

Intervention by South Africa to the Plenary discussion on:

Leave no one behind, Urban Equity and Poverty Eradication.

(Right to the City and Cities for all)

The South African delegation notes the inputs made in the Policy Paper 1 and finds resonance with most of the components outlined, given our own history and struggles to reverse the old spatial, social, political and economic conditions. Our own constitution and legislative landscape continues to aspire towards creating an environment where all South Africans can enjoy a good and decent quality of life.

We are encouraged by the fact that the Governing Council of the UN Human Settlements Programme approved the international guidelines on urban and territorial planning.

The guidelines among many provisions enjoins **national governments** to collaborate with other spheres of government in formulating national and urban and territorial policy frameworks that promote adequate standards of living for current and future residents.

They provide for **local government** to:

- (a) Cooperate with other spheres of government to ensure social and spatial integration and inclusion particularly through access to all parts of the city and territory, as every inhabitant should have the ability to enjoy the city, its opportunities, services and spaces; and
- (b) Provide for quality, safer and accessible spaces in line with the needs of all women, men, girls and boys.

We are satisfied that our own declaration as a continent from Abuja recognizes the need to enhance people centered urban and human settlements through access to

affordable basic services including water, sanitation, energy, health, education and sustainable transport and employment by citizens in general and the youth, women and vulnerable groups in particular.

With regard to the issue of “Rights”, what South Africa normally advocates for in the international human rights system is the “right to development approach” as enshrined in the 1986 UN Declaration on the Right to Development. The Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action (VDPA) recognises the Right to Development as an inalienable and fundamental human right which places the individual at the centre and as a beneficiary of development. Additionally, a right to development-based approach is a comprehensive process through which all human rights (civil, cultural, economic, political and social), and fundamental freedoms are progressively realised. Core human rights principles of equality, equity, non-discrimination, transparency, accountability, participation and international cooperation, including effective partnerships for development are indispensable in achieving the Right to Development. Hence, it is recommended that the right to development is at the centre of human settlement to avoid the situation of imposed conditionalities to its implementation.