



CIB NEWS ARTICLE

International Council for Research and Innovation
in Building and Construction

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July 2010

From CIB Co-sponsored Events

Report on the SB10 Conference held in April 2010 in Madrid, Spain

SB10 Madrid was part of the series of Regional SB10 Conferences taking place in 2010 which, together with the World SB11 Conference in 2011, are all organised under the auspices of CIB, iiSBE and UNEP.



The Sustainable Building conference (SB10mad), organized by GBC España, presented not only work currently underway, but also all the challenges the building sector is facing to achieve essential sustainable objectives.



The Minister of Housing of the Government of Spain, Beatriz Corredor

With nearly 750 registered participants and under the auspices of the Ministry of Housing and GBC España, a three day broad scientific and parallel activities programme was presented. Spain's Minister of Housing, Beatriz Corredor, opened the conference,

emphasising the fact that the energy efficiency achievements in new construction housing are not sufficient to meet international climate change commitments. Spain must face a challenge in which intervention in existing buildings becomes necessary. Reaching the sustainability objectives will be impossible unless action is focused on the large existing dwellings stock of the large cities.

The Spanish Ministry of Housing estimates that, for every million euros invested in rehabilitation works, 54 jobs will be created. As the Minister said "rehabilitation dynamizes the market and generates activity for the auxiliary sectors, as well as for the manufacturing industry, and generates more employment than civil construction or new built nowadays".

On top of this economic interest, the Ministry referred to the social benefits that rehabilitation of dwellings will bring, allowing an advance towards a more cohesive urban model through the rehabilitation of the city centres and unfavoured and obsolete quarters, thus avoiding the inconvenience of urban sprawl.

Keynote Speakers:

The three keynote speakers at the SB10MAD were:

- Raymond Cole
- Fernando Prats
- Nils Larsson

Raymond J. Cole, Director and Professor at the School of Architecture and Landscape Architecture of the University of British Columbia in Canada, showed a capacity audience several photographic images demonstrating the enormous quantities of waste we generate per day, hour and even minute, how this dynamic is affecting our planet's global warming, and how it will imply changes in the way we design buildings as well as in our way of life.



Prof. Raymond J. Cole

According to Professor Cole, a sustainable and ecologically possible human future will be based not on isolated buildings improvement, but on environmental evaluation at urban level.

Fernando Prats, of Arquitectos Urbanistas Ingenieros Asociados (AUIA), prestigious architect and urban planner reminded the audience that the logics of last decade's unlimited and indiscriminate growth have seriously damaged the institutional culture, making our cities' urban expansion worse.



Fernando Prats

As a solution, Prats suggested the creation of new paradigms, starting with a new phase that would create innovative logics to replace the destructive ones with regenerative others. For this, the indiscriminate sprawl should be contained, the existing city should be recycled and revalorized, and its eco-efficiency should be multiplied, taking into account that, to change the cities, the coupling between urban metabolism and the vital cycles of the biosphere (soil, carbon, water, energy and materials) has to be improved.

But Prats did not only present a vision of the present. He went further to state that the next 40 years will be decisive. The world population may reach 10.000 million inhabitants by year 2050, when the key issue will be the impact of each one of them. Prats, without a non-grounded alarmism, emphasized that if we want to avoid a catastrophe with temperature increases above 2 degrees, we have 10 years to react. The key will be to increase the life cycle of products, launching a war against waste, and increasing active eco-efficiency.

Nils Larsson, Executive Director of iiSBE, in his lecture "The Challenge of Sustainable Building in a Skeptical Environment", spoke about the drastic increase in precipitation and droughts, one of the main symptoms pointed out by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) in its Fourth Evaluation Report.



Nils Larsson

Larsson underlined that, as we will not be able to avoid these pessimist predictions, the only thing we can do in the long run is to try and find the roots of the problem in order to devise a solution. He made it clear that we are starting to be in a race against the clock, in which there may be unforeseen setbacks such as the increase of the efficiency being swallowed by an uncontrolled growth.

Like his two predecessors, Larsson emphasized the importance of building rehabilitation as a key issue: the existing dwelling stock must be recycled, and refitted, the taxes imposed on building efficiency innovations must be minimised.

Industry Panels

In parallel with the keynote speeches, provision was made for industry panels in which the different participants in the building sector presented practical solutions for roofs and façades retrofit, the ecolabeling of construction materials and the Energy Certification of buildings in Spain, in relation to the recent recast of the Energy Performance of Buildings Directive. Various perspectives on the difficulties the rehabilitation of buildings faces were analyzed from the industry viewpoint, and a number of experiences in various fields were presented.



A view of the industry stands

Scientific Programme

The scientific programme, the core of the Conference, was structured in four Thematic Areas, with 120 lectures in total:

- Area A. Sustainable Renovation of Districts; Best Practices
- Area B. Traditional Techniques and District Rehabilitation
- Area C. Methodologies and Tools for Sustainability Assessment
- Area D. City, Building and Tourism: a Mediterranean Challenge



The Audience

All the work presented at the Conference served to confirm:

- the necessity to take advantage of the present economic crisis to realize the most needed changes in our productive model to face the global crisis
- the importance of the building sector in the environmental crisis as well as in the viability of these changes
- the necessity for Rehabilitation and urban revitalization as indispensable future activities to redress the sector
- the existence of experiences that demonstrate the viability of this activity, together with the barriers that oppose its evolution
- the possibility to develop knowledge and technologies to support it
- the need for a change in the normative and managerial aspects that presently frame building construction
- that social participation is needed to obtain the necessary consensus to carry out the work.

Summary of Conclusions

The conclusions reached by the end of the conference can be summarised as follows:

The main objective is the satisfaction of people's needs
The satisfaction of the habitability needs of people, starting with the neediest, must be the chief objective in the vital conversion of the building sector towards sustainability. Habitability should be the measure of success.

Citizen's participation is a must

Awareness boosting and a social consensus on the need for a global change is urgent, and is the foundation for citizens' participation on the construction of the new sector.

The action scale is urban

The sector must understand that the problems we face actually have an urban scale, and so solutions must be proposed that recognize productive and territorial aspects far beyond local, to interrelate with the global problems we face.

Rehabilitation is crucial

The sector's instrument is rehabilitation, the interpretation and intervention in the built object, as the foundation of physical and conceptual resources with which to face the global change. Rehabilitation at urban scale requires a redefinition of its own field of action and its own tools.

Rehabilitation must be built

Rehabilitation demands thus research and innovation. Technological innovation starts with an understanding of historical knowledge itself as a conceptual, technical and managerial resource to sustainability, progresses with the development of adequate efficient technologies to intervene on the built stock, and demands data, information and precise tools design to evaluate and monitor its evolution.

An appropriate social and political agreement is required

With innovation mostly in management, with new actors and a multi disciplinary approach to engage the various professionals involved, a participative management in demand of new legislative and financial scenarios, and an appropriate social and political agreement to support them is required.

Next Steps

The conclusions of the SB10mad Conference will be presented at the next worldwide Sustainable Building Conference SB11 Helsinki and the most important biannual Spanish Environmental Conference CONAMA 2010.

GBG España is presently working intensely for the results of the Conference not to remain as useless stuff, trying to put them to work so that they contribute to the change in the sector and SB10mad is not an ephemeral event but the starting point to convey all the conclusions to the public and the politicians.

The Ministry of Housing of the Government of Spain, whose commitment to present the conclusions of SB10mad to the EU Council of Ministers has been clearly expressed will support this endeavor within the framework agreement with GBC España.

SB10mad also served to demonstrate the maturity of GBC España as a chapter of iiSBE and an Established Council of WGBC, both in its influence capacity in our country and to foster its presence in a worldwide environment, increasing at the same time its responsibility with respect to sustainability in building construction.

There is a long way to go, in which the organizers of the event have marked the Spanish Conference as an excellent starting point.



Javier Ramos Guallart (Secretary General of Housing), Beatriz Corredor (Minister of Housing), Felipe Pich-Aguilera (President of GBC España), Isabel León (Treasurer of GBC España), Justo García Navarro (President Organizing Committee SB10mad), Javier Serra María-Tomé (Vice-Director General of Innovation and Quality in Building, Ministry of Housing)

Additional Information

Proceedings

All the papers presented at SB10mad are downloadable from the conference website at www.sb10mad.com/ponencias/. Note that the Proceedings are in Spanish only.

In the near future the full Proceedings and the separate papers will be free downloadable from ICONDA@CIBlibrary.

Further information

For further information about the outcome of this conference visit the designated website at www.gbce.es.

or contact

GBC España
Paseo de la Castellana nº 114, 4º 7
28046 Madrid
España
Teléfono +34 91 411 98 55
Email: info@gbce.es

Other SB conferences

Information about other SB10 conferences and about the SB11 World Conference in 2011 can be found in the SB10/11 Portal (see [here](#)).

