



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ASSESSMENT IN WEST NILE REGION, UGANDA



Economic Development Assessment in West Nile Region, Uganda

Acknowledgements

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The report is prepared by UN-Habitat, Planning, Finance, and Economy Section, Urban Practices Branch in collaboration with Makerere University Urban Action Lab for an integrated study of the economic and social development response of the West Nile Region - Koboko, Arua, and Nebbi municipalities.

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Executive Summary

The Municipality of Arua is in North-Western Uganda, approximately 480km north of Kampala, and is classified as a secondary city, to be upgraded to a regional city soon. It inhabits 65,000 people, with a population growth rate of 3% (National Population and Housing Census, 2014). Due to its strategic location near the borders to the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and South Sudan, the city's economy is based predominantly on formal and informal cross-border trade, natural resource exploitation, agriculture and transport and hospitality services (hotels, restaurants). Because of their proximity to the borders, and to refugee camps within the region, Arua and neighbouring municipalities also host a large population of urban refugees and migrants, which contribute to their economic growth. Arua (and urban areas within the West Nile Region) will continue to grow and prosper economically, especially if important infrastructure projects are implemented as planned - such as the new railway line (providing transportation linkage between Mombasa port in Kenya to the DRC) and upgrading of the airport in Arua. Those infrastructure projects would significantly increase the region's economic

and infrastructure, (including basic services, housing, infrastructure, waste management, social services such as medical services and schools) and a lack of employment opportunities for people of concern were emphasized. Other identified challenges in the region include spatial inequality, high unemployment amongst youth, and environmental degradation.

Applying an integrated planning approach, as highlighted in UN-Habitat's Integrated Multi-Scalar Regional Profile (2018), is crucial for decision-making at urban and city level, promoting dialogue across planning scales as well as across administrative boundaries, including different sectors (transport, trade, planning, finance, environment, economic development and investment; local governments, planning, housing etc.) and urban stakeholders (from civil society, including representatives of vulnerable groups, development partners, private sector and academia).

The Integrated Multi-Scalar Regional Profile laid the foundation, and had a strong territorial component, fostering inter-scalar planning

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