

Considering Cities as Systems to address air pollution in African cities continues as ASAP East Africa participate in the Urbanization Conference in Nairobi.

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In November 2019, the DFID East Africa Research Hub (EARH) convened a two-day [Urbanization Conference in Nairobi, Kenya](#) aimed at shaping cities as systems through urbanization and spatial justice. The conference brought together representatives from UK and African cities to explore urbanization characteristics, challenges and opportunities through the four projects funded by the EARH:

- A systems Approach to Air Pollution (ASAP) – East African www.asap-eastafrica.com
- Shelter provision in East African Cities: Understanding Transformative Politics for Inclusive Cities
- Spatial Inequality in Times of Urban Transition: Complex Land Markets in Uganda and Somaliland
- The Urban Land Nexus and Inclusive Urbanization in Dar es Salaam, Mwanza and Khartoum

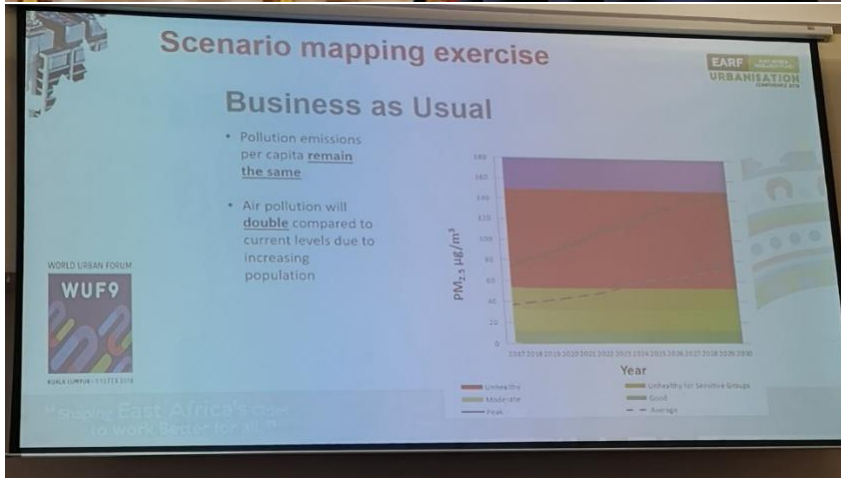
Urban air quality, a burning issue not to be ignored

- The conference was well attended by researchers, policy makers, media, Academia, opinion shapers and bureaucrats from different disciplines with an interest in urbanization issues. The ASAP East Africa Research Project played a prominent role from

the start of the conference with multiple panellists reiterating the need to address urban air pollution as part of the quest for sustainable urban growth.

- **Mr Charles Hinga**, The Principal Secretary, State Department for Housing and Urban Development (Kenya) stating that urban air quality is a critical issue that governments are interested in owing to the high rates of urbanization. Nairobi has recorded an increase from 8% to 35% between 1963 and 2018 in population.
- **Susie Kitchens**, The Deputy High Commissioner, British High Commission in Kenya reiterated the same sentiments and added that almost half of the Kenyan population will settle in urban areas by 2030 and thus there exists a need for scientifically backed decision making to avoid a possible crisis.

ASAP researchers led by Prof. Pope Francis (University of Birmingham) outlined the the objectives of the ASAP study and highlighted key findings from Kampala, Nairobi and Addis Ababa. Scenario mapping shows that air pollution levels could double due to increasing populations in many African cities. The vulnerability dimensions to air pollutions considering the best/worst scenario were also explored. Case studies for the cities were presented by Dr. Anne Kamau (University of Nairobi) and Dr. Bikila Teklu (Addis Ababa Institute of Technology).



Prof. Pope Francis presenting ASAP East Africa research findings from Nairobi, Kampala and Addis cities

The valuable contributions by Prof. Gatari and Dr. William Alvis on the state of air pollution monitoring systems, associated health impacts and link to climate change emphasized on the need to take urgent action based on available evidence.



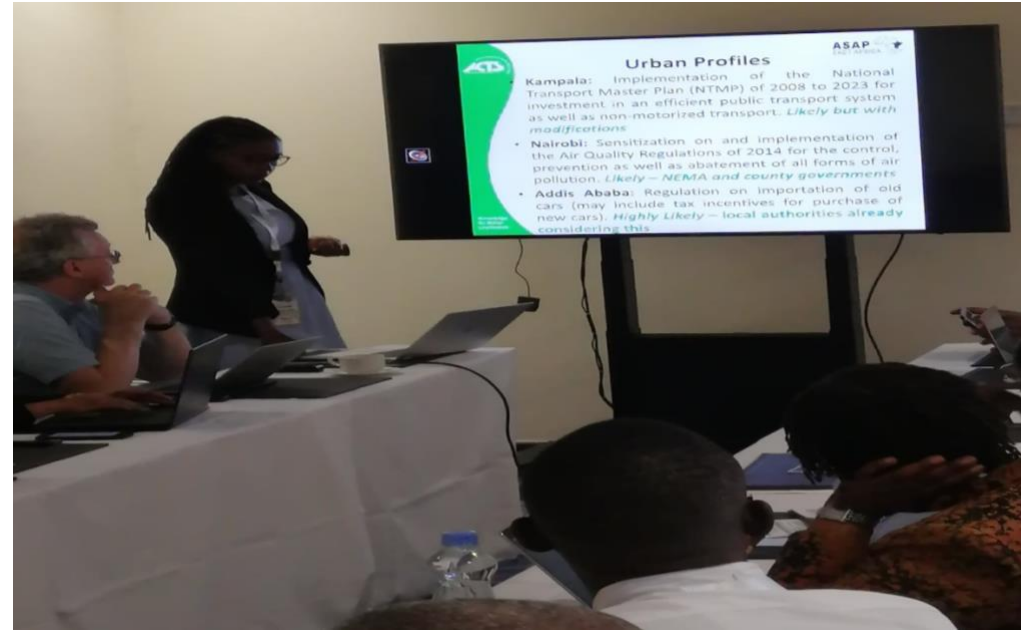
Prof. Gatari (University of Nairobi) and Dr. William Alvis (University of Birmingham) actively following the conference proceedings

While exploring the possible interventions for urban air quality, Dr. George Mwaniki a senior researcher in the ASAP East Africa highlighted that taking A systems approach offers the best route to understand and address the complex causes and consequences of air pollution in cities. The approach allows the consideration of the interconnected social, environmental, political, economic and historical systems and their influence on air pollution.



Dr. George Mwaniki actively participating in a panel discussion

Motor vehicular emissions were identified as the major source of air pollutants in most African cities. The ASAP team explored the research findings and provided recommendations for different stakeholders in the conference. Winnie Khaemba, a research fellow in the team and Tom Randa a research assistant (both African Centre for Technology Studies), engaged the participants in sessions on air pollution.



Ms. Winnie Khaemba presenting on key recommendations from the ASAP East Africa research findings

Forthcoming ASAP East Africa Activities and Further Research

- Publication of Study findings (see <https://www.asap.uk.com/asap-east-africa>)
- Dissemination workshops
 - Community Dialogue in Namuwongo (Kampala)
 - Day Workshop at the Ethiopian Public Health Institute (Addis Ababa)