

Pacific Regional Local Government Symposium 2010

Working Group Session 2B - 14 October 2010

Managing Urbanisation in the Pacific

Chair:	Mr. Lopati Samasoni, Director of Rural Development, Ministry of Home Affairs, Tuvalu
Facilitator:	Ms Sarah Mecartney, UN-HABITAT Pacific Programme Manager, UN-Habitat
Partners:	<p>UN-HABITAT is the mandated UN agency to promote socially and environmentally sustainable human settlements and adequate shelter for all. www.fukuoka.unhabitat.org</p> <p>UNESCAP – Pacific Office in cooperation with partners is a regional hub for sharing ideas, policy options, practices and south-south cooperation to achieve inclusive and sustainable development of urban areas in Asia and the Pacific. www.unescap.org/epoc</p>
Participants	Representatives of local and provincial governments (Kiribati, PNG, Samoa, Tuvalu, Vanuatu), national government agencies, academia and research institutes (University of the South Pacific, Pacific Island Institute of Public Policy), development partners (AusAID, World Bank), programme and project managers and consultants (ADB)
Session Summary:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The Chair welcomed participants and introduced the facilitator. ▪ The facilitator provided an overview of the session and encouraged participants to share their experiences and knowledge of urban programmes and initiatives in their respective countries and cities ▪ Plenary discussion allowed animated dialogue with a number of participants sharing experiences of relationships between local government and national agencies, the importance of linkages with rural settlements for a genuine integrated approach to achieving sustainable development and the need to focus on urban centres as drivers of economic growth. ▪ The Chair concluded the session.
Context:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A rapidly urbanising Pacific <p>Since 2000, the rate of population growth in Pacific Island countries has been averaging around 2% per annum. If the population of PNG is excluded (6.2 million persons) from the Pacific island total population of 9.1 million persons, then Pacific urbanisation increases to 46%. Thus, nearly 1 in every 2 Pacific islanders live in urban areas. Sub-regionally, 66% of Micronesians and 42% of Polynesians live in cities and towns, both of which are experiencing rapid growth rates of around 3 to 4%. Most Pacific island urban residents are found in Melanesia (1.55 million out of 2.18 million) while the largest proportion of urban populations is found in Micronesia.</p> ▪ The Pacific Urban Agenda <p>The Pacific Urban Agenda (PUA) was developed in 2003 and included in the Pacific Islands Forum's Pacific Plan (Initiative 13.5) in 2005. PUA2 (2007) was adopted and supported by renewed national government commitments to its implementation, as well as increased development partner support from a range of stakeholders including the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat, Secretariat of the Pacific Community and bilateral agencies such as New Zealand Aid Programme and AusAID.</p> <p>At a further regional workshop of Pacific planners convened in October 2007, PUA2 was refined into a Regional Action Framework for implementation over 5 years, supported by a coalition of international development partners: UN-Habitat, ESCAP, Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat (PIFS), Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC) and Commonwealth Local Government Forum (CLGF). In May 2010, UNESCAP resolution 66/7 recommitted the agency to supporting Pacific Governments address the challenges of better managing urban growth.</p>

- **Third PUA Workshop**
To be convened in 2011 for exchange of experience and capacity building requirements

Outcomes:

1. How do we manage cities and towns in Pacific atolls and islands?

Recognition for the efforts of various agencies and towns in the region to address urban challenges. There was consensus on the urgent need for greater resources to be devoted to adequately manage the unique challenges found in the Pacific. Highlighted concerns included population densities, planning, housing, services and infrastructure, increasingly youthful populations and a need to recognize urban residents as communities.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- a) Clear identification of priority areas that compel practical (financed) responses that are community focused.
- b) Political commitment that is backed by resources and encourage innovative approaches to urban strategies.
- c) A change of mind-set to accepting our ever increasing urbanising islands with more inclusive and participatory approaches to planning

2. What are the best approaches to managing urban development in the Pacific?

Promotion of urbanisation as a driver of economic growth and development prospects, developing appropriate data to help guide planning and policy development and designing practical, targeted plans that can be effectively implemented.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- a) Participants emphasized a need to recognize the role of 'ruralisation' to adequately address the challenges of managing urban growth and to acknowledge role of culture and traditional landowning groups.
- b) Strengthening existing partnerships in-country, increasing efforts to liaise with national agencies responsible for managing urbanisation to better influence national development strategies and to harness resources and capacity building opportunities.
- c) Inclusion of communities and the private sector and city-to-city sharing of best practice.

3. What value can regional cooperation add to managing urbanisation?

Acknowledgement of the efforts of CLGF Pacific, UNESCAP, UN-HABITAT, PIFS, SPC, AusAID, New Zealand Aid Programme and others, in the region for supporting Pacific Island government commitment to the Pacific Urban Agenda. Regional cooperation can encourage the desire to collaborate, promote sharing of best practices and peer exchange and support countries to place urban priorities more firmly on the agenda.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- a) Effectively utilise urban fora for best practice and experience exchange. To focus efforts of PUA3 on emerging points, that is: (i) encourage national, regional and international partners to include local government in policy development and strategy implementation; (ii) housing; and (iii) Services and infrastructure (water and sanitation in particular). Cross-cutting issues such as climate change and gender must be taken into consideration with particular attention to vulnerable groups.
- b) Research and knowledge creation/management to better understand the urban situation supported by national urban fora.
- c) Support articles 25 and 26 of the Port Vila Declaration on Building Vibrant & Resilient Local Economies & Communities in the Pacific

Attachments: Powerpoint Presentation (833kb), CLGF Port Vila Declaration