

INFORMATION & COMMUNICATION DIRECTORATE

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Venue: Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.



Africa Urban Forum: Interested in hosting a side-event? Book your spot now.

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. Estimates show that 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 must engage the people living in Africa's rapidly expanding towns and cities.

To review the status of urbanization on the continent and co-create innovative avenues to support an inclusive and holistic approach to unlocking the potential of urbanization on the continent, the African Union is convening the inaugural **Africa Urban Forum** to be held from the 4-6 September 2024 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

Convened under the theme "Sustainable Urbanization for Africa's Transformation: Agenda 2063", the Forum will provide a platform for cross-sectorial discussions on

sustainable development in African human settlements led by policy makers, business leaders, representatives of urbanization and human settlements sectors and other related sectors, think tanks, private sector, financial institutions, engineers, architects, civil societies and the media. The format of the African Urban Forum will include round-tables, plenary sessions/ panel discussions, dialogues, side events, assemblies, and exhibitions.

Registration to attend the Forum is ongoing. [Register here.](#)

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.

By focusing on "Sustainable Urbanization for Africa's Transformation – Agenda 2063", the forum underscores the critical importance of harnessing the potential of urbanization to drive inclusive, nature protecting, climate resilient development across the continent. During the three-day meeting, participants will delve on two sub-theme which focus on:

- **Financing Urbanization for socio-economic transformation.** This sub-theme looks at the rapid urbanization in Africa which presents a significant financing challenge, requiring substantial investments in infrastructure, services, and social amenities to accommodate growing urban populations. While traditional financing mechanisms have often fallen short of meeting the scale and complexity of urban development needs, the forum will explore both supply and demand side constraints on financing African cities and identify innovative options for financing urbanization, including public-private partnerships, development finance, and community-based financing models.
- **Sustainable and resilient urban development in Africa.** As African cities continue to expand in the face of climate change, there is a growing recognition of the need to promote sustainable and resilient urban development 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. The forum will explore strategies for building cities that are environmentally sustainable, socially inclusive, and economically resilient.

Book a spot to convene a side-event: Deadline, 15th July 2024.

The African Union is calling on persons from the African Union institutions, governments institutions, private sector, academia, civil societies and any other entities interested in convening a side-event during the forum to submit their expression of interest. The side events will be convened physically prior to and after the main high-level and parallel sessions and will offer the opportunity to listen to different experts and delve into some complementary topics to the themes of the Forum.

The proposals for the side-events must be aligned to the theme and sub-themes and proffer opportunities for innovative approaches to address existing and emerging challenges to sustainable urbanization in Africa. The approaches are crucial in the realization of commitments on urban development, capacity building, programme, and project implementation. The organization of side event is free of charge.

The basic criteria for selection include the following:

- Given the inclusive nature of the forum, priority will be given to side events organized by groups of three or more partners, sponsors or participants, or any combination thereof.
- The theme of the side event should relate to at least one of the subthemes provided above or be cross-cutting in nature.
- Consideration should be given to gender balance and geography in the choice of speakers and panelists.
- The format of the side event should ensure broad stakeholder participation, including that of the private sector and major groups, and actively involve the audience.
- The outcome of the side event should inform the overall outcome of the Africa Urban Forum.
- The side event should last no longer than 1 and 1/2 hours and should not overlap with the main sessions of the Forum.

Responsibility of Organizers.

The logistics of the side events, such as room and virtual platform allocation and the setting up of audiovisual equipment, need to be arranged in collaboration with the side events coordinator.

The organizers of the side events will be responsible for the following:

- Inviting speakers and panelists and handling their visa and travel arrangements.
- Inviting participants from member States, major groups and other stakeholders.
- Preparing a summary report on the event and sharing it with the secretariat of the Forum.
- Publicity, reproduction of materials and media coverage.
- Any catering services that may be required must be arranged through the designated caterers of the Forum and fully covered by the organizers.
- Events should be conducted in English or French. Arrangements for simultaneous interpretation will be the responsibility of the organizers.

Interested persons/ groups should fill the following Registration form availed in **English** and **French**. Once the form is completed, it should be submitted to KabeloN@africa-union.org adding in copy Birmaji.tola@un.org and giuseppe.tesoriere@un.org

Learn more about the African Urban Forum on [here](#).

For further information, please contact:



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