City Limits: Urbanisation and vulnerability in Sudan

Khartoum and Juba

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Rapid urbanisation

• 40% of Sudan’s population reside in towns
• Khartoum: 5 million people; Juba: 600,000 - with further increases expected
• Until 1970s: pull factors – economic growth
• 1970s onwards: push factors – drought and conflict with high levels of displacement
• Post-CPA: a combination of both. Many people have been IDPs, refugees and/or economic migrants at various points in their lives
• Majority of urban poor seeking better livelihoods opportunities, security and services
Policy overview

- Policy formulation has fallen behind the reality of rapid urbanisation
- Long history of urban planning, but not always implemented, or overwhelmed by large population movements
- Strategies for economic growth and poverty alleviation rural not urban focused
- Shifting but generally negative policy towards IDPs
Governance & leadership

- Parallel and overlapping systems of administration – North and South
- Khartoum:
  - Popular committees at community level – multiple roles but highly politicised
  - New generation of urban IDP leaders
- Juba
  - Dual capital: policy of decentralisation clashing with recentralisation of key powers
  - Contested governance at community level
Urban economy

- Economic boom associated with stark and growing inequalities
- Close links between economic activity and political power
- Dramatic rise in value of real estate and cost of living
- Unskilled labour – growing numbers and competition from neighbouring countries
- Women increasingly primary breadwinners
- Risky/illegal livelihoods strategies
- Unemployment of youth linked to gang culture
Land issues

- Demand for urban land outstripping availability – proliferation of informal settlements
- Evictions, demolitions and relocation
  - impact of land classification system and master plans
  - poor people being moved off prime value land
- Juba - forceful land grabbing on the rise
- Khartoum – impact of GPRs
Access to land

- Cumbersome, ambiguous and expensive land allocation process
- Unclear eligibility of post ’97 IDPs Khartoum
- Accelerated land registration in Khartoum pre-CPA and pre-referendum
- Juba – corrupt and contentious land allocation process
Services and urban infrastructure

- Service infrastructure failed to keep pace with rising urban population
- Municipalities unable to provide effective services
- Inadequate access to clean water a major problem
- Unaffordability:
  - concentration of services in city centres
  - poorest households often faced with highest costs for accessing services
Environmental consequences

• Deforestation associated with rapid urbanisation
• High levels of pollution:
  – water & soil contamination related to poor solid waste management
  – cholera outbreaks
  – poorest at most risk in peripheral areas
• Poorest settlements on land at high risk of flooding (impact on health)
• Lack of enforcement of environment protection legislation
Social consequences

- Growing insecurity, crime and weak rule of law
- Tensions related to wealth and economic status rather than ethnicity
- Increasing numbers of street children and associated exploitation
- Impact on gender relations – positive and negative
- Implications for the post-referendum period?
International assistance

• History of strong rural bias
• Assumption that urban population is ‘alright’
• Engagement limited to:
  – humanitarian assistance to IDP camps
  – annual contingency planning for floods
  – contingency planning for elections & referendum
  – some micro-finance initiatives
  – urban planning in Khartoum and Juba
Challenges….but also opportunities

- Opportunities for private sector and small business development
- Opportunities to create better educated workforce (both women and men)
- Opportunities for cost-effective provision of services to all
- Opportunities to harness rural-urban linkages to the benefit of both
- Opportunities to foster integration of different ethnic groups