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**Press release**

Americas

## **RICS Inaugurates Three New Members to Americas World Regional Board**

**NEW YORK, NY, August 16, 2011** – RICS announced today the inauguration of three new members, Alexia Nalewaik FRICS CCE, Constantine Kontokosta MRICS PhD PE AICP and Uche Obi FRICS MA to the RICS Americas World Regional Board.

Commenting, Neil Shah, Managing Director, RICS Americas said: “Each of these new Board members has exhibited the exceptional vision, capability and professionalism necessary to lead the future of RICS Americas. With their acute understanding of the issues and opportunities facing the Americas World Region, they are poised to meet the many challenges and responsibilities of being part of the RICS Americas Board. They will be instrumental in order for us to ensure successful delivery of the region’s business plan objectives and add value to the strategic direction and performance of the RICS brand.”

### **RICS Americas New World Regional Board Members for the 2011- 2014 term**

#### **Alexia Nalewaik FRICS CCE**

Ms. Alexia Nalewaik FRICS CCE is one of three new members appointed to the Board. All new Board Members commenced their duties on August 1, 2011 and will serve a period of three years. The successful candidates will now set about leading the development of the organization’s global vision and strategy.

Commenting, Ms. Nalewaik said: “I believe the breadth of my non-profit professional association experience, combined with the depth of my technical experience in valuation, construction and real estate, is ideal for the effective operation of RICS Americas.”

Ms. Nalewaik, who was elected to RICS Membership in April 2006 and upgraded to Fellow in October 2010, is an independent consultant with 20 years of broad construction industry experience in both the public and private sectors, specializing in international high-risk and troubled mega-projects. Her work focuses on cost management, change/claims analysis, owner representation, contract negotiation, and risk mitigation.

Ms. Nalewaik is a globally published expert in construction audit, governance, and accountability. She currently serves on the RICS Americas Construction Council, and also holds positions with AACE International as Inter-organization Chair and with ICEC as Administrative Vice-Chair. Ms. Nalewaik also spent eight years of regional board service with the American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE).

**Royal Institution of  
Chartered Surveyors**

60 East 42nd Street  
Suite 2918  
New York  
NY 10165  
USA

**t** +1 212 847 7400  
**f** +1 212 847 7401  
**e** [ricsamericas@rics.org](mailto:ricsamericas@rics.org)

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## **Constantine Kontokosta MRICS PhD PE AICP**

Dr. Constantine Kontokosta MRICS PhD PE AICP is a licensed Professional Engineer in the State of New York (specializing in architectural engineering). He also holds certifications from the American Institute of Certified Planners and the U.S. Green Building Council as a LEED Accredited Professional. He became a Member of the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors in October 2010.

Commenting on his appointment to RICS Americas World Regional Board, Dr. Kontokosta said: "It is an honor to be appointed to the RICS Americas Board. I look forward to the opportunity to expand the recognition of the RICS designation in the Americas, to develop new research and academic collaborations, and to position RICS as the leading real estate, construction, and valuation professional organization in the Americas as it is across the globe."

Dr. Kontokosta is the Principal and founder of the KACE Group, a real estate development and investment firm with offices in Midtown Manhattan and Eastern Long Island. Since the company's inception in 2001, he has completed a number of projects in a range of sectors, including a boutique hotel, mixed-use infill buildings, and a vineyard, as well as land development and substantial rehabilitation projects. The mission of his firm is based on the principles of sustainable development, balancing economic feasibility, social equity, and environmental responsibility.

Dr. Kontokosta is also the Founding Director of the NYU Center for the Sustainable Built Environment, an inter-disciplinary research center focused on the advancement of applied research, practice, and technology in the real estate and construction industries, and a Clinical Associate Professor at the New York University Schack Institute of Real Estate.

At NYU, Dr. Kontokosta has led the expansion of sustainability initiatives at the Schack Institute, building the curriculum for the new Sustainable Development concentration in the M.S. program, and is currently working with several departments to create an Urban Systems curriculum. Dr. Kontokosta is actively engaged in international teaching and research initiatives throughout Europe, China, and South America, working closely with such institutions as the University of Reading (UK), the Technical University Berlin, and the Chinese Academy of Sciences. He holds a PhD in Urban Planning from Columbia University, specializing in urban economics. Prior to his doctoral studies, he earned an M. Phil and M.S. in Urban Planning from Columbia University, an M.S. in Real Estate Finance from New York University and a B.S.E. in Civil Engineering Systems from the University of Pennsylvania.

Dr. Kontokosta's work has been featured in the *New York Times*, *Fortune*, *Travel & Leisure*, *Robb Report*, *Green Real Estate Daily*, *Crain's*, and *Commercial Mortgage Alert*, among other media outlets. His research focuses on urban systems theory and smart cities, market transformation around climate change



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and energy efficiency, land use regulations and sustainable development policies, and technological innovation and economic competitiveness. He has presented his academic research at numerous conferences across the globe, including the American Real Estate and Urban Economics Association, the European Real Estate Society, and the World Sustainable Buildings Congress, and has published in leading scholarly journals, such as *Urban Studies* and the *Journal of Sustainable Real Estate*.

Dr. Kontokosta is a member of the Executive Team of the NYC EDC's Urban Technology Innovation Center (UTIC), where he plays a critical role in advancing policy and finance issues relating to green building technologies, and is an appointed member of the New York City Council's Municipal Entrepreneurial Testing System (METS) Advisory Committee. He has been named an Academic Partner to the UNEP Sustainable Buildings and Climate Initiative, leading research on GHG emissions in the global buildings sector, and serves on its Board of Directors. Dr. Kontokosta co-organized and hosted the Urban Systems Symposium that led to the creation of the Urban Systems Collaborative, where he is a founding member of the Governance Team. He is also a member of the Clinton Global Initiative and part of the Green Buildings Task Force.

### **Uche Obi FRICS MA**

Mr. Uche Obi FRICS MA earned a Bachelors Degree in Estate Management and a Masters Degree in Property Valuation and Law - City University Business School, London, England. He began his career working as a Valuation Surveyor with Countrywide Commercial Surveyors in London, England and undertook the valuation of commercial properties for secured lending purposes on behalf of Major Financial Institutions and was involved in Business Development.

Mr. Obi became a Professional Member of RICS in November 1997, a Fellow in 2009 and was appointed to the RICS Caribbean Board in January 2010. He has been an active participant since becoming a member of the organization. Since May 2006, Mr. Obi has been involved in the APC Assessment process as an Assessor, Mentor and Supervisor. In May 2008, he conducted an APC training course for 15 candidates based in Kingston, Jamaica and in August 2008, he was influential in RICS' participation at the 4<sup>th</sup> Urban and Regional Information Systems Association's Caribbean Geographical Information System (GIS) conference held in Grand Cayman.

Mr. Obi has also played an instrumental role in establishing CPD events in the Cayman Islands and setting up the Government's panel of approved valuation firms. In January 2010, he gave a presentation to the RICS Caribbean Board titled, "*Providing Value for Money to Members*", and conducted a CPD lecture, "*Property Valuation During a Recession*" in September 2010.

Commenting on his appointment, Mr. Obi said: "It is a pleasure to serve on the RICS Americas Board. Since RICS is a global organization with members who have a great influence on their local economies, it



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is vital for the organization to be at the forefront of promoting professional standards and ethics within the real estate/construction industry in the region.”

Mr. Obi, a UK citizen of Nigerian descent and married with two children, relocated to the Cayman Islands in 2001. He is currently employed as a Senior Valuation Officer, Cayman Islands Government where some of his duties include:

- Valuation of properties for various purposes, including stamp duty assessment
- Advising the Government and its agencies on real estate matters, including acquisitions, disposal, leasing and asset management
- Providing expert witness testimony at hearings on disputed compulsory acquisition cases

Mr. Obi says that his goals for RICS include, but are not limited to increasing awareness of the organization and promoting high standards of professional practice in the Caribbean region. He also states that he would induce greater involvement and interaction between members through CPD events, promote RICS’ participation in more events in the region, encourage the formation and support of local chapters and enhance the APC process and standards.

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**For more information, please contact:**

Abigail E. La Croix  
Communications Manager, RICS Americas  
60 East 42<sup>nd</sup> Street  
New York, NY 10165  
[www.ricsamericas.org](http://www.ricsamericas.org)  
T: 212.847.7400  
F: 212.847.7401  
E: [alacroix@rics.org](mailto:alacroix@rics.org)

**About RICS**

RICS is **the world’s leading qualification** when it comes to professional standards in land, property and construction. In a world where more and more people, governments, banks and commercial organizations demand greater certainty of **professional standards and ethics**, attaining RICS status is the recognized **mark of property professionalism**.

Over **100 000 property professionals** working in the major established and emerging economies of the world have already recognized the importance of securing RICS status by becoming members.



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RICS is an **independent** professional body originally established in the UK by Royal Charter. Since 1868, RICS has been committed to setting and upholding the **highest standards** of **excellence** and **integrity** – providing **impartial, authoritative advice** on key issues affecting businesses and society. RICS is a **regulator** of both its individual members and firms enabling it to **maintain the highest standards** and providing the basis for **unparalleled client confidence** in the sector.



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