



**Permanent Mission of the Kingdom of Swaziland
to the United Nations**

Statement by

Honourable Mr. Paul Sintentela Dlamini

Deputy Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Swaziland

During the United Nations Conference on Housing and
Sustainable Urban Development (Habitat III)

Quito, Ecuador

17 – 20 October 2016

Please Check Against Delivery

Mr. Secretary General
Your Excellencies, Heads of States and Government,
United Nations Secretary-General,
Distinguished Delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Secretary General,

I bring warm and fraternal greetings from His Majesty King Mswati III, the Head of State and Ingwenyama of the Kingdom of Eswatini, the Queen Mother Indlovukazi and the entire Swazi Nation.

His Majesty would have loved to join you all for this eminent occasion. However due to other pressing engagements, He has delegated me to represent Him and deliver the national statement of the Kingdom of Eswatini.

Secretary General,

On behalf of my country's delegation, I wish to express our profound gratitude to the Republic of Ecuador's government for the warm welcome and hospitality. Like all other Habitat Stakeholders, the Swaziland Government looks forward to fruitful deliberations as we usher in the Habitat III era. As we do so with excitement, we appreciate the work of UN-HABITAT on cities and sustainable urbanization, which has helped to define the focus and direction of our country's initiatives in sustainable human settlements development.

Secretary General,

In Swaziland, like in most parts of Sub Saharan Africa, we are experiencing rapid urbanization rate at an estimated national rate of 1.34 %. This urbanization pattern is unsustainable and therefore requires urgent remedial strategies as their impact especially on the poorest of the poor can no longer be ignored. It is imperative, therefore, that future human settlements are well planned, inclusive, equitable, resilient, economically productive and adequately serviced. In order to move the country forward, the Kingdom of Swaziland has set forth a long term national development policy framework affectionately known as *Vision 2022*.

It is the desire of His Majesty, King Mswati III and the Swazi nation that by 2022 Swaziland attains a developed country status with the living conditions of our people at par with those of advanced economies in the world. As a country, we hope that the advent of the New Urban Agenda will largely influence the implementation of Vision

2022 with greater emphasis on sustainable urban development. Since Habitat II, the Government of Swaziland, working closely with other national agencies, has made some remarkable strides on the Habitat Agenda era. To this end, the country has embarked on the development, improvement and review of different legislations that seek to improve security of tenure especially on urban land and provision of affordable housing to the citizenry.

Secretary General,

A noteworthy exercise is the present review of the Building and Housing Act whose rationale is to incorporate new sustainable building technologies. These include among others aspects of the green economy and energy efficient methods which are by and large environment friendly. It will usher in cheaper alternatives of building materials thereby positively influence the affordability of the housing end product and improve the provision of housing in the country. Similarly, the Government of Swaziland has amended the Sectional Titles Act to align it with the necessary changing times. Its implementation will open up the housing sector in particular home ownership for the low and middle income groups of society who were previously excluded from partaking in the real estate sector.

In our quest to improve the standard of living of the country's citizenry, the Government of Swaziland through assistance from the World Bank continues to upgrade informal settlements within the urban space. Through the Urban Development Project, the country has improved the delivery of basic services such as portable water supply, access roads and storm water drainage, sewer services, etc. Funds permitting, it is government's aim to improve the living conditions in peri urban settlements through improving access to safe water, sanitation, improving security of tenure, and reducing overcrowding and improving the structural quality of housing.

Habitat II has also resulted in the country's review of the Housing policy to cover both urban and rural areas with due consideration accorded to women, youth and vulnerable groups. As part of its implementation, the country is presently involved on the delivery of affordable rental housing through Housing the Nation Programme. The Programme involves country-wide construction of Institutional and affordable housing by Swaziland National Housing Board. Its rationale is to empower the country's citizenry through the provision of rental housing and home-ownership. Striking a balance between the two augurs well for the country's skewed housing sector to the benefit of the nation as a whole.

Secretary General,

In conclusion, let me reiterate the Kingdom of Swaziland's continued support to UN-HABITAT in the development and implementation of the new urban agenda in the post-Habitat III era. We are very confident and optimistic about the prospect of Habitat III in achieving a sustainable urban future globally. In preparing for the adoption and implementation of the New Urban Agenda, Member States should make an effort to adopt innovative approaches to address issues such as the eradication of poverty and slums, urban sprawl, security of tenure, access to basic services, infrastructure provision, as well as other key economic and social development considerations.

I thank you for your attention!

Quito, Ecuador