



## CIB NEWS ARTICLE

International Council for Research and Innovation  
in Building and Construction

Providing a global network for international exchange and cooperation in research and innovation in building and construction, in support of an improved building process and of improved performance of the built environment.

February 2007

### Around the Task Groups and Working Commissions

#### W112 – Culture in Construction

## Report of the Joint International Conference on Construction Culture, Innovation and Management

By



Dr. Richard Fellows and Dr Mohammed Dulaimi

### Background

This International Conference held on 26-29 November 2006 in Dubai, United Arab Emirates, sprang from collaboration between three organisations – CIB W112 (formerly, TG23), The Centre for Innovative and Collaborative Engineering of Loughborough University UK, and The British University in Dubai, who hosted the conference magnificently. Dr Mohammed Dulaimi of BUiD chaired the conference, which received sponsorship internationally – Nakheel, CIOB, Halcrow, Slavenburg, WT/Projects, The University of Hong Kong and BK Gulf LLC.

The conference began with an informal reception at the BUiD venue in Knowledge Village on the evening of 25 November. The reception was a most welcome event to renew friendships and make new ones and to get to know 'cyber-contacts' face to face!

The conference major event began on the morning of Sunday – yes, not all cultures have the same 'weekend'! Dr Dulaimi opened proceedings with a welcoming address, followed by David Lock, Registrar and Acting Chief Executive of BUiD who introduced the University and welcomed delegates to Dubai.

The opening speech, The Role of the Client in Promoting Innovation in Construction, was delivered by Marwan Al-Qanzi, Head of the Department of Procurement and Contracts of Nakheel. Next, Professor

Patrick Godfrey (University of Bristol; Halcrow) delivered the first keynote address on Systems Thinking Approach to Sustainable Innovation, a keynote which stimulated much thought and discussion.

The second keynote address was given by Geert Hofstede, Professor Emeritus, University of Maastricht, on Culture Beyond the Black Box, a highly articulate and invigorating summary of the seminal contributions of this eminent researcher and author. The question and answer session which completed the morning's events, needless to report, was lively and far-ranging in scope, reflecting the important contributions of the speaker and setting out the ground for a thought-provoking four days.



Richard Fellows with Professor Geert Hofstede

Following a sumptuous lunch at which a wide array of dishes was provided (including sushi, hommus, curry, and gateaux), delegates returned for sessions of paper presentations organised as two parallel themes – Promoting Innovation Culture in Construction and Working with Diversity and Multiculturalism.

A highly memorable first day was 'crowned' by a shower of rain – the first time the roads had got wet in months – to make taxis as rare as raindrops previously had been – and the journeys to our hotels quite exciting, even through the dense Dubai traffic (7-lane jams)!

The second day of the conference dawned with delegates reading a feature column about the conference in the local English language newspaper, Emirates Today, in which the interview with Mohammed Dulaimi aired the importance of the themes of the conference, the collection of international expertise and the major issues to be addressed.

The first keynote, Procurement and Contract Systems as Promoters of Innovation, was delivered by Dr Amin Haboub of Nakheel and considered how that major developer strives to improve procurement approaches for greater efficiency and effectiveness on its (major) projects. Professor Ron McCaffer gave the second keynote and, in his inimitable style, unearthed and addressed a variety of issues concerning 'Improving Construction – Why Innovation Tarries'. An extremely lively and informative Q&A session followed – much of which continued throughout the conference!

The remainder of the day was devoted to paper presentations in themes of Innovative Construction Methods, Technologies and Processes, Innovative Approaches to Procurement and Project Delivery, and Construction Management and Development. W112 enjoyed its first meeting as a full CIB Working Commission in the afternoon at which Professor Hofstede gave a further presentation to aid development of a research agenda (see separate report for details).

The day was completed with a sumptuous conference dinner at the Jumeriah Beach Hotel, located in the shadow of the Burj El Arab. Delegates were treated to a delicious international buffet, succinct speeches, and a display of local music and dance.

The plenary session of the third day was superbly 'chaired' by Silvester Slavenburg, who adopted an 'Oprah Winfrey' approach to Q&A for Professor Roger Flanagan's insightful keynote presentation on 'Profiting from Innovation'. Rarely has a conference session been so stimulated and lively – much fun and learning was enjoyed by all! The session was completed with a presentation of the activities and benefits of participating in CIB.

The remainder of the day was spent in parallel presentation sessions under the themes of Innovative Approaches to Procurement and Project Delivery, and Innovative Use of ICT.

Delegates spent the final day of the conference enjoying technical visits to two of the most amazing projects – Palm Jumeirah, and 'Ski Dubai' – the indoor ski slope in the Mall of the Emirates.



*Dr Mohammed Dulaimi and Geert Hofstede*

Despite a full conference programme of over eighty papers, delegates were able to visit many of the amazing and spectacular development in Dubai, include skiing trips and safaris into the desert.

Our thanks go to the members of the scientific committee, the organising committee, to the conference administration team – especially Rachael Watts and Carolyn Moss – and to our host, The British University in Dubai. Our Special thanks are due to the sponsors for their financial and intellectual support and, most especially, to the chair of the conference, Dr. Mohammed Dulaimi.

The proceedings from this conference are introduced in a separate issue in this newsletter (see [here](#).)

### **Additional Information**

For additional information about the CIB W112 meetings please contact the Coordinators:

Richard Fellows

[fellows@hkucc.hku.hk](mailto:fellows@hkucc.hku.hk)

Wilco Tjihuis

[w.tjihuis@utwente.nl](mailto:w.tjihuis@utwente.nl)



You can find more information on the activities of CIB W112 at [www.cibworld.nl](http://www.cibworld.nl). Search under Databases/CIB Commissions. Click on Commissions and type W112 in the search field.