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## AFRICA COMMON POSITION ON HABITAT III (GUIDED BY AGENDA 2063)

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### 1. *Preamble*

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We, African Ministers of Housing and Urban Development, convening in Nairobi, Kenya, on 13 April 2015, as a sub-committee on Urban Development and Human Settlements of the African Union Specialized Technical Committee on Public Service, Local Governance, Urban development and Decentralization to initiate a process of developing an African Position on the Third United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development (HABITAT III) to be held, in Quito, Ecuador, October 2016;

**Take NOTE** of the extensive consultations that have taken place among the various stakeholders within our respective countries; among ourselves as Ministers of housing and urban development under the auspices of the erstwhile standing conference regularly convened since 2005<sup>1</sup>; and more significantly among our Heads of State and Government who have provided guidance on the vision for Africa's development as well as adopted a collective position on the future global development agenda<sup>2</sup>;

**RECOGNIZE** the coordinating role of the African Union Commission, and the technical support of the Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA), and the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UNHabitat) who have endeavoured to facilitate the operationalization and realization in the sphere of urban development and human settlements principles, ideals, and goals embodied in Africa's vision and goals as espoused by African people and their governments;

**EMPHASIZE** that 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 urbanisation and human settlements development 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;

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<sup>1</sup> AMCHUD

<sup>2</sup> African Union Commission. 2014. Agenda 2063-Popular Version. AUC. Addis Ababa; African Union Commission. 2014. Common African Position (CAP) On the Post-2015 Development Agenda. African Union. Addis Ababa.



**ACKNOWLEDGE** the positive trends such as sustained positive economic growth rates in some economies, rapid urbanisation, the youth bulge, climate change and inequalities, and therefore **REITERATE** the importance of prioritizing structural transformation<sup>3</sup> for inclusive and people-centred development in Africa.

**REASSERT** the urgent need to harness the transformative potential of urbanization in its various facets to facilitate the reduction of poverty in all its forms and achieve an integrated, prosperous, stable and peaceful Africa driven by its own citizens and representing a dynamic force in the global arena;

**ACKNOWLEDGE** the important contribution of civil society organizations can make to this process and the importance of partnerships between government and other stakeholders;

**We therefore COMMIT to speak with one voice and to act in unity to ensure that Africa’s voice is heard and is fully integrated into the outcomes of the Habitat III conference.**

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## 2. Background

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### 2.1 On Habitat III

1. **RECALLING** the United Nations General Assembly Resolution 66/207 of March 2012<sup>4</sup> on the convening in 2016, in line with the bi-decennial cycle (1976, 1996 and 2016), a third United Nations conference on housing and sustainable urban development (Habitat III) to reinvigorate the global commitment to sustainable urbanization. The resolution further stipulates that the conference should focus on the implementation of a “New Urban Agenda”, which should also build on the

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<sup>3</sup> This document adopts the definition of Structural Transformation by the United Nations Economic for Africa (UNECA) whose key elements includes: a reallocation of resources from less productive to more productive sectors and activities; an increase in the relative contribution of manufacturing to GDP; a declining share of agricultural employment to total employment; a shift in economic activity from rural to urban areas; the rise of a modern industrial and service economy; a demographic transition from high rates of births and deaths (common in underdeveloped and rural areas) to low rates of births and deaths (associated with better health standards in developed and urban areas); and a rise in urbanization. It is associated with a fundamental change in the structure of the economy and its drivers of growth and development. (UNECA. 2013. Economic Transformation for Africa’s Development. Prepared for C-10 Meeting April, 2013 Washington D.C. )

<sup>4</sup> United Nations General Assembly A/RES/66/207, *Implementation of the outcome of the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II)* and strengthening of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat). 14 march 2012



Habitat Agenda<sup>5</sup>, the Declaration on Cities and Other Human Settlements in the New Millennium<sup>6</sup> and the relevant internationally agreed development goals, including those contained in the United Nations Millennium Declaration<sup>7</sup>, and the Johannesburg Declaration on Sustainable Development and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation<sup>8</sup>, and the outcomes of other major United Nations conferences and summits;

2. **CONSIDERING** that the objective of the conference will be to secure renewed political commitment for sustainable urban development, assessing accomplishments to date, addressing poverty and identifying and addressing new and emerging challenges, and that the focus of the conference will include, but will not be limited to, the theme “Sustainable urban development: the future of urbanization”, to be discussed and refined during the preparatory process<sup>9</sup>;
3. **ALSO TAKING INTO ACCOUNT** that the conference will result in a concise, focused, forward-looking and action-oriented outcome document, which shall reinvigorate the global commitment to and support for housing and sustainable urban development and the implementation of a “New Urban Agenda”<sup>10</sup>;
4. **TAKING NOTE** of the United Nations General Assembly Resolution 69/226 of 19 December 2014<sup>11</sup> which, *inter alia*, invites the Bureau of the Preparatory Committee for Habitat III to prepare the draft outcome document of the Conference on the basis of inputs from broad regional and thematic consultations among all stakeholders and to circulate it no later than six months prior to the Conference;

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<sup>5</sup> *Report of the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II), Istanbul, 3–14 June 1996* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.97.IV.6), chap. I, resolution 1, annex II.

<sup>6</sup> United Nations General Assembly Resolution A/RES/S-25/2. *Declaration on Cities and Other Human Settlements in the New Millennium*. 9 June 2001.

<sup>7</sup> United Nations General Assembly A/RES/55/2. *United Nations Millennium Declaration*. 18 September 2000

<sup>8</sup> *Report of the World Summit on Sustainable Development, Johannesburg, South Africa, 26 August–4 September 2002* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.03.II.A.1 and corrigendum), chap. I, resolution 1, annex.

<sup>9</sup> United Nations General Assembly Resolution 67/216. *Implementation of the outcome of the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II) and strengthening of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) 20 March 2013*

<sup>10</sup> United Nations General Assembly Resolution 67/216. *Implementation of the outcome of the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II) and strengthening of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) 20 March 2013*

<sup>11</sup> United Nations General Assembly Resolution 69/226 on *Implementation of the outcome of the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II) and strengthening of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat)*. 19 December 2014



5. **ALSO NOTING** that the same resolution calls upon Member States to continue to include in their planned regional meetings, such as the regular sessions of regional ministerial conferences on housing and urban development, as well as other relevant regional intergovernmental meetings, discussions on Habitat III so as to facilitate the provision of regional inputs to the preparatory process for the Conference<sup>12</sup>;
6. **NOTING FURTHER** that the deliberations during the Second session of the Preparatory Committee for the United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development (Habitat III) held in Nairobi 14 -16 April 2015 which, among other outcomes, invited participating states and all key stakeholders to provide inputs to the development of the draft outcome document. The Bureau of the Preparatory Committee has been encouraged to distribute to all participating States, as early as possible and no later than six months in advance of the Conference, the draft outcome document of the Conference. A request was also made to the same Bureau in preparing the draft outcome document, to take into account the comments received<sup>13</sup>;
7. **CONVINCED** therefore that there is an urgent and imperative need for African countries, through regional consultative forums supported by relevant institutions to prepare accordingly in developing a common position on the pursuit collectively of both national and continental goals and objectives and for effective engagement in the Habitat III process;

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## 2.2 Underlying Principles

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8. **RECALLING** Decision 29 of the African Union Summit (Assembly/AU/Dec.29 (II)) of July 2003 which reaffirmed the determination of African countries to reap the potential benefits of cities and towns as centers of economic growth and places of opportunity and prosperity for all African people; and further recalling Assembly/AU/Dec.504 (XXII) of January 2014 on African development goals which reiterates a commitment to African Transformation and the importance of existing continental frameworks that encompass the political, economic and social aspirations of the continent;

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<sup>12</sup> Ibid. paragraph 18.

<sup>13</sup> A/CONF.226/PC.2/CRP.1 Preparatory Committee for the United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development (Habitat III) Second session Item 4 of the agenda Preparations for the Conference Draft resolution Preparations for the Conference



9. **INSPIRED** by the Solemn Declaration adopted by African Heads of State and Government at the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of African unity in May 2013 by which they undertook as part of the continent's agenda for social and economic development to expand and develop urban infrastructure and develop planned approaches to rapid urbanization and emergence of new cities<sup>14</sup>;
10. **FURTHER INSPIRED** by the fundamental African aspirations outlined in 'Africa Agenda 2063' by which the very first commitment includes a quest to make the continent prosperous, with the means and resources to drive its own development, with sustainable and long-term stewardship of its resources and where, among other facets, cities and other settlements are hubs of cultural and economic activities, with modernized infrastructure, and people have access to affordable and decent housing including housing finance together with all the basic necessities of life such as, water, sanitation, energy, public transport and ICT<sup>15</sup>;
11. **COMMITTED** to ensuring that the Habitat III process and the new agenda to be adopted in 2016 is fully in synch with African realities, and that the new agenda provides support to enhances the momentum towards realizing the Continental vision;
12. **TRUSTING** that the deliberations we adopted at the 5<sup>th</sup> AMCHUD session in N'Djamena, Republic of Chad, provide a useful starting point in developing a common position on Habitat III and for our engagement with the rest of the international community in defining a new urban agenda. It may be recalled that, among other matters, the Ministers had decided to develop an African Urban Agenda and requested the Secretariat with support of the ADC - Nairobi, to convene a meeting of African experts in housing and urban development for this purpose.
13. **REAFFIRMING** the principles agreed in N'Djamena that the African Urban Agenda should be owned and driven by Africa, informed by African realities and based on Africa's current priorities as well as future needs: be implementable and results focused, with clearly defined deliverables and a plan of action; and that it should build on relevant existing commitments in regional and globally agreed documents on urbanization and sustainable human settlements.
14. **UNDERTAKING** to apply the above experiences, pronouncements, commitments, decisions as well as the guidance from our Heads of state and governments as

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<sup>14</sup> African Union. 2013. 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Solemn Declaration. Addis Ababa. African Union Commission p.4

<sup>15</sup> African Union. 2015. *Agenda 2063 Final Edition, April 2015 Popular version The Africa We Want* pp.2-3



underlying principles for developing a common African position for the forthcoming Habitat conference;

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### ***3. Context and Justification***

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#### ***3.1 The Transformative Potential of Urbanization and Human Settlements***

15. **RECOGNIZING** that during the almost 20 years from 1996, at the proclamation of the Habitat Agenda and the Istanbul Plan of Action, till today in 2015, the African continent has undergone a profound transformation in the level of population growth and demographic composition; in the state of urbanization and human settlements development; as well as in the role and function of urban systems in economic development. Projections indicate that the trend will continue with increased intensity as the continent enters the next twenty years of implementing the forthcoming Habitat III conference outcomes<sup>16</sup>;
16. **CONSCIOUS OF** the implications of the above distinctive development, and as underscored by AMCHUD's N'Djamena Declaration, we will strive to articulate an urbanization agenda which not only fosters dynamic rural-urban linkages in an integrated manner but also takes into account the needs of people who will be contributing to the continent's development while operating from the rural setting;
17. **ENCOURAGED** by the acceleration of economic growth that has taken place during much of the Habitat II agenda period and the opportunities it presents for rectifying the longstanding anomaly of having increased urbanization in the absence of sustainable and transformative economic development; and heeding the call of our Heads of State and Governments to concretize, align and maintain consistency in all development endeavours with the transformation thrust of Africa Agenda 2063;
18. **CONSIDERING** that transformative urbanization is neither automatically generated nor a straight-forward process, it needs to be built on the momentum gathered from the achievements and initiatives embarked upon during the past twenty years of implementing the Habitat Agenda. Many successes were registered, challenges encountered and new developments occurred which were not anticipated in 1996. It is therefore important to take stock of Africa's performance in the past two decades;

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<sup>16</sup>United Nations Population Division. 2014. World Urbanization Prospects The 2014 Revision





### 3.2 Taking Stock of Habitat II

19. **RECALLING** the Habitat Agenda and the Istanbul Declaration on Human Settlements as the main outcomes of the Habitat II Conference held in 1996, which established the twin goals of adequate shelter for all and sustainable human settlements development in an urbanizing world, and adopted a global plan of action to attain those goals;
20. **APPRECIATING** the laudable efforts made and substantial achievements gained during the past two decades of implementing the global plan of action. Particular note is taken in this respect to the progress made in putting in place strategies and systems within our respective nations for ensuring adequate shelter for all.
21. **CONGRATULATING** countries that have achieved, through the implementation of successful housing policies and programmes, an increase in low-income housing supply and systematically improved slums, which in some cases, has led to a significant reduction in slum growth, proportion of slum dwellers; and absolute number of slum dwellers.
22. **CONCERNED** however, that the proportion of urban population in Sub-Saharan Africa living in slum settlements has risen from 31% in 1995 to 62% in 2012<sup>17</sup>. The factors associated with this negative development include poor functioning of housing markets; limited access and high costs of land; undeveloped level of conventional housing finance which seldom serves low-income households; and, in some cases institutional and regulatory frameworks which do not provide sufficient support to microfinance and community based savings groups. In many instances women encounter severe difficulties in gaining access, owning, controlling or inheriting land and property<sup>18</sup>;
23. **TAKING NOTE** also of the Joint Monitoring Programme for the MDG whose 2012 update on **water services** indicates that coverage in the developing world overall stands at 86 percent, but it is only 63 percent in countries designated as 'least developed'. According to the report, only 61 percent of the people in Sub-Saharan Africa have access to improved water supply sources<sup>19</sup> and that in the case of sub-Saharan Africa the number of people defecating in the open is still increasing<sup>20</sup>.

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<sup>17</sup> United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat), Global Urban Indicators Database 2012

<sup>18</sup> UN-Habitat. 2011. Affordable Land and Housing in Africa. Nairobi. UNHabitat. P.18

<sup>19</sup> United Nations. 2013 The Millennium Development Goals Report. 2013. P.47 <http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/pdf/report-2013/mdg-report-2013-english.pdf>

<sup>20</sup> Report to the CPR on MDG Implementation and Strategy UNHabitat related targets DRAFT 22\_11\_2013 p.4



24. **DISTRESSED** also by the rising levels of inequality in African cities which remains the second highest in the world with an average Gini coefficient of about 0.58, well above the average of 0.4;<sup>21</sup>
25. **ACKNOWLEDGING** that the challenge of urban poverty remains critical in many parts of the continent despite the findings of several reports showing some improvement in both monetary and non-monetary based poverty indicators. The opportunities of urbanization have not spread broadly enough, and the generative capacities of urban centres being weak, with a bulk of the population remaining trapped in low productivity, low income and poor welfare sectors;
26. **AWARE OF** the pervasive nature of the informal sector associated with the continent's urbanization, within which, in some instances almost half of the urban population live and make their livelihood; Also taking note of the estimates made by the African Development Bank that the informal sector contributes about 55 per cent of Sub-Saharan Africa's GDP and 80 per cent of the labour force. It is estimated that nine in 10 of both rural and urban workers have informal jobs in Africa and most workers consist of women and the youth<sup>22</sup>.
27. **APPRECIATING** the initiatives taken by some countries to remove the bottlenecks encountered by squatters, traders, artisans as well as small-scale enterprises and service providers with a view to increasing their productivity and developing a complementary linkage with the formal economy; Also recognizing the structural implications of the dominance of urban informalism whereby labour is shifting from rural agricultural based activity not towards high productivity industrial or service occupation, but clustering in low income, low productivity and unregulated economic circuits. We reiterate our determination to unlock the potential of the informal sector and to harness its creative energies as well as consolidate the accumulated human and physical assets embedded within it;
28. **WELCOMING** the progress so far made in negotiations regarding the proposed sustainable development goals for the post-2015 development agenda. We fully support the specificity given to urbanization with the agreement to include a new separate Goal 11 -- *making cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable*. However, we remain guided by the common African position adopted by our Heads of State and Government that underscores Africa's prime agenda of

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<sup>21</sup> Urbanization in Africa - AfDB. <http://www.afdb.org/en/blogs/afdb-championing-inclusive-growth-across-africa/post/urbanization-in-africa-10143/>

<sup>22</sup> <http://www.afdb.org/en/blogs/afdb-championing-inclusive-growth-across-africa/post/recognizing-africas-informal-sector-11645/>





fostering structural transformation; We therefore undertake to ensure that goal 11, as it stands now, needs to be considered together with goals 8, 9 and 10 on matters relating to promoting economic growth as well as full and productive employment; building infrastructure, industrialization and innovation, as well as reducing inequality within and between countries. We commit to ensure that urbanization and the development of human settlements in Africa contribute to structural transformation and to the achievement of sustainable development goals;

29. **ACKNOWLEDGING** the progress made in promoting decentralization and institutional reforms in the past two decades relating to urban governance and human settlement management. With varying degrees of success, in almost all countries, there have been efforts to deconcentrate functional authority away from the centre and to foster an increased degree of people’s participation. Indeed, by the turn of the century some countries were even embarking on a fourth and even fifth generation of reforms and revitalization, including improving efficiency, expanding the scope for citizen participation, increasing transparency and raising levels of accountability;
30. **TAKING INTO ACCOUNT** the substantial reforms that have been undertaken in the past two decades aimed at reinvigorating the role and effectiveness of local governance as well as deepening local democracy and enhancing citizen participation; we recognize the various achievements made particularly in reorienting the local government function from civic management into a prominent institution for steering local development. It is satisfying to note that through a wide-ranging span of legislative and constitutional changes, the power and authority of local governments in Africa have been enhanced and a significantly broad space has been created for their independent functioning. In addition, within this framework, a partnership orientation towards development management is increasing; this is occurring as a growing trend between spheres of sub-national governments,, involving collaboration between local authorities, national governments, the private sector, as well as communities and civil society in general.
31. **FURTHER NOTING** with concern that many of our large and medium-sized urban centres are vulnerable to sea-level rises; prone to suffer heavily from the consequences of heavy precipitation such as floods and landslides; and in many instances they are subjected to extreme heat events and the associated drought; therefore reaffirming the need for urban areas to manage risk reduction and climate change strategies.
32. **WELCOMING** evolving spatial linkages between urban centres, especially those which create urban development corridors that serve as dynamic vehicles for regional growth. However, we are also aware of the grave implications of rapid expansion of



urban centres of almost all sizes, which lead to the encroachment of vulnerable ecosystems; loss of fertile agricultural land; elongation of transport networks with all the attendant effects; and increased costs for infrastructure and service provision. We remain gravely concerned on the absence of measures taken to curtail the unsustainable trend of vast increases in the urban footprint in some countries;

34. **TAKING NOTE** of the recent independent assessment made by the continental association of local governments (UCLG-A) which found that the institutional environment for local authorities in half of the 50 countries they surveyed requires major reform efforts. They also found that 36% of African countries maintain an institutional environment which is generally unfavourable to the functioning of cities and local authorities. The results show that local governments in only 7 countries, out of the 50 that were assessed, operate in an institutional arrangement which is favourable to their thriving<sup>23</sup>;
35. **UNDERSCORING** the urgency of overcoming the above shortcomings, while also remaining determined in the next two decades to harness effectively some of the opportunities that are beginning to evolve and which we consider to be critical for accelerating Africa's transformation. In the same regard, we are also aware of the challenges that are emerging and which could undermine the same historical potential that we intend to build on;

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## *4. Emerging Opportunities and Challenges*

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36. **REITERATE** that the process of urbanization and the potential embedded within it, present an invaluable opportunity for Africa to realize the qualitative change being aspired for. The experience of other developing regions reaffirm the possibilities that can be attained by harnessing the emerging dynamism during the historical window of between 40 and 60 percent urbanization levels. Beyond the shift of populations as well as the agglomerations and concentrations which tend to be more visible with urbanization, there are a number of important institutional, cultural, economic as well as political transformations that can contribute to major advances when appropriately harnessed;

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<sup>23</sup> UCLG-A. 2014. Assessing the Institutional Environment of Local Government in Africa. Rabat. UCLG-A.



37. **WELCOMING** the current prominence given to the urbanization agenda both globally, regionally and at the level of our respective national settings. The agenda tends to impinge on almost every global issue currently being addressed – from peace and security, environmental sustainability, to different aspects of development. The convening of the Habitat III conference provide a strategic opportunity for the continent of Africa to seek for more favourable partnerships in the pursuit of this particular agenda. Furthermore, as noted in different parts of this document, the issue of urbanization constitutes a key component of almost every major policy pronouncement by African leaders as well as by regional institutions. The same applies at the national level whereby urban is not simply a geography. Rather the specific development imperatives are given due recognition;
38. **APPRECIATING** the establishment of Specialized Technical Committee No. 8 of the African Union. Henceforth the urban agenda is mainstreamed into the decision-making processes of the Continental body and acquires the potential of being incorporated in key integration endeavours that are being pursued. Increasingly a more collaborative institutional architecture is emerging in the continent aiming at enhancing the potential of urbanization for economic transformation. Not only are UN agencies and Africa’s regional institutions seeking more collaboration on this particular agenda, but also universities, local authorities, private consultancy firms as well as non-governmental and civil society associations expressing more interests in working together;
39. **CONVINCED** that the demographic transition which is beginning to unfold in Africa presents a valuable window of opportunity for rapid economic growth if appropriately harnessed through the right social and economic investment policies. The rapid decline in fertility rates and the subsequent change in the population age structure leads to the increase of the working-age population thus creating the possibility of having a larger labor force and fewer young people to support.
40. **ALSO ANTICIPATING** that the expansion of the continent’s resource base with recent discovery of additional oil, gas, and mineral reserves in a number of African countries; complemented with the ongoing enhancement of good governance and better economic management, will create a more dynamic setting for the industrial transformation that Africa is seeking. Unlike the period of the late 1970s to the early 1990s when the continent is described to have gone through a period of ‘static gains and dynamic losses’ in terms of industrial development, the industrialisation strategy that is currently building up seems to have a more endogenous anchor and it is also rooted in the quest for high productivity performance and innovation-led productivity growth<sup>24</sup>.

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<sup>24</sup> UNECA & African Union. Industrialization for an Emerging Africa: **Issues Paper**. E/ECA/CM/46/2



41. **ACKNOWLEDGING** that alongside the opportunities there are also challenges. The most immediate and notable is the strong association of Africa’s urbanization with negative externalities. Slum proliferation, pervasive informality, infrastructural breakdown, resource deficiency have almost become the hallmarks of Africa’s cities to the neglect of the powerful potential of the overall process. Initiating a policy paradigm shift from focusing on ‘problem solving’ to enhancing ‘generative capacity’ presents a formidable challenge;
42. **KEEPING IN MIND** the universal limitation of the ‘20th century urbanisation model’ that operates through a massive deployment of non-renewable resources, encourages sprawl, fragments urban spaces with rigid zoning and social differentiation, and more inclined towards the private sphere in comparison to the public good. Once again, it is a major challenge to reorient this model and to replace with a more sustainable, inclusive, mixed development approach which enhances the public good;
43. **RECOGNIZING** however that for all the opportunities to be harnessed and the challenges to be overcome, the African dimension of the new Habitat agenda has to be in synch with broader continental vision as articulated in the key instruments earlier mentioned. More specifically, Africa’s engagement into the Habitat III process has to ensure that the ultimate outcome is an agenda for urbanisation and human settlements which bolsters and enhances the continent’s quest for structural transformation.
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## ***5. Africa’s Agenda: Urbanization and Human Settlement Development for Structural Transformation***

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44. **GUIDED** by the broader continental vision as articulated in the various instruments during the last couple of years, including the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Solemn Declaration by the African Union’s Assembly of State and Governments, the Common African Position on the post 2015 development agenda, Africa Agenda 2063 as well as the decisions and resolutions earlier adopted by AMCHUD ; informed by lessons of experience particularly in relation to achievements and setbacks of the past two decades; driven by the impetus of a sustainable growth trajectory as well as the unfolding opportunity as we embark into the next two decades of the continent’s development; we reaffirm our commitment to seek an urbanization agenda which is



transformation oriented and which can accelerate Africa’s shift from a low-income commodity-driven to a stronger resource-based manufacturing economy;

45. **RECOGNIZING** the imperative need for an Africa urban agenda and a common position on Habitat III to derive from the broader vision and underpinnings already expounded collectively by our leaders during the last three years since 2013, we agree to base our considerations on the normative and operational framework of Africa Agenda 2063 as elaborated by the Commission of the African Union;



46. We therefore **COMMIT**, as guided by the above framework, to develop an urban agenda for Africa anchored on the following six overlapping pillars derived from the broader continental aspirations, goals and priorities as articulated in the Africa Agenda 2063 and also in the Common African Position for Post-2015 Development Goals:

Pillar 1: Enhancing the potential of urbanization for Accelerating Structural economic transformation and inclusive growth;

Pillar 2: Fostering sustainability and resilience in the overall process of urban development at national and regional levels;





Pillar 3: Promoting People Centred Urban and Human Settlement Development;

Pillar 4: Promoting Transformative Change, Democratic Development and Respect for Human and Peoples Rights through Urban Planning, Management and Governance;

Pillar 5: Strengthening Regional Integration as well as preserving and enhancing the diverse African architectural and urban identities forging a shared continental identity and developing linkages among national urban systems;

Pillar 6: Urban and Human Settlement Development Enhances Africa’s Position as a Global Player

47. We **AGREE** that the nuances and specific facets within each pillar may vary with the specific conditions for each country or sub-region, but there are also shared parameters that African countries and the global community as a whole may need to address as part of Habitat III;
48. **Pillar 1: Enhancing the potential of urbanization for Accelerating Structural economic transformation and inclusive growth;** We **CONSIDER** this pillar to be at the core of Africa’s interest in the framework of the ‘new urban agenda’ that will come out of Habitat III. The pillar encapsulates the continent’s desire for structural change and strives to take measures which will make both, the process of urbanization and the emerging spatial features, to generate and bolster a momentum for change. Its main priorities include the following:
- (a) Optimising Agglomeration Economies to foster Inclusive growth and reducing inequality;
  - (b) Developing Rural-Urban Linkages which increase agricultural productivity, support commodity based industrial development, streamline population movement and promote environmental sustainability;
  - (c) Nurture the spatial, human and institutional complementarities for Diversification, industrialization and value addition;
  - (d) Create appropriate conditions for expanded, efficient, accessible and cost-effective means of service delivery and Infrastructure development;
  - (e) Establish opportunities and conditions for enabling asset valorization, increased scale economies, expanded transactional modalities as well as the institutional mechanisms for improved domestic resource mobilization;
  - (f) Generate dynamic sources particularly relating to land, real estate, service delivery, industrial growth as well as infrastructural improvements for maximizing innovative development financing





49. **REITERATING**, in all the above parameters, the quest for the dynamism of urbanisation to provide the thrust for Africa’s productive capacity to shift from a predominantly low productivity, extractive and resource-based economy to a higher level of manufacturing and tertiary activities. The desired mode of urban development entails an increase in the capacity of job creation for all, entrepreneurship development targeted particularly at the burgeoning informal sector, a generative rural-urban linkage, and increasing self-reliance through optimising the conversion of urban based resources into dynamic assets;
50. **FURTHER UNDERSCORE** that a key measure for unleashing the dynamism of urbanisation is through optimising spatial economies by generating agglomeration advantages in the management of urban development. By applying territorial, legislative and programmatic interventions, complementary economic activities can be attracted and steered towards coalescing in contiguous locations. A number of countries in Africa and in other developing regions have used such measures as: territorial and land-use planning at various scales, growth pole initiatives, promotion of connectivity and functional linkages, to generate benefits which in turn lead to the improvement of productive efficiency. These include the ability of economic entities to match their requirements for major inputs such as labour, premises and specialised suppliers; and also to have access to a better range of shared services, infrastructure and external connectivity. There arises also the benefit of generating better information flows which can promote more learning, creativity and innovation;
51. **ACKNOWLEDGING** that apart from the capital cities which tend to have a bulk of the national urban population most of the African urban centres are small, usually of less than 300,000 people. The functional capacity of each centre together with the adjoining area is often very limited. To effectively harness the benefits of urbanization it is necessary to develop linkages and build complementarities across territories. The focus needs to be at the level of systems of cities and building portfolios of functions within nations as well as across the region. In this respect, the various corridor development initiatives that are being promoted across national boundaries will generate the required synergy for supporting economic diversification and structural transformation;
52. Also **UNDERSCORING** the importance of fostering a two-way flow and forward and backward linkages, particularly with respect to rural and urban development, as well as supporting value chain development. The thriving of urban centres which have been described as ‘consumption based’ – living off export proceeds and rents from the rural economy – suggests that rural-urban relationship cannot be taken for



granted. The experience of a number of countries underscores the importance of integrated territorial planning and strategic investment to develop functional connectivity between urban and rural areas. Flows and exchanges can be enhanced through territorial planning and organisation, location of activities, environment resource deployment, human settlement development, connectivity and backstopping the economic development across the hierarchy of settlements;

53. **ACKNOWLEDGING** the importance of science, technology and innovation in fostering diversification and industrialization and also recognizing the potential of urbanization in providing the conditions for the development, transfer and utilization of these enablers of transformative development, we commit to enhancing technological capacities; to build an enabling environment for innovation, increase support for research and development, and to optimally utilize space and geospatial technologies<sup>25</sup>;
54. **CONSIDERING** the early onset of negative externalities in African urban centres, largely caused by infrastructural deficiencies as well as capacity limitations; it is an imperative to give priority to the set of interventions that can allow a normal functioning of urban systems. We applaud the ongoing efforts in almost all of our countries to initiate major strategic public investments targeted at unblocking and eliminating negative externalities. We **commit** to effectively deploy all available policy, fiscal and regulatory measures to acquire the necessary resources and capacities for overcoming this major challenge. Increasingly innovative partnership arrangements with the private sector will yield encouraging results, as is the case with our own joint efforts in sub-regional collaboration as well as with the support of African regional institutions. We must explore new cooperation modalities at the global level during the next twenty years;
55. **Pillar 2: Promoting Sustainable Urban Development, Resilience to the Impact of Climate Change and Enhanced Capacities for Risk and Disaster Management;** **COGNIZANT OF** the profound impact of urban development on natural resources; **ALARMED** by the increasing vulnerability of Africa’s urbanization and human settlement development to the effects of climate change, and also recognizing the vulnerability to environmental risks as well as human and natural disasters, we **REITERATE** a commitment to foster sustainability and resilience as well as to building adequate capacities for risk and disaster reduction in all aspects of urban development. Shared parameters under this pillar include:

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<sup>25</sup> Common African Position on Post.....pp.10-11



- (i) Sustainable Land-use planning as well fostering the application of building and infrastructure design which mitigate, where possible, or adapt to impact of climate change;
- (ii) Promoting renewable energy utilization;
- (iii) Controlling pollution and emissions, including Green-House-Gases;
- (iv) Preserving the urban eco-system and maintaining a balanced rural-urban linkage;
- (v) Promoting urban safety, increasing capacity for risk and disaster prevention and response;

56. **MINDFUL OF** the natural resource intensity of the current mode of urbanisation and human settlement development – in terms of ecological footprint, non-renewable energy extraction and deployment - we shall strive to promote growth and improve human wellbeing without depleting the natural resource base , exacerbating global warming and intensifying eco-system breakdown;
57. **RECOGNIZING** the need to integrate sustainable urban development policy as a key component of a national sustainable development policy and, in this regard, to empower, on the one hand, all relevant stakeholders to work more closely together and, on the other hand, local authorities to work more closely with national governments. We recognize that partnerships among cities have emerged as a leading force for action on sustainable development. We commit to support international cooperation among local authorities, including through assistance from international organizations<sup>26</sup>.
58. **COMMIT** to promote an integrated, holistic and participatory approach to planning and building sustainable cities through support to local authorities, efficient transportation and communication networks, greener buildings and clean development strategies, and an efficient human settlements and service delivery system, improved urban land governance, improved air and water quality, reduced waste, improved disaster risk management and built resilience<sup>27</sup>. [**Nairobi Statement on Rio**]
59. **ACKNOWLEDGING** the role of cities in contributing to achieving green economy in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication, and strongly encourage local governments to implement urban development programmes in line with national and global commitments to sustainable development. We realize that making significant progress towards building green economy in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication will require new investments, new

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<sup>26</sup> AMCHUD IV – Nairobi Declaration 2012

<sup>27</sup> Nairobi Statement on Rio



skills formation, technology development, transfer and access, and capacity building in all countries. We acknowledge the particular need to provide support to developing countries in this regard, and to develop international and national financial mechanisms accessible to local governments to implement sustainable development programs<sup>28</sup>.

60. **ENCOURAGING** business and industry to contribute to green job creation throughout their global supply chains, including through support to small and medium enterprises. Particular emphasis should be on the needs of unemployed urban youth<sup>29</sup>.
61. **AGREE** that each country should work for accelerated use of the Clean Development Mechanism. We encourage more widespread use of energy planning tools to be applied at the regional, national and local level to provide a robust framework for donors and partners to coordinate their development cooperation;
62. **ACKNOWLEDGING** the implications of climate change for territorial planning and access to basic services, and the need for integrating adaptation and mitigation measures in planning frameworks of African Cities in the face of growing threats of floods, sea-level rise and landslides, coastal erosion, and increasing greenhouse gas emissions; **Aware** of efforts being made by our respective governments to address the impact of climate change by introducing innovative reforms for improving territorial planning and access to basic services for all;
63. **REAFFIRMING** that climate change is one of the greatest challenges of our time, and especially for African cities, and express our deep concern that developing countries are particularly vulnerable to and are experiencing increased negative impacts from climate change. Cities contribute significantly to greenhouse gas emissions and are at the same time heavily impacted by climate change. Therefore, cities need to be central in addressing climate change challenges.
64. **ENCOURAGE** all stakeholders, including inter-ministerial relations, international initiatives and partnerships, to address the interrelationship among water, energy, food, urbanization, disaster risk management and climate change. This is in order to achieve synergies as well as to minimize conflicts among policy objectives, foster resilience, and maintain priority to limiting impacts on vulnerable populations<sup>30</sup>.
65. We shall **ENDEAVOUR** to strengthen adaptive capacity and urban and human settlements in general by taking such measures as: Climate proofing of urban infrastructure, e.g. seawalls and storm surge barriers; Investing in storm water drainage; Developing early warning systems; enhancing community resilience;

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<sup>28</sup> Ibid

<sup>29</sup> Ibid

<sup>30</sup> Ibid



relocation of vulnerable settlements and infrastructure; accessing financing mechanisms such as the UNFCCC Adaptation Fund; and even establishing Insurance schemes;

66. **FURTHER STRIVE** to build mitigation capacity in such areas as: Energy efficiency in local government facilities, e.g. street lighting and water pumps; Foresighted transport and infrastructure planning; Compact and dense urban patterns to reduce travel distances and infrastructure networks; Promote energy efficient building materials; Landfill methane recovery; Protect forests and watersheds; and accessing financing facilities such as Clean Development Mechanism (CDM) and others;
67. **Pillar 3: Promoting People Centred Urban and Human Settlement Development: STRONGLY CONVINCED** that the main object as well as subject of Africa's development are the people of this continent. Apart from being the sole focus of all endeavours they also constitute the main asset for development. The unleashing of that asset potential and combining it with physical capital within the process of urbanisation creates a powerful dynamic for structural transformation. The pervasiveness of poverty, incapacity, and informality has rendered this valuable endowment to become almost like a liability. There is ample evidence, within Africa and among other regions, confirming that urbanization and human settlement development provide a viable setting for increasing human and physical capital accumulation. Increasing the value of human capital is not only cost-effective with a lower unit cost in urban contexts, but also the multiplier, returns as well as the potential for exerting an impact on rural development tends to be higher. We are encouraged by the increasing flow of foreign direct investment that are attracted to major agglomerations in the continent. We are determined to consider all avenues for developing our human capital and deploying it effectively towards realizing structural transformation objectives;
68. **RECOGNIZE** also that an essential component of human and physical capital accumulation is a well-functioning and sustainable delivery systems for basic needs as well as for infrastructural development. Generally this is one dimension of urbanization which is the most visible and which tends to attract significant policy and programmatic attention almost in all societies. At the same time, it is also one of the most challenging to manage as the experience from within Africa and from other developing regions reveals. Furthermore, the operational scope of this driver is so broad that it cuts almost all development sector at local and macro levels. At the most advanced stage it connects with fiscal systems as well as capital markets; it links with the public as well as with the private sector and communities. In the context of structural transformation it can act as an accelerator of change, if handled appropriately, or it can be a hindrance. Within the framework of the Habitat III exchanges, we must give in-depth consideration to delivery models for key





transformation areas such as housing, water and sanitation, drainage systems and energy;

69. **FULLY ASSOCIATE** with the goals and priority areas outlined in the Common African Position for the Post-2015 Development Goals with respect to this pillar, taking due note that almost all of them have a direct bearing on urban and human settlement development:

- (a) The eradication of poverty
- (b) Education and human capital development
- (c) Universal and equitable access to quality healthcare
- (d) Gender equality and women's empowerment
- (e) Leveraging population dynamics for development
- (f) Harnessing Africa's youthful population
- (g) Improving access to sustainable human settlements

70. **BEARING IN MIND** the thrust of the above goals which underline the urgency of addressing urban poverty through job creation and entrepreneurship development; improving human welfare through the provision of basic services to all; promoting gender equality; leveraging population and demographic dynamic as well as promoting human settlement, we remain mindful of the urgent need to conclude the unfinished business of Habitat II as well as the Millennium development goals;

71. **RECALLING** the inclusion of improving access to sustainable human settlements in the Common African Position for Post-2015 as a key component of 'people-centred development' we remain mindful of the cognizance taken by Heads of State and Government of the rapid urbanization rates in Africa and the importance of having the necessary infrastructures and amenities for an improved quality of life. We are therefore committed to expanding urban infrastructures and developing a planned approach to rapid urbanization and the emergence of new cities, as well as promoting urban and rural planning. This includes increasing decent and affordable housing; improving sanitation and hygiene services, promoting access to social and economic amenities in human settlements and increasing the efficiency of delivery and use of physical facilities and amenities, including waste management, transportation and energy<sup>31</sup>.

72. **Pillar 4: Promote Transformative Change, Democratic Development and Respect for Human and Peoples Rights through Urban and Human settlement Planning, Management and Governance: ACKNOWLEDGING** the envisaged aspiration within Africa Agenda 2063 of a continent that has undergone a deepening of the

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<sup>31</sup> Common African Position .....p.14





culture of good governance, democratic values, gender equality, respect for human rights, justice and the rule of law; **AWARE** of the profound impact of urban and human settlement towards achieving this ideal, we **COMMIT** to developing and consolidating systems of urban and human settlement planning, management and governance which will reinforce this aspiration at the urban level;

73. Strongly **BELIEVE** in pre-emptive spatial and programmatic planning as an effective mechanism for responding to rapid urbanization and for directing sustainable human settlement development we remain **DETERMINED** to build and consolidate required skills, methods, data and practices for decentralized and local planning, management, and governance;
74. Consistently **ENDEAVOUR** to view the city as a collaborative platform which engages the public, private and civil society actors and, in this respect, we **COMMIT** to advance the various reforms aimed at enhancing participation, transparency, accountability, inclusiveness and the pursuit of justice at national and sub-national levels;
75. We **REMAIN COGNIZANT** of the principle that urban management for transformative change shifts from being "maintenance of the stock" or "administration of the status quo" towards becoming the processes by which adaptations and adjustments are made in the process of implementing the decisions resulting from the planning and governance processes. It can be evaluated by checking whether the managing agents are, actually improving on the original plans and encouraging the necessary regenerating practices to increase economic and ecological prosperity.
76. **UNDERSCORE** the importance of adequate capacities of public institutions to communicate and to analyze alternatives, assess the impacts of their actions operating according to learning models which support adaptation and adjustment of strategies and policies over the short, medium, and long-terms, within frameworks of complexity of resource flows, costs and benefits, and impacts. This will involve capacity building of institutions to implement the sustainable and transformative dimensions of urban and human settlement development dimensions with regard to the design, investment, implementation, and management of policies and programmes;
77. **COGNIZANT** of the potential of rapid urbanization to generate conflict and insecurity likely to be triggered by resource scarcity, inequitable wealth distribution or even political malpractices; We are **DETERMINED** to strengthen conflict



prevention, management and resolution institutions as part of urban and human settlement management and governance;

78. **BEARING IN MIND** that African human settlements, as it is universally the case, are an embodiment of the diverse histories, cultures and traditions of this continent, but also Conscious of the role of cities and human settlements in forging shared identity and serving as transmission nodes of collective norms and values, we **COMMIT** to develop legislative, institutional and organizational systems for the preservation, consolidation, and dissemination of the diverse components of urban and human settlement related cultural assets and identities;

79. **Pillar 5: Urban Development Fosters Linkages and Accelerates Regional**

**Integration: MINDFUL** of the strong desire for an ultimate political unity of Africa which will be the culmination of the integration process, including the free movement of people, the establishment of continental institutions, and full economic integration underpinned, among others, by a diverse infrastructure (quality and size) that will be in place to support Africa's accelerated growth, technological transformation, trade and development, we **RESOLVE** to enhance the contribution of urban and human settlement development to the continental integration process;

80. We **SHALL ENDEAVOUR** to consolidate the dynamics of urban and human settlement development, particularly the aspects of increased scale economies, the facilitation and intensification of flows, higher levels of transactions and interactions as well as the sharing of norms and values, all of which being critical factors in the promotion of regional integration; Indeed, we are **AWARE** that human settlements are the crucibles within which peoples' everyday activities and interactions take place. We **PLEDGE** to provide the facilities, including spaces and local institutions, that would promote cross-boundary interactions;

81. **REALIZING** that urban centres have served as dynamic nodes for trade, investments as well as cultural exchanges among African peoples, we are determined to further develop necessary conditions for closer interactions as well as strive for increased value addition in the evolving partnerships. To this end, we shall at expanding continental spatial development programmes as well as regional infrastructure initiatives;

82. **CONSIDERING** the centrality, within an integration framework, of expanding market access through lowering transaction costs, and enhancing production capacity, we resolve to intensify the process of creating sustainable agglomerations as well as the requisite facilities within them so that cross-country trade and investment can flourish and the free movement of labour and capital across the entire is facilitated;



83. **BEARING IN MIND** that effective functioning of financial and monetary Institutions to be established within the continental integration framework would benefit significantly by also leveraging urban and human settlement assets currently insufficiently under-valored (including the housing stock); also **AWARE** of the potential growth of innovative and robust continental-wide financing mechanisms derived largely from urban based economies, we **COMMIT** to
84. **Pillar 6: Urban and Human Settlement Development Enhances Africa's Position as a Global Player: REAFFIRMING** the aspiration within Agenda 2063 of Africa emerging as a strong, united, resilient and influential global player and partner with a bigger role in world affairs, while also taking full responsibility to finance her growth and development; and not being donor dependent, we **COMMIT** to translate this aspiration by reinvigorating the NEPAD Cities Programme and strive to promote strategic synergy and forge within the continent's integration framework, a dynamic network of urban and human settlement entities;
85. **AWARE** of the fact that a new strategic role and place of an urbanizing Africa in the global arena, will be based on mutually beneficial partnerships with the outside world. We **COMMIT** to strengthen the continent's capacity and role in global negotiations-in the area of urban and human settlement development as well as on the reforms of the multilateral institutions dealing in this sphere; We remain **DETERMINED** to engage actively with the rest of the international community in the process of defining a New Urban Agenda by which we shall **ENSURE** that Africa's goals and perspective are incorporated;
86. **REITERATING** also a sentiment expressed in the Common African Position for Post-2015 Development Agenda that each country has primary responsibility for its own economic and social development, and that the role of national policies, domestic resources and development strategies is critical; **REAFFIRMING** that African countries need additional resources for sustainable development; and **RECOGNIZING** the need for significant mobilization of resources from a variety of sources and the effective use of financing;
87. **REAFFIRMING** also the principles of common but differentiated responsibilities, the right to development and equity, and mutual accountability and responsibility, as well as ensure policy space for nationally tailored policies and programmes. In this regard, Africa's partners have a crucial role to play in supporting the continent's urban and human settlement development in accordance with national needs and interests;
88. **AGREE FINALLY**, to consider in the course of elaborating this common African position the requisite clearly defined deliverables and plan of action, together with



the appropriate modality for monitoring and evaluating the agenda that can emanate from this proposed framework

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