

## **UK Built Environment Advisory Group Roundtable Joint Statement**

### **Commonwealth built environment professionals commit to working more effectively ‘Towards a Common Future’.**

Representatives have agreed to collaborate to build capacity and develop more effective solutions for Commonwealth countries which are urbanising most rapidly and are among the most vulnerable.

The collaboration was agreed at a roundtable<sup>1</sup> held at the Houses of Parliament yesterday and attended by government and United Nations representatives, INGOs, and the built environment professions. The roundtable coincided with the 2018 Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting.

The roundtable was also used to launch the Commonwealth Association of Architects’ Survey of the Architectural Profession in the Commonwealth<sup>2</sup> and the Commonwealth Association of Planners’ Survey of the Planning Profession in the Commonwealth. Both surveys have identified a critical lack of capacity in a number of Commonwealth countries, many of which are rapidly urbanising and are among the most vulnerable. They also reveal a corresponding lack of educational and institutional capacity. These countries are unable to train professionals fast enough to compensate for the shortfall together with a perceived weakness in built environment policy in terms of standards, implementation and enforcement.

Representatives were also presented with the ‘Planning for Rapid Urbanisation Toolkit’ developed by the Prince’s Foundation, for use by rapidly growing cities with limited access to technical expertise. The toolkit was developed in collaboration with CAP and the CAA, and the support of the Royal Town Planning Institute, the Commonwealth Local Government Forum, New York University and UN Habitat.

Speaking after the event, Peter Oborn, Chair of the UK Built Environment Advisory Group<sup>3</sup> said: “It is important that the built environment professions from around the Commonwealth have recognised the need to collaborate more effectively with one another to support vulnerable member countries. The evidence from the surveys has highlighted the seriousness of the situation and the need for innovative solutions, and it is only by working together that we be able to realise the potential of urbanisation to create prosperity, stability and a truly sustainable future.”

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<sup>1</sup> The roundtable was hosted by Bob Neill MP, organised by the RTPI and convened by the UK Built Environment Advisory Group on behalf of the Commonwealth Association of Planners (CAP) and the Commonwealth Association of Architects (CAA). The participants included representatives from UN Habitat, the Foreign & Commonwealth Office, the Department for International Development, the Commonwealth Engineers Council, The Commonwealth Association of Surveyors and Land Economists, the Commonwealth Local Government Forum, the Prince’s Foundation, RTPI, RIBA, IStructE and ICE together with the Global Alliance for Urban Crises ([www.urbancrises.org](http://www.urbancrises.org)).

<sup>2</sup> For a copy of the CAA’s survey, visit: [www.comarchitect.org](http://www.comarchitect.org)

<sup>3</sup> More about the UK Built Environment Advisory Group at [www.ukbeag.org](http://www.ukbeag.org)