Front-line Cities and Islands

Concept Note, April 2019

“The voyage to a resilient and sustainable future is not one that is taken alone, but by a movement of cities, states, islands and countries working together to shape the future we want.”

H.E. Tommy E. Remengesau Jr.
President of Palau and Leader of the Global Island Partnership

Islands are at the front-line of climate change impacts. In parallel island urban settlements are rapidly growing and as they grow attention is needed to ensure this growth does not exacerbate vulnerabilities. Resilience building in island towns and cities is critical. Driven by determination and necessity, islands are also at the front-line of spearheading integrated solutions to climate change and sustainable development. This is evident through Fiji’s leadership to mobilize oceans and climate action through to Seychelles pioneering the world’s first blue bond and debt-for-adaptation-swap, to efforts by Cozumel to move towards an innovative sustainable development and smart island model as response to climate change mitigation and adaptation and Hawaii’s statewide efforts as an early leader on how a subnational entity can effectively implement their own climate and sustainable development priorities. These islands can and are building resilience to stressors and shocks and more can be done. They need to learn from what each other are doing but also from others in similar situations including other cities. They can share experiences on integrated water-energy-food nexus projects given their smaller scale, as well as share, aggregate and package together innovative financing and green investment activities that by their nature are discrete but when packaged together are significant, impactful and investment scale.

The Opportunity
During the UNFCCC COP 23 in Bonn, the COP President Fiji together with the President of Palau on behalf of the Leaders of the Global Island Partnership and with Mayors of the ICLEI Local Governments for Sustainable Development launched Front-line Cities and Islands (Watch the video from the launch event). Front-line cities and islands builds a movement of mayors and leaders of island economies at the front-line of climate change impacts with mayors and leaders of resilience working together to champion local action in urban areas to deliver scalable, integrated solutions to urgently build resilience: on islands and globally.

Objectives

● To create a network of coastal cities / municipalities within GLISPA, ICLEI and other regional and international entities to highlight islands and island economies, particularly urban areas, cultivate city-to-city and island-to-island learning and strategic partnerships, determine priority issues that they can work on together, share solutions that have been undertaken and identify and develop funding sources and innovative financing mechanisms for the long term.

● To develop a special pathway through UNFCCC and other multilateral and donor processes for coastal cities, municipalities and settlements for funding in the short and medium term.

● To promote dialogue and agreement aimed at achieving innovative resilience solutions.
The Partners
Front-line emerges through two long-standing partnerships - the Global Island Partnership (GLISPA) and ICLEI Local Governments for Sustainability - joining forces to support cities and islands on this bold action plan. Through their respective networks Front-line is championed by Fiji with the Leaders of the Global Island Partnership (the Presidents of Palau, Marshall Islands and Seychelles with the Prime Minister of Grenada and Premier of British Virgin Islands) alongside mayors and island leaders from the ICLEI network (Mayors of Nadi, Suva and Lautoka (Fiji), Cozumel (Mexico), Honiara (Solomon Islands), Castries (St Lucia), Vacosas Phoenix (Mauritius), and many others. The Organisation of East Caribbean States also joined Frontline as a regional partner in March 2018.

This influential collective of mayors and leaders will build a coalition of global resilience champions at the front-line to deliver scalable and integrated solutions to implement the SAMOA Pathway, Sendai Framework, Paris Climate Agreement, SDGs and the New Urban Agenda. It provides a platform to identify, learn from and scale solutions from islands and member cities providing greater momentum on resilience building to all engaged.

The Initiative
GLISPA and ICLEI will work together along with partners on promoting sustainable island and urban development through sub-national and city leadership on a range of issues important to islands including amongst others: resilience and systems planning, climate change and clean energy, healthy oceans and near-shore coastal fisheries management, resilient infrastructure and innovative finance, ecosystems services for resilience and post disaster recovery and sustainable tourism.

Methodology
This would include Island champions and leaders from islands
1. City-To-City twinning and learning. ICLEI and GLISPA will match island cities with other cities from the ICLEI global network and GLISPA network, from global north and south, particularly coastal and island communities.
2. Identifying and partnering with local public-private sector platforms, initiatives and collaborations that can engage communities, provide local context and accelerate action.
3. Developing action plans and project mobilization to support island implementation of sustainable development priorities including through innovative financing.
4. Mobilising implementation focussed measurable leadership commitments on island urban sustainable development and resilience with a mechanism to support implementation.
5. Supporting advocacy and outreach on the initiative and relevant issues through the Global Covenant of Mayors for Climate and Energy and other relevant global processes.
6. Measuring progress - monitoring and reporting of progress will be conducted in reference to the relevant international frameworks, particularly the SAMOA Pathway, Sendai Framework, Paris Climate Agreement, SDGs and New Urban Agenda.