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THE URBAN HYDROLOGY

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THE HYDROLOGY OF NAIROBI AND POSSIBLE FLOOD MANAGEMENT
STRATEGIES

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1. INTRODUCTION

Nairobi is the capital of Kenya as well as the largest city in East Africa (Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania). It has become the centre of local, national, regional and international organisations including those of the United Nations system, international research centres and also the headquarter for East and Central African-based multi-national and transnational corporations. The city has grown considerably since it was founded in June 1899 as a railway depot roughly halfway between Mombasa and Kisumu for the then Uganda railway.

By 1907, Nairobi had become the capital of Kenya a position it has maintained to date. During the second world war, its position not only became established as a military base but also as a centre for European settlement. The city was planned to cater for various racial groups including the European, Asian, Arabs and Africa among others. The population of each racial group grew steadily. By 1962 the population had grown from 118,000 to 266,795 persons (Table 1). With the growth of population, the city boundary has been increased from 76.8 kilometers square in 1927 to cover approximately 680.9 kilometers square in 1963. This expansion has now included the former large European Coffee estates, the Kikuyu reserve around Dagoretti and nearly 51.2 kilometers square of ranchlands to the east of Nairobi.

The population of the city doubled between 1976 and 1986 to a total of approximately 1 million people. This increase in population has been due to natural increase as well as immigration of the rural folk to urban areas in order to seek employment there. With such an increase of population alot of stress has been laid on the provision of public services including health, transport, water supply and also on the maintainance of these infrastructures. Each