

## IHC Newsletter

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## IHC CONTRIBUTION TO WORLD HABITAT DAY

### THE IHC SPONSORS IMPORTANT DISCUSSION IN WASHINGTON, D.C.

The IHC joined *Foreign Policy* magazine in sponsoring a panel discussion, "The Challenges and Opportunities of an Urban World," in celebration of World Habitat Day. The session was held at the New America Foundation on October 8th. Peter Kimm, IHC Board chairman, moderated the discussion between Lawrence Hannah, advisor on international development and former World Bank economist, Christina Larson, contributing editor of *Foreign Policy* magazine, and Billy Cobbett, Manager of the Cities Alliance Program. Chris Williams of UN HABITAT made introductory remarks about the significance of World Habitat Day.

A video of the event can be found on the New America Foundation's website ([www.newamerica.net](http://www.newamerica.net)). An excerpt of Mr. Cobbett's remarks, which placed the issue of urbanization in a broader context, appears below:

#### Cobbett's Remarks:

"The urbanization debate is increasingly similar to the climate change debate in that everyone knows that it is going on, and those that don't are fighting about the trends and statistics to see if they can disprove what is happening....Most policymakers have a rough idea of what they need to do, but the political decisions are very difficult. Hopefully, in the urbanization debate, we don't wait until the glaciers disappear before we

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decide that it's time for action. But the current trends are pointing in that direction.

"What are the practical things that a policymaker needs to promote? The first challenges are the **dysfunctional urban land markets** that dominate in most countries and cities. What we need to achieve is easier said than done because it is tied up with power, politics and patronage. We need open land markets where we know who owns the land, how they got it and how it can be transferred; open access to information; and, easier transferability and release of land....

"... [Another] challenge is for policymakers to **gradually formalize and extend the provision of services to the entire population of a city**, including both the existing backlogs and planning for future provision, in line with evidence-based policymaking. These services include water, sanitation, solid waste and energy, as well as education and healthcare. The absence of dealing with this on a formal basis leads to huge price distortions within markets, such that the poor pay more for the same unit of service as the wealthier in the same city. It also leads to the creation of parallel markets, which is worrying for the long-term security of a city, since parallel markets give rise to parallel systems of governance. If the local government does not provide an essential service, someone else will and that puts them in a position of power and authority over those that are receiving. Prime examples of this are the favelas in Rio de Janeiro....

"[A final] practical step is to **recognize the permanence of the urban poor** and to act accordingly, which has been missing in too many policy responses. This entails the recognizing of an urban citizenship-the right of the poor to have access to the opportunities and responsibilities that come with being part of a long-term community. Besides access to land and services, this also means providing access to employment opportunities - indeed, the informal sector should be seen as an essential part of the private sector. Too often, local authorities destroy employment opportunities by dismantling the informal markets, without offering alternatives. Urban citizenship also requires the extension of those municipal services, which are almost never in the public debate, such as security....

"...This is how cities will be created and this is also how societies will stabilize."

Please contact Karoline Raeder ([raeder@intlhc.org](mailto:raeder@intlhc.org)) to receive a complete transcript of Billy Cobbett's remarks.

## IMPROVING URBAN HEALTH OUTCOMES

### THE IHC SPONSORS SEMINAR ON CAPITOL HILL

In partnership with the Woodrow Wilson Center and Habitat for Humanity International, the IHC sponsored a seminar on "Improving Health Outcomes for Slum Dwellers and the Urban Poor" on July 20th in the Rayburn House Office Building. The discussion highlighted the rapid urbanization of the developing world, and the resulting spread of slums and poverty. The panelists identified linkages between health outcomes and investment in the areas of housing, water, sanitation and other infrastructure. The discussion between Jacob Kumaresan, Director of the World Health Organization's Center for Health Development (Kobe, Japan) and Richard Lamporte, Director of New Program Development for JHPIEGO (an affiliate of Johns Hopkins University), was moderated by Blair Ruble of the Woodrow Wilson Center. About 75 people attended the event.

## NEW IHC WEBSITE

### THE IHC WEBSITE WILL OFFER TOOLS FOR ADVOCATES, POLICY MAKERS AND RESEARCHERS

The IHC will be launching its new website in January 2011. In addition to greatly improved organization and graphics, it will contain three new features: 1) A "Data Center," which will contain baseline demographic information by country on urban population levels, growth rates and urbanization trends. Additional data will be presented on urban agglomerations with populations over 750,000. 2) A slideshow summarizing the challenge of urbanization in developing countries. 3) An extensive list of links to other sources of information on urbanization and housing.

## GLOBAL CLIMATE CHANGE

### THE IHC PLANS TO FOCUS ON THE EFFECTS OF GLOBAL CLIMATE CHANGE ON THE URBAN POOR

With funding from the Rockefeller Foundation, the IHC has begun research on climate change impacts on the urban poor and under-housed in developing countries. As a first step, the IHC is preparing a monograph to summarize the particular impacts and threats of global climate change for cities, many of which are at or near sea level. There is a growing recognition that one aspect of adapting to climate change is developing strategies to deal with vast slum settlements in areas that are particularly vulnerable to sea-level rise and extreme weather events. There is also concern that changing weather patterns in parts of the world, particularly Africa, will reduce land fertility, thereby exacerbating urbanization. We believe it is important to be engaged on this issue.

## GENDER AND HOUSING

### THE IHC LAUNCHES WORK ON GENDER ISSUES IN HOUSING

Together with the Urban Institute, the IHC has begun a research project on gender and housing. Of particular interest is gender discrimination in property ownership and inheritance rights, and how these issues are related to economic development and poverty alleviation. The paper will examine how stronger tenure and ownership rights might empower women economically and enable them to invest in small businesses for their economic advancement. The focus will be on the urban context and will include several case studies.

## HAITI SHELTER RECONSTRUCTION

### IHC'S WORK CONTINUES IN HAITI AMID IMMENSE CHALLENGES

The IHC continues to provide strategic and policy advice to USAID/Haiti. Following a field visit by Bob Dubinsky and IHC consultant Steve Giddings in August, various discussions were held to focus IHC's support in a way to reinforce the work of others in the sector. It was decided that IHC could best contribute by lending support on programmatic and policy issues regarding housing and infrastructure recovery, through research on critical

subjects. To that end, IHC has been engaged in three activities:

- With assistance from Michael Shea of Westat (IHC member), the IHC put together an issues paper on how a housing voucher program might work in Haiti.
- IHC has assigned David Painter a consultant with extensive overseas and USAID experience, to oversee a broad summary assessment of the housing sector. This will result in an up-to-date overview of shelter-related subjects, ranging from housing finance, to land tenure, to the building materials industry
- The IHC will be organizing a second panel of housing and urban development experts in December to discuss and review emerging policies, plans and developments in reconstruction and housing redevelopment.

## PAUL SIMON WATER FOR THE POOR ACT

### A REVIEW BY THE IHC IS UNDERWAY

The IHC, in collaboration with Water Advocates, is conducting a review of how funds from the Paul Simon Water for the Poor Act (\$915 million, to date) are being used by USAID in support of improved access to water and sanitation in the developing world. Of particular interest to the IHC is the extent to which the funds are being directed to projects that target the poor in urban slums.

## REAUME FOUNDATION GRANT RECEIVED

### A NEW GRANT TO THE IHC IS MADE BY THE REAUME FOUNDATION

The IHC was awarded a grant from the Reaume Foundation in the amount of \$20,000. The funds will enable the IHC to repeat its successful support for graduate-level scholarship into housing and urban issues in developing countries. Specifically, the IHC will manage a process to solicit research proposals from graduate students. Finalists will be invited to Washington, D.C. to present their work to technical experts, including those from development agencies. The author of the winning work will be supported in presenting his or her findings in international

forums.([www.intlhc.org](http://www.intlhc.org)).

## QUADRENNIAL DIPLOMACY AND DEVELOPMENT REVIEW (QDDR)

### FINAL REPORT MADE PUBLIC

The IHC has long been involved in this comprehensive review of diplomacy and development. We are pleased that the QDDR report has been issued by the State Department and that it includes a number of items that promote a more effective, flexible and forward-looking development assistance program. The IHC is hopeful that this adds up to a higher priority for the world shelter crisis and attention to the problems and opportunities presented by the continuing rapid urbanization of the developing world. A few noteworthy conclusions of the report:

- The U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) would become the lead agency for "food security" and "global health." These are two key initiatives of the current administration and both have important urban dimensions.
- USAID would have greater independence for development planning and project implementation. A new Bureau of Policy, Planning and Learning would support greater innovation and attention to emerging and important world trends, such as urbanization.
- Staffing at USAID would be strengthened through an increase in Foreign Service personnel and a senior technical career track. These will, hopefully, enable the Agency to broaden its expertise to include personnel with urban development and housing-related skills.

## A PEACEFUL 2011!

### THE IHC LOOKS FORWARD TO A PRODUCTIVE 2011

The IHC would like to thank all of those who work with us and who share our commitment to building a better world where families live with dignity in decent housing.

We appreciate the strong and continued support from our sponsors, our members and our funders. In 2011 we will redouble our efforts to ensure the rightful place of housing on the development agenda!

## DONATE TO THE IHC

### PETER KIMM MAKES HIS ANNUAL DONATION TO THE IHC

The IHC encourages members and friends to make a donation to the IHC. This additional support enables the IHC to more effectively undertake its mission of education, outreach and advocacy. Donations to the IHC are deductible for income tax purposes.

For example, Peter Kimm, IHC chairman of the board, recently made his annual year end donation of \$1,000 to the IHC. Every year since the the IHC was formed Peter Kimm has served as its unpaid board chairman and has, in addition, made an annual contribution of \$1,000 to support the organization. The IHC is very appreciative of his support and his active involvement in its activities and programs. His donation will help the IHC further its mission.