



## IHC Weekly Update

February 5, 2016

### In this Update

[Did Underlying Inequality Result in Contaminated Water in Flint, Michigan?](#)

[Habitat for Humanity Previews Solid Ground Campaign](#)

[USAID Power Africa Road Map](#)

[IHC Member Event: Cities, Climate Change and Development](#)

[OpenIDEO Announces Urban Resilience Challenge Winners](#)

[In the News and Around the Web](#)

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### Urbanization and Inequality Loom in Flint, Michigan

If you live in the United States, it has been difficult to miss the coverage of the water crisis currently unfolding in Flint, Michigan. Mistakes made at multiple levels of government have led to protracted exposure to unsafe and at sometimes toxic drinking water throughout the town, creating a public health crisis.

The serious contamination of such a basic resource is something one might read about in lesser developed nations around the world, with grave economic challenges and difficulties meeting basic needs. That this happened in the United States draws attention to the challenge of providing quality services to urban areas, especially when resources are tight, and government shortcuts are taken. Transparency, accountability of and responsiveness of local government to its citizens are all integral to ensuring a flourishing community. The issues of water contamination in Flint highlight also underlying issues of inequality and disenfranchisement.

It is not just the poor living in informal settlements around the globe that experience health and other hardships due to inequitable systems of governance and service delivery. Flint, Michigan brings the story sady "home" to the US, but, hopefully,

will strengthen the resolve of communities to continue to make their voices heard and of city leaders, both to listen and to understand the interconnected impacts that their decisions have on the lives of people living there. The Ford Foundation's Jean Ross published an article this week, expanding on this topic. You can read it [here](#).

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## **Habitat for Humanity Previews Solid Ground Campaign**

This week, as part of their larger legislative conference Habitat on the Hill, Habitat for Humanity International provided a preview of their new global advocacy campaign *Solid Ground*. The campaign focuses on access to land for shelter with four core pillars: disaster resilience, gender and property rights, secure tenure, and slum upgrading.

Bob Buckley, a renowned urban expert who has worked for the New School, Rockefeller Foundation, World Bank and others, presented on the importance of housing and access to land when addressing other global development needs. There followed a discussion of the new campaign, the role of US partners and the advocacy efforts already beginning in countries such as Cambodia.

The Solid Ground campaign website will launch formally later this spring, but in the meantime you can find more information about the campaign [here](#). You can also follow the campaign on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#).

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## **USAID Power Africa Road Map**

Last week, the Powering Africa Summit took place in Washington D.C.. This summit brought together the public and private sector from the United States and many countries in Sub-Saharan Africa to explore successes and further opportunities for collaboration toward the shared goal of adding 30,000 megawatts and 60 million connections across sub-Saharan Africa by 2030.

Among other outcomes, USAID launched a "roadmap" for how the Power Africa program will use the nearly US \$43 billion in commitments that the U.S. government has leveraged from over 120 public and private sector stakeholders.

IHC members might be particularly interested in Pillar 2 of the road map, which

focuses on large-scale roll-out programs, and the need for not only financing but capacity building, governance and regulatory reform in complex urban settings.

Read the full report [here](#). Read more about Power Africa [here](#).

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## **IHC Member Event: Cities Climate and Development**

IHC is pleased to be hosting a member breakfast with the University of Pennsylvania's Eugenie Birch. Dr. Birch is the Lawrence C. Nussdorf Professor of Urban Research and Education Professor and Chair of the Graduate Group in City and Regional Planning at the University of Pennsylvania School of Design. She co-directs the Penn Institute for Urban Research and is the Chair of the Habitat III General Assembly of Partners, an integral part of the activities leading up to Habitat III.

She will present on the results of the COP21 meetings in Paris late last year, what the Paris Declaration will mean for cities in the coming years, the relationship to Habitat III and the trends that will affect the future of urban development funding.

Her presentation will also focus on the role of civil society in shaping the New Urban Agenda, which will guide resource allocation and programs in urban areas. Come r about the impact that COP21 will have and ways in which you and your organization can engage and can think about climate adaptation and mitigation in your urban programming.

WHEN : February 22, 2016

*A light breakfast will begin at 8:30 am, program at 8:45 am*

WHERE : IHC Offices

1424 K St, Suite 600, Washington D.C.

A remote option will be available.

RSVP by Wednesday February 17th to Anjali Bean at [bean@intlhc.org](mailto:bean@intlhc.org).

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## **OpenIDEO Announces Urban Resilience Challenge Winners**

OpenIDEO, a global community working together to design solutions for the world's biggest challenges recently concluded a challenge competition focused on resilience in urban slums. Challenges usually take place over three to five months to create "a

space for community members to contribute, refine and prototype solutions," on specific topics.

After reviewing more than 350 submissions from over 100 countries, the OpenIDEO Urban Resilience Challenge has concluded by announcing eight winners. The winning ideas will be implemented in Bangladesh, Ethiopia, India, Indonesia, Kenya, Tanzania, the Philippines, and South Africa, and range from community flood prevention and fire risk reduction, to slum upgrading and construction retrofitting.

Read more about the challenge and OpenIDEO [here](#).

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### In the News and Around the Web

- Read an article evaluating India's "Smart City" experiment and its effect on poverty reduction [here](#).
- Read a *Guardian Cities* article highlighting Lebanon's efforts to resettle refugees in Beirut [here](#).
- Watch an interview with the World Bank's Peter Ellis on how South Asian countries can make the most of urbanization [here](#).

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