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Toward a National Urbanization Strategy for Namibia

Issue analysis and key recommendations



Photo: Leonie Watson 2010

By: Roberto Ottolenghi

& Barrie Watson

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Preamble

Part I : the case for a National Urbanization Strategy

1. Unguided urbanization: a major threat to sustainable and equitable development
2. Namibia: Urbanization as an ongoing process.
Table: Lifetime migration
3. A strategy for national distribution of industrial investment as key to manageable urbanization.
4. Agriculture and Food Security

Part II: A road map to a National Urbanization Strategy

5. The main challenges
6. Addressing the challenges
 - The Institutional challenge
 - The Planning challenge
 - The Urban Governance and Management reform challenge
7. Concluding considerations

Part III: The Work Program

8. A Work Program in support of the formulation of a National Urbanization Strategy – a proposal for activities to be initiated in 2011.
9. The role of international assistance

APPENDIX A

POPULATION PROJECTION FOR URBAN LOCALITIES IN NAMIBIA BASED ON THE 2001 CENSUS RESULTS (F. MAANDA).

Preamble

This report is the result of a joint initiative of the Government of the Republic of Namibia (the Ministry of Regional and Local Government, Housing and Rural Development) and UN-Habitat.

The awareness of the major challenges facing the country in light of the foreseen urbanization trends prompted the multi-partner Habitat Committee, which is hosted by the Ministry, to indicate the formulation of a national Urbanization Strategy as a priority. This is reflected in the UN-Habitat Country Program Document 2008-09.

The initiative was financially supported by the Spanish MDG-F through the UN Joint Program on Cultural Tourism, approved in 2009.

UN-Habitat, one of the four UN agencies participating in the Joint Program, recruited one international and one national consultant, each for a work month split in two periods (October 2010 and January 2011), to carry out the required consultations and issue analysis. A three-days National Workshop was held in Windhoek from 27 to 29 January 2011, widely attended by representatives of Central and Local Government, civil society and academia. This provided much of the basis for the case this Report tries to make.

This Report is seen by the authors as a first step in an inevitably long and demanding process, institutionally as broad as possible, to allow Namibia to properly guide and manage urbanization and avoid the negative downsides which have beset many developing countries in the recent past.

Part I : the case for a National Urbanization Strategy

1) Unguided urbanization: a major threat to sustainable and equitable development

The Government of Namibia, in deciding to move toward the adoption of a National Urbanization Strategy, has embarked upon a praiseworthy and unusual challenge. Urbanization has seldom been guided by rational and planned strategies; in most countries it has simply 'happened', driven by drastic changes in the economy which automatically induced large sections of the population to move toward better livelihood and employment opportunities (real or perceived as the case may be).

Defining a national urbanization strategy implies a thorough multi-sectoral review linking together all aspects of the national socio-economic scenario and tailoring individual sectors' strategies to a set of desirable national goals. This is invariably a complex process since sectoral agendas often tend to function according to pre-determined goals and approaches with a life of their own. Reviewing past experiences in the continents and countries which went through large scale urbanization implies therefore, most of the times, carrying out a piecemeal effort at analyzing the key sectors' strategies which, in the absence of a comprehensive and multi-sectoral strategic framework, drove the process.

Urbanization does bring greater prosperity (today's poorest countries are those least urbanized), but urbanization processes can nevertheless go badly wrong if measured against the desirable parameters of social equity, balanced distribution of resources and sustainability.

Namibia Vision 2030 "Namibia Vision 2030: Policy Framework for Long-term National Development" of 2004 sets forth a number of goals which its national community intends to achieve in the course of the next twenty years.

The following ones are immediately worth quoting as they project the desired situation in 2030:

- There is free movement of the population within the country and population distribution is maturely adjusted to the location of resources for livelihood. **Namibia is a highly urbanized country with about 75 per cent of the population living in proclaimed urban centers.**
- **Urban places are widely distributed in the country, and over-concentration of population in some centers is absent.**
- **The predominance of Windhoek has considerably reduced as a result of growth of other urban centers throughout the country. (page 49)**

Though highly desirable, the achievement of these goals should not be taken for granted; indeed if previous international experience is to provide a model, the exact opposite may occur; that is: urbanization may increasingly concentrate in a very few centers with the capital city being ever more predominant, unless strong and proactive guiding mechanisms are applied.

The experience of the main Latin American countries (Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Mexico) which experienced a large scale urbanization process before the other developing regions indicates that:

- Urbanization (pre and post World War II) was directed primarily toward a few 'primate cities' and their metropolitan areas, engendering an urban crisis that continues to date, with massive transfers of poverty from rural to urban; the influx of newcomers proved in excess of the employment generation capacity that urban investment was able to create and in excess of public delivery of services and infrastructure. The experience in Asian countries broadly mirrored that pattern.
- Equity was largely a casualty of this process: disparities among regional communities and social groups in terms of income, access to resources, employment and services grew rather than being reduced and still continues today. In Brazil, for example, it makes little sense to focus on the aggregate national Human Development Index (HDI), classified as 'High' in 2010, since the discrepancies among States speak of two different countries within the same nation:

The overall HDI for the industrialized Southern states and the State of San Paulo equals that of some European countries like Croatia (now in the EU), Montenegro and Bulgaria while that of States of the North East, like Pernambuco and Paraiba, equals the HDI of Equatorial Guinea.

Similar discrepancies are to be found when selective HDIs are measured: the HDI for Education in the State of Rio de Janeiro almost equals that of Switzerland, while in the North Eastern State of Maranhao it equals that of Sao Tomé and Principe; in terms of Life Expectancy, the HDI for the Federal District of Brazil's capital (Brasilia) is on a par with that of Poland, while Northern States like Alagoas are on a par with Kazakhstan.

The above should sound a note of warning for Namibia, currently acknowledged as 'one of the most unequal societies in the world' by Vision 2030 (page 105), especially since greater equality is meant to constitute one of the fundamental goals of the Vision.

In Namibia, inequity is found among regions and within regions, produced by unequal access to productive resources as well as social services. Income disparity among regions is huge, from the N\$ 11,359 for Khomas and N\$ 1,070 for Ohangwena; adult literacy is 94% in Khomas (Windhoek region) and 57% in Kunene; life expectancy is 42 for Caprivi and 57.5 for Erongo (the region of Walvis Bay-Swakopmund).

Vision 2030 is well aware of the risk and highlights (page 105) the "Worst-case scenario for 2030:

- **Poverty increases in spite of economic growth.**
- **The gap between the rich and the poor widens.**
- **Majority of the population lives below the poverty line.**

2) Namibia: Urbanization as an ongoing process.

Industrialization was the main driver of urbanization in Latin American and Asian countries and this is going to be the case for Namibia.

Vision 2030 projects the scenario (page 39):

- **As an industrialized country, Namibia's income per capita base had grown to be equivalent to that of the upper income countries, resulting in a change in status from a lower middle income country to a high income country.**
- **Manufacturing and the service sector constitute about 80 percent of the country's gross domestic product.**

What type of an urbanization pattern can large scale and intensive industrialization be expected to bring about?

Again, past experience elsewhere may serve as guidance: the concentration of urbanization in a few metropolitan areas mirrors the concentration of industrial investment in the same places; HDI variations reflect the same pattern with the areas least covered by industrial investment scoring the lowest.

Investors (foreign and national) naturally tend to opt for location in urban areas to capitalize on the benefits that proximity to better quality infrastructure, communication, transport, financial and banking services would afford; import substitution industries would find an additional benefit

by proximity to a large urban consumer market. The capital city may often be the preferred choice for advantages perceived to derive from proximity to key Government departments. National Governments in developing countries, eager to mobilize investment, may find it counter-productive to introduce restrictions on choice of location.

All of the above may not turn out to be the case in Namibia, but concerns should be raised to lead to correct decisions on an industrial distribution strategy with the required mechanisms to realize it. The danger is that, in its absence, investors' choices may concentrate development in a few existing urban areas, further exacerbating existing imbalances geographically, economically and socially.

For the time being current trends of urbanization do indeed point in the direction of further urbanization and further population concentration in a very few regions (Khomas and Erongo primarily, exactly where industrial investment has already occurred spanning in turn the growth of service and commerce related activities.

The percentage of the Namibian population in urban locations is projected to increase from 33.1% of a total population of 1 830 000 in 2001 to 43.7% of a projected population of 2 400 000 in 2016. Two places, Windhoek and Walvis Bay at the time of the 2001 census accounted for **45.9%** of the urban population of 603 612. This percentage is projected to increase to **67.5%** by 2016. Windhoek alone is projected to increase from 38.7% of the 603 612 urban population in 2001 to 42.5% of an urban population of 1 049 490 by 2016.

These population projections have been taken from Appendix A attached herewith (Maanda F.). But projecting, all the way to 2030, rates of population growth in the main cities based on past and present increases becomes dubious since the full impact of industrialization (and its distribution modalities) cannot be gauged with certainty. Actual rates of growth in these areas may be even higher than what has so far been expected.

To illustrate further the on-going movement to these main metropolitan areas, the following extract from the report *Urbanization in Namibia: Statistics and Vision 2030* may be considered. It emphasises the move to the two main destinations of Windhoek and Walvis Bay in Khomas Region and Erongo Region respectively, by measuring percentages of people whose place of usual residence is different from place of birth.

Table : **Lifetime migration**

Source: Results of the 2001 Census, Bureau of Statistics NPC 2003

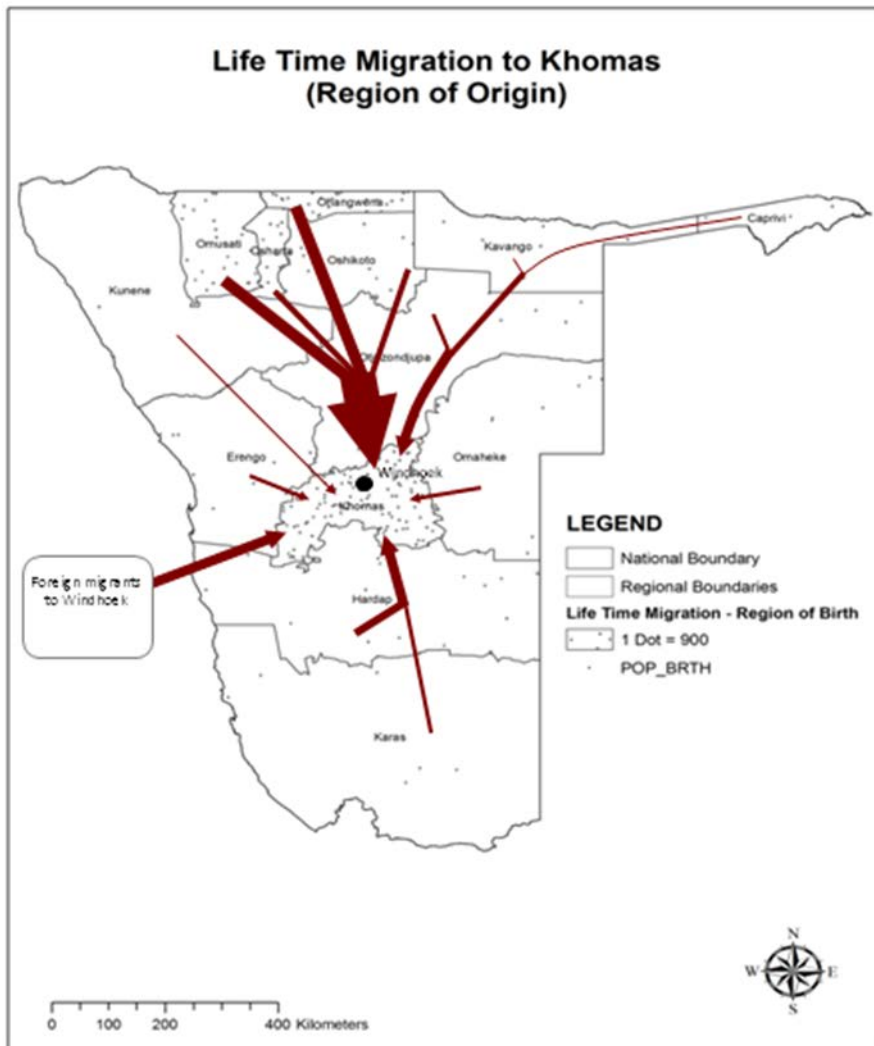
Area	Place of usual residence	Place of birth	Percentage born in the area
Namibia	1 805 117	1 736 839	96.2
Urban	522 777	312 158	59.7

Rural	1 282 340	1 166 938	91.0
Caprivi	80 584	73 841	91.6
Erongo	99 169	44 171	44.5
Hardap	69 007	53 082	76.9
Karas	64 792	41 918	64.7
Kavango	203 409	193 395	95.1
Khomas	230 791	99 946	43.3
Kunene	66 290	53 894	81.3
Ohangwena	240 112	221 347	92.2
Omaheke	68 766	52 519	76.4
Omusati	239 870	223 065	93.0
Oshana	155 874	119 438	76.6
Oshikoto	158 329	121 059	76.5
Otjozondjupa	128 124	74 442	58.1

“ At regional level, out of the usual residents, 95.1% of all people enumerated in Kavango Region were actually born there, compared to Khomas Region with 43.3% and Erongo Region with 44.5%”.

What the Table above shows is a picture of a Namibian population until now fairly stable in original locations but increasingly induced to move for economic reasons toward selected urban locations (Windhoek, Walvis Bay); enhanced investment in those same locations may make the flow of people uncontrollable and undermine the Vision 2030’s goal of reducing the predominance of existing urban centers.

In order to illustrate the above in a more simplified graphical form, the following table presents a map that shows lifetime migration to Khomas Region from other regions and outside the country. Source: Compilation by F. Maanda from Results of the 2001 Census, Bureau of Statistics NPC 2003



The danger of seeing current trends exacerbated rather than reverted is real; since industrialization is acknowledged as the prime engine of urbanization, the first strategic concern must focus on the scope for an industrial sector's strategy to drive the process along desired development lines.

3) A strategy for national distribution of industrial investment as key to manageable urbanization.

The Ministry of Trade and Industry is well aware of the challenge.

There is consensus on a number of key points:

- The need to decentralize investment so as to minimize urban concentrations
- The adopted method is to support non-rural commerce and industry in
 - Agricultural areas;
 - Mining (to extend through local service industry)
 - Fisheries and aquaculture (fairly widespread)
 - Live stock farming.
- Industry should be resource based or supporting; for instance, industry that supplies products to agriculture and vice-versa.
- Agriculture remains a major resource; an Agro-scheme or Green Scheme is underway and targets agricultural development based on irrigation and is done in close cooperation with the Ministry of Agriculture. This has been made operational for the past two years.

The 'Industrial Development Strategy – An Investor Guide' issued by the Ministry presents indeed selected investment proposals across the country, with emphasis on disadvantaged regions; this responds to the strategy of show-casing project proposals through documentation that is distributed internationally and locally.

However it may be legitimate to wonder what the actual incidence of these project proposals in search of investors may turn out to be in comparison to investors' direct proposals and preferences for type of investment and location.

Moreover necessary instruments to drive the process along nationally desirable lines are still in the making.

- An industrialization policy is still in draft form and lacks so far inter-sectoral comments and contributions.
- While a program of incentives exists (see the Trade & Industry Ministry's publication 'Special Incentives for Manufacturers and Exporters'), the foreseen incentives are not linked to locality requirements (the above Publication clarifies that '...Companies operating under the (incentives) regime are free to locate their operations anywhere in Namibia').
- The majority of the investments on offer are basically in the form of tax breaks (under the Ministry of Finance); these could instead also be applied in a targeted manner to support investment in disadvantaged regions and include other types of investments like access to land and services.
- The Ministry understands the importance of an inter-sectoral approach to industrial policy formulation and specifically to the issue of investment location (this issue is currently handled through the Environmental Committee of the Ministry of Environment and Tourism), but, as mentioned above, the process is not immune from constraints and problems; the desired level of inter-sectoral consultation has not been achieved.

An industrial investment policy that takes into account all sectors' priorities and projects the stated goals of Vision 2030 spatially over the national territory should be a cardinal prerequisite for a successful and manageable urbanization.

It may otherwise occur that the actual flow of people toward the regions with highest investment peaks turns out to exceed the already high projections of population growth for the same areas.

4) Agriculture and Food Security

Considering the foreseen growth of the industrial and services sector, inevitably the relative importance of agriculture in the national economy is going to decrease if measured in terms of percentage of GDP. Nevertheless, there is awareness in Government of the fact that rural areas are still home for the majority of the Namibian people and as much as possible efforts ought to be made to productively stabilize communities on the land. Elsewhere (India, Brazil among other), rates of urbanization have been slowed in regions where focused attention has been paid to improving agricultural sector's efficiency while investing in agro-industry.

Namibia has been immune in recent years from the shocks which inflated the price of basic food commodities in the global market (elsewhere sudden fluctuations rapidly priced out large sections of the population from stable and secure access to basic food commodities, increased poverty and produced social tension and instability). But financial trading on the futures market for basic food commodities is by now a reality which poses additional problems for countries largely depending on imports for food security. Large scale urbanization may add a vulnerability factor, since the most exposed to sudden price fluctuations would be the urban poor (especially the informal sector) whose incomes are not protected against inflation and whose access to food producing regions is forcibly limited.

PART II: A road map to a National Urbanization Strategy

5) The main challenges

Urbanization poses several challenges to the Namibian Government and the national population.

- First, there is a major **Awareness challenge**: while urbanization is in principle a positive phenomenon for the economic and social development of a country (higher GDP, easier inclusion of larger sections of the people in a network of services like health and education), urbanization processes can go wrong, unless guided and directed by

principles of equity and sustainability. The awareness that is needed is that, simply left to market forces' investment preferences, urbanization may produce major unwanted results in terms of income disparities, greater inequality among regions and among social groups, negative impact on natural resources and on food security. Going a step further, this initial awareness must translate into firm policy guidance; in view of the complexity of the process involved in the formulation of an Urbanization Strategy, it may require high level political sponsorship to ensure success.

- Second is therefore the **Policy challenge**; this is clearly national and inter-sectoral in nature. Individual sectors' agendas must be made to dovetail with the main national goals (as expressed in Vision 2030) and then interpreted, over the national territory, through an implementation strategy that also takes a spatial dimension. Without wider understanding of the on-going processes and of the impact of sectoral decisions, policy makers in government departments and decision-makers in private concerns are going to continue to knowingly or unknowingly support the present urbanization trends, even when those may result in unintended consequences. Urbanization as a concern does not belong exclusively to any Ministry; the need for a concerted inter-sectoral and inter-institutional approach is obvious. Which moves the analysis to the level of the search for the most appropriate consultative and decision making mechanisms.

There are then additional and crucial challenges of a more technical and institutional nature which are listed here and then further detailed in Section 6 – Addressing the challenges.

- The third level is that of the **Institutional challenge**; if urbanization is rightly perceived as an inter-sectoral concern, the need for an overarching institutional guidance and co-ordination ought to be factored-in. The National Planning Commission, mandated to oversee national policy formulation and co-ordinate inter-sectoral decisions, may be seen as the natural body to spearhead the process. It is beyond the scope of this report to specifically indicate to the Government of Namibia which structure should be preferably given to the consultative and co-ordination mechanism which would be required. The benefit of high-level policy guidance is however emphasized. At the technical level, the Ministry of Regional and Local Government, Housing and Rural Development should be the line 'urbanization Ministry' seen as in charge of developing the national planning framework which translates also in a spatial dimension the individual sectors' plans in a coordinated manner. Inter-institutional coordination mechanisms are never easy and tend to be perceived as taxing already strained manpower resources; yet, the urgency of the challenge should provide the rationale for a genuine and sustained effort.
- Next is the **Planning challenge**; Namibia has a series of statutory plans which are regularly prepared at the various geographical levels. The need to project planning to 2030 in a comprehensive manner so as to guide and factor in the urbanization process calls for the introduction of a revised planning agenda; first of all, since urbanization

affects regions and cities because of factors beyond the control of regional and city authorities, a national development planning instrument to guide urbanization seems to be required. The sense of urgency inherent in the urbanization issue should speed up the ongoing debate over the need for a National Development Framework.

- The last level of challenge is one of **Urban Governance and Management reform** to ensure that city government is put in a position to deliver in accordance with national goals and citizens' expectations. Cities are where urbanization impacts; it is primarily city authorities which will have to cope with the added pressure and ensure that the socio-economic development promise inherent in urbanization is actually realized. Their responsibility is going to be dramatically changed by urbanization when by far the vast majority of Namibian citizens will depend on city authorities for their daily access to services. Municipal Government will be the first level of Government citizens will look at to give response to the majority of their needs. Namibia will not legitimately reach the status of a developed country, irrespective of GDP increases, if delivery of services to its citizens fails to be commensurate with the standards which that status implies. The required scope of legal, institutional, planning and fiscal reform to suit the new demands on city Government needs to be assessed to lead to adequate change.

6) Addressing the challenges

- **The Institutional challenge**

Whichever instrument for high level inter-sectoral coordination the Government of Namibia may opt for, the Ministry of RLGHRD should have a leading role in the inter-institutional consultative and decision making framework for urbanization.

The Ministry (RLGHRD) is the leading governmental agent for national development. It is integrally associated with the changing pattern of human settlement and hence of urbanization. It has the daunting task of facilitating the provision of infrastructure associated with human settlement to all corners of the nation. According to the Ministry's STRATEGIC PLAN for the Period 2009 – 2014 (page 15), "the Ministry's vision is the efficient service delivery at sub-national levels of Government, comparable with industrialized countries". In the Appendix it adds that "Its challenge for a competitive economy is the inadequate physical infrastructure for effective implementation of decentralized functions" (page 31).

With this expanse of responsibility, its planning perspective is nation-wide as are the impacts of its policies. Decisions by the Ministry directly influence the rate and direction of urbanization. Despite this the Ministry does not have a nation-wide spatial plan showing its developmental

priorities or its long term goals. This may be because of a lack of explicit legislation calling for this approach from the Ministry.

The closest authority the Ministry has in order to address service provision nationally comes in within the still operative Ordinance 18 of 1954. The Ministry through the Namibia Planning Advisory Board (which is advisory to the Minister RLGHRD) has a role in national development. Section 12 (2) states that the Board shall have the function *(b) to formulate in general terms a town planning policy for Namibia with special reference to various types of development in their relation to roads, railways, residential, commercial and industrial areas, recreation, open spaces, water supply, sanitation, soil suitability and the like, including also the administrative and financial implications which certain types of development would have in respect of local educational and other public institutions, townlands, places of government control; and (c) to undertake any survey within the Namibia and to assign plans in connection therewith.* This function requires a nation-wide policy and plan addressing settlement (and urbanisation).

Over the last decade, the Ministry has been considering new legislation in which the creation of a nation-wide structure plan features explicitly. The most recent proposal comes from deliberations held in 2010. The main principles and implications of these deliberations are summarized as follows:

- There will be an **Urban and Regional Planning Board** composed of eleven members which will advise the Minister on cadastral and structure planning and land-use zoning changes accompanying development.
- Provision is made for **authorized planning authorities**, which are: Authorized Local Authorities, Authorized Regional Councils and the Permanent Secretary (MRLGHRD – division dealing with town and regional planning matters). These authorized planning authorities are established to enable decentralized decision-making and to ensure fast-track decisions at central level in the case of other regional and local authorities. Regional and Local Authorities can apply to the Minister to become authorized planning authorities on condition that they adhere to the criteria (an approved structure plan and a professional planner in employment) as specified in the Act.
- The concept of **structure plans** in relation to the National Development Framework, Regional Structure Plans and Urban Structure Plans are contained in the Act and Regulations.

There is an urgent need for an agreed **National Development Framework** that gives geographical form to all other development or structure plans. Such a framework plan will link resources to development nodes and the national infrastructural networks. The National strategy could then be more widely known and understood.

The Ministry (RLGHRD) should move quickly in setting out its policies in a manner that is better understood and for which a National Development Framework could be an excellent vehicle. In this way, urbanization as a powerful force will be better recognized and addressed. As noted above, existing legislation does permit the Ministry to commence with formulation of such a

national development policy for settlements. The following Sections under 'The Planning challenge' try to outline a linkage with Regional Development Planning.

Ensuring multi-sectoral coordination should be the fundamental prerequisite: Urbanization should figure prominently on the agenda of the Ministry of RLGHRD and call for the inter-institutional coordination already argued for in this report.

An 'Urbanization Committee' may be created for the purpose, a Committee which should gather representatives of the various Divisions of the same Ministry (primarily Planning and Decentralization) together with representatives of the other key Ministries with a stake in the urbanization process. Sub-national authorities, representatives of civil society, academia, and the private sector should be considered as important stakeholders.

It has been noted that running consistently an inter-institutional committee for the prolonged time that this would require is never easy; creating one anew may also pose problems.

The opportunity of revamping the existing Habitat Committee, in existence within the Ministry but not recently fully operational and entrusting it with the function of running the urbanization discourse may be a possibility.

Again, inter-sectoral and inter-institutional coordination appear like an absolute prerequisite; the mechanism should take the form which appear most practical to Government.

- **The Planning challenge**

Focusing planning on the urbanization issue with required time projections would greatly help Government in all its levels (National, Regional, Municipal) in translating the policy goals of Vision 2030 in a practical agenda for development with a spatial dimension for all its national territory. The need for a National Planning Framework has been discussed in the previous section, as a key instrument for development, as a guide for individual sectors' programs across the country and for the equitable delivery of infrastructure and services..

Regional level planning is at the same time an instrument to define and bring regional priorities to the attention of central authorities and the instrument through which national policy choices concerning settlement development, service delivery and investment distribution should be reflected and take a spatial development form.

Regional Plans are customarily prepared in Namibia for the 13 Regions (the latest ones were produced for the period 2002-06) under the leadership of the Regional Councils (established in 1992 – via the Regional Council Act No.22). The RCs are 'liable for the planning and coordination of regional policies and priorities and for overseeing the general implementation of regional development activities in the region'.

Regional Plans constitute a crucial level of planning where local communities' priorities are reflected; so far actual implementation of the Plans has been limited by funding constraints. In view of the urbanization challenge, two intrinsic limitations must be noted in the way Regional Plans are conceived:

- They are obviously time limited in their analysis and proposals since they are geared to the five-year established time frame; should the priority now be to try to gauge and make provisions for the impending urbanization, they may need to be revisited to properly factor-in that crucial dimension.
- They limit their analysis purely to the given region's dimension and cannot sufficiently take into account those factors, outside the regions' control, which will determine the way urbanization takes place and ultimately affects them. This consideration too would warrant a revised methodology for the sake of better guiding the urbanization process.

Two examples of Regional Plans may help explain these limitations.

Regional Development Plans were prepared for the period 2002 to 2006 for the Erongo Region (63% of the population is urbanized) and the Oshikoto Region (86% of the population still rural) through their Regional Councils.

The high rate of urbanization in Erongo, mainly directed toward the Walvis Bay-Swakopmund area, is noted in the Plan and ascribed primarily to in-migration (8%, the second highest in the country) from Northern Regions (among which Oshikoto). The Erongo Regional Plan recommends a strategy to achieve a better spatial balance and less concentration of activities and population, through investment directed primarily at the cities of the interior like Omaruru, Karibib, Uis etc.

But it is unlikely that current investment trends which focus primarily on the Walvis Bay region would change in the absence of clear central policy guidelines with a mix of incentives and restrictions attached to individual locations. The Municipality of Walvis Bay reports a high incidence of applications for development as well as a difficult negotiation process in relation to sectoral projects coming down directly from individual Ministries or service provider companies, all in the absence of an overarching development strategy to balance and distribute investment and population growth.

The Oshikoto Regional Plan presents a region in search of investment to stabilize people's livelihood and revamp the economy. 60% of the people still depend on agriculture; communal agriculture suffers from 'low and declining productivity'. There is a considerable outflow of young active population (within the Region, toward Tsumeb, but primarily toward other Regions offering better employment opportunities).

For both Regional Plans, the dossiers of investment proposals, meant to correct current trends, which are presented in the Plans, will depend on the degree of attractiveness to investors which will in turn depend from a series of decisions taken outside the Regions concerning infrastructure investment and incentives. Population growth projections to 2006 are based upon the measurement of past rates; future population growth rates, in a scenario of large scale urbanization, will be affected by decisions on which regional communities will have little influence.

Regional Plans on their own, in the absence of a much needed National Development Framework, may largely remain 'statements of intentions' in a rapidly changing scenario. They could be revisited, with a major focus on the potential effects of large-scale urbanization, and this should be done under national strategic guidance from the Ministry of RLGHRD so as to allow for a perspective that goes beyond each individual region's boundaries and problems and supports the formulation of the National Development Framework. The direct participation of key sectors' Ministries (especially Industry, Agriculture, Environment) should add the required dimension of impending economic change.

Revisiting Regional Development Plans may not need to imply an individual review of each of the 13 Regional Plans; a broad regional analysis based upon an assessment of natural resources and their potentialities for sustainable development and for stabilizing people (bio-regions, which define the crucial linkages among administrative regions) may serve a better purpose in trying to lead a diverse country like Namibia through a delicate period of drastic economic and social change while avoiding unwanted dislocation.

- **The Urban Governance and Management reform challenge**

Vision 2030 (page 209) indicates as one fundamental objective:

To achieve effective governance in support of sustainable long-term development through decentralization and devolution of authority to the lowest effective level so that local people can properly exercise their option to be involved in decision-making and management of resources.

- **Empowering local authorities to improve their revenue generating capacities and exercise control over the management of their affairs;**
- **Providing adequate financial and other resources for government operations at Regional and Local Authority level;**

The city level is the 'front line' of urbanization where all the ill effects of unguided urbanization processes pile up straining Municipal authorities' ability to cope. One of the key features of past urbanization processes gone wrong (as in most Latin American and Asian countries) can be described as the inability of Municipal authorities to adequately respond to the drastically increased pressure on their finances and on their institutional capacity so as to cater for the needs of a greatly expanded population. While the greatest percentage of GDP could be ascribed to urban-based sectors in many countries in those regions, city authorities were by and large bankrupt; while the pace of urbanization increased, a reform process to devolve decision making powers to Local Authorities as well as to put them in a position to raise and retain adequate percentages of fiscal revenues had lagged behind. Local Authorities came to depend more and more on inter-Governmental financial transfers from the Centre which were neither predictable nor sustainable.

Decentralization is an ongoing process in Namibia (an inter-sectoral Decentralization Committee is functioning) which should proceed in parallel with a similar mechanism for urbanization. At present many Local Authorities are under severe strain in keeping up provision of serviced land with growing demand from newcomers. These newcomers, being mostly poor, are unable to provide a sufficient resource base to Local Authorities to offset the cost of provision of land and services.

Local Authorities complain that unsure revenue sources prevent them from accurately planning for new delivery of services and argue for the right to retain greater percentages of their fiscal revenues. But the problem is not simply one of financial revenue; planning and regulatory frameworks also need to be adapted flexibly to changing realities. Planning and infrastructure standards tend instead to be rather inflexible in most countries and, moreover, tend to be uniformly applied over the national territory irrespective of specific urban circumstances. Standards which may look appropriate today may prove unsustainable in the near future under pressure from large scale urbanization. Urban expansion too has its limits, especially in cities where availability of land for settlements is constrained by morphological features or need to safeguard natural resources (both Windhoek and Walvis Bay are cases in point).

There is therefore a need for a comprehensive reality check of a whole package of planning, regulatory and fiscal instruments to better equip Local Authorities to deal with the coming pressure and ensure that timely delivery of land and services avoids the spread of informality which has plagued the majority of cities in the developing world.

But, primarily, large-scale urbanization processes gone wrong have implied a massive transfer of poverty from rural to urban areas (cities' unpreparedness to cope has been noted above). The resulting growth of informality and the plight of the urban poor have been the dominant factors in the urban discourse and policy making in the last decades. 'Urban Development' strategies became inevitably the instrument to correct the distortions and mitigate the effects of imbalanced urbanization processes.

The rationale for a national Urbanization Strategy (coherent with the goals of Vision 2030) is exactly to provide Government with the instrument to avoid an unwanted and undirected inflow of people to few cities already experiencing population growth as well as excessive pressure on land and natural resources; it is however undeniable that Central and Local Government alike will need to carefully review, under a changing perspective, all the legal, regulatory and planning mechanisms which have so far been adopted to ensure equitable absorption and sustainability of the urban poor.

The "Community Land Information Program Report of March 2009" profiles informal settlements in Namibia. It reports that at that date there were 541 119 people in informal settlements, the vast majority in urban areas.

Some of these settler households do have services and legal tenure and are hence in a position to improve their situation. Nevertheless, the search for legal tenure and a serviced site is a

major national issue. Namibia has to this date applied supportive policies to stabilize tenure, as opposed to other developing countries; these need to be scaled up and made increasingly efficient and comprehensive to match the foreseen increase in urban migrants. A mix of modalities are being jointly applied: free-hold as part of group titles (where ownership is vested in a 'body corporate' and where individual families are shareholders) or individual, renewable and registered leaseholds as part of current legal provisions or Flexible Land Tenure Bill if and when ratified by Parliament. The Sectional Title Act (originally conceived to allow for subdivisions within buildings) is being amended so it may be applied to land subdivisions so as to allow for the creation of sub-plots of minimum 300 square meters.

Land registration is being improved, being made quicker and more accessible also thanks to international technical support. Title deeds and associated documents will become electronically accessible to the public in the very near future.

Delays at the Surveyor General's Office may need similar technical advice and support. Changes may be needed to survey requirements that recognize improved technology. The checking processes should be reviewed so as to place more responsibility on the professional making the submissions and so as to reduce the burden on Office Staff.

The reform process that may be required is therefore multi-faceted; one of the key responsibilities of Central Government will be to ensure that all measures needed to put Municipal Authorities in a position to respond to their much enhanced burden and responsibility are undertaken in a timely fashion.

7) Concluding considerations

This report was drafted following two specific periods of work by the UN-Habitat consultants in Namibia, between October 2010 and January 2011 the latter of which included a National Workshop held in Windhoek from 27 to 29 January, with broad participation from Central, Regional and Municipal authorities, academia and civil society .

The consensus emerging from the Workshop was of great value in guiding the drafting of this report.

The overall conclusions were:

- **That there is an urgent need for a national urbanization strategy within a spatial framework; that, to this effect, there is the need for a strong institutional coordination mechanism to guide and lend coherence to individual development agendas (by Ministries, service provider companies, Regional and Municipal Government) otherwise at risk of working at cross-purposes;**
- **That more actions are required to support Vision 2030 and the devolutionary processes;**

- That, without political support, individual efforts by councils and other individual organizations may end inconclusively and in frustration;
- That the valuable network of stakeholders gathered at the Workshop should be maintained and strengthened as the example of the future core of the institutional and coordination mechanism required to guide urbanization toward desirable national goals.

Part III: The Work Program

8) A Work Program in support of the formulation of a National Urbanization Strategy – a proposal for activities to be initiated in 2011.

Namibia has already commenced on the road towards having a national urbanization strategy. Key elements may be found in the National Vision 2030, in the Regional Development Plans, and in the extension network of infrastructure that has been created. All Ministries are deeply aware of the implications of the impending urbanization process for their sectors' agendas. The overarching national and inter-sectoral strategic framework, however, can only be arrived at through a sustained process of analysis and consultation.

Following are some proposals in a step by step approach:

- a. Promote the establishment of the institutional mechanism vested with coordination and policy guidance tasks in the process of National Urbanization Strategy formulation; UN-Habitat and the Office of the UN Resident Coordinator to assist the Government of Namibia as required, primarily in the consultations regarding the optimal structure in this respect. This inter-sectoral Committee/Working Group (ideally to be called Urbanization Committee) will define the objectives and the methodology to be followed, define its Work Program, initiate required research and data collection, liaise with stakeholders at national, regional and municipal level to investigate and recommend on the methods to be used and will be responsible for the effective production of the agreed outputs. As previously mentioned the Government may opt to revamp and refocus the existing Habitat Committee for the purpose rather than proceeding to the creation of an additional inter-agency Committee.
- b. Initiate the process of updating Regional Development Plans as a basis for their integration into a National Development Framework. The Ministry of RLGHRD should be the lead agency, in charge of defining a methodology, defining the initial scale of the analysis and the Regions to be taken up as a priority; the updating of the Plans should be carried out with 2030 as its time horizon; RLGHRD will ensure that the information to be used in each regional development plan is fully coordinated with that of other regional

plans and that all the plans are drafted so that they can be later integrated into a single National Development Framework designed to guide the urbanization process in accordance with stated national goals.

- c. Regional (and Local) Development Plans should be informed by initiatives currently undertaken, including the UN-Habitat National Observatory Profiles, the Association of Local Authorities in Namibia City Development Strategies and the SDFN-NHAG Community Land Information Programme, to ensure that regional experiences and realities are reflected; also the revival of the formulation of the national informal settlement upgrading (formalisation) and the urban poverty reduction strategies should be pursued.
- d. Committees should be formed in each Region to complement the Central Urbanization Committee.
- e. The updating program should commence shortly after the release of the 2011 census figures so that the reports are informed by the latest figures available.
- f. A Workshop gathering all Regional Councils, key Ministries and central agencies, key Municipalities, representatives of civil society, academia and private sector organizations should be organized so as to discuss the purpose and methodology of the regional planning exercise, define timing, eventually agreeing on a pilot exercise to test the process.
- g. The methodology for preparing the National Development Framework should be assessed and defined in consultation with regional partners to ensure that the instruments to adequately capture and reflect regional development priorities are correctly taken into account. Further on, a system of regular presentations and consultations in the process of formulation of the National Development Framework should be devised.
- h. Sectoral Ministries participating in the Central Urbanization Committee will have the main function of helping translate their sectoral agendas in a decentralized spatial framework in line with the national objectives and in consultation with Regional and Municipal Government.

9) The role of international assistance:

The urbanization issue, for its inter-sectoral nature, lends itself to draw specific support from UN agencies in Namibia on the field of their respective competence, under the guidance of the UN Resident Coordinator. Individual UN agencies should ensure that their Country Programs clearly factor-in the urbanization issue.

UN-Habitat, which assisted the Government of Namibia in launching the initiative of which this report is a direct result, proposes to continue supporting the process leading to the formulation of a National Urbanization Strategy.

In 2011, should the Government agree with the proposed steps in this report, UN-Habitat proposes to provide technical support toward:

- The establishment and the functioning of the Urbanization Committee (or the revamping of the Habitat Committee) to be vested with the task of leading the process of strategy formulation,
- The definition of the methodology for revising and updating Regional Plans,
- The organization of the Regional Planning work, designed to revisit and update Regional Plans and, later on, the formulation of the National Development Framework.

A more detailed Work Program will be formulated in conjunction with Government after discussion on this report and on its findings/recommendations.

APPENDIX A

Source: Urbanization in Namibia: Statistics and Vision 2030 prepared by Faniel, I Maanda, 2010 from source data contained in Results of the 2001 Census, published by the Bureau of Statistics, NPC, 2003, and Population Projections 2001 to 2031, for regions and the nation, published by the NPC, 2006.

It must be noted that these figures are based on the most recent national census of 2001 and would need to be replaced with more up to date figures once the planned census of 2011 has been concluded..

POPULATION PROJECTION FOR URBAN LOCALITIES IN NAMIBIA BASED ON THE 2001 CENSUS RESULTS (F. MAANDA).

Urban Locality	Total Population, 1991	Total Population, 2001	Population Growth Rate 1991 - 2001	2003	2011	2016
Windhoek	147 056	233 529	4.73%	256 143	370 725	446 001
Walvis Bay	12 100	43 611	13.68%	56 359	157 194	262 526
Rundu	19 366	36 964	6.68%	42 067	70 568	91 399
Oshakati	21 603	28 255	2.72%	29 813	36 953	41 140
Swakopmund	17 681	23 808	3.02%	25 268	32 058	36 110
Katima Mulilo	13 377	22 134	5.16%	24 477	36 607	44 768
Rehoboth	21 439	21 308	-0.06%	21 282	21 180	21 130
Otjiwarongo	15 921	19 614	2.11%	20 450	24 168	26 274
Keetmanshoop	15 032	15 778	0.49%	15 933	16 568	16 896
Tsumeb	16 211	14 929	-0.82%	14 685	13 749	13 304
Grootfontein	12 829	14 249	1.06%	14 553	15 834	16 516
Okahandja	11 040	14 039	2.43%	14 730	17 849	19 648
Gobabis	8 340	13 856	5.21%	15 337	23 025	28 212
Lüderitz	7 700	13 295	5.61%	14 829	22 948	28 547
Ondangwa	7 926	10 900	3.24%	11 618	14 994	17 033

Ongwediva	6 197	10 742	5.66%	11 992	18 629	23 218
Mariental	7 581	9 836	2.64%	10 362	12 764	14 166
Outjo	4 535	6 013	2.86%	6 362	7 972	8 924
Khorixas	7 358	5 890	-2.20%	5 634	4 715	4 314
Opuwo	4 234	5 101	1.88%	5 295	6 145	6 621
Omaruru	4 851	4 761	-0.19%	4 743	4 671	4 636
Orandjemund	-	4 451				
Karasburg	4 602	4 075	-1.21%	3 977	3 608	3 436
Arandis	4 303	3 974	-0.79%	3 911	3 671	3 556
Otavi	3 506	3 813	0.84%	3 877	4 146	4 287
Karibib	3 067	3 726	1.97%	3 874	4 529	4 896
Okakarara	3 725	3 296	-1.22%	3 216	2 915	2 776
Hanties Bay	1 612	3 285	7.38%	3 788	6 695	8 901
Usakos	3 548	2 926	-1.91%	2 815	2 413	2 234
Eenhana	-	2 814				
Outapi	-	2 640				
TOTAL	406 740	603 612	4.03%	653 243	896 074	1 049 490

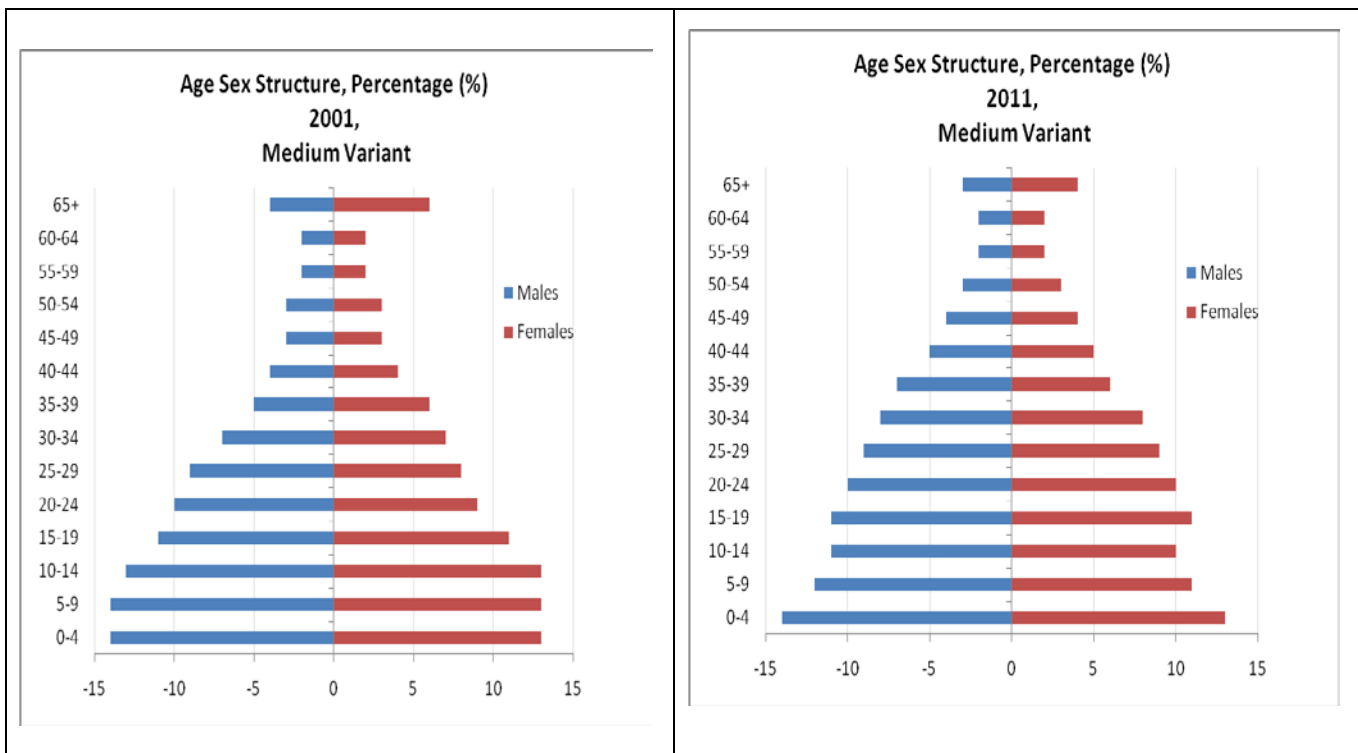
APPENDIX B

Source: Urbanization in Namibia: Statistics and Vision 2030 prepared by Faniel, I Maanda, 2010 from source data contained in Results of the 2001 Census, published by the Bureau of Statistics, NPC, 2003, and Population Projections 2001 to 2031, for regions and the nation, published by the NPC, 2006.

Composition of the future population: Age and Sex Structure

Namibia's population is dominated by young people, and this will continue as trend in future. *Figure 14* presents the age sex structure of the Namibian population until the year 2026.

Whilst it must be noted that these figures are based on the most recent national census of 2001 and would need to be replaced with more up to date figures once the planned census of 2011 has been concluded, it nevertheless quite clear that there is a bulging proportion of younger people moving through the 5-year age brackets below who will be seeking employment most probably in urban areas.



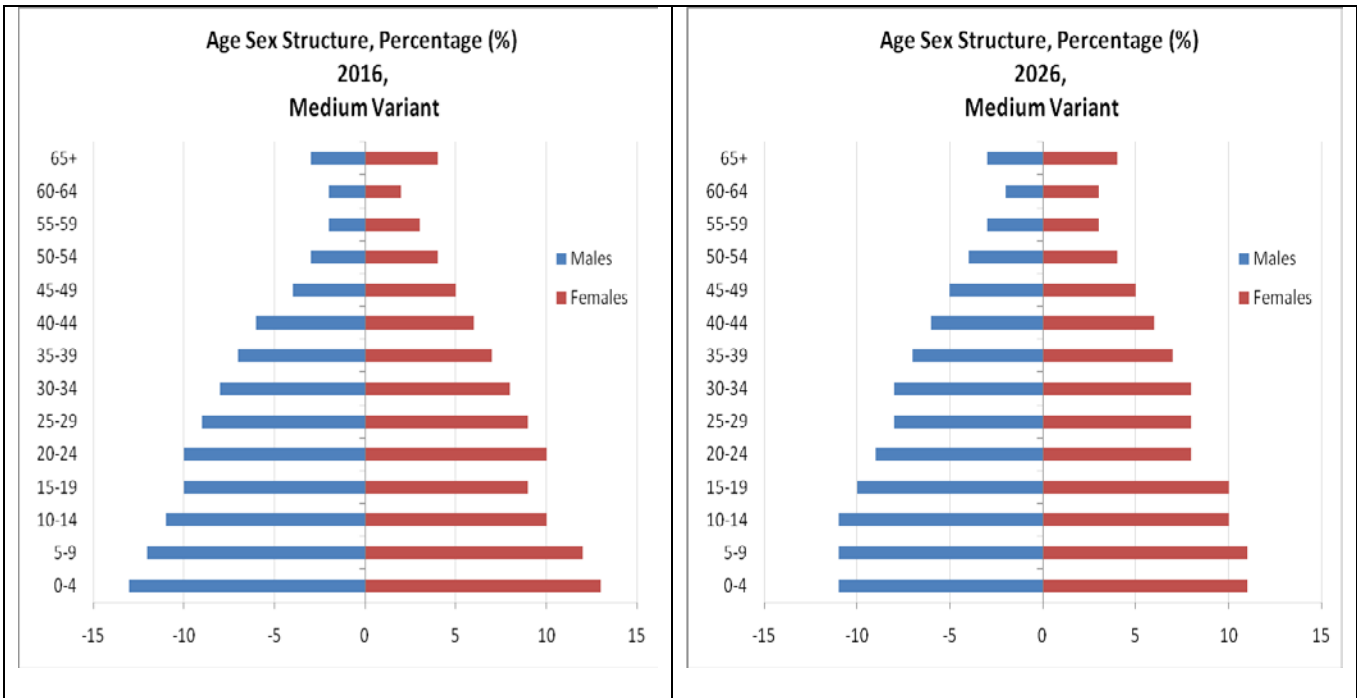


Figure 14: Age and Sex Structure 2001 to 2026. Please note that the negative figure does not actually mean a negative figure, it was only used for the purpose drawing the graph