

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

**Support to AU/NEPAD (Period of July 2009 to June 2010)**

**Introduction**

UN-HABITAT is supporting the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) by advocating for sustainable urbanization in Africa. Through its regional office for Africa and Arab States (ROAAS) and with the help of its Habitat Programme managers posted in a number of countries within the region, the agency carries out various activities in line with its operational, political, normative, institutional, and monitoring and implementation mandates.

However, the NEPAD remains a cross-cutting programme, which needs to be strengthened at the institutional level in order align the agency's priorities with the need for more concrete actions to empower African cities to strive for solutions, which are adapted to their concrete problems.

In this context, the course of action remains consistent with the agency's strategic plans, which focuses on: (i) advocacy and building awareness of the issues and challenges associated with rapid urbanization within the African region; (ii) promoting policies and strategies at the regional and national levels, which integrate the urban dimension of the African challenges; (iii) implementing pilot initiatives at the country level upon the request of Member States; (iv) and finally mobilizing resources to bring pilot initiatives to scale.

**Advocacy**

UN-HABITAT convened in February and May 2009 major stakeholders in Africa's development by organising "Regional Conference of Capital Cities of Africa," and "Tripartite Conference EU/ACP and UN-HABITAT" to discuss raising awareness of the rapid rate of urban growth in Africa and its worse consequence when it is related to the formation of slums and informal settlements. It is officially estimated that at least 72 percent of the urban dwellers in Sub-Saharan Africa spend their lives in life-threatening slums, which have become known as "time-bombs". This "urbanisation of poverty" is becoming the single largest obstacle to the attainment of the Millennium Development Goals for the region.

The first "State of African Cities Report", prepared by ROAAS projected a few months ago a doubling of the urban population by the year 2030, and what is more alarming is the increasing extreme high level of urban inequality.

**NEPAD Cities Programme**

As reported in previous documents, the Phase II of the NEPAD Cities Programme entered into force in June 2007, when UN-HABITAT signed an agreement of cooperation with the NEPAD Cities Network members led by the City of Durban (eThekweni municipality), South Africa, to initiate the operational phase of the programme. The agreement focused on sharing of responsibilities in order to increase synergy and speed up the ownership of the programme at the

local level. Under this agreement, the leading role of UN-HABITAT in developing the programme was recognised, which is providing 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.

The agreement further provides for the operationalization and implementation of the NEPAD Cities Programme by the members of the network led by the eThekweni municipality, and supported by a coordination unit or secretariat established by UN-HABITAT.

Taking into account the latest developments in the context of the African regional integration process, and the subsequent inclusion of the NEPAD into the African Union structure, which shall result into its transformation as an implementation agency, UN-HABITAT will accordingly strengthen its NEPAD secretariat and transform it into a “NEPAD Support Unit” in order to create the necessary conditions for a better coordination with partners at both national and local levels on one hand, as well as the interagency level on the other hand.

### **Collaboration with other UN agencies: convening Cluster IV on “Environment, Urbanization and Population”**

UN-HABITAT has acted as the convener of the Cluster IV within the interagency mechanism in support of the NEPAD, which is coordinated by the UNECA.

The members of the cluster held their last meeting recently in November, in Addis Ababa in conjunction with the holding of the 10<sup>th</sup> RCM meetings, whose recommendations were included into the cluster’s report to the RCM plenary meetings, which were chaired by the Deputy Secretary General, H.E. Asha Rose Migiro.

It planned to hold the next meeting of the cluster before the month of June at the invitation of UNEP, acting as the convener after taking over from UN-HABITAT based on the principles of good governance and interagency rotation. The concrete date and venue of that meeting will be communicated at a later stage after consultation among the cluster members.

UN-HABITAT as active member of Cluster IV has intensively taken part in the preparations of the cluster’s retreat which was held from 11 - 12 May 2010 in Tunis, Tunisia. The Agency shall intensify efforts in collaboration with other members to contribute to the UN support to NEPAD based on its ongoing and future activities in Africa in the fields of its mandate.

### **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, and local economic development.