



**EAST AFRICAN COMMUNITY  
EAST AFRICAN LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY**

**MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION OF THE ASSEMBLY URGING EAC COUNCIL OF  
MINISTERS TO DEVELOP A REGIONAL URBAN PLANNING POLICY FOR THE  
COMMUNITY**

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***Moved by Hon. Nancy Abisai and adopted by Assembly on Wednesday 1<sup>st</sup> June 2016***

**WHEREAS** urban planning is a technical and political process concerned with the use of land, protection and use of the environment, public welfare, and the design of the urban environment, including air, water, and the infrastructure passing into and out of urban areas such as transportation, communications, and distribution networks. Also urban planning including shelter which is a cardinal area of humanity and a basic need in the present times. Most people continue to live in deplorable conditions, with no basic utilities and services, in slums, where congestion, pollution and land degradation characterize the environment;

**IN ACCORDANCE** with the objectives of the Community under Article 5 (3) of the Treaty for the establishment of the EAC directs the Community to ensure the strengthening and consolidation of co-operation in agreed fields that would lead to equitable economic development within the Partner States and which would in turn, raise the standard of living and improve the quality of life of their populations and the promotion of sustainable utilisation of the natural resources of the Partner States and the taking of measures that would effectively protect the natural environment of the Partner States;

**THE FACT THAT** urban development aligned with population growth, which has rapidly increased over the past few decades within the region. Urban planning aligned on the introduction of modern medical services and public health interventions which reduce death



rates. Also urban planning guides and ensures the orderly development of settlements and satellite communities which commute into and out of urban areas or share resources with it;

**REALISING THAT** the scale and pace of urbanization is opening up unforeseen possibilities. Large concentrations of people and goods providing for increased opportunities for creativity, larger labor markets, and higher levels of productivity, not to speak of the cultural and political opportunities associated with urban life;

**NOTING THAT** urban explosion also poses daunting challenges which has resulted in unemployment and insufficient investment in basic services with the resulting environmental and social problems. Also high cost of land and poor public land management, coupled with the high price of housing available in the formal sector, has contributed to create slums and informal/squatter settlements in cities throughout the region. Over 30% of East Africans urban population lives in such conditions of limited, if any, tenure security and poor access to basic infrastructure services;

**FURTHER NOTING THAT** the recent rainstorms, mudslides ,floods in the capital cities of some of the EAC Partner States and other weather phenomena have exacted a devastating toll on property, human welfare, natural resources, and the economies. More than 95% of all deaths caused by disasters have occurred in areas which are mostly unplanned. Among the factors that have contributed most to the damage inflicted during a hazard event is the location of infrastructure and housing developments as well as how they have been constructed, and how land use affects the natural environment recurring natural phenomena into human and economic disasters. Allowing dense populations on a floodplain or permitting poor or un-enforced building codes in earthquake zones is as likely as a natural event to cause casualties and losses;

**AWARE THAT** poor urban governance and inappropriate policy frameworks have contributed to the vulnerability of the urban poor. Corruption, inappropriate policies, and cumbersome regulatory requirements in the EAC cities have led to a variety of deprivations, such as inadequate infrastructure and environmental services, limited access to school and health care,



and social exclusion. Better urban governance is therefore a necessary condition for empowering the urban poor and improving their opportunities and security;

**URBAN PLANNING WILL** reduce social inequality. Whereas social and economic inequalities, which are particularly apparent in urban areas and are growing in all the cities in the EAC Partner states and can lead to social and political clashes. Poverty reduction tends to decrease inequality and thereby social tensions;

**CONSIDERING THAT** urban planning helps to avoid large-scale health and environmental problems due to lack of proper services in slum areas which affect a whole city, as evidenced and witnessed recently and currently by urban outbreaks of cholera and plague in some of the EAC cities. Problems of inadequate water supply, sanitation, solid waste disposal, and storm-water drainage which affect the urban poor residents and also create negative spillovers, such as the reduction and deterioration of the groundwater table and of surface water bodies;

**FURTHER CONSIDERING THAT** urban planning mitigates the impacts of disasters. Policies and programs to reduce poverty can not only increase the productivity of the poor in the region, but can also raise consumption, thereby boosting local economic development for the benefit of all. Cities that are inhospitable to business and that deter investors usually represent even worse prospects for their poorest residents;

**FURTHER AWARE THAT** in order to mitigate the above-mentioned challenges, the EAC region has to develop urban strategy that shall guide Partner States to focus on creating livable cities that are able to fully tap their productive potential and deliver on their promise of development for all residents. This requires that cities be efficiently managed, economically competitive and financially viable. And while cities are in an increasingly important position to maintain social cohesion and drive productivity within countries, most still need to catch up with infrastructure and housing deficiencies and take needed steps toward sustainable urban management. To bring better quality of life, social equity, and in particular services to the poor, it is crucial to improve the overall regulatory environment for urban and housing development (infrastructure

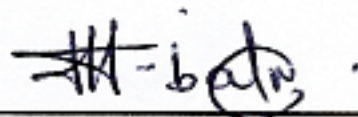


and housing delivery, preservation of key heritage sites), management of cities (capacity building of municipal governments and strengthening their fiscal base), and access to capital markets.

**NOW THEREFORE, THIS ASSEMBLY DO RESOLVE TO;**

- a. urge the Council of Ministers through the secretariat to convene a regional conference on habitat so as to consolidate and harmonize ideas and have the EAC position on Habitat III Agenda;
- b. urge the Council of Ministers to fast track the development of a Regional Urban Planning Policy for all cities and towns in EAC Partner States; and
- c. urge the Council of Ministers to establish an Urban Development Desk at the EAC Secretariat to coordinate urban development matters in the region.

**CERTIFIED BY:**



**Alex Obatre**  
**DEPUTY CLERK**

**DATE:** 01 - JUNE - 2016

