



STATEMENT BY

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DURING

**THE SECOND EDITION OF THE AFRICA URBAN FORUM (AUF2)
TO BE HELD FROM**

8-10 APRIL 2025, KICC, NAIROBI.

Honourable Ministers,

Excellencies,

Distinguished Delegates,

Distinguished Guest

Ladies and Gentlemen,

1. It is a great honour to welcome you all to Nairobi for the Second Africa Urban Forum. I am pleased to join you at this Ministerial Plenary Session and, as we proceed through the official opening and our engagements over the coming days, to reaffirm our shared commitment to the Forum's theme: ***"Adequate Housing for All: Advancing Socio-economic and Environmental Transformation towards the Realization of Agenda 2063."***

2. We gather at a moment of profound consequence for our continent. Africa is urbanizing at a pace and scale without historical precedent. Within a single generation, our cities will absorb hundreds of millions of new residents. This transformation will shape the physical form of our settlements, the structure of our economies, the resilience of our societies, and the trajectory of our development
3. The central question before us is not whether Africa will urbanize, but whether this process will be guided with intention, foresight, and discipline. Across our countries, we face urgent and familiar realities: the rapid expansion of informal settlements, persistent housing deficits, overstretched infrastructure, and growing exposure to climate-related risks. These challenges are compounded by constrained fiscal space, limited access to long-term financing, and uneven institutional capacity. Left unaddressed, they risk entrenching inequality and undermining the promise of our cities.
4. Yet, if approached strategically, urbanization offers Africa one of its most powerful pathways to transformation. Well-planned and well-financed cities can drive industrialization, unlock productivity, create employment at scale, and serve as engines of innovation. They can connect markets, deepen regional integration, and expand opportunity for millions. Urbanization is therefore no longer a sectoral issue confined to housing, planning, or infrastructure; it has become a defining economic and political question that shapes how we grow, how we compete, and how we secure the well-being of our citizens.
5. This Forum must therefore mark a decisive shift in how we respond. We cannot afford for our deliberations to remain at the level of diagnosis. The time has come to move from conversation to execution—towards bankable projects, investable pipelines, and implementable policies that translate our ambitions into results on the ground.
6. At the centre of this agenda lies housing. Housing is too often treated as a social obligation or a consumption good. In reality, it is foundational infrastructure—and an economic sector in its own right,

with deep linkages across construction, manufacturing, finance, and services. When we invest in housing, we do not simply provide shelter; we stimulate industries, generate employment, and anchor communities. This is why adequate and affordable housing must be elevated from the margins to the core of Africa's development strategy.

7. At the same time, we must recognize that housing cannot be addressed in isolation. The future of our cities will be shaped by the integration of multiple, interdependent systems. Urban planning must guide growth in a manner that is orderly, inclusive, and efficient. Infrastructure must keep pace with expansion, ensuring access to basic services. Climate resilience must be embedded into the fabric of our cities, recognizing the increasing frequency and intensity of environmental shocks. Technology must be harnessed as a practical tool to enhance planning, service delivery, and governance. Financing models must evolve to mobilize both public and private capital at scale. And critically, the transformation of informal settlements must be approached with urgency, dignity, and inclusion. These are not separate agendas; they are different dimensions of a single, integrated urban question.
8. The conversations taking place across this Forum—on financing, technology, resilience, infrastructure, and informal settlement transformation—point to a common truth: sustainable urbanization demands alignment. Alignment between national governments and local authorities; alignment between public policy and private capital; and alignment between continental priorities and global systems. It also demands innovation, not only in technology, but in how we structure institutions, mobilize resources, and implement solutions at scale. But perhaps most importantly, it demands inclusion—so that Africa's cities are built in a manner that leaves no one behind. This Forum also carries a responsibility that extends beyond our continent. As we prepare to engage the global community at World Urban Forum 13, Africa must speak with clarity and coherence—articulating not only our challenges, but our priorities, our solutions, and our expectations. We must be clear that Africa's urban

transformation requires financing at scale: long-term capital that is affordable, predictable, and aligned with development objectives; and partnerships grounded not only in dialogue, but in delivery—so that urban development is perceived not as a cost to be managed, but as an investment to be leveraged.

9. Kenya is honoured to host this Forum, and we do so with a clear understanding that its success will be measured not by the quality of our dialogue, but by the strength of our outcomes. Let this gathering connect ideas to investment, and investment to implementation. As we continue our deliberations—and as we come together in fellowship beyond the formal sessions—let us strengthen relationships, build trust, and forge enduring partnerships that can translate policy into tangible results. The future of Africa’s cities will not be determined by circumstance; it will be determined by the choices we make now.

I thank you.