

## Directorate of Information and Communication

## PRESS RELEASE

**Technical consultation meeting on preparations for the 2020 Africa-France Summit on Sustainable Cities kicks off in Lusaka**

**Lusaka, Zambia, 27 November 2019**– African experts have convened in Lusaka to deliberate on regional priorities in preparation for the 2020 Africa-France Summit, billed for 4-6 June 2020 in Bordeaux, France on the theme of “Better Cities, Better Lives” co-hosted by the African Union Commission, the UN Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), and the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat).

With Africa having the world’s highest rate of urban growth (3.58%) and its urban population doubling between 1995 and 2015 and projected to almost double again by 2035, the Summit presents an opportunity for African countries to further reinvigorate commitments to advance sustainable urbanization through innovative solutions, and strengthen international cooperation in this regard.

Mr. Claude Ngomsi, Representative of the UN-HABITAT, on behalf of the Director of the Regional Bureau for Africa expressed his appreciation and thanked the participants for their presence in this consultation meeting. He indicated that, urban issues will be discussed in Bordeaux in June 2020 and that at the end of this summit commitments will be made by African countries and France to promote solutions to sustainable urbanization.

Speaking at the same event, the Director of the sub-Regional Office for Southern Africa, Mr. Said Adejumobi, noted that ECA seeks to support member States and their regional and sub-regional

organizations, in formulating and implementing harmonized macroeconomic and sectoral policies, programmes and initiatives to address key regional integration priorities including the critical issue of urbanization and its relationship with structural transformation. He expressed appreciation for the fruitful collaboration with the African Union Commission and the UN-Habitat and with other partners in providing support to member States on sustainable urbanization.

And on his part, the Coordinator of the STC8 Secretariat, Mr. Issaka Garba Abdou on behalf of the African Union Commission ( Department of Political Affairs ), stated that “As we identify the priority areas of sustainable urbanization in Africa for canvassing during the Summit, we should not only focus on challenges but also opportunities that Africa’s urbanization trajectory presents”. He further urged the participants to take advantage of the preparatory workshop to ensure that Africa takes her rightful role in shaping the deliberations during the 2020 Africa-France Summit for sustainable development of African cities.



In his opening remarks, the Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Local Government and Housing of Zambia, Bishop Ed Chomba observed that “Never have urbanisation and sustainable development become more relevant an issue of discussion than now. The high rate of urbanisation presents both opportunities and challenges”. He noted the importance of the 2020 Africa-France Summit given that while urbanization has historically driven socio-economic growth and transformation, Africa’s uncontrolled rapid urbanization amidst slow structural transformation threatens sustainable development.

Meanwhile, Mr. Apollinaire Nkeshimana, Adviser (Ministry of Minister of local Government of Public Works , infrastructure and Urban Planning of Burundi), Representative of the Chair of the Sub-committee on Human Settlement and Urban Development (HUD) of the AU-STC8 emphasized that the Africa-France 2020 Summit aims to develop new long-term partnerships within the framework of Africa-France cooperation.

Addressing the participants, Ms. Mamonaheng Qhasho, Housing and Human settlement officer ( Ministry of Local Government and Chieftainship of Lesotho ) , Representative of the Chair of the African Union Specialized Technical Committee on Public Service, Local Governance, Urban

Development and Decentralization (AU-STC No. 8), advised on the need to reflect on Africa's steadily rising rate of urbanization and foster sustainable development in the region through the implementation of the African Framework for the New Urban Agenda, SDG's and Agenda 2063 in realizing The Africa We Want. "Let us continue to reinforce the processes of coordination with the private sector to ensure they embrace decentralization, service delivery and housing development as the drivers of economic growth," Ms Qhasho said. She then officially opened the meeting.

The two-day technical consultation on preparations for the 2020 Africa-France Summit provides a good platform for consultations and engagement among African member States, to jointly formulate the region's priorities and related desirable strategic outcomes.

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