

Strengthening Our Institute and Profession: Your Voice Matters

From: Mark R H Harris

Dear RIBA Middle East & Africa Colleagues,

It is with great enthusiasm that I reach out to you as the newly appointed RIBA Council Member for The Middle East & Africa, having taken up my 2023 – 2026 seat last month, succeeding Alice Asafu Adjaye.

For those who may not be familiar, the RIBA Council is elected by RIBA Members and acts as the representative body for the membership. Chaired by our newly elected President, Muyiwa Oki, Council convenes quarterly and is responsible for collecting insight from the profession to guide the strategic direction of the organisation. Council appoints the RIBA Board of Trustees, the majority of whom are Council Members, including the RIBA President, and is composed of UK national, UK regional, and international members, with our region standing alongside Europe, The Americas and Asia / Australasia.

I am writing to introduce myself and seek your support and engagement as we move into an exciting and critical period for the region, our profession / industry and the RIBA.

I am a British-born and educated Architect, residing in Qatar since 2012. Currently, I also serve as the Qatar Country Representative for the RIBA Gulf Chapter. My international architectural career has taken me from the UK and Europe to Africa, the Caribbean, Australia and, more recently, the Middle East.

I am here to represent you and carry your views into Council – acting as a channel from grassroots members and practices in the region, through established or future regional chapters to guide the strategic direction of our Institute.

Over my term on Council, I am committed to addressing some critical issues and would like to collaborate with you on the following key initiatives in order to refresh the way we operate and interact as individuals, practices and as an Institute:

- **Understanding Your Needs:** Identifying the real needs of our regional / international members.
- **Future Regional Representation:** Advocating for meaningful representation for The Middle East and Africa within Council and our Institute.
- **Building Stronger Connections:** Strengthening or establishing accessible and inclusive regional chapters, alongside a network of dedicated country representatives and practices.
- **Addressing our environment:** delivering better buildings and places, stronger communities and a sustainable environment.
- **Boosting Your Practices:** Strengthening commercial ties and support to help members identify project leads and win work.
- **Showcasing Your Talent:** Showcasing members' regional work globally, including regular features in RIBAJ.
- **Continuous Learning:** Developing a relevant, affordable (or open-access) CPD Programme tailored for regional members to ensure we stay up to date, competent and valuable.
- **Establishing RIBA Hubs:** Creating visible, vibrant regional hubs to enhance our professional network and links with clients, the public and other stakeholders.
- **Fostering Dialogue:** Organizing impactful events, missions, talks and exhibitions - fostering collaboration within our community.

- **Addressing Local Challenges:** Tackling country-specific issues around professional recognition, registration, protection of title and related fee levels.

I am eager to hear your thoughts, ideas and concerns. Your regional input is invaluable in shaping the future of our profession and our Institute and I'd like to ensure these are captured and carried back to 66 Portland Place.

Please do not hesitate to reach out to me at mark.harris@riba.org with any questions, suggestions or ideas - or if you're interested in volunteering your time and expertise.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Best regards,

Mark R H Harris

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