

**From Global Village
to Urban Globe
Urbanisation and Poverty in Africa:
Implications for Norwegian Aid
Policy**

Amin Y. Kamete
Arne Tostensen
Inge Tvedten

R 2001: 2

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Contents

Preface	vii
Executive summary	viii
1. Urbanisation in developing countries, with special reference to Africa	1
1.1 Urbanisation: a conceptual framework	3
1.1.1 What is urbanisation?	3
1.1.2 What is 'urban'?	4
1.2 What causes urbanisation?	5
1.2.1 The 'standard' explanations	5
1.2.2 The importance of natural increase	6
1.2.3 The urban sprawl	6
1.3 Urbanisation trends in Africa	7
1.3.1 Global and continental pictures	7
1.3.2 Regional and country pictures	8
1.3.3 Is urbanisation correlated with national prosperity?	11
1.3.4 A closer look at Norway's development aid recipients	13
1.4 Why do cities continue to grow?	16
1.5 Urban settlements in context	18
1.6 Rural-urban linkages: an overview	20
1.6.1 The nature and types of rural-urban linkages	21
1.7 Judging urbanisation: virtue or vice?	22
1.7.1 The virtues	23
1.7.2 The vices	25
1.8 Conclusion: emerging issues	27
2. Urban poverty	29
2.1 The magnitude and characteristics of urban poverty	31
2.1.1 The number of urban poor	33
2.1.2 The nature of urban poverty	36
2.2 The coping strategies of the urban poor	40
2.2.1 Governance of poor urban settlements	41
2.2.2 Diversification of income and expenditure	42
2.2.3 Housing as a productive asset	43
2.2.4 Urban-rural links	44
2.2.5 Social relationships and networks	46
2.3 Processes of marginalisation and exclusion	48
3. Urbanisation and the donor community	53
3.1 Urbanisation of poverty	53
3.2 Recipient governments	54
3.3 Bilateral donors	56
3.3.1 Sweden	56
3.3.2 Denmark	59
3.3.3 Finland	61
3.3.4 The Netherlands	61
3.3.5 Canada	62

3.3.6	The United Kingdom	63
3.3.7	The United States	65
3.3.8	Comparative bilateral strategies	67
3.3.9	Norway	68
3.4	Multilateral donors	71
3.4.1	Habitat	71
3.4.2	The World Bank	73
3.4.3	The United Nations Development Programme	76
3.4.4	Specialised agencies of the United Nations	77
3.4.5	The Cities Alliance Initiative	78
3.4.6	Comparative multilateral strategies	80
3.5	Non-governmental organisations	81
4.	Towards an urban development strategy	83
4.1	Substantive issues	83
4.2	Institutional approach and modes of intervention	85

References	89
Terms of reference	97

Tables

1.	Perspectives on urbanisation	4
2.	The contribution of natural increase to urban population growth in developing regions	6
3.	Urban population as a percentage of total population by region	7
4.	Average annual growth rate of urban populations by region	8
5.	Urban population as a percentage of total population by African region	8
6.	Current urbanisation indicators in all African countries	9
7.	Projected annual urban growth rates in Africa	10
8.	Comparing the level of urbanisation and HDI and GDP per capita for the most and least developed countries in Africa	12
9.	Proportion of population residing in urban areas in Norway's development aid recipients in Africa 1950-2025	13
10.	Average annual growth rate of urban population in Norway's main development aid recipients in Africa 1950-2030	14
11.	Urbanisation and economic growth indicators in Norway's main development aid recipients in Africa	15
12.	Classifications of urban centres	19
13.	Defining cities by size	19
14.	Population of urban centres with more than 10 million inhabitants in developing countries	20
15.	Key relationships in the rural-urban interface	21
16.	Human development in Norway's main partners in development co-operation	30
17.	Proportion of urban and rural population below the poverty line in Norway's main partners of co-operation	34
18.	HDI rank and level of urbanisation	34
19.	Urban-rural discrepancies in human development	35

20. Urban population with access to safe drinking water and sanitation services	35
21. Structure of household expenditure in Luanda	37
22. Employment and income in Oshakati, Namibia	38
23. Marital status among the adult population in Oshakati, Namibia	39
24. Types of dwelling in Oshakati, Namibia	40
25. Potential indicators of increasing or decreasing vulnerability	47
26. Socio-economic characteristics of formal and informal settlements in Windhoek, Namibia	48
27. Urban-based projects financed by NORAD	70

Boxes

1. Conceptualising 'urban' and 'urbanisation'	4
2. Designating 'urban' areas in Zimbabwe	5
3. Post-independence urbanisation in Angola	5
4. Urbanisation in Africa: cause and effect?	6
5. Urban growth and economic trends in urbanisation in Zambia	11
6. Linking urbanisation and economic prosperity: is Africa the odd one out?	12
7. Redefining urban areas by size?	20
8. Urbanisation in Johannesburg: the verdict	24
9. Urbanisation and human misery in Africa	26
10. ... and still more misery	27
11. Building cities from the bottom up	31
12. Musseques in Luanda, Angola	32
13. Informal settlements in Oshakati, Namibia	33
14. Vulnerability	36
15. Urban associations in Luanda	42
16. The informal economy in Oshakati	43
17. Housing in Luanda	44
18. Urban-rural links in Oshakati	45
19. Coping in Oshakati	47
20. The extremely vulnerable	49
21. Marginalisation and exclusion in Duncan village	51

Figures

1. Why cities continue to grow	17
2. Judging urbanisation and urban areas: the virtues	24
3. Judging urbanisation and urban areas: the vices	26

Preface

This report was commissioned by the Norwegian Agency for Development Co-operation (NORAD). The terms of reference are appended. The authors would like to thank all those who contributed by making themselves available for interviews or in other ways supplied information and viewpoints, including the participants in a seminar on 5 February 2001 when the draft final report was presented. Special thanks to Richard Moorsom for expeditious and competent language editing.

Bergen and Harare, April 2001

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Arne Tostensen
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Executive summary

1. Urbanisation is a global phenomenon, caused by a combination of economic and socio-cultural factors. Some 47 per cent of the world's population currently live in towns and cities, North America, Latin America and Europe being the continents with the highest rates of urbanisation at around 75 per cent. People leave rural areas because of low agricultural productivity, poverty, war and natural disasters, and migrate to urban areas in search of employment, education and a 'modern way of living'. At high levels of urbanisation, natural population increase outpaces in-migration as the most important source of urban growth.
2. Until recently Africa was the least urbanised continent, but the pace of urbanisation is currently the highest in the world at 3.7 per cent. Some 52 per cent of Africa's population are expected to live in towns and cities by 2025. Northern Africa is the most urbanised sub-region with 51 percent, followed by Southern Africa (48 percent), Western Africa (40 percent), Middle Africa (35 percent) and Eastern Africa (26 percent). The urbanisation rate in Norway's main partner countries varies from 40 per cent in Mozambique to 14 per cent in Uganda.
3. The increasing rate of urbanisation has a number of implications for social and economic development. Among those normally highlighted are the following:
 - There is an unequivocal correlation between urbanisation and economic development and growth;
 - Urban areas play a significant role in the democratisation process, through political mobilisation as well as local government;
 - There is a close link between urban and rural development, both in macro-economic terms and through migration and urban-rural links;
 - The proportion of women in migration flows to cities is increasing, and the urbanisation process impacts significantly on the status and roles of women;
 - The environmental problems facing developing countries are increasingly associated with cities and urban centres;
 - Poverty is increasingly an attribute of urbanisation, and urban poverty exhibits specific features which need to be understood better.
4. Urban areas have until recently received less explicit attention than the countryside in terms of national development priorities and development aid. This neglect can be traced to the perception that urban areas have always been favoured in development policies and in the allocation of resources (the 'urban bias thesis'), and that they are home to only a small proportion of the population in developing countries. However, the 'anti-urban' perspective seems to be changing; urban areas are increasingly

considered an integral part of national policies and deemed legitimate targets of aid in much the same way as rural areas.

5. The growing attention paid to urban areas should not be taken to mean that the rural areas can be disregarded. The bulk of Africa's population will remain in the countryside for some time, but the fact that an increasing share of Africa's future population will live in cities and towns justifies a focus on urban issues. In addition, there is an increasing awareness of the importance of urban-rural links, through exchange of goods, services and people, for the development of both rural and urban areas alike.
6. The urbanisation of Africa has both virtues and vices. Economic development is generally considered the most important virtue, even though in Africa there is no discernible correlation between the level of urbanisation and national economic well-being owing to what the World Bank calls 'distorted incentives'. Poverty in Africa has been seen as primarily a rural phenomenon. However, the emerging large and sprawling informal settlements in most towns and cities have become increasingly difficult to disregard both for national governments and the international community.
7. The magnitude of urban poverty is difficult to ascertain, and will depend on the definition used. The proportion of the urban population below the poverty line is more than 50 per cent in many African countries, but generally lower than in rural areas. Among Norway's main partners, Mozambique has the highest proportion of urban poor with 62 per cent and Uganda the lowest with 16 per cent. It has been estimated that more than 50 per cent of Africa's poor will live in cities and towns by 2025.
8. Urban poverty exhibits a number of special characteristics that need to be better understood. People largely depend on a commercialised market for goods, services and land, making employment and income the key determinants of well-being. Retrenchment in the public sector has led to a decrease in formal employment. At the same time, the informal sector is increasingly seen as a "competitive dead-end sector with low pay and long hours".
9. Urbanisation is linked to significant changes in the social organisation of communities, neighbourhoods, families and households. Congestion and economic hardship tend to make social units unstable, and many poor urban areas are severely affected by crime and social unrest. Female-headed households are a predominant feature of most poor urban areas.
10. Poor households employ a number of coping strategies to grapple with poverty. In response to a defaulting government, a broad range of community-based associations has been established. Many households diversify their income and expenditure by deploying additional labour and changing dietary habits. Housing is often used as a productive asset for the production and sale of goods as well as for renting out accommodation. Urban-rural links are maintained by many poor households to reduce costs and alleviate social pressure. Finally, urban-based social relationships and networks are important not only for daily coping strategies but also for access to employment, housing and social services.

11. Notwithstanding the overall urbanisation of poverty, there are important differences between population groups in Africa's cities and towns. This is not only the case between formal and serviced areas and informal settlements. There are also important processes of marginalisation and social exclusion within informal areas where individuals are wholly or partially excluded from full participation in the society in which they live.
12. Some groups are permanently marginalised, with few opportunities for upward social mobility. This may be due to physical or mental disability, near complete social isolation or a 'culture of poverty' that expresses itself in complete resignation. This category includes the homeless, street children, prostitutes, alcoholics, substance abusers or other destitutes.
13. However, larger groups may be marginalised and excluded temporarily or in relation to specific social arenas owing to limited resources or particular social stigmas. Women and female-headed households are generally poorer and more vulnerable than men and male-headed households. They may be discriminated against in the formal labour market, and generally carry heavier social responsibilities. Other social categories facing particular problems of marginalisation and social exclusion are the unemployed, the elderly and the HIV/AIDS affected.
14. For urban development policies and interventions to have an impact, both the complexity of urban poverty and the inventive solutions of the urban poor themselves must be taken into consideration.
15. The late 1990s have seen a renewed interest in urban issues in the donor community. Many agencies have embarked on new urban strategies, including the question of how to tackle urban poverty, whose complexity poses great challenges of strategy formulation and implementation. The challenges are a concern both of policy and of institutional capability in pursuit of policy.
16. Most African governments have viewed with concern the rapid growth of towns and cities, and some have attempted to slow down the process. None of these attempts have been successful; it is acknowledged that urban growth is irreversible and that new approaches to addressing the ensuing problems are urgently needed.
17. Sweden has been a pioneer in aid to urban areas. Sida concedes that rapid urbanisation in poor countries is associated with serious problems and draws the sobering conclusion that the rapid urbanisation in the developing countries will continue whether we like it or not. The relevant question is what we can do to alleviate some of the inevitable problems.
18. Sida lists six reasons why development assistance to urban areas is warranted:
 - developing countries are becoming more and more urbanised;
 - poverty is being urbanised and urban poverty is a neglected problem that needs more attention;
 - serious environmental problems accompany rapid urbanisation;

- nearly two-thirds of the GNP of most countries is generated in urban centres;
- rural development requires the services that only towns can supply;
- international assistance is insufficient in targeting the urban poor and in improving the functions of urban municipal institutions.

In promoting the three objectives of (a) reducing urban poverty; (b) improving the urban environment; and (c) promoting urban economic growth Sida has established a separate unit to handle the operational aspects.

19. Most bilateral agencies espouse the same views as those of Sida. Norway, however, is a latecomer at present without an urban strategy and its involvement in urban affairs have been limited, albeit not negligible. The urban portfolio does not reflect a coherent urban strategy; it is rather a collection of discrete projects that have come about somewhat haphazardly.
20. Complementing the bilateral donors, a large number of multilateral agencies is involved in the urban agenda, first and foremost the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat). The Habitat agenda is comprehensive and the organisation now appears set to become the UN global advocacy agency for cities and human settlements with an explicit focus on the urban poor. In terms of the volume of its urban project portfolio the World Bank is the principal multilateral organisation in the urban arena. Its new urban and local government strategy has four building blocks: (a) formulating national urban strategies; (b) facilitating city development strategies; (c) scaling up programmes to service the poor; and (d) expanding assistance for capacity-building.
21. Non-governmental organisations are important stakeholders in urban development, many of which are the principal implementers of urban development interventions. In addition to NGOs, several professional milieux have been involved in urban affairs in developing countries, as well as private consulting companies.
22. To achieve greater coherence and enhanced involvement in urban matters NORAD would be well advised to elaborate an urban development strategy, taking on board the full implications of a fast urbanising African continent. Such a strategy must incorporate the array of relevant substantive issues in a comprehensive fashion, with a focus on urban poverty reduction.
23. Substantively, a number of key factors and priorities needs to be highlighted:
 - Local government structures for urban development should function well. Such structures are important both for issues of democratisation and good governance, and for service delivery to the urban poor.
 - Another major area of concern is employment and income generation. To buttress the sustainability of cities a meaningful strategy must emphasise productive activities and entrepreneurship. Above all, creating an enabling policy environment conducive to productive enterprise is of paramount importance.

- Housing and secure tenure for the urban poor are also significant. An adequate dwelling is important for health conditions, employment and income, as well as social security.
 - Moreover, in the environmental field the improvement of infrastructure in water and sanitation, roads and municipal transport, and solid waste collection and treatment must figure high on the agenda.
 - Similarly, in the social sectors – health and education – the urban challenges are daunting and must be addressed as a matter of priority. The concentration of people in urban areas creates serious health hazards stemming from congestion, inadequate water supplies and sanitation, pollution and poor housing conditions.
 - Finally, attention also needs to be directed to the processes of marginalisation and social exclusion in poor urban areas.
24. To get a firmer organisational grasp of the urban agenda the formation of an internal network of ‘urbanists’ is suggested. An urban focal point is proposed at the centre of the network as a modicum of leadership. Since the envisaged functions of the suggested urban network are many and varied, the capacity to handle them must be enhanced through the addition of new staff and other resources, including funds to enlist external assistance.
25. The time is overripe for NORAD to partake in international networks and meeting places on urban issues – within the aid community as well as in professional circles. It is advisable to seek collaboration with other agencies and actors such as bilateral aid agencies, notably Sida, which has been a pioneer in the urban aid field, as well as other like-minded countries. Among the multilateral agencies Habitat is the first choice as a collaborating partner in view of its urban mandate. Within the ‘Cities Alliance’ initiative the World Bank is also an obvious candidate. Since the range of urban expertise in Norway is fairly wide, albeit uneven and not so deep, NORAD is encouraged to draw on external professional milieux through a series of framework agreements.

1 Urbanisation in developing countries, with special reference to Africa

The formation of towns and cities is not an altogether new phenomenon in Africa. One of Africa's present-day megacities, Cairo, can trace its origins back to 3114 BC, when the first known pharaoh, Menes, founded Memphis where Cairo is located today (Chandler 1994a). Other ancient African towns included Carthage, Aksum, Alexandria, and Meroe. Sub-Saharan Africa remained predominantly rural up until the ninth century. As from around the year 1000 a number of cities were founded in the Niger Basin: Kano, Zaria, Timbuktu, Ife, and Oyo. In Eastern and Southern Africa the old coastal trading towns of Kilwa and Sofala are well known, and above all Great Zimbabwe in the interior (Chandler 1994b). In general, the pace of urbanisation in pre-colonial Africa was slow.

The circumnavigation of Africa by Portuguese navigators and the subsequent colonisation of the interior provided a strong impetus for the urbanisation of the continent. The colonial powers founded new 'European' cities and connected them to the hinterland with railways and roads. The main initial functions of the colonial cities were trade and administration (and army garrisons). Later, mining and manufacturing provided the growth momentum (Christopher and Tarver 1994).

The main challenge facing African towns and cities today, however, is the achievement of economic growth and its equitable distribution, so that urban economies can contribute appropriately to national economic development and provide sufficient labour market opportunities (World Bank 1999). More specifically, the following issues are often highlighted:

- Poverty is increasingly an attribute of urbanisation, and urban poverty exhibits specific features which need to be understood better;
- The environmental problems facing developing countries are increasingly associated with cities and urban centres;
- The proportion of women in migration flows to cities is increasing, and the urbanisation process impacts significantly on the status and roles of women;
- Urban areas play a significant role in the democratisation process, through political mobilisation as well as local government;
- There is an unequivocal correlation between urbanisation and economic development and growth;
- There is a close link between urban and rural development, both in macro-economic terms and through migration and urban-rural links.

Urban areas have until recently received less explicit attention than the countryside in terms of national development priorities and development aid. The underlying rationale for this neglect can be traced to two pervasive perspectives:

- That urban areas have always been favoured – by design or default – in development policy and in the allocation of resources – the ‘urban bias’ thesis (Lipton 1988)
- That they are home to only a small proportion of the national population in the developing world (United Nations 2000)

These ‘anti-urban’ perspectives seem to be changing, however. Sida (1995:10) captures the prospects for and implications of urbanisation by stating that rapid growth in the South is “unprecedented”, arguing that this growth “...constitutes a major transformation ... with far-reaching economic, social, cultural and political consequences.” This view is shared by the United Nations Centre on Human Settlements (Habitat), which predicts that urban areas will “...be the place where compelling social issues such as poverty, homelessness, crime and unemployment will take on a dimension far bigger and more complex than ever seen before” (Habitat 1994). Habitat goes on to point out that cities will be the home and workplace for most of the world’s population, centres of economic activity as well as areas of major pollution and consumption.

Such a “major transformation” has important ramifications. The urbanisation process bears decisively on (i) poverty generation and reproduction; (ii) livelihoods; (iii) gender relations; and (iv) governance.

Considerable emphasis has first of all been given to the role of urban areas in the coping or livelihood strategies of populations in the developing world (de Haan 1999; Jones and Nelson 1999). Indeed, most traditional explanations of urbanisation dwell on economically motivated migration geared towards improving or maintaining livelihoods. Urban areas still maintain this role in the survival strategies of a substantial section of the rural and urban populations of any African country.

Linked to survival is the rising phenomenon of poverty. The concentration of poor people in urban areas, themselves being run by impoverished administrations in poverty-stricken countries, has obvious negative implications. In this vein, Nelson (1999:1) bemoans the rapid urban growth “...which has made it next to impossible for urban authorities to provide ... services or sufficient employment.” Special social groups, such as the unemployed, the elders, and the homeless, are often affected particularly hard. These implications transcend urban borders, linking rural well-being closely to urban well-being.

The management of urban settlements is also important, raising the crucial issue of democratic governance. Democratisation goes beyond urban management, however, into transparency, accountability, the rule of law, participation, reciprocity, and trust. What makes democratisation particularly relevant is the fact that by virtue of various forms of decentralisation, urban centres have obtained increasing formal authority over their areas of jurisdiction, although often stopping short of a genuine devolution of decision-making power.

Linked to decentralisation efforts is the critical issue of local government finance. Central governments in the developing world have, since the adoption of structural adjustment programmes, been decentralising responsibilities without allocating the necessary resources to discharge them (Wekwete 1992 and 1997). Local authorities are often left with no option but to rely on user charges, fees and rates, in addition to the grants they receive from the central level of the nation-state and foreign donors.

The above picture, to which we will return in more detail later, calls for a reassessment of development assistance policies for urban areas. It indicates that urban areas are becoming increasingly important, and that they should be considered an integral part of any aid policy and deemed legitimate targets of aid in much the same way rural areas are. The linkages between rural and urban areas entail that, if unattended, the problems of urban areas may spill over into rural areas. Likewise, development assistance directed exclusively at rural areas cannot be effective unless the problems and opportunities of the adjacent urban areas are attended to.

Based on the above discussion, it can be argued that the process leading to the development and growth of urban areas should be re-examined. An understanding of this process affords us the chance to grasp its dynamics and develop workable intervention strategies (Datta 1990). Urbanisation has implications for economic development and occupies a critical position in sustainable development, but this all depends on how well managed the process is (Sida 1995:2; World Bank 1990, 1999 and 2000a).

Intervention in urban areas by way of development assistance is by no means anti-rural. However, while urban areas are indeed linked to rural areas in more ways than one, they do have their own dynamics and characteristics, and, hence, need their own intervention strategies. Thus, rather than taking an anti-rural stand, this report intends to highlight the specifics of the urban condition, with special reference to the urbanisation of poverty. Nor does this report call for a complete shift of policy emphasis and allocation of funds. It merely argues for increasing attention to the urban agenda, within a comprehensive development framework where both urban and rural areas have their legitimate roles to play.

1.1 Urbanisation: a conceptual framework

1.1.1 What is urbanisation?

Traditionally, urbanisation has always been perceived in demographic terms, that is, as the increase in the number of people living in the urban areas. Most commentaries on urbanisation are based on this demographic perspective (Devas and Rakodi 1993; World Bank 2000; United Nations 2000).

BOX 1. CONCEPTUALISING 'URBAN' AND 'URBANISATION'

"Urban means city or town ... Among the most common definitions [of urbanisation] we found the following:

- 1a. The proportion of the total population living in urban centres;
- 1b. The number of people living there;
- 2a. The growth in the proportion (in per cent) of the population living in urban centres;
- 2.b The growth in the number of people living there;
3. The social process by which a population adjusts to the urban way of life;
4. The physical spread of built-up land.

[U]rban growth ...[means] the net increment of the urban population."

Source: Sida 1995:64.

While the demographic strand is dominant, it is not the only one. Other strands focus on socio-cultural, economic, administrative and spatial issues. Table 1 captures the essence of these alternative definitions, which, as noted by Kamete (1999), tend to be biased towards particular disciplines and professions.

Table 1. Perspectives on urbanisation

Strand	Description
Socio-cultural	Changes in life styles The adoption of an urban way of life that is consumerist, diverse, sophisticated, etc.
Demographic	Describes a certain threshold of population for a settlement
Economic	Structural change from an agricultural to a predominantly manufacturing economy Similar change of occupation for the majority of the working population
Spatial	The spreading of 'urban' functions into agricultural land The concentration of people in limited spaces
Legal-administrative	Designated as urban according to the laws and policies of the land

1.1.2 What is 'urban'?

As with 'urbanisation', the term 'urban' has also been conceptualised variously. Functionally, a centre becomes urban because most of its economic activities are in the non-extractive sector. Thus, a centre of settlement that relies heavily on manufacturing and service sectors is urban. A place may also become urban because its population size has surpassed a certain threshold. Most countries put this at a minimum of 2,500 people (World Bank 1999:127). This classification is often qualified by other criteria, such as compactness and density (see Box 2). A place only becomes urban if this threshold population is adequately concentrated in a limited area, defined by, for example, administrative boundaries.

Again, it should be emphasised that the alternative classifications based on socio-cultural, economic, administrative and spatial criteria are difficult to establish and not likely to generate consensus. Demographic criteria carry the day when it comes to real decision-making, even though the economic criterion sometimes enters as an important additional factor.

BOX 2. DESIGNATING 'URBAN' AREAS IN ZIMBABWE

The Central Statistical Office (CSO) (1993) of Zimbabwe has adopted a multidimensional approach to the demarcation of urban areas. To pass the urban test an area should:

- Have been administratively declared as an urban area
- Have a population of at least 2,500
- Have a compact population pattern
- Have the 'majority' of its workforce engaged in non-agricultural activities.

1.2 What causes urbanisation?

1.2.1 The 'standard' explanations

Traditional geographical and economic explanations of urbanisation tend to focus on population growth induced by internal rural-urban migration (see, for example, Todaro 1989; Devas and Rakodi 1993; World Bank 1995). Until recently, policies and strategies were almost silent on the role of natural increase in urban growth.

In Africa, most of the factors causing rural-urban migration have been seen to be economic (Todaro 1989), reduced to the standard 'push-pull' factors. People are 'pushed' out of poverty-stricken rural areas, which depend on low-yielding rural subsistence agriculture, and 'pulled' to the urban areas by the perceived higher wages and better opportunities in these centres (Todaro 1989). Such economic theories have not gone unchallenged (Tolley and Thomas 1987), but they still tend to dominate the debate.

In addition to the push of rural poverty and the pull of a perceived better life in urban areas, socio-political upheavals (civil strife, civil wars or international wars – see Box 4) and natural disasters (principally droughts and floods) in the countryside often result in people seeking refuge in relatively secure urban areas. The continuation of these inflows and the length of the refugees' sojourn in the urban areas depend on the persistence of the original stimuli. Continued urban residence also depends on how well the refugees or internally displaced persons fit into the urban ways of life and adopt an urban lifestyle (Gmelch and Zenner 1996). Some never return to the rural areas, while others adapt to a quasi-urban existence by splitting households and 'straddling' urban and rural areas.

BOX 3. POST-INDEPENDENCE URBANISATION IN ANGOLA

"Rural urban migration constitutes one of the most serious problems of Angola. ... The migration to cities is not generally brought about by the search for employment. ... Migration occurs due to the search for basic services which can only be found in cities. ... [A]n extremely important component of internal migration is the forced migration of people motivated by civil war that attracted migrants to cities. ... The urbanisation process has been extended by severely deficient living conditions. Besides Luanda, the private economic and administrative centres of Malange, Huambo, Benguela, and Lobito are the main urban agglomerations whose populations range from 150 to 300 thousand inhabitants."

Source: Amado et al. 1994:1122-1123.

1.2.2 The importance of natural increase

Notwithstanding the importance of rural-urban migration in urban growth, the contribution of the “natural growth of the existing urban population” (Devas and Rakodi 1993:22) to urbanisation is increasingly being acknowledged. For example, less than half of Harare’s urban population growth between 1982 and 1992 was due to migration (CSO 1993). Indeed, the growth of cities can no longer be regarded simply as a problem of migration (Devas and Rakodi 1993:23). It is suggested that the young age of most migrants contributes to higher natural increases. According to Rakodi and Devas (1993:24) over 54 per cent of the urban growth in Kenya is attributable to natural increase. It is now generally agreed that migration is mainly important in the early stages of urbanisation. Thereafter, natural population growth takes over as the dominant contributory factor in urban growth. (IIED in Sida 1995:13).

BOX 4. URBANISATION IN AFRICA: CAUSE AND EFFECT?

“The high rate of urbanisation poses developmental problems for governments and people concerned. ... (It) is mainly due to rural-urban migration, high urban natural increase, and to an expansion of urban boundaries as well as to interethnic wars. Also non-spatial factors have significant impacts ... such as non-spatial policies which include fiscal, industrial, defence, equalisation, and agricultural and immigration policies.”

Source: Obudho and Obudho 1994:53.

Sida (1995:17) maintains that more than 50 per cent of the urban growth of the developing world stems from natural population growth within the urban areas. Migration (35–40 per cent) and boundary changes (10–15 per cent) account for the remainder. Table 2 provides the global picture for the developing regions.

Table 2. The contribution of natural increase to urban population growth in developing regions

Region	Contribution of natural increase (per cent)
Africa	61
Latin America	73
Asia	44

Source: Adapted from Sida 1995:17.

1.2.3 The urban sprawl

The spatial expansion of urban areas has not been looked at as an urbanisation issue proper (Kasarda and Crenshaw 1991:470). Rather, analysts chose to call it urban sprawl (Lim 1987). However, the fact remains that as urban areas expand outwards and incorporate surrounding non-urban land to make way for industrial or housing development, urbanisation is taking place (Obudho and Obudho 1994:53; see Box 4). The size of the urban population increases, and the proportion of rural land and rural population goes down. For example, Zimbabwe’s second largest city, Bulawayo, started off as a small urban settlement of less than one square kilometre in surface area. Slightly over a century later, the city is a sprawling settlement of about 600 km². The city still continues to grow as it encroaches on surrounding rural land (Kamete 2000).

1.3 Urbanisation trends in Africa

1.3.1 Global and continental pictures

Table 3 gives figures on urban population as a proportion of total population in the world.¹ Between 1950 and 1975 Africa was the least urbanised continent. The table shows that Africa has begun outpacing Asia in terms of urbanisation, but that the percentage of the population currently residing in urban areas still remains below half. It is expected to pass the halfway mark between 2020 and 2025, by which time 52 per cent of the population in Africa will be urbanised. Considering the relatively low urban population in Africa, the potential for urbanisation is still high (Wekwete 1990).

This perhaps explains the high annual growth rates in urban populations depicted in Table 4. It is shown here that Africa consistently registered the highest annual urban growth rates during the period in question. Indications are that it will continue to have the highest growth rate, at least for the next 30 years. Within fifty years from 1950, the urban proportion of the population increased more than two and a half times, and by 2025 it will have increased by three and a half times.

While the pace of urbanisation is slowing down (see Table 4), the fact remains that in absolute terms the level and rapidity of urbanisation in Africa is significant. In absolute terms, between 1950 and 1975 the African urban population rose by 70 million; between 1975 and 2000 it rose by a further 195 million. The next 30 years will see the figure rise by 469 million, an increase 15 times the 1950 urban population figure.²

Table 3. Urban population as a percentage of total population by region

Geographic region	Year			
	1950	1975	2000	2025
Africa	15	25	38	52
Asia	17	25	37	51
Latin America and the Caribbean	41	61	75	82
Europe	52	67	75	81
North America	64	74	77	83
World	30	38	47	58

Source: Adapted from United Nations 2000.

¹ It is important to note that the figures used throughout this report are official statistics from the countries concerned or international agencies. Apart from the confusion arising from the various definitions of urban and administrative boundaries, figures about the future are based on extrapolations of past trends. Some of these past trends are themselves extrapolations; hence the periodic revisions by some agencies such as the United Nations. In any case the extrapolations do not take into account important changes in, say, the economic, administrative or political landscape (Sida 1995:11). Nevertheless, these numbers are useful for comparison and analysis.

² Put differently, this increase alone is about 1,470 per cent of the total 1950 population figure.

Table 4. Average annual growth rate of urban populations by region

Geographic region	Year			
	1950–1955	1975–1980	2000–2005	2025–2030
Africa	4.5	4.4	3.7	2.6
Asia	3.7	3.5	2.5	1.7
Latin America and the Caribbean	4.5	3.5	1.9	1.1
Europe	2.0	1.1	0.3	-0.03
North America	2.7	1.0	1.0	0.7
World	3.0	2.6	2.0	1.5

Source: Adapted from United Nations 2000.

1.3.2 Regional and country pictures

This section discusses urbanisation trends in different regions of Africa. Eastern Africa, with 18 countries (see Table 6), is the least urbanised of the five regions. It will maintain this position beyond 2025. In this region Djibouti (at 83 per cent) is the most urbanised, while Rwanda (at about 6 per cent) is the least urbanised.

Table 5. Urban population as a percentage of total population by African region

Geographic region	Year			
	1950	1975	2000	2025
World	30	38	47	58
Africa	15	25	38	52
Eastern Africa	5	12	26	41
Middle Africa	14	27	35	50
Northern Africa	25	39	51	64
Southern Africa	38	44	48	60
Western Africa	10	23	40	56

Source: Adapted from United Nations 2000.

Northern Africa has over half its population living in urban areas, up from 39 per cent in 1975. Southern Africa is second at 48 per cent, followed by Western Africa at about 40 per cent. Currently the most urbanised country in Africa is Libya at 87 per cent, followed by Djibouti (83 per cent) and Reunion at 71 per cent.

Table 6. Current urbanisation indicators in all African countries

Country	Total urban population (thousands) (2000)	Percentage residing in urban areas (2000)	Annual urban population growth rate (2000–2005)
World	2,245,049	47	2.0
Africa	297,239	38	3.7
Eastern Africa	64,576	26	4.6
Burundi	600	9	5.9
Comoros	231	33	4.3
Djibouti	531	83	2.3
Eritrea	722	19	4.6
Ethiopia	11,042	18	5.0
Kenya	9,957	33	4.1
Madagascar	4,721	30	4.8
Malawi	2,723	25	7.3
Mauritius	478	40	1.6
Mozambique	7,917	40	4.1
Reunion	496	71	1.9
Rwanda	476	6	4.2
Seychelles	49	64	2.2
Somalia	2,776	28	5.2
Uganda	3,083	14	5.7
Tanzania	11,021	33	5.4
Zambia	3,632	40	2.6
Zimbabwe	4,121	35	2.9
Middle Africa	33,859	35	4.3
Angola	4,404	34	4.9
Cameroon	7,379	49	4.0
Central African Republic	1,489	41	3.0
Chad	1,820	24	4.2
Congo	1,841	63	3.7
DRC	15,641	30	4.5
Equatorial Guinea	218	48	4.5
Gabon	998	81	3.1
Sao Tome and Principe	69	47	3.3
Northern Africa	87,949	51	3.0
Algeria	18,969	60	3.1
Egypt	30,954	45	2.3
Libya	4,911	88	2.6
Morocco	15,902	56	2.8
Sudan	10,652	36	4.5
Tunisia	6,281	66	2.3
Western Sahara	220	95	3.3
Southern Africa	22,546	48	1.5
Botswana	815	50	2.22
Lesotho	602	28	4.6
Namibia	533	31	2.8
South Africa	20,330	50	1.3
Swaziland	266	26	4.0

Western Africa	88,210	40	4.2
Benin	2,577	42	4.4
Burkina Faso	2,204	19	5.6
Cape Verde	266	62	4.0
Côte d'Ivoire	6,854	46	3.4
Gambia	424	33	4.5
Ghana	7,753	38	4.2
Guinea	2,435	33	4.6
Guinea Bissau	288	24	4.0
Liberia	1,416	45	4.9
Mali	3,375	30	4.6
Mauritania	1,541	58	4.3
Niger	2,207	21	5.5
Nigeria	49,050	44	4.1
Saint Helena	4	71	2.3
Senegal	4,498	48	4.0
Sierra Leone	1,779	37	4.0
Togo	1,540	33	4.2

Source: United Nations 2000.

Table 7. Projected annual urban growth rates in Africa (2000–2005)

Country	Growth rate (2000–2005)	Region
Malawi	7.2	Eastern
Uganda	5.7	Eastern
Burkina Faso	5.6	Western
Niger	5.5	Western
Tanzania	5.4	Eastern
Somalia	5.2	Eastern
Ethiopia	5.0	Eastern
Zimbabwe	2.9	Eastern
Morocco	2.8	Northern
Libya	2.6	Northern
Djibouti	2.4	Eastern
Algeria	2.3	Northern
Tunisia	2.3	Northern
Seychelles	2.2	Eastern
Reunion	1.9	Eastern
Mauritius	1.6	Eastern
South Africa	1.3	Southern

Source: United Nations 2000:60.

As Tables 5 and 6 indicate, there seems to be no clear relationship between regional location and national levels of urbanisation. Currently, Eastern Africa, which has the lowest overall urbanisation level, has some of the most highly urbanised economies, like Djibouti (83 per cent), Reunion (71 per cent) and the Seychelles (64 per cent). These levels exceed some countries in Northern Africa, which at 51 per cent, is the most urbanised region in Africa. Examples are Egypt (45 per cent) and the Sudan (36 per cent).

BOX 5. URBAN GROWTH AND ECONOMIC TRENDS IN URBANISATION IN ZAMBIA

“In the post-independence period rapid growth in urban population occurred, in response partly to the removal of restriction on freedom of movement, partly to the failure of development policies to equalise urban and rural income opportunities, and partly to the growth in employment opportunities in urban areas.

[R]apid national economic growth in the years following independence ... based on high copper prices on the world market and increased government investment was accompanied by an increase in urban jobs. [B]y the early 1970s Zambia was a relatively prosperous middle income country. However its economy was heavily dependent on copper which accounted for 90 per cent of its exports. In 1971 and again in 1974 copper prices fell drastically. ... Its economy was further damaged by oil price increases of the early and late 1970s. [T]he volume of migration was reduced due to the decline in economic opportunities and an increasing proportion of urban growth could be attributed to natural increase.”

Source: Rakodi 1994:346–348.

The annual urban growth rate is equally difficult to explain by region. Table 8 depicts no clear pattern. Eastern Africa again dominates the list, having not only the fastest growth but also the slowest. Of the seven countries with rates of at least five per cent, five are in Eastern Africa. The other two are in Western Africa. Of the ten countries with urban growth rates below three per cent, half are in Eastern Africa. Northern Africa contributes four countries to this list, and Southern Africa a single case. It can be concluded that the evidence at hand suggests no clear regional pattern. In view of this inconclusive picture, the process of urbanisation is perhaps best explained by reference to country-specific conditions.

1.3.3 *Is urbanisation correlated with national prosperity?*

In Africa, there is no apparent correlation between the level of urbanisation and national economic well-being. The figures for the Human Development Index (HDI)³, HDI rank and the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) per capita, as shown in Table 7, do not validate the argument that the most urbanised nations are also the richest. In other words, the table implies that using the level of urbanisation as a proxy indicator of wealth or poverty is unjustified. With reference to the less developed countries of Africa, therefore, the kind of positive relationship between urbanisation and economic development asserted by the World Bank (2000a:36) and cautiously treated by Simon (1997) is not borne out by the available evidence.

³ The HDI is based on three indicators: longevity, as measured by life expectancy at birth; educational attainment as measured by a combination of literacy rate (two-thirds weight) and the combined gross of primary, secondary and tertiary enrolment (one-third weight); and standard of living, as measured by GDP per capita (PPP US\$) (UNDP 2000:269).

Table 8. Comparing the level of urbanisation and the Human Development Index (HDI) and Gross Domestic Product (GDP) per capita for the most and least developed countries in Africa

Country	Urbanisation level (per cent)	HDI rank value (1998)		GDP per capita 1998 (1995 US\$)
		Value	Rank	
MOST URBANISED				
Djibouti	83	0.447	149	742
Gabon	81	0.592	123	4,360
Tunisia	66	0.703	101	2,283
Seychelles	64	0.786	53	7,192
Congo	63	0.507	139	821
LEAST URBANISED				
Rwanda	6		164	227
Burundi	9	0.321	170	147
Uganda	14	0.409	158	332
Ethiopia	18	0.309	171	110
Eritrea	19	0.408	159	175
Sudan	26	0.477	143	296
OTHER DEVELOPMENT AID RECIPIENTS				
South Africa	50	0.697	103	3,918
Zambia	40	0.420	153	388
Mozambique	40	0.341	168	188
Zimbabwe	35	0.555	130	703
Angola	34	0.405	160	527
Tanzania	33	0.415	156	173
Malawi	25	0.385	163	166

Source: Adapted from United Nations 2000; UNDP 2000; World Bank 1999.

Interestingly, the World Bank (1999:130) now admits that while it is true that “urbanisation is typically associated with rising per capita income ... in Europe, Latin America, and ... much of Asia ... Africa has been the exception.” In a more recent publication the Bank boldly reiterates this observation, pointing out that “...sub-Saharan Africa has been a notable exception to ... (the) rule...” that “national economic growth is closely correlated with urbanisation” (World Bank 2000a: 36). Box 7 gives further details on Africa’s unique situation in this regard.

**BOX 6. LINKING URBANISATION AND ECONOMIC PROSPERITY:
IS AFRICA THE ODD ONE OUT?**

“Africa has been the exception,” says the World Bank (1999:130). In the 25 years from 1970 to 1995 Africa experienced an average annual urban population growth rate of about 4.7 percent. Gross Domestic Product per capita dropped by 0.7 percent. The World Bank maintains that this is a unique phenomenon “...even among poor countries.” In view of this, the Bank concludes that African cities “are not serving as engines of growth and structural transformation.”

Diagnosing the problem, the Bank traces the causes to “distorted incentives” whose effect is drawing people to cities, not for opportunities, but primarily to benefit from state subsidies. This analysis confirms the urban bias thesis, claiming as it does that urban consumers are favoured “over rural producers” due to biased pricing and trade policies.

1.3.4 A closer look at Norway's development aid recipients

The discussion below will focus on Norway's most important development aid recipients in Africa: Angola, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Malawi, Mozambique, South Africa, Sudan, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe. Tables 9 and 10 provide insights into the trends in these countries regarding levels of urbanisation and annual urban growth rates.

Table 9. Proportion of population residing in urban areas in Norway's development aid recipients in Africa 1950–2025. Per cent.

Country	Year			
	1950	1975	2000	2025
World	30	38	47	58
Africa	15	25	38	52
Angola	8	18	34	51
Eritrea	6	12	19	33
Ethiopia	5	10	18	32
Malawi	4	8	25	52
Mozambique	2	9	40	57
South Africa	43	48	50	62
Sudan	6	19	36	55
Tanzania	4	10	33	52
Uganda	3	8	14	26
Zambia	9	35	40	52
Zimbabwe	11	20	35	52

Source: Adapted from United Nations 2000.

Currently, the most urbanised country in this group is South Africa, with exactly half of its population living in urban areas. Zambia and Mozambique come second with 40 per cent.⁴ With a level of only 14 per cent Uganda is the least urbanised.

Four of the countries – Mozambique, Sudan, Zambia and South Africa – have levels of urbanisation at more than 40 per cent. The levels in another three – Eritrea, Ethiopia and Uganda – are below 20 per cent. The remaining four are in the 25–35 per cent range. By 2025 all but three of the countries (Malawi, Uganda and Ethiopia) will have more than half of their people residing in urban areas. All 11 will have a quarter of their population urbanised. The average level will then be just above 48 per cent.

On average the urban growth rate now stands at 4.4 percent (see Table 10), expected to drop to three per cent between 2025 and 2030. With 6.1 per cent Mozambique has the highest average annual urban growth rate over the period of analysis. South Africa has the lowest with 2.1 per cent. Ten of the eleven recipients registered an average annual urban growth rate of at least four per cent.

⁴ In fact, Mozambique is slightly more urbanised at 40.2 per cent compared to Zambia's level of 39.6. The 'tie' results from the rounding of figures.

Malawi's current urban growth rate of 7.3 per cent is the highest for the 2000–2005 period. Apart from increasing natural growth, this may be a result of people leaving the congested rural agricultural lands of this tiny country for the towns and cities. The highest rate (11.2 per cent) ever recorded was that for Mozambique in the 1975–1980 period. This can in part be accounted for by the urban influx generated by the intense civil war that followed independence from Portugal in 1975. Even though official statistics are unavailable, Angola's pace of urbanisation has been similarly rapid; the capital city, Luanda, is estimated to have grown from about 1.5 million to 3.5 million in the past eight years.

Table 10. Average annual growth rate of urban population in Norway's main development aid recipients in Africa 1950–2030. Per cent.

Country	Year				Average
	1950–1955	1975–1980	2000–2005	2025–2030	
Africa	4.5	4.4	3.7	2.6	3.8
World	3.0	2.6	2.0	1.5	2.3
Angola	4.7	6.0	4.9	3.2	4.7
Eritrea	5.4	4.6	4.6	3.4	4.5
Ethiopia	5.4	4.4	5.0	4.0	4.7
Malawi	4.1	6.8	7.3	3.2	5.4
Mozambique	6.1	11.2	4.1	2.8	6.1
South Africa	3.1	2.3	1.3	1.5	2.1
Sudan	7	4.1	4.5	2.2	4.5
Tanzania	4.6	10.7	5.4	2.8	5.9
Uganda	8.1	4.3	5.7	4.3	5.6
Zambia	9.2	6.1	2.6	2.6	5.1
Zimbabwe	5.2	5.6	2.9	2.1	4.0
Average	5.4	5.6	4.2	2.8	4.8

Source: Adapted from United Nations 2000.

In absolute terms South Africa has the largest urban population of just over 20 million. Three of the remaining Norwegian aid recipients (the Sudan, Ethiopia and Tanzania) have urban populations of more than 10 million each. Mozambique, Zimbabwe and Angola all register urban populations of more than 4 million respectively. Malawi, Uganda and Zambia each have more than 2 million people resident in their respective urban areas. Eritrea is a solitary case at less than one million urban residents. The potential for further urban growth is considerable, especially in view of the fact that there is still a lot of 'room' in urban areas, because densities "in terms of persons per hectare" in the towns and cities are relatively low (Sida 1995:13).

In economic terms three of the aid recipients – Malawi, Tanzania and Eritrea – had in 1998 a GDP per capita of less than US\$ 200. Only Zimbabwe (US\$ 703) and South Africa (US\$ 3,918) had GDP per capita levels of more than US\$ 700. The levels for the rest range from slightly above US\$ 225 to a little less than US\$ 400. In terms of economic performance three of the countries (Zambia,

Zimbabwe and Eritrea) had negative GNP growth rates for the period 1997–98. Table 11 captures the picture. It shows Mozambique's huge economic growth rate of 11.3 per cent compared to an urban population growth rate of 4.1 per cent. Angola (7.9 per cent) also performed well, as did Uganda (5.8 per cent). Incidentally, these are the only countries with GNP growth rates exceeding their annual urban growth rates. The remaining countries – whose GNP growth rates range between less than one per cent and just above three per cent – have annual urban growth rates which exceed their GNP growth rates.

While the urban growth rates can be explained it is more difficult to provide a simple explanation of the economic performance presented above. International conditions are a factor to consider but they do not have the same effect on these countries. A case in point is the rise in oil prices (see Box 6). Whereas most countries suffered economic setbacks as a result of the oil shocks, Angola, by virtue of being an oil producer, benefited from soaring oil revenue. Different national contexts and global forces thus offer a possible explanation for the plight of Norway's development aid recipients (see Simon 1997). For example, Zambia's reliance on copper in a situation of tumbling copper prices on the world market offers a possible explanation (Rakodi 1994:346, see Box 6). Zimbabwe's strained relations with its major creditors and donors, coupled with adverse socio-political and economic environments, may shed light on its bad performance.

Table 11. Urbanisation and economic growth indicators in Norway's main development aid recipients in Africa

Country	Total urban population (thousands) (2000)	Percentage residing in urban areas (2000)	Urban population growth rate (2000–2005)	GNP growth rate (Average annual percentage) (1997–1998)
World	2,245,049	38	2.0	
Africa	297,239	47	3.7	
Angola	4,404	34	4.9	7.9
Eritrea	722	19	4.6	-4.0
Ethiopia	11,042	18	5.0	-0.8
Malawi	2,723	25	7.3	1.8
Mozambique	7,917	40	4.1	11.3
South Africa	20,330	50	1.3	0.6
Sudan	10,652	36	4.5	-
Tanzania	11,021	33	5.4	3.2
Uganda	3,083	14	5.7	5.8
Zambia	3,632	40	2.6	-1.8
Zimbabwe	4,121	35	2.9	-0.4

Source: Adapted from United Nations 2000; World Bank 1999.

However, these explanations are inadequate and a conclusive diagnosis in the context of this report would be too ambitious. It remains clear, however, that the situation in the urban centres of the countries in question is not attractive and not conducive for the well-being of their residents (see Box 9). It is particularly disturbing that the urban populations are growing. Some analysts

(Jones and Nelson 1999) have pointed out that this may mean the urbanisation of poverty, resulting from “urbanisation without growth” (World Bank 1999:130).

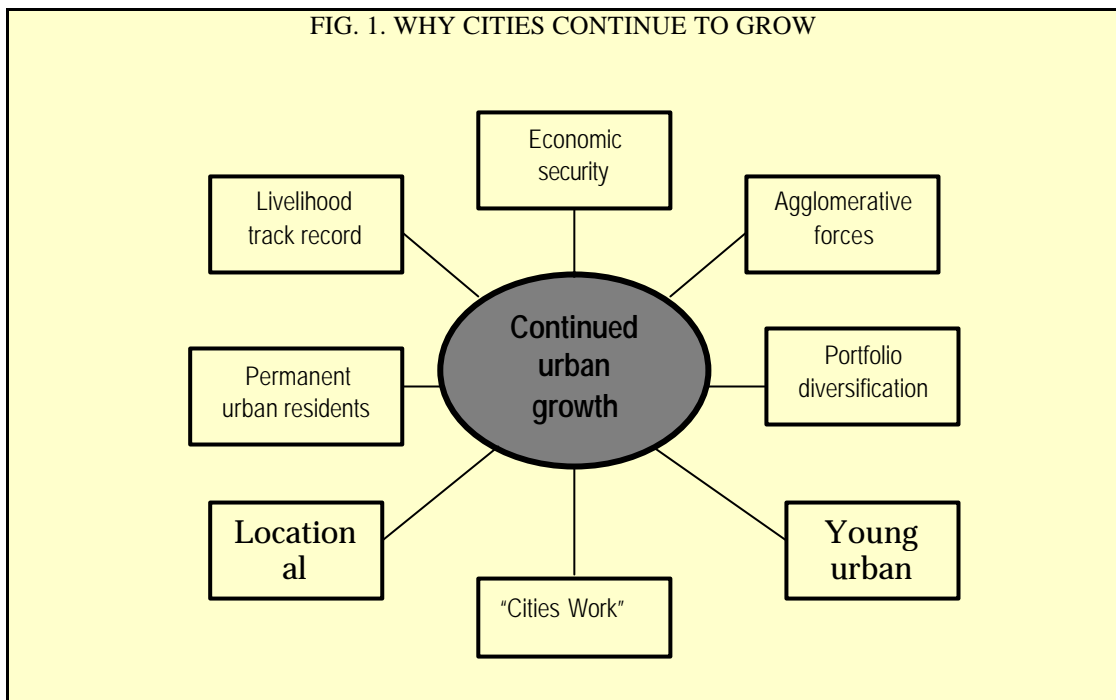
It is evident from the scenario depicted above that Norway’s main partners in Africa are not an exception to the phenomenon of rapid urbanisation, albeit perhaps as latecomers compared to other regions of the world. While explanations may differ in emphasis on economic, political and cultural factors, there is one indisputable conclusion: the growth of the economies is not able to match urban growth, let alone handle it. This prospect is particularly disconcerting in view of the fact that urban growth in these countries, like elsewhere in Africa, is not showing appreciable signs of slowing down.

The symptoms of the situation depicted in the tables and figures above manifest themselves in deplorable living conditions in the urban centres: urban poverty, inadequate or unavailable basic services, increasing vulnerability, marginalisation and exclusion (Potts 1997). For further discussion see next chapter.

1.4 Why do cities continue to grow?

As noted above, urbanisation has been rapid in Africa. This trend, though perhaps tapering off somewhat and varying from one country to another, is still phenomenal. There has to be an explanation why urban areas continue to grow, despite policies designed to reverse the trend in some countries (de Haan 1999). Figure 2 addresses this issue.

From purely economic and geographical perspectives, internal mechanisms in urban areas promote sustained growth, linked to their position as production zones. It is acknowledged that urban centres produce a substantial proportion of the national income in most countries. Globally, urban areas account for some 55, 73, and 85 per cent of the GNP in low-income, middle-income and high-income countries respectively (World Bank 1999:126). This is explained by the fact that the “...growth sectors of the economy – manufacturing and services – are concentrated in cities where they benefit from agglomeration economies, ample markets for inputs, outputs, and labour and where ideas and knowledge are rapidly diffused” (World Bank 1999:126). In urban areas the proximity of all production factors makes economic activity possible and productive. Because of these locational advantages and agglomeration economies urban centres continue to grow as they attract outsiders and retain and help to expand those economic players who are already in. It is a truism that labour is attracted to and retained in areas where economic activities are concentrated (Todaro 1994). Hence, urban areas continue to grow by virtue of the inherent economic growth dynamic created.



Another, complementary explanation is that towns and cities, despite all their negative features (see below), provide a much better option for livelihood than their rural hinterland. In the latter, farms are increasingly becoming smaller, sub-economic and eventually unable to feed the farmers' households. Similarly, mining operations located in rural areas are being adversely affected by low commodity prices on the world market (Box 6; Rakodi 1994:346; Sida 1995:18; Kamete 1999). Left with no better option for their livelihood, the struggling rural-based people move to or remain in the cities, inhospitable though they may be.

In addition, urban areas seem to have established a livelihood track record. The World Bank maintains that people move to the city in expectation of a better life and that the evidence at hand proves that these expectations have largely been met (World Bank 1995:1). This fact is well known by people in the rural and urban areas alike. As a result, those already in the cities opt to remain there, and those in the rural areas choose to join the ranks of the urbanites. As a consequence, urban growth continues relentlessly.

Furthermore, for some poor households (both rural and urban) the opportunities offered by urban areas continue to form part of their livelihood strategies. These people straddle the rural-urban divide (Beall et al. 1999). They have learned to rely on both systems (rural and urban) to survive. This, as de Haan (1999:13) proposes, is "...a form of portfolio diversification by families." As long as this strategy is a workable option cities and towns will continue to experience the impact of such strategic considerations at the household level.

Urban growth will continue as new families diversify and those in the towns and cities remain there for life.⁵

The age structure of the urban population explains the boom in natural increase (Devas and Rakodi 1993; World Bank 1999). Urbanites are predominantly young, in reproductive age with a wish to have children. In the case of Anglophone Southern Africa, the erstwhile preponderance of single men in the towns and cities has given way to urban families. This, again, bolsters natural population increase.

Linked to the above, as well as to the question of livelihood strategy, is the current situation that induces some people to remain urbanites for life. In colonial South Africa and Zimbabwe blacks were temporary sojourners in urban areas, controlled by means of strict influx control legislation (Levi 1982; van Onselen 1976). They only remained in the cities as long as they were useful as gainfully employed workers. On losing one's job or becoming old, returning to the rural areas to die was the only option available, or to wait until another job was found (Mafico 1990; Kamete 1998). However, with the coming of independence, the repeal of colonial influx control laws and mounting economic pressures, the majority of urban residents has opted to remain in the cities and towns for life; their rural homeland only features in their plans as a burial ground.

The foregoing analysis seems to suggest that urban areas have an in-built mechanism to initiate and sustain growth. This analysis is perhaps a fitting summary of all the reasons cited above and the World Bank's firm conviction that "cities work" (World Bank 1991:18).

1.5 Urban settlements in context

Urban centres can be classified according to various criteria as applied in Southern Africa in Table 12 below. Kamete (1999:5) cautions, however, that the classifications adopted "are not exclusive, neither are they foolproof." For example, some mining towns can also be agricultural towns; border towns can also double as manufacturing towns and/or as agricultural service centres. Similarly, size, local authority type and economic function can 'stand in each other's way' as a definitive category for a given centre is sought. Thus, it is important to note that urban centres are not viewed as uniform entities in terms of size, function and conditions. They differ, sometimes quite significantly, even within the same national borders. What makes this even more intricate is the fact that the same urban centres may have boundaries that are viewed differently by different stakeholders and for different purposes. In this way administrative boundaries may not be coterminous with electoral constituency boundaries; and functional boundaries for health, education and rating purposes may not agree with electoral or administrative boundaries, let alone

⁵ Based on evidence from Zimbabwe Potts (1995) argues that due to deepening urban poverty some urbanites are retracing their steps back to the rural areas.

other functional divisions (Kamete 2000). In addition, there is no guarantee that these will be the same for census purposes.

The World Bank (1999:128) stresses that small and medium-sized centres (however defined) will be home to “most of the world’s population” in the future. These centres are growing faster than the larger cities – a manifest feature since 1970. The very definition of what is a small urban centre and what is a medium-sized one is not conclusive as it differs across regions and countries. In 1998 the United Nations specified some criteria for defining cities according to size. Table 13 captures these criteria. The 1999 revision of population projections (United Nations 2000:7) seems to have adjusted the threshold criteria upwards, as reflected in Box 8.

Table 12. Classifications of urban centres

Classification	Description	Examples
Size	According to population	Centres classified as small, medium (intermediate) and large based mainly on population thresholds
Local authority type	According to the local authority type in charge of the area	City Council (Zambia, Zimbabwe), municipality (Zimbabwe), transitional local council, metropolitan council (South Africa) Local Board, Growth Point (Zimbabwe)
Economic function	Functional characteristics of urban centres	Agricultural, industrial, mining, tourist towns
Location	Based on location of centre within the country	Border, inland, coastal, tribal towns

If the ‘new’ criteria are adopted, Africa would only have two cities in the largest category: Lagos (13.4 million) and Cairo (10.6 million). The scenario for the developing world is presented in Table 13. What is the relevance of this categorisation to urbanisation and urban development? It all has to do with the role urban areas are supposed to play and how various types of urban centre relate to the surrounding rural hinterland.

Table 13. Defining cities by size

Designation	Population size
Megacity	Over 5 million
Large city	Between 1 and 5 million
Medium-sized city	0.5 to 1 million
Small city	Less than 0.5 million

Source: Adapted from figures and definitions from United Nations 2000:6; World Bank 1999:128.

BOX 7. REDEFINING URBAN AREAS BY SIZE?

Though not explicitly stating that it has adopted a new classification system for the world's cities, based on population thresholds, the United Nations does seem to have done so or may be in the process of doing so compared to Table 14. The grouping of cities below (United Nations 2000:7) surely underpins this impression:

- Cities of 10 million or more
- Cities of 5 to 10 million
- Cities of 1 to 5 million
- Cities of less than 1 million

There have been many commentaries on the role of intermediate and small centres in national development as well as their part in the development and underdevelopment of the surrounding areas (Hardoy and Satterthwaite 1986; Southall 1988; Kamete 1998). Usually it is the smaller and intermediate centres that are at the doorstep of the rural areas. Therefore, they form the first encounter rural folks have with urban forces. The economies of these centres are normally shaped by the rural hinterland because they serve these outlying areas. It is thus not surprising to find agricultural and mining towns (Kamete 1999) in Southern Africa.

Table 14. Population of urban centres with more than 10 million inhabitants in developing countries

Urban agglomeration	Population (millions)			
	1975	1999	2000	2015
Mexico City	11.2	17.9	18.1	19.2
Bombay	6.9	17.5	18.1	26.1
Sao Paulo	10	17.5	17.8	20.4
Lagos	3.3	12.8	13.4	23.2
Calcutta	7.9	12.7	12.9	17.3
Buenos Aires	9.1	12.4	12.6	14.1
Dhaka	2.2	11.7	12.3	21.4
Karachi	4.0	11.4	11.8	19.2
Delhi	4.4	11.3	11.7	16.8
Jakarta	4.8	10.6	11.0	11.0
Metro Manila	5.0	10.5	10.9	14.8
Rio de Janeiro	7.9	10.5	10.6	11.9
Cairo	6.1	10.3	10.6	13.8

Source: United Nations 2000:9.

1.6 Rural-urban linkages: an overview

As noted in the previous section on the classification of urban centres, cities and towns do not exist in a vacuum. They function in a context shaped by economic, spatial, social and administrative forces at work. In most cases, the main determinant of this context is the nature of the surrounding rural area. This section seeks to describe the types of relationship urban areas have with their rural counterpart – adjacent or distant. Table 15 highlights some of the key relationships.

Table 15. Key relationships in the rural-urban interface

Type	Description	Examples
Economic	Livelihood and production-based	Financial, labour and commodity flows, remittances
Social	Social organisation, social capital, cultures	How the urban populations relate to their home areas and vice versa
Trade and commerce	Exchange of goods and services	Primary goods bought from rural areas, finished goods from urban centres. Commercial services like banking in urban areas
Politico-administrative	Decentralised or delegated authority performing functions of a central government ministry	Official documents (birth certificates, etc). Supervision of field personnel of government line ministries
Environmental	Solid, liquid and waste disposal	Interchange of pollution as air, water sources and the landscape of either centre becomes the other's dumping 'ground'
Spatial	Neighbourhood and neighbourliness	Expansion of urban into rural hinterland

Source: Adapted from Kamete 2000.

1.6.1 The nature and types of rural-urban linkages

The interface between urban centres and their rural hinterland is characterised by diverse relationships and interactions. However, whatever taxonomy is chosen, it is evident that the interface is most conspicuously structured by flows of various types. For ease of discussion this report will elaborate on the most important of these flows as set out in Table 15 above.

Economic aspects are those associated with livelihood and production. They encompass various kinds of resource flow – principally labour, natural resources, commodities, and financial flows (Baker and Pedersen 1992). There is an exchange of raw materials and finished or semi-finished goods, whose sources are found in rural areas and urban areas respectively. Whereas urban areas facilitate extractive processes in rural areas, rural areas facilitate manufacturing in the urban areas. Water used in urban areas is normally drawn from sources located in rural areas. The exchange of labour is driven by urban centres' need for human resources that rural areas have in abundance, especially in the semi-skilled and unskilled category. Once established in the towns those in employment almost invariably remit some of their earnings to their rural homes for the upkeep of kith and kin (von Troil 1992).

The selling of goods and services produced in one type of settlement to another marks the trading and commercial relationships between towns and cities (Pedersen 1992). They are thus each other's market and source of income. Towns serve the additional task of providing access to markets farther afield for their rural hinterland. Whether destined for national, regional or international markets, rural produce has to use the facilities of the nearby town or city.

Environmentally, the interface is characterised predominantly by urban areas polluting the rural landscape, water and air. Industrial, residential and institutional waste in urban areas is often dumped directly onto rural areas or into rivers and emitted into the air that ultimately ends up in rural areas (Kamete 2000; Abdel-Ati 1992). Rural areas pollute the urban environment, for example, by chemically affecting sources of drinking water or the atmosphere through the use of agricultural chemicals such as pesticides (Kamete 2000). A lot of the solid waste, especially in urban market places, can be traced to rural produce.

Spatial relations take the form of urban areas taking over and incorporating rural territory to make way for housing, industrial or institutional development. This sometimes results in urban areas compromising the revenue base of rural areas as they lose not only rateable land but also the natural, capital and human resources that go with it.

Urban areas serve as administrative centres for specific jurisdictional districts that are mostly rural. These towns host the state-appointed administrators and local governments. Central government ministries also have sub-offices in towns. These urban centres serve an important administrative function in terms of licences, registration and reporting, as well as other services, duties and obligations.

The social interactions in the rural-urban interface range from mere social, individual, household or clan to larger organisational issues. Most importantly, in terms of social capital, rural-urban linkages form a crucial element in coping strategy for the poor.

It should be stressed that the conventional view of urban centres exerting an exploitative influence over the rural areas – thereby leading to rural underdevelopment – is being replaced by an appreciation that the relationship is mutually beneficial and should remain so. Rural and urban areas do need each other. They can be good for each other's growth and prosperity (World Bank 1999:128). The outcome of this relationship is ultimately a function of policy and management, not only at the local level but also, perhaps primarily, at the national level.

1.7 Judging urbanisation: virtue or vice?

Urban centres have had varied impacts on society and space. How good or bad urbanisation is judged to be depends ultimately on the specific effect of the process and the resultant urban settlements, especially on the well-being of its inhabitants and society at large. This well-being may be expressed in various forms: socio-cultural, economic, political and environmental. Figures 3 and 4 reflect some of the important judgements.

1.7.1 The virtues

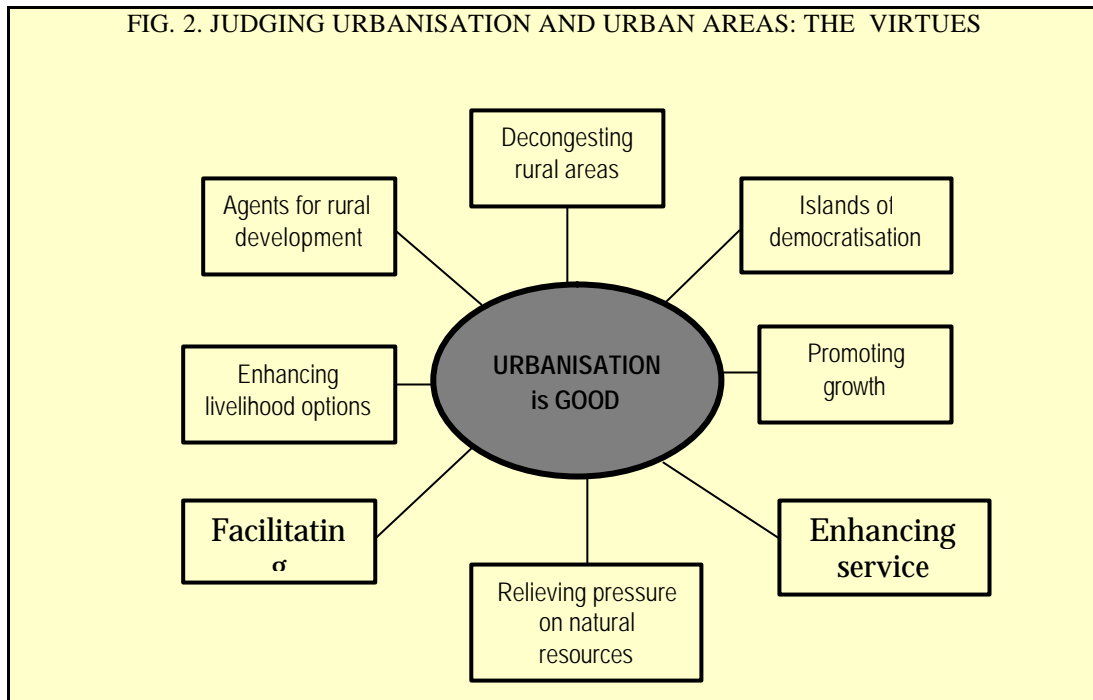
Urban areas have been described in various terms as generators of economic development (Kamete 1999) due to their role as 'engines of growth' (World Bank 1999:125). The fact that the manufacturing and services sectors (which are predominantly 'urban' functions) are the key growth sectors of most economies bears testimony to the role of cities in initiating and sustaining national economic growth (Beavon 1997). There is some truth in the claim that cities and town are the causes as well as consequences of economic development.

Urban centres are a response to stimuli for economic development. If properly managed they also promote it. Economic progress requires specialisation, diversification and division of labour. It requires transport and distribution networks; it needs a large market, as well as the concentration and location of this market in accessible areas. In addition, economic development requires labour as well as inputs in the form of goods and services. Because productive enterprises need inputs and have to dispose of their products, they concern themselves with strong forward and backward linkages, resulting in the grouping of related industries and services – referred to as agglomeration by economic geographers. Wherever and whenever urbanisation has occurred – be it in Asia, the Americas or Europe – these are the ingredients of economic development. And Africa is no exception (Bairoch 1988; World Bank 1999). The emergence of urban centres is thus a response to need and Africa therefore needs them.

Based on the above analysis it can be said justifiably that urban areas promote rural development, however defined. Urban areas are essential markets for rural produce.⁶ The surplus of the rural hinterland finds its way to urban markets and consumers such as households, institutions and industries. Furthermore, these centres are sources of some goods and services that contribute to making the rural areas work. Rural inhabitants need inputs for their extractive processes and agricultural production; they need finished goods for their operations and households; they also require essential services, be they technical, financial, professional or social (Kamete 2000). All of these are readily available from urban areas. Because of this input-output relationship created by urbanisation, urban and rural areas develop backward and forward linkages on a wider scale, from which they both benefit. In terms of livelihood urban centres are the source of remittances to rural kinfolk (de Haan 1999). These remittances are used not only for consumption purposes but to promote rural development as well.

Through their transport and telecommunications networks – however rudimentary – urban centres link their rural neighbours to the rest of the country and the world at large. In a world increasingly becoming one huge global village, the importance of this 'window' to the world cannot be overemphasised (see Box 9).

⁶ In rare cases the preference for imported goods by the urban population may result in rural farmers finding it difficult to penetrate the urban market.



A notable impact of urbanisation is the decongestion of the rural areas. As people move to urban areas and establish homes there, the pressure on rural land is relieved. This is what happened historically in the developed world.⁷ Relieving pressure on rural agricultural land is complemented by the reduction of pressure on the natural environment as the sole source of livelihood. These twin processes imply a shift from extractive to manufacturing and service sectors. In this way urban centres may be seen as safety valves.

BOX 8. URBANISATION IN JOHANNESBURG: THE VERDICT

“A little over a century ago ... the site of Johannesburg was no more than an unwanted south sloping remnant of ground. ... There was little to commend the property for agricultural purposes and it offered precious little prospect as a suitable place for a village ... [Y]et within a mere 40 years of being founded on such an unlikely site Johannesburg was being hailed as a ‘world city’... The financial importance of the city is reflected by the fact that it is the home of the Johannesburg Stock Exchange ... [which] is ranked 12th in the world on the basis of its market capitalisation. The ... CBD contributes 12 percent of South Africa’s GNP.

[N]otwithstanding the glitzy wonders of Johannesburg ... there is also a less attractive, deprived and deeply disturbing side. ... [A]djacent to this, the most opulent city south of the Sahara, there are hundreds of thousands of people living in deprived communities or townships. In addition there are also tens of thousands living in informal settlements of shacks recently erected in the veld.”

Source: Beavon 1997:153–161.

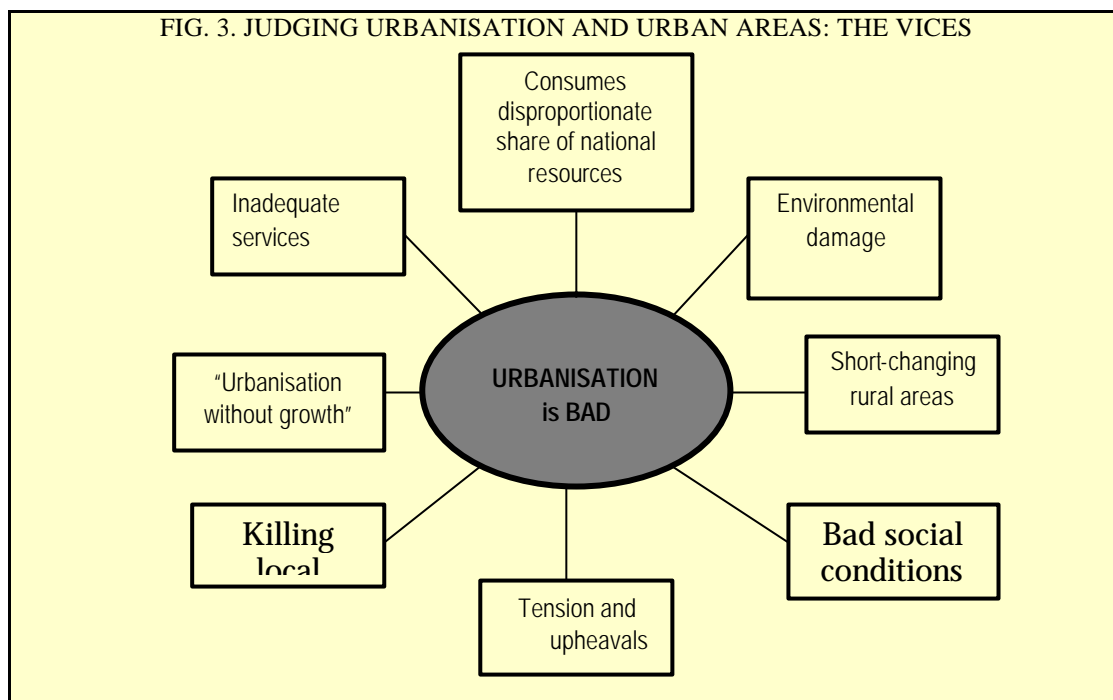
⁷ This should be considered within specific cultural contexts. Some urbanites do not let go of their rural landholdings, preferring instead to straddle (Beall et al. 1999).

Urban centres are seedbeds of democratisation. In urban areas key components of democracy – diversity, knowledge and information – reach a critical mass large enough to trigger and sustain democratic processes. The proximity to the main political institutions reinforces the political importance of urban centres. Being home to many pressure and interest groups, institutions of higher learning and most supportive (or disruptive) international organisations, urban areas have been known to be springboards of democratic movements that have spread throughout the whole country and given birth to new democratic dispensations. Links to the outside world through various media and telecommunications expose urban centres to international impulses of democratisation.

1.7.2 The vices

There are some sour sides as well to urbanisation and the resultant urban agglomerations. These have become more easily discernible and more pronounced than the positive aspects because of media exposure, thus creating a perception of urban areas as cesspools of human misery and environmental damage. In fact, these vices have been the source of calls for policies and strategies to reduce or halt urbanisation.

Urbanisation in most African countries is not matched by economic growth. As a result, the urban centres have failed to deliver in terms of improved social conditions for the bulk of the population, especially for the low-income category (World Bank 1995). As reflected in Figure 4, urbanisation may mean misery for urban residents whose quest for a better life is met with disappointment (compare Box 9; see also Beavon 1997:161). Unavailable, inadequate and/or decaying infrastructure and community services are now a common feature of developing world cities (Box 11; see also Rakodi and Devas 1993:8–9), manifested in poor housing, squatter settlements and slums, homelessness, declining social indicators and lack of mobility. Some economic policies in developing countries have worsened the plight of the hapless urban residents. Noting this, Potts draws attention to “... the devastation of urban living standards wrought by structural adjustment policies...” which have “...served *further* to immiserise most urban households...” (Potts 1997:451, emphasis in the original).



In terms of the livelihood strategies of poor households, it can be argued that urban areas have delivered (World Bank 1995:1). But delivery has not been at the required scale and volume, and at a cost in both human and environmental terms. Although the application of the urban unemployment concept is problematic and controversial there is no doubt that unemployment is rampant in urban Africa (Potts 2000). Zimbabwe's unemployment rate of over 60 per cent is by no means unique. Unable to find a job in the formal sector, the urbanites do not go back to the rural areas (Beall 1999; de Haan 1999). They devise their own means of livelihood, hence the growth of the informal sector, most of it unregulated by any kind of labour, public health, environmental and sanitation laws (Kasarda and Crenshaw 1991:477; Kamete 2000b).

BOX 9. URBANISATION AND HUMAN MISERY IN AFRICA

"The combined impact of the debt crisis and structural adjustment policies reduced urban workers to astonishing levels of poverty, evidence of which, as incomes from wages, slipped completely out of line with the minimum required to keep a family (or in many cases even an individual) fed, let alone sheltered, clothed abounds in the literature. ... As a consequence of the massive falls in most urban incomes, sometimes combined with improvements in rural incomes accruing from better agricultural prices, the 'new' urban poor of Africa are often poorer than rural households in crude income terms. ... The fact that urban poverty may now surpass rural poverty is of particular significance to any study of the nature of urbanisation in Africa. ... It is particularly important that policy makers recognise this, now longstanding, situation so that urban poverty can be tackled and further deliberate reduction in living standards prevented. That this is necessary is indicated by Amis and Rakodi (1994:632) who point out that in sub-Saharan Africa "a view that urban areas are well-off and that all the poverty is rural has proved remarkably robust".

Source: Potts 1997:451.

The natural environment is not spared by urbanisation (see Box 11). Environmental damage stems largely from poor waste management practices. Industry, households and the informal sector have been rightly blamed for polluting the environment. A large share of the blame has correctly been apportioned to urban local authorities and central governments for failing to adopt sound and practicable environmental management policies and strategies.

With reference to socio-cultural and political indicators, urban areas have not performed well. The cultural concerns are compounded by perennial political conflicts stemming from instability, protest and tension. Urban areas are hotbeds of pluralism, dissent and even upheaval. Because of the diversity of backgrounds and the prevalence of problems in a situation where knowledge and information flow freely, urban areas sometimes turn into a battleground, in both intellectual and physical terms.

BOX 10. ... AND STILL MORE MISERY

“In many cities of the developing world 40–50 per cent of the population live in slums and informal settlements – as much as 85 per cent in the case of Addis Ababa, 59 per cent for Bogota and 51 per cent for Ankara ... [W]hile not all informal settlements provide unsatisfactory living conditions, they are usually inadequately served with essential infrastructure. Extremely high population densities and room occupancy rates ... indicate an inadequate supply of housing. Other services are generally quite inadequate to meet the rapidly growing needs. UNCHS estimates that, for most cities in the developing world, only a quarter to a half of solid waste is collected by municipal authorities (UNCHS, 1987:2) ... with obvious consequences for public health. Inadequate road networks ... [and] provision of social services lag far behind the needs. While the health facilities for high-income groups may be very good, those of the poor are so inadequate that their health conditions are as bad as those of the rural population.

Source: Devas and Rakodi 1993:8–9.

It is true that urban areas promote rural development. Sometimes, though, urban centres do short-change their rural counterparts by, for example, underpricing rural produce, overpricing finished commodities, drawing cheap and mostly young labour from rural areas and spewing tonnes of solid, liquid and gaseous waste onto rural areas. Added to all this is the fact that urban areas seem to consume a disproportionately larger share of the national wealth compared to their share of national population. This is part of the famous thesis on urban bias (Lipton 1988).

1.8 Conclusion: emerging issues

The preceding discussion on urbanisation in the developing world, particularly in Africa, has a number of implications for development and development co-operation.

The discourse has noted that:

1. Urbanisation is an irreversible phenomenon in African countries;

2. The urbanisation trend is set to continue;
3. Urban areas are gaining in influence;
4. Urbanisation and the growth of urban areas have multiple repercussions, among them economic, socio-cultural and political changes;
5. The most important national and local issues will in the future be played out in urban areas;
6. Most of the urbanisation occurring in Africa is not accompanied by economic growth;
7. Urban areas have an in-built thrust to continue to grow;
8. It is not tenable to separate urban and rural areas as discrete spheres because their fates are inextricably linked;
9. Urban areas vary widely not only in location and size but also in functions and substance;
10. There are both good and bad sides to urbanisation.

2 Urban poverty

The literature on poverty – whether rural or urban – is replete with data and descriptions of the conditions of the poor. While this is important, we would like to stress at the very outset that poverty is not only a condition. It also reflects social relationships, which are sometimes entrenched in long-standing structures and institutional arrangements. Answers to questions about how poverty was produced in the first place, and how it is being reproduced continuously, must be sought in the social relationships between the poor and the non-poor. It follows from this analytical perspective that poverty reduction entails a change of existing social relationships. Herein lies the challenge facing donors and their collaborators when charting strategies and designing programmes.

Poverty in sub-Saharan Africa is pervasive and serious. Although there has been progress measured by indicators such as life expectancy at birth (up from 40 years in 1960 to 51 years in 1992) and adult literacy (up from 28 per cent in 1970 to 51 per cent in 1992), the values on socio-economic indicators are still very low with stagnating or declining trends as from the 1980s (UNCHS 1997:100). This is perhaps best illustrated by the fact that the 24 countries with the lowest Human Development Index (HDI) in the world are all located on the African continent (UNDP 2000).

All of Norway's most important co-operation partners in Africa are among the 24 countries with the lowest HDI ranking in the world, with the exception of South Africa (103), Zimbabwe (130) and the Sudan (143) (see Table 16). The overriding goal of Norwegian development co-operation is to contribute towards lasting improvements in economic, social and political conditions in developing countries, with particular emphasis on the poor. This policy of poverty reduction aims to have a bearing on the choice of partner countries for long-term development co-operation, be reflected in the dialogue on the organisation and focus of co-operation with these countries, and form the basis for following up poverty issues with multilateral organisations and in international processes (MFA 2000:17).

Poverty in sub-Saharan Africa has been seen, also by the Norwegian aid authorities, as a predominantly rural phenomenon. The focus on rural poverty is attributable to the fact that the overwhelming majority of the African population has lived in rural areas, but also that the urban population generally has been seen as having higher income, better physical infrastructure and better access to social services. The higher standard of living in urban areas has, in turn, been perceived as being sustained by a strong urban bias in African government policies after independence. Although there is some validity to these contentions, the 'urban bias thesis' (Lipton 1980) has also contributed to discounting early indicators of increasingly difficult life situations for people in urban areas (Jamal and Weeks 1993; Potts 1997).

Table 16. Human development in Norway's main partners in development co-operation (1999)

Country	Norwegian aid (NOK million)	HDI rank (of 174)	GDP per capita (USD)
Tanzania	388	156	480
Mozambique	286	168	782
Zambia	213	153	719
Uganda	198	158	1,074
Ethiopia	187	171	574
Angola	153	160	1,821
South Africa	124	103	8,488
Sudan	110	143	1,394
Zimbabwe	103	130	2,669
Malawi	96	163	523

Sources: NORAD 2000; UNDP 2000.

Perceptions of urban poverty started to change in the late 1980s (Becker et al. 1994). The emerging large and sprawling informal settlement areas in most towns and cities became increasingly difficult to disregard both for national governments and the international community. The inadequacy of income-based poverty lines and the complex nature of urban poverty were increasingly recognised, leading to alternative ways of assessing the situation of the urban poor, and to upwardly adjusted estimates of their number (Nelson 1999).

The urbanisation of poverty has primarily been associated with the economic stagnation and the structural adjustment programmes of the 1980s, intended to alleviate the alleged urban bias in development. These programmes typically led to falling real wages, increasing prices for goods and services, and reduced public expenditure, all affecting the urban population particularly hard (Becker et al. 1994). The impacts of these policies were exacerbated by the increase in urban populations as from the 1970s and are accounted for in Chapter 1.

Even though urban poverty has become part of the development discourse and receives increasing attention, there is still considerable controversy surrounding its magnitude, characteristics and trends (UNCHS 1996; World Bank 2000). The controversies centre on different perceptions of what constitutes poverty and its measurement, but as Amis and Rakodi (1994:632) have pointed out, “a view that urban areas are well off and that all the poverty is rural has proved remarkably robust.”

Our point of departure is that poverty is pervasive and grave in both rural and urban areas of Africa, but that there are good reasons to focus on poverty in cities and towns. Urban poverty has long been neglected by national governments and aid organisations, including the Nordic ones. An increasingly large share of Africa's population is expected to live in cities and towns, which in itself is likely to contribute further to the urbanisation of poverty. And there is persuasive evidence that urban and rural poverty are closely interlinked, suggesting that a better understanding of urban poverty is important for poverty alleviation in sub-Saharan Africa in a broader sense.

The next section will take a closer look at the scale and nature of urban poverty, arguing that the real problem is greater than statistics on income and consumption indicate and that the urban poor are particularly vulnerable to changes in their political, economic and social environment. The subsequent section will address the coping strategies of the urban poor, with a particular focus on the governance of poor urban areas, diversification of income and expenditure, housing as an asset, and the importance of social relations and networks in contexts where the nuclear household is under considerable pressure. The final section will discuss the 'urban poor' as a target group by focusing on processes of marginalisation and social exclusion in poor urban areas.

2.1 The magnitude and characteristics of urban poverty

All cities and towns in Africa contain areas that convey an immediate impression of misery and despair, often amplified by their stark contrast to adjacent formal and modern parts of the urban context (see Box 12).

BOX 11. BUILDING CITIES FROM THE BOTTOM UP

"Most new housing and most new neighbourhoods in Third World cities are organised, planned and built outside the law. Most urban citizens have no choice but to build, buy or rent an 'illegal' dwelling since they cannot afford the cheapest 'legal' house or apartment. It is now common for 30 to 60 per cent of an entire city's population to live in houses and neighbourhoods which have been developed illegally. In most cities 75 to 90 per cent of all new housing is built illegally."

Source: Hardoy and Satterthwaite 1989:12.

Shantytowns, squatter areas, informal settlements or slums⁸ are normally overcrowded and noisy, with small brick houses or iron shacks, inadequate access to water, electricity and sewerage and underdeveloped social services (Vaa 1995). The large number of people present during daytime indicates limited employment and income in the formal economy, and informal economic activities – dominated by women – yield minimal returns. Most such areas also experience severe problems of social tension and violence. A large number of studies portrays urban informal settlements as deeply impoverished slum areas (Hardoy and Satterthwaite 1989; Moser 1996; Bank 1998).

Having said this, there has also been a tendency to perceive informal settlements and their inhabitants as all poor and all vulnerable. In actual fact, most areas of this type show considerable internal differentiation in terms of employment and income, housing, access to urban services, health and levels of education.

⁸ Even though these terms are often used interchangeably, they have different connotations: the term 'squatter areas' connotes illegality of settlement, the terms 'shantytown' and 'slum' highlight the poor social conditions of settlements, and the term 'informal settlement' comprises both.

Systematic differences have been found between social categories such as men and women, young and old, first and second generation urbanites and people from different ethnic groups and backgrounds. In addition, there is increasing evidence that conditions in the formal parts of most African towns and cities are deteriorating, with ensuing overcrowding and social problems (Gmelch and Zenner 1996).

The notion of poverty in urban areas is further complicated by the perceptions of poverty among the poor themselves. Though little systematic and comparative research has been done on this topic, anthropological studies of poverty have shown that people's own perceptions of disadvantage often differ markedly from those of 'experts' (Wratten 1995:17).

BOX 12. MUSSEQUES IN LUANDA, ANGOLA

The capital city of Angola, Luanda, has grown from an estimated 1.5 million inhabitants in 1992 to more than 3.5 million in 2000. About 80 per cent of the population live in slum areas (*musseques*) and conditions in the formal parts of the city (*bairros*) are equally squalid. There are no functioning local government structures in the musseques. Practically all public services have broken down, meaning that water is a major expense for most families and garbage and human waste cause major health risks. Schools and health clinics are understaffed and under-equipped, the latter contributing to an under-five mortality rate of 279/1000. The large majority of the population in Luanda depends on an over-saturated informal economy, where the returns are meagre and the risks high. The harsh conditions in the musseques are exacerbated by the inability of most people to maintain links with the countryside due to the war situation.

Sources: UNICEF 2000; UNDP 2000.

To exemplify urban poverty, references will be made to throughout this chapter the capital city of Luanda in Angola and the secondary town of Oshakati in Namibia. Luanda is a large city in a country which scores low on most socio-economic indicators, while Oshakati is a small town in a country whose socio-economic indicators show relatively favourable results (UNDP 2000). These two urban settlements will be considered representative of two major types of urban setting in sub-Saharan Africa. The level of urbanisation in Angola is estimated at more than 50 per cent (UNDP 2000:47), while urbanisation stands at 32 per cent in Namibia (UNDP 2000).

BOX 13. INFORMAL SETTLEMENTS IN OSHAKATI, NAMIBIA

Oshakati in northern Namibia is a small town of 60,000 inhabitants – the main urban centre for more than 800,000 Owambos, the largest ethnic group in Namibia. Approximately 60 per cent of its population live in four separate shantytowns. Socio-economic indicators depict a less dramatic situation than in the case of Luanda, but there is considerable social differentiation in the informal settlement areas. Only 20 per cent of the adult population have formal employment, the remaining 80 per cent depending on the informal economy. Income varies considerably; some 70 per cent of the shanty households have income below the national poverty line and the remaining 30 per cent earn up to five times the set poverty line. Women and female-headed households are generally poorer in terms of income than their male counterparts, but tend to have stronger urban networks and are thus less vulnerable. While urban-rural links are important parts of the coping strategy for most people, the very poorest have problems maintaining such links, which, in turn, adds to their marginalisation.

Source: Tvedten and Nangulah 1999.

2.1.1 *The number of urban poor*

The magnitude of urban poverty in Africa is difficult to assess, and depends on the adopted definition of 'poverty' (Wratten 1995; Baulch 1996). Conventional definitions are normally based on income or consumption, or on social indicators such as life expectancy, infant mortality, nutrition, the proportion of the household budget spent on food, literacy, school enrolment, access to health clinics, etc. The quantification of urban poverty is further compounded by the often arbitrary definition of what constitutes an urban area, and the fact that many households are involved in both urban- and rural-based activities, either through circular migration or 'straddling'.

Nevertheless, attempts have been made at estimating the absolute number and proportion of urban poor in Africa. Overall estimates of the total number of urban poor in developing countries vary from 330 million to more than 600 million (UNCHS 1996:108). As regards sub-Saharan Africa in particular, the proportion of the urban population below the poverty line has been estimated by the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements to vary from 25 per cent in Uganda to 64 per cent in Gambia (UNCHS 1996:113). In more general terms, some commentators argue that the majority of Africa's poor already live in cities and towns (Wratten 1995:11; Potts 1997:453). Although estimates vary, there is general agreement that urban poverty is on the rise in both absolute and relative terms and that the total number is substantial.

Definitions based on income or consumption are useful because they provide a uniform standard by which comparisons can be made of the incidence of poverty in different sub-populations (urban and rural, male- and female-headed households, old and young, etc.), or in the same population over time (Wratten 1995:15). Table 17 below gives country-specific estimates of the proportion of urban and rural dwellers below the poverty line in some of Norway's main partners of co-operation, primarily based on national sources.

Table 17. Proportion of urban and rural population below the poverty line in Norway's main partners of co-operation

Country	Urbanisation (2000)	Urban poor	Rural poor	Source
Tanzania	33	41.0	57.0	RoT 2000
Mozambique	40	62.0	71.2	RoM 2000
Zambia	40	56.0	83.0	RoZ 2000
Uganda	14	16.0	46.0	WB 2000
Ethiopia	18	52.0	48.0	UNDP 1998
Angola	34	61.0	78.0	UNDP 2000b
South Africa	50	28.5	70.9	May 2000
Sudan	36	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
Zimbabwe	35	56	86	SDF 1997
Malawi	25	65.0	60.0	UNDP 2000d

Sources: On urbanisation: United Nations 2000. On poverty: see far right column in table.

Many aspects of poverty cannot be captured adequately by income- or consumption-based measures alone. Social indicators are often used as additional measures and to contrast the well-being of urban and rural populations, thereby avoiding the problem of urban-rural price differences. Unfortunately, the Human Development Report (UNDP 2000) does not distinguish between rural and urban areas when reporting on the Human Development Index; it reflects a national average. Table 18 compares HDI rank with degree of urbanisation in Norway's most important partner countries. There is no systematic correlation between degree of urbanisation and HDI rank (with the exception of South Africa as a special case), thereby indirectly questioning the postulated positive correlation between urbanisation and development.

Table 18. HDI rank and level of urbanisation

Country	HDI Rank in 1999 (of 174)	Urbanisation Level (1998)	Projected Urbanisation Level (2015)
Tanzania	156	26.4	38.3
Mozambique	168	37.8	51.5
Zambia	153	42.9	51.5
Uganda	158	13.5	20.7
Ethiopia	171	16.7	25.8
Angola	160	32.9	44.1
South Africa	103	49.9	56.3
Sudan	143	34.2	48.7
Zimbabwe	130	33.9	45.9
Malawi	163	14.6	22.7

Source: UNDP 2000.

More specific data on human development in urban and rural areas are available in several national UNDP reports, including those for Angola and Namibia. Generally, the differences in HDI are principally attributable to disparities of income and consumption, whereas the distribution with respect to

social indicators such as life expectancy and literacy are more even between urban and rural areas. This underlines the insufficiency of income-based definitions of poverty, and points to the importance of other factors for the well-being of urban and rural dwellers.

Table 19. Urban-rural discrepancies in human development

	Angola		Namibia	
	Urban	Rural	Urban	Rural
Income	535 (USD)	83 (USD)	7,751 (NAD)	1,875 (NAD)
Life expectancy at birth	42.0	42.0	56.4	50.7
Illiteracy rate	42.1	56.7	8.3	26.3
HDI	0.41	0.26	0.700	0.534

Sources: Angola: UNDP 2000. Namibia: UNDP 2000.

A third alternative method of estimating the scale of urban poverty is to focus on the number of people living in poor quality homes or neighbourhoods (UNCHS 1996: 114–115). Although urban incomes are generally higher and urban services and facilities more accessible than in rural areas, poor town dwellers have to contend with poor housing, overcrowding, bad sanitation and contaminated water, and the sites are often illegal and dangerous (see Table 20). According to the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements, estimating levels of poverty on the basis of poor quality housing and the absence of basic infrastructure and services gives a realistic picture of the number of people in urban areas living in poverty (UNCHS 1996:195). However, others have warned that a “housing class” does not represent a meaningful way to subdivide a population as it does not capture the diversity found in such areas.

Table 20. Urban population with access to safe drinking water and sanitation services (1990). Percentages

Country	Access to safe drinking water	Access to sanitation services
Tanzania	43	63
Mozambique	44	61
Zambia	70	75
Uganda	65	74
Ethiopia	91	76
Angola	71	25
South Africa	-	-
Sudan	55	89
Zimbabwe	95	95
Malawi	97	100

Source: UNCHS 1996:512.

In conclusion, the magnitude of urban poverty depends on the definition of poverty, which is subject to continuous debate. There is general agreement, however, that income and consumption are important indicators of poverty, and that HDI and the quality of housing are important supplementary

indicators. Notwithstanding the controversy over the magnitude of urban poverty, there is general agreement that it is on the rise both in absolute and relative terms. This is the case in Norway's main partner countries of co-operation as well. With the rising level of urbanisation and deteriorating economic conditions in these countries, it is likely that the majority of the poor will live in cities and towns within a period of 15–20 years.

2.1.2 The nature of urban poverty

In addition to the fact that the current magnitude of urban poverty is considerable in both absolute and relative terms, it is increasingly being acknowledged that quantitative definitions of urban poverty are inadequate. The quantitative measures invariably restrict the number of criteria used to describe poverty and comparable time series of data are generally lacking; they oversimplify and standardise what is complex and varied; and they project a static picture of poverty as an inescapable phenomenon (UNCHS 1996:110). The quantitative indicators are too descriptive and fail to capture the dynamics of poverty over time. For a more comprehensive conception of poverty, the notion of vulnerability has been introduced (Box 15).

BOX 14. VULNERABILITY

“Vulnerability is not synonymous with poverty but means defencelessness, insecurity and exposure to risk, shocks and stress. It is linked with assets, such as human investments in health and education, productive assets including houses and domestic equipment, access to community infrastructure, stores of capital and claims on other households, patrons, the government and the international community for resources in times of need.”

Source: Wratten 1995:17.

Moser (1996:24) sums up the notion of vulnerability as “the well-being of individuals, households or communities in the face of a changing environment.” Environmental changes that threaten well-being can be ecological, economic, social or political, and they can take the form of sudden shocks, long-term trends or seasonal cycles. Focusing on vulnerability in terms of ‘shocks’ and ‘crises’ should not, however, allow us to lose sight of inequality, exploitation, class relations – i.e. the chronic vulnerability and insecurity for people in a hostile political economy (Wood and Salway 2000). With reference to urban poverty in particular, the following characteristics of vulnerability are often highlighted (UNCHS 1996:111).

Urban dwellers generally face higher living costs than rural dwellers, because many items that have to be purchased in urban areas are free or cheaper in most rural areas.

Urban areas are characterised by a greater degree of commercialisation of goods, services and land than are rural areas. Food is a major running expense for most urban households, often making up more than 50 per cent of total

consumption. Poor households tend to spend a larger share of their budget on food than do non-poor households. A second major expense is fuel and water. Firewood or charcoal is widely used in poorer urban areas without electricity, and is expensive both to buy and to collect. In urban areas where piped or running water is not available, water tends to be a major expense due to high transportation costs. In both cases, user fees normally have to be paid when private or communal services are made available. Transportation is a third major economic burden for many households. Where public transportation is not available, private transportation to work or other necessary tasks in the formal city may consume a substantial share of the household income.

Housing is normally a considerable one-time construction expense, as well for people living in poor-quality dwellings such as corrugated iron shacks. The land and housing market is under strong pressure in most urban areas, often with private interests speculating and raising prices and thereby rendering them unaffordable for large sections of the urban population. Public or private loans – if available at all to poor people – tend to carry high interest rates and have to be serviced with utmost regularity. In case of default the dwellers are evicted and the dwelling repossessed. In many cases the prohibitive building costs compel urban dwellers to rent accommodation, which adds to their vulnerability in terms of eviction threats whenever the rent is not paid promptly. Expenses for health and education also tend to be large expense items. While outlays for educational purposes can be avoided by not sending children to school, medical expenses normally have to be met at short notice. Having said this, many studies of urban poverty show a clear correlation between level of education and health, particularly among women. Table 21 below presents the structure of expenditure for the poorest and richest households in Luanda.

Table 21. Structure of household expenditure in Luanda

Expense item	Poorest 25 per cent	Richest 25 per cent
Foodstuff	64.1	48.2
Water	5.2	2.5
Health	4.5	10.3
Education	4.1	7.1
Transport	9	5
Housing	1	8

Source: UNDP 2000.

The dependence of urban households on cash income usually means greater vulnerability. The rural areas provide more opportunities for subsistence production or foraging, while such opportunities are limited in urban areas when prices rise or wages fall.

The income of urban households tends to vary considerably, both for individual households over time and between different households. Retrenchment in the public sector due to structural adjustment has affected many badly. In many

poor urban areas only 10–15 per cent of the households have members in formal employment (UNCHS 1996). Food subsidies that made food affordable for the poorest families have largely disappeared. With the downscaling and redundancy of formal employment, an increasing number of people has resorted to the informal economy. After a period with considerable optimism regarding the role and prospects for the informal sector (World Bank 1991), it is now largely perceived as a “competitive dead-end sector with low pay and long hours” (Moser 1996:24). Income is typically low and fluctuating, particularly with respect to trade, which is most commonly pursued by women. Incomes are normally higher in informal production, which is dominated by men.

Many urban households depend on a sole breadwinner, which makes them vulnerable. With retrenchment, illness, divorce or other conditions taking away the main source of family income, there are generally no systems of social security or other support structures buffering such shocks. In response to decreasing and fluctuating income more household members tend to be forced onto the labour market in a multiplicity of pursuits. This applies particularly to women, who have to combine employment in the informal economy with domestic responsibilities.

Table 22 compares employment status with income among male- and female-headed households in Oshakati, revealing a significant difference in household income between those with formal employment and those depending on informal sources of income. Employed female-headed households (making up 35 per cent of the total) generally have higher incomes than unemployed male-headed households, which underlines the dominance of women in the informal economy.⁹

Table 22. Employment and income in Oshakati, Namibia (percentages)

Income (NAD)	Employed MHH	Unemployed MHH	Employed FHH	Unemployed FHH
< 50	0	10	0	8
51–100	0	5	0	10
101–250	3	52	10	38
251–500	26	20	30	21
501–1000	38	3	20	21
1001–3000	29	8	40	3
> 3000	4	2	0	0

Source: Tvedten and Pomuti 1994.

The nature of support networks based on family, kinship and neighbourhood is generally different in urban areas and is less effective in providing support or assistance when needed.

⁹ The official poverty line in Namibia is NAD 600 per month, meaning that approximately 70 per cent of the households are defined as poor.

Urbanisation has led to significant changes in the social organisation of communities, neighbourhoods, families and households (Hannerz 1980; Tvedten and Pomuti 1994; Rakodi 1997). Nuclear and one-parent households have become more common, at the expense of multi-generational extended family units. While this entails a smaller number of mouths to feed, it also means a lower number of potential income earners. Economic hardship and congestion of people have also made household units less stable, leading to radical household composition shifts, even over brief periods of time. Divorce rates also tend to be higher in urban than in rural areas. Furthermore, poor urban communities tend to be less cohesive than traditional rural villages because people come from different geographical areas and diverse ethnic backgrounds. The combination of poverty and a heterogeneous population often exacerbate instability and tension. As a result, crime and violence (both public and domestic) tend to be more prevalent in urban than in rural areas.

The relative isolation and individualisation of many urban communities and social units have led to more vulnerable social networks. The ability to overcome an economic crisis often depends on the ability to make claims for help or resources from social relationships with family, friends, neighbours or the state – so-called social capital. Alternative urban networks are created, but these often depend on the command of economic resources and necessary urban cultural competence (such as literacy) that many households do not possess. Table 23 shows the marital status among the adult informal settlement population in Oshakati, with significant implications for household stability and composition. Only 15 per cent adhere to the ‘ideal’ of being formally married in a nuclear family setting.

Table 23. Marital status among the adult population in Oshakati, Namibia

Marital status	Per cent of total
Traditional marriage	3
Church/magistrate marriage	12
Single	58
Cohabitants	23
Widow/er	2
Divorcee	2

Source: Tvedten and Pomuti 1994.

In the absence of adequate housing and physical infrastructure, poor urbanites typically face more serious environmental hazards than do rural dwellers.

The central importance of housing to peoples’ quality of life is often overlooked (UNCHS 1996). Secure tenure and house ownership are important preconditions for economic security as well as physical well-being. In the absence of adequate housing, and attendant piped water, drains, sewers, regular solid waste collection, etc, poor urban populations are at risk both economically and in terms of environmental hazards (McGranahan et al. 1997). Inadequate housing and urban services have had particularly detrimental effects

on health, injury and premature death in poor urban areas. The high population densities in most urban shantytowns have made infectious and parasitic diseases particularly widespread. In fact, illness rather than starvation is the principal cause of death in poor urban areas in Africa, partly because poor nutrition makes people more susceptible to disease, especially children. Table 24 below shows the distribution of types of inferior housing in Oshakati, which has significant implications for economic security as well as health and well-being.

Table 24. Types of dwelling in Oshakati, Namibia

Type of dwelling	Male-headed household	Female-headed household
Brick house	36	29
Iron shack	62	69
Traditional dwelling	2	0
Tent	0	2

Source: Tvedten and Pomuti 1994.

HIV/AIDS is currently a grave concern in urban as well as rural areas of Africa. There is no conclusive evidence on the prevalence of AIDS in the two types of setting, but over-crowding, poverty and the breakdown of traditional structures of social organisation are likely to add to the impact of the AIDS pandemic in cities and towns. Having said this, increasing evidence is also being adduced that the infected move or are being moved to rural areas to be cared for and to die, adding an additional burden on rural dwellers (UNDP 2000).

In conclusion, the urban poor are characterised by a high degree of vulnerability despite their relatively high average level of income compared to that of the rural poor. Poor urban households are more exposed to changes in income and prices for basic goods and services, and their vulnerability is exacerbated by poor housing, the deterioration of public services, and increasing tension and violence in congested urban settings. In fact, the degree of poverty in urban households seems to have less to do with the actual amount of monetary income accruing to these units than with the way in which such resources are controlled, used and allocated.

2.2 The coping strategies of the urban poor

How do poor households respond when incomes decline, jobs are increasingly scarce, the prices of food and services increase, and the general living conditions deteriorate? As governments and donors grapple with the problems of poverty, understanding how the poor respond to economic crisis has become increasingly important. This understanding can help to ensure that interventions aimed at reducing poverty complement and strengthen people's own inventive solutions rather than substitute for or block them (Moser 1996:1). In the following section, some key elements in the coping strategies of the urban poor will be discussed.

2.2.1 Governance of poor urban settlements

The term 'governance' refers to the relationship not only between government and state agencies, but also between government, communities and social groups (UNCHS 1996:161). As discussed in Chapter 1, policies for urban development have generally not been successful due to limited political will and capacity to devolve genuine decision-making authority, and to allocate adequate financial resources from the central to the local level of government. As a result, poor urban areas have suffered from inadequate provision of housing, physical infrastructure and social services, in turn causing social unrest.

In response to this situation of a defaulting government, a broad range of community-based associations have emerged, at the initiative either of communities themselves or of national and international non-government organisations (Tostensen et al. 2001). Such associations are of three main types. Some are primarily development associations, providing housing, electricity, sewerage, solid waste disposal, or engaging in other projects to improve physical conditions in urban communities. Others primarily have a social agenda, being involved with education, health, kindergartens, micro-credit societies and other projects to improve social conditions. And finally, some associations are primarily political or orientated towards advocacy of issues, organising the community internally or vis-à-vis the state or other external agencies.

Most community-based associations have a democratic agenda (often pushed by external agencies), and strive to be representative both of their membership base and of management structures. However, many associations are *de facto* linked to special interest groups, and evolve into elitist organisations. Problems normally centre on financial management, representation of women and the poorest sections of the population, and project implementation. Most associations also depend on external funding of some type or another, which renders them vulnerable and less sustainable.

Having said this, community associations do play a vital role in many poor urban areas and are important both for improving living conditions and for fostering democratic practices. The most notable example is that of South Africa, which elected a democratic government in 1994 following a protracted struggle in which civic associations in the black urban townships played a critical role. But elsewhere in urban Africa associations have also begun to assert themselves in the day-to-day management of their communities. Experience indicates that community-based associations are most successful when they manage to establish constructive relations with the state and local authorities (Tostensen et al. 2001).

BOX 15. URBAN ASSOCIATIONS IN LUANDA

“In the peri-urban areas of Luanda, there are initiatives which at present are directed mainly towards family and individual survival. There is [...] a potential for community-level responses, but residents of peri-urban *bairros* are only interested in organising themselves around activities which they feel can resolve their problems on a more permanent basis. Because of promises made in the past that did not bear fruit, communities tend to be wary of promises, plans and fine words.

It is currently mainly NGOs that are concerned about the institutional void in the poor areas of Luanda. The state has not shown much sign of being aware of this problem, and continues to be more concerned with technical than institutional development. The ‘international community’ appears to see the solution mainly in terms of the creation of multi-party democracy or, in the case of the World Bank, privatisation of state services. We have argued that the concept of community-based rehabilitation advocated by NGOs is still valid, and that the creation of sustainable institutions is potentially an important contribution to peace-building, rehabilitation, reconstruction and development in Angola.”

Source: Robson 2001.

2.2.2 Diversification of income and expenditure

Employment and income are the most important determinants of well-being in urban areas; at the same time, labour is the greatest asset of the poor. Unemployment and declining income have implications not only for access to money and material resources, but also for urban identities. For most people, employment and income is the very rationale for moving to town and becoming urban.

Households respond to the insecurity of employment first of all by deploying additional labour. This normally means additional labour input by women, but in the poorest households also children and young adolescents work. Women’s contribution to household income varies, depending on the opportunities available and existing labour supply constraints. Their education and the need to balance employment with other household responsibilities also have implications for their income-generating capacity. The majority of poor urban women work in the informal sector with petty trading and service activities. Boys and girls who contribute to household income tend to do so in different ways. Boys are more likely to earn income directly, while girls tend to contribute indirectly, for example by taking on childcare responsibilities. Child labour is a source of serious concern, because lack of education compromises the chances of escaping poverty in the future.

Households also respond to the insecurity of employment by adopting an expenditure-minimising strategy. This normally means reducing total spending, changing dietary habits (by reducing the number of meals per day or buying cheaper and less nutritious food), and cutting back on the purchase of non-essential goods (which in many cases may narrow the range of options to get out of poverty, such as transportation to search for work). Households may also design strategies around non-monetary resources, such as bartering and increasing food production in gardens and peri-urban areas.

Research on intra-household time allocation, decision-making and resource-pooling shows that women, because of their multiple responsibilities, have frequently assumed a disproportionate share of the burden of adjusting to adverse economic circumstances (Moser 1996). At the same time, we know that women normally have the main responsibility for feeding and maintaining children and youngsters. Enhancing the opportunities for employment and income for women is therefore a particularly important element in a strategy to reduce poverty in urban areas.

BOX 16. THE INFORMAL ECONOMY IN OSHAKATI

“The immediate impression from the informal settlement areas in Oshakati is that informal economic enterprises are an important and dominant activity. There are small outlets for local brew (*tombó*) and liquor apparently in every second house, open from early morning to late night. Women are busy cooking meat and other foodstuffs (*okapana*) for sale either from their own house or from the main commercial areas in town. There is a number of small shops selling cooking oil, soap, bread and sweets. Small outdoor markets provide a variety of goods from fruits and vegetables to watches and perfumes. Piles of second hand clothes lie on the ground, sold for two Namibian dollars for a pair of trousers and three for a dress. In front of the houses women are having their hair braided and plaited by women in the neighbourhood known for their skills. A tailor sits with an old sewing machine mending a worn-out shirt, trying to compete with the somewhat larger enterprise close by making African dresses on request from people wanting to look like the models in glossy South African magazines. And in backyards one can hear the hammering from mechanics trying to get an old Ford Anglia back on the road. Young men are also ‘one the move’, trying to get piece work from Angolan traders or planning activities of a more illicit type.”

Source: Tvedten and Hangula 1994.

2.2.3 Housing as a productive asset

Proper housing is important not only for the well-being of the household as a social unit, but also as a productive asset (UNCHS 1996). The urban poor use their dwellings with particular resourcefulness when other sources of income are reduced. The type and quality of a house does not necessarily reflect the socio-economic position of the household, but may rather be a reflection of strategies to minimise housing expenditures.

House owners may use their homes for economic enterprise. Production and sale of alcoholic beverages and food is particularly common, and may be pursued in more than 50 per cent of the dwellings in certain areas. However, many houses and shacks also host productive enterprises like tailoring, shoe repairs, furniture making, hair cutting and braiding, and backyard garages. An added advantage, particularly for women, is that they may combine income-generating activities with childcare.

In addition, poor households may rent out part of their house to raise income. This will normally be done if the house has a certain minimum size, but cases may be found in which beds in single-room dwellings are rented out. Rent is normally paid in cash, but may also be demanded as contributions in kind to recurrent household costs. For households with plots and security of tenure,

selling off part of their urban land is an alternative means of raising income. For the poorest and most vulnerable, selling their entire property is a last resort that may yield a surplus. This is an option for people who intend to return to the rural areas. Otherwise, the desperation of such an act appears to presage urban destitution.

Owning a house and a plot is, finally, a potentially important tool for extending relationships and generating social capital. House owners can receive and entertain guests from urban and rural areas alike, and larger houses tend to become centres of activity in urban shantytowns. It also adds to peoples' status, and house ownership and a fixed address may be important in dealing with the state or other external agencies.

Not having access to secure tenure and a proper dwelling is, together with lack of employment, probably the most important determinant of poverty and vulnerability for poor urban households, only one step away from destitution.

BOX 17. HOUSING IN LUANDA

"Housing is fundamental for the growth of individual capabilities, for the family and for the community. Housing investments in Angola have been minimal in recent decades, which has led to a deep housing crisis and grave deficiencies in the management of the housing stock. High prices for construction materials, lack of a housing policy and priorities, absence of bank credit for housing and lack of urban development plans have contributed to the deepening housing crisis."

"Only in Luanda 2,600,000 people live in poor and alarming housing conditions. More than two-thirds of people live in dwellings with only two rooms, with the average number of persons per room being 2.3. In terms of infrastructure and sanitary arrangements, half the population do not have minimal facilities such as a bathroom or a latrine."

"Under the present conditions, the high suburban construction has been sustained by a black market where prices move freely and workers are hired who charge unrealistic prices compared to the income of people hiring them. Generally people are confused about the overall cost of their dwelling, since most of them build in a step-by-step fashion."

Sources: UNDP 2000b:62–63 and UNDP 1998:54.

2.2.4 Urban-rural links

Following the decline in the urban economy there has been increasing attention devoted to the importance of urban-rural links in the coping strategies of the poor. Evidence suggests that many poor urban dwellers maintain close links with their rural areas of origin (Tvedten and Pomuti 1994; de Haan 1999). This applies not only to the first generation of migrants, but also to people who have grown up in urban settings.

Such links may first of all take the form of exchange of goods and services. Urban households typically send money or commodities to rural relatives or friends, including clothes, detergents, soap, tobacco, sugar, white flour, and imported goods. Rural households for their part may supply their urban

relatives with foodstuffs (meat, staple grains and vegetables), home-made beverages, firewood and building material.

In addition to exchanging goods and services, many poor urban households have members staying in rural areas for longer or shorter periods of time. This typically involves children who stay with relatives where food is more easily accessible and life more tranquil; youngsters staying in the rural areas to attend to land and cattle; or older people moving back to their rural area of origin when they are unable to work in town any more. On the other hand, many poor urban households are compelled to host and feed rural relatives and friends who need a place to stay when in town. Visits like these often represent heavy economic burdens on the households concerned, but are difficult to escape because they are considered a reciprocal element of social capital.

In addition to these urban-rural relations, there is evidence that many households pursue a circular migration strategy or are semi-permanently split in a rural and an urban part through 'straddling' – not relinquishing their roots on either side of the rural-urban divide (Bank 1998; de Haan 1999). Circular migration and 'straddling' may contribute to the forging of constructive relations between urban and rural areas, but are also likely to increase the vulnerability of the household as a social unit and exacerbate intra-household tensions.

The close links between urban and rural areas have a number of important implications. Problems of unemployment and poverty in cities and towns have repercussions in rural areas, and, *vice versa*, problems of low agricultural production in the countryside impact adversely on urban areas. However, there are indications that the extent of such linkages varies both among urban areas and between households within given shantytowns. The poorest households seem to have the greatest problem in establishing and maintaining such links, which reinforces their marginalisation and exclusion.

BOX 18. URBAN-RURAL LINKS IN OSHAKATI

"The urban-rural links are extremely important for the informal settlement dwellers in Oshakati, both in social and economic terms. 86 per cent of the households have access to a rural dwelling, and 73 per cent have household members living in rural areas at least 8 months a year."

"I have family members who live in Oshakati, but we cannot afford transport fees to visit them. Sometimes they come to visit us, and bring things like sugar which is not available here. In towns one has the advantage of being closer to markets, unlike in rural areas. People in towns normally do not pay for transport when they want to go shopping. There are many advantages in towns because everything is there. One has access to most of the things (infrastructure). In rural areas one has an advantage of having own fields to cultivate, while in towns one does not have access to this. Friendship in rural areas is better than in towns. There a person cannot eat with a neighbour if he is hungry. Here neighbours who have ploughs can plough your field for free, in town nothing is done without any charge. Friends who help each other in rural areas do not expect any kind of refund."

Sources: Tvedten and Pomuti 1994:5; Tvedten and Nangulah 1999:50.

2.2.5 Social relationships and networks

Poverty exerts severe pressure on the urban household as a social and economic unit. With the household under pressure, other types of social relations and networks become increasingly important as part of the coping strategy, i.e. as social capital. People are involved in relations and networks not only for their daily survival strategies, but also for access to employment, housing and social services. Furthermore, networks may be critical for the ability to mobilise support in times of severe crisis.

Traditionally, the most important social entity beyond the nuclear household is the extended family. Relations may be based on matrilineal or patrilineal principles of organisation, and specific rules of authority and inheritance. Extended family relations are typically important not only for economic purposes, but also for fulfilling important socio-cultural obligations and rituals related to birth, circumcision, marriage and death. Such relations seem to be less prevalent in urban areas. Many households do not have extended family members nearby, and the weakening of conjugal relations makes the extended families less cohesive. Maintaining links with extended family members in rural areas is, as indicated above, often difficult, particularly for the poorest.

There are indications that bonds with neighbours and friends are the most important relationships in the daily life of poor households, particularly for women. Most people in an urban neighbourhood interact with each other in one way or another during the day, particularly the poorest ones who do not leave the shantytown for work or other external activities. Neighbourhood relations are often formed between people with different geographical and ethnic backgrounds, and thus contribute to widening the potential network of poor urban dwellers. Money and different food items may be exchanged to forge and cement relationships, and neighbourhoods also typically organise childcare activities, safety measures, etc.

Maintaining cordial relationships with institutions and individuals in the modern, urban sector is often decisive for the well-being of poor households. These actors can be entrepreneurs and patrons as potential employers, government officials who may be important for accessing public services, or teachers and health personnel who may be important for social services provision. Developing good relations with potential employers is particularly important, as both the formal and informal labour markets tend to recruit people by way of personal connections rather than formal processes.

The predominant focus on individuals and households as units of analysis has caused researchers and decision-makers to overlook the importance of these types of network relations. Understanding their dynamics will make it easier to target policies and interventions for improving the opportunities of the poorest segments of the urban population.

BOX 19. COPING IN OSHAKATI

“Paulus Shindike is a married man in his mid-thirties, and has been employed as a security guard for nearly ten years. His wife by traditional marriage stays in his village in Ohangwena with their three children. Shindike himself stays in Oshakati with another woman, with whom he has two children. The two women know about each other (‘They accept that they are two’). Shindike manages to save money from his low-paid job, because people in the security firm ‘help each other out’ and his girlfriend makes some money. He has invested in cattle that are taken care of by a younger brother in the village. Shindike argues that the most important thing is to have a permanent job, so you “know that you will have a paycheck every month”. He also prefers Oshakati to towns in the south, because “it is easier to get to know people and you will always find somebody who can help you” . ”

Maria Nangumbe is a young single mother with three children from 1 to 10 years. She lives in a recently built iron shack, and makes and sells *okapana* in co-operation with another woman in the neighbourhood. Things were very difficult when her cohabitant died in 1997. She did not get any help from his extended family, and her own family in the rural areas had little to support her with. They now take care of one of the children. She received most of the help from neighbours in the neighbourhood. Nangumbe argues that many men want to stay with her, but she does not want them. ‘Men are nice sometimes, but you don’t have to live with them’. She is relatively successful in the informal economy, because ‘I have a good place at *Omatala*, and neighbours who take care of my children when I am there’ .”

Source: Tvedten and Nangulah 1999:28.

Quantitative data on income and consumption in poor urban areas often suggest that people would not be in a position to survive at all. When they do survive, in defiance of very harsh conditions, it is attributable to a complex system of coping strategies with important economic as well as socio-cultural underpinnings. Indicators of increasing or decreasing vulnerability for the individual, household and community are summed up in Table 25 below.

Table 25. Potential indicators of increasing or decreasing vulnerability

Type of vulnerability	Increasing vulnerability	Decreasing vulnerability
Individual		
Labour	Loss of permanent job Decline in secure wage employment Increase in casual employment Acquisition of physical disability	Increase in number of household members working, especially women Increase in home-based enterprises Increase in jobs held by individual workers
Human capital	Decline in access to social and economic infrastructure Decline in school attendance or increase in drop-out rates Decline in health clinic consultation	Substitution of community-based or private for public services
Household		
Housing	Increased perception of threat of or actual eviction Deterioration in housing stock High level of overcrowding	Resolution of tenure insecurity Use of plot for inter-generational ‘nesting’

Household relations	Erosion of households as a social unit Household extension that reduces the ratio of earners to non-earners Inability of women to balance multiple responsibilities and community participation Older daughters undertaking childcare Elderly lacking care giver Increase in domestic violence	Household extension that increases the ratio of earners to non-earners Sharing of childcare, cooking and space Reduction in domestic violence
Community		
Social capital	Increasing personal insecurity in public places Decline in inter-household reciprocity Erosion of community level organisation	Community-based solution to crime problem Inter-household reciprocity Active community-based organisations

Source: Adapted from Moser 1996:25.

2.3 Processes of marginalisation and exclusion

In the preceding sections we have outlined the magnitude and characteristics of urban poverty, and the main coping strategies of the urban poor. We have argued that more than half of the poor population in Africa will live in towns and cities within a period of 15–20 years, and that despite their comparatively higher average level of income than their rural counterparts the urban environment makes the urban poor particularly vulnerable.

Notwithstanding the above, there are important differences between population groups in urban areas. The most obvious ones are found between formal and serviced areas and informal or squatter settlements Table 26 outlines these differences for Namibia's capital city, Windhoek. In fact, the differentiation is so pronounced in most cities and towns in Africa that it renders the urban-rural dichotomy rather questionable. It may be more relevant to speak about a 'trichotomy', with shanty areas and small semi-urbanised communities constituting an intermediate category between the urban and the rural.

Table 26. Socio-economic characteristics of formal and informal settlements in Windhoek, Namibia

Characteristic	Windhoek, formal	Windhoek, informal
Average household size	3.4	5.7
Female headed households (per cent)	20	35
Six years+ of education (per cent)	80	51
Unemployment (per cent)	7	32
Annual per capita income (NAD)	30,019	4,886
Annual per capita consumption (NAD)	19,167	3,355
Food consumption per household \leq 40% (per cent)	96.4	64.0

Source: CSO 1996.

There are also important processes of differentiation within the shantytowns or squatter areas themselves. These may be less visible to an outsider in contexts

where everything seems to be marked by poverty, but differences in employment and income, housing, access to physical and social services, relationships and networks, etc. may be determinants of people's ability to cope with and improve their own situation. In their own perceptions of poverty, moreover, the poor frequently attach value to 'non-visible' qualitative and relational dimensions such as close and non-exploitative social relations, independence, security, and self-respect (Wratten 1995:17).

BOX 20. THE EXTREMELY VULNERABLE

"The poor have always had strategies for day-to-day coping with low incomes, high consumer-prices, and inadequate or unreliable economic and social infrastructure. But to withstand economic shocks or long-term economic crisis, households must be able to survive such periods without irreversible damage to the productive capacity of their members and to their net asset position. The greater the risk and uncertainty, the more households diversify their assets to prevent such erosion. When asset bases become so depleted that even an upturn in the economy cannot reverse the damage – when all 'capital is cashed in' – households are extremely vulnerable."

Source: Moser 1996:24.

Recent advances in the analysis of poverty have pointed to options for bridging the gap between macro-orientated quantitative analyses and micro-orientated analyses of qualitative processes in the study of urban poverty and marginalisation (de Haan and Maxwell 1998). The strength of comparative community studies is their capacity to examine behavioural responses at household, intra-household and community levels. By highlighting how formal and informal institutions – including households and community organisations – foster or limit the capacity of households to adjust to external constraints in different contexts, community studies complement more typical economic research focusing on individuals, including the poor, as "atomistic decision makers in product or labour markets, not as members of social groups" (Moser 1996:17).

The concept of 'social exclusion' is currently in frequent use, defined as "the process through which individuals or groups are wholly or partially excluded from full participation in the society in which they live" (de Haan 1998). Social exclusion manifests itself in income markedly lower than the average in the society at large, failure or inability to participate in social or political activities, or otherwise a life in the margins.

Some groups may be permanently marginalised, with few if any options for upward social mobility. This may be due to physical or mental disability, near-complete social isolation or a 'culture of poverty' expressed in the form of complete resignation. This category may include the homeless, street children, prostitutes, alcoholics, substance abusers or other destitutes.

However, larger groups may be marginalised and excluded on a less permanent basis or in relation to specific social arenas owing to limited resources or

particular social stigmas ('dependent poor'). People in this category will strive for upward social mobility, and search for ways of combating or bypassing structural and social constraints.

We have argued above that women and female-headed households are generally poorer and more vulnerable than men and male-headed households in poor urban settings. They may be discriminated against in the formal labour market, and normally carry heavier social responsibilities for children, the elderly and other vulnerable groups. This notwithstanding, recent studies from informal settlements indicate that there is an emerging process of 'matrifocalisation' whereby women acquire an increasingly central socio-economic position in urban informal settlements. In response, poor men are becoming emasculated and are react in increasingly violent and anti-social ways (Bank 1998).

Another social category often facing particular problems of marginalisation and social exclusion in poor urban areas is the elderly. Older people tend to move back to their rural areas of origin once they cease to be active on the labour market, in order to be cared for by the extended family. For the elderly, the rural areas are a more hospitable environment than dense and tense cities and towns. Besides, in relevant cases they would get more out of their old-age pension in rural areas than in town. For old people to remain in urban areas is in most cases indicative of marginalisation and isolation, suffering from the breakdown of support networks in urban contexts. In many countries being buried in the city and not in the ancestral soil of their rural area of origin is taken as an ultimate indication of poverty and marginalisation.

A third marginalised group of increasing size and importance is that of the HIV-infected. As noted above, our knowledge about the infection rate – in urban as well as in rural areas of Africa – is limited, but in some of the most severely affected countries (such as Uganda, Namibia and Botswana) it is likely to be more than 20 per cent.¹⁰ The knowledge about the cause, epidemiology and likely outcome of the disease is increasing, and victims are increasingly stigmatised. Many are sent to rural areas to be cared for and eventually to die there. Those HIV/AIDS-infected who remain in urban areas are likely to be among the very poorest and most marginalised.

In addition to having pointed to the above broad social categories of marginalised poor, we have argued that unemployment is a particularly important determinant of marginalisation and social exclusion. People without employment will not only have inadequate material resources, but also be susceptible to poverty and vulnerability in areas such as education and health. While the informal economy represents a vital source of income for the majority of poor urban dwellers, it is characterised by insecurity and low and fluctuating income. Formal employment with job security and a fixed income has many advantages that reduce the vulnerability of the poor.

¹⁰ The fact that the recorded HIV/AIDS infection rate is highest in some of the African countries with the best health systems and statistical capacity does not necessarily mean that the *de facto* incidence is lower in other countries.

Another major determinant of well-being is housing. Lack of a proper dwelling and accompanying urban services such as piped water, electricity, sanitation and regular solid waste collection impacts directly on social and physical well-being as well as income earning capacities. Due to the privatisation of the land and housing market in most urban African settings the threshold for access to a proper house is particularly high, and access to credit and other enabling resources is particularly critical.

Finally, education is important for social mobility among the poor in cities and towns. Being functionally illiterate has negative implications not only for possibilities in the formal labour market. It is also a necessary skill in an increasing number of other urban contexts and relations, ranging from participation in credit schemes to shopping through post catalogues where goods may be more easily accessible and cheaper than in the urban area of residence. Informal or illegal urban settlements tend either to lack schools or have schools of inferior quality.

Processes of marginalisation and social exclusion are particularly relevant for development policies and donor interventions. Being largely de-linked from political and economic processes and events in society means that general economic development will not affect the marginalised social groups either directly or indirectly through 'trickle-down' mechanisms as argued by liberal economists. At the same time, the most marginalised also tend to be excluded from networks and associations that may provide important vehicles and opportunities for empowerment: they are short of social capital.

BOX 21. MARGINALISATION AND EXCLUSION IN DUNCAN VILLAGE

"Duncan Village in East London is one of the most densely populated black urban areas in South Africa with a population of more than 100,000 people. The township is characterised by mass poverty and squalor. People live in unacceptably cramped conditions where there are generally no services at all, or where those that are available are hopelessly inadequate. Over 50 per cent of the adult population are unemployed and there are high levels of alcoholism, crime, substance abuse and domestic violence in this township. Most of the households in Duncan village live on or below the poverty line and in circumstances where the struggle for survival is a constant preoccupation.

Definitions of squatter populations are frequently based on the morphology of the settlements they live in, which comes to define them as particular kinds of communities in the imagination of policy-makers and politicians. By deploying this type of thinking, the state [...] creates the false impression that the spatial boundaries within the urban ecology are somewhat iron-clad which define different kinds of 'natural' urban communities. In dealing with contemporary urban situations [in Africa] it is important not to simply accept definitions of the nature of urban society, but to expose them to careful scrutiny."

Source: Bank 1998: 6 and 12-13.

For urban development policies and interventions to make an impact, both the complexity of urban poverty and the inventive solutions of the urban poor

themselves must be taken into consideration. This can best be done by linking policies in key areas such as income generation, housing, infrastructure and health to two discrete, yet inter-related, levels of intervention. One is the level of local government, which has a key role to play in urban development but often lacks the necessary resources, competence and capacity. The other is the level of individuals, households and associations where people have developed coping strategies that could be constructively linked to interventions rather than substituted for or blocked. Integrating the two levels seems to offer the best opportunities for creating the empowerment and security that is necessary to improve the conditions in poor urban areas in Africa (World Bank 2000). We will return to this in Chapter 4.

3 Urbanisation and the donor community

The preceding chapters have argued that urbanisation is an irreversible and relentless process that leads to the growth of urban centres. As a historical process urbanisation is a comparatively late phenomenon in Africa; the *level* of urbanisation in Asia and Latin America is higher than in Africa but the *pace* of African urbanisation is currently faster. With urbanisation comes a host of benefits and costs that manifest themselves in various ways.

Among the benefits is economic growth. An unequivocal correlation between urbanisation and economic growth has been found in the history of most countries elsewhere in the world, and one would expect to find the same in Africa. However, Africa seems to be the exception in this regard – ostensibly because the concomitant framework conducive to enterprise has been lacking. But the potential exists. Other benefits include democratisation. There is no doubt that urban centres – particularly capital cities where key political institutions are located – have been hotbeds of political activity receptive to democratic stimuli from abroad. Perceptions of African cities and towns, however, have conjured up images of abject poverty and human misery, environmental degradation and pollution, disease, crime, and other social ills.

This is not the place to argue the merits and demerits of urbanisation in a normative sense. Suffice it to state as a matter of fact and as a point of departure that the cities and towns of Africa continue to grow rapidly. Governments and donors cannot afford to stand by and watch this rapid development without addressing it. The opportunities must be seized upon in order to alleviate the adverse effects and to reinforce the beneficial impacts.

The previous sections have also pointed out that what is analytically designated ‘urban’ and ‘rural’ cannot be treated as a sharp dichotomy of discrete entities to be approached by completely separate modes of intervention. There are ‘grey’ areas in between that can be classified as neither ‘urban’ nor ‘rural’. When considering policy and project interventions the close urban-rural linkages of reality need to be taken into account; it is more important to acknowledge the interdependence of urban and rural areas than to insist on their separateness. Having said this, the analytical distinction between ‘urban’ and ‘rural’ is still pertinent because there are – after all – significant differences between ‘urban’ and ‘rural’ areas that have a strategic bearing.

3.1 Urbanisation of poverty

This report directs special attention to one particular aspect of African urban growth: the increasing urbanisation of poverty. Having insisted for a long time that poverty is predominantly a rural phenomenon, the donor community is now waking up to the realisation that its overriding poverty reduction objective needs to address both rural and urban poverty in a balanced fashion within a framework of sustainable development. The late 1990s have seen a renewed

interest in urban issues on the part of bilateral and multilateral donors alike. Many of them have embarked on new urban strategies, including the vexing question of how to tackle urban poverty. However, since urban affairs have been neglected for so long, it will take time for the donor community to adjust its strategic considerations and to gear part of its institutional apparatus to the task at hand. The complexity of urban poverty – or poverty in general for that matter – poses great challenges of strategy formulation and implementation. The pitfalls are many. Not least, the existing institutional frameworks – within which aid agencies have been operating thus far – are hardly appropriate and conducive to a reorientation of policies and priorities towards urban interventions. Thus, the challenges are a concern both of policy and of institutional capability in pursuit of policy.

The policy challenge is likely to be the more difficult one to meet compared to that of institutional reorientation. Sectoral and professional interests are entrenched, and modes of thinking are habitual and slow in changing. The necessity of transcending sectoral interests and overcoming the strictures of outdated perspectives so as to move towards a more holistic, inter-disciplinary approach is a daunting yet inescapable task. Chapter 2 above has given important pointers to the direction in which the actors should move lest the urban poverty problem remain unresolved.

The institutional challenge arises at two different levels. The first is the structures internal to aid agencies and how to reorientate them towards new tasks. The second relates to the co-ordination of all actors involved in policy-making and implementation alike: governments, civil society and the poor themselves, on the one hand, and the international actors such as aid agencies and international NGOs, on the other. Aspiring to bring all these actors into concerted action is probably a futile effort; contradictory interests and modes of operation are too diverse for that. At a more modest level, however, it should be possible to induce a limited range of actors to harmonise their objectives and co-ordinate their activities in specific circumstances towards common ends.

The sections below will deal with the various types of actor involved: governments at the recipient end, bilateral and multilateral aid agencies, and civil society organisations at national and international levels.

3.2 Recipient governments

Most African governments have viewed with concern the rapid growth of towns and cities within their jurisdiction. But few have devised strategies to address in a comprehensive manner the challenges that rapid urbanisation poses. At best, piecemeal interventions have been made with regard to specific questions such as slum upgrading, regularisation of squatter settlements and the like. For years, some have attempted to slow down the process – or halt it – through restrictive influx control measures, even to the point of periodically rounding up urban entrants and relocating them to their erstwhile rural domicile, or bulldozing down informal settlements. None of these often harsh measures have been successful. Hence, it is grudgingly acknowledged that urban growth is

irreversible and that new approaches to addressing the ensuing problems are urgently needed.

The failure of governments and states to tackle the urban challenge – by design or by default – has compelled civil society to take action (Tostensen et al. 2001). The increasing involvement of civil society organisations in matters that were previously the sole responsibility of public authorities, at central or local levels, has caused unease and friction in the relationship between the new entrants on the scene and the representatives of the state. The lack of a regulatory framework has not contributed to the easing of tensions, although in a number of cases the interface has worked amicably because city authorities have resigned themselves to the fact that they cannot cope.

In view of the disappointing performance of African governments at central and local levels with respect to urban functions and services, and the gap-filling role of NGOs in that situation, a number of donors have been tempted to bypass governments altogether and relate directly to community-based organisations. Some have even added an 'ideological' justification to such an inclination: governments are inherently poor performers in service delivery; in the interest of efficiency greater room should be made for the private sector and civil society. Such moves, however, may be rash. The long-term sustainability and efficiency of NGO solutions are open to question as well; it is not given that NGOs will perform better. Rather, it is an empirical question that needs to be examined on a case-by-case basis. The observed poor performance of urban municipalities must be analysed specifically. Could failure be attributable to a weak revenue base, and would redressing that problem help to restore the capability of local government in service delivery? Furthermore, would NGOs have the authority to create a policy environment that is conducive to private sector economic growth?

Whenever external donors are seeking collaboration with counterpart governments in developing countries, the role of civil society in maintaining functions that are normally considered a public responsibility should be taken into account. A donor needs to know in advance of any intervention to what extent the recipient state has been capable of discharging its functions, and the extent to which NGOs have entered the arena to fill the gap left by state inaction or default. This knowledge is crucial in designing an appropriate intervention. Should a donor intervene in order to assist the relevant government to repossess its functions or should it seek to arrive at a *modus vivendi* with the state and the NGOs? The latter would mean that funds and expertise be channelled through NGOs as well as state organs in an agreed 'mix' as a permanent feature of urban management and governance. The conditions in this regard are likely to be so specific from one country or city to another that general prescriptions would hardly apply. Before intervening, aid agencies would be well advised to study the situation carefully and agree on a course of action in consultation with the government and civil society concerned.

3.3 Bilateral donors

This section will enumerate the current urbanisation and urban poverty policies of selected bilateral donors, notably the Nordics and other 'like-minded' countries such as the Netherlands and Canada. The concluding part will deal with Norway's aid policies – or lack of such – in this field.

3.3.1 Sweden

Through its international development co-operation agency, Sida, Sweden has been a pioneer in aid to urban areas (Sida 1995). Dating back to 1987, the cue was taken from the compelling developments of continued urban growth and the palpable truth that an increasing share of the globe's poor live in urban environments. Attempts to stop urban growth had failed. "... [M]any governments and donors have implemented programmes to encourage potential migrants to stay in the rural areas. The success of these programmes has been limited. Rural development programmes bringing better education, information and communication on the contrary seem to promote migration rather than prevent it" (Sida 1995:18). Sida concedes that rapid urbanisation in poor countries is associated with serious problems: an increasing part of the urban population lives in unplanned, often illegal, shantytowns with limited access to basic needs and with environmental conditions that threaten life and health. From this angle urbanisation is 'bad' (Sida 1995:19).

On the other hand, there must be valid reasons why people move – apparently of their own volition – to urban areas, despite all the ills found there. Evidently, the migrants find their urban existence preferable to what they left in the countryside. Otherwise they would have returned home. The explanation is probably that the town and cities offer more opportunities for a reasonable livelihood. In recognition of the 'rational choice' of rural-urban migrants Sida draws the sobering conclusion: "The rapid urbanisation in the developing countries will continue whether we like it or not. The relevant question is what we can do to alleviate some of the inevitable problems" (Sida 1995:19).

In its approach to urban development Sida identifies a range of relevant issues that constitute the basis of its urban aid policy and strategy: urban-rural linkages; structural adjustment; economic revival; urban poverty; environment and health; and shelter. Recently, urban transport has been added to the list (Sida 1999).

Interestingly, the Sida policy document goes far in emphasising the importance of urban-rural linkages: "[t]he linkage between urban and rural life is very strong in newly urbanised countries, especially in sub-Saharan Africa. (...) In the long run it is difficult to see how economic development, including productive and sustainable agriculture, can take place if the urban economy does not develop" (Sida 1995:21–22).

While recognising the short-term adverse effects of structural adjustment, particularly on the urban populations, in the form of higher prices, declining real wages, retrenchment and unemployment, and cuts in social services, the

outcome is viewed in optimistic terms. Apart from its economic import, structural adjustment means a restructuring of state functions such as the devolution of decision-making authority to local levels. This holds great promise for the rejuvenation of urban municipalities, provided the financial resources are available by means of locally generated revenue and/or transfers from the central level. The role of civil society is also recognised in this move towards greater pluralism in urban governance and management (Sida 1995:24–25).

Above all, the urban centres are recognised as ‘engines of economic growth’. However, to release the economic potential a number of constraints hampering urban productivity needs to be removed: infrastructural deficiencies; inappropriate regulatory frameworks; weak municipal institutions; and inadequate financial services. Failure to remove such obstacles is probably the reason why Africa has been an exception to the historical trajectory of urbanisation and concomitant economic growth. To release the productive potential of urban economies is a priority task for Sida – in the formal as well as informal sectors. Credit schemes are seen as one vehicle for promoting small-scale enterprise (Sida 1995:27–30). Unless the urban areas are set on an economic growth path the cities and towns of Africa will never become sustainable. Economic growth and employment creation are preconditions not only for the well-being of the urban population but also for the revenue base of municipalities and their ability to deliver services.

For an aid agency whose principal objectives include poverty reduction, a focus on urban poverty is to be expected (Sida 1995:31–36). The policy document states emphatically that urban poverty is increasing, and highlights certain features peculiar to urban poverty: greater dependence on cash income; long distances between residence and workplace; crime and insecurity; environmental degradation and pollution; the hardship of female-headed households and street children; and the plight of the destitute.

More than anything else urban agglomerations are associated with environmental degradation: water and air pollution, and poor sanitation and inadequate solid waste collection, commonly referred to as the ‘brown agenda’ (Sida 1995:37–39). In turn, these egregious problems lead to serious health hazards, often hitting the urban poor – especially the children – harder than the non-poor. These daunting challenges need addressing as a matter of priority.

Access to shelter means more than accommodation and the satisfaction of a social need and human right. Housing is a key element in the livelihood strategies of the urban poor, because the dwellings are used as a productive asset. A wide range of home-based productive activities forms the backbone of the informal economy, particularly for women (Sida 1995:41–44). Consequently, for social and economic reasons security of housing tenure is critical. Secure tenure would provide an incentive for the poor to invest in their dwelling and create economic dynamism. But housing is always a major investment, more so for the poor than the non-poor. Housing finance is grossly inadequate and often beyond the reach of the poor because they have no

collateral and would at any rate have great difficulties in servicing a loan, given meagre and erratic incomes. The need is overwhelming and the available finance sadly inadequate. The fundamental problem of the creditworthiness of the poor is a stumbling block in designing credit schemes – whether private or public – even with a heavy subsidisation component. ‘Site-and-service’ schemes have not been a resounding success either (van der Linden 1986). There is a need to revisit housing schemes and to take a fresh look at the various models that have been peddled over the years with a view to designing interventions catering for a differentiated mass of the poor, including those who border on destitution.

Sida’s policy document (1995:47–48) lists six reasons why development assistance to urban areas is warranted:

- Developing countries are becoming more and more urbanised;
- Poverty is being urbanised and urban poverty is a neglected problem that needs more attention;
- Serious environmental problems accompany rapid urbanisation;
- Nearly two-thirds of the GNP of most countries is generated in urban centres;
- Rural development requires the services that only towns can supply;
- International assistance is insufficient in targeting the urban poor and in improving the functions of urban municipal institutions.

These reasons are in themselves convincing enough to justify a focus on urban affairs and a higher priority accorded to urban issues in the overall development assistance of Sweden. Although a fair share of Sweden’s development assistance currently finds its way to urban areas, the approach in the past has tended to be piecemeal. There is a need to take a comprehensive grip on the urban agenda in order to transcend the diverse vested interests that undermine the efficacy of urban policy.

Sida has singled out three objectives and entry points in its urban approach (Sida 1995:49–51):

1. Reducing urban poverty;
2. Improving the urban environment;
3. Promoting urban economic growth.

The fact that an increasing number of people in African towns and cities live under miserable conditions of poverty is a good enough argument to justify increasing efforts towards poverty alleviation or reduction. Income generation is the first priority, through job creation or some form of self-employment in productive enterprise by means of micro credit schemes. Improved housing and legalisation of secure tenure is another priority. The provision of social services such as education and health is also high on the agenda, as is infrastructure.

The key to the long-term sustainability – environmentally and economically – of urban centres is economic growth. The concentration of labour and other

production factors in towns and cities provides a good basis for economic development. But the potential is not allowed to come to fruition because of unreliable services, deficient infrastructure, congested transportation networks, poor planning, inadequate institutions, inappropriate or outdated regulatory frameworks, etc. Whereas donors and public authorities should be averse to direct involvement in productive activities, they have a role to play in providing an improved framework conducive to private sector enterprise and economic growth. In this sphere Sida focuses on capacity-building, institutional development and credit mechanisms for catalytic investments.

While the Swedish policy document presents a thorough and incisive urban analysis, reflecting recent research findings, it is more vague with respect to policy prescriptions and operationalisation. The need for assistance to multiple key sectors is reiterated, as well as a comprehensive approach to governance and public administration. The role of a range of different actors is also recognised, in particular NGOs in collaboration with city authorities. Otherwise, flexibility and pragmatism is emphasised in the design of interventions, tailored to the site-specific circumstances.

To handle the operational aspects of its urban aid policy Sida has established a separate Urban Development Division under the Department of Infrastructure and Economic Co-operation. Although it has not been difficult to effect a policy change in favour of urban areas, it has been a time-consuming task to build up a project portfolio to implement the new policy direction. This owes more to bureaucratic inertia than active resistance within the agency. With a new budget structure, within which the country programmes form the bulk, it is of paramount importance that urban concerns be integrated into the country programming process in order to be taken into account.

3.3.2 Denmark

Urban development has not in its own right been a priority in Denmark's bilateral aid programme; there has been an express emphasis on rural areas. This should not be construed to mean that urban concerns have been absent from the aid agenda. Urban-related projects have been subsumed under the policy area *Environmental Issues in Industrial and Urban Development*, which was formulated in 1989. There was no comprehensive approach to urban centres; at that time urbanity was synonymous with industrial activity and resultant environmental problems.

Most of DANIDA's current urban aid portfolio thus stems from Denmark's environmental commitment. Its bilateral activities centre on water supply and sanitation, solid waste management, and air pollution, which tend to be urban-based. Unfortunately, 'urban' does not feature as a statistical category in the reporting practices. Consequently, it is difficult to get a reliable picture of the urban project portfolio. Within the institutional structures of DANIDA there is no separate unit with a specific urban brief. Responsibilities are dispersed throughout the organisation.

Multilaterally, Danish assistance has been channelled primarily through Habitat's various programmes. Denmark has been among the largest contributors to Habitat. Other noteworthy multilateral partners in the urban sphere include the UNDP, UNICEF, the ILO, the EU and the World Bank.

In recognition of the increasing importance of urban areas in the developing world DANIDA recently produced a pamphlet (in Danish only) about the role of towns in Danish development co-operation (DANIDA 2000). Although not as thorough as Sida's this report raises many of the same concerns; they need not be repeated here. Its substantive point of departure is the fact that the developing countries are urbanising and that, as a result, urban poverty is on the increase. Apart from the overriding objective of poverty reduction the three cross-cutting concerns in Danish aid must be observed: environmentally sustainable development; the improvement of women's living conditions and the importance of gender issues; and promotion of democracy and popular participation.

More specifically, the document highlights three objectives in urban development (DANIDA 2000:5):

- Lasting improvement in the living conditions of the most vulnerable groups in urban areas (poor women, children, youth, etc.);
- Better exploitation of the development potential inherent in urban-rural linkages and in urban growth in particular with a view to promoting social, economic and political development;
- Promotion of democracy, popular participation and good governance as a precondition for the sustainable development of urban societies.

DANIDA recognises the multiplicity of stakeholders involved in urban development: public authorities; civil society, and the private sector. While acknowledging the tension that might arise between interested parties, DANIDA stresses the importance of working in partnership towards common goals. Hence, the need for institutional frameworks within which opposing interests can be brokered. In this regard, municipal governance is crucial (DANIDA 2000:31-33).

Pointing towards operationalisation, the document stresses the integration of urban concerns into the country strategies and sector programmes, as well as other forms of bilateral aid, e.g. the NGO, private sector, and mixed credit programmes. In the multilateral field, Danish assistance will be guided by the outcome of the Istanbul +5 special session of the UN General Assembly in June 2001. Support for initiatives like the 'Cities Alliance' is under consideration. The environmental commitment in urban areas will be strengthened.

This approach accords well with that of Sida, except in one respect. It is interesting to note that whereas the Sida document merely recognises the existence of strong urban-rural links, DANIDA seems determined to build on them in an attempt to create a productive dynamic to stimulate economic growth (DANIDA 2000:36-37). Among the linkages to be exploited further is

the processing of agricultural produce by urban-based industries; urban-based industrial production of agricultural inputs such as machinery, fertilisers, etc.; and joint energy production for the benefit of urban and rural areas alike.

3.3.3 Finland

The third Nordic country to some degree involved in urban activities is Finland. Having gone through dramatic aid budget cuts in the early 1990s Finland's aid programme has been resuscitated, but its volume in terms of GNP is still much lower than that of the other Nordics. Finland is committed to poverty reduction as an overriding goal. Environmental issues, democracy and human rights also figure high on the agenda (Milbert and Peat 1999:79–87).

The majority of activities are geared towards poverty reduction, particularly in the rural areas. But this emphasis does not preclude urban projects. To the extent there is an urban portfolio, it has not come about as a deliberate effort to put urban affairs in the forefront. It is rather a collection of projects generated by an interest in environmental problems and infrastructure, which happen to have an urban bias. There is no institutional unit with an urban remit, but sector advisers in infrastructure, the environment, energy, health, education and culture deal with urban matters as and when required.

3.3.4 The Netherlands

Among the like-minded countries the Netherlands has had an urban portfolio for some time. After the 1976 Vancouver conference on human settlements the Dutch government formulated a co-operation strategy regarding shelter, although without differentiating between urban and rural areas. Up until the mid-1980s priority was given to the rural areas. The general aid approach has mainly taken the form of substantive sector programmes such as water and sanitation, and primary health care. As a result, the urban centres have benefited. In some instances, programmes have been adopted which specifically address the urban agenda: urban and regional planning; site-and-service schemes for housing development; and slum upgrading (Milbert and Peat 1999:139–148).

The 1991 policy document *A World of Difference: A New Framework for Development Co-operation in the 1990s* (Netherlands 1991) moved urban poverty up the priority order – in both bilateral and multilateral aid programmes – with emphasis on the following components: (a) income generation and employment, including working conditions; (b) empowerment of local organisations; (c) development of regulations for work and social welfare; and (d) direct interventions in favour of the most vulnerable segments of the urban population. Two years later the urban policy was amended, leading to the launching of the 'Urban Poverty Alleviation Programme', which at that time was one of the few aid interventions explicitly catering for the urban poor. The urban poverty reduction strategies formulated in the early 1990s are still valid (Milbert and Peat 1999:142). The following priorities apply:

- Employment creation and income-generating activities supported through micro credit schemes;
- Urban transport and mobility;
- Housing and land use;
- Social environment (safety, crime prevention, street children);
- Physical environment: water supply, sanitation and drainage, solid waste management, occupational health hazards in the informal economy, and environmental management;
- Institutional development and urban management;
- Rural-urban linkages, in particular the role of secondary towns in regional development.

The Directorate General for International Co-operation within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs is in charge of policy formulation. The Division for Economic and Urban Development under the Rural and Urban Development Department handles the day-to-day affairs. This division, with a handful of urban professionals, manages global and regional multilateral programmes, whereas the embassies cater for bilateral urban activities (Milbert and Peat 1999:140).

3.3.5 Canada

Within the circle of like-minded countries across the Atlantic, Canada has been involved in urban activities since the late 1970s. For a long time the approach was sector-based, giving priority to agriculture, energy, infrastructure, water supply and sanitation, and to a lesser extent transport, communications, health, and human resources. Human resources development manifested itself in institution-building and management projects. Some of the activities in these sectors were located in urban areas.

The hosting of the 1976 Habitat conference in Vancouver did not appear to induce Canada to accord higher priority to urban development. Not until 1998 did Canada elaborate a coherent strategy on urbanisation, published as *An Urbanising World: Statement on Sustainable Cities* (CIDA 1998). This document argues forcefully for increasing attention to the urban agenda, much along the same lines as do the Sida and DANIDA documents referred to above, and that of DFID below. The same points are reasserted and basically the same analysis adopted. It is noteworthy that CIDA sees cities not only as a source of problems but also as a development tool: urbanisation is part of the solution to the problems that hinder development. The density and concentration of activities and people in cities make it possible to enhance the effectiveness of aid programmes and to multiply their beneficial impacts (CIDA 1998:10).

CIDA's operational intervention framework stresses the need for flexible and practical tools (CIDA 1998:14):

- A framework for analysing the urban context;
- Items to consider in the definition, planning, design implementation, and monitoring and evaluation of programmes and projects in urban settings;

- Intervention at the national, sub-national, municipal and community levels;
- International urban co-operation expertise and partnerships.

The Canadian mode of operation is based on partnerships between urban authorities in Canada and counterparts in developing countries. Consequently the Federation of Canadian Municipalities plays a key role, akin to that of the Norwegian Association of Local and Regional Authorities (see below). In the same vein, the administrative unit on Human Settlements Urban Development is located within CIDA's Canadian Partnership Branch, which also serves as a focal point for the NGO sector. It is worth mentioning, moreover, that Canada has generated a solid knowledge base for its urban involvement through the Canadian Urban Institute and the Centre for Urban and Community Studies at the University of Toronto. The latter has published extensively on urban issues (Stren 1994; Stren and Kjellberg 1995; McCarney 1996).

Canada participates actively in international urban-related networks and collaborates with multilateral agencies, notably Habitat, the UNDP, UNEP, the WHO, UNICEF, and the UNFPA, as well as international associations like the International Union of Local Authorities. The World Bank and the regional development banks are also partners.

3.3.6 The United Kingdom

Previously the United Kingdom was not considered part of the like-minded group of donors, mainly due to its colonial past. However, in recent years UK policies have increasingly tended to converge with the basic orientation of the like-minded. This has been reinforced through the so-called 'Utstein' process – a series of consultative meetings between the ministers of development co-operation of the Netherlands, Germany, the United Kingdom and Norway.¹¹ Similar meetings also take place at the level of senior officials.

A reorganisation of UK aid occurred in 1997 with the formation of the Department for International Development (DFID). Under its predecessor, the Overseas Development Administration (ODA), the aid programme had been balanced between urban and rural activities. In the 1970s an explicit rural development priority carried the day, but not to the exclusion of significant projects in towns and cities. The latter springs from a longstanding British tradition in teaching, research and other interventions in urban settings, reflecting a pro-urban attitude. The urban portfolio included projects in housing finance, water supply and sewerage, slum upgrading, infrastructure, and institution-building for urban governance (Milbert and Peat 1999:190–196).

DFID is currently formulating strategies to reduce urban poverty (DFID 2000). The draft consultation document contains a thorough analysis of the urban condition and seems to subscribe to most of the tenets espoused by the Sida (1995) document referred to above. DFID's document sets out the central role

¹¹ The name 'Utstein' refers to the venue of the first such meeting, held at Utstein Monastery near Stavanger in western Norway.

that urban development can play in reducing poverty if strengthening poor people's capacity to improve their socio-economic and political conditions is recognised. Such efforts should be matched by corresponding measures to address the particular characteristics of inadequate urban development, which can constrain these opportunities.

The document affirms that cities are centres of politics, culture, complex service provision systems, enterprise development and innovation. They create spaces where poor people can participate in a range of socio-economic and political activities, which can radically improve their well-being and status. They can also provide a range of services (environmental, health, education, infrastructure, safety nets, etc.) on an efficient and cost-effective basis, which can provide benefits for poor people – good health, educational and job opportunities, libraries, savings and loans facilities, and access to environmental services.

Furthermore, dynamic, well-managed cities generate benefits far beyond their boundaries. A buoyant regional economy, which fosters productive exchanges of goods, services, people and capital between rural and urban areas, makes a significant contribution to national economic growth. Indeed, all the nations in the South with the greatest economic success over the last 30 years have urbanised rapidly; most of those with the least economic success have not. However, there is no reference to the African exception in this regard. There is a direct correlation between economic growth and poverty reduction.

Section 1 of the policy document demonstrates the positive role urban centres can play, but also outlines why many urban centres to date have failed to deliver real benefits to poor people. It stresses that national governments, donors and other international organisations have tremendous opportunities right now to support the development of dynamic, well-managed cities, which can distribute benefits to poor people. Many donors have developed new urban strategies and plan to increase their investments in urban areas. Most governments have jointly signed up to an international framework, the Habitat Agenda, to address their urban problems, and the Istanbul+5 special session of the UN General Assembly will take this framework forward.

Section 2 describes the range and breadth of the challenge to ensure that poor people optimise their benefits from urban development. It highlights particular aspects of the urban experience, which make life in cities particularly difficult for poor people, especially those living in crowded, unsanitary slum settlements. It also demonstrates how opportunities can be constrained through the variable capacities and willingness of cities and national governments not only to meet poor people's rights and needs directly, but also to create the enabling economic and governance framework within which poor people's expectations can be realised in the longer term.

Section 3 describes the evolution of international experience in addressing the urban challenge, and in making cities work for poor people. It highlights the fact that planning and policy reform processes must take place at city, regional

and national levels, and stresses that an understanding of poor people's rights, needs and capacities must be placed at the centre of the development agenda. There are major opportunities for reform at the beginning of the 21st century. These include the spread of democracy and decentralised government, the growth of new tools and mechanisms for understanding the needs of poor people, and ways of working with local government, civil society and the private sector.

Section 4 stresses that the approach to the challenge must be on a twin track – both national and international. National governments must be at the forefront of the reform process. They set the enabling framework within which local governments at town level operate, shape macro-economic conditions, and outline the rights and responsibilities of all citizens, including poor people. International bodies in turn must support national governments in their efforts to ensure that policies and resource flows contribute to reductions in poverty in urban areas.

Section 5 is concerned with the priorities for DFID in supporting this agenda. It demonstrates that DFID is already doing a lot. A wide range of programmes are operational on the ground, and have played an active role in strengthening the capacity of the leading urban international organisation, Habitat, to respond to the challenges it confronts. Based on these experiences, and the lessons identified in the document about the scale and nature of the urban challenge, this section goes on to outline the actions DFID proposes to take to help reduce poverty in urban areas.

Section 6 explains how this reduction in poverty will be measured and monitored in countries and in cities and towns.

Within DFID, urban matters are handled by a small team of architects and physical planners in the Infrastructure and Urban Development Department. It co-ordinates a multi-disciplinary urban group which cuts across a range of other units, covering sectors such as education, the environment, natural resources, social development, health and population, and finance. Its purpose is to integrate urban concerns in DFID's general policies and activities. Urban affairs have gained greater recognition in recent years: reference is made to the urban agenda in the latest White Paper, and the current process of formulating a strategy on how to address urban poverty has been instrumental in bringing urban issues to the fore. The fact that the UK is the largest contributor to Habitat is also an expression of the growing recognition of an urban focus in UK aid policy. Even so, the emphasis remains heavily rural.

3.3.7 The United States

Urban issues have been a feature of US development assistance for more than three decades, handled by the Office of Environment and Urban Programmes within the US Agency for International Development (USAID). In collaboration with recipient governments at central and local level, community organisations and the private sector the United States has been engaged in a variety of urban

activities: services, shelter, local government and management, municipal finance, water supply and sanitation, industrial pollution control, solid waste management, capacity-building, networks of urban municipalities ('twinning') and professional associations, etc. (Milbert and Peat 1999:197–214).

The urban development policy elaborated in 1984 (USAID 1984) was superseded by a revised version in 2000, entitled *Making Cities Work: USAID's Urban Strategy* (USAID 2000). Rather than demanding additional resources this strategy calls for a refocusing of current resources through an 'urban lens'. By way of introduction the policy document reiterates many of the points made by other agencies: the importance of rural-urban linkages; the disproportionate contribution by cities to environmental hazards and climate change; the futility of attempts to halt the urbanisation process, etc. Furthermore, the strategy summarises the most important lessons that USAID has learned during its involvement in urban affairs about how cities work (USAID 2000:7–8):

- Getting the policies right is essential, including legal and enabling frameworks;
- Getting the roles right, i.e. spelling out the respective roles and functions of central and local governments, civil society and the private sector. Partnerships are considered suitable models;
- Financing is a key to success. Improving the access of municipalities, urban enterprise, and households to capital markets;
- Promoting environmentally sustainable economic growth;
- Enhancing rural-urban linkages for mutual benefit;
- Creating incentives for clean industry. Emphasis is put incentives for the adoption of clean technologies, rather than end-of-pipe pollution control;
- Building development partnerships between donors, public and private organisations;
- Showing real improvement in people's lives, with emphasis on the urban poor;
- Participation underpins progress. Hence the need to involve urban communities.

In operational terms the strategy relies on the central role of Regional Urban Development Offices (RUDOs), of which there are three in Africa. They are staffed by professionals in the relevant sectors and are charged with backstopping of ongoing projects.

The strategy document relates urban activities to the six overall objectives of USAID and finds that these objectives can better be achieved with an urban perspective, because of the truly cross-cutting nature of urban issues (USAID 2000:11–15):

1. The objective of broad-based economic growth and agricultural development can be achieved by reinforcing the interdependence of urban and rural areas;

2. The second goal of democracy and good governance can be reached by supporting cities as incubators for political leadership, representative government, and good governance;
3. Contributions towards building human capacity through education and training can be made through urban-based programmes, complementary to the rural-based;
4. Urbanisation leads to declining fertility and contributes to stabilising world population. The concentration of people in urban areas enhances the reach of health care programmes;
5. Perhaps more than anything else, environmental programmes located in cities will contribute to the protection of the globe's long-term sustainability;
6. Disaster prevention and mitigation efforts can be greatly enhanced if examined through an 'urban lens'.

In summarising USAID's urban strategy the document lists six precepts (USAID 2000:17):

1. With the full recognition of its ongoing urban-related programmes and its considerable successes in coping with urbanisation in developing countries, USAID will continue to adapt its behaviour, attitudes, and practices to the urban reality of the 21st century;
2. The pursuit of the six development goals of USAID can be facilitated and enhanced by making cities work better;
3. USAID will analyse the current utilisation of its entire range of credit and grant tools and specialised staff available to address urbanisation concerns;
4. USAID acknowledges that not all entities within the organisation are equally advanced in their approaches to urban issues (i.e. one template does not fit all);
5. Multi-sector objectives can be achieved most effectively by targeting cities in assisted countries over a 5–10 year period;
6. The USAID will form partnerships and work with a broad array of organisations to achieve mutually agreed-upon goals.

In the implementation process the strategy emphasises the importance of building alliances with the private business and financial community, civil society, and the international community (e.g. multilateral organisations). The strategy document is informed by scepticism of government, in particular at the central level. The role of local government is recognised, however, although the nature and scope of that role are subjected to scrutiny. Furthermore, within USAID awareness needs to be raised on urban issues, co-ordination needs to be improved between various units, and capacity needs to be strengthened.

3.3.8 Comparative bilateral strategies

There is a striking resemblance in the bilateral urban development strategies enumerated above. The similarities are such that we would venture to assert that an emerging consensus is discernible. This consensus can be summed up in the following points:

- The urbanisation process is unstoppable and irreversible;
- An increasing number of the world's poor live in towns and cities. Hence, poverty reduction efforts must increasingly be directed towards urban settings;
- Urban areas are engines of economic growth;
- Rural-urban linkages are strong and could be exploited for mutual benefit;
- Urbanity is associated with democratisation processes;
- Urbanisation leads to congestion and causes severe environmental problems of sanitation, and of air and water pollution;
- The concentration of people in urban centres enhances the reach and effectiveness of interventions in most sectors;
- A comprehensive multi-sector approach to urban development is required, in which urban municipalities could assume a co-ordinating role, in collaboration with civil society and the private sector;
- Good urban governance is essential. Devolution of decision-making authority to urban municipalities could go a long way towards establishing workable management systems in a holistic fashion, provided the requisite revenue base comes with decentralisation.

There are, of course, nuances and differences of emphasis between various bilateral donors. Some donors would part ways over the role of public city authorities. Whereas the Nordic and like-minded bilaterals would tend to assign significant functions to municipal authorities, not only in management and co-ordination but also in service delivery such as water supplies, solid waste collection, education, health, etc., other donors like USAID would be inclined to restrict public involvement and allow greater manoeuvrability for the private sector. In the same vein, the Nordics and those agencies espousing a social-democratic position – broadly speaking – would tend to emphasise enhancing the revenue base of urban municipalities, while at the same time underscoring the critical role of an appropriate policy framework. By contrast, those agencies basing themselves on more neo-liberal precepts would be disposed towards emphasising private sources of finance, and be sceptical about public financing through taxation.

Be that as it may, the differences are of degree and priority rather than principle. Notwithstanding some dissensus, which might come more clearly to the fore in operationalisation and implementation, the basic tenets are shared. Consequently, there is scope for collaboration in joint efforts.

3.3.9 Norway

Where does Norway fit into the bilateral picture? Since its inception Norwegian aid policies have been geared towards rural areas – a logical orientation, since an overwhelming majority of the populations of Norway's co-operating partner countries has lived in rural areas. It also reflects the predominant position of the international donor community up until the present. Moreover, domestic considerations have influenced the thinking on aid in this regard. Norway is a moderately urbanised country and the entire political establishment has for

decades agreed on the policy objective of preserving a dispersed settlement pattern domestically through various means.

As a result, the Norwegian government does not at present have an urban development strategy in its aid programme, and its involvement in urban affairs has been limited. The Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) is responsible for the formulation of Norwegian aid policy. With regard to urban development issues, however, the Ministry of Local Government and Regional Development (MLGRD) and the Ministry of the Environment (ME), in particular, have advisory functions vis-à-vis the MFA. The MLGRD deals with issues of housing (through its Department of Housing) and issues of governance and tenure (through its Department of Local Government), while the ME deals with urban environmental issues (through its Urban Section of the Department of Planning). The Norwegian Agency of Development Co-operation (NORAD) is the executive arm with respect to Norwegian bilateral aid, although the MLGRD has some implementing functions related to Habitat projects. Previously, one of the divisions within the Technical Department was charged with overseeing the urban and Habitat areas, albeit with limited resources to do so. Since the reorganisation of NORAD in January 2001 this task has been assigned to the Productive Sector Development and Employment Generation Unit within the Technical Department. Pollution control and other environmental concerns, however, have been allocated considerable resources; pollution control and physical land use planning in urban areas are well defined in the general development policy and strategy.

In its contribution to the Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II) in Istanbul in 1996 the Norwegian Government stated that “Urban projects have not been given priority in Norwegian development assistance” (MLGL 1996:88). Even though the report also foreshadowed that “[w]ith the increasing emphasis on environmental conditions and institutional development, it is reasonable to assume that aid to urban development will be more extensive in the future”, the involvement remains limited. NORAD’s Budget and Statistics Division listed only two projects under the DAC code for urban development (43030) in 1999 (Yug 2000 and Zib 0039), with an additional two projects coming on stream in 2000 (Moz 2014 and Pal 0001).¹² A few more projects with an urban component are coded under the multi-sector code (430), comprising ‘town planning’, ‘general urban development’ and ‘general rehabilitation’. NORAD has compiled an ‘unofficial list’ of 25 projects with Habitat and/or with an urban orientation, the majority located in Asia. The projects on the African continent are listed in Table 27 below.

¹² Definitions are made with reference to the DAC code for urban development, which comprises i) integrated urban development projects, ii) local development and urban management, and iii) infrastructure and service provision in urban areas (Jorid Almås, personal communication).

Table 27. Urban-based projects financed by NORAD (2000).

Country	Project title	Project description	Norwegian partner
RAF (Zimbabwe, South Africa, Zambia, Namibia, Uganda)	Municipal International Co-operation	Strengthening the capacity of local government in co-operating countries, as well as the international understanding within Norwegian local government	Norwegian Association of Local and Regional Authorities (KS)
South Africa	Housing co-operative programme in South Africa	Develop a co-operative housing model for the delivery, financing, operation and maintenance of housing in South Africa, which can offer new affordable and long-term sustainable housing for middle and low-income households	Norwegian Federation of Co-operative Housing Associations
Tanzania	Promotion of rural (mainly urban despite title) initiatives and developm. enterprises	Establish and expand PRIDE/ Tanzania as a credit model for the promotion of small-scale income generation activities	
Uganda	Capacity-building, Dept. of Civil Engineering, Makerere University	Institutional Co-operation and capacity building (construction management, environmental, structural, geo-technical, transportation and water-resource engineering)	Norwegian University of Science and Technology
Uganda	Capacity-building, Department of Architecture, Makerere University	Institutional co-operation and capacity building in architecture, urban and regional planning and manufacturing science	Oslo School of Architecture and Norwegian University of Science and Technology
Mozambique	National Environmental Management programme	Institutional development in MICOA, training and consultancy in Environment Impact Assessment and industrial pollution control	Norwegian Pollution Control Authority
Zambia	Support to the Water Supply and Sanitation Sector Programme	Reorganise the water and sanitation sector in accordance with the national water policy	
Zambia	Industrial Pollution Prevention Programme	Institutional development of the Environmental Council of Zambia, and training in the areas of air pollution control, water pollution control, and hazardous waste control.	Norwegian Pollution Control Authority and Norwegian Veritas

Source: NORAD

In any case, the urban project portfolio does not reflect a coherent urban strategy, nor is it categorised under an unequivocal 'urban' heading. The existing portfolio seems, rather, to be a collection of discrete projects that have come about somewhat haphazardly, stemming largely from environmental

concerns in urban areas rather than a preoccupation with urban problems as such.

Among the staff of the MLGRD, the ME and NORAD, there is considerable expertise and interest in urban affairs. However, in the two line ministries there are few people with specific knowledge about developing countries and development aid. NORAD's expertise about urban issues seems dispersed, uneven and not yet so deep. Above all, a sense of strategic thinking is lacking – most probably because policy direction from the political leadership level has been feeble when it comes to urban questions. In fact, NORAD's general aid strategy does not make a single reference at all to urban issues (NORAD 1999).

The ME is one of the six Environmental Resource Centres that NORAD draws on for expertise related to development issues in the South, formalised in an agreement. The unit within the Technical Department of NORAD dealing with urban and Habitat matters is responsible for liaison with the MLGRD. Through the same unit NORAD is a permanent member of the joint MFA/MLGRD national committee on Habitat affairs. NORAD also seeks professional advice from the MLGRD on specific project issues.

In view of the increasing weight of the urbanisation process in Norway's partner countries and mounting urban poverty, the time would seem ripe for a reassessment of past policies. This report forms one element in an effort towards crystallising the urban agenda, with special reference to urban poverty reduction, and to putting urban issues on the Norwegian aid agenda. It could thus become a vehicle for assisting Norway to link up with the general trend within the donor community that acknowledges urbanisation and urban areas as a major challenge.

3.4 Multilateral donors

Complementary to the aid programmes of bilateral donors, a large number of multilateral agencies is involved in the urban agenda, some in a big way, others only modestly. Their mandates vary widely. The specialised agencies of the United Nations generally have sector responsibilities. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), on the other hand, is principally a funding agency, drawing on the expertise of the specialised agencies in the implementation of specific projects. Only one UN agency has an explicitly urban remit: the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (UNCHS), or, more conveniently, Habitat. As a development bank the World Bank's project portfolio includes urban interventions which date back to the 1970s.

3.4.1 Habitat

The United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat) was established in 1978, two years after the conference on human settlements in Vancouver, Canada. Based in Nairobi, Kenya, Habitat is the lead agency within the UN system for co-ordinating activities in the field of human settlements, with an emphasis on towns and cities.

Among Habitat's numerous projects and programmes the following deserve special mention:

- *The Urban Management Programme (UMP)* is implemented jointly with the World Bank and the UNDP, with the participation of many bilateral donors. The UMP develops and applies urban management knowledge in the fields of participatory urban governance, alleviation of urban poverty and urban environmental management, and facilitates the dissemination of this knowledge at the city, country, regional and global levels.
- *The Sustainable Cities Programme (SCP)* is implemented in conjunction with UNEP and several other donors. It builds capacities in urban environmental planning and management at the local, national and regional levels. City demonstrations are used to apply the concept and approach of the programme, and these are then institutionalised at the municipal level. Demonstrations are then replicated at the regional level. Cross-sectoral, issue-specific working groups, whose members represent the key stakeholders in the city, are the core element in the programme. At the global level, the programme facilitates the exchange of experience and know-how. The SCP has an important secretariat function for the *Urban Environment Forum*, which promotes co-ordination and collaboration between urban environment programmes.
- *The Urban Indicators Programme* is a decentralised networking and capacity-building programme that responds to one of the most critical needs of urban policy – the need for better information on urban conditions and trends.
- *The 'Best Practices' Programme* comprises a global network of partners representing governments, local authorities, grassroots organisations, training, educational and research organisations dedicated to applying lessons learned from good and best practices to ongoing policy and leadership development activities. Activities include: (i) awareness-building through the Dubai International Awards for Best Practices; (ii) networking and the use of information in decision-making through the 'best practices' database; (iii) learning from experience through the development of best practice case studies and policy briefs; (iv) peer-to-peer learning and transfers based on matching of supply with demand for best practice knowledge, expertise and experience; and (v) policy analysis and development.
- *The 'Cities Alliance' Initiative* started in 1999 and is being implemented jointly with the World Bank (see below).

Habitat was the secretariat for the second UN Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II), held in Istanbul, Turkey, in June 1996. Organised under its two main themes – 'adequate shelter for all' and 'Sustainable human settlements development in an urbanising world' – this conference formulated the Istanbul Declaration and the Habitat Agenda, in which governments made far-reaching commitments to the goals of adequate shelter for all and sustainable urban development. Habitat is the focal point for the

implementation of these commitments. The Plan of Action accompanying the Habitat Agenda can be summarised under five main headings:

- Adequate shelter for all;
- Sustainable human settlements development in an urbanising world;
- Capacity-building and institutional development;
- International co-operation and co-ordination;
- Implementation and follow-up of the Habitat Agenda.

The Habitat Agenda is comprehensive. Some consider it unfocused, lacking prioritisation and clear performance criteria against which progress can be measured. This may be one of the reasons why Habitat came under increasing criticism after Habitat II for lack of strategic direction in its activities. The relatively small Habitat administration appeared ill equipped for the lead and monitoring roles placed on its shoulders. As a result, frustration mounted within the donor community, leading to a downward spiral of declining credibility and confidence in the ability of the administration to come to grips with the task at hand. The initial donor response was the ever increasing 'earmarking' of funds to specified programmes. It came to a head for Denmark in 1998 when all funding was withdrawn. At the programme level the highly selective 'cherry-picking' practice of donors was compounded by the alleged problems of competing 'fiefdoms' within the organisation, all contributing to incoherence.

A revitalisation exercise was launched and the confidence of the donor community seems about to be restored after the appointment of a new executive director and the adoption of a new revitalisation framework emanating from various critical reports. The erstwhile 'bricks-and-mortar' approach is giving way to a more 'activist' stance, covering the full gamut of urban issues. Habitat now appears set to become the UN global advocacy agency for cities and human settlements with an explicit focus on the situation of the urban poor.

In June 2001 a special session of the UN General Assembly – dubbed Istanbul+5 – will be held to take stock of progress on the Habitat Agenda and the Plan of Action five years after the Istanbul conference. Governments are expected to submit progress reports on a range of performance indicators. This performance audit will form the basis for future action.

3.4.2 The World Bank

In terms of the volume of its urban project portfolio since the 1970s the World Bank is the principal multilateral organisation in the urban arena. Many of the Bank's major undertakings in road construction, water supplies and social infrastructure have been urban-based. The initial focus was on basic infrastructure and housing for low-income groups. The 1980s saw a shift of emphasis towards financial and institutional aspects while a series of sector-based infrastructure projects (roads and water) were retained. Due to the heavy involvement in structural adjustment programmes in the 1980s and the reorganisation of the Bank in the late 1980s, the interest in urban affairs waned

somewhat in the early 1990s. However, the late 1990s have seen a renaissance of the urban agenda. The World Development Report 1999/2000 devoted a chapter to 'Dynamic Cities as Engines of Growth' (World Bank 2000: Chapter 6).

In 2000 the Bank formulated a new fully-fledged urban and local government strategy entitled *Cities in Transition* (World Bank 2000). The new strategy takes cognisance of the fact that the urbanisation process is going on relentlessly, that within a generation the majority of the developing world's population will live in urban areas, and that the number of urban residents in developing countries will double, increasing by over 2 billion inhabitants. The strategy is based on *four principles*: (a) strategise holistically and intervene selectively; (b) commit to scaling up urban assistance; (c) reinvest internally in urban knowledge and capacity; and (d) work through strengthened partnerships.

The *building blocks* of a new strategy include the following (World Bank 2000:63ff):

- *Formulating national urban strategies.* The urban transition must be considered in the context of the national development agenda of the country in question, i.e. in a holistic fashion.
- *Facilitating city development strategies.* The city development strategy is both a process and a product that identify ways of creating the conditions for urban sustainability along the dimensions of livability, competitiveness, good management and governance, and bankability. A first 'scoping out' phase would provide a quick assessment of the readiness of the city, the chief concerns of its officials, and the industrial, commercial, and banking interests. These findings would form the basis for a second, more in-depth analysis of the local economic structure and trends, the potential obstacles – institutional, financial, environmental, and social – and the strategic options. A third phase would focus on outside assistance, particularly on how the Bank and other agencies could help the city achieve its goals.
- *Scaling up programmes to provide services to the poor.* Upgrading, combined with secure tenure, not only improves the basic quality of life of residents. It also creates the conditions for raising their incomes by providing basic public goods, and stimulates private savings and investment in housing and small shops that form the core of informal employment within these communities. Upgrading thereby fosters the creation of individual and communal assets that generate wealth and facilitates rental markets that expand housing options and additional sources of private income for residents.
- *Expanding assistance for capacity-building.* Fostering intermediary channels of knowledge-sharing.

These building blocks would, in turn, be the means applied towards achieving a vision of sustainable cities, encompassing *four functional prerequisites*: (i) livability; (ii) competitiveness; (iii) good urban governance; and (iv) bankability.

- The agenda for improving *livability* includes reducing urban poverty and inequality, creating a healthful urban environment, enhancing personal security (minimising the risk of crime, violence, traffic accidents, and natural disasters), establishing an inclusive system of legal protection and political representation, and making cultural and recreational amenities available to all (World Bank 2000:47). Urban living conditions, especially in large and fast-growing cities, are deteriorating relative to those in smaller towns and rural areas, and the urban-rural gap in mortality, morbidity, and other health and nutritional indicators is narrowing. Some urban residents are now the worst off (World Bank 2000:39). The environmental problems of urban areas (the 'brown' agenda) – air, soil, and water pollution, noise, and traffic congestion – have more direct and immediate implications for human health and safety, especially for the poor, and for business productivity than do 'green' environmental issues (World Bank 2000:39). Policies to curb future environmental deterioration from motorisation and urban economic activity will have limited effect if focused narrowly on sectoral issues within transport, energy, or industry. Effective solutions must address broad issues, including transport demand, land use planning, industrial development and location, and household income growth and distribution – all central to the urban development agenda (World Bank 2000:39). Urbanisation is characterised – even defined – by fundamental changes in the physical concentration of population, in the nature and scale of economic production, in land use, and in social structures and patterns of interaction (World Bank 2000:43). Densification of settlement directs land and wealth into housing and related infrastructure and increases the need for complex systems to provide water and energy, market food, transport goods and people, remove wastes, and protect public health and safety (World Bank 2000: 43);
- In *competitive cities* output, investment, employment, and trade respond dynamically to market opportunities. The basic conditions for competitiveness of cities are efficient markets for land, labour, credit, and for inputs (particularly transport, communications, and housing), to ensure that the benefits of urban agglomeration are achieved and the diseconomies (from congestion and pollution, for example) are minimised (World Bank 2000:48). Urban areas account for a disproportionately high share of national economic production and are the main sources of economic growth in most countries. Economic growth is closely correlated with urbanisation (although sub-Saharan Africa has been a notable exception to this rule since the early 1980s, in terms of measurable income growth) (World Bank 2000:36). Synergy between the rural and urban economies is a particularly important channel through which growing urban areas contribute to national development. 'Urban' and 'rural' are interdependent markets linked by exchanges of people, goods, services, capital, social transactions, and information and technology that benefit residents in both locations (World Bank 2000:37). Migration between rural and urban areas is a vital source of alternative employment for the agricultural population and transfers innovation as well as remittances – in fact, migration is a carrier of growth. In many countries improved infrastructure and changes in agricultural practices are permitting more fluid labour exchange, including seasonal and

even daily commuting. Distinctions between cities, towns, and rural areas are becoming almost obsolete as economic activity spreads outwards into vast semi-urbanised and rural industrialised regions in response to global trade opportunities and technological changes (World Bank 2000:38);

- *Good urban governance* implies inclusion and representation of all groups in the urban society – and accountability, integrity, and transparency of government actions – in defining and pursuing shared goals (World Bank 2000: 49). Municipalities bear the basic responsibility of government at its lowest tier for allocating resources and promoting social equity, within constraints set by higher levels of government (which assign functions and fiscal authority), and for ensuring the provision of local public goods and services through partnership with the private sector and civil society (World Bank 2000:44). Local governments, or designated agencies such as public utilities, have vital roles to perform in ensuring that the poor have essential services; providing urban public goods (streets, storm drainage, public green spaces); facilitating efficient use of and equitable access to urban land; undertaking co-ordination, planning, and policy corrections, as needed, to account for positive and negative spill-over effects of private activities (such as pollution); and protecting public safety (World Bank 2000:45).
- The first step towards *bankability* is financial soundness, as reflected in the respect for hard budgets and judicious use of even weak resource bases. For the cities that can access capital markets, bankability can be defined in terms of creditworthiness. In both cases bankability requires a clear and internally consistent system of local revenues and expenditures, balanced by transparent and predictable inter-governmental transfers, good financial management practices, and prudent conditions for municipal borrowing (World Bank 2000:51).

In 1997 the Bank established the Global Urban Partnership – a network of collaborating partners of public and private donors, NGOs and local groups with a view to identifying and prioritising efforts and to bringing knowledge and resources to bear more systematically on the problems of the cities. Such partnerships are an important part of the Bank's mode of operation in implementation.

3.4.3 The United Nations Development Programme

As the body within the UN family responsible for co-ordination of technical co-operation the UNDP has over the years provided assistance to a great number of urban development projects, mostly as a source of funding for the specialised agencies of the UN. However, the UNDP also carries out projects and programmes of its own, such as 'Local Initiative Facility for the Urban Environment (LIFE)' and the 'Public-Private Partnerships for the Urban Environment Programme (PPP)' (Milbert and Peat 1999:284–292).

LIFE is a community-based endeavour launched at the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro in 1992. It operates on the premise that local people are best equipped to prioritise and find solutions to their environmental problems. The main objective is to promote dialogue between urban authorities, non-governmental

and community-based organisations, and the private sector with a view to promoting programmes that address environmental problems facing the urban poor.

LIFE operates in a three-stage mode. In the initial phase, interactive, consultative workshops help to formulate strategies at the national level on how to mobilise communities and resources. Projects are then designed and implemented with built-in mechanisms for monitoring and evaluation. In the final phase the lessons learned are shared to refine the participatory methods of policy-making.

The PPP programme is a collaborative effort with the Business Council for Sustainable Development and the independent Swiss association 'Sustainable Projects Management'. The programme currently comprises governments, the private sector, NGOs, the scientific community, and other developing country institutions. The objective is to identify, promote, and share the contribution of the private sector in promoting a sustainable environment in urban areas, by investing in environmentally sound technologies and projects. The programme emerged from the realisation that the public sector – especially the urban municipalities – is ill equipped to meet the continuously expanding need for urban infrastructure. Hence the need for mobilising new resources, both financial and human, as well as technological, to meet the growing demand.

The UNDP is also an important partner with Habitat and the World Bank in the inter-regional 'Urban Management Programme (UMP)'. In the past decade the UMP has set the premises upon which programmes in the urban field may be based. It has evolved into the largest technical co-operation programme of its kind, and the largest UNDP programme operating in urban areas. Several countries have made financial contributions, including Germany, the Netherlands, Sweden, Switzerland and the United Kingdom.

In the first phase of operation (1986–1992) the UMP was preoccupied with developing concepts and preparing generic frameworks, tools and discussion papers on urban management. Phase II (1992–1996) was devoted to translating the results of the conceptual frameworks into operational programmes and action plans. Five themes were identified and considered to encompass the key issues in urban management: (i) land; (ii) infrastructure; (iii) municipal finance and administration; (iv) poverty reduction; and (v) environmental management. The programme was subsequently decentralised and the third phase (1996–2000) has culminated in ten years of experience in urban management. Notable among these is the consultative process at the city level, providing services for upstream policy-making, creating networks for urban managers, planners, national and regional institutions, etc.

3.4.4 Specialised agencies of the United Nations

The specialised agencies (ILO, WHO, UNESCO, UNIDO, etc.) and other entities (UNFPA, UNICEF, UNRISD, etc.) within the UN system have sectoral or other specific mandates. As such, many of them command specialised

knowledge that can be drawn upon in urban-related activities. Generally, the specialised agencies and other entities draw funding from the UNDP, but some have established funds of their own, and some are funds in themselves. It is a major management challenge to try to integrate the sector specialities of these organisations into a coherent urban endeavour. But the expertise at their disposal cannot be left untapped for urban development purposes.

3.4.5 The Cities Alliance Initiative

Launched in May 1999, the Cities Alliance Initiative is a new joint undertaking by Habitat and the World Bank, linking up with other UN agencies, regional development banks, bilateral agencies (including Norway), local authority associations, NGOs, and the business community. It is committed to creating a new coherence of effort in urban development to contribute to the realisation of the rich promise of what well-managed cities can accomplish (Cities Alliance 1999).

The Cities Alliance has been conceived to provide the efficiency and impact of urban development co-operation in two key areas:

- Linking the process by which local stakeholders define their vision for their city, analyse its economic prospects and establish priorities for action, with investment strategies for implementation;
- Making unprecedented improvements in the living conditions of the urban poor by moving to city-wide and nation-wide scales of action.

Two priorities have been set for action (Cities Alliance 2000):

- *Cities Without Slums* through city-wide and nation-wide upgrading of low-income settlements to improve the environmental circumstances of the urban poor;
- *City Development Strategies* aimed at formulating a broad consensus on a vision and a set of priorities for city actions.

With respect to the upgrading of low-income settlements the Alliance will make funds available (Cities Alliance 1999):

- To identify and prepare city-wide and nation-wide urban upgrading programmes;
- To help selected cities and countries to strengthen their policy framework as a necessary foundation for community upgrading;
- To establish consensus with local stakeholders, create donor alliances, and mobilise resources to implement programmes;
- To promote activities that raise awareness, disseminate information, and create global base knowledge on 'best practices' in scaling up urban upgrading programmes.

With a view to charting city development strategies through a consultative process among the stakeholders, the Alliance will make funds available (Cities Alliance 1999):

- To support city-based consensus-building processes to establish priorities and actions for development;
- To assess the city's economic growth prospects linked to employment and to regional and national development;
- To assist local authorities in outlining financing and investment strategies, taking into account city-based resources and revenues, as well as private sector investors and partners;
- To build capacity and share the lessons and knowledge acquired in formulating and implementing city development strategies.

Countries eligible for assistance are those included in the following categories of the OECD/DAC list of aid recipients: developing countries and territories, and countries and territories in transition. Eligible cities will have to satisfy additional competitive criteria that emphasise their prospects of success and sustainable change (Cities Alliance 2000).

The governance and organisational structure of the Cities Alliance consist of three organs. The multi-donor Consultative Group (CG) is the supreme body, with the following functions (Cities Alliance 2000):

- Consider long-term strategies for the Alliance and approve its annual work programme;
- Approve the annual financial plan and criteria to be used in screening activities to be financed from the City Alliance Trust;
- Facilitate donor co-ordination of related activities financed from non-core funds and parallel financing;
- Share the knowledge and experience gained by cities in tackling their problems;
- Review the performance of the Cities Alliance and evaluate its impact;
- Confirm donor pledges and help to raise additional resources;
- Approve and amend the Cities Alliance Charter.

In addition to the financial contributors to the Cities Alliance Trust, the CG membership includes the International Union of Local Authorities (IULA), Metropolis, the United Towns Organisation (UTO), and the World Associations of Cities and Local Authorities Co-ordination (WACLAC).

The charter of the Alliance also stipulates a 5–7 member Policy Advisory Board (PAB), which will provide guidance to the CG on key strategic and policy issues. Its membership will be drawn from pre-eminent urban experts, and will include representatives of non-governmental and community-based organisations, the private sector, as well as the secretariats and programmes of associations of local authorities. The responsibilities of the PAB include (Cities Alliance 2000):

- Providing advice on specific issues related to city development strategies and scaling up slum upgrading;
- Reviewing and commenting on the Cities Alliance strategy as reflected in the draft annual work programmes prepared by the secretariat;
- Facilitating the engagement of local authority networks in building capacity to sustain and replicate the work of the Cities Alliance;
- Evaluating the impact of the Cities Alliance work programme through *ex post* evaluation of selected activities.

The funding structure distinguishes between core funds and non-core funds. The latter are earmarked for specific themes, activities or regions. The initial funding target for the Cities Alliance Trust is US\$ 21 million for the first three years of operation. Given the direct linkage of activities to investment strategies, it is envisaged that these funds will act as a lever and release in excess of US\$ 500 million in urban development investment (Cities Alliance 1999).

The Alliance is still in its infancy and it would be premature to judge its performance. But the initiative holds great promise and could be a good entry point for Norwegian activities in the urban arena. Norway has already paid its 'membership fee' of US\$ 250,000 to the CG and further financial contributions are being considered.

3.4.6 Comparative multilateral strategies

The multilateral agencies differ widely in function, scope and nature. They do not necessarily differ in the analysis of urbanisation processes and urban poverty, but most of them have a restricted mandate, which precludes their taking a comprehensive approach.

It is no coincidence that this report devotes much attention to two multilateral agencies that have a broad mandate in the urban field: Habitat and the World Bank, and their joint Cities Alliance Initiative. The UNDP also has a broad mandate, but primarily as a funding agency *vis-à-vis* the specialised agencies. Again, similar to the bilateral agencies there may be nuances and differences of emphasis in the approach of the overarching multilateral agencies. The World Bank is likely to emphasise economic growth and a policy environment conducive to enterprise more strongly than Habitat and the UNDP. But these differences are not so great that they can be bridged. This report subscribes to the view that resuscitating and promoting productive activities are vital to the long-term sustainability of urban areas in terms of the revenue base of local authorities and general service delivery.

The potential that lies in the various UN specialised agencies and other entities could be exploited meaningfully by the 'umbrella' agencies in a concerted effort towards urban development.

3.5 Non-governmental organisations

In addition to governments (central and local) and multilateral agencies, numerous non-governmental organisations are important stakeholders in urban development. These include large international NGOs, national NGOs and local NGOs or Community Based Development Organisations (CBDOs). Some of these confine themselves to advocacy or relief roles, others are development NGOs with considerable expertise and resources, and some are involved in small-scale grassroots activities for the benefit of their own constituencies.

In many cases NGOs are the principal implementers of urban development interventions. These interventions are often related to social sectors in urban areas (health, education), but there are also many examples of NGOs with a specific urban agenda related to housing, physical infrastructure, the informal urban economy, transportation, urban employment creation, etc.

Having said this, we should reiterate that NGOs are a mixed bag (Tostensen et al. 2001). Whereas some are democratic and truly representative of their constituencies, others may be autocratic with a leadership that does not understand principles of accountability and transparency. Still others may be bogus organisations whose leaders are only out to make money for themselves. Notwithstanding the *bona fide* nature of NGOs, some may be lacking in professionalism and capability to execute projects. The point to make here is quite simply that before entering into a collaborative relationship with an NGO it should be vetted thoroughly on a number of criteria.

Moreover, there is no *a priori* reason why one category or another should be excluded from collaboration. Instead, pragmatism is called for. If an NGO is deemed capable of performing a useful function in an urban development setting its origin does not matter that much. It is for the management of an aid intervention to make sure that the special niches of NGOs fit into the overall design and contribute to its successful completion.

In Norway there are also a number of NGOs that have been involved in cities and towns in developing countries, even though most of the NGOs still have a rural emphasis in their programmes. None of the five largest Norwegian NGOs (the Norwegian Red Cross, Norwegian Peoples' Aid, Norwegian Church Aid, Save the Children, and the Norwegian Refugee Council) have specific policies regarding urban development and poverty reduction, but all have individual projects located in cities and towns.

In addition to NGOs proper, several professional milieux – both public and semi-private – have been involved in urban affairs in developing countries in one way or another. Some of these work through twinning arrangements with sister institutions in the South (Tvedten et al. 1998). The most relevant professional milieux of this type include:

- Norwegian Association of Local and Regional Authorities
- Norwegian Federation of Co-operative Housing Associations

- Norwegian Housing Bank
- Norwegian Pollution Control Authority
- Norwegian Mapping Authority
- Directorate of Cultural Heritage

In addition, there are several research milieux with an urban agenda and involvement in urban development research and projects. An overview from 1996 (Falleth and Holmberg 1996) includes about a dozen research institutions dealing with such issues. Among the most important are:

- Dept. of Architecture, Norwegian University of Science and Technology
- Norwegian Institute for Urban and Regional Research
- Chr. Michelsen Institute
- Norwegian Institute for Water Research
- Norwegian Institute for Air Research
- Norwegian Building Research Institute
- Oslo School of Architecture
- Dept. of Administration and Organisation Theory, University of Bergen
- Dept. of Sociology and Human Geography, University of Oslo

Finally, Norwegian private consulting companies have been involved in urban development in developing countries, often in multilateral projects. Among these are:

- Interconsult
- Norconsult International
- Norplan/Asplan Viak
- Blom
- OPUS
- Norwegian Register Development

It would be a challenge for the Norwegian aid authorities to support capacity development on urban development issues, as well as to enlist the assistance and expertise of international and Norwegian NGOs along with those embedded in urban communities in developing countries. The appropriate 'mix' of stakeholders, however, cannot be determined *a priori*. It has to be tailored to the specific circumstances at hand.

4 Towards an urban development strategy

The policy implications flowing from the above documentation and arguments run along two dimensions: (a) substantive emphases; and (b) organisational approaches. This concluding section will advance a set of recommendations that have to be fairly general in nature at this stage. The design of interventions is clearly beyond the scope of this report; they will have to be tailored to the country- and site-specific conditions at hand. The issues highlighted here serve rather to provide pointers to possible action in the urban field. NORAD's staff will have to take the requisite operational grip in order to implement whatever policy is adopted.

The reservation has often been made that Norway, whose own urbanisation level is comparatively low, has no experience and no comparative advantage in urban matters. Indeed, some claim that Norway has no urban policy geared towards its own society. While there is some merit to this argument it should not be taken to its extreme. The rhetorical question could equally well be posed: does Norway have a comparative advantage in tropical agriculture? As long as Norway is committed to assisting developing countries in tackling their poverty problem, which is fast becoming a predominantly urban phenomenon, it would be indefensible – professionally and ethically – not to give increasing attention to Africa's cities and towns.

4.1 Substantive issues

Substantively, a commitment to urban development and poverty reduction in developing countries requires a comprehensive and holistic approach across multiple sectors. Towns and cities are integrated 'organisms' that need to be understood as such. To achieve a greater coherence and enhanced involvement in urban matters NORAD would be well advised *to elaborate an urban development strategy*, taking on board the full implications of a fast urbanising African continent. Such a strategy must incorporate the array of relevant substantive issues in a comprehensive fashion, with a focus on urban poverty reduction. No country strategy should be made without reference to rural as well as urban poverty.

Embarking on an urban strategy exercise might seem too ambitious and a number of NORAD's staff members might question the utility of such an effort. It should be borne in mind, however, that formulating an urban strategy could be done at varying levels of ambition. A 'minimalist' approach might very well be more appropriate in the circumstances than a 'maximalist' process involving the full gamut of stakeholders within and outside NORAD, as well as the co-operating partners in the South. The emphatic point we are making is simply that some systematic and strategic thinking be done with a view to sensitising the organisation to urban issues and to integrating them into NORAD's operations in a coherent manner. Making do with the current state of disarray is strongly discouraged.

Based on such a comprehensive understanding within the organisation, more specific areas of concern should be identified. We have indicated what some of these areas might be, from the point of view of urban poverty reduction. But a more concrete elaboration of such areas must also take into consideration the relevant national and local contexts, as well as the implementational capacity and competence of NORAD and its co-operating partners.

- First, we have underscored the importance of well-functioning local government structures for urban development. Such structures are important both for issues of democratisation and good governance, as well as for service delivery to the urban poor. Currently, many local urban governments grapple with many responsibilities, but often lack the necessary capacity and competence to cope. A focus on local government should also include relations with civil society and the private sector. The development of local government capacity is well suited for twinning arrangements with similar institutions in the North, although experience indicates that these should be strengthened by expertise on development issues.
- A second major area of concern has to do with employment and income generation. To buttress the sustainability of cities a meaningful strategy must emphasise productive activities and entrepreneurship. Not only would enterprise and business promote economic growth and provide income for the poor, they would also gradually expand the revenue base of local authorities. Only with secure revenue sources can local governments hope to be able to fulfil their role in service delivery. When relating constructively to existing initiatives by men and women in the informal sector, micro-credit schemes have proven to be a particularly useful tool of intervention. Similarly – in the formal and informal economies alike – infrastructure support and training (primarily vocational, but also in small-scale business management) could make a valuable contribution. Otherwise, the formal economy would stand to benefit from credit arrangements designed to meet the needs of medium-sized entrepreneurs, as well as institutional support with a view to establishing a stable, collective bargaining machinery in the labour market. Above all, beyond such specific aid interventions, measures to create an enabling policy environment conducive to productive enterprise are of paramount importance.
- Third, we have pointed to the importance of housing and secure tenure for the urban poor. An adequate dwelling is important for health conditions, employment and income, as well as social security. Interventions can be made in different ways, including support to the formulation of housing policies (e.g. zoning and land use planning), secure titling (including proper cadastral development), housing co-operatives, cheap and adapted building materials and methods, and savings and credit schemes. The importance of housing for the poor means that housing associations already exist in many countries, representing important potential partners of co-operation. While acknowledging that Norway does not possess a comparative advantage in urban development in general, the existing expertise and experience is

considerable in municipal planning, infrastructure and management of medium-sized towns, as well as in housing, not least in co-operative housing schemes.

- Fourth, in the environmental field the improvement of infrastructure in water and sanitation, roads and municipal transport, and solid waste collection and treatment figure high on the agenda. Strategies towards meeting these needs could be evolved with the participation both of local governments and of community-based civil society organisations to encourage participation and local ownership. Coupled with efforts in social infrastructure measures would also be needed in the control of toxic emissions of industrial waste into the air, the soil and the waterways.
- Fifth, in the social sectors – health and education – the urban challenges are daunting. The level of concentration of people in urban areas tends to create serious health hazards stemming from congestion, inadequate water supplies and sanitation, pollution and poor housing conditions. The HIV/AIDS infection rates are generally higher in urban centres than in the rural areas and call for urgent action. Basic education and vocational training for the urban population would go some way towards alleviating the plight of the urban poor – both socially and economically.
- Finally, we have drawn attention to the processes of marginalisation and social exclusion in poor urban areas. These processes affect destitutes, but also larger population groups excluded from full participation in society. The types of intervention described above may easily bypass such groups, thus contributing to their further marginalisation. In certain cases direct support in terms of emergency aid may be most relevant, but normally various forms of empowerment would be better in a longer-term perspective. Contributing to establishing relations between local community groups and national or international NGOs may be a relevant form of such support.

4.2 Institutional approach and modes of intervention

Assuming that NORAD accepts the substantive arguments underpinning a greater commitment to urban affairs, the question remains as to how the field could be approached in institutional terms. At present there is no dedicated unit within NORAD charged with the overall co-ordination of all urban-orientated activities. Even so, several officers – dispersed throughout the organisation – deal with urban affairs as a matter of routine, perhaps without reflecting on their ‘urban’ nature. This state of affairs is clearly not satisfactory; a firmer organisational grasp is desirable.

Acknowledging that NORAD has just gone through a major internal reorganisation, the time would hardly be opportune for broaching further organisational changes. However, given the fact that a number of staff deal with urban issues regularly and possess the relevant competence it would be feasible and not cause much further institutional upheaval to suggest the

formation of an *internal network of 'urbanists'*. Such a network would doubtless be a useful conduit of information flows and could stimulate further thinking in this area. The challenge is to strike a balance between an over-ambitious (at this stage) organisational solution, on the one hand, and the current non-committal 'business-as-usual' stance, on the other. To overcome some of the capacity constraints and to widen the circle of actors, consideration should be given to including professional milieux outside NORAD, perhaps in an 'observer' capacity initially.

To make a network function properly a modicum of leadership would be required; reliance on spontaneity would not suffice. An *urban focal point* is proposed, therefore, as the centre of the network. After NORAD's recent reorganisation the logical location of such an urban focal point would be the Productive Sector Development and Employment Generation Unit in the Technical Department. This would presumably inject a pro-active element into the network, and hopefully lead to steady progress towards a more committed pro-urban position in the future. The envisaged focal point would be charged with co-ordination of the network and be allowed to take initiatives and raise issues towards promoting the urban agenda. Thus, the network could become a driving force for integrating urban perspectives and concerns into the country programming processes and for adding an urban dimension to the various thematic or sector strategies already in place. The urban network could arguably assume a watchdog function in this regard vis-à-vis the rest of the institution.

Lest the proposed urban network become hamstrung in discharging its functions there would be need for a gradual strengthening of the in-house urban professional expertise. Since the envisaged functions of the suggested urban network are many and varied the capacity to handle them must be enhanced through the addition of new staff of various types, and other resources, including funds to enlist external assistance. Suggesting a major expansion of staff would probably not be a feasible option – at least not in the short run. Rather, a judicious addition over time to the existing staff complement relevant to the urban agenda would be justified, depending, of course, on the future priority accorded an urban thrust. Ambitions and priorities must be set at a level commensurate with the competence and capacity available within the organisation.

Beyond internal networks, the time is overripe for NORAD to *partake in international networks and meeting places on urban issues* – within the aid community as well as in professional circles. Examples include the OECD/DAC Group on Urban Environment; the EU Urban Experts Group¹³; and the Programme Review Committee of the Urban Management Programme under UNDP and Habitat auspices. Participation in such networks abroad would give access to new impulses and experiences garnered by others who have been

¹³ Although not an EU member state, Norway may still participate by virtue of its membership of the European Economic Area.

involved in the urban agenda for some time. The learning benefit could be substantial.

In recognition of NORAD's limited experience with urbanity to date, and its comparatively narrow professional competence base, it would be advisable *to seek collaboration with other agencies and actors* – not least in the formative stages of urban involvement. From the point of view of bilateral aid agencies the Nordic counterparts would be an obvious initial choice, notably Sida, which has been a pioneer in the urban aid field for the past decade. Other like-minded countries include the Netherlands, United Kingdom, Germany, Switzerland and Canada. The advantage of collaboration with like-minded agencies is the similarity in philosophy and mode of operation. The meeting of minds at policy and conceptual levels would, in turn, serve to facilitate collaboration on the ground.

At the political level, it appears that aid to towns and cities will be put on the agenda of the so-called 'Utstein group' (the ministers of development assistance from the United Kingdom, Germany, the Netherlands and Norway) that is scheduled to meet in the near future. This would be a good opportunity for laying the foundation stone of an urban policy of greater clarity and coherence.

Similarly, at the policy and strategy formulation level the multilateral agencies could provide useful inputs, even though NORAD is a bilateral agency. With its urban mandate Habitat is the first obvious choice as a collaborating partner. Within the 'Cities Alliance' initiative the World Bank is also an obvious candidate. There is every reason to consider the 'Cities Alliance' a suitable entry point, since Norway seems poised to take a greater interest in this venture with a financial contribution. Otherwise, many of the UN specialised agencies could assist in their respective sector specialities, complementary to those of NORAD.

At the level of project implementation, co-ordination and collaboration is even more important. It is recognised that NORAD in its recent reorganisation exercise wished to concentrate its efforts on fewer sectors. This makes managerial sense and is understandable with a view to not spreading its professional expertise too thin; a certain specialisation is warranted. However, in light of NORAD's overriding objective of poverty reduction – fast shifting attention to the poor of towns and cities – the institutional constraints should not be seen as a stumbling block precluding an urban commitment. Complementary expertise can be sought elsewhere, in Norway and abroad. The previous chapter has documented the fact that the range of urban expertise in Norway is fairly wide, albeit uneven and not so deep – as yet. NORAD is currently drawing on those professional milieux through a series of framework agreements. The potential is considerable for using them more extensively and systematically in relation to items on the urban agenda. Should the requisite expertise be missing in Norway, however, it can be found elsewhere – in neighbouring countries or farther afield.

At the outset, it should be stated emphatically that flexibility, pragmatism and pluralism are required in choosing organisational models and approaches to the

urban agenda. No single model could fit all settings. A variety of models should be contemplated, and adapted to varying circumstances. The point of departure must always be the conditions on the ground. Imported models and experiences gained elsewhere may certainly be useful, but adjustment to local conditions is mandatory. A suitable 'mix' of actors and substantive elements must be sought.

Selecting an appropriate model is not first and foremost a technical question. The inclusion of the politics of governance is inescapable. Governance considerations are central not only because the diverse urban interests pitted against each other require mediation and compromise, but also because the sectional interests need to be transcended in finding a holistic 'solution' acceptable to everybody. Arriving at workable governance structures and processes will add an element of stability to urban centres and provide a basis for long-term sustainability – politically and managerially. In this regard, the 'twinning' of towns and cities in the North and their counterparts in the South seems an attractive model. In the Norwegian aid programme a number of such twinning arrangements are currently in operation under the auspices of the Norwegian Association of Local and Regional Authorities.

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Terms of reference

Urbanisation is a major phenomenon of our time, with considerable implications for the development process in Africa, Asia and Latin America (UNCHS 1996). Some 80 per cent of the population in Latin America and about 44 per cent in Africa and Asia are expected to be living in towns and cities by 2010 (United Nations 1999). The main challenge facing African towns and cities is the achievement of economic growth and its equitable distribution, so that urban economies can contribute appropriately to national economic development and provide sufficient labour market opportunities (World Bank 1999). More specifically, the following issues are often highlighted:

- Poverty is increasingly an attribute of urbanisation, and urban poverty exhibits specific features which need to be understood better;
- The environmental problems facing developing countries are increasingly associated with cities and urban centres;
- The proportion of women in migration flows to cities is increasing, and the urbanisation process impacts significantly on the status and roles of women;
- Urban areas play a significant role in the democratisation process, through political mobilisation as well as local government;
- There is increasing evidence of a correlation between urbanisation and economic development and growth;
- There is a close link between urban and rural development, both in macro-economic terms and through migration and urban-rural links.

Scope of the study

With reference to key priorities in Norwegian development aid, the study will give particular attention to the relationship between urbanisation and urban and rural poverty. More than 50 per cent of the poor are expected to live in urban areas by 2010 (Wratten 1997), and urbanisation has major implications for Norway's main partner countries of co-operation. Recent research on the linkages between urban and rural poverty suggests that the urbanisation process also has strong implications for the rural poor (Bryceson et al. 2000).

Recent analyses of poverty and well-being in both urban and rural areas have broadened their focus from money-metric measures of income and consumption to livelihood strategies, in order to enhance the understanding of the causes of poverty, the process of increased well-being or impoverishment, and the outcomes of policy interventions. At household, community and societal levels, the assets available constitute a stock of capital which can be stored, accumulated, exchanged or depleted and put to work to generate a flow of income or other benefits. Social units need, it is suggested, to be able to call on stocks of all types of capital (natural, produced/physical, human, social, political and financial) (Rakodi 1999). Not all households are able to adjust to the same extent, however, leading to processes of marginalisation and differentiation within poor urban areas (World Bank/UNCHS 1999).

On the basis of a livelihood strategy framework, the study will comprise a discussion of the implications of urbanisation and urban-rural linkages for the planning, implementation and evaluation of Norwegian poverty-reduction policies. The discussion will have reference to three key areas: economic growth with equitable distribution; basic social services; and social safety nets for the poorest and most vulnerable groups. For each area, a limited number of cases will be selected and discussed with respect to the relevance of the urbanisation process.

Increased attention to urbanisation in Norwegian development aid does not mean that existing priorities need to be reordered, only that they be adjusted to a new reality where urban and rural poverty cannot be separated. Specifically, the report will include the following sections:

- An introduction to urbanisation in developing countries, with special reference to Africa. This section will highlight central trends of urbanisation in Africa, with particular reference to Norway's main partner countries of co-operation. In addition to the main factors behind high urban growth rates, the differences in size and functions of urban centres as well as the close links between urban and rural areas will be emphasised.
- An outline of the implications of urbanisation for urban and rural poverty. It will be argued that the extent of urban poverty has generally been underestimated, mainly due to the focus on average incomes and lack of attention to vulnerability as an important aspect of poverty. A main focus will be given to processes of marginalisation. The important linkages between urban and rural poverty will also be discussed.
- An outline of the current strategies for urban development, both by international aid organisations and national governments and NGOs. The increasing importance attached to urban development by development organisations will be discussed with particular reference to the Nordic countries and local government and NGOs. Interventions tend to relate to a large variety of sectors including governance, economic development and democratisation, often without a specific poverty focus.
- A discussion of the most relevant strategies for poverty alleviation in urban areas in Norwegian development aid. With reference to the strong emphasis on poverty alleviation in Norwegian development aid, including NGOs, this section will discuss and analyse alternative interventions to support social and economic development in poor urban areas. Particular attention will be given to employment, housing, social services and popular participation. This will be the main thrust of the study.

Urban research capacity at CMI

Despite its importance, the urbanisation process has been accorded relatively low priority in Norwegian development aid policies (Ministry of Local Government and Labour 1996). In an effort to enhance research capacity on urbanisation and to develop institutional competence on which the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and NORAD can draw, the Chr. Michelsen Institute has established a Strategic Institute Programme (SIP) entitled *Urbanisation and*

Development in Africa. The envisaged study on the possible implications of the urbanisation process for Norwegian development aid is an important component of the SIP, which has been accepted by the MFA and the Norwegian Research Council (NFR).

Implementation

The study will be undertaken between 1 October 2000 and 31 January 2001. In view of budgetary constraints the consultancy will be carried out as a desk study by Arne Tostensen and Inge Tvedten from the Chr. Michelsen Institute. In order to ensure that perspectives and perceptions from the South are taken sufficiently into consideration, a colleague from the South will be identified and included in the study team. The draft final report will be presented at a seminar for MFA/NORAD after its completion.

On the presumption that urbanity matters in development assistance, there will be an initial need for an overview of how the urbanisation process relates to current aid policies; what experiences have been garnered internationally; and the main implications of the urbanisation process for Norwegian policies towards urban poverty alleviation.

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Summary

Some 52 per cent of Africa's population are expected to live in towns and cities by 2025. There is generally an unequivocal correlation between urbanisation and economic development and growth, but in Africa this appears not to apply owing to 'distorted incentives'. Urban areas play a significant role in the democratisation process. There is a close relationship between urban and rural development, both in macro-economic terms and through migration and urban-rural links. The proportion of women in migration flows to cities is increasing, and the urbanisation process impacts significantly on the status and roles of women. Female-headed households are a predominant feature of poor urban areas. The environmental problems facing developing countries are largely associated with cities. Poverty is increasingly an attribute of urbanisation, and urban poverty exhibits specific features that need to be understood better. Urbanites depend on a commercialised market for goods, services and land, making employment and income the key determinants of well-being.

The late 1990s have seen a renewed interest in urban issues in the donor community and many agencies have embarked on new urban strategies. The challenges are a concern both of policy and of institutional capability in pursuit of policy. The urban policies of selected bilateral and multilateral aid agencies are reviewed.

To achieve greater coherence and enhanced involvement in urban matters NORAD is advised to elaborate an urban development strategy. Such a strategy must incorporate the array of relevant substantive issues in a comprehensive fashion, with a focus on urban poverty reduction.

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