



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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SISTER CITIES INTERNATIONAL AWARDS GRANT FOR AFRICAN SUSTAINABILITY PROJECT TO THE MARYLAND SISTER STATES PROGRAM

ANNAPOLIS—Sister Cities International has awarded a three-year, \$115,000 grant to the State of Maryland – Bong County/Maryland County, Liberia Sister States Committee to perform projects to address sanitation, health, and water issues in urban areas of Africa. The grant is part of Sister Cities International's Africa Urban Poverty Alleviation Program.

"This Sister Cities International program represents a major effort to address fundamental needs of citizens of urban areas in Africa," said Patrick Madden, President & CEO, Sister Cities International. "These sister cities represent some of the strongest partnerships between the U.S. and Africa and will become the measure of how cities can help each other and leave an enduring legacy in tangible ways."

The seven grant recipients were selected from a pool of 34 applicants by an independent panel of five experts in the areas of sister city relationships, aid administration, and international development. The other recipients include:

- Boulder, Colorado, and Kisumu, Kenya
- Corvallis, Oregon, and Gondar, Ethiopia
- Fort Worth, Texas, and Mbabane, Swaziland
- Grand Rapids, Michigan, and Ga East/West Districts, Ghana
- Lansing, Michigan, and Akuapem South Municipality, Ghana
- Louisville, Kentucky, and Tamale, Ghana

In preparation for the project, Sharon Pinder, Executive Chair of the State of Maryland – Bong County/Maryland County Sister State Committee and Nancy Wallace, Committee Member, traveled to Washington, DC, September 11-12, 2009, to meet with Sister Cities International staff and received program training. In December 2009, a representative of the Committee will travel to Bong and Maryland Counties, Liberia to begin work on their project.

"We are proud to be part of the inaugural phase of the Sister Cities International's Africa Urban Poverty Alleviation Program. With this grant we will be able to fund two projects that will significantly improve the quality of life for our partners in Liberia," says Pinder.

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About Sister Cities International

Sister Cities International is the only U.S.-based organization dedicated to creating long-term city-to-city relationships between U.S. and communities abroad. Created by U.S. President Dwight D. Eisenhower in 1956 at a White House summit, the organization is a leader in people-to-people exchanges with a network that boasts over 650 U.S. cities with more than 2,000 sister city relationships in 135 countries on six continents. Currently, the organization has 124 partnerships in 32 countries in Africa.

About AUPAP

Africa Urban Poverty Alleviation Program (AUPAP) is a three-year project to alleviate poverty in 25 African cities through water, sanitation, and health initiatives led by U.S. and African sister city programs. U.S. sister city programs will collaborate with their African counterparts to identify and address the most critical problems in these sectors, which form a barrier to sustained development in urban areas. This project is funded by a \$7.5 million grant from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation.

The sister cities network will capitalize on local members' technical and professional expertise; links to city government, academia, nonprofits, and the private sector; and the long-term, people-to-people relationships they have developed over time to create projects that are both technically sound and based at the grass-roots level. Sister Cities International will also gather a group of international development experts to aid in the planning and execution of the projects.

For more Information

Contact Mary E. Nitsch at mnitsch@sos.state.md.us or 410.240.3865 for more information about the Maryland Sister States Program. Visit www.sister-cities.org for more information regarding Sister Cities International and the Africa Urban Poverty Alleviation Program.

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