



# Caribbean Urban Forum 2023

## CALL FOR ABSTRACTS

Improving resilience and sustainability through Innovation

31<sup>st</sup> May – 2<sup>nd</sup> June 2023,

Royal Torarica Hotel, Suriname



THE UNIVERSITY OF THE WEST INDIES  
ST. AUGUSTINE CAMPUS, TRINIDAD & TOBAGO, WEST INDIES



## About CUF 2023

The Caribbean Urban Forum (CUF) is an international conference on urban planning and development, land management and other spatial planning related topics relevant to the Caribbean context. It has been held annually since its inception in 2011. It is the main opportunity for practitioners, policy makers and researchers to share experience and knowledge on ongoing activities in the Caribbean and/or relevant to the Caribbean, to build capacity through training programmes, workshops, scientific paper presentations, and panel discussions and advance policy positions through dialogues. More importantly, the event is a key activity which builds comradery between practitioners and strengthening networking with organisations and institutions to allow for the translations of ideas into plans and plans into action.

The Anton de Kom University of Suriname (AdeKUS) and the Spatial Planners Association of Suriname (SPASU) are respectively the host and the co-host of the CUF 2023, which will be held 31 May 2023 to 2 June 2023 at the Royal Torarica Hotel in Paramaribo, Suriname. CUF 2023 will be organized in close partnership with the government of Suriname, represented by the Ministries of Spatial Planning and Environment (MROM) and Public Works (MPW) and the Caribbean Network for Urban and Land Management (CNULM) and with the support of other national, regional, and international organisations.

The theme of this year's conference is: *Improving resilience and sustainability through Innovation*. The Caribbean region is emerging from the COVID 19 pandemic and thus there has been a greater appreciation of the need for cyclical systems which can support effective prediction, planning, implementation, and evaluation, leading to continuous improvement, which are the cornerstones of Resilience and Sustainability.

The conference recognizes the risks the Caribbean faces from natural disasters, including those exacerbated by Climate Change, as well as recalcitrant political, economic, environmental and social challenges such as inequality, limited economic growth, fragile ecosystems, ineffective systems, and poor urban strategies. We must address these issues while embracing new strategies and technologies. This will require a culture of innovation new technologies and reforms in policies and practices, to set regional and national goals, to share information, and inclusively find solutions. The emergence of new regional players in the energy sector and stronger commitments to sustainability by some regional leaders are positive developments. How can planners take advantage of the opportunities?

CUF 2023 is to be an inclusive and diverse event. We are inviting planning practitioners, policy makers, researchers, municipal managers, and allied professionals to submit abstracts of proposed presentations. There is no restriction on the academic or professional background of authors and student presentations are welcomed as long as their topic complements the

CUF 2023 theme. Presentations can show-case projects, report research findings, examine policy issues, or recommend new ways of working.

The forum will also be used as a 'think-tank' to evaluate the extent to which the Caribbean Urban Forum is making contributions to innovative practices and improved planning and management in the region.

### **Conference Objectives**

Through presentations, workshops, and discussions the Forum will:

1. Shape the development of the region based on the new opportunities for growth through sound planning practices
2. Examine the Region's status as it relates to climate risks and opportunities for climate change adaptation and mitigation;
3. Explore the new technologies and practices which can lead to impacts on lives and livelihoods
4. Critically examination of the implication of gender to the physical environment
5. Explore opportunities and survival mechanisms in poor communities to enhance the quality of life.
6. Review professional planning practice and education across the Caribbean;
7. Convene a general meeting of the Caribbean Planning Association (CPA)

### **Thematic Area**

#### Energy resilience and local content development

The Caribbean is undergoing rapid change in the energy environment. The emergence of Suriname and Guyana as global players in the oil industry has implications not only for their own development but also for the region. Some countries have made significant advances in the actualization of renewable energy which not only provides energy security but provides economic opportunities to address social inequality. Strategies such as 'work from home' arose out of necessity during the COVID19 pandemic and would have had positive impacts such as energy savings, reduction of greenhouse gases and improved mental health. While such changes often require new knowledge and technologies, resilience should also build upon local knowledge and experience. The following questions are posited:

- What are the implications of the new oil boom and stronger political commitments to what-resilience?
- What are examples of increasing energy resilience in the Caribbean, or can be adopted by the Caribbean?
- What are the practices which should be retained from our experience with the COVID-19 pandemic?
- What can be done to create and hold local knowledge and experience?

### Climate Resilience through Technology and Ecosystem based Approaches (EbA)

The Caribbean is not a major producer of greenhouse gas emissions but is at the forefront of its impacts. This is expected to be exacerbated by sea level rise and increases in hydro-meteorological events such as storm surges and hurricanes. This impacts the wellbeing of populations of the Caribbean, as the majority of people, approximately 70 percent, live in coastal cities and informal settlements, and most major infrastructure is also located along the coastal zone. Although some capital cities have well-planned areas with sturdy structures, the sprawled communities on the outskirts of the city and those in proximity to the coastline often have non-resilient buildings, informal and haphazard development and are located in highly vulnerable areas putting them at high risk. Sound urban planning and management is hampered by an uncoordinated approach to strategic decision-making, limited stakeholder engagement, ineffective resource allocation and policies that are ill-equipped to support innovation. The following questions are posited:

- What are the new technologies or nature based solutions that are being utilized to strengthen planning and management?
- How effective is networking to create new tools to support planning and management and address the barriers towards the use of these tools

### Mitigation and management of disaster impacts

The Caribbean has a long history of disaster events. Hurricanes are an annual event and it is predicted that the region will experience a more frequent and active hurricane season with an anticipated 80% increase in the frequency of Category 4 & 5 Atlantic Hurricanes over the next 80 years. There is also significant susceptibility to hazards associated with earthquakes and volcanic eruptions. Since 1970, there have been 19 >M6 earthquakes along the 900-km length of the Lesser Antilles subduction zone, with the vulnerability of all islands significantly increasing, associated with continuous population growth and changes in building and land use practices. There have been at least 34 historical eruptions of volcanoes in the Lesser Antilles, with 21 of these incurring since 1900. Individual countries within the region do not have all the resources, technology, and know-how to be able to respond to these complex and dynamic challenges. Confronting these challenges demand a multi-country, multi-stakeholder, multi-participatory approach and learning as well as scaling the successes of actual cases deployed with due regard to the Caribbean's socio-cultural, socio-economic, and political contexts. The following questions are posited:

- What can be done to decrease vulnerability for disasters?
- What can be done to limit inundations and their consequences after storm surges?
- What can be done to assure delivery of drinking water, during and after events caused by climate change, as drought, inundation or salination?

### Gender-Equity and Social inclusion in urban planning

The Caribbean region is fortunate in that its constitutional framework identifies men and women as equals, although other understandings of gender is not as readily embraced.

Female participation in higher education is on par or exceeds males and females have been representatives at all levels of the political spectrum. Still there are many gender related issues which need to be addressed including female unemployment and under-employment, wage differentials, gender based violence, reproductive rights, male under participation in higher education, males in crime and criminality, and cultural discrimination against the LGBTQIA+ community among others.

Further persons with disabilities, migrants and other vulnerable populations often feel the brunt of mainstream policies and existing systems which seek to address the marginalization often are difficult to manage transparently and many not allow for the equal enjoyment of opportunities. The following questions are posited:

- What data exist on marginalized groups that is of relevance to urban and land planners?
- What are the issues that should engage the attention of urban and land planners and what are the strategies going forward?
- Are the views marginalized groups incorporated in policy making?

#### Economic Recovery Resilience and Local Economic Development

The turbulent global political environment inevitably impacts the Caribbean. Despite this, there are many advantages in the Caribbean which can be leveraged for economic development. This include, *inter alia*, cultural diversity and heritage, unique and abundant biodiversity, a large marine space, highly skilled professionals, geo-political stability, a large diasporic population. Caribbean populations, in the post-colonial era, largely emerged from poverty through a range of cultural and other strategies (e.g. sou-sou, co-operatives, credit unions etc., friendly societies, religious organizations etc.) and lessons learnt may be applicable today in light of recalcitrant poverty and increasing inequity. The following questions are posited:

- What are the areas which can be leveraged through the use of urban planning and management?
- What are the strategies that can be put in place to encourage economic recovery at a national level but also to stimulate local economic development in communities?
- What legitimate strategies exist or what can be encouraged to allow for the survival of communities to continue in the absence of money?

#### Professional Planning Practice, Education and Training in the Caribbean

Professional Planning Practice, Education and Training in the Caribbean has been a consistent theme across all editions of the Caribbean Urban Forum due to its critical importance. As the role of physical planning becomes more central to advancing integrated economic development and enhancing urban growth strategies, we will continue in this forum to address:

- How can the planning profession encourage lifelong learning and greater professionalism in the discipline?
- How our training programmes equip our planners to engage communities in integrated approaches that seek to create climate-smart places for living?
- How our current engagement and planning frameworks give a voice to our communities?
- How our governance systems may increase transparency in the decision-making process for development planning outcomes?
- How can we foster effective partnerships and cooperatives between local authorities, civil society and the private sector?

### **Submission Criteria**

Submissions are invited under the following criteria:

Presentations: For acceptance to present at the conference, an abstract must be submitted. These should (a) state the problem being addressed; (b) describe the activities in the work that have addressed the problem and; (c) the relevance of the paper to the theme and/or sub-theme. Abstracts should be submitted in UK English using MS Word or equivalent format using Arial font size 10" and 1" margins, single spacing and not exceed more than 300 words. Abstracts submitted to other conferences or publications are allowed.

Architectural/Urban Design/Urban Planning Projects: A description and sample image of an architectural/urban design/ urban planning project. The description should outline the following: (a) location, (b) client or commissioning agency (c) whether built or unbuilt (d) relevance to the conference themes. Projects from architectural, urban design and urban planning students are welcomed and student projects should be clearly indicated. Combined text and images of submissions should be forwarded in single page pdf format

Presentation and Project submissions should include: 1. Title of the proposed presentation; 2. The sub-theme to which it relates; 3. Name(s) of author(s); (no more than 3) 4. Position or title of author(s); 5. Author(s) employer or affiliated institution; 6. Contact details including - e-mail address, telephone/fax numbers and postal address.

Abstracts should be submitted electronically to: Presentations Sub-Committee Email: [CUF2023@gmail.com](mailto:CUF2023@gmail.com)

Deadline: **February 15<sup>th</sup>, 2023.**

Feedback on acceptance of abstracts will be provided by **March 10<sup>th</sup>, 2023.**

Presentations should be sent to the Presentations Sub-Committee as a backup as early as possible, but by **May 15<sup>th</sup>, 2023 at the latest.**