

Highlights of the Uganda Atlas of Our Changing Environment

KAMPALA'S CHANGING ENVIRONMENT



Figure 1: Kampala City during day (left) and night (right).

Opportunities

Kampala District is estimated to cover an area of 197km² and has remained the capital city since 1969 with an annual population growth rate of 5.61%. With this growth rate, Kampala absorbs 40% of the national urban population and 4.9% of the national population (UBOS, 2002). Population has increased from 774,241 in 1991 to 1.2 million in 2002 (UBOS 2002). These population figures reflect the night populations but the estimates show that the populations double during the day because many people travel to the city for work and business and return to their homes outside the city at the end of the day. The Kampala suburbs are also experiencing rapid urbanization leading to development of satellite towns around the city. In addition the hosting of the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) in November 2007 strongly boosted the city status.

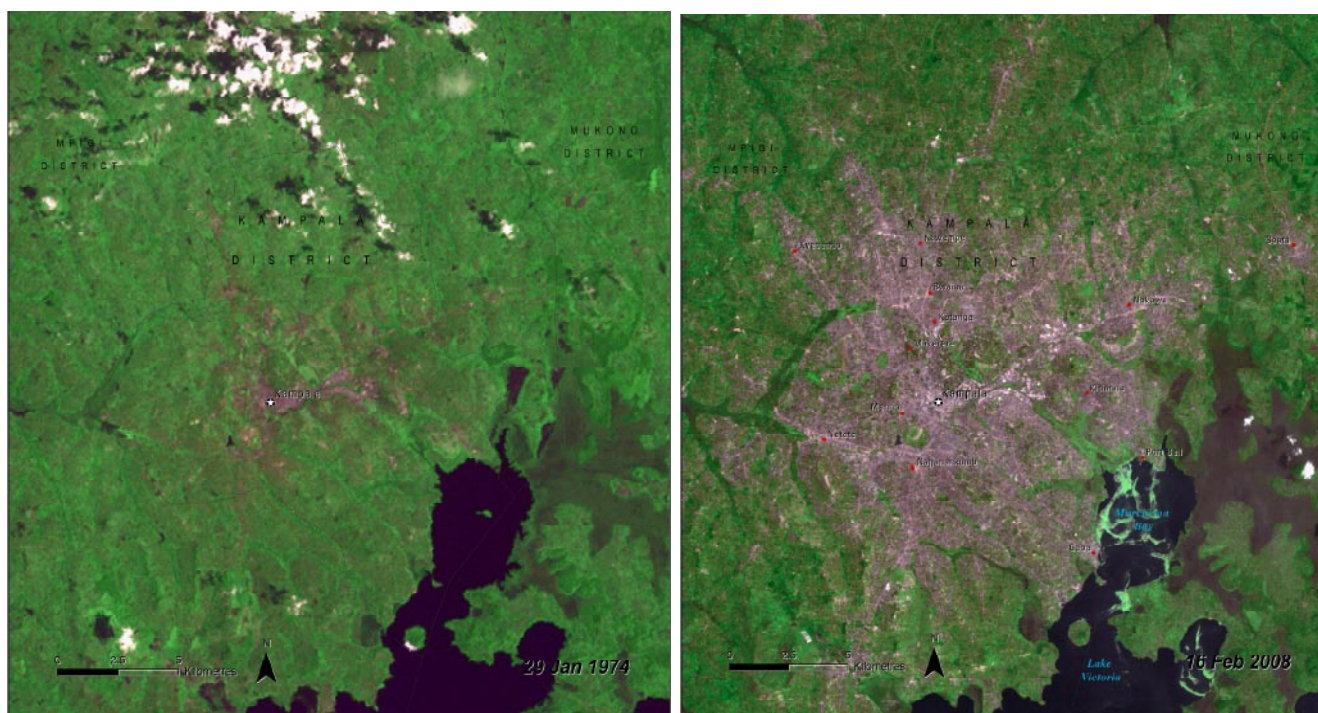


Figure 2: Expansion of Kampala City from 1973 to 2008. The waters of Lake Victoria at the Murchison Bay in Luzira were clear in 1973. By 2008 a green substance covers the bay at the mouth of Nakivubo Channel.

Threats

Floods due to unplanned settlement in water channels.

Kampala is served by two major wetland systems; namely the Nsooba – Lubigi and Nakivubo Wetland systems. These also act as the main drainage systems out of Kampala. Recent developments have seen the clearing of the buffer zones of forests and open spaces, as well as encroachment on the wetlands in favour of unplanned settlements. Most of Kampala's land surface in the built up areas is highly paved leading to reduced water infiltration which leads to generation of high storm waters. Of late storm water causes flooding in some places such as Bwaise, Kalerwe, Clock Tower and Kyambogo.

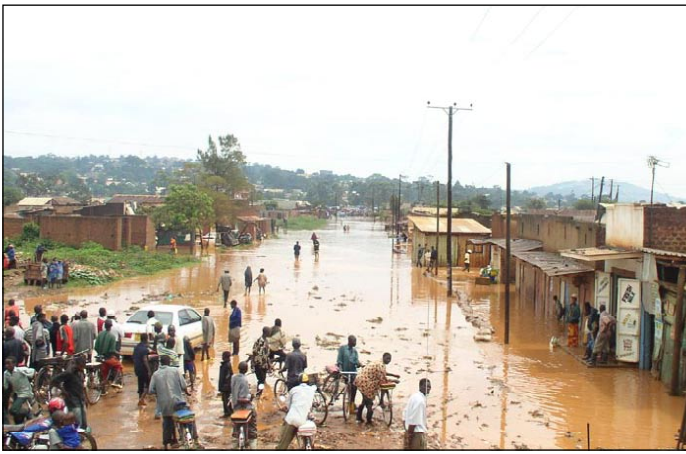


Figure 3: Unplanned settlements in a wetland in Bwaise blocking the waterways and causing floods (2007). Construction of structures in drainage channels at Zana on Kampala-Entebbe highway resulted in flooding in 2007.

Declining water quality

Overtime, Kampala has had its water quality deteriorating due to:

- Contamination of water by pit latrines.
- Frequent flooding that ends up draining the pit latrines direct into the water tables.
- Industries that have been constructed close to water ways, releasing their effluents into the water.
- The silt which is being eroded from the opened up areas and during the rains is swept down into the water sources.

Algae on Lake Victoria

The waste water from the city flows into the lake through the Nakivubo Channel, which was built to stop the lower areas of the capital from flooding. Overtime the water in the Lake Victoria has become more turbid and this has a negative impact on the fish industry since it leads to silting up of the breeding grounds for fish. A thick carpet of algae has covered Lake Victoria's Murchison Bay, causing a sickening stench in Luzira, Ggaba and Munyonyo. The algae mass, which looks like green oil paint on the lake surface, is a result of increased pollution from human disposal and industrial waste.



Figure 4: Water is green and smelly at Port Bell, Luzira (2009) and Katosi landing site in Mukono District (2004), left and right respectively.

Policy interventions

- The ongoing process of gazettement Nakivubo wetland system for water attenuation and purification needs to be finalized and enforced.
- A similar process should be undertaken for the Nsooba – Lubigi wetland system to serve as a storm water attenuation area.
- The long-term interventions therefore, would be to resettle people from the flood attenuation areas and safe guard the natural drain pattern of the City.
- There should be plans for the establishment of a wastewater treatment plant.
- The sources of silt such as roads and built up areas should be stabilized.
- Physical planning should be improved and enforced.