

Opening Lecture – Efs 2017/2018

THE CIRCULAR ECONOMY AND THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT

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Abstract

The idea of the “Circular Economy”, currently much discussed in connection with environmental policy, has been familiar for decades in the field of industrial ecology. The circular economy aspires to improve resource efficiency by focussing on “closing loops” for material flows through the economy, to reduce dissipative losses. This approach is potentially valuable for material products with short service lives, such as packaging and some IT devices. However, for products (such as buildings and vehicles) with long service lives, the focus needs to be on maximising the utility obtained from products and materials in use; i.e. the focus should be on stock in use rather than flows through the economy. This lecture will explore the implications of focussing on stocks rather than flows, and how the ideas embodied in the “Circular Economy” must be adapted for the construction sector and the built environment.



Roland Clift Emeritus Professor of Environmental Technology and founding Director of the Centre for Environment and Sustainability at the University of Surrey, UK; previously Head of the Department of Chemical and Process Engineering at the University of Surrey, UK; Visiting Professor in Environmental System Analysis at Chalmers University, Göteborg, Sweden; Adjunct Professor in Chemical and Biological Engineering at the University of British Columbia, Vancouver, Canada; Visiting Professor at the Center for Industrial Ecology, University of

Coimbra, Portugal; past President and Executive Director of the International Society for Industrial Ecology; past member of the UK Royal Commission on Environmental Pollution, Ecolabelling Board and Science Advisory Council of the Department of the Environment, food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA). Prof. Clift’s research is concerned with system approaches to environmental management and industrial ecology, including life cycle assessment and energy systems.

Organization:



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