



Cities, Human Settlements, Gender Equality and Women's Human Rightsⁱ

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Goal 11 focuses on making places - urban, rural and peri-urban – inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable. Any action to implement SDG 11 must address power structures, human rights and access to services, particularly for women and girls in all their diversity, and gender-nonconforming and trans people.

Data

- More than **50 per cent of urban women and girls in developing countries** live in conditions where they lack at least one of the following: access to clean water, improved sanitation facilities, durable housing, land tenure and sufficient living area.
- **Gender-based violence** is pervasive. Violence against trans and gender-diverse people (a total of 2,609 reported cases in 71 countries worldwide between 1st of January 2008 and 30th of September 2017) frequently overlaps with other axes of oppression prevalent in society, such as racism, sexism, ageism, xenophobia, and anti-sex worker sentiment and discrimination.
- Worldwide, women make up less than **five percent** of mayors.

Key Messages

- Cities provide many opportunities for women, and girls and gender non-conforming people, such as access to education, employment and income generation, greater independence and cultural engagements; yet, women's, and girls' and gender non-conforming peoples' urban experience also includes insecurity, gender-based violence, economic exclusion, inadequate public services and lack of or limited participation in local governance decision making.
- Women in many cities face challenges accessing safe and secure housing, land rights and land tenure. They, along with youth, indigenous, trans and gender non-conforming peoples, and other marginalized groups, are more likely than men to face forced evictions and experience violence, including sexual violence, as a consequence of homelessness.
- National governments need to support local governments to implement the SDGs locally, and local governments and urban stakeholders need to use international sustainability agreements such as the SDGs in the local context in a gender-responsive manner.
- Localizing the SDGs with a structural change focus that addresses gender and intersecting inequalities and working with local partners to plan, implement, monitor and evaluate, is critical for successful implementation of SDG targets.
- Cities are both intensive and extensive users of resources. Alongside action to ensure compact and sustainable cities, it is important to decentralize and reverse the trend toward megacities, especially for climate change action and ecological integrity.
- Investments in disaster risk reduction, including early warning systems accessible to all and adaptation measures for critical sectors, are essential for building resilient communities and facilitating sustainable development. For example, Small Island Developing States (SIDS) are low-lying island nations that are highly vulnerable and often affected by weather extremes and climate change, including the increased severity of cyclones, storm surges, heavy rains, droughts, sea-level rise and ocean acidification, which impact women of all ages and girls most.
- Current indicators do not capture social and cultural dimensions; for example, Target 11.5 focuses on economic losses and fails to recognize lost livelihood & assets, which is what often most affects women.

- Human rights obligations, such as under the Convention on the Elimination of all Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) including its general recommendations, must be met at all levels of government in designing and implementing urban policy.
- National governments must live up to their responsibilities to tackle the systemic problems that impede adequate levels of financing for development and women's rights and gender equality, including at the sub-national level. This includes the role of debt, illicit financial flows and tax havens that deprive low-income countries of necessary revenues to implement SDG 11.

Recommendations

1. Rethink and redevelop human settlements, including cities, from a feminist perspective; put persons in all their diversity at the center; give prominence to care & reproductive work as well as productive work.
2. Ensure and enable women's meaningful and active participation in leadership and decision-making at the sub-national level.
3. Design and implement policies to make cities safe (i.e. recovering public spaces, ensuring better inter-connection between productive and reproductive activities, fighting all types of gender violence in public spaces including sexual assault and harassment);
4. Enact policies and programs that enable care work to be shared and redistributed among men and women (i.e. flexible hours in delivering services, child and elder care options, planning and zoning that integrates education, health care, housing, parks and transport);
5. Implement gender-responsive budgeting at the national and sub-national government levels, fulfilling commitments, for example, in the New Urban Agenda.
6. Strengthen positive rural-urban linkages through equitable and sustainable sharing of scarce resources, including through sustainable territorial water and energy systems and through conservation and restoration actions.
7. Ensure age- and gender-responsive planning and investment that incorporates Universal Design and responds to and includes girls and women of all ages, in all their diversity.
8. Plan for sustainable, safe and accessible urban mobility for all and environmentally sound, resource-efficient transport systems for passengers and freight, effectively linking people, places, goods, services and economic opportunities – accommodating the movement and safety of everyone.
9. Sub-national governments should undertake mapping of local actors and put in place structures to hold regular forums to bring actors together to discuss policies and their impacts on women, girls, gender-nonconforming and trans people.
10. Develop mechanisms to engage women's and feminist groups in designing policy solutions.
11. National and local governments, as well as the United Nations Statistical Commission, should increase their commitment and allocation of resources to ensure that, at a minimum, relevant data is disaggregated by sex, gender and age.
12. Resilience under SDG 11 should be defined by underpinning it with people's priorities, development justice and reducing inequalities. Resilience should also be about participatory urban governance that ensures broader involvement of stakeholders with an all-of-society approach.
13. Undertake systematic assessment of gender differentials in resource use and the resulting contributions of these actions to climate change.
14. Involve diverse communities in disaster risk reduction planning to ensure achievement of target 11.b. For example, ensure that toilet and sanitation facilities at evacuation center respond to needs of all women and girls, and that shelters ensure the rights and safety of everyone without discrimination, including gender-non-conforming and LGBTQI.
15. Enact progressive taxes, fees, fines, penalties, incentives, tariffs and other regulation to promote sustainable consumption and production (SCP) and emissions reductions, at local level.

ⁱ For reference: See the Women's Major Group HLPF 2018 Position Paper at <https://tinyurl.com/y7bry64r>