A Manifesto for a Genuine People-Centered Organization of Environmental Planners and Allied Professions

World Town Planning Day, 8 November 2026

Planning Is Strongest When It Is Done Together

Geopolitical tension, economic uncertainty, climate-related disasters, environmental degradation, widening inequality, and intensifying competition for land and resources have raised the stakes of every planning decision in the Philippines. Planning can no longer stay confined to technical documents, conferences, and regulatory compliance. It must become a collective public effort to protect human welfare, strengthen communities, and safeguard the environment for future generations.

The country needs a people's organization of environmental planners, allied professionals, researchers, educators, and communities: independent in judgment, democratic in governance, inclusive in membership, and accountable to the public.

I. Shared Problems, Shared Responsibility

Conflicts abroad, disrupted trade and energy supply, and threats to food security now bear on the cost of land, housing, and public services at home, compounding rapid urbanization, infrastructure gaps, unequal access to land, and weak institutions. No single discipline can resolve problems this interconnected. Planners must work with economists, engineers, architects, lawyers, scientists, and social scientists, favoring collaboration over rivalry and public service over organizational self-interest.

II. Serving the Public, Not Only the Members

An organization's larger duty is to make professional knowledge serve society. Farmers, fisherfolk, workers, informal settlers, indigenous peoples, entrepreneurs, and property owners must have a real voice in decisions about their land and livelihoods, through formal channels that still respect the standards binding regulated professionals. Communities should not be consulted only after a plan is written. They should help write it.

III. Independence

Planning is credible only when professional judgment is independent. Government agencies, investors, landowners, developers, and communities all deserve a hearing; none should prevail by default over sound planning and the general welfare. The organization must support policies the evidence justifies and question those that threaten sustainability, equity, efficiency, or the rule of law. It must never serve political authority, private economic influence, or the ambitions of its officers.

IV. Planning for National Resilience

Environmental planning protects agricultural land, natural resources, and infrastructure; guides urban growth; reduces exposure to hazards; and bears on food and energy security, housing, transport, and public spending. A plan should be judged by whether its implementation leaves society better able to withstand shocks, not by whether it was approved. Good planning prevents avoidable losses instead of tallying the cost of recovery.

Our Declaration

On this World Town Planning Day, we call on environmental planners and allied professionals to unite in building an independent, democratic, and people-centered institution devoted to the common good. We commit to move from recognition to contribution, from exclusivity to cooperation, from ceremonial advocacy to evidence-based action, and from consultation as a formality to genuine participation.

We organize to ensure that our professions serve the people. We plan to shape development in the public interest. We seek unity because the nation's problems demand collective knowledge, independent judgment, and shared responsibility.

For the people. For the environment. For the nation. For future generations.

Happy World Town Planning Day 2026!