Call for Action

Multiple Deprivations in Secondary Cities in Sub-Saharan Africa
The Call: “Turning Secondary Cities into Bedrocks for Settlement by our Future Children”
Current Situation

Population and Urbanization Trends, Projections and Dynamics in Sub-Saharan Africa

472 Million

With a population of 472 million people residing in urban areas (by 2018), Sub-Saharan Africa is the least urbanized region in the world. However, the region is the fastest urbanizing in the world, with an annual urban population growth rate of 4.1 per cent, compared to the world’s annual urban population growth rate of 2 per cent.

By 2050, one (1) in four (4) of the world’s population will be in Sub-Saharan Africa.

40%

Currently, the percentage of urban population in Sub-Saharan Africa region stands at about 40 per cent of total population in the region. This trend will remain constant in 2050, where Southern SSA will still be the most urbanized, and East SSA the least urbanized.

62%

Southern Sub-Saharan Africa is the most urbanized in the region (approx. 62% of total population living in urban areas), followed by West Sub-Saharan Africa (48%), Central Sub-Saharan Africa (45%) and East Sub-Saharan Africa (20%) respectively.

55 per cent by the year 2050

Currently, the percentage of urban population in Sub-Saharan Africa region stands at about 40 per cent of total population in the region. However, this is projected to reach 55 per cent by the year 2050.

Demographic Characteristics and Dynamics in Sub-Saharan Africa

Population in Sub-Saharan Africa is predominantly children and youth

By 2015, the share of children and youth between ages 0-24 years in Sub-Saharan Africa constituted 19% of the world’s children and youth population.

628M2017 - 945 M2050

By 2017, there were 628 million children and youth between ages 0-24 years in Sub-Saharan Africa. This is projected to rise to 945 million by 2050 - a 51% increase.
By 2050, the children and youth in Sub-Saharan Africa will constitute 33% of the world’s children and youth population. Notably, Sub-Saharan Africa is the only region in the world that is projected to experience a positive increase in children and youth population by 2050, with the rest expected to record a decline.

By 2050, more children and youth will be living in urban areas and cities, than in rural areas.

Comparing global trends, Sub-Saharan Africa leads in regions with biggest proportion of urban population residing in secondary towns and cities.

By 2015, Sub-Saharan Africa, over 46% of the urban population reside in towns and cities below 300,000 population, as compared to 40% in the rest of the world. Only 28% of urban population in the region reside in primary cities.

Secondary cities in the region are renown as primary reception centres to rural-urban migration, an underlying factor for their growth.

The fastest growing secondary towns and cities are in coastal West SSA, coastal East SSA and around Lakes Victoria and Tanganyika; areas that comprise 3 of the climate change hotspots in Africa.

In line with urbanization and demographic trends, secondary towns and cities in SSA are dominated by children and youth population.

Future SSA secondary towns and cities will be highly unique due to the children and youth bulge. However, these secondary towns and cities will continue to be challenges since Africa is not fully prepared for this population explosion.

Therefore, children stand to be most at risk with externalities of climate change in secondary towns and cities. Research shows that many of the main killers of children in the region - diarrhoea, under-nutrition and malaria - are highly sensitive to climate.
### Multiple Deprivations in Secondary Towns and Cities in Sub-Saharan Africa

**City-wide Level Deprivations**
Secondary cities in SSA are characterized by domination by primary cities; Gaps in urban planning mainly due to inadequate proper spatial frameworks towards sustainable futures; Weak data systems for monitoring growth and inform decision-making; Inadequate/Lack of critical infrastructure and optimal connectivity; Weak economies and low human capital development, and; Weak governance and institutional deficiencies.

Further, at city-wide level, there is lack of enough emphasis placed on children and youth, yet data shows them as a critical development group of interest.

**Income and employment**
Primary cities have an economic advantage because of superior infrastructure, job opportunities and human capital. For this reason, secondary cities have high population turnovers, largely acting as transit centres for migrants from rural areas to primary cities. This is a deprivation at the core of other deprivations, affect children more, which is manifested through poor child health, challenges accessing education and poor housing and living environments.

**Water and Sanitation**
The SSA region has the least population with improved sanitation facilities (33%). This deprivation is top on children deprivation in SSA, and is higher in SSA secondary cities than primary cities. This is attributed to poor urban planning, urban poverty manifest in poor housing, and lack of improved toilet facilities and unreliable water supply. Poor WASH conditions are associated with an increased health burden, with children being debilitated by illness, pain and discomfort, primarily from diarrhea diseases and other waterborne diseases.

**Housing**
Globally, the SSA region is the worst performing in the aspect of urban housing; estimates show that about 70% of urban residents in SSA live in informal settlements or slums. This deprivation is execrated by income and employment deprivations, and has a multiplier effect on WASH and health deprivations. This deprivation has a profound impact on all children’s lives, with its impacts ranging from psychological, health and developmental.

**Health**
The SSA region has a higher health burden that other world regions, and children bear a disproportionate burden of disease urban areas. Literature shows that secondary cities perform poorly on health indicators when compared to primary cities. In children, this deprivation is often suffered concurrently with income and WASH deprivations.

**Education and ICT**
From a global perspective, SSA region has highest levels of education deprivation of all world’s regions, with girls being about 1.3 more deprived than boys and twice more deprived than girls elsewhere in the world. The study shows that secondary cities lag behind primary cities in the indicators of education such as years spent in study, enrolment at ECDE and post primary education. In ICT, there is almost an even access to mobile phones for all areas, but computer and internet usage rates are highest in primary cities and lowest in rural areas. Better performance of primary cities is associated with higher quality education in big cities, supported by better infrastructure and a better trained workforce.

**Living Environments**
Primary cities have poorer physical environment because of high levels of urban pollution – air, noise and lesser vegetation cover per capita, but better overall living environments while considering use of clean energy, and physical and social infrastructure. Acutely lacking in SSA secondary cities are child-friendly spaces, and this affects children’s wellbeing including their health, safety and ability to socialize later in life.

**Access to services**
The study reveals that secondary cities have generally poor access to services, especially when compared to primary cities. This includes on health, education, financial services and public transport. Better access in primary cities is enabled by better economies, infrastructure, connectivity and human capital. Rural areas are the most deprived in terms of access to services. This is except for access to green areas and public open spaces where the study shows primary cities as having lesser green areas per capita than secondary cities. Poor access to facilities and services impacts children’s education, health, and is associated with increased crime rates.

**Crime**
The SSA has second highest crime rates after Latin America and Caribbean regions. Within SSA, primary cities have the highest crime rates and this is attributed to urban inequalities, low wages and unemployment as well as lack of access of facilities and services. Crime affects the future of youth population because it interferes with their education and health foundations, which are vital in their adult lives.
Main Deprivations and Children Deprivations in Secondary Towns and Cities in Sub-Saharan Africa

Study reveals that secondary towns and cities are less able to meet needs of urban cities than primary cities;

- Lusaka City (Primary) is 3 times more able to meet needs of an urban resident in Zambia than Solwezi, Kitwe and Kabwe towns.
- Nairobi is 1.5 – 2.0 times able to meet the needs of an urban resident in Kenya than Nakuru, Kilifi and Kisii towns.

Income and Employment
- Higher population living in poverty in secondary towns and cities than in primary cities.
- Higher child-dependency ratios in secondary towns and cities.
- Child living in poverty fall behind early in learning, knowledge, and affects socio-emotional development.

Housing and WASH
- Biggest proportion of population living in slums in secondary towns/cities than primary cities.
- In Kenya, Kilifi town is 90% informal as compared to Nairobi (65%)
- ARI and diarrhoea diseases that commonly affect children are associated with crowding, unsafe water and unimproved sanitation, often characterizing informal settlements.

Health
- Higher maternal and under-5 mortality rates in secondary towns and cities than primary cities.
- Prevalence of malnutrition more pronounced in secondary towns and cities.
- Access to health facilities better in primary cities than secondary towns/cities.
The Principles

Outlines 17 SDGs and targets, which are an Urgent Call for Action by all countries, including developing countries in Sub-Saharan Africa

SDGs and targets recognize that ending poverty and other deprivations must go hand-in-hand with sustainable strategies that improve health, reduce inequality and spur sustainable social, spatial and economic growth.

The Sustainable Development Goals
Leaving No one Behind

Provide basic services in urban areas and cities, including secondary towns. These include access to housing, safe drinking water and sanitation

Ensure equal access to opportunities

Strengthen resilience in all towns and cities

The New Urban Agenda
Making Cities Safe, Sustainable and Resilient

Africa’s blueprint and master plan and strategic framework for delivering Africa’s goal for inclusive and sustainable development

Key priority areas include: Incomes, jobs and decent work; Modern and liveable habitats and basic quality services; Poverty and Inequality; Economic diversification and resilience;

Agenda 2063
A prosperous Africa based on Inclusive Growth and Sustainable Development

The convention affirms that due to their vulnerability, children require special care and protection, by among others legal and policy protection in a number of issues, including:

Child survival and development

Participation in development through inclusion and freedom of expression

Health and health services

Adequate standards of living

Convention on Rights of the Child
Meet children’s basic needs and help them reach their full potential
Call for Action

1. Paradigm Shift to secondary towns and cities as the current and future frontiers of sustainable social, economic and spatial urban growth and development in Sub-Saharan Africa.

   This will include increased support towards policies and legal frameworks and institutional and governance frameworks for sustainable development and growth of secondary towns in Sub-Saharan Africa.

2. Placing youth and children at the core of policy development, funding and programming for secondary cities.

   Key focus areas in this regard should include:
   
   a). Improve child health and wellbeing through improving housing, state of water and sanitation, and child-friendly living environments
   
   b). Creating opportunities for youth development through employment and education

3. Embracing pro-active planning and use of data to determine future needs and plan for secondary cities

4. Developing strong economic bases for secondary cities