

Closing Statement
John McLaughlin

It has been a real pleasure to participate in the Bathurst and Melbourne meetings and especially to contribute to the preparation of the Bathurst Declaration. I realize there is some scepticism regarding the worth of such exercises and their gravation towards a reaffirmation of conventional wisdom; however in this case I believe we have made some genuine progress. We have advanced our collective understanding of the importance of property to economic, social and environmental development; we have also, I believe, developed a better understanding of the challenges associated with building and sustaining the necessary property infrastructure.

We could have course gone further. I would have preferred to see a more indepth discussion of the relationship of property to social development (with an emphasis on the formation of social capital and the civic society agenda). I would have liked more emphasis on the potential role of business and I was disappointed that we didn't give more attention to the special needs of the very poorest countries. And I was somewhat frustrated with our use/abuse of the technical language associated with the property field!

But overall, I believe this has been a very successful endeavour. Bathurst demonstrated that a very diverse international group could work together effectively on rather difficult institutional and technical matters. Don Grant and Ian Williamson are to be commended for their energy and drive, and above all for their courage in believing that this was possible.