

**OPENING STATEMENT**  
**Dr. Joan Clos**  
**Secretary-General of Habitat III,**  
**07 April 2016**

**GREETINGS**

Honourable Ms. Ms. Lindiwe Sisulu, Minister for Human Settlements, Republic of South Africa

Honourable Mr. David Makhura, Premier of the Gauteng Province

To the:

- Honourable Ministers
- Bureau Members present
- All Mayors and their Delegations
- Representatives of other Urban Stakeholders
- Colleagues, Ladies and Gentlemen.

I would like to greet all of you, who travelled to Pretoria from different parts of the world, to the final Habitat III Thematic Meeting on Informal Settlements.

1. We are gathered here to discuss the significant challenge of informal settlements at the global level. Around one quarter of the world's urban population continue to live in slums and informal settlements. And the number of slum dwellers around the world continues to grow at around 10 percent every year, intensifying in many parts of the world.

2. The proportion of slum dwellers is most acute in Africa (at 61.7 percent), followed by Asia (at 30 percent), Latin America and the Caribbean (at 24 percent), and Arab States (at 13.3 percent). Slums are considered normal in a statistical sense.

3. The conditions in slums are a huge risk to inhabitants' health and make them more vulnerable to communicable disease outbreaks. These conditions affect slum dwellers' life expectancy. While the poorest 20% in cities struggles to reach 55 years of age, the richest 40% goes well beyond 70 years.

4. In terms of jobs, while the informal economy provides employment, these informal jobs are often unskilled, low paid, and are insecure livelihood options that allows inhabitants to survive but not to progress sufficiently to change their living conditions.

5. In the broader context of housing, at least two billion more people will require housing in urban and rural areas in 2030. From slum residents to middle-income households, it is estimated that 330 million households are currently financially stretched by housing costs; this number could grow to 440 million by 2025.

6. Given these facts and in view of our rapidly urbanizing world, informal settlements and housing should clearly be one of the top priorities in developing the New Urban Agenda.

Any city at low levels of economic development is bound to have slums. This has been the case throughout history, including in cities such as London and Paris.

Urbanization generates wealth. Good urbanization generates more wealth. Urbanization if used effectively as a tool for development, will help nations to unlock the question of informal settlements. They can do so by using the huge potential for socio-economic development created by well-planned and well-managed cities.

The key to sustainable urbanization is good design. Legislative, physical and financial.

Good design does not happen by chance. It happens by choice.

7. The effectiveness of any solutions depends on their ability to operate within frameworks within the urban context.

- a. Urban Planning and Design will enable to planners and decision makers to have a more holistic and spatial view of the problem and solutions to informality.
- b. Legislation is key in ensuring that solutions are both realized and institutionalized esp in the context of governance towards addressing the issues of informality.
- c. Finance has and always will determine that any proposal will be implemented.