

Executive Summary and Policy Recommendations

Overall Summary

Population and Urbanisation

In 2009 Africa's total population for the first time exceeded one billion, of which 395 million (or almost 40 per cent) lived in urban areas. Whereas it took 27 years for the continent to double from 500 million to one billion people, the next 500 million will only take 17 years. Around 2027, Africa's demographic growth will start to slow down and it will take 24 years to add the next 500 million, reaching the two billion mark around 2050, of which about 60 per cent living in cities. Africa should prepare for a total population increase of about 60 per cent between 2010 and 2050, with the urban population tripling to 1.23 billion during this period.

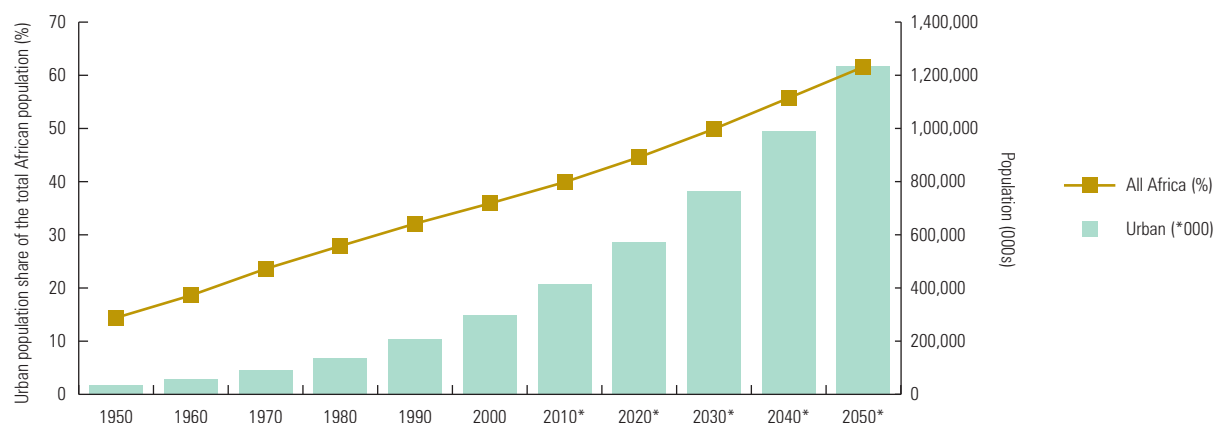
Strong demographic growth in a city is neither good nor bad on its own. Experience shows that across the world, urbanisation has been associated with improved human development, rising incomes and better living standards. However, these benefits do not come automatically; they require well-devised public policies that can steer demographic growth, turn urban accumulation of activities and resources into healthy economies, and ensure equitable distribution of wealth. When public policies are of benefit only for small political or economic elites, urbanisation will almost inevitably result in instability, as cities become unliveable for rich and poor alike.

Around 2030, Africa's collective population will become 50 per cent urban. The majority of political constituencies will then live in cities, demanding means of subsistence, shelter and services. African governments should take early action to position themselves for predominantly urban populations. In the early 2040s, African cities will collectively be home to one billion, equivalent to the continent's total population in 2009. Since cities are the future habitat for the majority of Africans, *now* is the time for spending on basic infrastructure, social services (health and education) and affordable housing, in the process stimulating urban economies and generating much-needed jobs. Deferring these investments to the 2040s simply will not do. Not a single African government can afford to ignore the ongoing rapid urban transition. Cities *must* become priority areas for public policies, with investment to build adequate governance capacities, equitable services delivery, affordable housing provision and better wealth distribution. If cities are to meet these needs, municipal finance must be strengthened with more fiscal freedom and own-source funding.

Regional Urban Configurations

City regions, urban development corridors and mega urban regions continue to emerge or become increasingly visible across Africa. Their spatial and functional features demand

GRAPH 1: AFRICAN URBAN POPULATION TREND 1950-2050



* Projections
Source: WUP 2009

new urban management methods to ensure consistent area-wide governance. Sweeping reform is also critical for effective delivery of affordable housing, services and urban infrastructures commensurate with the magnitudes of these rapidly expanding urban concentrations. Different political traditions, economic circumstances and location-specific features make every African nation and city unique. Therefore, effective reform and adaptation must be location-specific. Still, a few broad concepts for holistic area-wide urban management have emerged from comparable situations around the world and African governments should not ignore them, as outlined in Section 1.3, *Government or Governance?*

Urban Poverty and Slums

In recent years, Africa as a whole has shown that informal settlements can be reduced effectively as 24 million African slum dwellers saw their living conditions improved during the 2000/10 decade. Progress has been uneven across the continent, though. Northern Africa collectively managed to reduce from 20 to 13 per cent the share of slum dwellers in its urban population. Egypt, Morocco and Tunisia have been the most successful countries in this respect. Tunisia in particular, as it has successfully eradicated the slum phenomenon within its national boundaries. However, south of the Sahara the number of slum dwellers decreased by only five per cent (or 17 million), with Ghana, Senegal and Uganda at the forefront as they managed to reduce the proportion of slum dwellers in their urban populations by more than 20 per cent. Much remains to be done with regard to urban poverty and slum incidence, particularly in view of the rapid demographic growth of African cities, most of which results in the proliferation of informal settlements south of the Sahara. Urban slums are one of the major threats to African urban stability and, by extension, to overall political stability.

Urban Land Markets

Formal urban markets, by their very operations and rules, prevent access to land by the majority of city dwellers all over Africa. As a result, informal markets fill this exclusion gap and this is where the overwhelming majority of African urban land transactions take place nowadays. This report concludes that governments should seek the most effective entry points for an overhaul of the often abysmal failures of their formal urban land administration systems, with their unresponsive institutions, excessive delays, cumbersome land transaction administration and the associated corruption. Stigmatising informal urban land markets as inappropriate, illegal, illegitimate or undesirable negates the realities on the ground. There is much that formal land markets can learn from their informal counterparts. Any assessments and subsequent policies should put formal markets in a position gradually to embrace some informal practices in order to relieve overburdened public land administration. Governments should also rationalize fee structures, improve registration systems, and gradually phase out the debilitating legal and procedural dual systems in urban land markets, as explained in individual regional chapters of this report.

Africa-wide Recommended Intervention Areas

- Polarization and confrontation have increased in African cities due to *laissez-faire* attitudes to rapid urbanisation. The unfolding pattern is one of disjointed, dysfunctional and unsustainable urban geographies of inequality and human suffering, with oceans of poverty containing islands of wealth. Socio-economic conditions in African cities are now the most unequal in the world. This situation threatens systemic stability, affecting not only the continuity of cities as socio-political human eco-systems but also entire nations.
- Africa's urbanisation must not necessarily be seen as problematic. The challenge of urban sustainability calls for a focus on cities as people-centred concentrations of opportunity. Harnessing rather than alienating human energies is essential to maintaining urban dynamism, which cannot be fostered or maintained with rising urban inequality. The urban poor should not be punished for their poverty. Instead, urban planning and building regulations should reflect a country's degree of national development and its institutional capacities while keeping costs at affordable levels for all. Construction standards should be set more realistically in order to facilitate rather than restrict the creation of housing and livelihoods.
- Increasingly well-defined urban regions and urban development corridors introduce complex and highly fluid spatial, regulatory and political realities. As urban systems and inter-urban flows of people, goods, communications and funds extend across national borders, policies must follow suit if they are to have any realistic prospect of influencing the outcomes. The management tools of the traditional mono-centric city are not appropriate for today's multi-nuclear urban configurations. The need for governance reform to introduce holistic area-wide planning and urban management simply cannot be over-emphasized.
- The geographic extension of existing urban administrative territories should be considered. Complex as the enlargement of municipal territory may be, the benefits of extended municipal boundaries are sure to outweigh any inconveniences. This would allow for improved management of further urban growth, while land values can be captured through sales and taxation, in the process adding to municipal own-source revenues.
- African governments should also consider the relocation to their secondary cities of all government departments and agencies that have no overriding reasons to be located in the capital. With today's information and communication technologies, the physical presence of many government departments in highly congested capitals has become unnecessary. Relocation would better spread economic activity, reduce traffic congestion, and relieve the pressures on urban land and housing markets in capital cities.
- The scarcity of data on urban Africa continues to remain a challenge. Short of timely, objective and accurate city-specific data, urban managers will keep on operating in a knowledge vacuum, resulting in uninformed policy- or

decision-making, or the wrong scale or focus. This leads to predatory politics that hollow out good governance, while imposing additional burdens on the majority of urban residents that goes largely overlooked in the process. Good governance can only emerge with reliable and accurate data to inform policy and strategy decisions.

- The manner in which cities are developed today will affect future options for resilience in the face of climate change. Today's planning decisions can cause inefficiencies and ecologically unfriendly urban configurations further down the road. Spatial separation of related urban functions is evident among most metropolitan areas and increases transportation needs. Urban mobility must become a key factor in spatial decisions, and improved mass transit systems can significantly reduce private vehicle use. Cities are in a unique position to contribute to global and local climate change adaptation, mitigation and protection, and they must take advantage of it. However, forward-looking spatial planning decisions alone are not enough. In order to prevent any policy gaps, it is important to link national, regional and local environmental adaptation and mitigation policies through vertical and horizontal cooperation across *all* tiers of government as well as all relevant stakeholders.
- Many African municipalities are financially weak because their revenue- and finance-generating structures are inadequate and inefficient. Decentralising responsibilities without fiscal decentralisation contributes to urban decay, poor services and the proliferation of slums. *Fiscal* must match *political* decentralisation in order to create more revenue-generating options and decision-making power for local authorities. An appropriate municipal tax regime can boost cities' own revenue sources. Property tax is currently the major revenue source for municipal authorities although, at times, it can place an inequitable burden on property owners. Alternatives are available, as explained in Sections 1.4 and 1.5.
- Slums are, in a large part, the outcome of lack of access to urban land and housing finance. Land plots under informal tenure expose those occupying them to eviction, and they cannot be used as collateral to back up bank loans. These two factors do not encourage slum dwellers to improve their homes. This situation must be changed to encourage the urban poor to undertake improvements through self-help.
- Many urban managers deeply underestimate the risks associated with urban food and water insecurity. African governments should heed the warning bells of 2008 and seriously consider the potential effects of urban food and water shortages. Significant amounts of African land and water resources are purchased or long-term leased by foreign governments and foreign food processing corporations. Some even bring agricultural workers into Africa. Importing agricultural labour and exporting food are the two kinds of trade flows which increasingly urban and periodically undernourished African populations can ill afford. Africa is well-placed to make strategic, forward-looking decisions on the wise use of its rich water

and agricultural resources. However, governments must bargain harder for better and more transparent deals, so that foreign investment can contribute to Africa's future food and water security, with benefits spread out among local communities in terms of additional business, cash payments and employment opportunities.

Northern Africa Summary

Population and Urbanisation

The demographic and economic dominance of Northern African cities was well established by the beginning of this century. With the exception of Sudan, whose urban population is still increasing at over 4.3 per cent per annum, the subregion's rate of urban demographic growth has noticeably slowed down.

The peri-urban sprawl and overcrowding of lower-income districts that characterized Northern African cities in the post-independence period have been the targets of vigorous public policies over the past 20 years. This was particularly the case in Egypt, Libya, Morocco and Tunisia, which have reduced their collective number of slum dwellers from 20.8 million in 1990 to an estimated 11.8 million in 2010. Tunisia has managed to eradicate slums altogether; a feat for which it should be commended. Today, nine out of 10 urban slum households in Northern Africa suffer from only one shelter deprivation, mainly lack of improved sanitation (Egypt) and insufficient living area (Morocco).

Starting in Tunisia in the 1990s urban rehabilitation and housing strategies have gradually shifted away from direct government intervention and towards public-private partnerships with a proven ability to deliver both low-income and market-rate housing units. These interventions have been a welcome evolution away from largely ineffective top-down housing authorities which proved unable to meet the needs of the region's rapidly growing urban populations. Despite significant progress in Northern Africa over the last decade, redress of past urbanisation trends must come hand in hand with adequate housing for new households.

Urban Economies and Governance

With fiscal support from governments, Northern Africa has experienced a steady shift to urban-based economies and a better balance between agriculture, manufacturing and diversified services and industries. Consequently, the subregion has seen a significant reduction in poverty, with Sudan the only exception. Still, urban unemployment remains a problem, particularly for youths, underscoring the persistent missing link between the education system, skills and development of a vigorous private sector.

Urban management institutions and structures remain less than adequate in Northern Africa. Local authorities are relatively weak and lack decision-making autonomy and financial resources, as these are still centralised at the national level. Collection of local taxes is difficult due to the inability of cadastral systems to keep up with developments, particularly in the informal housing and land sector.



▲ Marrakech, Morocco. ©Narvikk/iStockphoto

The desirability of stronger capacities and financial resources for local authorities is now under debate in the subregion. The need to consult city dwellers is also gaining recognition, particularly in Egypt, Morocco and Tunisia. The challenges posed by the probable effects of climate change in the subregion can also best be met through fully participatory dialogue addressing issues such as diminishing water resources and rising sea levels.

Urban Land Markets

The urbanisation rate in Northern Africa doubled between the 1970s and the 1980s after constraints on urban land ownership were lifted and when, consequently, it became possible to convert agricultural land to urban uses. The result was a chaotic proliferation of unplanned subdivisions and the rapid emergence of densely populated peri-urban informal settlements which, over the past 30 years, have accommodated most of the demographic expansion of Northern African cities. Where agricultural land has been converted to urban uses without any authorisation, land and property rights have been transferred through private notarial acts without the title registration demanded by property registration procedures. This has established two *de facto*, parallel property transaction systems.

In Northern Africa, new towns have developed to absorb demographic growth and meet the concomitant increase in demand for urban housing. These new areas are transforming the larger cities into structured city regions, changing the spatial distribution of urban land and raising its values.

Urban land prices have doubled every three years since 1970 in the established urban areas. In urban extension zones, new development areas and new towns, prices have doubled every year or every other year. High land values effectively bar low-income households from access to formal land markets, pushing them into informality.

Public authorities in the subregion are beginning to grasp the potential of land as a revenue source and are learning how to use their assets and regulatory powers to bring about and capture higher land values through sales and taxation. This brings much-needed new land into urban development while paying for infrastructures in under-serviced areas.

Emerging Issues: Transnational Urban Systems

Two major transnational urban systems are currently emerging in Northern Africa:

- 1 The incipient Southern Mediterranean Coastal Region corridor is to consolidate with a combination of tourism and manufacturing. However, the area is rife with conflicts over land uses, and national plans must be supplemented by transnational agreements that take holistic views of the Southern Mediterranean coast.
- 2 The Nile Valley Corridor has traditionally acted as a link and a bond between the countries in the watershed. The major issue today relates to the use of the Nile waters. While individual country shares are governed by international agreements, the allocation of shares among cities within each country and the rationalization of water use are both high priorities, particularly in Egypt. A complicating factor



▲
Cairo, Egypt. ©Guido Potters

is the forthcoming referendum in Southern Sudan, which may very well lead to the formation of a new riparian Nile state and the attendant need for international renegotiation of national shares in Nile waters.

Recommended Intervention Areas in Northern Africa

- Whereas commendable inroads have been made in slum reduction in Northern Africa, more remains to be done to redress the outcomes of past urbanisation trends - especially sprawling, densely populated, informal settlements in peri-urban areas.
- Over the next decade, availability of serviced land and enforcement of development regulations will continue to pose significant challenges. Demand for affordable housing, both rental and ownership, will require significant improvements in land management, including a redefinition of the roles of local authorities and the private sector.
- Governments are urged to facilitate fiscal decentralisation, allowing for effective local tax-raising powers. Likewise, governments should consider phasing out parallel hierarchies of appointed executives and elected councils at the provincial and municipal levels, in order to allow for greater self-determination.
- Property registration must be made simpler and more affordable, with the following five benefits: promotion of adherence to the procedure, enhanced security of tenure, better development controls, improved land taxation and rent collection, and enhanced municipal own-source income from land transactions and land ownership.
- Climate change-induced sea level rise is bound to affect coastal settlements and threaten ecologically important areas. In areas at risk, urbanisation should be prohibited and any proliferation of settlements or marinas contained through land management. Coastal municipalities should work closely with central government departments in favour of holistic coastal management plans that regulate urbanisation, tourism development and industrial uses, in order to safeguard the natural environment. In-depth research should help establish subregion-wide guidelines and regulations to protect the marine ecology, including beach flora and fauna.

Western Africa Summary

Population and Urbanisation

In West Africa, too, urban populations are expanding rapidly. During the 2010/20 decade, cities in the subregion will become hosts to an additional 58 million, and another 69 million during the 2020/30 decade. Even by then, urban demographic growth will not subside because, despite a projected decline in urbanisation growth rates after 2030, West African cities will still have to accommodate an additional 79 million until 2040, and another 84 million between 2040 and 2050. This demographic expansion is neither good nor bad in itself. Outcomes can be positive or negative, depending on how it is spatially distributed and how the benefits of urban agglomeration are shared.

Urban Economies and Governance

Concentrations of business and populations in cities generate efficiency and economic gains in some areas and urban centres, while some others are left behind. In those cities and areas that are found lagging, as in the lower-income urban areas of the economically stronger nations, stark spatial disparities and socio-economic polarization are becoming increasingly visible as urban inequality increases. As the pace of urbanisation and urban growth speeds up, the capacity of most West African nations to manage the consequences of undesirable urban trends is decreasing, due to inadequate spending on human and institutional capacities, services delivery, adequate and affordable housing and job opportunities. The social, economic and environmental effects of these failures fall heavily on the poor, who are excluded from the benefits of urban prosperity.

Over-urbanisation, whereby populations grow much faster than urban economies, is becoming visible across the subregion. Symptoms include major social and economic challenges like high unemployment rates, slum proliferation, social polarization and crime, which all result from systemic governance failure and unequal distribution of urban or national wealth. Rapidly growing cities can be major assets for political, social and economic development of a nation or region, provided that this growth is properly steered, managed and sustained with fair distribution of public funding in social and basic infrastructures, social development and employment generation for broader-based well-being.

Poverty can only weaken any society's capacity to tackle organized crime, human trafficking, armed conflict, terrorism, social unrest and the spread of diseases. These, in turn, can have severe security and other implications not only for the countries where they are rife, but also for neighbouring states and the global community. In a global age, the outcomes associated with high poverty can no longer be contained within national boundaries; they imply linkages between alleviating poverty and maintaining regional and global stability.

Urban Land Markets

The structure of the urban land market in Western Africa has predominantly been influenced by colonial traditions rooted in both English and French law. Governments are in control of land allocation and title distribution. With the exception of Burkina Faso, most governments have been reluctant to release land on the required scale. Due to rapid urbanisation, demand for secure urban tenure and freehold titles by investors and rising middle class has been sustained in Western African cities. This demand has contributed to the development of the formal private land market. New land laws and codes are being adopted across the region in order to facilitate appropriation or restriction of private land allocation. Though these reforms have introduced some form of private land ownership, they do not guarantee full protection or security of tenure.

While the management of land has been increasingly decentralised from central government to local entities,

in many West African countries the responsibility for land allocation and title registration remains in the hands of central government. Despite government resistance, popular demand for upgrading and regularisation policies is rising sharply. Securing and safeguarding formal tenure for informal settlers remains the greatest challenge and housing development projects still fail to reach out to the urban poor. Land markets and prices are the main drivers of urban spatial expansion and geographic social patterns. Urban land prices are steadily increasing while most city-dwellers' incomes are not, and as a result communities living close to urban centres are increasingly faced with eviction. Overly cumbersome and time-consuming tenure regularisation procedures are linked with corruption and vested interests, turning land management and administration into a challenge.

Emerging Issues:

National and Transnational Development Corridors

The geographic and economic conditions underlying the emergence of urban development corridors in Western Africa are nothing new, as they rediscover age-old trade routes. Novel dimensions, however, include the nature of the forces at play, the emergence of West-East corridors and the growth of formerly stagnant urban nodes.

Western Africa's regional urban configurations, city regions and urban 'ribbon' developments are the outcomes of dynamic urbanisation driven mainly by larger cities. Regional city and urban corridor patterns are the results of shifts in metropolitan spatial organisation and associated functional specialization. While metropolitan central business districts and immediate surroundings increasingly host top-level political, economic and commercial urban functions, the peri-urban and adjacent rural areas are left to cope with rising demand for housing and commercial functions that have been forced out from more central urban areas by rising land prices. In view of the major role cities play in regional development, regional urban clusters and their interlinking through urban corridors deserve special attention, especially where they are the result of spontaneous urbanisation processes.

Regional urban patterns are often conducive to national economic and social development, but they become of regional importance when they cross national borders and link with similar configurations in neighbouring countries. For this reason, urban development corridors are considered as positive for spatial integration, socio-economic systems and the economy on a regional scale. They are not without drawbacks, though. Unless well-steered and managed, regional urban configurations can produce severe economic and spatial imbalances in areas outside the corridors. This can, and will, result in spatial and functional gaps, particularly affecting the transit towns that are incapable of leveraging the opportunities created by the larger cities along the corridor. Moreover, regional agreements on the free movement of people, goods, finance and communications are an important pre-condition if the beneficial outcomes of regional development and trade are to be maximised.



▲ Street Life, Île de Gorée, Dakar, Senegal. ©Guido Potters

Prominent domestic development corridors have emerged in Western Africa, including the *Dakar-Touba* corridor in Senegal; *Bouaké-Abidjan* in Côte d'Ivoire; and between *Ouagadougou* and *Bobo-Dioulasso* in Burkina Faso. As these domestic corridors grow, they connect with similar corridors in neighbouring countries. This creates new impulses for economic and political integration in the subregion. A good example of the trans-national expansion of domestic corridors is the emerging *Maradi-Katsina-Kano* corridor, linking Niger and Nigeria, with *Katsina* a major transit city. A trans-national corridor is also consolidating between land-locked Burkina Faso and Côte d'Ivoire (i.e., the Gulf of Guinea) with cities like *Bobo-Dioulasso*, *Korogho*, *Banfara* and *Ferkessédougou* as the intermediate nodes.

In the future, these corridors are expected to strengthen their significant social, economic and political roles. In Western Africa, distance and isolation remain major determinants of spatial relations, even though the policies and technologies designed to mitigate them are becoming more

and more effective. Since regional interconnectivity lags the expansion of those corridors, emerging transnational urban configurations call for proper planning, otherwise they stand to lose much of their significance.

Recommended Intervention Areas in Western Africa

- Sweeping governance reforms focused on improved urban management are needed in Western Africa. Significant new spending on basic services, infrastructure, affordable housing and urban mobility (transportation) is in order in the decades to come. This spending is urgently needed because the longer it is postponed, the higher the financial, social and political costs will be.
- 'Permits to occupy' and administrative permits do not provide sufficient security of tenure and this is why they must be converted to secure land titles. In order to facilitate this process, interim land titles should be formalized. On the other hand, some existing mechanisms should be eliminated. This includes lifting restrictions on conversion

of residential property titles, such as *'mise en valeur'* (the obligation to develop a plot before a title can be formalised) and, in a similar vein, the cancellation of usage rights on properties that have not been developed within a specific timeframe.

- The capacities of central and local administrations are inadequate, particularly with regard to land registration and property identification. This causes a major operational bottleneck in the delivery of property titles and implementation of large-scale property identification and registration. This situation calls for stronger capacities for the land registration system.
- Since most land tenure is of a customary nature in Western Africa, governments must acknowledge this traditional land occupation practice. Such integration in the land markets must happen gradually for the sake of proper links between customary and statutory systems. The first step in this process involves identification of the major land systems operating in a country, based on an inventory of habits and customs. The basic rationale for public policies is to ensure market fluidity through the smooth mainstreaming of customary into formal land markets. This effective disappearance of customary property must be accompanied by fair compensation schemes for customary holders.
- Governments in the region have so far been in control of land allocation and title distribution. Therefore, it is incumbent on them to release more public land in order to relieve demand pressure (especially in urban and peri-urban areas, on land with strong agricultural potential, or located close to agricultural land or trunk roads). The broad objective for policies should be to encourage pluralistic land markets that are able to respond to different social, economic and environmental policy needs and the needs of different segments of the population, the priority being enhanced tenure security.
- The public sector should establish and maintain a 'level playing field' where various suppliers of land, credit and building services can compete on equal terms. Procedures for land allocation, transfers and registration should be streamlined in order to reduce corruption and nepotism.
- In the absence of capital market funding, alternative sources (like the Housing Bank in Burkina Faso, created in 2005) should be made available, including micro-credit.

Eastern Africa Summary

Population and Urbanisation

With only an estimated 23.5 per cent of the population living in urban areas, Eastern Africa remains the least urbanised subregion on the continent. Nevertheless, it is rapidly catching up. Between the year 2000 and 2005, the populations of *Nairobi* and *Dar-es Salaam* experienced annual average growth rates of four per cent. Rather than rural migration, these increases largely reflect natural demographic growth, with the balance resulting from displacement induced by local

conflicts. For instance, prolonged civil war in Mogadishu has pushed many people to Somalia's smaller, secondary towns.

Accommodating rapidly growing urban populations is clearly a challenge in Eastern Africa. Urban areas are plagued by seemingly ever-increasing unemployment rates, spontaneous, uncontrolled expansion of urban slums and informal settlements, residential overcrowding, deterioration of already overstretched infrastructures and services, environmental degradation and acute housing shortages.

Eastern Africa's future is unquestionably urban, although it is to take another 40 years before a majority of the population lives in towns and cities. In view of the already challenging conditions summarised above and the sustained pace of prospective demographic growth, it is imperative for governments to take their responsibilities seriously with regard to good governance, housing, infrastructure and employment in the subregion's urban areas.

Urban Poverty and Slums

As urbanisation proceeds apace, good governance and urban management will become both more necessary and more complex, as will the social issues associated with poverty. The ongoing urbanisation of poverty in Eastern Africa calls for strong and effective policies, including an end to exclusion of the poor by political and business elites.

Although most Eastern African economies have continued to grow over the past few years, income inequalities remain high. Eastern Africans largely depend on the informal sector for jobs and housing. Informality is a problem, not a solution. Urban poverty fuels crime, violence and social unrest. Inequality and inadequate housing combine with lack of labour and social policies to fuel violent, urban-based politico-religious militias that contribute to further insecurity. This phenomenon has its root-causes in deep-seated frustration, especially among the young, in the face of high unemployment and poor socio-economic conditions.

Urban Land Markets

In Eastern African cities, low-income residents have little if any access to formal land or housing markets. Therefore, they acquire land informally and develop it outside formal systems. Governments in the subregion are now overwhelmed by the needs of the ever-expanding numbers they have failed to accommodate since independence. Informality has taken on such proportions that it has become the norm. Consequently, simply declaring informality 'illegal' is no longer an option. Acknowledging the conditions now prevailing is a first step in the way forward. Governments must open up outdated formal systems and embrace some of the informal procedures that make land and housing accessible to the low-income majorities of urban populations.

Emerging Issues

As new economic and urban development corridors develop in Eastern Africa, larger cities must consider expanding their municipal boundaries to accommodate future demographic growth. Municipal authorities must also expand own-source



▲
Nairobi, Kenya. ©Guido Potters

revenues through land sales at market prices while creating space for urban planning. Expanding municipal boundaries is a complex exercise but the longer-term benefits will outweigh the short-term difficulties. The need for holistic regional planning and economic decentralisation is inevitable.

Eastern Africa's primate capital cities should also consider the relocation to secondary cities of all government departments, agencies and functions that do not necessarily need to be located in the capital. This would relieve traffic, housing, office space and population pressures on capital cities while stimulating growth and economic opportunities in the remainder of the country. This may be a complex and expensive exercise, but again, the longer-term benefits will easily outweigh short-term inconveniences.

Recommended Intervention Areas in Eastern Africa

The inability of Eastern African governments to supply affordable land to low-income city dwellers is the result of bureaucratic inertia, expensive administrative procedures, allocation inefficiencies and inappropriate use of public office. Most of these deficiencies can be addressed with relatively little effort, which suggests that the underlying issue is lack of political will. The inadequacies and outright failures which plague formal land and housing markets impose significant costs on society at large, and make the majority

of city residents vulnerable and landless. Over the past several decades, experience has amply demonstrated that any inadequacies or failings among government institutions are inexorably compensated for by non-state operators deploying legal, semi-legal or illegal means. Although specific vested interests may have a stake in the *status quo* of imperfect or failing urban housing and land markets, the price will be paid by the urban poor majorities in the short run, and society at large in the longer term. In order to address current, highly inequitable urban land access conditions, national and urban decision-makers would be well-advised to consider and acknowledge that:

- Urban planning must become more efficient and forward-looking, in order to enhance urban densities and reduce transportation needs, cut per-unit land costs, provide more efficient and affordable basic services as well as improved living environments for all citizens. This will require a better grip by public authorities on urban land use and land allocation. This, in turn, calls for legislative amendments that allow for more pragmatic urban land administration and management approaches.
- As in most other regions of the world, urbanisation in Eastern Africa comes with special challenges requiring systematic local planning, provision of infrastructure and shelter as well as delivery of urban services as needed to

improve general welfare, particularly for the poor. These policy responses have critical roles to play not only within metropolitan boundaries, but also in peri-urban areas where the more significant unplanned changes take place, often on high-potential agricultural land that is required to feed the city.

- In order better to meet these challenges, early harmonization of the dual systems of customary 'user rights' tenure and 'ownership' is in order, the rationale being to discard the prevailing notion that customary or informal systems are merely there for 'survival'. Both systems come with their specific benefits and shortcomings; whether any phasing out over time of the customary system is desirable and feasible must be determined in view of local or national conditions and circumstances. Where it appears that both systems should be maintained, the interface between them should be clarified and made workable.
- Since more extensive municipal boundaries are needed to add to public holdings of vacant land, state-owned land should be converted to municipal land. This would enable municipalities to use land as a revenue source, provided it is sold at market rates, and better control the peri-urban developments which today lie beyond their administrative control.
- The spatial, institutional and social impacts of migration to urban areas and urban demographic growth must be better managed. While it is not possible to interfere with demographic patterns, urban managers must seek ways better to integrate new arrivals into the formal system. Therefore, they must develop realistic land-use plans and infrastructure standards. Special attention should be paid to easing the procedures and lowering the costs of land subdivision, particularly in rapidly growing peri-urban areas.

Central Africa Summary

Population and Urbanisation

The urban population of Central Africa has more than doubled from 23.7 million in 1990 to an estimated 55.6 million in 2010. The 100-million mark should be reached around 2022, with further growth to 112.7 million by 2030 and 185.9 million by 2050. Inter-decade urban growth rates will start a steady declining trend between 2020 and 2030. However, since these declining growth rates apply to ever-larger numbers, the region's urban population will continue to expand significantly in absolute terms: from 19.1 million over the past decade, additions to Central African urban populations are expected to grow to 25.9 million in 2020/30, 31.2 million in 2030/40, 35.4 million in 2040/50 and 37.8 million 2040 and 2050.

In 2010, the subregion's three most urbanised countries were Gabon (86 per cent), São Tomé e Príncipe (62.2 per cent) and Congo (62.1 per cent). Least urbanised were Chad (27.6 per cent), the DRC (35.2 per cent) and Equatorial Guinea (39.7 per cent), who all remained below the Africa-

wide urbanisation average of 39.9 per cent. The CAR, the DRC and Equatorial Guinea are not projected to become predominantly urban until after 2030, while Chad is likely to do so only around 2042.

During the 2000/10 decade, Angola and Cameroon were the region's most rapidly urbanising countries with decade rate increases of 9.5 and 8.5 per cent respectively. Over the 2010/20 decade, the growth of Central African urban populations is likely to be highest in Chad (22.8 per cent), compared with 12.8 per cent in Angola, 12.1 per cent in Cameroon and 3.1 per cent in Gabon, suggesting a convergent trend over time, although at different paces.

Urban Economies and Governance

Many Central African countries are richly endowed with natural resources that make their economies fairly privileged on the continent. This results in good growth rates, though not necessarily in good socio-economic development. Indeed, many countries experience stagnating or declining incomes per head, as well as rapid spread of extreme poverty and rising income inequality in urban areas. The overall deterioration in urban living standards for increasing numbers has become acute. This comes largely as the result of highly unequal distribution of national wealth, poor governance and rampant corruption. The latter is especially the case in the primary sector (oil, minerals and forestry).

Because national income and wealth are poorly shared, large sections of the Central African population are deprived of basic needs satisfaction. Oil-rich Angola stands out as the most unequal country in the region in almost every aspect of life. These disparities are reflected in the distribution of income, access to adequate housing, urban land, basic infrastructure and social services (water, sanitation, electric power, education, and healthcare). Angola's major problem clearly has to do with wealth distribution. Cities and their populations cannot develop or perform optimally if only a small group has access to most of the resources and economic opportunities. Given the region's mineral wealth, significantly higher spending is required for the sake of broad access to affordable urban land and housing as well as social and basic infrastructures. Particular attention should be paid to improved energy security in support of enhanced productivity, employment generation and poverty reduction in cities.

Urban Poverty and Slums

The failure of Central African countries to address inequality and the resultant urban poverty has led to a proliferation of urban slums. In the process, large shares of the urban population have been deprived of decent living conditions that are clearly within reach, if only the right policies were deployed. Besides severe inequality and socio-economic exclusion, many urban slum dwellers in Central Africa also experience malnutrition. Today, widespread incidence of low-calorie intakes and even hunger are entirely preventable, and yet many poor, including urban, households face periodic malnourishment.



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Butembo, DRC. ©Guido Potters

Data on Central African cities shows that the informal economy (on which the majority of urban dwellers relies) has limitations, and therefore efforts to promote access to formal employment must be stepped up. History has amply shown that industrialisation and urban productivity will progress faster where government takes a pro-active, enabling role. Europe, North America, Japan and, more recently, East Asia, have all shown that successful socio-economic development follows proactive government assistance to urban-based industrial development, especially through enhanced transportation systems.

Today, with ongoing economic liberalisation, income and consumption inequality is rising in Central Africa. If they are to take advantage of their rich resources to improve the living conditions of the majority of their populations, Central African countries must reform urban governance, enhance the transparency of public sector management and improve the distribution of national riches while addressing corruption and impunity in a far more pro-active way.

In the region's urban slums, women are major contributors to households' financial and material conditions. This puts them in a position to act as major agents of change within these communities. But then as many as 95 per cent of female slum dwellers need various forms of support, including short- and medium-term credit. Their needs, abilities and capabilities must be better reflected in the design of any development programmes that affect their lives. Financial assistance to female-owned small businesses would go a long way towards strengthening their contributions to the fight against poverty, in the process promoting alternative household survival strategies and improving the welfare of the most deprived segments of the urban population.

Urban Land Markets

In Central Africa, too, urban land is neither well managed nor well allocated or distributed. Some central governments or local authorities in the subregion have started to improve urban land policies, but much more effort is needed to meet the needs of the majority of urban populations. It is incumbent on local authorities to update their land administration and management practices, taking lessons from the hands-on, needs-based approaches that are the defining features of informal markets, that provide for the vast majority of urban land transactions. Formal recognition of this plain fact of urban life is long overdue. Rather than stigmatising informality, public authorities should review the arrangements and mechanisms prevailing in informal urban land markets. Formal markets have much to learn from the sheer cost effectiveness and expediency that informal urban land transactions offer.

New and affordable technologies are now available for urban land management and administration. If combined with greater transparency and better understanding of the links between land distribution, population growth, climate change and development, they have a crucial role to play in improved welfare for all and the protection of the urban environment.

Against a background of relentless demand and price rises, capturing land values has a more critical role to play than ever in the funding of urban infrastructures. The problem in Central African cities is that amid an ever-more intense scramble for urban land, the sale of public (municipal and state) land is increasingly shrouded in secretive allocation procedures and abuse of office. Where governance is weak and corrupt, public urban land is often captured by privileged individuals and sold or illegally transferred for private gain. Unless illegitimate transfer and sale of this non-renewable municipal resource is curbed, the outcome can only be the perpetuation of significant foregone municipal own-source funding. Urban land has already ceased to be a key source of revenue for municipalities in many Central African cities. Corruption has become so commonplace that it has now started to affect urban development mechanisms. A rigorous debate on the use of land revenues and land administration and management is needed to explore alternatives, in order to enable urban land once more play its crucial role in the funding of municipal policies.

Emerging Issues

Regional Mobility

Migration is encouraged by the Economic Community of Central African Countries (ECCAC), but some Central African nations remain hostile to free movement of people, goods and financial flows. Cross-border migration can bring benefits such as enhanced welfare on both sides of national boundaries. Authorities at local, city and national levels should more objectively analyze the impacts of cross-border migration. Most migrants are highly motivated people and act as vectors of economic, technological and cultural exchange. They bring different knowledge and cultures that can complement local ones. Well-administered and well-governed cities that are open to new ideas, cultures and technologies can act as a host country's best catalyst of economic growth and human development.

Regional Urban Development Corridors

Major cross-border development areas are emerging in Central Africa as they do elsewhere on the continent. One is the *Luanda-N'Djamena* development corridor, and another links *Brazzaville* and *Kinshasa* into a mega urban region, and there are many others. The *Brazzaville-Kinshasa* link involves populations in excess of 10 million and already stands out as the world's most populous and fastest-growing cross-border metropolitan area. This mega urban region features high concentrations of the economic, industrial, social, health and political activities of both Congo and the DRC, providing employment opportunities to large numbers of people on both sides of the river Congo. If the current degrees of political, economic and spatial cooperation can be sustained and improved, the *Kinshasa-Brazzaville* mega urban region could very well become one of the most dynamic in Africa.

However, public authorities in both countries must be aware that this high-potential dynamism remains hostage to a number of problems. Both capital cities experience rapid

demographic growth against backgrounds of substandard urban governance and management. Basic and social infrastructures are poorly maintained and in need of serious upgrading; this is particularly the case with roads, because rapidly increasing numbers of vehicles cause traffic congestion and countless road accidents. Other problems include poor energy supply and substandard waste management. Most other urban problems also remain unaddressed and both *Kinshasa* and *Brazzaville* urgently must boost their respective productive potentials through improved management performance.

The emerging 2,000 km long *Luanda-N'Djamena* corridor between Angola and Chad is one of the most important new spatial developments in Central Africa. The subregion as a whole is still deeply underdeveloped in terms of road, rail and waterway connections, severely hampering mobility of people, goods and services between the larger cities and poses a significant obstacle to regional economic cooperation, integration and development.

The Member States of the Economic Community of Central African States (CEEAC) have adopted a plan to develop a reliable and competitive regional transportation network in a bid to stimulate effective and affordable regional movements and integration. Since 80 per cent of goods and 90 per cent of people in the subregion move by road, priority was accorded to the development of road connections, supported by a pledge of US \$6.4 billion to develop or improve trunks roads between the region's capital cities by 2010. However, progress is slow and it became clear that the objective would not be met by 2010.

The fact remains that early construction of this regional road network should be a matter of the highest regional priority, as it would connect an estimated 20 million city dwellers in the major cities and also unlock an estimated additional five million people in secondary towns, villages and rural areas along its path. Many of the larger conurbations are major port cities and the interconnection of these urban economic hubs could greatly enhance logistics, trade and labour flows, including the prospect of elevating some of the domestic ports to regional prominence.

Unhindered cross-border flows of people, goods and services as well as well-adapted intra-regional regulation are critical to better productivity, poverty alleviation and food and energy security in Central African cities. However, strengthening transnational and regional logistic corridors and major new road networks will not be enough. Governments of the ECCAC states must do far more to simultaneously stimulate the economic and social development of their cities as the engines of national and regional growth.

Recommended Intervention Areas in Central Africa

- National and urban governance practice must improve in the face of very rapid, increasingly problematic urban demographic growth. Efforts must, in particular, focus on enhancing local capacities for urban management in order to maintain cities' role as national and regional engines of growth and development.

- Central Africa's wealth of oil resources, hydro-electric potential and employment opportunities are significant, but the benefits must be shared more equitably if current symptoms of over-urbanisation are to be eradicated. When *demographic* outpaces *economic* momentum, poverty and slums proliferate. Upgraded and expanded infrastructures would improve the productivity of cities, create jobs and improve the living conditions of the poor, who represent the vast majority of Central Africa's urban populations. Substituting 'clean' and cheap energy sources for fuel wood would reduce health and safety hazards among the urban poor and slow down deforestation.
- Municipal authorities in Central Africa must pay more attention to urban services in an effort to improve the urban environment and adapt to climate change. Inadequate waste collection and excess-water drainage systems are a case in point, being major causes of urban flooding, as is informal urban expansion in hazardous locations.
- Faced with the challenge of climate change, national and urban authorities should seek support from development partners in order to enhance public awareness of the effects of climate change on cities. Once properly informed, all citizens can and must act on local causes of climate variability and prepare for climate change-induced hazard mitigation. More than just an additional environmental concern, public authorities should acknowledge climate change as a serious threat to cities and sustainable development.
- Migrants are agents of change and development. Given the high degree of mobility that characterizes the subregion, governments should take early steps to facilitate freedom of movement of people, goods and services within and among countries in order to facilitate trade, cultural and political exchange.
- Even though they are already twinned, both geographically and symbolically, *Brazzaville* and *Kinshasa* should strengthen political cooperation between them in order to improve infrastructures and provide holistic urban management and administration. This includes well-adapted regulation and facilitation of migratory flows between them for the sake of their economic and social development.
- Public authorities must also focus on employment generation in urban areas. At the moment, the mismatch between demographic growth and economic opportunities is filled in by the informal economy and self-employment, but these short-term palliatives only fuel poverty and socio-economic insecurity across generations. Informality is a problem; not a solution. In this critical area, too, governments must anticipate on future problems and stimulate urban-based industrial and manufacturing activities. Urban unemployment and inequality must rank among Central African governments' prime concerns.
- Corruption, mismanagement of public funds and inappropriate use of public office are major factors behind the unequal distribution of incomes and rising urban poverty. The illegitimate control of power, wealth and resources by a minority, or, in other words, corruption, is obviously part and parcel of the larger process of underdevelopment.



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Cape Town, South Africa. ©Don Bayley/iStockphoto

- Central African governments are urged to pay attention to the management and guidance of emerging domestic urban corridors and the regional interlinking of domestic corridors. This should go hand in hand with regional agreements on free movement of people, goods, services and finance in order to optimize the economic, social and political benefits of these novel urban configurations.

Southern Africa Summary

Population and Urbanisation

With a projected 61.7 per cent of its population living in urban areas, Southern Africa remains the most urbanised subregion on the continent, and this proportion is expected to swell to two-thirds by 2020. With the exception of Botswana, Lesotho and Namibia, demographic growth is now steadily slowing down, from a 9 per cent rate in 2000/10 to 5.7 per cent 2040/50 decade. Contrary to other subregions, rural to urban migration remains the dominant factor, with the balance due to natural increases.

Urban Economies and Governance

Deep-rooted inequalities inherited from the apartheid era have been perpetuated by the neoliberal economic policies that continue to rule urban development, even though the discriminatory pattern is based more and more on class than race. Uneven development has been felt mostly by youths, who make up the majority of the urban population. Governments have invested in education but employment creation falls well short of demand. City authorities in the region should better include young people in their service provision and governance strategies.

Widespread multiple deprivations persist in the low-income urban areas of Southern Africa. Deprived urban communities are the most vulnerable to disasters and disease, including HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis and cholera. Persistent spatial inequalities hark back to the conditions the Black majority experienced during the colonial and apartheid eras. Of all the continent's subregions, Southern Africa features the steepest degrees of socioeconomic inequality, with extreme poverty occurring along class and racial lines. Consumption of water, electricity and other urban utilities remains effectively segregated and very unequally distributed between wealthy and poor areas, although water is even more unequally distributed than income. Southern African income inequalities are growing in both rural and urban areas, except for the Republic of South Africa where marginal declines were observed between 2001 and 2005 due to redistributive policies.

As the result of neoliberal reform and deregulation of basic utilities, private firms now provide water, electricity, waste removal, education and health services in the South African Republic's cities. Commoditisation of services has shifted responsibility from local authorities to the private sector, which is not advantageous to the poorer sections of the population. The capacity to provide services and infrastructure as well as to plan, invest and create jobs has declined in Maputo, Harare, Luanda and Lusaka.

Urban Land Markets

As in other subregions, urban surface areas have expanded hand in hand with demographic growth, and formal urban land markets have only been able to serve the wealthy. Combining formal rules with social and customary practices, informal urban land markets provide access to land when the formal markets do not or cannot deliver. Poor land administration

and unresponsive public institutions are increasingly failing to track formal and informal land transactions, which interferes with proper market mechanisms and taxation. A way forward would be for governments to recognize informal urban land governance in general, and informal urban land markets in particular, in order to improve the administration, management and supply of urban land. Municipal functions that could be devolved to the community and neighbourhood levels include the registration of occupancy, enforcement of basic land use regulations, dispute settlement and simple title registration by local chiefs. Transitory institutional structures should facilitate involvement by property development finance and undertake land management and planning at the neighbourhood level, with the ultimate aim of incorporating such structures into municipal operations.

Metropolitan Development and Mega Sporting Events

Metropolitan-wide initiatives embracing integrated development planning, infrastructure provision, rural-urban linkages and economic planning have dominated spatial developments in the region. A reasonably high degree of subregional integration has facilitated the sporting events of global and regional importance that have been the highlights of 2010 in Southern Africa: the African football cup in Angola, the world football cup in the Republic of South Africa, and the All Africa games in *Maputo*. The FIFA World Cup showed how urban development can be influenced by spending on infrastructure. For example, post-2010 *Durban* is striving to become a successful port and sport city with stadiums and services that are able to host future Olympic, Commonwealth or Pan-African games. The major sporting events have sped up many urban development projects. For all their visible benefits, these events have also had negative impacts, including mass evictions and displacement of low-income residents.

Recommended Intervention Areas in Southern Africa

- As part of development policies, public authorities must mobilise urban young peoples' potentials and energies with proper training in entrepreneur skills and information/communication technologies, in order to enable them to set up and run their own businesses. Some urban authorities have tried to foster inclusive cities, but none have fully considered children and youth in their service provision and governance strategies. Cities should make more efforts to deliver broadband Internet to all urban neighbourhoods, rather than reinforcing existing inequalities in services delivery.
- Given its central position in the political economy, land should be treated as a matter for the national constitution, rather than just the statute book. National constitutions should provide guidance and clarification on critical land-related issues such as resolution of historical grievances, security and protection of rights irrespective of tenure, equitable land distribution and public land acquisition. Short of such clear constitutional guidance, land reform

will fall short of existing needs and will be prone to legal challenges by vested interests.

- Land information is available, but *access* to information on procedures (land use plans, lease and purchase procedures, land taxes, population densities, infrastructure available etc.) must be improved. This could be done through government Websites as a minimum first step, with on-line applications made available at a subsequent stage. In the longer term, the expertise and capacities of land professionals (surveyors, town planners, valuers, architects, etc.) need improvement, too. Instead of relying on universities only, local authorities should come up with training programmes that include the sharing of expertise across various authorities and counties.
- Local authorities must enhance land-based revenues. They should consider a flat tax for all properties not yet on valuation rolls. This mechanism should remain in place until properties can be valued and formally added to rolls. New and additional taxation is broadly accepted if it is transparent and fair and if revenues are spent on tangible neighbourhood improvements. Before looking to broaden revenue bases, though, local authorities must exploit existing mandates to the full and improve fee collection, and in this regard *Lusaka* and *Dar es Salaam* show the way.
- On top of looking to reduce financial deficits, local authorities should renegotiate their mandates with central government. This opportunity is more readily available in countries in the process of constitutional change, such as Zimbabwe (and recently Kenya in Eastern Africa), which could set out explicit roles and financial mandates for local authorities, as has happened in Botswana.
- As any others in the world, Southern African urban authorities must become more familiar with climate change and its incipient or prospective effects on their respective areas. They can do so through networking and cooperation with research institutions, and as part of systematic efforts to deploy appropriate data and monitoring systems. Outside the South African Cities Network, these functions are rather weak at the moment. Indeed, most databases on urban conditions include limited (where any) city-specific local data.
- The Pretoria-Johannesbourg GauTrain - Africa's first high speed train - can reduce *Johannesburg's* notorious traffic jams and long commuting times. However, since the line bypasses the townships where the majority of the conurbation live, it misses an opportunity to break with the legacy of apartheid in the transportation sector.
- Cross-border economic corridors offer economic opportunities to the poor and investors alike. Economic and physical planners should take a well co-ordinated interest in the potential of these corridors. Any spatial development initiatives should be broadened to integrate urban components.
- Governance should encourage or reward energy conservation through retrofitting buildings, solar power and information to residents and industry, supported by appropriate technologies towards savings.