

*** News Release ***

“Built environment professionals across the Commonwealth renew their commitment to confronting global challenges together.”

On World environment Day, Commonwealth associations representing architects, engineers, planners and surveyors have relaunched the 'Built Environment Professionals in the Commonwealth' (BEPIC), a voluntary collaboration that aims to advance **advocacy, capacity building and climate action** in response to the global challenges posed by climate change and rapid urbanisation.

The collaboration also responds to the findings of the [Survey of the Built Environment Professions in the Commonwealth](#), published in 2020, which identified:

1. That there is a critical lack of capacity in a number of Commonwealth countries, many of which are urbanising rapidly and are among the most vulnerable.
2. That there is a corresponding lack of educational and institutional capacity to grow the profession fast enough in a number of Commonwealth countries.
3. That there is a perceived weakness in built environment policy in many Commonwealth countries in terms of standards, implementation, and enforcement.

The findings of the survey are particularly important in light of the fact that nearly 50% of the projected increase in the World's urban population to 2050 is forecast to be in Commonwealth countries where 95% of the cities most at risk from climate impacts are to be found. This growth represents a doubling of the urban population across the Commonwealth, from 1bn to 2bn in the next 30 years.

BEPIC members include the Commonwealth Association of Architects (CAA), the Commonwealth Association of Planners (CAP), the Commonwealth Association of Surveying and Land Economy (CASLE) and the Commonwealth Engineers' Council (CEC).

The collaboration also recognises the work that has been undertaken by the members of the [Commonwealth Sustainable Cities Initiative](#) and the [Declaration on Sustainable urbanisation](#) adopted by Leaders at the Commonwealth Heads of Government meeting which took place in Kigali, Rwanda in 2022. First launched in 1997, BEPIC aims to strengthen the impact of its members through joint advocacy, knowledge sharing and continuing professional development.

CAA President, **Peter Oborn** said:

“The CAA is pleased to have renewed its commitment to BEPIC and looks forward to collaborating with built environment colleagues from around the Commonwealth as we work together to help leverage the Commonwealth advantage for greater impact.”

CAP President, **Jua Cilliers** said:

“Recognising the urgency of our shared challenges in urbanization and climate change, the Commonwealth Association of Planners is deeply committed to the principles and goals of BEPIC. Together, we can forge transformative pathways that not only respect our diverse cultural landscapes but also strengthen the resilience of our cities”.

CASLE President **Joseph Ajanlekoko** said:

“CASLE is delighted to renew our collaborative efforts with our colleagues in BEPIC. The challenges facing our professions within the commonwealth are numerous and diverse and only by facing them together do we have a chance of success.”

CEC President, **Dawn Bonfield MBE** said:

“What we know as built environment professionals is that none of us can work independently from one another, and this collaboration represents the reality of the systems in which we all exist, so we are delighted to be working together with BEPIC colleagues on these shared objectives.”

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BEPIC Objectives

1. Encourage a positive environment within which the partners can foster a collaborative environment to work effectively together.
2. Establish a foundation for collective action in key areas such as advocacy, capacity building, and climate action.
3. Encourage the joint promotion of diversity within the built environment professions across the Commonwealth.
4. Provide a mechanism at a senior level for continuing dialogue between the partners.

Background to the members of BEPIC

- **CAA:** The Commonwealth Association of Architects represents national architectural institutions across the five regions of the Commonwealth, united by shared values and the mission to maximise the contribution by architects to the benefit of society. www.commonwealtharchitects.org.
- **CAP:** The Commonwealth Association of Planners has been connecting planners and advancing planning across the Commonwealth for over 50 years. Today this global institution plays an increasingly significant role in promoting planning as fundamental for sustainable human settlements, mitigating the impacts of climate change and building resilient communities. www.commonwealth-planners.org
- **CASLE:** The Commonwealth Association of Surveying and Land Economy was formed in 1969 as an association of independent professional societies and other bodies, in the field of surveying, and land and marine economy. It aims to foster development of the profession in Commonwealth countries, including appropriate standards of education and training, and to facilitate the transfer of technology with dialogue between member institutions and others, including governments. www.casle.org.
- **CEC:** Engineering is at the heart of social and economic development, and key to delivering a sustainable future for people and planet. The Commonwealth Engineers' Council is a global network, established in 1946, open to all engineering institutions and societies across the Commonwealth, as well as individual members from Commonwealth Countries. Our mission is to promote and support the role of engineers and engineering as a key enabler of the critical infrastructure that underpins civilisation, the achievement of the UN Sustainable Development Goals and the response to the global climate emergency. www.commonwealthengineers.org

The Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) takes place biannually and will next take place in Samoa in October 2024. BEPIC are working to build on the Declaration on Sustainable Urbanisation to align with the theme of One Resilient Common Future.

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