

The Kenya National Urban Forum**Monday 27 January 2020, Kisumu, Kenya**

- **Excellency James Macharia, Cabinet Secretary, Transport, Infrastructure, Housing and Urban Development**
- **Excellency Prof. Peter Anyang' Nyong'o, Governor of Kisumu County,**
- **Governors present**
- **County Executive Members present**
- **Ambassador Njambi Kinyungu, Permanent Representative of the republic of Kenya to UN-Habitat**
- **Mr. Charles Hinga Mwaura, Principal Secretary, State Department of Housing and Urban Development**
- **Distinguished Participants**
- **Ladies and Gentlemen**

A very good day to all of you! Siku njema kwenu nyote!

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Government of Kenya and all those involved for organizing this National Urban Forum. I also appreciate the County of Kisumu for accepting to host the Forum. This promises to be an exciting day for me as this is my first National Urban Forum in Kenya.

The National Urban Forum is the culmination of local and community efforts to bring all key stakeholders together in support of the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals, particularly Goal #11 on Sustainable Urbanisation. More importantly, it is a strong example of the localisation of the New Urban Agenda, reflecting our commitments to ensure we translate policy into practice.

For Kenya, the National Urban Forum is a significant first step towards the country's representation at the World Urban Forum. The 10th session of the WUF, as it is popularly known, will take place from 8 to 13 February in Abu Dhabi, the capital of the United Arab Emirates. The national urban forum brings together the national government and the counties, civil society, the private sector and academia to reach a common position on best practices to be presented during the WUF 10 in Abu Dhabi, including successful programs and innovation in the urban sector in Kenya.

As the format and framework of the National Urban Forum mirrors that of the WUF, our gathering here today provides an opportunity for participants from Kenya to understand how the WUF is organized. This largest and most inclusive gathering of urban experts, communities and city managers is an opportunity to learn from the global community and for Kenya to share innovations and best practices with the rest of the world.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

As you all may know, the first session of the WUF was held in Nairobi in 2002. The WUF remains the key platform to highlight innovations in sustainable urbanisation. We have since added to this global platform a mechanism for the implementation of the New Urban Agenda and the sharing of successful experiences in achieving the urban dimensions of the Sustainable Development Goals.

Kenya, being among the first countries to develop a popular version of the New Urban Agenda together with an Implementation Matrix, will find this a useful platform to exchange on progress made in implementing the New Urban Agenda at global, national and local levels.

By adopting WUF 10's theme - Cities of Opportunities: Connecting Culture and Innovation – this national urban forum will help prepare the participants for a fruitful engagement. Culture and cultural diversity are sources of enrichment, grounded in human rights principles and provide an important contribution to the sustainable development of urban areas.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

UN-Habitat continues to provide technical and collaborative support to Government of Kenya. The support is structured through the Habitat Country Programme Document (HCPD) for Kenya (2018-2022) signed by Cabinet Secretary James Macharia and myself in 2018.

Our cooperation is based upon Six Strategic Action Directions (SADs) that will facilitate effective and efficient implementation of the New Urban Agenda in Kenya. The outcomes include improved Land Management and Sustainably Planned Human Settlements. We also share with the government the aspiration to improve access to Quality Urban Basic Services and Infrastructure for all citizens. A central concern is also to work together to improve Access to Quality and Affordable Housing. This means ensuring that we upgrade existing slums to ensure there is upward mobility for citizens living there and also prevent the creation and expansion of new slums. To do this sustainably, we need to encourage innovation in improving Urban Economy and Finance. We also need to Improve Urban Governance and Resilience by improving the capacity to monitor, evaluate and manage.

I am very happy to say that UN-Habitat is currently implementing 33 projects in 21 counties. These include solid waste management in Kisii town through the recycling of plastics. There is also the promotion of local economic development in Homa Bay county through the upgrading of Nyakwere market. Today, this market covers 5,000 square meters and accommodates 650 traders.

UN-Habitat is committed to expand its footprint in Kenya in accordance with the needs of the people. We will be guided by the National Government as we continue to develop strategic engagements with the counties. We will also work with our partners the European Union and other UN agencies to have an integrated approach when implementing projects in Kenya.

In the immediate future, I see important collaborations on climate change, waste management and physical planning, in line with UN-Habitat's Strategic Plan 2020-2023.

Ladies and gentlemen,

UN-Habitat is open to receiving talented support from the government of Kenya to reinforce the UN-Habitat's Kenya Country team. Allow me as well to reiterate the commitment of UN-Habitat to support Government and the people of Kenya in the implementation of the Government's BIG FOUR Agenda. UN-Habitat is ready to bring its expertise and knowledge to support the housing programme to reduce inequality and to make sure no one and no place are left behind

Ladies and Gentlemen

Coming back to the WUF 10, most of you here will be participating in the many aspects of the global forum. These include Dialogues, High-Level; Grassroots Discussions, Women and Youth Assemblies; Training Events, Caucuses and Exhibitions. As participants, I urge all of you to immediately begin to familiarize yourselves with these Events so that you gain maximum benefits from WUF.

Finally, **Ladies and Gentlemen**, I would like to conclude by explaining that this WUF10 will be different from other WUFs. We will not be only happy with declarations. We will be wanting to ask all participants to commit to specific actions. Some will be at the level of government commitments and others at the community or individual level.

So, I am asking all of you to think: How does National Urban Forum and the World Urban Forum benefit Kenya as a Country?

- The WUF like the National Urban Forum is a platform for exchanging knowledge with experts. Make a commitment to share and learn. So, come back with at least three innovations that can apply to Kenya and that can solve major urban challenges.
- We cannot move forward without mobilizing resources for urban interventions. Attend the Cities Investment Platform (CIP) and come back with some with a list of potential funders.
- Networking opportunities for advancing the New Urban Agenda and everyone going should come back with a list of partnerships forged.
- Don't forget that you are an ambassador and go to the WUF to showcase Kenya's innovations and achievements.

With these words, I wish you well in your deliberations in the various National Urban Forum sessions. I also take this earliest opportunity to wish you safe travel to Abu Dhabi and hope to see you there.

I thank you. Asante Sana.