



2007 President's speech at APB Annual Dinner

會長於亞太分會
週年晚宴講話



2007



statistic, and one that my colleagues and I on Council are extremely proud of.

Obviously the needs of the housing industry in the UK, here in Hong Kong and elsewhere in the world are different. Housing policy and housing practice have to be set within the context of very different economic circumstances, societies and cultural values.

But whatever differences there may be between us, policies to create sustainable communities: ensuring adequate housing for those in greatest need and doing so in a way which encourages different organisations and different sectors of the community to work together more effectively are not restricted to any one country.

The goal of creating sustainable communities is a common one shared by Governments and peoples throughout the world.

In the next twelve months, for the first time in history, more than half of the Earth's population will live in cities. The number of city-dwellers is expected to top 5 billion before 2030, accounting for 60% of the total population. In Asia and Africa their number is expected to double in just one generation.

Almost all future population growth will be concentrated in the cities of the developing world, which are already battling with serious problems such as poverty, lack of drinking water and sanitation.

The challenge for housing professionals is not so much to try to control where people will live – wider social and economic policies drive that agenda – but how to provide better conditions for individuals and for families: to help them improve their lives and also ensure that the communities in which they live are healthy and safe places to live in.

Only 2 weeks ago I was in South Africa where, as in the UK, discussion was focused on how to secure investment to improve the existing stock and to provide new accommodation.

In the UK the housing sector is responding imaginatively – particularly in creating new vehicles to attract private sector funding – and as a result we have a much more diversified housing sector than even a decade ago. The question is now whether these new vehicles can not only deliver the investment that's needed but whether they can also bring about further improvements in service delivery.

A key challenge for the CIH, is to ensure that within the housing profession we have professionals in place who can cope with these changes and still focus on providing high quality services which will help to create and maintain sustainable communities.

I know that many people in this room tonight are striving to deliver good quality services which satisfy tenants and other service users, and many of you are using your skills and expertise to help regenerate communities.

But, whatever success we have achieved, it is my view that we need to do more.

As a profession and as individual organisations, we need to have a clear vision of where we're going; we need to recognise the changes that are taking place in our operating environment; and we need to inspire our staff in contributing positively to what must be a shared agenda.

At the CIH, one of the critical success factors in our Business Plan is to help improve individual and organisational performance.

We are concerned about improving standards, which we achieve through promoting professional practice,

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Chairman, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen. Can I begin by saying how pleased I am to be here this evening, and to be able to visit my friends and colleagues in the Asian Pacific Branch during my year as President.

Twelve months ago, along with a number of colleagues from the CIH Council, I attended your last annual dinner which coincided with the Asian Pacific Branch's 40th anniversary celebrations. That was a memorable occasion and one that fellow members from the UK still recall with great pleasure.

Since your last dinner the debate on housing policy in the UK has shifted.

For the last decade, housing has been regarded as a means towards an end – wrapped up in the wider language of communities or regeneration. That has now been re-enforced by a commitment to increase new housing supply as an objective in its own right.

The Government has also made it clear that with its new focus on supply, Ministers will neither be constrained by existing institutional relationships nor producer

interests. Future provision will be based on a new model in which an increasing variety of providers work both in competition and in partnership.

The Government propose a mix of carrots and sticks to achieve new targets on housing supply: including increased competition between Housing Associations and private developers for public subsidy. In turn, developers will need to progress existing schemes more quickly or risk losing planning permission and Government will be looking to Housing Associations to make resources go further through more efficient procurement and by using reserves to finance extra borrowing.

Local Government will also be expected to up its game – both at a strategic level and in supporting delivery.

With new pressure on public spending it is also clear that the future must be one that is based on a far more robust assessment of value for money. The solutions that count going forward will be the ones that make the best use of scarce public resources. Increased Government funding is important – but it's how we use that subsidy to create even more resources that is the key – whether that's in the form of cheap land, developer contributions, private finance or any other combination of initiatives.

The political imperative is to make this money work as hard as it possibly can – and that means giving it first to those who can maximise its value.

The CIH has worked hard over the past 12 months to influence government policy and to "Make the Case for Housing". As a result, housing in the UK now has a much higher profile: but the CIH also needs to respond to developments that are taking place internationally.

The CIH has a large overseas membership. The Asian Pacific Branch now comprises around 2,000 of our 20,000 members worldwide. That is an impressive



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and we strive to influence housing policy, drawing on our members' experience to influence new ideas and initiatives.

But most importantly we support this by helping to develop the knowledge and skills of housing professionals.....working with Universities and Colleges to implement our education programmes.....providing training courses and other events.....and through our professional practice publications and advice.

This is at the heart of what we do.

In recent years my colleagues in the Asian Pacific have done much to extend networking with individuals and to strengthen communications with friendly organisations in the Peoples Republic of China, Taiwan and Macao. Six years ago the branch changed its name, and its focus, to reflect the challenges and opportunities that were emerging because of the strong desire for increased professionalism across the region as a whole. And we have been working closely with the Asian Pacific Branch to further develop the opportunities for membership of the CIH in the region.

Earlier this week I visited both Taiwan and Macao. It was inspiring to meet housing and property management colleagues in those countries, and to discuss some of the challenges they are facing at the present time. It is remarkable how familiar many of those challenges are to those faced by housing professionals in the UK.

In Taiwan I was delighted to present certificates to 33 individuals who recently successfully completed a study programme to become fully qualified members of the CIH. This was the first group of professionals from Taiwan to become members of the CIH, and their achievements represent a true milestone in the history of our organisation.

Members of the Asian Pacific Branch of the CIH have worked tirelessly to develop links in Taiwan, Macao, China and elsewhere across the region and they deserve full acknowledgement for their vision and commitment. On behalf of the CIH's council I would like to publicly thank all those members who have contributed to that vision and who continue to promote the role the CIH plays in promoting professional housing management.

Chairman, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen..... the Chartered Institute of Housing's mission is...“to maximise the contribution that housing professionals make to the well being of communities.” This needs skilled and trained workers to deliver policies into practice on the ground.

These are exciting times both for the Asian Pacific branch and the CIH as a whole. I hope that we will be able to meet again to take forward the initiatives we have already begun to develop the CIH as a truly international organisation.

May I wish you all an enjoyable evening.

*The annual dinner was hosted jointly by The CIH (Asian Pacific Branch) and The Hong Kong Institute Of Housing on Friday 26 October 2007