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INTERNATIONAL BENCHMARKING OF ARCHITECTURAL PROGRAMMES IN SOUTH AFRICA

CAA SACAP Joint Statement 13 April 2012

The Commonwealth Association of Architects and the South African Council for the Architectural Profession have agreed to work towards a mutually acceptable revision of the reciprocal CAA/SACAP Validation Agreement of May 2005 that until recently had formed the basis of the validation and mutual recognition of courses, programmes and examinations in South Africa. The Agreement, due for review in May 2010, was terminated by CAA reflecting concerns with the operation of the South African procedures over a number of years, whilst recognising the considerable change in the SACAP organisation and that SACAP is implementing new comprehensive procedures in the form of the Purple Book guidelines for course validation.

The 2005 CAA/SACAP Validation Agreement represented formal recognition of the maturity and robustness of the South African validation system at the time, and outlined several principles that both bodies undertook to follow to ensure that best practice is exchanged and followed in both CAA and SACAP validation systems. SACAP continues to support the fundamentals of the CAA validation system as a multinational partnership, and more particularly its unique endeavour to preserve and encourage diversity, innovation and development as part of the validation of appropriate international standards.

CAA and SACAP acknowledge the mutual benefits of an updated Validation Agreement in which the objectives, procedures and reciprocal responsibilities are redefined reflecting the changing local and regional realities within an increasingly inter-related international context. The parties have therefore agreed to prioritise the completion of the separate and overall formal reviews of the CAA and SACAP validation systems already underway. To allow sufficient time for implementation of the new procedures and development into a robust validation system CAA has requested a period of 2 years before it will consider re-validation of the South African system.

It was further agreed that, until such time as the revised CAA/SACAP Validation Agreement is ready for implementation, the validation of programmes offered by the various South African learning sites by CAA will be on the basis of equivalence with CAA direct visits. SACAP visiting will continue as scheduled and accommodate requirements applicable to direct validation as set out in the CAA Green Book and in the CAA letter of 27 December 2011. Members of the Validation Panel (from whom CAA representatives on visiting boards are drawn) are nominated by the member institutes of CAA and CAA direct visiting boards are formed with 2 CAA representatives and those from the local profession. Accordingly CAA and SACAP have agreed that a CAA panellist from 'out of region' and one from 'in-region but out of country' will join SACAP visiting boards. Both organisations envisage that this will allow best practice to be exchanged and developed in both CAA and SACAP validation systems.

CAA and SACAP have also discussed the current initiatives towards global mutual recognition of architectural qualifications and future options for the South African system to gain the best advantage for South African graduates and SACAP may consider other validation authorities and accords as available and emerging. Membership of the Canberra Accord, for example, will achieve mutual recognition of the South African system with those of USA, Canada, Mexico, China, Korea, Australia and SACAP. Moreover, as CAA is a signatory to the Canberra Accord, a benefit for South African schools visited under the interim CAA direct validation arrangement is that they can be included within the Accord.

Phill Mashabane
President SACAP

Clare Newton
Chair CAA Validation Panel