

### **Item 3 Interactive Dialogue w/ SR Housing**

Mr. President,

Americans for Democracy & Human Rights in Bahrain and the Bahrain Institute for Rights and Democracy, thank Rapporteur Farha for her report. The financialization of the housing market is increasingly impacting human rights, and we agree with the Rapporteur's assessment that many countries are facing a subversion of housing and land as social goods; in favor of their value as commodities for the accumulation of wealth. We further share her concerns of this resulting in widespread evictions and displacement.

In the Eastern Province of Saudi Arabia, we are concerned with a recent development project, which aims to demolish homes and buildings of cultural and historical significance in Awamiya. The project will specifically affect the neighborhood of al-Masora, one of Awamiya's oldest neighborhoods, which dates back more than four centuries. The planned demolition will destroy more than 400 centuries-old houses and cultural sites.

It is concerning that residents' cultural and historical attachment to their land and homes are being disregarded in favor of investment priorities, without consultation or consent. We are also alarmed by the forced eviction of residents, some without any compensation for their land. We are concerned that these measures will further impoverish the local population, leaving many displaced without alternative housing, and forcing many individuals to establish informal living settlements. We also fear that these plans will further marginalize residents of the Eastern Province, who already face considerable discrimination.

In light of this pertinent example, which highlights both the impact of treating housing as a commodity, and also, the implications of policies that disregard the right to adequate housing, we wish to ask the Rapporteur: What steps can Governments, like Saudi Arabia, take to ensure that investment and development projects better recognize the social functions of housing and human rights obligations in this regard?

Thank you.