

Proposal of the Forum

[Executive Summary]

The purpose of this Forum is to promote mutual understanding and collaboration among Asian nations in order to prepare a framework for cooperation in the field of architecture and building construction.

Participants are to include government officials and representatives from private industry. This framework, or “platform”, will include market information about materials, professional manpower, and building technology as well as legal systems, standards, regulations, and production systems.

[Issues]

The architecture and building construction necessary for Asian urbanization requires that we take a more sophisticated approach to international collaboration.

We will focus on the following issues during the conference:

1. What is the importance of establishing a common platform?
2. How to create appropriate means for international collaboration?
3. How to find triggers that lead to concrete projects between countries?

[The goal]

The goal of this Forum is as follows:

1. To build mutual understanding of the architectural and building construction issues confronting Asian countries as they urbanize.
2. To create a framework or platform for sharing the issues facing the building construction industries in each country, i.e. constraints, opportunities, best practices, etc. Each country will have its sub platform shared among the participating nations. The platform will facilitate dialogue and mutual cooperation among representatives from the various nations.
3. To have each country create its own vision based on its own state of affairs, and to share that vision with other countries to facilitate international alliances and collaborations. The goal will be the same but the vision based on the

goal can be different from country to country.

[Introduction]

On behalf of architecture and building construction professionals in Japan, including representatives from government, the academic community and private industry, we have sought to establish a wide variety of links among our colleagues in other Asian nations. Our activity is based on extensive experience in international cooperation and the promotion of such cooperation in the building and housing construction industries. This Forum is strongly supported by Japan's Ministry of Land, Infrastructure and Transport.

The purpose of this proposal is to generate opportunities for establishing mutual understanding, for sharing provisions of rules and regulations, and for collaborating to establish a common platform in architecture and building construction in Asian nations. We look forward to creative and constructive discussions among the eminent professionals participating in this Forum.

[Background]

Since currency devaluations induced an economic recession in Asia, the region's nations have been struggling to reach their previously high economic growth rates. At the same time, however, the situation facing the Asian region has changed.

Many Asian nations facing urbanization have yet to prepare a proper plan for dealing with this trend. It is commonly known that the demand for urbanization must be matched by an adequate construction capacity to meet that demand and that the quality to consort with certain criteria must be achieved. It is also necessary to understand the different dynamics of public and private sector projects, the latter of which are based more on market-driven factors.

On the other hand, there is mutual concern over significant issues such as environmental control, fire and safety management, quality control systems, and

technology innovation and its practical application. These are common concerns for all the countries but related provisions must be different from nation to nation.

Recent innovations in information technology have accelerated globalization and revealed that even relatively conservative fields such as architecture and building construction have changed their style. The management of extensive information about material procurement, manpower management and building technology is increasingly crucial to our efforts to achieve better quality, cost efficiency and mass production.

As a nation that conducts two-thirds of its overseas construction projects in the Asian region, Japan is keenly aware of these changes and is very much concerned about the future of architecture and building construction in the Asian region.

Accordingly, we propose to organize an international conference called "Asian Forum for the Field of Architecture and Building Construction". We believe that mutual understanding among Asian nations is essential to laying the groundwork toward establishing a framework; solid channels to the people, technology, qualification systems, legal structures and management systems required to achieve urbanization.

[ISSUES]

Our main concern is how to foster international alliances in the architectural and building construction communities.

We propose the following three issues to be discussed;

1. What is the importance of establishing a common platform?

It will be necessary that the participating countries share a common understanding of the present problems. Discussion of the problems presented by each country will help everyone realize the need for a common framework, or platform, for cooperation.

2. How to create appropriate means for international collaboration?

Given the many alternative methods for achieving international collaboration,

we must set priorities and discuss ways to implement these methods. Concrete programs, such as people exchanges and technical support, will be proposed.

3. How to find triggers that lead to concrete projects between countries?
Active discussion will help to reveal hidden problems that could be solved by other countries.

In discussing the implications of the various issues concerning the participating countries, we assume it will be most appropriate to focus our attention on areas that are of importance to all participating countries.

It is generally thought that the use of innovative techniques usually is not cost efficient. However, international alliances can facilitate technology transfers that help to improve both quality and efficiency. Consequently, the receiving country will gain compatibility with global standards.

Discussion on the above issues should not be limited to technological aspects but also include legal and financial considerations.

Regarding Japan's view on international collaboration, we realize that we have increasing opportunities to introduce, and a market large enough to absorb, foreign resources such as building materials, manpower, and design and construction services as well as direct or indirect technical assistances. Further discussion will be welcomed by the Forum.

[Approach and the Goal]

The Forum's first step will be to arrange an international conference in Tokyo that will give participants a chance to create a common appreciation for the key issues.

We intend to invite government officials and prominent private-sector professionals from selected Asian countries.

The purpose again is to create mutual understanding of the technologies, legal structures, public incentives, and financial systems of each participating country through discussions focusing on key topics to be selected beforehand.

To pave the way for a fruitful conclusion to the conference, we set forth of the following goals for the Forum:

1. To create a mutual understanding of what each country needs in the fields of architecture and building construction.
2. To create a common framework or platform among the nations as a useful vehicle to communicate each other and to establish mutual cooperation. Discussion will start by sharing common concrete issues to be selected beforehand. Each country will have sub-platform to develop its own customized form based on its specific needs.
3. To create and share visions for establishing international alliances and collaborations that is based on conditions in each country. Each country's vision will be formed based on a common goal for all participating countries but unique to that country because it also takes into consideration circumstances specific to that country.

[Merit of the Forum]

If all the participants understand the concept of the Forum and share the same goal, the discussion will become very constructive and productive. Each participant will understand that the purpose of the forum is:

1. To understand other countries' visions through discussions on each issue.
2. To create opportunities to discover other countries' needs and concerns through direct discussions with key people from those countries.
3. To give participants the opportunity to show his or her country's vision to the key people of other countries.