



International Society of City and Regional Planners

**ISOCARP**

Knowledge for Better Cities

URBAN  
ECONOMY  
FORUM

UN HABITAT  
FOR A BETTER URBAN FUTURE

## **56th World Planning Congress of the International Society of City and Regional Planners**

8 November 2020 to 4 February 2021

<https://doha2020.isocarp.org/>

# **Congress Declaration**

## **Preamble**

### **How Our World turned in 2020**

The 2020 Congress of the International Society of City and Regional Planners – the 56th World Planning Congress – was initially planned to happen in-person in Doha, Qatar but was turned into an online conference bringing urban experts and practitioners together virtually from around the globe. The virtual congress opened on 8 November 2020 (World Town Planning Day) and closed on 4 February 2021. It challenges us to reflect on the Post-Oil City and how Urban Green Deals can contribute to global, national and local agendas for sustainable, resilient and equitable urban development.

2020 has been marked by the Covid-19 pandemic, imposing on the Congress a much broader and more complex agenda. The pandemic has triggered a public health crisis, has claimed over one million lives worldwide, and unleashed a devastating economic crisis with far-reaching impacts that will probably contribute to even more in-depth changes in our lifestyles.

These *simultaneous* crises – climate, environment, health, social, economic – are demonstrating the fragility of our world. For planners, this is highlighting the need for integrated solutions, as we realise that we cannot put the climate agenda and planning for a post-oil future aside while we take on unprecedented challenges like the current pandemic. Likewise, human, economic and environmental cost of slums and marginalisation, expose the imperative of inclusive

urbanisation. They all pose the question: how resilient is the physical, social and political infrastructure of our urbanised, globalised, ecologically imbalanced world? Is more change necessary than previously thought?

## **The World Planning Congress and the urbanisation agenda**

Since its inception in 1965, the International Society of City and Regional Planners (ISOCARP), as a global organisation, has been bringing together recognised and highly qualified, cross-sectoral planners from countries worldwide, currently 85 of them. Members of the Society share a common interest: international cooperation and inclusive knowledge-sharing in support of innovations in planning practice, training, research, and education.

In this ‘Decade of Action’, urban and regional professionals are charged with being key players in moving the world from goals to action. They support both decision-makers and communities to shape the essential frameworks, plans and design of urban form that will make cities inclusive and resilient, while also protecting and restoring the world’s ecosystems. Urban and regional planning has a history of more than 100 years of integrating policies, plans and designs to find solutions for complex problems through global collaboration. In 2015 the Governing Council of UN-Habitat adopted the International Guidelines on Urban and Territorial Planning IG- UTP, followed in 2016 by the New Urban Agenda (NUA) of the United Nations, and professional and political organisations across the globe have adopted charters and development agendas to deal with arising issues.

In the face of monumental issues challenging sustainable urbanisation at the global scale, the role of urban actors in achieving all 17 Sustainable Development Goals (in particular SDG-11 concerning cities) is urged for effective, collaborative, and immediate action toward the 2030 agenda and beyond! This is an opportunity for innovative new approaches to Planning and for forging of daring Green Deals, which will address at once the climate crisis, the post-Covid economic recovery, and the provision of adequate living conditions for all.

## **A Shared Global Message**

Energised by the congress theme, Post-Oil City, and the many challenges of our time, the 2020 World Planning Congress developed together — via inclusive process over the course of the Congress proceedings — a Declaration of shared values and collectively identified opportunities for transformative action.

The following Congress Declaration has been jointly prepared by the International Society of City and Regional Planners; and the participants and honored Co-hosts, the Urban Economy Forum and UN-Habitat, of the 56th Annual World Planning Congress.

-----

# Declaration

## 56th World Planning Congress

### of the International Society of City and Regional Planners, co-hosted by UN-Habitat and Urban Economy Forum

4 February 2021

**CONNECTED** in a world-wide community of city and regional planners, planning researchers, urbanists, placemakers, city officials and administrators, and experts in related fields;

**IN COLLABORATION** and having learned from one other during the 56th World Planning Congress of the International Society of City and Regional Planners;

**FOCUSED** on the challenges of the congress themes, Post-Oil City and the transformative potential of Urban Green Deals;

**INSPIRED** by our shared values and collectively identified opportunities for transformative action:

**We call upon** all national, regional and local governments to collaborate and promote urban and other place-based research and knowledge-sharing to advance global sustainable urbanisation and territorial cohesion goals, through science-based policy and data-driven planning that accounts for disproportionate impacts across global regions and the rural-urban continuum.

**We advocate** a territorial approach to climate action and resilience by promoting place-based policy responses to accelerate efforts to mitigate climate change and to more effectively adapt to its localised impacts. A territorial approach allows decision makers to better incorporate context-specific climate change drivers and impacts, and to tailor support and measures in local and regional Urban Green Deals. The scale and complexity of the challenges posed by the growing climate emergency, compounded by health, economic, social and biodiversity crises, highlight why such an approach is needed to scale up ambitious climate action from across all levels of governance – thus through collaborative action of governments, civil society, academia and (planning) professionals.

**We acknowledge** that amidst the current pandemic, cities and towns have moved quickly to respond. It is now imperative that our short-term response and recovery is leveraged to advance and inform long-range planning and is integrated with long-term sustainable development agendas. A dynamic approach will be essential for adaptability and resiliency of cities.

**We advocate** that good urbanisation and sustainable towns and cities are the engines of prosperity, opportunity and a better quality of life for all people and their nations. The planning- and allied professions should advocate for the implementation of the *International Guidelines on Urban and Territorial Planning* (IG-UTP) and its 12 key planning principles. They should all play a central role in the pandemic response and recovery, and in shaping pandemic-resilient urbanism.

**We acknowledge** climate change and nature degradation, inequalities, urbanisation, rapid population changes and technological revolution as the five “megatrends” that will shape our world over the course of this century and require urgent concurrent and integrated policy interventions by the international community.

**We acknowledge** that in the face of global crises we need to move from agenda to action and implementation — scaling up solutions to meet critical global goals. This will require accountability today for environmental costs that will be felt tomorrow; must take into account that different regions will be impacted differently; and must address the informal “majority world”. This action will rely on systems level change and innovation — such as in digitalisation, big data, new global economic models, and multilateral financing structures — as well as on multilateral Urban and Regional Green Deals.

**We recognise** that global crises and challenges — climate change, environmental degradation, pandemics, economic crises — have disproportionate impacts on the most vulnerable global populations. Addressing widening digital divides, wealth gaps, inequitable access to basic resources, and rapid informal urbanisation, needs to feature prominently in all urban solutions.

**We recall** - in the search for better policy coordination - that national and sub-national urban policies can rally and coordinate various actors for a common vision, and can promote transformative, productive, inclusive and resilient urban development for the long-term. While such policies can be tremendously effective, it is important to consider our responsibility for advocacy and for holding governments accountable when they ignore inclusion, transparency, equity, data or science.

**We call** for a sufficient funding of planning institutions and for capacity building for all stakeholders, and for inclusive planning practices that embrace indigenous and local knowledge. This will be required to respond to multiple crises and to build back better and greener requires not only planning expertise from national and local governments, civil society and academia, but must include all communities and local stakeholders.

**We call** for public space and the rethinking of the public realm to be a priority issue. Not only is well-designed public space a matter of aesthetics, improved social interaction, and the celebration and preservation of cultural heritage and diversity, but it lies at the nexus of sustainability, public health and social equity. To achieve greater climate resilience, sustainable mobility, pandemic resilience, and social justice outcomes, the post-oil era brings great opportunity for urban public spaces to play a strategic and pivotal role for an integrated approach to equitable and sustainable formal and informal urbanisation. Democratic public spaces —of and for all — must be central to planning for the post-oil city.

*More than any time in history, the problems facing our planet are dire and require definitive, urgent and collaborative planning action. Planners are uniquely positioned to lead communities in this work, and we call upon city, regional and national governments, as well as international institutions and organisations, to deliberately and persistently facilitate the engagement of planners and placemakers, and to adopt urban and territorial planning as a key tool for conceiving and implementing Sustainable Development Goals, towards achieving stable recovery and shared prosperity, in harmony with our natural environment.*

END