



MALAWI: BLANTYRE URBAN PROFILE



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UNITED NATIONS HUMAN SETTLEMENTS PROGRAMME

REGIONAL AND TECHNICAL COOPERATION DIVISION

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FOREWORDS



According to research published in UN-HABITAT's¹ 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, which appears 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

¹ UN-HABITAT - United Nations Human Settlements Programme

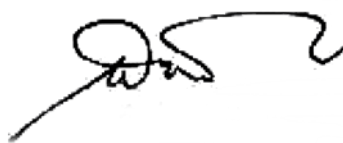
Poverty reduction is the Malawi Government's overriding development objective as espoused in the Malawi Growth and Development Strategy. In line with this, the government recognizes the critical role played by the cities and other urban centres in the socio-economic development of this country. Thriving 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 that of urban poverty that is 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 and is being implemented in all the four cities of Lilongwe, Blantyre, Mzuzu, and Zomba. The urban profile for Blantyre City is an important document that sets out the key challenges faced by the city in the areas of urban 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 move forward 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. Blantyre City Council (BCC) 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 the central government and the city councils alone. More importantly, it will need the concerted efforts of all stakeholders involved in the development of Blantyre including the private sector, civil society, political and community leaders, development partners, and city residents.

The Government of Malawi would like to thank UN-HABITAT¹, the European Union and the ACP² 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 Blantyre 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 efforts to ensure the successful implementation of this phase. May his soul rest in peace.



Kester E. Kaphaizi
Principal Secretary
Ministry of Local Government
and Rural Development

¹ UN-HABITAT - United Nations Human Settlements Programme
² ACP - Africa, Caribbean and Pacific Group of States



In Malawi, the urban profiling exercise was undertaken under the leadership of national and local authorities. This initiative has been carried out locally in Blantyre, Lilongwe, Mzuzu and Zomba cities as well as nationally.

The Blantyre Urban Profile focuses on the findings of a desk-study,

interviews with key actors and a town hall consultation with key urban actors and institutions. Consultation participants agreed to address the salient urban issues including Governance, Local Economic Development, Land, Gender, Environment, Slums and Shelter, Basic Urban Services and Waste Management, and all problems that negatively affect investments and economic development.

Blantyre City faces many problems such as rapid urbanization, low income levels, lack of housing finance, lack of land for city expansion, and human capacity deficiencies among others. These factors have led to the mushrooming and growth of informal settlements in the city. Typical characteristics of such settlements are insecure tenure, lack of basic urban services and infrastructure, informal land delivery systems, and inefficient housing markets. Prompt actions will therefore be taken to overcome the challenges and ensure lasting and positive change.

Blantyre City Council is committed to improving living conditions in the city through its participation in upgrading initiatives and other development programmes with various stakeholders. These initiatives will help the city grow from strength to strength. They are also in line with Malawi's development instruments enshrined in the constitution of Malawi, and conform to policy initiatives articulated in the Malawi Growth and Development Strategy (MGDS).

I wish to acknowledge the technical and financial support received from UN-HABITAT in the formulation of this urban profile.

I would like to thank the Government of Malawi through the Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development (MLGRD) who are providing national leadership to this programme, Ministry of Lands, Housing and Urban Development (MLHUD), Mzuzu University who facilitated the process of coming up with the profile, and the staff of Blantyre City Council and in particular Costly Chanza, the Programme's city focal point and all those who have participated in and supported this initiative.

In a special way I would like to express my deepest gratitude and acknowledge the tireless efforts of the late Dalitso Mpoola, then National Coordinator of the Participatory Slum Upgrading Programme in Malawi, who supported and committed himself to this initiative. May his soul rest in peace.

The City of Blantyre now has an important tool that will enable it to move forward in addressing the challenge of urban poverty. Addressing urban poverty requires a concerted effort by all stakeholders. I therefore wish to invite all stakeholders and all our development partners to support the city of Blantyre in its efforts to attain the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

Emmanuel Ted Nandolo
Chief Executive Officer
Blantyre City Council

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 it is currently being implemented in 23 African countries, 59 African cities, 4 Pacific countries, 3 Caribbean countries, and 21 Pacific and Caribbean cities. PSUP 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, Slums and Shelter, Basic Urban Services, and Waste Management, and proposed interventions; (2) detailed priority proposals; and (3) project implementation. PSUP 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 Blantyre City 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

Blantyre City is the oldest urban centre in Malawi, established by the Scottish Missionaries in the 1870s and declared a planning area in 1897. It is the hub for communication, commercial activities and cooperation in Malawi. The influence of Blantyre declined when Lilongwe became the capital city in 1975. However, it has maintained its grip as the commercial capital of Malawi. The city offers a number of economic opportunities but lacks resources to meaningfully implement its strategies and provide the required basic social infrastructure and urban services required for economic development to

All in all, the leadership of Blantyre should embrace good governance through principles of sustainability, subsidiarity, equity, transparency and accountability, civic engagement and citizenship, and security.

GOVERNANCE

Blantyre has a participatory and democratic system of governance. Councilors are elected by city residents while the mayor is elected from among the councilors. The secretariat comprises of appointed staff members, and together with civil society groups and the regulatory authority of the central government, make the governance system. Some of the major challenges facing governance in Blantyre are lack of security of tenure and land governance, corruption, inadequate human capacity and poor billing system, and lack of transparency leading to low revenue collection. Social infrastructure is poorly maintained and the poor do not have access to the basic urban services. Efficient city management systems must be put in place to address these challenges. Public participation should also be encouraged in city development and management.

LOCAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Blantyre is the commercial and communication hub for Malawi and it offers various economic opportunities. About 45 percent of Blantyre's residents are employed in the private sector, 12 percent are employed in the public sector, and 36 percent are self-employed and mainly working in the informal sector. Poverty rates in Blantyre stand at about 24 percent. Poverty is accelerated by the steady increase in prices of basic commodities such as food and the high rates of unemployment. Local authorities need to provide land for investment and incentives to encourage foreign investment and the setting up of businesses which will lead to job creation, as proposed in the Blantyre Urban Structure Plan (2000).

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