

“Charter for the Built Environment”

COP17 Declaration.

DURBAN, December 1st 2011

We *as built environment professionals* inhabit and are all citizens of one interdependent and fragile planet *together with the rest of humanity*,

We recognise that *Africa amongst continents* (our continent) is the most vulnerable to climate change, and exhibits the highest forms of global social inequality,

We recognise that our continent is a bastion of biodiversity that is vulnerable to the unmediated demands of poverty alleviation,

We recognise in South Africa that design has been used to entrench social and economic injustices, and that only through implementing a new architecture and urbanism can we truly unbind the geographies of our past,

We recognise that economic opportunity has direct enablers in the configuration of the primary elements of the built environment; being Architecture, Urbanism, Nature, transport and infrastructural services, and we recognise that design must hold these elements in harmony and be accountable to the broader society,

We seek for a quality of life in which our social, spiritual, economic and symbolic ambitions can be pursued without compromising on social or environmental justice.

We seek a built environment which enhances the natural environment and its biodiversity,

We seek a built environment which brings delight, joy, reflection, safety and opportunity to its inhabitants,

We seek a built environment in which design is the arbiter of the pragmatic and the poetic, and that considerations for generations to come precedes the present demands of the day,

We seek a built environment which enables our history and culture to be reflected tangibly, but equally allows the future to be manifest,

We seek a built environment in which a new abundance is achieved, but not at the expense of hinterlands, but through efficiency and designing with constraints and modesty,

We seek a built environment that will be independent of a carbon intensive economy,

We seek a built environment that will recognize mistakes of imported harmful past technologies.

We seek a built environment whose shape, form and performance will be resilient to political and economic change.

We seek a built environment that is imbued with hope, that will be a refuge for the weak, and equally be a place where the desire for success can be satisfied,

We seek a built environment which supports the evolution of humanity into enlightened beings, and supports an ethical stewardship of place, space, resources and social cohesion.

We seek an environment which moves beyond shelter but supports dwelling and 'being'.

We seek a built environment in which the needs of the many outweigh the needs of the few, and that actively seeks to integrate that which was torn asunder, by designing for the dignity of all citizens through social cohesion, exposure and celebration of difference.

We seek a built environment which pursues excellence and eschews mediocrity and sloth and its associated cruelty and inadvertent erosion of dignity,

We seek a built environment which inspires its citizens to constructive action,

We seek a built environment which reflects our shared destiny and duty as citizens of this lonely planet.

We seek a built environment that will compel governments and the public sector to appoint public officials that are equally academically and professionally qualified in the built environment professions to monitor, complement and / or compete with other private sector built environment practitioners to enhance best practices in the building and construction industries and professional practice as a whole especially in countries where they are lacking.

We seek to influence and effect the expansion of educational and training opportunities in the built environment fields across the board especially for those previously and presently disadvantaged.

Authored by Mokena Makeka on behalf of Architects and their concern for society, **COP17 DURBAN**,
November 30th 2011