South Africa to host 25\textsuperscript{th} World Congress of Architects in 2014

The Deputy Minister of Public Works, Hon Hendrietta Bogopane-Zulu recently led the South African delegation to the 24\textsuperscript{th} World Congress of the International Union of Architects held in Tokyo, Japan from the 24 September to 01 October 2011.

The significance of the Tokyo meeting was that following the Congress, the Japanese Organising Board would wrap up and hand over the baton to the next host which happens to be South Africa through the city of Durban in the eThekwini Metropolitan Municipality. The Deputy Minister accepted the baton on behalf of the government and the people of South Africa.

This year’s event was organised and hosted by Japan on behalf of the International Union of Architects (UIA) and the week long festivities were held at the apt Tokyo International Forum. The event was attended by more than 5000 participants, 1700 were foreign delegates and about 2700 were Japanese professionals with 600 architecture students. The Congress was a sombre occasion which took place against the recent devastating earthquake, tsunamis and the nuclear incident which afflicted Japan on 11 March 2011.

Organised under the theme: \textit{Beyond Disasters, Through Solidarity, Towards Sustainability}, the Congress looked at the role of architecture to design and build structures that will anticipate and absorb natural disasters such as the recent one in the country while at the same time contending with the new modern challenges including climate change, global migration and the pressures on the burgeoning cities, aptly referred to as hyper-den-cities, which will characterise a future Asia.

Speaking at the official closing ceremony, the Deputy Minister of Public Works, Ms Hendrietta Bogopane-Zulu, passed condolences to the government and people of Japan on behalf of the South African government before accepting the baton from the Presidents of the Japanese Institute of the Architects, Mr Taro Ashiharo and the International Union of Architects (UIA), Ms Louise Cox. Internationally the UIA
comprises of 1.4 million registered architects as members and about half a million students coming from 124 countries including South Africa.

The Deputy Minister reiterated the position of the South African government on the importance of architecture and general infrastructure development to meet developmental goals:

“As we move forward to creating sustainable livelihoods and preserving tomorrow today, we count on you to design structures that are relevant and responsive to our modern challenges as we head towards 2050 and beyond.

So central was the role of infrastructure development that the South African government established the Infrastructure Commission headed by the President, His Excellency Mr. Jacob Zuma”, the Deputy Minister reminded the Congress.

The Deputy Minister was joined on stage by the Speaker of the Ethekwini Metropolitan, Councillor Loggie Naidoo who drew on the experiences of the FIFA 2010 World Cup and the upcoming COP 17 in Durban in November 2011 to assure the world that Durban was ready, mobilised and waiting and that it would not disappoint. Also present were representatives from the South African Institute of Architects (SAIA), their African peers from African Union of Architects and the South African Council for the Architectural Profession (SACAP).