

GENERAL RAPPORTEUR'S SUMMARY STATEMENT

by General Rapporteur Jeffrey Featherstone, USA

The 2013 World Congress of the International Society of City and Regional Planners (ISOCARP) was co-hosted with the City of Brisbane and the Planning Institute of Australia. The 49th Congress took place from October 1 to 4 and attracted about 200 experts from 45 countries.

More than 100 speakers presented an outstanding array of papers devoted to the congress theme: *What is effective planning practice at the global frontiers, whether planning for the local community, or mature metro or mega city, or vast urbanizing region?* The congress offered five concurrent tracks of papers that covered five topics set forth in the Call for Papers:

- *Migration as the new face of change*
- *Valuing what already exists*
- *Community and Stakeholder Engagement*
- *International Planners Exchange*
- *Forum on Planning Education: Are we doing it right?*

The five tracks were overseen by an eleven-member congress team. Papers in the first track addressed the issue of migration and how seismic demographic changes have created new urban challenges. This track was co-chaired by Amos Brandeis of Israel and Njeri Cerere from Kenya. Track 2 papers described how planners are increasingly being called upon manage change while protecting what is valuable, valued, culturally precious and essential to life. It was co-chaired by Silja Tillner of Austria and Belinda Yuen from Singapore. Papers in the third track addressed the complicated question of whether we are fully engaging the important stakeholders in our communities through effective engagement techniques and programs. This track was co-chaired by Warren Batts of Australia and Pietro Elisei of Italy/Romania.

Track 4 papers comprised the International Planners Exchange, which addressed multiple topics of city and regional planning and included best practice cases, planning methods and strategies. This track was co-chaired by Agatino Rizzo of New Zealand/Italy, Stanley Yip from Hong Kong in China, and Sinisa Trkulja of Serbia. Finally, Track 5 covered planning education and sought to determine whether planning education and certification programs needed to be retooled. It was co-chaired by Saskia Spijkerman of The Netherlands and Griet Geerinck from Belgium.



Many of the papers were peer-reviewed by an ISOCARP panel and these papers were recognized in the congress program as having achieved this status. These papers along with fifteen non-peer reviewed papers rated highly by the congress team are being published in a separate document, the final Congress CD Rom.

The General Rapporteur and Congress Team presented their findings at the closing plenary session and are presented in greater detail in the concluding reports prepared by the congress team co-chairs. Overall, the congress topics were timely; the presentations were excellent; sessions were well attended and congress participants were engaged; and the interactive sessions were popular. It was clear from the presentations and papers that urban issues are becoming more challenging and that planning matters a great deal!

In the track concluding reports, findings are presented according to three categories of questions: What are the challenges? What did we learn? What's needed in the future? Just a few main points are noted. In Track 1 it was highlighted that migration is a global trend that affects all of us and a totally interdisciplinary and comprehensive approach is needed to address it. In Track 2 we learned that it is important to find a balance between conservation and construction, to seek reasonable remodeling methods, and to create a dynamic environment full of human temperament. Track 3 authors stressed the importance of public engagement at the forefront of planning and outlined numerous tools, both in-person and digital to facilitate successful community engagement processes. In Track 4 we learned many lessons, including the critical importance for cities to become more resilient to change and uncertainty. Finally, in Track 5 authors stressed the need to bridge theory and practice by implementing experimental learning and involving multiple stakeholders in better defining the planning discipline.

The 49th Congress sought to explore planning practice at the global frontiers. As General Rapporteur I believe we learned a great deal about the new frontiers from our papers and dialogue each other. I urge you to review the papers and concluding reports as they offer valuable lessons from the past and exciting new insights and advances. I also urge you to continue the dialogue and we'll see you at the 50th Congress in Poland.