





THE ROLE OF URBANIZATION

TRANSFORMATION OF AFRICA

MARCH, 2014 ADDIS ABABA, ETHIOPIA





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This publication is a report of the side event which was jointly organized by the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) and the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) during the Eighth Joint Annual Meetings of the African Union Specialized Technical Committee on Finance, Monetary Affairs, Economic Planning and Integration and the Economic Commission for Africa Conference of African Ministers of Finance, Planning and Economic held in Addis Ababa on the 25-31 March, 2015. This side event was undertaken as part of the Presidential Initiative project of the Africa Urban Agenda Programme - an initiative of UN-Habitat

This report was prepared under the overall leadership of the Director, Partners and Inter-Agency Coordination Branch, and Addis Ababa Liaison Office, UN-Habitat, Mariam Yunusa; and the Director of the Social Policy Development Division, ECA Takyiwaa Manuh. Specifically, the report was prepared by the staff of the Partners and Inter- Agency Coordination Branch, UN-Habitat and Urbanization Section, ECA.

Conceptualization of Side Event on Urbanization in the Structural Transformation of Africa:

UN-Habitat: Mariam Yunusa,. Lucia Kiwala and Omoayena Odunbaku

ECA: Semia Tapia Guermas and Sandra Zawedde.

Coordination and Report Writing:

UN HABITAT: Omoayena Odunbaku (Task Manager) ECA: Sandra Zawedde (Task Manager)

Chikondi Banda (Report Writing)

Programme and Administrative support:

The contributions of staff members below towards making the side event and the production of this report a success is also acknowledged.

UN Habitat: Anusuya Banerjee, Wycliffe Tongwa, Emmanuel Bugoye, Florence Bunei and Elizabeth Khawae

ECA: Tigist Eshetu, Sofanit Abebe, Berhanu Tesfaye and Abraham Kassa

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DESIGN AND LAYOUT

Austin Ogola

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

l.	INTRODUCTION	05
II.	OPENING REMARKS	07
III.	INSIGHTS FROM POLICY MAKERS AND EXPERTS	13
IV.	INFORMED RESPONSE FROM MEMBER STATES	17
V.	INTERACTIVE SEGMENT AND CLOSING REMARKS	21
	ANNEX A: List of Participants	23
	ANNEX B: Programme of Work	25



INTRODUCTION





Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

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- 1. UN-Habitat and The Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) organized a side event on **The Role of Urbanization in the Structural Transformation of Africa** in line with the eighth Joint Annual Meeting of the African Union (AU) Specialized Technical Committee on Finance, Monetary Affairs, Economic Planning and Integration and ECA's Conference of African Ministers of Finance, Planning and Economic Development, which focused on Implementing Agenda 2063: Planning, Mobilizing and Financing for Development.
- 2. The purpose of the side event was to engage prominent African stakeholders, including representatives from member states, Regional Economic Communities (RECs), academics, civil society organizations and development partners in collective reflection, and experience sharing on issues related to urbanization and structural transformation in Africa. The event provided an opportunity to propose measures that would harness cities and urbanization as drivers of inclusive and sustainable transformation in line with the Post 2015 Development Agenda, Africa Position on the sustainable Development Goals and the AU Agenda 2063.





- 3. Mr. Khabele Matlosa, Director of Political Affairs, delivered the African Union Commission's (AUC) remarks on behalf of H.E. Dr. Aisha Abdullahi, the Commissioner for Political Affairs. He noted that the side event was held at a time when there was a renewed impetus to streamline urban housing issues within the AU's Agenda, especially following the successful operationalization of the Specialized Technical Committee (STC) No.8 on Public Service, Local Government, Urban Development and Decentralization.
- 4. Mr. Matlosa emphasized that Africa needed to shift from a largely agrarian to an industrialized economy with larger urban populations and bigger cities. Mr. Matlosa also highlighted the varied ways that the African Union had upheld the importance of urbanization, which included transforming the African Ministerial Conference on Housing and Urban Development (AMCHUD) into a Sub-Committee on Urban Development and Human Settlements (HUD) of the African Union Specialized Technical Committee No.8. and establishing a Coordinating Unit of the Sub-Committee on HUD; facilitating a closer collaboration between the HUD Coordinating Unit with UN-Habitat and other partners dealing with human settlements development and prioritizing the development of an African Charter on the Values and Principles of

- Urban Development as an instrument with a view to deepen sustainable urban development.
- 5. Mr. Matlosa also noted that, although African governments have on several occasions committed themselves at an international level to relevant legal and normative frameworks and strategies related to housing, human settlements and urban development, little is known about this work in Africa.
- 6. He mentioned that the attempts to document the facts regarding urbanization and structural transformation in Africa have been limited, which is a challenge for Africa in harnessing urbanization as a key priority for the contient's development where urban planning can be fully integrated into development policies and programmes at continental, sub-regional and national levels. He added that it was important for each African country to adopt a model that would enable urbanization to facilitate the reality of structural transformation, including the creation of employment opportunities, addressing socio-inequality and pervasive poverty and creating habitable settlements with equal opportunities for women and youth.
- Mr. Matlosa concluded by thanking The Economic Commission for Africa and UN-Habitat for providing the AU with technical and financial

support in the area of urbanization and human settlements development, when efforts to integrate the quality of towns and cities in Africa as a critical element of the structural transformation of Africa and the realization of Agenda 2063 are being made. He applauded the Governments of Nigeria and Ghana for the financial support provided towards the African Urban agenda through the Strengthening Partnerships Project and the Presidential Initiative, both of which are aimed at raising the profile of urbanization as well as contributing to the democratic values of human development. Mr. Matlosa called on other governments to join Ghana and Nigeria to support the New Africa Urban Agenda.

- 8. Ms. Takyiwaa Manuh, the Director of Social Policy Development delivered ECA's opening remarks on behalf of Mr. Abdallah Hamdok, Deputy Executive Secretary of the The Economic Commission for Africa. She thanked the delegates for taking time out of their normal weekend schedules to attend the side event and appreciated UN-Habitat and the African Union Commission for their close and effective collaboration in the organization of the side event.
- 9. In her remarks, she observed that the High Level Panel at the meeting provided an opportunity for policy makers, academia, Regional Economic Communities (RECs) and experts from different African countries to discuss the linkages that exist between urbanization and structural transformation in the African context. She recalled that the past two

- years been utilized by all development practitioners and governments to set Africa's future in this area for the next 50 years, known as the African Union's Agenda 2063.
- 10. Ms. Manuh reminded delegates that it is within the Agenda 2063 framework that African leaders and stakeholders acknowledged structural transformation as a path to promoting sustainable development which translated the recent impressive growth rates into sustainable prosperity, increased job opportunities and more inclusive development. The Economic Commission for Africa would, therefore, support African member states to transform their economies by undertaking research, developing evidence-based policy frameworks and strengthening African capacities to achieve the economic and social transformation that they desire. Urbanization could be an important driver for the structural transformation of African economies and societies.

She reminded delegates that cities and towns can be used as productive places for economies of scale and agglomeration effects and added that, while urban concentrations of populations allow for popular mobilization and technological innovation and specialization across a range of areas which include transportation, education and health, industry clusters could enhance domestic productivity to raise export competences. Urbanization is thus an important global trend in the 21st century that could be a transformative force for economic growth and productivity, including

wealth and state-building. The numerous opportunities offered by urbanization could be used to activate a pattern of urban growth that could positively impact upon other spheres of national development, including agricultural productivity and living conditions in rural areas.

11. Ms. Manuh noted that urban areas also provide serious challenges to governments, especially in the delivery of housing, infrastructure, notably power, water and sanitation, and services such as controlling pollution and crime. Therefore, strategies are needed to ensure that the benefits of urbanization are maximized while the negative effects are mitigated.

This would require an innovative model in Africa and a new urban agenda which would be fully integrated into the national development strategies and entirely connected to sectoral policies. Africa needs to proactively reinvigorate territorial planning within the framework of strengthening developmental states and the renewal of national planning.

12. Ms. Manuh concluded by thanking the panelists and delegates for actively participating in the debate on urbanization with policy makers and senior experts in charge of planning, finance, monetary affairs, economic development and integration.







- 13. Mr. Marco Kamiya of UN-Habitat's urban economy branch shared experiences of global urbanization from Asia and Latin America and linked them to Africa's experiences. He spoke of Asia's deliberate vision of having a universal system of cities as opposed to unplanned urbanization which has occurred in other regions, because they understood that urbanization and growth were highly correlated, especially in East Asia and China where production networks link cities. However, in Latin America there are low-productive economies with weak economic integration, which implies that urbanization in that region is not enhancing productivity.
- 14. Mr. Marco revealed that planned urbanization creates value and improves productivity and competitiveness and recommended the standard model for sustainable urbanization should have integration where the infrastructure is built in such a way that links trade to cities and countries financial strength where entities should have the capacity to deliver urban infrastructure and services in the short-, medium- and long-term and productive capabilities, which implies continuous innovation and hence production of more complex goods and services. He also pointed out that, although Africa's growth episodes were becoming faster and shorter, there was a need to rethink how systems and cities are linked across borders to attract productive investments and develop connections with cities using infrastructure

- and ICT. Mr Marco went on to say that Africa is currently where Asia was in the 1960s and Latin America in the 1920s but it has the opportunity to change the status quo if there was a focus on formulating and reformulating high-quality policies.
- 15. Mr Marco concluded by highlighting that sustainable urbanization required integration (infrastructure and trade); empowerment of local government with local finance and productive capabilities.
- 16. In his presentation, Prof. Fantu Cheru, a Senior Researcher from the African Studies Centre at Leiden University in the Netherlands, highlighted the need to translate important concepts to policy and practice, which would be the basis of advocating for development issues like urbanization. He reiterated that, although cities are important for the structural transformation agenda, their functions had changed because of the globalization process which has impacted upon capturing the geography of places, talent and infrastructure among others. He added that it was important to understand the pathways to structural transformation and the political conditions required for structural transformation as well as the practical challenges that might obtain.
- 17. Prof. Cheru shared Ethiopia's experience and approach to structural transformation which took into consideration inclusive and evidence-based

aspects. He mentioned that Ethiopia realized that industrialization could not happen without functional cities, hence the need for a clear convergence of urbanization and industrialization. The framework under which Ethiopia is implementing their structural transformation initiatives - the Growth and Transformation Plan - requires disciplined planning and functional institutions at the federal level of government, notwithstanding the political will and commitment at the highest levels of policy making.

- 18. He acknowledged that the Ethiopian government has faced multiple challenges on the urbanization and structural transformation agenda but had taken a deliberate decision to learn by doing. In Ethiopia structural transformation was not rhetoric about the shift from rural to urban economy but a political project beyond the shift of the composition of the economy from agriculture to value addition.
- 19. Prof. Cheru concluded by sharing that, although competitive cities are needed, every country would have to navigate its own path in the pursuit of transformation by creating soft and hard infrastructure in building cities and taking into consideration the national and continental perspective. He did, however, stress the pivotal role of a functional state or the need to establish a developmental state with a long-term and unified vision around poverty reduction, income growth and support to the sort of vibrant market economy

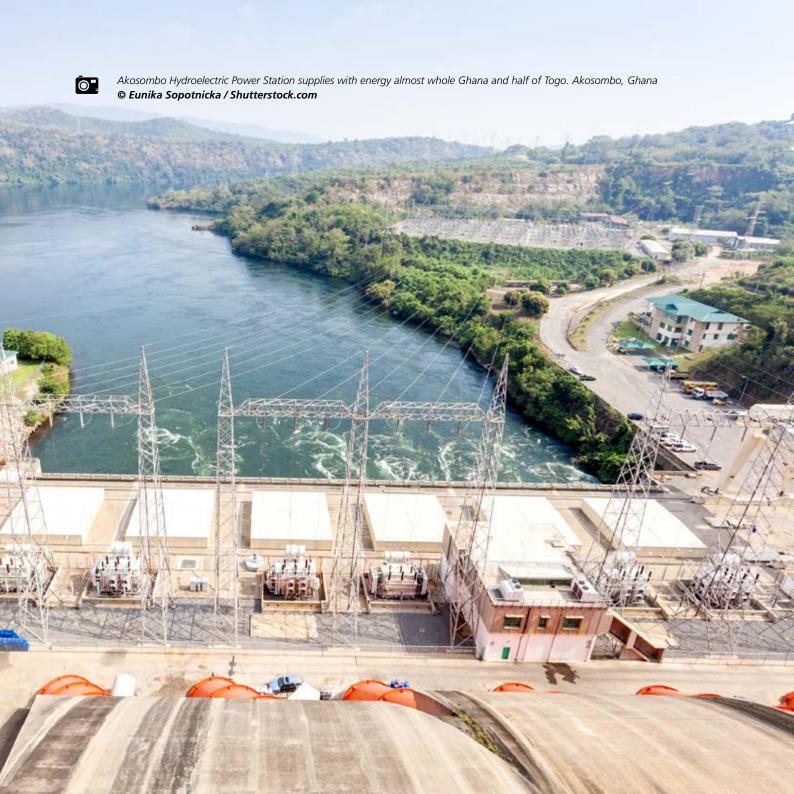
- needed to create prosperity from domestic resources, not forgetting the competitiveness needed through trade and connectivity. Structural transformation requires political intervention and massive resources.
- 20. In sharing his thoughts on the evolution of the South African urbanization process and government response to the nature of urbanization in South Africa which is different from many other countries in the region Mr. Madala Backson Masuku, the Deputy Minister of Economic Development of the Republic of South Africa also provided a brief historic context of South African towns which were only 25 in number from 1911 to 2001 and 307 towns in 2007. In 1990, 52 per cent of the country was already urban and currently two-thirds of the 54 million South Africans live in urban areas.
- 21. Mr. Masuku highlighted the economic and political factors that led to such levels of urbanization as colonial governments made a fiscal and agricultural push notwithstanding the migration dynamics from India and Europe. The disaggregation and laws that were passed restricting movement of people within the country influenced the response to urbanization in South Africa. However, even with the restricted movement of people, the economy demanded that more movement of labour and the restrictions affected South Africans internally and the people from the neighbouring countries.

- 22. The first intervention, therefore, was to allow the popular masses to enact the 1955 Housing and Security Act which defines the urban context. Prior to that, in 1944, reconstruction and development programmes had also responded to education, housing and security as the government had realized that settlements had to be for productive purposes. In 2001, the rural-urban strategy was adopted which was geared toward urban renewal to address the historic issues that South Africa had experienced. The need to adopt a national framework for planning was then apparent as well as that of the need for social inclusion and economic planning including other programmes such as the housing programme of 1994-2014. Tenure agreements in urban settlements were also revised because of the effects of the apartheid regime which affected the interactions of economic activities involved in the social housing programme, the integrated human settlements programme and sustainable development programmes.
- 23. Mr. Masuku also mentioned that South Africa's National Development Plan response had to define a new growth path which was commodity driven, looking at further opportunities for industrialization as a pre-requisite and R&D and innovation as growth drivers that could create jobs. Other factors that have been considered as enablers include the green and knowledge economies.

24. In conclusion, Mr. Masuku mentioned that, as South Africa responds to urbanization, it also considers urbanization to be a growth driver.









INFORMED RESPONSE FROM MEMBER STATES

- 25. H. E. Mr. Akin Oyateru, Permanent Representative of Nigeria to UN-Habitat and UNEP, thanked the organizers for the invitation to participate in the side event and shared his thoughts regarding the New Africa Urban Agenda. He provided an overview on why an emphasis had being placed on the New Urban Agenda in Africa and explained that, although there was a global Habitat Agenda from the second United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II) held in Istanbul in 1996, the conference outcomes contained in the Istanbul Declaration and the Habitat Agenda had also been adopted as the new global action plan to realize sustainable human settlements had minimum input from the Africa region.
- 26. Mr. Oyateru encouraged Africa to use the current opportunity offered by the preparations of Habitat III, to strengthen the continent's position in the upcoming Habitat Conference, which is held every two decades with the next one slated to be held in Quito, Eduador, in October 2016, where a new global agenda will be set.
- 27. Mr. Oyateru stated that, African member States accredited with UN-Habitat in Nairobi, had agreed to drive the process of Africa's New Urban Agenda,

- taking into consideration the reality of urbanization and highlighting the importance of Africans owning this agenda. While analyzing the current urbanization trend in Africa, he reiterated that the continent could learn, adopt and integrate good practices from other world regions such as Latin America and Asia.
- 28. Citing examples of how youth in cities, especially those living in congested areas, could be psychologically affected by their environment, leading to defiant behaviour, Mr Oyateru explained the relationship between slums, crime and social injustice and emphasized the need to view urbanization as a solution rather than a problem, as it is mostly perceived in Africa.
- 29. Further asserting that the principle and philosophy of urbanization is more holistic and has witnessed a paradigm shift, Mr. Oyateru stressed the importance of integrated planning, its pros and cons and noted that, while African governments had good blueprints, they were synonymous with non-implementation and non-linkages with other sectoral and existing plans.
- 30. Mr Oyateru concurred with Prof. Fantu Cheru on the need for deliberate efforts by governments to

engage actively in development processes, which is the reason governments of Nigeria and Ghana are financially supporting the Africa Urban Agenda with contributions of USD 3m and USD500,000 respectively. He called on other African countries to support the initiative so that Africans can own the process.

- 31. Mr. Oyateru concluded by stressing the importance of urbanization as a tool for development and emphasized the need to adopt a bottom-up approach to planning as opposed to the current top-down approach; inclusive planning involving all actors and stakeholders; rural-urban linkages and rural settlement planning. Existing rural settlements today would develop into medium and large settlements of the future.
- 32. In her embedded response to the panel discussion Ms. Akua Sekyiwa Ahenhora, the Deputy Permanent Representative of Ghana to UN-Habitat and UNEP, thanked the delegates and panelists for attending the side event. She also expressed sincere appreciation to the AU Chairperson, Dr. Nkosozana Dlamini Zuma, for her commitment to the new Africa Union Vision, Agenda 2063.
- 33. Elaborating on the importance of urbanization as a defining feature of the century, she presented the demographics of Africa's urbanization as a dynamic opportunity for its development, stating that the anticipated urban population of three-quarters of

- one billon could only become a propelling factor for development if strategic measures are taken to pre-empt the inherent challenges of urbanization such as inadequate infrastructure and poor housing manifested in informal settlements such as slums and environmental degradation. She affirmed that urbanization had reached a critical stage and highlighted the importance of state and non-state actors in addressing these challenges.
- 34. She mentioned that the Presidents of Ghana and Nigeria had decided to champion the Africa Urban Agenda. She also explained briefly the structure of the Africa Urban Agenda Programme, citing the Presidential initiative for the Africa Urban Agenda, supported by the Government of Ghana, as the top-down component and the Strengthening Partnerships for a New Africa Urban Agenda, supported by the Nigerian Government, as the bottom-up component of the Africa Urban Agenda.
- 35. She shared how the Presidential Initiative had been launched at a breakfast during the United Nations General Assembly meeting in September, 2013 and explained that the Africa Urban Agenda was geared to supporting African countries and stakeholders in the preparation of the National Habitat III reports as well as advocate for Africa's common position as a major component of the Global Urban Agenda to be adopted at the third United Nations conference on housing and sustainable urban development (Habitat III) in 2016.

- 36. Ms. Akua revealed that the Presidential Initiative had sought to place urbanization at the core of national plans, ensure strengthened linkages between, national, territorial, economic and urban plans, to which the Government of Ghana had committed a one-off payment of USD 500,000 to UN-Habitat to facilitate this initiative. She added that the Government of Ghana had developed national urban policy and action plans and a national urban forum and had mainstreamed the urban agenda in the country's medium development plan. The urban development unit of Ghana's Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development, cited as part of the process of driving the agenda, had focused on advocacy and inclusion of the initiative in all urban activities, yielding enormous political commitment and support from development partners, civil society and key stake holders.
- 37. She re-affirmed Ghana's commitment to addressing the challenges of urbanization in Africa, stating that the President of the Republic of Ghana, H.E. Mr. John Dramani Mahama, had pledged his personal commitment to champion the course of human settlements and sustainable urbanization in Africa and was working with other African leaders to place urbanization at the centre of development in the continent. She called on other countries, through the AU Chairperson, to contribute to the Africa Urban Agenda; emphasizing the need to own the process and pointed out that having the best models and strategies alone would not suffice, rather the need for

a political will in driving the process was required as a factor for success.

She thanked the staff of UN-Habitat, Economic Commission for Africa and the African Union Commission for working and advocating for an urbanization prioritization which will lead to the Africa we want in 2063.





Market place at Onitsha, Nigeria. © Alessandro Scotti



V

INTERACTIVE SEGMENT AND CLOSING REMARKS

- 38. Ms. Aisa Kirabo, the Deputy Executive Director of UN-Habitat, urged African countries to take ownership of urbanization development strategies and stated that leaders needed to spearhead development processes with passion and vision. She further recommended that a discussion on urbanization be organized to ensure that countries take ownership of the urbanization strategies proposed. The cost of harnessing the benefits of urbanization could be high on societies and cities and integrated approaches to ensuring that the benefits are spread to all urban dwellers could be achieved through collaboration among all sectors and institutions to minimize the negative effects of urbanization, she said.
- 39. Dr. Kirabo pointed out that National Urban Policies should take into consideration all levels and stages of urbanization, from the small towns to megacities and strategies should be put in place to ensure that the benefits in the gradual progression to higher levels or urbanization are enjoyed by urban dwellers. She urged governments and policy makers not to lose touch with the needs of the people whom they serve and reiterated that it was the role of governments to put in place mechanisms or strategies that could address the needs and priorities of urban dwellers in an effective and sustainable manner. Beyond the other benefits, urbanization could be used as a tool for peace building among different groups of people

- and that, when urban dwellers needs and aspirations are met, conflict could be minimized.
- 40. In conclusion, Dr Karibo highlighted the important role that urbanization could play in organizing and spearheading the strength of economies.
- 41. Dr. Nkosazana Dlamini Zuma, the Chairperson of the African Union Commission, shared briefly what it was doing to promote the urbanization agenda and responded to questions raised by the delegates.
- 42. She highlighted the initiatives that the African Union had undertaken in the area of urbanization. The first one was the upcoming 2015 dialogue on urbanization slated to take place in Tanzania where political leaders, academia and private sector businesses would be invited. She noted that these three categories were the most influential in promoting the positive benefits of urbanization. The second initiative would be the round table discussion with financial institutions for access to finance for the vulnerable entrepreneurs in urban areas such as women and the youth.
- 43. In response to a question posed by a participant on the significance of changes in national leadership after democratic elections, Dr. Zuma noted that the strength of a political party is more important than changing political parties in government with every

election. The strength of a political party can ensure that implementation of development goals is carried on despite changes in its internal leadership.

- 44. She highlighted that a strong ruling party has to be inclusive in its structure and membership, and should have an agreed vision that can be taken up in the event of change of leadership. She noted that this in turn would enhance the sustainability of policy implementation strategies and that strong leadership should be people centred.
- 45. Further, improving information flow to urban dwellers and urban-rural migrants is important for smooth transitions that would help them settle and fully benefit from cities and urban areas. Dr. Zuma noted that people who live in slums tend to have a negative self-image and sense of self which can affect the way they regard other communities who do not live in the slums. She therefore urged leaders to consider ways of providing facilities and services for slum residents.
- 46. She further urged urban leaders to consider the significance of recreation to preserve societal norms and values. Reference was made to some of the negative impacts of social media and the internet of the behaviour of the youth. Dr Zuma noted that the absence of recreation facilities can lead to the youth finding leisure in vices such as alcohol

- abuse, sex, explicit and/or violent and inappropriate entertainment or use of the internet.
- 48. She recalled the South African experience of high crime levels in townships that were merely designed to accommodate labourers and noted that the absence of recreation and other amenities was one of the key factors that attribute to the high crime levels. Dr Zuma emphasised the need for childcare centres in urban areas to ensure that children's needs are taken care of when both parents are working. She further highlighted the African Union's desire to link cities and capitals in Africa across national borders through roads, rail or high speed rail to fully harness the benefits of integrated development through urbanization.
- 49. Dr. Zuma concluded by acknowledging the importance of urbanization in Africa's development and expressed commitment to the cause by committing the African Union to spearhead a discussion on urbanization. She stated that the next two summits of African Union Heads of State in Addis Ababa and Kigali shall focus their discussion on the topic of urbanization. This way, the Heads of State would have time to internalize the issues before the third United Nations Conference on Human Settlement and Sustainable Development, which is scheduled to be held in Quito, Ecuador, in October 2016.

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

MEMBER STATES

South Africa

Mr. Madala Masuku

Deputy Minister Economic Development

Sthendile Shongwe Economic Development Deputy Ministry Economic Ministry

Ms. Hurchele Saaiman-mnella South African Embassy

Nigeria

Ambassador Akin Oyateru PR of Nigeria to UNEP and UN-Habitat

Ms. Obayomi Azeez Embassy of Nigeria

Mozambique

Mr. Manuel Goncalves Embassy of Mozambique

Sudan

Ms. Amal Ahmed Mukhtar Ministry of Environment amalmukhtar@hotmail.com

Ghana

Ms. Akua Sekiywa Ahenkora DPR of Ghana and UN-Habitat

Guinea

Mr. Moussa Sidibe Guinea Embassy

Regional Economic Communities

Mr. Oswell Binha Association of SADC Chamber of Commerce and Industry

Development partners

Mr. Andrew Hust Embassy of Canada

Africa Union

Dr. Dr. Nkosazana Dlamini Zuma Chairperson

Mr. Khabele Matlosa Department of Political Affairs

Mr. John G. Ikubaje Department of Political Affairs

EXPERTS

Prof. Fantu Cheru Leiden University

Ms. Winnie V. Mitullah University of Nairobi IDS

UN-Habitat

Dr. Aisa Kirabo Deputy Executive Director

Mr. Marco Kamiya Human Settlements Officer

Ms. Anusuya Banerjee Associate Social Policy Officer

Ms. Axumite Gebre-Egziabher Director, Regional Office for Africa

Ms. Mariam Yunusa Director, PIACB

Odunbaku Omoh (Ms) Human Settlements Officer

UNOCHA

Mr. Avril Perry AU Liaison Office

UNECA

Ms. Takyiwaa Manuh Director SDPD

Ms. Josephine Ulimwengu

Ms. Semia Guermas de Tapia SDPD

Ms. Sandra Zawedde SDPD

Ms.Fidelia Dave SDPD

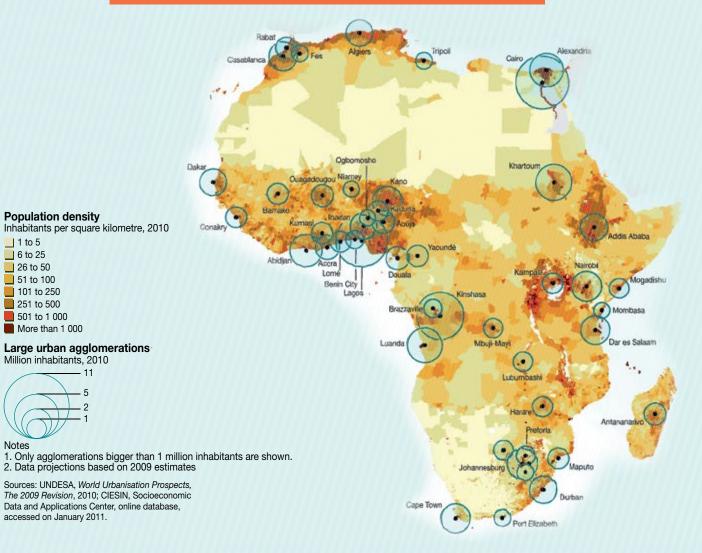
Mr. Abbi M. Kedir

Ms. Patronella Madzimure

Ms. Pamela ZintatuMtshanga

Ms. Chikondi Banda Thole

THE ROLE OF URBANIZATION IN THE STRUCTURAL TRANSFORMATION OF AFRICA



PROGRAMME OF WORK

Venue: Conference Room 6, UN Complex, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

Date: 28 March 2015, Time: 1.00 pm to 3.00 pm

The eighth Joint Annual Meetings of the African Union Specialized Technical Committee on Finance, Monetary Affairs, Economic Planning and Integration and the Economic Commission for Africa Conference of African Ministers of Finance, Planning and Economic Development

PROGRAMME	
12:30	Registration of participants
13:00 - 13:20	OPENING Dr. Takyiwaa Manuh, Director, Social Development Policy Division, Economic Commission for Africa
13.00 13.20	Dr. Khabele Maltosa, Director Political Affairs, African Union Commission
	PANEL : POLICY MAKERS AND EXPERTS
13:20 - 14:00	Mr. Marco Kamiya, Programme Officer (Urban Economist), UN-Habitat
	Prof. Fantu Cheru, Senior Researcher / African Studies Centre, Leiden University, The Netherlands
	Mr. Madala Backson Masuku, Deputy Minister of Economic Development of the Republic of South Africa.
14:00 - 14:20	INFORMED RESPONSE FROM MEMBER STATES
	H.E. Mr. Akin Oyateru, Per. Rep of Nigeria to UN-Habitat and UNEP.
	Ms. Akua Sekyiwa Ahenkora, Deputy Permanent Rep of Ghana to UN-Habitat and UNEP.
14:20 - 14:40	Interaction of Panelists and delegates- Q &A
	INTERACTIVE SEGMENTS AND CLOSING REMARKS
14:40 - 15:00	Dr. Aisa Kirabo, Deputy Executive Director, UN-Habitat
	Dr. Nkosazana Dlamini Zuma, Chairperson of the African Union Commission







UN@HABITAT

UNITED NATIONS HUMAN SETTLEMENTS PROGRAMME P.O.Box 30030, Nairobi 00100, Kenya; Tel: +254-20-7626742; Fax: +254-20-7625015;

infohabitat@unhabitat.org

