



## AFRICA URBAN FORUM

4- 6 September 2024, Addis Ababa - Ethiopia

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## **Theme: “Sustainable Urbanization for Africa’s Transformation: Agenda 2063”**

### **1. Context**

The Assembly of Heads of State and Governments of the African Union held in Malabo in 2014 established the Specialized Technical Committee on Public Service/ Administration, Local Governments, Urban Development and Decentralization (AU-STC.No.8). The AU-STC.No.8 Sub-Committee on Urban Development and Human Settlements (HUD) serves as the primary consultative body responsible for promoting sustainable development in African human settlements. It also acts as the continental platform through which governments collaborate to enhance African cities, enabling them to fulfill their potential as centers of hope, growth, and prosperity.

The African Union Commission and its member-states established the Africa Urban Forum during the Fourth Ordinary Session of the Specialized Technical Committee on Public Service, Local Government, Urban Development and Decentralization (AU-STC.No.8) held in Cairo, Egypt in August 2022. The AUF was captured in the AU-STC.No.8 declaration and has been conceptualized upon the rising consciousness of the rapid urbanization in Africa, its opportunities, & challenges, and the need to create a continental scale forum to support an inclusive and holistic approach to unlocking the potential of urbanization in the continent.

The Harmonized Regional Framework for Implementing the New Urban Agenda in Africa, which was developed by the African Union Commission, jointly with UN-Habitat and UNECA will serve as the main guiding framework for the deliberations of the Africa Urban Forum. The framework aligns with the transformative vision of Africa 2063 and serves as a pivot for addressing urban related issues in Africa.

### **2. Why urbanization matters**

Urbanization on the African continent represents a megatrend. By 2050, the percentage of people living in urban areas is predicted to rise from 47% in 2000 to around 60%. With an average annual urban growth rate of 3.5% in the last 20 years, Africa has seen the largest urbanization in the developing world, and this trend is anticipated to continue until the year 2050. According to projections, major African cities will house up to 85% of the continent's population between 2010 and 2025. Urbanization in Africa varies by region, each area having its own geographic and historical contexts. East

Africa has the lowest rate of people living in cities while South and North Africa lead in urban growth; followed by Central and West Africa who are home to some of the largest megacities in Africa.

Economic, cultural and social perspectives change when a large portion of the population moves from rural to urban areas. Any effort at economic growth, human development or environmental protection on the continent has to engage the people living in Africa's rapidly expanding towns and cities.

Previous urbanization phases, elsewhere in the world, have provided impetus for socio-economic progress. On the African continent, urbanization is already shaping every aspect of economic, political and cultural life. There is, however, a dearth of precedents and theory that can be used to understand and guide Africa's urbanization so as to ensure an economic dividend. A lack of infrastructure and services, unplanned settlements, significant informal economies, dependence on commodity extraction and exports, and institutional gaps, continue to undermine the links between urbanization and industrialization in many African countries.

African cities and towns will be built one way or another in the next three decades. How they are built will determine the prospects for the continent and the viability of global sustainability efforts for the remainder of the century. It has never been more important for new multi-level governance arrangements and continent-wide programmes to harness the current urbanization phase to ensure economic diversification, reduced cost-of-service delivery and climate resilient development.

### **3. Ethiopia, Host of the Inaugural Africa Urban Forum 2024**

The African Union Commission, AU-STC.No.8: Special Technical Committee, has selected Ethiopia to host the Africa Urban Forum due to its unique urbanization journey, and exemplary Pan-African values. Ethiopia's focus on sustainable urban development through policies such as its human-oriented infrastructure development, urban greening projects, and slum transformation, demonstrate its readiness and competence. Additionally, Ethiopia's vast experience in hosting high-level regional forums and meetings further underscores its suitability to host the Africa Urban Forum.

### **4. Objectives of the Africa Urban Forum**

Provide a diverse multi-stakeholder platform to;

- Raise the profile of urbanization as an imperative for sustainable and resilient development in Africa.
- Support inclusive and participatory human settlement development in Africa's structural transformation and attainment of Agenda 2063.
- Facilitate dialogues and buy in for sustainable urbanization among Africa's heads of state and Governments.
- Identify, discuss, and prioritize emerging and critical issues in inclusive and

sustainable urban development from the perspective of different stakeholders.

- Exchange ideas, best practices and innovative approaches related to sustainable urbanization.
- Foster collaboration of different stakeholders at various levels to develop strategies, improve programme & project implementation outcomes, share resources, and build capacities.

#### 5. **Expected outputs (non- exhaustive) of the Africa Urban Forum include:**

- African Union declaration which will benefit not only Africa but will serve as Africa's position on sustainable urban development to be communicated to the global community including the World Urban Forum.
- More awareness on the urban agenda in Africa at the highest level of Head of States.
- A roadmap on the implementation of the African Union declaration on sustainable, equal, and inclusive urbanization.
- Commitments for support to implement African Union urban development flagship projects.
- Investment commitment/ Partnerships on urban development financing, capacity building, programme, and project implementation.

### 6. **Theme and Sub-themes**

#### 3.1 **Main theme: "Sustainable Urbanization for Africa's Transformation – Agenda 2063.**

~~Agenda 2063, the African Union's long-term vision for the continent, is a blueprint for Africa's future. The theme underscores the critical importance of harnessing the potential of urbanization to drive inclusive, nature protecting, climate resilient development across the continent. At its core, the theme reflects a commitment to realizing the vision outlined in Agenda 2063, which envisions an Africa that is prosperous, integrated, and peaceful, with empowered citizens and strong institutions.~~

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#### 3.2 **Sub-themes**

##### **Sub-theme 1: Financing Urbanization for socio-economic transformation**

Rapid urbanization in Africa presents a significant financing challenge, requiring substantial investments in infrastructure, services, and social amenities to accommodate growing urban populations. However, traditional financing mechanisms often fall short of meeting the scale and complexity of urban development needs. This sub-theme explores both supply and demand side constraints on financing African cities. It aims to identify innovative options for financing urbanization, including public-private partnerships, development finance, and community-based financing models.

##### **Sub-theme 2: Sustainable and resilient urban development in Africa**

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practices that balance economic growth with environmental conservation and social inclusion. The Nairobi Declaration deriving from the Africa Climate Summit held in September 2023 in Nairobi recognized cities as hot spots for climate vulnerability, thus the nexus between urbanization and climate change. This sub-theme explores strategies for building cities that are environmentally sustainable, socially inclusive, and economically resilient.

## **7. Stakeholders Participation**

Participation at the Africa Urban Forum will include; political leaders ( local authorities/ mayors, parliamentarians, ministers, heads of government/ states), policy and decision makers, business leaders, media representatives, representatives of urbanization and human settlements sectors and other related sectors, think tanks private sector, financial institutions, engineers, architects, NGO's, civil society representatives ( urban residents, unions, professional associations, indigenous people, women , youth, religious organizations) etc. and citizens of the host country. Particularly the forum will mobilize new stakeholders in the discussion to foster cross-sectorial approach, such as Ministers of Finances and Ministers of Environment.

## **8. Partners**

UN-Habitat, UNECA, Regional Centre for Mapping of Resources for Development, African Development Bank, Shelter Afrique, African Centre for Cities/ Cities Alliance, United Cities for Local Governments of Africa, and Centre for Africa Housing Finance, WRI, FMDV.

## **9. Format of the Forum**

The format of the African Urban Forum will include round-tables, plenary sessions/ panel discussions, dialogues, side events, assemblies, and exhibitions.

## **10. Date and Venue**

The Africa Urban Forum will be held in Addis Ababa - Ethiopia on the 4-6 September 2024.

The Venue, Adwa Victory Memorial Museum is found in the Central Business District of Addis Ababa at a walkable distance to all major international hotels.

## **On-line Registration**

On line registration will be open from May 2024 on the African Union Commission webpage to be provided.

## **11. For more information please contact:**

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