Working Together to End Homelessness

13 February 2020
3-6pm, Conference Room 12, UN Headquarters, New York

By adopting the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, Member States have committed to achieve sustainable development for all nations, peoples and segments of society and have pledged to leave no one behind. Homelessness is one of the most visible manifestations of inequality, affecting people of all ages, genders and socio-economic backgrounds in both developed and developing countries. Levels of homelessness have dramatically risen in most of the major cities of the world. The last time a global survey was attempted by the United Nations in 2005, an estimated 100 million people are homeless worldwide. A follow-up study by UN-Habitat in 2015 showed as many as 1.6 billion people, over 20 per cent of the world's population, lived in inadequate housing conditions.

Homelessness is a complex phenomenon that manifests in different forms. The most visible form is to be forced to openly live on the streets or in public spaces. Another form, which is invisible and more common in developing countries, is to have to live in very precarious housing conditions that lack basic services and security of tenure. Homeless people face discrimination, stigmatization and even criminalization. Although homelessness is often attributed to personal and family circumstances and cultural factors, its causes are primarily structural, such as poverty, inequalities, unemployment or job insecurity, and lack of affordable housing. Social and economic policies must be in place to address these root causes.

Addressing homelessness assists Member States in implementing various SDGs, including Goal 1, "End poverty in all its forms everywhere"; Goal 3, "Ensure healthy lives and promoting well-being for all at all ages"; Goal 10, "Reduce inequality within and among countries"; and Goal 11, "Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable". More specifically, it contributes to reaching SDG target 1.3 to implement nationally appropriate social protection systems and measures for all and to achieve substantial coverage of the poor and the vulnerable by 2030, and SDG target 11.1 to ensure access for all to adequate, safe and affordable housing and basic services. Identifying the persons experiencing homelessness, determining the drivers of homelessness, and devising successful policies to combat homelessness will also contribute to the pledge to leave no one behind.

UN DESA's Division for Inclusive Social Development (DISD) will organize an event on "Working Together to End Homelessness" during the 58th session of the Commission for Social Development (CSocD58) on 13 February 2020 at UN Headquarters in New York. The event aims to promote an understanding of homelessness around the world and mobilize support among various societal actors to end homelessness.

The event will engage various stakeholders, including the philanthropical community, the private sector, local governments/communities, persons experiencing homelessness, and other relevant actors to identify common challenges, and exchange good practices and way forward to end homelessness. In specific, the event aims to:

- Learn from philanthropical communities on effective policies and measures, and innovative solutions to fight homelessness;
- Promote public-private partnership at the local, national and international levels to address homelessness;
- Identify critical areas of interventions necessary to prevent homelessness, support those living in homelessness, and device long-term solutions to end homelessness.
- Emphasize the need for supporting local actors to accelerate the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the SDGs.

Guiding Questions

1. What are the major challenges faced by local communities?
2. What policies and measures have proven to be effective in addressing challenges faced by homeless people at the local, regional and national levels?
3. How can we promote public-private partnership to combat homelessness?
4. What is the specific role of philanthropical communities (and the private sector) to ensure access to affordable housing?
5. How can the international community mobilize various societal actors to prevent/address temporary and long-term homelessness?

Draft Agenda

15:10 - 15:31	**Opening Remarks** • **Ms. Daniela Bas**, Director of Division for Inclusive Social Development, UNDESA • **Ambassador of Monaco** (TBC) • **Ambassador of Finland**
15:35 - 16:10	**Session I - Moderator: Ms. Jean Quinn,** UNANIMA International, USA **Speakers:** ▪ **Ms. Francesca Deferrari**, Officer-in-Charge of the UN- Habitat New York Office ▪ **Dame Louise Casey**, Institute of Global Homelessness, UK ▪ **Mr. Josh Littlejohn**, Co-Founder, World's Big Sleep Out ▪ **Mr. Mel Young**, Co-Founder Homeless World Cup (TBC) ▪ **Ms. Elizabeth Madden,** Community Activist, Ireland
16:20 - 16:55	**Session II - Moderator: Ms. Amanda Misiko Andere,** Chief Executive Officer, Funders Together to End Homelessness **Speakers:** ▪ **Mr. Mark McGreevy**, CEO, Depaul International ▪ **Ms. Susan Thomas**, Melville Charitable Trust Chair, Funders for Housing and Opportunity ▪ **Ms. Ashley Gromis,** Postdoctoral Research Associate, Eviction Lab, Department of Sociology, Princeton University ▪ **Ms. Gwendolyn Cassidy,** Coordinator of ManagingProjects.org, and non-profit ManagingLove.org.
17:00-17:15	**Q & A**
17:35-17:40	**Closing Remarks: Ms. Daniela Bas**, Director of Division for Inclusive Social Development, UNDESA