



United Nations

Department of
Economic and
Social Affairs

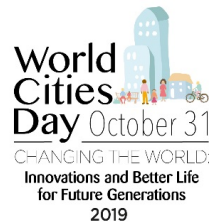


**Mayor's Office for
People with Disabilities**

Inclusive United Cities for All: Affordable Housing and Homelessness

31 October 2019

11am-12.30pm, CR. 12, UN Headquarters, New York



Background

The World Cities Day celebrated each year on 31st of October is expected to greatly promote the international community's interest in global urbanization, push forward cooperation among countries in meeting opportunities and addressing challenges of urbanization, and contributing to sustainable urban development in cities, villages and rural areas around the world. For 2019, the UN-Habitat has selected the theme "Changing the world: innovations and better life for future generations" to discuss how urbanization can be used to achieve sustainable development.

This year, UN DESA's Division for Inclusive Social Development and the New York City Mayor's Office will host the third edition of "**Inclusive United Cities for All**" with a focus on affordable housing and homelessness. The event aims to provide a platform to share concrete recommendations on addressing homelessness, with a focus on affordable housing measures at the local levels. The event will focus on strategies and measures taken at the local level to address/end homelessness and share good practices and lessons learned to addressing the specific needs of vulnerable groups and individuals who live in the margins of society, within the context of the 2030 Agenda.

Inclusive United Cities for All will bring together mayors, and experts from governments, civil society, private sector and the UN system. It will be articulated in a series of events throughout the day after the opening in the morning. The outcome of the Day will contribute to enhance the discussion and recommendations that will take place during the 58th Session of the Commission for Social Development (CSocD58) from 10 to 19 February 2020 since the policy theme is on "Affordable housing and social protection systems for all to address homelessness". This is the first time ever that the Commission will discuss this theme and its impact on communities and people living in vulnerable situations.

Over half the world's population now lives in cities. With the number expected to double by 2050, rapid urbanization poses several sustainability challenges related to affordable housing, environment, migration, infrastructure, basic services, such as education, health, safe drinking water, and sanitation, food security, decent jobs, and safety.

In fact, homelessness is affecting people of all ages and abilities, and socio-economic backgrounds. Levels of homelessness have dramatically risen in most of the major cities of the world, affecting both wealthy and poor nations. At least, an estimated 100 million people are homeless. Moreover, about 1.6 billion people—more than 20 per cent of the world's population—may lack adequate housing.

There is no “one-size-fits-all” solution to address homelessness and improve housing affordability across countries. For example, Housing First has been adopted in Finland to address homelessness. Rehabilitation and reuse of vacant buildings for social inclusion has been applied in Spain and France. Canada has supported the community-based programs to respond to homelessness. Policy decision makers adopt different solutions according to specific city context. Cities need to invest more in affordable housing and provide basic services to homeless people.

By adopting the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, Member States have committed to achieve sustainable development for all nations and peoples and for all segments of society. The Agenda is based on the ideals of inclusiveness and shared prosperity and Member States pledged to leave no one behind and to endeavor to reach the furthest behind first. Addressing homelessness assists Member States in implementing various SDGs, especially Goal 11 (Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable), and SDG target 11.1 to “ensure access for all to adequate, safe and affordable housing and basic services and upgrade slums.” Identifying the persons experiencing homelessness, determining the drivers of homelessness and adopting successful solutions to end homelessness will contribute to the implementation of SDGs.

Guiding Questions

1. What are effective and innovative solutions to address challenges faced by homeless people in our cities?
2. How can we promote public-private partnership to combat homelessness?
3. What is the specific role of cities to ensure access to inclusive affordable housing for people of all ages and abilities?
4. How can cities mobilize various societal actors to prevent homelessness in the long term?



Draft Agenda

Opening Remarks

- **Ms. Penny Abeywardena**, Commissioner, NYC Mayor's Office for International Affairs
- **Mr. Victor Calise**, Commissioner of the Mayor's Office for People with Disabilities

Moderator:

- **Ms. Daniela Bas**, Director, UN DESA's Division for Inclusive Social Development

Speakers:

- **Ms. Leilani Farha**, UN Special Rapporteur on Adequate Housing - *via video message*
- **Ms. Lydia Stazen**, Director, Institute of Global Homelessness
- **Mr. Juha Kaakinen**, CEO, Y-Foundation, Finland
- **Ms. Gianna Zamaro**, Vice-President of Social Affairs Department, Regione de Friuli-Venezia Giulia
- **Mr. Guilherme Freire**, Director Leadership School State of Parana Government, Brazil
- **Ms. Ruth Moatti**, UN Youth Delegate to the General Assembly Third Committee

