



Lilongwe Assembly  
City Development Strategy  
*"A shared future"*

MALAWI

Lilongwe

Cities Alliance Annual  
Meeting: 20 January 2010

*Overview and evaluation of  
mentorship programme*





## Introductory remarks

- CDSs have taken many forms with different elements, emphasis and scales – each CDS must reflect a city's own identity
- The Lilongwe CDS is organised around 5 key areas of concern, namely governance, shelter and land, infrastructure and environment, community development and economic development
- Based on the key challenges and strategic directives, a 5-year or medium term programme of action/implementation plan was developed
- This will enable strategy aligned implementation and a proper foundation for future growth and development
- The medium term Lilongwe CDS will serve as a management framework for new politicians post the envisaged local elections in May 2010 as well as a mechanism to monitor performance and progress
- Although the CDS was developed with the assistance of a diversity of stakeholders, more needs to be done on an ongoing basis to ensure awareness and buy-in from role players, such as development partners, funders and government departments.



- Background
- High level overview of the State of the City
- Stabilisation Strategy
- Evaluation
- Recommendations
- Concluding remarks



# Lilongwe Assembly City Development Strategy

*"A shared future"*

MALAWI

Lilongwe

## Background







- Following the request by the **City of Lilongwe** to be mentored by Johannesburg, the mentorship process was approved by UCLG, UCLGA, SALGA and the Johannesburg Council – important to ensure upfront buy-in of key parties
- Without any signed agreements, the mentorship process was regarded as ad hoc technical assistance, with Johannesburg funding its own expenses
- During the 1<sup>st</sup> contact session and an assessment of the situation in Lilongwe, it was agreed to redefine the CDS process and to divide it into 3 phases, namely:
  - Phase 1: Preparatory phase
  - Phase 2: Development of the CDS
  - Phase 3: Requirements for implementation



- A Preparatory Phase or Assessment Phase was regarded as essential due to the following:
  - Limited or no data and information (spatial, financial, institutional, economic, services, etc)
  - No local political context, no Chief Executive, many officials acting
  - No formal knowledge of development partner activities
  - No organised stakeholder groupings
- Thus, not possible to commence with analytical work to inform key areas of concern or any strategic approaches
- The scope of work of phase 1 thus included:
  - An audit and analysis of currently available development information
  - An institutional analysis
  - A stakeholder analysis
  - An analysis of donor projects and its potential alignment to the CDS process
  - The establishment of a Task Team and Extended Task Team
  - The development of a CDS framework and funding application for Phase 2.



- The Lilongwe CDS was developed building on the base information compiled in *phase 1*
- The CDS contains the following:
  - An outline of the legal and policy context
  - An overview of the State of the City linked to the sector challenges
  - A long term vision and strategic directives (organised into themes) for the City
  - Goals and objectives
  - An implementation plan (Year 1 to 5) setting out priority actions, including proposed iconic projects
  - Monitoring and evaluation guidelines
  - Requirements for implementation
- The CDS was completed between February 2009 and November 2009, inclusive of 5 contact sessions and 5 external participation sessions
- The CDS will be officially launched in February 2010



- Phase 3 of the CDS is critical for operationalising the implementation of the strategy. This requires the approval of the Lilongwe CDS while the following are taking place in parallel:
  - setting up of the CDS Unit
  - the preparation of the budget estimates and identification of funding sources
  - the preparation of the 2010/11 business plans and importantly
  - the preparation of departmental scorecards
  - the preparation and finalisation of the iconic/legacy projects to be undertaken by the City
  - popularising and mainstreaming the CDS within Lilongwe and indeed within Malawi
- Post elections, the 2010/11 business plans, budget and departmental scorecards, aligned to the CDS must be approved by the new political leadership
- July 2010 – commence with implementation and regular reporting





# Lilongwe Assembly City Development Strategy

*"A shared future"*

MALAWI

Lilongwe

## High level overview: *State of the City*





- Lilongwe City Assembly is part of a **two tier system** of government in Malawi namely National Government and Local Government
- The Lilongwe City Assembly has **two bodies** namely the Assembly (political body) and the Secretariat (administration)

### Challenges

- Lack of political leadership – no local decision-making
- Limited participatory structures
- Unstable and uncertain financial environment - manual accounting system, poor collection rate, inadequate billing systems, no clear financial track record/auditing
- State of fixed and movable assets (IT systems, dumping, etc)
- Management challenges eg vacancies, duplication, decision-making, no strategic focus
- Outdated by-laws
- Corruption
- Ad hoc management of intergovernmental/development partner relations



Since its establishment as the national capital in 1975, Lilongwe has demonstrated significant and uncontrolled growth which is now, according to the 2008 census, the largest urban area in Malawi. Key issues relating to population, housing, land management, tenure security and the availability of spatial information

### Challenges

- Fastest rate of urbanization in the country
- Slow housing delivery, poor quality housing stock, high room occupancy leading to social and service problems, high rentals
- Outdated structure plan, no adherence to zoning, prime land released for foreign development, red tape to release land
- Limited tenure security
- Poor state of spatial information



The MDGs require that a number of key health challenges such as child and maternal health, HIV/AIDS and other related factors be addressed by signatory nations. Community development thus explored aspects relating to health, education, support to vulnerable groups, urban safety, culture and heritage, sport, parks cemeteries and poverty alleviation.

## Challenges

### *Health*

- Cholera outbreaks in Lilongwe are the worst in Malawi, exacerbated by poor sanitation, solid waste systems and storm water management
- Malaria infection rates are high in the rainy session
- While the HIV infection rate is declining, it remains a high at 14%
- Most Lilongwe City Assembly clinics are not functioning due to a lack of staff, funding and equipment
- High staff turnover, no medical doctors employed by LCA
- There are insufficient and poor quality public toilets within the City



## Challenges

### *Education*

- Poor intergovernmental management with unclear roles and responsibilities at local level
- High dropout rate from school
- Insufficient teaching equipment, classrooms, pit latrines at schools
- High teacher student ratio and high teacher absenteeism

### *Poverty Alleviation*

- No poverty alleviation policy or programme at a local level
- NGO efforts are not effectively coordinated

### *Other*

- No cultural facilities, limited sport facilities, only one developed park, no sport development programmes, vulnerable groups not catered for, etc





Lilongwe lacks well-planned and quality infrastructure networks. Services are erratic and impact negatively on the day-to-day activities. Little attention is paid to environmental issues and assets

## Challenges

### *Water*

- 34% of potable water is unaccounted for
- 25% of the City's area is yet to be reticulated
- Water provision appears to be poor – of the 566 water kiosks in the City, only 50% are fully functioning - estimated shortfall of 1300 water kiosks
- In the absence of reliable data, it would appear that demand for water exceeds supply;
- Major distribution problems



## Challenges

### *Sanitation*

- Inadequate sanitation facilities, especially in low income areas
- No reliable statistics on household access
- Quality of sanitation facilities - only 9% of the City appears to have access to reticulated sewer lines
- Current sewer plant is located on the opposite side of town in relation to the location of the majority of the population
- Sewage is dumped across the city

### *Roads*

- Inadequate transportation planning and management
- Lack of or inadequate storm water drainage
- Insufficient funding for new roads and/or maintenance
- Poor quality roads contribute to the high accident rate in the City
- Lack of walkways, parking space, bus stations and bus bays
- Illegal developments taking place in road reserves
- Limited road signage
- Vandalism of cables and electrical fittings resulting in non-functioning traffic lights



## Challenges

### *Electricity*

- Inadequate electricity generated making it difficult to meet the demand
- Vandalism of transformers and cables
- Illegal connections
- Electricity is sold at 30% of the cost of production, benefiting the rich rather than the poor - there are no step up charges
- Slow rate of connectivity
- Lack or inadequate sustainable alternative energy sources
- There has been a lack of investment in extending the network

### *Environment*

- Wood remains the main source of fuel - forest cover is depleting fast
- Poor solid waste management and inadequate sanitation systems are contributing to high levels of pollution and disease
- Developments are taking place within the 1:50 year flood lines and within wetlands



Lilongwe is situated at the centre of a large and productive agricultural area. Its major industry is tobacco processing. Little information is available on the economic profile of Lilongwe City

### Challenges

- Inadequate telecommunications infrastructure, erratic services supply
- Counterfeit products, many foreign traders, substandard products
- Limited staff within the City Assembly for undertaking enforcement
- Vendor and trader bylaws are outdated
- Lack of technical and financial support for small scale traders (informal sector);
- There are limited designated trading places for SMEs and informal traders
- Low export sales except for the tobacco industry
- Uncompetitive/ few local products on the international market
- Poor road network within and outside the city hampering economic development
- Prohibitive interest rate which impacts negatively on economic development
- Corruption
- High tax rate (30%), forex shortage
- No support programmes for entrepreneurs
- Tourist sector underdeveloped



# Lilongwe Assembly City Development Strategy

*"A shared future"*

# The Stabilisation Strategy

MALAWI

Lilongwe







- At the end of the initial assessment, the need to develop and implement a stabilisation strategy to institute immediate interventions to address the following was identified:
  - Financial systems – procedures, billing, debt collection, accounting, budgeting, auditing
  - Organisation review
  - The identification and filling of critical vacancies, including the appointment of the CEO
  - Training and staff development
  - Staff retention strategy
  - Equipment upgrading and refurbishing
  - Office space and management
  - Mechanisms for improving local accountability
- Stabilisation strategy led to appointment of CEO and Head of Planning and key equipment and resource issues (computer equipment, software, furniture, etc) were also addressed



Lilongwe Assembly  
City Development Strategy  
*"A shared future"*

Evaluation of mentorship  
programme

MALAWI

Lilongwe





- Joburg mentorship programme has been critical for the preparation of the Lilongwe CDS. This has included ensuring
  - That the programme remained on target
  - That the quality and quantity of the information is sufficient for the CDS development
  - That necessary tools were developed to facilitate the process
  - That the Task Force controlled and owned the CDS process
- Mentoring required “quick thinking and decision making” and targeted support and guidance
- The process must be flexible to accommodate new requirements such as the stabilisation strategy
- Regular contact sessions are required



- Initial interaction between Johannesburg and Lilongwe teams were minimal, but increased and became more regular as process progressed
- Delays in funding requests and understanding of local requirements nearly resulted in a loss of momentum and buy-in in the process
- The utilization of local consultants was less successful – same knowledge gaps and lack of experience of CDS processes than internal staff – staff lacked experience to manage and guide them
- Assembly staff demonstrated varying understanding, levels of participation and commitment to the CDS process
- High expectations from external stakeholders
- Forward planning, time management and delegations not inculcated in organisation



- Only verbal agreement to assist with the single intention to complete the preparation of the CDS document Joburg
- The lack of a formal agreement allowed for the following:
  - The flexibility to change the process to be responsive to the capacity levels within the Assembly without having to respond to red tape and lengthy processes to gain agreement for deviation from a set mentorship programme;
  - As there is no political context in Lilongwe, the process and the number of decision making processes involved in changing the mentorship requirements were minimised, and
  - The informal nature of the process also allowed the relationship between Johannesburg and Lilongwe to emerge, thereby facilitating the development of a more formal relationship.





- At the end of Phase 1 the Task Force was required to prepare the State of the City Report with the use of the phase 1 consultant reports – soon apparent that the Task Force lacked the capacity and the skills required to prepare the report. Consequently, the Johannesburg mentors then undertook the drafting of the report and drew on the Task Force to provide the additional information and to verify the content. Again, the following were evident:
  - There appeared to be very limited institutional knowledge - unaware of sector policies, data and other information which may exist;
  - Staff do not fully participate in CDS activities;
  - Lack of project management skills; and
  - Embedded knowledge of individuals yielded valuable results through intensive interviewing processes.
- Mentoring required illustrating a process/concept by first doing it and then explaining how it should be used
- Mentorship required 100% “lead by example” in the beginning to 25% at the end of phase 2 – gradual hand-over of responsibilities eg LCA staff was responsible for final stakeholder session (opening addresses, presentations, agendas, discussion documents, etc)



- The CDS preparation was guided by a Task Force (operational) and an Extended Task Force (oversight)
  - Task Force members included LCA officials, development partners such as UNHabitat, JICA, MALGA and key national departments
  - Extended Task Force included a wider range of organisations such as business, NGOs and CBOs, professional institutes and related organisations
- 7 stakeholder workshops were held during phase 1 and 2
- Internal participation changed over time
  - The majority of the Task Force members did not read the reports
  - Task Force representation changed to primarily internal staff and JICA - often lower level staff with very few or none Directors being present - this often hampered the preparation of workshop materials and the quality of the debate
  - Witnessed significant commitment from a number of staff members who regularly attended the meetings and were willing to take on responsibilities
  - Dynamics in the Task Force appeared to change from when the mentors were present and in-between contact sessions - department hierarchies appeared to have less influence during contact sessions than in-between sessions, where lines of authority in some instances paralysed the completion of activities



- External participation also changed over time
  - Generally, the meetings were well attended
  - Initially, junior representatives were sent from organisations
  - Once the importance of the CDS for the development of Lilongwe was recognised, there was a shift to the participation of senior managers or organisation leaders
  - Participation of development partners remained low despite currently funding programmes and projects within Lilongwe
- In all instances, the Johannesburg mentors were required to assist with the preparation of workshop material, provide photocopies, a data projector and other basic resources



- The CDS manager was fairly isolated
- CDS Leader reported directly to the Head of Planning, and as a result, found it difficult to give instructions to senior staff members
- First CDS in Malawi, thus no institutional knowledge on the process, content and the leadership required to complete a successful CDS
- Lack of project management skills
- Opportunities to make use of the mentors in between visits via phone or email were not maximised
- Based on the above, a recommendation was made that a position be created in the Office of the Chief Executive, which was agreed
- This decision will assist with
  - resolving the issues relating to the lines of accountability and
  - will also increase the CE's control over the CDS and in turn his management team.



- The management of the Assembly has been in disarray for some time – acting CE and majority of senior management positions
- The Johannesburg mentors repeatedly stressed the importance of stabilising the management structures of the organisation, not only for the preparation of the CDS, but more importantly to improve the level of service delivery
- National Government took note of the concern and in May 2009, a Chief Executive was appointed and many of the management positions were confirmed
- The impact of a skilled and experienced CE was felt immediately
  - adopted a strong line on stamping out corruption
  - improved working conditions
  - purchased vehicles
  - improved the Assembly's collection rate
  - demanded improved service delivery levels and
  - more importantly has embraced the CDS and its importance for the development of Lilongwe



- Access to quality data in Malawi is a challenge, especially sector specific data (available data contradictory or for the country as a whole and not for Lilongwe)
- Lack of knowledge where to find available data
- Definitions/terminology also proved to be problematic – local “safe sanitation” definitions include pit latrines while the WHO does not recognise a pit latrine without a water seal or ventilation as a safe sanitation method. Based on various studies and differing definitions, approximately 83% of households in Lilongwe City appear to have access to “proper” sanitation. However, if the WHO definition is applied, only 29,5% of households have access to safe sanitation
- Low level of institutional knowledge regarding sector policies, projects, programmes, by-laws or powers and functions – especially documents produced by external organisations





- While Malawi and South Africa are part of SADC, language and use of terminology is sometimes different. However, there were more similarities than differences, resulting in better cooperation and mutual understanding. For example:
  - In South Africa when we refer to poverty alleviation, in Malawi it is regarded as the “safety net”
  - Both countries have tribal or traditional authority areas but the powers and level of influence of the traditional leaders are different. Land ownership and practices vary significantly while freehold ownership is rare. It took several contact sessions to understand the differences and to incorporate the understanding into the CDS
  - Lunch time in Malawi is an institution – no matter the urgency and the limited time available for completing tasks, at least one hour is taken for lunch. In order to maximise the work time available, the Johannesburg mentors structured work sessions in such a manner as to coincide with the City Assembly’s work hours and stopped the practice of “going out” for team lunches. As a result, the time available for constructive engagement increased.



- The Lilongwe CDS exposed the lack of coordination and integration of projects and programmes undertaken within Malawi
- While Phase 1 of the CDS was funded by Cities Alliance, UNHabitat have recently started a City Profiling exercise which is comparable to a CDS and also co-funded by Cities Alliance
- Duplication of effort appears to be common and in many instances can be attributed to projects and programmes being determined and imposed by donors as opposed to being locally initiated
- While Lilongwe was earmarked for the preparation of a City Profile, the project was stopped with a decision taken that the CDS should proceed and be the development plan for the City of Lilongwe



- The need to disseminate the CDS reports within the Assembly and other key organisations was constantly stressed
- It is difficult to determine to what extent this has occurred
- Was not possible to determine to what extent the CDS is owned by the organisation as a whole or whether it is restricted to the few participating individuals
- It is not certain whether participating staff will be prepared to stand by the document throughout its implementation
- Embracing the CDS will depend on ongoing commitment by the CE and CDS Leader in keeping the document alive and ensuring that the implementation of the plan takes place



# Lilongwe Assembly City Development Strategy

*"A shared future"*

MALAWI

Lilongwe

## Recommendations





- Mentorship programmes take time, resources and commitment
- Momentum is key to ensuring that staff members remain involved and committed to the process and to retain stakeholder interest and confidence. It also facilitates a demonstration that with effort, a quality product can be produced on time
- Capacity building is extensive from the most basic of processes to the more complex – local involvement a must
- Want to conclude with some recommendations:
  - Mentorship programmes
  - Structure of mentorship team
  - Nature of support
  - Project management
  - Skills requirements
  - Skills transfer
  - Mentor peer support unit



## Mentorship programmes

- Based on the Johannesburg/Lilongwe programme, it can be argued that knowledge about the development of CDSs is less than adequate
- A guide-pack is not sufficient
- Mentorship programmes, linking cities with capacity and cities with less capacity and experience will enable more developing cities to understand their growth paths and development priorities
- Mentorship programmes will also strengthen regional relationships

*but someone needs to take the first step...*





## Structure of CDS mentorship teams

- For too long developed countries have sent young, skilled technical advisors to developing countries to “mentor and support” people with more experience and “less” skills or to develop policies and programmes on their behalf – in the majority of cases this led to glossy documents with limited local benefits/impact
- Although LCA officials were not experienced in the development of CDS processes, their local knowledge outweighed that of the mentors
- Mentors cannot be junior staff, they need to be
  - Highly skilled and experienced with broad-based knowledge
  - Be able to work with peers in senior management positions
  - Be able to “read” situations and quickly respond
- Both parties need to identify a driver for the process – point of control, responsibility, accountability
- Both the mentor and mentee teams must have equal status



## Nature of support

- The changing nature of the process requires that the mentor team must possess a wide range of skills and experience to tap into, for example
  - Phase 1 (assessment phase) skills = analytical and process conceptualisation
  - Phase 2 (CDS development) = identifying the key challenges, developing solutions and understanding how to operationalise solutions (relative simplistic process but require extracted thoughts), as well as good communication skills (share with stakeholders and obtain buy-in)
  - Phase 3 (Requirements for implementation) = technical skills, business planning and budgeting, project and time management and reporting
- Skills requirements thus change from phase to phase and mentor teams need to be aware of this to ensure continuity and integrity of the process



## Project management

- Mentorship programmes require that a new product be developed while both organisations proceed with their day-to-day activities – this might lead to resistance and competing priorities
- At the outset, a programme of action must be jointly agreed by both parties
- It is the mentor's responsibility to ensure that the programme stays on track and that deadlines and time frames are met
  - Phase 1 – Mentor takes 100% project management responsibility
  - End phase 2 – mentor project management responsibility only 20%
  - Phase 3 – mentor project management responsibility decrease to 0%
- Project responsibility thus increase with ownership



## Skills transfer

- Phase 2 was developed in-house without any external financial support, proving that a lot can be achieved with own resources and it is not necessary to remain dependent on donors and their associated timeframes and processes
- Where possible, in-house staff should be used to develop the CDS and the use of consultants should be minimised (also lacked experience in CDS development)
- In-house participation and involvement will yield the following benefits:
  - Skills transfer
  - Ownership
  - Development of institutional knowledge
  - An understanding of the effort, knowledge and perseverance required



## Mentor peer support unit

- The establishment of a mentor peer support unit is proposed for consideration for the following reasons:
  - There are many emerging issues from a CDS process which cannot be addressed as part of a CDS process and where national government interventions are required eg urbanisation strategies, pro-poor interventions, etc – the mentor support unit can identify these issues/by-products of CDSs and initiate a lobbying process with national governments and development partners
  - The mentor support unit can facilitate mentor programmes – matching mentors and cities that require CDS mentoring
  - A central point to monitor progress of CDS mentorship programmes
  - A point for mentor peer support and/or complex problem solving – sound board
  - The support unit should thus be technical in nature and not a point to lobby for funding



# Lilongwe Assembly City Development Strategy

*"A shared future"*

## Concluding remarks

MALAWI

Lilongwe







- A CDS for local governments in developing countries is not a luxury, but **a necessity**
- Development partners and other funding organizations should focus on **targeted support**, rather than generic policy development and training
- Mentorship-programmes to develop CDSs in selected areas can **fast-track** these processes and support governance, sustainability and independence

*"Few things in the world are more powerful than a positive push. A smile.  
A word of optimism and hope. A "you can do it" when things are touch."  
Richard M. De Vos*