

**SPEECH BY HIS EXCELLENCY DR. MOHAMMED GHARIB BILAL,  
VICE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED REPUBLIC OF TANZANIA AT THE  
SYMPOSIUM ON "SUSTAINABLE URBANIZATION:  
MEETING THE CHALLENGES OF IMPLEMENTING MASTER PLANS"  
JUNE 6<sup>TH</sup> 2014, WHITE SANDS HOTEL, DAR ES SALAAM**

**Honorable Ministers;**

**Prof. Joseph Semboja  
CEO of UONGOZI Institute;**

**City and Municipal Mayors;**

**Permanent Secretaries;**

**Directors of City and Municipal Councils;**

**Distinguished Guests;**

**Ladies and Gentlemen;**

I feel honored and privileged to have been requested to address this Symposium on "**Sustainable Urbanization: Meeting the Challenges of Implementing Urban Master Plans**". Let me take this opportunity to thank the organizers - The Institute of African Leadership for Sustainable Development (UONGOZI Institute) for not only inviting me, but also for organizing events of such nature which provide a platform to share experiences, and encourage discussion among senior leaders from government, the private sector and civil society.

Also, as patron of the Green Growth Platform, an initiative of UONGOZI Institute which aims at increasing decision makers' and opinion leaders' understanding of the issues related to eco-friendly growth and development, I am indeed pleased to be here today, especially because urban areas play a crucial role in economic growth and development.

Let me also take this opportunity to thank **Professor Ivan Turok**, an expert on urban development, for agreeing to be here with us and for sharing his knowledge on the subject.

**Ladies and Gentlemen;**

You have been here today for a symposium of Sustainable Urbanization, with the focus on meeting the challenges of implementing Master Plans. Aside from their obvious environmental impacts, urban areas are unquestionable engines of economic growth

and account for as much as 80 per cent of Gross Domestic Product. Urban areas provide employment and distinct opportunities for poverty eradication. To date, no country has achieved high standards of living for its citizens without urbanizing. While many have tried, no country has been able to successfully halt or reverse the trend of urbanization. Climate friendly urban planning and design are not only necessary for the security of a city's inhabitants but also recognize the need to protect a country's most important economic assets. Protecting infrastructure and services safeguards livelihoods and enables economic activity to flourish.

Urban areas need to be planned, designed, and developed to lessen their impact on the environment, be resilient to the effects of climate change, and contribute to economic growth.

### **Ladies and Gentlemen;**

Planning consists of making choices among the options that appear open for the future, and then securing their implementation, Master Plans are tools to guide and manage the growth of urban areas in a planned manner. Unfortunately, in many countries in Africa, Master Plans often do not exist or where they do, they are not fully implemented due to a host of reasons. I am sure this symposium provides a useful platform for a discussion on challenges, prospects and pre-conditions for successful implementation of Urban Master Plans.

### **Ladies and Gentlemen;**

African cities are undergoing rapid growth accompanied by rapid development pressures with high demands for housing and infrastructure as a result of high population growth rates. All African countries acknowledge the rapid pace of urbanization. About one century ago, the urban population in Africa was less than **8 per cent** of the total population.

At the end of the 20th Century, Africa was **35 per cent urban, 40 per cent in 2009, and 41 per cent in 2012**. Currently, while Africa is the least urbanized continent in the world, it is experiencing the highest urban growth and the most rapid rate of urbanization. Between 1950 and 2005 the urban inhabitants in Africa grew by an average annual rate of 4.3% from about 33 million to 353 million persons. Even though the annual growth rate has declined to 3.36 per cent per year from 2005 to 2010, African urban areas grew 1.7 times faster than the urban growth rate of the world in the same years. The high growth rate means that some cities will double their population in 15 years, and some others even in a shorter period. The United Nations projections suggest that Africa will enter its urban age by 2035 when 50 percent of the population will live in urban areas. African cities with less than 500,000 inhabitants are now absorbing about two-thirds of all urban population growth.

### **Ladies and Gentlemen;**

The changing landscape of Africa's increasingly urban future is often cited as constituting a 'mega-trend' resulting from a combination of rural-urban migration, natural population growth, and the spatial reclassification of urban areas. Moreover, conflicts, drought and rural poverty have driven millions of people out of their homes to live in slums and in the vicinity of the cities and towns as refugees and internally displaced persons. This trend has enormous implications for sustainable development in Africa.

Urbanization, together with Africa's approaching demographic transition may well become the most decisive determinants of Africa's economic and social development since independence. This shift from rural to urban population majorities together with the change to a younger demographic – will create difficult new challenges, but the potential to harness this powerful and unavoidable process represents an invaluable opportunity for accelerating Africa's transformation agenda.

### **Ladies and Gentlemen;**

Like urban areas in other African countries, urbanization is not well managed in most of Tanzania's rapidly urbanizing areas. Urban planning techniques have not kept pace with the immigration of people into urban areas, and this has resulted in rapid urban sprawl and horizontal expansion. One of the most evident negative effects of urban sprawl is the creation of informal settlements. A case study by the World Bank estimates that more than 70% of Dar es Salaam residents live in informal, unplanned settlements with close to no basic services. Some of these settlements have been established in areas that are prone to environmental disasters and therefore not suitable for housing. In addition to the many efforts by the Government to reallocate people living in areas deemed unsuitable, it is also our job to revise existing Master Plans and explicitly identify these areas and ensure that proper measures are put in place to stop people from establishing settlements in unsuitable areas.

In relation to the problem of informal settlements, unplanned urban growth leads to problems in the areas of service provision and infrastructure, as well as major environmental and health problems, mainly associated with poverty. The World Bank estimates that about 50% of informal city and town dwellers live on an average income of \$1 a day. Also, about 75% of city dwellers living in informal settlements are unemployed or underemployed, those employed are mostly involved in the informal sector, which may not necessarily be profitable or environmentally sustainable. Thus, urban poverty is a major challenge that we seriously need to address, especially because poverty is positively correlated with environmental degradation.

There have been various efforts by the government through initiatives such as MKURABITA to assist the entry of informal business owners into the formal sector. It is vivid that programs of such nature still need to reach out to more self-employed individuals in the informal sector and it is our responsibility to ensure that not only are

these people enabled to participate in the formal sector, but also make sure that they understand the methods towards environmentally-friendly business practices.

**Ladies and Gentlemen;**

Good urban growth practices lie on the basis of proper implementation of designated master plans. Successful development, monitoring and implementation of Urban Master Plans is what will ensure that many of the negative impacts of urban sprawl are avoided. As such, urban policies should be an integral part of environmental and economic policies. It is our responsibility to keep pondering on this issue and suggest effective methods to ensure that urbanization is sustainable and beneficial to our society.

In order to ensure that urban Master Plans are successful, a comprehensive implementation framework needs to be put in place. Ideally, this framework would encompass a number of elements, all in favor of sustainable and effective planning arrangements for urban areas. It is understandable that it may take a while for urban Master Plans to be revised so that they reflect current trends in urban population growth rates and poverty levels. However, it is important to keep pushing for efforts that would hasten the process of revising Master Plans. In addition, it is important for us to oversee that planning authorities are equipped with the facilities needed to design and efficiently implement urban Master Plans.

**Ladies and Gentlemen;**

In addition to better implementation frameworks for urban Master Plans, it is important to ensure that they accommodate sustainable practices that will promote development. It is crucial to have Master Plans that would warrant that social, economic and spatial inequality will not continue to rise in African cities.

Moreover, the art of making sustainable urban Master Plans will be to incorporate environmentally friendly alternatives to attractive urban designs where people would like to live and spend their time. In order for this to happen, it is essential that various stakeholders from different sectors are involved in the broader discussion of how to improve the welfare in our urban areas.

Effectiveness in the implementation of Master Plans is essential and can be done with proper arrangements. Moving towards more sustainable urban areas will require leaders in the government, civil society and the private sector to engage in discussions collaboratively. It is my hope that this symposium today provided a platform to productively rethink and redefine issues associated with sustainable urbanization and the implementation of Master Plans.

**Distinguished Guests;  
Ladies and Gentlemen;**

I am sure you must have had interesting discussions today, but let me conclude by saying that sustainable urban development has been one of the biggest challenges facing African countries. Over the last two decades, demographic and economic changes have propelled cities and other urban areas to become the principal habitat of humankind. We should ask ourselves if Africa's rapidly urbanizing cities will become magnets of hope and engines of growth and social transformation or if they will become centers of poverty, disease, and environmental disasters with disillusioned residents.

The focus of African urban areas must therefore be on better planning. Planning for urban growth requires both central and local government to anticipate urban growth, rather than simply react to the challenges posed. Urban planning should not only be inclusive and pro-poor, but must also find ways to improve the living conditions of current slum dwellers and to provide adequate alternatives to new slum formation. There is also the need for improvements in public transportation, access to services such as water and electricity, and the country's capacity to attract foreign investment to help unleash this potential. Africa's hope for economic and social transformation cannot be realized without its urban areas leading such efforts.

By prioritizing sustainable urbanization within a broader development framework, many critical development challenges can be addressed in tandem such as energy, water consumption and production, biodiversity, disaster preparedness and climate change adaptation. Recognizing the long-term realities and implications of the current actions, the development challenge is to come up with strategies that promote sustainable urban development, to meet the needs of the present generations and improve their quality of life without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. Hence the need to revisit our urban development practices.

**Thank you for your attention.**