

## **International Housing Coalition to Sponsor 12 Sessions at World Urban Forum III**

**OTTAWA, Ontario, June 09, 2006** — The International Housing Coalition is sponsoring 12 networking sessions on the world housing crisis during the upcoming World Urban Forum III in Vancouver June 19-23, 2006. Developed in conjunction with some 11 national and international organizations, these sessions will present important worldwide experience and recommend policies to improve housing in the developing world, improve aboriginal housing in Canada and promote affordable housing in the United States.

Of special focus will be the issues of how to engage the private and non-governmental sectors, and how to raise the priority of housing among national and multilateral development assistance organizations.

Held every other year, the World Urban Forum was established by the United Nations to examine one of the most pressing issues facing the world today: rapid urbanization and its impact on communities, cities, economies and policies. It is projected that in the next fifty years, two-thirds of humanity will be living in towns and cities.

The International Housing Coalition (IHC) was founded and capitalized by the National Association of Realtors® (NAR), The Canadian Real Estate Association (CREA) and Habitat for Humanity International (HfHI) to promote the goal of "HOUSING FOR ALL" as an essential element to ending poverty worldwide. The IHC was incorporated as a non-profit organization in August 2005.

The mission of the International Housing Coalition is twofold: to promote national housing policies that have been proven effective and to activate and energize the private sector in finding housing solutions. The IHC was organized for the purpose of restoring housing to a position of importance and priority on the world development agenda. This decision to form the coalition coincided with plans to hold the World Urban Forum. Immediately following the forum, the coalition will begin its outreach to individual countries.

The 12 networking sessions the IHC will sponsor are: "Housing for All: Essential to Economic, Social and Civic Development;" "Scaling Up Slum Improvement;" "Aboriginal Housing in Canada: Building on Promising Practices;" "A Worldwide Review of Housing Sector Strategies and Finance in Developing Countries;" "The Bellagio Housing Declaration;" "Housing the Poor; Engaging the Private and Citizen Sectors: Social Innovations and Hybrid Value Chains;" "China's Housing Successes and Disappointments Since 1977;" "Land and Real Estate Assessment Methodologies;

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Land and Property Markets in Ghana;" "From Vancouver '76 to the Present: Donor Investment in Housing; What Has Been Learned?;" "Developing and Strengthening Worldwide Networks for Housing the Poor;" "Promoting Affordable Housing in the United States;" and "Sharing Knowledge: lowering the Costs of Housing and Managing Tsunami Shelter at Scale."

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The coalition is chaired by Peter Kimm, who for many years led housing efforts at the U.S. Agency for International Development and now acts as a consultant for many international organizations. Members of the board of directors include Kimm; Gerry Thiessen, immediate past president of CREA; Al Mansell, immediate past president of NAR; and Elizabeth Blake, Senior Vice President Advocacy, Government Affairs & General Counsel for Habitat for Humanity. The coalition's president and CEO is John T. (Jack) Howley, a former U.S. Foreign Service officer and USAID employee with international housing expertise.

### About The Canadian Real Estate Association

The Canadian Real Estate Association (CREA) is one of Canada's largest single-industry trade Associations, and represents more than 85,000 REALTORS® across Canada. CREA's primary mission is to represent its members at the federal level of government and to act as a watchdog on national legislation affecting or impacting the real estate industry. CREA also works to defend the public's right to own and enjoy property. See .

### About the National Association of Realtors®

The National Association of Realtors®, "The Voice for Real Estate," is America's largest trade association, representing more than 1.3 million members involved in all aspects of the residential and commercial real estate industries. See [www.Realtor.org](http://www.Realtor.org).

### About Habitat for Humanity International

Habitat for Humanity International, based in Americus, Ga., is an ecumenical Christian ministry that welcomes to its work all people dedicated to the cause of eliminating poverty housing. Since 1976, Habitat has built more than 200,000 houses in nearly 100 countries, providing simple, decent and affordable shelter for one million people. See [www.habitat.org](http://www.habitat.org).

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