

Media Statement

For immediate release

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SALGA President Chairs UN Panel

The South African Local Government Association (SALGA) and the world body, United Cities & Local Governments (UCLG) President, Mr. Parks Tau has been appointed to co-Chair a United Nations High-Level Independent Panel to oversee the effectiveness of the Habitat III.

The appointment, alongside fellow co-Chair, Ms. Rosario Robles - the Secretary of Agrarian, Territorial and Urban Development of Mexico - follows the recent announcement of their appointments into the eight-member assessment panel for the Habitat III, which is a programme that promotes socially and environmentally sustainable towns and cities.

The co-Chairs were appointed during the first sitting of the assessment panel with the UN Secretary-General António Guterres in New York, United States, on Workers Day. The panel was recently established subsequent to the adoption of the New Urban Agenda at the Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development, which is known as Habitat III, held in Quito, Ecuador, in October last year.

In the announcement of the panel earlier last month, the UN indicated that the independent panel is a follow-up and review of the Habitat III outcome, and it will contain recommendations on enhancing the effectiveness, efficiency, accountability and oversight of the UN-Habitat.

An assessment report by the panel will also serve as an input to a two-day High-Level Meeting of the General Assembly to be convened by the UN President of the General Assembly during the 71st session in September this year. The meeting will further discuss the effective implementation of the New Urban Agenda and the positioning of UN-Habitat in that regard.

Speaking shortly after the news of his appointment, Mr Tau described his new role on the UN panel as an instrument to advance the interests of local government both on the local and international scale.

“Having committed to advocating for the location of local government at the centre of a changing world, the panel presents an opportunity to lead this agenda,” he said.

Other members of the panel include architect Peter Calthorpe; Ambassador Dian Triansyah Djani, the Permanent Representative of Indonesia to the UN; Anne Hidalgo, Mayor of the French capital, Paris; Sheela Patel, Founder and Director of the Society for Promotion of Area Resource Centres; Ambassador František Ružicka, Permanent Representative of the Slovak Republic to the UN and Ponsto S.M. Sekatle, Minister of Health and Social Welfare of Lesotho.

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