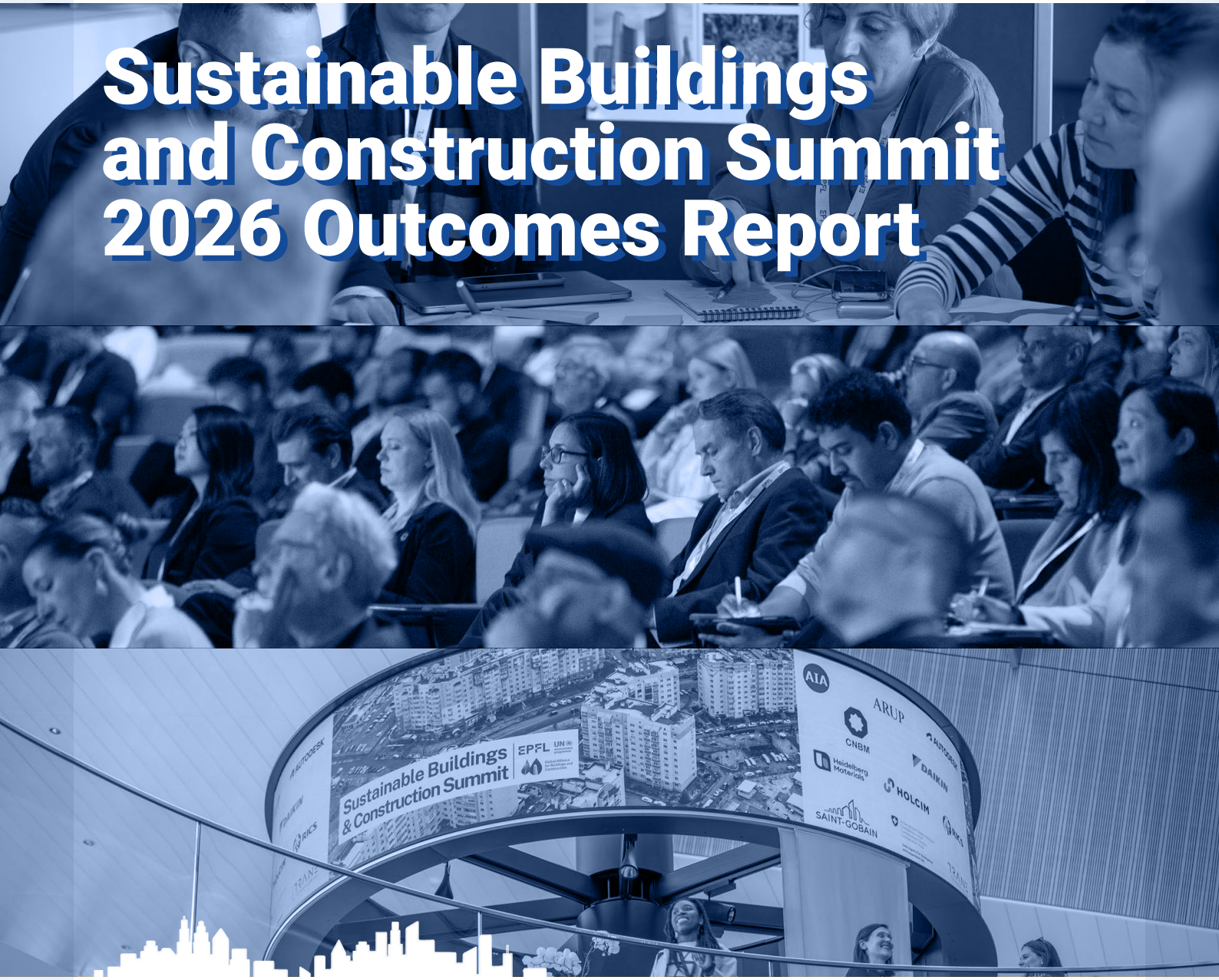
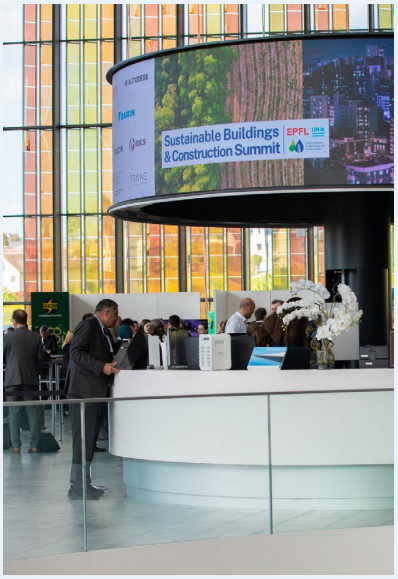
Sustainable Buildings & Construction Summit

20-22 APR '26 | SwissTech Convention Center, Lausanne, CH

From Belém to Antalya: The Lausanne Chapter



Sustainable Buildings and Construction Summit 2026 Outcomes Report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About This Document

This document captures the key outcomes and strategic directions emerging from the **Sustainable Buildings and Construction Summit 2026** (SBCS26), held 20–22 April 2026 in Lausanne, Switzerland. It draws on the summit's high-level plenaries, 15 cross-disciplinary workshops, the first in-person Technical Meeting of the Intergovernmental Council for Buildings and Climate (ICBC), and ICBC-dedicated workshops. It is intended as a reference for partners and more broadly for all those working to accelerate the transition to a zero-emission, efficient, and resilient buildings and construction sector.

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Sustainable Buildings & Construction Summit

EPFL | UN environment programme | Global Alliance for Buildings and Construction

20-22 APR '26 | SwissTech Convention Center, **Lausanne, CH**

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Summit Overview

The Sustainable Buildings and Construction Summit 2026 brought together 468 participants from 64 countries (national governments, municipalities, research institutions, industry leaders, international organisations, and civil society) in Lausanne, Switzerland. Co-organised by EPFL's Centre for Worldwide Sustainable Construction (CWSC) and United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) as host of the Global Alliance for Buildings and Construction (GlobalABC) secretariat, the summit built on the momentum of the first Global Forum on Buildings and Climate, held in Paris in 2024. Approximately 27% of participants came from emerging and developing economies, reflecting the summit's ambition to engage the regions where construction growth, and therefore climate risk and opportunity, is most concentrated, and where continued efforts to broaden participation remain a priority.

The summit was also a convergence of the sector's institutional architecture, with the first in-person Intergovernmental Council for Buildings and Climate (ICBC) Technical Meeting convening in Lausanne. Taken together, the three days reflected a sector increasingly oriented toward execution: less focused on making the case for change, more focused on what it actually takes to deliver it.

The summit was made possible with the support of sponsors: the American Institute of Architects, Arup, Autodesk, CNBM Simona, Daikin Industries, Heidelberg Materials, Holcim, Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors (RICS), Saint-Gobain, the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), and Trane Technologies, and media partners Buildings & Cities and Construction 21. The programme and workshops were shaped by UNEP, GlobalABC, and EPFL's Centre for Worldwide Sustainable Construction, and their respective communities and partners, whose expertise and engagement were central to the summit's substance.

468
participants

64
countries

27%
from EMDEs

The Sustainable Buildings & Construction Summit 2026 at a Glance

60+
speakers and session leads

15
cross-disciplinary workshops

25+
countries represented at the first in-person ICBC Technical Meeting

2 Ten Years On: A Sector Coming Into Its Own

Ten years after GlobalABC was established at COP21 in Paris, the buildings and construction sector is operating at a different level of recognition. The work of the past decade, building the evidence base, developing frameworks, convening governments and industry, and advocating for the sector's place in the climate agenda, has produced something real. Awareness of sustainable construction among sector stakeholders now stands at 94% globally (Saint-Gobain, 2026). Governments that were not engaging with building decarbonisation a decade ago are now presenting national building codes, decarbonisation roadmaps, whole-life carbon policies, and resilience and adaptation frameworks. The sector's inclusion in high-level bilateral and multilateral statements is no longer exceptional. Lausanne 2026 was not a milestone event in isolation: it was one step in a widening trajectory, and it reflected how far that trajectory has come.

That recognition is indeed no longer implicit. On 17 February 2026, just weeks before the summit, the governments of India and France issued a Joint Statement following President Macron's official visit to meet with Prime Minister Modi. Among commitments spanning security, energy, space, and climate action, the two leaders explicitly affirmed that they "will engage for decarbonization and resilience of the buildings sector, notably through the Déclaration de Chaillot and its Intergovernmental Council for Buildings and Climate." The buildings sector, and the specific institutional architecture built around the Déclaration de Chaillot, named in a bilateral statement between the major G20 economies is a signal that the sector's years of advocacy have produced something durable.

Yet political recognition and delivery are not the same thing. The Global Status Report on Buildings and Construction 2025–2026, announced at the summit ahead of its publication shortly after, confirms that the gap between stated commitments and actual progress is widening, not shrinking, and that as of January 2026, no country's NDC 3.0 included an extensive buildings and construction strategy (UNEP, 2026). Lausanne was oriented around that gap.

Three conclusions recurred across the summit and constitute the strategic frame for everything that follows:

- **Implementation is the primary bottleneck, not innovation.** Governance fragmentation, finance misalignment, and capacity deficits are what is actually slowing progress. The tools, frameworks, and technologies needed to decarbonise the sector largely exist. What is missing is the ability to deploy them consistently and at scale.
- **Decarbonisation, adaptation, resilience, and affordability must be addressed together.** Approaches that treat these as competing priorities consistently fail in the contexts where they are most needed. The most compelling examples from Lausanne, across housing, materials, and urban planning, were those that pursued all three simultaneously.
- **Transformation requires coordination across sectors, scales, and stakeholders.** What distinguished the summit was sustained engagement between governments, industry, academia, and civil society around shared implementation challenges, alongside a growing sophistication about what each can contribute, and what each needs from the others.

3 What the Sector Knows Now

3.1 Urban Form Is the Upstream Decision

The most significant emissions and resilience decisions for the built environment are not made when a building is designed. They are made upstream, at the planning stage, when land use, density, and transport connectivity are determined. Cities built around low-density sprawl and private car dependence lock in high operational emissions and infrastructure costs for generations, regardless of how efficient individual buildings become. As plenary speaker Hélène Chartier of C40 Cities put it: "The best climate activist is a good urban planner." The problem of cities whose physical form makes sustainable living difficult regardless of individual choices was named as one of the sector's most underaddressed structural challenges. Compact, mixed-use, transit-oriented urban development integrating nature-based solutions is not an aspirational preference: it is a precondition for decarbonisation, adaptation and resilience at scale. And it requires inter-ministerial coordination between ministries of housing, transport, environment, and finance that is consistently lacking.

The implication for where GlobalABC members and partners can have the greatest impact: engaging earlier in planning processes, and at the city and regional government level, not only at the national policy level.

3.2 The Implementation Gap Is Structural

Across workshops and plenaries, a consistent diagnosis emerged: the sector is not short of solutions. It is short of the governance structures, finance mechanisms, and institutional capacity to make them operational at scale. The stakes are significant: the buildings and construction sector is responsible for around 37% of global CO_2 emissions and nearly 50% of global material extraction, the largest footprint of any sector (UNEP, 2026). Yet floor space grew 20% over the past decade while energy demand rose just 11%, evidence that efficiency measures are working. The challenge is that construction is outpacing decarbonisation efforts: new floor space is being added faster than emissions can be reduced across buildings and energy systems, cancelling out those gains.

Three structural barriers were named repeatedly.

- **Fragmented governance:** responsibilities for construction, environment, energy, finance, and planning are spread across ministries with limited coordination, and policies designed in isolation frequently work against each other.

- **Insufficient and misaligned finance:** while investment in sustainable buildings and construction is growing, it remains far short of what the sector requires, and consistently fails to reach affordable housing, informal settlements, retrofit programmes, and smaller markets.

- **Capacity gaps:** the shortage of trained professionals in sustainable and low-carbon construction, including building code inspectors, procurement officials, engineers familiar with lifecycle assessment and EPD methodologies, and local builders in both formal and informal construction contexts, is a first-order constraint, not a background condition.

Saint-Gobain's 2026 Sustainable Construction Barometer, launched and presented at the summit, puts data behind this diagnosis. Drawing on 30,000 citizens and 4,800 sector stakeholders across 30 countries, the Barometer finds that 87% of stakeholders believe the sector needs to go further, yet only 32% of professionals routinely assess carbon footprints and just 30% say they already carry out sustainable projects, compared with 55% who say they intend to. The gap between intention and practice is persistent: for the third consecutive year, action is lagging stated ambition. The competitiveness of sustainable construction solutions remains the most cited driver for acceleration, with nearly one in three stakeholders pointing to it. Citizens are also increasingly connecting health and well-being with sustainable buildings, with that association rising 4 points in a single year, a lever the sector has yet to fully use.

Understanding the gap as structural changes the response. The priority is not more frameworks or more pilots: it is investing in the governance, finance, and capacity infrastructure that makes frameworks and pilots scalable.

3.3 Housing Requires an Ecosystem, Not a Product

Affordable and sustainable housing emerged as one of the summit's most urgent themes, and the discussion consistently refused to treat it as a technical problem with a technical solution. Residential buildings account for 77% of total floor area and around 70% of buildings' energy demand globally (UNEP, 2026), placing housing squarely at the intersection of economic growth and climate action. With 80% of future construction set to take place in emerging and developing economies, the design and policy choices embedded in housing programmes today will shape emissions trajectories for decades (IEA, 2023).

The intergovernmental foundation for this work is the ICBC Belém Call for Action for Sustainable and Affordable Housing, adopted at COP30 and now endorsed by 14 countries and the European Commission. The Call places housing at the heart of climate, affordability, and resilience goals simultaneously, rejecting the framing that these are competing priorities. It also includes an explicit commitment to define and consider ODA flows for sustainable housing by 2030, recognising that international development finance has a direct role to play in closing the housing-climate gap. The summit's housing discussions built directly on the commitments under the Belem Call for Action, exploring what delivery looks like in practice across very different national contexts.

What Lausanne demonstrated, through country presentations from Brazil, India, Senegal, Portugal, and others, is that the approaches that work build an entire ecosystem: integrating passive design and low-carbon materials with accessible finance, community participation, training for local builders, and supply chains for locally available materials. Brazil's Minha Casa Minha Vida programme, now embedding thermal comfort, renewable energy, water reuse, and improved urban location into mass housing, works because it combines federal policy, large-scale financing, and local delivery. India's experience in Bhubaneswar and Cuttack showed that community-led upgrading, passive design, and low-rise, high-density forms can improve living conditions while reducing emissions, but only where community participation was treated as a design condition rather than an afterthought.

The persistence of self-built and informally constructed housing, which represents a substantial share of the global building stock in many lower- and middle-income contexts, underscores the depth of this challenge. Formal standards, certification systems, and financing instruments largely do not reach these contexts. The enabling agency matters as much as the technical solution: the most effective interventions create coordination mechanisms bridging government, finance institutions, local authorities, communities, and technical actors, rather than delivering solutions directly.

3.4 Materials: No Single Solution

One of the summit's most substantive contributions, brought together by research, industry evidence, and government case studies, was a clearer collective picture of where the materials transition stands and what it requires.

Prof. Karen Scrivener of EPFL's Laboratory of Construction Materials presented research on low-carbon cements, including LC3 (Limestone Calcined Clay Cement), which uses widely available raw materials to reduce clinker content and lower the carbon footprint of cement production. LC3 and other supplementary cementitious materials (SCMs) can be deployed in a range of contexts, including where more capital-intensive alternatives are not viable. Ghana's GS-524 national cement standard, which allows clinker content as low as 35%, illustrates how research of this kind can translate into national policy. Heidelberg's calcined clay plant in Ghana, producing 400,000 tonnes per year and cutting CO_2 by 87% relative to clinker, shows what industrial-scale deployment looks like when policy and industry investment align.

A keynote by Prof. Michael Ramage of Cambridge Transformation Labs (University of Cambridge) made the timber and bio-based materials case with striking specificity. Each kilogram of timber holds 1.8 kg of CO_2, meaning timber buildings are active carbon stores, not just low-emission structures. He compared embodied carbon for equivalent buildings: timber at 126 tCO_2e, concrete at 310 tCO_2e, and steel at 498 tCO_2e. He also noted that European forests already grow 150% more timber annually than the construction sector currently uses, and that fast-growing bio-based materials like hemp can deliver structural performance equivalent to 75% of construction timber from just 1% of global agricultural land. The constraint on scaling these materials is not biological: it is logistical, regulatory, and market-based.

The discussion across materials sessions surfaced the same productive tension: different pathways, each with strong evidence, pointing to different contexts and priorities. The carbon case for timber is compelling where sustainably managed forests exist and where embodied carbon in structure is the primary target. The case for low-carbon cements and SCMs is equally strong where concrete is the dominant and most accessible material, including infrastructure. The conclusion reached was that these are complementary solutions, not competing ones. What's more, most buildings use a mix of materials, and the real question is how to decarbonise the whole, not champion a single component. The sector's tendency to debate which is "better" distracts from the more important question of which is most appropriate where.
It was also noted that materials choices alone are not the whole story. How materials are used, how efficiently they are specified, and how buildings are designed, considering sufficiency approaches,

to use less material overall are equally important. Product-level data, including Environmental Product Declarations (EPDs) and lifecycle assessments (LCA), are increasingly essential for enabling credible comparisons across material types and for supporting manufacturers, specifiers, and engineering firms in making informed sustainability choices. Circular economy approaches, including recycled content, design for disassembly, and end-of-life traceability, were also identified as underutilised levers that deserve greater attention in both policy and practice.

The policy implication is direct: governments that specify performance-based outcomes rather than prescribing particular materials create the conditions for innovation and local adaptation. Standards and procurement reform that reward performance across material types, not just familiarity with dominant ones, is one of the most actionable contributions available to governments. The data infrastructure, including EPDs, lifecycle assessment, and whole-life carbon methodologies, also needs to be capable of comparing genuinely different approaches on a common basis, without baking in assumptions that favour one material pathway over others. That is part of what makes the CLEAR initiative, and the harmonisation work it represents, so consequential.

3.5 Industry as a Driver, Rather than a Recipient

A consistent message from industry participants at the summit was that the private sector is not waiting for governments to act, and that its primary need is not subsidy or protection, but clarity. Across the materials workshops and the industry-led sessions, the message was consistent: the products exist, the capacity exists, and the investment is ready to scale. What industry needs from governments is regulatory certainty, standards that reward performance over familiarity, and procurement systems that make the business case for sustainable construction legible to developers, asset owners, and project financiers.

Three asks from industry to governments came up consistently. First, implement and update building codes and standards to allow performance-based, lower-carbon products onto the market, since current specifications in many jurisdictions still default to conventional products by habit rather than by evidence. Second, use public procurement to create demand: when governments lead by example, markets follow. Third, invest in awareness and education across the value chain: architects, engineers, and end-users who default to familiar materials and techniques do so partly because alternatives are not well understood, and industry cannot close that gap alone.

The private sector's most effective route to influencing government policy runs through structured platforms that bring both sides into the same conversation. That is what the GlobalABC, including the ICBC, working groups, member initiatives, and the summit itself provide, and it is what sponsors and industry partners are investing in when they engage with this work.

3.6 Finance: A Structural Problem, Not a Supply Problem

Capital is not the constraint. The constraint is the mismatch between the structure of available finance and the nature of the investment required. Buildings are long-lived assets with long payback periods, high upfront costs, and split-incentive problems that conventional instruments handle poorly.

Property Linked Finance (PLF) was examined as a structural solution: by attaching finance to the property rather than the individual owner, PLF aligns repayment periods with asset lifetimes, addresses the payback problem when properties change hands, and creates asset-backed cashflows that can attract institutional capital. With over $20 billion already mobilised through PLF in the US and Australia, the model is proven, and the challenge is adapting it to different regulatory contexts. Country representatives from the Netherlands, Türkiye, and Somalia each reflected on both the potential and the specific barriers in their settings, including the question of whether PLF can be extended to cover resilience as well as decarbonisation, particularly relevant where seismic or flood risk makes rebuilding more viable than retrofitting.
Green finance instruments including green bonds and sustainability-linked loans are also beginning to influence product specifications upstream, creating new market incentives for lower-carbon construction choices. This was identified as an area where financial institutions, working alongside manufacturers and specifiers, can accelerate market transformation without waiting for regulatory change.

More broadly, the general opinion was consistent that finance works best bundled with technical assistance, advisory services, and local intermediary organisations. Capital alone does not unlock delivery in affordable housing, informal settlements, or smaller markets.

3.7 Data and Transparency: Foundational, Not Optional

Data appeared in every thematic area, including housing, materials, finance, urban planning, and resilience, not as a separate topic but as an underlying constraint. The specific challenges are well known but not yet resolved: EPD and LCA methodologies are not harmonised across markets; data on building performance and materials footprints is incomplete and inconsistently accessible; and there are ongoing questions of data ownership and what data is needed for distinct purposes, from regulatory compliance to investment decision-making to performance benchmarking.

A deeper challenge is the absence of shared definitions. Without common agreement on what "sustainable," "near-zero emission," or "resilient" means in a building context, comparing performance across markets, tracking progress against commitments, and directing investment credibly all become harder. Shortly before the summit, GlobalABC with lead partner WorldGBC published Near-Zero Emission and Resilient Buildings: Shared Definitions, Indicators, Frameworks, and Policy Guidance for Implementation, a collaborative effort to establish exactly that common reference framework. Some workshops drew on this publication, and its reception reflected how acutely the sector has felt the absence of agreed definitions. Having a shared language is not a technical nicety: it is a prerequisite for collective accountability.

Across architecture, engineering, construction, and operations (AECO), this momentum is also evident in industry-led initiatives: through the GlobalABC Market Transformation Hub, WBCSD and Autodesk, in collaboration with global engineering firms like Arup, have developed step-

by-step guidance for consistent and transparent embodied carbon assessments through Building Information Modelling (BIM) workflows, adding to the growing body of tools designed to close the data harmonisation gap.

At the summit, RICS, WBCSD, and GBDI launched CLEAR (Coalition for Life Cycle Emissions Alignment and Reporting), with ten collaborating organisations already signed on, to directly address the harmonisation gap on whole-life carbon measurement. Together, these initiatives reflect growing sector consensus that shared definitions and comparable data are the foundation on which credible progress tracking, policy, and investment must be built.

Both CLEAR and the broader data agenda need to be designed to serve the full range of national contexts, including those with limited technical capacity and those working with local and informal construction systems. The underlying principle: the goal is not simply more data, but data that is trusted, comparable, and usable by decision-makers with varying levels of technical sophistication.

3.8 Resilience Is Underpriced

Resilience was widely acknowledged as essential but persistently underinvested. The structural reason is familiar: avoided losses are harder to quantify than upfront costs, and financial systems do not yet adequately reward long-term risk reduction. The 2026 Sustainable Construction Barometer reinforces this: only 47% of sector stakeholders globally believe sustainable construction creates more value than conventional

construction, a figure Saint-Gobain describes as too fragile, particularly in Europe. Making the economic case for sustainable and resilient construction more visible and measurable is one of the most significant opportunities to accelerate the sector's transformation. This connects to a broader shift gaining momentum in the sector: moving beyond minimising harm toward construction that actively restores and regenerates the living systems it touches, an approach reflected in the growing uptake of regenerative design principles, and championed at the summit by American Institute of Architects President Ilya Azaroff.

The connection between resilience and affordability matters most in the contexts where both are most needed. For countries with high climate exposure, buildings designed without resilience are not just climate liabilities: they are financial ones. The framing that resonated most: resilience is not a cost, it is risk management. The challenge is making that legible to the institutions that price risk. At the same time, continued investment in designs and construction methods that integrate low-carbon materials, resilience, and affordability remains essential to making that case in practice, not just in principle.

Passive cooling strategies also drew significant attention as an underutilised resilience lever. Their intersection with building envelope performance, water infrastructure, and urban heat management makes them both a climate adaptation and affordability tool, reducing long-term energy costs for households in warming climates. Countries including Kenya, through its 2024 National Building Code, are already mandating passive cooling as a standard, offering a replicable model for others.

3.9 People Are the Last Mile

A cross-cutting insight, present in workshops on culture, gender, social sustainability, and self-construction but relevant everywhere, is that

technically sound solutions frequently fail at the point where users are expected to engage with them. This is not primarily a communication problem. It is a design and trust problem.

Solutions that do not make sense to the people who use them will not be adopted, regardless of technical merit. Energy efficiency interventions that require users to surrender control or accept complexity see lower uptake than simpler alternatives. Housing upgrades imposed on communities without meaningful participation can lead to resentment and maintenance failure. Gender equity in the built environment is part of the same analysis: buildings, neighbourhoods, and construction value chains designed without adequate representation from women are less safe, less functional, and less equitable.

Three keynote speakers brought this to life from their own practice. Kotchakorn Voraakhom, landscape architect and founder of Porous City Network, spoke from her experience transforming Bangkok, a city sinking at 2cm per year while monsoon flooding intensifies. Her Chulalongkorn Centenary Park, Bangkok's first new public park in three decades, is designed at a 3-degree incline to funnel stormwater into a retention basin capable of holding a million gallons of water during heavy rain. Her argument was not primarily about engineering: it was about helping communities reconnect with the land they inhabit, making the logic of resilience legible through everyday public space rather than technical mandates. Mariam Issoufou, 2025 UNEP Champion of the Earth and principal of Mariam Issoufou Architects, brought a parallel argument from a West African context: the most durable and climate-appropriate buildings are those rooted in local materials, craft traditions, and spatial practices, and the global construction industry's tendency to import standardised solutions erases exactly the knowledge that makes buildings work for the people who use them. Ashok B. Lall, architect and founder of Ashok B. Lall Architects, reinforced this from decades of practice in South Asian contexts, where passive design strategies, local materials, and community-centred processes consistently outperform imported technical solutions.

Together, these voices grounded the summit's institutional discussions in a reminder that sustainable construction is ultimately about the quality of people's lives, and that the sector's most important knowledge is often local, embodied, and at risk of being systematically overlooked.

4 First In-Person ICBC Technical Meeting

4.1 What the Meeting Revealed

The first in-person Technical Meeting of the Intergovernmental Council for Buildings and Climate on 22 April 2026 brought together Country-designated Senior Representatives from over 25 countries, many meeting face to face for the first time since the ICBC's formal launch at COP29 in Baku. The ICBC now counts 53 confirmed member countries and 16 observer countries.

What was most significant was not the institutional milestone, but what governments said when they had the floor. The consistency across very different national contexts was striking: modernising building codes, scaling affordable and resilient housing, advancing low-carbon materials, and mobilising finance for sustainable buildings are challenges that governments across the income spectrum are navigating simultaneously. The differences are in starting points, institutional capacity, and access to technical support, not in the fundamental nature of the challenge.

France, as ICBC Chair, framed the council explicitly as a platform for candid exchange, where sharing challenges is as important as sharing achievements. Brazil and Türkiye, as COP30 and COP31 Presidencies respectively, framed the moment as a transition "from Belém to Antalya": the commitments made at COP30 now being carried forward and elevated under Türkiye's COP31 leadership. Germany underscored that in a context of geopolitical uncertainty and energy pressure, structured international cooperation on buildings is more important, not less, and called on partners to direct resources to GlobalABC as the ICBC secretariat.

4.2 What Governments Are Doing and What They Need

Country presentations mapped both progress towards implementing the Chaillot Declaration and where support is most needed towards implementation. Kenya has launched a National Building Code and National Decarbonisation Roadmap, embedding Chaillot commitments into long-term planning and offering peer exchange with other African ICBC members. Morocco introduced the Advanced Sustainable Living label, the country's first urban-planning-based incentive for residential energy and environmental performance, and is seeking peer exchange on financial instruments to drive developer uptake. China presented a multi-layered regulatory system with large-scale green building deployment, including zero-carbon demonstration zones that integrate policy, technology, and design at scale. Brazil is delivering on the Belém Call for Action for Sustainable and Affordable Housing through Minha Casa Minha Vida and the Eco Invest programme.

Somalia, currently drafting its building codes and housing policy, described Lausanne as an opportunity to embed sustainable construction provisions from the start, before national frameworks are set. Fiji is developing bamboo-cement technology and timber value chains as both climate solutions and local livelihoods, but needs peer learning and resource mobilisation to scale them. Zambia has proposed a Southern Africa Regional Centre of Excellence in sustainability, hosted at one of its leading universities, and is seeking ICBC partnership to operationalise it.

The asks that emerged most consistently, from Morocco, Fiji, Somalia, Armenia, Uganda, Zambia, and others, were for structured support through ICBC Country Dialogues: demand-driven engagements tailored to each country's specific priorities, gaps, and institutional context. Over 15 countries have requested Country Dialogues. Multiple delegations were explicit that the ICBC secretariat must be adequately resourced to respond.

4.3 The ICBC Product Portfolio

Twelve products endorsed or acknowledged at the COP30 ICBC Ministerial Meeting in Belém represent the sector's most concrete set of government-validated implementation tools, and in-country progress on several of the products was reported at the Lausanne Technical Meeting. The portfolio spans the full range of the sector's implementation priorities: the **Belém Call for Action for Sustainable and Affordable Housing** (endorsed by 14 countries and the European Commission); the **World Championship for Energy Savings** (WCES), whose digital platform launched at the summit with seven countries presenting national league progress; the **Principles for Responsible Timber Construction** (endorsed by 17 governments and nearly 400 industry stakeholders); the **Global Framework for Action on Sustainable Public Procurement**; the **Global Property Linked Finance Initiative**; the CAS on Sustainability in the Built Environment (EPFL Extension School), launching its first cohort in January 2027 with ICBC member countries nominating government engineers to participate; and the **Country Action on Blended Cements and SCMs**. An ICBC Baseline Survey, the first joint stocktake of member countries' existing laws, policies, and implementation tools, has received responses from over 15 countries, with analysis feeding directly into ICBC priorities for COP31. Full details on each product and its status are available through the ICBC secretariat.

4.4 The Road to COP31 in Antalya

COP31 in Antalya represents more than a deadline. With Türkiye as both COP31 Presidency and a new ICBC member, the conditions for a high-visibility buildings moment are in place. The proposed ICBC Ministerial Meeting, a Sustainable Buildings International award ceremony including for WCES, and a new cycle of product endorsements together create an opportunity to demonstrate, in front of the full COP audience, that the buildings sector is moving with the coordination and ambition that climate requires.

Whether the COP31 opportunity is fully realised depends on the work done between now and November: ICBC Country Dialogues advancing, national leagues registering buildings for the WCES, and products being developed and submitted that reflect governmental commitment. The countdown has started.


Global Alliance for Buildings and Construction
Towards a zero-emission, efficient, and resilient buildings and construction sector
ICBC CO-CHAIR (KENYA)
ICBC CHAIR (FRANCE)


ICBC CO-CHAIR (KENYA)


BELÉM CALL FOR ACTION
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Express your interest to join the ICBC, and endorse the Belém Call for Action here


Principles for Responsible Timber Construction
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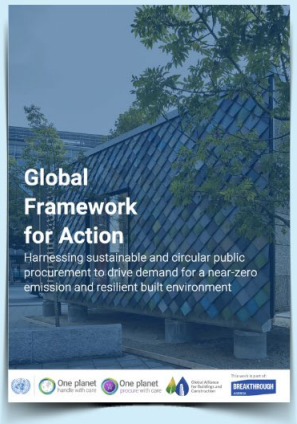
Global Framework for Action
Harnessing sustainable and circular public procurement to drive demand for a near-zero emission and resilient built environment


TÜRKIYE


Launch of the "Sustainable Built Environment"
Continuing Education Programme
21 April
EPFL
UN environment programme
Global Alliance for Buildings and Construction

5 Priorities for the Road Ahead

The following priorities emerge from the convergence of findings across plenaries, workshops, and the ICBC Technical Meeting. They span government, industry, and finance.

5.1 Scale Private Sector Leadership on Sustainable Construction

Industry's most powerful contribution to accelerating the sector's transition is demonstrating, at scale, that sustainable construction is commercially viable. Companies can set and publish internal whole-life carbon targets, prioritise low-emission materials and systems in their own procurement, invest in product innovation and market development, and make the business case for sustainable construction visible through transparent reporting. Where industry moves ahead of policy, it creates the market evidence that makes adoption easier across the value chain.

Manufacturers also have a specific role in supporting specifiers and engineering firms with decision-ready sustainability data, including EPDs and LCA information that is comparable, accessible, and relevant to the contexts where those firms operate. Green finance instruments, including sustainability-linked loans and green bonds, are creating new upstream incentives; companies that align their product strategies with these instruments are better positioned as capital increasingly seeks credible sustainability credentials.

Beyond responding to policy signals, the private sector has its own leadership role to play. Companies can continue to set and publish internal embodied carbon targets, scale procurement of low-carbon products within their own supply chains, and invest in the R&D and market development that makes low-carbon construction competitive. This is most effective when pursued through industry-wide collaboration and associations, which can accelerate standard-setting and market signalling beyond what individual companies can achieve. The most effective industry actors at Lausanne were those already operating at this level of ambition, coming to the ICBC and the summit not only to engage with policy but to demonstrate what they were already doing and make clear what enabling conditions would allow them to go further.

5.2 Make Country Dialogues the Delivery Mechanism

Over 15 countries have requested ICBC Country Dialogues. Two are targeted by end of 2026. These structured engagements, grounded in the Baseline Survey and each country's specific priorities, are the primary mechanism through which political commitments made at COPs translate into coordinated national action. Their delivery depends on the ICBC secretariat being adequately resourced: the single most consistent ask from the Lausanne Technical Meeting.

National governments initiate and host dialogues; the ICBC secretariat coordinates and provides technical support; GlobalABC partners, including international organisations, development banks, and implementing partners, contribute thematic expertise. Municipalities and sub-national governments, who are often closer to implementation than national ministries, need to be included where relevant. Country Dialogues are, in this sense, a microcosm of what the buildings sector requires more broadly: each actor

contributing from their specific role and expertise, with coordination across the whole value chain producing outcomes that no single actor could achieve alone. In parallel, countries can also engage in established roadmap processes, including GlobalABC Climate Action Roadmaps, which provide structured, multi-stakeholder pathways for national action, alongside Country Dialogues.

5.3 Use Procurement as a Policy Signal

Public procurement is the most immediately actionable lever available to governments: it does not require new legislation in most contexts, sends a clear signal to industry, and creates the market conditions for low-carbon products and practices to scale. Where governments specify whole-life carbon, resilience, and circularity in what they buy, industry responds, as the Netherlands, France, and Ghana have each demonstrated. The Global Framework for Action on Sustainable Public Procurement provides the architecture; the training modules for procurement officials launching in 2026 are the entry point.

For industry and industry associations, helping governments understand how to write and enforce performance-based procurement criteria is one of the most direct contributions available to accelerating the policy signal that justifies further investment in low-carbon products.

5.4 Connect Finance to Delivery Ecosystems

Finance will not reach affordable housing, informal settlements, or smaller markets through conventional instruments alone. Property Linked Finance (PLF) offers a structural pathway for financing environmental and resilience improvements to buildings where the regulatory conditions exist; blended finance is more broadly applicable where capital needs to be combined with technical assistance. The task is connecting the ICBC's finance-focused tools (the PLF Initiative, the Toolbox for Public Development Banks, and the Article 6 Handbook) to national development banks and country-level processes that are closest to the investment pipeline.

For investors and financial institutions, the buildings sector offers a significant and growing investment opportunity. The share of renewables in buildings' final energy demand needs to rise from around 17% in 2024 to 46% by 2030 (UNEP, 2026), and closing that gap will require private capital at a scale that public finance alone cannot provide. Risk-adjusted returns on sustainable and resilient construction improve significantly where policy frameworks are in place, making engagement with country-level processes a sound commercial interest as well as a sustainability commitment.

5.5 Invest in Human Capacity Systematically

The capacity gap undermines progress in every other area. The CAS programme creates a structured pathway for building technical expertise at the government level, with ICBC member countries nominating government engineers to participate. The priority is ensuring this and equivalent programmes reach the countries where the gap is most acute, particularly those in the emerging and developing economies, that have explicitly requested ICBC support. Industry also has a direct role: companies that invest in training, technical knowledge transfer, and local skills development alongside their products achieve better market uptake and create more durable local demand for sustainable construction.

5.6 Build Shared Data Infrastructure

Initiatives like CLEAR and the GlobalABC Knowledge Platform, planned for launch by Q3 2026, together create the conditions for shared, comparable resources and data on carbon performance, materials, and building outcomes. For industry, harmonised data infrastructure reduces the cost of demonstrating product performance across markets and gives investors the transparency they need to price sustainable assets correctly. These tools are designed to consider the full range of national contexts, not only markets where whole-life carbon accounting is already mature. The first ICBC Progress Report, to be published ahead of the 2027 Global Forum for Buildings and Climate, will provide the first systematic stocktake of implementation progress under the Déclaration de Chaillot.

6 Looking Ahead

Lausanne reflected a sector increasingly clear-eyed about what it needs to do, and increasingly equipped with the institutional infrastructure to do it. The ICBC provides the intergovernmental mechanism. The Déclaration de Chaillot provides the framework. The ICBC product portfolio helps provide the tools. The Country Dialogues process provides a pathway to national implementation.

However, the buildings sector transition will not be delivered by governments alone. The private sector brings the products, the investment capacity, and the innovation that government policy needs to translate into market transformation. Finance institutions bring the capital structures that can make sustainable construction viable at the scale and speed required. Research and academia bring the evidence base that makes credible policy possible. Civil society and communities bring the local knowledge, the accountability, and the on-the-ground legitimacy that make solutions stick. The summit's most important contribution may have been demonstrating, across 15 workshops, the ICBC technical meeting, and three days of cross-sector dialogue, that these actors are increasingly working from a shared understanding of what is blocking progress and what needs to happen next.

The strategic question is no longer whether sustainable construction is possible. It is whether governments, industry, and the financial sector can align fast enough to make it the default. The road to COP31 in Antalya is the next concrete step in that journey.

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