

Advisory Group on Gender Issues, AGGI Statement

**delivered by Prof. Inés Sánchez de Madariaga, Chair of AGGI and Director of the
UNESCO Chair on Gender, Universidad Politécnica de Madrid
UN Habitat Executive Board 28-29 March 2023**

Dear Executive Director, Member States and colleagues

I am speaking as Chair of AGGI, the Advisory Group on Gender Issues, an independent expert advisory body that advises and supports the Executive Director on all aspects of UN Habitat's work to promote gender equality and women's empowerment.

The Second General Assembly of UN-Habitat will take place next June, under the theme "A sustainable urban future through inclusive and effective multilateralism: Achieving the SDGs in times of global crises".

The five key areas of action highlighted in the Report of the Executive Director, that is: 1 Universal access to adequate housing; 2, Urban climate action and environmental protection; 3 Urban crisis recovery; 4 Localization of the SDGs and multilevel governance; and 5 Urban prosperity and local finance, are all areas in which women's issues and gender equality play a key role.

Women, particularly those living in urban informal settlements, working in informal economies, the grassroots, those displaced due to different form of disasters - are working against huge challenges to survive for their families and communities. Women are disproportionately affected by poverty, discrimination, climate change, housing prices, lack of economic opportunities, pandemics, and conflicts.

But women are also key partners and resilient leaders to be taken on board in multilevel governance structures for the localization of the SDGs, aiming at the creation of green, just, sustainable, and prosperous cities and rural areas.

For these reasons we raise a strong voice supporting the full consideration of the gender implications arising in all these five key areas that will be under discussion during the UN-Habitat Second General Assembly.

Because we should not be complacent with the present situation: there are risks that potentially undermine the hard-fought gains of women in cities and human settlements.

The post-pandemic and the many ongoing wars and displacements of women and children are among those threats. As we today can tragically see in Europe and many other countries, more work needs to be done regarding women affected by conflict, including their access to housing, decent work, urban services, decision-making processes regarding their own future, and so on.

AGGI is committed to position gender equality and women's empowerment as a key transformative path in the implementation of UN-Habitat's activities, flagship programs and technical cooperation.

After the *Valencia Declaration* we adopted in October 2021, to lay out a vision for Gender Equality in the Post-pandemic, we adopted, at the World Urban Forum 11 in Katowice, a *Manifesto for Peace*, outlining the specific needs of women in war and conflict, on which there is an urgent need for action.

We reaffirm the need for the continued commitment and concrete support of Member States to implementing gender equality and women's empowerment across UN-Habitat's normative and operational activities and the work of AGGI.

We also reaffirm our call for the financial resources that will allow to carry out effective programs addressing women's needs in cities, for an effective implementation of the Resolution 1/4 'Achieving gender equality through the work of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme to support inclusive, safe, resilient, and sustainable cities and human settlements', of 2019, to meet the SDGs, especially SDG 11 which will be reviewed at the High Level Political Forum (HLPF) in July 2023.

We thank Member States and UN-Habitat, on behalf of all the women in the world, who are grateful for this opportunity and support to women's participation in building better communities and cities.