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Concept Note for Side-Event at the 4th Forum on Financing for Development

Unlocking Fiscal Potential for Sustainable Urban Development: Empowering African Mayors to Mobilize Resources for the SDGs and Agenda 2063

Date: 30 June 2025 Time: 14:30 - 16:30 Venue: Sevilla, Spain

- I. **Event Overview:** The 4th Forum on Financing for Development presents a unique opportunity for global leaders and experts to discuss innovative strategies for financing development in urban areas, particularly in Africa. As the continent faces rapid urbanization, the ability of local governments to expand fiscal space and manage financial systems effectively is essential for achieving sustainable urban development in line with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the African Union's Agenda 2063.

This side-event will spotlight the proactive efforts of African mayors—especially from the DA-15 project target cities (Addis Ababa, Dar-es-Salaam, Kigali, Lusaka, Nairobi and Yaounde)—who have assessed their financial performance and developed action plans to address key fiscal challenges. It will also introduce the *Fiscal Space Performance and Monitoring Dashboard*, a digital tool developed by the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) to support evidence-based decision-making in fiscal management. The dashboard will provide real-time data to help cities track their fiscal health across dimensions such as liquidity, solvency, and revenue collection efficiency.

The side-event will serve as a platform to discuss challenges, showcase progress, and explore future actions to expand fiscal space for sustainable urban development. By fostering dialogue and sharing best practices, this event will also aim to mobilize resources for strengthening local financial systems.

II. Objectives of the Side-Event:

1. **Showcase Financial Management Efforts:** Highlight the efforts of African mayors, particularly from the DA-15 project target cities, in improving financial performance and expanding fiscal space, with a focus on revenue and expenditure management.
2. **Discuss Financial Performance and Challenges:** Examine the challenges faced by cities in managing their finances, specifically in revenue expansion and expenditure control, and explore the actions that have been or will be taken to overcome these challenges.
3. **Introduce the Fiscal Space Dashboard:** Present the *Fiscal Space Performance and Monitoring Dashboard* as a key tool for tracking real-time data on cities' fiscal health, supporting informed decision-making and enhancing financial management.
4. **Mobilize Resources:** Foster partnerships and mobilize resources to support African cities in overcoming fiscal challenges, strengthening financial systems, and financing sustainable urban development.
5. **Promote Knowledge Exchange:** Facilitate dialogue among mayors, local government leaders, donors, and experts to share experiences, strategies, and best practices in urban fiscal management.



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III. Target Audience:

- **African Mayors and Local Government Leaders:** Especially those from cities that have undertaken financial assessments as part of the DA-15 project.
- **Development Partners and Donors:** Interested in supporting local governments in strengthening financial management and revenue generation.
- **Academics and Experts:** Focused on urban development, finance, and governance.
- **Policy Makers:** Both at the local and national levels.
- **Civil Society and Private Sector Representatives:** Engaged in supporting sustainable urban development and fiscal reforms.

IV. Key Topics for Discussion:

1. **Assessing Financial Performance – Revenue and Expenditure:** Present findings on financial performance from DA-15 cities, focusing on revenue generation, collection efficiency, expenditure management, and fiscal sustainability. Discuss the challenges in these areas and the actions taken—or planned—to overcome these obstacles.
2. **The Role of the Fiscal Space Dashboard in Financial Management:** Introduction and live demonstration of the *Fiscal Space Performance and Monitoring Dashboard*, showcasing its ability to provide real-time, actionable data on key fiscal dimensions such as liquidity, solvency, and asset management. This tool empowers city authorities to track their financial health and make informed, data-driven decisions.
3. **Challenges and Actions to Overcome Fiscal Gaps:** A deep dive into the specific fiscal challenges faced by cities in the DA-15 project and the strategic actions mayors and local leaders are taking—or will take—to address these issues, including improving tax collection, managing public expenditure, and diversifying revenue sources.
4. **Aligning Local Actions with Global and Continental Agendas:** Discuss how cities' financial strategies contribute to the broader goals of the Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development and Agenda 2063 the Africa We Want. Highlight how strengthening fiscal space supports key development goals like poverty reduction, climate resilience, and infrastructure development.
5. **Mobilizing Resources for Fiscal Strengthening:** Explore ways to mobilize financial resources and foster partnerships to support cities in enhancing their fiscal health, expanding fiscal space, and financing sustainable urban development.

V. Format and Structure of the Side-Event:

The side-event will follow a structured format to ensure an engaging and informative discussion. The program will include:

1. **Opening Remarks:** Introduction to the importance of fiscal space expansion and its connection to sustainable urban development. An overview of the side-event goals and an introduction to the *Fiscal Space Performance and Monitoring Dashboard* as a key tool in fiscal management.
2. **Thematic Presentation:**
 - a. **Documented Case Studies on Municipal Financial Performance:** An overview of the first phase of the DA-15 project implementation, from the launch to the adoption of the financial performance assessment reports in each of the six pilot cities: Addis Ababa, Nairobi, Lusaka, Dar es Salaam, Yaoundé, and Kigali. This presentation will highlight key experiences, challenges faced, lessons learned, and successful practices adopted by the cities in expanding fiscal space and improving financial management, with a focus on how each city performed well in fiscal performance
 - b. **Dashboard Demonstration:** A live demonstration of the *Fiscal Space Performance and Monitoring Dashboard*, showing how real-time data can help city leaders track and



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improve fiscal health. The demonstration will focus on practical applications of the dashboard in financial decision-making.

3. **Panel Discussion – Financial Performance and Challenges:** A panel of mayors from the DA-15 cities will discuss their cities' financial performance, focusing on key revenue and expenditure management issues. They will share insights on the fiscal challenges faced and the actions taken—or to be taken—to overcome these obstacles.
4. **Interactive Q&A Session:** An open Q&A where participants can engage with panellists and the dashboard presenters to ask questions about the strategies, challenges, and tools being discussed.
5. **Closing Remarks:** A summary of key takeaways from the discussions and a call to action for continued support in mobilizing resources and strengthening the fiscal capacity of African cities. The closing remarks will emphasize the importance of local governments in financing sustainable urban development and call for increased partnerships and investments.

VI. Expected Outcomes:

- **Enhanced Knowledge Sharing:** Participants will gain a deeper understanding of the financial performance of African cities and the strategies being implemented to strengthen fiscal health, with a focus on real-time fiscal monitoring through the *Fiscal Space Performance and Monitoring Dashboard*.
- **Strengthened Partnerships:** New connections and partnerships between local governments, donors, and development organizations, aimed at supporting cities in overcoming fiscal challenges and financing their development agendas.
- **Mobilized Resources:** Increased commitment from donors and partners to provide the financial and technical resources necessary to support cities in expanding fiscal space and improving financial management systems.
- **Actionable Insights:** Practical takeaways for mayors and local government leaders to apply in their cities, focusing on improving revenue collection, expenditure management, and aligning fiscal policies with sustainable development goals.

VII. Conclusion:

This side-event at the 4th Forum on Financing for Development will provide a crucial platform for African mayors, especially those from DA-15 cities, to share their experiences in improving financial management and expanding fiscal space. By addressing challenges in revenue collection, expenditure management, and financing urban development, this event will contribute to the broader global conversation on how cities can finance their development agendas in alignment with Agenda 2030 and Agenda 2063. The presentation of the *Fiscal Space Performance and Monitoring Dashboard* will highlight the importance of data-driven decision-making in enhancing fiscal capacity and mobilizing resources for sustainable urban development.