

Grassroots Constituency Group
Statement on Pathways to Inclusive, Sustainable Urbanization
Violet Shivutse, Chair, Huairou Commission
at the
High Level Meeting to Assess Progress on the Implementation of The New Urban Agenda
Thursday 28 April 2022

Good day, your excellencies and development colleagues. I am honored to address you today and deliver the Statement of Violet Shivutse, Chair of the Huairou Commission: Women Homes and Communities (HC), a global network of grassroots women's organizations leading resilient, sustainable development initiatives in 41 countries, of which I am a part. As an invited PGA Advisory Committee member tasked with representing the Grassroots Constituency's perspective on accelerating the implementation of the New Urban Agenda, Violet consulted our members as well as Shack/Slum Dwellers International, our peers and long-term allies. Collectively, our constituency maintains that catalyzing sustainable urbanization depends upon:

- strategically engaging urban poor and rapidly urbanizing and gentrifying communities who have self-organized and built partnerships to establish inclusive urbanization policies and planning processes; and
- supporting them to share their approaches with governments and other key actors to motivate and incentivize similar actions.

As poverty, displacement and homelessness have skyrocketed with the Pandemic and inequalities have increased with the extreme concentration of wealth, good practices with solid positive results are key to inspiring decision makers to innovate and take bold actions to advance the New Urban Agenda aims.

We would also like to underscore that grassroots organizations, leading the grassroots constituency on sustainable, inclusive urbanization, have been driving the realization of policy commitments to sustainable cities and human settlements—including access to affordable and decent housing, basic services, and cities and public spaces safe for women and families for more than 25 years.

The grassroots constituency were key contributors to shaping the priorities and outcome document of the Habitat III Conference through our participation in expert groups, regional processes and member state linkages. Once the New Urban Agenda was adopted, we became and remain anchoring members of the UN-Habitat World Urban Campaign led over forty Urban Thinkers Campuses in raising awareness, advocating and driving locally-led initiatives in implementing the Agenda. Building partnership with local and national governments as well as other development partners to drive inclusion of our community

through evidence-based demonstration of community-led activities have been the strategy in advancing the localization of the New Urban Agenda.

Grassroots Recommendations, to Accelerate Progress in the Implementation of an inclusive NUA

1. **All levels of government** put an end to forced evictions and invest in innovative alternatives developed through collaborative partnerships between grassroots communities, their governments, and other key stakeholders.
2. **National governments, Bi-and multilateral institutions Convene Multi Stakeholder Mechanisms to facilitate:**
 - a) direct financing to support community level and grassroots-led action, including community organizing, data collection and grassroots led planning and peer learning exchanges.
 - b) commitments to invest in grassroots women’s empowerment and public leadership in sustainable urbanization solutions and promoting gender responsive and equitable urban development policies that will tangibly improve the living conditions, livelihood opportunities and collective organization of urban poor grassroots women.
3. **UN Habitat and Regional Agencies** foster and scale up their support for two-way capacity building initiatives that engage grassroots organizations as well as policy makers, and technical professionals in the planning and development of inclusive, resilient and sustainable cities.

Grassroots Constituency Organizations Commitments, in turn, Build Upon

The two hundred plus grassroots organizations our social movements represent, who live and organize for better living conditions--decent housing and basic services-- and livelihood opportunities in their poor urban, peri-urban and rural communities, across 60+ countries spanning Africa, Asia, Latin America, the Caribbean, and urban poor communities in the North , have proven their capacity to mobilize their own savings, build partnerships with local governments and urban development professionals and lead settlement upgrading, large scale housing, tenure security and community safety initiatives.

We commit to build upon these pathways and leadership skills to accelerate inclusive, sustainable urbanization efforts, and to focus our energy and resources on:

- advancing the 2030 Agenda to achieve SDG 11 by using the New Urban Agenda as a roadmap.
- partnering with all levels of government and other key stakeholders to co-produce alternatives to evictions that transform informal settlements and slums into secure, sustainable communities;
- collectively mobilize and dedicate funds to develop sustainable settlements for our community members and leverage contributions from state and international development partners;

- contribute our community data, local knowledge, and development innovations for improving the quality of life in our communities to efforts to promote inclusive, resilient and sustainable urbanization; and
- continue building the capacity and strength of our constituency to change how sustainable development priorities are framed and implemented and formalize recognition of grassroots organizations as experts and key stakeholders in promoting just, inclusive urbanization.

Thank You!