

A DIALOGUE ON EFFECTIVE URBAN LAND USE PLANNING FOR A SUSTAINABLE AND TRANSFORMATIVE CITY

HOTEL AFRICANA

11TH OCTOBER 2018

KEY ISSUES RAISED AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The Friedrich-Ebert-Sifting (FES) together with the Community Based Association for Child Welfare (UCOBAC) convened a half-day dialogue on effective urban land use planning for a sustainable and transformative city (Kampala) on 11th October 2018 at Hotel African, Kampala.

This dialogue which builds on earlier research studies undertaken by various stakeholders on the emerging issues regarding lack of adequate information on urban plans, lack of harmonized laws and policies relating to urban land use, poor implementation of existing policy and legal framework among others. It provided a platform for reflection on urban planning and how the relevant stakeholders can best position themselves to address the emerging challenges such as conflicting interests on urban land use, environmental degradation, destruction of eco systems, proliferation of informal settlements and slums and poor consumption and production patterns to create the 'city we want'.

Key Issues Raised and Discussed

- i. The restrictive nature and non-responsive policy and legal frameworks, which through the discussion was termed as '*The Book*' was sighted as one of the major challenges while planning for the city. It was argued that some of the existing polices and laws can no longer serve the interests of the people and are not tuned to modern developed of cities.
- ii. Unclear guidelines when determining government priorities: The majority of participants expressed concerns on what exactly determines these priorities. A senior planner from National Planning Authority (NPA) made a clarification that these priorities come from the people specific criteria on issues they consider when planning is being done.¹ On whether this was being done effectively is an issue that raised further concerns.

¹ 1. Multiplier effect, 2. Regional balance, 3. Emergencies, 4. Improved livelihoods, 5. Synergies, 6. Creation of employment, 7. International frameworks such as SDGs.

- iii. Commercial development in the city favors a few individuals who do not represent the interests of the majority of Ugandans that live in Kampala city. This has led to further individual rights and developments which disregard the required assessments as provide for by relevant planning bodies.
- iv. Planning was emphasized as a key issue in any urban development processes. It plays a significant role on what, when, where and how developments will occur. However it was noted that much as the National Physical Development Plan still remains a master plan to which all other plans must conform. Participants raised concerns regarding compliance to this requirement. It was observed that despite this provision, many buildings have continued to come up in the city even when they have not complied with the required physical plans. It was noted that the city does not have neighborhood plans and nothing is being done to promote planning. Lack of political will to implement urban plans was sighted among the challenges for planning.
- v. Land has moved from being looked to one of the **factors of production** and is now looked at as a **commodity**. This shift has influenced the growing interests in land acquisition in the city and subsequently affected the enjoyment of the land rights, especially to the urban poor who form a big section of people that live in Kampala city. Rubigi case was sighted as of such examples of growing interests of land in the city.
- vi. The current policy program has become a *disarray* where development in the city is being seen as everything a state does for the public even if it disfavors the majority of the people – especially the urban poor who lives in different slums in the city. This has continue to fuel tensions surrounding urban land use in the city.
- vii. Concerns were raised on Sunday markets in the city as one of the challenges in urbanizing the city. An official from KCCA clarified that Sunday markets were planned to give opportunities to poor women to trade and earn an income for their families. He emphasized that if well managed, it has the potential to benefit the urban poor and it is so far one of the best practices in the region.
- viii. Concerns were raised on what can be done to ensure that the process of urban planning is done in a transparent manner considering that some of the budgeting processes are influenced by personal interests with influence from government.
- ix. There is a huge disconnect between government and its people.

Recommendations and Conclusions

- i. Create more and safe spaces for engagement and dialogue especially for people who are directly affected by the current city plans and the non-responsive policy and legal framework – ‘The Book’.
- ii. There is a need for a paradigm shift from ‘The Book’ to creating more economic opportunities through innovations that speak to the realities of the majority urban in the city.
- iii. Civil society organisations need to organise themselves better by creating strategic partnerships to influence planning processes for the city. Much as advocacy is a continuous process, CSOs need to register results.
- iv. There is need to revolutionarise the budgeting process to allow other players – private sector and local governments – to compete for grants to address the current urban land use challenges in the city. This will create competition, quality and effective use of available resources to modernize the city and deal with all its associated challenges. While doing this, there is need to open up budget advocacy space at KCCA to ensure responsible budgeting.
- v. There is a need for a national dialogue to involve everybody and not only people in Kampala. Other towns of Mbale, Kable, Gulu Mbarara etc. must be part of the dialogue to effectively address the question of governance in urban planning processes throughout Uganda.