Resolution

1. The country representatives, experts and partners attending the Fourth Pacific Urban Forum, held in Nadi, Fiji on 25-27 March 2015,

2. Recalling that the Pacific Urban Agenda was first developed in 2003 and later endorsed by the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific in 2004 and by the Pacific Island Forum Leaders in 2005,

3. Further recalling that the Pacific Urban Agenda was refined in 2007 and 2011 with a regional action framework to guide and support local and national level Pacific island governments, institutions and development partners to address priority urban management issues and challenges,

4. Recognising that since 2011 many Pacific Island governments, local authorities, development partners and other stakeholders have been addressing the improved management of urbanisation within the region and that significant achievements have been made. However, momentum needs to be maintained, particularly to raise awareness of the need to address pressing urbanization concerns, especially integrated planning and strengthening rural-urban linkages, peri-urban management, and ensuring that cities and local authorities are inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable,

5. Endorse the key messages and recommendations of the Forum Outcomes Document (A New Urban Agenda for the Pacific) whereby:

   a. Social equity is to be enhanced: Housing and settlement upgrading programmes and improved access to serviced land; building on the approaches developed in the region and global good practices. Build stronger partnerships across sectors including more comprehensive partnerships between national and regional housing and WASH programmes particularly in the peri-urban interface.

   b. Environment, Resilience and Urbanization are more comprehensively addressed: Upscale and embark on integrated climate change vulnerability, multi-hazard, pollution

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1 Fiji, Kiribati, Papua New Guinea and the Autonomous Region of Bougainville, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu and Vanuatu. Given the devastation that Tropical Cyclone Pam had cased, only small delegations from Tuvalu and Vanuatu participated. The PUF therefore agreed to bring the forum to the two countries. Consultations were held on 2 June 2015 in Port Vila, Vanuatu and on 30 June 2015 in Funafuti, Tuvalu where this document was endorsed and minor amendments proposed focusing on the importance of culture and tradition and the need for inter-island transport to strengthen rural-urban linkages. These comments have been incorporated.
and greenhouse gas assessments of towns and cities, develop corresponding action plans which take into consideration traditional resilience practices and mainstream climate change adaptation, resilience and low emission into urban planning and management and accelerate implementation. Further, climate change adaptation, resilience building and low emission concerns of Pacific towns and cities are to be more strongly integrated in global climate change negotiations.

c. The Urban Economy is to be harnessed: Build a stronger understanding of the importance of strong urban economies for national economic development and highlight the importance of urban markets for the rural sector as well as outer islands and regional integration in the Pacific and strengthen local economic development approaches that are based on Pacific opportunities. Further empower local governments to direct local economic development, infrastructure investments (national and community works) and enhance municipal finance.

d. Urban Governance is to be strengthened: Embark on the development of National Urban or Urbanization Policies where these have not yet been developed and periodically review such policies in line with the above highlighted priorities and in closer consultations with national development and strategic planning processes. Ensure that towns and cities have an enabling local strategic policy and legislative framework, capacitated institutions, leaders and professionals.

6. Commit to promote the key messages and recommendations at the local, national and regional level to ensure that Pacific Island urban actions are strongly integrated in the Post-2015 development agenda.

7. Urge the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat), the Commonwealth Local Government Forum (CLGF) and other partners to continue to focus attention on the issue of strengthening urban governance, planning and management capacities at all levels, taking into account the key messages of the Forum, in the planning and implementation of their programme activities and partnership building.

8. Stress the importance of establishing suitable financing mechanisms to support the strengthening of urban planning and management capacities at all levels, including through the localization of resources alongside localizing the SDGs, and recommend this issue to be considered at the Third International Conference on Financing for Development in July 2015 in Addis Ababa².

9. Agree to inform the Sixth Asia Pacific Urban Forum³, the Asia-Pacific Preparatory Committee meeting for Habitat III in October 2015 as well as the global-road map and the Habitat III⁴ conference itself, and the Commonwealth Local Government Conference in Gaborone in June 2015⁵ about the results of this Pacific Urban Forum, and resolve to circulate this Outcome Statement to Pacific governments, the Pacific Island Forum Secretariat and other relevant fora to strengthen efforts for formulating and improving strategic urban frameworks in the region.

10. Call on the Pacific Island Forum Secretariat as the lead agency for the new Framework for

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⁴ http://unhabitat.org/habitat-iii/
⁵ http://www.clgc2015.org/
Pacific Regionalism\(^6\) and other members of the Council of Regional Organizations in the Pacific to facilitate greater understanding by Pacific Leaders of and recognition for sustainable urbanisation,

11. Support the establishment of an effective Pacific Regional Small Island Developing States Coalition on Sustainable Urbanisation guided by UN-Habitat and CLGF Pacific to support advocacy efforts by countries and strengthen development partner coordination,


13. Request the Government of Samoa to submit this resolution to the seventy-first session of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific in May 2015.

Pacific Urban Forum 2015

“Towards a New Urban Agenda:
Harnessing Opportunities in a Post-2015 Environment”

25-27 March 2015

Tanoa International Hotel, Nadi, Fiji

Outcomes Document

Summary

The Fourth Pacific Urban Forum, convened by the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) and Commonwealth Local Government Forum (CLGF) Pacific, from 25 to 27 March 2015 focused on sustainable urbanisation in the Pacific with a view to develop a New Urban Agenda for the region. The Forum provided a multi-stakeholder platform for discussion and debate on the opportunities that may be provided by well-managed urbanisation and the inter-linkages between the social, economic and environmental dimensions of equitable sustainable development. The Forum brought together urban policy makers and practitioners from national and local government, development partners, non-governmental organisations, academia, and the private sector. The participation throughout the three day event from eight Pacific small island developing states (SIDS) facilitated exchange of regional, national and local experiences, practices and strategies that demonstrated the transformative potential of urbanisation and identified key policy recommendations that could advance the urban agenda in the Pacific and shape the post-2015 development agenda, as well as Habitat III.

An overview of the thematic issues, key messages, solutions and recommendations emerging from the discussions over the three-day Forum is as follows:

Major Highlights and Key Recommendations

The specific needs of the Pacific in the process of urbanization must be recognized and adequately addressed in the post-2015 development agenda. Key priorities include: upgrading of informal settlements and access to safe and affordable housing for all, land, provision of basic infrastructure and services, building urban resilience to climate risks and other shocks, enhancing rural-urban linkages, addressing gender inequalities, job creation and strengthening capacity for urban governance, planning, management, and data collection and analysis. Continuing the “business as usual” approach to the development of cities and urban areas will not be enough to manage the pressures of rapid urban growth.

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7 Fiji, Kiribati, Papua New Guinea and the Autonomous Region of Bougainville, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu and Vanuatu. Given the devastation that Tropical Cyclone Pam had cased, only small delegations from Tuvalu and Vanuatu participated. The PUF therefore agreed to bring the forum to the two countries. Consultations were held on 2 June 2015 in Port Vila, Vanuatu and on 30 June 2015 in Funafuti, Tuvalu where this document was endorsed and minor amendments proposed focusing on the importance of culture and tradition and the need for inter-island transport to strengthen rural-urban linkages. These comments have been incorporated.
At the Global level

- There was significant support for a stand-alone Sustainable Urban Development Goal (SDG) for sustainable cities and human settlements that promotes inclusive, accessible, productive and environmentally sustainable and resilient urban areas, including for the following reasons:
  - A stand-alone goal would help drive and orient investment by governments at all levels towards sustainable urbanization in the Pacific,
  - Ensuring sound sustainable urban and regional development will accelerate progress towards achieving all the SDGs,
  - The role of local government in planning, implementing and monitoring the implementation of the SDGs at the local level will be essential to ensure that they can be achieved across the region,
  - Emphasis should be placed on communicating the SDGs and raising awareness of the importance of implementation at all levels, to ensure full understanding and ownership by Governments at all levels and stakeholders.
  - There was also support for engaging in the roadmap towards Habitat III and global climate change negotiations with emphasis on local resilience.

At the Regional level

- The SAMOA Pathway and Framework for Pacific Regionalism should be used as entry points for enhancing policy engagement at the highest level on the importance of addressing critical Pacific urban challenges.
- The New Pacific Urban Agenda is to be anchored with the members of the Council of Regional Organizations in the Pacific (CROPs) and development partners to demonstrate support for the urban sector in the regional development agenda and provide assistance in implementation.
- UN-Habitat, CLGF and other regional stakeholders such as the Pacific Island Forum Secretariat should create opportunities for key urban stakeholders dealing with urban planning and management to exchange knowledge, find solutions and test innovative approaches. A review of existing knowledge management systems and the possible establishment of a knowledge repository will be explored.
- Sharing of good practices within the region has been and will continue to be important in helping Pacific cities and towns learn from others’ successes and failures and take advantage of the opportunities associated with building sustainable cities.

At the National and Local levels

- Policy-makers and urban practitioners at the local and national level should actively promote and take into account the inter-linkages between the social, economic and
environmental dimensions of sustainable urbanization in the formulation of their policies, plans and programmes.

- An approach based on data and local knowledge and broad participation to urban planning and design is necessary to build ownership, enhance the strategic implementation of urban (and related) policies and to help Governments and other stakeholders to measure progress.

- Urban planning and management should go beyond urban boundaries to improve rural-urban connectivity through investments in better infrastructure for transportation, including inter-island transport, and communication, developing supply chains to create market opportunities for rural producers, and balancing the needs and priorities of people living in urban and rural areas.

- There is a need for wholly new approaches to planning and urban management moving away from regulation and control towards flexible planning instruments that allow authorities to address the real challenges and opportunities posed by urbanisation.

- Effective governance, policy-making and planning mechanisms are required to efficiently manage rapid urban growth. An integrated and multi-sectoral planning and management approach needs to be adopted at all levels.

- Mechanisms for promoting inclusive participation of all individuals in decision-making processes of national and local, and where applicable traditional, governments should be strengthened. More effort needs to be made to encourage the participation of traditional leaders, women, young people and people with disabilities in decision-making on urban development initiatives.

- Integrated and balanced approaches that engage all key stakeholders in order to produce scalable solutions, innovations, and multi-stakeholder partnerships to foster sustainable urbanisation will be required. To this end, every effort should be made by national governments, local authorities and development partners to ensure that this outcomes document contributes to global, regional, national and local policy-making.

“A New Urban Agenda for the Pacific”

Urbanisation Trends in the Pacific

Managing urbanisation and the consequences of urban growth continues to be one of the major cross-sector challenges facing Pacific Island governments and their communities. Urbanization in the Pacific region is a microcosm of broader global urbanization trends in three main respects, namely, (i) the proportion of the population residing in urban areas continues to increase at a rapid pace, (ii) there are strong links between well managed urbanization and improved economic growth prospects, and (iii) symptoms of urban hardship and poverty continue to be most visible in all Pacific towns and cities.

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The number of Pacific islanders living in urban areas continues to increase. Using the most recent Pacific Island Countries (PIC) population censuses, the average rate of urbanization in the Pacific Region is 47%. Urban growth rates have now outpaced rural population growth everywhere in the Pacific. Exceptions are in French Polynesia, and also in the case of FSM, Palau, Niue and the Cook Islands, where there have been urban population declines due to growing overseas emigration.

During the next few decades, the most dramatic population shifts will occur in Melanesia. With an urban growth rate averaging just below 3%, Melanesia has the highest urban growth rate in contrast to the rates seen in Micronesia (1.4%) and Polynesia (0.9%). PNG is unique amongst its neighbours, having a total urban population of approximately 800,000 to 1.1 million persons, which is higher than the total sub-regional populations of Polynesia (649,600 persons) and Micronesia (524,900 persons). At current rates, urban populations throughout Melanesia are expected to double in one generation (25 years), with the Solomon Islands and Vanuatu likely to achieve this in 16 and 17 years respectively.

Rates of urban growth exceed national population growth rates in most Pacific countries. This is most visible in Melanesia where moderate to high urban growth rates in the order of 2% to 4% exceed national population rates by 100% and more. Peri-urban areas in the Pacific’s capital cities record even higher rates of population growth rates (e.g. Greater Honiara in the Solomon Islands 16% per annum according to 2009 census), demanding attention from provincial governments and for increased efforts for integrated regional planning to improve strategic (infrastructure and service) investments to capitalise on opportunities. In fact, PICs continue to underestimate their urban populations due to outdated urban-rural political or local government boundaries that do not take into account growing peri-urban populations.

The growth of squatter and informal settlements has become a dominant form of urban growth in the Pacific region with recognition of the communities’ urban permanence. Recent estimates are that at least a third of total urban populations live in informal housing and under-serviced settlements, with the largest numbers of settlements located in the Melanesian capitals, namely, Port Moresby, Suva, Port Vila and Honiara.

Increases in population density are another immediately visible consequence of high urban population growth in the Pacific region. Urban population densities in excess of 5,000 - 10,000 people/square kilometres that are usually associated with urban poverty in Africa and Asia are becoming quite widespread. To cite an example, in Kiribati, the South Tarawa urban area there were 40,311 people living on 15.76 km2 of land in 2005, translating into a population density of 2,558/km2. If one focuses just on the islet of Betio in South Tarawa, the country’s main commercial area and port, its resident population of 12,509 was living on a land area of 1.2 km2 (2.4 long and 0.5 wide), giving a density of 10,400 people per square kilometre – twice that of Hong Kong and Singapore. To cite a Melanesian example, in Vanuatu’s main town, Port Vila, there was a population density of 1,240/km2 in 1999. By 2007, when the urban population was estimated to be around 41,000, this density would have increased to 1,730/km2.

The growth in urban populations in the Pacific that has been seen over the last century is a consequence both of demographic change and, substantial and continuous migration from rural to urban areas. These trends are expected to continue well into the next century.
Challenges and Opportunities for Sustainable Urbanisation in the Pacific

Social Equity

Well-planned city and town service extensions can foster a number of positive outcomes, such as, an adequately planned future supply of land with affordable development and housing solutions; reduced risk of spontaneous informal settlements, enhance equitable access to basic services and harness the opportunities of urban growth.

Securing land tenure, increasing the deliverability of water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) services, and providing access to affordable housing are among the priorities of individuals residing in informal settlements in order to ensure these communities are included in urban development processes. There is a need for greater ‘pro-poor’ emphasis in existing urban planning policies and legal frameworks. Traditional governance arrangements and non-mainstream solutions also needed to be explored in how they can best support urban service and infrastructure delivery.

Improved access to land and housing for urban residents especially those in settlements should be through participatory consultation, use of existing local stakeholder networks, greater advocacy and awareness programs, a mandate of support from higher political levels including development partners, and the mobilization of financial resources, including for post project maintenance.

Issues of gender, youth, disability and livelihoods need to be specifically addressed in urban development initiatives so wider social equity concerns are given ‘equal’ and more balanced consideration in programme and project conceptualization, design and implementation.

Key Actions

- Upscaling and embarking on housing and settlement upgrading programmes and improving access to serviced land and housing, including through planned city extensions; building on the approaches developed in the region and global best practices.

- Building stronger partnerships across sectors including more comprehensive partnerships between national and regional Housing and WASH programmes.

Environment, Resilience and Urbanisation

The disastrous effects of natural hazards and climate change are seen in the majority of Pacific cities and towns. Climate-related hazards including flood, cyclone, storm surge and sea incursion, results in unprecedented social, economic and environmental costs particularly for vulnerable communities that lack the capacity and necessary infrastructure to cope with disaster risks. Considering and responding to these risks should be an essential part of urban management strategies and infrastructure development plans.

Adopting climate risk resilient planning, including preparedness, response and recovery actions such as, enhancing resilience of infrastructure, enforcement of laws and regulations, improving community preparedness and resilience including building on traditional knowledge, strengthening institutional capacities that concentrate on addressing the underlying factors that
generate and reproduce disaster risk, is an example of an effective tool that can be implemented at the local, national, and regional levels to mitigate the substantial effects of climate change.

Furthermore, integrating cost-efficient green technologies in sustainable infrastructure, reducing the carbon footprint of urban areas through innovative solutions to reduce pollution and energy consumption; and investing in water and waste management, will be particularly import for cities to advance environmental sustainability and can produce economic and social benefits.

Strengthening the enabling environment to include improved urban governance arrangements and adequate human and financial resources, including participatory bottom-up urban development strategies, local knowledge and data are essential to ensuring urban resilience and environmental sustainability.

Key Actions

- Upscale and embark on integrated climate change vulnerability, multi-hazard, pollution and greenhouse gas assessments of towns and cities.
- Develop integrated climate change adaptation, resilience and low emission action plans for towns and cities.
- Integrate climate change adaptation, resilience and low emission actions into urban policies and plans.
- Accelerate the local/urban climate change adaptation, resilience building, including leveraging traditional and cultural knowledge, and low emission actions response based on, but not limited to, the above mentioned plans.
- Ensure that climate change adaptation, resilience building and low emission concerns of Pacific towns and cities are integrated in global climate change negotiations.

Urban Economy

Despite the financial strains experienced around the world from the effects of the recent global economic crisis, the overall contribution of Pacific cities and towns as engines of economic growth and socio-economic development is evident, as they account for an average of 60-70% of the National Gross Domestic Product (GDP). Cities should be recognised and more purposefully used as drivers of national economic growth and as a means to combat extreme poverty, generate decent work opportunities (in particular for women and young people), and strengthen social cohesion.

Unfortunately, poorly planned urban growth is currently contributing the sub-optimal economic growth and the continued urbanisation of poverty. Well planned cities and towns provide opportunities for investment in pro-poor housing and basic services such as clean drinking water, adequate sanitation, energy, and improved mobility, including public transport. Increased investment in upgrading infrastructural facilities such as roads, water and energy facilities, waste management, among others, can produce a number of socio-economic benefits such as increasing employment opportunities and stimulating economic growth.
A growing emphasis on the complexities of the informal economy underlines the multiple reasons behind workers engaging in informal employment. Motives have diversified from being primarily an ‘alternative’ to include a ‘deliberate choice’. There should be increased acknowledgement of the influence and contribution of the informal sector to the national and urban economy including in sustaining livelihoods.

Engaging in public-private partnerships can facilitate more investment opportunities, enhance the deliverability of basic services and increase mobilization of adequate resources.

There is a need for more enabling legislation and regulatory frameworks to support sustainable and pro-poor economic development.

Key Actions

- Build a stronger understanding of the importance of strong urban economies for national economic development and highlight the importance of urban markets for the rural sector and regional integration.
- Develop local economic development approaches that are based on pacific opportunities.
- Empower local governments to develop integrated municipal finance and economic strategies.
- Leverage the private sector as well as the informal economy is such approaches.

Urban Governance

In 2003, no Pacific Island Country had an urban/urbanisation policy. Now, in 2015, four Pacific Island Countries have such policies and legal frameworks (Fiji, PNG, Samoa, Tonga) and a fifth (Solomon Islands) has just announced its commitment to developing one. Developing and implementing national urban policies establishes a comprehensive framework and advocates for an integrated approach to sustainable urbanization, helps to coordinate the work of different sectors and tiers of government, establishes the incentives for more sustainable practices, and supports better resource allocation.

Successful sustainable urbanization depends on setting up integrated institutional arrangements and mechanisms that facilitate effective governance, administration and management of urbanization processes and urban centres. Policies, legislations and plans need to be in place and need to be enforced, responsive and accountable leadership and human resources, administrative and managerial mechanisms are essential in order to implement such policies and programmes efficiently and effectively.

Investing in capacity building for governments and local authorities is critical to promoting effective leadership at the community, municipal and provincial levels, and thus ensuring effective implementation of urban priorities and related initiatives. To this end, capacity building is an essential component in building more effective collaboration and coordination across all levels of government to develop and implement coherent national policies and plans specific to enhancing the sustainability of cities and which integrate all three dimensions of sustainable
Engaging in multi-stakeholder partnerships with key stakeholders, including development partners, the private sector and civil society, is particularly essential to produce innovative, scalable solutions and appropriate financing mechanisms. The financial base of local authorities as well as national authorities supporting local implementation needs to be further strengthened through mechanisms that support, rather than hinder sustainable urbanization including land-value capture.

Key Actions

- Embark on the development of National Urban or Urbanization Policies where these have not yet been developed and periodically review such policies in line with the above highlighted priorities.

- Identify gaps in polices and legislation, review existing urban and local policies and legislation to ensure that they adequately reflect the above highlighted priorities and enable sustainable local development and urbanization.

- Strengthen the capacities of policy makers and leaders at national and local levels and those of urban professionals and strengthen the capacities of institutions mandated to implement the policies.

- Monitor such policies and ensure their implementation.

(End of New Urban Agenda for the Pacific)

Next Steps

The New Pacific Urban Agenda will feed into the following high-level and other key consultative forums:

- Sixth Asia Pacific Forum in October 2015 (UN-Habitat and UNESCAP)

- Asia-Pacific Preparatory Committee Meeting for the Third United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development (Habitat III) in October 2015 (UN-Habitat and UNESCAP) in Jakarta, Indonesia.

- Commonwealth Local Government Conference in Gaborone, Botswana in June 2015 (CLGF)


- Pacific Islands Forum Leaders Meeting in Papua New Guinea in September 2015

- United Nations Conference on Climate Change (COP 21) in Paris in December 2015

There is recognised value to aim to achieve impacts at scale by facilitating and strengthening
partnerships and strategic alliances. Points of entry vary for different country circumstances but integrating priority urban issues into national sustainable development plans and local government development strategies should be identified for the integration of the action points as they relate to social equity, environment and resilience, urban economy and governance (as stated above).

The discussions during the Regional Collaboration Session revealed the need for a Community of Practice and a Knowledge Repository on sustainable urbanization. It was recommended to review existing mechanisms and to promote learning and sharing of experiences, and support political momentum for sustainable urbanization in the lead up to post-2015 development agenda and Habitat III and strengthen them. Such a Knowledge Repository would be important to provide all stakeholders an opportunity to share ideas and experiences, and promote learning and needs to be institutionally anchored.

In line with the procedures for United Nations conferences, member countries nominate national government focal points, and engage in the Habitat III preparatory process leading to the formulation of a new global urban agenda for the next twenty years. In the Pacific a regional Habitat III report is planned and would become an official input to the Habitat III process if officially endorsed by governments. As part of the global momentum towards Habitat III, Pacific Island Countries will explore organizing National Urban Forums, and other multi-stakeholders gatherings and campaigns to discuss and raise awareness on priorities and challenges towards sustainable urban development in the region.

To support the implementation of this New Urban Agenda for the Pacific a Regional Coalition of Small Island Developing States on Sustainable Urbanisation will be initiated and guided by UN-Habitat and CLGF. All tiers of government, members of the Council of Regional Organizations in the Pacific (CROPs) and development partners are invited to join. This coalition makes up the composition of future Pacific Urban Forums to be held periodically.

Monitoring and Measuring Progress

The progress against this New Urban Agenda for the Pacific will be monitored and reported by national governments at the occasion of periodic Pacific Urban Forums in a template provided by UN-Habitat and CLGF.

- ENDS -