



Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
15 November 2019

English only

Commission for Social Development

Fifty-eighth session

10–19 February 2020

**Follow-up to the World Summit for Social Development
and the twenty-fourth special session of the General
Assembly: priority Theme: Affordable housing and
social protection systems for all to address homelessness**

Statement submitted by Nobel Laureate Mother Teresa Charitable Trust, a non-governmental organization 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.

* The present statement is issued without formal editing.



Statement

Causes of Homelessness:

The causes of homelessness reflect an intricate interplay between Structural Factors, Systems Failures and Individual Circumstances. Homelessness is usually the result of the cumulative impact of a number of factors, rather than a single cause. Structural factors are economic and societal issues that affect opportunities and social environments for individuals. Key factors can include the lack of adequate income, access to affordable housing and health supports, the experience of discrimination, or shifts in economy both internationally and locally, which can create challenges for people to earn an adequate income, pay for food and for housing. Homelessness and poverty are inextricably linked. People who are impoverished are frequently unable to pay for necessities such as housing, food, childcare, healthcare and education. A critical shortage of housing that is affordable, safe and stable directly contributes to homelessness. The most impactful factor is lack of affordable housing nationwide. System failures occur when other systems of care and support fail, making vulnerable people turn to the homelessness sector. Individual and relational factors also apply to the personal circumstances of a person experiencing homelessness.

Challenges faced by Homeless People:

People experiencing homelessness have a significantly higher risk of death. Deaths are often the result of falls, being struck by vehicles, cold weather, heat strokes etc. Disorders that affect joints, ligaments and tendons are common among people experiencing homelessness. Treatment is a challenge due to stressful living on streets or in shelters. Hunger and poor nutrition can contribute to chronic conditions. People living in streets are prone to develop skin diseases and are often at risk of infectious diseases due to compromised immune system and overcrowded at shelters. Many chronic diseases and disorders are common in homeless populations. A large part of the homeless population has serious mental health issues.

Effects:

Education is the most important requirement for everybody to get a fit job ensuring a dignified life. Otherwise existence will be complicated. Research show that nearly three quarters of homeless youth give up going to school. Besides most of the homeless have health issues. Homeless persons suffer from psychological symptoms such as depression, anxiety and behavioral disorders at high rates, many homeless people commit crimes such as theft, murder and kidnapping.

Rehabilitation:

To respond to this problem of homelessness and mental illness, it is necessary to develop an integrated system of services that can, in a flexible and coordinated fashion, cover the different needs involved: Basic needs should include food, lodging or housing, clothes and hygiene. Medical attention: this is crucial, since, due to the poor diet, hygiene and self-care conditions of this group, its mortality and morbidity rates are higher than those of the rest of the population. Psychiatric attention: diagnosis, psychopharmacological treatment, crisis intervention and hospitalization are necessary. Psychosocial rehabilitation: training in self-care, social skills and adaptation to the community; support for integration and maintenance in the community. Employment rehabilitation: prevocational, vocational and occupational training, and support for finding employment and adaptation to work. Residential support in the community: Graded residential services according to the different

levels of independence and following the principle of the least restrictive alternative and finally economic support.

Barriers and Inequalities:

There are many solutions for the issue. One is supporting charities. Charities are the nearest to homeless people to ease their suffering. Besides, facilitating the access to education is of best solution for homelessness.

This phenomenon is like most social phenomena, but it is sensitive to all social levels of the community. Homelessness is a serious problem that impacts thousands of people each year in many countries. It is a problem that Governments and societies are committed to tackle more effectively.

People should definitely sympathize with homeless people because with the right charities, institution, support and help, homelessness could be overcome, and homeless people would be able to make a change in their lives.

Affordable Housing:

Housing is considered to be affordable when a household spends less than 30% of its pre-tax income on adequate shelter. Households that spend more than 30% of their income on shelter are deemed to be in core housing need. Those that spend 50% or more on shelter are in severe housing need. Unfortunately, although most people are able to obtain housing through the private market (rental or home ownership), it isn't adequate for everyone.

In addition to the affordability standard of 30%, affordable housing has developed standards for adequacy (the housing does not require major repairs) and suitability (the housing is sufficient in size and has enough bedrooms) when evaluating a household's situation.

The terms affordable housing and social housing are often confused. While all social housing is affordable, the term 'social housing' refers more specifically to housing that is subsidized by a level of government.

Affordable housing is a much broader term and includes housing provided by the private, public and not-for-profit sectors as well as all forms of housing tenure (i.e. rental, ownership and cooperative ownership). It also includes temporary as well as permanent housing. In other words, the term "affordable housing" can refer to any part of the housing continuum from temporary emergency shelters through transition housing, supportive housing, subsidized housing, market rental housing or market homeownership.

It is estimated that by 2030, 3 billion people i.e., 40% of the world population need new housing and basic infrastructure. Let us all commit our self towards this social issue.

Research and Development:

Bring in a Research & Development team with innovative ideologies to demonstrate and deliver ready to live in houses in a short time, with lower costs and higher quality construction in a sustainable manner. This would also promote technologies that will foster an environment of research and development in the country. The challenge will encourage participation from across the affordable housing and construction sectors, such as technology providers, researchers, start-ups, developers, academia, public sector agencies, and civil society organizations. Pointing out that the conventional system of housing construction is time consuming as well as resource intensive, there is a need to look for new

emerging, disaster-resilient, environment friendly, cost effective and speedy construction technologies. The shift in technology transition will also address the challenges of large-scale housing construction in minimum time and cost with optimum use of resources and environment friendly practices.

Support from International Monetary Fund:

Under the auspices of the United Nations, the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) were endorsed by 193 countries as an over-arching policy framework through 2030. The IMF is committed to the SDGs and is supporting its members in their implementation in areas relevant to its mandate of financial stability and sustainable and inclusive economic growth. At a broad level, IMF engagement on the SDGs is aligned with the five SDG pillars of people, prosperity, planet, peace, and partnership. We request IMF, World Bank, funding agencies and concerned governments to consider support of low-cost housing policy and also support Research and development projects to bring out innovative low-cost housing technologies.

WE BELIEVE TO HAVE A NEW WORLD WHERE NO ONE EVER HAS TO LIVE ON THE STREETS.
