



NAMIBIA UNIVERSITY
OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

Faculty of Natural Resources and Spatial Sciences

Integrated Land Management Institute

URBAN LAND REFORM IN NAMIBIA

GETTING READY FOR NAMIBIA'S URBAN FUTURE

*Policy paper for submission to the
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The Integrated Land Management Institute (ILMI) is a centre of the Faculty of Natural Resources and Spatial Sciences (FNRSS) at the Namibia University of Science and Technology (NUST), committed to developing reputable and multidisciplinary research and public outreach activities in the fields of land, administration, property, architecture, and spatial planning.

The Land, Livelihoods and Housing Programme aims at deepening and expanding the focus on these key issues in Namibia. This thematic approach seeks to reflect the wide-ranging skills existing at the FNRSS, and was developed to guide ILMI's activities during the 2014-18 period. The programme is organised in four aspects: institutional, environmental, fiscal and spatial processes.

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ABOUT THIS DOCUMENT

This document outlines some pertinent questions regarding urbanization in Namibia, provides central policy recommendations and identifies relevant research gaps to guide the policy debate on urban land reform as part of the 2nd National Land Conference scheduled for 1-5 October 2018.

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A. INTRODUCTION

It is widely recognized that urbanization is the defining characteristic of our times. In a similar way in which the industrial revolution marked many countries in the 19th Century, today our planet's 'urban revolution' is considered by many a defining moment for the human species as a whole¹.

While cities cover only 0.5% of the Earth's surface² they account for over 80% of the world's GDP³. However, 'the urban' is not something reduced to what happens in 'cities', but extends throughout the planet's territory in the form of power lines, telecommunications, airspace jurisdictions, marine exploration licenses, mining rights⁴. These cut across old urban-rural divisions, and in many cases also nation-states borders.

The challenges and opportunities of informal settlements and the informal economies have led to new paradigms of planning that leave behind past ideas that hoped for a 'grand plan' to be implemented from 'the top' to 'the bottom'⁵. Today, particularly in 'the Global South', partnerships where stakeholders 'meet each other half way' (central government, local government, professionals, and inhabitants), appear to hold considerable potential for equitable, localized, and sustainable urban development⁶. Under this paradigm, government keeps focus on the core issues (e.g. bulk infrastructure, subsidies), and for the rest it promotes partnerships.

Cities are contested and are political by definition. How to live together is the most basic political question, and cities are by definition places of density, diversity, and intense activity. Cities also shape ourselves, which is where 'the right to the city' comes in⁷: the right to transform the places we live. Why is this important? Because by changing the places we live, we change ourselves⁸.

Namibia's geography and urban spaces have been largely shaped by a process of gradual dispossession, both rural and urban; this process did not stop with independence in 1990, but continues today. In a similar way that the Apartheid administration placed considerable efforts in restructuring South West Africa to benefit its racist objectives through the Odendaal Plan. Up to now, debates on government intervention on 'urban land reform' have been reduced to discussions on the Flexible Land Tenure System. While this initiative is highly relevant, there is a lack of a pro-active overall vision with regards to urbanisation.

Today we need the anti-Odendaal plan⁹. It is this 'counter plan', inspired by equity that will be here referred to as 'urban land reform', a strategy that embraces difference, creates spaces for being together, repairs inequities from the past, empowers existing and potential economic opportunities, and paves the way for the society of the future. The challenge is not only how to deal with future urban growth, but how to support the hundreds of thousands already living in informal settlements in urban areas, as well as those living in rural towns and



villages and other urbanizing areas. Matters of bulk infrastructure, such as water and electricity, employment and support to informal economies, are part and parcel to this. An urban land reform programme should overhaul the spatial inequality that characterises Namibia's entire territory.



Speculative territorial development map of Namibia: map by author.



B. ELEVEN THESES ON URBANIZATION IN NAMIBIA

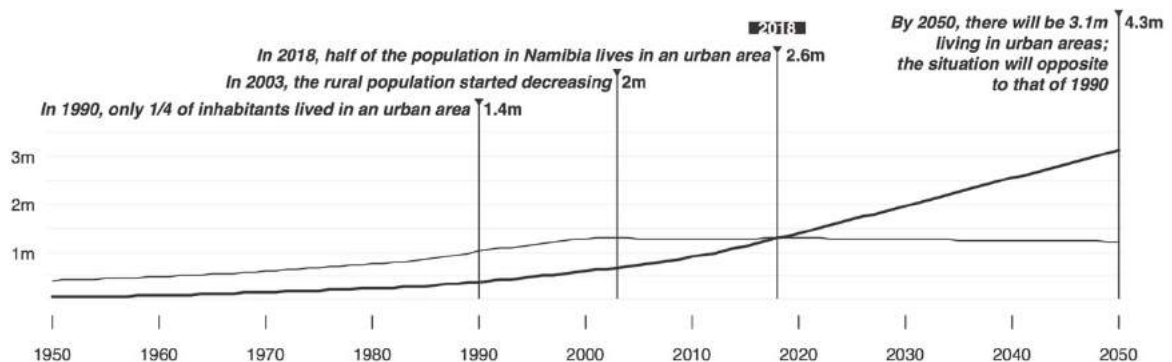
1. Namibia’s future is predominantly urban – a unique opportunity to fight poverty

Urbanization is partly due to rural-urban migration, and partly due to (internal) growth of urban populations¹⁰; it is also strongly linked to prospects of jobs and better opportunities in urban areas. Only a few countries have experienced weakened urbanization, but in all cases this has been in a context of general economic slowdown¹¹. Even where rural development succeeds, this does not reverse migration to urban areas¹². In Namibia considerable investment has been allocated for rural development through land resettlement in the first 28 years since independence, in some years reaching a cost of N\$2m per beneficiary¹³; this is equivalent to the amount that would be required to support access to land and housing for 67 urban dwellers through the Shack Dwellers Federation of Namibia programme¹⁴. Urbanization should not be considered a threat, but an opportunity to find innovative solutions to harness skills and knowledge within communities’, civil society and the private sector, and strengthen the state’s capacity to provide services to reduce poverty.

> *The 2018 National Land Conference (NLC) must acknowledge that Namibia’s future will be largely urban. Urbanization holds potential for more impactful development, and can be part of the solution to reduce poverty. Concomitant resources must be made available to take advantage of the opportunities that directing urbanization at the National scale holds in terms of prosperity for the majority.*

2. Namibia will have to accommodate 2 million additional urban residents by 2050

In 2018 50% of Namibia’s population lives in urban areas¹⁵. At Independence that figure stood at only 28%¹⁶, and hence ‘the urban’ did not receive attention at the first National Land Conference in 1991. As a consequence the increase in urbanization from 28% to 50% was not steered proactively by Government, leading to the urban land and housing crisis of today. Now is the time for Namibia’s urban future to be imagined. We have a unique opportunity to turn this tide in our favour, which many other countries in Africa, Latin America, and Southeast Asia have missed.



Source: UN World urbanization prospects 2018 available at <https://esa.un.org/unpd/wup/Country-Profiles/>



> *The 2018 NLC must put most of its emphasis on urban land reform to be prepared for the urban future in the next 30 years, or the urban land and housing crisis will grow to dimensions where intervention will only be able to mitigate some of the harsh living conditions in informal settlements.*

3. Government spends insufficient resources on housing and urban development

There are three main ways that Government invests in urban housing: through the National Housing Enterprise (NHE) and the suspended Mass Housing Development Programme (MHDP), through the Build Together Programme (BTP)¹⁷, and through support to Shack Dwellers' Federation of Namibia (SDFN). NHE is characterised by a slow pace of delivery and high input cost¹⁸. Although BTP is the most long-term and far-reaching programme there is no thorough evaluation of its impact; a pilot study by NUST is currently underway¹⁹. Government support for SDFN is through an annual financial allocation to the Twangana Fund²⁰, but this is negligible versus the scale of the informal settlement challenge.

Since Independence, budget allocations to housing development (including DBTP, SDFN, NHE and MHDP) have historically been around 0.1% of GDP, far below international figures such as 0.6% of GDP (European Union member states in 2015)²¹, 0.3% for OECD Countries²², 0.5% in Zambia²³ or up to 3.7% of GDP in South Africa²⁴. While this figure does not consider expenditure for bulk infrastructure²⁵ and other public investment supporting housing, it does illustrate a great demand for increased public spending on housing and urban development, which will provide the necessary basis for increased economic growth.

Calculating government contribution to SDFN, NHE, and rural land reform, it can be said that the impact of public spending on the urban poor is a way to make a broader impact in the living conditions of low-income inhabitants²⁶.

> *The 2018 NLC must commit to increase public spending on urban development and housing to levels that will ensure adequate impact in curbing the urban land and housing crisis. The NLC should commission a team to explore funding innovations to support urban development in Namibia.*

4. The vast majority of households is poor and excluded from the housing market

Namibia is characterized by high, though slightly reducing, income inequality. It remains at the top of the list of the GINI Index²⁷. 89% of households have a monthly income below N\$ 5,000 and 7% have a monthly income between N\$ 5,000 and 10,000²⁸. Even middle income employees in Namibia's public service sector experience difficulties in accessing adequate housing²⁹, including nurses, police officers, military personnel and teachers. The most vulnerable sectors of Namibia's labour force, such as domestic workers, security guards, or construction workers, as well as those working in the informal economy, are much further removed from attaining adequate housing.



Completed yet largely vacant MHDP-1 houses in Walvis Bay, 2015

> *The 2018 NLC must commit urban land reform efforts to be directed to improve the situation for the urban poor in order to have the widest possible effect as this group represents the vast majority of citizens in the near future.*

5. Urbanization is largely driven by citizens mobilizing resources at the grassroots

At Independence it was estimated that only 20% of the urban population lived in informal settlements³⁰. Today, 2 out of every 3 people in an urban area live in an informal settlement³¹. This is a massive transformation, that has taken place in a remarkably organized manner compared to conditions observed in neighbouring countries. Organized communities such as Shack Dwellers' Federation of Namibia stand out as international examples³² and their efforts have demonstrated that low-income groups are best placed to gather information about themselves³³, organise and mobilise resources³⁴, and with the help of proactive professionals, develop their own settlement layouts and implement them³⁵. While not every informal settlements inhabitant belongs to the SDFN, they have developed bottom-up mechanisms that can be replicated for other low-income communities. Ample resources exist, drawing from national and international experience on how to support low-income communities in informal settlements³⁶.

There is increasing recognition that unlawful occupation of urban land may be socially-legitimate where there is no available mechanism to access land, and some governments are taking an accommodating approach³⁷.



Community-led mapping in Gobabis. Source: <http://namibia-shackdwellers.blogspot.co.za/>



> *The 2018 NLC must commit adequate state support and resources for organized communities to drive their own urban land and housing solutions based on their established needs and affordability. The state must establish mechanisms to support 'community finance institutions' to invest in urban and rural land improvements.*

6. The informal economy is increasingly supporting the majority of urban livelihoods

In the 19th and 20th century urbanization has occurred in many parts of the world with industrialization forming the basis of supporting urban livelihoods. However, historically Namibia's economy has been based on resource-extraction, with minimal production and value addition to support urban jobs and negligible local demand. With Namibia gaining independence in an era of highly competitive globalizing markets, 'traditional industrialization' such as other countries have experienced is increasingly unlikely. Namibia largely experiences jobless growth³⁸ and unemployment is high and increasing, already 67% of employment lies within the informal sector, following larger continental trends³⁹. Considering that women are most active in the informal sector⁴⁰, housing strategies enabling informal livelihood generation are an affirmation towards gender equality. Considering a population largely generating livelihoods in the informal economy is important when developing policies and programmes, which are often based on the assumptions of widespread formal employment driven by industrialization.



Traders at Herero Mall informal market in Katutura. Photo by author.

> *The NLC must acknowledge the importance of the informal economy in urban development and livelihood generation. Besides conventional public amenities, public land and infrastructure must be made available to support the informal economy.*

7. The low-density sub-urban model is unsustainable and reproduces inequality

The development model segregating the function of the city to separate areas (e.g. industrial, residential, CBD) is a specific form of urban development⁴¹ that has been promoted since the 1950s. In that context housing is often simplistically understood as the mere construction of houses, disregarding the long-term sustainability of the infrastructure that is needed to



support adequate housing, such as bulk infrastructure, public amenities, and other aspects that sustain health, well-being and dignified living. The common perception that Namibia has vast land available is misleading, if the high cost for land servicing per household and the low rates base in the long-term is taken into consideration. The established minimum erf size of 300m² (for single residential zoning) is unaffordable to the majority, costing an average of N\$86,000 per erf to service⁴², and is widely regarded by communities and built environment professionals alike to be a major cause of retarding land delivery.

Furthermore, planning terminologies like 'low-density' and 'high-density' are usually used to refer to 'wealthy' and 'poorer' neighbourhoods, embedding inequality and segregation through class (and race, considering Apartheid legacies) in the very structure of cities. Mixed-income neighbourhoods are virtually non-existent in Namibia. This might satisfy 'land value', which keeps the 'property market' on a growth track that is desirable for financial institutions. But it also maintains socially untenable segregation between groups, and restricts poorer inhabitants to areas with inferior infrastructure and less opportunities for participating in the urban economy.

Land delivery is undertaken by various professions that are regulated⁴³, including legislated minimum fees⁴⁴. This in turn informs university curricula, largely educating future professionals how to perform in 'the formal sector'⁴⁵, and often side-lining more realistic, but complex developmental challenges.



Spatial segregation continues to structure most Namibian urban spaces: Windhoek. Photo by author.

- > *The 2018 NLC must pledge to re-think the expansive sub-urban model (urban sprawl) and work towards more compact and sustainable cities that will maximize the impact of public infrastructure and encourage urban economies to develop across all scales.*
- > *The 2018 NLC must create mechanisms for local authorities to determine special development areas within their planning schemes to redress apartheid-designed urban structures and 'redistribute' access to urban livelihoods.*
- > *The NLC must task professional bodies and educational institutions to produce a plan of action to reform legislation governing each discipline as well as liaising with educational*



institutions to trigger a process of revising curricula to prepare younger generations for the actually-existing challenges ahead.

8. Emphasis on 'property' can jeopardize security of tenure of the poor

It is documented that programmes providing freehold land titles to low-income individuals can work where supply and demand for land are relatively balanced⁴⁶. However, in a highly unequal context such as Namibia, where the demand is considerably larger than the supply, low-income beneficiaries are placed at high risk of losing their land by selling it to higher-income individuals in distress situations⁴⁷. Legal clauses limiting the sale of such property usually push such transactions into the 'black market', as the distress is often stronger than the fear of breaking the law⁴⁸. No systematic research has been conducted on the effects of land titling in Namibia, but recent research shows that there are active informal land markets⁴⁹ and that one of the key barriers in registering land rights is the cost of transfer⁵⁰. While the Flexible Land Tenure System is set to make a dent in this respect, currently there are only three pilot projects, that are yet to be reviewed before a National roll-out of the programme.

Although the National Housing Policy⁵¹ mentions 'social housing', it does not expand on a strategy to undertake such a programme and this area of housing provision has not been explored. A recent call to 'Outsource government flats'⁵² by the Ministry of Works and Transport could be revised to create Namibia's first comprehensive social housing programme, using the government's housing stock and government or local authority land as a resource.

> *The 2018 NLC must recognize the need to focus on security of tenure and security of occupancy of urban land and housing, instead of only 'individual ownership'. Alternative housing models including social housing must be actively developed.*

9. Innovation increasingly takes place at local government level

Local authorities have a key responsibility in urban development, which makes their financial sustainability central in achieving their local development mandate. Namibian local authorities have not yet balanced their revenue and expenditure⁵³, and there are only few local authorities that are able to fully sustain their operations; and even fewer that are able to undertake investment in housing, as per their legal mandate⁵⁴. It is internationally recognized that the key problem for local authorities in developing countries is the mismatch between available resources and municipal spending needs, together with a dependency on central government transfers, and lesser revenue from property taxation, service charges, and, in some cases, other forms of taxes controlled by central government⁵⁵. Yet, international research also shows the increasing role of the local government level in engendering innovation⁵⁶. This is evident in local authorities that have developed their own form of titles that are only valid within their own jurisdiction⁵⁷. Such informal titles may be cheaper and provide most of the benefits of security of tenure. However, attempts at decentralisation⁵⁸ have been deemed insufficient⁵⁹, and local authorities have expressed the urgent need for local government reform⁶⁰.



> *The 2018 NLC must make local government reform an integral part of urban land reform. Innovative funding mechanisms to support local authorities need to be developed to sustain urban development at all scales.*

10. The private sector cannot provide structural solutions for ultra-low income groups

The limitations of commercial finance for land servicing and housing for the majority are well established. Only 4% of Namibian households have a monthly income above N\$ 10,000⁶¹, which in itself is not a guarantee of being able to afford the median house price on the market⁶². While the commercial private sector is active in assisting low-income groups' through corporate social responsibility and charity⁶³, these measures provide relief rather than structural long-term solutions. Although Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs) are actively promoted in land and housing delivery, the new act⁶⁴ is conceived for PPPs that are only workable where there is a mismatch between the supply and the effective demand; in other words, where there is not enough supply of a product while there are potential customers that are able to afford the product. The commercial private sector may thus be able to contribute to the housing deficit for lower-middle incomes and public sector employees. However, the vast majority of housing needs is in the low-income groups⁶⁵, in other words, 'high risk' clients for financial institutions, who are not able to afford the most basic house delivered by the private sector.

However, non-governmental organisations in liaison with private companies are currently testing to develop erven with basic services, preparing greenfield land for an organised, incremental development at very low cost⁶⁶. Such innovative ways of addressing land servicing should be explored and mainstreamed.

> *The 2018 NLC must acknowledge that PPPs and private sector investment have a limited role to play in addressing the urban land and housing crisis, mostly for middle-income groups, and that other processes have to be supported to address the needs of low-income groups.*

11. Rural and urban are not separate entities, but part of a dynamic (global) system

The urban / rural divide in land-related discussions is counter-productive, as both are linked in many complex ways which are often not well understood: most importantly in terms of infrastructure, food systems, economic linkages, (labour) migration, communication networks and family relations among many others. The rural and urban population in Namibia is quite uneven between regions; 85% of the population of Khomas and Erongo live in urban areas, while in regions like Ohangwena, Omusati and Oshikoto only 15% does⁶⁷. Migration lies at the heart of these dynamics; at the national level the 2011 census shows that about a third of the population lived in a place different from their place of birth, and in the Khomas and Erongo regions, almost half of the inhabitants were born elsewhere. The City of Windhoek reports that 85% of those living in informal settlements come from the Northern areas of the country⁶⁸.



Yet, a well-researched and participatory planning process to give spatial direction for National Developmental Agenda's such as Vision 2030 has never been conducted. Only one in three countries in Sub-Saharan Africa have a national urbanisation policy or plan⁶⁹, and Namibia is not among them. While efforts towards a 'National Urban Policy' are underway⁷⁰, these should not be limited to proclaimed urban areas but should plan for the entire territory across rural-urban divides. An urban policy should identify areas of strategic intervention and metropolitan development, and requirements for bulk infrastructure (e.g. water, electricity, water treatment etc.) versus demographic prospects, to make the most strategic use of the limited public funds available.

Furthermore, such planning is not reduced to the jurisdiction of one government office, ministry or agency, but should be coordinated from a high-level body such as the National Planning Commission or Office of the Prime Minister, bringing the various O/M/As to account, and drawing on ample expertise in the national universities, as well as in the private and civil society sectors. All of these should be part of the process of re-imagining the spatial future of the country.



Urbanization as historical process ranging across rural-urban divides: Oshakati. Source: Google Maps

> *The 2018 NLC to commit the state to create a unit within NPC to coordinate government O/M/As and non-state actors in the development of a National Urban Policy and a National Spatial Development Plan to re-imagine the future integrated spatial development of the country.*



C. POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS TO EFFECT URBAN LAND REFORM

The following outlines central policy recommendations informed by the above these on urbanization in Namibia. Many of these recommendations are not conclusive but require additional research and public engagement to be further developed.

1. Establish urban land reform as integral part of land reform

- 1.1 Define the aims of a redistributive urban land reform informed by the UN-defined right to adequate housing⁷¹, and covering the full range of settlements from rural villages to metropolitan urban regions
- 1.2 Define urban land reform beneficiary target groups proportional to demographics of income groups (focusing on the 'currently disadvantaged')
- 1.3 Define eligibility criteria for urban land reform beneficiaries, and with special regard for gender relations of households
- 1.4 Define 'available land' (incl. government land, public enterprises land, municipal land and private land) and processes for accessing such land for urban land reform purposes
- 1.5 Define a timeframe for urban land reform

Some pertinent questions:

- > *How does urban land reform relate to rural resettlement? Is there a separation?*
- > *Who is landless: households versus individuals as beneficiaries?*
- > *How will rights of women as beneficiaries be protected in a patriarchal setting?*
- > *Who is landless in informal settlements: the current tenant or the 'landlord'?*
- > *When has urban land reform achieved its targets?*

2. Create transparent administrative structures

- 2.1 Establish a National, standing, cross-institutional committee mandated to coordinate urban land reform (incl. Government O/M/As, Civil Society NGOs and CBOs, Universities) reporting directly to Parliament and Cabinet
- 2.2 Establish a professionally-capacitated spatial planning unit accountable to the above standing committee
- 2.3 Develop an inter-ministerial, GIS-based, information platform for urban and regional spatial data, including an urban land/housing needs assessment monitor and allocation database between NSA and central, regional and local government
- 2.4 Develop democratic and transparent processes of public engagement on urban land reform policy development, implementation, periodic review and evaluation at National and local levels (i.e. local urban land committees)

Some pertinent questions:

- > *How centralized / decentralized should the urban land reform process be?*
- > *How to build implementation capacity across institutions and sectors?*
- > *How to manage political interest in control of land allocations?*



3. Develop a national urban policy and spatial development plan

- 3.1 Task the spatial planning unit to oversee the development of a National urban policy and a National spatial development plan which integrates regional and metropolitan planning with agrarian and rural land reform objectives and guides spatial planning at all levels
- 3.2 Commit government at all levels to pursue equitable, sustainable, and compact urban areas, and establish required regulatory reform to effect this goal
- 3.3 Develop strategies for the proactive inclusion of informal economic activities through availing public land, public infrastructure and amenities
- 3.4 Define special development areas at national, regional and local level for strategic interventions such as development corridors, inner-city social housing developments, strategic public works, etc.
- 3.5 Develop participatory neighbourhood-based planning procedures and area-based urban management pilot projects

Some pertinent questions:

- > *How do we imagine our shared future urban society?*
- > *Which are the pressing colonial spatial legacies that need to be reversed?*
- > *How can spatial planning be reformed to align with ambitions for equitable cities?*

4. Develop mechanisms to finance urban land reform

- 4.1 Define urban land reform beneficiation process and 'subsidy' levels per beneficiary, and for different points of departure (informal settlements, backyarders, waiting lists, etc.)
- 4.2 Research and internationally benchmark National expenditure on urban development and housing to guide budget allocations for urban land reform
- 4.3 Develop capital funding formula for central government to support regional and local government financially in land servicing and infrastructure development and community-led settlement upgrading processes
- 4.4 Reform local authority finance and National and local taxation paradigms to align with urban land reform aims
- 4.5 Align non-governmental finance mechanisms incl. community finance (savings groups), NHE finance mandate, social housing institutions, building societies and private investment (PPPs) with urban land reform aims and to ensure affordability for all income sectors

Some pertinent questions:

- > *How much does the state spend per beneficiary on urban land reform in comparison to rural resettlement?*
- > *How to ensure equity in terms of public spending on urban land reform?*
- > *How can inadequate local revenue bases be augmented in ways that allow for proactive planning and implementation of land delivery at local authority level?*



5. Implement a comprehensive housing strategy

- 5.1 Implement the recommendations of the Revision of the Mass Housing Development Programme study, undertaken by ILMI / NUST in 2017 for the Ministry of Urban and Rural Development
- 5.2 Streamline informal settlement upgrading and integrated, planned layout processes (for new urban residents) and mainstream to all local authorities
- 5.3 Develop inner city medium-rise social housing pilots using existing government flats and vacant government and local authority land
- 5.4 Develop guidelines on land servicing and housing PPPs for local authorities
- 5.5 Re-focus NHE (credit-linked housing) to service the public and middle-income sector
- 5.6 Revise the 2009 National Housing Policy to accommodate a broader vision on adequate housing

D. RESEARCH GAPS RELEVANT TO URBANIZATION

Further research is needed in the following areas:

- > National expenditure on housing and urban development in international comparison
- > Housing provision (public and private) versus urban population growth
- > Current and projected infrastructural capacities (e.g. water, electricity) to support urban development
- > Spatial distribution of employment opportunities and projected job-creating investments
- > Sociology of rural-urban linkages and dynamics
- > Local government funding mechanisms to finance urban development⁷², including forms of taxation, suitable for Namibia
- > Quantitative and qualitative urban land demand
- > Impact of land titling programmes in Namibia
- > Impact of the Build Together Programme to inform its revision
- > Extent of desegregation of colonial spatial patterns
- > Structural barriers for pro-poor urban development and informal trade support
- > Amount of land allocated by LAs to inhabitants
- > Historical changes in land values, construction costs
- > Extent of evictions and displacement at the national level



E. APPENDIX A: ONGOING POLICY PROCESSES ON LAND AND HOUSING

There are about thirteen different on-going processes that are key for Namibia's urbanization, and it's unclear whether there is overall coordination among these to achieve a higher and longer-term aim. Some of these are:

1. National Land Policy (review after Second Land Conference)

Status: The National Land Policy of 1998 is set to be reviewed at the upcoming National Land Conference. This is conceived as a follow up on the First National Land Conference that took place in 1992.

Steering agency: Ministry of Land Reform and the Office of the Prime Minister

Related documents: National Land Policy of 1998

National Land Conference of 1992, Consensus Document

2. National Urban Policy

Status: This process started in the late 2000s, and after a momentum that was achieved through a partnership between Government, the University of Namibia (UNAM) and local and international town planners in 2011, the process hasn't advanced significantly until recent years.

Steering agency: Ministry of Urban and Rural Development

Related documents: "Towards a National Urbanization Strategy for Namibia" (2011), Roberto Ottolenghi and Barrie Watson.

3. National Spatial Development Framework

Status: The urban and Regional Planning Act, 2018 is published in Government Gazette No. 6631 of 20 June 2018 [GOVERNMENT NOTICE No. 125 Promulgation of Urban and Regional Planning Act, 2018 (Act No. 5 of 2018), of the Parliament] and that the National Spatial Development Framework is conceived as a structure plan on national level only.

Steering agency: Ministry of Urban and Rural Development

Related documents: "The proposed new urban and regional planning bill (ILMI Document 1/2015)" (2015), Pieter Genis.

4. Mass Urban Land Servicing Programme

Status: This process started in 2015, when the President announced the intention to service 180,000 erven of land country-wide. A committee-based process started involving several government institutions, the Affirmative Repositioning social movement, and the Namibia University of Science and Technology.

Steering agency: Ministry of Urban and Rural Development

Related documents: "Mass Urban Land Servicing Programme Implementation Plan" (2016), Ministry of Urban and Rural Development

5. Mass Housing Development Programme

Status: This programme was started in 2013 by then-president Hifikepunye Pohamba, aiming at building 185,000 houses throughout the country, at a cost of N\$45 billion, by 2030. The programme was stopped in 2016 due to irregularities, and the same year the Namibia University of Science and Technology was commissioned to review the Programme's strategy and implementation plan.

Steering agency: National Housing Enterprise, Ministry of Urban and Rural Development

Related documents: "Summary of Blueprint on Mass Housing Development Initiative in Namibia" (2013), Government of Namibia

"Revision of the Mass Housing Development Programme" (2017), Namibia University of Science and Technology / Ministry of Urban and Rural Development



6. National Land Use Planning Act

Status: Draft bill being circulated, workshop took place on May 11-12 with an emphasis on implementation.

Steering agency: Ministry of Land Reform

Related documents: Draft Land Use Planning Bill

7. National policy on Utilisation and Subdivision of Agricultural Land, 2017

Status: Ministry of Agriculture, Water, Forestry (MAWF), being the competent sectoral custodian mandated to promote, develop, manage and utilise agricultural land, water and forestry resources. Therefore, since this year the Ministry directed by cabinet to facilitate a consultative process in developing a national policy on the utilization and sub division of Agricultural Land.

Steering agency: Ministry of Agriculture Water and Forestry

Related documents: Land Reform Act of 2002, Agricultural Land Act .1970 (Act No.70 of 1970)

8. National Land Use Planning Policy, 2016

Status: The process of formulating the National land Use Planning policy started in 2006, aiming at the establishment of consistent and transparent land use planning procedures from local to regional and National level;

Steering Agency: Ministry of Land Reform

Related Document: Integrated Regional Land use Plans, Urban structure Plan, Regional structure Plan, Decentralisation Policy 1997 and Decentralisation Enabling Act 2000, Regional Planning and Development policy, 1997

9. Rural Development Policy (2012)

Status: While there is a Rural Development Policy, it mainly focus on economic development and makes little mention of socio-spatial issues. The Ministry has identified the need to develop a strategy to address the rural housing challenge.

Steering agency: Ministry of Urban and Rural Development

Related documents: Rural Development Policy 2012.

10. Flexible Land Tenure Act

Status: The act was passed in 2012 and the regulations published in May 2018. The first three pilots will take place in Oshakati, Gobabis and Windhoek, and is expected to be rolled-out nationally thereafter.

Steering agency: Ministry of Land Reform

Related documents: "The new flexible land tenure act: an update (ILMI Document 2/2015)" (2011), Ase Christensen.

11. National Habitat Strategy

Status: On October 2016, Namibia signed the New Urban Agenda at the Habitat III conference in Quito, Ecuador. This should in principle set the guidelines for the Agenda to be implemented in Namibia, which includes action on national urbanisation and housing in particular.

Steering agency: Ministry of Urban and Rural Development

Related documents: "National Plan of Action, Habitat II" (1996), Ministry of Regional and Local Government and Housing

12. Decentralisation Process

Status: The Decentralisation policy was established in 1997 and a ten-year review report was published with Finnish support.

Steering agency: Ministry of Urban and Rural Development



Related documents: The Namibian government has a website with decentralization-related documents:
<http://www.decentralisation.gov.na/home>

13. National Informal Settlement Upgrading Strategy

Status: Pilots have taken place in some local authorities, report being finalised. This was done with support of the European Union; the African, Caribbean and Pacific Secretariat; and UN-Habitat. The objective is for this process to lay the grounds for a national strategy for informal settlement upgrading

Steering agency: Ministry of Urban and Rural Development

Related documents: "Participatory Slum Upgrading Programme (PSUP) for Namibia" (2016)



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