

**Statement by Deputy Minister Zoliswa Kota-Fredericks, Leader of the South  
African delegation  
on the special theme for the 25<sup>th</sup> Session of the Governing Council of the United  
Nations Human Settlements Programme:  
“UN-Habitat’s Contribution to the post 2015 development Agenda in order to  
promote sustainable urban development and human settlements”**

President of the Governing Council, members of the Bureau, Ministers, Ambassadors, High Commissioners, Executive Director, distinguished guests, colleagues, ladies and gentlemen.

Mr President, in respect to the recent cowardly terrorist attack at Garissa University, I would like use this opportunity to express on behalf of the Government and the people of South Africa, our sympathy and deepest condolences to the Government and people of Kenya, especially families of the victims.

South Africa congratulates the President and members of the Bureau on their election and pledges its support to ensure a successful outcome of the meeting.

We align ourselves to the Statement read by Egypt on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

The 25<sup>th</sup> session of the Governing Council takes place as preparations for Habitat III are in full swing and we believe that this session, and the theme discussed here in the coming days can significantly enhance and influence the discussion in the United Nations on the post 2015 development agenda and preparations for Habitat III. The African Union, in its agenda 2063, acknowledges “Cities and other settlements are hubs of cultural and economic activities, with modernized infrastructure, and (where) people have access to all the basic necessities of life including shelter, water, sanitation, energy, public transport and ICT”

South Africa therefore wishes to reaffirm its commitment to the principles outlined in the outcome document of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, entitled ‘The Future We Want’, which recognizes that, if well planned and developed including through integrated planning and management approaches, cities can promote economically, socially and environmentally sustainable societies; and commit to working towards improving the quality of human settlements, including the living and working conditions of both urban and rural dwellers in the context of poverty eradication so that all people have access to basic services, housing and mobility.

The 2013 Open Working Group on the post 2015 Sustainable Development Goals explicitly addressed urban-rural linkages under proposed targets to increase rural investment and support positive economic, social and environmental links

between urban, peri-urban and rural areas by strengthening national and regional development planning for these areas.

We recommend that within the frame of national urban and human settlement policies, full recognition is accorded to varied developmental needs, according to scale, along the Rural-Urban Continuum. To achieve improved development of territories, from rural clusters to metro conglomerations, the importance of strengthening such multi-level, collaborative development planning, in order to achieve our collective development goals cannot be over-emphasised.

South Africa believes that the need for integrated people-centred spatial planning cannot be overemphasized. Infrastructure, local economic development, socio-economic and recreational amenities, adaptation to climate change, basic services, transport and housing are all part of what we call Integrated Development Plans that are prepared , in consultation with local communities on the basis of their stated needs and agreed priorities. South Africa is currently developing a spatial framework to guide investment by all state departments and state owned companies and specifically the Human Settlements Sector to achieve balance between spatial equity, economic competitiveness and environmental sustainability.

In recognition of the central importance of development planning for coherent urbanisation and human settlements, Governing Council in its last session

requested that a set of agreed universal principles for urban and territorial planning should be developed. This recommendation has now resulted in the Draft International Guidelines on Urban and Territorial Planning, which are to be under discussion for adoption during this session. South Africa supports these Guidelines, as they provide countries an opportunity to initiate a more globally coherent approach to creating inclusive and well planned territories, to craft a more common language in the application of planning practices across regions and states, and to support the application of the proposed post 2015 Sustainable Development Goals.

South Africa supports the adoption of an inclusive approach and a high level of integration between the proposed goals of the post 2015 development agenda with key elements of the Habitat III New Urban Agenda, and related agreed outcomes. We wish to highlight the outcomes of the Sendai Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction and Climate Change, which pledged to mainstream approaches to build safer, less risk vulnerable, human settlements. Thus, in an increasingly urbanizing world, it is also critical that the SDGs directly reference the phenomena and the demands of urbanisation; South Africa thus support the stand-alone proposed goal number 11, to ***'make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable'***.

In recognition of the need for local government to play its role in the implementation of the SDGs, we also support the consideration of proposals that

may be targeted for implementation and monitoring at local level. The Open Working Group defined the SDGs as aspirational global targets, but with each government setting its own national targets, guided by the global level of ambition, but taking into account national circumstances. The governance arrangements for sub-national action and coordination should then be fully considered.

In summary, for South Africa, the three key issues we would wish to see mainstreamed into the continuing preparations for Habitat III:

First, recognition and interpretation of the nature of the rural-urban continuum recognition of the rural-urban continuum as an indivisible and continuous sequence of human settlements at different scales, characterised by two - way flows of people and resources. Secondly, that the proposed Guidelines on territorial and urban planning will allow us to progressively apply a universally applicable reference framework to guide diverse planning approaches. Thirdly that proposed the stand-alone goal number 11, '***make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable***' is supported given the need for intergovernmental coherence in the implementation of our global agendas, and the importance of localisation mechanisms.