



# Cities<sup>and</sup> Climate Change Initiative

ABRIDGED REPORT

Lami Town  
Fiji

Climate Change  
Vulnerability Assessment



**UN HABITAT**  
FOR A BETTER URBAN FUTURE



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Fiji

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UNHABITAT

## **Lami Town, Fiji – Climate Change Vulnerability Assessment**

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First edition 2013

United Nations Human Settlements Programme

P.O. Box 30030, Nairobi 00100, Kenya

E-mail: [infohabitat@unhabitat.org](mailto:infohabitat@unhabitat.org)

[www.unhabitat.org](http://www.unhabitat.org)

HS Number: HS/027/14E

ISBN Number (Series): 978-92-1-132400-6

ISBN Number (Volume): 978-92-1-132616-1

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### **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

Funding for the Lami Town climate change vulnerability assessment was provided by the Government of Norway and the United Nations Development Account. The United Nations Environment Programme funded a Cost-Benefit Analysis on ecosystems-based adaptation which informed this document. The latter two also fund the implementation of initial adaptation options.

This report is based on: SCOPE Pacific Ltd (2012). *Lami Town Climate Change Vulnerability and Adaptation Assessment 2011* (UN-Habitat); and Rao, Nalini S., Tim Carruthers, Paul Anderson, Loraini Sivo, Tracey Saxby, Trevor Durbin, Vainuupo Jungblut, Terry Hills and Stuart Chape (2012) and *A Comparative Analysis of Ecosystem Based Adaptation and Engineering Options for Lami Town, Fiji* (Samoa, Secretariat for the Pacific Regional Environment Programme).

Summarized by: Liam Fee

Reviewers: Bernhard Barth, Maria Adelaida Antonette Mias-Cea, Sarah Mecartney

Editor: Peter Grant

Design and Layout: Deepanjana Chakravarti



# Contents

|           |  |    |
|-----------|--|----|
| <b>01</b> | <b>Introduction</b>  | 01 |
| 1.1       | Cities and Climate Change  | 01 |
| 1.2       | UN-Habitat's Cities and Climate Change Initiative  | 01 |
| <b>02</b> | <b>Overview of the City</b>  | 02 |
| 2.1       | Fiji: Overview   | 02 |
| 2.2       | Geographical Location  | 02 |
| 2.3       | Governance Structure   | 03 |
| 2.4       | Demographic and Urbanization Trends  | 04 |
| 2.5       | Physical Features, Land Use and Tenure   | 04 |
| <b>03</b> | <b>City-Wide Vulnerability –<br/>Scoping Exposure, Sensitivity and<br/>Adaptive Capacity</b> | 06 |
| 3.1       | Assessment Framework   | 06 |
| 3.2       | Exposure   | 06 |
| 3.2.1     | Rainfall   | 06 |
| 3.2.2     | Temperature  | 07 |
| 3.2.3     | Storms and Wind  | 08 |
| 3.2.4     | Storm Surge and Sea-level Rise   | 09 |
| 3.2.5     | Non-climate Disasters – Earthquakes and Tsunamis   | 10 |
| 3.3       | Sensitivity  | 11 |
| 3.3.1     | Ecosystems   | 11 |
| 3.3.2     | Physical Systems   | 12 |
| 3.3.3     | Economic Systems and Livelihoods   | 12 |
| 3.3.4     | Social Systems   | 13 |
| 3.4       | Adaptive Capacity  | 13 |
| 3.4.1     | Autonomous Adaptation at the Community Level   | 13 |
| 3.4.2     | Adaptation at the Institutional Level  | 14 |
| <b>04</b> | <b>Vulnerable People, Places and Sectors</b>   | 16 |

|           |   |    |
|-----------|---|----|
| <b>05</b> | <b>Identifying Key Adaptation Options</b>                               | 19 |
| 5.1       | Cost-Benefit Analysis: Ecosystem Versus Infrastructure Based Adaptation | 19 |
| 5.2       | Social and Policy Interventions   | 20 |
| 5.3       | The Cost of Business as Usual   | 22 |
| <b>06</b> | <b>Recommendations and Conclusions</b>                                  | 23 |
| 6.1       | Practical Actions at the Local Level                                    | 23 |
| 6.2       | Multi-Level Recommendations   | 24 |
| 6.3       | Strategic Recommendations for Lami                                      | 24 |
| <b>07</b> | <b>Annex: Follow-Up Actions</b>   | 25 |

## List of Figures

|            |  |    |
|------------|--|----|
| Figure 1:  | Lami Town within the Greater Suva area                   | 02 |
| Figure 2:  | Map showing Lami Town boundaries                         | 03 |
| Figure 3:  | Lami Town's Strategic Plan Governance Structure          | 04 |
| Figure 4:  | Land use map of Lami Town                                | 05 |
| Figure 5:  | Assessment framework                                     | 06 |
| Figure 6:  | Monthly average rainfall in Viti Levu, 1961-1990         | 07 |
| Figure 7:  | Annual mean temperature for Laucala Bay, Suva, 1940-2010 | 08 |
| Figure 8:  | Sea-level in Suva Harbour, 1998-2010                     | 10 |
| Figure 9:  | Flooding hotspots in Lami Town                           | 16 |
| Figure 10: | Erosion hotspots in Lami                                 | 17 |
| Figure 11: | Locations of possible adaptation actions                 | 19 |
| Figure 12: | Cost of adaptation actions avoided                       | 21 |

## List of Tables

|          |  |    |
|----------|--|----|
| Table 1: | Major disasters in Fiji, 2003-2010   | 09 |
| Table 2: | Community uses of river and foreshore ecosystems in Lami and changes in their use. | 11 |
| Table 3: | Unit cost of adaptation actions  | 20 |
| Table 4: | Cost-benefit analysis of adaptation actions in terms of damage avoided             | 21 |



# Introduction

## 1.1 Cities and Climate Change

Climate change is already affecting millions of people worldwide. In urban areas, which are typically characterized by significantly higher population density, climate change will exacerbate and compound existing climate vulnerabilities, especially for the urban poor. As a result of climate change, it is expected that storm frequency and intensity will increase, flooding will become more serious and droughts will affect food production in rural areas, which will have damaging effects in cities. Coastal areas are particularly threatened by inundation from storm surges and sea-level rise. Existing urban development challenges, such as poor health and inadequate housing, is substantially exacerbated by the effects of climate change. At the same time, cities are the main drivers of increasing greenhouse gas emissions. This means that cities must be at the centre of efforts to both mitigate the causes of climate change, and to adapt to their anticipated effects.

In Fiji, as in many areas in the Pacific, urban populations are located in highly hazard-prone areas in the coastal zone. Storm surges and sea-level rise can affect settlements, food production and infrastructure. A lack of basic services such as clean water supply and solid waste management can exacerbate the negative effects of climate change. Amid all this, the poorest are almost always the most vulnerable, as they have less access to infrastructure, basic services and social safety nets in the event of a disaster.

## 1.2 UN-Habitat's Cities and Climate Change Initiative

Cities and local authorities have the potential to mitigate the causes of climate change, and protect themselves from the effects. The Cities and Climate Change Initiative (CCCI) promotes the mitigation of, and adaptation to, climate change in developing countries. More specifically, it supports the development of pro-poor innovative approaches to climate change policies and strategies, building on UN-Habitat's rich experience of sustainable urban development (through the Environmental Planning and Management approach of the Sustainable Cities and Agenda 21 Programmes) as well as on well-recognized capacity building tools. CCCI develops, adapts and disseminates methodologies that put city managers and practitioners in a better position to support adaptation to climate change. It also promotes collaboration among local authorities and their associations in global, regional and national networks, with the rationale of:

- 1) enhancing policy dialogue so that climate change is firmly established on the agenda;
- 2) supporting local authorities' efforts to bring about these changes; and
- 3) enhancing awareness, education and capacity-building in support of climate change strategies.

A major outcome of the initiative will be the development of a set of tools for mitigation and adaptation.

# Overview of the City

## 2.1 Fiji: Overview

Fiji is located in the South Pacific, around 2,000 km North of New Zealand, at a latitude of between 15° and 22° South and 175° and 178° East. There are 322 islands in the Fijian archipelago, of which 110 are inhabited. Of a total land mass of 18,270 km<sup>2</sup> Viti Levu (10,544 km<sup>2</sup>) and Vanua Levu (5,538 km<sup>2</sup>) are the two largest islands and account for most of the country's population and economic activities. Of its population of 837,271, as of 2007, approximately 51 per cent live in urban areas. Suva is the capital and is one of two cities, along with Lautoka. There are 11 declared towns, including Lami. The Fijian economy has shown relatively slow growth in recent years, with its annual GDP improving from a period of slight contraction in

2009 and 2010 to a 2 per cent increase in 2011<sup>1</sup> the main economic sectors are tourism and cash crops, particularly sugar.

## 2.2 Geographical Location

Lami Town is adjacent to Suva City on the southeast coast of Viti Levu. It is a coastal town in the north-western part of the greater Suva area, which is the most densely populated region in Fiji, with 62.1 per cent of the country's total urban population. The total land area of Lami is 680 hectares and the population is approximately 20,000.

Figure 1: Lami Town within the Greater Suva area



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