



Hon. Celestine Ketcha Courtès
Minister of Housing and Urban Development, Cameroon,
Global Observance of World Habitat Day speech
Monday 5 October 2020

Honourable Minister of Public Works and Housing of Indonesia,
Honourable Ministers of Cameroon and Egypt
Ms. Maimunah M. Sharif, Executive Director of UN-Habitat (My Dear Sister),
Honourable Mayor of Surabaya,
Distinguish speakers and participants,

It is an honour for me to take the floor at this special occasion to share the highlights of the WHD celebrations in Douala, Cameroon, as well as given an pointing out key messages from Sub Sahara Africa

Before continuing my remarks, I would like to acknowledge and thank the participation of the African Union Commission, the President of the specialized technical sub-committee on housing and urban development of the AU and the Ministry of Infrastructure, Equipment and Social Housing of Burundi, the Economic Commission of the United Nations in Africa, and the Deputy Executive Director of UN-Habitat in the celebration of the World Habitat Day in Douala, Cameroon.

The main events on the continent were:

- Radio and TV debates, and roundtables on housing for all in Senegal, Benin, Mozambique, Chad, Kenya, Comoros, Guinea, Burundi, and Cameroon,
- Clean cities campaigns and competition in Cameroon and Nigeria
- Training sessions for local authorities on the SDGs and the New Urban Agenda in Burkina Faso, Angola, Cameroon

At the end of these reflections, we retain that the need for decent housing in Africa is glaring, but it is an opportunity, no doubt, for national and international investors.

To achieve this, urbanization tools must be implemented based on priority investment program, preferably, in convergence territories to optimize the coordination of stakeholders and increasingly scarce resources with a focus on integrated urban regeneration.

It is at this level that UN-Habitat's responsibility is crucial, namely, to support the design and implementation of contextualized approaches to real estate development, and to reduce the decent housing deficit (or housing backlog) on the **continent estimated at more than 50 million units as indicated by Vera Songwe, the Executive Secretary of UNECA earlier**



The African Union Commission is striving to mobilize member States for the design and implementation of innovative approaches to increase decent housing provision under the 2063 Agenda, the Africa We Want.

**Honorable Minister
Distinguish participants**

In Cameroon, and **thank you to the Mayor of Douala**, we have been able to reflect on the urban future challenges and solutions for reducing the housing deficit estimated today at close to 2.2 million homes. Part of public housing units in Cameroon served as COVID 19 quarantine sites with the aim to reduce stigmatization and ensure quality control of affected persons.

As in Africa, **housing deficits in Cameroon is a challenge for structural transformation**. It is for this reasons that participants were unanimous to empower local governments and support their engagement in housing analysis, provision, management and maintenance; this will be done through frequent concertation and monitoring of joint housing and urban development projects under the People, public, private partnership arrangements

The one-week event was punctuated with the visit of private sector-led real estate development in Yaoundé, Douala and Limbe. This visit was to give a place at the table to Private Sector for them to accompany the **huge program of 10.000 Affordable Housing and 50.000 Serviced Plots instructed by H.E President Paul Biya**. In few minutes, the winner of the first National Real Estate Award will be known as well as the cleanest municipalities

This will be done as you, in Surabaya, reveals the results of the UN-Habitat Scroll of Honor. Thank you for the synchronization to link Global and National WHD

**Honorable Minister
Distinguish participants**

Before COVID 19, it was estimated that **Africa needs 1.7 trillion US Dollar to address the housing deficit**, particularly in affordable housing. The emergence and expansion of the COVID 19 pandemic has exacerbated the right to housing, particularly for informal sector workers, especially women and young people. However, a better conception of **socio-economic recovery centered on housing would immediately create between 20 and 50 million jobs for a target of 10 million decent housing units**. Seen through this prism, Africa could professionalize the housing value chain by also promoting intra-continental trade. In this perspective, it is recommended that women and girls be trained to participate fully in the production, management and maintenance of housing stock.

I cannot conclude my message without calling for the examination and the launch of a **Global Action for Decent and Affordable Housing for all in Africa (GADAHA)**, the Government of Cameroon under the upcoming framework of collaboration with UN-Habitat and the Cameroon Real Estate Corporation is keen to facilitate this process. I will be delighting if the *Indonesian's Ministry of Public Works and Housing* can be part of this process.



Housing For All:
A Better Urban Future

Thank you so much for your kind attention