

Nairobi Metropolitan Region: Networking the Sustainable African Metropolis: Issues, Visions, Concepts

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Preface

This report, “Nairobi Metropolitan Region: Networking the Sustainable African Metropolis: Issues, Visions, Concepts”, was developed in response to the first International Planning Competition in Nairobi’s history. In the fall of 2008, eager to gather new ideas, the Ministry of Nairobi Metropolitan Development put out a call for proposals for a “spatial planning concept” for the Nairobi Metropolitan Region. The objective of the competition was:

“To develop a sustainable land use system for the Nairobi Metropolitan Region (NMR) which will result in an environmentally sustainable NMR that will amongst other things:

- Build an internationally competitive and inclusive economy for prosperity
- Deploy world class infrastructure and utilities for the region
- Optimise mobility and accessibility through effective transportation
- Enhance the quality of life and inclusiveness in the region
- Deliver a unique image and identity through effective place branding
- Ensure a safe and secure Nairobi Metropolitan Region
- Employ World Class Metropolitan Governance Systems

The concept shall ensure that the NMR’s 15 local authorities are uniquely identified and articulated as strong and interdependent development nodes within the region. It will clearly identify the role of core Nairobi and define its functional relationship with the other constituent local authorities.”

In July of 2009, the Ministry invited eight of the nineteen teams that responded to their request to submit proposals. We were one of the eight selected teams. The document that follows is the essence of our vision for the Nairobi Metropolitan Region.

This competition and the challenge it presented created a unique opportunity to dialogue on the future of the Nairobi Metropolitan Region, a dynamic and diverse area ranging from an economically powerful urban core, fuelled by local entrepreneurial and intellectual skill, to areas of great natural beauty and high agricultural potential. The competition also provided a chance to

anchor a metropolitan spatial concept in Kenyan realities and provided a way for government to tap into the formidable expertise and creativity in the country. This was a step forward in the government's attempt to address the complex problems of rapid urbanization and harness the opportunities it presents in the 21st century.

This report is the result of a collaboration spanning three continents, three universities and three firms. It was initiated and spearheaded by seasoned Kenyan experts- former Director of Physical Planning, Mr. Renson Mbagwa, Dr. Lawrence Esho and Edwin Wamukaya (Center for Urban and Regional Planning, Nairobi); Dr. Peter Ngau, Dr. Isaac Mwangi, Dr. Charles Karisa and Lecturer Margaret Ng'ayu (Department of Urban and Regional Planning at the University of Nairobi). They brought on board Dr. Jef Van den Broeck, Dr. Han Verschure, Dr. Andre Loeckx, Dr. Bruno de Meulder, Dr. Frank Moulaert, Dr. Fabio Vanin and graduate students Bruce Githua and Margaret Macharia (Department of Architecture, Urbanism and Planning (ASRO) of the Katholieke Universiteit in Leuven (KUL)); Dr Elliott Sclar, Dr. Jacqueline Klopp and Nicole Volavka-Close (Center for Sustainable Urban Development, Columbia University)*; Paul Guillaume, Filip Lagiewka, Guy Vloebergh, Koen Vande Sompele (Omgeving - Belgium); and Véronique Wouters, Daan Vantassel and Lieve de Cock (Euro Immo Star, Belgium).

On 8 April 2010, the Ministry of Nairobi Metropolitan Development hosted an awards ceremony. At that ceremony the Ministry announced that our international consortium was selected as first runner up, just three points behind the winning team led by the Delhi-based Consulting Engineering Services (I) Pvt. Ltd.

We are honored and delighted to have participated in this historic planning competition and will continue to promote more active and open dialogue on metropolitan issues within Nairobi and its surrounding cities. As part of this effort we present a slightly revised version of the spatial concept submitted for the competition. We hope it will enrich and provoke continued policy discussion on and support action for making the Nairobi Metropolitan Region a sustainable, democratic, prosperous and uniquely African metropolis.

Keywords: metropolitan, sustainable, networks, vision, concepts, Nairobi

“Nairobi Metropolitan Region. Networking the Sustainable African Metropolis: Issues, Visions, Concepts.” CSUD, in collaboration with its international partners which include the Center for Urban and Regional Planning, Nairobi; Department of Urban and Regional Planning at the University of Nairobi; Department of Architecture, Urbanism and Planning (ASRO) of the Katholieke Universiteit in Leuven (KUL); Omgeving – Belgium; Euro Immo Star, Belgium, is currently working to publish its concept in a book and is also developing a popular version of the award-winning report which will be launched and circulated further in Nairobi in Spring/Summer 2011.

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