

Count Down to World Architectural Congress in Durban

The count down has begun to the start of the largest gathering of architects ever held in Southern Africa. Arrangements for the 25th World Congress on Architecture, UIA2014 Durban, are powering ahead at a rapid pace and Durban will soon have the eyes of the world firmly fixed on her when the Congress opens on 3 August 2014 at the International Convention Centre Durban (ICC).

The Congress will run from 3-7 August 2014 and will bring together architects, design and built environment professionals, pioneers in urban planning and thinking, activists, city makers, academics and researchers, students, Government officials, decision makers and thought leaders, citizens and communities - to debate and discuss alternative strategies for the design and delivery of more habitable, functional and beautiful cities.

The Congress theme, 'architecture OTHERWHERE', will celebrate diversity by exploring other communities, other regions, other disciplines, and other ways of thinking about, practicing and teaching architecture. The intention is to acknowledge the built environment as a major force that may be harnessed towards a better life for all – through the sub-themes Resilience, Ecology and Values.

The impressive clutch of HIGH-PROFILE SPEAKERS, all leaders in their respective fields, will lead a series of keynote panel debates and academic discussions, as well as present keynote addresses. The line-up includes renowned international personalities, as well as local specialists and

professionals. An extensive Student Programme, convened with the assistance of local Architectural students, forms an integral part of the main event, offering young professionals of the future the opportunity to meet and engage with students and professionals from around the world.

UIA 2014 will be used as a launch pad for a three urban regeneration projects, which are starting to gain traction in the lead-up to the event. Each one focuses on stimulating interest in the built environment sector and focus on Durban's inner city.

These include:

- * The activation of a section of Pixley Ka Seme Street (formerly West), showcasing what is possible with the creation of a high quality, pedestrian-priority public space - for people who live and work in the City to relax, exercise and play.
- * The activation of the Rivertown Precinct provides an opportunity for regeneration in the inner city. Arts and culture initiatives and exhibitions will be run during the Congress to show the opportunities that exist for bringing investment, sustainability and vibrancy back to the area.
- * Pocket Parks –these projects aim to bring nature and delight back to the city, providing a place for relaxation, play areas for children and small spaces for activities, events or street cafes, where people can socialize, share laughter and conversation. ●

www.uia2014durban.org

