

International real estate federation to provide affordable shelter for the poor in Nigeria

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International Real Estate Federation (FIABCI), which operates in 60 countries across the world, said in Abuja yesterday it has initiated a process that will generate affordable shelter for the urban poor in Nigeria.

FIABCI's African Region President Mr. Osita Okoli said the group in conjunction with United Nations and others have started preliminary work on replicating its activities across the world in Nigeria.

He made the statement in a press conference prior to the kickoff of the group's Africa Trade Mission being hosted by Nigeria.

Okoli said that with over 100 affiliate organisations, "FIABCI has made presentation to Global Housing Foundation (GHF) which is one of the foundations affiliated to FIABCI to cater for affordable houses for the urban poor in the regions of Asia, South America and lately, Africa.

"They are projects ongoing, financed and coordinated by the United Nations in conjunction with Meryl Lynch and also handled by GHF of South Africa at the moment."

He said GHF "has also approved and we have been in liaison and correspondence for projects to be done in Abuja, Nigeria. We have written to the Federal Capital Territory about that, we have set up meetings and we had a team that was planning to come to Nigeria late last year but that meeting had been delayed.

"It is going to be actualised. We are working hard to see that GHF implements projects in Nigeria especially starting with Abuja.

He said the group met the minister of state for works, housing and urban development Mrs. Grace Ekwere where it expressed its desire to not just build affordable houses for urban dwellers but to "also partner with her ministry in spreading this to other parts of Nigeria.

"That is one way FIABCI is helping to bring housing to the urban poor and these projects are structured in such a way that housing are going to come virtually free to the people; the government provides land and infrastructure, FIABCI mobilises capital, provides materials and labour to build houses and they are titled and given away to the urban poor" he said

On her part, the International President of FIABCI Lisa Kurass who works in Texas stated that the organisation which has about 35 universities globally will use the African Trade Mission "to unlock the vast potential of real estate in Africa as well as expose those potentials to the world. The upside potential is tremendous and we want encourage the building energy efficient buildings."