

# **Urban change in Uganda: The challenge of managing urban areas in a global environment**

*Isolo Paul Mukwaya<sup>1</sup>*

*Paper for the College of Urban Planning and Public Affairs (CUPPA) conference at the  
University of Illinois Chicago USA 22<sup>nd</sup> – 24<sup>th</sup> July 2004*

---

## **Abstract**

Cities across the globe are experiencing change not solely in terms of their size, but also in respect of the activities they host and the function they play in the worlds' economic trading and political systems. If globalization is an inescapable tide sweeping over all nations and cities, which policy response can be the best form of adaptation in towns in Uganda? What challenges do changes in urban areas create for planning authorities? Have new forms of spatial development emerged, or old ones died out in Uganda? This paper focuses on the local urbanization trends in Uganda detailing the primary characteristics of the processes of change in urban areas in Uganda with examples drawn specifically from Kampala City in order to understand more how the policy makers, urban planners and the community have responded or dealt with the challenges of urbanization. It also asks the following questions; how do urban areas in Uganda seize the opportunities arising from rapid urbanization to ensure that livability is created in them; opportunities are sufficient; and there is an enhanced environment, rather than destroyed place?

***Key words: Urbanization, Globalization, Adaptation, Kampala***

---

<sup>1</sup> Department of Geography Makerere University  
P.O.BOX 7062 Kampala Uganda  
Voice: 256 71 850605  
Fax: 256 41 542265  
[paulmukwaya@eudoramail.com](mailto:paulmukwaya@eudoramail.com)

## **1.1 INTRODUCTION**

Urbanization should be regarded as a condition for, and the result of development (MLWE, 2002). The processes of globalization are producing far more integrated and interdependent world economies into the 21<sup>st</sup> century. A review of urban growth and development in the developing countries over the last two centuries suggests accelerated urbanization, which is accompanied by economic development and social change. By the year 2025, over 54% of the African population will be living in urban areas (UNCHS, 1995). Although urban areas in Africa generate 55% of GNP their growth is accompanied by a multitude of problems (Rugunda, 2001). As cities grow in size and number they gain new influence but forces outside the immediate city environments also influence them. The challenge confronting all of us as city planners, urban policy makers, city managers, researcher, etc. is; how do we position our urban areas especially in the face of the global environment? As Uganda becomes more democratic, with higher economic growth rates and increased economic reforms, the country's expanding towns will increasingly serve as the engines of future economic growth. The towns are providing new opportunities in industry, trade and investment, communications, infrastructure, and social services. This growth has however generated numerous problems.

## **1.2 TRENDS AND PATTERNS OF URBANISATION IN UGANDA**

Urbanization in Uganda is relatively young compared to Kenya and Tanzania. The roots of urbanization in Ugandan can be traced to the 1890s when the European footprint in the country started to be felt – a period that defined Uganda's spatial and urban development pattern. With the building of the Kenya - Uganda Railway, economic and administrative centers were established. Nothing much has changed much from this pattern after the independence period.

The urban centres created "pressure zones", a phenomenon punctuated by heavy demographic shifts from rural areas to urban centres. The urban migrants later over-ran existing facilities culminating in increased pressure on housing utilities, land resources and other infrastructure. The railway line accelerated growth of urban centres such as Tororo, Kasese, Gulu. Colonial policy also regarded towns as centres of non-African settlement and shaped legislation and administration to that end. Later, the colonial government set up administrative centers in various parts of the country to stabilize most settlements, which laid the foundation for the earlier growth of urban centres. In later years urbanisation in the country has been influenced by long distance truck drivers.

Uganda is experiencing rapid urbanization like most developing countries. It is happening in the face of widespread poverty, shrinking peasant economies and acute scarcity of resources for local authorities. The level of urbanization in 2000 was 14.2% and with an urban growth rate of 5.2%, it is projected to increase to 20.7% by 2015. The urban population as enumerated in 1969, 1980, 1991 and 2002 censuses is given in Table 1. In 1969, 3 districts of Kampala (100%), Jinja (25.6%) and Gulu (8.1%) were above the national average (6.6%). Five (5) districts had urbanization rate above the national average of 7.4% of 1980. In 1991, six (6) towns had urbanization rates of 11.3% above the national average while in 2002, 7 towns (Kampala, Mukono, Busia, Jinja, Gulu, Kitgum and Nebbi) had rates of 12.2% above the national urbanization level. The proportion of urban dwellers increased overtime from 6.6% in 1969 to 12% in 2002. The urban population registered growth rates of 8.2 percent between 1959 and 1969, 3.9% during 1969-1980, 5.8% during 1980-1991 and 4.6% between 1991 and 2002. Table 2 shows the population of the 20

largest urban areas of Uganda, and their population size in 1969, 1989, 1991 and 2002. Between 1991 and 2002 Mukono showed the highest growth rate (15.9%), while Soroti Municipality showed the lowest rate (0.1%). The high growth rate for Kitgum (10.3%), Lira (10.1%), Gulu (9.3%) and Kasese (9.0%) is partly attributed to insecurity forcing the population to move to towns, which are relatively more secure. There are many urban centers, which are not officially gazetted. If these are gazetted and included in the urban population, the level of urbanization in 2002 will be higher (UBOS, 2002). The remarkable economic growth over the last decade as well as political stability have led to the expansion of existing urban centres especially Kampala and the sprouting up of hundreds of small trading centers in the countryside particularly along highways and major road junctions.

Index	1969	1980	1991	2002
Number of towns	58	96	150	74
Urban population	634,952	938,287	1,889,622	2,921,981
Proportion urban %	6.6	7.4	11.3	12.2
Urban growth rate %	8.17	3.93	6.35	3.73
% in capital city	53.9	47.9	41.0	40.7
% in 20 largest towns	87.4	80.4	74.4	76.6

Table 1: Urbanization in Uganda 1969 – 2002 (UBOS, 2002)

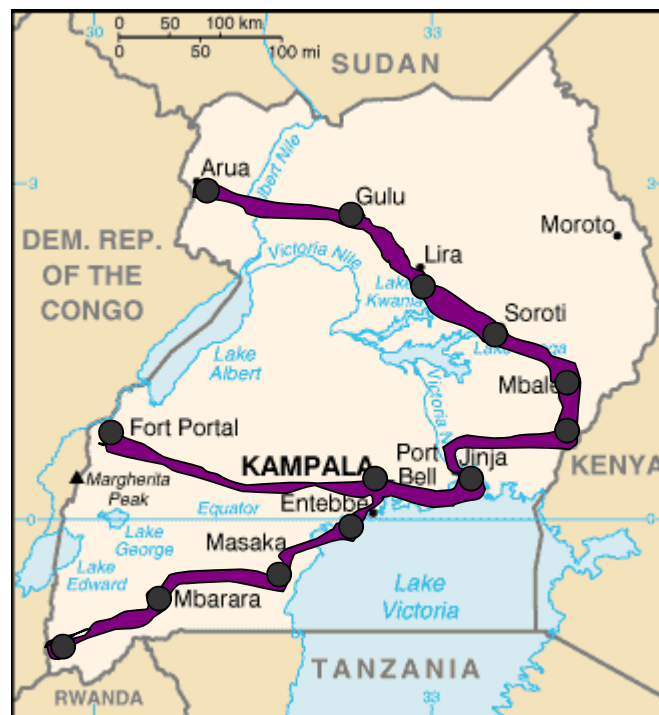


Figure 1: The most discernible urban corridor in Uganda along which the biggest towns in the country are found

Even with growth of smaller urban centers in the country, the major issue that is easily discernible from Table 2 throughout the period 1969-2002 is that of urban primacy. Uganda has

only one city<sup>2</sup> i.e. Kampala clearly indicated by its population of 1,208,544 in 2002 followed by Gulu the second largest town with a population of only 112,944 in 2002. What is clear is that the major urban areas in the country fall within what could be described as the “urban corridor”, a reflection of the colonial policy of infrastructure development especially the construction of the Kenya – Uganda railway.

### **1.3 KAMPALA’S URBAN DEVELOPMENT PATTERNS**

The beginning of urban development in Kampala was closely tied to the former colonial concept of separating residential areas according to races. Initial efforts were to accommodate the working population in the colonial government who were mainly expatriate civil servants. This resulted in the construction of houses in Kololo, Nakasero and Mbuya in Kampala. Later housing estates referred to as Africa quarters during colonial days, to cater for Africans who were coming to Kampala from the countryside to work were established by the colonial administration in Nakawa, Naguru, Ntinda. Areas, which were inhabited by Europeans, were well supplied with infrastructure facilities, like water and houses well made of strong bricks and rooted with clay tiles. The houses and compounds especially in Kololo and Nakasero are also spacious. While the commercial areas and the residential areas designated by the colonial government developed systematically, those, which were still under, the Kabaka (the Kibuga) did so basically without any plan. It is this fact that has led Kampala to be termed a dualistic city i.e. partly indigenous and partly colonial.

The heavy population (41% of the total urban population in 2002) in Kampala city has been brought by a number of factors including inter alia; the postcolonial policy of concentrating the socio-economic opportunities in specific urban nuclei to the detriment of other areas. Kampala is typical of sprawling cities of the developing world with all the accompanying stress and strains of unplanned development, urban poverty, unemployment and environmental degradation. It still has the relics of a failed planning and development management system left behind by the colonial administration.

With the creation of Kampala City Council after independence to control all developments in the city, Kampala has since then taken on a hybrid nature especially in the former Kibuga areas. Similarly, the extensions of the city boundaries have now incorporated parts of Kawempe, Nakawa and Naguru into the city boundaries (Figure 2). Here, you find executive houses side by side with semi permanent structures. In fact mud and wattle walled houses with corrugated iron sheets constitute 35% of all housing units in Kampala. It is therefore argued that the planning and urban development control needs to take a different orientation basing on the different needs of the urban inhabitants

---

<sup>2</sup> The World Bank (2000) distinguishes between small cities (less than 0.5 million people), large cities (between 1 million and 5 million people) and mega-cities (over 5 million people)

Rank 1991	Rank 2002	Urban area	Current status	Population				Average annual growth rate %		
				1969	1980	1991	2002	1969-80	1980-91	1991-02
1	1	Kampala	CC	33,070	458,503	774,241	1,208,544	3.14	4.76	3.8
2	4	Jinja	MC	47,872	45,060	65,690	86,520	-0.58	3.35	2.4
3	5	Mbale	MC	23,544	28,039	53,987	70,537	1.68	5.96	2.3
4	7	Masaka	MC	12,987	21,123	49,585	61,300	7.77	4.84	1.8
5	8	Entebbe	MC	21,096	21,289	42,763	57,518	0.09	6.36	2.5
6	6	Mbarara	MC	16,928	23,253	41,031	69,208	3.55	5.16	4.5
7	16	Soroti	MC	12,398	15,048	40,970	41,470	1.86	9.11	0.1
8	2	Gulu	MC	18,170	14,958	38,297	112,944	-1.87	8.55	9.3
9	17	Fort Portal	MC	7,147	26,806	32,789	40,605	11.69	1.83	1.8
10	13	Kabale	MC	8,236	21,469	29,246	45,757	9.21	2.81	3.1
11	3	Lira	MC	7,340	9,122	27,568	89,781	2.09	10.05	10.1
12	15	Tororo	MC	15,977	16,707	26,783	42,473	0.43	4.29	4.0
13	12	Arua	MC	10,837	9,663	22,217	45,883	-1.1	7.57	6.2
14	9	Kasese	MC	743	9,917	18,750	53,446	3.06	5.79	9.0
15	19	Busia	TC	1,146	8,663	27,967	37,947	19.45	10.65	2.6
16	20	Mityana	TC	2,263	2,547	22,529	34,623	1.14	19.84	3.7
17	18	Iganga	TC	5,958	9,899	19,740	38,009	4.88	6.27	5.6
18	22	Lugazi	TC	NV	10,439	18,828	31,026	NA	5.53	NA
19	10	Njeru	TC	4,637	3,880	36,731	52,514	-1.71	20.43	3.1
	11	Mukono	TC	3,565	5,783	7,406	47,305	NA	NA	15.9
	14	Kitgum	TC	3,242	4,961	12,978	42,929	NA	NA	10.3
	21	Hoima	TC	NA	NA	NA	31,630	NA	NA	NA
	23	Koboko	TC	NA	NA	NA	29,443	NA	NA	NA
	24	Masindi	TC	NA	NA	NA	25,515	NA	NA	NA

Table 2: Population of the largest 24 towns in Uganda

Note: NV indicates that the area was not enumerated separately, NA – Data unavailable, CC – City Council, MC – Municipal Council and TC – Town Council

Source: UBOS, 2002

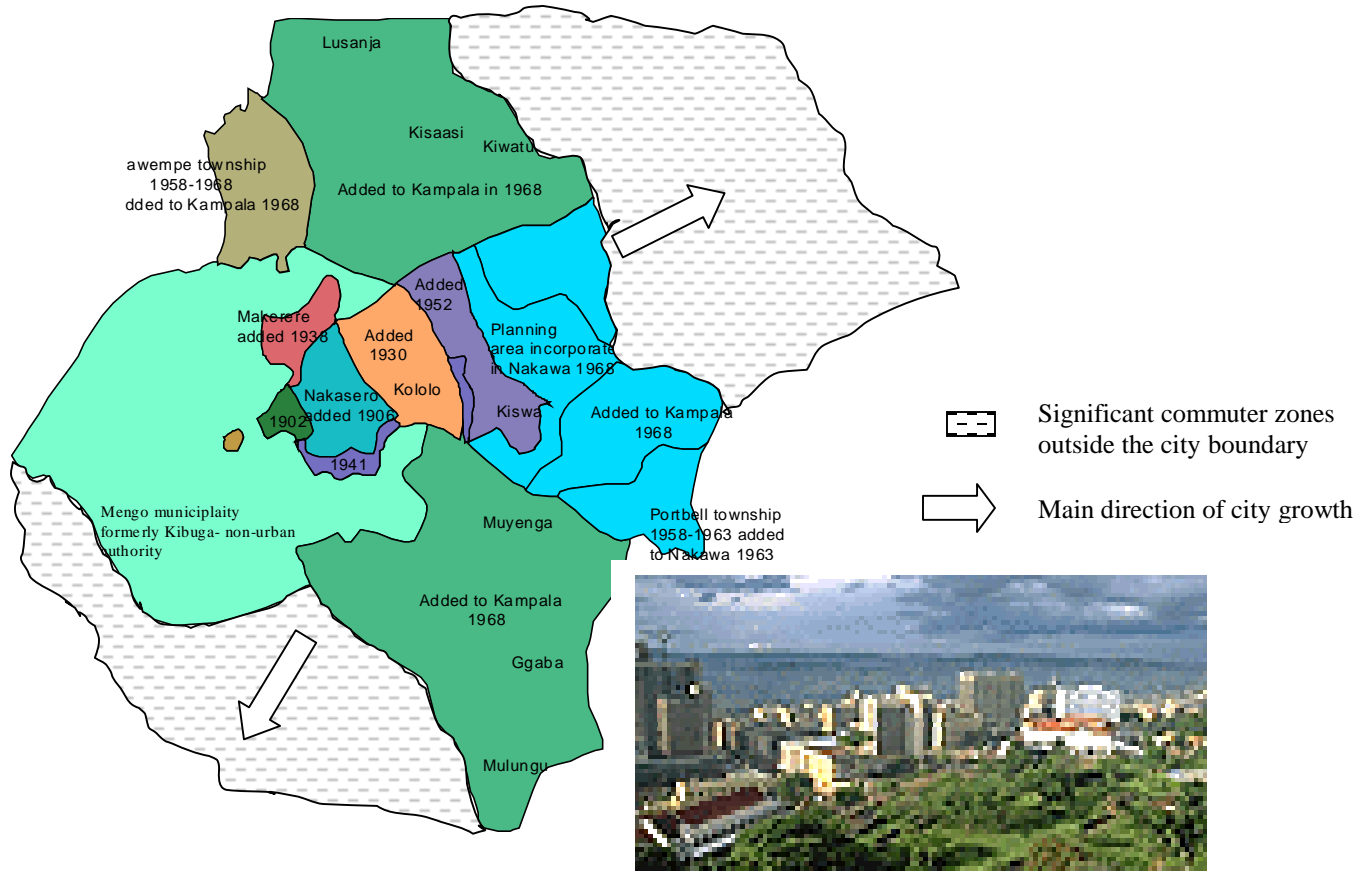


Figure 2: The spatial development process in Kampala City (Isolo, 2001) with additions

## 1.4: POLICY AND URBAN CHANGE IN UGANDA

### 1.4.1: Policy framework

From 1950s up to early 1980s, the development focus in many developing countries was based on rural areas. There was a presumption among the social policy architects, urban managers, and researchers that urban areas were better off in terms of social and economic infrastructure. The British colonial government regulated the planning and administration of almost all of the urban areas in Uganda under the Urban Authorities Act 1958, which was later, amended to Urban Authorities Act, 1964. During this era, the British virtually ignored the pre-existence of well established and sophisticated land settlement and local governance or urban administrative systems like the “Kibuga” in Kampala, which had in many cases been in existence long before their arrival (MLWE, 2002).

Most of the planning policies and outline schemes had the effect of segregating income and racial groups and they gave preference to upper and middle-income groups. The implications of this colonial and post colonial policy framework was that the emerging urban authorities were empowered to initiate urban plans, “coordinate and facilitate construction of public utility services, transport, communications and other public services, as well as conserve and develop the resources of the area concerned”. This left them with full responsibility to respond to the

movement en mass and ever soaring rate of urban population in the urban nucleus without corresponding increase in investment in the infrastructure, a condition that made them unable to respond to the problems of urbanisation. The result has been unprecedented pressure on infrastructure like water supply, residential accommodation and sanitation services in urban areas. In Kampala, the problem is summed up in the following:

*“Kampala Township was created in 1902. African residence was restricted to an area outside the township on land that was under mailo tenure. The last boundaries were demarcated in 1968. The development of the land outside the 1902 township was left to the owners of the land. This had adverse effects on the urban planning of Kampala Buildings face different directions. There is great mixture of use, with great separation of residential from commercial and industrial uses. Most of the buildings are temporary or semi permanent and many of the households live in overcrowded conditions” (UNEP, 1989).*

Most of the settlements in Ugandan towns have sprung up without proper urban planning and development control requirements. Consequently, the settlements are not recognized by city authorities and have been described as 'illegal', and not conforming to urban authorities' health and population holding capacity regulations. Due to their status, urban authorities have also tended to ignore them in the provision of the necessary services such as water, refuse collection, electricity and sewerage disposal. However, the authorities seem to tolerate them as it they have far reaching economic and political implications representing centres of high population density. In the 1970s and 1980s, the political turmoil meant a total collapse of the whole Uganda economy. Subsequently the industrial sector collapsed, major property owners in the country were expelled which led to a decline in institutional capacity of urban authorities. By 1979 the economy was in total doldrums with income per capita of US \$ 120 as compared to the income per capita of over US \$ 450 in 1970 (MFED, 1987). However, population growth in urban centres remained on course. For example, between 1969 and 1980, Kampala grew by 3.14%. The single most important characteristic that can describe this period in Uganda's urban areas is the urbanization of poverty among the urban population.

#### **1.4.1.1 The Town and Country Planning Act**

It provides legal framework for urban planning and, defines and describes the various levels of governments, their functions and how they relate to each other. The existing Town and Country Planning Act does not cater for the dynamic developments of the urban development process in Uganda today. It also runs in conflict with the recent legislation on land, which leads to serious implications for city functioning and overlap in the provision of services. The existing law lays more emphasis on urban planning and less on rural planning which has therefore led to a mass influx of people to urban areas. As the formal planning procedures and programs developed under the previous structure plans and outline schemes remained legally in place, they bore less and less reference to what was actually taking place on the ground. The regulations were basically top down and could therefore no longer create and foster a meaningful and manageable planning and administrative processes in the country.

Previous urban plans involved the preparation of physical plans and regulations on land use, social and infrastructure provision. The majority of these plans pegged the provision of

infrastructure services onto the organs of the central government (parastatals and line ministries) in a supply driven manner. In the absence of a participatory planning process and fiscal transfers to enable local authorities and communities to identify, prioritize, plan, implement, commission, operate and maintain the services, investments created out of these plans tended to be inappropriate to the local needs and were not sustainable.

News urban structure plans, legislations and policies have led to a departure from this traditional delivery system and proposed land use planning and corresponding regulations with design strategies and enabling policies and programs, which address urbanization in a multi sectoral basis. These policies and programs are aimed at complementing and reinforcing the already existing urban activities geared towards strengthening the economic viability and urban processes in the urban centres. The policy changes and legislation can be seen in the following;

#### **1.4.1.2 The Local Government Act 1997**

The Local Government Act, 1997 repealed the Urban Authorities Act of 1964. According to the act, urban councils include city, municipality, and town councils. Uganda has 1 City, 13 Municipal councils, 34 City/Municipal Divisions, 66 Town Councils. The Act gives more powers to the local authorities to manage the development of urban councils, municipalities and the city council while central government comes in to play the guiding role. The act empowers the Minister for Local Government to declare an area urban when and if it satisfies the following criteria;

- Minimum population size of 25,000 for a town, 100,000 for a municipality, and 500,000 for a city
- Has a master plan for land use
- Has its own offices
- Has available water sources
- Is able to meet the cost of providing services
- If an area is declared a district headquarters, then it automatically becomes a town council

#### **1.4.1.3 The Land Use policy and environmental laws**

Urban planning and development has a direct impact on land use and the ability to use land more effectively. The land use policy in Uganda has therefore been inseparable from urban planning and development. It is the main spatial development framework for the country meant to guide and bring about orderly development at a national level by separation of incompatible land uses. Government also pays great attention to environmental impacts of developments and therefore with funding from the World Bank, it established the National Environmental authority (NEMA) with a mandate to ensure that all developments adhere to acceptable environmental standards through environmental impact assessments and consequently mitigation measures.

#### **1.4.1.4 The Condominium Property Act 2001**

This was enacted in 2000 to facilitate development, ownership and, occupation of flats and sectional properties. It is envisaged that this Act will encourage development of high density, high-rise housing types to meet the increasing housing needs especially in urban areas.

### **1.5: Factors influencing the functioning of urban systems in Uganda**

The planning and management of urban areas and their proper functioning in Uganda is influenced by a number of factors that are either within or beyond the control of the local authorities. These include among many the restructuring of the national economy, rapid population shifts, a movement towards decentralization and an increasing role of the private sector in the running of urban affairs.

#### **1.5.1: Restructuring of the national economy**

This is in response to shifts in the national and global economic forces, which have affected the city. Since 1986, there has been the adoption of more liberal economic policies by the central government as a necessary element in the pursuit of economic growth after three decades of political turmoil and economic collapse. The attraction of investment capital to the city has dramatically affected the urban economy. The impact of these economic reforms has been felt in areas as changing urban land uses, environmental decline, and growth of the urban informal sector as well as growing urban poverty.

#### **1.5.2: Population shifts.**

Kampala is experiencing a rapid growth in its population as people and firms move to it in response perceived economic opportunities and higher quality of life. At the same time there is a growing number of the unemployed and a growing informal sector. At the current growth rates of 4.0 % per annum, it is estimated that the population of Kampala will be more than one million by the year 2015 although the possibility of higher growth is acknowledged. At present Kampala accommodates 40 % of the country's urban population (Nostrand, 1993).

#### **1.5.3: Increasing role of the private sector in urban affairs**

In the face of central government resource constraints there has been a declining involvement of the central government in economic and urban development with an increasing role of the private sector, non-governmental organizations in areas of services delivery, infrastructure development and property development. At the same time, the urban authorities are increasingly confronting challenges from organized sectors and civil society groups that have become more assertive in trying to influence urban policies. Against these provider, there are other informal structures that in the form of CBOs, NGOs, churches, self-help groups in various parts of the city that play their part to cater for deficiencies in the delivery systems of the formal structures.

#### **1.5.4: Movement towards decentralization**

The increasing role of the private sector has been accompanied by a corresponding decentralization of urban management shifting planning and decision making from the central government to the local government. Decentralization has led to a re-examination of the role of the national government authorities and parastatals that performed dominating and sometimes overlapping functions.

## 1.6: THE CHALLENGES OF PLANNING AND MANAGING URBAN AREAS IN UGANDA

### 1.6.1 Environmental conditions

For a long time, urban areas in Uganda have grappled with problems of service provision with limited success. The level and quality of services does not match the needs of the population in many urban areas in the country. Environmental conditions in many urban areas in Uganda are appalling (Table 5). Accessibility to environmental services ranges from total inadequacy to non-existence in most urban areas. Inadequate planning or lack of it in some areas and the resultant development in inappropriate areas such as open spaces, swamps, and steep slopes is causing serious environmental problems such as water pollution, disease outbreaks, etc. The housing stock in Uganda stands at 2,690,900 units while the household distribution of people averages 5.7 persons. The occupancy density is estimated at 1.05 giving a backlog of 235,906 units. Kampala has a housing stock of about 138000 units with a backlog of 44,228 units. All the other urban areas have approximately 176,310 housing units and a backlog of 63,473 units (Department of Housing, UHL & UD 1992). Environmental components in around Kampala City are very much at risk due to a variety of activities associated with uncontrolled urbanization process (Table 3).

<b>Environmental component (VEC)</b>	<b>Process of urbanisation putting the VEC at risk</b>	<b>Impacts associated with urbanisation process</b>
Land resources/ terrain/ soils	Uncontrolled construction Solid waste dumping Inappropriate agricultural practices	Land pollution from garbage disposal Lack of good access between neighborhoods
Water resources	Solid waste dumping Severe sanitation problems Poor maintenance of drainage systems	Pollution from a variety of sources Environmental health problems Malaria on the increase due to poor drainage
Wetlands/ Swamps	Poor maintenance of drainage systems Drainage for agriculture, industry, brick-making and other uses Burning and harvesting of papyrus	Perceived increase in air pollution but no hard data is available
Air quality	Rapid increase in motorization Indoor pollution from charcoal stoves and other inappropriate fuels Garbage burning is on the increase Uncontrolled industrial emissions	Perceived increase in air pollution Dust from roads is also a reported problem

Table 3: Processes of urbanization and their environmental impacts (Van Nostrand Associates, 1994)

### **1.6.2: Issues of privatization and service delivery**

Statements like water for all, shelter for all, educations for all, by the year 2000 have been common in many government policy statements and speeches. The year 2000 seemed to be a magic year. Now that local authorities have failed to deliver; new delivery systems have been adopted in the country.

Privatisation is now a buzzword in Uganda. The process of privatization has affected the means through which urban councils acquire resources and run their affairs. This has affected the mode through which their constituents can expect to receive the services traditionally provided by the local councils. Although there is no distinct policy on privatization of municipal services in Uganda, the privatization process for municipal services has borrowed from the existing parastatal privatization policies and Acts. Municipal councils are considering comprehensive privatization programmes as a means to reinforce and enhance the ability to govern and increase the level and quality of services to their constituents.

The enactment of the Local Government Act 1997 gives urban authorities autonomy over their financial and planning matters. Kampala City at district level is responsible for education, medical and health services, water construction and rehabilitation and maintenance of roads and all decentralized services and activities (Local Government Act 1997). All urban councils may contract out services to the private sector. They are however, still obliged to establish, prescribe, control and administer the forms in connection with these services.

No government function is more basic to local taxpayers and businesses than service delivery. A survey by UNDP among 151 mayors world wide about the challenges facing local authorities as they entered the 21<sup>st</sup> century showed that inadequate service delivery was the second most serious problem after unemployment (United Nations, 1997). Service delivery provides the contact point with government: the crossing guard who shepherds school children, the road crew that fixes potholes, the municipal clerk who issues marriage licenses, etc. are the envoys between a government and its people.

Although law may mandate provision of certain services, specific arrangements for how to actually deliver those services are typically not mandated. Not surprisingly, service delivery arrangements vary widely in Kampala. These include open competition, management contracts, franchising, concessions, compulsory competitive tendering and shifting of responsibilities. There are some points to say about this form of services delivery system.

In the first place, privatization is a new concept and not well understood and developed in the city. Two or more privatization modes may be applied concurrently in the same service. Some conceptual confusion and ambivalence about what privatization actually involves still exists. Some understand it as contracting or leasing out tasks and responsibilities to private sector firms, while local (municipal) government retains overall supervisory and regulatory control; some understand it as total and complete transfer of responsibilities for providing the service to private sector firms who set their own prices; some understand it as commercialization of services by municipal governments or parastatals, etc. Given the forms of services delivery, more questions arise such as, how does one draw the line between competition and other forms of privatization? What standards should local authorities follow to determine which form of service delivery

should be adopted for a particular service? Under what circumstances should open competition be adopted for one service and concessions for another? This conceptual ambivalence still requires clear definitions to enable more objective assessment of the efficacy of privatization as an efficient and effective mode for the provision of municipal services.

Service	Provider
City planning	Central and Local Government
Transportation	Central – Local government
Roads	Central, Local government and private provision.
Housing	Central, local government and private provision.
Electricity	City Council and Private Developers.
Water	Uganda Electricity Board (now restructured into three agencies)
Sewer	National Water and Sewerage Corporation.
Solid waste	National Water and Sewerage Corporation.
Fire protection	Central government.
Emergency Medical services	Central government (Police)
Police	Central government (Police)
Courts	The Central Government
Health services - Family health	Central government.
Public disease control	Central government
Environmental health	Central and Local government.
Mental health care	Central government
Libraries	Local government.
Parks and Recreation	Local government.
Open space	Local government.

Table 4. Formal service provision agencies in Kampala

Services	Coverage of the population.
Access to some form of sanitation*	98 %
Connection to sewers*	9 %
Generation of domestic waste**	16,500 m <sup>3</sup> daily (4,500 m <sup>3</sup> or 27 % treated). 73 % is discharged as raw sewerage into open drains.
Generation of solid waste	760 tons per day.
Collection service of waste	10 % of the city population is served.
Access to water***	
● Piped water	50 % of households have access to piped water. 8.4 % of this has running water in their households and 42 % have standpipes in their yards.
● Open springs	35.8 % draw water from springs.
● Open wells	11.5 % draw water from wells.
● Streams	0.5 % draw water from streams.
● Other sources	0.8 % draw water from other sources

Table 5. The state of service delivery in Kampala

Sources: \* - Population census (1991), \*\* - Sengendo (1997), \*\*\* - MFEP (1992) and \*\*\*\* - Isolo (2001).

There is serious lack of functional coordination among the service delivery systems in the city, which jeopardizes good planning, and cost effective delivery systems. For example, the separation of water providers and providers of other services with important connections to water,

such as fire protection, planning and public health presents a serious problem for planning and quality of life in Kampala City. An especially troublesome tension exists between the City Council and utility companies like the National Water and Sewerage Corporation (NWSC), and Uganda Electricity Board (UEB); where roads are dug up for utility lines – water and sewer lines, electricity cables - when they have just been repaired or maintained by the City Council. Serious as the problems of uncoordinated growth policies are, however, even more serious are the institutional complexities of resolving such controversies. Because public authorities and local governments are independent entities there is no mandate that they coordinate with one another to plan and implement services.

### **1.6.3: Urban land management regimes**

With only 11.3% population out of 16.6 million people as urban (MPED, 1991) Uganda would not have suffered from urban population pressure, had the land market been appropriate. In the pre-colonial era, the land tenure system in Uganda, took the form of communal ownership. With the advent of colonial administration, new forms of land management emerged. There are four types of land tenure systems in the country and in the city of Kampala, public land accounts for only 15% of total land area. Most of the urban population does not have access to land due to low-income levels that make them unable to acquire land through the open market (Nuwagaba, 1993). Land has effectively turned into a "commodity" and this has led to the development of a land less class culminating into a phenomenon of urbanization of poverty. On private land orderly development of the city has not been possible.

Proper land use planning, mapping and surveying are made more difficult by the provisions of the national constitution that empower citizen's ownership of land in various forms. There are three main land tenure categories in the city, namely, public land that falls under the jurisdiction of the Uganda Land commission, mailo (private) land where KCC has no powers to grant leases, and freehold land held by institutions like churches, mosques, schools and other NGOs usually for a period of 99 years. Within the above categories, there exist other subsystems of land tenure such as customary tenure on mailo land and customary tenure under public land where the tenant enjoys some rights. About 55 % of all the land within Kampala City Council boundary is public land. The rest of the land, 45 %, is private mailo and freehold land. It is mainly because of this that development control has not been effected in the city as expected (Nostrand, 1992).

Heightened competition that comes with globalization demands the approval of land matters for economically best use activities. With the continuous rural urban migration and the complexity of property ownership, squatter problems may even be worse, which urban authorities are finding difficult to pull down. When authority for land matters rests on other agencies, a serious draw back falls on the capacity of the urban authorities to undertake various programs efficiently and effectively. Despite the absence of an adequate, or functioning, legal framework, an informal market for land has flourishes. This should not be surprising since the Ugandan economy has been growing and development activities have been increasing since the early 1990s. Land insecurity, however remains, a pressing social, economic and governance issue. At the same time, the impacts of major projects like the expansion of Entebbe road, on local land prices, land speculation, and land loss by the poor have not been assessed.

### **1.6.4: Transport issues in towns of Uganda**

One of the most important challenges for urban development in developing countries such as Uganda is transportation planning. During the 1970s and early 1980s, the economic crisis and civil strife that affected the country greatly hindered the development and maintenance of urban transport infrastructure. Today there are other problems of urban transport that have arisen out of relative peace and stability in the country. The age of automobiles has led to ineffective land-use patterns, traffic accidents, greater disparities in mobility and economic opportunities.

There are approximately 465,000 vehicles in the country, with a potential of additional 10,000 vehicles per year. Over 70% of these vehicles are registered in Kampala City and ply the city roads daily. The average daily fuel consumption of a petrol-omnibus is 34.3 litres, a diesel omnibus is 26.1 litres and a big bus is 80 litres. When translated into carbon values, on average one omnibus produces 18,536 Kg of carbon annually while one big bus produces 61,847 Kg of carbon a year. Five omnibuses produce 92,680 Kg of carbon in a year, which is equivalent to 339,827 Kg of carbon dioxide; one big bus produces an equivalent carbon dioxide of 226,771 Kg. Use of bus reduces CO<sub>2</sub> emissions by 113,056 Kg per year per bus, which is equivalent to 30,833 Kg of carbon. Over 10,000 omnibuses operate within the city, 90% doing town service (The Kampala Traffic Improvement Project, 2002).



Figure 5: The Kampala bus systems in the early 1920 and the present

There are no finances and adequate capacity to build public transportation systems or to expand roads to handle the new traffic. The challenge is how to plan for an increasing importation of second hand vehicles in the city of Kampala which in essence has created high levels of traffic congestion, parking difficulties, difficulties for pedestrians, massive air pollutants and an increase in greenhouse gas emissions. The immediate and obvious effect to the economy is the loss of labour hours as most people report to work late. Isolo (1997) found that a total of 23813 man-hours are lost daily on trips to and from the central business district by Kampala's working population due to traffic congestion, which represents 270 jobs that remain undone daily.

In Uganda the transport sector accounts for 75% of GHG emissions and as the demand for transportation energy continuously grows, GHG emissions will, therefore, continue to increase. The increase in motor vehicle operation and use and subsequently the consumption of petroleum products, coupled with the rapid growth of urban populations will impact negatively on human health in urban areas (particularly in Kampala).

### **1.6.5: Government structures**

The local government is a weak institution. It started off as a colonial institution, which was never fundamentally transformed to cater for a growing African urban population. The local authority is under the ministry of Local Government and therefore has built in structural limitations virtually rendering it neither local nor government.

Conflicts of interests between politicians and bureaucrats in urban authorities make the efficient running of urban affairs difficult. The incomplete separation of powers at all levels of government creates bureaucratic delays in the approval, implementation and re-development of projects in urban areas. A case in point is the tension between different levels of government over the redevelopment of the old minibus terminal in the Kampala city. In the first place there is a widening gulf between the City Mayor and the city bureaucrats over the issue. The Member of Parliament for Central Division, where the terminal is located adds a political dimension to the saga, staking his political fortunes to keep the park in the present management system. The present management structure of the terminal is viewed as an efficient mobilizing machine in the city center and several candidates in local elections court its patronage. What is missing here is the input from commuters, drivers or conductors themselves.

### **1.6.6: Fiscal problems**

The local authority generally lacks financial independence; often it must rely for survival on assistance from the central government, which only increases the leverage of the latter over it rendering it both structurally and financially weak. The central government has substantially reduced the amount of aid provided to local authorities while at the same time increasing their mandated responsibilities. Concerns with horizontal and vertical fiscal imbalances are present. In Kampala divisions, horizontal imbalance is minor, but vertical imbalance is major. There are no major economic inequalities between divisions in terms of income but there are major imbalances between local government divisions and central government in terms of their capacity to raise revenues to finance their expenditure commitments.

In response, the local government Kampala City Council has had four choices: increase revenues, reduce services, borrow money, or achieve efficiencies. Fiscal stress in the council has rendered two of these, borrowing and increasing revenues especially through taxes which choices are very problematic. As a result, service reductions and an urgent need for efficiencies increasingly dominate council and staff agendas. The Local Government Act 1997 gives the responsibility to local authorities to manage the affairs of the people at local level but the ability of the City Council to manage the city is constrained since the central government is economically dominant based on having the lion's share of the tax revenue, which provides it in practice to have even a greater influence in city affairs.

Apart from revenue wrangles, poor revenue collection and revenue leakage, the real problem is that the central government, which sings about decentralization, has selfishly refused to surrender some of the lucrative sources of revenue to local government. In effect, even with decentralization, local governments still remain under the central government's control due to lack of financial autonomy. There is a misconception in the country that lucrative sources of revenue like Value Added Tax (VAT) and Income Tax must exclusively be for the central

government even when the The Local Government Act of 1997 spells out legal provision for distribution of revenues between the central and local governments (New Vision, 2001).

In Uganda the decline of finance has resulted in a “survival model” of municipal activity, in which councilors are not so much supervising the running of services as devoting their attention to controlling the limited finances of the local authority so as to create a modest surplus for visible development projects. In this context of declining or non-existent resources, municipal authorities have evolved into “revenue collecting animals” whose object is simply to sustain themselves (Amis, 1992)

### **1.6.7: Cross boundary development issues**

Urban sprawl in the larger Kampala City has made the boundary of the city blurred. The population figure of Kampala is about 1.2 million. However, daytime population almost doubles to two million, meaning that many who work and do other errands in Kampala reside outside the city. This has put pressure on the public facilities and transportation system in the city during the day. While the city has to meet the demands of the commuters, government financial transfers to urban authorities are only limited to the night population.

Related to the above is the cross boundary problem of environmental degradation. Before leaving home from work and other errands in the urban centres, commuters leave behind wastes that have to be cleaned up by the urban authorities. However, due to many factors, among them is residents’ attitude towards cleanliness such as the habit of throwing trash as they like. Many of these find their way into the drainage channels and others are found on the streets. Uncontrolled development such as the cutting of trees, draining of wetlands and leveling of hills for residential development, have caused silting of lower areas especially in the valleys. This burdens the urban authorities every year, not to mention damages to private and public properties when floods occur.

## **1.7 CONCLUSION**

Urban change is a reality and a continuous process in Uganda influenced by local and global trends. Most urban areas in Uganda today were rural villages fifty years ago, so their housing, water, sanitation, and public health infrastructures are often very poor or nonexistent. Moreover, their populations have more than quadrupled, causing environmental problems, resource depletion, etc. At the same time, the landscape of power within which planning operates has not changed much in recent decades.

A large part of the urban socio-economic life takes place within disaggregated constituent elements namely, civil society organizations, non-governmental organizations, community based organizations, tribal groups, private sector, civil society and informal sector which confirms the prevalence of multiple regimes in the face of local government failure to provide for the urban population. Addressing issues of growing urban areas requires new vision, policies, and approaches. Planning systems and urban management regimes should be reinvented or continually searched for to adapt to new challenges. Urban authorities must work with local and traditional management systems and structures already in place to create functionally efficient urban areas, which can adequately serve as engines of national growth and development.

The role of local urban authorities as defined by the 1964 Urban Authorities Act, refined by the 1997 Local Government Act needs to be changed from just development control to include the role of guidance. The aim is to effect urban planning basing on the needs of the urban population. Urbanization processes will continue for many years to come creating continued pressure on infrastructure and other services as well as environmental conditions in urban areas. Urban areas are environmental “hot spots”, which require special attention not only from a local perspective but also from a global perspective.

The overall picture in the urban areas in Uganda projects a systemic crisis. The urban system is not only failing to meet the demands of the rapid population growth within the context of poverty and marginalisation, but their own basis for sustainability is also in jeopardy. Urban governments are generally a weak institution with little economic, political and ideological power, and limited in their autonomy, authority, legitimacy and management capacity.

## **REREFENCES**

Amis, P (1992): *Urban Management in Uganda – Survival under stress*.

Elliot Jennifer (2001): *An introduction to sustainable development* Routledge – Taylor and Francis Group 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition London

Isolo Paul Mukwaya (2001): *Urban sprawl and the challenges of public transport services delivery/provision in Kampala City Uganda*. Institute of Geography Master of Philosophy Social Change (Geography) Norwegian University of Science and Technology Trondheim Norway

Karaos Anna Marie (1997): *Existing and Alternative Models of Urban Governance*. Urban Management Programme Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific. UNDP / UNCHS (Habitat) / WORLD BANK February 1997.

MFED (1987): *Background to the budget* Ministry of Finance and Economic Development Kampala Uganda

MLWE (2002): Ministry of Lands, Water and the Environment; *The rapid urbanization process and consequences for sustainable development*. A paper presented at the International Conference on Planning Legislation, Housing and the Environment Jinja Nile Resort Jinja Uganda.

UBOS (2002): Uganda Bureau of Statistics Provisional 2002 Population Census Results at <http://www.ubos.org/census2002.html>

Rugunda Ruhakana (2002): Opening speech at the *Sixth International Conference on Planning Legislation, Housing and the Environment in Africa*. Jinja Nile Resort Hotel Jinja Uganda

Seruga David (1999): *The impact of urbanization on the peri-urban green belts: A case study of Namanve* Department of Geography Bachelor of Environmental Management dissertation Makerere University

Sengendo Hannington (1997): *Urbanisation, Urban Governance and the Environment: Critical Conditions for the Formulation of an Environmental Management Strategy for Kampala – Uganda*. In H. Sengendo and A. Balihuta eds. (1997): *Mawazo, The Journal of the Faculties of Arts and Social Sciences* Makerere University Kampala Uganda. Volume 7 Number 2 December 1997 pp 94-106.

The Kampala Traffic Flow Improvement Project: (a sector project idea in Uganda) presented at the international investor's workshop Frankfurt, Germany 21<sup>st</sup> march 2002

The World Bank (2002): *World Development Report 1999/2000; Entering the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*, The World Bank Washington DC

UNCHS (2000): *Privatization of Municipal Services in East Africa: A governance approach to Human Settlements Management*. Nairobi Kenya.

United Nations (1997): “*Urban Governance in the 21<sup>st</sup> century*”. International Conference on Governance for Sustainable Growth and Equity. Part 3. International Colloquium of Mayors United Nations, New York 28-30 July 1997. Draft interim report.

Van Nostrand Associates (1994): *Kampala Urban Study Report* Van Nostrand Associates Kampala Uganda