



UN HABITAT



# FIJI: GREATER SUVA URBAN PROFILE



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UNITED NATIONS HUMAN SETTLEMENTS PROGRAMME

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## FOREWORD



According to research published in UN-Habitat's flagship report, *The State of the World's Cities 2010-2011*, developing regions including Africa, the Caribbean and the Pacific, will have more people living in urban than rural areas by the year 2030. With half the world's population already living in

urban areas, the challenges we face in the battle against urban poverty, our quest for cities without slums, for cities where women feel safer, for inclusive cities with power, water and sanitation, and affordable transport, for better planned cities, and for cleaner, greener cities is daunting.

But as this series shows, there are many interesting solutions and best practices to which we can turn. After all, the figures tell us that during the decade 2000-2010, a total of 227 million people in developing countries moved out of slum conditions. In other words, governments, cities and partner institutions have collectively exceeded the slum target of the Millennium Development Goals twice over, and ten years ahead of the agreed 2020 deadline.

Asia and the Pacific stood at the forefront of successful efforts to reach the slum target, with all governments in the region improving the lives of an estimated 172 million slum dwellers between 2000-2010.

In sub-Saharan Africa though, the total proportion of the urban population living in slums has decreased by only 5 per cent (or 17 million people). Ghana, Senegal, Uganda, and Rwanda were the most successful countries in the sub-region, reducing the proportions of slum dwellers by over one-fifth in the last decade.

Some 13 per cent of the progress made towards the global slum target occurred in Latin America and the Caribbean, where an estimated 30 million people have moved out of slum conditions since the year 2000.

Yet, UN-Habitat estimates confirm that the progress made on the slum target has not been sufficient to counter the demographic expansion in informal settlements in the developing world. In this sense, efforts to reduce the numbers of slum dwellers are neither satisfactory nor adequate.

As part of our drive to address this crisis, UN-Habitat is working with the European Commission and the Brussels-based Secretariat of the African, Caribbean

and Pacific Group to support sustainable urban development. Given the urgent and diverse needs, we found it necessary to develop a tool for rapid assessment and strategic planning to guide immediate, mid- and long-term interventions. And here we have it in the form of this series of publications.

The Participatory Slum Upgrading Programme is based on the policy dialogue between UN-Habitat, the African, Caribbean and Pacific Secretariat and the European Commission which dates back to the year 2002. When the three parties met at UN-Habitat headquarters in June 2009, more than 200 delegates from over 50 countries approved a resounding call on the international community to pay greater attention to these urbanization matters, and to extend the slum upgrading programme to all countries in the African, Caribbean and Pacific Group.

It is worth recalling here how grateful we are that the European Commission's 9th European Development Fund for African, Caribbean and Pacific countries provided EUR 4 million (USD 5.7 million at June 2011 rates) to enable UN-Habitat to conduct the programme which now serves 59 cities in 23 African countries, and more than 20 cities in six Pacific, and four Caribbean countries.

Indeed, since its inception in 2008, the slum upgrading programme has achieved the confidence of partners at city and country level in Africa, the Caribbean and in the Pacific. It is making a major contribution aimed at helping in urban poverty reduction efforts, as each report in this series shows."

I wish to express my gratitude to the European Commission and the African, Caribbean and Pacific Secretariat for their commitment to this slum upgrading programme. I have every confidence that the results outlined in this profile, and others, will serve to guide the development of responses for capacity building and investments in the urban sector.

Further, I would like to thank each Country Team for their continued support to this process which is essential for the successful implementation of the Participatory Slum Upgrading Programme.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Joan Clos". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

**Dr. Joan Clos**

Executive Director, UN-Habitat



# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## INTRODUCTION

The Greater Suva Urban Area (GSUA) is confronting a range of challenges relating to urban poverty, environmental risk, infrastructure and land management, amongst others. In order to effectively engage these challenges, and seek solutions to them, this urban profile documents and analyses six key components of the GSUA: urban governance and finance, urban planning and management, land development and administration, urban infrastructure and services, urban housing and shelter, and climate change and disaster risk reduction.

Urban profiling consists of a set of actions to assess urban needs and capacity issues at the city level. It employs a participatory approach where priorities are agreed on through consultative processes. Urban profiling is currently being implemented in over 20 countries in Africa, the Middle East, the Caribbean and the Pacific. Urban profiling in Fiji includes an overall national urban profile and urban profiles of three urban areas, namely the Greater Suva Urban Area, Lautoka City and Nadi Town. Each profile will be published separately.

## BACKGROUND

The GSUA comprises the capital city of Fiji, Suva City, and three municipal towns namely Lami, Nasinu and Nausori Towns. The GSUA is the country's largest urban area holding an estimated 57 per cent (244,000 people) of the national urban population in 2007. The urban area covers 4000 hectares and forms part of the larger Suva-Nausori Corridor. The population growth rate in the GSUA hovers around 1.7 per cent on average, with towns such as Nausori Town having higher growth rates at 4 per cent. The GSUA is the country's economic centre generating an estimated 30 per cent of the national gross domestic product.

## URBAN GOVERNANCE AND FINANCE

The GSUA consists of four municipalities, each managed by a separate council. Each council is headed by a Special Administrator, appointed by the central government, and managed by a Chief Executive Officer (CEO). Both posts answer to the Ministry of Local Government, Urban Development, Housing and Environment. The performance of the Special Administrator is evaluated often, and the position has clear objectives such as improving rates collection and shifting from cash to accrual accounting in council operations. Nevertheless, overlap between the CEO and the Special Administrator posts is leading to confusion resulting in ministry level

intervention and a high turnover of staff in these roles.

Rate collection in the GSUA continues to improve, simultaneously strengthening the financial position of the municipalities and exacerbating their financial management shortcomings. Improved collection of rates is largely linked to better interaction between the public and the municipalities. The distribution of human resources between the municipalities is unequal, with Suva City enjoying more skilled staff resulting in more effective governance. In general, there is a lack of qualified, skilled staff to support municipal needs.

## URBAN PLANNING AND MANAGEMENT

Regulation and control of land development takes place within a framework of town planning schemes and by-laws. Suva, Nausori and Lami all have approved town planning schemes, and Nasinu is currently preparing its scheme. These schemes are the primary physical planning instrument used by the councils.

Despite the existence of small town planning units in three out of the four councils, implementation of schemes requires strong support from the Department of Town and Country Planning. Even Suva, the most well-equipped of the councils, is not independent. Such dependency results in long delays in approving project proposals.

## LAND DEVELOPMENT AND ADMINISTRATION

There are three categories of land ownership in the GSUA: state land which is managed by the Department of Lands and Survey, iTaukei (indigenous Fijian) lands managed by the iTaukei Lands Trust Board, and privately-held land. Administration and management is framed by relevant national acts.

Indigenous landowning units in iTaukei villages in the GSUA actively determine how land is utilized in their villages, many now seeking economic and development ventures on their lands. This is encouraged by the National Housing Policy of 2011.

## URBAN INFRASTRUCTURE AND SERVICES

The responsibility for the provision of infrastructure and basic services in the GSUA is shared between local municipalities and the central government. The latter provides water supply and sewerage services, roads, power and telecommunications. The LCC manages drainage systems, waste, street lighting, parks and community facilities. Currently, iTaukei villages are not permitted

access to municipal urban services, although this policy is under review and likely to be revoked for public health reasons.

Despite ongoing upgrades, water supply shortages and maintenance issues across the GSUA are calling for attention. Waste management and sewerage has been a focus on GSUA municipal policies since the 1990s and sanitation in the urban area is now well-managed. Solid waste management also needs improvement, with councils considering waste transfer stations, and a possible second landfill site. Roads need repair and improved maintenance, as well as expansion to cope with higher traffic loads.

## URBAN HOUSING AND SHELTER

Housing development in the GSUA includes formal detached dwellings and multi-unit apartments. Increasing demand for housing and reduced supply of land is leading to the production of higher density housing, especially in the centre of Suva. Similarly, within the informal sector, the number and density of informal settlements has increased.

The National Housing Policy, formulated in 2011, has resulted in increased provision of affordable housing, with the Housing Authority undertaking multi-phase housing projects. Affordable housing projects are also supported by a number of national and international agencies.

## CLIMATE CHANGE AND DISASTER RISK REDUCTION

While the GSUA is located on the coast, it is not as exposed to climate-related hazards as urban areas on the west coast. Nonetheless, it does suffer from natural hazards including coastal and riverine floods, earthquakes and landslides. Mangrove deforestation has increased the GSUA's vulnerability to the adverse effects of climate change by removing an effective storm surge and flood 'barrier'. However, an extensive amount of wetland has been retained around the coast and river which reduces flood risk and facilitates adaptation to climate change.

# INTRODUCTION

Rapid Urban Sector Profiling for Sustainability is an action-oriented assessment of urban conditions which focuses on priorities, capacity gaps, and existing institutional responses to key themes at the local and national levels. The purpose of the assessment is to develop urban poverty reduction policies at local, national and regional levels through an assessment of needs and response mechanisms, and as a contribution to the wider-ranging implementation of the Millennium Development Goals.

The study is based on an analysis of existing data and a series of interviews with relevant stakeholders, including local communities and institutions, civil societies, the private sector, development partners and academics. This consultation typically results in collective agreement on priorities and their integration into urban poverty reduction projects, including proposed capacity building projects.

Urban profiling is being implemented in over 20 African, Arab, Caribbean and Pacific countries, offering an opportunity for comparative regional analysis. Once completed, this series of studies will provide a blueprint for central and local authorities and urban actors, as well as donors and external support agencies.

## METHODOLOGY

Urban profiling comprises three phases outlined below:

- i. **Phase One:** involves a rapid participatory urban profiling at national and local levels, focusing on land and land administration, governance, informal settlements, urban health, infrastructure and services, gender, environment, disaster management, economy, urban-rural linkages and proposed interventions.
- ii. **Phase Two:** identifies priorities through a pre-

interviews through survey questionnaires conducted as part of the profile exercise. The background includes data on administration, urban planning, economy, the informal and private sectors, urban poverty, infrastructure and basic urban services, public transport, energy, social services, linkages between urban and rural areas, linkages between town and traditional urban villages, land tenure and administration, health and education.

## 2. Synthetic Assessment

The second section is structured around an assessment of six key themes: urban governance and finance; urban planning and management; land development and administration; urban infrastructure and services; housing and shelter; climate change and disaster risk management. This section also provides an overview of the existing institutional set-up, the regulatory framework, as well as resource mobilization and performance. This section also highlights agreed priorities and includes a list of identified projects.

## 3. Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) Analysis

A basic SWOT analysis and an outline of priority project proposals for each of the six key themes are provided in the third section. The project proposals include beneficiaries, partners, estimated costs, objectives and activities.



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