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Resolution No. 19/16: Women's role and rights in human settlements development and slum upgrading.

Recalling the commitment made by Governments in the [Istanbul Declaration on Human Settlements](#)⁶ to ensure the full and equal participation of all women and men and the effective participation of youth in political, economic and social life,

Recognizing that the empowerment of women and their full and equal participation in political, social and economic life, the improvement of health and the eradication of poverty are essential to achieving sustainable human settlements ([resolution 17/11 of 14 May 1999](#)),

Bearing in mind the importance that the [Habitat Agenda](#),² adopted by the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II), places on women's equal access to adequate housing, land and property, and the importance of all actors adopting and implementing policies, laws and programmes aimed at the realization of these rights,

Recalling paragraph 23 of the [Habitat Agenda](#), which states that, "[w]hile the significance of national and regional particularities and various historical, cultural and religious backgrounds must be borne in mind, it is the duty of all States to promote and protect all human rights and fundamental freedoms, including the right to development"

Recalling further paragraph 24 of the [Habitat Agenda](#), which states that "implementation of the Habitat Agenda, including implementation through national laws and development priorities, programmes and policies, is the sovereign right and responsibility of each State in conformity with all human rights and fundamental freedoms, including the right to development, and taking into account the significance of and with full respect for various religious and ethical values, cultural backgrounds and philosophical convictions of individuals and their communities, contributing to the full enjoyment by all of their human rights in order to achieve the objectives of adequate shelter for all and sustainable human settlements development",

Recalling the Commission on Human Rights [resolutions 2000/13 of 17 April 2000](#), [2001/34 of 23 April 2001](#), [2002/49 of 23 April 2002](#) and [2003/22 of 22 April 2003](#) on women's equal ownership of, access to and control over land and the equal rights to own property and to adequate housing, as well as the emphasis placed on women's equal access to land, credit, adequate shelter and basic services in the Plan of Implementation of the World Summit on

Sustainable Development,⁹ Stressing that the impact of gender-based discrimination and violence against women on women's equal access to adequate housing, land and property is acute, particularly during complex emergency situations, reconstruction and rehabilitation,

Also recalling the Convention on the Elimination of All forms of Discrimination Against Women, Mindful of the commitment to formulate and strengthen policies and practices to promote the full and equal participation of women in human settlements, planning and decision-making, made in the [Habitat Agenda](#) (inter alia, paragraph 184), and reaffirmed in the [Declaration on Cities and Other Human Settlements in the New Millennium](#)⁶ (inter alia, paragraph 44),

Mindful also that in [its resolution 16/6 of 7 May 1997](#) on women in human settlements development, the Habitat Commission had requested the creation of a Gender Coordinating Unit directly under the Executive Director in order to mainstream the gender perspective in all policies, projects, programmes and activities of the Centre (also [resolution 17/11 of 14 May 1999](#)),

Bearing in mind the [United Nations Millennium Declaration](#)³ and the resolve to promote gender equality and the empowerment of women as effective ways of combating poverty, hunger and disease and to stimulate development that is truly sustainable (paragraph 20),

Recalling also the Goal in the Millennium Declaration of making a significant improvement in the lives of at least 100 million slum dwellers by 2020,

Recognizing that women form a large proportion of the urban poor, especially those living in slums,

Recognizing also that urban poor women and children are particularly severely affected by unlawful forced evictions and emphasizing the need for promoting policy alternatives to unlawful forced evictions through the campaigns on secure tenure and urban governance, Bearing in mind also the importance of the empowerment of women in the fight against HIV/AIDS,

Emphasizing that gender mainstreaming is a priority for the whole of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-HABITAT),

1. Requests the Executive Director, in developing and implementing UN-HABITAT gender policy, to promote the full integration of gender perspectives in all activities of UN-HABITAT, especially in the campaigns on secure tenure and urban governance and in slum upgrading projects;
2. Requests the Executive Director in consultation with Governments to develop or, where they already exist, to strengthen mechanisms for monitoring the impact of human settlement policies and programmes on the lives and work of women in cities, especially those in low-income areas and slums, as well as strengthening women's networks and other organizations active in this area;
3. Invites Governments to increase financial and other assistance to UN-HABITAT to enable the Programme to strengthen the mainstreaming of gender issues and the work of the Gender Coordinating Unit, in particular in support of gender-specific slum upgrading projects and especially those related to employment creation, women's empowerment, housing improvement and property rights;

4. Also requests Governments to promote and protect women's equal access to adequate housing, property and land including rights to inheritance, and to secure access to credit through appropriate constitutional, legislative and administrative measures;
5. Encourages Governments to support the transformation of customs and practices that discriminate against women and deny women security of tenure and equal ownership of, access to and control over land and equal rights to own property and to adequate housing;
6. Urges Governments to address the issue of forced relocation and forced evictions²⁹ from home and land, and to eliminate its disproportionate impact on women;
7. Urges Governments to promote the effective participation of women in human settlements planning and development at all levels of government and in particular to utilize the untapped resources and knowledge of urban, poor women in local community development;
8. Also urges Governments to ensure gender sensitive implementation of slum upgrading programmes and in particular to emphasize poor women's rights and equal access to adequate housing and land and need for secure tenure, basic amenities and income generating activities and education and measures to protect women and girls against violence;
9. Requests Governments to promote credit schemes for shelter and income generating activities that are affordable to poor women in particular those affected by HIV/AIDS;
10. Also requests the Executive Director to include a report on the implementation of the present resolution in her progress report to the Governing Council at its twentieth and future sessions.

8th meeting
9 May 2003