Commonwealth Association of Planners

ADDRESS TO EXPERT GROUP MEETING: "THE ROLE OF PLANNING IN CLIMATE CHANGE MITIGATION AND ADAPTATION": ROME: 30 NOVEMBER 2007

"A man has been charged with murder in Australia after allegedly punching and kicking an elderly man during a heated argument over water restrictions. Ken Proctor, 66, was watering his front lawn in southern Sydney on Wednesday when Todd Munter, 36, walked past and made a remark about wasting water. Mr Proctor then turned his hose on Mr Munter, prompting a fight, police said. … Mr Proctor later died of a heart attack. Australia is suffering its sixth year of severe drought and all major cities have imposed restrictions on household water consumption." BBC News Thursday 1 November 2007.

"The Australian of the year 2007, environmentalist Tim Flannery, once predicted that Perth in Western Australia could become the world's first ghost metropolis, its population forced to abandon the city due to lack of water. …Australians are some of the world's greatest energy consumers, and people in Perth use more water than any other city in Australia. Yet theirs is the driest climate in the world, and Perth sits on the edge of a vast desert, an island of greenery in the form of European style parks and gardens. The City's case is a fascinating paradox of over consumption matched by a dawning awareness of climate change ... The City is made up of suburbs that stretch for more than 70km along the coast of the Indian Ocean. People consume a lot of energy. It is a car-dependent city with little public transport. Many of the luxury houses overlooking the ocean … boast fashionable black roofs that soak up the heat in temperatures of up to 42 degrees in summer, and produce a greater need for air conditioning inside. … There is a joke doing the rounds that goes: the good news is that we'll all soon be drinking recycled water; the bad news is that there will not be enough to go around." BBC News Thursday 3 May 2007.

"Voters in the tiny South Pacific nation of Kiribati are going to the polls in a general election. A total of 146 candidates are contesting the election, in which education and employment are the dominant themes. The Kiribati archipelago comprises more than 30 coral atolls that straddle the equator. Some of the atolls are threatened by rising sea levels, an issue which is a key concern for many voters. … The population of 100 000 is growing, but job opportunities are becoming increasingly scarce. The economy is based on fishing and farming. … Most of the islands of Kiribati are low–lying coral atolls that lie on top of a submerged volcanic chain and are surrounded by reefs. Rising sea levels are causing great alarm. Kiribati has asked its neighbours across the South Pacific to take in environmental refugees if the worst should happen and communities are inundated. The signs are not good. Storm surges and unusually high tides have destroyed some homes. They have also contaminated farm land and supplies of drinking water." BBC News Wednesday 22 August 2007.

Distinguished guests and colleagues,

These three news stories are not the only such stories from around the world, but they illustrate very vividly that climate change is now a reality, is not only an environmental issue, is already having profound social, economic and political consequences across the globe, and can no longer be ignored. They also illustrate that the impacts of climate change will know no boundaries, and will impact at the scale of the individual, the metropolis, and the state; will know no wealth boundaries and will impact on the first – world business executive and the poor subsistence farmer; and will know no boundaries of geographic scale and will impact on the small island state and on the large continental land masses. Above all though, they tell a tale of the urgent need to reconsider the direction which planning and development are taking everywhere.

The purpose of this paper is not to give a detailed expose on climate change, although some of the science needs to be sketched in order to properly understand the consequences. Climate change is a highly technical field, fraught with complex science, dire warnings, uncertainties as you will see from the case studies discussed later in this paper, debate and sometimes even conflicting hypotheses. But that is the work of the scientists who have made this subject their field of work. The task of this paper is to explore what the meaning of all of this is for planning , which is our field of work.

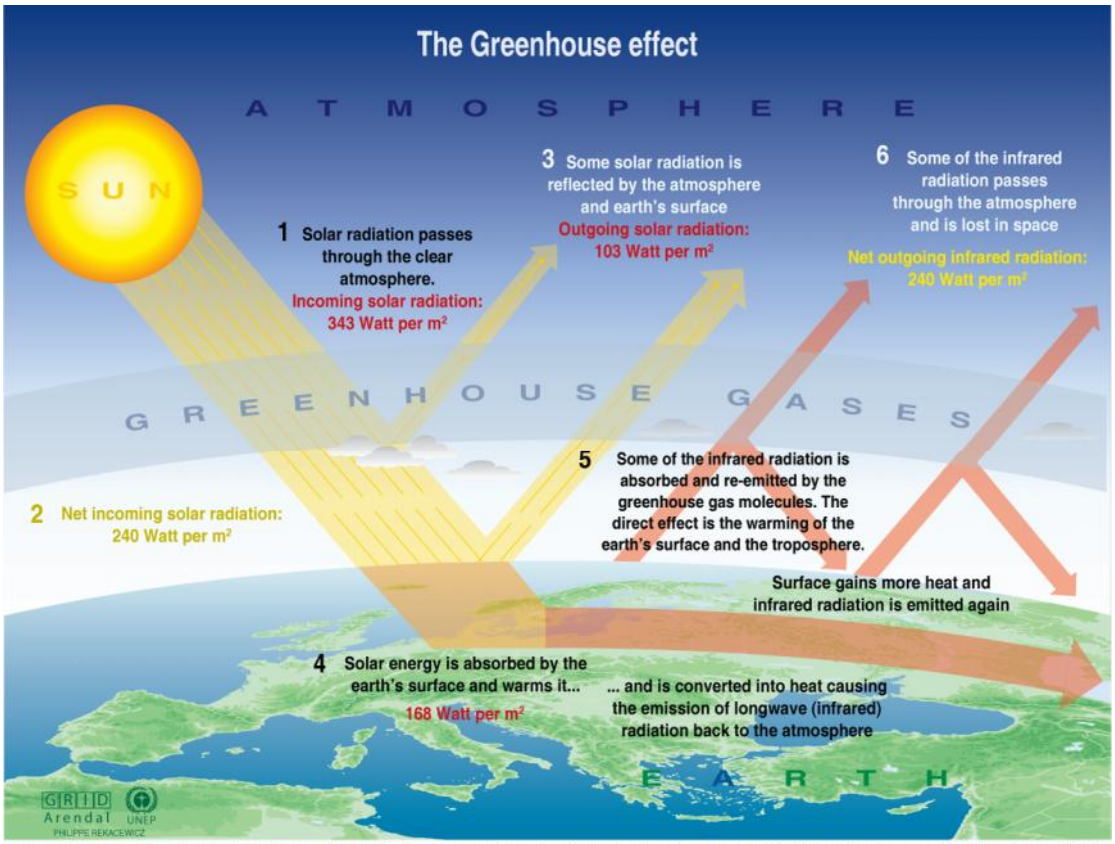
1. What is Climate Change?

Climate is defined very simply as "average weather". So if on average you have hot dry summers and cool wet winters, you probably enjoy a Mediterranean climate. But we know that weather patterns, and hence climate, have always changed. There are indications that in times past Greenland was arable farmland, and the depth of the ice pack over New York was greater than the height of the tallest skyscraper in Manhattan. We also know that the Caribbean island of Trinidad was part of the South American continent until sea level rise 1 0 000 years ago caused it to be severed from the mainland. Changing climate is therefore not new.

Although we know that our climate is changing, there are some uncertainties as to exactly how much it will change, nor are we presently always certain as to what the impacts of the change will be in.

To understand why the issue of climate change is now so critical however we need to consider the science of climate for a moment:

The earth absorbs heat energy from the sun and radiates heat energy back into space at infra–red wavelengths. Some of this energy goes back into space, but an increasing amount is absorbed by trace atmospheric gases, for example, carbon dioxide and methane – the greenhouse gases. The greenhouse gases re–emit this energy in all directions, crucially including back to earth, thereby warming it further. These greenhouse gases occur naturally, but human activity is increasing their concentration. This process is depicted in the following diagram:



Sources: Okanagan university college in Canada, Department of geography, University of Oxford, school of geography; United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), Washington; Climate change 1995, The science of climate change, contribution of working group 1 to the second assessment report of the intergovernmental panel on climate change, UNEP and WMO, Cambridge university press, 1996.

The science underpinning climate change has advanced significantly in the last 20 years since the publication of the Bruntland report *Our Common Future* in 1987. This report is seen as the catalyst for the significantly raised awareness of the issue of climate change and its impacts. It alerted the world to the necessity of fostering economic development that could be sustained without depleting natural resources or harming the environment. It was concerned about global equity and recognised that achieving equity and sustainable growth wo uld require technological and social change. It is perhaps famous for giving us the definition of sustainable development which we all know as

> "*Development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs."*

The importance of this report is perhaps best seen in the context of what the thinking was 30 years ago. The text books then dealt with climate change as "Climate change – inadvertent" and postulated that the increasing emission of nu clei into the atmosphere would lead to a reduction in global temperatures of as much as 4 degrees, resulting in the thickening of the ice packs and advancing glaciers.

Since the publication of the Bruntland report we have had the publication of a series of UNEP Global Environment Outlook, with GEO 1 published in 1997, and the publication last month of the Geo 4 report. The Geo 4 report is the work of hundr eds of researchers and looks in depth at a range of environmental issues, but also explores the socia l aspects of climate change. It finds

that there are no major issues raised in the Bruntland report for which the for eseeable trends are favourable.

We have also had the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) and Stern reports. I will deal with these briefly, as the information they contain is so voluminous that there is not enough time to go into these reports in any depth.

The Stern report, or to give it its full title, "Stern Review Report on the Economics of Climate Change", can be found at www.hm-treasury.gov.uk . It is a lengthy report and in six separate sections it looks at climate change from an economic perspective, but includes useful information of a more technical nature. It examines the impacts of climate change on growth and development, the economics of stabilisation, policy responses for mitigation, policy responses for adaptation and sets out frameworks for international collective action. The report makes it clear that all countries will be affected by climate change. Adaptation - which can be defined as "building resilience" - and minimising the costs of impacts are seen as essential. The report goes on to say this about climate change "... it is still possible to protect our societies and economies from its impacts to some extent - for example by providing better information, improved planning and more climate resilient crops and infrastructure." (Page vii)

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, under the auspices of UNEP, has also done extensive work on a scientific evaluation of climate change including recording changes in atmospheric constituents, snow and ice cover, and sea level, and also looks at the potential consequences of climate change. It has released a series of assessments, with the fourth released in 2007. The fourth report includes a section dealing with sustainable development and climate change mitigation, and argues that making development more sustainable by changing development paths can make a major contribution to climate change mitigation. Land management is listed as a specific example of an area where synergies between mitigation and adaptation can exist (Page 34).

What we can be certain of now is that climate is changing by virtue of global warming. The science is irrefutable, and there is clear consensus that climate change is a serious global threat and it demands an urgent global response. It will affect access to water, food production, health, the availability of land, and the environment, including significant costal flooding, affecting where and how we live.

2. Why is climate change on the planning agenda?

The outcomes of the World Urban Forum are well known to all of you, but it is worth remembering that the three priority issues identified in the discussion documents at Vancouver, including the "Reinventing Planning" Paper and the Vancouver Declaration, list poverty, urbanisation and climate change as the three most critical issues of the day.

The paper entitled "REINVENTING PLANNING: A NEW GOVERNANCE PARADIGM FOR MANAGING HUMAN SETTLEMENTS" had the following to say:

"What difference can the New Urban Planning make?

- ***Reduce vulnerability to natural disasters***.

  By addressing, in cities throughout the world, some key causes of climate change, and by carefully planning settlements so that fewer people are vulnerable to natural calamities,

human settlements will become more liveable and the world will stand a better chance of coping with environmental challenges.

- ***Create environmentally-friendly cities***.

Urban growth has enormous impacts on the local, as well as global, environment. *New Urban Planning* can support environmentally-friendly forms of transport and sustainable building, and conserve environmental assets. More efficient and economical city forms, where legal and governmental systems can deliver them, are vital elements for environmental sustainability."

How? Ten Principles of New Urban Planning

1. Sustainability

The overarching principle that governs *New Urban Planning* is sustainable development as elaborated at WSSD in 2002. This is not an exclusive preserve of planning. The special contribution that *New Urban Planning* makes is its practical focus on reconciling and integrating social, economic and environmental considerations in human settlements development. *New Urban Planning* takes account of the impact of today's developments on future generations, a crucial factor in environmental sustainability.

The Vancouver Declaration states the following in its opening paragraph, and it is timeous to remind ourselves that a number of planning institutes and associations from around the world have signed up to this declaration.

> *"We, representatives of the planning profession of the world, dedicate ourselves to working together, and with others, to tackle the challenges of rapid urbanisation, the urbanisation of poverty and the hazards posed by climate change and natural disasters. Urbanisation must become more sustainable if the global community is to realise the aspirations in the Millennium Development Goals, especially MDG7, which seeks to "ensure environmental sustainability".*

and have undertaken to do the following:

> *"We will promote this Declaration to governments, international development organisations, civil society and other professions in a spirit of global partnership."*

But why was climate change listed as a priority issue? WUF in Vancouver also saw the launch of a publication entitled "Making Planning Work" a joint publication by a number of organisations, including the Department for International Development in the United Kingdom, The Royal Town Planning Institute, also from the United Kingdom, the Commonwealth Association of Planners, and UN Habitat. One of the aims of this publication was "to focus international attention on the urgent need to increase global understanding of sustainable urban development processes…" (Making Planning Work, page vi).

But it is not only the planners who recognise the critical role of planning in addressing the issue of climate change: the Stern report presents four key elements of future international frameworks with the fourth adaptation strategy stating:

"It is essential that climate change be fully integrated into development policy".

Similarly, at the 2007 Commonwealth People's Forum held last week in Kampala, the Civil Society Statement to the Heads of Government meeting included a substantial section on climate change, which concluded with the following:

"1. We *call* on Commonwealth Member States to:

a. *ratify* and *implement* their legal obligations as contained in the UNFCCC and Kyoto Protocol;
b. *commit* to negotiate a Road Map at the UN Climate Summit in Bali for a fair, effective, flexible and inclusive post-2012 climate regime by no later than 2009;
c. *endorse* the following as key elements of a post-2012 regime; namely
    i. decisive quantified emission reduction targets for all developed countries under the Kyoto Protocol, including monitoring of compliance;
    ii. incentives for enhanced mitigation action by developing countries including through enhanced carbon trading;
    iii. technology development, diffusion and commercialisation; and securing the scale of resources required to address climate change
d. *establish* a High-Level Commonwealth Commission, with civil society participation, to examine the challenges of climate change and to identify strategies, including for:
    i. addressing the impacts of climate change on Commonwealth Small States;
    ii. disaster risk reduction strategies and support;
    iii. employment transition to a more sustainable economy; and
    iv. local level climate change strategies.
e. *establish* measures and finance to support developing countries in adapting to the impacts of climate change, in particular through a Commonwealth Climate Change Adaptation Fund to facilitate adaptation measures and technologies accessible by all sectors, with special attention to the needs of the poor."

So the question then is clear: how are we, the planners of the world, respond ing to the issue of climate change which clearly requires global collective action?

3. What then is the role of planning in mitigating and adapting to climate change?

There are clearly two aspects of the role of planning in the face of this challenge. They are firstly "Are we creating spatially sustainable new settlements and cities?" which equates to mitigation, and secondly "Are we considering what the likely impacts of climate change are going to be on existing urban settlement in our local context?" which equates to adaptation.

Climate change is likely to speed up the rates of urbanisation within some countries, as we see more and more environmental refugees. The UN predicts that there could be 150 million climate change refugees within the next 50 years. What does this mean for the countries of the world? What collective action should we be debating?

Planning is like preventative medicine, whereas we have spent the last generation focussing on curative medicine. So, we have had social upheaval, the diseconomies of retro-fitting infrastructure, and the avoidable costs of rehabilitating settlements after natural disasters, when instead we should have been planning for new sustainable urban settlement and hazard mitigation.

A fundamental problem is that planning arguably has a maximum horizon of 20 years, if we take the Integrated Development Planning process as an example. It must be conceded that clarity

about specific impacts is sometimes going to be difficult to obtain, and even more difficult to extrapolate over such a time period.

BUT the issue cannot be ignored, and the potential impacts HAVE to be identified and made available to inform the planning process and decision making. Within any planning area there will be indications as to what the likely impacts will be, with some more obvious than others. It might be relatively easy for example to draft scenarios around the impacts of sea level rise on the chores of Bangladesh, but it is much more difficult to spell out what this means for the planning of Kolkata.

Similarly, the impacts of sea level rise might be easier to predict than the impacts of global warming and potential drought on agricultural production in Africa, and the likely consequences of this for social dislocation, economic degradation, and migration to urban centres such as Nairobi and Johannesburg.

Planners have to facilitate debate around this issue of climate change and the drafting of likely impacts in our geographic area of work. For example, we must pay close attention to the protection of high potential agricultural land in order to protect food sources, and we must sketch scenarios to spell out the likely impacts of climate change on rural–urban migration.

4. What can we learn about this role from work already being done around the world?

There is a rapidly growing awareness of the impacts of climate change, but this is not yet universal. This may well be due to the difficulty of obtaining sufficiently reliable information on which to base the drafting of planning responses, but is also undoubtedly a consequence of the issue of climate change having only recently been brought so strongly onto the planning agenda as a result of events such as WUF III. Some countries, such as India, appear to still be following the "discredited, technocratic master plans of an earlier era" (Making Planning Work page 11) and seemingly have not yet engaged with the issue of climate change in any strategic way. In countries such as South Africa which has adopted integrated development planning as the cornerstone of post apartheid planning, there is still little or no mention of the likely impacts of climate change in most of the Municipal IDPs. But all is not lost, as planners around the world are beginning to engage with this issue, even if we have not yet reached the stage of producing definitive planning responses.

The following four case studies are presented to outline the range of responses to the issue of climate change in different parts of the world.

4.1 Pacific islands

Kiribati was the subject of one of the news stories cited at the start of this paper. Information obtained from the BBC website shows that in 1989 overcrowding prompted resettlement of inhabitants to other low-lying atolls, and in 1999 the government reported that two uninhabited coral reefs have been submerged because of rising sea levels. Interestingly, in March 2002 it announced a decision along with Tuvalu and the Maldives to take legal action against the United States of America for its refusal to sign the Kyoto Protocol.

Against this background of a high level of awareness and the realities of the impacts of climate change, the Second Pacific Regional Workshop on Urban Management was held in Fiji in April 2007, and was followed by the Pacific Planning Forum meeting. The purpose of this workshop included reviewing the implementation of the Pacific Urban Agenda which was set up in terms of

the Pacific Plan which is specifically concerned with policies and plans for urbanisation, and which serves as the integrated framework for urban management. The workshop was also intended to enhance learning by sharing information on urban planning and management, and to refine priorities of the Pacific Urban Agenda.

At the commencement of the workshop, a number of plenary addresses were presented, some of which specifically highlighted the three priority issues facing planning namely poverty, urbanisation and climate change. At the conclusion of the workshop, the participants who represented many Pacific countries including Kiribati, presented the outcomes of the group sessions where the various issues were debated. Not one speaker mentioned climate change or the threats it represents. As an observer, I asked if I could make the observation that this was a critical omission, especially in the context of the small island states of the Pacific where this issue is literally one of life and death and threatens the very existence of some countries. It was agreed that this issue needed to be referred to.

The report on the workshop recognises that some countries did not even consider urban planning to be a priority until recently (paragraph 7). It lists the challenges to the implementation of the Pacific Urban Agenda as things such as the push factors driving people to the urban areas, it records that waste disposal is a public health issue, it makes mention of the need to make serviced land available and it deals with urban security but mostly in the economic security sense. No mention is made of the threats of climate change in the section dealing with challenges. In the section of the report dealing with actions, brief mention is made of the issue of climate change in the section which deals with the urban environment where in paragraph 29 the following is stated:

"Monitor and evaluate environmental and disaster hazards, climate change and key sources of pollution, and develop strategies to minimise environmental damage and vulnerability to disasters."

The work being done by the various agencies in supporting the Pacific Urban Agenda is acknowledged and fully supported. Dealing with climate change almost as an afterthought, and burying it away as two words in the last paragraph of the section of the recommendations for action dealing with "Urban environment", must however be questioned. It cannot be said that there is evidence of climate change being a priority issue within the field of urban management and planning in the small island Pacific States, despite the severity of the threats they face as acknowledged in the quoted news report from the BBC and as apparent from the extensive work done on building the scientific knowledge base on the likely impacts of climate change in the Pacific. The role of planning in climate change mitigation and adaptation is clearly not yet fully appreciated in the Pacific Island states – at least from the evidence of this workshop.

4.2 Barbados

In June 2007, the Barbados Town and Country Planning Society convened a Commonwealth Association of Planners Regional Workshop entitled "Re – shaping the Planning Agenda: Experiences of Small Island States". It had as one of its stated themes "Climate change and disaster management" and dedicated a session on the opening day to this issue.

I will not dwell on this case study for long as it is one of the case studies which has been shortlisted for presentation in this Rome meeting, and Richard Gill, the President of the Barbados Town and Country Planning Society is here to present this case study. It needs to be recorded however that in Barbados there appears to have been a significant acknowledgement

of the potential threats of climate change to the urban fabric of the island, and specific action is being taken through the planning process to mitigate against the identified impacts and to adapt planning practice itself to deal with this priority issue.

The papers presented at the Barbados workshop made specific mention of the need for planning to look at the impacts of climate change, and for the need to develop a policy framework for climate change. Such a policy framework was argued to include an assessment of current vulnerability by looking at the ways in which existing policy and development practice can reduce vulnerability, by designing policy alternatives which deal with effects on the economy, and which includes hazard mitigation planning in the design of human settlements and coastal zone management. A multi - faceted approach to lessen climate change impacts was put in place, and includes the regular monitoring of coral reefs and beaches - both critical elements of Barbados' tourism based economy - increasing buy–in from developers and property owners, and looking closely at coastal building codes.

This positive response of the planners of Barbados, working in partnership with the local scientific experts, in addressing the role of planning in climate change mitigation and ad aptation is to be lauded, and serves as a useful example for other countries to follow. There has been a significant advancement from simply identifying the potential threats, to making the critical connections with the development and planning process. The good work being done in this regard in Barbados is acknowledged by the invitation to the Barbados Society to present this work at this Rome meeting.

4.3 Delta Municipality, Canada

In June 2007, the Canadian Institute of Planners held their annual con gress in Quebec. A very interesting paper was presented in one of the parallel session s on the work done by the Delta Municipality on climate change.

In 2004, the Earth Sciences Sector of Natural Resources Canada and the Canadian Institute of Planners agreed to co–sponsor ways to build capacity at local government level related to planning and climate change. The Delta Municipality case study was one of five done in various areas of Canada.

Delta is located on part of the alluvial deposit of the delta o f the Fraser River, and approximately 50% of the area is less than 1,5m above sea level and is protected by a system of dykes. Every winter the area is flooded, causing property damage in areas with inadequate protection. The alluvial deposits are sinking, due to settlement which is a natural occurrence in deltas, and the area is facing threats from sea level rise and higher wave action. The area is therefore in a situation which can best be described as a "squeeze".

The presentations identified the likely climate change impacts, and looked at some of the consequences for erosion, undermining the dyke system, and the inundation of agricultural land. The point was made that we need scientific outputs which are appropriate to inform changes to planning policy. The role of planners as agents of change was also acknowledged, as was the role of the planning system in designating land use to prevent inappropriate land use.

What was not highlighted however, and what would be very useful for planners elsewhere to learn from, was what the strategic planning lessons are from the Delta case study. It is clear that under normal circumstances, deltas do not sink – they are regularly replenished by the deposition of alluvial soils during flooding. The erection of the system of dykes many decades

ago means that the Fraser River has not been able to replenish these flats, thereby causing the settlement already mentioned. Coupling this with the impacts of sea level rise and increasing wave impacts must mean that greater attention needs to be paid to the strategic lessons which come from this for planning in many places around the world. If we talk of sustainable development, then how sustainable is it to continue to sustain 103 000 people living in an area which will become more and more dependant on the dykes for protection, especially when maintaining the system of dykes will itself become more and more expensive? What is the planning response to further development and densification of the Delta area? What, if anything, has been said about managed retreat? What strategic lessons are the planners taking from the scientists and what messages are they in turn giving to the decision makers in local government? Is it enough to only talk of appropriate land use, or are there bigger issues which require a more integrated approach? Planners, as purveyors of a public good often have little control of decision-making – especially in local government. What we as planners do have control over however is the messages we choose to take to the decision makers, and the question must be asked as to how well we are doing that in situations like this, where the future of a community is a stake, or the future costs of maintaining that community may well need to be questioned.

In this case study there is clear evidence of the acknowledgement of the role of planning. There is a suggestion however that it would be very valuable to draw out the strategic lessons which can be drawn from the Delta experience.

4.4 Cape Town

The Cape Town case study is not the result of the presentation of any specific papers, but the outcome of discussion between officials and the writer. The planners within the Cape Town City Council have engaged in some serious discussion with experts as to the likely impacts of climate change on the urban fabric of the City. There is however a fair degree of uncertainty at this stage as to exactly what the impacts are likely to be, as there is no unanimity amongst the scientists as to what the impacts are likely to be. It is not clear whether or not there will be more or less rain in the Western Cape, but what is agreed is that there are likely to be extremes in weather patterns.

The most obvious threat is that of sea level rise, and the 5m contour has been plotted across the City as the first step in identifying likely problem areas. A Coastal Edge Policy has been developed, to control development in these areas, and interestingly it is reported that this is showing up the mistakes of the past. The issue of changing agricultural practice has also been listed as a potential impact, as has the issue of carbon emissions. The response to the latter has been an investigation into transport management and the possible densification of the City. A number of scenarios are being put on the table including managed retreat, engineering solutions, and green solutions such as rain water harvesting. It is acknowledged that adaptive strategies should be the focus of the work being done by the City in planning ahead. It is however difficult to propose specific planning responses in situations where the scientific knowledge base is uncertain.

The noteworthy response of the City is however that the department responsible for planning is collaborating with the environmental department and they are putting out a project brief calling for experts to investigate the most likely threats and planning impacts of climate change, focussing on sea level rise and carbon emissions, with time lines. The outcomes of this project will be recommendations as to how best these issues can be managed by the City, and hence

how best the City can ensure sustainable development, and reduce liability from development in areas identified as potentially hazardous.

This case study is still at a very early stage, and hence does not yet offer hard examples of solutions. What it does illustrate however is the need for collaboration between planners and scientists to identify threats, and to then put in place strategies and policies which ensure that the future development of the City is sustainable in the light of the impacts of climate change, and reduces the liability of these threats to both the Municipality and the community. In the light of the scientific uncertainties which still remain, this seems a very sound approach to unpacking a complex and critical issue.

5. Conclusions

It is clear from the mountain of documentation which is now available on the subject of climate change, that the impacts will be international, and will know no political or other boundaries. We will all be affected, no matter how rich or poor, developed or undeveloped, rural or urban, small island state or large country.

It is also clear that the time horizons of planning and changing the built environment make instant responses to climate change difficult in the planning system. We also must acknowledge that the scientific knowledge base on which to base any planning responses has only recently reached a stage where decisions can start to be made with some degree of certainty, and that in some instances there still is some uncertainty over the nature of the impacts of climate change. What is certain however is that the issue cannot be ignored, and every endeavour must be made to identify the likely impacts, and to plan accordingly for both mitigation and adaptation. The dangers of climate change are now clearer than ever before, and decisions taken now will decide the fate of millions of people.

Innovation will be essential to successfully addressing the planning response to climate change, and the sharing of experiences and information will be critical to this. We need to look for that innovation, and we must welcome the contributions made already by Barbados, Delta and Cape Town plus the many others who are tackling this issue. There are things we do know and can act on, such as protection of biodiversity and decreasing the dependence on fuel by planning sustainable urban development. But the size of the challenge is daunting, and the pool of skills available to address these complex and intertwined issues is very small, as can be seen from the figures applicable to the Commonwealth. The population of the Commonwealth is approximately 2 billion, and the number of planners in the Commonwealth is estimated to be about 30 000 to 35 000. This means that each planner in the Commonwealth is on average responsible for the future livelihoods of 70 000 people. The spread of skills is also unbalanced, with the estimates for some Commonwealth countries put as high as one planner per 320 000 population.

We need to now build and strengthen the planning function across the globe, to spread the message about the reforming of the global planning agenda, to highlight the critical urgency of addressing climate change as one of the three global priority issues confronting the planning system, and to empower planners to translate the global to the local in order to address these issues appropriate to their own context.

We are citizens of the planet and need global collective action to address issues of global importance, including climate change.

In the Commonwealth People's Forum Civil Society Statement to Heads of Government, the challenge to us, the planners of the world, is summed up well in the following paragraph:

"Recognising that action to address climate change must also contribute to the removal of the wide disparities in living standards among us, and lead to transformation through creating new economic opportunities, more sustainable arrangements for land use and transport, and adequate shelter for all." (Paragraph 26)

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