Working Paper No. 2012/49

Donor Assistance and Urban Service Delivery in Africa

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May 2012

Abstract

Sub-Saharan African cities have been growing at historically unprecedented rates. Since the early 1970s, they have welcomed international assistance involving a succession of major thematic objectives. The main agency involved in urban assistance has been the World Bank. But as its goals have changed, it has been obliged to operate increasingly through a decentralized, more democratically structured local government system. Overall, the success of this international assistance regime has been positive but modest, given the overwhelming needs of African cities. Still, African cities are increasingly finding solutions both co-operatively and on their own.

Keywords: urban assistance, African cities, decentralization, World Bank, local government, urban management

JEL classification: F35, H70, N47, O18

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This study has been prepared within the UNU-WIDER project on 'Decentralization and Urban Service Delivery in Africa', which is directed by Danielle Resnick and is a component of the larger UNU-WIDER programme 'Foreign Aid: Research and Communication (ReCom)'. UNU-WIDER gratefully acknowledges specific programme contributions from the governments of Denmark (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Danida) and Sweden (Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency—Sida) for the Research and Communication (ReCom) programme. UNU-WIDER also acknowledges core financial support to UNU-WIDER's work programme from the governments of Finland (Ministry for Foreign Affairs), the United Kingdom (Department for International Development), and the governments of Denmark and Sweden.

ISSN 1798-7237 ISBN 978-92-9230-512-3

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Typescript prepared by Janis Vehmaan-Kreula at UNU-WIDER

1 Introduction

For the last several decades, cities in sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) have been growing at historic rates. At the same time, since most of them are very poor, they have not been able to keep up with the need to provide the most essential services to the bulk of their people. Partially as a result, they have called upon international institutions, (both multilateral and bilateral), for project and programme support. By many measures, this assistance has been very considerable since the 1970s. But, what are the essential features of this pattern of international intervention, and how successful has it been? This study aims to address these questions. As the paper will show, international urban assistance in Africa has gone through a number of distinct phases, each of which relates to development ideas important during that time period. But in the end, African cities have become much more connected to forward-looking ideas—and with each other—than they were at the beginning of this journey.

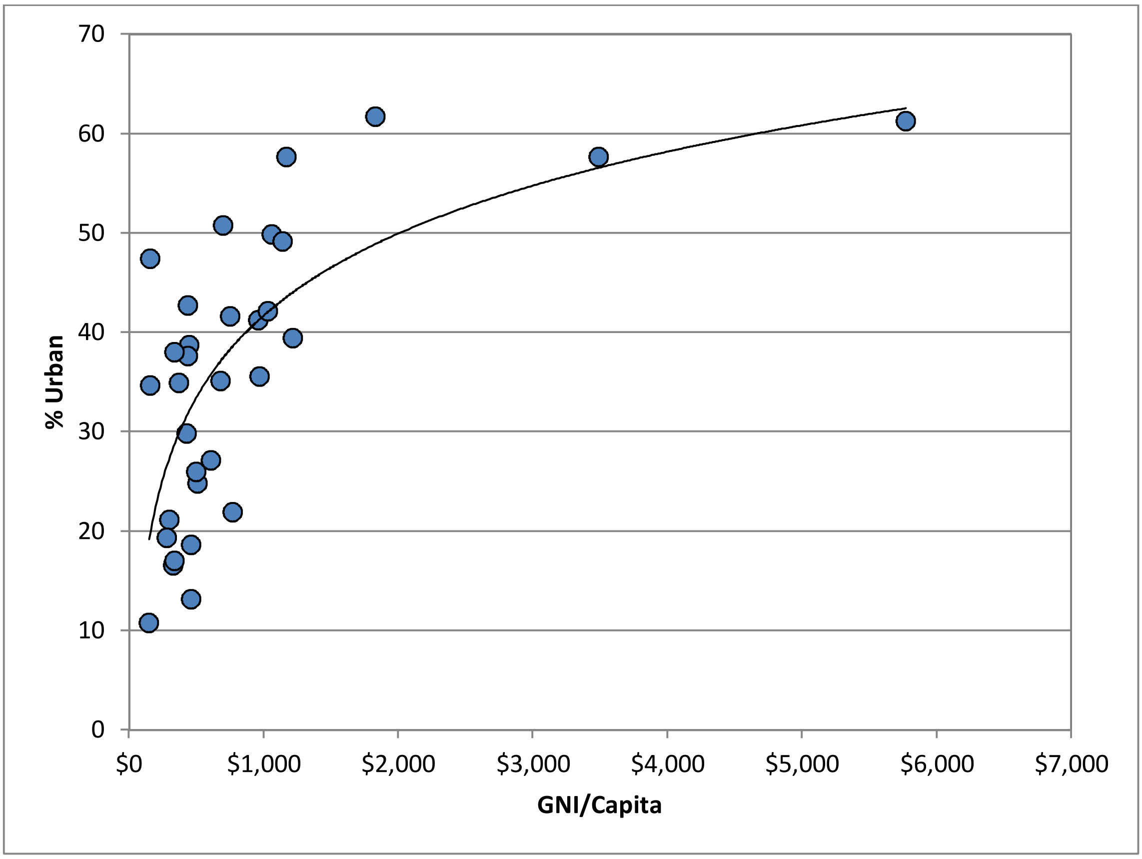
According to the 2011 revision of the *World Urbanization Prospects*, 309 million sub-Saharan Africans out of a total estimated population of 843 million live in urban areas. At 36.7 per cent, this represents the lowest urban proportion of all major world regions (UN 2012: file 1). By contrast, Europe is 72.9 per cent urban, North America is 82.2 per cent urban and Latin America and the Caribbean are 79.1 per cent urban in the same year (UN 2012: file 1).

While the proportion living in cities is relatively low, African cities have been growing rapidly for some time. In SSA in particular, the average annual rate of urban growth from 2005-10, across over 40 countries, is estimated at 3.71 per cent, which is one of the highest levels of urban growth in the world. By comparison, the equivalent rate for China during the same period was estimated at 2.62 per cent. Latin American, European, and North American cities were growing at 1.60, 0.40, and 1.31 per cent per year, respectively (UN 2010, File 6).

The low level of urbanization of SSA, combined with a high rate of urban growth, typically correlate with low levels of gross national income (GNI) per capita. This is indeed the case for SSA where, at US$885.3 per capita annually, GNI figures are among the lowest of any world region (World Bank 2010a: 379). While there is no clearly delineated causal relationship between levels of urbanization and economic growth, the two measures are positively related, as Figure 1 illustrates.

Other studies show that higher national income *and* economic growth correlate with higher levels of urbanization. Although these studies do not establish the direction of causation, ‘they do show that the association between urban and national economic growth is robust and worthy of attention’ (Montgomery et al. 2003: 304). Nevertheless, high levels of urbanization or the presence of very large metropolitan areas do not necessarily lead to economic benefits. As Polèse (2009) demonstrates in detail, while urbanization takes place as per capita wealth increases, many countries—including many in the developing world—can sustain a very high level of urbanization without levels of wealth corresponding to what might be expected in northern, more ‘developed’ countries. Aside from oil rich, desert countries, most wealthy countries are also highly urbanized.

Figure 1: Relationship between GNI/capita and urbanization levels, 2009
(sub-Saharan African countries)



Sources: UN (2010); World Bank (2010a: 378-9).

2 'Slumming it' in African cities

Urbanization, then, may be associated with economic growth, but it does not immediately lead to economic development. Indeed, as countries become more urbanized the lag between urbanization and development may be considerable. This lag can vividly be seen in the size of the low-income population in many developing country cities. Although many of these cities—particularly in Africa—experience very high rates of growth, much of that growth seems to be absorbed by the rise of 'slums' and informal housing. Slums are defined as 'a multidimensional concept involving … poor housing, overcrowding, lack of services and insecure tenure' (UN-HABITAT 2003: 1). According to an important UN-Habitat report (2003: xxv), 'the immensity of the challenge posed by slums is clear and daunting'. This report further stated that, as of 2001, '… 924 million people, or 31.6 per cent of the world's urban population, lived in slums. The majority of them were in the developing regions … Within the developing regions, sub-Saharan Africa had the largest proportion resident in slums in 2001 (71.9 per cent)' (UN-HABITAT 2003: xxv). The report further argued that, just as the number of slum dwellers had grown substantially since the 1990s, the number was projected to grow to 'about 2 billion if no firm and concrete action is taken' (UN-HABITAT 2003: xxv).

Following this ground-breaking report, a number of prominent writers have since expanded on the issues of urban poverty and insecurity. In *Planet of Slums*, Davis (2006) excoriates international financial institutions for their role, via structural adjustment programmes, in creating the preconditions for a severe deterioration in urban services. In *Shadow Cities: A Billion Squatters, a New Urban World*, Neuwirth (2005) argues that international agencies have been seriously out of touch with the reality on the ground for much of the world's urban poor. Both books suggest that the future of third world cities will be dominated by 'slums' and 'squatters'. The work of these two authors, and others like them, has influenced the continued focus on this aspect of the urban condition as a touchstone of what needs to be improved.

Nevertheless, more recent aggregate statistics tell a rather more complicated—and even hopeful—story. New calculations by UN-Habitat (2009) in the period from 1990 through 2010 indicate that while the share of SSA's total population living in cities increased during this period, the proportion of the region's urban population living in slums actually decreased, from 70 to 61.7 per cent. Extrapolating these trends indicates a steady decline through to the year 2030, with the SSA slum population diminishing to approximately 53 per cent of the total urban population in the sub-region. Thus, this statistical information suggests neither disaster nor the complete disappearance of slums in the proximate future but rather a slow improvement in living conditions as more and more people move to, and settle permanently in, the cities of SSA (UN-HABITAT 2009: 179).

3 African cities: from local government to urban management

In the light of these trends in rapid city growth, persistent poverty, and the intransigent establishment of very large areas of unserviced, insecure, and informal areas of housing, how have African governments been able to cope? There are several trends, but one of the most important was the movement in structure from *local government* in the 1960s and 1970s to *urban management* in the 1980s and 1990s (Stren 2004). To put this succinctly, emphasis moved from a focus on the structures, powers, and functions of local government in the early years after independence, to a focus on the management of urban services, including transport, garbage disposal, housing, water supply, and street cleaning. Paradoxically, as urban services were declining, there was an increasing discussion of, and concentration on what to do about this problem. The provision of such services became increasingly challenging due to the increase in the numbers of Africans living in seriously underserviced (i.e. 'slum') conditions.

The details of this transformation are further complicated by the legacies of colonial rule. Out of 47 SSA countries on the World Bank list, 35 (or 74 per cent) are either former British or former French colonial territories. At the outset, the differences were quite clear. By the mid-1960s, for example, the town and city councils in anglophone countries were comprised of elected councillors and a mayor elected by the sitting councillors as well as a professional civil service with department heads under the management of a town clerk with a relatively wide range of local powers. Ultimate control over the senior officials as well as the financing of the local body was left to the minister of local government at the national, or provincial/state, level. The francophone equivalent was a communal structure similar to that found in France with an executive mayor responsible to the national Minister of the Interior, elected representatives, a small number of departments, and a relatively limited range of service responsibilities.

Until the 1990s, most major services in a typical francophone city were carried out either by agencies of the central government or by semi-autonomous local agencies supported by large multinational corporations (Stren 1989). The organizational and institutional structure in both groups of countries was relatively simple.

Over time, African countries reformed their systems of urban government in an idiosyncratic fashion. As this happened, individual systems became more and more complex. The examples of Nairobi, Kenya and Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire are instructive in this regard. During the 1980s, Nairobi, Kenya had a budget of US$68 million compared with US$47 million in Abidjan. In addition, Nairobi employed approximately 16,908 workers and professionals compared to only 2,150 in Abidjan. Nevertheless, Abidjan contained a wealthier population and enjoyed a higher level of public services. The cities differed in five major ways. First, in Abidjan, many major services, such as electricity and water supply, and garbage removal, were contracted out to private companies, thus removing their employees from the public roll. Second, there was a metropolitan system in Abidjan consisting of a central government, known as the government of 'The City of Abidjan', and ten lower-level communal governments. Third, the finances of Abidjan were quite directly controlled from the centre (Stren 1989: 26–7). Fourth, during most of the 1980s, Nairobi was governed by a centrally-appointed commission, with no elected positions, presumably to 'cleanse' its operations.[1] And finally, while in most anglophone cities local taxes were collected locally and dispensed locally, francophone cities retained the French system of national tax collection, whereby local taxes (property taxes, business taxes and fees) are collected by a national agency and deposited into a single national account, to be allocated thereafter to the commune or city government upon request. During the 1980s and 1990s, the reliability of these payments from central government account in some countries could not be assured.

Until South Africa removed apartheid laws and organized democratic elections in 1994, its cities were virtually isolated from the rest of the African continent. Yet, after the end of apartheid, the publication of a new constitution, and the election of new local governments in 1995 and 1996, the governance of South African cities began to attract serious attention elsewhere in Africa. At the same time, as Mark Swilling notes, creating democratic local governance structures in South Africa to involve all groups in the population emphasized the importance of policies to deal with the very large urban informal sector, which is predominantly dominated by the black African population (Swilling 1997: 215). This policy emphasis connects South African cities much more closely than before with other SSA cities even if South African cities are, comparatively, much richer in terms of both human and material resources.

Today, the design of local government institutions has been further influenced by the adoption of decentralization policies in most African countries. These policies have given more powers to cities and local governments since the 1980s (Stren and Eyoh 2007), even though financial support for cities is still weak in most countries. Nevertheless, the most clear-cut difference in institutional structure at the local level is still found between anglophone and francophone countries, even though these differences are decreasing. The following examples of Dar es Salaam in Tanzania and

1 Following the same approach, the City Council of Dar es Salaam, Nairobi's neighbour to the south, was placed under the control of a commission from 1996 to 2000.

Bamako in Mali illustrate the anglophone and francophone approaches, respectively. The examples highlight the progress these cities have achieved in terms of reorganizing their political and administrative structures so as to better manage their essential services in the face of rapidly growing populations. The complex local institutional structures that currently exist provide the context within which international assistance projects operate.

An anglophone city: Dar es Salaam City Council

Since the year 2000, the local government system in Dar es Salaam has been a two-tier structure. At the local level are three municipalities: from north to south, they are Kinondoni, Ilala, and Temeke. In the 2002 census the recorded populations of the three municipalities were 1,027,225 for Kinondoni, 588,897 for Ilala and 719,933 for Temeke, producing a total population of 2,336,055 for the whole city of Dar es Salaam. Each of the three municipalities is independent, but the three are overseen by a co-ordinating institution, Dar es Salaam City Council (DCC).

The exact roles and functions of the two major levels of local government are set out in two Government notices. For the three local municipalities, which report directly to the Prime Minister's Office, Regional Administration and Local Government (PMORALG), and not to the DCC, GN No. 4 of 2000 describes their main functions to include, in general to maintain and facilitate the existence of peace, order and good governance within their area of jurisdiction; to promote the social welfare and economic well being of all persons within their area of jurisdiction; to give effect to meaningful decentralization in political, financial and administrative matters relating to the functions, powers, responsibilities and services of all levels of local government authorities; to promote and ensure democratic participation in, and control of, decision making by people concerned; and to establish and maintain reliable sources of revenue and other resources. More specifically, each municipal council deals directly with the following services: health, solid waste management, infrastructure including roads, natural resources, trade and informal sector development, urban development, legal issues, education (responsible for primary education and some aspects of secondary education especially where community is involved), culture, agriculture, and livestock, water, co-operative development, community development, information and communication, and technology development. In recent years, three major innovations have been instituted: the incorporation of a required proportion of women councillors (30 per cent); the organization of the administrative system to include 73 local wards (in each of which there is a ward administrative officer, supported by a Ward Development Committee); and the elaboration of neighbourhood participation around the 262 *mtaa* (street or neighbourhood) development committees. These *mtaa* committees are elected from local residents, and often take their work very seriously. A general lack of municipal services in so many parts of the city makes these local committees very significant in the daily lives of Dar es Salaam residents.

The DCC, while it represents the whole region of Dar es Salaam, including the three municipalities, has a more modest role. Government Notice 319B describes its main functions as largely co-ordination of the functions and activities of the municipal councils including having responsibility for such cross-cutting issues as transport, waste management (the administration of dumping sites for refuse), ensuring law and order, giving technical support to the councils, preparing a Sustainable Urban Development

Plan, preparing an Action Plan for upgrading of unplanned settlements, and dealing with national and international protocol matters relating to the city.

As governmental institutions, both levels of local government operate through elected councils. Elections take place every five years, and incorporate a wide variety of political parties, based on the multi-party system established nationally since the 1980s. Each of Kinondoni, Ilala, and Temeke municipal councils is administered by an elected council made up of one councillor from each ward, any members of Parliament from that municipal area (three for Kinondoni, two each for Ilala and Temeke), and a number of nominated women members, equal to at least 30 per cent of all ward councillors. Full council meetings are normally held every three months and are open to the public. Including MPs, the three municipal councils of Kinondoni, Ilala and Temeke have, respectively, 51, 35, and 36 members. The mayor of the municipality is elected by the sitting councillors for a five-year term. Much of the work of the municipal councils is under the direction of standing committees. The work of the council is supervised by an executive officer and his staff. The total number of administrative staff employed by these councils is 1,270 for Kinondoni, 1,277 for Ilala, and 333 for Temeke.

The DCC is a smaller structure, with 22 councillors, including the Mayor—currently representing the majority ruling CCM party—who is elected for a five-year term by the councillors. The Council comprises 11 elected councillors from the three municipalities (selected by their councils), the seven members of parliament for the city region, and several nominated members of parliament sitting as special women's representatives. The DCC employs 363 administrative staff. In addition, the whole region of Dar es Salaam employs close to 10,000 primary school teachers (the figure for 2005 was 9,267).

The francophone approach to local government owes a considerable institutional debt to France. Typically, the urban commune is a direct creation of the central government, being composed of elected representatives, an executive mayor (responsible to the Ministry of the Interior), and a number of small administrative departments. The mayor has a 'cabinet', made up of senior officials and one or two assistant mayors. While it may be almost unlimited in principle, in practice the functional scope of the commune is more restricted than in the (anglophone) representative council system, as local bodies in large francophone cities may be responsible only for such services as garbage removal and street cleaning, the regulation and licensing of markets, public transport, cemeteries and funerals, marriage licenses, keeping a municipal archive, and the regulation of animals and butcheries. Important local services are often undertaken by central government agencies, parastatal companies, or contracted out to private companies (usually of French origin). Since France began to decentralize in 1981, however, there have been parallel changes in many francophone African cities towards giving more power and functions to the elected communal authorities in the largest cities. Nevertheless, two unique elements are often still present. One element is the collection of local taxes by delegated officers of the central government (usually the Treasury or the Ministry of Finance), who have their offices at the municipal level; when taxes are collected, they are kept in a central government account until being allocated back to the commune. A second element is the persistence of the notion of *tutelle* or 'tutelage' on the part of the central government vis-à-vis local authorities. Ultimately, local authorities have not been considered 'mature' enough to be fully responsible for their own actions. This notion is changing slowly as several of our case studies indicate. A good example of a francophone municipal council can be found in the local system of the city of Bamako.

A francophone city: the district of Bamako

Bamako, as the capital city of Mali, and its largest urban center, has been governed as a special district since 1996. It is the only 'district' in the country, local government normally being embodied in the governance of communes, designated as local authorities. But in Bamako, the urban territory has been divided into six communes (Commune I, II, III, IV, V, and VI). The six communes are, in turn, divided into 60 neighbourhoods (*quartiers*), collectively representing an estimated total population of 1,202,570 in 2009. For the time being (although changes are being contemplated), these communes have political, administrative and budgetary autonomy. At the same time, for the management of the larger affairs of the city, they are entitled to representatives (in proportion to their population) in the district council. Totally, since the municipal elections of 2004, they have sent 27 representatives to the Bamako District Council. Local elections are held based on a party list system, every five years, but can be prorogued for a period of six months or more by decree of the council of ministers at the center. While there can be a multiplicity of parties presenting candidates, only those lists with at least five per cent of the total can allocate councillors. Where there is equality in the votes for two candidates, the position is allocated to the elder candidate. This is the case for the final election of mayor (in both the district and the communes); where there is equality of votes, the eldest candidate is selected from among the councillors represented on the council. The district council selects a mayor and two assistant mayors. The council also selects its secretariat, the executive body for the district. The district employs some 642 permanent professional staff, divided into nine major functional sectors: environment and planning, regulation and control of urban transport, roads and sanitation, management of markets, international assistance and twinning, information, maps and plans, lands and properties owned by the district, and taxation and habitat.

The powers and functions of the two levels of local government in Bamako (the district, and the six communes) include the following categories: economic development, urban planning, education, health, water and sanitation, land tenure and heritage management, and roads and transport. The more general, and area-wide functions are reserved for the district, while more specific local functions are the responsibilities of the communes. As for health and education, larger structures and institutions are managed and maintained by the district, while more local structures are the responsibility of the communes. And the two largest markets in the city—the *Grand marché* and the *Marché de la Médina*—are managed by the district. While there is some overlap between levels, it is nevertheless the case that the central government decides the main lines of responsibility and power for every one of these sectors. And the district is also under the permanent surveillance (or *tutelle*) of the national government, in the direct form of the active presence of the *sous-prefet,* who represents the president of the Republic of Mali.

Local governance trends

The two case studies depicted in this section do not, by any means, exhaust the range of institutional forms and functions which have taken shape in municipal governments in large cities in Africa. Although the distinction between anglophone and francophone-influenced structures still has resonance, with decentralization across the continent, many of the administrative differences between the two ideal types are diminishing. At the same time, as cities struggle to find local responses to their severe problems of providing adequate infrastructure and services to their populations, they develop localized solutions to their problems. Finally, the historical experiences of countries like Mozambique or Angola (lusophone), Ethiopia (with a non-colonial past) and South Africa (with a past history almost unique in Africa in terms of colonial influences), the range of variation is much greater than the anglophone/francophone distinction would suggest.

Besides these factors that produce variation, African municipal leaders (both elected and non-elected) have many more opportunities to meet, and to share and discuss their common problems, than was the case in the past. For example, the *Africities* meeting of mayors and local government specialists is now held every three years on a regular basis. At the last meeting in Marrakech in 2010, there were some 5,000 participants (Cities Alliance 2012). Institutional innovations in one country will be noticed in others, with the result that—even though similar structures are rare from country to country—other countries will consider how best to handle the same problems. As for the chief elected official in African cities, the mayor, this position in virtually every African country is either based on some form of nomination or validation from above (as in the case of Ghana, or in Johannesburg), or indirect election by sitting councillors. So far as we know, no large city mayor in Africa is elected directly by popular vote of the whole urban area.

4 Urban governance in a challenging environment: weak finances, uneven services

In spite of the evolution of urban structures since Independence, which has reflected more formal powers to cities in many countries, an increasingly complex management system, and a commitment to decentralization in most, cities in Africa remain severely limited by the resources they have available to carry out their essential mandate: to provide reliable local services to their growing populations at a cost that reflects ability to pay. In fact, despite a general commitment to decentralization on the part of most African countries from the mid-1980s through the early 1990s, genuine decentralization has in most countries not been very evident. A 'stocktaking' exercise of decentralization in Africa based on the experience of specialists in 30 African countries showed that the pace of decentralization was sluggish at best (see Ndegwa 2002). The data showed only 'a moderate degree of decentralization in the Africa region for the 30 countries for which data was complete and analyzed ... On a scale of 0 to 4.5, with 0 indicating the lowest level of decentralization and 4 the highest level possible, only two countries (South Africa and Uganda) scored in the top range (3.0-4.0)' (Ndegwa 2002: 12).

This 'moderate' level of decentralization in African countries is only one part of the policy environment of African cities. As they grow, their finances strain to maintain, let alone develop, enough services and infrastructure to support a very large population. Based on studies of ten major African cities (Accra, Addis Ababa, Bamako, Dakar, Dar es Salaam, Johannesburg, Kampala, Kigali, Maputo, and Ouagadougou), with populations varying from 779,000 (Kigali) to 3,888,180 (Johannesburg), the revenue base was—except for Johannesburg—very limited. From municipal budgets available for the years 2007-9, the aggregate, annual per capita revenues for these major cities range from a high of US$701.89 in Johannesburg, to as low as US$5.70 in Bamako (see Table 1). Since South African cities are ‘outliers’ in terms of revenue and levels of expenditure, the nine remaining SSA cities average around US$32.93 per person (Ayenew 2010; Cameron 2010; Diop 2010a, b and c; Kironde 2010; Nach Mback 2010a and b; Nansozi 2010; Shenga 2010).

This low level of expenditures for African cities has persisted for many years. In 1998, a major World Bank study observed that the largest cities of francophone West Africa, such as Abidjan, Dakar, and Douala, had a revenue of US$20 per person while many smaller capital cities had revenue of US$4 to US$6 and secondary cities had revenue of less than US$2 per person (Farvacque-Vitkovic and Godin 1998: 68). While these figures have climbed in the intervening years, they are still very low in comparison with other regions of the world. For example, the Municipality of Sao Paulo in Brazil, which has a population of 11,254,503, possessed a total revenue of US$1,266 per person as of 2010 (Brazil 2011).

Table 1: Municipal revenue per person, 10 African cities

City	Estimated population (date)	Revenue per inhabitant (in US$)
Accra, Ghana	2,112,264 (2007)	12.53
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia	2,800,000 (2009)	91.03
Bamako, Mali	1,368.000 (2006)	5.70
Dakar, Senegal	2,271,841 (2007)	22.39
Dar es Salaam, Tanzania	2,869,477 (2008)	29.44
Johannesburg, South Africa	3,888,180 (2007)	701.89
Kampala, Uganda	1,406,600 (2008)	29.20
Kigali, Rwanda	779,000 (2007)	39.84
Maputo, Mozambique	1,094,315 (2009)	43.78
Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso	1,520,955 (2007)	22.49

Sources: Ayenew, Cameron, Diop, Kironde, Nach Mback, Nansozi, Shenga, all 2010. Revenue figures in US$ are calculated for exchange rates in force at the time the fiscal information was collected.

The low level of expenditures per person in African cities (outside of South Africa) is not simply just a function of their low aggregate national incomes. If this were the case, then urban revenue could be improved mainly by raising the level of the overall economy—a very challenging task. Instead, as seen in Table 2, the proportion of national GNI per person spent on local services is *still very low* when compared to cities in Latin and North America. In Accra, for example, the proportion is less than 1/10 of 1 per cent, and in Dar es Salaam, it is 2.5 per cent. By contrast, in the USA, Canada and Brazil, the proportion ranges from 7.5 per cent to 13.5 per cent. These figures reinforce the impression that, in Africa, national resources—*even with the advent of decentralization*—have traditionally not been spent in improving (or even maintaining) services to the fast-growing capital cities.[2]

[2] A discussion of the reasons for this striking discrepancy is, unfortunately, beyond the scope of this paper.

Table 2: Municipal revenue (per person) as proportion of GNI/person, various cities

City	(1) Municipal revenue/person (in US$)	(2) National GNI/person (in US$)	(1)/(2) (%)
Accra	12.53	1,330	0.09
Dar es Salaam	29.44	1,200	2.5
Chicago	3,434	45,850	7.5
Toronto	3,751	35,310	10.6
Sao Paulo	1,266	9,370	13.5

Sources: Author's figures on municipal revenues, based on published budgets; and Table B.6 in UN-Habitat (2009) *Global Report on Human Settlements 2009.* Dollar equivalents calculated from currency converter site at: http://www.xe.com/ucc/

5 To the rescue? International assistance for African cities

In view of the severe challenges that African cities face, it should come as no surprise that their national leadership has sought support from international agencies. During the late colonial period, aid came from agencies of the colonial powers. In the case of anglophone countries, this was limited to the Colonial Office and the Colonial (later Commonwealth) Development Corporation (CDC). The CDC, an early attempt to provide capital for investment projects throughout the British Empire (later the Commonwealth), had two contradictory aims: one was a welfare strand 'to pre-empt social unrest' and to support the economic underpinning of successful self-government movements; the other was to strengthen non-dollar sources of supply of food and materials in order to reinforce the viability of the British state (Cowen 1984). By 1991, the CDC had an investment portfolio of 1,331 million pounds. In Africa, the largest recipient in terms of projects was Kenya, while the country with the highest aggregate investment by the CDC was Zimbabwe with 62 million pounds in project investment ventures. It is difficult from the existing figures to parse the sectoral allocation of CDC's worldwide investments, but 39.8 per cent of all its placements were in Africa, and 4.3 per cent of its worldwide placements were in the category of 'housing finance'. Overall, therefore, it is very likely that little of the CDC's large investment portfolio by 1991—when the CDC was taking stock of its mission—was in urban areas of Africa.

Today, as the development finance arm of DfID, the CDC has an investment portfolio of 1,933 million pounds and a mission to invest at least 50 per cent in Africa, but it had no explicit urban or city-based projects in its portfolio as of 2010 (CDC 2010). Other donors, however, have been much more active on the urban front. The most important of these, by far, has been the World Bank. According to a policy paper of the African Development Bank Group, the World Bank 'is the only organization so far that provides urban development finance on a large scale across the continent' (2010: 9).

5.1 The World Bank

Beginning in the early 1970s, the World Bank began to take an interest in cities around the developing world and particularly those in Africa. Since then, its projects have been much larger and more complex than urban projects supported by any of the bilateral agencies. The story of this growing and fluctuating interest has been told from different points of view by a number of writers. Annik Osmont, a leading French scholar with considerable research experience in West Africa, has written a critical account of the Bank's urban work in Senegal, Burkina Faso, and Tunisia, dealing largely with the period leading up to the 1990s and the Bank's efforts to promote structural adjustment (Osmont 1995). Edward Ramsamy, an American-trained planner, writes about the development of the Bank's urban policies over the years until the end of the 1990s, focusing on a case study of two Bank projects (Urban I and Urban II) in Zimbabwe (Ramsamy 2006). The Bank itself (through its West African division) wrote a comprehensive review of its own policies and challenges for the future in *The Future of African Cities* (Farvacque-Vitkovic and Godin 1998). Finally, we have an important, albeit brief, retrospective account of Bank policies over the three decades by Michael Cohen, a former Bank official who led the Urban Division during the 1980s and 1990s (Cohen 2001). Since the Bank is by far the largest donor to have worked in the urban field in Africa, the following analysis will concentrate on Bank urban policies and projects, starting in the early 1970s.

Before the Bank began to develop an investment programme for cities, housing represented the major focus of discussion with respect to the needs of urban areas in developing countries. Discussion centered on the employment benefits of good housing for 'low-income' groups, as well as, by the 1970s, the benefits that a good housing development programme could have for the alleviation of poverty. In the World Bank's 1972 document *Urbanization Sector Working Paper*, the problem was presented as a multifaceted one:

> The malaise of urban centers in the developing countries is only too evident in the squalor of the rapidly growing slums and unauthorized settlements, the deterioration in many public services, the extreme shortage of housing, and the congestion in the streets. Less immediately evident, but certainly no less important, are the growth of unemployment and the worsening of income distribution (World Bank 1972: 14).

During the 1970s, the 'flagship' urban projects in Africa, which were carried out respectively in Senegal, Zambia, Tanzania, and Kenya, were the so-called 'sites and services' projects. In fact, half of the 58 urban projects from 1972 through 1976 were categorized as 'Site [sic] and Services, Urban Extension Areas, etc' (World Bank 1972: 59). The notion of sites and services, originally drawn from experience in Chile, involved the preparation of basic infrastructure, the training of local people to work on their own homes, and the extension of financial support to encourage them to complete their construction. Transposed to Africa, these were very large and costly projects, with up to 15,000 plots per project, often in several locations. They were officially evaluated by the Bank in a very positive light (Keare and Parris 1982). Ultimately, however, they fell victim to 'slippage' whereby original allottees sold out to wealthier purchasers, the construction of infrastructure and services did not get completed, allottees kept their plots but did not build for an inordinate length of time, and numerous other problems and issues ensued. All of this was considered a 'learning experience' (see Cohen 1983), but in any case the Bank's projects were a great stimulus for the progressive development of urban policy thought in Africa. It should not be forgotten that the urban programme in the Bank flourished under a supportive Bank President, Robert McNamara, who famously said in 1975 'If cities do not begin to deal more constructively with poverty, poverty may begin to deal more destructively with cities'

(McNamara 1975: 20). McNamara's engagement and enthusiasm helped to fuel an almost messianic drive among dedicated young Bank officials for improved urban policies.

In spite of the Bank's dramatic efforts to deal with the housing problem in African, and other developing area cities, the problem kept getting larger. An International Housing Coalition (IHC) evaluation stresses the ultimate impossibility of coping with the housing issue:

> Various donors have provided substantial funding for housing construction over the past 30 years, considerable amounts of it in Africa. The World Bank has been the major donor in the sector, providing more than US$16 billion worldwide since 1972. USAID's Housing Guarantee (HG) loan programme, the major bilateral programme in the sector, provided US$2.7 billion in loan guarantees in 44 countries from the mid-1970s through the mid-1990s before being phased out in the late 1990s. While donor programmes and 'pilot projects' introduced many innovative ideas, such as sites and services, 'evolutionary' housing (housing built over time as financial circumstances permit), and slum upgrading, they were unsuccessful in creating sustainable systems for the production of housing at the scale needed to meet the burgeoning demand in the urban areas. UN-HABITAT notes that donor assistance (in Africa and Asia) 'does not seem to have had any major impact on the incidence of slums'. [UN-HABITAT 2005: 7] (IHC 2007: 3)

Since Bank projects—no matter how large—could not remotely keep up with the growing demands for housing and infrastructure in African cities, the policy focus began to change. World Bank shelter-related loans to Africa fell from US$498.82 million over 1972-81, to US$409.44 million over 1982-91, and to US$81.26 million in 1992-2005 (Buckley and Kalarickal 2006: 20–21). In the 1980s one began to hear about the need to improve local management practices which could then, ideally, lead to a more effective delivery of services. Some of the next generation of projects dealt with 'urban management', an elusive term since it was almost never precisely defined (see Stren 1993). The essence of the new direction in urban projects was to take a more 'business-like' approach to the management of services by relating their administrative structures more closely to proper economic incentives and pricing signals. In a section on 'The Management Problem' a major publication stated, '[t]he deficiencies in urban services in the cities of developing countries are … a reflection not merely of absolute resource constraints but also of other constraints, particularly the institutional arrangements of urban service delivery' (World Bank 1995: 14).

The Bank accordingly supported decentralization, but was concerned that political decentralization, which the Bank did not directly promote, would not be matched by other reforms. 'Whatever the motivating forces behind recent political decentralization' the Bank said, 'in practice it has not necessarily brought about improvements in service delivery' (World Bank 1995: 17). This logic is consistent with the argument that decentralization in Africa was largely an endogenous dynamic; in almost all cases, the Bank did not initiate decentralization but rather worked with the decentralized structures once they were put in place (see Stren 2003). In some cases, particularly in federal systems, a new constitution or an amendment to an existing constitution solidified the powers of each level of government, protecting the local level in significant ways. This was true, for example, in Brazil and South Africa. In other countries, such as Niger, Côte d'Ivoire, Burkina Faso and Senegal, national legislation gave more powers to local level governments.

Along with support for decentralization, another central idea was to strengthen the economic development of cities, on the premise that cities were a major catalyst for wider development. Some of the objectives of this strategy included enhancement of urban management capacity, improvement of the regulatory framework, promotion of the private sector's role in shelter and infrastructure provision, and strengthening financial services, such as tax collection (World Bank 1991). Along with the remnants of structural adjustment loans, which tended to reduce public sector employment even at the municipal level, this was the Bank's agenda for the 1990s.

Evaluating the Bank's urban projects at the end of the decade—largely based on data from Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire, and Senegal—Farvacque-Vitkovic and Godin (1998) paid special attention to the financial difficulties faced by municipalities in the West African region. In this study, the authors emphasized the very low level of municipal resources. In the largest cities of this sub-region, roughly 70 per cent of their resources came from local sources (fees and taxation), the rest from the national level (Farvacque-Vitkovic and Godin 1998: 67). Although (as we have seen in Figure 1) the overall level of municipal resources may have risen somewhat over the last decade, it is still so low as to raise serious questions about how municipalities can manage their local administrations and service responsibilities.

During the last decade, two central themes of emerging African urban projects have been 'good governance' and the challenge of local participation. In important respects, responding to the participation challenge will be the Bank's—and the international assistance community's—most important task for the immediate future. This challenge is often portrayed as balancing 'demand-driven' with 'supply-driven' components, particularly with respect to 'good governance' elements. For the period between 2000 and 2007, 80 urban projects throughout the Bank were analyzed for the presence of these elements. Virtually all the projects included 'supply-side' governance elements, such as improving the financial management of Ministries or local government departments, training administrators, developing improved guidelines for infrastructure development or for local revenue collection. Yet, an increasing number of urban projects over this period (60 per cent overall) included 'demand-driven' components as well. Typical demand-driven elements include public access to information (such as through regular publication or availability of documents), participation in local decision-making (through regular consultations and local forums, or even participatory budgeting), public oversight of government expenditure, and mechanisms for public monitoring (through regular Citizen Report Cards).

As Bank Task Team Leaders (known as TTLs) design new projects, they incorporate many of these demand-driven tools. Of course, while Bank urban projects are large and complex, with many separate components, there is an attempt to involve local governments and even neighbourhoods in project work and in the monitoring of government outcomes, where possible. One of the factors behind this trend is pressure from recipient countries. One Bank official revealed that, in a particular African country, he was asked to develop a participatory component to the Bank's proposed urban project if he wanted the project to be accepted locally. If he was not prepared to do this, it was implied that the country would go to another donor. This highlights how local participatory mechanisms help to ‘sell’ and to ‘legitimize’ projects in the recipient country, no matter what the other technical and other benefits of the project may be.

A good example of the integration of a demand-driven tool in a larger project is the Local Government Support Project (LGSP) in Tanzania. The project, with a total funding of US$60.8 million from 2004 through 2012 has three interrelated components. Of the three major components, the largest in terms of cost has been support for a grants system administered by the central government to help local governments plan capital investments. The second largest is support for administrative oversight at the President’s Office. The third and smallest element, entitled the Community Infrastructure Upgrading Programme (CIUP), for which US$18.8 million was budgeted in the first phase, has been a very successful part of the larger project (World Bank 2004). This element has been operating only in informal areas of Dar es Salaam, which constitute 70 per cent of the total population.

In particular, this programme engaged local communities in 15 selected informal housing neighbourhoods in Dar es Salaam to improve their infrastructure. By involving local communities in the design and the upkeep of improved infrastructure for their neighbourhoods, the project was able to charge and also receive 5 per cent of its costs from the participants. Financial contributions from the local people, which were relatively small in relative terms, seem to have reinforced their sense of ‘ownership’ of the improvements, which involved streetlighting (especially important to women), improved roads and footpaths (in areas where seasonal flooding can prevent access to many sections) and public toilets. Visible results on the ground indicate that people are improving their houses and business premises, and new services (such as clinics and shops) are being built in the improved areas.

Yet, even with a series of follow-up projects by the Bank, this programme covers no more than 20 per cent of the unplanned areas of this very large, and rapidly growing city, or the equivalent of 14 per cent of the overall population. There is very little chance that Tanzania’s local governments can replicate such a project on their own, and there is even less chance that a large outside donor (aside from the Bank) can add to the investment that these projects represent. Thus, although this project is a substantial achievement, and has many positive and beneficial elements, its infrastructure improvement component—supported by local communities—can only touch a fraction of Dar es Salaam’s continually growing needs for services and infrastructure.

Although the World Bank’s urban projects are generally large and very complex—with many different components operating at different levels of government—there is increasing recognition in the Bank that it needs to take account of ‘good governance’. Its understanding of this term has evolved considerably since it originally defined governance in a purely ‘supply-driven’ fashion as ‘the use of political authority and exercise of control over a society and the management of its resources for social and economic development’ (Landell-Mills and Serageldin 1991: 3). Almost a decade later, the Bank extended this interpretation and stressed the importance of institutional development and capacity building and the fact that corruption was a major issue (see World Bank 2000). The Bank also acknowledged the necessity to build rules and restraints into the public sector, and to build ‘competition’ between and within agencies. However, it went further, and stressed the promotion of citizen ‘voice’, including ‘various forms of representative decisionmaking and political oversight; direct involvement by users, nongovernmental organizations and other groups of citizens in the design, implementation, and monitoring of public policies; and the transparent production and dissemination of information’ (World Bank 2000: 23).

In a more practical vein, perhaps a key marker in the process of shifting to a demand-oriented approach is the Bank’s analysis of the requirements for effective service delivery to the poor. At the local, and the urban level, Bank projects have always been measured by the effectiveness of their delivery of basic services—in particular, water, public health services, education, electricity, and sanitation. Successful (or improved) delivery of these services affects poor people in a positive way; the services themselves are a part of the Bank’s classic responsibility for the production of infrastructure. In the 2004 World Development Report, *Making Services Work for Poor People* (World Bank 2003), the Bank argues that ‘services can be improved by putting poor people at the center of service provision. How? By enabling the poor to monitor and discipline service providers, by amplifying their voice in policymaking, and by strengthening the incentives for providers to serve the poor’ (World Bank 2003: 1). The central argument is that services are better provided to the poor when accountability mechanisms can be built in between poor people and providers, between the poor and policy-makers, and between policy-makers and the service providers themselves. The report places special emphasis on strategies to curb corruption (an example of ‘bad governance’), since corruption affects poor people more than others (World Bank 2003: 195). While there are many proposals to strengthen the authority structure and make delivery mechanisms more efficient (‘top-down’ or ‘supply-driven’ suggestions), there are even more ideas—many drawn from experience—about how to make the system more responsive to the users of services (‘bottom up’ or ‘demand-driven’ suggestions).

A large project in Lagos, known as the Lagos Metropolitan Development and Governance Project, exemplifies many of these trends and suggestions. This project was approved in 2006 for US$205.69 million, but has been slow in the implementation stage, with only 26 per cent of the total having been disbursed as of June 2010 (World Bank 2010b). Still, an important component of this project involves community participation. The project puts US$12.13 million into what it calls ‘urban policy and project co-ordination’. Much of this funding is dedicated to such elements as workshops and city-wide consultative forums, providing strong communications with stakeholders so as ‘to promote good urban governance, accountability and transparency practices in LASG [Lagos State Government] operations …’, conflict resolution and resettlement, strengthening Citizen’s mediation Centres and an Office of the Public Defender for poor communities (World Bank 2006: 49–50).

Similarly, in the Project Appraisal Document for the newly-undertaken Kenya Informal Settlements Improvement Project (KISIP), which is a project approved in March 2011 in the amount of US$165 million, the following statement appears:

> *Improvement of informal settlements cannot be achieved without the active involvement of slum communities.* [Emphasis in original] Many attempts to upgrade informal settlements have had limited success because of failure to fully involve community residents in the planning, implementation, monitoring, of investments. A lesson from the government-financed Kenya Slum Upgrading Programme is to fully involve all members of the community, including landlords

> and tenants and men and women in the selecting [of] priorities and in identifying legitimate members of the community. The proposed KISIP will not invest in any informal settlement until communities, through a participatory process, agree on a vision, prepare upgrading plans, and submit a community resolution to the municipality and the MoH (World Bank 2011: 18).

Following this logic, approximately US$10 million (or about 10 per cent of the total) is being spent on community-related and participatory efforts in this project. The project will operate in 15 of the country's 45 municipalities. Supporting the Bank in various sub-components involving community participation are Agence Française de Développement and Swedish Sida. Sida has emphasized that, of all critical factors in urban development, '[g]ood urban governance is probably the most important factor of all' (Tannerfeldt and Ljung 2006: 84). This is a broad topic, incorporating the role of the central and local governments, but also stressing the role of civil society organizations such as NGOs. In terms of 'slum improvement', a promising recent approach is 'to involve the poor and to create real ownership and substantive participation … through negotiated agreements. Local governments and slum dwellers have agreed to work together on concrete projects where both parties contribute. Here the poor put forward their views, these are taken seriously, and a deal is negotiated and agreed' (Tannerfeldt and Ljung 2006: 88). Nevertheless, in 2007 Sida restructured and eliminated its urban group (IHC 2008: 6).

5.2 Other agencies

Sida is just one other assistance agency with whom the Bank works in its African projects. Others are the EU, Cities Alliance, and a number of the other bilateral agencies, such as DFID, GTZ, and USAID. Virtually none of these agencies mount large projects at the same scale as the World Bank, and few of them could be considered leaders in the design of, and policy direction of urban project work. In general, urban development assistance on the part of both bilateral and multilateral agencies appears to have fallen in recent years. At a meeting of the major urban donors in 2006, virtually all agency representatives claimed that urban development was declining as a proportion of their agency's budget. Among the reasons for this are competing claims for a declining budget from more politically important issues such as climate change or food aid to war-torn or drought-ravaged areas, HIV/AIDS programmes, the demands of movements for human rights, and different political support coalitions in the country of origin (Stren 2008). This impression has been confirmed by parallel studies in 2008 and in 2010 (IHC 2008; Kharas et al. 2010). A good example of many of these trends would be USAID, which as recently as the early 1990s had some 20 urban-oriented support staff in Washington, DC, 12 field offices around the world (including in a number of African countries) with staff of up to 50, and a very active urban programme. Part of this operation was the Housing Guarantee loan programme, active for almost thirty years until its termination by Congress in 1993. The overseas positions, called Regional Housing and Urban Development Officer [RHUDO] positions, were eliminated in 2001. Now, the urban programme is very limited, with no overseas field offices and only a small policy and administrative staff in Washington (Interview, Jessica Toludo, January 2011).

Over the last several years, however, two important collaborative agencies have arisen in the urban field. The first was the Urban Management Programme (UMP), a co-operative effort—established in 1986—of UNCHS (now UN-HABITAT), the World Bank and the UNDP. Much of the funding was supplied by UNDP. As it was reorganizing itself internally, its Director moved to Washington and established the Cities Alliance in 1999. The Urban Management Programme ceased to exist as a unified worldwide programme in 2006. In a retrospective, published article on the UMP, Michael Cohen sharply criticized the organization. Arguing that the UMP had little credibility in the Bank, and 'wildly exaggerated [its] perceptions of its own self-importance' given its very modest budget in comparison with that of the Bank for urban projects, he concluded that '[i]t is not evident to me … that the UMP can claim to have had a major impact on the process of urbanization in developing countries' (Cohen 2005: 5).

As it now operates, the Cities Alliance is a coalition of ten of the major donor countries, the World Bank and UN–HABITAT (as founder members), the Asian Development Bank, the United Nations Environment Programme, the European Union and, as of 2007, Brazil, Ethiopia, Nigeria, South Africa, Chile, the Philippines, as well as Metropolis and United Cities and Local Governments. The work of the Cities Alliance represents the first time—albeit on a modest scale—that all the major urban assistance agencies have worked together on agreed projects in a wide variety of countries and regions. With an in-house staff of less than 20 for most of the decade, an annual budget (drawn from the contributions of all the major northern and multinational donors) of about US$14 million, and grants of up to US$500,000, Cities Alliance has nevertheless been an important 'player' in the international urban arena.

With two central programmes over most of the decade—City Development Strategies, and Slum Improvement plans—and a series of dynamic directors, the Alliance has fostered a relationship directly with cities and local governments that the large multilaterals (for example the World Bank) are not easily able to do. TTLs from the Bank, for example, can directly explore projects, or find support for background research and consultancies on particular cities, using funds advanced by the Cities Alliance. This sort of funding is normally not available to Bank officials, who are (a) required to operate through central government agencies; and (b) do not have funding flexibility to explore various options in their project design work. But while the Cities Alliance is physically headquartered in a World Bank building in Washington, and its directors (and many but not all of its staff) are World Bank officials, the agency—because it is jointly funded by a variety of international donors—has in the past attempted to operate at some level of independence from the Bank. This independence from the Bank, according to the Cities Alliance most recent report, is being questioned for reasons internal to the operation of the Bank. At the same time, the old emphasis on the two major programmes has been changed, and the Alliance is starting the current decade with a new, 'transitional' approach which stresses transformation in individual countries. Until the end of fiscal year 2010, the Cities Alliance had processed a total of approximately US$141 million of both 'core' and 'non-core' grants, over 80 per cent of which went to support new ideas and plans for city development (Cities Alliance n.d. 34–5).

6 Conclusions

The beginnings of serious donor assistance to African urbanization were in the early 1970s with the advent of the World Bank's urban programme. From sites and services, through support for improved urban services (sometimes called the 'urban management' approach), to the current emphasis on selective slum upgrading through participatory projects along with capacity building for both national and local government institutions, the Bank has employed a wide variety of approaches to give assistance to African cities. Other agencies, such as UN-HABITAT, Cities Alliance, and the bilaterals have also developed urban projects—albeit at a much smaller level of scale—in Africa.

While these projects and approaches have been gestating, African cities have been simultaneously affected by three major trends. The first is the overall high rate of growth that especially the poorest cities have experienced. The second is political and administrative decentralization which, in most cases, has not been accompanied by an equal level of fiscal decentralization. The third is democratization. Compared with the early 1970s, when African cities were just emerging from late colonialism, they are much larger—with generally much larger slum populations than they had earlier. Yet, they have more formal powers, and their local officials and mayors are more generally elected in a regular manner. While there has been a lot of experimenting with new methods of delivering essential services, such as water, sanitation, health services, education, public transport, and waste disposal, these methods have been applied differentially in individual countries, with help and support from both donor agencies and from the NGO community. Local government staff has become more professional, and both elected and professional staff are much more in touch with developments in other parts of the urban world than they were in the past.

In the light of all these changes pulsating through African cities, has international assistance made a major difference? The answer must be both yes and no. To take the negative answer first, it is very difficult to see, on the ground, major improvements in service delivery in many countries, when slum populations are growing almost exponentially, most citizens do not have piped water available in their dwellings, and—at least in some southern African countries—the level of HIV/AIDS approaches 25 per cent of the total adult population. On the positive side, as cities grow, countries become more productive, and the proportion of the urban population living in slums and experiencing poor access to services gradually declines. In countries like Tanzania new and continuing urban projects are having a decidedly beneficial effect in some parts of the urban informal city. In other countries, new institutional configurations for delivering water, or for removing waste, are improving the quality of life for many people. As agencies work more collaboratively (through the Cities Alliance, or along with the larger projects which the World Bank is able to mount) their collective ability to connect with local people in a new demand-driven approach seems to be having a positive effect.

Given that SSA received about 31 per cent of all committed urban assistance over the period 1995-2007, one might hope for greater impacts on the ground. But of course one must remember that the needs of African cities are far greater than that which the collective assistance of the international community can possibly satisfy on a continual basis.[3] What is clear is that African cities, their local populations, and their local governments, are much more connected to a wide range of solutions to their service and administrative challenges than they were before, and as a result much more ready to engage in creative efforts to respond to their own needs. The international community has played an important role in the opening of these possibilities. Improvement will be slow, but there are visible changes.

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3 Kharas et al. (2010: 7) estimate that during 1995-2007, SSA received the largest share (at 31 per cent) of committed urban assistance. After Africa came SCA (South and Central Asia) with 18 per cent, EAP (East Asia and Pacific) with 17 per cent, LAC (Latin America and the Caribbean) with 13 per cent, MENA (Middle East and North Africa) with 11 per cent, and Europe with 6 per cent. While the authors do not offer an aggregate figure on urban assistance over this period, they estimate that urban public investment needs are 'around US$120 billion per year' (3), while ODA for urban development has averaged no more than US$1 billion per year (4).

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