



African Ministerial Breakfast Meeting on National Urban Policy



Thursday, 8th June 2023



07:30 hrs - 09:00 hrs



(UN Complex - Conference Room 9)



RSVP

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Ministry of Land,
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Introduction

Urbanization in Africa is progressing rapidly. With an urban growth rate of 3.4 per cent, currently, 44 per cent of the region's population resides in urban areas. By 2035, the region will have half of its population living in cities and will be predominantly urban by 2050 with six in ten persons living in urban areas.¹ However, urbanization in Africa is characterized by unique challenges.

It has the highest global incidence of urban poverty with about 23 per cent living below poverty line and most countries are off-track in achieving Agenda 2030 goals.² In most countries, urbanization continues without a national urbanization strategy as only 23 countries have developed explicit NUPs to guide urbanisation and deal with intra-urban development challenges,³ hence unable to harness urbanization benefits.



Urbanisation of Challenges

Urban economic development remains a major challenge in Africa. The economic transformation and benefits of urbanization, including substantial productivity gains supported by scale, density, and agglomeration as observed in other regions, are yet to be realised in Africa. Impacts of COVID-19 continue to widen municipal financing gap in Africa alone is estimated at US\$25 billion per year.⁴ Climate change and environmental pressures continue to be major threats. Their frequency and intensity continue to pile pressure on cities and to disrupt urban livelihoods. Despite the challenges, however, recent UN-Habitat survey⁵ indicated African government are yet to harness opportunities offered by NUPs with only 50% and 36% of NUPs from Africa give moderate to extensive attention to economic development, climate change and environmental sustainability respectively.

Migration is among the main drivers of urbanization. While prospects of better livelihoods continue to attract migrants to urban areas, capacity of cities in Africa to cater for the increased migrants limited. Many governments have discouraged the migration. However, effective policies would help reap migration dividends.

Cities in Africa remain prone to conflicts that impose human suffering and persistent economic impacts. While the urban areas are at the heart of the dynamics of war and peace, conflicts over belonging, indigenous claims to land, trading rights, as well as religious differences, manifest in contestations that turn violent. Conflicts put cities under pressure to absorb refugees and displaced persons and at the same time cause strains to urban revenues, including shifting resources away from development and social spending.

¹UN-Habitat (2022) WORLD CITIES REPORT 2022 Envisaging the Future of Cities

²UN-Habitat (2022) WORLD CITIES REPORT 2022 Envisaging the Future of Cities

³UN-Habitat, OECD and Cities Alliance (2021) Global State of National Urban Policy 2021

⁴UN-Habitat (2022) WORLD CITIES REPORT 2022 Envisaging the Future of Cities

⁵UN-Habitat, OECD and Cities Alliance (2021) Global State of National Urban Policy 2021



Urban Policy as an Opportunity to shape Urbanisation in Africa

While urbanization has resulted in many challenges in cities in Africa, if efficiently managed it would ensure a clear path towards sustainable urban development. NUPs provide an effective opportunity capitalize on the potential of urbanization as well as mitigate its negative externalities in Africa.⁶ It's not only an integrated development tool to create common vision for urbanisation but also an overarching framework that supports implementation of the New Urban Agenda (NUA) and Sustainable Development Goals (SDG).⁷ Developed and implemented through a participatory and inclusive process NUPs would effectively guide the urbanization process in Africa.

Despite their importance, most African countries are yet to develop explicit NUPs to guide urbanisation. Of the 23 countries that have developed explicit NUPs to deal with urbanization and intra-urban development challenges, only 11 are using them to monitor SDGs and NUA, and 8 for Sendai agreement⁸. In these countries, NUPs have effectively supported addressing challenges and opportunities of exponential urbanisation and achievement the African Union's Agenda 2063: principally implementation of Goal 4 on modern and liveable habitats in the face of increased urbanisation on the continent.

Objective of the Meeting:

Organised on the side-lines of the 2nd Session of the UN-Habitat Assembly, the meeting aims to create a platform for urban development ministers and permanent secretaires from African to discuss how National Urban Policies (NUPs) would effectively provide an opportunity capitalize on the potential of urbanization as well as mitigate its negative externalities. It will share experiences on NUP development in the region including available resource mobilization and financing mechanisms.

⁶ UN-Habitat (2017) National Urban Policy: Sub Saharan Africa Report

⁷ UN-Habitat (2019) 20+ Reasons why NUP matters.

⁸ UN-Habitat, OECD and Cities Alliance (2021) Global State of National Urban Policy 2021



Participants

The high-level breakfast meeting will bring together ministers and permanent secretaries from housing and urban development ministries in Africa.

It will also bring on board development partners including:



Republic of Korea (MoLIT)



African Union (AU)



Agenda

- 07:30 hrs – 07:40 hrs Opening Remarks by **UN-Habitat Deputy Executive Michal Mlynar**
- 07:40 hrs – 07:50 hrs African Urban Outlook
- 07:50 hrs– 08:10 hrs Status of National Urban Policies in Africa
- 08:10 hrs– 08:20 hrs Country Experiences
- 08:20 hrs– 08:35 hrs Regional Dialogue – Countries Perspective
- 08:35 hrs– 08:50 hrs Regional Dialogue – Donors Perspective
- 08:50 hrs– 09:00 hrs Wrap up and way forward