

Manifesto for responsible architecture

Architects commitment to the climate of the future

We, - architects of the world - have called consistently upon international institutions and national governments for many years to be aware of the impact of the construction industry on climate change and the solutions that architecture can provide.

By virtue of our training and experience, we, architects of the world are the instigators of urban development proposals aimed at housing populations in safe, healthy, supportive and humane conditions. We have the skills necessary to design low-carbon, energy efficient, resilient, healthy and inclusive built environments that contribute to mitigate the effects of climate change and to adapt our cities and buildings to its side effects.

Without a doubt, the 21st Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP-21) is the last chance!

As key players in the built environment, we, - architects of the world - are convinced that everything is still possible if concrete and innovative steps are undertaken to promote a more low-carbon environment adapted to the new climatic conditions.

Consequently, in our daily professional practice and regardless of the project size, we - architects of the world - are committed to promote the following measures with both public and private clients.

For a sustainable and resilient city

Put people at the centre of urban development

The sustainable city is above all friendly and supportive. Its primary purpose is to create communal living conditions and facilitate social inclusion for present and future generations. The sustainable city is not one of closed groups and confinement but a lively city where public spaces belong to the citizens.

Promote the compact city to encourage social and functional diversity

The low-carbon sustainable city combines density and intensity in a balanced way and harmoniously integrates housing, offices, shops and community facilities. Access and mobility are its defining elements. To live well is to live near jobs, services and public transport.

Design, first and foremost, in sustainable buildings

Favour innovative proposals

A project designed around communal architecture should aim for a more rational use of resources. During the design of new buildings or renovation operations, let's encourage innovative solutions that favour shared spaces and facilities that can adapt to multiple uses.

Give value to design studies

The environmental performance of a building should be closely linked to architectural solutions from the preliminary design stage. The building orientation and its compactness are just as important as the thermal performance of materials and systems.

Favour the use of local resources and solutions for construction

Use local resources adapted to context, delivered through short supply chains to significantly reduce the building's carbon footprint and promote the "ownership" of the project by residents. Architecture is also an "emancipation process". Priority should also be given to the environment by focusing on locally proven technical solutions.

Construct buildings that satisfy needs and anticipate their future adaptation

Sustainable construction requires buildings designed to correspond to the needs of the region and end-users. To live well is to live in energy efficient housing that is fit for purpose and future changes in family composition. The obsolescence of commercial buildings and public facilities can be slowed down by anticipating the future requirements of end-users.

Favour urban regeneration

Above all, the low-carbon city should be an invertible city that can rebuild itself from within. Whilst respecting heritage conservation, let's favour urban renewal and, whenever possible, avoid the development ex nihilo of new towns.

Establish governance mechanisms shared by all

Sustainable urban development is collaborative planning that involves all urban developers: councillors, residents, architects and the entire built environment team. Their action should be based on governance mechanisms shared by all.

Study the life cycle and demolition of buildings

Sustainable and responsible construction is to study buildings throughout their life cycle, to pay attention to recycling and the reuse of building materials. It also considers waste and takes into consideration building demolition.

Renovate existing building stock

Large-scale renovation of the existing building stock is an important prerequisite to achieve the overall objective of reducing greenhouse gas emissions. Consequently, the extensive renovation of the existing building stock should be at the heart of public policy.

Architecture is a powerful force, both in the medium-term and at low-cost, to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and adapt our societies to the inevitable side effects of climate change. Through their comprehensive approach that takes into consideration economic, social, environmental, political and cultural factors during the design of urban operations, architects contribute to the global commitment to sustainability.

To live better together tomorrow, we - architects of the world - call for the implementation of decisive policies to stop the uncontrolled growth of cities, to eradicate the injustice related to the allocation of resources, to slow down climate exodus, to anticipate exposure to natural or industrial risks and to put an end to the depletion of natural resources across the planet.

Paris, 30th November 2015



As of now, together, we - architects
of the world - are committed
to the climate of the future!