

Statement during the plenary of Prepcom II by South Africa on behalf the African Union member states

On behalf of the African Union Members States, I have the honour to present this statement.

From the onset let me join the previous speakers in congratulating the Bureau members for their stewardship in this process and for the work already done since we last met in New York at the first Preparatory Committee for the United Nations Habitat III Conference.

Our interventions is firmly embedded in Decision 29(Assembly/AU/Dec.29 (II)) of 2003 by our heads of state and governments which reaffirmed the determination of African countries to reap the potential benefits of cities and towns as centers of economic growth and places of opportunity and prosperity for all African people in the course of economic development and structural transformation.

We are also guided by African Union Summit (**Assembly/AU/Dec.565 (XXIV) which adopted the African Union Agenda 2063** with a request to Member States and the Regional Economic Commissions to accelerate the domestication of Agenda 2063 and integrate it into their respective Development Initiatives and Plans

We reassert the urgent need to harness the transformative potential of urbanization in its various facets to facilitate the reduction of poverty in all its forms and achieve an integrated, prosperous, stable and peaceful world driven by its own citizens and representing a dynamic force in the global arena.

We align ourselves to the intervention by G77 and China and would like to emphasize the following as key to the Habitat III process

We reiterate the unique dynamism of urbanization in Africa and are therefore convinced from an African perspective that the ensuing six fundamental principles should underpin the outcome of Habitat III:

- (i) it has to be a people focused agenda
- (ii) it has to be inclusively empowering to remove barriers and to enhance the full realization of human potential;
- (iii) it has to promote structural change in a sustainable manner;
- (iv) it has to encompass the entire continuum of human settlements;
- (v) it has to be anchored in robust, dynamic, participatory, people-centred institutions;
- (vi) it has to recognize Africa's diversity;

Further we are convinced that Habitat III outcome document should be guided by inter-alia, six key pillars

- (i) Optimising Spatial Economies;
- (ii) Fostering Linkages and Promoting Integrated Urban Systems;
- (iii) Reducing Negative Externalities
- (iv) Promoting Human and Physical Capital Accumulation;
- (v) Enhancing the Public Realm
- (vi) Promoting functional Urban Systems

Finally we further reiterate that the new urban agenda should not be seen to divert from the original mandate of the Habitat Agenda which is "adequate shelter for all and sustainable human settlement in an urbanizing world". The new urban agenda should therefore strengthen the Habitat Agenda cognizant of developments over the past 20 years but more so inspired and informed by emerging trends and vision for the next 20yrs. A new vision for the next 20 years therefore calls for a strengthened UN-HABITAT to deliver on the new mandate.

We propose that our recommendations be taken into consideration while negotiating the the outcome document of the Habitat III conference.

Thank you.