Climate Change Financing In African Cities: Bridging The Financing Gaps For Climate Resilient Urbanization In Africa

I. Background

With an urban population share of almost 34 per cent and an urban growth rate of 4 per cent in 2019, African cities are highly vulnerable to climate variability and change. Over half of the urban population in Africa lives in extreme poverty, in unhealthy and insecure housing, and in informal neighborhoods and are vulnerable to the effects of climate change. The risks and hazards related to climate change also threaten urban growth contributing to further economic vulnerability. Often lack of funds is a major obstacle that hinders this planning and implementation processes that can change the future of African cities.

By 2040, more than half of the African population will be living in cities, which will put great pressure on cities’ infrastructure increasing waste production, consumption of energy and demand for mobility leading to more greenhouse gas emissions.

The impacts of climate change are hitting Africa hard, and the worst is yet to come in terms of flooding droughts and cyclones affecting food supplies, the economy and health according to the World Meteorological Office.

African cities contribute little to climate disruption but pay a heavy price for the impact of climate change. The adverse effects of climate change constitute an increasingly threatening challenge to the socioeconomic development of cities and the preservation of natural and man-made resources and ecosystems, that guarantee access to basic services, food and water supplies. UN-Habitat’s global report on Cities and Climate Change, recommends that the international community should facilitate access to financial resources for climate change adaptation in vulnerable cities and disseminate information on climate change science and options for mitigation and adaptation responses. During the launching of the latest report from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), the United Nations Secretary-General that declared public and private sector must work together to ensure a just and rapid transformation to a net zero global economy.
Resilience initiatives will require African cities to seek domestic, international, or private financing - particularly when it comes to green infrastructure investment. African countries and cities in particular face a problem in accessing green finance which leads to challenges in developing strategies to prevent, respond and adapt to the consequences of climate change with a huge impact on the economic viability of cities and their environmental resilience.

How can African cities overcome the barriers to accessing climate finance to (re)-build zero-carbon cities? A roundtable discussion on climate change finance in Africa during World Habitat Day will explore ways and mechanisms to ensure the financial viability of African cities to cope with the impacts of climate change to build economically and environmentally resilient carbon free cities. The roundtable will be conducted in English with simultaneous French translation.

II. Objectives

The objective of the roundtable is to contribute to solutions to reduce the difficulties encountered by African cities in mobilizing domestic and international financial resources and accessing the various national and international climate finance windows to plan and promote green and climate resilient human settlements for a zero-carbon Africa. Specifically, it will:

1) Review gaps and challenges related to city climate and resilience financing in Africa

2) Present good practices and cases of successful initiatives to overcome financial challenges related to mitigation and adaptation of African cities to climate adverse effects.

3) Create awareness among decision makers and authorities (national and local) for improved policies and actions towards increased of financing of urban resilience.

4) Discuss solutions, innovative approaches towards partnerships (such as PPP) to boost climate financing in the context of rapid urbanization in Africa.