



THE SUVA STATEMENT FOR A SUSTAINABLE URBAN PACIFIC

Accelerating Action at All Levels for Inclusive, Safe and Climate Resilient Cities, Towns and Communities in Pacific Island Countries

The participants, hosts and organizers of the Sixth Session of the Pacific Urban Forum,

1. *Inspired* by the transformative role of national, subnational and local governments in designing, planning and managing sustainable urban development in the Pacific for the localization of the Sustainable Development Goals, Paris Agreement, and implementation of the [2050 Strategy for the Blue Pacific Continent](#),
2. *Taking note* of the [outcomes of the fifth Pacific Urban Forum](#) hosted in 2019 in Nadi, Fiji, which launched the [Pacific Urban Partnership](#)¹ and provided concrete commitments for implementation of the Pacific New Urban Agenda agreed upon at the fourth Pacific Urban Forum of 2015,
3. *Recognizing* the significant adverse health, social and economic effects of the coronavirus pandemic on Pacific cities and towns, especially on vulnerable urban communities often living in informal settlements, and the need to build resilience for a sustainable recovery at all levels of government and society against future pandemics and other interlinked crises, chief among them the climate emergency, as reflected upon in the [Virtual Pacific Urban Forum held in 2021](#),
4. *Recalling* the outcomes and global commitments of the second United Nations Habitat Assembly as a critical milestone for realizing sustainable urban development in a coordinated manner, with the participation of all relevant actors,
5. *Welcoming* the recent adoption of the Commonwealth Declaration on Sustainable Urbanization by Commonwealth Heads of Government, including by twenty-five small island developing states,
6. *Recalling* resolution 79/9 of the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, co-sponsored by the Government of Fiji, in which the Commission committed to promoting sustainable urban development and localization of the Sustainable Development Goals to enhance the quality of life, develop healthy environments and better manage environmental risks and resources,
7. *Expressing concern* at the lack of integration of sustainable urbanization in key regional development frameworks, plans, strategies, including the present Council of Regional Organizations in the Pacific architecture and coordination arrangements, including the limited participation and enabling

¹ The members of the Pacific Urban Partnership are: UN-Habitat; ESCAP; CLGF; ICLEI; EAROPH, Home in Place; The University of Melbourne's Centre for Cities; and Monash University's Sustainable Development Institute

environment for Pacific local and subnational stakeholders to meaningfully engage in regional and global urban development and climate change fora,

8. *Reaffirming* the vital role of the Pacific Island Forum in fostering regional cooperation for sustainable and climate resilient urban development, as well as in directly assisting their members in their efforts to localize the Kainaki II Declaration, Framework for Resilient Development in the Pacific, 2050 Strategy for the Blue Pacific Continent through active partnerships, with local governments, civil society and all stakeholders, Council of Regional Organizations in the Pacific and the agencies, funds and programs of the United Nations system,
9. *Encourages* all countries and stakeholders to:
 - a. Deepen regional cooperation on sustainable urban development and the Pacific New Urban Agenda through, among other modalities, sharing of knowledge, good practices and lessons learned in the Pacific region, including but not limited to supporting voluntary subnational and local reviews and reporting on the Sustainable Development Goals and the 2050 Strategy for the Blue Pacific Continent, in close alignment and guided by national review and reporting mandates and processes.
 - b. Commit to fostering sustainable risk informed urban development practices that prioritize resilience, justice, equity, and the protection of vulnerable communities, especially those residing in informal settlements, against the devastating impacts of climate change, disasters health emergencies and non-communicable diseases in Pacific Island nations.
 - c. Draw on, respect, and revive cultural and traditional knowledge systems within sustainable urban development approaches upholding indigenous rights, reflective of their critical role in generating urban resilience in the region.
 - d. Recognize and rectify gender inequalities and barriers in urban areas in the region, by supporting representation of women in subnational and local government as well in communities as part of climate and disaster responses, to pave the way for more inclusive, effective, and sustainable recovery efforts that benefit entire societies in the Pacific Islands.
 - e. Acknowledge the role of cities and towns across the Pacific in maintaining national stability in support of the Boe Declaration, and in providing pathways for mobility and livelihood transformation as the climate crisis accelerates.
 - f. Strengthen the pivotal role of cities, towns, local communities and their regions to pave the way for a brighter future, empowering youth to drive economic opportunities, foster innovation, and contribute to the resilience and prosperity of the entire Pacific region.
10. *Requests* the member states of the Pacific Island Forum and members of the United Nations system in the Pacific to:
 - a. Recognize and enhance the role of the Pacific Urban Forum as the region's apex multi-stakeholder urban forum and dialogue platform for subnational and local government matters in the Pacific region, including the convening of a high-level ministerial segment in its seventh session;
 - b. Institutionalize and embed sustainable urban development in the regional development architecture of the Council of Regional Organizations of the Pacific, including by establishing dedicated institutional strategies for sustainable urbanization supported by dedicated focal

points in the Council of Regional Organizations of the Pacific with adequate resources and mandates;

- c. Strengthen the urbanization dimensions of the proposed Implementation Plan of the 2050 Strategy for the Blue Pacific Continent across all of its thematic priorities, leveraging a 'whole of government and society' approach with adequate resources for implementation to leave no one or place behind in the Pacific;
- d. Focus the extensive regional technical and policy development capabilities of Council of Regional Organizations in the Pacific on the unique issues facing the citizens of Pacific Island cities and towns, including: climate action and a just transition; informal and customary urban land tenure; complex intercultural capacities; governance; traditional knowledge systems; hybrid ecosystem services; and food and water security;
- e. Assist cities, towns and urban communities upon request, with the facilitation and provision of policy studies and capacity-building activities, to inform their efforts to promote sustainable and climate resilient urban development;
- f. Encourage development partners and donors to dedicate adequate resources and technical assistance to sustainable and climate resilient urban development, recognising the need for strengthening and building capacity within local and municipal governments across the region;
- g. Participate in and invite cities, towns and all stakeholders, as appropriate, to participate actively in the eighth session of the Asia-Pacific Urban Forum to be held in October 2023 in Suwon, Republic of Korea; the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting in October 2024 in Apia, Samoa; the twelfth session of the World Urban Forum to be held in November 2024 in Cairo, Arab Republic of Egypt; the United Nations Framework on Climate Change processes, including the Conference of the Parties, as well as the Ministerial Meeting on Climate Change and Urbanization; and the Fourth International Conference on Small Island Developing States.
- h. Report on the implementation of the present statement with partners and Council of Regional Organizations in the Pacific to the seventh session of the Pacific Urban Forum welcoming the invitation by Papua New Guinea to host the forum in Port Moresby in 2025/6.

7 September 2023
Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat
Suva, Fiji