



## **Economic and Social Council**

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### **Commission for Social Development**

**Fifty-eighth session**

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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: Affordable housing and social  
protection systems for all to address homelessness**

### **Statement submitted by Greek Orthodox Archdiocesan Council of North and South America, 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.

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\* The present statement is issued without formal editing.



## Statement

The Greek Orthodox Archdiocesan Council of North and South America, a non-governmental organization in general consultative status with the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations, welcomes the priority theme of “Affordable housing and social protection systems for all to address homelessness.” The priority theme presents the opportunity for global action on the crisis of homelessness through greater policies and social protections.

The protection of people experiencing homelessness is deeply embedded in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development through, sustainable Development Goal 1, “end poverty in all its forms everywhere,” Goal 3, “ensure healthy lives and promote well-beings for all,” Goal 11, “make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable,” inter alia.

Our organization wishes to address the Commission on the need for universally accepted definitions of homelessness and housing, informed by a human rights framework, to spur action towards an international framework of housing and social protections applicable for developed and developing nations. The definition of homelessness must encompass cultural and political contexts of each Member State, structural failures, and personal drivers. Structural failures, inter alia, include poverty, rising inequality in income, access to land and property, access to credit and financing, un- and under-employment, and lack of social protection. Personal drivers include, inter alia, family breakdown, domestic violence, sudden job loss, mental health and well-being, and as a result of conflict or climate-related disasters. Housing must be considered a human right, not a commodity which only incentivizes economic gain in global markets. Housing through a human rights framework should ensure increased availability to affordable housing units.

The Republic of Finland, through their successful Housing First policy, has efficiently decreased the amount of people experiencing homelessness. Finland has housed an estimated 12,000 people over the last thirty years by providing permanent housing with a regular lease and supportive services for each individual. The Government of the Republic of Finland has integrated the Housing First approach into the national policy program to continue the progress on the prevention of homelessness.

The Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia catered to the needs of rural to urban migrants through an Integrated Housing Development Program model paired with an Urban Safety Net program. Housing is provided through cooperatives, small real estate and private, formal, and informal sectors. People receive free health, education and housing support through the safety net program.

We call on Member States to:

- Adopt universal definitions of homelessness and housing to better respond to the crisis of homelessness worldwide;
- Use universally accepted definitions of homelessness and housing to collect disaggregated data to inform all international, regional and local policy to combat homelessness;
- Use the model of programs in use in both developed and developing nations as examples for an international framework of mitigating the crisis of homelessness.