PRINCIPLES AND REALITIES OF URBAN GOVERNANCE IN AFRICA

Global Campaign on Urban Governance

UN-HABITAT

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Foreword:

UN-HABITAT launched the Global Campaign on Urban Governance in 1999 to support the implementation of the Habitat Agenda goal of "sustainable human settlements development in an urbanizing world." The campaign's goal is to contribute to the eradication of poverty through improved urban governance. There is a growing international consensus that the quality of urban governance is the single most important factor for the eradication of poverty and for prosperous cities.

This paper on the principles and realities of urban governance is quite timely considering the declining levels of social welfare on the African continent and the limited involvement of local communities in the processes that are meant to address their plight. In Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) that accounts for a quarter of the world's 1.2 billion people living on less than $1 a day, poverty is evidently pervasive. Out of the 20 countries classified by UNDP as possessing the lowest human development index, 19 are in Africa. Although a number of poverty-reducing programmes are being implemented in almost all SSA countries, little positive impact has been recorded.

Whatever explains the low success record of current poverty reduction efforts in Africa, the continent's worsening degree of vulnerability to life and welfare-threatening calamities is unmatched. Poverty in Africa is characterized by lack of access to income, employment opportunities, freely determined consumption of goods and services, shelter and other basic needs of life. The majority of the people suffer from weak purchasing power, homelessness, and insufficient access to basic social services and necessities such as education, health, food and clean water.

Increasingly, the impact of governance is acknowledged as critical for unleashing national energies for poverty reduction. Good governance in all its dimensions i.e. functioning democratic institutions, rule of law, transparency and accountability, effective service delivery, participatory decision making is can significantly increase the impact of poverty-reduction policies. Effective relationships between institutions at national and sub-national levels undoubtedly will improve responsiveness of the public sector. Conversely, bad governance is an additional burden borne by the poor in society.

This paper addresses the applicability of principles of good governance to the realities of African cities, and should be seen as an invitation for further localized debate on principles and realities of urban governance in Africa. It is hoped that the paper inspires all urban actors – policy-makers, practitioners and researchers - to creatively develop home-grown governance mechanisms that help to fight poverty. Despite the past decade of local government reforms and the entrenchment of decentralization policies in some countries such as Uganda and Ghana, cities throughout Africa continue to exhibit limited capacities to provide adequate services as well as to generate adequate urban livelihoods means for their populace

While this paper brings forward a set of generic considerations applicable to African urban governance realities, , it acknowledges that cities embody highly diverse histories,

types of governance, and connections with the larger world. For example, the infrastructure capacities of Cairo and Johannesburg far exceed those of cities like Lagos and Kinshasa, which sometimes make up for their almost complete lack of the trappings of a well run city with sheer entrepreneurial dynamism. There are thousands of secondary towns and cities whose characters remain virtually unknown. Many have long been dormant; others have succeeded in functioning as trade and agricultural centers.

The paper concludes with a call to Habitat Agenda partners to continuously cultivate and institutionalize a space for ongoing interactions among government organizations, interest groups and communities.

DR. ANNA K. TIBAIJUKA
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
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Section One

The Applicability of the Norms
of Good Governance to Urban Africa

Section One:

INTRODUCTION:

The applicability of good governance norms to urban Africa

Much of the current emphasis in African urban development centres on re-intensifying efforts to configure appropriate modalities of urban governance. Such emphasis includes not only the evolution of effective public municipal institutions but also the rationalization of land markets, investment in infrastructure and more coherent laws, taxation and planning.

Particularly important is the ongoing entrenchment of specific norms of good governance capable of guiding institutional behaviour and decision-making. A hard-won consensus within the international community specifies norms that appear to have general applicability to governance issues across the world. These norms include: sustainability, decentralization or subsidiarity, equity, efficiency, transparency and accountability, civic engagement and citizenship, and security.

Such norms enable practitioners, politicians and residents to better compare heterogeneous urban contexts and work together to bring diverse resources, experiences and skills to bear on the improvement of life in distinct cities.

This paper attempts to address the finer applicability of these good governance norms to African urban contexts. It highlights some of the critical issues to be considered in fostering institutional and community behaviour really reflective of such norms, as well as a broad range of urban practices based on them, in what are usually highly precarious cities. For despite the past decade of concentrated reform, African urban politics remain a rough and tumble world. Cities are not generating, nor have other access to, the kinds of finance necessary to pull off the sweeping restructuring necessary to substantially increase the number of jobs, opportunities, and services. As national and local states have long regulated urban spaces with such unreality and arbitrariness, this inability to provide at least a basic framework for sustainable urban livelihoods means that public authority is rarely taken seriously.

While this paper largely generalizes African situations, it is important to emphasize that cities embody highly diverse histories, types of governance, and connections with the larger world. The Sahelian cities of Kano, Ouaghiya, and Omdurman certainly experience different dynamics than the "boomtown" centers of Mbuji-Mayi and Port Gentile. The infrastructure capacities of Cairo and Johannesburg far exceed those of cities like Lagos and Kinshasa, which sometimes make up for their almost complete lack of the trappings of a well run city with sheer entrepreneurial dynamism. There are thousands of secondary towns and cities whose characters remain virtually unknown. Many have long been dormant; others have succeeded in functioning as trade and agricultural centers.

Still, in face of global economic restructuring, many of the particular economic arrangements, cultural inclinations and forms of external engagement that made African cities different from each other are fading away. Additionally, African urban actors across the region increasingly view their situations as linked, and their ability to foster these linkages is critical to the long-term viability of any large urban centre.

Notions of governance are themselves changing. In these notions, the emphasis of government is to orchestrate a wide range of institutional ensembles, formal procedures and informal social

norms and conventions that connect at certain times and places to temporarily serve specific agendas and developments. Governance becomes an increasingly contested and plurilateral process of constructing spaces of strategic coherence capable of being subject to particular agendas and interventions, as well as capable of generating effects at other scales.

Despite emerging notions of governance, which at least cursorily point to the importance of mutual belonging-- through the emphasis on partnerships-- the status of the urban citizen largely remains a solitary one. Not only have formal public institutions largely "abandoned" urban residents, visible collective actions that might provide some alternative measures of belonging and provisioning are impeded. As African states must adhere to "disciplinary measures" enforced by the North and multilateral institutions for their economic survival, and as the North depends on displays of the apparent sovereignty and coherence of these states, the space for effective and visible alternatives for organizing urban life is often constrained.

The larger critical questions that are applicable to generating new normative urban practices include:

- ⚔ How do various African institutions construct particular economic spaces that are amenable to a certain set of interventions and practices?
- ⚔ What kinds of forces and what kinds of intersections among them make possible or impede links and collaborations among different communities and networks?
- ⚔ How can urban residents extend their skills beyond survival level livelihoods in order to increase the overall productivity of households, communities, and cities as a whole?

These are just some of the questions urban Africans implicitly struggle with on a daily basis and which inform their notions and practices of sociality.

It is difficult to assume a fixed set of prescriptions and maps for "redeeming" African cities. Rather, the complexities at work in the policies and practices that have shaped land use, shelter and urban services suggest how individual African cities or national urban contexts work out effective governance arrangements that require a long-term and largely open-ended political process.

In this discussion, I want to provide some sense about what is entailed in such a political process. Such attention to urban politics in relationship to the effective application of good governance norms is important. For, prevailing paradigms of urban development in Africa may actually work against social arrangements that have been effective in terms of providing opportunities for livelihood under precarious conditions.

This working against what has often been effective not only impacts upon what residents consider possible or impossible. It also shapes how residents set out to try and accomplish a wide range of tasks. It shapes their sense of what can be shown or must be hidden, what can be institutionalized or must remain provisional. In sum, it shapes the extent to which they can be engaged by municipal institutions and how they, themselves, engage the city. This navigation of the possible and impossible, the visible and invisible, and the established and the provisional becomes the "real" objective of everyday governance activities for most residents.

At the heart of the challenge about governing cities is the issue of the political management of complex and incessant tradeoffs that must be made by all cities in a context of sometimes-painful global exposure. The tradeoffs concern to what extent, for example, fiscal soundness takes

precedence over the equitable delivery of urban services, or the extent to which managerial proficiency supercedes expanded popular participation in decision-making.

The critical issue is how these tradeoffs are defined? Who is involved in negotiating them? What are the appropriate forms of community organization and mobilization in a context where urban government is increasingly less capable of meeting the demands of all citizens? How does one combine, relate and balance different forms of participation, negotiation, contestation, and partnership to ensure vibrant politics and constructive collaboration to solve real problems. How can forms of political community be re-imagined, especially in a temporal frame where the contradictions of expanding global capitalism are more extensively interwoven in local urban life? How can such political community be re-imagined in a context where formerly valued modalities and practices of social cohesion dissipate, as do the territorial parameters through which cohesion is recognized and performed?[i]

Given the challenges posed by these tradeoffs, the future of normative good urban governance in Africa compels new ways of practicing urban politics. Therefore, the primary norms of good governance have substantive applicability and use in urban Africa as long as the following considerations are kept in mind.

1. *A broader appreciation and understanding of local knowledge and local economic resources on the part of municipal institutions is necessary in order to make these norms something real and dynamic in people's everyday lives.* Such understanding permits not only governance norms to influence and be transmitted through the practices that make cultural sense to specific urban contexts. It also allows municipal institutions to discover local ways in which such norms are already being used and identify critical areas of municipal intervention.

2. *There is not one way of realizing good governance norms.* These norms can become a reality through various practices, policies and institutional arrangements. What works for one context doesn't necessarily work in others. What counts for an effective realization of such norms is usually the product of everyday political negotiation.

3. *New constituencies must be built for new municipal governance processes.* Given the persistence of parallel modalities of power and rule that predominate across the region, particular emphasis could be placed on cultivating the capacities of youth, women, children, the aged, and the disabled to engage with new municipal institutions.

4. *Build on the social exchanges of urban markets to better articulate quarters and economic activities throughout the city and use the pursuit of such integration as a concrete context to elaborate and practice governance norms.* Building on the vitality of local urban markets and the inter-linked social and economic transactions that take place within them, identify ways of articulating economic activities and actors across the discrete quarters of the city as a way of putting governance norms in practice. Such a pursuit also can become an important means of consolidating greater urban economic growth.

5. *Governing cities must anticipate changes in social solidarity and the large-scale emigration of residents from cities.* Africa now has the largest number of displaced persons, refugees, and returnees in the world[ii], as well as the largest per capita migratory population.[iii] Such migration reflects both increasing economic difficulties as well as social and livelihood formations long present in African societies and which are now

being amplified by changing global conditions.[iv]   Unable to productively absorb the annual cohorts of job seekers[v], many national economies would simply collapse without the remittances of citizens who have migrated elsewhere--from countryside to city, from African city to African city, from African cities to the North.[vi]

6.   *African cities have histories and it is important to remember them*. Institutions working with cities often have little memory about what has been done in the past. Too often institutions and communities approach their challenges with a "clean slate." While it is important to try new things, the inability to recover history can discourage citizens from involving themselves in the affairs of the city.

7.   *Decentralization works only if municipal institutions are made more proficient*. Such proficiency is not simply a matter of capacity building and the transfer of skills, but the embedding of these institutions in dynamic inter-governmental and inter-community relations. Where relations themselves are the means to strengthen will and skill.

8.   *Governance sometimes requires municipal institutions to engage processes and actors they don't fully understand*. Conventional notions of governance usually entail a well-developed sense about who and what can be governed. To govern a city and its communities assumes that citizens are organized into identifiable households, spaces, and associations. While certainly most of African urban life takes place through such identifiable social units, the forms through which everyday livelihood takes place are also becoming more complex. Households are composed in more intricate ways, involving larger numbers of people unrelated through kinship. Social collaboration increasingly takes place across discrete communities and groups. The networks of interdependency and cooperation increasingly involve more highly diverse backgrounds and capacities. Thus, critical areas of social life take place outside of established associations and institutions.

9.   *The valued ways of growing urban economies today also can expand urban informality*. Given existing global economic frameworks, African cities are most likely to pursue economic growth through a limited series of development trajectories. These include land and real estate speculation, discounted local labour, highly advantageous terms offered for inward investments, improvements in the services related to the management of mineral and agricultural resources, and subcontracting for large manufacturing and service industries. These trajectories tend to affect severe changes in African urban social economies that valued equity and social reciprocity. The bulk of growth takes place in sectors that can produce substantial increases in economic capacity for a small minority of the urban population. Such skewed pathways of economic viability can extend and deepen the importance of informal and illegal activities acting as the basis for the economic livelihoods of larger numbers of urban residents.

10.   *Dealing effectively with informality requires a long-term process of building share political cultures between communities and municipal institutions*. The conventional instruments of promoting security of tenure, housing and livelihood--such as primary and secondary titling, upgrading, subsidized service provisioning--have often served as a means for those with political and economic power to expand their capacities. As a result, the majority of urban residents continue to pursue a wide range of informal solutions to consolidate their position within the city. Most African cities are characterized by a substantial history of prohibitory measures and skewed advantages that force the urban majority to avoid fixed commitments to practices of livelihood

formation transparent to government authorities. Therefore, a process of building engagement, mutual trust and accountability in incremental stages over the long run must inform policies and interventions pursued by municipal government.

11. *Build networks of interchange among cities*. Networks of economic transactions, information flows, migration, and social exchange cut across cities and regions. As such, any city is not a coherent, territorially bounded entity where all the parts--its spaces, communities, activities and actors--fit together neatly in some overarching whole. The city is a haphazard process, where external forces have as much to do with what happens inside cities as whatever takes place locally. Therefore, governing the city must not act as if it possible to bring the city into some kind of consistent order. At best, municipal institutions can help steer different urban actors into practices whereby they pay attention to each other and take each other into consideration as they plan, invest, trade, and influence. Given the flows of information, people and resources between cities, governance also entails how to configure complementary relationships among them.

12. *Restore security as a vital principle and instrument of governance*. Insecurity is not a by-product of increased urban impoverishment and the inability of public institutions and urban economies to provide adequate platforms for sustainable livelihoods. It is increasingly a modality of "governance" itself, where fostering insecure environments becomes an important component in making and securing claims on limited resources, controlling the mobility and participation of urban residents, and extending profit margins through an engineered scarcity of essential goods.

The following discussion takes up these twelve points of consideration in greater depth.

HISTORICAL CONSIDERATIONS:

Cities for Engagement

It is clear that the major urban areas that are the focus of this discussion operate from different legacies and engagements. Abidjan, Kinshasa and Nairobi, for example, were completely colonial inventions, while Lagos, Douala and Kampala had pre-colonial existence. Urban consolidation was always in many senses both ordering and rupturing. Whether African cities could be said to share a history of highly problematic engagements between often vastly different local and external orientations and powers doesn't change the fact that urban forms cannot be accounted for only on the basis of pinpointing structural relationships.

Nor can urban life be accounted for only in terms of relative industrialization. Perhaps the key reason for citing the existence of a pre-colonial African urbanity is to mark a distinction between urbanism as a way of life and conventional understandings of urbanization as a process.[vii] In Bascom's discussion on Yoruba cities, he emphasizes the way in which urbanism was made possible through the intersection of farming, trade and, most importantly, occupational specialization. Weaving, dyeing, vulcanizing, brass-casting, woodcarving, calabash-carving, leather and bead work, pottery, medicines, and ritual services all required specialization. This sense of specialization was extended to the practice of trade. Such specialization required each occupation to be dependent on others. The key element of cohesive urban growth, according to Bascom, was that formal political control mechanisms operated at supra-kinship levels. This level of operation enabled intense market competition and occupational differentiation. Nevertheless, kinship bonds continued to situate individuals in clearly demarcated positions and responsibilities within support and authority networks.[viii]

For the most part, the long period where different versions of colonialism operated were, of course, critical to the shaping and present-day capacities of most African cities. The importance of colonialism was not that it gave rise to cities in what was for the most part considered to be a rural continent. Rather, the crucial move was to shape urbanization so that cities would act instrumentally on African bodies and social formations in ways which made various endogenous forms of and proclivities toward urbanization possible only within the context of an enforced engagement with the European world.

The ways in which this "urbanization for engagement" was accomplished and manifested varied in different settings and time periods. It varied with the degree and kind of urbanization that proceeded colonialism. It varied with the different ways in which distinct African societies used the creation of new cities and/or the transformation of pre-colonial ones for their "own" objectives, however diffuse, coherent, varied or contradictory these objectives might have been.

This is not to say that urbanization or engagement with the larger world did not exist prior to the colonial period. The medieval urban mixed economies of the Central and Western Sudan, centred largely on trans-Saharan trade, certainly pursued a politics of relations with external powers—often manipulating the ideological conflicts between Christians and Muslims concerning the use of trade routes. Indeed, the unwillingness to sustain such mixed economies and multiple external engagements, through the allure of the lucrative slave trade, was largely responsible for the rapid decline of these pre-colonial urban centers.[ix]

During the period of formal British occupation in South Africa, 1806-1910, a large number of towns were founded. However, only Johannesburg and Cape Town attained populations that exceeded 100,000. Cape Town remained the largest city in Sub-Saharan Africa into the 1950's.

In the most urbanized African country at that time, South Africa, 25 per cent of the population was considered urbanized, but only fourteen towns had more than 14,000 inhabitants, and South African cities contained only one eighth of the African population. As of 1950, almost all Sub-Saharan African cities contained less than 200,000 inhabitants. Between 1950 and their respective dates of independence, capital cities grew 110 per cent on average, with some cities, such as Lusaka, growing as much as 400 per cent.[x]

Between 1950 and 1990, there was a 1.017 per cent increase in the growth of capital cities.[xi] Presently, cities like Dakar, Abidjan, Luanda, Maputo, Douala, Cape Town and Nairobi are verging on three million people. Ibadan, Conakry, Dar es Salaam, Kano, Yaounde, Lumumbashi, Lusaka, and Harare have populations of roughly two million. Kinshasa has anywhere from 6-7 million depending on who is counting and how they are doing it. Greater Khartoum, Johannesburg, and Addis Ababa have roughly 4 million, with Lagos approaching 12 million.[xii] Many of these figures are undoubtedly underestimates of real population sizes, for example, with a UN-HABITAT estimate for Lagos of 13.4 million in 2000.

Linking the Urban and Rural
There have been many explanations for this urban growth, and for the massive rural to urban migration that took place from the end of the World War II to the onset of the global recession in the early 1970s. Obviously many factors are at work. Rural migrants were forced to the city in some instances by land shortages or by the collapse of rural economies. Here, it is important to keep in mind the heterogeneity of rural circumstances. Increasing differentials in wealth and capacity had varied impacts on different rural regions and categories of urban residents. So did the increasing differentiation of land use and production for domestic consumption, as opposed (or alternating with) domestic production.

In other instances and for specific categories of migrants, economic advancement, freedom from the social constraints of rural life, education, prospects of enhanced social status, the connections between the attainment of education and urban employment, and varying government policies related to cultivating an established urban population became factors.[xiii] The complexion of migration also varied among regions. The migration of entire families took place more often in West and Central Africa, where the role of women in farming was no larger than that of men, and where there was a strong tradition of trade.[xiv]

Also significant were the degree to which the elaboration of rural-urban linkages facilitated migration and the extent to which the linkages, in and of themselves, intensified a sense of difference between places. This sense of difference could be potentially converted into a resource for both rural and urban life. Kinship ties provided a link that enabled people to find a place in the city, and an opportunity to return if things didn't work out. This is a linkage reinforced by communal land tenure systems and a gendered division of labour, where women were generally responsible for food production.

The sense of linkage went beyond these kinship ties. The concentration of administrative power in cities was so sudden, that it had a jarring effect on the rural areas, which were also the objects of this administration. Rural areas were forced to change, particularly as substantial amounts of low-cost imported foodstuffs began saturating urban markets.[xv] Rural areas also resisted the various ways in which they were to be incorporated into more nationally focused production and political systems. Administration was limited in its scope and ability to incorporate rural areas within its ambit.[xvi]

Thus, urban and rural areas existed, in part, as disarticulated spheres. Structuring and plying linkages among them have not only been necessary to reduce "mutual estrangement" and facilitate some sense of overarching coherence. Linkages have also become economic instruments in their own right. Linkages are things that can be used and manipulated to facilitate a better life in both domains, compensate for difficulties, and circumvent various social and governmental controls. Increasingly, as people faced conflicts around changes underway in rural areas, the city became a place of refuge, a source for tipping the scales in favor of one party or another, and a place for the short-term accumulation of resources. For urban residents, rural areas became a place to send family members in times of difficulty, to hide assets, to feed urban households, or to garner support or inputs for various urban projects.

Governing Complex Urban Fields

Much has been written about divergent colonial governance policies, that is, the British preferring to delegate as much local administration to so-called customary institutions; while the French sought to subsume most aspects of everyday urban life under the authority of their own administrative apparatus. Accordingly, municipalities once under British control tend to have a longer and more elaborate history of decentralized local councils—which is why the bulk of the current decentralization efforts have largely taken place in Francophone Africa. Although as the colonial presence became more entrenched in each instance, the colonial state was to assume progressively more responsibility for the social reproduction of urban populations. The bulk of such social reproduction, however, remained the purview of social orders denied official recognition, and usually misinterpreted either as "traditional", "irregular," or "spontaneous."

Cities across the continent, for the most part, still have not given rise to "appropriate" formations of local governance. In Anglophone countries, municipalities may have legally been accorded broad powers but seldom demonstrated any real political or economic accountability. In Francophone countries, local municipal authorities had few powers coupled with intricate controls over finance and elaborate bureaucratic supervisory apparatuses.[xvii] A piecemeal approach to development has prevailed, that is, selective interventions that would above all constitute a rationale for commodifying land, such as slum clearance, the building of new estates for civil servants, sites and services schemes, and the general tendency to down-grade, over time, the role and the responsibility of the state in the provision of shelter. Systematic planning was often assumed only at the level of master plans informed by Western assumptions that have little correspondence with reality.

Most post-independence societies presented states with a complex social terrain, as well as with relatively new social divides and emerging social formations. The rapid growth of cities at this time generated social dynamics that were difficult to track and assess, let alone, control. The historical differentiation of education, religion, language and region of origin were all to a certain extent intertwined.

States continued to face societies that attempted to postpone any final version of what the nation would look like. Processes undertaken to ensure local survival produced, as a result, particular orientations to governance, authority and social organization, which simultaneously carved-out and depleted spaces of local autonomy. Usually, those processes implicitly sought to defer the centralizing trends directed by the state. For example, the continuation of high levels of investment in non-accumulation activities and multiple social identities—reflecting both the failure of the consolidation of national identities and a vehicle of resistance to them—constituted a barrier to accumulation, yet often maximized access to markets and opportunities at the same time.

Local belief systems, which in one context or time period served as leveling mechanisms—ensuring equitable distributions of resources and opportunities to the detriment of investment in material accumulation—at other points, acted to legitimize profound socioeconomic change. The question is not simply one of the successful penetration of capital relations into urban Africa. Rather, the issue also concerns the maintenance of moral authority necessary in order to domesticate new forces of accumulation and articulate local labour relations to broader socio-political changes.

The adamant way that most states insisted upon centralizing the focus of societal attention upon themselves and forcing interactions between state and society to become vehicles for dispersing the uniformity of state authority, severely limited the capacities of states to exert real control. In other words, by failing to take into consideration the heterogeneity of aspirations, concerns, values, and practices employed by its diverse constituents, there were few points of apparent conjunction between state and society. There were few ways of enabling local communities to see that the extension and empowerment of their valued ways of life rested in cooperation with the emerging state.

As state weakness became more visible, the struggles among distinct spheres of wealth and authority—state bureaucrats, traditional elite, soldiers, and commercial patrons—gave rise to alliances made up of a wide spectrum of social identities and activities. These alliances or "enclaves" then influenced and sometimes directed the productive activities of individuals and households. In the process, alternative forms of social control and getting things done were brought to life. The growth of these alternative forms further weakened state authority, sometimes forcing it into more repressive measures. Each "enclave" attempted to maximize possibilities of loyalty, reciprocity and rights—to labour, time, status, and investment. Enclaves sometimes cultivated their own particular discourses, set of symbols, explicit rules or languages of affiliation. This process also had to be complemented by expanding the enclave's positions within various political and organizational networks.

Regimes occupying state power increasingly turned to the use of state privileges and the trappings of sovereignty for private objectives. Occupation of state power was increasingly viewed as the key vehicle to private accumulation. This conversion of public resources and institutions into instruments for the realization of private gains or for the gains of a particular constituency was reflected in the development of cities as well. The state used its bureaucracy as a means of providing employment and fostering entrepreneurial advantages for favored groups. It made entrepreneurship outside the rubric of the state difficult, since the state feared that the encouragement of private enterprise would give rise to an autonomous framework of resource accumulation, patronage and political opposition. Accordingly, regimes curtailed many possibilities for urban economic development.

Section Two

**Do Good Governance Norms
Make Sense in Urban Africa?**

SECTION TWO

THE IMPORTANCE OF LOCAL KNOWLEDGE

African cities are largely invisible cities. In other words, successive generations of urban residents have brought their own particular aspirations and logic to cities. These have been applied to operating in physical, cultural and administrative spaces that have been contested and subject to highly inequitable power relations from their inception. [xviii] The city subsequently became something foreign, something requiring great adaptive flexibility and sometimes dissimulation. Even though the city remained a platform for the renewal and transformation of African societies, the commitment, skills and outgrowths of this long-term engagement with African cities have largely remained out of view.

There are many reasons for this invisibility--some strategic, some simply the products of colonial and neo-colonial relations. Overcoming the governmental and economic blockages that prevent this wealth of knowledge and experience from being applied to the development of urban institutions and formally recognized development processes is one of the key challenges facing urban governance in the region. The elaboration of a set of universal norms of good governance, first and foremost have to be directed and assessed in terms of their capacity to inform the application of such knowledge to the development of African cities that make sense. They must make sense both in terms of Africans being able to "converse" with the larger world and in terms of the local histories and aspirations that have motivated a long-term African affiliation with cities.

Also important in this regard are the efforts African urban residents make to cultivate a sense of place--i.e. with its connotations of familiarity, security, belonging and confidence. Without such a sense of place, people do not have a platform through which they can creatively engage the larger world and the knowledge and opportunities it has to offer.[xix]

Given widespread insecurities in cities--in tenure, livelihood, and personal safety--many residents have been reluctant to invest time and resources into institutionalizing a sense of place. Instead, a way of being and operating in the city that relies upon the provisional has dominated. Important and stable assets are, as a result, often hidden, neither mobilized for physical or social infrastructure development. Without clear institutional forms connoting a sense of stability and faith in the future, a sense of continuity is often experienced by default.

In other words, communities develop particular kinds of coping mechanisms to make up for their perceived inability to shape their current or future conditions. Sometimes, a sense of stability is forged out of a collective belief that a community is constantly under threat by more powerful external powers. The only way to respond is to make sure either that things remain as they are or that they constantly change, so as to outpace whatever those more powerful forces might have in store. Second, communities can also become convinced that local initiatives and development efforts will be wasted since the conditions that they address are changing fast anyway and their efforts will be inadequate to those changes. How emerging governance institutions deal with these beliefs is critical.

At the same time, there are sets of basic technical knowledge regarding urban management and development that need to be more effectively incorporated into planning and governance

processes. In addition, municipal authorities and department staff often lack important data regarding demographic profiles, land registration, enterprises, and population related investments that could help inform policy and program development.

African municipal governments are now focusing on taking inventories of public services currently provided by existing facilities and infrastructure. Short-term development priorities based on an analysis of insufficiencies by zone and sectors are also being set. Long- term needs are defined and overall investment programs formulated.[xx] Fiscal audits, economic analyses, environmental impact studies, and land occupation surveys complement these efforts. All these instruments are in the service of enhancing the visibility of urban processes, and particularly, the achievement of a clear sense of boundaries. These boundaries refer not only to administrative demarcations. The establishment of clear boundaries among municipal functions and economic sectors is also important. For the ambiguity of boundaries is seen as an impediment to assigning viable responsibilities and developing legitimate municipal authority.

As municipalities are able to attain a clearer reading of what is taking place in their cities, what do they do with it? How do these readings inform the development of effective policies and regulations? For too long, faith in the regulatory process has been undermined by a lack of fit between planning processes, legal frameworks and local urban realities. While the uneasy mix of the "traditional" and the "modern" regarding land production and allocation may add certain flexibility in resource-starved cities, both are outdated and inadequate. Excessive attention has been placed on solving problems through clearance, eviction, harassment and prohibition--of informal settlements, trade and production.[xxi] It is important to restore the authority of planning and regulatory processes through the ability of the relevant institutions to act in decisive and flexible ways.

A first step in this process of reinvigorating public authority is for the relevant planning and enforcement departments to pay less attention to ensuring that specific actors and activities stay within their designated "territories" or roles. Instead, the issue is how to generate "action-spaces" where different actors and activities are enlisted in a process of improving the local environment and prospects for livelihood and service delivery. For example, instead of boxing-in the large numbers of small contractors, builders and artisans to the so-called "informal sector", why not identify areas where they can be legitimately involved in public contracts. Instead of prohibiting home-based work or simply turning a blind eye to it, why not figure ways of formally acknowledging that in most quarters, the home will be a site of work. Taking off from this recognition, the task is to come up with viable ways of ensuring that such a coupling between residence and work is sustainable and does not diminish the capacities of the overall physical and social environment.[xxii]

Important work in this area is being done, for example, by the Center for Research on Local Knowledge in Bamako, the Centro de Investigacao e Documentacao para Desenvolvimento Integral at the Catholic University of Mozambique in Beira, the work done by Together in the City with the government of Mozambique in terms of revitalizing local institutions in urban land redistribution systems, the Song Taaba in Ouagadougou working on the development of small-scale urban industrial districts, the Groupe de Recherche et d'Expertise du le Développpment des Savoir-faire Locaux en Afrique in Kinshasa, and the Laboratoire d'ètudes et de recherches en Santé et Développement locale in Niamey

RECOMMENDATIONS:

a. Ensure that local partners are equipped with a comprehensive compendium of research publications, monographs, theses, and reports concerning their respective cities. Given the proliferation of electronic databases and library resources, it is now possible to provide key decision-makers, departments and institutions with a substantial sampling of the accumulated knowledge that exists regarding cities.

b. Encourage local partners to document experiences and interventions, even in various anecdotal forms. Enlist the participation of various educational institutions to sponsor projects that elicit various forms of documentation about a broad range of urban experiences on the part of students and other constituencies. Facilitate opportunities for both local and external researchers, journalists, professionals and other interested parties to observe various planning and decision-making for and other convocations.

c. Encourage civil servants in various departments to document findings attained in the performance of their duties, either through checklists, journal logs, focus groups, etc., so that multiple points of contact with constituencies and clients become opportunities for data retrieval and engagement.

d. Encourage local partners to build-on existing relationships with local media—so as to encourage the development of reader/listener surveys, call-in shows on local radio—as a supplementary vehicle to generate local opinion and ideas.

FINDING EFFECTIVE WAYS TO REALIZE GOOD GOVERNANCE NORMS

A solid appreciation of good governance norms can potentially go a long way toward an effective application and integration of both local and expert urban knowledge. For, good governance norms are not simply moral injunctions. They are also specific practices capable of guiding diverse urban actors into more effective and judicious action. Certainly, a more direct application of the knowledge African cities have "accumulated" requires greater opportunities for the broadest number of city residents to make their knowledge known in ways they deem both forthright and capable of improving their lives.

Certainly, all such knowledge is made more cogent and comprehensive by virtue of opportunities for different actors with different experiences, interests and positions to interact with each other, and in ways which ensure mutual respect and recognition of differences. Certainly, the capacity of residents to render what they know and to continuously renew a willingness to know new things is predicated on their trust that what they know will not be used against them. In all, these norms of good governance help guide practice, and are not simply abstract principles rallied in order to make easy judgements about what are often uneasy, even awkward efforts to deal with difficult problems.

Nor can such norms substitute for the gritty experiences of everyday urban politics. Whose knowledge counts for what is something inevitably struggled over. Rarely has an overarching vision of urban development informed what has transpired in cities anywhere. Colonial authorities, having had no shortage of ideas concerning what appropriate African cities would look like, constantly changed their minds. During the early stages of colonialism, Africans were considered ill suited for urban life, and their presence in the city was to be tolerated only for brief periods. Subsequent administrations, faced with escalating costs of control, changed this position and tried to rush through the development of a thoroughly urbanized population de-linked from any substantive connection to rural pasts or presents. [xxiii]

Additionally, as colonial regimes had been imposed over a plurality of societies with their own moral structures, they could not act as the manifestation of a single moral force. Without a ready consensus as to the values and discourses on which development would take place, the ability of states to use the development of cities as a means of building national cohesion was limited. [xxiv] Newly independent states basically inherited this dilemma and continue to struggle with it today.

Any process that makes the accumulated practices of city making--largely invisible throughout great swathes of African urban life and history--more highly visible is bound to unleash intense contestation and social change. Thus, the very thing that potentially makes up urban Africa's most significant resource for governance is also the very thing that introduces a large measure of precariousness. Good governance is not, then, the product of a "rational consensus reached through appropriate deliberative procedures whose aim to produce decisions that represent an important standpoint equally in the interests of all." [xxv] In other words, it is not a set of practices that have unequivocal meaning or specifications about how actors are supposed to behave. Without conflict and democratic competition as to the relative valuation about ways of doing things, about whose knowledge is useful for what purposes, practices of administration and planning become stagnant. They lose flexibility and a cutting edge.

There has been a long debate in African societies about how different viewpoints and ways of doing things can best interact with each other. This has been a debate over power. Who gets to use it and for what purpose. It is debate about what kinds of social arrangements are best capable of producing power and directing it for the benefit of the society as a whole.

Some African political philosophers have argued that consensual systems of political deliberation were and still are best suited to the deep-seated cultural values throughout most of the region. They argue that competition for power was something of an anathema for most societies, and that traditional governance systems focused on ways in which everyone could participate in power-- where the institutionalization of different viewpoints was not directly related to carrying out positions of public responsibility.[xxvi] Rather than rule by the majority, "traditional" government proceeded by finding ways to incorporate all decision-makers in ways that didn't relegate anyone to a minority position. Disagreements may have remained, but decisions were viewed largely on the basis of their practical abilities to maintain strong interactions among the decision-makers.

Yet, such renderings of African "traditional" governance have come under great scrutiny and criticism in recent years. Consensus politics have long been used as a pretext to consolidate authoritarian regimes and to preclude substantive discussion and debate. Participation in so-called "traditional systems" and "modern systems" is often kept apart, like night and day, having no impact on or relevance to the other. Making sure different groups feel included in the nation has often been at the price of keeping people from speaking their minds, and thus new ideas and ways of doing things sometimes have failed to emerge.

Urban life throughout much of the continent has taken on an increasingly split character in terms of the ways in which broader social "arguments" are conducted. In some instances, there is a strong sense of social interdependency no matter the positions or viewpoints held by the participants. These interdependencies have often been expressed through various patronage systems, both formally and informally configured. Despite strong antagonisms and highly unequal access to resources and opportunities, rich and poor have frequently have the sense of being joined together defending against an ever-threatening external world. With few resources to draw upon, different categories of people turned to each other as resources.

While such bonds may have been capable of carrying people through prolonged difficulties, they also have made independent action difficult. Individual initiative is sometimes hard to take because the probable implications for doing something new may be difficult to assess for people with whom there are many intricate mutual dependencies. Given the large numbers of people usually involved in such networks, an excess of caution often predominates to the exclusion of innovation and daring.

But such interdependency also has been a means to enforce a largely static sense of equality, that is, of making sure no one acquires significantly more prestige or wealth. For example, regardless of their convictions and backgrounds, competing urban elite usually know each other quite well. They frequently consult each other and are tied together through a wide range of "extra-political" ties. These ties provide them with vehicles to undermine each other or at least leave each other vulnerable to being undermined. They thus tend to "stay close" to each other. Such proximity is a way to make sure they all know what each other is up to and also as a way to keep each other in "check."

Individual alliances and friendships often end up meaning little, as do the efforts to carve out distinct collective political identities. The psychological interdependencies among the urban elite have gone a long way toward intensifying popular disillusionment with the political process. The larger population sees this process as too arbitrary or unable to make critical decisions.

On the other hand, social conflict has sometimes been fierce and persistent but without well-developed competing agendas or visions to fight about. At times, it hasn't mattered how strong

social connections were. If someone occupied a position of privilege, nothing could deter attempts by rivals to eliminate the occupant if he or she showed signs of vulnerability. In many places, conflict has become a way of life, and the fight pursued just because there is a fight.

Much of Sierra Leone's "lost decade" is directly attributable to the conviction, built up over the post-colonial period, that revolutionary change would emanate simply from the ferocity and sweeping nature of fighting itself. [xxvii] There was no ideology, no vision about how a society should look or be run. Such notions are highly seductive for larger numbers of African youth with no prospects.

What is important is to reconnect the process of conflict to a series of clearly demarcated and fleshed-out social ideas about what cities can and should look like, how they should be run, and by whom. Just as important is the process of creating spaces of sustainable conflict within cities. Here, interdependencies among actors from different walks of life are not based on the avoidance of conflict. Rather, actors see their cooperation as a constellation of semi-autonomous identities collaborating in furtherance of agendas that are partially shared but also divergent.

Many cities have been grappling with these issues. Particularly salient are the experiences of the *Pikine Project de Ville* in Dakar, the Community Development Program of the Cape Town Metropolitan Council, the The Agence de Restructuration et d'Aménagement de Nylon program in Douala, participating cities in the UNDP Sustainable Cities Program, particularly Ibadan and Dar es Salaam, the municipal reform projects undertaken in Addis Ababa, as documented by the Civil Service College, and in Kampala, as documented by the Uganda Management Institute.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

a. Encourage local partners to elicit and document competing or divergent ideas about urban development and management that could facilitate the development of clearly delineated political positions to be the object of choice by a local urban electorate. While consensus and partnership are necessary to deal with the state of crisis prevalent in many cities, the prospect that cities have distinct and alternative futures should be highlighted.

b. Supplement the emphasis on best practices with a distillation of alternative modalities for urban development based on the concrete interventions and mobilizations undertaken in various African cities. From the emphasis of local self-sufficiency on the part of the National Rally of Woodcutters in Libreville to the urban regional integration frameworks proposed by the *Rassemblement des Républicains* in Abidjan, for example, there exist varying frameworks around which debate can be crystallized. It is through such debate that the practice of good governance norms is best honed and adopted to local situations.

c. While it is clear that UN-HABITAT does not and cannot work with explicitly political concerns, it can emphasize that good governance is not simply a technical but a political consideration, fundamentally requiring contexts of open political expression and fair political competition. In situations where national and local states embody and act on narrowly defined interests that have managed to consolidate their hold on them, states cannot be neutral mediators of divergent social interests nor arbitrate contested visions of urban development according to normative principles of governance. In many African nations, the appropriation of the state provides opportunities for specific elite networks, regimes or cliques to pursue specific practices of economic accumulation and enrichment behind the guise of technical administration. Insulated from fair political competition and accountability, such networks always place non-state groups in a reactive position, where they are usually treated as a potential threat to their hold over the state, and thus to the resources that accrue to it—through taxation, rents, investment and foreign assistance. This is why municipal decentralization has turned out to be an "ambiguous adventure".Good governance requires the consolidation of "citizen" as the first and foremost identity an urban resident has. But such an identity needs a guarantor; needs an institutional form that recognizes its supremacy and ensures its freedom of expression and operation. This guarantee is not possible when states act as parochial interests themselves, and there can never be good governance as long as this situation persists throughout much

BUILDING NEW CONSTITUENCIES FOR GOVERNANCE

Given the persistence of highly split governance systems, as well as intricate interdependencies, it is necessary to cultivate constituents of municipal institutions adhering to the norms of good governance. These constituents include particularly women, children, youth, the aged, and the disabled. Much has already been written about the acknowledging the crucial role women play in ensuring a more equitable application of household resources; their role in ensuring the sustenance of households, and the critical role they have played in recent democratic and peace movements. Given all of this, women remain woefully underrepresented in municipal and town councils, ministerial departments, development committees and other manifestations of urban associational life. Needless to say, any good governance campaign makes no progress unless the full participation of women in every aspect of urban life is "normalized", that is, not seen as something exceptional, not seen as something warranting comment, either critical or celebratory.

Urban youth across the region are facing difficulties establishing themselves. The basic stepping stones of social reproduction, as in marriage, raising children, establishing a household--are being foreclosed, or at least substantially delayed, for many youth. The capacities of traditional or parallel systems of social and economic organization have been strained, and are unable to meet the needs of youth as they once did in the past.

The vast majority of urban youth foresee little that political processes can do to assuage their growing anxieties about the future. So far, cultural expression has been the locus through which urban youth are demonstrating their disaffection with current urban realities and regimes, as well as putting forward their notions of what it means to be a "healthy" urban citizen. But because youth in these expressions must both demonstrate their willingness to be cut off from prevailing norms and throw themselves into images of future urban living that cannot be as yet well-formed, the energy of this participation can be often violent and disruptive.

Excluded from any meaningful role in formal decision-making venues, urban youth have come to rely upon the street, public space, music, dance, dress, language, and bodily composure as the vehicles through which their own sense of urban space can be constructed and set against the prevailing city. What is important is that these youth are the full products of several generations of urban residents thoroughly ensconced in the informality that characterizes much of today's African cities. They have witnessed the long-term effects of generations having to take increasingly desperate measures in order to consolidate their right and possibility for living in the city.

Their capacity to articulate demands on municipal institutions and to hold them accountable must be strengthened. The ability of municipal institutions to include youth in decision-making and planning processes is important if these institutions are going to be able to counteract the entrenched interests of sometimes more powerful "traditional" organizations who may refuse to cooperate with municipalities.

The development of local youth councils has been a productive start in constituency building. Drawing upon representatives of various youth associations, clubs, and student groups, advisory bodies are established for local governments to ensure a structured and direct connection between previously marginalized urban populations and local officials. Particularly salient examples of this process can be found in Windhoek, Nairobi, and Dakar, as well as the recent establishment of a round table of Congolese youth to monitor the inter-Congolese Dialogue.

RECOMMENDATIONS

a. Identify, recognize and work through the varied and proliferating associations of urban youth, and not only through youth associations that have been established to identify with the Habitat Agenda. Recognize the important settings and practices of popular urban culture, using important convocations, festivals and music shows to build awareness of critical governance issues, social rights, and public participation.

b. Encourage the acknowledgement and involvement of faith-based communities as integral elements of good governance campaigns. For those customarily excluded or under-represented in official domains of public life, faith-based communities play an increasingly important role in the everyday lives of urban residents. In fact, the church and the mosque have become the most important institutions throughout urban Africa today.

BUILDING ON THE SOCIAL EXCHANGES OF URBAN MARKETS

Throughout the towns and cities of Africa, local markets remain vital places of economic and social activity. In addition to being organized sites for the retailing of goods and services, they are places where larger numbers of urban residents go to take "their chances" to buy and sell nearly everything acquired in all kinds of ways. They are often the region's most proficiently managed urban social institutions and provide an important arena for residents to both forge and act out their varying connections to one another. Even in the apparent disorder and anarchy of many markets, hundreds, without any seeming commodity to sell, are busy at work linking groups of buyers, groups of sellers, and groups of buyers and sellers in various combinations. While dissimulation and manipulation may be at work, the success of these market operations over the long run depend upon a sense of long-term trust and a transparency to what is being transacted.

Having recently examined the social dynamics of markets in Douala, their relative success depends often on very different kinds of actors and activities being brought together, and often outside of any institutionalized framework that might help to guarantee trust and sanctions if things go wrong. This intersection of highly diverse actors must then practice a form of transparency and accountability in order for their transaction to work in the present, let alone for it to continue into the future. Without having clear institutionalized sanctions or common institutional or community membership to draw upon, the rules for the collaboration must be composed. Such market transactions thus constitute an important and concrete way in which urban actors are participating in new social frameworks of cooperation that can be possibly extended into other facets of urban life.

As the center of economic and social life for large swathes of urban Africa, many local authorities either remain largely unaware of how such markets function or are threatened by them. While markets pose formidable challenges for regulation—especially in terms of health and sanitation— they often remain sites of inappropriate regulation. As centers of commercial transaction, local authorities seek to generate as much of their operating revenue from them. At times, local authorities are concerned that the most dynamic economic activities are displaced from the most official and regulated trading spaces in areas surrounding the designated markets or in the mushrooming of informal markets. But instead of understanding the nature of these transactions and the opportunities they generate for different kinds of economic actors with different capacities, networks, commodities and places of operation to "reach" and intersect with each other, the emphasis is to bring them under some kind of control. These sentiments are understandable given the need to ensure fair commercial practices and to ensure revenue for local government. But, it is important to understand the logic and scope of such exchanges. For, they can serve as a possible basis to facilitate greater inter-linkages among various economic facets and territories of the city and use the pursuit of such articulations as the basis to forge new social and political coalitions based on the norms of good governance.

Improved urban economic integration requires convincing economic actors that there is a "level playing field", so that activities, resources, and cooperation don't have to be hidden or distorted. It also requires diversifying sources of supply and changing regulations regarding the use of land, facilities, communications, and infrastructure. The increased capacity of local productive activities has sometimes been accomplished via the work of local entrepreneurial associations that link economic activity with environmental improvement, citizenship rights and human resource development. Therefore, regulatory frameworks and economic development policies will have to recognize new forms of legitimate collective action and ways of organizing. Understanding

existent market activities and the composition of actors and relationships within them is a useful start to this process.

Markets and the Linkage of Economic Activities

On the basis of dynamic local markets, there are strong internal and external moves toward the increased articulation of discrete productive activities and enterprises. These include the clustering of diverse industrial or petty commodity activities, and those that divide subcontracting opportunities.[xxviii]

Clustering aims at attaining collective efficiency in terms of the exchange of information, the shared use of equipment and orders, enhanced access to suppliers and markets, and the improvement of knowledge stock.[xxix] Despite depressions in demand and the limited absorption capacity of African markets, most African firms operate at excessively small scales that limit rates of return. Increased clustering introduces greater levels of specialization and complementarity that leads to increased efficiency and output. Additionally, clustering enlarges the scope of production systems operating in small markets with limited capital. Producing multiple products from the same materials and with the same machinery, or using the same labor and machinery to produce different products at different times and cycles attains greater flexibility.[xxx]

Clustering can also solidify relationships of trust and collaboration. Such collaboration is important in urban environments where firms have little faith in the prevailing legal system, where contractual obligations are often not met given rampant uncertainties and risk, and where there are few mechanisms for sharing information regarding defaulters.[xxxi] Clustering promotes important external economies—facilitating access to inputs, technical know-how and markets.

More importantly, a platform is created for joint action among diverse firms and economic activities. Joint action is not simply an abstract notion that implies a series of normative procedures. For it must take into consideration the ways in which firms already cooperate at distinct stages of the production of specific goods and services. It must also find ways of building on the various kinds of collaboration that already exist among competitors in the same activity. Capacity for joint action is the incisive marker of emergent industrialization, i.e., of whether urban informal sectors can actually act as a locus for engendering new economies of scale.[xxxii] In this period where municipal regulations are being systematically re-examined, it is a most opportune time for local authorities to get a better grip on how such collaboration is already taking place. If local officials demonstrate a willingness to better accommodate the practices of local production and marketing, local economic actors may demonstrate a greater willingness to work with local authorities, instead of spending undo amounts time and resources trying to defend against what are often perceived to be their unwarranted intrusions.

Innovation is fostered by sharing information, engaging in activities which enhance the skills and knowledge of everyone involved, sharing techniques and technology, and joining together to diversify sources of inputs and markets, as well as broaden the general knowledge about what is taking place in the larger world.[xxxiii] This cooperation also shapes the space in which economic activities take place. In other words, ways in which different economic units collaborate together brings about a particular character to the urban territory, i.e., the way it looks, is arranged, and built. If different types of enterprises—with different histories, labor, or resources—are going to cooperate, then they will arrange the concrete parameters of their interactions in ways that make such cooperation easier. They will do their best to make sure that they have fluid access to each other's facilities, that there will be places to discuss issues, that there can be an easy circulation of information, personnel, and other material. At the same time, this is a cooperation among distinct organizations, identities and/or capacities. Ways of marking this distinction must also be maintained and adjusted. Therefore the location of activities, the design of workshops, the

provision of water and electricity, the access to transportation—all are important interdependent facets of such articulations that should be grasped by local authorities in a more holistic manner.

Likewise, these transactions are embedded in the institutional, spatial and social arrangements of a locality.[xxxiv] Trust, the all-important characteristic of collaboration, is cultivated through a continuous process of "learning by doing." Learning by doing gets an organization to discover what it really can or can't do by concretely engaging with the activities of other organizations. It is a matter of "trying on things for size." In the process, an organization comes to appreciate the value of the actual and potential contributions of other firms as distinct units with identities of their own that should be maintained and nurtured.

Such cooperation always requires a platform on which it can take place. The platform is made up of available natural resources, public fixed collective capital, private capital and institutional and regulatory forms.[xxxv] In precarious political and economic environments, small entrepreneurs tend to oscillate between dealing with a lot of different actors on a short-term basis, or, conversely, "playing their cards (keeping what they do) close to their chest." This constant hedging of bets fixes these actors to either a narrow series of relationships or a continuous *ad hoc* process of dealing wherever and with whomever they can.

Most officially established African entrepreneurial clusters and commercial districts have a makeshift quality, given their exposure to political and economic uncertainties and lack of access to a wide variety of resources. As a result, much of economic activity appears vulnerable and temporary. When things are temporary, trust is usually something that can be accomplished only within a small circle of kin or other associates. The question becomes, then, who can socialize various actors to think and deal with each other in different ways. How can collaboration be sustained across a sufficient number of different actors, not too small or not too large? Here, the extensive social reach often displayed by urban markets has potentially much to offer.

One of the most successful examples of clustering activities entails industrialists in the Eastern Nigerian city of Nnewi, which contains a cluster of 23 medium to large scale factories and engineering shops. While half of these concerns are automotive centered, the other half vary from liquor to electrical accessories, personal care products, dyes, cement blocks, road construction equipment and toilet paper. Manufacturing activities originated in the Biafran war when a local aluminum factory was built to support the war effort. The region also had a long history of palm oil traders who early on invested in transportation and, after the war, specialized in motor parts. This specialization enabled networks to be elaborated with various Asian manufacturers, so that spare parts originally engineered abroad were increasingly produced locally.[xxxvi] All firms started small, but by 1994, averaged 125 workers per factory.

What is particularly striking about the development of this industrial district is that it works in a national context where aggregate industrial output has experienced virtually zero growth for some time. The diminution of growth results in a subsequent reduction in domestic demand, inflationary pressures, and the unavailability of foreign exchange. Tariff rates have not significantly changed to favor local production. Fluctuating values of the national currency made costs of imported inputs unpredictable, and commercial trade has generally remained more profitable than manufacturing. In other words, there is little in the Nigerian macro-economic environment that could be counted upon to reduce transaction costs.

The Nnewi enterprises reduced transaction costs through further elaborating a specific history of entrepreneurship. Each manufacturer started as a trader in a vibrant spare parts market with Asian suppliers. Many of them had a good education, owned their own transport, and most

decided to produce one of the many primary products they traded in, thus taking advantage of already existent distribution networks. These distribution networks were both tightly controlled through lineage and decentralized—a mixture of an extended family based system and modern entrepreneurship. Rather than consigning goods on credit, these enterprises required purchasers to remit deposits. These deposits could be immediately used as working capital—necessary for ensuring adequate telecommunications, water and electrical supplies in an environment where the public provision of power is very erratic. Shares in firms were also offered informally within trust-based social networks.[xxxvii]

The interaction of well-developed domestic and international networks is particularly important to the success of these enterprises. Through their long experience as traders, a proficient circulation of information is used to accurately calculate product demand. Nnewi entrepreneurs have formed various professional associations, which also promote information exchange. Their involvement in the spare parts sector exposed them to various Asian production systems and gave them access to a wide range of technological options. Asian and Nnewi manufacturers have developed substantial trust in their dealings with each other, which opens up possibilities for expanded markets and technological upgrades.[xxxviii]

The productivity of these firms is impressive. Their ability to expand and become increasingly competitive, however, is largely contingent upon productivity gains in other sectors of the Nigerian economy. More safeguards around assets and greater macro-economic stability are also needed. Although it is possible to discern the "twinkling" of significant post-Fordist industrial development in Africa, the complexities and externalities incumbent in such development require expanding circuits of articulation among diverse sectors and a solid platform for these circuits.

Linking Spaces in the City; Linking City and Countryside
Markets are about bringing different people and activities together for some kind of mutual benefit. Urban Africans have frequently been very proficient at such transactions. The key is how different kinds of resourcefulness that exist within the city can be brought together.

One of the important economic challenges facing African cities is that dense and highly populated urban perimeters must be better integrated with urban cores. This is of great economic importance since urban perimeters bring rural and urbanized functions into a proximity that has yet to be fully capitalized. On the one hand, urban peripheries are the site of labor-intensive agricultural activities. These include market gardening, fruit growing, and small-stock breeding that play an important role in providing food for local urban markets. Here, production, marketing and the limited processing activities that do take place often rely heavily on a wide range of informal processes, especially in terms of land access and use. On the other hand, urban peripheries are residential areas for those who have been economically pushed out of the older urban cores and seek lower-cost areas in which to live. Properties closer to the urban center are frequently rented out as the primary source of household income. Additionally, entrepreneurs in overcrowded inner city quarters confront both spatial and economic limitations to expansion, and move their operations to more peripheral locations.

Given the fact that the contribution of rural migration to urban growth is slowing substantially,[xxxix] more capital-intensive agricultural production is now theoretically possible. Hence, the urban perimeters could be the sites of larger farms with more synergy to export markets.[xl] Cash crops and production systems need to be developed which have higher valued added per quantity of water used and inputs absorbed. Such capital-intensive production usually requires a substantial rationalization of land ownership and management.

For the most part, urban perimeters have absorbed the varying uses made of them. They are places for the expansion of capital-intensive agriculture, sites of small-scale farms for local production, low-cost places of residence, and places where small and medium scale entrepreneurship can expand. Substantive intersections or conflicts between these varying uses have so far been limited. Municipalities are beginning to recognize that the urban fringe is as complex an urban dynamic as the core. As has been pointed out in Asia, spatial positioning alone is not sufficient to say anything about social composition or function within regional and urban systems.[xli]

There is some initial African evidence of increasing lateral movement across different rural areas and across different secondary towns, and even, in some instances, significant urban to rural migration.[xlii] The sustainability of cities is partially dependent upon how well they can influence other rural and secondary urban dimensions within the national and regional territories in which they are situated. Accordingly, the process of giving the city "definition" in part rests with understanding how it is positioned in territories larger than itself, and most immediately, how it is positioned in rural areas that surround it. A focus on rural-urban linkages is an important aspect of urban development planning. Substantiating these linkages means generating increased rural demand for urban services and provoking greater social and economic differentiation in the city—i.e., an economic profusion of "boundaries." Here, boundaries refer to distinctions among activities, identities, and functions that bring greater diversity to the overall economy.

Substantive rural-urban linkages would make African cities more amenable to a "thorough" and "normative urbanization." In other words, economic actors and households would specialize in particular sectors and activities. As was pointed out before, most urban residents continue to hedge their bets and spread resources and energies around a wide range of activities that are never really developed or capitalized. This hedging of bets deters urbanization and limits consumption capacities. Limited consumption constrains the potential output and economic wellbeing of rural areas.[xliii]

If linkaging can affect the spatial concentration of economic activities, as well as shape the ways specific concentrations of population radiate out from major urban centers, a gradual integration of small markets, once isolated and unable to resist the pressure of imports, becomes possible.[xliv] Integration leads to the specialization of production areas, market-led farming, the growth of the trade in food products and the establishment of niche markets. Specialization is based on an assessment of comparative advantage as sub-regional trade opens up. In this instance, it makes little sense, for example, for the Senegal River Delta to produce rice, when it can be produced much more cheaply in Mali.[xlv]

Substantiating rural-urban linkages may require a more open-ended definition of the city, particularly from the point of view of sustaining the city. A more open-ended definition of where the city begins and ends, and what it does or doesn't do, contrasts to the "tightening" of coherence and boundaries usually implied in most current urban restructuring activities. For a well-defined consolidation of the urban-- its boundaries and its functions, its precise definition of parts and interactions-- may unwittingly reaffirm a sense of urban primacy. And urban primacy has already been demonstrated to have little use in making rural and urban areas more productive and better linked.

One of the cornerstones of structural adjustment policies was to end an artificial urban bias. An urban bias limited the resources available to rural producers and communities. Rural areas were too often seen as homogenous. Proximity to urban services and institutions was viewed as a good thing for rural areas. For proximity meant that benefits were distributed equally between the rural

and the urban.[xlvi] Yet, spatial proximity does not by itself mean that rural practices and livelihoods necessarily have social and spatial access to diverse urban functions or resources.

What is required for productive urban-rural linkages is what has been often difficult to accomplish within the primary urban systems themselves: a network approach that is geared toward "filling the spaces in-between". In other words, more lateral connections are needed between settlements and activities in a polycentered spatialization of horizontal, complementary and reciprocal activities. But it is precisely this effort to forge lateral connections that constitutes a concrete context in which to promote new governance behaviors. The promotion of new kinds of transparency, accountability, democratic practice, and cooperation that often prove so difficult to operationalize within communities, with their hierarchies and traditions, may prove more fruitful in the "marketing" of new transactions between communities.

Rural settlements and secondary towns are usually singularly focused on the big city. As a result, they lock themselves into often highly exploitative or marginalizing relationships. On the flip side, significant domains of production become unavailable to urban actors. Still, in a regional network approach, various forms of clustering are forged among settlements, each with their own specialization and localized administrative, cultural and commercial relationships.[xlvii]

Both multilateral and national investments have focused on improving transportation links between towns and rural areas. But even when transportation links are good, the marketing of rural goods may still be subject to monopolistic practices. Increases in available supply may dampen per unit prices. Specific villages may lack any comparative advantage in terms of marketing their specialized products.[xlviii]

Therefore, a network approach requires a disaggregated set of policy initiatives that can take into consideration substantial variations in a region's resources. The city becomes linked to the region in more diverse ways. In some instances, manufacturing functions may be distributed outside of the city along major transport routes. Quarters or districts may develop that are more substantially linked with particular rural clusters than they are with other parts of the city.

In the context of such linkages, it easier to think about reducing the extreme "centrality" that characterizes urban development—i.e., where the significant investment goes to making an even more modern city limited to well-built banks, hotels, offices and ancillary services often demarcated in a highly centralized fashion. An appreciation of such linkages also allows what El-Shakhs calls "multi-nucleated" regional development. Here, the "cores" of local social communities are preserved. These cores reproduce themselves as specific nodes in the overall sustainability of particular urban processes.[xlix] According to El-Shakhs, communities are able to preserve and cultivate a specific urban "memory", that is, specific ways of doing things and of keeping themselves dynamic. Communities will differ in their "memories" and in their incentives and arrangements. Thus, social communities become potential sites for the decentralization of particular activities, administrative functions or niche markets. The trick becomes to identify such communities, see how they correspond to administrative designations, and negotiate the common terms through which they are willing and able to work together and/or work apart.

Note: The Dawanau market in Kano, the Adjame market in Abidjan, the New Bell market in Douala, the Grand Marche in Lomé, and the Mafoundi market in Yaounde are particularly salient examples of how specific marketing practices have enabled an upscaling of urban economic activity with wide regional reach.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

a. Encourage local partners to substantiate their assessments of local economic resources, activities, trajectories of economic development, policy frameworks, cultures of entrepreneurship, locational advantages, and possible leading edge strategies.

b. Encourage an identification of the nature of economic and entrepreneurial innovation that exists in the city. The focus should be on localized initiatives, policy frameworks, changes in the organization and management of formal firms, with a general overview of their operations, domains and organization, including an assessment of factors that would either facilitate or impede mainstreaming, up-scaling, and synergistic articulation or networking among discrete innovations.

c. Promote a networking process which retrieves information and documents relevant to the theme from a broad range of local, national, regional and international institutions, assesses the interventions underway in terms of existing governmental and civil society bilateral and multilateral agreements.

d. Extend the city consultation process to bring together actors across sectors involved in the generation of economic innovation, including key business and public officials, key associations in civil society and the public sector. Deliberations would focus on how best to: i) identify local economic resources and resourcefulness; ii) maximize existing economic capacities, emphasizing policy frameworks and institutional practices most conducive to promoting articulations and networking among discrete economic activities; iii) identify the potentials and problems inherent in the operations of new economic associations that have emerged from the urban associational movement; iv) identify specific possible policy frameworks, institutional practices, and organizational structures potentially capable of integrating local urban "real" economies into an overall urban economic development strategy and productivity gains and; v) identify terms of reference and organizational modality for elaboration of strategic action plan and follow-up

CHANGING NOTIONS OF SOCIAL SOLIDARITY

How people are connected to each other is something that has given rise to great anxiety, conflict and experimentation in urban Africa. Increased mobility of urban populations among locations marked by ever-increasing disparities in economic capacity means that city residents witness more people suddenly accumulating and losing material wealth. As a result, the pressures for maintaining a sense of cohesion within the framework of extended family systems and the practices of resource distribution that go with it are enormous. The capacity of good governance norms to affect how people act on a day to day basis depends greatly on the ability of residents to feel confident in the strength of these social connections.

There is a preoccupation on the part of many residents in African cities with the extent to which they are tied to the fates of others whom they witness "sinking " all around them. At the same time, they hope that the ties around them are sufficiently strong to rescue them if need be.[l]

In part, the solidity of social connections enabled extended family members to seek out livelihood possibilities far from home. It enabled them to be prepared to shift gears at any moment, to undertake arduous journeys and live under precarious circumstances. Whatever benefits accrued from migration were largely remitted back home and sometimes became the primary income of many families. Distance from home did not connote disconnection from place.

But in recent years an intensity of disconnection has set in. Increasingly, emigration is motivated by the sense that the only way to remain at home is to accumulate large sums of disposable cash, or at least acquire the credentials that can be converted into well-remunerated status. While household dependency on remittances and inter-household transfers has increased, migrants are less concerned about using their labor to help families to remain in place.[li]

Even efforts at consolidating a sense of place can make the city seem less cohesive. For example, Dakar, Accra, and Lagos have witnessed the explosive growth of housing starts in the past decade, as repatriated earnings are usually invested in land acquisition and home construction. While at one level, this investment represents an ongoing commitment to consolidating a place in the city, the widespread corruption and shabby work of contractors, the inflated costs of building materials, and the volatility of financial transactions have acted against much of the long-term security sought by investors. In addition, since the bulk of such investment is placed in construction, rather than in explicit production-centered activities[lii], the notion of what place is becomes increasingly narrow. In other words, property is divorced from the prospective viability of the larger economic context in which it is situated, thus in turn, requiring greater levels of transactions with other places, most usually Europe, in order to sustain it.

In cities with shrinking resources and opportunities, increased conflict emerges over who will control the vehicles of inter-mediation and transaction among communities, between communities and the state, and between the state and larger scales. Given the anxieties associated with the elaboration of social connections and the intensified concerns about who can legitimately do what with who under what circumstances, these more expansive instances of social collaboration may often require heightened levels of invisibility in order to be functional.

In contrast to conventional notions of transparency, such invisibility allows a space of operation for actions that everyone may know are taking place but without having to be recognized in a direct visual way. For if such clarity is produced, it may compel a spiraling need to make comparative assessments--in other words, assessments about which kind of people get to have

what kinds of rights, resources and opportunities as compared to others. These are comparisons that many urban Africans, who have valued a strong sense of social equanimity, have attempted to avoid.

While a sense of caution, consensus and inclusiveness is often important to livelihood in conditions of scarcity, it has often been achieved at the expense of dynamic contributions to the public sphere. Making action plans based on deterring potentially negative reactions on the part of diverse actors with whom an individual, household, community or institution is connected too often settles for the minimum when bold strokes are called for. But as Emmanuel Eze points out, such boldness needs confidence in a set of practices that anticipate and cope with fundamental social disagreements.[liii]

To the extent to which the identified norms of good governance can provoke, manage, and render fruitful such disagreement they will have contributed greatly. But these norms are not ends in themselves; they do not guarantee specific outcomes of urban well being. Rather, they set the stage for an important engagement among various actors and dimensions of urban life in order for new outcomes to emerge, rooted in practices that embody a sense of the city as a place of change and vitality.

Note: Changes in social solidarity are being affected by various factors in different cities and by the different ways that economic hardship is manifested. By increasing transnational migration in Dakar; political and regional divides in Abidjan; mega-urbanization in Lagos; changes in rural-urban relationships for residents of Lusaka; economic implosion in Kinshasa; increased religious tensions in Addis Ababa; fall out from protracted war in Luanda; political repression in Harare—to name a few.

THE IMPORTANCE OF URBAN MEMORY

Dynamic communities require an ability to actively situate their present circumstances into an historical perspective. Such perspective concerns how the community comes into existence, what has been tried, and how the current arrangements of everyday living are always in part an expression of what it was possible to do in the past. Without such a perspective, communities are haunted rather than enriched by what has come before.

Memory is the active process of remaking the framework through which actors understand what is happening to them in their daily lives. Social conflict in cities is being partly driven on the basis of the memories urban actors have about what constitute viable spatial coordinates within which everyday life can be conducted and livelihoods secured. In other words, memories are about finding ways of situating oneself in the world best suited to the kinds of challenges one is facing. For the question urban residents face is, what territorial arenas, identifications, and ways of affiliating are most effective in terms of securing livelihood and opportunity in increasingly difficult and uncertain times?

Here, memory is an act of popular urban imagination--and such imagination is work that is essential for sustainable urban life. Conflict about memory is a way actors try to de-link

themselves from certain enforced ways of thinking about the city and how one should act in it, as a well as a means for attempting to implement new references.

But the acknowledged antecedents of conflict--i.e. stories about what started the conflict--and the language through which such conflicts are waged too often center on very partial and distorted histories--ones that tend to efface important stories of collaboration among diverse interests and groups. One can observe this process repeatedly in the accounts coming from the violent explosions during the past several years in Kaduna, Bauchi, Lagos, Jos, and other Nigerian cities.[liv] Greater transparency in the history of cities is as important as transparency in the formal institutional mechanisms of urban politics.

Given the fact that most African cities were the products of a long-term and changing engagement between Europeans and Africans, it is alarming how little that engagement is made the object of systematic public examination. Of course, most families have their particular stories, collective resentments are still fresh in the minds of many, and there remains a kind of collective guilt that the administration of urban life remained fundamentally outside of formal African control for so long.

But throughout the postcolonial era, public authorities often acted as if nothing had taken place before their tenure. Because changes in power have been so often arbitrary, erratic and highly manipulated, those who come to rule remain fundamentally insecure about their own authority and competence. Too often this insecurity has been compensated by "wiping out" any traces of past regimes. But an excessive number of so-called "fresh starts" usually ends up by maintaining too many of the policies, laws and institutional mechanisms of the past.

This accumulated absence of active memory has produced a situation where the city is perceived as something not to be acted on. A city can be lived in or can be the source of livelihood, but the city, itself, is not something that one attempts to address.

Consequently, cities have been perceived as almost "foreign objects", full of threats and blockages that must be circumvented; something that has a life of its own apart from whatever actions residents take within it. Thus, the city is not something that residents make or where their actions have implications elsewhere. Such attitudes are clearly seen in the aftermath of long efforts to mobilize local communities to elaborate a sense of urban citizenship through taking initiatives to manage their local environments. While local residents have become increasingly active in improving their environments, their sense of belonging and their sense of what spatial frameworks are relevant for their well being often remain highly localized.

While such local initiatives are important and usually productive, they seldom have cognizance of what other people in other parts of the city are doing, and how their actions are or could be connected. Cities are made. Unless a heightened knowledge of the pasts of cities are made part of the immediacy of residents' everyday lives in the present, they will not fully appreciate the fact that the cities in which they live are, substantially even if not wholly, their creations. Thus, their involvement in the governance of cities will remain tentative.

Different sectoral actors must find ways of paying more attention to enabling urban populations to attain a broader understanding of how the city has come to look and operate as it has. They must open up the varied and often contradictory ways in which different urban actors tried to deal with the constraints and possibilities of this engagement in the past to public debate. By not making this past more transparent, civic involvement remains largely passive as if the present realities have no connection to people's own actions and choices.

The accumulated skills and resources applied to building functional urban livelihoods have had little to do with the policies and planning procedures that have determined what gets officially recognized as valuable contributions, construction, and livelihood. This reality must be changed. It must be changed by first making the city the conscious object of discussion and examination-- in schools, religious institutions, communities, and local authorities. The city can no longer afford to be a "hands off" proposition--a strangely disconcerting attitude perpetrated by officials in cities where hands are all over the place trying to make something work.

Note: Conflicts around memory—whose memory counts, how memory is to inform present affairs, and whose memory has the greatest validity or authenticity—have become particularly salient issues for urban struggles in Johannesburg and Cape Town, Dar es Salaam, N'djamena, Freetown and Monrovia, Bangui, Lagos, Goma, Kigali, Bujumbura, Khartoum, Kigoma, Pointe Noire, Zinder, Mombassa, and Ziguinchor.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

a. Encourage local partners to retrieve, catalogue, and synthesize archival materials that exist regarding their respective cities. Encourage a process of ongoing documentation as a basis for future deliberations. Make use of older generations of informants possessing a capacity to render oral histories of cities.

b. Encourage history of the city as an important element of school curricula at all levels. Organize special days in churches, mosques, and associations for the presentation of oral histories and other documentation regarding city history. Encourage newspapers and media to incorporate special pages or programs on urban historical review, as well as the delineation of key city events on this day in history.

c. Encourage heritage preservation, not only in terms of architectural heritage, but also festivals, memorials, or celebrations that recall key urban institutions, actors, and movements from the past.

IMPROVING MUNICIPAL PROFICIENCY:

The Opportunities and Limitations of Subsidiarity

Conventional wisdom says that a more proficient mobilization, organization and deployment of local resources and resourcefulness is best accomplished by a comprehensive decentralization of governmental authority and financial responsibility to the municipal level. The conventional thinking is that only when urban citizens take responsibility for the management of their political affairs will they feel secure enough to become proficient entrepreneurs and forward looking in their individual and collective initiatives.

African urban citizens have largely been left out of the picture until recently. Most planning decisions have been taken in reference to legal frameworks and development procedures that were often little more than direct copies of those of the former colonial authorities.[lv] After a brief period of local experimentation with urban development policies and practices, the key actors increasingly deferred to the agendas of multilateral organizations. As these same organizations are now instructing municipalities to become increasingly self-reliant, it is often difficult to see exactly what space is available for context-specific forms of such reliance to take root.

In the prevailing process of subsidiarity, i.e. of bringing management of public affairs and goods down to the most immediate and practical levels of where they actually take effect, municipal authorities are supposed to act with increased measures of fiscal autonomy. Municipal authorities are to take on more responsibility for covering larger shares of their operating costs. In this respect, municipal governments in many African cities are caught in a persistent bind. Improvements in physical and administrative infrastructure are necessary in order to make peoples' activities more productive. By being more productive, these activities can generate increased amounts of revenue. Then municipal governments can use this revenue to improve the overall urban environment.

As the tax base of most cities remains very limited, however, municipalities are not able to raise sufficient funds in the interim so as to have some kind of working capital to make these improvements. At times, authorities become more coercive and deceitful in their efforts to raise revenue, further alienating citizens that must be increasingly engaged.[lvi] Trying to address these dilemmas has been one of the main features of externally induced policy and project initiatives.[lvii]

Fiscal Politics

The current trend is toward sector-wide strategies. These strategies focus on creating economies of agglomeration, that is, basically taking what exists and finding new ways to organize, link and substantiate it. Fostering greater links between training and job creation is an important component of these economies of agglomeration. Theoretically, these links will, in turn, bring about virtuous cycles. Targeted investments in human capital creation, employment and entrepreneurship, largely managed outside of the public realm, will result in better health and living conditions. Improvement in these conditions will result in a more solid base of human capital and so forth.

Local governments now rely heavily on various forms of municipal development funds. Here, the central government uses its credit rating to access funds on capital markets for municipal development. Alternately, a more privatized formula is used, where the government provides liquidity but does not assume the subsequent risk.[lviii] Now, most states and international organizations promote mixed funding, i.e., grants, loans, internally generated revenue,

governmental transfers, foreign direct investment, etc., for urban development needs. In fact, most urban development projects now necessitate mixed funding. Grants are conditional upon accessing loan financing, which are themselves conditional upon governmental guarantees. Such development financing assumes the existence of suitable credit markets for municipalities and attractive repayment conditions, both of which are rare.

So far, decentralization has encumbered municipalities with increased burdens of tax collection that are not compensated by an increased share of national revenue. This is particularly the case in Francophone countries. Composite figures for West Africa show that local government budgets represent less than 1per cent of GDP, and 3-5 per cent of state budgets in economies where public revenues are only 15 per cent of the GDP.[lix] While US $20 per annum is spent for residents in the somewhat better off cities of Abidjan and Dakar, only $4-6 is spent on average for other African capital cities.[lx] West African local authorities spend 1/100th the amount per capita as their European equivalents.[lxi] If medium size West African cities were to set aside 3 per cent of their budgets for routine maintenance and 2% for larger operations and renewal projects, they would spend twice the amount of their overall budget and more than twenty times what they do actually spend in these areas.[lxii]

In most African urban contexts, a variety of revenue burdens predominate. Rate-of-return targets are too high; loan repayments tend to exceed local government capacity; and municipal governments are often bogged down with time-consuming cadaster projects that will only increase revenue generation in the long-term. Additionally, indirect taxes are the only real source of cost-recovery for non-revenue-generating services such as road maintenance, waste management and drainage.

While municipalities in "normal" conditions would be expected to rely heavily on revenue generation through taxing property, such practice proves difficult in most African cities. Reliance on property as the locus of taxation is often constrained by inadequate land registration systems, lack of formal property titles, excessive exemptions available to those who develop land, and a lack of compliance due to poor delivery of services. In light of these problems, the Municipal Development Program has been piloting several "simple tax" programs in Benin as a way of cultivating the involvement of the broadest range of citizens in what might be popularly perceived as a fair process of revenue generation.

There has been a significant devolution of responsibility to the local level. Yet, there has not been an equivalent devolution of political and fiscal power. While states may now have more options to access development and operational financing for municipalities, they are not generally providing a fair share of the national fiscus for cities. In most Francophone countries, the state has first claim on whatever resources are available. The state is supposed to raise money for municipalities and inform them well in advance of the budgeted allocation. But this is seldom the case. The system becomes distorted with too many tax exemptions and too much incorrect information. As a result, cities find it difficult to generate realistic plans, leading almost always to excessive amounts of deficit spending.[lxiii]

In Guinea, 40 per cent of business taxes and 60 per cent of property taxes go the state, with the rest shared between Conakry and its constituent districts. Central government transfers account for only 10 per cent of the capital city's budget.[lxiv] As large urban centers are also decentralized into multiple municipalities, a skewing of capacities within the urban centers is also taking place. In Côte D'Ivoire, the ten municipalities that make up Greater Abidjan can borrow from a local public fund to complete district servicing projects. The aim of these projects is to bring in rapid returns through the construction, for example, of markets and bus stations. This fund was

established with 71 per cent World Bank and 29 per cent national government funding. Yet, there are increasing disparities among districts. For example, while the per capita capital budget of the former European district of Plateau was 60 times higher in 1987 that that of the peripheral district of Attécoubé; it was 99 times higher in 1990.[lxv]

In order to deal with the lingering problems of balancing responsibility and financial capacity and to deter further fragmentation within urban systems, a general agreement among multilateral and other donor groupings has coalesced around several objectives:[lxvi]

- To coordinate municipal and national regulatory frameworks so as to promote greater municipal autonomy, as reflected in the trends to establish municipal accounts;
- To diversify the character of state-local transfers, e.g., investment funds, shared tax revenues, global operating grants, devolution of property gains;
- To focus on realistic taxation. For example, to center on the use of property and facilities rather than on ownership;
- To identify new modalities of taxation, e.g., asset ownership, asset appreciation (capital gains, property appreciation), transfer of property, use of property (such as "residential" or "housing" taxes) and;
- To assess the extent to which administration costs of specific interventions outweigh the potential gains. For example, the problem with investments in cadaster systems is that, instead of generating a working understanding of the social composition and profiles of urban districts, attention has been paid to the spatial positioning of specific population centers and other urban assets, which are much less useful for taxation purposes.

What Olowu calls a "polycentric constitutional order" is likely a necessary legal platform on which effective decentralization will have to proceed. While there needs to be constitutional guarantees that ensure the adoption of specific electoral modes and governmental relations, statutory provisions are also necessary as a means of gradually phasing in changes in the overall political system and distribution of powers. Here, different scales and branches of governmental responsibility must progressively get used to new roles and capacities.[lxvii]

Governance as Networks of Collaboration
Contemporary notions of governance emphasize that institutions should forge some kind of consensus about how the different social and organizational practices these institutions embody can interact with each other for the good of the city as a whole. Additionally, it is through these interactions that institutions can change what they think is possible to do, and thus their role in the city. It is through these interactions that they can come up with methods for achieving these new possibilities.[lxviii]

Even if they prove effective, these processes of governance are essentially precarious and unstable. Social relationships are isolated from the complex and continuous web of causal connections in which they take place. These social relationships are then set up as both explicit objects and instruments of governance. Such maneuvers undoubtedly generate unanticipated consequences. These consequences can make certain interests and collaborations visible that have not been visible before. They can often reveal worrisome facets in the character of powerful and/or trusted actors.[lxix]

For example, intersecting extended family networks have been the key locus of decision-making and resource allocation in many African urban neighborhoods. Even when formal political parties may compete for power, or institutions are delegated formal authority to carry out specific

functions, these family networks remain the critical domain through which support or opposition is mobilized for particular projects.

As has been indicated before, the recent wave of decentralization gives sub-municipalities greater responsibility for managing their affairs. Local NGOs and local municipal councilors, working together to find new ways of managing these new responsibilities, have often tried to bring these family-based networks into formal governance processes. They have tried to make visible the critical roles they have played in the "real governance" of these communities. Such a project, however, has sometimes backfired, exacerbating deep divisions within these networks. Incorporating these networks into formal governance arrangements can fragment their apparent coherence, and even set off debilitating power struggles. While such struggles may have taken place all along, there had, nevertheless, been implicit agreements in the past to maintain an image of cooperation and power sharing.

As I have also emphasized before, municipal institutions must find ways of working with such networks despite the complications. Therefore, governance doesn't make sense unless, from the outset, we understand it as a plurality of mechanisms and strategic orientations that seek flexibility and an ability to change gears. This flexibility is particularly important in African cities where negotiating forums and new frameworks of local governance seem to constantly rearrange political alliances.

For example, the activism of certain community groups and key actors in some instances has been discovered to depend upon the inactivity or invisibility of other groups. These other groups used the political openings created by the formation of new municipal structures to secure the power necessary to maintain their relative invisibility. In other instances, intersectoral coalitions—of community associations, welfare groups, NGOs, unions, and government-- give rise to "ethnic interests" in places where they hadn't really existed before.

Put simply, governance means bringing different identities and interests together. Under decentralization, there have been many instances of new NGOs or community associations being formed "overnight." In many urban quarters, NGOs and associations that have been around for a long time usually made a point about the fact that anyone from the community could participate. After all, in highly undemocratic national contexts, NGOs and local associations based a large measure of their legitimacy on being places where democratic values and practices would predominate.

As municipal governance increasingly values the activity and inclusion of representatives of various communities and sectors, the specification of local identities or interests now makes up a possible vehicle for participating in political power. Accordingly, many associations and NGOs have often become less open and have frequently placed restrictions on who can participate. They narrow their work so as to consolidate themselves as having distinct identities, and then demand inclusion in the partnership process.[lxx] In many cities, levels of participation have, at least, become more formally differentiated, with certain activities and rights only available to certain kinds of participants. In response to these new local politics, residents try and find a variety of ways to make themselves special or particular. They try to embody key interests that can't be ignored.[lxxi]

No matter how irrelevant ethnic identity might be to most features of daily life in many urban quarters, it becomes an easy way of marking-out "distinct" interests and identities. This mobilization of "ethnic interest" is, however, activating the participation of people in local affairs that never had been involved in the past. The potential problem with this new participation is that

it is often oriented to seeking alternative forms of jurisdiction and legitimacy outside coalition-based forms of local governance.[lxxii]

In the end, the key to increased municipal proficiency has less to do with structural issues than it does with expanding and better-capacitated participation on the part of urban residents in different facets of public affairs. Unless participation is enhanced, it is unlikely that municipalities will acquire the political leverage necessary to access their fair share of the resources necessary to substantially improve service delivery, institutional functioning and infrastructure development.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

a. Support comparative assessments on strengthening participatory city-planning processes already underway in specific cities. Particular attention should be paid to the capacity and potentials of such processes to promote a general, shared identification and interest on the part of specific sectoral, community and institutional actors in the development and governance of the urban system as a whole. Important facets of such a comparative assessment might include the following:

⚔ conduct a historical analysis of local political dynamics affecting the disposition of participatory city-planning structures and processes, based on discussions with relevant sectoral actors;

⚔ situate this analysis in a broader contextual survey of urban and national economic and political trends, key events, and forms of local initiative and activism;

⚔ identify opportunities and constraints in the elaboration of participatory city-planning processes, with attention to resource management, income generation for local authorities, responsibility for service provision, alterations in regulatory environments, social conflicts among communities;

⚔ conduct an evaluative consultation among key stakeholders to discuss ways of improving, extending, and/or deepening participatory processes;

⚔ recommend, in consultation with stakeholders, specific programmatic and institutional supports geared toward operationalizing, sustaining, and mainstreaming participatory city-planning processes, particularly in the areas of consolidating partnerships and conjoint responsibility for elaborating economic development strategic plans and practices;

⚔ facilitate a networking process to identify potential regional and international partners to facilitate funding of capacity-building and institutional support programs and;

⚔ consolidate diverse experiences in different cities into a regional conceptual and programmatic framework of municipal development in Africa as a reference in future program development.

b. Build on the Urban Management Program City Consultation process.[1] Particularly important is the generation of flexible organizational structures capable of managing new partnership arrangements and direct competing institutional or sectoral objectives to shared end-results. Opportunities for low-key exchange and negotiations are often the most fruitful, especially in promoting substantive engagement between marginalized and unorganized segments of the urban population and local officials. Elaboration of cross-sectoral partnership programs is often largely contingent upon enhancing the capacities of inter-governmental coordination—a process which often requires trust and cooperation build up over time through the management

c. Ensure respect and patience with rule-making processes. In African urban contexts, demands for the respect for law and rules exceeds any appreciation of what they are intended to guarantee, i.e., a structured arena providing justice, equanimity, consistency and security to fundamental social transactions. Too often, rules regarding how elections are conducted, boundaries demarcated, and responsibilities for service delivery delegated are constantly shifted to suit political interests, avoid responsibility, or act as problem-solving mechanisms. Much legislative activity is presently taking place in Africa. New municipalities are being established, as are new rules for ensuring more democratic representation, as well as the disposition of resources. "Democracy" and "good governance" are thus names under which implicit permission to alter constitutions, by-laws, electoral procedures, and tax codes are being made. Assuming that laws and rules appropriate to sectoral requirements and cultural contexts are arrived at, there should be adequate time periods allotted in order for the rules to have their effect. Sufficient time must pass for populations to accustom themselves to conducting the various transactions concerned under the direction posited by the existing rules. Such a time period is necessary not only to adequately assess the effect of these rules but also to provide opportunities for urban populations to live under the larger sense of having clearly deliberated and drawn frameworks of societal guidance. If such laws prove inadequate to the task or context, they can be altered. However constant alteration, as is evident in many African contexts today, tends to produce rules as "fetishes" and objects of manipulation, rather than guidance. Thus, good governance campaigns must emphasize broad consultation in the law and regulation-making process and, then, respect for this process as would be demonstrated in guaranteeing at least a *de facto* moratorium on any short-term changes on the rules and laws that ensue from it.

[1] *Urban Management Program, 2001, Implementing the Habitat Agenda: Urban Management Program Case Studies. UN-HABITAT*

ENGAGING PROBLEMATIC URBAN PROCESSES AND LIVELIHOODS:

The Relationships Between Governance Norms and Livelihoods

The accumulated years of popular disillusionment with the state, the labor-intensive demands of securing basic needs, the entrenched "negotiability" of justice, and the effects of internationally mandated and supervised economic reform processes have largely overwhelmed the practices of social reciprocity among urban residents.[lxxiii] As a result, the mechanisms through which local economies expand in scale and coalesce into new political formations are often unclear, as well as often murky and problematic. They can entail highly tenuous and frequently clandestine articulations among, for example, religious and fraternal networks, public officials operating in private capacities, clientelist networks mobilizing very cheap labor, foreign political parties, and transnational corporations operating outside of conventional procedures.[lxxiv]

With these economic scenarios come more flexible configurations of associational life, political identities less dependent on the cohesion of specific places and territories, as well as, on the other hand, obsessive preoccupations with origins and belonging.[lxxv] Consequently, the efforts to balance contradictory scenarios of well-being are becoming more volatile and uncertain in many African cities.

African cities have sometimes been dynamic platforms for elaborating new ways of life and affecting profound social transformations in how people organize themselves and their livelihoods. Good governance norms can both clarify and obscure the challenges of contemporary urban life. On the one hand, an explicit focus on values enables questions concerning the management of urban processes to hone in on the critical dimensions of how cities are actually live, how they are used, and how urban actors relate to one another.

The difficulty is that the specification of such norms often ends up addressing very different objectives and functions of governance. These objectives and functions do not easily coincide or necessarily follow from each other. The progressive informalization of African urban economies and social life represents, in part, a major restructuring of livelihood and how residents deal with urban life. The operative values, everyday social arrangements, and the predominant practices through which the city is navigated and its resources appropriated and deployed are being subject to major changes. While intensifying and broadening levels of impoverishment are seen as diminishing the city's productive capacities, the gradual normalization of economic and social activities that run counter to both local and more universalized values is seen as more worrying. In other words, the ways in which residents are compelled to reproduce their social and economic lives increasingly fall outside the prevailing notions about what it means to live a good and virtuous life.

While the inability of national and urban economies to provide for basic needs and a minimum series of supports can be viewed as the primary factor in this gradual erosion of ethical citizenship, more effective provisioning systems alone do not necessarily result in the renewal of a virtuous life. At the same time, African urban residents have often attempted to construct a proper and fulfilled life through an entrepreneurial orientation that depends upon diversifying the kinds of situations and persons with whom they transact. A continuous interaction among these diversities is pursued. The workplace, the home, the neighborhood--as well as various processes of production, consumption, investment, favor giving/receiving-- are used as sites for individual initiative and for diversifying a person's socioeconomic position. The all too frequent problem in Africa is that actions otherwise infused with deep moral values either become instruments of

crass accumulation for the few or run up against the government's unrealistic assumptions about how people are supposed to act in cities.

The issue is what kinds of conditions must be created in order for citizens to meet their social and economic needs in a sustainable fashion.[lxxvi] In cities facing larger numbers of fragmented households, extended family networks, and community support systems, where employment, education and health opportunities are diminishing, the critical question is not only whether residents can piece together some form of livelihood, but also how they do it. Governance norms which focus on decentralization, participation, transparency, and so forth attempt to assert the need to bring the process of governing and development as close to the people and their practices as possible. But often the closer government comes to the people, the closer it comes to a series of diffuse, and often illicit, everyday practices relied upon in order to provide for everyday needs.

Thus, public institutions bound to highly circumscribed notions of legality face clear limitations in how they can engage and negotiate with many of the everyday realities of urban life. The capacity of engagement, and thus administration and development, depends greatly on the formation of community structures, at once representative of what really takes place in the life of a community and also legitimate in the eyes of the state. Even when municipal-community relations are mediated through practices of subsidiarity and legitimate community institutions, negotiating this balance of cooperation and compliance is a difficult process. Such difficulties are often why municipalities believe that their primary functions are to simply deliver a core set of services and to foster infrastructure development.

But for cities with limited economic resources and many poor citizens—where various modalities of self-provisioning have been the norm for a long time—increases in service delivery efficiencies and the provision of infrastructure do not necessarily contribute to sustainable communities. Too often the assumption is made that providing more houses, more clinics, more recreational facilities, or more water pumps will in and of themselves, enable local citizens to relate to each other with greater respect, provide greater levels of household and community cohesion, and promote greater economic collaboration.

But important challenges remain. How are communities likely to accommodate or adapt to major interventions in terms of housing and resource provision? Who is likely to have access to what kinds of changes; what are some of the probable effects that such changes are likely to have on existent local economies and support practices?

Norms and a Development Agenda
The issue is how municipal government can best set the agenda for the viable development of the city as a whole. This is a process that requires a broad range of public and civil institutions to at least know how residents are using the city and how they are organizing their everyday life. In addition, it is a process that requires active consensus among citizens about the "right" values and behaviors, as well as their pursuit of them. It requires that households are capable of socializing children and youth into the proper moral orientations toward everyday conduct. It requires that residents are identifiable as members of specific residences, social and work units. In order for a municipality to govern, it must have clearly defined subjects to govern.

For cities long unable to adequately provide for the populations that operate within them, how are spaces constructed through which knowledge of urban life is best and appropriately accessed? How can residents participate in the formal management of local affairs in ways that best produce themselves as citizens?[lxxvii] In this line, there has been wide spread attention to area based management systems as a concrete form of subsidiarity. Here, financial allocations,

programmatic interventions, and planning shifts from the discrete activities of line departments to a more integrated focus on specific spatial areas. These areas are viewed as having distinctive resources and needs as they relate to their social reproduction. Such an area-based approach is thought to promote a more precise account of what services and development products will best enable specific communities to sustain themselves.

The problem with much of the focus on subsidiarity and strategic responses like area-based management that ensue from it is that they end up being viewed primarily as ways of improving the capacity of municipalities to deliver services and infrastructure products. For example, Peter Schübeller in a report for the Urban Management Program states, "Participation should be justified on the basis of its contribution toward the objectives of infrastructure management." "While participation may also serve broader social and political goals, the decision to employ a participatory approach must in the first place be based on the contribution of this approach towards the goals of infrastructure systems and the effectiveness and efficiency of service-delivery."[lxxviii]

But increases in efficiencies may still deliver services that, in the end, increase the financial burdens for households in ways that place new strains on local social cohesion. Rather, the issue is the kinds of structures that best enable local residents to participate in a broader engagement amongst themselves and with a wide range of other urban actors in ways that cultivate good citizenship over the long run. Only then, will municipalities have some sense of the kinds of inputs that best facilitate and then capitalize on this expanding local resourcefulness.

As Nick Devas indicates, these are issues that have to do with how the multifaceted relations among actors and interests are conceptualized and steered. He poses the critical questions as follows[lxxix]:

⚔ What is the nature of the relationship among stakeholders at certain political and economic conjunctures?
⚔ What are the forms of negotiation that strengthen or weaken the position of specific stakeholders in urban governance?
⚔ And as Edgar Pieterse states, urban governance is fundamentally about the nature, quality and purpose of the relationships that link various institutional spheres in urban areas,that is, local state, civil society and the private sector.[lxxx] These issues concern the level of inter-institutional engagements, the characteristics of these engagements--particularly the degree to which they are informed by trust, reciprocity and credibility, and the commitment of these relationships to achieving higher-order objectives.

These global concerns also need to be broken down into more focused inquiries. What kinds of decisions do specific actors have power and influence over? How do they exert such influence, for example, in a proactive manner, through resistance? What positions do these actors assume, and what resources can they draw upon to mobilize power? What constrains their room for maneuver? How do they create opportunities for forging relations with other actors and interests? How do they manage these relations? All of these considerations impact upon what can be planned or anticipated.

Of course, the conduct of such relations--as a field for the constitution of powerful actions, resource mobilization, and opportunity creation--are situated in reference to specific institutions, processes, rules of the game, and decision-making practices. All of these affect the interactions among actors, and thus the outcomes. Relations, for example, are guided by technical

approaches, personalized political leadership, incremental responsiveness to citizen and pressure groups, and department service management styles.

Each of these guiding frameworks can be affected by varying degrees of regulation, formalization, accountability, or marketing. Each pushes and pulls the local public domain of citizenship in particular ways--opening possibilities and confidence for some actors, foreclosing it for others--as well as establishing a particular arena for social conflict and cooperation.

Creating functional spaces of urban citizenship, collaboration among urban actors, and the formation of viable urban economies and political institutions largely depend on a capacity to extract incipient means of sustainable livelihoods from a broad range of compensations and improvisations--not usually well-formed--that are set in motion by urban residents. Context-specific principled action--action that reflects behaving as good citizens--does not come fully customized to African settings. Nor does it entail the wholesale adoption of ways of doing things that are seen as working elsewhere.

For, no strong and ethical socialization project exists capable of definitively getting the majority of urban residents to commit themselves without reservation to the long-term development of specific neighborhoods, to long-term participation in evolving governance institutions, nor to what we may consider to be "good" livelihoods. The uses and occupations of African urban spaces are likely to be quite fluid for the immediate future. At the same time, the lack of mediating institutional mechanisms capable of connecting the discrete uses of the city made by frequently resourceful residents means that a broad range of potential synergies and coordination is lost.

Note: While increasing informalization is a trend across urban Africa, when war economies combine with heightened levels of urban ungovernability, livelihood formation becomes highly problematic. It is problematic not only in terms of its precariousness but also in its increasing dependency on criminality and what has been called "pariah capitalism"—e.g., smuggling, money laundering, drug and weapons trading. While municipal governments in Dar es Salaam, Kampala, Johannesburg, Dakar, Lusaka, Kitwe, Pointe Noire, Beira, Porto Novo, Enugu, and Ouaghiya can develop innovative approaches to try to engage informal economic processes, deeply entrenched illicit economies in cities such as Banjul, Monrovia, Touba, Bukavu, Matadi, Mogadishu, and Nouadhibou prove must more difficult situations to envision viable solutions.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

a. Encourage development policy innovations based on crafting a dynamic relationship between state law and formal practices as well as informal legal systems and land development practices. Accept the informal market as a legitimate means of satisfying the basic human need for shelter. Develop greater understandings of the community-based regulatory and management systems, especially as they apply to land disputes, property rights, service distribution and resource provisioning. Identify new ways of supporting local organizations capable of taking part of the growing responsibility for the management of illegal settlements and encourage new responsibilities to be delegated to community associations, often supported by NGOs with technical and strategic assistance. In micro-credit support, provision of trading spaces and industrial extension services, encourage strategies combining structural and legal reform with socio-institutional capacity building.

b. Rather than expecting the total overhaul of management systems, a number of small-scale experiments to facilitate change in local socio-institutional environment (including local government) may be more appropriate. The aim should be to install a socio-organizational framework that strives to promote short-term adaptive flexibility, reduces levels of uncertainty, and builds on long-term sustainable development process and

c. Emphasize strategy making as an interactive and political endeavor, using symbolic language rather than technical data to provide understandable story lines and metaphors, which capture and create widely shared social meanings. The responsibility of local government planners and decision-makers, then, should revolve around: i) building horizontal networks and partnerships; ii)developing stakeholder mapping and ways to involve all stakeholders in policy development; iii)creating and maintaining areas for debate on strategic issues; iv) developing public discourse about the qualities and relationships of places; v)cultivating moral and imaginative argumentation to complement legal/administrative and scientific/technical argumentation and; vi)cultivating practices which connect strategic ideas to regulatory and investment decisions.

d. Municipalities must be encouraged to review the regulatory framework to ensure that all levels of government, professional departments, politicians, and officials interact, co-ordinate and build effective alliances with communities and community-based organizations. Policymakers need to understand the relative power of groups and organizations for selective intervention and targeted support. This is the only way to develop meaningful intervention strategies. Municipal authorities should hold frequent meetings with community-based organizations to identify their needs and to disseminate policies addressing poverty. Thought should also be given to the creation of "dedicated bureau" dealing with interaction with community-based organizations. This bureau should have strong links with the executive authority of the local municipality and the units set up by municipalities to co-ordinate and integrate their sectoral programs.

e. Municipal efforts to support community-based development initiatives could include making community-based initiatives a component of the overall local economic development program. They could extend active material and non-material support to the local credit unions, community banks, co-operatives, local exchange and bartering networks, neighborhood associations, informal trader's associations; establishing a network of people or service clubs that can provide technical assistance to community groups. They could examine ways and means to subcontract to community groups the delivery of community services or the operation of common facilities and provide or facilitate access to training and funding to community groups. Local governments should also give greater autonomy to community based organizations and communities, not only in defining their needs, but also in the selection of possible external support. The community should have the freedom to choose, for instance, NGO assistance for design and implementation of neighborhood infrastructure projects. In order to promote the participation of poor communities and their organizations, media such as popular theatre, press, radio, television, or specific advertising campaigns could be used.

f. Corruption rightly should be seen as a major impediment to good governance and operational democracy. But it should, in some circumstances, also be acknowledged as a means to finance development operations that have no other means of support. While the informal structures that carry out these operations can be highly exploitative and venal, at other times, they ensure a fair measure of redistribution in societies where formal public institutions simply don't work. They often can effectively, although in highly distorted and exploitative ways, access scales of engagement and transaction otherwise not available to the vast majority of actors in African cities and thus improve livelihoods. This is not to say that large numbers of "ordinary" citizens are involved. Anything approaching adequate assessments of the degree and quality of "spillovers" from such operations on African urban economies are exceeding difficult to piece together. But, the discernible intricacy and scope of these informal structures must indeed play a significant

DEALING WITH EXPANDING INFORMALITY:

Sorting out the Good and the Bad

Perhaps the biggest challenge for the successful application of good governance norms in urban Africa is the persistent and even growing informalization of economic life. This is not just a matter of a well-defined informal sector of marginally profitable and small-scale economic activities. Such informalization reaches into all domains of economic life and is increasingly reproduced and extended by the very pursuit of economic policies purported to bring increased growth levels and the reduction of poverty.

In many cases, representations of a supposedly coherent trajectory of growth and economic and institutional transformation are distorted. In other words, the coherence of reform is attained by actively suppressing the visibility of highly skewed transfers of capital, highly distorted concentrations of investment in speculative activities, and the manipulation of national accounts.[lxxxi]

The problem is compounded by the extent to which the proceeds of speculation are placed in real estate and infrastructure--which tend to "cover up" the often "extralegal" character of circulating capital and the appearance of diminishing economic capacity on the part of the majority. This process tends to make urban economies increasingly a patchwork of highly informalized and disconnected activities.

While these activities provide an important underpinning of individual livelihood for the majority of urban residents, they also can facilitate the very highly privatized and increasingly substantial accumulation of the few. [lxxxii] In some countries, more dimensions of national economy are themselves becoming informalized. Critical transactions--and thus intersections--among social classes, domestic and transnational private entrepreneurial networks, and public officials--increasingly take place out of view. In some cities, the disposition of land and commodities becomes increasingly criminal. Examples include: land grabs by speculators and sometimes government officials without regard for the law; diversion of large volumes of official exports to parallel commodity markets; growth of a vast international illegal trade in automotive parts fueled by car theft and car jacking; extra-official financial speculation and barter deals involving commodity futures, national debt buy-backs, and weapons exchange backed by an illegal diversion of public treasury funds. Such activity takes on a scale that effectively "crowds" out and paralyzes much conventional economic activity.

At the same time, macro-economic constraints on functional and sustainable urban growth prompt renewed interest in the possible ways economies of scale are generated through informal mechanisms.[lxxxiii] Religious brotherhoods and fraternities, ethnically based trading regimes, syndicates, and even community-based and multi-association operations are functioning with increasing scope. Urban quarters not only serve as platforms for popular initiatives, for example, waste management, micro-enterprise development and shelter provision—but readapt local modalities of cohesion and sociality to more regional and global frameworks.[lxxxiv] Some localities, such as Nima (Accra), Obalende (Lagos), Texas-Adjame (Abidjan), and Grand Yoff (Dakar) reflect a strong relationship between the elaboration of local associations and the generation of new economic activities and resources.

Here, associations become important in working out new divisions of labour. They help coordinate the cross-border, small and medium-scale trade of individual entrepreneurs. They pool and reinvest the proceeds of this trade to access larger quantities of tradable goods, diversify

collective holdings and reach new markets. The mechanisms through which local economies expand in scale are often murky and problematic. They can entail highly tenuous and frequently clandestine articulations among, for example, religious and fraternal networks, public officials operating in private capacities, clientelist networks mobilizing very cheap labor, foreign political parties, and large transnational corporations operating outside of conventional procedures.[lxxxv]

Increasingly, these new modalities of association and economic accumulation operate in-between the conventional survival strategies that urban quarters have pursued for some time and the growth of more unconventional economic practices. In many ways, these latter practices, which integrate various scales, are a direct outgrowth of the strains placed on African societies by changes in the global economy. These strains manifest themselves in the intensification of civil conflict, the breakdown of public economic governance despite substantial public sector reform, and the shift of critical economic activities to border and frontier territories.[lxxxvi]

While seeking to deter the highly exploitative dimensions of these informal economies of scale, much is to be learned from them. What do they suggest about new forms of urban livelihoods? How can profitable forms of livelihood be made compatible with new legal and policy frameworks? How can greater economic exchanges be promoted among African urban centers? What kinds of political and economic organizations can best capture the energy and resourcefulness of such unconventional trade? If much of a city's economic resources and resourcefulness rests in the elaboration of informal activities at larger scales, how do municipalities engage the actors involved? More importantly, how do they legitimately capture and deploy the income deriving from these activities? What role do municipalities have to play in encouraging or steering the proceeds of informal economies into more clearly legitimate and/or formal urban economic investments? How could these investments best build platforms of legitimate economic activity capable of diminishing an over reliance on the irregular?

Given the fact that both national and municipal governments are increasingly driven to or availed opportunities to act in illegal ways, does it make sense to expect that those governments who are seemingly "above-board" should completely avoid dealing with their cities' large shadow economies in anything but a pejorative manner?

As we have seen in this discussion, the usefulness of good governance norms is as a set of principled guidelines capable of leading different urban actors into a more judicious and productive engagement. Such engagement is the essential platform on which it is possible to evolve administrative, management and development practices and institutions best capable of improving urban life in the region.

These norms of good governance are not elements of some overarching framework in which cities try to fit the complex realities of everyday urban life. They are not to be a series of expectations or guarantees to which all actors must submit, either in order to be taken seriously or to be able to participate in the overall process of governance. They are not intended to be the primary characteristics reflected by all urban processes or actors. Rather, they should guide practices of interaction among the different domains of urban life and, as such, posit a reasonable hope that these domains can respond to each other with greater interest and equanimity.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

a. Acknowledge that reforms required to develop functional, pragmatic rule and regulations need less prescription, more flexibility and simplicity (if only in recognition of the very limited enforcement capabilities of complex rules at local level) and increased transparency in enforcement. Acceptance must replace hostility, accommodation should follow to replace negation. Enabling and service-rendering regulation and regulation coupled with support services should be forthcoming to replace the existing restrictive and prohibitive rules and laws.

b. Acknowledge at the same time that the informal system is not necessarily fair. The informal economy simultaneously is and will continue to be both potential sources of opportunity and upward mobility for some households and individuals, and a "sinkhole" of exploitation for many others. Thus there is a need to frame thinking about the informal economy and new regulatory systems in a manner that recognizes these two sides. Regulatory frameworks should therefore be encouraged that encompass supportive, stimulatory and preventative policies and programs not only for maximizing employment creation but also for poverty reduction, which addresses existing and new modalities of marginalization and exclusion.

c. Assess regulatory frameworks against a poverty reduction-empowerment matrix – do interventions contribute to poverty reduction or are they poverty generating; do they

BUILDING SHARED URBAN POLITICAL CULTURES

Can existing forms of mobilization within African cities serve as a platform for more proficient engagements of global urbanization processes and for a more equitable and sustainable city? The answer to this challenge rests largely on how the ways of living and getting things done in the city are connected. Recent tendencies have emphasized processes of partnership and corporatism. Different actors and sectors identify opportunities that allow them to operate in concert. Many of these partnerships are organized around making community participation, agreed-upon terms of reference, and divisions of labor around global tasks the top priorities. Given cultural histories that value inclusiveness[lxxxvii], this approach does often seem to be an important means of getting African urban neighborhoods involved in a wide range of development initiatives.

Determining the scale at which goods and services are best handled requires sustainable networks of information flow and knowledge creation. This occurs not only through deliberate capacity building and empowerment processes, the transfer of context-appropriate technical knowledge, and the entrenchment of structured interactions among diverse urban actors. It also takes place through the systematic pursuit of interchange among institutions and actors in various sites of intersection--arrangements that require flexibility and continuous innovation.

Accordingly, provisions must be made for community groups, technical departments, local authorities, national officials, and others to pursue opportunities for negotiation and collaboration outside the institutionally sanctioned contexts of deliberation, planning and oversight. Flexibility and negotiability must be a mandated aspect of policy and program development. While the actual process of negotiations may not always be fully transparent and documented, all relevant and interested parties must know that such flexibility is an inherent and important part of the governing process and that they have a constitutional right to influence it.

An important task of municipal governance, then, is to ensure that spaces are maintained for diverse formations and initiatives to take place and to constantly search for arenas in which they pay attention to each other. The point here is not for actors to defend, mask or hide from each other, but to see each other as sharing potentially uncharted and unclaimed spheres of activity and maneuver--something which belongs to nobody and thus can be shaped together.[lxxxviii]

The task of forums that might be organized to bring different actors together should not always focus on trying to fit the diverse and potential contributions of different segments of the community to a specific objective. The aim should be to sustain an ongoing discussion about what different actors might accomplish through working together. The idea is to explore how different backgrounds and skills might find different ways of expressing themselves. Just because a farmer farms, or a taxi driver drives does not mean that they have to represent or carry out those activities within a larger development agenda.

To a large extent, a flexible and proactive way of assessing what different actors might bring to a planning or development process is required. The focus would be on identifying local citizens that are "known" to have specific skills, perspectives, and connections. They are not identified on the basis of their position, or lack of one, in formal organizations or because they are officially sanctioned as "representatives" of specific bodies. Forums which involve such organizational designations will be required, but more to review plans rather than to make or carry them out.

This relational approach to governance is multi-pronged, enlisting legislative, fiduciary, juridical and political mechanisms to support multifaceted relationships among diverse urban actors. Such relationships must be legislatively constituted in order to provide certain fiscal, administrative,

and political responsibilities, as well as resources, to municipal governments. Territorially or sectorally structured community organizations must be authorized to undertake specific levels of participation in municipal planning, oversight, and delivery processes. A juridical basis elaborating such participation as a right is a necessary underpinning of such legislative action.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

a. Amplify the contribution of civic education programs to the overall good governance campaign. Particularly important is to emphasize the fact that norms of good governance at the level of city administration must have their antecedents in the governance of everyday family, household and neighborhood life. For it is within the household and in the relationship between spouses, parents and children, boys and girls that the essential values of good governance are learned and practiced. International Human Rights Law Group's program in Kinshasa has had a profound effect in mobilizing increased participation in the management of local neighborhood affairs. It has done so through focusing explicitly on changing people's attitudes about how resources, such as food and opportunities, are distributed in families, how tasks are apportioned, and how the defended prerogatives of fathers, for example, prevent household members from more effectively working together. Once family members' experience changes in their own relationships, they feel more capable of participating in broader community affairs. The Kinshasa program has engaged scores of churches, schools and associations to conduct this work. In addition to a focus on family life, they have also encouraged ethnic groups and associations to take pride in the way in which they are often capable of fostering respect and tolerance. Instead of participating in the conventional viewpoint that ethnic groups are residual holdovers of a traditional past, the program encourages people to view them as important "workshops" for practicing problem-solving and reconciliation that can then be transferred to the larger domain of a multi-ethnic urban life. The program frames the more insidious aspects of ethnic mobilization as born out of defensive maneuvers—where people have fundamental doubts as to judiciousness of ethnic identification.

b. Plan programs the take advantage of the potentially significant effect information and communications technologies have on what are otherwise "face-to-face" local development politics. Overlapping systems of personal accountability in many poor communities sometimes constrains independent action, as individuals are required to assess the potential and variegated implications of their actions on distinct sets of connections in tightly drawn networks. In this regard, electronic village halls, telecenters, and public information points become contexts where individuals can access specific kinds of information without necessarily being known in the community as the "seekers" or "bearers" of that information. They can make specific opinions, ideas and proposals known without individuals having to initially assume responsibility as the "authors" of such ideas. In this way, information, belief, ideas and proposals can circulate throughout a community without the intervening mediation of interpretations based on identifying the location of where those ideas are coming from. Thus, ideas and proposals can be "discussed" in broader ways. These processes do not preclude the identification of authorship at any point in the process, as such information and communication systems also enable clearly indicated identities to forge relationships

BUILDING NETWORKS OF INTERCHANGE AMONG CITIES

Despite enormous difficulties, one thing that African cities do well, via the initiatives of their citizens, is to extend themselves into the larger world. Many urban Africans have become experts in international trade, and we have seen how important migration and cross-border trade is to the survival of African cities. But building trans-urban networks also has an important local political function as well.

Much of these trans-urban activities and networks have remained informal. Beyond the various associations of local authorities, it is time for municipalities to systematically think about ways of enlarging and deepening the networks and coalitions among them and identify a potential range of possible structured exchanges. Even at a basic level, municipal officials from different cities could talk to each other about their respective markets, transport facilities, and some of economic activities in which their residents collaborate or compete. After all, residents from different cities are involved in each other's markets, are heavy users of transport facilities, and often work closely together in various other cities across the world.

The more that individual cities pursue various kinds of partnerships, the less pressure is placed on individual domains and communities within discrete cities to always have to work out their problems and opportunities conjointly. As we have seen, development processes usually stir up internal conflicts within communities. Mitigating these conflicts, in part, means extending and diversifying the external networks available to them. The availability of larger numbers of external networks has many different implications. On the one hand, if sectors, interests, populations and groups don't get along, the availability of an expanded range of external linkages reduces their need to deal with each other.

The exception to this is when access to contacts, opportunities and resources explicitly mandate specific levels of local cooperation. Still, less contact does not necessarily spell out a good or a bad outcome. Just because different groups share a common locality does not necessarily mean that they have to deal which each other. It does not mean that dealing with each other at some point will produce benefits for all.

The strength of any community is not only reflected in the degree of interchange among differences or social harmony. It is also reflected in a community's ability to be indifferent to different groups acting on their differences. Local conflicts usually ensue when groups feel that they have to take what other groups are doing into consideration. Conflicts ensue when the actions of others are necessarily interpreted as having something inevitably to do with one's life chances or situation.

The availability of external networks increasingly provides a vehicle of solidarity that does not rely upon concepts of territoriality. As such, it is much more flexible. It is possible for groups to be convinced that they are rooted in the world, and that they have a sense of belonging no matter where they might be located. Such convictions make it possible for groups to share space with those who are different from them. Without a sense of "rootedness" that goes beyond a specific locality or territory, those differences have a greater chance of becoming an incessant source of threat.[lxxxix]

In some circumstances, groups limit what they do because they know that they have to deal with another group with whom they share interests, territory, membership or common location. As a

result, violence and manipulation may be constrained. At the same time, enterprise, initiative and creativity may also find themselves diminished.

On the other hand, the availability of external linkages supportive of the interests, agendas, and operations of local groups may harden their "negotiating" position when dealing with others. The availability of external linkages may lessen the extent to which they take the other's experience and viewpoint into consideration. Groups my refuse to "play" if they don't get their way.

Furthermore, actors may assume one point of view or position within a local context, but then take a very different position outside the locality. It is quite common in urban African politics for elite actors to assume a particular position within a local context, and then do completely the opposite when dealing outside it. This "versatility" can potentially be a strategic maneuver capable of strengthening the position of localities within diverse external networks.

At the same time, community participation can be impeded; important understandings of local dynamics on the part of community residents confounded. This duplicity is especially dangerous where community leaders or patrons claim to be operating in the interest of specific constituencies. For, complicity among these elite in external networks for the purpose of their own self-aggrandizement or enrichment tends to foster antagonisms. These antagonisms frequently are expressed as a matter of inter-group conflict rather than as recognition of elite duplicity.

In general, however, if a locality is to cultivate external networks, much of the exploration of possible niche markets, affiliations, alliances, resource and knowledge inputs will take place informally. For, the critical challenge is how to recognize the identity of a single locality in many different localities. Localities have an increasing number of ways to affiliate with all the different things going on in all the different localities of the world. Given this, what are all the various things a locality can "say" about itself, which can be used to explore a wide range of productive relationships?

Globalization is not about what localities can attract, but where they can go, where they can "find" themselves. As Jordi Borja indicates, it is the ability of cities to act on information regarding international markets, the flexibility of commercial and productive structures and the capacity to enter networks of various dimensions and complexities that constitute their viability. These capacities are more important than geographical location, past positions within national or international economies, accumulated capital or natural resources.[xc]

The elaboration of leading edge strategies is not to subsume all aspects of local economies to the predominance of securing a specific niche in an internationalized urban hierarchy. Rather, such strategies provide opportunities for localities to establish footholds in others, engage in diverse markets and investments, and secure points of articulation and "breakthroughs" for an equally differentiating local economy. In other words, local economic development in cities rethinks local resources and resourcefulness in new ways in order to foster context-specific articulations to global urbanizing and economic trends. This is a very different orientation than the prevailing tendency of generating high and medium technology and small and medium scale enterprises as some standardized panacea to urban difficulties. This is an orientation that urban Africans from many different walks of life are already pursuing, but without support or recognition from national or municipal institutions

This sense of reaching far beyond the locality in order to achieve a dynamic sense of community is also a different way of thinking about local democracy. Local politics usually entails who gets

what under what circumstances. Efforts are directed to lessening the social distance among different identities, groups and circumstances. Often development is slowed down by virtue of the uncertainty it raises as to whom will benefit or who might gain undo advantage over another. When cultivating external networks becomes an important task, no member of a locality can be theoretically excluded. Granted, vast disparities exist in terms of the kinds of networks and resources to which specific groups and individuals have access. There are also disparities as to the kinds of leverage mobilizing those networks potentially have over local everyday life. Yet, it is rare that any African urban resident is without some kind of external network that can be plied or mobilized in some way.

Throughout urban Africa, in fact, apparent disparities between districts are often re-balanced through the differences of investment placed in external ties. "Middle-class" districts may have a more solid anchorage in local power and accumulation structures. Yet, poorer communities, often by necessity, often possess a greater and more diverse range of external contacts outside the city that accrue particular benefits and advantages to them in the overall urban system. During the recent history of economic crisis and structural adjustment, middle class families often confronted greater difficulties feeding themselves than many living in poorer districts.

Cultivating networks is not by itself sufficient grounds for local viability. Especially now, the fate of localities as a whole are often enjoined to those residents and sectors whose networks are the most solidified. Nevertheless, an enlarged space is opened up for local initiatives undertaken at "home." Public authorities can potentially appropriate such an enlargement of a space for local initiatives as an excuse to withdraw from certain responsibilities. Additionally, an increasing number of public relationships are threatened with privatization. Still, intensified local activism adds synergy to local capacities and makes institution building better suited to local realities.

Note: Many different potential trajectories of increasing trans-urban economic flows have been discussed. Examples include: the West African urban belt running from Abidjan to Ibadan; the Atlantic coast corridor, from Cape Town to Douala; the Southern African Development Community urban corridor running from Dar es Salaam to Johannesburg, via Lusaka and Harare; trading belts of secondary Sahel towns, for example the Sikasso, Korhogo, Bobo Dioulasso; the extension of the Maputo corridor that now runs from Maputo to Pretoria through Gaborone to Windhoek or; the revitalization of the historic Kano-Khartoum trading zone.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

a. Continue to encourage the exchange of experience, information, and knowledge among municipalities that are inter-linked either through geographic positioning or proximity, migratory or economic flows. Consider ways of building upon the exchanges that have taken place among various municipal officials, technicians and activists under the auspices of Habitat-sponsored and other activities to strengthen both personal and institutional ties, within and across sectors.

b. Continue to strengthen the documentation of interactions at different sectoral and action levels that exist among discrete African cities, with attention to distinct national, administrative, cultural and/or cultural identities of these cities impede and/or promote interaction and coordinated actions.

c. Consider what kinds of concrete and complementary collaborations among municipal actors across sectors are possible in terms of beginning to consolidate a sense of networked urban space. In other words, what can local and national authorities, planners, city technicians and managers, NGO workers, activists, entrepreneurs start doing now to bring a greater mass to the support, as well as coherence and efficacy, of good governance agendas. Focus on how regional associations of local authorities, NGOs, faith-based communities, planners, and so forth can adopt concrete commitments to good urban governance in ways capable of providing direction and support for local memberships. Focus on how individual contributions are to be managed; what rights and responsibilities will partners have. Given the enormous "playing field" of city-networks, how can diverse sectors and interests be motivated to work together, and what are the appropriate institutional frameworks necessary to sustain this work?

d. Enlist the support of other Pan-African institutions in this regard.

RESTORE SECURITY AS A CRITICAL VALUE AND INSTRUMENT OF GOVERNANCE

Depleted municipal budgets, overworked judicial systems, underpaid police, escalating urban impoverishment and the breakdown of local social systems and values all combine to make urban environments across the region much less secure. Such heightened insecurity deeply affects where people can go and what they can do. As more residents withdraw from many engagements with public spaces, a self-fulfilling prophecy ensues: the more everyday urban life is withdrawn from the street and other public places, the more dangerous they become. As defensive maneuvers, communities also make their quarters no go areas for any group not affiliated with a particular social or political grouping.

In Lagos and Kinshasa, a cat and mouse game prevails as the elite who drive from their enclaves to their offices vary their routes to circumvent the shakedowns and attacks organized by criminal gangs on the roads. In Johannesburg, security companies offer satellite tracking systems for automobiles given the fact that one car is high-jacked every thirty minutes. In protected estates, such as Maryland or Anthony in Lagos, where access in and out is severely limited even for residents, gangs still find ways to penetrate and inform residents to prepare themselves for handing over money within a day or two. While for many African cities, high levels of everyday insecurity may be a relatively recent phenomenon; it is not specific to Africa, nor are the varieties of responses undertaken by various groups of residents.

While well-organized neighborhood patrols, with residents positioned at every intersection throughout the night, are the norm in thousands of localities across the continent, a generalized disillusionment with anybody's ability to control escalating criminality leads to immediate "dispensation" of justice in most circumstances. Sheer claims that someone has stolen or raped quickly translate into immediate beatings or killing of the accused. In many cities, if a suspect is brought to the police, the aggrieved party is expected to pay the costs of maintenance in prison until the case is adjudicated. In some cities, the prison systems are so overwhelmed that all institutions prefer the application of "local solutions." Though neighborhoods may feel they have little choice but to take matters into their own hands, their responses can act to undermine any overall sense of justice, and further contribute to the problems they are attempting to solve. What prevails is then a sense that no element in the society has the ability or legitimacy to control a situation that for both rich and poor severely curtails their movement and use of the city.

In some cities, such as Douala and Abidjan, rampant armed robberies have led authorities to initiate large-scale security operations with extraordinary powers of detention and seizure. The arbitrary and sometimes ruthless manner in which these policing operations have been conducted have contributed more to intensifying insecurity than reassuring frightened populations. Governments are often ill-equipped to guarantee both efficient and judicious applications of available laws—e.g. from woefully overcrowded prisons, backlogged judicial dockets, rudimentary security technologies. But when security forces take the law into their own hands they can generate a resentment which precipitates further criminality or engage in criminal activities themselves.

What is particularly troubling is the gradual breakdown of security as an essential value and instrument of rule. Sometimes regimes find it easier to consolidate their ruling position by either conceding territory to a state of ungovernability or by using insecurity as a means to accumulate wealth and resources. Instead of attempting to police, regulate or exert control over certain sections of the city, national and/or local states simply "withdraw"—a process that often leads

those areas to devolve into self-destructive struggles over authority and resources. In an era of trade liberalization, where many new commodities are entering urban markets and many new channels are opened up to acquire them, a whole range of illicit business, protection rackets, smuggling, money laundering have become available. A climate of insecurity has been used to control competition, promote hoarding, mask clandestine import/export channels. Insecurity reduces the amount of scrutiny the general public can apply to both governmental operations and those of the private sector.

Perhaps more importantly, this convergence of insecurity with economic accumulation changes the culture through which urban populations understand effective practices of livelihood formation. Where once the notion that hard work and study were the necessary ingredients to getting ahead prevailed, insecure urban environments have created the impression, not completely inaccurate, that criminality, illicit deals, and trickery are the keys to success.

Residing in close proximity, urban residents often use their knowledge of each other—their comings and goings, domestic intrigues, acquisitions, and tendencies—as knowledge with which to eke out some kind of advantage, and often a kind of parasitism. What is there to steal; who is available to abuse or manipulate; whose coattails can be ridden? Just as knowledge has been elevated to the primary object of production at the highest levels of global capitalism, so too with the poor, does the appropriation of knowledge—whether it be impressions, rumors, or observations about those with whom they share residential and operating space—start to take precedence.

It is common sense that city life based on fear tends to simply produce more fear. The enclosures and segregation which exist as signals of vulnerability only "persuade" those who have little to use that vulnerability is a potential resource--even though it is the poor who most usually prey on the poor.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

Identify and strengthen local forms of judicial deliberation, such as the community policing forums in South Africa and the gacaca in Rwanda. If communities must inevitably assume substantial responsibility for self-policy and the administration of justice—in the interim period while more effective municipal institutions are being constructed in this regard—then local mechanisms and traditional dispute resolution mechanisms could be adapted to the prevailing realities. While particular forms for the administration of justice are important, many urban quarters are living without any kind of consensual rules and regulatory frameworks. As long as there is a broad based consensus as to the forms of policing and justice that should prevail, and as long as the basic human rights of "offenders" are respected, there is room for considerable variation in terms of the specific content of such procedures. This is no way lessens the urgent need for municipalities and national states to re-specify and harmonize criminal codes and policing procedures—bringing rationality and uniformity to the administration of justice across the municipal domain. Local policing forums, ombudsman, courts, and dispute mechanisms could have an important role to play in ensuring that legal frameworks and administrative procedures make sense to local realities, as well as contributing new ideas to the constitution of broader judicial frameworks.

a. As UN-HABITAT's Safer Cities programme has contributed important new evidence as to roots of urban insecurity, it is important to encourage local authorities to facilitate access to available public space, particularly for the activities of a broad range of community associations. Particularly important is sensitivity to the insecurity experienced by women—in the performance of domestic tasks, in transit to and from the workplace and other social activities. In selecting infrastructure inputs, water collection points, transportation stops, and night markets should be well lit. Schools should be encouraged to organize student patrols to support the safe passage of girls between school and home.

b. Municipal budgets should prioritize a living wage for police personnel. As underpaid police are often the source of weapons in criminal acts, ensuring legitimate practices on their part is an essential element of restoring a semblance of security to cities. Police-community liaisons are another important aspect of legitimately extending the policing function beyond the corps itself, while at the same time promoting greater community cooperation with the police.

c. The selective and often arbitrary criminalization of informal economic activity often promotes a general sense that legality is instrument used against citizens rather than supportive of them. Less policing effort should be directed toward regulating petty trade activity and more toward the public prosecution of economic crimes of scale. This would reassure urban residents that there is not a "sliding scale" of justice. With an urban public increasingly convinced that accumulation of substantial resources and economic capability is attributable to underhanded and illicit practices, everyday complicity—i.e. favor-seeking, goods purchase, petty extortion— with gangs, area boys, or wayward police is encouraged in thousands of small transactions. These transactions provide a platform on which, what are initially "small-time" criminal groups, gain prominence and up-scale criminal activities.

Section Three

Concluding Recommendations

Section Three:

CONCLUDING RECOMMENDATIONS

The following areas are recommended as critical strategic themes to be emphasized by UN-HABITAT

a. *Local Empowerment Through Exercising Control of Self-Knowledge*
Habitat and others have made a great effort to substantiate the knowledge base on African cities. The Global Observatory and Urban Indicators processes have recognized the importance of comprehensive knowledge and its transparent application for viable urban governance. From public policy decisions to business management, the availability of information and the subsequent constitution of knowledge is critical to understanding what it is possible to do and how in any given circumstance and environment. Although by now a cliché, knowledge is indeed power, for to know, to act as if one is in the know, is a currency that paves the way to enrolling interests, actors and institutions for specific objectives.

The same principle holds true for urban localities, and for the various publics that exist within them. Inefficient, inept and corrupt municipal governments reproduce their deficiencies in part because the majority of quarters within cities do not make themselves "visible"—i.e., they do not convey a comprehensive picture of how many people live in the quarter and how they are living. This is not a matter of providing municipalities with the capacity and resources to conduct accurate censuses or put together an accurate cadaster system. This is a matter of residents, through their various associations, mapping out the basic social information incumbent within the quarter and using this information as a tool for negotiating closer and ongoing engagements with municipal authorities.

All quarters, no matter how poor or divided, have a presence within the city and their residents employ particular ways in which they use the city as a potential resource. Too often, quarters use available social capital and economic capacity to insulate themselves from either the intrusiveness or neglect of local governments. Assets are hidden and diverted. A sense of what is really taking place in quarters is obscured. As a result, government authorities can often continue to act with impunity because they have no sense of the local capacity and power that could be potentially mobilized within the quarter. Now, it is calculated gamble for localities to put together and convey a knowledge base more representative of local social realities. But by controlling the local production of this knowledge, its strategic communication to various tiers of government could begin to elicit—partly out of sheer political interest of their part—more responsible terms of interaction between government and community.

Greater attention by the larger development assistance community could be paid to enhancing the interest and ability of local associations to convert a more systematic process of social data collection and community profiling into specific political advantages.

b. *Emphasize the Reality of Urbanization*
What makes urban governance and development in Africa a largely disordered and dysfunctional field is the perpetuation of the misassumption that Africa is primarily a rural continent. While demographically, the majority of Africans may remain rural, everyday life throughout the region is so dominated by largely urban concerns and sensibilities that urbanization is, de facto, the name of the game. While urban growth may be occurring as much in secondary towns and cities as in major administrative and commercial centers, the reproduction of an agriculturally oriented

rural life is in question. Rural areas continue to experience substantial flows of out-migration, often stirred by conflict, environmental degradation, the collapse of rural economies, or the "urbanization" of resource-rich centers of extraction.

Similarly, the pervasive myth that cities are themselves highly "ruralized"—with the maintenance of rural practices, economies and attitudes on the part of many urban residents—contributes to deferring recognition as to just how urbanized Africa really is. While internationally driven economic reform regimes have been largely oriented toward reducing artificial urban bias in national economies, current systems of resource valuation and globalized commodity-chains make it increasingly unrealistic to pin economic hopes on agriculturally oriented export production.

The massive numbers of unemployed youth that dominate the demographic profile of almost all African cities largely makes it possible for political regimes to perpetuate ineffective and unjust practices of governance through either sustained repression of youth or by mobilizing them as extra-parliamentary forces and goon squads. This is just one example of how the precariousness of life in rural areas and that of urban areas is linked so as to destabilize populations and preclude them from establishing a secure base in either rural or urban areas.

The symbolic valorization of ancestral rural homes, to which large numbers of urban residents continue to subscribe, does not detract from the fact that national populations largely construe their future possibilities in urban terms. Good urban governance is predicated on a fundamental recognition of the reality of the city in African life and that those urban populations are basically in towns and cities to stay.

One of the critical fault lines in Africa today is that of intergenerational conflict. A younger generation of urban actors no longer deems it possible or desirable to operate through heavily rural inflected social support and exchange systems, and are pursuing entrepreneurial and professional opportunities in new ways. Political actors have been adept at manipulating traditional support, exchange and patronage systems as a way to ensure the longevity of their power. Urban younger generations are implicitly challenging the basis of this power. But they confront difficulties in pulling off an effective and more explicit challenge because of this sustained collective myth about Africa's essentially rural foundation.

International actors must bring about a substantial change in their own orientations. Their priorities, literature, and representations of African realities must go further in emphasizing the critical importance of urban realities, the reality of cities as at the heart of Africa's economic future, and thus the need for the region to accelerate urbanization at all levels.

c. Develop Context-Appropriate Norms of Social Justice Based on Effective Development Planning

Appropriate development planning instruments can foster a concrete municipal vision capable of integrating diverse and sometimes highly disarticulated parts of the city. Effective governance norms can only be instituted when diverse communities and sectors see themselves as interrelated, as sharing a common spatial arena. Such a collective cognition must be built. This process requires specific sets of methods that draw on the understandings of different constituencies as to who they are, where they are located, and the critical factors that affect their lives, amplifying areas of overlap and complementarity.

The South African Integrated Development Planning process (IDPs) is a good example of such an instrument. Here, each local authority is required to conduct an assessment of the needs of

communities and different interest groups and prioritize these needs in terms of urgency, importance, and constitutional and legislative imperatives. IDPs do the following:

- ⚔ establish frameworks and goals to meet these needs,
- ⚔ devise strategies to achieve the goals within specific time-frames,
- ⚔ develop and implement projects and programs to achieve key objectives,
- ⚔ establish targets and monitoring tools/instruments to measure impact and performance,
- ⚔ budget effectively within limited resources and meet objectives, and
- ⚔ regularly monitor and adapt the development program based on the underlying development framework and development indicators.

Essentially, IDPs are instruments, which compel local authorities, in conjunction with a broad range of local groups and associations, to re-imagine what the larger city, or municipality is. Through a systematic consultation process that brings different actors and domains together, IDPs chart out how different facets of the city are linked and how the growth and sustainability of leading economic actors and activities are crucially dependent upon increases in the quality of urban life for all.

Local authorities often don't have an understanding of the real divergent pulls at work when the discrete communities making up the city pursue their own interests and ways of producing livelihood. This is the case even when it may be clear that the less privileged exist as a cheap resource for the more privileged. The key challenge is how diverse ways of living and using the city can complement one another, and how this complementarity could inform more manageable, equitable and efficient systems of service delivery and development.

Increasingly, more urban residents are being availed legislative guarantees to access service levels which they can afford and to which they pay in proportion to what they actually consume. Planning instruments like IDPs become an important step in preventing municipal actors from trying "smooth-over" complicated debates about the responsibilities of municipalities and national government in the provision of basic services.

If people have to pay for services in order to attain them, tools, such as IDPs, are necessary in order to present a clear range of possible options, such as:

- ⚔ Should service standards be increased?
- ⚔ Should block tariffs be provided for a "lifeline" service level which links price to volume (while offering higher service levels to those who can afford them)?
- ⚔ Should residents be encouraged to relocate to areas where substantial infrastructure is in place and where, subsequently, consumption costs would be lower?
- ⚔ Should more elaborate self-provisioning systems based on collective local initiative be facilitated?
- ⚔ Should more extensive cross-subsidization across districts of varying income levels be legislated?

The use of effective planning tools goes a long way to reconciling technical feasibility with local conceptions of social justice—a convergence which itself goes a long way toward substantiating realistic good governance norms and practices.

d. *Institutionalize Specific Practices of Transparency and Accountability*
Arif Hasan's recommendations his UN-HABITAT paper, "Informal City" still stand as some of the key concrete areas for good governance promotion. Accordingly, Habitat's local partners

should continuously be encouraged to cultivate and institutionalize a space for ongoing interactions among government organizations, interest groups and communities. All prospective urban development plans should be publicized at their conceptual stage and suggestions and objections should be elicited from a broad range of social actors. Steering committees should be established for development planning and implementation for each important sectoral domain and planning phase, and whose composition is drawn from a broad range of social actors. Public sector institutions should publish all of their land holdings, including existing and proposed land use and market values.[xci]

A Concluding Note

Above all else, the norms of good urban governance are crucial in order for the widest range of urban actors to persist in making their cities better places in which to live. The important task is to keep the faith that things can get better and that such betterment is possible through the actions local citizens undertake on their own. Of course, these local actions are not enough; they will need to be complemented by substantial amounts of external investment. Such persistence requires flexibility and determination. Flexibility and determination are not characteristics automatically given to the urban "personality." They must be worked at and rehearsed. This rehearsing must be done within arenas that are both available for such rehearsals and also capable of being changed through the very process that is rehearsed.

Given the difficulties most African urban households face in "making do," the contexts that are the sites for rehearsing new modalities of governance must also be the object ongoing experimentation--i.e. must be made stable places of experimentation. They must affirm that change is possible. They must convince people that it is worth trying to change things. Alternately, they must affirm an active sense of engagement with the city even when people are convinced that nothing can really change. They must function with a sense that there is a wider world of possibilities for action and being that is not "out there", far removed from the details of everyday life, but immediately accessible through the steps that people take in local contexts.

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[xci] *Drawn from the recommendations proposed by Arif Hasan in the "The Informal City"—a paper delivered to the UN-HABITAT Regional Symposium on Urban Poverty in Asia, Fukuoka, 27-29 October 1998.*