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SOLOMON ISLANDS: NATIONAL URBAN PROFILE



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UNITED NATIONS HUMAN SETTLEMENTS PROGRAMME
REGIONAL OFFICE FOR ASIA AND THE PACIFIC

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FOREWORDS



According to research published in UN-Habitat's¹ flagship report, *The State of the World's Cities 2010-2011*, all developing regions, including the African, Caribbean and Pacific states, 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 to 2010, a total of 227 million people in the 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 and 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 (ACP) 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 ACP 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 ACP Group.

It is worth recalling here how grateful we are that the European Commission's 9th European Development Fund for ACP 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 ACP 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, which appears to read 'Joan Clos'. The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Dr. Joan Clos

Executive Director, UN-Habitat

¹ UN-Habitat - United Nations Human Settlements Programme



Urbanization in Solomon Islands is a relatively recent phenomenon. However, rapid population growth has meant that by the time of the 2009 census, almost 20 per cent (102,030) of the country's total population lived in urban and peri-urban areas. With an annual urban growth rate of 4.7

per cent, it is projected that by 2020, about 25 per cent of the country's population will be living in urban areas if the present trend continues.

Rapid urban sector profiling studies have been undertaken in Solomon Islands by the Ministry of Lands, Housing and Survey with the support of UN-Habitat and financed by the European Commission. To date, three city profiles for Honiara, Gizo and Auki have been completed and published. The present report sets out the national urban profile, consisting of a general background and a synthesis of six themes: governance and institutional links, infrastructure development, informal settlements and housing, local economy and employment, urban land and planning and urban security and environmental safety.

The overall intention of the participatory slum upgrading programme is to assist developing countries in the Pacific region to identify their urban conditions, priority needs and capacity gaps and to ascertain how institutions are responding to these issues, so as to be able to measure the seriousness of urban problems and the gaps in response to those problems and compare them to the standards required by the Millennium Development Goals. In addition, the intention is to bring those problems to the surface so that corrective measures can be taken to improve substandard conditions and reduce the overall levels of poverty.

The identification of the thematic areas is crucial for planning, coordination and channelling of funds from both national and international sources and for implementation of urban programmes and projects. The growing recognition by the Government of Solomon

Islands of the importance of the proper management of urbanization and its perceived role as an engine for national growth will obviously attract attention towards allocation of its share of funds and institutional capacity-building towards raising the urbanization profile to its rightful place in the development of Solomon Islands.

The cross-cutting, participatory nature of rapid urban sector profiling studies is important for the planning and identification of projects for cities in Solomon Islands, for their joint funding by national, provincial and local level government and international donor agencies. The studies are important because of their focus on priority issues and because they take a relatively short time to prepare. Their role as a prerequisite for the lengthy preparation of an urban development plan can assure their place in a more holistic urban planning approach and may provide a short-term solution to some critical urban issues.

The national profile will assist the national Government to identify key urban issues to be included in its overall strategic planning and contribute national efforts to achieving Millennium Development Goal 7, target C (to reduce by half the number of people without sustainable access to safe drinking water) and target D (to achieve significant improvements in the lives of at least 100 million people living in informal settlements by 2020). As part of the efforts of the Government to achieve Millennium Development Goal 7, the Ministry of Lands, Housing and Survey has included in its corporate plan a policy intention to convert all temporary occupation licences to fixed term estates by 2020 (*source: Ministry of Lands, Housing and Survey, 2010*).

I support Solomon Islands national urban profile and look forward to further interventions from UN-Habitat (and other partners) to support the efforts and plans to improve the image and progress of urban development in our country.

Joseph Onika

Minister of Lands, Housing and Survey

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



Urban profiling is an accelerated and action-oriented assessment of needs and capacity-building at city level. It is currently being implemented in over 20 countries in Africa, the Caribbean and the Pacific and uses a structured approach where priority interventions are agreed upon through consultative processes.

The urban profiling methodology consists of three phases:

- (1) completion of a rapid participatory urban profile at national and local levels, focusing on urban thematic areas and proposed interventions;
- (2) detailed priority proposals; and
- (3) project implementation. In the Pacific region, the Pacific Urban Agenda² was endorsed by leaders of the Pacific Island Forum in 2005.

Urban profiling in Solomon Islands includes a national profile and profiles for Honiara, Gizo and Auki, each published as a separate report. The present report sets out the national urban profile, which constitutes a synthesis of six themes, namely governance and institutional links, infrastructure development, informal settlements and housing, local economy and employment, urban land and planning and urban security and environmental safety.

BACKGROUND

Urban profiling in Solomon Islands started in 2011, following a partnership agreement made between the Government of Solomon Islands and UN-Habitat in response to the sustainable development challenges of rapid urbanization. Solomon Islands has one of the highest annual urban growth rates (4.7 per cent) in the Pacific. This is putting immense pressure on urban service delivery, which is already in short supply and declining in Solomon Islands towns. Urban infrastructure and services, such as roads, drainage systems, power, housing, health and education services, solid waste management, water and sanitation have deteriorated over the years due to minimal maintenance and improvement. These problems have been exacerbated by a lack of urban policies or city development strategies, a lack of skilled human resources and poor management and weak governance at all levels of government in most towns, paving the way for the rising growth of informal settlements and failing infrastructure.

The national urban profile for Solomon Islands is the first long-term documented advocacy tool that aims to encourage a policy shift towards improving the urban planning and management of towns to achieve desired outcomes for the country. The report discusses the following key urban development challenges, which emerged from the Honiara, Gizo and Auki urban profiles.

- Governance and institutional links
- Informal settlements and housing

- Local economy and employment
- Urban security and environmental safety
- Urban land and planning
- Infrastructure development

Achieving progress in resolving these key urban development issues will play a crucial role in transforming towns into productive and liveable places.

GOVERNANCE AND INSTITUTIONAL LINKS

Effective governance and strong institutional links between the national Government, local authorities and other stakeholders is vital to achieving better service delivery in towns. Local authorities play a critical role in shaping and managing urban centres or towns through the provision and maintenance of services such as markets, education, health, recreational areas, physical planning, drainage clearance and waste management. However, for too long they have been poorly resourced and ill-equipped to execute such roles effectively.

As a result, the urban authorities in most towns, including Honiara city, continue to face inadequate technical capacity and resources to better address urban planning and management issues. Weak public sector financial management and institutional links, coupled with a lack of a national urban vision, have contributed to poor service delivery and urban development in towns. This is further affected by poor local revenue collection, limited financial support from the national Government and the lack of a lead agency with a committed and credible leadership to lead urban reform.

A number of local authorities have recently benefited from donor-supported projects such as the Provincial Government Strengthening Programme (supported by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the Honiara City Council Institutional Strengthening project (CLGF/New Zealand) and the Rapid Employment Project (World Bank) aimed at strengthening and improving institutional and basic service delivery capacity. While some local authorities have noticed improved internal revenue collection and management practices, there is still a need for effective and efficient urban governance and strong institutional links to further improve and sustain service delivery in urban centres.

INFORMAL SETTLEMENTS AND HOUSING

In spite of informal settlements painting an unsightly picture in the towns, they continue to provide affordable houses for almost 35 per cent of the lower and middle-

income earners in urban centres. Informal settlers have continued to improve their homes (illegally) over the years, resulting in a mixture of housing quality in these informal settlements, despite the lack of tenure security over the land they are occupying. Housing shortage and high rental costs in the city have driven an increasing number of middle and high-income earners into informal settlements, exacerbating health and social issues, as these areas are often lacking in key urban services, such as water and sanitation. Housing and access to land is a critical component for the overall management and strategic planning for towns or urban centres.

LOCAL ECONOMY AND EMPLOYMENT

Towns are the engines for economic growth, as they provide greater social and economic opportunities for the people. Local authorities receive internal revenue from formal economic activities in towns, but these funds are insufficient to provide capital works and maintain quality services to urban residents.

Rapid urban population growth outstrips job creation through the formal sector in the urban centres, especially in Honiara, leading to high unemployment and increasing urban poverty. Employment creation is most likely to take place in the urban informal sector, providing job opportunities for people without a formal education and linking the rural and urban economies through food production, remittances and circular migration. The informal sector needs to be supported by policy as an important source of livelihood in urban areas.

URBAN SECURITY AND ENVIRONMENT

A high rate of youth unemployment and an increasing economic gap between the rich and the poor, coupled with low policing capacity and poor resources, has given rise to urban safety and security concerns in towns, especially in Honiara. This has wider repercussions for the local and national economy, for investment and for the social well-being of urban communities. Urban security and safety are integral to achieving sustainable urban development.

The urban environment has undergone much transformation, with the rapid growth of urban centres and the development of a built environment. Some urban space is becoming hazardous and unliveable - most visible in housing developments on steep slopes, river banks, swampy areas and gullies. The authorities (local and national) need to ensure that towns are protected by incorporating environmental risk reduction and climate change considerations into urban planning.

URBAN LAND AND PLANNING

Land plays a critical part in all forms of development and is both in short supply of developable land in urban centres, especially in Honiara city; and at risk of the low capacity to make land available for development. The limited supply of state land hinders the provision of adequate (serviced) housing and determines the issue of security of tenure and affordability. This problem is further exacerbated by a poor work ethic, corrupt practices and weak land administration, resulting in huge land rental arrears, an inconsistency in the implementation of plans such as the conversion of temporary occupation licences, lack of progress towards achieving Millennium Development Goal 7, target F³ and illegal occupation of state land.

Most land that can be developed adjacent to urban centres is in customary land ownership. Customary land is only alienable through long and complex procedures. The Government has no jurisdiction over customary land unless the landowners have entered into an agreement through a formal lease with the Government for use of the land.

Towns in Solomon Islands suffer from poor physical planning, as evidenced by the lack of a land use policy or plans and strategies to effectively address the growing planning issues in towns (transportation and road networks, failing infrastructure, an absence of green and recreational spaces and poor housing standards). Planning is done in a piecemeal manner with little or no connection to other sectoral plans or consultation with service providers and communities. The key challenges are to improve land administration and strengthen planning capacity, as well as develop inclusive planning frameworks between government agencies, service providers and communities (including customary and urban land owners).

INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT

The national Government is responsible for the development of major urban and rural infrastructures and services. Its top priority (as defined in the national development strategy –2011-2020) is to develop the rural areas and improve market linkages to urban areas. Connecting rural areas with reliable services in urban areas is a real challenge due to the geographical dispersion of settlements and the topography of the country. As a result, most communities have difficulty accessing quality health care, education, water and adequate transport. Whilst the national Government has helped to shape the country's urban centres, there is still weak investment, coordination and an increased dependency on the national Government, resulting in a decline in infrastructure in all provincial towns.

Building better roads to link rural and urban areas offers benefits to both through improved livelihoods. Many rural problems of poverty, food security and environmental issues in Solomon Islands cannot be solved without strengthening urban-rural linkages. Unfortunately, rural and urban institutions continue to be seen as two quite separate issues by policymakers. In fact, they are linked together through economic development, food production, remittances and circular migration.

Local authorities lack the capacity and resources to implement policies and plans effectively by themselves. Partnership approaches to urban management and planning are therefore critical.

INTRODUCTION



Urban profiling is a rapid, action-oriented assessment of urban conditions, focusing on priorities, capacity-building gaps and existing institutional responses at the local and national levels.

The purpose of the urban profile is to support the formulation of urban poverty reduction policies at local and national levels through an assessment of needs and response mechanisms and as a contribution to the wider-ranging implementation of the Millennium Development Goals.

It is based on an analysis of existing data and a series of interviews with urban stakeholders, including local communities and institutions, civil society organizations, the private sector, development partners, academics and others. This consultation typically results in a collective agreement on priorities and their integration into work plans and strategies, including proposed capacity-building components, all aimed at urban poverty reduction.

METHODOLOGY

Urban profiling in Solomon Islands consists of a national profile and profiles for three cities: Honiara, Gizo in Western Province and Auki in Malaita Province. Each urban profile is published as a separate report.

The Ministry of Lands, Housing and Survey conducted a national city consultation, which engaged stakeholders in the profiling process. The intention is to devise a

partnership framework with urban stakeholders in a single response strategy to enable the Ministry and local authorities to improve their efforts to better plan and manage towns. Urban profiling consists of three phases:

- **Phase 1** deals with the collection of information and opinions of urban stakeholders at national and city levels and examines governance structures and approaches in selected thematic areas in order to agree on priority interventions and to develop brief proposals through broad-based city consultations, using a SWOT analysis technique.
- **Phase 2** builds on the priorities identified through pre-feasibility studies and develops detailed plans for capacity-building and capital investment projects.
- **Phase 3** implements the projects developed during the two earlier phases, with an emphasis on skills development, institutional strengthening and replication.

This report presents the outcomes of Phase 1 at the national level in Solomon Islands and consists of:

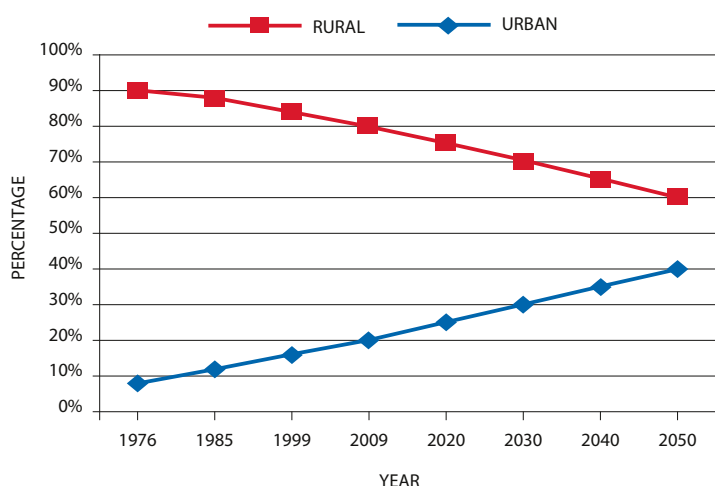
- A general background section on the urban sector in Solomon Islands based on the key issues identified in Honiara, Gizo and Auki in interviews, focus group discussions and a national consultation workshop held in Honiara in August 2012.
- A synthetic assessment of six thematic areas – governance and institutional links, informal

settlements and housing, local economy and employment, urban security and environment, urban land and planning and infrastructure development – in terms of their structures, regulatory framework, resource mobilization, accountability and performance. This section also highlights agreed priorities and includes a list of identified projects.

- A SWOT analysis and an outline of priority project proposals for each of the key areas. The project briefs are to be found at the end of the report. The proposals include beneficiaries, partners, estimated costs, objectives and activities.

URBANIZATION IN SOLOMON ISLANDS

Urbanization in Solomon Islands is growing steadily (see figure 1 below). The 2009 census revealed that annual urban growth of 4.7 per cent exceeds the national population growth of 2.3 per cent, indicating the growing importance of the urban areas - the heart of socioeconomic growth and future prosperity. However, there is little or no recognition of this trend by policymakers, as it is being overshadowed by a focus on the 80 per cent of the population who live in rural areas and a lack of recognition of the interconnectivity of the two areas. As a result, urban issues have not been presented as priorities of the national Government in recent years.



No country in the industrial age has ever achieved significant economic growth without urbanization. Urbanization is the increase in the urban share of the national population, which is associated with the influx of rural population into towns as well as with natural growth. The rural-urban migration is the key driving force, which is often difficult to restrict but it can also be positive as well. The rapid growth of poverty, informal settlements and social disruption in towns does paint a threatening picture. Cities and towns concentrate poverty, but they also provide the best opportunity for escaping it.

The urban population of Solomon Islands in 2009 was 102,030, representing about 20 per cent of the national population. This figure included the peri-urban areas throughout the country. With an annual urban growth rate of 4.7 per cent, it is projected that, by 2020, about 25 per cent of the country's population will be living in urban areas. The rapid annual growth rate of the urban population has outpaced and continues to outstrip the institutional, administrative and financial capacity of the national Government, provincial authorities and service providers to cope with the demands of rapid urbanization.



Solomon Islands has yet to officially define an urban area, but it refers to centres with high population density, a concentration of services and facilities, a formal government administration and high dependency on the cash economy. In the absence of a formal definition of an urban area, the National Statistics Office regards Honiara and its peri-urban areas and the provincial towns as urban areas. Given the economic and social importance of these locations, there is an urgent need for more attention to be given to urban planning and management of the city in terms of technical capacity and resources.

As the population of Honiara increases, people are now residing on customary land in Guadalcanal Province, outside the town boundary. The 16 per cent urban growth rate in Guadalcanal Province, as indicated by the 2009 national census, is linked to the return of people displaced from Guadalcanal during the period of social tension. Informal settlements or squatters are consequently encroaching onto customary land beyond the city, creating internal problems (and possibly conflict) for traditional landowners and the Guadalcanal provincial authorities. This trend is dangerous as it is a repeat of the same demographic pattern, which led to the social/ethnic tension. The national Government, together with the Honiara city council and the

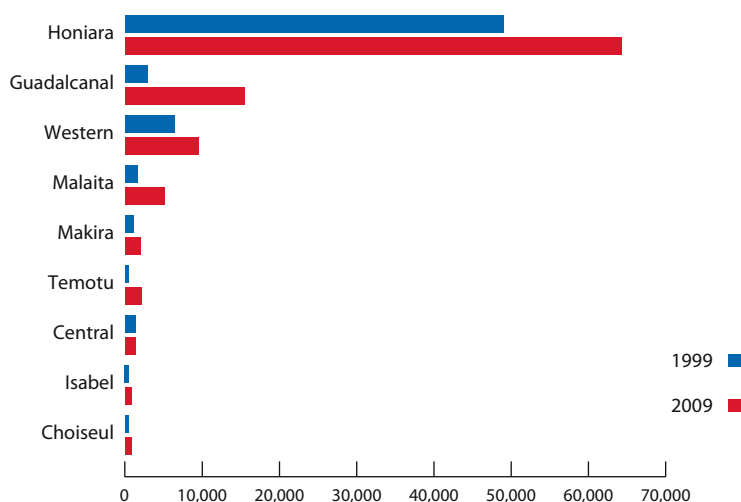
Guadalcanal provincial authorities should address this issue quickly. The peri-urban areas outside the Honiara boundary would be considered by many as a logical development to capture urban growth. The same pattern is also visible in other provincial towns, but is happening at a slower pace.

The high level of growth of the urban population in Solomon Islands is due to the increasing influx of the rural population into Honiara and other urban areas, as well as natural growth of the population. Rural-urban migration is the dominant force in the urbanization trends in the country. Between 1986 and 1999 for instance, almost 81 per cent of 18,694 additional people in the city were counted as being in migration (internal and external) to Honiara city while natural growth accounted for 19 per cent. Rural-urban migration therefore, will continue to increase and remain a major factor in driving urban growth in Solomon Islands, rather than economic development.

Rapid urban growth is evident in the prolific growth of informal settlements, peri-urban villages and the informal sector. The growth rate of informal settlements (estimated to be more than 6 per cent per annum) exceeds the urban growth rate of 4.7 per cent per annum, indicating that urban growth rates are primarily driven by informal settlements. In Honiara city, informal settlements are growing at around 6 per cent per annum, representing about 35 per cent of the city's population (source: Ministry of Lands, Housing and Survey, 2006).

With the growth of the urban population, the need for effective urban planning and management is a critical development policy issue for the national and provincial governments, if they are to achieve a liveable, productive and sustainable future for towns. The development of a national urban profile is therefore, the beginning of a long journey that will help guide urban policy development along the desired paths for the sustainable management of towns and growth centres in the years ahead.

SI URBAN POPULATION BY PROVINCE



BASIC URBAN SERVICES



The provision of services in urban areas is considerably better than in the rural areas, in spite of national rural development strategies, and is partially responsible for accelerating the rate of rural-urban migration. The rapid growth of the urban population, coupled with increased urban expansion would require twice the capacity of the existing urban infrastructure and services which were built in the 1970s.

The lack of urban policy guidance and political commitment by the national Government has left key institutions involved in the provision of housing, infrastructure, urban planning and management poorly resourced and ill-equipped. As a result, there are no integrated investment plans to provide adequate infrastructure to meet the needs of a rapidly increasing population. The high level of demand for better urban services places a significant strain on the limited services currently available. This includes pressure placed on services by rural and urban commuters who visit the towns to use markets and buy goods and services.

SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT

Local authorities are responsible for solid waste collection and management systems in towns. This includes the management of landfills of varying design and quality. The refuse facilities that are in place are poorly maintained and often depend on donor support (e.g. the Japan International Cooperation Agency) for improvement. This has hampered efforts for improving the collection and disposal of garbage, resulting in unsightly and unhealthy piles of rubbish being a



common feature in most towns, where open dumping and burning of solid waste is also common practice.

To sustain and improve solid waste management will require additional resources and public-private-community partnerships. The challenge for local authorities is to build and improve the capacity of the existing community and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to actively participate in improving waste management.

WATER

The Solomon Islands Water Authority provides water for about 54 per cent (8,366) of the 15,382 urban households throughout the country (*source: Solomon Islands Government, 2011*). The Authority's water sources are from boreholes, storage dams or directly from streams and are piped into urban centres for household, commercial, industrial and other institutional uses.



Urban water sources are located on customary land and are at risk of being closed by landowners if rents are not paid in a timely manner. Rainwater collection is not a common practice in most towns. The Authority also provides water to a limited number of households in the informal settlements, while most informal households access water from streams, rivers and directly from boreholes and storage dams. In Honiara, the Authority provides water for about 75 per cent of (or 6,771) households, of which around 18 per cent are located in informal settlements.

Water disruption and rationing is a major issue in Honiara, Gizo, and Auki due to constant power blackouts, unplanned residential developments on steep slopes (difficult for reticulation and causes a loss of pressure), a lack of adequate financial resources to repair the aged system and the inability of the Authority to identify, disconnect or charge the numerous illegal water connectors. With the current financial support from Japan (SI\$ 200 million), the Authority is expected to repair and replace the aged system in Honiara.

SANITATION

Sanitation is a critical issue in Solomon Islands. Most urban centres have recorded the use of septic toilets and pit latrines. In Honiara, 63 per cent (5,686) of the 8,981 households have their own or shared flush toilet, while 14 per cent own or share a pit latrine. Pit-latrines are common in informal settlements where one toilet

can be used by up to 20 people just metres from houses and where the smell is unbearable. Others practice open defecation in the bush and along the shoreline, giving rise to privacy, health and gender safety concerns, as well as polluting the environment.

Local authorities are responsible for the discharge of septic tank wastes, but due to poor resources they are unable to respond efficiently to complaints causing health hazards and risks to residents and the environment. In Honiara, an estimated 30 per cent of all households in the city are connected to 14 deteriorating sewerage lines whose outlets flow directly into the sea, polluting the coastal environment and raising health concerns for coastal settlements and ocean users. Households located near drains and on shorelines are the most affected, as raw sewage, wastewater and solid waste flow through open drains posing a serious health risk to inhabitants. Littering, especially in the drains, and the lack of public amenities are serious environmental concerns for the local authorities.

EDUCATION

The national education system in Solomon Islands includes primary and secondary education, as well as vocational and tertiary institutions. The Ministry of Education and Human Resources Development is the authorizing ministry and is responsible for developing and coordinating the implementation of national policies, plans and teacher training. Most schools

are administered by provincial or local authorities. Churches also help to provide much-needed education services. The private schools in Honiara provide a better service (well-resourced and equipped) than the city council schools, but are not affordable for the majority of the urban population.

Local authorities, through their education departments, are given overall responsibility for teacher management, including recruitment, placement and provision of housing, and for capital works and maintenance of secondary and primary schools. However, they often find it difficult to execute this function effectively because they are ill-equipped and under-resourced. This issue is further exacerbated by weak institutional links between the national Government and local authorities.

Enrolment rates and educational facilities vary significantly across the provincial towns. The student-teacher ratio in most schools is higher than 40, with schools lacking adequate space and resources. Secondary schools in particular lack adequate facilities such as offices, libraries, classrooms, recreational grounds and laboratories. Upgrading the existing school facilities, improving quality education and building decent houses for teachers are the key challenges for the local authorities.

HEALTH

Provincial towns in the country, including Honiara, have a main hospital and several clinics; most of which are run by the national Government and administered by each provincial authority. Local churches provide health services in some clinics and aid posts in provincial centres.

The private clinics in Honiara provide a better service (quicker) than the local authority clinics and the state hospital in the city, but these are unaffordable for the majority of the population. A major health issue in the country is a shortage of common medical drugs (such as antibiotics) in all towns including at the central hospital, which is the only referral hospital in the country. The central hospital in Honiara has many patients whom list informal settlements as their main place of residence. The hospital beds in most provincial towns are limited, with many patients discharged early to make way for new admissions. Lack of resources, in particular staffing, a poor working environment and the non-provision of staff housing also affect the health service.

As urban populations continue to increase, the existing clinics need to be upgraded and new clinics developed to cater for current and future needs. At the same time, living environments need to be improved, with increased access to improved water and sanitation.

ENERGY

The Solomon Islands Electricity Authority is a statutory governmental body that provides powers to households, commercial enterprises, industries and other institutions throughout the country. The Ministry of Mines and Energy is responsible for energy policies and plans, data collection and analysis and advises the national Government on energy sector issues.

The Authority provides electricity to about 70 per cent (10,748) of the 15,382 urban households in the country. In Honiara, it provides power to 64 per cent of the 8,981 households, of which about 7 per cent (400 households) are located in the informal settlements. Most households in the informal settlements are without electricity and occupants use kerosene lamps, candles and firewood as their main lighting and cooking fuel. The open fires pollute the environment and there is a need to look for alternative energy sources and ensure more equitable and affordable energy provision. Renewable energy sources, are a way forward, but this will require more funding to make it a viable option for communities.

The Authority struggles to provide a reliable service as the main generators regularly break down, leading to frequent power blackouts in Honiara. Given the increased development in the city and other provincial towns, there is a need for the Authority to upgrade its generators and increase power output in the short term to provide a reliable power supply to meet current and future needs.

TRANSPORT AND ROAD NETWORKS

Most towns are serviced by taxis, buses and trucks owned by companies and individuals and regulated through local licensing. Bus operators in Honiara design their own routes, leaving some parts of the city with no coverage. There is increasing public demand for the city council to address this issue by regulating routes through licensing as well as concerns over the roadworthiness of public service vehicles. In Honiara there is a need to critically look at the bus routes so that all sections of the towns are equally served and not deprived. There is also a need to address the transport/mobility needs of the disabled and elderly people in the urban centres.

Due to its challenging topography (which is typical of most towns in the country) and the overall lack of strategic planning, Honiara, which is characterized by hills and gullies, suffers from poor road connectivity, traffic congestion and a high level of road safety risk. The roads are often not clearly marked or well-lit at night, posing further risks to pedestrians and drivers.

The primary tar-sealed roads and secondary roads, which serve the suburbs, informal settlements and other outlying areas, are not well maintained.

The highway that connects rural Guadalcanal to Honiara is a lifeline for the supply of food and other produce to the city. The lack of repairs to the highway in the past has reduced services to the city, causing the price of goods to increase. This has also affected urban food security and nutritional intake, since most fresh vegetables sold at the local markets comes from the rural farmers on Guadalcanal. Equally, towns play a critical role in promoting rural development as agricultural income is attached to the efficiency and capacity of urban processing centres, markets *and trans-shipment points for rural produce and goods*. The transportation links need to be improved with better infrastructure.

BANKING AND COMMUNICATION SERVICES

Three major regional banks are represented in Honiara, providing personal loans for housing and education. However, access to these services requires capital and collateral and thus obtaining a loan from these banks is very difficult for the urban poor and low and middle-income earners.

Solomon Telekom's monopoly of telecommunication services in the country ended in 2010 with the deregulation of the telecommunications market, paving the way for the establishment of Be-Mobile Company. Telecommunication coverage has greatly improved as the two providers in the country have extended access throughout the islands and into the rural villages. A significant number of people are now using mobile phones as they are more convenient and accessible than landlines.

AIR AND SEAPORTS

Honiara provides the only international airport in the country and is a gateway to the nine provinces and outlying islands. Solomon Airlines has a monopoly over national air travel, making domestic travel very expensive.

Honiara is also the only international seaport and serves as the main link between international and domestic routes. The main wharf at Point Cruz caters for exports and imports, although there is a limited storage area for containers.

GOVERNANCE AND INSTITUTIONAL LINKS



The need for effective governance and stronger institutional links is critical to achieving an improved urban quality of life. The urban sector in Solomon Islands needs greater political and economic autonomy so as to ensure effective, efficient and equitable development of its urban areas.

The way in which the national Government plans and coordinates its activities has a direct bearing on the local authorities who have the power and responsibility for the planning and management of towns. Local authorities are key players in shaping and managing towns through the provision and maintenance of services such as health, education, public amenities, planning the upgrading of informal settlements and waste management. However, for too long, they have been poorly resourced and are ill-equipped to execute their mandatory roles and functions effectively. This has resulted in poor delivery of basic urban services such as road maintenance, garbage collection, education and health.

As a result, the local authorities in provincial towns and in Honiara city continue to function with inadequate technical capacity and resources to address the urban development and planning issues they face. Weak public sector financial management and institutional links, coupled with the absence of a national urban vision, have contributed to poor service delivery in towns. This is further affected by ineffective local revenue collection, limited financial support from the national Government and the lack of a national lead agency for urban reform.

Local authorities do not have the necessary technical and managerial staff, nor do they have a human resources policy which promotes best practice and meritocratic recruitment of employees. They depend entirely on the national Government to provide technical and managerial staff, who are often not forthcoming due to a lack of decent housing and poor services, such as water, health and education, at the local level.

Elected local leaders are not able to involve all the diverse communities in local urban affairs, thus limiting an inclusive participatory approach to urban service delivery. There are a number of local and international NGOs which operate in urban centres, but they appear to work in isolation with no established formal partnership with the local authorities. Building strong institutional links is vital to enhancing better service delivery.

A number of local authorities have recently benefited from donor projects such as the provincial government strengthening project,⁴ the Honiara City Institutional Strengthening project funded by the New Zealand Aid Programme (and implemented by the Commonwealth Local Government Forum) and the Rapid Employment Project funded by the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank,⁵ each aimed at strengthening and improving institutional and basic service delivery capacity. Some local authorities, such as the Honiara City Council, have noticed a significant improvement in internal revenue collection and management practices. However, there is still a need for effective urban

governance with strong institutional links to national authorities, the private sector and communities to consolidate and sustain these improvements.

INSTITUTIONAL STRUCTURES

The Local Government Act and the Provincial Government Act provide the mandate for Honiara City Council and the provincial authorities to be responsible for the management of urban centres.

The Town and Country Planning Act gives power to the Honiara City Council and the provincial authorities to provide effective urban management and planning in their respective towns.

Provincial members of the local government elect the provincial premier, while councillors elect the city mayor who appoints the chairs or ministers for different portfolios within their respective towns.

Top-down decision-making, insufficient funds and weak administrative and technical capacity impedes the effective delivery of better urban services.

The potential for public-private and civil society partnerships in service delivery has not been fully explored, although some good examples exist.

There is no existing formal system to collectively engage urban stakeholders in urban design and decision-making.

REGULATORY FRAMEWOK

The Minister for Home Affairs has the power under the Local Government Act to establish (and dissolve) the Honiara City Council, while the Minister for Provincial Government has the power under the Provincial Government Act to establish provincial governments and appoint an interim team when necessary.

The Honiara City Council and the provincial authorities are empowered by the Local and Provincial Government Acts to adopt by-laws and regulations to promote the principles of good governance.

The Public Health Act empowers local authorities to enforce environmental and health standards in Honiara city and provincial towns.

The Town and Country Planning Act empowers the local authorities through their planning boards to carry out physical planning in their respective towns. However, local authorities are under-resourced and lack the technical capacity to effectively plan and manage towns.

A building by-law or ordinance guides building and design standards in Honiara and other towns, but it has never been effectively enforced due to lack of capacity.

PERFORMANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY

Local authorities lack a performance and appraisal system and suffer from *wantok bisnis* (nepotism and promotion based on political affiliation) rather than being appointed on merit.

Citizens lack the means and capacity to take their elected leaders to court to hold them accountable for any financial mismanagement. There is no mechanism for citizens complaints.

The city mayors or provincial premiers are elected by local elected members, creating an environment in which they are more accountable to their peers than to citizens.

Financial accountability and transparency remain an issue in the local authorities,

Limited internal revenue and support from the national Government impede the efforts of local authorities to execute their statutory functions and roles effectively, as expected by their citizens.

Civil society organizations are active in health and education delivery in Honiara and provincial towns but lack the necessary effective coordination to have a significant impact on service provision and poverty alleviation.

RESOURCE MOBILIZATION

Local authorities receive limited funds from the national Government, which are inadequate to improve service delivery and capital works in urban centres. These include tied funds for specific programmes.

Local authority internal revenue is limited and does not achieve significant positive impacts on service delivery or city/town development.

Internal revenue collection has improved, but ongoing efforts must be maintained to achievement a 100 percent collection rate, and internal revenue collection has improved.

Effective strategic planning linking social development and urban management and planning at the local level are needed.

AGREED PRIORITIES

- Effective and efficient urban governance to meet the needs of current and future urban populations.
- Effective coordination of urban policy and plans between state agencies, donors, NGOs and local authorities so that plans and activities are fully aligned with development priorities that have been identified and agreed.
- More political and economic autonomy to be given to local authorities to help them deal with a wide range of urban issues.
- Improve and/or strengthen urban governance through wider community participation in urban affairs to improve accountability and decision-making processes.

GOVERNANCE AND INSTITUTIONS N°1

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Establish a key national urban agency to advance the urban agenda in the Solomon Islands	
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GOVERNANCE AND INSTITUTIONS N°2

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Strengthen the technical capacity of local level planning boards	
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INFORMAL SETTLEMENTS AND HOUSING



High population growth rates and the influx of rural migrants are primarily responsible for the explosion of the informal settlements in urban and peri-urban areas. However, the failure of national Governments to provide access to affordable housing and land for development, particularly for low and middle-income earners, together with weak planning and development control and a lack of political will, also plays a significant role in the rise in informal settlements in all Solomon Islands towns.

Informal settlements vary significantly in size in Honiara and other towns. In Honiara, informal settlements are home to 35 per cent of the city's population (64,609), while in Gizo they account for almost half of the population (3,477). They are located within and on the fringes of the built-up areas. They are found on both state land and customary land and are characterized by a lack of planning and poor infrastructure, especially water, sanitation, electricity, roads, recreational areas and garbage collection and a lack of safety for the public, for women in particular (source: Amnesty International, 2011).

Informal settlements are a permanent feature of the urban areas in Solomon Islands. They are a key driver of urban growth and will remain a major driving force of urban development. This is evidenced by the fact that they are not confined to low-income earners; many middle and high-income earners are moving into informal settlements because of limited access to land, formal housing and high rental costs. Settlers

continue to improve their homes outside formal legal regulations, resulting in a mixture of housing quality in these informal settlements. In Honiara, approximately 33 per cent of the nearly 9,000 households in the city were built without any planning approval (source: Ministry of Lands, Housing and Survey, 2006). Housing improvements will continue as settlers want to improve their standard of living, in spite of poor and inadequate infrastructure in these areas and the lack of secure tenure (fixed term estate) for the land they are currently occupying.

The development of informal settlements in urban areas in Solomon Islands, as with other Melanesian towns, is strongly linked to ethnic groupings. Settlers live and behave according to the norms and values practised in rural villages.⁶ Settlements are given a local name in their dialects, reflecting their cultural identity. Ethnic groupings are expressed in residential patterns that are emphasized by historical political control, restricting individuals of any particular ethnic group to certain areas and limiting residential choices, especially for new rural-urban migrants. This often promotes "ethnic gangsters" and regionalism rather than a national identity, in spite of the efforts of church and community leaders in the informal settlements who promote community development and conflict resolution.

Shortage of housing and high rental costs is a critical issue in Honiara - an issue that is further affected by the lack of a national land use policy and a national housing policy to guide land allocation for housing. As a result,

the demand for housing in urban areas far exceeds supply, fuelling the growth of informal settlements. The situation is deteriorating, with corruption associated with multiple land sales, weak land management and administration and physical planning, in spite of past efforts, such as those provided by the project on institutional strengthening of land administration.⁷

Adequate housing promotes healthy living standards as it enhances development in other sectors such as health, education, economic development and employment. Housing is a basic need which also stimulates growth in the land and housing industries, with knock-on effects elsewhere in the economy. As the urban population has increased, the private sector and informal systems have been major players in housing provision. However, housing has often been constructed without services or site development. There is a need to improve urban planning and land management to better provide for those in informal settlements and to enable the housing market to better provide for all urban residents. The Government should facilitate an affordable housing market and work with financial institutions to encourage the reduction of current interest rates for housing loans (15 per cent) to enable people to access accommodation.

INSTITUTIONAL STRUCTURES

- In 1985 the national Government handed over housing development to market forces. Initiatives by individual government ministries and statutory organizations are small in scale, geared towards public housing and do not address the low and middle-income brackets.
- The Town and Country Planning Boards of Honiara City Council and the Provincial Government, have the power to undertake physical planning and development control in towns and delegate those powers to local authorities, which in turn require additional resources and skilled personnel to execute effectively.
- The power to allocate land lies with the Commissioner of Lands in the Ministry of Lands, Housing and Survey.
- The National Provident Fund and its sister organization, the Home Finance Corporation provide housing loan and site and service sites for their members through the recently introduced home ownership scheme.

REGULATORY FRAMEWORK

- Regulatory frameworks such as the Town and Country Planning Act, the Lands and Title Act, local authority construction by-laws or ordinances provide for settlement upgrading in all towns.
- The link between the Town and Country Planning Act and the Lands and Title Act are tenuous, leading to the Commissioner of Lands granting areas of land to developers that are yet to be properly planned and often including areas reserved for future road expansion.
- Local authority building by-laws or ordinances guide the standard of buildings and design in all towns but they are not enforced effectively.
- There is no policy for responding to informal settlement issues in spite of operational plans for the regularization of temporary occupation licenses.
- The Solomon Islands Government approved and assigned SBD1 million in 2012 to continue the upgrading effort in temporary housing areas but due to lack of capacity the budget provisions have not been fully utilized, underlining the need to expand Ministry of Lands, Housing and Surveys staff and embark on a concrete in-service training programme.
- There are no recent site planning regulations to guide subdivision design and utility service provision to support settlement upgrading.
- There is no land use plan or infrastructure master plan for informal settlements and it remains unclear as to whether they will be considered in the National Infrastructure Investment Plan (due in 2013).

RESOURCE MOBILIZATION

- There is no budgetary support for upgrading the infrastructure of informal settlements but there is hope for improvement through the informal settlements programmes of the Ministry of Lands, Housing and Survey; and also a major national infrastructure development programme by MID commencing in 2013.
- The Ministry has formed a technical working group for temporary occupation licences which addresses the regularization of informal settlements, but such efforts are affected by a lack of readily available funds and staffing problems.

- Local authorities lack the financial capacity to allocate a budget for settlement upgrading and they rely mostly on grants from the national Government and internal revenues for capital works.
- Budget allocation for physical planning at the local level is only for site inspections (application for land extension, building etc).
- Development of a partnership framework may encourage community participation in service delivery, particularly in the informal settlements.

AGREED PRIORITIES

- Regularising Temporary Occupation Licences
- Public and private enterprises recognize the importance of housing infrastructure for the well-being of their employees.
- Provision of accessibility by all households to affordable housing, especially lower and middle-income earners.
- Land and finance are readily available for appropriate educational infrastructure.
- Encourage youths in the settlements to participate in settlement upgrading and service provision efforts.
- Provide basic infrastructure to new areas of land to allow for residential development.
- Informal settlements to have access to basic services.

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URBAN HOUSING AND INFORMAL SETTLEMENTS N°2	Ministry of Lands, Housing and Survey to develop plans for informal settlement upgrading	

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URBAN HOUSING AND INFORMAL SETTLEMENTS N°3	Develop a housing policy to create an enabling environment to access affordable land and housing	

URBAN SECURITY AND ENVIRONMENTAL SAFETY



The law and order situation in most urban centres is peaceful in spite of minor incidents relating to drinking beer and homemade alcohol (kwaso) in public. A high rate of youth unemployment, alcohol consumption, the increasing economic gap between rich and poor, coupled with low policing capacity has given rise to some safety and security concerns in towns, especially in Honiara. This has wider repercussions for the local and national economy, investment and the tourism industry. Mitigation measures include a wider focus on the importance of traditional values, leadership, family and community responsibility, policing, crime prevention, education and awareness.

There is a need to improve community policing to encourage people living in urban settlements to respect the environment and the law. Community policing is an important link between the community and NGOs and faith-based organizations with a presence in the informal settlements. This requires strong leadership and commitment from national and local government and community leaders.

The Royal Solomon Islands Police Force (RSIPF) is responsible for law enforcement. However, public perception persists with the view of an undisciplined and corrupt police force with numerous complaints of non-attendance or late response to criminal activities. The Force is poorly resourced and ill-equipped, which contributes to poor police performance. Positive intervention recently as a moral booster for the force included the programme of new police housing construction by donors.. The lack of public confidence has led to public and private enterprises hiring private

security firms to protect their premises in all urban areas.

The situation however has improved significantly with assistance from the Regional Assistance Mission to Solomon Islands. As a result of collaborative efforts by the police force and the Regional Assistance Mission, the crime rate has dropped by 6 per cent from 6,833 reported cases in 2009 to 6,420 in 2010 (source: Solomon Star, 7/01/11:3).

The urban environments of Solomon Islands have a negative image due to uncontrolled development and weak waste management in towns, in spite of some progress being made in terms of health facilities and water, sanitation and hygiene awareness programmes carried out by World Vision and other NGOs.

As the urban population increases, demand for land, sanitation, water and solid waste services also increases. Refuse facilities are poorly maintained and local authorities struggle to keep pace with the collection and disposal of garbage. In Honiara, 54 per cent of 8,981 households dump their household waste either in the river or the sea, or burn it in their backyards (source: Solomon Islands Government, 2011).

Sewerage systems were built in the 1970s and many properties rely on individual septic tanks. A limited number of properties that connect to the existing sewerage lines dispose waste into the sea, polluting the marine environment. Industrial and household wastes (plastic bags, empty bottles, cans, cables, metals, etc) are often dumped on the shoreline. Without positive



intervention, coastal environmental conditions in towns will deteriorate and threaten the health of residents and the remaining natural ecosystems.

Most communities, and in particular those in the lowland and low-lying coastal zones, are vulnerable to the threat of climate change and commonly experience adverse impacts resulting from climate change and variability (source: National Adaptation Plan of Action, 2008). Impacts include extreme high tides (king tides), frequent/continuous intense rainfall and storm surges, coastal erosion, flooding, tropical cyclones, a rise in the sea level, saline intrusion, landslides and subsidence. Solomon Islands urban centres have a high physical and social vulnerability to these adverse climatic events and other natural disasters (including geohazards).

There is a need to reinforce the existing environmental regulations and to work on implementation of a national environment and climate change policy. The Government has a responsibility to ensure towns are protected and therefore the need for mitigating practices to be introduced into urban planning and management is vital.

INSTITUTIONAL SET-UP

- Law and order is provided by the Royal Solomon Islands Police Force.
- The correctional service centre is supported by the Government of Australia. It provides rehabilitation programmes for prisoners and engages church organizations to visit prisoners.
- The National Disaster Management Office of the Ministry of Environment, Climate Change and Meteorology coordinates climate change and disaster management programmes.

RESOURCE MOBILIZATION

- There is a shortfall in funds and resources for effective policing throughout the country and in particular in the informal settlements in Honiara and peri-urban villages.

- Local courts are under-resourced and poorly equipped, leading to delays of years for some case hearings. The justice and legal institutional strengthening project, which is supported by the Regional Assistance Mission, is trying to remedy this by strengthening and providing sufficient resources to local courts so that cases are dealt with quickly to regain public trust and confidence in the judicial system.
- Partnerships with private security firms active in urban centres require a formal system to harness effective partnerships with the police force.
- Community policing needs to be strengthened.

EMPOWERMENT AND ACCOUNTABILITY

- Community policing in Honiara and other urban centres needs strengthening by the provision of training and resources to enable communities to address law and order issues in effective partnership with the police force and other stakeholders.
- Police professionalism is still influenced by nepotism.
- Family disintegration and erosion of cultural values contributes to lawlessness and decline in public safety in towns.

AGREED PRIORITIES

- Safety of communities through effective policing and an effective judicial system.
- The development of climate change adaptation and resilience plans at the city level.
- All people regardless of age and social groups to conduct their lives with dignity and self-respect and with respect for others.
- Urban communities to live in a healthy, clean and safe environment.

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SECURITY AND
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Urban vulnerability assessments

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N°2

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Community policing plan

LOCAL ECONOMY AND EMPLOYMENT



An increasing share of national wealth has been produced in Honiara and other provincial towns with a range of urban economic activities, strengthening the viability of rural economic development by providing markets, processing centres and trans-shipment points for rural produce. Local authorities receive internal revenue from economic activities in towns, but this is insufficient to provide and maintain quality services for urban residents.

Rapid urban population growth outstrips job creation in the formal sector, especially in Honiara, leading to increasing unemployment, hardship and urban poverty. This is manifested in the rapid growth of squatter settlements and actors in the informal sector.

Employment creation is more likely to take place in the urban informal sector, but this is not a panacea. This sector provides job opportunities for the vast majority of people without a formal education and is intricately linked to the rural-urban economy with the marketing of food products, betel nuts and handicrafts. The national Government and local authorities are not able to provide sufficient market outlets to cater for the increasing number of vendors, despite the critical role of the informal sector in job creation and poverty reduction. The informal sector needs to be recognized and supported in policy as a key source of livelihoods. The challenge for the local authorities and the national Government is to create a friendly socioeconomic and political environment that will allow the formal and informal sectors to flourish.

There is a thriving black-market business for alcohol especially in some back-streets of Honiara which

is getting out of control. This business has been considered as profitable with a high turn-over for the vendors. The authority's ban on sale of alcohol after 6 pm, except for hotels and restaurants, means that consumers demand has to be met through other means especially black-market outlets. The authorities find it difficult to curb the fast growing business of alcohol sale after the official hour.

LINKING THE RURAL AND URBAN ECONOMIES

Cities and towns play a critical role in promoting rural development efforts, as agricultural income is closely linked to the efficiency and capacity of urban processing centres, markets *and trans-shipment points for rural produce and goods*. Most of these activities are based in urban areas and are an integral part of the national economy. *In this way, urbanization can be viewed as the spatial translation of the production structure of rural economies across Solomon Islands*. The way towns are planned and built affects how efficiently they can function as generators of national, regional and rural economic growth.

Increasing unemployment in urban centres links to rising law and order problems in urban areas. There is a need to develop a hierarchy of cities and satellite towns to support a more appropriate spatial distribution of the population, economic growth and development. This links to current government policy on economic growth centres and upgrading of current provincial towns, which aims to manage the movement of people

to satellite growth centres rather than to Honiara. This requires strong political will and financial support. Transferring increasing financial powers to urban governments is important for generating the necessary revenue to provide services and increasing job opportunities for urban populations.

INSTITUTIONAL STRUCTURES

- Local authorities rely on limited economic activities for their internal revenue.
- Decision-making and prioritization of development needs for the country are influenced by demographic analysis from the census data supplied by the Statistics Department of the Ministry of Finance and Treasury.
- The Department of Labour and Employment is mandated to manage the national workforce.

REGULATORY FRAMEWOK

- The Public Service Commission looks after the welfare of public servants.
- The private sector is governed by the Labour Employment Act.
- Local authorities are empowered under the Local and Provincial Government Acts to pass ordinances and regulations that are appropriate to enhancing economic growth,
- The Industrial Relations Department of the Ministry of Labour and Employment caters for all industrial matters, including minimum wages, occupational health and safety and other welfare issues.
- The Labour Act governs all forms of employment and states what types of activities can be classified as employment for the purposes of remuneration and tax. It also determines the criteria for choosing people who are employable and the type of working environment that is acceptable.

PERFORMANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY

- The Department of Treasury collects data from the Internal Revenue Commission through personal income tax records to monitor the employment rate.
- Limited internal revenue and limited financial help from the national Government hinder effective delivery of services at the local level.
- Government public service reform continue to restructure through rightsizing to maximize productivity and efficiency.

RESOURCE MOBILIZATION

- Government inability to provide employment opportunities leads to increasing unemployment.
- Local authorities receive limited financial support (annual grants) from the national Government, which is inadequate for the services that are needed.
- Internal revenue collection at the local level needs to improve further to meet and maintain quality services in the city.
- There is limited international development support for service projects at local levels. More assistance is required to stimulate the local and national economy.
- Local authorities and the national Government need to provide an investment-friendly (socioeconomic and political) climate in all urban areas.

AGREED PRIORITIES

- Strengthen current systems to improve internal revenue collection and identify alternative revenue sources to stimulate employment creation.
- Develop a hierarchical city concept for the nine provinces with towns of different functions and size throughout the country.
- Distribute development equitably across the country.
- The national Government needs to support investment projects at the provincial level to create more employment opportunities.
- Population growth needs to be lowered to a sustainable level – that is, to a level that the country can accommodate in terms of its resources and capacity.
- A higher proportion of the population must be economically active.

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	Develop plans and policies to better address the urban informal sector	
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URBAN LAND AND PLANNING



Solomon Islands towns are located on state land, which the colonial Government acquired from customary landowners. Land has a critical role in all forms of urban development and future expansion. About 15 to 20 per cent of state land is unsuitable for development due to topography and environmental constraints. Most state land in urban areas that can be developed is occupied and poor land-use management has resulted in usage below optimal density, especially in Honiara and Auki. There are still undeveloped plots of land being held by private developers for several years. Several private real estate developers are holding a number of big estates that can be developed into housing estates. However, these estates have been idle for more than the allowable period and the Commissioner of Lands is obligated by law to undertake a process of forfeiture. There is a need for this land to be better managed and developed to meet the present and future demands of people living in towns.

The Government has taken steps to address this with the establishment of a national task force⁸ on urban public land governance (2011). The task force, established by the Cabinet, is implementing the policy of the National Coalition for Rural Advancement to improve the governance of publicly owned urban land and to improve the working of urban land markets. It is trying to increase the availability and affordability of land in urban areas⁹.

The limited supply of state land hinders the provision of adequate housing and security of tenure and affects affordability. This is further exacerbated by corrupt

practices and weak land administration, resulting in high land rental arrears and an inconsistency in the implementation of plans, such as the conversion of temporary occupation licences, and plans to prevent the illegal occupation of state land. The existence of informal settlements on customary land and within the city poses social security concerns and is a major constraint to the expansion of town boundaries.

Most prime land required for urban development or expansion that can be developed is in customary ownership and is located at the fringes of urban boundaries. The Government has no jurisdiction over customary land unless landowners have entered into an agreement with it for use of the land. Acquisition of traditional land for public purposes is also expensive (estimated to be several million SI\$) and traditional landowners from the peri-urban villages are reluctant to lease their land to the Government for urban development. Customary land can be bought through long and complex procedures. However, any such process needs to ensure that traditional customary landowners are not alienated. Local authorities and the national Government need to work closely with traditional landowners for the sustainable development of land and services beyond the administrative jurisdiction of the towns and ensure that land in the city and other towns is effectively planned and managed. The growing shortage of urban land will remain a dominant social-political flashpoint within towns, thus requiring innovative solutions.



Solomon Islands towns suffer from poor physical planning due to lack of resources and skilled physical planners. Physical planning is done on a piecemeal basis and with limited public participation. This is evidenced in the absence of a comprehensive road and public transport networks plans, parking, parks and the poor layout of towns landscape. The key challenges are to improve land administration and urban planning and to work closely with customary landowners on the urban fringes to free up their land for development.

THE INSTITUTIONAL STRUCTURES

- Local authorities are responsible for administrative and planning functions but lack the power to allocate state land for development (this power is vested with the Commissioner of Lands at the Ministry of Lands, Housing and Survey).
- Planning and decision-making on land issues is not integrated, leading to a high incidence of conflicting land decisions.
- Physical planners from the Ministry are responsible for town planning, while development control is carried out by building inspectors from the local authorities. But, the links between these responsible agencies are weak, leading to a lack of effective planning.
- The physical planning offices of the Honiara City Council, the Ministry of Lands, Housing and Survey and the governments of other provincial towns are poorly resourced and lack skilled staff, hindering their ability to carry out their mandated duties adequately.
- The Town and Country Planning Act allows for stakeholders to take part in the development of a local planning scheme but it is not effectively executed by the Honiara City Council, the Ministry of Lands, Housing and Survey or provincial planners.

REGULATORY FRAMEWORK

- The Town and Country Planning Act determines the way state land is to be used and sets development controls. This power is delegated to the provincial town and country planning boards in each town, including Honiara.
- Local authorities are responsible for enforcing the Act (serving notices on illegal developers and ensuring compliance with local building by-laws and ordinances). This is not carried out effectively in all towns.
- Planning appeals are referred to the Minister for Lands, Housing and Survey, who has the power under the Act to overrule the decisions of planning boards.
- The Lands and Title Act administers the allocation and registration of all state land.
- Under the Lands and Title Act, the Commissioner of Lands can acquire land through agreement with the landowners. The Act also makes provisions for the right to compensation for the land acquired.
- Provincial towns (with the exception of Honiara) lack a local planning scheme to guide urban development.

RESOURCE MOBILIZATION

- Local authorities have no budgetary support for preparation of new residential subdivision plans.
- There is a shortage of land available for all types of urban development at the local level, especially in Honiara.
- There is inadequate liaison with, and involvement of, customary landowners in mobilizing land for urban purposes,

PERFORMANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY

- Weak administration of state land, poor revenue collection, widespread corruption practices and a poor work ethic remain a challenge for the Ministry of Lands, Housing and Survey.
- State lands are no longer put out to public tender, thus depriving the public of the opportunity to apply for them. State land is directly allocated by the Commissioner of Lands, disabling (past) efforts to create a transparent, accountable and fair process.
- Weak consultation links between the Department of Physical Planning and the Commissioner result in decisions on land being taken without physical planning input, leading to leases issued contrary to local planning schemes and land parcels being created without physical planning approval.
- The tracking system created to enable departmental staff at the Ministry to determine the status of applications has not been followed, creating room for corrupt practices.
- The Commissioner is unwilling to evict illegal developers or occupiers of state land (to avoid socio-political disturbances).

AGREED PRIORITIES

- Effective and efficient urban land administration and physical planning in Honiara and other provincial towns.
- Improved equitable access to serviced land across all tenure types to be available and affordable for economic and social development.
- A system to be in place to ensure that all key stakeholders are involved in land supply processes.
- Greater participation of landowners in development processes to avoid alienation of their land rights.

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	Review the Town and Country Planning Act and the Lands and Title Act	

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	Urban land governance	

INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT



The national Government has primary responsibility for the provision of urban and rural infrastructures and services. The Ministry of Infrastructure and Development takes the leading role in national and provincial roads, bridges and wharves. It works closely with the provincial authorities through their works units to ensure their needs are accommodated within the national budget. In this way, the national Government help shapes urban development. However, an isolated sector-by-sector approach leads to weak coordination and a dependency on the national Government, resulting in declining infrastructure in provincial towns and in the rural areas.

Building effective transport networks encourages investments in the rural areas and improves the economic capacity of existing businesses. Improved access to roads enhances population mobility and creates opportunities for rural communities to transport and sell their produce in urban markets and access government and banking services.

There are major disparities between Honiara and provincial towns in terms of quantity and quality of infrastructure and services. Roads, bridges, state facilities (education, health, housing), water supply and drainage systems are worse in the provincial towns. Road and drainage maintenance are not a priority until it rains, when surface run-off water washes litter and mud down the drainage systems, blocking them and damaging roads. The drainage problem is partially addressed by the rapid employment project in Honiara which provides

community-led cleaning and maintenance of some drains. However, the sustainability of the efforts of the rapid employment project in keeping the drains clean will need further input from the City Council to link it with other donor and community activities. Integrated road networks are lacking, especially in Honiara, due in part to the challenging topography of the city and an overall lack of strategic planning. Drainage and road maintenance should be part of a wider strategic plan for infrastructure investment.

Infrastructure development and maintenance is challenging and expensive, given the geographical dispersion and topography of the urban centres. As a result, most communities have difficulty accessing quality health care, education, water and transport to markets. Local authorities are under-resourced and are unable to provide quality services. They rely on the national Government and donor support to meet major infrastructure needs. The donors, NGOs and in particular the private sector are powerful shapers of the urban centres. The private sector is increasingly providing critical infrastructure, such as telecommunications, tourism and housing, which was previously the domain of Government. Donors are continuing to invest in health and education services. More recently, the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank have been investing in improvements in roads and wharves and subsidizing the cost of sea transport on uneconomical rural routes. The Australian Agency for International Development and the Japan International Cooperation Agency are investing in water supply, health, wharves

and market facilities. The Pacific Infrastructure Advisory Facility is providing technical assistance for financial and operational strengthening of the Solomon Islands Water Authority and has conducted a scoping study for the port of Honiara (at the request of Solomon Islands Port Authority). The study found that with a relatively modest investment and more efficient use of land in the port area, the current facilities at Point Cruz would be sufficient to meet demand for a period of about 10 years.

With proper infrastructure, accessibility to a wide range of services such as education, health and markets will be much improved. This link needs to be shaped and strengthened to produce better outcomes for towns. The need to build and strengthen the technical and administrative capacity of local governments is critical, as is strengthening the links with donors, the private sector and NGOs.

A better rural-urban transport network offers benefits to both urban and rural people and should be strengthened and maintained. This needs a framework to link and integrate many of the key sectors that share the national goal of sustainable development and poverty reduction in line with the Millennium Development Goals. This is where a national urbanization policy is needed to link these key stakeholders together to achieve common goals.

INSTITUTIONAL STRUCTURES

- Local authorities through their works units are responsible for monitoring service delivery in their respective towns and rural areas and work closely with the Ministry of Infrastructure and Development.
- The Ministry is empowered by the national Government to prepare policy proposals and oversees policy relating to efficient infrastructure development needs. It works with local authorities through their works departments to facilitate a well-integrated infrastructure investment programme.

REGULATORY FRAMEWOK

- The Ministry is responsible for administering and facilitating the formulation of the National Transportation Plan, relevant policies and legislation to achieve safe, social, economic and environmentally sustainable infrastructure inputs..
- The Provincial Government Act guides the administration of the provinces, while the Local Government Act guides the administration of the Honiara City Council.

- Local authorities are empowered under these two acts to executive overall administration of their respective towns and provinces.
- The Town and Country Planning Act 1988 guides physical development in urban areas.
- The Public Finance Act provides authority to the Central Tenders Board to execute contracts to a value of SI\$ 500,000 or more on behalf of the Government.
- The Public Finance Act empowers the Tender Board of the Ministry of Infrastructure and Development to administer contracts for less than SI\$ 500,000 on behalf of the Government.

PERFORMANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY

- Local authorities through their works units are responsible for monitoring service delivery in their towns for each fiscal year and report to the Ministry of Home Affairs, in the case of the Honiara City Council, and to the Ministry of Provincial Government, in the case of the provincial authorities, who then will report to Parliament.
- The Office of the Auditor General monitors the financial expenditure and performance of the provinces and the Honiara City Council for each fiscal year and reports to parliament.
- The Ministry of Development Planning and Aid Coordination sets the required standards for approval of development budgets for government projects and benchmarks for the monitoring of projects.
- Each ministry is responsible for the implementation of its development budget.

RESOURCE MOBILIZATION

- Development projects worth SI\$ 500,000 and more must go through the Central Tenders Board for approval.
- The national Government supports both current and development expenditure through the national budgetary process.
- The Government receives financial support from local revenue (taxes) and donor assistance to support physical works and capital investment.

AGREED PRIORITIES

- A network of air, road and sea transportation services to be in place to enhance market movements between urban and rural areas.
- Improved urban and rural services and infrastructure to be in place.
- Disadvantaged urban and rural communities to be given top priority for improved access to services.
- Technical and administrative capacity of local authorities and elected representatives to be improved so they can execute their functions effectively.
- A regulated transport system to be operating effectively and efficiently.
- National, provincial and priority rural roads to be maintained to a required operational standard.
- Effective drainage systems to be in place for existing and proposed developments.
- Develop infrastructure plans so that provision of services is coordinated to optimize the benefits of investment.
- Adequate safety of roads to be maintained.

INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT N°1

Project proposal Page

Develop plans to improve critical infrastructure at the local level

INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT N°2

Project proposal Page

Establish a national transport act to regulate public transport in the city

CONCLUSION



Towns are increasingly seen as the heart of economic growth as they provide greater social and economic opportunities. This important function and role however, is only partially recognized as Governments and development agencies have tended to focus their attention on rural development. While rural development will remain a key force in national development, the country is no longer to be seen as a rural society. In 2009, almost 20 per cent of the national population were living and working in towns and peri-urban areas and this is projected to rise to 25 per cent by 2020.

As Solomon Islands becomes increasingly urban, people are faced with issues such as urban poverty, rising growth of informal settlements and failing basic services (roads, health, garbage collection etc). A policy shift toward urban issues need not be at the expense of rural development, as both are connected through food production (urban markets, transport for rural products), remittances and circular migration.



Maintaining rural-urban linkages is important as this helps to improve the quality of life for the national population. This means the performance of towns needs to be maintained at a required level to meet the needs of present and future generations.

The current development approach, in which the national Government and provincial authorities undertake to plan and manage towns, therefore needs to be changed in order to better address these urban issues whilst harnessing the socioeconomic opportunities of urbanization.

The development of a national urban profile is the beginning of the way forward. It has identified a number of key development policy issues that need to be addressed through participatory planning approaches. They include urban governance and institutional links, urban housing and informal settlements, local economy and unemployment, environmental safety and urban security, urban land and planning and infrastructure development. Achieving these key development policy issues is crucial as they are integral to transforming towns into productive, liveable (healthy, safe, clean) and sustainable places.

A strategic approach to link and integrate many of the key stakeholders who share the national goal of sustainable development and poverty reduction in line with the Millennium Development Goals is vital. This is where a national urbanization policy is required, to provide a link between these key stakeholders in a systematic and partnership approach to achieve the common goals they desire for the country in the years ahead.

GOVERNANCE AND INSTITUTIONAL LINKS

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES	OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS	PRIORITIES
<p>The current work of the provincial government strengthening project, and the rapid employment project in capacity-building and training.</p> <p>Existing activities of NGOs, churches and donors in health and education.</p> <p>Political support for development of economic growth centres by the current Government.</p> <p>The establishment of the Town and Country Planning Act and planning boards to guide urban development and management.</p> <p>Corporate plans of the Ministry of Lands, Housing and Survey to support urban programmes.</p>	<p>Lack of a national lead agency for urban reform.</p> <p>Weak links between civil society groups, donors, the Ministry of Lands, Housing and Survey and the local authorities in terms of urban planning and management.</p> <p>Corruption and <i>wantok bisnis</i> exist at all levels.</p> <p>Existing by-laws and acts that are intended to guide urban development and management are not enforced effectively at the national and local levels.</p> <p>Local authorities are poorly resourced and ill-equipped.</p> <p>Lack of citizen ownership to form a forum to take part in the planning and management of urban centres.</p> <p>Poor work ethics, leading to weak implementation of plans/programmes such as temporary occupation licence plans.</p>	<p>Donor support is likely for identified priority interventions.</p> <p>Improve the status of local authority planning boards to better discharge their mandated roles.</p> <p>Improve local authorities relationship with other cities through existing platforms such as the Pacific-Pacific City Forum¹⁰.</p> <p>Establish a citizen forum.</p>	<p>Political uncertainty and political interference in planning and decision-making processes.</p> <p>Higher urban growth rate and increasing illegal settlements in urban centres.</p> <p>Inadequate financial support from the national Government.</p>	<p>Establish a national leading agency to advance the urban agenda.</p> <p>Strengthen the technical capacity of planning boards at the local level .</p> <p>Build the technical and administrative capacity of local authorities to help them deal with a wide range of urban issues.</p> <p>Improve and/or strengthen urban governance through wider community participation in urban affairs to improve accountability and decision-making processes.</p>

GOVERNANCE AND INSTITUTIONAL LINKS N°1	Project proposal
	Scoping study for the establishment of a lead national urban agency

LOCATION: Ministry of Lands Housing and Survey

DURATION: 3 months

BENEFICIARIES: Ministry staff, local authorities, urban communities and civil society.

IMPLEMENTING PARTNERS: the Ministry and civil society, with support from UN-Habitat.

BACKGROUND: The lack of a key national urban agency in the country has led to poor coordination of urban issues between the national and local authorities and stakeholders. As a result, urban issues are not presented as priority policy issues at the national level. Urban issues are addressed in a piecemeal way by different stakeholders and the impact is limited. Local authorities are responsible for urban planning and management but they are poorly resourced and ill-equipped to address urban challenges, coupled with limited financial and weak policy support from the national Government. Setting up a national urban agency will help to drive the urban agenda forward.

OBJECTIVE: To coordinate and advance the urban agenda effectively at the national level.

ACTIVITIES:

- (1) Conduct a survey amongst the Ministry of Lands, Housing and Survey, the Ministry of Provincial Government, the Ministry of Infrastructure and Development and the Ministry of National Development Planning and Aid Coordination to identify where to host the proposed agency.
- (2) Develop the organizational chart and roles and function of the proposed agency.
- (3) Identify staffing needs and resources.
- (4) Present the findings to the Ministry of Lands, Housing and Survey and other key ministries and the national taskforce for urban land governance for their input.
- (5) Finalise a Cabinet paper with identified recommendations

OUTPUT INDICATORS: A national urban agency is endorsed with key staffing needs met and adequate resources.

STAFF REQUIRED: An experienced consultant (with a background in public sector reform) is needed.

GOVERNANCE AND INSTITUTIONAL LINKS N°2	Project proposal
	Strengthen the technical capacity of planning boards

LOCATION: Ministry of Lands, Housing and Survey

DURATION: 6 months

BENEFICIARIES: Honiara City Council, NGOs, the State, business sectors, community, youths and residents in the city.

IMPLEMENTING PARTNERS: the Ministry and local authorities, with support from UN-Habitat.

BACKGROUND: Local authorities through their planning boards are responsible for urban planning and management of their respective towns. The Town and Country Planning Act, which gives power to the planning boards, is silent over “who” and what criteria are to be used to appoint board members. Planning boards lack the technical and administrative capacity to carry out their statutory functions effectively. The Act is also silent over the role of planners and how they relate to the boards. There is no policy direction coming from the boards to planners on how and what to do pertaining to urban planning. This weak relationship leads to lack of forward planning in the towns.

OBJECTIVE: To improve the technical capacity of the planning boards so that they are able to carry out their duties effectively.

ACTIVITIES:

- (1) Review the Town and Country Planning Act, especially the areas that deal with the appointment of members of boards.
- (2) Conduct consultations with local authorities and other stakeholders regarding the review.
- (3) Conduct a series of training and awareness sessions about the roles and functions of planning boards.

OUTPUT INDICATORS:

- A review of the Act is completed.
- Planning boards are knowledgeable about their roles and functions.

STAFF REQUIRED: An experienced consultant (with a background in planning law) is required.

URBAN HOUSING AND INFORMAL SETTLEMENTS

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES	OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS	PRIORITIES
Existing activities of NGOs, churches and donors in service delivery in the informal settlements.	Lack of plans for informal settlements leading to rapid expansion of illegal settlements.	Donor support is likely to improve informal settlement plans and conditions.	Political uncertainty and lack of political support.	Ministry to develop plans for informal settlement upgrading.
Corporate plans of the Ministry of Lands, Housing and Survey support upgrading of informal settlements.	Inadequate financial support from the Ministry for upgrading of informal settlements.	A source of readily available workers.	Social disruption of family linkages.	Ministry to formulate a housing policy to provide an enabling environment to access affordable land and housing.
Provide housing for low, middle and high-income earners.	Weak links between civil society, Honiara City Council, donors and the Ministry with regards to the upgrading of informal settlements.	Improve the social and physical environment and image of informal settlements.	Inadequate financial support from the Government.	Land and finance are readily available for appropriate educational infrastructure.
Local sociopolitical institutions in the informal settlements.	Weak enforcement of the Town and Country Planning Act and reduction of illegal developments.	There is room for wider community participation in planning/management of informal settlements.	Some settlers may be displaced in the course of settlement upgrading.	Provision of microfinance schemes to assist individuals to build their own homes.
	Lack of a housing policy to regulate the housing market.	Internal revenue is likely to rise through increased land rents for the Ministry and property rates for the City Council.,	Loss of economic livelihoods through destruction of farm lands (settlers highly dependent on these for growing food)	
	Increased non-compliance with planning regulations.	More land availability and housing developments,		
	Corruption and lack of forward planning.	conversion of temporary occupation licences and approval of buildings.		
		Improve the image of settlements through the inputs from the rapid employment project.		

URBAN HOUSING AND INFORMAL SETTLEMENTS N°1	Project proposal
	Develop a housing policy

LOCATION: Ministry of Lands, Housing and Survey

DURATION: 12 months

BENEFICIARIES: the Ministry, Honiara City Council, physical planners and informal settlers in the city.

IMPLEMENTING PARTNERS: the Ministry and civil society with support from UN-Habitat.

BACKGROUND: Shortage of affordable urban land and housing is becoming a critical issue in urban

centres, especially in Honiara. As a result, low and middle-income earners are moving to settle in informal settlements, which are poorly served with water supply, power, sanitation, road, housing, and garbage collection. In Honiara, about 33 per cent (22,000) of the city's total population are living in informal settlements. The Ministry of Lands, Housing and Survey and Honiara City Council, however, continue to perceive them as a low priority and a sensitive area to deal with. The continuing lack of attention paid to urban housing has resulted in the number of illegal settlements rising at an uncontrollable rate in the city and increasing rents being asked for housing. A housing policy may help to address this issue through collaborative efforts between stakeholders and the Government.

OBJECTIVE: To create an enabling environment for the housing sector to provide fully serviced housing land, increased availability and access to housing finance.

ACTIVITIES:

- (1) Engage a consultant to identify a housing needs assessment in Honiara and other towns.
- (2) Undertake consultations with key stakeholders, the Ministry and residents of informal settlements.
- (3) Present the findings to the Ministry and other key stakeholders for their input.
- (4) Finalize the housing policy document.

OUTPUT INDICATORS: A housing policy document is prepared and approved by the Ministry of Lands, Housing and Survey.

STAFF REQUIRED: An experienced development planning consultant and local counterparts.

URBAN HOUSING AND INFORMAL SETTLEMENTS N°2	Project proposal
	Prepare subdivision plans for the informal settlements

LOCATION: Ministry of Lands, Housing and Survey

DURATION: 12 months

BENEFICIARIES: Honiara City Council, the Ministry, physical planners and informal settlers in the city.

IMPLEMENTING PARTNERS: Honiara City Council, the Ministry, planners and civil society, with support from UN-Habitat.

BACKGROUND: Informal settlements constitute about one third of the city’s population and increase at an annual rate of 6 per cent. These settlements are unplanned and often lack adequate water supply, sanitation, road, housing, electricity and garbage collection services. The Honiara City Council and the Ministry’s efforts to regularize temporary occupation licences as well as upgrade the settlements needs to be supported by comprehensive, resourced plans and policies to upgrade informal settlements and to assist settlers secure the area of land they are currently occupying.

OBJECTIVE: Develop subdivision plans that are readily available to guide land allocation and include input from the beneficiaries.

ACTIVITIES:

- (1) Engage a planning consultant to design subdivision plans for informal settlements.
- (2) Undertake consultations with relevant stakeholders and residents of informal settlements.

(3) Identify and assess settlements and residents that are likely to be affected.

(4) Digitize the plans and ensure that they are approved by the Honiara Town and Country Planning Board

(5) Supervise the field survey.

OUTPUT INDICATORS: Subdivision plans are computerized and surveyed, a report on settlements and residents that are affected is completed.

STAFF REQUIRED: Two local consultants (Urban Planner and a qualified Geographical Information Systems consultant/Surveyor.) are required.

URBAN SECURITY AND ENVIRONMENTAL SAFETY

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES	OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS	PROJECTS
<p>Regular police surveillance in the city and suburbs.</p> <p>The Ministry of Environment, Climate Change and Meteorology deals with national environmental issues</p> <p>Awareness programme on climate change undertaken by NGOs.</p> <p>National policy and plans for climate change programmes in place.</p> <p>Planning regulations exist to restrict development on swampy land and on steep slopes.</p> <p>Private security firms are available.</p> <p>An improved judicial system assistance from the Regional Assistance Mission to Solomon Islands.-</p> <p>Capacity-building training programmes for the police force.</p> <p>Road safety management (road signs) is being implemented by the Ministry of Infrastructure and Development.</p>	<p>The police force is not well resourced or equipped to deliver consistent protection services.</p> <p>Weak enforcement of the regulations of the Town and Country Planning Act which prohibit developments in swampy sites and along steep slopes.</p> <p>Inconsistency of the policing operation (nepotism).</p> <p>Urban centres only have one main road, leading to traffic congestion.</p> <p>Few employment opportunities exist in towns.</p> <p>Lack of plans to relocate vulnerable settlements in towns.</p> <p>Lack of pedestrian lights/crossings to control traffic flow and safety of pedestrians.</p> <p>Poor street lights in parts of the city.</p>	<p>Redesigning of the road system to cater for walkways, parking, bus stands and taxi bays.</p> <p>Provide a safer environment for investors and the general public.</p> <p>Potential for more business activities (tourism, wholesaling and retailing).</p> <p>Improve the links between different state institutions, NGOs and the private sector in their efforts to keep the city and towns safe and clean.</p> <p>The work of NGOs, such as Save the Children Australia, on crime prevention in towns and settlements.</p>	<p>Expensive to relocate the most vulnerable settlements.</p> <p>People are reluctant to move to a new place.</p> <p>People continue to build in areas prone to natural hazards.</p> <p>Politicians may not support plans for relocation as this may affect their voters.</p> <p>Ethnic cohesion and affiliation are growing in the city and towns.</p> <p>A culture of excessive compensation demand is emerging in the city and the trend is often dominated by ethnic groupings.</p>	<p>Develop plans to improve community policing.</p> <p>Carry out urban climate change vulnerability and adaptation assessments.</p> <p>Develop plans to relocate houses and settlements in towns that are most vulnerable to natural disasters such flooding .</p> <p>Public awareness programme on the effects of climate change and disaster-prone and vulnerable areas.</p>

URBAN SECURITY AND ENVIRONMENTAL SAFETY N°1	Project proposal
	Urban vulnerability assessment

LOCATION: Ministry of Lands, Housing and Survey

DURATION: 6 months

BENEFICIARIES: Honiara City Council, the Ministry, residents of the city, planners and civil society.

IMPLEMENTING PARTNERS: Honiara City Council, the Ministry of Lands, Housing and Survey, the Ministry of Environment, UNDP and civil society, with support from UN-Habitat.

BACKGROUND: Shortage of state land that can be developed in towns and weak enforcement of the Lands and Title Act and the Town and Country Planning Act have led to an increase in (especially urban poor) houses and informal settlements on steep gradients, along the coast and in swampy areas that are prone to natural disasters such as earthquakes, landslides and

storm surges. Vulnerability to natural disaster and climate change is a critical issue in Honiara and other provincial towns. There is a need to work together to better address climate change and natural disasters as they often have negative effects on the socioeconomic livelihoods of urban residents.

OBJECTIVE: To improve the environmental safety of communities by ensuring that an adaptation and assessment participatory methodology is developed and complied with in all proposals for developments,

ACTIVITIES:

- (1) Engage a consultant to design an assessment checklist.
- (2) Assess and identify areas that are vulnerable so that they are restricted for development.
- (3) Undertake consultations with relevant key stakeholder communities on how to better plan for climate change and reduce risk.
- (4) Relocate communities that are most vulnerable to natural disaster.

OUTPUT INDICATORS: A climate risk assessment checklist is completed, vulnerable sites are identified and incorporated into planning processes.

STAFF REQUIRED: A qualified climate and environmental planner is required.

URBAN SECURITY AND ENVIRONMENTAL SAFETY N°2	Project proposal
	Community policing plan

LOCATION: Ministry of Police and National Security-

DURATION: 6 months

BENEFICIARIES: Honiara City Council, the Solomon Islands Police Force,, civil society groups, communities and urban residents.

IMPLEMENTING PARTNERS: Honiara City Council, the Ministry of Police and National Security and donor partners especially NZODA and UN-Habitat.

BACKGROUND: Law and order problems continue to have adverse effects on the city’s economy and urban planning and management. Juvenile delinquency, robbery and antisocial behaviour in the city continue to rise and are partly linked to an increase in the unemployment rate amongst youths and the decline of cultural values that promote respect. Local authorities and the national police force lack the resources and capacity to effectively address law and order problems

in towns by themselves. This can be better addressed by involving the urban community and reinforcing the existing community policing units at the local levels to work in partnership with the national police force and communities.

OBJECTIVE: To promote and consolidate community policing networks by involving the whole community to become proactive in addressing law and order issues in the city.

ACTIVITIES:

- (1) Under the community consultative approach, identify key causes of law and order problems.
- (2) Devise intervention strategies to address these issues.
- (3) Undertake consultations with key stakeholders. (
- 4) Design plans to implement the approved intervention strategies.

OUTPUT INDICATORS: A detailed plan on how to implement community policing, improved links between the community, local authorities and the national police force and increased security and safety in towns.

STAFF REQUIRED: An expert in law and order with support from the Honiara City Council, the Ministry and the national police force.

LOCAL ECONOMY AND EMPLOYMENT

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES	OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS	PROJECTS
<p>The informal sector provides employment opportunities for people without a formal education.</p> <p>Rural-urban economy linked through the marketing of food products, betel nuts and handicrafts.</p> <p>Local authorities receive revenue from formal economic activities in towns.</p> <p>The rapid employment project is providing employment for less educated people in the city.</p> <p>Improvement in the Honiara City Council administration and internal revenue collection (NZ Aid Programme/CLGF).</p> <p>UNDP/provincial government strengthening project provides capacity development funds for local authorities.</p>	<p>Not enough market outlets and poor facilities to cater for increasing number of vendors.</p> <p>Rapid growth of urban population outstrips formal employment opportunities in towns.</p> <p>Lack of plans and policies in support of the informal sector as a key source of livelihood.</p>	<p>Donors are likely to support plans to upgrade existing market facilities.</p> <p>The introduction of a "user pays" system for certain services, such as parking fees, etc.</p> <p>Family planning programmes undertaken by NGOs and the Ministry of Health and Medical Services.</p> <p>The current government policy on economic growth centres and upgrading of provincial towns, which aims to manage the movement of people to satellite growth centres and to generate more economic opportunities for urban-rural people.</p>	<p>Lack of political support for the informal sector.</p> <p>Social insecurity for the vendors who do not have secure access to market locations.</p> <p>Weak sense of civic pride towards keeping the town and market clean.</p> <p>Limited land availability for future expansion for businesses to create more employment opportunities.</p> <p>Increasing black-market and street sellers of alcohol in the city (informal sectors).</p>	<p>Develop hierarchical cities or towns throughout the country.</p> <p>Develop plans and policies to better address the potential of the urban informal sector.</p> <p>Devise mechanisms to improve the internal revenue collection of the Ministry of Lands, Housing and Survey and local authorities.</p> <p>Develop critical infrastructure at key economic sites to support growth centres.</p>

LOCAL ECONOMY AND EMPLOYMENT N°1	Project proposal
	Develop plans to improve the informal sector

LOCATION: Ministry of Lands, Housing and Survey

DURATION: 6 months

BENEFICIARIES: Honiara City Council, the Ministry, rural-urban vendors and residents of Honiara.

IMPLEMENTING PARTNERS: Honiara City Council, the Ministry of Lands, Housing and Survey and civil society, with support from UN-Habitat and UN Women.

BACKGROUND: Rapid urban population growth and a large influx of rural-urban migration, especially into Honiara, outstrip job creation in the formal

sector, leading to increasing unemployment and urban poverty. The formal sector employed about 27 per cent of the urban population (102,030) in 2009.

Employment creation is more likely to take place in the urban informal sector. This sector provides job opportunities for the majority of people without a formal education and clearly links the rural-urban economy through the marketing of food products, betel nuts and handicrafts. The national Government and local authorities are not able to provide sufficient market outlets to cater for the increasing number of vendors, despite the critical role of the informal sector in job creation and poverty reduction. Lack of decent market outlets has resulted in the mushrooming of street markets in towns. Market vendors continue to face daily hardships as they often work in unhygienic and unsafe environments. The informal sector needs to be recognized and policies developed to support it as a key source of livelihoods.

OBJECTIVE: Create more market outlets to cater for the increasing number of market vendors.

ACTIVITIES:

- (1) Engage a consultant to design the overall plans for markets in towns.
- (2) Undertake consultations with relevant key stakeholders on the plans.
- (3) Develop proposed plans and costs.

OUTPUT INDICATORS: Detailed plans for markets are completed.

STAFF REQUIRED: A consultant with a background in markets and planning is required.

- (3) Conduct public discussions with stakeholders and local and national governments to determine the issues identified.

- (4) Develop the model town plans for implementation.

OUTPUT INDICATORS: A detailed model town plan is prepared with the necessary costings and is ready for implementation.

STAFF REQUIRED: An urban and town planning consultant is required, with local assistants.

LOCAL ECONOMY AND EMPLOYMENT N°2	Project proposal
	Develop hierarchical towns

LOCATION: Ministry of Lands, Housing and Survey

DURATION: 6 months

BENEFICIARIES: Urban residents and visitors

IMPLEMENTING PARTNERS: Honiara City Council, New Zealand Aid Programme, the Ministry, civil society and UN-Habitat.

BACKGROUND: A high rate of unemployment and poverty in Honiara is linked to rising law and order problems. Developing a hierarchy of towns throughout the country is critical as this will support a more appropriate spatial distribution of the population as well as economic growth and development. This links to current government policy on economic growth centres and the upgrading of provincial towns, which aims to manage the movement of people to satellite growth centres rather than to Honiara. However, this requires strong political will and financial support. Increasing financial powers transferred to urban governments is vital to generating the revenue necessary to provide services and increase job opportunities for urban populations.

OBJECTIVE: To create more socioeconomic opportunities for people.

ACTIVITIES:

- (1) Undertake a social survey and consultation with stakeholders and national and local governments to determine what types of towns they want to live in.
- (2) Undertake a cost-benefit analysis.

URBAN LAND AND PLANNING

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES	OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS	PROJECTS
<p>The Solomon Islands institutional strengthening of land administration project has made some improvements to the current land administration processes (mapping, procedures, etc).</p> <p>The setting up of a national urban land governance task force.</p> <p>The corporate plan of the Ministry of Lands, Housing and Survey supports effective land administration and planning.</p> <p>Establishment of four technical working groups within the Ministry.</p> <p>Existing legislation, such as the Lands and Title Act, the Town and Country Planning Act, the Health Act, etc., is intended to promote better planning.</p> <p>Local authorities have planning boards which control development and planning in towns.</p>	<p>Weak land management within the Ministry, leading to malpractice with regard to land administration.</p> <p>Too much power is vested in the Commissioner of Lands under the Lands and Title Act.</p> <p>Weak management and leadership within the Ministry.</p> <p>Lack of competent planners.</p> <p>Political interference in planning and land allocation (decision-making processes).</p> <p>Weak enforcement of the Lands and Title Act/Town and Country Planning Act, leading to rapid growth of squatters.</p> <p>Minister has too much power under the Town and Country Planning Act.</p> <p>The Town and Country Planning Act is silent over the role of planners.</p> <p>Weak planning boards.</p>	<p>Development partners such as UN-Habitat and the World Bank may provide support for priority projects.</p> <p>Provision of planned areas for new residential sites leads to quick land allocation for developers.</p> <p>Set up dialogue with customary land owners for unlocking land for investment.</p> <p>Research into the impacts of return of alienated land to landowners.</p> <p>Establish a land tender board and site development fund.</p>	<p>Political uncertainty and lack of readily available funds.</p> <p>Corruption still exists within the system.</p> <p>Weak link between the Town and Country Planning Act and the Lands and Title Act, leading to the Commissioner of Lands granting areas of land to developers that are yet to be properly planned and/or are reserved for future road expansion.</p> <p>Limited land available in the city and the city boundary is fixed.</p> <p>Informal settlements are becoming influential and politically powerful.</p> <p>Direct land allocation increases and facilitates malpractice.</p> <p>The Guadalcanal Provincial Authority and customary landowners refuse to allow the expansion of the city boundary into the land they hold around the city.</p>	<p>Review and amend the Lands and Title Act and Town and Country Planning Act to improve land administration and planning processes.</p> <p>Establish a national taskforce to address poor urban land governance.</p> <p>Build the technical capacity of the physical planning office.</p>

URBAN LAND AND PLANNING N°1	Project proposal
	Review the Lands and Title Act and the Town and Country Planning Act

LOCATION: Ministry of Lands, Housing and Survey

DURATION: 6 months

BENEFICIARIES: the Ministry, Honiara City Council, planners and land administrators and property developers.

IMPLEMENTING PARTNERS: the Ministry, Honiara City Council, planners, the Attorney General's Chambers, civil society and UN-Habitat.

BACKGROUND: The current Lands and Title Act and Town and Country Planning Act are derived from the British system and give power to one person in a

highly centralized way. Planning and decision-making about land are not well coordinated, leading to a high incidence of bad and conflicting land decisions over the years. The process of acquiring land and getting planning approval is often subject to corrupt practices under the current acts. A review of them is likely to improve land and planning management systems.

OBJECTIVE: To improve land administration and planning processes in order to reduce malpractice.

ACTIVITIES: (1) Consult key staff within the Ministry and the Honiara City Council to review the current land and planning processes in order to identify areas that need to be changed. (2) Undertake wide consultations with key stakeholders on what changes should be made and how they will be implemented. (3) Prepare submissions to the Attorney General’s Chambers for review. (4) Prepare final submission to the Minister responsible for approval.

OUTPUT INDICATORS: Alterations are made to the Lands and Title Act and Town and Country Planning Act, which are approved by the Minister responsible.

STAFF REQUIRED: A legislative expert is required, with support from Ministry and Solicitor General Office.

ACTIVITIES:

- (1) Establish a national task force and a secretariat to coordinate the necessary actions to address poor urban public land management.
- (2) Undertake an inventory of urban public land.
- (3) Review existing processes and regulations for urban land administration and planning.
- (4) Identify the number of existing lessees of fixed term estates that are not yet developed so that appropriate policy options can be executed.

OUTPUT INDICATORS: A well-researched and documented public urban land resource inventory is completed.

STAFF REQUIRED: A qualified town or regional planner is required, with support from Ministry staff.

URBAN LAND AND PLANNING N°2	Project proposal
	Urban land governance

LOCATION: Ministry of Lands, Housing and Survey,

DURATION: 3 months

BENEFICIARIES: the Ministry, Honiara City Council, property developers, NGOs and residents of the city.

IMPLEMENTING PARTNERS: the Ministry, Office of the Prime Minister, civil society and development partners such as UN-Habitat and the World Bank.

BACKGROUND: State urban lands throughout the country have not yet been valued and accounted for. There are a number of registered fixed term estates that are yet to be developed. There is a need to find out why these plots of land are not developed in order to better address the impediments that cause malfunction of urban public land governance and development of land in the urban areas.

OBJECTIVE: To enhance understanding of the limitation of governance of urban public land and propose action to eliminate its impact on the development of urban land.

INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES	OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS	PROJECTS
<p>Legislation, policy and plans for infrastructure development exist at the national level.</p> <p>Donors (AusAid and JICA) are currently supporting water improvements in the city.</p> <p>Local authorities have works units.</p> <p>The rapid employment project provides funds for minor road repairs through the Ministry of Infrastructure and Development.</p> <p>Pacific Region Infrastructure Facility are helping the Government to develop a: Solomon Islands national infrastructure investment plan.</p>	<p>Local authorities are poorly resourced and ill-equipped to repair and build new roads.</p> <p>Lack of capacity to enforce the Transport Act and manage public transport.</p> <p>Lack of proper coordination between donors, the Ministry of Infrastructure and Development and local authorities with regards to drainage and road improvement in towns.</p> <p>Local authorities do not have infrastructure plans and policies.</p>	<p>Donors (AusAid, World Bank etc.) are likely to support key infrastructure needs.</p> <p>Develop a Transport Authority Act to manage public transport in the city.</p> <p>Community groups and NGOs working in settlements can be mobilized to assist with infrastructure development by providing labour.</p> <p>Private sector is also investing in infrastructure developments in the country.</p>	<p>Lack of political support and political uncertainty.</p> <p>Donor funding may not reflect the real needs of the people.</p> <p>Limited funds from donors to fund infrastructure projects.</p> <p>Lack of respect for public property from some people.</p>	<p>Develop plans to improve critical infrastructure at the local level.</p> <p>Establish a national transport act to regulate public transport in the city.</p>

INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT N°1	Project proposal
	Develop local infrastructure plans

LOCATION: Ministry of Infrastructure and Development

DURATION: 6 months

BENEFICIARIES: Urban residents, visitors and local authorities.

IMPLEMENTING PARTNERS: Honiara City Council, Ministry of Lands, Housing and Survey and civil society, with support from UN-Habitat.

BACKGROUND: Local authorities are under-resourced and ill-equipped to provide a quality service. They rely on the national Government and donor support to meet major infrastructure needs. Infrastructure development and maintenance is challenging and expensive, given the geographical dispersion and topography of the urban centres. As a result, most communities have difficulty accessing quality health care, education, water and public transport, Developing infrastructure plans at

the local level will improve service delivery, encourage major investment into the rural areas and improve the economic capacity of existing businesses. Improved access to roads and other services enhances population mobility and creates opportunities for rural communities to transport and sell their produce in urban markets and access government and banking services.

OBJECTIVE: To improve the level and quality of infrastructure in urban centres.

ACTIVITIES:

- (1) Engage a consultant to identify infrastructure needs at the local level.
- (2) Discuss these needs with key stakeholders.
- (3) Draw up the infrastructure plans with detailed costings.
- (4) Implement the proposed plan.

OUTPUT INDICATORS: Infrastructure plan is documented and a report is compiled.

STAFF REQUIRED: A consultant with a background in engineering is required, with support from the Ministry of Infrastructure and Development and local authorities.

REFERENCES

- Amnesty International, 2011, *Where is the dignity in that? Women in Solomon Islands slums denied sanitation and safety*, <http://www.amnesty.co.uk>
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ENDNOTES

- 1 UN-Habitat - United Nations Human Settlements Programme
- 2 http://www.unescap.org/epoc/R3_PacificUrbanAgenda.asp
- 3 Target 7.f. Plus: By 2020 to have regularized all temporary occupation licenses and illegal occupation of government leasehold land in Honiara squatter settlement
- 4 The project is funded by UNDP through the Ministry of Provincial Government and aims to strengthen the financial management and planning capacity of local government.
- 5 The rapid employment programme is a five-year programme funded by the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank in response to high youth and female unemployment in Honiara. It has two components: general cleaning in the city, which is administered by the City Council, and side road maintenance and drainage work coordinated by the Ministry of Infrastructure and Development.
- 6 New rural-urban migrants are housed by their wantoks on arrival and assisted to find work and acquire land in the informal settlements. The sociopolitical set up in these settlements is a reflective of a typical traditional village, where a community is headed by a chief.
- 7 The project designed a system to manage and administer land transactions within the Ministry of Lands, Housing and Survey to reduce corruption and malpractice, but staff failed to follow this system.
- 8 The National taskforce consists of 13 representative from the Office of the Prime Minister, the Ministry of Finance and Treasury, The Ministry of Public Service, the Ministry of Lands, Housing and Survey, Guadalcanal Provincial Government, Honiara City Council, civil society (3 members), the private sector (2 members) and the financial sector.
- 9 The primary aim of the task-force on the Urban Public Land Governance is to assist SIG in the governance and administration of public urban land.
- 10 <http://www.pacific.clgf.org.uk/pacific-capital-cities-forum-pccf/>

SOLOMON ISLANDS: NATIONAL URBAN PROFILE

The Solomon Islands: National Urban Profile consists of an accelerated, action-oriented assessment of urban conditions, focusing on priority needs, capacity gaps, and existing institutional responses at local and national levels. The purpose of the study 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 analysis of existing data and a series of interviews with all relevant urban stakeholders, including local communities and institutions, civil society, the private sector, development partners, academics, and others. The consultation typically results in a collective agreement on priorities and their development into proposed capacity-building and other projects that are all aimed at urban poverty reduction. The urban profiling is being implemented in 30 ACP (Africa, Caribbean and Pacific) countries, offering an opportunity for comparative regional analysis. Once completed, this series of studies will provide a framework for central and local authorities and urban actors, as well as donors and external support agencies.

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