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**Security of tenure is tantamount for the enjoyment of an adequate standard of living: Amnesty International oral statement to the 25<sup>th</sup> Session of the UN Human Rights Council (3 – 28 March 2014)**

14 March 2014

Item 3

Promotion and protection of all human rights, civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights, including the right to development

General Debate

Mr. President,

Amnesty International welcomes the *Guiding Principles on security of tenure for the urban poor* presented by the Special Rapporteur on adequate housing as a component of the right to an adequate standard of living, and on the right to non-discrimination in this context.

Over many years our organization has documented innumerable cases of forced evictions affecting individuals in all regions of the world. We have repeatedly emphasized that it is the poorest members of society, living in informal settlements with no security of tenure, who are at risk of forced eviction. The lack of legal frameworks that confer a minimum degree of security of tenure to all leaves marginalized groups vulnerable to harassment and threats, and makes it easy for governments to evict people without due process.

In this respect, Amnesty International welcomes the recognition of diverse types of tenure in the *Guiding Principles*. Our organization joins the Special Rapporteur in stressing the importance of prioritizing the provision of security of tenure *in-situ*. Only in exceptional circumstances and after genuine consultation with affected people can eviction and resettlement be considered as an option for achieving security of tenure. Amnesty International also joins the Special Rapporteur in highlighting the

importance of promoting security of tenure for women. Guaranteeing equality and non-discrimination is an important component of securing the right to adequate housings of those living in informal settlements and slums.

Mr President,

Amnesty International also welcomes the reports from the Special Rapporteur's visits to Indonesia and the United Kingdom. We urge the Indonesian authorities to heed her call to ensure that forcibly relocated religious minorities, particularly Ahmadiyya and Shi'a communities, are guaranteed safe return to their homes. We ask the UK government to address the report's recommendations, in particular the lack of security of tenure of Gypsy and Traveller communities, which acts as a barrier to their enjoyment of an adequate standard of living.

The impacts of a forced eviction are serious and enduring, especially for people already living in poverty. People lose not only their homes but also neighbourhoods, personal possessions, access to work and to services such as water, sanitation, and health care. Given that security of tenure is a central component of the right to adequate housing, Amnesty International endorses the Special Rapporteur's suggestion that this Council adopt the Guiding Principles.

Thank you Mr. President.