



UN-HABITAT
The United Nations Human Settlements Programme

**Statement by Mrs Anna Kajumulo Tibaijuka, UN Under- Secretary-General,
Director General of the United Nations Office in Nairobi (UNON), and Executive
Director, UN-HABITAT**

At the Closing Session of Local to Local Dialogue 19th April 2007, Nairobi

Hon Musikari Kombo, Minister for Local government, Government of Kenya, Ministers
and Honorable Members of Parliament, Distinguished Participants

Ladies and Gentlemen

It is a great honor and privilege for me to appear before you all today, on the last day of the workshop Local to Local Dialogue organized by UN-HABITAT in partnership with Groots Kenya in consultation with Huairou Commission. I am pleased to note that women from 12 African countries gathered in Nairobi for learning and sharing experiences on Local to Local Dialogue. We are grateful to the Government of Norway for continuing its support to the Gender and Women Empowerment programmes in UN-HABITAT.

Today women are struggling to find public space both at Local and National levels.

Unless women are involved in the decision and policy-making process at all levels of the state, changes in women's political and to some extent social and economic status will continue to be marginal. Since the early part of 1990s, particularly after the Beijing

Conference on Women and Development and the Second United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II), women's role in local, provincial and national political processes has been discussed throughout the region. Moreover, the Beijing+5 and Istanbul+5 reviews identified women and politics and women and local government as important crosscutting issues.

The local-to local dialogue workshop is part of the UN-HABITAT Global Programme on Gender and Governance. Some of the other aspects of this Global Programme are Awards and Competitions on Women and Friendly Cities and Gender Responsive governments in Caribbean and Latin America and Asia and Pacific Regions, Expert Group Meeting on Building Partnerships between the Women and Government in Africa, and Support for Women Land Access Trusts. For UN-HABITAT, these Trusts are key for empowering women through access to and ownership of land, housing and property, and acting as intermediaries between Women Groups, Financial Institutions, Governments and other Actors. These programmes aim at fulfilling internationally agreed commitments on gender equality in human settlements development and MDG's, especially Goal 3 on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment and Goal 7 on environmental Sustainability, targets 10 and 11 on water and Sanitation and improving the living conditions of at least 100 million Slum Dwellers by 2020.

Moreover, women in decision-making positions in local bodies, councils, committees and legislative bodies provide opportunities for "transformative leadership". Women can help to redefine political priorities, place new items on the political agenda such as local planning; prioritizing development issues, delivery of basic services and municipal

budgeting for urban poor that reflect and address women's specific concerns. The increased partnership between grassroots women, elected women, development organizations, local authorities, civil society actors, professional organizations, women groups and national institutions is the key linkage in bringing women into mainstream Governance Processes. Governance is about accountability, transparency and forging of partnerships between and among different actors.

Local to Local Dialogue can be used as a means within the Governance networks to achieve the broader goals of women specific concerns. UN-HABITAT sees this approach which can build up on various tools and it can be used for achieving women rights in land, housing and secure tenure in particular.

UN-HABITAT with the support from donors, development partners and local organizations would continue to support Local to Local dialogues together with local authorities and national Governments in Asian and Latin American countries. We will expand partnerships with networks as reflected in MTSIP 2008-2013 by partnering with local authorities and institutions, and bringing women in these in governance networks.

It is important to remember that we cannot speak of Urban Planning, Inclusive Cities and Governance without Women being at the centre of such Programmes and activities. I am pleased to learn that for four days the women have developed action plans for follow-up to the local to Local Dialogue. I hope you all can internalize the learning from the workshop and become Great Leaders in your Communities.

Thank you for your Attention.