

Abstract

Urban sprawl on agricultural lands has become a global phenomenon plaguing all countries of the world, rich or poor and is mainly influenced by spatial growth of urban areas. Spatial growth in urban areas is an inevitable phenomenon hence the need to regulate it. The aim of this research was to establish the effects of urban sprawl and land use change in the area of Wote town in Makueni County, Kenya. Purposive sampling was used to subdivide the study area into two clusters (Kamunyolo and Unoa). The target population for the study were the natives who own land and live within the study area. The research identified increase in urban population (14%), low agricultural returns (29%), demand for housing (16%) and weak ineffective land institutions (13%) as the major causes of urban sprawl in Wote town. The major impacts of sprawl were found to be diminishing agricultural land (55%), pressure on the existing infrastructure (17%) and increase in land values (14%). The research points that the current urban sprawl is very prevalent and of major concern for attainment of two sustainable development goals (improved agricultural food production and affordable housing) in Kenya . The urban sprawl has both positive and negative effects. However, the negative effects far outweigh positive effects, with diminishing agricultural land being the greatest negative effect. There is need therefore, to regulate urban sprawl to optimize positive effects while minimizing the negative effects.