



**COUNTRY STATEMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA DELIVERED BY
MINISTER THEMBISILE SIMELANE AT THE HIGH-LEVEL POLITICAL MEETING ON
THE REVIEW OF PROGRESS IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE NEW URBAN
AGENDA**

New York, 16 July 2026

Your Excellency the President of the United Nations General Assembly,

Honourable Ministers,

The Executive Director of UN-Habitat,

Distinguished Delegates,

Ladies and Gentlemen.

It is an honour for me to address this High-level Political Meeting convened to review progress in the implementation of the New Urban Agenda (NUA), and to recommit our countries to a renewed sense of urgency to accelerate the achievement of the transformative commitments we made in Quito in 2016.

South Africa aligns itself with the statement made by Uruguay on behalf of the G77+China.

The New Urban Agenda reflects our shared interests and commitment to sustainable urban development and the aspirations of our people for inclusive, resilient, and vibrant cities.

As part of this global stocktaking process, South Africa submitted its Second National Report on the Implementation of the New Urban Agenda, which assesses progress made since our first report, highlights persistent challenges, and identifies priority actions required to accelerate implementation. The report reflects our national efforts

and reaffirms South Africa's commitment to the effective implementation of the New Urban Agenda and the achievement of Sustainable Development Goal 11.

South Africa has made notable progress in implementing the NUA commitments through comprehensive policy frameworks. Our National Development Plan (NDP), covering 2012 to 2030, guides sustainable development, while the Integrated Urban Development Framework (IUDF), adopted in 2016, has concretised policies for inclusive and resilient cities, centred on human advancements.

The IUDF is further underpinned by targeted efforts to drive equitable urban transformation. Key policy instruments, such as the White Paper on Local Government and the White Paper for Human Settlements, have been reviewed to enhance service delivery, accountability, and responsiveness to the realities of rapid urbanisation. The introduction of the District Development Model (DDM) in 2019 marked a pivotal step in fostering greater coordination between the spheres of government, ensuring that development is integrated and responsive to the needs of our communities.

The revised White Paper for Human Settlements provides a progressive policy foundation for creating sustainable, inclusive, and equitable communities. The Draft White Paper on Local Government, which is the foundational policy mandate for the local government system, provides an enabling framework for South Africa to deliver on the urban transformation agenda..

Recognising that informal settlements remain one of our greatest urban challenges, South Africa has expanded its informal settlements upgrading programme. We are undertaking proactive approaches to improve planning, strengthen tenure security and accelerate upgrading interventions.

These interventions are aligned with renewed commitments contained in the Draft Political Declaration, particularly the shared goal to advance social inclusion and the eradication of poverty; improved and expanded access to basic services, thereby giving effect to our commitment to the realisation of basic human rights; and accelerate the transformation of informal settlements and slums, which will help to restore human dignity to the most vulnerable segments of our population, and fostering a collective sense of purpose in building people-centred urban spaces and settlements.

South Africa is unwavering in its resolve to implement the outcomes of the Africa Urban Forum, especially , the mainstreaming of housing delivery as an integrated economic and social development instrument; building of strong, structured, and formalised partnerships between all spheres of government, development finance institutions, communities, civil society organisations and the private sector for scaling adequate housing delivery.

These priorities are particularly important as South Africa, like many countries across our continent, continues to experience the effects of rapid urbanisation and the complex challenges associated with human mobility. Addressing these challenges requires integrated, inclusive and forward-looking approaches that ensuring that no one is left behind.

South Africa remains firmly committed to the principles of international solidarity, human dignity and the rule of law. We will continue to work with regional and international partners to advance sustainable development, promote inclusive urbanisation, expand economic opportunities and, recognising that these efforts are essential to advancing a shared vision of sustainable urban development.

Through strengthen regional cooperation, we reaffirm our commitment to a shared, peaceful and prosperous Africa, as envisaged in Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want, while upholding the human rights, dignity and fundamental freedoms of all people in accordance with international law and applicable international obligations.

Excellencies,

Ladies and gentlemen

As we look beyond this Midterm Review, South Africa reaffirms its unwavering commitment to the full implementation of the New Urban Agenda. We remain committed to strengthening partnerships at the national, regional and global levels and stand ready to work with Member States, UN-Habitat and all stakeholders to build inclusive, resilient and sustainable cities and human settlements for present and future generations.

I thank you for your attention.