

AUIIF an opportunity to debate infrastructure development

Angola will host the 2nd Africa Urban Infrastructure Investment Forum (AUIIF) on 19 and 20 January 2015. The event is spearheaded by the African Business magazine and IC Events, co-organised with the United Cities and Local Governments of Africa (UCLG-A) and supported by the UN-Habitat.



As part of the conference, the ministry of planning and urbanism will organise site visits to the country's 'new centralities' and field trips will be organised to the major urban and housing projects around the capital, Luanda. The capital is a great case study in post-conflict urban development and the Forum will discuss issues faced by African countries, mainly those who have suffered decades of conflict and civil war.

Speaking about hosting the Forum, José António M. da Conceição e Silva, the Angolan Minister of Urbanism and Housing, said it is a great opportunity to debate fundamental questions about infrastructure development in the continent and also for Angola to showcase the efforts done for the creation of a solid base for sustained development and the raising of living standards of its citizens.

Future of Africa

"The future of Africa, as it is in other parts of the world, is urban. A new paradigm of development gives a particular role to cities and local authorities as the transformation locus and agent of African societies. From now on, cities of Africa should take the lead in shaping the future of the continent," UCLG-A secretary general, Jean Pierre Elong Mbassi, said.

Today, 72% of urban dwellers on the continent live in slums and their living conditions are often worse than in rural areas. Angola is well ahead to address this issue. The economy of Africa's second biggest oil producer grew by 5.1% in 2013 and is projected to reach 7.9% in 2014 and 8.8% in 2015 as major public infrastructure investment kicks in.

Tomas Paquete, events director at IC Events, emphasised the importance of the Forum. "The forum will propose concrete steps to be taken to maximise the effectiveness of urban infrastructure development, from finance through design to implementation. These will be incorporated in the works of the 7th Edition of the Africities Summit from 1-5 December 2015 in Johannesburg, South Africa.

"The forum will also stress the importance of tapping into both African and international capital to finance infrastructure development, as well as seek to identify viable and innovative financing models to make infrastructure projects more attractive to investors. Cities are the bedrock of strong economies. London, New York, Los Angeles, Mexico city, Hong Kong, Tokyo, Mumbai are all core to their nation's economies and unless we have suitable cities our economic development will be held back."

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