

**HOW TO
MAKE
WOMEN'S
RIGHT TO
HOUSING
EFFECTIVE?**



The United Nations (UN) Special Rapporteur on the Right to Adequate Housing has been working on the matter of women's right to adequate housing since 2002, when then Rapporteur Miloon Kothari started researching the theme, with regional consultations and presenting reports to the UN Human Rights Council.

In 2011, the current Rapporteur, Raquel Rolnik, developed a new analysis of the question, monitoring the situation through a virtual debate platform (www.righttohousing.org/debates) where people and organisations interested in the matter could contribute.

The project had the support of one general and seven regional coordinators who not only researched their respective regions, but also assisted those participating in the platform, allowing a rich exchange of experience. Some 300 people and organisations in over 60 countries helped identify the existing advances and challenges.

With this guide, we hope to assist people involved in the formulation and implementation of public housing policies so that they may truly incorporate the gender perspective. We also hope that this resource will be useful to feminist organisations and groups of women who fight for the true application of this right.



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WHY WOMEN AND HOUSING RIGHTS?

Does it make sense to think on housing rights from the point of view of women? If this is a universal right, why analyse it exclusively from the perspective of the female gender? Although it cannot be denied that in recent decades women have won many rights and occupied spaces that were, until recently, denied to them, reality shows that there is still great inequality between men and women in all regions of the world. With similarities, differences and particularities that cannot be ignored, this is a phenomenon that, unfortunately, may still be seen world over.

Women are still at a disadvantage compared to men in the labour market, even when they have more years of study and higher professional qualifications. Most informal work – without right to labour guarantees – is performed by women. Apart from that, in many companies, women's wages are lower than those of men performing the same function, even in the case of board members. In politics, female participation is still much lower than that of men. In the domestic realm, the responsibility for maintenance of the house and for care of the children, elderly and sick is still mostly in the hands of women, even when they work outside of the home. Worldwide, the outdated idea that men have power over the body and life of women continues sustaining domestic violence, many times resulting in the death of women. The dynamics of gender inequality may, therefore, be verified in all dimensions of human life.



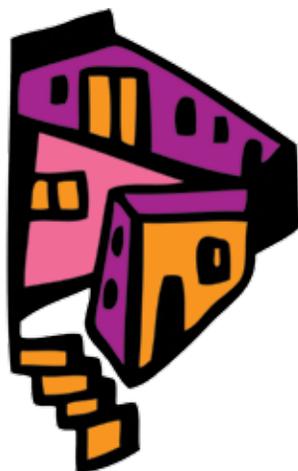
With regard to housing, it is no different. For women, the non-realisation of this right or its violation has specific consequences, not seen in the same way in the case of men. If we truly want to promote equality between men and women, these differences of experience must be taken into consideration. Traditionally, however, such understanding is not taken into consideration by governments when establishing laws, elaborating public policies or executing projects.

But it is necessary to clearly recognise that social and cultural connection of women with the domestic space cannot strengthen the idea that "a woman's place is in the kitchen" and that public spaces in the labour market, politics and other dimensions of life are exclusively male. It is important to comprehend that guaranteeing women's **rights to adequate housing** is fundamental to women's day to day life yet, also, to promoting women's autonomy in all spheres of life and for making other human rights effective.

With the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, of 1948, the right to adequate housing was included in the list of rights internationally recognised as universal, that is, which are accepted and applicable all over the world and are valid for all people. International treaties determine that states are obliged to respect, protect and promote this right. The International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights is especially important, and includes Article 11 to "recognize the right of everyone to an adequate standard of living for himself and his family, including adequate food, clothing and housing, and to the continuous improvement of living conditions". The UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights issued two general comments on the matter. In General Comment n° 4, the Committee deepens reflection on the content of the right to housing and on the elements that it comprises. In General Comment n° 7, what is covered is the right to housing in processes of forced eviction.

WHAT IS THE RIGHT TO HOUSING?

Every person has the right to adequate housing. This statement should be understood in a broader manner, not referring to the house itself. Adequate housing is not just a roof and four walls. In general lines, both in the urban and in the rural environment, the right to housing includes seven elements:



SEVEN ELEMENTS OF THE RIGHT TO HOUSING

- SECURITY OF TENURE
- HABITABILITY
- AVAILABILITY OF SERVICES, INFRASTRUCTURE AND PUBLIC EQUIPMENT
- ADEQUATE LOCATION
- CULTURAL ADEQUACY
- ACCESSIBILITY, NON-DISCRIMINATION AND PRIORITISATION OF VULNERABLE GROUPS
- AFFORDABLE COST

THE SEVEN ELEMENTS OF THE RIGHT TO HOUSING AND WOMEN'S LIVES



Following, we will show how the absence or violation of each of the elements that are included in the right to housing specially affect women. We also present examples of public policies, laws and judicial decisions that aim at facing the situation and guaranteeing women the right to housing.

It is important to understand that the division of the right to housing into seven elements is purely didactic. The following examples show how the elements are inter-related. It is also necessary to clarify that the examples presented have not always been implemented satisfactorily. There are several factors that make the execution of public policies more difficult. One of them is the non-allocation of the necessary human and financial resources. Another is the strong presence in many societies of cultural standards that entrench the exclusion of women.



In the next pages, pay attention to these symbols:

This one indicates examples of public policies, legislation and judicial decisions that effectuate women's right to housing.



This one indicates virtual platform website participants' comments:
www.righttohousing.org/debates





[SEVEN ELEMENTS]

SECURITY OF TENURE

All people have the right to live without the fear of being evicted and receiving undue or unexpected threats. There are several types of tenure to guarantee this and they vary according to the legal system and the culture of each country, region or people. These methods may be formal or not, written in documents sanctioned by the state, or not, and may be collective or individual. What is fundamental is for all people to have the right to live in a stable and safe manner, no matter what kind of protection is guaranteed.

Worldwide, land and housing is mostly in the hands of men. Due to this, in cases of divorce, women are frequently forced to leave their homes, as they do not own them and women's right to marital property is not recognised. In many places, women without title deeds to property cannot enrol in credit programs or call for loans to improve their houses or businesses. Early, polygamic or religious marriages often place women's right to housing at risk, as they are not recognised by authorities.



Lilian Ifeoma Chibiko, from Nigeria, on July 20th, 2011

I have been very active in fighting widow's issues in my country. It has been very difficult to fight this issue because the concept has been that women has no right to own a land except through their husband but when their husband dies, they become frustrated widows with no right to their husbands property. It is quite alarming the way women are treated when it comes to possession of landed property.

In several religions world over, there are customs and traditions, in some cases written in laws and constitutions, which neither grant women the right to possession of homes or land nor allow them the right to inherit goods in case of separation or the husband's death.



WOMEN'S TENURE



In recent years, several countries have recognised, in their constitutions and laws, the right of women to land and housing in equal conditions with men, among them Namibia¹. In many countries, in fact, there are laws that grant women property when public housing is granted and/or determine that, at the least, the house be registered both in the man's and in the woman's name, as is the case in the General Law for Regularisation of Land in Brazil² and in some regional title-deed policies in Bangladesh³.

In Tajikistan⁴, an initiative promoted through a partnership between the country's government, UN Women, NGOs and other institutions, resulted in the modification of several determinations of the Land Code, which used to discriminate against women. The Code started obliging the deeds of collective land to include the names of all members of the family, especially women. The promotion of campaigns and the production of promotional material regarding the matter, the offer of free legal assistance, the creation of networks of organisations and specialists in the matter and the introduction of gender indices in the monitoring of these policies resulted in expressive growth in the volume of land in the name of women, which climbed from 2% in 2002 to 14% in 2008.



Anissa Saidi, from Tunisia, on August 09th, 2011

Tunisian law obligates the husband, in case of a divorce, to provide the wife with a house or to pay money for housing. Implementation of this law is seen as satisfactory. Defaulting husbands may face imprisonment. It is still common for Tunisian women to give away their share of inheritance under social pressure, although the law guarantees them rights in accordance with Islamic law.

RIGHT TO ASSETS IN CASE OF DIVORCE

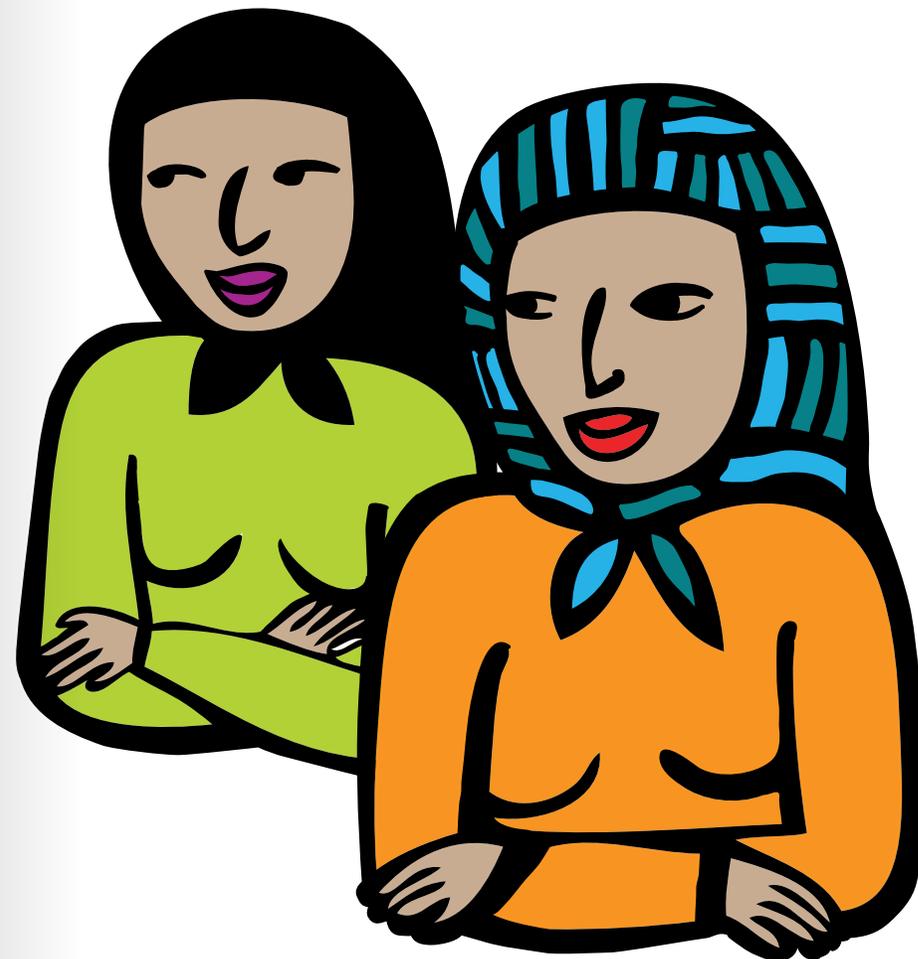
In Tanzania⁵, in a case brought by a husband contesting the equal division of the couple's assets at the time of the divorce, the judge ruled that granting all the assets exclusively to the husband would go against the country's Constitution, and that equal division of the assets would agree with the principles of non-discrimination and human dignity, included in the constitutional text, in the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women and in the Universal Declaration of the Human Rights. In Algeria, in 2005, the reform of the Family Code determined that, in case of divorce, husbands would be obliged to grant housing to their former spouses in case they have children.⁶



WOMEN'S EQUAL RIGHT TO INHERITANCE

The constitution of Ethiopia⁷ states, for example, that women have the same rights as men do to their inheritance. An amendment in the National Code of Nepal⁸ recognised the right of single, married or widowed women to inherit from their parents and also of widows inherit from their late husband.

What has been noticed in some cases, unfortunately, is that, although they have the legal right to inheritance, women are often pressed to give up their share. For this reason, the instruction issued by the by the Head of the Higher Council of Sharia Jurisdiction of Palestine⁹, demanding from competent authorities compliancy with specific conditions for women's abdication of their inheritance, is of interest.



For women who are victims of domestic violence, lack of security of tenure may be fatal: many cannot end a relationship with the aggressor as they cannot see a viable housing option for themselves and their children.

State forced eviction processes also have a violent impact on women, bringing psychological effects and instability in the family environment. At the time of eviction, apart from destroying the house and goods, verbal abuse, beatings, rapes and even murders may take place.

The informality of house possession may also be a hindrance for installation of water, electricity and telephone services, as is the case in many nations. The process for regularisation of tenure, in general, is troublesome, slow and expensive, making it complicated for most women.



Milena Timotijevic, from Serbia, on September 2nd, 2011

An important issue I'd like to address is one discriminatory common law practice especially present in rural regions, but in cities as well – the practice where daughters after death of parents disown inheritance in favor of brothers. This practice is so widespread that it is done in free will, but there are also lots of cases where there has been coercion as well.

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Serbia changed its Family Law¹⁰, allowing courts to determine the removal of an aggressor from the family home and/or authorise the victims to return if they have abandoned their house due to aggression or threats, whether or not they own the real estate.

In India, the Protection Of Women From Domestic Violence Act¹¹ guarantees to women the right to remain at home, no matter who the holder of the deeds is, and permits the judge to determine that the aggressor leave the house. The judge may also prohibit the aggressor from selling the house or using it in any other manner, even if it is his property, as well as ordering that the aggressor to grant the victim a house of equal quality.



[SEVEN ELEMENTS]

HABITABILITY

Adequate housing must present good conditions of protection against cold, heat, rain, wind, humidity and also against the threat of fire, landslides, flooding and any kind of factor that may put people's health at risk. Apart from that, the size of the house and the number of rooms (bedrooms and bathrooms, mainly) should be in accordance with the number of residents. Adequate space for washing clothes, storing and cooking food are also important.

When housing conditions are not adequate, the impacts on the life of women are profound, as, traditionally, they play the social part of carer for the house and family. Just to give one example, each year, in countries like China, where wood or coal fires are used in houses, millions of women acquire respiratory diseases and may even die. Women interviewed by Amnesty International for a study on the slums of Nairobi, Kenya, describe the risks they take when using bathrooms and other public sanitary equipment, far from their homes. In places like these, apart from having no privacy, women and girls are often victims of sexual violence. Besides that, there is great incidence of infectious disease due to the precarious sanitary installations. Another factor that frequently threatens the habitability is overpopulation. In houses with one or two bedrooms there are often ten or twelve residents. This context eliminates people's privacy and also increases the exposure of women and girls to situations of sexual violence.





Zelda Rempel, from Canada, on July 23rd, 2011

Women in the north have even a bigger challenge of just find shelter during the cold winters. Usually they are not adequate or accessible as the cost of lumber and repairs are huge in the north. Emergencies shelters are available but beds are short in demand and for disabled women usually not accessible.



PUBLIC POLICIES

In the city of Vienna, Austria, a housing project¹² built hundreds of apartments from 1997 to 2010, taking into consideration matters that are normally not thought of and that are important to women: place to store bicycles and prams, ample community space, no more than four apartments per floor, lack of dark areas. In each apartment, special attention was turned to the kitchen, as the central place for domestic work: all are large, with enough natural lighting and windows turned to a patio where children play, allowing women to do the house work and still keep an eye on their kids.



LEGISLATION

In the regional plane, several treaties and conventions include habitability as a condition for the realisation of women's right to a dignified life. Examples are the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms¹³ and Protocol on the Rights of Women, in Africa¹⁴.

New Zealand, in its Action Plan for Human Rights¹⁵, has established the right to housing as a priority for intervention and, specifically, improvement in habitability conditions, focussing on adequate internal temperature and humidity control and also on actions to avoid overcrowding of houses.



[SEVEN ELEMENTS]

AVAILABILITY OF SERVICES, INFRASTRUCTURE AND PUBLIC FACILITIES

Houses should be connected to water supply networks, sanitation, gas and electricity; in the neighborhood, there should be schools, kindergartens, health clinics and sports and leisure areas. There should also be accessibility to public transportation, cleaning services and garbage collection, among other services.

Women are more affected than men whenever these kinds of services are not available, since they spend more time doing housework, even when they also work outside the home. For instance, in many communities that experience water shortage, women are the ones who walk for several miles carrying water every day. They are also the ones who dedicate several hours of their days to take the kids to school or the elderly to health centers. The absence of those and other items, therefore, reduces the free time that women could dedicate to other activities that ensure their independence and also imposes greater physical stress, affecting their health.





NGO Canoas – from Santa Fé, Argentina, on August 11th, 2011

[...] many houses are built in low places, at the risk of flooding (in many cases, those places are dams and waste dumps) and don't have a sewage system, access to drinkable water or electricity grids, and all of that entails risks. [...] Moreover, the derelict lands, the deficiencies in maintenance and in cleaning services, the lack of illumination and the restriction in public transportation routes and schedules also limit the possibilities of free mobility of women along the public space and the rest of the city.



LEGISLATION AND PUBLIC POLICIES

In 2006, the European Parliament adopted the Resolution on Roma Women¹⁶, in which it advises the states to determine that local authorities should guarantee the adequate provision of services and infrastructure, such as drinkable water, electricity, garbage collection and public transportation, in the Roma settlements.

In Bolivia, the Constitution¹⁷ stipulates that it is the state's responsibility to ensure universal and equitable access to basic services, such as drinkable water supply, sanitation, electricity, domestic gas, postal services and telecommunications.



[SEVEN ELEMENTS]

ADEQUATE LOCATION

To be adequate, housing must be located in a place that offers opportunities for economic, cultural and social development. This means that in the neighbourhood, there should be offer of jobs and income sources, means of livelihood, public transportation, supermarkets, chemists, post offices and other basic sources of supply.

For women, housing located away from job centres and public facilities, or the absence of an efficient and accessible public transportation network, is particularly harming. Living in a distant location, for them, means greater difficulty when it comes to getting jobs as well as greater expenses and physical stress from the long commute.

In several European countries, many communities of Roma people suffer with the remote location of the settlements. In Albania, for instance, many children do not attend school due to the long distances and there are also reports that ambulance services refuse to go to the settlements. In such a situation, once more, women are the ones that suffer the most.



Liliana Rainero, from Argentina, on August 9th, 2011

The distance from house to work, the physical accessibility to work, to recreation, to education and to culture are translated into costs in time and money. They have direct consequences over the everyday life of citizens, particularly women. Furthermore, environmental conditions, deterioration of the surroundings and the fact that the usual routes do not offer minimal safety conditions increase the fear of violent situations and affect women's autonomy, limiting their possibilities of social insertion.



[SEVEN ELEMENTS]

CULTURAL ADEQUACY

The manner of construction of a house and the materials used in it should express both the cultural identity as the diversity of its inhabitants. Renovations and modernisations should also take into account the cultural dimensions of the house.

Frequently, housing policies have been misinterpreted as the simple mass production of identical houses. Projects are developed without any concern for social and cultural needs of the benefiting community and important specific aspects of women's cultural identity are ignored in the buildings. In fishermen communities, for instance, houses must have open areas for the fish preparation, a typical female activity. If the kitchen space is closed, the stench of fish spreads around the house.



Irma, from Costa Rica, on August 29th, 2011

We know that housing's a right, however, in the indigenous villages of our country, we feel that housing programs violate the rights and the traditions of the family because of the architecture, the resources, the manipulation of the constructors and, most of all, the authorised entities related to the financing of the project. Lately, indigenous women are denouncing those anomalies to the responsible authorities and in some cases even to the Attorney General of the Republic.



LEGISLATION AND PUBLIC POLICIES

In Venezuela, the law of the Housing Finance System¹⁸, from 2005, speaks of several elements of the right to housing, highlighting the requirement that housing policies are carried out considering local culture and particularities.

The Australian government published in 2007 the third edition of the Indigenous National Housing Guide¹⁹. Developed in a partnership between communities, entities from the civil society and professionals in the area, the Guide aims to facilitate the planning and construction of houses which are safe, sustainable and culturally adequate to the indigenous communities.



[SEVEN ELEMENTS]

ACCESSIBILITY, NON-DISCRIMINATION AND PRIORITISATION OF VULNERABLE GROUPS

Adequate housing must be accessible to society's vulnerable groups, such as the elderly, children, people with disabilities, people with HIV, victims of natural disasters and also women. Housing laws and policies should prioritise assistance to those groups and take into account their special needs. As well as ensuring the right to adequate housing, it is fundamental that the rights to non-discrimination and equality be guaranteed and respected.



For women, it is important that housing policies take into account the needs of different groups, specially the underprivileged, such as elderly women, widows, women with disabilities, women with chronic diseases, single mothers, householders, lesbians, transsexuals, transvestites, victims of domestic violence, disaster victims, immigrants and women displaced within their own country, among others.



Justus, from Uganda, on July 18th, 2011

Uganda Settlements Network have carried out research on housing and HIV/AIDS and it was shocking to find how women with HIV are thrown out of their property by relatives just because of their status. Some were even denied rental arrangements by land lords because of the fear that the women would die in their houses.



PUBLIC POLICIES



In Latin America, there are some examples of public policies that prioritise women's right to housing, such as the Municipal Policy of Habitat and Housing of Quito²⁰, Ecuador; and the Five-Year Housing Plan²¹ (2005-2009), of Uruguay.

In Europe, some countries, like Scotland²², establish that women who are victims of domestic violence have priority in social housing programs. In France²³, the housing right law establishes as a priority the attendance of groups in vulnerable situations, such as single mothers.

LEGISLATION



There are many examples of laws, policies and judicial decisions that both prohibit discrimination in access to housing and establish the prioritisation of women in housing policies. In the United States, there is a law²⁴ that prohibits any form of discrimination in the access to housing based on race, gender, color, religion, familial status, natural origin or disabilities.

JUDICIAL DECISIONS



In Ontario, Canada, the Human Rights Court²⁵ decided that the exclusion of people from housing based on reasons like income, participation in social assistance programs, citizenship, place of origin, gender, marital status and age is contrary to the Human Rights Code of the city.



[SEVEN ELEMENTS]

AFFORDABLE COST OF HOUSING

The cost of housing should be affordable, so as not to undermine the family budget and also allow the access to other human rights, such as the right to food, to leisure, etc. In the same sense, expenses for running a house, like electricity, water and gas, should not be very costly.

The meaning of "affordable cost", however, is not the same for men and women. This happens because, in general, women have a more restricted access to formal employment and, therefore, to labor rights; moreover, they also tend to receive lower salaries. When it comes to single women or women who are householders, the cost of housing has an even greater impact on the budget. Therefore, in a world where housing policy is oriented primarily by market production, that which is considered affordable to men may not be affordable to women.

The affordable cost of housing is also extremely important to women who are victims of domestic violence. The high cost of housing forces these women, many times with children, to remain in the aggressor's house. Many women who manage to escape this cycle end up homeless, given the unavailability of low cost housing or other alternatives, such as emergency shelters. In these cases, ensuring affordable housing means not only protecting women's rights to adequate housing, but also women's and their children's physical and psychological integrity.



Plataforma de Afectados por la Hipoteca, from Spain, on September 11th, 2011

[...] the problem of losing the house and ending up with a debt for life has, in many cases, led to a feeling of failure, shame and stress that (certainly due to the pressure of man's role as the "head of the household" who must be a breadwinner, according to the patriarchal neoliberal model) has brought many men, in the worst cases, to violence against women, with many cases of domestic violence; and, in other cases, to deep depressions, alcoholism, abandonment of the house... These latter situations have forced women to face the problem by themselves, including negotiations with the banks, requests to management, search for work, care of the children and of other dependent family members, etc.



LEGISLATION AND PUBLIC POLICIES

In Bolivia²⁶, the "Solidarity Rate" of electricity reduces the amount paid by families which consume up to 70Kw per hour by 25%. The country also established the Law on Water and Sanitation, which determines the charge for these services according to the socioeconomic situation of the user.

Regarding domestic violence, several countries, like Brazil²⁷, India²⁸, Serbia²⁹, the Czech Republic³⁰ and Turkey³¹, incorporated in their legislation a determination for states to create shelters for battered women and children or for those women who are suffering threats of aggression. In the same sense, the Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence Against Women and Domestic Violence³², adopted by the European Council, also determines that states must provide a sufficient number of shelters for adequate and safe accommodation of women and children.

WHAT TO DO?

LISTEN TO WOMEN, ALWAYS!

The participation of organisations and groups of women must be ensured in all steps of the development of housing policies, programs and projects, as well as in the elaboration of new laws, so that women's needs are taken into account. It is also important that actions be developed to expand women's access to justice in the fight for housing, such as the promotion of educational activities and the provision of legal services free of charge or at least at affordable cost.



Debbie D – from Canada, on July 6th, 2011

Hi, I am an activist, advocate and researcher with a focus on poverty, housing and homelessness. As for myself I have lived in and out of poverty all my life, I am a single parent of 52 with three grown children, 9 grandchildren and two children still at home. My passion is fighting for the rights of those who can't fight or are unable to have a voice. Presently we are doing education around the human rights documents as people don't understand the language or what they mean. We are starting to use human rights arguments in our appeals with housing and social services.



Sylvia.Noagbesenu – from Ghana, on August 13th, 2011

In many cases, women in Ghana for example are ignorant of their legal rights to own and inherit houses, land or other property. Those women who are aware of their rights frequently do not know that legal means exist through which they can claim these rights. Access to legal assistance is frequently blocked as a result of high cost or simple unavailability. Most women pressing property, land or housing claims will face intense societal and familial pressure to desist, and in most cases this pressure will prevail to defeat the claim.

EQUAL RIGHTS

It is critical to ensure the equal rights of men and women with respect to the use, acquisition, transfer, administration and control of housing and land, regardless of their family situation or their relationship status. This is also true with respect to inheritance and rights over marital property, for example in case of divorce. Housing policies should prioritise housing ownership on behalf of women or, at least, in the name of both spouses.

PRIORITISE WOMEN

To incorporate prioritisation in the planning and implementation of housing policy, especially of women who are economically marginalised, householders, elderly, disabled, etc. All legal dispositions and social practices which discriminate against women and prevent women from having total access to housing and land must be eliminated.

MORE THAN FOUR WALLS AND A ROOF

The planning and implementation of housing projects is about much more than just building houses, it is about ensuring the comprehensive enjoyment of housing rights. This includes, among other items, connection to water supply, electricity, sewage and telephone systems, transportation and also that the location is close to public services and facilities, such as health clinics, kindergartens and schools. It is essential that the house be integrated into the urban tissue, providing opportunities for economic, social and cultural development to women and enabling inhabitants to interact socially.

HABITABLE SPACE AND RESPECT FOR CULTURE

Housing programs must also meet the requirements of being habitable and of the local cultural particularities. At the moment of planning of the house and social facilities, the use of appropriate materials to facilitate the everyday life of women and to ensure their safety and physical integrity must be respected.

HOUSING SHOULD NOT COST AN ARM AND A LEG

It is necessary to make available to women the necessary financial resources to obtain and improve housing, to supply them with access to information about the functioning of financial and credit systems and also to the participation in subsidised rent programs and emergency shelters. Women should be included among the beneficiaries of social housing programs.

DISAGGREGATED DATA

To enable the monitoring of implementation of women's right to housing, public policies on housing should rely on indicators disaggregated by gender.



Hilda Herzer, Laura Gil y De Anso and Julia Ramos – from Argentina, on August 13th, 2011

The availability of quantitative (and also qualitative) information disaggregated by gender is a fundamental starting point to the thinking and development of responses adequate to the reality of women concerning habitat, both by the state as by social organisations and civil society.



Virginia Quispe, from Bolivia, on August 5th, 2011

One of the major obstacles is women's lack of information and knowledge of their own rights. On the other hand, to demand the right to housing, it's necessary to be a member of an organisation or to be organised, since individually it's very hard.



WHAT SHOULD WE, WOMEN, DO?

All around the world, social organisation and mobilisation to claim rights has positively contributed to advances in legislation and in public policies in several areas. It is not different when it comes to women. However, many times cultural customs and traditions prevent the advances conquered by women from actually being implemented. It is therefore essential for women to continue mobilising, to have an effect on the customs and traditions of their countries, aiming at eliminating cultural barriers and at transformation, in everyday life, of gender inequality. This task, if done individually, is very hard. However, together, in groups, women have already shown themselves capable of promoting deep social transformations.



LEGAL BASIS

INTERNATIONAL NORMS AND STANDARDS



CEDAW Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women
General Recommendation 21
Thirteenth session (1994)

UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
General Comment 12 'Right to adequate food'
Twentieth session, 1999, U.N. Doc. E/C.12/1999/5

UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
General Comment 16 'Article 3: the equal right of men and women to the enjoyment of all economic, social and cultural rights'
Thirty-fourth session, 2005, U.N. Doc. E/C.12/2005/3

United Nations Human Rights Committee
General Comment 28 'Equality of Rights between Men and Women (Art. 3)'
UN Doc. UN Doc. CCPR/C/21/Rev.1/Add.10

UN General Assembly
Resolution 52/93 'Improvement of the situation of women in rural areas'
Fifty-second session, Agenda item 105, UN Doc. A/RES/52/93

UN General Assembly
Resolution 50/165 'Improvement of the situation of women in rural areas'
Fiftieth session, Agenda item 107, UN Doc. A/RES/50/165

UN Sub-Commission on the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights
Resolution 1997/19 'Women and the right to adequate housing and to housing and land'
UN Doc. E/CN.4/SUB.2/RES/1997/19

UN Sub-Commission on the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights
Resolution 1998/15 'Women and the right to adequate housing and to housing and land'
UN Doc. E/CN.4/SUB.2/RES/1998/15

UN Sub-Commission on the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights
Resolution 1999/15 'Women and the right to development'
UN Doc. E/CN.4/SUB.2/RES/1999/15

UN Commission on the Status of Women
Report on the forty-second session (2-13 March 1998)
Resolution 42/1 on 'Human rights and land rights discrimination'
Economic and Social Council Official Records
Supplement No. 7
UN Doc. E/CN.6/1998/12

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Resolutions 2000/13; 2001/34; 2002/49; 2003/22; 2005/25 on 'Women's equal ownership of, access to and control over land and the equal rights to own property and to adequate housing', UN Doc. E/CN.4/2005/RES/25

Governing Council of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme
Resolution 20/7 on 'Gender Equality in Human Settlements Development'
UN Doc. HSP/GC/20/7

Governing Council of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme
Resolution 19/16 'Women's Role and Rights in Human Settlements Development and Slum Upgrading' HSP/GC/19/16

Governing Council of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme
Resolution 21/9 on 'Women's housing and land rights and access to finance'
UN Doc. HSP/GC/21/9

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Created in 2000 by the United Nations Human Rights Council, the Special Rapporteur on Adequate Housing aims to gather information on the situation of the right to housing across the world and to provide assistance to governments and citizens to implement it. In order to do this, the Rapporteur visits several countries, develops thematic studies relating the right to housing to several other themes and presents to the UN reports on those visits and studies. Among the themes already studied by the Rapporteur are the financial crisis, climatic changes, process of rebuilding after natural disasters, migrations, forced evictions and also women rights to housing. To learn more about the Rapporteur, access the site: www.righttohousing.org

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