



## High Level Political Forum 2018

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Thematic Review of SDGs implementation, SDG 11: Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable

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Honourable Moderator and President

Distinguished delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen

With over half the world's population, cities will play a pivotal role in determining whether the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) realize their transformational potential. **Goal 11 on Urbanisation** is immensely cross cutting and touches on economic, social and environmental dimensions.

While we note and appreciate the progress on implementing the SDGs, we remain concerned by several factors underpinning the implementation of the SDG 11 at regional and national level. Even today as we talk about creating sustainable cities, safer transport and public spaces for women and girls, creating decent jobs, more and more people continue to lose their livelihoods due to conflicting policies, unequal trade agreements, more and more women and girls are facing oppression, intimidation, threats and marginalization within and across the regions. Even as the spirit of the Agenda is leaving no one behind; seas of people globally are being excluded unseen and unheard of.

We want to draw your attention to a few core issues that urban communities face on the ground. Current urbanization poses challenges to gender equality; adversely affects women, and girls and gender non-conforming people due to structural gender inequalities, social norms, stereotypes and cultural beliefs. Many women in developing cities and especially women living in slums face challenges accessing safe and secure housing, land rights and security of tenure, and have limited or no access to public services to meet their basic needs, including water, sanitation, electricity, public transport, and health care. Gender-based violence in public space is alarming since cities lack gender perspective; 60 to 70 per cent of urban residents have been victims of crime where rapid urban population growth is highest. Trans and gender-diverse people including homeless youth population, elderly people around the world are victims of horrifying hate violence, which often go unreported.

SDG 11.5 express the concerns of people affected by disasters, systemic barriers and mechanisms in the post disaster management who are already marginalized especially women and girls, potentially dragging them even deeper into poverty. Further, Climate change has major impacts on gender equality in urban areas. In the event of cyclone, storms and flooding, women and girls are more likely than men to suffer illness, death and displacement. Investments in disaster risk reduction, including early warning systems and adaptation measures for critical sectors, are essential for building resilient communities. Particular attention to be given on Small Island Developing States and Least Developed Countries with an all-in society approach for building back better towards resilience.

We strongly recommend that resilience be redefined by underpinning it with the people's' priorities, development justice and reducing the inequalities. Resilience should also be about participatory

urban governance that ensure broader involvement of stakeholders. Acknowledging the complex adaptive systems that accepts the importance of both scientific as well as traditional and local knowledge that assists in bringing about resilient solutions and communities at city level. Unless we redefine resilience on these critical considerations, defending environment and achieving sustainability will be an exercise in futility.

Many data gaps exist for measuring progress for SDG 11, especially time-series data, and governments need to invest in it. The current indicators do not capture social and cultural dimensions; for example, Target 11.5 focuses on economic losses and fails to recognize lost livelihood and assets, which is what often most affects women.

Ensuring girls' and women's participation and safety in cities requires a gender transformative approach to achieve systemic change. It includes empowering women and girls, designing future cities that are well-lit, well-planned, well-maintained, using Universal Design principles where they can claim space to participate as active citizens in urban governance. Human rights obligations, such as under the Convention on the Elimination of all Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), must be met at all levels of government in designing and implementing urban policy. We call on national and local governments to invest in the collection of gender data which is essential to minimise the gender gap..

We have **key recommendations** and urge governments to; adopt law with a human rights based and gender equality approach including on eviction; ensure visibility of urban poor and recognition as 'full citizens'; provide adequate opportunities to maintain sustainable living standards including access to employment, transport and decent wage; provide social protection measures including universal access to sexual and reproductive health rights and child protection; extend participatory governance to all types of urban poor including participatory budgeting and community monitoring; and finally address root causes and push-pull factors behind rural-urban migration.