



STATEMENT OF INTENTION SECURING SKILLED TRADES WORKERS IN SUPPORT OF THE RESIDENTIAL CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY

Background:

In recent years the global residential construction industry has experienced a growing shortage of skilled trade workers. The reasons for this growing shortage are numerous and vary by country.

In some countries, the shortage is attributed, at least in part, to workers leaving the industry in light of the long-term downturn in the global housing industry. In others, there is a perception that the industry may be unsafe and young people are better served by seeking other college educated professions. There are some countries in which trained skilled workers have better job opportunities outside of their home country, resulting in worker shortages in the countries of origin. In still others, the ageing demographics of the population and the limited number of workers joining the industry are contributing to this issue within many countries.

With the residential construction industry in most economies poised for growth, this growing skill shortage is creating a variety of challenges—challenges which impact housing affordability, availability and in some cases quality and safety of building work. The ability for a country to address the needs of its citizens to re-construct housing following natural disasters may also be compromised. And, as a strong residential construction market is often a key contributor to the financial health of a country, the shortage is certain to impact the future economic growth.

The IHA is committed to working together to identify proven strategies that will assist in securing the skilled work force required to address the residential construction industry's needs. This effort will work to further the IHA's

priorities of housing affordability, availability and choice of housing, while positioning the economies of IHA countries for future success.

For the purposes of the IHA, the definition of skilled trade workers are those who participate directly in the construction of a home, whether a single family stand-alone structure or a building providing apartments or condominiums for multiple families. Trade workers can include, for example: carpenters; electricians; iron workers (e.g. for bar bending); masons/bricklayers; plumbers; and painters. In many countries these workers receive training through pre-apprentice and apprentice programs whereby skills are acquired in part by working with other experienced trades people and by formal tertiary learning arrangements.

Intent:

The IHA Members, designated as “we” in this public statement, have a common interest in ensuring that the residential construction industry has access to the skilled trades workers necessary to address the needs that exist in member countries. In pursuit of this, we intend to pursue the following:

- We will work towards raising the recognition of the skilled trades in the residential construction industry as a rewarding, well-paying, valid, safe, and beneficial career path.
- We will share strategies designed to demonstrate the benefits of careers in the industry which encourage women and underrepresented groups.
- In those countries where wages are of a concern, we will share knowledge of approaches to make certain those trained in the residential building trades are appropriately paid, particularly as they begin their careers (entry level).
- We will together share information on methods to provide a clear training path for the skilled workers through both informal “on the job” training and development, pre-apprentice, and apprentice training programs.
- We will share details on the training programs, including those that address various skill levels, within each IHA country.
- We will share information on strategies to encourage government support of training programs. Support may be for stand-alone

government initiatives or as part of Public Private Partnerships (PPP) that support apprentices, and new workers entering the residential building industry.

- We will work together to share efforts supporting the recognition of skilled trade certifications (qualifications) across various jurisdictions, within countries and beyond country borders. This effort will allow skilled workers to enter a jurisdiction or country for the purpose of addressing labor shortages in the residential construction industry.
- We will share the information and the data necessary to validate the impact that skilled trades have on the residential construction market, including the impacts on housing affordability.
- We will work together to share and document the benefits of the skilled trades to the industry through increased industry productivity, declining product installation challenges, and enhanced quality and safety.
- In light of concerns about ongoing shortages of skilled workers and the need to increase productivity, we will share information on items such as alternate building products and techniques, like automation and manufactured housing, which may be used to assist in addressing residential construction needs of the future.

Review Commitment:

This statement is not intended to be legally binding on any of the IHA Member Organizations. No cause of action will arise with respect to compliance, or lack thereof, of any signatory party to the guidance and intent expressed in this Statement. This Statement is not intended to create, nor does it create, any right, benefit, or privilege, substantive or procedural, enforceable at law or in equity, against any of the IHA Member Organizations supporting this Statement. The IHA Members will conduct a biennial review of this Statement of Intention and ratify or revise it, based upon consensus.

This statement became effective as confirmed by the members on April 13, 2018.

This statement was updated and reconfirmed on September 30, 2021.

This statement was updated and reconfirmed on March 2, 2024.