

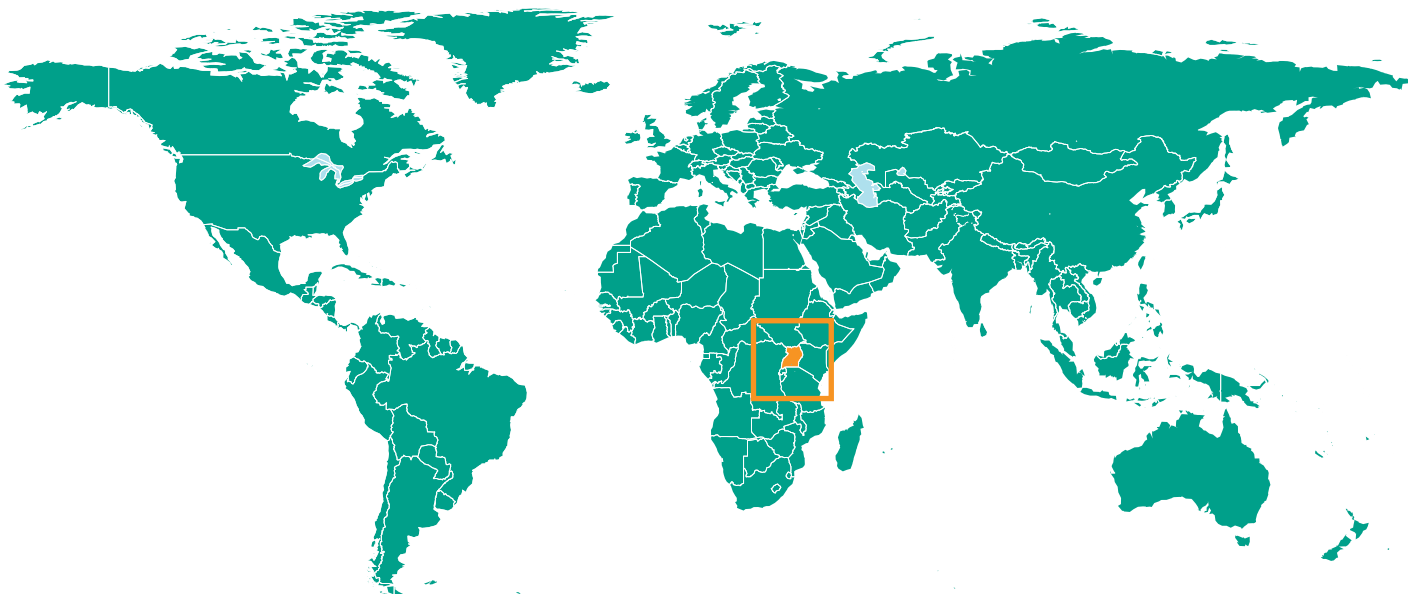
COUNTRY  
PROGRAMME  
DOCUMENT  
2016 – 2021

# UGANDA

SUPPORT TO SUSTAINABLE  
URBAN DEVELOPMENT  
IN UGANDA

***Towards achieving SDG 11 in Uganda:***  
*Making cities and human settlements  
inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable*





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P.O.Box 30030, GPO 00100

Nairobi, Kenya

Fax: + (254 20) 762 4266/7

E-mail: [unhabitat@unhabitat.org](mailto:unhabitat@unhabitat.org)

Website: [www.unhabitat.org](http://www.unhabitat.org)

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## FOREWORDS

### MINISTER'S



Uganda is a signatory to the New Habitat Agenda and recognizing the importance of **the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG 11) in Uganda**; focusing on cities as hubs for ideas, commerce, culture, science, productivity, social development and much more.

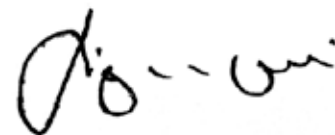
There is urgent need to address this challenge within the Ugandan context. Urbanization trends in Uganda and indeed world over cannot be stopped but needs to be managed well or else economic development and poverty reduction will be stalled. The Government of Uganda developed country Vision 2040 and a National Development Plan II framework which spell out Government's priority areas for public spending in which urbanization is one of the critical areas.

This Habitat Country Programme Document (HCPD) therefore recognizes the contribution of the urban sector as very significant provided it is enabled to function efficiently. The urban sector should be regarded as a social economic entity with many sub-systems that are inter-linked and work together to stimulate economic growth that will result into inclusive, resilient and liveable cities and towns. Tackling some of the problems in a piece meal manner does not enhance the functionality of the urban sector as an economic entity. This in essence has not in the past optimised the functioning of the urban sector as engines of economic growth.

The Country Programme Document proposals have been designed to adopt a holistic and integrated approach in addressing urban development, planning, management and institutional issues. This implies that planning has been integrated i.e. physical planning and based on social economic and environmental considerations. This will promote economic competitiveness of the urban sector and eventually salvage urban poverty.

The urban sector plays a dual role as a producer and consumer; it is therefore important to development synergies that come from coordinated investments in people and places in the urban sector in order to enhance their role as producers as opposed to focusing predominantly on their consumer demands. As a producer, the urban sector should be enabled to produce more jobs, revenue, houses, skills, more value on goods, finished goods, knowledge, urban culture and above all it should have the capacity to effectively manage waste in order to secure quality environment. On the other hand, as consumers, the urban sector should be enabled to have the necessary social and infrastructural services such as water and sanitation, electricity, roads, including adequate land; security to meet the needs of the urban citizens.

As we move into the future, the government will strengthen policy measures and institutional frameworks for dealing with these challenges. The government will institute strong measures for the review and monitoring of the sustainable urban development programme implementation process and results across and levels of government. I would like to thank UN-Habitat and all development partners for their continued support to development programmes in Uganda. The government remains committed to the implementation of SDG 11 and the New Habitat Agenda and to the achievement of the goals.



**Daudi Migereko**  
Minister of Lands, Housing  
and Urban Development

## EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S



The UN-Habitat Country Programme Document (HCPD) is a tangible component as well as a genuine endeavour of UN-Habitat to better coordinate normative and operational activities in a consultative and inclusive process involving UN-Habitat, national governments, UN country teams, sister United Nations (UN) agencies,

development partners and all divisions of our agency. As the UN agency responsible for cities and other human settlements, the UN focal point for local authorities, and the agency responsible for the implementation of Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) 11, the New Habitat Agenda and the urban dimension of Agenda 21, UN-Habitat is focusing on achieving "Sustainable Urbanization". The concept has resulted from years of experience and reflection by Habitat Agenda partners representing a wide range of public, private and civil society sectors. This (HCPD) is a strategic tool meant as a guide for all UN-Habitat activities over a five-year period. A major dimension of the UN-Habitat CPD is to advocate UN-Habitat's mandate and address the urban challenges facing Uganda.

The CPD has identified national urban development goals and priorities including shelter, land, urban governance, access to basic services, etc. **The Sustainable Urban Development Programme (SUDP)** in Uganda is designed to unlock the development synergy that comes from coordinated investments in people and places and it will result in inclusive, resilient and liveable cities and towns. The Sustainable Urban Development Programme marks a new deal for Ugandan cities and towns.

The Uganda Country programme, is timely, coming as it does on the heels of such a major decision by the world leadership on SDGs. SDG 11 focuses on cities as hubs for ideas, commerce, culture, science, productivity, social development and much more. The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) also endorsed the "Cities without Slums", which is an alternative way of mainstreaming the notion of urban and physical planning. Unless they are well-planned and well-built with environmental aspects in focus, cities will not be without slums and will continue to leave behind disastrous ecological footprints.

In line with the UN reform process, the CPD therefore seeks to strengthen the role of the UN and to demonstrate our commitment. I am confident this country programme will be able to integrate the normative and operational aspects of sustainable settlements. I wish to thank our UN-Habitat Programme Manager and the Government of Uganda for their input and dedication and for putting together this document under the guidance of the Regional Office for Africa (ROAF) and with support from all branches and programmes of the agency.

**Dr. Joan Clos,**

Under Secretary General of the United Nations and  
Executive Director of the United Nations Human Settlements  
Programme (UN-Habitat)

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The HCPD for Uganda outlines the main objectives and priorities for UN-Habitat in Uganda. In collaboration with the government and other United Nations agencies, the overall aim of this HCPD is to promote the New Habitat Agenda: ensuring the sustainability of urban growth as a driving force as well as a source of equitable development with the power to change and improve lives.

Challenges of urbanization in Uganda include: uncoordinated planning and development leading to uncontrolled sprawling of the major towns; youth bulge in urban areas; growth of slums and informal settlements, dilapidated housing, and poor sanitation; privatization of urban development without providing public space and connectivity; weaknesses in administration, institutions, legal normative framework and overall planning; and weak coverage of basic infrastructure services, notably water, energy, and sanitation, which makes it difficult to improve welfare in either urban or rural environments.

UN-Habitat plays an active role in urban development and urban policy. Through partnerships with the Ministry of Lands, Housing and Urban Development (MLHUD), UN-Habitat has assisted in identifying key urban issues— such as those above – and areas needing support to improve urban development in Uganda. Analysis has identified seven key sectors of intervention, as follows:

- i. Planned Urbanization and human settlement development** - Outcomes will include: policy, legal and regulatory frameworks strengthened; legal and policy frameworks implemented; urban and regional spatial plans being implemented; and improved capacity for physical planning at all levels.
- ii. Youth and vulnerable groups' access to competitive skills and social-economic opportunities** - Outcomes will include: Innovation hubs and youth centres prepare young people for gainful socio-economic engagement; Youth undertake social monitoring and participate in policy debate and planning to achieve “the future they want”.
- iii. Improved physical Infrastructure, basic services and urban economy** - Outcomes will include: increased inclusive access to urban infrastructure services; and a competitive urban economy developed and strengthened and improved inclusive economic growth.
- iv. Urban Governance and Capacity Building** - Outcomes will include: capacity of training institutions of central and local governments strengthened for enhanced service delivery; and Increased awareness on sustainable urban development and management processes that strengthen effective public participation.

- v. Housing and Slum Upgrading/Redevelopment Programmes** - Outcomes will include: living conditions of slum dwellers improved; and increased access to low cost housing through availability of long-term affordable housing finance.
- vi. Management of Land Resources and the Urban Environment** - Outcomes will include: increased availability and affordability of serviced land and tenure security for the poor; NLUP directives and strategies adopted by most LGs; Improved equity in access to land, livelihood opportunities and tenure security by vulnerable groups; land services delivered through a “business approach”; and urban planning and management that adopt environmental approaches.
- vii. Greater Kampala Metropolitan Area Development** - Outcomes will include: Greater Kampala Metropolitan Authority (GKMA) formed with institutional and infrastructure improvements; Kampala city-wide slum upgrading project approved; GKMA economic development strategy formulated and Implemented with private sector engagement; and GKMA Physical Development Framework and Transport Master Plan Implemented.
- viii. Programme Management** – will include: Programme implementation oversight through a National Programme Steering Committee, Programme Management Unit and Technical Working Group; Advocacy, Outreach and Communication; and Monitoring, Evaluation and Reporting.

The HCPD has addressed these areas of intervention to guide the government of Uganda in meeting its sustainable urban development challenges. The multilateral programming instruments presented in the HCPD that help to guide national priorities and UN system priorities are the National Development Plan II (NDP-II), Vision 2040, and the UN Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF). Uganda's national development goals and priorities are based on the NDP, the nation's main development policy framework. The focus areas of UN-Habitat and the government of Uganda, highlighted in the HCPD, are governance and accountability, social development, physical planning, human capital development, environment and natural resource management, service delivery/productivity and livelihoods, and security and conflict.

Taking into account the UNDAF and other UN system activities, the country programme in Uganda contains a strategy to approach urban issues through articulating long-term development strategies. It incorporates health, education and food security concerns as priority areas of the UN as a whole. The HCPD presents a clear programme designed to guide UN-Habitat's current and future work in Uganda.

## BACKGROUND AND RATIONALE

### OVERVIEW OF URBANIZATION IN UGANDA

Like most developing countries in sub-Saharan Africa, Uganda is experiencing rapid urbanization. The country has a population base of 35 million and a high population growth rate of 3.2% making it one of the fastest-growing populations in Africa. This has serious implications in terms of demand for land, housing, water, health, education, jobs and urban services, as well as impacts on the environment. While Uganda still has a low level of urbanization (18.2 per cent) it has a high urban growth rate of 5.2 per cent per annum. Most of this growth has been in secondary towns such as Hoima -10.7 per cent, Mbarara - 8.6 per cent, and Mukono - 10.4 per cent, (Uganda Bureau of Statistics UBOS, 2014). The Greater Kampala Metropolitan Area (GKMA) has the highest urban population representing over 50% of Uganda's total urban dwellers. It is projected that by the year 2035 Uganda's population will have grown to 68.4 million of which 30% will be in urban areas. In addition the country's economic growth, averaging 6.7 per cent over the last decade, supports the view that urbanization and agglomeration of people around higher-order economic activity will occur.

Within this context while the secondary towns are still relatively small, unless they are managed properly they will grow into large unplanned settlements over time. Uganda has the rare opportunity to proactively manage urbanization within the secondary towns to ensure a better future for its residents. Thus the national government must build the capacities of central and local urban governments and urban poor communities to jointly manage urban growth to forestall the inevitable formation of large slums that sadly characterise this country.

The Fifth Edition of the Uganda Economic Update presents evidence that well managed urbanization can stimulate economic growth and productive jobs for Uganda's young and rapidly-expanding population. In many countries the growth of cities has driven expansion of productive businesses by reducing the distance between suppliers and markets. It also facilitates provision of social services and infrastructure through economies of scale. These positive urbanization effects are already visible in Uganda where the poverty level is 7% lower in urban than in rural areas. The economic stimulus created by growth of urban areas should be particularly welcomed at a time when Uganda's economic growth has slowed to 4.5 per cent in 2013/14, which is 2 per cent lower than the historical average. While much of the recent growth has been generated by the government's ambitious investment program, there is a limit to the ability of this strategy to continue to facilitate significant growth in the future. The public debt-service ratio has increased rapidly as a result of this program, while capacity limitations result in delays to implementation of public projects.

Ensuring cities drive economic growth can provide the stimulus needed by the Ugandan economy, but it is also a significant challenge. The urban congestion and slums seen today are clear indications that urbanization needs to be better managed. There is a need to improve the business environment, to enhance skills, to develop infrastructure, and to provide better quality services and housing. Their achievement will require close coordination and cooperation within the Government and between public and private sectors. There is also a need to move fast to build solid foundations when the rate of urbanization is still relatively low.

At the same time, the urbanization process must be implemented in parallel with measures to transform the agricultural sector as a vital precondition for the provision of food and inputs into urban centres. Remittances from urban workers play a major role in financing development of viable agriculture. Such virtuous circles have been key to the development of a number of emerging nations, including Thailand and, to some extent, China. The development of Uganda's oil sector will also be significant in the urbanization process. Indeed, international experience has shown that rates of urbanization tend to accelerate following the commencement of oil production. This creates both threats and opportunities. While increased urbanization will add pressure on cities, revenue derived from the oil sector can finance the infrastructure needed to ensure Uganda's cities fulfil their potential. The challenge for policymakers is to ensure that these processes are managed to generate maximum possible benefits for all of the country's citizens.

### URBANIZATION TRENDS IN UGANDA

Urbanization in Uganda is relatively low at 18.2 per cent compared to her East African counterparts such as Kenya and Tanzania. The roots of urbanization in Uganda go back to the 1890s when the European footprint in the country began to be felt. With the building of the Kenya-Uganda railway, economic and administrative centres were established, and they have since grown into big towns such as Pakwach, Tororo, and Kasese. Persistent rural poverty that causes migration to urban areas hoping to improve their livelihoods partly explains the urban growth rate. Economic transformation policies have been mainly focused on urban areas (for example on industrialization) so are also partly responsible for urban expansion. The central region has the highest number of people living in urban areas, but the eastern region is the fastest urbanizing region. Economic growth and political stability over the last two decades have led to expansion of urban centres, in particular Kampala, and the growing of hundreds of small trading centres, particularly along transport routes – highways and the railroad.

Table 1: **Urban centres by type, census year & population**

Index	1969	1980	1991	2002	2014
Number of gazetted urban centres	na	41	150	75	197
City	na	1	1	1	1
Municipality	na	2	13	13	22
Town council	na	34	33	61	174
Town board/township	na	4	18	20	na
<b>Urban population</b>	<b>634,952</b>	<b>938,287</b>	<b>1,889,622</b>	<b>2,921,981</b>	<b>6,426,013</b>

**NB:** The figures in 1969, 1980 and 1991 are as per the 1991 definition, while those for 2002 and 2014 are as per the 2014 definition of urban areas.

na = Information Not Available

\* The Urban Population of 2014 excludes the population enumerated in town boards

Political instability in north Uganda is a factor that has led to increased urbanization in the northern region. Insecurity caused large numbers of people to relocate to urban areas for protection. This factor explains why Gulu and Lira Municipalities were among the largest urban areas in Uganda in the 2002 census. Lastly, high natural population growth in towns due to improved health and internal migration (especially rural to urban) are by far the most significant causes of urban expansion (Dihendra Kumar, World resource, Shauib Lwasa, 2002). This pattern has continued: urban centres have created 'pressure zones' of demographic shifts from rural areas to urban centres, thus putting strain on existing facilities and infrastructure.

In August 2014, there were 197 urban centres<sup>1</sup> in Uganda as shown in Table 1. These include one capital city, 22 municipalities, and 174 town councils (excluding the town boards). Table 1 shows the number of urban centres by type

and urban population based on the censuses from 1969 to 2014. The urban population increased overtime from about 600,000 in 1969 to nearly three million in 2002, a five-fold increase in 33 years. The period 1991–2014 saw a more rapid increase in the urban population, nearly doubling from three million to over six million.

**Size of urban centres:** Table 2 shows that the urban population is concentrated in a few urban areas. There are 21 urban centres with a population of more than 50,000 persons. These constitute only 11 per cent of the urban centres but collectively host 57 per cent of the urban population of Uganda. Conversely, there are 149 urban centres with a population of 25,000 persons or less, and their total population constitutes only 28 per cent of the total urban population of Uganda. The median size of an urban centre in Uganda is 24,000 persons.

Table 2: **Distribution of urban centres by size, 2014**

Population of urban centre	# of urban centres	Total population	Share of total population
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