

## HABITAT III Open-Ended Informal Consultative Meetings, New York

### DAY 2 (26 April), AFTERNOON SESSION:

#### Housing Policies (Policy Unit 10), Informal Settlements (Pretoria Thematic Meeting), and Civic Engagement (Tel Aviv Thematic Meeting)

#### INPUT BY SOUTH AFRICA

In our discussions yesterday, a common refrain emerged, which is the importance of **partnerships** and **participatory approaches** to urban development. Countries share a common experience which tells us that a partnership approach is critical to integrated planning and sustainable, effective policy implementation. Our legal and policy framework and our institutions must be shaped so as to draw out common goals and support coordinated action— not only *within* government, but *between* government and non-government actors. To this end, the New Urban Agenda must emphasise the role of all relevant stakeholders, from local government actors, community-based organisations, community members, planners, academics, and the private sector.

In South Africa, our approach to integrated planning thus puts **local government** at the centre of planning for urban development, informal settlement upgrading and the built environment. The imperative for integrated participatory development planning is enshrined in our legal framework that mandates **annual integrated development planning** which is driven by local government but encompasses investment in infrastructure and service delivery by all levels of government.

Best practices from our national programme for the **upgrading of informal settlements** have also demonstrated the benefits of participatory planning approaches which give a platform to

community voices and rely upon partnerships with community-based organisations. We have seen how participatory upgrading methodologies ensure that the specific needs and realities of the affected community are understood and addressed, and further guarantee that the solutions adopted are sustainable and practical.

Evidence and experience have also taught us that **housing policies** must be flexible, varied and adaptive—addressing a wide range of housing typologies, a full spectrum of tenure security options, and diverse market and state-driven approaches. In South Africa, **incremental** approaches which prioritise **in situ** upgrading—where possible—have enabled us to scale up delivery while retaining valuable socio-economic and cultural ties within communities. Inclusive, pro-poor policies for the delivery of basic urban services and adequate housing can thus prevent new informal settlements, while simultaneously integrating existing slums into spatially transformed cities which ensure the urban dividend is felt by all urban residents.

We therefore support the recommendations of policy paper 10 and call for the Pretoria Declaration on informal settlements to be integrated into the New Urban Agenda.