Urbanisation Versus Occupation in the Beira Municipality: How Land Registration Supports Spatial Planning Processes

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SUMMARY

Beira, with a population of more than 500.000, is the second largest city in Mozambique and is located in the estuary of the Pungue river. New residential and industrial areas are needed to provide homes and work for the growing population. Presently in the Beira Municipality urbanisation often follows occupation and not the other way around. This hampers spatial planning processes seriously: in case an urbanisation plan can be enforced, one can hardly build on the reserved spaces. One of the reasons is that due to speculation these spaces are already occupied. In many cases those speculation activities are managed by the Municipality: the Municipality tries to find a way to avoid open conflict, court cases or worse by supporting resettlement. By national law there is no need to compensate this form of land use other than for the assets that it has (trees, crops).

One of the objectives of the Phased Transformation of the Beira Municipal Registry Project is that spatial planning processes should be improved in such way that the demand for new urbanisation areas can be met. This needs an alternative approach towards speculation than so far has been applied. During urbanisation projects, before the announcement of the implementation, an inventory of the existing land tenure situation in the field should be carried out. Once this 'recordation' had been finished, from that moment land use obtained by speculation should be defined by the Municipality as 'illegal land use'. This new attitude towards illegal land use should be incorporated in the regulations of the Beira Municipality. The recordation requires a spatial component and can be done by aerial imagery. Monitoring the area by aerial images is required in order to identify illegal occupation. These imageries can function as important evidence material for illegal land use. The result of this approach is that informal occupation - before the announcement of urbanisation- is recognised, costs for resettlement are included in the business case of the urban development and the unrestrained (illegal) occupation of land has come to an end. Once the new regulation of 'illegal

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land use' has been applied, it should be clearly communicated to the citizens of Beira. Enforcement of this new regulation is very important. In general there should be understanding that illegal (i.e. not recognised) occupation delays the process of spatial planning and implementation of urban plans. This is not in the benefit of the community as a whole. Presently the Beira Municipal Land Registry is not able to facilitate urbanisation processes, amongst others because of the condition of the paper based archive. Therefore it is planned to pilot the new approach in two urbanisation areas within the Beira Municipality.