

GÄVLE AND BEYOND

This section is a wrap-up of the many events that were put on in conjunction with the CIB World Building Congress in Gävle. Our thanks to all those Coordinators and others who have provided reports for inclusion.

Elsewhere in this Issue there is much comment on this new format which has already been earmarked for application at the next World Congress in New Zealand in 2001.

One characteristic, among others, which emerges from these reports, is that far from being superficial gatherings of a pre-dominantly social nature, most generated substantive discussions and resulted in real progress being made by the Groups concerned.

It is a blue-print for future events - hence the title Gävle and Beyond.

As the Secretary General asks: [Do we meet in isolation or on the world stage?](#)

The CIB World Building Congress in Gävle, Sweden by Professor Christer Sjöström

The recent CIB World Building Congress in Gävle, Sweden, turned out to be an incontestable success.

In all some 480 delegates (including guests and a few short stay visitors) took part in and contributed to the Congress Programme. The Congress concept with presentation of papers, both in oral and poster sessions, received a favourable rating and in the course of two and a half days around 250 research papers were presented and discussed.

The conclusions from the five Congress Symposia were presented at the Concluding Plenary Session and now form an important input to the Agenda on Sustainable Construction that is currently under production. The Agenda is scheduled to be released at the very beginning of 1999.

A Dynamic Process

The Swedish industrialist Dr. Bo Berggren used his introductory speech to remind the Congress that sustainable development is a dynamic process, rather than a final destination, in which the global community - companies, governments, people - work together towards integrating social, economic and environmental objectives for the future. Industry will be a key player in global sustainable development in the 21st Century.

The importance of the construction sector and the built environment when it comes to attaining a sustainable development in our societies was clearly defined and underlined in a number of speeches and addresses during the Congress. The UK Construction Minister, Mr. Nick Raynsford, pointed to the fact that construction is also a major sector of the National economy accounting for around 8% of the gross domestic product in the UK and providing employment for 1.4 million people.

Dr. Christian Patermann, Directorate General XII, European Commission in the introduction to his speech on the European Union's 5th Framework Programme painted a comprehensive picture of the vast importance of the construction sector in the Union. He also highlighted the fact that construction relative to most other industries is less developed regarding operational concepts, technologies and occupational safety. This is because the present day construction process allows very little, if any, reward for RTD.

An Active Dialogue

Mr. Björn Stigson, President of World Business Council for Sustainable Development, ended his speech by saying that business cannot meaningfully address the sustainable development challenges in isolation. Business needs an active dialogue with other stakeholders in society. He also stated that innovative thinking is required to address the challenges of the future and he quoted Albert Einstein: "Today's problems cannot be solved by thinking the way we thought when we created them". Successful research meetings, be they symposia, conferences or congresses, result in determining and establishing state of the art knowledge and directions for future developments. And this is exactly what this Congress did.

The five volume proceedings is a valuable source of information for those interested in all the varied aspects of Construction and the Environment.

The Proceedings may be ordered by contacting Mrs. Kickan Fahlstedt, Division of Materials Technology, Centre of Built Environment, Royal Institute of Technology, P O Box 88, SE-801 02 Gävle, Sweden, Phone (+46 26) 14 78 66, Fax: (+46 26) 14 78 01, E-mail: fahlstedt@bmg.kth.se.