

PLANNING AFRICA 2012

17-19 SEPTEMBER 2012

GROWTH, DEMOCRACY AND INCLUSION:

NAVIGATING CONTESTED FUTURES

CONFERENCE REPORT

INTRODUCTION/BACKGROUND

Planning Africa was originally launched in 2002 at a time of crisis and the need to confront isolation and Africa's regeneration. Using this successful platform, in 2006 the conference strove to reassert planning and focussed on "making connections and strengthening regions"; in 2008 it was "shaping the future" with great emphasis on the environmental challenge; and in 2010 "beyond crisis" took its cue from the challenges and constraints of governance. Now in 2012 the theme "growth, democracy and inclusion: navigating contested futures" takes the on-going debate and discourse around social cohesion further particularly in light of the rapidly changing global political and economic events and the impacts these have nationally, regionally and continentally.

The current conference recognised that settlements whether large or small host a collection of people and resources, all with specific determined relationships to each other and thus emphasised the importance of re-engaging between theory and practice. Urban and rural planning is about adding or protecting value in settlements to benefit everyone living or passing through these areas. There are a number of mechanisms, tools and skills that planners can use and combine in different contexts to create, add or protect value. It therefore raises key questions about:

- What values drive planning
- How do and how should planners distribute land values
- How can planners reassert the use of capital value and create new value on the African continent.

It also recognised that the situational dynamics have been changing including:

- the relationship between planning and the State needing to be carefully articulated, eg is there foremost a reliance on the State or more forceful role for an empowered, engaged citizenry?
- in 2002 there was little reference to environmental concerns, by 2010 sustainability was crucial and is now an ever increasing concern.

As in the past the response of conference has been very good. In short the outcomes of Planning Africa 2012 should provide guidance to major questions on the African continent with regard to:

- coping with and positively steering unprecedented growth of settlements in light of major urbanisation and increasing focus on the need for urban resilience;
- entrenching democratic practices which ensure governance systems take account of principles of equity, fair distribution and just management of resources; including of all people in the planning and implementation of infrastructure and services, contributing to an improved quality of life and of the environment to the benefit of all.

It is not the intention of this report to provide a detailed, extensive reflection on each and every, of what were high quality papers and presentations, but rather to be selective and discuss some key themes that emerged during the two and half days of deliberations by international and national dignitaries, experts and practitioners.

CONTEXTUALISING CONTESTED FUTURES: THE GLOBAL MAELSTROM

“Today is the tomorrow we worried about yesterday” is an old adage that continues to hold true – it seems that notwithstanding our being witness to great shifts and changes in our overall environment and recognising that in many ways we are complicit perpetrators of much of what faces us, in general, we have not as yet – in the best interests of society at large - managed to successfully harness that most defining of human attributes – the ability to think ahead, weigh up options, consider choices, make decisions and take (pre-emptive) actions. So in the end we continue to worry while acknowledging that to have a future our actions going forward need to underpin sustainability.

The very vision of the future is currently one of the areas of highest global contestation and the forces impacting it seemingly beyond our influence and control. However there is ambivalence in and amongst societies at large, *“Mainstream politics no longer taps into these issues and has abandoned the attempts to provide a shared vision capable of inspiring us to create a better society. As voters, we have lost sight of any collective belief that society could be different”*¹.

But if, as it seems, the nature and character of the future and the trajectory for achieving it are significantly influenced by our understanding of the current reality then it is critical to understand whose reality it is we are discussing. By way of example the following quote highlights the complexity of understanding power and its application:

*“The aide said that guys like me were ‘in what we call the reality-based community,’ which he defined as people who ‘believe that solutions emerge from your judicious study of discernible reality.’ I nodded and murmured something about enlightenment principles and empiricism. He cut me off. ‘That’s not the way the world really works anymore,’ he continued. ‘We’re an empire now, and when we act, we create our own reality. And while you’re studying that reality – judiciously, as you will – we’ll act again, creating other new realities, which you can study too, and that’s how things will sort out. We’re history’s actors.....and you, all of you, will be left to just study what we do.’”*²

¹ Richard Wilkinson & Kate Pickett: *The Spirit Level. Why equality is better for everyone.* Page 4. Penguin Books London, 2010.

² Ron Suskind, quoting a “senior advisor” to President Bush. Ron Suskind, “Without a Doubt,” *New York Times Magazine*, 17 October 2004.

This viewpoint would impact global through regional to national and even sub-national levels. Thus, should planners be fatalistic and accepting or should they be more understanding of what sets them apart, makes them in some ways unique, in addressing the prospects for growth and inclusion and finding a way to reduce contestation. South Africa's minister responsible for national planning, Minister Trevor Manuel, acknowledged that planning is multi-disciplinary, that planners need to be aware of and sensitive to the tensions and contradictions inherent in the planning enterprise but that in the end it is about transforming society and it carries moral and ethical obligations with it.

FUTURE MAKING, TRANSFORMATION & NATIONAL IMPERATIVES:

Thinking Global but acting Local

Ben Okri's observation that "freedom is the overture" was used to emphasise that Africans have gained their freedom but they now need to decide how they are going to use it to what end – Africa's future is in Africans hands if they rise to the challenge. Thus, clearly there is a dire need to be more conversant with and attuned to the broad sweep of global challenges and opportunities. In this regard it was suggested that planners needed to be more critical in their understanding of events and the possibilities emanating from them. It was suggested strongly by several participants that if future making is the imperative, then planning needs to provide the platform for day-dreaming. In this regard the planning process can provide far stronger support in opening up debate, strengthening democratisation and encouraging a stronger bottom-up approach to driving agendas and action. This would be played out against the backdrop of the shifting role and relationship between the State and its people and the deepening of democracy.

However it was also acknowledged that in this process a preferable rather than a probable future needed to be agreed, plans need to be realisable, if not other powerful forces move in to fill the space with generally non progressive outcomes. This immediately draws into question the nature and character of planning - its scale and timing - and in particular the role of planning and planners in societal context. The transformation process is frequently, sometimes unwittingly, impinged upon by the profession and individual planners *inter alia*:

- Who are unwilling to move out of their comfort zone and recast strategies;
- Where priority is given to profitability over other objectives or outcomes
- Who lack sufficient insight into the multitude of interdependencies
- Who have insufficient understanding of and support for an innovative and learning culture

Thus to be effective, planners both individually and severally need to address and overcome these challenges. From the presentations it was abundantly clear that planning although having technical dimensions is however very much a political enterprise, one which is presenting choices and influencing decisions.

The Value of Planning: Making Great Communities

In the opening plenary, Paul Farmer, CEO of the American Association of Planners, presented an abridged version of a presentation he had made to the Australian Institute of Planners earlier in the year and available on the APA website (www.planning.org). The theme of the presentation was the value of planning in making great communities.

He suggested that to understand the value of planning it is necessary to understand what is important – not just to planners but more importantly for ordinary people. If resilience is important it is necessary to know in what context it is being used– is it to improve protection from for example the ever more rapidly changing

technologies, the implications of climate change and environmental pressures, or the unequal impacts of global trade. Is the fundamental aim of planning thus to protect? What is clear is that there are many conflicting and competing reasons for thinking ahead. To assist and support these processes society has developed various mechanisms many of which provide democratic frameworks for decision making – planners make use of and influence these institutions. However in this context how do we as planners know what is right to do?

In this regard although our education, values, and experience are important, it is being open to paradigm shifts and being responsive that should set planners apart. Although a planner must be technically competent, planning solutions are not purely technical, they need to be sensitive to the “arts”, the psychology of human behaviour and why and how other people arrive at decisions is crucial to resilient planning and sustainability. Thus, it is important to acknowledge that although people need to be engaged in determining priorities, these decisions, to be implemented, are played out in a political arena of competing ideas and scarce resources where the art of influence becomes necessary to success.

If a planner is much more than a technician and planning is thinking ahead what then is a plan? It was suggested that based on experience that some of the most successful plans were stories told in powerfully memorable narrative format. People are drawn into the story, defined and valued the outcomes and understood their implications. Thus it was suggested that the value of planning is that it provides people with safety and the protection of what they prize most. Never the less communities to stay ahead do need to remain nimble and be responsive and in this context planners must be innovative and encourage alternative ways of seeing things. For example although a community might see protection from flood waters as a first priority, sight should not be lost of the potential value that could be added for the community if the water was to be better managed and productively utilised.

Knowing when and how to engage with a community is critical to the success of an initiative. Communities, just like individuals, need to work through trauma and other experiences that have wide and far ranging emotional impacts. It was suggested that when planners got involved in planning with the rejuvenation of Pittsburgh after its disastrous industrial collapse they had been party to and understood the “grieving process” the community had gone and was going through and because of this “empathy” succeeded in establishing a realistic plan which is being successfully implemented. In contrast in the Ruhr area of Germany after the collapse of the steel industry there this “grieving process” had not been gone through and there was much bitterness and blaming and planners needed to assist and lead the community through the missing emotional stages. It thus seems clear that to make progress, successful plans are not constructs of planners alone but built on intense conversations that demonstrate benefits to the affected communities. It is also in this context that the governance of planning should be viewed and institutionalised and care needs to be practised when assigning levels of importance to different facets of planning. For example codifying planning through land use zoning is necessary but expending resources on further technical improvements might do nothing to address crucial priority issues identified by a community.

In summary the following five prescriptions were suggested as being crucial if planners and planning are to add real value in the service of communities:

- Planning needs to be grounded in hard science – evidence based decision making is crucial – the issues concerning climate change are an example;
- Communities and their feelings vary – planners must understand and value emotions, attention must be paid to how people think;
- Decision making happens in political context – be a political scientist and be sensitive to competing and conflicting demands;
- Advance communications between people and continuously improve skills for “explaining the past and unlocking the future”;
- Be passionate about planning, take pride in what is being done, be motivated, genuine and convincing.

In conclusion it was suggested that planning is not a profession for the timid but is an enterprise profoundly in the service of communities.

In the African context a UN view is that the continent (with respect to urbanisation, economic growth etc) is rapidly catching up with rest of world; however the link between urbanisation and

economic growth varies between regions as well as countries, never-the-less there is a consistent improving trend which needs to be harnessed to ensure the benefits are captured for Africa. The projected demographic shift indicates that by 2019 the African urban population will be larger than Europe or Latin America and will total some 539 million people. Although this will present major challenges and have serious implications for political choices and in particular the planning for and provision of services and utilities, if the continent, regions and countries collaborate more fully the opportunities to be reaped and benefits to be gained from the urban dividend will be enormous. Technical planning – “drawing lines for utilities” – will no longer suffice. The establishment of the African Planning Association and the recent publication of the first phase of its comparative study of land planning and regulations is an important step in the process of providing focus to and empowering the planning profession.

Planning to be successful, to have the desired impact and positive outcomes, will have to be driven through strong accountable leadership, focused on an agreed trajectory and needs to be proactive in terms of supporting decisions based on intelligent choices thus facilitating pre-emptive actions. Crucial will be the effectiveness and efficiency of inter-governmental relations ensuring that roles and responsibilities are appropriately assigned between levels and spheres of government and that devolution is meaningful and that all parties are encouraged and supported to “fly in the same direction”.

Transformation and change: Re-casting planning and re-inventing planners

If transformation is to be achieved the fundamental question is how does change happen – in South Africa the Constitution creates the enabling context within which people are expected to execute agreed changes – these actions in turn are guided by policy. Attaining transformation is thus clearly not the responsibility only of government, but, equally a number of agencies need to engage and interact and include the active participation of the people. All this must be supported by improved leadership and effective government. But importantly it is fundamental to such transformation that a shift is promoted and supported in the relationship between State and people - from recognising them as subjects to a situation where they are empowered citizens.

It is a *sine-qua-non* that planning is about thinking ahead; however it was also recognised and repeatedly emphasised that this is clearly not straightforward, but complex, particularly when considering that people in general are more concerned with outcomes than they are with the processes involved. Successful transformation will be about making choices and selecting supportive priorities to see the transformation through. Now, in the rapidly changing world of today as demands change with increasing speed, planning as an enterprise needs to recognise this – the way planning is conceived of and its purpose needs recasting. In short these global changes oblige a rethink of planning – what forces are important and prevail eg the markets, do they enable or inhibit sustainable outcomes and if so what are the conditions under which they occur. After the 2008 global crisis, new paths to development emerged. These no longer focused solely on markets thus in the context of promoting a just developmental state should the market be questioned – what space is there for political movement and political settlement. How can and should planning work with what can be construed as a corrupt state. It was pointed out that this is currently difficult as there is no theory and base line on which to construct an understanding of the necessary relationships. However it is an area where planners should be actively engaged. It was implied that it might even

mean rather than “re-planning”, that “de-planning” could be considered. Where the former has more to do with “trying again”, the latter reduces strict directives and encourages local initiative and aspirations.

However a general view expressed in different ways by the conference is that planning, importantly, is a political and not purely technical enterprise. A distinction was suggested between decision making and decision taking. The former, is a process of presenting options and motivating a specific choice(s) and the preserve of planners. The latter is the role of “politicians” who decide to proceed with a specific choice. However within this it is important for planners to understand politicians and the application of political will if they, planners, are to exercise their mediating power to mitigate for example the “short-termism” of political demands.

Consequently, from what many speakers were saying it can be concluded that for planning to suitably address the complex context it needs to be multi-disciplinary in nature, taking both the diagnostic problem/solution dimensions and predictive impact aspects into account. To do this successfully it thus needs to be driven, proactive and pre-emptive in character while noting that both scale and time frame need to be appropriate to the purpose.

Important in this transformation process is the emphasis on engaged and empowered citizens and the promotion of and support for “personal agency” as opposed to “state agency”. Planners will need to be not only conversant with this changing environment, but also be nimble and creative in proposing realisable solutions which can be sustained over the longer term.

Although there was no neatly defined, single, commonly agreed position on what planning is, it was none the less possible to discern a distinction between what can be construed as more general planning versus that which relates to urban and regional concerns. It is these latter considerations which place emphasis on spatial and physical dimensions and thus provided for a more focused approach in the debate, in particular with regard to the core competencies required in integrating the socio-economic and ecological dimensions of sustainability.

Some observations which usefully framed and focused this fresh outlook for planners included the following :

- Planners need to recognise that an overarching challenge is that of leapfrogging into a very different future and how to reconcile this with the current realities ie Africa has the benefit of learning lessons from elsewhere
- Successful planners and their plans recognise that “the horizon moves away as one walks towards it.”ie change is constant and must be accommodated
- “Always walk questioningly – make the road while walking it.” ie be critical, creative, innovative and where appropriate be “subversive”.

In summary speakers indicated that planners will need to:

- Become multi-skilled and conversant with other disciplines and points of view thus making them well rounded in ability

- accept that feelings and perceptions vary from place to place and thus understand the variability and value of peoples' emotions in the creation of credible plans
- deepen their insight into why and how decisions are taken and become "policy scientists"
- advance citizens empowerment and democracy through imparting and strengthening community skills
- be passionate, strong in convictions and proud to be in service of community .

NATIONAL PLANNING

A New Dawn: Dreaming of Bold Action

The presentations highlighted that national planning has evolved globally over time and can be categorised in terms of logic and content. The thrusts and practice have differed across countries and imperatives have included: addressing population growth; tackling climate change; improving productivity and efficiency; modernising and extending infrastructure. Categories of planning traditions and some examples include the following:

- The spatial tradition is an up-scaling of much of what is understood by the idea of regional planning. It had a strong British and European influence which was exported through colonial networks to Africa and other parts of developing world. It has seen its practice evolve from post WW2 decentralisation policies through to urban strategies of the 1980/90's to the current mediation between objectives eg cohesion, competition and sustainability). A major boost was provided to national spatial planning by the EU which linked Establishment Funding to preparation of the European Spatial Development Perspective and national plans/strategies. Current examples include plans for the Baltic States, many East European countries, Wales, Scotland and Ireland. There is also a strong focus on national spatial planning in the Arab States.
- The economic tradition generally worked within five year (medium term) time horizons and had plans that set the direction for national economic development. Its origins lie in state socialism but a lot of the thinking has been transferred more recently to that of the "developmental state" approach. Although frequently it has been associated with authoritarian, top down structures, it has also been applied under democratic rule as in India. It has been used most commonly in the countries of East Asia including China, Malaysia, Indonesia, Thailand, Cambodia and Brunei but also in Turkey and some Latin American countries viz Colombia, Mexico and Nicaragua. Notwithstanding institutional problems several post-colonial African countries have also adopted the approach viz Namibia, Uganda, Botswana, Tanzania, Zambia.
- Long range strategic planning was rooted in corporate sector strategic practices of the 1970's and from about 1980 was incorporated into government planning – in particular long range city planning and by 2000 was being used at national level eg Jamaica. Increasingly it has been used more recently as an instrument of reconstruction and new state formation – for example in Afghanistan, East Timor, Iraq, and the Balkan States.

- Hybrids of the aforementioned are now being applied by countries across several continents as the approaches to national planning are evolving with increasing cross-over between traditions and this holds the potential for more effective approaches. (and this is where the hope lies for more effective approaches). China is moving from directive to strategic (but still strongly target-driven) approaches, has integrated spatial planning into the 5-year plans, and has located its 5-year plans within the framework of a long range strategic framework. East European countries have linked their 5-year plans to the spatial planning approaches of Western Europe (spurred on by the need to access EU funds) and Central Asian countries are combining long range strategic planning with the five year tradition (e.g. Tadjikistanng NDP).

In summary it was suggested that the benefits and utility of strategic planning are that it is supportive of *inter alia*:

- Thinking longer range and tackling challenges and constraints presented by short-termism
- Integrating sectors and spaces and scales
- Promoting coherent governance
- Advocating for investment in priorities
- Influencing other planning and decision making processes
- Leveraging engagement with other parties
- Guiding decision making based on evidence
- Communicating and promoting visions of the future.

South Africa – National Development Plan (NDP)

The NDP is “home grown”, it builds on the various planning traditions and integrates these approaches to best address the strategic challenges to and opportunities supportive of South Africa’s transformation. The National Planning Commission, located in the Presidency, took two years to complete, publish and gain parliamentary acceptance in mid-2012 for the plan.

The plan quite deliberately does not replace policy but provides a narrative. It tells a story of what the future South Africa could be like and in doing so suggests ways of addressing a range of developmental issues and dimensions. It is structured in terms of focus areas or pillars which seek to:

- unite the population
- encourage good governance and government taking note of national and provincial responsibilities as well as the fact that there are various powerful lobby groups
- ensure economic growth while reducing inequalities and eliminating poverty
- promote the capabilities of people and the country as a whole to deepen democracy and strengthen inclusiveness
- ensure strong leadership to provide vision and focus.

Importantly for planners the NDP identifies land and the geographical spatial legacy as a particularly intransigent set of issues and challenges impacting on socio-economic development and in response articulates proposals important to improving conditions for the poor. These include some for human settlements where spatial planning is very important. Other elements include informal settlement improvements, locating residences closer to work opportunities, access to public transport, densification of development, provision of spatial frameworks, comprehensive review of financial support for built environment.

The successful implementation of the plan, getting the parties to fly in the same direction, crucially will depend on the constructive mobilisation of multi-stakeholder partnerships and the attainment of on-going support through the negotiation and conclusion of a “social compact”. A challenge the “social compact” convenors face is that each of various parties, government, labour, business, civil society etc has an own agenda which

anticipates that other parties will fill their identified gaps. Strong leadership, skilful negotiation, good communication and high levels of transparency and a compact providing support both in terms of its form and architecture will be imperative. The provision of strong normative objectives should mitigate the potential of powerful interest groups “high-jacking” the process.

The NDP will also provide the basis for encouraging greater coherence within and across spheres of government which is pre-requisite for dealing with strategic and regional issues. However, importantly rather than the NPC making proposals on institutional or legislative requirements to give effect to the NDP the approach is envisaged to deepen democracy and empower both the state and citizens who in partnership will better use what is available in giving effect to the vision.

This is a very recent and ambitious initiative with far reaching implications. It sets itself the task of nothing less than promoting, guiding and enabling the transformation and reconstruction of the country. To achieve this planning needs to change and adapt. Therefore the suggestion that “planning has not been transformed, but that apartheid lives on” should only be assessed sometime in the future if useful lessons are to be learnt.

Turning vision and plans into reality:

There was reasonable consensus that the context is now very complex and requires a carefully crafted approach to adequately address all the challenges and opportunities. However in moving forward it was clear that there is currently a “window of opportunity” in that:

- Planning has entered a new era, it is gaining support and its credibility is increasing
- The leadership tends now to be more vision led and decision making is based more on reliable, defensible evidence
- Communication, engagement and dialogue is improving because of *inter alia* the availability of strategic and influential documents as well as improving relationships between leadership and stakeholder groupings
- Options and choices are being openly and constructively discussed in a process of scenario building
- Strategies and families of inter-related strategies are being formulated as the cornerstone of going forward in an integrated way
- Importantly spatial and infrastructure planning is now combined to achieve greater coherence and better synchronisation of effort and higher impact
- Agreements are being considered (if not in place) to achieve cross government coherence (both vertical and horizontal) and integration of interventions
- Financial and investment planning, using appropriate methods and tools, is now integrated with development and land planning.

Confronting Urban Issues in India

Professor Madhu Bharti from Ahmedabad, India, gave an overview of and discussed the context of and issues facing planning and development in India and concluded with some pointers for urban reform policy and practice.

India has a population of 1.21 billion people of which 68.4% (833million) are rural while 31.16% is urban. In the decade 2001-2011 urbanisation increased from 27.8% to 31.1% and the proportion of

rural dwellers declined from 72.2% to 68.8%. The population growth over this decade was 17.64%; the population density is 382 persons per square kilometre; the gender ratio is 924/1000 female to male persons and the literacy rate is 74.04 which is up from 64.83 at the beginning of the decade. These trends and ratios vary both between and within states, regions and cities. Mumbai is the largest city with a population of nearly 12.5 million and the smallest of the top ten big cities is Jaipur with just over 3 million. It is estimated that by 2030 40.76% of the population will be urban, an increase of almost 10% on the current figure.

Against this background the key issues identified and addressed in various urban plans and policies include the:

- rapidly increasing population
- high unemployment and poverty levels
- inadequate and failing physical and social infrastructure
- urban transport in particular the traffic congestion and rising pollution levels
- rigidities in urban land policy constraining the supply and development of land
- massive shortages in urban housing
- rapidly increasing slum populations
- general degradation of the environment

In introducing urban reforms it was noted that urban growth is very dependent on attaining efficiency and equity in the delivery and financing of urban infrastructure. The contribution of the urban sector to GDP is currently expected to be in the range of 50-60% thus:

- enhancing productivity of urban areas is now central to policy pronouncements of the Ministry of Urban Development;
- national economic growth and poverty reduction efforts will be increasingly determined by the productivity of these cities and towns
- for Indian cities to become growth oriented and productive it is essential to achieve a world class urban system.

However, there is a vast resource gap. To address this constraint the Ministry of Urban Development has introduced fiscal, institutional and financial reforms, which include:

- resource mobilisation catalysed by “Urban Development Plans Formulation and Implementation” support available to all states
- second generation reforms – regulatory framework – which makes provision for private sector financing and delivering infrastructure at municipal level as well as appropriate training of and capacity support to regulators.
- Model legislation: central government is in process of preparing model legislation for facilitating participation by private sector in urban infrastructure.
- Municipal accounting system: recommendations have been made for an accrual basis of accounting to be introduced for urban local bodies and suggested model budgeting and accounting formats for that purpose.
- Public/private partnership guidelines: central government will develop guidelines for private sector involvement in infrastructure which will ensure a competitive and transparent bidding process.
- Fiscal incentives: Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) – FDI in urban infrastructure facilities is to be directly encouraged and supported.
- Pooled financing for municipal infrastructure – traditionally municipal corporations and

urban local bodies have relied on subsidised funds for providing urban services and this constrains the introduction of user charges and efficient project operations and maintenance.

- City Restructuring – the Government of India is encouraging city wide reforms and restructuring so as to ensure that:
 - Cities are managed efficiently and become creditworthy (to attract private finance)
 - Which will enable them to prepare long term plans for infrastructure investments and implement poverty alleviation programmes
- Establishment of an Urban Academy (UA) as a centre of excellence in urban matters such as urban water supply, sanitation, urban transport, urban governance, municipal finance etc. The UA will coordinate all training and capacity building initiatives and efforts of change management forums.

Never the less, if the visions and plans are to benefit from the aforementioned and be successfully turned into reality then provision for *inter alia* the following will need to be ensured:

- An agreed trajectory, sharp focus and coherence across and between levels/spheres of government and between and within departments
- Acknowledgement that bottom up rather than rigid top down approaches provide better opportunities for accommodation of alternative views and support negotiation.
- Recognition that global practice demonstrates that a “fixed formula” or “one size fits all” approach is no longer sufficient – the local context, creativity and innovation is very important
- Sound organisation, systems and procedures etc are in place over an extended period of time to provide for stability.
- Acceptable norms and standards which support development performance
- Compliance thereto which in turn requires strong commitment to and management through a “social compact”
- Introduction of catalytic projects to drive the process and show progress and leverage.
- Loops in local democracy are closed so that expectations are not raised beyond delivery capability and capacity.

But how can local municipal planning contribute to these imperatives?

Globalisation has resulted in the world being characterised by different “spaces” and these in turn being described and theorised through various discourses. In this regard the question is posed as to whether cities have returned to being city states – in practice many are being run like businesses. Over time expectations of cities have grown but governance abilities have not grown in similar fashion, never-the-less this has led to innovation in some areas eg metropolitan strategic planning.

The focus on an agreed vision has been crucial to the success of cities globally that have adopted a strategic planning approach and stuck with their vision for city development. For example: Singapore prioritised improving the quality of life for all its citizens as paramount and everything that is done is geared to achieving this vision over the longer term. Hong Kong’s vision is to ensure over the longer

term its regional positioning entrenches and advances its competitive advantage. London provided a medium to longer term spatial development strategy which established a guiding framework for a suite of development strategies. Mumbai is utilising strategically targeted investment into infrastructure to focus on its strengths in order to achieve its vision of being a significant global player. Sao Paulo in Brazil is endeavouring to create a “city of 30 minutes” – everyone in the city, rich or poor, should within 30 minutes have access to the diverse opportunities of the city.

The discussion suggested that in these cases success depended on the political leadership being committed to the vision, and clear on agreed priorities within an integrated trajectory for the city development which ensured that actions were synchronised to achieve maximum impact and beneficial outcomes. In short municipal governments were successful in leveraging their spatial planning powers to achieve strategic gain. Never the less a common refrain amongst participants was that if sustainable development was to be promoted and supported then the role of planning in municipalities needed to be better understood and its positioning given higher prominence and more support.

Governance remains, however, a key issue in the context of devolution and sound inter-governmental relations. There is also increasing pressure for municipal government to enter into partnerships in order to, on the one hand, ameliorate municipal shortcomings, particularly with regards to a variety of capacities and capabilities, and on the other strengthen the base for driving development and improving awareness and relationships.

Plan Implementation and Governance

London based Professor Greg Clark, mentor and Advisor on City and Regional Investment, Development and Governance, having suggested that city regional development is an integrated process and that although “writing a plan is easy(ish)” it is the implementation thereof that is the crux of its success.

In ensuring sound implementation it is necessary to take the following into account while ensuring they are articulated in a coherent and consistent way:

- implementation arrangements consisting of the tools and organisation(s) created specifically to support the delivery of the Plan; and the
- governance architecture consisting of the longer-term changes to the institutional/organisational approach to development as a result of the Plan.

The process followed for plan preparation and execution is cyclical in nature and embraces the following steps:

- Determination of plan & policy/resources
- Identification of catalytic projects
- Selection of implementation tools
- Design of governance architecture
- Communication of vision and engagement

It is important to note that global experience demonstrates that there is no single correct way and that different organisations can take the lead and drive initiatives. Case studies from Barcelona, London, Paris, New York, Singapore, Hong Kong, Sao Paulo and Mumbai were used to illustrate that although there are differences in approach it is the coherence between implementation architecture, implementation arrangements and governance architecture that is crucial.

In summary it was suggested that there are three broad strands of issues discernible:

- The broad sequencing of the initiatives which is achieved in different ways:
 - In Singapore the governance structure drives the plan;
 - In London the plan and governance structure develop in tandem;
 - In Sao Paulo the plan drives the governance structure.
- However it was also noted that a change in strategy does not always initiate a change in governance – it is not always a causal relationship, there are other factors eg politics as in London and the LDA.
- The overlap between multiple strategies, and governance structures etc which can be alleviated by eg clear boundaries (New York) or exacerbated through eg complex boundaries (Paris in transition to metro structure). There is thus a need for institutional buy-in – different city strategic plans have different levels of buy-in eg Singapore – strongest local government whereas Paris continues to exhibit tension during its transition.

Never the less there always are challenges and constraints to achieving this and in South Africa it has been well illustrated by intergovernmental relations which although defined and legislated for still leaves a lot to be desired with regard to, in particular, the resultant inconclusive roles and responsibilities including the scale of and time horizons for plans. Issues requiring urgent attention include *inter alia*:

- National and provincial sphere departments imposing projects on a municipality without necessarily taking cognisance of local planning considerations;
- a weak municipality without capacity cannot even start to plan let alone be expected to meet the many and varied compliance requirements
- Sector legislation can be a serious challenge where inter alia national departments of environment, water or energy take precedence over municipal planning.
- Turf battles between these same sector departments can be a serious threat to the ability of a municipality fulfilling its service delivery mandate.

The challenge of the changing role of the state as previously discussed also impacts municipal planning. Tensions arise around taking responsibility for establishing municipal priorities and being accountable for outcomes at local level versus needing to meet compliance requirements imposed by either national or provincial spheres of government. This was illustrated in some circumstances by the Integrated Development Plan (IDP), its process and suite of plans – there is frequently ambivalence as to whether they are truly local development plans or whether they are a way of ensuring outside prerogatives. In this regard how do people engage, what is their role and in this context could planners in fact be “subversive” by explicitly offering other alternative options. Innovation and creativity in planning practise thus is very important.

Need for strong political leadership

Undesirable urban development tends always to run ahead of planning therefore there is great need for proactive and pre-emptive planning to manage the urbanisation process. The global COP17 deliberations hosted in eThekweni were catalytic to establishing a Kwa-Zulu Natal provincial climate policy position. Planning, as consequence, across the province and for eThekweni in particular was focused on sustainable development. The apartheid legacy of unequal development and the use of discriminatory approaches and tools meant that amongst other things space needed to be reshaped to positively impact peoples’ lives. The strong provincial and city leadership provided the guidance and support for new approaches and greater innovation to

successfully address development through a suite of interventions including Project Consolidate, the Small Town Rehabilitation project etc.

Intergovernmental relations are also further confused by the fact that some processes which should rationalise or ameliorate the relationships between spheres of government have been delayed and now exacerbate inconsistencies: for example provincial legislation has been introduced in some provinces to compensate for the lack of new national spatial legislation and in time this will need to be over-hauled and rationalised –this will come at a cost in time, resources and the impact of confusion. Generally, in these turf battles it is municipalities that lose out the most.

Municipal planning departments in the main are not viewed as particularly important and thus for a variety of reasons are weak – frequently lacking capacity and capability and compromising integrity by outsourcing work to consultants – and they tend to get over-ridden by other municipal sectoral departments having executive functions for implementing projects in, transport, roads, housing and such like.

Further complicating their planning role and responsibilities is the fact that there is little or very weak municipal planning integration resulting in a lack of coherence between *inter alia* Planning Schemes and Land Use Plans, finance plans, budgets and other content of IDPs. In general land development processes are poorly managed, suffer excessive red-tape and are poorly aligned with priorities.

Although integrated development planning is anticipated to embrace an inclusive approach and thus address these shortcomings, including that of promoting greater social cohesion, this frequently is not the case. There is frequently a fragmentation of policy principles and standards in and between regulations and spatial planning. The poor are excluded and the resultant patterns of informality and growth make service delivery and accessing opportunities very difficult. Participation by people in the planning process is often promoted merely to meet compliance requirements rather than for supporting citizens empowerment and the attainment of broader social cohesion and democratisation.

Creativity and innovation in the urban transition

UN Habitat is providing professional expertise and support to enable urban planning innovation to assist cities regain urban advantage and thus deliver higher quality of life and lower environmental impacts. It was anticipated that significant enhancement to urban advantage would be gained through:

- Working sustainably with nature rather than undermining it
- Leveraging density to improve urban efficiency
- Optimising the utilisation of infrastructure
- Maximising competitiveness of resource endowments

It was suggested that if the above were achieved it could provide opportunities for a cheaper transition to an urban based society and supportive fiscal decentralisation and overall improve national socio economic performance.

A significant weakness is also reflected in municipal planning departments' lack of ability to play a meaningful role in mediating power relations. The departments frequently lack the competencies to match the tactics of powerful groups with vested interests and thus are unable to mediate on behalf of other (citizens groups) to achieve public benefits. Managing "big capital" is complex and the approach chosen is very much dependent on whether it is viewed as a challenge or opportunity and thus whether there should be creative management against for example agreed developmental norms (eg through partnering) or punitive control (eg through taxation). Frequently basic communication is not good with the result processes lack transparency and thus result in trust breaking down and the spreading of misinformation.

Communications, transparency and un-intended consequences

There was a suggestion that there are "too many plans but little planning". This was voiced in the context of African planning experience. The opinion was not critical of the content of plans but rather of the failure to adequately communicate the intentions and implications of the plans and open up robust debate between stakeholders. It was suggested that this is particularly relevant with regards to processes like urbanisation and informal growth where these pressures have serious implications for supply side planning and provision of infrastructure and services. The resultant lack of transparency can mean misinformation being propagated, expectations being raised, which if not met can result in undesirable unintended consequences. Conflicts around and clamp downs on land invasions was cited as an example.

In conclusion there was reasonable consensus that IDP's frequently say all the right things on paper with respect to the socio-economic situation, the environment and all the other dimensions necessary for the achievement of sustainability. Never the less it was questioned as to whether they are in fact credible, realistic and implementable and whether they are sufficiently proactive to pre-empt potential challenges not currently fully understood nor as yet a priority.

CONFRONTING THE SPATIAL LEGACY

Deeply embedded realities

The spatial legacy in South Africa is the result of hundreds of years of racially prejudiced divisive planning and rule and is deeply embedded. The way this legacy plays out and is experienced, is a clear reflection and embodiment of the past skewed patterns, on the one hand, of opportunity and wealth accumulation, and on the other of pauperisation and under-development and, because of this, remains highly volatile, and contentious.

In this context land use (access, utilisation, ownership etc) is very much a contested terrain. However, spatial planning legislation is slow and difficult to change – the constitutional concepts of fairness and public good as mediated through the state needs to be balanced with recognition for and protection of private property rights. It was suggested that in general law is a blunt instrument and cannot prescribe for all situations. It was pointed out that legislation can result in unintended consequences such as when compliance becomes too onerous and can in turn encourage lawlessness.

In South Africa, sectors, such as mining and agriculture, tended to have a pre-eminent position in the land debate and it has been their interests which have been served first rather than municipal priorities. Roles also get confused in the land restitution process which creates an institutional vacuum and as a result market forces have tended to overwhelm and dominate. A suggestion, based on the work of Sen, was that an alternative more objective approach based on land entitlement could be adopted. However it was acknowledged that this would require meeting carefully defined and agreed performance criteria and raises with it significant administrative and other issues.

The previously discussed issue of Intergovernmental relations also has serious implications for resolving the land use planning challenge due in part to the lack of clarity on roles and responsibilities, but also including lack of skills, inadequate capacity etc. It was suggested that some of the capacity issues could be addressed by more fully and better utilising the capabilities of available young professionals.

Celebrating Young Planners

Plenary 5 had a focus on young planners and highlighted the importance of their potential contribution to resolving some of society's intractable problems. The presentations discussed, in both practical and academic ways, problems young planners face and opportunities open to them, the complexity of finding the right balance between competing requirements in creating a useful applicable curriculum and training regime, and the support in terms of both guidance and finances, that is required and available.

Government recognises the employment and skills crisis facing South Africa and the imperative for meaningful economic transformation but has also indicated in the National Development Plan that to be realistic this can only be"built brick by brick, institution by institution and being sustained and rejuvenated over time.....it requires skilled managers and workers."

To provide impetus to this the National Treasury provides funding through the Infrastructure Skills Development Grant. In particular this funding is used to strengthen and support local government to effectively and efficiently deliver quality infrastructure by increasing the pool of skills and create jobs for unemployed graduates in the technical sector (e.g engineering, town planning etc)

Eligible candidates include unemployed young graduates who have not entered the job market as well as, under certain circumstances, existing municipal staff. Opportunity will be given to town planners, GIS professionals, valuers, project managers and personnel in other fields related to the built environment. Candidates need to be committed to professional development and life-long learning. They also need to be willing to serve municipalities/ local government during the training and post training periods.

This is, however, a complex and mammoth task and cannot only be a state effort and needs supportive partnerships to be fostered and nurtured.

The planning profession in South Africa is regulated by a statutory council – SACPLAN - in terms of the Planning Professions Act 2002 (Act 36 of 2002). The mandate provides for planners to be registered thus providing assurance with regards to competencies, skills and knowledge as well as their general ethical and professional behaviour, all of which are of great importance to the profession as a whole but to young planners in particular. Given the complex and changing environment within which planners operate SACPLAN initiated a project to enhance the standing of the profession, raise standards and achieve the right mix and balance of generic , core and technical competencies of planners. In short SACPLAN provides an important resource for and support to young planners and a vehicle for raising the bar, increasing pride in and enhancing relevance and accountability of the profession.

To achieve the desired improvement in skill, competency and knowledge levels amongst planners, mentoring and coaching by competent and committed people is crucial. The organisation *Coaches and Mentors of South Africa* provides a platform for bringing together those people needing support with those able to provide mentorship for capacity building and skills acquisition. It was suggested that "mentors point to doors – they

don't open them; but enable you to find the strength to open them yourself.”

Notwithstanding gains to be made through practical approaches to upgrading capabilities, planners do also require formalised studies and training in order for them to understand and be well equipped to do what is expected and required of them. In this regard the design of an adequate curriculum needs to provide for skills and tools appropriate to and knowledge sensitive to the fast ever changing environment. The curriculum provides a basis for what planners must be able to do, and establishes the knowledge base, competencies as well as the generic and technical skills required. Although a framework curriculum was being advocated it was not suggested that all institutions would necessarily provide exactly the same course work etc. Rather, differences of philosophy, interpretation and emphasis should be encouraged as this would be more likely to facilitate innovation and creative solutions.

Case studies provided by Cornell University demonstrated how important “hands-on” practical experience, partnerships, coaching and support are to the development of not only young professionals but also provided significant benefits to members of the wider stakeholder community, including project recipients, public, private and not for profit sectors and importantly for the attainment of sustainable outcomes.

The weakness of municipal planning departments also frequently results in an inability to constructively manage vested interests - “big capital” - these developments then dictate where municipalities need to follow on with infrastructure and services rather than municipal investment guiding the direction of private investment. In contrast concerns also were voiced about the level of transparency in and the ease with which land owners could engage with land planning processes

There was reasonable consensus that “to get the basics right” of integrating the many interests it is imperative to develop a framework for spatial development. In South Africa at a local level this is formalised in a Spatial Development Framework which it was felt should be an integral element of a credible IDP and not just another compliance requirement. There was also the suggestion that the SDF should be the base for and provide strategic direction to an IDP. However this was countered by the view suggesting that such a position would need to be the result of negotiation between affected and interested parties.

In order to move towards a more just position, and recognising it is very difficult to examine and regulate land outside of ideology, South Africa’s legislative “answer” was the introduction of SPLUMB (see BOX). This Bill builds on the normative position of the Development Facilitation Act which it replaces and the “need to entrench property rights”. It was, however, suggested that the apparent bias to western values and systems together with the current control orientation of the legislation is an impediment to the attainment of developmental outcomes in general and social cohesion in particular.

The lack of clarity and thus uncertainty with regard to inter-governmental roles and responsibilities has made addressing the land questions particularly onerous. Cities and in particular metropolitan municipalities were finding they were not in control of land ostensibly under their jurisdiction. Johannesburg Metro took this issue to the Constitutional Court and obtained a ruling in their favour – simply put: land use planning and management is principally a municipal responsibility. Whether or not courts are the most appropriate place to make policy decisions remains a contentious issue and is open to debate. The fact that the case was brought by the largest, most powerful municipality, however, does raise the question as to how pertinent the findings and ruling will be to other

municipalities, be they large or small, urban or rural, which face diverse land challenges – in short one size does not fit all.

Diverse cultural values, principles and practices

Planning has tended to subscribe to a failed vision – it has on the whole not come to grips with the issue of diverse realities, whose reality it is catering for or what the reality means for the affected parties – the process of planning in many instances has been for people rather than undertaken with people enabling them to empower themselves as citizens. This has been particularly pertinent with regards to “the informal sector.”

The growing trend towards informality and informalisation in many socio economic processes of urban and rural life have led to a re-think and recognition that rather than viewing it as a problem and trying to eliminate such informality it is far more constructive to see it as an opportunity and reap the benefits from such approach. It does however call for a different approach to planning and role for planners. Speakers were adamant that embracing informality does not mean accepting squalor; neither does informal necessarily mean that it is illegal. It was strongly suggested that it needed an African definition.

These informal areas frequently offer a richness and diversity of opportunities and provide new urban arrivals with a foothold in the economy. In making their decisions people, in general, are rational and will locate themselves where they can obtain the highest level of utility – they will try and locate as close to opportunities as possible. In contrast planners of formal low income settlements will frequently try and minimise establishment costs and thus plan such settlements in marginal locations where the market value and thus price of land is low. It was agreed important that planners deepen their knowledge of and better understand what informality is about as well as the range of tools and techniques that can be used to address such circumstances –planners need to change “perspective” and “view the world through different spectacles”. However whatever system is used it needs to be credible, understood by the people, and be implementable.

It was highlighted as paramount that the relationship between urban and rural circumstances be better understood and the interconnectedness between the two constructively catered for – urban and rural is too frequently viewed as being in competition rather than being two sides of the same coin. Migration, the movement of people primarily from rural to urban areas, is a world-wide phenomenon, and together with urbanisation has over the past century resulted globally in significant increases in economic output and social welfare. But it is not a once off action; it is a process of arrival that can span generations. However, there was some anxiety expressed that population planning frequently is inadequate – it was emphasised that both population growth and decline have serious implications for investment into services and infrastructure required to support improving, sustainable economic and social conditions.

In this regard planning needs to cater for the different conceptions of density (eg of population), intensity (eg of usage) and diversity (eg of activities) and be sensitive to the need for spontaneity and flexibility. The usefulness of land-use planning and zoning needs careful consideration under these circumstances.

Participants suggested that the link between land use and economic activity is insufficiently understood – there is a fetish for “paint by numbers” which tends to ignore the complexity of exchange and use values and cultural perspectives; there is a need to recognise “horses for courses” which it was suggested could usefully be performance driven, meet community needs, enable self-regulation and promote equitability and justice. Land to be used for strategic purposes should be prioritised during planning, set aside and protected. Thus for example land for food security should be identified, and maintained as such.

Land and property value and the benefits gained from increasing values was recognised as a contentious issue; one which needs much greater insight in order for more equitable solutions and sustainable developmental outcomes to be forthcoming. It is not only about land and property increasing values, and possible municipal income streams, but also about the potential role “benefit capture” could have for rural and urban policy and how this could impact migration and settlement patterns. In this regard it was recognised that prioritised public investments, particularly in infrastructure, are key to guiding future development and creating value.

SPLUMB (Spatial Planning and Land-Use Management Bill)

National Housing Forum (NHF) negotiations in the mid-1990’s acknowledged the urgent need to address the land use management conundrum. The outcome of these negotiations was the Development Facilitation Act (DFA) introduced to expedite the land-use planning management process but with the expectation that it would be expeditiously addressed further and in more detail. However, this did not happen thus creating an hiatus which was used by powerful interest groups to their own benefit.

Importantly, the new SPLUMB legislation addresses the historical fragmentation, while recognising the current three spheres of government and that power lies at the centre where parliament arbitrates and navigates contested positions. Even though the Constitutional Court has recently ruled in favour of the primacy of municipal planning this does not mean that oversight, monitoring or enforcement of policy by other spheres of government will fall away. The current Bill is an attempt to unify legislation and cajole stakeholders to move in a single direction while recognising that it is a first step and on the basis of experience can be reviewed and reframed. Currently it is anticipated that provincial planning will need to take municipal planning into account.

Spatial legislation tries to manage the overlap and exclusivity between spheres government in order to reduce potential contestation: for example specific roles are assigned to spheres of government. The responsible national department is currently assessing the readiness of municipalities to implement land use management. For example do they have the necessary level and availability of policy and other skills. The legislation provides for a move towards a coherent regulatory framework on land development. Thus it was suggested that the introduction of the Bill is critical to enhancing municipalities’ ability to deliver sustainable development outcomes as there is clearly a focus on localisation of adequate capacity and capability.

Many departments are affected by, as well as give effect to land use. For example the White Paper on Local Government includes for the demarcation of municipalities; and the Municipal Systems Act has reference to integrated planning. This latter resulted in long running debate, some-times viewed as a struggle between departmental protagonists of one or other viewpoint as to what integrated planning is about or consists of. It thus raised the issue of credibility of IDPs, how representative they are of peoples’ views and should provincial and national government interests be reflected in the plans; and in general how is all of this reflected in or related to the spatial frameworks.

Over and above aforementioned departments there is also other legislation that impacts land development. This includes the Draft Infrastructure Development Bill which is attempting to fast track the implementation of infrastructure aligned with work of Presidential Coordinating Committee (PICC), the New Growth Path and the

requirements for giving effect to the 18 Spatial Infrastructure Projects (SIPS). The Expropriation Act, currently under review to determine ways of speeding up the process while not jeopardising the protection of property rights, provides for land for public good purposes in advance of actual demand.

Conference acknowledged that it is probably “better to have something than nothing at all”, none the less there were concerns including:

- The potential inconsistencies and contradictions in the Bill for example –
 - Recognition is given to the 3 spheres of government, including their powers and functions being geared to a developmental agenda however the Bill speaks of “regions” which are not clearly defined
 - Although land use management is given a national focus in interpretation and practice it tends to mean for the urban and not rural context
- The extent to which learning from other countries experiences was pursued and evaluated for the local context
- Dependency on Good inter-governmental relations are critical to successful implementation however this dependency is a weakness if it cannot be remedied even in the short term – for example this could mean the need for much improved dialogue between spheres of government, or the possible use of an “agency” to carry out some functions.
- Appeal bodies need to be reviewed as they have weakened municipal planning
- “informality must be accepted” – it needs an African definition to be included into the town planning schemes etc
- Over regulation is not only a national issue: for example should national regulations only contain norms and standards and not procedures or should these latter be left to province.
- Repeal of DFA and enactment of new the Bill needs to be carefully synchronised to mitigate against excessive confusion, duplication etc.
- Lack of ownership of land in traditional areas as well as no or inadequate cadastres in these and other areas makes management onerous if not impossible. Traditional leaders tend not to accept the pre-eminence of a municipal role and parliament ends up mediating land use.

As the South African Local Government Association (SALGA) is representative of municipalities, their views are important and it was noted that they do not consider SPLUMB to be sufficient and suggest that it will be a technocratic and administrative exercise because the Bill does not sufficiently:

- clearly define the municipal role and responsibilities
- acknowledge skills and capacity issues
- provide for reversing apartheid legacy – not transformative
- provide for innovation
- encourage or support tools facilitating desired outcomes such incentives, taxes

In conclusion it was noted by the Deputy Minister that although “Spatial planning can be viewed as an Achilles Heel”, law making needs to achieve a balance between speed/pace and quality, thus the result is not a blue print but a step in an evolving compromise.

CONCLUDING COMMENTS

The Planning Africa Conference 2012 set itself the goal of navigating contested futures. Importantly it needed to identify who will be shaping the future and interrogate how and through what forces it will be shaped, while recognising this could be at global, continental, regional or local levels. Within this context it was necessary that the deliberations considered the role of planners as well as the tools and instruments at their disposal for generating the kind of value-add desired by society in organising land and the built environment use and management.

After 2008 it was no longer clear that market forces would continue to be as dominant as they had been previously. Africa is in the fortunate position that in general its national economies have weathered the global instability well and that its leaders, planners and peoples can learn from elsewhere and choose to leap-frog into the future. In this regard sound national planning will be critical.

Trends indicate an increasing confidence in planners which will be further enhanced if planners successfully respond to the changing context in particular with respect to:

- Sustainability
- Engaging with state on spatial governance
- Demonstrating respect for citizenry.

In mid-2012 the South African Parliament accepted the National Development Plan. This provides the South African planning profession with an unprecedented opportunity to engage and be seen to be raising the profile and thus importance of planning in the affairs and life of the nation.

The African Planning Association, in 2012, published the first phase report on land issues and the state of planning across countries of the continent. By establishing crucial baseline information it provides a source of comparative African information and lessons and the impetus to improving planning credibility and outcomes on the continent.

Against the background of wide-ranging global events and rapidly changing conditions the deliberations on planning considered *inter alia* the following to be important:

- the content of and normative issues to be considered in planning, in particular the important coordinating function of spatial and physical planning;
- inter-governmental issues and the need to get all entities to move in the same direction
- planning horizons; and the relationship between short, medium and long term planning
- the implementation of planning and plans
- lessons to be learnt from planning experiences in South Africa, Africa and globally.

In moving forward in this regard and more broadly planners can and should:

- lead “the rebirth of the continent” – it is important and was noted that the continent is viewed as an emerging market of significant proportions.
- Provide the basis for the practical implementation of theory
- Encourage partnerships between the planning profession/planners, politicians, citizens and other groupings
- Recognise that “life is about making choices” and be passionate and celebrate the important role planners’ play in this process.
- More actively “day dream” - need to think carefully about what is wanted but also be very cognisant of what the implications are if planning profession doesn’t act
- Be more innovative in applying appropriate systems and tools and in better utilisation of resources such as young professionals.

In short this conference again expanded on, and provided opportunities to strengthen planning and planners' national and societal roles and the functions they fulfil and will:

- Shape and influence thought leadership in planning and development across the continent, including the role of planners and planning;
- Inject fresh impetus into achieving national goals including increasing economic output and reducing poverty and eliminating inequality;
- Strengthen the on-going dialogue and debate on planning and governance issues having a bearing on future development of the continent;
- Provide traction for increasing innovation and creativity;
- Raise the profile of and encourage and facilitate greater support for young planners.