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Colombian Government Adopts AIS 410 into Building Code to Accelerate Resilient Housing Improvements

First-of-Its-Kind Building Standard to Evaluate and Reduce Seismic Vulnerability of Informal Housing

BOGOTA, August 31, 2023 - Colombian Minister of Housing, City, and Territory, Catalina Velasco Campuzano signed into effect this week Standard AIS 410-23 (“AIS 410”), marking the first technical guideline in Colombia that provides standards to reduce the vulnerability of informal housing.

AIS 410 outlines the technical specifications necessary to evaluate and reduce seismic vulnerability of masonry houses that were built informally. Prior to this, the majority of housing was excluded from the technical and financial assistance needed for formal permitting and building compliance. This document opens the doors for the country to accelerate structural improvement of informal housing in all municipalities throughout Colombia.

“AIS 410 is a great step to enable the scaling of structural home improvement programs at the national and local levels, and demonstrates that we are ready as a country to take the next steps to achieve resilient housing for all,” notes Manuela Pinilla Rodriguez, Country Director for Colombia of Build Change. “It is important now to continue to work together to improve efforts in policy implementation and financing of resilient housing to ensure that AIS 410 is widely implemented and serving its purpose to protect the lives and assets of people living in vulnerable homes.”

This advancement is particularly critical in light of the recent tremors that have shaken Colombia. The Institute for Risk Management and Climate Change (*Instituto de Gestión de Riesgo y Cambio Climático*, IDIGER) carried out a study in 2018 that found that in the country's capital, 75% of the city's homes are not code-compliant.

In other major cities, the scenario is very similar: the Global Earthquake Model (GEM) estimated that 61% of existing housing in the department of Antioquia is built without meeting seismic-resistant standards. In Cali, more than 70% of housing units are vulnerable, and this number reaches up to 80% in surrounding municipalities of the Metropolitan Area.

Minister Velasco Campuzano remarked of the achievement, “We are taking an important step in the search for safe territories and homes with structural and material elements that have a minimum quality level necessary in the event of seismic events.”

AIS 410’s approval is critically important in an ongoing effort to reduce deaths, damages and economic losses caused by disasters in Colombia. It supports, scales, and advances the replication of ongoing home improvement programs, including *Cambia Mi Casa*, the national home improvement program, and *Plan Terrazas* implemented in the City of Bogota. It has the potential to be used as a model for other countries with high percentages of informally built housing.

AIS 410 was a collaborative effort led by the Colombian Seismic Engineering Association (*Asociación de Ingeniería Sísmica*, AIS) and Build Change, which included results of tests carried out at EAFIT University, the Colombian School of Engineering, and the Nueva Granada Military University, to give the country a technical tool for public use for the evaluation and reduction of structural vulnerability of informal housing.

Of this collaboration, the President of AIS, Juan Andrés Oviedo Amézquita, noted, “As the leading institution in Colombia for the development of guidelines and technical documents related to structural and earthquake engineering, AIS is proud to announce to the society that the most recent Standard AIS 410-23 is now available in Colombia. Without any doubt, this new technical document is a good example of our utmost mission: to mitigate seismic risk throughout the entire country.

“With this document we aim to reduce the vulnerability of informal masonry construction, which represents the majority of housing in the country. We would like to express our deep gratitude to Build Change, with whom we closely collaborated in order to develop the AIS 410-23 document. Finally, we expect that society in general will embrace this new opportunity to grow and develop more resilient and safe cities and communities. We will continue working on the progress of earthquake engineering in our country.”

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About Build Change

Build Change is transforming the systems for regulating, financing, building and improving houses around the world. Our engineers, builders, coders, policy advocates, and lending partners are providing urgently needed housing solutions in the world’s most disaster-prone countries. Since 2004, we have safeguarded more than \$4B in housing infrastructure assets across Latin America, the Caribbean, and Asia Pacific, improving the lives of over 1 million people and building new or retrofitting more than 200,000 buildings.