

Following the adoption of the Long Range Plan by the Permanent Committee in June 1996, an Ethics Committee was formed to consider the desirability of preparing a document on ethics for adoption by IABSE. The Committee began its work by reviewing a considerable number of documents on ethics adopted by national organizations. Even though it was realized that there were significant differences in ethics among these organizations, particularly with regard to geographical locations of these organizations, it was recognized that there were many common principles that should form a basis for an IABSE document on ethics.

Meetings of the Committee were held between 1997 and 2001. IABSE Members also had several opportunities to express their views about ethics and the draft document. The Ethics Committee has considered all comments; prepared a final draft for consideration by the Executive Committee of IABSE, which accepted the document in the course of 2002.

The Committee members (1997 - 2002) were :

Roger Dorton, Canada  
Aksel Frandsen, Denmark  
John Hanson, USA, Chair  
Abdel-Hady Hosny, Egypt  
Manabu Ito, Japan  
Sergio Marques de Souza, Brazil  
Jörg Schlaich, Germany  
T. N. Subbarao, India  
Bruno Thürlimann, Switzerland

IABSE is very thankful to the Committee and in particular to its Chair, Prof. John Hanson, for its important work and contribution to a domain requiring more attention from every structural engineer and citizen of our world. It is now to the IABSE members to endorse and apply these principles.

#### Foreword

IABSE was founded in 1929 by engineers in Europe who were mainly responsible for bridges. Very quickly, the Association developed in all parts of the world and now counts some 3900 members in 100 countries. Since the mid 1970s, the activities of the Association have expanded and include the entire constructed environment. While bridge and structural engineering remain the core activities of the Association, many engineers and scientists, as well as others, have found a common interest in IABSE, as reflected by its Mission: To exchange knowledge and to advance the practice of Structural Engineering worldwide in the service of the Profession and Society. This document is intended to set forth the ethical principles by which the members of IABSE participate in the practice of structural engineering.

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#### Commentary

## **Article**

### **Article 1 - Personal Responsibility**

Personal integrity is paramount in the practice of structural engineering. The safety, health and welfare of the public is the primary concern of all members of IABSE

Persons engaged in the practice of structural engineering include academicians, researchers, and practitioners, whether as an employee or an independent consultant. All persons who are members of IABSE are expected to take responsibility for their actions. These actions should be based on a fair and balanced consideration of societal, cultural, ecological and economic issues.

### **Article 2 - Collective Responsibility**

Collectively, through the Association, members of IABSE seek to represent the highest standards of structural engineering and related technical disciplines. IABSE members pledge to consider sustainable development as essential to the future of society.

The members of IABSE recognize that they have a collective responsibility for the safety, well-being and cultural needs of the public in the use and occupancy of the constructed environment. This responsibility will not be met without the recognition that sustainable development must be considered at every level in the practice of structural engineering.

### **Article 3 - Competence**

Competence requires knowledge and experience in the area of technical work being performed. Members of IABSE hold themselves to be competent in the disciplines in which they provide professional services.

The practice of structural engineering and related disciplines is becoming increasingly complex. Success of any project, particularly large projects, requires the interdependencies of many disciplines. Participants in large projects requiring multi-disciplinary competencies shall strive to ensure that competent engineers are responsible for all technical phases of the work.

### **Article 4 - Continuing Education**

Professional development is a lifelong endeavor. Members of IABSE use the meetings of the Association and other professional organizations to exchange knowledge on the highest international level and to continue their education throughout their careers.

The exchange of knowledge is essential to the achievement of high standards in the practice of structural engineering. Continuing research and development is essential to the well being of the profession. IABSE seeks to promote the exchange of knowledge on a global level through conferences, colloquia, and symposia, as well as through publications. Its members should provide opportunities for professional development of persons under their supervision and control. Younger engineers cannot advance in the practice of this profession without the opportunity to learn from other engineers.

### **Article 5 - Publications and Communications**

Due recognition shall be given to the work of others. Public statements shall be objective and truthful. Reports shall be unbiased, providing sufficient information in keeping with the scope of services for sound judgements. Testimony in legal matters shall be honest and straightforward. Members shall not disparage other engineers or scientists. Members shall not proclaim or represent that technical material of another professional engineer is their own.

Structural engineers should be encouraged to participate in public affairs, where their competency and experience can provide insight. However, this participation should be carried out in keeping with the need for honest and unbiased representation.

One area of particular concern is advertisements. Advertisements should not imply a larger or more significant role in a project than was performed. Members should contribute to the state of the art by seeking to publish their achievements in research and practice.

Constructive criticism should be regarded as contributing to integrity and truthfulness.

### **Article 6 - Disclosure**

Members of IABSE shall immediately disclose any interest, direct or indirect, that might be considered as prejudicial to the exercise of their professional judgement on behalf of their client or employer. They shall also not undertake a review or assessment of the work of another engineer without that engineer's knowledge.

Conflicts of interest may occur between individuals, individuals and organizations, and organizations. If a conflict cannot be resolved, it is incumbent upon the party causing the conflict to withdraw from the operation creating the conflict.

### **Article 7 - Cooperation**

Members of IABSE will strive to cooperate with other parties of similar disciplines, and with interdisciplinary parties engaged as joint participants, in large and complex projects.

Performance of large and complex projects requires cooperation of many disciplines. Members of IABSE will seek to acquire an adequate general knowledge of the project to understand the interrelationships upon which the successful completion of the project depends.

### **Article 8 - Competition**

Members of IABSE will not compete unfairly with other professional engineers. They shall seek fees which are commensurate with responsibility and authority. They will not pay or accept a commission in securing professional work for themselves or others. They will refuse all gratifications or rewards other than the agreed fees. They will not seek to supplant an engineer who has been engaged to provide professional services by offering to provide the same services at a lower fee.

IABSE believes that technical qualifications and experience which are sufficient for accomplishment of a project should be the primary criteria for selection of an engineer.

### **Article 9 - Fidelity**

Structural engineers are bound by continuing faithfulness to the obligations and responsibilities of their clients or employers, and they pledge to remain loyal and devoted to these interests. Information concerning

Loyalty to clients by a structural engineer requires independence from suppliers, manufacturers and contractors.

business affairs, technical methods or processes shall be treated as confidential and shall not be disclosed except as expressly permitted by the client or employer.

**Article 10 - Enhancement of the Profession**

Members of IABSE shall always act to enhance the public regard of structural engineering. They shall seek to promote the stature of engineers and scientists, while discouraging untrue, unfair or exaggerated statements with regard to professional engineering.

Accepted by the Executive Committee on April 27, 2002.