



STATEMENT DELIVERED BY SOUTH AFRICA

URBAN SERVICES AND TECHNOLOGY (POLICY UNIT 9)

HABITAT III OPEN-ENDED INFORMAL CONSULTATIVE MEETINGS

NEW YORK

27 APRIL 2016

Chairperson,

We wish to express our support for recommendations of Policy Paper 9, while adding two important points to the discussion.

First, the principle of subsidiarity reflected in Policy Paper 9 is critical and, in fact, features as a pillar of our own Constitution—recognising that responsibilities for functions must be ascribed to the most appropriate sphere of government. The legal and fiscal framework must then accord the responsible sphere of government with appropriate revenue-raising authority and channel sufficient resources to ensure effective delivery of the function. Funding follows function.

Second, apart from water, sanitation and energy, urban services must also include other critical infrastructure for households to prosper, including IT and public transport. In South Africa, our cities have led the way in providing free Wi fi, thus enabling students, households and job-seekers to link into critical digital networks and resources.

Public transport in urban areas must not only be resource-efficient, space-efficient, operational, clean and safe. It must also be affordable. At a household level, subsidised public transport

decreases the share of household expenditure spent on transport to school and work, thus making living in the city more affordable.

At a city-wide level, affordable, integrated public transport impacts on the spatial transformation of cities and their property market by creating efficient links from less well-located areas into the city centre, thus increasing the property value of those areas and decreasing household transport costs. Its not enough that housing itself must be affordable to low-income families; the entire experience of living in the city must be affordable, including the costs of travelling to schools, jobs, clinics and recreational areas. Households should not be forced to make a trade-off between inadequate living conditions in shacks close to town, vs. a small house on the outskirts with inordinate transport costs and lengthy commute times.

The New Urban Agenda must therefore emphasise the critical linkages between affordable, integrated public transport networks, the spatial transformation of cities, and the development of sustainable, liveable human settlements.

We further propose for the New Urban Agenda:

- Focus on spatial transformation across all geographic scales.
- Policies, plans and instruments to reduce travel distances and costs, especially for poor households.

By 2036, a larger proportion of the population should live closer to places of work, and the transport they use to commute should be safe, reliable and energy efficient. This requires:

- Strong measures to prevent further development of housing in marginal places
- Increased urban densities to support public transport and reduce sprawl
- More reliable and affordable public transport and better coordination between various modes of transport
- Incentives and programmes to shift new jobs and investments towards the dense townships on the urban edge, and
- Focused partnerships with the private sector to bridge the housing gap market.