



CONCEPT NOTE

SECOND AFRICA URBAN FORUM (AUF2)

Theme: "Adequate Housing for All: Advancing Socio-economic and Environmental Transformation towards the realization of Agenda 2063."

8-10 APRIL 2026

NAIROBI- KENYA

1.0 Background and Context

Africa's urban transition is unfolding at an unprecedented pace. As a result, the continent's urban future is not only inevitable but also critically important, presenting a significant opportunity for structural transformation. Globally, over half of the world's population currently resides in urban areas, a figure projected to reach nearly 68 per cent by 2050. Within this context, African cities and human settlements are emerging as critical engines for economic growth, social inclusion, climate resilience, and sustainable development.

Although Africa remains the least urbanised continent, it is experiencing the fastest rate of urban population growth worldwide, with average annual growth exceeding 3.5 per cent. By 2050, approximately two-thirds of Africa's population is expected to live in urban areas, a shift that will have profound implications for the continent's economies, societies, and environment. Meeting this growth will require the delivery of significant new housing stock to respond adequately to the shelter needs of the population.

Urban migration across the continent is being driven by a combination of push and pull factors. Push factors include climate vulnerability, resource scarcity in rural areas, and conflict in fragile regions, while pull factors include improved economic opportunities and better access to services in urban centres. African cities already contribute more than 75 per cent of national income, with the informal sector generating the majority of new jobs for the expanding urban population. However, an estimated 60 per cent of urban residents continue to live in informal settlements, often without access to adequate housing, basic services, and essential infrastructure.

At the continental and global levels, the African Union Agenda 2063, the Sustainable Development Goals under the 2030 Agenda, and the New Urban Agenda recognise urbanisation and human settlements as strategic pillars for Africa's development. Agenda 2063 envisions a high standard of living and quality of life for all citizens, with cities and human settlements serving as hubs of cultural and economic activity, supported by modern infrastructure and universal access to basic necessities of life.

1.1 The Africa Urban Forum

The Africa Urban Forum (AUF) is a continental platform established by the African Union to facilitate dialogue and coordination on sustainable urbanisation and human settlements in Africa. The Forum brings together political leaders, policymakers, local and regional governments, development partners, the private sector, academia, civil society, and other relevant stakeholders to discuss Africa's urban challenges and opportunities.

The African Union Specialized Technical Committee on Public Service, Local Governments, Urban Development and Decentralization (AU-STC No. 8), at its Fourth Ordinary Session held on 31 August 2022 in Cairo, Egypt, decided to establish the Africa Urban Forum as a dedicated continental platform for advancing Africa's urban agenda.

AUF provides a forum for shaping a shared urban agenda, promoting policy coherence, and strengthening institutional collaboration among Member States. It enables the exchange of knowledge, experiences, best practices, and innovations that support sustainable urban development across the continent.

The Forum is anchored within the mandate of AU-STC No. 8 and is aligned with continental and global frameworks, including Agenda 2063, the Sustainable Development Goals, and the New Urban Agenda. Through AUF, African countries consolidate positions on key urban issues and articulate common perspectives within global urban policy processes.

The First Africa Urban Forum (AUF1) was held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, from 4th to 6th September 2024. AUF2 builds on the outcomes of AUF1 and seeks to further strengthen dialogue and coordination on Africa's urban development priorities.

1.2 The Inaugural Africa Urban Forum (AUF1)

The African Union Commission -Department of Political Affairs, Peace and Security- convened the inaugural Africa Urban Forum (AUF1) hosted by the Federal Republic of Ethiopia from 4-6 September 2024 in Addis Ababa, with the technical support from UN-Habitat and the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA)

The Forum brought together Ministers, city officials, private sector actors, and other urban stakeholders to deliberate on Africa's urban challenges and opportunities.

During AUF1, participants adopted the *Africa Urban Forum Declaration on Sustainable Urbanization*, reaffirming commitments made in Cairo in 2022 to recognise urbanisation as an irreversible trend that the continent must harness for its structural transformation. The Declaration calls for sustainable and inclusive urbanisation policies, strengthened climate resilience, innovative urban financing mechanisms, and enhanced regional cooperation in line with Agenda 2063.

Following AUF1, the African Union Specialized Technical Committee on Public Service, Local Governments, Urban Development and Decentralization (AU-STC No. 8), at its Fifth Ordinary Session held in Tunis, Tunisia, deliberated and endorsed the convening of the Second Session of the Africa Urban Forum in 2026, to be held ahead of the Thirteenth Session of the World Urban Forum (WUF13).

1.3 The Second Africa Urban Forum (AUF 2)

The Second Africa Urban Forum (AUF2), convened by the African Union Commission and hosted by the Government of Kenya, with technical support from UN-Habitat and UNECA, will be held in Nairobi, Kenya, from 8th to 10th April 2026 under the theme "*Adequate Housing for All: Advancing Socio-economic and Environmental Transformation towards the realization of Agenda 2063.*"

AUF2 will serve as an African Union-led flagship for advancing political commitment, strengthening policy coherence, and promoting investment pathways for affordable, inclusive, and resilient housing as a driver of Africa's economic transformation. Convened ahead of WUF13, AUF2 will consolidate Africa's common position on housing and human settlements, while showcasing locally led solutions, innovations, and partnerships.

2.0 Making the Case for Housing: Transforming Africa's Agenda 2063

Recognising that African cities will continue to evolve significantly over the next three decades, it is imperative to acknowledge that the provision of affordable and decent housing is central to this transformation, irrespective of the trajectory of urban development. Housing transcends its role as mere shelter or a social good; it is a foundation for safety, stability, and dignity, and a strategic economic and resilience asset.

Secure housing contributes directly to improved health, educational outcomes, and social cohesion, fostering inclusive communities that encourage interaction, resource-sharing, and mutual support. It also plays a critical role in mitigating homelessness and social exclusion, while reducing the number of people living in vulnerable and precarious conditions.

From an economic perspective, housing construction stimulates broad value chains. On average, each housing unit constructed generates more than two additional jobs across the construction, manufacturing, and services sectors, thereby boosting local economic development (LED). Investments in housing increase demand for construction materials, labour, and supporting infrastructure. Secure housing further enables households to build wealth and access credit, supporting entrepreneurship and small business development. At both city and national levels, housing development contributes to public revenues through property taxes and service charges, strengthening local fiscal capacity.

2.1 Housing, Resilience, and Adaptation

From an environmental perspective, resilient housing is critical to mitigating the impacts of climate change-induced natural hazards. Climate-smart housing solutions that incorporate sustainable materials and energy-efficient designs can significantly reduce carbon emissions while protecting communities from climate-related risks such as floods, droughts, and storms.

As Africa experiences increasing frequency and intensity of climate-related disasters, investment in resilient housing—including green and social housing that serves the majority of the urban poor—not only safeguards lives but also reduces long-term infrastructure repair costs and helps secure livelihoods across diverse regions of the continent. From a spatial planning perspective, housing serves as an anchor for integrated development, linking land use, infrastructure, transport systems, and the provision of basic services.

2.2 Housing and Infrastructure in the African Context

Housing and infrastructure development are critical drivers of economic growth and social development across Africa. However, the continent continues to face significant deficits in both areas. Rapid urbanisation, population growth, and persistent funding constraints have resulted

in millions of people living in substandard housing, often without access to basic services such as clean water, sanitation, and reliable electricity.

Addressing these challenges requires innovative approaches to urban planning, increased investment in sustainable infrastructure, and policy frameworks that promote affordable housing solutions capable of supporting inclusive and resilient communities. Elevating housing and infrastructure development to a high political priority—through coordinated, multi-sectoral strategies that address the needs of low-income populations and promote social inclusion—is critical to unlocking Africa’s economic potential and improving living standards.

In this regard, Africa’s urban future holds significant promise. Cities can emerge as engines of growth, innovation, and opportunity—provided that housing is prioritised. By investing in affordable and sustainable housing solutions, African countries can reduce poverty, enhance quality of life, and build resilient communities, thereby translating the aspirations of Agenda 2063 into tangible outcomes.

3.0 Kenya as Host of the Second Africa Urban Forum 2026

The African Union Commission made a call for expression of interest to host the AUF2 to all the African member states with a deadline. The Government of the Kenya is the only country that expressed interest with valuable proposal within the specified time. The African Union Commission has also selected the Republic of Kenya to host the Second Africa Urban Forum in recognition of the country’s demonstrated leadership in harnessing urbanisation as a catalyst for inclusive growth, resilience, and socio-economic transformation.

Kenya has made notable progress in advancing housing and sustainable urban development as a central pillar of its national development agenda. This leadership was further underscored by Kenya’s launch of the Global Champion for Adequate Housing initiative during the 80th Session of the United Nations General Assembly, positioning the country at the forefront of global advocacy for housing as a foundation for dignity, opportunity, and stability.

Hosting AUF2 presents a strategic opportunity for Kenya to convene the continent at a defining moment for Africa’s urban future. As one of the fastest urbanising regions globally, Africa faces an urgent imperative to translate urban growth into economic opportunity, social inclusion, and climate resilience. Kenya’s experience in addressing housing deficits, informal settlements, urban infrastructure gaps, and community resilience offers practical insights that resonate across diverse African contexts.

By hosting AUF2, Kenya will provide a platform not only to showcase locally led innovations and policy reforms, but also to catalyse continental dialogue on housing as a driver of structural transformation. The Forum will serve as a convening moment to mobilise political leadership, align policy priorities, and strengthen partnerships across governments, cities, development partners, the private sector, and communities.

In this regard, Kenya's role as host extends beyond logistics to stewardship — offering leadership in shaping a shared African narrative on housing, urbanisation, and development, and reinforcing Africa's collective voice ahead of major global urban policy processes.

4.0 Timing and Strategic Positioning of AUF2

Beyond serving as a technical and policy convening, the Second Africa Urban Forum represents a defining continental moment for Africa's urban and housing agenda. As Africa undergoes one of the fastest urban transitions globally, AUF2 is positioned to move the housing conversation from aspiration to action—galvanising political leadership, aligning policy priorities, and mobilising partnerships and investment at scale.

Convened at a critical juncture ahead of WUF13, AUF2 will provide African leaders with a collective platform to assert ownership of the continent's urban future, translate commitments into implementable pathways, and articulate a coherent African position on housing and human settlements within the global urban discourse. The Forum is therefore not only a space for dialogue, but a catalyst for delivery, accountability, and long-term impact.

5.0 Objectives of the Forum

The Second Africa Urban Forum seeks to elevate housing as a central development priority and to position it as a transformative lever for Africa's urban future. The Forum aims to mobilise political leadership, align policy frameworks, and catalyse collective action in support of affordable, inclusive, and sustainable housing across the continent.

Specifically, AUF2 will raise awareness among policymakers, stakeholders, and the public on the critical role of housing in achieving the aspirations of Agenda 2063, particularly in the context of rapid urbanisation, demographic change, and climate pressures. It will inspire coordinated action among Member States, financial institutions, civil society, and the private sector to align efforts and accelerate the delivery of affordable housing at scale.

The Forum will provide space for rigorous examination of housing policy frameworks, including diverse tenure systems and inclusive slum transformation strategies, recognising informal settlements as integral components of African cities while unlocking pathways toward adequate, safe, and sustainable housing. It will also serve as a platform for sharing best practices, innovative solutions, and successful case studies from across the continent, fostering peer learning and adaptation across varied national and local contexts.

AUF2 will engage a broad spectrum of stakeholders—governments, cities, private sector actors, civil society, and communities—to encourage collaboration, co-creation, and shared ownership of housing solutions. In parallel, the Forum will advance dialogue on innovative financing strategies and delivery models capable of crowding in public and private investment to support large-scale housing and urban development.

Finally, AUF2 will promote climate-smart and sustainable housing approaches that respond to present needs while safeguarding future generations, and will generate policy

recommendations to inform African Union decision-making and shape Africa’s collective engagement at the Thirteenth Session of the World Urban Forum (WUF13).

6.0 Expected Outcomes and Outputs

The Second Africa Urban Forum is expected to deliver concrete outcomes that reinforce Africa’s collective commitment to advancing inclusive, resilient, and sustainable urban development, with housing positioned at the centre of this agenda.

The Forum will forge renewed political and institutional commitment among Member States and stakeholders to operationalise the principles set out in the Africa Urban Forum Declaration adopted in Addis Ababa. This will include a strengthened focus on inclusive housing policies that expand equitable access to safe, affordable, and adequate housing for all urban residents. To support accountability and continuity, AUF2 will contribute to the formulation of a high-level monitoring approach to track progress on housing-related commitments, ensuring alignment with ongoing regional and global urban dialogues.

AUF2 will also catalyse collaborative partnerships among governments, the private sector, civil society, financial institutions, and community organisations, enabling the co-creation of housing solutions and facilitating sustained knowledge exchange and resource mobilisation. Through platforms such as the Africa Housing Compact, the Forum will strengthen cooperation across actors and geographies, supporting scalable and locally adaptable housing interventions.

In addition, the Forum will provide a vibrant continental platform for the exchange of best practices, innovative approaches, and successful housing and urban development case studies from across Africa. This will enhance peer learning and encourage the replication and adaptation of proven solutions within diverse urban contexts.

The Forum will further enhance the visibility of African-led innovation and leadership in housing and urban development, positioning Africa as a proactive contributor to global urban policy discourse.

The principal outcome of AUF2 will be the adoption of the **AUF2 Nairobi Declaration**, which will articulate Africa’s shared priorities and policy positions on housing and human settlements and inform the continent’s engagement at the Thirteenth Session of the World Urban Forum

7.0 Theme and Sub-Themes

The Forum will be guided by the following theme:

“Adequate Housing for All: Advancing Socio-economic and Environmental Transformation towards the realization of Agenda 2063”

This theme places housing at the centre of Africa’s urban transformation agenda, recognizing it as both a social imperative and a strategic economic driver. It reflects the continent’s shared

commitment to inclusive growth, human dignity, resilience, and structural transformation, while responding directly to Africa’s accelerating urbanization and the urgent need to deliver safe, affordable, and sustainable housing at scale. AUF2 will position housing not as a sectoral concern, but as a unifying platform through which cities can drive productivity, climate resilience, social cohesion, and long-term prosperity in line with Agenda 2063.

7.1 Sub-themes

AUF2 will be guided by the following interconnected sub-themes:

1. Urban planning and infrastructure development
2. Resilience building and sustainable urban development
3. Smart cities, technology, and innovation
4. Innovative financing for housing and urban development
5. Transformation of informal settlements
6. Urban displacement and migration

8.0 Forum Venue

The Second Africa Urban Forum (AUF2) will be held at the **Kenyatta International Convention Centre (KICC)** in Nairobi, Kenya. KICC is a premier regional venue with the capacity, facilities, and strategic location required to host a high-level continental forum of this scale.

The venue offers state-of-the-art technical infrastructure, including interpretation booths, simultaneous translation facilities, high-speed internet connectivity, hybrid meeting capabilities, and a fully equipped media centre and briefing rooms. It also provides office space for meeting participants and is located in close proximity to major hotels, government offices, the headquarters of UN-Habitat and UNEP, and Jomo Kenyatta International Airport (JKIA), which is accessible within 15–20 minutes via the expressway.

KICC further offers secure, centrally located grounds with adequate outdoor space, including the COMESA grounds, suitable for exhibitions, innovation marketplaces, cultural showcases, and other outdoor engagements.

9.0 AUF2 Date

The Second Africa Urban Forum (AUF2) will be held **from 8th to 10th April 2026**. The timing of the Forum strategically positions AUF2 approximately one month ahead of the Thirteenth Session of the World Urban Forum (WUF13), scheduled to take place from 17th to 22nd May 2026 in Baku, Azerbaijan. This sequencing enables Africa to consolidate a unified and coherent continental position on housing and human settlements, strengthen ministerial and policy-level preparations, and align AUF2 outcomes with ongoing African Union policy processes. It also allows for structured engagement with UN-Habitat and global partners in advance of deliberations at WUF13, ensuring that Africa’s priorities are clearly articulated and effectively represented within the global urban discourse.

10.0 Stakeholder Participation

Participation in AUF2 will bring together a broad and diverse range of stakeholders, reflecting the multi-sectoral nature of housing and urban development. The Forum will convene political leadership, including Heads of State and Government, Ministers, Mayors, local authorities, and parliamentarians, alongside senior policymakers and decision-makers from across Member States. Participation will also include private sector leaders, financial institutions, development partners, think tanks, and representatives from the urbanisation and human settlements sectors. Civil society organisations, professional associations, engineers, architects, non-governmental organisations, community representatives, women and youth groups, indigenous peoples, faith-based organisations, media representatives, and citizens of the host country will also be engaged to ensure inclusive and representative dialogue. In recognition of the cross-cutting nature of housing, **Ministers responsible for Finance and Environment** will be specifically invited to foster integrated, cross-sectoral approaches to housing and sustainable urban development.

11.0 Partners

The Forum will be supported through strategic partnerships with continental and global institutions active in housing, urban development, climate resilience, and financing. These partners include, among others, **UN-Habitat, the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA), the African Development Bank, Shelter Afrique, the African Centre for Cities, GIZ, ICLEI, the World Bank, the Development Bank of Southern Africa (DBSA), Habitat for Humanity, Cities Alliance, the European Union, United Cities and Local Governments of Africa (UCLG-Africa), the Centre for Affordable Housing Finance in Africa, the World Resources Institute, the Global Fund for Cities Development (FMDV), C40 Cities Climate Leadership Group, and Safaricom PLC.** Partnerships will support technical inputs, knowledge exchange, financing dialogue, and the effective delivery of Forum outcomes.

12.0 Structure of the Forum

AUF2 will be delivered through a dynamic and interactive programme structure designed to promote dialogue, knowledge exchange, and partnership building. The Forum will comprise high-level plenary sessions, ministerial and leadership roundtables, panel discussions, thematic dialogues, assemblies, side events, and exhibitions. This format will enable both strategic policy discussions and practical engagement, while providing space for showcasing innovations, partnerships, and locally led solutions in housing and urban development.

13.0 Closing Session

The Second Africa Urban Forum (AUF2) will conclude on **10 April 2026** with a high-level closing session that affirms Africa's collective resolve to advance adequate, inclusive, and resilient housing as a cornerstone of sustainable urbanisation.

The closing session will synthesise key political, policy, and investment messages emerging from the Forum, reaffirm shared commitments by Member States and partners, and formally

adopt the **AUF2 Nairobi Declaration**. It will underscore Africa’s unified position on housing and human settlements and signal a clear transition from dialogue to implementation.

In doing so, the session will position AUF2 not as an end in itself, but as a decisive continental milestone – setting the tone for Africa’s engagement at the **Thirteenth Session of the World Urban Forum (WUF13)** and reinforcing Africa’s leadership in shaping global urban and housing discourse.

For more information please contact:

a. African Union Commission

Mr. Issaka Garba Abdou, Head of Division, Governance and Human Rights and Coordinator of the AUF, Email: GarbaAbdoui@africanunion.org; and Ms . Gaokgakala Sobatha, Expert Decentralization , Local Governance and Urban Development , Email: SobathaG@AfricanUnion.org

b. Government of Kenya

Eng. Byron Buyu, Secretary Urban and Metropolitan Development, Email: byronbuyu@gmail.com; Plan. Lilian Kieni, Director Urban Development liliank312@gmail.com; and Dr. Robert Sangori, Deputy Director Urban Governance, Management and Resilience / BCRUP Coordinator, rsangori@gmail.com

