



Federal Government of Nigeria

STATEMENT BY MR. FRIDAY OKAI, DEPUTY PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF NIGERIA TO UN-HABITAT AT THE SECOND SESSION OF THE PREPARATORY COMMITTEE (PREPCOM II) FOR THE UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE ON HOUSING AND SUSTAINABLE URBAN DEVELOPMENT (HABITAT III) HELD AT THE UNITED NATIONS HEADQUARTERS, NAIROBI, KENYA FROM 14TH- 16TH APRIL, 2015

**Madam Co-chair,
Excellencies,
Distinguished Delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

I bring you very warm greetings from the Government and people of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, and good wishes for a successful outcome of the Second Session of the Preparatory Committee (PrepCom II) Meeting for the Third United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development (Habitat III). Permit me also to acknowledge and appreciate all those who extended good wishes to us on the recent conduct of the very fair and credible elections in Nigeria, which we believe, will usher in greater growth and development.

Nigeria aligns itself with the Statement of Egypt on behalf of the Group of 77 and China. We appreciate the work of the Bureau of the Preparatory Committee and are confident of their ability to direct our affairs to a satisfactory conclusion.

Madam Co-Chair,

The Habitat III Conference to be convened in 2016 is a critical conference, and should focus on transcending the Habitat Agenda, while also building on relevant international development goals and operationalizing the post-2015 Development Agenda for the realization of the ideal urban future we seek. As we move closer to the convening of the Habitat III Conference, there is need for more concerted efforts by all governments and partners in preparing, designing and formulating a universal bottom-up, inclusive, transformative New Urban Agenda for housing and sustainable urban development, which must address the three pillars of sustainable development – economic, social and environmental in an integrated manner and will stand the test of time for future development actions in the next 20-years. There is little doubt that the world is closely watching and anxiously waiting for the outcome of these preparations to see what the new global Urban Agenda will deliver in terms of addressing issues of poverty, environmental degradation, climate change, reducing inequalities, building peace and security, human rights, reducing conflict-related suffering, and identifying and addressing other new and emerging urban challenges.

We advocate, and emphasize that the New Urban Agenda must be problem solving with commitments from all countries and partners, as well as deliver growth, prosperity, peace and justice for all. Not only must it contain measures to address balanced regional growth in our world, but it must also widen social protection and enhance policy and innovation in all regions of the world. The development of a robust monitoring framework and assessment mechanism for the New Urban Agenda must also be accorded priority. A workable follow-up and review framework that is fit for purpose must be put in place.

It is with this conviction of our ability to develop a wholesome Urban Agenda that the Government of Nigeria is undertaking earnest preparations for the Habitat III Conference. A broad-based multi-stakeholder National Habitat Committee for Habitat III was established in February, 2014 to adequately prepare Nigeria for the Conference. The Committee has engaged in nationwide consultations with key stakeholders, and integrated all facets of housing and sustainable urban development required for the promotion of an equitable and prosperous society for all its citizens, resulting in the production of a comprehensive, evidence-based National Report that embraces people's felt needs.

Madam Co-Chair,

It is equally in this same spirit, and our concern for the sustainable management of all categories of human settlements in Africa, that we have extended a similar vision to the wider African continent through the implementation of the **Strengthening Partnerships for a New African Urban Agenda Project (SPP)** which the Government of Nigeria, with the support of UN-Habitat is championing, as part of the Continental preparations for Habitat III. The SPP was launched two years ago during the 24th Session of the Governing Council of UN-Habitat with a support grant of US\$3.0 million from the Nigerian Government. Through this initiative, we are determined, and are vigorously pursuing a solid process to empower African countries to effectively engage and contribute at all levels, to advance a new African Urban Agenda, and adopt a common position for Habitat III, as well as participate in other critical global processes such as the post-2015 Development Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). We are indeed, pleased to report

steady progress in this regard. We look forward to hosting African Governments, partners and friends of Africa at the **African Regional Conference for Habitat III** to be held in our capital city of Abuja, as the last main activity under this initiative before the end of the year.

Madam Co-Chair,

In concluding my statement, I want to reiterate the commitment and the confidence of the Government of Nigeria in the Habitat III Conference and its preparations. We urge that as we forge ahead in the process towards Habitat III, we must, all together, in the remaining months, move beyond our business as usual approach, and demonstrate a greater sense of urgency and commitment, including forging stronger partnerships of development cooperation, and sharing of best practices that promotes good governance and national accountability through existing country-level mechanisms and regional and international frameworks for action, to positively impact on the outcome document of Habitat III.

We look forward to successful deliberations at this second session of preparatory meeting, and for stronger cooperation and collaboration with all stakeholders. We are optimistic that our joint and accelerated actions over the next critical months will usher in economic growth, development and prosperity for all and a better urban future for all.

I thank you Madam Co-Chair, distinguished delegates for your attention.

15th April, 2015