



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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### Volume 8, Issue 1

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## REPRESENTATIVE HOWARD BERMAN INTRODUCES GLOBAL PARTNERSHIPS ACT

In the last hours of the 112th Congress, longtime foreign aid supporter Congressman Howard Berman (D-CA) introduced the Global Partnerships Act of 2012. The bill was intended to replace the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961, a piece of legislation that hasn't been updated in over 50 years, and is a comprehensive framework aimed at reforming the U.S. foreign aid system.

The IHC was very active in the development and formation of the bill, especially in the section focused on water, sanitation and adequate housing. The IHC played an important role in having adequate housing included as part of one of the eight U.S. goals of global development, and strongly supports the requirement for a global strategy on water, sanitation and shelter that would authorize funds for assistance to water, sanitation and shelter projects.

Because the bill was introduced at the very end of the session, it did not have the opportunity to be considered by the House of Representatives and Congressman Berman left the House at the end of the year. However, it is expected that Congressman Gerry Connolly (D-VA) will reintroduce the legislation with very few changes again this year.

Due to the bill's size and complexity, and understanding the toxic climate for any new spending in Congress, it is unlikely that the bill will get much attention in the near future. However, having such a comprehensive bill on the legislative record is a major step forward, and portions of the language are more likely to be recycled into smaller, more sector-specific legislation in the future.

## IHC PARTICIPATES IN TWO HILL ADVOCACY DAYS

This spring, the IHC participated in two advocacy days on Capitol Hill, one in partnership with Habitat for Humanity International (HFHI) and one in honor of World Water Day. On February 5th, the IHC joined Habitat affiliates from across the country in an advocacy day focusing on affordable housing both in the US and abroad. Similarly, with access to water and sanitation constituting two of the five criteria that define a slum household, the goals of World Water Day align very much with the IHC's mission and the IHC was pleased to advocate for these issues on March 22nd.

Several pieces of legislation being considered by congress and strongly supported by the IHC were promoted at these events. The 2013 Paul Simon Water for the World Act, the Sustainable Land and Urban Management (SLUM) Act and the Global Partnerships Act (covered above) were all discussed in hundreds of meetings with members of Congress and their staff.

In a rapidly urbanizing world, the Sustainable Land and Urban Management Act will seek to focus attention on cities and slums in the US foreign assistance agenda. The bill will encourage programs that increase access to tenure security, basic shelter, and urban services and infrastructure, and support reforms that seek to enhance access to shelter for the most vulnerable.

The Water for the World Act aims to build upon the Water for the Poor Act of 2005 and codify many of the best practices for water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) spending learned in the past decade. It focuses on making better use of existing WASH funds, strengthening accountability for WASH programs already underway, and ensuring the greatest impact on communities worldwide without spending new money or creating new bureaucracy.

Each bill supports the IHC's overarching goals, and the IHC was pleased to work together with partners from the DC area, around the country, and the world on these important issues.

## USAID RELEASES DRAFT URBAN SERVICES DELIVERY POLICY FOR PUBLIC COMMENT

In March, the Policy Planning and Learning (PPL) Office at the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) released a draft of their upcoming new policy, *Sustainable Service Delivery in an Increasingly Urbanized World*. Having been involved in the drafting process from its early stages and hosting a listening session for USAID in August, the IHC was pleased to see USAID eliciting feedback from the global development community by releasing the policy in draft form

IHC has long advocated for an urban policy within USAID, and while it is narrow in scope it is nonetheless a major step towards USAID's recognition of urbanization as a critical demographic change for development programming.

The 30-page policy outlines the challenges presented by urban growth in the developing world, and the need to adjust existing approaches and develop new ways to deliver services such as food, healthcare, water, sanitation and electricity in cities. With an emphasis on sustainability of programs, the strategy focuses on, among other things, political and financial security, accountability, pro-poor programming, public-private partnerships, and supporting municipal governance as ways to ensure sustainable service delivery.

The policy was designed to advance continuing work on USAID's core development objectives: food security, global health, climate change, democracy and governance, disaster assistance and conflict prevention and response. Looking at all of these programs through an urban lens will help to improve the effectiveness of USAID program assistance.

The policy is undoubtedly a step in the right direction, addressing the unique challenges presented by growing cities; however, the IHC is disappointed that the issue of housing is not identified as a critical factor in delivering sustainable services to urban residents, especially in slums.

## **IHC PARTNERS WITH THE USAID ALUMNI ASSOCIATION**

The IHC has developed a working relationship with the USAID Alumni Association (UAA) to increase awareness about the significance of urbanization for development and how it should affect USAID's priorities and assistance programs.

The UAA is a 501(c)(3) NGO that fosters collegial networks of former USAID employees while promoting exchange of knowledge among alumni who wish to use their public service experience to advance global development. UAA facilitates access to alumni expertise for professional counsel and public education in support of sound U.S. foreign assistance.

The UAA Development Issues Committee has focused its early attention on the urbanization phenomenon. The IHC has participated in developing the UAA urban agenda. Taking advantage of the USAID's monthly "Making Cities Work Speaker Series," UAA organized a panel on January 15 to reflect on its members experience as it relates to USAID's new urban policy.

Building on the success of that initial effort, the UAA Urban Team plans to organize four workshops in 2013 highlighting the growing recognition that urbanization must play a more

prominent role in both development programming. Each workshop will seek to underscore urbanization as a transformative development phenomenon, interrelating it to other important development themes and situated (for the most part) in a particular region. Topics may include (subject to addition as members, USAID or partners may suggest):

1. Urbanization, the Environment and Sustainability - Asia,
2. Development Pathways - Africa,
3. Financing Cities - Latin America, and
4. A global perspective on the issue of urban slums.

The IHC plans to help organize the urban slum workshop and to continue to provide advice to the UAA.

The UAA Development Issues Committee team leader is Owen Cylke. The Co-Chairs of the UAA Executive Committee are Alex Shakow and Nancy Pielemeir.

## **IHC'S CONTINUED INVOLVEMENT IN THE POST-2015 AGENDA**

With the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) set to expire in less than two years, the process of shaping the post-2015 development agenda is in full swing. The UN High Level Panel is set to give its recommendations to the Secretary General at the end of May, and the Secretary General will present his final recommendations to the UN General Assembly in September. Leading up to these announcements, the international development community has begun to deliberate on what kind of goals will succeed the MDGs, and every sector is eager to ensure their issue is well represented.

The IHC continues to be heavily involved in shaping the objectives of the new development goals, participating in meetings discussing the development agenda and coordinating with Habitat for Humanity International to produce reports that make the case for our mutual goals. The IHC strongly believes that housing, a critical foundation to many other development priorities, should explicitly be included in the new set of MDG development goals. More generally, the IHC believes the new goals could improve on the previous ones by giving additional attention to the very poor, especially in urban areas.

## **JOIN THE IHC COALITION: BECOME AN IHC MEMBER**

Join the IHC and help support its advocacy, education and research program. Basic membership dues are \$200 for 2013. To join go the IHC web site [www.intlhc.org](http://www.intlhc.org) and click on Support the IHC.