



WORLD GREEN BUILDING COUNCIL

Copenhagen Communiqué December 2009

SUMMARY

- The building sector consumes more than one third of the world's energy and, in most countries, is the largest source of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions.
- The World Green Building Council (WorldGBC) calls on member states at COP15 to agree on a platform of proven policy tools and support mechanisms for action by industry and the community that reduce GHG emissions in buildings.
- The WorldGBC network and its partners are working together to develop common carbon metrics between the leading green building rating tools to enable consistent measurement of carbon savings from green buildings.

“Buildings represent the biggest and best opportunity for achieving cost-effective carbon mitigation action, globally. The World Green Building Council represents the biggest and most effective coalition of organisations dedicated to the development of green, low-carbon buildings, and as such we recognise the historic importance of the climate change negotiations taking place in Copenhagen. Countries around the world must embrace the opportunities afforded by new and existing buildings to help us curb global emissions and set us on a low-carbon trajectory for development that goes hand in hand with benefits for people and businesses everywhere.”

Tony Arnel, Chairman, World Green Building Council

Globally, the building sector consumes more than one third of the world's energy and, in most countries, is the largest source of GHG emissions and a major contributor to global climate change.

The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) COP 15 negotiations currently taking place in Copenhagen present an opportunity for the world to reach agreement on measurable actions in the global building sector to dramatically reduce global climate change, whilst ensuring continued economic development.

Fortunately, the building sector provides some of the most cost-effective and expedient ways to tackle climate change. The IPCC's Fourth Assessment Report concluded that, with proven and commercially available technologies, the energy consumption in both new and old buildings could be cut by an estimated 30-50 per cent without significantly increasing investment costs. However, this potential is not yet reflected in international priorities. For example, as of April 2009, only 12 of the 4,500 projects in the Clean Development Mechanism pipeline were seeking to reduce energy demand in buildings.

The COP15 negotiations represent an opportunity to redress this, the WorldGBC calls on member states to agree on a platform of proven policy tools and support mechanisms for action by industry and the community that reduce GHG emissions in buildings.

Such a platform should also be supported through the international aid programs of developed nations, so that developing countries can also implement appropriate measures.

CAMPAIGN FOR A SUSTAINABLE BUILT ENVIRONMENT



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Specifically, it should comprise:

- Deployment of rating tools through voluntary green building councils and associated organisations to drive the 'green' transformation of property markets;
- Adoption of minimum energy efficiency standards for buildings through national building regulatory codes;
- Fiscal incentives to encourage investment in projects that improve energy efficiency and reduce GHG emissions from new and existing buildings; and
- Measurement of and performance goals for emissions from national building stock, including a net 50 per cent reduction in the sector by 2030.

World Green Building Council

The World Green Building Council represents a coalition of 16 established green building councils, 8 emerging councils and over 30 applicant councils developing around the world. This network is transforming the global property market and building industry through its green building rating systems, education and advocacy.

A range of independent studies confirm that buildings certified by green building councils can consume 85 per cent less energy and 60 per cent less potable water, and send 69 per cent less waste to landfill than non-certified buildings. Certified green buildings also have a superior market value - clearly demonstrating the enormous potential of the sector.

The member nations of the WorldGBC are undertaking a number of initiatives to highlight the effectiveness of green building policies and the use of green building tools in reducing emissions. These include:

- Promotion, support and training for new green building councils in over 40 countries, including the adoption or development of building rating tools appropriate to their country.
- Development of [common carbon metrics](#) between the leading green building rating tools to enable consistent measurement of carbon savings from green buildings.
- Evaluation of the efficiency and effectiveness of government policies and regulations to support the sustainable transformation of the property and building industries.
- Development of a comprehensive range of [case studies](#) on successful green buildings and green building policies.

UNEP SBCI

The WorldGBC is a contributing member to the Sustainable Buildings and Climate Initiative of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP SBCI). UNEP SBCI was established in 2006 as a partnership between the UN and building sector stakeholders, to promote the worldwide adoption of sustainable building practices.

Over the past year, the WorldGBC Policy Task Force has worked closely with the UNEP SBCI Secretariat and membership to develop a *Buildings and climate change industry call to action*, which urges radical action on carbon emissions from buildings. This document has the full support of the WorldGBC network and can be downloaded [here](#), along with the accompanying [Official Submission](#).

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