

**SPEECH BY THE CABINET SECRETARY, MINISTRY OF INFORMATION, COMMUNICATION AND TECHNOLOGY, AND ACTING CABINET SECRETARY FOR LAND, HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT DR. FRED MATIANGI DURING THE PLENARY OF THE SECOND SESSION OF HABITAT III PREPARATORY COMMITTEE ON 14<sup>TH</sup> APRIL 2015.**

**Honorable Ministers**

**Excellencies**

**Executive Director, UN-Habitat**

**Distinguished delegates**

**Ladies and Gentlemen**

I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the Kenya Delegation. Kenya aligns itself with the statement delivered by the representative of Egypt on behalf of the Group of 77 plus China. At the onset I congratulate the Executive Director for his stewardship of the preparatory process of Habitat III conference. Let me also congratulate the Bureau for their tireless efforts in guiding our deliberations.

**Excellencies,**

Our agenda for the next three days entails preparations towards Habitat III Conference. We will discuss organizational matters, evaluate progress in implementation of Habitat Agenda; identify

challenges as well as address new and emerging issues for consideration and incorporation into Habitat III. This meeting offers a unique opportunity to discuss these key issues.

Urbanization is both inevitable and irreversible since half of humanity now lives in urban areas. It is therefore imperative that our cities and human settlements fulfill their roles as drivers of sustainable development. We also note the projections that the World urban population is estimated to reach 4.2 billion by 2020, with estimations that by 2050 seventy percent of the world's population will live in cities.

Kenya is no exception to this phenomenon, and has experienced a steady increase from 19% in 1999 to 32% in 2009 and a projection of a 50% increase by 2030. It is worth noting that this rapid urbanization is taking place amidst increasing poverty levels, natural disasters and calamities, economic downturns and negative environmental impacts, particularly in the developing world.

Kenya has made tremendous efforts in implementing the Habitat II agenda as well as the MDG's amidst several challenges. We have managed to provide better housing facilities although we have not reached our target. With more support we shall be able to deliver more houses and basic services for our citizens. Furthermore the Kenya Constitution 2010 recognizes housing as a human right and adopts a devolved system, which emphasizes a people centered development and draws power and resources closer to the people.

The Government, together with stakeholders has also put in place policies, legislation, programmes and projects towards attainment of the Habitat Agenda twin goals of ‘’ **adequate shelter for all and sustainable human settlements in an urbanizing world.**’’

However, despite these efforts, the challenge of provision of adequate shelter, urban management and sustainable human settlements is still enormous and far from being realized. The key challenges include rapid urbanization; unplanned urban settlements; growth of informal settlements and slums; inadequate infrastructure and basic services in both urban other human settlements; unbalanced development, unprecedented environmental degradation and neglect of rural areas among others.

Considering the above challenges, Kenya supports a new global development agenda for Habitat III that supports sustainable urbanization and human settlements. This would entail a framework for ensuring:- long term resilience to urban shocks and stresses enabling vulnerable communities to adapt and recover ; provision of basic infrastructure and services in all human settlements; International guidelines on territorial planning that are customized to national scenarios; appropriate land use management systems; inclusion of shelter and slum upgrading and prevention strategies in urban management.

While emphasis should be put on urban planning and management, an integrated and holistic planning and linkage approach, which sees urban and rural areas as two ends of rural-urban continuum, as opposed to two different entities competing for space should be adopted and maintained.

With regard to preparations for Habitat III, Kenya encourages a comprehensive and critical review of implementation of Habitat Agenda through synthesis of national reports to identify issues that are peculiar to member states. In addition efforts should be made to have focused regional and sub-regional group meetings convened by regional Economic Commissions to harmonise and synchronise regional substantive issues. These meetings should be organized soon after PrepCom II to ensure a concise, focused, forward-looking and action-oriented outcome document that is all inclusive

Considering that the Prepcom III scheduled for June next year will wrap up the substantive issues for the conference, Kenya supports and calls upon the Executive Director of UN-Habitat who is also the Secretary General for Habitat III to put in place a clear mechanism for supporting participation of developing countries especially least developed countries at the June meeting, as well as the Habitat III Conference itself. In anticipation of a new urban and human settlements agenda, Kenya also looks forward to a reformed, transformed and democratic UN-Habitat that has capacity to carry

forward the new vision and mandate while at the same time identifying with the aspirations of all member states.

As I conclude, let us ensure that by the end of the meeting, we shall together put on place concrete measure for mobilizing resources and escalating political momentum to narrow identified implementation gaps. The renewed political commitment will shape and reinvigorate the global commitment for sustainable urbanization that will focus on the implementation of a New Urban Agenda, building on the Habitat Agenda of Istanbul 1996 and the Post 2015 Development agenda.

I am confident that under the able stewardship of the Executive Director, Dr. Joan Clos we shall together work towards attaining the goals that will be set out in the SDG's and the new urban and human settlements agenda. With these remarks Excellencies, let me once again wish you all a good stay in our country Kenya.

I thank you for your kind attention.

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