



WOMEN'S
RIGHTS
TO CITIES

RIO DECLARATION

Feminist contributions to the NEW URBAN AGENDA

On Well Being in Cities

We, representatives of women and feminist activist organizations from across Latin America, gathered in Rio de Janeiro in May 2016 at the “**Prá Lá e Prá Cá – O direito das Mulheres às Cidades**”¹ Seminary, state that no city can be just, sustainable, solidary and safe while the rights of women are not fully included and represented in its integrity, plurality, complexity and in all its dimensions of class, race, ethnicity, generation, sexual orientation and physical condition.

We know that living in great urban centers has its pains and pleasures. A great city beckons countless possibilities; promises of change, education, healthcare, renovation and a better life. However, the flip side of this coin is not far behind, appearing in the form of violence, human trafficking, weapons smuggling, drug dealing, inadequate transport and precarious housing, besides the lack of potable water and sanitation. Cities expand beyond their limits giving birth to slums, suburbs or segregated cities. Historically excluded populations live in this urban sprawl and, since poverty has gender, race and ethnicity, they consist primarily of women, mostly black and native women.

We stress that the document to be agreed upon by the governments related to the **Habitat III** agenda must consider and include citizenship in all its diversity. The absence of black and native women from the “Rascunho Zero”² document presented so far is inadmissible. We, feminists from Latin America, consider it to be fundamental that the approach to the planning and building of cities incorporate not only gender diversity, but all diversity of citizenship which inhabit urban spaces.

As a result of crises, wars and climactic problems, we should, today more than ever, strongly consider the issue of migrant and refugee women, whose displacement from their homes make them extremely vulnerable and exposed to discrimination for various reasons.

The **New Urban Agenda** must consider the impact of great ventures and the actions of large corporations on the deterioration of women’s quality of life and their communities. These lead to forced relocations and migrations, diminished access to natural resources such as water, increase in cost of housing, discrimination in access to labor markets, rise in rates of violence, both domestic and in the community, besides other correlated factors. It is important to emphasize the need for holding companies and corporations accountable for the social vulnerability they bring to the communities surrounding them, precarious employment and/or seasonal labor, negative impact on informal labor markets and other violations of women’s human rights.

We can no longer accept and live with the absence of rights or partial rights. Every day, our toil moves the economy of the region, promoting the development of our countries and cities. In the twenty first century, it is about time our rights, which may be formally recognized but ignored in practice, were included with due emphasis and comprehension in the 2016 **Habitat III – United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development’s agenda in Quito**.

Entry into the world of rights begins with the right to a home. The right to adequate housing is of fundamental importance, but it is essential that housing include access to potable water and sanitation, basic rights usually ignored in our cities. The burden which comes from the lack of these services end up falling, as usual, on women, increasing their workload and limiting opportunities, with enormous costs to health and quality of life. Insecurity over ownership is also detrimental to women’s self-esteem and hinders the improvement of their lives and that of their families. Women and impoverished populations have been abandoned on hillsides, slopes and distant lands, requiring the development of strategies of adaptation and resilience with creativity and tenacity, for governments have not been able to respond to these demands.

1 In English, “Back and Forth – Women’s rights to cities”

2 In English, “First Draft”

Moreover, near this dignified housing there must be daycare centers, schools and healthcare services so that women themselves, their children and family, usually in their care, have access to quality public services, such as education, culture and leisure. In this uneven division of labor between men and women, it is women who commute to and from home, work, school, leisure and when caring for others. Local urban planning which incorporates care services from a gender perspective, freeing up women's time and creating opportunities for greater economic autonomy, is vital.

Packed buses, packed trains, packed metros. Harassment also packs public transport in Latin America. The New Urban Agenda must unconditionally guarantee accessible and safe transport for the mobility of women, for cities suffer from a centralization of access to common, commercialized and privatized goods. Mobility in cities is more complex and unsafe for women than men. Routes are marked by sexist harassment suffered on public transport, making it necessary to build cities which are multi-centered, with safe housing, mobility and accessibility.

Safety is essential! Even though violence continues to occur primarily in domestic spaces, the violence experienced in public spaces generates fear and restricts liberties. Streets, especially those in the outskirts, are usually dark, without sidewalks, covered in trash and

unsafe. Aside from the fear of assault and harassment which accompanies women in their daily lives, they also have to deal with the actions of drug dealers, police violence, religious intolerance and domestic violence which limit their citizenship.

We reaffirm that wellbeing in cities and their surroundings is not limited to a roof and some services, but in equality of access and participation in the decisions involving public policies. There can be no democracy without equality! And in order to have equality, it is indispensable to consider the various needs of its inhabitants. Our cities can no longer be planned and built considering only the economic interests of a white, patriarchic, sexist and racist hegemonic masculinity.

Recognizing that any form of exclusion and discrimination are factors in the negation of human sustainability, in that they regulate rights and opportunities between men and women, different social classes, races and ethnicities, physical condition, sexual orientation and gender identity in unequal ways. We, Latin American feminists and activists, gathered at the International Seminary "**Prá Lá e Prá Cá – O Direito das Mulheres às Cidades**"³, add to the contributions of other women and organizations in building an inclusive New Urban Agenda.

3 In English, "Back and Forth – Women's rights to cities"

SIGNATORY ORGANIZATIONS AND PROJECTS

ActionAid
Agora é Que São Elas
Articulacion Feminista
Marcosul – AFM
CISCSCA – Centro de Intercambio
Y Servicios Cone Sur
Comissão de Defesa dos
Direitos Humanos e Cidadania
– CDDHC-ALERJ
Espaço Feminista – PE
Fase Rio
Feminicidade Rio de Janeiro
Huirou Commission
Ibase- Instituto Brasileiro de
Análises Sociais e Econômicas
Ilê Omolu Oxum

Instituto Promundo
Instituto Magna Mater
Instituto Omolara Brasil
ISER – Instituto de
Estudos da Religião
Laboratório Habitat, Participación
Y Género – Facultad de
Arquitectura de la UNAM
Meu Rio – Circuito
Mulheres Mobilizadas
Mirim Brasil
ONU-Habitat Brasil
ONU Mulher Brasil
REDEH – Rede de
Desenvolvimento Humano

Confederação Nacional
de Municípios – CNM
Projeto Municípios Seguros
e Livres de Violência contra
Mulheres CNM – UE Brasil
Red Mujer e Habitat de
América Latina e Caribe
Secretaria de Política para
as Mulheres da Bahia
Secretaria de Política para as
Mulheres de Santo André- SP
SOS Corpo – Instituto Feminista
para a Democracia
Think Olga – Campanha
Chega de Fiu Fiu
União Brasileira de Mulheres
União por Moradia Popular

Partnership:



Realization: