



## **Thirteenth Session of Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD-13): the Water, Sanitation and Human Settlements challenges for Africa**

### **A Paper for the AMCHUD Meeting**

#### **Introduction:**

The twelfth session of the Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD-12), which took place in New York, in April 2004, reviewed the state of implementation of the goals and targets in the thematic areas of human settlements, water and sanitation as contained in Agenda 21, the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21 and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation (JPOI), and the Millennium Development Goals.

Building on the outcomes of the CSD-12, the thirteenth session of CSD (CSD-13), which will take place in New York, from 11 to 22 April 2005, will function as the “policy” session of the first-two year “implementation cycle,” with a focus on water, sanitation and human settlements. This session is expected to take policy decisions on practical measures and options to expedite implementation. The policy options and actions Governments are expected to agree on at CSD-13 will further underscore international community’s commitments to meet the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation (JPOI) targets and commitments in water, sanitation and human settlements.

Shelter and human settlements provide a concrete context for action. The struggle for achieving the internationally agreed targets on water and sanitation will have to be waged in human settlements - in cities, towns and villages, where water will be consumed and waste generated. It is at the level of human settlements that the global goals and policies become operational reality. This is a key message for CSD-13 to be considered in its deliberations, and in doing so it must recognize the importance of housing and urban development policies at national level, and its implementation at local level.

#### **Sustainable Urbanization in Africa:**

The challenge of achieving sustainability in a global context is both vital and complex. Indeed, the data fully supports the view that sustainable development is only possible if sustainable urbanization is achieved. The concept of Sustainable Urbanisation has a number of special characteristics. It includes not only **environmental** but also **social, economic,** and **political-institutional** sustainability and it brings together urban and rural, encompassing the full range of human settlements from village to town to city to metropolis. In this way, sustainable urbanisation links cities and their environment, at local, regional, national and global levels. By taking this wider view, sustainable urbanisation moves beyond sterile arguments about urban versus rural. It accepts the reality



of urban growth and migration among human settlements and it concentrates on effective management of the process.

Africa is the fastest urbanizing region in the world, with population doubling almost every 20 years. The rural population is growing at the rate of 2.5 per cent per annum, while the urban population is experiencing 5-10 per cent growth per annum<sup>1</sup>. Urbanisation level in Africa was 14.5 per cent in 1950; it increased to 34 per cent in 1990. In terms of numbers, about 300 million people in Africa currently live in urban settlements. This figure is estimated to reach 500 million by 2020. In 1975, there were only 8 cities with one million populations. By 2000, the number had risen to 40. Lagos, for example, is expected to have a population of about 23 million in 2020 and will be the third largest city in the world. This rapid growth of urban population becomes a source of concern when the challenges posed by it are far beyond the management capacity of the nation and its human settlements.

By 2020, Sub-Saharan Africa's urban population will approach 440 million, or 46 percent of its projected total of 952 million. Today, Africa's urban areas are credited with 60 percent of the region's Gross Domestic Product (GDP). Municipalities, however, capture only a small percentage of GDP - on average less than US\$ 15 per capita per year - in revenue, creating disparity between the requirements for municipal governance and available resources.

### **Urbanization of Poverty:**

In 2001, 166 million people or 72 per cent of the African urban residents were living in slums. As many as 150 people share one toilet in the slums of Nairobi, Kenya and Lagos, Nigeria. Most of the slum population is under-employed, or unemployed. They have no hope for a better life as they are trapped in a vicious circle of urban poverty, social exclusion, deprivation, disenfranchisement and lack of self-esteem.

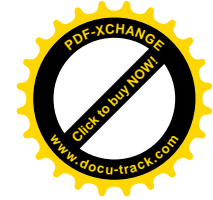
There is an urgent need to identify practical, innovative solutions to stemming the growth of slums that work at scale. While there are several examples of pilot projects worldwide demonstrating the impact of local policies and programmes on reducing urban poverty, the challenge facing the development community is to find solutions that worked at nation- and citywide scales. Indeed one of the greatest and most exciting challenges is that of scaling up and far wider application of successful experiences.

### **Economic growth and sustainability:**

Global economic processes have stalled in Sub-Saharan Africa with severe consequences for its urban areas. Africa is the only region in the world without a true newly industrializing economy. The failure to industrialize can partly be explained by external

---

<sup>1</sup> Onibokun (2003), "The State Of Implementation Report on Human Settlements In Africa", a report prepared for CSD-12, Centre for African Settlement Studies and Development, Ibadan, Nigeria, December 2003



factors, but a variety of domestic factors must also be taken into account, including economic policies, the effects of personal rule, historical legacy, the role of the state and low levels of literacy. Structural adjustment, which has created shortages of imported materials, reduced investment, retrenched the public sector and led to declining effective demand, has badly affected urban-based manufacturing. Large-scale manufacturing, which created an impressive volume of jobs in the Asian and Latin American regions, has generated only a small number of employment opportunities in urban Africa and, consequently, the informal sector continues to remain the largest source of employment in the region.<sup>2</sup>

There have been some improvements in the performance of the economy of the continent as a whole throughout 2003. The growth rate of real GDP in Africa rose from 2.9% in 2002 to 3.7% in 2003. The level of inflation has largely stabilised over the whole continent. Fiscal deficit fell from 3.4 % in 2002 to 3 % in 2003. Furthermore a positive trade balance could be registered for the fourth year in a row. The factors responsible for the improvement are: the strengthening of the macroeconomic environment, the recovery of non-fuel commodity prices, debt relief under the enhanced HIPC initiative, and the implementation of the Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs). A recent study, drawing links between the HIPC Initiative and the Millennium Development Goals however argues that debt relief will only provide a fraction of the funds required for poverty reduction and to avoid another build-up of unsustainable debt.<sup>3</sup>

A large number of difficulties, however, continue to face the economy of the continent. Civil strife threatens the development of the economy in many countries. Furthermore the current growth level is still inadequate to reach the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Most countries, with the exception of South Africa and many of the countries of North Africa will have to increase their growth rate up to 6-8 %. In order to achieve that OAD flows will have to be increased, external debt will have to be reduced to sustainable levels and market access for African exports will have to be improved significantly. In addition to that the macroeconomic environment in most countries will have to be improved further, governance and institutions will have to be strengthened and the human capital of the continent has to be developed further<sup>4</sup>

### **Poverty and Sustainability:**

Slow economic growth in Sub-Saharan Africa has meant increases in both the share and number of the poor in the 1990s, leaving it as the region with the largest share of people living below \$1 a day. The forecast anticipates per capita growth averaging 1.6 percent over the 2006-15 period – a reversal of the region’s long-term historical decline. But even this is far short of the growth needed to reduce poverty to half the 1990 level. In fact the

---

<sup>2</sup> Economic Report on Africa 2004, African Development Bank

<sup>3</sup> “Debt relief is not enough”, *Teunissen, J.J. (ed); Forum on Debt and Development (FONDAD), 2004*

<sup>4</sup> “Africa’s role and performance in the international trading system”, *African Development Bank (ADB), 2004*



number of poor is expected to increase from 314 million in 2001 to 366 million people by 2015 in Sub-Saharan Africa.

There is also a growing crisis of food security in Africa. Food and nutrition security remain Africa's most fundamental challenges for human welfare and economic growth. Far too many people on the continent are unable to acquire and effectively utilize at all times the food they need for a healthy life. Because of low food availability and profound poverty, an estimated 200 million people on the continent are undernourished, and their numbers have increased by almost 20 percent since the early 1990s. The result is that more than a third of African children are stunted in their growth and must face a range of physical and cognitive challenges not faced by their better-fed peers. Undernutrition is the major risk factor underlying over 28 percent of all deaths in Africa (some 2.9 million deaths annually). The continuing human costs of inadequate food and nutrition are enormous, and the aggregate costs of food and nutrition insecurity at the national level impose a heavy burden on efforts to foster sustained economic growth and improved general welfare.<sup>5</sup>

Sub-Saharan Africa, however, is a region with diverse performers. There are a few countries that have sustained a remarkable growth and achieved some progress in poverty reduction, such as Uganda and Ghana. The recent survey indicates that Cameroon is making progress in achieving the poverty target.

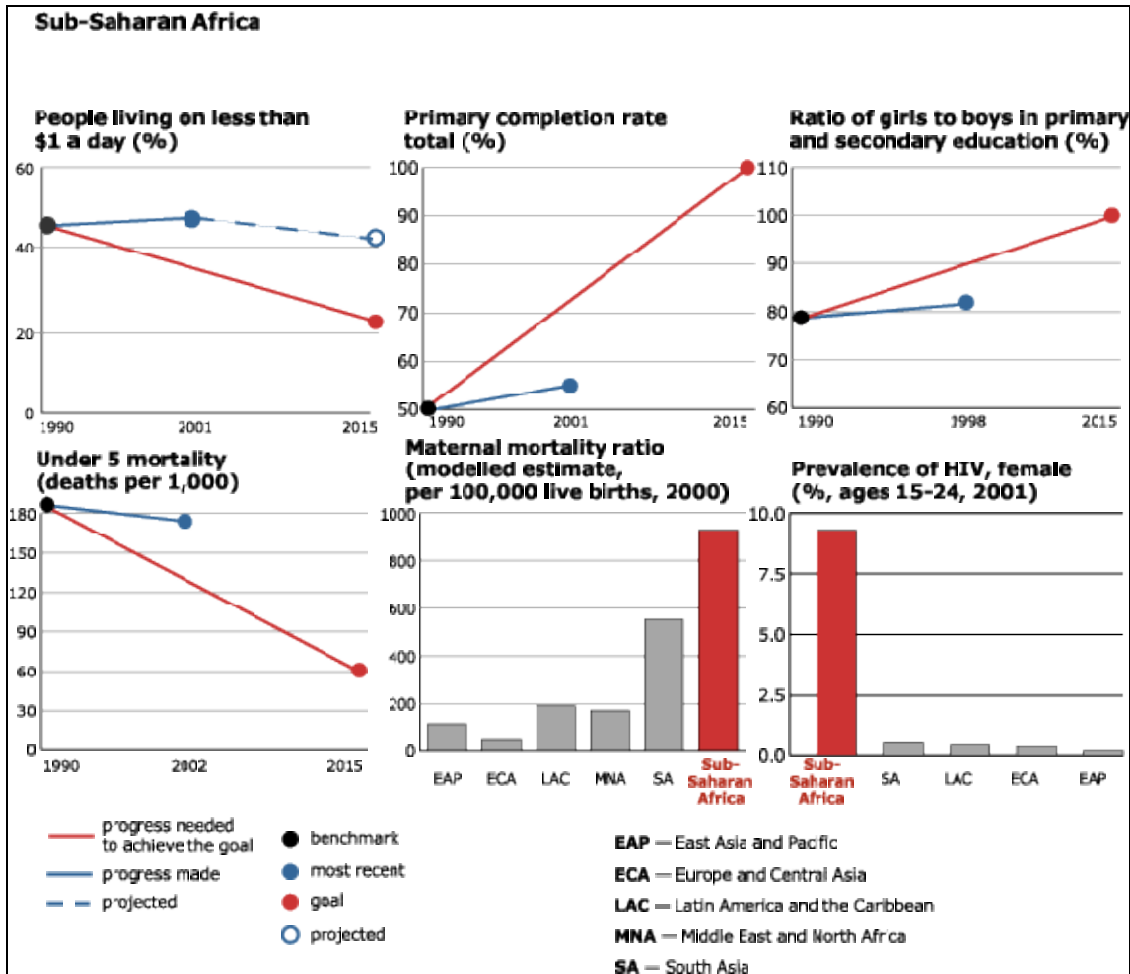
### **Urban Health and Sustainability:**

In Sub-Saharan Africa life expectancy has declined from 50 to 46 years since 1990. Five countries still have life expectancies less than 40 years of age. The main reason for its declining life expectancy is the high infant mortality rate, 103 per 1,000 live births, with HIV/AIDS as the leading cause of deaths, but malaria and tuberculosis are also serious problems. People living with HIV/AIDS face tremendous health risks from opportunistic illnesses (such as tuberculosis) that compromise their way of life and dramatically increase their risk of death. In the hardest hit countries in southern Africa, life expectancies will fall to about 30 years of age. Among infants and children, HIV/AIDS is reversing the health gains realized worldwide through years of improved child health and immunization services. Estimates indicate that there are about 15 million children who have lost at least one parent to AIDS in Africa, and by 2010, the number of children will be 28 million.<sup>6</sup> The situation with regard to AIDS orphans poses a greater challenge to development.

---

<sup>5</sup> Todd Benson (2004), "Africa's Food and Nutrition Security Situation: Where Are We and How Did We Get Here?" IFPRI, 2020 Discussion Paper No. 37 August 2004

<sup>6</sup> Hunter S and J Williamson (2000), Children on the brink 2000, US Agency for International Development, Washington



(Source: [http://www.developmentgoals.org/Middle\\_East\\_&\\_North\\_Africa.htm](http://www.developmentgoals.org/Middle_East_&_North_Africa.htm))

There is increasing evidence that lack of adequate shelter has a direct impact on the care and prevention of the HIV/AIDS affected persons and orphans. For the slum dwellers, lack of secure tenure, poor access to basic services, and lack of access to public health care, results in improper and infrequent access to highly active Anti-Retroviral therapy drugs (even when they are free). Slum residents are often unable to adhere to the required medical regimes as they lack a supportive community environment and find their attention diverted to basic daily survival issues. The HIV/AIDS orphans, the street children, particularly young girls and the homeless adults are the worst affected as they are most susceptible to HIV/AIDS pandemic in urban areas.

### Urban Infrastructure and sustainability:

Around the world, 1.1 billion people lack water and 2.4 billion lack sanitation. Over 300 million of those people live in Africa. Although the Johannesburg summit set a target of reducing by half the proportion of people without access to safe drinking water and sanitation by 2015, more than 300 million Africans still lack access to safe drinking water



and 14 countries on the continent suffer from water scarcity. Out of 55 countries in the world with domestic water use below 50 litres per person per day (the minimum requirement set by the World Health Organization), 35 are in Africa. Almost half of all Africans suffer from one of six main water-related diseases.

### **From CSD-12 to CSD-13:**

At the CSD-12 session many delegations expressed satisfaction that water, sanitation and human settlements were being addressed during this first cycle of the Commission in its new work programme after WSSD as these three themes are crucial in achieving the MDGs and the JPOI goals, and in particular for combating poverty. Participants noted that the persistence of poverty continues to hinder efforts to achieve sustainable development. Poverty as a cross-cutting issue must be addressed in an integrated manner, incorporating the issues of water, sanitation and human settlements. Some delegations and major groups expressed concern that in Africa region, poverty levels have increased in recent years. Food insecurity and malnutrition, and impact of HIV/AIDS in this region, was noted as an urgent concern.

The CSD-13 session is expected to take policy decisions on practical measures and options to expedite implementation. Thus the CSD-13 provides an important opportunity for national governments to put forward their suggestions on the water, sanitation and human settlements issues, and get international community's commitments to meet the Millennium Development Goals and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation targets.

A set of policy options for CSD-13 to be considered are listed below for discussion:

- Human settlements provide a concrete context for action. It is at the level of human settlements that the global goals and policies become operational reality. CSD-13 must recognize the importance of housing and urban development policies at national level, and its implementation at local level;
- Many countries in Africa are not on track in meeting the MDG/JPOI targets. In fact the number of poor is expected to increase from 314 million in 2001 to 366 million people by 2015 in Sub-Saharan Africa. Increased ODA to countries in Africa is needed to achieve these targets.
- Bilateral aid agencies should increase their financial support to the urban sector in poor countries to ensure that they have the seed money to engage the right policies. International financial institutions should consider whether investments targeted at intervention on reaching the MDGs should be excluded from the debt of developing countries.
- Water, sanitation and human settlements must be included in NSDSs and PRSPs, while ensuring that NSSD and PRSP processes are inclusive and involves local authorities and other stakeholders.
- Slum upgrading policies, which put the slum dwellers as active agents and not passive beneficiaries, needs to be evolved through inclusive and participatory process. It must also be ensured that legislation and affirmative actions are actually



implemented to ensure that women benefit from the recognized rights and that current disparity is effectively addressed.

- Measurement and analysis of slums in mainstream monitoring instruments, such as the national population censuses, the Demographic and Health Surveys, and other global surveys, should be included.
- In line with the principles of the Global Campaign for Secure Tenure of UN-HABITAT, countries and cities should adopt situ upgrading as the norm and relocation to be used only in exceptional circumstances such as hazardous locations. Forced evictions, being a gross violation of human rights should be combated.
- Financing slum upgrading will require increased ODA as well as innovative financing mechanisms that focus on mobilizing domestic private capital
- Adopt pro poor land management programmes that include the poor by regularizing the settlements and integrating them into the city's development plans. Some innovative ways to regularize include: The development of additional or alternative sustainable forms of tenure that meet the needs of the poor. At the moment, individual titling is generally used; The adoption of a city-wide participative planning approach, which accommodates the informal land delivery processes; Linking innovative service design to the communities' capacity for sustainability;
- As shown by the UN-HABITAT campaign on Urban Governance, the active involvement of cities and local authorities is paramount to the realisation of the Millennium Development Goals.
- A key lesson from experiences is that improved governance is essential to meet the challenge of MDGs and JPOI targets. Democratic and inclusive participation of all stakeholders, sustainability, subsidiarity, equity, efficiency, transparency and accountability, civic engagement and citizenship, and security, are recognized as important dimensions of good governance
- Political decentralization to the local level is an essential component of democratisation, good governance and citizen engagement; it should involve an adequate combination of representative and participatory democracy;
- Participation through inclusiveness and empowerment of citizens shall be an underlying principle in decision-making, implementation and follow-up at the local level;
- With a view to consolidating citizen engagement, local authorities should strive to adopt new forms of participation such as neighbourhood councils, community councils, e-democracy, participatory budgeting, citizen initiatives and referendums is as far as applicable in their specific context;
- The participation of women and youths and a consideration of their needs should a cardinal principle embedded in all local initiatives.
- Shift from a needs-based approach to a rights-based approach in providing water security to the poor. Recognition of this right at international level is critical to generate political and will help create a culture of resource allocation that will put the interests of the poor first.
- Promote a pro-poor urban water governance framework. The overall context of pro-poor policies which promote social equity access with security needs to be addressed under this pro-poor governance framework.



- Build partnerships and recognize the important role of informal markets and small-scale service providers. A tool for effective inclusion of all service providers (public, private, formal, informal large and small scale) is to develop compacts, whereby the state plays a leading role but negotiations, information and interests of the poor are placed at the centre of service provision.