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END THE IMPUNITY TO STOP BUILDING COLLAPSES

A JOINT STATEMENT BY BUILT ENVIRONMENT PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATIONS ON THE SOUTH C BUILDING COLLAPSE

For Immediate Release

We, the undersigned built environment professional associations, address the nation following the tragic collapse of a building under construction in South C, Nairobi.

Our Condolences and Solidarity

At the outset, we express our profound sorrow and solidarity with the families who have lost loved ones, those injured, and the communities whose lives have been shattered by this preventable tragedy. In the 21st century, in a country as educated, trained, and professionally endowed as Kenya, such disasters should be a thing of the past. Each life lost represents a collective failure that must weigh heavily on our conscience.

We call out the responsible professionals

We express our deep indignation at the systemic lapses that occasioned this collapse and the unacceptable loss of life. As professionals – Architects, Engineers, Quantity Surveyors, Planners, Construction Project Managers, Surveyors, valuers and allied practitioners – we must always take responsibility. Where our members have failed in design, supervision, certification, or ethical conduct, they must be held to account.

Building collapses arise from **interconnected lapses** across the entire development chain – from planning and design, to approvals, materials, construction methods, inspection, enforcement, and political interference. Our associations stand ready to work with the national government, regulators, and county governments to cure these failures and restore public confidence in the industry.



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Key Systemic Issues That Must Be Addressed

We must fix the problem at the counties

The planning departments in counties must invest in value addition to the development control and building control. These must not be seen as merely revenue generation exercises. Every county must have a Chief Architect, Chief Engineer, Chief Surveyor, Chief Valuer and Chief Planner. These professionals must ensure that Inspections, Quality Assurance and Quality Control are done for all building approvals

Address the Developer Impunity

He who pays the piper calls the tune. The developer should not be left to walk free in this mess. In all the building collapses the developer must be held ultimately accountable for failure to comply with all the requirements as captured in Clause 5 of the National Building Code 2024.

Investigations must be done. Lessons must be learned

Over 200 buildings have collapsed since 1996. Many investigations have been done. There is no evidence that we have implemented the lessons learnt. We call on thorough investigations in this incident. We must have the findings disseminated and lessons learned must be incorporated in our industry improvement. We must bring this problem to a stop

Apportion blame to the culpable parties

We are aware that different players are involved in building projects from planning, design, construction, maintenance and demolition. We are aware that these include Counties, Regulators, Ministries, Departments and Agencies. They also involve independent consultants and contractors as well as developers. We call upon the culpable parties to take responsibility within the framework of the law. This should apply to this and the previous documented building collapses. Failure to make people take responsibility makes this culture of impunity entrenched and there is no way to stop it.

Address all the Issues that have been identified

The perennial problem of building collapses will not stop until we are able to comprehensively address the underlying issues. We call upon the parties within the sector to address all the underlying issues which are not limited to among others poor governance, political interference, by-passing procedures, corruption, involvement of quacks, credential renting, lack of geotechnical investigations, poor construction sequencing, poor construction materials, lack of quality control during construction/execution among other issues



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Inbuilt Peer Review in all Processes

Peer review is a powerful safety tool. Peer review should be mandatory for all the works at all the stages from planning, design, approvals, execution and a process that ensures that the designer is different from the implementer is encouraged to ensure that deliberate design checks for operability and constructability are embedded in all our processes. There must be evidence of this from the public and private sector. This must involve the documented evidence of those involved in peer reviews.

Establish a National Planning System

The planning role is devolved and this empowers a closer monitoring of the buildings by counties that are closest to the buildings. It is our view that a national planning system that provides all the information about the approved building projects in the 48 governments will bring a standardized development control framework and enhance peer learning which builds on synergy. Counties will continue to play their constitutional mandate and the national platform (Not Authority) will enhance openness of information. This has been successfully implemented in the judiciary while other platforms like IFMIS and E-Citizen have also served both the National and County Governments proving very vital in service delivery

What Must Happen Next – Without Delay

Following the completion of investigations from this incident, we call for the following

1. **A multi-stakeholder task force** composed of **professionals** to investigate systemic failures, including:
 - Structural design and supervision;
 - Construction methodology and sequencing;
 - Quality assessment of materials used;
 - Approval, inspection, and enforcement breakdowns.
2. **Developer accountability**, including:
 - Immediate obligation to provide reparations to affected families;



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- Full audit of the developer's other projects by the same multi-stakeholder team, applying identical rigor.

3. Swift regulatory action:

- Deregistration and prosecution, where appropriate, of culpable Architects, Engineers, Quantity Surveyors, Planners, Surveyors, Contractors, Developers and other registrable parties;
- Sanctions must be decisive, transparent, and timely.

4. Regulatory coordination, avoid fragmentation:

- Agencies must act jointly, share information, and apply sanctions consistently.
- Turf wars and institutional silos cost lives.



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Our Commitment

We recognize lives lost to preventable building failures as a national shame. The causes are known. The solutions are known. What is required now is courage, coordination, and commitment.

We, the built environment professional associations in Kenya, commit to work with the National and County Governments, regulators, and the public to restore integrity, safety, and trust in the spaces we create.

Signed.

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