

Information about the City and Municipality of Nampula

1. General Aspects

With approximately 600.000 inhabitants, the City of Nampula is the third largest cities of Mozambique, after Maputo and Matola. It is the provincial capital of Nampula Province, the most populous in Mozambique with more than 4 million inhabitants. In geographical terms it is located in the centre, that is: in the interior – 200 kms from the coast - of the province, and on the Northern Development Corridor, linking the port of Nacala with the land-locked countries of the Southern African, in particular Malawi, through a road and railway line. Furthermore, the national backbone highway passes through the city. Additionally, Nampula has an international airport with weekly flights to Nairobi, Dar-es-Salaam and, in the near future, Johannesburg, and several daily flights to five national destinations, including the national capital, Maputo, and other major provincial capitals.

Although industry is not a prominent feature of the City, Nampula is a major productive centre, and in the areas of commerce, public and private services, tourism and education it is highly dynamic. Outside Maputo, Nampula is the Mozambican city with most universities and other training institutes.

Due to its size and relative sophistication the area of influence of Nampula covers the entire Northern Region of Mozambique and part of the Central Region. Even for some border areas of Malawi and Tanzania, Nampula City is a reference.

2. History

Nampula is a relatively new city. It was founded by the intruding Portuguese colonial army in 1907, and elevated to city status only in 1956. During the liberation war Nampula was the strategic military centre for the fight against the Frelimo liberation movement. Because of this the city grew substantially in the last decades of colonial rule.

After Independence in 1975 the Portuguese literally abandoned Nampula and rural populations invaded the city, squatting in un-planned areas in the outskirts. This migratory movement was dramatically increased during the war of destabilisation, affecting Nampula in the decade between 1982 and 1992. When the war ended the Government expected the refugees to return to the countryside, but this did not happen. Rather, after a few years of migratory slow-down, growth of the city resumed, as the rapid economic development of Mozambique materialised mostly in the urban areas, as opposed to the rural area.

Therefore, Nampula in the post-war period developed into a major Mozambican growth centre, attracting an increasing number of public and private investments in wide range of economic and social areas. And migration to Nampula, from all of Mozambique and even from countries from all over Africa and the rest of the world, has now reached an alarming scale with tens of thousands of rural poor pouring into the city each year.

In colonial times there was a Nampula Town Hall with a very limited mandate. It was extinguished in 1979. The Municipal Council of Nampula was created in 1998, alongside with those of other major Mozambican cities. Frelimo won the first local elections that year, and in the subsequent elections in 2003 and 2008. Next local elections are expected in 2011.

3. Area, Administrative Division and Population

The jurisdiction of Nampula Municipality covers an area of 404m², divided into 6 Municipal Administrative Posts, which again are divided into a total of 18 neighbourhoods, of which 6 in the Central Business District and 12 in the peri-urban areas.

In the last population census carried out in 1997 Nampula had close to 480.000, but due to the accelerated yearly population growth rate of 5,7%, is now more likely to be 600.000. It is expected that this number will increase to 1.000.000 before 2010. Half of the population are less than 15 years old.

Of this only 4% live in the CBD, while 96% live in the peri-urban neighbourhoods. It is estimated that 80% of the population live in unplanned areas, most of which with high population densities and appalling environmental and living conditions.

4. Socio-Economic Indicators

It is estimated (2005), that almost half of the adult population is unemployed and that only 40% had an income above the minimum salary of 100 usd per month. According to the latest statistics, urban poverty and inequality is increasing. The amount of beggars and street children is at the raise.

80% of residential houses are sub-standard huts built of local materials such as sticks, poles and mud and with roofs of grass or corrugated iron sheets. Only 36% of households have some kind of sanitation.

The coverage of piped water supply is around 43%, while only 14% of households have electricity.

5. Problems, Challenges and Actions Taken

The main problem faced by Nampula is the massive migration of poor people to the city, which has resulted in the loss of control of land management and turned urban planning extremely difficult. In 2009 Nampula therefore embarked on a city-wide slum upgrading strategy to address this issue through the preparation of comprehensive urban plans for each of the 12 peri-urban neighbourhoods. In parallel a programme for land tenure regularisation will be kicked off in March 2011, in order to secure land rights, especially of the poor and other vulnerable groups.

The additional challenge is, however to mobilise sufficient resources to implement the urban plans. Fortunately, water and energy supply systems will be significantly increased in the coming years, and the storm water drainage system will be rehabilitated and expanded. However, funds are still very scarce, in particular for the improvement of access to the residential areas and of housing conditions themselves.

The solid waste management is another area of concern, since the city has no land-fill and insufficient equipment and staff to ensure a regular collection. However, a strategy has been prepared and a Solid Waste Management Master Plan will be concluded in 2011. Resources for implementation are being negotiated with potential partners.

Finally there is the problem of poverty per se. The Mozambican Government and the individual municipalities are preparing strategies to address the issue, and funds have been made available to more efficiently deal with urban poverty. Specific strategies and actions are being developed for street-children.