

2023

GHANA'S STATEMENT ON SMART SDGs CITIES PROGRAMME IN NAIROBI, KENYA

**VIRTUAL PARTICIPATION BY
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DEPUTY MINISTER FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT,
DECENTRALISATION AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT
GHANA**

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**STATEMENT BY HON. MARTIN ADJEI- MENSAH KORSAH (MP),
DEPUTY MINISTER FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT,
DECENTRALISATION AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT, GHANA
IN RESPECT OF SMART SDGS CITIES PROGRAMME- GHANA
DURING 2023 FIRST SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE BOARD OF THE
UNITED NATIONS HUMAN SETTLEMENTS PROGRAMME (UN-
HABITAT)**

WEDNESDAY 29TH APRIL 2023 AT 6.00AM GMT

**The Executive Director, UN-Habitat
Your Excellencies,
Distinguished Delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

1. OPENING REMARKS:

- I. I bring felicitations from His Excellency, Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo, the President of the Republic of Ghana and the good people of Ghana. I also seize the opportunity to bring you warm greetings from Daniel Botwe (MP), the Hon. Minister for Local Government, Decentralisation and Rural Development;
- II. It is important to also express our appreciation to the UN-Habitat (Head Quarters, the representative of UN-Habitat in Ghana, Ms. Abena Ntori for their continuous support to Ghana in pursuing the urban agenda over the years. Indeed, the invaluable support and technical assistance from UN-Habitat in pursuing the New Urban Agenda and formulation of relevant Policies and Strategies viz. National Urban Policy (NUP) and Slum Upgrading and Prevention Strategy cannot be overemphasized. Currently the review of the 2012 NUP which is almost completed was significantly reviewed with experts from the UN Habitat, Nairobi, Kenya. The guidance and inputs from the Experts enriched the draft revised Policy and their perspectives in the global context were brought to bear.
- III. Suffice to note that, the UN Habitat support to Ghana during the COVID-19 pandemic in selected urban poor communities and slum areas such as Ashaiman, Ga-Mashie, Sabon Zongo in the Greater



Accra Metropolitan Area (GAMA) through the provision of essential Personal Protection Equipment (PPEs), provision of running water infrastructure and support to the aged and vulnerable was very commendable.

GHANA SMART SDGs CITIES PROGRAMME

- Your Excellencies, on behalf of Daniel Botwe (MP), the Hon. Minister for Local Government, Decentralisation and Rural Development, in collaboration with the Ghana's Ministry of Finance as well as the National Development Planning Commission I wish to assure the UN-Habitat, the Executive Board and all Stakeholders of Ghana's commitment in delivering the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the New Urban Agenda through established national institutional arrangements particularly the Local Government System.

56.7% of Ghana's population live in urban areas and this is growing rapidly at a rate of 4.6%, according to the 2021 Ghana's Population and Housing Census report. However, rapid urbanisation without the provision of corresponding socio-economic infrastructure and by extension basic services results in rapid growth of informal settlements characterized by inadequate and unsafe housing conditions, inadequate water and sanitation and insecure land tenure for many, hampering quality of life.

- Ghana has demonstrated clearly how we have localized the implementation of the SDGs through our decentralised approach to governance. All our 261 Local Authorities have aligned interventions in their respective Medium-Term Development Plans and Annual Action Plans to the SDGs
 - i. That we tackle poverty and hunger;
 - ii. Improving access to quality education;
 - iii. Promoting access to quality healthcare and resilience amongst the people;
 - iv. Commitment to climate action through several interventions to increase forest cover and to leverage on these interventions for economic empowerment;
 - v. Increased industrialization through Government's "One District, One Factory" initiative;



- vi. Leveraging on urbanisation as a catalyst for infrastructure delivery for improved services and addressing urban challenges and
 - vii. Strengthening of partnerships at all levels to deliver a common agenda of improved standards of living, economic empowerment, job creation and smart cities through the SDGs.
- Your Excellencies, it is therefore a privilege for us as a country, to be the first to be implementing the Smart SDGs Cities Programme with support of UN-Habitat and the Government of the Kingdom of Norway. This Programme in our view, is a game changer and in tandem with the *Theme for the 2022 World Cities Day “Acting Locally to Go Global”*.
 - Ghana has been an active forerunner in pursuing the achievement of the SDGs at the national level. In April 2017 the UN Secretary General appointed His Excellency Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo, the President of the Republic of Ghana and Her Excellency Ms. Erna Solberg, then Prime Minister of Norway (Kingdom of Norway) as co-chairs of the eminent group of SDG Advocates. This has led to a longstanding collaboration between Ghana and Norway.
 - We are particularly excited that Ghana is the first country and Kyebi (Abuakwa South) the first city to implement the Smart SDGs Cities Programme which would accelerate the achievement of SDGs in our Cities. Starting from the ten (10) Local Authorities that would be the initial beneficiaries, it is envisaged that these beneficiary Local Authorities would be able to:
 - i. Systematically process data collection and analysis on SDG implementation;
 - ii. Prepare City development strategies that incorporate the principles of Smart SDG approaches.
 - iii. Strengthen key local institutional capacities in areas of planning, governance, revenue mobilisation and service delivery as a key to promoting sustainable urban development
 - iv. Deepened Government-Citizen -Engagement/ Policy Dialogues at all levels especially at the sub-national levels



- We are looking forward to the preparation of transformative viable pipeline projects for financing through the United Nations Capital Development Fund (UNCDF) and Partners, and the involvement of the Youth at all levels.
- We are happy to announce the draft revised National Urban Policy considered all the issues of urban sprawl and haphazard development and fashioned out appropriate Strategies to address the challenges through design of urban related programmes and projects like the Smart SDGs Cities.
- It is our ardent hope that whilst other interventions and efforts by Ghana to leverage on urbanisation as a catalyst for development at the local level, the ten (10) Local Authorities are being pursued with vigour, the Smart SDGs Programme will deliver solutions to the myriad of urban challenges being faced in these Local Authorities
- The overall outcome and impacts of the Smart SDGs Cities Project would culminate in resilient and sustainable cities with dividends such as job creation, higher productivity and livable cities.
- The Government of Ghana and its Development Partners envisage that the ongoing revision of the National Urban Policy which has considered emerging urban issues especially inclusivity, climate resilience, adequate housing, urban mobility and accessibility, efficient energy among others ties in perfectly with the Theme of the 2022 World Habitat Day “*Mind the Gap. Leave No One or No Place Behind*”.

2. CONCLUSION

His Excellency Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo, President of the Republic of Ghana, and the Government of Ghana stand with the UN-Habitat and all Partners and continue to declare its commitment to strengthening the UN-Habitat towards ensuring an effective sustainable urban development as well as sustainable human settlements.

As I conclude, despite pursuing the new urban agenda and implementing programmes and projects like the Smart SDGs Cities, there is the need to



take cognisance of the urban-rural dichotomy and ensure strong urban-rural linkages.

I thank you for your kind attention.