

CAP Representative

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COMMONWEALTH ASSOCIATION OF PLANNERS 2004 FORUM REPORT

On behalf of the PIA Queensland Division I attended the Commonwealth Association of Planners (CAP) 2004 annual conference and business meeting in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia as the official CAP representative. This report is on relevant matters raised at the CAP business meeting on 4 July and at the conference from 5-7 July 2004.

CAP Business Meeting

The business meeting was attended by all the various CAP regions, including Africa, Americas, Asia and Europe. I was the only official representative from the Pacific region and it is notable that no contact had been made by the New Zealand Planning Institute.

I submitted a copy of the CAP 2004 Annual Report to the meeting and our initiatives in the Pacific were well received – the first Pacific Network of Planners Newsletter was published just prior to the Forum and will be posted on the CAP website. The CAP President Cliff Hague tabled a note of encouragement about our efforts, which is attached. I noted that the PIA National Office has been kept aware of our activities and that a formal submission will be made shortly to the National Council recommending that PIA rejoins the CAP. I acknowledged the contribution the Canadian Institute of Planners (CIP) had made to our 2003 Forum and commended their efforts in planning assistance.

The CIP report noted their assistance is currently focusing on Africa because the CIDA (equivalent to AusAID) funding is directed towards that region. The Africans welcome this collaboration, but with local rather than foreign consultants. Hence the CIP relies on the internship program on a multi-year basis to work directly with national agencies. The intern programs thus gain credibility with national NGOs and aid donors. Some donors have an agenda slanted towards tied aid using their own organizations/firms to get the work and this has to be recognized in dealing with the international agencies. However, the CIP aid model is exemplary and one we should strive to follow here in Australia.

An important CIP effort is the July 2006 World Urban Forum (WUF) in Vancouver, for which CIP is part of the organizing committee. It is proposed to hold the next major CAP Forum in conjunction with the WUF. A funding strategy is needed to start now to get representatives from all the CAP members to the event. This has implications for our region to assist the Pacific nations to be involved. It was stressed however, that the WUF should be more than a talk-fest – “a WUF without *action* is like a dog with no bite”.

Mr Bosire Ogero reported that the East African region has held two workshops during the year and is involving more of the surrounding nations in its activities to form more professional planning bodies. Their experience has strong parallels to our Pacific work.

A final report from Olusola Olufemi on Women in Planning was tabled in her absence (attached) but not discussed in detail. It was resolved to continue this initiative and Prof

Roxana Hafiz (Bangladesh) agreed to be the new Coordinator, assisted by regional coordinators, including Alicia Yon for Australia/Pacific, Pamela Ayebare in East Africa and Carol Archer in the Caribbean.

The Singapore Institute of Planners proposed a CAP Awards for Excellence in the SE Asia region and suggested extending the concept to the whole CAP membership.

President Cliff Hague presented a report and a Business Plan for 2004-06 (attached). He noted that Namibia has nominated to join CAP and at least 25 member nations are needed to be eligible for Commonwealth Foundation funding. Zimbabwe has dropped out by default when it left the Commonwealth. We are encouraged to seek PIA formal membership for Australia, as well as perhaps a Pacific grouping based on Fiji or Samoa.

The meeting comments on the Plan drew attention to its emphasis on meetings, rather than on action programs. This led me to raise the issue appended to my report, of establishing a CAP international planning aid directorate with salaried staff to gain significant donor sponsorship and direct assistance programs. This was taken up by several speakers and a resolution was made by the meeting for the CAP Executive Committee to investigate setting up such an agency – e.g. CAP Action Program.

The election of office bearers and Vice Presidents for 2004 –06 resulted as follows:

President:	Cliff Hague (final term)
Secretary General	John Anderson (UK)
VP Europe	John Anderson (UK)
VP America	Ron Shishido (Canada)
VP East Africa	Bosire Ogero (Kenya)
VP Southern Africa	TBA
VP West Africa	Chijioke L. Odimuko (Nigeria)
VP SE Asia	Mohd Thalha HJ. Alithamby (Malaysia)
VP SW Asia	Sattar Sikander (Pakistan)

SW Pacific - in the absence of NZPI, Roger Brewster was nominated as the Coordinator.

The formal meeting Minutes will be issued by the Executive in due course.

In summary, the reinvigorated CAP has reached a threshold of self confidence and most members are enthusiastic about its future. It is becoming more pro-active in regional planning networks and giving assistance to the developing nations. The strong support given the whole event by the Malaysian government is a significant recognition of its perceived value.

CAP is gaining strength and credibility worldwide. As Cliff Hague stated in his 28 June 2004 message to us, "We are being increasingly recognised by national and multi-lateral agencies as being an effective and informed voice. In September I will be at the World Urban Forum in Barcelona, where I have been asked by UN-Habitat to speak on behalf of CAP. If we could replicate the effort and entrepreneurial-ism of Queensland across the whole CAP territory then we would be a powerful, global voice for the role of planners in developing sustainable human settlements."

The Commonwealth is all about partnerships. That was a key message from the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting in Nigeria at the close of 2003. The CIP has shown wonderful leadership in planning aid. The suggested CAP Action Program directorate could be a useful vehicle for ongoing programs linking the people of very different countries together to build a better Commonwealth.

This has important implications for the future involvement in CAP by PIA and action in the Pacific region for future planning assistance to PNG, Timor Leste and the Small Island States. The Pacific Network of Planners is a first step in becoming involved in the UN Habitat supported Pacific Urban Agenda, to facilitate planners and graduates to work and/or provide voluntary assistance in short and longer term overseas projects, on invitation from the recipient nations.

CAP Forum

The CAP Forum was attended by over 300 delegates and surprisingly for a Muslim country, the number of women delegates was noticeably high at around 60%. The event also had a high level of political support, not only from the Prime Minister, but also other Ministers and high ranking officials.

The themes of sustainable development, affordable housing, place making and heritage are all familiar ones to us, but a strong commitment to implementing them was evident in the group and in government announcements. I visited a slum renewal project in KL, all based on replacement with high rise towers, offering basic 3 bedroom apartments to the slum dwellers to buy at about AU\$12-15000 value as low interest loans. It is being constructed by private enterprise for the government. While not obviously applicable to the Pacific situation, it was never-the-less an impressive improvement to their lifestyles.

Most of the papers were Asian oriented in theory and practice, except for an analysis of Caribbean hot tropical climate housing. Interestingly the preferred solid masonry approach was similar to a Malaysian research study – quite different to the light weight materials promoted in some Australian studies.

I was given an unexpected opportunity to present the first Pacific perspective to the last plenary session and drew on material used at the 2003 Pacific Forum to review the current aid and planning situation in the small island states. It was well received by all.

The papers are available on a CDROM if anyone wants to have a copy. An index is attached separately of most of the abstracts and papers.

On my return journey through Singapore, I was invited to give a presentation to the Singapore Institute of Planners on the new Gold Coast performance based IPA planning scheme. They were interested in what we have experienced in its implementation from both the developers' and assessors' aspects. When I explained that 6 months was a short time frame for and MCU approval, their incredulous response was that under the Singapore master plan, 3-4 weeks was normal for even a significant large project! Most of the Singaporean consultants work outside the country, as there is little for them to do under the URA planning controls.

In summary, the Forum was very well organized and presented with interesting different perspectives on familiar themes. We can always learn more from the international scene and this event was no exception. I appreciated the opportunity to attend the formal CAP business meeting on behalf of the Queensland Division and to present the Pacific perspective to an international audience.



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