

Global Planning Education Association Network (GPEAN) is mainly involved in three activities: the World Planning Schools Congress (WPSC) held every five years; the book series called the Dialogues in Urban and Regional Planning; and collaboration with UN-Habitat.

World Planning Schools Congresses

GPEAN held its 4th World Planning Schools Congress (WPSC) in July 2016 in Rio de Janeiro. An assessment of this congress has been made by GPEAN in several meetings held during and at the end of the congress; and this assessment has been shared with the AESOP CoRep in its March 2017 meeting in Warsaw.

GPEAN is now working on the preparations for the next WPSC to take place in 2021. Preparations include firstly the updating of guidelines for WPSC and possibly the production of a handbook for congress organisers, taking into consideration the lessons learnt from the 2016 WPSC as well as from the previous WPSCs. The experience of GPEAN member organisations are also being sought for this purpose, and AESOP has been contributing with its experience in congress organisation and with its congress guidelines, contracts and handbooks.

A new congress committee will also be formed over the next months. Following the work of the congress committee on new congress guidelines, the call will be made for bids for the 5th WPSC to be held in 2021.

Dialogues in Urban and Regional Planning

GPEAN also compiles a book series every 3-4 years in collaboration with Routledge. The book series, named the *Dialogues in Urban and Regional Planning*, features seminal articles from the members of the eleven planning schools associations, providing a glimpse into the discussions and concerns regarding planning theory, practice and education in different regions of the world.

The sixth book of the series, which brings together articles on the theme “*the Right to the City*” is currently being prepared, and is planned to be published in August 2017.

UN-Habitat Liaisons

GPEAN collaborates with UN-Habitat and has a UN Liaisons post in its governing council. Both GPEAN and AESOP have been contributing to the Habitat III process and particularly the debates on the New Urban Agenda. Both GPEAN and AESOP have become one of the members of the General Assembly of Partners (GAP), a special initiative proposed by the World Urban Campaign (WUC) to serve as a platform for non-governmental partners in Habitat III. Currently there is ongoing work to revise the constitution and by-laws of GAP, so that this assembly continues working with its Partner Constituent Groups (PCG) and their Strategic Frameworks and Action Plans for the implementation of the New Urban Agenda.

GPEAN and AESOP have been contributing to the New Urban Agenda (NUA) that was adopted during the Habitat III Conference in October 2016. Prior to the Habitat III meeting, AESOP prepared a Position Paper focusing on the role that research and academia, and in particular, our planning schools should play in the implementation phase of the New Urban Agenda through capacity building, knowledge production, and monitoring. This Position Paper was shared with the Habitat III Secretariat and GAP, and published on our webpage. In addition to its involvement during the preparation process, GPEAN also had a strong presence during the Habitat III Conference, and organised a side event called “Capacity Building for the New Urban Agenda: Roles for Universities”.

The next GPEAN Governing Council meeting

GPEAN Governing Council meets annually in conjunction with the regular congresses of one of its member associations. The next meeting of GPEAN (for 2017) will be held in Denver, USA, in conjunction with the ACSP (American Collegiate Schools of Planning) annual conference, which will take place in October. ACSP has agreed to waive the conference registration fees for GPEAN delegates, so that the GPEAN representatives can follow the scientific sessions too.

The main agenda items for this meeting will be the establishment of a new congress committee and the drafting of guidelines and a handbook for the World Planning Schools Congress, as mentioned above. In addition, the webpage of GPEAN is an issue that needs addressing since the current webpage is not maintained at all. A new chair will also be elected for the Governing Council in this meeting, since Nancy Odendaal, the current chair from the Association of African Planning Schools, will be completing her term.