



## 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: Addressing inequalities and challenges to  
social inclusion through fiscal, wage and social  
protection policies**

**Statement submitted by International Association of Charities,  
Caritas Internationalis, Company of the Daughters of Charity of  
St. Vincent de Paul, Congregation of the Mission, Dominican  
Leadership Conference, Fondazione Proclade Internazionale —  
Onlus, International Confederation of the Society of St. Vincent de  
Paul, Religious of the Sacred Heart of Mary, School Sisters of  
Notre Dame, Sisters of Charity Federation, Sisters of Mercy of the  
Americas, UNANIMA International, VIVAT 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

As the 57th Commission for Social Development considers “Addressing inequalities and challenges to social inclusion through fiscal, wage and social protection policies”, the United Nations Working Group to End Homelessness (WGEH), the Institute of Global Homelessness (IGH), and the International Coalition to End Homelessness encourage the Commission to address the multifaceted problem of housing exclusion and street homelessness. These concerns leave so many behind and must be solved, with specific indicators, to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030. We urge the Commission to focus on unsheltered homelessness and access to adequate housing in its discussion of social protection policies by:

Calling upon Member States to provide adequate shelter to all persons regardless of gender, age, disability, legal, institutional, or socio-economic status that is safe, secure, and accessible; and to measure and monitor the extent of homelessness, particularly unsheltered homelessness;

Urging regional and global stakeholders to promote efforts to assess progress toward ending homelessness in a way that is meaningful and consistent across all countries, including support for practices of enumerating the homeless population, particularly the unsheltered population, to provide a benchmark from which Member States can mark progress toward the progressive right to housing.

The United Nations Working Group to End Homelessness is a group of NGOs that evidence a concern for poor and marginalized people around the world in their programs and advocacy. We are dedicated to the alleviation and eventual elimination of unsheltered homelessness. In our efforts to achieve this goal, we work with the United Nations, global platforms to end homelessness, and academic centers such as the Institute for Global Homelessness at DePaul University, Chicago, IL, USA.

Unsheltered homelessness affects all groupings - men and women, families with children, youth, the elderly, and people with disabilities. It occurs in most nations — wealthy and poor — across the globe. It has severe negative impacts on both individuals and on cities.

Several United Nations agreements already acknowledge the key role of housing and shelter.

- Sustainable Development Goal 11, indicator 11.1: “By 2030, ensure access for all to adequate, safe and affordable housing and basic services and upgrade slums.”
- The 2016 New Urban Agenda: “We will take positive measures to improve the living conditions of homeless people with a view of facilitating their full participation in society and to prevent and eliminate homelessness.”
- The 1996 Istanbul Declaration on Human Settlements: “... everyone will have adequate shelter that is healthy, safe, secure, accessible and affordable and that includes basic services, facilities and amenities.”

Despite clear recognition that housing, and shelter are central to meeting human potential, existing Sustainable Development Goals and declarations do not specifically mention street homelessness and do not include clear goals to prompt action and enable accountability. A renewed focus on this issue, a clear indicator in Sustainable Development Goal 11, and discussion across forums and agreements would play a key role in remedying this to ensure no one is left behind as implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development moves forward.

Adequate housing is a core component of social protection. Social protection floors are designed to protect individuals and countries from shocks and their stresses by providing an adequate, basic standard of living to vulnerable populations. In addition to ensuring a basic income and access to healthcare, housing must be considered as a key component of ensuring individuals have a basic standard of living. According to “Social Protection: A Coherent Strategy for Shared Prosperity,” the CSocD56 Civil Society Declaration, “it is patently clear that people cannot make meaningful contributions to societal development if they are... fighting simply for basic survival.” People experiencing street homelessness in every corner of the globe face negative outcomes related to mortality, health, ability to earn a basic income and other basic elements of survival.

In conclusion, the WGEH and the IGH urge member states to take steps to remedy the exclusion of street homelessness in this global debate by situating the issue within the conversation around social protection floors, and by exploring the challenges street homelessness poses to meeting the objectives of the 2030 Agenda. We call for a clear, global measurement of street homelessness; a shared goal to reduce and ultimately end street homelessness; and support for a global movement to spread effective strategies across member states. Ensuring social protection requires a roof, not just a floor!

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