The Inter-American Housing Union

The Inter-American Housing Union has its origin in a savings and loan convention held in Peru in 1963, and which was sponsored by the Inter-American Development Bank, the Agency for International Development and the National League of Insured Savings and Loan Institutions from the USA. A second convention was held in Santiago, Chile in January 1964.

The Union was established under the name of the Inter-American Savings and Loan Union in Caracas, Venezuela, on 12 November, 1964.

In 1985 the Union changed its name to the Inter-American Housing Union, reflecting the changing nature of the provision of housing finance in South America.

The offices of the Union were established in Santiago, Chile in August 1986, and the institution has the status of an international organisation under Chilean law.

Membership

At present, 263 institutions are members of the Inter-American Union. Brazil has the largest number of members, but generally all of the specialist housing finance institutions in South and Central America belong to the Union. The Union also has members in the Bahamas, Jamaica, Trinidad, the USA and the Dominican Republic.

Organisation

The Union’s supreme governing body is its General Assembly, which comprises all active members. The board of directors is responsible for determining the institution’s policy and for its operations. It comprises a director and alternate for each of those countries which have more than three active members of the Union. Those countries with more than 20 members have two alternate directors.

Executive Committee of the Inter-American Housing Union

President:
Arthur Tonsmire (USA)
First President:
Jose Roberto Tallo (Argentina)
First Vice-President:
Jose Arota (Ecuador)
Second Vice-President:
Jesus Rafael Boade (Venezuela)
Members:
Luis Fernando Sanin (Colombia)
Alvaro Alberto Barreto (Brazil)
Freddy Reyes (Caribbean Association of Building Societies and Housing Finance Institutions)
Secretary-General:
Dr Alfredo Tapia Garcia
Head, Technical Division:
Dr Guillermo Le-Fort Campos

An executive committee assumes the functions of the board of directors between meetings of the board. The executive committee comprises the president, the past president, two vice-presidents, and three members. The secretariat is headed by a secretary-general, Dr Alfredo Tapia Garcia. The other principal officer is the head of the technical division, Dr Guillermo Le-Fort Campos.

The Union holds annual inter-American housing conferences and these serve as a principal means of communication between the housing finance institutions in South and Central America. The most recent conference was held in Mexico City in May 1986; the 1987 conference will be held in Colombia. The Union also organises seminars on more specialist matters throughout South and Central America. The Union issues a number of publications, including a fortnightly information letter, a journal, Advance, and various specialised publications.

The Union operates a major technical assistance programme, and this has been increasingly important due to the economic problems of the South American countries, in particular, very rapid inflation and a decline in living standards. In 1986, for example, the union gave technical assistance to the savings and loan system in Honduras, including a study of the implications of a draft law submitted to the Parliament.

Inter-American Housing Bank

The Inter-American Housing Union helped to establish, in 1975, the Inter-American Savings and Loan Bank, based in Caracas, Venezuela. All of the institutions holding stock in the Bank are in fact members of the union. The Bank has raised funds through loans from international banking organisations and its own security issues, and it has made loans to a number of Latin American countries aimed at contributing towards the construction of dwellings.

The bank has been affected by the economic problems in South America, and is currently considering various ways of diversifying its activities. The executive president of the Bank is Dr Iari de Andrade.