



HOSTED BY THE PACIFIC URBAN PARTNERSHIP & THE PACIFIC ISLANDS FORUM SECRETARIAT

SIXTH PACIFIC URBAN FORUM, 2023

CONCEPT NOTE

Background:

The Pacific Urban Forum (PUF) is the premier event for urban practitioners, thinkers, leaders, and advocates in the Blue Pacific. Held every four years, the PUF brings together a diversity of representatives from across national and local governments, policy makers, urban development practitioners and urban planners, civil society organizations, traditional leaders, local and international academia, private sector and development partners, among others. For the first time the PUF is being hosted by the Pacific Islands Forum, providing a unique platform for further regional consideration of urban issues.

In the Blue Pacific rapid urbanisation at the regional scale is overlaid on a range of diverse local sociocultural and physical contexts, pressures, and development priorities. In urban areas across the Pacific, however, socio-economic and environmental challenges are evident in key development shortcomings, including the prevalence of sustained unemployment, rising inequalities, capacity shortfalls in urban service delivery, and continued housing unaffordability and informality.

Intertwined with these issues are the region's high levels of vulnerability to climate change and disaster risk, which threatens traditional livelihood resources, marine and low-lying island areas and poverty alleviation. Increasingly these pressures are compounding economic and social drivers of rural-to-urban migration.

Following the adoption of the Pacific New Urban Agenda (PNUA) and a renewed recognition of the many opportunities and challenges for the Pacific, PUF6 will focus on the development action plans at local and regional levels, providing recommendations for urbanisation strategies and elicit voluntary commitments from stakeholders. The PUF provides the opportunity to:

- Enhance and elevate the role of Pacific cities and towns in contributing to national and regional policy platforms;
- Revitalise and accelerate implementation, review achievements and improve monitoring of the Pacific New Urban Agenda (PNUA);
- Improve the mechanisms for collection and exchange of knowledge and data on sustainable urbanization in the Pacific through open and accessible platforms for debates, sharing lessons learnt, best practices and policies;
- Develop new partnerships to support an enabling environment for sustainable urban development in the Pacific;
- Synthesize regional outcomes for input into the next Asia Pacific Urban Forum (2023), COP 28, the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (2024) and the World Urban Forum (2024).

The first PUF, held in 2003, gave rise to the Pacific Urban Agenda (PUA), which was endorsed by the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) in 2004 and by the Pacific Island Forum Leaders in 2005. Subsequent PUFs held in 2007 and 2011 reaffirmed commitments to the PUA. The fourth PUF held in 2015, however, reviewed the PUA in light of the UN's new *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* and associated Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), as well as regional consultations on development of the global New Urban Agenda finalised in 2016 at Habitat III. As a result, a new regional platform for sustainable urban development emerged, titled the Pacific New Urban Agenda.

The fifth PUF, focussing on “Accelerating the implementation of the New Urban Agenda to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals in the Pacific” was held in July 2019 in Nadi, Fiji, and attended by over 200 participants from 25 countries, including high level representation from 13 Pacific Islands Countries. PUF5 also saw the establishment of the Pacific Partnership for the New Urban Agenda (PP-NUA), in 2023 rebranded as the [Pacific Urban Partnership](#) (PUP), where eight organisations working on urban issues in the Pacific are collaborating to accelerate the implementation of the Pacific New Urban Agenda through a multi-stakeholder partnership. The partners include:

- United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat)
- United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia-Pacific (UNESCAP)
- Commonwealth Local Government Forum (CLGF Pacific)
- ICLEI Local Governments for Sustainability (ICLEI Oceania)
- Eastern Regional Organisation for Planning and Human Settlements (EAROPH)
- Home in Place
- Monash Sustainable Development Institute, Monash University
- Melbourne Centre for Cities, University of Melbourne

Each partner brings specialist skills and capacity to the collective effort to achieve sustainable urbanisation in the Pacific region.

In 2021 the partnership organized a [Virtual Pacific Urban Forum](#) which further defined the workplan of the partnership and the priorities for the Sixth Pacific Urban Forum. Since 2019 the partnership has been contributing to local, regional and international forums on sustainable urbanisation. The Local 2030 Islands Network, Global Covenant of Mayors on Climate Change and Energy (GCoM) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) have also joined with the PUP as partners in the organisation of the 6th Pacific Urban Forum.

Sixth Pacific Urban Forum (PUF6)

The Sixth Pacific Urban Forum will be held from 5th to 7th September 2023 at the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat Conference Centre in Suva, Fiji Islands. The event is co-hosted by the Pacific Urban Partnership and the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat.

PUF6 will focus on the four pillars of the Pacific New Urban Agenda (PNUA)

- Environment, resilience and infrastructure
- Social equity and urbanisation
- The urban economy
- Urban governance

Pacific Island Countries and Territories rightly view climate change as an existential threat and, as confirmed by the Pacific Island Forum Leaders’ meeting in Suva, July 2022, addressing this issue has

greater priority than any other challenge that they face. The devastating impacts on island communities are already being seen and resulting in displacement of populations. This has been exacerbated by impacts from the Covid 19 pandemic. It is time to use the evidence as a basis for planning action.

Significant emphasis will be on climate change, resilience (including post pandemic, financial crisis, food security), lessons from Covid, SDG localization, affordable housing and working in partnership.

Programme

The programme will include a series of plenary and parallel breakout sessions, roundtables and talanoa discussions. Following the official Forum opening ceremony and keynote presentations by dignitaries, Day 1 will focus on the four PNUA pillars, reviewing changes through the COVID-19 pandemic, providing opportunities for country updates, and highlighting key areas of progress and innovation. Day 2 will have a focus on climate action and resilience, including consideration of emerging areas of regional interest around Loss and Damages and Climate Justice, before providing a platform for regional engagement in multilateral processes such as CoP28. Day 3 will draw upon Days 1 and 2, linking urban issues with regional and global policy platforms and forums, including the 2050 Strategy for the Blue Pacific Continent, the 8th [Asia Pacific Urban Forum](#), and the [12th World Urban Forum](#) (to be held in 2024). Site visits will be scheduled for Friday the 8th of September for participants for those interested in exploring some of the sustainable urban development initiatives across Greater Suva.

Closed pre and post event sessions will be scheduled for specific purposes and constituency meetings as required. These may be held in the evenings, or as pre and post PUF events on 4th and 8th September.

The full programme can be found on the Pacific Urban Partnership website [here](#).

Registrations

Registration is now open via the PUF6 online ticketing platform [here](#).

There is no cost for participation. The organisers reserve the right to limit numbers due to venue capacity restrictions if necessary.

Further Information

Regular updates will be provided in the lead-up to PUF6 on the PUP website, alongside further documentation, and information on previous Pacific Urban Forums. Streaming links will also be provided for keynote plenaries and a limited number of breakout sessions.

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