Habitat III
The first draft of the National Planning Committee’s report for Habitat III has been developed. It is worth looking at for a variety of reasons; particularly, because of the importance of the general themes that are woven through the agenda and how they might impact and affect our membership.

Prior to this teleconference, Liz had a conversation with Saul and Sylvia about the importance of Habitat III and how NAHRO plays a role in the civil society engagement piece and what the committee’s role might be.

The committee should view our work through the lens of Habitat III so that our policy agenda might be incorporated within the U.S. National Report. We should be considering that as subcommittees report-out at this teleconference, as we talk with each other and our colleagues about the importance of the research topic and how it relates to IRGE study exchanges, the international partnerships that we have developed, and how they both connect domestic and global conversations that will occur with Habitat III. We need to structure our efforts in a way that helps inform the Habitat III agenda.

We have an unprecedented possibility to address a real concern of the planning committee, which is to ensure the agenda that comes out of Habitat III survives the course of the 20-year interval between Habitat III and IV; that Habitat III goals and policies are part of a follow up process; and that NAHRO membership plays a key role in ensuring the appropriate follow up over that 20-year period.

Continuing her remarks, Liz said this is groundbreaking for us: when we look at the quality of the work that has been done on the IRGE research paper and think about some of the opportunities that are presenting themselves to us, there might be a compelling opportunity for NAHRO to organize under the auspices of the Habitat III civil society engagement that connects IRGE with our partners, connect via powerful issues such as community resilience and how we recover from disaster.

Concluding her remarks, Liz stressed the importance and timeliness of IRGE work that may have great domestic consequences and impact, yet the connections with global conversations are really critical. We can affect the global agenda while impacting the domestic agenda and engaging our members in the process, particularly Housing and CR&D committees.

As subcommittees deliver their reports, they should think about how Habitat III presents an amazing opportunity for us to connect these issues through re-positioning and privatization of social housing on the world stage.
Study Exchange

The Netherlands, Germany: Aug. 26-Sept. 04, 2015 (15-20 participants or less)
IRGE members received a draft itinerary and an estimated budget for the study exchange prior to the teleconference. Evette and Pat presented highlights. They were commended for planning a well-thought out, meaningful and an exciting opportunity for study exchange participants; for arranging complimentary meals and transportation, which will reduce overall expenses for participants.

IRGE agreed to extend invitations to be considered as a study exchange delegate to members of the NAHRO Board of Governors and Chapter Presidents. The Communications Subcommittee will assist with preparation of appropriate background information for transmittal to these groups the week of May 11-15. If expression of interest from the two group is less than 15, others may be invited to submit an application for delegate consideration (other NAHRO leadership, global partners, HUD staff and interest groups).

Invited delegates will be asked to express their interest by May 26. Delegates will be selected by June 1. (Submissions are reviewed and selections are made by the President in consultation with the IRGE Vice President.)

Five concurrent session proposals were submitted on behalf of IRGE: (1) Research Paper; (2) Habitat III; (3) South Africa-housing and informal settlements; (4) South Africa: proposed Maryland partnership with NASHO; (5) Feredj Remi on social housing policy in Paris.

Due to space limitations, IRGE can only have three concurrent sessions. Liz suggested adding a breakfast session and offered this lineup: Breakfast: Habitat III; Brown Bag: Remi; two concurrent sessions: one on the research paper (include results of study exchange); and combine the two sessions on South Africa. There were no objections to Liz’s recommendation.

Liz also suggested inviting Housing and CR&D to participate in the IRGE business meeting for a conversation on the research paper and exchange.

Research Subcommittee
David Baldwin reported in the absence of Betsey Martens. A draft of the research paper will be sent to IRGE members prior to the summer conference in Austin. Members are encouraged to read it, think about it and bring comments to the meeting. Following Austin, NAHRO staff will read and comment on the paper.

Betsey will lead a concurrent session at both summer and national conferences on topics related to the research paper.

Pat suggested that the Research Subcommittee advise the Study Exchange Subcommittee of important areas to focus on; a plan of action for more focused areas.

Saeed asked if the research paper would be submitted to Habitat III. Liz responded that conversation has to occur. The issues that are discussed and generated by the white paper have great implications, both in terms of established countries, how the research paper informs developing countries in terms of their own development of a housing portfolio, and the overall sustainability of housing. It will be very important for us, as events unfold, to look at connecting important themes, to look at how to connect
content to issues like financing, regulatory framework, and how we juxtapose themes that are emerging from the Habitat III work with the research paper.

Saeed also inquired about the availability of the 60-page report. Liz advised the report has not been posted online. IRGE will have a focused discussion on Habitat III at its meeting in Austin.

Julie suggested the formation of a smaller working group related to Habitat III to begin the transfer of information. Around the time of the Austin meeting, Liz said IRGE could start framing what we think would be our response and the engagement process. She cautioned that the NAHRO response must be within the framework of the national committee, as it officially represents the United States.

Partnerships Subcommittee

Australasian Housing Institute (AHI)
Kerron Barnes reminded the committee that the March issue of AHI’s *Housing Works* features his article on page 26. Saul’s letter to AHI’s Executive Director Kelly Badewitz is available.

Israel
Kerron shared that Yoa Galant is the country’s new Minister of Housing. The party has adopted an ambitious program of more public and rental housing; lowering the barrier to urban renewal and reducing housing costs. Kerron suggested an invitation be extended to the Minister and others to visit the United States after he has settled into office (perhaps in 2016).

Liz said she appreciates Kerron’s work in terms of monitoring Israel and their political climate; however, due to IRGE’s ambitious agenda we must limit our focus to NAHRO’s existing organizational partnerships. We should keep an eye on Israel and gather information as needed. Additionally, said Liz, she is reluctant to delve full stream into the relationship with Israel primarily because it is a relationship with a country versus a relationship with a non-governmental organization as with our other partners.

South Africa
Lloyd announced a delegation of five from South Africa, Steve Tshwete Housing Association (STHA), will soon visit Vancouver and Seattle. Saeed said Vancouver entered into a MOU with STHA. It contains take “a-ways” for both sides.

John said that he is working with Lawrence’s organization, The Housing Association East London, on forming a partnership with Maryland PHAs for an ongoing professional exchange. MARC or the state chapter, MAHRA, may enter into a MOU/MOA with the organization. Saeed said he would share his agency’s MOU with John.

There being no further business, the teleconference was adjourned.

**Teleconference Participants:** Liz Glenn, Julie Brewen, Joe Gray, John Papagni, Mary Paumen, Pat Gustafson, Branna Lindell, Alan Zais, David Baldwin, Evette Hester, representative of Miguell Del Campillo; Darbah Skaf, Stella Madrid, Marlene Hurd, Elizabeth Morris, Lloyd Halverson, Saeed Hajarizadeh, Kerron Barnes.

NAHRO Staff: Sylvia Bowen

Next Teleconference: Friday, June 12, 2015 at Noon Eastern Time