



Institute of Policy Analysis
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PARTNERSHIP FOR AFRICAN SOCIAL
& GOVERNANCE RESEARCH

First *Utafiti Sera* Forum on Urban Governance and City Transformation: The case of Kigali, Rwanda



FORUM Report

By
Institute of Policy Analysis and Research, IPAR-Rwanda

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We would like to express our gratitude to PASGR and Hewlett Foundation for supporting *Utafiti Sera* (Research-Policy Community) forum which brought together experts and key stakeholders in the Urban Governance, Rwanda.

We thank all our participants for freely and candidly sharing their thoughts and experiences at the forum and for their commitment to be part of the Kigali Urban Governance and City Transformation *Utafiti Sera House*.

ABBREVIATIONS

ED	Executive Director
ICT	Information, Communication and Technology
IDP	Integrated Development Programme
IPAR	Institute for Policy Analysis and Research
MININFRA	Ministry of Infrastructure
PASGR	Partnership for African Social and Governance Research
RHA	Rwanda Housing Agency
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The First *Utafiti Sera* Stakeholders' Forum on Urban Governance in Kigali was held on January 18, 2018 in Marasa *Umubano* Hotel, Kigali, Rwanda. The forum brought together 40 stakeholders from local, national and international institutions concerned with research, urban governance and transformation, and policymaking (see list of participants in Annex 2).

The aim was to introduce *Utafiti Sera* to the stakeholders in the urban governance in Rwanda, to constitute an *Utafiti Sera* house and to determine key areas of focus under the Project "*Utafiti Sera on Urban Governance and City Transformation: The Case of Rwanda*". The project is being implemented by IPAR-Rwanda in partnership with PASGR.

Ms Kayitesi, Executive Director of IPAR-Rwanda and Prof. T. Aina, PASGR's Executive Director gave welcoming remarks, with a brief overview of IPAR Rwanda and PASGR respectively. Ms Kayitesi further highlighted the objectives of the project, noting that the project marked an important beginning of a partnership with PASGR and other stakeholders in contributing to a better Kigali City.

Dr Martin Atela, PASGR's, Research Uptake & Policy Engagement Manager presented on the 'concept of *Utafiti Sera*', highlighting the links between evidence and policymaking. Dr Atela noted that policymakers faced numerous challenges such as complete lack of access to evidence, poor packaging, and inappropriate evidence among other issues, all which inhibited policymakers from using evidence in their policy work. He noted that PASGR's *Utafiti Sera* is aimed at addressing these challenges bridging the gap existing between policymakers and researchers.

Dr Aime Tsinda, IPAR's Senior Research Fellow, provided a framework for the Kigali Urban Governance *Utafiti Sera House's* activities, including highlighting the specific objectives of the house namely:

- i. To map the key stakeholders in the area of urban governance in Kigali;
- ii. To synthesis the evidence in existing studies on urban governance in Rwanda; and
- iii. To organise forums on urban governance in Kigali based on research evidence generated from the synthesis in objective (ii) above and other evidence presented in the house in order to guide policy and programme action.

Finally, Dr Tsinda outlined the three major objectives of the initial forum as follows:

- i. To introduce *Utafiti Sera* to the stakeholders in the urban governance in Rwanda and constitute an *Utafiti Sera* house;
- ii. To identify the focus areas on urban governance and city transformation in Rwanda based on the views of stakeholders and research evidence;
- iii. To agree on key areas of focus to be discussed in subsequent forums on urban governance.

The presentations were followed by lively discussions in a plenary session that generated valuable contributions from a wide range of participants as detailed in this report. The forum identified the following action points:

- i. To conduct a study on the performance of One Stop Centres;
- ii. To adopt a multi-sectoral approach to urban governance and city transformation;
- iii. To carry out a comprehensive analysis of what is referred to as 'affordable housing';
- iv. To identify the causes of lack of compliance with master plans by the citizens;
- v. To identify appropriate and sustainable strategies for waste management in secondary cities;
- vi. To devise strategies to improve institutional coordination and implementation mechanisms for urban governance and city transformation;
- vii. To adopt strategies for leveraging people's voices about urban governance and city transformation in a multilingual and multicultural society like Rwanda;
- viii. To explore advantages and disadvantages of the Smart City Project, and
- ix. To measure the level of understanding and awareness of the citizens on urban governance and city transformation mechanisms.

From the above recommendations, the following five key areas were selected to guide activities planned in the upcoming forums:

- i. Study of socio-cultural aspects of housing;
- ii. Incentivising the private sector to invest in affordable housing;
- iii. Impact of poor waste management on public health;
- iv. Impact of urbanisation on food security;
- v. Putting in place efficient and cost effective public transport system in urban areas.

1. Introduction

1.1. Background to the First *Utafiti Sera* Stakeholders' Forum

The First Kigali Urban Governance and City Transformation *Utafiti Sera* is part of a series of evidence-to-policy projects designed by PASGR to inform development policies and practices across Africa.¹ *Utafiti Sera* at national, local and regional levels is an innovative mechanism to inform and positively advocate and contribute to appropriate and relevant policies and programmes that address inclusive development and the wellbeing of citizens through engaging research evidence in policy-making processes. It addresses the challenge of getting policy actors to take forward research findings by bringing together researchers and public policy actors through the establishing and strengthening research-policy communities.

The Kigali Urban Governance and City Transformation *Utafiti Sera* is being implemented by IPAR-Rwanda, which also serves as the host organisation for the *Utafiti Sera* House.² The initial activities of the *Utafiti Sera* include: i) mapping of stakeholders on Urban Governance in Rwanda; ii) making a synthesis of existing studies on urban governance in Rwanda; iii) organising forums on urban governance in Rwanda based on research evidence. The First Stakeholders' Forum captured in this report, was organised to complement the initial IPAR's mapping of stakeholders. As a result of the forum, at least five main themes were identified to guide upcoming house activities.

1.2. Opening Session

1.2.1. Welcome Remarks by the Executive Director, IPAR-Rwanda

Ms Eugenia Kayitesi, the Executive Director of IPAR-Rwanda welcomed the participants to the forum. After acknowledging the representation of the various stakeholders from diverse backgrounds (including researchers, practitioners, academicians, and policymakers), she disclosed that the project '*Utafiti Sera* on Urban Governance and City Transformation: The Case of Kigali' is jointly implemented by IPAR-Rwanda in partnership with PASGR. Ms Kayitesi thanked PASGR for choosing to partner with IPAR-Rwanda. She then introduced IPAR-Rwanda as a local think tank that was established 2008 with the support of both the African Capacity Building Foundation (ACBF) and the Government of Rwanda. IPAR's vision is to become an independent institution that promotes a culture of dialogue and debate on policy issues.

1 Besides the Kigali *Utafiti Sera* work, PASGR is currently running various *Utafiti sera* projects in Kenya, Mozambique and Nigeria. These are: Social protection (II) in Kenya; Employment Creation in Agriculture and Agro-industries (II) in Kenya; New forms of social and political action in Nigeria; Urban Governance & City Transformation in Nairobi; Transparency and Accountability in the Extractive Industry in Mozambique and Employment creation in agriculture and agro-industries (II) in Nigeria. For more details on *Utafiti sera* please see link: <http://www.pasgr.org/utafiti-sera/>.

2 Both the Kigali and Nairobi *Utafiti Sera* houses are anchored on a major Urban Governance and Turning African Cities Around studies conducted by PASGR in Nairobi, Kigali and Addis Ababa and funded by the Department of International Development (DFID).



IPAR's Executive Director concluded by indicating that the forum was going to introduce to the participants the concept of 'Utafiti Sera House' and how the house would contribute to addressing some of the challenges linked with urban governance and city transformation in Kigali.

Ms. Eugenia Kayitesi,
Executive Director IPAR-Rwanda

1.2.2. Opening Remarks by the Executive Director, PASGR

Prof Tade Aina, PASGR's Executive Director gave an overview of PASGR and introduced it as a non-profit organization based in Nairobi and working across 13 countries in Africa. He further highlighted that the organisation ran a number of programmes including the following:

- i. **A higher education programme:** strengthens the provision of graduate-level education by enriching the teaching and practice of social science research for public policy in Africa;
- ii. **A professional development and training programme:** builds individual and institutional research capacity and the utilisation of research by offering training courses in policymaking and policy research methods;



Prof. Tade Aina,
Executive Director PASGR

- iii. **A research programme:** focusing on three programme namely urban governance and turning African cities around, varieties of mode of governance and inclusive development and social policy and social protection in Africa. Prof. Tade noted that the main objective of the project was to examine the major transformational aspects of selected African cities informed by evidence generated from a multicity PASGR study. He disclosed that the first *Utafiti Sera* forum created a great opportunity to work with urban planners and geographers who constituted a pertinent community of thought. Prof. Tade concluded by admitting that he was impressed by the calibre of the participants who are aware of the importance of the problem at hand.

2. Presentations

2.1. Presentation 1: About *Utafiti Sera* by Research & Policy Engagement Manager, PASGR

Dr Martin Atela, the Research & Policy Engagement Manager, PASGR indicated that *Utafiti* is a Swahili word which was adopted to express clearly the idea of how to produce evidence to influence policymaking. In his view, the major problem that most development partners faced was that they get drowned in too much data. Dr Atela explained that there was an abundance of data available but the problem was being able to exploit it. He presented an example of health workers from different health units in Kenya who rigorously fed excessive data into their health system. The data ended up being sent to a central pool to be stored where it was never consulted by policymakers.

At this level, Dr Atela deplored the reality of good studies being conducted but evidence from these studies not reaching policymakers. He provided reasons why research is not used by policy makers, some which included: (i) Lack of climate favourable for research use, (ii) Production of research evidence that is not relevant, (iii) Difficulty in translating research evidence into practice.

In this context, Dr Atela described *Utafiti Sera* as a combination of many entities- a process (sequence for activities), a place (space for key stakeholders), a forum (a non-partisan), and a vehicle (for policy uptake). The main objectives of *Utafiti Sera* include:

- i. To create and sustain a vibrant research-policy community;
- ii. To make policy relevant research evidence available to policymakers;
- iii. To engage key policymakers and practitioners through direct contact and policy advocacy.

Furthermore, he indicated that the *Utafiti Sera* pathways impacted the community by coming together to constitute a house/community. It therefore privileged evidence-based researchers and institutions that reached out to communities to carry out research, collect evidence, and package or format the evidence. The crucial stepping stone was to communicate the evidence through social media, policy debates, meetings, and other dissemination channels. Another stepping stone facilitated through *Utafiti Sera* was examining the research outcome and exploiting it to influence a given policy. In this respect, he outlined some of the *Utafiti Sera* projects undertaken so far:

1. Social protection policy uptake in Kenya;
2. Employment creation in the agriculture and agro-industry;
3. New reforms in urban governance.

However, before closing his presentation, Dr Atela put forward some major gaps and reflections for future research undertakings:

- i. The potential role of journalists and the mass media;
- ii. Monitoring and evaluation of progress; how do we know that we are making an impact?
- iii. Increase efforts in responding to policymakers and practitioners' needs via research;
- iv. Strengthening implementation sciences;
- v. Enhancing sustainability.

1.2. Presentation 2: *Utafiti Sera* (Research-Policy) Forum on Urban Governance and City transformation: Case of Rwanda by Senior Research Fellow, IPAR-Rwanda

In his introduction, Dr Aime Tsinda, the Senior Research Fellow from IPAR-Rwanda, noted that the 21st Century is known as the first urban century. However, in Rwanda, there are still very few people living in urban areas (only 18%). Though there are many definitions for the concept of urban governance, Dr Tsinda used the simplest definition: *'Urban Governance is a process whereby governments and stakeholders collectively decide to plan and manage urban areas.'*

In this context, he indicated that this project aimed to inform public policy actors by facilitating their interaction with relevant researchers. Dr Tsinda proposed the following major activities in order to achieve the project objectives:

- i. Mapping of stakeholders in the area of urban governance in Rwanda;
- ii. Synthesising existing studies on urban governance in Rwanda; and
- iii. Organising forums on urban governance in Rwanda based on research evidence and drafting policy briefs.

He also presented the framework required for effective urban governance. This framework was based on the following four dimensions:

- i. **City-national interface:** effective urban governance depends not only on local institutions and actors but also operates within frameworks set by national governments that links the city, regional and national development;
- ii. **Municipal cities:** expanding the capacity to plan, manage and finance urban growth is a fundamental component of effective urban governance;
- iii. **Private sector actors:** key stakeholders in urban and economic development; and
- iv. **Effective political and institutional systems:** urban governance is influenced by the creation and operation of effective political institutions, government capacity to make and implement decisions, and the extent to which it addresses the needs of the poor.

Furthermore, Dr Tsinda described the following points (or initiatives) that promote or hinder effective urban governance through the application of the above framework in the context of Rwanda:

- i. **City national interface:** Kigali Innovation City³ and social protection programmes are designed by national institutions but implemented by local entities;
- ii. **Municipal capacity:** in Rwanda, urban governance is constrained by limited adherence to master plans due to limited capacity of One Stop Centres;
- iii. **The role of the private sector:** modern mass public transport in Kigali with internet bus project of Smart Kigali Initiative, use of electronic payment;
- iv. **Political and institutional systems:** relocation of households living in high-risk zones, promotion of affordable and sustainable housing models for urban and rural areas (Integrated Development Programs, or IDP models).

3. Plenary Discussions

Mr Roger Mugisha, a research fellow at IPAR-Rwanda moderated the session and thanked the presenters for giving a rich overview on urban governance and research uptake. He also gave the floor to the participants to freely express their views on the issues highlighted during the presentations. The following is a summary of the key emerging issues raised by the participants from the plenary discussions:

- Performance of *One Stop Centres*⁴;
- Lack of compliance with master plans;
- Problem of prioritisation in urban governance and transformation;
- Policies that are not evidence-based;
- Lack of clear definition of the concept ‘affordable housing’;
- Lack of efficient planning and coordination mechanisms;
- Need for multi-sectoral approach to Rwanda’s cities governance and transformation;
- Lack of awareness of policies related to urban governance and city transformation.

The participants expressed concern on the country’s urbanisation rate which is still at 18%. They felt that Rwanda will face difficulty in achieving the Sustainable development Goals (SDGs) since the majority of the population still lives in rural areas. In this context, one of the major issues raised during the discussions was about the performance of *One Stop Centres* located at the head offices of all the districts in the country. Although the centres were identified as being very crucial in ensuring effective implementation of urban governance and city transformation strategies, participants deplored the fact that no research had been conducted on their performance. Furthermore, the problem of staff turnover in those centres was overemphasised. To provide a viable solution, IPAR-Rwanda was requested to conduct research on the problem of staff turnover in One Stop Centres and their retention strategies.

Another crucial problem discussed concerned the violation of master plans. In this respect, participants wondered why people violated the master plan knowing that, once found, their constructions would be demolished. In the same perspective, participants in the forum explained the reason why it had been difficult to implement Kigali City’s Master Plan. This was because the latter was designed when the majority of the City’s residents were living in informal settlements. In their view, this made the master plan difficult and costly as it required upgrading the already existing informal settlements. However, it was observed that if adequate urban governance strategies were adopted, the problem would gradually be corrected through the government’s ongoing project of promoting descent housing by moving people from high-risk zone to Integrated Development Programme (IDP) models.

⁴ One Stop Centre is an innovative initiative and processing system meant to expedite the planning, building and land development approval process concurrently. One Stop Centre Services includes: (i) ensuring respect for safety standards in the construction sector (ii) developing and reviewing key area detailed physical plans (iii) ensuring quick service delivery mostly in building permit issuance and monitoring and (iiii) advising the City of Kigali or Districts’ land bureau for efficient service delivery.

The participants also pointed to the issue of commercial buildings and other sites that are constructed in Kigali but these buildings are still vacant for many years before being put to use. They wondered how the loss for persons who invested in constructing those houses could be calculated. In this regard, the participants recommended IPAR-Rwanda to undertake the following major research projects:

- i. A need assessment on housing and design models to measure the losses incurred in unexploited houses;
- ii. Study of people's capacity versus implementation requirements of master plans;
Designing a model for government projects prioritization in the area of urban governance and city transformation (e.g. transport, housing, communication, etc.).

There was also a consensus that research data generated from universities and other different research institutions were not used by policymakers. It was also noted that on many occasions very good research was conducted but their findings were shelved without being disseminated to the public. In most cases, policy actors seemed to be unaware of the existence of these findings while some institutions, especially governmental ones, spent a lot of money on the same research projects.

Practical issues regarding '*affordable housing*' was also raised throughout the forum. In this regard, it was argued that a number of constructed houses classified as 'affordable', were in reality not affordable at all. In this context, the participants recommended that IPAR-Rwanda or other research institutes carry out a more comprehensive analysis of what is referred to as '*affordable housing*' by matching the latter concept with the existing *Ubudehe* categorisation scheme. Another important issue in need of further study was the identification of construction materials that could be used to construct affordable houses in Rwanda.

Furthermore, to solve all the challenges raised above, the participants in the forum suggested that a holistic study utilizing a multi-sectoral approach to city governance and transformation in Rwanda should be conducted. In this regard, it was noted that sustainable urban governance cannot be achieved without considering a number of factors such as society, culture, environment, etc.

In the same order of argument, the participants raised the issue of waste management in Rwanda. They pointed to the fact that many studies have been conducted on the issue, but none of which provided viable solutions. It was therefore requested that IPAR-Rwanda undertakes research on sustainable solutions for waste management in Rwanda.

The forum also discussed the issue of planning and coordination mechanisms. While the participants acknowledged that Rwanda had some interesting ongoing projects (such as the IDP model, Internet connectivity, etc.), the issue of inappropriate coordination and implementation mechanisms was raised by many participants in the forum. Although an inter-ministerial steering-committee was established to coordinate projects that fall under the same cluster, their efforts had not produced the desired results. The participants therefore recommended that research institutes or universities conduct research on establishing a coordination implementation framework for urban governance and transformation projects. Additionally, it was recommended that IPAR-Rwanda should assist the government in designing better models for investing in viable projects, and streamlining public private partnerships.

4. Reactions to Emerging Issues Raised during Plenary Discussions

After the interventions by the participants, the presenters and the invited guests were given an opportunity to react to some of the key issues raised during the plenary discussions. Dr Aime Tsinda reacted on the issue of prioritisation noting that prioritisation in planning requires assessing and determining available capacities. Regarding the issue of coordination, Dr Tsinda also noted that the problem does not only arise at the level of implementing master plans, but also at the beginning of the planning process and this is a general problem in all areas.

Staff turnover in One Stop Centres was also repeatedly noted as a challenge, although Dr Tsinda pointed out its positive effects. After restructuring across districts and widespread layoffs, the remaining personnel in the districts were more responsive, which he considered as a prerequisite for effective work and a reflection of their capabilities.

Regarding relationship between research and policy, Ms Eugenia Kayitesi noted that good research is designed to be relevant to policy, and its results should be delivered in an accessible form to policy-makers – and with good policy-making securely and rationally based on relevant research findings. She however noted that some of these research projects require a lot of funds. While IPAR-Rwanda is qualified to conduct research in various areas, Ms Kayitesi revealed that her organisation had limited resources and expressed the need for building successful partnership in the area of research and development.

Concerning the problem of the gap between research and policymaking, Dr Martin Atela noted that in most African countries research is conducted for the solely for the sake of publication. In his view, any research project should be designed in such a way that its findings should inform a given policy. As an example, he pointed out a project that PASGR did in collaboration with the University of Ibadan where policymakers were engaged at the data collection stage, and eventually the researchers implemented a dissemination phase in which they reverred back to policymakers to brief and share with them the findings. Dr Atela concluded his intervention by advising researchers to adopt suitable research design methods that cater for the entire research process. However, he pointed to the fact that some universities lacked this capacity. The last intervention was made by Prof. Tade Aina, the Executive Director of PASGR who emphasised the need to engage policymakers in all their research projects.

5. Key Emerging Recommendations from the participants' interventions

As a result of the presentations and the open discussions by the participants, the following key recommendations were formulated:

- i. To study the performance of *One Stop Centres*;
- ii. To adopt a multi-sectoral perspective on urban governance and city transformation;
- iii. To carry out a comprehensive analysis of what is referred to as 'affordable housing';
- iv. To identify causes of lack of compliance with master plans by the citizens;
- v. To identify appropriate and sustainable strategies for waste management in secondary cities;
- vi. To find ways and means of improving institutional coordination and implementation mechanisms for urban governance and city transformation;
- vii. To devise strategies for leveraging people's voices about urban governance and city transformation in a multilingual and multicultural society like Rwanda;
- viii. To study the advantages and disadvantages of the Smart City project;
- ix. To measure the level of understanding and awareness of urban governance and city transformation mechanisms.

6. Key Themes agreed upon during the Plenary Session

After formulating the recommendations, the participants were given an opportunity to reflect and agree on five key research areas to consider in the upcoming forums of "*Utafiti Sera Project on Urban Governance and City Transformation: The Case of Rwanda*". Out of nine recommendations stated above, the participants came up with the following five main research themes:

1. Study of socio-cultural aspects of housing;
2. Incentivising the private sector to invest in affordable housing;
3. Impact of poor waste management on public health;
4. Impact of urbanisation on food security;
5. Putting in place efficient and cost effective public transport system in urban areas.

7. Closing Remarks by Executive Director, IPAR-Rwanda

The forum was officially closed by the Executive Director of IPAR-Rwanda who called for leveraging urbanization for Rwanda's economic transformation. However, in order to efficiently address all the challenges involved, she requested stakeholders to educate citizens on urbanisation dynamics, challenges and opportunities.

As the outcome of the forum, she expressed her satisfaction on the following main issues that emerged from the discussions in the plenary session. In her opinion, the forum achieved its objectives and IPAR-Rwanda as a think-tank would share the report with the appropriate stakeholders. Ms Kayitesi also requested the full support of all the members of the "house" that had been already constituted during the forum and announced that IPAR-Rwanda was planning to organise other *Utafiti Sera* forums in the next few months. She concluded her remarks by thanking PASGR for its support and partnership.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Programme of the Day

TIME	ACTIVITY
8.00AM-8:30AM	Arrival and Registration of participants
8:30AM-8:50AM	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Welcome Remarks by 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 by 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 by Rapporteur+ Any further suggestions from stakeholders
11:50AM-12.00	Closing Remarks by Executive Director of IPAR-Rwanda
12.00	Lunch

Appendix 2: List of Participants

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