Challenges of urban environmental governance. Participation and partnership in Nakuru Municipality, Kenya

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The urbanisation process has many impacts that can be classified in three major groups. One group includes impacts on the physical form and socio-cultural character of urban areas. These affect, for example, the growth of mega cities, the fragmentation of urban areas, the formation of national and international urban systems and diversification of social behaviours and lifestyles within cities. A second group includes impacts that are notable for their negative effects. These are revealed as growth of insecurity in urban areas, lack of affordable housing or secure tenure, increasing social exclusion, traffic congestion, environmental pollution, shrinkage of the formal economy and crisis in urban management. There is a third group of impacts that seem to be mainly positive. These include the spread of urban democracy and increase in urban productivity, particularly in the informal sector (Urban Observatory, 1999).

This study focuses on institutional responses to some negative impacts of urbanisation and intends to show how some innovative responses through partnerships may lead to positive impacts. In many cities and towns in the developing world, access to basic services such as water provision, sanitation, solid waste collection and drainage is inadequate for a majority of the residents, especially those living in low-income urban areas (UNCHS, 2001). The rapid rate at which the population in these areas is increasing compounds this situation and often leads to environmental and living conditions that endanger the health of the residents, with consequent losses in productivity and quality of life. Many governments have come to realise that with conventional strategies they will not be able to extend services to all urban residents. Innovative approaches are therefore being introduced; not only technical ones, but also with regard to the participation of different stakeholders.

Devas (1999) notes that recent empirical research on urban issues tends to focus on two areas: the analysis of urban government and management and the analysis of urban poverty and the survival or livelihood strategies of poor households and communities. The former is generally characterised by a top-down approach with an emphasis on performance, efficiency and enabling strategies. Devas observes that the information generated by such studies, especially if they are done by donor

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agencies, tends to be normative or prescriptive, concentrating more on what ought to happen that describing what actually happens (Devas, 1999). The analysis of livelihood strategies of low-income households and communities is stronger in the analysis of what actually happens, but is weaker in practical policy implications. Devas concludes that both these sets of analytical perspectives tend to look at one part of the system only. This study is concerned with the middle ground between the top-down management delivery model and the bottom-up household/community access-demand model, thus analysing both aspects. In other words, we study both the partnership arrangements and their outcomes at the community level, and the processes at the urban management level, using examples from LA 21 in Nakuru.

Recently, there has been a lot of interest in urban environmental issues and the responses to various urban challenges by different actors. There is also a growing concern by researchers and practitioners on the impacts of rapid urbanisation, especially in the developing world. We note, however, that a well-developed theoretical framework for analysing initiatives that deal with the impacts of rapid urbanisation does not exist, though several attempts have been made recently (Hordijk, 2000; Frijns and Mengers 1999; McGranahan et al., 2001b; Hardoy, et al., 1993, 2001). In this chapter we therefore make an attempt to develop a theoretical framework that helps us analyse participation and partnership arrangements and their contribution to sustainable development. We first examine the urban environmental problems common to many cities in developing countries and later discuss the concepts of urban environment and urban management. We examine the meaning of sustainable development, linking it to the debates on urban environmental management and partnerships. Next, we explore the meaning of urban environmental management, its objectives and various approaches and the meaning of urban governance. The meaning of the concepts of collective action and participation receive specific attention, since they are utilised in solving urban environmental problems.

Partnerships have been proposed as a way towards improving the urban management process and urban governance. Proponents of partnerships also see them as mechanisms of achieving sustainable development. We examine the concept of partnerships and the forms that they take and assess the current consequences of recent partnership activities. There have been different approaches directed at improving the quality of life in cities especially those in low-income countries. Since 1992, there is a global tendency to adopt a Local Agenda 21 aimed at reconciling development and environmental concerns, while at the same time improving the livelihood of the people. At the end of this chapter, we examine the LA 21 process and the way partnerships have been formed within it.
Theoretical Framework

1.1 Urban environmental problems

As centres of population and human activities, cities consume natural resources from both near and distant sources. In this process, urban areas generate environmental problems over a range of spatial scales: the households and workplace, the neighbourhood, the city, the wider region and the globe (Hardoy, et al., 1993; 2001). Urban environmental problems have a range of social impacts: they may impair human health, cause economic and other welfare losses or damage the ecosystems on which both the urban and rural areas depend. It is well known that environmental problems vary from city to city and region to region and are influenced by such variables as a city's size and rate of growth, income, local geography, climate and institutional policies and capabilities. Environmental problems can be divided into two sets of issues or 'agendas'. The first set of issues, the so-called 'green agenda' deals with problems such as resource depletion, climate change, ozone depletion, increase of urban production, consumption, waste generation and their interference with ecosystems. These environmental problems have impacts that are more global and delayed, and often threaten long-term ecological sustainability (McGranahan et al., 2001b). 'Green agenda' problems are the prime environmental worries in the developed countries.

The 'brown agenda' focuses on environmental hazards at the household, neighbourhood and workplace level, which are the effect of pollution. It deals directly with the health risks and threats that emerge from the local environment. Common problems are poor housing, low availability and quality of drinking water, insufficient waste water disposal, bad drainage, waste accumulation and uncontrolled waste disposal, and urban air pollution. Especially in the large cities of developing countries such problems are a major threat to human health (McGranahan et al., 2001b). It can be argued that at the household and neighbourhood level, environmental health issues (the brown agenda) predominate, whereas issues of ecological sustainability (the green agenda) are more important at the city and higher levels.

Many studies of water and sanitation, solid waste services and urban environmental issues identify institutional failure as the principal source of environmental problems. The speed with which the urban populations have grown in

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3 Bartone, et al. (1994) define the brown agenda as: "... the immediate and most critical environmental problems which incur the heaviest costs on current generations, particularly the urban poor in terms of poor health, low productivity and reduced incomes and quality of life: lack of safe drinking water, sanitation and drainage, inadequate solid and hazardous waste management, uncontrolled emissions from factories, cars and low grade domestic fuels, accidents linked to congestion and crowding, and the occupation of environmentally hazard-prone lands, as well as the interrelationships between these problems."
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Third World nations has far outpaced the institutional capacity to manage. Arrossi et al., 1994, indicate that the central characteristic of the problems experienced in urban areas is not the scale of population but the scale of mismatch between demographic change and institutional responses. This mismatch is between the speed with which population has concentrated in particular urban centres and the very slow pace with which societies have developed institutional capacity to cope with this. The provisions of infrastructure services (water supply and sanitation) along with solid waste and wastewater disposal are among the areas of great concern in human settlements, especially in the developing countries. Failure to provide these services adequately results in many of the well-known costs of rapid urbanisation: threats to human health, urban productivity and environmental quality (WRI, 1996). Deficient services manifest themselves most obviously in the form of pollution, disease and economic stagnation. The most common benefits arising from improvements in service provision are better health, improved quality of life and time savings, which can be allocated to other activities (ibid., 1996).

In informal and illegal settlements, the provision of sanitation is inadequate and the majority of the households rely on pit latrines or bucket toilets. The number of urban residents who had no access to adequate sanitation increased by almost 25% to 400 million between 1980 and 1990 (Drakakis-Smith, 1996). Limited water supplies to urban areas also affect the disposal of household waste. In these often overcrowded and under-resourced areas the health consequences resulting from inadequate sanitation can be significantly worse than in other urban areas or rural areas. All over the world, different countries are exploring different methods of providing adequate sanitation at a cost significantly lower than that of investing in conventional water-borne sewerage systems.5

An estimated 30-50% of the solid waste generated within urban centres of developing countries is left uncollected or dumped on any available waste ground. Piles of garbage serve as breeding grounds for disease vectors and rubbish blocks open drains (Arrossi, et al., 1994). At times of heavy rain, the blocked drains may result in flooding with loss of life and property. Many municipal authorities in the cities of the South are unable to cope with the ever-increasing heaps of garbage (Hardoy, et al., 2001). There are sufficient examples of alternative ways in which the relatively poor households can be serviced at affordable per capita cost to suggest that garbage collection services could be greatly improved. Some of these alternatives not only improve the solid waste

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4 In some towns they are called “night soil”.
5 The Orangi pilot Project in Karachi is a good example of a cheap and affordable sanitation system in low-income settlements.
these alternatives not only improve the solid waste services, but also are a source of employment through recycling and trading of recycled waste.

Seeking solutions to the many urban environmental problems in many cities is not a purely technical issue. The threats to environmental quality in urban areas, to a large extent, are the result of human activities, and the solutions opted for are also human solutions, involving the choice from suggested solutions and their implementation through values, institutions and practices. Finding those solutions and implementing them are the challenges of urban environmental governance. New debate of urban environmental governance has been spurred by increased public awareness of the adverse environmental consequences and the fact that environmental issues transcend sectoral boundaries. It is clear that there are environmental challenges faced by the urban environments all over the world and urban managers have been looking for approaches to deal with the urban environment. In the following section we examine the concepts of urban environment and that of urban management and link them to the sustainability debate.

1.2 The urban environment and urban management

1.2.1 The urban environment

In a very broad sense, the urban environment consists of human and other resources, processes that convert these resources into various usable products and services, and the effects of these processes, which may be negative or positive. The quality of the urban environment is influenced by its geographical setting, the scale and nature of human activities, the structures within it, and the waste, emissions and ecological disruptions that these generate. The competence and accountability of the institutions elected, appointed or delegated to manage it also play a role (Nunan and Satterthwaite, 1999). It is therefore helpful to look at the urban environment from three viewpoints: the natural environment, the built environment and the socio-economic environment. The natural environment encompasses the resources and processes related to flora and fauna, human beings, minerals, water, land air, etc. Built environments are resources and processes related to buildings, housing, roads, railways, electricity, water supply, gas, etc. The socio-economic environment (sometimes also called the human environment) includes resources and processes related to human activities, such as education, health, arts and culture, economic and business activities, heritage and urban lifestyles in general. It is the intersection and overlay of these three dimensions that constitutes the ‘urban environment’ (Haughton and Hunter, 1994).

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6 We will examine the concept of governance as it relates to urban environment in the following sections.
Bossel (1999) sees a city as a system and proposes to analyse urban environments in terms of three major systems and their sub-systems. As major systems he distinguishes the human system, the support system and the natural system (Hordijk, 2000). Bossel divides the human system into three sub-systems: the individual system that encompasses elements such as norms and values, autonomy and development aspiration and such characteristics as gender, class, health, education and material standards of living. The social system includes income distribution and class structure, demographic characteristics, social groups and organisations and, finally, the governance system with the government institutions and other public bodies (Hordijk, 2000).

As to the support system, Bossel (1999) argues that the society has created two subsystems to provide the necessities for human sustenance: an economic system and an infrastructure system. The economic system comprises the modes of production and consumption and the economic and financial institutions. Many elements of the infrastructure system form part of what is usually referred to as 'built environment'. But the infrastructure system goes beyond this, encompassing the social infrastructure and the systems created to ensure supply of water and energy, disposal of liquids and transport and communication. The natural system includes all characteristics related to natural resources and the ecosystem, such as the physical structure, climate, soil, flora and fauna, air, land and other resources.

1.2.2 Urban management

Urban management is concerned with policies, plans, programmes and practices that seek to ensure that population growth is matched by access to basic infrastructure, shelter and employment. Such access will very much depend on the demand and supply of the different items involved, which, in turn, are critically affected by the public sector policies and functions that only the government performs. Urban management is now a key approach in urban development. The literature on urban development has given significant attention to the increasing need to manage the growth of cities in the developing world and its related problems (Werna, 1995). According to Werna, international theories and policies about urban development have shifted from projects in the 1960s and 1970s to the concern of long term, citywide processes. Emphasis is now being put on local capacity building and institutional strengthening for the management of the urban development process. The major reasons for the shifts in approach are failure of the previous approaches to tackle escalating problems in the urban areas. The main problems mentioned in the literature are poverty, the informal sector, illegal settlements and environmental hazards and degradation (Hardoy et al., 2001; Stren, 1992). Although these specific issues are valid, it is important to give attention to problems, which are of an en-
vional nature, because of their interconnectedness and linkages with all other sorts of urban problems.

According to Sharma (1989), urban management aims to ensure that the components of the system are managed in a way that enables the daily functioning of a city. This will both facilitate and encourage all kinds of economic activity and enable residents to meet basic needs for shelter, access to utilities and services, and income-generating opportunities. McGill (1998) indicates that urban management should seek to achieve the simple but fundamental twin objective of planning, providing and maintaining a city’s infrastructure and services, and making sure that the city’s local government is in an organisationally and financially fit state, so that provision and maintenance are possible. Local government is therefore seen as the necessary driving force to integrate all the players in the city building process. By integrating all the players, one harnesses the urban development process itself (ibid.).

Mattingly (1994) distinguishes between three dimensions of the process of urban management: the object, the objectives and the actions. According to him, the object is the collection of activities that take place in the urban arena. The objectives are not concerned, he argues, with effectiveness, transparency or accountability. It is important to note that the choice of objectives is a political activity and is therefore open to conflict and debate. The principle of urban management, according to Post (1997), includes deciding on priorities. Taking actions is the third dimension of urban management. Actions tend to differ from one area to another and from time to time. Objectives should determine what sort of actions should be undertaken. Actions may include tasks such as providing water, drainage, garbage collection, policing and health care, as well as the operation and maintenance of public services, land development and planning (ibid.).

Wekwete (1997) argues that urban management refers to the political and administrative structure of cities and the major challenges they face to provide both social and physical infrastructure services. These, according to Clarke (1991), include managing urban economic resources, particularly land and the assets of the built environment, creating employment, and attracting investment in order to improve the quality and quantity of goods and services available. The traditional view associates urban management primarily with municipal and central governments. This is largely the supply-driven model, whereby the state and its agencies have statutory responsibilities for management. The provision and maintenance of services are viewed as rights that citizens expect, partly because some of them pay tax and partly because of the political legitimacy that they give to the local and central governments. In many countries, there are local government statutes or decrees
that define local responsibilities and articulate centre-local relationships (Wekwete, 1997). Agenda 21, the global plan of action for achieving sustainable development, identifies local governments as important players for local level initiatives and actions directed at achieving sustainable development. In chapter 28 of the Agenda 21, local authorities in each country are therefore called upon to undertake consultative processes with their populations in order to achieve a consensus on a local Agenda for their communities. The International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives (ICLEI) has since 1992 been undertaking surveys on local government's response to Agenda 21 (see ICLEI 1997; 1998; 2002). In the following section we examine the concept of sustainable development and the different pathways that can be followed to achieve it.

1.3 Sustainable development and urban sustainable development

A major shift in thinking has embraced sustainable development as an organising principle that allows reconciliation between economic development and environmental protection. Much of this policy advocates taking local action to implement sustainable development, with particular emphasis on the role of local authorities as delivery agents. The World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED) used the term sustainable development in its 1987 final report, ‘Our Common Future’, and defined it as: “...development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs” (WCED, 1987). This definition contains two concepts: the concept of needs, in particular the essential needs of the world’s poor, to which overriding priority should be given, and the idea of limitations imposed by the state of technology and social organisation on the environment’s ability to meet present and future needs (WCED, 1987). This well-known definition of sustainable development recognises that we need to link development and protection of the environment in order to protect and manage ecosystems and natural resources which are essential to fulfil basic human needs and improve living standards for all.

There is a wide range of scholarly and popular literature with competing and often contradictory definitions of sustainable development. These perspectives differ primarily in terms of their implicit assumptions with respect to what is to be sustained, variously invoking biological systems, development trajectories, investment profitability, power relations, levels of material consumption and cultural lifestyles (see for example, Satterthwaite and Mitlin, 1994). The lack of a conceptual consensus in part explains the lack of clarity regarding sustainable development within the scholarly and popular literature, as well as susceptibility of the concept to political or ideological co-option (Selman, 1996; 1999). In some instances, the concept has been adopted as a policy to guide future development.
Theoretical Framework

According to Miller and Roo (1999), sustainable development refers to the long-term viability of human activity. Many countries have adopted this principle as the cornerstone of their efforts to address environmental challenges (Bührs and Aplin, 1999). With the rise of the concept to political prominence, governments have followed different courses with regard to its translation into their policies, institutions and practices. Given that the term is open to many different interpretations, and perhaps should be categorised more as a discourse than a definable concept, it is not surprising that its introduction has led to different approaches by governments and communities. Countries all over the world seem to follow different paths towards sustainable development (Bührs and Aplin, 1999; Church, 2000).

There is a wide body of literature focusing on different approaches that could lead to sustainable development. One branch of literature focuses primarily on environmental policy with an emphasis on greening (see the work of Falloux and Talbot, 1993; Johnson, 1995; Dalal-Clayton, 1996). Another approach concentrates more on how it could be achieved through institutional reform (OECD, 1990; Pugh, 1996; O'Riordan and Voisey, 1998). A third pathway is that of social mobilisation. Rather than relying on governments to take the lead, or to expect much of institutional change at the national level, advocates of social mobilisation put their faith and hope on communities. As communities are closest to the action when it comes to putting sustainable development into practice, this approach can be seen as a more direct means of effecting real change (Bührs and Aplin, 1999). These three approaches are based on different rationales and foci: on the idea of the need for policy integration; on the idea that changing institutions may be more effective way to influence behaviour and on a belief in the power of the people and the importance of practice as a guide for policy (ibid.).

These approaches may be seen as complementary to each other. Since they are chosen for different reasons and operate in different realms of governance (policy, institutional, local), it is unlikely that any of them on its own will achieve sustainable development. Green planning without supporting institutional reforms and practice amounts to nothing more than symbolic policy (Bührs and Aplin, 1999). Bührs and Aplin further argue that institutional reform does not automatically produce good policies or outcomes, in spite of claims to the contrary. Local and practical action, directed at achieving sustainable development might be frustrated or undone by institutional obstacles and conflicting policies. However, all this will depend on several factors in each specific setting, which calls for empirical research and analysis of the specific settings.

Applied to urban areas, sustainable development seeks to guide urban growth in a manner that does not close options for the long-term future, nor generates inter-
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generational inequity (WCED, 1987). Sustainable development hence ensures that economic and social aspects of change in addition to environmental features are all taken into account (Barrow, 1995). The economic dimension calls for increasing employment opportunities through expansion and attraction of firms, which complement rather than have negative implications for social and environmental improvements. The social dimension includes contributing to a sense of community and to social justice among groups within the urban population (Miller and Roo, 1999). The environmental dimension seeks to conserve biodiversity for economic, ethical and aesthetic reasons, and to pursue stewardship of environmental services, which provide both valuable resources and absorb wastes in a continuing manner (Rees, 1992). So, sustainable development has emerged as a new agenda for planning programmes in societies at various stages of economic development. Its requirement that long-term urban growth should balance the three dimensions demands knowledge and commitment greater than city planning has evolved in the past (Atkinson, 1999). It calls for a systematic treatment of the three dimensions in a manner which we currently only partly understand: we must supplement scientifically based approaches with judgment where knowledge is still only partial (Drakakis-Smith, 1996). The urban environmental management process seeks to address the challenges of urban growth and eventually the process should lead to urban sustainable development. In the following section we explore the meaning of urban environmental management and the challenges that the process seeks to address.

1.4 Urban environmental management

Environmental management as it is conventionally understood refers to a formal body of techniques, rules and practices for planning, organisation, and social and technical control of the human utilisation of, and interaction with nature and natural resources (Emmett, 1998). Urban environmental management is best seen as a subsidiary process, taking place within the overall process of urban management. It is an all-embracing concept covering not only the physical environment, but also aspects related to the urban ecology, incomes, infrastructure, investments and institutions, all of which must be seen in relation to the political, social and cultural environment in any urban area (Edelman et al., 2000). Conceptually, all basic principles of urban management also hold for urban environmental management. When examining and analysing the urban environmental management process, we need to understand what are the aims and objectives of the urban environment management approach; who are the actors involved; what activities have been identified, agreed upon and prioritised; how the implementation of these activities is done and what the results of these activities are.
Urban environmental management (UEM) emphasises that environmental impacts of a city are widespread and that management should take a holistic approach. Urban environmental management involves the planning, design, operation and development of related urban environmental policies, procedures and technologies to address urban environmental problems. Bartone et al. (1994) state that UEM aims to:

- identify urban environmental issues;
- agree on strategies and actions to resolve these issues among all those whose cooperation is required; and
- implement these strategies though coordinated public and private actions.

In time, therefore, the process should improve health and profitability in cities, reduce environmental hazards and protect natural resources so as to sustain economic and social development (ibid.).

Effective urban environmental management should seek to address various urban challenges. First, strategies are to be developed for reconciling economic growth with environmental protection. According to UNCHS (1996; 2001), some of the worst forms of environmental hazards found in many cities are a result of economic growth proceeding without adequate concern for its environmental impact. Cities need to find ways to both encourage economic development and satisfy an increasing demand for energy, water and other resources, in ecologically sound ways. The dynamism and creativity that cluster in cities could provide a source of solutions to the wide range of environmental problems (WRI, 1996).

Secondly, successful UEM seeks to forge coordination and collaboration between different actors, sectors and jurisdictions. The management of the urban environments in the developing countries has faced serious problems because of lack of understanding of the dynamics of the forces and actions within the urban environment. This has complicated the implementation of many urban environmental policies in the urban areas. Jurisdiction complexity further complicates the implementation of other urban environmental policies. By their very nature, urban environmental problems often require strategies that span jurisdictions and sectors (Emmett, 1998). This is true whether the issue is delivering water and sanitation services to low-income communities or solid waste management. An example: without adequate solid waste management, urban drainage systems will not work, because garbage is the most common cause of blockage (UNCHS 1996, 2001; Hardoy et al., 2001). Still, in most towns in the third world, responsibilities for urban environmental management tend to be fragmented among different agencies and jurisdictions.
Thirdly, UEM needs to identify actors from the public, private and civil society spheres to undertake joint activities aimed at addressing urban environmental problems. Arrossi et al. (1994) note that the public/private conventional model, which identifies certain activities to be undertaken by the public sector and others by the private sector, has failed in dealing with urban environmental problems. The failure of public authorities to meet their responsibilities means there is either no provision or a combination of formal and informal private provision. There is also failure of the local and the central government to develop responses that mesh with local peoples’ needs and priorities and build on the resources that are available. On the part of the private sector, there has been the problem of lack of incentives for making long-term investments in solid waste management, water supply and sanitation and drainage improvement. The problem is exacerbated in the low-income settlements where land tenure is uncertain or illegal, since any investment may be lost if the inhabitants are evicted and their shelters demolished. Due to the failure of the public/private conventional model, UEM is expected to adopt new approaches to the management of the urban environment. We require synergistic approaches between the two – the state and the markets – to meet the challenges of the urban environment (Safier, 1992). Safier (1992) argues that the challenge taken by the new approach to urban management is to define “appropriate roles and responsibilities of key actors involved in water supply, sanitation and solid waste management: the public sector, the private sector and the popular sector: NGOs and CBOs”. UEM aims to create a situation in which the private sector takes the initiative, while the government primarily coordinates and facilitates (Post, 1997).

Fourthly, UEM seeks to gear the entire development into a desired direction ensuring that there are appropriate institutions that identify issues and problems and agree on strategies and actions that are to be undertaken. These institutions should also set priorities and devise ways in which resources, both financial and human, will be mobilised to ensure that implementation of prioritised actions is done.

Finally, UEM needs to ensure that prioritised actions will have impacts even beyond the city limits as environmental problems within the city are interlinked with the hinterland.

We note that therefore the urban governments cannot effectively manage the urban environment on their own and that they need to work in collaboration and in consultation with a wide variety of actors. A more recent view of urban management articulates a broader urban governance view that brings to the fore the role that civil society plays and expands the range of stakeholders to include private sector agencies, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), community-based organisations (CBOs) and a variety of interest groups (Wekwete 1997). This ap-
proach implies that urban management in the governance perspective has to be more participative, broader in outlook, more transparent and less bureaucratic. In the next section we will examine the concept of urban governance and link it with the process of urban environmental management.

1.5 Urban governance

The term governance is given a variety of meanings by different users and has progressively become a component of ‘aid-speak’ and a political ‘sing song’. It is a word characterised more by its widespread use than its clarity or singularity of meaning, just like ‘sustainable development’, ‘partnerships’ and ‘poverty alleviation’. Paproski (1993) explains the concept of governance as the process of interaction between the public sector and the various actors or groups of actors in civil society. The crucial distinction between government and governance is the notion of civil society, which can be defined as the public life of individuals and institutions outside the control of the state (Harpham and Boateng, 1997). Urban governance refers to a shift from state sponsorship of economic and social programmes and projects to the delivery of these through partnership arrangements, which usually involve both the governmental and non-governmental organisations (NGOs). In effect, good governance is about governmental agencies and NGOs working together (Stoker, 1997) in non-hierarchical and flexible partnerships (often characterised as ‘networks’, Rhodes, 1995). The emergence of partnerships as key mechanisms of urban governance ensures the inclusion of new partners in the delivery of policies and services. According to Harding (1996), these partners are established institutional actors who have ‘positional strengths’ to deliver the required resources. The significance of this is held to be the new role for the state as the coordinator and manager of these partnerships (ibid.).

Young (1994 provides one of the most pertinent formulations in the field of governance. He argues that governance arises as a social or societal concern whenever members of a group find that they are interdependent in the sense that the actions of each impinge on the welfare of others. Interdependence gives rise to collective action problems in the sense that actors left to their own devices in an interdependent world frequently suffer joint losses as a result of conflicts or are unable to reap joint gains because of an inability to cooperate. Young further states that governance involves the establishment and operation of social institutions capable of resolving conflicts and/or facilitating cooperation.

We argue that in any form of good urban governance, new institutional arrangements have to come into being that promote partnerships and forms of ‘government at a distance’ (Murdoch and Abram, 1998). The state needs to seek out those external agencies, which seem most appropriate to the delivery of particular govern-
mental objectives and programmes and aims, at least in principle, to coordinate and manage complex relations in line with some notion of the ‘public interest’. Although the ‘public interest’ is hard to define, one mechanism that is frequently employed to inject some notion of ‘public good’ into the functioning of governmental institutions is public participation. It is hoped that government can be kept in tune with public aspirations through the enrolment of citizens, either as individuals or as groups (*ibid.*).

The recent concern with governance in urban areas stems from a more general attention being paid to ‘good governance’ as a development issue. One approach sees urban governance as essentially preoccupied with questions of financial accountability and administrative efficiency (Badshah, 1997; Sampford, 2002). An alternative approach that is relevant to our study, is one more interested in broader political concerns related to democracy and popular participation (Robinson, 1995). Good governance is a concept that has recently come into regular use in political science, public administration and, more particularly, development management. It appears alongside such concepts and terms as democracy, civil society, popular participation, partnerships, human rights and sustainable development. In recent years, it has been closely associated with public sector reform (Okot-Uma, 2001). Many authors have noted that good governance should, among other things, be participatory, transparent and accountable. Good governance may therefore be defined as comprising the processes and structures that guide political and socioeconomic relationships, with particular reference to ‘commitment to democratic values, norms and practices, trusted services and just and honest business’ (*ibid.*). Hence, good governance should ensure that political, social, environmental and economic priorities are based on a broad consensus in society and that the voices of the poorest and the most vulnerable are heard in decision-making over the allocation of development resources. UNCHS (2001) sees good governance not in terms of money or technology, not even expertise, but in terms of a well-managed and inclusive city.

UNCHS (now UN-Habitat) sees good urban governance as an efficient and effective response to urban problems by accountable local governments working in partnership with civil society. Good urban governance is therefore a powerful tool in helping make cities better places to live and work in (UNCHS, 2001). It not only benefits citizens, but also brings benefits to the economies. More specifically, it assists in fighting corruption, maintaining democracy, improving the quality of life and life chances for all citizens while at the same time improving opportunity for people to manifest their desires and wishes in life. It also promotes security, equity and sustainability (*ibid.*).
According to the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP) good urban governance has eight major characteristics: it is participatory, consensus oriented, accountable, transparent, responsive, effective and efficient, equitable and inclusive and follows the rule of law. It assures that corruption is minimised, views of minorities are taken into account and the voices of the most vulnerable in society are heard in decision-making. It is also responsive to the present and future needs of the society. Hence, good urban governance seeks new ways to be creative, to build strengths and to access and utilise resources. This is particularly true at the scale of the locality and the neighbourhood. It is at this level that we find attempts to identify and utilise local knowledge, to build local institutional capacity and to develop social capital, all as means by which local problems can be solved, local needs met and employment created with minimum state intervention (Kearns and Paddison, 2000).

Institutional frameworks are relevant at a variety of levels. They include international organisations and national governments with roles and action plans in the governance of urban areas. Institutional frameworks can have widespread effects upon incentives and disincentive structures, which can operate for environmental management. Pugh (1996) argues that various institutions, firms, households, governmental agencies, CBOs and NGOs each have characteristic comparative advantages. He goes on to argue that firms have a comparative advantage in entrepreneurship, including the development of environmental technologies, while governments have a comparative advantage in policy making, selling property rights and in institutional reforms, NGOs and CBOs have a comparative advantage in mobilising household efforts for pro-environmental purposes. Finally, households have a comparative advantage in some aspects of personal and social development. It is therefore important to consider the appropriate institutional combination in urban environmental management.

Although institutional reforms facilitate good urban governance, the local government has a special role to play since it is the democratic level closest to the citizen. Governance solutions are rightly felt to belong to the local level and so, after years of being side-lined and ignored, local government now finds itself at centre stage. It is being encouraged to innovate, to be close to the citizens and to develop partnerships. The key challenges that the local government now faces include meeting the demand for increased transparency and participation from citizens, modernising its administration and services, fitting into other levels of governance and dealing with the new technologies and taking advantages of their benefits. Local governments are not the only organisations to take decisions that can bring about im-

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7 See article on: http://www.escap.org/huset/gg/governance.htm
provements in people’s lives. In many cases, it is other institutions, be they in the private sector or civil society, that are in a better position to bring about such changes in people’s quality of life. For instance, communities in many low-income neighbourhoods have been responding to environmental challenges in various ways. Urban environmental management requires that there is cooperation between all the actors (from the public, private and civil society sectors) in the urban areas. These actors possess different qualities and this is the point at which it is strongly linked with the concept of urban governance. However, urban governance is not limited to issues related to the improvement of urban environment, but encompasses the broader poverty reduction initiatives. This is where it gets very close to the concerns of sustainable development. One of the ways, which we examine in the following section, is through collective action between different actors.

1.6 Collective action and the community

Many theorists have sought to explain the periodic eruptions of collective action through such phenomena as inequality, the reform of bad government and class conflict (for example Karl Marx), social disintegration and anomie, (Emile Durkheim), shared religious values (Max Weber), relative deprivation and (Gurr, 1968) among many other theoretical arguments. Other theorists have attempted to combine some of the above theories to form more sophisticated theories of collective action (Berejikian (1992), Mason and Krane (1989), Tilly (1978)). Each of these theories has some explanatory power and each has contributed to our understanding of collective action. Yet we can distil from the theories some aspects that can best explain the emergence of collective action in urban areas.

In many instances, collective action is spontaneous and the result of a well-known crisis: misuse of resources or missing services. Collective action may also be driven by incidences of relative deprivation. Collective action is action directed towards the achievement of a common goal or a common interest that cannot be obtained by acting alone. Many of the solutions to urban environmental problems can only be successful, especially in the low-income neighbourhoods, when the communities participate. In many instances, collective action by poor households in urban areas to organise shelter, basic services, employment and security becomes widespread, especially where there is minimal government assistance and where the government faces numerous constraints (Rakodi, 1993). The evolution of endogenous solutions to collective action problems, when these are considered viable, is often attributed to the existence of a ‘community’. It is considered that a community will more easily be able to overcome constraints to collective action such as the costs for monitoring and enforcement (Mearns, 1995). Already existing and varied relations within the community-based environmental management issues facilitate collective action (Baumann and Sharan, 2000).
People join together to form collective organisations because they believe that greater benefits are achievable through collective action than when they act alone. People might desire collective action to control negative externalities or to encourage the production of positive externalities and public goods. The motivation for collective action is to do things that benefit people in the collective organisation. Collective action is therefore successful to the extent in which it improves the welfare of those who participate in it. It is worth noting that although groups must make collective decisions and determine what they think is the best action for the group, groups themselves do not have preferences. Rather, individuals within groups have preferences, and there are methods for aggregating those preferences, of which voting is an example, that can lead to group decisions. Groups also do not typically make decisions by giving every member an equal chance to participate in every decision. Even groups of modest size tend to elect representatives who make decisions on behalf of the group.

Wade (1988) argues that collective action is based on a moral capacity to recognise the claims of others, empathy for their position and a norm of fairness, which can lead to unselfish behaviour. It has been suggested that the more homogenous the community is, the more likely it is that these factors will support collective action (Ostrom, 1990). Despite the positive aspects of ‘community’, several authors recognise that the community alone is insufficient as an explanation for collective action (Baumann and Sharan 2000; Baud 2000; Mearns, 1995; Ostrom, 1990). Most recognise the need for sanctions to back agreements, whether these are internal or external to the community. There is little evidence for the claim that collective action in urban environmental management is a tradition, sustained by voluntary and moral commitments. Wade (1988) further shows that those members of the community in positions of power may be able to induce and support collective action, which could benefit the community as a whole.

Most studies on collective action emphasise the centrality of incentives to individual decision-makers to make cooperation attractive (Ostrom, 1990; Wade, 1988). The perceived benefits from cooperation are usually conditional on clearly defined boundaries to the resources and rights that are socially recognised, and which can be monitored (Oakerson, 1986). In this connection, Ostrom suggests that collective action is most likely if the results can easily be seen and the participating group is small. Evidence suggests that collective action is likely when members of the community are mutually vulnerable and mutually dependent (Mearns, 1995). The former, applied to the situation in the low-income settlements in urban areas, refers to a situation where, there is lack of urban basic services and the provision cannot be realised and sustained without cooperation from others. In such a situation of missing services, members of the community realise there is a higher risk in non-
cooperation and there is greater likelihood for collective action (Baumann and Sharan, 2000). CBOs have been known to be effective in tackling environmental problems at the neighbourhood level, but their resources and local base usually do not allow them to do more (Lee, 1994; Baud, 2000). They have to enter into partnerships with other actors. Baud (2000) noted that current knowledge on community-based collective action is limited to certain regions and large cities, with a focus on successful cases. There is therefore need for a better understanding of the conditions, which both allow and prevent effective CBO/NGO/local government combinations to emerge.

Recent scholarship has seized on the concepts of ‘social capital’ and ‘trust’ to explain collective action on cooperative communities (see works of Putman, (1993); Fukuyama (1995); and Bowlers and Gintis (1998). ‘Trust’ explains how the calculations of rational maximizers might change, based on their perception of how others will behave. The term social capital describes a relationship of equilibrium between norms of reciprocity, networks of civic engagement and trust. Norms, networks and trust reinforce each other to produce social capital, which inheres in the structure of relations among people (Putnam, 1993; Coleman, 1990). We however observe that the definitions of social capital are methodologically problematic because they assume and hide what should be causal and falsifiable relationships among the variables that supposedly produce it. Another problem with the concept of social capital is that it is defined by its function, as some aspect of social structure that facilitates the concerted actions of individuals (Coleman, 1990). Studies on the role of social capital in collective environmental action have also been on the rise recently (see for example those by the World Bank’s Social Capital Initiative Group).

In so far as collective action in urban areas has the potential of improving environmental quality, especially in the low-income neighbourhoods, there are a number of difficulties that might make collective action impossible. Such difficulties include interactions among similar partners and the problem of ‘free riding’. One way of dealing with the problem of free riding involves institutional design whereby larger groups can promote cooperation by organising themselves into small subgroups. If group size leads to free riding, the use of small sub-groups therefore makes sense, since individual action is more readily recognised at each sublevel where the group is small. However we note that it is not only the group size that matters, but also the degree of homogeneity of the group. In the following section we examine the concept of participation and the difficulties of realising effective participation, especially in urban areas.
1.7 Participation and urban environmental management

At the outset, the 1991 Human Development Report emphasised that people must be at the centre of development. In addition to development of the people and development for the people, UNDP advocates development by the people, that is, "through appropriate structures of decision making, people must participate fully in the planning and implementation of development strategies" (UNDP, 1991: 13). For the purpose of this study, participation is defined as 'taking part in the formulation, passage or implementation of environmental management initiatives' (Klugman, 1994). It is necessary, however, to be more specific as to the nature of participation in a particular context, and identify who takes part in what, when and how, and with what results. Participation is an effective means of raising awareness, without which there is neither political will nor individual motivation to protect or improve the environment. Participation is used and advocated as a means to motivate and organise the essential multiplicity of actors. It is used to obtain better information about conditions and potentials. Participation by both men and women is a cornerstone of good governance. Participation could be either direct or through legitimate intermediate institutions or representatives. It is important to point out that representative democracy does not necessarily mean that the concerns of the most vulnerable in society would be taken into consideration in decision-making. Participation needs to be informed and organised. This means freedom of association and expression on the one hand, and an organised civil society on the other hand.

The notion of participation is very close to that of interest. Thus, for people living in cities, participating in a cleaning campaign means taking part in a collective action directed at the general interest of their neighbourhood. The participation dynamism is therefore dependent on the notion of interest. There are several degrees of participation that are relevant to our study. These include individual responsibility, collective responsibility, material or financial contribution, and assuming responsibility in community-based management. Participation is used or advocated as a means to motivate and organise the essential multiplicity of actors. It is employed to draw out priorities, which have widespread support across departments and levels of government and among interests outside government in the business and community sectors (Mattingly, 1999). Participation can help build long-term capacity and enhance the ability of local people to manage and negotiate development projects. Participatory planning can help raise the status of vulnerable groups, such as women, by providing the opportunity to play a role in the development process. It also brings users and service providers, both governmental and private, into a direct relationship and this may have a greater impact on the accountability of these suppliers.
More and more, sustainable development is presented as the sensible response to the increasingly worrying situation and conditions in cities. Embedded in most interpretations of this broad concept is the need for more participatory approaches to environmental decision-making. Such a call can be found in many discourses on sustainable development emerging from a variety of sources. Analysts of sustainable development also agree on the necessity of participatory approaches. O’Riordan (1996) for instance, suggests “that the sustainability transition is a profoundly radical combination of ecological imperatives, social redistribution and political empowerment which will involve global management regimes, the limitation of national sovereignty and greatly enhance local involvement and self-reliance”. Similar calls for more consultative, participatory and deliberate approaches are made by analysts and actors in the environmental field who argue that stakeholders’ involvement in decision-making is needed to tackle environmental problems. Many justifications to such calls for participatory approaches to environmental problems relate to the characteristics of environmental issues. Hove (2000) argues that environmental problems frequently present four major characteristics: complexity, uncertainty, large temporal and spatial scales and irreversibility. Participation of a wide range of actors in the problem-solving process can make the process easier. Looking for extended participation is the most obvious way of involving actors in the process. It can potentially guarantee a higher degree of legitimacy to the decisions taken since a wider range of social forces will have been allowed to influence the process instead of it being imposed ‘from above’.

While participation can be thought of as the yarn that binds together actors in the public/private interface, many scholars and practitioners argue that there are drawbacks to participatory approaches. For one thing, participatory approaches can be time-consuming and require a considerable investment of resources, which can present a challenge to projects that operate with limited resources. Participation can be a source of tension and sometimes even a destabilising force in that it can inappropriately unbalance existing socio-political relationships (Haughton, 1999). This can undermine the very relationships that the participatory process seeks to foster between actors in the public/private interface. Often, motivations for participatory approaches need to be made clear as poorly targeted participatory schemes run the risk of promoting an ideological perspective in development, even at the expense of securing direct benefits for people from development projects. In some instances, participatory strategies that are conceived without sufficient inquiry into how burdens are distributed in a particular society can result in a shifting of undue burdens onto the poor, while relinquishing national governments of their responsibility to promote development and equity.
As seen above, the challenge lies in the practical design and organisation of a participatory problem-solving process. Questions such as the legitimacy and representativity of the interest groups that participate in the process tend to arise. Blowers (1997), commenting on the participation of social movements, notes that the idea that environmental or urban social movements are given space to operate in a vigorous civil society does not adequately deal with the problem of legitimising and implementing decisions. Environmental movements are not representative, nor are they accountable, and consequently, their influence must be secured ultimately through the formal political process.

This lack of representativity and accountability also holds true for community organisations and business actors acting on environmental problem-solving process. A second question stems from the selection of participants. Legitimacy can be gained, provided there is some legitimacy content in the selection itself. Thirdly, the procedures for dispute resolution and power balancing need to be carefully designed if the process is to sensibly articulate different value judgements and logistics in a manner that respects quality and equity criteria. In order to gain some insight into how the participation of different actors could be effective in environmental decision-making and action, we examine the concept of partnership and the evolution of participatory and partnership approaches in development in the following section.

1.8 Partnerships

Effective urban management processes and good urban governance require the formation of partnerships between different organisations and actors in the urban areas. A partnership is a form of participation. Since the UNCED conference in Rio, where the idea of Agenda 21 was mooted, and the subsequent process of developing LAs 21 by local authorities, culminating later in the Habitat agenda, the idea of partnerships has become common. In the area of urban environmental management, the usefulness of partnerships between local authorities and other actors and how this could lead to urban sustainable development has gained wide recognition in theory (see the works of Squires, 1989; OECD, 1990; Bennet and Krebbs, 1991; Serageldin et al., 1994; Harding, 1996; Badshah, 1996; Hastings (1996, 1999); Schubeter, 1996; Katajima, 1997; Syrett, 1997; Selman, 1996, 1999; Hordijk, 2001; Baud et al., 2001a; Baud and Post, 2001). The adoption of effective partnerships as a means of attaining sustainable development in urban areas can only be assessed by empirical research and analysis. We argue that while partnerships are being promoted at the international level, they are difficult to form and when formed, they do not always function properly. Their outputs are sometimes difficult to identify, especially in the developing countries. The emphasis on partnerships for effective urban environmental management has been
gaining a lot of attention and interest. We will examine the evolution of participatory and partnership approaches in development since the 1960s in the following section.

1.8.1 The evolution of participatory and partnership approaches in development

Prior to the 1960s, many strategies to promote growth in developing countries were capital and technology intensive. These strategies were often promoted by international and multilateral organisations that designed development interventions in centralised units of decision-making, and implemented them in a ‘top-down’ fashion. People at the receiving end of the plans were at most ‘passive participants’ (Mangal, 1998). By the late 1950s and 1960s, it was recognised that many projects did not result in significant benefits for their target groups because of their mechanistic nature and the way in which they systematically excluded the input of local people. This suggested that input from local people was an important ingredient for success. The result was a paradigm shift towards the concept of ‘community development’ in project planning. Community development focused on developing skills in local communities and supporting CBOs. In many projects, local people were sought out for labour mobilisation and cost reduction in the implementing phase, but their participation was limited in the planning phase. Though the paradigm of community development promoted people’s involvement in projects, people were still at the ‘receiving end’ of plans that were generated and directed by the national agenda. Community input in problem identification and solving was generally not sought and local people essentially participated as ‘active recipients’ (Cernea, 1991; Chambers, 1994).

Initially, more attention was given to rural community development than urban community development, as poor people in rural areas were essentially seen as ‘producers’ of products, whereas the beneficiaries of urban projects were seen as mere ‘users’ (Mangal, 1998). Users were accorded a less role and were often excluded from the decision making process. Yet, the dynamic growth of informally constructed residential areas and squatter settlements in cities of developing countries indicated that people in urban areas exert a concerted effort to manage many activities to meet their basic needs. Soon community development planning in urban areas became focused on building infrastructure in developing countries particularly in Asia and Africa (ibid.). Local people were encouraged to develop the needed skills and to take responsibility for supporting and assisting in implementing a range of physical infrastructure works.

In the 1970s and 1980s, analysts argued that communities had inherent capacities, knowledge and beliefs about the systems in which they constructed their daily lives – the very systems development planners wished to ‘improve’ (Cohen and
Uphoff, 1980). It was argued that genuine attempts at local participation should not exclude the knowledge and beliefs of communities, but rather involve people actively in every stage of the project cycle. This meant that local people had an important role to play in the planning, decision-making and implementation of the plans, and that they take an active role in the evaluation (ibid.). Since some of the best-intended decisions yielded harmful outcomes, it was recognised that more attention had to be given to how the risks of undesired project consequences were distributed among different stakeholders, particularly among vulnerable groups, in order to determine whether people were benefiting equitably from programmes (Chambers, 1994).

At the same time that ‘people-centred planning’ advocated a more inclusive process, a rethinking of the causes of poverty suggested that people’s ‘non-participation’ was linked to the larger structural contexts in developing countries. This led to the political and economic marginalisation of certain groups, which prevents them from sharing equitably in society’s resources (Schubeter, 1996). Analysts argued that not only did people need to be an integral part of the decision-making process, but also that poor people and vulnerable groups such as women, who were often the most excluded and marginalised from society, needed to be brought directly into development initiatives. Since a power differential caused people in the lower rungs of the power ladder to be excluded from access to, and control over, the resources they need to sustain and improve their lives, empowering them was an essential step toward increasing their influence in decision-making (Cernea, 1991; Mangal, 1998).

It is now widely recognised that, from the late 1970’s onwards, governments in more advanced economies and some in the South sought to reconfigure their relationship with society and the various sectors and actors, redefining their spheres of influence vis-à-vis economic forces and with citizens, and their mechanisms for accountability and legitimacy (Magalhães et al., 2002). With the beginnings of massive structural adjustments programmes throughout the developing world during the 1980s, it was clear that large parts of urban populations were going to be affected by the whole range of measures that were meant to liberalise economic management (Rakodi, 1999). It was common for structural adjustment ‘packages’ to attempt to reduce the size of the public sector, together with the public services offered at low cost. Such measures have had adverse effect on the quality of life of both poor and lower middle-income urban dwellers. These effects have coincided with an overall political activity, a strengthening of the texture of the civil society and widespread urban protest. Many people living and working in cities have responded to these changes by demanding high quality services, which the municipal governments cannot afford to continue offering alone.
Challenges of Urban Environmental Governance

The democratising forces emerging in the late 1980s and early 1990s in most of the developing world further expanded the scope and meaning of collective action in urban management. Baumann and Sharan (2000) observe that civil society expanded on the more pluralistic approach to participation, which emerged in the 1970's by arguing for more plural forms of political and economic participation, not only on a local level, but also on a societal level as a whole. These movements saw the re-emergence of civil society not only as a political force, but also as a complement to the state and market in charting the course of development (Mangal, 1998). This idea was reinforced and even formalised at UNCED 1992, which officially recognised that the challenges to development could only be overcome by greater collaboration between governments, the private sector and civil society. The UNCED signalled the start of a new era in the area of environmental management, in particular urban environmental management. The conference adopted Agenda 21, a farranging programme of reform. After the conference it was clear that the tasks ahead were too much and too important for governments alone. New partnerships had to be forged and the business community and civil society organisations were to get involved. Agenda 21 spoke broadly about new roles through partnerships: “business and industry should be full participants” and “the private and public sectors should strengthen partnerships to implement the principles and criteria for sustainable development”. The public sector should establish procedures to allow an expanded role of the private sector (Gomez-Echeverri, 1997) and of other stakeholders.

The UNCED’s urgent insistence that the private sector and the civil society should have an expanded role in LA 21 processes in collaboration with the private sector, provided the key to a different approach: the concept of public-private partnerships (PPP). The immediate challenge from Rio was to translate the PPP principle into action. UNDP has been very instrumental and has initiated efforts to create the framework to allow partnerships to happen and developed a Public-Private Partnership model. However, the PPP model developed by the UNDP cannot be generalised as it treats all developing countries as one block. It is here argued that there is no one single model that can be replicated in different cities. There are, however, some real institutional barriers to forging partnerships in the areas of urban environmental management. Institutional barriers and the apparent lack of political will to reform them remain the most stubborn and powerful obstacles to real change.

1.8.2 Defining partnerships

Recently, there is a growing volume of literature about the concept of partnerships and practitioners, researchers and observers are developing greater insights into the prospects of partnerships, especially as a solution to the provision of urban basic
services. From the existing literature on partnerships, definitions of what constitute partnerships in urban environmental management are characteristically generalised and its malleability and lack of precise definition have undoubtedly sponsored the rise of partnerships on the political agenda.

According to Hordijk (2001), general characteristics that most partnerships have in common are that: (a) a partnership involves two or more actors and some authors add that at least one should be public; (b) each partner is a principal, i.e. each is capable of bargaining on its own behalf, rather than having to consult with other forms of authority; (c) a partnership is an enduring relationship between these actors (based on a written or verbal agreement, informal or formal in nature, with some continuing interaction); (d) each of the participating organisations and actors bring something to the partnership. Each partner transfers some resources – both tangible and intangible – and the partnership should be mutually beneficial (without assuming equality between actors); (e) a partnership finds its expression in concrete activities (including planning initiatives); (f) a partnership implies a shared responsibility for the outcomes of the activities; (g) partnerships are meant to serve a public interest. Gonzalez et al., 2000 distinguish these partnerships from other commercial enterprises and they are now sometimes called public interest partnerships.

Given the above characteristics of partnerships, we are able to highlight some of the preconditions that have to be fulfilled before a partnership can be effective. First, according to Hordijk (2001) there has to be a certain degree of mutuality of interest between the actors concerning the specific goal the partnership must pursue. Secondly, partnerships can only function if there is trust among the partners, as well as mutual accountability and transparency (Baud, 2000). Thirdly, effective and able leadership is an important precondition for the functioning of any partnership arrangement. Most partnerships have come to being especially there where a common crisis exists, affecting all the actors concerned. However, the existence of a crisis will not lead to actors coming together and undertaking activities to address the crisis if there is not a “champion” to initiate discussions. Finally, a strong political will is needed to support partnership activities in the long run.

In this study we define partnership arrangements as any co-operative working arrangement between business (formal or informal), non-profit organisations (CBOs and NGOs) and government (local and central), in which resources and skills are shared in projects that benefit each partner as well as the community. We also see partnerships as any voluntary commitments by a wide range of actors in the urban environment to make a contribution to the improvement of the quality of
the living environment. This definition stresses the voluntary nature of relationships; the wide range of participants, from the community to the private sector, the local government, central government departments, NGOs and CBOs, and the need for a shared strategy and agreed contributions of resources to the process. Thus, partnerships are those arrangements that involve at least two or more actors; represent a more or less enduring relationship between actors; are mutually beneficial (without assuming equality between the actors); address public interest issues and concerns; and find their expression in activities related to improving the quality of the environment (Baud, et al., 2001a, b).

Partnerships appear to offer a mechanism for bonding together multiple interests and perspectives necessary to implement integrated programme strategies responsive to diverse local socio-economic and environmental concerns (Hastings 1999). The use of partnerships between public and private sector actors designed to achieve public policy objectives is in general not a new phenomenon. What is new is the emphasis and the political willingness by the government in different countries to encourage these initiatives. From a policy perspective, partnerships can be mechanisms for merging the objectives, experiences and resources of multiple institutional and individual actors necessarily involved in an integrated, territorial approach to environmental management. If properly structured, partnerships are capable of providing the flexibility necessary to identify and respond more efficiently and effectively to the diverse local socio-economic, political and environmental circumstances. They can also help organise and enhance complementarity of urban environmental programme purposes vertically (among levels of government) and horizontally (across governmental units at the same level). Finally, partnerships can provide a means to organise and capitalise on the advantages of pragmatic public and private sector cooperation (OECD, 1990; Hastings, 1996; 1999).

1.8.3 Types of partnerships
Partnerships can take many forms, can be used for many purposes and involve complex legal, political, organisational and financial interrelationships among the partners (Axelrod and Dion, 1988). The purpose of each partnership is an orchestration of policy and execution, based on shared objectives and priorities. An important change has recently been taking place in the conception and implementation of urban environmental development programmes in the framework of LA 21.

In this context, four types of partnerships have become prominent:
1. In response to the pulling out of national state activities, there has been a growth of activities by NGOs and CBOs, which often act in partnerships with government agents to take on tasks previously performed solely by the state.
2. A variety of public/private partnerships.
3. Partnerships between various levels of state authorities and state-sponsored agencies.
4. Partnerships between individual households and private service providers, which may take the form of private/private partnerships.

We contend that the type of partnership arrangements that emerges in a concrete situation highly depends on the local actors, local circumstances and, to a larger extent, the local political environment. For instance in countries where the central state has been withdrawing from certain areas of activity through reductions in public service provision and selective reductions in public spending, several innovative approaches are emerging. Miller and Roo (1999) argue that former urban services provision has been replaced or complemented by new policies, which attempt to stimulate individual action and partnership with private, voluntary and community groups.

1.8.4  Components of partnerships

This section considers the components of partnerships in urban environmental management, covering what they seek to do, who is involved, how they are to be implemented, how they may change over time and what are the preconditions for success. Therefore, when studying partnerships, we first need to examine their aims and objectives, the activities they engage in, the actors involved, the nature of the relationships, the socio-economic and political context and the outcomes of the partnerships (Baud and Post, 2001). McQuaid (1994) stresses the importance of three components in this respect: the mandate, including the aims and objectives of the partnership arrangement; the arrangement within each partnership; and the various outcomes. The aim of a specific partnership may involve a range of activities or programmes, focusing on a single project or on a series of programmes affecting a range of factors which influence the ‘quality of life’ of residents in an area (McQuaid, 1994). The aims may concern a specific geographical area or a particular client group within an area. The range of activities may be narrow or wide.

As regards the arrangements within each partnership, we need to consider the range of actors, which may include key agencies such as central and local government, voluntary sector bodies, the local community (groups and individuals), the private sector (formal or informal) and influential individuals. It is important to identify precisely the types of actors and their respective contribution to a partnership. Another aspect to be considered is the formal or informal structure of the partnership, which may range from formal legally binding contracts, to non-bidding public agreements or informal relations based on trust and mutual benefit.
With respect to the third component – the outcomes – we need to examine the process-outcomes and substantial outcomes of these partnership arrangements. Issues like financial viability, legitimacy, accountability, effectiveness, inclusiveness and exclusiveness of an arrangement and political will are important outcomes to be considered. Given the huge diversity and ever changing nature of partnerships in urban environmental management, we will get better understanding by narrowing the focus down to some partnerships along the dimensions discussed above. The components of partnership arrangements that need to be studied are summarised in Table 1.1.

Table 1.1 Components of partnership arrangements

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component of partnership</th>
<th>Examples</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>MANDATE</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aims</td>
<td>Reduction of solid waste generated, visioning, consultations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Range of activities</td>
<td>Encourage recycling activities; clean-ups; strategic planning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scale of intervention</td>
<td>Neighbourhood level</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>ARRANGEMENTS</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Actors involved and excluded</td>
<td>Who does what, how and when</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nature of relationships</td>
<td>Formal or informal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decision-making structure</td>
<td>Organisational structure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Division of tasks</td>
<td>Related to organisational structure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inputs of various actors</td>
<td>What do different partners bring to the partnership</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial arrangements</td>
<td>What financial resources are available to the partnership</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monitoring and evaluation</td>
<td>Review of progress made; lessons and replicability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outcomes</td>
<td>What actual benefits (tangible or intangible); value-added</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Adapted from Mcquaid R.W (1994)*

1.8.5 **Strengths and weaknesses of partnerships**

The essential quality that partnerships embody is that of complementarity in which the relative strengths and weaknesses of each partner are offset against each other to produce developments that combine the best contributions. In practical terms, these developments are economically efficient, socially responsive and environmentally sustainable (UNCHS, 2001). Partnerships therefore offer each party benefits that cannot be achieved while operating independently. This requires actors from each sector to understand and acknowledge the legitimate interests of the other. Successful partnerships should provide (a) an efficient way of identifying different and changing needs; (b) adequate trust between the partners; (c) clarity concerning the purpose of the partnership and the individual roles of partners within it; (d) adequate leadership; (e) possibilities for all partners to fulfil their roles; (f) adequate access by all partners to essential information; (g) necessary financial and other resources (h) compatibility with the prevailing political and...
nancial and other resources (h) compatibility with the prevailing political and legal climate; and finally (i) potential for wider application. These issues make it possible to assess the organisational structure through which a partnership is to operate at each relevant stage and the roles of the central and local government together with other stakeholders, developers, NGOs, CBOs and local residents (ibid.).

However, there is the question of whether partnerships as such are effective in seeking solutions to urban environmental problems. Although partnerships can be effective in helping address urban management problems, they are inappropriate for addressing issues the solution of which requires democratic decision-making. Their action is piecemeal and contributes to the already existing fragmentation of the territory, either because they focus on a specific area or because they concentrate on a single policy, sector or both. Partnerships are often short-lived and have a fluctuating membership. Private enterprises frequently opt out of participation. The civil society is often not a stable partner with changing representation through CBOs that tend to represent particular interests and lack knowledge or skills. Partnerships are useful and necessary but they are more appropriate for solving management problems (in urban services for instance) than for addressing issues that require democratic decision-making (UNCHS, 2001).

According to Pugh (1996), urban environmental management requires the use of effective multi-institutional or multi-organisational structures. He argues that coherence and effective partnering in multi-organisational contexts are not assured or guaranteed. Since most partnerships are directed at improving the provision of a 'public good', several problems may arise. In the terminology of game theory, there may be some self-interest in 'free-riding' (i.e. gaining the benefits of environmental improvement without making any contributions oneself) and potential partners may face a 'prisoner's dilemma' (i.e. each wanting the benefits of others cooperation but individually having an incentive to abstain). Coase, cited in Pugh, recognises that goods with social benefits and 'publicness' (i.e. they offer externality and third party enjoyment of benefits) pose dilemmas for their optimal provision. Pugh observes that 'free-rider' and 'prisoner's dilemma' situations can be broken by some form of social cooperation which could be achieved by a CBO organising households collectively into self help mediating between households and policy makers.

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8 A variant of the 'free-riding' and 'prisoner's dilemma' more applicable to urban areas is the case of a householder in a street where all his/her neighbours paint their houses, so raising the value of all houses in the street. However, for each individual householder the extra value to his house of painting is less than the cost of the paint, although the house will increase in value due to his neighbour's efforts. So his maximum personal benefit is gained by not painting his house, although this means a lower total welfare for the community. The end result may be that no one paints his or her house.
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and between government environmental and infrastructure agencies. These possibilities also have some reasoned support in theory of how social cooperation can arise in 'free-rider' and 'prisoner’s dilemma' circumstances (Mwangi, 2000).

We argue that the operational dimension of partnerships is complicated by a wide array of factors that need to be investigated. Helmsing (2000) argued that, while the partnership approach may assist in resolving some of the ‘old problems’ related to service provision in urban areas, it presents us with a new class of problems. Issues of how to resolve considerable inequalities between different actors, coordination between various actors and their activities, financial viability of some initiatives, capability of the public sector to work with others, and so on, are some of the new challenges facing the partnership approach. We now examine the potential partners and discuss their strengths and weaknesses.

1.8.6 Actors and organisations in partnerships for urban environmental management

As said, several groups can be identified that can play a role in partnerships for urban environmental management: the government at the national, regional and local level; the formal private sector; the informal private sector; NGOs, CBOs and external support agencies. Incidentally, households have often been left out in analyses of partnerships. Devas (1999) argues that it is questionable whether individual households should be included in urban governance, since governance implies collective action rather than individual action. However, households clearly are part of the picture, since they are participants in the urban environmental management. If we are to have a complete picture of collaboration between different actors in the urban arena, households cannot be left out. We contend that households are actively involved in partnership arrangements for urban environmental management as members of the CBOs and also on their own. The present study focuses on partnerships between the public, the formal and informal private sector, and participation by households and community groups.

The public sector: local and central governments

Although there is generally a major shift towards a more decentralised way of planning, still most urban authorities in countries, whether industrialised or developing, receive their powers and obligations from a central government authority. The allocation of powers and responsibilities is to protect the rights of the citizens, to provide services and facilities which are not specific to an individual, but are for the common good, or to provide a service or facility which cannot be provided in any other way (Gidman, et al., 1994).
Local governments still have to influence the developments in towns, because of the persistence of problems such as inadequate housing, infrastructure and services (education and health) for the low-income population, as well as traffic congestion and pollution. In order to enhance the road towards sustainable development in cities, there is a need to make changes in the organisation and structure of local governments. The right kind of government is that kind that redefines its traditional role to be a catalyst and facilitator (Osborne and Gaebler, 1993). Osborne and Gaebler refer to a reinvented government as one that separates its functions of policy decision-making (steering) from its function of service delivery (rowing). In other words, today’s governments have to do less and to lead more (ibid.). Only governments have the legitimacy and capability to steer and integrate the activities of multiple stakeholders by acting beyond single purposes. Steering means bringing different stakeholders around the table and moderating differences and negotiating cooperation.

The primary strength of the public sector stems from its legal authority, law-making power, monitoring and regulatory function, and the mandate that it has to act directly with (or delegate responsibility to) other stakeholder groups. It is the primary decision-maker with regard to the public good and is expected to represent its constituencies. The public sector also has the responsibility to work holistically in coordinating urban environmental management initiatives with other community development needs.

UNCHS (2001) notes that the presence of the state varies greatly from one country to the other, between strong states and weak states. Even in countries where the state is still strong, as in France and the UK, it no longer has the political and economic resources needed to carry out the traditional functions of societal governance on its own. In developing countries, for instance, local governments are not able to offer even basic services to many of the citizens living within their jurisdiction. They are also poorly resourced and in many instances poorly managed. Therefore one of the weaknesses of the public sector is that it lacks reliable funding and technical resources. Political interference and corruption, high staff turnover and significant inefficient and inflexible bureaucracy are other weaknesses of the public sector.

The new role of the government has become to create frameworks and to facilitate collective action, rather than to intervene directly (ibid.). As a result of institutional failure in many urban areas, the public sector has not managed to deliver and there have been policies directed at decentralisation of urban infrastructure management. The management of urban environmental problems presents complex institutional challenges. The factors that cause managerial complexity include a large number of organisations involved, cross-jurisdictional conflicts and
overlaps, central-local conflicts and tensions between centralisation and decentralisation. Although local government has nominal responsibilities for the provision of urban environmental infrastructure, central government entities retain much of the authority and financial resources to implement services. Considerable ambiguity exists about the roles of various institutions working in the area of urban management and the provision of urban environmental infrastructure lacks coordination. The behaviour of bureaucracies that face few incentives to perform well underlies many of these institutional problems. Helmsing (2000) observes that an important issue is that greater involvement of other parties in the provision of infrastructure and services would in fact require not a reduced but an expanded regulatory capacity on the part of the government. He further states that new modalities of infrastructure provision need new and complex regulatory and monitoring capacity of the government and especially so in the new partnership arrangements (ibid., 2000).

The private sector
‘Private’ does not only stand for firms, but also individuals, communities and households. In many countries, under pressure of constraints on government resources, there is an incremental process of unintended privatisation: as public services fail, enterprises and households find their own solutions. This is especially the case in the spheres of essential personal services (transport, education, health) and basic infrastructure (water and fuel). The other form of privatisation is programmed: here governments make policy decisions to sell assets, to franchise or concede the whole operation or to contract out aspects of it (Batley, 1997).

The private sector9 can either be formal or informal, and – in the sphere of urban environmental management – ranges from small, individual garbage collectors or water vendors to large companies, which operate or develop large segments of water supply, sanitation and solid waste management (UNDP, 1996; UNCHS, 1996; Davidson and Peltenburg, 1993; Faulkener, 1997). Employees within the private sector are concerned about issues of job security, working conditions, and the particular social status that would be associated with certain jobs. Private sector involvement increases employment, and can also offer an element of security and improved working conditions to groups of non-formal workers who are often exposed to health hazards.

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9 The private sector can either be formal or informal. The term formal is used to signify those organizations and actors that are officially recognised and accepted, and those processes which conform to official rules and regulations. Informal actors are those who do not have full, official recognition or do not comply in some way or other with official rules or procedures. What is referred to as informal private sector is simply unregulated and un-taxed.
The formal private sector refers to institutions, firms and individuals who may be active in many different aspects of infrastructure management but whose main objective and organisation is to generate a profit on their investments. They can, because of their access to financial resources and/or their potential ability to operate more efficiently, play a role in the financing and/or provision of certain infrastructure services and in construction operations and the maintenance of relevant facilities (Faulkener, 1997). Because a private concern mostly has a much narrower focus than its public sector counterpart, it will frequently be able to offer innovative technical and financial solutions and provide a benchmark price for the provision of a service. In the literature, the private sector is endowed with qualities such as political independence, economic rationality, efficiency, dynamism and innovation; qualities that make it measure up favourably to public sector enterprise (Post, 2002). Empirical evidence on how privatisation works is still rather flimsy and largely drawn from experiences in the North. In many developing countries, there is often a strong political opposition to privatisation from groups afraid to lose from such reforms.

The private sector has strengths in transparency, its ability to innovate and replicate and its customer focus (Caplan, 2001). It is able to respond quickly to the need to improve and deliver services and has limited exposure to political interference. It is also responsive to competitiveness. However, since the private sector is not politically accountable, there is still a strong need for regulation by the public sector (Gentry, 1997). Related to this is the overall concern to ensure that the low-income population will benefit from such formal private sector participation. In most instances, the private sector tends to primarily serve the higher income segments of society. The private sector tends to leave low-income areas because the profit margins may be too low and the poor households may not be able to pay for the services provided by the private sector.

Much of the literature on the role of the private sector overstates its potential and ignores the fact that effective private sector participation requires strong, competent and representative local government to set conditions, oversee the quality and control the prices charged. The private sector lacks vision regarding community development, largely due to their distance from the community and also from the customer. As seen above, many governments in developing countries have institutional weaknesses to regulate the private sector. The private sector also lacks financial transparency and is not able to perceive other sectors as equals (rather than taking the lead). It is rigid and propagates hierarchical management styles Caplan, 2001).

It is important for urban governments to also recognise the informal private sector and develop partnerships with this group. The informal sector is an important
source of income and employment for the poor in urban areas and this group can often bridge the gap between the urban poor and the formal sector when it comes to the provision of less profitable urban services or services with standards below these of the formal sector. Schubeter (1996) argues convincingly that residents are producers of infrastructure services in the informal market, that is, persons may earn their livelihood by such activities as hiring themselves to weed parapets, digging drains and selling water in areas where it is scarce.

Informal and formal service providers are often in direct competition with each other and strategies for reconciling the interests of these groups are an important part of problem solving (Gidman et al., 1994). The main obstacle for partnerships with the informal sector is the common tendency in favour of the formal sector and the negative attitude among urban planners and managers and policy makers against the informal sector (ibid). Informal sector activities are considered as being transitional, and are supposed to disappear automatically with economic growth (Mangal, 1998). This is frequently accompanied by ignorance of the informal sector and local authorities and urban managers, and leads to its marginalisation in spite of the major role actually played by this group in the cities and towns of developing countries.

Community-based organisations (CBOs)
There is a huge variety of different types of CBOs, which include self-help, local, grassroots, and community management organisations in addition to village or small town councils. Members are often motivated by self-interest, but this should be channelled in a way to promote the broader interests and development goals of the community. Generally, CBOs involve “any voluntary action undertaken by a group of persons which aims at the satisfaction of individual or collective needs or aspirations” (Arrossi et al., 1994). The distinctive feature of a self-help initiative or activity is the substantial contribution made from the individual’s or group’s own resources in terms of labour, capital, land and/or entrepreneurial skills.

Despite frequent mention in several major policy documents of the importance of CBOs, understanding of environmental CBOs in the urban areas is equally inadequate. The CBOs may be seen as potentially important actors in public/private and public/civil society partnerships, particularly in urban low-income communities. These groups often play a crucial role in catalysing and/or facilitating the active participation of communities in infrastructure development. The CBOs, the nearest we come to voluntary action for environmental improvement, are normally funded by the community itself. They represent the community or member interests, and enjoy popular support. An effective community organisation is a pre-condition for undertaking collective initiatives. In most instances, intermediary or-
organisations and institutions can demonstrate alternative solutions to meeting collective social needs through specific projects.

One of the major weaknesses of CBOs is that they are prone to internal fighting and power struggles and their lack of resources and a broader perspective make them vulnerable to external influences (Maina et al., 1998). CBOs also face some leadership problems. Moreover, they cannot solve most community-level environmental problems without interventions from local authorities and other actors. The provision of infrastructure and basic services is an element of habitat improvement that generally cannot be tackled by a community or an NGO in isolation. According to a framework developed by Lee (1994), water supply, sewerage, drainage and garbage disposal are environmental management activities that are more closely conducted at the community level, and they need to be linked to the larger framework of urban administration to be viable and effective.

We argue that, although in the current literature a lot of emphasis has been laid on the role of the CBOs, we need to ascertain whether CBOs are effective and whether they have their resources to control. In most instances, CBOs have a weak resource base and they tend to be influenced by powerful partners. We further need to know whether the CBOs in low-income settlements are representatives or they are just membership organisations for house-owners only. These issues and many more can only be proved by empirical data that the current study has attempted to collect in the Kenyan context, using the Nakuru case study.

Non-governmental organisations

Arrossi et al., (1994) provide a concise definition of an NGO which refers to “all non-state, non-profit making organisations and as a specific term for indigenous and/or Northern-based organisations, which support self-help, grassroots, community or people’s organisations and individuals as needed”. Generally, NGOs seek partnerships with CBOs so as to gain sustained and integrated results within the communities they want to intervene. NGOs provide complementary skills and knowledge, working together towards a shared overall goal related to the livelihoods of the communities where they are operational. NGOs are under pressure from donors to enter into partnerships with CBOs and other actors and this is nowadays being used as criteria for funding.

It has been acknowledged that the NGO sector is making a significant contribution to the promotion, production and improvement of shelter in various regions of the developing world (UNCHS, 2001). NGOs operate according to the principle that all people have a right to control their own destiny, with a preference for shelter solutions based on their own community or neighbourhoods. In many countries,
NGOs play the role of enablers and implementers of new ideas and models when working with CBOs and helping such organisations' development efforts. In many instances, NGOs have succeeded in demonstrating alternative solutions to meeting shelter and service needs through specific projects and these, in turn, have sometimes pointed to approaches that have wider applications (ibid.). NGOs therefore are enablers alongside CBOs, mediators between people and the authorities which control access to resources or goods and services, advisors to state institutions on policy changes and, finally, they can be advocates who can put community concerns on the national or international policy agenda.

We intend to indicate in this study that, although the roles of NGOs have been emphasised in literature, they may not remain in a locality for so long especially when external funding is ended. Experience has shown that some NGOs may not be necessarily serving the interests of the residents of the areas in which they operate (UNCHS, 2001). They also tend to implement the funding agencies’ projects and needs with too little concern for the locals. Another major weakness of NGOs is that they are normally not accountable to the communities that they work with, especially those in developing countries. NGOs lack sufficient and predictable funding and they also lack power to influence decision-making. Moreover, they tend to play their ‘own rules’. NGOs may also compete directly with local political representatives selected by the communities themselves.

External support agencies
Huge capital investments in urban infrastructure such as a citywide water reticulation system, sewerage rehabilitation and extension require some form of assistance from external agencies outside the municipality. There are also administrative constraints experienced by donor agencies, especially the lack of trained personnel working within the recipient countries and a need to keep the staff costs down. This often results in a bias against smaller programmes, under which category many housing, basic services and infrastructure projects fall.

We argue that interventions by external support agencies that seek an efficient implementation of ‘their’ projects may sometimes inhibit innovative local solutions that are cheaper than the solutions designed by foreign agencies. External agencies rarely stay for long and only continue their local presence to guarantee the maintenance and expansion of new projects. Many international donors withdraw support from the community after completing one ‘successful’ project, just when this should have laid the basis for expanding the scale and extending the scope of their work. Still, many donors operate on a ‘project by project’ basis when what is needed is a long-term process to strengthen institutional capacity, overseen by democratic governance (UNCHS, 2001).
It is necessary for international agencies to ensure that their funding reaches a significant proportion of those in need. Still, most funding agencies retain cumbersome procedures for funding. This means long delays before a particular community knows whether it can go ahead with an initiative it has planned and for which it had obtained funding. International agencies need to strengthen support for the institutional processes by which low-income groups organise and develop their own action plans and programmes (UNCHS, 2001). New approaches must be found if aid is to be effective in supporting a diversity of community level initiatives that permit low-income groups to address their self-chosen priorities.

Households

The household is the key unit of production, reproduction and consumption, and the unit where decisions on pooling and allocating labour and resources are made (Hordijk, 2000). So, we cannot analyse actors in the process of urban environmental management without studying households and their roles. Poor households spend considerable amounts of physical, economic and social energies to maintain access to environmental resources, and manage these resources in an effort to minimise the negative impacts of their use on household members. According to Lee (1994), households not only manage environmental resources on their own, but are also actively engaged with other households and in CBOs in addressing common environmental management problems. Households in low-income urban areas experience problems like the lack of safe and sufficient water supply, inadequate sanitation, inadequate housing and inadequate solid waste collection. These environmental problems have a great impact on the daily life of households and their practices. The perception of the environmental problems and related health risks is an important factor determining the undertaking of activities related to solving some of the environmental problems. Other factors that determine whether households undertake environmental management initiatives are the composition of the household, the tenure of the household and the duration that the household has stayed in a specific neighbourhood.

From the foregoing we observe that there are several actors and as many viewpoints in a given society. These actors have both their strengths and weaknesses. Good urban governance requires mediation of the different interests in society to reach a broad consensus in society on what is in the best interest of the whole community and how this can be achieved. It also requires a broad and long-term perspective on what is needed for sustainable human development and how to achieve the goals of such development. The recognition of the different roles that are going to be undertaken by different actors collaborating to improve the quality of the environment is almost meaningless unless they have the capacity to act effectively. For instance, a local authority with adequate capacity has adequate
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powers and autonomy, appropriate boundaries, and sufficient personnel, management, technical and fiscal resources. Many cities in the South are faced with inadequate manpower, limited jurisdictional responsibilities, unstable political systems, interfering rather than supporting governments and a chronic shortage of fiscal resources (Gilbert et al., 1996). There is therefore need to build capacities of all the actors discussed above if the strive to sustainability through partnerships and good governance is to succeed. Secondly, financial, human and technical resources should be availed and mobilised to support prioritised actions. In the following section we examine the Agenda 21 and the Local Agenda 21 process and indicate the strengths and weaknesses of this approach in putting cities on the path towards attaining sustainable development.

1.9 The local agenda 21 process

Agenda 21, the global plan of action to achieve sustainable development in the 21st century, outlines the key initiatives that need to be undertaken by governments in collaboration with other key actors. Running to around 500 pages, there are 40 chapters covering topics from poverty to deforestation and from health to waste management. A novel feature of the Agenda 21 document was the explicit recognition of the roles of ‘major groups’ like women, youth and business. UN conferences since 1992 have increasingly built inputs from such groups into their programmes, in contrast to earlier practice of excluding all, save national governments and a few favoured observer organisations. Agenda 21 provides a powerful practical and conceptual framework to towns and their communities through the steps required to create and implement a programme for achieving long-term economic and environmental sustainability (Kivell et al., 1998). In short, it assists in the preparation of a strategy to take a community forward in a manner, which brings positive, desirable and predictable results.

The onus of implementing the key objective of Agenda 21, that of sustainable development, has been placed clearly on local governments and its constituent communities. The real roots of Agenda 21’s success therefore lie at the micro, local level. Agenda 21 recognises this by pointing out in Chapter 28 that local authorities construct, operate and maintain economic, social and environmental infrastructure, oversee planning processes, establish local environmental policies and regulations, and assist in implementing national and sub-national environmental policies. As the level of governance closest to the people, they play a vital role in educating, mobilising and responding to the public to promote sustainable development (UNCED, 1992). A major assumption here is that ‘all’ local governments have the capability of promoting sustainable development initiatives. However, we note that local governments in some developing countries are extremely weak financially and their
decisions are highly influenced and controlled by the central governments, as it is the case in Kenya.

UNCED proclaimed Local Agenda 21 (LA 21) as the mandate to local governments to translate Agenda 21 to the local level. Ideally, LA 21 programmes are based upon the creation of appropriate local government systems to integrate planning and policy making, with a focus on long-term outcomes and involving all sectors of the community. For the purposes of this study, LA 21 is defined as a participatory, multi-stakeholder process to achieve the goals of Agenda 21 at the local level through the preparation and implementation of a long-term, strategic plan that addresses priority local sustainable development concerns. The LA 21 programme seeks to be both visionary and practical, identifying both long-term and short-term goals. LA 21 cannot exist in isolation from other activities of a local authority and to be meaningful it must address issues of local government reform, budgetary constraints and economic and environmental issues (ICLEI, 2002). It emphasises the need to build upon many local council programmes and strategies already in place and stresses flexible outcomes.

According to Selman (1996), the concerns of LA 21 are not confined solely to those of environmental stewardship, but embrace much wider issues of active citizen participation and ‘quality of life’ – which is perhaps a more friendly term to describe its primary goal. It is a process that asks those in local government to work in partnership with the local community to develop a strategy comprising a series of action plans, which will set out how we will work together towards the goal of sustainable development in the 21st century and beyond (UNCED, 1992; Malbert, 1998; ICLEI, 1997)

The Habitat Agenda (Instanbul, 1996) has reconfirmed the LA 21 framework as a valuable approach to harmonise urban development and environment. The two agendas emphasise the role of cities in development and their potential contribution to sustainable development. They also stress the need to look at urban development articulating social, environmental and economic performance and to strike a balance in the pursuance of reducing urban poverty, improving environmental conditions in the short and long term and enhancing urban economic productivity. Finally, the two agendas also emphasise that local actors (both state and non-state actors) are the key managers of the urban development process. Conceptually, the two agendas highlight the need to institutionalise a new approach to urban development planning and management that articulates environmental issues with social and economic development concerns for the present and future generations. Both agendas call for a shift of emphasis from local government and environment to one of local governance and sustainability (Selman and Parker, 1999). An appropriate
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LA 21 seeks to integrate the goals of the Habitat Agenda and Agenda 21 and to devise a strategy for their implementation, which articulates the brown and green agenda. LA 21 attempts to bring long-term environmental sustainability considerations into current issues affecting the quality of life and livelihoods of urban dwellers (particularly the poor). Some scholars have called this objective “greening the brown agenda” (McGranahan, et al., 2001a; Wanderer, et al., 2002).

Agenda 21 does not embrace a set of programme or stipulate objectives, nor are local governments under any compulsion to participate in Agenda 21 or utilise the tools it offers. All local governments aim at providing a healthy and progressive environment for their residents and for local businesses and industry – both now and for future generations (Badshah, 1996). Despite the commonality of this aim, the Agenda 21 programme recognises that each community has unique needs, resources and aspirations, which will be reflected in both the format and content of a plan. The diffusion of Agenda 21 concepts and increasing interest and implementation at local level make it impossible that this style of planning and policy implementation is considered advantageous. When deployed with commitment and community involvement, the LA 21 tools help ensure that the resulting integrated environmental, economic and social strategy will be effective and sustainable.

Proponents of LA 21 programmes argue that they are not starting from scratch, but are rather building on existing programmes, activities and policies (UNCHS, 1996, 2001; ICLEI, 1997). For local authorities that have already undergone integrated strategic planning, LA 21 are concerned with the application of sustainable development principles to that framework. LA 21 principles include: (a) multi-sectoral engagement in the planning process through a local stakeholder group, which serves as the coordination and policy body for moving towards long-term sustainable development; (b) consultation with community partners such as community groups, NGOs, businesses, churches, government agencies, professional groups and unions, in order to create a shared vision and to identify proposals for action; (c) participatory assessment of local social, environmental and economic needs; (d) participatory target setting through negotiations among key stakeholders or community partners in order to achieve the vision and goals set out in a community action plan; and (e) monitoring and reporting procedures, such as local indicators, to track progress and allow participants to hold each other accountable to a community action plan (ICLEI, 1997). We need to note that there is no commonly agreed recipe for developing LA 21s. Local circumstances and national and local institutions dictate the approach to be used.
1.9.1 Evaluation of LA 21 processes

Woolfe (1995) points out that successful local authorities around the world are approaching LA 21 in several ways, depending on their circumstances. They develop documents known variously as a LA 21, an environmental strategy, a sustainable development strategy, or other names. They usually encompass a series of interrelated strategies and/or the incorporation of LA 21 principles into council policies, programmes and practices. LA 21 requires local interpretations of sustainable development for practical applications. As Wilks and Hall (1994) explain, LA 21 is both non-statutory and recent, and some councils not only suffer from lack of awareness of the principles of sustainable development, but also operate in a context of greatly reduced funding. They recommend that local authorities require the powers and resources to implement initiatives such as LA 21, and these are best developed by a regional and national commitment to sustainable development.

It has been argued that, at their best, LAs 21 can provide a means by which environmental issues become more integrated in the planning and management of an urban area. The consultation process, with its potential to secure more cooperation between the different government agencies, private sector, NGOs and CBOs is very important for the successful implementation of various proposals and plans. A critical outcome of this process should be agreement on priorities and actions, and on the partnerships to implement them. LA 21s can also integrate what is often termed the ‘brown’ environmental agenda with the broader ‘green’ or ecological concerns, which has generally proved difficult within conventional, local government-directed environmental plans (McGranahan et al., 2001a).

McGranahan et al. (2001a) correctly note that perhaps the main worry with regard to LA 21 is the relatively few instances of success. It should be expected that all those governments that fully endorsed Agenda 21, thereby undertaking to support the development of LAs 21 in each settlement, are actively involved in its design and implementation. However, there are only very few LAs 21 in the world and most of them are in the developing countries. Another worry, according to these authors, is that by being ‘local’, they may not deal with the transfer of environmental burdens across each locality’s boundaries. Cities can also develop very high quality environments by transferring their environmental costs to other people and other ecosystems (Hordijk, 1999; 2000).

Although LA 21 can ensure better use of limited resources, they do not themselves increase investment capacity. Most urban governments in low and middle-income nations remain weak and ineffective; many have little accountability to their citizens. This means less scope for LAs 21 to become the vehicle for real consultative processes (McGranahan et al., 2001a). Few local governments have enough re-
sources available to fund LA 21 initiatives and action plans. A survey done by ICLEI in 2001 revealed that while municipalities recognise the importance of integrating LA 21 processes into their governance structure, the actual change has not yet occurred throughout the entire municipal system.

In the mid 1990s, about 1,800 cities and towns had developed a LA 21 (Mega and Pederson, 1998). In these towns, however, many questions still arise about the documents prepared. Most seem to represent promises and it is doubtful whether implementation will correspond to any degree of the desired goals. Nevertheless, there is some progress. A recent study by ICLEI revealed that as of December 2001, 6,416 local governments in 113 countries were involved in LA 21 activities. Of these, 44% of municipalities were actively undertaking LA 21 programmes while the remaining were committed to the process, but may not have moved beyond this stage (ICLEI, 2002). This is a significant increase since 1997, when the survey reported 1,812 LA 21 processes in 64 countries (ICLEI, 2002, see also Box 1.1). Implementation of LA 21 in many towns, especially those in the developing countries, is complicated by many socio-political, institutional, legal and financial issues that need to be studied carefully. However, few studies have examined how LA 21 activities are being undertaken and what challenges they face. Moreover, the utilisation of the concepts of partnership and its operationalisation in developing countries have received little attention from researchers (Selman, 1996; 1999). In this study we seek to examine how the process of LA 21 has progressed in Nakuru, in order to elucidate the innovative activities within the process and how the process is utilising the partnership principles. We now re-examine the concept of sustainable development as it is applied to urban areas.

1.9.2 LA 21 and urban sustainable development

One of the main questions that this section attempts to answer is: what is the specific added value of LA 21 with regard to achieving or contributing to the transition to urban sustainable development? The experimental, learning-by-doing approach in the LA 21 indicates that the process has a ‘demonstration’ rather than a ‘pilot’ function. Localising sustainable development is mainly a question of doing the groundwork at the local level and working its way up to the national level. There are numerous examples (also outside LA 21) that confirm this. According to LA 21, spatial planning provides a more comprehensive umbrella for all aspects relating to urban sustainable development.

Given its demonstrative value, LA 21 should be viewed as a learning process. This process should not be unduly extended, but work towards a finality. This finality should certainly include a strategy that permits to reflect on lessons learnt, put them in a comparative perspective and disseminate them. Finality could also include
transition to another status or integration into a broader set of interventions. At a project level, the question of sustainability revolves around the capacity to incite stakeholders to take responsibility and claim ownership of the project (Wandeler et al., 2002). If we go by the definition that LA 21 capacity building interventions are targeting local authorities, then they should claim ownership. However, elected officials stay in power for a limited time only. As the planning and management capacities of team members and council officers increase, they may be promoted to higher levels of government or move to senior positions in partner institutions. If ownership is to be claimed by a wider range of stakeholders, the problem of sustained participation has to be considered.

Box 1.1 LA 21 for poverty alleviation in Africa

In Africa, LA 21 processes have been undertaken by at least 151 municipalities in 28 countries. Only South Africa has established a national campaign to support local governments in undertaking LA 21. Municipalities are adopting LA 21 to best fit their local situations. In Africa, according to a survey of 36 municipalities by ICLEI, municipalities are using a 'sustainable development' approach in their planning process. In this approach, economic, ecological and social considerations are all taken into account in development decisions. Economic development is of particular concern to African municipalities. Local governments identified economic development as both a common overarching approach to LA 21 and as a specific priority (ICLEI, 2002). It is notable that 90% of local government respondents reported poverty alleviation as a priority and 80% identified economic development as such (ibid). Stakeholder groups are included in 78% of the processes reported by municipalities. There are still groups that generally have not been included in the process. The ICLEI survey results indicate that women groups and youth are included in less than half of the processes reported in Africa and ethnic minorities are included in only 3%. In all, LA 21 processes are in the early stages in many municipalities, but some achievements have already been reported. LA 21 in Africa, as elsewhere, has not been without obstacles. Lack of financial support has been a serious problem for many municipalities. Local governments also have identified insufficient support from national governments and insufficient linkages with international organisations and processes as an important barrier. Lack of expertise was also felt to be a problem by many municipalities. Along with an increase in financial support, local governments identified increased national commitment to and political support for LA 21 and sustainable development as essential to furthering their success.

Source: ICLEI, 2002

While considering the contributions of the LA 21 towards sustainable development, we need to examine specific aspects of the partnerships formed. Partnership building therefore should be one of the LA 21’s major achievements. It is also the area in which LA 21 will need to invest its best efforts in the future. However, sustaining these arrangements is one of the major challenges of the entire process and could also be its weakest point. In a process that revolves around creating
Challenges of Urban Environmental Governance

multi-stakeholder forums, dialogue and inter-sectoral collaboration, cross-city communication appears an obvious tool for steering away from local (business) interests, latent conflicts, etc.

1.9.3 Review of attempts to assess outcomes of partnership arrangements in LAs 21

This study focuses on the process and outcomes of building partnerships. To analyse these aspects, we use indicators derived from various studies that aimed to assess the outcomes of partnership arrangements. The first of these is the work of Baud et al. (2001a) who conducted various case studies to examine the contributions of new partnerships in urban solid waste management systems to the quality of life in situations where the provision of this basic service was effectively improved. These authors assessed the contributions made by public-private, public-community, community-private and private-private partnerships to the goals of sustainable development. They developed a criterion for their assessment based on the multiple goals of sustainable development as developed by Satterthwaite in 1997. Using a nine-point indicator system, their assessment showed contributions of different partnerships to urban sustainable development. The indicators that they used in the analysis were minimisation of the amount of waste, maximisation of use and recycling, disposal of waste in a controlled fashion, financial viability, employment providing a living wage, legitimacy from the perspective of the authorities and the public, better coordination, cleaner environment and minimisation of occupational health hazards. This assessment dealt only with partnerships within the solid waste management system, while the present study also examines partnerships that have been emerging in water supply and sanitation and under the LA 21 process. Some indicators are also relevant for this study such as financial viability, legitimacy, better coordination and cleaner environment. We go further to assess not only the outcome-type indicators, but also the process-type indicators of the partnership arrangements such as the existence of political will, legitimacy, inclusiveness and accountability.

A second attempt to assess the outcome of partnership arrangements was made by Russel and Anjum (2001), who evaluated the sustainability of an NGO model involved in the provision of urban transport in Pakistan. They indicated that the performance and future development of the NGO will depend on legality, fares review, corruption, representation and training. We will also use some indicators from this model such as legality, wider representation and training as important components that will affect the contributions of partnerships for urban environmental management to sustainable urban development. Given the fact that the emerging partnership initiatives are in an early stage, we have not covered issues
related to corruption, though this aspect also affects the sustainability of initiatives.

Jones and Pisa (2000), in their assessment of the performance of partnership arrangements in land acquisition and their effect on the supply of land for housing, observed that performance measures for partnerships are lacking and that this has had negative implications. They note that one of the factors that has been cited often as affecting the performance of partnerships is political interference (Jones and Pisa, 2000). They observe that without a reasonable set of performance measures and a candid appraisal of existing practice, advocacy of partnerships for urban environmental management will continue to represent a victory of hope versus expectations. Although our study is based on partnerships for urban environmental management, we share the same observation that there is an urgent need to develop criteria of assessing the performance of partnerships and their possible contribution to sustainable development. However, we go further to assess the contribution of LA 21 to sustainable development in terms of processes and outcomes.

Margerum (1996) has proposed a model for measuring the success of integrated environmental management (IEM) and this framework is relevant to our analysis. The model, that he terms "a framework for success" for IEM consists of three features: structure, process and outputs. Within the structure, he argues that we need to examine (i) the laws and policies that allow an integrated approach; (ii) whether the approach is led by stakeholders through a process deemed legitimate; (iii) whether stakeholders are willing to share power and collaborate; (iv) if there is an entity that can initiate and convene the effort; and finally (v) if there are people with time, resources and skills to lead the effort. In terms of the process, he states that the stakeholders should develop clear and effective communication processes, make decisions by consensus, effectively identify and manage conflicts, consult with the general public and clearly identify roles and responsibilities. Regarding outputs, we need to find out if the stakeholders develop familiarity, common goals and mutual understanding; whether the management scope is expanded to involve the full array of actors and factors; whether the stakeholders develop a focused and flexible strategy to guide implementation; whether stakeholders develop processes for monitoring and measuring effectiveness and if stakeholders create structures and mechanisms for coordinated decisions. We use these features and adopt them for the current study together with some that have been developed by Church, 2000 (Table 1.2, see page 52).

Church (2000) has discussed what needs to be considered when assessing the success or failure of LA 21. He contends that one consideration must be the result
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of capacity-building processes. There are also issues related to the participation of all those actors whose cooperation is needed, especially the marginalised groups, including youth and women. He indicates that whilst sustainable development might be the ultimate goal of LA 21 processes, environmental improvements should be the first evidence to emerge. If there is no evidence of such improvements, then the value of LA 21 must be questioned. Further, he convincingly puts that any assessment should also consider the nature and quality of consultation, the ideas and proposals that result from it, and the ways in which these have brought about genuine lasting change. He sums up some fourteen issues that need to be considered under what he calls the process, projects and policies. Although his criteria go further to assess the policies, our study on partnerships does not use policy indicators, as policy making remains a domain of the public sector. The criteria that are relevant to our study are shown in Table 1.2.

Table 1.2 Assessment criteria for partnership initiatives

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Issues to be considered</th>
<th>Indicators</th>
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| Policies                | Existence of goals and targets with measurable objectives  
                          | Adoption of the targets by the local authority  
                          | Existence of an anti-poverty strategy  
                          | Presence of a set of indicators linked to targets and funded programmes to meet the targets |
| Process                 | Involvement of many actors and increase in the number of participants and organisations over time  
                          | Existence of political will  
                          | Are partnerships relations legitimate both socially and legally?  
                          | Accountability |
| Outcomes                | Are the initiatives financially viable?  
                          | Existence of action plans and/or contracts  
                          | Effectiveness in terms of a cleaner environment |

Adapted from Church (2000)

Church does not undertake an assessment of LA 21. The present study presents such an assessment, though based on the limited information that is available. In our study of partnerships, we will concentrate on indicators that are related to process and outcomes only. These include: broader public involvement indicated by the number of actors in any partnership, capacity-building initiatives, existence of political will, better coordination, financial viability, legitimacy, whether the partnerships lead to a cleaner environment and, finally, whether awareness has been created.
Theoretical Framework

Figure 1.1 Conceptual framework

The physical environment (the natural system)  
The built environment (the infrastructural system)  
The socio-economic environment (the human and support system)  

URBAN ENVIRONMENT

SOCIO-ECONOMIC PROBLEMS

URBAN ENVIRONMENTAL PROBLEMS

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

PUBLIC SECTOR

PRIVATE SECTOR (commercial and social)

CIVIL SOCIETY

URBAN ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT (UEM)

PARTNERSHIPS IN LA 21 PROCESS

PARTNERSHIPS IN UEM

COMPONENTS OF PARTNERSHIPS: objectives, activities, actors, internal arrangements and outcomes

ASSESSMENT OF PARTNERSHIPS PROCESSES AND OUTCOMES

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1.10 Conclusions

In this chapter we reviewed the main concepts employed in this study and presented an overview of the emerging initiatives in urban environmental management. This results in the theoretical framework as visualised in Figure 1.1 (page 53). We observed that there are various approaches to deal with the negative effects of urbanisation as they affect the various components of the urban environment (i.e. the physical environment, the built environment and the socio-economic environment (Bossel, 1999)). One of these negative effects is the deficient provision of basic infrastructure services, such as water, sanitation, solid waste collection and drainage. This deficiency forms one part of the urban environmental problems, i.e. the ‘brown’ agenda, which deals with the health risks and threats that emerge from the local environment. In addition to these ‘brown’ agenda issues, there is growing concern with the ‘green’ agenda or environmental problems that threaten long-term ecological sustainability. This concern can be placed against the background of the sustainable development debate, which seeks to reconcile economic development with ecological protection for the sake of present and future generations.

Our examination of the concept of sustainable development showed that definitions of the concept differ widely, but most of them suggest a balance between the environment, the economy and socio-cultural resources. From the environmental or ecological point of view, the emphasis is on the management of the environment in order to maintain the integrity of ecosystems and resources. From the economic point of view, the goal is to maximise human welfare within the constraints of existing capital stock and technologies. From the social point of view, the emphasis is on human actors and the roles played by their relationships and patterns of social organisation (Emmett, 1998). With the rise to political prominence of the concept of sustainable development, urban managers have followed different courses with regard to its translation into their policies, institutions and practices. Attempts to attain sustainable development in urban areas have led to different approaches. In general terms, urban sustainable development means that urban growth is guided in a manner that does not close options for the future. Urban environmental management then seeks to address the challenges of urban growth in such a way that the process can lead to sustainable development.

By aiming to reconcile economic growth with environmental protection, urban environmental management bears a close relation with sustainable development. We have seen that urban environmental management also seeks collaboration between various actors, sectors and jurisdictions and as such is related to the concept of governance. We operationalised the concept of urban governance as the sum of many
ways in which, public and private institutions, civil society organisations and individuals, plan and manage the common affairs of a city. It is a continuous process through which diverse and even conflicting interests may be accommodated and collective action can be undertaken. It includes formal as well as informal arrangements and the social capital of citizenry. We observed that citizens, communities and other actors from the popular sector cannot simply be left to go ‘their own way’ within a partnership and that they need to be linked together into some form of co-ordination and mediation, to prevent a partnership from falling apart. This means that all other actors from the public and private sectors must participate to ensure that good urban governance is maintained.

Urban environmental management is also related to the concept of partnerships. Forming partnerships with a wide array of public, private and civil society actors and making them function is not so easy as has been proposed. There is need to acknowledge the operational difficulties and the strengths and weaknesses of different actors. This implies that collective action aimed at solving different urban environmental problems through collaboration needs to be supported by appropriate institutional changes and responses. We argued that not all actors – be they citizens or communities – have the intentions, abilities and/or resources to take on the responsibilities that partnerships entail. The state should therefore retain such mechanisms as ‘safety nets’ and compensatory mechanisms to protect the least active citizens and communities. Another issue that we need to highlight here is that an increase of the local dimension in new partnerships arrangements gives rise to complicated problems of coordination: how can some broad notion of the public interest be delivered if citizens and communities are left to go their own way? This implies that the state still has a key role to play in the delivery of strategic policy and governmental coordination. We observed that the existing literature on partnerships lays more emphasis on the process of forming partnerships rather than on the substantial outcomes that these structures achieve. We concluded that there is an urgent need to examine the outcomes of different partnership arrangements and how they really lead to value-added outcomes, before we can advocate their formation.

The present study examines emerging partnership arrangements as an approach being used as a means of attaining sustainable development goals. A parallel approach that we examine is the LA 21 process, which applies the partnership principle as well. The process of developing LAs 21 has been going on since 1992 and several attempts have been made to study the process. A key feature of LA 21, which distinguishes it from many other processes, is that it attempts to encourage the active involvement of the community to determine and implement actions for local sustainable development. There has been a dramatic growth of LA 21 proc-
Challenges in the past five years and this indicates the continued relevance of this participatory, multi-stakeholder planning process to address local issues of global concern. The success of these local initiatives is evidenced by the integration of LA 21 into municipal systems in some countries and improvement in specific areas such as air quality, water resources management and public participation.

Some (though few) studies have attempted to assess the contributions of partnerships to urban sustainable development and we will utilise some process-type and outcome-type indicators derived from them to do such an assessment for Nakuru, Kenya. It is our contention that once such an assessment is done, it would be easy to identify the weak areas and improve them in the future. Now that the theoretical framework of the study has been set, the following chapter will present the research problem and methodology selected to undertake this study.