



# Economic and Social Council

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## Commission for Social Development

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**Follow-up to the World Summit for Social Development and the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly: Priority Theme: “Advancing Social Development and Social Justice through Coordinated, Equitable, and Inclusive Policies”**

**Statement submitted by: International Association of Charities; Company of the Daughters of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul; Congregation of the Mission; DePaul University Ruff Institute of Global Homelessness (IGH); End Child Prostitution, Child Pornography and Trafficking of Children for Sexual Purposes, Inc.; Institute of the Blessed Virgin Mary – Loreto Generalate; International Confederation of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul; International Presentation Association; Maryknoll Fathers and Brothers; Maryknoll Sisters of St. Dominic, Inc.; Religious of the Sacred Heart of Mary; School Sisters of Notre Dame; Sisters of Charity Federation; UNANIMA International; non-governmental organizations in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council\***

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 36 and 37 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

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\* The present statement is issued without formal editing.



## Statement

The Working Group to End Homelessness (WGEH) is a group of non-governmental organizations in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council. We advocate at the United Nations for people who are vulnerable, pursuing the human right to adequate housing for all and to end homelessness. We are committed to the elimination of homelessness in all its forms as described in [A/Res/78/172](#) (2023), [A/Res/76/133](#) (2022) and [E/Res/2020/7](#) (2020), and the Secretary General's reports [A/80/318](#) (2025), [A/78/236](#) (2023) *Inclusive policies and programmes to address homelessness*. The WGEH collaborates with the United Nations Member States, Agencies and Commissions, global platforms to end homelessness, academic centers, and individuals who are or who have experienced homelessness to devise solutions and call for change.

The signatories to this statement, as Economic and Social Council accredited non-governmental organizations and members of the WGEH, urge the 64th Session of the Commission on Social Development to address homelessness in the exploration of the Priority Theme: *Advancing Social Development and Social Justice through Coordinated, Equitable, and Inclusive Policies*.

The right to social development is the human right of every person to participate in, contribute to, and benefit from economic, social, cultural, and political progress. This right was officially recognized by the UN in the [1986 Declaration on the Right to Development](#) and is foundational to achieving the [Sustainable Development Goals](#). It aims to improve the well-being of all people by ensuring fair distribution of development's benefits. One group that is left out of that distribution are people who lack a domicile. It effects their ability to hold a job, to vote, to access education and health care and participate in their community.

The representatives of civil society in the Working Group to End Homelessness have a view of the world from the perspective of people experiencing homelessness, an egregious form of poverty. It appears that governments would rather render them invisible and work with the parts of society that grow wealthy by speculating on land and commodifying housing. While this speculation and commodification can be economically lucrative, it denies about 40% of the world's population their right to participate in social development and pursue social justice.

According to recent estimates by the United Nations Human Settlements Program, (UN Habitat) 2.8 billion people worldwide lack access to adequate housing, secure land and basic water and sanitation services. More than 1.12 billion of these people live in slums or informal settlements. Additionally, 300 million people face absolute homelessness, lacking any form of stable shelter, no housing at all. Young people are the age group with the highest risk of becoming homeless and there is a growing concern about an increase in the numbers of older adults who are homeless (UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs).

These people are left out of the progress that is achieved through putting people at the centre of development, a human rights framework built on equality, non-discrimination, participation, transparency, and accountability. Further, even though States have the obligation to create conditions that are favourable to development, cooperate with each other to achieve it and formulate international development policies so that development will be shared among all people and all countries, most are not developing policies that will address homelessness. We are seeing an increase in criminalization of persons who experience homelessness and evictions.

“Social justice” is the concept that everyone deserves equal access to social, economic, and political rights. It is a broad principle that includes fair treatment and aims to eliminate systemic inequalities based on factors like race, gender, or socioeconomic status. It is critical that Member States ensure access to resources and opportunities and remove barriers that prevent people from achieving their full potential such as a lack of safe, appropriate housing.

*A home for all* is essential to putting people at the centre of development, to eradicating extreme poverty, to promoting decent and productive employment, achieving inclusive societies and moving toward social justice. We call upon Member States in consideration of the Priority Theme to:

- **Safeguard the Human Right to adequate housing as a component of the right to an adequate standard of living**, addressing homelessness as an affront to human dignity and an obstacle to the enjoyment of human rights by fulfilling commitments to provide safe, appropriate, and supportive housing for all and securing land rights for all.
- **Ensure homelessness is prioritized in the discussion of poverty** across the SDGs, as ending homelessness is essential to ending poverty and achieving Agenda 2030 and its promise to “leave no one behind.”
- **Recognize that homelessness takes many forms**, including people living without accommodation, people living in temporary or crisis accommodation, and people living in inadequate and insecure housing.
- **Employ improved data collection methodologies and reporting** on homelessness through the SDG framework of targets and indicators. Encourage Member States to capture the accurate and current numbers of people experiencing homelessness along with disaggregated demographic data that can be universally applied to formulate effective national, regional, and global policy.
- **Expand the capacity of all countries to foster social resilience and inclusive societies** by increasing and extending social protection programs especially for families and children, people with disabilities, and socially excluded persons such as people experiencing homelessness, through domestic resource mobilization and fair and progressive taxation, debt forgiveness and encouraging international cooperation.
- **Enact comprehensive policies and interventions to prevent and address homelessness** by increasing the supply of affordable, permanent housing as well as housing with social supports. Persons experiencing homelessness and people at serious risk of homelessness must be included in the design, implementation, and monitoring of all policies and programs, along with Civil Society, particularly the Working Group to End Homelessness.

We implore the Commission to work with Civil Society and people experiencing homelessness to address the drivers of homelessness such as conflicts, climate change, criminalization and commodification so that we Break the Cycle of Homelessness and all people have a home and may realize social justice.

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*In addition to the ECOSOC organizations listed on page one of this statement, The following group without ECOSOC accreditation endorses:*

*Caroline Thema Foundation, Limpopo Province, SA*