UDC and partners host urban revitalization exhibit and conference featuring Hamburg, Germany

November 25, 2013, Washington, D.C. – CAUSES, together with the Goethe-Institut Washington, HafenCity Hamburg and the International Building Exhibition (IBA) Hamburg, recently hosted the conference and accompanying exhibition: “Hamburg: Building the City Anew. A Journey into the City of Tomorrow.” The exhibit served as the basis for a panel discussion engaging Hamburg urban revitalization partners with representatives from the U.S. government, the District of Columbia, the private sector and from the local citizens in designing the city of the future while bridging the divide between those who have access to economic opportunities and those who do not.

Cities all over the world must reinvent themselves in order to thrive in the future, use resources more wisely, improve operational efficiencies and become more intentional about reducing negative environmental impacts. Socioeconomic divides must be overcome, and all citizens must be engaged in defining the future and in constructing cities in ways that improve the health, wellness and economic opportunities for all of their citizens.

City-states have an important role to play in modeling such a vision of urban development that is environmentally sustainable and socially just. City-states require renewal. They have little to no surrounding space, nowhere to go; and therefore must continuously be reinvented while growing upward and inward, becoming more sustainable and livable all within its perimeter. Hamburg and D.C. are both experiencing a return to urban life that offers both challenges and opportunities for economic growth and for livability. Strategies and development models must recognize the role of culture, education, the arts and recreation in managing growth that is environmentally sustainable, socially just and provide economic value.

Hamburg, like Washington, D.C., is a city-state. Hamburg is commercial, compact and comfortable all at once. Without a surrounding area over which it has jurisdiction, Hamburg must meet all of the needs of its citizens, attract businesses and visitors, and reinvent itself in order to meet the ambitions of a modern city that keeps pace with the times. HafenCity, Europe’s largest inner-city development project, is setting new standards for ecological sustainability and mixed-use development along the Elbe River in Hamburg, Germany. The International Building Exhibition is applying experimental design and urban planning to a neglected inner-city island, transforming it into a vibrant and sustainable area.
The Nov. 15 panel discussion explored how Hamburg organized itself to meet the demands of a modern city that is ecologically sound and economically vibrant, based on the topics: 1) Growing a City-State: From Sprawl to Intensity, moderated by Helge Pols of the German Embassy, and 2) Creating One City: Overcoming Physical, Historical and Demographic Barriers, moderated by Emily Yates of the German Marshall Fund.

The conference featured panelists: Jürgen Bruns-Berentelg, CEO, HafenCity Hamburg, and Uli Hellweg, Managing Director, IBA Hamburg. Representing D.C. were: Michael P. Kelly, Director, District Department of Housing and Community Development; Victor Hoskins, Deputy Mayor, Planning and Economic Development; Marvin Turner, Director, U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) District of Columbia/ National Capital Area Office; Larry Handerhan, HUD and Karen Settles, D.C. Housing Representative. The opening reception on Nov. 14 featured Bruns-Berentelg and Hellweg, Dr. Dorothee Stapelfeldt, Deputy Mayor of Hamburg, and Karlfried Bergner, Minister, German Embassy.

And don't forget to watch a special episode of CAUSES TV featuring the CEO of HafenCity Hamburg, Mr. Jürgen Bruns-Berentelg.

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