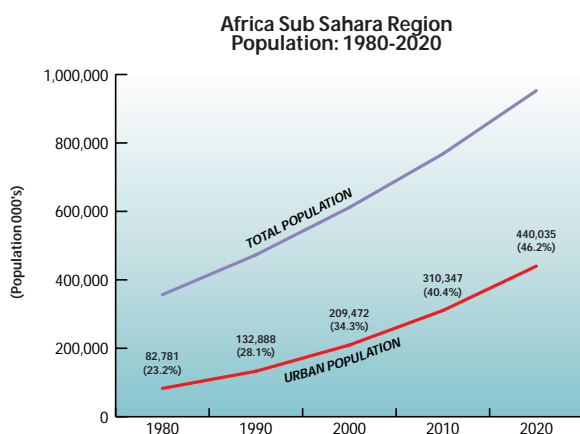


Sub-Saharan Africa's urban population will approach 440 million, or 46 percent of its projected total of 952 million, by 2020.³ Today, urban areas account for 34 percent of the total population of 611 million and are credited with 60 percent of the region's GDP. Municipalities, however, capture only a small percentage of GDP - US\$14 per capita - in revenue, creating disparity between the requirements for municipal governance and available resources.

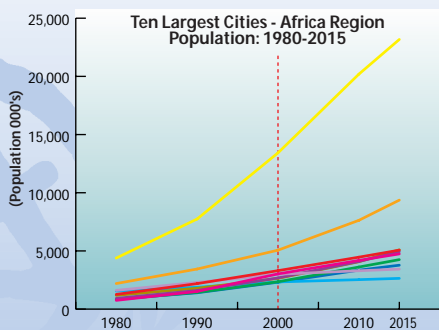


Source: UN, World Urbanization Prospects, 1999

Definitions of 'urban' and 'rural' vary widely across Africa. Many African countries use a population figure of 2,000 to distinguish between rural and urban settlements. However, the figure varies from 100 in Uganda to 20,000 in Nigeria and Mauritius. Almost half the countries in Africa use a numerical definition to indicate the areas that qualify as urban.

The pattern of urbanization in West Africa differs somewhat from that in East Africa. In many West African countries there are few secondary cities, so

the population is concentrated in one or a few large cities. Population growth in East Africa is more evenly distributed over secondary and tertiary cities. But there, also, primary cities are going through a period of rapid growth. By 2015, it is expected that one city in Sub-Saharan Africa (Lagos) will have a population of more than 10 million inhabitants, and 70 cities will have populations of more than 1 million. The most important



- Nairobi - Kenya
- Johannesburg - South Africa
- Dar Es Salam - United Republic of Tanzania
- Addis Ababa - Ethiopia
- Luanda - Angola
- Cape Town - South Africa
- Maputo - Mozambique
- Abidjan - Côte d'Ivoire
- Kinshasa - Democratic Republic of the Congo
- Lagos - Nigeria

Source: UN, World Urbanization Prospects, 1999

Anti-urban bias among aid agencies

Several international development agencies in Africa still have no department specifically in charge of urban development. In several agencies, the ruralist lobby is so strong that urban poverty is hardly recognized as such and "urban development has to walk in disguise behind the imperatives of health, education, gender, family planning, micro-enterprise promotion, environment...." Aid organizations tend to ignore the city as an engine of social and economic development that can also contribute to sustainable rural development.

contributor to urbanization in both West and East Africa was until recently migration from rural areas. In Southern Africa natural population increase is already the most important cause of urbanization.

Global economic processes have stalled in Sub-Saharan Africa with severe consequences for its urban areas. Africa is the only region of the world without a true newly industrializing economy. The failure to industrialize can partly be explained by external 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 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 Asia and Latin America, has generated only a small number of employment opportunities in urban Africa.

In many countries of Africa, states are pitted against their cities, abetted by a pro-rural bias among most aid agencies. As population shifts toward urban areas, parliaments become disproportionately weighted in favour of rural constituencies. Where systems of governance are still centralized, this can result in national neglect of urban areas. This neglect can translate into a failure to supply and maintain essential infrastructure and services required by urban populations and potential investors.

Nonetheless, there is forward movement. In recent years, national governments across Africa are adopting decentralization as one of their primary strategies for development. Africa has also spawned an "associative" sector built on local solidarity movements. Many of these have been supported by external aid in developing and testing innovative bottom-up approaches to service delivery in both rural and urban areas. To increase the involvement of disadvantaged groups in economic, social and political decision making processes, countries in Africa have revised constitutions and passed legislation that supports the participation of excluded and disadvantaged groups, especially women.