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Social development

Ecuador and Madagascar*: revised draft resolution

Inclusive policies and programmes to address homelessness, including in the aftermath of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19)

The General Assembly,

Recalling the World Summit for Social Development, held in Copenhagen from 6 to 12 March 1995, and the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly, entitled “World Summit for Social Development and beyond: achieving social development for all in a globalizing world”, held in Geneva from 26 June to 1 July 2000, and their outcomes,

Reaffirming that the Copenhagen Declaration on Social Development and the Programme of Action of the World Summit for Social Development¹ and the further initiatives for social development adopted by the General Assembly at its twenty-fourth special session² constitute the basic framework for the promotion of social development for all with people at the centre, and encouraging the continued global dialogue on social development issues,

Recalling the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights,³ which, inter alia, recognizes the right of everyone to an adequate standard of living including adequate food, clothing and housing, and to the continuous improvement of living conditions,

Recalling also General Assembly resolution [70/1](#) of 25 September 2015, entitled “Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development”, in which the Assembly recognized to ensure access for all to adequate, safe and affordable housing and basic services, and to implement social protection systems and measures for all, including floors for all, and affirmed its commitment to the full

* On behalf of the States Members of the United Nations that are members of the Group of African States.

¹ *Report of the World Summit for Social Development, Copenhagen, 6–12 March 1995* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.96.IV.8), chap. I, resolution I, annexes I and II.

² General Assembly resolution [S-24/2](#), annex.

³ See General Assembly resolution [2200 A \(XXI\)](#), annex.



implementation of the 2030 Agenda, and its recognition that eradicating poverty in all its forms and dimensions, is the greatest global challenge and an indispensable requirement for sustainable development,

Recalling further General Assembly resolution [69/313](#) of 27 July 2015 on the Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development,⁴ which is an integral part of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development,

Recalling Economic and Social Council resolution [2020/7](#) of 18 June 2020, entitled, “Affordable housing and social protection systems for all to address homelessness”, and the commitments thereto,

Taking note of the report of the Secretary-General entitled “Affordable housing and social protection systems for all to address homelessness”,⁵ in which he encouraged Member States to develop comprehensive intersectoral national strategies and specific policy interventions to address homelessness, build broad-based partnerships with relevant stakeholders, including with civil society, to prevent people from falling into homelessness, and to combat stereotypes and discrimination against people experiencing homelessness,

Reaffirming the Paris Agreement⁶ and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change,⁷ the SIDS Accelerated Modalities of Action (SAMOA) Pathway⁸ and the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants,⁹ as each document contributes to the improvement of the situation of homelessness and the promotion of the right of individuals to adequate housing as a component of the right to an adequate standard of living, without discrimination,

Recalling the importance of the full realization of Agenda 2063 of the African Union, as well as its first 10-year implementation plan (2014–2023), as a strategic framework for ensuring a positive socioeconomic transformation in Africa within the next 50 years, and its continental programme embedded in the resolutions of the General Assembly on the New Partnership for Africa’s Development¹⁰ and regional initiatives, such as the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme,

Recalling also the Convention on the Rights of the Child,¹¹ in which States parties recognized the right of every child to a standard of living adequate for the child’s physical, mental, spiritual, moral and social development,

Recalling further the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women,¹² which advances the full realization of the human rights of women, including the right to social security, and the outcomes of the Fourth World Conference on Women, held in Beijing, in 1995,¹³ towards advancing the goals of gender equality, development and peace for all women and girls in the interest of all humanity,

⁴ General Assembly resolution [69/313](#), annex.

⁵ [E/CN.5/2020/3](#).

⁶ See [FCCC/CP/2015/10/Add.1](#), decision 1/CP.21. annex.

⁷ United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 1771, No. 30822.

⁸ General Assembly resolution [69/15](#), annex.

⁹ General Assembly resolution [71/1](#).

¹⁰ [A/57/304](#), annex.

¹¹ United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 1577, No. 27531.

¹² United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 1249, No. 20378.

¹³ *Report of the Fourth World Conference on Women, Beijing, 4–15 September 1995* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.96.IV.13), chap. I, resolution 1, annexes I and II.

Recalling the New Urban Agenda,¹⁴ which, inter alia, promotes cities and human settlements that fulfil their social function, including the social and ecological function of land, with a view to progressively achieving the full realization of the right to adequate housing for all, as a component of the right to an adequate standard of living, without discrimination, including for persons with disability,

Noting the importance of aggregated and disaggregated data for formulating effective policies to address homelessness and the need to make concerted efforts to identify people experiencing homelessness, both temporarily and chronically,

Recalling Economic and Social Council resolutions 2016/7 and 2016/8, of 2 June 2016, in which Governments were encouraged to continue to develop, improve, extend and implement inclusive, effective, fiscally sustainable and nationally appropriate social protection systems and measures and in which it was acknowledged that social protection floors can provide a basis from which to address poverty, vulnerability and homelessness, and are therefore essential to end the situation of marginalization of persons experiencing and at risk of homelessness and help them to integrate into society,

Recognizing that addressing homelessness through affordable housing and other targeted policies and social protection systems for all assists Member States in realizing the right to adequate housing as part of their implementation of the New Urban Agenda and the achievement of the goals and targets of the 2030 Agenda,

Noting with concern that individuals and families can become homeless temporarily or for prolonged periods as a result of armed conflicts, natural disasters or humanitarian emergencies, or pandemics, including the coronavirus disease (COVID-19), and that climate change is predicted to increase the frequency, irregularity and intensity of sudden or slow-onset natural hazards, heightening the risk of disaster-related homelessness,

Concerned that the right to adequate housing is not realized for many throughout the world and that millions continue to live in substandard housing, or are experiencing homelessness, or are at immediate risk of homelessness,

Noting with concern that homelessness among adolescents and youth is a major concern in many countries, and that youth living in poverty experience additional deprivations to their standard of living, including lack of access to decent jobs, quality education and training and health, putting them at greater risk of bearing the negative economic consequences of shocks such as pandemics,

Mindful of the particular challenges faced by homeless women and girls, including gender-based violence and lack of access to adequate hygienic equipment and health facilities, and recognizing the need for gender-responsive, disability-inclusive and locally relevant measures to combat homelessness,

Recalling its resolution 74/270 of 2 April 2020, entitled “Global solidarity to fight the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19)”, and its resolution 74/274 of 20 April 2020, entitled “International cooperation to ensure global access to medicines, vaccines and medical equipment to face COVID-19”, which all call for multilateral and multisectoral approaches to address the global pandemic,

Recalling also its resolution 75/156 of 16 December 2020, entitled “Strengthening national and international rapid response to the impact of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) on women and girls”, which identified the existing and potential impacts of coronavirus disease on women and girls and put a clear and comprehensive road map for addressing these impacts,

¹⁴ General Assembly resolution 71/256, annex.

Noting that homelessness is not merely a lack of physical housing, but is often a disaffiliation process interrelated with poverty, lack of full and productive employment, decent work and access to infrastructure, as well as other socioeconomic issues that may constitute a loss of family, community and a sense of belonging, and, depending on national context, can be described as a condition where a person or household lacks safe habitable space, which may compromise their ability to enjoy social relations, and includes people living on the streets, in other open spaces or in buildings not intended for human habitation, people living in temporary accommodation or shelters for people experiencing homelessness, and, in accordance with national legislation, may include, among others, people living in severely inadequate accommodation without security of tenure and access to basic services,

Noting with concern that people, inter alia, women and girls, experiencing or at risk of homelessness are already in vulnerable situations and disproportionately affected by serious health concerns, which further increase their vulnerability to global pandemics such as COVID-19, recognizing that this is influenced by a lack of housing and housing inadequacy, nutritious food, a lack of access to safe drinking water and sanitation and health-care services, as well as inequalities and poverty, particularly in the wake of lockdowns,

Stressing the urgent need to build on COVID-19 recovery efforts and to accelerate action at all levels and by all stakeholders to fulfil the vision and goals of the 2030 Agenda, and emphasizing the need for concerted action pursuant to all relevant major United Nations conferences and summits in the economic, social and related fields and their outcomes, including the World Summit for Social Development, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030¹⁵ and the New Urban Agenda,

1. *Notes with concern* that homelessness is a global problem, affecting people of different ages and with diverse economic, social and cultural backgrounds, in both developed and developing countries, while acknowledging the lack of up-to-date data on the number of persons suffering from homelessness, with the last estimation carried out by the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) in 2005, in which it estimated that 100 million persons were experiencing homelessness, and that 1.6 billion people lived in inadequate housing conditions, with about 15 million persons forcefully evicted every year;

2. *Calls upon* Member States to ensure the promotion and protection of all human rights, in accordance with their obligations under international human rights law, while recognizing that homelessness constitutes an affront to human dignity and may be an obstacle to the enjoyment of human rights and that urgent national and international action is therefore required to address it;

3. *Reiterates* that the eradication of poverty, hunger and malnutrition, in particular as they affect people experiencing and at risk of homelessness and other people in vulnerable situations, is crucial for the advancement of global sustainable development;

4. *Urges* Member States to consider people experiencing homelessness in designing, implementing, creating and evaluating policies, programmes and strategies for full, equal, meaningful, effective, constructive and sustainable participation in society and access to affordable, stable, safe and adequate housing, as part of the human right to an adequate standard of living, and that those efforts are compliant with their applicable international human rights obligations as well as oriented

¹⁵ General Assembly resolution 69/283, annex II.

towards achieving sustainable development goals and fulfilling the commitment of leaving no one behind;

5. *Stresses* that the responsibility for developing integrated, holistic, inclusive and effective policies and programmes affecting people experiencing homelessness, as well as coherent multisectoral efforts globally and evaluating this issue regularly as part of follow-up action lies foremost with Member States and local governments, in consultation, as appropriate, with individuals and families with a lived experience, civil society organizations, especially those currently serving the identified demographic, and other relevant stakeholders;

6. *Welcomes* the implementation of inclusive, social and public housing programmes, and encourages Member States to continue to enable all persons in vulnerable situations to access adequate housing by constructing, maintaining and managing housing programmes at affordable prices and costs, as well as providing income subsidies, as a means to prevent homelessness and informal housing, and to share the best practices;

7. *Calls upon* Member States to collect disaggregated data on demographics related to homelessness and establish categories of homelessness, accompanying the existing measurement tools, and encourages Member States to harmonize the measurement and collection of data on homelessness to enable national and global policymaking;

8. *Encourages* national and local governments to improve access to affordable housing through integrated housing policies and social protection measures, including social protection on both the demand and the supply sides, including by addressing legal and policy barriers to equal and non-discriminatory access to adequate housing, including for women of all ages and women-headed households, and providing access to credit facilities, as well as through protection against unlawful eviction, the provision of adequate emergency and temporary shelter and services and security of tenancy and support for the development of affordable housing, which is especially important for low-income households;

9. *Emphasizes* that poverty eradication requires that Member States implement and strengthen nationally appropriate social protection systems and measures for all, including floors, ensuring access thereto for the poor and people in vulnerable situations, including women, children, persons with disabilities, indigenous peoples and those in informal employment, in an effort to prevent and address homelessness;

10. *Recognizes* that the international community faces increasing challenges posed by the negative impact of climate change, natural disasters and environmental degradation, which have exacerbated vulnerabilities and inequalities for people experiencing homelessness, particularly in developing countries and small island developing States, and stresses the need to anticipate, plan for and reduce disaster risk, including through the implementation of Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030, and to ensure the right to an adequate standard of living is promoted and respected;

11. *Urges* Member States to effectively address the structural and circumstantial drivers of homelessness, including inequalities, poverty, a loss of housing and livelihood, a lack of decent job opportunities, lack of access to affordable housing, lack of social protection, lack of access to land, credit or financing, and high costs of energy or health care, as well as lack of financial and legal literacy, through appropriate means;

12. *Emphasizes* the need for accessible, publicly available and affordable health-care services in order to address specific medical needs of people experiencing

homelessness, who are often at risk of contracting communicable diseases such as COVID-19 and HIV/AIDS;

13. *Recognizes* the need to implement measures to promote and improve the mental health and well-being of all, specifically people experiencing or at risk of homelessness, including scaling up of comprehensive and integrated psychosocial support services for the prevention and treatment of mental disorders and other mental health conditions, through psychosocial support, raising awareness and tackling stigma, promoting well-being, addressing social determinants of health and fully respecting their human rights;

14. *Urges* Member States to address all forms of violence including gender-based violence against women of all ages, children, and persons with disabilities especially the challenges faced by those experiencing or at risk of homelessness, as well as negative social norms and gender stereotypes that perpetuate all forms of discrimination, violence and harmful practices;

15. *Recognizes* the importance of strengthening intergenerational programmes, partnerships and solidarity among generations, and in this regard the importance of targeted programmes throughout the life course to mitigate and address homelessness including through the provision of supportive services, assistance in locating housing, health-care services and mental health services, quality education and training, employment counselling, child care, food, and trauma services, as well as basic material necessities such as food and hygienic equipment, to people experiencing and at risk of homelessness, giving special attention to interventions with families, women and children who are at risk of violence, in order to break the cycle of intergenerational homelessness and poverty;

16. *Urges* Member States and other stakeholders to close digital divides and promote digital inclusion, particularly of people experiencing homelessness, by taking into account national and regional contexts and addressing the challenges associated with access, affordability, digital literacy and digital skills, including media and information literacy, and by ensuring that the benefits of new technologies, including information and communications technologies, are available to all, taking into account the needs of those who are in vulnerable situations;

17. *Urges* Member States to take concerted action, in accordance with their obligations under international law, to remove obstacles to the enjoyment of human rights, including the right to an adequate standard of living, including housing, through increased availability of adequate housing, resources and basic services in order to promote the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development;¹⁶

18. *Also urges* Member States to address legal, administrative, social, economic, digital and cultural barriers, irrespective of geographic location, that limit people experiencing or at risk of homelessness, in all its forms, from full, equal and meaningful participation, representation and input at all levels, while enabling the capacities, resources, information, technology, support, space and skills needed to empower and ensure the full, equal and meaningful participation of the poor, female-headed households and others in vulnerable situations;

19. *Encourages* Member States to increase the pool of affordable housing with social supports, particularly in urban areas, upgrade slums and take steps to end arbitrary evictions and the commodification of housing, through such actions as taxing empty units, requiring a certain percentage of new housing construction to include affordable housing, providing access to legal remedies, promoting housing cooperatives, promoting caps on rental costs and moderating housing costs;

¹⁶ Resolution 70/1.

20. *Also encourages* Member States to ensure, in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic and similar situations, that people experiencing homelessness have access to personal protective equipment, health care services, medical supplies, medicines, vaccines and testing, the provision of sufficient safe drinking water, sanitation and hygiene facilities, and access to easily comprehended information about the situation, enabling people experiencing homelessness to follow mandated health recommendations without fear of persecution or personal risk;

21. *Encourages* close collaboration, broad-based partnership at all levels and the sharing of good practices between Member States as well as other relevant stakeholders, including civil society and the private sector, to educate, to raise awareness, to prevent people from falling into homelessness, to support those experiencing homelessness, to develop long-term sustainable solutions to end homelessness, and to support the empowerment of all persons in vulnerable situations, including those experiencing homelessness;

22. *Requests* the Secretary-General, in close collaboration with relevant United Nations entities, to submit a report to the General Assembly, at its seventy-eighth session, on the progress that has been achieved and challenges that remain in the implementation of inclusive social development policies and programmes to address homelessness, including through recommendations for possible indicators on social protection and access for all to adequate, safe and affordable housing in the aftermath of COVID-19.
