



STATEMENT DELIVERED BY SOUTH AFRICA

URBAN GOVERNANCE, CAPACITY AND INSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENT (POLICY UNIT 4)

HABITAT III OPEN-ENDED INFORMAL CONSULTATIVE MEETINGS

NEW YORK

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Chairperson,

South Africa supports the recommendations in policy unit 4 and wishes to illustrate how governance, capacity and institutional development plays a key role in the implementation of vision and policy. We adopted a Comprehensive Plan for the Development of Sustainable Human Settlements in 2004, which “promotes the achievement of a non-racial, integrated society through the development of sustainable human settlements and quality housing”. In 2009, President Zuma announced that the Department of Housing would be re-named the Department of Human Settlements and declared “We will proceed from the understanding that human settlement is not just about building houses. It is about transforming our cities and towns and building cohesive, sustainable and caring communities with closer access to work and social amenities, including sports and recreation facilities.”

At a programme and project level South Africa is embarking on high impact initiatives. Human Settlement Catalytic projects can range from mega scale inclusionary neighbourhoods to

seemingly small but high impact interventions. The underlying principle of all of these is that they are all spatially targeted interventions whose main objective is to intervene to deliberately restructure settlement patterns and impact on the environment. The development objectives include:

- Implementing projects that ensure spatial, social, economic & ecological integration and innovations i.t.o. energy, water and alternative building materials;
- Identifying and implementing national priority catalytic projects using different tenure options to deliver high impact integrated and sustainable human settlements that clearly demonstrate spatial, social and economic integration;
- Increasing the supply of housing opportunities using different tenure types to ensure the diversity necessary to address social, economic and cultural needs;
- Ensuring that poor households have adequate housing in better living environments;
- Supporting the development of a functionally and equitable residential property market; and
- Improving institutional capacity and coordination for better spatial targeting and scale initiatives.

This requires strong co-ordination across government departments at national level and between spheres of government (national, provincial and local).

Housing in South Africa is a functional area of concurrent national and provincial legislative competence. Whilst municipalities have a clear mandate to ensure the access of communities to adequate housing and services, the specific function of executing national and provincial housing programmes lies with provincial government. The policy intent, however, is to progressively enable municipalities to manage the full range of housing instruments to allow for better coordinated and accelerated human settlements delivery. The Housing Act provides for “accreditation” as a capacitation mechanism to allow for the administration of national housing programmes by municipalities. However, if the full responsibility for the administration of

national housing programmes is to be transferred, then the Constitutional and legal framework for assignment of powers and functions needs to be followed.

The Constitution envisages that additional powers and functions may be transferred to the local sphere and offers a framework for the assignment of such powers and functions to local government by national or provincial legislatures or executives. The principle of subsidiarity is introduced, which determines that a national and provincial government must assign to a municipality.

Accreditation has been introduced as an instrument to ensure the progressive capacitation of municipalities in order for them to perform the assigned function without compromising delivery capacity in the short term. The accreditation, and ultimately assignment, of municipalities to administer national housing programmes on behalf of provinces seeks to achieve two inter-linked objectives:

- Coordinated development (horizontal integration): By locating the decision-making authority around the administration of national housing programmes at the local sphere, municipalities can co-ordinate decisions that relate to the broader sustainability of human settlements. With the authority to take such decisions, opportunities for the application of innovative planning principles arise and this contributes to the potential for the development of integrated and sustainable human settlements within municipal jurisdictions. This is a key emphasis of the Comprehensive Plan for the Development of Sustainable Human Settlements, “Breaking New Ground.
- Accelerated delivery (vertical integration): The efficiencies associated with certainty in respect of funding allocations, and decentralising delivery authority to the local sphere, should lead to accelerate delivery and improved expenditure patterns. This should result in a reduced requirement to roll over unspent funds, as well as a more coordinated approach to planning approval and implementation.

I thank you