



## **SESSION 5: MAKING CITIES INCLUSIVE, SAFE, RESILIENT AND SUSTAINABLE: REGIONAL PRIORITIES AND OPPORTUNITIES**

### **Consolidated CSO Statement**

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On behalf of urban poor communities, slum dwellers and homeless people, I'd like to thank you for providing space for the urban poor to be heard at this level. I speak here hopeful that our collective recommendations as CSOs be included in the whole process of the Agenda 2030 implementation and in crafting a new urban agenda.

We feel encouraged that the SDGs and the "New Urban Agenda" point at combating urban exclusion and facilitating inclusion. We also agree that the rights of all to universal access to quality basic services should be promoted.

But amid the continued push for neoliberal policies in the name of economic growth, we are very doubtful that urban poverty will be significantly addressed by 2030.

The promotion of public-private partnerships in the SDGs and the new urban agenda being facilitated by international financial institutions, especially through development assistance, translates to more debt, higher taxes, and further privatization and inaccessibility of urban infrastructures and basic social services including education, health and housing.

Public interest must be ensured over that of private corporations. Social services and sustainable livelihoods must be ensured by governments. Decent work and living wages, as opposed to contractualization and the flexibilisation of labor, must be prioritized.

In order to truly address urban poverty, policies that promote low wages, contractualization and flexibilisation of labor should be stopped.

Housing should be acknowledged by national and local governments as a basic human right. Instead of privatized mechanisms in place, governments must put public interest foremost. Demolitions, evictions and all forms of displacement must end now. Governments must have resettlement plans for the urban poor, on-site development of local communities, and access to adequate, affordable, and sustainable housing with adequate employment and basic social services.

We are deeply concerned that the goals do not prioritize the need to sustainably develop the rural areas to resolve landlessness and regulate corporate control that leads to land and resource grabs, apart from destruction and depletion of resources. These issues have historically caused rural-urban migration, which is now compounded by climate change.

We agree that human settlements be made more resilient, but at the same time we should address the root causes of environmental and economic crises and hold responsible parties accountable.

Lastly, the SDGs and the new urban agenda should embrace the human rights approach. We in the urban poor, slum dwellers, internal migrants, informal sector and the homeless want to be seen as rights-holders, contributors and partners in development of cities and not treated as urban blight. Sustainable urban development plans must involve the participation first and foremost of the urban poor.

Thank you.