

**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.