

# Malawi Urban Forum Report

Malawi City Development Strategy and Slum Upgrading  
Programme (CDS/SUP) Framework Phase I

P126367



Government of Malawi

**Cities Alliance**  
Cities Without Slums

**UN HABITAT**  
FOR A BETTER URBAN FUTURE

**MINISTRY OF LANDS, HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT**

## **MALAWI URBAN FORUM (MUF)**

**FINAL REPORT OF THE SECOND SESSION**



Held on 27-28 October 2011 at Crossroads Hotel in Lilongwe

## INTRODUCTION

The 2<sup>nd</sup> session of the Malawi Urban Forum (MUF) took place in Lilongwe from 27-28 October 2011.

This report presents a summary of the forum proceedings held under the theme, **Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and Sustainable Urbanisation in Malawi**. Full presentations can be accessed online on the following links [https://docs.google.com/leaf?id=0B6\\_p3XI6NqvMNDZhZjI5YWQtNTk3ZS00Y2FILTk2YjktODM3MmM4NzdmOGMO](https://docs.google.com/leaf?id=0B6_p3XI6NqvMNDZhZjI5YWQtNTk3ZS00Y2FILTk2YjktODM3MmM4NzdmOGMO) and

[https://docs.google.com/leaf?id=0B6\\_p3XI6NqvMNmM3YjE1OTEtYmYzZC00ZTcwLWEzNTUtNzE4NTA1NjQ5ODIy](https://docs.google.com/leaf?id=0B6_p3XI6NqvMNmM3YjE1OTEtYmYzZC00ZTcwLWEzNTUtNzE4NTA1NjQ5ODIy) or contact the MUF Secretariat at the Ministry of Lands, Housing and Urban Development.

This report has an introduction, background, opening remarks, dialogues, conclusions and key observations and a list of participants is annexed.

## BACKGROUND

MUF was established in 2007 and the first session was held in December 2008 under the theme, 'Harmonious Urbanisation: the Challenge of Sustainable Development in Malawi'. Over 200 participants to the first forum came from central and local government, parliamentarians, civil society, slum dwellers representatives, academia, media, private sector and development partners met for two days to reflect on urbanisation which has become one of the most significant demographic and development dynamic in Malawi.

MUF is organized in recognition that urban areas in general, present unparalleled opportunities for the simultaneous attainment of most, if not all, of the MDGs. However, unless concerted action is taken to redress urban inequalities, urban areas could be destined to become the predominant sites of deprivation and social exclusion. With just under 5 years to go before the MDGs end year in 2015, the second session of the MUF explored the MDGs and Sustainable Urbanisation in Malawi focusing on

provision of basic urban infrastructure and services which are fundamental to their attainment especially targets 10 and 11 in urban areas. This is because the proliferation of informal settlements both in cities and small urban centres, and inadequate provision of basic urban services is a major constraint to the achievement of the MDGs in urban areas.

According to UN projections one in three Malawians will live in urban areas by 2030 and nearly half of all Malawians will live in urban areas by 2050. Malawi is therefore going into the urban age. Therefore, it is recognized that strategising to sustain this urbanisation will depend on current decisions and actions to address and plan for the most pressing urban challenges.

In tandem, the second session of the MUF explored how urban centres are fairing in the provision of basic urban services and infrastructure and proposed innovative fast-track delivery mechanisms if the MDG targets 10 and 11 are to be met by 2015 in urban areas in Malawi. It also provided a platform for a national dialogue to inform

the national urbanisation policy which is planned.

### Objective of the MUF

The main purpose of the MUF is to provide a platform for stakeholders to exchange ideas and experiences on urban development in Malawi. The specific objectives of the second MUF were to:

- Create a space for genuine policy dialogue among all partners in the country to promote better and sustainable urban development.
- Raise the profile of urban and housing issues at the country level in view of developing policies and programmes for adequate infrastructure, housing, energy, water and sanitation and sustainable energy and urban development.
- To generate outcomes aimed at informing the new Malawi Urban Policy whose formulation was about to commence.

### Participation

The forum, was attended by over 220 participants comprising government officials, NGOs, civil society, universities, representatives of urban poor community organisations, representatives of international development partners resident in Malawi, international participants from UN-Habitat in Nairobi, Save the Children, KRI Japan International, Canadian International Development Agency, Germany Technical Cooperation (GIZ), City of Johannesburg, Managing and Uniting Development (MUD) Africa, RMIT University of Australia, Cities Alliance Southern Africa Region and Centre for African Cities of the University of Cape Town in South Africa. A full list of participants is annexed.

### Exhibitions

Exhibitions were mounted by a number of institutions—government, private, NGOs and community groups covering a number of areas including housing, urban infrastructure developments, GIS in urban

planning and artefacts from community groups. Institutions and groups which mounted exhibitions included: Department of Physical Planning, Malawi Homeless Peoples Federation (MHPF); the Centre for Community Development (CCODE); Local Development Fund (LDF) Urban Window of the Ministry of Finance, Airtel Malawi, Lilongwe Urban Poor People's Network (LUPPEN) and Lilongwe City Council.

### Publicity

The Forum was well publicized by word of mouth, online social media with an independent facebook page, Linked-In and Twitter, newspapers, radio and television. The forum was preceded by a number of events that included a debate on Urbanisation in Balaka Township which was organised by the Balaka Debate Club; a discussion forum on Urbanisation and its impact on property development in Malawi hosted by the Malawi Knowledge Network (MAKNET) at Lilongwe Hotel and a Media Training Workshop at Crossroads Hotel on Urbanisation in Malawi organised by the National Media Institute of Southern Africa

(NAMISA) in conjunction with the MUF Steering Committee and UN-Habitat.

## Forum Proceedings

The forum was organized around 16 thematic dialogues and events as follows:

### Events

1. Keynote Address
2. Malawi Award for Human Settlements Best Practice Presentations.
3. Training Event on GIS in Urban Planning.
4. Presentations from Cities Alliance Southern Africa and Centre for African Cities.

### Dialogues

5. Water and Sanitation.
6. Housing.
7. Sustainable Energy.
8. Urbanisation and Millennium Development Goals.
9. Urbanisation, Urban Poverty in National Development Framework.

10. Local Authorities and Provision of Basic Urban Infrastructure and Services.
11. Funding for Urban Development and Urban Poverty Reduction.
12. Community Dialogue.
13. The Voices from the Slums.
14. National Urban Profile.
15. NGOs and Urban Services and Infrastructure Delivery
16. Community Driven Processes in Delivery of Basic Services and Infrastructure.

Each dialogue had two Key Speakers with a Chairperson who moderated the discussion and debate among the participants and a discussant to highlight main issues in the presentation. Rapporteurs attached to each dialogue prepared a summary of the main conclusions and participants key observations.

## OPENING REMARKS

The Forum was officially opened by the Deputy Minister of Lands, Housing and Urban Development,

Rev. Christopher Ngwira MP. The World Bank Country Manager for Malawi, Ms. Sandra Bloemenkamp presented a keynote address. The Principal Secretary for the Ministry of Lands, Housing and Urban Development Mrs. Ivy Luhanga presented opening remarks and UNDP Deputy Resident Representative, Mr Ram Shankar also made remarks.

## Summary of Official opening address by the Deputy Minister of Lands, Housing and Urban Development

The Deputy Minister, Hon Rev. Christopher Ngwira MP pointed out that the theme of the forum ‘Millennium Development Goals and Sustainable Urbanisation in Malawi’ correctly illuminated the two critical issues at the centre of the current development paradigm which is focussed on achieving MDGs and ensuring sustainability of urbanisation and urban development in the country. He indicated that the gathering provided a great opportunity for stakeholders to discuss and identify solutions to critical issues which could have been problematic if tackled by a single Ministry.

The Deputy Minister informed the forum that Malawi remains committed to achieving the MDGs by 2015 through the implementation of its own National Development Strategy, namely the Malawi Growth and Development Strategy(MGDS) which aims at creating wealth through sustainable economic growth as a means of reducing poverty. He observed that cities are the hub for national production and consumption such that well managed urbanization can facilitate sustainable economic growth and development, thereby promote broad social welfare gains. However, he cautioned that if not sustainably managed, urban centres can degenerate into centres of poverty and crime, among other issues.

Honourable Ngwira noted that there is a growing realisation in the world that urbanisation is irreversible. As such, he advised that the challenge for all countries is not to stop urbanisation but rather to devise means of how to properly manage it to ensure that urban centres become areas for social, economic and cultural advancement.

He assured the forum that MUF is a step in the right direction in promoting sustainable urbanisation. He said the exchange of ideas and information on the state of urbanization in Malawi will go a long way in assisting government to develop appropriate policies to deal with growing urban challenges. He pointed out that there is need for a paradigm shift in the manner we plan and develop urban centres. He called for the adoption of radical policies and proactive approaches to enable Malawi attain sustainable urbanization.

The Deputy Minister emphasized that the nine priorities within priorities in the MGDS provide the appropriate guidelines to better planning and development of social services and infrastructure that support sustainable urban development.

He assured the forum that government recognises that cities and towns are not mere challenges but rather offer opportunities for the attainment of the MGDs. He said the adoption and implementation of the Rural Growth Centres Strategy is a clear testimony.

In addition, he said the establishment of the Ministry of Lands, Housing and Urban

Development shows that government recognizes the need for a specific and sustainable urbanization approach to economic development through improved approaches to land management, provision of housing and urban policies. He called for greater unity between economic development, urbanization and people's welfare and challenged stakeholders to join hands in debates and forums to come up with appropriate policies that will promote sustainable urban development.

Honourable Ngwira highlighted that local urbanization forum like one held in Balaka prior to the MUF shows that Malawians are keen to play a role in bringing about various types of community driven urban development. He observed that more organizations are joining hands with the Ministry to support programs of reaching out to all communities in Malawi to learn from the grassroots about alternative forms of community driven urbanization. He gave an example of the roles being played by MAKNET, CCODE and UN-Habitat.

The Deputy Minister challenged the forum to discuss and come up with tangible resolutions as to:

- How the provision of infrastructure and services in urban areas could address the development shortcomings that the urban poor are facing.
- How to shift from provision of infrastructure and services that support convenient urban consumption to one that enables everyone to socially grow while replacing and/ or improving on the development infrastructure around them.
- How the social and economic environment that Malawians live could be used to encourage greater participation by everyone to achieve MDGs and sustainable urban development.
- How urban planning could be used to generate greater economic activities and result in properly organized and integrated hierarchies of communities, markets and urban systems that support local value-

addition for gainful export into global markets.

The Deputy Minister further said government is working towards enacting the new Land Act which will turn the whole Malawi into a planning area in order to deal with the challenges that have resulted in unbalanced development of human settlement, squatter development, under and/ or undeveloped land in towns and cities. He added that the new Physical Planning Act and the Planning Standards and Guidelines which are being reviewed will be applied for this purpose.

Honourable Ngwira announced that in the FY2011/12, government set aside MK1.5 billion under the Public Sector Investment Programme (PSIP) within the Ministry of Finance, Development Planning and Cooperation, part of which will be used to support various National Slum Upgrading Programs [NSUP]. He explained that the primary objective of NSUP is to improve living conditions in slums of the major urban areas through provision of infrastructure, urban services and improvement of shelter as well as programs

to prevent the formation of new slums.

Finally, the Deputy Minister assured the forum that government was prepared to adopt plausible outcomes and recommendations from the forum and integrate them into strategies and policies that will not only lead to the expeditious achievement of the MDGs but also support the emergence of a Malawian approach to achieving sustainable urban development.

### Summary of Remarks by the UNDP Deputy Resident Representative

**M**r. Ram Shankar observed that cities contribute disproportionately to Gross Domestic Product (GDP). He said in Malawi, cities account for 20 percent of the population and that less than 5 percent of the urban land area contributes 65 percent of the GDP. He said this is because cities have the infrastructure, technology, skills, physical assets and human capital necessary for economic growth and poverty reduction; are centres of education, employment, enterprise and innovation; are centres of politics, culture and social cohesion; are

centres of excellence in the provision of social services; generate a disproportionate amount of revenue for government in national taxes and therefore are engines of growth for national development.

He urged that taking the right decisions coupled with right and effective policies that promote sustainable urbanisation could ensure that urbanisation becomes a vehicle for poverty reduction and the attainment of the MDGs in Malawi. He cautioned that failure to do this implies running the risks of condemning more urban dwellers to live in poverty and making the cities fail to fulfil their potential for poverty reduction; creating cities that become sites of deprivation, social exclusion, crime and instability; creating cities that impede environmental sustainability because of large ecological footprints and significant contribution to climate change.

Mr. Shankar added that unsustainable urbanisation has poverty implications as rapid urbanisation without matching basic services and infrastructure and job opportunities results in the urbanisation of poverty. He said this threatens the

attainment of the MDGs in urban areas because as more people move to urban areas, the battle to attain the MDGs could as well be getting tough.

He informed the forum that the United Nations was proud to be associated with the MUF where Malawians from the whole spectrum of the urban stakeholders gather to reflect and share ideas on one of the most significant population dynamics facing Malawi – rapid urbanisation and how to make this phenomenon an effective vehicle for poverty reduction.

### **Summary of Remarks by the Principal Secretary, Ministry of Lands, Housing and Urban Development**

Ms. Ivy Luhanga, the Principal Secretary said MUF is an advocacy platform where experts and other stakeholders exchange ideas and experiences in urban planning, development and governance in Malawi. She noted that managing urbanisation to facilitate sustainable economic growth and development requires concerted efforts of all stakeholders.

She said this is the reason why the Ministry continues to engage with all partners in order to achieve the government vision of sustainable urban development in Malawi. She assured the forum that the Steering Committee has plans to extend public consultation programmes throughout Malawi as part of the process of developing a National Urban Policy.

### **Summary of Keynote Address by the World Bank Country Manager**

Ms. Sandra K. Bloemenkamp explained that urbanization and industrialization contribute immensely to national GDP to the extent that no country has achieved middle income status without them. She informed the forum that urbanization and industrialization are key to meeting the MDGs. She observed that African urban population growth rates continue to be the highest in the World adding that the urbanization rate for Malawi is estimated to be one of the highest at 5.3 percent.





**Ms. Sandra Bloemenkamp making a Keynote Address: Photo by G. Chilinde**

She observed that closer to half of the population in Malawi live in poverty such that rapid urbanization is accompanied by the urbanization of poverty which demands measures to address the situation. She advised that there is an urgent need to support the capacity of urban centres to address the challenges of urbanization as it happens rather than act later. She pointed out that urbanization or increased rural-urban migration cannot be slowed down or prevented.

She cautioned that policies may not succeed if governments continue to think in the opposite direction particularly on how a well managed and sustainable city can make a

decisive contribution to economic growth, and social progress. She therefore advised that the most effective response to urbanization is to plan for it.

Ms. Bloemenkamp added that the essential elements of sustainable urbanization include a positive national policy framework for well managed cities. She pointed out that there is need to treat the urban poor as citizens, able and willing to contribute to the well being of the city. She advised that formalizing informal or bringing the urban poor into the city should be planned for as informal settlements are origins of income for majority of inhabitants in many African cities.

She added that dealing with slums is not only a question of investment but requires enabling cities to engage slum dwellers as citizens who are seeking economic security and rights.

She said urban centres are critical for pro-poor activities, entrepreneurship and economic modernization making it important that urban policies must be directed at strengthening cities as economic platforms.

She observed that most employment growth in Africa is happening in the informal sector. She therefore emphasized that efforts need to be directed at ensuring that cities must act as incubators of economic and employment growth such that supporting the activities of the informal sector must be considered as a critical urban policy component.

Finally, she observed that since productivity of urban centres is increasingly determining national economic growth, it also determines economies of sub-regions. She challenged the participants to debate how cities in Malawi could play as economic regions that could positively impact their immediate hinterlands.

She concluded that there is need for documented evidence and data on relevant urban issues to facilitate policy decision making in view that service delivery in cities and towns cannot be managed and printed on project by project basis using public funds.

# DIALOGUES

## Dialogue 1: Water and Sanitation

### Basic Urban Infrastructure in Small Towns for Water Supply and Sanitation Services

Mr. John Kandulu, Water Aid Southern Africa Regional Director said the growing population in most African and Asian countries is absorbed in small towns where service provision is a big challenge. He observed that demand for water and sanitation services is on the rise than anticipated.

He attributed the rising demand to the growing importance of small towns as centres of attraction for rural migrant labour and transit markets for agricultural produce to bigger cities. He observed that the water sector in urban areas is characterised by utility based solutions unlike in rural areas where water supply is demand driven and revolving around participatory community management models. Mr. Kandulu said both

rural and urban models are not suitable for small towns.

He observed that unpredictable settlement patterns complicate planning services and that diseconomy of scale in small settlements make water and sanitation services a marginal business. He added that modest incomes coupled with low ability and unwillingness to pay for services entails dismal coverage on investment costs.

He said this is due to inadequate human resources caused by low retention for skilled and experienced workers; highly variable demand in terms of quantities versus fewer technological options; weak regulatory framework due to inadequate capacities in small towns; inadequate accountability mechanisms due to distance from the centre; ineffective lobbying by Members of Parliament making it difficult to attract external financing and deficient mechanisms evident by incomplete decentralization of the financial management function making “access for all” slogan to water and sanitation a mere colourful dream.

He noted that access to basic sanitation is extremely low in small towns in developing countries and does not receive adequate attention at central government level. He attributed this to insignificant budget allocations; lack of political will to address sanitation issues, inadequate technical capacity at Local Government level to meet the water and sanitation MDG targets; and highly dispersed settlements which do not favour conventional infrastructure solutions. He advocated for intermediate technological and management innovations in water and sanitation sector.

Mr. Kandulu warned that meeting the water and sanitation MDGs may not be possible using conventional standard “one-size-fits-all” models which may not work for small towns. He urged for the promotion of the population clustering model in small towns; outsourcing to small private water and sanitation service providers; and liberalization to allow small water entrepreneurs to explore, diversify and innovate mechanisms that could ensure access to water and sanitation services.

## Women leadership, citizen engagement and integrated partnerships for sustainable water supply

Mr. Muthi Nhlema of Water for People informed the forum that with an urbanization rate of 2.08 percent per annum, Blantyre is one of the cities with an increasing urbanization trend. He said 7 in 10 of Blantyre residents live in high density, unplanned slum dwellings of which the conditions are worse than in rural areas.

He said Malawi is experiencing a rural push which is being influenced by diminishing land holding for the rural poor, decreasing quality of life in rural settings, inadequate policy to regulate migration and declining economic activities all of which result in urbanization of poverty evidenced by development of slums and reduced access to water and sanitation services.

Mr. Nhlema said low cost provision of water services in low income communities of Blantyre is not without challenges because Kiosk Management committees are run on volunteer basis. He added that other

challenges include lack of transparency and accountability, coordination and communication problems, political interference and non-payment of water bills leading to disconnections and vandalism of infrastructures.

He informed the forum that in order to eliminate inefficiencies in water provision in low income areas of the city, a partnership approach was used whereby Blantyre Water Board, Blantyre City Council, Water for People, Local Leaders and Water Users Associations (WUA) came together to ensure sustainable access to water in urban poor locations. He said this involved community mobilization, data sharing and exchange visits to successful WUAs.

He informed the forum that in one WUA alone, the arrangement created 80 jobs in 54 water kiosks by 2010 whereas in 2007, workers were mere volunteers. He said a loss of US\$10500 in unpaid water bills in 2007 was converted into full cost recovery such that a profit of US\$46175 was realized in 2010.

He informed the forum that 11 out of 34 water kiosks were operational in 2007 as compared to a total of 54 in 2010. He said in 2007, 493 people were drawing water from one kiosk and this was reduced to 265 people in 2010. Mr. Nhlema said 5000 people or 34 percent from low income areas had access to water kiosks in 2007 as compared to 14286 people or 92 percent in 2010.

He concluded that the problem for accessibility to water services in urban low income areas requires policy support for a sustainable market system that involve all key players with external experts playing a facilitating role.

## Dialogue 2: Housing



Dialogue on housing: Photo by G. Chilinde

## **Housing as a Means of Achieving Meaningful Development in Small Urban Centres under the District Councils of Malawi**

**M**rs. Sphiwe Mauwa, District Commissioner for Dedza District Council reminded the forum that Malawi adopted the decentralization policy in 1998 which implied that powers, functions and resources were transferred from central to local level. She said the argument stands that district councils are better placed to provide services to rural masses due to their remoteness because they are closer to the community hence are well and easily informed about community needs.

She pointed out that in line with the policy; each district council is required to come up with District Development Plan (DDP) outlining priority development projects. She observed that most DDPs have not prioritised construction of houses in small towns as an issue which makes it difficult for donors, government or district councils to construct or implement housing projects.

She observed that some small urban centres in the districts have basic infrastructure facilities which act as pull factors for village communities to migrate to the centres to access basic services. However, she noted that housing constitute a missing link in the centres such that residing there becomes less attractive to skilled workers who are unwilling to live in dilapidated houses.

She warned that most small urban centres are becoming slums in the districts although housing land is available. She urged that this is posing a risk for communicable diseases due to poor sanitation. She said unless housing problems are dealt with in the rural towns, provision of basic infrastructure will not be meaningful as services may remain underutilized.

She observed that there are initiatives aimed at addressing the housing problem in District Councils through the Local Development Fund (LDF) community financing window. She said through the fund district councils are constructing houses for primary school teachers. She said in FY2009/10, LDF financed the construction of 900 teacher's houses

throughout the country. She added that in FY2010/11, 800 houses were under construction and FY2011/12 funds were available for construction of 700 houses.

She also informed the forum that apart from housing projects for individuals and private organizations, the Ministry of health was constructing houses and renovating old ones for staff in health centres under the Health Sector Wide Approach Programme. She added that the Ministry of Agriculture Irrigation and Water Development, was also renovating houses for extension staff in the districts.

Finally, she recommended that infrastructure development projects for small urban centres should be designed as a package to include housing. She also advocated for the decentralization of housing finance to empower the district housing officers in terms of resources, trainings, and equipment to enable them deliver the provision of housing in small urban centres.

### Dialogue 3: Sustainable Energy

Mr. Maxon Chitawo of Mzuzu University informed the forum that the energy balance in Malawi is heavily biased towards wood fuel at about 93 percent. He said about 91 percent of the population depends on wood fuel in the form of firewood, and charcoal for most of their energy needs.

He observed that the supply of electricity in Malawi is inadequate, unreliable and inaccessible to most people yet other sources have not been fully exploited for energy generation. He noted that no investment was made into power generation between 2000 and 2010.

Mr. Chitawo observed that Malawi has abundant natural resources that could be harnessed for energy generation. He cited high solar insolation; perennial rivers; uranium deposits; a large number of hot springs; biomass; coal and considerable wind speed. He said by using Renewable Energy Technologies (RETs), Malawi can harness energy flows from on-going natural processes and turn them into energy services to meet the energy demand. He advocated

that the advantage is that renewable energy fuel resources are sustainable, environmentally friendly, have low operational costs and require less maintenance than traditional generators.

He explained that the rationale for integrating RETs in urban planning is that urban low income groups in slums and high density areas are the most affected with energy poverty. He noted that the urban poor are the hub of charcoal business which has resulted into severe deforestation.

In conclusion, he said as the proportion of people living in towns and cities increase, utility companies are faced with the challenge of supplying services. He urged for the exploration of energy options to meet the increasing energy demand. He said integrating renewable energy technologies in urban planning will enhance energy supply security, availability and reliability to meet the basic energy needs of urban migrants.

Mr. Chitawo recommended that the national urban policy need to integrate renewable energy technologies for onsite energy generation to harness and utilise the

abundant solar resource. He added that well engineered municipal waste management practices in city and town councils should incorporate energy recovery. He urged that innovative financial and technological interventions should be explored, along with measures to enhance awareness for energy efficiency and conservation.

### Dialogue 4: Sustainable Urbanization and MDGs

Dr Thomas Munthali said cities are the hubs of much national production and consumption because they form engines for economic and social processes that generate wealth and opportunity. However, he pointed out that cities also create diseases, crime, pollution, poverty and social unrest especially when slums develop which create an urban divide.

He observed that slum dwellers number more than 50 per cent of the urban population in Malawi and have little or no access to basic social services. He described Malawi as one of the fast urbanizing countries in Africa at 5.3 per cent per annum and nearly twice the Africa rate of 3.5 per

cent. Dr Munthali noted that the urbanization challenge is recognized by government because it is part of the key focus under the MGDS II within the population sub-theme under Social Development.

He said meeting the MDGs in urban areas is more than improving the lives of 100 million slum dwellers noting the rising cost of living in urban areas. He said with over 50 percent of the World Population in urban areas, urbanization calls for major infrastructure improvements. He added that urbanization requires effective community-level responses to HIV/AIDS focusing not only on prevention but also supporting both the infected and affected.

He observed that although there is progress in meeting most of the MDGs in Malawi, urban areas lag in almost all MDGs. He pointed out that sustainable urbanization is the key determinant in meeting the MDGs. He said tackling urban poverty provides an important entry point for achieving all the MDGs in cities as people living in slums can be easily targeted with interventions aimed at poverty reduction.

Finally, he called for the development of a National Urban Policy and review of the National Housing Policy to contribute to the coordination of sustainable urban and infrastructure planning and development for sustainable urbanization and achievement of the MDGs in urban areas.

### **Dialogue 5: The Voices from the Slums**

#### **CCODE: Participatory Informal Settlement Upgrading**

**M**s. Funny Chimbanga, a representative of Malawi Homeless People's Federation (MHPF), a slum dwellers organisation working with CCODE informed the forum that upgrading informal settlements requires participation of the affected groups. She said community mobilization is the key starting point to define entry points with community leaders before local organizations and institutions.

She added that exchange visits to similar successful upgrading programs elsewhere helps to shade light on grey areas. She said this has to be followed by setting up

coordinating bodies at community level to establish Informal Settlements Network (ISN) with representation from all sectors.

The representative said external facilitators need to take time understanding the community and giving them a chance to write the profile of their community. She said the community has to be centrally involved in framing the tools, a process which requires negotiations and testing before they can be used in the data collection. She added that young people as drivers of change have to be involved and the community has to be clustered for inclusiveness. She said the affected community has to undertake a household census where numbers are assigned to each household.

Ms. Chimbanga said it is important to build bridges with the local council for the process to succeed. She pointed out that needs assessment has to be undertaken so that the upgrading can marry with community expectations. She cautioned that the process is not without challenges as it takes candid planning to overcome community prejudices. She explained that the urban

poor perceive city authorities as untrustworthy because experiences elsewhere have shown that issues are discussed but later bulldozers enter the neighborhoods with a full scale demolition exercise. She added that where a slum upgrading project raises high expectations, these just have to be met accordingly.

Finally, she said participatory slum upgrading requires understanding the community and avoiding fast-tracking the process in order to keep all local stakeholders on track and knowing that external experts remain facilitators and the community as drivers. She ended her presentation with a quote from Albert Einstein that “doing things the same way and expecting change to happen is insane”.

### **Challenges Faced by the Urban Poor**

On behalf of the Lilongwe Urban Poor People’s Network (LUPPEN), Mr. Bauti Phiri started with the issue of access to land. He informed the forum that it takes long for an applicant to be allocated land because they are kept on a long waiting list which has no

time limit. He pointed out that the development charge for the land is unaffordable for the urban poor since it is not refundable in the event that one fails to develop the land. He observed that the Land Act is old saying it backdates to 1962 implying that it misses out on democratic principles. He called for the adoption of the new Land Bill which encompasses gender, democracy and decentralization issues.

He bemoaned the lack of procedure for evictions observing that some urban poor locations like Chifumbe and Chatata in Lilongwe City, people were evicted without compensation. He said this has resulted in loss of economic activities, disturbing access to education and eroding cultural values. He appealed that there is need to inform the affected community before implementing eviction orders.

On access to health services, Mr. Phiri said residents of urban poor locations travel long distances to access health facilities. He gave an example of Kauma, Mtsiliza and Mbwetu which depend on facilities in Area 18 while those in Area 24 have to go all the way to Bwaila Hospital in Area 2. He complained

that health workers pay less attention to patients denying them access to better services hence people resort to seek assistance from traditional healers oftentimes leading to loss of life. He demanded the construction of health facilities in areas of the urban poor since they are home to majority of the in urban residents.

On waste management, Mr. Phiri observed that this is one of the poorest services in the cities as waste remains uncollected for a longtime giving example of high density areas like Area 23, 22, Kaondo, Dubai, Mtsiliza, Mtandire and Mwenyekondo among others. He said this result in the outbreak of diseases and contributes to climate change due to methane gas which is produced in the makeshift dumping sites. He appealed for better waste management to combat the spread of diseases and ensure environmental quality.

Mr. Phiri also spoke about Constituency Development Fund (CDF) and Local Development Fund (LDF). He said the urban poor find it difficult to understand how these funds operate due to lack of

information which leaves them with many questions regarding accessibility. He said there is need to improve the flow of information and ensure that the urban poor communities take part in development.

He also pointed out that the urban poor cannot access decent housing due to lack of housing and financing programmes. Mr. Phiri said this has resulted in the formation of slums, informal /illegal land allocation committees contrary to city regulations and provisions of the Land Act. He added that the practice is worsening urban crime especially theft and vandalism. He recommended that housing delivery systems should enable all income groups to have access to decent housing to arrest the problem of slums.

He pointed out that the urban poor find it difficult to access portable and affordable water due to high cost of connection fees in addition to a long waiting period to be connected. He said this causes the breakout of waterborne diseases in urban poor areas. He said there is need to provide urban poor communities with all basic infrastructure services including portable water and sanitary facilities.

Finally, Mr. Phiri said electricity is not affordable to the urban poor due to high cost of connection fees, waiting time for connection and frequent power outages which threatens lives. He said inaccessibility of electricity results in deforestation as people resort to use fuelwood and charcoal thereby threatening the urban environment. He urged that unless these challenges are addressed, the urban poor will continue to face problems in urban Malawi which would threaten achievement of the MDGs.

## **Dialogue 6: Local Government Sessions**

### **Local Authorities and Basic Service Delivery: Challenges for Sustainable local Development in Malawi**

**D**r Richard Tambulasi from the Department of Political And Administrative Studies at Chancellor College, University of Malawi described local government as the level of authority that is closest to the citizens. He informed the forum that the characteristic features of local government include locality, legal personality, autonomy, and governmental power. He added that

urban areas in Malawi fall in the jurisdiction of local governments for basic service delivery.

He pointed out that ideally, local government is preferred for basic service delivery because of its proximity to citizens, accountability and transparency, efficiency and effectiveness in service delivery, mobilization of community participation, ensuring equity in resource distribution for poverty reduction and stands a good chance for increased and sustainable community development.

He cautioned that effective attainment of these roles is dependent on a strong system of local government and a democratic environment, local political control and managerial autonomy in service delivery, an adequate financial resource base, a fair division of human resources between central and local government with good remuneration, an adequate communication and regular flow of accurate information within and between levels, a vibrant civic culture for citizen participation, trust and honesty and receptivity to innovation.



Dr Tambulasi informed the forum that urban service delivery in Malawi is affected by factors that include incompleteness of sector devolution, lack of elected local representatives, small financial base, lack of institutional capacity for the councils to tap all potential revenues, unclear responsibilities and mandates, understaffing, accountability and transparency challenges.

He added that other factors include retrogressive citizen attitude towards public property, increasing population, political influence and interference in the management of local development and constituency funds and a faulty legal framework observing that the 2010 amendments to the local government act will potentially further constrain local autonomy and control in service delivery.

Finally, he advised that there is need for political, administrative and citizen commitment at various levels if local governments are to be effective in service delivery which is critical for effective attainment of the MDGs.

## MDG Based Planning: Case of Blantyre City

Mr. Costly Chanza, Director of Planning and Development for Blantyre City Council informed the forum that Millennium Cities Initiative is a project of The Earth Institute at Columbia University which is assisting under-resourced cities in sub-Saharan Africa to meet the MDGs. He said Blantyre City and Mwandama Village in Zomba were incorporated in the project in 2006. He said the basis was that rural development cannot be realized without urban development. He pointed out that three strategies were developed which include preparation of materials to inform foreign investors on investment opportunities; Information, Education and Communication (IEC) including development of a Millennium Cities Investors Guide; and capacity strengthening for Blantyre City investment promotion through public-private sector dialogue.



Victoria Avenue in Blantyre City: Photo by C. Chanza

He discussed with participants the Millennium Based Planning Process (MBPP). He said the process is aimed at identifying commercially viable investment opportunities in Blantyre City to stimulate domestic enterprise development and establish needs of the sectors in order to identify and agree on priorities in the social and investment sectors.

Mr. Chanza informed the forum that this involved identifying the gaps for bridging such that studies were done on education and gender while water and sanitation, health and household needs assessment were in the process.

In the investment sector, he said activities involved identifying the most promising local investment opportunities, analyzing the investment environment with which new investors must interact, disseminating information on opportunities and environment, publishing the investment guide and establishing a local investment desk and building capacity and opportunities of the city to promote itself.

Finally, he informed the forum that validation of the education and gender reports was in progress. He said other activities in progress include publishing the needs assessments for health, water and sanitation studies, finalizing the cost assessments and gap analyses for the major social sectors, finalizing the integrated city development strategy for promotion to potential funding partners, incorporating a “Friends of MCI” activists group to mobilize leading Blantyre citizens, partnering with government bodies to encourage Blantyre to improve its “Ease of Doing Business” and securing funding to establish Blantyre as a Millennium City.

### **Contesting Spaces in Urban Malawi: a planning challenge for local governments?**

**M**r. Evance Mwachunga, a lecturer in the Department of Geography and Earth Sciences at Chancellor College, University of Malawi said urban land plays a crucial role in socioeconomic development as it provides space for shelter, security, wealth, power and is a source of livelihood as it contributes 40 percent of the GDP. However, he pointed out that urban land can be a source of conflict. He said urbanisation and planning failure can create pressure on urban land hence bring about conflicts.

He said that such conflicts can occur between local elites and the landless poor, informal residents against statutory authorities, and foreigners against indigenous citizens because most customary land is being acquired by foreigners while most indigenous Malawians remain landless.

He said there are some elements of top down approach in management of urban space which imply clinging to by-gone

development paradigms focussed on economic growth than the needs of the citizen. He argued that the physical notion of land has an economic motive guided by western economic legacy. He pointed out that there is interfusions of actors in land delivery whereby statutory agencies are dealing with land even at the local level hence create confusion over jurisdiction with the local authorities.

Mr. Mwachunga argued that unnecessary delays, bureaucratic and cumbersome procedures in urban management coupled with an acute shortage of human and financial capacity and unaffordable high land prices create the contestation among those marginalized in urban space.

He said space is a social product because society produces own space hence need for stakeholder participation in its production. He observed that contestation over urban space emanates from contradictions between the conception of space among planners and the way inhabitants conceive it in daily practices. He explained that this can happen due to contradiction between the received law that land is owned by the state against

lived experiences based on primacy and history of settlement. He pointed out that planning, as a local government activity, can create urban conflicts in the event that land is not accessible to the urban poor.

He advocated that planning has to emphasize on bottom up approaches to ensure meaningful and effective participation and transparency hence guarantee the urban poor their right to the city. He added that there is need to adopt community led land regularisation to ensure tenure security for the urban poor by formalising and legalising the role of grassroots leaders in land management arguing that they are innovative, efficient, and knowledgeable.

## **Dialogue 7: Urbanization, Urban Poverty and National Development Framework**

### **The Link between Malawi Growth and Development Strategies and Urbanization**

**M**r. Joseph Upile Matola from the Ministry of Finance, Development Planning and

Cooperation informed the forum that urbanization and development are highly inter-related as experience has shown that in most developed countries majority of the population live in urban areas as opposed to the country side. He said economic development encourages urbanization which is an important catalyst for growth and development. He added that rural-urban migration facilitated economic development during the industrial revolution in America and Europe as the population migrated to work in cities. He said economic growth encourages rural-urban migration as people search for better life in towns and more rural land increasingly convert to urban uses.

He observed that in Sub-Saharan Africa, urbanization has occurred to a large extent independent of economic development and wondered whether Malawi is also urbanizing without a corresponding rate of economic development. He said Malawi needs deliberate policies and strategies which will ensure sustainable urban development because high level of growth is necessary but not sufficient for achieving sustainable urbanization.

Mr. Matola said the MGDS recognize that urban development is an indicator of social and economic development especially if urbanization corresponds with infrastructure development. He informed the forum that urban development is a sub theme under infrastructure development and the goal is to create a sustainable, economically and socially integrated urban system.

He said the key strategies include providing support to processes of urban renewal and slum upgrading; supporting the development of utilities, mechanisms and structures in local authorities and provision of critical urban infrastructure; enforcing rules and regulations on land use and physical developments; promoting public private partnerships in the development of urban infrastructure; and improving infrastructure facilities in slum areas and restricting the formation of new slums.

Mr. Matola said the MGDS is also tackling the problem of rural-urban migration by focussing on integrated rural development (IRD) which is aimed at developing rural growth centres that will contribute effectively to economic growth. He said the

expectation is that the centres will create employment in rural areas and therefore reduce rural-urban migration.

He said the MGDS is promoting the growth and development of rural growth centres through the provision of utilities and communication networks to facilitate the linkage of production areas to markets; implementing an effective rural electrification programme; and promoting and implementing economic empowerment programmes.

Finally, Mr. Matola urged that the country faces a big challenge for achieving sustainable urban development due to an urbanization rate classified as the highest in the world. He pointed out that Malawi needs policies that will ensure both rural and urban based economic growth. He challenged stakeholders to align their activities to the strategies outlined in the MGDS for urban development and attainment of the MDGs.

## Dialogue 8: Funding for Urban Development and Urban Poverty Reduction

**M**r. Mike Moyo, Director of Urban Development at the Local Development Fund informed the forum that urban development and urban poverty cannot be discussed in isolation of urban infrastructure financing. He said deficiency in urban infrastructure has a direct bearing on urban development and poverty.

He informed the forum that in 1998, 15.3 percent of the population in Malawi lived in urban areas and in 2011 this was estimated at 20 percent and forecasted to rise to 30 percent by 2030 and 50 percent by 2050. He reminded the forum that Malawi is urbanizing fast such that society is experiencing most pressing challenges that include lack of adequate urban infrastructure, pollution, diseases, poverty and unemployment. He said in 1987, Malawi had about 187 urban centers and estimated that this figure grew to about 240 in 2011.

Mr. Moyo explained that the link between urban infrastructure and urban poverty

reduction is that it involves systems which have a direct link to daily living, e.g. transport, water, telecommunications, public health, energy and finance. He pointed out that local councils in Malawi own and operate both hard and soft municipal infrastructure which includes capital assets like local urban roads, streets, water distribution, solid and liquid waste management and soft infrastructure like governance, economic, social infrastructure.

He said lack of adequate funding for infrastructure development overtime has resulted from problematic fiscal transfer systems; insufficient local government revenues and limited access to other forms of debt financing in local councils. He said local councils lack capacity manifested by shortages of qualified staff, technical and administrative capacities to plan, implement, operate and maintain urban infrastructure facilities coupled with poor coordination between implementing agencies.

Finally, Mr. Moyo said the major challenge in urban infrastructure financing is insufficient legal and administrative instruments for private sector participation. He cited lack of clear policies, insufficient

investment laws, political influence in tariff setting and enforcement of payments, unreliable planning guidelines and standards, lack of transparency in procurement processes, and insufficient accounting standards in local governments. He advocated for the exploration of other methods for financing urban infrastructure.

### Special Session 1: Community Dialogue

People from urban poor communities met to dialogue among themselves on issues that affect them due to urbanisation. The session was moderated by Ms. Sara Kalenjeka from CCODE.

Village Headman Chibwe from Mtandile observed that government is empowering communities through the NGOs but called for transparency when executing development projects. He added that there is need for appropriate coordination among implementing institutions and agencies to avoid duplication.



Community dialogue: photo by G. Chilinde

He gave an example of a situation where resettlement is needed in order to upgrade a slum location that the strategy needs to be clearly explained to the affected. He said the slum upgrading project for Chinsapo and Mtandile which will be implemented under the facilitation of CCODE should involve local people to execute the development activities.

Village Headman Goliati from Chinsapo added that budgets for slum upgrading whether from City Council or Local Development Fund (LDF) must be communicated to the concerned communities especially that there are no councillors to represent them.

In tandem, Asha Chisamba from Chinsapo demanded equal allocation of development funding. She observed that currently, some locations of the city are well developed because they are given much attention yet funding for services in urban poor communities is nonexistent or disproportional to the number of people being served. She added that government need to plan toping up the donation from the Bill Melinda Gates Foundation which runs from 2010-2015. She said a clear and transparent exit strategy should ensure that government makes provisions for the continuation of the project beyond 2015.

Ms. Maulana from Chinsapo II observed that the country is experiencing high rural-urban migration because rural development projects fail to employ local inhabitants and instead employ people from other areas or districts. She argued that if rural development projects were providing jobs to local inhabitants, rural-urban migration would have been reduced as people would become able to settle in their locations.

Mphatso Njunga of MHPF Blantyre pointed out that the main challenge in informal

settlements is the lack of electricity due to difficulties to get access to prepaid meters and advocated for government to impress upon Electricity Supply Corporation of Malawi (ESCOM) to ensure supply arguing that charges from post-paid meters are usually exaggerated.

She added that water and electricity service providers take a long time to provide the service to applicants in low income areas. She further said government should consider providing funding for low cost housing to sustain programs which are running on donor funding.

Ms. Njunga pointed out that government need to revisit the Chiefs Act which does not recognize Chiefs in urban areas. She said the truth is that Chiefs exist in urban Malawi such that the decentralization process cannot work efficiently without them because they still command a lot of influence.

Modester Kaphala said when a decision to resettle people for slum upgrading is made, provision of basic utility and social services especially electricity, water, education and health centres, and security need to be

considered. She also pointed out that land acquisition process favours the higher income groups arguing that government should consider making provisions for the urban poor. She further observed that the city councils approve plans for the construction houses which are above MK5 million and complained that this is a higher standard which the urban poor cannot afford. She urged the authorities to consider that the urban poor are also important in the city because they provide labour in the implementation of development activities.

The participants observed that Community Development Committees (CDCs) were inactive due to the absence of councillors as they are the ones who used to present the demands of the CDC to the city councils. They pointed out that currently most of the CDC members do not know their roles and responsibilities because they have not undergone orientation training particularly on how they can collaborate with community block leaders and local chiefs to deliver development in their communities.

The participants also wondered why LDF is difficult to access and less understood by the

local communities. They argued that LDF has been misrepresented by the politicians who use it to gain political mileage. They urged that LDF management need to do more civic education and public awareness especially on how communities can access the fund.

Finally, the participants resolved that with the absence of councillors, there is need to work with local chiefs as they are the ones responsible for ensuring community development.

### Training Event: GIS in Urban Planning

Mr. Arkford Mkundika, a GIS Specialist from the Department of Physical Planning introduced participants to the use of Geographical Information Systems (GIS) Applications in the development of maps, sketch maps, detailed land use and layout plans including data capture, analysis and management in planning. He explained that land use planning in Malawi has developed much to the extent that the use of relevant software applications is the only appropriate way to deliver quality and more accurate

outputs. He demonstrated to the participants a few examples on how to make a sketch map and a detailed layout plan using ArcMap software.

### **Special Session 2: National Urban Profile for Malawi**

The Team Leader was Mr. Lucky Kabanga and presenting in his behalf, a member of the team Mr. Mtafu Manda, a Lecturer at Mzuzu University said Participatory Slum Upgrading Programme (PSUP) encourages the participation of various stakeholders in urban decision-making. He informed the forum that the study involved local, regional and central govt institutions; private sector; academia; civil society groups; Non-Governmental Organizations, Community Based Organizations, Faith Based Organizations, Community Development Committees, members of the community and donor organizations.

He described the six step methodology which the study utilized. He then talked about Malawi, describing it as one of the least developed countries in the world with 15.3 percent of its population being urban

projected to grow to 25 percent by 2015. He said it is one of the fastest urbanising countries in Africa at 5.2 percent after Rwanda and Burundi with urban poverty at about 25 percent and population in unplanned settlements at about 64 percent.

Mr. Manda said the Malawi Urban Profiling focused on seven thematic areas which included urban governance and municipal finance; local economic development; land, gender and HIV/AIDS; environment, urban disaster risks and climate change; shelter and slums and basic urban services. He described the findings under each theme in detail and ended the presentation by outlining the challenges in urban Malawi.

### **Dialogue 9: NGOs and urban services and infrastructure delivery in urban areas**

#### **Non-Governmental Development Organisations (NGDOs) in the City and the Quest for Poverty Reduction**

Dr. Jonathan Makuwira from RMT University in Australia said urbanisation and urban poverty reduction debate has lately become the centre stage of development discourse

due to the emerging trend that half of the world's population now live in urban areas.

He observed that in Malawi, urbanisation is growing at an unprecedented pace. He argued that the growing rural-urban migration trend calls for concerted efforts, including the participation of Non-Governmental Development Organisations (NGDOs) in view of their potential to contribute to addressing the challenges of urban poverty reduction.

Finally, he advised that NGDOs need to concentrate efforts within the sectoral areas identified by City Councils and, at the same time, depoliticise their operations through collaborative approaches with urban institutions and ensure increased capacity development of their beneficiaries.

### **Urban Rapid Appraisal in Ndirande Township, Blantyre City**

Ms. Ajeeba Aslam, Deputy Country Director for Save the Children informed the forum that Ndirande is the most populated township in Blantyre and one of the poorest and

overcrowded urban slum areas with a population of 109164 people in 2008.

Ms. Aslam said Ndirande has middle-income, poor, and ultra poor households with each group having distinct characteristics that define their wealth status. She informed the forum that major livelihood strategies in the Township were formal and informal employment, small-scale business, and agriculture. She said most of the middle-income were formally employed, while most poor and ultra poor were working in the informal sector.

She noted that most of them access business loans from microfinance institutions where conditions are tough. She observed that urban agriculture was affected by low productivity because of land limitation and absence of agricultural extension services.

She said access to safe water was a major challenge due to erratic delivery of piped water. She observed that the source of portable water for the majority were water kiosks. She observed the lack for proper sanitation facilities, drainage systems or rubbish pits waste disposal. She said residents had access to free health services

even though the Health Centre had a large catchment area with minimal human and financial resources.

Ms. Aslam observed that Early Child Development education services were available and most households were accessing free public primary education. She argued that public schools suffer from high pupil-teacher ratio and understaffing. She noted that some students do not reach secondary school due to poor performance and lack of money for fees. She pointed out that lack of resources, infrastructure and adequate sanitation facilities were the cause for high dropout rates.

She pointed out that Orphans and Vulnerable Children (OVC) in the Township were vulnerable to sexual abuse. She attributed this to rising cost of living in the city which is exposing OVCs to the risk of contracting HIV/AIDS through transactional sex as a survival strategy.

However, she noted that government provides child protection services with the exception that the Child Protection Unit had capacity challenges in terms of human and financial resources. She urged for the need

to address these capacity gaps and that stakeholders should join efforts to address the challenges which OVC and others vulnerable groups encounter while living in the city so as to achieve inclusive and sustainable urbanization.

### **Dialogue 10: Community Driven Processes in delivery of basic services and infrastructure**

**M**r. Sane Zuka, a Lecturer at the Polytechnic of the University of Malawi explained that social capital is about networks, norms and reciprocal relationships among individuals that give rise to something valuable, which can lead to improved individual or collective wellbeing. He said people benefit by being members of particular networks or social structures useful in resolving collective problems, improving the flow of information and reducing monitoring and transaction costs. He added that collective action is founded on the use of mutually agreed rules, norms and networks to place group interests above those of an individual. He argued that communal social capital is necessary for



local economic development and that a community with more of it is likely to experience development.

He said social capital could be useful in the management and provision of urban services in order to achieve the MDGs in urban areas. He added that local councils may not fund service delivery and infrastructure development without engaging social capital.

He observed that in view of these financial challenges, social capital can be used to improve access to education through the establishment of community managed day care centres. He also said social capital can lead to reduced corruption, increased information flow, pooling resources for construction of access roads and sanitary facilities and collective work efforts in managing water kiosks, waste disposal and communal security. He advocated for the integrating social capital in strategies to address urban infrastructure challenges in order to meet the MDGs.

Finally, Mr. Zuka advised that there is need to recognize the role played by local communities in the delivery of urban

services. He advocated that social capital can enhance communal identity and promote collective action through joint ownership of resources.

### **Special Session 3: Malawi Awards for Human Settlements (MAHS) Best Practices**

#### **From Tenants to Landlords: Slum Dwellers Working for Adequate Housing in Kasungu Town**

A representative of the group informed the forum that a team of people who were renting some poor houses in a secondary town of Kasungu some 100km north of Lilongwe organised themselves under the banner of Malawi Homeless Peoples Federation. She said they started saving some funds in groups for housing aiming at leveraging a housing loan from Mchenga Fund.

She said with facilitation of CCODE, the group conducted exchange visits to other similar groups in Lilongwe and Blantyre in order to learn how they managed to construct own houses. She said after the visits, the group engaged with the local

authority to be allocated land for housing. Once the land was allocated they started preparing for the construction and in a few months, 26 houses were built and are occupied.

The representative said bottlenecks were encountered in the process which included delays in granting necessary approvals for the building plans, price fluctuations for the construction materials, unfulfilled promises and sometimes lies which affected the construction of a drainage system and power supply to the houses.

She said the process provided them with lessons having learnt that partnerships with local authorities, savings and exchange visits are drivers of change and that people must be prepared before embarking on actual construction work.

#### **Chinyonga Community Nurseries**

Mr. Sylvester Mitini Nkhoma from Blantyre City Council informed the forum that the process to establish community nurseries in Blantyre City involved a number of steps which included: raising awareness; identification of

land and demarcation; soliciting applications for land; screening of applicants for plot allocation; payment of registration fees to the council and other conditions.

He further pointed out that before the development the area was notorious for criminal activities for Blantyre residents and that the land was used as an illegal dump site by residents of Chinyonga Township. He said this resulted in bad odour from the dump site and that both human and wild scavengers used to frequent the area. In addition, soil excavation on stream banks undermined the integrity of the river course leading to erosion, illegal and wanton tree cutting and farming activities were rampant on the stream banks and that there was constant bridge wash-away on Moi Road posing a challenge to the council's civil engineers.

Mr. Nkhoma said in order to find a sustainable solution to these challenges, an initiative for community nurseries was developed aimed at empowering local urban residents for entrepreneurship in the horticultural industry, creating job opportunities, providing security to the area,

beautifying the area, easing pressure from the council on grass cutting activities during the rainy season, making the area habitable for both human and other living things and protecting the area from wild fires and illegal dumping of waste.



**Working in a nursery: Photo by S. M. Nkhoma**

He said the next step was to source financial, technical and human resources for operations. He added that people had to invest own funds and others borrowed from financial institutions while the technical support was self provided or advice from friends and staff from the council. The nursery operators used family labour while others provided opportunities for temporary employment to people from surrounding low income areas.

Mr. Nkhoma said over time, they have observed that nursery owners find experienced and trained labour force expensive to hire and are difficult to find. He also said some of them lack knowledge and skills in plant production, pest and disease control, organisation and marketing among others. He pointed out that these need support from the council and other stakeholders in order to sustain the horticultural practices.

He said the initiative has registered positive economic social and environmental changes. He informed the forum that nursery owners have some economic independence such that others have reported positive changes in their family welfare. In addition, residents of Chinyonga and surrounding areas are now experiencing reduced crime levels. He also said co-ordination, integration have improved and level of support among stakeholders has increased.

Finally, he said the quality and beauty of the environment in Chinyonga area has improved in addition to increased demand for horticultural products and replication of

horticultural nurseries in other open spaces of the city.

### **Lilongwe City Development Strategy: A Shared Future**

Mr. Kalimujiso Banda informed the forum that Lilongwe participated at a UCLG City Future Workshop in July 2007 hosted by the City of Johannesburg. He said the objectives of the workshop were to develop regional 'learning networks'; share experiences with CDSs that enable cities to meet MDGs; identify cities that need assistance with the development of their own CDS and identify suitable mentors to support these cities. He added that through UCLG, the City of Lilongwe was mentored by the City of Johannesburg.

He defined a CDS as the understanding of the city regarding the longer term strategic direction jointly undertaken with local partners to accelerate economic growth and enhance development for the benefit of all residents of the city and contributing to further transformation of the country as a whole. On mentoring, he said it is the partnering of cities where an experienced

city provides technical advice and support in a particular area of expertise as an independent opinion.

Mr. Banda informed the forum that there is no signed agreement between the two cities such that each is responsible for its own expenditure and that the arrangement was supported by donors and Malawi Government. He informed the forum that the themes for Lilongwe City CDS include governance, land and shelter, infrastructure and environment, economic development and community development. He then explained the progress made in each of the thematic areas with regard to implementation of the strategy.

Finally, Mr. Banda informed the forum that the implementation process faces financial challenges as it is donor dependent and that the revenue mobilization within the council is poor. However, he said for a lesson to other cities, the process of CDS requires leadership commitment, avoiding duplicate processes, a flexible approach and identifying a champion to pursue the process.

### **Special Session 4: International Reports**

#### **Cities without Slums**

Ms. Adele Hosken, from Cities Alliance Southern Africa Regional Office in South Africa informed the forum that the Cities Alliance (CA) is a global partnership for urban poverty reduction and promotion of the role of cities in sustainable development. She said Cities Alliance was launched in 1999 by UN-Habitat and the World Bank adding that the alliance now consists of 24 members which include donors, developing countries, international local government associations, multi-laterals and non-governmental organizations.

Ms. Hosken pointed out that CA provides support developing countries to address the challenges of rapid urbanization, as well as harnessing the opportunities and gains from the urbanization processes for the benefit of their citizens.

She said the support falls within four broad categories namely: slum upgrading programmes; City Development Strategies;

National policies on urban development and local government and defining urban systems in form of State of the Cities Reports.

She said for the past ten years the CA operated an open access grant facility which provided funding for 220 technical assistance projects in all developing regions with a total exceeding US\$65 million.

Ms. Hosken said CA has continued to contribute to increasing development focus on urbanization and on the importance of cities to national development. She pointed out that CA has worked consistently to increase coherence of effort and increase investments for urban development – both from members and non-members.

She pointed out that there has been a long history of strengthening and promoting the role of local government in sustainable urbanization. She described the ULCG as an instrumental in driving this agenda. She said based on long standing practices of city-to-city cooperation, peer-to-peer partnerships were strengthened to improve strategic urban planning practices through learning and cooperation. She singled out the Malawi

context where the cooperation between the City of Johannesburg and Lilongwe City Council led to the development of the first City Development Strategy in the country.

She informed the forum that CA support in Malawi originated in 2008 with support for the preparation of the Lilongwe City Development Strategy. She pointed out that at the same time, UCLG, mobilized support for the process which led to the establishment of the mentorship program between the City of Johannesburg and Lilongwe City Council which has now spanned more than 2 years. She noted that this has sparked interest from three other Malawian cities to focus on strategic urban planning which is now supported through mentorship programs with two more South African cities.

She informed the forum that CA, through UN-Habitat, will support the development of the Malawi urban policy and continuing the dialogue on urban development through platforms such as the MUF.

Ms. Hosken said Slums are the products of failed policies, bad governance, corruption, inappropriate regulation, dysfunctional land

markets, unresponsive financial systems, and a fundamental lack of political will. She said these failures add to the toll on people already deeply burdened by poverty and constrains the enormous opportunity for human development that urban life offers. She emphasized that improving conditions in slums is central to reducing urban poverty.

She informed the forum that the 2010 MDG report has found that despite the significant benefits for public health, economic development, and poverty reduction water and sanitation are often low priorities for domestic budgets such that water and sanitation interventions bypass the poor.

She observed that despite considerable efforts, slum improvements are not keeping pace with the needs of the growing urban poor populations. She said there is need to redoubled efforts to affect significant improvements. She pointed out that reports advocate for the adjustment of the target estimating that 100million slum dwellers will only constitute 10 percent of the real need.

Ms. Hosken said the population in cities of developing countries is expected to double

from 2 billion to 4 billion over the next three decades. She observed that many developing countries adopt a hostile approach to the urban poor, forcing them to obtain land and essential services informally, expensively and inefficiently.

She informed the forum that the visible results are slums of despair. She challenged the forum that without significant change in policies and systems, cities in developing countries are very likely to fall behind their development targets, affecting national economic growth and the livelihoods of hundreds of millions of slum dwellers.

Finally, she said there are both negative and positives lessons that accompany the nature of response to urbanisation in different countries. She urged that Cities and governments need to rethink how the formal and informal intersect and how the skills of the 'informal' can be enhanced to participate in the development process. She applauded the collaboration between the Lilongwe City Council and the Malawi Homeless People's Federation as a good example. She expressed the hope that the discussion through the MUF will provide a

framework for reflecting on sustainable urbanization.

### State of the Cities in Africa Project

**M**s. Ntombini Merengane from the African Centre for Cities (ACC) at the University of Cape Town (UCT) informed the forum that the purpose of the project is to facilitate urban research and policy discourse for the promotion of vibrant, democratic and sustainable urban development in the global South from an African perspective. She said the project is aimed at promoting interdisciplinary research and teaching on the urban form at city, national and regional levels, which include the study of urban planning, urban geography, urban sociology, urban infrastructure and urban culture. She said the Centre is a knowledge institution focussed on production of new and relevant knowledge linked to the agenda of human capital development to give a practical expression to the 'afro-politan' agenda.

She said the SOCA project receives funding from Urban Landmark and the Cities Alliance. She outlined the three guiding principles of the project as demand driven,

anchored in a durable earning university and other tertiary training institutions and that research conducted should inform training of the next generation of urban practitioners and policy makers.

She pointed out that the areas of academic research at UCT include: African urbanism, urban culture and inclusion, food security, new regionalism, housing finance for the poor, relational urban governance, alternative planning, spatial inequality and urban water management which feed into the State of the Cities Report (SOCR).

She said the first component of the project will catalyse the establishment of a formal process for the SOCR process based on a demand driven model. She added that the second component is developing a baseline for SOCRs. She explained that the project established a portal, [www.urbanafrica.net](http://www.urbanafrica.net) for knowledge sharing, interactive exchange and information dissemination on urbanisation in Africa.

## CONCLUSIONS AND KEY OBSERVATIONS FROM THE FORUM

During the two days of the forum, participants made the following key observations:

1. That urbanization and industrialization contribute immensely to national Gross Domestic Product (GDP) such that no country can achieve middle income status without them.
2. That sustainable urbanization is key to meeting Millennium Development Goals.
3. That there is an urgent need to support the ability of Malawi's urban centres to address the challenges of urbanization before and as it happens.
4. That a positive national policy framework is an essential element of sustainable urbanisation.
5. That the urban poor should be fully involved in the urban governance and development processes as they are a key resource to the socio-economic development of urban areas in Malawi.
6. That urban centres are engines of growth, entrepreneurship and economic modernization making it important to aim urban policies at strengthening urban areas as economic, manufacturing and export processing zones.
7. That cities and towns act as incubators of economic and employment growth hence adequate support to the formal and informal sector is a critical component of an urban policy.
8. That there is need for documented evidence and data on a number of urban issues not limited to water and sanitation, housing, access roads and energy to facilitate the process for urban policy development, decision making and resource allocation.
9. That infrastructure and service delivery in cities and towns cannot be managed on project by project basis using public funds but on a sector wide approach.
10. That densification and integrated management of cities and towns should be planned and encouraged.
11. That there is need to promote public private partnerships in the development of infrastructure, service delivery and improved facilities in slum areas.
12. That there are insufficient legal and administrative instruments for private sector participation in urban infrastructure financing.
13. That simple evidence of ownership like beaconing of plots should be used for slum upgrading while encouraging individuals who need titles for access to financing to pursue the titling process.
14. That there is need for subsidising the low income to access decent housing in order to improve the housing conditions in slum areas of the country.
15. That urbanisation affects all MDG targets such that the battle for achieving the MDGs in cities has to be fought and won in urban centres to ensure sustainable urbanisation in Malawi.
16. That there is need to put in place a National Urban Policy and review the National Housing Policy for sustainable urbanization in Malawi.

The session adopted the key observations and the Deputy Minister for Lands, Housing and Urban Development officially closed the 2<sup>nd</sup> session of the MUF on 28<sup>th</sup> October 2011.

## ANNEX: LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

Participant	Organization	Participant	Organization
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