



Global change, urban livelihoods and food security

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- Urban growth is now inevitable due to natural population increase
- As the number of people living in urban areas is increasing and so is the number of the urban poor
- 43% of the African urban population lives below the poverty line (UN Habitat, 2008)
- Most of the current urban spatial growth is the result of slum and informal settlements proliferation.
- Rapid urbanization and the urbanization of poverty has produced communities that lack the ability to resist and recover easily from hazards
- In 2007 373.4 million people lived in African cities and this figure is projected to double by 2030 (UN Habitat, 2008)
- This has implications on local government's capacity in terms of planning, environmental management and the provision of basic services

Definition of key terms

- **Food security** can be defined as,

“food that is available at all times, to which all persons have means of access that is nutritionally adequate in terms of quantity, quality and variety, and is acceptable within the given culture.” (Rome declaration on World Food Security, 1996)

- **Food crisis** is *“when an emergency occurs and people for whatever reason, do not have enough food to stay healthy and active”* (Oxfam GB, 2006).

- **Global change** refers *“ to an interconnected set of phenomena, resulting largely from human actions which have modified the environment at an accelerate rate during modern times”*

- **Urban livelihoods**

Global change impacts in Zimbabwe

- Zimbabwe initially known as the grain basket in SADC plunged into food insecurity over a period of 10 years
- Food insecurity was no longer restricted to the countryside as it increasingly characterized the core urban areas
- Urban local authorities and other stakeholders did not seem to pay adequate attention to the plight of the urban poor
- Food security research and policy have continued to focus more on the rural poor where the incidence and depth of poverty is more pronounced
- It is often assumed that people in urban areas can cope and recover easily from shocks and stresses as compared to their rural counterparts, which is not always the case
- Urban areas do not always provide the best of opportunities to everyone

Multiple stressors

- Urban areas in Zimbabwe are complex systems (consist of large number of components, components interact dynamically, interaction is non linear)
- food security in Zimbabwe was a result of number of factors



Owners demolishing their own house in Epworth, Harare.



Backyard demolition in Chitungwiza, Harare.



Effects of global change on the urban poor

- High inflation rates resulted in reduced purchasing power and limited access to income
- Land seizures coincided with a period of droughts, severe economic decline and high unemployment
- Decline in maize yields- in 2005 the country produced btwn 750 000 - 1 million tonnes (< national requirement of 1,8 million tonnes)
- Parallel market increased the price of maize and other food products
- Lack of attention and action by urban local authorities and other key actors
- Assumption of high resilience in urban areas compared to rural counterparts
- Opportunities were limited and competition was high, creating a large number of urban poor

