PARTICIPATORY
SLUM UPGRADING
PROGRAMME

PSUP

**TRANSFORMING THE
LIVES OF ONE BILLION
SLUM DWELLERS**

Policy Recommendations Paper

URBAN DEVELOPMENT IN AFRICA
AND THE ROLE OF PARTICIPATORY CITY-WIDE SLUM UPGRADING FOR URBAN SUSTAINABILITY AND THE PREVENTION OF NEW SLUMS

SDG 11 Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable.

Target 11.1 By 2030, ensure access for all to adequate, safe and affordable housing and basic services and upgrade slums.

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Purpose of the paper

Slums are a human construct, representing a certain economic system in urban centres related to informality and weak governance, and resulting from speculative land markets and a general lack of planning and the neglect of long term investment in infrastructure and housing[1]. Slums are defined by the absence of: adequate housing[2], basic urban services, security of tenure and sufficient living area. It is widely accepted that they are a one of the most visible manifestations of poverty.

The Sustainable Development Goal 11 calls for an end to poverty by 2030, describing it as "the greatest global challenge facing the world today" and an "indispensable requirement for sustainable development". Research now shows that towns and cities with large-scale informality and slums and uneven economic development, cannot benefit from the urban advantage because so many residents live in substandard conditions trapped in a vicious poverty cycle.
National and municipal governments, often alongside international and community based organizations, have put - and continue to invest - significant resources and effort into the management and prevention of slums and informal settlements. Many are trying to fulfil the aspirations of the 2012 Rabat conference which aimed to dramatically reduce their incidence worldwide. Despite these efforts, however, there is today approximately one billion people worldwide still living in slums.

In sub-Sahara Africa, the numbers of slums dwellers are significant and increasing: over half of the African urban population (61.7%) lives in slums and by 2050, Africa's urban dwellers are projected to have increased from 400 million to 1.2 billion[3].

Many African governments are understandably looking to find solutions to manage slums in urban centres. Forced evictions, however, are not the way forward - especially given

the current and increasing numbers of slum dwellers across African towns and cities. It is not practical to evict large numbers of people without making worse, the already fragile security and health challenges facing some urban centres in the region. Importantly, forced evictions are a gross violation of people's rights. It is unfair given that most slum dwellers are already in vulnerable situations due to poverty and a lack of affordable housing alternatives.

Drawing UN-Habitat's knowledge and international research, this policy paper therefore argues that:
1. The forced eviction of slum dwellers is no solution for the slum challenge. It only results in the spatial transfer of slums from prime land to other areas.
2. Sustainable African urbanization is best fostered by a) inclusive, systematic and long-term policies and planning that promotes b) improvements to the living standards for all urban dwellers – including slum dwellers themselves.
3. Participatory, inclusive, city-wide, in-situ slum upgrading provides a proven alternative to evictions and forced relocations and helps strengthen capacity and knowledge for prevention.

Key challenges of African urbanization

Global trends show that economic growth and overall urban development cannot occur without sustainable urbanization[4]. At the same time, research makes clear that not all approaches to urbanization create the building blocks for inclusive development. Urbanization that therefore doesn't include all stakeholders and results in clear spatial and institutional disparities, constrains economic growth and social stability. For example, UN-Habitat research shows that those towns and cities which don't tackle informality and have more than 40% informal settlements and slums, dramatically lower their capacity for city-wide and equitable urban development[5]. At the same time, those towns and cities that have invested in slum dwellers and slum upgrading are economically (and often socially) better off.

Today, almost two-thirds of Africa's urban population lives in informal settlements or slums. This is a significant figure. Although the share of people living in urban slums has dropped since 2000 from 65% to 55.9%, in absolute terms they have increased from 128 million in 2000 to 200 million

1   Paper written by the Slum Upgrading Unit, UN-Habitat (Dr Melissa Permezel). Substantive comments from Professor Oyebanji Oyeyinka PhD, Dr Mathias Spaliviero and Mr Thomaz Ramalho from the Regional Office for Africa and Dr Naison Mutizwa-Mangiza Director & Principal Adviser, Policy and Strategic Planning, UN-Habitat, were highly appreciated.

2   The Right to Adequate Housing (1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights) is ratified by most African countries. It states that adequate housing must have security of tenure, availability of services, materials, infrastructure and facilities, must be affordable, habitable, accessible, not cut off from employment, health and other services or located in dangerous or hazardous place, respect cultural norms. http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Publications/FS21_rev_1_Housing_en.pdf

3   UN-Habitat (2013). State of the World Cities Report 2012/13.

4   UN-Habitat (2013), The State of the World Cities Report 2012/13.

5   UN-Habitat (2015), El Estado de las Ciudades Colombianas.

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today and numbers continue growing[6]. By 2050, more than 1.3 billion Africans will live in urban centres; almost triple the total number of African urban residents today.

This very rapid urbanization process has been accompanied by massive urban sprawl, a high degree of informality and a rapidly escalating urban poverty challenge. Governments, especially municipal and local, do not have sufficient governance capacities in terms of financing, land use management, spatial planning and infrastructure provision[7]. Many urban dwellers continue concentrating in urban slums and governments have, for a range of reasons, been unable to manage the negative externalities including:

1. Lack of investment in urban development and infrastructure

Capital investments in infrastructure in many African countries have remained the same for the past 40 years (only 20 percent of GDP). By contrast, East-Asian countries have invested heavily in infrastructure and urban-based employment-generation during their periods of rapid urbanization[8]. This promoted urban jobs, the development of a 'middle class' and also helped positively restructure the economies of many Asian countries.

In the absence of such interventions and investment, African urban economic growth has been comparatively limited. Many African towns and cities have been unable to respond to employment needs nor foster the necessary opportunities. Many governments have not facilitated the provision of serviced land, basic infrastructure and adequate housing. As a result, much of urban Africa is significantly dependent on low wage informal economies and has urban centres defined by informality and mushrooming slum populations. Perhaps more significantly, African government's lack of investment threatens its capacity to benefit (in contrast to Asian nations), from the demographic dividend of having large sections of the population ready to work -which, if harnessed, is a key factor in national and city-level urban development.

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6   UN-Habitat (2015). *Slum Almanac – Tracking improvements to the lives of slum dwellers.*

7   UN-Habitat (2014). The State of African Cities: Re-imagining Sustainable Urban Transitions, http://www.afdb.org/en/blogs/afdb-championing-inclusive-growth-across-africa/post/urbanization-in-africa-10143/

8   African countries lag behind their peers in developing countries in infrastructure provision (World Bank 2010). The differences are particularly large for paved roads, power generation and supply, and access to potable water and sanitation. Access to electricity reaches only 16 per cent of African citizens, compared with 41 per cent in other developing countries.

So while Africa is in a period defined by a demographic youth 'bulge', there has been limited effort and success at harnessing the potential of these urban residents, which has been one of the underlying factors in the development progress experienced by East Asia.

2. The rise of informality

Due to the speculative opportunities for a few from an informal environment, and the ongoing low rates of investment in formal urban infrastructure, particularly affordable housing, planning frameworks and job generation, many African urban centres have become primarily associated with informality, whether in economic/employment terms or in terms of their housing and land sectors. According to a UN-HABITAT study on urbanization[9], "there is a negative correlation between informal economy and informal employment and GDP per capita; hence, informal growth tends to be 'growth-reducing' in Africa as with other developing countries". As a result, "the formation of cities in developing countries is taking the shape of informality, illegality and slums".

Informality has also increasingly become a physical and spatial challenge for African cities, with large parts of cities and towns entirely beyond the control of the authorities: unplanned, without basic services or security of tenure and often socially and economically segregated from the formal urban areas. Furthermore, unplanned urbanization and large scale informality comes at a cost: inequity and segregation, undermining the capacity of urban centres to be a vehicle for prosperity.

Urban areas with significant proportions of slums and informal settlements are not as sustainable and prosperous as those who have successful alternatives to low-income housing and inclusive economic development.

Why forced evictions are counterproductive to Africa's Urban Development

Given the above, many African national and local governments are concerned about the unfolding trends in urban development and the underlying demographic, economic and social characteristics. The sheer scale and complexity of the trends observed, tend to exasperate city managers and tempt short-term but ultimately unsustainable solutions. One of the

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9   Oyebanji Oyeyinka (2016), "Urbanization Structural Transformation", UN-HABITAT Occasional Papers Series Number 1.

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more radical approaches in this context is forced eviction, slum clearance and removal of the urban poor.

One of the biggest myths around effectively managing and preventing slums, however, is to literally interpret the call of the SDG's and "eradicate" them. As urban centres continue to expand, eradicating slums in terms of forced evictions, only creates a vicious cycle: slum dwellers are moved but new slums emerge and gather elsewhere in a different part of the urban environment.

UN-Habitat is advocating approaches that harnesses the skills and talents of slum dwellers to foster social and economic development in African towns and cities. Research shows that towns and cities with significant numbers of slums dwellers undermine all urban dweller's prosperity prospects. We therefore need to not just transform spatial locations - but also the economic structures of slums to self-sustaining production centers[10].

There are instances where the immediate and short-term impacts of environmental and geographical hazards are considerations for moving urban populations in a lawful re-location process (severe geography, clear climate impacts – close to coastlines, hazardous and toxic waste materials). The movement of people under such circumstances are also bound by international laws which most African governments have signed up to.

Careful consideration therefore must be given to the agenda for moving the urban poor. There is no evidence that undertaking evictions have made urban areas more inclusive, equitable and thus prosperous. Instead, research shows that forced evictions have a significant monetary and social cost, in the short and long-term, causing a whole range of problems for both those affected and for the government[11]. There are direct costs in terms of loss of economic production and innovation, ongoing unrest and social problems in communities and the loss of civic trust. Essential economic and social networks, platforms for civic engagement and innovation are also often destroyed.

The cost is also a spatial one. Unlawful forced evictions simply

move the informality and slum phenomenon to other parts of the same city; re-creating the very divisions that urban managers think they are improving by this action.

Forced evictions are thus highly disruptive and unsustainable. The approach reinforces poverty by undermining the economic and social capital necessary for broad based inclusive urban development.

International Covenants, Declarations and Global Frameworks ratified by African Governments

Unlawful forced evictions not only do not deliver the urbanization Africa needs and wants, they also undermine and are counter to global agreements that many African Nations have signed up to:

– International Covenant on Human Rights.
– Africa 2063 *Agenda which clearly states that inclusion and sustainability, drawing on the resources of all residents, is the recipe for African Development*.[12]."
– The Sustainable Development Goals which prioritize inclusive and sustainable development and slum upgrading as a tool to deliver that outcome[13].
– Slum upgrading commitments. African governments have agreed to slum upgrading as a tool for reducing poverty as per pledges delivered in Rabat 2012 and Kigali 2013.

How to manage and prevent slums

Pre-conditions underpinning sustainable urbanization

While it is near impossible and not recommended to eradicate slums in the short term, governments have sufficient motivation and reasons to upgrade slums. Most importantly, by converting them gradually from places of diseases and joblessness to loci of growth, harnessing the energy and resources of the people living there. To achieve this, there are some 'pre-conditions' or 'ingredients' required for fostering sustainable and equitable urban development[14].

10 UN-Habitat (2015). Columbia report. UN-Habitat (2013). State of the World Cities – Prosperity.

11 UN-Habitat (2014). Assessing the Impact of Eviction, Yves Cabannes, Silvia Guimarães Yafai and Cassidy Johnson (Eds) (2010). How People Face Evictions. Development Planning Unit, University Colleague London, http://www.lincolninst.edu/pubs/324_Human-Rights-and-Evictions-of-the-Urban-Poor-in-Colombia

12 p.1 Africa Agenda 2063.

13 Goal 11: Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable and Goal 11.1: By 2030, ensure access for all to adequate, safe and affordable housing and basic services and upgrade slums.

14 UN-Habitat (2013). State of the World's Cities Report 2012-2013: Prosperity of Cities. UN-Habitat (2015). The Construction of More Equitable Cities – Public Policies for Inclusion in Latin America. UN-Habitat (2014). The State of African Cities.

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These include:

- **Changing mind-sets towards slums and slum dwellers.**
  A key start is recognizing the negative effect of slums and
  at the same time, the potential of slum dwellers. Encourage
  urban decision makers to adopt a more positive mind-set
  towards slum dwellers to embrace their potential and
  improve their living conditions for inclusion and prosperity.
- **Adopting inclusive approaches** - moving away from
  top-down decisions and decision making processes to
  those which strengthen municipal governments and local
  communities to deliver inclusive local solutions.
- **Strengthening the pro-poor and integrated focus
  of national policies, legislation and regulations:** this
  also requires strategic links between key departments and
  institutions, urban managers and the linking of plans and
  strategies across various thematic areas.
- **Prioritizing and securing financing and investment
  mechanisms for affordable housing, basic services and
  infrastructure** supported by some form of a decentralized
  system to empower local and municipal governments
  as well as mechanisms to support local economic and
  household improvement initiatives.
- **Ensuring that participatory processes are in place to
  engage all stakeholders and institutions.** All urban
  residents have contributions to make to urbanization
  in creative and innovative ways. Such broad based
  involvement also takes the pressure off government to
  deliver and bring all the ideas and know how to urban
  challenges. Participation also fosters the necessary
  integration of key institutions and plans which also
  promotes a more inclusive and sustainable outcome.
- **The role of location and the importance of integrating
  housing, local economic and transport opportunities,
  education and health services, waste management etc.**
  Sustainability is achieved when key drivers of development –
  economy, job opportunities, services, housing, transport are
  all linked together and integrated so people can make the
  most of their time, skills and commitments.

Policy priorities for managing and preventing through transformation of slums:

UN-Habitat recognizes that the configuration of slums and
informal settlements in urban contexts is different and often
specific. There is not a one size fits all response to managing
and preventing slums. However, the Agency promotes a
number of policy priorities that can be strengthened through
national and municipal policy and strategy frameworks.

1. Accelerate the Construction of Affordable and Adequate Housing

Since serious affordable housing shortages (and associated land
speculation) are some of the main causes of slums, and should
therefore be a priority of municipal and national authorities.
The challenge of housing deficit and poor housing quality
of low-income residents is acute due to land and housing
market malfunctioning. This needs to be tackled head-on.
Housing deficits and slum formation are highly correlated as
stated by the SDG 11.1: "by 2030, ensure access for all to
adequate, safe and affordable housing and basic services, and
upgrade slums". Governments need to consider a range of
mechanisms, however, to achieve this - organizing government
land and donating some for strategic, pro-poor development,
with mechanisms to finance housing including micro-financing
options. Building codes need to enable affordability, habitability
and safety and security of tenure considered as a continuum
including long-term rental. Consideration of gentrification
processes which end up excluding the poor also need to be
factored in as well as to promote a basic level of social mix.

2. Broad Infrastructure Investment and Slum Infrastructure Improvement

In general, Africa still has a huge deficit in key infrastructure
resulting from historical limited budgetary allocations to this
critical sector. This includes in basic water and sanitation, roads
and streets, service and livelihood infrastructure (common
markets) and public space for social and environmental
purposes. Infrastructure improvements have a direct impact
in improving the competitiveness of urban centres through
lowering the cost of doing business, improving mobility and
making them liveable and attractive. More critically, the deficit in
infrastructure in slums must be addressed and linked with other
broader urban infrastructure to achieve integration. Combined
with investment in the housing sector, these investments and
integrative actions will help upgrade and eventually transform
slums into liveable communities and ones connected to the rest
of the urban context.

*Consider slum upgrading and infrastructure development
as investment and part of overall economic development.*

3. Transform Slums into Production Centers linked with the rest of the urban context

What fundamentally transforms slums and informal economies
into prosperous zones of growth is to create the conditions for
self-organizing, skill-driven production centres that are linked
with the rest of the urban context. While housing schemes

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will secure decent lives for slum dwellers, it is decent work and income generation opportunities that will change the life of low-income slum dwellers in the long term. What therefore matters are the efforts made to improve slum dwellers employment and re-employment abilities. This can be achieved through training and by connecting such actions with external structures and opportunities. Improvements to design of the physical environment can help: improved streets and spaces for livelihood generation, improve incrementally built housing, water and sanitation facilities, provision of electricity. At the same time, providing mechanisms for micro-financing, training and capacity development are also very important as is consideration of how land value sharing/capture can be developed that promotes inclusive urban development.

Participatory, incremental, city-wide slum upgrading as a tool for promoting sustainable urbanization in African urban centres and for preventing slums.

In-situ, incremental, participatory slum upgrading provides a sustainable alternative for African towns and cities as shown by global research and the experience of those twenty-five African countries participating in UN-Habitat's Participatory Slum Upgrading Programme (PSUP) [15]. It:

- **Changes mind-sets towards slums and slum dwellers.** They have a role to play in sustainable urbanization and in the positive transformation of towns and cities.
- **Facilitates economic, social and livelihood development and thus provides a platform for poverty alleviation:** Participatory processes strengthen pre-existing social and economic and networks and activities and foster links with the rest of the urban environment. Livelihood and economic development activities can be supported, particularly for youth and women as their skills and ideas are harnessed and knowledge strengthened[16]. It harnesses the skills and

assets of those living in slums and informal settlements for broader sustainability gains.

- **Provides strategic options for urban managers:** In-situ, participatory slum upgrading enables those in charge to undertake effective planning processes, harness the positive elements of the urbanization process and leave a legacy of improvement. Slum upgrading strengthens sustainable livelihoods and at the same time, provides opportunities for transformation, formalization and integration into the broader urban environment.
- **Is cost effective:** It is generally understood that in-situ upgrading costs much less per household than the short and long-term costs of evictions. Furthermore, important economic and social capital is more likely to be preserved – a cost that is often not accounted for. Furthermore, it reduces the number of slum and informal settlements dweller unlike forced evictions which simply relocates the problem to another area and has a very negative impact on those who are often not to blame for living in slums anyway.
- **Manages risk:** the engagement of a broad range of stakeholders is more likely to bring risk factors to the fore, and develop widely endorsed solutions to manage those risks.
- **Delivers the progressive and inclusive planning agenda of many individual countries:** (such as expressed through the 2010 Kenya Constitution's specific planning stipulations).
- **Delivers the inclusive and democratic agenda of the African Union's 'Africa Agenda 2063':** (especially aspirations 1, 3 and 6).
- **Delivers the progressive and incremental commitments made by many African countries in relation to embracing sustainable planning and participatory in-situ slum upgrading:** such as the International Declarations signed by the 51 ACP countries (Rabat Declaration 2012 and Kigali Declaration 2013).
- **Provides a practical platform to implement the recently endorsed SDG's:** Goal 11 (urban SDG) and sub-goal 11.1 is 'by 2030, ensure access for all to adequate, safe and affordable housing and basic services and upgrade slums'[17].
- **Helps establish a minimum standard of living:** Participatory city-wide slum upgrading provides a platform for people to get out of poverty and establish a path towards an improved and sustainable standard of living.

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15 http://unhabitat.org/urban-initiatives/initiatives-programmes/ participatory-slum-upgrading/ .European Commission (2015). Mid-term evaluation of the Participatory Slum Upgrading programme. For example, the local and municipal governments in 2 of the UN-Habitat PSUP projects in Cameroon, are using the participatory approaches modelled and used in PSUP to inform other planning processes and seeing the benefits of doing so (engaged and active communities, new ideas and solutions to long standing challenges). What exactly? Do give the precise reference if you have it.

16 http://mgafrica.com/article/2015-03-27-the-hidden-treasures-in-africas-slums, http://www.seattleglobalist.com/slumrising/ slumrising-parttwo, http://afkinsider.com/88007/african-slums-most-innovative-places-on-earth/, http://www.bbc.com/future/ story/20130325-bringing-mod-cons-to-the-slums

17 https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/topics

Conclusion

Urbanization promotes equitable prosperity and sustainable development when active and consistent investments are made in all urban residents - including slum dwellers.

The future of African towns and cities is critically dependent on sustainable inclusive urban management, governance, investment and planning. These are the proven and necessary ingredients for urban development. Planned urbanization is also essential for Africa's structural transformation, the achievement of the continent's Agenda 2063 for prosperity and in delivering the newly endorsed Sustainable Development Goals (SDG's). Eradication and forced evictions do not promote that sustainable and inclusive agenda.

UN-Habitat calls for African Governments to recognise the potential at their doorstep - whilst at the same time, engage with the approaches agreed to and promoted - especially that of the Africa Urban Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals - to establish a clearer and more sustainable path to tackle informality and improve the lives of the millions of slum dwellers on the continent.

African governments and high level bodies can clearly influence their national and city-level urban sustainability agendas by creating the conditions that foster proactive institutions and put into action targeted interventions to make development inclusive and equitable. Forced evictions do not support these important endeavours.

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