



UNHABITAT

Regional and Technical Cooperation Division



THE GAMBIA: NATIONAL URBAN PROFILE



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UNITED NATIONS HUMAN SETTLEMENTS PROGRAMME
REGIONAL OFFICE FOR AFRICA AND THE ARAB STATES

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FOREWORDS



According to research published in UN-HABITAT's flagship report, *The State of the World's Cities 2010-2011*, all developing regions, including the African, Caribbean and Pacific states, will have more people living in urban than rural areas by the year 2030. With half the world's

population already living in urban areas, the challenges we face in the battle against urban poverty, our quest for cities without slums, for cities where women feel safer, for inclusive cities with power, water and sanitation, and affordable transport, for better planned cities, and for cleaner, greener cities is daunting.

But as this series shows, there are many interesting solutions and best practices to which we can turn. After all, the figures tell us that during the decade 2000 to 2010, a total of 227 million people in the developing moved out of slum conditions. In other words, governments, cities and partner institutions have collectively exceeded the slum target of the Millennium Development Goals twice over and ten years ahead of the agreed 2020 deadline.

Asia and the Pacific stood at the forefront of successful efforts to reach the slum target, with all governments in the region improving the lives of an estimated 172 million slum dwellers between 2000 and 2010.

In sub-Saharan Africa though, the total proportion of the urban population living in slums has decreased by only 5 per cent (or 17 million people). Ghana, Senegal, Uganda, and Rwanda were the most successful countries in the sub-region, reducing the proportions of slum dwellers by over one-fifth in the last decade.

Some 13 per cent of the progress made towards the global slum target occurred in Latin America and the Caribbean, where an estimated 30 million people have moved out of slum conditions since the year 2000.

Yet, UN-HABITAT estimates confirm that the progress made on the slum target has not been sufficient to counter the demographic expansion in informal settlements in the developing world. In this sense, efforts to reduce the numbers of slum dwellers are neither satisfactory nor adequate.

As part of our drive to address this crisis, UN-HABITAT is working with the European Commission and the Brussels-based Secretariat of the African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) Group to support sustainable urban development. Given the urgent and diverse needs, we found it necessary to develop a tool for rapid assessment and strategic planning to guide immediate, mid and long-term interventions. And here we have it in the form of this series of publications.

The Participatory Slum Upgrading Programme is based on the policy dialogue between UN-HABITAT, the ACP Secretariat and the European Commission which dates back to the year 2002. When the three parties met at UN-HABITAT headquarters in June 2009, more than 200 delegates from over 50 countries approved a resounding call on the international community to pay greater attention to these urbanization matters, and to extend the slum upgrading programme to all countries in the ACP Group.

It is worth recalling here how grateful we are that the European Commission's 9th European Development Fund for ACP countries provided EUR 4 million (USD 5.7 million at June 2011 rates) to enable UN-HABITAT to conduct the programme which now serves 59 cities in 23 African countries, and more than 20 cities in six Pacific, and four Caribbean countries.

Indeed, since its inception in 2008, the slum upgrading programme has achieved the confidence of partners at city and country level in Africa, the Caribbean and in the Pacific. It is making a major contribution aimed at helping in urban poverty reduction efforts, as each report in this series shows."

I wish to express my gratitude to the European Commission and the ACP Secretariat for their commitment to this slum upgrading programme. I have every confidence that the results outlined in this profile, and others, will serve to guide the development of responses for capacity building and investments in the urban sector.

Further, I would like to thank each Country Team for their continued support to this process which is essential for the successful implementation of the Participatory Slum Upgrading Programme.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Joan Clos', with a long horizontal flourish extending from the bottom of the signature.

Dr. Joan Clos
Executive Director, UN-HABITAT

BACKGROUND

INTRODUCTION

The urban profiling in The Gambia consists of an accelerated, action-oriented assessment of urban conditions, focusing on priority needs, capacity gaps, and existing institutional responses at local and national levels. The purpose of the study is to develop urban poverty reduction policies at local, national and regional levels, through an assessment of needs and response mechanisms, and as a contribution to the wider-ranging implementation of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The study is based on analysis of existing data and a series of interviews with all relevant urban stakeholders, including local communities and institutions, civil society, the private sector, development partners, academics, and others. The consultation typically results in a collective agreement on priorities and their development into proposed capacity-building and other projects that are all aimed at urban poverty reduction. Urban Profiling is being implemented in over 20 African and Arab countries, offering an opportunity for comparative regional analysis. Once completed, this series of studies will provide a framework for central and local authorities and urban actors, as well as donors and external support agencies.

METHODOLOGY

The Participatory Slum Upgrading Programme consists of three phases:

Phase one consists of the rapid profiling of urban conditions at national and local levels. The capital city, a medium-sized city, and a small town are selected and studied to provide a representative sample in each country. Information is collected through standard interviews and discussions with institutions and key informants, in order to assess the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT) of the national and local urban set-ups. The findings are presented and refined during city and national consultation workshops and consensus is reached regarding priority interventions. National and city reports synthesize the information collected and outline ways forward to reduce urban poverty through holistic approaches.

Phase two builds on the priorities identified through pre-feasibility studies and develops detailed capacity-building and capital investment projects.

Phase three implements the projects developed during the two earlier phases, with an emphasis on skills development, institutional strengthening, and replication.

This report presents the outcomes of Urban Profiling Phase One at the national level in The Gambia.

URBAN PROFILING IN THE GAMBIA

In The Gambia, the urban profiling focuses on Banjul, the capital city, Kanifing Municipal Council (KMC) and Brikama town in the western region. Through desk reviews, Focus Group Discussions (FGD) and institutional questionnaires, the profiling exercise targets municipalities, government departments, private institutions, non-governmental organizations, and the academia within the selected cities.

A Focus Group Discussion was held in each of the 29 wards within the three municipalities/regions covered in the profiling exercise. In each ward, the session brought 20 participants discussing urban poverty issues. Discussions were guided by a team of moderators that comprised of a facilitator, secretary and observer.

The purpose of the various data collection mechanisms was to obtain information on people's perception regarding the causes, effects and possible solutions to urban poverty. This brought together a cross section of youth, adults, men, and women for interactive discussions at each stage of the assessment. The discussions allowed interaction among all participants which encouraged them to give out detailed opinions on the gains and issues hindering urban poverty eradication.

REPORT STRUCTURE

This report consists of:

1. a general background of the urban sector in The Gambia, based on the findings of the national assessment report, a desk study, interviews, and a consultation held in The Gambia in 2005 (see back cover for a list of participants in the city consultation and a bibliography). The background includes data on administration, urban planning, the economy, the informal sector, the private sector, urban poverty, infrastructure, water, sanitation, public transport, street lighting, energy, health, and education;
2. a synthesis of seven main thematic areas – governance, slums, gender and HIV/AIDS, environment, local economic development, basic urban services, and urban safety and urban disaster management – in terms of the institutional set-up, regulatory framework, resource mobilisation, and performance (this second section also highlights agreed priorities and includes a list of identified projects); and
3. a SWOT analysis and an outline of priority project proposals for each theme. The proposals include beneficiaries, partners, estimated costs, objectives, activities, and outputs.

THE GAMBIA URBAN CONTEXT

The urban population in The Gambia stood at 53 percent of the total population in 2003. Increasing urbanization is causing stress on social services provided in urban areas with consequences of rising urban poverty. The Greater Banjul Area has the worst-case scenario - Banjul and its surroundings, the Kombos, constitute about 51 percent of the total population of the country. This high concentration of the population in this area has implications on poverty, particularly the growing incidence of urban poverty.

The distribution of poverty by area shows that poverty averaged 57.2 percent in urban areas and 63.3 percent in rural areas. The poverty picture becomes clearer when looked at from a regional perspective. Kuntaur Local Government Area has the highest head-count poverty rate of 92.3 percent, followed by Janjangbureh at 71.7 percent, and then Kerewan and Basse with 68.4 percent and 64.3 percent respectively. Mansakonko, Kanifing and Brikama have head-count poverty rates of 61.1 percent, 59.3 percent and 54.3 percent respectively. Banjul, the capital, has the least proportion of poor people, about 10.6 percent.

Rapid increase in urban population has been one of the major problems faced by The Gambia. In addition to loss of arable land in the Kombos, the rapid increase in urban population has brought with it several environmental and socio-economic problems including deforestation, soil erosion, pollution and waste generation, and stress on health, education, and employment services (Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (2007-2011) The Gambia).

URBAN, RURAL AND TOTAL POPULATION

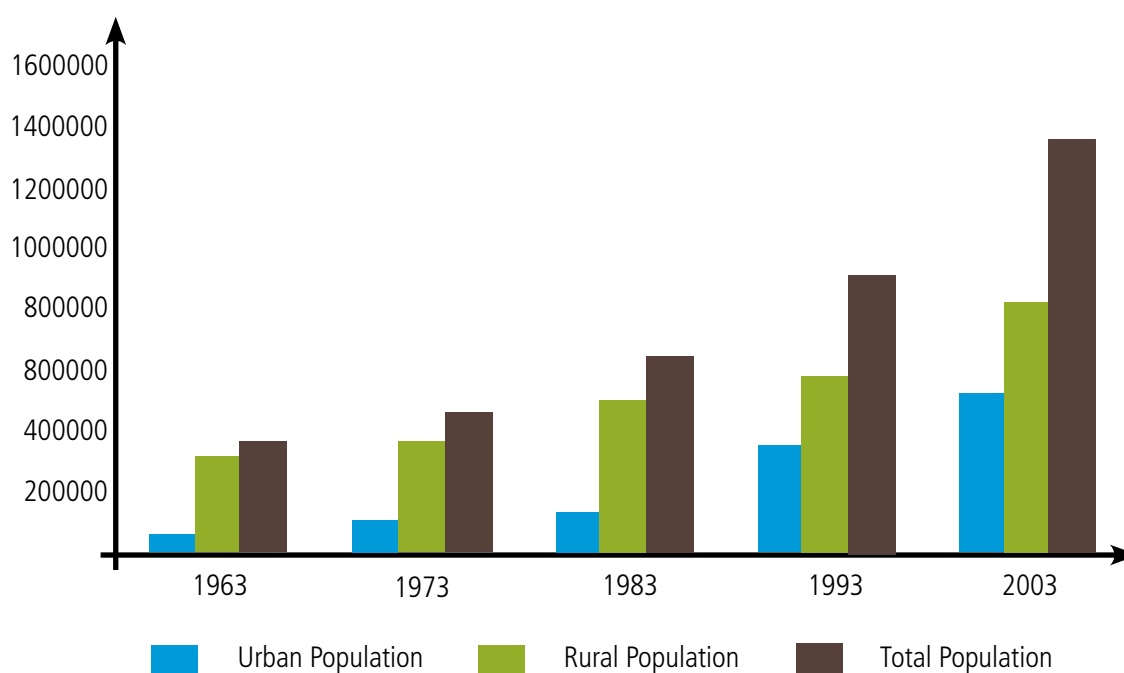


Figure 1. Urban, Rural and Total population in The Gambia, 1963 to 2003. Source: Gambia Bureau of Statistics, The Gambia.

MAP 1: DEMOGRAPHY OF THE GAMBIA



Source: www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/geos/ga.html. Worldfact: The Gambia

DEMOGRAPHY

The Gambia's total population in 2003 stood at 1.3 million people compared to 1.03 million in 1993. This represents a growth rate of 2.8 percent between 1993 and 2003 compared to a growth rate of 4.2 percent in the previous decade. The decline in population growth rate could be on account of:

- i. The outward movement of refugees from neighbouring countries that have now attained peace and stability, i.e. Sierra Leone, Liberia, Guinea Bissau, and the Casamance region of Senegal; and
- ii. The unfavourable economic climate in The Gambia resulting to the outward movement of economic migrants.

Nevertheless, the population density continued to move up, from 97 persons per square kilometer in 1993 to 128 persons per square kilometer in 2003. This

HEALTH

Available statistics indicate improvements in infant mortality rate from 137 per 1,000 live births in 1993 to 75 per 1,000 live births in 2005. Under-five mortality rate also decreased from 137 live births in 1993 to 99 per 1,000 live births in 2005. The improvement was mainly on account of significant achievements that have been registered with regard to immunization services. DPT3 (diphtheria, pertussis and tetanus) vaccine coverage was almost 90 percent in 2005. The country was declared polio-free in 2005. Malaria, diarrhoea and respiratory infections are the major causes of infant mortality. Malnutrition is reported to contribute to infant and under-five mortality.

Malaria and tuberculosis are still endemic and major killer diseases in The Gambia. Malaria is the leading cause of mortality particularly among children under the age of 5 years. Nationally, malaria causes about 4 percent of deaths in infants and 25 percent of deaths in

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