

Nairobi Declaration on Green Building for Africa

Conference on Green Building Rating Systems in Africa

4-6 May 2010, Nairobi, KENYA

We, experts, practitioners and decision makers from twenty countries in Africa, meeting at the Conference on Green Building Rating Systems for Africa, after three days of fruitful debates and discussions, declare our commitment to promoting and fostering green building practices in Africa.

We take note of the tremendous environmental challenges and threats currently being faced by the African Continent:

In a continent of rapid urbanization the volume of building operation continues to grow very rapidly and requires close monitoring in terms of its environmental impact;

Africa's intense development pressure, the resulting rapid urbanization and generally carbon intensive mediums of energy generation, leaves the built environment under particular pressure to thoroughly embrace the sustainability imperative.

Considering that building operations are estimated to be responsible for 56% of energy used in Sub-Saharan Africa by buildings alone, this is an urgent matter that can no longer be underestimated by decision makers, the building industry and building professionals.

We resolve that in order to reduce CO₂ emissions and help strengthen the ability of cities to adapt to climate change while improving the quality of the built environment, it is urgent to improve the environmental performance and energy efficiency in buildings.

We are committed to being the promoters of green practices, from planning, design, construction and operation of the built environment, as well as to the use of appropriate building materials, technologies, services and processes that minimize CO₂ emissions in our Continent.

We underline the importance of taking into account social and cultural specificities of Africa in particular:

- Exploring traditional practices that have been proved to be environmentally beneficial while addressing the need for mass housing constructions in Africa given the fact of rapidly increasing urban population growth;

- Addressing the needs of populations at the bottom of the social and economic pyramid that require affordable housing and simple solutions to face economic challenges.

We emphasize the importance of:

- Sourcing building materials and appropriate technology that are locally available.
- Designing buildings taking into account climatic conditions on the continent and by so doing making use of naturally available energies that can be harnessed profitably.
- The role of urban design and planning in sustainable urban development.
- The use of renewable energy.
- The development and or use of a green building rating system.

We recommend that models of Green Building Councils and the associated green rating systems be developed and considered that cater for the different country needs and specificities on a national and/or on a sub-regional basis while collaborating with different countries.

We further emphasize the importance of training professionals, and introducing green building practices in the education system in order to increase public awareness and skills to spread green practices.

We call the World Green Building Council and UN-Habitat to support this process through best practices exchange in order for African countries to learn from various models available in the World.

We further call on the respective Governments to support the Green Building Councils of their respective Countries.

We further propose a road map for the next two years to engage African countries in a decisive process to:

- Set up National and/or sub-regional Green Building Councils.
- Set up an African network to foster exchange between experts, professionals, decision makers and the private sector and to assist emerging Green Building Councils in the Region.
- Advocate for policy and regulation to encourage the adoption and enforcement of the appropriate rating system and best practices in each country.

Finally, we re-iterate the need to set-up an African Platform that will promote and/or confederate the different green building initiatives in Africa.