

**Statement by ISOCARP/ GAP in discussion following the  
Panel on Urban Governance, Capacity and Institutional Development  
Thursday 28 April 11.30 am – 1 pm**

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Madam Moderator

Thank you for giving us the opportunity again to speak on behalf of ISOCARP and GAP.

We believe inclusive and transparent urban governance lies at the heart of inclusive and sustainable urbanization and furthermore, urban and territorial planning is a critical instrument of urban governance, aimed at *“reshaping the forms and functions of cities and regions in order to generate endogenous economic growth, prosperity and employment, while addressing the needs of the most vulnerable, marginalized or underserved groups.” (IGUTP)*

While advocating for strengthening the role, capacity and resources of local authorities, we should not overlook the fact that in many cities and countries across the globe, urban and territorial planning is not in fact a function of elected local/regional government. This is a fundamental question, as Judge Ntaba from Malawi said – who are the players, who has the power, where is the accountability? Planning is often assigned to professional or technical bodies, or parastatal institutions which, even if well-equipped to undertake this task, are not accountable to citizens or even to their elected representatives at the local level. This allows planning to become a tool of the wealthy and influential elites, rather than an instrument to address inequality and inequity. In strengthening local governance, therefore, we would like to advocate for the spatial visioning and strategic planning functions, in particular, along with capacities to execute these, to be vested in local and regional governments as appropriate, who in turn need to reach out to their constituents in the planning and implementation process. Also coming back to a point some of us have been making for the past few days, local authorities have a critical role in promoting resilience and sound urban planning in the aftermath of crisis, to ensure a continuum from disaster recovery to sustainable urban development.

To ensure that these functions indeed rest with local and regional authorities, we strongly urge member states to make the implementation of the International Guidelines for Urban and Territorial Planning, which they have already adopted, integral to the New Urban Agenda, and fully engage national and international associations of planners and other urban professionals in this process.

Thank you for your attention.

*Delivered by*  
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