

25 November 2020

The Rt Hon Alok Sharma MP

Secretary of State, BEIS
COP26 President
1 Victoria Street
London
SW1H 0ET

Dear COP President-Designate Sharma,

Re: Request for a Built Environment Day at COP26

As organisations that work in the built environment and recently contributed to deliver on the November Dialogues, we understand our contribution to climate change. The buildings and construction sector makes up close to 40% of global energy and process-related emissions. As it is responsible for 7-10% of global employment and stores approximately 50% of global wealth, the sector is also key both in social and economic terms.

Without significant actions from the built environment there can be little chance of meeting the Paris Agreement and *“holding the increase in the global average temperature to well below 2°C above pre-industrial levels and pursuing efforts to limit the temperature increase to 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels”*.

However, buildings and infrastructure also offer many of the solutions needed to tackle climate change, while at the same time furthering social and economic development, so we are clear that we wish to play our part.

The current COVID-19 health crisis has shaken the world. It is testing healthcare and welfare systems, our communities and our economies, our ways of living and working in unprecedented ways. The scale of the recovery required is unprecedented, but we have an opportunity to build back better.

The built environment can drive a green recovery and support a climate-resilient future. It can deliver short-term jobs and growth by improving and retrofitting existing built assets as well as ensuring new ones do not contribute to high carbon lock in. Half of all buildings that will be standing in 2060 have not been built yet. We have a unique opportunity to address climate change, increase jobs and prosperity, clean our air and water and do it an inclusive and just way. What we do now – in this critical moment of recovery – matters.

COP26, the Paris Agreement review and pressure to increase ambition provides even more opportunities. But only around half of Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) mention energy efficiency and building codes, and even fewer address embodied carbon linked to the manufacturing of building and construction materials. The timing of NDC enhancement, coupled with the need for a green recovery, can help address policy gaps and unleash faster decarbonisation in the built environment.

We are keen to play our part at COP26.

We — a network of international organisations working to make the built environment more sustainable — believe we can create a rallying point for our sector’s broad and diverse set of stakeholders by organising a dedicated Built Environment Day at COP26 under the coordination of the Global Alliance for Buildings and Construction (GlobalABC).

A first Buildings Day was organised at COP21 and since, Buildings Days have been held back to back at Climate COPs. Many actions towards a vision of a net zero emissions, healthy, efficient and resilient built environment have been initiated. A significant number of our organisations and those we work with are signed up to Science Based Targets (including property companies and manufacturers of cement and steel). Others have committed to the Nearly Zero Energy Buildings call, a campaign of the Clean Energy Ministerial together with GlobalABC, the EP100 initiative, the Zero Carbon Buildings for All call at the 2019 UN Climate Action Summit, and/or the WorldGBC Net Zero Carbon Buildings Commitment / C40 Zero Carbon Buildings Declaration, which have doubled in signatories in a year and now include 76 companies, 28 cities and 6 states and regions.

A **Built Environment Day at COP26** would put a spotlight on the sector, demonstrate how leading actors of the sector have come together to align long-term targets and short-term action, to present concrete pathways to net zero. The scale of impact of actions is still suffering from the sector’s fragmentation – a highly visible event at COP26 would help step up the ambition and action. We need to outline the critical steps that have to be taken by 2025 in order for this sector to reach its 2030 and 2050 goals respectively, globally and forge the radical cooperation needed across governments and players throughout the buildings and construction value chain.

We intend to use the lead in to COP26 to collaborate with governments, policymakers and with one another, to drive further ambition and catalyse action. The Built Environment Day at COP26 would provide an excellent backdrop to showcase this work.

We look forward to discussing with you how we can work together and make COP26 the success that it needs to be, under your Presidency.

Yours,



Mark Watts,
Executive Director,
C40 Cities



Marco Caffi,
Executive Director,
Green Building Council Italia



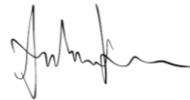
Martina Otto,
Head of Secretariat,
Global Alliance for Buildings and
Construction



Helen Clarkson,
CEO,
The Climate Group



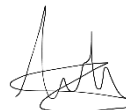
Julie Hirigoyen,
CEO,
UK Green Building Council



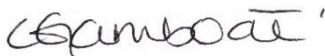
Andrew Higham,
Chief Executive,
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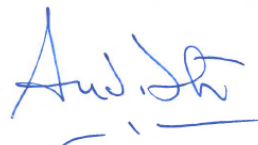
Peter Bakker,
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Maria Mendiluce,
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Cristina Gamboa,
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Andrew Steer,
President and CEO,
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