

**Digital Technology at the Service of Ending Homelessness**

 Date, Time

**INTRODUCTION:** The Vincentian Family welcomes the theme of the 59th Commission for Social Development, ***“Socially just transition towards sustainable development: the role of digital technologies on social development and well-being of all.”*** In a world struggling to recover from COVID-19, millions are launched more deeply into poverty, untold numbers experience evictions, and digital exclusion is rampant. With digital technology evolving to alleviate the wide-ranged impact of COVID-19 in our daily lives, it can also be harnessed to prevent, alleviate, and end homelessness. Engaging technology in ending homelessness is vital in ensuring that recovery from COVID-19 is socially just. It can further accelerate achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals, particularly SDG 11.1.

The Congregation of the Mission, the Company of the Daughters of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul, the International Associations of Charities (AIC), Sisters of Charity Federation, the International Confederation of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul, and the Institute of the Blessed Virgin Mary all are involved in a variety of efforts to end homelessness.   After the celebration of 400 years of our Charism in 2017, the Vincentian Family embraced ending homelessness as the main focus of our collaborative advocacy at the United Nation. The Institute of the Blessed Virgin Mary is further engaged in addressing the needs of persons without homes, particularly through education.

Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, the world has witnessed creative approaches in using technology to provide more accessible services of every kind. Telemedicine has risen to the fore. One can tour a potential apartment virtually. People purchase groceries and supplies using apps. Technology enables government agencies and nongovernmental organizations to collect and analyze data so as to more efficiently identify needed services and to address root causes of social concerns. According to a 2020 GSMA Association (Global System for Mobile Communications Association) report entitled, “Accelerating Digital Inclusion for People Experiencing Homelessness,” digital technology is instrumental in enabling unhomed persons to connecting with family and friends, access health care, find jobs, experience empowerment and agency, and locate information.

In this event, we will explore how technology is currently used by persons experiencing homelessness. We will also discuss both creative ways of using technology to enhance service delivery to persons surviving on the streets and to develop solutions for homelessness.

**RATIONALE:** According to UN Habitat, there are approximately 150 million persons globally living without homes. Another 1.6 billion experience inadequate housing. As the world recovers from COVID-19 and its impacts, a socially just transition calls for efficient use of resources to alleviate homelessness. That, in turn, is a clarion call for creative and innovative uses of technology to speed solutions. There remain only nine more years to implement the Sustainable Development Goals. With innovation, access, and skill-building, technology can prevent, address, and end homelessness.

**OBJECTIVES:**

\*Discuss the current reality of digital technology use by persons surviving on the streets

\*Highlight creative ways in which technology can be harnessed to provide resources and services to persons without homes and to end homelessness

\*Provide insight into technology use in counting homelessness

**SPEAKERS**:

1. Person who is now or has experienced homelessness
2. NGOs providing services through creative technology
3. Organization using technology to promote education/job skills training
4. Organization with expertise on counting homelessness