



THE PERMANENT MISSION OF
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TO THE UNITED NATIONS

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**STATEMENT DELIVERED ON BEHALF OF THE
SOUTHERN AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY (SADC)**

IN THE SECOND COMMITTEE

BY DR K.Z. MBATHA

**PERMANENT MISSION OF SOUTH AFRICA
TO THE UNITED NATIONS, NEW YORK**

UNDER AGENDA ITEMS:

ITEM 95 (B) "HUMAN SETTLEMENTS" AND

**ITEM 95 (C) "THE UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE ON
HUMAN SETTLEMENTS (HABITAT II)"**

Check against delivery

15 November 1995

Mr Chairman,

I have the honour to make the following statement on Item 95 (a) "Human Settlements" and 95(b) "United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (HABITAT II), on behalf of the Southern African Development Community (SADC), namely Angola, Botswana, Lesotho, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Swaziland, Tanzania, Zimbabwe, Zambia, and my own country South Africa.

The members of the SADC community fully support the views expressed by the Group of 77 on this item.

Mr Chairman,

The eradication of poverty has emerged as a cardinal challenge at the series of United Nations sponsored conferences starting with the UN Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED), the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD), the World Summit on Social Development, and most recently, the World Conference on Women. The Second United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (HABITAT II) to take place from 03 to 14 June 1996 in Istanbul, Turkey, provides the opportunity to focus the collective energy of the international community on a

fundamental aspect of poverty eradication.

The development of sustainable human settlements in a rapidly urbanising world, and the provision of adequate shelter for all are priority areas of particular relevance to our region.

The first principle of the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development underscores that human beings are at the centre of concerns for sustainable development and we are happy to see that this principle has been recommended as the overall principle in the Global Plan of Action for Habitat II.

In our region we are actively seeking to ensure broad participation and consultation at the City Summit. The Ministerial Conference of African Ministers responsible for Human Settlements met in Johannesburg from 16 to 18 October 1995 to consolidate country, sub-regional and regional strategy towards effective African participation in the HABITAT II process. At the conclusion of the conference the Johannesburg Declaration was adopted recommending the highest level of participation and attendance at HABITAT II and full participation at the Third PrepCom in New York in February 1996.

Mr Chairman,

In the context of the important role which cities and urban areas play in economic, political, social and cultural development the complementarity between urban and rural areas and their respective communities should be taken into account. All sectors of society, including both the private informal sectors, should be engaged and should participate in the process of formulating appropriate programmes aimed at improving the living environment of all people on a sustainable basis. To ensure constructive development of the youth in our cities, towns and villages, the needs and contributions of the youth have to be taken fully into account. An active role by the youth will contribute to the development of sustainable and durable solutions to the problems associated with urban and rural land utilisation and human settlements. Programmes should also be accessible to all, especially the poor and the increasing number of marginalised and displaced persons in society.

The members of SADC consider that the empowerment of women is fundamental to enhance the process of sustainable human development. The inclusion of women in the processes of decision making and the removal of barriers inhibiting full

participation in human settlement development will ensure that women benefit equally from improved shelter, health care and income.

Mr Chairman,

In order to stimulate the implementation of the HABITAT II agenda, financial mechanisms will need to be developed in order to strengthen existing mechanisms and create the necessary support for international, regional, and national endeavours. The development of infrastructure in areas where this is lacking, particularly in rural areas, is necessary for improving the implementation of land management and human settlement programmes. The overall approach of SADC to the housing challenge is to mobilise and harness the combined resources, efforts and initiatives of communities, the private commercial sector and the government in a complimentary way. Housing strategy should place specific emphasis on the roles and responsibilities of all actors, maximising job creation, skills transfer, capacity-building, and upward mobility for both skilled and unskilled labour in the housing arena, particularly the role of small and intermediate enterprises in housing construction. Housing-finance mechanisms are being reviewed and strengthened to develop the capacity necessary to support the eradication of housing backlogs.

The importance of water resource management cannot be overstressed. The impact of the expansion of human settlements on the quality and quantity of fresh water resources should be an integral part of the process. Human settlements without regular and reliable water supply sources are hardly conducive to human habitation.

Mr Chairman,

Continued support should be given to the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements for the commendable work which it is doing to prepare for the City Summit. Such support will be of cardinal importance in implementing and monitoring the results of the conference. SADC looks forward to contributing to the successful outcome of The HABITAT II conference in Istanbul in 1996. We reaffirm our commitment to the continuing support for the important work being undertaken by the UN Centre for Human Settlements in implementing the Global Strategy for Shelter to the year 2000.

I thank you.

