



Open-Ended Informal Consultative Meetings

25 April 2016

Women PCG on

“Public spaces, informal Settlement and Civic Engagement” thematic session

We, organizations and people from civil society acting to achieve gender equality, would like to share with Member States and United Nations representatives, considerations for the discussion of the New Urban Agenda, Habitat III. Our thoughts relate to the issues "safe cities", "inclusive cities" and "public space."

First, we would like to emphasize that we agree with the demand that the New Urban Agenda has a human rights, gender equality and women's empowerment approach, and we stress that the specific needs of people suffering inequality, be it economic, social or political, must be recognized.

Regarding public spaces, we **demand** recognition and action against gender-based violence in public space. Gender-based violence in public space includes practices ranging from sexual harassment and discrimination to physical assault, rape and femicide. Gender-based violence in public spaces threatens the rights of millions of people around the world, mainly and mostly women, girls and LGBTQ+ people, to participate in public space with freedom, autonomy and security. We are every day deprived of our right "to life, liberty and security" as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights **stated**.

Therefore, we reinforce the need for the new agreement to:

1. Integrate gender-based violence in a comprehensive way

The UN itself recognized, at the 57th Commission on the Status of Women (CSW), that it is necessary to strengthen measures to protect women and girls from violence and harassment, including sexual harassment and intimidation, both in public and private spaces, and strengthen national legislation to punish violent gender-related deaths of women and girls, integrating mechanisms or policies to prevent, investigate and eradicate these deplorable forms of violence.

2. **Clarified** inclusion

It needs to be clear and defined in the new agenda what is understood by "inclusion" in cities. Inclusion should not mean imposing a predefined model of society in which marginalized and at-risk groups are included. We believe it should mean equal access for women and men to the opportunities and infrastructure that cities offer; and the existence of space for various viewpoints, ideas, and ways of life to be included. This is extremely important given the different and complex urban contexts that are set worldwide.



3. Tackle inequalities

We ask to consider the economic and spatial inequality. Poor neighborhoods lack essential services and economic activities, which are concentrated in the richer areas of the cities. Because of that, people living in these neighborhoods are often exposed to more violence due to longer commutes.

4.

In conclusion it is not possible to have safe and inclusive cities with the invisibility, naturalization and legitimization of violent practices that are rooted in gender inequality. This means that **If we want more inclusive and safe cities, we need to address gender-based violence in public spaces.** The conversation about cities can NOT go on without this discussion.