

Growth of Urban Agglomeration Nodes in Eastern Africa

Tabukeli Musigi Ruhiiga

*Department of Geography & Environmental Sciences, Mafikeng Campus, North West
University, Private Bag X2046, Mmabatho 2735, South Africa
Fax: +27-18 389 2637, E-mail: kukuza.ruhiiga@gmail.com*

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ABSTRACT The future of urbanization points to increasing agglomeration forces through which towns and cities merge into huge continuously built up areas with variations in the diversity of economic activity. This paper reports the results of a study of urban agglomeration trends in Eastern Africa and the implications for urban policy and planning. Based on secondary statistics on urbanization and on the mapping of urban sprawl of the largest cities, recent population size and growth projections are configured to generate areas of potential intense population convergence where these centers will grow and merge into urban agglomerations. The results indicate spatial expansion that eventually will see the merger of smaller towns within a 50± kilometer radius of the city, growth computations predict that huge chunks of territory in the region will still be supporting a large non-urbanized population; doubts as to the soundness of current urban planning approaches which are built on a public administration platform, and that distortions in the rural-urban interface create doubts about long term planning for economic growth. The findings point to the need to review and restructure urban policy and planning.