

## Expansion of urban centres in Angola leading to environmental imbalance - Minister

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Huambo – The expansion of urban centres is leading to a “steep fall in the living standards and aggravation of social grievances and environmental equilibrium.”

This was said Tuesday in central Huambo province by the minister of Urbanisation and Construction, Fernando da Fonseca.

Fernando Fonseca was speaking at the opening of the 2nd international meeting of the team of urban settlement experts.

The official said the policies adopted by Angolan Government and local authorities are focusing on the reinforcement of the territory planning's institutional capacity.

According to him, the policies focus on the promotion of the efficient management of infrastructures of supply of water, electricity and basic sanitation, implementation of services, local financial management and making of decisions on community participation.

He stated that the urban growth is too surprising as the country is seeking to overcome the 30 years of armed conflict that caused the loss of human capital through the displacement of the populations, thousands of deaths and force migration mostly in the quest for Government protection in urban centres.

The minister said as well that in order to get access to social housing, the Government has put in place the Housing Foment Fund whose managing boards were sworn in recently.

To him, the fund will play a relevant role in addressing the housing problem.

He mentioned the construction of new cities as one of Government's successful options.

Fernando Fonseca said the National Commission on Housing has decided to build 200 new houses in all districts of the country.

To this end, the Government has decided to build about 56 new urban areas with 144,037 social houses, plus 10,000 privately built houses.

Going with the theme "Planning, Upgrading and Regularising", the meeting sponsored by the Ministry of Urbanisation and Construction is being attended by about 70 participants from the provinces of Benguela, Bié, Cunene, Huambo, Huíla, Luanda, Kwanza Norte, Moxico and Namibe, and experts from South Africa, Spain, Portugal, Mexico, Mozambique and Namibia.

For two days, the meeting will tackle such topics as urban expansion and upgrading of precarious settlements, land regularisation, financial planning, national urbanisation and housing programme, atlas proposals on the country's urban situation as a basis for information on urban planning.