NAIROBI - May 2017

On behalf of Jane Katz and Greg Budworth, we are pleased to provide an update on the UN General Assembly of Partners (GAP) and Civil Society Organisations (CSO) Partner Constituent Group (PCG), of which you are a member.

Since our last newsletter, those persons who could make it to Nairobi, were present for the May 7th General Assembly of Partners(GAP) plenary meeting and were engaged in various meetings in and around the UN Habitat compound as the 26th Governing Council of UN Habitat met to discuss the future of UNH and the implementation of the New Urban Agenda.

The 6 to 12 May was clearly going to be an interesting week in Nairobi. A draft resolution was being circulated calling for the discontinuance of GAP.

Understandably, there was a lot of work done by the GAP Executive Committee and other members to garner support for GAP. Thankfully, the discontinuance of GAP was removed from the resolution by the end of the week. While many support the ongoing deepening and broadening of stakeholder engagement for the implementation of the New Urban Agenda, not every member state does. GAP originally was intended to be dissolved at the adoption of the New Urban Agenda in Quito in October 2016. However, the membership voted to continue GAP in Quito with the development of a new Constitution.

Later a proposal was made by Dr. Clos, UN Habitat Executive Director, to have GAP become part of the implementation of the NUA by being housed in UN Habitat and offered secretarial support for the short to medium term from UNH Staff. At the Governing Council Meeting, as you would expect, the Executive Committee was quite involved in operational and side meetings which included a meeting with the special team evaluating UN Habitat, participation in the Governing Council plenary, sessions with the senior Executive Staff of UNH, World Urban Forum stakeholders and a special audience with Dr Clos, and others, in pursuit of GAP interests for the NUA.

GAP Constitution

The week in Nairobi was also an historic period for GAP, as the 7th Plenary on Sunday the 7 May the new GAP Constitution, euphemistically known as GAP 2.0, was adopted by the GAP Members and is now in effect. There has been much work by the Executive Committee on the drafting leading to the historic adoption. At the 8th Plenary, held on 11 May, the Terms of Reference for Partner Constituent Groups and the offices of the President and Vice President were discussed and were later that day adopted by the GAP Executive Committee.

You would have received emails from the Executive Council containing the new Constitution and the Terms of Reference, however, both are available from our website: www.generalassemblyofpartners.org

Implementing the NUA Conference

The Implementing the New Urban Agenda Conference took place on 3-5 May 2017, at the Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Centre. The conference was convened by Compass Housing with support from Victoria Department of Land, Water and Planning, RMIT University, Monash University, EAROPH and CoDesign Studios. With over 250 delegates from Australia, New Zealand, South East Asia, the Pacific region and the United States, the conference explored a wide ranging agenda to identify the key issues that nations will confront in implementing the New Urban Agenda.

The keynote presentation at the conference was delivered by Dr Joan Clos, Executive Director UN Habitat who provided an inspirational beginning to the conference deliberations.

Over 70 contributors explored a range of topics in panel sessions and workshops. The conference core themes of ‘a city for all’ and ‘a sustainable city’ set the context for examination of current relevant programs at national, state and local level with a strong input from civil society organisations. The conference was both optimistic and realistic about the opportunities and challenges faced in implementing the New Urban Agenda. Delegates stated that the conference was an opportunity to meet and work with disciplines and professions that they do not normally engage with.

This reflects the multi-disciplinary and cross-professional opportunities that the New Urban Agenda provides for developing holistic solutions to the challenges of urbanisation.

The conference will produce a report Implementing the New Urban Agenda: Towards a Roadmap which will be delivered to the global Eco City Summit to be held in Melbourne in July 2017.
9th Session of the World Urban Forum

The Ninth Session of the World Urban Forum will be the first session to focus on the implementation of the New Urban Agenda adopted in Habitat III.

In the New Urban Agenda, participating States request the report of the implementation of the Agenda to incorporate, to the extent possible, the inputs of multilateral organizations, civil society, the private sector and academia and to build on existing platforms such as the World Urban Forum.

WUF9 will be an instrumental to substantively feed into the inputs for the first report of the implementation of the New Urban Agenda. The Forum will also contribute to global mobilization towards advocating for the common vision on sustainable urban development in advancing on the achievement of the Agenda 2030 and the Sustainable Development Goals.

GOALS

- Raise awareness of sustainable urbanization among stakeholders and constituencies, including the general public
- Improve the collective knowledge of sustainable urban development through inclusive open debates, sharing of lessons learned and the exchange of urban solutions and good policies
- Increase coordination and cooperation between different stakeholders and constituencies for the advancement and implementation of sustainable urbanization
- Platform to incorporate the inputs of multilateral organizations and stakeholders into the reporting of the implementation of the New Urban Agenda

Election process

An outline of the election process, drawn from the TORs, is:

1. One Co Chair position will be subject to election in 2017, the other in 2018, and elections are for two-year terms
2. This year one Co Chair position will be subject to election in June 2017;
3. The election process will be coordinated by the Co-Chair not up for election and another “Elector” drawn from the PCG and who is not nominating for the subject Co-Chair position;
4. Expressions of interest in being a Co-Elector with the Co-Chair not subject to election. Interested persons may simply email JKatz@habitat.org
5. Simultaneously, nominations are now called for the position of Co-Chair of Civil Society Organisations PCG and you are referred to the Terms of Reference. Nominations and supporting documents can be sent to JKatz@habitat.org

- Nominations will open on 2 June 2017 and close on 12 June 2017
- Candidates for election to Co-Chair will be circulated by email on the 15 June 2017 and voting will close on 29 June 2017 and will also be done via email.
- The sitting Co Chair, Jane Katz and the Co-Elector, will declare the results on 1 July 2017

Post the election, we will be sending out the PCG’s Stakeholder’s Strategic Framework to members for feedbacks and inputs. The Co-Chairs will coordinate the adoption of the PCG Work Plan via a participatory process with PCG members, including process for establishment of Regional Committees.

A copy of the work plan framework will also be distributed for comments.