

HOUSING AND SOCIAL PROTECTION TO END HOMELESSNESS



United Nations

Department of
Economic and
Social Affairs

UN HABITAT
FOR A BETTER URBAN FUTURE



Background

Homelessness is one of the most evident illustration of poverty and social exclusion occurring in all countries and cities, threatening the health and life of people experiencing it. It is a violation of human rights, which should not be tolerated. People becoming homeless do not only lose their houses, but are also uprooted from their family and social connections. They are prevented from accessing health and mental care, as well as from having access to education and job opportunities. This often makes it even more difficult to find and keep a new house.

The immediate cause of homelessness is often a specific circumstance in people's life, but homelessness always has structural drivers. These drivers include poverty, shortage of affordable housing, lack of access to social protection, discrimination and social exclusion, privatization of public services, call for a coordinated and cross-sectoral framework of actions.

Different countries' experiences demonstrate that homelessness can be ended through coordinated and effective interventions, integrating housing, health, employment and education perspectives. During the COVID-19 emergency response several national and local governments took extraordinary actions that are paving the way to end homelessness. At this stage it is critical to ensure that the provision of temporary and emergency accommodation to people in need is only the first step towards the implementation of long-term solutions to ensure that these achievements are not reversed. In this context, the need to gather reliable data for targeting and monitoring is becoming even more crucial. A consensus on a clear, inclusive, politically sensitive definition of homelessness, as well as on commonly agreed approach to data collection methods should be reached at the local, national and international levels.

Governments, in partnership with all other stakeholders, are called upon to implement long-term solutions, including the provision of adequate housing, social protection policies and measures, and comprehensive and evidence-based national strategies to prevent and address homelessness.

The "Housing and Social Protection for all to End Homelessness" Roundtable, jointly organized by UN DESA and UN-Habitat, marks another milestone of the collaboration between the two agencies on the topic.

The Roundtable gathers high-level technical experts, as well as representatives of Governments, to discuss the new urgency of addressing homelessness within the context of a COVID-19 *new normal*, as well as the opportunities arising from the collaborations established throughout the response phase.

*As part of the event the **Proceedings of the Expert Group Meeting on Affordable Housing and Social Protection Systems for All to Address Homelessness** will be launched. The Report collects and analyses the contribution of different and cross-sectorial experts to deepen the understanding of the complex causes of homelessness, the challenges homeless people face and the effects of homelessness on individuals and societies. The report contains policy recommendations on effective housing and social protection policies.*

The event also builds on the lessons learnt through the Expert Group Meeting on Affordable Housing and Social Protection Systems for All to Address Homelessness (May 2019), the 58th Commission on Social Development (February 2020) and the historical first United Nations resolution to address homelessness that was adopted by the UN Economic and Social Council in June 2020.

Housing and Social Protection to End Homelessness

12 October 2020

17:00 EST/ 16:00 CET / 10:00 EST

Join as an attendee:

<https://unhabitat.webex.com/unhabitat/onstage/g.php?MTID=e95008ba0c96ba31c960c1cbec3e4d28c>

Details	Time
Moderated by Chris Williams, Director of New York Office, UN-Habitat	
OPENING REMARKS AND SETTING THE SCENE <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ms. Daniela Bas, Director, Division for Inclusive Social Development, DESA• Mr. Robert Lewis-Lettington, Chief of Section, Land, Housing and Shelter, UN-Habitat	17.00 – 17.10 (EAT) 10.00 - 10.10 (EST)
In practice: Testimonies and Stories of Homelessness	17.10 – 17.15 (EAT) 10.10 -10.15 (EST)
Keynote Speech - Strategies to Address Homelessness Ms. Dame Louise Casey , Chair of the Advisory Committee, Institute of Global Homelessness	17.15 – 17.30 (EAT) 10.15 – 10.30 (EST)
Keynote Speech - Social Protection Systems for All to Prevent Homelessness and Facilitate Access to Adequate Housing Ms. Christina Behrendt , Head of the Social Policy Unit, Social Protection Department in Geneva ILO	17.30 – 17.45 (EAT) 10.30 – 10.45 (EST)
Keynote Speech – Practical application of a harmonised definition: the case of the European Typology of Homelessness and Housing Exclusion (ETHOS) Mr. Freek Spinnewijn , Director, European Federation of National Organisations Working with the Homeless - FEANTSA	17.45 - 18.00 (EAT) 10:45 – 11:00 (EST)
National experiences to end homelessness	18.00 - 18.10 (EAT) 10.00 – 11.10 (EST)
In practice: Testimonies and Stories of Homelessness	18.10 - 18. 15 (EAT) 11.10- 11.15 (EST)
Q&A and Feedback from Audience	18.15 - 18.30 (EAT) 11.15 - 11.30 (EST)
Wrap up and closing	18.30 (EAT) 11:30 (EST)