

USGBC's Greenbuild Conference Officially Kicks off in Toronto

Published on **6 Oct 2011**

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Posted in **Media**



23,000 leaders of the "regeneration" captivated by Friedman, Roberts, Fedrizzi, Farmer and others at the Air Canada Centre

(TORONTO) Oct. 6, 2011 – The U.S. Green Building Council's (USGBC) [Greenbuild International Conference & Expo](#) kicked off in Toronto yesterday with 23,000 delegates from around the world showcasing the latest in green building products, technologies and innovations. Beginning with an opening plenary celebration event at the Air Canada Centre on Wednesday evening, 2011 marks Greenbuild's 10th year. Greenbuild is the world's largest green building conference & expo.

"This is the first time Greenbuild has been held outside of the U.S. and Toronto is a fitting place to celebrate 10 years of Greenbuild," said Rick Fedrizzi, President, CEO & Founding Chair, USGBC. "Last night's opening event featuring renowned leaders like Thomas Friedman, Dr. Paul Farmer, Cokie Roberts and others was a spectacular look into the future and what's next for green building."

Fedrizzi kicked off the event, welcoming the crowd to Greenbuild. Pulitzer Prize-winner Thomas Friedman talked about the necessity of a green revolution: "We're not having a green revolution (right now); we're having a green party. In revolutions, people get hurt – companies are forced to change or they die." He added, "Our revolution will be here when the word green disappears."

Friedman also spoke about the importance of price signals and long term fixed consumer demand. He talked about "loops" that are shaping the future, including how the rising food prices lead to political instability which leads to oil crises, and so on. He spoke of a broader intersection of climate change, population growth and globalization, taking a page from his book, *Hot, Flat and Crowded 2.0*. Friedman identified 1979 as a year when we began down our path of consumption, pollution and climate change, and pointed to the 2008 economic crisis as the wakeup call when both the market and Mother Nature crashed. Ending with a call to action, Friedman said, "The challenge we have today is that we must become the regeneration."

When Friedman told the crowd that they were "too dumb to quit," he was met with enthusiastic applause and agreement.

Fedrizzi returned to the stage as the event turned to USGBC's Resiliency Agenda, "The green building movement will jumpstart a fragile and struggling economy," said Fedrizzi. "Resilience in Haiti is about rebuilding and education – harnessing a culture's spirit."

ABC News political commentator Cokie Roberts moderated a panel featuring medical anthropologist Dr. Paul Farmer, former Canadian Prime Minister Kim Campbell and Friedman on the topic of resilience. Farmer reflected on his work in Haiti before the 2010 earthquake and the rapidly mobilized global response in the time following the disaster. "The earthquake forced us to reconsider how we build infrastructure, and that's a good thing," said Farmer.

Campbell praised attendees' work toward a greener built environment, noting, "This group understands that we have a challenge. Instead of being in denial about climate change, [they're] looking for solutions."

USGBC also introduced [Project Haiti](#), its initiative in partnership with HOK to build a LEED Platinum orphanage in Port-au-Prince. "If we can build a LEED Platinum building here in the poorest country in the western hemisphere, we can build one anywhere," said Roger Limoges, chief of staff, USGBC.

Fedrizzi ended his remarks with a look to the year 2037, envisioning the day when the USGBC closes its doors, having accomplished its seemingly unachievable mission. Imagining what USGBC would announce when that day comes, Fedrizzi said simply, "we changed the world."

Chart-topping rock band Maroon 5 closed out the evening on a celebratory note with an energetic performance featuring hits like "Moves Like Jagger," and "Misery."

A long-time champion for the environment, Maroon 5 went carbon neutral for its 2007 tour, performed at the Live Earth Inaugural Ball in 2009 and was honored at the 2006 Environmental Media Awards. The band has also taken the stage in support of Haiti, launching the Haiti: Aid Still Required campaign movement earlier this year, and played at "A Night to Benefit Haiti" in Los Angeles.

About U.S. Green Building Council (USGBC)

The U.S. Green Building Council is committed to a prosperous and sustainable future for our nation through cost-efficient and energy-saving green buildings. With a community comprising 79 local affiliates, nearly 16,000 member organizations, and more than 168,000 LEED Professional Credential holders, USGBC is the driving force of an industry that is projected to contribute \$554 billion to the U.S. GDP from 2009-2013. USGBC leads an unlikely diverse constituency of builders and environmentalists, corporations and nonprofit organizations, elected officials and concerned citizens, and teachers and students. For more information, visit usgbc.org and connect on [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#) and [LinkedIn](#).

About Greenbuild

The U.S. Green Building Council's (USGBC) Greenbuild International Conference & Expo convenes the industry's largest gathering of representatives from all sectors of the green building movement. Three days of extensive educational programming, workshops, a vast exhibition floor and ample networking events provide unrivaled opportunities to learn about the latest technological innovations, explore new products, and exchange ideas with other professionals. Greenbuild is the three time recipient of IMEX Green Meetings Award. Visit greenbuildexpo.org for more information.

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