



## FIJI DECLARATION

We call on all Commonwealth Governments at national, sub national and local levels to take actions as a matter of urgency to help deliver UN-Habitat's New Urban Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly SDG11 to make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable; and in taking such actions to recognise the crucial role of planners and spatial planning in achieving success.

### **Preamble**

We, the Commonwealth Association of Planners (CAP), representing approximately 40,000 planners in 27 Commonwealth countries meeting at our biennial conference, "Planning for Sustainable Development", in Fiji on 8-10 November 2016, opened by Lorna Eden, Assistant Minister of Local Government, Housing and Environment from the Government of Fiji, are ...

**Appreciative** of the Conference video message of the Rt Hon Baroness Patricia Scotland QC, Secretary-General of the Commonwealth, which recognises the skills and talents of Commonwealth planners in developing safer and more sustainable communities that provide for the needs of all, and invites the assistance of CAP in implementing the outcomes of the Commonwealth's "Reverse Climate Change" event held in London on 29<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup> October 2016.

**Inspired** by the Conference video message of His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales who launched the "Rapid Urbanisation Project" which will develop practical tools and resources for managing rapid urbanisation and urban extensions in towns and cities across the Commonwealth and beyond.

**Convening** soon after the Habitat III meeting in Quito in October 2016, where world leaders adopted the *New Urban Agenda* which sets a new global standard for sustainable urban development and will help us to rethink how we plan, manage and live in cities.

**Recalling** *The Vancouver Declaration* of 2006 to which CAP was a key contributor and signatory, and asserted that there can be no sustainable development without sustainable urbanisation and no sustainable urbanisation without effective planning, and that political will, appropriate legislation and investment in professional capacity is required for effective planning.

**Responding** to the *Gaborone Declaration* of the Commonwealth Local Government Forum in 2015, which recognised that the heightened challenges around attaining sustainable human settlements call for more imaginative leadership and planning that involves working with communities and putting citizens and natural systems at the centre of planning, and which called for new and locally based urban and rural planning approaches.

**Welcoming** the *International Guidelines on Urban and Territorial Planning* produced in 2015 by UN-Habitat which provide national governments, local authorities, civil society organizations and

planning professionals with a global reference framework that promotes more compact, socially inclusive, better integrated and connected cities and territories that foster sustainable urban development and are resilient to climate change.

**Recognising** the importance of the UN's Sustainable Development Goals 2016, and in particular Goal 11 which seeks to make cities and human settlements safe, inclusive, resilient and sustainable, and Target 11.3 that aims by 2030, to enhance inclusive and sustainable urbanisation and capacity for participatory, integrated and sustainable human settlement planning and management in all countries.

**Building** on the outputs of the 2015 Pacific Urban Forum which concluded with a stronger call to find solutions to the challenges of urbanisation in the Pacific Region

**Acknowledging** the rapid rate of urbanisation in many Commonwealth countries, the threats posed by climate change to places, economies and people across the Commonwealth and the imperative for effective planning to tackle these challenges to help implement the Sustainable Development Goals and the New Urban Agenda.

**Noting** the particular vulnerabilities to climate change and natural disasters of Small Island Developing States (SIDS) in the Commonwealth.

**Accordingly adopts this Fiji Declaration calling on Commonwealth Governments at all levels as a matter of urgency to implement the New Urban Agenda, and take the following actions where appropriate:**

1. Recognise the crucial role of planners and spatial planning in achieving the successful implementation of the New Urban Agenda and the SDGs
2. Review their planning systems and practices including legal and institutional frameworks, to ensure they are fit for purpose in relation to the New Urban Agenda and the SDGs – the review to be informed by the International Guidelines on Urban and Territorial Development.
3. Review, and increase as necessary, the supply, capacity and capability of professionally qualified planners, through the establishment or support of institutes, universities and professional organisations that educate, promote and accredit professional planners.
4. Ensure that adequate and effective planning resources are available, in number and in skills, to respond to the challenges and opportunities in the New Urban Agenda, SDGs and the International Guidelines on Urban and Territorial Planning.
5. Recognise that more decentralised planning, within an appropriate national framework, and the need to address critical issues such as climate change and poverty alleviation may require updating of skills, better integration of planning into local and central government structures and consideration of international best practice to enhance performance and effectiveness.
6. Recognise the economic, social, cultural and environmental importance of urban areas by committing to monitor progress and to raise awareness amongst policy makers across all parts of government of the opportunities for synergies to enhance integration and make best use of scarce resources.

7. Develop and implement multi-disciplinary training and awareness raising programmes for all relevant organisations and individuals to enhance understanding of the New Urban Agenda and the role of planning in managing urban change.
8. Address the specific needs of Small Island Developing States drawing on where appropriate the outputs from the Pacific and Caribbean Urban Forums.
9. Work across administrative and national boundaries where that is necessary to match the scale of functional activities shaping urban development such as in metropolitan areas or rapidly expanding settlements.
10. Ensure plans are up to date, realistic and implemented, and in so doing facilitate access to land, clean water and shelter and reduce the risk to the general health and well-being of communities, including vulnerable communities.
11. Monitor and audit plans on a regular basis to ensure that they are working for, and not against, inclusion, resilience and sustainability.
12. Engage and empower communities to contribute to plan-making and involve people in all age groups including the young and elderly, women, indigenous peoples, the poor, minority communities and the disabled.
13. Make full and appropriate use of information technology in implementing the New Urban Agenda and the SDGs.

**And as members of CAP we commit as a matter of urgency to:**

- Promote and use our planning skills to help implement the New Urban Agenda and the SDGs in Commonwealth countries,
- Promote this Declaration to our national, sub national and local governments,
- Work with the Commonwealth Local Government Forum and other professional associations and individuals to promote this Declaration across the Commonwealth, and
- Review our progress in delivering these commitments at our next Biennial Conference in 2018.

**And finally we express warm appreciation** to the Government and people of Fiji, the New Zealand Planning Institute, the Planning Institute of Australia, the Commonwealth Local Government Forum and sponsors for organising and hosting this excellent conference.

**Commonwealth Association of Planners**

**Fiji, 10 November 2016**