



Consultative status with
UN Economic and Social Council

International Union of Tenants

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Statement from the XVI Congress of the International Union of Tenants, IUT Birmingham, England, August 6-8 2004

AIDS/HIV causes loss of breadwinners and increase homelessness

Every minute, five young people between 15 and 24 years old are infected with HIV. Experts predict AIDS and other diseases will leave more than 44 million orphans in developing countries by the end of this decade.

HIV/AIDS has become part of the permanent condition in human settlements around the world especially in Africa and Asia. The highest incidence of HIV/AIDS is in cities and towns. There is growing consensus that strategies to reduce HIV/AIDS must go beyond health interventions because of its severe social consequences. The disease exacerbates poverty, creates orphans, marginalises people and stigmatises those afflicted and their families. It has also weakened the ability of local urban institutions to deliver services because so many employees are affected at every level of society.

AIDS devastates families as so many of the victims are heads of households or parents. HIV/AIDS tends to push more households into hardships and urban poverty, thus generating a *greater need for low-cost housing* by the growing number of urban poor. A family affected by HIV usually experiences a reduction in income due to illness and at the same time increased expenses in health care, thus resulting in household deficits. To make ends meet, families take children out of school and save on food. Should this not be sufficient, they then *default on rental payments or mortgages*.

We, the signatories of this statement and appeal, urge our governments in the developed world to increase its Official Development Assistance, ODA, for the purpose of stemming the spread of HIV/AIDS.

We also direct our plea to the UN-Habitat, to its funding members and also to the governments affected, to put special emphasis on the particular problems linked to the effects of HIV/AIDS, loss of breadwinners and loss of accommodation, which then again are causing new casualties. Access to safe and affordable housing is a crucial step for stopping the increase of homelessness among the most vulnerable groups, women and children.

Birmingham, England, August 8th 2004