



HABITAT III AFRICA REGIONAL MEETING

DRAFT ABUJA DECLARATION FOR THE UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE ON HOUSING AND SUSTAINABLE URBAN DEVELOPMENT (HABITAT III)

“Africa’s Priorities for the New Urban Agenda”

24-26 FEBRUARY 2016

We, the representatives of National Government, local and regional authorities, intergovernmental organizations, United Nations agencies, professionals and academia, private sector, civil society organizations, women, children and youth, participating in the Habitat III Africa Regional Meeting in Abuja, Nigeria, from 24 to 26 February 2016;

GUIDED BY the African Agenda 2063, as a strategic framework for ensuring inclusive socio-economic transformation and, in this regard, recall the importance it attaches to urbanization as a driver of structural transformation;

EXPRESS OUR profound gratitude and appreciation to the Government of the Federal Republic of Nigeria for convening and hosting this African Regional Preparatory Meeting on the United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development (Habitat III);

CONVEY appreciation to the people of Nigeria, and particularly the residents of the Federal Capital Territory Abuja, for the warm welcome and hospitality extended to the participants at this meeting;

COMMEND the Habitat III Secretariat, the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) and the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), for compiling the Habitat III Africa Regional Report presenting the implementation of the Habitat Agenda (1996) and the current urban challenges;

COMMEND ALSO the African Union (AU) for its efforts on facilitating an inclusive process towards the Habitat III Conference to articulate Africa's vision for sustainable urban and human settlements development in the New Urban Agenda;

RECOGNIZE the milestones of Habitat I and Habitat II Conferences, *The Future We Want* of the Rio+20 Conference, relevant resolutions of the UN General Assembly and the Governing Council of UN-Habitat, Decision 29 of the second session of the African Union Assembly on urbanization, as well as the Dakar Declaration of November 2014 on the occasion of the 15th Francophonie Summit;

RECOGNIZE the World Urban Forum as the foremost global arena for interaction among policymakers, local government leaders, non-governmental stakeholders and expert practitioners in the field of human settlements, specially the ninth session of the Forum in 2018, to be held in Kuala Lumpur in Malaysia, being the first one to have a thematic focus on the implementation of the New Urban Agenda to be adopted at Habitat III;

ENCOURAGES African national governments, local and regional authorities, intergovernmental organizations, United Nations agencies, professionals and academia, private sector, civil society organizations, women and children & youth, to participate at the next Habitat III Thematic Meeting on Informal Settlements, to be held in Pretoria, South Africa on 7 and 8 April 2016.

WELCOME the presidential initiative on the African Urban Agenda and strengthening partnership programme under UN-Habitat and invite African Heads of States and Governments to join and support the initiative;

LOOKING FORWARD to the celebration of COP22 in Marrakech in November 2016 as a significant step in linking the implementation of the New Urban Agenda in the framework of the climate change agreements and welcome the initiative by the Government of Morocco to host an African Ministerial Forum in May 2016 in Rabat to advance on the debate of city policies and sustainable development.

TAKE INTO ACCOUNT the recent adoption of the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda on Financing for Development, the Sendai Framework on Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030, as well as the Paris Agreement on Climate Change;

ACKNOWLEDGE that the opportunities and challenges of urbanization and human settlements have increased in scope and complexity, and thus the need to harness the full potential of the existing institutional and policy frameworks as transformative instruments for economic growth and poverty reduction;

MINDFUL that Sustainable urbanization for Africa encompasses a holistic and integrated concept of human settlements in a continuum which reinforces economic, social and environmental linkages across metropolises, cities and medium-sized towns to villages where most of the continent's population still reside, requiring a multi-sectoral approach which strengthens partnerships at all levels including with non-state actors;

AWARE of the emerging challenge of forced urbanization due to, among others, conflicts, terrorism and natural disasters, which has forced populations to move en masse from rural areas to urban centers and vice versa, and across borders, stretching existing infrastructure resulting in increased insecurity and poverty which need to be addressed in a comprehensive manner;

RECOMMEND:

1. Harness the potential of urbanization to accelerate structural transformation for inclusive and sustainable growth

- Allocate adequate financial resources to promote sustainable urbanization and human settlements development to drive structural transformation for the benefit of all citizens. This should include promotion of land titling and registration, as well as resource generation through land base revenue and land value capture;
- Promote inclusive economic growth that translates to full employment and decent jobs as well as improved living standards for all
- Enhance connectivity between rural and urban areas to harness the full potential of the urban rural linkages
- Strengthen linkages between urbanization and structural change policies, including accelerated industrialization and agricultural modernization strategies for high productivity and value addition
- Strengthen and create systems of well-connected cities and human settlements at the national and regional levels as nodes of growth based on their competitive advantages
- Integrate urbanization into national development planning as a cross cutting factor driving national growth and transformation
- Prioritize planning and investment for sustainable urban mobility systems that link people, places and economic opportunities

2. Enhance people-centered urban and human settlements through

- Ensuring access to affordable basic services including clean water, sanitation, energy, health, education and sustainable transport and employment by all citizens in order to realize their full potential, especially youth, women and people in vulnerable groups;
- Strengthening institutions and spatial planning systems to foster urban safety and security, as well as healthy environment and promotes inclusion through participatory approaches and consultative frameworks;
- Ensuring access to sustainable, affordable and adequate housing and land, and promoting slum upgrading to ensure security of tenure and access to socio-economic facilities, taking into account the diversity of contexts, the potential of informal economies and the rights of the inhabitants;
- Developing and implementing clean air policies to reduce health risks through regulatory and voluntary initiatives, working with multiple stakeholders;
- Developing a national system of connected cities and human settlements to enhance rural-urban linkages and to advance growth and transformation based on their competitive advantages
- Adopting integrated National Urbanization Policies in the context of national development planning to facilitate multi-sectoral coordination and collaboration and avoid sectoral silos
- Focusing on preemptive, spatial and programmatic urban planning to harness the full potential of urbanization and avoid irreversible and unsustainable pathways
- Accommodating cultural differences, promoting localized systems of sustainable urban development and increased attention for the preservation of cultural heritage

3. Strengthen institutions and systems for promoting transformative change in human settlements including through:

- Enhancing capacities for rural and urban planning, governance and management, underpinned by sound data collection and use;
- Promoting effective decentralized urban management by empowering cities and local governments, technically and financially, to deliver adequate shelter and sustainable human settlements
- Facilitating the participation of urban dwellers in urban governance and management
- Strengthening and harmonizing urban legislation and regulation to promote and facilitate planned urbanization

4. Enhance the contribution of urban and human settlements development to continental integration by

- Taking advantage of urban corridors at the regional level for related infrastructural and other initiatives, cross regional interaction and movement of people
- Orienting regional and interregional infrastructure, facilities and initiatives to promote cross boundary interaction and leverage urban and human settlements assets
- Enhancing the urban dimension of existing sub-regional initiatives and investments
- Positioning urbanization and human settlements as a driver of competitiveness through specialization and connected urban systems at the regional level, namely infrastructure, economy and institutions
- Developing sustainable cities with improved urban systems for improved functionality, efficiency including energy and resource efficiency and effective delivery of urban basic services and infrastructure

5. Enhance environmental sustainability, resilience and effective responses to climate change in cities and human settlements by

- Strengthening capacities of local governments for strategic response to climate change adaptation and mitigation across the rural-urban continuum
- Developing infrastructure that is resilient and which will reduce the impact of disasters especially in slums and informal settlements and building institutional capacities and mechanisms, and disaster risk management and mitigation including early warning systems and urban observatories
- Promoting Green building and infrastructure technologies as well as the application of designs which mitigate climate change and adapt to its impact, including the urban heat island effect
- Fostering the utilization of sustainable renewable energy and natural resources as well as investment in Low Carbon production systems in urban centres
- Promoting resource efficiency in cities, to facilitate urban development in a manner that preserves rapidly diminishing natural resources, and allow cities to better manage water waste food land and energy;
- Developing systems for sustainable solid and liquid waste management, including promoting the principle of reducing, reusing and recycling of resources

6. Enhance efforts to advance a global partnership to facilitate the implementation of the new global urban and human settlements agenda by

- Mobilizing financial resources from both state and non-state actors
- Enhancing multi-stakeholder engagement for the effective implementation of the New Urban Agenda for cities and human settlements agenda in Africa, including the private sector
- Capacity building, skills and technology transfer for sustainable urban and human settlements planning and management

7. Strengthen UN-Habitat to make it politically visible, as the key player in mobilizing all relevant actors, State and non-State in implementing the New Urban Agenda as the outcome of Habitat III as well as the urban and human settlements component of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and reiterate the importance of the Nairobi Headquarters location of UN-Habitat by

- Establishing universal membership at its Governing Council to give it more authority and legitimacy in decision-making
- Ensuring additional, stable and predictable financial resources both from regular and non-regular budget of the United Nations
- Improving the ability of the organization to provide capacity building to developing countries in designing, planning, implementation and sustainable management of urban and other human settlements
- Empowering UN-Habitat as the global anchor institution that mobilizes and leads all actors on the sustainable urbanization agenda, urban governance, and which engages the UN system in the implementation of mandates on urbanization and human settlements

We finally commit to promote the principles and the recommendations included in this Abuja Declaration for Habitat III, ensuring that this contributes to the upcoming Third Preparatory Committee meeting to be held in Surabaya in July 2016 as well as to the formulation of the New Urban Agenda at the next United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development to be held in Quito (Ecuador) in October 2016.

Abuja (Nigeria), 26 February 2016