**HABITAT FOR HUMANITY INTERNATIONAL**

Billions of people worldwide lack an adequate home. Millions live in constant fear of eviction. Disasters displace millions more from their homes each year, endangering their future. Today, nine of every 10 adults lack access to housing finance systems. In many places, women and marginalized groups are systematically and routinely discriminated against, left without a voice in decision making processes and denied their rights to land.

With the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic, around the world families are facing both a public health and an economic crisis further worsened by a housing crisis. A safe and secure home is the first line of defense in this pandemic and the preexisting global need for adequate and safe housing will only exacerbate the impacts of the pandemic as it continues. Through policy and systems change, there is greater potential to create stability and security for millions more than we could serve by only building one house at a time.

Habitat for Humanity promotes policies that:

* Ensure access to adequate housing options for all.
* Expand affordability through housing finance options.
* Promote secure tenure rights and equitable access to land for shelter.
* Enable stakeholder engagement and community participation.
* Foster resilient and responsive communities through housing.

Very quickly, this global health emergency has become a housing emergency. “Stay at home, save lives” has emerged as a mantra in the fight against COVID-19 worldwide, underscoring how central the home is to public health during a pandemic. Where for many “shelter in place” means adjusting routines and mindsets, for others it is exacerbating the conditions with which they have struggled for too long. The fast-moving challenge posed by the COVID-19 pandemic adds another urgent reason to ensure that the housing needs of diverse communities, including women, children, persons with disabilities, migrants and refugees, the homeless, the elderly and indigenous people, can shelter with safety and stability to protect their health and their families.

We applaud efforts made by multilateral organizations and governments to protect housing, but much more must be done. Habitat for Humanity, a global nonprofit housing organization working with communities across nearly 70 countries, works towards a vision of a world where everyone has a decent place to live by building strength, stability and self-reliance in partnership with families in need of decent and affordable housing.