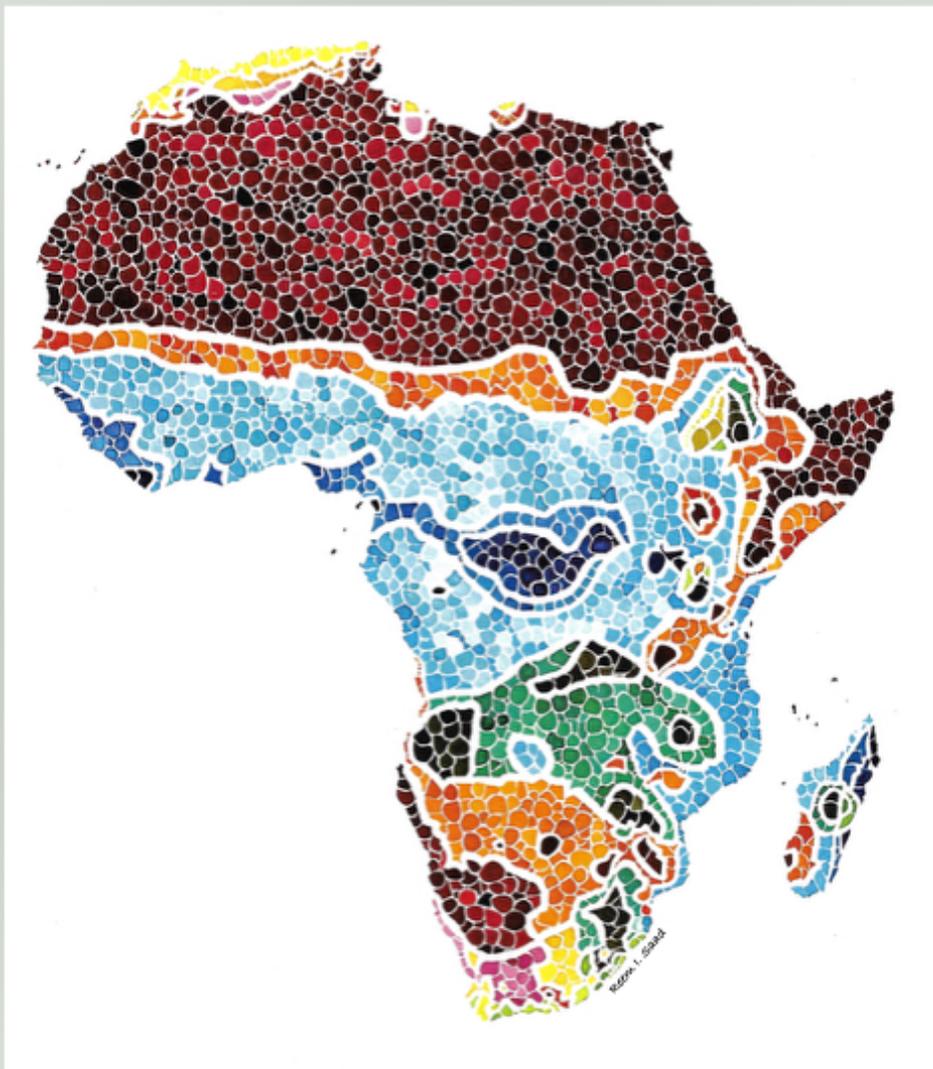# The Cities of #TheAfricaWeWant

Between Disappointed Hopes, Real Promises, and Pathways to Reinvention

ABSTRACT
from a Forthcoming Book of Luc GNACADJA

The Cities of the #AfricaWeWant

Abstract

African cities have become the primary arenas where the continent's most visible tensions are unfolding — housing, mobility, inequality and climate — while also holding its greatest potential for transformation. It is within urban spaces that Africa's future is increasingly being shaped, at a time when climate risk is exposing, accelerating and amplifying long-standing territorial vulnerabilities.

This book is grounded in a personal and political conviction: Africa will neither achieve sustainable development nor fully claim its place in the global community without reclaiming intellectual, political and cultural ownership of its urbanisation. Urban growth can no longer be endured, imported or mechanically reproduced.

Instead, it must become a deliberate project of territorial transformation: a lever for social justice and climate resilience, and an expression of confidence in Africa's own urban imaginaries.

Entitled *The Cities of the #AfricaWeWant – Between Disappointed Hopes, Real Promises and Trajectories to Be Reimagined*, this book positions itself simultaneously as a manifesto, a critical analytical framework and a strategic guide. It brings together structural analysis, political advocacy, situated narratives, historical references and concrete proposals to rethink African cities from their lived realities, everyday practices and latent potential — the real city rather than the fantasised one.

Rooted in a contextual and Africa-centred approach, the book explores pathways towards more inclusive and better-governed urbanisation, aligned with local social and territorial capacities. It speaks to all those involved in shaping Africa's future cities — citizens, elected officials, urban planners, architects, researchers, investors and civil society actors — with the ambition of fostering a shared, embodied and action-oriented vision.

The book is structured around five main parts:

- a critical diagnosis of contemporary African urbanisation, highlighting tensions, blind spots and structural constraints;
- an epistemological and political repositioning that values pre-colonial modernities, the real city and popular resources;
- operational pathways to turn cities into genuine territorial projects, grounded in land sobriety, urban ecology and the regeneration of existing urban fabrics;
- the rebuilding of public capacities, from territorial intelligence to local finance and transformative leadership;
- a horizon for collective action, articulated through a territorial and climate pact based on five major transitions and multi-actor coalitions in service of a polycentric, resilient and sovereign Africa.

Throughout the chapters, readers will encounter inspiring figures, concrete case studies, uncompromising critiques and strategic proposals for an urbanisation aligned with the real needs of populations, local capacities and sustainability imperatives. Urban planning is approached as an interface between society, nature and memory, but also as a foundational political act.

This book is an invitation for Africa to reclaim authorship of its urban and territorial history, and to turn it into a lever for dignity, sustainability and collective self-determination.

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Luc Gnacadja
10 February 2026

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Annex – Table of Contents (Indicative Chapter Titles)

THE CITIES OF THE #AFRICAWEWANT

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