

SOUTH AFRICA'S STATEMENT AT THE 2ND HABITAT III 2ND PREPARATORY COMMITTEE, PLENARY

Chairperson, South Africa stand to support the statement made by Egypt on behalf of G77 and China.

We view this meeting as an important step towards developing an agenda that addresses our priorities, our realities and our vision for development in the next 20 years.

For South Africa, any new agenda for urbanization and human settlements must place people at the centre. The people are our most valuable resource for solving our development challenges, and we need to do everything in our power to provide a conducive environment to reap the power of our human resource. We can do nothing for our people if we do not do it with them.

In our consultations for the National Report for Habitat III, the issue of real, meaningful stakeholder engagement and participation was raised again, as they felt that they wanted to be given an opportunity to continue to addressing the challenges we face, not stand idly by on the side-lines waiting for government to provide.

The people-centred approach must ensure that the integration and mainstreaming of the issues that affect young people, women, people with disabilities and vulnerable groups in order to

harness their energy and creativity, and in order to address their particular challenges with regard to education, health, shelter and livelihood opportunities.

Secondly, any new agenda must build upon the Habitat Agenda. What was agreed to 1996 still remains valid and we should continue to achieve those important principles even as we move forward to address new challenges. The new agenda should seek to radically transform our human settlements to harness their social and economic development potential. The agenda should accurately reflect the rural - urban continuum of human settlements.

South Africa strongly support the notion which recognizes that urbanization cannot be divorced from overall economic, social, political and physical development of any region, country, city or local area. It is therefore critical that urbanization be seen as integral part of national and regional development agenda.

South Africa congratulates the African region for its handwork during the AMCHUD processes; intensive exchanges from Durban Declaration to Ndjamena declaration and currently through AU STC8. These deliberations will enhance our input at Habitat III Conference.

The Habitat III Conference provides a unique opportunity for Africa to engage with the rest of the global community in addressing how Africa's rapid urbanization and human settlement can be enhanced to serve as a transformative force not only for the continent itself, but also for its contribution to the overall world development.

Hence it is our wish that the new urban Agenda to be adopted in 2016 will take African realities into account.

I thank you