

Company of the Daughters of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul

(by email)

18 November 2019

I am writing with regard to the draft Guidelines for the Right to Housing. First, I comment the Special Rapporteur for her efforts in addressing issues (lack of adequate housing in addition to homelessness) which are very serious in most countries.

My first comment relates to a request to elaborate a bit more on widowhood. According to a 2018 report by UN Women, there are 258 million widows worldwide, of whom one in 10 lives in extreme poverty. In some countries, widows are subject to eviction after their spouse dies. I appreciate that Section 5 addresses security of tenure and equal rights to property. It would simply be helpful to mention that widows are significantly affected by these concerns.

Next, persons experiencing homelessness in many parts of the world include families, often mothers and their children. The guidelines do mention families. But it would be helpful if they would provide greater reference to family homelessness. For example, in the Implementation Measures of Section 6, at a), could there be a reference to States being required to provide safe, adequate, and secure emergency housing for persons experiencing homelessness, including the provision of appropriate housing for whole families? (The idea being that families would be kept together, except in the circumstances of an abusive spouse, and that a greater amount of resources would be put towards provision of emergency family accommodations).

The language in 6 a) related to "concrete plans to reduce and eliminate homelessness "in the shortest possible time in accordance with the maximum of available resources" with clear timelines and accountability mechanisms" is appreciated, as often persons experiencing homelessness must endure long wait times and competition from many others for the opportunity to view or be placed in permanent accommodations.

Appreciatively,

Margaret O'Dwyer, DC

NGO Representative to the United Nations

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