market, Suva, Fiji © Bernhard Barth/UN-Habitat



3

COUNTRY PROFILES

CHAPTER 3 COUNTRY PROFILES

Fiji

Background

Urbanization Trends

According to the 2017 Census, Fiji's total population stands at 884,887 persons compared to 837,271 in the 2007 census. This is an increase of 47,616 persons, or 5.7 percent. The urban population stood at 494,252 which is approximately 56 percent of Fiji's population, an increase from 51 percent in 2007.

The Greater Suva urban region (Lami, Nasinu and Nausori) has grown from approximately 241,270 people in 2007 and increase to 268,432 in 2017. The nature of the jurisdictional boundaries of the urban area makes it difficult to measure the growth of the Greater Suva urban population, as the Town Boundary for the four Municipalities within the central corridor are interconnected and divided by river streams. Meanwhile, this central division is heavily urbanized.

The urban population in Fiji is regarded as the population that is living in within the declared townships as well as adjacent to the town boundary (peri-urban areas); the reason being that the peri-urban population also contributes to the urban economy.

Greater Suva is heavily urbanized and it is an emerging economic belt for Fiji. An emergence of informal settlements has accompanied the opportunities. The other emerging economic corridor is the Lautoka - Nadi corridor, and informal settlements are also noticeable in this area.

Sectoral Challenges

Housing, Informal Settlements and Land

Land for housing is both difficult and expensive particularly in the urban areas, and unaffordable by the poor. One reason is the inability of state infrastructure agencies to coordinate their investment according to a plan to increase the supply of serviced land to the land market. The second is the high premium demanded by Native Land-Ownning Units (Mataqali) for the lease of native lands for development. As a result, the demand for land is concentrated on state lands and lands owned under free hold rights. As most lands fall under the native land ownership, the supply is limited, and the high demand and speculation on land have increased the cost.

In 1955, Fiji established a Housing Commission to respond to housing pressures created by people moving to Suva. However, pressure on housing and land in Suva has continued and over the last decade has been exacerbated by the expiration of land leases. For example, in 2001, approximately 13,100 leases expired, affecting more than 22,000 people. Many of these farmers moved to towns and established "squatter settlements". In 2007, it was estimated that more than 140,000 people, equivalent to 15.7 percent of the national population, were living in 200 informal settlements. The majority of these settlements were located along the Lami-Suva-Nasinu-Nausori (East Viti Levu) corridor, the Nadi-Lautoka-Ba corridor (West Viti Levu), and in Labasa (Vanua Levu).²⁶

²⁶ J. McKinnon, S. Whitehead, M. Chung, and L. Taylor. 2007. Report of the Informal Settlements Scoping Mission. New Zealand Agency for International Development. Wellington, New Zealand.

For people living in Pacific towns and cities, particularly the poor, shelter is a precondition for access to other benefits, such as livelihoods, services and credit. Tenure therefore forms the foundation on which any effort to improve living conditions has to be built. Since tenure systems are complex due to historical and cultural factors, and need to adjust to modern day needs, policy responses must address such country specific needs.

The iTaukei²⁷ Lands Trust Board (TLT) was established to manage land through a central agency. However, there is still some way to go to persuade traditional land owners not to informally lease land to 'squatters' in urban and peri-urban areas without paying regard to environmental impacts and the provision of services. Even where settlers have settled on 'Crown land' in urban and peri-urban areas and paid a nominal fee, the government has had difficulty controlling population growth through families sharing accommodation and 'subdivision' of lots undertaken by families.

Infrastructure and Basic Services

The TLT can arrange for easements on iTaukei urban land to ensure that essential services such as water and sewerage are provided. However, according to the Asian Development Bank (ADB), most informal settlements lack access to basic services, particularly improved sanitation, drainage, and solid waste management. Settlements are commonly located on marginal lands such as mangrove swamps, which are prone to flooding. Poverty incidence in Fiji's informal urban settlements has been estimated at 53 percent – the highest among urban groups.²⁸

Urban Governance

A key legacy of British colonization is that Fiji has as many as 48 Acts dealing with human settlement such as towns, villages and land issues:

"There is no one single common institutional body to manage all these documents ... an act relating to Town Planning: the Fiji Islands Town and Planning Act that was designed to manage the development and use of land and properties within its urban areas boundaries."²⁹

In addition, there are multiple government agencies on the national level managing these Acts. Ministry of Local Government has the overarching responsibility to manage urban centers in Fiji, and administers the Town Planning Act, Subdivision of Lands Act, Local Government Act and Business Licensing Act. In addition, amendments to the Public Health Act and Local Government Act during the budget announcement of 2018-19 has seen local authority powers shifted from Rural Local Authorities to Municipal Councils. This has resulted in a more comprehensive approach being taken for land use planning, including permit management for buildings. The Government has also invested in master land use planning exercises for the Greater Suva Area, Lautoka and Nadi townships, with support from Singapore Technical Corporation.

Ministry of Local Government has been playing a pivotal role in the Informal Settlements Upgrading Programme. The Director of Town and Country Planning has been working closely with the Ministry for Housing on scheme and subdivision plan clearances. Municipal Councils have been assisting in upgrading programs and providing sanitation services to support Ministry of Housing and Community Development.

At the provincial level, central government agencies work through Provincial Councils, largely funded by central government. At the district level, Municipal Councils are the Local Authority for urban and rural areas.

²⁷ I-Taukei are native Fijians

²⁸ Asian Development Bank, Country Partnership Strategy 2014-2018, Sector Assessment (Summary): Water And Other Urban Infrastructure And Services, p.2.

²⁹ Dia, A. S., 2010, How to adapt the planning legislation to the ground reality in the Pacific small islands nations: The Fiji town and country planning act case study http://www.isocarp.net/Data/case_studies/1786.pdf

Urban Economy

Fiji is one of the most developed of the Pacific Island countries. The tourism industry is increasingly driving Fiji's national economy, with Nadi Town considered to be the hub of Fiji's tourism activities. Suva, the capital seat of Fiji, is home to the country's main banking, financial and administrative institutions. Urban areas in general are driving trade, commerce and education services. Lautoka City is known as an industrial hub, with the port and the sugar cane processing industries. Lautoka provides good educational facilities which boost the local economy.

The informal sector also participates in the national and local economies. Studies estimate that approximately 20 per cent of Fiji's national economy is generated through the informal sector. This sector includes subsistence agriculture, informal manufacturing and services and owner-occupied dwellings. Further, the sector is estimated to employ approximately 40 per cent of the country's work force. This is especially the case in urban areas, where informal settlements are high, though rural informal sectors are also robust. More women work in the informal settlement than men – though this is also the case in the formal labour market of Fiji. Informal settlements provide essential small-scale produce, products and services to urban residents.

The important role of the informal sector has been recognized by municipal councils, several of whom have proposed schemes and initiatives to accommodate informal sector economic activity within formal municipal spaces. Such schemes include Ba Town's multi-purpose hall and vendors accommodation facility, and Rakiraki Town's similar facility. Additionally, for the purpose of promoting informal settlement activities, several initiatives have been taken including the development of Municipal [farmers] Market where micro business activities are promoted. Fijian Government has invested an estimated FJ\$20 million on market projects over the last 4 years. Some municipalities are making provisions for informal activities

in their strategic plans, by providing space for trade and micro-enterprise.³⁰

Urban Environment and Climate Change

As an island nation, Fiji has a tropical climate and is vulnerable to climate change and climate-related hazards. As low-lying islands in the tropics, it is particularly exposed to seaborne hazards given that its towns and cities are coastal or riverine. Natural hazards to which these urban areas are exposed include cyclones, hurricanes, coastal and riverine erosion, landslides. In this sense, these events can greatly impact the economy and infrastructure of the island. According to the latest global climate model (GCM), sea level rise, temperature rise, and ocean acidification are events highly predicted to occur in the future. This scenario may potentially have profound consequences for the island urban centres, agriculture and coastal development.

Mangrove deforestation and coral reef extraction in order to accommodate urban development and for reasons of income generation are increasing the vulnerability of urban areas to coastal hazards. Both mangrove forests and coral reefs provide effective barriers against storm surges and cyclones. Of particular concern are the residents of informal settlements in towns and cities as many such settlements are located in highly vulnerable areas, such as riverbanks and pockets of coastal land.

However, town planning schemes elaborated by the municipalities contain very limited consideration of climate change or disaster risk management. Rehabilitation and rebuilding following disasters have been very costly to the central government. Similarly, disasters have caused substantial damage and losses to municipal, iTaukei and private property, and negatively impacted on local economies. Due to projected increases in climate-related hazards and extreme events, as well as increased size and density

³⁰ Fiji National Urban Profile, p.30.

http://www.fukuoka.unhabitat.org/projects/fiji/pdf/Fiji_National_Urban_Profile.pdf

of urban areas, such costs are likely to increase unless municipalities being to consider climate change and

disaster risk as a component of their urban planning and development operations.



A street view of Lami, Fiji © Bernhard Barth/UN-Habitat

Policy Context

Policy Action on the National Level

As with many other Pacific Island countries, Fiji has taken a number of initiatives in recent years to address urban development issues. Some of these initiatives have faltered as a result of political and policy changes following the coups of May 2000 and November 2006 (and the adverse impacts of fragmented and out-dated legislation).

The Urban Policy Action Plan (2004 – 06)³¹ was intended to provide the necessary broad policy framework for addressing rapid urbanization, infrastructure development and local government capacity. This initiative has given rise to other initiatives including 'urban growth management action plans' (supported by the ADB)³² and a 'rural growth centres' initiative currently being developed by the Town and Country Planning Department of the Ministry of Local Government, Housing and Environment. At the provincial level, there appears to be a good degree of coordination provided through

the Office of the Provincial Council which promotes community consultation and works with Town Councils.

In collaboration with UN-Habitat, three Urban Profiles were developed for the Cities of Suva, Nadi and Lautoka, as well as a National Urban Profile. The purpose of the urban profiling studies was to develop urban poverty reduction policies at local, national, and regional levels, through an assessment of needs and response mechanisms, and as a contribution to the wider-ranging implementation of the Millennium Development Goals.

Housing, Informal Settlements and Land

A national policy on 'squatters' was approved by the Government of Fiji in 1994. It established a 'National Squatter Council' and embarked on various 'upgrading' programmes managed through the 'squatter resettlement unit' of the Ministry of Lands. Such programmes undertook subdivision of land, built infrastructure and improved services. However, the government acknowledged in 1994 that the speed of rural to urban migration and natural urban increase had overwhelmed basic services and that there was insufficient land available for residential development.³³

³¹ Fiji Roads Authority, 2014. UPAP Urban Policy Action Plan. http://www.fijiroads.org/sites/default/files/UPAP_Urban_Policy_Action_Plan_2004-06.pdf

³² ADB, Urban Sector Strategy Study, March 2005

³³ Ministry of Local Government Housing, Squatter Settlement

The 'Squatter Resettlement Unit' was part of the Ministry of Lands prior to 1999 when it was transferred to the Ministry of Local Government, Housing, Squatter Settlement and Environment. Informal settlements upgrading and resettlement is now undertaken by the Ministry's Department of Housing.

Fiji developed its National Housing Policy in 2011 to support the provision of affordable and decent housing for all. The policy advocates a shift away from direct provision of affordable housing, which has resulted in a limited supply of housing for mostly the better-off among low-income groups, to creating an enabling environment for the development of an affordable housing market through selective and innovative policy interventions.

For informal settlement upgrading, the policy promotes security of tenure, and demand-driven community-based approaches. In 2014, the government launched its City-Wide Squatter Upgrading Project and Town Wide Informal Settlement Upgrading Project, which will expand basic services to informal settlements in urban and peri-urban areas, and supports incremental informal settlement upgrading activities. In addition, UN-Habitat's "Participatory Slum Upgrading Programme" (PSUP Phase III, 2018-2021) aims to establish a national approach to sustainable urbanization and urban poverty alleviation in partnership with the Ministry of Local Government, Urban Development, Housing and Environment. This initiative aims to formulate citywide slum upgrading and prevention strategies, capacity building of all urban stakeholders, institutionalization of slum upgrading and prevention, as well as policies addressing the implementation of Millennium Development Goal 7. For this period, the Republic of Fiji committed to institutionalize a participatory governance and urban development assessment approach for policy review, slum upgrading and prevention strategies aiming at improving the lives of the urban poor.³⁴

Under the 2013 Constitution of the Republic of Fiji Islands the Government of Fiji Section 35 enshrines the right to housing and sanitation, stating:

"The State must take reasonable measures within its available resources to achieve the progressive realisation of the right of every person to accessible and adequate housing and sanitation."

During the budget announcement in 2018-2019, the formation of the Ministry of Housing and Community Development was realised to specifically investigate the Housing Sector across the country.

Climate Change Considerations

Fiji endorsed its National Climate Change Policy³⁵ in 2012, identifying eight climate change priority areas, including adaptation. Adaption is the only priority area which addresses climate change for cities, mentioning as an objective to reduce the vulnerability and enhance the resilience of Fiji's communities regarding climate change and disasters impact. The policy also identifies a number of strategies that relate to urbanization, including improving building codes and managing urban waste and pollution.

On the local level, municipal councils should thoroughly incorporate actions to address climate change and disaster risk when revising town planning schemes. Some initiatives have already commenced on the local level following climate change vulnerability and disaster risk assessments. For example, Lami Town Council has begun incorporating climate change adaptation initiatives, such as a mangrove nursery and mangrove replanting schemes into its development operations. In Lautoka City, the Department of Housing has begun looking at relocating residents of the coastal Navutu settlement to a less exposed and vulnerable inland sites.

and Environment, Squatter Settlement Unit, Cabinet Minute 1994.

³⁴ Participatory Slum Upgrading Programme in Fiji. http://www.fukuoka.unhabitat.org/projects/fiji/detail01_en.html

³⁵ Government of Fiji, 2012, National Climate Change Policy, Secretariat of the Pacific Community, <http://www.sprep.org/> <https://www.preventionweb.net/files/Fiji%20National%20Climate%20Change%20policy.pdf>

Kiribati

Background

Urbanization Trends

The total population of South Tarawa was approximately 56,388 persons at the 2015 Census, having grown from 17,921 persons at the time of independence in 1979. Betio Town Council, in the southwest of the national capital of South Tawara, is the most populous urban area in the country, with a population of over 17,330 persons in 2015 on a land area of 1.75 square kilometres.

Betio began as the British administrative centre for the former Gilbert and Ellice Islands colony and with Bairiki village continues to be the social and economic centre for South Tarawa. Formerly, South Tarawa was made up of approximately 16 villages, however, all of South Tarawa is now one continuous urban area administered by two local government administrations. North Tarawa is under increasing development growth pressures due to its proximity to services, and the limited land available plus overcrowding in South Tarawa.

Traditionally, parts of the community and parts of the Government of Kiribati associate urbanization with negative social and environmental impacts and that urban challenges can be resolved through population decentralization.

Sectoral Challenges

Housing, Informal Settlements and Land

There have been concerns about overcrowding in South Tarawa since the 1990s, which remains a concern today. The urban land supply and tenure situation is complex with frequent ownership disputes; this situation was exacerbated by the destruction of the land registers by a fire in the 1980s. The use of government head lease arrangements, the multitude of formal and informal sub-lease arrangements, and the lack of available serviced land for residential purposes have limited the options for people wanting to access housing in urban areas. The public and private sector have not been able to deliver appropriate serviced housing. To access housing, people have had to consider sharing already over-crowded housing with friends and family, constructing illegal dwellings or entering into a formal or informal arrangement with a traditional landowner. This informal land supply system is an important social net for people in urban areas, but in turn over-burdens the infrastructure and urban services in South Tarawa.

The regulatory environment for urban planning to date has focused on land administration and development control by the central government. This type of management has had a limited focus on how development can achieve broader development outcomes.



Informal settlement in Tarawa, Kiribati © Charlene Liao

Local councils provide some administrative support through accepting planning permit applications and through participation on planning committees tasked with approving development applications. The central government through the Lands Division within the Ministry of Environment, Lands and Agriculture Development (MELAD) administers a range of land legislation such as the Native Lands Ordinance and the State Lands Act 2001. Planning policies managed by the Land Division include general land use plans, development standards and planning permit procedures. The Environment and Conservation Division of MELAD manages environmental issues and the Environment Act.

With the responsibilities of different Ministries on urban issues, as well as the relationships between the range of different legislation and policies being unclear, the Government of Kiribati recognized the need for policy coherence to address its land management issues as it continues to face significant overcrowding on South Tarawa.

In order to address these challenges, among a wide range of urban management issues spanning across various urban sectors, the Ministry of Internal Affairs has developed a National Urban Policy (NUP) to identify urban priorities, improve coordination and effectiveness of projects, and to provide a national unifying vision for the development of urban areas.

Infrastructure and Basic Services

According to the 2015 Census, 14 percent of the urban population (which includes South Tarawa, Betio, and Kiritimati Islands) sourced drinking water mainly from wells. On the other hand, 37 percent sourced their drinking water primarily from the public utilities board (PUB), the Linnix water system, or through the general pipe system.

As of the 2005 Census, 72 percent of the urban population sourced drinking water from wells; 67 percent of which was sourced from reticulated systems, which are fed from ground-water reserves.

Operation of these fragile systems requires a delicate balance between recharge from rainfall, evapotranspiration, discharge to the sea, mixing with tidal ground-water, and pumping of water from the aquifer to meet public needs. A primary reason for the previously low usage of the public system and a high reliance on wells is that the reticulated public water systems only delivered water 1 to 2 hours per day. Constrained supply, over-pumping, leakages, and illegal connections all contributed to a failing public water supply system. However, as highlighted from the latest census, much progress has been made in this area.

Waste management services vary considerably across Pacific urban areas, in part because demand on these services is increasing along with expanding urban population. While landfills are now in place in all urban areas, the management and operational efficiency of these landfills vary greatly; with efficiency sometimes being undermined by limited infrastructure (e.g. compaction machinery, garbage trucks) and a lack of cost recovery systems and technical expertise.

Kiribati is highly dependent on petroleum imports for electricity generation in the urban areas, land, sea, and air transport³⁶. The traditional use of biomass for cooking and copra drying remains the largest use of renewable energy, providing around 25 percent of the gross national energy production. Solar water heating and solar photovoltaic (PV) are other renewable energy technologies used thus far, producing less than 1 percent of total energy used in Kiribati, with biofuels offering a greater potential. The outer islands depend on solar and biomass for energy. The need for the provision of a reliable, affordable and environmentally friendly energy supply to the outer islands is essential, given that the outer islands where 58 percent of the households reside only 30 percent of them have access to electricity.

³⁶ Government of Kiribati, 2013. Kiribati Integrated Environment Policy.

Urban Governance

The Ministry of Internal Affairs is responsible for overseeing local governments, made up of 3 town (urban) councils and 20 island (rural) councils. The Ministry assists local councils in their developments through developing of priority project proposals, drafting by-laws, undertaking internal audits, compiling financial accounts, and approving local authority budgets. Local authorities are empowered to raise local revenue through by-laws although this forms a much greater proportion of overall revenue for town councils than for island councils which rely more on transfers from the central government. The local council system is uniform across the country.

Operating alongside and overlapping with the formal local government in Kiribati are various forms of traditional governance, based on local practices and structures, such as the Unimwane (the Elders. Often major landowners) and the Maneaba (village meeting place).

While politically, administration and service delivery are decentralized, line ministries and councils appear to have few decision-making powers and little authority³⁷. In addition, the traditional governance systems are stronger than the modern Island Council system of governance. On occasions, conflicts between the traditional and the modern council systems have caused difficulties in delivering services to the islands and have required resources meant for other purposes to be diverted to diffuse these tensions. There is therefore a need to ensure a harmonious and beneficial relationship between the modern and the traditional forms of governance in the country.

Urban Economy

In the mid-1990s, it was estimated that South Tarawa accounted for approximately 60 percent of GDP³⁸,

³⁷ World Bank. 2017. Doing Business–Kiribati Economic profile. www.doingbusiness.org/documents/profiles/country/kir.pdf

³⁸ Government of Kiribati. 1995. The Urban Management Plan for South Tarawa. Ministry of Home Affairs and Rural Development:

emphasizing that urban-based economic activities make a significant contribution to economic growth in general.

The private sector has a strong presence in urban areas; promoting privately operated public transport, supporting trading activities with privately owned shops, restaurants and other local eating places, entertainment establishments, flourishing roadside markets, as well as growing small-scale construction and service enterprises³⁹. Urban centres with a narrow economic base such as South Tarawa are dominated by government sector activities and are unable to provide sufficient private sector employment opportunities for their growing urban population. For example, the Kiribati 2015 Census indicates that government workers accounted for 70 percent of paid workers, mostly in South Tarawa⁴⁰. Urbanization can be considered as a catalyst for private sector involvement, and as engine of economic growth for the nation.

Though measurement of the contribution of the informal sector activity to GDP is difficult due to widespread underreporting, the urban informal sector plays a large role in sustaining the urban population. It provides both employment and income to the people living in the urban areas, through engaging in a range of informal sector activities by exchange, bartering, as well as paid and unpaid employment, including village and community work.

Urban Environment and Climate Change

Like many other Small Island Developing States (SIDs), Kiribati has suffered heavily from the impacts of climate change. Kiribati presents a tropical climate which is closely related to the temperature of the oceans surrounding the atolls and small islands.

Government of Kiribati Printer. Bairiki.

³⁹ Asian Development Bank. 2008. Working in Fragile Environments: A Midterm Review of the Pacific Strategy (20052009). Institutional Document.

⁴⁰ AusAID and New Zealand Government. 2009. Surviving the global recession: strengthening economic growth and resilience in the Pacific. Canberra.

Additionally, it presents wind-waves and seasonal rainfall, which varies year by year, both of which are mostly influenced by the El Niño phenomenon. The global climate model (GCM) states that El Nino, rising average temperatures, ocean acidification, sea level rise as well as the average rainfall and the risk of coral bleaching are events projected to highly increase in the future.

The elevation of most of Kiribati is only 1.5 to 2.0 meters, making the country particularly vulnerable to sea-level rise, which raises the salinity of underground water supplies and damages both housing and coastal infrastructure.⁴¹ Sea-level rise also alters shorelines through erosion, in turn impacting land boundaries and disrupting the livelihoods of local communities.

Similarly, temperature variation caused by climate change alters existing rainfall patterns, which increases the incidence of waterborne diseases, such as cholera and typhoid, and dengue fever. These illnesses are most prevalent in over-crowded urban areas, such as squatter and settlements.⁴²

In addition, the transition from a traditional subsistence lifestyle to a contemporary market-based economy has brought with it key challenges that adversely affect the overall health of the urban environment. Some of these key environmental challenges, such as the loss of island biodiversity, waste and pollution and the unsustainable use of natural resources, are further exacerbated by the impacts of climate change.

⁴¹ Asian Development Bank, 2010. Climate Change in the Pacific: Stepping Up Responses in the Face of Rising Impacts. Manila.

⁴² Asian Development Bank, 2010. Climate Change in the Pacific: Stepping Up Responses in the Face of Rising Impacts. Manila.



Housing in an informal settlement in Tarawa, Kiribati © Charlene Liao

Policy Context

Policy Action on the National Level

The Kiribati Vision for the next twenty Years or the KV20 which is Kiribati's long-term development blueprint for the period 2016-2036 and the first long-term national development plan for Kiribati that draws strength from the unique opportunity it presents for both the government and citizens of Kiribati to collaborate towards improving the quality of life for all I-Kiribati. The Vision is anchored on four pillars: Wealth; Peace and Security; Infrastructure; and Governance in which urbanization as a cross-cutting issue was embedded.

The Kiribati Development Plan 2016-2019 (KDP) is a four-year strategic plan that sets out government priorities and projects and assists the targeting of donor funding. It identifies urban issues under two key priority areas of the environment and infrastructure. Issues of overcrowding and population growth are identified as key drivers of deterioration in urban infrastructure and housing, as well as of natural resources such as and water. It also identifies the build-up of waste, increasing incidence of litter and climate change as having a significant impact on the environment. The strategies and the key performance indicators it proposes, includes:

- Measures to enhance waste management and pollution control by improving the number of landfills and increasing the amount of bulky waste collected;
- Improve and strengthen urban development policies and land planning for sustainable urban growth and private sector development by improving GIS and data systems;
- Improving the urban environment through the establishment of an urban development policy; and,
- Improve the climate resilience of urban infrastructure through investment in solar energy and upgrading of electricity, telecommunications and water infrastructure.

Kiribati with its urban population that makes up about 57 percent of its total population, in its commitment to accelerate the implementation of the New Urban Agenda and the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals, has proactively and innovatively planned urbanization and is positioning itself for a better quality of life in the urban areas and communities and committed to work in close partnership with UN-Habitat and other stakeholders. The Government recognises that urbanization, as Kiribati's urgent challenge requires action now, to ensure that the country's urban areas do not deteriorate and impact negatively on social, cultural, environmental and national economic outcomes.

Against this backdrop, Kiribati has completed the (draft) Kiribati National Urban Policy.⁴³ The Policy addresses all aspects of cross-sectoral action in urban development and governance, and it is set upon a number of guiding principles, which include; gradualism and equality, social inclusion and cultural preservation, decentralized urban governance, participatory integrated planning and transparency, commitment and sustainability, innovation and quality, efficiency and safety, adaptability and resilience, and polycentric development principles. The project was supported by the United Nations Development Program.

The Kiribati National Urban Policy also takes stock of the legal, regulatory tools and policies, as well as current projects and programmes that impact each of the focus areas. It recognises that no single Ministry is responsible for achieving urban outcomes, and actions from the NUP will require coordinated effort to ensure lasting change.

Government has also approved, the Kiribati Local Governance (KiriLOG) project aiming for institutional strengthening programs for local governance and urban development. This project cost around AUD\$7 million.

⁴³ As of January 2020 the policy has been submitted to cabinet and is awaiting endorsement.

Housing, Informal Settlements and Land

Policy objectives of the Kiribati National Urban Policy pertaining to housing, informal settlements and land include, inter alia:

- To promote integrated planning of urban areas taking into consideration population growth, infrastructure requirements and land use.
- To strengthen stakeholder participation in planning and enforcement mechanisms to curtail unauthorized development.
- To strengthen physical planning and development that improves quality of life and mitigation of disaster risk.
- To provide affordable housing in all urban areas, with a focus on vulnerable households and low-income earners.
- To promote standardized and building codes to all housing construction (for government and private houses).

Infrastructure and Basic Services

The National Urban Policy has identified, among others, the following policy objectives related to infrastructure and basic services:

- To provide 100 percent coverage of treated tap water in all households in urban areas.
- To ensure availability, quality and sustainability of water supply through source conservation, increasing efficiency, reducing losses and development of new sources.
- To ensure 100 percent coverage of sanitation services with proper collection, transportation, treatment and disposal.
- To provide adequate urban transport infrastructure to ease the mobility and travel demand.
- To improve access to Information, Communication and Technology (ICT) services, including internet connectivity, to improve quality of education and communication.
- To ensure equitable and adequate coverage of electricity and energy provision.
- To promote the usage of renewable energy as major sources of energy, e.g., Solar.

Most recently, the government urban management projects in partnership with various donors have focussed on improving the energy, communications, transport, and water, sanitation and waste infrastructure of urban areas. For example:

- Road rehabilitation on South Tarawa to ease mobility and traveling demands
- Construction of housing quarters (for public servants through donor support (NZ Aid) to ease overcrowding and meet the housing demand
- A solid waste management initiative that involved rehabilitating landfills, introducing fee-based collection of rubbish, and the collection and stockpiling recyclable materials and scrap metal for subsequent exporting.
- A sanitation improvement project through upgrading of existing sewage systems and community education and awareness campaign. Additionally, the implementation of the 24/7 water supply system at 3 pilot areas in South Tarawa.
- An institutional strengthening and reform program for the Public Utilities Board. This project aimed to improve the quality, sustainability and efficiency in the delivery of services for power, water and sewerage in South Tarawa.
- The installation of a solar system to the South Tarawa electricity grid to reduce reliance on imported petroleum, improve energy security and reduce environmental impacts.
- A telecommunications improvement project that strengthened the legal, regulatory and institutional environment to transition to a market-driven telecommunications sector and improve connectivity across Kiribati.

Climate Change Considerations

The Kiribati NUP, in line with the KDP recognizes the country's extreme vulnerability to climate change impacts, and the threats that climate change and natural disasters pose to sustainable development. One of the key priority areas of the KDP is Environment, which presents its objective as: "Facilitate sustainable development through protection of biodiversity, support to the reduction of environmental degradation and the mitigation of the effects of climate change by the year 2019." Therefore, climate change and disaster risks are addressed in national policies and strategies relating to population, water and sanitation, health and environment.

Any underlying processes driving urban vulnerability must also include urbanization in the context of how to adapt to climate change and environmental degradation.

Climate change and disaster risk reduction measures have also been mainstreamed into other priority areas of the Kiribati National Urban Policy, namely Land, Housing and Urban Infrastructure, focusing in increasing water and food security as well as the promotion of infrastructure development and land management. In addition, it recognizes that the environment, including its goods and services, is the foundation of the country's livelihoods, human health and economy.



Kiribati, Bairiki Village © Bernhard Barth

Papua New Guinea

Background

Urbanization Trends

Papua New Guinea (PNG) is the most populous of all Pacific Island countries with a total population of approximately 7.1 million people at the time of the 2011 Census, having grown from 5.2 million in 2000. The current population since 2011 is estimated to be 8.5 million. The urban population has grown from approximately 686,000 persons in 2000 to 874,000 persons in 2011. Some 37.5 percent of the urban population live in Port Moresby under the administration of the National Capital District. The current population of Port Moresby is believed to be more than 1 million given the high rate of movement from rural villages to the city. This is a significant increase because it is receiving most of the migrants from the rural areas. The PNG National Research Institute forecasted in 2010 that the urban population will grow to 3.5 million people by 2030.

The towns and urban areas of PNG were defined before independence. After the Second World War, PNG was divided into administrative districts, each requiring a headquarters. By 1969, 19 towns or cities had been defined through either the Town Boundaries Act (1924), Town Planning Act (1952) or Physical Planning Act of 1989.⁴⁴

The pattern of opening up and splitting districts and sub-districts was characteristic of the development of urban areas with the coastal areas being developed first and the highlands later. The coastal towns of Madang and Lae were formalised as towns in 1924 and 1931 respectively, and Port Moresby formalised in 1950.

Other urban centres have been recently developed in response to the migration of people taking up work in the mining, petroleum, forestry or agricultural industries.⁴⁵

Sectoral Challenges

Housing, Land and Informal Settlements

In Port Moresby, 45 percent of the population live in settlements – 20 planned settlements and 79 unplanned settlements.⁴⁶ The number of unplanned settlements, both on state and customary land, have increased rapidly in the recent past.

The growth of these settlements is the result of uncontrolled migration and population growth and the government's failure to provide affordable housing and developable land supply to meet increased demand. These settlements are characterized by a lack of planning, poor infrastructure and a lack of urban services.⁴⁷

Building codes and standards, as well as zoning laws and regulations exist but are ignored. With the lack of a National Land Use Policy and the National Housing Policy, land allocation as per the housing needs are unmet. Hence, the demand for shelter in urban areas far exceeds supply, fuelling the growth of squatter and informal settlements.⁴⁸

The problem is compounded by corruption associated with multiple land sales, the lack of effective land management and administration systems, and no clear legal framework for customary land management system. The Constitution of Papua New Guinea specifically provides for the "recognition that the cultural, commercial and ethnic diversity of our people is a positive strength" and calls for "traditional villages and communities to remain as viable units of Papua New Guinean society.

⁴⁵ Office of Urbanization, 2012, p.4.

⁴⁶ UN-Habitat, 2010, Papua New Guinea: Port Moresby Urban Profile, p.9.

⁴⁷ UN-Habitat, 2010, p.9.

⁴⁸ UN-Habitat, 2012. Papua New Guinea National Urban Profile, p.8.

⁴⁴ Office of Urbanization, 2012, An interim report on the State of Towns and Cities in Papua New Guinea, Government of Papua New Guinea, p.2.

" As part of this, Papua New Guinea recognizes customary land tenure as a cornerstone of such social arrangements. A separate Customary Land Registration Act provides some protection for customary ownership (representing approximately 97 percent of all land in PNG), although it does leave open the possibility of 99-year lease arrangements.

Urban Security, Law and Order

Law and order has been at the heart of urban development and urban concerns over many decades.⁴⁹

The most notorious manifestation of Papua New Guinea's law and order problems has been the steady rise in violent urban crime, widely attributed to raskol (criminal) gangs comprising adolescent boys and young men. By the second half of the 1980s, criminal gangs had entrenched themselves as a menacing feature of the urban landscape, with sophisticated networks extending across the country.⁵⁰

A further important dimension to the law and order concern was tensions between different tribal and ethnic groups within urban settings, particularly unplanned settlements. For example, in early 2012, an ethnic clash between settler groups in the provincial capital of Lae resulted in the deaths of six people and the destruction of houses, shops, buses and other property. Morobe Governor Luther Wenge called for the reintroduction of the Vagrancy Act. Papua New Guinea passed a vagrancy act in 1977 to regulate or restrict freedom of movement and empowered police to arrest if they considered that a person did not have lawful means of support. The Act was ruled unconstitutional in 1986 and revoked. Over the years there has been various calls for laws to limit the migration of rural people to urban unplanned settlements.

⁴⁹ Dinnen, S 2009, 'Thirty Years of Law and Order Policy and Practice: Trying To Do "Too Much, Too Badly, With Too Little"', in R J May (ed.), Policy Making and Implementation: Studies from Papua New Guinea, ANU ePress, Canberra Australia, pp. 233-260.

⁵⁰ Dinnen, 2009, p.238.

Physical Planning

The Physical Planning Act of 1989 places planning responsibilities on physical planning boards. All of the 21 provinces are supposed to have their own boards. There is a dedicated board for the National Capital District, known as National Capital District Physical Planning Board (NCDPPB) for Port Moresby. The support unit for the NCDPPB is part of the NCD Commission which is responsible to the Board for the preparation of development plans and assessment of development proposals. There is a zoning plan for the city of Port Moresby but this only relates to the formal built up part of the city and excludes the ad hoc settlements in the peri-urban areas.⁵¹

Physical Planning Boards in all the other provinces of PNG face the same challenges arising from rapid peri-urban expansion of settlements and inadequate amount of land to build affordable housing. Consideration of development plans for the future of towns and district centres is an important component entrusted to the provincial physical planning boards.⁵²

Aluklu noted in 2010 that "many authorities seem to think that their towns are not large enough to pose problems and that planning is therefore not an issue. As a result, many towns experience uncoordinated and haphazard development. A case in point is the rapid growth in informal settlements, which develop and expand without adhering to any formal rules and regulations."⁵³

In summary, a combination of historical factors and major present challenges for planning in PNG:

- Most land is in customary ownership which is complex with many owners/parties involved;
- Towns have outgrown their formally defined boundaries established many decades ago;

⁵¹ UN-Habitat, 2010, Port Moresby Urban Profile, p.12.

⁵² Yala, C (Ed.), 2010, The Genesis Of The Papua New Guinea Land Reform Program: Selected Papers from the 2005 National Land Summit, National Research Institute Monograph No. 42, p.41.

⁵³ Aluluklu, M. Physical Planning, in Yala 2010, p.44.

- Total urban population is difficult to calculate as most urban growth is occurring in the peri-urban areas and migration rates vary through the year;
- The development and expansion of peri-urban settlements is a result of semi-formal arrangements reached between local landowners and urban migrants usually without reference for the need to provide essential services.
- Very rigid state land release process within the Department of Lands and Physical Planning

Infrastructure and Basic Services

There are obvious disparities in the distribution of urban infrastructure and basic services between the formal areas and the unplanned settlements. While formal areas are serviced, these settlements, because of their unplanned status, often do not have access to many basic services. Some people who live in settlements access services illegally, and the burden of payment is borne by rate-payers in the formal areas. The existing road network is poorly maintained, and while access to health care and education is available, the facilities are often run-down and poorly resourced.⁵⁴

Within some informal settlements, water is available from randomly placed communal standpipes with very few having individual connections. However, most of these standpipes have been vandalized and poorly maintained and as a result, water supply to these settlements has been disconnected. This has led to the development of many illegal water connections in these settlements.⁵⁵

All formal areas are connected to the sewerage network administered by Eda Ranu Water and Sewerage Company. Informal settlements do not have linkages to the sewerage network and therefore they use alternative outlets such as pit

latrines and direct disposal into the sea, bushes, drains or waterways which leads to pollution of the environment. The collection of refuse within the city is the responsibility of the NCDC, but it is not reliable and consistent.⁵⁶

PNG Power, which administers the national grid provides electricity to the city. Electricity is supplied indiscriminately within the city based on a user-pay system. However, there are cases of people with electricity connection in informal settlements on the fringes of residential areas entering into agreements with other settlers to extend connection to them at some fee.⁵⁷

In general, provision of basic services is not in par with the growth of urban population. Densities in some suburbs increased in the recent past, but the available utility infrastructures were not upgraded concurrently to efficiently and effectively serve the high density.

Urban Governance

Urban governance in Papua New Guinea faces a number of challenges as it attempts to keep pace with increasing population growth, address corruption and poor revenue collection, and respond to reforms with limited authority and poor representation by urban communities in urban decision-making processes. Urban local governments are ill-equipped to respond to these challenges in a holistic manner because they lack financial and human resources, and often there is no training policy for urban council staff or suitable means for the systematic measuring of performance. Furthermore, urban sectors in Papua New Guinea have suffered from continuous political volatility with their system of governance.

In most urban areas, the councils are unable to involve all the diverse communities in the city's decision-making process. Some city councils have several advantages that could assist in improved

⁵⁴ UN-Habitat, 2010, Port Moresby Urban Profile, p.13.

⁵⁵ Ibid., p.13.

⁵⁶ Ibid., p.4.

⁵⁷ Ibid., p.14.

governance, including the creation of new urban wards, emerging partnerships, good governance, and programmes with sister cities that have developed with participation from civil society as well as the public and private sectors.⁵⁸

Institutional structures are not well arranged to efficiently and effectively manage urban issues. They are disintegrated and are not harmonised for better flow of information, communication and decision making.

Urban Economy

The increasing population in urban areas has resulted in a lack of employment opportunities. The unemployment rate in Port Moresby is considerably higher than in other urban centres of PNG. A high percentage of the unemployed are those with no formal education or education up to primary school level. More than 50% of unemployed persons are found in settlements and urban villages.⁵⁹

However, this is not to say that they are not involved in other income generating activities as most of these people participate in informal sector activities. In Port Moresby as well as in other urban areas, the informal sector employs the bulk of the population.

The Informal Sector Control and Development Act aims to regulate and promote the growth of the informal sector. However, the implementation of the Act has not been very successful.⁶⁰

Urban Environment and Climate Change

Papua New Guinea has been experiencing an increase in warm temperature extremes and a decrease in cool temperature extremes. Additionally, the island is frequently affected by tropical cyclones and by wind-waves which can display variability according to the El Nino phenomenon. The general climate model indicates that for future climate predictions, events such as El Nino and ocean acidification will continue to occur, and the risk of coral bleaching, temperature and sea level rise will keep increasing.

The expanding population in urban sectors has given rise to environmental pressures. Most urban sectors have limited land for expansion, thus putting pressure on marginal ground and hill slopes. This poses great risks to the built-up areas of towns and increases the threat of soil erosion and flooding, which are further exacerbated by the climatic changes.

Solid waste management is a challenge in all the urban centres in PNG. There is no proper solid waste management system in the country. Port Moresby does manage its solid waste but it is not efficient and effective. In times of natural disasters such as flooding, this solid waste clogs drains and runoff, affecting people living along the drainage areas.

⁵⁸ UN-Habitat, 2012, Papua New Guinea Urban Profile, p.8.

⁵⁹ UN-Habitat, 2010, Port Moresby Urban Profile, p.13.

⁶⁰ Ibid., p.13.



Settlement in Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea © Bernhard Barth

Policy Context

Policy Action on the National Level

National Urbanization Policy

Concern with urbanization in PNG began in the 1970s, as summarized below:

- 1973 - White paper on "Self Help Housing and Settlements for Urban Areas"
- 1977 - National Planning Office's "Managing urbanization in Papua New Guinea"
- 2000 - Special Parliamentary Committee on Urbanization and Social Development directed to inquire into the social and development implications of growing urban centres
- 2002 - Establishment of the National Taskforce on Urbanization and Law and Order
- 2003 - Establishment of the Ministerial Urbanization Committee, the National Consultative Committee on Urbanization and the Office of Urbanization
- 2005 - Interim Statement of the Urbanization Policy to guide urbanization in the 2005-2020 period
- 2005 - National Land summit – improving the system of land administration, land dispute settlement, and designing a better framework for mobilising customary land for development
- 2005 - Pilot projects on accessing urban customary land and rejuvenating rural service centres
- 2005 - National Consultative Committee on Urbanization directed the Office of Urbanization to develop a national urbanization policy to address urban growth issues and incorporate lessons learned from national land development pilot projects

- 2007 - Establishment of the 'urbanization challenge fund,' to address service delivery issues at the local level of towns and cities

- 2012 - First National Urban Forum held

PNG was the first Pacific Island country to develop a comprehensive national urban policy: National Urbanisation Policy 2010 to 2030. The policy evolved over several decades arising from a number of attempts to address rapid urban expansion in the major cities and towns of PNG. The Policy was designed to complement the National Land Development Policy on accessing and developing customary land in urban areas.

The Ministerial Committee overseeing the development of the Policy noted that urbanization had become a major issue, given the symptoms of social and economic disorder such as crime, unemployment, ethnic conflict, squatter and unplanned settlements and a general breakdown of law and order. The Ministerial Committee also noted that the global economic crisis, from 2007, "heightened and exacerbated the extent of urban issues that reflected an increasing informality such as the unplanned settlements as well as rising unemployment."

The policy was developed out of extensive national consultations with stakeholders and was driven by a national taskforce. Policy development drew on experiences and lessons learned from a number of "pilot projects."

In 2005, the Government of PNG adopted seven cross-sector urban policy areas and related goals. These areas are included in the policy statement (summarised below):

- Population and employment – development of a hierarchy of cities;
- Transportation and infrastructure – adequate transport and infrastructure systems;
- Urban environment and climate change – minimise the impacts of climate change;

- Housing and social issues – accessible, affordable and available shelter, health, education, social and community services;
- Urban land availability – facilitate robust land market;
- Urban security, law and order – support stakeholders to improve urban security;
- Institutions and governance – efficient and effective sector institutions.

The NUP identified 6 major issues and a range of responses to each as summarised below:

- Absence of policy – adopt NUP;
- Rapidity of urbanization – agree hierarchy of cities; sites and services programmes;
- Absence of integrated planning – urban profiling; devolution of urban management to local, district and provincial levels;
- Inadequate trunk and primary infrastructure – mobilise customary land owners;
- Growing peri-urban areas – urban profiling; capacity building; and
- Lack of capacity at all levels – capacity needs identification, training.

The NUP has four “pillars”:

- Enabling framework for policy implementation;
- Capacity building;
- Infrastructure and service upgrading; and
- Urbanization challenge fund.

There were five “implementation components” designed to achieve the “pillars”:

- Provision of primary infrastructure and services;
- Development of sites and services requiring land mobilising;

- Enhancing rural growth centres;
- Building capacity at local and provincial levels;
- Development of urbanization and urban management policies, plans and programmes.

The complexity of the National Urbanisation Policy in PNG may have been unavoidable given the scale of the issues in the national context, the number of larger cities, compared to other Pacific countries which usually have only one significant city, the ethnic divisions and size and rapid growth of the national and urban population. The implementation arrangements are necessarily complex requiring application at all levels of government. The commitment and consistent application of the policy across all levels of government will be a major challenge along with sufficient budgetary allocations.

Other National Level Frameworks

Urbanization was identified as a key sector in the Medium-Term Development Plan II 2011- 2015. The MTDP was developed to implement the PNG Development Strategic Plan (2010 – 2030) and “Vision 2050”. The MTDP II identified a number of key sectors in respect of urban development, including:

- Land – Provide a secure, well administered land market that serves the needs of landowners and contributes to the nation’s strategic development;
- Law, Order and Justice – Provide a safe, secure, and stable environment for all citizens, visitors, communities, and businesses to conduct their affairs freely; and
- Urban development – Urban centres developed according to international town planning standards in order to cater for urbanization and socioeconomic progress and deliver quality of life for all urban people.

While the MTDP has been updated (MTDP III 2018–2022), urbanization continues to be an important consideration as a driver of economic development, which is its primary focus.

PNG launched its revised National Population Policy 2015–2024 in February 2015. The 2000–2010 policy called for balanced urban and rural development, however the 2015–2024 policy recognised that:

Migration, urbanization, and population distribution patterns contribute to, rather than detract from sustainable development.⁶¹

The Population Policy has a goal “To achieve a more appropriate balance between urban and rural development and to promote a spatial distribution of population that is conducive to economic growth and sustainable development.”

The Population Policy notes that the official statistics indicate that the rate of urbanization has changed little between censuses.

However, this proportion presents a misleading picture of the real level of urbanization in PNG. The reason is that the boundaries of PNG’s UAs [urban areas] have not been reviewed and adjusted since the initial delineation in 1980. As a result, a very large number of rural-urban migrants who, over time, have settled just outside the boundary of most major UAs are, in the official statistics, considered as rural. Analysis of census data since 1980 shows that, during the last three decades, this type of movement has been very significant. A review and re-delineation of the boundaries of UAs in PNG based on a set of meaningful demographic/statistical criteria, is very long overdue and should be carried out by the NSO as a matter of urgency.⁶²

Urban issues cut across a number of the policy objectives outlined in the National Population Policy, particularly employment and the environment.

⁶¹ Government of Papua New Guinea, 2014, National Population Policy 2015–2024, Department of National Planning and Monitoring, p.16.

⁶² Government of Papua New Guinea, 2014, p.39.

The policy recognises that well-managed and -planned urbanization and migration can contribute to development.

The fact that the MTDP and National Population Policy identify ‘urban development’ as a priority and calls for the implementation of the National Urbanisation Policy as well as for reforms of the land titling system, indicates a strong level of policy coherence and integration.

Given that constrained access to land and adequate housing is an issue for many people in urban centres, including public servants, a national coordinated response is warranted.⁶³

The National Urbanisation Policy also refers back to the MTDP stating that “it must support the strategic direction and objectives of the MTDP and the overarching draft National Strategic Vision and draft Development Strategic Plan.”⁶⁴

The Government of PNG is clearly seeking a high level of policy coherence and clear articulation of national urban development priorities. ... *The NUP needs to support and complement these strategies as integral elements of its policy framework.⁶⁵*

Housing, Land and Informal Settlements

In consultation with all relevant urban stakeholders, including local communities and institutions, civil societies, the private sector, development partners, academics, and others, Urban Profiles were developed for Port Moresby and on the national level. The priorities highlighted for housing, land and human settlements were:

- Public and private enterprises recognize the importance of providing low-cost housing infrastructure.

⁶³ Government of Papua New Guinea, 2011, Medium Term Development Plan – Building the foundations for prosperity, Department of National Planning and Monitoring p.63.

⁶⁴ Papua New Guinea Office of Urbanization 2010, p.64.

⁶⁵ Papua New Guinea Office of Urbanization, 2010, p.10.

- Making formal housing affordable to all, especially the poor.
- Ensuring that land and finance are readily available for informal settlement upgrading.

Infrastructure and Basic Services

The National Urban Profile highlights the following priorities related to infrastructure and basic services:

- Appropriate urban infrastructure in place.
- Pro-poor communities targeted for assistance.
- Improved skills of local administrations, technical staff and elected representatives to better manage their urban development and planning mandates in addition to urban service and infrastructure investments in towns, including the peri-urban and informal settlements.
- A regulated transport system operating effectively and efficiently.
- appropriate and well-designed roads constructed.
- Appropriate drainage solutions in place for existing and proposed developments.

Climate Change Considerations

Papua New Guinea developed and adopted a Climate Compatible Development Strategy, including key concerns regarding forestry, agriculture, environment and conversation finance, national planning and monitoring. The main statement is to “Adapt to the domestic impacts of climate change and contribute to global efforts to abate greenhouse gas emissions”.

There is a chapter dedicated to Environment and Climate Change in the National Urban Profile, which addresses climate change mitigation as well as adaptation. In terms of mitigation, the Urban Profile states,

In order to reduce car reliance and reduce emissions and pollution, there needs to be a greater concentration of settlements around public transport corridors. In addition, efforts need to be made within the current development of a national climate change policy to work towards carbon neutral towns and cities.⁶⁶

For climate change adaptation, it stresses the need for sustainable planning, especially with customary landowners, on the layout and settlement design that would encourage adequate areas for living as well as communal or household areas for family primary production. It also emphasizes the need for a physical and environmental structure plan developed to deal with major challenges, such as encouraging use of public transport and providing multipurpose drainage areas as a means of minimizing impacts of climate change.⁶⁷

Papua New Guinea National Settlements Upgrading Strategy

Developed in 2015, the Papua New Guinea National Settlements Upgrading Strategy has been endorsed by the Ministry of Housing and Urban Development but in mid-2019 the strategy had not yet been tabled at the National Executive Council (cabinet). The strategy provides a comprehensive overview of the informal settlements situation in the country. The Strategy has seven prongs that comprehensively address the specific challenges that cities and towns as well as informal settlement communities face in Papua New Guinea.

1. Secure Land Tenure – The strategy recognized that land tenure challenges can be categorized along seven distinct systems that require differentiated approaches: (i) Unplanned State Land, (ii) Leased State Land, (iii) Planned State Land, (iv) Reserve Land, (v) Customary land which again is differentiated by the tenure arrangements between informal settlers and

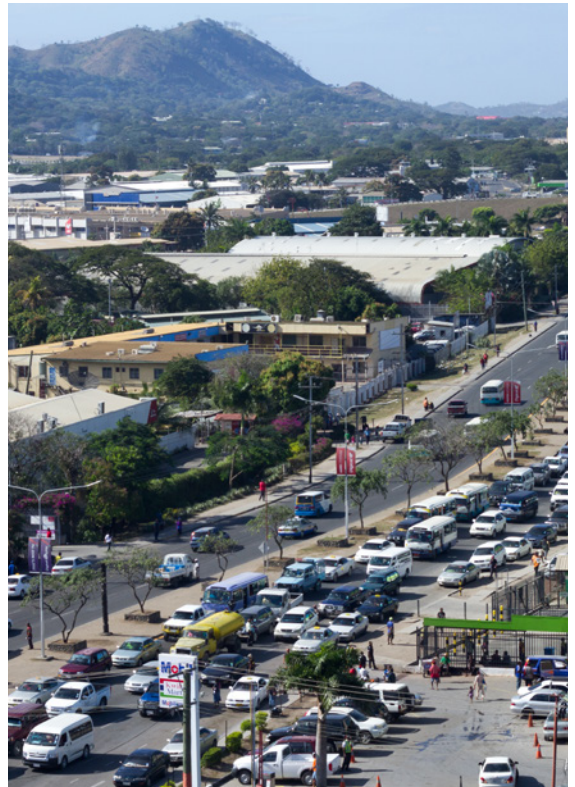
⁶⁶ UN-Habitat, 2012, p.22.

⁶⁷ UN-Habitat, 2010, p.22.

- the landowners, (vi) traditional land and (vii) freehold land;
2. **Urban Infrastructure and Basic Services** – The strategy recognized the importance of a wide range of infrastructure and services types beyond addressing the lack of adequate water and sanitation which form part of the global definition of slums. The strategy also includes electricity, roads, drainage, solid waste, schools and clinics and makes the provision for communities to further articulate their demands. The strategy supports community driven interventions and provides for proactive engagement of utilities and other service providers.
 3. **Housing** – the strategy covers minimum standards, affordability and financing, production technologies and materials, capacity development (construction related) and eligibility.
 4. **Livelihood Opportunities** – the strategy focusses on livelihood opportunities within the informal settlement from a planning and a capacity development perspective.
 5. **Settlements Sensitive Urban Policy and Planning Framework** – the strategy recognizes the current challenges with the planning frameworks that do not recognize informal settlements. In order to promote upgrading changes at the policy level are required.
 6. **Financing Settlements Upgrading** – a wide ranging approach to financing the above components are presented in the strategy.
 7. **Stakeholder Participation and Coordination** – the strategy highlights the importance of broad stakeholder engagement, in particular the targeted communities.

8. **National and Local Government Coordination** – addressing an identified challenge the strategy develops an approach for better coordination between local governments and the national authorities.

National Capital District – Citywide Informal Settlements Upgrading and Prevention strategy 2016-2026



A view of Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea © Bernhard Barth

The Citywide Informal Settlements and Prevention Strategy is structured similarly to the national strategy and provides further details as relevant for the country's capital. The National Capital District Commission endorsed the strategy in October 2016 and since then has redoubled its efforts for upgrading including through the "Settlements to Suburbs" Programme.

Samoa

Background

Urbanization Trends

At the last census in 2016, Samoa had a total population of 192,126 persons, of which 18 percent (35,454) lived in the Apia urban area, a decline from the previous census in 2011. The Samoan population is projected to grow slowly, primarily because of high outward migration to New Zealand, Australia and America.

As with most other Pacific Island countries, the town boundaries of Apia have become blurred with a significant number of people commuting daily to Apia from the villages along the northern coast of Upolu, particularly the villages that lie between Apia and Faleolo International Airport. Thus, it has an extensive peri-urban area.

... villages are growing rapidly in the urban hinterland, with many having expanded to the extent their village boundaries blur the 'urban rural' divide. As a result, villages now form one linear strip of urban development between Apia and the international airport at Faleolo some 30 kilometres to the northwest of Apia.⁶⁸

Approximately 52 percent of the total population of Samoa now lives in Apia especially along the narrow north-west coastal corridor between Apia and the Faleolo International Airport. Much of this population commutes to central Apia each day to work, study or shop. This has pressured Government to make more land available in a planned orderly manner to accommodate the increasing number of urban dwellers. The peri-urban development of Apia has given rise to initiatives to plan new villages e.g. Vaitele village, and the government recognised the need for more effective planning.

A new township at Saleologa on the island of Savaii is also being developed into a town with defined 'urban' boundaries.

Sectoral Challenges

Housing, Land and Informal Settlements

As Apia developed into the main port and administrative centre since the arrival of Europeans in the nineteenth century, some land was converted from village ownership to government and freehold land uses. These changes occurred on an opportunistic basis rather than through planning. There is a variety of urban type land uses in many villages around Samoa including businesses, tourism ventures and schools. Despite many attempts, there is no formal or proper land use plan for the development of Apia, however, several urban spatial plans and policies have been developed to guide the growth and development of Apia around traditional and non-traditional villages.

Most housing in Samoa is made of cement, treated walls and iron roofing. Besides being situated on customary village lands and/or freehold property, communities also have access to treated water supply, reliable electricity and proper sealed access roads maintained by the government; and therefore, the term 'informal settlements' may not be fully applicable to the context of Apia. Nevertheless, many of these houses do not fall within the standards of the National Building Code.⁶⁹

Infrastructure and Basic Services

As mentioned above, Samoa has good coverage of basic infrastructure and has largely achieved the goal of providing basic services. The water supply network serves the majority of the Apia Urban Area (AUA). Septic tanks are used by almost all households throughout AUA, while a very small percentage use pit latrines.

⁶⁸ Jones, P. and Cocks, J., 2002, Urban development and uncontrolled discharge in Apia, Samoa, p.32.

⁶⁹ UN-Habitat, 2014, Apia, Samoa Climate Change Vulnerability Assessment, p.19.

Apia is also served with a wastewater treatment plant used mainly by the commercial sector and multipurpose buildings. Within the AUA, every household and business has access to electricity.⁷⁰

Apia also has an extensive drainage system that is regularly upgraded as new roads and properties are built. Due to the continuous build-up of new roads, properties, residences and office buildings, the drainage system has suffered in that now most of the flooding is the result of either blocked drains or natural waterways being reclaimed.⁷¹

Urban Governance

Samoa does not have local government systems, meaning all national matters ranging from water supply, electricity, land, planning and infrastructure to village and individual matters are managed by the national agencies.

The 1990 Village Fono Act gives village councils (fono) authority over village law and order, health and social issues. This traditional system provides communities with a local governance structure managed by village councils with hereditary connections and customary land ownership to the specific area. In the Apia urban area, some lands are under freehold land ownership without traditional councils. In these areas, with no systematic governance arrangements in place, local churches perform some duties while the national government presides over all statutory matters. This puts pressure on the Planning and Urban Management Agency (PUMA), as the central government agency responsible in this area to ensure sustainable urban development. Created in 2004, PUMA continues to struggle to elevate urban planning and management onto the Apia and national development agendas.

Urban Economy

Samoa has a relatively small but developing economy that has traditionally depended on agriculture, fishing, tourism, overseas family remittances and development aid. Samoa is one of the highest recipients of remittances in the world as a proportion of Gross Domestic Product (GDP), typically fluctuating between 20 and 25 per cent. Only around 12 per cent of Samoa's total population is engaged in formal paid employment. Two-thirds of Samoa's potential labour force is absorbed by subsistence village agriculture, a dominant sector in the Samoan economy.⁷²

Tourism is the backbone of the Samoan economy. Since 1994, tourism earnings have been the largest source of foreign exchange and have grown significantly from USD 40.6 million in 1999 to USD 107.3 million in 2007. More than half of the available hotel rooms in Samoa are found within Apia and the broader AUA.⁷³

Urban Environment and Climate Change

Samoa, like other Pacific Island States, is prone to natural disasters, most of which are weather and climate related, with floods, storms and wave surges associated with tropical cyclones being the predominant causes. Its tropical location exacerbates vulnerability, with extreme rainfall, temperatures and tropical storms posing significant risks of flooding and storm surges.⁷⁴

The global climate model findings indicate that, like the other islands, El Nino and ocean acidification will continue to occur and risk of coral bleaching, sea level and extreme rain events will increase. Specifically, projected climate change scenarios predict a moderate exposure of Apia to intense and more frequent hazard risks in the future with respect to rainfall, storms and sea level rise.

⁷⁰ UN-Habitat, 2014, Apia, Samoa Climate Change Vulnerability Assessment, p.8.

⁷¹ Ibid.

⁷² Ibid, pp.2-3.

⁷³ Ibid, pp.16-17.

⁷⁴ Ibid, p.1.

Despite low drought projections, it remains a concern because of its potential effect on electricity, water and livelihoods, which will heavily impact the city population.⁷⁵



Apia, Samoa © Bernhard Barth

Policy Context

Policy Action on the National Level

The Government of Samoa, with the assistance of the Asian Development Bank, started a process in 2001 to address the urban growth challenges in Apia. The project identified the following urban development issues:

- Urban population had grown significantly;
- Squatter settlements had expanded;
- Housing densities had increased;
- Domestic and industrial waste was increasingly visible on the streets;
- Uncontrolled wastewater discharge and environmental degradation was visible;
- Crime had increased; and
- Water supply, sanitation and road infrastructure could not meet demand.

This eventually gave rise to the establishment of PUMA in 2002, under the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment, the lead government agency on environmental and sustainable development issues. In 2004, with the Planning and Urban Management Act coming into force, PUMA was mandated with the development of strategic urban and spatial plans' and became the regulator for all developments to ensure sustainable development is achieved. In April 2019 however, PUMA was transferred to the Ministry of Works, Transport and Infrastructure.

Since 2004, PUMA established policies and guidelines to address the wide range of issues associated with urbanization, including the Sanitation Policy (2010), Parking Policy (2006), Noise Policy (2006), Outdoor Advertising Signage Policy (2006), Disability Access Guideline (2008), Container Storage Guideline (2008), Housing Guideline (2006),

⁷⁵ Ibid, p.29.

Telecommunication Guideline (2006) and Flood and Development Guideline (2007). Apia does not have a central city-level governing body and as such, developments in the City are implemented by various stakeholders. PUMA however regulates all developments in Samoa, including the City.

Apia's urban development challenges arise from a lack of a mechanism to coordinate these various policies, as well as planning across infrastructure and service providers. As a result, the government is unable to effectively coordinate land use policy, or plan for strategic infrastructure investments at the city level that are demanded by a growing urban economy⁷⁶. The Samoa National Urban Policy was released in 2013 to provide a holistic and integrated framework to improve urban development in Samoa.

The National Urban Policy focuses on the following outcomes: (a) Improved city centre structure and built form based on a shared vision; (b) Introduce a Apia spatial city / urban plan for the city; (c) Introduce relevant planning law reforms and regulations; (d) Improved governance, planning, integration of urban structure, services management and disaster risk reduction/resilience; and (e) Increase private sector participation.

The National Urban Policy articulates the overall objectives and directions for building a more resilient and desirable physical form. It also recognizes the future investments required for making the City more workable, liveable, inclusive, competitive and sustainable. This further reinforces the need that urban planning must act as a conduit to coordinate land management with infrastructure, natural resources, and hazard risk reduction.⁷⁷

As a key achievement of the National Urban Policy, the Apia Waterfront Plan 2017-2026 (AWP) was developed and launched in December 2016.

The AWP outlines a framework to develop the Apia waterfront with certain areas of the waterfront being developed since 2018.

Urbanization is not identified as an explicit sector in the Strategy for the "Development of Samoa 2012-2016". However, under 'Environment,' the Strategy called for the "development of an urban agenda and policy."⁷⁸ Sections on the economic sector, infrastructure, sustainable energy supply, sustainable tourism and agriculture are also relevant to urban development. Interestingly, the section on the social sector and social cohesion focuses on a range of issues touching on urbanization, including:

- Community safety;
- Customary justice;
- Village governance;
- Community development;
- Safety nets and social protection;
- Resilience to climate change and natural disasters; and
- Partnerships for financing initiatives.

Housing, Informal Settlements and Land

PUMA's approach to land use control has largely focused on development permission. Long term visioning and city planning has only recently been given special priority, since the development of the National Urban Policy. A key driver has been the intent of improving climate resilience and disaster risk reduction by mainstreaming existing data and climate projections into urban land use plans.⁷⁹

⁷⁶ Planning and Urban Management Agency Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment, 2013, Samoa National Urban Policy, p.9.

⁷⁷ Ibid, p.10.

⁷⁸ Economic Policy and Planning Division, 2012, Strategy for the Development of Samoa, 2012- 2016, Ministry of Finance, Government of Samoa, p.19.

⁷⁹ Planning and Urban Management Agency Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment, 2013, p.9.

Infrastructure and Basic Services

The National Infrastructure Strategic Plan (2011) recognizes the issues of coordination and lack of integration that occurs within the sector. It notes that the poor strategic alignment of urban planning and infrastructure delivery detracts from improving efficiencies and productivity. It encourages asset management and the implementation role of the Ministry of Works Transport and Infrastructure of the plan.

The Apia Spatial Plan 2014 provides further guidance on the development of Apia with guiding principles focused on:

- Encouraging a Unique Sense of Identity
- Enabling Good Urban Design
- Establishing and Reinforcing Employment centres
- Guiding Residential growth
- Enabling an infrastructure corridor
- Encouraging walkability and bicycle usage
- Enhancing Public Open Spaces and urban greenery
- Protecting the Natural Environment, and
- Preserving the Existing Cultural Heritage

A key achievement of this has been the development of Samoa's Urban Design Standards in 2018.

Climate Change Considerations

Samoa has no specific legislation dealing with climate change; however, the Strategy for the Development of Samoa is a strong policy framework that outlines and supports mitigation and adaptation efforts. This document indicates efforts to commit to local resilience through working on coastal management and adaptation programmes for vulnerable villages.

Moreover, the policy's goal statement is to "enhance Samoa's response to the impacts of climate change in support of national sustainable development efforts".

A climate change vulnerability assessment has been conducted for Greater Apia, which identifies local vulnerability to potential climate change impacts. The results of this study provide a context for planning major infrastructure developments, ensuring that buildings and other assets are designed and located in suitable areas to withstand future changes; for developing climate-sensitive land use plans; and for developing appropriate adaptation responses for urban communities.

In addition, Community Integrated Management (CIM) Plans that focus on building community resilience to Climate Change Impacts have been developed for all districts of Samoa, including the four districts within the Apia Greater Urban Area. These CIM Plans provide possible interventions that need to be implemented over time to help minimise the impacts of climate change on communities thereby enhancing their resilience.

Solomon Islands

Background

Urbanization Trends

The total population of the Solomon Islands is estimated at approximately 650,000 persons in 2017, and the National Statistics Office predicts that the national population will reach 760,000 persons by 2025.

Honiara is the primate city; there are a further three urban centres in the Solomon Islands: Gizo, Auki and Noro, and a number of secondary centres, including Buala, Kirakira and Tulagi. According to the Solomon Islands National Statistics Office, the average annual urban growth rate between 1999 and 2009 was 4.7 percent; the highest of any Pacific Island nation. The most obvious transformation in the growth of urban areas are seen in Honiara, Gizo and Auki, driven largely by economic opportunities in these cities and towns⁸⁰.

“The national average urban growth (4.7 percent) exceeds the national population growth rate (2.3 percent), indicating a shift of attitudes from rural towards towns, particularly to Honiara. This is a clear manifestation of the growing importance of towns as the engine of economic growth, places of opportunity and future prosperity.”⁸¹

The capital of the British Protectorate of Solomon Islands was shifted to Honiara in 1952 to utilise the well-developed infrastructure that had been left behind by the United States Military after the World War II. Rural-urban migration intensified after independence from the British in 1978 and continues to be a strong demographic trend today. Significant urban growth in Honiara over the years, especially

in the urban periphery, has led to the spill-over of development into Guadalcanal Province. In the peri-urban areas beyond the municipal boundary, the population has increased at an average annual rate of 16.4% over the inter-census period.

“The Honiara City Council population grew by 2.7 percent a year between 1999 and 2009, but when the urban parts of the adjacent wards of Tandai and Malango are included, making up the Honiara Urban Area, this rate rises to 4.4 percent a year. The urban area of Tandai more than tripled over the decade with an annual growth rate of 12.8 percent, while the urban areas of Malango ward were defined as ‘urban’ for the first time. The rapid growth of these peri-urban areas, much of it in squatter settlements, is symptomatic of the pressure on the provision of housing and other services for new migrants in Honiara generally...”⁸²



Honiara, Solomon Islands © Bernhard Barth

⁸⁰ Solomon Islands National Urban Policy Framework (2016-2035), p.12.

⁸¹ Solomon Islands National Urban Policy Framework (2016-2035), p.15.

⁸² Solomon Islands National Statistic Office, 2009 Population and Housing Census Report on Migration and Urbanization, Ministry of Finance and Treasury, p.21.

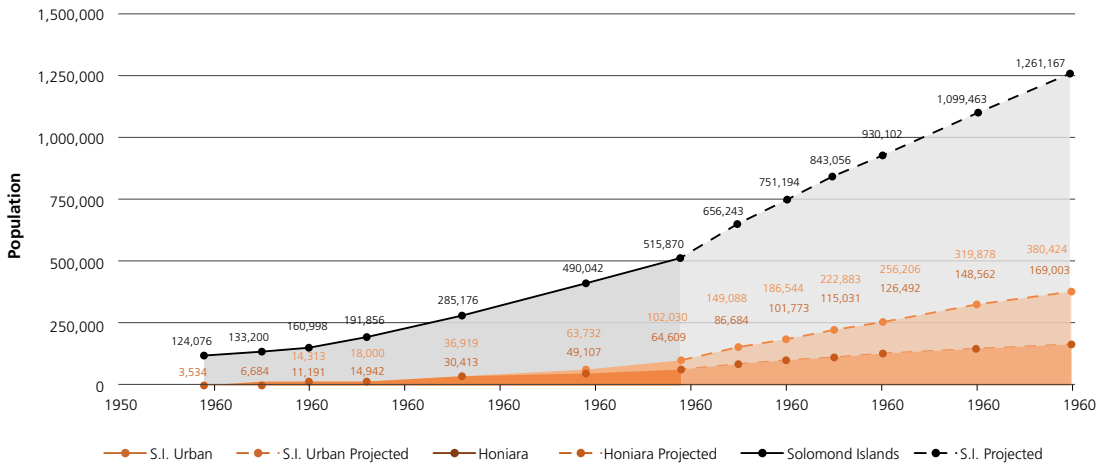


Figure 5. *Population Figures: Historical (1959-2009) and Projected (2010 - 2050)*
(data sourced from the Solomon Islands Government)

The official projections (2010-2050) are displayed in the figure above.

Sectoral Challenges

Housing, Informal Settlements, and Land

Under the Development Planning Act (formerly the Town and Country Planning Act), the responsibility for developing and administering land regulations, as well as urban policy and housing, rests with the Ministry of Lands, Housing and Survey (MLHS). The MLHS predicts that a consequence of rapid population growth in Honiara is leading to considerably higher housing densities.

Additionally, the high rate of urbanization accompanied by inadequate service provision and poor planning strategies in the past have resulted in the proliferation of informal settlements. UN-Habitat has noted that the growth rate of informal settlements exceeds the urban growth rate of 4.7 percent per annum, indicating that urban growth rates are primarily driven by informal settlements. In Honiara, informal settlements represent approximately 35 percent of the city's population,

and are growing at around 6 percent per annum.⁸³

In order to exercise some form of control over the growth and to monitor informal settlements growth, as well as to provide a degree of tenure security, the MLHS has been issuing "Temporary Occupants Licenses (TOLs)" since the 1960s. However, in 2006, the MLHS learned that the rate of growth in Honiara's public land area was extremely high and unplanned because existing license holders were having family members build next door. For the same reason, the population growth rate in some peri-urban areas around Honiara were also found to be substantially higher than could be determined by the TOLs issued.

"Formalizing security of land tenure in informal settlements is hampered by weak land administration, resulting in land rental arrears, and inconsistency in the implementation of plans such as the conversion of temporary occupation licenses and illegal occupation of state land."⁸⁴

⁸³ United Nations Human Settlements Programme, 2012, Solomon Islands: National Urban Profile, p.12.

⁸⁴ Solomon Islands National Urban Policy Framework (2016-2035), p.27.

Infrastructure, Basic Services and Health

Rapid population growth in Honiara additionally results in an increased demand for basic urban services, including water, sanitation, road infrastructure, schools, health clinics and burial grounds. Characteristics of informal settlements vary within urban areas of the country, but all share inadequate access to basic services⁸⁵. Health and safety risks are in turn exacerbated due to factors such as poor water and sanitation; lack of access into informal settlements for emergency vehicles; and increasing crime and ethnic conflict.

Officials from Honiara City Council (HCC) in 2014 noted that HCC was providing a range of services beyond the city's formal jurisdiction. This includes health, education and waste disposal services to communities which either straddled or were immediately outside the official town boundaries, but which had a majority of the population travelling in and out of the city daily to attend school, or health services, shop and work.

"Despite the sensitive issue of non-extension of Honiara boundary into the Guadalcanal Province area {due to customary land ownership in adjacent areas}, demand for development of surrounding urban areas will continue as population grows. This is where the concept of 'Greater Honiara' prevails, and it urgently needs proper management and coordination from the two authorities."⁸⁶

Urban Governance

The Ministry of Home Affairs administers legislation and policy governing the operation of the Honiara City Council and the Town Councils of Auki, Gizo and Noro. The Ministry of Provincial Affairs administers legislation and policy governing the operation of all nine Provincial Governments in the Solomon Islands.

⁸⁵ World Bank – Feature article. Delivering water and sanitation to Melanesia informal settlements. 2015

⁸⁶ Solomon Islands National Urban Policy Framework (2016-2035), p.7.

The Ministry of Infrastructure Development addresses road and sanitation infrastructure while The Solomon Islands Water Authority is responsible for the reticulation of water in Honiara, Auki, Gizo and Noro. The Ministry of Lands, Housing and Survey, is responsible for the development of Local Planning Schemes under the mandate of the Planning Development Act.

The national government had in the past put more emphasis on rural development strategies, resulting in the lack of plans to improve effective urban planning and management. As a result, key institutions involved in provision of housing, urban planning and management, urban services, infrastructure development and management were poorly resourced or ill-equipped, and not properly coordinated. For example, Town Councils have a significant lack of resources to administer anything other than the most basic of services i.e. waste collection, administration of markets, public health and some basic planning functions. The reality is that most councils struggle to administer even these services.

The HCC considered that there was a lack of "connection" with central government agencies and that HCC and other town councils tended to introduce their own policies and programmes with limited reference to national policies and priorities. As a result, national policies in areas such as climate change and waste management have often lacked commitment at the local or city level.

Urban Economy

Economic activities in urban areas contribute over 50 percent of the national gross domestic product (GDP) in the Solomon Islands.⁸⁷ The demographic shift to urban areas, as described above, is a clear indication of the growing importance and the critical role towns play in the rapidly growing socio-political economy, demonstrating a strong correlation between urbanization and economic development.

⁸⁷ Solomon Islands National Urban Policy Framework (2016-2035), p.22.

Providing adequate employment opportunities, as well as enhancing the effectiveness and efficiency of urban markets and investments - including the informal sector - are essential in order to sustain urban productivity and address urban poverty.

"The important issue and the one to be enhanced is to generate employment in the urban centers so that they are attractive to economic migrants, resulting in high employment rates in the centers. As rural people (e.g. from rural Guadalcanal and other provinces) move to Honiara and or other urban areas it allows the realization of scale economies, achievement of greater thickness in markets and an increased specialization, resulting in national growth and modernization ... Urbanization that is driven by these positive economic benefits needs to be facilitated and enhanced."⁸⁸

Urban Environment and Climate Change

The Solomon Islands is amongst the most vulnerable nations to the direct and indirect impacts of climate change. The main climatic risks facing urban areas in the Solomon Islands are an increased incidence and severity of cyclones, rising atmospheric temperatures and sea level rise. These impacts bring with them a broad range of associated long and short-term shocks and stresses, such as increased precipitation, flash and ravine flooding, extreme heat events and drought, increased severity of storm surges and coastal inundation. The most severe floods of recent years occurred in April 2014, resulting in the displacement of approximately 10,000 inhabitants of the capital city of Honiara.

In addition to these climatic risks, rapid population growth inevitably leads to environmental degradation due to land clearing with consequent susceptibility to flooding, earthquakes and landslides. The residents of many informal settlements are also most at risk to the adverse effects of climate change due to their locations in land slide and flood prone areas.

All events mentioned above constitutes in future climate challenges projected for the island.

The combined effects of the current and projected impacts of climate change and an increasingly urban population place urban centres across the Solomon Islands in an extremely vulnerable position. As a result, it has been widely recognized that it is necessary to embed both considerations firmly within the national (urban) policy agenda of the Solomon Islands.

Policy Context

Policy Action at the National Level

National Urban Policy

With the intention of providing a coherent rubric for formulating plans and policies to address the myriad of urban challenges facing urban centres across the Solomon Islands, in 2014 the MLHS committed to the development of the National Urban Policy (2016-2035) which will provide an overarching framework for addressing both current and future urban challenges. In doing so, the Ministry set out to develop a policy which would insist on the importance of enhancing and promoting prosperous, peaceful cities whilst reducing poverty and building urban resilience at the national level.

The inaugural Solomon Islands National Urban Conference (SINUC) was held on 27-29 June, 2016 in Honiara to guide the initial stages of the formulation of the NUPF through a multi-stakeholder, participatory process. The emerging policy indicated that the guidelines set out in the document must be "adopted in all urban centres and towns" for implementation by City Councils or Provincial Governments.⁸⁹ Its mission makes reference to urban development issues in the Solomon Islands:

⁸⁸ Solomon Islands National Urban Policy Framework (2016-2035), p.12.

⁸⁹ Solomon Islands National Urban Policy Framework (2016-2035), p.41.

“[To develop] people-focused urban centres that are planned and managed in accordance with the principles of sustainable urban development to develop safe, environmentally responsible, inclusive, interconnected and resilient urban areas.”

This is a significant shift in policy direction by the National Government, who had previously promoted counter-urbanization strategies in the past, to no avail.

The first document of its kind in the Solomon Islands, the NUP is aligned with the National Development Strategy (2016-2035) which has been taken up as the country's overarching policy framework, setting out the strategic direction and framework for future development policies, programmes and priorities in the Solomon Islands. The NUP has additionally been aligned with targets and indicators of recent global commitments and frameworks that address urban issues, namely the 2030 Development Agenda, the New Urban Agenda and the Paris Agreement under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.

Importantly, the development of the NUP has been a step in the right direction towards enhancing the vertical and horizontal integration of policy actions; building the institutional and financial capacity of governments at the national, local and sectoral levels to provide adequate and affordable housing for all, accompanied by adequate infrastructure and basic services; supporting urban economic growth, while reducing urban poverty; and addressing land management and municipal boundary issues.

Spatial and Territorial Planning

The NUP also guides ways through which the Government can administer urban growth in primary and secondary centres, and recognises that urbanization is a trend that will continue in the Solomon Islands.

“National urban policies will ensure that national economic and social policies as presented in the National Development Strategy document do not accentuate sharply and unnecessarily the concentration of population and economic activities only in large urban areas such as Honiara and its environs.⁹⁰”

Hence, the Government has taken action to declare more growth areas in the country as “planning zones”, enabling them to formulate Local Planning Schemes – as elaborated in the following section.

Housing, Informal Settlements and Land

One of the goals of the NUP is to improve the quality of settlements and housing, including to “ensure access for all to adequate, safe and affordable housing, infrastructure and basic services” and “to upgrade all informal settlements through an upgrading scheme approach”.

The draft Honiara Informal Settlements Upgrading Strategy (2016) has been developed and will be adopted to guide informal settlement upgrading in Honiara. The strategy recognizes the climate change vulnerability of informal settlements and calls for an integrated upgrading and resilience approach.

A Temporary Housing Areas Upgrading Program, that transforms TOLs into more permanent tenure instruments and ensures appropriate provision of area infrastructure, is currently under development.

Policy Action at the Local Level

Since announcing the intention to develop a National Urban Policy in 2015, The Government of the Solomon Islands has partnered with UN-Habitat to develop Urban Profiles on the national level as well as for Honiara, Gizo and Auki, and has made initial progress towards fulfilling the same for Kirakira and Tulagi.

⁹⁰ Solomon Islands National Urban Policy Framework (2016-2035), p.6.

Local Planning Schemes (LPSs) are mandated by the Development Planning Act, empowering local authorities to be responsible for shaping and managing urban centres and towns, and for the maintenance of public services such as health, education, and waste management. LPSs have so far been developed for the city of Honiara, the towns of Gizo and Auki, and the Choiseul Bay Township.

A concerted effort by local authorities has also resulted in the update of the Honiara Local Planning Scheme and development of the Honiara Urban Resilience and Climate Action Plan, the latter of which was formally endorsed by the Solomon Islands Government.

Climate Change Considerations

Solomon Islands Climate Change Policy address climate change as an integrated and cross cutting development issue, dealing with the challenges and benefiting from the opportunities it can bring. There are ten climate change priorities, which include vulnerability, adaptation and disaster risk reduction. Under this priority is mentioned the need of social resilience, and climate proofing infrastructure and communities relocation as a last resort. Lastly, another priority refers to mitigation, where livelihood improvement of residents is highlighted. The Urban Profiles and a climate change vulnerability assessment conducted in Honiara outlined the projected risks of future climate change, but most significantly

they stressed the current impacts of climate related shocks and stresses on urban centres across the Solomon Islands, highlighting the need for timely and appropriate policy intervention at the national level. It was recognized by both the MLHS and the MECCDM that in many areas urban space had become increasingly hazardous, a trend most visible in housing constructed on steep slopes, riverbanks, swampy areas and gullies. Both local and national authorities have committed to ensuring that towns, settlements and their residents are protected from the risks pertaining to climate change. To do so, it was deemed necessary to embrace of both climate change adaptation and mitigation actions as national priorities, and to focus on integrating climate change into both immediate and long-term policy requirements. One of the six guiding principles of the NUPF is the aim of achieving “environmentally sustainable and resilient towns and cities”. Moreover, of the seven goals at the forefront of the NUPF, Goal 6 best exemplifies the effectiveness of the mainstreaming process, focused on achieving “Enhanced Environmental Sustainability and Resilience”. The objectives accompanying the goal of achieving “Enhanced Environmental Sustainability and Resilience” embeds the MLHS’ commitment to the prevention of unsustainable and non-climate resilient urban development into policy. Additionally, this goal will ensure mandatory adherence to Honiara Urban Resilience and Climate Adaptation Plan (HURCAP) at the government level.



Aftermath of severe flooding in 2014, Honiara, Solomon Islands © Bernhard Barth

Tonga

Background

Urbanization Trends

At the time of the 2016 census, the total number of people living in Tonga was 100,651, of which approximately 74 percent live on the main island of Tongatapu. According to the 2016 Census, the urban population was 23,211 persons (23 percent of the total population), which includes the villages of Kolofo'ou, Ma'ufanga and Kolomotu'a, making up the Nuku'alofa urban area.⁹¹ According to the Statistics department of Tonga the urban growth rate was -4.2 percent, while rural areas were growing at -2.0 percent. Neiafu is the administrative centre of the Vava'u group and is the second largest urban centre in Tonga, with a population of 5,251 according to the 2016 census.

Sectoral Challenges

Land

Tonga has a complex land system, designed by King Tupou I to provide wide access to land and protect families from poverty. This system has many strengths, including avoiding the permanent loss of access to land services. However, there is an absence of an effective lease system and efficient land management and planning for the allocation of public faculties, transport and other needs. The lack of such planning and management, combined with inefficient administration of land laws and regulations in Tonga is resulting in inefficient urban development and lack of space for important public spaces and infrastructure, and is also slowing development. Increased monetization of traditional land practices is also undermining the design of the land access system.⁹²

⁹¹ Kingdom of Tonga, 2016, Tonga 2016 Census of Population and Housing, Statistics Department, p.10.

⁹² Ministry of Finance and National Planning, 2015.

Infrastructure and Basic Services

Steady migration from outer islands to the urban centre on Tongatapu is ongoing. This movement is driven by the reality of limited opportunities in small communities, and in turn has consequences for decisions on where to put new infrastructure to meet changing population pressures.

The type of technology and infrastructure, and where they are placed is a balancing act, with important consequences for supporting inclusive and sustainable institutions. This is particularly important in Tonga where many small communities are dispersed across many islands. If infrastructure is dispersed too widely, it is not possible to build up sufficient linkages to promote sustainable growth. On the other hand, if infrastructure is too concentrated to create growth hubs in the key centres, opportunities will be limited elsewhere.⁹³

Technological change is opening up opportunities for supporting smaller communities in more cost-effective ways that enhance inclusion and participation. Examples include the provision of distance education and health services through new communications technology, and the development of smaller scale alternative energy systems.

While traditional societies produced limited waste and pollution, most of which was bio-degradable, modern trade and consumption have given rise to vast amounts of waste. There is a serious lack of commitment to managing waste disposal, and opportunities for landfill are limited. Efficient management, minimization and recycling of waste are essential.⁹⁴

Tonga Strategic Development Framework 2015– 2025, Kingdom of Tonga, pp.76-77.

⁹³ Ibid, p.73.

⁹⁴ Ibid, p.77.

Urban Governance

Given the small size of Tonga and its limited resources, there is limited scope for a complex multi-tier system of governance from the national to local level. At the same time, however, some decentralization of government administration is necessary given the dispersed nature of the country and to ensure that the public has easy access to administrative services.

The government administration in Tonga is supported by a network of Town and District Officers across the Kingdom. The development of offices for Members of Parliament in their constituencies is further helping to improve the outreach of government to be more responsive to local needs. More still needs to be done to strengthen this and to ensure more inclusive access across the Kingdom. The size of Nuku'alofa is also raising questions about the best way of ensuring integrated management of the main urban centre.⁹⁵

Although there are older villages within Nuku'alofa with locally elected leaders or councils established to oversee the provision of certain services, the level of coordination with central government policies and programmes is not clear. At one point it was proposed that Nuku'alofa have its own Town Council, although it was not made clear how the government's Planning and Urban Management Division (PUMD) would coordinate or collaborate with the proposed Council. The Parliament did not endorse the Nuku'alofa Town Council in 2011, and hence it was not established.

Urban Economy

Tonga has a small land mass, but a large marine area. The economy is small with fragmented markets, diseconomies of scale and long distances from overseas markets which contribute to high costs. Economic activity is also at risk from severe natural events and climate change. There are also skills shortages in many areas, including management, problem solving and entrepreneurship, contributing to the cost of operations and low productivity. Tourism is proving to have some potential.

The extent of possible economic opportunities depends significantly on the human capacity, as well as the technology and infrastructure that can be mobilized to develop and use Tonga's limited resources. Efforts are being made to address the special needs of small businesses, and those on outer islands to ensure that all of the support to business development is not focused solely on business in Nuku'alofa.⁹⁶

Urban Environment and Climate Change

Many of Tonga's 176 islands are low lying, in particular the more heavily populated areas. This leaves Tonga very exposed to a range of natural hazards, including droughts, cyclones, localized flooding and sea level rise. These all pose a threat to the natural resource base which is limited to small islands, reefs and deep ocean.

Tropical Cyclone Ian in 2014, affected some 5,500 people (nearly 70 percent of the population of Ha'apai), destroying or severely damaged about 75 percent of their housing stock. Damages and losses are estimated at \$50 million or 11 percent of Tonga's GDP.⁹⁷

As a result of these risks from extreme events, Tonga ranks 171 out of 172 countries listed in the 2013 World Risk Index⁹⁸ which systematically considers a country's vulnerability, and its exposure to natural hazards such as earthquakes, storms, floods, droughts and sea level rise. Climate change will further exacerbate vulnerability, with cyclones, temporary and permanent flooding and more unpredictable rain fall expected to intensify.

Growth in the Nuku'alofa urban population has resulted in the subdivision of agricultural allotments on the outskirts of the city and settlement in swampy areas. A boom in housing construction has seen heavy demands on sand and gravel and the mass removal of mangroves, which removes the habitat

⁹⁶ Ibid, pp.61-62.

⁹⁷ World Bank, 2014. Building Back Better in Tonga after Cyclone Ian. <http://www.worldbank.org/en/results/2014/10/01/building-back-better-tonga-cyclone-ian>

⁹⁸ Germanwatch, 2013. 2013 World Risk Index http://www.worldriskreport.com/uploads/media/WorldRiskReport_2013_fact_sheet.pdf

⁹⁵ Ibid, p.71.

for juvenile fish and crustaceans, as well as natural protection from climate change impacts such as sea level rise, strong winds and storm surges; and increases soil and coastal erosion.

Policy Context

Policy Action on the National Level

The “Tonga Strategic Development Framework (TSDF) 2015-2025,”⁹⁹ sets out seven National Outcomes, most of which are relevant to sustainable urban development, as summarised below:

- a. a more inclusive, sustainable and dynamic knowledge-based economy
- b. a more inclusive, sustainable and balanced urban and rural development across island groups
- c. a more inclusive, sustainable and empowering human development with gender equality
- d. a more inclusive, sustainable and responsive good governance with law and order
- e. a more inclusive, sustainable and successful provision and maintenance of infrastructure and technology
- f. a more inclusive, sustainable and effective land administration, environment management, and resilience to climate and risk
- g. a more inclusive, sustainable and consistent advancement of our external interests, security and sovereignty

In support of these seven National Outcomes, there are twenty-nine Organizational Outcomes including:

- Closer public/private partnerships for economic growth
- Strengthened business enabling environment

- Appropriate decentralization of government administration with better scope for engagement with the public
- More reliable, safe and affordable energy services
- More reliable, safe and affordable transport services
- More reliable, safe and affordable information & communication technology (ICT) used in more innovative ways
- More reliable, safe and affordable buildings and other structures
- Improved land use planning, management and administration for private and public spaces
- Cleaner environment with improved waste recycling
- Improved resilience to extreme natural events and impact of climate change

The Government of Tonga established the Planning and Urban Management Division (PUMD) in the Ministry of Lands, Environment, Climate Change and Natural Resources in 2007. With ADB’s assistance, the PUMD was tasked to develop and implement an Urban Planning and Management System which included:

- Well-planned and sustainable urban development;
- A safe and efficient road system within Nuku’alofa;
- Preparation of planning legislation;
- Preparation of an urban integrated development plan (UIDP) to identify and prioritize development needs for the sector for 2009–2020; and
- A traffic management study for Nuku’alofa.¹⁰⁰

⁹⁹ Ministry of Finance and National Planning, 2015. Tonga Strategic Development Framework 2015– 2025, Kingdom of Tonga.

¹⁰⁰ Asian Development Bank, 2010, Technical Assistance Completion Report, Urban Planning and Management System.



Tapuhia rubbish dump, Tonga © DFAT Australia

The Government of Tonga also passed the National Spatial Planning and Management Act to be administered through the PUMD in 2012.

A summary of the principle objectives of the Act are:

- Land management;
- Land use consistent with environmental and cultural values;
- Plan urban structure;
- Secure environment;
- Protection of assets;
- Balance the present and future interests of all persons; and
- Enable public participation in planning

A National Spatial Planning Authority was established to administer this Act.

Further, when Tonga completed its review of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) Programme of Action in 2013, it highlighted the following priorities for the next five to ten years.

- Land for more people moving into the urban area;
- Environmental issues such as rising sea levels that were impacting the small-scale urban area;
- Ensuring housing and services for the urban area
- Promoting employment and economic activities to avoid the problem of urban poor; and
- Promoting Decentralization.

Many of the priorities outlined in the 2013 ICPD review response are being addressed through the PUMD and National Spatial Planning and Management Act. Meanwhile, the Strategic Development Framework does not make a clear reference to the priorities of the PUMD.

Land

TDSF 2015-2025 adopts as one of its Organizational Outcomes:

Improved land use planning, management and administration with stronger and appropriate enforcement which ensures the better provision of public spaces as well as private spaces, ensures more appropriate placement of infrastructure, better protects the environment and limits risks, so as to improve safety conditions both for communities and business, working in harmony with a better application of the traditional land management system.¹⁰¹

¹⁰¹ Ministry of Finance and National Planning, 2015, p.77.

Infrastructure and Basic Services

TDSF 2015-2025 recognizes energy as a fundamental requirement for developing a progressive dynamic economy, and a prerequisite for an improved quality of life; helping to improve access to clean water, effective education and health services, food security and communication, in urban and rural areas alike. It promotes universal access to modern energy sources, including decreased dependence on fossil fuels and increased utilization of feasible renewable energy technologies and improved energy efficiency.¹⁰²

It promotes accessible, safe and reliable transport services based on good infrastructure and competitive services; recognizing that transport, when designed to address the needs of vulnerable groups can help to improve their participation and inclusion.¹⁰³

Modern information and communication technology (ICT) is emphasized with particular importance, as it can make a major contribution to mitigating the difficulties of remoteness and distance; and provide accessibility communications formats that enhance the engagement of vulnerable and excluded groups. It can help improve knowledge, services delivery and trade. In times of disaster, reliable communications can play a critical role both before and after.¹⁰⁴

In addition, the Strategy promotes safe and appropriate construction technology which will help to lessen maintenance of structures, save on energy usage, and increase resilience to disasters.

Updated building codes, with stronger compliance and awareness, are also essential. More resilient and accessible building will help groups with special needs, as well as generally supporting more inclusive growth and development and quicker recovery after disasters.¹⁰⁵

¹⁰² Ibid, p.74.

¹⁰³ Ibid,.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid, pp.74-75.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid, p.75.

Climate Change Considerations

One of the seven goals of the TDSF 2015-2025 is to commit to “more inclusive, sustainable and effective land administration, environmental management, and resilience to climate and risk”, aiming to improve the quality of life. One of the Organizational Outcomes is “Improved resilience to extreme natural events and impact of climate change”, where it is stated:

We are one of the most vulnerable countries in the world with respect to natural disasters... Future climate change is only likely to make some of these events more serious. The potential for damage can be lessened by the application of better technologies, improved communications, more education on dealing with disaster and response awareness, and more appropriate infrastructure in addition to limiting building on more disaster-prone areas. Once a natural disaster has happened it is necessary to be able to move quickly into action to help communities avoid further death, ill health and damage. These services are particularly important in more vulnerable and isolated groups.¹⁰⁶

Climate change and environmental considerations have also been mainstreamed into all of the National Outcomes of TDSF 2015-2025.

Tonga has developed and adopted its National Climate Change Policy, which is consistent with TDSF 2015-2025, as well as the sustainable development goals. It provides a clear vision, goal, and objectives to direct responses to climate change and disaster risk reduction. The overall focus of the policy is to aim to “A Resilient Tonga”, in which urban issues might be addressed through resilience building actions at national, island, and community level. The “Joint National Action Plan 2 on Climate Change Adaptation and Disaster Risk Management 2018 – 2028,” (JNAP 2) aligns with this policy.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid, p.78.

Tuvalu

Background

Urbanization Trends

Tuvalu's national population growth has fluctuated widely over recent decades from a high of 7.2 percent in 2006 to a low of -1.2 percent in 2007. The main reason for this is the wide variation in international migration from year to year.¹⁰⁷ However, it is clear that the most significant population change over recent decades has been the increase in the population of Funafuti, the government and economic hub of Tuvalu; and the decline in the outer island's populations. Funafuti's increased share of the population came with independence and the separation of the Gilbert and Ellice Islands into Kiribati and Tuvalu, respectively, in 1976.

Following the 2012 Census, the population of the country was reported as 10,837 persons, of which 6,194 persons lived on the main island of Funafuti (an urban population of 57 percent). All of Tuvalu's population growth since 1973 has occurred in Funafuti, and there has been little or no growth in the other islands. In 1973, Funafuti had approximately 15 percent of the total population.¹⁰⁸ The second largest human settlement in Tuvalu is on the island of Vaitapu, with a stable population during the intercensal period between 2002 and 2012, of just over 1500 people and less than 1600 people.¹⁰⁹

Sectoral Challenges

Housing, Land and Informal Settlements

Development in Funafuti follows government leased areas, and with no spatial plan in place, development is largely unplanned.

Land scarcity is a major issue in Funafuti, with the influx of migrants from outer islands. With the absence of proper land boundary markers, there are also increasing incidences of land disputes.

Housing is limited in Funafuti, and currently there is a major shortage due to the continuous expansion of its population. With no national housing policy and a building code that is irrelevant to the context of Tuvalu, quality of housing and affordability are major issues. In some cases, housing conditions on rented properties under the private sector are very poor while the costs are very high. Key challenges for the Funafuti Island Kaupule (FIK) and central government are to establish a national building code that is applicable to the context of Tuvalu and to develop housing legislation that ensures that the conditions and prices of housing follow standard guidelines and regulations. The government also needs to provide affordable housing options for lower income groups.

Informal settlements in Funafuti is a critical issue that has been overlooked in national planning and development. In 2003, an ESCAP survey of 49 households living in informal settlements on Funafuti highlighted poor sanitation conditions, overcrowding and lack of incentive to improve their housing because of the lack of security of tenure. With increasing demand for land and shortage of housing in Funafuti, people living in informal settlements are more at risk of facing evictions or being homeless in the near future if nothing is done to protect these people. There is no legislation in place to protect informal settlers, and government has no social protection schemes in place to compensate for such situations. It is therefore critical that legislations for housing include people in informal settlements, and the building code ensures that basic health and sanitation services are provided for.¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁷ Government of Tuvalu, 2011, Tuvalu National Population Policy 2010-2015, Department of Planning and Budget, Ministry of Finance and Economic Development, p.19.

¹⁰⁸ Government of Tuvalu, 2011, p.36.

¹⁰⁹ UN-Habitat (2015), Vaitapu Urban Profile, p.5.

¹¹⁰ UN-Habitat (2015), Funafuti Urban Profile, p.5-6.

Infrastructure and Basic Services

In Funafuti, urban basic services are the responsibility of the central government, and while the FIK also shares some of these responsibilities it focuses specifically on the indigenous Funafuti communities. In Vaitupu, the Vaitupu Island Kaupule (local governing body) provides these services to all households.¹¹¹

Service provision such as water, waste and energy in Funafuti remains inadequate, although there has been marked improvement in accessibility over the past 15 years. Households still experience water shortage as water catchment facilities are inadequate for maximising water harvesting. Sanitation services are still a problem as septic tanks are not properly built, and untreated sewage waste is dumped on private lands. As the current dumpsite is being filled up there is a need for an additional solid waste disposal site, but there is a lack of land available. Meanwhile, the Tuvalu Electricity Authority provides electricity to 96 percent of Funafuti's households. Out of those without electricity, only 25 percent of households are from informal settlements.

The central government is responsible for building and maintenance of roads, marine port facilities and airports including schools and health facilities in Funafuti. As the main urban center, the government has heavily invested in infrastructure in Funafuti over the past 15 years. The key issue is the lack of public transport services. School and health facilities are accessible and free; however, the quality of services needs to be improved, as well as resources. Information, Communication and Technology (ICT) facilities which are provided by the Tuvalu Telecommunication Corporation need improvement in terms of costs and quality of services.¹¹²

Urban Governance

There are two layers of government in Tuvalu: the central Government and the Island Kaupule. The Kaupule, or local administration by elected island councils was established following the creation of the protectorate in 1892. Local governments were established on the eight inhabited islands by a 1966 ordinance that provided the framework for a policy aimed at financing local services at the island level. Funafuti's town council and the other seven island councils each consisted of six elected members, including a president. Under the Falekaupule Act of 1997, power was devolved from the central government to the island councils.

Funafuti is referred to as the urban area, but there is no focal point in government for Urban Development. The Department of Rural Development (DRD) which looks after all local governance and improving decentralization does not have a mandate for urban development. This is an issue that needs to be addressed because of urbanization problems. Other concerns are the demarcation in decision making roles at management and administrative levels within the Kaupule and Falekaupule. Further, there is a need to develop an Island Development Plan, and to improve the quality of service provided by the Kaupule.¹¹³

Urban Economy

Funafuti is the seat of central government and is the hub for outer islands. It is where businesses, financial institutions, public corporations, non-government organizations, seafaring agencies and other service providers are based. Nevertheless, unemployment is rising in Funafuti, as well as inequality between rich and poor. With no access to micro-financing, people who are facing hardships rely on family links to the outer islands and informal businesses to meet their financial needs.

¹¹¹ Ibid, p.6..

¹¹² Ibid, pp.4-5.

¹¹³ Ibid, p.4.

Expansion and further investment of private sector in Funafuti is affected by the competing use for lands, geographical setting, isolation and lack of resources. Commercial businesses are dependent on importation of goods, whereas local trade between outer islands and Funafuti are very weak. The main challenge for Funafuti is to strengthen inter-island trade which could reduce the high dependence on importation of goods and improve economic development locally. Furthermore, strengthening the local market base for local products could also assist the development of the informal and private sector.¹¹⁴

Urban Environment and Climate Change

Tuvalu, classified under Least Developing Country and the smallest of any independent state, faces current challenges such as rising average temperatures and tropical cyclones, as well as coastal erosion and sea level rise. Future climate issues include the increase of temperature and sea level rise, risk of coral bleaching, extreme rain events. Furthermore, the occurrence of ocean acidification and El Nino phenomenon are expected to continue.

Recent disasters such as the drought in 2011 and Cyclone Pam highlighted the vulnerability of the island in terms of water shortage, and disaster risk management procedures. There are major projects on climate change, biodiversity and disaster risk management that are being implemented to help Tuvalu adapt to these environmental and climate conditions.

However, there still remains limited and lack of financial, technical and planning capacities. Donor funding such as the Green Climate fund are difficult to access because of the complex requirements which Tuvalu could not comply with.¹¹⁵

The World Bank has estimated that building resilience against climate change will require Tuvalu to invest annually around 2% of GDP, to build the country's adaptive capacity by climate-proofing critical infrastructure, adopting better early-warning systems for all hazards, and enforcing policies and plans to inform decision-making.¹¹⁶

¹¹⁴ Ibid, p.5.

¹¹⁵ Ibid, p.6.

¹¹⁶ Government of Tuvalu, 2005, National Strategy for Sustainable Development 2005 – 2015, Economic Research and Policy Division, Ministry of Finance, Economic Planning and Industries, p. 6.



Local kids in Tuvalu © Bernhard Barth

Policy Context

Policy Action on the National Level

The urban policy framework is set out for Tuvalu in its National Strategy for Sustainable Development (NSSD) – Te Kakeega III (TKIII) 2005 – 2015 and the National Population Policy 2010-2015. The Government has clearly articulated the range of issues that it wishes to address with respect to the management of urban development on Funafuti, with a focus on improving housing standards and management of solid and liquid waste management. However, this has yet to be synthesised in a national policy statement, although the broad objectives were agreed at an “urban dialogue” in July 2010.

This urban dialogue, conducted by UN-Habitat and the Commonwealth Local Government Forum (CLGF) agreed to establish an “urban working committee” to address urbanization on Funafuti, develop a clear vision consistent with the national plan, review information gaps in the urban sector, encourage effective coordination between all levels of government and guide implementation of an urban management plan. The urban dialogue also agreed that a clear rationale on the importance of urban issues should be communicated to government and communities.

The NSSD has outer island and Falekaupule development as a key strategy. It notes that the Falekaupule Trust Fund was established to assist outer island development and identify strategies that will reverse the outward migration and falling output from the outer islands and ensure that the outer island economies are sustainable.¹¹⁷

Additionally, Tuvalu has developed urban profiles, including an overall national urban profile and urban profiles of Vaitupu and Funafuti Island.

The urban profiles provide a set of actions to assess urban needs and capacity issues at the city level. The formulation process employed a participatory approach where priorities were agreed upon through consultations.

Housing, Informal Settlements and Land

Under “Social Development,” the NSSD has housing as a key objective, including improving housing standards, the provision and availability of housing, reviewing land leases to afford greater security and “develop an urban management plan for Funafuti that offers land for residential development.”¹¹⁸

Infrastructure and Basic Services

The Government of Tuvalu’s National Population Policy has as its third goal to “improve the urban environment.” This goal was developed in response to the concentration of people around the airport and government offices on Funafuti (Fogafale Islet) with a population density of around 1,610 people per square kilometre and a range of environmental, waste management and sanitation issues.¹¹⁹

The NSSD also gives a high priority to management of the environment which includes to “develop and implement an urban and (sic) waste management plan for Funafuti.”¹²⁰

Climate Change Considerations

Recognizing that climate change “poses the most serious threat to the security and survival of Tuvalu”¹²¹, the NSSD has a chapter dedicated to climate change, and has mainstreamed climate change into each of its priority areas.

¹¹⁸ Government of Tuvalu, 2005, p.23.

¹¹⁹ Government of Tuvalu, 2011, Tuvalu National Population Policy 2010 – 2015, Department of Planning and Budget, Ministry of Finance and Economic Development, p.43.

¹²⁰ Government of Tuvalu, 2005, p.43.

¹²¹ Government of Tuvalu, 2005, p.5.

¹¹⁷ Government of Tuvalu, 2005, National Strategy for Sustainable Development 2005 – 2015, Economic Research and Policy Division, Ministry of Finance, Economic Planning and Industries, p.13.

The Tuvalu Government is the focal point of all national issues including climate change adaptation, whereas activities are undertaken at the Falekaupule level. The Tuvalu Climate Change Policy outlines seven priorities, two of which can be linked with urban policies: a) developing and maintaining infrastructures to withstand climate change impacts and projection and disaster risks; and b) planning for effective disaster preparedness, response and recovery.

The National Advisory Council on Climate Change (NACCC) advises Government on high-level policy responses to climate change through the Climate Change and Disaster Policy Unit (CDP), within the Office of the Prime Minister.

The integration of climate change resilience into national (and sector-specific) policies is the responsibility of the CDP.

Together with the Environment Department, the CDP coordinates projects that address physical responses to the impacts of climate on the environment. Te Kaniva, the Tuvalu Climate Change Policy and the accompanying National Strategic Action Plan on Climate Change and Disaster Risk Management, together with the National Communications and the National Adaptation Programmes of Action (NAPA) thoroughly spell out Tuvalu's vulnerability and have guided and instigated the implementation of climate change actions across the country. The NAPA specifically outlines urgent and immediate adaptation needs country-wide¹²².

Te Kaniva is scheduled for review, as is development of its medium- to long-term National Adaptation Plan under the NSSD to further strengthen Tuvalu's resilience to the impacts of climate change.



Filling of borrow pits in Funafuti, Tuvalu © Bernhard Barth

¹²² Government of Tuvalu, 2005, p.7.

Vanuatu

Background

Urbanization Trends

Vanuatu had a population of 272,459 persons as of 2016.¹²³ The urban population of 67,749 persons, situated in the capital of Port Vila and the secondary centre of Luganville, constituted 24.9 percent of the nationwide population.¹²⁴ The urban population had grown from only 25,870 in 1989.

However, as with other Pacific Island countries, if the census figures categorised the peri-urban areas around cities as “urban” then the urban growth rate surrounding Port Vila would be significantly higher. Taking these areas into consideration, Port Vila has trebled in size since the 1980s.¹²⁵

... the urban proportion has increased steadily and reached 56 percent of the total [Sanma] provincial population by 2009. This proportion would undoubtedly be higher if the peri-urban census units surrounding Port Vila were re-classified as urban.

Most of the people living in these areas commute to Port Vila for work and are effectively part of the urban economy.¹²⁶

Chung and Hill noted in 2002 that many of the settlements in the peri-urban areas of Port Vila are growing at more than twice the rate of the Port Vila urban area.¹²⁷

¹²³ Vanuatu National Statistics Office, Ministry of Finance and Economic Management, 2016. Post Cyclone Pam Mini-Census Report.

¹²⁴ Vanuatu National Statistics Office, Ministry of Finance and Economic Management, 2016. Post Cyclone Pam Mini-Census Report.

¹²⁵ Chung, M.& Hill, D. 2002, Urban informal settlements in Vanuatu: Challenge for equitable development, report prepared for Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat and UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, Pacific Operation Centre, p.4.

¹²⁶ Government of Vanuatu, 2011, National Population Policy 2011 – 2020, Department of Strategic Policy, Planning and Aid Coordination, Ministry of the Prime Minister, p.33.

¹²⁷ Chung & Hill, 2002, p.9.

Sectoral Challenges

Housing, Land and Informal Settlements

Under the current planning and regulatory environment, Port Vila is showing signs that it can no longer accommodate further population growth within its boundaries. Port Vila’s boundaries have largely been defined by government owned land, formerly designated by the colonial administration. The city has outgrown these old boundaries with the expansion of ‘squatter settlements’ in the peri-urban areas and other nearby villages such as Erakor, Eratap, Ifira, Mele and Pango, but which lie outside the city boundary. This situation exists largely because of the failure of the urban housing and land markets, evidenced by the shortage of affordable housing in the urban areas.

A large proportion of squatters are forced to live in sub-standard, unhealthy conditions, with a lack of basic services such as water supply, electricity for lighting, rubbish collection and public transport; as well as poor living conditions due to poor housing and unhealthy surroundings, particularly from poor drainage.¹²⁸ However, the government does not allow leases over government-owned land until plots are adequately serviced with water, electricity, drainage and sewage. As municipal councils have insufficient resources to provide these services, the process of legalising housing plot leases is too slow to keep up with demand.¹²⁹ As a result, people are trapped in their current conditions.

Uncertain land tenure contributes to the insecurity and other difficulties of squatters. Although Vanuatu law provides protection for tenants, these do not apply in this informal market.

¹²⁸ Ibid, p.vi.

¹²⁹ Ibid.

Housing conditions range from adequate to very poor. Most housing is self-built from whatever materials are available, mainly corrugated iron, wood, traditional thatch and bamboo, and recycled pieces of tin, plastic and wood. Affordable building materials are in short supply.¹³⁰

Infrastructure and Basic Services

In informal settlements, residents with metered supply sell water to their neighbours at an extremely high price. Most households can afford to use only one to two drums of this water per week, saving it for cooking and drinking, and bathing and washing clothes and food utensils in nearby rivers.¹³¹

Most households in the informal settlements depend on pit toilets: either a basic pit toilet, often an uncovered hole in the ground with some surround, or an improved pit toilet with pour-flush facility or ventilation. More than one quarter of households share toilet facilities.¹³²

Water pollution in Port Vila harbour and the lagoons is serious, with the probable cause being the lack of a sewerage system and poor management of many individual septic tank systems.¹³³

Many residents aspire to have electricity, mainly for lights, but very few houses are connected to the main supply. A very few have their own solar power. Few households have electrical appliances other than a small radio, and most cook with firewood or gas.¹³⁴

Urban Governance

The governance structure for Greater Port Vila is complex, crossing two local government jurisdictions, with large areas of informal settlements, customary land-ownership arrangements, and a number of NGO organizations engaged in municipal service provision in different areas across the city.

Port Vila Municipal Council (PVMC) holds jurisdiction over the formal municipal area of the city. Shefa Provincial Council governs the area of Efate Island outside of the municipality of Port Vila, including the peri-urban areas. Land outside of the PVMC (as well as Luganville) is governed under customary law by members of the Malvatumauri, or the National Council of Chiefs, with any modifications to customary land uses and management regimes requiring compensation. As a result, proposals to expand the Port Vila municipal boundary to integrate peri-urban areas remain highly contested by stakeholders, with the differing governance systems acting as a barrier to cross-border provision of services and strategic planning for ongoing urbanization.¹³⁵

National Government Agencies maintain oversight of both PVMC and Shefa Provincial Council, who both report to the Department of Local Authorities (DLA). Resources and staff expertise in areas such as urban planning, engineering, disaster risk reduction and construction is predominantly focused within these national institutions, which engage with and support the local authorities on an ad-hoc basis.

Urban Economy

Sustained growth in the economy for all sectors in Vanuatu is constrained by a very high cost structure. Electricity, telecommunications, indirect taxes and transport costs are all very high compared to other countries in the region. While wages are not high, productivity is low, resulting in a very high effective cost of labour.

¹³⁰ Ibid.,

¹³¹ Ibid.,

¹³² Ibid.,

¹³³ Government of Vanuatu, 2006, Priorities and Action Agenda 2006 – 2015, Department of Economic and Sector Planning, Ministry of Finance and Economic Management, p.30.

¹³⁴ Chung & Hill, 2002, p.vi.

¹³⁵ UN-Habitat and RMIT University, 2015. Climate Change Vulnerability Assessment for Greater Port Vila, pp.14-15.

These high costs constrain local as well as foreign investors and affect tourism and manufacturing. Secure access to land for development also remains an obstacle.¹³⁶

During the period of colonial administration, the migration of indigenous 'Ni-Vanuatu' people to the city was strictly controlled. The intervention of the Second World War brought changes in Vanuatu as it became a military base for Pacific operations which provided many opportunities for local people to gain employment and earn a cash income. This urban experience greatly influenced employment and mobility patterns after the war as well as undermining the attitude that local people did not belong in the city.¹³⁷

Access for local people to Port Vila became easier during the 1960's, and significant numbers started migrating to the city permanently in search of jobs.

After Independence in 1980, the growth of Port Vila accelerated. Public sector jobs expanded, and more of them went to Ni-Vanuatu citizens. Over the years, opportunities for formal education have widened, providing many more ni-Vanuatu with opportunities and aspirations for wage employment, which is still mostly located in the urban sector. Although the urban population has become much more heavily Ni-Vanuatu, most Ni-Vanuatu live in peri-urban areas and the informal settlements that dot the town and mark its fringes.¹³⁸

However, residents of informal settlements reported difficulty in meeting their basic needs for food, clothing and money because of insufficient incomes or jobs.

The livelihoods of roughly a quarter of Port Vila households are either dependent on or supplemented by direct production of goods. When broken down by product type, household-based income generation shows a high level of diversification in small-scale items. In addition to market-economy based livelihoods, subsistence products are an integral component of many Ni-Vanuatu's livelihoods. Even within the urban area of Port Vila, over 51 percent of households are estimated to be engaged in self-supply and consumption of livelihood products, according to the 2009 National Census.

Urban Environment and Climate Change

Vanuatu is an island highly subjected to geologic hazards, such as volcanic eruptions and earthquakes, being located in a seismically and volcanically active region. Additionally, it is highly vulnerable to other natural disasters such as cyclones, coastal flooding, river flooding and landslides. In this context, Vanuatu is one of the Pacific island most vulnerable to climate change, which impacts can greatly influence not only the environment but the economy and social aspects of the island.

According to a 2014 United Nations University report, Vanuatu was one of the countries at greatest risk¹³⁹ of natural disasters. The report highlights the vulnerability of urban areas around the world. Climate change will worsen a number of these climate-related risks, and introduce new hazards to Vanuatu through changes to variables such as extreme rainfall, temperatures, sea levels, and ocean temperatures and acidity.¹⁴⁰

In Vanuatu's case, the vulnerability of the urban population is heightened by the makeshift state of 27 percent of houses in the capital, most of which were destroyed by Cyclone Pam in March 2015. Constructing strong, resilient housing is too expensive and financial credit is unaffordable for many residents who live on low wages.

¹³⁶ Government of Vanuatu, 2006, p.16.

¹³⁷ Haberkorn, G. Port Vila: Transit Station or Final Stop? Recent Developments for Ni-Vanuatu Population Mobility. Pacific Research Monograph No. 21, National Centre for Development Studies, Australian National University, referenced in Chung & Hill, 2002, page 7.

¹³⁸ Chung & Hill, 2002, p.7.

¹³⁹ National Housing Commission, 2010, p.10.

¹⁴⁰ UN-Habitat and RMIT University, 2015.

In addition, informal settlements often occupy marginal land, including river banks and flood-plains, some of which are regularly flooded even in moderately heavy rain.¹⁴¹

Given the widespread destruction of most housing in the informal settlements around Port Vila during extreme weather events, substantial assistance will be necessary to address urban shelter and settlement recovery. The emphasis in disaster management has been on making communities aware of the need for preparedness and promoting the renewal of traditional knowledge of mitigation and preparedness.¹⁴²

Policy Context

Policy Action on the National Level

The Government of Vanuatu's "Priorities and Action Agenda, 2006 – 2015" (PAA), sets out national development priorities for the period and identified a number of cross-cutting issues including urbanization as well as increasing incidence of hardship and poverty. Under 'Environment' the PAA noted:

Increasing pressure on both urban infrastructure and the environment in Port Vila and Luganville. Water pollution in Port Vila Harbour and the lagoons is serious. The probable cause of the high pollution is the lack of a sewerage system and poor management of many individual septic tank systems. The urban environment of Port Vila is particularly important for sustaining the growth of tourism. A new Port Vila development plan would assist in defining how public amenity can be maintained or improved and the attractiveness of the town enhanced for both residents and tourists.¹⁴³

There have been a range of initiatives addressing various aspects of urbanization in Vanuatu, including a national workshop on urbanization held in 2009. The Workshop comprising Provincial, Municipal and National government representatives agreed to the following broad vision:

To sustainably manage and develop urban areas in Vanuatu that support economic development, health, environment and welfare of all the people of Vanuatu.

The workshop went on to note priority areas for action including economic growth; improving living conditions (includes education, formal and informal housing, urban planning, sanitation and health, environment); risk management (includes: climate change, coastal erosion etc.); governance and partnership (includes: migration, strategic planning, central and local government, chiefs, community groups, NGOs, donors, enforcement, monitoring, coordination and working together).

The National Population Policy 2011 – 2020 also clearly identifies urbanization as a priority as it has as one of its goals:

Manage rural-urban migration and urbanization¹⁴⁴

The policy went on to identify a number of strategies to address the above goal including:

- Review and implement the land use planning policy;
- Complete and implement a national urbanization policy; and
- Implement government's decentralization policy.

However, to date this policy has not been accorded a high priority by the government. Although there have been many calls for the development of a comprehensive urbanization policy in Vanuatu through various national policy statements over the last six years or more, little progress has been made.

¹⁴¹ Chung & Hill, 2002, p.vi.

¹⁴² Government of Vanuatu, 2006, p.31

¹⁴³ Government of Vanuatu, 2006, p.28.

¹⁴⁴ Government of Vanuatu, 2011, p.46.

The challenges facing Port Vila in particular are exacerbated by the fact that most of the urban growth has occurred outside of the official city boundary and include a number of surrounding villages as well as the peri-urban custom owned land, over which central government and local government appear to have little control.

Housing, Informal Settlements and Land

A number of initiatives related to land and housing have been taken in recent years, including the 2012 Land Use Planning and Zoning Policy:

The policy aims to guide land use planning by setting priorities and outlining legislative and institutional settings to enable land use planning that encourages the best current use of our land resources and at the same time allowing for future generations equitably benefit from the same resources.¹⁴⁵

The Policy calls for “the development of a national urban policy and guidelines.”¹⁴⁶ Also in the policy development pipeline was a National Subdivision Policy through the Ministry of Lands.

The National Housing Corporation developed a Corporate Plan for the period of 2011-2015 which aimed to address the development of affordable housing for the low and middle-income population.¹⁴⁷ The National Housing Corporation also aims to “Develop flexible and innovative programmes and projects to achieve Government housing policies, with a focus on improving the living conditions of people in informal settlements and rural villages, and on diversifying income opportunities.”¹⁴⁸

¹⁴⁵ Government of Vanuatu, 2012, Vanuatu Land Use Planning and Zoning Policy, Land Use policy and zoning thematic working group, Physical Planning Unit, Ministry of Internal Affairs, Page 2.

¹⁴⁶ Government of Vanuatu, 2012, p.4.

¹⁴⁷ National Housing Corporation, 2010, Strategic Plan 2011 – 2015, Vanuatu, p.3.

¹⁴⁸ National Housing Corporation, 2010, p.10.

Climate Change Considerations

Vanuatu established a National Advisory Board for Climate Change and Disaster Risk Reduction, with the aim of improving coordination and governance. It focuses on implementing national-level urban policies through coastal developments, with an emphasis on land use planning, identification and planning of highly vulnerable areas, including possible community relocation. Moreover, it further addresses freshwater resources management to urban/rural areas and food security. A comprehensive Climate Change Vulnerability Assessment has been conducted for Greater Port Vila, providing a baseline for understanding social, economic and environmental vulnerabilities, as well as the range of possible impacts of climate change to the city in the short and longer term. The study was used extensively in the recovery from Cyclone Pam, and is a first step towards the development of an urban resilience and climate adaptation action plan for the Greater Port Vila Area. Among the recommendations was the need for cross-boundary engagement to address climate change issues; requiring management structures and formal frameworks that enable planning across municipal-provincial boundaries, through political engagement between local governments, as well as at the ward/community levels.¹⁴⁹



Informal settlement, Vanuatu © Bernhard Barth

¹⁴⁹ UN-Habitat and RMIT University, 2015, p.45.



4

SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

CHAPTER 4 SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The State of National Urban Policy Development in the Pacific

Table 2 below provides an overview of the state of NUPs according to the analysis of each country in Chapter 3.

During the period 2008-2010, Papua New Guinea was the first Pacific Island country to develop a comprehensive national urban policy, namely, the National Urbanisation Policy 2010 to 2030. PNG, along with Samoa which adopted the Samoa National Urban Policy in 2013, are the only Pacific Island countries to have fully embarked on NUP implementation. Solomon Islands has formulated its National Urban Policy (2016-2035), which aims to “Enhance and promote prosperous, peaceful cities whilst reducing poverty and building urban resilience at the national level.” This policy is yet to be endorsed by cabinet. Urban Profiles were developed on the national level as well as for Honiara, Gizo and Auki, Kirakira and Tulagi. Kiribati is likewise in the Formulation phase, having developed a National Urban Policy which is currently in final draft stage. The vision of the NUP is “A sustainable urban environment that supports a prosperous, healthier and happier people”.

Whilst Fiji has not yet started the formulation of an explicit National Urban Policy, there has been substantial progress in urban diagnosis as three Urban Profiles were developed for the Cities of Suva, Nadi and Lautoka, as well as on the national level. There has been a long interest in enhanced urban planning in the new millennium, but nothing has been formalized. A National Housing Policy was developed in 2011 to support the provision of affordable and decent housing for all, and together with the Informal Settlements Upgrading Strategy, is being actively implemented.

The urban policy framework in other Pacific Island countries are established through multiple developmental and sectoral policies that address urban-related issues. The urban policy framework is set out for Tuvalu in its National Strategy for Sustainable Development (NSSD) – Te Kakeega III (TKIII) 2005 – 2015 and the National Population Policy 2010-2015. Tuvalu has developed Urban Profiles for the two main towns on Funafuti and Vaitupu Atolls, establishing a diagnosis of urban needs and capacity issues at the city level. The Government of Vanuatu’s Priorities and Action Agenda, 2006 – 2015 (PAA) identifies several cross-cutting issues including urbanization, and the National Population Policy 2011 – 2020 also clearly identifies urbanization as a priority. Like Tuvalu, there are urban profiles for Port Vila, Luganville, Lenakel, and a National Urban profile.

In Tonga, the Planning and Urban Management Division (PUMD) in the Ministry of Lands, Environment, Climate Change and Natural Resources was tasked to develop and implement an Urban Planning and Management System, as well as to administer the National Spatial Planning and Management Act. Tonga is hence in the feasibility stage, where there may be benefit in identifying key urban issues and drivers and making a case for the development of a National Urban Policy.

At a regional level, progress is mixed but encouraging. Some Pacific Island countries have formulated plans such as PNG and Samoa but have not made substantial gains in implementation. Others have various draft urban policies such as Fiji and made some gains in the key urban centres such as Suva. Importantly, some have out in place key institutions and legislation to address urbanization such as PUMA in Samoa and the PUMD in Tonga.

Table 2: *State of National Urban Policy Development in the Pacific*

Country	Urban-Related Policies on the National Level	NUP Phase
Papua New Guinea	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Urban Profiles for Port Moresby, and on the national level ■ National Informal Settlements Upgrading Strategy (2016, to be endorsed) ■ National Urbanisation Policy 2010 to 2030 	Implementation
Samoa	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Planning and Urban Management Act (2004) ■ Samoa National Urban Policy (2013) ■ Apia Spatial Plan (2014) ■ City Development Strategy (Draft 2015) ■ Apia Waterfront Plan 2016 ■ Urban Design Standards 2018 ■ National Infrastructure Strategic Plan (2011) 	Implementation
Fiji	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Urban Policy Action Plan (2004-2006) ■ Urban Profiles were developed for the Cities of Suva, Nadi and Lautoka, national level ■ National Housing Policy (2011) ■ Urban NAP (as part of the National Adaptation Plan) 	Implementation
Solomon Islands	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Urban Profiles: national level, Honiara, Gizo, Tulagi, Kirakira and Auki ■ National Urban Policy (2016-2035) 	Formulation
Kiribati	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Kiribati Development Plan ■ National Urban Policy (final draft) 	Formulation
Tuvalu	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ National Strategy for Sustainable Development (NSSD) – Te Kakeega III (TKIII) 2005 – 2015 ■ National Population Policy 2010-2015 ■ Urban profiles: Vaitupu and Funafuti 	Diagnosis

Vanuatu	■	Priorities and Action Agenda, 2006 – 2015	Diagnosis
	■	National Population Policy 2011 – 2020	
	■	2012 Land Use Planning and Zoning Policy	
	■	Urban profiles: Port Vila, Luganville, Lenakel	
Tonga	■	Tonga Strategic Development Framework (TSDF) 2015-2025	Feasibility
	■	Urban Planning and Management System	
	■	National Spatial Planning and Management Act (2012)	

Drivers for National Urban Policy Development in the Pacific

Based on an analysis of the country-by-country review in Chapter 3, a review of the main drivers of National Urban Policies in the Pacific Region is provided in the sections below. Many are cross-cutting, highlighting the need for coordination and integration across important Pacific urban themes. Figure 4 at the end of the section provides a visual overview of this summary by country.

Peace and Conflict

A high rate of youth unemployment and an increasing economic gap between the rich and the poor, coupled with low policing capacity and poor resources, has given rise to urban safety and security concerns in towns and cities in the Pacific. Some examples of conflict include:

- Rapid peri-urban growth in Honiara, Solomon Islands and unchecked informal settlement expansion with an influx of from other islands into Guadalcanal Province creating ethnic tensions, eventually leading to the overthrow of the government in June 2000.
- Rapid growth in Port Moresby, Lae and Madang in Papua New Guinea created ethnic rivalry and urban crime.

- Riots in Nuku’alofa, Tonga in November 2006.

This has wider repercussions for the local and national economies, investment and the social well-being of urban communities. Urban security and safety are integral to achieving sustainable urban development.¹⁵⁰

As such, urban safety has been a major driver for urban policy change in the Pacific. In Papua New Guinea, the development of the National Urbanization Policy was triggered by symptoms of social disorder exacerbated by rapid urbanization such as crime, ethnic conflict and a general breakdown of law and order. Increase in crime was also one of the issues that triggered the Government of Samoa to address the urban growth challenges in Apia in 2001.

With crime and ethnic conflict directly associated with urban growth, improving urban safety is one of the objectives of Goal 6: Enhanced Urban Governance, Capacity and Safety in the Solomon Islands National Urban Policy. One of the actions proposed to this end is to establish police and security services at the city and urban levels, and to provide financing and support to community policing.

¹⁵⁰ Solomon Islands National Urban Policy Framework (2016-2035), p.44.

Economic Development

There is increasing realization that towns and cities are engine for economic growth. They provide greater social and economic opportunities for the people than rural areas. However, rapid migration of people to urban areas without jobs, housing, land and services can create a level of urban poverty which can effectively undermine development.

In many urban centres in the Pacific region, rapid urban population growth outstrips job creation through the formal sector, leading to unemployment and increasing urban poverty.¹⁵¹ Local authorities receive internal revenue from formal economic activities in towns, but these funds are insufficient to provide capital works and maintain quality services to urban residents. Employment creation is most dominant in the urban informal sector, providing job opportunities for people without a formal education and linking the rural and urban economies through food production, remittances and circular migration.

Therefore, as a matter of policy, the informal sector should be supported as an important source of livelihood in urban areas.¹⁵² In Papua New Guinea, the Informal Sector Control and Development Act aims to regulate and promote the growth of the informal sector. The Solomon Islands National Urban Policy ensures support to the informal sector in a controlled way, by setting land aside for market vendors, and ensuring hygiene and safety are maintained with minimal control. In Vanuatu, where a high priority is placed on economic development in national development policy, urban economy may serve as an entry point for the development of a National Urban Policy.

National Spatial Planning and System of Cities

An ongoing driver of change in Pacific cities has arisen from colonial administrations and early settlement patterns.

Where ports, international airports and government administrations have been established, cities have developed because of employment opportunities in industry, administrative bureaucracies and related service industries. At times, the response to urbanization by governments has been informed, in part at least, by the misconception that Pacific people are essentially rural or outer islanders and only reluctantly migrated to the city, or were part of an “undesirable trend that needed reversing.”¹⁵³ The response in the early years involved either limiting rural to urban migration, or forcing or providing incentives for people to return to rural or outer island villages.

Since the turn of the 21st Century, the positive impact of urbanization has gradually become embraced with multiple Pacific countries having identified urbanization as a priority in their national development plans. Alongside this trend awareness has grown that urban centres and provincial towns do not function in isolation; and that they have economic, social, physical and cultural linkages with the rural areas surrounding them and other urban centres. In other words, developmental decisions affecting one urban centre need to be considered in light of the development strategies of all regions and their centres. Equally, development efforts of regional towns and centres need to consider their interrelationship with the rural areas they interact with. Consequently, the concept of urban systems has been emphasized in urbanization strategies and policies in the Pacific.

A National Urban Policy can serve as a tool to promote strengthened urban, peri-urban, and rural links through integrated territorial development and a longer-term, national-level vision of urban development priorities. In Papua New Guinea, the development of a hierarchy of cities is prioritized in the National Urbanization Policy to address issues of population and employment.

¹⁵¹ UN-Habitat – Solomon Islands : National Urban Profile 2012

¹⁵² ADB – Solomon Islands country partnership strategy: Urban Sector Assessment – Issue paper for stakeholder consultation, Honiara 13 Oct 2015

¹⁵³ Vanuatu National Statistics Office, Ministry of Finance and Economic Management, 2016. Post Cyclone Pam Mini-Census Report.

Overcrowding in South Tarawa, Kiribati and the inability of basic infrastructure to meet demand provoked the government of Kiribati to investigate the establishment of alternative urban growth centres. The Solomon Islands National Urban Policy also aims to achieve more balanced urbanization and to promote rural-urban linkages.

Clarity on Governance and Legislation



Funafuti, Tuvalu © Bernhard Barth

A recurring theme in Pacific Island countries has been the ambiguity and confusion over the roles and mandates of national, state, and local government actors in delivering services at the local level. If urbanization is to be harnessed for its potential to deliver growth and improved livelihoods for urban residents, cities and local governments need to be positioned to exploit that potential. A National Urban Policy Framework involving provincial and local governments will provide a platform for achieving this higher level of coordination.

Where there are weak linkages between central, provincial, local government and traditional land owners, villages or local communities, poor coordination as well as lack of understanding of

overall urban development goals and objectives is inevitable. At worst, this manifests through obstructive strategies on the part of landowners, conflicting objectives amongst urban stakeholders and/or inter-agency rivalry particularly with respect to the administration of the peri-urban zone that lies on the borders of provincial, city and town administrations.

Several local governments have noted that although they may have communication with line Ministries, there was often poor coordination between the Ministries with whom they were dealing and a lack of efficient administration or poor understanding of relevant policy. Some local government representatives noted that it was the elected representatives that had primary responsibility for driving urban planning and yet they lacked an adequate understanding of urban policy and planning issues. Local governments have, at times, decided to take their own initiatives and have developed relationships with donors, the private sector and individual investors to further their urban management objectives.

It is clear from the above country-by-country review and from discussions with both central, provincial and local government representatives that urban planning poses major challenges. There are a wide range of agencies involved in planning and delivering services, whether physical infrastructure services such as water, electricity and sanitation or social services through education and health facilities. There is on the one hand a lack of a clear framework within which this array of agencies can act to address pressing urban development concerns, and on the other hand an overall lack of coordination amongst the key service delivery agencies within most countries. Most importantly, local and provincial governments on the whole lacked capacity to tackle complex urban planning issues and there was a clear disconnect with central government policy and programmes.

A number of country representatives pointed out that where governments had strong rural development

policies or programmes, then this had provided a good framework within which to engage with rural stakeholders and provided the means by which agencies could coordinate.

There is a great need, therefore, to ensure that all countries have 'strong' urban frameworks in order to promote the coordination of policies and services, engage with stakeholders, particularly local government, and promote urbanization planning priorities with the wider community.

While the Pacific Urban Agenda provides a broader regional 'policy framework', the development and implementation of a National Urban Policy provides the opportunity to strengthen multi-level governance, presenting a framework for collaborative and coordinated institutional arrangements between all levels of government - promoting linkages between sectoral policies, as well as between national, regional and local governments and policies, therefore enhancing both vertical and horizontal coordination. For example, The Samoa National Urban Policy was developed to provide a holistic and integrated framework to coordinate the myriad of urban sectoral policies established under the Planning and Urban Management act, as well as planning across infrastructure and service providers.

Disaster Recovery, Security, Risk Resilience and Reduction

The United Nations University ranked Vanuatu, Solomon Islands, Tonga and Papua New Guinea amongst the top ten countries at most risk to extreme natural events (earthquakes, tsunamis, cyclones) in the world¹⁵⁴. Additionally, as elaborated in Chapter 1, climate change presents the Pacific Islands with unique challenges.

In informal settlements in particular, the poor quality of housing and the lack of basic services (poor solid waste and sanitation services, poor access to potable

water as well as under provision of key social services such as shelters and health services) are central issues not only because of overcrowding, but also because they are often built in the most vulnerable areas to flooding or coastal inundation. Weather-related extreme events such as flooding, cyclone and tsunamis also have substantial impact on livelihoods in vulnerable urban poor communities, as subsistence products are an integral component of many livelihoods. In this context, urban food security is important.

Extreme events and crises in the Pacific over recent years have provoked policy change. The Government of Vanuatu has undertaken a major rebuilding programme of housing and informal settlements in its capital city following the devastation brought by Cyclone Pam. Such events drive further change in cities as governments and donors commence rebuilding programmes. Flooding in Solomon Islands in 2014, which affected the urban poor communities of Honiara, has paved the way for climate change mainstreaming into the National Urban Policy.

The development of a National Urban Policy provides a multi-stakeholder platform for the identification of issues related to disaster risk reduction and urban resilience, promoting an inclusive approach that considers populations such as those within the informal sector that traditionally may have been excluded from the policy process. It can also support multi-sectoral coordination for addressing them in a way that increases efficiency and maximizes co-benefits, and provides an opportunity for alignment with climate change, disaster risk reduction and other environmental policies and initiatives.

As elaborated under each of the countries in Chapter 3, all countries have taken steps towards improving climate resilience, disaster risk reduction and overall security. For example, in Papua New Guinea, the National Urban Profile emphasizes the need for spatial planning for devising infrastructural and transportation systems, as a means of minimizing impacts of climate change.

¹⁵⁴ United Nations University, 2014, World Risk Report, Institute for Environment and Human Society

The Samoa Planning and Urban Management Act aims to improve climate resilience and disaster risk reduction by mainstreaming existing data and climate projections into urban land use plans. In the Solomon Islands, climate change considerations have been mainstreamed into the National Urban Policy through a multi-stakeholder consultative process. Meanwhile in Tonga and Tuvalu, National Urban Policy development can serve as an entry point to enhance alignment between urban policy and climate change policies such as the Joint National Action Plan on Climate Change Adaptation and Disaster Risk Management 2010 – 2015 (Tonga), and Te Kaniva, the Tuvalu Climate Change Policy (Tuvalu).

Housing and Informal Settlements Upgrading

It is conservatively estimated that 800,000 to 1 million Pacific urban residents live in some type of informal settlements, with all the major Pacific towns and cities—especially the Melanesian capitals of Honiara, Port Moresby, Port Vila, and Suva—having squatter and informal settlements that house 15 to 50 percent of their total urban population. These settlements including slums cannot be separated from the urbanization of poverty, as they are symptomatic of the underlying economic and social malaise that has been embedded through poor governance and ineffective institutions and policies, the ultimate result of this being an urban underprivileged class.¹⁵⁵

Urban poverty often stands neglected in policy-making in the region, given the historical levels of rural poverty. This bias persists even today in many countries, which look at urban poverty as a marginal issue.¹⁵⁶

Many informal settlements develop in land adjacent to urban centres, which are in customary land ownership.

The government often has little or no jurisdiction over customary land, unless the landowners have entered into an agreement through a formal lease with the government for use of the land. This results in limited capacity of municipal governments to provide infrastructure and urban services, and a reluctance to plan on customary or ‘private’ family/communal lands.

A National Urban Policy can serve to change the official attitude towards informal businesses and settlements from neglect (illegal and undesirable) to recognition and policy support (NUP Guiding Framework). It can facilitate a spatial approach that supports mechanisms that integrate peri-urban informal settlements into the urban fabric, and that provide a basis for upgrading. In addition, it can serve to enhance multi-sectoral, multi-stakeholder coordination to address customary land issues, and infrastructure and service provision, and to integrate with climate change and disaster risk reduction considerations into settlements upgrading.

The Urban Profiles of Papua New Guinea prioritize making formal housing affordable to all, especially the poor, and ensuring that land and finance are readily available for informal settlement upgrading. One of the goals of the Solomon Islands National Urban Policy is to improve the quality of settlements and housing, including to “ensure access for all to adequate, safe and affordable housing, infrastructure and basic services” and “to upgrade all informal settlements through an upgrading scheme approach”. Fiji has been actively implementing its National Housing Policy, as well as its Informal Settlements Upgrading Strategy. In Vanuatu, the development of a National Urban Policy can serve to align urban policy with the National Housing Corporation’s goal to “Develop flexible and innovative programmes and projects to achieve Government housing policies, with a focus on improving the living conditions of people in informal settlements and rural villages”.

¹⁵⁵ Prasad, B., Singh, R., Swami, N., 2014, Urbanization and Economic Growth: An Empirical Study of Pacific Island Economies, School of Economic Working Paper No.1. University of the South Pacific.

¹⁵⁶ United Nations Human Settlements Programme, 2013, Addressing Urban Poverty, Inequality and Vulnerability in a Warming World, Asia-Pacific Issue Brief on Urbanization and Climate Change No. 1, p.4.



Informal settlement in Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea © Bernhard Barth

Urban Planning and Management Practices

Land management issues play a critical role in urban development in the Pacific region. While there is typically a shortage of developable land in urban centres, the capacity to make land available for development is hindered by institutional and regulatory barriers. For example, customary land is often only alienable through long and complex procedures. The limited supply of state land hinders the provision of adequate (served) and affordable housing.¹⁵⁷

Towns and cities suffer from poor physical planning, even within municipal jurisdictions - as evidenced by the lack of a land use policy or plans and strategies to effectively address the growing planning issues including transportation and road networks, failing infrastructure, an absence of green and recreational spaces and poor housing standards. Planning is often done in a piece-meal manner with little or no connection to other sectorial plans or consultation with service providers and communities.¹⁵⁸



Port Vila, Vanuatu © UN-Habitat

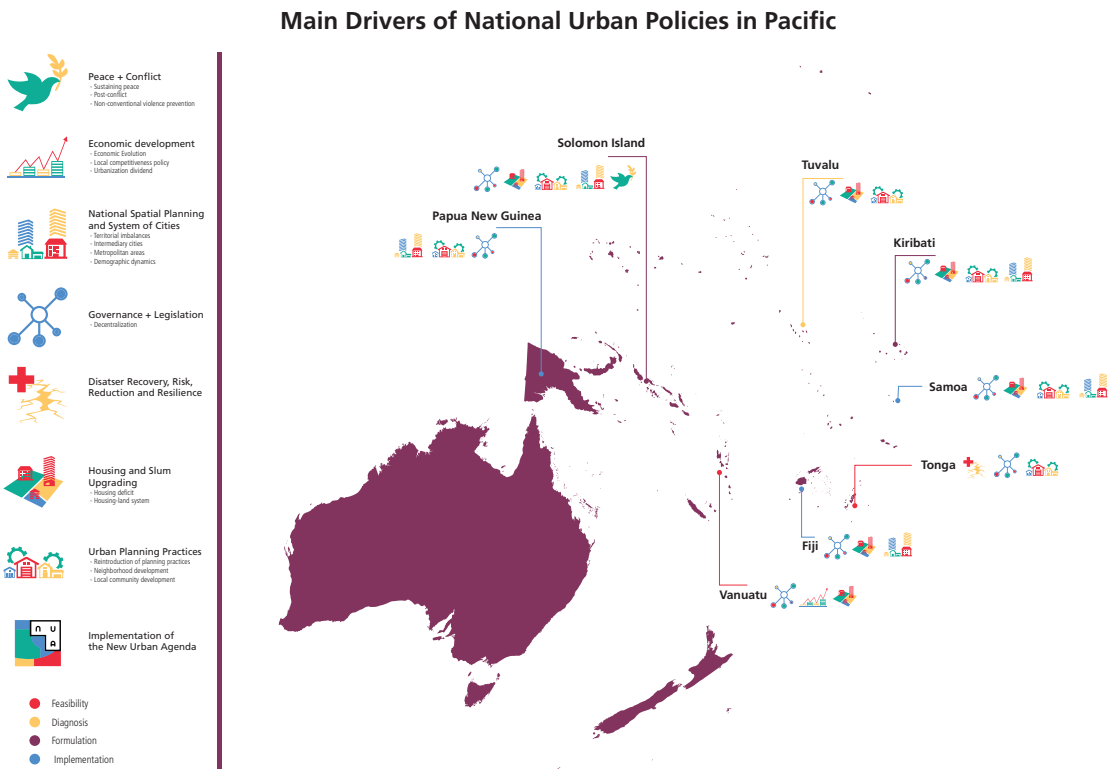
¹⁵⁷ Solomon Islands National Urban Policy Framework (2016-2035), p.23.

¹⁵⁸ Ibid.,

A National Urban Policy can serve as a tool to improve land administration and strengthen planning capacity, as well as to develop inclusive planning frameworks between government agencies, service providers and communities (including customary and urban land owners).¹⁵⁹ Integrated urban planning is highlighted in the existing National Urban(ization)

Policies of Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands and Kiribati. Riots in Nuku'alofa, Tonga in November 2006 and the consequent destruction of much of the city centre created an opportunity for the government to redesign the city and introduce more effective planning mechanisms under the Urban Planning and Management System.

Figure 4. *Main Drivers of National Urban Policies by Country*



Possible Next Steps for National Urban Policy Development in the Pacific

The list below proposes possible next steps for National Urban Policy development based on the UN-Habitat National Urban Policy process. It has been tailored to an extent to the Pacific regional

context but allows countries the flexibility to select the aspects that are most applicable to their context/ need/ circumstances.

For a detailed description of the process, refer to National Urban Policy: A Guiding Framework.¹⁶⁰

¹⁵⁹ Ibid.,

¹⁶⁰ National Urban Policy: A Guiding Framework <https://unhabitat.org/books/national-urban-policy-a-guiding-framework/>

Feasibility Phase (Tonga)

- Determine the “drivers” (priority urban issues) which will serve to set the strategic direction, as well as to identify “champions” (an individual, group of individuals or an organization of influence) that will actively work to increase political will and drive the National Urban Policy process.
- Identify key facts and figures (urban issues, relevant stakeholders, institutions and national, sectoral and sub-national urban policies, strategies and frameworks).
- Based on the above factors, “Make a Case” for National Urban Policy development.
- Promote National Urban Policy development as a clear priority within national development policy and strategy development.
- Identify the Core Team, and formulate a Stakeholder Reference Group (a smaller group of key stakeholders to consult throughout the process) for National Urban Policy formulation.

Diagnosis Phase (Vanuatu and Tuvalu)

- Promote greater investment in developing robust city-wide data, including on peri-urban settlements (those areas that are settled that lie between usually local government and provincial government boundaries) and ensure that National Statistics Offices generate accurate data through national census questionnaires on urban populations that include peri-urban settlements.
- Promote an understanding of evidence-based policy and means to engage urban communities in policy development as the primary beneficiaries of urban policy, recognising that community interests are at the heart of urban policy development.

- Diagnose urban issues through a participatory process (see: National Urban Policy: Framework for a Rapid Diagnostic¹⁶¹).
- Translate the priority urban issues into goals and objectives of the National Urban Policy.
- Identify key stakeholders (institutions), and conduct a stakeholder (and institutional) mapping and analysis.
- Identify cross-cutting issues (e.g. gender, climate change) that could be mainstreamed into policy formulation.
- Formulate a National Urban Policy “Discussion Paper” based on the above.

Formulation Phase (Solomon Islands, Kiribati)

- Align national policy targets with international and regional frameworks, as well as review and reporting requirements as far as possible.
- Evaluate different policy options to assess which actions are best suited for the context in order to achieve the policy goals.
- Once the policy options are selected, develop a Policy Proposal including a policy summary, goals, task breakdown, budget, timelines and stakeholder roles.
- Continue to strengthen consensus for the Policy Proposal once it has been formulated. Promote understanding of the role of a National Urban Policy with stakeholders (especially central, provincial, and local government and traditional land owners as well as local community stakeholders).
- Conduct a capacity gap assessment to identify the financial, human and institutional capacity gaps in implementing the policy.

¹⁶¹ National Urban Policy: Framework for a Rapid Diagnostic
<https://unhabitat.org/national-urban-policy-framework-for-a-rapid-diagnostic/>

Implementation Phase (Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Fiji)

- Conduct an Implementation Analysis to understand the legislative and administrative landscape in which the National Urban Policy will be implemented, and the commitment needed.
- Formulate detailed Implementation Work Plans for each of the policy options, clearly defining the role of stakeholders (particularly local, provincial governments and the community) as partners in the implementation process, including timelines, and ensuring that a strong monitoring and evaluation framework is in place.
- Strengthen vertical coordination between central and local government to address policy priorities.
- Promote horizontal integration of urban development issues across sectors.
- Strengthen financial and human resources of local government.
- Review national urban policies, in particular implicit¹⁶² national urban policies if they adequately capture the multisectoral approach needed to address urbanization challenges.



Apia, Samoa © Bernhard Barth

¹⁶² An Explicit NUP is observed where a policy has a title of “National Urban Policy” or a variant such as “National Urbanization Policy” or “National Urban Strategy” or “National Urban Development Strategy”, while an Implicit NUP is a policy form in which many elements of a NUP exist within multiple urban-related policies and strategies, but they are not yet brought together as an explicit NUP

Monitoring and Evaluation (All countries, in all phases)

- Analyze good practices for Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) and formulate an M&E Plan both for the process of National Urban Policy development, and for the outcomes of the policy- including clear indicators for measuring goals and objectives, along with baselines, targets and interim milestones
- Conduct monitoring continuously throughout the policy (development) process, and standalone evaluations at key junctures of the process, allowing time for the results of policy implementation to become apparent.
- Create feedback mechanisms to inform future policy cycles with the results of M&E (e.g. establishing clear progress indicators, and regular meetings with reference group and key stakeholders)
- Institutionalize periodic evaluation and review of policy impacts, with feed-in of learnings into subsequent policy processes.
- Receive feedback from relevant government institutions and other stakeholders in preparing evaluation reports.
- “Urban Policies” may not always be the terminology used in the Pacific. However, the National Urban Policy process can provide a platform for the discussion of shrinking urban areas and provide a more detailed analysis of rural-urban linkages (including the roles of cities for rural development, promotion of growth centres in outer islands/remote provinces).
- Priority issues such as climate change and security (such as urban food, land and housing) can be mainstreamed across National Urban Policies. Potentially, this facilitates funding of urban priority projects through different funding windows (e.g. climate change) and thematic entry points.
- National Urban Policies should speak to the principle of “leaving no one behind”, including gender mainstreaming and social inclusion more generally, ensuring that people in vulnerable situations benefit from the policy and its implementation, including from a spatial perspective.
- Ensure there is adequate public awareness and participation with the communities understanding why the need for National Urban Policies and why the need for good urban planning and management. This is critical given issues such as planning and the notion of ‘public interest’ is new in the Pacific and not well understood by many stakeholders.

Additional Considerations for National Urban Policy Development

Moreover, the following points were highlighted during the Special Session on National Urban Policies at PUF5:

- National Urban Policy implementation is not (entirely) dependent on policy endorsement. The process of National Urban Policy development can generate projects and programmes, as well as stakeholder engagement.



Rainwater harvesting in South Tarawa, Kiribati © Bernhard Barth / UN-Habitat



5

CONCLUSION

CHAPTER 5 CONCLUSION

Developing national-level policies to address pressing urban issues such as population, land management, social protection and inclusivity, environmental management, service provision and employment is a relatively new policy task in the Pacific. The range of issues and stakeholders makes the policy-making process complex and at times actors will find coordination time consuming and consensus-building particularly demanding, even when the overarching goal for policy development has been agreed upon. However, as demonstrated throughout this report, rapid urbanization in the region, the limited availability of land, the challenge of providing housing and infrastructure in urban areas as well as environmental concerns and climate change vulnerability create a great need for such a policy.

In the Pacific context, this will require robust and integrated national policy as well as strengthened capacity at the level of provincial and local government administrations. It also requires community awareness of the issues and why urban planning and management is needed. The development and implementation of National Urban Policies provides the opportunity for Governments to take a participatory and integrated approach to addressing complex urban issues and charting the way forward for sustainable and inclusive urbanization in the Pacific. This publication has provided an overview of country-level processes and outcomes and introduced some of the tools used; and may thus help to advance the New Urban Agenda in the Pacific in line with the outcome document of the Pacific Urban Forum.



6

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7

ANNEX

ANNEX 1 DECLARATION OF THE FIFTH PACIFIC URBAN FORUM

MAKING PACIFIC CITIES AND HUMAN SETTLEMENTS PROSPEROUS, INCLUSIVE, SAFE, RESILIENT AND SUSTAINABLE

NADI, REPUBLIC OF FIJI, 3 JULY 2019

We, the participants of the Fifth Pacific Urban Forum (PUF5) held in Nadi, Republic of Fiji, from 1-3 July 2019, representing national, sub-national and local governments, academia, professionals, international and regional organisations, civil society, urban poor, women, youth organisations and other stakeholders, thanking the Government of Fiji for hosting and the co-organisers for convening PUF5;

A. Past progress and agreements guiding our 5th Pacific Urban Forum (PUF) engagement:

1. Recalling that the Pacific Urban Agenda (PUA) was developed in 2015, with discussions starting at the First Pacific Urban Forum (PUF) in 2003, which was revisited at successive PUFs in 2007 and 2011 and further refined and strengthened at the Fourth PUF in 2015 with the adoption of four thematic priority pillars with corresponding actions;
2. Recognising that since the Fourth PUF, significant multilateral agreements on sustainable development have been made, particularly in 2015 with the 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development, the Paris Agreement on Climate Change, and the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, and that these agreements set universally applicable frameworks and goals to tackle global challenges, including urbanization;
3. Recognising that the global issue of urbanization was reinforced in 2016 with the adoption of the New Urban Agenda, which affirms and acknowledges that urbanization is an accelerator for sustainable development, and called for a commitment to promote inclusive decision-making, planning and follow-up processes (para 41) and for new forms of partnerships between governments at all levels and civil society (para 92);
4. Recalling the Kuala Lumpur Declaration on Cities 2030, made at the Ninth World Urban Forum (WUF9) in 2018, which encouraged and called for the formulation of New Urban Agenda implementation frameworks at all levels, the creation and consolidation of inclusive platforms and collaborative agendas;
5. Further recalling the Ministerial Statement signed by heads of Pacific Island delegations present at WUF9, stressing the need to remobilise and reinvigorate the Pacific region's attention to urban matters, in line with the Framework for Pacific Regionalism, and for efforts to strengthen policy and implementation mechanisms for the PUA;
6. Recognising Small Island Development State (SIDS) specific frameworks such as the Small Island Developing States Accelerated Modalities of Action (SAMOA) Pathway, which agreed on accelerated modalities of action for the resilience and sustainable development of SIDS that face similar development challenges;

7. Recalling regional frameworks such as the Framework for Resilient Development in the Pacific and reiterating, as recognised in the Boe Declaration, that climate change is the single greatest threat to the livelihood, security and wellbeing of Pacific people, including urban inhabitants;
8. Noting that a PUF preparatory meeting was convened by the Commonwealth Local Government Forum in December 2018 and that partners called for stronger actions to be taken to implement the four pillars of the PUA: social equity; environment, resilience and urbanization; urban economy and urban governance, but also including urban infrastructure as an additional key element.

B. Outcomes from our engagement at PUF5

9. Recognise that urbanization is a powerful force for sustainable development and that the Pacific's urban transformation requires an urgent response;
10. Re-emphasise that climate change is a crisis for the Pacific region and the world, representing a significant threat for sustainable development, and that reducing the vulnerability and contribution of Pacific cities and human settlements to climate change and natural hazards calls for a reconsideration of the way cities are planned and transformed and the way infrastructure is developed;
11. Emphasise that urbanization is a pressing concern for the region and requires a regional response as, like other issues such as climate change and migration, the issue has transboundary implications, and that in the coming decade Pacific urban populations, including a burgeoning youth population, will outnumber rural populations;
12. Commit to ensuring social equity and the "right to the city" through urban development, recognising the positive role women, youth and all people play in the co-creation of inclusive, liveable and prosperous cities;
13. Re-emphasise commitments made in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (particularly Sustainable Development Goal 11), the New Urban Agenda (para 31) for adequate housing, and the PUA for upscaling the provision of affordable and adequate housing, improving access to housing and land, and settlement upgrading;
14. Acknowledge that sustainable urbanization for the Pacific is based on a system of cities approach that promotes balanced territorial development and positive connectivity between islands, rural centres, intermediary and primary cities;
15. Remain concerned that accelerated urban growth is leading to growing informal settlements in urban and peri-urban areas with often extremely poor housing conditions, lack of access to infrastructure and basic urban services, and precarious informal employment;
16. Recognise that access to land and land governance significantly impact urbanization and that the lack thereof fundamentally hampers the way cities and towns in the region can grow. Land and planning legislation, urban data, and the capacities of urban professionals such as planners and land management specialists have a particular role to play in unlocking the sustainable development potential in the region;

17. Reaffirm that an integrated approach to urban planning includes a consideration of diverse, appropriate and accessible housing options, a mix of land uses and incomes, inclusive public spaces, sustainable urban design, safety measures and the integration of land markets;
18. Recognise the use of local materials and appropriate building technologies as an essential component of developing adequate, safe and resilient housing;
19. Acknowledge that while all Pacific Island Countries are different and that the diversity of our islands is to be respected, we face similar challenges arising from rapid urbanization and that this similarity provides an opportunity to address urbanization in a coordinated and integrated regional manner;
20. Respect that existing structures, agreements and frameworks under the Framework for Pacific Regionalism, such as the Framework for Resilient Development in the Pacific, the Boe Declaration, the SAMOA Pathway, the Ocean Pathway and the Voluntary National Review mechanisms under the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, particularly under Sustainable Development Goal 11, including its positive interlinkages with the urban dimensions of all other Sustainable Development Goals, provide a platform to highlight urbanization issues and to promote broader discussions;
21. Acknowledge that the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat (PIFS) is well placed to coordinate any diagnosis of current regional Pacific governance architecture that seeks to harmonise and elevate efforts to address urbanization in the Pacific in a coherent and coordinated manner, and that PIFS is equally well placed to support the monitoring, reporting and evaluation processes of such a governance structure as well as the implementation of the Pacific Urban Agenda;
22. Advocate that effective urbanization responses will be made stronger by drawing upon the expertise of a diverse range of stakeholders to build a “coalition of the willing”¹⁶ and that forming action orientated partnerships at all levels should be considered;
23. Emphasise the role of Pacific communities as active and meaningful partners in setting the development agenda in their villages and human settlements, as well as in local level planning and national approaches to urbanization;
24. Acknowledge the need for infrastructure to include resilient, sustainable and inclusive design principles, and local knowledge, including nature-based solutions, to avoid costs to future generations;
25. Highlight that fostering a sense of belonging in cities, including investing in inclusive public spaces for gathering, such as markets, securing land tenure and appreciating the interaction between the urban and traditional settlements, assist in building the social fabric of a city, which complements approaches to building urban resilience.


C. Recommendations: Based on the aforementioned outcomes, we the participants:

26. Advocate for a Pacific vision of sustainable urbanization whereby urban areas are prosperous, inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable, and that accord to Pacific history, values and context;
27. Call for the integration of traditional knowledge, structures and practices into codes, policies, planning and institutional structures;
28. Encourage all Pacific countries to develop national level planning for urbanization through national sustainable development plans, urban and housing policies and sector plans so as to effectively harness the positive gains that urbanization offers for the benefit of future generations;
29. Recommend that urban development planning and budgeting incorporate the four pillars of the PUA (social equity; environment, resilience and urbanization; urban economy; and urban governance), with additional consideration also being given to urban infrastructure, to achieve sustainable urban development;
30. Recommend meaningful multi-stakeholder engagement, including women, youth, people with disabilities and those in vulnerable situations, so as to leave no one behind;
31. Call for a stronger evidence base and use of evidence, including innovative forms of data collection and analysis, in order to make effective policy, planning and investment decisions;
32. Recommend that the current regional institutional and governance architecture and frameworks are strengthened to elevate and accelerate efforts to address urbanization;
33. Emphasise the need for increased, coherent investment and financing for sustainable urban development at regional, country and local levels to tackle the major urban challenges at scale;
34. Call on our international partners, particularly UN-Habitat and ESCAP, to ensure that the progress in implementing the PUA, and the commitments made at PUF5, are reflected and followed-up at occasions such as the Seventh session of the Asia-Pacific Urban Forum to be held in Penang, Malaysia, and in the Tenth session of the World Urban Forum to be held in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates;
35. Request the incoming Chair of the Pacific Islands Forum to table this Declaration at the upcoming Pacific Island Forum Leaders meeting in Tuvalu and for the Forum to favourably consider its recommendations for action within appropriate regional architecture and processes;
36. Commit to building and strengthening our partnership to accelerate efforts, and to increase resources and commitments towards the implementation of this Declaration and the Pacific Urban Agenda.



Participants of the Pacific Urban Forum, Nadi, Fiji, July 2019 © UN-Habitat





Pacific Islands are very diverse regarding urbanization and given the relatively small size of the countries, their cities are even smaller yet. However, many countries in the region have made significant strides over the last decade to address urbanization challenges and to harness its opportunities.

In order to take stock and gain a better understanding of urban policies in the Pacific, this document provides a policy overview, focussing on eight Pacific countries. The document concludes with a set of recommendations.

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