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BRIEFING ON FIRST ANNUAL REPORT TO CONGRESS  
ON THE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT PROGRAM  
JANUARY 8, 1976

GOOD MORNING.

YOU KNOW THE PURPOSE OF THIS MEETING, SO I WON'T BELABOR IT WITH EXTRANIA.

I WILL SAY, HOWEVER, THAT OUR FIRST ANNUAL REPORT TO CONGRESS ON HUD'S COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT PROGRAM -- WHICH I AM RELEASING TO YOU -- PROVES THAT AMERICA'S CITIZENS, THROUGH THEIR LOCAL GOVERNMENTS HAVE WHAT IT TAKES TO TACKLE THE TOUGH NATIONAL PROBLEMS AND FIND THE RIGHT SOLUTIONS.

CONGRESS AND THIS ADMINISTRATION CAN APPROPRIATELY TAKE CREDIT FOR THEIR VISION AND CONFIDENCE IN ASSIGNING BOTH THE MONEY AND RESPONSIBILITY FOR NEEDED COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT TO THE LOCAL OPTIONS OF THE COMMUNITIES. THEY TRUSTED THAT THE PROGRAM WOULD SPUR LOCAL CITIZEN PARTICIPATION IN THE DECISION-MAKING PROCESS.



THAT TRUST WAS WELL PLACED. THE DECISIONS MADE LOCALLY SHOW THAT THE AMERICAN PEOPLE ARE ATTUNED TO OUR PRESSING NATIONAL NEEDS. OUR REPORT INDICATES THAT 67 PERCENT OF BLOCK GRANT FUNDS ARE BEING USED FOR "PREVENTION OF SLUMS AND BLIGHT" -- AND "CONSERVATION AND EXPANSION OF HOUSING STOCK".

OTHER OBJECTIVES ADDRESSED INCLUDE "IMPROVEMENT AND EXPANSION OF COMMUNITY SERVICES" AND "MORE RATIONAL LAND USE POLICIES".

THE SIGNIFICANT THING ABOUT THIS FIRST REPORT, HOWEVER, IS NOT ONLY THE IMPRESSIVE RECORD OF ACCOMPLISHMENT BUT ALSO THE FACT THAT IT WAS DONE IN AN AMAZINGLY SHORT PERIOD OF A "START UP" YEAR, UNDER A HOST OF NEW AND UNFAMILIAR REQUIREMENTS.

TO SUMMARIZE:

.....FROM THE FISCAL 1975 APPROPRIATION, HUD MADE 2,950 GRANTS TOTALLING \$2.5 BILLION. ABOUT 88 PERCENT OF IT TO ENTITLEMENT CITIES AND URBAN COUNTIES.



.....METROPOLITAN APPLICATIONS INDICATE THAT 71 PERCENT OF THEIR FUNDS WILL GO DIRECTLY INTO NEIGHBORHOODS WHERE INCOME IS 80 PERCENT OR LESS THAN THE METROPOLITAN AREA MEDIAN.

.....PROGRAM REGULATIONS AND GUIDELINES HAVE BEEN DRASTICALLY REDUCED ALL AROUND. FOR EXAMPLE, APPLICATIONS ARE NOW AVERAGING 50 PAGES -- INSTEAD OF THE 1,400 PAGE AVERAGE FOR PRIOR CATEGORICAL GRANT PROGRAMS.

.....ALL STEPS INVOLVED IN BLOCK GRANTS -- APPLICATION, HUD REVIEW, APPROVAL, AND CONTRACTING -- AVERAGE 8 MONTHS, START TO FINISH, WHEREAS UNDER THE CONVENTIONAL URBAN RENEWAL PROGRAM, IT TOOK MORE THAN TWO-AND-A-HALF YEARS.

THUS, THE PROGRAM IS CARRYING OUT ITS CONGRESSIONAL AND ADMINISTRATION OBJECTIVES:

.....ESTABLISHING LOCAL HOUSING GOALS;

.....ADDRESSING THE PRESSING NEEDS OF LOWER-INCOME RESIDENTS;

.....SHIFTING RESPONSIBILITY TO LOCAL GOVERNMENTS;



.....SHARPLY REDUCING FEDERAL RED-TAPE; AND

.....INCREASING THE CERTAINTY OF FUTURE FUNDING.

WE MAKE NO CLAIM OF PROGRAM PERFECTION. AND, WE INTEND TO SEE THAT THE USES TO WHICH FUNDS ARE PUT ARE CAREFULLY MONITORED.

BUT THE FIRST YEAR DOES TELL US THAT WE'RE ON THE RIGHT TRACK. ITS SUCCESSES -- ALONG WITH ITS INEVITABLE PROBLEMS AS A NEW AND UNTRIED IDEA -- WILL SERVE US WELL AS WE REVIEW AND APPRAISE THE APPLICATIONS OF OUR CITIES AND COUNTIES FOR THE SECOND FISCAL YEAR TO COME.

THE SUCCESSES, WE BELIEVE, HAVE FAR OUTWEIGHED THE PREDICTED PROBLEMS -- AND THE PROSPECTS FOR AN EVEN BETTER PERFORMANCE DURING THE SECOND FISCAL YEAR OF THE PROGRAM ARE IMPRESSIVELY BRIGHT.

TO THOSE OF YOU WHO MAY RECALL THAT HUD HAS BEEN CHIDED BY CONGRESS FOR PAST TARDINESS, I HAPPILY POINT OUT THAT THIS REPORT WAS COMPLETED, PRINTED AND DELIVERED TO CONGRESS ON DECEMBER 30, ONE FULL DAY BEFORE IT WAS DUE.

