

THE WORLD NEEDS SUSTAINABLE DISASTER RELIEF HOUSING

The Wood Products Industry Can Help

WE LIVE IN A WORLD THAT DEALS WITH CRISIS ON A DAILY BASIS. POWER STRUGGLES RESULTING IN CIVIL UNREST OR OUTRIGHT WAR, POVERTY AND ASTRONOMICAL DEBT – THESE ARE BUT A FEW OF THE SITUATIONS CONTINUALLY PLAGUING THE PLANET’S GENERAL POPULACE AND AFFECTING THEIR DAILY LIVES. WHEN CHALLENGING CLIMATIC CONDITIONS ARE ADDED TO AN ALREADY CHARGED ATMOSPHERE, ALONG WITH A SEEMINGLY EVER-INCREASING INCIDENCE OF NATURAL DISASTERS, WE FIND A SITUATION WHERE PEOPLE’S MOST BASIC NEEDS ARE COMPROMISED, THAT FOR CLEAN WATER, FOOD AND SHELTER.



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Organizing Committee
Sustainable Disaster Relief Housing
Conference

Recent catastrophic events in New Zealand, Japan, Chile, Haiti, Pakistan and Indonesia are a perfect example of the devastation wreaked by natural events which leave too many homeless in their wake. Even here in North America, the effects of Hurricane Katrina in 2005 are still being felt by the people of Louisiana; this year’s spring and early summer flooding, both in the United States and Canada, has forced thousands of people from their homes, damaging many of those homes beyond repair. It takes years to rebuild communities that have been devastated by natural disasters. During that time, temporary housing becomes the breeding ground for disease and desperation, particularly in developing countries, as has unfortunately become all too apparent in Haiti following the devastating earthquake of 2010.

There is a need for permanent solutions from the start – with the financial crisis most countries find themselves in, it is not financially responsible to erect temporary housing solutions that require replacement with permanent buildings at a later date. All too often, the temporary housing must suffice well beyond its useful lifetime, filling a long-term need it was not designed for, because financing cannot be found for the permanent solutions. This reality leads to inadequate and unhealthy living conditions.

There is an urgent and world-wide need for swiftly-erected and durable housing solutions, particularly following natural disasters, but for areas with challenging climates as well. North America’s northern communities, particularly in Canada, are also constantly struggling to provide acceptable, affordable, and easy-to-assemble sustainable housing for their citizens. There are highly populated areas world-wide that are currently at high risk for catastrophic events, from earthquakes, volcanic eruptions and tsunamis – the Pacific Rim figures prominently, as do North and South America’s west coasts, India, Nepal and many





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parts of the Middle East. The world must be prepared to take action.

Years of research in the forest products industry have resulted in direct responses to address the issue of sustainable and affordable housing which can help current and future needs for permanent and adaptable solutions as a first line of response. In an effort to facilitate face-to-face interaction between the countries and regions requiring these solutions, those in the wood products industry who can deliver them, and those who oversee their implementation, the Forest Products Society is holding a conference in the fall of 2011. The conference is entitled Sustainable Disaster Relief Housing, Swift and Durable Construction Solutions in Times of Need and will be held at the National Arts Centre in Ottawa, Ontario, Canada on October 27 & 28, 2011.

The Sustainable Disaster Relief Housing conference will bring together key research and design practitioners, government agencies, housing industry leaders, relief organizations and representatives from countries and regions in need. Three main sessions will fill out the day and a half-long program in an effort to:

1. clarify the needs, both current and future, and critically evaluate current response scenarios;
2. identify housing solutions and understand the various stages involved in supplying and executing those solutions; and
3. insure preparedness strategies by learning

from what hasn't worked in order to mitigate delays in delivery of solutions when next called upon to do so.

The conference will also include an exhibition hall with table-top displays where representatives from companies and organizations directly or indirectly involved in providing sustainable disaster relief housing will be present. The evening program on October 27th will include breakout sessions from these experts who will share their relief-effort experiences with a more intimate audience.

The speakers' roster for the conference is filling in and currently includes the following:

- **IAN DE LA ROCHE** Ph.D., Adjunct Professor at the University of British Columbia and Business Associate, Timwood AB: Dr. de la Roche is the former President of Forintek Canada Corporation and was instrumental in merging three national institutes, Forintek, FERIC and Paprican, into FPIInnovations where he served as President and CEO for two years. His 40-year experience as a researcher, strategic planner and program developer have changed the face of industry, government, and university partnerships in North America. Dr. de la Roche's talk is entitled: "Sustainable Shelter Solutions Following Natural Disasters."
- **AVI FRIEDMAN**, Ph.D., Professor of Architecture at McGill University, founder

of the Affordable Homes program at McGill: Dr. Friedman is known nationally and internationally for his housing innovation and was selected by Wallpaper magazine in 2010 as one of ten people worldwide who would "most likely change the way we live." Among this practicing architect's numerous awards are the Manning Innovation Award and the United Nations World Habitat Award. Dr. Friedman's talk is entitled "Innovative Strategies for Lower Cost Wood-Based, Prefabricated Dwellings."

- **MICHAEL GREEN**, Architect and founder of mgb ARCHITECTURE + DESIGN: Mr. Green's building design expertise ranges from residential to commercial, from single family homes to international airports. His preoccupation is with safe, cost-effective and carbon neutral solutions to the world's building challenges and champions mass timber solutions for all. Mr. Green's talk is entitled "Solving one challenge without causing another."
- **JEFFERY ARMSTRONG**, a trained architect and founder of DAC International: Mr. Armstrong's experience is in the development of quickly-erected, energy efficient, panelized homes that have been shipped around the world. DAC, along with its technologies and expertise, were purchased by KOTT lumber where Mr. Armstrong continues with his contributions and his passion. His talk is entitled "Cold Climate Social Housing: A Case Study."

Speakers are being solicited from various organizations involved in disaster relief efforts worldwide, such as the United Nations Habitat Division, the US National Guard, the Canadian International Development Agency, and the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation. We hope to have representatives from the Chilean, Japanese and Haitian embassies to speak on their recent experiences as well as university, research and industry representatives to demonstrate the inroads that have been made toward finding solutions. Please forward suggestions for speakers to the Organizing Committee via the

Conference website at <http://www.forestprod.org/sustainablereliefhousing/contact.html>.

This conference would not be possible if not for the sponsors who have contributed at various levels. Gold sponsors for the conference are FPIInnovations, Natural Resources Canada and the Eastern Canadian Section of the Forest Products Society. Other sponsors include the Forest Products Laboratory in Madison, Wisconsin, Laval University in Quebec City, Momentive Specialty Chemicals Canada and Norjohn Limited – A Division of Walker Industries. Additional sponsorship at various levels is still being sought. Confirmed table-top exhibitors at this time include: the University of Minnesota, FPIInnovations, and the Forest Products Society. The Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation is considering securing an exhibit space as well. There are a limited number of break-out session opportunities on Thursday evening. Those first expressing an interest in the break-out sessions will be given priority. Please contact the organizing committee at the link provided above for your interest in procuring an exhibit space and/or a break-out session.

The time is right for a conference of this type – easily erected, affordable and sustainable solutions are needed now. With the conference being held in Canada's capital city, an influential, international, multi-disciplinary audience is expected.

Representatives from various government ministries will be in attendance, including Natural Resources Canada and the Department of Foreign and International Trade Canada, along with representatives from various embassies, non-governmental organizations, para-governmental organizations, universities, aid agencies, and manufacturers. The hope is to create a forward momentum in identifying appropriate solutions and the equally important and pertinent strategies for their implementation. Anyone involved in the supply and implementation of relief solutions or with an interest in this topic is urged to attend. For more information, visit the Conference Web site at: www.sustainablereliefhousing.org.