

PRESS NOTE

WEBUILD CHAIRMAN IACOVONE: SMART CITIES AND DIGITALISATION OF INFRASTRUCTURE TO CREATE JOBS, OVERCOME COVID-19 IMPACT ON SECTOR

MILAN, April 16, 2021 – The COVID-19 pandemic has caused the Italian infrastructure sector to suffer a 8.3% decline in revenue, forcing a reassessment of the entire sector in light of the latest trends at the global level, according to Webuild Chairman Donato Iacovone during an address to the 4th Annual Digital Construction Summit, which was dedicated to the prospects of applying digital technology and best practice by global players.

“The new investments that are needed to be made in infrastructure to support economic development, increase competitiveness and create jobs in a period of emergency in Italy and elsewhere must be based on three fundamental pillars: sustainability, digitalisation and collaboration - three keywords to shape the future of infrastructure amid a progressive adoption of a smart approach to make the planning, construction and use of infrastructure by people more efficient,” he said. The growing focus on sustainability does not only concern achieving the development goals set by the United Nations - it must start from within the sector itself. In Europe, construction is responsible for 36% of total emissions, 40% of energy consumption, 50% of raw materials extraction, and 21% of water consumption.

The crisis caused by the pandemic and the strong digital push show the need for a new concept of infrastructure. Making it smart thanks to digitalisation, artificial intelligence and big data analysis would improve the management and use of public works. It would improve and make more flexible the planning, management and use of the entire urban infrastructure sector. It is a process that the Webuild Group follows on all its projects in the world. It also showcased it during the construction of the Genova San Giorgio bridge. Opened in August 2020 in record time, it uses technology that makes the maintenance more efficient and safety even better.

Overall, smart cities are where there is a clear digitalisation of infrastructure. “Cities represent ecosystems subject to the most important transformations. They face new challenges that require stakeholders, including construction companies, to change quickly their approach to put people at the centre. The most advanced cities are working to build urban data platforms, acquiring open data and big data from sensors in infrastructure. An urban data platform allows for planning based on data from the city and the management of events in real time. It is an approach based on the participation of all stakeholders - from builds to users – that points towards efficiency and the safety of residents.”

It is a strategy that is already being followed by the Group according to sustainability and innovation at all stages of planning and production: design, planning, construction techniques, materials, digitalisation of work sites, safety, quality and the environment. It is an integrated and interdisciplinary approach that comprises everything from geological surveys to the reuse of materials; from inclined tunnels to vertical shafts; from excavating in hyperbaric conditions to tailor-made concrete mixes; from automated excavation systems to digital work sites; from sustainability and transparent to artificial intelligence for tunnel-boring machines to smart safety.

Webuild, the new group born in 2020 from Salini Impregilo, is a leading global player in the construction of large, complex projects for sustainable mobility, clean hydro energy, clean water, green buildings, supporting clients in achieving sustainable development goals (SDGs). The Group is the expression of 115 years of engineering experience applied in 50 countries on five continents with 70,000 direct and indirect employees from more than 100 nationalities. Recognised for five years by Engineering News-Record (ENR) as the world leader in water infrastructure (such as dams, hydraulic tunnels, water and wastewater management, and water treatment and desalination plants), it ranks since 2018 among the top 10 in the environment sector and it is also leader in sustainable mobility (especially metro and rail lines, in addition to roads and bridges). A signatory of the United Nations Global Compact, the Group's expertise is displayed in projects such as the M4 metro line in Milan, Grand Paris Express, Cityringen in Copenhagen, Sydney Metro Northwest, Red Line North Underground in Doha, Line 3 of the Riyadh Metro and the high-speed railways in Italy. Other projects include the new Genoa Bridge and the Gerald Desmond replacement bridge in Long Beach, California, the expansion of the Panama Canal, the Snowy 2.0 hydroelectric power station in Australia, the Rogun hydroelectric dam in Tajikistan, the Anacostia River and Northeast Boundary tunnels in Washington, D.C. and the Al Bayt 2022 World Cup stadium in Qatar. In 2020, the Group's total order backlog reached €41.7 billion, with 89% of the backlog of construction orders involving projects that support the SDGs set by the United Nations. Webuild, subject to direction and coordination by Salini Costruttori SpA, is headquartered in Italy and is listed on the Milan Stock Exchange (Borsa Italiana: WBD; Reuters: WBD.MI; Bloomberg: WBD:IM).

[More information at www.webuildgroup.com](http://www.webuildgroup.com)



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