

# **Evolution of Spatial Planning in Zanzibar and its Influence**

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**Key Words:** Development of Spatial Planning, Urban Growth, Planning Issues

## **SUMMARY:**

Zanzibar Town was developed as the coastal Swahili town dominated by the Arab and Asia merchants brought by the monsoons. Zanzibar has experienced different stages in spatial developments that had positive and negative dimension to living environment. In 19th century, Zanzibar started to develop spatial planning programs for improving sanitation and recreation areas of the Stone town. The main objective of that planning scheme was to create spaces for circulations and improving health situation of the urban environment. The source of the spatial planning existing in Zanzibar today is growth trend of the Zanzibar town where many planning issues raised and planners found its resolutions. Planning legislations were enacted and planning principles were laid down, which are still in use today.

This paper briefs on planning stages that Zanzibar has gone through and it outlines the spatial development changes that took place from time to time. Some attempts that have been taken to solve some of the planning issues raised during the changes are also discussed. Finally, it recommends on the essential needs for sustainable essence of the spatial planning particularly to the list-developed countries, which are much more affected with informal urban developments.

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## **1. INTRODUCTION**

The context of spatial planning refers to the natural phenomena in which human beings arrange or organise physical features in such a manner that they may accomplish their socio-economic and recreation activities comfortably. Whenever such organisation fails to fulfil the set goals of socio-economic or environmental or what ever; or when its outcomes and or impacts happen to affect the target goals then new ideas of re-organising features or put in new features emerge; and that is new evolution takes place to overcome issues raised from the existing or previous plans.

Zanzibar spatial development was emerged to accommodate trade desire for both residents and foreigners. A small town of about one Square Kilometres were enough to satisfy the trade demand of that time. The features of the town was organised with narrow streets, tall buildings, parks and market as well as beautiful harbour. Almost all waste water and sanitation were disposed direct to the sea (Indian Ocean – Zanzibar Channel).

The city of Zanzibar was not accounted of very great importance in the past, and it was not until the advent of the Oman Arabs to the Island in early eighteenth century and the subsequently exploitation of central of Central Africa by them, and later by the Great Power of Europe, that the town of Zanzibar may be said to have become famous till to date.

## **2. GROWTH TREND OF THE ZANZIBAR TOWN AND EVOLUTION OF SPATIAL PLANNING**

According to H. V. Lancaster in *A Study in Tropical Town Planning – 1923*, in the middle of seventeenth century, Zanzibar town was only occupied by few fishermen's huts on the sandy point known as Shangani<sup>1</sup> and a ruined building which had been used as a church and residential quarters by the Portuguese. Due to the nature of the place with less human destructions there was no impact to the existed environment and place was so cool and safe for her habitat.

In the beginning of eighteenth century some improvements were made that included establishment of the Zanzibar port, which enabled big ships to anchor close to the land. That stage attracted foreign traders from Arabia and India to approach the town due to that port and its conveniences within a short distance of many mainland towns, and country in the vicinity of the new town was infinitely richer and more fertile than the arid coral in the old

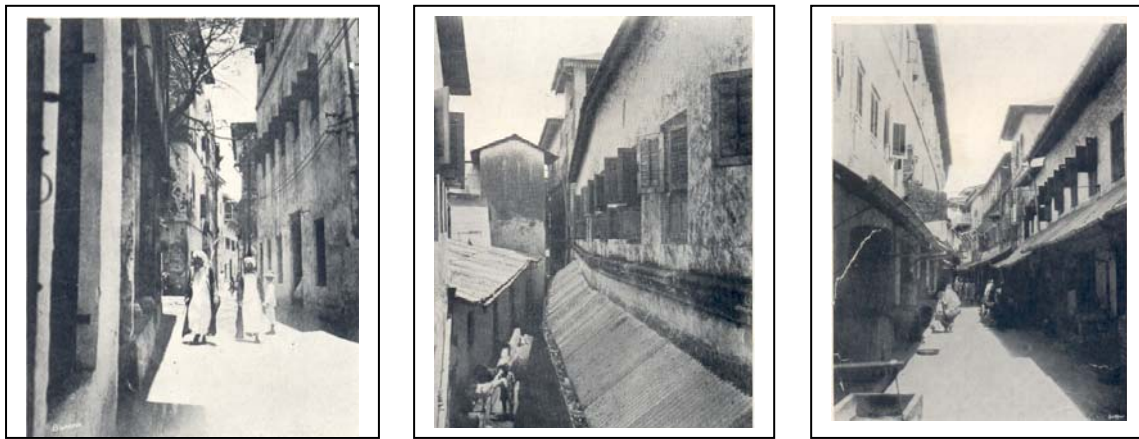
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<sup>1</sup> The name Shangani was derived from the Shaghaya, a district on the mainland coast westward of Zanzibar (H. V. Lancaster, *A Study in Tropical Town Planning – 1923*)

towns of Unguja-Ukuu<sup>2</sup> and Kizimkazi<sup>3</sup>. Hence a new residential area was established in which others new comers from Patta and Mafia settled.

In 1710 and during the ruling of Oman, the fishing village (Shangani) had blossomed forth into a large native town, through which were dotted the stone-built houses of the wealthier Arabs and Indians merchants. By 1799 the town was developed with few houses and huts straw mat which are neat.

After some times, (in 1811) more stone buildings were constructed by Arabs and merchants however the town was spread-out with plaited coconut – leaves huts. The town was square in shape with a tower in each of its corners for outworks towards the sea. During that time, Zanzibar town was somehow unique due to its characteristics of cleanliness and most inoffensive. The town was a maze of tortuous and narrow streets,



Typical Residential and Bazaar Narrow Streets of the Stone Town

## 2.1 Common Problems Faced the Town

In-migration continued to overload the existed residential area while there were in-effective building regulations and development guidelines from which developer had to be bond with. Thus resulted to some planning issues such as:

- High population density over the small developed area
- Poor hygienic condition due to haphazard disposal of solid and liquid wastes and also resulted the spread of the tropical disease such as malaria and tuberculosis (which demanded strong attention; and disease like bubonic plague, cholera and hookworms (which need to be considered in any spatial planning).



Typical Pit latrine

<sup>2</sup> The Administrative quarter of the Native Ruler of Central Unguja in 17<sup>th</sup> Century

<sup>3</sup> The Persian primitive city situated at South of Zanzibar Island before 17<sup>th</sup> Century

- Poor circulations and improper accessibility due to lack of open spaces and access roads
- Poor environmental aesthetic due to un-organised structures

By 1832 a big changes of the city took place whereby it became the capital of Oman and present Government outlined measures to address the situation that included:

- Taking ant-mosquito measures such as eradication of all nearer permanent breeding places nearby the occupied town and rendering flight of mosquito from plantations to town,
- Building regulations to ensure new development on the other side of the town (Eastern side of the creek road) is provided with sufficient open spaces to secure light and air as well as circulation within and surrounding the premises.
- Disposal of the sewage waste and proper storm-water drains as well as collection of solid waste.

The outcomes of the above improvements enhanced the growth of the city and emerging of Ng'ambo residential areas beside the Creek road (opposite of the Stone-town). The city population reached up to 12,000 inhabitants in 1832. The new Ng'ambo area was dominated with soil-mud and tree poles huts, covered with coconut palm leaves roofs. These native developments were temporary structures regarded less planning and organising of physical features. The linear development spread along main roads towards country sides.

In 1890 Zanzibar became a British Protectorate and two years later it was declared as a free port. Apart from the building regulations there was no town master plan. The government was more concern on controlling permanent residential development in Ng'ambo areas (old un-planned that emerged since 1840's) as a measure for future planned developments.

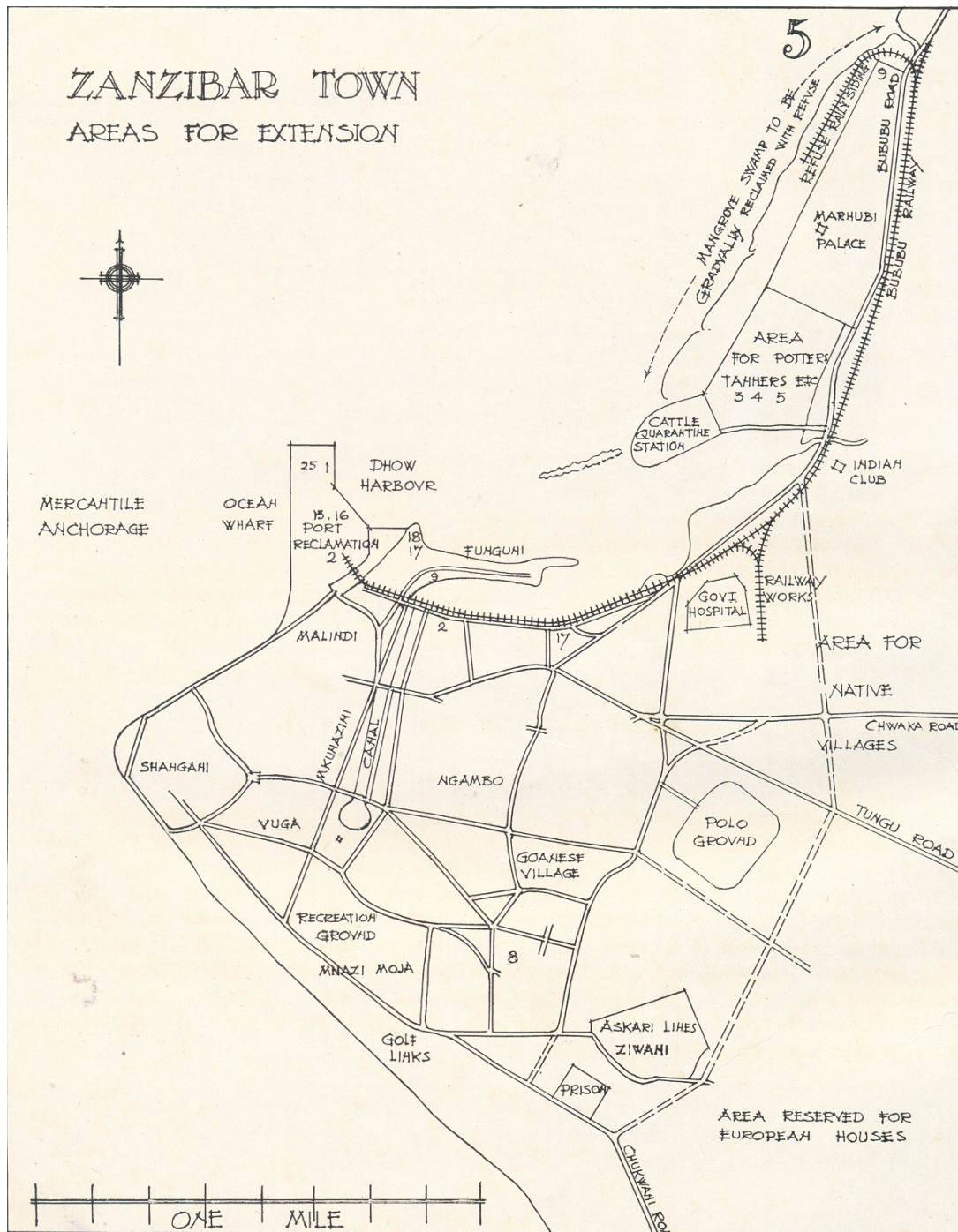
## 2.2 The First Master Plan 1923

The plan was developed (A Study in Tropical Town Planning – 1923, by H. V. Lancaster). It was a plan to address problems of sanitation and open spaces in the stone town at large. The town population were about 35,000 inhabitants distributed in both stone town and Ng'ambo area whereby Ng'ambo area dwelled-in by more than 70% of the total population. The area was growing haphazardly just some one had to get place for living; initially temporarily but ended as for good.



The former Creek road separates Stone Town Area on the Western side and Ng'ambo Area on the





### 2.3 The Town Scheme 1958

The scheme was prepared to address the transportation issue in the Stone town by Geoffrey Mill. The plan was prepared followed the 1955 (Town and Country Planning Decree)

guidelines and resulted into development of several semi-planned<sup>4</sup> settlements in Ng'ambo areas.

The third town master plan was prepared after the Revolutionary of 1964 of Zanzibar. It was done by the team from the German Democratic Republic in 1968; the priority area of the plan was to improve the Ng'ambo areas accessibility and provision of public utility at communal levels like stand water tapes, street lights and storm water drainage and sewerage. At the time being, the town accommodated about 68,000 dwellers. From the plan, housing schemes of Kilimani and Kikwajuni were developed.

The Revolutionary Government of Zanzibar on-the other hand started to implement the Housing Policy of providing decent housing for her people and managed to develop houses in urban and rural areas. This exercise resulted the demolition of several houses in Ng'ambo areas of Michenzani (Kiswandui/Mwembetanga/Kisimamajongoo/Mwembekisonge/Miembeni), and were replaced by the Block of Flats known as Development Houses of Michenzani. The construction exercise of this scheme is going-on till today though at very slow pace. Among the impacts of this exercise is the shifting of the Ng'ambo dwellers further to the urban periphery where public services are yet provided. On the other hand, the exercise attracted new urban migrants from outside the city that resulted to pressurise the existed services and resources. More dwellings emerged on which followed no building regulations or development guidelines.

## **2.4 The Zanzibar Town Master Plan 1982**

The team of expertise from the People Republic of China involved in the preparation of this plan. The plan was concentrated on issues of:

- Living in sub-standard areas (by 68% of urban dwellers)
- Increasing of squatter settlements
- Deterioration of the sanitation in flooding areas
- Sea/coast pollution due to city sewage discharging.
- Dilapidation of the stone-town structures due to lack of maintenance

The plan did therefore:

- Lay-down urban development guidelines which included- reflection of the physical planning with the existed economic situation and gave consideration of the future development; full utilisation of the existed facilities; use of high-yield agricultural land to the minimum as possible; and to respect the custom and habit of the Zanzibar people.
- Establish town boundaries and possible extensions for controlling its development.
- Establish new organised and re-organised urban land use for Town centre, Stone-town, Industrial and warehouses areas, Residential areas (existing and proposed), Public open spaces and seafront, Public utilities, and other uses.

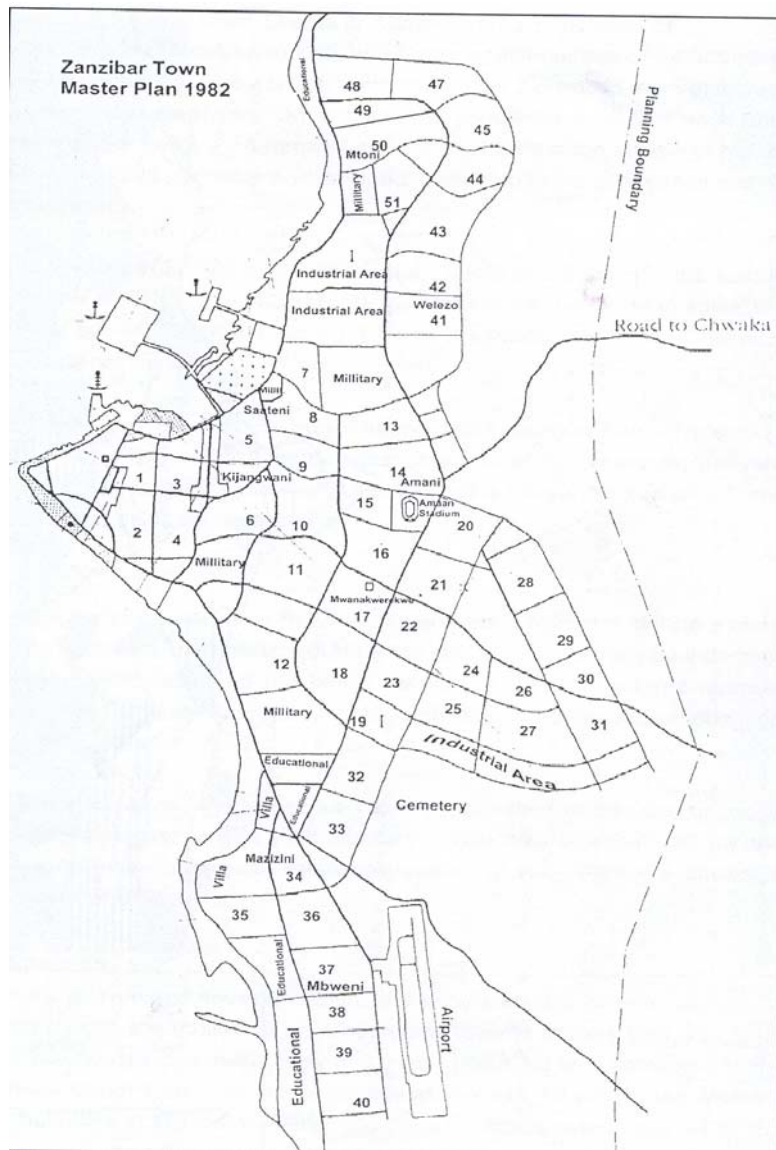
The first stage of implementation of the plan came out with the following proposals:

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<sup>4</sup> Settlements constructed in-line patterns, followed the existed building guidelines and regulation and provided with public services at minimum but extended with un-planned/organized structures

- New development of residential neighbourhoods in NU 20 (Amani), NU 21 (Magogoni), NU 41 and NU 42 (Welezo), and NU 49 (Mtoni)
- New Industrial area at Maruhubi and Warehouse at Maruhubi and Welezo
- Cemetery yard at Mwanakwerekwe
- Refuse dump at South of the Amani Stadium
- Ring road to connect proposed neighbourhoods and existed roads
- Improved water supply system by adding new water source at Kaburi-Kikombe
- On-site sanitary management and later-on town sewerage systems and storm water ditches
- Solving of flooding problem in Kwahani, Main market and Government Printing Press.

The plan was implemented successful by 60% though it was expected to be reviewed by 1986 but due to economic constrain it could not be done. The preset planned development seen in Zanzibar Municipality is the result of this plan whereby other neighbourhoods were developed like NU 22- Mwanakwerekwe, NU 23 – Mombasa, NU 18-Mpendae, NU 34-Mazizini, NU 40- Chukwani, NU 50-Mtoni and Bububu/Kidichi



The shortfalls of this plan included

- Un-integration of land use plan and public utilities like water supply, electricity supply, storm water drainages, solid waste collection points, access roads, etc.
- The planned settlements lack some of these utilities and the provided ones are neither sufficient nor efficient or proper installed. This is because these facilities are provided by the Central Government and due to lack of fund. Its implementation is far from satisfactory.



- Change of land use to residential due to high demand of residential plots for instance open spaces and playing grounds, etc
- Abandon of development regulations and guidelines that resulted to poor structures and organisation of spaces.

The preliminary target of the plan was to minimise distance of inhabitants to their socio-economic activities and recreations, the plan did also meant to control urban development for future town expansion. Actually this target today is not achievable due to the fact that all areas close to the planned neighbourhoods have been encroached by informal residential developments. These types of developments have been emerging even in the undeveloped planned neighbourhoods such as Mtoni, Bububu, and Tomondo. Among the reasons for these developments are proximity of obtaining public utilities provided in the planned areas and informal land acquisition for expecting compensation or pre-occupying of land parcels before planning.

On the other hand, the implementation capacity of institution responsible for implementation is low that it can not provide adequate surveyed land parcels according to the existing demand. At the same time some of people who are provided with surveyed plots are not capable of developing the plots; instead, they are selling to other people and squatting to the nearby sites (ie new informal settlements close to the planned settlements).

The existed informal settlements could not be improved due to the economic situation notwithstanding increased new housing demand and constantly expanding urban area in all directions while the existing public utilities and services continue to deteriorate and lose its efficiency.

## **2.5 The National Land Use Plan of 1995**

This is the plan and policy document for coordinating land use development of the whole Zanzibar. The plan aimed at integrating physical, environmental and economic planning for effective and sustainable land use development. The main areas dealt with this plan include growth of economy, balance development of socio-political/administration at all levels and localising of land use planning to the local bodies.

Among main issues that the plan identified are:

- Unbalanced settlement system and un-even distribution of economic activities, social services and recreation activities that Zanzibar Town is highly provided than other areas.
- Uncontrolled settlement development; persistent growth of unplanned settlements, uneconomic land use, intrusion of settlements in good agricultural land, land environmental degradation and pollution risk.
- Poor capacity to manage urban development (ie planning capacity, managing development and development control, provision and coordinating the provision of public utilities and social services into the implementation of physical plans).

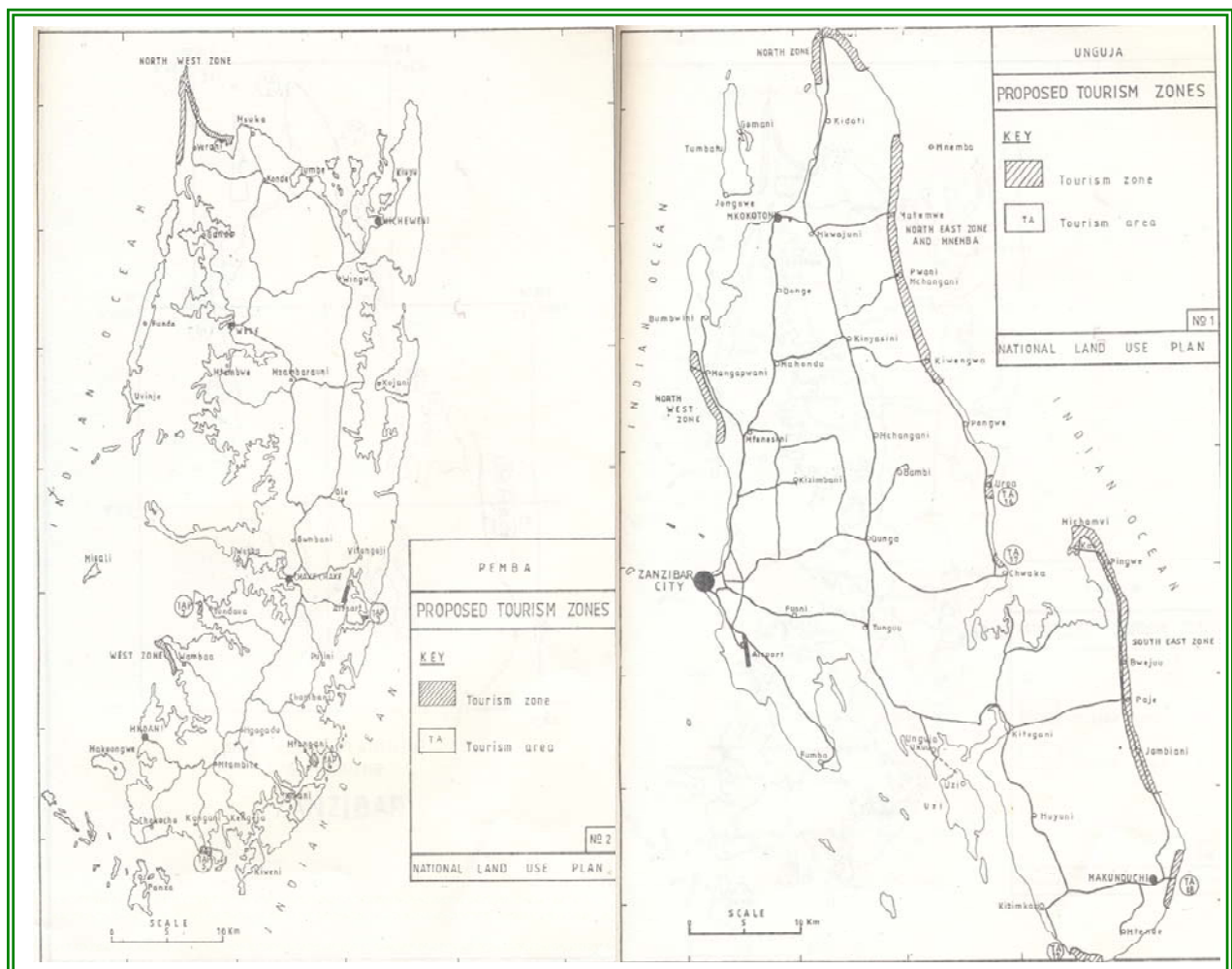
The plan proposed measures to reduce urban pressure caused by rural-urban migration by proposing planned village settlements and promoting of regional growth an service centres,



trading and service centre of District levels as well as rural trading and service centres in various areas.

## 2.6 The Tourism Zoning Plan 1996

Is the plan and strategy document and also is the product of the National Land Use Plan aiming at distributing the national economy evenly with respect of preventing distraction of natural environment and resources at large. The plan objective was to contribute to the implementation of Economic Reform Policy of Zanzibar. The plan zoned potential areas for tourism development, which are also less potential for agricultural development and enhancing employment opportunities for the residents of such areas. The plan proposed 19 areas in Unguja with total area of 400 hectares and 6 areas in Pemba covered the total area of 83 hectares for developing tourism industry. The Stone town was not included in this plan because it had its own Master Plan prepared by the UNDP. This strategy might effectively reduce the rural-urban migration rate which does also means will control the urban population and other consequences that may influence.



The implemented plan showed great achievements in enhancing employment opportunities. The planned areas could be turned to economic zones while some of the areas before were just marginalised due to its nature (ie coral-rag areas). Public utilities could be obtained in these areas some thing that had never been provided before. On the other hand, these areas became more attractive to outsiders who were looking for employment opportunities as a result of growing of tourism industry. Hence, the areas started to accommodate unexpected dwellers (such as East coast of Zanzibar). The new comers managed to acquire land informally and other resources as well as hijacking of employment opportunities that was initially aimed for natives living in those areas. Apart from that, the areas are continuing to be developed haphazardly with temporarily coconut palm leaves huts, poor sanitation, circulation and accessibility. All these informal developments are emerging near by hotel developments which mean the areas now accommodate more people than was planned.

## **2.7 Proposition Paper on the Upgrading of Ng'ambo Areas in the Zanzibar Municipality - 1998 by ZSP:**

Despite of all land use plans prepared to improve the situation of Zanzibar town and other areas, problems still persist and spatial plans are still coming-up. The International Sustainable City Program through Zanzibar Sustainable Program carried-out an attempt to reduce Zanzibar Municipality problems. Issues outlined by this plan included high population density in urban area (Size of household in Ng'ambo area reached 6.7 in 1998 while average of the Nation was 6.2); Insufficient and inefficient public services (eg. missing central drainage system and the existing storm water drains were not functioning properly, in adequate clean and safe water supply, improper collection and disposal of solid wastes, etc) The area is also faces environmental issues such as haphazard housing construction, land degradation due to illegal sand and soil mining, water contamination due to encroachment of catchment's areas, and flooding in various places of the city.

The main objective of this plan was to improve the health situation of Ng'ambo area through a strategy of improving infrastructure services. The implementation strategy set was to involve the community at all levels as possible in planning, decision making, and government assisted implementation

## **3. SPATIAL PLANNING MECHANISM AND LEGAL FRAMEWORK**

### **3.1 The Town and Country Planning Decree (Cap.85, 1955)**

The only existing statute on land use planning is the Town and Country Planning Decree of 1955 (cap. 85). The Decree technically is quite old and outdated but some parts are still valid and are applied in practice. The present planning procedures have its roots from this Decree and have been made and passed during the British colonial time and since then no amendments have been done. The existing political change has made the Degree difficult to put into force. The Decree gave more emphasis to the development of towns and small towns. It has been utilised since 1958 when The Town Scheme was prepared. The Decree has been

derived from the planning issues raised in the primal growth of the Zanzibar town so could be able to tackle all most all planning issues.

According to the Decree, the planning procedures start with the declaration of a planning area by the Minister responsible for planning. Then the Planning Authority is formed for preparation of planning schemes, surveying and boundaries demarcation. The scheme is then approved by the Government [Minister] after it has been displayed to the public for comments and opinion or even might reject, in a period of two months. Finally the scheme is put into force with or without Planning Authority making alterations to the plan. After the scheme is put into force, the planning authority may carryout parcelation of the whole area or part of it following principles prescribed in the Decree. Land titles are issued to owners of parcels who then have bound with development regulations and guidelines. Under this legislation no land development (new or repair) is allowed in the declared planning area without following the development procedures.

The Planning Authority is a responsible board in a planned area and it has a role of proving building permission for any land development; to monitor land developments, and to alter or revoke the building permissions (if this is considered expedient). According to the Decree the construction shall start within twelve months and completed within two years of the permission, unless a longer period is given. The planning authority may also make an agreement for regulating developments or land uses in the planning area. In a planning area, it is prohibited to build close to roads and streets without approval of the planning authority.

According to the Decree, the planning authority may issue preservation orders for trees and buildings. Tree preservation orders may be issued for protection of trees, groups of trees or woodlands. Building preservation orders may be issued for preservation building with special architectural or historic interest. Also display of advertisements may be restricted or regulated.

On the basis of the Decree, more detailed regulations have been adopted in the Town and Country Planning Regulations. Subsidiary legislations also contain orders for establishing of several planning areas. All these provisions are still valid to date.

### **3.2 Establishment of Joint Building Authority (J.B.A)**

The Joint Building Authority (J.B.A) was established since 1955 to control spatial development in the towns and small towns under the Town and Country Planning Decree of 1955 Cap, 85. The roles and functions of JBA were based on the Planning Authority functions that include providing of building permits and monitoring of land use developments in the town. It issues building or repair permits after developers submit their detailed building drawings for approval. The Authority comprised of technical experts and few selected local leaders. Each town had its own JBA team for execution of their daily activities.

J.B.A under Cap 85 of the Town and Country Planning Decree was given full mandates of planning and monitoring and also was given detailed schedules for exercising power of implementing its daily activities in bearing responsibilities of:

- preparation of planning schemes.
- development control.
- preparation of details land use plan for different uses.
- laying down procedures to acquire planning consent.
- laying down procedures of controlling pollutions, flood areas, and other uses not suitable for building development.

Presence of JBA enhanced Cap 85 to be functioning. Initially, the rate of un-authorized development was controlled in Zanzibar town though the authority had few staff to monitor all developments. As the population increased more housing development increased and the town expanded; people took that advantage to establish new informal settlements in the new Un-Planned Ng'ambo areas.

In 1969, the Town and Municipal Councils were abolished and the functions of the Planning Authorities and the JBA were automatically dissolved. The local governments were reinstalled in 1986 and during that period there was no authority to control spatial developments in the islands.

### **3.3 Department of Surveys and Urban Planning**

The Department Survey and Urban Planning in cooperation with the Department of Lands and Registration as the central government institutions bear the responsibility of planning and allocating land for various purposes under the same planning legislation (Cap 85 of Town and Country Planning Decree). The departments have the role of preparing land use plans (National and Regional, blocks and details, urban and rural Unguja and Pemba). Improvement plans for various areas are also being prepared by this institution. The question of development control, which is very essential in planned spatial development, is done by the local authorities in their jurisdictions but for the case of Zanzibar Municipality this role is also done by the Department of Lands and Survey and The Stone Town Conservation and Development Authority (in the Stone town boundaries).

### **3.4 Urban Development Control Authority (UDCA)**

On the other hand, a special committee known as Urban Development Control Authority' has been formed to approve building drawings and issue building permit. The Authority composed of member from institution dealing with urban development management such as Construction, Drains/Sewers, Health, Lands and Surveys and Urban Planning. This committee operates under the Zanzibar Municipal Council (as chair) and its mandatory power is applicable within the urban area which also includes part of the West District.

The operational aspect of these urban development mechanisms is somehow complicated due to overlapping of mandatory between organisations dealing with urban development



management and control. For instance, Within the Urban area of Zanzibar we can find Development Authorities of Zanzibar Municipal Council (ie responsible for Municipality jurisdiction), Stone town Conservation and Development Authority (responsible for Stone Town Jurisdiction), the Western District Authority (responsible for West District jurisdiction) and above all, the Department of Survey and Urban Planning and Department of Land and Registration are the responsible for the whole Urban areas and country areas since that they are acting as planning board and land development controller for the whole country. The overlapping of responsibilities provides a loophole for un-authorized developments to take place and encroachment of public lands such as open spaces. Apart from these bodies there are sectoral organisations who also in their capacity issue building permits.

## **4. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION**

### **4.1 Conclusion**

Regarding the Zanzibar town development trend, it was found that the existing spatial planning has its roots from early stages of urban developments. Although physical planning is a natural phenomenon that every human organises physical features to enhance easiness of her/his life but formal planning becomes essential to compromise between individual interests that every human might have for his/her convenience way of life. This formal planning does always regard public interests through approved legislations and guidelines. At the same time, the improved standard of living resulted from formal spatial planning means also creation of new development interests, which in one side is caused by the attractions provided within the planned areas that people who could not be accommodated in it wish for. On the other hand, people (often urban poor) who are accommodated within planned/improved areas may let their opportunities/rights of living in such areas to other people (high income) and squat in adjacent planned areas which they feel is suitable for their lifestyle. This is due to the fact that, the planned settlements are high-value areas and its development have to be bound with planning regulations, standards and guidelines, some thing that they can difficulty afford.

It is also true to say that planned development attracts new informal developments. The planned tourism development in Zanzibar is an exciting example for spatial planning ethics. The expected outcomes of improving the life of livelihoods turned to confusion. Employment opportunity has been taken to outsiders at large then it was expected; their livelihoods environment are totally changed from their culture; social and public utilities have been overloaded due to un-expected over population; and the new housing structures to these areas are so poor and indecent structurally and hygienically and they lack proper sanitation.

For the case of Legislation and Institutional framework, we can conclude that there is no further development done since 1955 whereby the Town and Country Planning Decree was enacted. The principal legislation remained the same although some regulations have been made to enhance planning procedures to take place. The Government is in a process to prepare and enact new legislations. Departments of Land and Registration and Survey and Urban Planning (under the support of the Sustainable Management of Land and Environment

Programme- SMOLE) have started to review lands and planning policies for betterment of the spatial planning in Zanzibar.

## **4.2 Recommendations**

The planning desire always exists what is needed is the capacity building to the planning and implementing agents and involvement of the stakeholders in all planning, implementing, monitoring and evaluation stages. The need for new Planning Legislations is quite vital due to environmental changes which have occurred since 1955, the existing one can no longer suite the present planning and development control needs. The effective legislation should be made by local experts them selves through stakeholders' participation. This will therefore, enhance development control measures to be affective.

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