Housing as a foundation for breaking the poverty cycle
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MESSAGE FROM HABITAT FOR HUMANITY  

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SUMMARY OF 4TH ASIA-PACIFIC HOUSING FORUM  

SPEAKERS AND MODERATORS  

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS
Dear delegates and supporters,

Thank you for your participation at the fourth Asia-Pacific Housing Forum in Manila. The forum was the best attended since the inaugural event in Singapore in 2007. It drew over 700 policy makers, business titans and thought leaders from humanitarian agencies and research institutions from over 30 countries. More importantly, the forum brought private, public and people sector stakeholders together under one roof to seek poverty housing solutions.

The forum, with the theme 'Housing as a foundation for breaking the poverty cycle,' achieved several outcomes. On the eve of event, the Philippine Housing and Urban Development Coordinating Council and Habitat for Humanity International collaborated on a high-level roundtable discussion which was hosted by Philippine Vice-President Jejomar Binay. The event was attended by 75 regional and Philippine policy makers, CEOs and leaders from NGOs and multilateral agencies. The outcome of the discussion was shared by Vice-President Binay in his keynote address at the opening of the Housing Forum and helped set the cornerstone for the three-day forum.

I believe the high-level discussion has also helped sustain the regional conversation on shelter for the vulnerable and marginalized, particularly in light of the evolving post-2015 Millennium Development Goals agenda. I am hopeful that the final iteration of the new goals will address adequate housing in a much more comprehensive way.

During the course of the Housing Forum, various capacity building opportunities were delivered and well attended. More than 100 participants took part in an inaugural housing finance course run by Wharton School and Habitat for Humanity International. The Eco-Town Framework training workshop run by the Philippine Climate Change Commission, and Asia Development Bank’s session on energy efficient technologies drew large groups as well.

Also noteworthy was the announcement of a major partnership between the Philippine government and our national office in the Philippines to support families displaced by the recent conflict in Zamboanga, in the south of the country. The partnership is currently underway — three make-shift hospital tents have been built, more than 10,000 shelter kits are set to be distributed, and 2,000 houses will be built over the next two years.

I am sure many of the conversations and connections for prospective collaborations will continue long after the Housing Forum. We will continue to be in touch so we can report back on developments and partnerships in the lead up to and at the next Asia-Pacific Housing Forum in 2015. I look forward to seeing you again at the next event.

Rick Hathaway
Vice-President, Asia-Pacific
Habitat for Humanity International
Quick Stats

703 delegates

34 countries and territories

75 discussants at high-level roundtable discussion hosted by Philippine Vice-President Jejomar Binay

100 trained in the Wharton-Habitat housing finance course

90 attended the Eco-Town Framework training workshop conducted by the Philippine Climate Change Commission

2,000 homes to be built for families displaced by the conflict in Zamboanga in a partnership between Habitat Philippines and the Department of Social Welfare and Development announced during the Housing Forum

1 bill to be authored by Philippine Senator Loren Legarda creating an agency responsible solely for the management of Metro Manila’s drainage system
Mainstream media coverage and pro-bono advertising

The Asia-Pacific Housing Forum was mentioned in more than 100 pieces of media coverage, across print, television and online from July to October 2013.

- Channel NewsAsia broadcast a news feature on the poverty housing situation in the Philippines on October 7. The coverage included presenting Habitat projects and an interview with Jonathan Reckford, CEO of Habitat for Humanity International. More details.

- ANC interviewed Rick Hathaway, Habitat for Humanity’s Asia-Pacific vice-president on their morning news show on September 27. Watch the interview.

50.9 million people reached through media coverage

US$46,000 worth of media coverage

US$102,500 worth of pro-bono advertising

National News

Housing Backlog 5.8 M By 2016

Circulation: 260,000.

Sample coverage

Social media coverage
The social media publicity measurement was carried out from July to October 2013 and conducted on two platforms @Habitat_org and HFHI’s Facebook page. Forum speakers and delegates also shared interesting discussion-related comments through their social media networks.

248,570
Fans or ‘likes’ on facebook.com/habitat

669,608
Fans or “likes” of known Facebook accounts with information about APHF

61,962
Followers on Twitter @Habitat_org

1,019,250
Twitter followers including both Habitat and non-Habitat handles

363,892
Monthly unique visitors to partners and third-party websites, including HFHI’s Asia-Pacific newsletter

Tweet from Philippine Vice President Twitter handle @VPJojoBinay (68,300 followers)
The forum drew to a close with a moving personal testimony from Christian Seso, a Filipino civil engineer whose family moved into a Habitat home 15 years ago. He said: “The house Habitat helped us to build is the place where we have molded our values, where we shaped the principles that have been keeping us to live a decent life, where we formed a strong family bond that was able to withstand the crisis we have faced for the past years, and where we started to kick off from the ground and liberated ourselves from the poverty cycle.”

The Forum was organized under the five sub-themes with 33 track sessions: Making Affordable Housing Finance Work; Building Resilience to Disasters & Climate Change; Nurturing Shared Value and CSR Leadership in Addressing Poverty Housing Issues; Strengthening Housing Policy & Advocacy; and Adopting Sustainable Housing Solutions.

Highlights included capacity building opportunities such as the one-day inaugural housing finance course run by the Wharton School and Habitat for Humanity which attracted 100 participants. Both the Eco-Town Framework training workshop run by the Philippine Climate Change Commission and the Asia Development Bank’s session on energy efficient technologies drew large groups as well.

Affordable housing finance
Across the sessions, participants recognized an effective housing finance system requires a stable macro-economic environment, enforceable pledges/liens on property, free markets in land and housing, effective methods of establishing property value, legal and regulatory infrastructure as well as competitive financial markets.

All these factors have to be driven by high-level political leadership and put in place before the private sector is incentivized to service low-income families. Private sector participation in the affordable finance eco-system can lead to innovative products for deposit, payment, remittance and micro-insurance, all of which the low-income population needs, in addition to credit.

Specific housing finance strategies should be developed for different segments of the population. In Nepal, housing microfinance is particularly useful for families building their homes in stages. On the other hand, subsidy programs should be targeted at those at the bottom of the pyramid, that is, the poorest of the poor.

Building resilience to disasters and climate change
Specific strategies are also required in building families’ and communities’ resilience to disasters and climate change. The conclusion drawn from different tracks is that disaster risk reduction is more useful than disaster management as far as the poor are concerned.

Risk mapping, locating businesses and homes in safe areas, and interventions such as flood control and watershed protection are useful risk reduction measures. Legislation can help address present and future risks through improving and implementing building codes, and providing individuals with information on safe areas to build their homes.

Nurturing shared value and CSR leadership
Speakers at CSR tracks called for the communities to be actively involved from the onset of projects. Communities should be asked the right questions such as what should be done for them to enable better designed CSR programs.

While shelter is a basic human right, speakers at these tracks also recognized that other needs have to be met. Hence, corporations involved in housing programs for their CSR activities should go beyond shelter to prioritize livelihood and include holistic development. The concept of community improvement districts in particular areas was mooted. The private sector and NGOs should work in partnership to address housing, education and employment needs, regenerating the area where people live without relocating them.

Also tossed up as a recommendation was the setting up of cross-sector platforms which share initiatives, best practices and even failures. This would help improve CSR efforts as these platforms can help
organizations avoid duplication of efforts or wastage of resources.

**Housing policy and sustainable housing solutions**

Participants in these tracks said by sharing goals and a clear vision for the city, the government can lay the foundation for a sound housing policy and encourage the participation of more private and people sector stakeholders. Other recommendations included the adoption of tangible policy measures such as rules and regulations to spur socialized housing projects to address the housing backlog. Also noted was that civil society and the private sector, together with the government, play a critical role in addressing the social dimensions of shelter. These dimensions include the provision of energy, relocation from high-risk areas, and the construction of eco-friendly housing. Corporations can advocate for and use readily available, indigenous materials for housing and develop appropriate technology. Such a move also creates livelihood opportunities for both the skilled and unskilled workers in local communities.

Speakers’ presentations and a photo gallery are available on www.aphousingforum.org.

“Private sector can do things but we don’t have the scale of the government. But we can develop effective templates which can be replicated many times over.”

— Zobel de Ayala, Chairman, Ayala Land and President and Chief Operating Officer, Ayala Corporation

“Unless you generate income, you won’t get around to housing. The poor are very clever, if they get the money, they know what to do.”

— Dr. Jaime Aristotle Alip, Founder and Managing Director, Center for Agriculture and Rural Development — Mutually Reinforcing Institutions (CARD-MRI)

“The problem with countries is that there is much overlap. Housing finance products overlap. We need to invest time to strategize and come up with an integrated strategy so that we get ‘bang for the bucks’”

— Dr. Marja Hock-Smit, Director, International Housing Finance Program, The Wharton School, University of Pennsylvania

“There will be an Asian century, but we cannot accept poverty as a way of life in our societies.”

— Henry Cisneros, former United States Housing Secretary, Co-Chair, Bipartisan Policy Center Housing Commission, and Executive Chairman, CityView
Speakers and Moderators

Opening Speakers

Vice-President Jejomar Binay
Republic of the Philippines

Rick Hathaway
Vice-President, Asia-Pacific
Habitat for Humanity International
Thailand

Jonathan Reckford
CEO
Habitat for Humanity International
United States

Moderator

Elizabeth Blake
Senior Vice-President
Government Affairs, Advocacy and General Counsel
Habitat for Humanity International
United States

Plenary 1

Speakers

Corazon “Dinky” Soliman
Secretary
Department of Social Welfare and Development
The Philippines

Henry Cisneros
Executive Chairman, CityView
Co-Chair, Bipartisan Policy Center Housing Commission, United States, and Former United States Housing Secretary

Dr. Liu Thai-Ker
Chairman of Advisory Board
Center for Liveable Cities, and

former Chief Executive Officer
Housing Development Board
Singapore

Yoshinobu Fukasawa
Regional Director
Office for Asia and the Pacific, UN-Habitat
Japan

Plenary 2

Speakers

Fernando Zobel de Ayala
Chairman, Ayala Land and
President and Chief Operating Officer
Ayala Corporation
The Philippines

Kymberly McElgunn Wolff
Senior Vice-President
Resource Development
Habitat for Humanity International
United States
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Chairman and Executive Director
Asian Disaster Preparedness Center
Thailand

Donovan Storey
Chief, Sustainable Urban Development
UNESCAP
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Zaigham Mahmood Rizvi
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Asia-Pacific Union for Housing Finance
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Founder and Principal Architect-Urban Planner
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The Philippines

Moderator

Plenary 4
Speakers

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Founder and CEO
VSG Capital Advisors
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Plenary 5
Speakers

Senator Loren Legarda
Chairperson
Committee on Climate Change and
Committee on Environment
Philippine Senate
The Philippines

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Deputy Secretary General
Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN)
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Nepal

Moderator

Sreenivas “Sreeni” Narayanan
Founder and Managing Director
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The Philippines
**Moderator**

**Rodrigo Cornejo**  
Trustee  
Asian Institute of Journalism and Communication and  
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World Association for Psycho-Social Rehabilitation  
Former Trustee  
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**Speakers**

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**Lian Pek**  
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2009 CNN Hero of the Year  
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