The Holcim Foundation for Sustainable Construction is more than just an idea now: on September 16 and 17, 2004 it held the first Holcim Forum for Sustainable Construction at, and with the cooperation of, ETH Zurich. 120 experts from around the world took part, showing that the importance of sustainability in construction is recognized everywhere, but there is a lack of concrete implementation in every part of the world.

“To me, sustainability above all means harmony – between nature and humans, between today and tomorrow, between rich and poor countries, between west and east,” said Dr. Zhenyu Li of Tongji University, Shanghai during a coffee break. 120 women and men from 35 countries – scholars, architects, politicians, students – came together in Zurich to talk about sustainable construction in a friendly atmosphere. With this mix of people, it is easy to imagine how lively and emotional yet professional the course of the Forum was. Again and again, it became apparent that sustainability means something completely different in Africa, for example, and in Europe or Latin America – especially in relation to the central topic of the Forum, the connection between basic human needs and sustainable construction.
The “Basic Needs” conference was the Holcim Foundation’s first major public engagement. As the Forum came to a close Friday evening, attendees appeared highly satisfied but also exhausted. For two eventful days they had listened to dozens of papers and statements, taken part in the debate on sustainability, discussed a wealth of details in workshops, judged projects, and taken advantage of every intermission to exchange thoughts with the other participants. Material for discussion was ample – and in some cases, as in the conference keynote speech, quite explosive: Simon Upton, Chairman of the OECD Round Table on Sustainable Development, maintains that the world’s real problems cannot be solved with global approaches, which are too often academic in nature and give rise to a verbal consensus without concrete effect. Upton thus remains skeptical of broad concepts and gestures.

Another prominent speaker, Professor Muhammad Yunus, showed on the second day how a single, in itself very simple idea can bring about sustained changes. Yunus is founder of the Grameen Bank, which extends “microcredits” of sometimes only a few dollars to help the poorest of the poor in Bangladesh onto their feet. In his talk, Yunus addressed an expanded concept of sustainability comprising the necessary social, cultural and economic aspects.

**A commitment to the future**

Other contributions dealt directly with sustainable building and its effects on society. Winy Maas presented revolutionary ideas for the architectural future of large cities, and Portugal’s Eduardo Souto de Moura showed the importance of sustainability in his spectacular football stadium. Many attendees were fascinated by the chance to meet these luminaries of international architecture and get to know them personally in a relaxed atmosphere. For younger attendees especially, the Forum became a genuine experience. In the awareness that sustainability is always a commitment to the future, the Holcim Foundation enabled five students from each of its five partner universities to attend the Forum.

**Winners from around the world**

The students came to the Forum not just to listen, but to inspire the professionals in attendance and contribute actively to the discussion with their projects that presented their proposed contributions to sustainable construction. A competition was held in which the attendees judged student posters. The three top prizes went to students from South Africa, China and Switzerland (see page 6). The student reports underlined the importance of sustainability on every continent – but also that the Holcim Foundation has succeeded in gathering outstanding forces from all regions of the earth for the Holcim Forum, thus contributing further to the acceptance of sustainable construction.
“We succeeded in bringing people together!”

Professor Dr. Hans-Rudolf Schalcher (left) was the guiding force behind the first Holcim Forum. The Dean of the Department of Civil, Environmental and Geomatic Engineering at the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology (ETH Zurich) and member of the Board of the Holcim Foundation led the way through the program.

Professor Schalcher, what were your expectations of the first Holcim Forum?

We wanted to bring a large number of the people with whom we are carrying out the first cycle of Holcim Awards together for the first time. This includes the jury members and representatives of our partner universities, for example.

Were there academic expectations as well?

We were primarily interested in building networks. The academic benefit of such an event is in the exchange between participants. These networks may later lead to cooperation on an academic level.

Are you satisfied with how the first Holcim Forum went?

Extremely satisfied! Throughout the Forum and post-event tour I was able to follow the intensive discussions which confirmed that the choice of attendees was outstanding.

What role can the Holcim Foundation play in such an academic environment? Do the participants not relegate it to the role of a mere sponsor?

I don’t believe so. After all, Holcim is in continual contact with the academic world and supports and initiates research in Switzerland and elsewhere. Holcim has also demonstrated a genuine scholarly commitment by endowing an assistant professorship for sustainable construction at ETH Zurich. This initiative will certainly leave tracks in the academic world.

How did you find collaborating with partner universities in preparing for the Forum?

It was quite diverse! They are all autonomous universities with their own academic culture. I think it will be a great challenge now for the Holcim Foundation to apply the same standards everywhere in granting the Holcim Awards. The problems and expectations surrounding the term “sustainability” differ widely around the world.

That was made clear again and again in discussions, opinions and papers. Did the diversity of definitions surprise you?

Not at all! There are innumerable so-called recognized definitions of this term, but still everyone understands sustainable construction to mean something different. Some focus on energy or resource consumption while others give greater weight to social aspects. Actually the economic aspect of sustainability currently draws the least attention – I hope we can change that somewhat through the Holcim Foundation.

Does a clear definition of sustainable construction not need to be found for the Holcim Foundation to carry out its work?

We have already established the five Target Issues (see “Foundations” Number 1 or www.holcimfoundation.org/target.html) – these express our understanding of sustainability in construction quite precisely.

Will future forums of this type have a stronger topical focus?

That is certainly conceivable. As I said, this time the aim was to bring people together. In the future, we may seek a deeper scholarly examination of a specific topic.

Will the next Holcim Forum be held in Zurich again?

Certainly not – we will roam around the world!
“Focus on the basics!”
Simon Upton is a highly committed politician. At the age of 23 he was elected to New Zealand’s Parliament, where he remained for 19 years. From 1990 to 1999 he also served as his country’s environment minister. Today Simon Upton is chairman of the OECD Round Table for Sustainable Development – and a member of the Advisory Board of the Holcim Foundation. At the Forum, he took on the role of keynote speaker. Far from resorting to empty platitudes, his passionate and pointed talk delivered ample material for discussion.

It is difficult, Upton said, to picture anything specific when hearing the expression “sustainability”, which has been puffed up by a surfeit of definitions to the point of becoming unrecognizable. Despite frequent lip service to the notion of sustainability, real progress has been modest. In part, Upton says, this is because hardly anyone understands the often nebulous concepts involved – including political leaders who sometimes sign international agreements without really knowing what they entail. Upton’s prescription is greater modesty. Fine-tuning of equilibriums will not help solve the enormous problems the world faces, nor are grand theories required. “Rather it demands modesty. Sustainable development is a useful idea if we are prepared to focus on the basics.”

“We need sustainable societies!”
The speech by Professor Muhammad Yunus drew especially strong interest at the Forum. How did he put his listeners under a spell? First, by his charismatic personality: Yunus, a member of the Advisory Board of the Holcim Foundation, has remained almost unbelievably modest, open and cordial despite all his successes. But he also made a strong impression with the project he introduced: Grameen Bank.

When the US-educated economics professor returned to his home country of Bangladesh in 1972, he sought solutions to the bitter poverty of his compatriots. After the famine of 1974, he traveled throughout the country to learn what the poorest of the poor needed. And heard, “to my dismay, that they only needed a few dollars to secure a job and thus a minimum income.” Yunus lent them – especially women – a few dollars from his own pocket. With the help of this microcredit, many borrowers managed to secure a job and escape misery. “Everyone said, it’s fine that you’re giving them money, but you’ll never get it back. But the opposite was the case: the poorest people were enormously dependable.” Yunus thereupon tried to sell traditional banks on his idea of microcredit – to no avail. So he founded Grameen Bank, which with loans of over $2.5 billion now leads all other banks in Bangladesh and has spawned followers in 60 countries. “At the turn of the millennium a goal was set to reduce the number of poor by half by 2015,” said Yunus at the conference. “That is why we must make an effort if we want a sustainable world. There are very many people in extreme poverty who have no opportunity to lead a sustainable life. We must concentrate first on them. Looking at the house they live in comes later.”
papers and opinions

Winny Maas, Netherlands:

“Long-term is not necessarily sustainable!”

Dutch architect Winy Maas loves to explore possibilities and deconstruct traditional assumptions. “When I think of sustainability I immediately think of the enormous potential of research, experiments, tests,” he said. In his entertaining talk he warned against equating sustainability with eternity, noting that “we don’t know what values will govern the lives of future generations.” Using a small French town as an example, Maas showed how time can erode ideas in architecture and urban planning. “There are political changes, demographic changes – so cities must also be capable of change.” But this is only possible if more short-term investments are made. It can also be sustainable to continually replace old ideas about construction with new ones, thus creating coherent but temporary situations.

Finally, Maas himself sketched out what such new ideas about building might look like. The Dutch architect, one of the founding members of Rotterdam architectural collaborative MVRDV, has made a worldwide name for himself with unconventional, radical proposals. The ideas presented at the Forum all arose from a wish to oppose the fragmentation of space and to increase the density of the structural fabric. Maas seeks links and combinations – between nature and residential space, between railway stations and museums. He understands that investors demand buildings with a clearly defined use, but says “we need flexible blends. They are sustainable because they are adaptable and can adjust to changing needs.” Since no one knows what changes will occur, significantly more investment must be made in “prototypes and bold proposals”.

Eduardo Souto de Moura, Portugal:

“There is only good or bad architecture!”

One of the most individualistic architects of our time, speaker Eduardo Souto de Moura put it clearly: “To me, architecture is a global issue. There is no ecological architecture, no intelligent architecture, no fascist architecture, and also no sustainable architecture – there is only good or bad architecture. But there are problems that we should not neglect. For example energy, resources, costs, social aspects – you always have to be concerned with that!”

He continually strives for originality, he is making a name for himself particularly through his use of exquisite materials combined with unexpected colors and a mastery of light to produce exceptional impressions.

To illustrate how he puts this view into practice Souto de Moura pointed to his celebrated new structure, the spectacular stadium in Braga, which lent architectural luster to the European Football Championship in Portugal while adhering to various principles of sustainability in the built environment. In his presentation Souto de Moura made it clear that sustainability need not only and not always mean renunciation, restraint and modesty. When aiming for sustainability one must also give people something they can be proud of. In that Eduardo Souto de Moura, one of today’s most visionary architects, has certainly succeeded with the stadium in Braga, as the spontaneous reactions at the Forum reaffirmed.
Student Awards: inspiration

The main attraction during breaks at the Holcim Forum was 21 posters displaying sustainable projects to be judged by the attendees. These posters were submitted by students from all over the world whom the Holcim Foundation had invited to the Forum.

“Sustainability is the ability to meet the future,” said Gerhard Schmitt, Vice President of the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology (ETH) Zurich at the Forum. “In fifty years we should still be able to make reasonable use of the buildings we are planning today – in every aspect regarded as important then.” From this perspective it is clear that the younger generation must be involved in the discourse on sustainable construction.

Five universities, five students each
The Holcim Foundation sought to link the future of architecture with that of engineering at the Holcim Forum by asking its partner universities in China, South Africa, Brazil, the United States and Switzerland each to invite five students. Some schools chose the young attendees directly, while others awarded the invitations to Zurich in competitions. The young people who ended up taking part in the Holcim Forum were distinguished by their talent, expertise and high level of interest. The students enjoyed the contact with others of similar interests from other parts of the world. “Students have written to me that they have never met so many interesting people from their own age group,” says ETH Professor Hans-Rudolf Schalcher, who served as program coordinator at the Holcim Forum.

A colorful gallery of projects
The young people enriched the Forum not only with their opinions and their presence, but also through an unusual action: the “student posters”. Each of them had previously been assigned the task of developing a project which would contribute in a sustainable way to meeting basic needs, and presenting the project on a large poster. The spectrum of projects ranged from disposal of construction waste in Brazil to new tree-like building structures in China. The result was a colorful, attractive and challenging gallery of presentations for Forum attendees to peruse during breaks with a benevolent eye – but also a critical one, as they were responsible for choosing the best from among a total of 21 of such projects.

Winners from South Africa, China and Switzerland
The best projects were recognized with prizes at the end of the event. Maria J. Loots of the University of the Witwatersrand in Johannesburg took third place. Second place went to Fang Xu and Feng Qu of Tongji University in Shanghai. The winning project was created by a team from ETH Zurich: Ivica Brnic, Florian Graf and Wolfgang Rossbauer plan to use enhanced traditional technologies to rebuild a war-ravaged university building in Afghanistan. Two members of the winning team were not present when the prize was awarded – they were in Afghanistan to advance the realization of their project. The students’ sustainable ideas are more than just castles in the air – they are concrete approaches to dealing with concrete challenges.

Next generation Awards
1. Florian Graf
2. Fang Xu and Feng Qu
3. Maria J. Loots
of the next generation

Florian Graf
Student, Swiss Federal Institute of Technology (ETH), Switzerland, member of winning team: “To me sustainable building means thinking globally. Naturally it makes sense to build a Minergie (minimal energy) house in Switzerland, but sustainability in other places is much more important. We shouldn’t forget, for example, that there will be a volume of new construction in China during the next few years equal to everything already standing in Europe. That’s why it makes sense to incorporate energy-saving innovations there.”

Fernando Amato
Student, University of São Paulo, Brazil: “Sustainable construction is a new way to bring together economic performance, environmental quality and social responsibility. Sometimes we forget one of these three aspects, but we must always bring them all together.”

Maria J. Loots
Student, University of the Witwatersrand, South Africa, 3rd place: “We must recognize sustainable building must not be a hindrance to life on the planet – including the life of animals and plants. I see that even large companies are getting involved in this concept, and I find that very stimulating. Because it shows that not everything in this world is about money.”

Seana Nkhahle
Student, University of the Witwatersrand, South Africa: “Building demands a holistic approach. That means for example that the construction industry must consider how it can provide employment, consume less water, enhance efficiency and support social and economic development. There is so much more at stake than simply piling stones together.”

Fang Xu
Student, Tongji University, China, 2nd place: “Our most important task is to find a balance between long-term demands and what is necessary in the present!”

Diana Csillag
Student, University of São Paulo, Brazil: “We must not create islands of excellence where everything that makes up sustainability is implemented, but rather start with ordinary everyday construction: buildings should consume fewer resources, give people an identity and have some relation to their environment.”

Lara Greden
Student, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, USA: “In the history of building, people have mostly worked with materials that required little energy to produce. This type of sustainable construction has almost vanished today but must be promoted again.”

Matt Lehar
Student, Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), USA: “To me something is sustainable if it can stand on its own feet – if it can theoretically continue to exist forever without consuming resources.”

Ajay Shah
Student, Swiss Federal Institute of Technology (ETH), Switzerland: “To me, sustainable construction means that we will give the next generation a better world, or at least one that’s just as good.”

Feng Qu
Student, Tongji University, China, 2nd place: “Every building has its own history. A city is almost like a family that is still developing. We have to protect this family.”
“An important basis for future projects!”

Members of the Advisory Board of the Holcim Foundation in Zurich (from left): Muhammad Yunus, Simon Upton, Rolf Soiron and Klaus Töpfer.

Dr. Klaus Töpfer paid the Holcim Forum a visit in his capacity as member of the Advisory Board of the Holcim Foundation. The German politician was Federal Minister of the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety for many years and later headed the Federal Ministry for Regional Planning, Building and Urban Development. Klaus Töpfer was named Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) in 1998. UNEP was founded in 1972 to coordinate all environment-related activities of the other UN organizations.

“Foundations” spoke to Klaus Töpfer during the Holcim Forum: How important is today’s discussion of sustainable construction?

Töpfer: Building is one of the world’s most important activities. Over ten percent of the global gross domestic product is associated with the construction industry. With this volume, giving short shrift to social consequences and environmental demands would create enormous difficulties. We live today in a divided world. On the one hand there is dramatic population growth in the developing countries and an associated enormous demand for urban development. On the other hand is a part of the world where the population is contracting, where cities must redefine themselves, where things that were built only recently must be reconsidered. To concern oneself in such times with sustainable construction is not only exceptionally helpful, but simply necessary.
First gathering of the Advisory Board

Several members of the Advisory Board of the Holcim Foundation for Sustainable Construction – Rolf Soiron, Klaus Töpfer, Simon Upton and Muhammad Yunus – also took part in the Forum. They used the opportunity for a discussion with the seven members of the Board of the Holcim Foundation on sustainability, the goals of the Holcim Foundation and how these goals can be achieved in the years to come. The first official Advisory Board meeting will take place in 2005, rounded out by the presence of Yolanda Kakabadse, member of the World Conservation Union (IUCN), and Amory Lovins, CEO of the Rocky Mountain Institute. The Advisory Board’s role is to inspire the Foundation, ensure that its activities are consistent with the current interpretations of sustainable construction and hence lend it credibility and integrity.

But what does sustainable construction really mean?
There are enormous needs for housing and infrastructure, including things like wastewater disposal, trash disposal and transport infrastructures. These needs must not be met at the expense of social demands. We cannot permit a further fragmentation of society, nor can we shift the burden to future generations. What we urgently need is economic development, social equalization and sensible treatment of the environment.

Can a conference like the Holcim Forum help solve these major problems?
The fact that so many important people were present demonstrates that we are seeking concrete progress, that we recognize the urgency of the problems. It is obvious that one conference cannot answer all these questions – nor does anyone expect it to. And naturally another benefit of such a conference is to enable new contacts. If someone comes from India to exchange views here, it can provide an important basis for future projects. Such a forum enables building of capacity and increases people’s understanding of the concerns and problems of others.

Rolf Soiron, Chairman of Holcim Ltd and of the Advisory Board of the Holcim Foundation: “Sustainable construction has to do with us not destroying the resources needed by generations to come – but we must also be aware that this can be achieved only with a reduction in the level of our demands and expectations.”

Markus Akermann, CEO of Holcim Ltd and Chairman of the Board of the Holcim Foundation: “Sustainable construction means energy-efficient use of building materials, aesthetics, rational housing and infrastructure, especially in developing countries. We as producers want to know what happens to our materials and what contribution we can make to sustainability.”
Over half of the Holcim Forum participants accepted the invitation to the post-event tour. For two magnificent early-autumn days, they studied sustainable projects, visited spectacular buildings and got to know the natural beauties of Switzerland.

“China is beautiful,” said a student from Shanghai, clearly enjoying the post-event tour after the challenging Forum, “but Switzerland is just as lovely – only much smaller than China. Everything is so close together here!” Gorgeous autumn weather over the entire weekend promised to leave the guests from around the world with striking impressions of Switzerland to take home. Brilliant sunshine made for a spectacular boat ride on mirror-smooth Lake Lucerne and a sensational ascent into the glittering glacier world of Mount Titlis.
Nouvel and tunnel

Of course the post-event tour was no mere tourist excursion. The programme remained focused on architecture, sustainability and construction. Participants were particularly impressed with the Lucerne Culture and Convention Centre (KKL), which they toured with a well-informed guide. This impressive event venue is the work of French architect Jean Nouvel and opened in 2000. Acoustically and architecturally, the KKL concert hall is regarded as being among the best in the world. The travelers experienced a different kind of record in Amsteg. Here work is proceeding on Switzerland’s largest construction project and the world’s longest tunnel, the 57-kilometer Gotthard Base Tunnel. In many areas the aim has been to take a sustainable approach to the many challenges of this mammoth undertaking. These efforts drew a keen interest and evoked lively discussions among the participants, making the post-event tour a continuation of the Holcim Forum not only in terms of content, but also of atmosphere, full of friendly but passionate debate over exciting topics.
In the same moment that participants at the inaugural Holcim Forum applauded the awarded entries in the “Next Generation” poster gallery, the Holcim Forum website was also updated. Virtual met reality as participants saw their own photographs from the event on the website on the same day. With interest in the Holcim Forum beyond the attendees in Zurich, the approach of the Holcim Foundation website was to create a real-time update so that Internet visitors experienced the Holcim Forum while attendees were in the plenum. Keynote addresses, expert papers and discussion presentations were released on the website as they occurred – providing a rich experience for the over 7500 visitors to the Holcim Foundation and Holcim Forum websites during September.

A dedicated website for the Holcim Forum – www.holcimforum.org – was created to provide information to conference attendees regarding working groups, the schedule of the conference, detailed profiles of each of the keynote speakers, and visitor information for Zurich and surroundings. During the Holcim Forum, the site was updated with the latest version of the participants list, papers submitted by presenters, and photographs of the event. The aim was clear: provide the richest information possible on the Internet for virtual and “physical” attendees of the conference, and encourage return visitors to the Holcim Foundation website. As a follow-up, a short video (6 minutes) has been produced to provide an overview of the Holcim Forum*.

During September, the number of visitors to the website more than doubled, and the higher level of visitors has since been maintained. The Holcim Forum and Holcim Foundation websites rank highly in Google searches for “sustainable construction” – all in time for the launch of the Holcim Awards awareness campaign in November. More than 500 people have registered to the Holcim Foundation e-newsletter, and will be regularly updated with the latest information about the Holcim Foundation and Holcim Awards competition (http://www.holcimfoundation.org/update1.html). Internet activities don’t stop with the public website. The dedicated Holcim Foundation site on HolSpace provides the most complete and updated source of information for Group company communications managers for their own communications activities – web.holcim.com/foundation and large range of photographs from the Holcim Forum are available on the Group-wide Holcim Image Bank (http://holcim.tpz.ch/webnative/listdir).

*The video is available on the Holcim Forum website: www.holcimforum.org/video
What does sustainable construction mean for you?

“Sustainable construction means quality of life, economical and efficient technologies, and conservation of natural resources. Sustainability is never limited to building only, it embraces many aspects.”

Carlos Bühler, CEO Holcim Brazil, Brazil

“Sustainable construction requires that we conserve resources or consume the minimum.”

Urs Bieri, Deputy CEO Holcim, Member of the Board of the Holcim Foundation, Switzerland

“Sustainability is a nice word, yet hardly anyone abides by the principle. I consider it very important that we achieve something here that really does some good. The first concrete step however is always particularly difficult.”

Gérard Letellier, Deputy Area Manager Holcim, Switzerland

“Buildings must be practical, durable, and of good quality. They must consume little energy and above all be adaptable.”

Karl W. Meissner-Roloff, CEO Holcim South Africa, South Africa

“People who develop and build something have a great responsibility. They must respect this for example even when they select materials.”

Bruno Nauer, CSR Project Coordinator, Holcim Group Support, Switzerland

“Long service life, low energy consumption, high quality of life – these are all important aspects of sustainable construction.”

Patrick Verhagen, Senior Vice President Corporate Industrial Ecology, Holcim Group Support, Switzerland

“We must not only build sustainably, we must work toward a sustainable way of life that leaves something for future generations. A sustainable lifestyle does not necessarily mean restrictions, but it does require new social, environmental, and economic approaches.”

Roland Walker, Head of Holcim Corporate Communications, Delegate of the Board of the Holcim Foundation, Switzerland

Barbara Dubach, Vice President Social Responsibility and SD Coordination, Holcim Group Support, Switzerland

“With sustainable construction one creates spaces in which humans can live well today and in the future. The manmade environment should enable interaction with the natural environment – it must contribute to our everyday well-being.”

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Holcim Awards competition welcomed at sustainable building conference in Brazil

The Latin American Conference on Sustainable Building (claCS’04) and Brazilian Conference on Technology for the Built Environment (ENTAC’04) were held in São Paulo in July. This premier event is one of five regional conferences scheduled in 2004 in preparation for the international conference Sustainable Building (SB’05) to be held in Tokyo next year.

Holcim Brazil was one of the sponsors of the event which attracted more than 800 participants. Hosted by United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), International Initiative for a Sustainable Built Environment (iiSBE) and the International Council for Research and Innovation in Building and Construction (CIB), claCS’04 brought together a broad and multidisciplinary group of experts to discuss a range of issues concerning sustainable development in the Latin American context. The Holcim Foundation for Sustainable Construction was presented at the conference through a special lecture from Holcim Brazil Commercial Director, Carlos Eduardo de Almeida. An information booth on the Holcim Awards competition was open throughout the conference, and attracted a great deal of attention from the attendees. The conference was coordinated by an alliance of Brazilian universities: State University of Campinas, University of São Paulo (USP), Federal University of Espírito Santo and the Federal University of Santa Catarina.

Firstly, it was agreed that sustainable construction can be incorporated into everyday buildings as part of an important contribution to sustainability. Secondly, the plenum concluded that sustainable construction needed to be not only environmentally and socially competitive, but also meet economic benchmarks where the cost of construction did not exceed that of standard building practices. Professor John explained that although the concept of “green building” had been successful in North America and Europe – in Latin America, there is a greater imperative for economic benchmarks to be met at the construction stage. “We can learn from other regions, other projects and other approaches, but the recipe for sustainable building materials and sustainable construction varies from region to region depending on environmental, social and economic considerations”, he said.

Vanderley John, professor, University of São Paulo and coordinator of claCS’04, Brazil: “We will never have sustainable buildings exclusively – but we can try to approach the optimum as closely as possible. Sustainable construction is a dream that we urgently need to pursue.”

Holcim Foundation partner university coordinator for USP in Brazil, Professor Vanderley John, and general coordinator of claCS’04 explained that agreement had been reached on two points during the conference – and this was in alignment with the approach of the Holcim Foundation for Sustainable Construction.

The Holcim Awards competition was introduced at claCS’04 with more than 800 people visiting the information booth.
An ambassador in every Holcim Group company

A series of six regional kick-off meetings have brought the Holcim Awards competition to life throughout the Holcim Group. More than 70 specialists from communications and marketing attended from 46 Group companies. The meetings provided a comprehensive introduction to the role of Group companies in raising awareness of the Holcim Foundation, and interest in promoting the forthcoming Awards competition. Embedded at the Corporate Communications Forum in Switzerland, a toolbox containing concepts, guidelines and templates for communicating the activities of the Holcim Foundation by Group companies towards employees and their markets was presented. Participants at the kick-off meetings and at the CC Forum were tasked with spreading the word in their home countries and ensuring that the Holcim Foundation becomes synonymous with engagement for sustainable construction solutions. All relevant communication documents (many also in French, Spanish, Portuguese and German) are available in the Holcim Foundation section of HolSpace: (https://web.holcim.com/foundation/Content/hf/hf.htm).
Global Holcim Awards to promote projects in sustainable construction

The Holcim Forum for Sustainable Construction held in Zurich was the first public engagement of the Holcim Foundation, established in December 2003.

This November the Holcim Foundation will announce a global competition calling for architects, planners, engineers, and builders to act in the interest of sustainable construction and submit their associated projects, ideas, and initiatives via a dedicated website (www.holcimawards.org). The prize money for the five regional stages and the final global stage of the competition totals USD 2 million. Entries close on March 31, 2005.

All actively involved Group companies have been allocated a budget to announce the Holcim Awards competition in professional magazines and journals. A series of six advertisements has been prepared that can be easily adapted for local use. Beyond the global announcement campaign, Group companies are encouraged to use their imagination and contacts to promote the Holcim Awards and help make the first cycle of the competition a success in all regions of the world. The advertisements and examples of additional promotional activities undertaken by Group companies are available in the dedicated section of HolSpace – web.holcim.com/foundation.

The judging criteria of the Holcim Awards were determined by the partner universities of the Holcim Foundation. The regional appraisal will be conducted by independent experts under the direction of the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology (ETH Zurich), University of São Paulo (USP) in Brazil; Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) in Boston, USA; the University of the Witwatersrand (Wits) in Johannesburg, South Africa; and Tongji University (TDX) in Shanghai, China.

Examples of the Holcim Awards competition announcements: One vision, but many voices – the Holcim Awards announcement campaign which starts in November 2004 features a globally unified layout and local texts.