

Honorable Habofanoe Lehana, Minister of Local Government and Chieftainship of the Kingdom of Lesotho and incoming Chairperson of the AU STC No.8 Sub-Committee on Urban Development and Human Settlements;

Honorable Ministers;

Distinguished Representatives from UNECA and UN-HABITAT;

Heads of Delegations;

Distinguished Participants; all protocol duly observed,

I am delighted to be present in this important side event organized on the margins of the 9th Edition of the World Urban Forum on the theme “Implementing the New Urban Agenda in Africa: Policy and Implementation Priorities”. Welcome to all of you in this beautiful city of Kuala Lumpur .

The theme of this side event resonates well with the overall theme of the WUF, “Cities 2030, Cities for all: Implementing the New Urban Agenda”.

Africa is a pioneer in the process of ensuring domestication of the New Urban Agenda in the continent. I therefore applaud the United Nation Economic Commission for Africa (UN-ECA) and the UN-Habitat’s

collaboration with the African Union Commission in steering and facilitating the development of this framework.

Ladies and gentlemen;

The first pillar of Agenda 2063 envisions cities and other institutions as centers of cultural and economic activities. Human settlements require modern infrastructure and provision of basic services. If managed well, cities have a huge potential to propel our continent towards greater industrialization and economic development. Exploiting the developmental potential of cities requires strong local authorities and institutions that are very close to the populations.

According to the World Bank, the share of Africans living in urban areas is projected to grow from 36 percent in 2010 to 50 percent by 2030. The continent's high urbanization rate could lead to an economic growth and transformation as well as poverty reduction. Alternatively, if mismanaged, it can increase inequality, urban poverty, and continued proliferation of slums.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The AUC capacity needs to be enhanced in order to effectively play its role in coordinating the implementation of the New Urban Agenda in Africa, including review and monitoring. More importantly, the AUC will deepen its partnership with key stakeholders such as UNDP, African Development Bank, the World Bank, United Cities and Local Governments of Africa (UCLGA) and the Regional Economic Communities in the implementation of the New Urban Agenda in Africa. The need for mobilization of local and international resources to facilitate implementation of the New Urban Agenda cannot be overemphasized. Africa's new partnership approach is to encourage the establishment of homegrown resource mobilization strategies.

In conclusion, I urge all participants to use this platform as network opportunity and establish partnerships as well as lessons and experiences sharing with other regions of the world. This experience sharing will ultimately enriched the proposed framework for the implementation of the New Urban Agenda in Africa.

I therefore call on our partners for a strong continued support and collaboration on the implementation of the New Urban Agenda in Africa.

The AUC in its part, remain committed to the follow-up, finalization and adoption by the policy organs of the continental framework on the implementation of the NUA.

I thank you for your attention.