

**Press Release - Jakarta - 1 July 2010**  
**Annual meeting of the World Ceramic Tiles Forum**

On Wednesday 30 June and Thursday 1 July 2010, the World Ceramic Tiles Forum gathered in Jakarta for its 17<sup>th</sup> session. This year's session of the Forum was hosted by ASAKI, the Indonesian Ceramic Industry Association, and was inaugurated by **Indonesia Vice-President Boediono**. Following an opening speech by **Mr. Alfonso Panzani, Chairman of the World Ceramic Tiles Forum**, Prof. Dr. Boediono gave an overview of the Indonesian economy and mentioned several actions which will contribute to the competitiveness of the ceramic tile industry in Indonesia.

The 17<sup>th</sup> Forum session involved the representatives of the ceramic tiles industry in Australia, Brazil, China, India, Indonesia, Italy, Japan, Malaysia, Spain, Taiwan, Ukraine and the USA. Altogether, these countries represent the very large majority of worldwide production in wall and floor tiles.

The main aspects covered at the Forum's General Assembly covered **global trends in consumption and production, the sustainability of ceramic tiling, developments in standardisation and trends in barriers to trade**.



*From left to right, Mr. Achmad Widjaja, President of ASAKI, Prof. Dr. Boediono, Vice-President of the Republic of Indonesia and Mr. Alfonso Panzani, Chairman of the World Ceramic Tiles Forum*

**Global trends in production, consumption and trade:** Armando Cafiero (Confindustria Ceramica) shared the data available on production and consumption in 2009. World consumption in ceramic tiles has been constantly rising over the last years with an estimate of 5,39 billion m<sup>2</sup> in 2000 increasing to 8,55 billion m<sup>2</sup> in 2008. As a result of the economic crisis, world consumption decreased slightly (by 1,4%) in 2009 compared to 2008. Over the same period, world production decreased by 2,5%. While domestic sales remained on average stable, exports are reported to have decreased by 10%. However, considering the rapid recovery and return to growth in emerging markets, particularly in Asia, the world production is expected to grow further in 2010 and beyond. The strength of domestic consumption in countries such as China, India, Indonesia or Brazil was particularly emphasised.

Debates on **sustainability** showed the need for increased cooperation and exchange of information between tiles manufacturers at international level. Aspects related to energy efficiency, environmental performance, safety and educational programmes on the use of ceramic tiles were considered as extremely relevant.

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On **standardisation**, the US delegation gave an exhaustive overview of the work currently being carried out at ISO level by Technical Committee 189. A number of important aspects of standard ISO 13006 are being revised, including the definition of porcelain and rectified tiles, specifications for extruded tiles with low water absorption, new pressed tiles sizing requirements addressing large formats... TC 189 is also considering further work on dimensional tolerances for rectified tiles, specifications for technical porcelain and specifications for mosaic tiles.

In the field of **trade policy**, a panel discussion moderated by David Portalés (ASCER) and involving Eric Astrachan, Andy Chen and Achmad Widjaja - respectively from the US, Chinese and Indonesian delegations - covered extensively the aspects related to *tariff and non-tariff barriers to trade, multilateral trade liberalisation*. Although the Forum members expressed their support for free trade in the sector of ceramic tiles, they could not avoid the conclusion that technical or tariff barriers are increasingly occurring in practice.



As in the previous years, CET, the European Ceramic Tiles Manufacturers' Federation shared its annual inventory of barriers to trade, covering 96 different practices in 31 countries analysed by the European association as barriers to trade. In that respect, delegations stressed the importance of communication between various tiles manufacturing countries in order to provide clarifications and solutions to such problems. In the absence of such communication, trade tensions or conflict will occur. Reference was also made to the EU anti-dumping investigation recently launched by the European Union concerning imports from China. Trade defence measures are not considered as barriers to trade provided that they are implemented in compliance with the WTO.



The Chairman of the World Forum, Mr. Alfonso Panzani, concluded by reflecting the call of the Forum members for fair trade and communication to avoid trade tensions, particularly in the context of an economic crisis.

The 18<sup>th</sup> session of the Forum will be hosted by **Mexico on 7 – 8 July 2011.**

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