



# MALAWI: ZOMBA URBAN PROFILE



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# MALAWI: ZOMBA URBAN PROFILE

UNITED NATIONS HUMAN SETTLEMENTS PROGRAMME

REGIONAL AND TECHNICAL COOPERATION DIVISION

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## FOREWORDS



According to research published in UN-HABITAT's 'flagship report, The State of the World's Cities 2010-2011, all developing regions, including the African, Caribbean and Pacific states, will have more people living in urban than rural areas by the year 2030. With half the world's

population already living in urban areas, the challenges we face in the battle against urban poverty, our quest for cities without slums, for cities where women feel safer, for inclusive cities with power, water and sanitation, and affordable transport, for better planned cities, and for cleaner, greener cities is daunting.

But as this series shows, there are many interesting solutions and best practices to which we can turn. After all, the figures tell us that during the decade 2000 to 2010, a total of 227 million people in the developing countries moved out of slum conditions. In other words, governments, cities and partner institutions have collectively exceeded the slum target of the Millennium Development Goals twice over and ten years ahead of the agreed 2020 deadline.

Asia and the Pacific stood at the forefront of successful efforts to reach the slum target, with all governments in the region improving the lives of an estimated 172 million slum dwellers between 2000 and 2010.

In sub-Saharan Africa though, the total proportion of the urban population living in slums has decreased by only 5 per cent (or 17 million people). Ghana, Senegal, Uganda, and Rwanda were the most successful countries in the sub-region, reducing the proportions of slum dwellers by over one-fifth in the last decade.

Some 13 per cent of the progress made towards the global slum target occurred in Latin America and the Caribbean, where an estimated 30 million people have moved out of slum conditions since the year 2000.

Yet, UN-HABITAT estimates confirm that the progress made on the slum target has not been sufficient to counter the demographic expansion in informal settlements in the developing world. In this sense, efforts to reduce the numbers of slum dwellers are neither satisfactory nor adequate.

As part of our drive to address this crisis, UN-HABITAT is working with the European Commission and the Brussels-based Secretariat of the African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) Group to support sustainable urban development. Given the urgent and diverse needs, we found it necessary to develop a tool for rapid assessment and strategic planning to guide immediate, mid and long-term interventions. And here we have it in the form of this series of publications.

The Participatory Slum Upgrading Programme is based on the policy dialogue between UN-HABITAT, the ACP Secretariat and the European Commission which dates back to the year 2002. When the three parties met at UN-HABITAT headquarters in June 2009, more than 200 delegates from over 50 countries approved a resounding call on the international community to pay greater attention to these urbanization matters, and to extend the slum upgrading programme to all countries in the ACP Group.

It is worth recalling here how grateful we are that the European Commission's 9th European Development Fund for ACP countries provided EUR 4 million (USD 5.7 million at June 2011 rates) to enable UN-HABITAT to conduct the programme which now serves 59 cities in 23 African countries, and more than 20 cities in six Pacific, and four Caribbean countries.

Indeed, since its inception in 2008, the slum upgrading programme has achieved the confidence of partners at city and country level in Africa, the Caribbean and in the Pacific. It is making a major contribution aimed at helping in urban poverty reduction efforts, as each report in this series shows."

I wish to express my gratitude to the European Commission and the ACP Secretariat for their commitment to this slum upgrading programme. I have every confidence that the results outlined in this profile, and others, will serve to guide the development of responses for capacity building and investments in the urban sector.

Further, I would like to thank each Country Team for their continued support to this process which is essential for the successful implementation of the Participatory Slum Upgrading Programme.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Joan Clos'. The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

**Dr. Joan Clos**  
Executive Director, UN-HABITAT



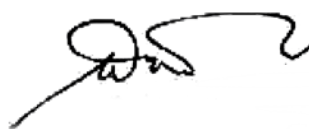
Poverty reduction is the Malawi Government's overriding development objective as espoused in the Malawi Growth and Development Strategy. In line with this, the Government recognizes the critical role played by cities and other urban centres in the socio-economic development of this country. Thriving and well functioning cities will in turn lead to thriving national economic development.

Our cities and other urban areas which are growing rapidly face a number of challenges, key among them is urban poverty characterized by, among others, poor housing, poor access to water and sanitation, as well as unemployment. The cities also face environmental challenges that are in part heightened by poor urban planning and environmental degradation.

The Government therefore welcomes the Participatory Slum Upgrading Programme (PSUP) that is coordinated by the Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development (MLGRD) and is being implemented in all the four cities of Lilongwe, Blantyre, Mzuzu, and Zomba. The urban profile for Zomba City is an important document that sets out the key challenges faced by the city in the areas of governance, land and housing, slums, basic urban services including water and sanitation, local economic development, gender and HIV/AIDS, energy, disaster risks, environment, and waste management.

Through a consultative process of city stakeholders, the city council has identified the priority actions to be carried out in support of efforts to achieve sustainable urban development and reduce urban poverty. The challenge is now to implement these priority actions that seek to improve the quality of life of the urban poor. In this regard, the Government of Malawi will continue to support the city council under the decentralized framework in achieving the poverty reduction goals. Zomba City Council will need to redouble its efforts and ensure that more resources are allocated towards pro-poor activities in the city. The goal of ensuring sustainable urban development and poverty reduction cannot be achieved by the efforts of central government and the city councils alone. More importantly, it will need the concerted efforts of all stakeholders involved in the development of Zomba including the private sector, civil society, political and community leaders, development partners, and city residents.

The Government of Malawi would like to thank UN-HABITAT<sup>1</sup>, the European Union and the ACP<sup>2</sup> Group of States for the technical and financial support towards the formulation of this profile. The commendable role of Mzuzu University in facilitating the process of the urban profile formulation as well as that of the chief executive, the PSUP city focal point, and management of Zomba City Council is appreciated. Special mention is made of the first National Coordinator of the PSUP in Malawi, the late Mr. Dalitso Mpoola who dedicated his time, skills and effort to ensure the successful implementation of this phase. May his soul rest in peace.



**Kester E. Kaphaizi**

Principal Secretary for Local Government  
and Rural Development

<sup>1</sup> UN-HABITAT - United Nations Human Settlements Programme  
<sup>2</sup> ACP - Africa, Caribbean and Pacific

Zomba City Council is very pleased to present this profile for slum upgrading. The profile was prepared through a consultative process of a wide range of the council's stakeholders, following UN-HABITAT<sup>1</sup> guidelines. It highlights seven major themes that are crucial to the overall improvement of the livelihood of the city's residents, more especially the urban poor, in the areas of Governance, Local Economic Development, Land, Shelter and Slums, Environment and Urban Disaster, Gender and HIV/AIDS, and Basic Urban Services.

Malawi is urbanizing rapidly and Zomba is not an exception in this regard. This rapid urbanization is important for national development by diversifying incomes, expanding options for more affordable service delivery, and widening the horizons for innovation and skill acquisition; but has its own challenges as well. These challenges are more evident with the majority of the city residents living in appalling conditions due to poor urban governance and lack of basic urban infrastructure and services among others. This situation requires urgent redress to enhance positive contribution of urbanization to city as well as national development. As such the profile has proposed projects considered to be the prime focus areas of intervention in this initiative.

I would therefore wish to emphasize and highlight the significance of this document for the city's development as well as national development. The Zomba urban profile is intended to focus on the most important issues that the city grapples with and to steer investment towards improved urban development.

I would like to thank the National Steering Committee under the Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development for taking the lead in coordinating the process of preparing this urban profile. Special thanks go to Mr John Chome, the UN-HABITAT Country Programme Manager for his support and assistance in all stages of the profiling process. Furthermore I would like to thank UN-HABITAT and the European Commission, which financed the profiling process. Without their financial support, we would not have been able to undertake this elaborate process. I thank Mzuzu University for undertaking this elaborate process as consultant through Mr Lucky Kabanga and Mr Dominic Kamlomo. I am also greatly indebted to all the stakeholders that made contributions to this profile through the consultation process. Thank you.



**Charles Kalemba**  
Chief Executive Officer  
Zomba City Council

<sup>1</sup> UN-HABITAT - United Nations Human Settlements Programme

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## INTRODUCTION

The Participatory Slum Upgrading Programme (PSUP) is an accelerated and action-oriented urban assessment of needs and capacity-building gaps at the city level. The programme is supported by funds from the European Commission's European Development Fund and is currently being implemented in 23 African countries, 59 African cities, 4 Pacific countries, 3 Caribbean countries, and 21 Pacific and Caribbean cities. The Participatory Slum Upgrading Programme uses a structured approach where priority interventions are agreed upon through consultative processes. The PSUP methodology consists of three phases: (1) a rapid participatory urban profiling at national and local levels, focusing on Governance, Local Economic Development, Land, Gender, Environment and Urban Disaster Management, Slums and Shelter, Basic Urban Services, and Waste Management, and proposed interventions; (2) detailed priority proposals; and (3) project implementation. The Participatory Slum Upgrading Programme in Malawi encompasses a national profile, as well as profiles for Blantyre, Lilongwe, Mzuzu and Zomba, each published as a separate report. This is the Zomba report and it constitutes a general background, a synthesis of the seven themes; Governance, Local Economic Development, Land, Gender, Environment and Urban Disaster Risks, Slums and Shelter, and Basic Urban Services; and priority project proposals.

## BACKGROUND

Under the motto of "Floriante Zomba" (Make Zomba a Flowery City) Zomba City, the first capital of Malawi up to 1975, is undergoing rejuvenation since it was declared a city in March 2008. The city is experiencing rapid population growth with a population of 88,314 in 2008 and an annual growth rate of 3 percent. Some 51 percent of the city's population is male and 49 percent is female. The city has a population density of 2,264 per km<sup>2</sup>. The local economy of Zomba comprises of

## GOVERNANCE

Zomba City Council is mandated to implement by-laws and legally binding policies and decisions with support from central government departments, statutory institutions and other private and civil society organizations. The city has had no councilors since 2005 and some of the by-laws are yet to be approved by the city council and the Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development. The lack of a comprehensive land use plan, land tenure insecurity and unplanned and illegal developments are some of the challenges facing the city. Service delivery and maintenance of infrastructure is inadequate. Unless popular support and good governance are regained through the restoration of elected councilors; recruitment of skilled staff; and development of a comprehensive physical, economic and environmental plan; the city will continue to face the current challenges.

## LOCAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Zomba City Council's economy largely depends on the informal sector for employment. The absence of an economic development plan makes economic investment difficult. Having emerged from a predominantly administrative background, formal employment in Zomba is dominated by financial services at 29 percent, agriculture and mining at 26 percent, marketing at 25 percent, manufacturing at 9 percent, and construction at 4 percent<sup>2</sup>. The economy is dominated by small-scale enterprises at 93 percent, medium enterprises at 6 percent and large-scale enterprises at 1 percent. The majority of the small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs) are informal businesses operated by vendors and petty traders. The agro-processing sector plays a significant role in the local economy but lacks the capacity to utilize raw materials from the surrounding areas. There are 1,465 entrepreneurs and only 23 percent are women.

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