

Urbanisation in Sudan - Concept note for a study for DFID

1. Background and rationale

Urbanisation is taking place at a rapid pace within Sudan. Although the trend is not new, the pace appears to be accelerating. For a country of its size, Sudan has relatively few cities; therefore the population drift from rural areas is focused on a small number of urban centres. Sudan's capital, Khartoum, has grown particularly fast – by a factor of eight between 1973 and 2005 (an average annual growth rate of over 6%)¹. Khartoum now has a population of over 5 million. Figures from the recent population census in Sudan have not yet been officially released, which limits knowledge about the pace and scale of urbanisation elsewhere. Nevertheless, it is widely believed that the population of Juba has risen two to three-fold since the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) in 2005, to a population of around 750,000². Meanwhile during the six years of Darfur's conflict, Nyala's population has swelled three times to 1.5 million, taking account of the large numbers of displaced that have gathered in and around Darfur's largest town.

The phenomenon of rapid urbanisation is widespread in Sub-Saharan Africa (and elsewhere). It is estimated that within two decades more than half of the population of Sub-Saharan Africa (currently the world's most rural region) will be living in urban areas.

The reasons for rapid urbanisation in Sudan are similar to other countries in Sub-Saharan Africa, but some appear to be particularly acute in the Sudan case (eg displacement). They include:

- (1) displacement from rural to urban areas due to long-running conflict, which has become permanent urban settlement for many (and continued insecurity in rural areas despite the signing of the CPA)
- (2) drought and rural poverty weakening and destroying rural livelihoods
- (3) mechanized agricultural schemes taking land from traditional farming communities
- (4) wealth, economic growth and service provision concentrated in the main urban areas, especially in Central Sudan.

The problems this creates is captured well in UNEP's 'Post-Conflict Environmental Assessment':

¹ UN Habitat (2009) 'Urban Sector Studies and Capacity Building for Khartoum State'

² Pantuliano, S., Buchanan-Smith, M., Murphy, P., and Mosel, I. (2008) 'The Long Road Home. Opportunities and obstacles to the reintegration of IDPs and refugees returning to Southern Sudan and the Three Areas. Report of Phase II. Conflict, urbanisation and land' *Humanitarian Policy Group, ODI*.

‘This explosive urbanisation is a severe challenge which has not been – and still is not – managed or adequately controlled by regional or local authorities. The result is chaotic urban sprawl and widespread slums, which are in turn associated with a number of health, environmental and social problems’
(UNEP, 2007: 123)

Until now the international aid community’s engagement with urbanisation in Sudan has been predominantly humanitarian, focused on displacement and the short-term provision of relief and services. However, the evidence indicates that this is a longer term and more permanent process with economic, social, environmental and political implications. It therefore requires a more considered, informed and strategic approach.

This concept note is for a study on urbanisation in Sudan. It builds on an existing research project, to be carried out by the Humanitarian Policy Group at ODI across three continents, on ‘Displacement in Urban Areas’. The Sudan study is to be carried out over nine to twelve months. Although there have been some ‘city-specific’ pieces of work looking at the challenges of urbanisation in Sudan in particular contexts, for example the recent UN Habitat study, none has looked at the process of urbanisation across the country – which is the proposed scope of this study – in order to identify the wider policy and programming implications.

2. Objectives and approach

This study will explore the process of urbanisation in Sudan in recent years and the challenges and opportunities that urbanisation presents. Specifically, the study objectives are as follows:

- (1) to deepen understanding of the drivers of urbanisation in different parts of the country, in relation to the broader economic, political and security context in different parts of Sudan
- (2) to analyze the consequences of rapid urbanisation, socially, economically, environmentally, and in terms of urban infrastructure and the provision of services
- (3) to assess the implications in terms of vulnerability of urban populations to future hazards and shocks, and in terms of development opportunities
- (4) to identify how the international aid community can best engage with the changing settlement pattern of Sudan, and the implications for humanitarian and development programming in the future.

This study will be based on case studies of four of Sudan’s largest and most rapidly growing urban areas, scattered across the country and thus representing different geographical regions, and also demonstrating different characteristics of urbanisation as described in Table 1.

Table 1 Four cities proposed for urbanisation study in Sudan

<i>City</i>	<i>Size</i>	<i>Location</i>	<i>Characteristics of urbanisation</i>
Khartoum	Over 5 million	Central Sudan	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Destination of millions of IDPs during North-South civil war over 2 decades, around 2 million of which are still in Khartoum• Destination of thousands of IDPs from Darfur conflict• Protection challenges linked to land and property issues (e.g. forced evictions and demolitions)• Vast unplanned and informal settlement areas, poorly served• Concentration of wealth in the capital
Juba	Approx 750,000	Southern Sudan	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Isolated garrison town with poor infrastructure until 2005• New capital of Southern Sudan since 2005: important political and economic centre• Very rapid population growth since 2005, vibrant economy but many excluded; poor service infrastructure• Protection challenges linked to land and property issues (e.g. forced evictions and demolitions)
Nyala	1.5 million (incl IDPs)	Western Sudan	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Long-term commercial centre of Darfur• Destination of largest numbers and concentrations of IDPs since the Darfur conflict began• Urban infrastructure under great pressure from rapid and distorted process of urbanisation³
Port Sudan	Approx 500,000	Eastern Sudan	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Long-term population drift from neighbouring impoverished and drought-stricken rural areas• Destination of thousands of IDPs from North-South and Darfur conflict• Influxes of refugees from neighbouring Ethiopia and Eritrea• Vast unplanned and informal settlement areas, poorly served

The recent history and pace of urbanisation in these four urban centres also relate to the different stages of Sudan's respective conflicts. For example, Juba is experiencing rapid urbanisation in the post-conflict period since the signing of the CPA as its economy recovers. Meanwhile Nyala has experienced rapid population growth due to displacement caused by the current and ongoing conflict in Darfur. Khartoum and to a lesser extent Port Sudan have been the destination of the displaced from all Sudan's conflicts in the last two to three decades, many of whom have decided to stay despite the ending of the North-South civil war.

The key questions to be addressed by this study are the following:

³ See Buchanan-Smith et al, (2008) 'Destitution, distortion and deforestation. The impact of conflict on the timber and woodfuel trade in Darfur', UNEP, November

1) *Understanding the process of urbanisation*

- What are the linkages between conflict-related displacement and urbanisation, in the short and longer term, and at different stages in the conflict cycle (e.g. during conflict, post-conflict etc)?
- What is the relative significance of the different drivers of urbanisation, for example of push versus pull factors?
- What are the linkages between urban and rural areas, for example socially and economically?
- What kinds of settlement patterns are associated with recent and rapid urbanisation in each city?
- To what extent have international approaches and strategies in response to IDPs and refugees crises (e.g. restrictive encampment settings) contributed to the growing number of displaced in urban areas?
- Which are the key institutions (governmental and non-governmental) that are engaging with urban displacement and urbanisation, and that are affected by it?

2) *The consequences of rapid urbanisation*

- What are the social consequences of rapid urbanisation? How socially integrated are recent arrivals into urban areas? What are the main tensions?
- What are the economic, livelihood and protection challenges faced by the displaced and the urban poor? How are these similar and how do they differ?
- What are the environmental consequences of rapid urbanisation, within urban areas and in the surrounding rural areas?
- How have the local authorities responded to processes of rapid urbanisation? What have been the consequences for urban planning and how has it coped with recent processes of urbanisation?
- How adequate is the urban infrastructure and the provision of services for a rapidly growing urban population?
- What are the land and property implications of urban displacement and rapid urbanisation, and how are these being addressed?

3) *The disaster risk and development implications of rapid urbanisation*

- What are the main hazards that rapidly growing urban areas face (natural and man-made), and which groups are most vulnerable?
- What are the main development challenges and opportunities?

4) *Developing approaches and strategies of intervention*

- In what ways can humanitarian and development agencies support IDPs, refugees and host communities in urban contexts? What approaches and strategies can be identified to effectively and suitably address the needs of these groups and support their coping strategies?
- In what ways can international agencies work together with state bodies (considering different institutional levels including federal, state and/or local level)?

- In what ways can humanitarian and development agencies mobilize civil society organizations in the response?
- In what ways can humanitarian initiatives in urban contexts be anchored to longer-term development-oriented programmes (e.g. urban planning, social housing, local integration)?
- What approaches can humanitarian and development agencies adopt to address key issues such as HLP, livelihoods and basic services initiatives in an integrated and effective way?

In answering these questions (and some more specific questions identified for each of the four case studies), the study will make a number of recommendations to DFID and to other international aid actors about how they need to adapt their humanitarian and development programming to better meet the challenges of urban displacement and rapid urbanisation, and to engage with key national and local institutions.

3. Methodology

The proposed methodology for this study is to carry out four individual case studies over a period of nine to ten months, according to a common framework and approach, and according to the following steps:

- (1) Literature review on urbanisation generally, and on aspects of urbanisation in each of the four cities
- (2) A team of two international researchers, plus four to five local researchers (some of whom will be seconded by agencies working in the respective urban area) to carry out field work over three to four week period in each urban area, using a common approach
- (3) Preliminary analysis of findings carried out in-country with the whole team, with subsequent and final analysis carried out in the UK
- (4) Report written for each of the four urban areas visited, with recommendations specific to each town

When the four case studies have been completed, the two lead researchers will draw out the common themes and differences emerging from the four case studies, and will complete a final analysis of the process of urbanisation across Sudan, identifying high-level recommendations for the international aid community.

4. Outputs and dissemination strategy

The study will produce five outputs as follows:

- (1) a report on Khartoum
- (2) a report on Nyala
- (3) a report on Juba
- (4) a report on Port Sudan
- (5) a synthesis report that provides an overview analysis and recommendations

Dissemination meetings are planned for Khartoum, Juba and London. For the Khartoum and Juba meetings in particular, a facilitative workshop approach is proposed, to enable the participants to really engage with the findings, and to set their own recommendations and plans of action. It may also be important for dissemination meetings to be held in Nyala and Port Sudan.