

## INTERNATIONAL



Meeting of the World Federation of Engineering Organisations Committee on Disaster Risk Management held in Ljubljana, Slovenia. The committee is hosted by the Japan Federation of Engineering Societies.

# World Engineers Forum 2012

by Marlene Kanga

**E**ngineering and sustainable development was a focus of discussion at the recent World Engineering Forum which was held last month, along with the meetings of the World Federation of Engineering Organisations (WFEO), in Ljubljana, Slovenia. Sixty eminent speakers from 30 countries presented the latest approaches to sustainable construction and developed new ideas for a green economy. The event was hosted jointly by the Slovenia Chamber of Engineers and WFEO.

The forum was an important event in the development of Slovenia. The objective was to bring the engineering profession, the economy and politics together to help re-launch the construction engineering sector which is currently facing one of its toughest crises in its history. The importance of the conference was highlighted in the opening addresses by the president of Slovenia, Dr Danilo Turk; the president of the European Council of Engineering Chambers, Joseph Robl; and the European commissioner for maritime affairs and fisheries, Maria Damanaki.

The forum also included a meeting of the presidents of seven major engineering organisations: the WFEO, the European Council of Engineers Chambers, the European Council of Civil Engineers, the European Federation of Engineering Consultancy Associations, the European Construction Industry Federation, the European

Federation of National Engineering Associations and the European Society for Engineering Education.

It was also an opportunity for engineers from Commonwealth countries to meet via the Commonwealth Engineers Council and to discuss ways in which engineers can collaborate to solve problems facing many Commonwealth countries in Africa and Asia.

A few hundred participants, engineers, politicians, researchers, scientists and entrepreneurs from all over the world presented their views on sustainable construction, a major challenge of the 21st century. The main areas for discussion included – cities and the urban environment – global, state, city and local levels; sustainable buildings and infrastructure, disaster/risk management and green buildings.

There were many international speakers including two from Australia. National president David Hood spoke on the Green Infrastructure Rating Tool and I spoke on systematic methods for natural disaster risk management, with two case studies from Australia. The forum concluded with a resolution to be included in *Rio +20 – WFEO Declaration on Sustainable Communities*.

An interesting innovation was the ability for engineers from around the world to participate via the virtual conference facility available at [www.tv4engineers.tv](http://www.tv4engineers.tv). It is possible to view all conference presentations and interviews with speakers and guests at this site. During the conference,

## INTERNATIONAL

questions were received by engineers viewing the material live as presented and submitting questions via twitter.

In addition to the Forum, the WFEO held the annual meetings of its Standing Technical Committees. There are ten committees covering a wide range of topics including energy, the environment, information and communication technology, innovations in technology, disaster risk management, capacity building in engineering, engineering education, anti-corruption measures, women in engineering and young engineers. These are all areas where the global view can enhance the development of appropriate systems and knowledge.

For example, I established a sub-committee to develop resources to enhance resilience against natural disasters, especially for developing countries. This will draw on the international expertise of its members and will facilitate knowledge transfer to developing countries. This initiative

is expected to have significant humanitarian outcomes.

Another interesting initiative is the development of a British standard on anti-corruption, BS 10500, which is soon to become an international standard, thanks to the work of the Global Infrastructure Anti-Corruption Centre ([www.giacentre.org](http://www.giacentre.org)). It is hoped that companies will seek accreditation against this standard in the same manner as for the international standards for safety, environment management and quality management systems. This will ensure that anti-corruption will become embedded in corporate cultures, with significant benefit to the community. ■

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Dr Marlene Kanga is national deputy president and the Engineers Australia representative to the World Federation of Engineering Organisations.



Meeting of the World Federation of Engineering Organisations Committee on Energy held in Ljubljana, Slovenia. The committee is hosted by the American Association of Engineering Societies.



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