



# Urbanization Challenges in Sub-Saharan Africa



UN-HABITAT

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The views expressed in this paper are those of the author and not necessarily those of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-HABITAT).

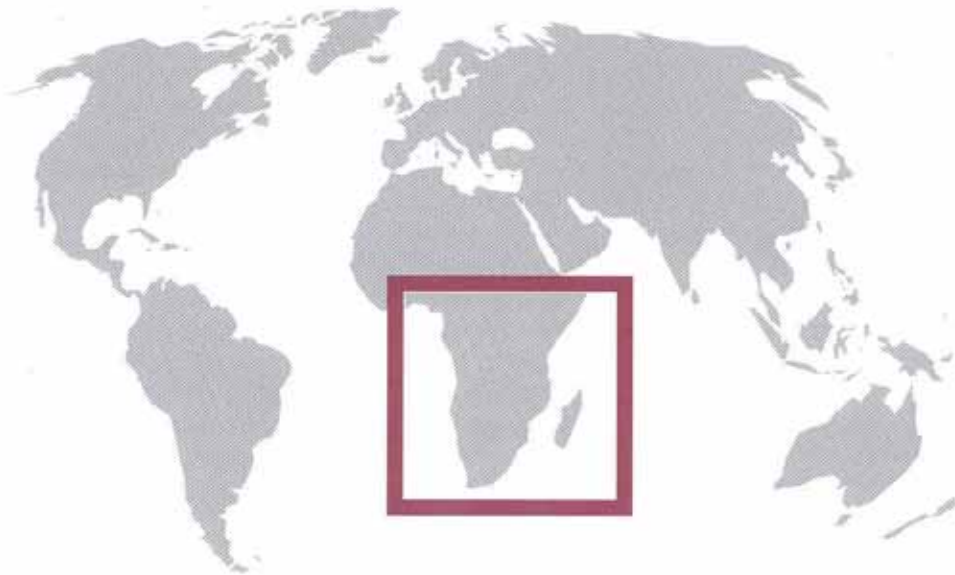
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*Urbanization Challenges in Sub-Saharan Africa*

**URBANIZATION  
CHALLENGES  
IN SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA**

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## Foreword



**T**he Urbanization Challenges in Sub-Saharan Africa report is timely as the evidence indicates that urban challenges include rapid urbanization, endemic poverty and life-threatening conditions in ever-growing slums, lack of potable water and sanitation, the high incidence of HIV/AIDS and large number of displaced persons.

Africa is currently growing at a rate of 250,000 new children every week contributing to a rate of urbanization that exceeds 4 to 5 percent.

But it is in city slums where poverty reigns that population growth is most felt as they absorb 190,000 new born and migrants every week. As such, urban slums absorb about three quarters of the population growth in African cities. Today at least one third of African urban residents live under life-threatening conditions. Refugee and internally displaced camps in the region are also areas of extreme human

suffering. The number of poor is expected to reach 404 million in 2015 or 46 percent of the continent's total population. The situation is not only one of slow and erratic economic growth but rather of regressive change in income distribution. In 2001, 166.2 million people or 72 percent of the African urban residents were living in slums. In 2015, the urban slum population of Africa should reach 332 million.

To add to the challenge, Africa, the world's most affected region, is now home to an estimated 29.4 million people infected with HIV/AIDS. More than 17 million have already died from HIV/AIDS-related diseases in the region. The pandemic may currently shave off up to two percent of annual economic growth in the worst affected countries.

Also, there are about 40 million Africans in danger of dying from starvation, most of them women and children. The causes of Africa's food crises remain a lethal combination of recurring droughts, failed economic policies, civil war, and the widening impact of AIDS, which has damaged the food sector and the capacity of governments to respond to need.

The report concludes that in an increasingly urbanizing Africa, the promotion of sustainable urbanization, encompassing the issue of economic growth, social equity and poverty reduction, cultural and ethnic cohesion, infrastructure provision and environmental protection, require more than ever, strategic, forward looking planning, consensus building and conflict resolution. Decentralisation, good governance and the empowerment of local authorities as well as the adoption of inclusive processes of resources allocation and decision making are fundamental to this task.

Mrs. Anna Kajumulo Tibaijuka  
Executive Director  
United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-HABITAT)

## Urbanization Challenges in Sub-Saharan Africa

### More urban poor in life-threatening conditions



**“Poverty in Africa should be at the top of the global security agenda”**

Barbara Stockin  
Director of Oxfam

Poverty in Sub-Saharan African cities is seen in a variety of forms. The striking images of beggars in the centre of Abidjan, pavement dwellers or street children in down-town Nairobi are well-known. There are, however, also less-visible forms of poverty, such as the countless thousands in overcrowded peripheral urban slums across Africa. Another less-visible and more temporary form are refugee camps, generated by conflict or natural disaster, generally located near country borders or other remote rural areas.

These invisible cities, ignored by official statistics and omitted from maps, are often excluded from formal governance structures and are highly deprived in terms of the resources and powers normally available in the visible parts of the city. Visible or not, high poverty levels such as, for instance, in the slums of Addis Ababa, Bobodioulasso or Kinshasa, make poverty a dismal reality calling for urgent action.

African rates of urbanization, often exceeding 4 to 5 per cent per annum, are close to those of Western cities at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, with the same associated problems of high child mortality, low life expectancy and low literacy. However, the development of African cities is not associated with the commensurate economic growth and effective redistributive measures required to alleviate poverty.

**Today, one of every two or three African city-dwellers lives in life-threatening conditions.**

In 1990, 241 million Africans (47.4 per cent of what?? — the urban population) were living on less than US \$1 a day<sup>1</sup>. In 1999, there were 315 million, averaging 49 per cent of the total population. **The number of poor is expected to reach 404 million in 2015 or 46 percent<sup>2</sup>.** UNCTAD estimates show an even worse scenario for Least Developed



## More urban poor in life-threatening conditions

Countries (LDCs) in Africa. Compared with LDCs elsewhere in the world, poverty in African LDCs is rising markedly. According to the agency, the proportion of people in 29 African LDCs living below \$2 per day increased from 82 per cent in the late 1960s to 87.5 per cent in the late 1990s. For those in extreme poverty under \$1 per day the increase was from 55.8 per cent to 64.9 per cent. The number of Africans living in extreme poverty in these countries rose dramatically from 89.6 million to 233.5 million over the same period.

**The situation is not only one of slow and erratic economic growth but rather of regressive change in income distribution<sup>3</sup> as the poorest get poorer, with reduced per capita incomes.**

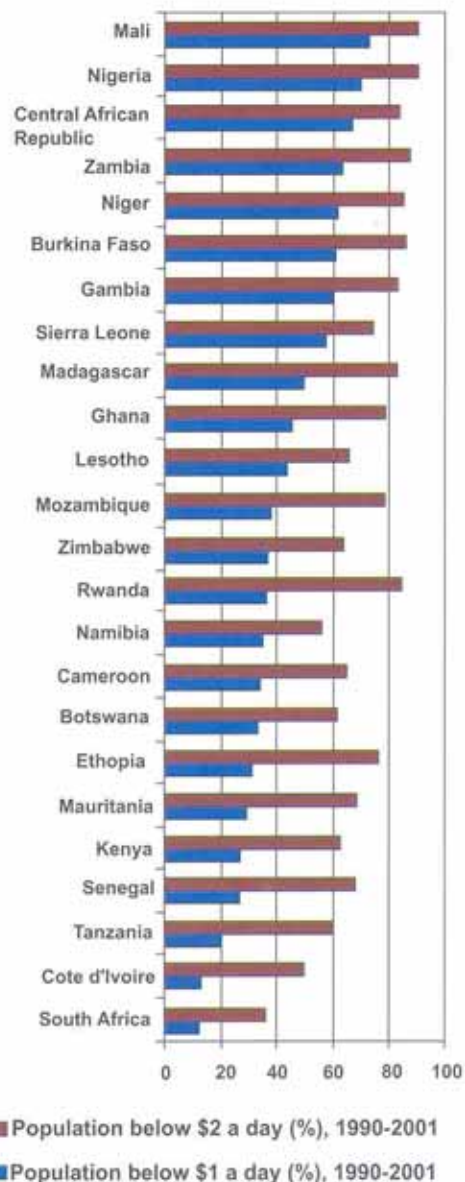
In some African countries, there has been a process of equalizing downwards as real wages have fallen, pushing large numbers of urban workers below the poverty line<sup>4</sup>.

**According to UNDP, only five of sub-Saharan Africa's 47 countries are expected to meet the global goal of halving the number of people living in poverty by 2015. This cannot be reversed unless there is a substantial increase of the per-capita income, without increasing inequalities.**

Lack of pro-poor policies is not only an impediment to growth; poverty itself hinders economic growth by limiting the domestic resources available for private investment and public goods.

**In today's context of globalization, international economic relationships could alleviate poverty. In practice, as argued by many, they reinforce it.**

### Poverty levels in Africa



## **Urbanization prospects**

Africa is currently growing by 250,000 new children every week.

**But it is in city slums that populations are growing fastest because they absorb 190,000 new-born babies and migrants each week.**

As such, urban slums absorb about three-quarters of the population growth in African cities.

The levels of urbanization in Africa today are similar to those industrialized Europe at the end of the 19th century. Sub-Saharan Africa presents some of the highest urbanization rates, often exceeding 5 per cent per annum, twice as high as Latin America and Asia. These current trends on population and human settlement growth defy belief. Indeed, Africa has overtaken Asia with a slight margin<sup>5</sup>. Estimates and projections show that secondary cities continued to grow most rapidly — in nearly all cases much faster than the capitals or other larger cities. It is the small cities and towns that continue to absorb the majority of new urban population.

**Over the next two decades, around 87 per cent of the population growth in Africa will be in urban areas.**

By the year 2007, more than half of the world's population will live in urban areas and approximately 40 per cent of them will be children below 15 years. Over 60 per cent of these will live in African cities - mega-villages that present little or no advantage over rural areas in terms of basic services or health.

Urban areas will strongly influence the world of the 21st century, and urban and rural populations will be increasingly interdependent for their economic, social and environmental well-being. Among the economic and social factors influencing this process are population growth, voluntary and involuntary migration, real and perceived employment opportunities, cultural expectations, changing consumption and production patterns and serious imbalances and disparities among regions<sup>6</sup>.

**With 35.7 per cent of their populations living in urban areas in 2003**, Africa is expected to experience rapid rates of urbanization during 2000-2030, so that by 2030, 51 per cent of its inhabitants will live in urban areas.

**The urban transition will be reached around the year 2030, when urban dwellers will start to outnumber rural inhabitants in Sub-Saharan Africa.**

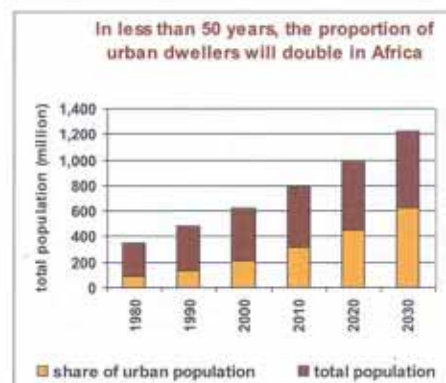
However, urbanization patterns show tremendous differences between sub-regions and countries. While the urban transition has already been reached in Southern Africa at the end of the 1990s, due to the large urban population increase in South Africa, Namibia, Swaziland and Lesotho in the same region still had urbanization rates below 30 per cent in 2003. By 2030, while urbanization in Congo, Gabon, South Africa, Botswana and Mauritania will have reached more than 70 per cent, like in today's industrial world, other countries will be still behind with rates equal or below 30 per cent in Burundi, Malawi, Rwanda or Ethiopia.



## Urbanization prospects

Urbanization without growth<sup>7</sup>  
 Urbanization in other regions has been closely related to industrialization and accompanying increase of production, employment opportunities and economic boom. Developing World urbanization in the last 50 years continued at the breakneck pace of 3.8 per cent per annum from 1960 through the 1980s and early 1990s in spite of falling wages, soaring prices and skyrocketing unemployment<sup>8</sup>. The African case is particularly paradoxical. How could cities in Cote d'Ivoire, Tanzania, Gabon and elsewhere — whose economies were contracting by 2 to 5 per cent per year — still sustain a population growth of 5 to 8 per cent per annum?<sup>9</sup> Part of the answer

lies in the experience of enforced policies of agricultural deregulation which accelerated the exodus of surplus rural labour to urban slums even as cities ceased to be job machines.



### The African Scenario

Indicators	Year	Africa	World	
Total population	2001	635 million	6,134 million	• Africa represents 10 per cent of the World's total population
Urban population living in slums	2001	71.9%	31.6%	• There are 40 per cent more slum dwellers in African cities than in an average city worldwide
Urban population	2000 2015	33.9% 42.7%	47.2% 53.7%	• Africa is less urbanized than the rest of the World by 13 per cent in 2000. This difference will be of 11 per cent in 2015.
Population Growth	2000-2015	2.4%	1.2%	• African population is growing 1.2 per cent faster than the World population
Urban Population growth	2000-2005	3.76%	2.9%	• African urban population is growing almost 1 per cent faster than the World urban population
Population below \$1 a day	1987 1998 2015	217 million 291 million 345 million	879.8 million 885.7 million	• The African poor represent about a quarter of the World poor
Population living on less than \$1 a day	1987-1998	46.6% 46.3%	28.3% 26.2%	• Africa had about 20 per cent more poor than the World average in 1998
Under-five mortality	2000	174/1000	81/1000	• Under-five mortality in Africa is 93/1000 higher than the World average
Life expectancy at birth	2000	48.7 years	66.9 years	• Africans live 18 years less than the World average
Probability at birth for women of surviving to age 65	1995-2000	41.4%	72.2%	• The probability of African women surviving to age 65 is 30 per cent less than the World average
Urban population without adequate access to sanitation	2001	57.2%	20.9%	• Africans are 36 per cent below the world average in terms of access to sanitation in cities
People (15-49) living with HIV/AIDS	2002	29.4 million	42 million	• Africans living with HIV/AIDS represent 70 per cent of the World population living with HIV/AIDS
Refugees	2002	3,305,100	12,051,100	• Africa hosts 27 per cent of the world's refugees
GDP per capita PPP (\$US)	2000	1,690	7,446	• The GDP per African inhabitant is less than 1/4 of the average World GDP per person

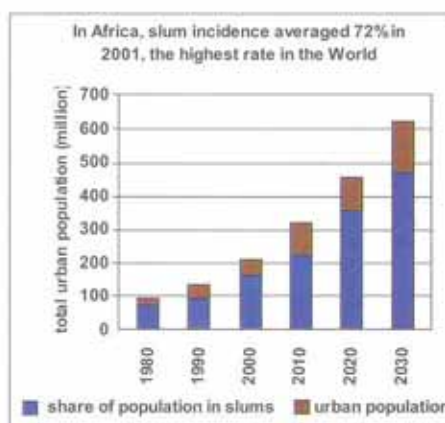
Sources: UNAIDS, UNCTAD, UNDP, UN-HABITAT, UNHCR, World Bank.

## Urbanization Challenges in Sub-Saharan Africa

### Urbanization prospects

#### Urban population in African countries as percentage of the total population

	2003	2030
<b>Eastern Africa</b>	<b>26.0</b>	<b>41.0</b>
Burundi	9.9	22.6
Comoros	35.0	54.1
Djibouti	83.7	90.1
Eritrea	19.9	37.4
Ethiopia	15.6	28.7
Kenya	39.4	62.7
Madagascar	26.5	40.7
Malawi	16.3	32.0
Mauritius	43.3	55.8
Mozambique	35.6	60.0
RÉunion	91.5	96.0
Rwanda	18.3	58.5
Seychelles	49.9	61.7
Somalia	34.8	53.9
Uganda	12.2	20.4
Un. Rep.of Tanzania	35.4	58.2
Zambia	35.7	50.2
Zimbabwe	34.9	51.8
<b>Middle Africa</b>	<b>36.8</b>	<b>54.4</b>
Angola	35.7	55.9
Cameroon	51.4	69.2
Central African Rep.	42.7	60.5
Chad	24.9	42.1
Congo	53.5	67.4
Dem. Rep.of Congo	31.6	51.0
Equatorial Guinea	48.1	67.6
Gabon	83.8	91.5
S.º TomÉ and Príncipe	37.8	48.7
Southern Africa	53.8	67.0
Botswana	51.6	65.7
Lesotho	17.9	29.8
Namibia	32.4	50.9
South Africa	56.9	70.0
Swaziland	23.5	36.6
<b>Western Africa</b>	<b>42.2</b>	<b>58.9</b>
Benin	44.6	63.5
Burkina Faso	17.8	33.0
Cape Verde	55.9	72.7
Côte d'Ivoire	44.9	60.4
Gambia	26.1	35.7
Ghana	45.4	58.3
Guinea	34.9	55.3
Guinea-Bissau	34.0	54.9
Liberia	46.7	63.4
Mali	32.3	52.0
Mauritania	61.8	81.1
Niger	22.2	41.0
Nigeria	46.7	65.0
Saint Helena	35.5	50.5
Senegal	49.6	67.1
Sierra Leone	38.8	58.7
Togo	35.1	54.6
<b>Sub-Saharan Africa</b>	<b>35.7</b>	<b>51.2</b>



Source: UN-HABITAT Global Urban Observatory, 2001 data

#### Population growth of largest African cities

	Population (millions)			Annual rate of change (per cent)
	1975	2003	2015	
Abidjan	1	3.3	4.4	2.2
Accra	0.7	1.8	2.6	2.6
Addis Ababa	0.9	2.7	4.1	3.8
Antananarivo	0.5	1.7	2.6	3.6
Bamako	0.4	1.3	2.2	4.6
Brazzaville	0.3	1.1	1.6	3.3
Cape Town	1.3	3	3.2	0.2
Conakry	0.6	1.4	2.1	3.8
Dakar	0.8	2.2	3.1	2.9
Douala	0.4	1.9	2.5	1.9
Durban	0.9	2.6	2.7	0.1
East Rand	1	2.8	3.4	1
Ibadan	1	2.3	3	2.5
Johannesburg	1.5	3.1	3.7	0.7
Kaduna	0.3	1.3	1.7	2.7
Kampala	0.4	1.2	2	4.2
Kano	0.6	2.8	3.7	2.6
Kinshasa	1.7	5.3	8.7	4
Lagos	1.9	10.1	17	3.9
Luanda	0.7	2.6	4.3	4.1
Lusaka	0.4	1.4	1.8	2.2
Maputo	0.5	1.2	1.9	3.4
Pretoria	0.6	1.2	1.4	0.6

Source: UN Population Division, World Urbanization Prospects, 2003



## High slum incidence in fast-growing cities

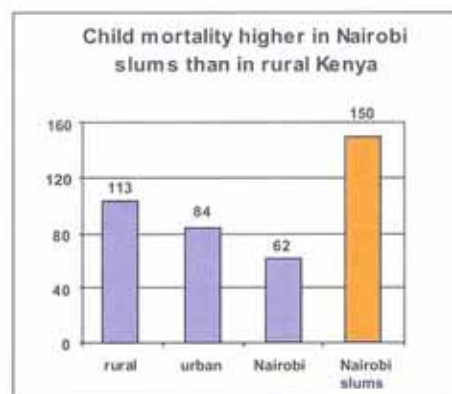
**In 2001, 166.2 million people or 72 per cent of African urban residents were living in slums<sup>10</sup>.** This shocking figure is accompanied by severe developmental problems, illustrated by the continent's poor life expectancy, high infant and child mortality, HIV/AIDS prevalence, and literacy particularly where it concerns women and girls.

Future demographic prospects will add to the challenges. In the next 25 years, roughly 400 million people will be added to the Africa's urban population, putting tremendous pressure on cities. Data show that high urban growth is associated with high slum incidence and that Africa is likely to be the host of an exceptionally large slum population in the years to come.

**During the 1990-2001 period, African urban slum populations increased by about 65 millions,** at an average annual rate of 4.5 per cent, about 2 per cent more than the total population growth (2.7 per cent). Based on these estimates, if no effective pro-poor policies are undertaken, urban slum populations are likely to double, on average, every 15 years while the total population doubles every 26 years. In 2015, the urban slum population of Africa should reach 332 million. These estimates are based on several demographic assumptions, which do not take into account the not yet determined impacts of HIV/AIDS and man-made disasters on population growth and slum formation, particularly in cities. Uncontrolled HIV/AIDS may aggravate population loss, leading to a smaller work force, higher poverty and further slum growth, with a parallel decreasing population growth in cities. This may mean a higher proportion of slum dwellers in the context of reduced

population growth.

Behind these general prospects, the real determining factors of slum formation vary tremendously from one country to another. Also, the national aggregates hide specific city-to-city realities. Furthermore, **available city aggregates data hinder dramatic intra-city differentials in terms of human development and basic services to truly describe the specific living conditions of the different communities living in slums.** In that respect, recent studies show considerable variations between people living in slums and those living in non-slum areas. For instance, while in Nairobi's slums, 11.3 per cent of the children die before reaching the age of 5, only 0.78 per cent die before the same age in non-slum areas. Such studies also show the dramatic differences between urban slums, non-slum areas and rural settlements. Using the same example, under 5 mortality rates and morbidity rates in slum areas equal or exceed those of rural areas<sup>11</sup>.



Source: African Population and Health Research Centre, 2003



## Urbanization Challenges in Sub-Saharan Africa

### The specifics of African urban slums

Measures of urban slum attributes in the African context show that the lack of improved sanitation is the most important determinant of slums. About 57 per cent of urban Africans do not have access to improved forms of sanitation. In some countries, this figure exceeds 80 per cent of the population, like in Niger, Sierra Leone and Mali.

The lack of improved water supply appears as the second determining factor, affecting about one fifth of urban Africa<sup>12</sup>.

The lack of sufficient living space or overcrowding comes as the third factor widely varying from one country to another. Compounding the slum attribute data, the worst scenarios, where more than 80 per cent of the population live in slum conditions, are found in West Africa - in Sierra Leone, Guinea Bissau, Niger, Mali and Mauritania. Unaccounted for in the available slum estimates is the vulnerability of slum dwellers to eviction which defines the security of tenure. The available numbers of reported evictions suggest

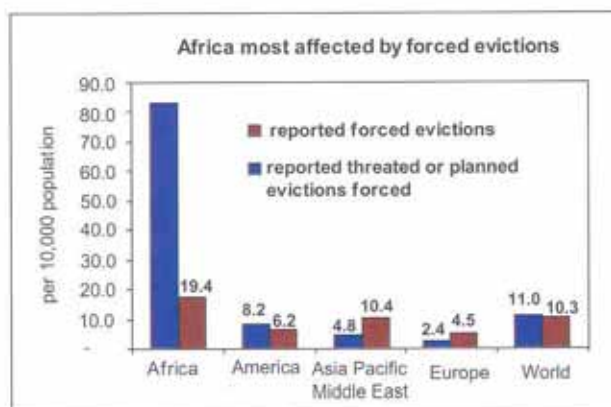
#### Urban slum and human development

the tremendous damage that eviction generates in Africa as compared to the other regions.

**Eviction is still widely practiced in Africa because of converging factors linked to poor governance, conflicts and insecurity.** The impact of evictions is considerable for the populations, especially the poor. It is

usually the poor who are evicted - wealthier classes virtually never face forced eviction, and never mass eviction. Studies show that forced evictions

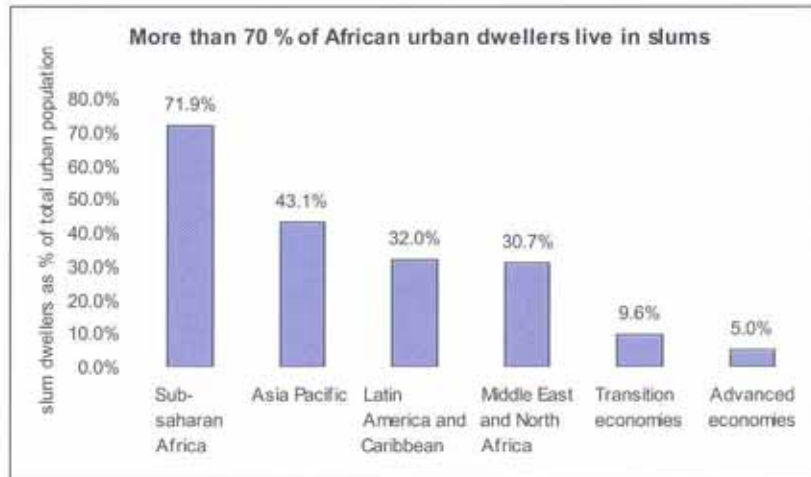
are often violent, and include human rights abuses beyond the violation of the right to adequate housing. Also, evictees tend to end up worse off than before the eviction. Finally, forced evictions impact most negatively on women and children<sup>13</sup>. Before eviction itself, which constitutes the ultimate shift, the threat of eviction, real or virtually generated by the general lack security of occupation, constitutes in itself an impediment to human development and an additional factor which pushes populations into the poverty trap.



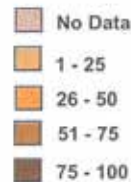
Development indicators	Urban slum indicators per percent of urban population					Slum dwellers	
	urban population (%) (2000)	population growth (%) (2000-2015)	lacking improved water	lacking improved sanitation	lacking sufficient living area	without durable housing	per cent of urban population
High	78.5	0.4	0.9	2.7	0	4.1	7.6
Medium	42.6	0.8	6.5	24.2	6.7	4.4	35.6
Low	29.7	1.7	15.1	54.5	30.5	21.9	79.7

Source: UN-HABITAT, 2003; UNDP, 2002

## The specifics of African urban slums



**Urban Slums in Africa**  
% of Slum Population in Urban Areas



Region	urban population ('000)	urban population as % of total	slum dwellers as % of total urban population
Sub-saharan Africa	231,052	36.20%	71.90%
Asia Pacific	1,217,725	59.10%	43.10%
Latin America and Caribbean	399,419	77.80%	32.00%
Middle East and North Africa	139,709	58.10%	30.70%
Transition economies	258,536	65.10%	9.60%
Advanced economies	676,494	79.30%	5.00%
World	2,923,184	62.50%	31.60%
Developing countries	2,021,665	40.90%	43.00%
Least developed countries	179,239	26.20%	78.20%

Source: UN-HABITAT Global Urban Observatory, 2001 data





### Defining Slums

A **slum household** is defined as a group of individuals living under the same roof lacking **one or more** of the conditions below:

#### 1. Access to improved water

A household is considered to have access to improved water supply if it has sufficient amount of water for family use, at an affordable price, available to household members without being subject to extreme effort, especially to women and children.

#### 2. Access to improved sanitation

A household is considered to have adequate access to sanitation, if an excreta disposal system, either in the form of a private toilet or a public toilet shared with a reasonable number of people, is available to household members.

#### 3. Security of tenure

Secure Tenure is the right of all individuals and groups to effective

protection by the State against forced evictions. People have secure tenure when: 1/ There is evidence of documentation that can be used as proof of secure tenure status; 2/ There is either de facto or perceived protection from forced evictions.

#### 4. Structural quality and durability of dwellings

A house is considered as durable if it is built on a non-hazardous location and has a structure permanent and adequate enough to protect its inhabitants from the extremes of climatic conditions such as rain, heat, cold, humidity.

#### 5. Sufficient-living area

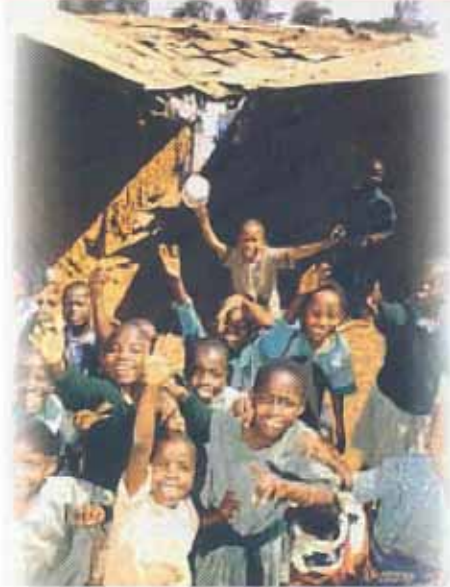
A house is considered to provide a sufficient living area for the household members if not more than two people share the same room.

Source: UN-HABITAT, *Expert Group Meeting on Urban Indicators*, 28-30 October 2002





## Cultural resistances in slums



Abidjan or Lagos are well known for their particular ethnic slums, gathering particular communities ruled by strong traditional ethnic and clan solidarity. These powerful ties secure social capital for the communities.



Although slums have been shaped by historical colonial segregations or racial historical divisions like in South Africa, they are also places of cultural resistance where ethnic groups and clans are able to develop survival strategies on the basis of strong solidarity. Slums are the manifestation of socio-economic divides but also the reflection of traditional societal divisions, based on ethnic and religious identity. Abidjan or Lagos for instance are well known for their particular ethnic slums, gathering particular communities ruled by strong traditional ethnic and clan solidarity. These powerful ties secure social capital for the communities.

However, in large cities, the vigor of clan and ethnic solidarity tend to diminish. In rural areas for instance, one individual may well feed thirty persons from his/her salary. In cities, the needs are much higher as saving and investing is getting increasingly difficult and individualism sometimes takes over. Also, ethnic identity is sometimes used through political manipulation as in the example of Nairobi slums, used as political battlegrounds. The Kibera slum dispute in 2001 started between landlords and tenants over rent. It was however stirred up by the divisive manoeuvres of politicians using particular ethnic differences to increase tensions. Other examples may be found as a consequence of negative strength of patriarchy and patronage used in some societies, which constitute impediments to the building of socio-economic and cultural resistances in slums.

Nevertheless, when compared to other regions, Africa seems to be extremely defiant to imported values and population able to generate new strategies in order to cope with the new forces of globalization.

## Urbanization Challenges in Sub-Saharan Africa

### The Water and Sanitation Challenges

The UN HABITAT Global Report on Water and Sanitation in the World's Cities<sup>15</sup> estimates that in Africa as many as 150 million urban dwellers, representing up to 50 per cent of the urban population, do not have adequate water supplies while 180 million, roughly 60 per cent of people living in urban areas, lack adequate sanitation. The impact on the in term of health has been well documented. Each year, worldwide, 2,2 million deaths or 4 per cent of all deaths, can be attributed to inadequate supply of water and sanitation. In addition the poor households



not only pay between 10 to 100 times as much as the rich for a liter of water while using a much higher proportion of their resources. If the International community hopes to meet the MDG 7, which includes the target of halving the number of people without access to clean water and inadequate sanitation by 2015, then the world is going to confront the problems of the urban poor. In fact in the rapidly urbanizing world successfully meeting this goal is closely linked to the commitment of improving the living conditions of at least 100 million slums dwellers by 2020.

City level data from 43 African cities show that 83 per cent of the population lack toilets connected to sewers. In the largest cities in Asia, this is 55per cent.

For example, for the slum of Mahira, a section of Haruma informal settlement in Nairobi, there is only one toilet per 10 units and two bathrooms for a settlement of 332 households for 1,500 inhabitants. In other words, what these individual city studies indicates is that if the assessment process is widened to measure the real proportion with access to safe water and those with access to clean toilet facilities, the

number of urban dwellers who are inadequately served is far much higher than the number officially acknowledged.

We entered the urban millennium when already half of humanity lives in urban areas. Of this, one-third of the

urban population, an estimated 1 billion people, live without adequate sanitation and basic services. Despite the increasing urbanization of poverty, many bilateral and multilateral donors partners in Africa avoid supporting programmes targeting poor urban populations on the assumption that the poor in cities are privileged and better off than those in rural areas. In Africa, the proportion of total donor funding for urban needs is 2-12 per cent of their total assistance in the region. There is no doubt that this proportion must increase if we have to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and there are positive signs towards this direction with various initiatives announced by the African



## The Water and Sanitation Challenges

Development Bank, the European Union, the World Bank and other bilateral donors. However, if increased investment is critical, even more critical is the urgent need to find better mechanisms for providing the poor with water and sanitation. Corruption, poor governance and lack of political support are the major reasons advanced by aid agencies and development banks for withdrawing from large-scale water capital investment in urban Africa. And when they turn to privatization, which is not at all the panacea in this sector, it has proven difficult to reconcile large private companies' interest and priorities with the slow and often expensive investment needed to ensure adequate access for poor and low income groups of urban population.

UN Habitat's Water for African Cities Programme is a direct follow up of the 1997 Cape Town Declaration adopted by African ministers to address the urgent need for managing water in African Cities. It is the first ever initiative to support municipalities and local authorities in managing growing water demand while protecting their fresh water resources from increased wastage and pollution.



### Urban households without access to improved water sources (%)

Sierra Leone	77.0
Guinea-Bissau	71.0
Chad	69.0
Angola	66.0
Equatorial Guinea	55.0
Rwanda	40.0
Eritrea	37.0
Niger	30.0
Congo	29.0
Uganda	28.0
Guinea	28.0
Gabon	27.0
Benin	26.0
Mali	26.0
Ethiopia	23.0
Somalia	23.0
Tanzania	20.0
Gambia	20.0
Nigeria	19.0
Cameroon	18.0
Burkina Faso	16.0
Togo	15.0
Madagascar	15.0

Source: UN-HABITAT Global Urban Observatory, 2001 data



## Urbanization Challenges in Sub-Saharan Africa

### The Particular impact of HIV

Africa, the world's worst afflicted region, is now home to an estimated 29.4 million people infected with HIV/AIDS. More than 17 million have already died from HIV/AIDS-related diseases in the region. The worst of the epidemic clearly has still to come, notably in southern Africa where rampant epidemics are under way. In four southern African countries, adult HIV prevalence has risen higher than initially envisaged: Botswana (38.8 per cent), Lesotho (31 per cent), Swaziland (33.4 per cent) and Zimbabwe (33.7 per cent). This high incidence affecting the lives of young productive adults, has heavy implications, one of them being the severe food crises faced in the latter three countries<sup>16</sup>.

Studies reveal that HIV-induced declines in gross domestic product levels in Sub-Saharan Africa are severely undermining poverty alleviation efforts in developing countries.

**The pandemic may currently shave off up to 2 per cent of annual economic growth in the worst affected countries.**

Some countries are likely to see their GNP shrink by up to 40 per cent within 20 years. On the whole, Africa's income growth per capita is being reduced by about 0.7 per cent per year because of HIV/AIDS<sup>17</sup>. In Botswana and Zimbabwe, life expectancy is anticipated to fall by as much as 30 years, and as much as one-quarter of the respective populations could die by 2010. This increased mortality effectively strips families of breadwinners, field labor, and parents and is already producing a huge group of AIDS orphans<sup>18</sup>.

On-going economic recession aggravates transmission of HIV/AIDS through increased migration, which

disrupts rural families and increases risk for that population. High poverty levels and the widening rural/urban gap in incomes and services have generated large seasonal or temporary population movements to cities in Africa. Those population flows heighten potential to spread HIV/AIDS at both ends, especially among returning migrants who flaunt their wealth and acquire more partners. When lack of information about HIV/AIDS and diminished elder authority are combined with the customary polygamy, Maasai labor migrants, for instance, are particularly



at risk to contracting HIV in cities, and rapidly spreading it through their rural homelands<sup>19</sup>. Largely dependent on massive road-transportation systems throughout the continent, the convoys of trucks traversing Africa have been dubbed The AIDS Express and constitute a formidable force in the spread of HIV/AIDS through the trucker-prostitute contacts as they occur along the major transportation routes. **Recent studies also show that the situation of extreme deprivation in cities, particularly in slums, traps residents into engaging in risky sexual behaviour for economic survival.**

## The Particular impact of HIV



Data show that slum residents start sexual intercourse younger, have more sexual partners, and are less likely than other city residents to know of or adopt preventive measures against contracting HIV/AIDS<sup>20</sup>.

While it has been rightly pointed that poverty, the lack of education, and gender inequality are key contributing factors in the AIDS pandemic, recent literature emphasizes the **strong links between AIDS and violent conflict in Africa**. It appears that the current instability and violence in the region encourages conditions favorable to the spread of the HIV virus. The reverse may also occur, with the explosion of HIV/AIDS contributing to further instability and conflict on the continent in coming years<sup>21</sup>. Soldiers have been identified as a principal vector of the AIDS epidemic in Africa. Indeed, this group is one of the most highly infected on the continent<sup>22</sup>.

### Sexual risk-taking in the slums of Nairobi

A study conducted by the African Population and Health Research Center shows that slum women are more vulnerable to HIV/AIDS infection than their non-slum counterparts. Women who live in slums become sexually active about 3 years earlier and are about 2.8 times more likely to have multiple sex partners than non-slum residents. The difference in the median age at first intercourse between slum and non-slum

residents who grew up in a city is five years. Young women (15-24 years) and married women in slums are 6.4 and 3.7 times more likely to have multiple partners than their non-slum counterparts. Data also show a marked difference between slum and non-slum residents in perception of the best ways to avoid contracting the HIV virus. Slum women are less likely to practicing abstinence, sticking to one partner, and using of condoms. Slum dwellers' low average age for commencement of sexual activity and greater number of partners are largely the result of the extreme deprivation that prevails in slums. High levels of unemployment, unstable sources of income and the predominance of low-paying jobs push many women and children into prostitution to supplement household incomes. Also, slum parents' authority over their children's sexual behaviour is greatly undermined with the lack of parents' privacy in crowded single-room accommodations.

*Source: Eliya Msiyaphazi Zulu, F. Nii-Amoo Dodoo and Alex Chika-Ezeh, Sexual Risk-Taking in the Slums of Nairobi, Kenya, in Population Studies, 56 (2002), pp. 311-323.*



## The toll of disaster and conflicts

**One in three African countries has lately experienced or is still experiencing armed conflict.**

Countries in conflict have lately experienced major declines in incomes such as for instance, Sierra Leone, the Democratic Republic of Congo, the Central African Republic and more recently, Cote d'Ivoire. Incomes have also fallen sharply in Zimbabwe, which is not formally in a conflict situation. On the other hand, countries that have reconciled from war, like Mozambique,

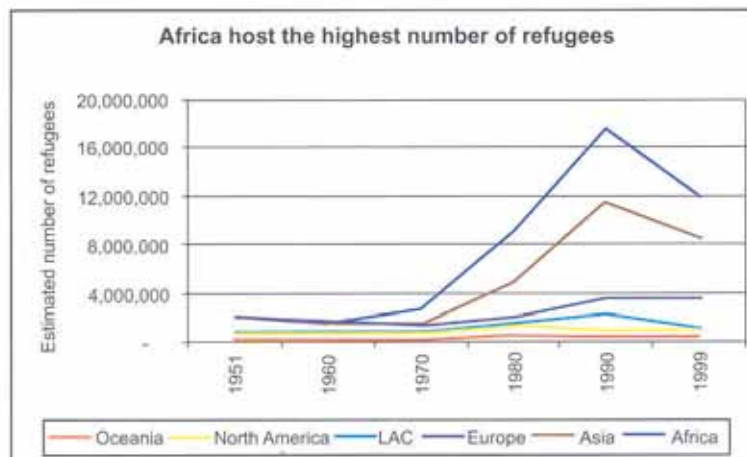
Rwanda, Uganda, Tanzania and Ethiopia, show better economic growth rates. Overall, high poverty rates and inequality are probably largely imputable to conflicts in

most countries in the region and vice-versa. High poverty rates, meaning low financial, human and social capital, as argued above (chapeau), also creates the conditions for poor governance and higher probabilities for conflicts and man-made disasters.

**As a result of conflict-generated poverty and the commensurate destruction of physical and social infrastructure, cities in war-torn countries generate a higher rate of slum dwellers and displaced persons.** Countries with recent or on-going

conflicts, such as Angola, Burundi, Central African Republic, Cote d'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of Congo, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Liberia, Rwanda and Sierra Leone, on average have 5 per cent more persons in slums than the continental average. This is most probably an underestimation as data in war-torn countries are usually not available.

**Africa hosts 30 per cent of the refugees in the World:**



525,000 Burundians, 500,000 Somalis, 490,000 Sierra Leoneans, 475,000 Sudanese, 350,000 Angolans, 345,000 Eritreans, 290,000 Liberians, and 250,000 Congolese.

Displacement of populations, mostly women and children, either internally or across borders, are out of ordinary proportions. Lately, in Liberia, Somalia, Sudan, and in Cote d'Ivoire, more than 1 million people have been displaced. Following the genocide in Rwanda in

## The toll of disaster and conflicts

1994, an estimated 250,000 Rwandans swept into Tanzania over a period of 24 hours, creating a refugee city that, overnight, became Tanzania's second largest town. Such displacements present huge challenges in terms of management



of human settlements. Large pockets of refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs) remain a continuing source of political friction, violence and insecurity in African cities.

**Large concentrations of refugees and IDPs in refugee camps, where conditions are similar to those of urban slums often put immense strain on the local environment, aggravating relations with indigenous groups.**

Many refugees are faced with the choice of either remaining in conflict zones and risking exposure to atrocity by armed forces, or seeking refuge in camps where they may be subjected to forced recruitment by rebel groups and obnoxious governments or abusive insurgencies. They live in very poor conditions and are among the most

vulnerable, lacking most basic services while surviving on minimum food requirements. Destroying food supplies and driving people from their lands are part of the techniques in war, applied in the recent years.

Today, there are about 40 million Africans struggling against starvation, most of them women and children.

The causes of Africa's food crises remain a lethal combination of recurring droughts, failed economic policies, war, and the widening impact of AIDS, which has damaged the food sector and the capacity of governments to respond.

In southern Africa, and to a lesser degree in the Horn of Africa, the impact of AIDS on the political and economic structure grows daily. The nexus between political violence and food shortages is still most easily illustrated in Angola where the humanitarian situation remains serious.



## Urbanization Challenges in Sub-Saharan Africa

### The toll of disaster and conflicts

#### Major armed conflicts (1998-2003)

Country	Ethnic	Political	International
Angola		X	X
Benin			
Botswana			
Burkina Faso			
Burundi	X		
Cameroon			
Cape Verde			
Central African Rep.		X	
Chad	X	X	
Comoros		X	
Congo	X	X	
Côte d'Ivoire	X	X	
Dem. Rep. of Congo			X
Djibouti			
Equatorial Guinea			
Eritrea			X
Ethiopia			X
Gabon			
Gambia			
Ghana			
Guinea		X	
Guinea-Bissau		X	
Kenya			
Lesotho		X	
Liberia	X	X	
Madagascar			
Malawi			
Mali			
Mauritius			
Mayotte			
Mozambique			
Namibia			X
Niger	X		
Nigeria	X		
Réunion			
Rwanda	X		X
Sao Tome and Principe			
Senegal	X		
Seychelles			
Sierra Leone	X	X	
Somalia		X	
South Africa			
Sudan	X		
Swaziland			
Togo			
Uganda	X	X	X
UN Rep. of Tanzania			
Zambia			
Zimbabwe			X

#### Mass refugee camps in Guinea

Guinea hosts one of the largest refugee populations in the world. They are mainly more than 300,000 Sierra Leoneans, up to 65 per cent of whom are estimated to be under eighteen. The Gueckedou area hosts refugee camps for Sierra Leoneans, within a peninsula-like territory stretching into eastern Sierra Leone. A river running along the border forms a natural barrier between this area of Guinea and Sierra Leone, providing minimal protection to refugees from soldiers who operate in the border area.

The camps range in population from several thousand refugees to more than 20,000. The refugees have constructed mud huts, which they call booths, and community buildings in the camps. Every camp has a camp chairman and a camp committee which, in a sense, can be considered local government structures. Local Guinean gendarmes are responsible for security within the camps but, with the exception of patrolling for suspected RUF rebels, do not maintain a significant presence in the camps. In addition, refugees have begun establishing community organizations in the camps. Nearly every camp has established women's associations which have attempted to ensure that women's views are taken into account in the camps, especially when it comes to sexual violence. Children in the refugee camps face serious protection concerns at the hands of their care-givers including physical abuse, sexual abuse and exploitation, denial of food, hazardous labor exploitation, and denial of education. These concerns are particularly acute for children separated from their parents during the war.

*Sources: Forgotten Children of War - Sierra Leonean Refugee Children In Guinea, Human Rights Watch, July 1999 and Human Rights Watch interview, Koulomba, February 24, 1999.*



## The toll of disasters and conflicts

### **Refugee camps in Eastern Democratic Republic of Congo**

The human toll of the 1994 Rwandan crisis was in the millions: 800,000 victims of the genocide, 2 million refugees outside Rwanda, and some 1.5 million internally displaced. The refugee camps, especially those in eastern DRC, were initially in complete disarray without the most basic minimum services. In July 1994, cholera and other diseases broke out, killing tens of thousands, affecting most the Goma camps, where about 1 million refugees lived. Also, the presence of armed elements among refugee populations has exposed civilians to increased risks. The forced population movements placed people at greater risk to HIV transmission. Rape and other forms of sexual and gender-related violence perpetrated by soldiers or paramilitary forces often become weapons of war and a tactic to terrorize.

*Source: UNHCR, The State of the World's Refugees, 2000*

### **Tsunami-affected communities in Somalia**

Thousands of people's lives in Somalia were shattered by the Indian Ocean tsunami wave on 26 December, 2004. Up to 1,500 buildings and 40 villages in northeastern Somalia were damaged by the tsunami. Once the immediate humanitarian crisis has abated, UN-HABITAT said it planned to provide basic shelter to homeless people by repairing properties and basic infrastructure. At least 150 people are estimated to have died. Residents of the fishing community of Hafun, the

worst hit area, lost more than half their homes, leaving them without shelter, clean water, sanitation and food. They were living 300-400 meters from the shore in makeshift shelters made from branches and plastic sheeting provided by UNICEF after vacating a school that had become their home. With local water sources contaminated, UNICEF is collaborating with the Somali Red Crescent Society to provide household chlorination.

Limited amounts of safe drinking water are also being transported from 92 km away in trucks. Other responses had come from UN-HABITAT, which had, under the flash inter-agency appeal launched by UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan on 5 January, initiated a rapid response effort aimed at helping survivors rebuild their lives.

*Source: IRIN Press release, 11 January 2005*

### **Desperation in Darfur**

An estimated 1.2 million people in Darfur region have fled their villages and are camped in 129 settlements across an area the size of France. Thousands, including thousands of children under five, are dying every month from easily preventable and treatable diseases. The crude mortality rate usually used to define a humanitarian crisis is one death per 10,000 people per day. A WHO survey found the crude mortality rate to be 1.5 deaths per 10,000 people per day in North Darfur, and 2.9 in West Darfur. Displaced people, in north and west Darfur are dying at between three and six times the expected rate. Diarrhoea in particular is linked to the deaths of half to three-quarters of the children



### Conclusion

under five. The combination of crowded conditions in the settlements, shortage of clean water, inadequate latrines, insufficient soap, and the mire caused by rain-soaked mud mingling with excreta, have combined to make hygiene an impossible goal for people living in small, tarpaulin-covered huts. Some households reported deaths due to violence - particularly among men aged between 15 and 45. Injuries and violence were linked to 15 per cent of total deaths. The humanitarian community has already done much to reduce death and promote survival. The extra efforts, needed now, include increased water and sanitation in the camps, accessible primary health care, security for displaced people and humanitarian workers, improved camp management and the assurance of adequate financial resources for many months to come.

*Source: WHO Press Release  
(13 Sept. 2004)*

Cities and towns have always been centres of opportunity, but without land, adequate shelter and basic services, urban environments can be among the most life-threatening on earth<sup>23</sup>. Rapid urbanization, the concentration of the urban population in large cities, the spread of slums, the lack of critical basic amenities, and the rapid growth of mega-cities are among the most significant transformation of human settlements in Africa. Today, the challenge for African Governments, leaders and thinkers is how to prepare our cities to accommodate the inevitable population pressure, the social and economic dynamics, security threat, environmental challenge, governance and institutional performance<sup>24</sup>.

The concept of urban development sustainability in Africa calls for a new approach to urban governance and urbanization, involving social, economic, environmental and political-institutional dimensions of development. It brings together issues

## Conclusion

such of urban rural linkages and interactions and the relationships between all spheres of government, the private sector and the communities. Good urban governance in Africa and the role of cities and local authorities are thus central to the pursuit of sustainable development in an urbanizing Africa. Arguably, the vast majority of cities and local authorities in Africa have much to do to implement good governance and to improve their day-to-day management transparency and accountability.

The work led by UN-HABITAT, the Municipal Development Programme, the Africities movement, the Council of Cities and Regions in Africa, and the global level - the New Economic Partnership for African Development, the United Cities and Local Governments and the World Urban Forum - are progressively charting new avenues for strengthening the capacity of local authorities in the region.

The role of local authorities in improving urban governance in Africa, requires a fundamental review of the concept of city and the laws, by-laws and policies that govern cities, towns and urban development in the region. In addition to their conventional role as provider of basic infrastructure and social services, cities need to be viewed and

empowered to serve as custodians of the environment, the catalyst for local economic development, and brokers for effective public and private partnership, or marshals of social equity and justice and leaders in forging a shared vision for the emergence of a new citizenry. To do so, they must be endowed with human, technical, technological, financial and information resources and competencies to assume these roles.

In an increasingly urbanizing Africa, the promotion of sustainable urbanization, encompassing the issue of economic growth, social equity and poverty reduction, cultural and ethnic cohesion, infrastructure provision and



environmental protection, requires more than ever, strategic, forward looking planning, consensus-building and conflict resolution. Decentralisation, good governance and the empowerment of local authorities as well as the adoption of inclusive processes of resources allocation and decision making are fundamental to this task<sup>25</sup>.



## Notes

<sup>1</sup> World Bank, World Development Indicators 2003, Population below US\$1 per day in 1993 purchasing power parity terms.

<sup>2</sup> Estimates from NEPAD, ECA Conference of Ministers, 1 June 2003.

<sup>3</sup> UNCTAD, *Economic Development in Africa. From Adjustment to Poverty Reduction: What's New?*, 2002, UNCTAD/GDS/AFRICA/2

<sup>4</sup> ECOSOC Report on Poverty in Africa, ROAAS, UN-HABITAT, 2001.

<sup>5</sup> The Habitat Agenda page 59 paragraph 99.

<sup>6</sup> UN-HABITAT (2005), Addressing the challenge of Slums, Land, Shelter delivery, and the Provision of and Access to basic services for all. ROAAS, Durban Ministerial Meeting.

<sup>7</sup> Josef Gugler, *Cities in the Developing World: Issues, Theory and policy*, Oxford 1997, p.43.

<sup>8</sup> David Simon, Urbanization, globalization and economic crisis in Africa, in Rakodi, *Urban Challenge*, p.95.

<sup>9</sup> UN-HABITAT, Global Urban Observatory's Slum Estimates, 2003.

<sup>10</sup> African Population and Health Research Center (APHRC) 2002, *Population and Health Dynamics in Nairobi's Informal Settlements*, Nairobi, Kenya, April 2002, page 91.

<sup>11</sup> This proportion is based on a rather limited sample of cities as data are not widely available for that particular definition of access to water.

<sup>12</sup> UN-HABITAT, Global Campaign for Secure Tenure, <http://www.unhsp.org/campaigns/tenure/tenure.asp>

<sup>13</sup> UN-HABITAT (2005), Addressing the challenge of Slums, Land, Shelter delivery, and the Provision of and Access to basic services for all. ROAAS, Durban Ministerial Meeting.

<sup>14</sup> UN-HABITAT, *Water and Sanitation in the World's Cities: Local Action for Global Goals*, Earthscan, UK, 2002.

<sup>15</sup> UNAIDS, *Aids Epidemic Update*, September 2002.

<sup>16</sup> UNAIDS and World Bank, *AIDS Poverty Reduction and Debt Relief: Implications for Poverty Reduction*, March 2001.

<sup>17</sup> David Gordon, *National Intelligence Estimate: The Global Infectious Disease Threat and Its Implications for the United States*.

National Intelligence Council, January 2000, p. 35.

<sup>18</sup> Ann May, *Maasai Migrations: Implications for HIV/AIDS and Social Change in Tanzania*, Jan 2003, Univ of Colorado.

<sup>19</sup> Eliya Msiyaphazi Zulu, F. Nii-Amoo Dodoo and Alex Chika-Ezeh, *Sexual Risk-Taking in the Slums of Nairobi, Kenya*, in *Population Studies*, 56 (2002), pp. 311-323.

<sup>20</sup> United States Institute of Peace, Panel on Nexus Between Conflict and AIDS, May 2001.

<sup>21</sup> Millicent Obaso, United States Institute of Peace, Panel on Nexus Between Conflict and AIDS, May 2001.

<sup>22</sup> UN Secretary General Kofi Annan Global Message of World Habitat Day 2003.

<sup>23</sup> UN-HABITAT (2005), Addressing the challenge of Slums, Land, Shelter delivery, and the Provision of and Access to basic services for all. ROAAS, Durban Ministerial Meeting.

<sup>24</sup> UN-HABITAT, Background Paper prepared for the joint EC / UN-HABITAT Regional Workshop Urbanisation Challenges in Africa, United Nations Gigiri, Nairobi, Kenya, 26-28 January 2005.

Page	Paragraph	Please read	instead of
2	5	47.7 per cent of the urban population	47.7 per cent of what ??
3	1	in the world	in the world
3	4	Sub-Saharan Africa's 47 countries	sub-Saharan Africa's 47 countries
4	2	population is growing fastest	populations are growing fastest
5	1	Côte d'Ivoire	Côte d'Ivoire
6	1	Réunion	Réunion
6	1	São Tomé and Príncipe	São Tomé and Príncipe
6	1	Côte d'Ivoire	Côte d'Ivoire
7	1	the continent's poor	continent's poor
7	2	Africa's urban	Africa's urban
7	4	Nairobi's slums	Nairobi's slum
8	2	overcrowding	overcrowding
12	1	World's Cities	World's cities
12	3	Millennium Development Goals (MDG) 7	MDG 7
12	4	55 per cent	55 percent
12	5	these individual city studies indicate	these individual city studies indicates
13	2	UN Habitat's Water for African Cities Programme	UN Habitat's Water for African Cities Programme
14	1	in Southern Africa	in southern Africa
14	5	have been dubbed "The AIDS Express"	have been dubbed The AIDS Express
16	1,5,7;	Côte d'Ivoire	Côte d'Ivoire, Côte d'Ivoire;
17	1	Tanzania's	Tanzania's



In the next 25 years, roughly 400 million people will be added to the African continent's urban population, putting tremendous pressure on cities. Rapid urbanization, the concentration of the urban population in large cities, the spread of slums and the lack of critical basic amenities, and the rapid growth of mega-cities are among the most significant transformation of human settlements in Africa.

*Cities and towns have always been centres of opportunity, but without land, adequate shelter and basic services, urban environments can be among the most life-threatening on earth.*

**Today, the challenge for African governments and local governments leaders and thinkers is how to prepare our cities to accommodate the inevitable population pressure, the social and economic dynamics, security threat, environmental challenge, governance and institutional performance.**



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