

The President of the UN Habitat Assembly;

The Executive Director and UN Under-Secretary General;

Excellencies; Distinguished guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,

1. On behalf of the Honorable Minister of Infrastructure – Government of Rwanda who would have wished to be part of this event but couldn't because of other equally important events he's currently engaged in; I wish to join other speakers in expressing my heartfelt gratitude to the UN Habitat and Government of Republic of Kenya for hosting this specific Session of the Habitat Assembly.
2. This event comes at a time when the relevance of sustainable urbanisation across the Globe can never be underestimated. The Government of Rwanda driven by its political will embraced sustainable urbanization as an engine of socio-economic and human settlement development. It has an ambitious objective of becoming an upper middle-income country by 2035 with 50% of its population living in urban areas from the current 28% and subsequently a high-income country by 2050 with 70% urbanization then.
3. Recognising the strategic importance of urbanisation, Rwanda was happy to lend its support to the Call to Action on Sustainable Urbanisation across the Commonwealth and as Chair-in-Office was delighted when Heads of government adopted the Declaration on Sustainable Urbanisation during the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) that took place in Kigali in June 2022. The declaration overarchingly aims at recognising the need for a rigorous multi-lateral, cross-sectoral, inter-disciplinary response which will leverage the power of the Commonwealth to respond to the nature and scale of the challenge, building upon its existing network and shared values.

4. Seated on a successfully implemented land tenure system where all land is registered; we have recently revised our National Land Use and Development Master Plan 2050 which revealed a new set of Satellite and Secondary cities in addition to the previous ones hence prompting the need to revise our National Urbanisation Policy (2015) and various City Master Plans as well to incorporate these emerging urban trends, environment and climate change aspects, among others.
5. The recently concluded fifth (5th) Housing and Population Census in Rwanda has revealed very important data and information on the state of urbanisation and human settlements in general that can never be under-estimated if the commitment towards sustainable urbanisation and human settlements is to be achieved.
6. On the affordable housing front, revision of the National Housing Strategy and development of a National Sites and Services Strategy is to enable the delivery of low and affordable rental housing in our cities and other urban areas.
7. This is in compliment with the ongoing insitu Informal Settlement Upgrading and rehousing development initiatives co-designed with the community to ensure minimum disruptions of existing households but also create appropriate densities within these upgraded areas.
8. In conclusion, we continue to look forward for more meaningful and productive collaboration with the UN Habitat in this noble agenda.

Thank you very much