SDI MEDIA STATEMENT

12 NOVEMBER 2025

For Immediate Release

Grassroots leaders and experts among the more than 1 billion people living in favelas and slums worldwide have demanded to be taken seriously by leaders at COP30.

The summit's Brazilian hosts recognize that "cities are shaping the future of global climate action" while continuing the self-defeating trend of downplaying and excluding residents of vulnerable low-income and informal settlements, often referred to as slums.

In an open letter to the COP30 Presidency, the Climate Champions Group of Slum Dwellers International (SDI) says its members are tired of being "asked to provide testimony of the real-life consequences of climate breakdown" even as they are persecuted and their homes dismissed as "illegal" by authorities at home.

With evidence showing that upgrading informal settlements can provide a GDP boost for entire societies, SDI argues leaders are missing a trick by failing to adapt cities to the effects of climate change, and by failing to take advantage of the wealth of data and insights its network can provide.

Joseph Muturi, President of the Global SDI Network, said: "Informal settlements have been treated as problems to be solved by governments for decades. Our contributions are key to building and running the cities of today and of tomorrow."

"We are arriving at COP30 demanding to be recognized as key stakeholders that hold solutions to climate change problems." Mr Muturi is the co-chair of the Nexus Area Working Group on Empowering People Living and Working in Informality under the UNFCCC Marrakech Partnership.

Tucker Landesman, who supports the SDI Climate Champions Group as a Senior Researcher on Urban Climate Action at the International Institute for Environment and Development, said: "We have strong research demonstrating that people living in informal settlements are disproportionately more vulnerable than most to the effects of climate change like extreme heat, floods, and storms"

"Evidence is emerging across the global South that upgrading informal settlements is one of the most effective climate adaptation strategies we have. It reduces risk, improves health, and strengthens local economies."

Nicera Wanjiru, a leader from the Kenyan national federation, Muungano wa Wanavijiji reiterated that "slum upgrading is climate action." "We are working to save our homes and livelihoods from flooding and storms, sea level rise, and extreme heat. We could do so much more if the experts sitting in government and big development organizations worked with us in real partnership."

Slum Dwellers International (SDI) is a global network of community-based organisations of the urban poor in more than 20 countries across Africa, Asia, and Latin America. Its federations organise savings groups, collect data, and negotiate with governments to secure land, housing, and basic services, advancing inclusive urban development and locally led climate action.

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