



**UNITED
NATIONS**

HSP

HSP/GC/20/INF/8



UN-Habitat

**Governing Council
of the United Nations Human
Settlements Programme**

Distr. General
24 March 2005

English and French

Twentieth session

Nairobi, 4–8 April 2005

**Durban Declaration on the Establishment of the African Ministers’
Conference on Housing and Urban Development and Enhanced
Framework of Implementation and Related Outputs**

Note by the secretariat

The secretariat has the honour to present, in annex I to the present note, a declaration on the establishment of the African Ministers’ Conference on Housing and Urban Development adopted in Durban, south Africa, and, in annex II to the present note, the Enhanced Framework of Implementation and Related Outputs adopted by the Conference. Both documents are presented as received by the secretariat, and have not been formally edited.

K0581068 010405

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Annex I

African Ministers' Conference on Housing and Urban Development

**Durban, South Africa
31 January–4 February 2005**

**(incorporating the Fifth Assembly of the African Population Commission
serving as the expert group meeting for the ministerial segment)**

**Declaration on the
Establishment of the African Ministerial Conference on Housing and Urban Development
(AMCHUD)**

**Durban, South Africa
3-4 February 2005**

We, the African Ministers responsible for housing and urban development, meeting in Durban, e-Thekwini, South Africa, from 3-4 February 2005, to consider the challenge of housing and urbanization in Africa,

Guided by Decision 29 taken by African leaders in the Second Session of the Assembly of Heads of State and Governments of the African Union held in Maputo in July 2003, which states that “if left unchecked, rapid urbanization is leading to the urbanization of poverty in the continent, with attendant problems that have condemned the majority of urban dwellers to unemployment, food insecurity and life under squalid conditions in slums and other unplanned neighbourhood without basic services such as decent housing water and sanitation, and the high risk this implies to their health and safety” ,

Welcoming with satisfaction the recognition of the shelter challenge at the same level as water, energy, health and biodiversity in the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) declaration and subsequent the focus by the Commission for Sustainable Development (CSD) on water, sanitation and human settlement, as the first entry point in implementing the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation (JPOI) and delivering the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs),

Recalling the 1994 Cairo International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) recognized that “The process of urbanization is intrinsic to economic and social development ...”

Recalling further the Second United Nations Conference on Human Settlements held in Istanbul in 1996 and the review of the Habitat Agenda contained in the Declaration on Cities and Other Human Settlements in the New Millennium, of the United Nations General Assembly Resolution S25.2 of 9 June 2001,

Recognizing the advent in 2001 of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), and also its NEPAD Cities Programme,

Encouraged by the increasing attention of the G8 Summits on the plight of Africa and the unfulfilled past commitments by the international community to assist the continent through debt cancellation and access to markets,

Welcoming the establishment of the Blair Commission for Africa with the aim of giving a "big push" in the mobilization of international financial support from the world's richest nations to assist the African continent to implement NEPAD, the MDGs and other development programs and break out of the vicious circle of poverty and underdevelopment in which the continent has found itself,

Noting that Africa is the fastest urbanizing region in the world, with urban population doubling almost every 20 years and that urbanization is an irreversible process that poses challenges far beyond the management capacity of governments, local authorities and other institutions, but also offers opportunities that need to be harnessed,

Aware that about 72 per cent of the urban residents in Africa live in slums without equitable access to land, adequate shelter and basic services, and urban environment that can be among the most life threatening conditions, requires sustainable financing mechanisms for housing and urban development,

Noting that political will, decentralization, good governance and the empowerment of national and local authorities as well as the adoption of inclusive processes of decision making are fundamental to addressing the urbanization challenge in Africa,

Aware of the fact that growing urban poverty and its increasing incidence among women requires gender sensitive approaches to sustainable urban development,

Recognising the impact of natural disasters, civil wars and the impact of HIV/AIDS pandemic on the living conditions in towns and cities,

Conscious of the linkages and the interdependencies between rural and urban areas and the importance of balanced territorial development strategies to promote synergies between towns, cities and their rural hinterlands,

Taking Note of the report of the Fifth Assembly of the African Population Commission serving as the expert group meeting for this conference,

Also Taking Note of the Enhanced Framework of Implementation of Sustainable Housing and Urban Development in Africa, and the Common African position at upcoming international meetings attached as Annex to this resolution,

Reaffirming our commitment to overcoming obstacles encountered in the implementation of the Habitat Agenda, the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation and the Millennium Declaration:

1. Express profound gratitude and appreciation to the Government of South Africa for the efforts made in convening and hosting this inaugural conference leading to the launch of the African Ministers' Conference on Housing and Urban Development (AMCHUD);
2. Commend the Commission of the African Union and the Executive Director of United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-HABITAT) for their joint efforts in convening this meeting related to the implementation of Decision 29 of the AU summit;
3. Express appreciation for the commendable efforts of the 5th Assembly of the African Population Commission meeting as an Expert Group that prepared for the deliberations of this Ministerial Conference;
4. Further appreciates the contribution of participating governments and all other co-operating Partners, including the United Nations Fund for Population (UNFPA), Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), African Development Bank (ADB), and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP);
5. Decide to establish the African Ministers Conference on Housing and Urban Development (AMCHUD) as the consultative mechanism on the promotion of sustainable development of Human settlements in Africa, under the auspices of the African Union;
6. Decide also that AMCHUD will, *inter alia*, and as guided by the Enhanced Framework of Implementation of Sustainable Housing and Urban Development in Africa:
 - a. Serve as a forum to discuss the urban challenge at the continental level and regional level as a basis for national and city level strategies and as a focus for the discussion of the Habitat Agenda and the relevant Millennium Development Goals and Targets;
 - b. Encourage and promote the strengthening of urban governance in Africa
 - c. Champion and support innovative urban development and land management practices in Africa;
 - d. Promote development of appropriate housing and low-cost construction technology for rural and urban housing;
 - e. Facilitate South-South and international exchanges of expertise, research, experience and best practices, including on the eradication of slums;
 - f. Develop a better understanding of urban land dynamics that can lead to improved land tenure and to the growth of urban land markets in Africa;
 - g. Support and strengthen the NEPAD Cities Initiative;
 - h. Support relief and rehabilitation of shelter and human settlements development in post-conflict and post-disaster situations;
 - i. Engage with development partners and multi-laterals on urban development issues in Africa and their financing;
 - j. Promote strong ties between research institutions to understand better the economic, legal and financial importance of urban development and urban land in Africa;
 - k. Encourage the collection of data and information that can improve the planning and management of urban development;
 - l. Promote the institutionalisation of a culture for urban planning including the preparation of urban strategic plans at both national and local authority level;
 - m. Encourage the mobilization of domestic financial resources for housing and urban development and promote the necessary partnerships for attainment of this objective;

- n. Mainstream urban and other issues dealing with human settlements in the macro-economic frameworks and national budgets of African governments including UNDAFs, PRSPs and other programmes;
- o. Serve as a platform for advocacy of good urban governance and security of tenure;
- p. Provide a focal point to link relevant aspects of the African Union strategic Plan and NEPAD programme as well as international processes and initiatives consistent with the urban agenda for sustainable development;
- q. Implementing a monitoring and evaluation mechanism for urban governance reforms;
- r. Encourage and support the adoption of programmes for slum upgrading and the building of partnerships among its members in pursuit of this goal;
- s. Undertake all other functions that will lead to the realization of the goals of the Enhanced Framework of Implementation for Housing and Urban Development in Africa adopted by this Conference;

8. Decide further that AMCHUD will establish links with other inter-ministerial conferences working on issues related to the Habitat Agenda, including, but not limited to, matters concerning water supply and sanitation, local government, land and infrastructure;

9. Resolve that AMCHUD will be composed of the following organs:

- The Biennial Ministerial Conference,
- The Bureau, and
- The Secretariat.

10. Resolve also that the Biennial Ministerial Conference shall be composed of Ministers responsible for Housing and Urban Development and shall normally meet after every two years to consult and review progress on the promotion of sustainable development of Human settlements in Africa;

11. Decide that the host and Chair of this inaugural conference, South Africa, shall be the first Chair of AMCHUD and shall serve until the next biennial conference;

12. Confirm that the Bureau established at this inaugural conference shall serve as the first Bureau of AMCHUD, with its members being Ministers representing each of the five sub-regions of the African Union;

- Southern Africa, represented by Republic of South Africa, and also Chair of the Bureau;
- West Africa: represented by Senegal
- North Africa: represented by Algeria
- Central Africa: represented by Chad
- Eastern Africa: represented by Kenya, and also Rapporteur of the Bureau

13. Decide that the Bureau shall be elected by the Biennial Conference of Ministers responsible for Housing and Urban Development and shall hold office until the next conference;

14. Mandate the Bureau to establish as soon as possible a Secretariat that will provide technical and administrative support;

15. Resolve that AMCHUD meets every two years, preferably three months before the sessions of UN-HABITAT Governing Council of UN-HABITAT;
16. Request the Commission of African Union and the Executive Director of UN-HABITAT to assist the Bureau in its efforts to establish the secretariat;
17. Call upon all other co-operating partners and other relevant UN agencies, the African Development Bank, our region's co-operation partners and donors, to support AMCHUD's efforts in the implementation of the measures outlined in this Declaration;
18. Request the African Union to mainstream issues of housing and urban development in the structure of the African Union by establishing a Specialised Technical Committee for the sector, including rendering related political and other forms of support to AMCHUD and giving a high prominence to the challenges of urban development in the NEPAD programme;
19. Request the Blair Commission for Africa and all G8 initiatives to assist the United Nations in its current efforts to revive the Habitat and Human Settlements Foundation as a mechanism for promoting slum upgrading and other pro-poor housing and infrastructure finance;
20. Call upon all other co-operating partners and other relevant UN agencies, the African Development Bank, our region's co-operation partners and donors, to support AMCHUD's efforts in the implementation of the measures outlined in this Declaration;
21. Request the Bureau of AMCHUD to inform the relevant regional, international and UN agencies and programmes on the creation of AMCHUD;
22. Commit ourselves to apprise our respective Heads of States and governments on the outcome of this conference and take appropriate actions to implement this declaration.

Annex II

African Ministers' Conference on Housing and Urban Development

**Durban, South Africa
31 January–4 February 2005**

**(incorporating the Fifth Assembly of the African Population Commission
serving as the expert group meeting for the ministerial segment)**

ENHANCED FRAMEWORK OF IMPLEMENTATION AND RELATED OUTPUTS

1. Overview

In Africa, rapid population growth has been accompanied by rapid urbanisation. The pace of socio-economic development in urban centres has not been matched by parallel development of infrastructure and social service facilities. In some cities, the population living in slum areas reaches more than 60 per cent. Consequently the majority of the population in some of the African cities live in abject poverty, illiteracy, and in poor housing conditions.

These legitimate concerns are taken into account at national and regional as well as continental and international levels in order to improve the lives of people in cities and towns. Against this background:

- The 1994 Cairo International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) recognised that “The process of urbanisation is intrinsic to economic and social development ...” and recommended “... to foster a more balanced distribution of population by promoting sustainable development in both major sending and receiving areas.” The ICPD clearly underlined that “Such development should be ecologically sound and promote economic, social and gender equity”.
- In 1996 the UN-HABITAT Summit in Istanbul and the 2001 Istanbul + 5 review of the second Habitat Summit called on Governments to take necessary measures to ensure adequate housing for all, alleviate urban poverty and promote overall social development.
- The Heads of State and Government, in September 2000, in New York committed themselves to the Millennium Declaration, which provides an integrated development framework. Goal 7 – Environmental sustainability, Targets 10 and 11, address the challenge of housing and urban development. Within a wider framework of social and economic interventions, “improvement of the lives of slum dwellers” implies access to safe

water, access to sanitation, security of tenure, durability of housing, and sufficient living area as well as social services such as health and education.

- Specifically, Targets 10 and 11 of the MDGs urge UN Member States to “Halve by 2015 the proportion of people without sustainable access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation” as well as to “Have achieved by 2020 a significant improvement in the lives of at least 100 million slum dwellers.”
- Decision 29¹ of the Second General Assembly of African Heads of State and Government (2003) expressed concern that “... if left unchecked, rapid urbanisation is leading to the urbanisation of poverty on the African continent with attendant problems that have condemned the majority of urban dwellers to unemployment, food insecurity, and life under squalid conditions in slums and other unplanned neighbourhoods ...”. This Assembly requested the AU, in collaboration with the UN-HABITAT, to work towards the implementation of the Decision.
- The New Partnership for Africa’s Development (NEPAD) recognises the role of cities as engines of socio-economic development and growth, contributing to regional integration, and the objectives of AU and NEPAD, which need to be developed on sustainable basis.
- In May 2004, the first NEPAD cities forum was organised in collaboration with UN-HABITAT. The forum endorsed the priorities set by the seven African cities -Bamako, Douala, Durban, Lagos, Lusaka, Nairobi, and Rabat - the first targets of NEPAD-city development initiative.
- The newly adopted Vision, Mission and Strategic Plans of the African Union (2004) recapitulated all previous commitments for social and economic development of the Continent but re-emphasised the role of African cities and towns as centres of economic development and social integration. These plans reinforce the NEPAD cities initiatives and commit to provide political and policy support to the successful implementation of these initiatives.
- The 2004 ICPD + 10 review in Africa stated that “Many cities in the ECA region are facing major challenges in the provision of basic services (housing, transport and sewage disposal facilities) due largely to rapid population growth, increased insecurity, scarce foreign investment, and economic mismanagement”.

These regional and international responses to the challenges posed by rapid urbanisation coupled with extreme shortage of social services called for joint collaboration between the African Union, UN-HABITAT and the Government of South Africa to organise the Fifth General Assembly/Expert Group Meeting of the African Population Commission (APC) and the First African Ministerial Conference of Housing and Urban Development (AMCHUD) with the theme **“Urbanisation, Shelter and Development: Towards an Enhanced Framework for Sustainable Cities and Towns in Africa”**.

The recommendations and outcomes of the Meeting have resulted in the development of this enhanced framework for the implementation of programmes for sustainable development of cities and towns.

¹ See Annex 1.

2. Urbanisation challenges and opportunities

In the next 30 years Africa's population will double from 888 million in 2005, to 1.77 billion. During the same period the urban population will increase from 353 million, which is 39.7 percent, to 748 million inhabitants at the rate of 4 to 5 percent per annum. In the next 30 years, roughly 400 million people will be added to the urban population. As highlighted in the 1994 Cairo International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD), the process of urbanisation is intrinsic to economic and social development.

In 2001, about 61 percent of all African urban residents lived in slums, with 54 percent of these in sub-Saharan Africa and 7 percent in Northern Africa. Even more notable is the slum incidence in sub-Saharan Africa, where 71.9 percent of the urban population currently lives in informal settlements. In addition to the situation above, 57 percent requires access to improved sanitation and 43 percent to improved sources of water.

It is estimated that 71 percent of the population live in poverty with two out of five living in extreme poverty (less than a dollar a day). In Africa, 31 countries have a Human Development Index (HDI) below 0.500, presenting a life expectancy at birth of 46 years and a GDP per capita of 469 US dollars. To add to the challenge, Africa remains the world's most affected region with an estimated 25.4 million infected with HIV/AIDS at the end of 2004. Within the same year, 2.3 million adults and children died from HIV/AIDS related diseases.

Rural-urban migration is a key component of urban population growth. Other factors in Africa contributing to this migration are civil wars and natural disasters such as drought and flooding. Urban areas have become the refuge for populations driven out of their homes because of fighting. Refugee camps, which are located near towns for ease of access to emergency assistance, have become permanent features in the human settlements of the Great Lakes Region, in Central Africa and several West African Countries. Twenty million refugees are in need of protection and assistance right now. An additional 25 million people are currently displaced within their own countries as a result of violence and human rights abuses.

Notwithstanding the above, urbanisation can be a positive development process if well managed and controlled with equitable access to land, adequate shelter as well as the provision of basic services. Political will, decentralisation, good governance and the empowerment of national and local authorities as well as the adoption of inclusive processes of mobilising local resources and judicious resource- allocation and decision making are fundamental to addressing the urbanisation challenge in Africa.

A balanced distribution of human settlements is an asset since such a network of cities and towns will allow a more efficient use of all resources and hence contribute to sustainable economic growth.

A well articulated hierarchy of cities of different sizes and characteristics fosters urban and rural economic integration by providing access to markets for small and medium enterprises as well as agriculture, livestock and fisheries. In addition, such a hierarchy enables better delivery of basic services such as education, health and sanitation.

In a rapidly urbanising Africa, the promotion of balanced and sustainable urbanisation requires, more than ever before, strategic, integrated planning, building consensus, gender mainstreaming,

capacity building, international co-operation, south-south co-operation and conflict resolution systems.

3. Enhanced framework for housing and urban development in Africa

The framework aims to identify and suggest measures for more effective African urban development policies and strategies so as to guide the actions of all stakeholders (government and non-government) in the urban development process thereby steering them towards the achievement of a collective urban vision. The framework will also aim to identify linkages between land policies and urbanisation.

3.1. Pro-poor focus and prioritising the vulnerable

3.1.1: Poverty is a major challenge to urbanisation. An urban poverty reduction focus is required for towns and city development strategies (CDS), and PRSPs.

3.1.2: Cross-cutting and integrated approaches addressing, inter alia, water, sanitation and human settlements, are essential for poverty reduction. Multi-sectoral approaches that are sensitive to gender, the aged, the disabled as well as street children, and are participatory and deal with all aspects of an improved living environment, must be put in place to reduce risk and vulnerability.

3.1.3: Inclusive processes for decision-making which involve civil society must be encouraged and promoted. Particular emphasis must be placed on the involvement of women and the poor.

3.1.4: Countries should be encouraged to empower women, by removing or reviewing laws that are discriminatory against women especially with regard to property rights, and to promote affirmative action in favour of strengthening effective women's rights to land and shelter. Legal recognition and effective implementation of equal property rights for women are an essential element for effective slum upgrading.

3.1.5: Heighten awareness through a campaign concerning land rights for women.

3.2. The Challenge of Slums in Africa

3.2.1: Slum upgrading in the context of housing and urban development policies must be an essential ingredient of national plans, town and city development strategies and Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs).

3.2.2: Secure tenure is essential to empowerment of slum dwellers and should be based on a pro-poor land policy that emphasises a range of affordable options that is not limited to formal title. Secure tenure campaigns to be undertaken by governments.

3.2.3: Governments are urged, in consultation with all stakeholders, to set national slum targets taking into account urbanisation trends and the MDG slum target and set out plans and strategies to prevent new slum formation.

3.2.4: Cities should take a leading role in implementing MDG slum upgrading targets.

3.3. Deepen understanding of urban land markets

3.3.1: Identify and communicate the role of urban land in poverty reduction, economic development and environmental sustainability in an African context. Affordable land should be made available to the poor, and land markets made transparent.

3.3.2: Research the ways in which public and private, formal and informal urban land and housing markets operate in African towns and cities, and how to make these markets work better for the poor.

3.4. Policy and law reform

3.4.1: Policies and laws must be revised and amended to ensure that they:

- a. respect the rights of citizens to move to towns and cities, and to support them in their efforts to realise the economic, cultural and social opportunities there;
- b. support, encourage and strengthen efforts to improve the quality of life and strengthen the rights to shelter, tenure security and services of slum dwellers; and
- c. support the enactment and the enforcement of building by-laws and regulations.

3.5. More effective urban management and governance

3.5.1: Improved urban governance is essential for addressing urban development challenges, including poverty reduction.

3.5.2: Monitoring of urban governance to ensure effective urban management of urban resources to eradicate corruption.

3.5.3: Land use and land management require a sound land administration system.

3.5.4: Decentralisation should be accompanied by necessary material, human and financial resources. To this end, it is critical to strengthen the capacity of local government to address urban management challenges.

3.5.5: Multi-sectoral and inclusive local/urban and spatial planning approaches must respond to the objectives of environmental sustainability, and develop land management and participatory decision-making processes tailored to the reality of African cities.

3.5.6: Strengthen information and databases required by local governments for development and planning.

3.5.7: Establish institutional platforms for partnerships for service delivery and decision-making between the public and private sector, NGOs and community-based organisations.

3.5.8: Effective spatial planning is important for sustainable urban development. Rural and urban development are not mutually exclusive processes.

3.5.9: Establish sound intergovernmental relations between national, regional /state/provincial and local/municipal government and set up institutional frameworks for effective governance of megacities.

3.6. Population trends, migration and urbanisation

3.6.1: The ICPD +10 recommendations on population distribution, migration and urbanisation in Africa should be explicitly adopted and incorporated into PRSPs and all development initiatives.

3.6.2: Promote investments in the social sectors, particularly education and health, to reduce urban poverty.

3.6.3: Promote research on urbanisation issues and establish data and information networks to strengthen urban planning and management.

3.6.4: Integrate population trends and concerns into social development programmes in urban areas.

3.7. Capacity building

3.7.1: Institutional capacity of the African Union and the Regional Economic Communities must be enhanced to address urbanisation challenges.

3.7.2: Ensure consistent, sustainable and appropriate programmes of urban development capacity building, at all levels of government.

3.7.3: Build capacity of civil society to enhance two-way partnerships with government.

3.8. Financing urban development and housing

3.8.1: Promote the private sector and local authority revenue generation as well as social security/provident funds for financing urban development and housing.

3.8.2: African urban development requires global cooperation. Effective urban development depends on global cooperation in terms of development assistance, debt relief and market access, without which it will not be possible for Africa to meet the MDGs.

3.8.3: Promote the establishment and strengthening of regulatory frameworks, laws and codes that are flexible, to enable financial institutions, and the NEPAD Cities Programme, to ensure effective and sustainable housing and urban development financing programmes.

3.8.4: Build the financial sector in a form that is adapted to each country so that a range of appropriate, sustainable and effective financial options become more widely available, and accessible for all sectors of society, particularly women, the most vulnerable and the poor.

3.8.5: Support the construction sector, including small and medium enterprises and the community sector, involved in slum upgrading to use appropriate low-cost technology, to boost economic development.

3.8.6: The involvement of the construction sector in slum upgrading will contribute to the economic development of urban centres as well as revitalising the informal sector

3.8.7: Increased financial support from the international community should be targeted at capacity-building, technical expertise and funding.

3.9. Consultative Mechanism

3.9.1: Establish and institutionalise a consultative mechanism of African Ministers responsible for housing and urban development. The consultative mechanism will play a significant role in the implementation of the 2003 Maputo Decision on Promoting the Development of Sustainable Cities and Towns in Africa (Assembly/AU/Dec.29(II)).

3.9.2: The Consultative Mechanism should:

- a. Serve as a forum to discuss the urban challenge at the continental level and regional level as a basis for national and city level strategies and as a focus for the discussion of the Habitat Agenda and the relevant Millennium Development Goals and Targets;
- b. Encourage and promote the strengthening of urban governance in Africa;
- c. Champion and support innovative urban development and land management practices in Africa;
- d. Promote development of appropriate housing and low-cost construction technology for rural and urban housing;
- e. Facilitate South-South and international exchanges of expertise, research, experience and best practices, including on the eradication of slums;
- f. Develop a better understanding of urban land dynamics that can lead to improved land tenure and to the growth of urban land markets in Africa;
- g. Support and strengthen the NEPAD Cities Initiative;
- h. Support relief and rehabilitation of shelter and human settlements development in post-conflict and post-disaster situations;
- i. Engage with development partners and multi-laterals on urban development issues in Africa and their financing;
- j. Promote strong ties between research institutions to understand better the economic, legal and financial importance of urban development and urban land in Africa;
- k. Encourage the collection of data and information that can improve the planning and management of urban development;
- l. Promote the institutionalisation of a culture for urban planning including the preparation of urban strategic plans at both national and local authority level;
- o. Encourage the mobilization of domestic financial resources for housing and urban development and promote the necessary partnerships for attainment of this objective;
- p. Mainstream urban and other issues dealing with human settlements in the macro-economic frameworks and national budgets of African governments including UNDAFs, PRSPs and other programmes;
- t. Serve as a platform for advocacy of good urban governance and security of tenure;
- u. Provide a focal point to link relevant aspects of the African Union strategic Plan and NEPAD programme as well as international processes and initiatives consistent with the urban agenda for sustainable development;
- v. Implementing a monitoring and evaluation mechanism for urban governance reforms;
- w. Encourage and support the adoption of programmes for slum upgrading and the building of partnerships among its members in pursuit of this goal;
- x. Undertake all other functions that will lead to the realization of the goals of the Enhanced Framework of Implementation for Housing and Urban Development in Africa adopted by this Conference;

3.9.3: Establish links with other inter-ministerial conferences working on issues related to the Habitat Agenda, including, but not limited to, matters concerning water supply and sanitation, local government, land and infrastructure.

4. Towards a Common African Position at Upcoming International Meetings

The position of African governments is reflected in support of common messages that are pursued at the 20th Session of the Governing Council of UN-HABITAT, the 13th Session of the Commission of Sustainable Development (CSD 13), the General Assembly Review of the Millennium Development Goals, and the Beijing Platform Review, all of which take place during 2005.

The Enhanced Framework sets out Africa's priorities for these forums:

- 1) Poverty, which is increasingly concentrated in African cities, is the overarching urban issue that the international community needs to address;
- 2) Slum upgrading, in the context of overall housing and development strategies, should constitute an essential component of national plans, towns and city development strategies, and PRSPs;
- 3) Regularising settlements and in situ upgrading should be regarded as intrinsic to town and city development strategies, with provision being made for affordable serviced land to prevent new slum formation;
- 4) Secure tenure is essential to slum upgrading to effectively address problems of urban poverty and should be based on a pro-poor land policy that emphasises a range of affordable options including non-formal titles;
- 5) Promotion of gender equality and women's empowerment should be an integral part of urban poverty reduction strategies and programmes. Legal recognition and effective implementation of women's equal property rights are an essential precondition for effective slum upgrading;
- 6) Human settlements, urban poverty, shelter for all, secure tenure, land and property rights, water, sanitation, transport, power supply, increasing women's participation in decision-making at all levels and gender mainstreaming in municipal planning and development, and access to credit, should be priority areas for women's action in the coming decade;
- 7) Poverty in cities cannot satisfactorily be dealt with by sectoral policies and strategies. It is a cross cutting issue that must be addressed in an integrated manner. This particularly applies to the CSD 13 topics of water, sanitation and human settlements;
- 8) Sustainable urban development in Africa requires that developed countries fulfil their commitment made at the Monterrey Conference on financing for development. This should be focused on providing new and additional resources (0.7% of GNP of developed countries for ODA) to leverage local resources including community-based resources;
- 9) Heavy indebtedness of many African countries is impeding their capacity to address housing and urban development issues. It is therefore a priority that international financial institutions must exclude investments in the urban sector, and those that particularly target the MDGs, from the debt of developing countries.
- 10) African urban development requires global cooperation. Effective urban development depends on global cooperation in terms of development assistance, debt relief and market access, without which it would not be possible for Africa to meet the MDGS.
- 11) For sustainable urban development, government at all levels must be empowered to act decisively and responsively to the needs of their citizens. This requires technical assistance and capacity building supported by the international community;

- 12) To redress the problem of exclusion, urban civil society in general and the poor in particular must be engaged in city development strategies and slum upgrading activities as active agents, not as passive beneficiaries.
 - 13) It is essential that city authorities have a leading role in implementing national and local action plans for MDGs, particularly the slum upgrading target in developing countries.
-