



MINISTRY OF LANDS, PUBLIC WORKS, HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT-KENYA

## GLOBAL SUMMIT ON SUSTAINABLE CONSTRUCTION

**Theme: Embracing the Challenge: "Tackling Embodied Emissions in the Growing Movement Towards Sustainable Building Practices"**

**Focal area:** Urban Planning in Africa- Key to Sustainable Construction

**Date:** Tuesday, January 14<sup>th</sup> 2025

**Venue:** Olympic Museum Lausanne, Switzerland

**Presenter:** Kennedy Matheka  
National Coordinator- Buildings and Climate  
State Department for Public Works



Thank you All with much greetings from Kenya and Let me start by appreciating EPFL, partners and other organisers of today's *Global Summit on Sustainable Construction*

1. Ladies and Gentlemen, there is no doubt that Africa is the **fastest urbanising region in the world** with an average **annual urbanisation rate of 3.2%**, well ahead of the **global average of 2%**.
2. Currently, an estimate of 470 million people live in Africa cities and urban areas and this number is **expected to grow** to 810 million people by 2035. By 2050, it is anticipated that the Continent's urban population will **nearly triple**, adding approximately 900 million people to these cities and urban areas across the continent. This surge means that two-thirds of the cities expected to exist in 2050 have yet to be built.
3. As of now, Africa is home to some of the **fastest-growing cities globally**, with a substantial portion of its population expected to reside in urban areas by mid-century. Major cities like here Nairobi are at the forefront of this growth, with the City's current population being 5.7 Million but projected to grow intimately 15 million by the year 2050, this being at a growth rate of over 5.7 %
4. This rapid urbanization presents significant challenges, such as inadequate infrastructure and increased greenhouse gas emissions. Therefore, Ladies and Gentlemen, addressing these issues through strategic urban planning is key for achieving our **Pan-African Sustainability Agenda 2063**.
5. In Africa, Urbanization serve as a catalyst for economic transformation. The concentration of populations in urban centers fosters trade and creates value chains that link rural and urban economies. However, for this potential to be realized fully, structural economic transformations must occur alongside urban growth. This includes diversifying economies beyond agriculture into manufacturing and higher-value services that can create well-paying jobs for the ever-increasing youth population

**In this year 2025 and beyond, we invite you all for economic opportunities as we urbanise,**

6. Sustainable construction involves using materials and methods that minimize environmental impact while promoting social equity and economic viability.
  - i. Many African countries have abundant local resources that can be harnessed, by each and every of you, for our construction.
  - ii. Ladies and gentlemen, we are all aware that incorporating energy-efficient measures and designs into our buildings lowers operational carbon emissions. Let's see economic, environmental and social value in investing in these resource efficient measures as we reform and transform
  - iii. We are ready to embrace and promote circular economy within the building sector as we urbanise. How can, ladies and gentlemen work together to tap opportunities in this new emerging are moreso in the use of recyclable materials within the construction industry?
  - iv. We have local communities willing to work with all of us to support sustainable planning processes to among others, ensure that our urban development's meet their needs, while fostering a sense of ownership and responsibility towards sustainable practices, again there lies a greater opportunity for all in this space.
7. Facilitate sustainable construction practices, African nations are keen on developing strategic policies and standards that promote low-carbon urban development strategies. There are a pocket of Sub-Saharan Africa countries having building codes which have mainstreamed sustainable and compared to other regions; however, several countries are making strides toward establishing frameworks that support sustainability;
  - i) Countries like Kenya, Senegal, Ghana, and other are developing roadmaps aimed at decarbonizing their building sectors. Specifically, here in Kenya, with support of our partners some who are participating in our todays conference, we are developing a Decarbonisation roadmap that seek to

provide investment and decarbonisation trajectories and a pathway for our construction sector through 2050 and beyond and further support innovation and technologies within our construction practices.

- ii) Over 38 out of 54 African countries have included buildings in their Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) under international climate agreements, and we look forward for more numbers as we develop 3.0 NDC version spanning 2031-2035.
- 8. Some of these policies focus on incentives and even tax break for sustainable practices while ensuring compliance with established standards. These examples give us extra economic and social, opportunities for all you here today, within the African context as we urbanise.
- 9. Ladies and gentlemen, as you are aware Kenya is the Co-chair of the **Intergovernmental Council for Buildings and Climate (ICBC)** alongside Brazil, we remain committed to enhancing coordination among member states and all organisations where we are all representing here today.
- 10. This involves facilitating knowledge sharing, best practices and collaborative efforts aimed at achieving decarbonization and resilience in the building sector. Working closely with other countries, remain the ICBC pillar with a view to strengthen global action against climate change.
- 11. Effective cross-sector **Collaboration, partnership and extended Cooperation** remain the key for driving comprehensive change within the built environment. Ladies and gentlemen, Lets unbundle how best we can tap these opportunities this year being 2025 and beyond as African nations create resilient cities capable of meeting future demands sustainably.
- 12. Thank you all for listening and remain blessed as we harness and embrace the Challenge of Tackling Embodied Emissions in the Growing Movement Towards Sustainable Building Practices.
- 13. I wish to invite each and everyone of you for a scheduled **Sustainable Construction in Africa Conference** scheduled **20-22<sup>nd</sup> May 2025** here in Nairobi, Kenya.