Urbanisation in Eastern Africa

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The world is increasingly becoming a city planet, as Stewart Brand notes in his book “Whole Earth Discipline: an Ecopragmatist’s Manifesto”. Half of the world population now lives in the cities and 80% will do so by 2050. The Greater Horn of East Africa (GHEA) region is experiencing similar trends. According to The Economist, nine of the 30 fastest growing cities in the world between 2005 and 2010, were in GHEA. Looking ahead from 2006 to 2020, another source predicts that seven of the world’s 100 fastest growing cities will be in the region (see Tables 1 and 2).

### Table 1. Fastest growing cities, 2005-10

(urban agglomerations of more than 750,000)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>City, Country</th>
<th>Average annual growth (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Kigali, Rwanda</td>
<td>7.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Mbuji-Mayi, DR Congo</td>
<td>4.63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Lubumbashi, DR Congo</td>
<td>4.61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Kolwezi, DR Congo</td>
<td>4.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Kinshasa, DR Congo</td>
<td>4.37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Kampala, Uganda</td>
<td>4.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Dar es Salaam, Tanzania</td>
<td>3.95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>Nairobi, Kenya</td>
<td>3.64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>Mombasa, Kenya</td>
<td>3.53</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


### Table 2. 100 fastest growing cities & urban areas in the world, 2006-20.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>City, Country</th>
<th>Average annual growth (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Dar es Salaam, Tanzania</td>
<td>4.39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Lubumbashi, DR Congo</td>
<td>4.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Kampala, Uganda</td>
<td>4.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Nairobi, Kenya</td>
<td>3.87</td>
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<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>Mogadishu, Somalia</td>
<td>3.52</td>
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<tr>
<td>31</td>
<td>Addis Ababa, Ethiopia</td>
<td>3.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100</td>
<td>Khartoum, Sudan</td>
<td>2.41</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: www.citymayors.com

What kind of urbanization is taking place?

In his book *The City*, Joel Kotkin traces the history of urban spaces all over the world and attributes to cities three basic functions; the creation of sacred space, provision of basic security and host for a commercial market. These are largely true of cities in the GHEA region with spectacular commercial building towering, better provision of social services vis-à-vis rural spaces and immerse trading activities many of which are informal. However the urbanization experience is highly differentiated and the apparent absence of deliberate urbanization policies is leading to extremes of poverty and prosperity co-existing in the same city (see Part 2 and 3 of this report). The Society for International Development’s (SID) State of East Africa Report 2006 estimated that based on 2001 data, 83% of East Africa’s urban population was living in slum conditions (as defined by UN Habitat).
What is propelling this?

Godfrey Chesang’, in an essay titled ‘Migration in East Africa: past, present and prognosis’ published by SID in 2007, suggests that liberalization of East Africa’s economies saw the decline of rural development support and thus facilitated the rural urban push. This view was echoed by Ambassador Juma Mwapachu, Secretary-General of the East Africa Community (EAC) in the February edition of this report. He said then,

*Urbanization is unstoppable (in East Africa), but what this does is strengthen the case for planned urbanization, one that balances the rural-urban development nexus. I believe that the rural-urban migration in the region is a result of the governments withdrawing from rural development since the 1980s, largely as a result of structural adjustment programmes.*

GHEA’s ‘Second Cities’ are urban spaces to watch

The major GHEA urban centers are also the respective countries’ administrative and commercial capitals. However, across the region there is growth of the ‘second cities’ away from the traditional urban centers. These are Kira and Gulu in Uganda; Mbeya, Shinyanga, Arusha and Mwanza in Tanzania; Mombasa, Nakuru, Machakos and Bungoma in Kenya; Al-Khartūm Bahri, Nyala, Bur Sudan, Juba and Al-UBayyid in Sudan; Gıtarama, Butare and Ruhengeri in Rwanda; Nazret, Dire Dawa, Mekele, Gonder in Ethiopia; Keren, Ådī Ugrī, Dek’emhāre, Nak’fa, Åk’ordat in Eritrea; Ali-Sabieh, Arta, Dikhil in Djibouti, Mbuji-Mayi, Kananga, Kisangani, Bukavu, Kolwezi in the Democratic Republic of Congo; Baidoa and Kisimayu in Somalia.

These urban centres, off the radar at the moment, will probably mature into full cities in the coming decades, driven by growing populations, citizens’ response to an continuing stagnation in rural areas, and the opportunity to engage with the vibrant commercial energy in an urban setting.

This newsletter takes a glance at the recent past to explore the momentum and drivers of GHEA’s urbanization. It opens in Part 1 with a substantive excerpt of the essay by Godfrey Chesang’ who examines the region’s urbanization experience from a combined historical, political and sociological lens. His characterization of the negotiation between ‘post-card cities’ and peri-urban villages at the ‘shoe-shine boundary’ is insightful. So too is the description of the different characters that the government apparatus takes when operating in these two different spaces.

Part 2, in a series of short commentaries, provides some ‘feel and flavour’ to the region’s urbanization experience. One sounds a cautionary note about the potential dangers of concentrating national populations in one city, a second complains about the severe traffic congestion being experienced in Dar es Salaam as the city’s population and car-buying capacity expands way beyond the limits of the road network and public transport system. A third, written soon after a devastating landslide in Uganda in March, argues for Kampala to be preemptively declared a disaster zone because the steep, overcrowded hills are a catastrophe-in-waiting. A fourth commentary speculates on whether the slums could well be sources of social stability while subsidizing the lifestyles of the rich, and a final one regrets that in a Nairobi, flowerpots can be more valuable than people. The Final Word introduces Juba, in South Sudan which could become East Africa’s newest capital city in January 2011.
PART 1: SHOE-SHINE BOUNDARIES, POST-CARD CITIES AND THE VILLAGIZATION OF THE CITY

By Godfrey Chesang’ (excerpts)

From an East African standpoint, a number of questions are inevitable. What does the recent surge in urbanisation mean for East Africa’s future as an integrated entity? Given that our urbanisation has not been accompanied by rapid economic growth, what possible futures do we face? How are East Africans’ aspirations for an urbanised future entangled with the historical baggage of the past? How does one begin to disentangle them? How can one begin prospecting for an East Africa with functioning cities?

The urban “mess”

Let us begin by positing that historically, a structural trigger has whipped into motion several erstwhile latent forces that result in the migration of people into spots usually with physical, economic or strategic specificities that make them attractive and sustainable as human settlements. Such a trigger might be the discovery of valuable minerals in an area as was the case of Johannesburg, the establishment of an administrative centre such as in Arusha in Tanzania, or the development of a port such as Kismu on Kenya’s Lake Victoria shores. Additionally, even inadvertent triggers might prompt further expansion of an urban area, in turn spawning an endogenous economy and leading to further growth. Such triggers might even be inadvertent, as is the case with border towns where restrictive border regimes spawn an informal and lucrative economy that attracts more people. In East Africa, Busia’s expansion in the 1980s as a result of the Chepkube economy is a case in point.

The concentrations of populations in particular locations results in massive social re-ordering as old ways of living become irrelevant and new ones emerge in the face of new sets of survival and relational imperatives. Cities transform into the natural centres of social and economic exchange and activity. Social hierarchies, value systems are reconfigured; new patterns of marginalisation and empowerment emerge, and in the process, disparate differentials of opportunities and risks articulate. In other words, new structures of power and modes of politics emerge. Cities also become the cultural kitchens; where cultural broths, salads and beverages are made. Accordingly, what would be madness in other contexts becomes normal practice in the city, “social misfits” fit in fine and wearing mini-skirts, kerb-crawling, body painting and piercing, and all those things your village pastor feared, become the normal order of the day. In other words, order and disorder become relative twins, and devil or no devil, must somehow coexist in a new society.

Postcards and the shoe-shine boundaries

But perhaps the most poignant, and even hilarious dimension in the messiness of our urbanisation is in the cultural footprint that its colonial genesis has left. You do not need to be a trained anthropologist to decipher this footprint. A detached look at the mundane realities of East African cities might just be what we should be focusing on. The typical East African city today is a contradictory picture. On the one hand is a formal, “postcard” section of the city that is geometrically organised relatively affluent and better serviced in terms of representational, welfare, sanitation and security needs. This part of the city exudes a post-colonial aesthetic that is an eclectic mix of colonial and post-independence monuments, architectural designs, gardening concepts or their derelict remnants, but inevitably, a lot of things here are aspirational. Almost naturally, this is the domain of the rich – newly arrived, or long-standing inhabitants of the city.

The state (read: government) in this part of the city takes a qualitatively different character. It provides, protects, regulates, arbitrates conflict, generally projects a human outlook and works in favour of those who live here. Part of the story is that the state apparatus here is well developed.
Occasionally though, there are the Black Mambas (Uganda), GSU (Kenya) or FFU (Tanzania) that invade the peace of this place. Precisely because such occurrences are an anomaly, the invasion of security forces in this part of the city usually evokes significant opprobrium in the media, on streets and in bars. Intrusions of this nature are however the order in the other part of the city.

The other side of the city is a “disorderly”, unplanned, usually unsafe and under-serviced “informal” section, where poor “born-cities” and newly arrived villagers eke out their lives – the shanty town city. In the shanty town, geometric order is an oxymoron. Houses are cluttered higgledy-piggledy, paper bags are scattered everywhere, as are scrap metal, discarded tyres, open sewers and just a lot of dust or mud, as the season dictates. In some parts of this town, pigs and ducks have the honourable job of inspecting open sewers as a matter of course and survival. The state in this part of the city is not a protector of rights, nor a provider of services. Rather it is a perforated apparatus that because of its weaknesses very selectively dispenses law and order. Otherwise, vigilantes rule the roost, funeral societies deal with the costs of transporting the dead back home, merry-go-rounds are the accepted form of micro-finance, and term *jua kali* is both literal and a main source of livelihood.

In the shanty town, the state operates in a strange manner. If it really wants to get hold of a criminal, the state comes in full force and gets that person. So the state is actually very powerful when it chooses to be, but such power is only exercised occasionally and selectively in relation to those that are considered most dangerous. In other words, if you wrong the state, they will find you. If very many of you wrong the state, they will put a blanket curfew for a few days but if one or all of you want help from the state, then patience must become not a virtue, but a permanent state of being.

The two worlds are of course very distinct. They are separated by different linguistic grammar, concentrations of bad and good smells, paved surface areas, type and health of vehicles. In the everyday life of a pedestrian from the shanty town, entry into the post-card is signified by crossing a boundary of shoe-shiners that ring it. More than any other city in East Africa, Nairobi is perfectly reflects this post-card image. Uhuru Highway to the west, Haile Selaisse Road on the south, Moi Avenue to the east and University Way to the north frame the four corners of its post-cards. There is no denying that you get elements of the same post-card dotted around the city. Like in Mexico City, Ibadan or Lusaka, shoe-shiners are a staying fixture on the periphery of the postcard.

This army of shoe-shiners, like elsewhere in the world, play at least three different roles. The first is aesthetic gate-keeping of the post-card. By polishing shoes, shoe-shiners in fact are involved in removing those things that are not allowed into the post-card. They are like landscapers who remove all debris from a particular location to allow the aesthetically desired landscape to take shape. Simply put, they implement the social rule that those who go to the city, must look un-dusty,
un-muddy and prosperous. This of course is not to suggest that people should stop polishing their shoes, because that would kill an industry.

The second thing shoe-shiners are doing is cashing in on the aspirational yearnings of sojourners to the post-card, in the process making a living for themselves and enriching a massive economy of the aspirational. They make money because they sell aspiration as a cheap, buyable and immediately dispensable commodity, which can also mute the dusty and muddy after-effects of not owning a car in a partially paved city. So after paying a small fee, and persevering through the brief ritual, shoe-wearers walk into the city looking like part and parcel of the post-card. They have also bought freedom from accusing eyes that tell them that they do not belong here. The really polished ones know that it is not “in” to carry a newspaper around, because carrying a newspaper confirms that you do not own a car whose back seat is the newspaper’s proper location.

The third role that shoe-shiners play is to remind us of the linkages between the post-card city and the shanty town. Because why else would there be a predictable income in shoe-shining? It is what makes you reflect on the efforts by governments to “beautify” the city, a rationale that sits comfortably with the improvement of security in cities. This even seems to have becomes the raison d’être of city authorities. The appeal of the post-card city thus escapes the limits of popular mindsets and also afflicts the bureaucrats. Within the post-card city, cigarette butts may not be thrown anyhow, hawking is not allowed, businesses must be licensed and, if people did it as frequently as they do it outside this post-card, public urination would be a capital offence. The city’s army is unleashed on the street everyday to police behaviour in the bounds of the post-card.

The performance of this choreography goes further up to the political level, where post-card images of the city have also acquired significant political purchase. It has become a matter of routine practice to evict “prostitutes”, “vagrants” and “idlers” from the streets of our cities, ostensibly to market the country internationally, and in the case of recent Mombasa marathon. There is nothing wrong with enhancing a city’s beauty, or improving security, but the assumption that these groups of persons are what will devalue the city is what again attests to the footprint of colonialism. It reminds one of that dark joke of Idi Amin clearing the streets of Kampala of the disabled and beggars to make the city look good.

More poignantly though, the buying of this post-card takes us back to colonial days where access to the city was limited to the chosen few. One has no choice but to remember that what our post-card city is now is that portion of land that was designed for the colonial civil servants.
The future of East Africa’s cities must transcend the postcard and its attached shanty towns; they must become the locus of the region’s creative energies, a place where all East Africans can enjoy and contribute to the liberating effects of urban life.

**PART 2: THE FEEL AND FLAVOUR OF URBAN LIFE IN EAST AFRICA**

**Not all cities will benefit from rising urbanization (by Tann vom Hove, November 28, 2008)**
http://www.citymayors.com/habitat/habitat08-urbanization.html

“In the case of Africa, the report notes that the capitals and primary cities on the continent have the highest growth rate. For example, Niamey, Niger; Dar es Salaam, Tanzania; and Lomé, Togo, all grew at an annual rate of 4 per cent or more, while Kigali, the capital of Rwanda, experienced a soaring annual population growth of 8.6 per cent from 2000 to 2005. The authors of the report caution that such urban primacy and concentration of a significant proportion of the national urban population in one city could be bad for business – it distorts the economy, creates imbalances in the distribution of populations and resources and gives rise to different forms of socio-economic disarticulation.”

**Help! Da Slum is coming to Da Full Stop and I’m being driven to despair (by Jenerali Ulimwengu, April 5, 2010)**
http://www.theeastafrican.co.ke/opOrEd/comment/-/434750/892658/-/view/printVersion/-/wo4mwjz/-/index.html

“I live in a city that I’m convinced will one day wake up to find that it can no longer move. Yes, Dar es Salaam has been called many a derogatory name, such as Da Slum, Dark Slum, etc, speaking to the rubbish on the pavements or the frequent power outages.

But now it looks like the growing congestion on the city’s roads is a real menace and may result in one day people leaving their homes, turning that last corner before hitting the main road, and lo and behold: Dar Stop. No movement. Then we will have the leisure of sitting the morning out, and maybe part of the afternoon before a rescue plan is worked out and we can all go... home, there to stay.

Reasons abound for this state of affairs, but one is rather obvious to a layman like me: There are just too many motor vehicles for our roads, which have never been of first class quality in the first place...Every day, hundreds of new cars are released onto our alley-like roads, mostly luxurious little toys or even more luxurious super jalopies with engines fit to run a manufactory.

Anyone who is anyone seems to feel incomplete unless they own one of these, so that if you asked someone on the streets of Dar whether they knew Jenerali, the reply would in the form of the question: What car does he drive? Here, you must drive or be deleted.
No wonder, then, that people who economically should belong to the lumpen proletariat have now constituted a brand-new class of their own: The lumpen motocariat, those who manage to beg, steal or borrow to acquire a vehicle but must depend on some benefactor for fuel, and when the thing breaks down, they just don’t know where to go...

Fewer cars on our roads will be a major boost for our economy and mental health: Less stress, less pollution and less rage welling inside our frustrated motorists. An efficient public bus system is a must. We may also want to institute other measures that have worked elsewhere, such as congestion tax, priority lanes for cars carrying more than two people etc. Otherwise, start carrying your drink, a sandwich and a book.”

**Kampala Hills will murder thousands (by Nakyeswa Kuwero Bwanika, March 5, 2010)**
http://news.jonzu.com/z_middle-east_kampala-hills-will-murder-thousands.html

“...One day Mutundwe hill, Kinawataka, Naguru, Banda, Kazo and other hills in and around Kampala, if unplanned excavations for stones, earth, and roads combined with unplanned human settlements on hills does not stop some of these hills will one day become deadly bulldozers that will sweep away thousands of people into valleys....The excavation is so bad that tonnes of mud on a regular basis floods the valleys below them ending up down stream.

Once upon a time Lubigi that now is a mere stream was as wide as from the Northern bypass to the road coming from Kalerwe through Bwaise to Wakiso! The wetland is now heavily built and politician claim deepening the streambed will solve natures engineering design!

Motorised vehicles, and thousands of diesel power generators, in a closed area, are emitting tonnes of improperly, burned fossil fuels. The toxic gases, are seen hanging in air, on cold days, early morning hours or on very hot seasons, on highly trafficked streets. The National Environment Building on Jinja Road, has turned black as a result!

Schools, churches, medical centres are struggling for space with bars, brothels and slums, breeding rare types of behavioural patterns!

Constitutionally, and medically there’re adequate reasons, to declare Kampala a Disaster Zone.”

**Kibera - It’s Rich City Folks Who Need Slums Most (Charles Onyango-Obbo, July 8, 2009)**
http://allafrica.com/stories/200907080947.html

“I too used to get all mooshy-wooshy about slums, until a University of Nairobi professor cured me of the fuzzy-headedness at a conference in Nairobi last year. The conference had reached the point where everyone was warning about the crisis that East Africa’s cities, particularly Nairobi, will face from the explosion of the slums. The violence witnessed in the slums during the [2008] post-election violence was the warning, the arguments went.

The university don got up and said the slums were a ‘necessary evil’, and a very important ‘transitional phenomenon’ and ‘conveyor belt’ that feed a city the population it needs to survive.

If we didn’t have slums, then people from the countryside would never move to the city. Many good people frown upon this migration to the cities from the countryside, but it is misplaced.

Not everyone who lives in a slum ends up there. Some eventually move to the slightly better working class areas, and then to the suburbs. They might join the police, army, or improve themselves slowly. But eventually, several make it. Some of them get to be MPs and ministers, and one day one of these people who started out in a slum could become president.
There are slums because cities in poor Third World countries can’t survive without them. Take the watchman who is paid KShs. 5,000 (US$ 58). At that low wage, the middle class can afford to hire a watchman for day and another for night. If there were no slums, and the cheapest accommodation a watchman could find was KShs. 5,000 a month, and all his other expenses were up accordingly, then the lowest a watchman or house help (‘house girl’, to use the politically incorrect word) would be paid is KShs. 50,000. At that wage, the middle class wouldn’t afford watchmen, house helps and nannies for their children.

Slums, therefore, are vehicles through which the urban poor subsidise its middle class. One could argue that the slums also explain why Nairobi is the biggest city in East Africa and has the region’s largest and richest middle class – because it also has the largest number of slums and slum population to subsidise it.”

City where flower-pots are more valuable than people (by Rasna Warah, July 11, 2010)

http://allafrica.com/stories/201007120302.html

“One of the reasons I decided to leave Nairobi and move to a small town on the Kenyan coast is because I couldn’t stand the schizophrenic, colonial nature of the city.

Though I miss the fine dining, the cultural events, the great shopping and the beautiful weather, I don’t miss the fear, violence and extremes of wealth and poverty that characterise life in the city.

Though I was born in Nairobi, and have spent a large part of my adulthood there, I have been finding it increasingly difficult to reconcile the fact that the Nairobi I inhabited was not shared by a majority of the city’s residents.

Nairobi definitely suffers from a bipolar disorder characterised by extremes of order and disorder, legality and illegality.

This is a city where it is illegal to spit or urinate in public in one part of the city, but where, in another part, people have no choice but to use “flying toilets” when they need to relieve themselves.

It is a city where, as Amnesty International reported last week, women and girls living in slums are too scared to use communal toilets at night for fear of being raped by their neighbours.

The report, titled “Insecurity and Indignity: Women’s Experiences in the Slums of Nairobi”, states that many women and girls are literally prisoners in their own homes because they are too scared to walk to a latrine after dark.

As a result, many have no choice but to urinate and defecate in plastic bags, also known as “flying toilets”.

Nairobi is a city where you can be arrested for “sitting on a flower pot” in the central business district, but also where children play in and around raw sewage because they live in neighbourhoods that lack basic sanitation.
It is a city where council askaris (police) can take you to court for making too much noise, but where the screams of women being beaten or killed by their spouses are unheard. It is a city where watchmen are being paid KShs. 5,000 to guard buildings worth KShs. 50 million.”

PART 3: THE FINAL WORD

Introducing Juba - East Africa’s forthcoming new capital city!

From the ruins of war a new city is emerging. Juba, the historical trade route river port city on the Nile is the largest and most developed city in the semi-autonomous region of South Sudan. Formerly a shantytown of tin and thatch houses, Juba is now is booming, and with estimated population of over a million people. A 2006 estimate of Juba’s population was approximately 250,000. Thus in a space of just under 5 years, its has quadrupled its population. Juba is naturally located to connect Sudan with Kenya, Uganda and the Democratic Republic of Congo.

Juba’s fastest growing economic activities are in construction, aviation, hospitality and education. This growth is attributed mostly to annual oil revenues of approximately USD 800 million received by the government of South Sudan. Cross border trade is vibrant. Imported food (fruits and vegetables), mobile phones, motorcycles, beer, electrical and household items from Kenya and Uganda are lowering the price of goods in the market and improving welfare in Juba. A number of East African firms, including banks, insurance companies and airlines, are participating in Juba’s growth.

Chinese construction companies account for the largest share of Juba’s infrastructural development. While much work has been done to provide the city with power and roads, a lot more is needed. Road transportation remains a major challenge during the March to October long rains. Security continues to improve, despite the almost ubiquitous presence of small arms, a legacy of the long war. Social services such as health and education also need significant investment in order to adequately serve Juba’s population. According to Wikipedia there were, as of 2009, three paved roads in Juba, one which was recently re-surfaced in July 2009. The main one is a concrete road, built by the British in the 1950s. Air connections are also improving – as of December 2009 there were daily flights from Nairobi’s International “Jomo Kenyatta Airport” operated by three companies, daily flights from Khartoum by one one company and weekly flights with Entebbe and Addis Abeba.

Optimism about Juba’s future is so great that it has been tipped to become the ‘Dubai of East Africa’. In January 2011, Juba may well be East Africa’s newest capital city, should the people of South Sudan choose full independence from the north in the forthcoming referendum.
**JUBA NOTES**

**King Kong debarks in Juba**


In January 2009, a new cinema opened in Juba, replacing the old tin-shack cinema that had served patrons faithfully, albeit a bit noisily until then. The opening show ‘King Kong’ was rapturously greeted by the audience, many for whom the big-screen experience was a first-time event. But with tickets priced anywhere between $10-20, many Juba residents will perhaps have to be content with the old tin-shack.

**Hail the Cuban-Jubans**

http://bit.ly/95lUvV

In the 1980s, at the height of the civil war in South Sudan, some 600 Southern Sudanese left to go study in Cuba. Some 100 of them have returned – graduates in diverse fields ranging from accounting to medicine to engineering. Their skills are badly needed by their country. But they also brought with them influences from Havana – salsa music, Cuban culinary delights and the Spanish language.

**Juba Heebie-Jeebies**


The Sudan Tribune is one of South Sudan’s many online newspapers that keeps Southern Sudanese around the world informed about what is going on in their homes. It has a lively commentary section that gives a unique insight into what some Southern Sudanese think about their country and Juba in particular. Views on the cost of utilities, crumbling and inadequate infrastructure and the suitability of its location as capital. Brevity might not be the authors’ strongest points, but reading them, the sense of need can certainly be felt.

**Life in Juba**


According to Rachel Zedek in her article ‘Boom time in Southern Sudan’

“Since the 2005 Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA), more than 150 life-support camps have sprung up across Juba. The range of accommodation includes large safari tents along the River Nile or the ‘4-star’ luxury mobile trailers of the Sahara Camp, equipped with en-suite bathrooms, TV, DVD players, catering services, air conditioning, 22-hour electricity and hot showers—a real luxury in Juba. These camps complement the new multi-storey hotels like Logalia House and Beijing Juba Hotel; both expensive but clean and efficient”.

Juba is home to an expanding number of expatriates who provide some of the badly needed skills to keep the nascent state of South Sudan on its feet. The authors of the articles indicated in the links above provide an insight into a rapidly changing city. The images (Skyscraper City and Flickr) are perhaps more poignant in that they allow us to see for ourselves this evolution. And for those who are convinced that they would like to see Juba with their own eyes, the Juba Travel Guide – the only travel guide for Juba – unlikely to disappoint (see http://bit.ly/9XX2rh).