

REMARKS BY ED OF UN-HABITAT, MS MAIMUNAH MOHD SHARIF AT THE LAUNCH OF THE GLOBAL ACTION PLAN ON SLUMS AND INFORMAL SETTLEMENTS, CSIR, PRETORIA, 0001

Honourable Ministers, Mayors, colleagues, distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen!

1.0 It is a pleasure to be here in Pretoria, South Africa launching the International Global Action Plan: Accelerating the Transformation of Informal Settlements and Slums by 2030.

2.0 Let me begin with expressing my gratitude to the **Government of South Africa for** providing us this **platform**, and for **continuing to champion the call “Cities for All”** through their commitment to positively transform informal settlements and slums. As you know, the New Urban Agenda provides 53 entry-points to slum and informal settlements transformation, but we need leadership and investments to translate policy into positive action on the ground.

Honorable Mmamoloko Kubayi, Minister of Human Settlements,

3.0 It is a great pleasure to jointly convene this important meeting with you. I know that you are a woman of action. At our meeting at the World Urban Forum in Poland in June, you committed to hosting this Global Action Plan launch, and have fulfilled this promise and for which I am very grateful. . This must be the first implementation of the declared action from Katowice that has been fulfilled. Thank you.

Ladies and gentlemen,

4.0 According to the 2022 UN-Habitat World Cities Report, despite the best efforts to achieve Zero Slum by Member States, there are more **than 1 billion people** living in slums and informal settlements today. This means that one (1) out of every four (4) persons are living in urban areas, in slum-like conditions. People lack access to water, sanitation, decent housing and are sharing a room

with three or more people. If we take tenure security as a benchmark, I dare say the figure will rise well beyond 1 billion persons.

5.0 If no transformative action is taken, it is estimated that by 2050, there will be 3 billion people living in slums or roughly an increase of 183, 000 people every day. **At the recently concluded World Urban Forum, we all attempted to envision our cities of tomorrow!** Unfortunately, we cannot avoid the sad reality that **the cities will be places of** poverty, exclusion, inequality and environmental degradation.

Honorable Minister

Distinguished delegates,

6.0 You may have heard that with the triple Cs - Covid, Climate and Conflict, the SDGs are further away than ever before. **SDG Target 11.1** on upgrading slums and affordable, safe and adequate housing is one of nine targets that are regressing globally! This Global Action Plan: Accelerating the Transformation of Informal Settlements and Slums by 2030 aims at creating a new momentum for slum transformation at scale!

7.0 We need to take transformative action to end the **marginalization of people and places through spatial integration**. We need serious commitment by Member States to improve the standard of living for all. We must not only 'mind the gap' but create action plans and approve budgets to ensure "no one and no place is left behind".

8.0 As a person from the global south and who grew up in poverty, I can tell you that the basic human right to development is the fundamental basis to deliver on the human rights agenda. This includes the Right to Adequate Housing and the Right to an Adequate Standard of Living.

9.0 UN-Habitat has the tools to assist Member States to achieve **sustainable transformation. Our normative guidelines promote:**

1) Spatial Equality and Justice,

- 2) Social Inclusion and Integrated Governance,
- 3) Reduction of Poverty and Economic Prosperity and
- 4) Environmental Sustainability and Protection!

10.0 We know that the road to achieving a better urban future is diverse.

We are not advocating any one model or pathway. Instead, we believe that different countries, cities and communities need to find their own pathways.

This is because driving transformation is about creating new potential for development every day, for everyone and everywhere.

Partnership vision for accelerating transformation

11.0 We know that **sustainable and people-centred investment in Slums and Informal Settlements** can deliver multiple Sustainable Development Goals and the New Urban Agenda. **Transformation at scale cannot happen in isolation.** It needs a **vision that will bring partners on board.** The structured partnership framework with long-term vision that is being proposed in this Global Action Plan will help bring political will, resources and communities behind the common vision of a better quality of life for all. The **complexity and scale** of the challenge requires strategic engagement, diverse expertise and the commitment of every stakeholder.

12.0 I recommend to all gathered here to peruse the Global Action Plan: Accelerating the Transformation of Informal Settlements and Slums by 2030 that fits very nicely with the motto of World Cities Day 2022: **MIND THE GAP – LEAVING NO ONE AND NO PLACE BEHIND.** The High-level Meeting on the New Urban Agenda in New York restated that: **We need local action to scale up our positive impact!**

Ladies and gentlemen,

13.0 I would also like to thank **our partners**, the Organisation of the African, Caribbean and Pacific States; and the European Commission. Together, we have **implemented projects worth 24 million Euros in 50 African, Caribbean and Pacific Countries since 2008.** This partnership has allowed us to keep countries engaged over a long period of time on the issue of **urban inequalities, poverty and exclusion.** **These efforts have led to** the launch of the **Roadmap to the Last Mile of Slums** during the DubaiEXPO and finally to this **Global Action Plan Launch event.**

14.0 I would like to further **share my gratitude to our core partners** of the **Global Publication and the Global Action Plan:** the World Bank, the European Commission, Cities Alliance, UNICEF, Habitat for Humanity, Slum Dwellers International and Huairou Commission! Thank you for engaging with

us regularly and for co-producing a consolidated response to informal settlements and slums.

15.0 Finally, and most importantly, I would like to thank all the government delegations and stakeholders from the Government of South Africa and abroad for having responded to our CALL to support Sustainable Urbanisation. You have committed taking important next steps to implement **global policy commitments to positively transform lives of the most vulnerable and marginalized in our cities.**

Ladies and gentlemen,

16.0 Please ensure to voice **your action proposals** for a better urban future during this important event. **With every person in improved living standards today, we have four people less in slum conditions tomorrow.** UN-Habitat will be with you and together we can **transform the cities of the future from becoming places of exclusion, inequalities and poverty.** Let us ensure that we aspire to inspire before we expire!

Thank you.