Global Planners Network Congress Closing Plenary

Rolling forward the GPN Action Plan

This note has been prepared to help in discussions at the Global Planners Network Congress Closing Plenary Session.

The 2006 Vancouver conference set out a bold Action Plan which has provided a context for the GPN over the last two years. This work programme needs to be updated in the light of the Global Planners Network Congress to continue to build the global capacity through outreach to wider planning community to deliver our desire for sustainable development, and greater social equality.

A wide range of potential action by the GPN has been highlighted in the Capacity Assessment work (see overleaf). This list will inform our ongoing work. However, it will be important for the GPN to identify priorities for action for the next five years, which will be fed into key 'windows of opportunity' for promoting planning such as the Global Cities Report 2009, WUF 5 2010 etc..

In doing so it is suggested that these priorities should be based on:
(i) Identified gaps in the capacity for planning;
(ii) Linkages with key global issues being identified by WUF etc.;
(iii) Reinforcing existing work streams that are central to the goals of the GPN;
(iv) Existing initiatives which provide a momentum for future new areas of work ; and
(v) The need for a 'Hub' within our existing Network membership which could champion the work stream.

We are looking to the participants at the Congress to discuss and make recommendations on the work programme. To help these discussions it may be useful to highlight some key areas for the network and its development that have emerged. The Congress itself is based around three themes - the major challenges of urbanisation, poverty and inequality and climate change. These could be pursued in some form by the GPN through advocacy, building capacity, communicating and networking

Within this context the following actions illustrate the potential components of an updated Action Plan:
(i) Disaster management building on the work of APA;
(ii) Climate change impacts on vulnerable communities building on the work of CIP;
(iii) A 'Bank of Cities' to build links to the corporate world;
(iv) A focus on poverty, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa, building on the work of CAP and SFU, with local partners;
(v) The development of an Active On-line presence of support tools for local planning action building on the work of the network; and
(vi) A sustained Outreach programme building on the momentum of created by the RTPI / CAP work

This note was sent to the steering group in advance of the GPN Congress, and is being put to the Congress in order that it can be brought together with other ideas emerging from our debates for discussion in the final plenary.

Illustrative list of potential action areas for GPN

Self-diagnosis of the capacity for planning by various people engaged in planning across the world, has thrown up potential actions under the 5 key themes, which are shown below by relevance to the three aspects of GPN's action plan [Capacity / Advocacy / Networking]. These areas are broadly described with more specific short-hand bullet-listed items suggested by respondents.

dimension	external drivers		response areas		tools
THEMES	NATURAL ENVIRONMENT / DISASTER MITIGATION	SOCIO-ECONOMIC	SPATIAL CONSEQUENCES OF DEVELOPMENT	RESOURCING & IMPLEMENTING DEVELOPMENT	FOR IMPROVING PLANNING
Networking	**Promotion & development of solutions / technologies related to preservation of natural resources & response to disasters** * relief strategies * transport * energy consumption	**Development & sharing of ideas / strategies relating to:** * community safety * considerations of local economy * exchange with other professionals (especially health promotion / law enforcement)	**With others involved in planning / development:** * cross border/regional exchange & joint-working * the agents of growth themselves * transport facilitation * energy suppliers * water / rural / environmental agencies	**Opportunities:** *EU funding * political will for environmental improvements * infrastructure investments	**Ways of working:** * joined up thinking * inclusionary approach * government advisory * training provision * standard setting * code formation
Capacity	**Developing/sharing information about natural resources & threats, disaster mitigation & response:** * adapting built environment * water levels * land degradation * air quality	**Information/Data on:** * lack of shelter * crime * informal economy & housing * demographics (growth, aging, migration) * effect of population changes * lifestyle factors (car dependency)	**Capacity for:** * slum & sprawl reduction * environmental standards * air-quality control * land management * dense development issues * urban design / quality	**Ensuring allocation:** * to transport * affordable housing * planning resources / planners	**Maximising effect of current resources with:** * stronger institutions * simpler applications * simpler legislation * information sharing * training provision
Advocacy	**Advocacy of concerns about natural environment to agents threatening conservation:** * tourism * competition over resources * reduction of bio-diversity * contamination **..and promotion of solutions:** * Land management (e.g. Brownfield identification) * Flood protection	**Advocacy of:** * poverty reduction * better / affordable shelter * poor urbanisation / slums * youth interests * planning in the context of political transition **Mediation of demands from different interest groups for:** * social cohesion * shared local understanding	**Getting involved and steering:** * growth management * regeneration funding * open space preservation * quality of life issues * sustainable urban forms * heritage/conservation * anti-suburbanisation * a balance of interests in priorities * longer term agenda	**Advocacy of:** * funding planning / planning training * central role for planning * expectation management * service provision	**Advocacy of:** *tackling corruption *identifying poor policies *promoting stability *community consultation *multidisciplinary approach *recognition of urban design *political will to promote planning

From 1268 self-diagnoses of the capacity for planning reflecting experiences in 117 countries – more details from globalplanning@rtpi.org.uk