

# **National Spatial Planning for Integrated and Climate Resilient Urban Development**

5th Spatial Planning Platform Conference

Kathmandu 1-3 Feb 2023 - MOUD/GON MLIT/GOP UN-Habitat/ROAP

**The 5th SPP conference underscored the importance to host knowledge exchange** meetings between senior officials and specialised planning experts on the progress made in developing Asia and the Pacific and elsewhere on improving national planning systems and spatial planning capacity at all levels. Spatial planning is a pivotal tool to plan and act at all levels on NDCs, the SDGs, the New Urban Agenda, in the context of climate change and pandemic recovery.

**The meeting showed steady progress on the establishment of national planning systems,** albeit the experience and trajectories are diverse. Equitable economic development, land resource management and adequate subnational governance remain basic drivers, but so is resilience, environmental management and adaptation, in the wake of multiple hazards and climate challenges. The global principles of the IG-UTP remain key guidance but are still insufficiently adopted nationally and localized.

**Spatial planning at all levels needs to be evidence-based, making best use of increasingly affordable, accessible data resources and planning tools.** National and sub-national planning and its evidence can be increasingly real-time, integrated, comprehensive and easily accessible, at an affordable institutional cost. The SPP conference showed again clear evidence of national spatial planning information systems driving evidence-based national urban policy decisions, such as the coherent designation of subnational priority urban development areas beyond existing administrative boundaries.

**National spatial planning systems have been introduced in all participating countries but they are not necessarily yet fit-for-purpose to drive sustainable urbanisation.** The litmus test for fit-for-purpose planning systems are about delivering real-time, specific, positive subnational and local governance outcomes. The Conference showed best experience where national planning systems and coordination focuses on steering accelerated inclusive and resilient local development.

**Diverse government entities, specific to national contexts, can host national spatial planning platforms to promote fit-for-purpose planning systems and outcomes in support of sustainable urban development.** National Spatial Planning Platforms can support horizontal and vertical coordination as well as capacity development, in collaboration with associations of planners and local governments. It can host the development of national strategic action plans for the fit-for-purpose planning system development. They shall also support the required capacity development needed at all levels, develop and promote tools and guidelines and monitor progress.

**Spatial planning, at sub-national level, delivers unique benefits and the Conference ample and recent experience.** These are benefits beyond conventional land use planning. Sub-national spatial planning is an essential tool for urban growth management, to steer towards sustainable and resilient urban expansion, to introduce or retrofit urban areas with effective and clean transport provisions and to ensure other urban provisions to be timely planned for. Equally important is that sub-national spatial planning is an essential and affordable tool for integrated governance and coordination, between sectors, administrations and stakeholders, across challenges as blue and green, urban and rural, public and private, developing and left-behind.

**The Conference calls for more global and regional action and collaboration, both in inter-governmental meetings and elsewhere.** The Conference appeals to ministers and senior officials to promote fit-for-purpose national planning systems in high-level meetings on sustainable urban development, including in the 2nd UN-Habitat Assembly (June 2023), the 8th Asia-Pacific Urban Forum (Oct 2023) and the 12th Sessions of the World Urban Forum (January 2024). The Spatial Planning Platform will continue to support specialised knowledge exchange and capacity development to developing countries, regions and cities at regional and global level in support of sustainable urban development and climate action. MLIT and UN-Habitat thanks the MOUD for the hospitality and impressive and inclusive co-hosting of the 5<sup>th</sup> session in Kathmandu.