

**12 October 2007**

### **Cement industry making good progress towards sustainable development**

The UK cement industry is making good progress towards reducing its carbon footprint and is pleased with the results of initiatives put in place several years ago to meet its sustainable development objectives.

We welcome the opportunity to have the debate on the sustainable future of the cement industry. Mike Gilbert, Chief Executive of the BCA, said, 'contrary to the report in today's Guardian newspaper, the UK cement industry is not an 'obstacle' to a low carbon economy, but an essential component. Since 1990, UK cement manufacturers have reduced their carbon dioxide emissions by 29%, saving over 3.9 million tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub>. Cement manufacture accounts for just 1.76% of total UK CO<sub>2</sub> emissions; the proportion accounted for by aviation and shipping is higher. UK cement manufacturers are also committed to global sector carbon reductions through the WBCSD Cement Sustainability Initiative and its 2002 Agenda for Action.

The cement industry has reduced its environmental impact through a number of significant initiatives, such as the replacement of primary raw materials and fossil fuels by processing wastes and by-products from other industries into alternative raw materials or fuels for use in the cement kiln. These initiatives coupled with significant investment in both modern kilns and energy efficient technologies has resulted in a 27.5% fall in energy use since 1990. In 2006 alone, the cement industry used over 1.1 million tonnes of waste which otherwise would have gone to landfill or incineration.

In the longer term, we are investigating with the International Energy Agency the application of carbon capture and storage to cement manufacture, a report on which is due to be published next month. Because 60% of industry's emissions are derived from the cement manufacturing process, efforts are being made to improve the substitution rate of fossil fuels

with waste-derived alternatives. The UK has an encouraging story here with a 23% reduction in fossil fuel usage since 1998; in 2006 waste-derived fuels made up 15% of the fuel used in UK cement kilns.

Cement is an essential and virtually irreplaceable building material. It is the principal ingredient in concrete, upon which we depend to build and maintain our homes, schools, offices, shops, hospitals, roads and transport infrastructure, water, energy utilities and, of course, flood defences.

Concrete is one of the most sustainable building materials, when taking account its local nature, the energy consumed during its manufacture and its energy performance over the whole life of a structure. Concrete buildings are adaptable to changing climatic conditions. 90% of the environmental impact of CO<sub>2</sub> associated with buildings arises during their operational lifetime from heating, lighting and cooling. With temperatures forecast to rise in the coming years, there are great advantages to be gained from concrete dwellings through the use of its thermal mass properties, which mean that buildings made from concrete can absorb heat in high temperatures and release it again when the temperature drops, thus reducing the energy needed for cooling and saving CO<sub>2</sub> emissions over the building's lifetime. This is important as currently some 27% of the UK's CO<sub>2</sub> emissions arise from the energy used to heat, light and cool residential properties. This figure rises to 50% for all properties.

ENDS

**For further information:**

Damian Testa, Head of Public Affairs and External Communications at the British Cement Association. Telephone 01276 608708, mobile 07866 388250, email [dtesta@bca.org.uk](mailto:dtesta@bca.org.uk)

**Notes to editors:**

The British Cement Association (BCA) is the trade and research organisation that represents the interests of the United Kingdom's cement industry in its relations with Her Majesty's Government, the European Union and relevant organisations in the United Kingdom. The members of the BCA (Tarmac Buxton Lime and Cement, Castle Cement, Cemex UK and Lafarge Cement UK) are the major domestic manufacturers of Portland cement producing over 90% of the cement sold in the UK.

The cement industry has an annual turnover of £775 million and is a major supplier to the construction industry. It employs around 3,500 people directly with a further 15,000 jobs depending upon its operations.

The base year of 1990 for the measurement of CO<sub>2</sub> emission reductions is used to reflect the signing of the Kyoto Protocol to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. This is an amendment to the international [treaty](#) on [climate change](#), assigning mandatory emission limitations for the reduction of [greenhouse gas](#) emissions to the signatory nations. The objective of the protocol is the ‘stabilization of greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere at a level that would prevent dangerous anthropogenic interference with the climate system’.

Wastes processed into alternative fuels for use in the cement kiln include scrap tyres, meat and bone meal, processed sewage pellets, waste solvents. By-products from other industries used as alternative raw materials include ground granulated blastfurnace slag, a by-product from the iron making industry, and pulverised fly ash from coal burning power stations.

The Cement Sustainability Initiative (CSI) is a global effort by 18 major cement producers who believe there is a strong business case for the pursuit of sustainable development. Collectively these companies account for more than 40% of the world’s cement production. See [www.wbcdcement.org](http://www.wbcdcement.org)