****

**Key Highlights**

**of the**

**The 12th National Development Policy Forum (NDPF) Featuring the 4th NBS Housing Baraza**

**on**

**Addressing Uganda’s Affordable Housing Deficit**

24th – 25th November 2022

Next Media Park, Naguru

# Introduction

The National Planning Authority (NPA) undertook a study entitled *‘Addressing Uganda’s Affordable Decent Housing Deficit: A meaningful Development Strategy’*. The paper is in line with the overall national direction for development, including the Uganda Vision 2040 and the NDPIII, which prioritize urban and housing development as vehicles towards increasing household incomes and improving the quality of life of Ugandans. Following its presentation to the Presidential Economic Council (PEC), it was recommended that the paper be finalized and forwarded to the Ministry of Lands, Housing and Urban Development (MoLHUD), which will cause the preparation and submission of a Cabinet Paper for consideration by Cabinet.

With support from GIZ Uganda, NPA partnered with the Next Media Services to organize the 12th National Development Planning Forum (NDPF) featuring the 4th Edition of the NBS Housing Baraza. The purpose of the Forum, which took place on Thursday 24th and Friday 25th November, 2022, at Next Media Park in Naguru, was to provide an opportunity for the general public, specifically, the stakeholders along the housing value chain to enrich the paper before its submission to the MoLHUD. The theme of the 12th NDPF/ 4th NBS Housing Baraza was “Building a Strong Housing Ecosystem”.

## Participants

The Forum/Baraza physically brought together participants from a cross section of stakeholders along the housing value chain including: Government i.e., National Planning Authority, Uganda Revenue Authority (URA) and Ministry of Lands, Housing & Urban Development; Financiers i.e., Housing Finance Bank and Financial Sector Deepening (FSD) Uganda; Real Estate Developers i.e., Association of Real Estates Agencies, Guoji Group Companies and National Social Security Fund (NSSF); Manufacturers i.e., Plascon Paints; Professionals in the construction industry i.e., Architects Registration Board and the Uganda Institute of Engineers; Civil Society i.e. Habitat for Humanity Uganda and Minority Rights International; Innovators i.e., Brownstridge Design Build Company and Innovation Village; and Prospective Homeowners, among others.

# Proceedings

## Pre-Forum Events

### **The launch of the 4th NBS Housing Baraza**

A launch event for the 4th NBS Housing Baraza, launch took place on Tuesday 15th November 2022 was broadcast live on NBS TV. During the event, the various partners, including Housing Finance Bank, National Planning Authority, Innovation Village, NSSF, Uganda Revenue Authority, and Plascon, were unveiled.

According to Ms. Mugume Janet, a Senior Sales Officer at the NSSF, the NBS Housing Baraza was expected to provide an in-depth dialogue with all the key stakeholders to understand their processes and determinans, given a good customer experience in real estate. NSSF also hoped to unpack all its housing products across the income spectrum, including the Solana Project in Lubowa and a lot more in the pipeline.

On behalf of the Uganda Revenue Authority (URA), Mr. Ibrahim Bbossa, the Assistant Commissioner Public and Corporate Affairs, noted that it takes stakeholders, partners, and Ugandans to put their hands together to make meaningful conversations on the nationwide delivery of services to the ordinary Ugandans.

The Innovation Village, represented by Ms. Sharon Kakai, Marketing and Communications Lead, promised to run a housing construction challenge (Zimba Challenge) that should be able to inspire and encourage different innovations to participate and bring on board what their thinking is about.

Mr. Jackson Emanzi, the Manager Home Loans at Housing Finance Bank Uganda noted that it has been four wonderful years of partnership with NBS, and that in their view the NBS Housing Baraza is a baby step in the right direction. They were looking forward to fruitful engagements.

Dr. Patrick Olowo represented the National Planning Authority at the launch event in the capacity of Ag. Director, Research and Development Performance. He said that NPA, as a national think tank, was more interested in sharing the information about the paper on addressing Uganda’s Affordable housing deficit with as many stakeholders as possible through the various Next Media platforms so as to catalyze debate and generate a better understanding and appreciation of the housing shortage problem.

### **Breakfast Meeting**

Mr. Denis Tugume, the Senior Planner, Physical and Spatial Planning and Ms. Emily Chelangat, the Senior Public Relations and Communications Officer attended a half-hour TV talk show. They enlightened the public on the mandate of NPA, why the NPA was focusing on housing, and what, from the finding of the NPA policy paper, was constraining the development of affordable decent housing in Uganda. They also explained why NPA was partnering with NBS TV on the 4th edition of the housing baraza.

## During the Forum

The Forum was officially opened by the Minister of State for Finance, Planning and Economic Development (Planning), Hon. Amos Lugoloobi, who was represented by Hon. Lydia Wanyoto, an Executive Board Member of NPA and was closed by Hon. Persis Namuganza, the Minister of State for Housing, Ministry of Lands, Housing & Urban Development. A keynote speech was made by Dr. Joseph Muvawala, the Executive Director, NPA before a presentation of findings was made by Dr. Hamis Mugendawala, the Manager Policy Research and Innovation.

Mr. James Macbeth Forbes, the Country Director GIZ Uganda was represented by Mr. Patrick Tumwine. In his remarks, Mr. Macbeth Forbes noted that affordable housing, which was the focus of the 12th NDPF was a very important issue. It is not only a human rights issue but also critical for socio-economic development of the country as highlighted in the Uganda Vision 2040, the NDPIII, and the SDGs (particularly target 11.1 on safe and affordable housing). He said that it is also one of the general social economic objectives in the Constitution of the Republic of Uganda. Therefore, the Forum offered the housing stakeholders an opportunity to make an input in the Cabinet Paper to be prepared by NPA and the MoLHUD and that it also offers an opportunity for stakeholders, including People with Disabilities (PWDs) to let their voices be heard in regards to their housing needs and share best practices.

Several other shareholders along the housing value chain shared their views as panelist while discussing the NPA paper. These included: Peace Ayebazibwe Kabunga, the Executive Director Housing Finance Bank; Ms. Sarah Chelangati Commissioner Domestic Taxes Uganda Revenue Authority; Mr. Robert Mutebi, Commissioner Information Technology & Innovation Uganda Revenue Authority; Ms. Martha Mugarura Asst. Commissioner Urban Development Ministry of Lands, Housing & Urban Development; Mr. Robert Kiggundu, Chairman of the Architects Registration Board; Ms. Windy Shen, the Country Manager Guoji Group Company; Mr. David Wanangwe, the Senior Project Manager National Social Security Fund (NSSF); Mr. Gerald Paul Kasaato, the Chief Investment Officer National Social Security Fund; Mr. Prosper Byamungu, the Team Leader Brownstridge; Eng. Andrew Muhwezi, the President of Uganda Institution of Professional Engineers (UIPE) Mr. Robert Otim, National Director, Habitat for Humanity Uganda, Mr. Kayongo Adrian, Marketing Manager, Plascon Uganda, and Joseph Lutwaama the Head of Programmes, the Financial Sector Deepening (FSD) Uganda, among others.

### **Methodology**

The Housing Baraza involved: Talk shows on TV (breakfast meetings); the official launch; opening Ceremony; a keynote address; panel discussions on different thematic areas i.e., a. Climate Smart Communities - Delivering integrated communities built to last; A Connected Ecosystem - Encouraging partnerships across the housing ecosystem; and Leading with Data - Making housing ecosystem data more available to and actionable for actors; and a Master Class - showcasing different innovations.

The physical participants were given an opportunity to interact with the panelist and contribute ideas on the different thematic discussions. The conversation from the NBS Housing Baraza was extended to the audience on television, radio and online via multiple twitter spaces. The online audience was able to listen in and ask their questions directly into the space, which questions were then shared on air and answered by panelists.

In order to drive the conversation even further, we leveraged various influencers to both ask questions and drive conversation, as well as explain the various topics being discussed by the diverse panels. This led to the organic conversation and audience insights.

### **Key Highlights**

1. Most participants who physically attended the Baraza were grateful to NPA for the policy paper that tackled the housing challenge in a wholistic way. It was noted that the paper provides an opportunity to direct the housing sector forward.
2. **Given the structural factors that are shaping the housing market, solutions have to go beyond advocating for the construction of more houses.** It is also imperative that we improve the existing ecosystem for affordable housing delivery to respond to both current and new challenges ahead. These include; urban poverty, climate change, energy and resource consumption habits, and green buildings. Evidence shows that 40% of the country’s carbon emissions are from the construction sub-sector.
3. **A successful housing ecosystem requires both supply- and demand-side of housing value chains to operate effectively at scale.** There is need for access to socio-economic statistics, financing options available, data related to approvals, land related issues, planned government initiatives and data on the construction industry, including; materials, technology and professionals. An integrated database on housing supply and demand is critical to provide insights on the needs and preferences of households, their linkages with demographic shifts, as well as housing gaps across different parts of the country. As much as possible, the repository of information should be made available to all relevant stakeholders, thereby enabling better-informed decisions across the board. For the Government in particular, the database will be useful in supporting housing interventions that are more targeted, more efficient, and better coordinated with other public policies to build stronger communities.
4. There are currently 204 registered engineers actively practicing in housing development; 150 civil engineers, 30 electrical engineers, and 24 mechanical engineers. These are very few compared to the demand. There is also need to sensitize individual and commercial developers to use professional engineers and other professional service providers along the housing value chain for a quality product and to achieve value for money.
5. According to the developers, there is a challenge of sourcing and procurement of materials in Uganda. Despite the BUBU policy, developers are constrained to procure materials locally because suppliers’ capacity for construction materials is low. Consequently, materials are not readily available on the local market, in the required quantity and quality.
6. **Access to finance for housing is not as much of a problem as lack of productivity among many Ugandans.** The reason why banks are reluctant to finance housing projects is because they have failed to show value. There is need to improve people’s livelihoods and enhance productivity of the population in order to create effective demand. For example, as individuals, boda boda operators have little value, however, as a collective, they can be transformed into a viable logistics company, which can be contracted to transport goods and services across the country. This would provide a predictable cash flow on the basis of which the financial institutions are able to provide financing and unlock their capacity to own property. The property can release equity to start other enterprises.
7. **Given the challenges along the housing value chain, there is need to take advantage of the condominium law to develop high-rise permanent buildings/condominiums.** However, there is a very bad mindset/mentality among many Ugandans, where everyone wants to build and own a bungalow with a boundary wall. There is need to enlighten Ugandans about the concept of community living which involves sharing ownership and use of common areas and amenities with neighbors.
8. **There is need to make climate smart choices by all partners in the housing ecosystem** in order to create climate smart communities and ensure sustainability through thermos comfort, green spaces, water conservation, waste management and reduced energy and resource consumption (ensuring low carbon blue print). There is currently a lot of wastage in Uganda’s construction through broken debris and dumping in swamps.
9. **Informal settlements are part of the social fabric of urban center**s therefore, there is need to provide; a sense of community and a simple way of life including access to water and sanitation facilities, food, security while upgrading slums. The plans to develop the Naguru housing created much bigger challenges including displacement of people, yet several years down the road no development has taken place.
10. Housing developers were encouraged to leverage on the current innovations in the housing sector that are cost effective and have the potential to reduce the cost of housing. The Housing Master Class showcased a number of innovations for sustainable building and low-cost construction of houses, particularly portable shipping container houses, including:
    1. The Simba container safari lodges, Uganda – increasing the number of lodges for tourists in Uganda. Built in a workshop/factory and transported to the site.



Figure 1: Ras Abu Aboud Stadium, Doha, Qatar



Figure 2: Johannesburg’s Maboneng Precinct



Figure 3: Box Park, London – pop-up shipping container malls



Figure 4: Container skyscraper in Mumbai, India

### **Conclusion**

The Housing Baraza was officially closed by the Hon. Persis Namuganza Minister of State for Housing, Ministry of Lands, Housing & Urban Development. In her closing remarks, she commended the Minister of State in Charge of Planning, the NPA Chairperson, and the technical teams for the thematic study aimed at guiding the Government on the best option for addressing the housing deficit in Uganda.

The Minister reiterated Government’s commitment to implementing the evidence-based policy recommendations of the study in a bid to provide decent and affordable housing to the people. She advised that Uganda’s housing deficit requires deliberate efforts from all stakeholders. She further highlighted Government’s active role in addressing some major constraints along the housing value chain through the Sustainable Urbanization and Housing Program of NDP III.

She further emphasized the importance of pursuing progressive, inclusive and innovative approaches to provide decent and affordable housing for all. This allows the people to live productive lives and therefore contribute more to economic growth of the country.

## Post Forum Activities

1. The National Planning Authority shall, by 14th December, 2022, submit the highlights and recommendations of the 12th NDPF/4th NBS Housing Baraza to the Ministry of Lands, Housing and Urban Development for consideration and inclusion in the Cabinet Memo.
2. A housing construction challenge (Zimba Challenge), spearheaded by The Innovation Village, will be launched on Wednesday 14th December, 2022. Interested innovators will be invited to apply to participate in a 9-month ideation, incubation and acceleration program to develop solutions that will leverage technology to house 1 million Ugandans a year in decent modern affordable housing by 2030.