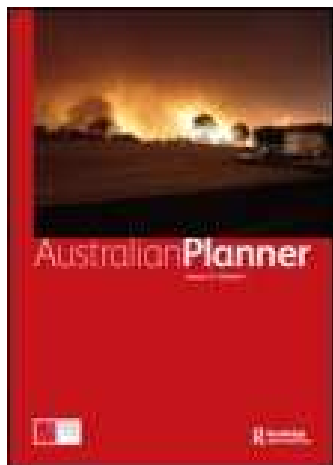


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Managing urban development in the pacific

Paul Jones^a

^a Pacific Urban Development and Management Adviser based out of Albury-Wodonga, Australia

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MANAGING URBAN DEVELOPMENT IN THE PACIFIC

Key themes and issues

This paper provides an overview of urban development themes, issues and concerns in Pacific Island Countries (PICs) in the context of developing a policy framework for managing Pacific urban development. It is organized into three main sections, namely, the contextual setting for Pacific Island towns and cities; major themes, issues and concerns in urban development in PICs; and developing a policy framework for managing Pacific urban development

Pacific island towns and cities

The focus of this paper is on towns and cities in the Pacific region. The PICs comprise an array of thousands of islands of varying origins including coral atolls, volcanic and continental islands, reflecting great diversity and complexity in the three geographic divisions of Melanesia, Micronesia and Polynesia (Jones 2003). Melanesia includes the larger islands close to Australia such as Vanuatu, PNG, Solomon Islands and Fiji Islands. Micronesia (the 'small islands') includes over 2,000 islands, atolls and islets to the north of Melanesia such as Kiribati, Marshall Islands and Guam and a narrow Polynesian corridor linking the Society Islands with south east Asia. Polynesia ('many islands') includes the scattered islands in the central Pacific such as Tonga, Samoa, Niue and Cook Islands. The islands contrast greatly in their socio-economic settings, geography, culture and resource base.

Pacific towns and cities exhibit a common element in that existing patterns of development including institutional, administrative and legislative structures

are a legacy of the colonial era of British, German, American, French and New Zealand administrations (Lea 2003). In the pre-colonial times, the population lived in villages and scattered hamlets. Most of the current towns and cities began as centres for the colonial administrators, followed by missionaries and traders who took on commercial, wholesale, agricultural and community functions. During the twentieth century, there was a gradual population increase in the towns but it was only in the 1960s that urban growth accelerated and the economic base of towns rapidly diversified. For some PICs, increasing urban growth was an outcome of independence, with many towns and cities reinforced as growing urban centres as a result of independence and statehood.

Education, lifestyle choices, increasing centralisation of Government sector bureaucracy, access to communications and transport, moderate industrialisation and private sector development, have all fuelled the movement of population to Pacific towns and cities (Ale & Jones 2003; Connell & Lea 1998; Jones 2003; World Bank, 2000). Collectively, these indicators of urban change reflect the permanency of the rural to urban transformation from village to city.

While the population's aspirations are increasingly one of an urban lifestyle, the rural influence embodying Pacific towns and cities remains strong. Family based connections to urban, rural and outer island lands are commonplace, primarily because of the traditional socio-cultural attachment to family lands as (i) a communal resource and (ii) source of personal identity and strength.

This melting pot of urban and rural

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Paul Jones is a Pacific Urban Development and Management Adviser based out of Albury-Wodonga, Australia. This is an abbreviated version of a paper prepared for the UNESCAP regional workshop on Pacific Urban Development held in Nadi, Fiji Islands, 1-4 December 2003.

values and aspirations is ultimately reflected in the distinctive physical form and structure that characterizes Pacific towns and cities. Typically the common pattern is low density urban and peri-urban areas interspersed with higher density informal and squatter housing, the latter dictated by land tenure. All towns and cities feature varying levels of services and infrastructure and a strong reliance on plantations and vegetable gardens for subsistence support.

To islanders in the new millennium, Pacific towns and cities represent colonial creations now being remodelled in an era of rapid urban growth whilst concurrently having to compete with the priority needs of rural areas and outer islands. In the context of understanding the status of urban development and urban management in PIC cities and towns, PIC towns and cities must compete with rural areas and outer islands for their legitimacy of need and equity in political power.

Urbanization and population

Approximately 45-50 per cent of the populations are now living in urban areas, a trend that continues to rise (see Table 1). As a result, the need for urban management now looms as one of the most significant development issues for PICs in the 21st century (Connell & Lea

2002; Jones, Taulealo & Kohlhasse 2002; Lea 2003). As Pacific cites and towns have urbanized, the key population trends emerging are:

- Urban growth rates continue to outstrip national growth rates in most PICs;
- Rural to urban migration continues to rise;
- The proportion of urban born is increasing, reflecting the growth in second and third generation Pacific urban dwellers;
- Capital cities are being reinforced as primate cities, generally attracting the greater share of national urban population growth;
- Rural migration to towns and cities has been bypassed in favour of international migration to countries on the edge of the Pacific rim, namely, United States, New Zealand and Australia. This is due to lifestyle choice, ease of access for some islanders due to colonial linkages – for example, the movement of islanders from Samoa, Tokelau and Niue to New Zealand – and more recently, migration due to political and socio-economic instability in countries such as the Fiji Islands and Solomon Islands; and
- The population of peri-urban areas, including both squatter and formal development areas, continues to grow faster than that of the narrowly defined census urban areas.

The growth of population and the rapidity of urban growth have resulted in spatial patterns of towns and cities that are distinctive in the Pacific. High

population growth is either polarized in one or two key islands (such as in Majuro in the Marshall Islands, Funafuti in Tuvalu or Apia in Samoa), or it is dispersed over a number of centres, such as in the Fiji Islands, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu. Primate cities dominate in all island settings.

Populations most vulnerable and at risk are in the towns and cities in the atoll nations of Kiribati, Marshall Islands and Tuvalu (Connell & Lea 1998; Jones 1997). The constraints underlying the growth of towns and cities in these PICs – namely restricted land areas, high population growth rates, rising sea levels and climate change, overcrowding, poor transport infrastructure and a socio-cultural reluctance to deal with the problems – pose fundamental barriers to sustainable economic, social and cultural development.

Themes in Pacific urban development

There are a number of common themes in urban development and management that unite PICs. Approaches to resolving these themes, issues and concerns vary depending on the level of development and the priority of the issue within each PIC. The key themes and their respective issues and concerns are summarized below.

THEME 1: URBAN ECONOMY

Towns and cities in the Pacific are the engine rooms of national growth. For example, the contribution of urban areas to GDP in Fiji and Kiribati is approximately 60 per cent while Samoa accounts for approximately 70 per cent (UPMPT 2001). Of all PICs, Fiji Islands has the most diverse economy, being the only country with an industrial, manufac-

turing and tourism base of any size. This fact remains, especially for tourism, despite recent social, economic and political instability.

The contribution of towns and cities to national GDP is a reflection of the significantly higher productivity of labour and capital in the fledgling private sector and major government spending in the public sector. Accessing and developing land, the third element of the urban production function alongside capital investment and labour assembly, is recognized as a constraint to economic growth in all Pacific towns and cities. Centralisation of government functions in towns and cities has played a key role in supporting the urban economy. Government is the lead formal sector employer in PICs and the bulk of these jobs are in urban areas (Jones 1996).

The nature of economic and political change in PICs over the last three decades explains the economy of urban, rural and outer island areas. A decline in world markets for agricultural commodities, as well as removal of subsidies and corresponding structural readjustment in rural areas in the region, has resulted in uncertainty in promoting public and private investment in rural areas, such as the sugar industry in Fiji Islands and copra in Kiribati.

Economic change has reduced opportunities in rural areas. For example, the expiry of the 99 year sugar cane leases and non-renewal for Indo-Fijians in the Fiji Islands, has meant a relocation of many households to neighbouring towns or to the greater Suva Nausori metropolitan area. Pacific islanders perceive towns and cities to be places of social and economic opportunity, despite the economic and social inequities and lack of infrastructure and services.

The urban economies of PICs are the major contributors to economic development, diversification, competitiveness and overall national growth, despite their fragility. Employment opportunities generated in towns and cities in PICs are primarily based on construction, retail, commerce, finance, tourist and wholesale trade. Both formal sector markets and an increasing informal sector market contribute to urban economic activity.

As in rural areas, government has a major role to play in facilitating investment in towns and cities by providing roads, bridges and the necessary infrastructure to enable business to develop and prosper. While the urban economy

TABLE 1: SELECTED PACIFIC ISLAND COUNTRY POPULATIONS 2000

Pacific Island Country	Last census	Population as counted at last census	Urban population (%)	Annual intercensal urban growth rate (%)	Annual intercensal national growth rate (%)
Cook Islands	2001	14,990	63	-1.0	-2.2
Fiji Islands	1996	775,077	46	2.6	1.6
Kiribati	1995	77,658	37	2.2	2.5
Marshall Islands	1999	50,840	65	1.8	2.0
Niue	1997	2,088	35	1.2	-3.1
Palau	1995	17,225	71	2.9	2.2
Papua New Guinea	2000	5,190,786	15	4.1	4.4
Samoa	2001	176,848	35	2.0	1.0
Solomon Islands	1999	409,042	12	3.4	...
Tonga	1996	97,784	32	0.8	0.6
Tuvalu	2002	9,526	47	1.7	0.5
Vanuatu	1999	193,219	21	4.3	3.0

Primary Source: Secretariat of the Pacific Community, Noumea. www.spc.int.nc/demog/pop_data2000

has brought diversified employment opportunities – both in the formal wage sector and the expanding informal sector – it has accelerated urban growth and the social, economic and environmental development problems that accompany it.

THEME 2: LAND

Land tenure, land supply and availability, combined with the continuing strength of traditional attachment by families to land as a communal resource, are the dominant factors shaping PIC towns and cities.

There are three common types of land tenure in PICs, namely, customary or native lands, freehold lands and state or public or crown lands. In all PICs, customary and native lands dominate the land tenure pattern – for example, in Samoa approximately 80 per cent of lands are native lands, in the Solomon Islands and Papua New Guinea approximately 97 per cent of lands are native.

The common theme across PICs is that native lands cannot be bought, sold or subdivided for freehold development. Some countries such as Kiribati are an exception to the rule.

Collective ownership of land and allocation of land use rights amongst family members rather than individual ownership characterize native land tenure. Native lands can be leased for urban development and require the majority consent of all registered family members for the land to be developed.

The formal process for the development of native land can be cumbersome for traditional owners, often requiring (i) consensus amongst family members (ii) registration of land leases for any development outside the family such as via a lands and titles court, and (iii) dealing with Government bureaucracy. A major implication of the above is that the development potential of native lands is constrained and hindered.

Pockets of freehold lands are generally fragmented amongst larger tracts of native lands in urban areas. As towns and cities have expanded and developed, freehold lands have been sought after as they are generally located in the prime positions for business, trade and housing, often around harbours and ports (Jones Taulealo & Kohlhase 2002; Ward & Ashcroft 1998). They continue to be in demand because freehold land can be sold, subdivided and leased. As the supply of undeveloped freehold land is diminished, native lands and tracts of state lands are increasingly the focus for

urban growth and development. Protracted negotiations for formal land leasing and compensation, removal of existing squatters, unresolved internal family land disputes and demand for ad hoc land increases by landowners have all been cited as constraints to the formal development of native lands by the private sector and government.

The focus for the physical development of Pacific towns and cities is in the narrow census defined urban areas and importantly, within the rapidly expanding peri-urban areas where native land dominates. Rigid land tenure arrangements and institutional failure constrain the timely supply of adequately serviced land onto the market. This has led to high land and housing prices on freehold land, and growing informal and squatter developments on native and state lands. Constraints on native lands continue to result in native lands being bypassed for 'planned' and formal subdivided development. Lack of a reasonable supply of affordable land not only increases land prices, but continues to significantly contribute to the expansion of squatter and informal development in all PIC towns and cities.

There are two land supply systems operating on native and crown lands; namely, the formal and informal systems. Large areas of native, and in some PICs state lands, provide a supply of land through (i) highly regulated formal systems where Government institutions are the main players, and (ii) traditionally based informal systems between the landowner and tenant. The existing informal system of land supply provides an important safety net to facilitate affordable land for urban households, including squatter settlements. In Fiji Islands, the Ministry of Local Government, Housing, Squatter Settlements and Environment estimates there are 82,000 squatters nationally, of which 60,000 are located within the greater Suva metropolitan area (ADB 2004).

THEME 3: HOUSING

The status of housing in Pacific towns and cities provides a good indicator of other facets of the urbanization process. Housing varies enormously and underlies the unevenness and diverse experience of sustaining an acceptable Pacific urban quality of life. Much of the housing stock in the larger cities of Suva (Fiji Islands), Port Vila (Vanuatu), Majuro (Marshall Islands) and Honiara (Solomon Islands)

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is dominated by permanent housing increasingly interspersed with informal housing constructed from timber with tin or thatched roofing. In other towns such as Funafuti (Tuvalu) and South Tarawa (Kiribati), the trend is the reverse with traditional timber and thatched housing dominating the urban fabric interspersed with traditional and permanent dwelling variations.

Access to services including sanitation and water, varies considerably throughout PICs with regional indicators masking local conditions. Overall, the trend in Pacific towns and cities is for deterioration in urban housing conditions.

Historically, housing needs in the Pacific were met by the family and wider extended kinship group, thus being dealt with in traditional ways. Indicators suggest that traditional mechanisms to support rural urban migration, family disputes, rural adjustment, poverty, land, housing affordability and urban growth issues generally, are straining at the seams, or for some, have disappeared.

The need for adequate shelter and affordable housing is reflected in the key trend that there has been a significant rise in squatter and informal housing in all Pacific towns and cities over the last 10 to 15 years. In Fiji Islands, the proportion of squatter households of total urban household increased from 5.5 per cent in 1996 to 10.3 per cent in 2002, based on provisional 2003 Household Income Expenditure Survey data. Census data indicates housing conditions are below urban averages for housing on native lands and urban squatter areas and worse for socially vulnerable groups such as female headed households and disabled persons. And invariably with squatter and informal housing comes overcrowding, increasing densities, poor domestic hygiene and environmental degradation. While there are exceptions in PICs such as Fiji Islands, the trend is that urban household size is generally greater than rural household size.

Approaches to the provision of public housing vary across the Pacific, with explicit housing policy by Government unclear or non-existent. The general policy direction has been to abandon direct intervention in public housing and focus on creating an enabling environment in which the private and public sector can take a greater role such as the provision of serviced sites; reducing planning, engineering and building standards; squatter upgrading; and

interventions in housing finance. The support of housing finance institutions including access to micro-finance is critical given urban housing and civil works account for as much as 20-25 per cent of total gross investment in developing countries.

Generally, the role of the private sector as a developer in providing land for housing in PICs is limited due to the small number of private contractors, coupled with industry concerns of dealing with the inherent problems of securing tenure and access to native lands. The cumulative impact of the above is that the demand for housing especially in the lower end of the market will continue to outstrip supply in all Pacific towns and cities.

THEME 4: FINANCING URBAN DEVELOPMENT

The urbanization process requires significant capital investment in infrastructure and services (ADB 2004; World Bank 2000). Funding for urban development comes from three main sources, namely, central government, local government (where it exists) and the private sector. The private sector is responsible for funding new development including access roads, water supply, sanitation, drainage and street lighting. Where a two-tier government system exists, central government funds the major infrastructure such as main roads, sewerage and water supply systems, port and airport infrastructure. Local government is responsible for funding the core services of local roads, footpaths, parks and reserves, drainage, health, waste collection and disposal. Where no formal system of local government exists, such as Samoa, or where it exists but only in name such as Kiribati, then services are funded by central government and in some advanced PICs, the private sector.

For central government, urban services are funded from three main sources, namely, external borrowings such as loans, user fees such as charges for utilities such as water and electricity, and general taxation such as for drainage, seawalls and roads.

In this setting, cost recovery to fund urban services can be viewed as either point of service or general taxation. The policies of social welfare have clearly demanded in the Pacific that basic services be subsidized, although this does not necessarily mean that those in most need receive access to such services.

In delivering services governments have been under increasing pressure, primarily from external development banks and donor agencies, to (i) adopt the principle of full cost recovery and (ii) privatize and corporatise utility operations. Central government increasingly realizes that large subsidies for key utility operators are unsustainable and that gradual user pays cost recovery, starting first with recurrent costs including operation and maintenance, are key strategies.

For local government, financing systems exist to provide residents (and non residents) with municipal services. Urban councils are charged with the collection of funds from local residents to provide the urban services they require. Town councils raise their own revenues mainly through property rates, rents, service charges and fees – for example, business licenses are most common – and, subject to constraints, use that revenue to finance local urban services. Rates are normally seen as a payment for services rendered, not as a tax, and rate arrears are commonplace in all local Government areas.

Local government has the power to raise loans from local banks, and investments in the order of 5 per cent to 20 per cent of total Council expenditure are the norm for some councils where the local government system is strong (for example, Fiji Islands). Enhanced local borrowing capacity is unlikely to lead to improved urban services, as loan repayments will ultimately have to be financed from user charges and property taxes.

Outside of the defined urban local government areas, no cohesive financing system exists for services in peri-urban areas. Existing municipal systems for water and sewerage are often extended by central government and generally this is done on an ad hoc basis. Due to the scattered and uncoordinated nature of government responsibilities for urban service provision in the peri-urban areas, the resources spent on the provision of services on a per capita basis are likely to be much lower than amounts spent within urban local government areas. An ESCAP supported White Paper on urban development policy for the Fiji Local Government Association in November, 2003, suggested a total desired investment for all urban towns in the next five years of some F\$83 million (as compared to the total 2003 budgeted investment of F\$5.6 million), comprising some 3.7 times the total annual operating budget of

the incorporated towns (Belloni 2003). Financing this scale of loans would increase annual cash requirements by some 23 per cent. If these were to come only from property rates, these would have to be increased by some 42 per cent.

THEME 5: INFRASTRUCTURE

Existing infrastructure systems across all Pacific towns and cities are in a precarious state as the existing infrastructure systems – especially water, sewerage, roads, electricity and waste management – are unable to cope with the demands of a rapidly increasing urban population (Connell & Lea 2002; Jones 2003; Lea 2003).

The uneven distribution of infrastructure and services in urban areas and the variation in coverage and reliability affects the quality of life of the population, often the urban poor, and ultimately the productivity and efficiency of the urban economy. In terms of water supply, for example, illegal connections and unaccounted water from leakages continue to cause poor water pressure and supply across all Pacific towns. Reticulated water system breakdowns are the norm across all cities from Honiara (Solomon Islands) to Suva (Fiji Islands) to Apia (Samoa).

Like water supply, sanitation system coverage varies within town and city boundaries where a combination of reticulated systems, pit latrines, septic tanks and beach defecation comprise the de facto urban sanitation systems in all PIC towns and cities.

Urban local governments undertake only limited infrastructure construction since basic services such as water supply, sanitation, drainage, access and street lighting for new development are funded by developers and/or central government. However, local governments eventually adopt this infrastructure and become responsible for its operation and maintenance, except for water supply and sewerage which is maintained by central Government or in some cases, a private utility operation.

While water supply and sewerage standards fall under the auspices of central government, standards for roads and access are set by and vary between central and local government. Some local councils (for example, Suva and Lautoka in Fiji Islands) have their own standards while different infrastructure standards are set for 'rural' and urban sub-divisions undertaken by central government in the

absence of rural local government. There is a tension between insisting on higher standards compatible with an urban setting and the affordability of such standards, particularly in relation to the relatively large plot sizes commonly found in the urban and peri-urban situation. A key issue is what level of infrastructure is appropriate and to what degree should standards be varied.

The lack of access to readily developable land within towns and cities combined with unrealistic planning standards and norms has a major impact on the cost of urban infrastructure and thus the affordability of serviced land for housing. The absence of affordable housing plots causes squatting and informal development in locations which are distant from town centres and/or difficult to access such as hillsides and in upper urban catchments or in the expanding peri-urban areas and potentially remote from existing points of urban service delivery. The costs of providing infrastructure and services to these households and communities are invariably high. Social equity concerns mean that infrastructure and service agencies are under political pressure to provide services to households in all urban, peri urban and rural locations. The cumulative result is inefficient, uneconomical and overburdened infrastructure systems.

THEME 6: POVERTY

The most visible change in Pacific towns and cities over the last 15 years has been the rise in poverty and widening of the poverty gap. Poverty encompasses inadequate and declining levels of the basic needs of food, shelter, clothing, sanitation water, health and education (Note that PIC governments are reluctant to use the term 'poverty', given that the needs of the household and individual have in the past been dealt with in traditional ways – hence a shift in recent years to use the term 'hardship').

While poverty cuts across all communities, it is most prevalent in low-income groups, often small households with one or no adult income wage earner. While income inequality is one aspect of poverty, indicators on access to sanitation, infant mortality, land security, shelter, safe water, squatter and informal settlements, incidence of preventable disease, life expectancy and education, are all part of determining the extent and depth of urban poverty (UNDP 1997; UNCHS 1996).

Urban poverty in Pacific towns and

cities can be characterized by a number of key issues and concerns, namely:

- With the shift in population from rural to urban areas, poverty is becoming more and more an issue polarized in urban areas;
- There are varying levels of government response depending on the extent of poverty in each country and how it is socially, economically and physically expressed in day to day living. For example, Samoa has few informal and squatter settlements but it is well recognized that urban hardships exists for families;
- Access to land and security of tenure as well as increasing local access to finance, are keys to breaking the poverty cycle;
- Under- and unemployment are key contributors to an insecure means of livelihood and vulnerability within households;
- Whilst cutting across all communities, poverty is most concentrated in the informal and squatter settlements in urban areas;
- With poverty invariably comes environmental degradation and decline; and
- With increasing intensification of poverty is a rise in urban security, safety, crime, law and order issues as now seen in all PIC towns and cities. For example, Port Moresby in PNG accounts for 40 per cent of all reported PNG crime while 18 per cent of the population in Port Moresby rely on crime as a principal source of income;

There is acceptance in PICs that strategies to reduce poverty need to be woven into the core of development policies. Four key institutional groups can play a collective role in reducing poverty:

- Government agencies;
- Family groups;
- NGOs and community based groups such as churches, and
- Financial institutions.

Financial institutions generally do not cater for those people who have no savings or assets, while family support is only as good as the stability of the wider family unit and ease of access to it. NGOs have a key role to play but often rely on others for support and facilitation.

Government therefore must play a key role in developing the enabling environment to break the poverty cycle.

THEME 7: URBAN PLANNING AND ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT

Contemporary urban planning in PIC towns and cities is a mix of institutions and processes whose heritage comes primarily from the era of colonial administrations. The reality of implementing unrealistic planning and development systems inherited from another era is a common theme across all PICs (Lea 2003).

Town planning schemes and land use plans form the main tools of urban planning, the result being that the development assessment of land use, buildings and subdivision by both local and central government tends to be the main activity of planning and development systems. Zoning schemes and land use plans have some relevance in some countries – in Fiji Islands they form local government boundaries and provide the basis on which property rates are determined – while in other countries such as Solomon Islands and Kiribati, zoning plans are ignored by both central and local government as they are not enforced and not understood by the wider community (Jones 1997).

Plans often only extend to the urban edge of the local government boundaries and do not encompass the rapidly growing peri-urban areas. Not surprisingly, planning systems have little or no urban management capability as preoccupation with day-to-day issues such as land boundary and ownership disputes means that strategic planning and policy issues rarely make it on to the agenda. Generally, there is little consistency in approaches at both the national and regional levels (Jones 1996; Storey 1998).

The result is that the urban environment is under increasing threat from traffic pollution, industrial discharge, destruction of mangroves and filling of wetlands, increased runoff including faecal coliform contamination and inadequate collection, treatment and disposal of domestic wastewater and solid waste. In this setting, the existing condition of urban planning and environmental management in PIC towns and cities is characterized by:

- Poor agency coordination, integration and strategic planning focus;
- Short term crisis management and an absence of medium to longer term planning;

- Emphasis on technical solutions such as land use plans rather than the process and underlying causes of issues;
- Minimal monitoring of trends and setting of indicators, noting that policy is gradually being more effectively articulated as management information systems are developed;
- Increasing environmental awareness on biodiversity and conservation issues
- Poorly developed concepts of public interest, public good and public gain; and
- Emphasis on individual self reliance and recognition of strong land owner rights.

For a range of reasons including the policies and programs of regional agencies such as the South Pacific Regional Environmental Programme (SPREP), environmental management and planning has tended to be developed in isolation from urban (and rural) planning. This has resulted in separate 'town planning' and environmental divisions within institutions, 'new' environmental legislation not integrated with existing planning legislation, and environmental planning including EIA not being mainstreamed as part of the broader development assessment process.

The prime reason for this is that the concept of environment in the Pacific has been promoted as being concerned with the biophysical environs, rather than viewing development and its consequences as affecting the total environment, namely, the social, economic and biophysical setting in which day to day development activities take place on land.

THEME 8: INSTITUTIONAL AND REGULATORY FRAMEWORK

The institutional and regulatory framework for urban development and urban management varies across PICs with government involved in varying roles as planner, regulator and service provider. The smallness of the countries involved, the socio-cultural sensitivities and political implications of modifying traditional decision-making structures which decide where and how lands are developed, means PICs have adapted their own models for planning and development (Jones Taule'alo & Kohlhasse 2002).

Central government, and where it exists local government, are key players in the land use planning and development process. In some PICs, government takes a lead role in facilitating land for urban

development as well as housing through government agencies while on freehold lands a small private sector takes the lead role in development. Unless land tenure is changed in urban areas, private sector involvement in development and construction will continue to be small. Where central and local government exist, central government institutions provide the major urban infrastructure while local government provides for local services. In the absence of formal local government, urban services are funded by central government and private sector. Development in the rapidly growing peri-urban areas is under the institutional responsibility of a myriad of agencies which is complicated by the array of differing administrative districts for which they are responsible.

With few exceptions, governance in PICs continues to be ineffective and inadequate as governments stay at arms length from their urban futures. The strong traditional socio-cultural order sitting alongside modern public decision-making structures results in government treading warily. Urban development institutions generally tend to have overburdened staff, skill deficiencies and lack human and technical resources. In its current structure, the institutional framework for urban development and urban management in PICs is characterized by:

- A lack of involvement of local councils and other stakeholders with central government in a formal and coordinated wider planning and urban management role;
- The absence of an overarching strategic growth plan that guides development in urban and peri-urban areas on a holistic basis with land and service issues considered;
- A plethora of outdated legislation, with control based on rules and regulation;
- The exclusion of peri-urban areas from effective institutional arrangements as part of managing the urban area in its totality, and
- Institutions that are functionally ineffective and inefficient in meeting and responding to the demands imposed by urban dwellers – for example, informal and squatter developments.

Resolving land tenure issues and balancing traditional customary rights to land with those of the 'public interest', is a

recurrent theme that lies at the heart of many attempts to improve governance and institutional arrangements for urban development and management in PICs. The priority issue arising is the need to review institutional arrangements and their regulatory and administrative underpinnings so as to be more effective in achieving governments' social as well as environmental and economic objectives in urban areas.

Responding to urban growth

Development banks such as the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank (ADB) are active in PICs, funding loan projects and providing technical assistance in infrastructure development, social sectors such as health and education, private and public sector development and environmental management. The European Union (EU) and Japanese International Cooperation Agency (JICA) provide grant funding for waste management, health, education and sanitation projects.

AusAID and NZODA are the key regional bilateral aid agencies funding programs across all of the above areas but predominantly institutional strengthening and capacity building programs in health, education, social development, agriculture and public sector reform. UN agencies such as ESCAP and UNDP provide regional assistance to countries in social and human development including the key areas of urban governance and poverty reduction. Key regional agencies such as the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat and SPREP, funded by multi-lateral sources, work with countries on policy development in infrastructure, environmental management, economic and social sectors.

There have been a number of attempts since the early 1990s to develop a regional approach to the planning and management of PIC towns and cities. In 1993, PICs participated in the Asia Pacific Regional Ministerial Conference in Asia and Pacific organized by ESCAP. In 1996, PICs took a key role in facilitating a UNDP and UNCHS regional paper on 'The State of Human Settlements and Urbanisation in the Pacific Islands' as part of the UN Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II) in Istanbul, Turkey (UNDP 1996). Building on the momentum gained from this conference, a draft Pacific Habitat Agenda and Regional Action Plan for the Pacific was prepared in 1999 and considered by the South Pacific Forum Economic Planning

Ministers meeting held in July 1999. In 2001, the Habitat +5 Conference gave further weight to the preparation of a Pacific Regional Plan of Action to address current urbanization, urban development and urban management issues. All of the above initiatives have assisted in reinforcing the need for a coherent approach to Pacific urban development and management.

Developing a conceptual policy framework

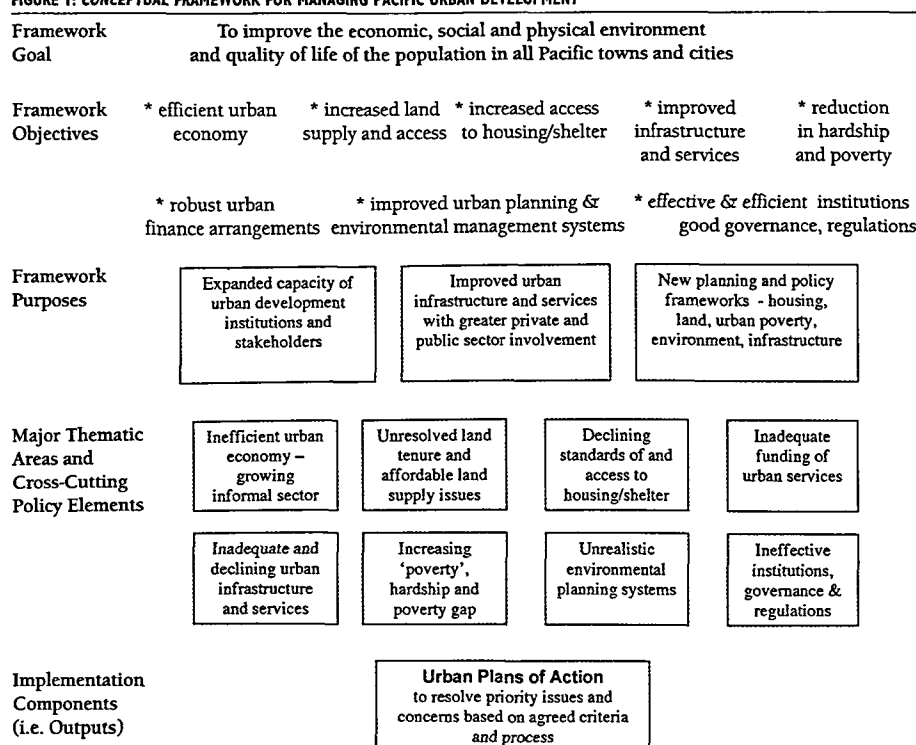
At the Pacific regional level, the priority challenge is to come to grips with the plethora of urban development issues and concerns that preoccupy PICs on one hand, and the means by which to effectively address these issues and concerns by good planning and urban management on the other. The advantage of developing a Pacific framework for urban development and management is that it can provide a sense of strategic direction and priority for individual PICs to deal with their numerous issues and concerns arising in managing human settlements. A PIC framework can be developed as a tool so as to systematically deal with detail whilst providing a sense of coherent direction in developing and managing Pacific towns and cities. As a framework, it also provides a structured approach by which PICs individually and collectively can compare where they are at, what works and what doesn't work.

What this paper indicates is that while PICs are at varying stages of development, there are common areas for improving the response to urban growth despite the diversity of planning contexts over many islands. Some of the common themes emerging that could form the basis of priority objectives at the regional level include the need to:

- Improve the contribution of urban areas to the national economy through better urban management;
- Provide adequate urban infrastructure and services;
- Enable housing development;
- Encourage land supply especially affordable plots;
- Reduce urban poverty and improve urban security;
- Improve community participation;
- Incorporate good governance as part of revised urban planning solutions, and
- Create effective institutions and relevant regulatory and policy frameworks.

A conceptual framework for managing urban development is shown in Figure 1. A suggested framework goal is "to improve the economic, social and physical environment and the quality of life of the population in all Pacific towns and cities". The conceptual framework indicates the major thematic issues and concerns in

FIGURE 1: CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK FOR MANAGING PACIFIC URBAN DEVELOPMENT



Pacific urban development and management and indicates the outputs to be sought, namely plans of action for implementation across all themes. The framework shows that by producing these outputs, PICs will have made substantive progress towards achieving the objectives and purposes of implementing the framework.

Key actions in developing a policy framework

To develop and implement the framework within each PIC, a number of key priority actions have been identified. These actions can be used as a 'checklist' in developing the overall framework within each country. The first action should be a profile analysis of the existing system of urban development and management and its shortcomings, constraints and opportunities. This would be the equivalent of a country needs analysis and assessment of thematic development areas such as land, housing and infrastructure as well as of cross cutting policy elements such as urban poverty reduction and urban services financing. For example, common thematic developmental areas cutting across all PIC towns and cities as identified in this paper are:

- Housing and shelter, especially for the urban poor;
- Infrastructure and service provision for the urban environment such as water supply, sanitation and waste management, and
- Rising urban security issues such as breakdown in law, order and urban safety.

These themes would need to be assessed in each PIC in terms of the profile of local contextual issues of access to land, finance, arrangements for governance and effectiveness and efficiency of institutions. Given this setting, the key actions in developing the Pacific framework are:

- Profiling, analysis and consultation including lessons learned from the past;
- Defining thematic development issues and cross cutting policy elements (their cause and effect);
- Defining system purpose, outcomes, principles and rules;
- Defining institutional and governance options and preferred arrangements;
- Defining the strategic planning framework;
- Defining the regulatory framework;

- Defining coordination mechanisms and means of on-going stakeholder participation;
- Agreeing support mechanisms such as GIS, land registration changes, etc;
- Defining the legislative framework and regulations needed,
- Agreeing the core implementation components and their institutional, regulatory and administrative frameworks, and
- Implementation of the agreed components and monitoring. ■

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