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## **Urbanisation and Urban Policies in Namibia**

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## ABSTRACT

Africa is in a process of rapid urbanization, which creates challenges in the provision of employment, housing and services, but also generates opportunities for economic growth. Approximately 30% of Namibia's population currently live in urban areas, and the assumed urban growth rate is 4.5% p.a. A central characteristic of the Namibian urban scene is the unequal level of development, both within towns and between towns in different regions. The socio-economic conditions are very difficult for many urban dwellers, particularly in the expanding informal settlements. There are, however, no indications that they are more severe than in most rural areas.

The fastest growing urban centres in central Namibia are Windhoek and Walvis Bay, receiving migrants mainly from the former Owambo regions. Northern towns, particularly Rundu and Katima Mulilo, are also growing fast and mainly receive migrants from the surrounding rural settlements. Southern towns seem to have a relatively modest and stable population growth. Windhoek's population is currently growing faster than employment opportunities and services, resulting in expanding informal settlements. Walvis Bay suffers from similar pressures, but is attempting to apply a more rigorous influx control. Northern towns currently have no control over immigration, which threatens their attempts to become financially independent.

Responsibilities for policies affecting urbanization is dispersed amongst different organizations, leading to conflicting views about the desirability of urbanization and about institutional responsibilities for urban management. It is argued that the Ministry of Regional and Local Government and Housing must retain a central role in the coordination of urban policies and management practises. However, lessons from recent experience also suggest that the involvement of community based organizations is critical, if urbanization is to benefit poorer households. It is also clear that there will be severe constraints on local authority capacity in the foreseeable future, suggesting that they should concentrate on developing appropriate management and planning systems and providing essential municipal services. Aid organizations will still have a role to play, but their interventions should be better coordinated.

The costs of urbanization are likely to be high in certain sectors, most of which will fall on municipalities and organizations providing housing and infrastructure. Unless economic growth is substantially higher than expected, employment opportunities will not grow fast enough to enable new immigrants to pay the full costs of new services. The main task of central government should be to provide an environment making it possible for the local authorities to implement the intentions of the Local Authority Act, but they will still have to provide funds to support urban development for some time. Further research is required to define urbanization policies and to establish the best method of managing activities.

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## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

The aim of this paper is to discuss the issue of urbanization and urban policies in Namibia. There is an increasing understanding of the need for a clear policy on urban issues both at the central, regional and local levels of government, as well as among community organizations, private interests and development organizations.

It is particularly pertinent that the discussion involves Local Authorities, and the Association of Local Authorities in Namibia (ALAN). Local Authorities are vested with the main responsibility for urban management and development, and are the institutions that are most directly confronted with urban challenges (Government of Namibia 1992). To facilitate such a process, we have seen it as our main task to raise issues and stimulate a debate rather than proposing solutions to the issues discussed. It is our hope that the current discussion paper will be a first step towards the development of a coherent national policy on urbanization, reflecting the concerns of the Local Authorities themselves.

### 1.1 Urbanization in Africa

Africa has traditionally been viewed as a typically rural continent. Of a total population of 280 million in 1960, only 18.8% was urban. Since then, however, Africa's urban population has increased dramatically. By 1990, 33% of Africa's total population of 645 million people was urban. Over 50% of the population is expected to be urban by year 2025 (UNCHS 1987, Mabogunje 1994, UNDP 1994).

South Africa is by far the most urbanized country in the Southern African region, with approximately 58% of the population living in cities and towns. The urban population is expected to increase to 69% by the year 2010 (Smith 1992). Namibia is on the other end of the scale with an urbanization rate of 28%, and is rightly considered to be a predominantly rural society with a population of 1,4 million, a population density of 1,7 people per km<sup>2</sup> and 72% of the population living in rural areas (NPC 1994a)<sup>1</sup>. However, the increasing importance of urban centres is evident also in Namibia. The average rate of urban growth is high also after international standards, estimated at 4,5% per annum compared with an average population growth of 3.1%<sup>2</sup>. And the importance of urban areas in socio-cultural, economic and political terms is equally evident.

It is generally acknowledged that African towns are characterized by a common set of problems related to poor housing and infrastructure facilities, a lack of formal employment opportunities, a rapid degradation of urban environmental conditions, a growing incapacity of administrative

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<sup>1</sup> The 1991 Population and Housing Census uses a functional definition of urban areas, by including municipalities and towns with basic social facilities such as schools, pipe-borne water, electricity, hospitals and/or clinics. 28 locations are, based on these criteria, designated as urban in the Local Authorities Act of 1992 (see Table 2, page 7). The 1991 Census identified a total of 51 locations with a population of 2000 + (see Appendix 1).

<sup>2</sup> As we shall return to, there is considerable controversy over the rate of urban growth both on a national level and for individual towns. The figure is a "compromise" between the most commonly cited figures, and is verified by the Central Statistical Office as reasonable. A rate of 4,5% implies that the urban population in Namibia will double between 1991 and year 2007.

structures to manage urban centres, and an apparent ungovernability and insecurity of life. In Southern Africa, an additional legacy from the colonial era is the "twin-city" phenomena with former "European" urban areas showing completely different characteristics from "African" urban areas (Swilling 1994).

At the same time, however, emphasis is also put on the potentially positive aspects of urbanization (Hardoy and Satterthwaite 1986, Baker 1990). From a national point of view, urban areas are often viewed as necessary locomotives for development. Well established urban centers may have a positive role to play through the provision of a range of goods (agricultural inputs, consumer items), job opportunities, urban cash flows, and services (health and educational facilities). And in turn, the rural hinterlands may provide resources (food, labour, demand for urban goods and services) which enable towns to expand their economic and social functions. Governments also tend to see urban concentrations as a cost-effective way of making investments and supplying services. People themselves commonly perceive urban areas as having better educational and medical facilities, better employment and income opportunities, and promises of a more "modern way of life". People migrate to town not because they don't understand what it is all about, but because towns to them represent opportunities they do not find in the rural areas.

By far the largest urban centre in Namibia is the capital Windhoek in the Khomas region, which currently has a population of approximately 175.000 (see Table 2). Together with 16 other municipalities in the central and southern part of the country, Windhoek represents the older, established towns in Namibia. In addition to these, there are 12 more recently established towns mainly located in the northern part of the country. One of these is Oshakati in the Oshana region, with a population of approximately 26.000 (see Table 2). The two types of urban centres share a number of characteristics and challenges, but also differ in many important respects. Windhoek and Oshakati will be used as the principal case studies in this paper.

## **1.2 Urban Policies and Management in Africa**

The complex and many-faceted situation found in urban areas in Africa calls for coherent urban policies and management practises. The development of policies and management practises has traditionally been highly centralized, but there is currently considerable interest in local government and decentralization as a way of handling the urban challenge. There are several reasons for this. One is the economic crisis in Africa, which has undermined even further the resource base of central governments and forced them to adapt a "rolling back of the state" strategy. This tendency has been reenforced by an ideological orientation by many donors in general, and by Structural Adjustment Programmes in particular. A second is the recognition that popular participation has a potential to improve government legitimacy, quality and planning. Popular participation, it is contended, can best be achieved within a system where political and administrative decisions are decentralized. And a third reason for the increasing interest in local government is an enhanced interest in public administration in developing

countries in general. It is recognized that unless government organizations function properly, neither indigenous efforts nor donor assistance are likely to produce the desired results.<sup>3</sup>

At the same time, the complexity of the urban situation has made it increasingly clear that urban policy formulation can no longer be regarded as the exclusive domain of the state. If decisions and implementation are the output of a given policy input, there are more actors in the urban policy field than are usually acknowledged. Communities and community based organizations implement decisions that have an impact on significant proportions of the population in towns and cities. And corporate bodies, trade unions, private enterprises and various categories of development organizations play major roles in the development of urban areas (Conyers 1990, Adamolekun 1991).

These conditions are also relevant for Namibia, even though the country does find itself in a relatively unique situation: The extend of urbanization is still relatively modest, and the magnitude of urban problems still manageable especially given the relatively healthy state of public finances. At the same time, the young Namibian government should be in a position to learn from the experiences of others and apply these experiences in the development of coherent and sound urban policies and management practises.

### **1.3 The Report.**

This paper is divided into three main parts. In Chapter 2, we present a background to the urban situation in Namibia. In Chapter 3, the current framework of urban management and development is presented. And in Chapter 4, we discuss some of the possible policy responses to the situation described. The report is a desk study, based on existing written sources. Much information is still needed in order to have a sufficient base for the formulation of urban policies. For this reason, chapter 5 includes a list of the most relevant areas of future research. The final chapter 6 includes an extensive bibliography.

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<sup>3</sup> This does not mean that decentralization necessarily is a better option. A number of countries (including Kenya and Tanzania) have experienced severe problems decentralizing due to lack of both human and financial resources.



## 2.0 URBANIZATION IN NAMIBIA

### 2.1 A Brief History

As opposed to several other areas in the southern African region, Namibia's precolonial population did not develop larger population centres as they are known for example from Angola, Zimbabwe and South Africa. The main reasons for this were the small population, environmental conditions that neither favoured a concentration of people nor catered for a sufficient economic surplus to maintain specialized urban functions, and the population's marginal location in relation to regional trade and migration routes.

Urban settlements in Namibia is thus largely an issue of the colonial era, and they have evolved on the basis of two dissimilar developments. In the central and southern parts of the country, they developed as administrative and commercial centres first under the Germans and then under the South African colonial regime. From the very beginning of permanent European settlement, the policy was to create urban centres as "white areas". Throughout the colonial era, both public and private investments were heavily concentrated in these towns. Permanent African urbanization was discouraged, while a web of laws (including pass laws and prohibition of property ownership) controlled most aspects of the African residents' lives. The African population was allowed to move in mainly as labourers, and lived in separate areas ("locations") with housing and other social services being inferior to those of the white areas. The large majority of those moving in were men. From 1913 the towns were administered by Municipal Boards, and had a high degree of independence. The system of urbanization through separate development was progressively tightened until 1977, when influx control measures were abolished through a General Law Amendment Proclamation. People could then move freely to towns and in principle settle where they wanted, but the employment situation and the economic conditions in general inhibited larger scale urbanization before Independence (Goldblatt 1971, Simon 1983, Kotze 1990).<sup>4</sup>

In the northern communal areas, urbanization was a much later phenomena. Despite the fact that the majority of people lived in the north, the lack of investments, both from public and private interests, effectively hindered such a development and maintained the north as a labour pool for urban industries elsewhere. Urban areas proper did not develop until the 1960s, as a response to administrative and military requirements by the colonial state. Towns were established as centres for the Homelands created by the Odendaal Commission in 1964, with basic facilities such as government departments (Water Affairs, Roads, and Transport and Communications), hospitals, police stations and schools. Other economic investments were still very limited, with the exception of investments made by the parastatal Bantu Investment Corporation which was given the main responsibility for economic development<sup>5</sup>. The towns

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<sup>4</sup> Further inhibiting the influx was the continued requirement for a work certificate in order to rent a house legally, although this rule became more and more difficult to reinforce as the private and "informal" housing market developed.

<sup>5</sup> Some will argue that the Corporation's main task was not to develop the Homelands, but secure profits for the colonial state.

Grootfontein, Karibib, Karasburg, Keetmanshoop, Mariental, Okahandja, Omaruru, Otavi, Otjiwarongo, Outjo, Tsumeb and Usakos)<sup>6</sup>. These have inherited their status from the pre-independence period, but are also generally the most developed urban areas. They are by law the most autonomous urban areas both financially and administratively.

Altogether twelve urban areas are defined as towns. Six of these (Katima Mulilo, Ondangwa, Ongwediva, Opuwo, Oshakati, and Rundu) are in the former northern communal areas and the remaining are located in the central and southern parts of the country (i.e. Henties Bay, Luderitz, Okakarara, Rehoboth, Arandis and Khorixas). Towns are expected to grow into autonomous and proclaimed municipalities when conditions related to formalization and income permit. This will make them more independent, but also give them a heavier financial and administrative responsibility. Today they are largely financed by central government. Finally, 17 settlements are defined as villages under the Local Authority Act. These are Aranso, Ariamsvlei, Aroab, Aus, Bethanie, Gochas, Grunau, Kalkfeld, Kalkrand, Kamanjab, Koes, Leonardville, Maltahohe, Noordoewer, Stampriet, Warmbad and Witvlei.<sup>7</sup> Villages are smaller settlements, represent the lowest level of local authority, and are not declared as urban areas. Table 2 below lists the municipalities and towns in Namibia, by current and projected population. The urban landscape is further illustrated in Map 2.

As seen from the table, there is a considerable difference in size amongst the municipalities and towns in the country<sup>8</sup>. This poses particular challenges to the formulation of a coherent urban policy. Windhoek is by far the most important urban centre in the country. It currently (1995) has 34,5% of Namibia's total urban population, and functions as a primate city culturally, economically, politically as well as in terms of population. No other country in Southern Africa has such a large proportion of its urban population living in the capital (UNDP 1994).<sup>9</sup> The exact growth rate of Windhoek is uncertain. Estimates range from 3.85% (MRLGH 1994) to 10% (the highest range scenario estimated by Windhoek

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<sup>6</sup> Walvis Bay was declared a Part I Municipality by Declaration 16 of 1994.

<sup>7</sup> Five additional areas were originally declared as villages (i.e. Aris, Kappsfarm, Omitara, Summerdown and Wlotzkasbaken), but these were abolished as villages by Proclamation 22 of 1993.

<sup>8</sup> There are no compelling reasons to doubt that the figures from the 1991 Population and Housing Census are representative, with one exception: Three larger informal settlements in Rundu seem to have been excluded (i.e. Sauyemwa, Kehemu and Kaisosi). If these are included, the estimated 1991 population increases to approximately 35.000, which effectively makes Rundu the second largest urban centre in Namibia (Olivier Graefe, pers. comm.)

<sup>9</sup> Angola is currently an exception due to the large influx of refugees to the capital Luanda, but this situation is not likely to remain.

**Table 2 Urban Population Projections 1991-2000 (Rate 4,5 %)**

	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	
ndhoek	147056	153674	160589	167815	175367	183259	191505	200123	209128	21
Main	41517	43385	45338	47378	49510	51738	54066	56499	59041	6
Katutura	86639	90538	94612	98869	103319	107968	112827	117904	123209	12
Chomasdal	18900	19751	20639	21568	22539	23553	24613	25720	26878	2
Ivis Bay	30452	31822	33254	34751	36315	37949	39656	41441	43306	4
akopmund	17681	18477	19308	20177	21085	22034	23025	24061	25144	2
abie	8340	8715	9107	9517	9946	10393	10861	11350	11860	1
otfontein	12829	13406	14010	14640	15299	15987	16707	17458	18244	1
ibib	3067	3205	3349	3500	3657	3822	3994	4174	4362	
asburg	4602	4809	5025	5252	5488	5735	5993	6263	6545	
itmanshoop	15032	15708	16415	17154	17926	18733	19576	20456	21377	2
iental	7581	7922	8279	8651	9040	9447	9872	10317	10781	1
handja	11040	11537	12056	12598	13165	13758	14377	15024	15700	1
aruru	4851	5069	5297	5536	5785	6045	6317	6602	6899	
vi	3506	3664	3829	4001	4181	4369	4566	4771	4986	
warongo	15921	16637	17386	18169	18986	19840	20733	21666	22641	2
jo	4535	4739	4952	5175	5408	5651	5906	6172	6449	
meb	16211	16940	17703	18499	19332	20202	21111	22061	23054	2
kos	3548	3708	3875	4049	4231	4421	4620	4828	5046	
ities Bay	1612	1685	1760	1840	1922	2009	2099	2194	2292	
eritz	7700	8047	8409	8787	9182	9596	10027	10479	10950	1
karara	3725	3893	4068	4251	4442	4642	4851	5069	5297	
angwa	7926	8283	8655	9045	9452	9877	10322	10786	11272	1
wediva	6197	6476	6767	7072	7390	7723	8070	8433	8813	1
wo	4234	4425	4624	4832	5049	5276	5514	5762	6021	1
akati	21603	22575	23591	24653	25762	26921	28133	29399	30722	3
oboth	21439	22404	23412	24465	25566	26717	27919	29176	30488	3
na Mulilo	13377	13979	14608	15265	15952	16670	17420	18204	19023	1
du	19366	20237	21148	22100	23094	24134	25220	26354	27540	2
ixas	7358	7689	8035	8397	8775	9169	9582	10013	10464	1
idia	4303	4497	4699	4910	5131	5362	5604	5856	6119	1
AL	425092	444221	464211	485101	506930	529742	553580	578491	604524	63

Source: Calculations based on the 1991 Population and Housing Survey



Municipality). An increase of 10% since 1991 would imply a current (1995) population of 215,305 and a population in year 2000 of 346.750. This seems unrealistically high. We will assume that a growth rate of between 4,5% and 6,5% is realistic.

The second major urban growth point in Namibia is Walvis Bay. The main reason for the growth of Walvis Bay is related to its (perceived) employment opportunities. The Municipality of Walvis Bay estimated the 1991 population to be 30.452 (Government of South Africa 1992). The present Municipality argues that the current population is approximately 55,000, but this again gives a growth rate that seems unrealistically high. There is little doubt that the population has increased considerably particularly since the town's inclusion into Namibia in 1994, but again we assume the real growth rate to be between 4,5% and 6,5%. Other municipalities and towns in the former commercial areas seem to have experienced a more modest growth. The increasing primacy of Windhoek, combined with the limited new employment opportunities created after Independence in the secondary towns, seem to be the main reasons behind this development. Some towns have probably had a real growth rate below the assumed average of 4,5%, including Tsumeb where the mining industry (copper) has experienced setbacks. Others (like Swakopmund) have had positive economic developments, but in sectors (like tourism) yielding limited employment opportunities.

In the former communal areas, the population growth also seems to be uneven. The continued serious problem of unemployment is a major reason for this. The population growth seems to be lowest in the towns of former Owambo (Oshakati, Ondangwa, Ongwediva). Many people (including former soldiers) left these towns after Independence, and these areas also have the strongest tradition for moving to the main towns in the south (Windhoek and Walvis Bay). In addition, the existence of secondary urban centres with basic services (like Outapi and Eenhana) seems to have slowed down the urbanization to the principal towns. The urbanization rate seem to have been stronger in Rundu and Katima Mulilo, approaching an assumed 6,5%. There are no obvious economic reasons for this (the unemployment problem is equally serious as in the other former communal towns), but people from these areas do not have the same tradition for migrating to the south as people from Owambo. Equally important is the lack of secondary urban centres in Okavango and Caprivi.

The towns in Namibia thus vary considerably both in terms of size and rates of urban growth. Table 3 below indicates the prospected population of the fastest growing towns in the country, given an urbanization rate of 6.5%. Given such a rate, the four towns in question will represent as much as 58% of the total urban population in Namibia by the turn of the century, with Windhoek alone representing 41%.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> For a closer description of Mariental, Opuwo, Rehoboth, Katima Mulilo and Aminius, see Devereux et.al. 1993.

**Table 3** Population prospects for the fastest growing municipalities and towns in Namibia (rate 6,5%).

Municipality/town	Population 1991	Est.pop. 1995	Est.pop. 2000
Windhoek	147,056	189,183	259,197
Walvis Bay	30,452	39,175	53,674
Rundu	19,366	24,914	34,134
Katima Mulilo	13,377	17,209	23,578

Source: Calculated on the basis of the National Population and Housing Census (NPC 1994a)

### 2.3 Socio-economic Characteristics of Urban Areas

In general terms, urban populations in Namibia are characterized by an older age structure, a larger proportion of males to females, smaller households, more people in the labour force and a higher level of education than rural areas (NPC 1995b). The age distribution is particularly noteworthy. The economically active population is concentrated in urban areas, while there is a disproportionate number of youngsters and older people in rural areas.

At the same time the differences in socio-economic conditions between the urban centres in the former commercial and communal areas largely remain. The towns in the central and southern parts of the country have a stronger economic base, with better formal employment opportunities and better conditions as regards housing and urban services. There is also, however, still a significant distinction between the former white areas and the former townships in these municipalities as regards socio-economic conditions. A recent development is the growth of informal settlements<sup>11</sup>. Some towns (like Walvis Bay) are actively discouraging uncontrolled settlement of this type, but most of them have seen the informal settlements grow at a largely uncontrolled rate.

The major problem for the northern towns is still the lack of formal employment opportunities, exacerbated by the still unresolved issue of urban land rights which has inhibited post-independence investments (see below). The dominance of informal economic activities and concomitant low levels of income have contributed to a significant expansion of informal settlement areas, with inadequate provision of services including water, electricity and sewerage. The same conditions of poverty and lack of formal land rights have inhibited their participation in various urban upgrading programmes (see below). Table 4 indicates the estimated proportion of the population in the northern towns living in informal settlements.

<sup>11</sup> In line with standard colloquial usage, the term "township" is used to denote low-income areas with formalized housing, access to basic social services and a system of secure tenure. Informal settlement areas (also called squatter areas) lack all these attributes and are generally (but not necessarily) poorer and more deprived.

**Table 4** Estimated Proportion of Population in Northern Towns Living in Informal Settlement Areas (1995)

Town	Total population	Informal Settlements	
		#	%
Katima Mulilo	15.952	11.964	75%
Rundu	23.094	17.321	75%
Ondangwa	9.457	4.729	50%
Ongwediva	7.390	2.217	30%
Oshakati	25.762	15.457	60%
Opuwo	5.049	3.534	70%

Source: MRLGH/Local Authorities (unofficial estimates).

Having said this, it is important not to see urban areas in isolation. Most households in urban areas maintain strong social and economic links with their rural areas of origin. They maintain part of their family there, and there is a continuous transfer of resources between the urban and rural household units. People also tend to move back to the rural areas when they get older or when life in the urban area becomes unmanageable. Thus the urban areas to some extent function as "urban footholds", with households combining an urban adaptation based on formal or informal income with a rural largely subsistence oriented adaptation. This has implications not only for social organization and levels of income in the urban areas, but also for people's willingness to invest in an urban life.

Looking more closely at the example of Oshakati, the current population is approximately 26,000. Around 60% of these people live in one of the six informal settlement areas in the town (Oneshila, Amunkambya, Uupindi, Evululuko, Sky, Kandjengedi). The population is young, with 67% being between 15 and 30 years of age. 27% of the households in the informal settlements are female headed. The average size of the households is 5.1, and the households are composed of a nuclear unit (one or two parents with children) living together with extended family members, distant relatives and non-relatives. The distant or non-relatives represent a relatively large group (29%), implying that the households will not necessarily act as one corporate unit.

The unemployment problem in Oshakati is severe, with the adult population either depending on informal employment (33%) or being completely unemployed (31%). Only 20% are formally employed, often in menial low-paid jobs. The most common forms of informal employment are *Cuca*-shops and hawking (*okapana* production). The employment rate is higher among men than among women (29% and 11%). The levels of income vary, with 60% earning N\$ 500 per month or less and 40% earning more than N\$ 500 per month.

The informal settlements are characterized by poor housing and inadequate physical infrastructure. Many houses in the formal areas are also overcrowded. 64% of the households

in the informal settlement areas live in shacks, with many of the brick houses being in poor condition. 81% of the households use community water taps, there are inadequate systems of sanitation with 65% using the bush, and very few households (6%) have electricity.

The urban-rural links remain an important part of people's survival strategy. As many as 73% of the population maintain parts of their households in the rural areas, 88% have access to land and cultivates, and 39% own cattle. The importance attached to the rural areas is part of the explanation for the lack of investments in housing, infrastructure etc. in the urban setting (see Tvedten and Pomuti 1994).

In the outset, the prospects for improving the socio-economic situation and living conditions in communal towns like Oshakati are clearly there. They are located in a heavily populated area representing a considerable market (and even more so if Angola is included). They can offer a number of services that the rural areas cannot. And there is an "urban culture" that clearly separates the town from the surrounding rural areas. However, the lack of employment opportunities remains a major obstacle. Further investments are effectively discouraged by duty free access to South African goods, but also by the lack of clarity related to urban land tenure, the lack of entrepreneurial skills, and the obscurity as regards the responsibility of the Local Authority in facilitating economic development.

The socio-economic situation in Windhoek is in many ways very different. On the one hand, the proportion of the population living in formal areas is much larger. Some of these (mainly the former white suburbs containing 28% of the population) have high employment rates, high levels of income, and high standards of housing and urban services. The situation in Katutura (with 60% of the population) is different, but also here there are areas with high levels of employment, relatively high levels of income and reasonable access to housing and urban services<sup>12</sup>. However, an increasing proportion of the population lives in expanding informal settlement areas. Employment, housing and urban services have not been able to keep up with the population increase. Approximately 25,000-30,000 of the population in Windhoek currently live in informal settlement areas like Ombili, Greenwell Matango, Freedomland and Okuryangava Extension 6, representing 17-20% of the population in the city. The problems of employment, income and housing are much more severe in these areas. A recent survey indicates a formal unemployment rate of 46% among heads of household, a relatively low average income and poor conditions of housing and infrastructure (Peyroux et.al. 1995).

Even though Windhoek is a much more "settled" urban area, people in the capital also maintain strong links with the rural areas. As many as 84% of people in the informal settlement areas have close family members, mainly in the north, 90% visit their rural area of origin at least once a year, and there seems to be a continuous flow of resources between urban and rural household units (Peyroux et.al. 1995). Nevertheless, there is little doubt that the large majority of people in Windhoek are "urban" and intend to remain so if conditions allow. Given the generally superior conditions related to employment and income, housing and social services, Windhoek is likely to continue to attract people from rural areas. The relatively superior conditions of

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<sup>12</sup> For ease of presentation, the term Katutura is used to denote all the north-western suburbs. Formally, however, Katutura is currently only one of several suburbs in this area. Others include Wanaheda, Okuryangava, Hakahana and Goreangab.



Windhoek are evident from a UNICEF study carried out in 1990. The study compares the socio-economic situation in Katutura, the informal settlement areas in Oshakati and rural Owambo. As is clear from Table 5 below, socio-economic conditions are generally better in urban than in rural areas<sup>13</sup>. Even though the figures do not give justice to important qualitative aspects of rural life such as subsistence production, social and economic networks and a known and safe social environment, the difference between urban and rural Namibia depicted represents an important background when discussing the issue of migration.<sup>14</sup>

**Table 5** Socio-economic Conditions in Windhoek, Oshakati and rural Owambo (1990)

Socio-economic condition	Windhoek (Katutura)	Oshakati (Informal)	Owambo (rural)
Female headed households	36%	40%	45%
Household heads employed	68%	31%	24%
Households farming	27%	52%	100%
Households with cattle	23%	17%	48%
Household income/year	R 7419	R 4336	R 255
Household heads without education	17%	27%	45%
Household heads with grade 8 +	33%	15%	6%
School attendance (5-15 years)	78%	76%	89%
Water in/outside house	100%	85%	50%
Toilet facilities	100%	25%	5%
Infant mortality rate	47/1000	70/1000	73/1000
Sick children (past two weeks)	66%	68%	68%
Women under 20 yrs with children	20%	39%	13%

Source: Unicef 1990.

## 2.4 Migration

The migration to urban areas is changing the population pattern in Namibia, and has important socio-cultural as well as economic ramifications. It also represents a considerable challenge for Government, which is to manage and develop the expanding urban centres. We do not have sufficient data to have a clear perception of the magnitude of the urban migration. Based on the assumed urban growth rate of between 4.5% and 6.5%, the urban population in Namibia will

<sup>13</sup> The data in the table are from 1990, and should be seen as indicative. Given the large influx of people, and expansion of informal settlement areas, it is likely that the socio-economic conditions have deteriorated somewhat in Windhoek. However, the socio-economic conditions in Oshakati have also deteriorated particularly as regards income. A large number of formal and informal employment opportunities disappeared with the South African Defence Force.

<sup>14</sup> Additional socio-economic data for localities with populations of more than 2000 people are available on diskettes from the Central Statistics Office. The type of information accessible is listed in Appendix 2 of this report.

grow with approximately 25,000 people between 1995 and 1996 (see Table 2 and Table 3). This rate includes a natural growth of 3.1%, thereby implying an average migration rate of 1.4% or approximately 10,000 people per year.<sup>15</sup> Again, however, the ambiguity of existing data and the differences between urban centres should be emphasized.<sup>16</sup>

As noted in the introduction, the urbanization trend is Africa wide. The more specific factors behind this trend differ between different regions and countries. They are normally considered to be a mixture between "rural push factors" (such as rural poverty, lack of income generating opportunities, lack of social services, and social constraints experienced particularly by the younger generation) and "urban pull factors" (superior employment opportunities, superior access to health and educational facilities, and the "attraction of town life".) What is important for people's decision to move is their perception of these conditions, which do not necessarily coincide with the actual situation.

Most of the factors mentioned are relevant also in the case of Namibia. The social and economic conditions in the rural areas are difficult for many, and the employment opportunities limited. Conversely, most urban areas do offer superior employment opportunities, education and medical facilities. However, it is equally clear that everybody is not in a position to exploit these opportunities, and many end up in situations at least as difficult as in the rural areas. The informal settlements are expanding, and the unemployment rate remains high. Once having arrived in an urban area, many will find it difficult to return to their rural area of origin even though they may eventually be forced to do so.

When people decide to move, there are two main factors determining where people go. One is, as discussed above, the individual household's opportunity situation *per se* (education, employment opportunity, economic resources). The other is the same household's contacts and social network in urban areas. The importance of this is evident in all urban areas. In the informal settlements in Oshakati, each settlement is dominated by people from the same area and ethnic group in Owambo (Tvedten and Pomuti 1994). And in Windhoek, the dominance of Owambos has been evident for a long time. Of the current population in Katutura, approximately 42% are Owambos, 19% are Damaras, 19% Hereros and 10% Namas. The proportion of Owambos among post-independence migrants is considerably higher. Very few are from other northern regions (Pendleton 1994)<sup>17</sup>. When people arrive in an urban area, they first move in with, and are taken care of by, relatives or friends. It may, as a recent study from Windhoek has shown, take several years before they establish a separate dwelling (Peyroux et.al. 1995). This

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<sup>15</sup> The 1991 Population and Housing Survey (NPC 1994a) is relatively weak on the issue of migration. It does show that 300,000 of the 1.3 million people born in Namibia lived in a district different from where they were born at the time of the Census, but have no information on other migration trends. This is to be rectified in an Intercensus Demographic Survey, to be carried out by the Central Statistics Office (National Planning Commission) in 1995/96.

<sup>16</sup> The Windhoek Municipality operates with 1000 newcomers per month as a "rule of thumb". As shown above, however, it is likely that a large proportion of the people establishing themselves in the reception and informal settlement areas are not migrants but have lived in Windhoek for a considerable time (see also Peyroux et.al. 1995).

<sup>17</sup> Out of a sample of 1864 people, only 1 and 4 were from Okavango and Caprivi respectively (Pendleton 1994). In a sample of 101 household heads from the informal settlement areas in Katutura, only 5 were from Okavango and none from Caprivi (Peyroux et.al. 1995).

is normally done when employment and income is secured, or when conditions in the dwelling become too difficult (often resulting from over-crowdedness).

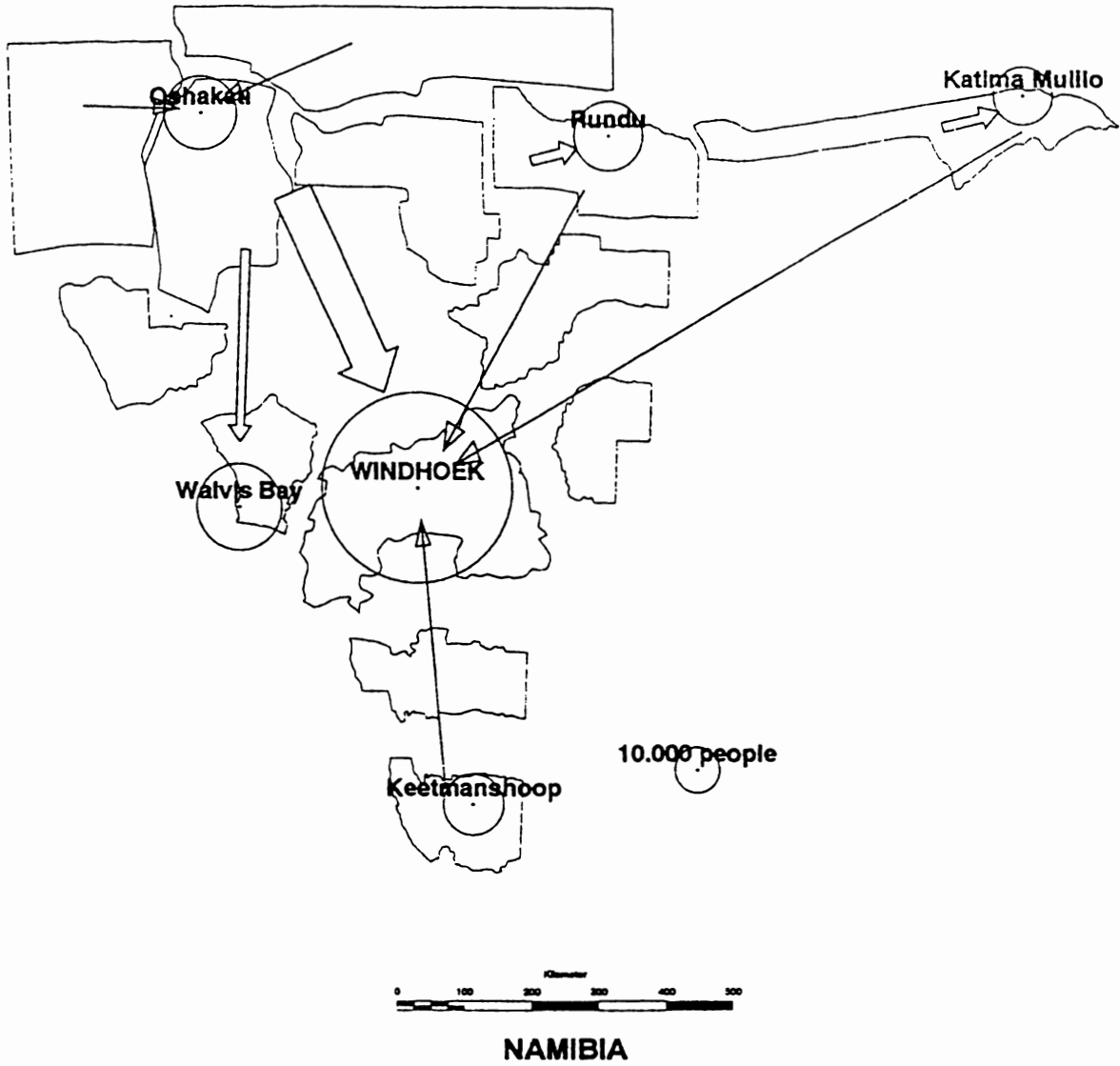
There is thus a general migration trend in Namibia with a main influx from the north to the central parts of the country, as illustrated in Map 3. The migration seems to be particularly strong between the regions of Oshana, Oshikoto, Ohangwena and Omusati (former Owambo) and Windhoek/ Walvis Bay, with a much more limited number of people moving from Okavango and Caprivi to the main towns in the south. The Damaras, Hereros and Namas living in the central and southern parts of the country have a much longer urban tradition, and represent a smaller proportion of current rural-urban migrants. A secondary migration trend is between rural areas and towns in the north. As noted this trend seems to be stronger in Caprivi and Okavango than in former Owambo, largely explainable by the fact that migrating Owambos either seem to remain in secondary centres or bypass the primary urban centres to go directly to Windhoek, Walvis Bay or other southern towns.

Different municipalities and towns currently tackle the urban migration differently. On the one hand, towns in the north have no influx control and people settle in informal settlement areas largely as they please. In the current state of transition between the former communal system and the planned formalization of land access under the Local Authority Act, there are in effect no serious obstacles<sup>18</sup>. On the other end of the scale, Walvis Bay has effectively discouraged informal settlements by turning people without proper access to land away. There are a large number of "backyard squatters", but this is also currently discouraged. Windhoek is in many ways in an intermediate position. There is an elaborate system of reception and resettlement areas which is to cater for new-comers in the process of securing own land and housing, but the influx is too large and the practical problems of implementation too great, for the Municipality to manage.

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<sup>18</sup> The "informal land reform" is becoming an obstacle in towns like Rundu (Graefe et.al. 1994). People pay increasingly high prices for land without legal status or title deed to traditional leaders, for lack of any better alternative.

Map 3



It is unlikely that the current rural-urban migration will decrease in the near or intermediate future unless conditions in the main urban centres deteriorate significantly, alternative growth centres are developed or conditions in the rural areas improve.

A more even development between the urban centres in Namibia in terms of population growth, economic opportunities and employment creation will be very important for the future of urban Namibia. It will curb migration particularly to Windhoek, relieve the increasing social and economic problems particularly in the northern towns and make it easier to develop coherent urban policies. Such a development is partly the responsibility of Central Government, but much can also be done by the local authorities themselves.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> Possible ways of redistributing financial resources and administrative capacity include more target directed transfers from central government, redistribution of income tax to regional and local levels of government, and "solidarity funds" between local authorities involving transfers of financial resources and exchange of skilled personnel.

### 3.0 URBAN MANAGEMENT AND DEVELOPMENT

#### 3.1 Institutional Responsibilities for Urban Management

The main responsibility for urban policy formulation and management rests with the government. As already discussed, however, there are a number of other actors who have a *de facto* influence on the urban landscape in Namibia including parastatals, private interests, aid organizations and community organizations. Policies and management practises are thus developed and managed in different institutions, often being unaware of the actions of each other. Effective implementation by one institution will largely depend on complementary policies by others. In some cases, there may even be conflicting interests between the institutions involved.

Further complicating the development of policies and management practises is the fact that there is no obvious answer regarding the extent to which urbanization is desirable. On the one hand, urbanization may facilitate the cost effective expansion of service provision to new households, but it may also create risks for unemployment and social destruction as well as adding costs for water supply and housing.

An urbanization policy should seek to establish under which conditions urbanization is desirable, and how these conditions can be fostered and financed. To be effective, it is vital that efforts are effectively coordinated and consolidated. In the Namibian context it is natural that such a responsibility rests with the Ministry of Regional and Local Government and Housing (MRLGH), in collaboration with the National Planning Commission.

*Ministry of Regional and Local Government and Housing.* A substantial part of the activities of regional and local authorities are co-ordinated through the Ministry of Regional and Local Government and Housing. The Ministry is subdivided into three Directorates, i.e. the Directorate of Regional and Local Government Coordination, the Directorate of Housing and the Directorate of Community Development. The Directorate of Regional and Local Government Coordination is again subdivided into four Divisions. These are i) the Division of Local Government Coordination, ii) the Division of Town and Village Administration, iii) the Division of Regional Government Coordination and iv) the Division of Town and Regional Planning.

The main functions of the Ministry regarding local government are stipulated in the First National Development Plan as: i) coordination and management of regional and local government, ii) rendering town and regional planning services to regional and local government (in accordance with the Local Authority Act of 1992), iii) dealing with specific matters concerning towns and villages in terms of the Town Planning Ordinance and the Township and Division of Land Ordinance of 1963 (both as amended), iv) acting as a secretariat for the Namibian Planning Advisory Board (NAMPAB), v) training officials for regional councils and local authorities and vi) presenting development budgets to the National Planning Commission, on behalf of regional, town and village councils.

Coordination of activities both within the Ministry and between the Ministry and the National Planning Commission in particular is currently not functioning satisfactorily. Problems are also experienced in the implementation of the Local Authority Act and in the Ministry's longer term planning efforts. The work of the MRLGH is hampered by the limited allocations from Central government, currently only approximately 4% of the government budget.

*Other Ministries.* There are also other ministries that are responsible for issues related to urban management and development, including the Ministry of Labour and Human Resource Development, the Ministry of Health and Social Services, the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Mines and Energy, and the Ministry of Works, Transport and Communication.<sup>20</sup> Finally, the National Planning Commission is responsible for national prioritization in economic planning, including regional planning. Coordination between the ministries is currently a serious problem and inhibits an effective implementation of urban development efforts. For some of the ministries, the real will to decentralize activities can be questioned.

*Regional Councils.* There is currently no clear perception about the role and responsibilities of regional councils for urban areas, and the Regional Councils Act of 1992 is not very specific on the issue (Government of Namibia 1992). However, their potential impact on urbanization is considerable. They are responsible for development within regions, and the location and design of infrastructural and social services will influence urban migration. The effectiveness of regional councils is currently hampered by the lack of qualified personnel and the limited economic resources allocated from government. In fact, a main source of income remains the 5% assessment rates from proclaimed municipalities and towns. This means that regions containing municipalities and towns (i.e. in the former commercial areas) receive considerable funds, whereas regional councils in the former communal areas do not. Given the role regions are to play for national development, the option of pooling these resources for the benefit of all regional councils should be considered. It is also necessary to question whether a tax on local authorities is the most effective way of financing regional councils, given the increasing responsibilities of the municipalities and towns themselves.

*Municipalities.* All Municipalities have an organized and formal administrative structure, performing the functions as a local authority. Administratively they are divided into departments of general administration, finance, health and engineering. Their functions include water supply, provision of systems of sewerage and drainage, collection of garbage, construction and maintenance of streets and public places, supply of electricity and gas and facilitating housing development. They are in principle independent from higher authorities, both administratively and financially. Municipal councils have between seven and twelve members. Their administrations vary considerably in size, from a total number of 1550 employees in Windhoek to only a handful in smaller municipalities. Currently most Municipalities are financially sound, with their main sources of income stemming from rates, charges and fees from provision of urban services (water, electricity, sewerage) and sales and taxation of land. Government contributes to their finances in the form of loans for development purposes and subsidies on streets, traffic control and fire brigades.

Windhoek has a total revenue base of N\$ 188 million (1993/94) and a staff of approximately 1550 people of whom around 10% are in administrative functions. The main sources of income are electricity (39,6%), water (16,7%) and property tax (16,3%). The principal expenditures are

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<sup>20</sup> The Department of Water Affairs (MAWRD) and the Department of Works (MWTC) in particular are considerable stakeholders in assets in the former communal towns.

salaries and wages (25,3%), repairs and maintenance (12,5%) and general expenses including goods and services (37,6%) (Kim 1993). With the current influx of people particularly to the informal parts of Katutura, the costs for the development of urban services will be considerable in the years to come. Whereas the Municipality previously was in a position to build up substantial capital funds, income and expenditures are now balancing implying an increasingly difficult financial situation.

*Towns and Villages.* In principle towns and villages have the same responsibilities and sources of income as Municipalities. However, in practise towns currently experience severe constraints related to lack of qualified staff and inadequate income, and are dependent on central government to cover salaries and maintenance costs. In addition, the Town Councillors are often inexperienced and with a limited understanding of their role and functions. Each Town Council has seven members, with a town clerk in an important administrative function. The lack of development in most towns currently undermines the authority of the Town Councils and may jeopardize their political legitimacy.

In addition to problems experienced in supplying urban services and developing effective structures for the collection of fees and other charges, a major problem for the development of the towns is the delay in formal proclamation. The current situation both prevents the Town Councils from selling or leasing land (potentially one of their main sources of income), and inhibits investments from private and other interests. There seem to be two possible ways of solving the current problem: one is to ease the formal requirements for proclamation; the other is to establish a separate institution solely responsible for implementing the process of formalization.

In sharp contrast to Windhoek, the Oshakati Town Council currently has a total staff of approximately 75 people, of which around 10 are in management positions. The total income is approximately N\$ 6.5 million (1993/94), with around 61% coming from electricity fees, 30% from water tariffs, with the bulk of the remaining income being transfers from central government (Oshakati Town Council 1995).<sup>21</sup> The potential income is considerably higher. Large parts of the population, mainly in the informal settlement areas, do not pay for urban services, and considerable incomes are expected from the sale and rent of land upon declaration. However, largely due to limited resources and technical know-how the town is currently not in a position to use the available funds for development interventions. In 1993/94, approximately 35% of the funds available remained unused. 86% of the expenditures were used for servicing water and electrical facilities, with hardly anything being used for development purposes.

*Community Based Organizations.* Community Based Organizations (CBOs) have as we have argued an important role to play in urban management and development. Some have influence by virtue of the status and position of their members (Lions Clubs etc.), while others have influence because public management structures have proven inefficient and inadequate and

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<sup>21</sup> At present SWAWEK and DWA provide bulk electricity and water to urban areas, and local authorities are responsible for collection of fees. With the possible privatization of SWAWEK and commercialization of DWA, this arrangement may be questioned in the future. The privatization of the "retail" supply of water and electricity is likely to increase prices and will require major adjustments in municipal financing.



local authorities have realized that CBOs have to be involved. The latter is particularly the case in densely populated and informal settlement areas, including those in the northern towns. CBOs may be involved both in formalizing policies and management practises, and in administering urban service provision (including collection of fees in close collaboration with public urban institutions).

Whereas CBOs may be important, or even necessary, to solve the challenges of urban polices and management, there are also potential dangers. This is not least the case in Namibia, where there are no strong traditions for these types of organizations.<sup>22</sup> One relates to the issue of representativeness. Experience from Namibia show that CBOs easily become dependent on external funding and develop into organizations for special interest groups. On the other hand some Local Authorities see strong CBOs as a threat. Many Town Councils still have a weak political base, and CBOs more in direct contact with the communities are seen as potentially undermining their legitimacy.<sup>23</sup> The challenge will be to find a balance between strengthening CBOs and supporting the development and the credibility of Local Authorities.

*Traditional leaders.* Traditional leaders are often disregarded by urban policy makers and planners, and the formal role of traditional leaders both in rural and urban areas will be curtailed with the implementation of the Traditional Authority Act. Nevertheless, there is little doubt that they still have a considerable influence particularly in informal settlement areas in the north (see Tvedten and Hangula 1993, Graefe et.al 1994). Whereas there may be good reasons for reducing their role as regards land allocation, law enforcement etc., their continued strong standing makes it vital to include them as partners of cooperation.

### 3.3 Urban Development

The development of urban areas involve a large number of activities. Some of these (mainly provision of land, housing and urban services) fall under the direct or indirect responsibility of the MRLGH and Local Authorities. Others (including education, health and creation of employment opportunities) fall under the responsibility of other ministries. However, they are all closely linked to the issue of urbanization and urban development.

*Land.* Access to land is a prerequisite for provision of shelter and development of viable economic enterprises. Local Authorities are responsible for the development of land within urban areas, as well as for sale of plots. All plots in local authority areas are, in principle, to be transferred with freehold title. However, a system of "Permissions to Occupy" (PTOs), where households and businesses lease plots, has been introduced in some of the designated communal towns as a transitional arrangement until the towns are formally declared. In others (including Oshakati) the issue of land is in a limbo. Land control is still *de facto* being based on the communal system of allocation, and there are no clear guidelines for the transition from the old communal system to a new system based on leasehold or freehold title. This applies to the

<sup>22</sup> Community based organizations were actively discouraged or suppressed by the colonial state, partly because they were seen as potentially politically dangerous. In addition, traditional institutions are, largely for the same reason, generally weaker in Namibia than other countries in the region.

<sup>23</sup> This is likely to become even more pronounced towards the next Regional and Local Authority election in 1997. Councillors will then be elected on an individual basis from wards, instead of on party lists as in the previous election.

process of planning, surveying and registration, the issue of compensation for households who have paid for their land under the old system and/or have to move to make room for new developments, as well as to the issue of secure tenure for real low-income groups (MLRR 1995).

The emphasis on leasehold or freehold title (as opposed to community based arrangements still prevalent in rural areas) raises the issue of affordability. The cost of serviced land is unaffordable for most low-income groups in the Municipal Towns, and in the northern communal towns the local authorities do not have funds to carry out land development<sup>24</sup>. In addition, the continued insecurity of tenure in the north inhibits investments both by households and business interests, especially since land titles are the most common form of loan security. The development of alternative systems of urban tenure (leasehold arrangements, community or block ownership etc.) will be of central importance in order to make it possible for low-income households to remain in urban areas.

*Physical planning.* The MRLGH also has the responsibility for physical planning of the land under their jurisdiction. In the case of Municipalities private consultants are normally hired to prepare development plans for towns. These are scrutinized by the Namibian Planning Advisory Board. Once a development plan is approved by NAMPAB, the Municipality or town can implement their development plans. Once again there is a division between Municipalities and the communal towns: the latter currently do not have the necessary funding and qualified personnel to carry out a proper planning, and the interest from private investors is limited. The problem can at least to some extent be solved by Local Authorities with limited financial and human resources sharing planners and other necessary expertise. This will also limit "patchwork development" and secure a sharing of experiences.

*Housing.* As regards housing, the 1991 Population and Housing Census indicates that 82% of the 73,870 households in urban areas live in what is called "good housing" (NPC 1994a). The figure seems too high, and is clearly misleading for most urban areas (see section 2.3). The private sector housing finance institutions cater well for the needs of the middle and upper income groups, and there is currently a frantic building activity taking place, particularly in Windhoek. However, the private sector is not interested in the low end of the market, because of the risk involved on return on capital and the cost of administering small loans.

For the low income housing groups, there are few options available. The parastatal National Housing Enterprise generally caters for the middle income group, even though there are plans also to involve lower-income groups. This leaves the national Build Together Programme as the main actor in the low-income housing field. The programme has undoubtedly recorded substantial results. A total of approximately 3500 loans have been granted all over the country over the past three years, out of which around 1200 houses have been fully completed (UNDP 1995). However, it does not nearly satisfy the demand and large parts of the urban poor still fall outside: Whereas up to 80% of the population in the informal settlement in the urban north are

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<sup>24</sup> The cheapest 300 square meter plot in Windhoek currently cost N\$ 5841, implying a monthly instalment of N# 113,63 for land only. Considering the credit needed to build a house and payment for urban services, a large proportion of the households in Windhoek cannot afford this. People are, in effect, forced to squat.

unemployed and most still have no security of tenure, 80% of the beneficiaries of the programme are employed and no loans have been given without at least a PTO.<sup>25</sup>

Currently what has been called "the people's housing process" (i.e. housing with no support from the outside) cater for most of the shelter construction among low-income groups (Turner 1976, Skinner and Rodell 1983). People build dwellings with the help of savings and private loans, and friends or informal sector builders, and may have to do without proper services at least for a period either because they are too expensive or because they are not available. The pace of building fits the households' own circumstances and priorities, and is not determined by rules and regulations of lending institutions etc. Both national and foreign NGOs and aid organizations are active in supporting this process, but against many odds. The organizations active in this field include the National Housing Action Group (NHAG), the Namibian Credit Union League (NACCUL) and the foreign aid organizations GTZ, CRIAA and IBIS. To support the "people's housing process", and create conditions for real low-income housing, is undoubtedly one of the main challenges in the urban sector in the years to come.

*Urban services.* Compared to most other countries in the region, the provision of urban services (water, electricity, sanitation and other municipal services) is widely distributed and of high quality in Namibia (NPC 1995). The bulk supply of water and electricity is the responsibility of DWA and SWAWEK, but within the municipalities and town boundaries the local authorities are, as noted, vested with the responsibility of supply, maintenance and collection of tariffs and fees. The problems of extending the services to the low income urban areas are of several types: some towns experience constraints related to funding, management capacity and the need to meet the minimum standards set by the government; often there is also a problem of collecting fees and tariffs; and finally, there are serious problems of maintenance, particularly in areas where the services are public and shared by many.<sup>26</sup> In some cases the best solution may be for the Local Authority to contract out some of these tasks to private enterprises, while retaining control in accordance with the Local Authority Act.

Proper access to water, electricity and sanitation is important for a number of reasons. For example, it has an impact on health, education, crime, security and economic opportunities for small scale entrepreneurs. In addition, there is an increasing awareness of the negative environmental effects of inadequate service provision, including deforestation, pollution of water and an unhealthy environment. Again the issue of affordability is central, and the search for ways of combining private and community supplies, where appropriate, must be given high priority.

*Employment.* Urban development also relates to the general socio-economic development of urban populations. Perhaps the most central issue is that of employment. Employment and income generation is necessary for the well being of individual households, it is necessary for investing in housing and infrastructure, and it is a precondition for the local authorities to recover the costs of supplying services. Although government has made a major policy commitment to improving economic growth and private sector employment, most of the formal sector growth since independence has come from the public sector. Namibia's direct foreign investments

<sup>25</sup> It has been argued that the MRLGH is not the proper institution to implement a programme like the BTP, and that this should rather be done by professional building societies like the National Housing Enterprise.

<sup>26</sup> In some areas, the problem of fee collection is exacerbated by the fact that people have used these services for years without paying for them, and the fact that those who should pay fees may be important potential supporters of elected officials.

continue to be low. In addition, current government attempts to promote informal employment and facilitate links with the formal sector have still not yielded significant results. Thus the unemployment problem continues to be a serious threat to urban development, not least in the north. Concerted efforts are necessary, both from government and private interests.

*Social services.* Social services are controlled exclusively by line ministries, with no direct involvement from local authorities. In theory, regional councils should have some influence over line ministries' spending in the regions but this process is still poorly developed. In the 1995/96 government budget, education is allocated 25%. The expenditure pattern in the past years show that a high share goes to urban schools, especially those catering for middle or higher income groups. The challenge faced in the educational sector is to find ways of improving the accessibility and quality of schools for the urban poor. High repetition rates, high teacher/learner ratios, high drop-out rates and poor facilities are common problems.

The health sector was allocated 16% in the 1995/96 budget. MHSS has in the past few years tried to move from a curative health care system to a system that is more preventive. However, this can only be achieved if people have access to clean water, better nutrition, vaccination and improved accessibility of health services. The basic health services are easier and cheaper to supply in urban areas, though access to water is becoming a constraint in some of the larger municipalities and towns.

### **3.4 The Role of Aid Organizations**

Aid organizations play a central role in the development of urban areas in Namibia. Through their financial resources and highly qualified personnel, they have had an important impact on a number of urban areas particularly in the north. However, given the lack of clear policy formulations and the weak financial position of many of the local authorities, there is a danger that their impact may become too strong, even in the areas of policies and management practises. They need a close coordination with government and among themselves to have a positive and sustainable impact on the urban scene in Namibia.

Among the international aid organizations, there are three main actors. The Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit (GTZ) mainly works in Oshakati and with central government, and has concentrated on sewage water awareness management through the large scale SWAM project. The French organization Development Centre for Research-Information-Action (CRIAA) has worked in Rundu with development of infrastructure in the town's informal settlement areas, and in Windhoek with support to the construction of 300 houses in a squatter resettlement area. And the Danish organization IBIS (WUS-Denmark) has implemented a large urban upgrading project in Oshakati, focusing on physical infrastructure (water, electricity, sewage and roads) and support to community development organizations. They also support local authorities with technical experts.

The approaches of the three organizations differ and seem to be poorly coordinated, but they all claim to work in close collaboration with MRLGH and the relevant Town Councils.<sup>27</sup> Whereas the Ministry and the Town Councils complain that they are not sufficiently involved in the planning and implementation of projects, the organizations complain that the same institutions are not sufficiently responsive. The problem partly seems to be one of communication, and partly one of inequality: whereas the aid organizations have considerable economic resources and highly qualified personnel, the government institutions suffer from lack of both of these assets. For the aid organizations it often becomes a question of either bypassing government organizations, or not fulfilling their obligations towards the donor agency and the community. The government institutions argue that it is the responsibility of the aid organizations to make their projects fit the current capacity of government institutions even if it means slowing down the development process. It should be added that this is particularly important in a situation when Local Authorities, and indeed the MRLGH itself, are striving to find their place and fulfil their obligations.

A number of small organizations are also working with issues related to urban development, including the National Housing Action Group (an umbrella organization for community based housing), the Namibian Cooperative Credit Union League (urban credit), the Urban Trust of Namibia (urban related research) and various organizations working with the promotion of small-scale businesses (Institute for Management and Leadership Training, the Private Sector Foundation, regional branches of the Namibian Chamber of Commerce and Industry, and the Namibian Development Trust). Most of these have relatively limited resources (both economic and manpower), and all depend on foreign support in one way or another.

The weakest link in the chain between the local communities, the aid organizations and the various government structures seems to be at the level of the communities themselves. There are only a few urban communities who have managed to establish strong and coherent community organizations, in a position to define their own needs and priorities. Although real participation in development and policy formulation is difficult to accomplish for reasons we have already discussed, we have also argued that a genuine involvement of communities increasingly stand out as a prerequisite for urban development. Conventional methods of planning and implementation have largely proven to be inadequate in the type of communities in question.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> Even here, the coordination seems to be limited. CRIAA and the Friedrich Ebert Foundation work with training and development of management and planning practises for Local Authorities in the country as a whole, whereas GTZ and Ibis work directly with specific Local Authorities. They all seem to be largely unaware of each others activities.

<sup>28</sup> The Community Development Committees (CDCs) in the informal settlements in Oshakati (supported by Ibis) are currently the best examples of what can be accomplished if sufficient time and resources are invested to support such institutions.

## 4.0 POLICY RESPONSE

### 4.1 How to Formulate Policy

At present there is no coordinated process of policy formulation on urbanization in Namibia. The National Report of Population (NPC 1993) contains one paragraph on urbanization, in which it states that government will attempt to minimize urban migration by promoting rural development. As we have argued, however, others have seen urbanization as potentially constructive, providing the opportunity to improve employment and services.

The Draft First National Development Plan contains no broad statements about urbanization, and seems to imply that, because Municipalities are supposed to be self-financing, there is no need for central government to be concerned with them. However, the draft NDP1 does state that the government will:

- \* Accelerate the proclamation of Towns and Villages
- \* Devise a town planning development policy
- \* Slow the rate of rural-urban migration
- \* Promote cost-recovery for services
- \* Expand and upgrade services in Towns, Villages and Settlements
- \* Clarify the roles of local authorities, regional councils and central government
- \* Provide further training for regional councils and local authorities

Urbanization policy must cut across all sectors, involving better co-ordination among various government authorities. Experience with other cross-sectoral policy formulation is mixed and largely untested. For example, government's commitment to private sector development cuts across many authorities and has been effectively incorporated into the policies of most ministries. However, there are many areas (eg. investment promotion and informal sector development) where programmes have yet to be coordinated in practice. Other cross sectoral policies include those affecting the environment, population, nutrition, poverty, employment and rural development. Whilst some of these policies have been formulated and presented in national documents, most are still viewed as the responsibility of one institution, and it is largely in these institutions that effective action has taken place.

In view of this experience, it is probably realistic to expect MRLGH to play the coordinating role, supported by Cabinet and NPC statements, in the development of a national urbanization policy.

### 4.2 Policies Affecting Urbanization

There is currently a strong commitment to the principle of decentralization of urban management and policy formulation to the level of Local Authorities. It is argued that this will

improve the effectiveness of urban services development, and thereby facilitate a more functional urbanization and migration pattern. However, there are several factors constraining the rate at which this can proceed.

Perhaps the most important one is the lack of trained personnel, and the related opportunity cost of the trained people who do exist. The training of appropriate people, and retaining them in public sector, will be a long term process and effective decentralization will require central support for many years.

Additional factors constraining effective decentralization is the weak financial base of many Local Authorities particularly in the north. While the potential for relatively healthy finances do exist (through assessment rates, fees and charges on urban services and, not least, sale of freehold property), there is a long way to go before this is effectively implemented.

The effectiveness of Local Authorities in fulfilling the obligations handed down in the Local Authority Act will also depend on the future rate of urbanization. There is no official policy on migration control, except that the Draft NDP1 states that rural-urban migration will be reduced by promoting growth in rural areas including secondary growth centres. In addition to promoting the development of secondary growth centres, government could also influence migration by campaigns aimed at making people aware of the difficulties of finding employment, having access to proper shelter and social services etc.

However, it remains a fact that the most important way of affecting urban development and migration is through employment creation. The government's impact on employment in urban areas includes the effect of the following policies:

- \* Public sector employment
- \* Promotion of private investment through fiscal and promotional activity
- \* Promotion of small enterprises

At present, government is committed to reducing the size of the civil service, as well as decentralizing the civil service away from Windhoek. If implemented, this could result in the loss of at least 10,000 well-paid formal sector jobs over the next five years, and a net loss in Windhoek of even more than this as some jobs are transferred to other towns. NDP1 projects a drop in public sector employment from 67,000 in 1994 to 63,000 in the year 2000.

There is no official statement on the decentralization of government institutions. However, some ministries have attempted to decentralize parts of their operations, including the Ministry of Basic Education (MBE) and the Ministry of Agriculture, Water and Rural Development. Whilst this will reduce the employment opportunities in Windhoek, it should generate opportunities in other urban areas especially in the north. There are no plans to relocate whole sections of Ministries out of Windhoek.

Government places great emphasis on private sector growth and has reduced taxation, curtailed capital flight and strengthened the Investment Centre in an effort to promote private investment. The projections in NDP1 suggest an average annual growth of 3% to 5% a year. However, the main growth sectors are subsistence agriculture, fishing, fish processing, other manufacturing and tourism which will provide relatively little employment in the urban areas. Growth rates in service sectors and construction, which currently provide much of the employment in Windhoek and other urban areas, are projected to be less than 3% per year.

According to NDP1, employment in manufacturing, construction and services (excluding government) is projected to increase by an average of 7,000 jobs per year.

As we have shown, formal sector employment provides livelihood for less than half of the population in urban areas, where most people are engaged in small scale income generating activities which may, or may not, provide an adequate income. Interventions to promote the informal economy tend to concentrate on a relatively small number of entrepreneurs and it is unlikely that this sector will solve the urban unemployment problem. Studies have also shown that the market for the most common informal enterprises is largely saturated (Norval and Namoya 1992, Tvedten and Hangula 1994).

### 4.3 Financial and Economic Implications of Urbanization

As should be clear by now, the issue of urbanization is not solely a question of economics but involves a number of important socio-economic and socio-cultural conditions. However, from a policy point of view it is necessary also to see urbanization in the light of national resource allocation.

The main economic implications of urbanization arise from whether it promotes economic growth, and whether it has an impact on the scale and efficiency of services provided. There are also substantial financial implications arising from the fact that it may be possible and necessary to provide more services in urban areas than in rural areas. The following analysis assumes that urban migration is at a rate of 10,000 people per year (see section 2.4), of which 5,000 are workers, 3,000 are learners and 2000 are pensioners and children under school age.

*Employment.* The main costs of urbanization arise from the risk that people will find it less easy to obtain employment in urban areas than in rural areas, even though those who are fortunate enough to find work will earn higher returns to their labour. From an economic point of view, the opportunity cost of labour can be assumed to be the returns to labour in subsistence farming (estimated at 5 N\$/day), which is the largest source of employment and is able to absorb large amounts of labour. Those earning higher wages in towns generate benefits to the economy equivalent to the amount by which their wages are higher than the opportunity cost, whilst those who fail to find employment generate economic losses equivalent to the opportunity cost of labour. Thus, if 5,000 workers move to urban areas each year, and only 1000 find wage employment at an average wage of 10 N\$/day, 2500 find informal employment and 1500 remain unemployed, then the economic benefits are N\$ 1.0m<sup>29</sup>, and the economic loss N\$ 1.5m<sup>30</sup>.

*Other aspects of economic activity.* The employment of people in rural and urban areas also generates other economic benefits in terms of operating surplus, or from linkages to other sectors of the economy. These benefits must be evaluated in economic prices. Thus, for example, subsistence agricultural output must be valued at import parity prices, rather than

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<sup>29</sup> i.e. 2.000 people \* (10-5) N\$/day \* 200 days.

<sup>30</sup> i.e. 3.000 people \* 5 N\$/day \* 200 days.



market prices, which would greatly increase the benefits arising from subsistence agriculture employment. Equally, employment in some urban-based activities generate substantial profits, shared amongst the owners of capital and government, which greatly increase the benefits of urban based employment.

*Education.* There are also substantial economic benefits from education, arising from the fact that it is cheaper to provide education in urban areas. Expenditure on education amounted to an average of about 1,000 N\$/person in 1993/94. If it is twice as expensive to provide these services to people in rural areas as it is to provide the same services in urban areas (eg. 1.300 N\$/person, compared with 650 N\$/person), then the savings from urban migration would amount to N\$ 1.8m, again assuming 3000 learners migrate to town each year.

*Health.* There are few reasons why the cost of running a primary health centre should be lower in urban areas than in rural areas: indeed, it is likely to be higher in urban areas. However, with a higher density of population, it is possible to provide the same access to health facilities with fewer, larger and more efficient health centres and hospitals. Average per capita spending on primary health care is currently about N\$ 200. If the same access can be provided at half the cost in urban areas, then the savings for 10.000 urban migrants would amount to N\$ 2.0m. Alternatively, the same expenditure could be maintained, with greater access for the new immigrants.

*Electricity.* For electricity, estimated total output is about N\$ 189m.<sup>31</sup> However, this reaches only 50% of the population at most, implying an average expenditure of about 250 N\$/person. Assuming again that the cost of providing electricity in rural areas is twice that of providing it in urban areas (eg. 400 N\$/person, compared with 200 N\$/person), then the savings from providing electricity to 10,000 urban migrants would amount to N\$ 2.0m.

*Water.* It is more complex to evaluate the economic costs and benefits of supplying water to urban migrants. Where the urban areas are in the same regions as the rural areas from which people are migrating, then the same principles of cost-savings should apply. However, if urban migration involves moving from areas of better water supply to ones of poorer water supply (as it does in the case of Windhoek), then there will be additional costs, rather than savings, since the cost of supplying Windhoek with water will rapidly increase, once current schemes reach capacity. The magnitude of this effect is potentially large, involving an increase in marginal unit costs from 4.18 to between 6 and 8 N\$/m<sup>3</sup>. Assuming an average per capita consumption of 200 l/day, this would involve additional costs of N\$ 1.4m for 10.000 immigrants.

*Housing, sewerage and refuse collection.* One of the main effects of urbanization is the need to invest in housing, which is usually built from local materials in rural areas. This constitutes an economic burden (if the cost of housing is greater than self-built rural housing), as well as a financial burden (if people are unable to pay the full costs of housing provided by urban authorities). Current unit costs are up to N\$ 10,000 per house, though efforts to reduce this by lowering standards, could reduce unit costs to say N\$ 7.500. An additional 10.000 immigrants would require about 2,000 houses, requiring an investment of about N\$ 15m, with annual financing costs of at least N\$ 1.5m.

<sup>31</sup> Value added estimated at N\$ 135m (NEPRU Parastatal Review) and intermediate inputs estimated at 40% of value added (Botswana I-0 matrix).

*Providing new services.* In practise, many of the above social services and utilities would not have been provided to people in rural areas, and there are thus no savings in providing new services. However, assuming that the economic benefits of providing the services are greater than the costs of providing the services (otherwise the services should not be provided in that way), then the economic benefits would be greater than the savings estimated above. Providing that the country can afford to supply services, this assumption should hold, though it may raise issues about how to mobilize the required resources and how to institute any cost recovery measures. In principal MPE and MHSS should see some savings, whilst SWAWEK, DWA, housing providers and municipal service suppliers should incur additional costs, which will only be partly recovered, at least initially. The structure of urban migration also has an important effect on economic costs and benefits. If migration consists mainly of the working part of families, then the potential costs are high (from the loss of employment), whilst the opportunity for savings in providing services are low.

Table 6 summarizes the main costs and benefits of urban growth. As can be seen there may be marginal benefits, but costs and benefits could go either way depending on how they are managed.

**Table 6** Costs and benefits of urbanization (N\$ m/year)

Item	Benefits	Costs
Increased wages	1.0	-
Employment	-	1.5
Education	1.8	-
Health	1.0	-
Electricity	2.0	-
Water	-	1.4
Housing	-	1.5
Net benefits	1.6	

#### 4.4 Suggested Urban Policy Priority Areas

On the basis of the preceding analysis, some urban policy priority areas can be outlined. These are of two main types. One is related to the national political and economic framework within which municipalities and towns operate, and the other to the policies of the local authorities themselves.

Currently the lack of clear policies and priorities by Central Government on crucial issues such as urbanization, industrial growth, employment, shelter and the environment makes it very difficult for local authorities to plan and implement their own areas of responsibility. More concretely, central government must give immediate attention to:

- i) The development of a sound and coherent urban policy for Namibia. This must outline what role central government perceives municipalities and towns to have for the economic development in the country, how this role is to be implemented and the financial resources central government is willing to commit for such a development to take place. As an immediate priority, the current budget allocation of 4% to the Ministry of Regional and Local Government and Housing must be increased in order to enable the Ministry to provide contributions to the Local Authorities necessary for these to firmly establish themselves and meet the demands of urbanization.
- ii) With reference to the overall role of urban areas for economic development, central government must further specify its priorities as regards private and public investments in larger urban areas, smaller towns and rural areas respectively. It is suggested that priority is given to facilitate industrial growth and employment creation in smaller communal towns. This will curb the migration to the largest municipalities, create employment in the type of urban areas where the employment problem is most severe, and stimulate urban-rural economic links and regional development in the formerly disadvantaged communal regions. This policy will require coordination between MRLGH, Ministry of Trade and Industry, Local Authorities and other relevant interests.
- iii) The increasing rate of urbanization is likely to have important implications for the utility of the current structure of water provision, electrical power provision, infrastructure (roads, railways, airports) and social services (health and education). The specific needs of urban communities must be taken into consideration when planning for future investments in these areas. In particular, emphasis must be given to supply these basic services at rates which are affordable as well as sustainable.
- iv) Housing provision is already defined as one of the four priority areas of central government. However, much still remains to be done particularly for the urban poor. National policies must both facilitate the "peoples' housing process" and develop housing schemes with less rigid requirements for eligibility.
- v) There is an increasing awareness of the environmental implications of concentrations of people in urban areas, regarding access to clean water, deforestation, industrial and domestic waste etc. It is unreasonable that Local Authorities should pay the bill for these conditions that follow from population movements beyond their immediate control. The Government must pay more attention to the urban aspects of environmental degradation, and allocate sufficient human and economic resources to combat negative environmental implications of urbanization.

Within the framework of national policies on the special conditions of urban areas, the Local Authorities themselves should give priority to:

- i) Increase efforts to explain the role of local authorities to urban populations, both in order to facilitate their democratic accountability and to develop an understanding for the link between cost recovery and urban development. The latter is vital to secure a financial base for a sound development of municipalities and towns.

- ii) Local authorities must become more efficient in their administration and planning in order to attract investments and develop, rather than simply manage, their towns. Ways to share expertise and cooperate in finding adequate planning systems must be developed.
- iii) Aid organizations should continue to play a role in urban development. However, these must be better incorporated into local government structures and must cooperate better between themselves in order to avoid "patchwork" and contribute towards coherent policies and management practises.
- iv) The Local Authorities should give more emphasis to the development of alternative systems of tenure rights and service provision for the urban poor, particularly those in informal settlement areas. These alternatives should include various forms of block or community service provisions.
- v) To be able to relate constructively to urban communities, the establishment of community based organizations must be actively encouraged. They should not be seen as competitors by the Local Authority Councillors, but rather as institutions of cooperation.
- vi) The considerable differences still existing in the capacities of local authorities to function effectively is unacceptable. Alternative ways of supporting the development of the poorest and least effective authorities both in terms of finances and human resources must be considered. Possibilities range from the establishment of a solidarity fund between local authorities, to an active exchange of qualified personnel.

## 5.0 RESEARCH PRIORITIES

As emphasized in the introduction to this paper, the information available concerning the issue of urbanization in Namibia is still inadequate. Further research is necessary in a number of areas, in order to have sufficient information to formulate relevant policies. Below is a list of areas where we feel more research is particularly pertinent.<sup>32</sup>

\* *Local Government Finance.* Democratic states may agree to the establishment of democratic local governments, but if this is not coupled with a decentralization of fiscal powers and resources, a contradiction may open up and undermine democracy.

\* *Town Planning Systems and Processes.* In some towns and cities the planning system has virtually no impact on the emerging urban form. This raises a serious question about whether conventional physical planning that assumes high levels of formalized control can adequately deal with the urban challenge.

\* *Urban Management Capacity.* The questions arising from the limited management capacity in many local authorities concern the precise training needs and what training capacity exist to meet them. In addition, there is a need for qualitative information about the type of training, training methods and underlying principles of public management.

\* *Migration.* An understanding of the process of migration is necessary for any informed policy on urbanization. Central research topics include social and economic characteristics of migrating households, regional variations in the extent and pattern of migration, and the potential role of regional urban growth centres in curbing or redirecting migration.

\* *Rural-urban links.* Urban households maintain close social and economic links with their rural areas of origin, and this has implications for social organization, economic conditions and people's long time commitment to the urban setting.

\* *Employment.* Consumption-focused strategies aimed at delivering basic services cannot resolve the urban crisis if they are not linked to wider strategies to establish a sustainable economic base for the city via job creation and income generation.

\* *Urban Infrastructure.* Regarding infrastructure and services, the provision of new, and the maintenance of existing, services is heavily dependent on the availability of finance, spatial planning assumptions and the affordability levels of the urban population. To manage this complex task, cities and towns have a shared interest in user-friendly mechanisms for generating targets, costs, timing and capacity needs on the basis of a set of changing and unstable assumptions.

\* *Housing and Standards.* The tendency of resolving the housing debate by focusing on infrastructure and services has detracted attention from the significance of above-ground shelter and the forces involved in its delivery. This link to economic processes

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<sup>32</sup> The Social Sciences Division at the University of Namibia is currently in the process of establishing an Urban Development Research Programme. The institution has carried out applied socio-economic studies in urban areas for a long time, but there is a need to consolidate the efforts and develop Namibian research capacity in the field.

draws attention to the problems of housing finance [sources, costs, terms] and the flow of finance through the urban system through, inter alia, the housing market.

\* *The Environment.* The implications of rapid urban expansion for environmental degradation in a period of economic and social distress, and when local authorities are being handed more responsibilities than resources.

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# NEPRU Publications

Updated: 18 September 2001

Publication ID	Title	Authors	No. of Pages	Year Published	Cost	VAT Amount	Total Amount
<b>BOOKS</b>							
NB1	<i>Monetary independence for Namibia</i>	Charles Harvey & Jan Isaksen (eds)	122	1990	N\$25.00	N\$3.75	N\$28.75
NB2	<i>Aid, donors and development management</i>	Stephen Lister (ed.)	184	1991	N\$25.00	N\$3.75	N\$28.75
NB3	<i>National Conference on Land Reform and the Land Question, Windhoek, 25 June - 01 July 1991. Vo. 1, Research papers, addresses and consensus document</i>	Republic of Namibia - OUT OF PRINT	614	1992	N\$60.00	N\$9.00	N\$69.00
NB4	<i>Macroeconomic modelling in Southern Africa: a comparative perspective - ISBN 99916-38-03-2</i>	Simon Stone (ed.)	92	1992	N\$0.00	N\$0.00	N\$0.00
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