

UN HABITAT



THE STATE OF AFRICAN CITIES 2010

URBAN CORRIDORS UNLOCK ECONOMIC POTENTIAL OF LANDLOCKED COUNTRIES AND REGIONS ACROSS AFRICA

according to UN-HABITAT's new report, *The State of African Cities 2010: Governance, Inequality and Urban Land Markets*.

Urban corridors, mega urban regions and city regions are emerging across Africa, including across national borders and according to UN-HABITAT's new report, *The State of African Cities 2010*, they are playing an important role in establishing large and regular trade flows which in turn create business and employment opportunities.

"Urbanization is here to stay and within a few decades, Africa will be predominantly urban. Already huge urban corridors across Africa are engines of economic growth," said Joan Clos, Executive Director of UN-HABITAT. "The issue now is for regional and national governments, local authorities and all other stakeholders to pull together to ensure the efficient management of urban agglomerations. Smart urban policies could help spread the benefits and lift the continent out of poverty."

According to the report, the 500 km Greater Ibadan Lagos Accra (GILA) corridor spans key cities across the four Western Africa countries of Benin, Ghana, Nigeria and Togo. The GILA corridor has a combined population of more than 18 million people with Lagos accounting for more than 50 per cent of the total. The GILA urban corridor is the engine of regional economy and contributes the major share of the Nigerian and Ghanaian combined GDP of US\$127,592,000.

The Greater Cairo Region in the North Delta region of Egypt is the largest urban region in Africa and hosts 77 million people, or 76 per cent of the Egyptian population. The NDR is made up of 3 emerging corridors: Cairo-Suez, Cairo-Alexandria and Cairo-Ismailia. This urban region is not only host to almost all of Egypt's industrial activity, but also 70 per cent of Egypt's agricultural land.

The population of the Gauteng City Region in South Africa is estimated to be close to 11 million, about 20 per cent of the nation's entire population. And though the Gauteng region sits on only 1.4 per cent of South Africa's land area, it generates approximately 38 per cent of the country's GDP. In fact, The GDP of the region is larger than that of almost every African country.

Other prominent examples include the incipient 150 km Dakar-Touba corridor which acts as Senegal's 'urban backbone', the 1,000 km Abidjan-Ouagadougou and the 900 km Kampala-Nairobi-Mombasa urban corridors.

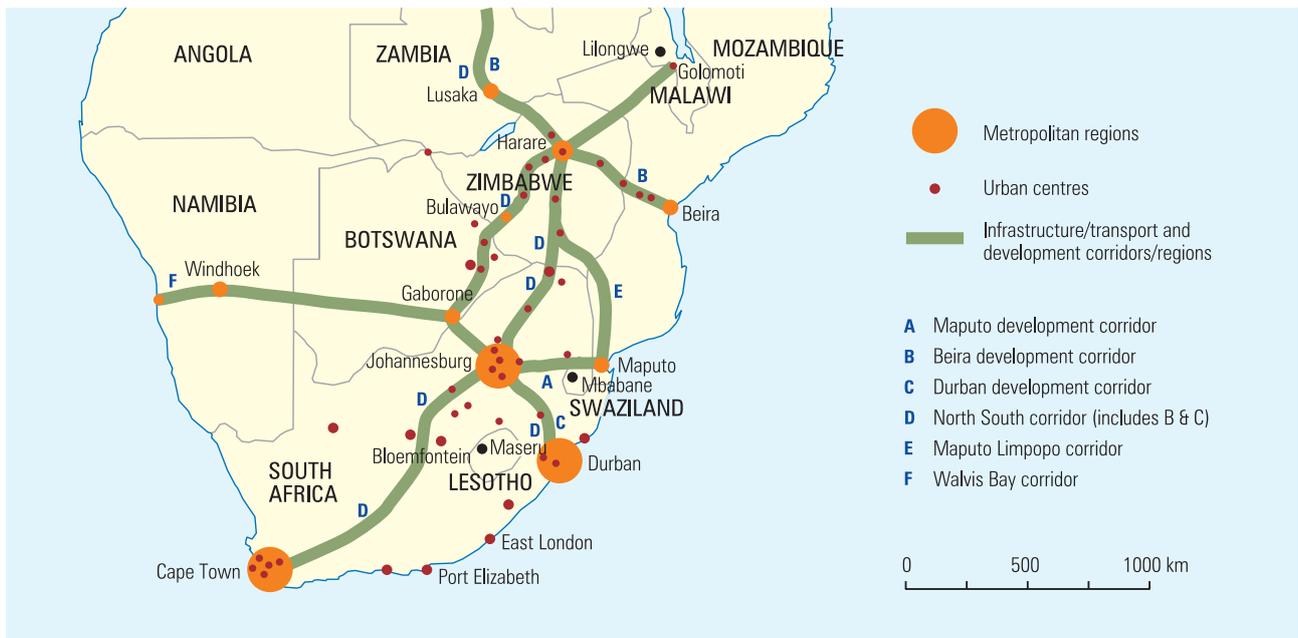
MULTIPLE CONNECTIONS TO WORLD MARKETS

These and many other regional development corridors are emerging all over Africa, providing landlocked countries or relatively lagging regions with much-needed links to major seaports, as well as serving as channels for cross-border labour and other migration flows.

Secondary towns along these corridors act as transit points and laterally connect the hinterlands, significantly contributing to new options for regional development. With their multiple connections, including to the world market, urban corridors are recognised factors of both development and regional economic integration.

According to the authors, experience in Southern Africa shows that when corridor development is led by the private sector (e.g., Maputo-Gauteng), it can become more difficult for governments to impose people-centred policies. In contrast, the Beira Corridor (between Zimbabwe and Mozambique) is largely in the hands of public authorities, which means that some of the benefits are being more equitably distributed.

The 2010/11 State of African Cities Report: Governance, Inequality and Urban Land Markets was prepared in collaboration with the United Nations Environment Programme with funding from the Government of Norway.



URBAN POLICIES SPREAD THE BENEFITS

In terms of policy, the report points out that the dynamics of corridors often makes them 'policy-invisible'. Instead the authors call for well-adapted regulation, especially where they run across two or more countries. Coordination between corridor development, metropolitan and national policies is also necessary, since poor corridor management can cause major development imbalances across regions.

Although they do not yet necessarily feature high on policy agendas, the sheer dynamism of these novel urban configurations can stimulate regional development and integration. Though most corridors dent the primacy of capital cities, the report argues that creating urban corridors geographically spreads the capital's economic, spatial and infrastructural synergies over an area vastly exceeding their current municipal boundaries.

