

Management and Innovation for a **Sustainable** Built Environment

Programme and Abstracts



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THE CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY AND THE CHALLENGES OF THE MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS

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ABSTRACT

It has long been recognised that the role of the construction industry in socio-economic development goes beyond its share in national output. A number of studies have focused on the issue of employment creation others have emphasised its multiplier effect on other sectors of the economy. The construction industry has also historically been linked with the process of industrialisation and urbanisation. Existing paradigms on the structural change of the construction industry as national economy develops over time has been evolving from an approach that stresses the role of construction investment (indeed physical capital accumulation) as an engine of economic growth to one where the pattern of the evolution of the industry should follow that of the general economy.

The role of construction infrastructure in the process of development has gained a new stimulus following the United Nations Millennium Declaration at the Millennium Summit in New York in September, 2000. Eight Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), measured through 21 targets, were devised. According to international development agencies as well as some writers concerned with the development process, the services provided by infrastructure have a pervasive effect on the economic and social targets related to the MDGs. An important question which should be the concern of the construction economics research community is, thus, how a well functioning construction industry could contribute to the attainment of these targets.

Using data obtained from World Bank and United Nations publications, and making use of an analysis developed in previous works, this study presents some prospects of the pattern of development of the construction industry in two groups of countries in Sub-Saharan Africa, according to their level of economic development. Some insights for the growth strategies of the construction industry in the groups of countries are also presented.