Bridging the Urban-Rural Divide, Key to Africa’s Development

Better Housing
Safe Drinking Water
Power Supply
Good Road
PROGRAMME OF EVENT

4:30PM  All Participants Seated [followed by introduction of the panelists]

4:35PM  Opening Speech by Chair of the Event - Dr. Alioune Badiane
        (UN-HABITAT Regional Director for Africa and the Arab States)

        Presentation of Keynote Addresses by:

4.40PM  (1) Ms Amal Pepple, CFR
        Honourable Minister of Lands, Housing & Urban Development

4.50PM  (2) Prof. Mrs. Raquel Rolnik
        United Nations Special Rapporteur on Adequate Housing

5:00PM  Presentation of First Paper by Dame Aleruchi Cookey-Gam, JP
        (Administrator – Greater Port Harcourt City Development Authority)

5:10PM  Presentation of Second Paper by Dr. Charles P. Onuoha
        (Honorable Commissioner of Urban Development – Imo State)

5:20PM  Presentation of Third Paper by Mallam Kabir M. Yari
        (United Nations Habitat Programme Manager for Nigeria)

5:30PM  Presentation of Fourth Paper by Prof. Mustapha Zubairu
        (Director – Centre for Human Settlements and Urban Development)

5:40PM  Presentation of Fifth Paper by Hon. Nwabueze Okafor
        (Vice-President – United Cities & Local Governments of Africa)

5:50PM  Presentation of Sixth Paper by Mr. Rasmus Precht
        (United Nations Housing Rights Programme, Nairobi)

6:00PM  Discussion on the papers presented

6:30PM  Vote of Thanks/Closing [followed by vacation from the venue]
About the Organizer

As the umbrella NGO for Nigeria’s tenants, the National Union of Tenants of Nigeria derived its source from the provisions of Decree No.1 of 1990 of the Federal Republic of Nigeria.

Commenced operation on 15th June 1994, the union solicits for everyone’s rights to adequate housing, which include advocacy for affordable shelter; livable environment and secure tenure.

In terms of the advocacy, the union directs its activity towards enhancing the enforcement of housing policy/legislation in all parts of Nigeria.

The central target of the advocacy is to ensure that every person residing in Nigeria enjoys full access to a minimum standard of civilized living without discrimination or interference.

For full details about the union, contact National Union of Tenants of Nigeria Dayspring Chambers, 122 Niger Street Port Harcourt, Rivers State of Nigeria Email address: info.nutn@yahoo.com Tel: 2348035088614, 2348066998314
Introduction

The World Urban Forum is currently a global premier conference organized by the UN-HABITAT to examine the most pressing issue facing the world’s cities; that is to say – rapid urbanization and its impact on humanity. The idea of World Urban Forum was conceived from the understanding that in the next fifty years two-thirds of humanity will be living in cities and, where this occurs, one-third of the cities population could be living in slum if the challenges of the cities are not tackled. The Forum, therefore, provides a podium for stakeholders in the public and private sectors to meet and articulate answers to these challenges.

This year’s session of the World Urban Forum holds in Naples, Italy, and is to underscore the theme of the Forum namely “the urban future”. To highlight this theme, activities namely – dialogues, roundtables, networking events, side and training events and exhibitions etc will be organized by experts to showcase the innovative aspects of some world’s famous cities.

At the Forum, the National Union of Tenants of Nigeria will organize networking event to examine the rapid urbanization challenge in Africa and elicit answers to this challenge – using a premium urban principle that identifies rural integration as a remedy to the challenge. The grand outcome of the event will culminate in the recommendation of policies that acknowledge rural integration as a catalyst for sustainable urbanization in Africa. Towards this objective, inspirations will be drawn from the leading initiatives in Nigeria, using the urban innovation policies of the Governments of Rivers and Imo States as lessons for best principles.

The call for the networking event arose from the fact that, due to the practice of one-city development in Africa, most countries in the region have experienced mass population outflow from the rural areas to the capital cities to search for bright lights of the cities. This trend has boosted the investment potentials of the capital cities and resulted in absolute concentration of projects in the cities to provide friendly environment for investors. These projects with the investments they attract have inflated the population pressure on African cities and kept the cities destitute of sustainable infrastructure and services that match the demand by the population. The effect of the mismatch includes homelessness, high cost of living, slum formation and forced evictions etcetera, all of which are keys to poverty and banes of social and economic development in the continent.

Though most African countries have, in response to rapid urbanization and as a strategy for decongesting the cities, adopted slum demolition exercise; but this option had been unproductive to the challenge. This is because most persons evicted by demolition never relocated outside the cities, but dallied around while those that relocated outside the cities afterwards found their ways back. When any such eviction occurs it leads to loss of livelihood means; rental fee increase and increased homelessness, all of which are factors that promote poverty and that have encumbered the full realization of Millennium Development Goals in Africa. To address this challenge demands, therefore, a redirection of the cities’ population to the local centers through pragmatic rural development policy. This entails spreading of infrastructure projects to rural areas to uplift the life-quality of the rural people to curtail the trend of rural population push to the cities.

Destined to result in sets of recommendations, the event will sample a collection of ultra-modern initiatives and global doctrines for achieving a better urban future in Africa and will, in so doing, emphasize the need for a change to paradigm that recognizes the role of local councils in the attainment of rural integration goal.
The Networking Event

1. Background
The event represents a moment offered to all the participants to deepen their understanding of the theme of the Sixth World Urban Forum titled – the Urban Future. The event is divided into five segments aimed to x-ray the challenge of achieving sustainable urbanization and how this challenge can be addressed, using rural development lens. The event will last 2 hours and spread between opening formalities estimated to last 30 minutes and paper-presentations and discussions on the papers presented scheduled to take 60 and 30 minutes respectively. The event will be conducted in English and French languages.

2. Paper Outlines
1st Paper (10 Minutes)
Sub-title: Bridging the Urban-Rural Divide (Neighborhoods' Community Development)
Speaker: Dame Aleruchi Cookey-Gam
Administrator – Greater Port Harcourt City Development Authority
Objective: the paper is to throw light on the fundamental flaws associated with one-city development system in tackling rapid urbanization challenges in Africa and how these challenges can be curbed, using neighborhoods development approach and drawing inspiration from the Greater Port Harcourt Development project. In the presentation, attention will be paid to (1) problems addressed by the project; (2) innovative aspects of the impact of the project on the urban poor on the one side and on the rural people on the other side and (3) how the project can create a permanent positive change in the life of both the urban and the rural poor in the context of improved conditions of basic infrastructure and services. To be shown in the paper are the quantitative and qualitative indicators of the expected impact of the project and how this impact can be sustained in a political system where continuity is a missing phenomenon.

2nd, 3rd and 4th Papers (30 Minutes)
Sub-title: Bridging the Urban-Rural Divide (Satellite-Towns Development Approach)
Speaker 1 Dr. Charles Onuoha
Commissioner of Housing and Urban Development (Imo State)
Speaker 2 Mallam Kabir M. Yari
HPM – United Nations Programme Support Office for Nigeria
Speaker 3 Professor Mustapha Zubairu
Director – Centre for Human Settlements and Urban Development
Objective: the papers intend to underscore the challenge of rapid urbanization in Africa; its impact on countries where “one-city” development policy is prevalent; and how this challenge can be surmounted, using a rural integration approach, under which social infrastructure and services can be equitably spread to all the local government headquarters to make life inclusive to rural people. The papers also aim to feed the participants with information on partnership for attainment of this objective; the end results of the objective; and the challenge of achieving the results and how this challenge can be effectually addressed using, especially, a pro-poor and people-oriented course. It is expected of presenters of the papers to (1) nosh the participants with information on where the policy had been pursued and achieved, (2) the beneficiaries of the policy and (3) the impact of the policy in the life of the beneficiaries and how sustainable had been the impact. While the first speaker builds his lessons from the “Satellite-Towns Development” project of the Government of Imo State, the second speaker will inspire the participants with the success story of UN-HABITAT urban support project in Anambra State.
5th Paper (10 Minutes)

Sub-title: Bridging the Urban-Rural Divide (Roles of Local Government Councils)

Speaker: Hon. Nwabueze Okafor
Vice President (West Africa), United Cities & Local Governments of Africa

Objective: The goal of the paper is to rejuvenate the participants’ memory of the defined role of local councils in the development goal of governments of African countries and of the significance of this role in addressing the challenge of rapid urbanization in the continent. The paper will also x-ray the challenges that (1) wane the rural development objective of local councils in Africa; (2) the extent to which the challenges have hindered the progress of local council’s existence and (3) the way forward towards addressing these challenges. The central idea of the paper is to create an awareness of the relevance of local councils in the realization of rural integration policy herein advocated for and to examine the challenges that must be addressed to be able to maximize local councils’ input, particularly in a political system, as legendary in Africa, where local councils are poorly funded and where their activities are politicized and tailored towards the dictates of state or provincial governments.

6th Paper (10 Minutes)

Sub-title: Bridging the Urban-Rural Divide (Pro-Poor and People Oriented Approach)

Speaker: Mr. Rasmus Precht
United Nations Housing Rights Programme, UN-HABITAT, Nairobi

Objective: The paper intends to highlight governments’ obligation on pro-poor consideration in a rural development pursuit and to remind governments of their duty to respect, protect and fulfill the slum dwellers/indigenous people’s rights affected by any such project. This will be canvassed, drawing references from the International Bill of Rights, particularly the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948), International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (1966) and International Covenant on Civil & Political Rights (1966). The paper will also equip participants with information on how these rights are compatible with attainment of governments’ development objectives and the effects of non-compliance with these rights on governments’ commitment towards the African Charter, on the one side, and the Habitat Agenda, on the other side.

Recent studies indicate that forced evictions without respect for the law have been a common practice in Africa. Most of these evictions theoretically bore the emblem of overriding public interest but, in practice, were used to settle political scores or to pursue personal or ethnic agenda. Even where the evictions are for infrastructure projects, such projects hardly benefit the poor, being the potential victims of the evictions. This is because the projects are usually of elite class, kept at exorbitant cost and sited at defined places. Most projects in Africa under which families were displaced, were mere paper work and were never executed and, even if executed, were usually abandoned halfway. The presentation will, to that extent, examine the issue of bad urban governance, being a ubiquitous feature in Africa and a factor that has promoted forced evictions without respect for the law. The paper will also underline the role of Housing Rights Programme of the UN-HABITAT and other premier initiatives in addressing the challenge. In the paper, participants’ attention will be drawn to where and how eviction issues had been addressed in Africa and how sustainable were the results achieved.
ON THE PANEL

Chair of the Event
Dr. Alioune Badiane
UN-HABITAT Regional Director for Africa and the Arab States

Keynote Speakers
(1) Ms Amal Pepple, CFR
Honourable Minister of Lands, Housing and Urban Development

(2) Prof. Mrs. Raquel Rolnik
United Nations Special Rapporteur on Adequate Housing

Lead Speakers
1st Speaker
Dame Aleruchi Cookey-Gam, JP
Administrator – Greater Port Harcourt City Development Authority

2nd Speaker
Dr. Charles Onuoha
Hon. Commissioner of Housing and Urban Development (Imo State)

3rd Speaker
Mallam Kabir M. Yari
HPM – United Nations Programme Support Office for Nigeria

4th Speaker
Professor Mustapha Zubairu
Director – Centre for Human Settlements and Urban Development

5th Speaker
Hon. Nwabueze Okafor
Vice President – United Cities and Local Governments of Africa

6th Speaker
Mr. Rasmus Precht
United Nations Housing Rights Programme, UN-HABITAT, Nairobi

Discussants
Dr. T. W. Danagogo
Commissioner of Urban Development & Physical Planning, Rivers State

Dr. Mrs. Opuenebo Owei
Dean of Faculty – Rivers State University of Science and Technology

Dr. Adedeji Daramola
Director – Institute of Environment, Research and Development, Ibadan
APPRECIATION

Hosting of this Networking Event could not have been possible without the input of all that have made contribution to the planning process of the event. In particular, is the Federal Ministry of Lands, Housing and Urban Development whose support for the event cannot be quantified. National Union of Tenants of Nigeria, therefore, acknowledges the inputs of Edna Tobi and TPL Morenike Babalola towards the event.

We also acknowledge the input of the UN-HABITAT Programme Support Office for Nigeria, whose contribution provided hitch-free environment for the event to be able to take place. Our appreciation therefore goes to the Habitat Programme Manager and the entire staff members of the Office.

Words are not enough to express our thanks to the Governments of Imo and Rivers States, especially the Commissioners of Urban Development of the both States namely – Dr. Charles Onuoha (Imo State) and Dr. T.W Danagogo (Rivers State), whose co-operation paved way for the success of the event. Our appreciation also goes to Dame Aleruchi Cookey-Gam (Administrator, Greater Port Harcourt City Development Authority) whose input to the event served as a source of courage. Words are, equally, not sufficient to acknowledge her input.

Without mincing words, we affirm our gratitude to Dr. Adedeji Daramola; (Executive Director – Institute of Environment, Research & Development, Ibadan); Dr Mrs. Opunenebo Owei (Dean of Faculty–University of Science and Technology, Port Harcourt) and Hon Nwabueze Okafor (Chairman of the Association of Local Governments of Nigeria–ALGON and the Vice-President of the United Cities and Local Governments of Africa–UCLGA) Their interest in the event also served as a motivating factor.

As we acknowledge with thanks the opportunity given to us by the World Urban Forum’s Secretariat to host this event, our final appreciation goes to all the potential participants in the event. We hope that the event will present an experience that must not be overlooked in the transformation into reality the urban innovation objectives of African countries.

C. W. ENWEFAH
[Event’s Facilitator]