



YAOUNDE ROADMAP FOR SUSTAINABLE HABITATS IN AFRICA



CLIMATE CHANGE CONFERENCE AFRICA

YAOUNDE, 23-24 OCTOBER 2023



Drafted and adopted in Yaounde at the Climate Chance Conference on "Sustainable Habitats and Climate Change in Africa" on 23 and 24 October 2023.

We, networks of international and African non-state actors, meeting in Yaounde on 23 and 24 October 2023 for the Climate Chance Conference Africa 2023 on the theme of Sustainable Habitat and Climate Change in Africa, have collectively drawn up this roadmap on the priorities for action to meet this major challenge for the African continent, which requires the mobilisation of all capacities.

We have set our work within the framework of the international resolutions that set the objectives of the international community.

- Sustainable Development Goal 11: *Make cities inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable*
- The 2015 Paris Agreement on climate change
- The roadmap of the last World Urban Forum held in Katowice in 2022: "*Transforming Our Cities for a Better Urban Future*".
- Target 12 of the new Global Biodiversity Framework (KM-GBF) ("*to significantly increase the area and quality, and connectivity of, access to, and benefits from green and blue spaces in urban and densely populated areas sustainably*")

We have based this roadmap on the most recent African summits:

- [The African Leaders Nairobi Declaration on Climate Change and Call To Action](#)
- CoMSSA Regional Mayors Forum (RMF) 2023: Final [Declaration](#)

Africities 2022: [Final Declaration of the 9th edition of the Africities Summit](#)

- Climate and Energy Week 2023: [Saly Declaration](#)

We welcome the initiatives undertaken in recent years, with which this roadmap is in synergy, in particular:

- The SURGe Initiative: launched by the COP27 Presidency in partnership with UN-Habitat and ICLEI, the SURGe Initiative aims to give impetus to existing projects on the ground by adopting a multidimensional approach to ensuring the resilience of urban systems at all levels of urbanisation.
- The Covenant of Mayors in Sub-Saharan Africa – CoM SSA: Since 2015, the Covenant of Mayors for Sub-Saharan Africa (CoM SSA), co-funded by the European Union, the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development and the Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation (AECID), has been a major catalyst for local climate action in the region, thanks to the political commitment of more than 360 local governments. The aim of CoM SSA is to help local governments move from climate planning to implementation, by aiming to unlock climate finance at the local level.



Our recommendations for a sustainable habitat in Africa

While African cities will be home to two-thirds of the continent's population by 2050, the rapid development of African urban areas is not taking place in a sufficiently planned and organised way, with the necessary urban infrastructure and services being built. The consequences are well known: African cities are triply informal in terms of their housing, their economy, and their governance. Between 1990 and 2015, 90% of the growth in housing (in residential areas) was informal and unplanned, with poor access to water and energy, increased pollution and public health problems, greater vulnerability to climate risks, particularly flooding, loss of biodiversity due to urban sprawl in sensitive areas, and so on. In this case, urban planning, and management as practised in African cities have been overtaken by the speed of urbanisation and urban demographics.

Furthermore, African cities are heavily dependent on their hinterland and their ecological territories, and effective urban management and inclusive governance of territories are needed if they are to realise their potential to become drivers of sustainable development for their respective territories and countries, and consequently for the continent as a whole.

Thus, we propose:

1- STRENGTHENING THE MEANS OF ACTION OF LOCAL GOVERNMENTS

Without greater decentralisation (improving the institutional framework for effective urban management - the principle of subsidiarity, devolution, and effective transfer of powers in particular, etc.), we believe it would be illusory to envisage progress towards sustainable urban development.

We therefore encourage national governments to strengthen the capacity of local governments to intervene:

- By strengthening their planning, urban management, and land management powers
- Giving them greater capacity to raise taxes and local resources
- By strengthening dialogue with urban and rural areas

In all cases, we advocate strengthening dialogue between States and local authorities.

We stress the importance of cooperation between local governments, between cities in the South, and within the framework of decentralised cooperation.

We stress the importance of taking into account both intermediate towns and metropolises, with a view to balanced regional development.



2- PLANNING AND LAND GOVERNANCE AT THE HEART OF STRATEGIES

The lack of planning, in a context of strong urban development, is a major difficulty today. One of the main problems is poor land management, with land tenure systems that are often complex and unsuited to people's needs. It excludes a significant proportion of the population from access to decent housing, and reinforces inequalities, particularly in women's access to property.

The change in land management is necessary, adapted to the different local realities. It must be nurtured by exchanges between regions to highlight successes and difficulties. It must go hand in hand with changes to the tax system, to strengthen the resources and autonomy of local authorities.

Support for the development of these concerted and participatory planning capacities must be a priority and must be backed by national and international institutions.

We stress the importance of strengthening local engineering, training, and access to new digital tools. The production of reliable, disaggregated and spatialised data is a major challenge, and it must be easily accessible to local decision-makers.

This planning must integrate all environmental and social issues. Inclusive, it must guarantee a mix of habitats, remedy existing gender inequalities, enable sustainable and accessible mobility, including for low-income populations, limit pollution, incorporate climate risks and be a tool for adaptation and resilience. It must be based on innovative solutions forged in informal neighbourhoods. It must integrate and preserve nature in the city as a recreational, educational and climate change adaptation challenge, taking care to ensure that urban sprawl does not come at the expense of farmland and sensitive natural areas in all their diversity. It cannot be developed without closely involving the populations concerned and integrating local realities. In this sense, it must be seen as a tool for strengthening governance and local democracy. Such planning is only possible through dialogue and a shared strategy between urban, peri-urban and rural areas, integrating food, energy and water issues.

3- EXPANDING THE SUPPLY OF HOUSING

The shortage of housing is one of the major problems facing African cities today, with its consequences in terms of social exclusion and the development of informal housing. Furthermore, this housing is based on conventional global construction techniques, with lots of concrete and steel. They are expensive to build, with many imported materials and high carbon costs.

Given the quantitative needs, there will be no single solution. We will need diversification, new construction in a high-quality public space, but also the integration of self-built housing, which needs to be supported, with the help of local residents.

Firstly, we propose to strengthen public and semi-public structures capable of producing significant quantities of housing. These structures must be able to rely on stronger engineering and have a real capacity for equity capital, as well as access to credit.

It will also be necessary to facilitate the production capacities of the private sector, including co-production by residents, particularly for the development of informal neighbourhoods, which will require



secure land tenure and access to basic urban services. It is also a question of recognising, promoting, and supporting citizens' initiatives in the production of affordable housing, through a legal and financial framework that is appropriate and provides incentives.

Strengthen research and development into sustainable urban techniques (agro-materials, sustainable construction and planning, soft mobility, pollution, etc.).

Strengthening the links between schools, training, and sustainable housing (training courses and job opportunities).

Encouraging eco-design and eco-construction of responsible habitats.

Construction using local materials and traditional techniques must be given genuine support in terms of promotion, training accessible to both men and women, and the structuring of sectors. Research and development must be stepped up, pilot buildings must be used for experimentation and demonstration, and attention must be paid to passing on traditional knowledge. Existing reference systems for skills and certification in earth construction in Africa should be supported and improved.

4- ELABORATING A COMPREHENSIVE URBAN ENERGY AND CLIMATE STRATEGY

Urbanisation is at the heart of the energy challenges facing the African continent. It is both at the heart of the increase in demand for energy, with urban households consuming three times as much as rural ones, and at the heart of all the inequalities, with the most precarious urban populations experiencing particularly difficult access.

Energy consumption is also one of the continent's biggest sources of greenhouse gases, through the use of fossil fuels for mobility or electricity generation, or indirect deforestation for cooking wood.

A proactive policy for the development of renewable energies is more necessary than ever, and African cities and regions must play their part.

We propose strengthening the decentralisation of electricity supply, based on adapted production methods such as photovoltaics, and involving local players. Local authorities and communities must have access to innovative tools, such as renewable energy purchase agreements (green PPAs).

The issue of wood fuel for cooking must be integrated into urban and peri-urban planning strategies. Dedicated production, managed over the medium term, can contribute to better management and regeneration of agricultural areas. The energy needs of micro-businesses and food processing cooperatives, which are often run by women, should be given particular attention.

The efforts of cities to reduce their carbon footprint, through better collective mobility, accessibility for all, energy efficiency, eco-design, and the development of local renewable energy production, must be integrated into the Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) of African countries.

This urban energy and climate strategy must also take into account the issue of waste recovery on a regional scale. The development of the circular economy is a major challenge for Africa.



5- MINIMIZING LOCAL VULNERABILITIES

Adapting territories to unavoidable climate change is a new constraint in the development of sustainable housing.

We stress the importance of carrying out area-wide assessments of specific vulnerabilities. Construction and urban renewal projects must incorporate this knowledge of risks and their mapping. This applies to both new build programmes and the renovation of informal settlements. Areas identified as high-risk must remain off limits to construction (non-aedificandi).

This adaptation must also be reflected at the construction level. The eco-design of buildings must guarantee their habitability.

6- STRENGTHENING AND ADAPTING FINANCE FLOWS

Without a considerable increase in the resources mobilised for sustainable urban development in Africa, it is unrealistic to expect significant results.

Today's cities suffer from a combination of a lack of autonomous fiscal resources, insufficient national budgets allocated to cities and regions, low levels of private investment and poor access to international funding.

Faced with this situation, we propose first of all to strengthen cities' capacities in governance and financial management. We need to develop local expertise in mobilising resources (climate finance, green bond engineering, etc.). We also need to find forms of financing adapted to all types of demand and needs.

We repeat the proposals made at previous African summits on the need to increase the funding available to African regions, cities and towns to implement local projects that have already been approved. "This funding should be allocated on the basis of transparent and evidence-based criteria" (Declaration of the CoM SSA Regional Mayors' Forum, Nairobi - 2023), stressing the importance in this context of "supporting the development of Africa's intermediate cities by implementing funding adapted to local realities" (Final Declaration of the 9th Africities Summit, Kisumu - 2022).

Creating favourable conditions for better use of local taxation and effective collection of local taxes, particularly property tax, is a major challenge. It is also by securing local authority revenues that African cities will be able to access new loans and financing, particularly green bonds. There is also the question of guarantee funds to provide access to credit.

The mobilisation of climate funds for urban development is an opportunity to be seized. Climate funding must be "distributed equitably for the benefit of local authorities", as emphasised in the Sally - 2022 Declaration supported by ENDA ENERGIE. Low-carbon construction and urban forestry could particularly benefit from this funding. We must also be attentive to the use of funds invested in Africa by diasporas, an opportunity which must be part of a sustainable housing strategy.



These various forms of climate finance must also support adaptation to climate change, as reaffirmed by African leaders in Nairobi in September 2023: "Promote investment in urban infrastructure, in particular by upgrading informal settlements and slums in order to build cities and urban centers resilient to climate change".

This financial mobilisation must be supported by training and information tools. Collaborative platforms for exchanging information on existing funding opportunities and their impact would be invaluable in strengthening local authorities' ability to access new funding. Decentralised cooperation can also play a role in providing engineering support for the preparation of complex applications.

We stress the importance of adapting banks and financial organisations to local socio-economic realities and to the engineering capacities of the players involved.

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Declaration endorsed by:

