

# Kenya and Tanzania cooperate on upgrading city slums

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## **KENYA'S ASSISTANT MINISTER FOR HOUSING MARGARET WANJIRU SAID THE GOVERNMENT IS IN THE PROCESS OF ENACTING A HOUSING POLICY TO STOP MORE SLUMS FROM TAKING ROOT**

*NAIROBI (Xinhua)* -- Kenya and Tanzania will cooperate under the East African Community framework to prevent the proliferation of informal settlements, a senior Tanzanian government official said on Tuesday.

Speaking to journalists in Nairobi, Tanzanian Minister of Lands, Housing and Human Settlements Developments Professor Anna Tibaijuka said her country is keen to learn from Kenya 's experience in slum upgrading.

"Our slums are not as expansive as those in Kenya so we are hoping to gain knowledge from our East African neighbor on policies to implement to stall the expansion of existing slums," said Tibaijuka, who is the immediate former UN-HABITAT Executive Director.

The Tanzanian minister said she will visit Kibera, one of Africa's largest slums on Wednesday before going back to her native country after a weeklong visit.

"Tanzania can only meet 24 percent of its housing demand annually and this could put pressure on the mushrooming of more informal settlements especially in the major towns," Tibaijuka said.

She is visiting Kenya with a team of housing experts to look at the Slum Upgrading Projects that have been established in Kenya's major towns.

"I understand Kenya's housing sector after working in the country for a long time," she said.

Tibaijuka worked as Executive Director of Nairobi-based UN- HABITAT where she led development partners in assisting the government in the construction of apartments for slums dwellers.

The five member East African community is forging national strategies that to ensure housing supply for the lower segment meets demand.

Kenya 's Assistant Minister for Housing Margaret Wanjiru said the government is in the process of enacting a housing policy to stop more slums from taking root.

"The new policy will make it illegal to expand the existing slums even as the government continues in its strategy to replace them with new high rise apartments," Wanjiru said.

"We are aware that some politicians and slums lords are preventing slum upgrading for their own personal gains," she said. Kenya can only meet a fraction of its housing demand which has led to the expansion of slums.

"Most of the new houses built annually target middle and high income segment while the demand by low income earners continues to rise as result of rural urban migration. The slums are a response to this mismatch in demand versus supply," Wanjiru said.