



**STATEMENT BY HON. ADJEI KWASI BOATENG (MP), DEPUTY MINISTER FOR
LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT AT THE 26TH SESSION OF
THE GOVERNING COUNCIL OF THE UN-HABITAT NAIROBI, KENYA**

MAY 8 – 12, 2017

Mr. President

Your Excellencies

The Executive Director of UN-Habitat

Co-Chairs of the Governing Council

Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen,

I bring you warm greetings from the Government and People of the Republic of Ghana, and especially my President **His Excellency Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo**. I join other speakers in expressing my heartfelt gratitude to the Government and People of the Republic of Kenya, particularly, the Governor and people of Nairobi County for hosting this very important event.

I seize this opportunity to congratulate the new President and his team on being elected to the bureau of the Governing Council of UN-Habitat.

Let me also commend the Executive Director of UN-Habitat and his entire team for successfully leading the adoption of the New Urban Agenda which we believe will bring transformational changes to our sprawling cities.

We as a country associate ourselves keenly with the position of the G77 and the African Group.



Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen,

As we have consistently submitted on all platforms, urbanization is irreversible and inevitable. We therefore, having agreed to embrace urbanization and the opportunities it presents, have chosen to recognize the New Urban Agenda as a social contract with our people to make their lives and settlements safer, more resilient, inclusive and sustainable within our framework of national development.

To this end, Ghana organized an Africa Strategy Workshop in Accra, in 2016 with support from the Cities Alliance and other development partners with high representation of Mayors and Ministers from various African Countries. During that conference, we all resolved that the New Urban Agenda is the roadmap for building a resilient, sustainable and environmentally friendly cities in our respective countries. We also resolved that our local authorities and cities play a critical role in achieving the objective of the New Urban Agenda. Ghana has already taken the lead in this direction through our decentralization programme which provides a framework for popular participation in governance. Through this, we have also **LOCALIZED** the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by bringing on board the informal sector as well as involving ordinary citizens in our communities in the process of determining development priorities.

Your Excellencies,



Ladies and Gentlemen,

Similarly, we have strengthened the basic administrative units in our country such as Metropolitan, Municipal and District Assemblies (Local Authorities). Currently, an enabling legislative framework is being put in place to allow these units of government to borrow from the financial market. This is what we refer to as the Municipal Borrowing Bill. The Bill when passed, will enable the decentralized administrative units to borrow from the financial market to fund capital projects that will deal with the challenges of urbanization by delivering quality services such as water supply, electricity and waste management.

Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen,

For us to succeed in implementing the New Urban Agenda, we are further committed to deepening our decentralized system of governance by strengthening and making more functional, governance structures below the District level which are meant to register births and deaths, generate revenue and ensure environmental sanitation amongst others. It is worth emphasizing that it is within these Districts and sub-district structures that long-term urban and territorial planning processes and spatial development practices take place.

We are also implementing the **Ghana Urban Management Pilot Project (GUMPP)** in four metropolitan and municipal assemblies. The project seeks to address urban infrastructure investment, spatial planning, street naming and property addressing system, urban management and the delivery of basic



services. Secondly, through the **Local Government Capacity Support Project**, our cities benefit from an **Urban Development Grant (UDG)** for investment and service delivery. Thirdly, the **Participatory Slum Upgrading Project** which seeks to improve slums in our cities is being implemented with the support of UN-Habitat. Fourthly, with support from the Cities Alliance and the GIZ, we are also implementing the **Land Services and Citizens Programme**, which basically addresses the informal sector involvement in slum upgrading.

Your Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Recognizing the importance of long-term planning, the Government of Ghana through the National Development Planning Commission, is preparing a 40-year Long Term Development Framework which is hinged on the SDGs, Paris Agreement, Sendai Framework and the New Urban Agenda. The key component of this process has been its participatory nature – i.e it involves the grassroots, informal sector, academia, policy think-tanks and political parties.

Your Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

One critical area that the New Urban Agenda addresses is food security. To this end, the Government of Ghana has started an agricultural initiative known as **“planting for food and jobs”** which will be complemented by processing of agricultural produce through the **“one District, one factory initiative”** policy of



the Government of Ghana to add value and improve local economic development.

Taking into consideration all the above, we believe that we have triggered the transformational change that the New Urban Agenda envisions. In the long – run the ongoing interventions would help bridge the rural-urban divide and tame migration of the youth to urban centers which contribute to urban slums city crimes, inordinate pressure on limited water supply, schools, hospitals, and the general creation of insanitary environment.

Your Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Finally, we wish to take the opportunity to commend all member states for their active involvement which led to the adoption of the New Urban Agenda, in Quito, Ecuador. We urge all member countries and development partners to continue in this spirit and to ensure that UN-Habitat is further strengthened to play its role in the implementation of the New Urban Agenda.

I thank you for your kind attention.