

Thank you, Mr Chair.

When we talk about the urgent need for action and delivery in Africa, we need to realize that implementation happens at local level. Local gov'ts and cities in Africa, many of which are growing at an ever-accelerating pace, need to be recognised for the pivotal role they already do, and also could and should, play when addressing the immense challenges related to the MDG's.

There is a huge need at local government level across Africa in terms of capacity building, skills development and resources – and our sector would like to make a strong please to the national delegations here at CSD-16, together with the international community to actively assist and enable local governments in rising to the challenges, particularly in the field of energy efficiency, energy security and climate change. To explore this topic further, we invite delegates to engage with our delegation during te remaining days of CSD-16 in seeking joint solutions.

To quote Mayor Arba Diallo from the City of Dori in Burkina Faso, former Executive Secretary of the Convention to Combat Desertification and distinguished member of our delegation: ***“Local Authorities are indispensable partners when it comes to the implementation of the various Conventions because implementation is, and will remain, a local issue. When it comes to the synergies to be promoted actively in the implementation of the three Conventions that came out of Rio, then we realise how much the international community will have to rely on the capacity of the local authorities to bring about the coordination in action which is so fundamental in ensuring success.”***

I thank you.