



Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
13 November 2020

English only

Commission for Social Development

Fifty-ninth session

8–17 February 2021

**Follow-up to the World Summit for Social Development and
the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly:**

**Priority Theme: Socially just transition towards sustainable
development: the role of digital technologies on social
development and well-being of all**

Statement submitted by Women's Health and Education Center (WHEC), a 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.

* The present statement is issued without formal editing.



Statement

Homelessness should not be seen as a personal failure, but a societal one. The characteristics of homeless populations have become increasingly diverse in many countries. They include groups overrepresented among homeless in the past, such as single adult men, members of indigenous populations and people leaving institutional care, as well as older persons, youth, families with children, and migrants. Unaccompanied migrant adolescents experiencing homelessness are a growing concern, since their precarious living situations as asylum seekers often lead to homelessness and housing exclusion. In addition, a large proportion of homeless people in many European Union countries have had experience living in children's institutions.

Addressing homelessness requires comprehensive, inter-sectoral policy frameworks and rights-based housing- and health-strategies, in alignment with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The structural causes of homelessness should be effectively addressed through legal and policy responses at all levels. Appropriate types of policy interventions should be made for each category of homelessness and by distinguishing between chronic and transitional homelessness. Please visit **UN Document E/CN.5/2020/NGO/60**, regarding our initiatives for achieving Universal Health Coverage, published by 58th session of Commission for Social Development. Available at: http://www.womenshealthsection.com/content/documents/CSocD_2020_Written_Statement.pdf

As Governments transition towards e-Government and e-Health throughout the world, there is growing acknowledgment of the role that e-Government and e-Health could play to harness information and communication technologies (ICTs) for women's empowerment and gender equality. However, much of e-Government and e-Health policy implementation, still do not take into account the differentiated access to, and impact of, technology for men and women. Recognizing this critical gap, Women's Health and Education Center (WHEC), as a part of gender equality initiatives aims to enhance knowledge awareness of good practices of gender-responsive policies, programs and strategies in e-Government and e-Health, in order to help build the capacity of Governments to harness this tool towards women's empowerment.

Whole-of-government, and whole-of-society approaches need to be taken to address and prevent homelessness. Policies have to be inclusive of and responsive to the rights, needs and aspirations of individuals, especially those in disadvantaged or vulnerable situations.

Women's Health and Education Center's (WHEC) initiatives and global information system encourages Member States of the United Nations to:

1. Develop comprehensive, intersectoral national strategies and specific policy interventions to address all categories of homeless, while implementing existing frameworks and instruments related to homelessness, so that all people can lead a decent life with dignity;
2. Improve access to affordable housing through integrated housing policies and measures on both the demand and the supply sides, including protection against forced eviction, the provision of adequate emergency and temporary shelter and services and support for renters and for the development of affordable housing, especially for low-income households;
3. Address the negative impact of the commercialization and financializing of housing by adopting or strengthening regulations on housing markets,

promoting inclusive and sustainable urbanization, and where possible implementing “housing at the center” approaches, recognizing the right to housing and better zoning aimed at economic and social inclusion:

4. Continue to strengthen national social protection policies and systems and expand the coverage of social protection floors to all, including people working in the informal sectors and those experiencing homelessness, while also investing in quality basic social services to ensure equal access to quality education, essential health coverage, safe drinking water and sanitation;
5. Build a broad-based partnership between State and non-State actors at all levels to prevent people from falling into homelessness, support those experiencing homelessness and develop long-term sustainable solutions to end homelessness;
6. Raise awareness of homelessness, including family homelessness, and address the specific needs of individuals and groups who are disproportionately affected, including women, children, adolescents, youth, older persons, persons with disabilities, indigenous peoples, people living in poverty and people displaced by natural disasters and conflicts, to support their empowerment and full participation in the societies they live in;
7. Address family homelessness, including through gender-sensitive policies and resource allocation and appropriate support services for families to break the cycle of inter-generational homelessness;
8. Combat discrimination and stereotypes against people experiencing homelessness, including by strengthening anti-discrimination laws, advocacy and awareness-raising, as well as by protection the rights of tenants and ensuring access to justice.

The WHEC Global Health Line (WGHL) aims to establish in collaboration with programs in low- and middle-income countries to improve maternal and child health, in collaboration with the developed countries, of mutual benefit and mutual respect, through its **LINK** (Learning and Innovation Network for Knowledge and Solutions) **Access Project**. Its syllabus is designed to promote and use of a broad understanding of women’s and children’s health; seek science and technology-based solutions to development challenges and encourage next generations especially girls and women to have education in science, mathematics and technology. Many economic and social factors impact women’s and children’s health and well-being to achieve good health and good health care systems.

We believe, our initiatives are placing public health on the agenda and it is catalysing collaborative networks – cutting across disciplines, sectors and borders. Available in 227 countries and territories, serving about 14 million subscribers, WHEC’s e-Health programs are available in six official languages of the UN.

We welcome everyone! Join the efforts!