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Social development

Inclusive policies and programmes to address homelessness

Report of the Secretary-General**

Summary

The present report, submitted pursuant to General Assembly resolution [76/133](#), provides a review of the progress, gaps and challenges in inclusive social development policies and programmes to address homelessness, given the socioeconomic impacts of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic. The specific challenges faced by disadvantaged groups are discussed.

The report shows that, while knowledge of and policies on homelessness are improving, substantial efforts are still needed. Notwithstanding homelessness concerns in developed and developing economies, the report serves to highlight global contrasts, along with the convergence of issues and strategies.

In the report, the Secretary-General proposes possible indicators for social protection and access for all to adequate, safe and affordable housing in the aftermath of COVID-19.

* [A/78/150](#).

** The present report was submitted after the deadline in order to include the most recent information.



I. Introduction

1. The coronavirus disease (COVID-19) crisis has exposed the critical situation faced by people experiencing homelessness and led to the adoption of innovative approaches to ensure access for all to adequate, safe and affordable housing and basic services.

2. The United Nations has been actively involved in addressing homelessness, as exemplified by its declaration of 1987 as the International Year of Shelter for the Homeless. United Nations bodies, as well as independent experts such as the Special Rapporteur on the right to adequate housing and the Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights, have consistently drawn attention to the hardships faced by people experiencing homelessness and to the violations of their rights and have highlighted the challenges that Governments face to ensure that everyone has access to a place to live in safety and dignity.

3. While definitions of homelessness differ, persons experiencing homelessness include not only people sleeping in public spaces but also those living in emergency and temporary housing, those living in severely unsafe and inadequate housing and those involuntarily sharing accommodation with others owing to a lack of housing alternatives. Persons experiencing homelessness are thus a very diverse group, and it is important to understand the different conditions as a continuum of situations and challenges. Critically, narrow definitions of homelessness tend to make the experiences of women and children less visible, as they are less likely to be living on the street, often conceal their gender for safety reasons and are also less likely to approach emergency shelters before all other options have been exhausted. Furthermore, while homelessness may be most visible in urban settings, rural areas are also affected.

4. Homelessness is both a concrete violation of human rights and an indicator of extreme poverty and social exclusion. Homelessness exists on all continents, albeit with varying manifestations. Frequently, it is interconnected with poverty and rising inequalities, lack of access to adequate housing, displacement, gender-based and domestic violence, substance misuse, discrimination, lack of decent employment, high cost of energy and health care, unbridled property speculation, limited access to quality education, privatization of public services and deficiencies in mental health care and social protection systems. Therefore, preventing and addressing homelessness requires consideration of its intersection with other issues and necessitates holistic policies covering housing, health care and services, and social and legal protection.¹

5. To promote the right of everyone to live somewhere security, peace and dignity, we must recognize that homelessness is best addressed by preventing it in the first place and, when it occurs, that the experience is as brief as possible. Ending homelessness is firmly embedded in the Sustainable Development Goals (including Goals 1 and 10, on ending poverty and reducing inequalities, respectively; and target 11.1, on ensuring access for all to adequate, safe and affordable housing and basic services by 2030). In the New Urban Agenda, it is noted explicitly that Member States “will take positive measures to improve the living conditions of homeless people, with a view to facilitating their full participation in society, and to prevent and eliminate homelessness, as well as to combat and eliminate its criminalization”.²

¹ See Brendan O’Flaherty, *Making Room: The Economics of Homelessness* (Cambridge, Massachusetts, Harvard University Press, 1996); Julien Damon, *La Question SDF. Critique d’une action publique* (Paris, Presses Universitaires de France, 2021); and Joanne Bretherton, Nicholas Pleace, *The Routledge Handbook of Homelessness* (Abingdon and New York, Routledge, 2023).

² See General Assembly resolution [71/256](#), para. 33.

6. To inform the present report, a survey was made available to collect information from national, regional and local governments, United Nations entities, civil society organizations and other stakeholders. Regional online consultations were also organized. In total, 34 written submissions were received, and 40 further stakeholders were engaged through the consultations covering a total of 30 countries. In addition, the Secretary-General mobilized the network of experts for the report, the research for which was based on the findings and network of the expert group meeting on affordable housing and social protection systems for all to address homelessness, organized by the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) and the Department of Economic and Social Affairs in Nairobi in 2019.

II. Advances and challenges during and after the COVID-19 pandemic

7. The COVID-19 pandemic has focused new attention on people experiencing homelessness. In several countries, concerns over public health and virus transmission led to innovation in access to health care and services and additional efforts to improve the privacy and adequacy of shelter and housing solutions offered to people experiencing homelessness. In response to the impact of the pandemic, some countries adopted a more intensified approach to homelessness. A number of countries, including Belarus, Cyprus, Denmark, Dominica, Ethiopia, Ghana, Greece, Jamaica, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Latvia, the Netherlands, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Sweden and Switzerland,³ reported that they had revised their policy frameworks and offered or extended social benefits such as shelters, drop-in centres, meals, health care and care packages to population groups most in need, including people experiencing homelessness, in 2020.

8. In some countries, local and national authorities swiftly took significant action, utilizing publicly funded temporary solutions such as hotel rooms to provide accommodation for those in need. Moratoriums on evictions were issued in several countries.⁴ Political will, additional resources and access to safe and dignified accommodation and to social support and health care and services proved essential to keeping people experiencing homelessness safe during the pandemic. Those efforts initially fostered hope for a long-term reduction in homelessness.

9. However, the economic hardships and the expiration of moratoriums resulted in a surge in evictions and reduced budgets for homelessness support, undermining the progress made in many cases. This was not universal: in some cities,⁵ existing programmes were reinforced, leading to a decrease in homelessness. However, such progress remained limited to a few countries, and in a larger number of countries and cities, the pandemic resulted in a substantial increase in the number of households facing eviction and persons experiencing homelessness due to the complex mental health impact and socioeconomic aspects of the crisis, including social isolation, job loss, higher rates of domestic and gender-based violence, and other psychological

³ See, for example, 2022 and 2023 voluntary national reviews, available at <https://hlpf.un.org/countries>; and the strategy of the Government of Sweden to combat homelessness for the period 2022–2026, available at www.regeringen.se/contentassets/5a5f795a1db144ec8dfe36cd60114ed7/regeringens-strategi-for-att-motverka-hemloshet-2022-2026.pdf.

⁴ See the report of the Special Rapporteur on adequate housing as a component of the right to an adequate standard of living (A/75/148); see also the analysis of eviction data by the Social Policy Division, Directorate of Employment, Labour and Social Affairs of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), available at www.oecd.org/els/family/HC3-3-Evictions.pdf.

⁵ See Suzanne Fitzpatrick and others, *Ending Street Homelessness in Vanguard Cities Across the Globe: An International Comparative Study* (Edinburgh, Heriot Watt University, 2022).

impacts. Critically, an increase in families and older persons experiencing homelessness has been reported by stakeholders.

10. The economic and social hardships arising from the COVID-19 crisis have deepened existing inequalities and created new vulnerabilities, significantly amplifying risks for certain marginalized groups.⁶ The groups include persons experiencing long-term homelessness who may be reluctant to access services available to them owing to a lack of trust in authorities, as well as aggravated mental health issues and prolonged despair, which require sustained care and treatment from professionals. In developing countries, where the informal economy usually sustains the low-income urban majority, many informal jobs vanished following lockdowns and mobility restrictions. With few assets and limited social protections, many urban residents were plunged into severe poverty very rapidly. Furthermore, specific population segments, such as women and children subjected to domestic and gender-based violence, have been compelled to remain in unsafe environments, with incidents of abuse potentially escalating during lockdowns and curfews.

III. Existing policies and programmes

A. Improving knowledge

11. Although the visibility of persons without any stable home or accommodation, in particular in urban areas, may appear straightforward, understanding the root causes of homelessness presents significant challenges.

12. Investments in tools and surveys have played a crucial role in advancing knowledge on homelessness and contributed to an emerging consensus that homelessness encompasses a wide range of diverse circumstances, which can be experienced by long-term street dwellers, recently displaced families, people fleeing domestic violence and exploitation, and newcomers to urban settings living in informal settlements. For example, a survey carried out in Brazil revealed that 71 per cent of people experiencing homelessness were employed in the informal sector, with 89 per cent lacking social benefits and 25 per cent lacking identification documents.⁷ These findings helped to shift public opinion and prompted the development of a context-specific national strategy.

13. Academic research, governmental and civil society expertise and the exchange of best practices among cities and countries have collectively resulted in substantial progress, in particular in the development of typologies providing a common framework for transnational exchanges on homelessness and the collection of statistical data.⁸

⁶ See UN-Habitat, *Cities and Pandemics: Towards a More Just, Green and Healthy Future* (Nairobi, 2021); see also United Nations, “COVID-19 pandemic in an urbanizing world”, policy brief, July 2020.

⁷ Roberta Mélega Cortizo, “National survey on the homeless population in Brazil: giving a face to homelessness and formulation strategies and policies to address homelessness”, paper presented at the expert group meeting on affordable housing and social protection systems for all to address homelessness, Nairobi, May 2019. Available at www.un.org/development/desa/dspd/wp-content/uploads/sites/22/2019/05/CORTIZO_Roberta_Paper.pdf.

⁸ See, for example, the European Typology on Homelessness and Housing Exclusion, available at www.feantsa.org/download/ethos2484215748748239888.pdf; the OECD Affordable Housing Dataset, available at www.oecd.org/housing/data/affordable-housing-database; and the Global Homeless Framework, described in Volker Busch-Geertsema, Dennis Culhane and Suzanne Fitzpatrick, “Developing a global framework for conceptualising and measuring homelessness”, *Habitat International*, vol. 55 (July 2016).

14. Nevertheless, as of March 2021, only 44 countries globally were monitoring data on homelessness.⁹ Moreover, research carried out by UN-Habitat in March 2022 shows that advancements in knowledge generation are not equally distributed across regions and that most developing countries have poor or non-existent data relating to homelessness, at least at the national Government level. Further understanding of homelessness in Central and South America, Africa and Asia is needed for truly global perspectives.

15. For international comparisons, the expert group meeting on affordable housing and social protection systems to address homelessness produced recommendations to use four categories of people who may be experiencing homelessness:¹⁰

- (a) People living on the streets or other open spaces;
- (b) People living in temporary or crisis accommodation;
- (c) People living in severely inadequate and insecure accommodation (e.g. extremely overcrowded conditions, unconventional buildings and temporary structures);
- (d) People lacking access to affordable housing (e.g. people sharing with friends and relatives on a temporary basis).

B. Regional variations and influencing factors

16. Homelessness is addressed and treated differently across regions, with the approach taken influenced by factors such as poverty and inequality levels, the urbanization rate, cultural and religious norms and social protection systems.

17. These factors, when translated into laws and practices, can result in unequal protection, in particular in areas related to family rights, inheritance, property, and land rights. Women, for example, have historically struggled with gendered property regimes that limit their access to land and housing. An assessment by the World Bank¹¹ in Africa found that just 13 per cent of women reported sole ownership of land or housing, compared with 39 per cent of men. The same imbalance is reflected in other geographical regions. Consequently, men and women face different risks of homelessness across various national contexts. Cultural norms or stereotypes that suggest that public spaces are not a place for girls or women are contributing reasons that reveal a hidden dimension of female homelessness in many societies. This forces women to share accommodation or housing with relatives or to engage in unwanted, potentially exploitative, relationships with men in order to secure accommodation.

18. The vast majority of the 1.6 billion people estimated to be in inadequate housing live in developing countries. Given the ongoing impact of climate change, war and civil unrest, and global economic uncertainty, that number is likely to continue to increase. In developing countries, in fact, the rapid pace of urbanization tends to lead to poverty being transferred from rural to urban areas, where it is often exacerbated by weak capacity of Governments to cope with increasing poverty.

⁹ See the Better Data Project of the Institute of Global Homelessness. Available at <https://ighomelessness.org/global-homeless-data>.

¹⁰ See the proceedings of the expert group meeting on affordable housing and social protection systems to address homelessness. Available at https://unhabitat.org/sites/default/files/2020/10/final_for_publication_homelessness_egm_proceedings_report_1.pdf.

¹¹ Isis Gaddis, Rahul Suresh Lahoti and Wenjie Li, "Gender gaps in property ownership in Sub-Saharan Africa", Policy Research Working Paper, No. 8573 (Washington, D.C., World Bank, 2018). Available at <https://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/939291535658711278/pdf/WPS8573.pdf>.

19. Popular prejudice often results in homelessness being associated with individual responsibility, even though it is mainly the result of policy failures and structural discrimination.¹² This recognition is producing critical changes in shifting responses from the blaming of victims for their own fate to more supportive socioeconomic and housing programmes. Nevertheless, attitudes and reactions to different subgroups of people experiencing homelessness often differ. In certain regions where homelessness is not prominently on the agenda, the focus is primarily on child homelessness, such as street children and those residing in shelters, while other experiences of homelessness receive less attention.

20. Crucially, social protection systems worldwide exhibit significant variation in funding, with expenditure ranging from a small percentage to approximately one third of gross domestic product.

C. Contrasting public interventions, governance and approaches

21. Policies to prevent and address homelessness vary greatly, from non-existent or minimal interventions to comprehensive programmes. Some countries have articulated effective responses to loss of housing within civil protection frameworks, offering emergency accommodation during crises such as earthquakes. Many countries address homelessness within their social security framework, deploying specific strategies involving multiple government departments (for example, housing, social affairs and health care) as well as local authorities, social welfare funds, national Governments and specialized agencies. Homelessness is the subject of legislation and certain State obligations in some countries, while in others, it is not covered by specific laws. In particular where national legislation is missing, cities bear the burden of addressing homelessness alone, struggling with limited resources to tackle the scale of the problem.

22. Governance and service delivery structures differ across territorial scales, including at the local, regional and national levels. Centralized approaches assign the implementation of national policies to local governments, while decentralized approaches leave local governments with greater autonomy in addressing homelessness. However, coordination across different levels of government and engaging stakeholders, such as social service providers, housing agencies, legal advisors, health-care providers and, in particular, people with lived experiences of homelessness, remains a challenge.

23. Governments that designate a single ministry or specialized agency to coordinate efforts across sectoral areas and among diverse stakeholders have experienced better outcomes, as they minimize duplication, ensure cross-sectoral interventions, and utilize public resources more effectively.¹³

¹² See the proceedings of the expert group meeting (see footnote 10).

¹³ According to information contained in the responses of Norway and Finland to the survey circulated for the purposes of the present report; see also Eoin O'Sullivan, "Key elements in homelessness strategies to end homelessness by 2030", Discussion Paper (Dublin, European Commission, 2022), available at https://housingfirsteuropa.eu/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/mlc-homelessness-discussion-paper_final_2022.pdf; and Nicholas Pleace, *Preventing Homelessness: A Review of the International Evidence* (Dublin, Simon Communities of Ireland, 2019), available at www.researchgate.net/profile/Nicholas-Pleace/publication/332684261_Preventing_Homelessness_A_Review_of_the_International_Evidence/links/5cc323e0299bf12097827bde/Preventing-Homelessness-A-Review-of-the-International-Evidence.pdf.

D. A shift towards prevention

24. Emergency accommodation and responses play a vital role in addressing sudden housing loss due to disasters or conflicts. However, short-term support is often prioritized in emergency measures, with the long-term housing and comprehensive needs of people neglected. This institutionalized focus on emergency accommodation can trap people in a system that lacks tailored psychosocial, legal and health-care assistance for integration and rehabilitation.

25. Approaches that address homelessness as a structural issue rather than as a social emergency experienced by few individuals and that emphasize prevention and rights-based strategies have gained traction.

26. Social protection and housing policies – including slum upgrading – play a key role in preventing homelessness. Prevention programmes need to be multifaceted and cross-sectoral, strongly tailored to the targeted populations. The objective is to address both the underlying structural factors contributing to homelessness and the specific risks that are pertinent to individual circumstances.

27. Increased focus on prevention can be seen at the local level¹⁴ as well as in national strategies.

28. Two crucial aspects of prevention not adequately mainstreamed into public policy are universal prevention, which is aimed at minimizing the risk of homelessness through the implementation of social policies that promote the inclusion of all within society, in particular with a pro-poor policy orientation, and targeted prevention, which addresses the needs of children transitioning from foster care, people leaving correctional facilities, those in need of mental health care, people residing in institutions and other at-risk groups.

29. Many States still lack adequate regulatory and institutional frameworks to prevent evictions, which often result in homelessness, in contravention of international human rights standards. Evictions are often treated solely as civil law matters, neglecting the potential risks of homelessness that they pose. Legal frameworks frequently offer limited provisions for eviction prevention, such as extending repayment periods for mortgage or rental debts or ensuring access to social and housing benefits. However, some countries have achieved significant reductions in evictions leading to homelessness, through dedicated units that collaborate closely with courts, public welfare bodies and public and private housing providers. In addition, it is vital to protect renters by ensuring that tenancy laws provide sufficient housing stability and protection against the cancellation of rental arrangements at short notice, as well as other possible safeguards¹⁵ such as the adoption of regulations to limit rent increases or reduce the practice of short-term leases.

30. It is essential to enforce the international prohibition on forced evictions, in particular to prevent those that take place in informal settlements, often in the name of urban renewal. Removals associated with slum clearance often involve the sudden, at times violent eviction of people who lose their shelter, belongings, community and livelihoods. Policy alternatives to forced evictions include the engagement of slum dwellers and their organizations to ensure that alternative housing options are adequate and in close proximity to sources of income and to community networks.

¹⁴ See, for example, <https://world-habitat.org/world-habitat-awards/winners-and-finalists/homelessness-prevention-in-newcastle-upon-tyne> and <https://world-habitat.org/world-habitat-awards/winners-and-finalists/sipho>.

¹⁵ See Fondation Abbé Pierre and FEANTSA, “Seventh overview of housing exclusion in Europe” (Paris and Brussels, 2022). Available at www.feantsa.org/public/user/Resources/reports/2022/Rapport_Europe_GB_2022_V3_Planches_Corrected.pdf.

31. Finally, homelessness prevention can be effective only when Governments address broader structural problems, including the lack of truly affordable and adequate housing for low-income households. Investing in social housing, implementing effective regulations and taking a proactive public role have proven to be successful in addressing homelessness and housing affordability challenges. Some countries experienced increased homelessness when public engagement in the housing sector was reduced, leading to a decline in social housing stocks, diminished social benefits and limited support for low-income families. However, according to Member State responses to the survey, the examples set by countries such as Norway and Finland demonstrate that reducing homelessness is possible through the expansion of social housing.

E. Unlocking housing options

32. Strategies such as Housing First have been tested and evaluated, including in increasing numbers of middle-income countries outside North America and Western Europe. The Housing First model is an integrated approach in which the primary needs of people experiencing homelessness to obtain permanent housing and ongoing tailored support services are prioritized. Housing is not conditional on health-service utilization, compliance, or abstinence but is treated as a human right. Services are offered by mobile multi-disciplinary teams, supported by case managers. Evaluations of programmes carried out in Canada,¹⁶ Chile¹⁷ and Europe,¹⁸ among other locations, show their effectiveness: after two years, between 80 and 90 per cent of programme participants are still in a stable home. Housing First has also proved successful when targeted towards people with complex needs, including long-term homelessness, mental health issues and substance misuse. Governments are encouraged to develop an overall housing strategy, including actions to improve informal settlements and resources for local governments, to couple the Housing First model with investments for adequate housing.

33. Addressing homelessness in developing countries is connected to challenges of scale. Another factor limiting the effectiveness of interventions is the focus on providing formal housing without fully understanding the needs and priorities of persons experiencing homelessness. While in situ participatory upgrading of poor-quality housing has proved to be more effective, the prevailing approach in many countries is still centred on relocation and standardized housing solutions. Many of these housing schemes fail as a result of peripheral locations, inadequate infrastructure and the additional financial burdens that they impose on low-income households.

34. Addressing the root causes of housing informality and improving living conditions require a radical rethink of land prioritization. Housing should be constructed in central locations, available at a truly affordable cost through diverse types of tenure, and designed to improve the well-being of occupants. It is important to recognize that homelessness and extreme housing inadequacy are often driven by economic need and a lack of support for people facing destitution. Preventing and addressing homelessness effectively in developing countries includes tackling

¹⁶ Canada, *Final Report on the Evaluation of the Homelessness Partnering Strategy* (Ottawa, Employment and Social Development Canada, 2018).

¹⁷ According to information provided at the sixteenth European Research Conference on Homelessness in 2022 by Ignacio Eissmann, Isabel Lacalle and Felipe Estay in a seminar entitled “Supported housing program: approach to the first results of the Chilean experience of adaptation of the Housing First model”.

¹⁸ Housing Europe Observatory, “Supporting people through Housing First: the experience of social housing providers”, Research Brief (Brussels, 2019).

economic inequalities, in particular of women and populations in vulnerable situations; providing tailored support; and ensuring that housing does not exacerbate the difficulties faced by people living in poverty.

F. Innovative approaches and collaborations

35. Various initiatives and novel interventions have been implemented and tested, including day centres, and mobile teams of professionals or volunteers reaching out assertively and compassionately to people living on the street. These interventions have required innovative and collaborative efforts, such as training law enforcement bodies to carry out care functions for people experiencing homelessness rather than policing and control duties. Such initiatives can fulfil important engagement goals to build trust, and rather than being provided as standalone solutions, they should be part of an integrated strategy.

36. A promising shift has also been experienced towards the participation in policy processes of, and accountability to, people experiencing homelessness. Member State responses to the survey used for the preparation of the present report provide some examples. For instance, the Advisory Committee on Homelessness that advised the Government of Canada to redesign its homelessness strategy included people with lived experiences. The National Housing Council of Canada, established to monitor the impact of the new housing strategy, also included members with lived experiences. In Argentina, the newly adopted Law 27654 expressly establishes a duty of the State for “the promotion of the exercise of political rights [by people experiencing homelessness] and their participation in the planning, implementation and evaluation of public policies”.

37. Furthermore, while housing-led solutions have demonstrated their effectiveness, the critical role of support services in breaking the cycle of poverty and homelessness, including those relating to food, education, employment, transport, health including mental health, trauma-informed care and childcare, has also been highlighted.

38. Calls to deepen social protection systems are now being made in relation to homelessness. This is the case, for example, for government universal income programmes aimed at combating extreme poverty. Universal income is often accompanied by a set of minimum standards of access to rights and services, in particular in the areas of housing and health.¹⁹

39. A wave of new ideas in social investment in which the importance of prevention over immediate intervention and the cost-effectiveness of investing in homelessness prevention and response are emphasized have also emerged. Social investments of this kind demonstrate that allocating resources to prevent and address homelessness yields long-term savings. The approach is evident in Housing First models. For example, a study conducted by Housing First Belgium²⁰ showed that, after two years of implementation, individual costs related to hospitalization decreased by 46 per cent, with an accompanying large reduction in accommodation costs (€17.80 per night per person spent on Housing First, as compared with €55 per night per person in a night shelter). According to an evaluation of the Ministry of Social Development and

¹⁹ See Philippe Van Parijs, Yannick Vanderborght, *Basic Income. A Radical Proposal for a Free Society and a Sane Economy* (Massachusetts, Harvard University Press, 2017); and Nick Kerman, “The role of universal basic income in preventing and ending homelessness”, *International Journal on Homelessness*, vol. 1, No. 1 (2021).

²⁰ See Housing First in Belgium, “It works! Results and invitation to fast track the exit from homelessness”, fact sheet, n.d. Available at www.housingfirstbelgium.be/medias/files/housing-first-belgium-results-en.pdf.

Family of Chile,²¹ Housing First requires a smaller budget than traditional models of floating service provisions and emergency shelters.

IV. Remaining obstacles and challenges

A. Barriers to ending homelessness remain high

40. The policies and programmes discussed in the prior section face considerable barriers to their implementation. These include systematic drivers connected to levels of poverty, inequality and informality, insufficient adequate housing, evictions, and displacement due to conflicts and climate change impacts. Other barriers are related to funding, lack of knowledge, governance and mindsets.

41. Barriers related to lack of funding include:

- (a) Inadequate resources for care and welfare sectors;
- (b) Non-transparent funding arrangements.

42. Barriers related to knowledge production, use and dissemination include:

(a) Insufficient and incomplete knowledge and data, including ambiguity of definition;

- (b) Lack of documentation and dissemination of good practices;
- (c) Low rate of evaluation of existing homelessness programmes.

43. Barriers related to governance include:

(a) Insufficient individualized and tailored social support;

(b) Ineffective coordination among various stakeholders and involvement of persons with lived experiences of homelessness;

(c) Insufficient coordination among health-care systems, criminal justice systems, institutions caring for minors and institutions responsible for assisting minors as they come of age;

- (d) Insufficient focus on prevention;
- (e) Limited political will and social mobilization.

44. Barriers rooted in mindsets include:

(a) Inadequately recognized needs of specific at-risk groups, in terms both of prevention and of tailored support services;

(b) Discrimination in access to adequate housing, employment and social support;

(c) Prejudice against and stigmatization of people experiencing homelessness;

(d) Cultural practices detrimental to the fulfilment of human rights, including exclusion of women from housing, land and property;

(e) Lack of focus on the dignity and rights of people experiencing homelessness.

²¹ Institute of Global Homelessness, “*Housing First in international contexts: what we’ve learned*”, webinar, July 2021. Available at www.youtube.com/watch?v=hJEIw7RGqio.

B. Need for a truly human rights-based approach to addressing homelessness

45. Homelessness is an affront to human dignity, a key principle on which international human rights law is based. A human rights-based approach to homelessness therefore sees persons experiencing homelessness not primarily as people in need of charity or social welfare but as rights holders entitled to the same protection of their rights as any other person. As duty bearers, Governments are obliged to ensure that persons experiencing homelessness can enjoy their rights on a non-discriminatory basis. A rights-based approach underlines that persons with lived experiences should be able to participate in the design, implementation and evaluation of policies aimed at preventing or addressing homelessness.

46. While not all governments or service providers working with persons experiencing homelessness have already adopted a human rights-based approach, the concept has received increased traction in several countries.

47. A human rights-based approach to homelessness entails a review of legislation, regulations and policies that may result in the exclusion of persons experiencing homelessness from social benefits or the right to vote.

48. Persons experiencing homelessness are frequently victims of crimes, including theft of their belongings, physical assault and hate crimes. A rights-based approach therefore must encompass measures to ensure the equal protection of persons experiencing homelessness against crime.

49. Many Governments retain outdated laws or regulations that criminalize life-sustaining activities associated with homelessness. In its resolution [43/14](#), the Human Rights Council called upon Member States to decriminalize homelessness and repeal provisions in legislation, such as vagrancy laws, that do not address the underlying causes of homelessness or support rights holders in exiting homelessness.

50. Some countries and cities have taken important steps by adopting legislation that provides persons experiencing homelessness with a legal right to emergency accommodation or obliges local authorities to provide (priority) access to social or public housing to certain persons formally recognized as “statutory homeless”. These laws present an important step, notwithstanding the limitations and challenges posed, for example, by the exclusion of certain groups from their scope or the capacity of local governments or service providers to respond adequately to requests made by rights holders.

51. A further element of a human rights-based approach is to ensure that persons experiencing homelessness have access to effective remedies and justice that should include easily accessible non-judicial complaints mechanisms, as well as access to the formal justice system, including legal aid and advice.

C. Need for better evaluation of programmes and dissemination of lessons learned

52. Policies and programmes addressing homelessness often lack follow-up evaluations, and the optimal conditions for their implementation remain unknown. Countries that are just starting to implement homelessness strategies and policies should prioritize the improvement of adequate housing, in particular in rapidly expanding urban areas, rather than replicating unsuccessful models relying solely on temporary shelter provision. While emergency accommodation will always be necessary, governments should make efforts to prevent the institutionalization of such accommodation. The focus should be on ensuring access to adequate housing for all

and facilitating a swift transition to permanent housing or in situ upgrading, avoiding systems of multiple layers of temporary accommodation that do not allow for long-term housing stability.

53. Additional knowledge from Central and South American, African and Asian countries needs to be developed and shared because insights from those regions have historically been overlooked within homelessness research and dialogues.

54. It is crucial to disseminate knowledge built upon both successful and unsuccessful experiences. When evaluating programmes, it is often observed that the most easily assisted populations receive the most comprehensive support. Countries need to focus on this significant problem and, in some cases, embark on a drastic policy redesign.

D. Need for better multi-level governance, including cooperation with and empowerment of civil society organizations

55. Governments play a critical role in establishing regulations and policies that govern access to land and housing that can either aid or hinder efforts to address homelessness among the urban poor. However, in particular in developing countries, the lack of effective strategies for inclusive development often leads to unequal access to land for housing, exacerbating homelessness. Moreover, the low overall social expenditure in some regions²² suggests that there is room for improvement.

56. This situation creates opportunities for various actors to make promises of improvements to land, housing, services or settlements in exchange for support, although those promises are not always fulfilled. An encouraging example of a way to address this issue is provided by the Thai Community Organization Development Institute.²³ The Institute's inclusive approach involves establishing city committees to negotiate for land and support the upgrading of informal neighbourhoods, which has successfully resulted in secure housing for around 104,000 urban poor families in more than 300 cities.

57. Civil society organizations, religious institutions and community groups often play a significant role in supporting people experiencing homelessness and extreme exclusion by prioritizing health care, food, and assistance in achieving economic stability. These organizations should be recognized as full partners by governments, as they provide vital resources and support, helping people experiencing homelessness to regain trust and gradually improve their situation. For instance, recently, with the support of the Kenyan slum dwellers federation Muungano wa Wanavijiji, Mathare community members established a physical address system, which can foster the planning of future investments, promote recognition and data collection and reporting, and facilitate access to services, infrastructure, the equitable distribution of disaster relief and other efforts.²⁴

²² See Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia, "Social expenditure monitor for Arab States: toward making public budgets more equitable, efficient and effective to achieve the SDGs", 24 November 2022.

²³ See Diana Mitlin, "The contribution of reform coalitions to inclusion and equity: lessons from urban social movements", in *Area Development and Policy*, vol. 8, No. 1 (December 2022).

²⁴ See Alice Sverdlik and others, *Towards a comparative understanding of community-led and collaborative responses to Covid-19 in Kampala, Mogadishu and Nairobi*, Working Paper 5 (Manchester, African Cities Research Consortium, 2022).

V. Challenges faced by disadvantaged social groups

58. The COVID-19 pandemic and its aftermath have exacerbated homelessness and deepened inequalities among disadvantaged social groups and persons in vulnerable situations.

A. Indigenous Peoples and racial or ethnic minorities

59. Indigenous Peoples globally number more than 476 million, spread across 90 countries.²⁵ Even before COVID-19, poverty and discriminatory practices, including identity and cultural subjugation, were creating additional vulnerabilities associated with their homelessness. When Indigenous Peoples move to urban areas, they often become overrepresented among populations experiencing homelessness. Systemic barriers and prejudice are found in many housing authority regulations, which routinely exclude them from public housing policies and programmes. Various studies showed that many services targeting Indigenous Peoples experiencing homelessness rarely responded well to their needs, with access to services often requiring cumbersome formalities such as providing information on educational attainment, land titles, race identification and employment histories. Where housing is provided, it tends to increase institutionalization and segregation, contributing to their further marginalization.²⁶

60. Ethnic and racial bias can also drive homelessness among minority groups. For instance, Roma people remain victims of discrimination and racism, including in accessing adequate housing, and in many European countries, Roma migrants are targets of forced evictions by local authorities.²⁷ Similarly, in the United States of America, African Americans and Indigenous Peoples (including Native Americans and Pacific Islanders) remain considerably overrepresented among people experiencing homelessness. While African Americans represent just 12 per cent of the total population, they account for 39 per cent of people experiencing homelessness. Similarly, although American Indian, Alaska Native, Pacific Islander and Native Hawaiian populations make up only 1 per cent of the total population, they account for 5 per cent of people experiencing homelessness.²⁸

61. Indigenous Peoples living in homelessness are at higher risk of premature morbidity and mortality. They are also more likely to be victims of violence and criminalization at the hands of authorities. In most cases, they have limited access to justice-related remedial or redress services for violations and are rarely consulted in decisions regarding housing policies.²⁹

B. Older persons

62. The number of older persons 65 years of age or older worldwide is projected to double between 2022 and 2050, from 783 million to 1.6 billion.³⁰ As older persons live longer, there is increased global demand for access to affordable health care and

²⁵ See www.un.org/en/observances/indigenous-day/background.

²⁶ See A/74/183.

²⁷ See www.ohchr.org/en/minorities/advancing-roma-inclusion.

²⁸ See Meghan Henry and others, *2020 Annual Homeless Assessment Report to Congress*, United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (Washington, D.C., 2021).

²⁹ See A/76/202.

³⁰ Available at [https://population.un.org/wpp/Download/Files/1_Indicators%20\(Standard\)/EXCEL_FILES/2_Population/WPP2022_POP_F03_1_POPULATION_SELECT_AGE_GROUPS_BOTH_SEXES.xls](https://population.un.org/wpp/Download/Files/1_Indicators%20(Standard)/EXCEL_FILES/2_Population/WPP2022_POP_F03_1_POPULATION_SELECT_AGE_GROUPS_BOTH_SEXES.xls).

suitable housing. Losing a home, managing rising costs of living, lacking access to employment for income and having to deal with health fragilities simultaneously makes homelessness for older persons a catastrophic challenge.

63. Older persons experiencing homelessness are a heterogeneous group with different needs and conditions. While some may experience homelessness due to sudden events including the death of a spouse, sickness and disability, or loss of income, others may experience prolonged homelessness due to poverty, unemployment or unreliable income. Irrespective of the reason, homelessness further limits the autonomy and independence of older persons. In developed countries, older persons experiencing homelessness may have access to institutionalized settings but not to the necessary assistive living devices that facilitate independence. In countries with weak social protection systems, older persons experiencing homelessness face a harsh reality in which essential services such as food, water and sanitation can be hard to reach or non-existent. In either case, older persons experiencing homelessness are more vulnerable to violence, neglect and abuse, which can worsen their physical and mental health.³¹

C. Persons with disabilities

64. An estimated 16 per cent of the world's population, or 1.3 billion people, experience significant disability. Persons with disabilities are disproportionately represented in people experiencing homelessness, and many, such as refugee children with disabilities, face compounding disadvantages.³² Experiencing homelessness and being a person with a disability can compound the effects of stigma and discrimination, significantly limiting opportunities to live independently with autonomy and dignity, contrary to article 28 of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, which refers to the right to adequate housing and social protection. Many persons with disabilities remain invisible and are routinely excluded from housing schemes and related programmes.

65. Compared with the general population, persons with disabilities typically have less access to education and formal employment as well as poorer health outcomes. In addition, older persons have higher rates of disabilities. As a result, persons with disabilities are at greater risk of precarious living conditions and poverty. Similarly to other population groups in disadvantaged situations, persons with disabilities are often bypassed because of discrimination and ableism, even where public housing for people experiencing homelessness is available. In many studies, it has been noted that housing for persons with disabilities, when available, is usually of substandard quality compared with that for other groups. Experiencing homelessness with a disability may also prevent an individual from acquiring available services owing to a lack of accessible information, leaving many excluded from public housing programmes.³³

66. Without the necessary support, people with long-term physical, psychosocial, intellectual or sensory impairments are inadvertently excluded from housing interventions. The historical systematic institutionalization of persons with disabilities and lack of access to social protection systems have created increased vulnerability to homelessness and incarceration among these persons. Several countries, such as Azerbaijan, Belarus, Costa Rica, Denmark, Estonia, Japan, Moldova,

³¹ See <https://generations.asaging.org/homelessness-older-adults-poverty-health>.

³² World Health Organization, *Global Report on Health Equity for Persons with Disabilities* (Geneva, 2022).

³³ UN-Habitat, *The right to adequate housing for persons with disabilities living in cities: towards inclusive cities* (Nairobi, UN-Habitat, 2015).

North Macedonia and Qatar have prioritized increasing access to appropriate housing for persons with disabilities through Government-led initiatives.³⁴

D. Young people and children

67. Homelessness experienced by younger people is often hidden and can go undetected by policymakers and the general population.³⁵ Youth homelessness continues to be a cause of global concern.³⁶ Children and adolescents who live or work on the streets, with or without family, can be found in major cities of the world, in particular in densely populated urban hubs.³⁷

68. Family poverty is the main self-reported reason for youth homelessness. In addition, certain groups are at greater risk: young people who are rejected by their families; young people of minority ethnic, racial or gender groups in poverty and hardship; and young asylum-seekers and refugees who may find themselves with nowhere to go.³⁸

69. Young people living on the streets face daily challenges in fulfilling basic needs. They also face barriers in accessing services associated with their civil engagement and with their sexual and reproductive health. In most cases, their situation forces young people experiencing homelessness out of education, lowering opportunities for employment and earning a decent living. In Dhaka, Bangladesh, for instance, three out of four street children can neither read nor write.³⁹ Young people living in homelessness face greater risks of malnourishment, poor health, violence and exploitation and are prone to engaging in illegal activities. They usually end up resorting to substance abuse and becoming victims of forced labour, human trafficking or sexual exploitation, putting them at greater risk of sexually transmitted infections, adolescent pregnancies and premature death.⁴⁰

70. Among the major challenges in addressing youth homelessness is the lack of comprehensive services for facilitating reintegration and rehabilitation. Such services, when available, allow young people coming from juvenile justice systems or other forms of institutionalization to access counselling services, including mental health and psychosocial support, which are crucial for their growth and development.

71. Homelessness policies and strategies often fail to accommodate the needs of young adults. Addressing youth homelessness could start with implementing targeted housing initiatives, as seen in homeowner schemes adopted by some countries, including Papua New Guinea and Slovenia, and slum improvement programmes as initiated by India, Kenya, Liberia, Malawi and Pakistan.⁴¹

³⁴ See voluntary national reviews for 2020, 2021 and 2022, available at <https://hlpf.un.org/countries>.

³⁵ See Robbie Stakelum and Miriam Matthiessen, “Youth homelessness in Generation Covid 19”, research paper, FEANTSA, n.d., available at <https://pjp-eu.coe.int/documents/42128013/64941298/Youth%2520Homelessness%2520in%2520Generation%2520Covid19%252026-05%2520final.pdf/ac5351f2-8b03-4283-251c-4f8c4e11230c>; see also www.actionforchildren.org.uk/blog/what-is-the-extent-of-youth-homelessness-in-the-uk/.

³⁶ Lonnie Embleton and others, “Causes of child and youth homelessness in developed and developing countries: a systematic review and meta-analysis” *JAMA Pediatrics*, vol. 170, No. 5 (May 2016), pp. 435–444.

³⁷ See Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics and United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF), *Survey on Street Children 2022: Survey Findings Report* (Dhaka, Bangladesh, UNICEF, 2023); see also www.mandelarhodes.org/news-impact/yam/under-the-bridge-the-invisible-lives-of-street-children.

³⁸ See Lonnie Embleton and others, 2016.

³⁹ See Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics and UNICEF, 2023.

⁴⁰ See Lonnie Embleton and others, 2016.

⁴¹ See voluntary national reviews for 2019, 2020 and 2022, available at <https://hlpf.un.org/countries>.

E. Migrants, internally displaced persons and refugees

72. The COVID-19 pandemic significantly affected human mobility, leading to an estimated 2 million fewer international migrants by mid-2020, a 27 per cent decrease in the growth expected in the growth expected since mid-2019. Moreover, the pandemic left millions of migrants and displaced people in more vulnerable situations.⁴²

73. By the end of 2022, 108.4 million people had been forcibly displaced from their homes and were living as refugees, asylum-seekers or internally displaced persons, with the vast majority coming from conflict-affected countries.⁴³ Displacement and loss of housing were also the result of climate-related events ranging from droughts to cyclones. This trend is predicted to increase because of climate change. While some displaced persons are sheltered in camps and temporary structures, it is estimated that 70 per cent move to non-camp settings, often in cities, to seek economic and social opportunities. They frequently live in overcrowded, marginalized areas exposed to hazards, without access to adequate housing, infrastructure, employment or basic services. Refugee camps initially intended as temporary accommodation often become permanent informal settlements without adequate housing and standards of living.

74. Various socioeconomic and systemic factors place migrants at higher risk of homelessness. Some are related to language barriers, limited social networks, unfamiliarity with local housing systems and discrimination. Migrants may also face challenges in accessing stable employment and affordable housing that further exacerbate their vulnerability, in particular in the case of migrants with an irregular legal status in the host country. Several countries have initiated programmes that target persons on the move, including programmes to ensure adequate housing standards for migrant workers in Malaysia and to promote the construction of housing for Palestinian refugees in Jordan.⁴⁴

VI. Indicators for access to housing for all

75. Housing policies significantly influence homelessness rates, highlighting the structural challenge of accessing adequate housing. Enhancing knowledge about the affected populations and the effectiveness of proposed solutions is essential for taking tailored action. This information is also essential for effective urban management, and it is imperative to establish obligations for its production.

76. Statistical data on homelessness can be derived from various sources, including:

- (a) Regular one-night counts;
- (b) National censuses in which census-takers pay special attention to the issue of homelessness;
- (c) General population surveys, including questions to identify persons who have experienced homelessness and to track public attitudes towards persons experiencing or having experienced homelessness;
- (d) Service data that offer insights into utilization and evaluation by the affected persons;

⁴² See *International Migration 2020 Highlights* (United Nations publication, 2020).

⁴³ See United Nations, Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, "Global trends: forced displacement in 2022" (2022), available at www.unhcr.org/global-trends-report-2022.

⁴⁴ See voluntary national reviews for 2021 and 2022, available at <https://hlpf.un.org/countries>.

(e) Administrative files for measuring the scope of the social care and health-care systems, including the number of services offered and information about their use, as well as budgetary data.

77. When producing housing indicators and data, disaggregation of data is crucial (for example by age, race, gender, sexual orientation, household composition, nationality, ethnicity, Indigenous or minority status, disability status and health conditions, immigration or other relevant characteristics), specifically in relation to groups in situation of vulnerability. Ideally, statistical systems⁴⁵ should be developed locally with the support of national statistical offices or international bodies, as well as civil society organizations and people with lived experiences. To ensure reliable information at all levels, the Statistical Commission can play a role in disseminating the most relevant procedures, including guidelines on disaggregation.

78. The use of the following indicators on access to adequate housing is recommended:

- (a) Proportion of social housing in total housing stock;
- (b) Ratio of median annual housing cost to median annual household income, disaggregated by relevant groups and income levels;
- (c) Percentage of population living in households in which total housing costs (after deduction of housing benefits) are more than 30 per cent of disposable income (after deduction of housing benefits);
- (d) Housing benefits as a share of total social benefits;
- (e) Rate of evictions, disaggregated by relevant group;
- (f) Proportion of total adult population with secure land rights based on legally authenticated documents and who perceive their rights to land to be secure, disaggregated by relevant groups and tenure type;
- (g) Share of public expenditure on the provision and maintenance of sanitation, water supply, electricity and physical connectivity of housing;
- (h) Number and type of housing discrimination complaints (e.g. disability, gender, family type, country of origin) registered by anti-discrimination agencies or organizations, and status or outcome of the complaint.

VII. Social protection indicators to prevent homelessness

79. Social protection systems, including social protection floors, help to prevent homelessness by reducing risks of poverty and improving access to educational and health-care services and decent work. Moreover, social protection contributes to reducing inequalities, including gender inequality. A well-designed and -funded social protection system can cushion the impact of shocks and normal life contingencies by providing income security for children, persons of active age and older persons.⁴⁶ The

⁴⁵ See Ian Thomas and Peter Mackie, “The principles of an ideal homelessness administrative data system: lessons from global practice”, *European Journal of Homelessness*, vol. 14, No. 3 (November 2020). Available at www.feantsaresearch.org/public/user/Observatory/2021/EJH_14-3/EJH_14-3_A3_web2.pdf.

⁴⁶ See International Labour Office, “Social protection systems for all to prevent homelessness and facilitate access to adequate housing”, Social Protection Spotlight Brief (Geneva, February 2022). Available at www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_protect/---soc_sec/documents/publication/wcms_757570.pdf.

following social protection indicators⁴⁷ are therefore proposed to help monitor and identify policies to address homelessness for population groups in disadvantaged situations, which require data on the number of people experiencing homelessness:

- (a) Proportion of people experiencing homelessness covered by at least one social protection cash benefit;
- (b) Proportion of people experiencing homelessness, disaggregated by sex and broad age group, covered by at least one social protection cash benefit;
- (c) Proportion of people experiencing homelessness, disaggregated by Indigenous or minority status, covered by at least one social protection cash benefit;
- (d) Proportion of migrants or refugees experiencing homelessness covered by at least one social protection cash benefit;
- (e) Proportion of people experiencing homelessness with disabilities receiving disability cash benefits;
- (f) Proportion of social protection measures that include housing benefits.

80. Accessing social protection services becomes particularly challenging for persons experiencing homelessness owing to their lack of identification documents. The requirement to have a place of residence contained in the procedures for obtaining social benefits further exacerbates this difficulty. To address the issue, it is imperative to establish specific programmes that enable people experiencing homelessness to access social security benefits and services.

VIII. Conclusion and recommendations

81. Homelessness is a complex intersectional issue that highlights the challenges faced by Governments in protecting, respecting and fulfilling the human rights of populations in vulnerable situations. Homelessness occurs globally, transcending economic and governance systems and requiring more comprehensive approaches. Factors such as evolving inequality, unfair distribution of resources, changing family dynamics and the commodification of housing contribute to the phenomenon. People experiencing homelessness often face stigmatization, discrimination and social exclusion. Homelessness is frequently overlooked in policy and legislation, and the lack of effective measurement and documentation hinders proper responses. The marginalization of people experiencing homelessness is reflected in the absence of targets for the issue in the Sustainable Development Goals. Addressing homelessness requires an urgent and collective effort from governments, civil society and international bodies to promote inclusive policies, equitable resource allocation and comprehensive support systems for those in need.

82. To this end, it is recommended that Member States:

- (a) Strengthen data collection and use, by establishing a comprehensive definition of homelessness that is aligned with the United Nations categories referred to in General Assembly resolution [76/133](#) and Economic and Social Council resolution [2020/7](#), including the categories covering people living on the streets, those in temporary accommodation or shelters and those in severely inadequate housing. Relevant stakeholders, including persons with lived experiences of homelessness, should be involved in developing the methodology and criteria for enumeration and disaggregation. Disaggregated data on homelessness, covering major cities, rural areas, and communities of different sizes, should be collected regularly, and

⁴⁷ Adapted from Social Protection Floors Recommendation, 2012 (No. 202) of the International Labour Organization.

community-led knowledge production should be supported, including regular surveys tracking public attitudes towards persons experiencing homelessness, their exposure to hate crimes, theft, physical assault, human trafficking, sexual and labour exploitation and assessing potential exclusion and discrimination in accessing housing, health care, social security benefits, education or employment. Public reporting on homelessness, including annual reports on data and trends, should be provided by Member States;

(b) Strengthen policy and strategy by explicitly recognizing homelessness as a priority within the development of social protection systems and floors. This includes investing in universal social protection to enable all persons, including those populations in vulnerable and in disadvantaged situations such as Indigenous Peoples and other minorities, older persons, persons with disabilities, children, young people, migrants and internally displaced people, to cope with lifelong risks and prevent them from falling into poverty and homelessness;

(c) Strengthen local and international cooperation by promoting communication and coordination among partners (across sectors, with local authorities and with civil society organizations) to develop policies and implement programmes and to address the intersectional nature of homelessness and the gaps that currently exist. The involvement of various stakeholders, including persons with lived experiences, researchers, civil society organizations, different levels of government, should be ensured in policy formulation, budgetary processes, implementation and assessments, facilitated by existing methods and legal provisions;

(d) Invest in ambitious housing policies to ensure an adequate and affordable housing supply for the entire population, irrespective of income. Those formulating the policies should address equitable housing distribution and consider expanding subsidized, social or public housing options that are accessible and affordable to individuals at risk of or experiencing homelessness. In addition, services offering emergency housing that is intended for short-term stays should either allow for its incremental improvement over time to enable residents to transition into decent permanent housing or provide pathways for people to transition into permanent housing in a timely manner and without protracting the use of temporary solutions;

(e) Undertake participatory upgrading programmes in slums and informal settlements with severely inadequate housing to improve habitability, security of tenure and access to essential services. It is crucial to promote pro-poor and gender-transformative land use and to prioritize access for disadvantaged groups and implement clear limitations on evictions with due process for those affected;

(f) Formulate a comprehensive national strategy to prevent and address homelessness across all dimensions. This strategy should be continuously evaluated and improved through multi-stakeholder peer review mechanisms involving experts from governmental departments, social services, health-care services, housing providers, civil society representatives and persons with lived experiences. In addition, it should involve reviewing legislation, regulations and policies that may result in discriminatory outcomes and taking steps to repeal or reform laws that penalize or criminalize homelessness and essential activities such as sleeping, begging, eating, or maintaining personal hygiene in public spaces;

(g) Emphasize the role of legal services and the judiciary in addressing homelessness as a human rights violation. In addition, Member States should ensure access to effective remedies and justice, including accessible non-judicial complaints mechanisms, and should provide legal aid and advice to ensure non-discriminatory access to the formal justice system.

83. To strengthen the global response to homelessness, it is recommended that the United Nations system:

(a) Set a global target aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals on ending homelessness, establish a comprehensive global dashboard within the open platform mandated in the UN-Habitat Assembly draft resolution on adequate housing for all,⁴⁸ which was approved by Member States during the second session of the Assembly in June 2023, and present regular biannual reports to the General Assembly. The reports should be focused on strategies, best practices and policies to prevent and address homelessness while highlighting trends, methodological aspects of data collection, and measures to facilitate equal access to housing, health care, social protection, water and sanitation, education and employment for people experiencing homelessness;

(b) Utilize the intergovernmental working group on housing, called for in the United Nations Habitat Assembly resolution on adequate housing for all, to advance the recommendations of the present report to end homelessness.

⁴⁸ HSP/HA.2/L.10.