



January 2002, Newsletter for the Cities Alliance

Cities Alliance Annual Forum: Stories from Kolkata

Two hundred and fifty people drawn from some 30 cities across India and Southeast Asia met in Kolkata, India last month to focus on strategies and partnerships for pro-poor city development. The four-day [Public Policy Forum of the Cities Alliance](#), jointly hosted by the Government of West Bengal, the UK Department for International Development (DFID) and the Asian Coalition for Housing Rights (ACHR), brought together national and international experts, businesses, governmental authorities, donor agencies, NGOs, community organisations, slum-dwellers and members of civil society. A full report of the proceedings, including speeches, presentations, photos and video footage is being put together and will be disseminated shortly. It will also be accessible on the Cities Alliance website (<http://www.citiesalliance.org>). This issue of our NewsWire provides just some of the highlights of the Forum.

Adding the Urban Poor to the Development Equation

Despite the diverse backgrounds of the panelists leading the Public Policy Forum's opening discussion on Sustainable Partnerships for City Development, their message was the same: the key to sustainable city development is the inclusion of the poor in the planning process. Chaired by Ruth McCleod, Chief Executive of Homeless International, panelists included Jockin Arputam, President of the National Slum Dwellers Federation of India, Akin Mabogunje, Executive Chairman of the Nigerian-based Development Policy Centre, Father Jorge Anzoreno, of SELAVIP Journal on Low Income Housing, and Ms. K. Prakayaew Nakarattan, Mayor of Uttradit City, Thailand. Among the many relevant messages coming out of the session, was that of Akin Mabogunje who spoke of the *zero-plus option* for cities: the choice to either ignore the urban poor, treating them as a 'zero', or to consider them a 'plus', harnessing their energy and bringing them into partnerships.

For [Professor Mabogunje's full speech](#)

For [a summary of the panelists' presentations](#)

Facing the Threat of Eviction was the focus of an informal evening meeting held during the Public Policy Forum. Organised as a session to share concerns and experiences of evictions, several specific suggestions on how to avoid forced evictions emerged from the discussions, from pursuing a rights approach, through both legal instruments and the media, to a practical developmental approach of improving housing and environmental conditions in-situ. Significance was also attached to the promotion of communities' own processes of networking, sharing information, learning how to negotiate and finding alternatives through, for example, participatory surveying and planning. Participants urged the Cities Alliance to give specific consideration to the issue of eviction when evaluating proposals for funding, and to be more proactive with funding agencies in promoting the principle of "*no eviction without appropriate consensual rehabilitation*", particularly given the [Cities Without Slums action plan](#).

A Peoples' CDS, where civic groups and communities are the initiators of the CDS process, was one of the recommendations of NGO representatives at the Public Policy Forum's session on City Development Strategies (CDS). The session, which addressed objectives, processes and performance of CDSs, elicited views from a broad range of stakeholders -- from NGOs, to government and donor organisations, to community leaders. Government officials spoke of their need to be sensitised to working in partnerships with civic groups and communities. NGOs emphasised the need to prioritise demands on people's energy and resources. Community representatives called for a process where they are better informed of city development activities that affect their lives. The varying views emerging from the different stakeholders proved to be very instructive. [Click here for a summary](#)

A Tale of Two Cities

Attending the Public Policy Forum and Consultative Group Meetings in Kolkata last month, São Paulo's Secretary of Housing and Urban Development, Paulo Teixeira, discovered many common issues the cities of Kolkata and São Paulo are facing. While the scale of some of the problems differs, Teixeira found there was much to learn from Kolkata's experiences. [The Times of India interviewed Teixeira during his December visit](#)

Also profiled in the Times of India were Cities Alliance partners [USAID](#), [DFID](#) and [SPARC](#) on their activities in Kolkata:

Increases in Forced Evictions

Recent events, particularly in South and Southeast Asia, have signalled an increase in the number of large scale, forced evictions, often accompanied by violence. From mid-August, Jakarta has seen extremely violent actions undertaken against the urban poor that have left at least 10,000 homeless. Fires that swept through two sites in Phnom Penh in November 2001 destroyed the homes of up to 4,000 families. This month the authorities in Karachi have commenced bulldozing homes of the urban poor, with activists estimating that up to 25,000 households could be affected. There have been a number of evictions in Beijing as part of the build-up to the 2008 Olympics, and these are expected to increase.

See: <http://www.achr.net/>

All of these countries were represented at the Millennium Summit, and all supported the adoption of the Millennium Development Goals, which included a signal of hope for slum dwellers around the world. As proposed by the World Bank, 'secure tenure' has been included as one of the key indicators to measure the progress in improving the lives of 100 million slum dwellers by the year 2020. Forced evictions are the most brutal denial of secure tenure. They invariably make the situation worse, and stand in direct contradiction to the aims of the Cities Without Slums action plan adopted by the United Nations General Assembly. This is a fundamental policy issue that the Cities Alliance will need to tackle head-on.

See also: <http://www.cohre.org>

New Resources and Upcoming Events

Global Learning Alliance Network

The Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) is hosting an initial brainstorm/consultation on February 4-6, 2002 to investigate the feasibility of establishing an alliance of universities and practitioners to improve the living conditions of the urban poor and support the implementation of the Cities Without Slums action plan. Approximately ten universities from different parts of the world will attend (invitees include Beijing, Bandung, Delhi, Hanoi, San Salvador, São Paulo, Mexico City, Seoul,

Nairobi and Johannesburg), as well as the World Bank Institute and representatives from the Cities Alliance Secretariat. This initiative by MIT builds upon the global video-conference on slum upgrading held in 2000 and the slum upgrading CD they produced on behalf of the Cities Alliance.

For more information, contact is Prod Laquian at: laquian@mit.edu

Pro-poor Infrastructure

We would like to share the attached resource which has been brought to our attention:

Private participation in infrastructure is generally expected to improve efficiency, and speed investment in service expansion. Well-designed infrastructure reforms can benefit the poor through improved economic performance and growth, and through service expansion. But making a significant dent in the problem of improved access to services by the poor requires careful attention to the details of sector reform. [The World Bank's Rapid Response web site](#) has assembled nearly 40 papers and links reflecting exciting new thinking on how to make infrastructure reforms "pro-poor" through freeing up entry into infrastructure markets, rethinking regulatory rules and processes, and more effective targeting of subsidies to those who really need them.

The World Bank's [Rapid Response Web site](#) provides access to knowledge resources on investment climate and privatisation policy for developing countries. Its services include a database of quality-assured papers, case studies and Web links, on-line helpdesk services, on-line discussion boards on hot policy issues, a newsletter and subscriber alerts for updates to the site, and a guide to training opportunities on policy design and implementation.

Would you like to be included?

Contact Chii Akporji for subscription information, other questions or suggestions about the newsletter: cakporji@worldbank.org

www.citiesalliance.org