

Civil Society Forum for the Africities 9 Summit

Kisumu, 17–21 May 2022

Africa's Cities and Affordable Housing

Civil society representatives meeting at Kisumu, Kenya on 15–16 May 2022 welcome the 9th Africities' theme, principles and intended outcomes stated in its concept note.¹

We also support the pledge to implement shared strategies to improve the living conditions of people at the local level, while contributing to the integration, peace and unity of Africa, starting from the grassroots.² We encourage operationalizing the expressed choice and will to implement the 2030 and 2063 Agenda commitments.

As a priority, we citizens of Africa also urge implementation of the human rights obligations shared by all treaty-bound African states and their constituent organs, including local and regional governments and authorities across the human habitat.³ Among these shared duties is the progressive realization of the human right to adequate housing, as guaranteed in the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.

The 2030 Agenda also pledges states to make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable by 2030, Target 11 states ensuring “access for all to adequate, safe and affordable housing and basic services and upgrade slums.”¹² It pledges the international cooperation of states to “end poverty in all its forms everywhere,”¹³ consistent with the 2063 Agenda determination to eradicate poverty in a single generation. ¹⁴ That means local authorities should operate with a sense of accountability to the people who elect and mandate them.¹⁹ We note that the intended outcomes of Africities 9 call for “a specific program for the development and planning of intermediary cities” and “a review of planning and development methods in Africa by taking the grassroots as a starting point.”

²⁰ As partners in local spheres of government, we civil society representatives call for the Africities Summit to call on local Authorities to integrate people led informal planning with technical planning approaches and processes.²¹ We also note the disparity in accessing finance and call for the Africities Summit to call on local Authorities to include in their policies the establishment of social housing funds with proper financing mechanisms.

²² There is little evidence of affordable housing in Sub-Saharan Africa. Housing programs do not either exist or not affordable or inefficient in scale relative to the demand.²³ Majority of efforts are uncoordinated, small scale compared with demand and often do not reach the target low-income beneficiaries.²⁴ Further, the Africities should call on local Authorities and governments to adopt and improve the housing cooperatives by providing clear guidelines and development of various cooperatives financing communal ownership and management.

25 Finally, we reiterate that Housing forms an indispensable part of ensuring human dignity. "Adequate housing" encompasses more than just the four walls of a room and a roof over one's head. Housing is essential for normal healthy living. It fulfills deep-seated psychological needs for privacy and personal space; physical needs for security and protection.