



Volume 1, Issue 1, Newsletter for the Cities Alliance

## December in Kolkata (Calcutta)

A four-day Cities Alliance Public Policy Forum (PPF) on "Sustainable Partnerships for City Development" will be held from December 9-12 in Kolkata, India, beginning with a day of field visits to highlight some of the many issues and challenges facing large cities like Kolkata, including: industrial relocation, municipal governance, slum upgrading, waste management, environmental protection, and empowering the vulnerable. Governmental authorities, non-governmental organisations, businesses, community organisations and local residents will have a chance to interact with civic leaders and the managers of the urban portfolios of bilateral and multilateral agencies. The subsequent days of the Forum will involve presentations and in-depth small group discussions to share experiences of pro-poor city planning in India and other Asian countries. Case studies of successful Asian city development strategies will be presented and discussed. The event, which is expected to attract over 150 participants from some 30 cities, is being jointly hosted on behalf of the Cities Alliance by the Government of West Bengal, the United Kingdom's Department for International Development and the Asian Coalition for Housing Rights. Participants have been invited from cities across India and South East Asia, including city Mayors, senior government officials, NGOs, and community-based organisations. The annual Cities Alliance Consultative Group Meeting is also being held in Kolkata from December 11-12.

For more details see the PPF [agenda](#)

## Momentum of Peshawar CDS strained by regional events. Contingency plans identified.

The influx of Afghan refugees into Peshawar since the September 11 terrorist attacks and obvious new preoccupations of local authorities have placed in question the scope and proposed timeframe of the Peshawar City Development Strategy (CDS). In a recent assessment of the post-September 11 situation, the local CDS Team considers the possible need to shift the focus of the CDS from strategic future planning to more immediate coping strategies to manage the current demands on the city. Despite the current strains on the Peshawar CDS process and even as the scope of the CDS is being reconsidered, the Team has identified a number of activities that can continue to take place under the present circumstances.

To read more about the Team's [assessment](#)

For more information on the Peshawar CDS, contact Task Manager Shahnaz Arshad at [sarshad@worldbank.org](mailto:sarshad@worldbank.org)

## 'Cities Without Slums' slogan open to interpretation. Cities Alliance Secretariat responds.

A demonstration by representatives of the urban poor in Jakarta, Indonesia last month, revealed that the 'Cities Without Slums' banner is open to misinterpretation. The action plan has set the target of improving the lives of at least 100 million slum dwellers by 2020. In Jakarta, however, the Cities Without Slums slogan has apparently become associated by some organisations of the urban poor with the local government's forcible evictions of the city's poorest, including pedicab drivers, street vendors and beggars. The World Bank and the United Nations were the initial targets of the local protest, as both institutions' support for the Cities Without Slums initiative were mistakenly interpreted as complicity in the local government's own violent actions against the city's poorest residents.

The events in Jakarta have signalled the need to ensure that the approach and underlying values of the Cities Without Slums action plan - working in partnership with local authorities and the urban poor to improve their living conditions - are clearly understood and endorsed at the local level. In Indonesia, the action plan is being translated into Bahasa to

support local efforts to clarify what the initiative actually proposes. The organiser of the Jakarta rally, Wardah Hafidz, and the organisation she represents, the Urban Poor Consortium (UPC), are also being invited to participate in the discussions of the Cities Alliance Public Policy Forum on "Sustainable Partnerships for City Development" to be held in Kolkata December 9-12 in connection with the Alliance's Consultative Group Meeting.

The Alliance will support translating the Cities Without Slums action plan into local languages and will encourage the adoption of locally-coined slogans that express the action plan's commitment to working with the urban poor to improve their living conditions.

We continue, of course, to hear of positive interpretations of the Cities Without Slums initiative by urban poor around the world. One such reference came in the form of a [poem](#), written by women living in Nairobi's Mathere Vallyry slum and recited during last month's World Habitat Day celebrations.

For the Reuters story on the October rally in Jakarta:

[http://208.7.193.61/fpweb/fp.dll/\\$vwb/htm/x\\_dv.htm/ u/000157243/ id/742585367/ k/d89tdqZOojawSYaP](http://208.7.193.61/fpweb/fp.dll/$vwb/htm/x_dv.htm/ u/000157243/ id/742585367/ k/d89tdqZOojawSYaP)

For an update on developments in Jakarta, check the Asian Coalition for Housing Rights website:

<http://www.achr.net/news.htm>

For the Cities Without Slums Action Plan:

[http://www.citiesalliance.org/citiesalliancehomepage.nsf/Attachments/Cities+Without+Slums+Action+Plan/\\$File/brln\\_ap.pdf](http://www.citiesalliance.org/citiesalliancehomepage.nsf/Attachments/Cities+Without+Slums+Action+Plan/$File/brln_ap.pdf)

## Global Urban Research Initiative (GURI) Network moves ahead on urban poverty alleviation research proposal

At a meeting in Toronto on October 6-7, developing country researchers gathered with researchers from the University of Toronto and the University of Paris, and representatives from Cities Alliance members -- France, CIDA and the World Bank, to determine which developing country cities have achieved significant poverty-reduction impacts and how they have done so. It is hoped that this research would contribute to future City Development Strategy initiatives.

For more on the [meeting](#)

## Measuring improvements in lives of slum dwellers

To mark World Habitat Day, the Woodrow Wilson International Center convened a seminar in Washington DC, co-hosted by the Cities Alliance, to consider secure tenure as an indicator of the achievement of the Cities Without Slums action plan goal of improving the lives of at least 100 million slum dwellers by 2020. Secure tenure has been identified along with sanitation in the UN Secretary General's *Road Map towards the implementation of the United Nations Millennium Declaration (A/56/326)*, as key indicators to measure improvements in the lives of slum dwellers. The seminar discussed how secure tenure can be quantified while allowing for regional and cultural differentiation, and how measurements can be developed by local stakeholders in a manner which best serves their interests.

[For a summary of the discussion](#)

To view the UN Millennium declaration: <http://www.un.org/millennium/>

## Would you like to be included?

Contact Chii Akporji for subscription information, other questions or suggestions about the newsletter:

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