

TG29 - Construction in Developing Countries



TG29 Coordinator George Ofori expresses himself as extremely pleased with the first meeting in Tanzania last September and is full of praise for Mr. K.M.I.M. Msita the Chief Executive of the National Construction Council, Tanzania and the other members of the organising committee for their flawless efforts.

Says George:

It is heartening that such a high standard was set at the very first meeting of the task group, which has set the benchmark for future meetings. We are also grateful to the sponsors the M.A. Kharafi (Tanzania) Ltd, Skanska, the Division of Building Technology of the Centre for Scientific and Industrial Research of South Africa, the Contractors Registration Board of Tanzania, and Con-Aid; and the supporting organisations, the Architectural Association of Tanzania, Institution of Engineers Tanzania, Tanzania Civil Engineering Contractors Association, University College of Lands and Architectural Studies, and University of Dar Es Salaam. Finally, I must express the special appreciation of the members of TG29 to the Honourable Mrs Anna Margreth Abdullah for opening the meeting and joining us for the large part of its first day.



What follows is adapted from a report by George Ofori on the meeting.

TASK GROUP 29 MEETING

ARUSHA, TANZANIA
21-23 SEPTEMBER 1998

SUMMARY OF REPORT ON MEETING

Task Group 29 on Construction in Developing Countries held its first meeting in Arusha, Tanzania from

21st to 23rd September 1998. It was organised and sponsored by the National Construction Council of Tanzania. TG29 which was formed in December 1997 has as its principal aim to study and effectively disseminate the possible ways and means by which the construction industries of developing countries can be continuously improved to equip them to fulfil the tasks required in the individual nations' drive to achieve social and economic progress.

The meeting was attended by over 60 participants from 10 countries and featured 22 papers. It was officially declared open by the Honourable Mrs Anna Margreth Abdullah, the Minister for Works of Tanzania. Throughout the emphasis was on discussions. The main points of the papers and the resulting discussion were summarised and assigned to four Working Groups to consider, and produce a set of Conclusions and Recommendations, together with a few priority areas on which the TG should concentrate during the next three years. The final session was devoted to the preparation of a programme of activities.

[The Tanzanian Minister for Works, the Hon, Anne Margreth Abdullah delivers the Welcome Address. On her right is Mr. K.M.I.M. Msita, Director of NCC - the Tanzanian National Construction Council - which organised the Meeting. Two well known CIB figures are on her left, Dr. Wim Bakens - CIB Secretary General - and Assoc. Prof. George Ofori - TG29 Coordinator]



During the meeting, an attempt was made to define three key concepts from a developing-country perspective. These concepts were: the construction industry; the objectives of construction industry development; and the informal sector of the industry. The members committed the TG to undertake a series of specific tasks over the next two years. These include three international research projects, the setting up of an Internet home page; increasing the membership of the TG, and hence, of CIB; and launching an international refereed journal to disseminate new knowledge on issues relating to construction in developing countries.

The general verdict was that the meeting was a major success which saw the participants committed to efforts to address the issues considered. The papers were of a high quality and the discussion, as well as the tangible results achieved at the meeting, have provided a momentum to the effort of TG29. A forthcoming CIB publication will incorporate the papers presented, a summary of the discussions, conclusions and recommendations, as well as the definitions formulated at the meeting.



[The participants at the TG29 Meeting standing in front of the Arusha International Conference Centre]

Next Meeting

The next meeting will be held in Uganda in June 1999 and this is described [here](#). TG29 will hold its first international conference in Singapore on 25-27 October 1999 in association with the Second International Conference on Construction Industry Development. This is also mentioned later.

Key Issues in Support of the Development of the Construction Industry

The meeting identified the following key issues as meriting being addressed by the Task Group:

- To establish indicators for measuring construction industry development, and its performance.
- To promote suitable institutional arrangements and sustainable financing mechanisms to support construction industry development.
- To define the construction industry in the context of the developing countries for the purpose of its development.
- To document and disseminate best practices in capacity building in the construction industries of developing countries.
- To promote measures for broadening work opportunities for the domestic construction industry.
- To disseminate research findings on construction in developing countries, for example, through a journal.
- To document and disseminate information on the informal sector for the purpose of its development.

Tentative Programme of Activities of TG29, 1998-2000

1. Priority Areas

It was agreed that the priority areas of the activities of TG29 should extend to all the main areas of the development of a construction industry and yet few enough to enable TG29 to make significant progress during its three-year life.

The Priority Areas will themselves also form the themes of future meetings of TG29. Each of the meetings will result in a Best Practice.

The Priority Areas are:

- Managing construction industry development
- Contractor development
- Human resource development
- Materials and technology development

The meeting decided that the Best Practice Reports will be published as CIB documents, which are likely to be cheaper than books by commercial publishers, and hence more affordable to TG29 members and others in developing countries. The reports will also be published in electronic format. For example, they will be placed on the Internet, although it was realised that not all potential readers have access to the facility.

These Best Practice documents are intended to: (i) inform and guide practice and further research; (ii) be part of the final report of TG29, which should include: also, an international synthesis. Clear terms of reference will be prepared by the TG29 Co-ordinator in order to guide submissions on individual countries.

2. Recurring Themes

The meeting recognised that several possible topics justified further study. However, it decided that some of these identified topics simply did not cover enough to be the broad themes of meetings of the TG. These topics will be Recurring Themes to be considered at each of the meetings, and in the preparation of the Best Practice documents. These are:

- globalisation, from a developing country perspective
- role of the informal sector
- poverty alleviation
- appropriate procurement practices (industry organisation structures)
- role of the community
- sustainability

3. Immediate Tasks

One point which clearly emerged during the meeting was that certain concepts were not clearly understood. The necessity was agreed to formulate appropriate definitions for these concepts immediately, in order to reduce confusion, and to provide a basis for further development of the field of construction in developing countries.

4. To Be Accomplished Soon

It was decided that one topic would be addressed 'by circulation'. This is the development of indicators of construction industry development for which the paper presented by Coordinator George Ofori at the meeting would serve as the starting point. The plan is that before, or at the next TG29 meeting, a 'final' set of indicators will be developed

5. Research Projects

The meeting decided that TG29 will undertake three international research projects on the following questions:

- the impact of foreign contractors on local construction industries (the study will test the Moavenzadeh-Hagopian model on the importance of technology transfer in construction industry development) measures for broadening work opportunities for the domestic construction industry in developing countries
- country agencies administering construction industry development (these include dedicated organisations for construction industry development such as Tanzania's National Construction Council, as well as units or departments within ministries)

6. Disseminating Findings

The TG will work towards producing an international refereed journal to disseminate new knowledge on issues relating to construction in developing countries. The journal will include articles on both research and practice and a target launch date is June 2000.

It was suggested that the cost of subscriptions should be kept low in order to make it affordable to developing-country readers. Another suggestion was that the journal should consider reprinting articles from other, more expensive periodicals.

The TG committed itself to setting up a home page for posting messages relating to its work, and facilitating discussions on issues of construction in developing countries. Dr Rodney Milford will co-ordinate the initial preparatory work, as well as the maintenance of the home page.

7. Obtaining Financial Support for TG's Work

The meeting agreed that efforts should be made to seek financial support for the work of the TG. The following were considered as possible sources: the appropriate European Union contacts and bilateral and multi-lateral donor agencies and grant givers. It was noted that the CIB Developing Countries Fund may be tapped by members (i) to support travelling to CIB events; and (ii) to obtain start-up finance for relevant projects.

TG29 is prominently featured in this issue with the above report and news of two major meetings to come.