



MALAWI GOVERNMENT

**MINISTRY OF LANDS, HOUSING AND URBAN  
DEVELOPMENT**

# **MALAWI HABITAT III REPORT**

**October, 2015**

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CHAIRPERSON OF NATIONAL HABITAT COMMITTEE

## LIST OF ACRONYMS / ABBREVIATIONS

<b>ADB</b>	African Development Bank
<b>ADC</b>	Area Development Committee
<b>CBO</b>	Community Based Organisation
<b>CCODE</b>	Centre for Community Development
<b>CDC</b>	Community Development Committee
<b>CDF</b>	Constituency Development Fund
<b>CEDAW</b>	Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women
<b>DfID</b>	Department for International Development
<b>DLHUD</b>	Department of Lands, Housing and Urban Development
<b>DPD</b>	Director of Planning and Development
<b>DRM</b>	Disaster Risk Management
<b>DRR</b>	Disaster Risk Reduction
<b>EIA</b>	Environmental Impacts Assessment
<b>ERP</b>	Economic Recovery Programme
<b>GoM</b>	Government of Malawi
<b>GRF</b>	General Resource Fund
<b>GDP</b>	Gross Domestic Product
<b>HAPs</b>	Habitat Agenda Partners
<b>HIV/AIDS</b>	Human Immunodeficiency Virus/Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
<b>HfH</b>	Habitat for Humanity
<b>ICT</b>	Information Communication and Technology
<b>IHS</b>	Integrated Household Survey
<b>IRD</b>	Integrated Rural Development
<b>JICA</b>	Japan International Cooperation Agency
<b>LDF</b>	Local Development Fund
<b>LED</b>	Local Economic Development
<b>LCC</b>	Lilongwe City Council
<b>LGFC</b>	Local Government Finance Committee
<b>MDGs</b>	Millennium Development Goals
<b>MEGS</b>	Malawi Economic Growth Strategy
<b>MGDS</b>	Malawi Growth and Development Strategy
<b>MIPP</b>	Malawi Institute of Physical Planning
<b>MPRS</b>	Malawi Poverty Reduction Strategy
<b>MUF</b>	Malawi Urban Forum
<b>NGOs</b>	Non-Governmental Organisations
<b>NHC</b>	National Habitat Committee
<b>NRCF</b>	National Rural Centres Programme

<b>NRA</b>	National Roads Authority
<b>NYP</b>	National Youth Policy
<b>NSSP</b>	National Social Protection Policy
<b>NLP</b>	National Land Policy
<b>NPDP</b>	National Physical Development Plan
<b>NDRMP</b>	National Disaster Risk Management Policy
<b>NDP</b>	National Decentralisation Policy
<b>NLGC</b>	National Local Government Committee
<b>NLGFC</b>	National Local Government Finance Committee
<b>NSO</b>	National Statistical Office
<b>ORT</b>	Other Recurrent Transactions
<b>PPP</b>	Public-Private Partnerships
<b>PSUP</b>	Participatory Slum Upgrading
<b>RA</b>	Roads Authority
<b>RBM</b>	Reserve Bank of Malawi
<b>RF</b>	Roads Fund
<b>SACCO</b>	Savings and Credit Cooperatives
<b>SADC</b>	Southern African Development Committee
<b>SCDP</b>	Secondary Centres Development Programme
<b>SGDs</b>	Sustainable Development Goals
<b>THAs</b>	Traditional Housing Areas
<b>UNGA</b>	United Nations General Assembly
<b>VDC</b>	Village Development Committee
<b>WDC</b>	Ward Development Committee
<b>WHO</b>	World Health Organisation
<b>YDEF</b>	Youth Enterprise Development Fund

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

### **INTRODUCTION**

The Habitat III National Report (the Report) for Malawi presents progress that has been made in relation to a number of set thematic areas since the second United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development (Habitat II) held in 1996 in Istanbul, Turkey. The Istanbul Conference acknowledged that urbanisation needs to be guided rather than prevented and adopted an agenda for human settlements (the Habitat Agenda) which revolved around two main themes: “Adequate shelter for all”; and “Sustainable human settlements in an urbanising world”.

The Government of Malawi committed itself to implement the Habitat Agenda. The current Report assesses the implementation of the Habitat Agenda, highlighting policies, legislation, practical measures undertaken, achievements made, as well as challenges, emerging issues and priority areas for action in the New Urban Agenda.

The Report fulfils the UN-Habitat Governing Council’s requirement for Member States to prepare national reports which consider the implementation of the Habitat II agenda as a basis for the formulation of a New Urban Agenda. It is an essential requirement for the preparatory process leading up to the third United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development (Habitat III), which will be held in the city of Quito, Ecuador, from 17 to 20 October 2016.

The Report was prepared following consultations with Stakeholders and Habitat Agenda Partners (HAPs) and sets a New Urban Agenda for Malawi for the next 20 years in accordance with the priorities made by the Stakeholders and HAPs.

The Report covers the following themes: Urban Demographics; Land and Urban Planning; Environment and Urbanisation; Urban Governance and Legislation; Urban Economy; and Housing and Basic Services. The Report discusses what has been achieved under those broad themes through the Habitat Agenda.

### **MAIN FINDINGS**

While some achievements have been made through the Habitat Agenda in respect of each of the thematic areas outlined above, there have been challenges and lessons learnt. In addition, the Report identifies future challenges which could be addressed through a New Urban Agenda.

Malawi has made a number of achievements in the twenty years since the adoption of the Habitat Agenda in 1996, but a number of challenges have been encountered along the way. The Decentralisation Policy of 1996 set in train a series of administrative reforms which, among other things, saw the devolution of planning powers from central governments to local governments, thus enabling emergence of a grassroots-friendly, bottom-up approach to planning which is in line with the Sustainable Development Goal of inclusive and participatory urbanisation.

Through the Habitat Agenda, the GoM has implemented a number of programmes which have assisted in managing rapid urbanisation as well as in realising the goals of sustainable urbanisation. These include re-launching the Rural Growth Centres project, the implementation of the latter phases of the SCDP, which although it was concluded in 2007, has played a significant role in implementing

infrastructure development programmes in the financially challenged medium size towns such as Balaka, Dedza, Karonga, Kasungu, Liwonde, Luchenza, Mangochi, Mzuzu and Salima. The Participatory Slum Upgrading Programme implemented with UN-Habitat assistance, as well as other slum upgrading programmes have to some extent improved the lives of people living in slums and contributed to the decline in the proportion of urban dwellers living in slums. Reforms in the road transport sector and a government commitment to improve the flow of digital information and promote communication for business purposes have strengthened rural-urban linkages.

However, challenges have been experienced in managing the country's rapid urbanisation. Managing rapid urbanisation sustainably requires adequate resources for the creation of sufficient jobs and the provision of adequate infrastructure and services such as schools, health centres, housing, recreational facilities, among others. However, Malawi is among the poorest countries globally and, with an estimated 2014 GDP per capita of \$US272.16, it is the second poorest country in the SADC region after Madagascar's. The constraints posed by Malawi's poor macro-economic performance are significant and has affected the country's ability to improve conditions of living in the fast-growing urban centres, leading to poor infrastructure and service provision.

Moving forward towards the post-1996 Habitat Agenda, a new urban agenda for Malawi needs to be formulated. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) form the basis for articulating a new urban agenda for the country. Goal 11.1 – ensuring access for all to adequate, safe and affordable housing and basic services, including the upgrade of slums – requires adequate financial resources and a strong national development policy which places greater priority on urban development issues. The challenge for the new urban agenda is to address the underlying causes of poverty in this country but also to prioritise urban issues in the country's overall development planning.

In the area of gender participation in urban development, the Report observes that notwithstanding the constitutional and legal protections upholding equality between men and women, women in Malawi are under-represented in urban governance as councillors as well as in local government management. This situation is largely due to deep rooted cultural beliefs which hamper women's participation in public life. This needs to be addressed in the new urban agenda for Malawi.

Under the theme of "Land and Urban Planning", the GoM has taken steps to improving urban land management to ensure sustainable urban planning. Noting the land-related challenges to sustainable urban planning, the GoM formulated and adopted the National Land Policy (NLP) in 2002. The policy contains a wide range of land related reforms which are proposed to be translated into law in the Land Bill which is currently being considered by parliament. Some of the reforms include improvements to the registration of land titles in urban areas through the devolution of land registration from central government to local government, and measures to resolve the conflict between planning authorities and chiefs in urban land administration matters, a factor which has been blamed in some cases for the proliferation of informal settlements. However, it is unclear when and if the Land Bill will be enacted into law, given the tortuous path it has taken since when it was passed by parliament in June 2013 and the current scenario when it has returned to parliament but it has faced delays in being re-tabled to facilitate enactment. This is a challenge for the new urban agenda.

The NLP does not only provide for reforms in urban land management, but also offers practical measures to address urban sprawl by enforcing more intensive use of urban land through the revision of planning standards to promote compact urban development. Some of these measures are already under implementation. The government has revised the Town and Country Standards and Guidelines in 2010 and prepared Land Use Planning and Development Management Guidelines and Standards in order to enhance adequate housing and reduce urban sprawl. Crucial to the revisions is the reduction in plot sizes so that more people are accommodated in urban space. Whilst the signs of contained urban sprawl are yet to be seen in the development of Malawi's urban centres, this is an important major step towards addressing the issue.

The GoM has taken steps to improve the technical capacity of Malawian professionals to plan and manage the rapidly growing urban settlements. The GoM has responded to the critical shortage of qualified personnel in the urban land management sector by supporting the establishment of planning and planning-related degree courses at two of Malawi's public universities in 2006 – Mzuzu University and University of Malawi's Polytechnic. In addition, the Natural Resources College in Lilongwe also offers diploma courses in land administration and diploma graduates with good grades at graduation can apply to Mzuzu University to upgrade to degree level. These measures have resulted in an increasing number of locally trained land management professionals who have addressed the critical shortage of qualified human resources in the urban and land sector.

Deregulation in the urban transport sector has resulted in public transport being privatised and private mini buses overtaking buses as the main mode of urban transport. Mini buses are poorly regulated and this has brought about a number of mobility problems in urban areas, such as congestion. Although the most dominant mode of urban transport is walking, the use of bicycle taxis and motorcycle taxis is increasing rapidly. Likewise, the use of private motor vehicles is also on the increase. With rapid urbanisation and rising car ownership, congestion on urban roads, compounded by lack of implementation of urban road networks, is on the rise. Whilst the problem is not pronounced at the moment, the decline in mass public transport in Malawi's cities has worrisome consequences from a sustainable urban planning perspective. There is need to integrate sustainable transport planning in line with SDG 11.2, which seeks to provide for access to safe, affordable, accessible, and sustainable transport systems for all, as well as improving road safety, notably by expanding public transport.

After ten years of the absence of local government elections between 2004 and 2014, Malawi took significant steps to improve urban governance by conducting tripartite elections in May 2014 and ushering in elected local government representatives. This has boosted local democracy and has enhanced participatory frameworks in the area of urban planning which are essential for sustainable urbanisation. Local councils are mandated to formulate and pass bylaws for the smooth operation of local affairs such as increasing city rates to increase revenue for service provision. The election of councillors raises prospects for better service provision and open, accountable urban governance. In addition, it is a major step towards ensuring participatory and inclusive urban planning. This is in line with SDG 11.3, which urges governments to enhance inclusive and sustainable urbanisation and capacity for participatory, integrated and sustainable human settlements planning.

Since 1996, the GoM has formulated a number of policies aimed at improving municipal finance, strengthening access to finance, supporting local economic development, creating decent jobs and integrating the urban economies into national development. The National Decentralisation Policy (NDP) paved the way for fiscal and administrative devolution in the form of direct funding allocations from central government to local governments to finance the functions which were devolved from central government. The NDP established additional sources of revenue for local government, namely locally generated revenue raised by local sources such as property rates ground rates, fees, licences, commercial undertakings and service charges; and ceded / non-tax revenue, i.e. tax that central government collects on behalf of local government, such as toll fees, gambling and casino fees, fuel / road levies, motor vehicle registration fees, as well as industrial registration fees.

In theory, these measures should financially empower local governments and enable them to adequately delivery services. In practice, central government has failed to remit the required funding to local governments. At best, only about 2% of the revenue raised has been disbursed. In the absence of councillors between 2004 and 2014, revenue from city rates dwindled because councils were legally constrained from increasing city rates. In addition, government does not always honour its obligation to pay city rates in a timely manner. With the SDGs placing a greater emphasis on the sustainable management of cities, urban councils will require greater financial empowerment to meet their various obligations to their citizens. This calls for greater consideration in the new urban agenda.

SDG 11.a broadly provides for support towards the economic development of cities as a strategy to enhance regional and national development. This is an important issue for the new urban agenda. There are a number of future challenges in the areas of improving municipal / local finance, strengthening and improving access to housing finance, supporting local economic development, creating decent jobs and livelihoods, and integration of the urban economy into national development policy that will need to be addressed in the new urban agenda for the country.

Data from the recent GDP by activity report published by the NSO suggests that Malawi's cities contributed more than 50% to the national GDP in 2014. This proves the assertion that cities are engines for economic development. There is potential to significantly improve the cities' contribution to economic development if the draft national urbanisation policy is adopted. As Malawi moves forward to adopt a new urban agenda, priority needs to be given to the urban sector in the same way that the GoM has prioritised the rural sector through favourable agricultural development policies.

Under the theme of housing and basic services, GoM has made a number of efforts over the past twenty years such as implementation of slum upgrading projects, increasing access to clean drinking water, increasing access to adequate housing, ensuring sustainable access to basic sanitation, among others. For example, the proportion of the urban population with access to safe drinking water was 78.8% in 2013, thus exceeding the MGDs target of 74% set for 2015. However, progress towards improved access to adequate housing is slow because access to serviced land for all income groups is a big problem for the urban authorities.

# MALAWI HABITAT III REPORT

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## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

Malawi is a signatory to the Habitat Agenda. In 1996 Malawi prepared a national plan of action for 1996-2000 which was presented at the second United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development (Habitat II) held in 1996 in Istanbul, Turkey. The Istanbul Conference acknowledged that urbanisation needs to be guided rather than prevented and adopted an agenda for human settlements (the Habitat Agenda) which revolved around two main themes: “Adequate shelter for all”; and “Sustainable human settlements in an urbanising world”. The third United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Development (Habitat III) will be held from 17 to 20 October 2016 in Quito, Ecuador, to reflect on how the 20 years of implementation of plans of actions under the Habitat Agenda have fared, and also formulate a New Urban Agenda for the next 20 years. With the majority of the world’s population living in urban areas, the focus of Habitat III is the New Urban Agenda. It is now documented that urban areas are not only the focus of migration, but also the engines of growth for national economies through industrialisation and employment creation.

The GoM resuscitated the defunct National Habitat Committee (NHC) to oversee the preparation of the Report and mobilisation of Habitat Agenda Partners (HAPs). HAPs were defined by the Habitat II Conference in 1996 as comprising local authorities, Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs), Community Based Organisations (CBOs), Trade Unions, professional bodies, researchers, academia, parliamentarians, financial institutions, youth and women’s groups, among others. The NHC previously established in 1996 to oversee the preparation of Malawi’s first ever National Habitat Report to the Habitat II Conference which took place in Istanbul (Turkey) had died a natural death. In its place the Malawi Urban Forum (MUF), established in 2007 to localise the World Urban Forum, has until recently been the platform from which the profile of urbanisation in the national development policy has been raised. The preparation for the Habitat III conference set the pace to reconstitute the NHC in December 2014.<sup>1</sup>

Following the re-establishment of the NHC, stakeholder consultation workshops and urban dweller interviews were conducted in January 2015 in three national centres and three sub-national centres: Mzuzu (the main city in the North), Lilongwe (the capital city), Blantyre (the main city in the South); and Mzimba Town (North), Nkhota Kota Town (Centre) and Balaka Town (South).

The Report covers issues, challenges and lessons for the New Urban Agenda for Malawi based on the following thematic areas: Urban Demographics; Land and Urban Planning; Environment and Urbanisation; Urban Governance and Legislation; Urban Economy; and Housing and Basic Services. The Report discusses what the government, local authorities and stakeholders have achieved through the Habitat Agenda following the Habitat II Conference held in 1996, and articulates Malawi’s New Urban Agenda for the next twenty years.

UN member states, including Malawi, adopted the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in 2000. The MDGs address the essential dimensions of poverty and their effects on people’s lives and aim to eradicate extreme poverty and protect the environment. They articulate eight goals and thirty-six targets which member states must achieve by 2015. The United Nations System assigned UN-Habitat

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<sup>1</sup> Membership to the NHC is drawn mainly from GoM ministries and departments, academic institutions, the Malawi Institute of Physical Planners, local and international NGOs, the Malawi Housing Corporation, the Electricity Supply Corporation of Malawi, UNDP, UN-Habitat, Lilongwe City Council and Lilongwe Water Board.

the role of assisting UN member states (including Malawi) in the monitoring and attainment of the goals and targets articulated in the MDGs. UN-Habitat has adopted a more holistic approach by integrating the Habitat Agenda indicators in the overall MDGs framework (UN-Habitat, 2009). In discussing the country's progress towards the achievement of the goals set at the Habitat II Conference held in 1996, the Report adopts UN-Habitat's holistic approach by evaluating Malawi's performance against the relevant goals and targets contained in the MDGs.

The 70<sup>th</sup> United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) held in September 2015 replaced the MDGs with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), a new package of Goals and targets aimed at eradicating poverty in all its forms. The new Goals and targets will come into effect on the 1<sup>st</sup> of January 2016, and will be effective for a period of 15 years up to the year 2030. The SDGs seek to build on the MDGs and complete what the MDGs did not achieve. The SDGs articulate more goals and targets than the MDGs - 17 Goals and 169 targets versus the MDGs' 8 goals and 36 targets. The new Goals and targets have been upheld as "a comprehensive, far-reaching and people-centred set of universal and transformative Goals and targets" (UNGA, 2015). Alongside continuing development priorities such as poverty eradication, health, education and food security and nutrition, the SDGs set out a wide range of economic, social and environmental objectives and their means of implementation.

Among the 17 Goals, Goal 11 – Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable – is the most pertinent to the future discourse on cities and human settlements and will dominate future studies aimed at monitoring and evaluating UN member states' (Malawi inclusive) attainment of the new Goals and targets in the post-2016 Habitat III era. To this effect, the Report reflects on the new Goals and targets of the SDGs.

## **2.0 URBAN DEMOGRAPHIC ISSUES AND CHALLENGES FOR A NEW URBAN AGENDA**

### **2.1 MANAGING RAPID URBANISATION**

Although Malawi is one of the least urbanised countries in the world, it is remarkably one of the most rapidly urbanising countries in the world. The share of the national population residing in urban areas has increased progressively since independence from 6.4% of the national population in 1966; 10.1% in 1977; 10.7% in 1987; 14.4% in 1998; 15.3% in 2008; and 16% in 2014 (Manda, 2013; UNDESA, 2014). By 2004, Malawi's urban population was estimated to have grown at a world record rate of 6.3% per annum, which was three times the global rate and nearly twice the Africa rate of 3.5% per annum (UN-Habitat 2010). Although the urban population growth rate has slowed down to 5.3% per annum between 2005 and 2010; and down further to 4.2% between 2010 and 2015<sup>2</sup>, Malawi remains one of the fastest urbanising countries in the world. There were an estimated 2,710,000 people living in urban areas in 2014 and the urban population is projected to grow to 12,437,000 by the year 2050 (UNDESA, 2014), thus representing close to a 460% increase to the current urban population in just 36 years. Rapid urbanisation in Malawi is attributed to high natural increase (Malawi has a total fertility rate of 4.0 in urban areas and 6.1<sup>3</sup> in rural areas); rural-urban migration fuelled by "push factors", i.e. diminishing rural land holdings with an attendant increase

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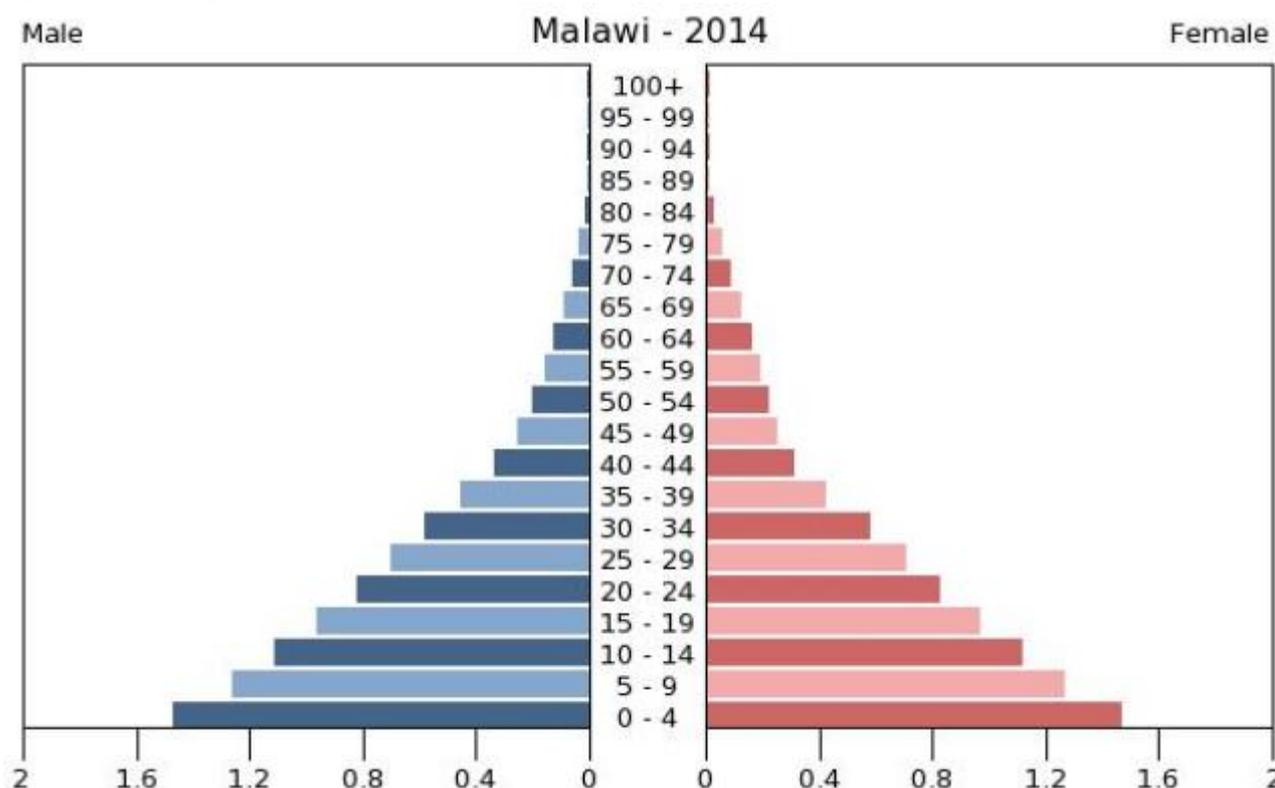
<sup>2</sup> Source: Undata at <http://data.un.org/CountryProfile.aspx?crName=Malawi> visited 27<sup>th</sup> October 2015

<sup>3</sup> These are 2013 figures. Source: USAID Population Reference Bureau at <http://www.prb.org/pdf12/malawi-datasheet.2012pdf> visited on 25th October 2015.

in rural poverty (see NSO, 2010); and urban boundary extensions that have reclassified hitherto rural populations as urban (Manda, 2013).

The population pyramid for Malawi (see Figure 1), constructed from recent national population data,<sup>4</sup> shows that Malawi has a young population with 46.9% of the population aged below 15 years, suggesting a high child dependency ratio. However, Malawi has a relatively small proportion of older people, i.e. those aged 60+, representing only 5.4% and 4.4% of the population for females and males, respectively. This suggests a very low old-age dependency ratio. The most productive age cohorts are considered to be those in the 25-54 brackets, which together represent 27.1% of the national population. This is the proportion of the population which must support the population within the “child dependency” and “old-age dependency” age cohorts as it is more likely to be economically active. As it can be seen, this is a relatively small population (27.1%) in comparison to the proportion of the population it must support (a combined 51.8%). In addition, the youthful population means that government must spend more to meet the educational, healthcare, and social needs of the young population. A young population like that of Malawi implies a big population momentum that will result in significant demand for services listed above in both the urban and rural areas in the next 20 years. As the population shifts to urban areas, the challenges will be more serious in the urban areas of various sizes.

**Figure 1: 2014 Population Pyramid for Malawi**



. Source: CIA World Factbook, Malawi People 2015

The GoM has since adopting the Habitat Agenda responded to the country’s rapid urbanisation in various ways. Firstly, under the National Decentralisation Policy (NDP) 1996, the central

<sup>4</sup> From CIA World Factbook, Malawi People 2015 at [http://www.theodora.com/wfbcurrent/malawi/malawi\\_people.html](http://www.theodora.com/wfbcurrent/malawi/malawi_people.html) visited 25th October 2015.

government has devolved its previously held powers and functions in regards to the preparation of strategic urban development plans to the main urban local authorities. The devolution of strategic urban planning functions has empowered local urban authorities to prepare medium term five-year city-wide development plans for their centres using a bottom-up multi-stakeholder consultative framework (GoM, 2001a). This has enabled the major urban authorities to be more responsive to issues that arise as a result of rapid urbanisation than was the case before decentralisation.

Secondly, the GoM re-launched the rural growth centres project in 2005 under the Integrated Rural Development (IRD) programme, as a strategy to promote economic growth and development in rural areas through small urban centres with potential for growth (Manda, 2014; GoM, 2006 & 2011). Rural growth centres are seen as a strategy to transform rural economies into potential engines for economic growth that will contribute to sustainable growth “while also mitigating the negative consequences of rural-urban migration” (GoM, 2006 & 2011). The rural growth centres project<sup>5</sup> was re-launched in 2005 after the discontinuation of the first wave of rural growth centres which were implemented between 1979-1991<sup>6</sup>. Whilst primarily a rural development strategy, the project was integrated into Malawi’s “urbanisation policy” conceived since the mid-sixties which has emphasised the diffusion of urbanisation to rural areas in a decentralised pattern, a concept which has been magnified in the National Physical Development Plan (NPDP) adopted in 1987 (GoM, 1987). Manda (2014) has argued that if the rationale for growth centres is to support rural development, they are themselves urban centres. The conceptual thrust of the re-launched rural growth centres project is no different to the one established under the National Rural Centres Programme (NRCP) in the late 1970s. Under the NRCP, growth centres were established in selected rural centres throughout the country. Infrastructure projects such as markets, health centres, schools, small scale industry workshops, among others, were concentrated in key centres with the primary aim of boosting rural economies and improving rural livelihoods. It was conceived that this would in return reduce the influx of rural migrants to the country’s four main urban centres of Blantyre, Lilongwe, Mzuzu and Zomba, and direct urban growth to the rural growth centres.

The new rural growth centres have been implemented at Nthalire in Chitipa, Neno District, Nambuma in Lilongwe, Jenda in Mzimba, Malomo in Ntchisi, Monkey Bay in Mangochi, Chitekesa in Phalombe, Mkanda in Mchinji, and Chapananga in Chikwawa. These new centres have been constructed with funding from the Local Development Fund (LDF) under the Local Economic Development (LED) project of the ADB. The typical infrastructure and services provided by government in the original wave of growth centres can also be found in the new wave growth centres except that additional types of services and infrastructure, such as technology centres, rural electrification, youth development centres, among others, have been provided at the new centres.

Thirdly, the GoM secured German financial cooperation to continue with the implementation of the latter phases of the Secondary Centres Development Programmes (SCDP). The SCDP was implemented in phases from 1985 to 2007, to assist medium size towns with the development of infrastructure to cope with rapid urbanisation. In addition, the programme provided financial support to the medium size towns to reduce urban poverty. The centres which benefited from the

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<sup>5</sup> The project was originally launched with German technical and financial assistance in 1977 under the name “Rural Growth Centres Project” (RGCP) but was subsequently re-named as “National Rural Centres Programme” (NRCP) in the 1980s.

<sup>6</sup> These were Bolero in Rumphu, Mbalachanda in Mzimba, Chikwina in Nkhata Bay, Likoma, Makanjila in Mangochi, Mkhota in Kasungu, Tsangano in Ntcheu, Neno, and Thekerani in Thyolo.

*The SCDP was implemented in small and medium sized towns to decongest major centres of Blantyre and Lilongwe. The centres that benefitted are Mangochi, Salima, Luchenza, Balaka, Liwonde, Dedza, Kasungu, Mzuzu and Karonga.*

*The facilities constructed were those that contributed to revenue generation such market, soccer stadia, commercial land as well as those falling under poverty alleviation through upgrading. Some 10,000 plots were developed.*

SCDP funding are Balaka, Dedza, Karonga, Kasungu, Liwonde, Luchenza, Mangochi, Mzuzu, and Salima. Typical infrastructure development programmes implemented under the SCDP were: the extension and improvement of markets, bus stations, administrative buildings, slaughterhouses; squatter upgrading; as well as provision of consultancy services to the beneficiary centres on project management, financial accountancy, facilities management, urban planning, among others.

Fourthly, the GoM has worked in conjunction with UN Habitat in the implementation of the Participatory Slum Upgrading Programme (PSUP) in the country's four major urban centres aimed at improving the lives of slum dwellers. In line with Millennium Development Goal 7, Target 11 – “improving the lives of at least 100 million slum dwellers by the year 2020” – a number of slum upgrading projects have been implemented in Lilongwe, Blantyre, Mzuzu and Zomba, with project activities having started in 2010. Phase III of the project (2009-2015) is currently underway.

In 2008 the GoM established the Local Development Fund (LDF) as a vehicle for channelling funds to district and urban councils for various development projects. Funding for the LDF is sourced both from central government and donor agencies. Through the Urban Window, the LDF provides funding for social and economic infrastructure in urban centres to stimulate local economic development. However, due to limited resources and competing demands for funding, the LDF has had a limited impact on the management of rapid urbanisation in the country. Whereas the bulk of the infrastructural and services funding for cities and towns ought to come from the revenue raised by urban authorities through city rates and fees charged under their bye-laws, non-payment including by central government is a major limitation.

The policies and programmes instituted by government and other stakeholders to manage the country's rapid urbanisation have achieved mixed results. Firstly, the 2008 Census revealed a trend towards the relatively rapid growth of smaller urban centres in Malawi (NSO, 2010), indicating a shift towards the desired policy goal of directing urban growth away from the main urban centres. In the main, it was the district centres, rather than the major urban centres of Lilongwe, Blantyre, Zomba and Mzuzu, which saw the highest urban growth rates between 1987 and 2008. Thyolo experienced the highest urban growth rate of 16.1% between the same period, followed by Mchinji at 14.0%, Kasungu at 12.6%, and Mangochi at 11.0%. In comparison, Lilongwe grew by 9.0%, Blantyre by 4.7%, Mzuzu by 9.7% and Zomba by 5.0% within the same period. It can be seen that only two of these centres (Kasungu and Mangochi) had benefited from the SCDP. Manda (2013) suggests that the rural growth centres project and the decentralised urbanisation strategy have had

some success in managing rapid urbanisation<sup>7</sup>. Secondly, the SCDP and RGC project have not achieved one of the intended impacts of reducing rural-urban migration. Instead, there has been an upward trend in rural-urban migration. According to the 2012 Integrated Household Survey, 54% of the population had moved from rural to urban areas in the past five years of the survey. In contrast, only 9% of the population had moved from rural areas to urban areas, reflecting a growing trend in rural to urban migration despite policies aimed at arresting the situation. The effect is that rural-urban migration is considered as the most important factor in urbanisation in Malawi (see Manda, 2013).

Thirdly, the National Decentralisation Policy has empowered the major urban centres to review their urban structure plans and implement new urban structure plans that have enabled them to manage rapid urbanisation more pro-actively and inclusively than before decentralisation. The cities of Blantyre, Zomba, Lilongwe and Mzuzu have already reviewed and started implementing their new structure plans.

Fourthly, there has been a decline in the proportion of people living in slum conditions in Malawi's cities since 2000. This has declined from 67.7% in 2009 to 64.3% in 2015 (GoM, 2010; 2014). Although it is tempting to attribute the decline in the proportion of urban dwellers living in slum conditions to the slum upgrading projects under the PSUP, it is noted that implementation of the said programme only commenced in 2015. Other programmes, such as the Malawi Poverty Reduction Strategy (MPSR), could have contributed to the earlier decline.

## **2.2 MANAGING RURAL-URBAN LINKAGES**

The functionalist view of human settlements posits that urban centres are magnets for economic activity and population movements, as suppliers of goods and services, and as demanders of rural goods (NSO, 2008; Beall, J. et al, 2010).). There are functional and structural linkages between urban and rural areas which stem from the differing competitive advantages between the two sectors. Both the rural and urban sectors produce goods and services which are in demand in the other sector. Urban centres enjoy a greater share of activities in the secondary sector, such as public institutions, transport and communications, finance and insurance, real estate, among others. Rural areas enjoy a predominance of activities in the primary sector, such as agriculture, fishing, mining, quarrying, among others (NSO, 2008).

Managing rural-urban linkages in the post-Habitat II period has involved a number of policy responses. Firstly, the GoM instituted reforms in the road transport sector to improve rural-urban linkages. Structural and institutional reforms in the funding and delivery of road infrastructure across the country have led to the improvement of the country's road system. A roads parastatal – the National Roads Authority (NRA) later called Roads Authority and Roads Fund – were established under the National Roads Authority Act of 1997 (amended 2005) to raise funds from road users, mainly in the form of a fuel levy, in order to finance the maintenance of roads in the country. The main objective of the RA is to ensure that public roads are constructed, maintained or rehabilitated at all times. These reforms in road construction, maintenance and associated funding

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<sup>7</sup> This observation can be said to be in line with the findings made by Kalipeni (1997) regarding the impact of post-independence Malawi's urban population redistribution and decentralisation strategies between 1966 and 1987 as having the desired effect of arresting the growth of large cities and encouraging growth in smaller urban centres throughout the country.

have played a crucial role in strengthening rural-urban linkages. A recent study showed that while the trunk roads which connect the country's main urban centres and their rural hinterlands are of a relatively good quality, road maintenance and rehabilitation is underfunded (Foster & Shkaratan, 2010).

Figure 2 shows one of the main trunk roads in Malawi that is well constructed and Figure 3 is one of the main access roads in Mzuzu that is poorly constructed.

**Figure 2: Chipembere Highway in Blantyre**



*Source: Alma/Urac Consult, 2015*

**Figure 3: St John of God- Chithira- Mchengautuwa Road in Mzuzu.**



*Source: Alma/Urac Consult, 2015.*

In addition, the Government approved a National Information Communication and Technology (ICT) Policy for Malawi in September 2013 to improve the flow of digital information and promote communication for business purposes. This follows the establishment of an e-Government department within the Office of the President and Cabinet. The implementation of the ICT policy will greatly assist in strengthening rural-urban linkages through increased trade transactions between the two regions as rural communities will better be able to access online information about products sold in urban areas, and vice versa. This information is crucial for business decisions and general development.

The policies and programmes discussed above have had relative success in managing rural-urban linkages in Malawi. Improved road funding has resulted in improvements to the country's main trunk road system. This has in return improved penetration to the rural areas from which most of the food that is consumed in urban areas is grown. However, some rural areas continue to suffer from poor road access due to their remoteness and their linkages with the country's major cities are consequently poor. The impact of the ICT policy on rural-urban linkages is yet to be assessed due to the fact that it is a recent, new policy.

### **2.3 ADDRESSING URBAN YOUTH NEEDS**

There is a paucity of data from the population censuses which segregates youth according to rural or urban residence. However, the 2010-2011 Integrated Household Survey shows that the proportion of youth living in urban areas is greater than the proportion of youth living in rural areas. From Table 1 below, it is noted that the proportion of youth in urban areas is greater than the proportion of youth in rural areas in all but one youth age group, i.e. the 10-14 age group. The preponderance of youth in urban areas can be attributed to the high rates of rural-urban migration among the youth as a higher proportion of youth tend to move to urban areas in search of employment opportunities. However, notwithstanding the attraction that urban areas hold for Malawi's youth, evidence shows that urban youth are less likely to participate in the labour force, and more likely to be unemployed than their rural counterparts. The Welfare Monitoring Survey of 2011 revealed that labour force participation among urban youth is only at 50%, whereas that for rural youth is at 80.8%. Similarly,

the unemployment rate for urban youth was much higher, at 49.6%, than that for rural youth at 10.7% (NSO, 2012, p. 33).

**Table 1: Percentage of youth population by age group and place of residence, 2011**

Age Group	% in Urban Areas	% in Rural Areas
10-14	12.2	14.1
15-19	10.8	9.9
20-24	9.9	8.0
25-29	10.8	7.3
30-34	8.8	5.9

*Source: NSO, 2012, Integrated Household Survey 2010-2011, p.10*

Addressing the needs of the youth is one of the themes under MGDS II. Sub-theme 5 notes that there are a number of social, cultural, and economic factors which limit the youth's contribution to sustainable economic growth and development. These include inadequate technical, entrepreneurial and vocational skills, limited access to credit facilities, high unemployment rates, poverty and deprivation, and marginalisation in decision making processes. Recognising the potential that the youth have in fostering economic growth, the GoM has included Youth Development and Empowerment as a key priority area under the MGDS II (GoM, 2011).

In 1996, the GoM adopted a National Youth Policy (NYP) which guided youth-specific programmes. The NYP was revised in August 2013. The policy notes that the youth lack basic opportunities that would enable them to develop to their full potential and hence are the most affected by poverty as the youth form the majority of the poor population in Malawi. Youth unemployment has been observed to have risen from 13% in 2005 to 15% in 2011. The policy further notes that there is a lot of underemployment among the youth, and that between 2005 and 2011, the formal employment sector was only able to create about 30,000 jobs per year against an estimated 300,000 new entrants into the job market (GoM, 2013, p. 2). A key feature of the 2013 NYP is the establishment of Youth Development and Empowerment programmes in line with the stipulations in the MGDS II. Seven policy areas have been identified as priority areas for action. These are:

- a) Youth Participation and Leadership;
- b) Youth Economic Empowerment;
- c) National Youth Service;
- d) Education for Youth;
- e) Youth in Science, Technology and Environment;
- f) Youth and Health and Nutrition; and
- g) Social Services, Sports, Recreation and Culture.

The government established the Youth Enterprise Development Fund (YEDF) in 2010 with a total government funding of K3 billion to equip youth with sustainable technical, entrepreneurial and

financial skills to enable them to effectively run small businesses. However, there is high rates of repayment defaults, a development which has threatened the sustainability of the programme. Early in 2015, the Minister for Youth announced that the government would delay disbursing new loans to the youth pending a review of the programme due to the politicisation of the loans.

*The Community Technical College Concept is one of the deliverables under the current Democratic Progressive Party leadership to contribute towards youth development and empowerment.*

*The first phase of the project was officially launched on 20 March 2015 by President Peter Mutharika at Ngala rural centre in Karonga District.*

*The first phase has rolled out 12 Community Colleges with some being fully operational such as Ezondweni Community College Mzimba.*

*The Colleges will be constructed in each of the 28 districts in Malawi within the five year term of the Mutharika administration.*

In 2015, the GoM launched the Community Technical Colleges (CTC) programme to enhance technical skills and empower the youth to contribute to socio-economic development through self-employment. In the initial phase of the programme, 12 CTCs were opened at a total cost of K400 million in Dedza, Karonga, Nkhotakota, Dowa and Mzimba. It is proposed that more CTCs will be established in phases to cover all the 28 districts in Malawi. The GoM has invested a lot of political will into the CTC programme as evidenced by the high level publicity from

the President and government ministers that has dominated the local media.

The achievement of the policies and programmes discussed above are varied. Most of the issues facing urban youth today, such as high rates of unemployment, deepening poverty, and lack of youth representation in decision-making even in programmes which target them, are attributed to weaknesses in the policy.

#### **2.4 RESPONDING TO THE NEEDS OF THE AGED**

The 2008 Census defined the elderly or aged as those persons aged 60 years and above. There were 684,083 elderly persons enumerated during the 2008 Census, meaning that for every 1,000 people, there were 53 elderly persons. The number of the elderly had slightly declined from 55 elderly persons for every 1,000 persons at the 1998 census (NSO, 2010). The number of the aged living in urban areas is smaller than in rural areas. Reflective of the relatively low numbers of elderly people living in urban areas, there were 43,411 elderly persons living in urban areas (representing 6.3% of the country's elderly) compared to 640,672 elderly people living in rural areas (representing 93.7% ).

Owing to the relatively low population of the elderly living in urban areas, there are very few projects instituted by either central or local governments specifically targeting the needs of the aged in urban areas.

In view of increasing impact of HIV/AIDS, the first Malawi Growth and Development Strategy (MGDS I) identified the need to protect the vulnerable, including the aged. The HIV / AIDS epidemic has increased mortality among the younger population groups who are also the most socio-economically active age groups. This has resulted in an increasing number of elderly people shouldering the burden of looking after the orphans left behind by their children and grandchildren. In MGDS II, issues to do with the elderly are included under Theme 3 and Sub-theme 1 – Supporting the Vulnerable – which includes the aged. The government's goal is to improve resilience and quality of

life for the poor to move out of poverty and vulnerability. The government's focus is productivity enhancement interventions that are developmental in nature as well as welfare support provision to improve the socio-economic status of the vulnerable.

It is estimated that 50-60% of orphans in Malawi live with their grandparents (Kazeze, 2006). This has increased the socio-economic hardships that the elderly already experience. The elderly have therefore been targeted in a pilot social cash transfer scheme which gives financial support to the vulnerable families and poor elderly caring for orphaned and vulnerable children (Kazeze, 2006). After its pilot phase in Mchinji District in 2006, the scheme extended to the rest of the country. An evaluation of the cash transfer scheme carried out between 2007 and 2008 found that beneficiary families "had fewer missed meals, lower rates of underweight children, fewer reported sicknesses, higher school enrolment and fewer absences, better access to medicines and health care, and a reduction in instances of young children working to help support their families" (Miller & Tsoka, 2008).

Concerned with the increasing vulnerability of the aged, the GoM formulated and approved a National Social Protection Policy (NSPP) in 2012 to provide a framework for the funding and provision of social support to the vulnerable populations with the overall goal of reducing poverty. The needs of the urban elderly are unclear in the policy. For example, the housing needs of the aged in urban areas are not addressed. During the national stakeholder consultation meetings, stakeholders lamented that the ideas in the late state president, Dr Bingu wa Mutharika's Silver Grey Foundation, which aimed to address the needs of the elderly, including housing, were not well strategised, and hence the foundation has died a natural death.

In the absence of specific policies targeting the aged in urban areas, it is difficult to discuss any policy achievement under this sub-theme.

## **2.5 Integrating Gender in Urban Development**

The Constitution of Malawi confers equal status upon men and women and prohibits discrimination on the basis of one's gender. On this basis, the Government of Malawi has committed to promoting gender equality, and is a signatory to a number of regional and international conventions aimed at fostering gender equality, such as the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW); the African Charter of Human and People's Rights and its protocol on women's rights; the SADC Declaration on Gender and Development; among others. A National Gender Policy was passed in 2000 to mainstream gender in the national development process and assist in the eradication of poverty (African Development Bank, 2005).

In urban areas there are estimated to be 1.2 million females and 1.1 million males out of a 2012 projected total urban population of 2.3 million persons (NSO, 2012). However, women are poorly represented in leadership positions, both in the public sector and in the private sector. For example, women's participation in urban governance remains minimal. In both the 2000 and 2014 local government elections, female participation in urban governance within the country's major cities was very low. Only an average of 12.8% of the councillors elected to the city councils of Lilongwe, Blantyre, Mzuzu and Zomba in the 2000 local government elections were female. Although this

improved to 20.8% in the 2014 elections, women continue to be under-represented in urban governance. This was against a backdrop of donor funding to female candidates in the elections. A review of the gender situation in Malawi by the African Development Bank (ADB) concluded that this was due to inadequate gender sensitisation and training for key stakeholders, insufficient gender analysis in implementation of activities, and lack of gender-sensitive monitoring and review (ADB, 2005).

In a study of women’s participation in town planning committees in 1997, Chipeta (2005) found that out of 107 town planning committee members then serving ten of the country’s town planning committees for Karonga, Mzuzu, Kasungu, Salima, Lilongwe, Dedza, Mangochi, Liwonde, Zomba and Blantyre, only 10.3% were female. Similarly, a study carried out between 1991 and 1995 on the participation of women in the various service committees (Education, Health, Works, Staff, and Finance Committees) at Lilongwe City Council, revealed that the average representation of women in those committees was 19% and 9%, respectively (Chipeta, 2005).

**Table 2: Women’s participation in local urban governance in Malawi’s major cities, 2000 and 2014 elections**

City	Percentage of Female Councillors after Local Government Elections held in:	
	2000	2014
Lilongwe	7%	29%
Blantyre	6%	24%
Mzuzu	9%	0.1%
Zomba	29%	30%
<b>Average</b>	<b>12.8%</b>	<b>20.8%</b>

*Sources: Adapted from Chipeta (2005) and Malawi Electoral Commission (2014)*

Promoting gender equality and women empowerment is one of the MDGs. In the 2014 MDGs Report (GoM, 2014), it has been noted that gender inequalities exist in women’s access to productive resources, development opportunities, and in decision-making positions. The proportion of seats held by women in parliament has declined from 22% in 2009, to approximately 17% in 2014 (GoM, 2014). Although the share of women in wage employment in the non-agricultural sector has increased from 13.1% in 2000 to 30.1% in 2013, this percentage is far below the target of 50% set to be met by 2015. The 2014 MDGs Report concludes that the goal of achieving gender equality and women’s empowerment is unlikely to be met by 2015.

One area where policy has helped to achieve equal representation between men and women in urban governance is at the lowest of grassroots participation in developmental activities. In line with SADC protocol, Area/Ward Development Committees (WDCs) require a representation of 50/50 gender split. As confirmed by HAPs government has ensured that councils adhere to this policy.

## **2.6 CHALLENGES EXPERIENCED AND LESSONS LEARNT**

Recent UN estimates show that the annual rate of urban population growth in Malawi remains higher than the national and rural population growth rates, respectively. Between 2010 and 2015,

the annual rate of urban population growth has been estimated at 4.2%, while the national and rural population growth rates for the same period have been estimated at 3.3%<sup>8</sup> and 3.1%<sup>9</sup> Per annum, respectively. The share of the population residing in urban areas is likely to increase progressively over the years relative to the share of the national and rural populations. As noted above, the urban population for Malawi is projected to grow to 12,437,000 by the year 2050 from the current figure of 2, 710,000, thus representing close to a 460% increase in just 36 years.

Managing rapid urbanisation sustainably requires adequate resources for the creation of sufficient jobs and the provision of adequate infrastructure and services such as schools, health centres, housing, recreational facilities, among others. However, Malawi is among the poorest countries globally. In 2014, the GDP per capita was estimated to be \$US272.16<sup>10</sup>, which was the second lowest in the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC) region after Madagascar's (see Table 3); and the sixth lowest in the world after Burundi, Somalia, Eritrea, Central African Republic, and Madagascar in that order from the bottom.

**Table 3: 2014 GDP Per Capita in SADC Countries ranked from highest to lowest**

Country	2014 GDP Per Capita (\$US)
Seychelles	15,592.17
Botswana	7,726.92
Mauritius	7,116.59
Republic of South Africa	6,086.45
Namibia	4,677.87
Angola	2,759.15
Swaziland	2,522.27
Democratic Republic of the Congo	2,038.10
Zambia	1,080.96
Lesotho	979.30
Tanzania	600.66
Zimbabwe	475.26
Mozambique	451.37
<b>Malawi</b>	<b>272.16</b>
Madagascar	271.08

Source: Compiled from Trading Economics' Global GDP Per Capita available at <http://www.tradingeconomics.com/country-list/gdp-per-capita>

Malawi's poor macro-economic performance has resulted in deep, severe and widespread poverty (UNDP, 2013). The 2012 Integrated Household Survey (IHS) revealed that the country had made very little progress in the fight against poverty between 2005 and 2012, with the incidence of poverty headcount marginally declining from 52.4% to 50.2% within that period, while the proportion of the

<sup>8</sup> Source: [http://www.indexmundi.com/malawi/demographics\\_profile.html](http://www.indexmundi.com/malawi/demographics_profile.html). Visited on 25th October 2015. There is conflicting data on the rate of national population growth according to source. UNdata (see link below) puts the national population growth rate between 2010-2015 at 2.8% per annum, which is the same as the rate given by the 2008 national census. The 3.3% national population growth rate figure is more accurate.

<sup>9</sup> <http://data.un.org/CountryProfile.aspx?crName=Malawi> visited 31<sup>st</sup> March 2014. The UN growth rate of 4.2% per annum between 2010-2015 is lower than 5.2% given by the 2008 national census.

<sup>10</sup> <http://www.tradingeconomics.com/country-list/gdp-per-capita>. Visited on 6th November 2015.

ultra-poor had increased from 22.2% to 50.2% within the same period. Income inequality has deteriorated in both rural and urban areas, but this has been more pronounced in urban areas where the gini co-efficient has increased from 0.39 to 0.48 between 2005 and 2012, compared with 0.34 to 0.37 in rural areas<sup>11</sup>.

With very limited financial resources, the central government has to balance the fiscal demands of more pressing sectors such as agriculture, health, education, and disaster management against those of the urban sector. As a result, the Government of Malawi has failed to adequately meet the rising demand for infrastructure and service provision arising from rapid urbanisation. The major urban centres are struggling to meet the demand for serviced land, resulting in the rapid growth of informal settlements and acute housing shortages, especially in the low income housing sub-sector. In addition, the rate of urbanisation has not been commensurate with industrialisation and job-creation in the country's urban areas. This has led to the proliferation of urban informality and the 'urbanisation of poverty' (UN-Habitat, 2010).

Another challenge experienced is how to sustain the rural growth centres model as a strategy for rural development, spatial distribution of urbanisation and for reducing rural-urban migration. Whilst it can be said that the programme has assisted in strengthening rural-urban linkages and in providing some urban services in rural centres, rural-urban migration has escalated. It is unclear if the newer rural growth centres will succeed where their predecessors failed in relation to reducing rural-urban migration. It is further noted that the resumed rural growth centres programmes intend to promote economic growth, but identification of 'engines' that can foster such economic growth is elusive Manda (2014).

With regard to women's participation, it is observed that although Malawi has signed and ratified a number of international conventions and has enacted laws and policies to eliminate gender inequality, disparities still exist between women and men in urban development and governance. One of the major challenges for the new urban agenda is how to meaningfully mainstream gender in urban development and governance given the significant cultural and religious hurdles that women face. Although all female candidates received donor funding for their political campaign during the 2014 tripartite elections, they still performed poorly. It appears that financing may not be the real cause, but rather deep-seated cultural and religious barriers. Addressing these cultural and religious barriers is one of the challenges for the new urban agenda.

A number of lessons have been learnt with regard to the sub-themes discussed above. Firstly, managing rapid urbanisation in the face of limited financial resources is a significant challenge to the government as well as local governments. Malawi's rapid urbanisation has been occurring in the context of declining macro-economic performance and deepening poverty. As a result, infrastructure provision has been poor and there has been a failure to turn Malawi's urban centres into veritable engines for economic growth. Secondly, although policies have been formulated to address issues as diverse as reducing rural-urban migration, integrating gender in urban development, strengthening rural-urban linkages, addressing urban youth needs, among others, poor implementation

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<sup>11</sup> UNDP, 'Policy and Institutional Framework for Integrated Rural Development in Malawi'. Available at <https://info.undp.org/docs/pdc/Documents/MWI/IRD%20PRODOC.pdf>. Visited on 6<sup>th</sup> November 2015.

compounded by low financial and technical capacity is a major challenge to the realisation of the well intended policies.

## **2.7 FUTURE CHALLENGES AND ISSUES FOR A NEW URBAN AGENDA**

Managing rapid urbanisation in a poor, agriculture-based economy will continue to be a significant challenge for Malawi. Malawi's macro-economic performance has shown no real improvement over time and this is likely to be the case in the post-Habitat II era. As a result, funding for urban infrastructure and services will continue to be a challenge. It is likely that informality and poor urban infrastructure provision will only worsen if sufficient measures are not taken to prioritise urban development issues in the face of continued rapid urbanisation. Although the proportion of urban dwellers living in slums seems to be on the decline<sup>12</sup>, deepening poverty levels could lead to increasingly poor sanitation, alarmingly inadequate housing, and woefully insufficient infrastructure. If not well managed, Malawi's rapid urbanisation has the potential to reverse the trend in the reduction of the proportion of urban dwellers living in slums that has been observed since 1996. Malawi's urban centres would thus become breeding grounds for crime, disease and squalor. The underlying causes of urban poverty will need to be aggressively addressed if Malawi is to sustainably manage rapid urbanisation. This is one of the key issues to be addressed in the new urban agenda.

Experience has shown that women have not been fully integrated in urban development in Malawi despite policies which seek to mainstream gender equality in all aspects of life. There are cultural, social and religious barriers to women's full participation in urban affairs which will remain a challenge in the near future. Addressing these barriers to women's participation in urban governance and development is one of the issues that need to be addressed in the new urban agenda.

The MDGs have now been replaced by the SDGs following the adoption of the post-2015 development agenda by the UNGA in September 2015. The following Goals represent future challenges under the broader themes discussed above which need to be addressed in the new urban agenda:

- Goal 11.1 – by 2030, ensure access for all to adequate, safe and affordable housing and basic services and upgrade slums.
- Goal 11.3 – by 2030 enhance inclusive and sustainable urbanisation and capacity for participatory, integrated and sustainable human settlement planning and management in all countries.
- Goal 11a – support positive economic, social and environmental links between urban, peri-urban and rural areas by strengthening national and regional development planning.

The above goals call for adequate mobilisation of financial and other resources to meet their provisions. Goal 11.1 – ensuring access for all to adequate, safe and affordable housing and basic services, including the upgrade of slums – requires adequate financial resources and a strong national development policy which places greater priority on urban development issues. The

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<sup>12</sup> See Section 9 – Selected Urban Indicators for Malawi – of this Report

challenge for the new urban agenda is to address the underlying causes of poverty in this country but also to prioritise urban issues in the country's overall development planning.

Goal 11a requires stronger rural-urban linkages which do not only aim to strengthen economic linkages between urban and rural areas, but also social and environmental links. Whilst the GoM has created an enabling environment for stronger rural-urban linkages through improvement in the road sector and a forward-looking ICT policy, incorporating the social and environmental links between urban areas and rural areas is a new focus area which requires policy support. This is a key issue to be considered in the government's proposed national urbanisation policy.

By calling for the enhancement of inclusive and sustainable urbanisation and capacity for participatory and integrated human settlements planning and management, Goal 11.3 entrenches the importance of inclusiveness in human settlements planning. As noted earlier, the participation of women and the youth in urban governance and development in Malawi is very poor. There is a need for strong, more inclusive policies which ensure that gender equality is not only articulated in policies, but actually enforced in policy implementation. Likewise, there is a need for the youth's needs and aspirations to be incorporated in the planning and management of Malawi's urban centres. These are challenges to be addressed in the new urban agenda.

## 3.0 LAND AND URBAN PLANNING

### 3.1 ENSURING SUSTAINABLE URBAN PLANNING AND DESIGN

Malawi does not have an overall national urban policy. The only policy guidance regarding national urbanisation was sought in the National Physical Development Plan (NPDP) of 1987 which has since become obsolete. However, the Government is at an advanced stage of drafting a national urbanisation policy whose main focus is to promote urbanisation as the engine of economic growth, which is a major policy shift from the dominant agriculture- and rural-focused strategies implemented since independence. The formulation of the urban policy, which began in 2013, follows the adoption of the National Land Policy (NLP) in 2002 which had recommended legal and policy reforms to address the land-related constraints to the country's development. Among the policy recommendations of the land policy was the call to extend land use planning to rural land to ensure that the use and development of both rural and urban land is properly regulated and sustainably developed across the country.

Prior to the Decentralisation Policy of 1996, urban planning functions throughout the country were performed by central government. Before decentralisation, central government played a key role in the preparation of urban structure plans as well as the overall strategic planning of Malawi's urban centres, with little involvement from local government and grassroots groups. Strategic urban planning was then a largely top-down activity which had very little input from local government authorities and grassroots communities. It was only in the area of development control that municipal authorities had a greater say through their statutorily constituted planning committees. However, the Decentralisation Policy, which came into effect after Malawi attained multi-party democracy, led among other things to the devolution of the central government's planning functions to the various municipal authorities. As noted earlier, the devolution of planning functions to local municipal authorities has resulted in a more inclusive and participatory bottom-up approach to planning. The local authorities are now able to review their urban structure plans and formulate strategic policies for their cities and towns on a five-yearly basis using an inclusive bottom-up participatory approach. Thus urban authorities are now more responsive to emerging issues affecting their jurisdictions than ever before. However, financial devolution has been slow in being implemented and local governments continue to face enormous challenges in their efforts to ensure that cities are sustainably planned and rapid urbanisation is sustainably managed.

Achieving "adequate shelter for all" is one of the main themes that was put forth in the Habitat Agenda adopted at Habitat II in 1996. Sustainable urban planning cannot be achieved if the needs of the majority urban poor are not incorporated in the planning and design of Malawi's cities. In order to address the shelter needs of the urban poor, the GoM has consolidated the transfer of responsibility for development and management of land for pro-poor housing (called THAs) from the Malawi Housing Corporation (MHC) to the main urban authorities.<sup>13</sup> The THA approach has provided for pro-poor urban plots "in which serviced plots are provided in the 'sites and services' tradition but with relatively tolerant standards for the construction of [the] dwellings in response to the poverty of the plot holders" (UN Habitat 2010, p. 45). It was envisaged that by transferring THA

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<sup>13</sup> The process of transferring the role to develop and manage Traditional Housing Areas from the MHC to the main urban councils was initiated in 1992 but found strong policy support in the Decentralisation Policy 1996.

land from the MHC to the urban authorities, the long-term needs of access to land and housing suitable for the urban poor would be addressed on the understanding that the participatory grassroots management structures at local government level would provide a better platform for the housing needs of the urban poor to be met (Mumba, 2005). However, this has not worked efficiently in practice as the requisite transfer of land from MHC / government to the urban authorities had not been preceded by an enabling legal and policy framework to facilitate the smooth and timely transfer of land, thus aggravating the existing problem of informal settlements (Mumba, 2005). In addition, local government authorities have struggled to attract sufficient financial support from both government and multilateral agencies to meet the rising demand for THA plots. The result is a significant backlog in the supply of THA plots and a largely unmet demand which has driven poor people to the informal squatter settlements managed by chiefs (UN Habitat, 2010).

On the other hand, the financial and technical capacity of the government and quasi-government institutions charged with the delivery of serviced urban land for development has proven to be very limited and too inadequate to cope with the exceedingly high demand for formal serviced land that has been caused by rapid urbanisation. This has led to the proliferation of informal settlements, with a recent estimate suggesting that 75% of the urban dwellers live in slums<sup>14</sup> or informal settlements (Nkhoma & Jameson, 2014). In addition, the failure of the formal urban land administration regime has pushed more and more urban dwellers to the informal urban land markets dominated by chiefs and private individuals. This sub-sector is largely unregulated and has found itself in conflict with the provisions of the Town and Country Planning Act 1988 which prohibits the administration of land by chiefs in statutory planning areas unless they are supervised by the urban authorities.

The quality of urban design in declared planning areas is regulated through the Town and Country Planning Act of 1988 and its subordinate instruments in the form of town planning standards and guidelines for development. Town planning committees formed under this Act are mandated to decide on applications to develop land in declared planning areas. Among the tasks of physical planners and the planning committees as decision makers is to ensure that urban land is developed in accordance with applicable land use plans, design standards and regulations, as well as ensuring that design quality standards are followed.

The task of scrutinising development application plans to ensure that relevant design codes are followed has not always achieved the desired results. Due to low human resources capacity, conflicting laws, and political pressure, physical planners and planning committees sometimes fail to ensure that the design and construction of buildings adheres to relevant codes, or that urban buildings are aesthetically appealing. In addition, politicisation of the planning process and the unnecessary interference into the affairs of local planning committees by powerful interests, has resulted in poor planning outcomes. The poor quality of buildings in the country's major urban centres has attracted the attention of the President of Malawi who has backed a campaign for

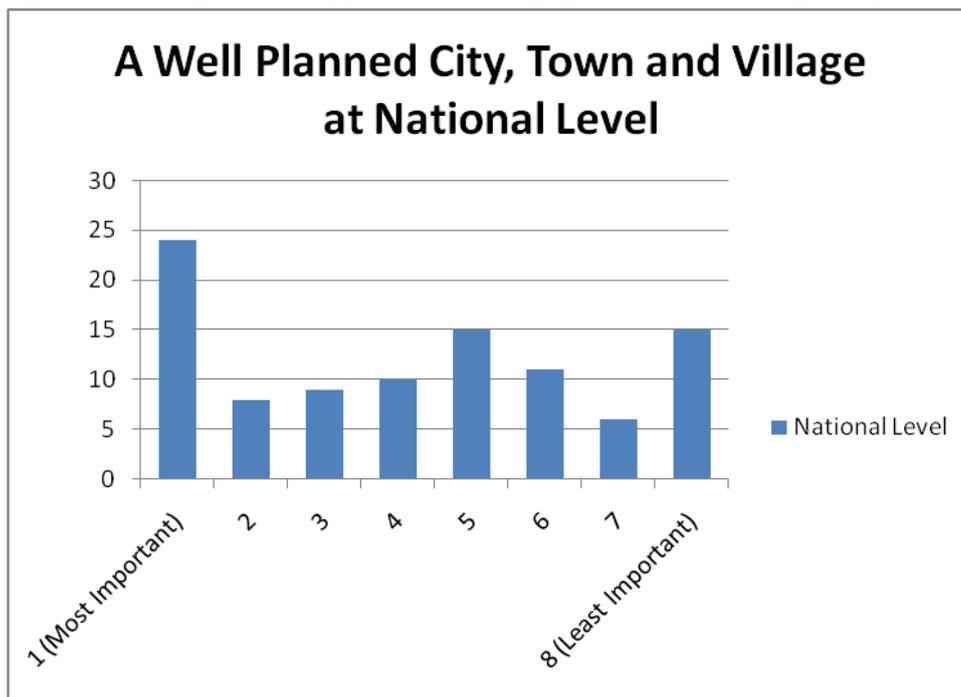
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<sup>14</sup> There is a tendency for some authors to equate informal settlements with slums, to the extent that these two terms are sometimes used interchangeably as is the case here. However, the two are different. 'Slums' refer to urban settlements with poor housing conditions, i.e. substandard housing construction materials, poor sanitation, no legally recognised title to land, and non-existent urban infrastructure such as piped water, surfaced roads, electricity, etc. However, "informal settlements" can have good quality housing, good sanitation and some basic urban infrastructure, but no legally recognised title to land (see UN Habitat, 2010)

redevelopment of the cities to ensure that high standards of architectural design are followed and buildings are aesthetically pleasing.<sup>15</sup>

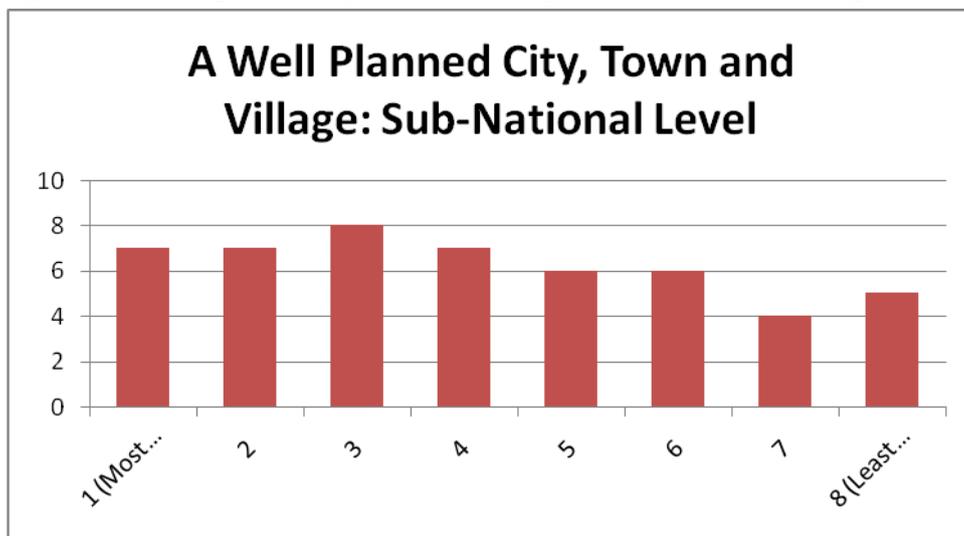
The urban dweller interviews and consultations singled out “a well planned city, town and village” as the most important urban issue at national level, with 24% of those interviewed expressing that view (see Figure 4). In contrast, only 15% of the people interviewed considered “a well planned city, town and village” as the least important issue towards a better urban future. At Sub-national level (Mzimba, Nkhota-kota and Balaka), whilst “a well planned city, town and village” was not considered as most important, it was the third most important issue among those interviewed (see Figure 5).

Figure 4: A well planned city, town and village (National Level Responses)



<sup>15</sup> The campaign to demolish unsightly buildings in Blantyre, code-named Operation Red Star, has been revived by the current president of Malawi, Professor Peter Mutharika, after initially being launched by first president of Malawi, Dr. Hastings Kamuzu Banda, in the early 1990s.

Figure 5: “A well planned city, town and village” (sub-national level responses).



### 3.2 IMPROVING URBAN LAND MANAGEMENT AND ADDRESSING URBAN SPRAWL

Urban land management is generally regulated through the urban land use zoning schemes that are in operation in all declared planning areas. Under the Town and Country Planning Act 1988, planning authorities are mandated to prepare land use zoning schemes aimed at designating broad categories of land uses that are permissible in various parts of the urban centre. Planning permission is required before any construction can commence in any part of a statutory planning area. The legal frameworks governing access to land in urban areas include the Town and Country Planning Act 1988, the Local Government Act 1998 and the Registered Land Act 1967. Local urban authorities, the Ministry of Lands, Housing and Urban Development, and the Malawi Housing Corporation provide mechanisms for the allocation of plots in urban areas.

Improved urban land management cannot be achieved without reforming the land law to improve access to land. The Malawi National Land Policy (NLP) was adopted in 2002. The policy calls for reform of access to land, resolution of conflicts between planning authorities and chiefs, and devolution of land registration from central government to local government (Chome & McCall, 2005). Currently, there are only three land registry offices in the whole country, hence land registration is a long, cumbersome process. Currently, urban land administration is fragmented, with a multiplicity of actors involved – these being the Department of Lands, Housing and Urban Development (DLHUD), city councils, and the Malawi Housing Corporation (MHC) on the one hand; and private individuals and chiefs, on the other (UN Habitat, 2010). However, the Land Bill, which was expected to institutionalise the above reforms, has not yet been approved.

In order to address urban sprawl, the GoM has through the NLP proposed a number of measures. It is recognised that urban planning and building densities in Malawi are relatively low by international standards and this has led to urban sprawl. The NLP provides that all urban land use and development will aim at enforcing more intensive use of urban land by revising planning standards to promote compact built forms in urban areas, by zoning more areas for vertical development, and enforcing vertical extension within central business districts and surrounding areas.

In order to address urban sprawl, the government revised the Town and Country Standards and Guidelines in 2010 and prepared Land Use Planning and Development Management Guidelines. Crucial to the revisions are the reduction in plot sizes so that more people are accommodated in urban space. The DLHUD has developed a concept for a Sectional Titles Act and Planning Guidebook to enable vertical city growth. The documents will assist in containing urban sprawl in the major cities. Approval and implementation of the national urban policies as well as the housing policy drafted in 2007 would go a long way in addressing these issues in the future.

### **3.4 ENHANCING URBAN AND PERI-URBAN FOOD PRODUCTION**

The NSO (2012, p.187) suggests that “food security exists when a person has permanent physical and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food to meet his dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life.” By their very nature, urban areas are net consumers of food and rely heavily on their rural and peri-urban hinterlands for their food security. Because urban areas are primarily for industry and commerce, most urbanites depend on their rural and peri-urban hinterlands to satisfy their food requirements.

The Third Integrated Household Survey (IHS 3) conducted between 2010 and 2011 revealed that 33% of the national population had very low food security. The survey also revealed that urban areas had higher food security than rural areas, with 67.7% of the urbanites being found to have scored a High food security score as opposed to 55.8% of those who live in rural areas (NSO, 2012). The relatively high level of food security in urban areas comes as no surprise as urbanites are relatively well off economically in comparison to their rural cousins. The relatively low food security in rural areas is an important factor for the increasingly high levels of rural-urban migration despite government’s strategies to reduce rural-urban migration. The issue of urban agriculture has gained international policy interest amid studies which have revealed rising levels of food insecurity in and around major urban centres (Satterthwaite, 1999). Studies have also found that urban agriculture is an important source of food as well as being a critical food security strategy for poor urban households (Mougeot, 2000; Nugent, 2000; Klemesu and Maxwell, 2000 cited in Mkwambisi, & Fraser, 2007).

Despite the importance attached to urban agriculture in other countries, Mkwambisi et al (2011, p.5) note that “there is a real policy gap in Malawi and urban agriculture is not seriously considered as a viable livelihood option”. Notwithstanding the explicit policy gap on urban agriculture, the urban land use zoning schemes designate land within urban areas for agricultural purposes. A study conducted by Mkwambisi et al (2011) found that urban agriculture was widely practiced in the cities of Lilongwe and Blantyre, and that on average, the households surveyed produced 228 kg/capita of cereal/year, which exceeded the 181 kg/ capita that the government of Malawi recommends for household food security to be achieved.

**Figure 6: Urban agriculture in Lilongwe – a vacant commercial plot next to a modern office complex is utilised for urban agriculture.**



*Source: Alma Consult, 2015.*

### **3.5 ADDRESSING URBAN MOBILITY CHALLENGES**

Urban mobility in Malawi has faced many challenges since the dissolution of the publicly owned mass transit company, Shire Bus Lines in the 1990s. The government no longer offers urban transport services and the urban transport system has been deregulated. Many private sector companies have been set to provide transport services for urban populations. Where buses used to service urban centres before, that gap has now been filled by privately operated mini buses and taxis. There are no government subsidies to the urban transport sector either, so the sector has been completely privatised.

A new mode of urban mobility has emerged in the past decade in form of bicycle taxis to complement the mini bus, taxi and walking. The legal status of the bicycle taxi remains unresolved and bicycle taxi drivers continue to be harassed by police despite bicycles being environmentally friendly and affordable by the ordinary urban dweller. Authorities often cite safety and the road traffic regulations for the confiscation of bicycles and the proscription of that mode of transport in urban areas (Manda, 2014c).

Despite the hurdles they face, bicycle taxi owners progressively upgrade themselves to motor bike, tri-cycle or motor vehicle taxis. The rapid increase in the private motor vehicle has increased congestion on city roads itself occasioned by rapid urbanisation, as well as the lack of financial muscle to extend the urban road net works. Many urban motorists have been faced with long queues and delays which have adversely affected the urban economies through loss of time. Congestion is also causing an increase in air pollution in urban areas owing to the emissions from the vehicles.

The dominant mode of urban transport in Malawi is walking. In Lilongwe, it was found that 60% of the traffic is pedestrian (GoM, JICA & LCC, 2010). However, nearly all urban roads lack walkways leading to frequent pedestrian-vehicle conflicts. Other forms of urban public transport, such as rail and bus, are nearly non-existent. Despite having a network of airports in nearly all urban centres, the only intercity air transport is between Blantyre and Lilongwe, and this only has stop-over for flights out of Malawi.

Addressing the urban mobility challenges has largely been hampered by laws that restrict rather than facilitate investment, as is evidenced by the precarious legal position of bicycle taxis. Local councils have been left to their own devices to address the unresolved legal position of bicycle taxis. The Mzuzu City Council is now in the process of recognising bicycle taxis through its structure plan review. The Council seeks to provide for bicycle pathways along the city's major roads to enhance safety. This is the first time in Malawi that bicycle taxis will be accommodated through the structure planning process.

Traffic congestion is one of the mobility challenges in the major cities in Malawi (see Figure 7). As noted in Section 4.3 of this Report, the road networks in urban areas have not expanded sufficiently enough to absorb the large amounts of vehicular traffic. As the number of vehicles has increased significantly in the past twenty years without a corresponding expansion of urban road networks, traffic congestion, especially in busy commercial areas, has become more critical. There is also poor urban road network, lack of direct routes or inadequate feeder roads resulting in motorists being trapped especially when there is an accident.



*Figure 7: Mobility challenges in a major urban street: Parking on both sides of the busy Hannover Avenue in Blantyre restricts mobility.*

### **3.6 IMPROVING TECHNICAL CAPACITY TO PLAN AND MANAGE CITIES**

The planning and management of cities requires the expertise and technical capacity of professionals in urban management and physical planning. Physical planning by its very nature is a complex and diverse field of study and practice, requiring competent personnel who have acquired knowledge and skills in areas as diverse as environmental sustainability, demographics, governance, urban design, urban economics, law, housing, land tenure and geographical information systems. Historically, there had been no tertiary institution offering physical planning degree programmes until 2006. The only institution offering some planning subjects was the Geography and Earth Sciences Department at Chancellor College, University of Malawi within the Bachelor of Social Sciences and Bachelor of Science degree programmes. Because the planning-related courses offered at undergraduate level were introductory, those graduates who entered the planning field were given preliminary training on the job before being sent for professional training outside the country. This approach to planning education was too costly and depended upon the availability of scholarships from the donor community (Manda, 2013b). In addition, the training that aspiring planners received in mainly Western universities was inadequate in addressing “the most pressing issues of cities of the global South: informal settlement, growth, poverty and weak government” (Watson, 2011, cited by Manda, 2013b, p. 60).

The lack of capacity to train planners locally had resulted in a critical shortage of well trained and experienced personnel to manage and plan Malawi’s fast growing cities. The situation became critical when the government started implementing the Decentralisation Policy in 1998 as this required among other things, the devolution of planning functions to local planning authorities. This resulted in an increased demand for planners to administer planning services at the forty urban and rural councils which had been conferred with planning powers following devolution (Manda, 2013b). The capacity deficit was also exacerbated by the proposal in the land policy to devolve land management to the lowest administrative tier at local chief level. Enemark & Ahene (2002) noted that such capacity deficit heightened the need for training land administrators which includes planners.

Specifically it was noted that Malawi had only 26 qualified physical planners, 20 land valuation professionals, and 12 licensed land surveyors in the whole country. This had translated to a short term capacity need for 400 professionals and 800 technicians to be trained to fill the vacant positions in the public sector. They called for an aggressive programme to train the required personnel (Enemark & Ahene, 2002).

The GoM has responded to the critical shortage of qualified personnel in the urban land management sector by supporting the establishment of planning and planning-related degree courses at two of Malawi’s public universities in 2006 – Mzuzu University and University of Malawi’s Polytechnic. In addition, the Natural Resources College in Lilongwe also offers diploma courses in land administration and diploma graduates with good grades at graduation can apply to Mzuzu University to upgrade to degree level. These measures have resulted in an increasing number of locally trained land management professionals who have addressed the critical shortage of qualified human resources in the land sector.

### **3.7 CHALLENGES EXPERIENCED AND LESSONS LEARNT IN THESE AREAS**

The National Land Policy (NLP) was aimed at addressing the country's constraints to social and economic development. Among the policy recommendations was the implementation of the reforms to improve the registration of land titles through the devolution of land registration to local government level. Secondly, the NLP sought to improve urban land administration by transferring the administration of urban land to respective local governments. Thirdly, the NLP sought to resolve the conflict between planning authorities and chiefs in land allocation matters by reforming planning law to prevent the automatic extinction of customary land rights through conversion of hitherto customary land to public land. Fourthly, the NLP calls for protection of customary land rights in urban informal settlements through upgrading. These are commendable policy articulations which unfortunately have not yet been implemented more than thirteen years after the policy was adopted.

Admittedly, it is the delay in the enactment of the Land Bill which has been in parliament since 2012 that has given rise to the non-implementation of most of the policy provisions in the NLP. The Land Bill was passed by parliament in June 2013 but has since then not received presidential assent. However, after over two years of review and further consultations with key stakeholders, including chiefs, the Land Bill has not yet been tabled again in parliament.

Urban land use in Malawi is regulated through the Town and Country Planning Act of 1988. As the law currently stands, an area can be declared a statutory planning area, thus paving the way for development control policies to be applied in the areas so declared. When planning authorities declare customary land as falling within a statutory planning area, the Town and Country Planning Act automatically declares such land as falling within the realm of public land which is subject to town planning control. This aspect of planning law has been the subject of controversy between planning authorities and traditional chiefs who had hitherto enjoyed their rights as administrators of customary land.

In addition, government failure to pay compensation for customary land which has been converted to public land (thus subject to planning controls), has added to the confusion within the urban land development sector. Chiefs have continued to administer land. The NLP seeks to address this issue by requiring that proper steps be followed to convert customary land to public land, and that chiefs play a participatory role in such conversions. However, the stalling of the Land Bill has delayed the harmonisation of the relevant provision in the Town and Country Planning Act with the corresponding provision in the Land Bill.

One of the challenges in the local planning regime is politicisation in planning and governance structures. The Town and Country Planning Board, an appeal body established under the law to hear appeals against contested planning decisions made by planning authorities, has not been functioning due to financial problems .

There are a number of lessons that have been learnt in regard to the challenges discussed above. One key lesson is that sustainable urban planning in a poor economy requires inclusive pro-poor

planning policies. Unfortunately in Malawi, pro-poor urban policies such as the THA approach require significant government subsidies and have proven to be financially unsustainable in the face of the government's poor macro-economic performance and declining donor support. Another lesson is that policy implementation, regardless of how sound the policies are, cannot always be guaranteed in Malawi. The NLP is a ground-breaking policy when it comes to land administration and land law. The fact that most of the policy provisions in the NLP have not been implemented thirteen years after its adoption is not merely a factor of the delay in the passing of the Land Bill into law, but fundamentally a factor of deep seated poverty and wavering political will. These are fundamental issues which need to be addressed in the new urban agenda.

### **3.8 FUTURE CHALLENGES AND ISSUES FOR A NEW URBAN AGENDA**

Malawi faces a number of challenges in sustainably managing rapid urbanisation. Firstly, achieving sustainable urban planning requires that urban land administration is fully reformed to ensure that there is equitable access to urban land for all income groups, including the poor and women, and that the inefficiencies inherent in the urban land markets which have in part contributed to the proliferation of informal settlements, are addressed. However, the delay in the implementation of the land policy reforms, compounded by the absence of a national urbanisation policy, is a threat to sustainable urban planning. In addition, local governments need to be financially empowered in line with the provisions of the decentralisation policy. SDG 11.3 states that by 2030, inclusive and sustainable urbanisation and capacity for participatory, integrated and sustainable human settlement planning and management must be enhanced in all countries. The early manifestations of an emerging participatory and inclusive approach to planning have been facilitated by the decentralisation policy which has seen the devolution of planning powers to local governments. A new urban agenda for Malawi must prioritise the implementation of the NLP and facilitate meaningful devolution of powers to local governments to enable them to meaningfully address the myriad challenges they face in sustainably managing the challenges of rapid urbanisation.

Another future threat to sustainable urban planning is the increasing reliance on the private motor vehicle and the decline of mass public transport in Malawi's cities. The future planning of Malawi's cities needs to integrate sustainable transport planning in line with SDG 11.2, which seeks to provide for access to safe, affordable, accessible, and sustainable transport systems for all, as well as improving road safety, notably by expanding public transport. Whilst cities in the global north are making efforts to promote mass public transport by investing in urban rail networks and passing legislation to discourage the dominance of the private motor vehicle as a mode of urban transportation, Malawian cities are making no effort to invest in mass urban transport. The deregulation and privatisation of the public transport sector has seen the phasing out of buses in cities to give way to mini buses and taxis. Urban rail is virtually non-existent as a mode of transport in Malawi's cities. This needs to be addressed in the new urban agenda.

## **4.0 ENVIRONMENT AND URBANISATION**

### **4.1 ADDRESSING CLIMATE CHANGE**

Malawi is experiencing climate change related impacts resulting from unsustainable and environmentally destructive human activities such as deforestation and to a lesser extent, increased emission of greenhouse gases into the atmosphere. According to the *State of the Environment Report of*

2010 (GoM, 2010), Malawi has been losing an average of 165,000 hectares, or 1% of its forest cover, every year since 1995. This amount of forest loss is significant enough to cause variations in weather patterns due to the loss of ecosystems and a decline in the amount of carbon dioxide captured by vegetation. It is acknowledged that Malawi is experiencing extreme weather patterns, such as floods and droughts at more regular intervals than before. Halle and Burgess (2006) report that Malawi has experienced major variations in weather patterns since the 1970s, ranging from severe drought in 1978-79, 1981-1982, 1991-1992; and extreme flood events in 1996-97, 2000-2001, and 2002-2003. In 2009, 2011 and 2015 the country experienced severe flooding which have been considered as the worst in recent memory with the 2015 floods resulting in 176 deaths, 645 injuries and 230,000 displaced persons as of 10 February 2015.<sup>16</sup> It is estimated that more than 63,000 hectares of land has been flooded, including 35,000 hectares of crop land. The government declared 15 districts in the country as a disaster area in January 2015.

Surprisingly, only 1% of the urban dwellers interviewed for the purpose of this Report considered “action taken on climate change and pollution” as the most important issue towards a better urban future (see Table 4). This is surprising because the survey was conducted in the wake of the devastating floods. However, most of the respondents said that as much as they would have wanted to have this as an important issue, the government lacks political will hence they saw no need for them to prioritise this. This is why the overwhelming majority of the respondents (83.3%) did not choose “action taken on climate change and pollution” as among the eight most important issues for a future urban agenda.

**Table 4: Respondents for “Action taken on Climate Change and Pollution”**

Rank	Mzuzu	Mzimba	Nkhota-kota	Lilongwe	Balaka	Blantyre	National Level	Proportion of Respondents (%)
<b>1 (Most important)</b>	0	0	0	2	0	1	3	1%
<b>2</b>	0	0	0	0	1	2	3	1%
<b>3</b>	0	1	0	3	1	0	5	1.67%
<b>4</b>	2	0	2	1	0	1	6	2%
<b>5</b>	2	0	0	2	0	0	4	1.33%
<b>6</b>	1	1	2	3	1	1	9	3%
<b>7</b>	2	0	0	2	2	3	9	3%
<b>8 (Least important)</b>	1	0	3	4	2	1	11	3.67%
<b>None</b>	42	38	23	58	23	66	250	83.3%
<b>Total</b>	50	40	30	75	30	75	300	100%

Source: *Urban Dwellers Interviews (2015)*

<sup>16</sup> Clar Ni Chonghaile, *The Guardian*, 10 February 2015.

With regard to HAPs, none of the respondents considered actions taken on climate change and pollution as the most important issue towards a better urban future. Only 2 experts of the 30 experts considered it as the fourth and seventh important issue respectively (see summary in Table 5 below).

**Table 5: Actions Taken on Climate Change and Pollution: Habitat Agenda Partners**

Rank	Mzuzu	Lilongwe	Blantyre	Total
<b>1 (Most Important)</b>	0	0	0	0
<b>2</b>	0	0	0	0
<b>3</b>	0	0	0	0
<b>4</b>	1	0	0	1
<b>5</b>	0	0	0	0
<b>6</b>	0	0	3	0
<b>7</b>	0	1	0	1
<b>8 (Least Important)</b>	0	0	0	0

*Source: Urban Dwellers Interviews (2015)*

In response to the environmental and socio-economic threats caused by climate change, the GoM has instituted a number of structural, legal and institutional reforms to deal with the issue. Firstly, Malawi is a signatory to a number of international treaties and instruments which made it obligatory for Malawi to develop climate change policies. Such treaties include the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, which was signed on 10 June 1992 and ratified on 21 April 1994; and the Kyoto Protocol, which was ratified on 26 October 2001 (GoM, 2012). Secondly, in 2012, the Government of Malawi approved a National Climate Change Policy, which among other things aims to coordinate sectoral efforts to address the climate change challenge by articulating measures for “better adaptation to, and mitigation against, climate change with a focus on resilience building for Malawi’s citizens” (GoM, 2012). The formulation of the National Climate Change Policy provides a guiding national policy for the implementation of all climate change-related activities and programmes in the country.

In addition, the Malawi Institute of Physical Planning (MIPP) has been advocating for the mainstreaming of climate change in urban planning. A training programme for physical planners to was conducted in 2013. However, this is yet to receive full government support for implementation. A Disaster management policy launched in 2015 has undertaken to develop strategies for urban disaster management. It is anticipated that the urban policy will likewise address the issue.

#### **4.2 DISASTER RISK REDUCTION**

Studies have shown that Malawi has experienced major variations in weather patterns since the 1970s, ranging from severe drought and extreme flood events (Halle & Burgess, 2006; GoM, 2010). The 2009, 2010 and 2015 devastating floods have underscored the country’s vulnerability to climate change-induced natural disasters.

With rapid urbanisation, disaster vulnerability in urban areas has become an issue of increasing concern for urban planners and policy makers as the ever-increasing squatter settlements are being developed in disaster prone areas. Lack of plan implementation and increasing informality has contributed to the deplorable state of resilience to disaster risks in urban areas. The town of Karonga is affected relatively more frequently by natural disasters such as floods and earth tremors. In response, the GoM has coordinated with UN-Habitat in a project aimed at mainstreaming DRM in a new structure plan that has been prepared for the disaster-prone town. Mzuzu University, as part of a multinational collaboration funded by DfID is also undertaking a three year research on risk and knowledge of every day urban risks in Karonga.<sup>17</sup>

As a result of the frequent occurrences of natural disasters, the government has incorporated disaster risk management (DRM) strategies in the Malawi Growth and Development Strategy (MGDS) 2006 – 2011 under Theme Two – Social Protection and Disaster Risk Management. The government also developed a Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) Roadmap and trained officers in various areas of DRR, including urban risks with a focus on fires and floods in informal settlements. Efforts were also taken by the Malawi Institute of Physical Planners (MIPP) to train and sensitise urban planners on mainstreaming disaster risk reduction in urban planning.

From a legal perspective, the Disaster Preparedness and Relief Act of 1991 is under review to ensure effective management of disaster rather than concentrate on relief. However, the main weakness of this law is its exclusion of urban settlements.

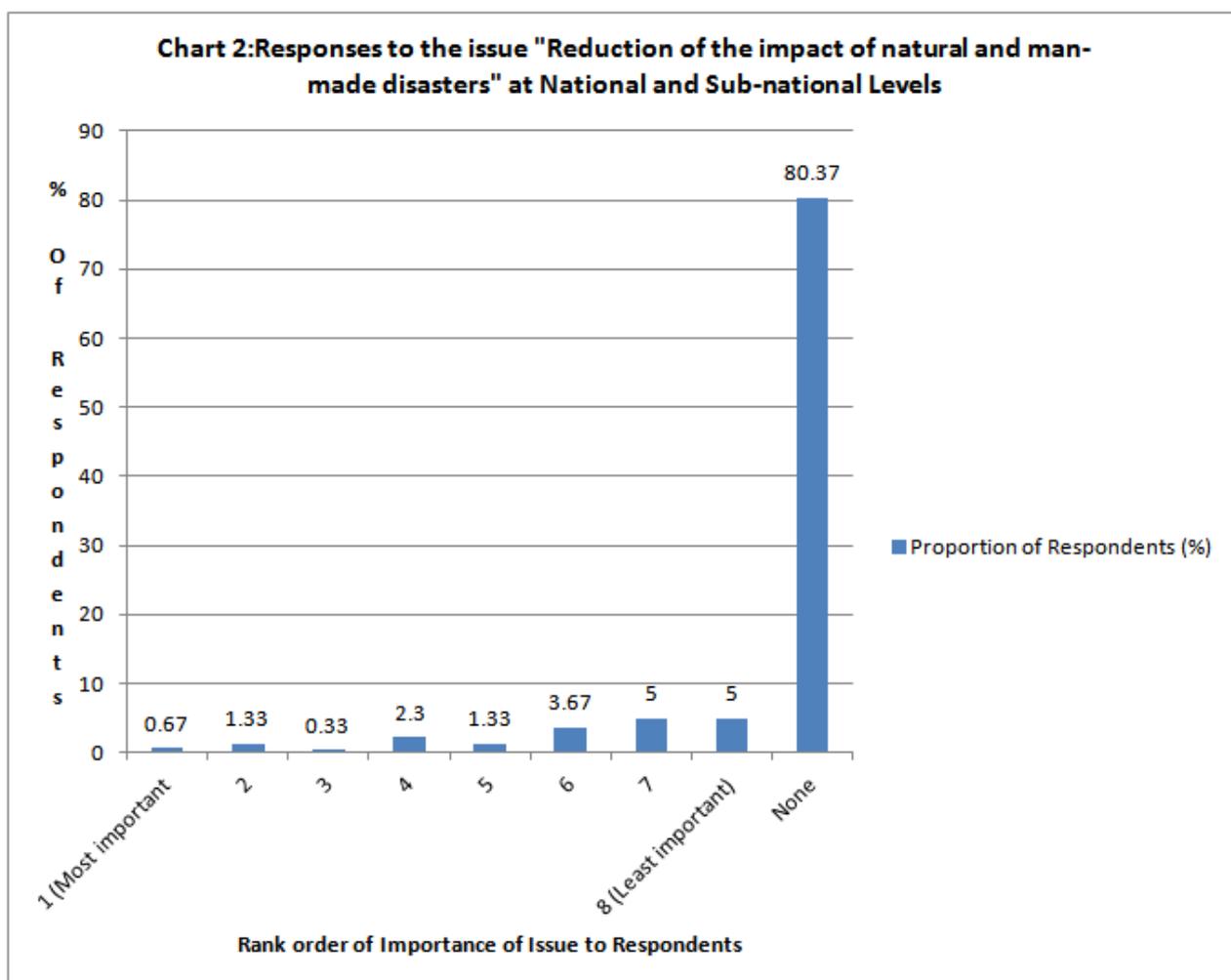
One of the challenges faced by agencies responsible for disaster risk management was the lack of a National Disaster Risk Management Policy. However, in March 2015, the government approved and launched the National Disaster Risk Management Policy (NDRMP) after the 2015 devastating floods had raised a number of policy issues arising from the lack of a comprehensive national policy. The development of the NDRMP is a major step towards the achievement of sustainable development through ensuring that DRM is integrated in development planning by all sectors of the economy. The NDRMP does not address specific urban issues related to DRM but its provisions are wide enough to be applicable to urban settings. Six priority areas towards the achievement of the policy goals have been identified. The first priority area is mainstreaming DRM into sustainable development, with a focus on integrating DRM into all planning processes (including urban planning) at all levels throughout the country. The policy acknowledges that government ministries as well as city and municipal councils do not have budget lines for DRM and therefore cannot adequately implement DRM activities. Thus the policy seeks to ensure that DRM activities are adequately funded. The policy provides that DRM committees will be responsible for coordinating the implementation of the policy at city, municipal, district, down to village levels. Information received from stakeholders and HAPs suggests that these committees have already been established at grassroots level.

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<sup>17</sup> [www.urbanark.org](http://www.urbanark.org) (seen 20 November, 2015)

Despite the importance that government attaches to the issue of DRM, the urban dweller surveys established a disconnect between urban dwellers' attitudes towards DRM and the official government position. The majority of urban dwellers considered "reduction of the impact of natural and man-made disasters" as the least important urban issue (see Figure 7 below). Out of 300 interviewed, only 0.67% of the urban dwellers considered the issue to be most important for the new urban agenda. In fact the majority of the respondents (80.37%) did not even rank the issue as having any importance in the order of their priorities as urban dwellers. This has implications for the new urban agenda as it appears that despite the importance that government and policy makers attach to the issue, ordinary urban dwellers do not see this as important. Disaster risk reduction awareness should be an issue of importance to all urban dwellers, not just to government officials and activists.

**Figure 7: Responses to the issue "Reduction of the impact of natural and man-made disasters" National and Sub-National levels.**



Source: Field surveys, 2015.

### 4.3 REDUCING TRAFFIC CONGESTION

Traffic congestion in the four major cities has become a key issue for urban dwellers and visitors alike. Car ownership rates have increased significantly; however, the capacity of existing urban roads has not been expanded to keep pace with the rapidly increasing traffic volumes, which in itself

is a by-product of rapid urbanisation. A new transport mode – the bicycle taxi – has emerged to compound the problem of traffic congestion in those cities.

The NSO has reported that in Malawi 27,598 private vehicles (excluding government vehicles) were registered between January 2013 to November 2013. The total number of private vehicles within the same period (newly registered and existing vehicles) was 250,000 (NSO, 2014). This means that there could be annually over 300,000 new vehicles registered to travel on the roads that have hardly expanded for a long time. For example, in the city of Mzuzu, only two roads have been constructed in the past 50 years – the road from St John of God to Chibavi, and the Marymount to Mzuzu Stadium road.

The road networks in urban areas have not expanded sufficiently enough to absorb the large amounts of vehicular traffic. The liberalisation of the public transport sector has seen a proliferation of mini buses and bicycle taxis, thus exacerbating congestion. Morning, midday and afternoon traffic peaks are particularly commonplace in the major cities.

Reducing traffic congestion requires both policy and traffic management measures. From a policy perspective, government could take measures to combat congestion through taxation, toll fees and parking fees, but the infrastructure does not exist: no public car parks, not toll gates. Whilst it is noted that some parking fees have been introduced in major cities, these have been levied purely for revenue collection and are not used as a deterrent to car owners from driving their cars into the city centres. One feature which has been used to reduce inner city traffic congestion in Malawi is the construction of by-pass roads. A good example is the Western Bypass in the city of Lilongwe which has recently been completed. Although primarily constructed to facilitate the movement of heavy goods traffic under the Nacala Corridor regional trade strategy, this road has also been instrumental in diverting traffic away from the city centre and in easing traffic congestion. In its 2015 Structure Plan review, the city of Mzuzu has proposed two road by-passes (eastern and western) to divert traffic from the city centre.

#### **4.4 AIR POLLUTION**

Air pollution is recognised as one of the key environmental issues identified in the Malawi State of the Environment Report (GoM, 2010). The main sources of air pollution include the burning of trees to produce charcoal, emissions from vehicles, manufacturing, mining, and a group of man-made gaseous chemicals known as organohalogen compounds (GoM, 2010) which are used in refrigeration, pesticides and coolants. These react with ozone when released into the atmosphere and give rise to ozone depletion and hence climate change.

As noted above, rapid urbanisation has brought with it a rapid increase in car ownership in urban areas. In addition, the rate of urban and peri urban deforestation has increased due to the high demand for fuelwood and charcoal, the major sources of energy even in urban areas. If appropriate technologies are not invented to find more environmentally friendly chemicals for refrigeration and cooling, the trends in the total emissions from organo-halogen compounds are likely to continue going up due to rapid urbanisation as the refrigeration and cooling activities are mainly urban activities. The motor vehicle population is expected to increase as levels of affluence increase despite

the new taxation policy on imported used motor vehicles. Efforts to increase the level of sink through afforestation programmes are frustrated by continued deforestation for timber, opening up of new farms and over-dependency on firewood and charcoal (GoM, 2010).

Another source of urban air pollution is waste. As the country rapidly urbanises, the volumes of waste generated by domestic and commercial consumption are getting higher. Studies have shown that urban councils are failing to adequately manage urban waste, leading to environmental concerns related to the quality of air and sanitation (Chipeta & Binauli, 2005). In addition, waste management is a growing issue as municipal authorities, due to resource constraints and capacity issues, are not fully equipped to manage the growing amount of waste that is generated by the rapidly growing urban populations. It is estimated that on average one urban resident generates 0.5 kg of waste per day. For example, Lilongwe City generates between 330 and 700 tonnes of solid waste per day but only 30% is collected (Lilongwe City Council, 2009, p.79). Due to the financial constraints that the major city councils are facing, it is not uncommon to see piles of uncollected rubbish all over the place in the major cities. The failure to adequately manage urban waste in the face of rapid urbanisation has led to increasing air pollution and the potential for the spread of communicable diseases.

There are a number of legislative and policy initiatives that have been carried out to address the issue of air quality, not just in urban areas, but also in rural areas. Firstly, the Environmental Management Act enforces air quality standards for industry, mining operations and motor vehicles. In addition, the environmental impact assessments (EIA) regime requires that certain projects be subjected to EIAs. Malawi has adopted World Health Organisation (WHO) air quality standards for air pollutants and has through the Malawi Bureau of Standards published a new standard for air quality called MS 737:2005 “Industrial Emissions – Emissions from Mobile and Stationary Sources Specifications” (Mapoma, & Xie, 2013).

#### **4.5 CHALLENGES, EXPERIENCES AND LESSONS LEARNT**

Urban environmental conditions in Malawi are influenced by energy and construction materials demand, as well as the reduced capacity for effective waste management within the urban councils. Low access to electricity and frequent interruptions to supply imply that many households must rely on charcoal and firewood for cooking. It is estimated that over 85% of urban dwellers rely on charcoal and firewood for their domestic energy needs. Rapid deforestation can in part be attributed to the increasing demand for charcoal and fuel wood as alternatives to electricity as the country experiences rapid urbanisation. Deforestation has had a significant impact on climate change related weather patterns in the country.

The majority of urban citizens are living in informal settlements, some of which are located in disaster prone areas, such as river and stream banks, or on steeply sloping sites which are prone to earth movements during heavy rain events. As such in case of major hazards like flooding, the risk of habitat destruction as well as water and sanitation related disease transmission is very high. Unfortunately, climate change and DRM are not adequately mainstreamed in urban planning, although the NDRMP 2015 proposes to reduce the underlying risk factors by, among other things, improving building safety. How this is to be done is not clear from the policy. At the national consultation workshops with

Habitat Agenda Partners, most of the council officers in attendance expressed concern that the legislation governing disaster management and response does not empower urban authorities in disaster risk responses. This issue came into sharp focus during the early 2015 floods where coordination of relief activities was done through the rural district commissioner's office, making it problematic for city authorities to take any leading role. Furthermore, policy recommendations on climate change do not recognise urban issues as emphasis is placed on rural areas and rural activities. The mandate for disaster management and vulnerability assessment in cities is given to rural districts, such that where there is a disaster in Lilongwe City, for example, government and donors provide funding and support to the District Commissioner responsible for Lilongwe Rural rather than the city Chief Executive Officer (See Schensul et al, 2013).

A number of lessons have been learned with regard to the above themes. Firstly, addressing climate change in the face of rapid urbanisation and inadequate capacity of the existing electricity supply, results in frequent power outages, making urban dwellers rely on charcoal and fuel wood.. Secondly, there is a disconnect between what the government perceives to be pressing urban issues and what the typical local urban dweller considers to be key issues. From the urban dweller interviews, it came as a surprise that urban dwellers did not place much importance on the issue disaster risk reduction. If the government's DRM policy is to have an impact, public sensitisation needs to be scaled up.

#### **4.6 FUTURE CHALLENGES AND ISSUES FOR A NEW URBAN AGENDA**

Addressing climate change requires government commitment and extensive citizen sensitisation to climate change. At the moment, the issue of climate change emerges into the public debate arena mostly when disasters have actually occurred. Mainstreaming climate change and DRM in all aspects of life is a very important step towards the sensitisation strategy that needs to be addressed in the new urban agenda.

Climate change is neglected in urban planning at both national and city levels, and further notes that policy recommendations on climate change do not recognise urban issues as emphasis is placed on rural areas and rural activities. The mandate on vulnerability assessment in cities is given to rural districts, and civil protection committees now in existence in rural areas across the country are non-existent in urban areas (Manda, 2013a).

SDG 11.5 seeks, by 2030, to significantly reduce the number of deaths and the number of people affected and substantially decrease the direct economic losses relative to global GDP caused by disasters, with a focus on protecting the poor and people in vulnerable situations. This requires a more rigorous approach to DRM and a revisit of the current NDRMP. Likewise, SDG 11.b calls for a substantial increase in the number of cities which adopt and implement integrated policies and plans for inclusion, mitigation and adaptation to climate change, resilience to disasters, and develop holistic risk management at all levels. For Malawi to achieve these goals, legislative changes are required to specifically advance the policy provisions in urban areas. Due to their grassroots connections, elected city authorities need to be empowered to play a key role in disaster responses and in setting the agenda for disaster risk management in urban areas. Although the NDRMP says that DRM committees will be responsible for the coordination and implementation of the policy at

city levels, and that funding will be provided for DRM at city and municipal levels, the bigger role remains with national agencies and it is not clear how funding will actually be made available. These issues new urban Agenda provides an opportunity for legislative changes .

SDG 11.2 provides that by 2030, authorities should provide access to safe, affordable and sustainable transport systems for all, improve road safety by expanding public transport with special attention to the needs of the vulnerable, i.e. women, children, persons with disabilities and older persons. Thus the SDGs recognise the importance of sustainable transport systems, which by definition are the more environmentally-friendly, greener modes of transportation such as mass transit (buses, rail) and walking and cycling. At the same time, the call is out there for the needs of the vulnerable to be considered in urban transport planning and provision. The deregulation of the urban transport system in Malawi has led to the dominance of the car and the minibus, both of which are relatively less sustainable modes of urban transportation. Although the volumes of transport-generated greenhouse gas emissions are low by global standards at the moment, there is a likelihood that traffic congestion and the rapid increase in vehicle ownership in urban areas, itself fuelled by rapid urbanisation, will escalate to levels which will be difficult to manage. In addition, Malawi needs to start implementing inclusive urban transport planning which incorporates the needs of the vulnerable. Statistics indicate that the proportion of people with disabilities is increasing in Malawi's urban centres (NSO, 2012). This calls for sustainable transport and the needs of the vulnerable to be incorporated in the periodical urban structure plan reviews that the main urban centres are mandated to undertake under the Decentralisation Policy. These are issues to be addressed in the new urban agenda.

Waste management has emerged as one of the issues arising from rapid urbanisation and is a major contributor to urban air pollution in Malawi. Although urban air pollution levels are relatively low due to relatively small levels of industrialisation in urban areas, it has the potential to emerge as a worrying issue in the new urban agenda due to the rapid urbanisation. The potential threat to public health caused by uncollected urban waste is high. SDG 11.6 aims to reduce the adverse per capita environmental impacts of cities, including by paying special attention to air quality and municipal and other waste management. This means that in the new urban agenda, municipal authorities will need to be financially empowered to deal with their waste management challenges. This may prove to be a very difficult task given the financial challenges that urban and national governments face. The attitude of the majority of Malawians towards waste will need to change through greater civic education.

## **5.0 URBAN GOVERNANCE AND LEGISLATION**

### **5.1 IMPROVING URBAN LEGISLATION**

Until May 2014, Malawi had run for nearly a decade without elected local governments. The government had instituted unelected committees to manage local affairs with serious implications. This situation detached local people from councils because of a political leadership vacuum and led to low patronage as, in the absence of councillors, participation in local public affairs was largely limited to the people that are connected to the influential political and social figures (Chasukwa, Chiweza and Jamali (2013). Manda (2014) also shows how this affected urban planning and service delivery.

The operations of the Local councils are guided by the Local Government Act (1998), Public Health Act (1966), Environmental Management Act (1996), Town and Country Planning Act (1988), Decentralisation Policy, National Land Policy (2002), National Sanitation Policy (2007) and National Decentralisation Policy (1996). Apart from these, the local councils also formulate local by-laws that operate within the council’s jurisdiction. Through these pieces of legislation, councils are mandated to prepare and approve plans, proposals, budgets, and institutional development. However, the implementation of these plans is met with a number of challenges including; political interference in the appointment of senior staff, corruption, inadequate funding and multiplicity of stakeholders in the urban areas that offer various basic services with no clear cut roles. In addition, most residents of the urban areas are not aware of the laws relating to local affairs such as by-laws, Local Government Act, Town and Country Planning Act, among others.

The election of councillors to the urban and rural councils is a significant boost to local democracy and has enhanced participatory frameworks in the area of urban planning which are essential for sustainable urbanisation. Local councils are mandated to formulate and pass bylaws for the smooth operation of local affairs such as increasing city rates to increase revenue for service provisions, etc. The election of councillors to the country’s urban and rural councils after a long absence raises prospects for better service provision and open, accountable urban governance.

Though “open, inclusive and urban governance” is considered a very important factor for the effective urban development, the results obtained from the stakeholder consultations shows that only 2% of the respondents indicated this as the most important issue towards a new urban agenda. Perhaps lack of knowledge among the citizenry regarding the importance of good urban governance contributed to lack of attention towards this issue. The majority of the respondents (32%) chose open, inclusive and urban governance as the least important issue towards a better urban future. Table 6 below is a summary of responses received on this issue in the urban dweller interviews.

**Table 6: Open, Inclusive and Urban Governance: Urban Dwellers**

<b>Issue: Open, Transparent and Inclusive urban Governance</b>							
<b>Rank</b>	<b>Mzuzu</b>	<b>Mzimba</b>	<b>Nkhota-kota</b>	<b>Lilongwe</b>	<b>Balaka</b>	<b>Blantyre</b>	<b>National Level</b>
<b>1 (Most Important)</b>	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
<b>2</b>	0	0	1	1	1	0	3
<b>3</b>	0	0	0	1	1	2	4
<b>4</b>	0	0	0	1	1	0	2
<b>5</b>	0	1	2	1	0	1	5
<b>6</b>	3	2	1	1	0	3	10
<b>7</b>	1	5	2	1	1	5	15
<b>8 (Least Important)</b>	4	3	3	1	1	7	19

On the HAPs, only 1 expert in all six urban centres considered open, inclusive and urban governance as the most important factor towards a better urban future. Only 2 experts considered open, inclusive and urban governance as the fifth and eighth important factor towards a better urban future respectively (see Table 7 below).

**Table 7: Open, Inclusive and Urban Governance: Habitat Agenda Partners**

Rank	Mzuzu	Lilongwe	Blantyre	National Level
<b>1 (Most Important)</b>	1	0	0	1
<b>2</b>	0	0	0	0
<b>3</b>	0	0	0	0
<b>4</b>	0	0	0	0
<b>5</b>	1	0	1	2
<b>6</b>	0	1	0	1
<b>7</b>	1	0	0	1
<b>8 (Least Important)</b>	0	2	0	2

Source: *Habitat Agenda Partners Consultation Workshops 2015*

Now that there are councillors in place in all the local councils, expectations are high from the general public as well as local councils that service delivery will be improved as the council authorities will have the required legal mandate to generate revenue. In fact, during consultations, the legal department of the Blantyre City Council said that it is more than ready to facilitate the formulation and approval of the much needed by-laws such as the collection of city rates. In addition, the revision of the outdated bylaws as well as formulation of new by-laws will also enhance service delivery.

## **5.2 DECENTRALISATION AND STRENGTHENING OF LOCAL COUNCILS**

Decentralisation and strengthening of local councils is perceived to be the most important factor for enhanced urban prosperity as it brings decision making closer to local councils thereby encouraging local councils to focus on prosperity (UN Habitat, 2013). The Government of Malawi formulated the National Decentralisation Policy in 1996. The National Decentralisation Policy devolves administration and political authority to the local level (GoM, 1996). In addition, the policy empowers the local councils to advance financial autonomy by devolving expenditure responsibilities and expanding local government taxing authority.

The Local Government Act (1998) was formulated and enacted into law to provide a legal basis for the implementation of the National Decentralisation Policy (1996). These legal frameworks have empowered the local councils to prepare physical development plans such as urban structure plans, collection of revenue, development control, upgrade informal settlements and provide basic urban services such as health, education among others. A number of activities have been devolved to the

local councils such as preparation of urban plans, collection of revenue, waste collection and management, construction and maintenance of roads, and provision of security.

However, most of the local councils lack financial and institutional capacity to effectively and efficiently perform various services in line with the requirements of the urban dwellers. For example, the Habitat Agenda Partners (HAP) complained that most of the major taxes such as motor vehicle licences, vehicle registration fees are collected by the central government thereby smothering the growth of the urban areas through the delivery of basic urban services. Furthermore, even though Ward based Community Development Committees were established in all local councils, it was observed that these WDCs tend to have a narrow focus, lacking the vision and initiative to set local priorities without local authority assistance (UN-Habitat, 2013). Furthermore, the participants said that these committees have no access to funding as there is no budgeting targeted for ward level community projects.

It is imperative that decisions on urban planning issues should be made as close as possible to those affected by them. This implies the decentralisation of urban planning decisions to the urban level of government. This requires effective local governments, greater capacity in terms of urban planning professionals, more resources at the local level, and reconsideration of urban boundaries in areas where urban development has outgrown older administrative limits (UN-Habitat, 2009, p. 80).

There is a growing rift between councillors and legislators on the use of Constituency Development Funds (CDFs), as in the absence of the councillors this fund was being managed by parliamentarians. Due to this problem, the councillors are proposing that the CDF be renamed Ward Development Fund (WDF) so that they have total control on the management of the fund. There is also evidence of WDCs being politicised, which is undermining their ability to mobilize across party lines (UN-Habitat, 2013). The other challenge is that WDCs lack technical expertise. It was also found that most of the WDCs do not capture the views of the youths as most WDCs do not have youth representatives in their committees. In circumstances where they have, the environment is not friendly for the youth to freely and willingly articulate their views, partly due to culture orientations.

### **5.3 IMPROVING PARTICIPATION AND HUMAN RIGHTS IN URBAN DEVELOPMENT**

UN-Habitat (2013) argues that participation is very crucial in budgeting and planning which helps to strengthen democratic decentralisation by identifying local needs and establishing local development options and priorities through local consultation. Participation empowers people to own development and gives them power to determine their destiny. Realising that participation is a human right, the Constitution of Malawi provides for the state to justify its policies. The Constitution also provides the right to men and women to own a property whether alone or in association with others as well as gives a right to development. These rights can best be realised through active and equal participation of all groups of people including the poor and the disadvantaged (UN-Habitat, 2011).

The democratic set-up requires formulation of urban plans to start from the grassroots level in a “bottom-up approach”. The absence of locally elected representatives of the people in the last decade affected the proper legal representation of the local people and this led to formulation of plans and implementation of development initiatives without approval of the council. This affected the legitimacy

of such plans and the realisation of the rights of the urban dwellers particularly the right to basic services (UN-Habitat, 2013). To fill the vacuum left by elected councillors, Community Development Committees (CDC) were put in place in local councils, although their legal mandate had been challenged.

In many councils, the tradition leaders commonly known as “blood chiefs” are still in control of the urban areas due to the presence of villages in urban areas that have not been fully compensated and relocated as required by the Land Acquisition Act. The tendency had made the recognition of local people to spearhead various developments problematic. Hence organizations were left with no option than to directly involve traditional leaders who mostly command the respect of many urban dwellers contrary to the preferred structure by the council, the CDC.

Now that the councillors are in place it is anticipated that these conflicts will end if not reduced. For example, it was learnt during HAPs consultation workshop held at Lilongwe City Council that the council has dissolved the CDC and formed the WDC headed by a Councillor and also plans to do away with the block leaders as they have outlived their contracts. This is very positive but the removal of the traditional chiefs in declared statutory planning areas requires political will and legislative changes. The establishment of the Urban or District Executive Committee in all the local councils has been very important as these provide good ideas for various development initiatives. In addition, the committee is comprised of NGOs, parastatals, and Community Based Organisations (CBOs) hence increasing participation as well as providing good fora for the realization of human rights in urban development.

#### **5.4 ENHANCING URBAN SAFETY AND SECURITY**

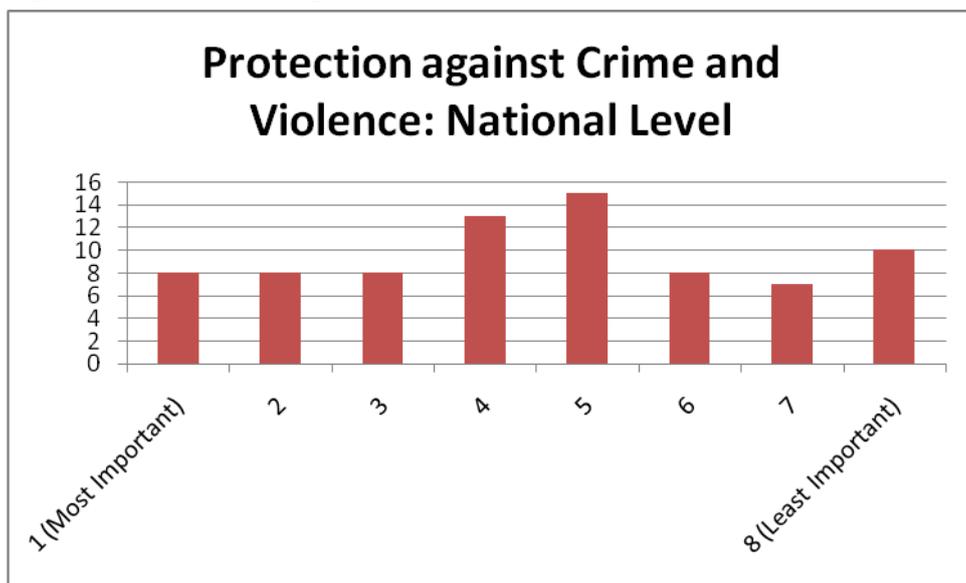
Urban safety and security encompasses a wide range of concerns and issues. According to UN-Habitat (2007, p.7), a major threat to the security and safety of urban areas is crime and theft. Malawi has been experiencing high rates of burglary and robbery cases particularly in the cities of Blantyre, Lilongwe and Mzuzu. Commercial Banks have been at the centre of attacks, the most notable ones being Standard Bank in Mzuzu and First Merchant Bank in Blantyre, which occurred just within four to six months of each other, between late 2014 to early 2015. Individual attacks on business people have also threatened most urban dwellers with most people losing their life and money in the process. These continue to provide an unfavourable environment for investment and safe living as they threaten peaceful co-existence, commerce, as well as people’s property and life.

During consultations, the police complained that most of the police officers are not well protected when carrying out their duties. For example, the police move without a rifle unlike their counterparts in other countries and this weakens the police in cases where robbery attacks have been reported and require urgent attention. Furthermore, the police lack adequate accommodation as most of the houses are small, dilapidated and poorly maintained and sometimes not even maintained. Even the vehicles used by the police service are inadequate and some take a long time to maintain due to inadequate funding.

The responses received from urban dwellers and HAPs during the national and sub-national consultations have given useful insights into the extent to which urban dwellers and HAPs attach

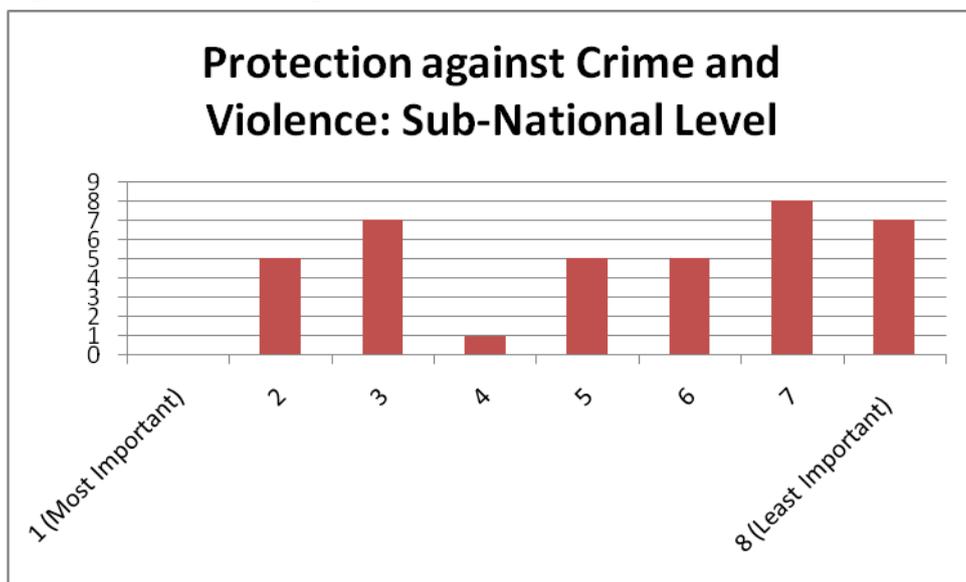
significance to the issue of urban safety. At national level, 21% of the respondents chose protection against crime and violence as the most important factor towards a better urban future. However, most of the respondents (39%) chose “protection against crime and violence” as their fifth important factor towards a better urban future. Figure 8 below shows results of the extent of importance that urban dwellers attach to the issue of protection against crime and violence at national level. It shows that most of the urban dwellers placed the issue at rank 4 and 5, respectively. However, at a sub-national level, many respondents placed the issue at seventh and eighth ranks, i.e. least important for them.

**Figure 8: Protection against Crime and Violence – National level**



Source: Urban Dwellers Survey 2015

**Figure 9: Protection against Crime and Violence – Sub-national level**

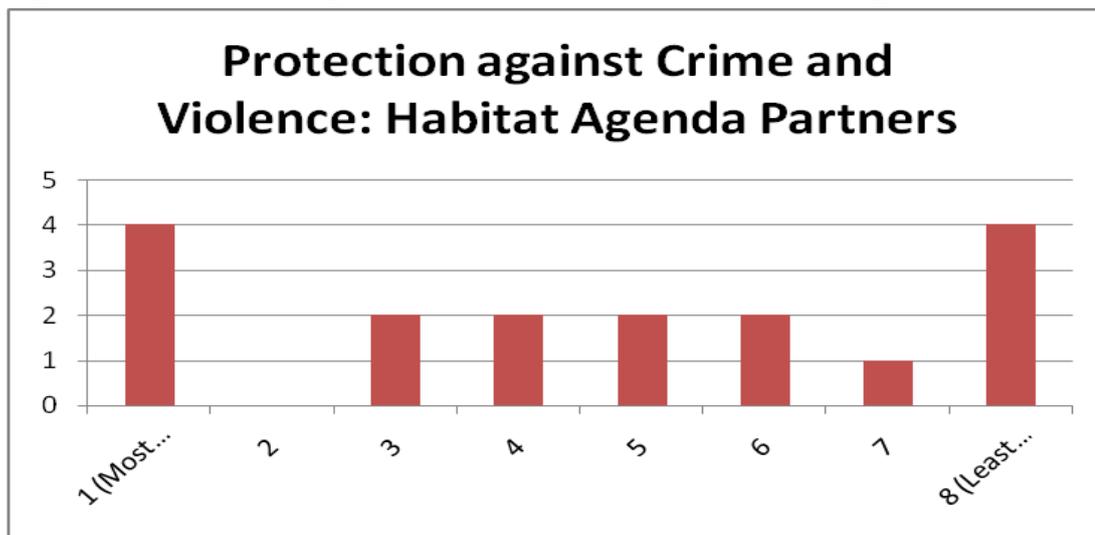


Source: Urban Dwellers Survey 2015

With regard to the sub-national level, none of the respondents chose “protection against crime and violence” as their most important factor towards a better urban future. The majority of the respondents (21%) chose “protection against crime and violence” as their seventh important factor towards a better

urban future (see Figure 9 above). On the side of HAPs, 24% of the experts said that protection against crime and violence was the most important factor towards a better urban future (see Figure 10 below).

**Figure 10: Protection against Crime and Violence – Habitat Agenda Partners**



Source: Alma Consult (2015), Habitat Agenda Partners Consultation Workshops

In an attempt to combat crime and theft at the grassroots level, community policing has been formed in all urban areas to curb crime and theft. In addition, efforts are being made to support the Malawi Police Service to enhance their security checks through the provision of security services such as construction of roadblocks at strategic points of the country’s main roads.

### 5.5 IMPROVING SOCIAL INCLUSION AND EQUITY

Social inclusion and equity ensures equitable (re)distribution of the benefits of prosperity, reducing poverty and the incidence of slums, protecting the rights of the minority and vulnerable groups, enhancing gender equality, and ensuring civic participation in the social, political and cultural spheres (UN-Habitat, 2013: 11). The improvement of social inclusion and equity is deep-rooted in the laws that govern the country. Section 30(4) of the constitution states that the state is obliged to respect the right to development and to justify its policies in accordance with this responsibility. Under section 30 (3) the state is therefore required to take measures to introduce reforms aimed at eradicating social injustices and inequalities. Most of the urban areas of Malawi continue to experience cases of social marginalisation and inequality in urban space particularly the urban poor. Some of the blame is placed on zoning of land that separates different classes of people from owning a certain piece of land. Furthermore, those with financial capacity are able to acquire land and register their business with ease because they are either financially stable to cope with the charges or are well connected. The poor are also excluded by virtue of being located away from job and economic opportunities – they have pay more for transport in order to connect to these places.

Social exclusion and inequality is however clearly observed in the allocation of urban resources by national and local government. Informal settlements continue to receive meagre resources in urban budgets in the areas of health, education, water, and roads ostensibly because they are “illegal”. In addition, the poor and the disadvantaged continue to suffer as they are rendered voiceless by the elites

who are able to bribe and influence the authorities (UN-Habitat, 2011). At national level, some urban centres are neglected while others get state financial support especially in urban road construction.

The civil society voice on urban issues has been limited except through the Malawi Urban Forum or individual advocacy projects by local and international professional bodies and NGOs. The GoM has taken steps to support the Malawi Institute of Physical Planners in its drive to establish a network of urban civil society organisations called Malawi Urban Network. So far progress has been with at least six civil society organisation showing interest.<sup>18</sup> It is anticipated that when empowered, the network will lead in advocating for political will, action and funding in the area of urban development and housing.

## **5.6 CHALLENGES EXPERIENCED AND LESSONS LEARNT**

The local councils have for the past years experienced so many challenges in the delivery of basic urban services due to the absence of councillors as the councils were left to work with unrecognized and illegal structures to get developments implemented leading to many consequences including misuse of funds. This is evident in the suspension in early 2015 of some staff at Lilongwe City Council due to misuse of funds after it was found through a series of investigations instituted by the Council's Committee of Human Resources. In the ten years between 2004 and 2014 when there were no councillors, city councils failed to act on city rates defaulters as the by-law to mandate city council to sell the properties subject to city rates defaults was outdated. Councils were thus engaged in lawsuits in the courts of law that had seen them lose millions of Kwacha in the process. Therefore, the local government should endeavour to provide a good platform for the council to properly execute their duties. In addition, election of councillors should also be maintained and not politicised.

Despite the Decentralisation Policy, most line ministries have in practice not fully devolved especially on the areas of budgeting and Land management. These are very crucial for the development of the local councils. The failure to devolve crucial functions has led to conflict among agencies of the central government and local government the most notable example being land management issues. This was evidenced during the stakeholder consultations, particularly in Nkhota-kota where the office of the Director of Planning and Development (DPD) is failing to budget for the Lands Office thinking that the office is supposed to be funded by the MLHUD. Even when it comes to reporting, at Mmbelwa District Council for instance, the Lands Officer reports to both the District Commissioner and the Regional Commissioner for Lands (N) causing a lot of confusion. Besides, during consultations in Mzuzu, the Council's management reported that development budget is not devolved as a result the council has to apply to the central government for funding especially on road maintenance and upgrading. It is however, pleasing to note that the MLHUD, in its functional review process, has made commendable strides to create structures at local level. Political will is needed to provide human and financial resources needed for the structures to fully operate.

There are a number of lessons that have been learnt with regard to the themes discussed above. Firstly, in the absence of councillors, there was inadequate political will to initiate and implement development projects due to the use of unelected groups. In addition, the capacity of the councils to increase revenue

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<sup>18</sup> These include Habitat for Humanity (HfH), Malawi Local Government Association (MALGA), Centre for Community Organisation and Development & urban research Institute (CCODE/URI), Urban Research and Advocacy Centre (Urac), Action Aid Malawi and Malawi Institute of Physical Planners (MIPP)

generation was challenged due to outdated by-laws. Most of the councils had failed to efficiently and effectively prepare and implement plans due to capacity constraints leading to informal settlements, poverty and encroachment on protected areas. Inadequate grass root participation as well as involvement of vulnerable groups in urban development planning process has led to resistance by the locals in plan implementation.

Secondly, the high incidence of crime and theft experienced in urban areas of late has led to human and economic losses. Therefore, there is a need to:

- Reform and increase interaction between the police and community so that trust and confidence is brought back; and
- Intensify police patrols in urban areas.

Thirdly, social exclusion and inequality have led to squatting and increased poverty burden as most of the urban dwellers have been denied basic urban services such as shelter. Encroachment in protected reserves is also partly a result of inequality in urban space posing danger on water and forestry resources.

#### **5.7 FUTURE CHALLENGES AND ISSUES FOR A NEW URBAN AGENDA**

The SDGs call inclusive and sustainable urbanisation, as well as increased capacity for participatory, integrated human settlements planning. The existing participatory frameworks need to be enhanced to facilitate sustainable urbanisation in this country, and this is a challenge for the new urban agenda. Firstly, urban legislation should be harmonised to facilitate sustainable urban land management. The GoM has drafted a Land Bill, the culmination of the NLP 2002, that among other things seeks to empower city, municipal and town councils to improve the use and management of urban land resources. However, there is growing uncertainty as to whether the Land Bill will be enacted into law any time soon given the legislature's recent deferral to table the Land Bill in parliament well over two years after it was stalled in 2013. In addition, a national land use and urbanisation policy is in the process of formulation. A housing policy has already been drafted but is yet to be adopted by government. Finalisation of the proposed national urbanisation policy as well as the adoption of the draft housing policy, ensuring that the Land Bill is enacted, are key issues for the new urban agenda..

On urban governance, the Ward Development Committees (WDC), Area Development Committees (ADC) and the Village Development Committees (VDC) are not budgeted for hence do not have adequate support to effectively plan and implement various development projects. Therefore, there will be a need to budget for community meetings. There will also be a need to advocate for active participation and incorporate human rights watchdogs in urban development process so that public consultation is widely acknowledged and national and local authorities held to account.

The national and local authorities' denial and inadequate attention paid to urban slums will also be another challenge. The perception that informal settlements are "illegal" and therefore do not deserve service provision by government needs to be challenged. Recognising informal settlements through upgrading as stipulated in the NLP will be necessary to provide security of tenure and legal recognition so that the fear for eviction is removed, realizing that informal settlements are an integral part of the

urbanisation process in poor countries like Malawi . In addition, there will also be a need to lobby for more resources to support the Local development Fund (Urban Window) to expand provision of services in informal areas.

Regarding social inclusion and equity, there is need to fully incorporate the needs of the vulnerable in urban planning in a decentralised participatory framework as stipulated in SDG 11.2 – which stipulates that special attention should be given to the needs of the vulnerable when formulating forward plans for sustainable urban transport systems. Therefore, there will be need to ensure that the needs of the vulnerable are incorporated in strategic forward plans for cities.

## **6.0 URBAN ECONOMY**

### **6.1 IMPROVING MUNICIPAL AND LOCAL FINANCE**

The Constitution of Malawi, the National Decentralisation Policy 1998 and the Local Government Act 1998 provide the framework for local government financing in Malawi. To begin with, the Constitution requires the central government to ensure that adequate resources are provided for the effective delivery of devolved functions to local governments. The National Decentralisation Policy provides for the devolution of some central government functions to local authorities. According to O’Neil et al (2014), among the functions devolved from central government to local government were health (responsibility for health centres and maternity clinics,); education (responsibility for nurseries, primary schools and distance education centres); water (responsibility for provision and maintenance of water supplies); and environment (responsibility for burial services, sewerage, environment reclamation and education).

The devolution of the above functions to local governments required, among other things, fiscal and administrative devolution in the form of direct funding allocations from central government to local governments to finance the devolved functions. To implement financial devolution, intergovernmental formulas have been developed to facilitate General Resource Fund (GRF) transfers and Other Recurrent Transactions (ORT) transfers from the National Local Government Committee (NLGC) to local governments. In addition, the central government Treasury Department established cost centres for the devolved functions to facilitate financial transfers from line ministries to local governments, although this has been implemented sluggishly (O’Neil et al, 2014).

The National Decentralisation Policy established the additional sources of revenue for local government, namely locally generated revenue raised local sources such as property rates ground rates, fees, licences, commercial undertakings and service charges; and ceded / non-tax revenue, i.e. tax that central government collects on behalf of local government, such as toll fees, gambling and casino fees, fuel / road levies, motor vehicle registration fees, as well as industrial registration fees.

The Local Government Act 1998 mandates all urban local authorities to charge city rates on properties, local taxes as well as user fees and charges under their by-laws. Section 44(4) of the Local Government Act provides that government will distribute grants to local authorities upon the recommendation of the Local Government Finance Committee (LGFC) in accordance with a formula approved by the parliament. The NLGFC was established in 2001 to administer the financial transfers

to local governments mandated by the National Decentralisation Policy, as well as to support the financial performance of local governments (O’Neil et al, 2014). The Local Development Fund (LDF), a nationwide financing mechanism for local development which integrates government and donor funding in a basket of unconditional grants, provides funding for local development through its “urban window”. Through the LDF, funds are distributed to both urban and rural councils for socio-economic infrastructure development projects ranging from roads construction and maintenance, the provision or upgrade of infrastructure in poorly serviced areas.

Public Private Partnerships (PPPs) are another source of funding for major infrastructure works that is available to local government. The GoM established the Public Private Partnership Commission under the PPP Act in 2011 to facilitate financial collaborations between the public sector and the private sector on major infrastructure projects.

In theory, these measures should financially empower local governments and enable them to adequately discharge their service delivery roles. However, in practice, local governments have been hampered by central government’s failure in some circumstances to honour its obligation to remit all the funds that it is required to remit to local governments to meet their service delivery obligations. There are reports that only a small proportion of the money from taxes and levies such as the fuel levy which by law must be remitted to local government after collection by central government is actually remitted. The result is that almost all councils are financially struggling to meet their obligations to provide new infrastructure and upgrade existing ones. In addition service provision is suffering due to their constrained financial positions. In the absence of councillors between 2004 and 2014, revenue from city rates dwindled because councils were legally constrained from reviewing their city rates upwards in the absence of councillors.

## **6.2 STRENGTHENING AND IMPROVING ACCESS TO HOUSING FINANCE**

Kadale Consultants (2009) state that there are two main types of housing finance that are offered by the formal financial sector, these being mortgages and home improvements.

Housing finance in the formal lending sector can be obtained from the banks as well as employee home ownership schemes, and microfinance institutions. The banks have been active in the provision of housing finance but under strict conditions aimed at screening out suspected defaulters such as those on very low incomes, those without collateral, those not on regular incomes, and those relying on land over which there is no security of tenure. The commercial banks became active in the mortgage finance markets only after the liberalisation of the financial market in 1989. Before then, only the New Building Society was allowed to provide mortgage finance to its clients (Kadale Consultants, 2009).

The Government of Malawi has acted to regulate the housing finance sector, firstly by liberalising the financial markets, thus introducing competition in the mortgage lending sector where for a long time the New Building Society was the only player. In addition, the government introduced a number of financial sector reforms designed to improve financial

sector supervision by the Reserve Bank of Malawi (RBM), which it is hoped “will create a platform for sustainable growth and innovation in the financial sector” (Kadale Consultants, 2009). In addition, the Financial Services Act of 2010 strengthens the legal framework for financial services delivery. Furthermore the Microfinance Act 2010 and the Financial Cooperatives Act 2011 provide for the supervision and regulation of these non-bank mortgage finance providers to protect consumers as well as allow for deposit taking on the part of the microfinance institutions. These measures have brought certainty in the housing finance sector and contributed to institutional growth in the housing finance sector, which in itself means that more and more people are being serviced with housing loans than ever before, although this is still inadequate.

Non-financial institutions have also started providing housing finance, mainly to poor households that cannot meet the strict lending criteria established by the commercial banks. Among the non-financial institutions which have started offering housing finance is the Centre for Community Development (CCODE) a local NGO which was established to support the activities of community savings groups aimed at mobilising finance for low cost housing development (Manda, et al 2011). A community fund, the Mchenga Fund, was established to encourage members to save for housing finance. By 2011, CCODE had issued housing loans to 600 people and 750 houses were constructed in a period of 3 years (Manda, et al, 2011).

Another low income housing finance NGO is Habitat for Humanity (HfH). HfH’s cost recovery model involves “converting the total building cost of each house into an equivalent number of bags of cement which the owner repays by physically replenishing them [the bags of cement] or reimbursing the money when the monthly instalments are due” (Kadale Consultants, 2009, p. 22). Other players in the housing finance sector include the Savings and Credit Cooperative Organisations (SACCO) which are coordinated by the Malawi Union of Savings and Credit Cooperatives, which acts as their main financial backer when a housing loan is made (Nyasulu & Cloete, 2007).

However, despite the legal and policy reforms to facilitate improved access to housing finance, the reality is the majority of urban residents are too poor to access the financial services availed by the commercial banks and microfinance institutions. Due to prevailing poor macro-economic performance, Malawian banks charge exorbitant interest rates, a factor which discourages even middle class citizens from accessing housing loans from banks. Only a very small proportion of the urban population has been able to access housing loans from the commercial banks, due to what are considered to be draconian requirements (UN-Habitat, 2010). As a result, many people opt to build incrementally using their own savings than to approach the banks. As for most of the low income earners, even the micro housing finance option offers limited opportunities as conditions can still be unfavourable to their limited financial capacity. Since the mortgage banks are not prepared to reach out to the low income

groups, the government should establish micro finance housing institutions which can serve the poor with minimal and favourable conditions as is the case in other countries like South Africa.

### **6.3 SUPPORTING LOCAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

The concept of Local Economic Development (LED) refers to an approach to development which is focussed to a local area and its characteristic potentials and challenges from an economic development point of view. The usage of the concept when applied to local urban governments has its origins in the National Decentralisation Policy, which calls for the devolution of functions from the central government to local government.

Apart from the National Decentralisation Policy, the framework for the establishment of LED in Malawi can be traced to the Malawi Growth and Development Strategy 2006-2011, which has “Integrated Rural Development” as one of its five thematic areas aimed at transforming rural economies through the development of a new wave of rural growth centres (Manda, 2014b). The first LED project was approved in 2008 with the aim of empowering local governments and communities to support a demand driven development model with a focus on reviving the economic growth of four new rural growth centres, namely Jenda, Malomo, Chitekesa and Monkey Bay. The major funders of rural growth centres LED project are the World Bank and the African Development Bank. The Local Development Fund manages the project on behalf of the Government of Malawi. The project is designed along four components: Deepening Enterprise Development; Growth Centres Development; Local Authorities Capacity Enhancement; and Technical Support and Knowledge Management (African Development Fund, 2010).

At a national level the government has provided for a LED Forum which operates through an inter-ministerial task force which coordinates government’s efforts in promoting local economic development in the country’s urban centres. At the local level, it is the responsibility of urban and district LED forums and their Technical Task Teams to coordinate LED activities and liaise with central government whenever issues arise. Central government is mandated to create an enabling environment for LED implementation. LED is a multi-stakeholder undertaking which also includes traditional leaders and different community groups in the planning and coordination of economic development activities at a local level. The private sector is also included but its role is to foster competitiveness and growth in the economy.

Apart from the Rural Growth Centres Programme, some of the other LED projects that have been implemented include the Millennium Village Project, One Village One Product Project, and another ADB-sponsored project which is aimed at promoting LED through infrastructure development.

#### 6.4 CREATING DECENT JOBS AND LIVELIHOODS

Though facing many challenges, the GoM has strived to create decent jobs and livelihoods for the poor urban masses through a number of developmental strategies and macro-economic policies principally aimed at poverty reduction and accelerated economic development. In the post-Habitat II era, the GoM has formulated and approved a number of long- and medium-term strategic policies aimed at poverty reduction through job creation and improvement of livelihoods throughout the country.

To begin with, the GoM formulated and approved the first long term development strategy for the nation soon after it was returned to multiparty democracy in 1994, called Vision 2020. Vision 2020 was launched in March 1998. One of the stated goals of Vision 2020 was to achieve sustainable economic growth and development as well as move Malawi to a middle income country by the year 2020 (National Economic Council, 2000). Among other things, Vision 2020 aimed to develop the manufacturing, mining and agricultural sectors to create employment and thus improve livelihoods.

Following Vision 2020, a number of medium term strategic policies aimed at boosting the economy and creating decent jobs for the populace as a means of sustainably reducing poverty have been formulated by the GoM. Firstly, the Malawi Poverty Reduction Strategy (MPRS) Paper was launched in 2002 to address the issue of growing poverty levels in the country. The MPRS was built around four pillars, the first one of which was the promotion of sustainable pro-poor growth. Secondly, in realisation of the fact that poverty levels had not significantly changed and the main macro-economic indicators for the country had remained unsatisfactory, the GoM launched the Malawi Economic Growth Strategy (MEGS) in 2004. The MEGS was aimed at fostering rapid broad-based economic growth by among other things, developing a set of policies that would stimulate private sector investment and trade (GoM, 2006b).

Thirdly, the first Malawi Growth and Development Strategy 2006-2011 (MGDS I) and the second Malawi Growth and Development Strategy 2011-2016 (MGDS II) aim to create wealth through sustainable economic growth and infrastructure development, and to transform the country from a predominantly consuming and importing country to an export-oriented country. Both strategies contain thematic areas which together are considered vital to the socio-economic transformation of the country. Of note is the thematic area of “sustainable economic growth”. Through sustained economic growth, the government aims to deliver on its vision of creating wealth and employment for all as well as on its ultimate goal of transforming Malawi into an industrial nation. Under MGDS I, the GoM was committed to the acceleration of the economic growth rate to at least 6% per annum, as well as diversification of the economy. It was rightly considered that accelerated economic growth would translate into decent jobs and improved livelihoods for all Malawians.

In the face of the early indications of unsatisfactory economic growth indicators during the early MGDS II period, such as scarcity of foreign exchange, declining industrial output due to acute fuel scarcity, and suspension of foreign aid, the new GoM led by President Joyce Banda acted in mid 2012 to formulate and implement the Economic Recovery Plan (ERP). The ERP was a strategy to achieve quick development results for the country by focusing on fewer priorities that are pro-growth. Diversified commercial agriculture, tourism, energy, mining, and infrastructure development were identified as key development sectors to achieve this goal. It should be argued though that there is very little the government is doing to boost the stated key development sectors. For example, there has been a lot talk of commercialising agriculture through the introduction of mechanised farming, irrigation, value added to farm produce, but very little is happening to translate these thoughts into action.

#### **6.5 INTEGRATION OF THE URBAN ECONOMY INTO NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT POLICY**

It is widely held that cities promote economic development and are in fact engines for economic development (Beall, et al, 2010; UN Habitat, 2010; OECD, 2006 and World Bank, 2009). The World Bank goes further to assert that no country has ever developed into a middle income economy without first industrialising and urbanising (World Bank, 2009). However, this generalisation does not reflect the economic reality of some African cities. It is observed that in Africa, urbanisation has not necessarily gone hand in hand with economic growth, employment, and higher living standards; and that a number of African cities, Malawian cities inclusive, have urbanised rapidly without matching economic growth, leading to pervasive urban poverty in a phenomenon referred to as the “urbanisation of poverty” (UN Habitat, 2013b; UN-Habitat, 2010).

Segregated data that highlights the contribution of Malawi’s urban centres to Gross Domestic Product (GDP) is not readily available. It is therefore difficult to estimate with accuracy how much Malawi’s cities contribute to the national GDP. However, from the recent “GDP by Activity” data published by the NSO in January 2015, it is possible to give a very rough estimate of the contribution of Malawi’s cities to GDP on the basis of the typical locational characteristics (i.e. whether typically rural or urban) for each activity (see Table 8 below).

**Table 8: GDP by economic activity classified as typically urban, 2013 (Mk’Million)**

<b>Item</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>2013 Contribution to GDP Mk’Million</b>	<b>% of 2013 Total GDP*</b>
<b>C</b>	Manufacturing	163,572.1	8.6
<b>D + E</b>	Electricity, gas and water	22,575.7	1.2
<b>F</b>	Construction	87,398.2	5
<b>G</b>	Wholesale and retail trade	337,585.9	18
<b>H</b>	Transport and storage	52,315.4	3

Item	Description	2013 Contribution to GDP Mk'Million	% of 2013 Total GDP*
I	Accommodation and food services	33,064.9	1.74
J	Information and communication	61,458.3	3
K	Financial and insurance services	114,370.1	6
L	Real estate activities	181,380.3	10
M+N	Professional, scientific and technical activities	3,999.2	0.2
O	Public Administration and defence	38,256	2.01
<b>Total GDP – All urban activities</b>		<b>1,095,976.1</b>	<b>58.54%</b>

\*The 2013 gross total national GDP was estimated at MK1, 901,103,000. The percentages for each activity are calculated against the GDP.

Source: NSO, 2015. *National Accounts Handbook – January 2015*.

It can be seen in Table 8 that the combination of economic activities that can be classified as predominantly urban amounted to a total contribution of MK1,095,976,100 to the national GDP in 2013, and accounted for well over half (58.54%) of the national GDP. This means that despite the economic problems associated with rapid urbanisation, Malawi's urban centres made a significant contribution to the national GDP in 2013. In the new urban agenda, there is a need to fully integrate urban economies to the overall development of this country.

The potential for cities to foster national economic development calls for policies which seek to integrate urban economies into national development policy. However, Malawi's development agenda has since gaining political independence in 1964 been focused on rural development due to the agro-based nature of the economy. The GoM has historically not had a coherent urbanisation policy for the country. However, realising that the country is urbanising rapidly, the GoM through the Ministry of Lands, Housing and Urban Development commissioned a study into the situation of urbanisation in Malawi in early 2013 (Manda, 2013). The study forms the basis for the formulation of a national urbanisation policy which is currently being drafted.

In addition, the GoM re-launched the Rural Growth Centres (RGC) project in 2005 after the first wave of growth centres implemented between 1979 and 1991 were discontinued due to poor performance and fighting over the selection of centres, factors which led to the main donor's withdrawal of funding (Manda, 2014). The RGC project seeks to integrate urban

economies into national development policy by focusing on enhancing the trickle down developmental effects of targeted rural centres.

## **6.6 CHALLENGES EXPERIENCED AND LESSONS LEARNT IN THESE AREAS**

There are a number of challenges that have been experienced in the areas discussed above. Firstly, improving municipal/ local finance has been problematic due to a combination of factors. To begin with, the lack of councillors in the city and district councils since 2004 until the 2014 tripartite elections adversely affected revenue collection for councils. To be able to raise revenue, such as from city rates, market fees, business fees, among others, Councils are required to pass by-laws to legitimise such fees. In the absence of councillors, it became problematic to raise revenue as councils lacked legal mandate (O'Neil, T., et al, 2014).

Secondly, although the decentralisation policy empowers local councils to benefit from the transfer of funds from central government to local governments to financially empower local councils, in reality the process is fraught with challenges which unfairly disadvantage local councils. The transfer of funding to local government is haphazard and falls short of agreed criteria. Whilst the Local Government Act mandates that 5% of government discretionary funding be directed to Councils, in the 2013/14 budget, only 3.9% of total government expenditure was budgeted to be transferred to local government (O'Neil, et al, 2014).

Thirdly, local governments face limited fiscal autonomy when it comes to tax collection. Only a small proportion of taxes collected by central government on behalf of local government are remitted to local government. For example, O'Neil, et al (2014) report that in 2009/2010, only 2% of the taxes collected on behalf of local government were actually remitted to local government. This obviously hampers the ability for urban councils to undertake various capital works programmes to improve city living.

In the area of housing finance, very few people are able to access housing loans due to low incomes, and collateral demands which exclude the employed. Most urban dwellers are poor and live in informal settlements where they have no title to the land they occupy to use as collateral. In addition, a financial access survey carried out in 2009 revealed that only 43.8% of urban dwellers have bank accounts and 39.9% are completely excluded from any form of financial credit access (Kadale Consultants, 2009). Accommodating the housing needs of the poor urban dwellers who have no bank accounts or live in informal settlements is an ongoing challenge. Only two NGO lenders, Habitat for Humanity and CCODE, offer housing construction loans to community members without requesting collateral by relying on pre-existing savings groups and social collateral within the community (Kadale Consultants, 2009). However, the demand for their services is too high owing to the large number of low income earners waiting to access their services.

There are many lessons that have been learnt from the five sub-themes discussed above. Firstly, devolution of financial services to local governments has been incomplete even though it has been almost twenty years after the National Decentralisation Policy was approved in 1996. Financial disbursements from central government to local government have been haphazard and have not met agreed criteria under the Local Government Finance Committee framework. A key lesson that has been learnt is that without an enabling law, policy can easily be subverted. Secondly, in the area of housing finance, access to housing for the poor urban masses will not be achieved unless government moves to assist councils with more funding for pro-poor social housing schemes, such as the Traditional Housing Areas (THAs), but with more oversight to avoid THAs from being infiltrated by the middle and higher income groups. This would ensure access to serviced low income housing plots to accommodate the housing needs for the poor in the burgeoning urban settlements.

### **6.7 FUTURE CHALLENGES AND ISSUES FOR A NEW URBAN AGENDA**

SDG 11.a broadly provides for support towards the economic development of cities as a strategy to enhance regional and national development. This is an important issue for the new urban agenda. There are a number of future challenges in the areas of improving municipal / local finance, strengthening and improving access to housing finance, supporting local economic development, creating decent jobs and livelihoods, and integration of the urban economy into national development policy that will need to be addressed in the new urban agenda for the country.

Firstly, the challenges that are currently being experienced in implementing the government's Decentralisation Policy, especially in the area of financial transfers from central government to local government, are likely to continue unless the current legislation is revisited. For example, central government collects a suite of certain taxes, such as the fuel levy, motor vehicle registration fees, among others, on behalf of local government, with the expectation that the funds would be remitted to local government in total. However, this does not often happen. O'Neill, et al (2014) reveals that in 2009/2010, for example, only 2% of such taxes were transferred to local governments.

The future challenge to improving access to housing finance lies in the profit-oriented nature of commercial banks which play a central role in facilitating access for mortgage finance to urban dwellers. To safeguard their lending capital, commercial banks must ensure that the borrower is capable of repaying the loan. The imposition of strict lending criteria that require collateral and security before a mortgage loan can be granted is likely to continue if Malawian banks are to avoid the financial crisis that hit America as a result of relaxed mortgage lending criteria. The government will have to find alternative ways to facilitate access to housing finance to poor urban dwellers from the non-banking sector.

Notwithstanding the government's best efforts to create decent jobs and improve livelihoods, the achievement of these goals will continue to be elusive because of the escalating levels of urban poverty and the structural weaknesses in Malawi's economy. Reviews of the MGDS's have been mixed, with the rate of economic growth during the MGDS I period from 2006 to 2011 averaging 7% per annum which exceeded the targeted 6% growth (UNESCO, 2010; Norad, 2014). However, economic growth in the MGDS II period declined to 1.8% per annum in 2013/2014 due to a decline in tobacco and uranium revenues. This rate of growth is far below the 6.9% which was projected in the MGDS II (Norad, 2014). Such macro-economic variations are common in Malawi, thus affecting the sustainable facilitation of job creation and improved livelihoods. This is an issue that requires serious consideration in the new urban agenda for Malawi.

A coherent national urbanisation policy to clearly articulate strategies to integrate the urban economy into the national development policy is required to set the country's urbanisation on a new path of sustainable economic development. The future challenge is that the policy, which for the first time in this country's history seeks to raise the profile of urbanisation vis-a-vis the country's economic growth, is likely to attract its fair share of critics who are enamoured with the historical rural bias of the country's development strategies. Like the National Land Policy before it, the proposed National Urbanisation Policy and its proposed companion legislation is likely to face challenges in being adopted and approved by government.

## **7.0 HOUSING AND BASIC SERVICES**

### **7.1 SLUM UPGRADING AND PREVENTION**

Informal settlements and slums have been a major problem in the urban areas in Malawi. The slum dwellers live under poor housing conditions, poor sanitation, poor or non-existent infrastructure services, as well as lack security of tenure. MDG 7 target 11 calls for a significant improvement in the lives of at least 100 million people globally. The proportion of people living in slums has declined from nearly 90% in 2005 to about 68% in 2009, 66% in 2010, 65.1% in 2013 and an estimated 64.3% by 2015 (GoM 2010; GoM 2014). The decrease in the proportion of slum dwellers has been attributed to the low cost government housing initiatives that have enabled a number of people to afford modest accommodation, as well as in the number of strategies which government has put in place in conjunction with multilateral agencies to upgrade slums and improve the conditions of life in slums, such as the UN-Habitat funded Participatory Slum Upgrading Programme and the "Cities Without Slums" initiative (GoM 2010; GoM 2014). Despite the decrease in the proportion of slum dwellers, the actual population of slum dwellers was estimated to have increased from approximately 1 million in 1990, to about 2.6 million in 2009 (GoM, 2010). However, there is an indication that the number of slum dwellers may have decreased from 2.6 million in 2009 to roughly 2.0 million in 2014, given the estimated urban population of 2,710,000 in 2014 and the assertion by Nkhoma and Jameson (2014) that 75% of the urban dwellers in Malawi live in slums or informal settlements. Nevertheless, it is worth noting that Englund (2002) found that the growth of slums escalated after the onset of multiparty

democratic rule in 1994 as a result of opportunistic utterances by politicians which gave the impression to the urban masses occupying the informal settlements that there would be no evictions in the multiparty era.

Even though upgrading has been a preferred solution towards improving the lives of slum dwellers, Njamwea (2003) argues that upgrading is expensive and donor dependent. Furthermore, planners think slum upgrading will set precedence for squatting and view slums as the cause of the problems in the urban areas (UN-Habitat, 2010). However, politicians look at these areas as potential sources of votes, and have in the process tacitly legitimised their informal occupation of urban space. Slum prevention is difficult to realize in Malawi because it requires prior urban planning and implementation of the urban zoning and layout plans which require human, material and financial resources.

It should be noted however that the term “slum prevention” is discouraged at international level because it is a quite ambitious terminology which cannot be achieved based on the complexity of the subject. Further, it is feared that it may encourage governments to start victimising people living in informal settlements yet these (informal settlements) are the only housing/human settlements option for most urban dwellers especially the poor in most cities of the developing countries. In this case, the Malawi government’s approach has not been “slum prevention” but “slum or informal settlement reduction”. To achieve this, the government has continued with the sites-and-services (THA) approach by devolving the responsibility for delivery to the urban authorities, although financial constraints and long processes of land acquisition from government are hampering efforts to deliver pro-poor housing.

The defunct Secondary Centres Development Programme (SCDP) that developed infrastructure and facilities and upgraded informal settlements was the major slum upgrading initiative. By the time of its closure in 2007, the SCDP had upgraded nearly 10, 000 plots in 8 urban centres. Its concept has since been incorporated in the Local Development Fund (urban window). In addition, UN-Habitat in partnership with the Ministry of Local Government implemented slum upgrading programmes since 2010 in the country’s four major cities of Blantyre, Lilongwe, Mzuzu and Zomba.. The PSUP was launched by UN-Habitat in 2008 and aims to improve the lives of slum dwellers by addressing the five areas of disadvantage that characterise slums, such as inadequate water, poor sanitation, substandard housing, overcrowding and tenure insecurity. Currently, PSUP is in its third phase in Malawi with a 2009-2015 funding of \$500,000. Efforts are also being made to prevent slums by reserving more land for low income earners in urban plans so as to enable them to settle in planned areas even though most of these plots are frequently allocated to middle and high income earners. As a way to speed up this initiative, the government started implementing a Decent and Affordable Housing Subsidy Project (DAHSP) in 2015 where the project beneficiaries will either access a complete house or cement or iron sheets for the construction of decent houses.

# Agony of life in urban slums

AJUSSA LEONARD  
STAFF WRITER

When Rose Adam received Estere Billy's family as new tenants in her house in Manje, Blantyre, she thought they would come and go as did the others in the past. That was in 2010, and now Billy's family has blended into her own, erasing the landlord-tenant boundaries in the process.

And it is not because they have bonded well, or anything of that sort. Billy is too poor to pay the K2 000 monthly rentals such that Adam has just taken in the family and rented out the house that Billy used to live in.

A mother of five, Billy comes from James Village, Traditional Authority Mabuka in Mulanje. She has no formal education and is not sure of her age.

Her first husband died a few years back, leaving her with two children. She later remarried and bore three more children.

In 2010, she and her second husband moved to Blantyre and sought tenancy at the Adams. They paid a monthly rent of K2 000.

However, two years later, the husband went for another woman in Milepa, Chiradzulu, leaving Billy with the burden of fending for five hungry mouths and rentals to pay.

As if that was not enough, her niece, who is also a single mother, came to stay with her, adding two extra mouths to the already hard-to-solve food equation.

"Seeing no hope in sight to make ends meet, I started moving around people's homes in the vicinity, doing all kinds of available piece works—sweeping, laundry, fetching river sand. Anything to earn me some money," Billy says.

Her catchment area stretches from Soche-Manje to the Homeless Federation (popularly known as Fede) up to Angelo Goveya. All is fish that comes to her net and she has no qualms about what kind of work she has to do.



Billy's family with their good Samaritan (In a blue head-wrap)



Billy: I leave it all to God

Although she continues to do that, she says some days are gloomy as she returns home empty handed. "My children understand this and on such days, we go to sleep on empty stomachs," says Billy.

Raising money for rentals and food has

been tough for her. This situation moved her landlord to eventually take her into her four-bedroomed house which already had six occupants. With Billy's family, the number of people in the house is now 14.

Billy works all day, everyday saying: "If I

stay home to rest, things get worse so I would rather go in search of money."

She wakes up at 4am, does some household chores like fetching water, cleaning utensils and sweeping the yard before she leaves for work around six in the morning.

"I go around asking for work and when I am done in good time, I move on in search of more. Depending on the work, I make between K150 and K500 per day," she says.

On the day of the interview, Billy had just returned from Kapeni Demonstration Primary School where she was ferrying sand from a nearby river.

"As a mother, I am always thinking of how my children are doing, but I cannot afford to stay at home because if I do, what will we eat?" she asks.

After a long day chasing odd-jobs, night brings its own issues. The 14 people in Adam's household start looking at what to eat and where

to sleep. Some sleep in the living room, others sleep in the bedrooms, corridors and the kitchen.

Adam says although it is tough accommodating all the people but they need her help.

"I could not just sit and watch the family suffer, so I just took them in. She no longer pays rentals and she is free to stay for as long as she needs me. I know it is a struggle being a mother with no reliable source of income. Kubeleka nkumodzi," says Adam.

Out of Billy's five children, 17-year-old Anne who is the eldest and in Form One at Limbe Community Night School, also helps with piece work.

"The money I get from doing the piece works contributes to Anne's fees. I do not know how

I will raise fees for next term, but I will try my best because she has to get educated. Maybe she can bail us out of our poverty in future," says Billy.

Anne uses her money to clothe herself and her siblings, who include her 14-year-old brother Zimveka who dropped out of school in Standard Four and is now more of a street beggar, 10-year-old Isaac who is in Standard Two at Kapeni, Precious in Standard One and four year-old Joseph.

Billy is not sure about the future.

"I leave it all to God. I just pray that my children will grow and have a better life than mine," she says.

This raises the question: Given her standards of living, what kind of future do her children have? ■

## FEEDBACK

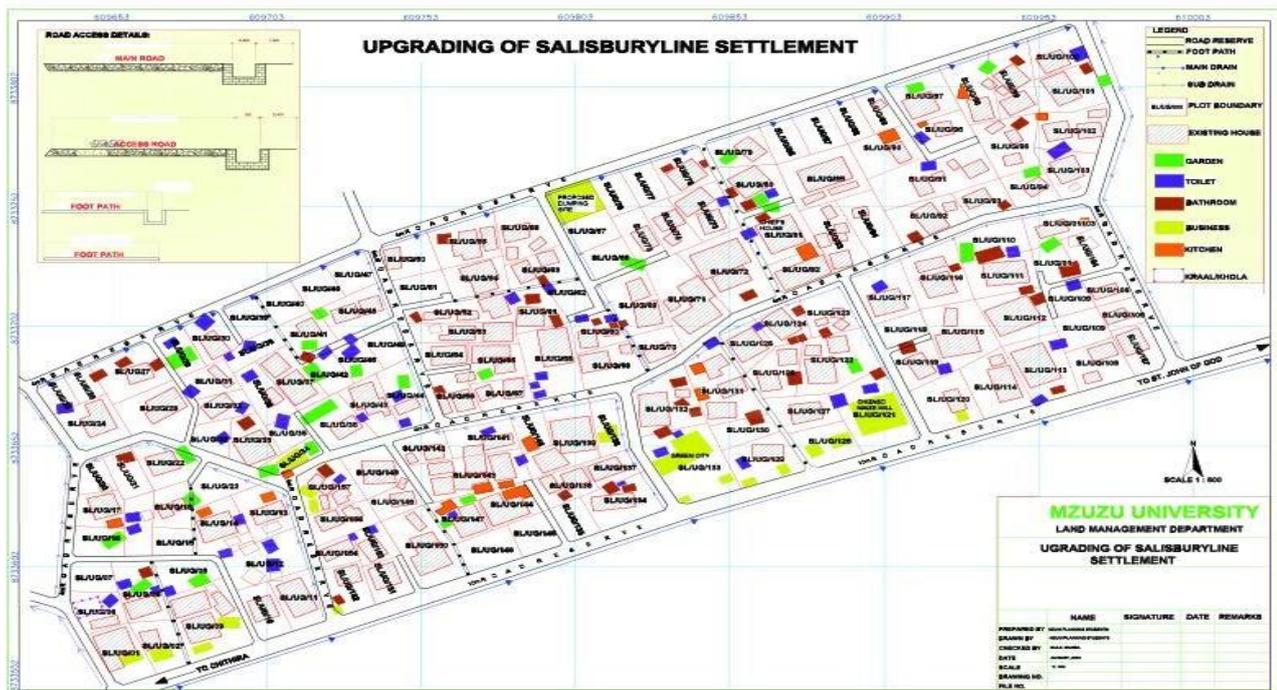
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Source: 'The Nation', Friday, February 20, 2015

Slum upgrading is a major subject in the Malawi university curricula. Through community planning studios university planning students at Mzuzu University and Polytechnic of University of Malawi work with local communities to devise strategies on urban upgrading thereby not only building community capacity to participate but also practical knowledge for students on slum causes and conditions. Government has undertaken to support city councils in the implementation of such upgrade plans (See figure 12) prepared through these university-community studios.

Figure 12: Salisbury line Upgrade Plan in Mzuzu; Source: Mzuzu University, 2012



Source: Courtesy of Mzuzu University Land Management Department, 2014

## 7.2 IMPROVING ACCESS TO ADEQUATE HOUSING

Access to adequate housing remains a major problem for most of the households in Malawi. Habitat Agenda especially paragraph 6.1 calls for the full and progressive realization of the right to adequate housing realising that the right to housing involves issues of secure tenure, equity, prevention of eviction, elimination of homelessness and participation (GoM, 2006). It further state that access to safe and healthy shelter is essential to a person's physical, psychological, social and economic well-being and should be a fundamental part of national and international action. The right to adequate housing as a basic human right is enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. Despite this, it is estimated that at the present time, at least 1 billion people do not have access to safe and healthy shelter and that if appropriate action is not taken, this number will increase dramatically by the end of the century and beyond (UNSD, 1992).

The type of structure of urban dwelling units can reflect potential correlates like income levels and access to important utilities (NSO, 2008: 51). According to NSO (2012), 57% of the households in urban areas live in permanent dwellings. Housing conditions in Traditional Housing Areas (THAs) are generally poor and basic services such as potable water and proper sanitation are often lacking.

**Figure 13: Mgone Squatter Settlement, Lilongwe**



*Source: Alma Consult, Urban Dwellers Survey 2015*

The original intention to provide water-borne sanitation in these areas within a decade of their creation turned out to be unrealistic. Equally unrealistic was the assumption that plots needed only enough room for two pit latrines, based on a density of around six people per plot but in practice plots accommodate between 9 and 14 people in major cities (NSO, 2012). Furthermore, the quality of building materials in both urban and rural areas is poor. For example, the 2008 census shows that overall, only 20.8% of houses in Malawi had cement floors and that 67.3% of urban and 12.5% of rural had cement floors. The situation was no better for other parameters such as roofing materials with 70.6% countrywide being grass thatch (urban 21.6%) (NSO, 2010).

However, steps have been taken by government and NGOs to develop decent housing. For example, CCODE has secured land to build houses for organised urban communities as shown in table (Table 9)

**Table 9: Number of Plots Secured by CCODE in Some Urban Centres in Malawi**

Urban Centres	Number of Plots Secured
Mzuzu	600
Karonga	30
Salima	100
Blantyre	950
Zomba	200
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,880</b>

*Source: CCODE, 2008*

The national government works with Malawi Housing Corporation (MHC) to construct new housing units in the major cities. Table 10 shows number of houses constructed by MHC in some urban centres.

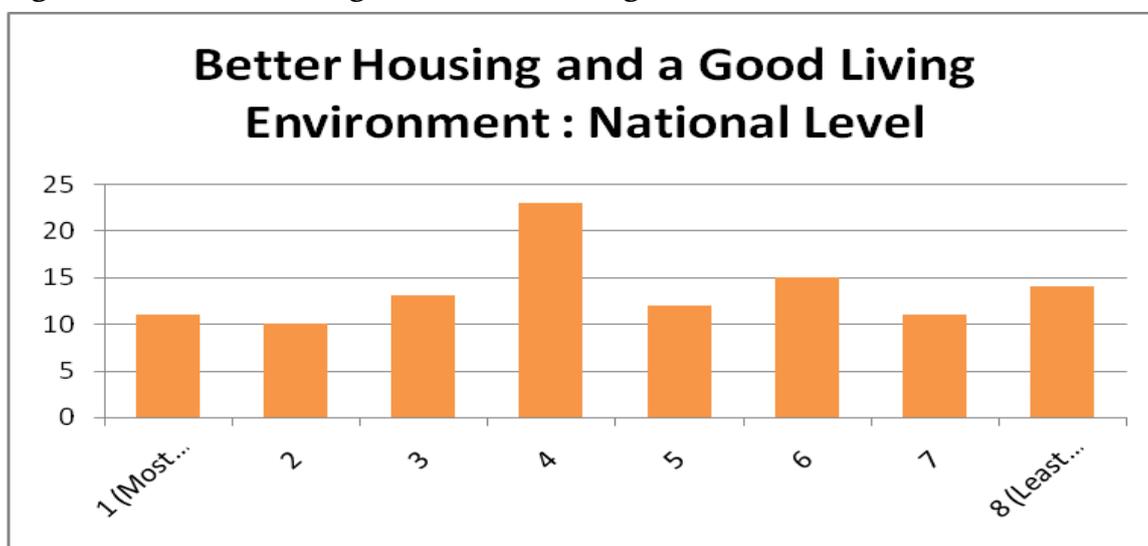
**Table 10: Number of Houses Constructed by MHC in Some Urban Centres.**

Urban Centres	Number of Housing Units
Blantyre	6,043
Lilongwe	3,369
Mzuzu	975
Zomba	1,279
<b>Total</b>	<b>11,666</b>

Source: Malawi Urban Housing Sector Profile (UN-Habitat), 2010

Regarding stakeholders’ perception on urban housing during the consultations, at national level, only 10% of the respondents considered “better housing and a good living environment” as their most important issue towards a better urban future (see Figure 14). Many respondents (21%) considered “better housing and a good living environment” as their fourth important issue towards a better urban future. These perceptions of course do not reflect the official position on the importance of better housing and a good living environment in urban areas. The Malawi Urban Housing Sector Profile (UN-Habitat, 2010) clearly identifies a need for more and better urban housing, identifying a demand for 21,000 new dwellings each year and the need for more low cost housing built according to appropriate standards of servicing.

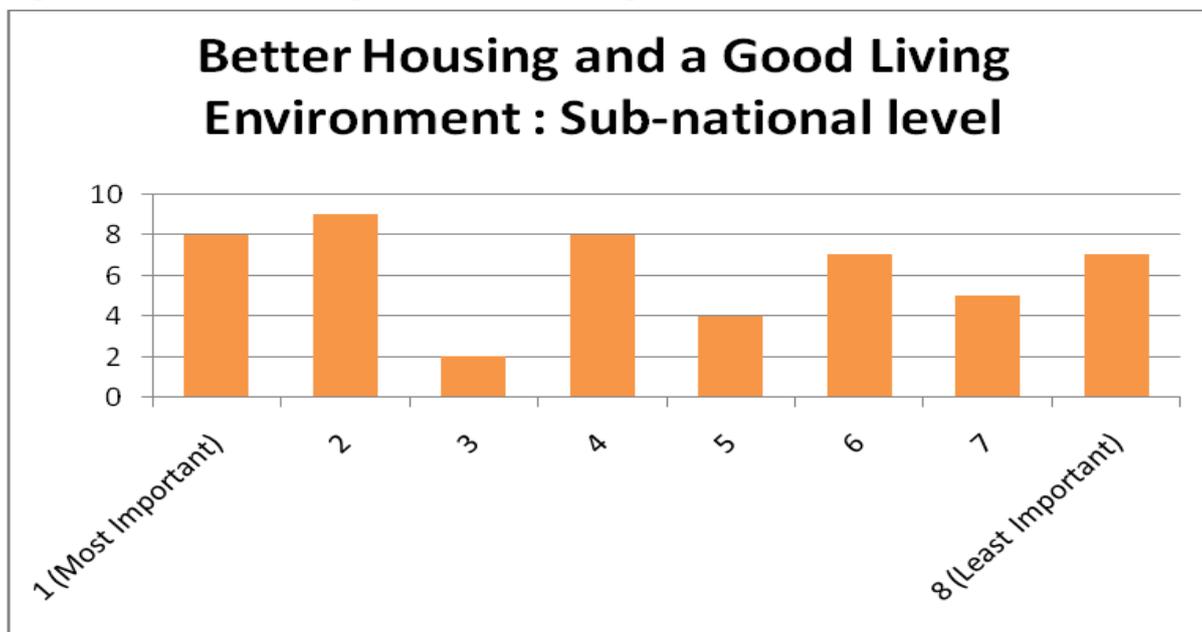
**Figure 14: Better Housing and a Good Living Environment**



Source: Urban dweller interviews 2015

At sub-national level, the percentage of people who chose better housing and a good living environment as their most important issue towards a better urban future rose to 16% whereas another 16% considered it their fourth most important issue (see Figure 15).

**Figure 15: Better Housing and a Good Living Environment**



Source: *Urban dweller interviews 2015*

Among the HAPs, 23% of the experts indicated that “housing and a better living environment” was the most important issue towards a better urban future while 24% said that housing and a better living environment was the least important issue towards a better urban future.

### **7.3 ENSURING SUSTAINABLE ACCESS TO SAFE DRINKING WATER**

Sustainable access to safe drinking water is a major public health requirement. Safe drinking water means water of acceptable quality and quantity for hygienic purposes (Millennium Project, 2004). The importance of access to safe drinking water is underlined by the fact that it is one of the goals of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and the Malawi Growth and Development Strategy (MGDS). MDG 7 target 10 and 11 aspire to reduce by half the population without access to safe water and sanitation by 2015. The Malawi Growth and Development Strategy (MGDS) calls for the increase in accessing safe water within 500m distance for all people, and thereby ensuring that basic water requirements of every Malawian are met while the country’s natural ecosystem is enhanced. The committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights of the United Nations Economic and Social Council stated through the general comment number 15 that the human right to water entitles everyone to sufficient, safe, acceptable, physically accessible and affordable water for personal and domestic uses (Millennium Project, 2004).

The water supply and sanitation sector review undertaken in 1998, gave priority to capacity building, coordination and management information systems as the main driving forces (strategies) towards the provision of safe drinking water. According to NSO (2012), in urban areas, access to safe drinking water is defined as piped into dwelling, piped into plot or communal standpipe. The provision of safe water in urban communities is dominated by the kiosk system. The kiosk system was introduced to ensure regular and affordable supply in traditional housing areas and squatter settlements when the government launched the Urban Communal Water Point Project in 1981 (Manda, 2009).

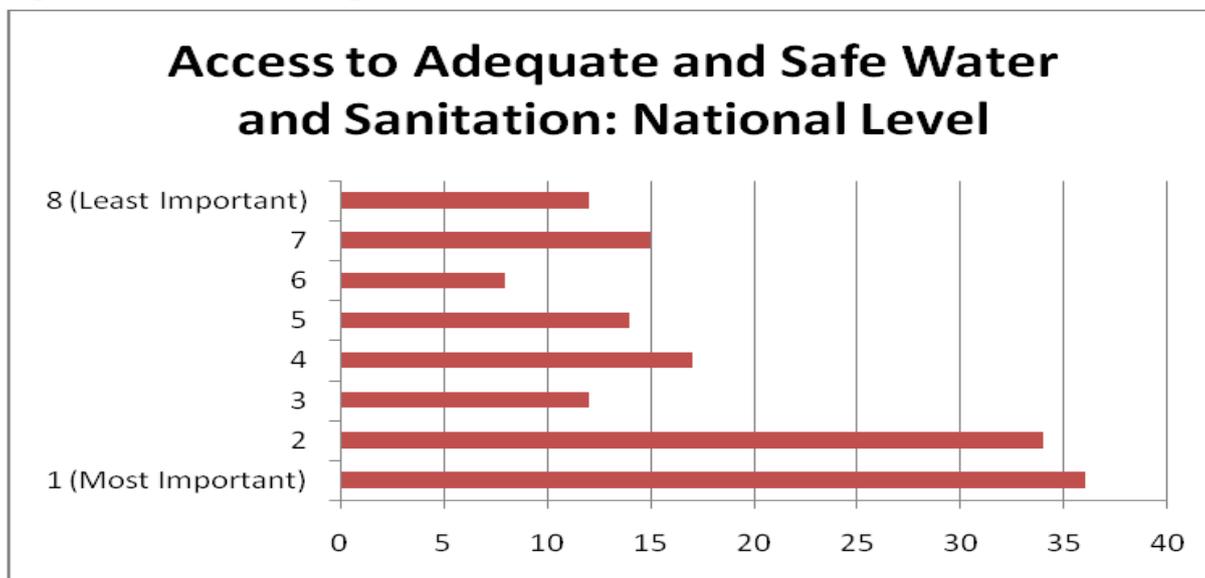
On the whole, the government policies which seek to facilitate access to safe water for all Malawians appear to have achieved the desired goals. According to the NSO (2012, p. 117), a household is classified as having access to safe drinking water “if the source of water is piped into a dwelling, piped into a yard or plot, communal stand pipe, protected well in a yard or plot, protected public well, borehole in rural areas, tanker, truck or bowser, and bottled water”. As noted above, MDG 7 targets 10 and 11 aspire to reduce by half the population without access to safe drinking water and sanitation by 2015. The government’s *2014 Millennium Development Goals Report* (GoM, 2014, p. 38) reports that Malawi is one of the countries in Sub-Saharan Africa “which have performed above the regional average in terms of the proportion of the population that have gained access to improved water source.” The percentage of the population with access to safe water has therefore increased from 79% in 2010 to 86.2% in 2013. It was projected in 2014 that by 2015, the proportion of the population with access to improved water source would have increased to 92%, surpassing the MGDs target of 74%. Likewise, the proportion of the population with access to basic sanitation has risen from 72.4% in 2012 to 95.1% in 2013.

However, it should be noted that these are national figures and those for urban areas portray a slightly different picture. Urban statistics show that the proportion of the urban population with access to safe drinking water rose from 90% in 1996 to 96.2% in 2006, but this declined sharply to 78.8% in 2013 (refer to Section 9 of this Report under “Selected Urban Indicators for Malawi”). Likewise, the proportion of the urban population with adequate sanitation declined from 97.3% in 2006 to 86.7% in 2013. A number of factors could explain the relative underperformance of the urban sector in respect of the two parameters. Firstly, urban water authorities are failing to cope with the increasing demand for safe drinking water in urban areas due to rapid urbanisation and capacity issues. This factor is acknowledged in the *2014 Millennium Development Goals Report*. The situation is more pronounced in the two biggest cities of Lilongwe and Blantyre, respectively, where water rationing and cuts are very common. Secondly, the proliferation of squatter settlements arising from rapid urbanisation has resulted in more people in urban areas facing water deprivation as these settlements are characterised by poor water and sanitation conditions.

Housing delivery is effective with safe water and sanitation. However, there is a very low coverage level which affects the majority of urban populations to rely on unsafe water sources. Despite significant investment at national level, most of the progress has been targeted at rural boreholes. In urban areas, the population with piped water inside house or on the plot increased by only 0.3% from 36% in 1987 to 36.3% in 2008 (Manda, 2009).

Urban dweller surveys show that 36% in Blantyre, Lilongwe and Mzuzu consider access to adequate and safe water and sanitation was the most important issue towards a better urban future whilst only 12% saw access to adequate and safe water and sanitation was the least important issue. 33% of the respondents chose access to adequate and safe water and sanitation as the second most important issue towards a better urban future (see Figure 16).

**Figure 16: Access to adequate and safe water and sanitation: National level**



*Source: Urban dweller interviews 2015*

The challenge to expand delivery of safe drinking water in urban areas is compounded by the low capacity of water utilities to provide adequate water in the cities. For example, in Mzuzu City nearly 30% of the population lacks reticulated water supply. Inadequate water and sanitation facilities will lead to the deterioration of the urban environment, increasing the disease burden on the urban poor. However, the roles and inter-relationships of players in water provision are unclear and the sector is fragmented, making planning and implementation difficult (NSO, 2012). The lack of coordination contributes to the failure to deliver safe water suppliers to people living in poverty. The cost of safe drinking is another major challenge for urban dwellers to access safe drinking water in urban areas as kiosk users tend to pay more than higher income groups. Furthermore, about 43% of the communal water kiosks operating in the informal settlements are not functional due to vandalism and low water pressure (UN-Habitat, 2011). Water supply is also hampered by lack of resources by the Water Boards to improve and maintain its water supply infrastructure. Nearly all urban centres experience water shortages day-long, sometimes for weeks.

Lilongwe, Blantyre, Zomba and Mzuzu cities have benefited from the National Water Development Programme II funded by the World Bank, the International Development Association, and the Malawi Peri-Urban Water and Sanitation Project (MPUWSP) of the European Union/ European Investment Bank (EIB) aimed at improving water services in the urban and peri-urban areas (UN-Habitat, 2012). The Project is aimed at rehabilitation of the existing water system and expanding the provision of portable water to urban and peri-urban areas. In Mzuzu City, new water treatment plants have been constructed at Kaning'ina, Katawa, Dunduzu and Nkhorongo.

**Figure 17: A community water kiosk in Lilongwe**



*Source: Alma Consult, 2015*

**Figure 17: An open well**



*Source: Alma Consult, 2015, Urban Dwellers Survey*

#### **7.4 ENSURING SUSTAINABLE ACCESS TO BASIC SANITATION AND DRAINAGE**

Sanitation and drainage are very crucial for the healthy development of the citizenry. The Draft National Sanitation Policy adopts two principles as having equal importance in the advancement of national sanitation and public health. These are access to safe sanitation for all, and adoption of safe hygiene behaviour for all (Manda, 2009, p. 21). The policy addresses issues of solid waste and effluent disposal from septic tanks, sewerage systems and commercial enterprises with the emphasis on recycling where possible. Under chapter III of the Malawi Constitution, section 13 (d), the state should manage the environment responsibly in order to prevent degradation and provide for a healthy living and working environment for all in Malawi. Local councils are charged with ensuring the provision of good sanitation in all the residential areas under the Local Government Act (1998). Safe sanitation is very crucial for avoiding the spread of diseases and also promoting privacy and dignity. Solid waste disposal is grossly inadequate in urban areas. In Blantyre, it served only 12% of the households leaving out all the informal settlement and Traditional Housing Areas (UN-Habitat, 2011).

There is a very weak institutional capacity and a lack of equipment and financing towards the sanitation sector. The operation of waste collection is badly affected by a lack of access roads in many urban areas. During consultations, most participants said that waste skips are no longer been emptied due to lack of transport and poor roads. Furthermore, continued reliance on septic tanks and pit latrines in most urban centres has been of growing concern. The unavailability of main sewer system despite increase in the number of urban residents has also been a problem. Mzuzu City Council, with funding from European Union is constructing conventional landfill at Msilo. Plan Malawi is also implementing an Urban Sanitation and Hygiene Project in all the four cities of Malawi. The project is aimed at improving access to sanitation and hygiene facilities by among others, making sure that every school and household has good sanitary facilities as well as conducting sanitation and hygiene awareness campaigns. The Lilongwe City Council is also implementing a Waste for Wealth Project in Area 25 and Mtandire (UN-Habitat, 2010).

However, safe sanitation remains a challenge. Manda (2009) found out that Blantyre had 10% of residents served by a sewer system and 9% of the Lilongwe population was served by a sewerage system while Mzuzu has no sewer system. In addition, in Lilongwe, 71% of the city's population uses pit latrines. With regard to solid waste, Palamuleni (2002) noted that only 30% solid waste is collected in Lilongwe, 28% in Blantyre and 8% in Mzuzu. In the peri-urban areas, there is hardly any waste collection giving serious ground-water implications.

**Figure 18: a Drain and a Toilet in Kawale, Lilongwe.**



*Source: Alma Consult, 2015.*

## **7.5 IMPROVING ACCESS TO CLEAN DOMESTIC ENERGY**

Hydro-electricity, the main source of energy in Malawi, is a clean source of energy followed by solar energy. Average household consumption in urban areas is one of the highest in Africa, registering above 2500 kWh per annum (GoM, 2009, p.1). Urban areas account for 20% in electricity connections (NSO, 2012). Respective connection at city levels stand only at 42%, 23%, 39% and 44% of the population in Mzuzu, Lilongwe, Zomba and Blantyre, respectively (UN-Habitat, 2012, p. 125).

As a way to increase power generation, production and supply the Government of Malawi is currently implementing a Millennium Challenge Cooperation Project that is aimed at assisting the distribution and rehabilitation of infrastructure with funding from the Millennium Challenge Account. In addition, some smaller urban centres such as Jenda (Mzimba), Phalula (Balaka), and Dwambazi (Nkhota-kota) are connected to electricity through the Malawi Rural Electrification Programme (MAREP). In Mzuzu, the Centre for Renewable Energy Technology of Mzuzu University undertakes research in wind and solar energy as an alternative energy use because electricity has proved to be expensive and unreliable due to the effects of climate change and disasters. However, research into clean energy sources is limited by financial constraints and very few greener alternative sources of energy are

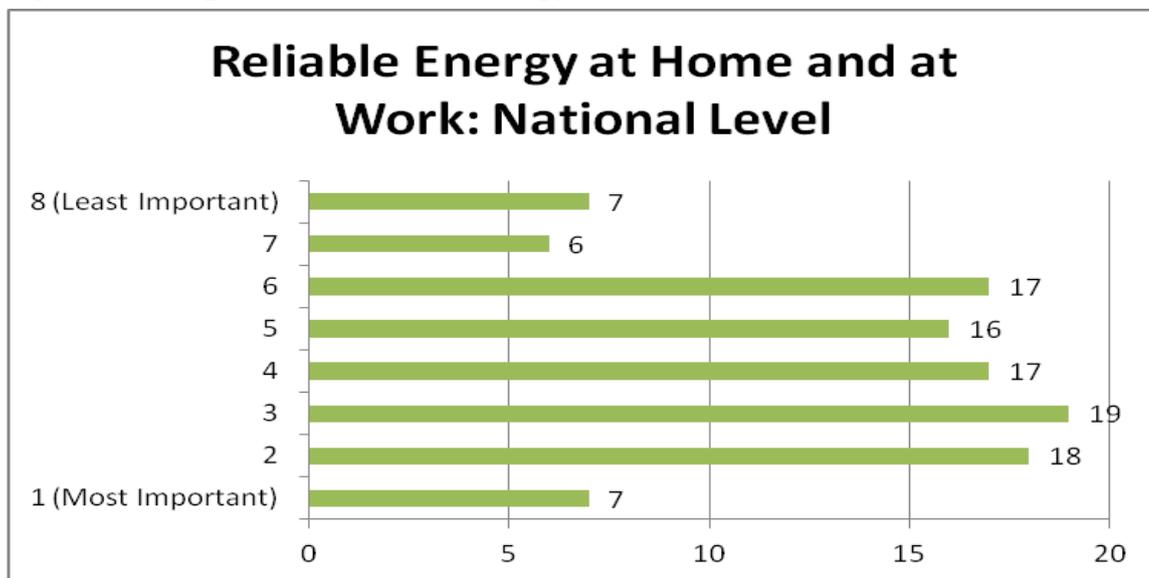
available on the market, although it should be noted that solar energy is gaining prominence as a greener alternative energy source.

Unfortunately, charcoal and firewood continue to be the major source of energy in most urban areas. NSO (2008) reported that the national reliance on electricity stands at only 9% thereby reinforcing the fear that domestic energy requirements are still heavily dominated by forestry resources which in Malawi's case are mostly of the land-degrading natural forest type rather than renewable plantation-based.

For example, about 10 percent of the population in Mzuzu relies on electricity for cooking while 65 percent use firewood, 24 percent use charcoal and the remaining 1 percent use paraffin and gas. For lighting purposes, 47 percent of residents rely on paraffin lamps, 40 percent rely on electricity, 11 percent rely on candles, and the remaining 2 percent rely on firewood (NSO, 2008). According to NSO (2012, p.121), in urban areas, 87% of the households use solid fuels such as firewood and charcoal for cooking whereas 13% use electricity as their main source of energy for cooking. The majority of urban households cook with charcoal and use paraffin for lighting. In urban areas, only 36% use electricity for lighting. UN-Habitat (2010) found that more than three times as many urban households use electricity for lighting as do for cooking. Malawi is facing supply constraints which are binding regardless of demand or willingness and ability to pay (UN-Habitat, 2010, p. 57). Malawi continues to experience power shortages especially in the urban areas of Lilongwe and Blantyre.

During the urban dweller interviews only 7% of the respondents at national level chose “reliable energy at home and at work” as their most important issue towards a better urban future. The majority (a combined 51%) chose “reliable energy at home and at work” as their second, third and fourth most important issue towards a better urban future (see Figure 19).

**Figure 19: Responses to “reliable energy at home and at work” – National level.**



Source: Alma Consult – Urban dweller interviews 2015

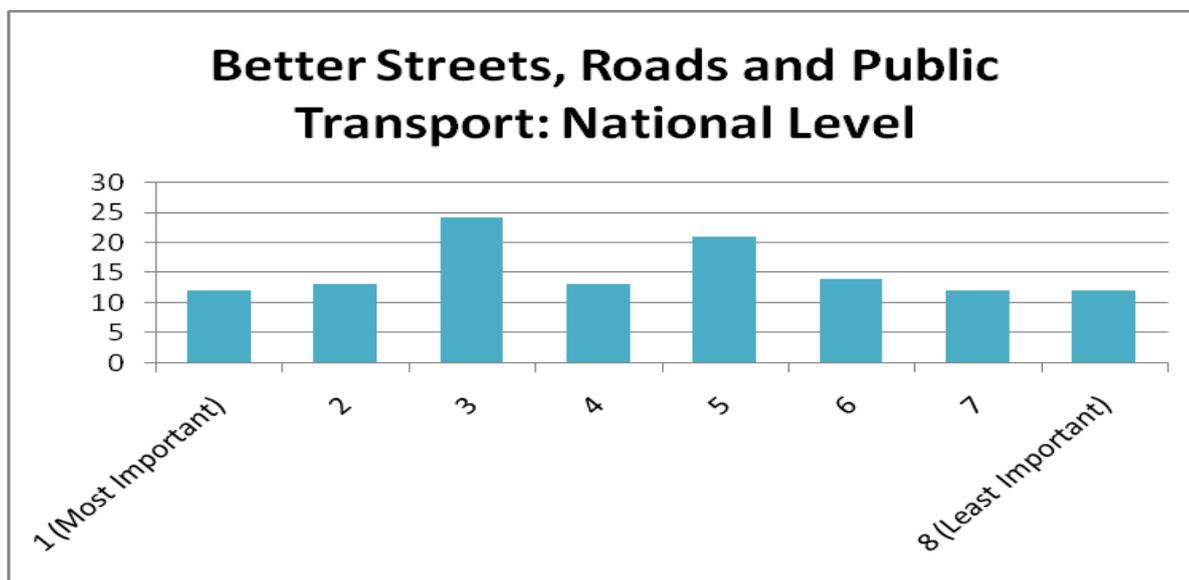
## 7.6 IMPROVING ACCESS TO SUSTAINABLE MEANS OF TRANSPORT

UN-Habitat (2013) found that housing delivery is effective with adequate transport infrastructure. Adequate transport infrastructure improves connectivity and spatially integrates various economic sectors with ease thereby increasing productivity through promotion of agglomeration economies. Improving access to sustainable means of transport is very important if a country is to achieve socio-economic development. Transport accounts for about 30 per cent of commercial energy consumption and for about 60 per cent of total global consumption of liquid petroleum (UN-Habitat, 2014).

However, urban centres in Malawi lack adequate transport infrastructure thereby adversely affecting trade and competitiveness as well as increasing the cost of doing business through increase in the cost of travel. Inadequate transport infrastructure also reduces the value of housing and its associated services. In developing countries, rapid motorization and insufficient investments in urban-transport planning, traffic management and infrastructure are creating increasing problems in terms of accidents and injury, health, noise, congestion and loss of productivity similar to those occurring in many developed countries (UNSD, 1992).

Consultations with stakeholders at national level revealed that only 11% of the respondents considered “better streets, roads and public transport” as their most important issue towards a better urban future. Most of the respondents (nearly 25%) considered “better streets, roads and public transport” as their third most important issue towards a better urban future (see Figure 20).

**Figure 20: Responses to “better streets, roads, public transport and mobility” at National Level.**



Source: Alma Consult – Urban dweller interviews 2015

Recently, there has been a proliferation of bicycle taxis in most cities in Malawi that are, user friendly and cost-effective. However, these are facing difficulties to operate in major cities due to what authorities consider to be safety issues. But the major problem is not the use of bicycle taxis but the lack of modal split in most roads in Malawi. With the issues of congestion at hand especially during

peak hours in Lilongwe and Blantyre, bicycle taxis and tri-cycles can be the most reliable option. The use of old vehicles is also becoming a problem even though the government increased import duty on old vehicles to encourage the use of new vehicles that reduce the emission of greenhouse gases. However, there is also a need to come up with measures to reduce the use of old vehicles already operating on Malawian roads.

## **7.7 CHALLENGES EXPERIENCED AND LESSONS LEARNT IN THESE AREAS**

The local councils have for the past years experienced so many challenges in the delivery of basic urban services due to the absence of councillors as the councils were left to work with unrecognized and illegal structures to get developments implemented leading to many consequences including misuse of funds and legal challenges. City councils also failed to act on city rates defaulters as the by-law to mandate city council to sell the property was outdated hence councils were engaged in law suits in the court of law losing millions of Kwacha in the process. Therefore, the government will endeavour to provide a good platform for the councils to properly execute their duties. In addition, election of councillors should also be as stipulated in the constitution and not politicised or conducted at the wish of individuals.

Most line ministries have in practice not fully devolved especially on the areas of budgeting and land management. These are very crucial for the development of the local councils. The failure to devolve crucial functions has led to conflict among agencies of the central government and local government the most notable example being land management issues. This was evidenced during the consultation workshops as the office of the Director of Planning and Development (DPD) is unable to budget for the Lands Office thinking that the office is supposed to be funded by the Ministry of Lands, Housing and Urban Development. There is also regarding reporting procedures as is some councils Mmbelwa Lands Officer reports to the District Commissioner while the Regional Commissioner for Lands (N) expects the officer to report to him. Furthermore, development budgets are not devolved and as a result the councils have to apply to the central government for funding especially on road maintenance and upgrading. Political will is needed not just to provide resources needed but mainly for devolution policy to fully operate. Furthermore, there will be need to provide more resources for the preparation and timely implementation of the layout plans of the existing prime land that will deter informal settlement. Proactive planning will help reduce slums as the land will have been zoned, detailed layout plans prepared and implemented.

Consultations revealed that vulnerable groups such as poor, aged, women are sidelined in preparation and implementation of urban development plans. It is necessary to develop policies that will support vulnerable groups as well as provide a conducive environment for participation of vulnerable groups in urban development.

The high incidence of crime and theft experienced in urban areas of late has led to human and economic losses. It is most threatening to note that high profile people have been attacked and that in most of the robbery cases police officers are caught a situation that has made people lose trust and resorted to mob justice. The increase of informality especially on marginal areas poses danger to the safety of the citizens and partly shows the extent of exclusion in the urban space particularly the poor who make almost 90% of the population residing in these areas. Therefore, there is a need to reform

and increase interaction between the police and community so that trust and confidence is brought back and to regulate development on marginal land.

## **7.8 FUTURE CHALLENGES AND ISSUES FOR THE NEW URBAN AGENDA**

SDG 11.1 urges governments worldwide to ensure that by 2030, access is afforded to all to adequate, safe and affordable housing, as well as basic services and slum upgrade. In the face of rapid urbanisation more and more people are living in slums although the proportion of people living in slums has declined since the 1990s. However, slum upgrading remains the only option if the challenges faced by slum dwellers are to be addressed. However, this will continue to be a major challenge if the national and local governments do not prioritise slum upgrading. Even though funds have been secured through the Participatory Slum Upgrading Programme (PSUP) to upgrade slum settlements, implementation is slow and targeted at the major urban centres at the expense of the smaller ones, where conditions are worsening. In addition, over-reliance on donor support in slum upgrading is not sustainable as donors cannot always be relied upon. Gutierrez (2007) pointed out that political will is very crucial in lobbying for funds needed for compensations and relocation as well as implementation of the upgrading exercise. The poor conditions in urban slums require strong political will for sustainable slum upgrading efforts to be maintained.

A strong forward planning framework needs to be institutionalised in the urban governments to ensure that serviced land that meets the housing needs of all socio-economic classes is made available ahead of housing settlement expansion. Urban plans should provide more land for housing especially for low income earners so as to enable them to meet their specific housing needs. There will also be a need to strengthen private-public partnerships to enable more actors to participate in housing delivery (GoM, 2006). The government is also required to provide a good macro and micro-economic environment for the proper function of the housing sector. For example, UN-Habitat (2012) found that 60% of the land in Mzuzu is not planned hence exposing it to squatting. Review and approval of the draft Housing Policy (2007) as well as the formulation of a Housing Act would help provide a legal basis and lobby for support for upgrading slum settlements as upgrading is a crucial issue in the draft Housing Policy. Harmonisation of the role of chiefs and customary land allocation procedures may also contribute to slum prevention in urban areas.

Lack of access to adequate housing finance and unavailability of housing funds to many households will be another challenge in the delivery of adequate housing. The existing macro and micro-economic policies will also impact adversely on the provision of adequate housing. For example, the instability of the Malawi kwacha against major currencies that continues to impact on the cost of building materials, the high lending rate currently at nearly 40%, among others, will continue to have an adverse impact on housing supply.

The capacity for water provision in the major cities does not match with the increasing number of urban dwellers and this will be a major challenge if not addressed. The water utility companies in the two major cities of Blantyre and Lilongwe are struggling to meet demand mainly due to rapid urbanisation which is constraining capacity to meet growing demand. Meeting the growing demands for safe drinking water is a current challenge and will continue to be a challenge for the new urban agenda.

To enable sustainable access to clean domestic energy, there will be need for more creative fiscal policies in order to promote greater access to modern sources of energy and more energy efficient conversion technologies and end-user appliances. In addition, the government should provide more resources to the energy sector to enable it expand electricity generation and supply as it is very cumbersome to note that even though the connection fee is exorbitant to most urban dwellers, many people apply for connection but wait several months, sometimes years to get connected. Furthermore, there is a need for private public partnership in energy generation, production and supply.

## **8.0 CONCLUDING REMARKS**

Following the Habitat II Conference in 1996, Malawi is one of the countries that adopted the Habitat Agenda, a series of goals and principles aimed at improving the quality of human settlements globally. The objectives of the Habitat Agenda and the strategies for their implementation revolve around two main themes: “Adequate shelter for all” and “Sustainable human settlements in an urbanising world”. The Habitat Agenda highlighted the importance of national governments to provide a supportive policy framework for the realization of the two themes through strengthening action by local government, civil societies, and the local communities. Signatories to the Habitat Agenda were called upon to implement local and national plans of action and monitor progress towards achieving objectives. This Report has provided a summary of the policies and programmes that the Government of Malawi has put in place to implement the Habitat Agenda since 1996, highlighting the achievements made, the challenges encountered, lessons learnt, and future challenges that should be addressed through the New Urban Agenda (Habitat III).

Malawi has made a number of achievements in the twenty years since the adoption of the Habitat Agenda in 1996. The Decentralisation Policy of 1996 set in train a series of administrative reforms which, among other things, saw the devolution of planning powers from central government to local governments, thus enabling a bottom-up approach to planning which is in line with the Sustainable Development Goal of inclusive and participatory urbanisation. Decentralisation has also enabled the transfer of the responsibility for the management of pro-poor housing projects to the local governments. Through the Habitat Agenda, the GoM has implemented a number of programmes which have assisted in managing rapid urbanisation as well as in realising the goals of sustainable urbanisation. These are the Growth Centres project, and the SCDP. Reforms in the road transport sector and a government commitment to improve the flow of digital information and promote communication for business purposes have strengthened rural-urban linkages.

However, a number of challenges have been encountered. Firstly, women’s participation in urban governance and development has been low despite policies and international obligations which seek to provide an enabling environment .. The Report finds that there are deep-seated cultural, social and even religious factors which have hindered women’s participation in urban governance and development. In addition, the Report finds that the youth and the aged are marginalised in decision-making and policy provision in the management of urban areas. SDG 11.3 calls for the enhancement of inclusive and sustainable urbanisation and capacity for participatory and integrated human settlements planning and management. There is a need for strong, more inclusive policies which ensure that women participation is not only articulated in policies, but actually enforced in

policy implementation. Likewise, there is a need for the youth's needs and aspirations to be incorporated in the planning and management of Malawi's urban centres. These are challenges to be addressed in the new urban agenda.

Secondly, managing rapid urbanisation has been adversely affected by the poor financial capacity of both local government and central government. Malawi's economy has been performing poorly for a long time, and this means that the government must prioritise its expenditure on public projects, sadly resulting in underfunding in the urban sector. For a number of legal and institutional reasons, local governments themselves have not been able to raise sufficient revenue for the provision of urban infrastructure that is able to meet the socio-economic and infrastructural needs of the rising urban populations, a factor which has given rise to the proliferation of informal settlements.

Improving urban land management is one of the GoM's strategies to ensure sustainable urban planning. Noting the land-related challenges to sustainable urban planning, the GoM formulated and adopted the NLP in 2002. The policy contains a wide range of land policy reforms which are proposed to be translated into law in the Land Bill which is currently being considered by parliament. Some of the reforms include improvements to the registration of land titles in urban areas through the devolution of land registration from central government to local government, and measures to resolve the conflict between planning authorities and chiefs in urban land administration matters, a factor which has been blamed in some cases for the proliferation of informal settlements. However, it is unclear when and if the Land Bill will be enacted into law.. This is a challenge for the new urban agenda.

The NLP does not only provide for reforms in urban land management, but also offers practical measures to address urban sprawl by enforcing more intensive use of urban land by revising planning standards to promote compact development. Some of these measures have already been adopted by the GoM. The government has revised the Town and Country Standards and Guidelines in 2010 and prepared Land Use Planning and Development Management Guidelines to enhance adequate housing and reduce urban sprawl. Crucial to the revisions are the reduction in plot sizes so that more people are accommodated in urban space. Whilst the signs of contained urban sprawl are yet to be seen in the development of Malawi's urban centres, this is an important step towards containing urban sprawl.

The GoM has taken steps to improve the technical capacity of Malawian professionals to plan and manage the rapidly growing urban settlements. The GoM has supported the establishment of planning and planning-related degree courses at two of Malawi's public universities since 2006 – Mzuzu University and University of Malawi's Polytechnic. In addition, the Natural Resources College in Lilongwe also offers diploma courses in land administration and diploma graduates with good grades at graduation can apply to Mzuzu University to upgrade to degree level. These measures have resulted in an increasing number of locally trained land management professionals who have addressed the identified critical shortage of qualified human resources in the land sector.

Deregulation in the urban transport sector has resulted in public transport being privatised and private mini buses overtaking buses as the main mode of urban transport. Mini buses are poorly

regulated and this has brought about a number of mobility problems in urban areas, such as congestion. Although the most dominant mode of urban transport is walking, bicycle taxis, motorcycle taxis and the private motor vehicle are now on the rise. Congestion on urban roads, compounded by lack of implementation of urban roads. The future planning of Malawi's cities needs to integrate sustainable transport planning in line with SDG 11.2, which seeks to provide for access to safe, affordable, accessible, and sustainable transport systems for all, as well as improving road safety, notably by expanding public transport.

Malawi has been experiencing climate-change induced extreme weather conditions which have caused significant damage to property and people's lives, especially the poor and vulnerable in the informal settlements in urban areas. For example, the extreme flooding which occurred in early 2015 caused severe property damage and loss of life in the cities of Blantyre and Lilongwe. The GoM has responded by formulating a Climate Change Policy in 2012 and DRM Policy in 2015.

After ten years of the absence of local government elections between 2004 and 2014, Malawi conducted tripartite elections in May 2014 ushering in elected local government representatives. This has boosted local democracy and has enhanced participatory frameworks in the area of urban planning which are essential for sustainable urbanisation. Local councils are mandated to formulate and pass bylaws for the smooth operation of local affairs such as increasing city rates to increase revenue for service provisions. The election of councillors to the country's urban and rural councils raises prospects for better service provision and open, accountable urban governance. SDG 11.3 urges governments to enhance inclusive and sustainable urbanisation and capacity for participatory, integrated and sustainable human settlements planning. The election of councillors is a major step towards ensuring participatory and inclusive urban planning which has been enabled by the Decentralisation Policy.

Since 1996, the GoM has formulated a number of policies aimed at improving municipal finance, strengthening access to finance, supporting local economic development, creating decent jobs and integrating the urban economies into national development. The Decentralisation Policy paved the way for fiscal and administrative devolution in the form of direct funding allocations from central government to local governments to finance the functions which were devolved from central government. The National Decentralisation Policy established additional sources of revenue for local government, namely locally generated revenue raised by local sources such as property rates ground rates, fees, licences, commercial undertakings and service charges; and ceded / non-tax revenue, i.e. tax that central government collects on behalf of local government, such as toll fees, gambling and casino fees, fuel / road levies, motor vehicle registration fees, as well as industrial registration fees.

In theory, these measures should financially empower local governments and enable them to adequately discharge their service delivery roles. However, in practice, local governments have been hampered by central government's failure to remit all the funds to local governments to meet their service delivery obligations. In the absence of councillors between 2004 and 2014, revenue from city rates dwindled because councils were legally constrained from reviewing their city rates upwards. With the SDGs placing a greater emphasis on the sustainable management of cities, urban councils will

require greater financial empowerment to meet their various obligations to their citizens. This calls for greater consideration in the new urban agenda.

SDG 11.a broadly provides for support towards the economic development of cities as a strategy to enhance regional and national development. This is an important issue for the new urban agenda. There are a number of future challenges in the areas of improving municipal / local finance, strengthening and improving access to housing finance, supporting local economic development, creating decent jobs and livelihoods, and integration of the urban economy into national development policy that will need to be addressed in the new urban agenda for the country.

Data from the recent GDP by activity report published by the NSO indicates that Malawi's cities contributed more than 50% to the national GDP in 2014. This proves the assertion that cities are engines for economic development. There is potential to significantly improve the cities' contribution to economic development if the national urbanisation policy currently being drafted is to be finalised and adopted. As Malawi moves forward to adopt a new urban agenda, priority needs to be given to the urban sector in the same way that the GoM has prioritised the rural sector through favourable agricultural development policies.

Under the theme of housing and basic services, number efforts have been made towards slum upgrading, increasing access to clean drinking water, increasing access to adequate housing, ensuring sustainable access to basic sanitation, among others. For example, the proportion of the urban population with access to safe drinking water at 78.8%<sup>19</sup> in 2013 exceeds the MGDs target of 74% set for 2015. However, progress towards improved access to adequate housing is slow.. Access to serviced land for all income groups is a big problem for the urban authorities, leading to the proliferation of informal settlements.

## 9.0 SELECTED URBAN INDICATORS FOR MALAWI

Indicator	1996	2006	2013
Percentage of people living in slums	92	89.9	65.1
Percentage of urban population with access to adequate housing	36.8	41.3	61.2
Percentage of people residing in urban areas with access to safe drinking water	90	96.2	78.8
Percentage of people residing urban areas with access to adequate sanitation	Not available	97.3	86.7
Percentage of people residing in urban areas with access to regular waste collection	Not available	Not available	17.7
Percentage of people residing in urban areas with access to clean domestic energy	Not available	10.9	12.6

<sup>19</sup> However, this had declined from 96.2% in 2006. Explanations for this decline have been given in the Report. Nevertheless the MDGs target of 74% had been exceeded.

Percentage of people living in urban areas with access to public transport	Not available	Not available	Not available
Level of effective decentralisation for sustainable urban development measured by:			
(i) Percentage of policies and legislation on urban issues in whose formulation local and regional governments participated from 1996 onwards	Not available	100	100
(ii) Percentage share of both income and expenditure allocated to local and regional governments from national budgets	Not available	-	-
(iii) Percentage share of local authorities' expenditure financed from local revenue	Not available	-	-
Percentage of city, regional and national authorities that have implemented urban safety and security policies or strategies	Not available	86	100
Percentage of city and regional authorities that have implemented plans and designs for sustainable and resilient cities that are inclusive and respond to urban population growth adequately	Not available	Not available	100
Share of national gross domestic product (GDP) that is produced in urban areas	63	58	60

Sources: National Statistical Office (2010 & 2012); UN Habitat, Global Urban Indicators (2009); GoM (2014)

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