The urbanisation of Africa: Growth areas

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Africa's cities are set to swell in size

OVER a third of Africa's 1 billion inhabitants currently live in urban areas, but by 2030 that proportion will have risen to a half. According to a recent report (http://www.unhabitat.org/pmss/listItemDetails.aspx?publicationID=3034) from UN-HABITAT, the United Nations agency for human settlements, the population of some cities is set to swell by up to 85% in the next 15 years. The most populous city in 2010, Cairo, will grow by 23% to 13.5m people. By 2025, however, it will have been overtaken by both Lagos (15.8m) and Kinshasa (15m). Food and water shortages, poor infrastructure and a lack of housing are among the problems faced by governments during such rapid urbanisation. Progress in meeting these challenges would be shown by a fall in the proportion of slum-dwellers, who currently account for 70% of urban inhabitants.

Correction to this article: Luanda was mistakenly placed among the two biggest cities in Africa; we meant Kinshasa. Sorry. This was corrected on December 13th.