

Small Housing Design Bureau



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Introduction

The paper discusses the formation of the Small Housing Design Bureau which will aim at providing housing plans and also provide construction guidelines to the urban poor with land in the low cost areas to enable them have professionally designed and legal housing structures on their land. This will target the low income group that have legally acquired land in the low cost areas country wide.

1 Shelter Situation Analysis

1.1 Basic General Data

Zambia, located in south-central Africa, is a landlocked country surrounded by the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Tanzania to the north; Zimbabwe, Botswana, and the Caprivi Strip of Namibia to the south; Malawi to the east; and Angola to the west. It has an area of approximately 753,000 square kilometers and a population of about 10 million, and a total population density of approximately 13 persons per square kilometer¹. Most of Zambia is high plateau with a flat or gently undulating terrain. This high elevation makes for a subtropical climate, and average temperatures range from 17°C in July to 22°C in January.

¹ Central Statistical Office, Zambia 2000 Census

Zambia is divided into nine provinces. The capital city, Lusaka is located in Lusaka Province. Lusaka City has a population of around 1.3 million, with population densities of up to 1,500 persons per hectare and an average population density of approximately 150 persons per hectare.

The population growth rate for Zambia is 1.654% (2008 est.) (world growth rate at 2006 is 1.14%). The country also saw migration of -2.68 migrant(s)/1,000 population (2007 est.). The median age of the country is total: 16.9 years male: 16.8 years female: 17.1 years (2008 est.).

Table 1: Demography and Health

Life Expectancy	Fertility	Births	Deaths	Infants
Total Population: 38.59years	5.3 births/woman	40.52 births/1000 population	21.35 deaths/1000 population	Total: 100.96 deaths/1000 live births
Male:38.49 years				Male: 105.73/1000
Female: 38.7 years				Female: 96.04/1000

Source: World Bank 2008

Zambia's economy has experienced modest growth in recent years, with real GDP growth in 2005-07 between 5-6% per year. Privatization of government-owned copper mines in the 1990s relieved the government from covering mammoth losses generated by the industry and greatly improved the chances for copper mining to return to profitability and spur economic growth. Copper output has increased steadily since 2004, due to higher copper prices and foreign investment. In 2005, Zambia qualified for debt relief under the Highly Indebted Poor Country Initiative, consisting of approximately USD 6 billion in debt relief. Zambia experienced a bumper harvest in 2007, which helped to boost GDP and agricultural exports and contain inflation. Although poverty continues to be a significant problem in Zambia, its economy has strengthened, featuring reduction in inflation, a relatively stable currency, decreasing interest rates, and increasing levels of trade.

Debt and Aid

Debt: \$2.598 billion (31 December 2007 est.)

Aid Received: \$504 million (2007)

Labour Force

Number in labour force: 4.989 million (2007 est.)

Sectors: agriculture: 85% industry: 6% services: 9% (2004)

Unemployment: 50% (2000 est.)

GDP Facts and Figures

Currency: Zambian kwacha (ZMK) Rate: ZMK4645 to US\$1 – Bank of Zambia mid-market rate 9th September 2009

GDP: \$15.92 billion (2007 est.)

GDP Per Capita: \$1,300 (2007 est.)

GDP Real Growth: 5.3% (2007 est.)

GDP Composition: agriculture: 17.3% industry: 26.2% services: 56.5% (2007 est.)

Production Growth Rate: 7.3% (2007 est.)

Industries, Land Use and Resource Consumption

Industries: copper mining and processing, construction, foodstuffs, beverages, chemicals, textiles, fertilizer, horticulture

Land use: arable land: 6.99% permanent crops: 0.04% other: 92.97% (2005)

Exports: copper/cobalt 64%, cobalt, electricity; tobacco, flowers, cotton

Electricity Consumption: 8.655 billion kWh (2005)

Natural Gas Consumption: 0 cu m (2005 est.)

Oil Consumption: 14,000 bbl/day (2005 est.)

1.2 Shelter Related Facts and Figures

Housing Stock and Deficit

The National Housing Policy document of 1996 identified a need for more than 860,000 housing units and recommended construction of 110,000 units per year. This policy suggest that 15% of the National Budget should be spent on building houses annually, but the actual amount spent and the rate of construction have been falling below the target. In fact at present it is believed the housing deficit has since risen to well over 1.5 million houses.

Occupancy and Number of Rooms

Above 78 percent of housing units in Zambia are occupied by a single household and 1.9 percent are shared. About 6 percent of households lived as one household in many housing

units and 5.5 percent of households lived in non-residential structures. The majority of households (77 percent) lived in housing units with one living room only while 18.3 percent lived in housing units with no living room at all.

More than half (54.8 percent) live in housing units with only one bedroom. Of the housing units provided free by employer, private organizations contribute the largest percentage (47.7 percent). Of those rented from employers, the largest percent (39.9 percent) are rented from individual employers while the smallest percentage are renting from District Councils.

Table 2 : Number of Bedrooms

#	Number of Bedrooms	Percentage
1	1	54.8
2	2	27
3	3	13
4	4	3
5	0	1

Source: Central Statistical Office, 2000 National Census

Housing units in Zambia rarely have bedrooms exceeding 6.

Acquisition of Houses

Considering the method of acquisition of the housing unit for households occupying own units, the most commonly cited method was self-building. About 80 percent of housing units in Zambia are self built, 12 percent are purchased, 4 percent are acquired freely and 2.7 are inherited. Mortgaging is not so common in Zambia.

Most of the self built houses are constructed in low income settlements where the developers are unable to acquire professionally designed house plans therefore unable to acquire planning and building permission for their houses. This leads to having poorly self designed and constructed houses.

Construction Materials

The most common building materials are; Concrete, Iron Sheets, Grass Thatch, Slates, Burnt Brick, Mud Brick, Wood, Hardboard, Mud Floor, Marble, Terrazzo,

House Rental Types and Land Lease

House rentals in Zambia are generally in three forms; longer leases, quarterly or monthly payment terms. It should be noted that in line with the current Lands Act CAP 184, all land is

vest absolutely in the President. The President may alienate land to any Zambian or a non-Zambia (upon satisfying certain conditions in the Zambian laws) for not more than 99 years. This lease is renewable after the 99 years, however in case of non renewal, compensation may be given in respect of the developments that may have been carried out on the piece of land.

1.3 Housing Policy

As a way of providing a vision for the development of adequate and affordable housing for all income groups in the country, the housing policy was drawn up in 1996 after a comprehensive assessment of the housing situation in the country through a consultative process with many people and many stakeholders, throughout the country. The actions recommended in the policy document when implemented would lead to a systematic provision of shelter to all people.

1.4 Actors in Shelter Delivery and their Roles

The National Housing Authority (NHA), a parastatal, acts as the major housing developer in Zambia. The NHA falls directly under the Ministry of Local Government and Housing. It has in the past been able to attract funding from such institutions as the European Development Fund and Shelter Afrique. Its other role in the National Housing Programme is to service land for outright sale to private developers, working in partnership with local authorities where necessary. Other Ministries such as the Ministry of Works and Supply and the Ministry of Education also provide houses

The other actors are the private corporate sector, consisting primarily of building societies, other financial institutions. Building societies are expected to provide mortgage loans for house construction or outright purchase.

1.5 Shelter Design

Physical Planning for housing and indeed any other types of settlement is the mandate of the Department of Physical Planning in the Ministry of Local Government and Housing.

The population of Zambia in 2003 was estimated by the United Nations at 10,812,000, which placed it as number 73 in population among the 193 nations of the world. In that year approximately 3% of the population was over 65 years of age, with another 48% of the population under 15 years of age. There were 99 males for every 100 females in the country in 2003. According to the UN, the annual population growth rate for 2000–2005 was 1.16%,

with the projected population for the year 2015 at 12,670,000. The population density in 2002 was 13 per sq km

Gender issues are important in achieving sustainable economic growth, job creation, ensuring food security and reducing poverty. Living Condition Surveys carried out in the past have shown that persons in female headed households were more likely to be extremely poor than those in male-headed households.

2 Organisation

Role of Ministry of Local Government and Housing (MLGH):

It is recognized in Zambia that the physical planning of housing is very much a local government matter. To this end, local authorities are responsible, under the 1991 Local Government Act, for the following functions with policy guidance from MLGH:

- Creating capacity in order to provide necessary services,
- Setting local housing delivery goals,
- Creating and allocating land for housing purposes,
- Providing and maintaining infrastructure services to open up land for housing development,
- Enforcing building standards,
- Regulating land-use and controlling development,
- Establishing and managing upgrading and site and service schemes,
- Providing community and recreational facilities in residential areas,
- Constructing low-cost housing and selling at market rates.

Additionally, local planning authorities ensure that land for housing is identified and planned for in good time and that appropriate planning standards are put in place for quick and efficient development of housing.

Various agencies are responsible for providing, operating, and maintaining infrastructure and services in Zambia's urban areas. At the national level, the MLGH, through its Department of Physical Planning and Housing, is responsible for identifying "housing and improvement areas." The MLGH's Department of Housing and Infrastructure Development is responsible for the management of programmes that support infrastructure development, improvement, and rehabilitation.

Local authorities are responsible for the management and provision of council-owned housing and informal settlements.

My office is involved in the planning, coordination and implementation of municipal service provision programmes and projects. This involves amongst other things, housing construction.

3 Shelter Problem

After the re-introduction of multi-party politics and the liberisation of the Zambian economy by the Chiluba (Dr. Fredrick J.T. Chiluba, President 1991-2001) regime that came into power in 1991, a number of policies were introduced that effected various sectors of the economy that also included housing. A decree was made to the effect that all the housing stock country wide were to be sold to sitting tenants so as to encourage home ownership. Employers who were mainly the Public Service, Parastatals and Private Companies were no longer obliged to provide physical housing for the employees.

Government, through the Local Authorities therefore made land available for people to build houses. Obtaining land, from the local authorities, within the low cost areas has been relatively at a low cost for successful applicants. However, although the low income group have been able to obtain land to build houses, they have not been able to afford to pay professional fees for architectural drawings therefore unable to obtain planning and building permission from the Local Authorities for their housing construction. This has over the years resulted in poorly designed and illegally constructed houses in the low income settlements producing a very bad outlook to the environment.

Therefore the fact that these individual developers do not have approved drawings, it simply means that their housing structures remain illegal and subject to being demolished by the Local Authorities. This makes the people to continue living in fear that one day their houses will be demolished. Although this fear remains real and the fact that the Local Authorities have the mandate to demolish illegal structures, the rate at which people are illegally constructing houses has been on the increase over the past several years. This has not only been attributed to the high architectural costs but also due to the following reasons:

- Lack of enforcement by the city and town planners
- Political interference in development control
- Ignorance on the part of the people

These areas having illegal housing structures have led to high cases of environmental and health hazards with living environments of very low standards.

4 Proposal for Change and Improvement

Having realised this problem of poorly designed and illegally constructed houses, the Ministry of Local Government and Housing (MLGH) in conjunction with the Zambia Institute of Architects (ZIA) have come up with a proposal to deal with the poor housing designs. The two institutions have proposed to set up a 'Small Housing Construction Bureau' that will among other things do the following:

- 1 Carry out a study on the appropriate housing types for the various low income settlements
- 2 Provide cost effective drawings meeting the minimum approval standards
- 3 Provide appropriate construction guidelines for low cost houses
- 4 Provide standard Bill of Quantities for the various house typologies
- 5 Set a minimal fee for acquiring the drawings
- 6 Reduce the number of illegally constructed houses
- 7 Ensure that the Local Authorities become vigilant on enforcement in respect of development control within the planned areas

Small Housing Design Bureau

The Small Housing Design Bureau will be set up in line within the existing Government Legislation. To this effect consultations have began between MLGH and ZIA to look at the best way possible of setting up the bureau. The Small Housing Bureau will mainly focus on producing house typologies that are functional and cost effective that the low income group will be able to afford.

Consultative Meetings

The following consultative meetings have been held at the Ministry of Local Government and Housing as the first process to establishing the Small housing Construction Bureau:

Meeting with Zambia Institute of Architects

The first meeting comprised representatives from Ministry of Local Government and Housing and the Zambia Institute of Architects (ZIA).

- There was consensus at the meeting on the need to establish a housing construction bureau to help the low income group access architectural drawings with at least minimum acceptable standards.
- The developers will also be able to access bill of quantities and construction guidelines to enable them construct houses meeting minimum requisite standards. All this will be accessible to the local people at a minimal fee.
- Sensitisation and creating awareness with the people will be cardinal, the Zambia Institute of Architects is ready to assist the local authorities in this area.
- It was also acknowledged during the meeting that there was need to build capacity in the local authorities in the fields of planning and building inspectorate.
- ZIA will prepare draft housing plans of different typologies for adoption and that different building materials will have to be adopted for different areas.

Internal Meetings at MLGH

- The subsequent ones have been consultative meetings with the professional staff at the Ministry of Local Government and Housing.
- A working group within the Ministry has been formed that is looking at the modalities of setting up the Small Housing Bureau under the Department of Housing and Infrastructure Development (DHID).
- The Ministry has the mandate to provide policy guidance to local authorities in housing provision and ensure that the local authorities are delivery quality services to the people.
- The Ministry has acknowledged the need for collaboration with different institutions that are involved in provision of housing in the country.
- The need has been identified to hold a stakeholders meeting were the concept of the Small Housing Construction Bureau should be discussed. The principles behind the concept will need to be explained to the stakeholders

Planned Meetings

Other meetings that have been planned within the next 12 months are as follows:

- The National Housing Authority: to discuss their role being the national institution mandated by government to provide housing under the Ministry of Local Government and Housing

- The Lusaka City Council and some other selected Local Authorities: These are institutions mandated to provide land for housing and ensure building regulations are adhered to during construction
- Community Leaders: to sensitise the communities through their leaders on the need to adhere to regulations and disseminate information on the existence of the Housing Design Bureau
- Continued internal meetings within the Ministry and meetings with the Zambia Institute of Architects

The SWOT Analysis

A SWOT analysis has been agreed upon. However, it is still in its draft form and further discussions are being held to come up with a comprehensive SWOT. This will assist greatly in identifying where possible bottlenecks could be and find amicable solutions.

The following matrix is being developed to carryout the SWOT analysis:

Strengths <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Government mandate on housing/shelter provision• Government policy on housing• Technological/professional skills	Weaknesses <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Possible change in Government Policy• Access to bureau by rural councils• Cost effectiveness
Opportunities <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Controlled development• Information sharing amongst players in the housing sector• Need for improved housing design and construction for the low income• Provide legally constructed houses	Threats <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Political interference• Demand for free service

Conclusion

The proposal for the formation of the Small Housing Construction Bureau has been well received it will help in improving the living standards of the people in the low income communities. The process is ongoing and it is envisaged that the Bureau will be fully operational within the next 12 months.

References

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