

# PLANNING FOR CLIMATE CHANGE AND RAPID URBANISATION

## SUSTAINABLE URBANISATION A CALL TO ACTION ACROSS THE COMMONWEALTH

ONLINE PROGRAMME SUMMARY

ASSOCIATION OF COMMONWEALTH UNIVERSITIES  
COMMONWEALTH ASSOCIATION OF ARCHITECTS  
COMMONWEALTH ASSOCIATION OF PLANNERS  
COMMONWEALTH LOCAL GOVERNMENT FORUM

Supported by:

THE GOVERNMENT OF RWANDA  
COMMONWEALTH ENGINEERS COUNCIL  
THE PRINCE'S FOUNDATION





## COMMONWEALTH SUSTAINABLE URBANISATION PROGRAMME SUMMARY

In the context of climate change, rapid urbanisation and the recovery from COVID-19, the way we plan and manage our urban settlements is assuming even greater significance in terms of health, economic recovery and the ability to deliver against the SDGs.

### Call to Action:

With 50% of the projected growth in the world's urban population to 2050 forecast to be in the Commonwealth, the Association of Commonwealth Universities (ACU), the Commonwealth Association of Architects (CAA), the Commonwealth Association of Planners (CAP), and the Commonwealth Local Government Forum (CLGF), with support from The Prince's Foundation, the Ministry of Infrastructure of Rwanda (MININFRA), the Ministry of Local Government of Rwanda (MINALOC), the Commonwealth Engineers Council (CEC) and the Commonwealth Association of Surveying and Land Economy (CASLE), have been working together with a range of partners to champion a call to action on sustainable urbanisation in the Commonwealth.

Recognising the need for a multi-disciplinary, multi-sector effort, the group curated an online programme of events to bring together a range of stakeholders to consider the need for a more effective Commonwealth response. This short paper provides an overview of the Commonwealth Sustainable Urbanisation Programme of 12 online webinar events which took place between 24 June and 02 September 2020.

### Project Summary:

- **Launch of the Programme & launch of the Survey of the Built Environment Professions:** A high-level opening launched by HRH Prince Charles followed by presentation of the key findings of the Survey.
- **Feedback from the Frontline of COVID-19:** Highlighted the critical role that city governments and city leaders are playing in addressing the COVID19 crisis with a focus on the critical role of local leaders.
- **Planning for Rapid Urbanisation in a Post-COVID19 World:** Focused on the urgent need for capacity building and on planning responses which engage more effectively with real-world issues.
- **Decentralisation and Empowering Cities and Human Settlements:** Focused on empowering city/local government to ensure that cities can respond effectively to the needs of local communities.
- **Upskilling Professional Capacity for Climate Change & the Recovery:** Focused on the findings of the 'Survey of the Built Environment Professions in the Commonwealth' and the need to build capacity.
- **Sustainable Urbanisation and Local Economic Development (LED) in the context of Covid-19:** Focused on the importance of LED in cities and towns, to ensure jobs and livelihoods, unlocking local potential and strengthening value chains to underpin trade across the Commonwealth.
- **Infrastructure-led Community Resilience:** Focused on systems level approaches to building resilient and healthy communities through social and physical infrastructure.
- **Achieving Safe and Affordable Housing for All:** Co-hosted by the Commonwealth Foundation, highlighted the critical need in towns & cities across the Commonwealth for housing that is affordable.
- **Upscaling Delivery of Climate Responsive Design:** Co-hosted by INTBAU, focused on local and traditional methods of designing and building from across the Commonwealth.
- **Sustainable Urbanisation and Small Island Developing States – The Pacific & The Caribbean:** These two sessions drew on experiences from small states across the Commonwealth & highlighted the specificities of managing sustainable urbanisation in a SIDS context.
- **Towards a Call to Action, Next Steps and Programme Close:** Provided an opportunity to review the key issues emerging from the series and discussed how to leverage the Commonwealth and its networks to enable and support sustainable urbanisation.

### Watched by an audience of over 4,000 from 88 countries

The Online Programme comprised a total of 11 events in the Main Programme and 7 events in the CAA Lecture Series held over a 11-week period, involving 106 panellists from 31 countries. The programme attracted over 2,000 individual participants from 44 Commonwealth and 44 non-Commonwealth countries, amounting to over 4,000 unique views. The programme attracted participants from all 5 Commonwealth Regions: including around 400 each from Asia, and Europe, 100 from the Caribbean & the Americas, and 70 from the Pacific, plus over 400 participants from non-Commonwealth countries ranging from Bahrain to Iraq, Nepal and the Philippines. Participants included representatives from International Organisations, National Government, Local Government, Non-Government Organisations, Academia, the Built Environment Professions and the Private Sector.

### Key Messages:

1. Dealing with rapid urbanisation is a central issue for many Commonwealth countries
2. Effective planning is essential in preparing for and responding to rapid urbanisation
3. City led and empowered leadership with support for decentralisation is key
4. The COVID-19 pandemic has brought localisation to the fore
5. Aligning with the SDGs, and climate responses, is key for sustainable urbanisation
6. Sustainable urbanisation responses must be fully inclusive
7. Local economic development drives local sustainability
8. Infrastructure development must support community resilience
9. Sustainable urbanisation affects us all, large or small
10. The Commonwealth has a pivotal role to play

### Way Forward:

- Commonwealth Summit: Bring the issue of sustainable urbanisation to the attention of Member States and encourage them to place this firmly on the Commonwealth agenda
- Call to Action: Informed by the outcomes of the online programme, develop a Call to Action supported by our Commonwealth leaders and endorsed by the political leadership across the Commonwealth member states.
- Advocacy Strategy: Develop a strong advocacy strategy on the issues of sustainable urbanisation in the run up to the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting.
- Building on existing work: Continue with the extensive work we are already doing in support of sustainable urbanisation.
- Capacity Development: Develop the capacity of built environment professionals and other city stakeholders. Seek funding for comprehensive capacity building programmes.
- Commonwealth Sustainable Cities Network (CSCN) as a vehicle: Reinforce mechanisms to work collectively, across disciplines and sectors with a broadened technical, academic, and professional committee to ensure wide collaboration.
- Commonwealth wide collaborative governance: Seek support through the inter- governmental Commonwealth framework and urgently promote "collaborative governance"
- A collaborative Commonwealth initiative: Continue to develop the sustainable urbanisation initiative, in collaboration with the Commonwealth network.
- Align future activity with the Commonwealth and global development agenda and events

### Join Us:

If you would like to be involved in a Call to Action moving forward please send your name and email address to [info@commonwealthsustainablecities.org](mailto:info@commonwealthsustainablecities.org)

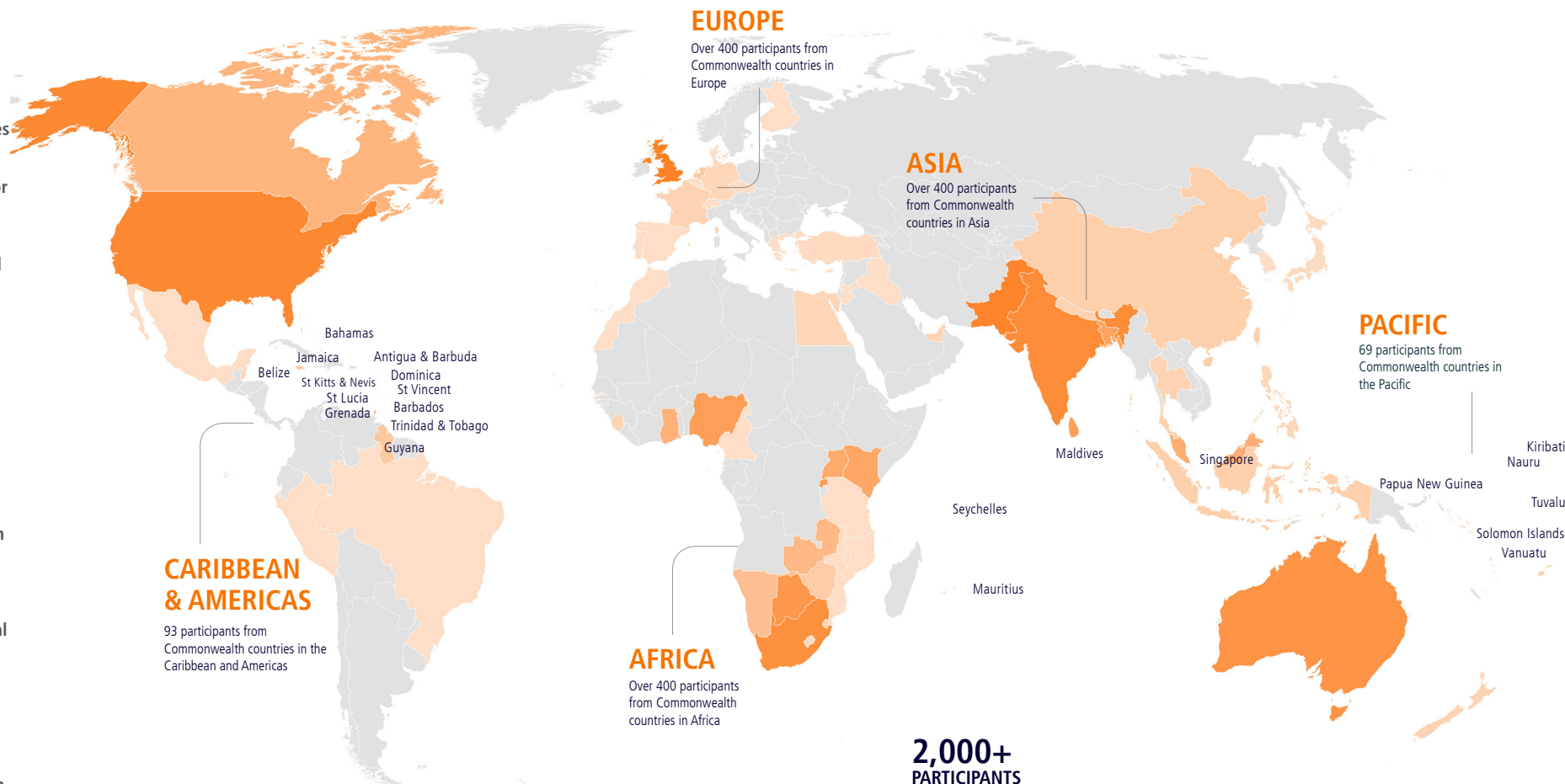
# COMMONWEALTH SUSTAINABLE CITIES PROGRAMME

24 JUNE-02 SEPTEMBER 2020

The range of topics considered included: Planning for Rapid Urbanisation, Decentralisation and Local Empowerment, Building Professional Capacity, Local Economic Development, Infrastructure-led Community Resilience, Affordable Housing for All, Climate Responsive Design, and the challenges facing Small Island States.

## KEY MESSAGES

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A total of 19 online events over 10 weeks attracted over 2,000 participants from 44 Commonwealth and 44 non-Commonwealth countries who engaged with 106 panellists from 31 countries: amounting to over 4,000 unique views.