

58th Session of the Commission for Social Development – CSocD58

ORAL STATEMENT by VIVAT International (during the General Discussion)

To be submitted by Louise Nolta

On behalf of VIVAT International, a collaborative network of 13 faith-based organizations.

On the streets of various cities across the globe we see the many faces of homeless people living in a subhuman existence trying to survive. It is so visible that we cannot turn our backs to this painful reality. They can be veterans of war, migrants or unemployed persons, older persons, persons with disabilities as well as with mental health issues. What often remains invisible is, their alienation from their family, community and culture. Homelessness is a symptom of so many related issues such as, inequalities and exclusions, neglect of rural economies, development induced displacement, sudden onset of disasters, climate induced migration, conflicts and violence. The condition of women who are deserted or pushed out of homes due to family and domestic violence, widows, migrants and refugees is worse. According to UN data, in 2018, more than 41 million people were displaced due to conflicts and over 17 million, by natural disasters.

This complex problem will not be solved with merely through charitable approach by providing them food, or some night shelter. It will require a well-thought-out global policy that that can be translated into national legislations and their implementation to end homelessness. It is a welcome step that the Commission addresses the issue of homelessness through affordable housing for and social protection systems.

It is time to work together to address homelessness by putting the last first, by bringing the marginalized to the center of all programs. Therefore, VIVAT International urges—

Member States at all levels:

- to develop a comprehensive understanding of the issue, through the experiences, perspective, as well as the context of the homeless themselves, and create a database of resources or best practices
- to provide affordable housing, health care system and jobs for homeless people especially female headed households
- to enhance mechanisms for building cooperation among the Member States, UN agencies and other stakeholders to ending poverty and homelessness.
- to utilize partnerships with providers, agencies, community leaders, and other mainstream entities that interact with people who may be at risk of homelessness.