

**UNITED NATIONS HUMAN SETTLEMENTS PROGRAMME  
(UN-HABITAT)**

**Support to NEPAD**

**Period of Report: July 2008 to June 2009**

UN-HABITAT's advocacy work in support of sustainable urbanization in Africa remains its main contribution to the implementation of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD). The core message of its campaign in support of NEPAD since the inception of NEPAD in 2001 addresses the issues of the rapid rate of urbanization of Africa, and its impact on the quality of life of citizens as one of the challenges of NEPAD. Based on its mandate and given its operational activities in Africa, mainly through its Regional Office for Africa & the Arab States (ROAAS), UN-HABITAT is providing a strong support to NEPAD by addressing daily - at various levels, including operational, political, normative, institutional, and monitoring and implementation, - the crucial issues of sustainable urban development in Africa.

As in previous years, the Agency's activities continue to focus on: (i) Advocacy and building awareness of the issues and challenges associated with rapid urbanization; (ii) Promoting policies and strategies at the regional and national levels to face the above challenges; (iii) Implementing pilot initiatives at the country level upon the request of member States; (iv) Mobilizing resources to bring pilot initiatives to scale.

**Main Areas of Intervention**

*Advocacy:*

The main area of advocacy is on raising awareness of the fact that Africa, as a region, is undergoing a very rapid rate of urban growth and that most of this growth is resulting in the formation of slums and informal settlements. Currently, 72 percent of urban dwellers in Sub-Saharan Africa, or 187 million people, live in life-threatening slums. This "urbanisation of poverty" is becoming the single largest obstacle to the attainment of the Millennium Development Goals for the region. UN-HABITAT has just released the first "State of African Cities Report", which projects that by 2030 the African urban populations will double its 2007 level. The report also points out that Africa's rapid urbanization does not necessarily mean a boon for the continent, and Africa now exhibits an extremely high level of urban inequality.

*NEPAD Cities Programme:*

Phase II of the NEPAD Cities Programme entered into force in June 2007. An agreement of cooperation was signed with the NEPAD Cities Network members to share responsibilities in order to increase synergy and speed up the ownership of the programme at the local level. UN-HABITAT continues to provide substantive backstopping and technical support for three areas of intervention: (i) monitoring of progress of African cities in the attainment of the MDGs in urban areas; (ii) the exchange of knowledge, lessons learned and best practices in pro-poor housing and

urban development; and (iii) technical support for the implementation of pilot demonstration initiatives. It also provides direct support to the Secretariat of the NEPAD Cities Programme which is currently assured by the Municipality of eThekweni in South Africa.

### **Support to policy development and institutional reform**

African Heads of State committed themselves to addressing the problem of urbanization in Africa, in partnership with UN-HABITAT in response to rapid and unplanned urbanization of the African continent coupled with increased challenges regarding tenure, security, the provision of basic services and amenities, and good governance. In terms of furthering Decision 29 of the 2003 AU Summit, UN-HABITAT in cooperation with the African Union has been convening annually a conference for African Ministers responsible for housing and Urban Development (AMCHUD).

The last meeting of AMCHUD was organized in July 2008, in Abuja, Nigeria with the aim at developing a common position on human settlements and interventions for dealing with the manifestations and consequences of unsustainable urban growth and urban poverty. As the lack of finance is the key factor for the proliferation of slums and poverty in African cities, AMCHUD committed to intensify efforts to improve the funding slum-upgrading, affordable housing and urban development.

Habitat Programme Managers in various African countries continue to work with African member States to promote the integration of the urban poverty agenda as an explicit chapter in national development strategies, plans and programmes including poverty reduction strategies, where they exist.

These efforts are being further assisted by capacity building programmes that focus on strengthening the ability of local authorities, public and private sector utilities and service providers, and urban poor communities to engage in slum upgrading and improvement initiatives and local economic development.

Direct support for policy development, institutional reform and capacity building is currently being provided to several African countries.

### **Collaboration with other UN agencies: convening Cluster on “*Environment, urbanization and population*”**

UN-HABITAT was charged by UNECA to convene the Cluster on “Environment, urbanization and population” within the interagency mechanism established to enhance the United Nations partnerships with regional and sub regional organizations in Africa.

The Cluster held two meetings during 2008, which were devoted to the review of progress made in line with the recommendations of the 8<sup>th</sup> RCM, and to explore possibilities of formulating of relevant recommendations as a feedback to the Consultant’s report commissioned by the ECA to review the structural functioning of the RCM and provide recommendations on how best to improve and align the UN priorities to AU and NEPAD programmes.

The last meeting held in Nairobi in September 2008, provided an opportunity for preparations for the 9<sup>th</sup> RCM, following which UNEP took over from UN-HABITAT as the Cluster convener based in line with the good governance practices.

### **Challenges and constraints**

The lack of funding to bring policy and capacity-building activities to scale remains the major challenge facing the UN-HABITAT partnership with NEPAD. Practical arrangements with donors institutions and other international, as well as domestic financial institutions need to be forged to ensure follow-up investment in areas of land, transport infrastructure and urban mobility, urban energy, local economic development, etc.