



POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

TO

**ADVANCE WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP IN DEVELOPING INCLUSIVE SUSTAINABLE CITIES & HUMAN SETTLEMENTS
LATIN AMERICA, THE CARIBBEAN, & BEYOND**

The Huairou Commission (HC): Women, Homes and Community network has functioned as the lead organizer and strategic convener of grassroots women's organizations and other women's groups and constituencies working to make the New Urban Agenda (NUA) an engendered policy and partnership framework placing women's participation at the center of producing inclusive, equitable and prosperous cities and communities. HC's commitment to collaborative, complementary organizing and action has enabled us to play a leading role in the General Assembly of Partners (GAP) where we co-chair the Women's Partner Constituent Group (WPCG) and to facilitate and anchor the Women's Caucus at all relevant policy making discussions.

THEMATIC RECOMMENDATIONS FOR A NEW URBAN AGENDA

A. LAND AND HOUSING

Establish coherent legal frameworks to guarantee equal tenure rights to women.

- **Design frameworks that capture both rural and urban realities for women's land rights and consider land tenure simultaneously with other laws that affect women and their ability to own, control, and access land** (marriage, inheritance, caste/ethnic identity, etc.) **to create an integrated approach.**
- **Guarantee security of tenure from one generation of women to another through strong inheritance protections and through measures that help women protect the vitality of land against climate change and other environmental threats**

Invest in and implement multi-dimensional approaches that empower women's groups to realize their own tenure, housing and settlement priorities and to partner with government officials to insure the New Urban Agenda is engendered, inclusive and efficient.

- **Mitigate risks of land grabbing and displacement** in formal, informal and customary systems to promote the economic and social security of women and their families and their contributions to the local economy.
- Promote the connection between women's security of tenure and their economic and political empowerment, which is **central to alleviating poverty, enhancing productive capacity and reducing income inequalities.**
- **Guarantee women's meaningful participation in the entire process, from data collection and enumeration** to fostering an understanding of land and housing administration, management, and governance.
- **Establish a range of win-win partnerships with stakeholders** by empowering community based women's groups to:
 - produce data and qualitative information documenting their access to and control over land and housing;
 - assume formal public leadership roles in upgrading their informal settlements by improving housing, basic services, public space and livelihoods in their communities

B. RURAL-URBAN NEXUS

Promote dynamic, equitable rural economies and communities that are secure and resilient; and foster strong collaborations between rural and urban women's groups to improve their economic and social status.

- **Support women's farmer organizations**, through equitable access to credit, information and technology to increase women's levels of food production and earnings; and, by encouraging the use of their traditional knowledge in the production, conservation, and distribution of food.
- **Scale-up market access for rural women and food access for urban women** and improve their productive capacity as both producers and consumers;
- **Support new direct trade relations between urban and rural women** that add value and strengthen local markets.
- **Involve grassroots women's groups in land use planning and regulations affecting peri-urban settlements** (housing, land regularization, transport, etc.)
- Insure economic development and land use departments limit urban sprawl and productive land loss **and assist women farmers to scale up and diversify their urban agricultural production** in order to improve and stabilize the supply of affordable and nutritious food and women's earnings¹

C. ENSURING WOMEN'S RIGHT TO THE CITY THROUGH PUBLIC SPACES AND URBAN TRANSPORT

Foster the empowerment and leadership of women at the household, municipal and national levels through public policies and budgets that promote women's equitable participation in economic and civic affairs and their safety and mobility.

- **Support women's groups to establish public priorities and program strategies that engender planning and policy processes related to how public spaces and essential municipal services-- markets, meeting spaces, toilets, transport, green spaces and sports/recreational areas-- are designed, provisioned and managed.**
- **Guarantee women's equal access to public market and storage facilities** and regularize, their public vending activities to enhance their economic security and roles in the informal economy.
- **Promote and publicly finance community centers**, operated and accessed by organized grassroots women's groups, as autonomous meeting and programming spaces to enhance women's empowerment and formalize their leadership in sustainable urban development.
- **Design public transport systems that acknowledge and flexibly respond to women's needs** as workers and family caregivers **and that provide safe travel between home and public spheres, increasing women's social mobility.**
- Improve **gender responsiveness in control and management of public spaces**: for local authorities, police, gender desks, etc.

D. GOVERNANCE (URBAN FRAMEWORKS)

Empower local governments to take appropriate actions and enhance the financial and technical capacities of local stakeholders to partner in the implementation of gender-responsive community development.

- Support and utilize community-led, gender disaggregated data collection documenting tenure and informal settlement upgrading priorities and encourage grassroots community-to-community learning and transfer of good practices, where women take the lead.
- Recognize and support organized networks of grassroots women, slum dwellers and informal economy workers who contribute to urban economic growth and support them in building movements to

¹ FAO data indicates the explosion of women producers (rural to urban) increases fresh food, creates jobs and green belts, recycles waste and strengthens the city's resilience to climate change (producing a win/win for women and cities).



influence and enhance urban development.

- **Establish and implement policies that dedicate a percentage of** enterprise funds, business loans, and technical support to diversifying and strengthening grassroots women's livelihoods and income generating opportunities in both the informal and formal urban economy.
- **Implement gender equality initiatives that include consulting and employing women's groups to engender the design and operation of urban development programs** and to take into the diverse nature of women's households, responsibilities, and needs in relation to housing, basic services, public space etc.

E. MUNICIPAL FINANCE

Strengthen municipal finance mechanisms that bring local communities, specifically grassroots women's groups, to the table in decentralized planning and budget allocation processes.

- **Facilitate partnerships between grassroots women, local authorities, and technical experts** to build the capacity of women's groups to understand and participate in budget planning and monitoring.
- **Enable local communities and grassroots women's groups to prioritize the agenda** and access and shape budget allocations through mechanisms like local gender desks and participatory budgeting fora.
- **Empower women's groups to understand and support local revenue collection procedures**, recognizing their capacity to insure such funds are collected and properly used to improve basic services and community infrastructure.
- **Introduce gender participatory budgeting** on all decision-making levels (international, national, local) as an analytic and governance tool to promote gender equality.

F. URBAN ECONOMY

Establish policy targets and revenue streams to reduce gender disparity in women's positions and earnings in the formal and informal urban economy, and adapt social protection mechanisms to address women's unique needs and over-representation among the urban poor.

- Recognize and resource the solidarity economy and other forms of collective resource pooling to support grassroots women's groups to weather recurrent crises. Encouraging:
 - pilot procurement policies and local investments in the solidarity economy to strengthen women's income generation and promote financial innovation and redistribute economic opportunities.
 - municipal regulations and financing to legitimate, diversify and enhance women's informal economic activities.
 - women's leadership in organizing economically in cooperatives and politically in associations as a means to drive social and economic inclusion and equity
- Make child care widely available and affordable and delivered in culturally inclusive social and educational settings appropriate to informal settlement residents, migrants, and other diverse children and families.
- Create municipal mechanisms for rewarding grassroots women's contributions to neighborhood and community development, **through their unpaid, "volunteer" work such as** community grants, stipends, etc. to underwrite their collective contributions to improving housing, infrastructure, education, health, safety and social relations in the city.
- **Collaborate with community-based women's organizations to monitor and insure micro-finance** is affordable and available to strengthen grassroots women's existing income generating and household improvement activities.



G. URBAN RESILIENCE

Empower local authorities (economically and politically) to establish collaborative climate resilience programs in urban neighbourhoods shouldering the greatest vulnerability and create financial incentives to engage local women's groups in the full range of risk reduction activities.

- Recognize the vital link between regularizing and improving living conditions in informal settlements and climate risk reduction and support women's groups and leaders of resident associations to understand and educate the community on these issues and initiate adaptation and emergency response measures.
- **Build on the strength of women's multiple roles and responsibilities** (as childrearsers, community developers and caregivers, and informal economy workers) and commission women's groups to collect data and lead community risk mapping activities.
- Dedicate decentralised, flexible funds to **foster multi-dimensional resilience building efforts** that can be adapted and tested in similar conditions.
- **Foster community organising and constituency building, aided by professional technical support, to scale up** the reach and impact of community driven resilience efforts.

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