

# URBANISATION AND THE URBAN POOR IN AFRICA

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## Outline

- Introduction
- Definitions
- Urbanisation trends in Africa
- Rural-urban migration
- Search for shelter
- Vicious cycle of poverty
- The way forward
- Conclusion

## Introduction

- Rapid urbanisation results from:
  - landlessness,
  - falling agriculture
  - lack of basic social and infrastructural facilities in rural areas
  - Increased population
- Urbanisation produces
  - Pressure on urban land and services
  - Informal settlements

## Introduction cont.

- Informal settlements are characterised by a combination of linked problems such as:
  - poor housing, unemployment, poor skills, low incomes, high crime environments, bad health and others
- The urban poor, however, make enormous contribution to the building and maintenance of urban life

## Introduction cont.

- Granting them secure tenure will enable them give off their best for urban life and development
- Anti-eviction laws followed by upgrading of tenure will ensure tenure security for the poor.
- Empowered local authorities working in close collaboration with other stakeholders can ensure tenure security for the urban poor and help alleviate urban poverty

## Definitions

- Urban area - a population of more than 5000 inhabitants
- Poverty is defined relative to the standards of living in a society at a specific time
- Urban poor are as people struggling to meet and maintain the basic biological needs of shelter, food, water, and safety
- Most of the urban poor in Africa earn and live on less than a US dollar a day

## Urbanisation Trends in Africa

- Pre – Colonial
  - Wars
  - Creation of nations
  - Trade
- Colonial
  - Development Policies
    - Exploitation of raw materials
    - Infrastructural developments
  - Search for markets for manufactured goods
- Post – Colonial
  - Development policies
    - Concentration of development in a few areas.

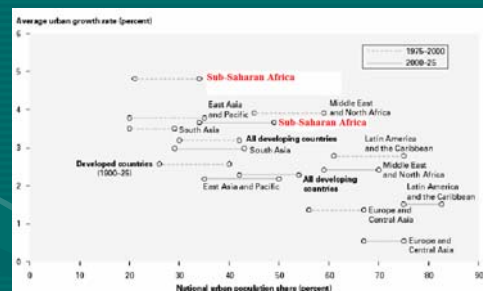
## Rural –Urban Migration

- In modern times urbanisation has been fuelled by increased population due to advances in medicine, improved life expectancy, low mortality rate etc.
- However, rural –urban migration accounts for a substantial percentage of the urban population. Push and pull factors accounts for rural –urban migration

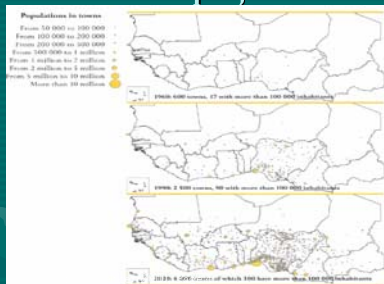
## Rural –Urban Migration cont.

- Push factors
  - Landlessness resulting from:
    - Privatisation of land
    - Commercial and Mechanisation of agriculture
    - Increased population
  - Failing agriculture
    - Failing weather
    - Lack of capital
      - Lack of irrigation
      - Other farm inputs
- Pull Factors
  - Lack of basic services in rural areas
    - Schools
    - Health centres
  - Urban attractions
    - Social amenities
      - Entertainment and recreational facilities
      - Sports
- The most vulnerable of rural-urban migrant are women and children.

## Regional urban growth rate



## Map of cities with more than 50 000 inhabitants in West Africa between 1960 – 1990 and projected for 2020



## Search for Shelter

- It is difficult or impossible for poor migrants to access land for housing in urban areas either through the formal or informal land delivery systems
- Formal land or housing delivery
  - Formal land and housing delivery is woefully inadequate in most urban areas
  - Where it exists, is beyond the reach of the urban poor because of expensive processes like, land acquisition, surveying, registration and the provision of services

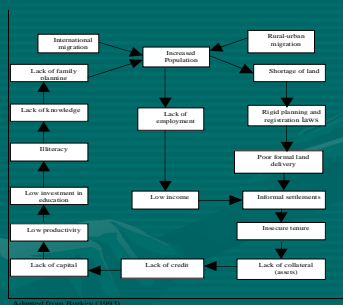
## Search for Shelter cont.

- Informal Land or housing delivery
  - Relatives
    - Only for a few days because social cohesion in African urban areas are fast breaking down
  - Purchase of customary land at the urban periphery;
    - means by which most households acquire land
    - this is normally expensive for the urban poor
    - (some pool their resources together)
    - Mostly illegal subdivision / wrong land use (insecure tenure)

## Search for Shelter cont.

- Informal rentals
  - Mostly verbal agreements concerning use of land or rented premises
  - Very little security of tenure
- Self allocation (invasion)
  - Unhealthy environments or public open spaces
- Informal Settlements generally
  - Lack basic social amenities and services
  - Do not meet basic health and safety standard
  - Are under constant threat of eviction

## Vicious cycle of urban poverty



## 1880 Norway

- “There is no use trying to help these people. This dirty ignorant people are putting too many children into the world. They won't work; they have no discipline. They misuse every opportunity they get. Every time they get some money in their hands it all goes into drinking and senseless waste. All the help we give them is just an incentive to laziness, and another opportunity to produce more children” (Burkey, 1993, 3)

## The way forward

1. Anti-eviction laws
2. Local government led upgrades

## Anti-eviction laws

- Forced eviction is a violation of human rights, particularly the right to adequate housing (UNCHS, 1999)
- Anti-eviction laws provide rules that govern the relationship between landowners and occupiers with respect to the eviction of people from the land and/or house
- Anti-eviction laws are a form of security of tenure for the urban poor, but they cannot adequately protect the individual occupier against landlords

## Local government in Upgrades

- Anti-eviction laws could, however, be used to help residents acquire additional rights and increase their tenure security through upgrades or relocation
- Local governments have a central role to play in informal settlement upgrade and management
- They should therefore be equipped with the required resources to help alleviate urban poverty

## Conclusion

- Increased urbanisation is here to stay (at least for some time)
- Granting the urban poor secure tenure is one way of combating urban poverty
- Local authorities should lead the fight in collaboration with relevant stakeholders
- Central governments should empower local authorities with the necessary resources
- So that the rapidly developing urban areas in Africa can live up to their potential as dynamic engines of growth and social modernisation, rather than get mired in poverty, environmental degradation and crime

Thank you