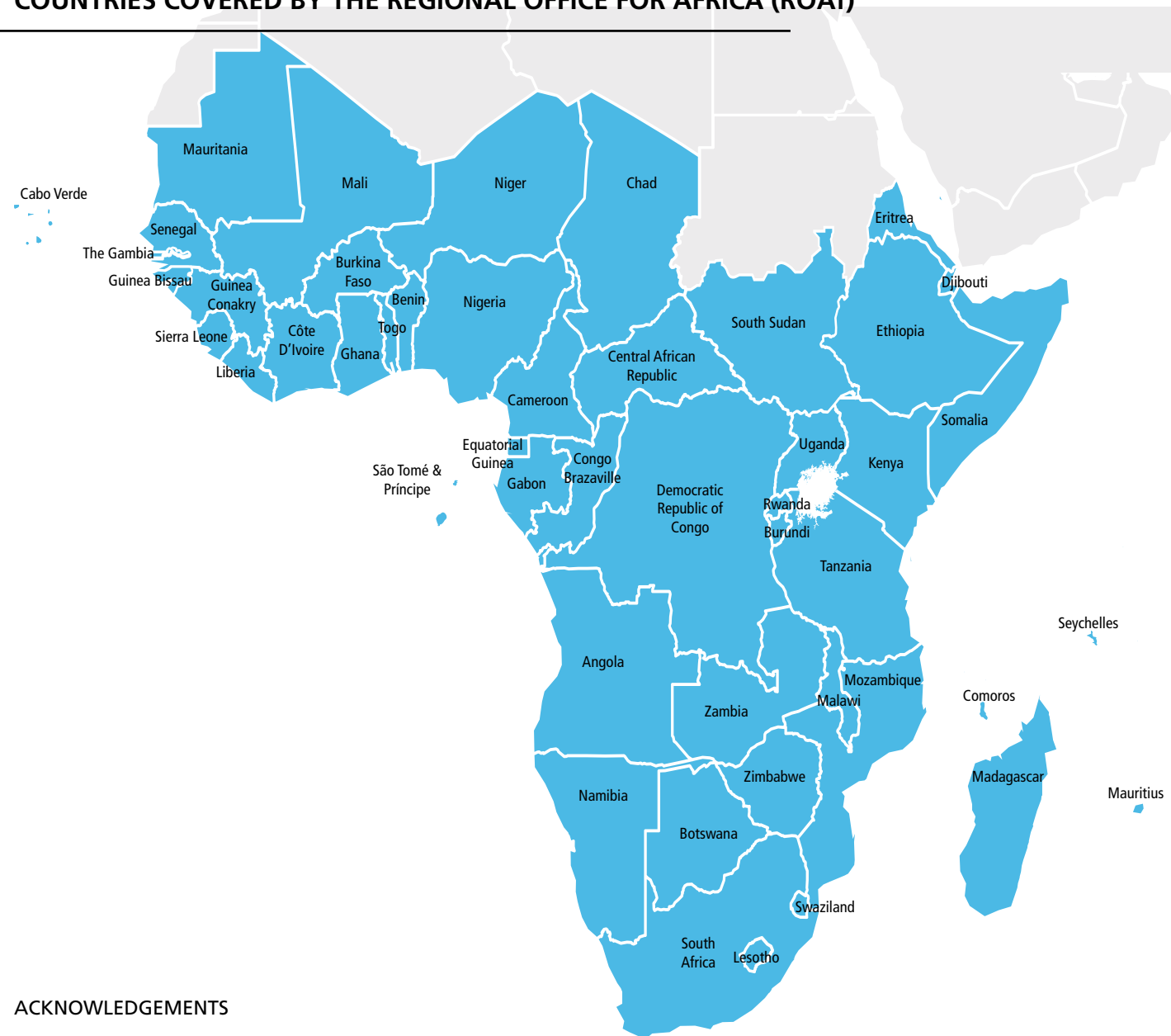


# **UN-HABITAT SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA ATLAS**



## COUNTRIES COVERED BY THE REGIONAL OFFICE FOR AFRICA (ROAf)



### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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## REGIONAL OFFICE FOR AFRICA UN-HABITAT

Africa's increased urban population is a powerful asset for the continent's overall transformation. However, it can only attain its full potential when cities are properly planned and adequately serviced. A major change is needed in the course of Africa's urban development – a shift whose main thrust can be propelled by, first, a re-examination of the planning process and the delivery of basic services.

UN-Habitat Regional Office in Africa (ROAf), located in Nairobi, Kenya, is working with African governments to take early action to position themselves for predominately urban populations. The portfolio of ongoing projects in Africa is very diverse in terms of geographic coverage and development partners.

### URBANIZATION IN AFRICA: OVERVIEW

#### Demographic and Urban Trends

In 2009, Africa's total population for the first time exceeded one billion, of which 395 million (or almost 40 per cent) lived in urban areas. Africa should prepare for a total population increase of about 60 per cent between 2010 and 2050, with the urban population tripling to 1.23 billion during this period.

Around 2030, Africa's collective population will become 50 percent urban. The majority of political constituencies will then live in cities, demanding means of subsistence, shelter and services. African governments should position themselves for predominant urban populations.

In the early 2040s, African cities will collectively be home to one billion people, equivalent to the continent's total population in 2009. Since cities are the future habitat for the majority of Africans, now is the time for spending on basic infrastructure, social services (health and education) and affordable housing, in the process stimulating urban economies and generating much-needed jobs. Not a single African government can afford to ignore the on-going rapid urban transition.

Cities must become priority areas for public policies, with investment provided to build adequate governance capacities, equitable service delivery, affordable housing provision and better wealth distribution.

#### New urban configurations

City regions, urban development corridors, mega urban regions and other new urban configurations continue to emerge or become increasingly visible across Africa. Their spatial and functional features demand new urban management methods to ensure consistent area-wide governance. Sweeping reform is also critical for effective delivery of affordable housing, social services and urban infrastructure commensurate with the magnitudes of these rapidly expanding urban concentrations.

Different political traditions, economic circumstances and location-specific features make every African nation and city unique. Therefore, effective reform and adaptation must be location specific. Increasingly well-defined urban regions and urban development corridors introduce complex and highly fluid spatial, regulatory and political realities.

As urban systems and interurban flows of people, goods, communications and funds extend across national borders, policies must follow suit if they are to have any realistic prospect of influencing the outcomes. The management tools of the traditional mono-centric city are not appropriate for today's multi-nuclear urban configurations. The need for governance reform to introduce holistic area-wide planning and urban management simply cannot be overemphasized.

#### Lack of fiscal decentralization

Many African municipalities are financially weak because their revenue- and finance-generating structures are inadequate and inefficient. Decentralizing responsibilities without fiscal decentralization contributes to urban decay, poor services and the proliferation of slums. Fiscal must match political decentralization in order to create more revenue-generating options and decision-making power for local authorities. Property tax is currently the major revenue source for municipal authorities, although, at times, it can place an inequitable burden on property owners.

## Urban poverty and inequality

Polarization and confrontation have increased in African cities due to laissez-faire attitudes to rapid urbanization. The unfolding pattern is one of disjointed, dysfunctional and unsustainable urban geographies of inequality and human suffering, with oceans of poverty containing islands of wealth. Socioeconomic conditions in most African cities are now increasingly showing unequal, threatening systemic stability, affecting not only the continuity of cities as social-political human eco-systems but also entire nations.

The challenge of African urban sustainability calls for a focus on cities as people-centred concentrations of opportunity. Harnessing rather than alienating human energies is essential to maintaining urban dynamism, which cannot be fostered or maintained with rising urban inequality. The urban poor should not be punished for their poverty. Instead, national urban policy, urban planning and building regulations should reflect a country's degree of national development and its institutional capacities while keeping costs at affordable levels for all. Construction standards should be set more realistically in order to facilitate rather than restrict the creation of housing and livelihoods.

## Informal settlements

In recent years, Africa as a whole has shown that informal settlements can be reduced effectively as 24 million African slum dwellers saw their living conditions improved during the 2000/10 decade. Although, progress has been uneven across the continent. Northern Africa collectively managed to reduce from 20 to 13 percent the share of slum dwellers in its urban population. However, south of the Sahara the number of slum dwellers decreased by only five per cent (or 17 million).

Much remains to be done with regard to urban poverty and slum incidence, because slums are one of the major threats to African urban stability and, by extension, to overall political stability. One aspect that needs more attention is that formal urban markets, by their very operations and rules, prevent access to land by the majority of city dwellers all over Africa. As a result, informal markets fill this exclusion gap and this is where the overwhelming majority of African urban land transactions take place nowadays.

Governments should seek the most effective entry points for an overhaul of the often abysmal failures of their formal urban land administration systems, with their unresponsive institutions, excessive delays, cumbersome land transaction administration and the associated corruption. Stigmatizing informal urban land markets as inappropriate, illegal, illegitimate or undesirable negates the realities on the ground.

A second aspect is that slums are largely the outcome of lack of access to urban land and housing finance. Land plots under informal tenure expose those occupying them with eviction, and they cannot be used as collateral for bank loans. These two factors do not encourage slum dwellers to improve their homes. This situation must be changed to encourage the urban poor to undertake improvements through self-help.

## Urban food and water insecurity

Many urban managers deeply underestimate the risks associated with urban food and water insecurity. African governments should heed the warning bells of 2008 and seriously consider the potential effects of urban food and water shortages. Significant amounts of African land and water resources are purchased or long-term leased by foreign governments and foreign food-processing corporations.

Africa is well placed to make strategic, forward-looking decisions on the wise use of its rich water and agricultural resources. However, governments must bargain harder for better and more transparent deals, so that foreign investment can contribute to Africa's future food and water security, with benefits spread out among local communities in terms of additional business, cash payments and employment opportunities.

## Climate change

Today's planning decisions can cause inefficiencies and ecologically-unfriendly urban configurations further down the road. Spatial separation of related urban functions is evident among most metropolitan areas and this increases transportation needs. Urban mobility must become a key factor in spatial decisions, and improved mass transit systems can significantly reduce private vehicle use.

Cities are in a unique position to contribute to global and local climate change adaptation, mitigation and protection, and they must take advantage of it. However, forward-looking spatial planning decisions alone are not enough. To prevent any policy gaps, it is important to link national, regional and local environmental adaptation and mitigation policies through vertical and horizontal cooperation across all tiers of government as well as all relevant stakeholders.

## STRATEGIES FOR SUSTAINABLE URBANIZATION IN AFRICA

### Compact cities

African cities need to move away from rigid planning and urbanization that creates low densities and long distances: an unsustainable model that generates socially divided and poorly connected cities.

### Initiating legal reforms and enhancing institutional capacities

Following the reform process, existing laws and regulations need to be reviewed, while simplified norms and basic principles need to be adopted to guide urban development and facilitate the use of tools and guidelines. Partnerships with governments can reduce social conflict, political instability, bureaucratic procedures and corruption, and therefore creates an environment conducive to strong and flexible institutions.

### Developing a transformative national urban policy

Countries may wish to consider, depending on their national contexts, to review or develop their National Urban Policies. A good National Policy should acknowledge the power of urbanization to propel and guide national economic growth and reduce poverty, both in urban and rural areas; promotes a more optimistic perspective about the city, confronting the negative perception of urbanization.

### Closing the urban divide

There is an urgent need of transforming planning and basic service provision from factors which perpetuate urban inequity to instruments for fostering inclusiveness and prosperity. Urban investments, in terms of goals and design, have to take into account the needs and interests of all social groups.

### Advancing a new pact: learning to do things together

The African cities have manifested a great potential in leveraging national transformation, in harnessing the people's creativity, and in serving as critical nodes in the connection with the global system. Bearing in mind that the African future is predominantly urban, the imperative of overcoming the current limitations need to be looked into.

### Learning to work together

Achieving higher levels of sustainable urban development requires clear policies, simple norms and basic principles, and concerted efforts from public, private and social actors and requires that different levels of government learn to work together. Effective decentralization demands strong coordination capacities of the central government and should lead to dynamic and well-governed cities.

### South-South cooperation

Africa can optimize its potential by learning from the experiences of other parts of the world, particularly those from the South. Apart from bilateral arrangements, collaboration among ministerial bodies of these regions needs to be developed, and UN-Habitat is ready to play a facilitating role in this process.

UN-Habitat remains committed to Africa. With the support from the African Development Bank and other development partners, UN-Habitat is keen to strengthen positive collaboration and partnerships with all levels of governments, non-governmental organizations, private sector and regional economic communities such as the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA), the East African Community (EAC), and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), Southern Africa Development Community (SADC), etc. towards eradicating urban poverty and in transforming Africa's urban development agenda.



PARTNERS

In Africa, Habitat Agenda Partners (HAP) are a range of organizations, both outside and within the national, local and county government in the quest of sustainable urbanization and human settlements development. In an effort to continue working and learning together, UN-Habitat has established a number of thematic networks composed of a cross section of HAPs to allow partners to contribute to the design and implementation of normative and operational programmes at all levels.

These includes, local authorities, NGOs and CBOs, trade unions, professional bodies, academics and research institutions, local communities, parliamentarians, private sector members, foundations, financial institutions, women and youths.

DONORS

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DFID  
MPTF Peace Building Fund II  
United Nations Trust Fund for Human Security (UNTFHS)  
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Government of Kenya  
Kisumu County Government  
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Garissa County Government

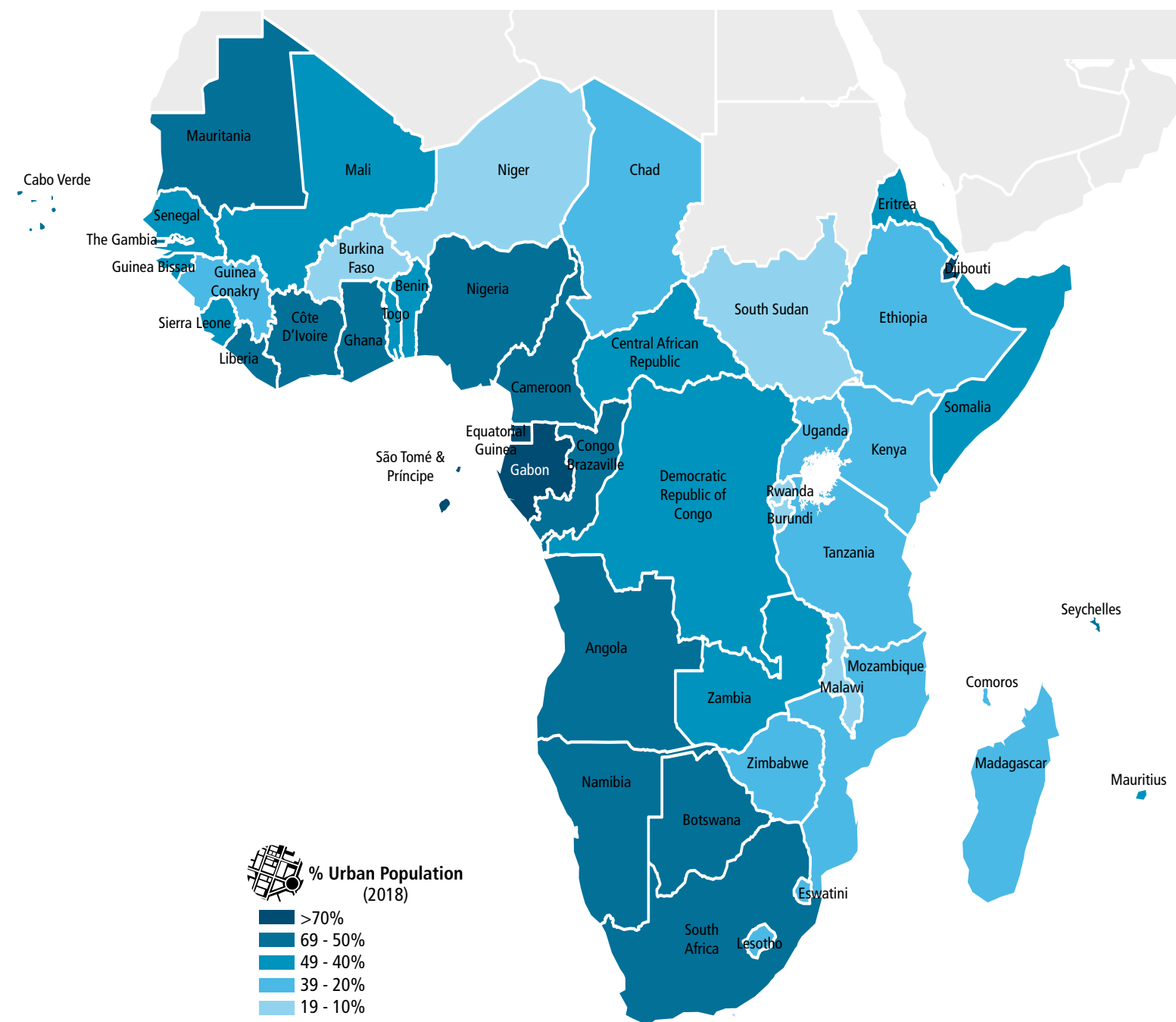
European Commission  
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IOM  
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DANIDA  
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Government of Republic of Korea  
Niger State Government  
Agència Catalana de Cooperació al Desenvolupament (ACCD)  
Andalusian Agency of International Cooperation for Development (AACID)  
United Nations Development Account

ACTIVE COUNTRIES IN 2020

- Angola
  - Botswana
  - Burkina Faso
  - Cabo Verde
  - Cameroon
  - Comoros
  - Congo DR
  - Cote d'Ivoire
  - Ethiopia
  - Ghana
  - Guinea Bissau
  - Guinea Conakry
- Kenya
  - Madagascar
  - Malawi
  - Mozambique
  - Niger
  - Rwanda
  - São Tome & Principe
  - Somalia
  - South Sudan
  - Uganda
  - Zambia
  - Zimbabwe



## % URBAN POPULATION



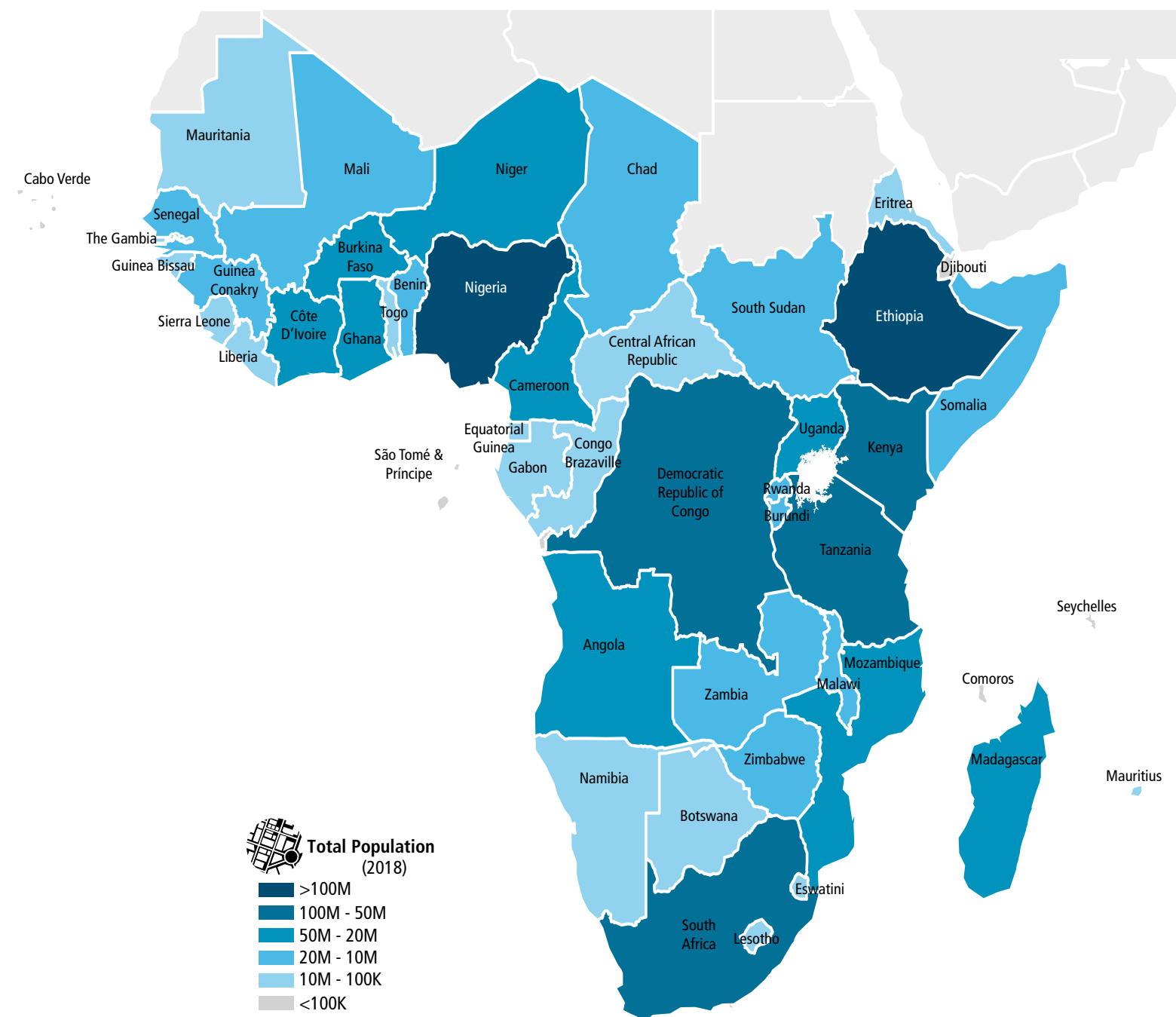
Source: UNDESA - United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division (2018). World Urbanization Prospects: The 2018 Revision, Online Edition.

UNDESA harmonizes urban indicators globally.

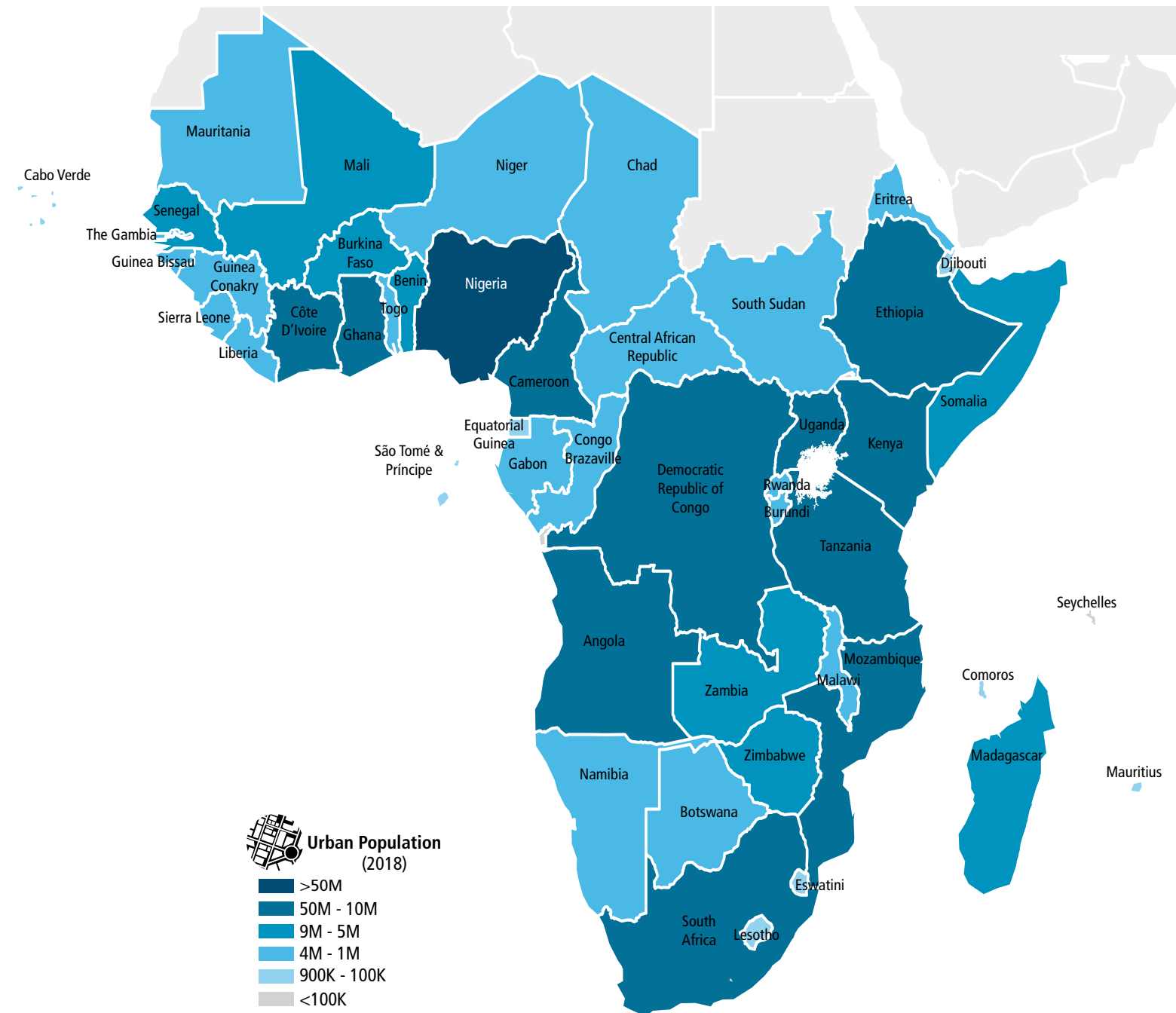
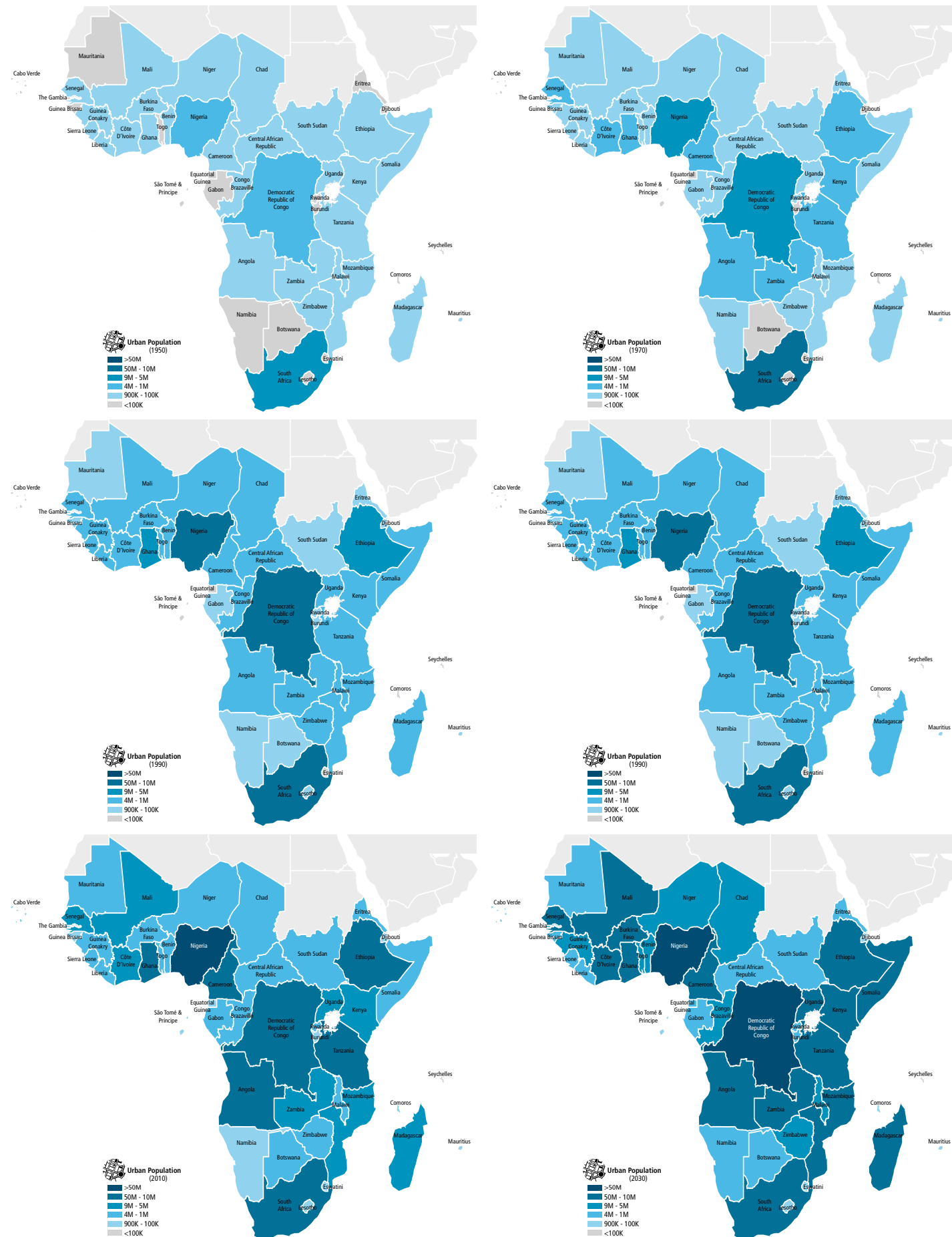
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## TOTAL POPULATION



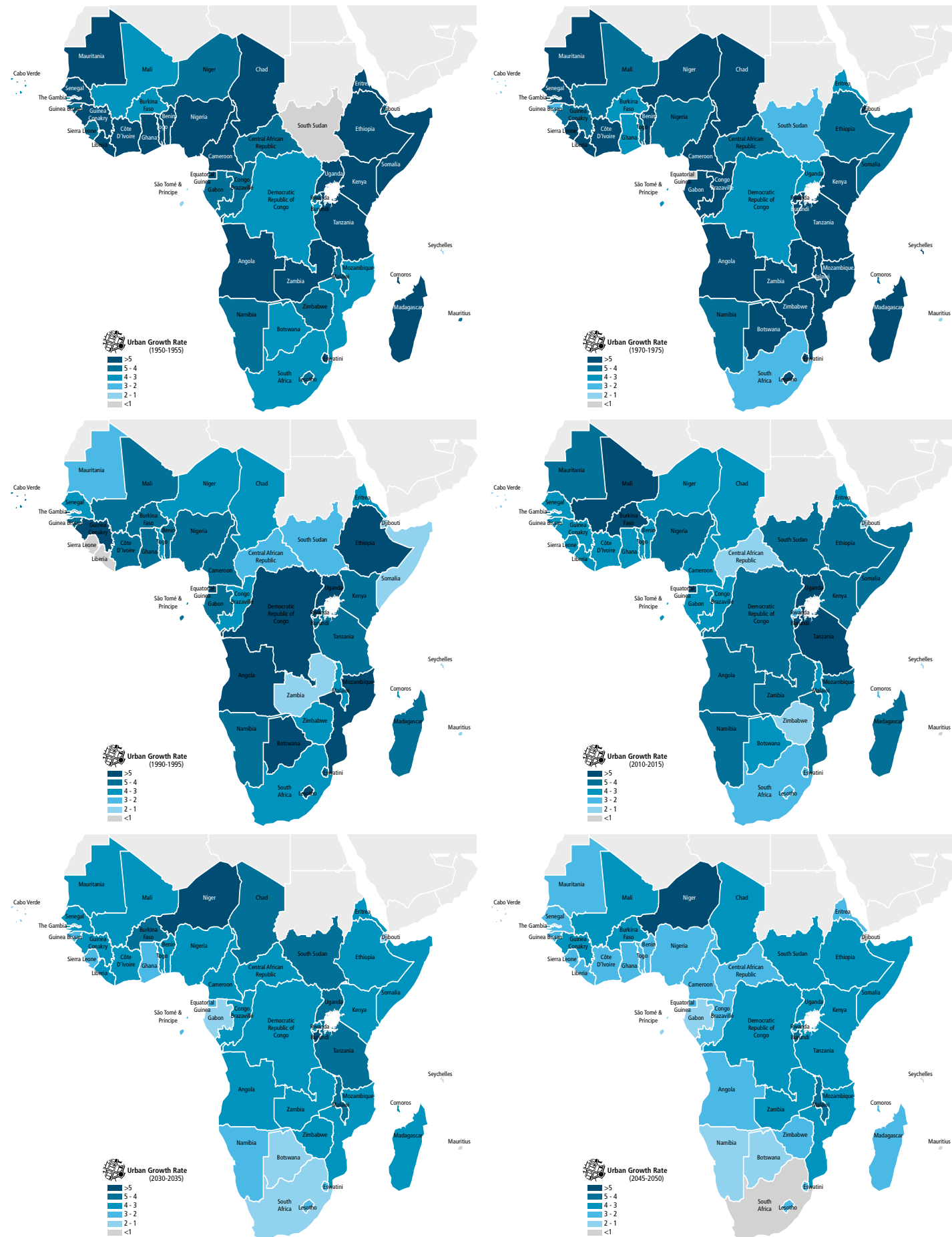
Source: UNDESA - United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division (2018). World Urbanization Prospects: The 2018 Revision, Online Edition.



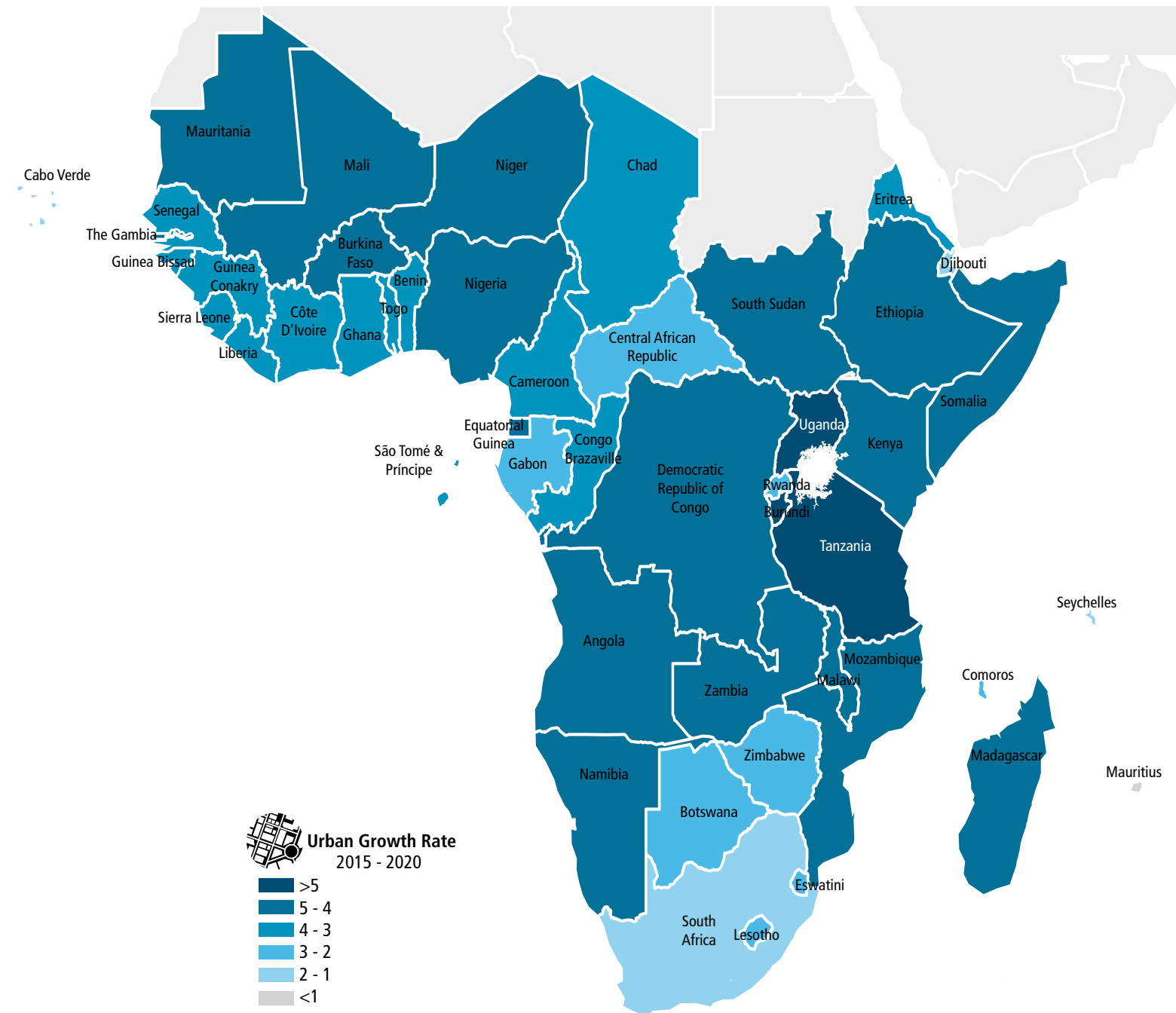
Source: UNDESA - United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division (2018). World Urbanization Prospects: The 2018 Revision, Online Edition.

UNDESA harmonizes urban indicators globally.

## URBAN GROWTH RATE



## URBAN GROWTH RATE (UNDESA 2015-2020)



Source: UNDESA - United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division (2018). World Urbanization Prospects: The 2018 Revision, Online Edition.

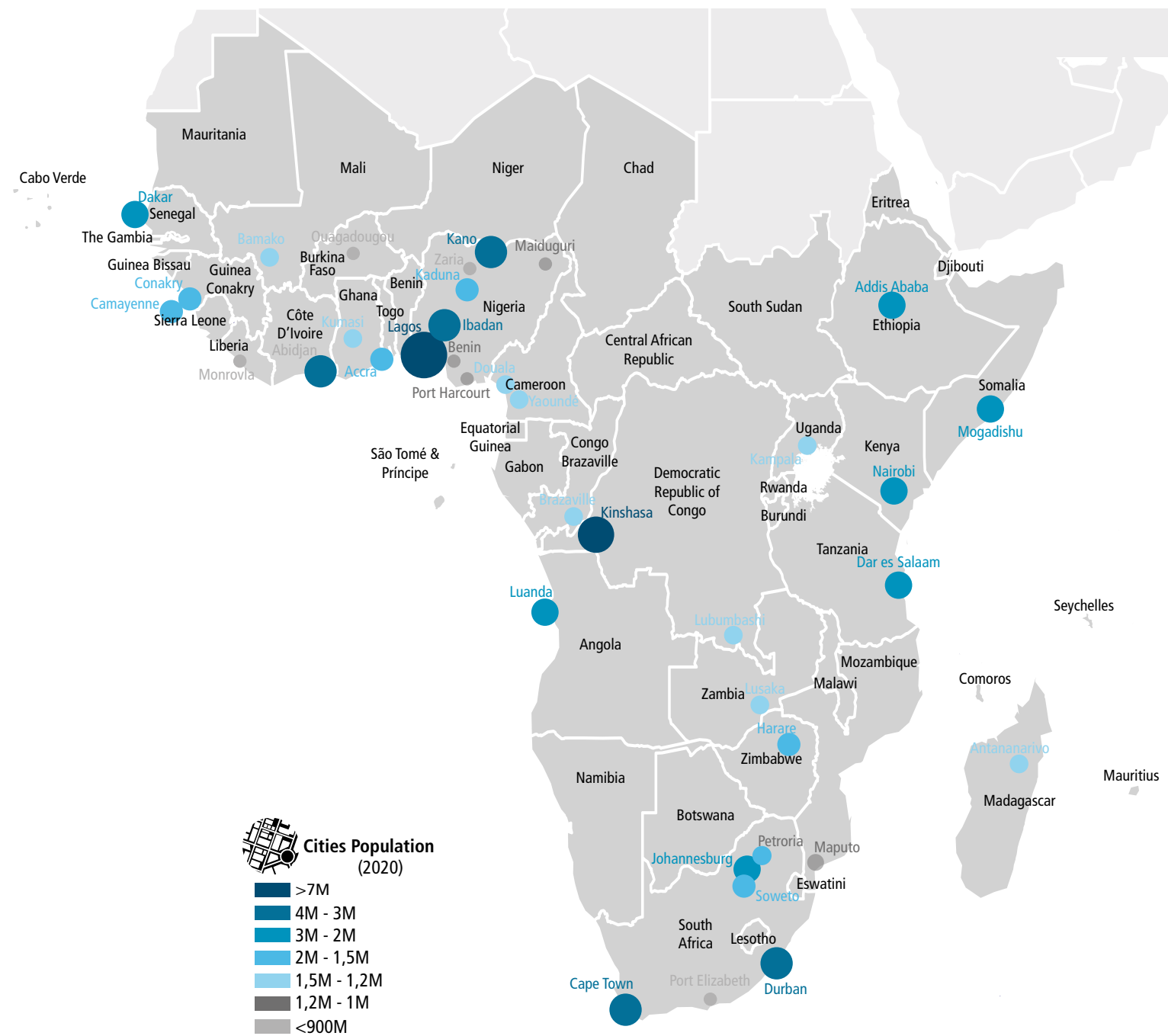
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## URBAN AGGLOMERATIONS

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