Message from The President

Lance Jay Brown, FAIA
CSU President

Getting to Zero

On March 3, 2022, I participated in a panel discussion at the New York Build Conference at the Jacob Javits Center in New York City. The panel was titled “A Sustainable Built Environment – Steps Towards Net Zero by 2050”.

In the aftermath of COP 26, the publication of the UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) report, and, the advent of climate change and Covid-19 there seems to be more and more agreement on what must be done to rebalance and regenerate our global environment. Much of this agreement hinges on our ability to reduce and, moreover, reverse the effects of climate change as measured by our production and reduction of CO2.

In considering my remarks for the panel discussion it seemed that there are indeed several steps to be taken if we are going to reach the goals set for 2050 and, with greater effort, perhaps earlier.

As a starting point and from a design point of view, we must start to look at best practices. Best practices in our time include past time-tested behaviors and processes derived by indigenous cultures around the world as well as the accelerated disruptors emerging today. Such practices must be reaffirmed and explicitly shared for maximum effect.

Additionally, this approach includes concerns for wellness, mobility, and an abiding respect and concern for the public realm. And last, but by no means least, all steps must address issues and concerns related to diversity, equity, and inclusion, in UN terms, Leave No One Behind. Leave no one behind (LNOB) is the central, transformative promise of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Given this as a preamble I offer the following ten steps to zero.

(Read more).
From a new realm in Metaverse to community solutions in Rio de Janeiro’s favelas and strategies to rethink cities’ development to meet climate ambitions, this seventh edition of CSU NEWS reminds us how sustainability and collective impact can create a better, greener and safer planet. The 2022 CSU Award Gala taking place on 16 March will celebrate the achievements of 4 influential personalities that have contributed to a positive change for a more equitable and sustainable society: the award-winning author Ms. Imbolo Mbue, the former President of the Rockefeller Foundation Dr. Judith Rodin, the Executive Director Emerita of UN-Habitat Ms. Anna Tibaijuka, and the immediate past President of the UIA Mr. Thomas Vonier.

After a successful 2021 Green Cities lecture series that showcased best practices in achieving sustainable urbanization in cities, CSU kicks off a new year-long series bringing us to the State of California for the month of March. We are also happy to announce the opening of our new virtual photo contest. Whether you’re an amateur or professional photographer, we would love to see some of your images from cities all around the world to be published in our newsletter. You can find more information on the format and themes here.

In the face of the escalation of tragic events in Ukraine, CSU would like to share a statement alongside with the design community:

**CSU Statement on Ukraine**

The Consortium for Sustainable Urbanization stands with the people of Ukraine. As architects, planners, and environmentalists, we promote the role of sustainable urbanization and resilient design in the planning of our cities. War’s destruction, wherever it takes place, is the opposite of sustainability, the negation of resilience, and the antithesis of urbanity. Any conflict, whenever it kills and maims people, however it mutilates and empties cities, is untenable. Whether in Iraq, Libya, Syria, Afghanistan, Ethiopia, Yemen, Myanmar, Kashmir, or Ukraine, the destruction and desolation of war leads to human tragedy, mass migration, climate change, and the end of civilization.

Our purpose is to advocate for responsible and enlightened planning and design. We stand with the 3.5 millions of architects around the world represented by the International Union of Architects (UIA), designers and urban planners, who condemn the invasion of Ukraine and express solidarity with all those suffering from the conflict: "The architectural community is fighting for a cleaner and better planet. We are distressed that the war is doing the opposite. We must stay focused on endowing a better world to future generations".
We reiterate the United Nations resolution calling for Moscow to immediately withdraw from Ukraine.

Articles

Could the Coming ‘Metaverse’ Help Accelerate Sustainable Urban Development?

Technology Column by

Sarbuland Khan, CSU Advisory Board Member

The first thing to note about ‘Metaverse’ is that it has yet to be created or even well-understood. The term ‘metaverse’ itself has been around for a long time. It was first coined as far back as 1992 by Neal Stephenson, in his science fiction novel “Snow Crash” in which he presented his vision of a computer created universe with programmable humans interacting in a virtual world.... (read more)

New Sustainable Favela Network Map Makes Palpable the Sheer Diversity of Community Solutions from Rio de Janeiro's Favelas

Beatriz Carvalho and Theresa Williamson, CSU correspondents in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil

Rio de Janeiro’s Sustainable Favela Network (SFN) recently launched an update to its Sustainable Favela Network Map. The results were presented during its last meeting of 2021, with 79 network members in attendance from favelas across Greater Rio de Janeiro.

The Sustainable Favela Network brings together favela collectives installing solar panels, building bio-systems to treat sewage, setting up green roofs and community gardens, strengthening community belonging through grassroots museums and initiatives that act to guarantee and protect their communities, collecting their own data on public health as an advocacy tool, and much more.... (read more)

Perspectives on Research for Sustainable Urbanization

Don Okpala, Guest Contributor, Lagos, Nigeria

The departure point of research for sustainable urbanization can be said to derive from and reflect the twin focal themes of the Habitat Agenda – viz “Adequate Shelter for all” and “Sustainable human settlements development in an urbanizing world”, subsequently affected/infuenced by climate change phenomenon in recent years.... (read more)

Rethinking Cities to Achieve Sustainability for all

Dr. Yasemin Afacan, Guest Contributor, Bilkent University, Turkey

In 2015, United Nations (UN) had adopted the 2030 agenda for a fifteen-year plan. This agenda is based on the idea of ‘no one is leaving behind’ and is comprised of 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). These SDGs are defined as a universal call to protect the planet and improve health and well-being. As social diversity and climate change threaten all of us, there is an urgent call for action to improve health and education, reduce inequality, and spur economic growth.... (read more)

CSU News
CSU Photo Contest Kick off (read here)

2022 CSU Green Cities Lecture Series #1: State of California, by Kevin Connaughton (read here)

2021 CSU Green Cities Lecture Series: Bridging the Global and Local Perspectives, by Maxinne Rhea Leighton (read here)

Upcoming CSU Events

CSU 2022 Awards Gala, 16 March 2022, Virtual
Register Here

CSU Flagship Conference “Forum for Sustainable Urbanization: Climate Change and the Role of Cities”, 18 May 2022, UN Headquarters, New York City
More Information Here

CSU Publications

Resilient Cities After COVID-19 (purchase here)

Post-Pandemic Cities (purchase here)

Sustainable Urbanization at the UN, for Architects and other Design Professionals (purchase here)

Gateway Portals to the City: Infrastructure for Sustainable Urbanization (purchase here)
Public Spaces for Sustainable Urbanization (purchase here)

Large Movements of Refugees and Migrants: Challenges for Sustainable Urbanization (purchase here)

The Future of Cities: An Integrated Approach to Urban Challenges (purchase here)

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