



Oral Statement
43rd session of the Human Rights Council
Item3
Guidelines for the Implementation
of the Right to Adequate Housing
Report of the Special Rapporteur on adequate housing as a
component of the right to an adequate standard of living,
and the right to non-discrimination in this context

MMM welcomes the guidelines. We agree that the right to housing is central to women's rights to substantive equality. However we believe gender equality and women's economic empowerment can also greatly contribute to its realisation.

We draw attention to the economic hardships faced by single mothers, which, combined with other intersectional discriminations [in accessing housing], notably race and migratory status, puts them at risk of homelessness – a situation which can quickly spiral down with dire consequences for their children.

According to recent Statistics¹,

- [in 2017-2018] One in every 55 single parent families in the UK became homeless, most of them single mothers
- In the US, [in 2017] they accounted for 21% of the homeless population.
- In France, [in 2018] over 2'000 mothers, mostly migrant, were homeless after giving birth and leaving the hospital.

[These numbers are likely to be underestimated given the hidden homelessness that prevails among women with children.]

Limited income and intersectional discrimination makes it almost impossible to access adequate and affordable housing – especially since child or housing allowances [that single mothers may receive] are usually not considered as “income”.

Even when they have enough personal income, single mothers are perceived as risky tenants and often face discrimination. The same applies when they seek access to credit.

We therefore call upon governments to urgently address the root causes of women's vulnerability to poverty and homelessness, including domestic violence and gender inequality.

We call for measures that support [the right to adequate housing for] single mothers and their children, including [anti-discrimination legislation,] a social protection floor that guarantees a minimum income, and the development of public infrastructure and services that reduces and redistributes unpaid care work.

¹ See sources and references in the written Statement that Make Mothers Matter submitted to the 58th UN Commission on Social Development: <https://makemothersmatter.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/201910-CSocD58-MMM-written-statement-single-mothers.pdf>

See also the outcome of the side-event that Make Mothers Matter organized on the margins of CSocD58: <https://makemothersmatter.org/invitation-csocd58-side-event-on-single-mothers-and-homelessness/>

Make Mother Matter - MMM - 5 rue de l'Université 75007 Paris, France - Tel/fax: +33 1 42 88 27 28
mmmi@makemothersmatter.org - www.makemothersmatter.org
Contact in Geneva: Valerie Bichelmeier - un-geneva@makemothersmatter.org

*Make Mothers Matter believes in the power of mothers to make the world a better place,
advocating for their recognition and support as changemakers.*

Created in 1947, MMM is an international NGO with no political or religious affiliations, transparently voicing the concerns of mothers at the highest level: the European Union, UNESCO and the United Nations (general consultative status).