

# Ahmedabad Declaration on Industrial Design for Development



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## A. Ahmedabad Declaration

1 The Meeting for the Promotion of Industrial Design in Developing Countries convened by the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) in close cooperation with the International Council of Societies of Industrial Design (ICSID) and the Indian National Institute of Design in January 1979, in line with the Lima Declaration and Plan of Action and in pursuance of the Memorandum of Understanding signed between UNIDO and ICSID on April 26, 1977 to accelerate jointly industrial design activities in developing countries in order to satisfy the urgent needs in this field, and to carry out as extensively as possible the promotional activities necessary to alert developing countries to the advantage of including industrial design in their planning processes,

### *Adopts*

The Ahmedabad Declaration on Industrial Design for Development.

- 2 **Having reviewed** the situation with respect to industrial design in a number of developing countries,
- 3 **Bearing in mind** that design improves function, enhances communication, simplifies manufacture, use and maintenance,
- 4 **Recognising** that the problem faced in most developing countries is that although design is a real need, it is not yet a sufficiently felt need,
- 5 **Noting** that design methodology is inadequately known and insufficiently used as an economic resource,
- 6 **Aware** that few countries have the organisational, financial and personnel resources which can enable industrial design to assume its proper role,
- 7 **Convinced** that design can help raise the quality of life within economic planning and that the designer can become an agent of progress,

- 8 **Recognising** that through design, relevant cultural traditions can be preserved and utilised to current advantage,
- 9 **Recognising** that cooperation between UNIDO and ICSID should not only further the transfer of technology, know-how and information in the field of industrial design, but should help to stimulate self-reliance,
- 10 **Noting** that UNIDO and ICSID have agreed to carry out as extensively as possible the promotional activities necessary to alert developing countries to the advantages of including industrial design in their planning processes,
- 11 **Bearing in mind** that as a first step towards achieving these objectives, this Meeting was convened to help initiate meaningful cooperation and exchange between institutions and designers concerned with problems of the developing world,
- 12 **Having decided** to adopt a common position and a line of action, the Meeting

### *Solemnly declares*

- 13 Its firm conviction that design can be a powerful force for the improvement of the quality of life in the developing world;
- 14 Its firm belief that designers must have a clear understanding of the values of their own societies and of what constitutes a standard of life for their own people;
- 15 That design in the developing world must be committed to a search for local answers to local needs, utilising indigenous skills, materials and traditions while absorbing the extraordinary power that science and technology can make available to it;
- 16 That designers in every part of the world must work to evolve a new value system which dissolves the disastrous divisions between the worlds of waste and want, preserves the identity of peoples and attends the priority areas of need for the vast majority of mankind;
- 17 That in view of the foregoing, the Meeting adopts the various measures set forth in the following Plan of Action.

## B. Plan of Action

### *Measures*

- 1 Developing countries are encouraged to consider the establishment of design institutions, design centres and/or other design-practising and promotional institutions to spread design methodology, awareness and consciousness.
- 2 These institutions should develop close and sustained links with industrial activity in government and in the private sector, at every level including heavy industries, medium-scale industries, small-scale, rural and craft industries, as well as with educational and research institutions, and with people who are the ultimate users of design.
- 3 In developing countries, the establishment of professional design associations which can function parallel to the design promotional institutions should be seriously considered, and such efforts assisted.
- 4 Design institutions are worthy of financial and other support by their governments, which must be their prime source of succour at this early stage of development.
- 5 These institutions must work to establish a priority for industrial design through the creation of a national design consciousness. They must hasten the awareness that in all areas of public expenditure, the integration of design in the planning process can ensure optimum quality and utilisation of resources. They must communicate that industrial design is concerned with the improvement of our environment through the appropriate use of raw materials, increased productivity, with the protection of health, human safety, natural and cultural resources, with the enhancement of working environments, and with expanding work opportunities and earnings at all levels, including exports. Therefore design considerations should be incorporated in plans for national development.
- 6 To achieve these purposes, such institutions in developing countries may consider the importance of articulating a statement on the importance of design which can serve as a national consensus on the need for creating design awareness and for utilising design as a discipline for better planning.
- 7 Such institutions must stress the importance of establishing and improving facilities for design education and training, upgrading design experience, as well as assisting designers to act as trainers and as catalysts for design awareness wherever they work, so that design skills can be disseminated at several levels simultaneously, and thus influence industrial activity on a broad scale in the developing world.
- 8 The establishment of national design awards, exhibitions, documentation and publication programmes should be encouraged as aids to a wider understanding of industrial design and of design traditions and resources.
- 9 Systems of active cooperation should be established and promoted between design institutions in the developed and less developed countries, and between these institutions in the less developed world.
- 10 These cooperative arrangements could be bilateral as well as multilateral. International organisations including ICSID, UNIDO, UNESCO, UNCTAD, WHO, UNEP, IBRD, the Asian Development Bank and the African Development Bank, IADB and others should be encouraged to provide active support to such cooperative arrangements.