



International Housing Coalition

Supporting Housing for All in a Rapidly Urbanizing World

International Housing Coalition Newsletter

In place of the Weekly Update, below is the IHC Newsletter with an update on our activities this past quarter. The Weekly Update will return next week.

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HOUSE RELEASES "WATER FOR THE WORLD ACT OF 2012"

IHC SUPPORTS THIS BILL TO INCREASE EFFECTIVENESS OF WATER AND SANITATION FUNDING

Representatives Earl Blumenauer (D-OR) and Ted Poe (R-TX) recently introduced H.R. 3658, the "Water for the World Act of 2012." This bipartisan bill aims to strengthen U.S. foreign assistance to water and sanitation programs by encouraging innovation, strengthening partnerships, and improving transparency and accountability without making additional demands on the foreign assistance budget.

The House version of the Water for the World Act is a companion to the Senate version of the bill, S. 641, which was introduced in March 2011 by Senators Dick Durbin (D-IL) and Bob Corker (R-TN). The Senate bill followed a similar bill that passed the Senate in 2010 with unanimous consent but did not advance in the House.

Water and sanitation issues are at critical levels and seriously affect slum dwellers and the urban poor. Nearly 900 million people around the world lack access to clean drinking water and 2.6 billion lack access to improved sanitation. The absence of these resources poses a significant challenge for development and security around the world, reinforcing a cycle of poverty and instability.

The legislation calls for U.S. development assistance programs to provide a greater, more effective role in

providing access to clean water and sanitation. This bill builds on the 2005 Paul Simon Water for the Poor Act and would enhance the capacity of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and the State Department address water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) issues. Specifically, the bill:

- * Elevates the existing position of the Global Water Coordinator within USAID to integrate and implement water strategies, and deliver aid more effectively;
- * Elevates the existing position of the Special Advisor for Water Resources within the State Department to coordinate the diplomatic policy of the U.S. with respect to global freshwater issues;
- * Increases the sustainability of WASH projects to ensure that our investments continue to provide benefits over the long-term;
- * Increases country-ownership of WASH projects to ensure that our foreign assistance dollars meet the needs of poor local communities, rather than officials in Washington; and
- * Increases transparency of aid and creates monitoring and evaluation standards that focus on impact to ensure USAID and the State Department can identify and utilize best-practices.

IHC is grateful to Representatives Blumenauer and Poe for their leadership on these issues and we are continuing to encourage more members of Congress to co-sponsor and support this legislation. The full text of the bill can be found [here](#).

IHC AND USAID SPONSORS 2012 URBAN POVERTY RESEARCH COMPETITION

IHC COMPLETES 2nd AND BEGINS 3rd ANNUAL COMPETITION

The IHC, in cooperation with USAID, the World Bank, the Woodrow Wilson Center's Comparative Urban Studies Project, and the Cities Alliance, is once again sponsoring a research paper competition and a policy workshop on urban poverty in the developing world.

The competition is designed for enrolled PhD and advanced Masters Students and focuses on policy-based and solutions-oriented research papers.

The theme of the 2012 competition is "Resilient Cities," and will focus on Land Markets, Global Climate Change, and

Youth. The call for papers was distributed in late January of 2012. Five to ten finalists will be published in a book, printed by the Woodrow Wilson Center and the top papers will be invited to a policy workshop in Washington in the fall to present their papers to a panel of experts. In addition, this year a grand prize winner will be selected and invited to and featured in the World Urban Forum 6 in Naples, Italy on September 1-7, 2012. The call for papers is available [here](#).

The three winners of the 2011 competition, focused on Land Markets, Urban Health, and Urban Livelihoods, recently joined us in Washington for a policy workshop where they were able to present their papers to a panel of experts at the Woodrow Wilson Center. The experts included representatives from Cities Alliance, UN-HABITAT and USAID. These three winners were picked from over 70 submitted abstracts and 16 finalists. The top six papers were published in the book *Reducing Urban Poverty: A New Generation of Ideas*, printed by the Woodrow Wilson Center, available [here](#).

IHC MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

TCG INTERNATIONAL

TCG International, LLC (TCGI) is an affiliate of The Communities Group, one of a collection of companies dedicated to promoting healthier, sustainable and more energy efficient communities; revitalizing distressed urban areas; developing affordable housing; and improving the delivery of neighborhood services. TCGI specializes in planning, finance, and project implementation, in these sectors.

As a small company, TCGI is unique in that it works both in the U.S. and overseas. Domestically, the firm works with neighborhoods, cities, housing authorities, and the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) on revitalizing older distressed communities. In cities like Norfolk (VA), Wilmington and Durham (NC), Savannah and Atlanta (GA), Duluth (MN); Frederick (MD), and others, TCGI is changing people's lives by achieving mixed-income housing and neighborhoods; helping people maximize cradle-to-career educational opportunities; and finding pathways to improved health, transportation, increased household income, and safer neighborhoods.

Internationally, TCGI operates parallel programs in several countries in Southern Africa, South and Southeast Asia, and the Caribbean. In Haiti, for example, TCGI first advised USAID and then the World Bank on shelter and neighborhood reconstruction. TCGI helped shape disaster reconstruction policies and programs for reducing camp population by

400,000 people; demolishing 27,000 uninhabitable houses; registering earth-quake affected neighborhoods; identifying housing solutions and financial support for 1.5 million persons; preparing strategic urban plans and investment plans for Port-au-Price, L'Axe Leogane/Petit-Goave, L'Axe Jacmel/Marigot, Les Cayes, Cap-Haitien, and Saint-Marc; establishing credit programs to improve 20,000 homes; and preparing a financial plan for housing reconstruction in situ.

IHC PARTICIPATES IN MCC SEMINAR ON URBANIZATION

IHC CHAIRMAN COMMENTS ON URBAN SHELTER ISSUES

The Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC) organized a brown bag seminar on urbanization and its impact on the developing world on January 12, 2012. Speakers included Bob Dubinsky, IHC board chairman; Chris Williams, Washington Representative for UN-HABITAT; Julian Baskin from the Cities Alliance and Daniel Hoornweg, lead Urban Advisor from the World Bank. Jennifer Witriol, senior program officer from MCC, moderated the session. The purpose of the seminar was to discuss the importance and impacts of urbanization on economic development, urban poverty and the growth of cities in the developing world.

The MCC is an independent U.S. foreign aid agency created by Congress in 2004. It provides well performing, competitively selected countries with large scale grants to fund community-led solutions for reducing poverty through sustainable economic growth. To date grants have been made to 24 countries.

Dubinsky's presentation focused on the IHC's experience in trying to make government officials and decision makers more aware of how urbanization is posing major challenges and opportunities for developing world countries and cities. Given the fact that a majority of the world lives in urban places, he noted that it is surprising that U.S. foreign assistance hasn't given more attention and priority to the unique problems and needs of urban areas. He pointed out that MCC had funded some large urban infrastructure projects in Mozambique, Tanzania, Jordan, and Lesotho, but that urban investments had not been a major focus of the MCC.

Dubinsky suggested that Congress and U.S. development agencies need to be better informed about the implications of urbanization and growing urban poverty, particularly that cities are the places where economic growth will largely occur if the process of growth is well managed. He suggested that MCC should consider becoming more involved in urban areas. He suggested the MCC might add an analysis of urbanization issues to its "constraints analysis" requirements; add staff

with urban programming experience, and make urban technical experts available to compact countries.

All of the speakers suggested that MCC's approach to development and the flexibility of its compact funding mechanism could be used to develop effective, multi-sector programs to address urban development issues. Several of the speakers encouraged the MCC to enter into compacts directly with cities.

IHC RELEASES 2011 ANNUAL REPORT

The IHC released its 2011 Annual Report in January. The report presents the highlights of our work for fiscal year 2011, running from October 2010 through September 2011. The IHC went through many organizational changes, including the hiring of a new CEO, Research and Policy Associate and bringing on our first intern. This renewed energy has allowed the IHC to complete another successful year.

The IHC successfully published and distributed four new research papers in 2011. These papers explore the ways in which topics such as gender, climate change and water and sanitation intersect with land and shelter, as well as take an in depth look at the shelter sector in Haiti, after the 2010 earthquake.

We remained actively engaged in dialogue around legislation including the Global Partnerships Act of 2011, the Paul Simon Water for the World Act, and federal budget negotiations. Our education activities included hosting a panel in honor of World Habitat Day, co-sponsoring the 2nd annual urban poverty essay competition and policy workshop, bringing three winning PhD students to Washington to discuss their research.

The full annual report is available [here](#).

JOIN THE IHC COALITION

BECOME A MEMBER OF THE IHC

Join the IHC and help support its advocacy, education and research program. Membership dues are only \$200 for 2012. To join go the IHC web site www.intlhc.org and click on Support the IHC.

