

Africa's housing ministers seek integration of climate change issues in planning

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By Jude Njoku

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Africa's Housing and Urban Development Ministers rose from the 4th session of the African Ministerial Conference on Housing and Urban Development, AMCHUD 4 in Nairobi, Kenya, last week, with a commitment to strengthen and develop transformative National Urban Policy and adopting strategies for realizing smarter and more sustainable urban development.

This, according to HUD ministers, would be achieved through reconfiguration of space, infrastructure and flows in new urban development and retrofitting existing cities, resulting into compact, mixed use, high density development that is walkable, bicycle friendly and transit oriented.

The four-day conference which was attended by a total of 394 participants, comprising 202 delegates, 25 observers, 87 media practitioners and 80 exhibitors, brainstormed on the theme, 'Territorial Planning and Access to Basic Services for all,' and a sub theme on Implications of Climate Change for Territorial Planning and Access to Basic Services in Africa.

The meeting which was declared open by President Mwai Kibaki of Kenya, also deliberated in four working groups, which focused on territorial planning; access to basic services for all; climate change; the constitution and rules of procedures of AMCHUD and other matters on global initiatives.

The HUD Ministers confirmed the establishment of a permanent secretariat to be hosted by Kenya, and sought UN-Habitat's continued technical, financial and logistical support in establishing the secretariat.

The Ministers acknowledged the implications of climate change for territorial planning and access to basic services, and the need for integrating adaptation and mitigation measures in planning frameworks of African cities in the face of growing threats of floods, sea-level rise and landslides, coastal erosion, and increasing greenhouse gas emissions.

Although the noted the efforts being made by African governments to address the impact of climate change by introducing innovative reforms for improving territorial planning and access to basic services for all, they stressed the need to intensify regional and national consultations and prepare common positions for the forthcoming Rio+20 in June 2012; the 6th World Urban Forum WUF in September 2012; and the Habitat III Conference in 2016.