

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE – June 14, 2011

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Rep. Brad Miller Reintroduces SLUM Assistance Act to Reduce Global Poverty and Promote U.S. National Security Interests

Washington, D.C. – **Rep. Brad Miller (D-NC)** will reintroduce today the *Shelter, Land, and Urban Management (SLUM) Assistance Act of 2011*

to raise awareness of the importance of rapid urbanization and slum conditions in the developing world which can pose a threat to the security and stability of developing countries, and thus to the United States.

Rep. Miller was inspired to pursue this issue by separate congressional delegation visits to the Kibera slum outside of Nairobi, Kenya. The largest slum in Africa, Kibera represents many of the challenges associated with slums and urbanization: dilapidated and overcrowded housing, inadequate access to water and sanitation, limited electricity, poor health conditions, and increased risk of violence and instability.

"The United States was once the international leader in promoting policies and investments that improved the lives of millions of slum dwellers," said **Rep. Miller**. "However, the lack of a coherent U.S. policy addressing the growing challenges of global urbanization is undermining critical American investments in health care, education, and disaster recovery in developing countries."

Approximately half of the world's population currently lives in urban areas. Around 80 percent

of the world's population growth will take place in developing countries leading to an increase in the number of slum dweller. Currently one billion people, a sixth of the world's population, live in slums. That number is expected to double in the next 30 years.

In an address to the World Urban Forum in 2010 Secretary of State Clinton recognized the need for attention on urbanization and shelter issues when she stated, "The challenges of urbanization are linked to everything, from democracy and human rights, to climate change and global health."

The *SLUM Assistance Act* would establish sustainable urban development and management as a major objective of U.S. foreign assistance and reinvigorate programs that provide legal protection for tenants, basic shelter, urban services and infrastructure. For those disproportionately discriminated against, this legislation will also promote the growth of functional housing markets and support reforms that seek to enhance their rights and access to shelter.

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