



Hon Minister of Public Service

Hon. Minister of Foreign Affairs

Hon Minister of Trade and Industry

**Hon Minister of Decentralization and Institutional Reform –
Burundi**

Principal Secretaries

Commissioner of Political Affairs –African Union Commission

**Expert Members of the Specialized Technical Committee (STC
N0.8)**

Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen

Good morning and welcome to the Mountain kingdom of Lesotho. Your presence at this meeting bears testimony not only to your commitment to the agenda of this meeting, but it also demonstrates the importance you attach to the institution of the STC N0.8 which you established some few years ago.

Let me from the onset express how deeply honoured we are to host this handover ceremony in the Mountain Kingdom of Lesotho. I am humbled by the confidence that the Member States have demonstrated by bestowing Lesotho the honour of chairing the Committee on Public Service, Decentralization, Urban and Local Government for the next (2) two years.

At this juncture allow me to pay tribute to the outgoing chairperson, Hon Minister of Benin HE. Mr. Barnabe Z. Dassigli who during his tenure did not only guide the Committee but also ensured tremendous achievements towards the attainment of the African Union vision for the three sectors.

Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen

African is going through a period of structural transformation, with urban transformation on the rising curve. Africans now live in urban areas more than at any point in history. It is estimated that in 1980, only 28 percent of Africans lived in urban areas. Today, the number of Africans living in cities is 40 percent, and is projected to grow to 50 percent by 2030. Due to this rapid urbanization provision of basic services such as solid waste management, housing, access roads, sanitation and electricity remain a challenge. Usually provision of such services is the responsibility of Local Authorities whose performance is inhibited by; lack of financial and human resources, political manipulation, corruption, lack of accountability and transparency, inadequate citizen participation, poor planning, monitoring and evaluation.

The issue of urban service delivery is a challenge that needs to be addressed given the deficit and poor quality service we have particularly in the peri-urban areas. Peri-urban areas are often areas of rapid population growth, with variable population densities, and with little or no planning for land-use. Compared to both rural and urban areas, peri-urban areas lack clearly-defined boundaries, both with respect to physical boundaries between plots and districts, and also with respect to municipal and administrative responsibilities. The lack of recognition of peri-urban areas by local and national governments has resulted in minimal or no infrastructure, and a lower profile for development projects than either rural or urban areas. Peri-Urban are important areas of transition which should not be neglected as their development firstly benefits the urban poor more than anyone else and secondly also could contribute tremendously to improved service delivery within any country.

In order to improve service delivery governments needs to develop and implement strategies that will enhance productivity and the quality of services delivered. These strategies need to promote (i) increased citizen participation in the affairs of the local authorities, (ii) partnership with the community, (iii) partnership with other players and outsourcing services, (iv) ensuring proper planning, monitoring and evaluation.

Given the myriad challenges that Africa is facing in its endeavors to enhance economic growth, I would like to reaffirm the commitment of the incoming bureau to the African Union agenda for this committee, which aims to; prevent and combat corruption; promote innovative approaches to service delivery, including through information and communication technology; promote decentralization and local Governance as well as sustainable human settlements and urban development in Africa.

Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen

In order to confirm our loyalty to the agenda of the African Union for this committee, allow me reflect briefly on the achievement of the sub-committee on Human settlement and Urban Development which Lesotho has been chairing for the last two years.

We have initiated the development of a regional implementation framework for implementing the New Urban Agenda through a consultative and collaborative process. The framework, which outlines the basic ingredients for implementing the agenda, is intended to provide inspiration and guidance to us to develop our respective national implementation frameworks without which, we cannot reach our common vision. Furthermore, such a framework will be the basis for monitoring our progress towards our common African position on the New Urban Agenda together with other major global commitments including the Sustainable Development Goals. The framework has successfully been endorsed by the Third Ordinary Session, which was held in Addis Ababa in December 2018. The challenge is for us to develop

our respective national implementation frameworks in order to reach our common goal.

The sub-committee also initiated the development of a Charter/ model law. I have been informed that the expert meeting which drew participation from the Bureau Members, STC- Housing and Urban Development Secretariat, African Union Commission (AUC), the United Nations Human Settlement Programme (UN-HABITAT) and the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG) Africa was held on 30th to 31st July 2018 in Nairobi, Kenya. The meeting deliberated at length on the initiation of these instruments. We count on the expert guidance to embark on an instrument that will best achieve our objective of strengthening urban planning and development while taking into consideration the challenges and the opportunities towards the approval, signing and implementation process.

Distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen

To enable the work of the STC N0.8 to move forward successfully, it is my intent to work alongside member states to champion the work of the STC. No8 in the areas of values and principles, good governance, performance management and the implementation of the Harmonized Framework for implementing the New Urban Agenda in Africa. My chairmanship will also continue to strengthen the processes of engagement with the private sector to ensure they embrace decentralization, service delivery and housing and urban development as the drivers of structural transformation. Last but not

least it will strengthen teamwork of the Sub- Committees of public service, decentralization and local government.

We need also to draw lessons where necessary, so that we will get good results, but in a timely and less costly manner.

Distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen

Allow me to conclude by reaffirming my commitment to the business of STC N0.8 and call for our collective efforts in ensuring that we are successful in our endeavors to accelerate the structural transformation of our continent.

On behalf of the Kingdom of Lesotho, let me acknowledge the contribution of the outgoing chair and his team and assure you of our continued commitment to take STC N0.8 to greater strides

I thank you for your kind attention.

KHOTSO! PULA! NALA!