**Report of the Portfolio Committee on Human Settlements on the Attendance and Participation on the World Urban Forum 11 (Wuf11) From 28 to 30 June 2022, in Katowice, Poland, 28 September 2022.**

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The Portfolio Committee on Human Settlements (hereafter called the Committee) attended the World Urban Forum 11 from 28 to 30 June in Katowice, Poland. The Committee reports as follows:

The Committee received an invitation from the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) which was shared by the Ministry of Human Settlements for participation of Parliamentarians at the World Urban Forum under the theme “Transforming Our Cities for a Better Urban Future”. The World Urban Forum 11 took place in Katowice, Poland. An approval was granted for five Members of the Committee and one official to attend. The delegation comprised of the Chairperson of the Committee, Ms R M Semenya, (ANC); Mr T C Malatji, (ANC); Mr M P A Tseki, (ANC); Ms N Khan Sharif, (DA) and Ms N Tafeni, (EFF) accompanied by the Committee Secretary, Ms K C Pasiya-Mndende. Mr TSC Dodovu, Chairperson of the Select Committee on Cooperative Governance, Traditional Affairs, Water and Sanitation and Human Settlements was also part of the delegation.

The Team South Africa was led by Ms M Kubayi, the Minister of Human Settlements, comprising of officials of the national Department of Human Settlements, MECs and provincial departments including officials from other departments such as Department of Transport.

The theme of WUF11, was “Transforming Our Cities for a Better Urban Future”, will provide greater insights and clarity on the future of cities based on existing trends, challenges and opportunities, as well as suggest ways cities can be better prepared to address future pandemics and a wide range of other shocks.

The forum was divided into key focus areas such as urban crises and urban recovery; equitable urban futures; greener urban futures; innovation and technology building urban resilience; urban planning and governance; future urban economy and finance. During the WUF11 there were four stakeholder assemblies comprising group of women, grassroots, youth and the business sector. In addition, the World Cities Report 2022 was also launched “Envisaging the Future Cities” with six (6) key findings as follows;

* Humanity ‘s future is undoubtedly urban, despite Covid-19
* The Covid-19 pandemic has reversed years of progress made in the fight against poverty, resulting in the emergence of newly poor people.
* Adoption of the “15-minutes City” concept underlying principle is that daily needs were close at hand in every neighbourhood, - within a 15-minute journey.
* Informal employment needs to be supported not punished.
* Vision for an optimistic future of cities must embody a new social contract.
* Climate change and environment concerns increasingly dominate future scenarios.

During the closing ceremony, the Speaker shared key messages of the WUF11 as follows: the climate emergency, pandemics, the housing crisis, violence, and conflict, all converge in cities. She also stated that everybody wanted to transform to a better urban future, and will have to increasingly deal with urban crises. These crises, such as the growing number of urban poor, demand a fundamental shift, in the way people live and the way the cities are shaped. She further stated that if those challenges were not addressed timely and effective, they would inevitably cast adverse impact on sustainable urbanization, and cost the world a much higher price to fix in the future. There was a clear recognition that mayors and local governments were both first respondents, and were in a position to mobilise their communities to make that shift happen, accelerating towards greener, healthier, and more resilient cities. The national governments could leverage this immense potential, through clarity on multi-level governance, bringing youth and local governments to the decision-making table, and investing early with the help of the private sector. The urban recovery frameworks allow the people to connect locally driven people-centred recovery with nationally-led interventions.

The WUF was a unique United Nations event led by partners. There were four stakeholder assemblies, comprising of groups of women, grassroots, youth and the business sector. She was also pleased to report that participants have acted on the Abu Dhabi Declared Actions and commitments. Hence at Katowice, there were 51 commitments and the platform was kept open for actions till 31 July 2022. She urged participants to record their declared actions, which will be reflected in the final WUF11 report. She was also very pleased for the launch of the “World Cities Report 2022: Envisaging the Future of Cities”, with the below 6 key findings:

* Humanity’s future is undoubtedly urban, despite COVID-19
* The COVID pandemic has reversed years of progress made in the fight against poverty, resulting in the emergence of newly poor people
* Adoption of the “the 15-minute city” concept, whose underlying principle is that daily needs are close at hand in every neighbourhood – within a 15-minute journey
* Informal employment needs to be supported, not punished
* Vision for an optimistic future of cities must embody a new social contract
* Climate change and environmental concerns increasingly dominate future scenarios UN-Habitat launched the New Urban Agenda Platform to monitor the implementation of these commitments as mandated by the UN General Assembly at Abu Dhabi.

She further stated that in the past two years, the NUA platform has actively recorded 38 country level reports. The World Urban Forum continue to encourage cities to do Voluntary Local Reviews. By 30 June 2022, 127 Voluntary Local Reviews from 34 different countries have been published with 10 additional ones on the way. From a legacy perspective, she was pleased that the WUF alumni network made up of all the former, current and future host of WUFs, have fulfilled their declared actions to work together, to be champions of sustainable urbanisation in their respective regions. She stated that they have all pledged to support the next host of WUF, the Government of Egypt and the City of Cairo.

She informed the participants that at the United Nations, they were ready to work as one. In addition, the 12 UN Resident Coordinators were also present at WUF11. Throughout the forum, there was a high level representation from sister agencies. She also stated that they were pleased to see the active participation by UN agencies in the advisory group, and the various sessions highlighting the key concerns around climate, development, and migration.

Report to be noted.