

**ADDRESS BY ZOU KOTA-FREDERICKS, DEPUTY-MINISTER  
FOR HUMAN SETTLEMENTS, REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA,  
AT THE  
SLUM DWELLERS INTERNATIONAL SOUTHERN AFRICAN  
HUB MEETING**

**15 NOVEMBER 2017, AT MISTY RIVER, IN GAUTENG**

Members of Slumdwellers International,

Distinguished guests,

It is a great honour to have been invited here today to engage with you as members of the SDI Alliance in Southern Africa. I welcome you warmly to South Africa.

Sis Rose and team, you have timed this meeting perfectly. A little over a year ago at Habitat 3 in Ecuador, we adopted the most significant document on human settlements and the urban development – the New Urban Agenda.

Since then, we have had some time to reflect on it and think through how we will make it a reality. In less than three months, the world's human settlements and urban actors will reconvene at

the World Urban Forum in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, to engage on the implementation of that agreed commitment we reached at Habitat 3.

You are a crucial part of that conversation. As you have often told us, “nothing for us without us”. So this meeting of the SDI Alliance Southern African Hub is a key milestone in the preparation for the World Urban Forum.

You will recall that South Africa strongly advocated for informal settlements to remain an urgent issue for the world to take up and address in the New Urban Agenda.

Our problems in South Africa mirror those at the global level. Despite having far surpassed the target we all set ourselves with the Millennium Development Goals - which was to improve the lives of 100 million slum-dwellers by 2020 - the absolute number of people living in slums and informal settlements has actually increased. Currently, there are around one billion slum dwellers worldwide, compared to 750 million in 1996.

It was clear to us and many likeminded role-players that the New Urban Agenda could not be silent on the issue of addressing slums and informal settlements, and that radical and urgent action

needs to be undertaken to focus on those living in unsuitable, unsafe, vulnerable and unsustainable circumstances.

We therefore took it upon ourselves, in partnership with the Habitat III Secretariat, and with support from UN-Habitat, to invite international stakeholders to a Habitat 3 meeting in Pretoria. Our joint work resulted in the Pretoria Declaration. 500 people from 52 countries participated in that conference, and we created sufficient momentum to ensure the New Urban Agenda does focus on improving the lives of people living in inadequate conditions and poverty, so that we do not have sing the same sad tune in twenty years from now, when we convene at Habitat 4.

Through the Pretoria Declaration, we call for prioritising in situ upgrading to respond to strengthen social, economic and cultural dynamics for safe and sustainable neighborhoods.

We place a lot of emphasis on a participatory approach, including the strengthening of partnerships, including with the private sector, community-based organisations and non-governmental organisations contributing to slum upgrading.

We recommend strong coordination mechanisms, frameworks and structures at national and local level, including at city and

neighborhood level to proactively steer upgrading of informal settlements as a joint effort by all stakeholders.

We agreed that there are gender specific needs that must be addressed in informal settlement upgrading and development so that we respond to women's multiple roles as family and community caregivers, and as income generators. Women's tenure security and safety are cornerstones of women's empowerment and gender equality, and therefore public policies that promote women's safety both in public and in private must be prioritised.

This is one of the reasons why we support the Know Your City Campaign. I am encouraged by this meeting, and I look forward to hearing more about the work that you are doing in each of your countries to make these principles a reality.

It is therefore my great honour to declare the SDI Southern Africa Hub open.

Thank you.