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Working Paper

Developing Prosperous and Inclusive Cities in Africa - National Urban Policies to the Rescue?

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Executive Summary

African cities will continue to expand—with or without government support. But strategic development of urban areas can ensure that rapid urban population growth drives economic productivity and better quality of life within a healthier local environment. Functional multilevel governance is a precondition to realizing this "urbanization dividend"—the positive dynamic through which the rapid growth of urban populations enables economic and human development.

National governments across Africa can enhance the effectiveness and accountability of multi-level governance by legally clarifying the roles and responsibilities of different international, national, and local actors. National governments are typically best placed to oversee matters such as the coordination of policy and regulatory frameworks; the efficiency and appropriateness of municipal boundaries; water basins; regional power grids; and intercity transport routes. In contrast, housing, sanitation, waste management, and urban transport benefit from local negotiation and coordination.

National Urban Policies (NUPs) emerged from Habitat III in 2016 as the policy instrument through which national governments can engage and shape an urbanizing world. They are particularly important in Sub-Saharan Africa, where urbanization is rapid and local governments are typically weak. NUPs can bring greater coherence and legitimacy to authorities and agents in cities and—critically—recalibrate the balance of power shared by different levels of government, state-owned enterprises (SOEs), civil society and the private sector.

Photo credit: Visty Banaji

About this working paper

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Unless they are tailored to African contexts and supported by domestic institutions, NUPs will struggle to lift the political, financial, and practical barriers to effective, accountable multilevel governance. Indeed, poorly crafted NUPs risk legitimizing centralized and factional control of cities and delaying the creation of functional local governments that is necessary for the coordination of infrastructure, services, and development programs.

At least 18 African countries have NUPs or policies that resemble NUPs. The scope and focus of the policies vary widely, as do the departments and agencies responsible for supporting cities. Urban policies are unlikely to gain traction unless they establish institutional cohesion and enhance implementation capacities across tiers of government, as well as between government and both private sector and civil society actors.

The effectiveness of NUPs hinge on their capacity to reflect the lived realities of African urban growth, including political tensions, informal settlements and economies, and acute shortages of public funds. NUPs need to go beyond infrastructure and finance wish-lists if they are to address the barriers to functional multilevel governance in urban Africa. Although each country is different, there is a common need to strengthen national governments' political and legislative commitment to cities and coordinate the formal and informal rules of the game.

African countries will be able to realize the potential urbanization dividend only by establishing enabling multilevel governance arrangements that are explicit about the following:

1. **Committing to increase the capacities of and resources allocated to urban governments—and codifying those commitments in law.** The importance of NUPs lies in their ability to outline mandates and responsibilities across tiers of government. National governments are typically best placed to oversee matters such as sectoral alignment in the national economy and the stewardship of water basins and national power grids. Local governments may be better positioned to coordinate housing, land allocation, or solid waste management—but they need support to develop the requisite capacities and manage the associated budgets. The appropriate balance of mandates requires regular recalibration, particularly as new technologies emerge that alter the nature of public goods and the best locus of coordination. Kenya's 2010 constitution, for example, includes a strong commitment to county governance, which the central government has reinforced with fiscal support despite political flux.[1]

2. **Creating a culture of rights and social justice.** Alongside financial and technocratic inputs, Africa's urban development will hinge on creating a culture of rights and social justice that manages inevitable competition for space, markets, and services. NUPs provide an opportunity for national governments to articulate natural rights (such as rights to water, sanitation, and shelter) and legal rights (such as rights to citizenship, suffrage, and peaceful protest) that can provide the foundation for a social contract. Tanzania's land management policies—in which the president has important powers to acquire land for public use but legal protections are in place for landholders and occupiers[2]—illustrates how national policies can balance public and private interests.

   Establishing an urban rights culture can validate the contributions of grassroots organizations, informal livelihoods, the media, and academia in forging new development pathways and vibrant cities. It can also facilitate the social participation and economic contribution of marginalized urban residents, such as women and youth. To date, national governments have displayed little willingness to engage alternative voices in anything other than confrontation. Vibrant African cities will depend on harnessing rather than alienating social movements and private initiatives.

3. **Collecting data and assimilating evidence that demystify all aspects of African cities, including the informal sector.** Although data collection has improved, it continues to focus on formal economic activity and tenure—despite the vast size and contribution of the informal sector. The consequences include capital misallocation, a premium paid for infrastructure and finance, and exclusion of low-income and marginalized groups.

   NUPs in Africa can help make informality more legible to planning efforts and investors. The process of designing, implementing, and reviewing NUPs offers an opportunity for decision-makers to collect and share evidence from multiple sources, formal and informal. This requires closer engagement between government agencies, academia, private sector and civil society actors, all of which generate relevant evidence that needs to be brought to bear on urban decision making.

NUPs can harness not only new actors but also new technologies. For example, grassroots organizations use global positioning systems (GPS) technology to record the number and quality of public services in informal settlements; local governments use mobile phone data to understand mobility patterns and improve their transport systems.

4. **Adopting a spatial strategy that curtails sprawl and creates sufficient population density to make public transport and other services financially viable, as well as a tenure system that improves both revenue collection and household security.** Many local governments would like to combine parcels of adjacent urban land and strategic infrastructure investment, in order to crowd-in dense, coordinated development. But ambiguous tenure and weak local governance often preclude this coordinated approach. Instead, urban form has typically been shaped by discrete individual decisions based on the need to access jobs and livelihoods, the interests of property developers, and the availability of cheaper land on the urban periphery.

   NUPs can clarify spatial planning responsibilities across tiers of government and outline transparent processes through which land can be acquired for public interests as cities grow. Spatial planning should be closely linked to tenure strategy, as clarification and formalization of tenure is a prerequisite for land-based financing. Improving tenure security is also essential for enhancing the economic productivity and resilience of low-income and other marginalized groups.

5. **Adopting an infrastructure strategy that reinforces the spatial strategy and draws on community-led innovations to ensure universal access to basic services and economic opportunities.** Top-down, capital-intensive infrastructure has proven difficult to maintain and yielded very low economic multipliers. Urban Africans pay an average premium of 29 percent for services relative to their peers in other regions.[3] To reduce these costs, African countries need infrastructure and services strategies that are informed by affordability constraints and draw on technical and institutional innovations (including in the informal economy). Such strategies must strike a locally appropriate balance between transformative mega-infrastructure and incremental, modular services.

   NUPs can guide infrastructure provision and operations in ways that unlock synergies between economic development, social inclusion, and climate resilience, and avoid lock-in to long-lived carbon-intensive or climate-exposed assets. They can guide the reform of state-owned utilities in ways that harness more affordable or newly emerging solutions. The falling costs of decentralized renewable energy and sanitation options (such as solar home systems and biodigesting toilets) and the emergence of new mobility services (such as e-hailing) can reduce costs and improve access to services, including for low-income residents. Partnerships with these players can offer a better financial and governance fit in many African cities than mega-projects, but they require national governments to facilitate scaling and integration into the urban fabric.

6. **Adoption of a fiscal and financing strategy that increases public budgets across all levels of government and mobilizes the resources needed to fill the chronic shortfall in investment in urban infrastructure.** Most local authorities in Africa have negligible resources for capital investment, because of both the very low incomes of most urban residents and inadequate local revenue collection capacities. NUPs can improve city governments' ability to secure funding by clarifying the process and schedules for transfers from national to local governments, providing the certainty necessary for effective planning and budgeting. National regulatory frameworks also set the rules of the game that determine whether local governments can access particular funding sources or deploy specific financing instruments. By explicitly articulating the conditions under which subnational agencies can deploy a financing mechanism, NUPs can increase investor confidence and lower the cost of capital.

   Attracting private capital is difficult where returns do not allow cost recovery and perceived risks are high. Local-level public agencies are rarely creditworthy. NUPs can help mobilize private investment in urban infrastructure and housing by developing clear spatial/infrastructure plans and articulating the powers of subnational agencies to use different financing instruments under specific conditions. National governments can help make the needs of African cities legible to potential financiers—by, for example, investing in project preparation. Well-designed NUPs can help ensure that "financialized urbanism" (whereby financial motives, markets, and institutions rather than the needs of households and firms shape the form and function of cities) does not distort decision-making in favor of financiers.

Rapid urban population growth in Africa offers scope to accelerate economic and human development while reducing the risks of climate change. But most cities are struggling to meet basic needs or lay the foundations for sustained prosperity. This is exacerbated by opaque, uncoordinated, and inconsistent decision-making.

NUPs have the potential to recalibrate the balance of power by clarifying the roles and responsibilities of different levels and sectors of government and harnessing the efforts of private firms, civil society, and households within cities. Doing so requires that national governments foster institutions that transcend political divides and provide oversight and integrity to the processes of budget allocation, land zoning, tariff setting, and public procurement. Realizing the urbanization dividend in Africa will depend on national governments' wholehearted commitment to growing and thriving cities.

1. Introduction

The urban population of Africa will expand by nearly a billion people between 2015 and 2050.[4] The pace and scale of this growth is creating new demands for infrastructure and services and associated political pressures as well as new opportunities.[5] The 900 million working-age people that will be added to Africa's cities by 2050 will drive a shift in employment from agriculture toward services. Complemented by higher wages in cities than in rural areas and lower per capita costs for service delivery, this structural transition has the potential to accelerate economic development and improved living standards across Sub-Saharan Africa.[6]

This dividend is not guaranteed. At the moment, urbanization in many Sub-Saharan African countries is creating more challenges than opportunities. The ability to harness and benefit from the region-wide demographic shift toward cities will help determine whether African countries succeed in addressing a range of social, environmental and conflict-related crises.[7]

All urban areas benefit from support from national governments. The role of national governments in reducing the risks and realizing the benefits of urbanization is both more critical and more complicated in Sub-Saharan Africa than in other regions.[8] This is partially because of the scale of the urban challenge: population growth is rapid, infrastructure deficits are large, and humanitarian crises are common. Additionally, governance capacities are notably weak or absent at the local level in many African cities.[9] Urban governance may be further complicated by political rivalries between national and local governments, between local governments and traditional authorities, and between governments and civil society groups.[10]

This report draws from governance theory and examples from Africa to assess the potential role of National Urban Policies (NUPs) in delivering an urbanization dividend—the dynamic through which urbanization enables economic and welfare gains—in Africa.[a] Following the publication of the New Urban Agenda in 2016, NUPs emerged in countries in the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) as instruments through which central governments align policy and economic sectors to address tepid economic growth and pursue international policy targets, such as the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).[11]

In Africa NUPs need to play a slightly different role. They must recalibrate the balance of power and responsibilities between tiers of governance, state-owned enterprises (SOEs), civil society and the private sector in support of rapidly evolving cities and bring greater coherence to the multiple modes of governance (including formal policies, plans, and programs, enforcement mechanisms and informal practices) that have evolved over the past several decades.

[a] *An urbanization dividend typically manifests as rising per capita income, which is achieved partly by the declining unit costs of service delivery and the dynamics of market agglomeration.*

This report highlights the importance of NUPs in ensuring that urbanization serves the national economic interest. Section two demonstrates the need for effective multilevel and multi-actor governance arrangements. Section three describes the evolving urban context in Sub-Saharan Africa. Section four describes the key elements or principles of effective NUPs in an African context. Section five summarizes the report's main conclusions.

2. The Case for Multilevel Governance and National Urban Policies in Sub-Saharan Africa

Governance of African cities is characterized by layers of contested authority, formal and informal, that have accumulated over time without alignment, coordination, or a well thought-out division of mandates.[12] The roles and responsibilities of different public agencies, traditional leaders, and emerging actors (such as grassroots organizations) are often ambiguous, disjointed, and contested.[13]

Local governments have very little capacity to invest in or oversee infrastructure programs or collect revenue from users; most urban infrastructure is centrally coordinated by national governments. Ineffective local governments struggle to provide affordable infrastructure and services, limiting the ability of African countries to manage the transitions required to meet the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) or the Paris Agreement.[14] It is impossible to engage in regulatory reform in cities that lack regulatory traction or to use fiscal instruments in the absence of a fiscus.[15]

At its meeting in June 2014, the African Union adopted the African Charter on Values and Principles of Decentralisation, Local Governance and Local Development and approved the creation of a High Council of Local Governments. Only three African countries (Burundi, Madagascar, and Namibia) have ratified this charter, suggesting a reluctance to invest in effective, accountable local governments, which could incubate political opposition or threaten the authority of traditional leaders.[16] In Angola, Senegal and other countries, national governments undermined the emergence of strong local government.[17]

The nature and extent of the urban governance deficit varies across countries, but all countries face urban challenges. To deal with them, national governments need to play a bigger role in urban development than they do in OECD countries. Multilevel governance has been proposed as a means of strengthening Africa's urban governance by better aligning the efforts of government agencies and those of private sector and civil society actors (Box 1).[18]

Box 1

What is multilevel governance?

Multilevel governance refers to the configuration of roles and responsibilities of international, national, and local authorities,[19] particularly the relationships among actors operating at different territorial scales. It recognizes that power should be diffused and shared across supranational, national, and subnational levels, depending on the most appropriate scale of decision-makinng and implementation for a given issue.

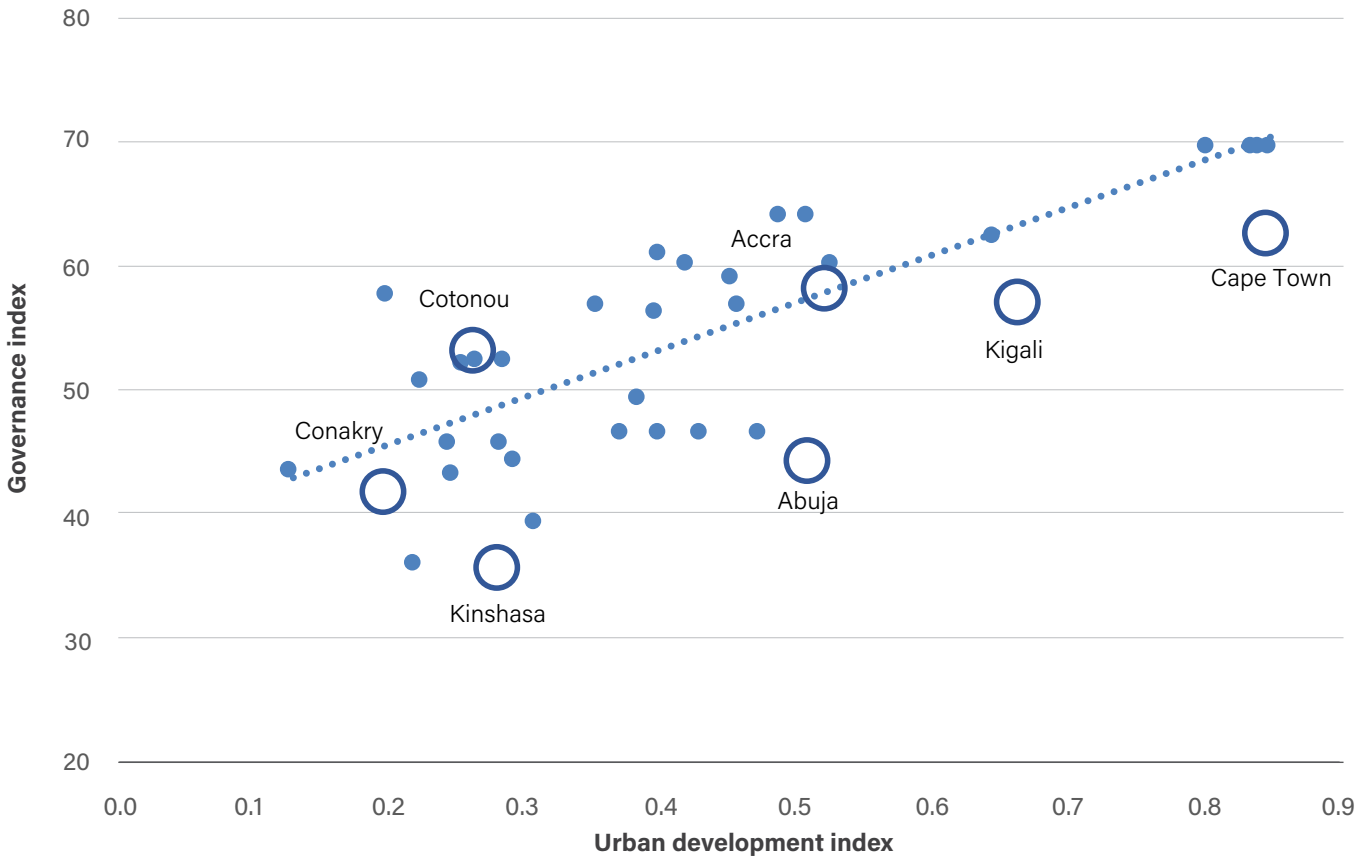
Multilevel governance as a theoretical framework contains both strengths and blind spots when it comes to understanding actors, relationships, and processes. For example, it may not be an effective way to fully engage with differences between formal and informal, public and private, statutory and traditional forms of governance. It should therefore be considered alongside other ways of understanding collective decision-making, including polycentric governance, network governance, collaborative governance, and reflexive or adaptive governance.[20]

NUPs emerged from the Habitat III conference in 2016 as a key tool to enable strategic multilevel governance of urbanization. The New Urban Agenda that emerged from that conference states that "multilevel and multi-actor governance requires National Urban Policies (NUPs) that set out the overall institutional architecture, with the respective competencies, tools, and resources clearly defined for each level of governance".[21]

Good governance at the national level appears to be correlated with urban development (Figure 1). But NUPs cannot substitute for functional local governance. They must formally recognize that many service delivery functions are best coordinated locally, that certain critical urban functions cannot be governed by cities alone, that capacity building may be required to develop effective local governments and that actors outside of formal government can make valuable contributions if effectively engaged.[22] There are innate tensions inherent in the idea that national governments can coordinate local development. These power dynamics need to be recognized and managed, or NUPs will fall victim to some of the same problems that have historically frustrated urban development in Sub-Saharan Africa.

Figure 1

Good governance at the national level is correlated with urban development



Source: Data on the governance index are from the Mo Ibrahim Foundation. Data on the urban development index are from Oxford Economics.

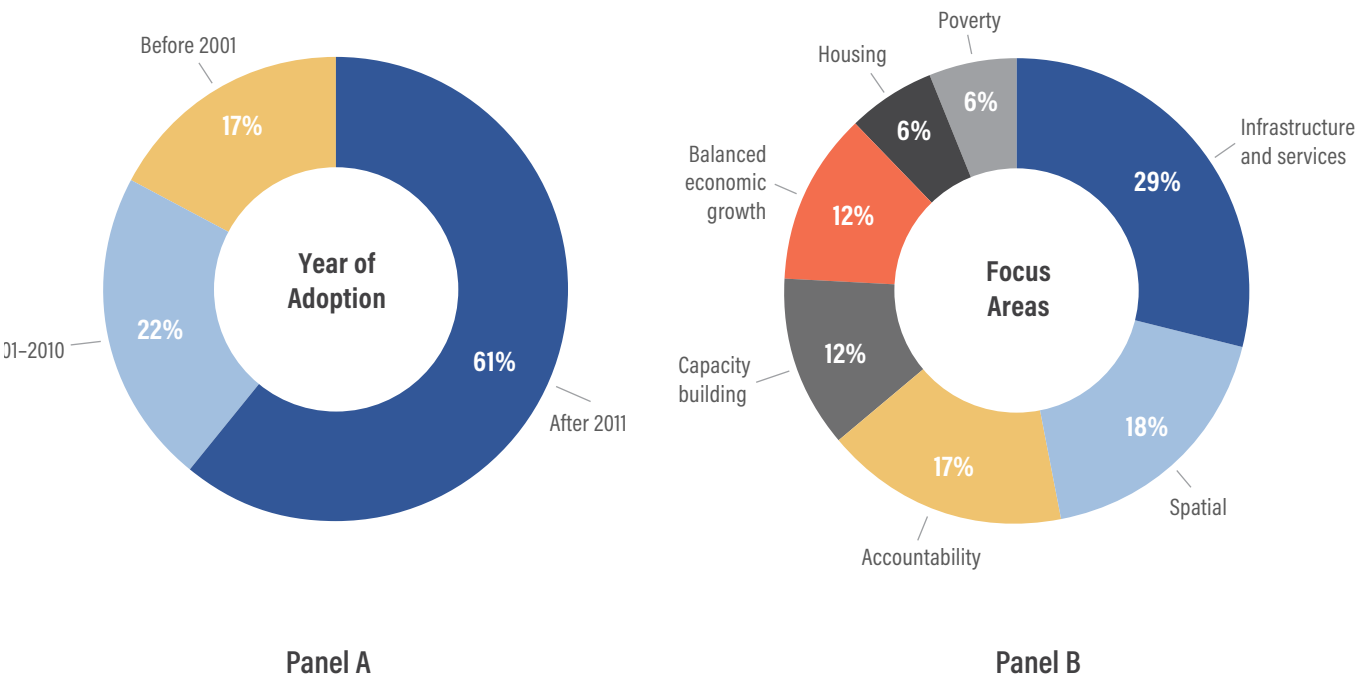
Note: The urban development index is based on ease of access to titled land, ease of doing business, economic strength, access to finance, and the effectiveness of the city government. The governance index is based on safety and rule of law, participation and human rights, sustainable economic opportunity, and human development. There may be autocorrelation because these variables are not independent. The blue dots are other African cities.

The hope is that NUPs will prescribe the balance of power and responsibilities across different levels of government, traditional authorities, the private sector, and state-owned enterprises and utilities. Ideally, NUPs will also outline how appropriate levels of capacity, budget, and decision-making power will be devolved to local governments over time in different contexts. The African Union recognizes the need for this clarifying and enabling framework in the Common African Position on Habitat III and its Values and Principles of Decentralisation, Local Governance and Local Development.

At least 18 countries have policies that resemble a NUP. Most are new (Figure 2, panel a). They are financed by international development assistance rather than domestic public budget.[23] The focus and the government departments and agencies responsible for supporting cities vary (Figure 2, panel b and Appendix Table A.1).

Figure 2

Africa's 18 National Urban Policies (or equivalent) focus on a range of sectors and were largely established subsequent to 2011



Source: Data from OECD (2016).

Unless they are tailored national contexts and owned by in-country institutions, NUPs will struggle to overcome the political, financial, and practical barriers to multilevel governance. Indeed, poorly crafted NUPs could actually strengthen national or factional control of cities rather than increasing the capacity and resources of local authorities. If NUPs are to avoid risks and harness urbanization opportunities in Africa, they must reflect the contexts within which African cities are evolving.

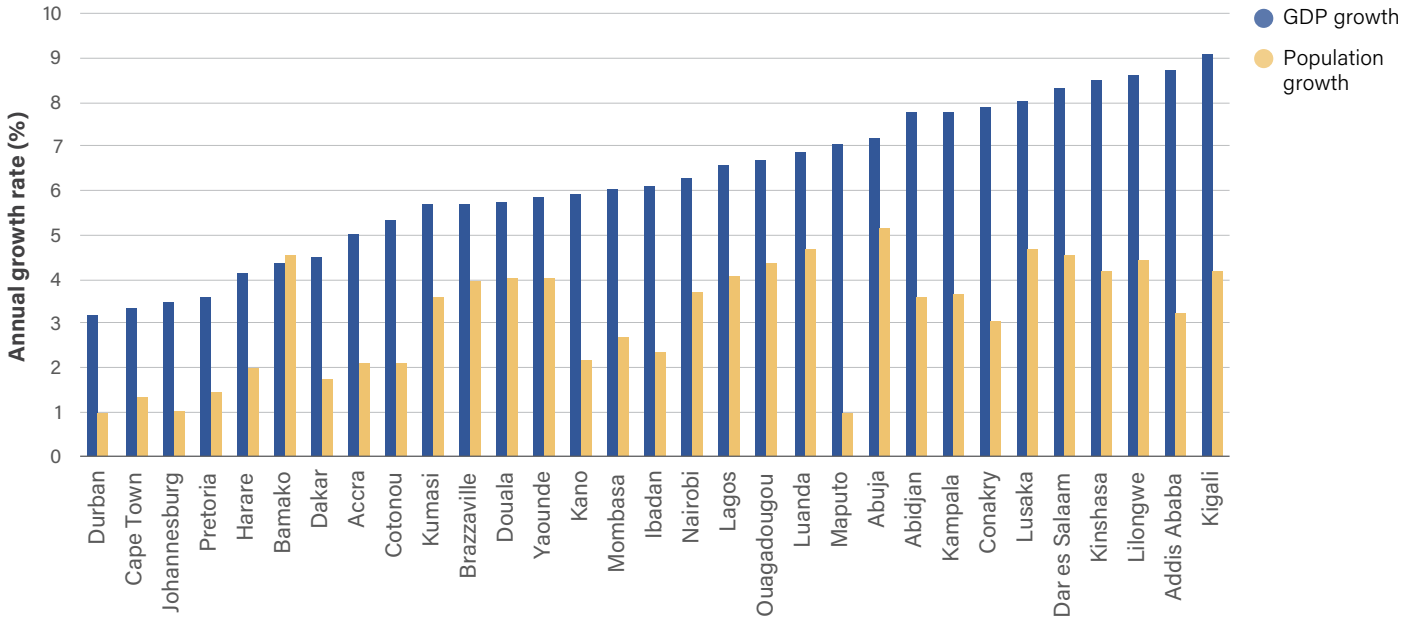
3. Evolving Urban Contexts in Africa

Over the past decade, many African cities have emerged as places of hope, opportunity, and economic growth relative to their rural hinterlands.[24] Nominal per capita GDP in Sub-Saharan Africa increased from $521 in 2002 to $1,800 in 2014—a period during which the proportion of the population living in cities increased from 32 percent to 37 percent. Botswana, Ghana, and Nigeria—which experienced both urbanization and economic growth since the 1960s—appear to have reaped the urbanization dividend. Botswana experienced both the greatest urbanization and the largest change in GDP per capita between 1960 and 2015.[25]

Average per capita income is usually higher in urban than rural areas—and it has risen steadily (Figure 3). World Bank data[26] suggest that urban population growth in Sub-Saharan Africa is also correlated with improvements in longevity, infant mortality, and access to services (with a few conspicuous exceptions, such as Dar es Salaam).[b] Urban dwellers in the region enjoy significantly higher levels of access to improved sanitation (40 percent versus 23 percent) and improved water (87 percent versus 56 percent) relative to rural areas.[c]

Figure 3

GDP growth in African cities outpaced population growth in 2015



Source: Data from Oxford Economics.

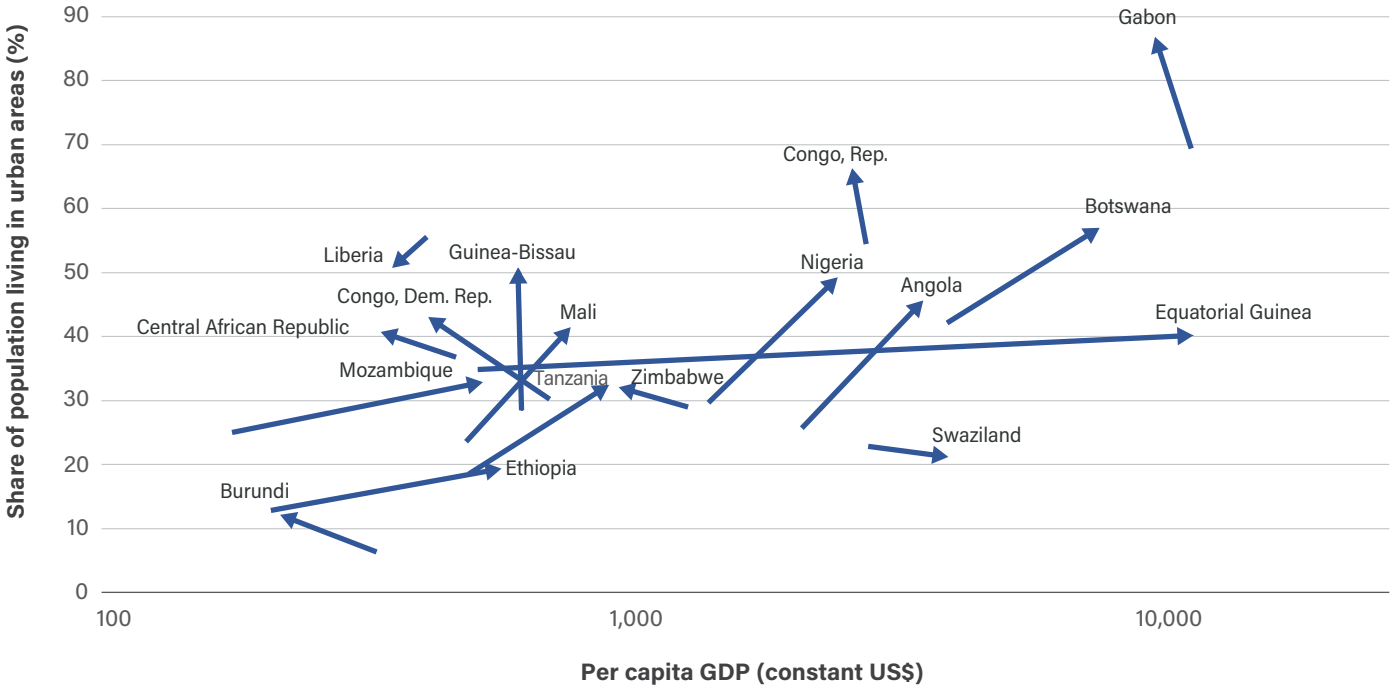
[b] *According to official data published by the Government of Tanzania, infant and maternal mortality are higher in Dar es Salaam than for the country as a whole, and life expectancy is lower.*

[c] *Measures of "improved" water and sanitation were originally defined for rural areas and therefore may not be adequate in contexts with higher population density. See: Satterthwaite, D., 2016, Missing the Millennium Development Goal targets for water and sanitation in urban areas. Environment and Urbanization. 28(1). 99–118*

Most African countries have seen a correlation between urbanization and rising per capita GDP. However, Figure 4 demonstrates that not all urbanizing countries have experienced economic and development progress. Few African countries have achieved a structural transition as people move from agriculture to industry and tradable services[27] or the scale and agglomeration economies associated with urban population growth.[28] This urbanization dividend depends on the provision of infrastructure and services so that urban residents can lead healthy and economically productive lives.

Figure 4

Urbanization and real GDP per capita do not necessarily correlate in Sub-Saharan Africa



Source: authors' own analysis, based on work by Turok (2013).[29]

Note: The arrows indicate the direction in which per capita GDP and urbanisation are trending over time. Arrows pointing to the top right indicate that urbanisation and incomes correlate; arrows pointing to the top left indicate that urbanisation is increasing but incomes are falling. The analysis uses per capita GDP in log scale. The authors have replaced the log values with the corresponding per capita GDP values in the figure for illustrative purposes.

Many development efforts across Africa have focused on closing the urban infrastructure deficit.[30] Provision of urban infrastructure in Africa confronts the twin challenges of low per capita income and fragmented governance. These problems call for innovative infrastructure planning and finance. Insufficient recognition of this context has contributed to the gap between urban infrastructure in Africa and other developing regions.[31]

Economic growth has fueled private sector interest in Africa, requiring policymakers to balance companies' demands for natural resources (notably land, water, fuel and minerals), banking, logistics infrastructure, and high-end accommodation against the acute need to provide basic services and protect the natural environment for the multiple goods and services it provides to humans and as a habitat for other species.[32] Where this balance has been uneven, the benefits of growth have been unevenly distributed, producing a new African urban elite and pockets of booming real estate alongside large populations that remain without adequate public infrastructure and access to basic services.[33] Urban sprawl has been a byproduct of this growth, amplifying inequality.[34] Angel et al. (2011) project that

the geographic size of cities and towns in Sub-Saharan Africa will increase by a factor of 12 between 2000 and 2050—faster than the rate of economic growth.[35]

The failure to realize an urbanization dividend in much of Africa partially reflects an inability to translate the demographic shift into a significant manufacturing sector.[36] Especially when embedded in national and international value chains, manufacturing and industrial activity can enable specialization and drive diverse growth and development.[37] It can create employment and skills development for unskilled and low-skilled people, helping to reduce poverty.

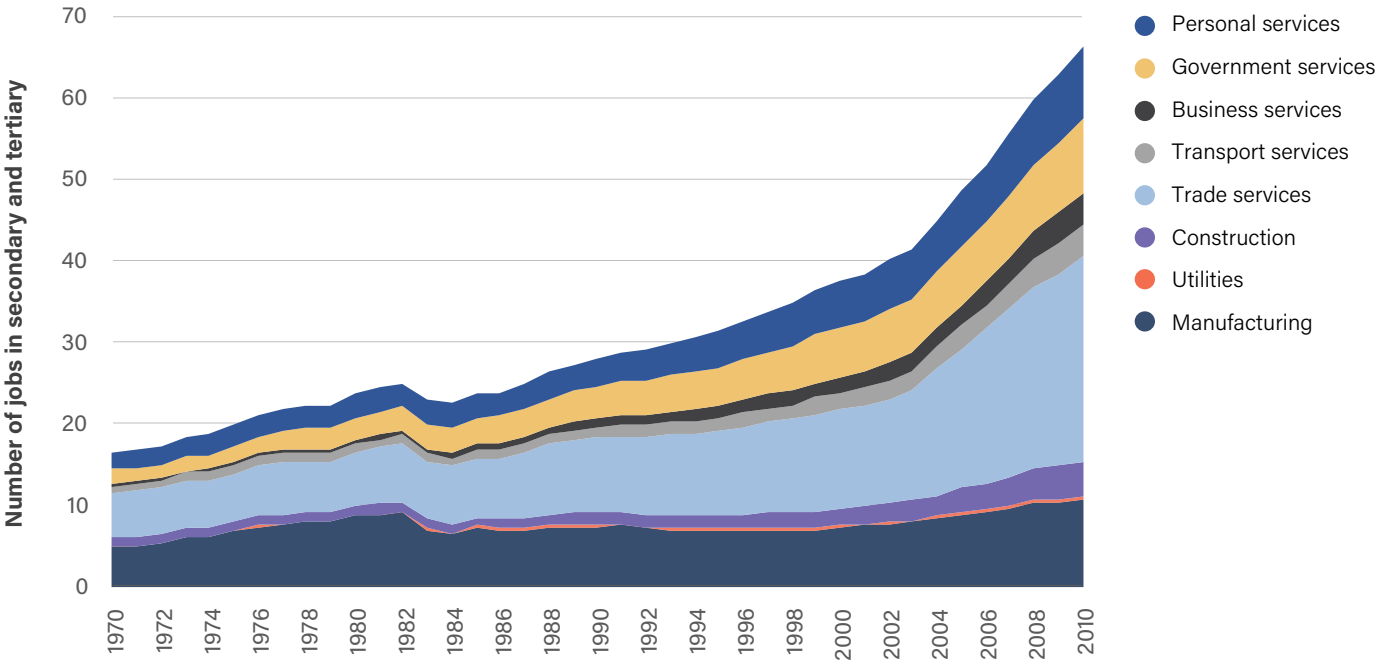
In Sub-Saharan Africa, the proportion of GDP that results from industry and services has increased only modestly since the 1980s (from 42 percent in 1981 to 58 percent in 2015), and manufacturing's share of GDP declined (from 17 percent in the early 1990s to 11 percent in 2015). [38] Note that these averages mask high variability among countries. Many Africans transitioned directly from work in agriculture in rural areas into services sector work in cities and towns.

Lack of reliable electricity and transport infrastructure hold back expansion of manufacturing in Sub-Saharan Africa.[39] The spatial incoherence of cities undermines agglomeration effects and competitiveness and contributes to the high cost of the urban services that are available.[40]

Trade in services is expanding rapidly. This sector includes wholesale and retail trade; repair of motor vehicles, motorcycles, and personal and household goods; and hotels and restaurants (Figure 5). Much of this economic activity is in the informal sector, which employs 60 percent of the urban workforce in Africa.[41] An estimated 93 percent of new jobs created in urban centers are in the informal sector.[42] In West Africa, the informal sector accounts for the majority of GDP and 90 percent or more of employment.[43] Women are much more likely than men to work in informal, non-agricultural employment, as well as to take on unpaid care work in their home and communities.[44]

Figure 5

Trade services are the largest source of urban employment in Sub-Saharan Africa



Source: de Vries et al., (2013).[45]

Note: Data are for 11 cities across Botswana, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Malawi, Mauritius, Nigeria, Senegal, South Africa, Tanzania, and Zambia. It includes estimates of both formal and informal employment.

The extent of informality partly explains why urbanization has not lifted incomes and fiscal revenues. It also underscores the precarious nature of livelihoods in African cities. Informality also challenges the agency of government and the efficacy of conventional state-led policy interventions, particularly interventions that rely on regulated markets and secure tenure.[46] Ambiguity around social relations, legal tenure, and political systems also deters private investment.[47]

4. Crafting National Urban Policies

The 18 NUPs (or similar policies) that have been drafted in Sub-Saharan Africa are full of the standard policy jargon. The technical capabilities, legal frameworks, financial instruments, and political will to deliver on these complex policies appear to be lacking.[48] NUPs need to go beyond donor-funded tick-box compliance with the African Charter or UN-Habitat requirements. They must create governance arrangements that can address local contexts by establishing common goals, clear roles and balanced power relations among the stakeholders that influence urban development.

Nobel laureate Ostrom identifies desirable attributes of governance, which could be relevant to the design and implementation of NUPs in Africa.[49] They include:

- clearly defined boundaries, so that governments have clarity about their jurisdictions
- proportional equivalence between benefits and costs, so that people who contribute to development enjoy reasonable rewards or repayments
- participatory processes, so that everyone who is affected can influence decision-making
- independent monitoring and checks
- a clear set of sanctions and other consequences for stakeholders that break rules
- fast and fair mechanisms to resolve any conflicts
- polycentric governance (where authority is distributed among multiple actors) to avoid concentrations of power and associated bottlenecks.

Many of these attributes are absent in Africa. They should be at the forefront of efforts to establish multilevel governance arrangements.

No NUP prototype fits all of Africa's countries. But by drawing on Ostrom's governance principles, understanding the regional context, and assessing efforts to support urban development, policy makers can identify necessary features of successful NUPs.

4.1 INCREASING LOCAL GOVERNMENTS' CAPACITY AND RESOURCES

The symbiotic relationship between national development and prospering cities envisaged in the Africa Common Position (prepared ahead of Habitat III) is not the norm in Sub-Saharan Africa.[50] Dakar's 11th-hour municipal bond cancellation, Addis Ababa's expansion and resultant ethnic conflict over land, Luanda's 20-year struggle to hold local government elections, the recentralization of property tax collection in Tanzania, Nigeria's inability to integrate Lagos into the national economic system, and the relocation of capitals away from primary cities are all manifestations of poor multilevel governance.[51]

NUPs are hollow unless national leaders commit to increasing the capacity and resources of local governments so that they are able to effectively fulfil their legal responsibilities. National governments need to be unambiguous in their support of this goal, whatever specific functions they devolve to local governments. Kenya is a good example. The central government made a strong commitment to county governance in its 2010 constitution, which was born out of the 2008 post-election violence. As a result, fiscal support for the outcomes of the 2013 local government elections was robust, despite political flux.[52]

The distinction between decentralization and devolution articulated by United Cities and Local Government (an umbrella organization for cities, local and regional governments, and municipal associations throughout the world) is useful in mapping national government's commitment to effective and accountable local governments (Box 2). Commitment to decentralization requires creating the capacity to manage mandates and associated budgets, deploying competent civil servants to cities (as opposed to drawing all capacity into national government), establishing the architecture for local government elections, and raising taxes and investing them locally.[53] Universities play an important role in creating the human resources that cities and countries need by training planners, administrators, architects, engineers and other built environment professionals.[54] Examples include the curricula of the Ethiopian Civil Service University and Ethiopia's Ministry of Urban Development and Housing, which awards 350 master's degrees a year;[55] the African Urban Research Initiative; and the Association of African Planning Schools.

Box 2

What does decentralization involve?

Decentralization encompasses the transfer of authority and resources to very varied extents. It is therefore important to distinguish among different types of decentralization, which have different political implications and characteristics for success.

Administrative decentralization involves delegating certain responsibilities in planning and management from the central state toward its local administrative extensions or local government authorities without losing accountability to the central government.

Political decentralization involves the delegation of political power, authority, and resources to subnational governments, typically to encourage more participation by and better representation of local populations.

Fiscal decentralization involves the redistribution of resources from the central government toward subnational governments. It requires creating local capacity for discretionary spending and transparent financial management.

Devolution involves the full transfer of responsibility, decision-making, resources, and revenue generation to a local-level public authority that is autonomous and fully independent of the devolving authority. The local authority operates within a legally recognized geographic boundary.

Deconcentration involves the dispersal of central power by transferring specific administrative responsibilities of the central government toward local public structures while maintaining the responsibility of local government units toward the central government.

Source: UCLG (2015).[56]

Neither decentralization nor devolution implies that local governments need assume responsibility for all service delivery and associated decisions. The importance of NUPs lies in their ability to outline mandates and responsibilities across tiers of government and actors. National governments are typically best placed to oversee matters such as the alignment of policy frameworks to ensure that they reinforce one another; the efficiency and appropriateness

of territorial boundaries, such as the jurisdictions of different municipal authorities; water basins; national power grids; intercity transport routes; and antitrust legislation. In contrast, housing, sanitation, land allocation, waste management, and urban transport require local negotiation and coordination. The appropriate balance of mandates requires regular recalibration as new technologies (such as Smartphones and small-scale photovoltaic systems) emerge that alter the nature of public goods and the optimal locus of coordination.

Maintaining a balance of power and responsibilities across tiers of government requires robust, formalized institutional arrangements. South Africa's Inter-Governmental Relations Framework Act (Act 13 of 2005) provides for regular policy engagements between different levels of government and establishes mechanisms for settling intergovernmental disputes and collaboration on initiatives that span local government boundaries.

4.2 ESTABLISHING AN URBAN RIGHTS FRAMEWORK

People moving to Africa's cities often do so in search of opportunity. Failure to recognize and integrate new urban residents results in conflict with incumbent interests over land, the formal economy, and finance and government, creating tensions that exacerbate ethnic and social fault lines.

Establishing social justice and human rights frameworks can harness new urban residents' search for opportunity and mediate conflict in a way that leads to inclusive and relatively inexpensive urbanization.[57] In many African cities, the "right to the city" and urban services are extended only to people who can afford them[58] perpetuating "sectioned and controlled purviews of the radically wealthy, surrounded by clusters of have-nots".[59]

Alongside financial and technocratic inputs, Africa's urban development will hinge on moving toward a culture of rights and social justice that manages inevitable competition for land, budget, and resources.[60] NUPs provide the opportunity for national governments to articulate natural rights that are universal (such as rights to water, sanitation, and shelter) and civil rights bestowed by a specific legal system (such as rights to citizenship, suffrage, and peaceful protest).[d] They provide the foundation for a social contract and the raising of levies and taxes.

Tanzania's land management policies show how public and private interest can be balanced (even if they are not always applied consistently). The Land Acquisition Act No. 47 of 1967 gives the president the power to acquire land for public use. But Section 179 of the Land Act (1999) and Section 11(1 and 2) of the Land Acquisition Act (1967) provide for the protection of the rights of landholders, and Section 24 (1 and 2) of the Constitution offers land occupiers protection when compulsory land acquisition is exercised.[61]

In contrast, Ethiopia—a country that experienced average GDP growth of nearly 11 percent a year between 2005 and 2016[62] —developed without legal and social frameworks to absorb new urban residents. Disturbed by the local government election results in 2005 (when Addis Ababa swung to the political opposition), the late prime minister Meles Zenawi, sought to prioritize the rural agricultural economy over the rapidly growing urban economy. Despite this political choice, Ethiopia's cities—particularly Addis Ababa—continued to attract investment from China, Indonesia, and the United States, among other countries. Much of this investment is concentrated in industrial parks and in the textiles, leather, agro-processing, and pharmaceuticals industries.[63] The resulting economic growth attracted new urban migrants, which, in the absence of sufficient planning or infrastructure investment, resulted in sprawl. The expanding urban area of Addis Ababa breached the territorial divides between the Oromo, Tigrayans, and Amhara ethnic groups, fueling conflict. The resultant violence, imposition of authoritarian rule, and jailing of dissenters made media headlines around the world in 2016 and forced an international reconsideration of Ethiopia's progress.

[d] The United Nations' International Guidelines on Decentralization and Access to Basic Services and its International Guidelines on Urban and Territorial Planning provide links to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) and the UN Covenants on Civil and Political Rights and Social, Economic and Cultural Rights (1966) that could be useful in establishing a rights culture.

Creating a culture of urban rights can support development and enable individuals to break away from traditional constraints to forge new urban identities. Women living in cities, for example, may be able to acquire assets through land and property markets, which they could not secure through traditional inheritance pathways in rural areas.[64] Similarly, recognizing human rights to secure tenure, decent housing, and basic services can legitimize the contributions of grassroots organizations and informal workers who help meet these needs.[65]

A rights-based culture is also an important protection for people with different perspectives or approaches from people with power. Multiple, often critical, voices have begun to emerge in African cities from interest groups and youth movements. National governments have displayed little willingness to engage these movements in anything other than confrontation. Vibrant African cities will depend on harnessing, not alienating, these groups in multi-actor governance.[66]

4.3 COLLECTING DATA AND ASSIMILATING EVIDENCE

Decision-makers need to know the city before planning, investing in, and building it. Doing so requires data, analytical expertise and robust, evidence-based debate.

Data on urban Africa have been improving steadily. By 2010, 47 African countries had conducted national censuses,[67] and an almost equal number now conduct general household surveys. The World Bank Group conducts urbanization reviews across the region that provide detailed demographic and economic data in support of the new urban agenda.

Despite these improvements, investors and local planners view African cities with uncertainty. Where data exist, the impression is that they do not capture the essence of many African cities or the full extent of risk.[68] Unfamiliarity manifests as capital misallocation and as a premium paid for infrastructure and finance.[69]

Informality is a significant contributor to uncertainty about African cities.[70] Given the size and contribution of informal housing, enterprises, and employment across Africa, governments need to recognize and engage with informality—as both a mode of existence (not necessarily democratic or legal) and a category of work (not always egalitarian or safe).[71]

If data collection for investors and planners continues to focus exclusively on formal economic activity and tenure, capital misallocation will persist. The Kilamba Housing Estate in Luanda, the island city La Cité du Fleuve in the Democratic Republic of Congo, the Tatu Housing Complex outside Nairobi, Lagos' Eko-Atlantic and Ghana's Hope City illustrate the propensity for investment capital to misread the needs emerging from Africa's urbanization.[72] NUPs can be designed in ways that steer investment toward under-served parts of the city and establish safeguards to protect vulnerable urban residents who may not be captured in data sets.

NUPs in Africa can also make informality more legible to planning efforts and investors. The process of gathering information and consulting stakeholders for the development, implementation, or review of NUPs can be a valuable way to generate new evidence or collate existing resources. In Accra, Ghana, enumeration was used to build solidarity and resilience among residents of the Old Fadama informal settlement who were vulnerable to eviction.[73] Geo-tagging enables cheaper, more accurate, and faster data collection for strategic spatial planning, environmental monitoring, and flood protection.[e] Residents of informal settlements have conducted enumerations using geo-tagging to record the location and quality of services (including water taps, toilets, and community centers) in order to advocate for better provision.[74] Cities from Abidjan to Nairobi have begun analyzing mobile phone data to understand mobility patterns and improve their transport systems.[75] Challenges remain in securing data from private mobility companies such as Uber, but collaborations such as "Shared Streets" (a non-profit digital platform) seek to create an information commons so that data can be used in urban planning. Improved data collection has to be accompanied by investment in growing analytical capabilities (whether in-house in government agencies and/or sustained partnerships with universities and think tanks).

[e] *Geo-tagging involves adding a geographic identifiers such as latitude and longitude coordinates, altitude and place names to digital content (e.g. photographs).*

4.4 ALIGNING SPATIAL AND TENURE STRATEGIES

Ideally, local governments in rapidly expanding African cities would combine parcels of adjacent urban land and investment in public amenities and transport, in order to create dense, coordinated development. Ambiguous tenure and weak local governance often preclude them from doing so, and very few national or local governments in Africa have the instruments or resources to coordinate interactions between market forces, regulations, public infrastructure investments, and tax systems to shape urban form.[76] These challenges are illustrated by the experience of Lagos, where inefficient formal systems exacerbate diffuse control of land and tensions between customary and statutory land ownership (Box 3).

Box 3

Complex and contested urban tenure in Lagos

A dual land regime prevails in many West African cities. In Lagos traditional authorities maintain customary concepts of land ownership and access alongside statutory land laws. The Land Use Act of 1978 partially acknowledges customary land tenure concepts, but ambiguity and contradiction fuels conflicts over land title in informal areas. Formal titles are expensive (costing 15–45 percent of the land value), confusing, and time consuming (taking at least six months to acquire).[77] Less than 20 percent of land transactions are estimated to take place through the formal system.[78]

The customary system offers affordable land and housing with comparable levels of tenure security to conventional systems if the residents have lived there for a long time. Their tenure is increasingly supported by more robust documentation of transactions. However, the quality of the urban environment that results from such piecemeal control of land is very poor. Customary landowners act as de facto land managers and surveyors over their relatively small areas of jurisdiction. Urban space is maximized for personal profit at every turn.

Lagos' dual land regime demonstrates both the viability and limitations of customary land management practices. These pervasive practices provide affordable housing but are incapable of incentivizing or enabling centralized infrastructure and broader developmental controls. NUPs need to outline interventions that advance public welfare without destroying the viability of the existing system.

Master plans—a legacy of the colonial era—have proven difficult to enforce and incapable of managing informal settlements in an accountable or fair manner.[79] Instead, urban form has typically been shaped by discrete individual decisions based on the need to access jobs and livelihoods, the interests of property developers, and the availability of cheaper land on the urban periphery.[80] Private and public investments are consequently poorly aligned with each other or with spatial plans. The result is sprawl, disjointed economic relationships between growing urban centers and their proximal regions, and higher costs of services and living.[81] This unmanaged spatial development has not generated agglomeration effects or coherence between where people live and where they work.[82]

NUPs could clarify spatial planning responsibilities across tiers of government. Local authorities are usually best placed to establish the zoning and building standards that are most likely to provide high-density but affordable inner-city living.[83] NUPs can also outline transparent processes through which land can be acquired for public interests as cities grow[84] and outline protections of the ecosystem goods and services on which cities depend.[85]

Nationally prescribed (or tolerated) tenure systems provide the template on which cities are built and social relations organized. They should be designed in association with spatial and infrastructure plans in order to mutually reinforce one another. Clarification and legitimization of local tenure is also a requirement for land-based financing.[86]

Addis Ababa, Harare, and Nairobi are among the cities experimenting with property taxes, land leasing, and development charges. Despite technical and political constraints, there seems to be scope for more extensive and progressive use of these instruments.[87]

Secure tenure is also essential for enhancing the economic productivity and resilience of low-income and other marginalized groups.[88] By definition, residents of informal settlements rarely hold land title. They face a high risk of eviction without compensation for land, shelter, or livelihoods. They often move to the periphery of the city, where service delivery is even less reliable and economic opportunities more limited.[89] Tenure solutions can facilitate incremental upgrading of informal settlements, creating housing assets that enhance economic security and adaptive capacity. Linking tenure reform with women's rights can also foster gender-just urban development.[90]

4.5 ALIGNING INFRASTRUCTURE AND SERVICES STRATEGIES

Many of Africa's NUPs recognize that urban infrastructure is critical if new urban residents are to successfully move out of agriculture and live healthy, productive lives in cities and towns. The challenge is how to finance and build it.

Since the 1960s, the formation of gross fixed capital (the net increase in physical assets) in African countries has averaged less than 22 percent of GDP, well below the 42 percent in East Asia.[91] Addressing the infrastructure backlog would require $68– $93 billion a year over the next three decades, a third of which would be for maintenance.[92] As much as 30 percent of the region's infrastructure is overused and poorly maintained and consequently suffers premature obsolescence.[93]

Kibera, an informal settlement in Kenya with one toilet for every 250,000 residents, exemplifies the sanitation crisis across the region. The shortfall costs the country an estimated $324 million a year in sickness, disease, and lost work hours.[94] In Khayelitsha, an informal settlement in South Africa, an average of 635 sexual assaults were reported every year on women traveling to and from the estimated 5,600 temporary toilets between 2002 and 2013. And many more go unreported. By one estimate, the attacks imposed a cost of $400 million in medical expenses, lost earnings, and legal costs.[95] These kinds of deficits in core infrastructure perpetuate poverty and social marginalization.

Urban infrastructure has to be affordable, technologically appropriate, and spatially coherent if it is to enhance productivity and well-being.[96] It also needs to complement, not destroy, the provision of urban services by the natural environment, something that has been largely ignored in Africa's rapid urban expansion.[97] Durban in South Africa is internationally recognized for its pioneering work on ecosystem-based adaptation, developing a network of connected wetlands, forests and grasslands. These ecosystems offer multiple services for urban centres, including reducing stormwater runoff; creating a supply of fuel, food and building materials; and regulating river flows and air temperatures. They also yield ecological benefits, helping to control invasive alien spaces, reduce fire risk and sequester carbon from the atmosphere.[98] As with grey infrastructure, it is important that green infrastructure is developed in ways that maximises ecological integrity and makes management more time- and cost-effective. These goals can best be achieved by local authorities applying the advantage of proximity and knowledge of local preferences to make budget, land, and investment decisions in the interests of citizens.[99]

When urban infrastructure is designed and delivered without meaningfully engaging local authorities, it undermines coherent spatial planning and provides expensive and poorly maintained services.[100] Central coordination partially explains the $3.3 billion in inappropriate infrastructure investments across the region;[101] the 29 percent premium African city dwellers pay for services relative to their peers in other regions; and the low economic multipliers on infrastructure in Africa.[102]

NUPs can support infrastructure provision and maintenance by specifying which departments or agencies are responsible for planning, financing, building, and maintaining infrastructure. They can also clarify the potential contribution of the private sector and provide mechanisms by which public-private initiatives are fostered and held to account.

There are huge opportunities for improving multilevel governance of infrastructure and services through reform of state-owned enterprises and actions in the transport, water, waste and ICT sectors, and energy sectors. Informal providers in these sectors represent a critical (but poorly documented) component of service delivery to some of urban Africa's poorest citizens.[103]

Technologically or institutionally innovative means of providing urban services are emerging from private and civic actors. In many African cities, partnerships with these players can provide a better financial and governance fit than mega-projects.[104] National and local governments will need to facilitate the scaling and integration of these services into formal systems if they are to underpin industrialization or economic transition.

Reforming state-owned enterprises

State-owned enterprises own much of the urban infrastructure in Sub-Saharan Africa. While there can be scale economies associated with monopolies (a market with a single supplier) and monopsonies (a market with a single buyer), there are also risks of inefficiency, poor service and overpricing.[105] In the power sector, Eberhard *et al.* (2011)[106] calculate that electricity in Sub-Saharan Africa costs three times as much as on the Asian subcontinent and twice as much as in Latin America. Transmission and distribution losses of electricity average 18 percent in African countries.[107]

To address these problems, NUPs can establish processes that improve the governance of SOEs and expose them to competition, for example by legitimizing independent service providers. Off-grid energy and sanitation technologies create scope for a wider array of actors to provide cost-effective urban services. These technologies may not be superior, but they may be better suited to extend services to urban areas that are rapidly changing or have small budgets. In the narrow streets of informal settlements, for example, waste pickers and biodigesting toilets can avert the need for expensive and administratively complex bulk infrastructure while meeting citizens' needs.[108] It falls to NUPs to legitimize these service delivery innovations and govern relationships between SOEs and emerging players.

NUPs can also insist that all citizens, not just those who can afford to pay, receive services. Doing so is a moral imperative and a financial challenge that has to be underwritten by the national Treasury. One option is to require SOEs to provide cities and towns with bulk services that local authorities can then distribute to households and firms. This mechanism enables local authorities to cross-subsidize poor users and reinvest savings in infrastructure, potentially breaking the low-services, low-productivity, low-revenue collection equilibrium experienced across much of the continent. In South Africa, national legislation requires local governments to provide every citizen with a basic allowance of free water every month. It allows local governments to levy a graded tariff for additional water.[109]

New technologies make effective and inclusive tariff-setting easier. Cape Town, Durban and Johannesburg, South Africa, have installed electronic flow-limiters that provide poor households with the daily 300 liters of free water that legislation demands. Once this volume is reached, the flow-limiters reduce supply to a trickle that can be augmented only if payment is made. The Nairobi City Water and Sewerage Company applies an innovative billing system that allows low-income customers to track their consumption and pay in smaller installments than the regular monthly bill requires using East Africa's mobile money system. Table 1 illustrates how emerging and conventional technologies may be integrated into an infrastructure strategy across different sectors and scales.

If NUPs are to oversee SOE reform, they have to be explicit with regard to private investment in public utilities.[110] They need to reference the need for antitrust commissions and legislation and bidding processes for public–private partnerships. These institutions and arrangements can uphold the principle of universal access and prevent privatization by stealth.

Uganda was successful in turning around its once loss-making public water utility (Box 4). Burkina Faso, Kenya, Mozambique, Niger, Senegal, and Zambia have also shown success in reforming their water utilities, experimenting with private sector participation and improving their internal governance through performance-based contracts and third-party monitoring.[111]

Box 4

Turning around Uganda's National Water and Sewerage Corporation

The National Water and Sewerage Corporation (NWSC) was established in 1972 to provide water and sewerage services to Kampala, Jinja, and Entebbe. For years it was a corrupt and underperforming utility. Despite an average tariff $1 per cubic meter, NWSC ran a monthly deficit of about $300,000, thanks in part to 50 percent water losses, poor customer service, low collection efficiency (about 71 percent), and outstanding accounts averaging about 420 days.[112]

The government of Uganda, supported by international development agencies, instituted a performance improvement process that included the following actions:

- It appointed a new board, which appointed a new chief executive officer in 1998. He held the position until 2011.
- It signed a performance agreement between the government and NWSC.
- It engaged the private sector through management contracts.
- It implemented internal performance management and efficiency measures.

Between 1998 and 2006, the share of the urban population with access to water soared from 48 percent to 70 percent, as the rate of new annual connections rose from 3,300 to 23,300. The total number of connections increased from 50,800 to 148,300 over this period. Unaccounted for water decreased from 51 percent to 28 percent, and the corporation moved from a loss to a profit (after depreciation) of $3 million.[113] NWSC also showed considerable improvement within this period, as the utility learned from its initial experience of designing performance agreements and management contracts.[114] The reforms turned NWSC into a highly effective service provider.

Table 1
Typology of an integrated infrastructure system, by type of infrastructure and scale

Service	International	National	Urban	Neighbourhood
Road and rail	Ports, regional roads, and rail network	Road and rail network	Distributor and connector roads, public transport roadways, railways	Streets, cycle-ways, walkways
Energy (mainly electric power)	International power transmission	Power generation, high-voltage transmission, seasonal storage	Medium-voltage distribution, power generation	Household-scale energy solutions, low-voltage distribution, power generation
Water supply	International water transfers and joint stewardship of international catchments	Large-scale water infrastructure and catchment management	Water infrastructure, bulk water supply, connector infrastructure	Reticulation (connecting local pipes to the main water supply), groundwater abstraction
Sanitation and wastewater	International agreements on quality and access	Catchment management for streamflow and water quality	Bulk wastewater infrastructure (treatment and outfalls)	Biodigesting toilets and methane capture, reticulation (connecting local drains to the main sewers), on-site sanitation, local treatment
Solid waste	International agreements on waste dumping and hazardous material	Guidelines and legislation on landfill management, water quality, and emissions safety; national targets for recycling and hazardous waste	Waste collection, recycling facilities, transfer stations, landfills	Waste pickers and recycling
Information and communications technology	Submarine and regional communications cables and telecommunications satellites	National mobile phone and TV towers, intercity communications cables	Mobile phone and broadband cable networks	Local cable networks and satellite receivers

Improving public transport

Traffic congestion and poor transport networks in African cities impose significant economic costs in terms of fuel expenditure; time lost; traffic collisions; and lack of access to jobs, services, and amenities. Vehicle ownership is rising rapidly in cities across the continent, which risks 'lock in' to car-based networks. Investments in mass transit, cycling lanes and sidewalks are likely to be more economically efficient and pro-poor, although mass transit in particular will require greater upfront investment.[115]

NUPs need to establish multilevel governance over planning, construction, and operations to ensure that transport is:

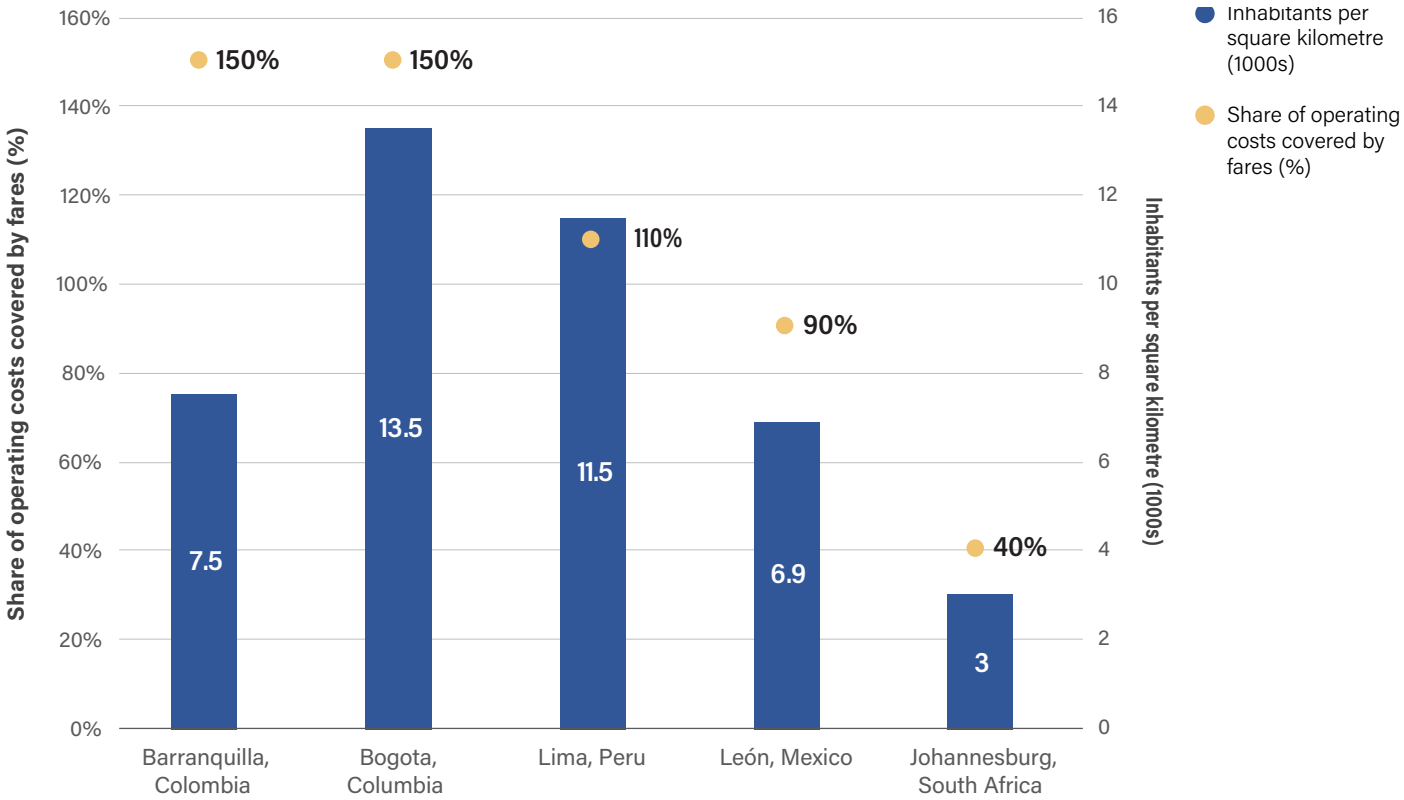
- Affordable and accessible to low-income households.
- Financially sustainable from the perspective of transport operators and local governments.
- Capable of connecting commuters with work, services and leisure opportunities.
- Safer for commuters and pedestrians than existing modes of transport, which kill more commuters per travelled distance than in any other region.[116]

- Effectively integrated with intercity transport systems to support the effective movement of goods and people.
- Less polluting of the local and global atmosphere (transport accounts for up to 70 percent of urban air pollution and nearly a quarter of global energy-related greenhouse gas emissions).[117]

The financial and political momentum required for effective and sustainable transport systems has begun to emerge. Addis Ababa has built a light rail system; Cape Town and Johannesburg, Dakar, Dar es Salaam, Lagos, and Nairobi are building Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) systems. National–municipal collaboration is required to oversee the selection of priority routes; negotiations with the owners of land on the selected routes; agreements with taxi (or minibus) transport providers; and the integrated planning of transport corridors, commercial development, and new housing sites to ensure the efficient use of land and uptake of public transport.[118] Dar es Salaam's nationally controlled but suboptimally located BRT demonstrates that national authorities are often not well-placed to understand the nuances of commuter convenience and local tenure arrangements and are therefore not well placed to realize the synergies between economic opportunities and transport routes. In Johannesburg, where population density is much lower than in Latin American cities, the BRT system has become a financial burden because of inadequate usage (Figure 6). Only when systems cover operating expenses can they begin repaying capital invested.

Figure 6

Population density is key to the financial viability of public transport



Source: Data from OECD (2016).

New mobility services include mobile apps that analyze and provide information about public transport; innovative products such as electric vehicles; and shared mobility services that use data and technology to arrange, track, and pay for trips on demand.[119] Notable examples in Africa include SafeBoda in Uganda, OGATaxi in Nigeria, and electric buses in Cape Town. If these new mobility services are to contribute to an urbanization dividend, data have to be shared with city planners responsible for infrastructure and planning. National governments need to regulate, integrate, and co-invest in the platforms required for use of mobility-enhancing software and data collection.

Improving water service

Most water catchments transcend city boundaries and cannot be managed by urban authorities alone. Ensuring water security and minimizing flooding risk for rapidly growing cities will depend on effective multilevel governance (including international treaties) of water catchments.[120] There is also a need for improved water governance within cities; the quality and affordability of water provision has been very unequal since colonial times.[121]

Such governance could achieve the following:

- Protect upper catchments, to ensure sufficient run-off and prevent siltation or pollution.
- Oversee water extraction, to ensure long-term sustainability, including by issuing licenses, managing dams to ensure optimal releases, and ensuring the judicious use of groundwater. Key criteria for sustainability include maintaining ecosystem function and ensuring adequate supplies of drinking water.
- Within sustainable levels of extraction, balance and negotiate the needs of different users, including agriculture, industry, power generation, and urban residents.[f]
- Regulate discharge into water bodies.

NUPs do not have to address all of these issues themselves. They need to establish a framework for public agencies to govern water extraction, distribution, and discharge by urban actors. NUPs can empower local governments or utilities to ensure access to sufficient, safe, and affordable drinking water for all urban residents (Box 5) and to manage sewage and industrial discharge into water bodies. NUPs can also act as a catalyst for improving catchment-level governance.

Box 5

Achieving universal access to water while earning a profit in Burkina Faso: Lessons from the water utility in Ouagadougou

Utilities often assume that they have to choose between being financially sustainable and serving the poor. In Ouagadougou, the capital of arid Burkina Faso, the local water utility (l'Office National de l'Eau et de l'Assainissement [ONEA]) is proving that this need not be the case. It provides piped water to 86 percent of the city's population and water is available an average of 23 hours a day, despite widespread poverty and the fact that 25 percent of the city's population lives in informal settlements. This achievement is remarkable given that in 2000 only half the residents had water and urban population growth has been rapid since then.[122]

The utility's mandate requires that it service only formal communities. To get around this constraint, ONEA entered into five-year water concessions with private operators to build and operate water networks in five informal settlements. ONEA sells bulk water to the operators at $0.55 per cubic meter; the final price charged to users is regulated to cross-subsidise water for low-income households and disincentivise excessive water consumption. [123]

[f] *Hydroelectric power provides almost half the electricity generated in Sub-Saharan Africa outside South Africa. Many hydroelectric plants depend on water catchments that cross national boundaries. As urban demand for water and electricity grows, sufficient flows of water to maintain both the functioning of hydroelectric plants and water resources will require international cooperation.*

This model has been rolled out to four informal settlements. The quality of the water is good, the expanded clientele has enhanced the utility's cash flow, and water lost to theft and leakages is low by regional standards. The program received technical support from the nongovernmental organization Water and Sanitation for the Urban Poor (WSUP), which has had similar success in Antananarivo, Madagascar. ONEA's experience illustrates the advantages of innovative partnerships with private and civic organizations to realize potential efficiencies and engage effectively with informal communities.

Improving electricity services

Shortages and the high costs of electricity generated by national utilities constrain the development of African cities.[124] Although rates of electrification are much higher in urban areas (71 percent) than in rural areas (22 percent), consumption remains well below developing world averages. Electricity use for productive purposes is low, constrained by high prices and unreliable supply.[125]

Governments must mobilize large-scale investment in power generation and distribution infrastructure and ensure that new infrastructure is compatible with efforts to limit anthropogenic climate change. African countries (and some cities) have been enthusiastic proponents of the Paris Agreement, but implementing ambitious Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) will prove difficult unless NUPs outline complementary low-carbon development and energy strategies for cities.[126]

The falling costs of small-scale renewable technologies (especially solar) could substantially improve quality of life, enabling better lighting and other basic household conveniences.[127] In 2015, 1.13 million small-scale solar lighting systems were sold in Sub-Saharan African, offering users new opportunities to generate and distribute their own electricity.[128]

NUPs have an important role to play in outlining the governance regimes that will provide power to growing African cities. These regimes need to establish regulators and independent system market operators (ISMOs) that can integrate the required investment in national grids and state-owned energy utilities, emergent mini-grids, emergency power producers, international hydro-power projects, newly found gas fields, transmission and distribution networks and storage capacity. NUPs can authorize cities to contract independent power producers, thereby stimulating investment and addressing the economically damaging urban energy deficit.[129]

With a few exceptions, cities in Sub-Saharan Africa have not competed for the $286 billion that was invested in renewable energy and fuels globally in 2015.[130] In 2014 there were 126 independent power producers in Africa (67 in South Africa), including private, municipal and community enterprises. They generated 11 gigawatts of electricity and $8 billion in investment between 1990 and 2013. Twenty-one of the region's 48 state-owned energy utilities remained insulated from competition.[131]

NUPs have a crucial role to play in aligning energy policies with industrial strategies and NDCs by requiring power producers to prioritize renewable energy technologies while recognizing the importance of ensuring affordable prices and energy security.[132]

4.6 CRAFTING A FISCAL, FINANCE, AND INVESTMENT STRATEGY

Resources for capital investment are negligible in most city governments in Sub-Saharan Africa, where the entire municipal budget is as low as $0.02 per capita (Table 2). To put these figures in perspective, the annual per capita municipal budget is $101 in Pekalongan, Indonesia; $399 in Feira de Santana, Brazil; $644 in Monteria, Colombia; and $4,907 in Bristol, the United Kingdom.[133] The primary challenge is the poverty of the people moving to cities;[134] this is compounded by inadequate local revenue collection and ill-conceived allocations of the money that is available.

Table 2
Estimated per capita municipal budgets in selected cities

City	Per capita budgets (US dollars)
Cape Town, South Africa	813.0
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia	91.0
Kigali, Rwanda	39.8
Dar es Salaam, Tanzania*	29.4
Kampala, Uganda	29.2
Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso	22.5
Dakar, Senegal	22.4
Yaoundé, Cameroon	16.0
Accra, Ghana	12.5
Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire	0.02

Source: Stren (2012),[135] Löffler (2016)[136] and Amani et al. (2018)[137]
Note: Figures are for years between 2010 and 2017.
**Amani et al (2018) report a much lower figure of $1.30.*

In 2013 the Infrastructure Consortium for Africa estimated that infrastructure funding consisted of 47 percent loans, 30 percent grants, 20 percent export credit guarantees (including oil-backed grants), 1 percent equity, and 1 percent guarantees and insurance. More than a third (36 percent) of all infrastructure finance in 2013 came from Asia ($13.4 billion in total), with Chinese institutions accounting for 85 percent of Asian finance.[138]

NUPs can enhance cities' access to both public and private finance and improve their capacity to raise and manage own-source revenue. National regulatory frameworks set the rules of the game that determine whether local governments can access particular funding sources and deploy specific financing mechanisms.[139] These rules include whether cities and state-owned utilities can incur debt, undertake public–private partnerships, and capture a proportion of the rising land values associated with infrastructure investment.

NUPs can outline the processes and schedules by which a greater portion of the national fiscus can be transferred to towns and cities while identifying catalytic projects that can be funded by national government to initiate the virtuous cycles of income, services, and revenue collection. United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG) call for 20 percent of the national fiscus to be transferred to local governments.[140] In 2013 spending by local authorities averaged less than 8 percent of total public spending (below the developing country mean of 8–12 percent).[141]

Fiscal empowerment and devolution are politically contentious. The formation of national committees on local finance can help transcend conflicts and political rivalries between spheres of government[142] and prevent the "raiding of the fiscal commons" by local authorities.[143]

Attracting private capital is challenging when returns do not allow cost recovery and perceived risks are high. Accordingly, absolute levels of private investment in African cities are low. Between 2003 and 2014, Cairo and Tunis

attracted the largest shares of foreign direct investment in Africa, worth $37 billion and $22 billion respectively. Less developed countries lack the creditworthy implementers or bankable projects that can secure comparable streams of private finance.

NUPs can help attract private investors by outlining the role of national governments in addressing both market and governance failures, in the following ways:

- Making the finance needs of African cities legible to potential financiers and ensuring a clear project pipeline from Africa's urban centers to attract some of the estimated $120 trillion that is managed by private and institutional investors.[144] The National Treasury can underwrite project loans, provide guarantees and negotiate lower rates of interest.[145]
- Foregrounding supply-side constraints, including legislation that prevents pension funds in the European Union from taking up long-term illiquid positions in Africa;[146] sharing risk among lenders, borrowers, insurers, and asset managers; and directing development finance to the public and private goods (including institutions) that are essential to building sustainable, inclusive cities.[147]
- Ensuring that the global phenomenon of "financialized urbanism" (whereby financial motives, markets, and institutions rather than the needs of households and firms shape the form and function of cities) does not distort decision-making in favor of financiers.[148]
- Harnessing technology to overcome information asymmetries and high upfront capital costs. The evolution of mobile phone banking has allowed low-income households to develop a formal history of savings and credit. Companies such as Off-Grid Electric and M-KOPA Solar have tapped into this digital resource, creating financial products that enable poor households to purchase solar generation systems incrementally (Box 6).

Box 6

Bringing power to poor communities while earning a profit in East Africa: Lessons from M-Kopa Solar

The off-grid renewable energy company M-Kopa Solar, a subsidiary of the East African telecommunications corporate Safaricom, illustrates what is possible when energy services understand what households want and can afford. The company began operations in 2012. Operating in Kenya, Tanzania, and Uganda with a staff of 757 and 1,251 field agents, it connected 330,000 households to solar energy systems by 2015.

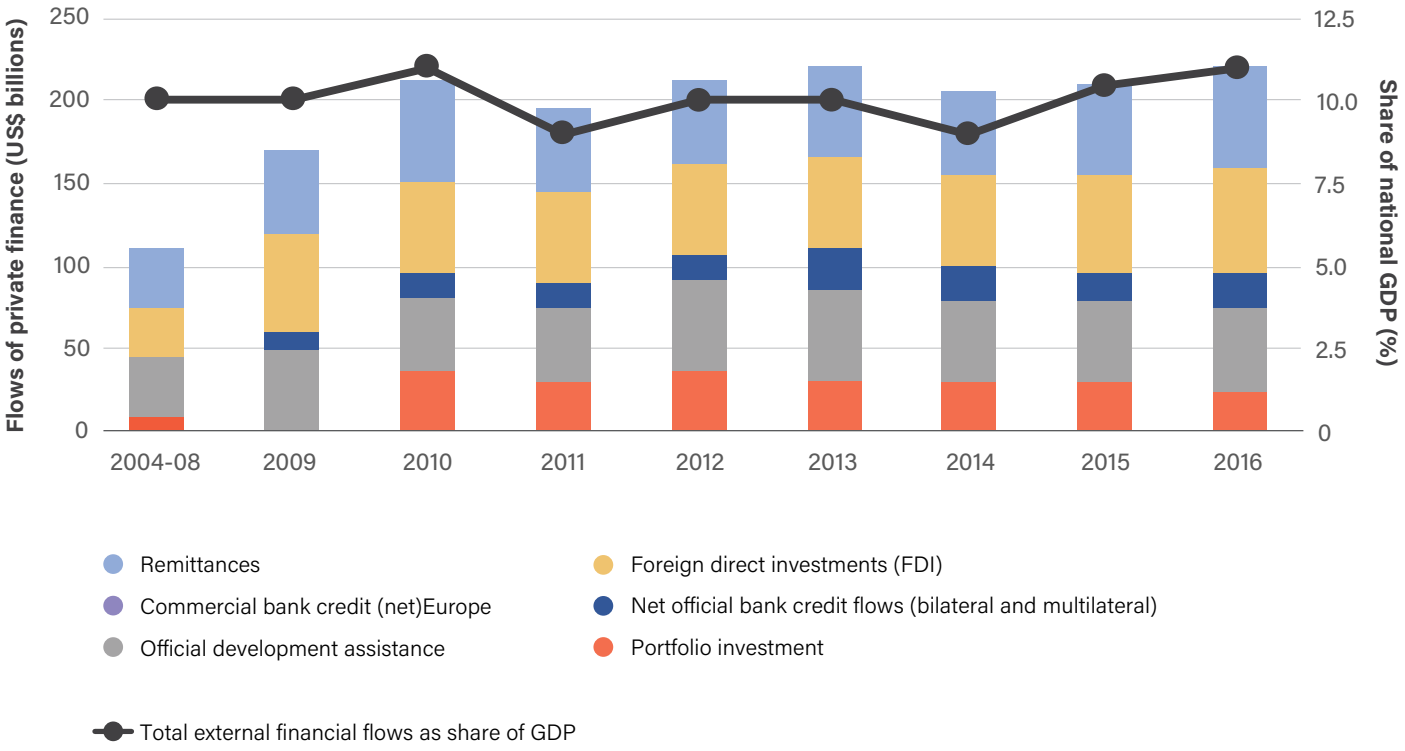
Field staff estimate how much households are spending on paraffin and batteries (typically $0.50–$1 a day) before tailoring a solar energy system that offers more, safer, cleaner, and less expensive energy. M-Kopa estimates that a typical household saves $200 a year using its systems.

The company has used its knowledge of household needs and income to expand its offering to include solar-powered televisions and refrigerators. A typical mobile money payment plan structured by M-Kopa involves a $35 deposit followed by daily payments of $0.45. After 365 such payments, customers own their systems outright.

M-Kopa estimates that 80 percent of its customers live on less than $2 a day—but in 2016 the company earned more than $60 million. The company's success shows that when the service offering and systems are right, significant financial resources can be mobilized from within poor and informal urban communities.

Figure 7

External flows of finance into sub-Saharan Africa are dominated by remittances, official development assistance and foreign direct investment



Source: Data from OECD (2016).

5. Conclusion: Using National Urban Policies to Help Build Prosperous and Inclusive Cities

NUPs emerged from Habitat III as the instrument with which to give meaning to the recognition that national governments can enhance the success of all cities. They are particularly important in Sub-Saharan Africa, where local resources and the capacity to benefit from rapid urban growth are weak and layers of formal and informal policies and plans (accumulated over many years) frustrate coherent, inclusive, effective urban governance.

At least 18 African countries have drawn up NUPs (see Appendix A), often with international support. However, progress in implementing them has been slow, suggesting political and administrative disincentives for devolving budgets and power. If NUPs are to be meaningful and implementable, they have to coordinate government, donor, civil society, and private sector efforts to ensure that the urban transition in Africa realizes its potential benefits and avoids risks. NUPs must go beyond a narrow technical and financial prescript and seize the opportunity to address structural impediments and lay the foundations for inclusive urban expansion.

Attributes that NUPs must share if they are to address this challenge include the following:

- A regulatory framework that articulates the mandates and responsibilities of different sectors and levels of government, and supports the long-term goal of building the capacities, resources, and powers of local authorities.
- A public commitment to core natural and legal rights, which can protect minority interests and create a framework for resolving ethnic and territorial disputes that inevitably emerge as cities grow.
- A commitment to know the city in multiple ways before investing in it. Doing so requires both trend data and fine-grained qualitative and quantitative data (including on informal settlements and the informal economy) that can guide the allocation of resources and crowd in private investment.
- A spatial and tenure strategy that enables the pursuit of a compact and connected urban form to reduce the risk of spatial exclusion. Clear land management systems are also important for local revenue generation, enabling governments to charge property taxes and capture a share of the increase in land prices that results from infrastructure investment.
- An infrastructure plan that includes reforming state-owned enterprises to be more sensitive to urban users' needs and ability to pay, and less damaging to the environment. It should uphold the imperative of universal access while enabling partnerships with service providers that have emerged in the absence of state-provided services.
- A finance plan that outlines processes by which local governments can take progressive charge of their investments and finances, including by underwriting municipal borrowing (with appropriate conditions) and devolving a greater portion of the national fiscus once capacity to raise revenue and make prudent investments in city programs and projects has been established.

Without realizing these aspirations, there is little prospect of achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. NUPs offer an opportunity to clarify the roles and responsibilities of different levels and sectors of government and actors in civil society and the private sector, and overcome the gridlock that has been exacerbated by opaque, uncoordinated, and fractious decision-making. They should not consolidate power in central government. Rather, they should create enabling frameworks that empower multiple actors—local governments, civic society, firms, and households—to contribute to urban economies and participate in urban societies.

Perhaps most critically, NUPs must be underpinned by national recognition of the critical role cities play in achieving sustained development. Reaping the urbanization dividend in Africa will depend on national governments' wholehearted support for growing and thriving cities.

APPENDIX A: NATIONAL URBAN POLICIES AND URBANIZATION STRATEGIES IN AFRICAN COUNTRIES

Table A1

National Urban Plans and urbanization strategies and in African countries

Country	Name of national strategy	Period covered	Focus	Comments
Algeria	Stratégie de Développement des Villes	2000–25	Balanced urban growth, improved urban economy and environment	Linked to national spatial strategy
Benin	Agenda Spatial	Permanent	Functional specialization of territories, territorial development	Insufficient means to implement
Burkina Faso	Programme de Développement des Villes Moyennes	Permanent	Balanced growth of big cities, rural–urban linkages	Incomplete
Côte d'Ivoire	Programme d'Infrastructures Urbaines d'Urgence	2008–15	Infrastructure	Grant of $44 million from the International Development Association (IDA) for targeted interventions in five sectors: drinking water, urban sanitation, solid waste, urban roads and local authorities
Ethiopia	Urban Local Government Development Project	2014–19	Municipal services and infrastructure	Connected to urban management strategy
Ghana	National Urban Policy (2013) linked to five-year Action Plan	2012–30	Twelve pillars: 1. Facilitate balanced redistribution of the urban population. 2. Promote a spatially integrated hierarchy of urban centers. 3. Promote urban economic development. 4. Improve the environmental quality of urban life. 5. Plan and manage urban growth and sprawl more effectively. 6. Ensure efficient urban infrastructure and service delivery. 7. Improve access to adequate and affordable housing. 8. Promote urban safety and security. 9. Strengthen urban governance. 10. Promote climate change adaptation and mitigation. 11. Strengthen applied research in urban and regional development. 12. Expand sources of funding for urban development and strengthening urban financial management.	More than half of population lives in urban areas. NUP process led by the President but driven by the poorly resourced Urban Development Unit within the Department of Local Government and Rural Development. Concerns about implementation and weak links with national development.

Gabon	Stratégie Nationale d'Habitat et de Développement Urbain	Permanent	Housing, infrastructure, institutional development	Insufficient resources
Kenya	National Urban Development Policy	Completed in 2013 but not yet approved; linked to Vision 2030	Governance and accountability	Formulated under the Cities and Urban Areas Act 2011
Malawi	Malawi City Development Strategy and Slum Upgrading Programme	2010–20	Urban management, institutional development, infrastructure	Blantyre City Council works alongside the Ministry of Lands, Housing and Urban Development and the Malawi Housing Corporation. Informality was not reduced by half by 2015 as planned. Insufficient resources and coordination by regional authorities.
Mali	Politique Nationale de la Ville	Permanent	Quality of life, enhancement of local economies, infrastructure	Located in the Ministry of Urban Planning. Based on the strengthening of the role of intermediary cities and importance of rural–urban linkages. Progress has been negligible.
Morocco	Stratégie Nationale de Développement Urbain	Permanent	Regional growth poles, large-scale infrastructure, promotion of midsize cities	Program has been well-resourced. Cities are viewed as central to national economic growth.
Niger	Stratégie Nationale de Développement Urbain	2010–30	Stronger urban networks, urban management, land rights, infrastructure and services	Insufficient resources
Nigeria	National Urban Development Policy, Regional Planning Act, and Urban Development Bank	1992–present	1. Promote efficient urban development and management. 2. Define the responsibilities of each level of government, to ensure effective plan implementation and accountability. 3. Provide appropriate financial mechanisms across the three levels of government to implement slum upgrading, urban infrastructure, and other development projects. 4. Revise and implement sectoral programs in housing, environment, employment, and other fields to make them more responsive to the country's urban problems.	Despite long-standing policies, national government's political and budget commitment to urban centers is lacking; agricultural bias remains.

Rwanda	Stratégie Nationale de Mise en Place des Infrastructures Publiques et de Renforcement des Capacités des Institutions Administratives Décentralisées	2000–20	Infrastructure and capacity building. Tough zoning laws linked to the Master Plan. Aim is to raise level of urbanization to 35 percent by 2020.	Political commitment is there, but resources need to be scaled up. Two-thirds of the urban population live in slums; number of slum dwellers doubled between 1995 and 2000.
Senegal	Programme d'Appui aux Communes	2006–10	Capacity building, legal tools, contract management, investment, infrastructure	Supported by Agence Française de Développement (AFD) and implemented by national government in 450 city projects. Political tensions derailed Dakar's municipal bond auction at 11th hour, and the mayor was subsequently imprisoned.
South Africa	Integrated Urban Development Framework	2014–present	Integrated package of spatial planning (transport, housing, infrastructure, land governance, local economic development, community empowerment, and urban governance)	Framework still being formulated.
Swaziland	Local Government Project	2011–17	Institutional support, infrastructure	In line with national development
Uganda	National Urban Policy	2013–30	Urban management, institutional development, infrastructure	Based in Ministry of Housing, Land and Urban Development; resources insufficient

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The Coalition for Urban Transitions is a major global initiative to support national governments to accelerate economic development and tackle dangerous climate change by transforming cities. It provides an independent, evidence-based approach for thinking about how to manage urban areas, and the accompanying process of economic, social, and environmental transformation, to maximize benefits for people and the planet.

The Coalition is a special initiative of the **New Climate Economy** and jointly managed by the **C40 Cities Climate Leadership Group (C40)** and **World Resources Institute (WRI) Ross Center for Sustainable Cities**. It brings together major institutions spanning five continents including research institutions, city networks, international organizations, infrastructure providers, and strategic advisory companies and is guided and championed by an Urban Leadership Council.

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