

Heather Lafferty,  
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Civil Society Statement to United Nations Habitat III Stakeholder Hearings

Thank you Moderator and esteemed panelists for your input into how we effectively implement the Habitat 3 vision and transformational commitments at a local level in communities around the world.

My name is Heather Lafferty. As the CEO of Habitat for Humanity in Denver, CO, I am excited to hear your insights into how we dramatically change the policy framework and environment to meet the growing housing needs in our communities.

We are facing unprecedented levels of homelessness and poverty in our community - where housing prices have increased more than 90% in last decade, compared to wages which have increased by only 27%. This growing disparity between income and housing expenses in a once "affordable U.S. city" is an example of what is taking place across our country, and certainly is amplified around the world.

I want to applaud the leaders who are involved with the zero draft - which has placed **adequate and affordable housing at the center** of the New Urban Agenda. Plus highlights the promotion of community-led development and security of land tenure. This fits with our needs at a local level and what leaders in our City have identified as critical for long term sustainability.

But, while I champion the vision set forth in the New Urban Agenda, I also am keenly aware of the dramatic need for immediate action. We can not wait for 20 years to provide people with a roof over their heads. Therefore, I urge the Bureau of the Preparatory Committee, the Habitat III Secretariat, Member States and fellow stakeholders to set **clear and decisive goals which we can hold ourselves accountable too. Goals that address the short term human needs AND long term sustainability of our urban areas.**

Today, we need to be courageous as we activate new resources and tools needed to address this urgent global issue. We must be collaborative and compassionate -- to understand this isn't just an economic issue -- but it is our morale imperative as human beings. And, we must be bold as we aim to build a world where no one is left behind.

Thank you for your leadership and commitment to this plan. I look forward to working with you to achieve this vision.