

USGBC and GBC Brasil Urge Governments to “Build the Green Economy from the Ground Up” with Submission to Rio +20 Conference

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On Oct. 31, the U.S. Green Building Council and the [Green Building Council Brasil](#) submitted a joint position paper on sustainability in the built environment for consideration of governments around the world and the U.N. governing body heading up next year's UN Conference on Sustainable Development, [Rio+20](#).

The [Rio+20 conference](#) will be held in June 2012 and marks the 20th anniversary of the first-ever Earth Summit. There were 172 governments represented at the 1992 meeting, which resulted in several environmental treaties, including the creation of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) – the foremost international forum for tackling climate change. Expectations run high for the Rio+20 conference, which is seen by many as the next glimmer of hope for global progress on the environment.

The themes of the Rio+20 conference are: The green economy in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication and an institutional framework for sustainable development. Both of these themes are compatible with the goals and missions of USGBC and GBC Brasil. The joint paper, "[Building the Green Economy from the Ground Up: Sustainable Cities and the Built Environment](#)," outlines the importance of sustainable urban infrastructure and planning. The proper planning of green communities and neighborhoods can facilitate sustainable economic and social development without further contributing to the acceleration of climate change. Developing countries are rapidly growing and cities now accommodate more than 50% of the world's population. **In a world of more than 7 billion people, we must chart a sustainable path that promotes economic prosperity and security for all while protecting the environment.**

In addition to well-planned, high-density neighborhoods, the paper explains the importance and benefits of green homes and schools. Not only do green homes and schools contribute to our global environmental goals, but they also improve health and quality of life. Key case studies from around the globe, including developing countries, demonstrate the affordability of a green built environment and urban infrastructure. The additional benefits of green communities, homes and schools, coupled with their viability and affordability address the crucial theme of poverty eradication under sustainable development.

Finally, the joint paper addresses the need for resiliency as a conscious goal for sustainable development. Climate change is imminent and two fold—sustainable development can assist mitigation efforts; however, it is crucial that these efforts are pursued in conjunction with resiliency in order to address adaptation needs. The vulnerability of Haiti and other developing nations demonstrate the devastating potential of climate change as well as the unquestionable need for resiliency in urban infrastructure.

USGBC would like to thank GBC Brasil for their assistance in the development of this joint paper, particularly for making the findings and policy recommendations relevant to Brazil and other rapidly developing nations. The report is available on the [GLOBE Alliance Resources page](#).

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