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2021 GLOBAL STATUS REPORT FOR BUILDINGS AND CONSTRUCTION

Towards a zero-emissions, efficient and resilient buildings and construction sector

iea UCL BPIE

2021 GLOBAL STATUS REPORT FOR BUILDINGS AND CONSTRUCTION

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2021 GLOBAL STATUS REPORT FOR BUILDINGS AND CONSTRUCTION

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FOREWORD

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As highlighted by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) last month, humanity's continued dependence on fossil fuels is warming the world. The consequences – such as droughts, wildfires and floods – are already affecting everyone and will only intensify without urgent action to reduce emissions. The buildings and construction sector is ripe for such action, as the Buildings Global Status Report shows.

According to the report, the sector accounted for 36 per cent of global final energy consumption and 37 per cent of energy related CO2 emissions. While we saw a drop in emissions, largely due to the COVID-19 crisis, the worry is that construction demand will push emissions higher. In Asia and Africa, building stock is expected to double by 2050. Global material use is expected to more than double by 2060, with a third of this rise attributable to materials used in the building and construction sector.

There have been improvements. Since 2015, coverage of buildings in Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) has increased from 90 to 136 countries. Today, 80 countries have developed building codes, an increase from 62 in 2015

Investment in building energy efficiency has increased by 40 per cent since 2015. This year alone, and despite the COVID-19 pandemic, we see that global investment in energy efficiency in the buildings sector rose by over 11% to ca. USD 184 billion in 2020. The fact that for the first time since 2015, the annual rate of growth in energy efficiency investment has exceeded 3% is a signal of hope.

Yet, overall, actions are too few to drive the kind of structural transformation we need for our homes and workspaces. Two thirds of countries where we see most of the growth in building stock still lack mandatory buildings codes. Most of the energy efficiency spending increase came from a small number of European countries. And there is a lack of ambitious decarbonization targets in NDCs.

We can do a lot more, particularly in areas such as space cooling, which is expected to double its energy consumption by 2040. Building and urban design solutions such as cool roofs, self-shaded building designs or urban ventilation corridors can reduce cooling demand.. We need to build differently, and use local, bio-based and recycled materials to create local jobs. We need to move towards circularity, where we have seen companies making ambitious commitments.

The next five years will be about widely adopting transformational approaches. It will be about collaborating through platforms such as the Global Alliance for Buildings and Construction. It will be about putting in place incentives and regulations that can take those solutions to the scale needed. With all stakeholders fully engaged we can create a built environment that is not only zero-carbon and resilient but provides inspiring places to live and work.

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