

**STATEMENT BY MR. NOEL KAGANDA, FIRST SECRETARY AND ADVISER ON
SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS OF THE PERMANENT MISSION OF THE UNITED
REPUBLIC OF TANZANIA TO THE UNITED NATIONS, NEW YORK, AT THE HIGH-LEVEL
SYMPOSIUM ON SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND SUSTAINABLE URBANISATION**

16 - 18 DECEMBER 2013, YANGZHOU, CHINA

I. INTRODUCTION

1. I wish to begin my presentation at this important Symposium by citing a statement contained in the Report of the High-Level Panel of Eminent Persons on the Post-2015 Development agenda, which I believe is pertinent to our discussion under this thematic cluster and particularly this presentation on *Urban-Rural Linkages and Sustainable Development Challenges of Cities*:

The post-2015 agenda must be relevant to urban dwellers. Cities are where the battle for sustainable development will be won or lost. Yet the Panel also believes that it is critical to pay attention to rural areas, where three billion near-poor will still be living in 2013.”

2. It is rightly justified to focus on the welfare and challenges of cities when considering the post-2015 development agenda, particularly in view of the fact that the world is undergoing an unprecedented wave of urban growth in human history – with current statistics revealing that the current urban population accounts for over half of the entire world population while that number is projected to rise to 5 billion by 2030.

3. It is worth noting however, that the demographic distribution vary widely between and within regions. Whereas, over three-quarters of the populations in North America, Latin America and Europe live in urban areas, slightly more than one-third of the populations of Asia and Africa are urban. For example the rural population in Tanzania accounts for around 76 per cent of the entire population of around 45 million people. That notwithstanding, the recent statistics reveal that the urban population growth is increasing annual by almost 5 per cent compared to 2 per cent in rural areas.

4. It would be quite understandable therefore, in the light of this fact, that, a country like Tanzania would seek to place high priority on both rural and urban sustainable development when considering the post-2015 development agenda, with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) at the core. I wish to draw another pertinent inspiration from Hon. Prof. Anna Kajumulo Tibaijuka (MP), Minister for Land, Housing and Human Settlements Development and former Under Secretary-General and Executive Director of UN-HABITAT that, when she asserted, and I quote:

“Sustainable development can only be achieved in rural and urban areas if they are considered holistically as part of the same integrated system.”

5. Consequently, it is important to address urban-rural linkages which I see as holding an enormous potential in addressing some of the challenges facing cities in both developed and developing countries. In this regard, I should like to highlight two aspects: first, focus on the sustainable development challenges of cities and, second, the urban-rural linkages as one of the means of addressing those challenges.

II. CHALLENGES OF CITIES IN THE DEVELOPING WORLD

6. Urban settlements in all parts of the world are facing a myriad of challenges including the effects of climate change, resource depletion, food insecurity, economic instability, unprecedented levels of unemployment, rising wave of crime and most devastatingly – urban and rural poverty. As underscored in the Rio + 20 outcome document, our governments need to increase efforts geared towards sustainable development and in particular eradication of extreme poverty and hunger (**emphasis mine**).

7. The situation in the developing world, particularly in Africa is much dire. The increasing urban growth necessitates our countries in the continent to increase by around 65 per cent the capacity to produce and manage our urban infrastructure, services and shelter. Most governments however, neither have the power nor resources to meet the needs of the bursting population, notably land, services, and facilities

needed for an adequate human life such as clean water, sanitation, schools and transport.

8. The persisting global economic crisis has and will continue to exacerbate the existing high levels of urban poverty in sub-Saharan Africa, where the incidence of such impoverishment is the highest in the world. Urban poverty manifests itself in the proliferation of slums and squatter settlements which accommodate close to 1 billion people. (UN-HABITAT Global Report on Human Settlements 2009)

9. Rapid urbanization of many developing countries has given birth to a large class of urban poor, further widening the gap between the high income and low income populations. Coincidentally, the growing number of urban poor suffers from a high incidence of diseases, most of which are environmentally based and preventable through less costly interventions. Communicable diseases such as tuberculosis, malaria, dysentery, hepatitis and typhoid inflict a huge burden on most poor countries while claiming lives of children, especially the under-five.

10. Worst still, urbanization pushes the low-income people in locations which are prone to natural disasters, such as low lying areas which are prone to floods and steep slopes which are prone to landslides, during heavy rain seasons. Slums have severe direct impact on the environment.

11. Most urbanization movements involve people who migrate to cities in search of jobs and prospects for a better life. However, most cities in developing countries face endemic levels of unemployment. As such instead of being lifted from the binds of poverty these populations are thrown into a more complex poverty vicious cycle, and often end up in slums, increasingly becoming part of the problem instead of the solution.

III. URBAN- RURAL LINKAGES IN THE POST-2015 AGENDA

12. The International Development Agenda has recognized the potency of urban-rural linkage development approach to sustainable development. Rio + 20 outcome document reaffirms the undertaking by United Nations Member States to strengthen urban-rural linkages and productivity of rural areas. Such an approach is effective in addressing the challenges facing cities today, including one of poverty in all its manifestations.

13. The Habitat Agenda, particularly paragraphs 10, 99, 141 and 147 makes a lucid case for economic, social and environmental interdependence and for the need for a balanced and mutually supportive development between rural and urban areas. And the reasoning provided therein is absolutely compelling:

“... by providing adequate infrastructure such as transport, communication, energy and other basic services mobility problems between rural and urban areas can be eased and access to markets, employment and other income earning opportunities enhanced”.

14. Rural-urban linkages can contribute to sustainable development by spreading opportunities for livelihood for urban and rural dwellers; enabling towns and rural areas to develop in a reciprocal and complimentary manner; and help to create a high-level of spatial scanning to mitigate unintended impacts on environment and longer-term sustainability in both rural and urban areas.

15. The following are few examples of urban-rural linkages:

- a) **Economic Linkages:** rural areas serving urban areas and cities through provision of food, construction materials, energy source and clean water; urban centres provide rural areas with manufactured commodities, agricultural inputs, agricultural tools, employment and financial services such as soft loans.

- b) **Demographic Linkages:** urbanization dynamic in developing countries especially in Africa is still characterized by the movement of people from rural to urban areas. It also involves cross-border movement of people who migrate to cities and towns in other countries in search of better life, commonly done through sale of their labour so as to enable them to remit their income to their rural household members. Such remittances is used to cater for health care needs of the elderly, paying school fees for the children left behind and for acquiring inputs for farming and purchasing other consumer items. Internal urban population is increasingly gaining traction, particularly in terms of its contribution to rapid urbanization.
- c) **Environmental Linkages:** cities contribute significantly to climate change and account for almost 70 per cent of greenhouse gas emissions from cars, industries and homes. High demand of affordable source of energy such as charcoal for cooking in formal settlements and slums accelerates deforestation in rural and peri-urban areas.
- d) **Spatial linkages:** rapid urbanization, which is prevalent in developing countries, has led to uncontrolled peri-urbanization. Peri-urban areas provide a breathing space for heavily congested sprawled cities especially in places with adequate infrastructure network, such as roads, railways. The Food and Agriculture Organisation in its publication entitled “Urban and Peri-Urban Agriculture” is right in asserting that:

“As cities expand physically, the frontiers between urban, peri-urban and rural activity blur and merge, presenting opportunities for beneficial linkages”.

IV. RECOMMENDATIONS/CONCLUSION

16. **Strengthening of physical infrastructure is key:** the Rio + 20 Conference outcome document recognized the importance of efficient movement of people and goods, and access to environmentally sound, safe and affordable transportation as a means to improve social equity, health, resilience of cities, urban-rural linkages and productivity of rural areas (Paragraph 132). Infrastructure linking towns and cities to rural areas open up opportunities for town and rural inhabitants. It is therefore important that countries should continue to invest adequately in infrastructure development while addressing rural-urban infrastructure gaps.

17. **Building Capacities:** Developing countries should be supported in building capacities to absorb excess rural population and to better manage urban development including the formulation and implementation of slum upgrading projects. Tanzania has developed such policies and has successfully undertaken slum upgrading projects in partnership with development stakeholders such as UN-HABITAT.

18. **Strengthening rural development:** countries should invest in rural development to create decent standards and conditions of living as a way to address the push and pull factors of rural-urban migration. Rural areas can effectively contribute to national economic growth through increased agricultural and non-agricultural activities. Non-agricultural activities and micro-enterprises provide an alternative to agriculture which is the primary preoccupation for most rural dwellers in developing countries. This diversification, which is inextricably linked to agriculture, provides opportunities for the population to take up new preoccupations such as agriculture input distribution, output marketing, processing and packing, transport, and marketing of merchandise goods. Financial services such as soft-loans are lifting millions of women from the grips of rural poverty.