



Private Sector Partnership Forum

Innovative Solutions to Challenges in Slums & Informal Settlements in Africa

24 to 26 June 2020, eConference

POLITICAL STATEMENTS

Date: Wednesday, 24 June 2020, 11:15-12:15 EAT

Topics Explored

Leveraging Partnerships for Inclusive and Sustainable Urbanization, Leaving No One Behind

Keynote Speakers

1. Hon. Yvonne Aki-Sawyerr, Mayor of Freetown (Sierra Leone)
2. Oumar Sow, General Director of Urbanism and Architecture (Senegal)
3. Hon. Charles Hinga, Principal Secretary, State Department for Housing & Urban Development (Kenya)

About the Private Sector Partnership Forum

Recognizing the key role played by the private sector in all areas of development, engaging the business community is critical to the realization of the SDGs. Even though approx. 60% of urban populations in Africa live in informal settlements, the economic importance of this large market remains untapped, yet it presents lucrative business opportunities. Companies and investors lack the enabling environment needed to develop business cases for modern solutions and affordable innovations for informal urban areas. For this reason, PSUP is taking the first steps towards addressing this major opportunity and duly matching private sector solutions with the needs in informal urban settlements and slums.

The three-day Private Sector Partnership Forum has been organized in recognition of the critical roles played by the private sector in innovating and piloting novel solutions to development challenges, and the public sector in scaling up successful innovations. To this end, the Forum seeks to facilitate partnership between national governments and municipalities with private sector companies, specifically investors and innovators with low-cost innovative solutions to development challenges.

About the Participatory Slum Upgrading Programme

The United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) together with the European Commission (EC), and the Secretariat of the Africa, Caribbean and Pacific Group of States (ACP) entered a tripartite partnership to address the challenge of slums in the Africa, Caribbean and Pacific Countries through the launch of the Participatory Slum Upgrading Programme (PSUP) in 2008. Since then, the PSUP has worked in over 40 countries and 200 cities and urban centres, developing the capacities of country partners in slum upgrading and urban profiling for sustainability. In addition, the Programme has developed more than 30 citywide slum upgrading and prevention strategies and identified concrete entry-points for participatory slum upgrading at city scale.

Description of the Session

The challenges of rapid urbanization that cities are facing globally are expressed in the growing proliferation of informal settlements in urban areas. One billion people worldwide live in slums. Provision of affordable and environmentally sustainable housing and basic services for the urban poor remains a key challenge for many African countries. In Sub-Saharan Africa the urban poor living in informal settlements and slums constitute 62% of the urban population. Despite the progress in improving slums and preventing their formation – represented by a decrease from 39 per cent to 30 per cent of the urban population living in slums in developing countries between 2000 and 2014 – absolute numbers continue to grow, and the slum challenge remains a critical factor. The magnitude of the slum challenge has been recognized globally and included as part of the international development agenda.

Target 11.1 of Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) #11 commits states and their development partners to ensuring access for all to adequate, safe and affordable housing and basic services and upgrade slums by 2030.

This global goal guides countries towards sustainable urbanization that involves improving living conditions of slum dwellers by improving access to affordable housing and upgrading slums. Similarly, the New Urban Agenda's (NUA) principle of "Leaving No One Behind" and commitment to "Sustainable Urban Development for Social Inclusion and Ending Poverty" binds member states to paying special attention to urban poverty and the needs of slum dwellers.

The key issues of slums and informal settlements are the lack of urban planning, overcrowding, lack of appropriate housing and infrastructure, including lack of social and economic services, and lack of vital basic services such as water, sanitation, and waste management. Other issues are environmental degradation, health deprivation, traffic congestion and lack of access to education, health services, employment and business opportunities. The dimensions of political and social issues of slums extends to the lack of public safety and social segregation, social disparities and stigmatization.

The key challenges to ensure a sustainable urbanization process that includes the 62% of urban residents living in informal urban areas are in the financing and policy development for the provision of affordable housing, water, sanitation, waste management, roads, urban drainage, communal infrastructure, employment, long-term service provision and the financing of maintenance of infrastructure.

During the session political leaders from African countries will make statements on the challenges, priorities and untapped opportunities for partnerships in their countries for an inclusive and sustainable urbanization that leaves no one behind, essentially inclusive of communities living in informal settlements. Their perspectives on innovative financing partnerships for a sustainable urbanization, the required changes to urban planning to make it inclusive of the urban poor and, among other, the required short and long-term measures that are needed to successfully respond to the multidimensional impacts of the COVID-19 crisis in the communities of informal settlements and slums that are being hit the hardest, will be shared.

Expected Outcomes

The Forum is among a series of events organized by UN-Habitat to strengthen partnership with the business community to support sustainable and inclusive urban development and the New Urban Agenda. It provides a platform for matching the needs of informal settlements residents and demands of cities with innovative private sector solutions.

The session is expected to have:

1. Provided an overview of the political perspectives from African leaders on the challenges and opportunities for financing partnerships for a sustainable urbanization that is inclusive of informal settlements and slums.
2. Specified entry points for opportunities for partnership between governments, investors, financing partners and investable innovative solutions for slum upgrading and prevention from the perspective of African leadership.