



**STATEMENT BY THE MINISTER OF HUMAN SETTLEMENTS OF THE
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA, MS LINDIWE SISULU MP, AT THE THIRD
UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE ON HOUSING AND SUSTAINABLE
URBAN DEVELOPMENT (HABITAT III)**

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QUITO

Check against delivery

Secretary-General of Habitat III

All protocol observed

We join my counterparts in a joint expression of gratitude to the Government of Ecuador and the City of Quito for their generous hospitality and excellent arrangements for the Third United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development, Habitat III. For us as South Africans it comes at an auspicious time when the World Summit Congress of the United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG) held in Bogota on Friday elected a patriot and hard working South African Mayor as their President for the coming three years. Congratulations to the new UCLG President Mr Parks Tau.

The World Urban Campaign also appointed another hard working community activist as its Chairperson, Mrs Rose Molokoane. We join the world in congratulating them and we are more than certain the world will learn a lot from our experiences over the last 22 years through them.

We want to go on and thank and also congratulate the Bureau of the Preparatory Committee and facilitators for their hard work in ensuring the success of all processes towards this conference. A special thank you to the Secretariat of the Conference for an inclusive and wide ranging consultations and engagements heading towards Habitat III.

South Africa has benefitted greatly from these consultation, we began our preparations for the conference in 1994 with the preparation of our National Report. Our National Report was a product of wide ranging consultation. With all role players, it culminated with our hosting of the thematic conference on informal settlements in April this year attended by many stakeholders I see here today and produced what is known as the Pretoria Declaration.

Today we are able to proudly proclaim that over the past 22 years of our democracy we have been able to build 4.3 Million houses and housing opportunities. This allows approximately 22 million people access to housing and basic services, this is an achievement we are very proud of. Just this morning I learnt that the population of Ecuador is 14 Million - We have built enough houses to house the whole of the population of Ecuador.

Having taken a conscious decision to prioritise women in our provision of housing, our report would indicate that 56 percent of the beneficiaries of free government housing are women.

Through our housing programme we are able to empower the poor with an asset and also train and create jobs for the unemployed achieve all this we worked in partnership with all three spheres of Government, business and the communities.

Since 1994, the national Department of Human Settlements has spent US\$ 10 billion (at 2010 prices) on housing and human settlement development, while over US\$ 1.2 billion has been spent by other government agencies on infrastructure projects for redeveloping human settlements. The capital investment by the state has created 1.29 million direct, indirect and induced person-year jobs, and the operational investment has created a further 10 800 jobs.

The growth of the average price of houses in the market, including for the affordable or gap market, has increased fivefold over the 20 years.

More than 10 739 communities in 968 towns and cities across the country benefitted from the Government Housing Programme, indicating the extent of the interface between communities and government, and each of the 4.3 million households.

Chairperson

As we celebrated what is regard as remarked achievement, we find we are facing a moving target. Our intensive efforts just cannot keep up with the rapid rate of urbanization occurring at the alarming rate of 63 percent annually and new household formation. Globally, we face the same conundrum: Yes, we did massively over-achieve on the Millennium Development Goal target of improving the lives of 100 million slum dwellers by 2020, yet today we are faced with approximately 1 billion people living in slum conditions.

South Africa would like to associate itself fully with the statement made on behalf of G77 and China.

Business as usual will not give us the desired outcome we committed to 2015 when we adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development its Goal 11 to "Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable". With this in mind, we engaged intensively at home, and participated actively and passionately in the all international preparations. South Africa and Africa have worked hard to make concrete proposals on how we can craft a new urban agenda that takes cognisance of Africa's unique urbanisation process, and shifts our thinking towards seeking to harness urbanisation to achieve structural and social transformation, as envisaged in Agenda 2063 for Africa.

In this regard, South Africa fully supports the Common African Position for Habitat III and its eight pillars, as endorsed at the African Union Summit of Heads of State and Government through a decision of the Executive Council.

I am very proud of the work we as Africa have achieved in shaping the draft New Urban Agenda we will be adopting here in Quito on Friday 20

October. We have worked collaboratively and intensively first to come to a shared understanding of the peculiarities of urbanization in Africa, and then to come up with a solid set of agreed principles, commitments and concrete actions to overcome the challenges our rapidly urbanizing continent is facing and which will harness the opportunities of urbanization in a productive manner that can engender real positive change and economic transformation in our continent.

I think we ought to congratulate ourselves for the determined manner in which we produced the Common African Position for Habitat III.

Structural economic transformation cannot be achieved without social and spatial transformation, this is most prominent in our country, that is where we in the human settlements and urban development sector come in. If we harness urbanization for the achievement of this economic, social and spatial transformation through the creation of livable, productive and sustainable human settlements, our key development objectives will have been met. Only then we will deliver sustainable human settlements achieve sustainable urbanization, and only then we will achieve the promise of the New Urban Agenda in our lifetime. Our commitment is unwavering.

Chairperson, ladies and gentleman thank you for this opportunity.