

*High-Rise Buildings, Roads in African Capitals Yet Substandard Living Conditions*  
*በአፍሪካ ዋና ከተሞች ውስጥ ያሉ ውብ ልማቶች ለሕዝቦች ግን ደረጃቸውን ያልጠበቁ የዜጎች የኑሮ ሁኔታዎች*

Development necessitates societal engagement; without it, it will be superficial and unsustainable. In other words, cities and infrastructures should represent the quality of living and society's way of life; otherwise, they are merely ornamental. Who does not enjoy blossoming with a well-kept road, an attractive open area, a conventional shopping centre, and magnificent architecture?

The question is whether this city development reflects the actual quality of life in society or is it only cosmetic. In the majority of African cities, over fifty percent of the population is compelled to live below the poverty line. Knowing these facts, the massive infrastructures and unwise investments are an insult to human intelligence and an affront to inclusive growth. People who care about gleaming cities while dismissing the welfare of the masses and they are selfish and care about themselves.

The socioeconomic development of Africa's megacities is contingent upon their having reached a certain point in their cultural evolution. Nevertheless, it should be planned and constructed by Africans based on the development stage of the society; otherwise, the possibility of a reverse effect and a socioeconomic crisis is unbearable.

The development gap between the capital and other second and third cities is astonishing, with the exception of certain African countries' cities, which are a natural reflection of their colonial past. With a few exceptions, I find it challenging to identify or refer to African cities that have grown through indigenous full participation and expertise.

In the context of growing urbanisation, many of Africa's major cities have been neglected for decades, particularly in terms of housing standards. The apparent expression of the lack of adequate planning in African cities is that the requirements of slum dwellers are not being met in slum districts, which has contributed to an increase in poverty.

Although metropolitan areas tend to have higher levels of social and economic development, employment possibilities, and access to a wider range of higher-quality vital services, they also have higher concentrations of poverty. When governments in Africa fail to adequately plan and invest in their second and third largest cities, the inhabitants of these cities relocate to their respective capitals, where they can feel safe from the unbalanced growth that has plagued their hometowns.

Even investors are wary because of the government's decreased focus, leaving only the nation's capital city as a hub for the vast majority of the country's investments. As a result of the backlog of urban neglect in smaller municipalities, residents are compelled to consider moving to capital cities, where they can receive relatively better service. Such dynamism will cause socioeconomic hurdles, service delivery obstacles, and other administrative burdens for the city government.

The majority of African cities are already overpopulated, yet they are also required to meet the needs of the millions of newcomers expected to arrive over the next few years. As a result, there is a growing recognition that immediate solutions, particularly through participatory programmes, are essential. Such planning should take into account both existing and alternative cities expansion. The phenomenon presents both an opportunity for industrial development and a impediment to meeting housing and other fundamental necessities.

With this perspective, it is appropriate to reflect on the growth of African cities, which is diametrically opposed to ordinary citizen life. For the sake of argument, I will describe the paradox and disparity of living conditions in most African political or financial capital cities. *For instance, Addis Ababa and Shero Meda, Nairobi and Kibera, Dar es Salaam and Tandale, Lagos and Makoko, Accra and Old Fadama, and Sandton and Alexandra* are two contrasting worlds inside the same metropolis.

The depiction of the wealth difference between a luxurious existence and a typical African slum dweller is shocking and unmatched. We should not forget that the return on investment for these enormous facilities is unimaginable in our lifetime. In addition, it imposes an excessive debt and financial load on the nation. These debts are paid by the entire nation, although a minuscule portion of the population continues to receive service. Due to the provision of foreign corporations and financiers, as well as other unexplained tales, the cost of construction was five times its actual cost. Moreover, the transfer of technology to young African engineers is negligible.

**What are the challenges:** In Africa, the absence of transparency, accountability, security, and the rule of law is in intolerable state? The frequently inflated state sectors and stifled small enterprises; patriarchy disguised as religion and culture; high unemployment rates; and massive poverty. Many people believe that Africa is the poorest continent on the entire planet. The poverty rate in African states is so high that almost every other individual life on less than the official poverty line. The most vulnerable elements of African societies, including children and women, are among those who suffer the most from the effects of poverty.

**What are the priorities:** The majority of African countries' institutions and governance systems are inherently impacted by the western governance paradigm? The majority of this governing system is tailored to serve a specific society, but this does not imply that it is entirely bespoke. African nations can only adopt a subset of the system's patterns, not the entire structure. Examples include federalism, Confederalism, Republicanism, etc. Hence, political or social scientists' appeal: "*If you explain your country's political structure to me, I can tell you how far your country has the potential to progress.*" In my view, it is of utmost importance for African states to focus on governance system foundations while simultaneously pursuing a development agenda.

**What is to be done:** Without widespread support from the general people, development programmes are doomed to flounder and never advance beyond the superficial level. National

planning and regulation should address the imbalance between the high-rise architecture of African capitals and the poor living conditions.

Achieving a sustainable solution to the problem in Africa will necessitate going beyond the superficial level of reforms, adopting a comprehensive strategy, and prioritising transparency and accountability. With the intention of forming coalitions and a social movement capable of rethinking the relationship between the state, society, and the natural world in more equitable, inclusive, and enduring ways. The most important thing for Africans to do is to implement it locally through their own local expertise and sagacity.

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