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## INTERNATIONAL PROGRAMS OF THE DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT

by

Thomas R. Callaway, Director\*

The first of what might be termed a meaningful role in international urban development for the United States Government began with the end of World War II in Europe. That continent began to shrug the dust and rubble from its shoulders and undertook the job of reconstruction with heavy involvement and assistance from the United States. At the same time, renewed and more persistent rumblings of independence began to be heard from three-score nations whose colonial ties were temporarily strengthened, but over the long term irrevocably weakened, by involvement in the war and exposure to another world.

At the end of the war in Europe, the U.S. changed its flow of weapons to building materials, tanks to bulldozers, and helmets to T-square and slide rule for a colossal reconstruction effort, which became known as the Marshall Plan. In the housing field, this 1944 effort was largely carried out and coordinated by a newly formed international office of the National Housing Agency, one of HUD's predecessor agencies. By the end of the year, controls on scarce export commodities, bilateral exchanges with England, France and Sweden, and the first technical assistance to less developed countries in South America, Caribbean, Africa and the Far East were underway.

By the time the National Housing Agency was succeeded by the Housing and Home Finance Agency in the late 40s, international staff were well involved in United Nations activities, long term field assignments, training of technical personnel, and a systematic exchange of documentation on housing and building technology involving more than 60 countries.

The housing crisis rapidly deepened, with millions of European refugees returning "home" to hopelessly overcrowded conditions, and the first waves of movement from rural to urban areas were beginning in the less developed world. Antiquated infrastructure and a scarcity of both building materials and trained technicians resulted in nations all over the world increasingly looking to the U.S. for guidance. For nine years, until the Foreign Operations Agency assumed administrative responsibility for housing assistance to less developed areas late in 1953, HUD's predecessors carried the responsibility for U.S. involvement in international urban development, and were instrumental in establishing the new housing efforts of the United Nations, the Organization of American States, the cooperative movement, and in the establishment of research stations, etc. By 1955 more than forty HHFA and ICA (International Cooperation Administration - the successor of the Foreign Operations Administration) technicians were abroad on assignment, and a high point was reached in technical assistance to less developed countries, with a corresponding decline in emphasis on Europe's recovery, which was now largely an accomplished fact.

During this period the major emphasis was on self-help, creation of institutions, and evolution of national policies. Documentation, training, and a general exchange of data covered a broad variety of subjects, but concentrated on basic technology such as stabilized earth, and simple methods of on-site "prefabrication."

The priorities for U.S. assistance to less developed countries were by now well established as food production, health and education, with staffing and investment levels in housing remaining very modest by comparison. While on one hand the rising urban crisis was at least partially recognized, problems of survival, coupled with agricultural and general economic productivity took precedence, consistent with the traditional economist's evaluation of housing as a local consumer/non-productive item. In fact, this attitude was to prevail until, by the middle 60s, when housing was

finally recognized as a priority area, Agency for International Development (AID) programs were declining, and available resources were heavily committed to existing priorities. (AID had by now succeeded the ICA.)

The situation was not all bleak, however, during the late 50s, some progress was made toward more comprehensive planning, going beyond housing as such to infrastructure programs and basic savings institutions. By 1960, the Development Loan Fund, the Alliance for Progress and the Social Programs Trust Fund gave housing and related activity a boost in Latin America. The Inter-American Development Bank, established in 1962, was allocated a major responsibility in low cost housing in the same area, while PL 480 funds, generated by the scale of excess agricultural products, provided modest funding for projects in other parts of the world. HUD professionals formulated several projects of a thousand or more units utilizing these PL 480 funds on AID's behalf, and provided a broad range of assistance to the several U.S. and multilateral bodies involved.

With the establishment of the Agency for International Development in 1961 came a rapid decline in technical assistance, and a growing emphasis on the various loan mechanisms. One of the loan vehicles which was implemented in the early 60s was the AID Housing Investment Guaranty Program. With the goal of attracting private capital and developers to the less developed areas in the hope of introducing innovation and large scale production on a pilot basis, the program was initially limited to Latin America, but was later extended to Africa and the Far East. To service this program for AID, a separate, specialized international operation was begun within the Federal Housing Administration, a component of HHFA, in 1963. After processing some 100 cases, the FHA International Office was phased out in 1969, and the present Office of International Affairs now represents the total international interests of the Department.

Throughout the period of the late 40s to 1965, when the Department of Housing and Urban Development was made a Cabinet post, HHFA continued its support to the foreign assistance program, mainly through the bilateral ICA/AID agencies, but also through the several multilateral organizations, it had played a role in creating. To support this effort, documentation under an Information and Methods Exchange series, and numerous special reports covered such subjects as aided self-help, housing surveys, market analysis, cooperatives, savings and loan institutions, planning, standards, prefabrication etc., and architects, planners, engineers and economists from the domestic as well as international programs were called upon with increasing frequency for short term assignments.

Geographically, technical assistance activity was concentrated in Latin America, with Africa second, and with other areas receiving modest and somewhat sporadic attention except for major efforts in such areas as Korea.

### CHANGING EMPHASIS

With the shift from the reconstruction of Europe to assistance to less developed countries, there was a reduction in the gathering of data from abroad. International Affairs became essentially an "export only" organization, with most of its staff supported by AID, and its major emphasis, on technical assistance to newly emerging nations and to Latin America. A major exception was the active participation of the U.S. in the housing, building and planning activities of the UN Economic Commission for Europe (ECE).

At the end of the 60s, the trend of activity was again reversed with a surge of interest on the part of HUD and the industry at large in developments in the advanced nations, who shared many of our urban problems. There was growing recognition that some of

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the answers might well be available there. This, of course, was the case, and a data flow began covering industrialized building, urban and regional planning, new towns, and many of the questions being raised within HUD.

Previously occupied principally in providing answers to the questions of less advanced societies, and in directing technical assistance to all manner of basic problems related to rural urban migration, squatters and basic institutions abroad, the Office of International Affairs was faced with the task of adjusting to and serving the program needs of our own complex society. This new emphasis came at a time when the flow of general information had become a flood. How to identify what was needed, how to select from what was available, how to present selected material in a usable manner, and yet keep material current were among the many problems which arose. We have only begun to develop some of the answers.

Within the Office of International Affairs, an examination was made of available international sources. U.S. industrial and professional groups and individuals were polled to determine needs, and the domestic operations of HUD were queried for priorities. There was no need to generate interest, or to wait for demand. At the same time that these preparations were taking place, a deluge of questions, as various as they were numerous, rolled in from persons and institutions who had long used international data -- or in many cases, were just becoming aware of the potential value of foreign source information.

A new cataloging system based on key words was devised; new types of publications were developed, and new and more effective data exchange systems were explored. All of this had to be done within the existing resources of a small staff, without neglecting obligations to the Department of State, AID, growing support to Peace Corps, and the service of U.S. interests in the United Nations and other international bodies.

#### BILATERAL EXCHANGE PROGRAM

The bilateral exchange program has become a major component of HUD's attempt to keep abreast of overseas developments of potential value to domestic programs. Over the years a large number of informal arrangements brought in thousands of documents and resulted in numerous consultations with foreign experts, though this was sporadic in nature. The new program, however, through formal exchanges between HUD and its counterparts abroad, covers specific subject areas and involves document exchange, expert team visits and consultation, cooperation in and exchange of research, and opens the way for research projects of mutual interest.

The first of these more formal exchanges began in 1967 under a broad government-to-government agreement designated as the U.S./German National Resources program. In the past two years, this has been restructured as a Department to Ministry arrangement, and agency-to-agency agreements with Japan, Sweden, the United Kingdom and Spain have been added, as well as a special program with France.

Subject areas in these agreements include urban and regional planning, housing technology, building technology, housing finance, housing management, citizen participation, and policy and legislation. Each program may be broadened to include other areas of mutual concern. A recent example of the program's "spinoff" is a project related to the role of the Quantity Surveyor in Britain, and his potential value in public housing programs in the U.S. Another is the use in Operation BREAKTHROUGH of a Swedish vacuum sealed refuse disposal system which transports refuse from individual locations to a central collection point through a system of conveyor tubes. Also, under our Memorandum of Cooperation with the UK Ministry of the Environment, we are obtaining information on housing management which, though dating back 120 years in the UK, is a fairly new field in the United States.

At present the only permanent assignment of staff to the field involves a HUD planner at the U.S. Embassy in Paris. This Urban Affairs Officer is working with a French team on the design of an experimental city at Le Vaudreuil, in Normandy, where pollution will be controlled. What is learned will serve both new towns and pollution control planning by HUD and other participating agencies.

The data will also be made available to the U.S. housing industry.

The bilateral program must be expanded slowly and selectively due to the very limited staff available. HUD's interest is in mature and balanced cooperative programs of relevance to our own and our partners' domestic problems -- not a passing splash in the papers. There is much that we can learn, some that we can teach, and a few areas which can be jointly explored.

As the agreements are between government entities, the initial contacts and consultations are limited at this point to Federal Government professionals and policy level officials. However, as the programs develop, it is hoped that local government and private industry representation from the U.S. and our exchange counterparts may prove feasible and productive. It is possible, for example, that personnel exchanges may be expected between UK housing authorities and one or more local housing authorities in this country.

#### INFORMATION FLOW AND PUBLICATIONS

Both the bilateral and informal exchange generate large numbers of documents on a broad range of subjects and in many languages. The processing of this material, and making it available to potential users demands a large percentage of available staff time. This is time well spent; it is in large part of the domestic payoff.

As data is received, it is reviewed for innovative value and application to HUD and industry priorities. The material is cataloged to make it retrievable for those doing research, and selected items are prepared for publication, further review by outside experts, or for translation. Accessions lists are distributed at frequent intervals to make data available on a current basis.

Articles of general interest, as well as notices of meetings, announcements of United Nations recruitment and other material of current interest are published in the HUD International Information Series. The Series also serves on occasion as a vehicle for resumés of in-house research, such as the five articles on Housing Subsidy programs in several European countries published during 1971.

For other general studies of subjects of interest to both U.S. and foreign audiences, HUD International BRIEFs have proven to be most effective. Subjects range from an evaluation of Russian industrialized building for domestic use to a resumé of Operation BREAKTHROUGH for overseas visitors. An extremely valuable use of this series relates to the reports of U.S. team visits to our bilateral counterparts. A recent example involves a study of urban development in Japan.

While the major emphasis on information flow covers domestic needs, efforts continue in service to less developed countries covered by the Agency for International Development (AID), the Peace Corps, and such multinational groups as the UN and OAS. For this purpose, the IME (Information and Methods Exchange Series) has been broadened to meet current priorities, and covers such areas as standards, cooperatives, planning, and the strengthening of urban institutions.

As the IMEs tend to become more sophisticated to meet the "second generation" needs of more advanced LDCs, there is still a great need for very basic "how to" information. To this end, the HUD International Basic Technology Series covers such areas as the use of a level, laying a brick, and simple instructions on how to mix mortar.

While extremely modest in both staff and funds, the information gathering, processing and publications program reaches many thousands of users each year, both domestically and abroad. For example, circulation of the basic HUD International Series now reaches approximately 8,000 users on a regular basis, while tens of thousands of items are shipped each year to meet specific requests, and hundreds of letters are written answering questions not covered by documentation.

#### PRESENT DIRECTION OF TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

Technical assistance, provided by OIA professionals mostly through AID, but also through Peace Corps, OAS and others, is directed to a great variety of subjects, including national urban planning, the materials industry, management and aided self-help.

At present, however, a large proportion of the limited technical assistance manpower available for AID support is utilized in three types of programs.

A major priority involves the question of reconstruction following a major disaster. In recent years, these have included the earthquake in El Salvador, war reconstruction in the Dominican Republic, flood reconstruction in Tunisia, and war reconstruction in eastern Nigeria. Very recent efforts have been directed to what was East Pakistan following major flooding and wind damage in the Dacca region, and Peru for long term planning and reconstruction of earthquake affected areas.

In such disaster assignments, the professionals involved are concerned not only with immediate problems of reconstruction, but take every opportunity to promote pre-planning against future needs. Such an example involved HUD with the experts of five nations of Central Treaty Organization (CENTO) in the Near East South Asia (NESAS) area. A presently active program of this type involves HUD, AID, the National Bureau of Standards and the U.S. Geological Survey.

A second priority area involves Sites and Services - or the basic urbanization of land for very low income families who would normally become squatters or add to the density of existing structures. Such sites and services programs are intended to provide basic amenities such as roads and water adjacent to minimal building lots which can be serviced under some freehold arrangements, with self-help construction of a dwelling. Appropriate areas are also allocated for public services such as schools, shopping etc., and may also include light industrial sites. Such neighborhoods should tie into existing "master plans" or natural development patterns of existing communities, and promote upgrading of family shelter and community services through self-help as economic means improve.

A third project type involves the Housing Investment Guaranty program (HIG) of AID, which channels private capital (mainly from the Savings and Loan System) to investment in housing in less developed areas. A guaranty similar to that of HUD's FHA is provided by AID under a fee system, with contract organizations and AID itself processing and monitoring the projects. Through the collection of a small fee, the program functions without cost to the U.S. taxpayer.

HUD's role in this program has been dramatically reduced, with its present activities relating only to advisory services to U.S. businessmen and AID personnel, and limited participation in feasibility studies as requested. Recent field visits have been made to Morocco and Thailand. As noted earlier, the HIG program is the major international housing program in terms of U.S. capital invested.

Another type of technical assistance in the form of advisory services and training is provided to Peace Corps volunteers. The

most notable example relates to the Ivory Coast, where HUD was involved in long term field services. A shift from AID to Peace Corps took place some four years ago. This program involves rural village housing, planning, and surveying under a nationwide program coordinated through the host country's Ministry of Construction.

A unique program of technical assistance now evolving relates to the Trust Territories of the Pacific, under which modified domestic programs, Peace Corps volunteers, and the several building housing authorities of Micronesia will cooperate in implementing programs for the islands administered by the U.S. on behalf of the United Nations.

A further definition of technical assistance would also include advisory services and consultation of international staff on domestic program areas. These relate to the application of advanced country data to domestic programs to reduce "reinvention of the wheel." On occasion it is also possible to identify types of programs or concepts utilized in less developed areas which have value in a domestic area. For example, evaluation of readjustable mortgage systems and self-help organizational techniques have contributed to domestic studies.

#### WHAT LIES AHEAD

The Office of International Affairs is principally a service organization, but it has clear staff and operational requirements as well. Its form and function reflect the needs of HUD and of the other organizations it serves. As a pioneer in international urban development on the part of the U.S. Government, the Office has seen many new organizations formed over the years to tackle various facets of the growing problems of urban growth. Many dedicated people man these organizations, utilizing various skills at tasks which were ill-defined in 1944. The fact of this conference, and the wealth of knowledge and expertise represented is a measure of the distance we have traveled in those 28 years.

As a people, we have just begun to realize the fact that most of man's economic, social and political problems -- and their solutions -- center on the nature and quality of urban life. Every facet of development, whether agriculture, transportation, industry, or the interplay of human differences affect this quality, and most are in fact urban in character. Even national boundaries are swept aside by rapid communications, and events around the world influence everyday life in every community.

HUD International will continue to adapt to changing needs, to provide needed services to organizations such as those represented here, and to represent a thread of historic continuity in an area of expanding international concern and action.