

## Call for Papers

### UNU-WIDER Project Workshop

# Beyond the Tipping Point: African Development in an Urban World

To be held at UN-HABITAT, Nairobi, 26-28 June 2008

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Throughout history cities have played a defining role in social, political, and economic transformations. And yet in the past 50 years development research and policy has placed a primary emphasis on national development strategies and rural poverty alleviation. The resilience of the 'urban bias' thesis has obscured the extent of urban poverty, as well as the specific challenges and opportunities posed by urban development. Given the inexorability of urbanization in the global south and an increasing recognition that the location of poverty is shifting to cities, it is critical that the challenges facing cities and towns now become an international development priority.

In 2007 the number of urban inhabitants will surpass rural dwellers as a percentage of the total world population. This workshop will take stock of what we know and what we need to know about cities and development; gather experiences of urbanization and urban growth from across the world; and offer policy options for an inexorably urbanizing world.

#### **Some of the specific issues to be considered are**

- What are the forces driving urbanization and how do they differ from one region to another?
- What are the economic and environmental costs and benefits of urban agglomerations?
- What is the link between urban infrastructure and poverty reduction?
- What are the gender dimensions of urbanization and urban living?
- How do urban spaces affect interaction between different ethnic, racial and religious groups? Does demographic concentration exacerbate political conflict or promote engaged state-society relations?
- Is our urban future to be characterized by poverty and inequality, fear and violence, or sustainable and prosperous urban spaces characterized by inclusiveness and cosmopolitanism?
- How can urban planning and urban development strategies be integrated into and help inform national and international development policy?

The workshop is intended for researchers and policymakers from the academic, government, and development communities. Participants attending UNU-WIDER projects typically come from a university, research institute, government department, or international organization. The workshop is open to advanced PhD students in economics or other social science disciplines.

#### **Submissions**

We invite submissions of papers written about ***African countries only*** on the topics listed above. Those wishing to present a paper should send a detailed abstract by 31 January 2008 to the e-mail address given below. All applicants should submit a short CV, including their full contact address, institutional affiliation, relevant publications and professional experience, nationality, age, and gender. Final copies of accepted papers are required by 15 May 2008.

E-mail: [nairobi@wider.unu.edu](mailto:nairobi@wider.unu.edu)

## Funding

There is no workshop fee. Subject to UN policies and procedures, UNU-WIDER will cover the costs of meals, airport transfers, and accommodation for all—and air travel costs for some—workshop participants. Preference will be given to funding participants from developing countries.

**The World Institute for Development Economics Research of the United Nations University (UNU-WIDER)** was established in 1985. The institute undertakes multidisciplinary research and policy analysis on structural changes affecting the living conditions of the world's poorest people; provides a forum for professional interaction and the advocacy of policies leading to robust, equitable, and environmentally sustainable growth; and promotes capacity strengthening and training for scholars and government officials in the field of economic and social policy making.