



## **WORLD GREEN BUILDING DAY – Press release**

**23 September 2009**

The Green Building Council of South Africa (GBCSA) will be participating in the first annual World Green Building Day on 23 September 2009 which will see green building councils worldwide hosting events to highlight the importance of green building. To mark the event, the GBCSA is joining other green building councils internationally in lobbying the negotiating teams for the forthcoming United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change COP15 negotiations in Copenhagen in December, where the world's leaders will meet to negotiate an international climate change deal to supersede the targets agreed to at Kyoto.

Under an initiative set up by the World Green Building Council, the GBCSA is urging the South African negotiating team to recognise the significant role of buildings in generating carbon emissions and contributing to climate change. Worldwide, buildings consume approximately 40% of total energy requirements, both in their construction and ongoing operation, as well as in the embodied energy of the building materials. Buildings also represent some of the best, most practical and cost effective emission reduction opportunities.

The Intergovernmental Panel of Climate Change's (IPCC) fourth assessment report has concluded that "the building sector not only has the largest potential for significantly reducing greenhouse gas emissions, but also that this potential is relatively independent of the cost per ton of CO2 equivalent achieved. With proven and commercially available technologies, the energy consumption in both new and old buildings can be cut by an estimated 30-50 percent without significantly increasing investment costs."

However, this potential has not yet been recognised in international priorities. The COP15 round of negotiations in Copenhagen will provide the opportunity to redress this, should member states agree on a platform of proven policy tools and support mechanisms for action that reduce GHG emissions in buildings while sustaining economic growth.

This platform would include the voluntary green building rating tools such as Green Star SA developed by the GBCSA, as well as minimum energy efficiency standards for buildings, fiscal incentives for energy efficiency in buildings.

South Africa's property and construction industries have indicated that they are ready to contribute to this global cause and hope that the political leadership will recognise and incorporate this willingness into concrete emissions reduction targets for our sectors. The GBCSA's submission to the COP15 negotiating team is set out in a letter (attached) which will be delivered on World Green Building Day.

