



## Pacific Urban Forum 2015

*“Towards a Pacific New Urban Agenda:  
Harnessing Opportunities in a Post-2015 environment”*

25-27 March 2015

(Preceded by a 2-day Workshop on Sanitation and Water Services in Informal Urban Settlements)

Tanoa International Hotel, Nadi, Fiji

### Concept Note

#### Context

Recent decades have seen some Pacific island urban populations grow at rates twice that of national population rates. Migration from rural areas and outer islands has contributed to declining populations in these areas while at the same time creating unprecedented population densities in urban areas. The combination of population pressures and the concomitant impacts on the environment through less than adequate waste management and at times an inability of basic water and sanitation infrastructure to deal with the increased population pressures, have created many health and social risks. Central, provincial and local governments have not been given the financial or human resources to meet these growing challenges. The consequences of this have been witnessed in a number of countries where urban rioting, increased crime rates and health epidemics have exacerbated population and urban management pressures.

The growth of urban populations in the Pacific presents a new challenge for which Pacific peoples are particularly well-equipped. Over the centuries Pacific peoples have exhibited extraordinary resilience and adaptability in surviving change. The diverse ways of living which have developed in order to thrive in ever changing environments and the creativity that has been shown in the face of many constraints have enabled Pacific communities to retain a strong cultural identity founded in connections to family, community and land. If this strength can be harnessed to create resilient and flourishing urban communities then the way forward will be clear and optimistic.

*“A new Pacific Urban Agenda will promote an urbanization model that is people-centred and harnesses national recognition for balanced development and the will to reduce the disparity of delivery of key services and improve the quality of life for all citizens.”*

#### History

The **Pacific Urban Forum** (PUF) is a regional event that aims to provide a unique and accessible platform for urban stakeholders to debate what creates a sustainable urban future for the region. The first PUF in 2003 gave rise to the **Pacific Urban Agenda** (PUA) which was endorsed by the United

Nations ESCAP Commission in 2004 and by the Pacific Island Forum Leaders in 2005. The PUFs in 2007 and 2011 reaffirmed commitment of the four priority themes of the PUA:

- Institutional framework (urban policy and strategic frameworks)
- Urban environment (risk resilient and green cities)
- Access to service and shelter (cost effective and efficient services, affordable housing, unlocking land for development)
- Urban quality of life (modernising social networks, cultural conservation, the urban village)

In addressing national and local urban challenges since the last PUF, Pacific island governments have actively identified the improved access to safe and affordable housing (city-wide and town-wide upgrading programmes as in Fiji), formed innovative partnerships (with local government, academia and NGOs) most prevalent in climate change mitigation and adaptation practices; launched national urban policies (Papua New Guinea, Samoa) and initiated a variety of legislative reforms that promote more inclusive planning and management approaches (Solomon Islands, Tonga, Vanuatu) to improve urban environments and urban quality of life.

The Pacific Local Government Forum (PLGF) in Papua New Guinea and PUF design dialogue held at the seventh World Urban Forum in Medellin in 2014 further identified the important need to support positive economic, social and environmental links between urban, peri-urban and rural areas by strengthening national and regional development planning.

## PUF 2015

Building on the gains that Pacific Island countries have made since 2011, PUF 2015 aims to harness these achievements and utilise emerging opportunities for the strategic advancement of a 'new urban agenda' that requires practical solutions, capable human resources, finances and vision to better meet present challenges and emerging needs of cities of the future in the Pacific.

With the deadline for the MDGs at the end of 2015 and the endorsement of the new Sustainable Development Goals (in September at the General Assembly, New York) the timing is crucial to consolidate the Pacific urban achievements and overcome the ambivalence by many to the urgency in addressing urban issues. The Forum will support Pacific stakeholders to engage with a strong organic voice and direction for the journey to Habitat III and capitalise meaningful contribution to the 6<sup>th</sup> Asia Pacific Urban Forum, the high-level, inter-governmental preparatory meeting for Habitat III for Asia Pacific that will take place subsequently in Indonesia in late 2015.

### *Habitat III A New Urban Agenda*

Habitat III is the 3rd UN Conference on Housing and Sustainable Development, to take place in 2016. It will bring together countries, cities, civil society, the private sector, education institutions and a wide range of their interest groups to review urban and housing policies that affect the future of cities with an overarching architecture of international governance. Importantly, it will generate a "New Urban Agenda" that will replace the existing Habitat Agenda and build on the framework and content provided by the Post-2015 process and. In preparation of Habitat III, UN-Habitat is strongly soliciting the support of Habitat National Committees and National Urban Forums to widely start discussion for envisioning the challenges and opportunities linked to the Urban Future at national and regional levels. [More information here.](#)

There is also a rich debate taking place across the Pacific region with the development of a new **Framework for Regionalism**, spearheaded by the PIFS, which will be a further important opportunity to articulate, promote and address the needs of urban and semi-rural communities.

In particular the PUF 2015 will aim to:

- Catalyse the engagement of national and local authorities, urban stakeholders and development partners for replication of identified solutions for improved urban management and access to affordable housing and urban basic services
- Encourage the strengthening of established networks for best practices and peer exchange such as through the Pacific Capital Cities Forum, Climate Change platforms, research institutes and academia
- Inspire change and build on positive country-led approaches and attitudes to urbanisation through the identification of actionable steps to incorporate the New Urban Agenda into national development plans and resource mobilization
- Secure Pacific SIDS support and commitment to shared goals and actions for the SDG on Sustainable Cities and Human Settlements and an articulated roadmap to a strengthened presence and contribution at Habitat III
- Explore cooperation opportunities and links to regional and global processes and urban development objectives to foster an enabling environment in the Pacific Region.

The outcomes of the deliberations will be synthesized into guidelines to support urban stakeholders prepare for engagement in the Post-2015 and Habitat III processes and seek renewed national and regional political commitment at all levels for sustainable urban development. The linkages to broader regional political endorsement are a critical aspect to the outcomes of this event.

## *Format*

The PUF will be preceded by a workshop that presents an analysis of Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) practice in urban informal settlements in the four Melanesian countries (linked to Priority Area 3 of the PUA). This Workshop will be held over 2 days from 23-24 March and will be led by the Water and Sanitation Program - World Bank in partnership with UN-Habitat, Asian Development Bank and UNICEF, under the auspices of the Pacific Regional Infrastructure Facility (PRIF) Water and Sanitation Sector Working Group.

The PUF proper will be held over 3 days from 25-27 March and focus on assessing accomplishments by Pacific Island countries in improving the planning for and management of urban growth; identifying and confirming priority areas to address new and emerging challenges for sustainable urban development; determining opportunities for resourcing the implementation of a new urban agenda and strengthening regional collaboration and engagement in global processes. The PUF will be led by UN-Habitat and CLGF in partnership with UNESCAP and supported by Cities Alliance.

The event structure presents a well-measured balance of plenary sessions, panel group discussions and activities in working groups, aiming to maximize participation and produce a high quality framework for concrete, practical follow up actions.

## *Participants*

PUF is specifically designed for urban policy makers and practitioners including heads of ministries and departments responsible for urban management and affairs, national planning, physical planning and local government, administrative heads of cities and towns in the region, development partners and interested non-government organisations. Participating countries include Fiji, Kiribati, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu and Vanuatu.

## Contact Us

Information regarding the Forum will be available and regularly updated on the following sites:

- Pacific Island Urban Realities facebook page [www.facebook.com/PIUrbanRealities](http://www.facebook.com/PIUrbanRealities)
- CLGF Pacific facebook page [www.facebook.com/clgf.pacific](http://www.facebook.com/clgf.pacific)
- CLGF Pacific website [www.clgfpacific.org/](http://www.clgfpacific.org/)

For general information about the PUF event contact:

Megan Praeger, Regional Program Coordinator on [megan@clgfpacific.org.fj](mailto:megan@clgfpacific.org.fj)

For information on the PUF programme and Habitat III contact:

Sarah Mecartney, UN Habitat Programme Manager for the Pacific on [mecartney-unhabitat@un.org](mailto:mecartney-unhabitat@un.org)

For registration details, logistical or travel queries:

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## Timeline to Habitat III

Event	Date	Declaration	Partners
Pacific Urban Forum 3	November, 2011	<a href="#">Outcome statement</a>	UNH, CLGF, ESCAP
World Urban Forum 6	September 2012	<a href="#">Naples Declaration</a>	UNH++
Pacific Local Government Forum	November, 2012	<a href="#">Honiara Declaration</a>	CLGF++
Pacific Housing Workshop	October 2012	<a href="#">Proceedings</a>	UNH, CLGF
Rights to Housing Workshop	June 2013	<a href="#">N/A</a>	UNDP, OHCHR, UNH, PACMAS
World Urban Forum 7	April, 2014	<a href="#">Medellin Declaration</a>	UNH++
Pacific Local Government Forum	May, 2014	<a href="#">Port Moresby Declaration</a>	CLGF
PIFS Leaders Forum	August 2014	<a href="#">Framework for Regionalism</a>	PIFS
SIDS Conference	September 2014	<a href="#">S.A.M.O.A. Pathway Apia Statement on SIDS and LG</a>	UNDESA++ CLGF
Asia Pacific Ministerial Conference on Housing and Urban Development 5	November 2014	<a href="#">Seoul Declaration</a>	APMCHUD 5
Pacific Regional MDGs and Post-2015 Agenda	November 2014	TBC	ESCAP,ADB,UNDP
Expert Group Meeting on Sustainable Urban Development in Asia Pacific	December 2014	TBC	ESCAP
<b>Pacific Urban Forum 4</b>	<b>March, 2015</b>		<b>UNH, CLGF, ESCAP</b>
Habitat Agenda Partners Conference	March 2015		ESCAP, UNH
6 <sup>th</sup> Asia Pacific Urban Forum	July 2015		ESCAP
Asia Pacific Inter-Governmental Habitat III Preparatory Meeting	July 2015	See ESCAP Resolution 70/12	ESCAP, Govt of Indonesia ++
Habitat III	October 2016	<a href="#">More information</a>	UNH+++