



Institute of Policy Analysis
and Research - Rwanda

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PARTNERSHIP FOR AFRICAN SOCIAL
& GOVERNANCE RESEARCH

First Utafiti Sera Forum on URBAN GOVERNANCE AND CITY TRANSFORMATION: The Case of Rwanda



Photo: Kigali Modern Bus Park

FORUM Booklet

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1. Introduction

The 21st century has been referred to as the first urban century. In Rwanda, population living in urban areas is still low- only 17.3% of the population live in urban areas (2014) compared to the Vision 2020 target of 35% [1]. However, Rwanda is urbanising at a high rate considering the last two decades, where it has been among the highest urbanising countries in Africa [2]. And like other countries, urbanisation in Rwanda is both a challenge and an opportunity.

As a challenge, cities are marked by inequality, poverty, conflict, violence and environmental degradation [3-6]. For example, rapid urbanization in Kigali has led to the proliferation of informal settlements where they experience inadequate and poor quality urban services including sanitation [6].

As an opportunity, urban centers can drive economic growth and offer economies of scale in productivity and public investment. In addition; they are social melting pots, centers of innovation and drivers of social change. For example, the Kigali Innovation City is providing a platform to bolster business operations and to serve as a model for Centres of Excellence across the country [7]. Such platforms will provide fertile ground for innovative sectors such ICT, Finance and Creative Industries.

Urban governance as defined by the Governance and Social Development Resource Centre (GSDRC) is the process by which governments (local, regional and national) and stakeholders collectively decide how to plan, finance and manage urban areas [8]. It influences how the poor benefit from economic growth. It also determines how the political and institutional systems and mechanisms, facilitates inclusive and pro-poor decisions and outcomes. It involves a continuous process of negotiation and

contestation over the allocation of social and material resources and political power. It is not just about the formal structures of city government. It also encompasses a host of economic and social forces, formal and informal relationships between numerous institutions and organizations.

GSDRC considers these elements to contribute to effective governance:

- **The city-national interface:** Effective urban governance depends not only on local institutions and actors, but also on the framework set by national governments that links the city and broader regional and national development [9]. However, in many contexts inadequate institutional frameworks have impeded urban governance.
- **Municipal capacity:** Expanding capacity to plan, manage and finance urban growth is a fundamental component of effective urban governance [10]. Each tier of government needs sufficient capacity to ensure that physical and socio-economic planning processes are well-coordinated, legally enforced, inclusive and cross-sectoral [11, 12]. However, many cities lack the skills, capacities and resources to meet obligations. In Rwanda, urban governance has been constrained by limited adherence to the master plans due to limited capacity of One Stop Centres at the district level. Adherence to district Master Plans was made difficult by limited integration of residential areas, commercial and other non-residential uses in district master plans, thus constraining the implementation of economic activities and emerging investments. This challenge requires efficient and

effective spatial growth models, and a strong yet flexible coordination mechanism.

- **The role of the private sector:** The private sector is a key stakeholder in urban and economic development. In addition to creating and providing employment, it can also be engaged in the design, construction and maintenance of infrastructure and provision of services [13]. For example, in Rwanda, with the support of the private sector, the government is developing modern infrastructure with smart¹ green cities, towns, well designed transport facilities and services [14].
- **Political and institutional systems:** Urban governance is political. It is influenced by the creation and operation of political institutions, by the government capacity to make and implement decisions and by the extent to which it recognizes and responds to the needs of the poor [8]. The most vulnerable being often excluded from, or ignored in, decision-making processes. There are gaps between poor and better-off residents' access to social, economic and political opportunities and in their ability to participate in and leverage benefits associated with urban living.

Developing solutions to urban challenges involves a number of interacting factors and actors, which makes desirable outcomes hard to achieve and predict. Maximizing the potential of urban areas requires institutionalizing mechanisms of coordination, planning and accountability among diverse stakeholders in a way that recognizes the complexity of urban challenges.

¹ Smart City" encompasses optimal space utilisation, connectivity with broadband systems and the internet of things, with efficient planning, services and utilities, and localised innovation for social and economic development. The "Green City" concept prioritises policies and investments in public, non-motorised and low-emission transport, building efficiency, renewable energy and efficient waste management.

As a contribution to a better understanding of trends in urban areas, Partnership for African Social and Governance Research (PASGR), with financial support from Hewlett foundation, is implementing a project on "Urban Governance and Turning African Cities Around in Nairobi, Kigali and Addis Ababa".

There might exist a bulk of many similar studies on Urban Governance in other cities. However, the challenge has been to get policy actors to take forward research findings. To address this challenge, PASGR developed the novel approach of bringing together researchers and public policy actors through the use of research-policy communities – *Utafiti Sera*.² Establishing this research-policy community of practice is expected to become an increasingly important avenue to inform government policies and practices.

The project hence aims at informing better public policy actors by facilitating their interaction with researchers. In Rwanda, this project is being implemented by the Institute of Policy Analysis and Research in Rwanda (IPAR-Rwanda) in collaboration with the Partnership for African Social and Governance Research (PASGR). The initial activities of the *Utafiti Sera* include: i) mapping of stakeholders on Urban Governance in Rwanda; ii) synthesis of existing studies on urban governance in Rwanda; iii) organizing three forums on urban governance in Rwanda based on research evidence.

These forums will help complementing the initial IPAR's mapping of stakeholders. The *Utafiti Sera* partners/members will also inform and review a synthesis of existing studies on urban governance. This synthesis will be conducted by IPAR-Rwanda and will provide state of the art information on urban governance in Rwanda. This document will serve as an evidence background paper to inform *Utafiti Sera* discussions on relevant policies to be designed.

² Kiswahili words for research-policy community

2. First Utafiti Sera Stakeholders' Forum in Kigali

The first *Utafiti Sera* stakeholders' forum in Kigali will consist of a half-day forum to identify the focus areas on Urban Governance and city transformation in Kigali. It will be based on the views of stakeholders and research evidence. Additionally, the aim of the first forum is to introduce *Utafiti Sera* to the stakeholders in the urban governance in Rwanda and to constitute *Utafiti Sera* house.

Utafiti Sera, a work in progress, supports, contributes to building and enhances a community of researchers and policy actors working together to ensure that appropriate and negotiated policy actions and uptake occur either through programmes, legislations, policies or administrative and other forms of civic actions around issues for which research has provided evidence or for which a synthesis of available evidence has been made. *Utafiti Sera* is a combination of many things that ensure and enhance policy outcomes. It is a 'process', 'place', 'forum', 'platform', or a 'vehicle' for transforming research evidence - based knowledge for policy uptake.

As a 'process' *Utafiti Sera* involves sequences of activities that enable the building of a community of interests and practice from where existing and new ideas and evidence flow from members of the community resulting in collective action and interventions to improve policy design and implementation.

As a 'place', *Utafiti Sera* provides a space for key stakeholders with interest, power, capacity and motivation to act in diverse ways to ensure that research evidence becomes available and is used to make informed policy decisions and practices.

As a 'forum', it provides a non-partisan platform for knowledge engagement, 'outreach' and 'in-reach' by different

members of the community irrespective of theoretical and ideological differences, in order to build bridges and work together to establish common ground for the pursuit of agreed upon goals.

And as a 'vehicle', *Utafiti Sera* constitutes motor and pathways, transmission belts or/ and channels for shared knowledge (common areas on which there are agreements and consensus), and experiences to enhance policy uptake.

In short, *Utafiti Sera* is a phenomenon whose form is determined by the specific conjuncture or/and context in which it is expressed or put in place. It has no permanent form except that of community formation or action of a collective of researchers and policy actors in the pursuit of policy uptake.

It is therefore expected that participants of the first stakeholders' forum will agree on the issues (e.g. Kigali innovation City or modern mass public transport in Kigali, affordable housing initiatives, Internet Bus Project as part of Smart Kigali initiative which is being implemented by some leading transport companies in Rwanda- Kigali Bus Services (KBS), Rwanda Federation of Transport Cooperatives (RFTC) and Royal Express etc.) to be discussed in two subsequent forums in the area of urban governance. These forums will also take place in the course of 2018.

3. Target Audience

The conference is aimed to bring together relevant stakeholders in the area of urban governance from national policy makers, civil servants from the key development ministries and organizations, other stakeholders (CSOs, development partners, etc.), private sector, academia and research institutes.

4. Implementing institutions

4.1. The Institute of Policy Analysis and Research (IPAR-Rwanda)

The Institute of Policy Analysis and Research (IPAR-Rwanda) is Rwanda's leading independent think tank with a reputation for high quality, cutting edge research and policy publications.

Vision: To become an Independent recognized Centre of Excellence on policy analysis and research in Rwanda and beyond.

Mission: To enhance evidence-based policy making through research and policy analysis, promote a culture of dialogue and debate to improve policy and impact change in Rwanda.

IPAR-Rwanda has been operational in a wide range of fields structured around five themes: 1) Agriculture, Rural Development and Settlements 2) Social Development; 3) Governance, 4) Economic Growth and Transformation; 5) Environment and Natural Resources Management.

IPAR-Rwanda became fully operational in May 2008. Since then, IPAR-Rwanda has successfully implemented several research projects, which has made its profile more

outstanding. The fact that its offices are located in Kigali gives IPAR-Rwanda a home base from which to work and provides IPAR-Rwanda with adequate administrative and technical support.

IPAR-Rwanda staff has had wide research and consultancy experience internationally and have collaborated and consulted with institutions in Europe, America and many countries in Africa. Major IPAR partners are Government of Rwanda, Civil society, the private sector, development partners, universities and other Think Tanks regionally and internationally. IPAR-Rwanda collaborates with major international organizations, including GIZ, USAID, DFID, World Bank, Action Aid Rwanda, UNDP, and World Vision among others.

Overall, the institute has collaborated with private organizations, governmental and non-Governmental organizations in undertaking project assessments and developing monitoring and evaluation programs, strategic plans and resource mobilization strategies. It also has a highly professional relationship with other think tanks in Africa as well as a competent and well-qualified team that is able to undertake any project which falls within its mandate.

4.2. Partnership for African Social and Governance Research (PASGR)

The Partnership for African Social and Governance Research (PASGR) is an independent, non-partisan pan-African not-for-profit organization established in 2011 and located in Nairobi, Kenya. PASGR's vision is a '*vibrant African social science community addressing the continent's public policy issues*'. PASGR seeks excellence in social science

research for public policy. In partnership with individual academics and researchers, higher education institutions, research think tanks, civil society organizations, business and policy communities both in the region and internationally, PASGR supports the production and dissemination of policy relevant research; designs and delivers suites of short professional development courses for researchers and policy actors; and facilitates the development of collaborative higher education programmes.

5. Key References

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13. Allen, A., et al., *Topic guide: Building reciprocal rural-urban linkages through infrastructure investment and development*. 2015.
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FORUM AGENDA

TIME	ACTIVITY
8.00AM-8:30AM	Arrival and Registration of participants
8:30AM-8:50AM	Welcome Remarks: Eugenia Kayitesi, Executive Director, IPAR-Rwanda Opening Remarks: Prof Tade Aina, Executive Director, PASGR
8.50 AM-9.10 AM	About Utafiti Sera: Dr. Martin Atela, Research & Policy Engagement Manager, PASGR
9:10 AM-9:30AM	Project Presentation: Dr. Aime Tsinda, Acting Director of Research, IPAR-Rwanda
9.30-11.AM	Brainstorming Session on Areas of Focus, facilitated by Moderator
11.00 AM-11-15	Coffee Break
11.15AM-11:50AM	Key resolutions from the forum and any further suggestions from stakeholders by Rapporteur
11:50AM-12.00	Closing: Executive Director of IPAR-Rwanda.
12.00	Lunch



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