

# The UIA-ACE-CNOA Joint Declaration for Sustainable Architecture to Turn the World of Today into the World of Tomorrow

Resulting from the collaboration between the International Union of Architects (UIA), the Architects' Council of Europe (ACE) and the Conseil national de l'Ordre des architectes (France) on the occasion of the 2024 Buildings and Climate Global Forum, this declaration aims to recall the commitments made by architects in favour of sustainable and responsible architecture. This declaration builds upon the ACE-UIA-CNOA Manifesto for Responsible Architecture, published in 2015 on the occasion of COP21 in Paris.

## We, architects, leaders and representatives of the architectural profession,

Recalling the commitment made by the  
International Union of Architects (UIA) in 2014 to:

- **Plan and design cities, towns, urban developments and new buildings to be carbon neutral.**

- **Renovate and rehabilitate existing cities, towns, urban redevelopments and buildings to be carbon neutral** whilst respecting cultural and heritage values.

- In those cases where reaching carbon neutral is not feasible or practical, **plan and design cities, towns, urban developments, new buildings and renovations to be highly efficient** with the capability to produce or import all their energy from renewable energy sources in the future.

- **Advocate and promote socially responsible architecture for the community**

Recalling the commitment made by the Architects  
Council of Europe (ACE) in 2009 to:

- **Change our individual professional practices** and place sustainability at the core of our practices and professional responsibilities, promote and foster appropriate mitigation and adaptation strategies and develop and continually improve practices, procedures, products, curricula, services, technology and standards that will enable the implementation of sustainable design; work to bring all existing and future elements of the built environment—in their design, production, use and eventual reuse—up to sustainable design standards, working towards the achievement of a zero emission built environment.

- **Promote sustainable design** and include energy and environmental performance information in all architectural competitions, public architectural awards and competitive selection processes, where appropriate as an assessment criterion, and encourage similar information to accompany all published architectural reviews.

- **Foster environmental literacy and competence** and support the creation of programmes to teach sustainable design skills to all undergraduate and graduate students of urban design and architecture, and encourage continuing professional education and research in relevant areas.

- **Practise institutional leadership** and set an example of environmental corporate responsibility by establishing policies and practices of resource conservation, recycling, waste reduction, and environmentally sound operations in the profession's institutions and organisations.

- **Collaborate for interdisciplinary approaches** and convene sister professions and industry interests to develop interdisciplinary approaches to curricula, research initiatives and industry practices that support an environmentally sustainable future; seek to establish policies, regulations, and practices in government and business that ensure sustainable design becomes normal practice.

- **Broaden service and outreach nationally and internationally** and work with national and international organisations to promote a worldwide effort toward a sustainable future.

Recalling the commitment made by the Conseil  
national de l'Ordre des architectes (France) in 2004,  
2010 and in 2022 through its Plea to:

- **Promote the adoption of sustainable development standards in architecture**, urbanism and construction through actively lobbying urban, habitat and construction policy makers and value chain actors across national, European and global levels.

- **Engage in open debate with the general public and sectorial market actors** to raise awareness on issues related to environmental issues and sustainable development goals in the fields of architecture, urbanism and construction.

- **Define the role of architects in contributing to sustainable development** through their missions to evaluate long term social benefits, conduct whole life value analysis, ensure resources and energy efficiency, and assess environmental impact.

- **Disseminate best practices and valuable examples** of successful architectural projects in terms of their mitigated impact on the environment and towards resources, waste and energy efficiency.

- **Place the protection and promotion of biodiversity at the core of all urban development and architectural projects.**

Recognising that reducing greenhouse gas emissions by setting the entire building sector value chain on a path to near-zero emissions by 2030 and decarbonisation by 2050 are ambitious, yet achievable, goals.

Aware that architects are not the only actors in the building sector value chain that need to work towards influencing ethical, socially responsible and sustainable development throughout the world.

Emphasising that we need the entire building sector value chain to come together to plan and design sustainable, resilient, carbon-neutral and healthy built environments that protect and enhance natural resources and wildlife habitats, provide clean air and water, generate on-site renewable energy, and advance more liveable buildings and communities.

**Pledge to make architecture an economic lever at the service of the inhabitants and the planet by abiding by the following guidelines:**

**- Prioritise rehabilitation of existing buildings in a virtuous way instead of building new:** transforming the use of buildings, mobilising empty offices and conducting resource studies for all projects to reuse materials before any rehabilitation work. Rehabilitating buildings entails reducing waste production. The most effective form of waste management is to prevent waste from being generated in the first place.

**- Decarbonise construction by developing new channels for materials.** Transition away from carbon- and energy-intensive materials and towards carbon-neutral and renewable materials. Develop eco-materials: bio-sourced, geo-sourced and re-used. Implement short supply chain architecture by developing local production channels for building eco-materials based on local resources.

**- Prioritise responsible land use and prevent urban sprawl.** Enable a more balanced territorial development. Limit the conditions for proposing undeveloped land for urbanisation

in urban planning documents by encouraging cities not to open up any new areas without having first demonstrated the impossibility of renovating/densifying the existing stock. Solicit multidisciplinary expertise involving designers (architects, landscapers) during the development and revision of urban planning documents to ensure they are adapted to the best land management practices and to guarantee the architectural, urban and environmental quality of projects.

**- Build resilience and adapt our cities and territories to the extreme phenomena that are becoming the new normal.** Design buildings that respond to the new climatic constraints and take into account the issue of risk to propose adaptation solutions. Stop urbanisation in areas subject to major risks (coastal erosion, flooding, mudslides, fires, etc.).

**- Protect and promote biodiversity.** Preserve agricultural land and natural areas as sanctuaries in urban plans. Preserve existing forests and replant massively adapted species, which are sources of biodiversity.

**- Highlight the urgent need for high-quality Baukultur,** which puts culture on centre stage in order to achieve sustainable and vibrant communities with a better quality of life and well-being for all.

**- Fund accordingly.** Grant public aid to cover any additional costs induced by the introduction of new sustainable architecture construction techniques during their introductory phase. Ensure that all tax and public aid measures are contingent upon meeting quality and ecological standards, backed by thorough design studies. Adjust the VAT rate of materials according to their carbon index. Support academic research in ecodesign and innovative sustainable solutions.

## References

- The 1993 Chicago Declaration of Interdependence for a Sustainable Future of the UIA/AIA World Congress of Architects
- The 2004 10 Proposals for a Sustainable Architecture of the Conseil national de l'Ordre des architectes (CNOA, France)
- The 2007 ACE Policy on Environment and Sustainable Architecture
- The 2007 Leipzig Charter on Sustainable European Cities adopted by the EU Ministers for Urban Development and Territorial Cohesion
- The 2008 European Council Conclusions on Architecture: Culture's Contribution to Sustainable Development
- The 2009 ACE Declaration on Architecture and Sustainability
- The 2010 CNOA Charter of Architectes on Sustainable Development
- The 2014 UIA World Congress Declaration 2050 Imperative
- The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, adopted by all United Nations Member States in 2015
- The 2015 Paris Agreement of the UN Climate Change Conference (COP21)
- The 2015 ACE-UIA-CNOA Manifesto for Responsible Architecture
- The 2018 UIA Architecture Guide to the UN 17 Sustainable Development Goals
- The 2018 Davos Declaration on Baukultur
- The 2019 ACE Statement on Designing for a Circular Economy
- The 2020 UIA Architecture Guide to the UN 17 Sustainable Development Goals Volume 2
- The 2022 CNOA Plea "Habitats Cities Territories: Architecture as a solution"
- The 2023 UIA "Copenhagen Lessons"
- The 2023 ACE-UIA "High-quality Architecture and Built Environment: A Political Goal"
- The 2023 Davos Baukultur Memorandum

