



Federal Republic of Nigeria

STATEMENT

At

The Twenty-Fourth Governing Council of the
United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-HABITAT)

Delivered by

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Urban Development and Head of Delegation

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Mr. President,

On behalf of the Government and people of Nigeria, I congratulate you, on your election to guide the deliberations of the 24th Session of the Governing Council of UN-HABITAT. We are certain that under your guidance, and with the support of fellow members of the Bureau, we shall deliver concrete measures for improved human settlements globally. It is equally our delight to express our deep appreciation to the Executive Director, Dr. Joan Clos, and his able team at UN-HABITAT, on the progress made in delivering on the sustainable urbanization provisions of the Work Programme for 2008-2013, in spite of the challenges of unpredictable funding. We also appreciate the very warm hospitality extended to our delegation by the Government and the people of the Republic of Kenya since our arrival in Nairobi and also congratulate them on the recent inauguration of a new Government.

Mr. President, Distinguished Delegates,

Nigeria aligns itself with the Statement of the distinguished representative of Zimbabwe on behalf of the African Group. We note the several pertinent issues before this Session of the Governing Council, for which urgent action is required. Our urban centres have become the dominant habitat for humankind, with over 50 per cent of the global population now living and working in towns and cities. This is a most significant global trend, but even more phenomenal, is the rapid rate at which urbanization is taking place in developing countries, especially in Africa. This urbanization pattern is unsustainable and therefore requires urgent remedial strategies as their impact can no longer be ignored. We must ensure that future settlements are well planned, inclusive, equitable, economically productive and resilient.

Mr. President,

Nigeria appreciates the work of UN-HABITAT on cities and sustainable urbanization, which has helped to define the focus and direction of our country's initiatives in sustainable human settlements development. We

also note the relevance of the debate which will take place at the Plenary on Wednesday. To address the rapid urbanization in Nigeria and the concomitant implications for youth unemployment and gender, the Government is consciously implementing an integrated Transformation Agenda, which outlines plans, policies, and programmes designed to empower the people, and improve their standard of living, as the bedrock for economic and social progress of the Nation.

Mr. President,

We recently established the Youth Enterprise with Innovation in Nigeria (YouWiN) Programme to support talented young entrepreneurs in setting up or expanding their businesses, and in turn providing employment opportunities for others. Our commitment is to create at least 80,000 jobs over a period of 3 years and another estimated 370,000 jobs will be created under a Subsidy Reinvestment and Empowerment Programme (SURE-P).

Mr. President,

Our National Housing Policy and National Urban Development Policy have recently been revised to accommodate the concerns of Nigerians, with due consideration accorded to women, youth and vulnerable groups. In the housing sector, we have embarked on setting up a Mortgage Refinance Company (MRC) to help bridge the housing gap, and boost the number of mortgages to 200,000 within the next few years, from its current 20,000, in addition to providing affordable housing. We are undertaking a National Urbanization Review, in collaboration with the World Bank, Cities Alliance and DFID, as part of our country level preparations for the Habitat III Conference on Housing and Sustainable Development in 2016. In addition, the UN-HABITAT Programme for Water for African Cities which has been on-going in Jos since 2006 has delivered clean drinking water to 45,000 people in the peri-urban fringes of the city.

Mr. President, Distinguished Delegates

As we prepare for the post-2015 Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) period and the Habitat III Conference, it is imperative that we work towards the evolution of a new development agenda capable of responding to the changing role of cities in the 21st Century. In preparing for Habitat III, member States should endeavour to adopt innovative approaches to address issues such as the eradication of poverty and slums, urban sprawl, security, access to basic services, infrastructure provision, as well as other key economic and social development considerations.

Mr. President,

Achieving a sustainable future and the promotion of healthy, inclusive and livable cities, will require the input not only of Governments, but also of business leaders and civil society, who must all be part of this developmental transformation process. We, therefore, call on regional bodies and development partners, to lead and support these change processes in their respective domains, and increase their contributions to UN-HABITAT to enable the Agency better deliver on its mandate.

Mr. President, Distinguished Delegates,

It is in support of this cause, that Nigeria is pleased to announce a contribution of **USD5 million** to support UN-HABITAT to shore up its activities in Africa. **USD3million** from the Federal Government of Nigeria will be used in the preparation of a New Urban Agenda in Africa, involving evidence-based research and capacity building of Habitat Agenda Partners, including Civil Society Organizations in the region. The Programme captioned '**Strengthening Partnerships for a New African Urban Agenda**' will be spear-headed by Nigeria. The remaining **USD2million** contributions from the Ondo State Government of Nigeria will be deployed for: Youth Empowerment Initiatives, Local Economy Development, Municipal Finance Management, Urban Renewal and Land Reform Programmes in the State. Permit me, Mr. President, to seize this opportunity to warmly invite all Heads of Delegations and Friends

of Africa to witness the formal launching of these initiatives on Wednesday April 17,2013, at the Nigeria High Commissioner's Residence, Leresho Ridge,here in Nairobi.

Mr. President,

In concluding my Statement, let me reiterate Nigeria's continued support to UN-HABITAT in the development and implementation of the sustainable human settlements agenda.We are very confident and optimistic about the prospect of UN-HABITAT in achieving a sustainable urban future globally. We,therefore, look forward to exhaustive consideration of the agenda items at this Session of the Governing Council, and the manifestation of the objectives in the very near future.

I thank you for your attention.

Nairobi, Kenya

15 April, 2013