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**CONSIDERATION OF THE COMMON AFRICAN  
POSITION ON HABITAT III**

### DRAFT COMMON AFRICAN POSITION ON HABITAT III

**We**, African Ministers of Housing and Urban Development, having convened in **Abuja, Nigeria, on 24<sup>th</sup> February, 2016**, as a sub-committee on Urban Development and Human Settlements of the African Union Specialized Technical Committee on Public Service, Local Government, Urban Development and Decentralization **adopt this** Common African Position on the Third United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development (HABITAT III) to be held, in Quito, Ecuador, October 2016.

**RECOGNIZE** progress made in advancing the human settlement Agenda since the convening of Habitat I conference in Vancouver, Canada in 1976 and Habitat II Conference held in Istanbul, Turkey in 1996, and the need to build on that progress.

**FURTHER RECOGNIZE** that despite the progress made, many challenges exist, which need to be addressed as a matter of urgency. In addition, there are new and emerging challenges to sustainable urbanization and human settlements which call for our collective efforts to effectively address them.

**CONSIDER** the Habitat III conference as a unique opportunity for the world to agree on a New Urban and Human Settlements Agenda building on the outcomes of Habitat II and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in addressing the unfinished business of the MDGs in particular, the goal of adequate shelter for all and that Africa must seize the opportunity to fully engage the global community in shaping the New Urban Agenda in line with these international agreements including African Union Agenda 2063.

**RECALL** all the relevant resolutions of the Governing Council of Habitat and the United Nations General Assembly on the convening of the Habitat III Conference and other outcomes of major UN conferences and summits on economic, social and environment fields including the outcomes of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda on Financing for Development as important contributions in defining the New Urban Agenda.

**ALSO ACKNOWLEDGE** the potential contributions of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development particularly Goal No. 11 and the Paris Climate Agreement to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change in contributing to the New Urban Agenda.

**ALSO TAKE NOTE** of paragraph 44 relating to sustainable urban development of the Dakar Declaration of 15<sup>th</sup> Conference of Heads of State and Government of countries using French as a common Language which was held from 29 to 30 November 2014.

**FURTHER TAKE NOTE** of the extensive consultations that have taken place among the various sub-regions, with stakeholders within our respective countries, and among ourselves as Ministers of Housing and Urban Development since 2005; and more significantly among our Heads of State and Government who have provided guidance on the vision for Africa's development as well as adopted a collective position on the future global development agenda.

**TAKE** into account the development of the African Report on Habitat III by ECA, and reiterate our call for the document to reflect our national reports, in terms of progress, opportunities, new challenges and new vision to inform a comprehensive Urban Agenda.

**REAFFIRM** the principles we agreed to in N'Djamena that the African Urban Agenda should be owned and driven by Africa, informed by African realities and based on Africa's current priorities as well as future needs; be implementable and results focused, with clearly defined deliverables and a plan of action; and that it should build on relevant existing commitments in regional and globally agreed documents on urbanization and sustainable human settlements.

**REASSERT** the urgent need to harness the transformative potential of urbanization in its various facets to facilitate the reduction of poverty in all its forms and inequality as well as achieve an inclusive, integrated, prosperous, stable and peaceful Africa driven by its own citizens and representing a dynamic force in the global arena.

**WELCOME** the Presidential Initiative on the African Urban Agenda and Strengthening Partnerships Programme under UN-Habitat and invite African Heads of State and Government to support the initiative.

**COGNIZANT** of the need to strengthen the UN-Habitat to make it politically visible, as a key player in mobilizing all relevant actors, state and non-state in implementing the urban and human settlements component of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

**REITERATE** the continuing relevance of the twin goals of the Habitat Agenda namely adequate shelter for all and sustainable human settlements in an urbanizing world, and reiterate that all its aspirations have not been fully met, mainly due to the challenges encountered in implementing the Habitat Agenda including limited access to housing

finance, land and basic services as well as the continued expansion of slums and informal settlements.

**ACKNOWLEDGE** the multi-sectoral nature of urbanization and human settlements development and the need to adopt an integrated and holistic approach in building collaborations, partnerships and alliances with relevant government departments and institutions as well as engagement with relevant stake holders including inter alia civil society, private sector, grassroots organizations, women, youth, people with disabilities, academia, media to facilitate delivery, financing, monitoring and evaluation of the New Urban Agenda.

**NOTE** current efforts to harness the creative energies of the informal sector as well as consolidate the accumulated and diverse human and physical assets embedded within it through participation, access and empowerment, especially of women, youth and people in vulnerable situation.

**Recognize** the centrality and importance of land for Africa's sustainable socio-economic development and committing to harness the full potential of dynamics of land investment, such as modern land registration systems, land value capture, land based revenue for fostering inclusiveness and increasing financial resources base as well as enhancing Africa's structural transformation.

**ACKNOWLEDGE this** entails cooperation, collaboration and dialogue between respective multi-level government departments and institutions to drive government-wide programmes and policies, the implementation of which must be supported by both state and non-state actors.

**REITERATE** that the process of urbanization, and the potential embedded within it, presents an invaluable opportunity for Africa to realize the economic, social and spatial structural transformation by harnessing the emerging dynamism resulting from the urban dividend provided by the expansion and movement of populations, resulting in urban agglomeration and concentration and recognize that institutional, cultural, economic and political transformations can contribute to major advances in the urban experience for Africa's diverse communities.

**FURTHER REITERATES** the importance of continuing to strengthen policy and institutional framework and capacity for managing urbanization and human settlements as a key component of structural transformation in Africa.

**RECOGNISE** the complementarity and symbiotic linkages between urban and rural settings, which exist as a continuum, driven by the overall dynamic of urbanization.

**RECOGNIZING** further that poverty is also a contributing factor of urbanization in Africa.

**TAKE NOTE** of the technical background document considered by the Expert Group Meeting (EGM) that informed the generation of this Common Position.

**REAFFIRM** six fundamental principles underlying the African perspective to the outcome of habitat III, agreed to in Nairobi on 13 April 2015.

**DECIDE** to pursue an ambitious new, and transformative Urban and Human Settlements Agenda based on the following pillars:

**Pillar 1: Harness the Potential of Urbanization to Accelerate Structural Economic Transformation and Inclusive Growth by:**

- promoting slum upgrading to provide secure tenure, infrastructure, basic service and socio economic facilities for addressing exclusion, poverty, health, safety and improved quality of life;
- committing adequate financial resources in the productive urban sectors for planning and management of urban areas, investment in infrastructure and basic services for human settlements development and provision of decent and affordable housing particularly to the low income segments;
- promoting inclusive economic growth that translates to decent job creation as well as improved living standards for all;
- promoting connectivity between rural and urban areas to harness the full potential of the urban rural linkage;
- transforming the urban economies into high productivity and value adding activities;
- promoting planning and investment for sustainable urban mobility systems that link people, places and economic opportunities.

**Pillar 2: Link Sustainable Urban and Human Settlements Development with Resilience through:**

- fostering resilience of human settlements, including social and economic resilience, along the rural - urban development continuum, and enhancing rural-urban linkages;

- adoption and domestication of the International Guidelines on Urban and Territorial Planning, and effective land use planning;
- active partnerships with the private sector as actors of land development, for the greater public good in human settlements;
- up-scaling participatory slum upgrading and prevention programmes;
- building institutional capacity and enhance it where it exists for urban safety, resilience and disaster risk management recognizing that urban areas are particularly vulnerable to climate change risks;
- installing early warning systems and urban observatories for disaster risk management and mitigation;
- preserving eco-systems and providing safe and inclusive urban public spaces;
- addressing urban pollution, promoting renewable energy utilization, use of low energy embodied construction materials, and improving waste management;
- embracing innovation in the conceptualization, implementation and maintenance of sustainable and resilient human settlements;
- Integrating mitigation measures throughout project cycles in order to reduce the impact of disasters on persons in vulnerable situations;

**Pillar 3: Enhance People-Centered Urban and Human Settlements Development through:**

- providing basic services to all for equitable, inclusive and sustainable urban and human settlement development;
- integrating gender equality and women empowerment in urban development;
- adopting community driven participatory approaches to human settlements development which originate from residents' identification of needs, and recognizes and builds upon the social capital, innovation, and resources of residents;

- ensuring safety and security in human settlements;
- facilitating access to urban services and housing for migrants and refugees as part of integrated and inclusive community development;
- promoting consultative frameworks among all urban and human settlements stakeholders as well as promoting participatory approach in urban project implementation;
- ensuring accessibility to housing and urban basic services for all, including people in vulnerable situations such as people with disability, children and the elderly.

**Pillar 4: Strengthening Institutions and Systems for Promoting Transformative Change in Human Settlements through:**

- adoption of integrated National Urban Policies including the review of planning curriculums in line with UN Habitat Resolution 25/6 on the International Guidelines for Urban and Territorial Planning and further mainstreaming urbanization into national development planning processes;
- supporting preemptive, spatial and programmatic planning as an effective mechanism for responding to rapid urbanization and for directing sustainable human settlements development;
- promoting effective decentralized urban management by capacitating technically and financially local authorities to address the challenge of rapid urbanization at the local level and to deliver adequate shelter and sustainable human settlements;
- strengthening urban governance through the creation of an enabling environment for efficient and effective service delivery, encompassing appropriate legislations and regulations, functional institutions, and adequate allocation of public finance between the local and national levels;
- Developing sound policy and regulatory frameworks to harness land based revenue, to improve good land governance, enhance gender equity, and ensure urban equity and sustainability.

**Pillar 5: Enhance the Contribution of Urban and Human Settlements Development to the Continental Integration Process by:**

- promoting sustainable planning and management systems of border cities and urban corridors within and across international boundaries;
- expanding continental spatial development programmes as well as regional and inter-regional infrastructure, facilities and initiatives that would promote cross boundary interaction and leverage Urban and Human Settlements assets.

**Pillar 6: Enhance Africa's Global Competitiveness through Urban and Human Settlements Development by:**

- promoting specialization amongst Africa's major cities with a view to maximizing the continent's value addition;
- promoting inclusive cities as articulated in the African Agenda 2063 through advocacy and outreach;
- striving to promote strategic synergy and forge within the continent's integration framework, a dynamic network of urban and human settlements that are competitive on the global platform;
- developing smart cities with improved urban systems for improved functionality, efficiency and effective delivery of urban basic services and infrastructure;

**Pillar 7: Enhancing Environmental Sustainability and Effective Response to Climate Change in Human Settlements by:**

- strengthening capacities for strategic response to climate change adaptation and mitigation;
- developing infrastructure for mitigating the impact of landslides, inundations, coastal erosion, drought, as well as increasing heat in human settlements especially in slums and informal settlements;
- promoting Green building and infrastructure and innovation of technologies as well as the application of designs which mitigate climate change and adapt to its impact;



- fostering the utilization of sustainable renewable energy resources as well as investment in low carbon production systems in urban centres;
- developing systems for sustainable solid and liquid waste management, including promoting the principle of reducing, reusing and recycling of resources;
- Mainstreaming climate change issues in urban planning;

**Pillar 8: Institute a Global Partnership for Sustainable Urban Management to Facilitate Implementation of the New Global Urban and Human Settlements Agenda in Africa which:**

- recognizes the importance of continued implementation of the unfinished business of the relevant MDGs and Habitat Agenda;
- acknowledges the importance of addressing human settlements continuum as a driving force for structural transformation;
- establishes appropriate financial mechanisms including the setting up of a well-resourced operational fund for facilitating implementation of the new Urban and Human Settlements Agenda;
- strengthens existing institutions and arrangements for implementation;
- strengthens UN-Habitat in Nairobi by universalizing its governing body, ensuring additional, stable and predictable financial resources from regular and non-regular budget from the UN, improving its ability to provide capacity building, empowering it to be the global anchor institution that leads and coordinates the entire UN system in the implementation of the mandate on urbanization and human settlements including in 2030 Agenda for sustainable development, Paris Agreement to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the New Urban Agenda;
- mandates our negotiators and interlocutors to engage in the Habitat III preparatory process based on this common position;
- recommend that this Common African Position on Habitat III be transmitted to the Heads of State and Government at the July 2016 AU summit in Kigali-Rwanda for their consideration.

2016

# Consideration of the common African position on habitat III

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