



## **AFRICA URBAN FORUM DRAFT DECLARATION**

### **Preamble**

**We, the participants of the Africa Urban Forum convened in Addis Ababa by the African Union, and hosted by the Government of Ethiopia:**

**Recognizing** that urbanization is one of the most essential elements of structural transformation of Africa since, it is essential to optimize it. This reality is borne out by the fact that urban areas are where the bulk of the GDP and wealth are produced, and most people are living there or will be migrating there in search of opportunity;

**Acknowledging** that the Africa We Want is dependent on the way African cities are planned, governed and managed so that they become true engine of economic growth, social inclusion and sustainable development.

**Conscious** of the challenges of infrastructure deficits, housing shortages, environmental degradation, and economic disparities that impede African cities to embrace the opportunities for economic revitalization, technological innovation, and improved living standards.

**Cognizant** of the commitments made in the Maputo Declaration, the formation of the AU Specialized Technical Committee No. 8 (AU-STC8) on Public Service, Local Government, Urban Development and Decentralization, the outcomes of the Brazzaville meeting, and the Cairo Declaration on the Africa Urban Forum;

**Mindful of** the outcomes of the High-Level Meeting for the review of the implementation of the New Urban Agenda organized by the United Nations General Assembly in April 2022, and the need to harness the transformative force of urbanization in Africa to achieve the African Agenda 2063 vision;

**Recalling** the the Addis Ababa Action Agenda on financing sustainable development appealing for financing sustainable development through internal fiscal and other financial mechanisms;

**Also recalling** the declaration of African Heads of states during the Africa Climate Summit in September 2023 in Nairobi, recognizing the close linkage between urbanization and climate change in Africa;

**Noting** the success of the AU-STC No.8 in championing the development of the Regional Framework for the New Urban Agenda in Africa; the two Charters under the AU-STC No.8 mandate, namely the African Charter on the values and principles of Public Service and the African Charter on the values and principles of decentralization, local governance and local development; and the Celebration of the African Public Service Day (APSD) as well as the African Decentralization and Local Development Day (ADD);

**Reaffirming** the commitments made during the First, Second, and Third and Fourth Ordinary Sessions of the AU-STC No.8, building on the foundational agreements underscoring our collective responsibility to address the complexities of urbanization and steer Africa towards a sustainable urban future;

**Expressing** our profound gratitude to the People and Government of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia for their hospitality in hosting this Forum,

## **COMMIT TO:**

### **Strengthen Political Commitment**

1. Fast track the realization of UN Agenda 2030 on sustainable development goal 11, linked SDGs and aspiration 1 of AU Agenda 2063 on a prosperous Africa based on inclusive growth and sustainable development.
2. Encourage each member state to design national territorial plans for human settlements that align infrastructure investment with nationally determined contributions and inclusive economic development so that the role of intermediary cities in structuring local economies in their hinterland is supported and the power of the agglomeration economies of major cities are fully unleashed, making them engines of economic growth.
3. Establish national urban committees to oversee the implementation of integrated and inclusive national urban policies that underpin the national territorial plan in each member state to address urban planning and inequalities, consequences of climate change, and financing needs for the development and management of cities, or the development of such policies where they do not yet exist.
4. Ensure that the implementation of the Africa Union Urban Resilience framework adopted by member states to increase capacity for cities to face shock and stress related to climate change and disasters is embedded in the national territorial plans for human settlements and associated urban policies. It should be executed with emphasis on the UN Secretariat flagship initiative on Building Climate Resilience for the Urban Poor (BCRUP) launched by the Head of State of Kenya who is championing BCRUP in Africa, **the African Union**

**Commission Aqinile Partnership on Urban Resilience in Africa** and on the African Union Commission Resilience Initiative for Africa (RIA).

5. Organize experience sharing among countries about implementing effective national territorial plans and supporting urban policies such as financing affordable and resilient housing delivery as vector of social inclusion, economic and environmental transformation.
6. Ensure that African city-regions can play an active role in speeding up the realization of the Africa Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), through coordinated cross-border investment strategies that foster alignment and cooperation partnership between cities and regions of Africa

### **Institutional Framework and Policy Alignment**

7. Call on the African Union, the Regional Economic Communities, RECs, and other bodies such as the United Cities and Local Governments of Africa (UCLG Africa) to elevate the management of urbanization among the priorities of the political agenda of Africa at the local, national, regional and pan African levels.
8. Also call on the African Union Executive Council and the African Union Commission to choose Managing Urbanization for the structural transformation of Africa as the African Union theme of the year in the nearest future and dedicate the debates of one of the upcoming conferences of heads of State and government of the African Union to that topic.
9. Request that AU-STC-8 finalize soonest the development of the African Union model law on Housing , and Urban Development with the technical assistance of UN Habitat and the support of professional associations and civil society organizations active in this field in Africa, such as the African Union of Real Estate (AURE), UCLG-Africa, Shelter Afrique Development Bank , the African Union for Housing Finance (AUHF), African Union of Architects, among others.
10. **Also request** to drastically strengthen the ability of AU-STC-8 to oversee the implementation of sustainable urban development initiatives across Africa.

### **Resource Mobilization and Financial Planning**

11. Encourage national governments to put in place transparent mechanisms for sharing public financial resources in order to ensure that investment and operations costs of managing urban development are met at the appropriate level of governance following respect to the subsidiarity principle promoted by the African Charter on the values and principles of public service and the African Charter on the values and principles of decentralization, local governance and local development
12. Call on the African and international finance community to explore innovative ways to finance investments in African cities and regions, including leveraging funds for investments in cities and regions through bonds issuing on the capital markets; the creation of special purpose vehicles, equitable access to climate finance, and public-private-partnerships (PPP), in line with optimizing the role of sustainable urbanization for Africa's structural transformation.
13. Call upon financial institutions to support the development of fit-for-purpose housing policies to address the need of low-income earners and to harness the

economic value of housing sector (job creation, manufacturing, revenue generation) embedded in a green industrialization and economy framework as defined by the AU, AfDB and UNECA.

14. Develop abilities for cities and municipalities to use green climate financing to build inclusive and just urban climate resilience strategies including mitigation and adaptation measures through the development and implementation of bankable climate related action programs and projects. These should be designed to be compatible with country platforms to accelerate just transitions.
15. Support African cities and Regions to develop comprehensive financial plans that include long-term gender-and-climate-sensitive budgeting for infrastructure and social services, and to harness own-sourced revenues to strengthen financial sustainability.

### **Capacity Development and Knowledge, Reporting and Accountability**

16. Implement training and capacity-building programs through regional workshops, conferences, and online platforms for urban planners, local government officials and officers, and community and civil society organizations leaders by partnering with academic institutions, underpinned with dedicated financial resources mobilized at the local and national governments levels, with the support of development cooperation partners and international organizations.
17. Explore the potential of open-source online knowledge products and peer exchange system to reinforce traditional training and capacity building programs.
18. Encourage the organization of an annual Cities and Urban Development Week, on the initiative of the African Union, the African Development Bank, the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa, with the support of UN-Habitat and the United Cities and Local Governments of Africa, to provide a forum for exchanging information, best practices and lessons learned from urban development management experiences in Africa.
19. Develop in collaboration with the Statistical Commission for Africa a comprehensive set of data systems and performance indicators to track progress towards the aims of the present declaration, using both qualitative and quantitative metrics.
20. Encourage member states to put in place a monitoring, reporting and verification system that will enable the measurement of achievements and challenges at the local, regional, and national levels in the implementation process of the national urban policies, aligned with national determined contributions, and the New Urban Agenda of the United Nations and to publish relating progress reports.

### **Strengthened Partnership, Advocacy, Outreach, and Communication**

21. Collaborate with regional institutions such as the RECS, the African Development Bank, the Regional Development Banks, UN-Habitat, UNECA, UCLG-Africa and Shelter Afrique Development Bank, to provide strategic support and resources.

22. Engage non-governmental stakeholders and community-based organizations to ensure diverse perspectives and expertise are incorporated into urban development initiatives, strategies, and actions
23. Promote inclusive urban planning approaches that actively involve all stakeholders, including youth, marginalized and vulnerable groups, in the decision-making, implementation, monitoring and evaluation process.

**Addis Ababa Ethiopia,  
September 6th, 2024**

**The Participants**