

SUMMARY REPORT



**PACIFIC
URBAN
FORUM**

24 - 26 MARCH 2026



Facilitated by the Pacific Urban Partnership
Hosted by the Government of Papua New Guinea and the National Capital District of Port Moresby



7th Pacific Urban Forum Summary Report

Partner Organizations



The development of this report was coordinated by the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) with the support of the Pacific Urban Partnership.

Coordination: Roi Chiti (UN-Habitat)

Contributors: Brett Davis (Monash University), Steve Gawler (ICLEI Oceania), Mere Naulunatua (Fiji Planners Association), Jon Ndramei (NHC), Alena Newsome-Tsukamoto (UN-Habitat), Kemo Pepena-Guise (NCDC), Samantha Poncabare (UN-Habitat), Jane Staney (EAROPH), Harley Stewart (UNDRR), Karibaiti Taoaba (CLGF), Elizabeth Kopel (PNG NRI), Lucy Slack (CLGF), Alexei Trundle (Melbourne Centre for Cities, University of Melbourne), Elisapeti Veikoso (National Spatial Planning Authority, Tonga), Paul Walter (Atlas Urban), Sara Libera Zanetti (ESCAP).

**Special thanks are extended to the team of rapporteurs from the Papua New Guinea National Research Institute (PNG NRI) for their valuable support in documenting the sessions and capturing key discussion points.*

Disclaimer: The designations employed and the presentation of material in this publication do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of the secretariat of the United Nations concerning the legal status of any county, territory, city or area or its authorities, or concerning the delimitation of its frontiers or boundaries regarding its economic system or degree of development. Excerpts may be reproduced without authorization, on condition that the source is indicated. Views expressed in this publication do not necessarily reflect those of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme, the United Nations, and its member States.

Table of Content

1. Acronyms.....	4
2. About the Pacific Urban Partnership (PUP)	4
3. Foreword.....	5
4. Message from the Host County	6
5. Message from the Host City.....	7
6. Executive Summary.....	8
7. Background of the Pacific Urban Forum.....	10
8. 7 th Edition of the Pacific Urban Forum.....	11
o Day 1 – Tuesday 24 th March.....	13
o Day 2 – Wednesday 25 th March.....	22
o Day 3 – Thursday 26 th March.....	37
o Site Visits – Housing and Urban Development Projects.....	44
o Market Stalls at the Venue.....	45
8. Media Coverage of PUF7.....	46
9. Acknowledgements.....	47
10. Annex.....	48

Acronyms

ADB – Asian Development Bank
CLGF – Commonwealth Local Government Forum
CROP – Council of Regional Organizations of the Pacific
EAROPH – Eastern Regional Organisation for Planning and Human Settlements
ESCAP – United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific
GoPNG – Government of Papua New Guinea
ICLEI – Local Governments for Sustainability
IOM – International Organization for Migration
NbS – Nature-based Solutions
NCDC – National Capital District Commission
NDCs – Nationally Determined Contributions
NHC – National Housing Corporation
PIFS – Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat
PNG – Papua New Guinea
PNUA – Pacific New Urban Agenda
POM – Port Moresby
PUF – Pacific Urban Forum
PUF7 – 7th Pacific Urban Forum
PUP – Pacific Urban Partnership
SDGs – Sustainable Development Goals
SPC – The Pacific Community
SPREP – Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme
UN-Habitat – United Nations Human Settlements Programme
VLRs – Voluntary Local Reviews
WUF – World Urban Forum
WUF13 – 13th World Urban Forum

About the Pacific Urban Partnership (PUP)

Purpose

The PUP aims to help enable the implementation of actions arising from the Pacific Urban Forum and the Pacific New Urban Agenda by supporting the countries of the region to achieve sustainable urban development. It seeks to rally implementing partners, to mobilize resources for regional and cross-country learning and development across different sectors to achieve better integration and synergies.

Member Organisations

- United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) (Chair)
- Commonwealth Local Government Forum (CLGF)
- Eastern Regional Organisation for Planning and Human Settlements (EAROPH)
- Local Governments for Sustainability Oceania (ICLEI Oceania)
- Monash University
- University of Melbourne, Melbourne Centre for Cities
- United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP)

Foreword

It is my pleasure to introduce this report. The Seventh Pacific Urban Forum (PUF7), hosted by the Government of Papua New Guinea (PNG) in Port Moresby, represents an important step in advancing the urban agenda across the Blue Pacific Continent. Bringing together ministers, local government leaders, development partners, researchers, civil society organizations and community representatives from across the region, the Forum demonstrated a growing consensus that addressing sustainable urban development is fundamental to achieving the Pacific's long-term development aspirations.

The discussions at PUF7 reinforced a clear message: urban issues can no longer be addressed from a reactive standpoint and in isolation from broader regional priorities. Provision of adequate housing, effective land management, informal settlements transformation, sustainable infrastructure, climate resilience, disaster risk reduction, social inclusion and livelihoods are deeply interconnected challenges and opportunities that increasingly converge in Pacific cities and towns. As urban areas continue to grow and evolve, they are becoming critical spaces for implementing solutions that support resilient, prosperous, and inclusive communities.

Building on the Suva Statement adopted at the Sixth Pacific Urban Forum in 2023, participants reaffirmed the importance of strengthening urban governance, supporting vulnerable communities living in informal settlements and poor neighborhoods, investing in local government capacity, and promoting climate-resilient development informed by Pacific knowledge systems and local realities.

At the same time, PUF7 highlighted the need to move beyond recognition of urban challenges towards stronger coordination, financing, and implementation mechanisms capable of delivering meaningful change on the ground.

A defining outcome of the Forum was the strong call to elevate urban priorities within regional policy and decision-making processes. Participants emphasized that sustainable urbanization is integral to the successful implementation of the 2050 Strategy for the Blue Pacific Continent and should be more systematically reflected across regional frameworks, institutions and investment priorities. This reflects a growing understanding that the future of the Pacific will increasingly be shaped by the resilience, inclusiveness, and sustainability of its cities, human settlements and local communities.

The outcomes captured in this report provide valuable inputs and insights into the shared priorities emerging across Pacific Island Countries and Territories. They highlight common challenges, showcase innovative responses, and identify opportunities for deeper multi stakeholders regional collaboration and peer learning.

Most importantly, they reflect a collective commitment to ensuring that urban development contributes to a stronger, more resilient and more prosperous Blue Pacific.

UN-Habitat and the Pacific Urban Partnership remain committed to supporting Pacific governments, local authorities, communities and regional partners in translating these priorities into action. As the region continues to implement the 2050 Strategy for the Blue Pacific Continent, the outcomes of PUF7 provide a timely foundation for strengthening the role of cities and towns in achieving sustainable development, climate resilience and improved quality of life for all Pacific peoples.



Ms. Kazuko Ishigaki

Regional Director for Asia and the Pacific, UN-Habitat Chair, Pacific Urban Partnership

Message from the Host Country

The 7th PUF was co-hosted by the Government of Papua New Guinea (GoPNG) and the National Capital District Commission (NCDC) with the technical support coming from the Pacific Urban Partners and UN-Habitat.

The 7th Pacific Urban Forum is a follow-up discussion on the agreed outcomes reached at the 6th Pacific Urban Forum held in Fiji as reflected in the Suva Statement for a Sustainable Urban Pacific.

Dr. Alexei Trundle from the Melbourne University did a presentation on the state of the urbanization in the Blue Pacific, which set the scene for the high-level plenary discussions and was followed closely with the breakout sessions for the next three days.

The agreed outcomes of the Forum are being consolidated into the *Port Moresby Urban Action Agenda: Taking Forward the Suva Statement for a Sustainable Urban Pacific*. This Action Agenda will be endorsed by Pacific Ministers and submitted to the forthcoming Pacific Islands Leaders Forum for high-level endorsement by Pacific Leaders.

Most Pacific Island Countries are still playing a catch-up game in the process of urbanization and in doing so we also confronted with development challenges and its ill-effects which obviously calls for one Pacific voice that must be heard and resonated in other international urban forums.

For Papua New Guinea (PNG), we are blessed with abundant natural resources with a huge land mass but we do have development challenges and I am always mindful that we must strike a right balance to ensure that we have a sustainable, resilient and livable cities with modern amenities for our people.

One of the biggest development challenges in PNG or perhaps in other countries is the acute shortage of state-owned land for further city expansion or development purposes.

Hence, the GoPNG since 2023 has made available development grants to purchase land or go into development partnership with the local land owners to develop or add value to the acquired land and this is way forward.

My Prime Minister has recently issued a clear instruction to all relevant government agencies to secure 10,000 hectares of land annually for construction of affordable housing. In the Gerehu suburb of our nation's capital city, the GoPNG is partnering with a foreign developer to construct 2000 affordable homes. Also, under the stewardship of the Governor for NCD, the NCDC has embarked on a Settlement-to-Suburb Program with a pilot project coming into shape at the six-mile area of the nation's capital. Also, the GoPNG has a tripartite arrangement with a local land owner and a private developer to develop a sizeable portion of land for affordable homes at the outskirts of Port Moresby known as Tuhave Housing Project.

The GoPNG has also enacted the Public Private Partnership Act in 2014 as well as introducing the Special Economic Zones in some provinces of PNG basically to attract foreign investors.

Under the 2026 National Budget, the GoPNG has committed K240 million out of the K1.7 billion from the Connect PNG Program to urbanization and housing space. This amount will gradually increase over the next few years.

This is a snapshot of 7th PUF and its relevance to PNG context. The challenge is for all to learn from each other's urban development experiences and to come up with lucid and pragmatic approaches in our resolve towards a sustainable, inclusive, livable and climate resilient urban dwellings for all.



Hon. Dr Kobby Bomareo

Minister for Housing and Urbanization,
Papua New Guinea
PUF7 Co-Chair

Message from the Host City

It was an honour for Port Moresby, through the National Capital District Commission (NCDC), to co-host the 7th Pacific Urban Forum alongside the Government of Papua New Guinea. This gathering of leaders, urban practitioners, and partners marks a pivotal moment for Pacific cities. We stand at a turning point where rapid urban growth demands new, strategic approaches to development that are sustainable, inclusive, and resilient.

The theme of this Forum resonates deeply with our mission in Port Moresby. Through our Port Moresby Vision 2040, the NCDC Corporate Plan and the city branding Amazing Port Moresby and 2040, we are working toward a city that is planned, safe, liveable, clean, inclusive, and healthy. Our key city development plans and strategies; the NCD Urban Development Plan, the Urban Development Roadmap, the Sustainable Urban Mobility Plan, and our Waste Management Strategy are aligned with national frameworks such as Vision 2050 and global commitments under the Sustainable Development Goals. Together, they chart a pathway for transformation that reflects the aspirations of our people. Hosting the Pacific Urban Forum has been more than a privilege; it has been a platform for shared learning and solidarity. The challenges we face with housing shortages, informality, infrastructure gaps, and climate resilience are not unique to Port Moresby. They are common across the Pacific. This Forum has allowed us to exchange lessons, bridge the divide between informality and formality, and explore innovative approaches to urban expansion and service delivery.

As we look back on the progress made and the lessons learned, we must also look forward with courage and clarity. The 7th Pacific Urban Forum has shown us that the urban agenda must be central to national development strategies. Fragmented approaches will not suffice; our future depends on integrated, sustainable, and people-centred planning.

Port Moresby, through the NCDC, is committed to leading by example. Our transformation projects from the Settlement-to-Suburb Program to major housing partnerships through the Farea Project demonstrate our resolve to create inclusive communities and modern amenities for all. We believe the future of the Pacific will be shaped in our cities, and how we plan, invest, and innovate will determine the wellbeing of generations to come.

On behalf of the NCDC Board and Management, I extend my gratitude to all Pacific leaders, delegates, and partners who joined us in this collective effort. May the Port Moresby Statement for a Sustainable Urban and Climate Resilient Blue Pacific serve as a beacon for our shared journey. Together, let us ensure that our cities are not only functional but also culturally vibrant and environmentally sustainable.



Hon. Powes Parkop

Governor of the National
Capital Commission District
(NCDC),
PUF7 Co-Chair

Executive Summary

The 7th Pacific Urban Forum (PUF7) was held in Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea (PMG), bringing together Pacific leaders and urban practitioners to advance inclusive, climate-resilient, and well-managed urban development across the Blue Pacific. PUF7 convened 422 registered delegates (including online participation) from 20 countries/territories and 38 cities, including eight Pacific ministers, alongside national and local governments, regional agencies, development partners, civil society, academia, and the private sector.

Core thematic discussions focused on rapid urbanisation and informality, land governance (including customary tenure), housing and basic services, urban climate resilience, inclusive governance (women, youth, vulnerable groups), data and planning capacity, and improving access to urban and climate finance. Across the various sessions participants unpacked key thematic areas and discussed good practices and viable solutions to accelerate for an inclusive, resilient and sustainable urban development in the Pacific.

Key highlights included the following priorities:

-  • **Climate resilient urban development:** Integrate climate adaptation, mitigation and disaster risk reduction into urban policies, planning, and investments;
-  • **Land governance planning, and housing systems:** Strengthen land governance, spatial planning, and housing systems, to ensure secure tenure, equitable access to land, and sustainable urban growth;
-  • **Inclusive housing and basic services:** Accelerate the provision of adequate and resilient housing and basic services, prioritising the transformation and upgrading of informal settlements while protecting vulnerable and underserved communities;
-  • **Culture, identity, and traditional knowledge:** Recognize and leverage cultural identity, traditional knowledge, and local practices as essential drivers of context-specific and resilient urban solutions;
-  • **Social inclusion and equity:** Address social and spatial inequalities and systemic barriers, including those affecting youth, women, and persons with disabilities, and marginalized groups, ensuring that no one is left behind;
-  • **Local government empowerment:** Strengthen the capacity, resources and mandates of local governments and urban institutions to deliver inclusive and people-centred services;
-  • **Financing sustainable urbanization:** Mobilise sustainable and innovative financing, including improving access to climate and green finance for inclusive, resilient and sustainable urban development;
-  • **Data, knowledge, and evidence systems:** Enhance urban data systems, research and knowledge-sharing, including by leveraging the development of a periodic State of Urbanization in the Blue Pacific report to inform policy, planning, and monitoring;
-  • **Integrated governance and coordination:** Promote cross-sectoral, multi-level governance and coordination across national, subnational, and regional levels.

Outcomes and Next Steps

PUF7 reinforced the need to shift from dialogue to delivery through stronger regional coordination, improved data and planning, and more accessible finance. A Port Moresby Statement will be launched, with intentions to carry outcomes into upcoming regional/global milestones, to elevate inclusive, resilient and sustainable urban development as a strategic priority within national and regional development frameworks and initiatives, as a cornerstone of the Blue Pacific vision.

Upcoming Global and Regional Milestones



7th Pacific Urban Forum high-level participants group photo
Photo Credit: Pidgin Productions

Background to the Pacific Urban Forum

The Pacific Urban Forum (PUF) is the region's primary platform for advancing sustainable urban development through dialogue and collaboration among national and local governments, regional bodies, development partners, civil society and academia. The first forum was held in 2003 (then titled the Pacific Region Workshop on Urban Management) and produced the initial Pacific Urban Agenda (PUA). The PUA was subsequently endorsed at ESCAP in 2004 and then adopted as a priority initiative in the Pacific Plan (2005), with the Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC) designated to support implementation.

Subsequent forums strengthened and renewed the regional urban agenda. PUF2 (2007) resulted in a revised Pacific Urban Agenda (PUA2), a Regional Action Plan, and support for urban planning capacity development, including the proposed establishment of a Pacific Islands Planners Association. PUF3 (2011) reaffirmed the revised agenda through four thematic areas: (1) urban policy and institutions; (2) urban environment; (3) access to services and shelter; and (4) urban quality of life.

PUF4 (2015), convened alongside major global policy processes—including Habitat III and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)—advanced the New Urban Agenda for the Pacific (NUAP), organized around four pillars: (1) social equity; (2) environment, resilience and urbanisation; (3) urban economy; and (4) urban governance. Subsequent discussions also identified urban infrastructure as an additional priority area, formally proposed in 2018.

PUF5 (2019) adopted a regional Declaration reaffirming commitment to the Pacific New Urban Agenda, though follow on implementation was structured through an action plan of voluntary country and stakeholder commitments and supported by the Pacific Urban Partnership.

PUF6 was hosted by the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat (PIFS) in Suva, Fiji (2023) and coordinated by the PUP, with support from urban-focused partners and Fiji's Ministry of Local Government and Suva City Council. For the first time, the Forum shifted from Nadi to Suva and was physically hosted at PIFS headquarters, enabling deeper engagement with PIFS and Greater Suva local authorities (including Suva, Lami, Nasinu and Nausori). PUF6 also ran in sequence with the Pacific Housing Forum, with bridging sessions linking housing discussions across the two events.



6th Pacific Urban Forum delegates
Photo Credit: Pacific Urban Partnership

7th Edition of the Pacific Urban Forum

The 7th Pacific Urban Forum (PUF7) was hosted by the Government of PNG and the Pacific Urban Partnership, and convened in Port Moresby, the Pacific's largest urban centre. Held at APEC Haus in downtown Port Moresby, PUF7 brought together representatives from across Pacific national and local governments, alongside development partners, civil society organisations, academia, urban practitioners, and the private sector, to exchange knowledge and showcase solutions for the region's growing cities and towns.

The forum convened 422 registered delegates, representing 20 countries and territories and 38 cities. Participation included delegations from across the Pacific as well as partners from outside the region. 8 ministers alongside senior officials from relevant urban line agencies and regional institutions.

PUF7 marked a significant milestone for the Pacific urban agenda, taking place two decades after urbanisation was first formally recognised within the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat's regional framework through the 2005 Pacific Plan. Hosting the Forum in Port Moresby provided a platform to further elevate urban priorities within national and regional policy discussions, with an emphasis on inclusive, climate-resilient and well-managed urban development.

PUF7 also coincided with PNG's Golden Jubilee period, aligning with national celebrations and providing an opportunity to highlight the role of cities and towns in national development and regional prosperity.

Pacific Ministers in Attendance

- Hon. Toelupe Maoiautele Poumulinuku Onesemo, Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Works, Transport and Infrastructure, Samoa;
- Hon. Kobby Bomareo, Minister for Housing and Urbanization, Papua New Guinea;
- Hon. Maciu Nalumisa, Minister for Local Government & Housing, Fiji;
- Hon. Harry Tekaiti, Minister for Culture and Internal Affairs, Kiribati;
- Hon. Jaimie Lence Vokia, Minister for Lands, Housing and Survey, Solomon Islands;
- Hon. Taniela Likuohihifo Fusimalohi, Minister for Lands, Survey, Planning and Natural Resources, Tonga;
- Hon. Ampelosa Manoa Tehulu, Minister for Public Works, Infrastructure Development and Water, Tuvalu;
- Hon. Andrew Solomon Napuat Minister for Internal Affairs, Vanuatu.

422
Registrations



20
Countries



38
Cities and Towns





Hon. James Marape, Prime Minister of PNG delivering the keynote address
Photo Credit: Creza Electroteks, PNG

Day 1 – Tuesday 24th March

OPENING CEREMONY

Day 1 opened with an official ceremony in Port Moresby, moderated by Mr. Jon Ndramei (NHC). A short video introduced Port Moresby's transformation and highlighted shared Pacific pressures from urban migration, informal settlement growth and climate risk, positioning PUF7 as an opportunity to advance resilient and inclusive urban development.

Hon. James Marape, Prime Minister of PNG, delivered the keynote address, welcoming delegates from across the region. He noted that while PNG remains comparatively less urbanized than many other Pacific countries, its towns and cities are growing and facing increasing urban pressures. The Prime Minister stressed that urbanization could improve livelihoods when it is planned and sequenced well, supported by reliable delivery of core services. He cautioned against the social costs of unplanned growth and encouraged participants to engage directly with Port Moresby beyond negative perceptions.

Ms. Kazuko Ishigaki (UN-Habitat), welcomed participants on behalf of the Pacific Urban Partnership, emphasising integrated approaches that address housing, land and basic services together, particularly given informality and climate exposure.

Hon. Dr. Kobby Bomareo, PNG Minister for Housing and PUF7 Chair, introduced PUF7 and linked discussions to PUF6 outcomes and the Statement for a Sustainable Urban Pacific, calling for stronger regional elevation of urban priorities. The opening concluded with a vote of thanks by Ms. Karibaiti Taoaba (CLGF Pacific), who highlighted the value of proactive collaboration.



Hon. Governor Powes Parkop, NCDC & PUF7 Co-Chair
Photo Credit: Daniel Wala Photography



PUF7 participants at the Opening Ceremony
Photo Credit: Daniel Wala Photography



Ms. Kazuko Ishigaki (UN-Habitat) delivering opening remarks
Photo Credit: Daniel Wala Photography

PLENARY 1

The State of Urbanization in the Blue Pacific

The first formal plenary of PUF7 convened a high-level regional dialogue on urban trends and priorities across the Blue Pacific, moderated by Ms. Andie Fong Toy (ESCAP). The session was prefaced by an overview of the State of Urbanization in the Blue Pacific report by Dr. Alexei Trundle (University of Melbourne), highlighting diverse urbanisation patterns across Pacific countries and the need for coordinated action on informality, infrastructure gaps, and multi-level governance.

A panel discussion and Q&A followed with contributions from Hon. Minister Ampelosa Manoa Tehulu (Tuvalu), Hon. Minister Andrew Napuat (Vanuatu), Ms. Finkewe Zurecnuoc (PNG UniTech), Mayor Tetabo Manaima (Betio Town Council/KILGA) and Director Teopola Kulavati (Ministry of Housing, Fiji), emphasising climate-resilient planning, stronger institutions and data, and the central role of land tenure and customary ownership in shaping sustainable urban development pathways.

Key Messages

- Urbanisation trends are diverse—better data and shared analysis are essential for decision-making.
- Sustainable urban development depends on land governance that respects customary systems while enabling security for services and investment.
- Pacific cities need integrated, solutions-focused action on informality and service delivery, backed by stronger institutions and multi-level coordination.

BREAKOUT SESSIONS

Settlements to Suburbs – Port Moresby Showcase (led by NCDC)

This session showcased Port Moresby's Settlement to Suburb Program, led by the NCDC, as a response to rapid urban growth, informal settlement expansion, and outdated planning frameworks. The presentation highlighted how Port Moresby, like many Pacific cities, has outgrown inherited planning systems and requires more adaptive, inclusive, and coordinated approaches to urban development.

The program is supported by key city development strategies, including the NCD Urban Development Plan, Urban Development Roadmap, and Sustainable Urban Mobility Plan, and is aligned with national frameworks such as Vision 2050 and MTDP4, as well as the Sustainable Development Goals. Current activities include the 9 Mile Rouna Quarry pilot, public-private partnerships at Farea and ATS, settlement mapping, pilot housing projects, infrastructure rollout, relocation planning, and integration of social services.

The session underscored the importance of transforming informal settlements into planned, serviced, and liveable suburbs through coordinated investment, regulation, infrastructure provision, and community engagement. Port Moresby's experience was presented as a potential model for inclusive urban development in PNG and the wider Pacific, demonstrating that urban transformation is achievable when strategic vision is matched with political leadership and practical implementation.



Dr. Alexei Trundle speaking at Plenary 1
Photo Credit: Daniel Wala Photography

Key Messages

- Informal settlement upgrading requires integrated approaches that combine housing, infrastructure, regulation, mobility, social services, and community engagement.
- The Settlement to Suburb Program provides a practical model for transforming informal settlements into planned, serviced, and more liveable suburbs.
- Strong political leadership, coordinated implementation, and alignment with city and national development strategies are essential to managing urban growth sustainably and ensuring no community is left behind.

Embracing the informal economy (led by UN-Women)

The breakout session examined the scale of PNG's informal economy and current research into what drives resilience and growth within it. The discussion drew on recent audit findings and ongoing analysis, alongside a research project using ethnography and Social Network Analysis to assess whether the informal economy can serve as a reservoir for resilient businesses in the Global South, using PNG as a key case study.

The session reinforced that informality is the dominant livelihood system in PNG, supporting most working adults and households, with women forming a large share of the workforce but concentrated in lower-value activities. A central insight was the dual role of the Wantok system: it provides essential start-up support (labour, space, seed capital) while also creating a "success tax" through social obligations that limit reinvestment and capital accumulation—often trapping women in survival-stage enterprises. Participants left with a clearer understanding of the informal economy's scale (including large annual circulation) and how family-centric networks, gendered domestic

burdens, and limited access to "bridging capital" (finance, mentors, training) can create structural ceilings on women-led business growth.

Key Messages

- The informal economy is a significant component of PNG's national economy, and a major component of most local economies. Increasing the understanding how this sector operates is essential if growth opportunities and increased incomes are to be realised.

A New Pacific Urban Research Agenda (led by University of Melbourne)

The session explored opportunities to strengthen urban-related education, research and capacity building across the Pacific, building on priorities identified through Pacific Urban Forums over the past two decades. It reflected on the changing landscape of tertiary education and domestic capacity within Pacific Island countries and territories, with renewed emphasis on regional partnerships and Pacific-led capacity development.

Discussions considered proposals for a Pacific Centre of Excellence in Land Management, a Pacific Urban Observatory, and broader regional curriculum and research initiatives. The session highlighted the importance of strengthening research on rapid urbanisation and climate change, while integrating traditional knowledge, local research and innovative technologies. Key areas of focus included land governance, informal settlement upgrading, affordable housing, basic service delivery and concepts such as the Right to the City.



Discussions at "Settlements to Suburb" session
Photo credit: Daniel Wala Photography

Key Messages

- Pacific-led urban education, research and training are essential to build regional capacity for responding to rapid urbanisation, climate change and urban governance challenges.
- Regional initiatives such as a Pacific Centre of Excellence in Land Management, Pacific Urban Observatory and urban research hub could support stronger data, curriculum development, technical learning and evidence-based policy.
- Priority areas for future research and capacity building include land governance, urban planning, informal settlement upgrading, affordable housing, basic service delivery, traditional knowledge and climate resilience.

Food Security and Climate Resilience: Kiribati Case Study (led by ICLEI/CLGF/KILGA)

This session shared lessons from a three-year project in South Tarawa, Kiribati, focused on climate adaptation, food security, ecological health, and improved use of waste streams. Implemented by ICLEI in partnership with the Kiribati Local Government Association and CLGF, the project worked with 10 local communities and strengthened local government planning for climate resilience. Presentations highlighted both the impacts of climate change on Kiribati and practical community-based responses, including biochar, soil improvement, agriculture training, aquaponics, seagrass initiatives, and piggery activities.

The session underscored the value of community-led adaptation, with local councils helping identify priorities and support community action. Participants noted that the project strengthened local capacity and demonstrated how locally grounded approaches can improve food security and climate resilience, with lessons relevant to other atoll island communities.

Key Messages

- Community participation was central to the project's success, with local communities actively shaping priorities, plans, and adaptation activities.
- The project strengthened local capacity for climate resilience and food security through practical initiatives such as soil improvement, agriculture training, and better use of local resources and waste streams.
- Lessons from South Tarawa have wider relevance for other atoll island communities, particularly in demonstrating the value of locally led and inclusive approaches to climate adaptation.

Training Pathways for Pacific Urban Governance (led by EAROPH)

This session presented a range of training programmes developed by EAROPH to support urban governance capacity across Pacific communities. Designed for flexible delivery — including in-person, online, self-guided, and hybrid formats — the courses are based on action learning and supported by participant workbooks to help develop localised implementation plans.

The session highlighted training pathways in areas such as local economic development, partnerships, sustainable housing, waste utilisation, climate adaptation, and community engagement.



"Food Security & Climate Resilience Kiribati Case Study" session
Photo Credit: Daniel Wala Photography

Overall, the discussion emphasised the importance of practical, adaptable training approaches to strengthen local leadership, planning, and implementation in Pacific urban contexts.

Key Messages

- There are action learning programs already available that can be customised for delivery to different communities, recognising that localised solutions are needed to address the contemporary challenges of urban development.

Pacific Urban & Regional Planning Network Launch (led by ADB/APP PNG)

The Pacific Urban and Regional Planners (PURP) Network was soft-launched at PUF7. The initiative is supported by the Asian Development Bank (ADB) through technical assistance aimed at creating a regional planning association that connects planners across the Pacific and supports countries to establish their own national planning bodies.

PNG, Fiji, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu are the founding countries. PNG has the Association of Physical Planners (APPPNG), Fiji has the Fiji Planners Association (FiPA), Solomon Islands is establishing the Solomon Islands Planning Association (SIPA), and Vanuatu is working to bring its planners together. Other countries, including Tonga, Samoa and Kiribati, have also expressed strong interest in joining.

The soft launch was followed by a session on Pacific master planning case studies, where Tonga, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu shared the urban development strategies they are currently working on.

The PURP Network will act as a platform for peer learning, knowledge exchange, and a shared Pacific voice at regional and international events. A formal business plan is being finalised to guide activities for 2026–27. Agencies that have shown interest in supporting training include Pacific Regional Infrastructure Facility (PRIF), Pacific Islands University Regional Network (PIURN), EAROPH and ADB.

Key Messages

- Pacific urban and regional planners must take the lead role in shaping sustainable, resilient and well-governed Pacific towns and cities.

Strategic Urban Planning: Lessons from Port Moresby (led by NCDC/Atlas Urban)

This session explored how Port Moresby has outgrown traditional planning frameworks and now requires more strategic, adaptive, and integrated approaches to urban development. Panellists discussed how existing initiatives—including the Urban Development Plan, Sustainable Urban Mobility Plan, and NCDC Corporate Plan—are helping guide the city's growth through better alignment of infrastructure, mobility, housing, and service delivery.

The discussion also highlighted the importance of managing informality, strengthening coordination across institutions, and drawing lessons from Port Moresby to support urban development across PNG and the wider Pacific.



Speakers at “Training Pathways for Pacific Urban Governance” session
Photo credit: Daniel Wala Photography

Key Messages

- Port Moresby's rapid growth requires a shift from static zoning to more strategic, adaptive, and integrated urban planning.
- Coordinated planning across infrastructure, mobility, housing, and service delivery is essential to achieving a safe, liveable, and inclusive city.
- Port Moresby provides valuable lessons for PNG and other Pacific cities on managing urban expansion, informality, and long-term development.

Resilient Pacific Urban Institutions & Communities (led by UN-Habitat)

The session explored key dimensions of urban resilience and development in the Pacific, including the relationship between traditional and modern systems of governance, the role of customary land ownership and livelihoods, and the importance of climate-resilient and inclusive policies. Discussion also highlighted the value of consultation in policymaking and the need to strengthen governance approaches that draw on traditional knowledge and place people at the centre of decision-making.

Key messages

- Pacific urban development must be people-centred, grounded in the realities, priorities, and knowledge of local communities.
- Traditional knowledge, governance systems, and customary land relationships must be recognised and integrated into urban policy and planning.
- Inclusive and climate-resilient policies should respond to gender, disability, and social inclusion, while building on lessons from what is already working across the region.

Case Studies of Master Planning in the Urban Pacific (led by the National Spatial Planning Authority Office of the Ministry of Lands, Survey, Spatial Planning Tonga)

The session explored the need for a stronger and more coordinated Pacific urban research agenda to respond to the challenges of rapid urbanisation and climate change. Participants highlighted the value of establishing a Pacific research hub or centre of excellence to strengthen evidence-based policy, build regional capacity, and support collaboration across countries and institutions. The discussion also stressed the importance of combining traditional knowledge, local research, and innovative technology to shape Pacific-led responses to urban change.

The session identified priority research areas including informal settlement upgrading, affordable housing, land use, territorial planning, basic service delivery, and pathways for integrating informal economies into more productive urban systems. Participants also noted the importance of developing a regional framework for urban tertiary education and capacity building, with support from potential funding partners.

Key Messages

- Regional collaboration is needed to establish a Pacific research hub or centre of excellence focused on urban development and climate change.
- A new Pacific urban research agenda can strengthen evidence-based policy and practice by drawing on traditional knowledge, local realities, and innovation.
- Priority areas for research include land use, territorial planning, informal settlements, affordable housing, service delivery, and the transition of informal economies into more productive urban systems.



Speakers of "Resilient Pacific Urban Institutions & Countries" session
Photo Credit: UN-Habitat

Commonwealth Declaration on Sustainable Urbanisation (led by Government of Fiji/CLGF)

This session focused on advancing the implementation of the Commonwealth Declaration on Sustainable Urbanisation, adopted by Commonwealth Heads of State in 2022 in Rwanda. Participants reflected on the Declaration's recognition of the interconnected challenges of rapid urbanisation, climate change, and population growth, and its call for stronger collaboration across all levels of government, as well as with the private sector, civil society, academia, and development partners. Updates were shared on ongoing work related to housing, urban planning, urban finance, skills development, and capacity building across the Pacific region.

The session featured perspectives from Fiji, which has played a leadership role in engaging with the Commonwealth on sustainable urbanisation, alongside contributions from regional stakeholders and partners. Discussions explored the need to elevate sustainable urbanisation as a priority within Pacific development and climate agendas, the challenges faced by local governments in delivering services and infrastructure to growing urban populations, and opportunities to strengthen cooperative governance arrangements. Participants emphasized the importance of building a broader regional coalition to support implementation of the Declaration and promote integrated, resilient, and sustainable urban development across the Pacific.



Speakers of "What's Next for EAROPH Pacific" session
Photo Credit: Daniel Wala Photography

Key Messages

- The Commonwealth Declaration offers a strong policy framework for sustainable urbanisation in the Pacific, but greater focus is needed on turning commitments into practical national and local action.
- Urban finance remains a key constraint for municipalities, requiring stronger local revenue systems, improved local government capacity, and better access to climate and development finance.
- Implementation will depend on stronger collaboration across government levels and institutions, including coordinated action on urban finance, housing, planning, and decentralised development.
- Sustained political commitment and integrated planning are essential to institutionalise the Declaration and support more resilient, inclusive, and well-managed Pacific towns and cities..

What's Next for EAROPH Pacific (led by EAROPH)

Forming a Pacific Chapter of EAROPH was first proposed at the 2019 Pacific Urban Forum held in Nadi Fiji, and was further discussed at the 2023 Pacific Urban Forum in Fiji. There was a signed up membership of around 30 people across different disciplines and sectors. There is some common membership with the newly formed Pacific Urban Regional Planners (PURP) Network but the EAROPH Chapter reaches across the whole region, with useful linkages to Aisa Pacific regional as well as global support networks.

It also has membership across different areas of expertise, not just planning, enabling a multidisciplinary approach to its activities. PURP and EAROPH Pacific can support one another in addressing issues of community and government concern.

The session helped build momentum for the EAROPH Pacific Chapter, generating new member sign-ups and renewed interest in strengthening regional networking, capacity building and knowledge exchange among planners.

Key Message

- The EAROPH Pacific Chapter is gathering momentum as a regional platform for multidisciplinary collaboration on urban and planning issues.
- The Chapter can strengthen capacity building and professional exchange by linking Pacific members to regional and global knowledge and training opportunities.
- Clarifying the Chapter's role and strengthening its communication and organisational structure will support its future development and complement other regional initiatives such as PURP.

CLOSING PLENARY

Empowerment & Equality for the Urban Citizens of the Blue Pacific

The Day 1 Closing Plenary, moderated by Ms. Mazrina Khalid (EAROPH), convened a high-level panel and Q&A featuring Hon. Toelupe Poumulinuku Onesemo (Samoa), Ms. Tiene Tooki Kanoua (KiLGA Kiribati), Mr. Taaniela Kula (Ministry of Lands and Natural Resources, Tonga) and Mr. Tevita Boseiwaqa (Suva City Council, Fiji).

The dialogue underscored that empowerment and equality must be intentionally built into urban governance and service delivery, with practical emphasis on inclusive participation (including women, youth and vulnerable groups), equitable access to land and opportunities, and stronger coordination across institutions—especially where informality and fragmented service responsibilities constrain city action.

Discussion also underscored that inclusive outcomes depend on stronger land administration, spatial planning, and cross-agency coordination, particularly where informality is widespread and responsibilities for land and utilities are fragmented across institutions.

Key Messages

- Inclusion must be designed, not assumed: empowerment and equality need to be embedded in governance, planning and implementation.
- Land governance is central to equity: fair access depends on transparent land administration, effective spatial planning, and coordination across sectors.
- Local, continuous engagement improves outcomes: participatory approaches that reach different groups throughout delivery help address service gaps and informality.



From left Mr. Taaniela Kula, Ms. Tiene Tooki Kanoua and Ms. Mazrina Khalid at Closing Plenary
Photo credit: Daniel Wala Photography

Opening Reception

The opening reception showcased the rich and diverse culture of PNG through performances, while also providing a valuable opportunity for participants to connect and network.



PUF7 venue at APEC Haus
Photo credit: Daniel Wala Photography



Performers welcoming delegates at the opening reception
Photo credit: Daniel Wala Photography



Performances at the opening reception
Photo credit: Daniel Wala Photography



Performances at the opening reception
Photo credit: Daniel Wala Photography



Participants at the opening reception
Photo credit: Daniel Wala Photography



Participants at the opening reception
Photo credit: Daniel Wala Photography

Day 2 – Wednesday 25th March

OPENING PLENARY

Setting an Urban Climate Agenda for the Blue Pacific

The Day 2 opening plenary, moderated by Ms. Kemo Pepena-Guise (NCDC), framed the day's discussions around the intersection of climate change, urbanisation and resilience, emphasising the importance of local leadership, culture and regional cooperation in advancing climate-resilient Pacific cities and communities.

The session opened with a welcome and recap of Day 1 by Mr. Christopher Dobunaba (NCDC), who highlighted key emerging priorities including the growth of informal settlements, climate impacts on vulnerable groups, waste management and overcrowding, stronger institutions and data for policymaking, recognition of customary land tenure, and the importance of political will to elevate the urban agenda regionally.

Hon. Dr. Taniela Fusimalohi (Tonga) then outlined urgent priorities for island urban climate resilience—particularly water security and quality, solid waste and drainage systems, resilient transport, food security, housing and land constraints, and long-range planning for sea-level rise and displacement/relocation. Mr. Sefanaia Nawadra (SPREP) focused on bridging regionalism to local resilience, noting the need for a more integrated regional “home” for the urban agenda and clearer pathways to mobilise climate finance through national processes and accredited regional entities.

The plenary closed with Ms. Milicent Barty (Kastom Keepers), who centred cultural resilience—arguing that custom and traditional governance systems function as infrastructure and must be embedded in how Pacific urban communities plan, adapt and thrive.

Key Messages

- Urban climate resilience is fundamentally about core services and systems—especially water, waste, drainage, transport, food security and housing—planned over long time horizons.
- Regional coordination needs a stronger “home” for the urban agenda, with clearer integration across institutions and improved access to climate finance via national mechanisms and accredited regional partners.
- Culture and Indigenous knowledge are central to resilience: community-led, customary systems strengthen adaptation and should be embedded in how Pacific cities plan and build.



Ms. Kemo Pepena-Guise moderating Day 2 Opening Plenary
Photo credit: Daniel Wala Photography

BREAKOUT SESSIONS

Urban NbS for Climate Resilient Island Communities, Economies and Environments (led by Monash University)

This session highlighted how the Resilient Urban Centres and Surrounds (RUCaS) programme is using Nature-based Solutions (NbS) to demonstrate practical, affordable, and inclusive responses to climate change in urban communities. Through case studies from On Nut, Thailand (redevelopment of a brownfield site), Luang Prabang, Lao PDR (community-based place-making in a heritage city), Battambang, Cambodia (cooler, greener roads and streets), Phu Quoc, Viet Nam (rapid urban development, flooding, waste and water challenges), and Honiara, Solomon Islands (urban resilience and adaptation), the session showed how NbS can be adapted and scaled across diverse urban contexts.

Discussion also explored how hybrid NbS could add value in Pacific urban settings, with attention to the unique features of Pacific urban communities, the strengths that can be built on, and the types of locations and issues where evidence and confidence should be strengthened. Overall, the session demonstrated the potential of NbS to support urban resilience, climate adaptation, and inclusive development in Pacific towns and cities.



Participants of "Urban NbS for Climate Resilient Island Communities Economies and Environments" session

Photo credit: Caza Electrotek, PNG

Key Messages

- Although climate impacts are felt disproportionately in urban communities, and even more so by the most economically and socially marginalized.
- Holistic water-sensitive NbS approaches can achieve significant improvements to climate resilience, particularly for marginalized communities, with synergies and benefits across the community, environment and economy.
- This approach is practical and implementable way to apply NbS principles to the design of resilient urban areas in the Pacific.

Recovery Ready: Resilient Pacific Urban Futures (led by UNDRR)

The session focused on the urgent need to transition from reactive disaster response to proactive urban resilience. As Pacific countries undergo rapid urbanization, growing populations and critical infrastructure are increasingly concentrated in coastal areas highly exposed to climate and seismic hazards. This dynamic has trapped many municipalities in a cycle of vulnerability, contributing to Sustainable Development Goal 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities) remaining the worst-performing SDG in the region.

Through presentation of a case study from Vanuatu and panel discussions involving experts in engineering, finance, and climate adaptation, the event emphasized the importance of "recovery readiness" in urban environments. The session covered how to embed pre-disaster recovery planning into urban development, adapt critical infrastructure for rapid restoration, and build inclusive partnerships from regional partners to national governments to local communities.

Key Messages

- Pre-planning is essential for effective recovery. Clear institutions, policies, and financing mechanisms need to be in place before disasters occur, so municipalities are ready to act quickly and avoid relying only on ad hoc aid.
- Resilience should be treated as an investment, not a cost. Recovery financing should support infrastructure that is built to withstand future climate risks, through stronger building codes, better risk modelling, and adaptable design.
- Implementation remains a major challenge. Even where recovery policies exist, delivery is often slowed by weak coordination, limited technical capacity, and systems that are not flexible enough for complex, multi-hazard contexts.
- Adaptation must integrate communities and ecosystems. Risk-informed planning should include climate screening, nature-based solutions, and the active involvement of communities, indigenous knowledge, and traditional landowners in future planning.

Yidinji Proposition – Indigenous Communities (led by EAROPH)

This session presented the Yidinji Proposition, developed through collaboration between Australian First Nations and Pacific Island participants, as a practical framework for advancing climate justice and adaptation in the Pacific region, including Australia. Building on the principles of the Yidinji Declaration, the session outlined an action-oriented approach centred on five pillars: empowering local communities, enabling adaptation, enabling remediation, enabling mitigation, and enabling transformation. Participants were introduced to the principles and proposals through presentations and supporting materials, with strong interest expressed in continued engagement with the Proposition.

Discussion highlighted the importance of empowering indigenous leaders and communities to shape and implement climate responses grounded in both traditional and contemporary knowledge systems. Participants stressed that adaptation efforts must be supported by adequate funding, including direct support for locally led solutions, and that stronger regional data collection is needed to inform realistic and context-specific policymaking. Overall, the session positioned the Yidinji Proposition as a practical regional contribution to climate justice and a potential pathway for stronger recognition by governments and international partners.

Key Messages

- Indigenous leaders and communities should be empowered to lead climate action, drawing on both traditional knowledge and contemporary approaches to develop locally grounded solutions.
- Traditional knowledge must be recognised and supported with adequate funding to strengthen climate adaptation, mitigation, and resilience in Pacific communities.
- Improved regional data collection and evidence are needed to support realistic, informed, and context-specific climate policymaking across the Pacific.



Speakers of "Recovery Ready: Resilient Pacific Urban Futures" session
Photo credit: Daniel Wala Photography

Enabling Climate Finance for Pacific Cities & Towns (led by ESCAP/UNDP/UNCDF)

This session highlighted the urgent need to strengthen urban climate finance for Pacific cities and towns, which are increasingly exposed to climate risks such as sea-level rise, flooding, heat stress, and environmental degradation. While cities are on the frontline of climate impacts, they face major barriers to accessing finance, including limited institutional capacity, complex accreditation requirements, weak data, fragmented coordination, and funding mechanisms that are not well suited to small island and urban contexts.

Discussions underscored that a single major disaster can erase years of development gains, reinforcing the need for timely, predictable, and locally accessible financing. Participants emphasized the importance of stronger alignment between national and local priorities, improved coordination across levels of government, and better identification of urban climate risks to make financing more credible and responsive.

The session also highlighted examples from Fiji and PNG, showing how cities can use domestic resources, digital tools, transparency, and innovative approaches – including waste levies and technology-enabled planning – to advance climate action even without relying solely on international funding. Participants called for more inclusive climate finance, ensuring that women, youth, and vulnerable groups benefit from investment, and for stronger regional cooperation to support faster and more context-appropriate responses across the Pacific.

Key Messages

- Pacific cities are on the frontline of climate change but remain under-resourced to plan, finance, and implement resilient urban investments at the scale required.
- Access to climate finance remains a major challenge, with complex application processes, limited accreditation, weak data, and insufficient project preparation capacity all constraining cities' ability to secure funding.
- Stronger coordination between national and local governments is essential to align priorities, strengthen investment readiness, and ensure climate finance supports inclusive urban development that benefits women, youth, and vulnerable communities.
- Locally grounded and regionally supported solutions are critical, including better use of domestic finance, digital tools, peer learning, and integrated land–ocean approaches that reflect Pacific realities.



Speakers of “Enabling Climate Finance for Pacific Cities & Towns” session
Photo credit: Daniel Wala Photography

New Technologies for a Circular Economy (led by EAROPH/SPREP)

This session explored practical approaches to waste management in Pacific Island contexts, with particular focus on small-scale artisanal biochar (SSAB) and waste-to-energy (W2E) systems. Discussions highlighted the growing pressure on landfill capacity across many Pacific islands and the increasing interest in technologies that can reduce waste volumes while generating useful outputs. Participants considered the potential of both SSAB and W2E as part of more sustainable and circular approaches to waste management, while emphasising the importance of choosing solutions that are appropriate to local conditions.

A key theme was the need for careful due diligence before adopting new technologies, particularly given the high costs and operational demands involved. Participants stressed that technologies must be assessed not only for technical performance, but also for their fit with local infrastructure, logistics, environmental conditions, and community needs. The session also highlighted the importance of involving technical professionals in sustainable development discussions to ensure proposed solutions are realistic, effective, and maintainable. Overall, the discussion reinforced that successful waste solutions in the Pacific must be context-specific, environmentally sound, and supported by strong partnerships.

Key Messages

- Waste management technologies must be carefully assessed to ensure they are fit for purpose, affordable, and appropriate to local infrastructure, logistics, and environmental conditions.
- Context matters when adopting solutions such as biochar and waste-to-energy, and technologies should respond to the specific needs and capacities of each country and community.
- Technical expertise and strong partnerships are essential to ensure sustainable waste solutions are realistic, effective, and able to deliver long-term benefits.

Linking Incremental Upgrading initiatives to public health and wellbeing, livability, climate resilience and SDG outcomes (led by Monash University)

This session examined how incremental upgrading can improve public health, wellbeing, livability, climate resilience, and SDG outcomes in poorly serviced communities, including informal settlements. It highlighted lessons from the Revitalising Informal Settlements and their Environments (RISE) Program in Fiji, which has trialled an innovative approach over the past seven years to address the complex biophysical and governance challenges faced by at-risk settlements. A central focus was the role of infrastructure in reducing exposure to faecal contamination, a major driver of poor health in underserved communities.

The session also underscored the importance of a strong authorising environment to support the mainstreaming of innovation, including government leadership, policy alignment, and coordination across agencies.



Participants of “New Technologies for a Circular Economy” session
Photo credit: Caza Electrotek, PNG

Discussion highlighted growing interest in incremental upgrading as a practical way to improve living conditions for a larger number of residents while longer-term formalisation processes continue. The experience in Fiji suggested that nature-based solutions and decentralised sanitation can provide an effective approach to upgrading in Pacific urban contexts.

Key Messages

- Incremental upgrading can provide a practical pathway to improve living conditions, health, and resilience in informal settlements while longer-term formalisation processes continue.
- Incremental upgrading offers a practical way to improve living conditions in informal settlements while longer-term formalisation processes continue.
- Public health improvements in underserved settlements depend on reducing exposure to faecal contamination through appropriate infrastructure and services.
- Government leadership, policy reform, and cross-agency coordination are essential to scale up incremental upgrading approaches.
- Nature-based solutions and decentralised sanitation can provide effective approaches to settlement upgrading in Pacific contexts.

Urban Resilience in the Blue Pacific: Addressing Compounding Urban Risks (led by ESCAP)

Pacific cities face escalating, compounding risks as climate change, rapid urbanisation, and environmental degradation converge—through both sudden shocks, such as cyclones, flooding, and landslides, and slow-onset stresses, including sea-level rise, saltwater intrusion, land subsidence, and extreme heat. These interconnected hazards place growing pressure on housing, infrastructure, water, transport, public health, livelihoods, and long-term development, particularly in fast-growing and geographically constrained towns where development is increasingly occurring in high-risk areas. The session highlighted the need to move beyond single-hazard responses towards integrated, risk-informed urban planning and governance that better links climate adaptation, disaster risk reduction, environmental management, and urban development.

Discussion focused on the governance and institutional barriers that continue to limit effective action. Participants noted that the main constraint is often implementation rather than a lack of plans or information, with fragmented mandates, institutional silos, and weak coordination preventing integrated solutions. The session also explored the importance of stronger data and monitoring systems, as available information is often not well shared or translated into local decision-making, while slow-onset risks remain under-recognised in zoning, planning, and investment decisions. Strengthening resilience will require systems-based planning, more resilient and in some cases decentralised infrastructure, stronger local capacity to prepare bankable projects, improved access to climate finance, and greater regional cooperation and peer learning to support more resilient urban development across Pacific SIDS.



Speaker at "Linking Incremental Upgrading initiatives to public health and wellbeing, livability, climate resilience and SDG outcomes" session
Photo credit: Daniela Wala Photography

Key Messages

- Strengthen governance and coordination: Break down institutional silos and improve national–local alignment.
- Improve data systems: Enhance accessibility and integration and develop decision-support tools.
- Embed risk into planning and investment: integrate slow-onset risks and align planning with financing.
- Build local capacity: Training, tools, and institutional support.
- Shift to implementation-focused approaches: From plans to actionable, funded interventions.
- Leverage regional platforms: Facilitate peer learning and knowledge exchange, and coordinate partners and resources.

Promoting Human Rights in Pacific Cities (led by OHCHR/UN-Habitat)

The breakout session explored how the Human Rights Cities framework can support more inclusive and accountable urban development in PNG and across the Pacific. Discussion focused on the pressures created by rapid urban growth, especially in relation to land, housing, informal settlements, and access to services, and how human rights-based approaches can help cities respond more fairly and effectively.

A key issue raised was the need to balance the legal rights of customary landowners with the human rights and housing needs of settlers. Participants also stressed that city development must be inclusive of the needs of persons with disabilities, as well as other groups often excluded from decision-making.

The role of corporate actors in city development was also discussed, with emphasis on the need for legal frameworks that support private sector engagement while protecting public interest and rights-based outcomes.

Key Messages

- Land, housing, and informal settlements are central to rights-based urban development in PNG and require balanced, context-sensitive solutions.
- Inclusive city development must respond to the needs of persons with disabilities and other excluded groups through meaningful participation and accessible planning.
- Clear legal and institutional frameworks are needed to guide collaboration between governments, communities, and corporate actors in city development.



Participants of the “Promoting Human rights in the Pacific” session
Photo credit: Daniel Wala Photography

Mobilizing Pacific Urban Finance (led by CLGF/PNG Unitech, Atlas Urban)

This session explored the importance of finance and governance systems in managing rapid urban growth in Port Moresby and Lae. Panellists discussed how secure land tenure, stable local revenue, clear urban planning, and investor confidence are all essential to supporting housing, infrastructure, and commercial development. The discussion also highlighted new models for financing urban growth and the emerging institutional and entrepreneurial actors driving innovation in Pacific cities.

Key Messages

- Effective urban growth depends on strong systems of governance, finance, and planning.
- Secure land tenure, reliable revenue, and investor confidence are critical to funding housing, infrastructure, and commercial development.
- New financing models and emerging institutional and entrepreneurial actors are shaping the future of Port Moresby, Lae, and other growing Pacific cities.

Capacity Building Tools for Pacific Master Planning (led by EAROPH)

This session explored the role of strategic master planning in helping Pacific countries respond to rapid urbanisation, informal settlement growth, climate risks, and the need for more inclusive and sustainable urban development. Discussion highlighted the importance of planning approaches that bring together government, NGOs, local communities, and other stakeholders to support climate resilience, economic growth, and more coordinated urban expansion. The session also considered how planning models and technical expertise from outside the region, including Malaysia, may offer useful lessons for Pacific urban contexts when adapted to local realities.

A key case discussed was the Greater Honiara conceptual master plan in Solomon Islands, which aimed to strengthen mobility, public spaces, resilience, and inclusion while guiding growth across an expanding urban region. Participants emphasised that master planning must not only support economic development, but also deliver benefits for local communities, especially in contexts affected by informal settlements and fragmented growth. The importance of phasing strategies was also highlighted, so that priorities can be sequenced realistically and budgets allocated effectively. The discussion further noted that any relocation of informal settlements must be approached carefully and sensitively, with measures such as subsidised housing considered to support fair and workable outcomes.



Discussion during “Mobilizing Pacific Urban Finance” session
Photo credit: Daniel Wala Photography

Key Messages

- Strategic master planning can help Pacific cities manage rapid urbanisation, climate risks, and informal settlement growth in a more coordinated and inclusive way.
- Master plans should support economic growth while also delivering clear benefits for local communities, not only governments or investors.
- Phased planning is important to ensure priorities are sequenced realistically and budgets are allocated effectively.
- Relocation of informal settlements must be handled sensitively, with practical support such as affordable or subsidised housing to encourage fair and workable outcomes.

A Housing Agenda for the Urban Pacific (led by PNG NHC)

This session showcased PNG's housing reform efforts as a practical model for addressing shared urbanisation challenges across the Pacific. The session highlighted housing as a regional priority, emphasizing that affordable and resilient housing requires integrated approaches that combine policy reform, land access, institutional capacity, innovative financing, and climate-responsive planning. PNG's experience demonstrated the importance of coordinated action to address rapid urbanisation, informal settlements, customary land constraints, and growing climate risks. The session also positioned PNG and NHC as regional partners for technical cooperation, knowledge sharing, and collaboration towards a shared Pacific Housing Agenda.

Key Messages

- Housing must be treated as a regional development priority. Across the Pacific, housing is closely linked to urban growth, land access, climate resilience, and economic development, making it a shared regional challenge rather than a standalone national issue.
- Effective housing delivery requires more than policy - PNG's experience shows that affordable housing depends on a combination of enabling policy, institutional reform, access to land, infrastructure planning, and practical implementation mechanisms.
- Regional collaboration can accelerate scalable housing solutions - Through models such as the Durand Farm project and PNG's tripartite housing finance approach, the session highlighted opportunities for Pacific countries to share knowledge, pilot solutions, and build a unified housing agenda.



Speakers at "A Housing for the Urban Pacific" session
Photo credit: PNG NHC

Pacific Ministerial Caucus

(led by UN-Habitat)

Ministers and senior officials from Pacific countries shared progress and challenges on urban resilience, housing, and informal settlement upgrading under increasing climate and disaster risk. Common approaches included risk-informed spatial planning, cross-ministerial coordination, settlement upgrading and service improvements, and efforts to strengthen building standards and governance systems. Across countries, major constraints remain limited local capacity, data/tenure gaps, and difficulty accessing and aligning finance, prompting calls for stronger regional cooperation and more practical implementation support.

The Caucus also highlighted the opportunity to strengthen the urban dimensions of Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) as a practical pathway for translating Pacific priorities into climate commitments, investment pipelines and implementation strategies. Many of the issues raised by ministers—including resilient housing, settlement upgrading, risk-informed spatial planning, water and basic services, land and tenure security, disaster preparedness, local government capacity and access to climate finance—are directly relevant to NDC implementation and future updates.

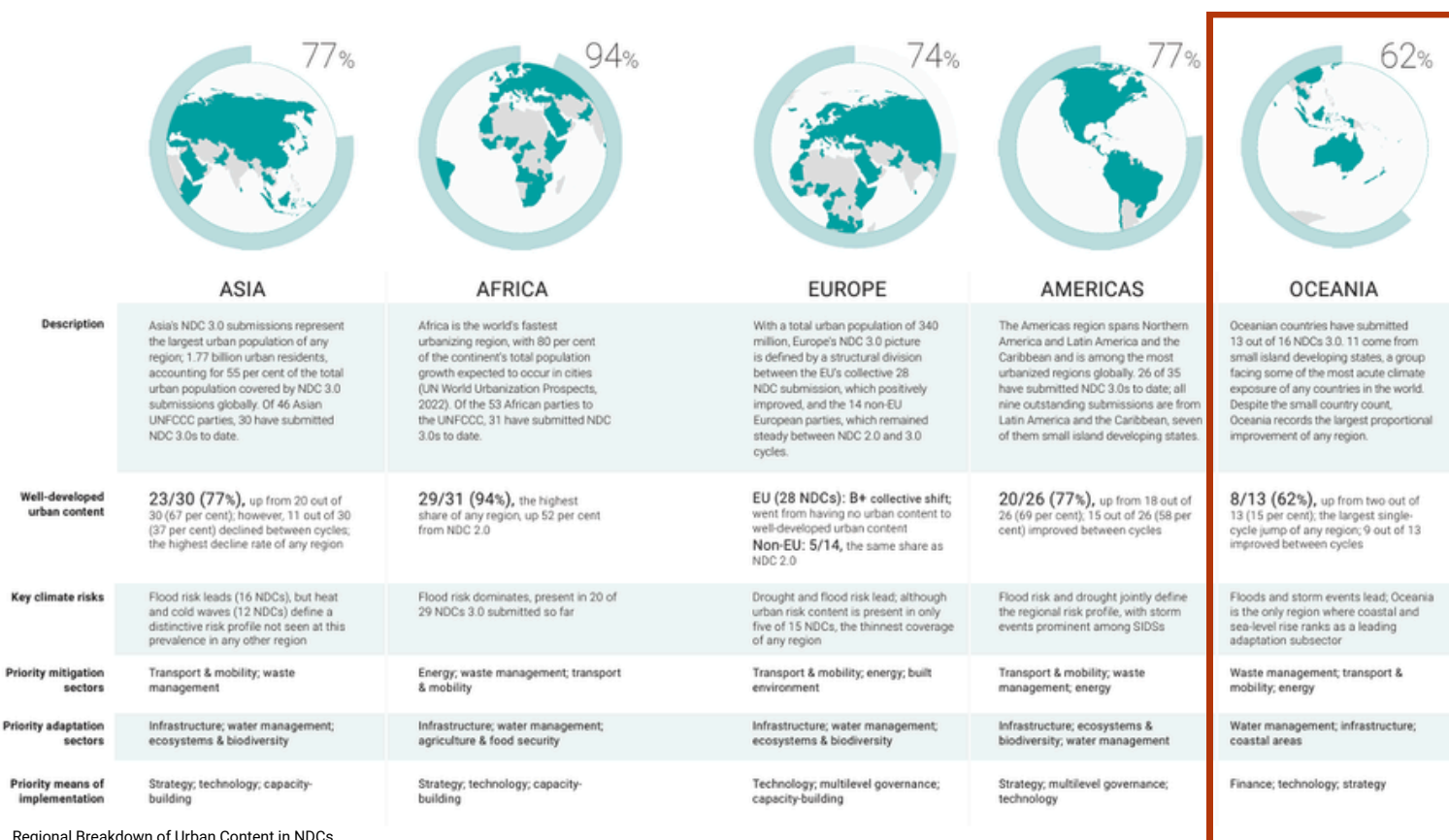
High-level Speakers in Attendance

- Hon. Maciu Nalumisa, Minister for Local Government & Housing, Fiji
- Hon. Harry Tekaiti, Minister for Culture and Internal Affairs, Kiribati
- Hon. Toelupe Maoiautele Poumulinuku Onesemo, Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Works, Transport and Infrastructure, Samoa
- Hon. Jaimie Lence Vokia, Minister for Lands, Housing and Survey, Solomon Islands
- Hon. Taniela Likuohihifo Fusimalohi, Minister for Lands, Survey, Planning and Natural Resources, Tonga
- Hon. Ampelosa Manoa Tehulu, Minister for Public Works, Infrastructure Development and Water, Tuvalu
- Ms. Andie Fong Toy, Head of ESCAP Sub-regional Office for the Pacific
- Ms. Debra Sungi, Managing Director, Climate Change and Development Authority, Papua New Guinea
- Mr. Leith Veremaito, Director General, Ministry of Internal Affairs, Vanuatu



Speakers of “Pacific Ministerial Caucus” session
Photo Credot: Daniel Wala Photography

Urban Content of Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs)



Regional Breakdown of Urban Content in NDCs

Source: Reproduced from UN-Habitat, Urban Content in NDC 3.0: A Snapshot of 128 NDCs, 2026, pp. 20–21, available at: <https://unhabitat.org/sites/default/files/2026/05/urban-content-in-ndc3.0.pdf>

Theme	Highlights from Oceania
Housing & Informal settlements	2% of regional urban population covered 3 of NDCs 3.0 mention affordable & safe housing 0 of NDCs 3.0 mention basic services & WASH
Build environment & infrastructure	2.2% of regional urban population covered 2 of NDCs 3.0 mention nature-based solutions 1 of NDCs 3.0 mention urban drainage and stormwater
Urban water & waste management	3% of regional urban population covered 3 of NDCs 3.0 mention wastewater treatment and sanitation 3 of NDCs 3.0 mention solid waste collection and disposal
Urban energy	0.1% of regional urban population covered 2 of NDCs 3.0 mention renewable energy 0 of NDCs 3.0 energy planning and systems
Urban transport & mobility	3% of regional urban population covered 3 of NDCs 3.0 mention public transport and mass transit 3 of NDCs 3.0 mention active mobility and non-motorized transport
Urban climate risks (water & heat)	3% of regional urban population covered 2 of NDCs 3.0 mention storms 2 of NDCs 3.0 mention floods
Urban climate finance	<1% of regional urban population covered 1 of NDCs 3.0 mention Urban & Subnational Climate Finance 0 of NDCs 3.0 mention Public
Multilevel governance & capacity-building	<1% of regional urban population covered 1 of NDCs 3.0 mention Training & Skill Development 0 of NDCs 3.0 mention Vertical Coordination
Urban loss & damage	2% of regional urban population covered 1 of NDCs 3.0 mention Agriculture & food security

Summary of Urban Themes and Highlights in Oceania NDCs

Source: Prepared by the author based on UN-Habitat, Urban Content in NDC 3.0: A Snapshot of 128 NDCs, 2026.

Urban Content in Oceania NDCs: Implications for Pacific Climate Action

The overview of urban content in Oceania NDCs presented here provides a strategic reference point for governments and partners seeking to strengthen the role of cities, towns and settlements within national climate action. While 8 of the 13 Oceania NDCs reviewed already include well-developed urban content, gaps remain in areas such as resilient housing, informal settlements, urban climate finance, multilevel governance and integrated urban resilience planning. Addressing these gaps would help align national climate commitments with the realities of rapid urbanisation and growing climate risks across Pacific settlements.

This analysis also strengthens the link between PUF7, WUF13 and the road to Pre-COP and COP31, where Pacific countries have an opportunity to elevate cities, towns and settlements within climate negotiations and finance discussions. The priorities identified during the Pacific Urban Caucus Training provide a practical basis for informing future NDC implementation and updates, while reinforcing the localisation of climate action within the broader Pacific climate agenda.

Key Messages from Ministers/Representatives Speeches

Fiji

- Whole-of-government coordination through an Informal Settlement Taskforce linking housing, land, climate and social protection.
- Delivery anchored in the National Housing Policy 2025–2030 and the Informal Settlement Upgrading Programme, backed by increased budgets and secured development leases.
- Resilient, inclusive implementation—cyclone-resistant housing for vulnerable groups plus city risk assessments and resilience plans supported by stronger data (national housing database and settlement survey).

Kiribati

- Governance and coordination as the foundation for climate action, including direct support to local governments.
- Stronger multi-level delivery with South Tarawa and Kiritimati councils to translate national priorities into local action and strategic plans.
- Addressing finance and capacity gaps by empowering local authorities to develop bankable projects and access funding.

PNG

- Urbanisation in PNG is rapid, youthful, and increasingly informal, with informal settlements now a dominant and enduring feature of urban growth.
- PNG has updated its National Housing Policy and launched a 10-year housing blueprint (2023–2033) to better respond to current housing and urban development pressures.
- Housing outcomes depend not only on construction, but also on land systems, affordability, governance, and coordinated infrastructure and service delivery.

- Policy direction is shifting from exclusion of informal settlements toward inclusion through upgrading, with a focus on enabling approaches, private sector participation, and more resilient, well-planned cities.

Samoa

- Urbanisation framed as central to the Pacific's future, requiring inclusive, people-centred planning grounded in Pacific values.
- Commitment to regional cooperation and solidarity to advance a shared Pacific urban agenda.
- Focus on resilient secondary towns and integrated planning/governance, with formal interest in hosting PUF in 2029 for shared learning.

Solomon Islands

- Honiara's land constraints and historical development drive informality and vulnerability, requiring place-based, community-led planning.
- Advancing the Suva Statement through customary tenure, risk-informed planning and climate-resilient housing, including upgrading Temporary Occupation License (TOL) settlements via surveys, mapping and tenure formalisation.
- Calling for regional mechanisms (e.g., Pacific Urban Tenure & Resilience Fund), standardised data tools, donor–local alignment, and capacity building through networks and city partnerships.

Tonga

- Spatial planning positioned as the key tool to manage urbanisation under severe land constraints, including a national framework and review of the 20-year capital plan.
- Responding to rising landlessness and homelessness around the capital through resettlement and longer-term planning measures.
- Emphasising infrastructure investment and development-partner engagement, and advocating for a regional ministerial forum linked to leaders-level processes.

Tuvalu

- Climate finance access highlighted as the primary barrier despite frameworks and strong political leadership.
- Requesting simpler, faster and more practical financing pathways tailored to small-island contexts.
- Flagging fragmented mandates and overlapping responsibilities, and seeking regional support to harmonise governance and elevate financing barriers to higher-level forums.

Vanuatu

- Urban policy coordinated through the Ministry of Internal Affairs, integrating climate policy, urban development and finance with a focus on informal settlements.
- Strong governance architecture via the National Advisory Board and Climate Finance Working Group, supported by urban/housing coordination committees.
- Post-2024 earthquake reforms accelerating a National Housing Policy (2025) and strengthened Building Code, alongside settlement mapping/upgrading, new housing models and PPP exploration.



Panelists at "Pacific Ministerial Caucus"
Photo Credot: Daniel Wala Photography

CLOSING PLENARY

Pacific Cities and Towns as the 'Engine Room' of Climate Resilience

The Day 2 Closing Plenary, moderated by Ms. Kazuko Ishigaki (UN-Habitat), convened a high-level dialogue on how Pacific cities and towns drive climate resilience, drawing together national and city leaders and regional risk-finance expertise. Contributions from Hon. Harry Tekaiti (Kiribati), Mr. Leith Veremaito (Vanuatu), Ms. Cindy Vunagi (Solomon Islands) and Mr. Ravu Frank (NCDC, PNG) reinforced that resilience action must be implemented where risks concentrate—particularly in informal and high-risk urban areas—through stronger coordination, risk-informed planning and locally grounded solutions.

The dialogue also highlighted the role of risk financing through contributions from Ms. Irma Daphney Stone (PCRIC), who outlined parametric insurance approaches designed to enable rapid post-disaster support, and Ms. Debra Sungi (Climate Change and Development Authority, PNG), who emphasised aligning national climate policy and finance with urban priorities and strengthening domestic systems and governance to mobilise climate finance more effectively. The session closed with reflections from Mr. Steve Gawler (ICLEI Oceania), underscoring the need to strengthen local government capability and position towns and cities centrally in climate action and implementation.

Key Messages

- Cities are the frontline delivery system for resilience. Climate impacts are already being felt in urban areas; getting urban planning, services and settlement management right is essential to national stability and long-term resilience.
- Finance must match urban realities—through better alignment and faster instruments. Stronger domestic coordination for climate finance, combined with tools such as disaster risk insurance/parametric mechanisms, can help close the gap between risk and response.
- Implementation depends on integrated governance and locally grounded solutions. Reducing siloed responsibilities, strengthening local government capacity, and embedding local knowledge and nature-based approaches into planning were emphasised as practical pathways to scale impact.



Speakers of Day 2 Closing Plenary
Photo Credit: Daniel Wala Photography

Special Activity - Governor's Walk - Active & Healthy Pacific Cities

As part of the 7th Pacific Urban Forum program, a special early morning activity was organized on Day 2, Wednesday 25th March 2026. The event, titled Active & Healthy Pacific Cities -Governor's Walk, was facilitated under the Amazing Port Moresby initiative.

The walk commenced at Sir Hubert Murray Stadium and concluded at Ela Beach, symbolizing Port Moresby's commitment to promoting health, wellness, and community engagement as integral components of sustainable urban living.

This activity highlighted the importance of integrating active lifestyles into the broader urban development agenda. It reinforced the message that sustainable cities are not only about infrastructure and housing but also about fostering environments where citizens can thrive physically, socially, and culturally. The Governor's Walk served as a practical demonstration of the Active & Healthy Pacific Cities theme, showcasing Port Moresby's vision of creating a safe, inclusive, and vibrant city. It also provided an informal networking opportunity for delegates, encouraging fellowship and dialogue outside the formal sessions of the Forum.



Governor's Walk
Photo Credit: Daniel Wala Photography



Governor Parkop at the Governor's Walk
Photo Credit: Daniel Wala Photography



Getting ready for the Governor's Walk
Photo Credit: Daniel Wala Photography

Day 3 – Thursday 26th March

OPENING PLENARY

Multilateralism & the Blue Urban Pacific – Stronger Together

Day 3 opening plenary convened a high-level dialogue on how the Pacific can strengthen multilateral cooperation to deliver practical outcomes for cities and towns as urbanisation accelerates and climate risks intensify. The session opened with a welcome and recap of Day 2 by Mr. James Wong (NHC), who emphasised regional solidarity and the need to invest in succession and youth participation to sustain long-term urban resilience efforts.

Moderated by Mr. Nicholas Booth (UNDP PNG), the discussion positioned multilateralism as essential for addressing cross-border challenges and as an opportunity for the Pacific to amplify its priorities through major global processes. Mr. Sefanaia Nawadra (SPREP) highlighted the Pacific's history of effective multilateral leadership and argued that urbanisation can be advanced by leveraging existing regional frameworks and coordination mechanisms, while elevating gaps that require collective action. Ms. Andie Fong Toy (ESCAP) stressed that alignment must start with local priorities, supported by clearer translation from global frameworks to local implementation, predictable resourcing, and stronger Pacific representation in regional/global urban platforms.



Participants at Opening Plenary
Photo Credit: Pidgin Productions

Ms. Lucy Slack (CLGF) reinforced that “development is local,” calling for a stronger local government voice in multilateral decision-making and better resourcing to overcome unfunded mandates and enable real delivery. Mr. Maselusi Amiatu (Samoa) echoed the need for empowered local governance and improved access to climate finance, particularly for smaller island contexts.

Key Messages

- Multilateralism remains indispensable for Pacific urban resilience, and the region can build on past leadership to elevate urban priorities.
- Local governments need stronger voice, capacity, and resourcing so regional/global commitments translate into implementation.
- Better alignment is required between global frameworks and local needs—supported by practical translation mechanisms and more accessible long-term financing and support.



Panelists of the Day 3 Opening Plenary
Photo Credit: Daniel Wala Photography

BREAKOUT SESSIONS

Climate Migration Urban Adaptation Pathways (led by IOM, University of Melbourne)

This session examined how Pacific cities and towns are facing new forms of rural-to-urban and intra-urban migration driven by climate change impacts in both rural areas and vulnerable urban locations. It explored how Pacific Island Countries and Territories are developing strategies to manage these pressures and support climate adaptation through migration.

The session took the form of a dialogue on the approaches and challenges involved in facilitating urban migration as an adaptation pathway for the Pacific. Regional context was provided on differing rural-to-urban migration patterns across the region, followed by case study evidence from Papua New Guinea and Solomon Islands.

A key focus of the discussion was the complexity of addressing climate hazards across multiple sites of exposure, reflecting the fluidity of human movement both into and within Pacific cities and towns. Participants highlighted the need for a regional framework to better understand, compare and support diverse migration and adaptation contexts across the Pacific.

Key Messages

- Climate change is reshaping rural-to-urban and intra-urban migration patterns across the Pacific.
- Migration can be an important adaptation pathway, but requires planned, inclusive and well-supported urban responses.
- Pacific countries face diverse migration contexts, requiring approaches that are sensitive to local drivers, risks and settlement patterns.

- Climate hazards often affect people across multiple sites of exposure, including rural areas, vulnerable urban locations and informal settlements.
- A regional framework is needed to support shared learning, policy development and climate migration planning across the Pacific.

Housing, Land & Basic Services: PNUA & WUF13 (led by UN-Habitat)

This session explored how regional cooperation can help accelerate implementation of the Pacific New Urban Agenda (PNUA), with a focus on the interconnected priorities of housing, land, and basic urban services. Discussions highlighted the importance of integrated approaches to addressing urban informality and vulnerability, and considered how these priorities align with UN-Habitat's broader strategic direction in the lead-up to World Urban Forum 13 (WUF13). Examples from Fiji and Honiara illustrated how regional frameworks can help localise sustainable development goals at the community level, including through action on water and sanitation, solid waste management, mobility, and sustainable energy.



"Housing, Land & Basic Services: PNUA & WUF13" session
Photo Credit: Daniel Wala Photography

The session emphasised that while policy frameworks are in place, implementation remains a major challenge and requires stronger collaboration between governments, development partners, regional institutions, and communities. Participants also highlighted the importance of decentralisation and more balanced provincial development to reduce pressure on capital cities, including the growth of informal settlements. In the context of customary land, the discussion pointed to Fiji's land-leasing system as a useful example of how landowner rights can be maintained while enabling sustainable development through cooperation between government and local communities.

Key Messages

- Housing, land, and basic services must be addressed through integrated approaches, as they are closely linked to urban vulnerability, informality, and sustainable urban development.
- Stronger collaboration is needed to translate regional and national frameworks into action, particularly through coordinated efforts between governments, partners, and communities.
- Decentralisation and the development of secondary towns and provinces can help reduce pressure on capital cities and limit the expansion of informal settlements.
- Secure and collaborative land arrangements are critical, and models such as Fiji's land-leasing system demonstrate how customary ownership can be maintained while supporting sustainable development.

SDG Localization & Leveraging VLRs

(led by ESCAP/UN-Habitat)

The discussion highlights the importance of strengthening the localization of the SDGs in the Pacific, particularly through tools such as Voluntary Local Reviews (VLRs).

Key challenges include limited data sharing, weak coordination among stakeholders, and insufficient funding and capacity. To address these gaps, there is a strong need for greater civil society and community engagement, improved data collection and reporting systems, and better alignment between national and local priorities. Both top-down and bottom-up approaches are essential, with local governments playing a critical role in measuring and implementing SDGs. Overall, enhanced collaboration, stakeholder participation, and data-driven strategies are crucial to advancing progress on the SDGs in the region.

Key Messages

- Multilevel reporting: Stronger alignment between national and local priorities is needed for effective SDG implementation, with local governments playing a central role in delivering and tracking progress at community level.
- Participation: Civil society, community engagement, and multi-stakeholder partnerships are essential to localising the SDGs and strengthening accountability.
- Data: Data gaps and weak information sharing remain major barriers to SDG progress and must be addressed through better collection, tracking, and reporting systems.
- Capacity building: Limited funding and technical capacity continue to constrain implementation, highlighting the need for greater investment in skills and resources.



Speakers from the "SDG Localization & Leveraging VLRs" Session
Photo credit: Daniel Wala Photography

Citizens & Wantoks: Planning for Urban Life (led by Atlas Urban)

This session explored how rapid urbanisation in Melanesian cities is reshaping the relationship between traditional social structures and modern urban life. Panellists discussed how first-generation urban dwellers continue to rely on kinship networks and informal settlement patterns while facing the high cost of formal housing and increasing pressure on inherited planning systems. The discussion highlighted the need for more strategic approaches to urban growth, including new housing models, stronger infrastructure planning, and better coordination between public and private actors across PNG and the Pacific.

Key Messages

- Urban growth in Melanesian cities must respond to the realities of kinship-based settlement patterns, informality, and the high cost of formal housing.
- More strategic and adaptive planning approaches are needed to manage urban expansion beyond inherited zoning frameworks.
- Bridging informality and formality will require new housing models, coordinated infrastructure delivery, and stronger collaboration between public and private sectors

Mayor's Multi-Level Governance Forum (led by CLGF/ICLEI)

The Mayor's Multi-Level Governance Forum, moderated by Ms. Lucy Slack (CLGF), brought together local government representatives from across the Pacific to discuss priorities for making urbanisation work in diverse island contexts. Participants highlighted common pressures facing councils and municipalities, including rapid urban growth, climate and disaster risks, limited finance and technical capacity, weak coordination across levels of government, and increasing demands on local service delivery. The discussion underscored the need for stronger multi-level governance, more direct and accountable financing for local governments, and inclusive local systems that reflect the needs of youth, women, rural communities, informal settlements and vulnerable groups.

Key Messages

- Pacific local governments are on the frontline of managing urbanisation, climate risks and community wellbeing, but often lack the finance, staffing and technical capacity needed to respond effectively.
- Stronger multi-level governance is needed to improve coordination between national, provincial and local authorities, and to ensure local priorities are reflected in national planning, financing and implementation systems.
- Inclusive and accountable local governance is essential, with greater participation from youth, women, communities and local actors, alongside improved transparency and access to development and climate finance.



Speakers of "Citizens & Wantoks" session
Photo credit: Daniel Wala Photography

PLENARY 2

Partnering for an Urban Agenda for the Blue Pacific

Day 3 Plenary 2 focused on translating the Suva Statement into practical regional action, beginning with Hon. Maciu Kauto Nalumisa (Fiji) revisiting the Statement's intent and stressing the importance of political will, inclusive urban governance, and partnerships to deliver resilient, liveable cities—particularly through strengthened local government systems and actionable commitments.

A set of high-level responses, moderated by Ms. Karibaiti Taoaba (CLGF Pacific), then reflected on how countries and partners can advance implementation. Hon. Lency Vokia (Solomon Islands) underscored the need for coordinated, risk-informed urban development (including land, housing, and governance) and proposed concrete regional mechanisms to support city delivery. Ms. Marthalina Ngatuaime Maui (Cook Islands) highlighted the importance of aligning national and local priorities, improving enabling legislation and planning systems, and addressing constraints faced by outer islands (including isolation, service delivery, and data needs).

Ms. Kazuko Ishigaki (UN-Habitat) reaffirmed the value of the Suva Statement as a regional platform for scaling solutions—especially on housing, land and basic services—and emphasized multi-level, cross-sector partnerships to move from pilots to implementation at national scale. Mr. Sepesa Rasili (PIANGO) reinforced the role of civil society in ensuring development remains people-centred, inclusive and accountable, with meaningful participation and community ownership.

Key Messages

- Move from principles to delivery: the Suva Statement now requires clear, coordinated implementation across governance levels and sectors, anchored in political will and practical commitments.
- Partnerships must enable local action: effective delivery depends on empowered local governments, aligned national–local planning, and stronger collaboration with regional agencies, UN partners, and civil society.
- Finance, data and inclusion are decisive enablers: cities need better access to fit-for-purpose finance, stronger data systems for planning and targeting, and genuine inclusion of communities to ensure resilience outcomes “stick”.



Panelists of Plenary 2
Photo credit: Caza Electrotek, PNG

PUF7 CLOSING PLENARY

The PUF7 Closing Plenary, moderated by Mr. Jon Ndramei (NHC), brought together final reflections on Pacific urbanisation and next steps for regional cooperation. In line with earlier discussions across the forum, the closing segment reinforced that Pacific cities and towns are central to resilience and development outcomes, and that the region must strengthen collaboration to move from dialogue to coordinated delivery.

Hon. Governor Powes Parkop (NCDC) emphasised the importance of learning from Pacific urban histories while planning for accelerating future pressures. Key themes included inclusive urbanisation, the need to balance customary/Indigenous land rights with human rights and service delivery, and ensuring that vulnerable groups—including persons with disabilities—are not left behind in planning and implementation.

Mr. Richard Howard (UN Resident Coordinator, PNG) presented “A Pacific Urban Roadmap: Towards WUF13, COP31, APUF9 & PUF8,” outlining how PUF7 outcomes can be carried forward into key regional and global processes.

The roadmap underscored the need to elevate the urban agenda within regional decision-making, strengthen the Pacific Urban Partnership as a coordination mechanism, and ensure Pacific urban priorities remain visible in upcoming convenings and reporting processes.

A closing address by Hon. John Rosso (PNG Deputy Prime Minister; Minister for Lands & Immigration) was referenced as reinforcing the importance of sustained political leadership, coordination, and resource mobilisation for inclusive, resilient urban development. The plenary concluded with a vote of thanks by Ms. Karibaiti Taoaba (CLGF Pacific), reaffirming CLGF and the PUP’s commitments to regional peer learning, support for local governments, and continued joint action on shared urban challenges.

Key Messages

- Cities and towns are the engine room of resilience and development. The plenary reinforced that inclusive urban governance and service delivery are critical to long-term stability and prosperity across the Blue Pacific.
- The region must shift from dialogue to delivery through stronger coordination. Carrying PUF7 outcomes forward requires clear regional pathways—including stronger Pacific Urban Partnership coordination—and alignment to upcoming regional/global milestones (WUF13, COP31, APUF9, PUF8).
- Rights-based, locally grounded implementation is essential. Urban solutions must respect customary/Indigenous land systems, uphold human rights, and embed inclusion for vulnerable groups as a core design principles.



Hon. John Rosso, Deputy Prime Minister, PNG at “PUF7 Closing Plenary”
Photo Credit: Caza Electrotek, PNG

Closing Reception

The closing reception marked the conclusion of PUF7, bringing participants together to reflect on the forum's outcomes and celebrate continued collaboration toward resilient and inclusive Pacific towns and cities.



Governor Parkop's speech at the closing reception
Photo Credit: Daniel Wala Photography



Participants at the closing reception
Photo Credit: Daniel Wala Photography



Delegates outside of APEC HAUS
Photo Credit: Daniel Wala Photography



Performance at the closing reception
Photo Credit: Daniel Wala Photography



Performance at the closing reception
Photo Credit: Daniel Wala Photography



Participants at the closing reception
Photo Credit: Daniel Wala Photography

Site Visits - Housing and Urban Development Projects

On Friday 27th March 2026, delegates undertook a series of site visits to key housing and urban development project areas in Port Moresby. These visits were organized to provide practical insights into the implementation of the Settlement to Suburb Program and broader government-led housing initiatives.

The itinerary included:

- 9 Mile Rouna Quarry Pilot Site – showcasing the pilot housing and settlement upgrading initiative under NCDC's Settlement to Suburb Program.
- Tuhava Housing Project – a tripartite arrangement between government, landowners, and private developers aimed at delivering affordable housing on the outskirts of Port Moresby.
- Duran Farm Housing Project – a national government housing initiative demonstrating large-scale delivery of affordable homes.
- Lakeside Housing Project – another government-backed development highlighting approaches to planned suburban expansion.

These site visits provided delegates with firsthand exposure to the challenges and opportunities of urban transformation in Port Moresby. They illustrated how policy directives are being translated into tangible outcomes through coordinated planning, infrastructure delivery, and public-private partnerships. The visits reinforced the Forum's theme of building sustainable, inclusive, and resilient Pacific cities, while positioning Port Moresby as a living laboratory for innovative housing models and settlement upgrading strategies. Lessons drawn from these projects will inform future urban expansion across PNG and the wider Pacific.



Delegates having lunch during the site visits
Photo Credit: NCDC



Housing projects site visits in Port Moresby
Photo Credit: NCDC

Market Stalls at the Venue

The market stalls served as a practical showcase of Port Moresby's informal economy and the vital role of women vendors in urban life. Women vendors from across the city showcased local goods and everyday market activity, offering delegates an authentic glimpse of the city's market spaces, livelihoods, and local enterprise. The activity also complemented the launch of NCDC's 10-year Women's Economic Empowerment Program, reinforcing the importance of supporting vendors, strengthening market systems, and recognising women's enterprise as part of inclusive urban development. This complemented wider Forum discussions on inclusive growth, food security, livelihoods, and strengthening the informal economy across Pacific cities.



Market vendors at the PUF7 venue
Photo Credit: Daniel Wala Photography



Media Coverage of PUF7

PUF7 received published coverage before, during and after the Forum through host-city channels, PNG media, and regional partner outlets, helping to raise the profile of the event across the country and the wider Pacific. Coverage highlighted Port Moresby's role as the first PNG host city, the Forum's focus on urbanisation, housing, infrastructure and climate resilience, and the significance of the event within PNG's 50th Independence year.

Pre-event articles by NCDC and The PNG Bulletin introduced the Forum and its expected regional participation, while opening-day and post-event reporting by The PNG Bulletin, One Papua New Guinea, and PNG Business News covered the official opening, Prime Minister Marape's keynote, and the Forum's wider regional significance. Regional partner coverage from CLGF also extended visibility beyond Papua New Guinea by highlighting participation from Pacific local government and urban partners.



Ms. Kazuko Ishigaki (UN-habitat) interviewed by PNG National Newspaper
Photo Credit: UN-Habitat

Selected Media Coverage Links

- [NCDC – Amazing Port Moresby Set To Host The 7th Pacific Urban Forum](#) – official host-city announcement.
- [The PNG Bulletin – Port Moresby to host 7th Pacific Urban Forum](#) – advance coverage of the Forum and expected delegates.
- [The PNG Bulletin – NCD hosts 7th Pacific Urban Forum](#) – opening-day reporting from the Forum.
- [The PNG Bulletin – Prime Minister Marape calls for smart urbanisation at Pacific Urban Forum](#) – coverage of the Prime Minister's keynote address.
- [One Papua New Guinea – PNG and Pacific Cities Can Be Transformed Through Smart Planning: PM Marape](#) – reporting on the Forum's urban development message.
- [PNG Business News – Marape calls for smart urbanisation at Pacific Urban Forum](#) – business media coverage of the keynote and policy themes.
- [PNG Business News – PNG, Port Moresby Hosts Landmark 7th Pacific Urban Forum, Driving Regional Urban Agenda](#) – post-event reporting on the Forum's broader significance.
- [CLGF – PUF7: representatives from across the Pacific meeting in Port Moresby](#) – regional partner coverage highlighting Pacific participation.
- [PNG Haus Bung. "Women Businesses to Be on Show at Pacific Urban Forum."](#) – Covered women market vendors at PUF7 and their role in showcasing Port Moresby's informal economy and everyday urban life.

Acknowledgements

The 7th Pacific Urban Forum was made possible through the collective efforts of a wide range of partners and contributors from across the Blue Pacific and beyond. PUF7 was a genuinely multi-stakeholder event, with shared ownership of its dialogue, outcomes, and future directions.

Special appreciation is extended to the Government of PNG for its leadership and substantial financial support, which was central to the successful delivery of the Forum and enabled many associated sponsorships. Appreciation is also extended to NCDC and the people of Port Moresby for their generous hospitality and support.

Recognition is further given to the many governments, organisations, and individuals whose contributions helped shape the programme and make PUF7 a meaningful regional gathering. Their efforts, both visible and behind the scenes, were integral to the success of the Forum.



PUF7 signage on the Port Moresby waterfront
Photo Credit: Daniel Wala Photography



PACIFIC URBAN FORUM

24 - 26 MARCH 2026

DAY 1 (Tuesday 24th March)

7:00 am	Arrival and Registration					
8:00 am	Opening Ceremony Moderator: Jon Ndramei, NHC Keynote Opening Address – Hon. James Marape, Prime Minister of Papua New Guinea					
10:00 am	Host City Welcome – Hon. Governor Powes Parkop, NCDC & PUF7 Co-Chair Welcome from the Pacific Urban Partnership – Kazuko Ishigaki, Asia-Pacific Regional Director, UN-Habitat Introduction to the 7th Pacific Urban Forum – Hon. Dr Kobby Bomareo, PNG Minister for Housing, PUF7 Chair Vote of Thanks – Karibaiti Taoaba, Regional Director, CLGF Pacific					
	Group Photo, Morning Tea & NCDC Women's Development Plan Launch					
	Plenary 1, Day 1: The State of Urbanization in the Blue Pacific Moderator: Andie Fong Toy, AP Overview of the 2026 State of Urbanization in the Blue Pacific Report – Dr Alexei Trundle, University of Melbourne High-Level Dialogue on Sustainable Urban Pathways for the Pacific Q&A Hon. Minister Ampelosa Manoa Tehulu (Tuvalu) Hon. Minister Andrew Napuat (Vanuatu) A/g Chancellor Finkewe Zurechnuoc (PNG UniTech Mayor Tetabo Manaima (Betio Town Council & Chair of KILGA) Director Teopola Kulavati (Ministry of Housing, Fiji)					
12:30pm	Lunch					
1:30pm	Breakout Sessions					
	Breakout Room 1(1A) Settlements to Suburbs – Port Moresby Showcase (NCDC)*	Breakout Room 2(2A) Embracing the Informal Economy (NCDC/UN Women/ PNG NRI)	Breakout Room 3(3A) A New Pacific Urban Research Agenda (UniMelb / USP / PNG Unitech / PNG NRI)	Breakout Room 4(4A) Food Security and Climate Resilience: Kiribati Case Study (ICLEI / CLGF / KILGA)	Breakout Room 5(5A) Training Pathways for Pacific Urban Governance (EAROPH Australia)	Roundtable Room (RA) Pacific Urban & Regional Planning Network Launch (ADB / APP PNG)
2:30 pm	Breakout Room 1(1B) Strategic Urban Planning: Lessons from Port Moresby (NCDC)*	Breakout Room 2(2B) Resilient Pacific Urban Institutions & Communities (UN-Habitat)	Breakout Room 3 (3B) Case Studies of Master Planning in the Urban Pacific (Govt. Tonga / PCCC)	Breakout Room 4(4B) Commonwealth Declaration on Sust. Urbanisation (Govt. Fiji / CLGF)*	Breakout Room 5(5B) Open Session 1 Tok Stori Space (Pacific Urban Partnership)	Roundtable Room (RB) What Next for EAROPH Pacific (EAROPH Pacific)
3:30pm	Afternoon Tea					
4:00pm	Closing Plenary, Day 1: Empowerment & Equality for the Urban Citizens of the Blue Pacific High-Level Panel Q&A Moderator: Mazrina Khalid (EAROPH) Hon. Toelupe Poumulinuku Onesemo, Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Works, Transport, and Infrastructure, Samoa Tiene Tooki Kanoua, CEO KiLGA (Kiribati) Taaniela Kula, CEO Ministry of Lands and Natural Resources, Tonga Tevita Boseiwaqa, Suva City Chairman (Fiji)					
5:30pm	Closing Remarks – Mazrina Khalid, EAROPH Secretary General					
6:00pm	PUF7 Welcome Reception (APEC Haus – BeachSide East) <i>Hosted by the National Capital District Commission</i>					
9:00pm	Close – Transport to Listed Hotels Provided					





PACIFIC URBAN FORUM

24 - 26 MARCH 2026

DAY 2 (Wednesday 25th March)

6:30am Active & Healthy Pacific Cities – Sir H.M. Stadium to Ela Beach Governor's Walk (Facilitated by Amazing Port Moresby)

Transit to APEC Haus / Arrival and Registration for Day 2 – buses departing hotels at 8:30am

9:30am **Opening Plenary, Day 2: Setting an Urban Climate Agenda for the Blue Pacific**

Moderator: Kemo Pepena-Guise NCDC

Welcome & Recap of Day 1: Christopher Dobunaba, NCDC Lead Architect (PNG)

Urban Climate Resilience for Island States – Hon. Dr Taniela Fusimalohi, Minister for Lands, Survey (Tonga)

From Regionalism to Local Resilience in Pacific Cities & Towns – Sefanaia Nawadra, Director General, SPREP

Cultural Resilience & Revitalisation for Pacific Urban Communities – Milicent Barty, Kastom Keepers Sol. Isl.

11:00am Morning Tea

Breakout Sessions

11:30am	Breakout Room 1(1C) Urban NbS for Resilient Island Communities (Water Sensitive Cities / Monash University)	Breakout Room 2(2C) Recovery Ready: Resilient Pacific Urban Futures (UNDRR)	Breakout Room 3(3C) Yidinji Proposition – Indigenous Communities (EAROPH / PICAN)	Breakout Room 4(4C) Enabling Climate Finance for Pacific Cities & Towns (ESCAP / UNDP)	Breakout Room 5 (5C) (EAROPH / SPREP)	Roundtable Room (RC) Pacific Urban Ministerial Caucus [invitational session] (UN-Habitat)
---------	---	---	---	--	--	--

1:00pm Lunch

Breakout Sessions

2:00pm	Breakout Room 1(1D) Co-benefits of Urban Settlement Upgrading (Govt. of Fiji/UN-Habitat / Monash Uni)	Breakout Room 2(2D) Urban Resilience & Compounding Risks (ESCAP)	Breakout Room 3(3D) Promoting Human Rights in Pacific Cities (OHCR / UN-Habitat)	Breakout Room 4(4D) Mobilizing Pacific Urban Finance (CLGF / PNG UniTech / Atlas Urban)*	Breakout Room 5 (5D) Capacity Building Tools for Pacific Master Planning (EAROPH Int.)	Roundtable Room (RD) A Housing Agenda for the Urban Pacific (PNG National Housing Corporation)*
--------	---	--	--	--	--	---

3:30 pm Afternoon Tea

4:00 pm **Closing Plenary, Day 2: Pacific Cities and Towns as the 'Engine Room' of Climate Resilience**

High-Level Dialogue Moderator: Kazuko Ishigaki, UN-Habitat

Hon. Harry Tekaiti, Minister for Culture and Internal Affairs, Kiribati

Leith Veremaito, Director General, Ministry of Internal Affairs, Vanuatu

Cindy Vunagi, Director of Physical Planning, Solomon Islands

Ravu Frank, City Manager, National Capital District Commission, PNG

Irma Daphney Stone, Risk Manager, Pacific Catastrophe Risk Insurance Company

Debra Sungi, Managing Director of the PNG Climate Change and Development Authority

Closing Remarks: Steve Gawler, Director International Programs, ICLEI Oceania

5:30 pm Close – Transport to Listed Hotels Provided



DAY 3 (Thurs 26th March)

6:30 am	Zumba on Ela Beach (Facilitated by Amazing Port Moresby)					
8:30 am	Arrival (buses from hotels at 8:00am)					
9:00 am	Opening Plenary, Day 3: Multilateralism & the Blue Urban Pacific – Stronger Together Welcome & Recap of Day 2: James Wong, Chairman of the Board, National Housing Corporation, PNG High Level Dialogue Moderator: Nicholas Booth (UNDP PNG) Sefanaia Nawadra, SPREP Director General Andie Fong Toy, Head of ESCAP for the Pacific Lucy Slack, Director General, CLGF Maselusi Amiatu, ACEO Land Transport, Ministry of Works, Transport & Infrastructure, Samoa Q&A					
11:00am	Morning Tea					
	Extended Breakout Sessions					
11:30am	Breakout Room 1 (1E) Climate Migration: Urban Adaptation Pathways (IOM / Uni. Melbourne)	Breakout Room 2(2E) Housing, Land & Basic Services: PNUA & WUF13 (UN-Habitat)	Breakout Room 3 (3E) Open Session 2 Tok Stori Space (Pacific Urban Partnership)*	Breakout Room 4 (4E) SDG Localization & Leveraging VLRs (ESCAP / UN-Habitat / EAROPH)	Breakout Room 5 (5E) Citizens & Wantoks: Planning for Urban Life (Atlas Urban/APPPNG)	Roundtable Room (RE) Mayor's Multi-Level Governance Forum (CLGF/ICLEI)
1:00 pm	Lunch					
2:00 pm	Plenary 2, Day 3: Partnering for an Urban Agenda for the Blue Pacific Revisiting the Suva Statement – Hon. Maciu Kauto Nalumisa, Minister for Local Government and Housing, Fiji High-Level Responses Moderator: Karibati Taoaba, CLGF Pacific. Hon. Lency Vokia, Minister for Lands, Housing & Survey, Solomon Islands Marthalina Ngatuaine Maui, Pa Enua Governance Director, Cook Islands Kazuko Ishigaki, UN-Habitat Regional Director Sepesa Rasili, PIANGO Treasurer & FCoSS President Action Commitments to Implement the Suva Statement					
4:00 pm	Afternoon Tea					
4:30 pm	PUF7 Closing Plenary Moderator: Jon Ndramei PNG NHC Pacific Cities: Looking Back to Look Forward – Hon. Governor Powes Parkop, NCDC A Pacific Urban Roadmap: Towards WUF13, CoP31, APUF9 & PUF8 – Richard Howard, UN RC, PNG Closing Address – PNG Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Lands & Immigration Hon. John Rosso Vote of Thanks from the PUP – Karibaiti Taoaba, CLGF Pacific Regional Director					
6:00pm	PUF7 Closing Reception (Ela Beach)					
8:00pm	Close – Transport to Listed Hotels Provided					



