

112TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

S. RES. 285

Supporting the goals and ideals of World Habitat Day, October 3, 2011.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

OCTOBER 3, 2011

Mr. KERRY (for himself, Mr. CARDIN, Mr. DURBIN, and Mr. AKAKA) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations

RESOLUTION

Supporting the goals and ideals of World Habitat Day,
October 3, 2011.

Whereas the United Nations has designated the first Monday of October every year as World Habitat Day, and the theme of 2011 World Habitat Day is Cities and Climate Change;

Whereas World Habitat Day calls on global citizens to reflect on the state of our towns and cities and the importance of adequate shelter and serves as a reminder of our collective responsibility for the future of the human habitat;

Whereas approximately 51 percent of the world's population currently lives in cities of all sizes and produces the majority of the world's economic output;

Whereas projections indicate that $\frac{2}{3}$ of the world's population will reside in cities just over a generation from now;

Whereas approximately 1,000,000,000 people currently live in slums, and more than half of this population is under the age of 25;

Whereas it is estimated that, by 2030, the number of people living in slums will double;

Whereas, according to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention, approximately 884,000,000 people lack adequate access to safe water, and nearly 50 percent of the developing world's population, over 2,500,000,000 people, lack access to sanitation services;

Whereas the Center for Disease Control and Prevention estimates that unsafe drinking water, inadequate sanitation, and poor hygiene contribute to the deaths of more than 1,500,000 children younger than 5 years of age per year;

Whereas, according to the World Bank, more than 1,400,000,000 people still live without electricity, a critical component of economic growth and development;

Whereas insecure lease and real property ownership tenure often subject slum dwellers to arbitrary, supra-market rents, forced evictions, threats, and harassment;

Whereas insecurity of land and property tenure severely inhibits economic development by undermining investment incentives and constraining the growth of credit markets, imperils the ability of families to achieve sustainable livelihoods and assured access to shelter, and often contributes to conflict over property rights;

Whereas women are affected disproportionately by forced evictions and insecure tenure as a result of gender-based dis-

crimination, often including gender-biased laws that define women as legal minors or otherwise prevent them from acquiring and securing land, property, and housing lease or ownership rights, making them more vulnerable to poverty, violence, and sexual abuse;

Whereas many of the world’s large cities are located in low-lying coastal areas that are more susceptible to environmental events and face serious threats from the effects of climate change such as storm surges;

Whereas the slum dwellers in low-lying coastal cities are disproportionately affected by disasters;

Whereas, according to the International Organization for Migration, there could be up to 200,000,000 environmentally induced migrants by 2050, many of whom will be forced from their homes by rising sea levels and the increased frequency of flooding or drought, thereby challenging the security of the United States and United States allies;

Whereas adequate housing and universal access to basic shelter serve as catalysts for economic, social, and democratic development in the United States and elsewhere;

Whereas international organizations, faith-based groups, and nonprofits are working towards providing safe, affordable, and decent shelter for all; and

Whereas the 2006 National Security Strategy states, “America’s national interests and moral values drive us in the same direction: to assist the world’s poor citizens and least developed nations and help integrate them into the global economy”: Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved*, That the Senate—

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

3 (2) reflects on the state of our cities and towns
4 and the importance of adequate shelter and is re-
5 minded of our shared responsibility for the future of
6 the human habitat;

7 (3) underscores the importance of a sustainable
8 urban development strategy that—

9 (A) promotes equitable access to—

10 (i) basic shelter and affordable hous-
11 ing, particularly by residents of slums and
12 informal settlements and similar densely
13 populated, impoverished urban areas; and

14 (ii) safe water and sanitation;

15 (B) promotes gender equality and women’s
16 empowerment;

17 (C) supports access to sustainable and re-
18 newable sources of energy;

19 (D) employs innovative approaches to
20 urban development challenges;

21 (E) leverages United States Government
22 resources through collaborative partnership with
23 foreign governments, intergovernmental organi-
24 zations, private sector entities, and nonprofit
25 and community-based organizations;

1 (F) operates to a scale that ensures sus-
2 tainability;

3 (G) addresses current and future effects of
4 climate change on cities; and

5 (H) improves environmental sustainability
6 in urban areas; and

7 (4) encourages the leaders and citizens of cities,
8 which are the source of, and solution to, many of the
9 world's development challenges, to build upon their
10 successful experiences and develop more ambitious
11 goals for urban sustainable development at the up-
12 coming United Nations Conference on Sustainable
13 Development to be held June 4–6, 2012, in Rio de
14 Janeiro, Brazil.

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