

Oral Statement

UNANIMA International

Colleagues, as we seek to adopt social policies which accelerate progress on the 2030 Agenda and the overarching goal of poverty eradication, we must first break the cycle perpetuated by the insufficient and incomplete framework we currently approach these issues with. This requires a new approach which exposes not just the individual injustices of extreme poverty, but also the broader systems which engender, foster, and profit from the unequal and unsustainable status quo in both the Global North and the Global South.

As a NGO with 25,000 members in over 100 countries, UNANIMA International's network is often found on the frontlines working with the world's most socially excluded people. We have found time and again through our research at the grassroots that women, children, and girls experiencing extreme poverty are often marginalized further through social and cultural prejudice and lack of access to appropriate resources and social protections. Now more than ever we see the acceptance of a 'growth at all costs' mindset, where the fulfillment of basic human needs has been made contingent on individuals' contributions to a profoundly unfair economy. This contributes to the invisibility of these populations, continuing the cycle of inequality and poverty whereby intersecting vulnerabilities are confounded and deepened.

A more nuanced understanding of the experiences of women, children, and girls in these contexts is necessary to inform effective policy making and foster sustainable and equitable social development. Homelessness and displacement should not be seen as a personal failure but rather as the structural failure and human rights violation that they are. Social justice for all requires a paradigm shift which de-commodifies people, place, and planet, and which orients development to the full realization of human rights, regardless of one's socioeconomic status or other societal biases.

In order to support the realization of this paradigm shift, we recommend Member States support a transformative response to inequalities at all levels - from the grassroots to global governance - and utilize transformative knowledge for a more just world.

Doing so can help create a renewed social contract, and parallels the UN Secretary-General's call for a new era of universal social protection, where social considerations are mainstreamed in development frameworks, and more inclusive institutional arrangements are systematically integrated. UNANIMA International fervently believes that when social justice is prioritized as such, human rights are upheld, sustainable and fair development is advanced, and widespread systemic inequalities like poverty and homelessness are addressed.