CIB Special Event

Latin American Regional Research Leaders’ Meeting

25th November 2000

Chaired by Prof. Vahan Agopyan, University of São Paulo, Brazil

“It is clear that the leaders of research here have done a marvellous job in motivating their young researchers”, was the reaction of CIB President John Duncan at the close of the Latin American Regional Research Leaders’ Meeting. This took place on 25th November 2000, the day after the CIB Symposium on “Construction & Environment. Theory into Practice”.

Although unforeseen events arose at the last minute to prevent a few key figures, who had been invited from Latin America from attending, the 26 selected participants were fully involved throughout the day’s programme.

They were briefed at the start on CIB’s activities by Secretary General Wim Bakens. Dr. Orestes Gonçalves then presented a wide ranging and carefully documented report on Construction Industry Bottlenecks in Brazil and other Latin American Countries. His topic was placed within a wider framework with supplementary reports by CIB Board Members on the experiences gained in developed countries. These were delivered by Roger Courtney (United Kingdom), Christer Sjöström (Sweden), John Duncan (New Zealand), Larry Little (Australia), Tamas Banky (Hungary) and Rodney Milford (South Africa). In fact these Speakers drew on a background, which extended beyond their own country of origin.

Much attention was focussed on the Quality, Productivity and Innovation Programmes being introduced in the Mercosul Countries and the objectives of the Forum of Competitiveness in Brazil.
The Meeting agreed on the desirability to establish a series of strategies and procedures, which would generate an environment favourable towards the evolution of sustainable construction in the Region. It was suggested that the setting up of an Agenda 21 Task Group would be an important means towards this.

And it was Agenda 21 for the conditions of the construction industry in Brazil and other Latin American Countries, which was the topic for the next session led by Prof. M. John Vanderley. The proposal mentioned above to form a Latin American Group charged with adapting Agenda 21 to the interests of Brazil and other Latin American countries received unanimous support. One way in which it could function would be to cooperate with CIB Commissions and Task Groups already engaged in the field.

However, as CIB President John Duncan pointed out, work on Agenda 21 was in progress and it could not be regarded as appropriate for every instance. The Latin American Group might well decide that its particular needs would call for something different to be produced in the future.

The final session was given over to exploring in detail the optimal form which cooperation between CIB and the Latin American Region might take. There was agreement that a prerequisite was for CIB Members to be adequately informed on the nature of the problems indigenous to the Region.

Prof. Agopyan said that a suitable network should be set up to facilitate exchanges and he identified several Organisations already operating in the Region which could play an effective role in reviewing Agenda 21. One of these was The Brazilian National Association of Built Environment Technology – ANTAC. The views and experiences of other countries in the Region were described by Liana De Bustillos from Venezuela who is also Coordinator of TG40 and by Walter Kruk from Uruguay.

The unanimous feeling to emerge from the discussions was that collaboration between the Latin American countries and CIB should be actively pursued and it was clear
that all the participants were motivated to see this through. It was agreed that the next stage would be for Prof. Agopyan to draw up an action plan in conjunction with the CIB General Secretariat.

Prof. John Vanderley, in the background Liana de Bustillos