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INTEGRATED URBAN DEVELOPMENT AND THE NEW URBAN AGENDA IN SOUTH AFRICA

1. Introduction or Background

The country's national development plan, the NDP, has estimated that by 2030 the urban population will grow by an additional 7.8 million people. This makes planned urbanisation a priority for the country. South Africa entered the democratic era with a population of around 40 million people of whom 53% lived in urban areas, and 43% in the previous homeland areas (or Bantustans), usually in a high degree of poverty. But since the ending of Apartheid, there have been significant shifts in South Africa's space economy, with corresponding flows of household and individual migration between urban centres as people looked for new opportunities and access to urban services. The population size has increased noticeably from 40, 6 million in 1996 to 51, 8 million in 2011. According to the census data of 2011, 61% of South Africa's population resides in urban areas.

South Africa's national urban policy, the Integrated Urban Development Framework (IUDF) also highlights the urgency of addressing the rapid urbanisation taking place within South Africa. Projections estimate that by 2030, South Africans resident in urban areas will constitute 71.3%, and 80% by 2050. These figures matter, because South Africa needs to manage its response now, in order to benefit from the dividends of mass urbanisation, whilst minimising the impact of badly-managed urbanisation. High growth rates have taken place in the country's major towns and cities such as Johannesburg, Pretoria and Cape Town in particular. Another emerging trend is the growth taking place in certain smaller or intermediary cities and towns, at times putting a strain on the provision of housing, sanitation and other services, due to insufficient resources to plan for, and accommodate this growth. This reality makes overcoming services backlogs in urbanising areas a 'moving target'.

There is thus an urgent need to develop a national approach to the challenges of urban growth. It is for this reason that the National Development Plan (NDP) requires government to put in place an urban development strategy to make urban spaces liveable, equitable, sustainable, resilient and efficient as well as support economic growth and social cohesion. Key in this regard is a systematic response to entrenched apartheid spatial patterns, particularly the exclusionary city planning, that continue to exacerbate social inequality and economic inefficiencies. The Integrated Urban Development Framework (IUDF) now provides a policy framework on how the urban system in South Africa can be reoriented so that cities and towns can become increasingly liveable, inclusive and resource efficient over the next 20-30 years. The IUDF also recognises that urban and rural areas operate on a continuum and proposes measures to strengthen our rural-urban linkages. The development of human settlements thus takes place within the policy context of the IUDF.

The increasingly changing situation in South Africa and elsewhere has pointed to the need to recognise the existence of rural-urban linkages within emerging policy contexts. Accordingly, the solution to the poverty problem in rural areas cannot be found in the rural economy alone. Indeed, poverty, unemployment, inequality, and environmental challenges are national problems that require both rural and urban places to deal with them collectively¹.

2017 was a critical year globally for the human settlements and urban development sector. After over two years of intensive preparations, the New Urban Agenda was finally adopted at the Habitat III conference in Ecuador. Our hard work paid off. South Africa was able to take its place as a leading voice, in recognition of our significant achievement over the past twenty years in the provision of adequate housing and human settlements. We were successfully able to ensure our proposals were included in the New Urban Agenda (NUA), which was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in December 2016, as the global commitment to addressing sustainable human settlements and urbanisation over the next twenty years.

However, we may not rest on our laurels. We have to move speedily to the implementation of the New Urban Agenda in South Africa, working on a plan that will ensure we align our strategies, policies and plans to this new global action framework. This will have to be undertaken as a partnership. The Human Settlements Summit provides the opportunity to jointly develop a South African Implementation Framework for the New Urban Agenda with all the stakeholders. This Implementation Framework will take cognisance of South Africa’s particular urbanisation context and persistent apartheid spatial legacy. It will ensure that we tackle urbanisation as part of a continuum of urban – rural development. It will acknowledge that human settlements development and urban management are intricately linked to the economic and social development of the country and has the potential to affect massive structural and spatial transformation if harnessed as a transformative force.

¹Taken from South Africa’s National Report to Habitat III Chapter 1 and Chapter 2, www.dhs.gov.za



The New Urban Agenda addresses the required policy, institutional, and programmatic commitments member states would have to implement, to tackle urbanisation and the reduction of poverty and inequality going forward. The New Urban Agenda aligns with South Africa’s development objectives as articulated in the National Development Plan, specifically Chapter 8 which is “Transforming human settlements and the national space economy” and Chapter 12, on which “building safer communities”.

The New Urban Agenda also aligns with the IUDF; the 4 primary drivers of the NUA and the 9 policy levers of the IUDF resonate. This means that the framing of our urbanisation levers and goals towards a coherent Implementation Framework should be a rational process of consolidation. South Africa actively shaped the New Urban Agenda adopted at Habitat III, through a collaborative effort of sector stakeholders. The same collaborative effort will be required to develop an implementation framework, and subsequently, its implementation approach across government. Of note is that Habitat III opened the door to major discussions on important urban challenges and questions; how South Africa interprets the NUA Principles and Commitments, and which items from the Quito Implementation Plan are priorities for South Africa, will be the key to the development of a workable Framework for Action.

Examples of some of South Africa’s current priorities are already well-reflected, and can be further built upon in the Framework; e.g. the themes for South Africa’s common position, such as:

- Harness the Potential of Urbanization to Accelerate Structural Economic Transformation and Inclusive Growth;
- Linking Sustainable Urban and Human Settlements Development with Resilience, and
- Strengthening Institutions and Systems for Promoting Transformative Change in Human Settlements.

This latter position emphasises the centrality of effective, spatially informed urban and territorial planning across different contexts and typologies, and this is a key lever to collectively explore as we debate how to better plan and manage our cities, towns and villages to forge integrated human settlements within the overall goals for sustainable urban development.

Our third alignment challenge will be with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The strategic position articulated by South Africa at Habitat III created a roadmap towards the achievement of Goal 6 and 11 of the Sustainable Development Goals. At the Summit we will therefore be also reflecting on how we can integrate selected indicators for Goals 11 and 6, as well as asking whether we need to position ourselves to agree targets and indicators for the other SDGs, most of which can be said to have an urban dimension.



2. Goal and Objectives of the Summit

Objectives:

- a. To obtain a deeper understanding of the commitments under the New Urban Agenda to be achieved by 2036;
- b. To become familiar with the goals and objectives of the IUDF and the policy levers to drive sustainable urbanisation;
- c. To better understand trends and developments related to urbanisation and human settlements, and how these will be monitored;
- d. To envisage and propose how long-term human settlement planning and visioning process could be enhanced by improved inter-governmental cooperation and participation from a range of sectors;
- e. To determine how short-term plans for delivery of housing and basic services can be improved and expedited in a way that reflects sectoral integration and spatial transformation priorities;
- f. To encourage active participation of all stakeholders in policy dialogue; and
- g. Facilitate advocacy for, and an enriched national policy dialogue on, urbanisation and integrated human settlements.

Summit Goal: For partners and stakeholders to better understand the context of rapid urbanisation as it impacts on People, Place and the Economy, and agree on the priorities for a consolidated Implementation Framework for the New Urban Agenda.



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3. Expected Results or Outcomes

The National Human Settlements Summit provides an opportunity to convene all actors and partners to remind ourselves of South Africa’s urbanisation challenges and the relationship between urban management, human settlements development, and economic and social development along the rural-urban continuum.

The New Urban Agenda provides a guide on how to address urbanisation and human settlements development. It examines ways to deal with the challenges and ways to take advantage of the opportunity for structural transformation that rapid urbanisation brings with it.

A positive outcome of the Summit dialogues would be a deep understanding of the New Urban Agenda as a policy framework that complements the NDP, the IUDF and human settlements policies, and that could, as progressively implemented, support South Africa’s transformative development vision.

This entails a significant mind shift for many stakeholders in recognising urbanisation as a critical development issue for South Africa.

The desired result of the Summit would be a set of concrete proposals for the development of a South African Implementation Framework for the New Urban Agenda, informed by the IUDF and the key SDG goals. This Framework should encompass a clear understanding by each stakeholder grouping of the role they will play in implementation, and the leverage they may bring in terms of strategic influence with identified partners, stakeholders.



4. Indicators of achievement

- a) The context for South Africa’s urban policies endorsed as central to the New Urban Agenda Implementation Framework.
- b) Key areas for reform acknowledged and agreed.
- c) Consensus reached on priorities for the New Urban Agenda Implementation Framework.
- d) Emphasis placed on collaboration and partnerships across government and with partners and actors.
- e) A populated matrix of stakeholder actions that will deliver the implementation of commitments in the New Urban Agenda.

This will then be converted into a draft Implementation Framework to be taken back to the National Human Settlements and Urban Development Forum for endorsement on World Cities Day on 31 October 2017.

