

ICC cosponsors performance-based building codes global summit

Participants from several nations discussed building regulations at a global summit in Washington, D.C. cosponsored by the International Code Council. The Global Summit on Performance-Based Building Codes, organized by the Inter-Jurisdictional Regulatory Collaboration Committee, provided opportunities to discuss international building regulations. Topics included terrorism and extreme events, multi-hazards, moisture and mold, energy efficiency, sustainability, security, accessibility and building life cycles.

Performance building regulations can reduce trade barriers address variations in cultures and practices of individual countries, and allow indigenous construction methods and materials. Such methods may not be addressed by most prescriptive regulations and associated standards. Unlike most prescriptive building regulations, which provide directions on how a building should be constructed, performance regulations focus on outcomes.

“Internationally, performance-based codes are improving our world in a number of ways,” said ICC CEO James Lee Witt, who addressed the summit. “They are increasing trade across borders, fostering innovation and strengthening our ability to share experiences of working with communities.”

“Bringing performance-based building regulation to reality, and doing it well, will not be a slam dunk, but it will be well worth the effort,” said Jack Snell, retired director of the Building and Fire Research Laboratory of the National Institute of Standards and Technology, in his remarks to the summit. “The key to the role of performance-based building regulations, as better regulation, is the extent to which it facilitates the emergence of better buildings that serve higher social ends.”

The National Research Council USA facilitated the event held at the National Academies. Grants from the National Science Foundation, the ICC, the National Research Council Canada and the Australian Building Codes Board funded the summit. A report of findings and conference proceedings will be available in early 2004. For more information on the IRCC, visit www.ircc.gov.au.

The Inter-Jurisdictional Regulatory Collaboration Committee is an unaffiliated committee of 10 of the leading building regulatory agencies from eight countries. The ICC, a 50,000-member association dedicated to building safety, develops the codes used

to construct residential and commercial buildings, including homes and schools. The majority of U.S. cities, counties and states that adopt codes choose building safety and fire prevention codes developed by the ICC.

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