

Plan B for rapid adaptation, GHG reductions and resilience in the built environment



Sixteen members and associates of iiSBE have collaborated to produce a paper called *Plan B for rapid adaptation, GHG reductions and resilience in the built environment*. The document outlines the views of iiSBE (the International Initiative for a Sustainable Built Environment) on the likely impacts of climate change and the range of reactions that may be expected. The paper suggests that some extreme climate-related events may need to occur in major cities of the developed world to cause governments to take resolute action. In such a case, there is a danger that the immediate needs of repair and reconstruction may cause vital adaptation and mitigation activities to be deferred.

The position paper describes a series of proposed actions that can be initiated quickly as circumstances require. The proposed actions include some that are focused on adaptation to new climate and weather conditions, and others aimed at rapid reductions in greenhouse gas emissions. They are all generic, which means that application to any specific location will require the addition of local or regional information to ensure there are specific plans with meaningful content.

Earlier versions of this position paper have been incorporated into several conference presentations during the past year. Two Canadian colleagues have been asked by the author to provide information relevant to selected Canadian regions, and they will be submitting proposals for one or more oral presentations at this conference.

This presentation should provide delegates with an integrated set of proposals for rapid action to meet the challenges that lie ahead.

iiSBE considers the proposals made in this document to complement the measures proposed in the Roadmap produced by the *Global Alliance for Buildings and Construction* (Global ABC), with the iiSBE proposals responding to a less optimistic and more drastic climate change scenario.

We developed this paper at a global level, but we consider that it must be supplemented by regional, national and sub-national analyses and strategies. This reflects the fact that all specific locations have characteristics that will greatly affect the possible pace of carbon reductions and the sectors they will occur in. For example:

- * Different latitudinal locations, geographic features and climatic regimes lead to different climates and cultural contexts, and this has also, over time, greatly affected the types of urban development patterns, building design and technologies, and how buildings are used. These factors, all strongly influence energy used for transportation, heating and cooling. Such patterns are difficult to change.
- * Countries that are in a state of rapid population growth and economic development may have relatively low current GHG emissions, but are likely to generate greatly increased emissions en route to the same state of development as currently mature economies. Such increased emissions will be due to factors such as higher accommodation standards and a greater use of private vehicles. Such countries are not likely to accept a slow- or no-growth of development in order to reduce emissions in the short term.
- * The economies of some regions and countries are more reliant on the extraction and/or use of fossil fuels than others, and this will affect their willingness to adopt low-carbon strategies and the pace of adoption of such strategies.

The factors outlined above support the view that a global approach must be supplemented by regional, national and sub-national analysis and strategies if successful implementation strategies for a low-carbon built environment are to be developed. Such a series of regionalized papers could also be valuable for Global ABC and the countries concerned.

We have asked colleagues in major global regions to participate in the development of versions adapted to their regions. This process is now beginning.