



Kenya Urban Support Program (KUSP)



*“Making Kenyan Towns Work!”*

CONCEPT NOTE ON

1<sup>ST</sup> KENYA URBAN FORUM 2023

NAIVASHA MUNICIPALITY, KENYA

JUNE 14 – 16, 2023

## 1.0 Background

Urban areas are already home to 55 per cent of the world’s population, and that figure is expected to grow to 68 per cent by 2050<sup>1</sup>. Building economic, social and environmental resilience, including appropriate governance and institutional structures, must be at the heart of the future of urban areas. The disruptive nature of COVID-19 and the emerging global uncertainties are all stark reminders that urban areas need to be prepared for an ever-changing and unpredictable future. Localizing the New Urban Agenda and SDG 11 is the most promising pathway to the optimistic scenario of urban futures.

Kenya has an urban population of 14.8 million spread across 310 urban centers with a population of 2,000 and above, key among them being Nairobi, Mombasa, Kisumu, Nakuru, Eldoret, and Ruiru among others. With a total population of 54 million<sup>2</sup>, it means that 31.2% of Kenya could be classified as urban. In 2009, the urban population was 12 million while ten years later in 2019, the population rose by 2.8million to14.8m. This rise in urban population, mainly caused by rural-urban migration and natural population increase has the potential to exert pressure on existing infrastructure & services the in cities, municipalities, towns and market centers resulting in challenges such as environmental threats, diminishing resources, inequality, poor governance, urban informality and rise in poverty levels.

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<sup>1</sup> World Cities Report, 2022. UN-Habitat

<sup>2</sup> Kenya Population and Housing Census, 2019

## 2.0 The Kenya Urban Forum

The WUF was established in 2001 by the United Nations to examine one of the most pressing issues facing the world today: rapid urbanization and its impact on communities, cities, economies, climate change and policies. The first WUF was held in Nairobi, Kenya in 2002 and has been held around the world ever since.

Kenya Vision 2030 identified urbanization as one of the four key challenges facing Kenya today and which was well envisioned in the National Urban Development Policy NUDP (*Sessional Paper No. 06/2016*).

The Kenya Urban Forum 2023 will be organized as the most open and inclusive gathering that brings together urban stakeholders to share a common urban development vision that addresses the challenges facing cities, municipalities, towns and market centers in Kenya. The Forum will provide a high-level platform for raising awareness on sustainable urbanization among stakeholders and constituencies, including the general public. It will focus on improving collective knowledge of sustainable urban development through inclusive open debates, sharing lessons learned and the exchange of best practices and good policies.

Under the theme “*The Future is Urban*”, the Kenya Urban Forum 2023 will provide a platform for stakeholders to prepare a roadmap for development of Kenya’s future cities based on existing trends, challenges and opportunities, as well as disruptive conditions, including the valuable lessons from the COVID-19 pandemic. The roadmap will suggest ways that Kenya’s urban areas (cities, municipalities, towns and market centers) can be better prepared to address a wide range of shocks and transition to sustainable urban futures.

Sequenced in a 3-day long discourse, the Forum events will enable Kenya to prepare and effectively participate at the 12<sup>th</sup> Session of the World Urban Forum (WUF 12) that will be hosted in Cairo, the capital of the Arab Republic of Egypt in 2024. The Forum will seek to increase coordination and cooperation to advance sustainable urbanization at national and county levels.

Participants expected at the Forum include National Government leaders, County Governors, Parliamentarians, County Executive Committee Members, County Assembly members, Urban Managers, development partners, local communities, women and youth groups, academics, diplomats, religious and business leaders, urban activists, professional organisations and civil society representatives and private sector executives. The Forum is organized by the State Department for Housing and Urban Development in the Ministry of Lands, Public Works, Housing and Urban Development in collaboration with the Council of Governors (CoG), the World Bank, UN - HABITAT and the Kenya Institute of Planners. Representatives of the above listed five partners and other lead agencies constitute the Secretariat of the Forum.

In the context of the theme of the Conference, the participants will engage on the “*Strategic pathways to sustainable urbanization in Kenya*”. The key themes of the conference include:

- i) Urban housing;
- ii) Urban Finance;
- iii) Urban Economy & Poverty,
- iv) Urban Governance & Management;
- v) Urban Planning and Management;
- vi) Urban Infrastructure and Services;
- vii) Urban Resilience, Climate Change, and Environment; and
- viii) The Land Question, Informality, Land Value Capture, etc.

### **3.0 Approaches and methodology**

The Forum meetings will be divided into assemblies, dialogue sessions, special sessions, roundtables, youth, gender and business assemblies, networking events, caucus meetings, training events along with an exciting array of side events, exhibitions, cultural events and much more. Urban Stakeholders will have an exciting opportunity to host one of the official events and to share and discuss best practices, new ideas, innovations or to provide relevant training to the Forum participants through the following various Forum meetings.

#### **a) Urban Assemblies**

The Forum will have the following Assemblies: Business and Private Sector Assembly; Academia & Research Assembly; Youth, Women & Gender Equality Action Assembly. The Recommendations from the Assemblies are expected to inform the outcome document of the Forum.

#### **b) Networking events**

Networking events will last two hours and will focus on strengthening partnerships, calling for new alliances or launching joint initiatives on the implementation of the New Urban Agenda and achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. They provide an opportunity to share ideas and commitments to advance sustainable urban development in Kenya’s cities, municipalities, towns and market centers.

#### **c) Side Events**

The topic of a side event should be related to the overall Kenya Urban Forum theme and will last one hour. Side events will include among others receptions and presentation to showcase

projects, research, data, knowledge, and initiatives relating to the implementation of the New Urban Agenda in Kenya.

**d) Training Events**

UN agencies, partners universities, local governments, capacity development institutions and other stakeholders will provide training on a range of topics lasting three hours. Training events should focus on developing the skills and knowledge of the trainee by providing the “how to” approach to development challenges with innovative tools, methodologies and instruments to support and achieve the Sustainable Development Goals.

**e) Caucus Meetings**

Caucus meetings will be informal meetings held between peers every morning before the main events take place and will mainly focus on the topics of the day. The regional economic blocks such as JKP, LREB, NOREB etc. will utilize these sessions to canvas for common urban positions.

**f) Exhibition**

An international World Urban Forum exhibition, the Urban Expo will be open throughout the Forum. This will showcase the work of some of the world’s premier institutions, United Nations agencies and other international and regional organizations focusing on innovations in urban development in relation to the main theme. It will provide an exciting glimpse into the future of our urban world.

The deadline for event applications for Side events, Networking events, Training events and Exhibition shall be communicated by the Secretariat of the Forum. Details for online and in-person registration to participate in the Forum shall also be provided by the Secretariat of the Forum.