

### FROM THE EDITOR

We continue to live in global rapidly changing times, economic meltdown, democratic shifts driven by conflicts, famine, disaster and conflict recovery. The problems and disparities seem ever greater and the opportunities to try to help grow. UK experience suggests an increasing recognition of the significant role of planning.

Looking forward, 20 years after the Rio Earth Summit, September 2012 will see the 6<sup>th</sup> World Urban Forum and before that in May the 5<sup>th</sup> UN Conference on Environment and Development. What impact can/will/should GPN and its member bodies have on those aspects of change where planners can make a positive difference?

Paul Taylor of UN-HABITAT (a planner himself) is in a unique position to offer a planner's view. His challenge to us on a recent visit to the RTPI was to further 'up our leadership' is even more apposite given present tendencies to cut back. Can GPN respond?

**Ron Tate (Editor)**

### NEWS FROM GPN PLANNERS

The Global Planners Network is gearing up for its Congress in Los Angeles in April 2012. ***Game Changers: Energy, Climate Change, and the Green Economy*** is the title, and the event runs from 14<sup>th</sup> to 17<sup>th</sup> April, alongside the annual conference of the American Planners Association. The front page of the [GPN website](#) is the place to find out more about the conference programme and registration.

PIA, the Planning Institute of Australia, marked World Town Planning Day on 8<sup>th</sup> November with a special [media release](#)

celebrating planning: "a chance to shout from the roof tops that **planning is important**" as Kirsty Kelly, the PIA Chief Executive put it. She also draws attention to the latest edition of [PIA Policy & Advocacy Bulletin](#), and to work on risk-based planning, disaster recovery and building resilience. The focus of the PIA [National Congress](#) in Adelaide at the end of April 2012 is on building resilient communities through "Planning for a Sun-burnt Country".

GPN members teamed up with others to organise a rewarding online conference for World Town Planning Day in November. The theme was ***Going Public: Public Spaces in our Communities***. Read a short account [here](#).

Presentations from the 2011 ***Planning Convention*** in London are available on the RTPI [website](#), including the fast-paced, thought-provoking address on environmental justice by Prof. Robert Bullard of Clark Atlanta University. The 2012 Convention will be in London on 27<sup>th</sup> June with the title "Making It Work!"

### FOCUS ON ... PLANNING EDUCATION

The World Planning Schools Congress took place in Perth, Western Australia in July: click [here](#) to see the keynote introduction by PIA President Dyan Currie.

Cliff Hague's [blog](#) covers the Commonwealth Planning Education Workshop held on 3 July also in Perth before the Congress. The paper from the Commonwealth Association of Planners on capacity-building can be downloaded [here](#).

Planning schools seeking international recognition can apply for accreditation of their courses by the Royal Town Planning Institute. The following accreditations are already in place or are 'in the pipeline':

**Fully accredited** Hong Kong University

**Provisionally accredited** Botswana University, University of Cape Town

**Working towards accreditation** Melbourne University, Massey University (NZ); Pretoria University & Witwatersrand University (South Africa)

**Wish to be accredited** University of Iceland, University of Singapore, Ion Mincu University (Romania).

## EVENTS & OPPORTUNITIES

The [Shelters for All](#) competition (deadline 15 January 2012) seeks innovative designs for housing in urban areas of developing countries. Winning designs will be awarded over \$15,000 (USD) in prizes. Designs will be assessed in terms of their hazard resilience, feasibility, sustainability, viability and scalability. This competition is being organised by a research unit at the University of Notre Dame, Indiana (USA). [Read more](#).

UN-HABITAT has launched [Urban Gateway](#) as an online community to help cities and urban practitioners to share knowledge and take action for sustainable cities in a rapidly urbanising world.

**Big Cities, Big Water, Big Challenges** is a new report from the World-wide Fund for Nature (WWF) which predicts increasing water stress in global megacities as more people move to urban areas. It warns of severe water shortages worldwide by 2050. [Read more](#)

A new book for practitioners and teachers by Cliff Hague **Regional and Local Economic Development** comments on over 70 development initiatives from more than 30 countries, identifying four main approaches: attracting inward investment, area regeneration, eco-modernisation and approaches that seek above all to be pro-poor and inclusive. [Read more](#).

The Commonwealth Association of Planners has produced a discussion paper on food & health ([download](#)). CAP Secretary General Clive Harridge writes *"One of the main aims is to raise awareness and encourage dialogue on planning for food security. The paper*

*concludes with a call to action, identifying 10 areas where specific actions are required."* Your comments on these areas and actions would be welcome. Please email comments to [Annette O'Donnell](#) at CAP.

The [C40](#) group – the organisation of the world's largest cities set up to address climate change – met in June in São Paulo. Three events at the conference are noteworthy: C40 merged with the Clinton Climate Initiative; the President of the World Bank announced that cities (not just national governments) will be able to borrow from the Bank in future, and C40 reached agreement with the International Council on Local Environment Initiatives (ICLEI) to work with 1,200 cities for standardised reporting of greenhouse emissions to provide base measurement for climate protection fund applications to the World Bank. [Read more](#)

The American Planning Association (APA) reports on the ICLEI 'Resilient Cities' conference in Bonn in June. [Read more](#)

## RESEARCH & PUBLICATIONS ROUND-UP

Regularisation of informal settlement can be done by awarding occupants legal title to the property, as has been tried in Peru; Brazil's broader approach combines titling with upgrading of public services. A recent report on **Regularization of Informal Settlements in Latin America** by Edesio Fernandes for the Lincoln Institute examines both approaches. It finds that titling is relatively cheap but does not trigger neighbourhood improvement; upgrading costs more and can lead to extra irregular development by those hoping to benefit from future upgrading. [Read more](#)

**How People Face Evictions** documents the experiences of local groups around the world from Buenos Aires to Istanbul. Researchers from the Development Planning Unit at University College London and the Building and Social Housing Foundation (BSHF) brought groups together to reflect on and share initiatives and experiences of struggles against

eviction. The report looks in particular at how local groups secure rights to adequate housing, legal security of tenure and freedom from destruction and dispossession. [Download](#) report; [read discussion](#)

**Climate change, disaster risk, and the urban poor: Cities building resilience for a changing world** is a new World Bank publication with 4 key messages: 1) The urban poor are on the front line, particularly vulnerable to climate change and natural hazards; 2) City governments are the drivers for addressing risks through ensuring basic services; 3) City officials build resilience by mainstreaming risk reduction into urban management; 4) Significant financial support is needed. [Read more](#)

The UN International Strategy on Disaster Reduction, UN-HABITAT and UNDP Kuwait organised a workshop on "Advancing disaster risk reduction and urban strategy in the Gulf States" in collaboration with the International Society of City and Regional Planners (ISoCaRP). [Read more](#)

**Post-disaster Reconstruction of the Built Environment: Rebuilding for resilience** edited by Dilanthi Amararatunga and Richard Haigh, published by Wiley 2011 identifies challenges faced by the construction industry after a disaster, including the restoration of permanent shelter and public services such as hospitals, schools, water supply, power, communications, and environmental infrastructure. [Read more](#)

## WORLD-WIDE PLANNING NEWS

### AFRICA

**South Africa** Durban – once at risk from storm surges and sea-level rise – has pioneered a cross-sectoral climate adaptation policy similar to those enacted in London and New York. The city is now experimenting with new policies. [Read more](#).

### ASIA-PACIFIC

**Australia** A paper by Anthony Bergin published by the Australian Strategic

Policy Institute (ASPI) makes recommendations for preparing the country better for future natural disasters. [Read more](#)

**China** The 42.4 km Qingdao Haiwan Bridge, opened in June 2011, will cut commuting times around the Bay and boost the fortunes of China's 'most livable city', Qingdao. [Read more](#) The government has admitted that the Three Gorges Dam project is destabilising the land around the reservoir. [Read more](#)

**Malaysia & Singapore** If the two countries are linked by a proposed High Speed Rail link, the region could become SE Asia's first mega-region, comparable with Tokyo-Osaka and Shanghai-Hangzhou, and the first Asian cross-border region. [Read more](#)

**Mongolia** Climate change and rapid urbanisation threaten fragile water resources in a country where more than half the inhabitants have no access to clean water, reports UNEP. [Read more](#)

**Singapore** In the past 25 years, Singapore has significantly increased its green cover and it has plans to go much further. [Read more](#)

### EUROPE

**Netherlands** Climate parties, energy boxes and model homes are examples of projects aimed at saving energy in existing homes. The Sustainable City Development advisory board of the Dutch NICIS Institute and elected officers of local government have formulated recommendations. [Read more](#)

**Spain** The *indignados* protests in Spain saw not only a platform for political speech, but new opportunities to reclaim and create political space. [Read more](#)

### LATIN AMERICA

**Mexico** Inspired by the revival of the Cheonggyecheon stream in Seoul, Korea, young planners in Mexico City dream of reviving the Rio Piedad. [Read more](#)

The McKinsey Global Institute report ***Building globally competitive cities: The key to Latin America growth*** argues that the region's largest cities are congested, poorly planned and dangerous and their institutional, social and environmental support structures have not kept up with their expanding populations. [Read more](#)

## **NORTH AMERICA**

**USA** Boston's Mayor has released an update on the city's Climate Action Plan. The message is that the proposed actions will bring significant economic benefits as energy efficiency and changed behaviour reduce greenhouse gas emissions and cut energy bills while demand for energy- and climate-related services can create jobs. [Read more](#)

**USA** The LA River emerges from the San Fernando Valley to run through downtown Los Angeles and industrial cities before spilling into the Pacific near Long Beach. The river is 'a mile wide and an inch deep' and has a high concentration of treated sewage. Locals have great hopes for it ... [Read more](#)

## **SOUTH ASIA**

**Sri Lanka** After the devastation of civil war which caused thousands of casualties and displaced half a million people, a Sri Lankan foundation has been allocated a plot of land by international cricketer Murali to initiate a community development project. Facilities will provide healthcare, education and business development opportunities, serving approximately 50,000 beneficiaries per year. The charity Article 25 will conduct a community participation workshop to ensure the needs of the community will be met, design and oversee construction of buildings to suit the local vernacular, creating the foundation for long-term, post conflict development in the area. [Read more](#)

## **WEST ASIA**

**Egypt** A critical account identifies corruption which allowed 'satellite' towns to be developed unsustainably in the desert near Cairo. [Read more](#) A plan for a

road and rail bridge spanning the Gulf of Aqaba between Egypt and Saudi Arabia has finally been approved after more than 20 years of debate. [Read more](#)

**Saudi Arabia** In a 'Letter from Riyadh', Jason Burke explains why conservation of architectural heritage has not been a political or religious priority, and why that may be changing. [Read more](#)

## **Global Planners Network**

*To find out more about GPN, visit the website [www.globalplannersnetwork.org](http://www.globalplannersnetwork.org). The website is regularly updated with news of GPN and its partners, and is also the place to find back copies of the Newsletter.*

*If you know someone who would find this newsletter useful, please pass it on.*

*If you have comments on it, or contributions for a future edition, please contact the Editor, Ron Tate, at [editor@globalplannersnetwork.org](mailto:editor@globalplannersnetwork.org).*

*There are practical difficulties in trying to do too much, not least an inability to meet resource implications. A newsletter cannot provide individual advice or a brokerage or introduction agency, nor can it vouch for or attest to the quality of every project, study, guidance note or research paper identified. Readers must make up their own minds on such issues.*