
UNITED NATIONS EXPERT GROUP MEETING FOR THE REVIEW AND APPRAISAL
OF THE PROGRAMME OF ACTION OF THE INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON

I. Introduction

Migration has historically been an integral part of life in many parts of the world, but has more recently become a topic of major focus in policy and academic circles. One of the major outcomes of migration, especially in the developing world, is urbanisation (O'Connell, 2018). According to Umbila et al. (2017), the proportion of the world population living in towns and cities rose from about 30% in 1230 to 53% in 2013 and is projected to rise to 64% by 2030 (United Nations Population Division, 2017). Most of this urban growth is occurring in Africa and Asia. Although data from recent population censuses suggests that Africa is not the world's fastest urbanising region (Potts, 2012), there is enough evidence to suggest that Africa's urban population has been growing at a very high rate. The proportion of Africa's population living in urban areas rose from about 26% in 1230 to 53% in 2013 and is projected to reach 64% by 2030 (United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2017). Several African countries (e.g. Nigeria, South Africa, Egypt, Morocco, Algeria, and Kenya) have

Although international migration has received more attention in recent debates on migration, internal migration, especially the rural-urban type, is far

Some of the largest African cities are Lagos in Nigeria (21 million people), Cairo in Egypt (20 million), Kinshasa in DRC (9 million), Luanda in Angola (4.3 million) and Nairobi in Kenya (3 million). Abidjan in Côte d'Ivoire (8 million), Alexandria in Egypt (6 million), Johannesburg in South Africa (5 million), Dar es Salaam in Tanzania (3 million) and Accra in Ghana (1 million).

There is enough evidence to suggest that African urban population will continue to grow and rural-urban migration continues to drive the urbanisation process. It has been projected that most of the urban growth will take place in small and intermediate cities and not in the megacities. This implies that the need for urban management is greatest in smaller cities. (UN Habitat 2010)

V. Impacts of Rapid Urbanisation in Africa

Urbanisation has both positive and negative impacts on socioeconomic development in Africa. In this section, we will look at some of these impacts.

1. Developmental Impacts of Urbanisation

Recent urbanisation in many African countries has resulted in rapid and unplanned urban growth, resulting in housing problems and emergence of slums. In some African urban centres, more than 30% of the population live in slums, which are characterised by overcrowded houses, limited electricity supply, poor access to water supplies, little sanitation and insecure living conditions. These are associated with frequent evictions by city authorities and landlords. Overcrowded housing and poor living conditions create a fertile ground for crime and social vices (e.g. drug abuse). The evidence is clear.

In recent years, urbanisation has also resulted in rising unemployment and urban poverty in some African countries. For instance, while poverty levels in Ghana as a whole has declined in recent years, Accra - the capital - more than doubled its standard poverty incidence (1 in 1222 to 1 in 204) and extreme poverty incidence rose from 1 in 1222 to 1 in 204. The main challenges to promoting sustainable urbanisation in Africa include: i) Lack of adequate resources to enhance the quality of urban infrastructure and promote urban dwellers' access to affordable housing, electricity and health facilities and other social amenities. (Ousu 2018). ii) Inadequate investments to generate employment opportunities. (UN Habitat 2018). iii) Lack of effective policy framework for incorporating migration into sustainable urban development programmes. and iv) Lack of capacity of municipal authorities to effectively design and implement sustainable urban development policies.

2. Positive Developmental Impacts of Rural-Urban Migration and Urbanisation

Despite the negative view of urbanisation in Africa, urban living has in a few cases contributed to access to education and health services, lower fertility, improved access to social services. Some of the informal settlements tend to boom with various forms of entrepreneurial businesses and activities mostly in the informal sector. A recent study by Aumbila et al (2010) among rural-urban migrants in the slums in Accra showed that incomes of the migrants were irregular, but higher than at places of origin. Over 64% of them save whereas 68% sent remittances. In the last 12 months prior to the study, about 88% of the rural-urban migrants assessed their overall household life as improved. A lot of them had improved after moving to Accra. The authors concluded that the development policies

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It can also lead to economic growth and poverty reduction + international governance should