



Federal Republic of Nigeria

STATEMENT

By

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At

Twenty-First Session of the Governing Council of the United Nations
Human Settlements Programme (UN-HABITAT)

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Nairobi- Kenya,

Madam President,

On behalf of Nigeria, I wish to congratulate you and other members of the Bureau for your election. We are confident that under your inspiring leadership, we will achieve remarkable success at this 21st session.

We also acknowledge the excellent work done by the Executive Director of UN-HABITAT - Dr. Anna Tibaijuka, and her team of dedicated staff for repositioning and revitalizing the agency to better perform its mandates in the 21st century and beyond.

We fully endorse the statement of the distinguished representative of Indonesia on behalf of G77 and China. As the developing world becomes more urbanized, the challenges of meeting the targets of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) on slums, water, sanitation and poverty reduction becomes ever more challenging and paramount.

Madam President,

We strongly support efforts on strengthening the UN-HABITAT to make it a more effective organ of international cooperation in the area of human settlements. We must provide UN-HABITAT with adequate, predictable and additional resources to vigorously pursue its mandate in achieving sustainable human settlements development, both in its normative and new strategic vision and operational activities.

We believe that the Medium Term Strategic Institutional Plan (MTSIP) for 2008-2013, which has spelt out UN-HABITAT's focus and priorities for sustainable urbanization, provides the basis for its strengthening and should be firmly supported.

We therefore call for expanding and strengthening the windows of opportunities in the United Nations Habitat and Human Settlements Foundation to include among others the Revolving Fund Account (REFA) as well as its Slum Upgrading Facility. We also strongly support the establishment of an African Fund on Slum Prevention and Upgrading (AFSPU)

as a powerful mechanism to complement these other initiatives to effectively address the slum situation in Africa.

Madam President,

Nigeria's development agenda is geared towards achieving the MDGs. The comprehensive political, economic and social reforms taking place in Nigeria today emphasize poverty reduction, slum upgrading, integrated planning and sustainability principles. This has resulted in improved quality of life.

Our national framework for poverty reduction strategy, which is the National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (NEEDS) - specifically focuses on poverty reduction, employment generation, wealth creation, gender mainstreaming, overall social development and value reorientation. In 2007, the NEEDS is being expanded to cover housing, slum upgrading, social housing, regional development and other urbanization issues. Virile public-private partnerships for development are also being promoted.

Current policy measures in operation include a revised National Housing Policy, Urban Development Policy and Environmental Sanitation Policy among others to achieve the goals of the Habitat Agenda and the MDGs. We have in place a modernized Land Registration and Information System, and we are in the process of establishing a National Housing Data Bank, as well as preparation of Strategic Regional Development Plans to correct national disparities. Our government has further launched the Niger Delta Regional Development Plan for promoting sustainable development and addressing MDGs in the region.

Other strategies include enhanced mortgage systems to facilitate home ownership among all segments of the population, a National Contributory Pension Scheme to ensure the availability of long-term savings for residential estate development and a robust secondary mortgage system,

Madam President,

Nigeria is working closely with UN-HABITAT in designing and executing programmes for sustainable human settlements development. Our government will continue to provide support to the agency and its organs.

We also eagerly look forward to the next session of the World Urban Forum IV in Nanjing, China in 2007, which has become a veritable tool for networking and strengthening cooperation for sustainable urban development.

We call for more vigorous support by the international community for development initiatives both nationally and also within the NEPAD Framework. There is need for adequate financial assistance, technical and technological transfer, institutional strengthening and capacity building that will enhance the achievement of sustainable urban development in Nigeria.

In conclusion, Madam President, Nigeria is fully committed to hosting the next African Ministerial Conference on Housing and Urban Development (AMCHUD) in furtherance of promoting the urban agenda in the African continent.

I thank you.