

110TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

H. RES. 1486

Supporting the goals and ideals of World Habitat Day.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

SEPTEMBER 23, 2008

Mr. MILLER of North Carolina submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Affairs

RESOLUTION

Supporting the goals and ideals of World Habitat Day.

Whereas in 1985, the United Nations General Assembly declared the first Monday of October to be World Habitat Day in recognition of the state of human settlements and the basic need for adequate shelter for all;

Whereas approximately 1,000,000,000 people currently live in slums, more than half of the population are under the age of 25, and 40 percent are under the age of 19;

Whereas it is estimated that by 2030 the number of people living in slums will double and two-thirds of the world's population will be urban dwellers;

Whereas slums are characterized by inadequate access to safe water, sanitation, and other infrastructure, overcrowding, poorly structured housing, and insecure residential status;

Whereas 88 percent of all diseases are caused by unsafe drinking water, inadequate sanitation, and poor hygiene, and almost 50 percent of all people in developing countries are suffering at any given time from a health problem caused by water and sanitation deficits;

Whereas approximately one in six people lack access to safe drinking water and approximately two in every five people lack access to basic sanitation services;

Whereas the costs of diseases and productivity losses linked to water and sanitation in less developed countries amount to 2 percent of GDP and up to 5 percent in sub-Saharan Africa;

Whereas insecure tenure subjects slum dwellers to forced evictions, threats, and harassment;

Whereas forced evictions involve the permanent or temporary involuntary removal of persons, families, and groups from their homes or land they occupy without appropriate forms of legal or other protection;

Whereas the legal responsibility to prevent forced evictions ultimately rests with the governments;

Whereas in 2007, approximately 5,000,000 people were affected by forced evictions, and projections show that the number of forced evictions are likely to increase to between 40,000,000 and 70,000,000 in the next 20 years;

Whereas insecure tenure severely inhibits economic development, long-term security of families, and the reduction of conflicts;

Whereas women are affected disproportionately by forced evictions and insecure tenure as a result of discrimination and gender-biased laws that prevent women from acquiring and securing land, property, and housing, making

them more vulnerable to poverty, violence, and sexual abuse;

Whereas women are responsible for 66 percent of the world's work, but own less than 15 percent of the world's property;

Whereas due to conflicts and natural disasters, more than 14,000,000 refugees and internally displaced people live in tents or other temporary shelters;

Whereas adequate housing provides a fundamental precondition to personal wealth creation and acts as collateral for credit and the development of local and national financial institutions;

Whereas adequate housing serves as a catalyst for social and democratic development; and

Whereas it is a matter of conscience and action that every human being enjoy the stability, the security, and the dignity of a decent, affordable home: Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved*, That the House of Representatives—

2 (1) supports the goals and ideals of World
3 Habitat Day;

4 (2) recognizes the importance of establishing
5 housing and shelter issues as a major priority of the
6 United States Government foreign assistance;

7 (3) urges an increased effort and the invest-
8 ment of greater resources by the Department of
9 State, the United States Agency for International
10 Development, and all relevant Federal departments

1 and agencies toward providing safe, simple, and de-
2 cent housing, clean water, and sanitation for the
3 poor and the very poor;

4 (4) advises the creation of a commission to
5 study the critical issues of shelter, especially slums,
6 and seek ways to improve the lives of the millions
7 of people worldwide in need of adequate and afford-
8 able shelter, including housing microfinance, slum
9 upgrading, secure tenure, and land tilting;

10 (5) commends the actions of governments,
11 international organizations, and charities around the
12 world working to make shelter a priority; and

13 (6) encourages the people of the United States
14 to observe the week with appropriate activities that
15 promote awareness of the importance of adequate
16 housing.

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