

PRESS RELEASE**Contact: Tiffany M. Gardner, 212-253-1771****For Immediate Release
Tuesday, April 14, 2008****Human Rights and Housing Rights Groups Urge New York City
Council to Vote Against the Rezoning of Harlem's 125th Street**

(New York) – Over 40 international human rights and housing rights groups today expressed dismay over the proposed rezoning of Harlem's famed 125th Street. The groups have issued a letter to the New York City Council, urging them to vote against the City Planning Commission's Rezoning Plans. The letter, organized by the National Economic and Social Rights Initiative and the Coalition to Save Harlem, was also sent to Governor David Patterson, Senators Charles Schumer and Hillary Clinton and Mayor Michael Bloomberg.

In their letter, the organizations note the growing housing crisis taking place across New York City, most prominently represented by drastic increases in the city's homeless population with significant increases in the number of homeless families. Additionally, the letter spoke to the New York City Housing Authority's precarious financial position, making it increasingly vulnerable to private takeover, and the significant displacement of communities across New York City that has already taken place.

"The proposed rezoning plans for 125th Street would permanently displace thousands of Harlem residents and place at peril the historical and cultural institutions of this vibrant community. The heart of New York City is its eclectic communities representing strong cultural backgrounds that come together to form a larger community with cultural, social and communal depth. The city's planning process will result in a redevelopment plan that seeks corporate profit at the expense of what makes New York City unique – the city that welcomes everyone," said Tiffany M. Gardner, legal director of the National Economic & Social Rights Initiative (NESRI).

According to international human rights standards, governments must protect the human right to housing, which requires the right to participation in decisions that will affect individuals' housing rights.

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