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Climate-friendly construction worldwide: Building Sense Now and MISEREOR embark on knowledge-sharing partnership

The global Building Sense Now initiative has joined forces with MISEREOR, the German Catholic Bishops' Organisation for Development Cooperation, to work on common projects. The partners' aim is to offer access to country-specific building expertise – not only in line with climate-friendly and culturally sensitive practice, but also so that ideas can be implemented directly worldwide. In specific terms, the plan is to organise a series of digital events looking at actual examples from Africa, Asia, Europe and Latin America. The curtain will be raised on the first free Master Class on 15 July. Furthermore, submissions for the Building Sense Now Global Awards can still be received until the end of August. The jury is looking for innovative people who answer climate change and the many challenges it poses with creative architecture and design concepts. Building Sense Now was founded in 2017 and is supported by the German Sustainable Building Council (DGNB).

“Our aim with the Building Sense Now initiative is to foster a new understanding of architecture, moving away from global standardisation towards buildings and cities that blend in meaningfully with their respective climate zones and cultures,” says Dr Christine Lemaitre, DGNB CEO and co-initiator of Building Sense Now. The global network of like-minded architects sees climate- and culture-friendly construction as a key lever in mitigating climate change and the scarcity of raw materials. “By joining forces with MISEREOR, we want to pool resources and organise a series of online events that will

offer access to specialist knowledge so it can be applied directly to building methods – in ways that make sense on a local level.

MISEREOR supports people all over the world in realizing construction projects that tap into local potential, traditional methods and resources. “Many of our partner organisations offer outstanding expertise underpinned by years of experience in this area,” states MISEREOR Chief Executive Pirmin Spiegel. “Our experience shows, that legal regulations in many countries, for example, make it difficult to build with locally available materials. There are unjustified reservations about building with earth, wood or bamboo, especially in urban contexts. The MISEREOR Chief Executive sees the partnership with Building Sense Now as a good opportunity to address such concerns: “It’s important to make as many people as possible aware of the tremendous potential offered by the traditional building methods of local communities. For example, they require significantly less production energy than steel, concrete or cement – and create a good living environment.”

Master classes featuring experts from different continents

The joint master classes will revolve around practical examples and field reports on building projects in different climate zones around the world. A variety of building experts from the MISEREOR and Building Sense Now networks will speak at the events, which apart from presentations, will also offer plenty of chances to exchange views and ask questions. All events are scheduled to last around one to two hours, cost nothing and will take place in English or with English subtitles.

To kick off the first Master Class on 15 July 2021, the two initiators of Building Sense Now Christine Lemaitre and Prashant Kapoor will provide an introduction to the vision of the initiative. This will be followed by a talk on 27 July by the architect Anna Heringer, who is famous for her award-winning mud buildings. The series continues in August and September with climate-friendly building in Latin America and Nigeria, low-tech strategies and the use of local building materials in Delhi. To view the full programme and to register, go to www.buildingsensenow.com/events/.

Applications open for the Building Sense Now Global Awards

Applications can also now be submitted for the second Building Sense Now Global Awards. The awards honour building professionals worldwide facing the multitude of environmental, economic and social challenges associated with climate-compatible, culturally sensitive design. Award winners are deemed to be driving change in the building and property industry with respect to sustainable development. Participation in the awards is free, and submissions are still open until the end of August. The award ceremony will take place at the Glasgow Climate Change Conference in November. For further information and submission details, go to www.buildingsensenow.com.

German Sustainable Building Council (DGNB e.V.)

The DGNB German Sustainable Building Council was founded in 2007 and has around 1400 members, making it Europe's biggest network for sustainable building. The aim of the DGNB is to promote sustainability in the construction and real estate industry and instil awareness of building sustainability among the broader population. The DGNB is an independent non-profit organisation. Its certification system offers a planning and optimisation tool for evaluating sustainable buildings interiors and districts. It was developed to help organisations enhance the tangible sustainability of construction projects. The DGNB system is based on the concept of holistic sustainability, placing equal emphasis on the environment, people and commercial viability. The DGNB Academy is an education and training platform that has already provided more than 5500 people from more than 45 countries with official qualifications in sustainable building.

MISEREOR

MISEREOR is the German Catholic Bishops' Organisation for Development Cooperation. For over 60 years MISEREOR has been committed to fighting poverty in Africa, Asia and Latin America. In its role as an aid organisation, MISEREOR joins forces with local partners to support those in need – regardless of their religion, ethnicity or gender. Since it was founded in 1958, MISEREOR has supported more than 111,000 projects in Africa, the Middle East, Asia, Oceania, Latin America and the Caribbean. MISEREOR is a member of the relief alliance Bündnis Entwicklung Hilft e.V.

Issued by:

Deutsche Gesellschaft für Nachhaltiges Bauen – DGNB e. V.
German Sustainable Building Council
Tübinger Strasse 43 | 70178 Stuttgart, Germany
+49 (0) 711 72 23 22-0 | info@dgnb.de

Press contact:

Felix Jansen
Director of PR, Communications and Marketing
+49 (0) 711 72 23 22-32 | f.jansen@dgnb.de

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