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### Economic Commission for Europe

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**Review of the implementation of the programme of work 2017-2018**

**Sustainable housing and real estate markets**

### **Information on Launch of the International Fire Safety Standards Coalition**

**Note by the Secretariat**

#### *Summary*

The International Fire Safety Standards Coalition was launched with the support of UNECE in Geneva at the Palais des Nations on 9 July 2018; it brought together key organizations from around the world dealing with fire safety of buildings with the purpose of discussing the development of landmark industry standards to address fire safety in buildings. It was the first face to face meeting of the International Fire Safety Standards (IFSS) Coalition bodies and therefore, the official 'launch' of the IFSS Coalition. This Note provides information on the Coalition.

The Committee is invited to take note of the information provided.

# Information on Launch of the International Fire Safety Standards Coalition

## Background

The Grenfell Tower fire in London in June 2017 has brought under the spotlight the need for a coherent global approach to fire safety. That fire - the worst in the UK for almost a century that claimed 72 lives - not only focused attention on building and fire safety in the United Kingdom but also exposed global inadequacies in how fire safety standards are set.

As the property market has become increasingly international with investments flowing across national borders, the sector still lacks a consistent set of high level global principles for the design, construction, and management of buildings to address the risks associated with fire safety. Differences in materials testing and certification, national building regulations or codes, and standards on how to manage buildings in use, particularly higher risk buildings, means there is confusion, uncertainty and risk to the public.

The Geneva UN Charter on Sustainable Housing endorsed by the Committee in 2014, underlines the importance of improving the resilience of buildings to natural and human-generated hazards through safety planning, design and construction. To respond to the need to address safety of buildings, the UNECE supported the organization of a launch of the [International Fire Safety Standards \(IFSS\) Coalition](#).

## 1. The International Fire Safety Standards (IFSS) Coalition

### 1.1. Role and objectives

IFSS stands for International Fire Safety Standards. It is a new, high level kind of an international standard that aims to provide greater clarity and consistency globally in the application of fire safety to buildings at a project, state, national, regional or international level. It sets out high level principles that any person involved in the design, construction or managing of a building globally would be proud to be associated with.

The IFSS Coalition is a group of professional and not-for-profit organisations responsible for researching, developing, publicising, and implementing International Fire Safety Standards for the construction and real estate sectors. The Coalition was established in late 2017 after the Grenfell Tower fire tragedy in London in June 2017. The IFSS Coalition supports the creation, maintenance, and use of high quality international standards, developed using a transparent and inclusive standard setting process. Each of the Coalition organisations has signed a declaration of support and commitment to promote and implement IFSS, and to encourage world markets to accept and adopt it.

### 1.2. Current members

The IFSS Coalition is a partnership of leading professional body and standards organisations from across the globe, committed to producing and supporting one shared set of standards for fire safety. The Coalition is creating a Standard Setting Committee (SSC) dedicated to realising the vision of shared and international standards to promote fire safety in the public interest.

Members of the Coalition are currently:

2. ACAI – Association of Consultant Approved Inspectors – <http://www.approvedinspectors.org.uk/>
3. AEEBC – The Association of European Experts in Building and Construction <http://aeebc.org/>
4. APS – Association for Project Safety – <https://www.aps.org.uk/>
5. BCA – Building Control Alliance <http://buildingcontrolalliance.org/>
6. CABE – Chartered Association of Building Engineers <https://www.cbuilde.com/the-cabe/>
7. CASLE – Commonwealth Association of Surveying & Land Economy <http://www.casle.org/>
8. CEBC - Consortium of European Building Control bodies <http://www.cebc.eu/>
9. CIAT – Chartered Institute of Architectural Technologists <http://www.ciat.org/>

10. CIBSE – Chartered Institution of Building Services Engineers – <https://www.cibse.org/>
11. CTBUH – Council on Tall Buildings and Urban Habitat <http://www.ctbuh.org/>
12. FIG – Federation International de Geometre, an international umbrella body of surveying professional bodies globally <http://www.fig.net/>
13. ICC – International Code Council <https://www.iccsafe.org/>
14. IFE – Institution of Fire Engineers <https://www.ife.org>
15. LABC – Local Authority Building Control <https://www.labc.co.uk/>
16. NHBC – National House Building Council <http://www.nhbc.co.uk/>
17. RIBA – Royal Institute of British Architects <https://www.architecture.com/>
18. RICS - Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors <https://www.rics.org/uk/>
19. SFPE – Society of Fire Protection Engineers <http://www.sfpe.org/>
20. SGSA – Sports Ground Safety Authority <http://www.safetyatsportsgrounds.org.uk/>
21. SIBL – Singapore Institute of Building Ltd <http://www.sibl.com.sg/>
22. The World Bank <http://www.worldbank.org/>
23. United Nations ECE <https://www.unece.org/info/ece-homepage.html>

### **1.3. The standards to be developed by the IFSS Coalition**

At present, the many contrasting standards across the world have contributed to uncertainty and confusion in the testing and approval of construction methods, products and operation of buildings. Research has shown that inconsistent approaches to the assessment and regulation of fire safety can lead to loss of life in extreme cases through to a loss of confidence by governments, financiers, investors and the public in buildings.

IFSS will set out universal rules that provide classification, definition, analysis and presentation of fire safety standards at a project, state, national, regional or international level. Professional institutions will incorporate these high-level standards and rules within their guidance or local standards, and members expect governments to support and/or adopt these principles.

IFSS will be used throughout the world both in developed nations and developing nations. Each of the organisations in the IFSS Coalition has committed to its adoption throughout its own professional membership.

The group aims to set up a public display certificate of compliance with the International Fire Safety Standards in all higher risk buildings where the public have access.

### **1.4. Partnership**

An IFSS Partner is an organisation that supports a collaborative approach to the development of international standards and commits, in principle, to the adoption of IFSS.

IFSS Partners can include, but are not limited to, the following types of organisation;

- Architects and designers
- Fire engineers
- Fire consultancy firms
- Fire risk assessors
- Construction consultancy firms
- Construction industry service providers
- Construction materials testing firms
- Construction companies (e.g. multinational firms with international construction portfolios)
- Construction products firms
- Facilities management firms
- Property investment firms and developers
- Banks and lending institutions
- Construction-related software providers
- Construction cost data service providers.

## **2. Launch of the IFSS Coalition and main outcomes**

The Coalition was launched in Geneva at the Palais des Nations on 9 July 2018; it brought together key global organizations dealing with fire safety of buildings with the purpose to discuss the development of landmark industry standards to address fire safety in buildings.

The coalition consists of national and international professional bodies and standard-setting organisations committed to developing and supporting a shared set of standards for fire safety aimed at delivering greater consistency of minimum levels of fire safety and professionalism in buildings across the world. A secretariat for the coalition is provided by the RICS - Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors

At the end of the meeting in Geneva, the members of the IFSS Coalition decided to develop the high-level standards and to work with professionals around the world to deliver the standards locally. The standards will be owned by the IFSS Coalition. As its first order of business the IFSS Coalition will set up a Standards Setting Committee that will draw on a group of international technical fire experts to develop and write the high-level standards to ensure they are fit for purpose across global markets.

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