

**African Policy Circle**



# Addressing the Challenges of Urbanization in Africa

A Summary of the 2019 African Policy Circle Discussions

**Position Paper**  
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## About the African Policy Circle

This publication is a joint output by the African Policy Circle, a group of civil society organizations and think tanks from Africa whose goal is to strengthen sub-Saharan voices in global, continental, regional, and national development debates as well as to promote good governance through critical reflection and innovative ideas. The African Policy Circle is supported by the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung and the Global Public Policy Institute (GPPi).



## Table of Contents

|                                                    |    |
|----------------------------------------------------|----|
| About the African Policy Circle                    | 4  |
| The 2019 Agenda: Addressing Urbanization in Africa | 5  |
| Key Challenges of Urbanization in Africa           | 7  |
| Tackling the Challenges of Urbanization in Africa  | 12 |

## About the African Policy Circle

The African Policy Circle (APC) is a platform for African civil society actors to jointly develop new solutions to African problems. Based on robust and evidence-based research, the APC develops common positions and policy recommendations on pressing issues regarding Africa's development, such as economic development, human rights and good governance, illicit financial flows, natural resource governance, or localizing the UN's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Moreover, and building on these positions, it utilizes the collective voice of its members to promote these positions and to engage in current and emerging debates on development.

The APC members meet twice a year to discuss thematic priorities, define common positions on key development issues, and determine the strategic direction of the group. The activities and thematic areas of the APC are decided jointly and leadership rotates on a regular basis. In 2019, Policy Research for Development (REPOA) in Tanzania served as the group chair and facilitator.

In 2019, the following organizations were members of the APC:

- African Capacity Building Foundation (ACBF), Zimbabwe
- African Centre for the Constructive Resolution of Disputes (ACCORD), South Africa
- African Forum and Network on Debt and Development (AFRODAD), Zimbabwe
- African Monitor, South Africa
- Centre for Natural Resource Governance (CNRG), Zimbabwe
- Centre for the Study of the Economies of Africa (CSEA), Nigeria
- CLEEN Foundation, Nigeria
- Democracy Development Programme (DDP), South Africa
- Good Governance Africa (GGA), South Africa / Nigeria / Ghana
- Institute for Public Policy Research (IPPR), Namibia
- Institute for Security Studies (ISS), South Africa
- Isis-Women's International Cross-Cultural Exchange (Isis-WICCE), Uganda
- National Initiative for Civic Education (NICE), Malawi
- Policy Research for Development (REPOA), Tanzania
- South African Institute of International Affairs (SAIIA), South Africa
- Southern African Liaison Office (SALO), South Africa
- Security Research & Information Centre (SRIC), Kenya

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## The 2019 Agenda: Addressing Urbanization in Africa

Africa is the world's least urbanized continent, and yet the rate at which its cities are expanding is growing faster than no other worldwide – at an average of 3.5 percent per year.<sup>1</sup> This growth of urbanization does, however, vary across the continent, ranging from the already heavily urbanized North Africa (47.8 percent) to the least urbanized Sub-Saharan Africa (32.8 percent).<sup>2</sup> The aggregate rate of urbanization on the continent is projected to grow from 40 percent in 2015 to 56 percent in 2050.<sup>3</sup>

The enormous speed at which Africa's cities are growing is linked to other key development trends, most prominently accelerating economic and population growth, increasing migration from rural to urban areas, and the youth bulge.<sup>4</sup> It is strongly driven by Africans' perceptions that cities – in contrast to the continent's rural areas – offer an abundance of livelihood opportunities, including employment and income-generating opportunities, food security, and access to finance, education and social capital as well as social protection.<sup>5</sup>

Rapid urbanization has also fueled the rise of megacities. Some of Africa's cities have already ballooned beyond the 10-million-inhabitants mark. There are currently seven megacities on the continent: Lagos, Cairo, Accra, Kinshasa, Johannesburg-Pretoria, Nairobi, and Khartoum. Several other cities, such as Dar es Salaam in Tanzania and Luanda in Angola, are expected to graduate to megacity status in the next 15 years.<sup>6</sup> Over the coming decades, Africa will see considerable growth in both its rural and urban populations; however, the continent's urban populations are expected to grow twice as fast as their counterparts in rural areas.<sup>7</sup>

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1 Huang, J. (2015). 'African Urbanization', Population Connection. Available at: <https://www.populationconnection.org/african-urbanization/>. Accessed 19 July 2019.

2 AfDB. (2012). 'Urbanization in Africa', AfDB Blogs. Available at <https://blogs.afdb.org/inclusive-growth/urbanization-africa-191>. Accessed 29 January 2020.

3 UNCTAD. (2018). 'Economic Development in Africa Report'. Available at [https://unctad.org/en/PublicationChapters/edar2018\\_ch1\\_en.pdf](https://unctad.org/en/PublicationChapters/edar2018_ch1_en.pdf). Accessed 29 January 2020.

4 UNCTAD. (2018). 'Economic Development in Africa Report'. Available at [https://unctad.org/en/PublicationChapters/edar2018\\_ch1\\_en.pdf](https://unctad.org/en/PublicationChapters/edar2018_ch1_en.pdf). Accessed 29 January 2020.

5 Stapleton, C. (2015). 'The Migrant Network Effect: An Empirical Analysis of Rural-To-Urban Migration in South Africa', Economic Research Southern Africa (ERSA) Working Paper. Available at [https://econrsa.org/system/files/publications/working\\_papers/working\\_paper\\_504.pdf](https://econrsa.org/system/files/publications/working_papers/working_paper_504.pdf). Accessed 29 January 2020;

FAO. (2016). 'Our World is Urbanizing: Is Food on Your Agenda?'. Available at <http://www.fao.org/3/I8568EN/i8568en.pdf>. Accessed 29 January 2020.

6 Güneralp, B, et al. (2017). 'Urbanization in Africa: Challenges and Uncertainties and Implications for Opportunities for Conservation', *Environ. Res. Lett.*, 13, 015002. Available at <https://iopscience.iop.org/article/10.1088/1748-9326/aa94fe/pdf>. Accessed 29 January 2020.

7 United Nations. (2014). 'World Urbanization Prospects: The 2014 - Population Division'. Available at <https://population.un.org/wup/Publications/Files/WUP2014-Report.pdf>. Accessed 29 January 2020.

This trend comes with significant challenges. As the surging demand for living space in urban areas consumes arable land and green spaces, the scale of Africa's urbanization is already taking a toll on the environment, including by polluting precious water sources and compromising air quality. In many sprawling and unplanned cities, spiking crime rates have meant that rapid urbanization has become a security concern as inhabitants fear for the personal safety as well as their property. Moreover, as vast numbers of people arrive in often small and underserved cities, demands for employment opportunities, energy, housing, transport, water, basic education, and healthcare are often stretching already poorly resourced authorities way beyond their limits.

Urbanization is also transforming the demographic composition and social structures of urban areas. While more than 60 percent of the urban population is now below or around 15 years of age, there has also been a growth in the number of elderly people living in African urban centers. In many places, the rapid increase in inhabitants is eroding existing community networks and social cohesion. Moreover, while poverty is more acute in Africa's rural areas, there are numerous pockets of poverty in many of the continent's cities. The continued economic growth experienced by most African countries has not trickled down but has instead led to an uneven distribution of benefits, leaving the majority struggling. As such, inequality has prevailed, adding to concerns over safety and security across urban centers on the continent. In combination with accelerating urbanization, other macro trends like climate change and the growing frequency of environmental disasters as well as rising costs of living, unemployment, illnesses, and an aging population spell dim prospects for Africa's cities and their inhabitants. Without concerted efforts to address these factors, the number of the urban poor in Africa will likely increase.

In addition to these socio-economic challenges, and due to their role as hubs for the large flows of illicit goods like drugs and weapons that help fund conflicts across the continent, Africa's cities have also become magnets for armed actors. In many parts of urban Africa, criminals have taken advantage of dense peripheries that local authorities struggle to reach. What is more, throughout much of the continent, weak state capacity has inadvertently aided and abetted the increase of crime in urban areas. Nowhere is this more pronounced than in Africa's small nations as well as its conflict zones and post-conflict environments. Examples include Kenya, where acts of terrorism have been more prevalent in major urban centers, or Guinea-Bissau, where authorities once seized 635 kilograms of cocaine worth an estimated \$50 million but let the traffickers escape with a much larger consignment of 2.5 tons because the police could not chase them.<sup>8</sup> The cost of growing urban poverty and subsequent inequality is also reflected in the rising prices for fences and gates as well as payments

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8 Mutume, G. (2007). 'Organized Crime Targets Weak African States', United Nations Africa Renewal. Available at <https://www.un.org/africarenewal/magazine/july-2007/organized-crime-targets-weak-african-states>. Accessed 29 January 2020.

made to private security companies and individuals in the affluent neighborhoods of African cities. If urban planning was done right, the resources spent on such security measures could instead be invested in poverty reduction.

These changes to Africa's urban landscape require a review of policy interventions at every level. There is potential to leverage urbanization to produce solutions that can meet and sustain the dynamic needs of growing city populations – but doing so requires more nuanced approaches to urban planning and policymaking. Against this backdrop, over the course of two workshops – the first in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania in May 2019 and the second in Lilongwe, Malawi in October 2019 – the African Policy Circle (APC) examined the causes and implications of urbanization in Africa and offered potential policy solutions for the most pressing challenges. This paper summarizes these discussions by focusing on four main areas identified by the APC members: 1) crime and violence; 2) mobility and transport; 3) water and sanitation; and 4) governmental weaknesses in the areas of institutional capacity, economic development policies, and urban planning (Section 3). The paper concludes by presenting various policy options discussed by the members over the past year (Section 4).

## Key Challenges of Urbanization in Africa

Africa is experiencing rapid urbanization. Its urban areas already hold around 472 million people according to estimates. That number is expected to double in the next 25 years.<sup>9</sup> The majority – or two fifths – of the urban population in Africa are young people. With only 1 in 6 African youths in wage employment,<sup>10</sup> the question whether this growing urban youth bulge will be able to sustain itself is cause for mounting concern, along with young people's relative vulnerability to political, social and economic disaffection. Coupled with growing urban inequality across all age groups, insecurity and violence are push-and-pull factors that dominate the socio-economic landscape in many African cities.

Many African megacities such as Lagos, Cairo, Kinshasa, Nairobi, Johannesburg-Pretoria, and Khartoum already struggle to absorb the bulk of the urban population.<sup>11</sup> The results are pockets of urban poverty in major cities and towns, most poignantly in the form of slums, and all the main conditions of overcrowded living: congestion, unemployment, stark inequalities, a lack of social and community networks as well as

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9 Saghir, J & Santoro, J. (2018). 'Urbanization in Sub-Saharan Africa', Centre for Strategic and International Studies. Available at <https://www.csis.org/analysis/urbanization-sub-saharan-africa>. Accessed 29 January 2020.

10 AfDB. (2017). 'Jobs for Youth in Africa'. Available at [https://www.afdb.org/fileadmin/uploads/afdb/Documents/Boards-Documents/Bank\\_Group\\_Strategy\\_for\\_Jobs\\_for\\_Youth\\_in\\_Africa\\_2016-2025\\_Rev\\_2.pdf](https://www.afdb.org/fileadmin/uploads/afdb/Documents/Boards-Documents/Bank_Group_Strategy_for_Jobs_for_Youth_in_Africa_2016-2025_Rev_2.pdf). Accessed 29 January 2020.

11 UN Habitat. (2016). 'Urbanization and Development Emerging Futures', World Cities Report. Available at <http://wcr.unhabitat.org/>. Accessed 29 January 2020.

crippling social problems, including crime, violence, inadequate basic infrastructure, and low standards of living.<sup>12</sup> In Sub-Saharan Africa, nearly 60 percent of urban residents live in slums.

## Rising Insecurity and Violence

Throughout 2019, members of the African Policy Circle focused on four major challenges resulting from accelerating urbanization on the continent. First and foremost, as the population of the urban poor increases, rising insecurity and violence constitute one of the most dominant risks of urbanization. Results from the 2016 and 2018 Afrobarometer surveys indicate that insecurity and violence are comparatively more prevalent in urban areas than in rural areas. Generally believed to be manifestations of economic inequality, weak state capacity and limited opportunities, the comparatively high prevalence of insecurity and violence in Africa's urban centers also suggests that urbanization may be a driver of such inequality and weak state capacity.<sup>13</sup>

Many of the fastest-growing African metropolises are witnessing a spike in both the rate and severity of urban insecurities.<sup>14</sup> In the absence of good governance, the widespread poverty and inequality in these societies are pushing many to look for alternative strategies of sustaining their livelihoods through violence and organized crime. Studies on the relationship between urbanization and inequalities in urban centers, for example concerning education and wealth, show that cities with such inequalities are more likely to have high crime rates.<sup>15</sup> Criminal activities range from petty theft to armed and organized crime. Over time, criminals in urban settings can 'graduate' to other, more dangerous behaviors such as drug trafficking. Additional examples of urban crime include self-directed violence, interpersonal violence in the family or community, and collective violence – such as rioting or terrorism – induced by political, social and economic factors.<sup>16</sup>

While the connection between urbanization and growing insecurity in Africa's cities is a general concern, the extent and types of violence and insecurity vary between

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12 UN Habitat. (2016). 'Urbanization and Development Emerging Futures', World Cities Report. Available at <http://wcr.unhabitat.org/>. Accessed 29 January 2020.

13 Fox, S. and Beall, J. (2012). 'Mitigating Conflict and Violence in African Cities', *Environment and Planning C: Government and Policy*, 30, 6: 968-981.

14 UN Habitat. (2015). 'African Forum for Urban Safety Launched'. Available at <https://unhabitat.org/africa-forum-for-urban-safety-launched/>. Accessed 29 January 2020.

15 Glaeser, E. L., Resseger, M. and Tobio, K. (2009). 'Inequality in Cities', *Journal of Regional Science*, 49, 4: 617-646.

16 Rutherford, A, et al. (2007). 'Violence: A Priority for Public Health? (part 2)', *Journal of Epidemiology and Community Health*, 61, 9: 764-770. Available at <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2659998/>. Accessed 29 January 2020.



different African countries and are influenced by multiple factors. For instance, violent crime is more prevalent and persistent in South Africa than in other countries in the region, which stems from the country's high economic inequality, low social cohesion, and the high number of people illegally possessing firearms.<sup>17</sup> Sudan, another fast-urbanizing African country, represents a very different context. The country is experiencing political turmoil as protestors demand civilian rule. Since the protests first erupted, many citizens have been killed, while approximately 1.64 million people in Darfur have been displaced. Gender-based violence has been especially prevalent.<sup>18</sup>

According to the World Health Organization, insecurity and violence are influenced by: 1) individual factors, such as drug abuse, psychological disorders, and the nature of violent behavior; 2) relationship factors, such as violent peer pressure, poor parental practices, and violent parental conflicts; 3) community factors, such as poverty, unemployment, drug trafficking, and high crime rates; and 4) societal factors, such as the prevalence of violent cultural norms, weak rule of law, and inequality.<sup>19</sup> As more and more people, especially youths, migrate from rural to urban environments, the rising demand for jobs and the limited absorption of youths into the urban labor market often drive young people to join gangs, engage in drug trafficking or commit violent crimes.<sup>20</sup> Insecurity and violence are also known to induce a wide range of social, economic and psychological problems on the individual, community and national levels. Those who are most vulnerable to – and most affected by – violence and insecurity are children and youths, the elderly and women. UN-Habitat highlights the fact that insecurity and violence have paved the way for widespread fear among urban dwellers. Moreover, they have led to a deterioration of foreign direct investment, a decrease in productivity, an increase in the number of private security agencies, and an uneven distribution of public services as a result of increased delivery costs.<sup>21</sup>

Responding to these challenges has proven extremely difficult due to a number of factors, among them weak state capacity and ineffective police systems in many African countries. As a result, many African elites have resorted to private security firms,<sup>22</sup> whereas many average-income or poor urban citizens are organizing

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17 Brankovic, J. (2019). 'What Drives Violence in South Africa?', The Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation (CSVr).

18 UN News. (2019). 'Sudan Must Hand Over Former President, Other Suspects, International Criminal Court Prosecutor Tells Security Council, Urging Justice for Victims of Violence'. Available at <https://www.un.org/press/en/2019/sc13849.doc.htm>. Last accessed 29 January 2020.

19 World Health Organization. (2015). 'Homicide – 2015 Update', Web Page. Available at <http://apps.who.int/violence-info/homicide/>. Accessed 29 January 2020.

20 Commins, S. (2011). 'Urban Fragility and Security in Africa. African Security Brief', Africa Center for Strategic Studies.

21 UN Habitat. (2007). 'Global Report on Human Settlements 2007 – Enhancing Urban Safety and Security', United Nations Human Settlements Programme. Available at <https://mirror.unhabitat.org/downloads/docs/GRHS2007.pdf>. Accessed 29 January 2020.

22 Caldeira, TPR. (2001). 'City of Walls: Crime, Segregation and Citizenship in Sao Paulo', Berkeley: University of California Press.

themselves into small neighborhood vigilante groups. Both developments are reshaping urban security in Africa in response to a growing fear of victimization felt by the continent's urban populations.<sup>23</sup> In some instances, these different security groups may complement or even replace the formal security apparatus. Further, rising insecurity and violence also constrain economic development. Studies have shown that insecurity is strongly linked to variations in productivity, thus slowing down the pace of development.<sup>24</sup>

During the discussion on these issues, the APC members agreed that crime and violence are typically more severe in urban areas and that they are compounded by rapid population growth. Safety and security concerns are more prevalent in African megacities and emerging megacities, which often account for a sizeable proportion of total crime in each country. Qualifying the composition of crime and insecurity, members emphasized the relatively high reported levels of burglary in some major African cities, where victimization rates have often exceeded 8 percent of the population. Although often non-violent, burglary is a serious offense that tends to be at least partly motivated by existing inequalities – rather than the overall level and prevalence of poverty – in a society in general and in most of urban Africa in particular.

Some APC members also noted robbery as a major security challenge in urban areas in many African countries – not only due to resulting injuries and property loss, but also because of the heightened fear and sense of insecurity this type of crime induces in urban residents. Members specifically pointed to South Africa, Kenya and Nigeria as examples of countries with major urban centers that are struggling with crime and insecurity in general and robbery in particular. According to comments by some members, the authorities in South Africa recorded 89 robberies for every 100,000 people in 2017-2018, with 29 percent of residents in Johannesburg reporting to have been victims of robbery. Similarly, participants commented that between 50 and 70 percent of citizens in Nairobi and Lagos said that they worry about crime ‘all the time’ or ‘very often’.

## Collapsing Infrastructures and Flawed Urban Planning

Apart from posing the various kinds of security challenges outlined above, rapid urbanization also has implications for infrastructure and strains already deficient urban planning efforts. It tests – and can lead to a collapse of – cities’ existing road and

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23 Ogbzor, E. (2016). Understanding the Informal Security Sector in Nigeria. Available at: <https://css.ethz.ch/en/services/digital-library/articles/article.html/94f665de-d201-4dcd-9e9a-fa7504ef9250/pdf>. Accessed 29 January 2020.

24 Marceau, N. and Lloyd-Ellis, H. (2003). Endogenous Insecurity and Economic Development. *Journal of Development Economics*, 72, 1: 1–29. Available at: <http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/B6VBV-48PVG6-2/2/703bdd202187b4f2b8292f0c0246d4b7>. Accessed 29 January 2020.

transportation infrastructures, especially in cases where these have not been designed for the new mix and increased volume of traffic. The results are notoriously congested traffic and frequent accidents. While walking and cycling are very common in many African cities, pedestrians and cyclists are also among those most frequently injured or killed in accidents. Nevertheless, many African cities' infrastructure measures primarily focus on road construction, which often leads to more motorization and, subsequently, more congestion, noise, stress, air pollution, and further accidents. What is more, the separation of residential areas from areas of employment, markets, schools, and health services that is common in many African cities may force residents to spend an increasing amount of time and money on transportation.

Further, despite the importance of water and sanitation in all aspects of development, many African cities are facing an ongoing crisis of water and sanitation, which most severely affects the urban poor. Safe water, basic toilets and good hygiene practices are essential for individual and socio-economic development. Children's health and development in particular depend on them. In Malawi, for example, there are around 9.9 million people who do not have access to basic sanitation and 5.6 million people without access to safe water sources. Every year, poor sanitation, unsafe water and unhygienic practices contribute to the death of 3,000 children who are below the age of five.<sup>25</sup>

Generally speaking, the main reasons for this water, sanitation and hygiene crisis in urban Africa include: a lack of or flawed planning at the country level; poor ownership, governance and a lack of political will for action; a lack of knowledge and poor maintenance as well as inefficient usage of existing systems; an unclear distribution of roles and responsibilities between the public and private sectors; and a lack of capacity to deal with these issues. Furthermore, Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) activities are usually not prioritized in national budgets or donor funds.

All of these issue clusters – of rising insecurity and violence as well as overburdened or non-existent basic infrastructures in Africa's urban areas – are exacerbated by weak institutional capacities, corruption, sluggish economic development, and a lack of urban planning. In this respect, members of the APC noted the problem of weak governance systems, law enforcement capacities and municipal leadership in most African cities, which are among the main reasons why the rise of unplanned settlements is often not effectively addressed. Similarly, weak institutional capacity has often meant that pressing infrastructural needs are not met or that access to key services, including health care, education, and water and sanitation, does not improve. In many instances, this combination of factors has resulted in the creation of enclaves within cities that separate the 'haves' from the 'have-nots', a situation that has exasperated economic and social inequalities and prompted spillover effects such as worsening crime rates in urban areas.

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25 Sefasi, A. (2009). 'Presentation at 11th APC Meeting'.

Throughout the workshops, APC members continually highlighted the importance of sound urban planning for addressing key challenges resulting from accelerating urbanization: unserved slums, pollution, issues tied to land ownership and use, or waste management, among others. Members cited the 2009 Global Report on Human Settlement Focused on Urban Planning, Goal 11 of the Sustainable Development Goals, the New Urban Agenda, and Malawi's Vision 2020 as useful resources that could guide urban planning efforts in African cities. At the same time, they expressed their frustration at the lack of actual implementation, citing poor political leadership, a lack of funding, and the exclusion of different stakeholders from planning processes as key reasons for these failures. Finally, members stressed the problematic lack of joint initiatives and poor dialogue and feedback mechanisms between urban councils and their citizens, citing that only a few civil society organizations in Africa have an explicit focus on urban governance activities.

## **Tackling the Challenges of Urbanization in Africa**

Urbanization is a double-edged sword. On the one hand, it is an essential part of development and can lift societies up by prompting diverse urban environments that stimulate creativity and innovation. On the other hand, rapid urbanization without appropriate policy responses to its particular challenges – for example in unplanned cities – can disrupt livelihoods and threaten the security of life and property. Without proper planning and infrastructure development that matches the influx of people moving to cities, demand for already scarce resources like employment, energy, housing, transport, water, sanitation, health care, security, and education becomes too high. Over the course of 2019, the African Policy Circle members therefore proposed several actions that not only aim to address the negative effects of urbanization – combating crime and violence, providing mobility and transport, increasing access to water and sanitation services – but are also geared toward improving urban planning, strengthening state capacities and promoting economic development.

### **Crime and Violence**

Both physical and psychological security are critical preconditions for people to thrive in urban spaces – and to do so sustainably. To adequately address the security challenges posed by a rapidly urbanizing Africa, APC members emphasized a number of key actions. First, there is a need for cooperation between urban communities and the respective law enforcement authorities – from the local to the national level. Too often, poor connections between the police and local communities hamper the implementation of violence and crime prevention strategies. Despite the significant role played by the police and other law enforcement agencies, success in confronting violence depends on communities' contribution to such efforts. An active engagement of both parties in the maintenance of peace and order, in the community and in the country more broadly, thus rests on a strong relationship between communities and the police or other relevant law enforcement or security actors.

Second, there is a need to upgrade essential infrastructure in Africa's cities, especially in underserved areas. The growth of cities and towns is associated with the growth of slums. Limited infrastructure hinders the delivery of key public services like policing, resulting in insecurity and violence. Most of the continent's urban areas are already densely populated, making tensions more likely to arise in the event of poor service delivery. To enhance formalized settlements that are conducive environments for safety and security, African governments need to promote sustainable urban planning structures that cater to all communities in urban areas.

Third, members highlighted the need to establish youth education clubs, recreation centers, and employment programs. Young men and women in urban areas are more vulnerable to crime and violence if most of them are unemployed, idle or driven by peer pressure. They are also more likely to engage in risky behaviors, such as excessive alcohol abuse and drug consumption, in addition to violent crimes, such as trafficking, robbery, assault, or sexual abuse. Prevention initiatives that specifically target youths are particularly important in schools, as these institutions can facilitate strong awareness campaigns on alcohol, drugs and other risky behaviors. Moreover, recreational activities such as sports, especially at schools, can contribute to keeping youth engaged and active, and should thus be encouraged. Finally, employment programs as well as entrepreneurial and vocational training are critical for building up the skills of young men and women, which helps to reduce youth unemployment.

## Mobility and Transport

In order to address the myriad of challenges that rapid urbanization poses for African cities' mobility and transport infrastructures, APC members proposed a number of potential solutions. First, they emphasized the pressing need to factor urban mobility into city planning and to develop integrated public transport systems. Transport cannot be planned and implemented in isolation; communities must be included too.

Second, members highlighted the need to pivot away from private transport and toward a public transport model. To encourage urban residents to make this shift, public transport should become more attractive and reliable, for example, by allocating separate lanes for public transport vehicles, as is done in Tanzania. Relatedly, there is a need to block private actors from obstructing governments' efforts to approve and implement public transport policies. This could be done by streamlining institutions and assigning clear responsibility to particular roles in order to better hold individuals accountable for their actions.

Additional suggestions included the need for balanced decision-making among policymakers to ensure that both vehicles and other road users, such as pedestrians and cyclists, are taken into account during planning processes. Moreover, informed efforts to improve urban transport infrastructures depend on better data and information that ensure a complete overview of the transport system, including travel behavior and route network inventories.

## Sanitation Services and Water

Water, sanitation and hygiene are central to sustainable economic and social development as well as environmental sustainability. As such, they underpin healthy living conditions everywhere, but especially in crowded urban areas. During their discussions on the topic, APC members focused on three key issues. First, they highlighted the success of existing WASH programs and stressed the need for greater public awareness as well as political prioritizing of WASH activities, including through allocating additional funds to WASH objectives.

Second, as some city councils lack the capacity to effectively oversee the private sector, APC members pointed out that there is a need to strengthen the enforcement of bylaws and the monitoring of companies' waste disposal practices as well as other corporate activities that have an impact on WASH activities.

Finally, the members stressed the need to discover the value of recycling, which not only has intrinsic value but can also help avoid high landfill costs. However, a key challenge is the lack of quantitative data for assessing the pros and cons of investing in waste transfer centers, landfills, composting, and energy recovery for power generation. Further, in addition to the political will needed to push such policies, there is a clear need to invest in communication strategies to strengthen awareness and change citizens' behavior around waste reduction, reuse and recycling.

## Institutional Capacities and Resilience

Resilience refers to the ability of a person, community or system to adapt to a variety of changing conditions, in addition to the ability to withstand shocks while still maintaining essential functions.<sup>26</sup> It includes learning to live with the spectrum of risks that exist at the interface between people, the economy and the environment. To building resilience in poor urban communities across Africa, city governments have to play a leading role in addressing the risks of urbanization by providing residents with key public infrastructure and services, such as drainage, road networks that include walking or cycling pathways on major roads, links to water networks, and health care services.<sup>27</sup>

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26 World Bank. (2015). 'Investing In Urban Resilience: Protecting and Promoting Development in a Changing World'. Available at <http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/739421477305141142/pdf/109431-WP-P158937-Public-Abstract-SentInvestinginurbanresilienceprotectingandpromotingdevelopment-inachangingworld.Pdf>. Accessed 29 January 2020.

27 Baker, J. (2012). 'Building Resilience for the Urban Poor – Let's Get Moving'. Available at <https://blogs.worldbank.org/sustainablecities/building-resilience-for-the-urban-poor-let-s-get-moving>. Accessed 29 January 2020.

APC members also highlighted the need to promote resilience among residents and authorities as a policy remedy, suggesting that the best way to do so within African cities was to work with their existing individual strengths. In this respect, they proposed five main recommendations. First, they emphasized the need for African cities to act as centers and drivers of growth. The members cited examples from around the world, such as Danzig, Fiume, Jerusalem, Shanghai, Kilwa, Mogadishu, and Tangiers, where leaders found solutions to uneven wealth distribution by promoting skills, markets, infrastructure, a large middle-class, and a variety of differently sized enterprises, among others. Members argued that by drawing on such strengths, African countries will be able to address current and future challenges of rapid urbanization, especially in inner cities. A failure to embrace and shape the growth potential of cities carries the risk of promoting informal settlements and economically excluded enclaves.

Second, members highlighted the important role of communities in securing their own cities. They observed that more and more urban communities find themselves excluded from social services, while structures for community engagement with city authorities are often weak or dysfunctional. In this respect, the members emphasized the need to strengthen community governance structures so citizens can exercise effective oversight and demand better service provisions for their communities. In addition, they pointed to the value of multi-sectoral dialogues between government institutions and local groups or organizations. On the one hand, community organizations can act as vehicles for citizen involvement and enhance people's capacities, bargaining power and access to resources. On the other hand, local government executives like councilors or chairpersons can reach out to key civil society organizations that have a wide reach within the community to facilitate such dialogues in a demand-driven manner. Further, community awareness and mobilization campaigns can also help bring to light differing cultural issues within these respective communities.

Third, local governments should help existing local groups in poor urban areas build the capacities of their respective communities in order to enable them to address the most pressing concerns on their own. While a lack of adequate housing may be the biggest issue in one poor urban community, another may urgently need better waste disposal. If governmental capacity to address these problems and cater to different local needs is limited, local governments should make it a priority to support the capacity of affected communities to do so. This could involve engaging local organizations that deal with sustainable and affordable housing, supplying cheap everyday materials, or teaching and helping residents build their own houses. In addition to addressing the immediate problems, the skills that residents learn in the process can eventually become a basis for income-generating work. Such incentive programs should allow for sufficient flexibility across poor urban communities and take into account the most pressing challenges as well as the availability of different local institutions that can provide the necessary trainings.

Fourth, members recommended that measures should be put in place to improve local governance – for example, through reducing delays in the processing of development

approvals and land ownership or by providing incentives for skilled people to serve in local authorities. To address heightening frustration over the apparent lack of solutions to urban challenges – despite a multitude of proposals – there is also a need for better advocacy and media engagement to ensure oversight and accountability, and to develop or improve existing monitoring systems for governance and law enforcement to make local authorities more effective. This could include, for example, instituting a peer review process and promoting measures to ensure that implemented policies are enforced.

Finally, given that financial limitations are often cited as a key reason for local governments' inability to effectively provide public services, members recommended that local governments prioritize reducing corruption as well as improving their capacity to collect taxes and other revenue.

## Economic Development

African cities are in a unique position to help build resilience by acting as bridgeheads and linking rural and urban areas. To harness their potential to do so, APC members proposed three main ways forward. First, cities can reduce crime and insecurity by providing communities with access to livelihood opportunities and the surrounding markets. City authorities do not need to invest in overly expensive ventures. Rather, they should focus on simple measures that have the potential to make a big difference, such as open-air bazaars that permit small operators and traders to operate legally. Similarly, makeshift weekend markets and accessible industrial areas can also offer important livelihood opportunities to citizens.

Second, members stressed the need to create incentives for private-public partnerships (PPPs) that engage the urban poor, create jobs and add value. According to the African Development Bank (AfDB), a third of Africa's 420 million youths (aged between 15 and 35) are unemployed. What is more, only 3.1 million jobs are created every year, despite 10 to 12 million youths reaching working age. Given these numbers, members saw PPPs in the agricultural sector as the most promising and effective avenue to reducing youth unemployment. Agriculture has enormous social and economic relevance in Africa: more than 60 percent of the population in sub-Saharan Africa are smallholder farmers. Cities could design frameworks for engaging relevant private sector organizations in PPPs to organize, train and support the urban poor in areas such as mechanized farming, animal production, poultry farming, fish farming, and beekeeping. A PPP that, for instance, provides portions of farmland as well as farming tools and seedlings (or start-up capital to purchase such items) could also benefit the urban poor. To ensure that the right PPPs are forged, it is crucial to do thorough needs assessments of the local communities to identify existing and future opportunities.

Finally, members cautioned that African cities can only act as effective joints between rural and urban areas if they do not seek to develop at the expense of the surrounding



rural areas. A common example are low commodity prices that consistently undermine rural livelihoods and can encourage brokers, traffickers and loan sharking. As such, there is also a complementary need to develop rural growth centers that can relieve cities of additional urbanization pressures by reducing the influx of people migrating from rural to urban areas. With better policies to enhance business investment, rural areas can be transformed to become more productive and attractive places to live. Such policies for rural development include, for example, improving the conditions for business start-ups in rural communities or making it easier for businesses in cities, such as restaurant chains or supermarkets, to set up branches in rural communities. Such policies could take the form of tax credits, tax exemptions or tax holidays for businesses. At the same time, members also stressed the need to improve the provision of basic amenities in rural areas, such as road networks and access to power and water.

## Urban Planning

Context-sensitive urban planning is a key to alleviating the risks of urbanization, for several reasons. For one, it is a crucial mitigation strategy against natural risks to cities, such as climate disasters. Moreover, effective urban planning can help to promote healthy communities, improve the overall quality of urban living, and to accommodate growing urban populations.

Natural disasters are common in both rural and urban areas, but their impact is usually larger in urban areas due to their higher population density. Disasters can also trigger epidemics, shortages and general disruptions of essential public services, in addition to disrupting travel routes and markets, which can cause price hikes. Through good urban planning, however, such dangers can be planned for and mitigated against. Dar es Salaam, for example, has been able to reduce the impact of floods by outlawing settlements in vulnerable areas and designating areas for resettlement.

Second, members noted that planning for and investing in healthy lifestyles and citizen wellbeing is another important building block of resilience in African cities. A crucial first step for achieving this is the realization that health is not only the absence of diseases but must be understood as complete physical, mental and social wellbeing. As such, contextually relevant urban planning needs to seriously incorporate provisions for walking and cycling paths, open spaces and parks, clean and affordable energy to replace charcoal and kerosene use, and sports and recreation facilities for healthy neighborhoods.

Finally, members discussed the need for improved urban planning and management practices. This includes extending the scope of environmental management from what is currently an overly narrow focus on urban administrative boundaries to a multiscale urban governance model as well as shifting urban policy and governance away from models that exclusively consider economic growth toward a more people-centered approach. It also means enhancing public participation and fostering the co-production of knowledge with all stakeholders in national planning processes.

