TG29 – Construction in Developing Countries

Report on the Second Conference of CIB TG29

Gaborone, Botswana, 15-17 November 2000

by

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The Second Conference of TG29 was held in Gaborone, Botswana from 15th to 17th November 2000. The theme was: “Challenges Facing the Construction Industry in Developing Countries”. The Conference was organized by the Botswana National Construction Industry Council in association with the Faculty of Engineering and Technology of the University of Botswana. The Conference was attended by 208 participants from 14 countries, making it the largest gathering of TG29 since it was established in 1997.

Opening Speech

The Conference was opened by the Honourable David N. Magang, Minister of Works, Communications and Transport who was also its patron. His inspiring speech set the tone for the Conference. Mr Magang outlined “client dissatisfactions”: cost overruns; delays in construction and poor quality of work. He also highlighted the concerns of local construction organizations and practitioners: lack of skilled personnel; lack of capacity in materials and equipment; and unfair competition from foreign construction firms. He then outlined some measures which had recently been taken to address these concerns, including: a price preference for local contractors on some projects; exemption of small construction firms from the requirement to provide performance bonds; an on-going restructuring of the public-sector performance system; and the institution of a forum at which businesspeople can

On the left Prof. R. Nkado
express their problems and needs to senior government officials. He concluded by urging the participants to offer practical proposals for improving the performance of the construction industry in Botswana and other developing countries.

**Papers presented at the conference**
Sixty seven (67) papers were presented at the Conference. The key terms defined were:
- Culture
- Technology
- Technology transfer
- Globalisation

**Conclusions and recommendations**
The Conference reached a series of conclusions and recommendations under the following broad topics:
- Consultant and contractor development
- Human resources
- Institutional development
- Performance measurement
- Procurement issues
- Regulatory issues
- Research and development

The full conclusions and recommendations will be included in the proceedings of this conference, that will be published by CIB in the near future.

**Botswana Government Initiatives**
The guest-of-honour at the Conference dinner was Honourable Baledzi Gaolathe, the Minister for Finance and Economic Planning. He outlined recent initiatives taken by the government to help the local firms to develop, including a Construction Industry Trust Fund, a Citizen Contractors Fund, price preferences for local firms, and reservation of a
proportion of jobs to such firms. He urged the citizen contractors to upgrade and grow; form joint ventures and strategic partnerships; improve the quality of design and construction; and seek to export their services.

**TG29 Future initiatives**
The meeting of TG29 considered some future initiatives including the preparation of a book on best practices in the management of construction industry development, and a compilation of good papers on training. Other best practices books will be prepared later. These will include those on labour and technology development.

**Next TG29 Conference**
It was agreed that the next Conference of TG29 will be held in South Africa in late 2001. The main hosts will be the Department of Public Works and CSIR.