

# START BRIEFING NOTE

Key messages from knowledge and capacity needs scoping workshops in two African Cities

The global population is now on track to exceed 9 billion by 2050, with 70 percent of the world projected to be living in cities. Over 90 percent of urban growth is occurring in developing countries, where an estimated 70 million new inhabitants are being added to urban settlements each year. This unprecedented rate of population growth and urbanization creates significant challenges for feeding cities, maintaining socio-economic stability and adapting to increasing risks from extreme climate events.

In March 2013, START organized workshops in two African cities - Addis Ababa and Durban - to assess the state of knowledge, and capacity needs, in the continent vis-à-vis urban risk, vulnerability and resilience and urban food security. The purpose of this briefing note is to communicate key messages from of these important pair of workshops to a broader audience and provide insights into knowledge and capacity gaps and needs in African cities that merit serious attention.

## URBAN FOOD SECURITY WORKSHOP

### Key Messages

- Urban food security is about much more than the production of food. Urban food insecurity is strongly linked to income poverty, and is exacerbated by poor infrastructure and services.
- The interlinked nature of the four food security dimensions (availability, accessibility, utilization and stability) requires the development of policy frameworks that encourage interconnected poverty reduction/social protection and rural/urban-linked development approaches and enhanced governance mechanisms.
- Climate change will intensify urban food insecurity by reducing the ability of the urban poor to access income sources for purchasing food, inhibiting movement of food into settlements, and increasing disease burdens.
- There is strong potential to address urban food insecurity in a manner that also strengthens capacities for adaptation to climate change.

For more information on START's portfolio of programs and activities on food security and climate change please visit <http://start.org/programs/upa>



A series of environmental disasters and poor governance have left millions of people in Haiti classed as "food insecure".  
Source: UN

In recent years, food security has become an increasingly urgent concern in national and international policy debates. High and volatile global food prices and their effect on food access by low-income groups has been an important catalyst for this renewed attention. However, the international food security agenda remains dominated by concerns over food production, while substantially less attention has been given to issues of urban food security and the complex factors and processes underpinning it.

To better understand the needs and challenges of urban food security, START and partners convened a meeting that brought together a group of academics, policy researchers and practitioners from Africa, Asia and Latin America to assess the state of knowledge of urban food security within the context of the rapid urbanization that is taking place in the global south. The workshop aimed to encourage cross-learning among researchers from different regions and perspectives.



## CITIES AT RISK: AFRICA WORKSHOP

Cities are responsible for more than 40 percent of global GHGs; they are also likely to be hit the hardest by climate change impacts. Cities are, therefore, doubly significant for any discourse on the climate change. The way cities develop will in many ways determine the extent to which our collective efforts succeed in tackling the climate challenge. Nevertheless, most cities have yet to “go green” and yet to put in place effective adaptation plans and strategies on account of a diversity of technical and capacity constrictions. Given the unique place of cities in the context of climate change and worrying trends in urbanization and global population growth, it is crucial that serious and sustained effort is exerted in improving our understanding of, and developing capacities in, urban vulnerability dynamics and resilience.

START and partners convened a four-day scoping workshop on “Cities at Risk: Africa” in March 2013 in Durban, South Africa. Attended by scientists, municipal representatives, and representatives of relevant African Universities and research centers, the event sought to assess the state of knowledge and capacity needs regarding vulnerability and risk in the urban sector, and to share knowledge, insights and experiences on pathways for effective climate change adaptation and resilience in African cities and urban systems.

*For more information on START's portfolio of projects and activities on cities visit <http://start.org/programs/cities-at-risk>*



Participants discuss during the Durban Cities at Risk Workshop: Africa, Durban, March 2013

### Key Messages

- More work needs to be done in bridging data, information and knowledge gaps in climate change impacts, vulnerability and exposure to these impacts in African cities. In many cities in Africa, even basic ‘MDG’ type data is not available.
- There is a dire need for ‘climate translators’ – climate information and knowledge must be presented in terms that are accessible to urban planners as well as the broader public.
- Good governance contributes to building resilience in urban areas by enabling effective and integrated action on climate change by all stakeholders.
- Vulnerability of infrastructure and communities in many cities in Africa cannot be meaningfully tackled without addressing urban poverty.
- There is a need to engage African cities in a sustained dialogue in low carbon growth through various initiatives, including the Durban Adaptation Charter.