

# **The Role of Agribusiness in Decongesting the Capital City of Zambia: Shifting Is Not A Lasting Solution**

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***Abstract:***

*Agribusiness is an essential aspect of agricultural development whose role in economic development cannot be overemphasised. Strangely, Zambian politicians lack the understanding of this huge role that agribusiness plays in fostering rural development. This is evidenced by the recent unprecedented calls by politicians for the shift of the country's capital city from Lusaka to Ngabwe. Lusaka has been a bushy and sparsely populated village not until its conception as the capital city of Zambia. The economic and population growth of Lusaka has been recording tremendous increases with huge industrial development. The development of industries and social amenities in Lusaka has continued to pull huge populations from all rural places country-wide. The continuous rural-urban drift has resulted in a stiff scramble for the limited available resources, a development that has seen increased population density, overcrowding, disease outbreaks, unemployment, land scarcity, crime prevalence and many negative vices. Sanity has since become a matter of great concern in our city and the environment has become unfavourable for conducting business hence the call for the shift of the capital city to Ngabwe. Interesting enough Lusaka was once like Ngabwe, sparsely populated and with vast free land. The study employed the review of existing and related literature as the study methodology. The key findings show that the congestion of any new place set as the capital city is inevitable. The decongestion of the capital city does not require running away from the grown populations but to facilitate economic activities in all rural areas through the development of agricultural production, procession, marketing and storage and distribution to enhance employment creation throughout the agricultural value chain. By industrialising rural areas and creating employment, rural-urban migration will be halted and the reverse, urban-rural drift, triggered. The dissemination of agribusiness education and capital investments in supporting tangible industrialisation of the agricultural sector will create pull factors in rural areas hence fostering city decongestion.*

**Keywords:** *Agribusiness, Capital city, Rural-urban migration, Pull factors, Urban-rural drift, City decongestion, Push factors.*

## **Introduction**

### **Background**

Agriculture is the basic industry that supplies the world with food, feed, oil, wool, fibre and many more products that are used for feeding the masses and as raw materials in the processing industries and it plays a major role in employment creation and economic development. Agriculture has diverse global impacts which extend to economic growth, poverty reduction, food security, safe livelihoods, rural development and environment management (World Bank, 2007). The rural populations of semi-arid lands in Zambia face multiple challenges that result from population growth, poor agricultural productivity and markets, unemployment, economic mishap, land tenure problems and climatic changes. In particular, subsistence-oriented farmers face various risks and opportunities in their attempt to secure their livelihoods. Failed breakthrough in agriculture and the need for employment have forced rural people to leave their homes in search of employment in industrialised urban areas (ASFG, n.d).

Migration presents a major developmental and humanitarian challenge, calling for a broad and comprehensive perspective. Advocacy and communication at the national, regional and

global levels are necessary for the importance of good perception of investing in the world's most vulnerable who would otherwise be forced to migrate. The main potential contributions of farming to rural development are in terms of supporting employment, ancillary businesses, and environmental services. Rural development is understood primarily in the economic sense of the process of assuring a progressive improvement in economic security of people in rural areas (Action Aid, 2013).

Lusaka has grown from a mere bushy and sparsely populated village under chief Lusaka. The transformation of this village to a city started way back in the colonial era, in 1935, when it was made the capital of Northern Rhodesia by the British colonialists (Middleton & Muller, 2008). The birth of Zambia in 1964 saw Lusaka being declared the new country's capital city. The continuation of industrialisation moved on with the declaration of Lusaka as the capital city (Helen & Meller, 2013). Lusaka is Zambia's largest city with massive economic drivers. The city houses the many notable economic hubs in the names of industries, institutions and business houses whose activities act as pull factors for rural-urban migration.

In May 2017, calls from politicians in government to move the capital city from

Lusaka to Ngabwe district, of central province had heightened. The government of Zambia wants to move its capital from Lusaka to the little-known district of Ngabwe which is geographically more central than Lusaka (Mulusa, 2017). Mulusa further indicated that human settlement on its own was a problem and thus they were compelled to start up a completely new capital city that would be planned on the modern principles of sustainable development. It was viewed that the growth of the city's population caused congestion and the birth of poorly planned settlements that proved a hindrance to sustainable development.

The city was not congested from its inception. The unfortunate fact is the lack of mitigating measures to curb the root causes of rural-urban migration and city congestion. Shifting the capital city from one place to another will only serve as a temporal and unsustainable measure. Addressing the causal factors of migration is the only sustainable measure that can halt rural-urban migration, trigger urban-rural drift and bring down city congestion. The secret to this achievement lies in the development of agriculture and its value chain through the agribusiness approach.

### **Problem statement**

The major problem does not lie in the

congestion of the capital city but in the root causes of rural-urban migration which gives rise to city congestion. Migration is central to the anticipated problems of overpopulation and city congestion in our capital city and it is migration and its causes that need to be addressed. The problem is therefore the presence of push-factors in rural areas and the continued rural-urban migration which is constantly putting pressure on the scarce resources in the city.

### **General objective**

The general objective of this paper was to outline the functional roles of agribusiness in fostering a balance in rural and urban areas' amenities so as to reduce rural-urban migration and city congestion.

### **Specific objectives**

1. To investigate the causes of overpopulation and congestion in the capital city.
2. To explain how agribusiness development can help to decongest the capital city.
3. To outline the demerits of shifting the capital city to a new location.

## **Research questions**

1. Has the capital city of Zambia been congested from inception?
2. What has caused overpopulation and congestion in the capital city?
3. How can agribusiness development help to decongest the capital city?
4. Do rural areas lack certain economic and social amenities which force people to migrate?
5. Will people not migrate to the new capital city if it is shifted to a new location?
6. Can well developed agribusiness value chains reduce rural-urban migration and trigger urban-rural drift?

## **Literature review**

Literature related to the topic was reviewed.

### **Definition and scope of agribusiness**

Agribusiness is simply another refined term for diversified agriculture whose role extends beyond production to procession and service delivery. It is the application of scientific research and knowledge to agricultural practices through value-chain development and farmer education. Agribusiness greatly benefits from agribusiness education. Agribusiness education or agricultural extension can be defined as the delivery of information inputs to

farmers (Anderson & Gershon, 2007). The role of extension services is invaluable in teaching farmers how to improve their productivity and supply of produce. Extension is also critical to move research from the lab to the field for application and to ensure a return on investment in research by translating new knowledge into innovative practices (Davies et al., 2009). With massive research and rich findings, agricultural development can remain a mere dream if the knowledge is not delivered to the farmers who transform it into practice.

### **Definition and scope of city congestion**

City congestion refers to the overgrowth of population in the capital city relative to the available land and resources which causes congestion in residential as well as economic areas. The congestion of the city gives rise to crime, poor sanitation, compromised health standards, economic and trade huddles. City congestion is caused by continuous rural-urban migration.

### **Definition and scope of migration**

Migration is the movement of people, either within a country or across international borders. It includes all kinds of movements, irrespective of the drivers, duration and cause, either of voluntary or involuntary nature. It encompasses economic migrants, distress migrants, internally

displaced persons (IDPs,) refugees and asylum seekers, returnees and people moving for other purposes, including for education and family reunification (Action Aid, 2013).

(ASFG, n.d) reports that in 2015 alone, there were 244 million international migrants, representing an increase of 40% since 2000. These recorded migrants included 150 million migrant workers. About one-third of all international migrants are aged between 15 and 34 years. Women account for almost half of all international migrants. It is also on record that a large share of migrants originates from rural areas. Around 40% of international remittances are sent to rural areas, reflecting the rural origins of a large share of migrants. In many African countries, more than 50% of rural households report having at least one international emigrant.

### **Context of rural-urban migration**

Rural-urban migration takes a narrower scope to being the movement of people from rural areas to urban areas in search of a better living. The push factors may be diverse ranging from family disputes to economic pressure whose relief may be sought through decent employment in industrialised and economically viable firms and institutions in the city.

The dimensions of contemporary migration call for global action, which must be comprehensive, bringing together humanitarian and development responses. Many individuals and families migrate from rural areas for economic reasons as they see no viable option for moving out of poverty within their own communities. Conflict, extreme weather events and political instability are among the root causes of rural-urban migration. Migration is part of the process of development. As economies undergo structural transformation, the movement of people in search of better employment opportunities within and across countries is inevitable. Migrants can be agents of development, contribute to economic growth and improve food security and rural livelihoods (Action Aid, 2013).

### **Causes of rural-urban migration**

Migration is a growing global phenomenon and most countries are simultaneously countries of origin, transit and destination for migrants. Conflicts, violence and natural disasters are among the root causes of migration and forced displacement. Many migrants are compelled to move because of socio-economic factors, which, to a large extent, include poverty, food insecurity, lack of employment opportunities, limited access to social amenities and

protection, natural resource depletion and the adverse impacts of environmental degradation and climate change.

As economies undergo structural transformation and the agricultural sector becomes relatively smaller and less productive, the movement of people within and across countries is inevitable. Safe, orderly and regular migration contributes to sustainable development, economic growth and food security. However, large movements of people present complex challenges. Areas of origin, transit and neighbouring countries are disproportionately affected (ASFG, n.d).

Migration is and should often be a deliberate decision and an important component of household livelihood strategies. The root causes of people deciding to move out of rural areas include but not limited to the following:

- **Rural poverty and food insecurity:** More than 75% of the world's poor and food insecure live in rural areas, mostly depending on agricultural production for their subsistence. The rural poor, and especially smallholder family farmers, face considerable difficulties in accessing credit, services, technologies and markets that would allow them to improve the productivity of their natural resources and labour. Migration becomes an important alternative and part of the strategies of rural

households for improving their livelihoods through accessing more paying economic activities in industrialised cities.

- **Lack of employment and income generating opportunities:** Most available jobs in agriculture within rural settings are associated with low and unstable incomes, poor safety and health conditions, gender inequality in pay and opportunities, and limited social protection. Due to restricted access to training, financial and extension services and processing facilities, more attractive prospects may be limited in rural areas thereby triggering the shift to urban areas with more attractive amenities.

- **Inequality:** Rural people are drawn to urban areas where they expect to have better employment opportunities and improved access to health, education, and basic services.

- **Limited access to social protection:** About 73% of the world population have no adequate access to social protection. The majority live in the rural areas of developing countries where they face difficulties in managing social, economic and environmental risks (ASFG, n.d).

- **Climate change:** Smallholder family farmers, small-scale fishers, forest-dependent communities and pastoralists are hardest hit by weather related disasters, which are increasing in frequency and intensity. Droughts, floods and

other related food price volatilities increase poverty and hunger, and the need to find viable options elsewhere arises hence migration.

• **Depletion of natural resources due to environmental degradation and climate change:** Land degradation and desertification affect around one-third of the land used for agriculture and about 1.5 billion people worldwide, undermining farmers' productivity and resilience (Action Aid, 2013). Climate change and the use of inappropriate farming techniques further exacerbate these challenges. The dramatic state of land degradation is one of the main drivers of conflict in the African dry lands, especially between pastoralists and arable farmers.

#### **The role of agriculture in rural development**

Agriculture, agribusiness and rural development are key elements to addressing the root causes of migration. It is supposedly not surprising that by 2050, over half of the population in the least developed countries will still live in rural areas. This is due to the fact that the resource base in the cities is continuously shrinking such that supporting the growing urban populations becomes almost impossible. About three-quarters of the extreme poor base their livelihoods on agriculture or other rural activities (ASFG, n.d). To address this growing

problem, concerted efforts must be geared towards a more productive agricultural sector and improved food systems in general, enabling diversification into manufacturing, processing and services, while also promoting the development of decent employment opportunities through agribusiness development.

#### **The effects of rural-urban migration**

Migration brings both opportunities and challenges to both rural and urban areas in the countries of origin, transit and destination. Policies and programmes play an important role in shaping the outcome of migration in terms of agriculture and rural development and, ultimately, as regards poverty reduction and food security in rural areas. For rural areas in the countries of origin, migration will affect the supply of labour and the related skills mix and demographic composition of the remaining population. This has a direct impact on the families' agricultural productivity and economic development. While migration may reduce pressure on local labour markets and foster a more efficient allocation of labour and higher wages in agriculture, rural areas of origin risk losing the younger, energetic, most vital and dynamic share of their workforce. Depending on the context, women who stay behind may

gain greater control over productive resources and services, potentially helping to close the gender gap in agriculture. In spite of this positive development with regard to the gender parity, women under such circumstances remain vulnerable and prone to food insecurity, social anathema and economic slavery.

Migration itself can contribute to advancements in agricultural and rural development in the countries of origin. If the credit and/or insurance markets in rural areas are absent or function poorly, remittances relax liquidity constraints and provide insurance in case of crises or shocks and foster investment in the agricultural value chain and other rural economic activities with potential for job creation. Moreover, diaspora organizations and return migrants can help rural areas in the countries of origin through capital investments, skills and technology transfers, know-how and social networks.

For rural areas in low and middle-income transit countries, migration and protracted forced displacements can constitute a challenge for local authorities to provide quality public services for the migrant and host populations and can, amongst other things, further strain natural resources and increase pressure on agriculturally based livelihoods.

## **Mitigating rural-urban migration through agribusiness**

According to the Action Aid report of 2013, Agriculture and rural development can make a strong contribution to meeting the global challenge of addressing large movements of refugees and migrants.

This can be achieved through several strategies;

1. Scaling-up the support to smallholder family farmers and creating alternative and sustainable livelihood options in rural areas, with a special focus on women and youth, is fundamental to addressing the root causes of rural distress migration. This requires:
  - Public policies targeting smallholder family farmers and promoting the adoption of sustainable agricultural practices and agricultural value chain development.
  - Diversification to off-farm activities, effective rural services and investments in value chains linked to sustainable agriculture such as agro-processing, storage and handling, transportation and marketing.
  - Rural education and vocational training that match labour market needs.



- Sustainable agricultural practices to limit the impact of climate change, promotion of sound natural resource management and increased productivity.
- Inclusive social protection systems that cover rural populations.

- Financial inclusion in rural areas, especially for women and the youth.

## 2. Agriculture and rural development

interventions can help both the host communities and the displaced people to cope with and recover from shocks, and lay the foundations for long-term sustainability. This can be realised through:

- Decent rural employment opportunities for both the displaced persons and the host communities.

- Integration of migration concerns into disaster risk reduction strategies, to deal with the potential migratory consequences of any environmental changes.

- Access to land, credit and markets for the displaced people and disadvantaged youth and women.

- Flexible, shock-responsive and risk-informed social protection systems, also accessible to the refugees, internally

displaced persons (IDPs) and migrants in host communities.

- Participation of displaced youth and women in existing producers' organizations, youth organizations and rural cooperatives.

## 3. Conflict prevention and rural stability.

Investing in sustainable agriculture and rural livelihoods can prevent conflicts related to natural resources and help reduce tensions, especially where food supplies and markets are severely strained. This approach can be best attained through:

- Environmentally sustainable livelihood strategies for the affected populations, encompassing both the displaced people and the host communities.

- Mitigation and prevention of pastoral and arable farmers' conflicts linked to trans-boundary movements and encroachments.

- Sustainable land conflict resolution between the displaced people and the host communities.

## Methodology

The methodology employed in this paper is review of existing related literature.

## Research findings

The paper brought out the following key findings:

1. No city has been congested from its inception. Overpopulation and city congestion come about as a result of rural-urban migration.
2. Poverty, food insecurity, lack of employment, family and societal conflicts, land tenure conflicts, forced displacements, climate change and environmental degradation are among the root causes of rural-urban migration.
3. Poor agricultural productivity, unsupported production, indecent employment and income, unrealistic markets and marketing support mechanisms, infrastructure underdevelopment and the scarcity of decent socio-economic amenities are the common push factors in rural areas.
4. Well-developed and supported agricultural value chain development (Agribusiness) can create decent employment and income, improve access to socio-economic amenities, stabilise rural-urban migration and trigger urban-rural drift thus causing city decongestion.
5. Shifting of the capital city to a new site will only serve as a temporal measure because people will continue to migrate to the new city where economic activities are usually concentrated. The various capital cities, within and outside the country, started uncongested but populations rose over time due to the continued search for access to amenities lacking in rural areas.
6. A well-coordinated agricultural education system has great potential to inform the farming populace and information centres, to uplift living standards of the rural masses, foster agro-processing, storage and marketing, which enhance sustainable rural development which can result in the decongestion of our capital city.

## Conclusions

There is no need for the proposed shift of the capital city from Lusaka to Ngabwe. This conclusion was supported by the fact that there has never been a congested capital city right from its inception. Overpopulation and city congestion come about due to migration. Even if the capital city is moved to a new site, people will still migrate, to the new city, following the growing economic activities. The causes of

rural-urban migration range from poverty, food insecurity, lack of employment, family and societal conflicts, land tenure conflicts, forced displacements, climate change and environmental degradation. Poor agricultural productivity, unsupported production, indecent employment and income, unrealistic markets and marketing support mechanisms, infrastructure underdevelopment and the scarcity of decent socio-economic amenities are the common push factors in rural areas. A lasting solution to city congestion lies in well-developed and supported agricultural value chain development (Agribusiness). Agribusiness can create decent employment and income, improve access to socio-economic amenities, stabilise rural-urban migration and trigger urban-rural drift thus causing city decongestion. Furthermore, a well-coordinated agribusiness system has great potential to inform the farming populace and information centres, to uplift living standards of the rural masses, foster agro-processing, storage and marketing, which enhance sustainable rural development which can result in the decongestion of our capital city.

## **Recommendations**

1. The government and other key stakeholders in the agricultural industry should begin to attach great importance to the delivery of agribusiness education which is essential for substantial job creation and economic development.
2. The government should begin supporting agricultural production, processing, handling and marketing beyond the staple food crop which will reduce the cost of production hence increasing the net profit for farmers.
3. The government should permanently dispose of the idea of shifting the capital city to a new site as a means of addressing city congestion because this is very temporal and unsustainable. It should, instead, transform the agricultural sector to a full-scale agribusiness venture with value chain development so that decent jobs may be created to stabilise rural-urban migration and trigger urban-rural drift.
4. The government to invest in infrastructure development to support growth of the agro-industry.

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