Global Homelessness and the Path Forward: An Overview of the Issue and its Place on the UN General Assembly's Agenda

- Concept Note -

Background

"Homelessness is a condition where a person or household lacks habitable space with security of tenure, rights, and ability to enjoy social relations, including safety. Homelessness is a manifestation of extreme poverty and a failure of multiple systems and human rights."

- Definition agreed upon by the experts from the *"Affordable housing and social protection systems for all to address homelessness"* UN Expert Group Meeting, held in Nairobi, Kenya (2019)

UN-Habitat's most recent data indicate that there are over 1.6 billion people experiencing homelessness and the lack of safe, adequate, and stable housing. Yet, the United Nations had not addressed the issue of homelessness as a priority until the 58th Commission for Social Development (CSocD58) in February 2020. Since that Commission, two landmark UN Resolutions have emerged:

1. ECOSOC Resolution E/CN.5/2019/L.5 **"Affordable housing and social protection systems for all to address homelessness"** (2020)

2. UN General Assembly Resolution A/RES/76/133 **"Inclusive policies and programmes to address homelessness, including in the aftermath of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19)"** (2021)

As detailed in UNANIMA International's publications and other research, it is well established that combatting the issue of homelessness is integral in achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Homelessness is deeply intertwined with both the direct and indirect consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic, poverty, climate change, and other major emerging issues for the international community.

In the next two weeks, UN Secretary-General António Guterres will be presenting a report on homelessness to the 78th session of the UN General Assembly. The first of its kind, this report will update the UNGA 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," as noted in operative clause 22 of A/RES/76/133. The presentation of this report can give Member States and civil society a better sense of homelessness and its manifestations.

Staying true to our mantra at UNANIMA International "don't talk about us, without us," this parallel event will provide a space to hear from thematic experts, Member States, civil society, and individuals with a lived experience in an open dialogue setting. It will give those interested in the issue of homelessness the opportunity to discuss the drivers, good practices from various state and non-state stakeholders, policy recommendations, and what the path forward is for addressing homelessness within the UN system. Together, we must ensure that the momentum achieved on homelessness continues so that the hidden homeless will no longer be left behind.

Modality

Hybrid webinar-style panel with the opportunity for online and in-person questions, answers, and discussion. In-person attendance will be held at the Baha'i International Community.

When: Thursday, September 7th, 2023 | 10:00 – 11:30am EST

Address: 866 United Nations Plaza, New York, NY 10017

Registration Link: https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZ0pcuGuqjMoH9PM3wYX9LeQh3Dwwqlf8ga7#/registration

Speakers

- Ms. Vero Henintsoa Andriamiarisoa, Chargé d'affaires of the Permanent Mission of Madagascar to the UN
- MaryAnn Dantuono, NGO Representative of the International Association of Charities to the UN
- Francesca Lionetti, UN-Habitat
- Dr. Ifeyinwa Ofong, NGO Representative of WorldWIDE Network Nigeria to the UN

- Hantamalala Rafalimanana, United Nations Focal Point on Housing
- Freek Spinnewijn, Director of FEANTSA
- Maryann Broxton, Main Representative to the UN for the International Movement ATD Fourth World

Moderator: Jean Quinn, DW, Executive Director of UNANIMA International

Guiding Questions

➢ Since the adoption of UN General Assembly Resolution 76/133 in 2021, how has homelessness manifested itself globally? How has the Resolution affected policies and/or been implemented?

➢ What are examples of good practices to address homelessness? What can be done to better support people experiencing less visible forms of homelessness and social exclusion?

➢ What are the challenges and achievements related to homelessness at the local, national, and international levels?

➢ What progress has been made to elevate the issue of homelessness at all levels of governance? What opportunities are there for strengthened partnerships and collaboration between Member States and civil society on homelessness?