

Zimbabwe and Russia Meet on Human Settlements Delivery



Left to Right: Minister of National Housing and Social Amenities Hon Zhemu Soda with Russian Deputy Housing and Construction Minister Nikita Stasishin

The Minister of National Housing and Social Amenities Honourable Zhemu Soda, met with the Deputy Minister of Construction, Housing and Utilities of the Russian Federation N.E Stasishin on the sidelines of the world urban forum. The meeting sought to discuss Russia's pending visit to Zimbabwe to explore human settlements delivery programmes and projects.

The Ministers explored various areas of cooperation in view of the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) signed between the two parties in July 2023. The signed MOU is in the fields of development of infrastructure, new building technologies and provision of affordable housing.

Stasishin explained that Zimbabwe is a reliable partner to the Russian Federation and made reference to the meeting held between His Excellency the President of the Republic of Zimbabwe CDE Dr Emmerson Mnangagwa and His Excellency Vladimir Putin this year. The Deputy Minister also explored housing delivery initiatives being pursued by Russia, and highlighted that despite the COVID

19 pandemic, Russia has made significant progress in housing construction as they have commissioned 110 million square metres of housing. He also explained that they do have good housing standards and were ready to share with Zimbabwe.

The Deputy Minister informed the meeting that Russia's construction work is on massive scale and extended an invitation to Zimbabwe to provide construction specialists who would assist in the ongoing projects.

He also noted that they were pursuing social housing programmes and ready to share their models with Zimbabwe.

In response, Honourable Soda appreciated the gesture for the meeting and informed the delegation that Zimbabwe was ready to receive them on a date to be advised. He also informed the meeting that key areas of interest to Zimbabwe were social housing, housing finance amongst other issues which would be shared through a framework.

He committed to have discussions with line Ministries on areas related to labour and possible partnerships in housing construction.

The Ministers agreed on a visit by the Russian Delegation to Zimbabwe which would explore other human settlements delivery interests.

The 12th Session of the World Urban Forum is being convened in Egypt under the theme: *It all starts at home ;Local Actions for sustainable cities and communities.*

Zimbabwe is being represented by the Minister of National Housing and Social Amenities Honourable Zhemu Soda, also in attendance is the Minister of Local Government and Public Works, Honourable Daniel Garwe, Ambassador Winpeg Moyo, Zimbabwe's Ambassador to Kenya and Permanent Representative to the UNHabitat, Ambassador Taonga Mushayavanhu the Permanent Representative to the United Nations, representatives from Local Authorities and the Urban Development Corporation.

The forum is being attended by over 37 000 participants drawn from 182 countries. It was official opened this Monday and addressed by Anaclaudi Rossbach the Executive Director of UN- Habitat. In her dress she stated that "The global housing crisis affecting almost 3 billion people is of paramount concern". She called upon the transformation of settlements and explained that the World Urban Forum was a perfect platform to scale up and

build partnerships. Honorable Manal Awad, the Minister of Local Development of Egypt also said that WUF serves as a valuable platform to highlight the rich cultural and architectural heritage of Cairo.

The week long forum will saw delegates participating in 37 sessions and over 500 partner led events each designed to explore solutions on rapid urbanization.