

STATEMENT

BY

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TO THE UNITED NATIONS

TO THE

**SECOND COMMITTEE**

**ON AGENDA ITEM 21**

**"UN-HABITAT"**

DURING THE

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UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY

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**Mr. Chairman**

I thank you for giving me the floor. Kenya associates with statements delivered by South Africa and **Sierra Leone** on behalf of the Group of G 77 and China and Africa respectively.

My delegation believes this debate is timely in the context of recent adoption of **2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development** containing the goal on making cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable.

Mr. Chairman,

The world is increasingly becoming urban. It is estimated that by 2030, approximately five billion people will be living in urban areas. Out of this, 95 percent will be in developing countries.

We continue to note the significance of human settlement and urbanization in sustainable development. Cities and urban areas will play a key role in achieving sustainable development.

The United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development held in Rio, in 2012, recognized the importance of cities and human settlements. It noted that if well planned and developed through integrated planning and management approaches, cities can promote economic, socially and environmentally sustainable societies. Kenya believes sustainable urbanization and human settlement will have a central role in years ahead.

Urban areas are drivers of economic growth. This is due to the productivity at the

firm and industrial level through various collaborative activities. Urbanization continues to open up numerous development opportunities. It will therefore be key to ensuring economic growth and job creation, social progress and environmental sustainability.

In Kenya, urban areas account for a substantial proportion of physical, financial, intellectual and technological capital in many countries.

Urban-based economic activities account for the bulk of the gross domestic product of countries globally. This is key in catalyzing the sustainable development process.

**Mr. Chairman**

Currently 32 percent of Kenyans live in urban areas. This is expected to exceed 50 percent by the year 2030. Rapid urbanization in the country has opened up many development opportunities. It plays a key role in economic growth and job creation, social progress and environmental sustainability. Urban areas account for a big proportion of the country's physical, financial, intellectual and technological capital. The urban-based economic activities account for the bulk of the country's gross domestic product. This continues to catalyze the development process in other parts of the country.

However, urbanization can result into various social, economic and environmental challenges which need to be addressed. Our constitution has provided the foundation from which to address some of the emerging issues from urbanization. It has established 47 Counties with autonomy to design and implement programmes to address specific local challenges. These include land use planning

processes and secure land tenure systems. The country's development blue print, Vision 2030, envisages secure, well governed, competitive and sustainable urban areas and cities that contribute to the realization of national development goals in all the 47 counties.

At the policy level, the government provides necessary incentives to unlock the private sector potential in delivering on this important agenda. There is active participation of the private sector in Public Private Partnership framework to provide affordable housing particularly for the low income. Appropriate and affordable building technologies are in place to address supply side constraints.

**Mr. Chairman,**

We have in place a national organizing Committee for the forthcoming United Nations Conference on Housing Sustainable Urban Development (Habitat III). It comprises of representatives from all stakeholder institutions and Habitat Agenda partners. This will be the first major implementing Conference for the new development Agenda. It will be expected to address challenges such as; weak urban planning, poor urban management and land regulation.

We recognize the outcomes of the second Preparatory Committee which took place in Nairobi in April 2015 and its roadmap for Habitat III Conference. We look forward to the last and final Prepcom in July 2015. This will be a critical session which will formulate the way going forward.

Habitat III is an opportunity to discuss and chart new partnership in response to challenges of urbanization. It will bring together diverse urban actors such as governments, local authorities, civil society organizations, private sector, academic

institutions and all relevant organization. It should focus on reviewing urban and housing policies that affect the future of cities. It should define a governance architecture and new urban agenda for the 21<sup>st</sup> century which recognizes the ever changing dynamics of human settlements. It also offers an opportunity to chart the implementation of SDGs.

Lastly Mr. Chairman, we all look forward to the Conference to further define the importance of cities and human settlements in the new development Agenda. It should offer the means to address challenges associated with development of cities and human settlements. It should improve the quality of human settlements for both urban and rural dwellers. We all look forward to defining the new Habitat Agenda which is relevant and implementable.

**I thank you.**