Background

The CIB W099 International Conference on “Achieving Sustainable Construction Health and Safety” was held in Lund, Sweden, on 2-3 June 2014. The conference was hosted by the Division of Construction Management and Division of Ergonomics and Aerosol Technology, Faculty of Engineering, Lund University. The venue of the conference was at Ingvar Kamprad Design Centre (IKDC) Lund University.

The main aim of the conference was to enable knowledge and ideas to be exchanged and to promote interdisciplinary cooperation in solving challenging problems regarding construction health and safety. This conference provided an international forum for researchers and practitioners from developed, developing and underdeveloped nations to address fundamental problems and constraints that affect the successful implementation of sustainable construction health and safety (work environment). The objectives of the conference were:

• to encourage and promote collaborative research and development of sustainable construction health and safety throughout the construction process, facilities management and eventual demolition of buildings.
• to ascertain the challenges that the present status of health and safety pose to the construction industry at various stages of the construction process.
• to discuss how construction industry, enterprises, and individual practitioners can meet health and safety challenges.
• to promote, secure and sustain the health, safety and welfare of people at work, as well as minimizing the risk of exposure to health and safety hazards.
• to explore the integration and application of new techniques, technologies and strategies towards attaining verifiable improvements in health and safety in construction.

Key-note speakers

The keynote speakers at the conference include:

• Petra Flyborg and Lars Björkeström, Swedish Construction Federation (SBI) – A safe working site
• Prof Andrew Hale, HASTAM, UK; Safety Science Group, NL - Construction Safety Management – Do We Know What Works
• Prof Pranab Nag, Ramakrishna Mission Vivekanand University, India - Meeting the Challenges of Occupational Health Services in Informal Construction Works
• Anna-Carin Nordlund, Magdalena Lee Falk, Swedish Work Environment Authority (SWEA) - Work Environment Hazard at Swedish Construction Sites
• Hendrik van Brenk, Chief Environment, Health and Safety Officer, Skanska USA Inc - Skanska Safety Road Map
• Carin Stoeckmann, Managing Director, Byggmästar’n I Skåne - How to create safe and sound construction sites and a good work environment
• Demirali Iljajovski, Head of HSE, Hoffmann A/S / Veidekke) - The speaker’s presentation was focused on how the company plan its health and safety work.

Panel debate

A panel debate comprising of both experts from the construction industry and academics discussed the following issues:

• How is the construction industry able to achieve a sustainable work environment?
• What practical steps can be taken and by whom?
The interesting discussions were participated by Mike Behm, Prof Pranab Nag and Prof Andrew Hale (representing the academics) and Petra Flyborg, Lars Björkeström and Carin Stoeckmann (representing the industry). Alistair Gibb performed excellently as the moderator for this debate. The audience participated actively during the discussions. The panel discussed on how to make health and safety sustainable. An interesting view was that today health and safety is accepted as an entity at all workplace. Organisations identify both safety and health hazards in the projects. Previously, most organisation was content with only planning for the safety hazards. Another suggestion was that the term work environment is more appropriate in comparison with only using health and safety. Here work environment may include well-being and psychosocial work environment. This was seen to be successful in one of the panel members’ organisation as they have successfully built a work environment culture. Here, everyone is important and their work environment is the company’s no 1 priority. It is important that management must lead and everyone must take the responsibility. It is not only the Client that bears the sole responsibility. The panel also discussed on the topic of dumping health hazards to third world countries such as India. In this case, how old ships and boats are being transported to India to salvage the usable materials. During this process, workers are being exposed to hazards such as asbestos. Such actions do not lead to better work environment.

A Special Thanks to Professor Alistair Gibb

CIB W099 wants to recognize Professor Alistair Gibb’s many contributions to the group and construction safety and health research as he leaves the Coordinator role after serving for 6 years. As W099 Coordinator, Alistair oversaw the W099 conferences in Melbourne (2009), Washington, DC (2011), Singapore (2012), and Lund (2014). He led the production of the Research Roadmap – W099 Safety and Health in Construction Report for Consultation. Alistair has mentored many CIB W099 members and participants in their research endeavors and throughout their careers. Additionally, Alistair’s excellent supervision skills had earned him many PhD students whom later become active CIB members. CIB W099 thanks Professor Gibb for all his leadership and service to the profession.

Additional Information

For additional information about CIB W099 contact the coordinator: Michael Behm behmm@ecu.edu.

You can find more information on the activities of CIB W099 here.

A news article on the proceedings is also published in a separate section of this newsletter here.

A more detailed full conference report can be downloaded here.