



Section F: Urbanization

Introduction

Across the globe, urbanization is inevitable and managing its levels and patterns has inherent challenges. Moving from chaotic to sustainable urban centres and cities would be the ideal scenario provided that; good policies and strategies are adopted, investments are mobilized, stakeholder participation is secured, good governance is practiced and human development recognized. In line with SDG 11, there is a need to support sustainable urban development with adequate and relevant data on urbanization.

The number of urban centres in the country increased from 17 in 1948 to 372 in 2019 leading to an increase in the population of Kenyans living in the urban centres from about 285,000 in 1948 to 14.8 million in 2019. However, the proportion of Kenyans living in urban centres is still relatively low. The percentage of urban population to the total population gradually increased from 5.3 per cent in 1948 to 31.2 per cent in 2019. The urban population in the country is mostly concentrated in the counties of Nairobi and Mombasa (as shown in Table 2). The growth of urban centres both in numbers and population accelerated immediately after independence. This is attributed to the migration of Africans to towns after independence following the removal of legal or administrative restrictions.

14.8m

Population of Kenyans living in the urban centres in 2019, up 285,000 in 1948. This was due to an increase in the number of urban centres in the country from 17 in 1948 to 372 in 2019

Definition of Key Terms and Concepts

Urbanization: The process of concentration of a country's population into settlements designated as urban centres.

Urban centre: A built up and compact human settlement with a population of at least 2,000 people. An urban centre may be classified as a market centre, town, municipality or city. Urban centres are also service centres that provide goods and services to both residents and the surrounding population. As such an urban centre may constitute some trading centres with less than 2,000 people.

Informal Settlements: These are urban settlements characterized by poor structural quality of housing, lack of formal basic services and infrastructure and lack of security of tenure. In most cases they are located in geographically and environmentally hazardous areas.

F.1 Spatial Distribution of Urban Centres by Population Size

Map F.1 shows the spatial distribution of urban centres and their population sizes. The location of administrative centres, the Kenya-Uganda railway, European large-scale commercial farming, caravan towns and missionary centres are some of the factors that influenced patterns of urbanization during the colonial period. In 2010, the devolved system of government was introduced after the

enactment of the Constitution of Kenya, 2010. This led to the introduction of 47 counties which have become the focus for development leading to an increase in the number of urban centres. Majority of the urban centres are concentrated in the counties around the central and western parts of the country.

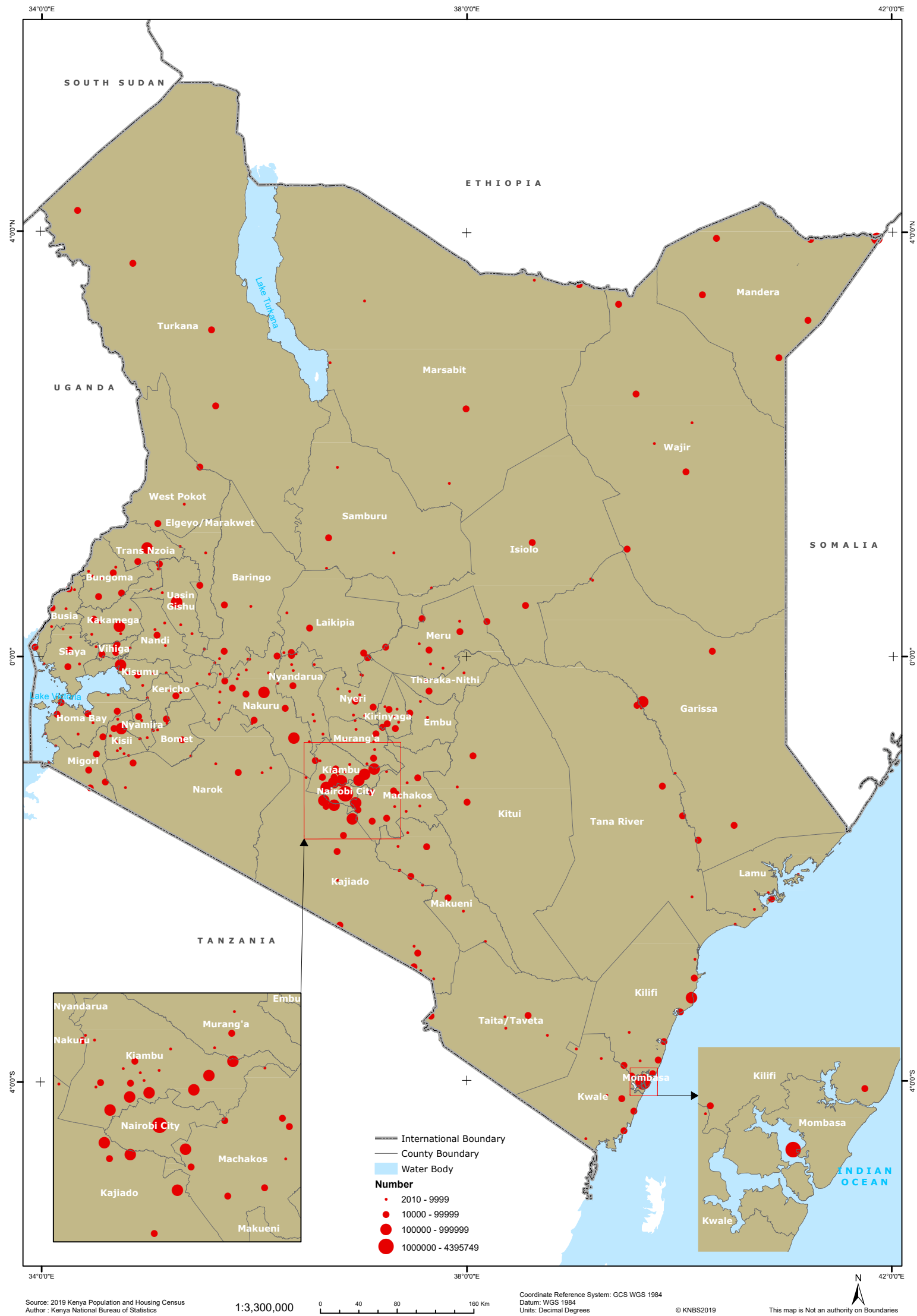
A number of urban centres are also concentrated along the coastline between Kwale and Kilifi counties. Nairobi City and Mombasa are the only urban centres that had between 1.0 million and 4.4 million people. A total of 20 urban centres have a population of between 100,000 and 999,999 people while those with between 10,000 and 99,999 people were 126. Majority of urban centres (160) had between 2,000 and 9,999 people.



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Map F 1: Spatial Distribution of Urban Centres by Population Size



F.2 Major Urban Centres

Access to major services, often located in urban centres, is key to the realization of numerous Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Map F.2 shows the distribution of major urban centres in Kenya. The areas in colour red are the urban centres with a population of 250,000 and above namely; Nairobi, Mombasa, Nakuru, Ruiru,

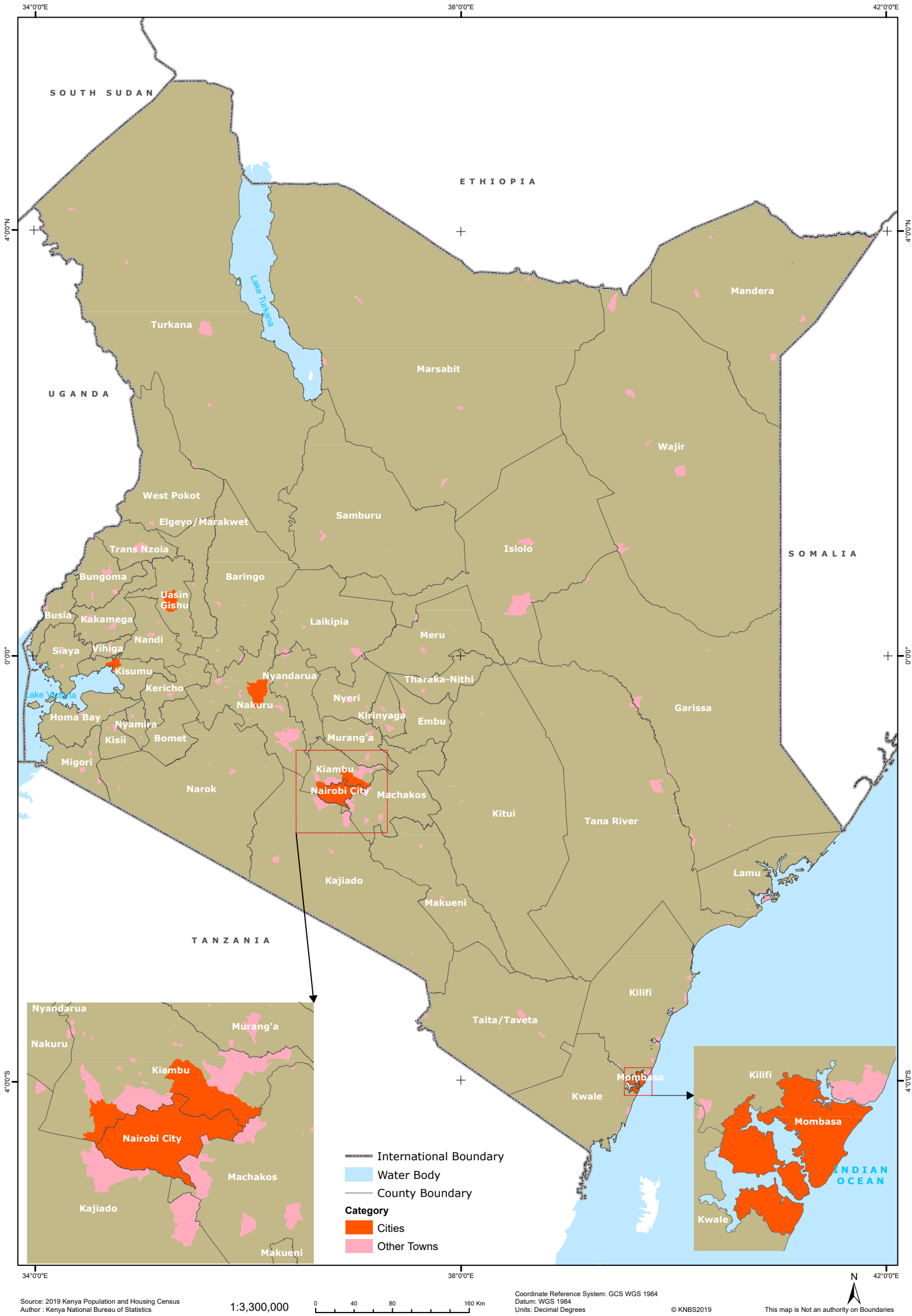
Eldoret, Kisumu and Kikuyu. The pink colour represents urban centres with a population of between 150,000 and 249,999 and include Thika, Naivasha, Karuri, Ongata Rongai, Kitale, Juja and Kitengela. Table 2 below is a summary of the major urban centres with a population of over 150,000 in Kenya.

Table 2 : Major Urban Centres in Kenya

Urban Name	Population	Urban Name	Population
Nairobi	4,395,749	Thika	248,901
Mombasa	1,208,112	Naivasha	198,399
Nakuru	570,614	Karuri	194,289
Ruiru	490,035	Ongata Rongai	172,516
Eldoret	475,659	Kitale	162,154
Kisumu	397,853	Juja	155,999
Kikuyu	323,825	Kitengela	154,327



Map F 2: Major Urban Centres

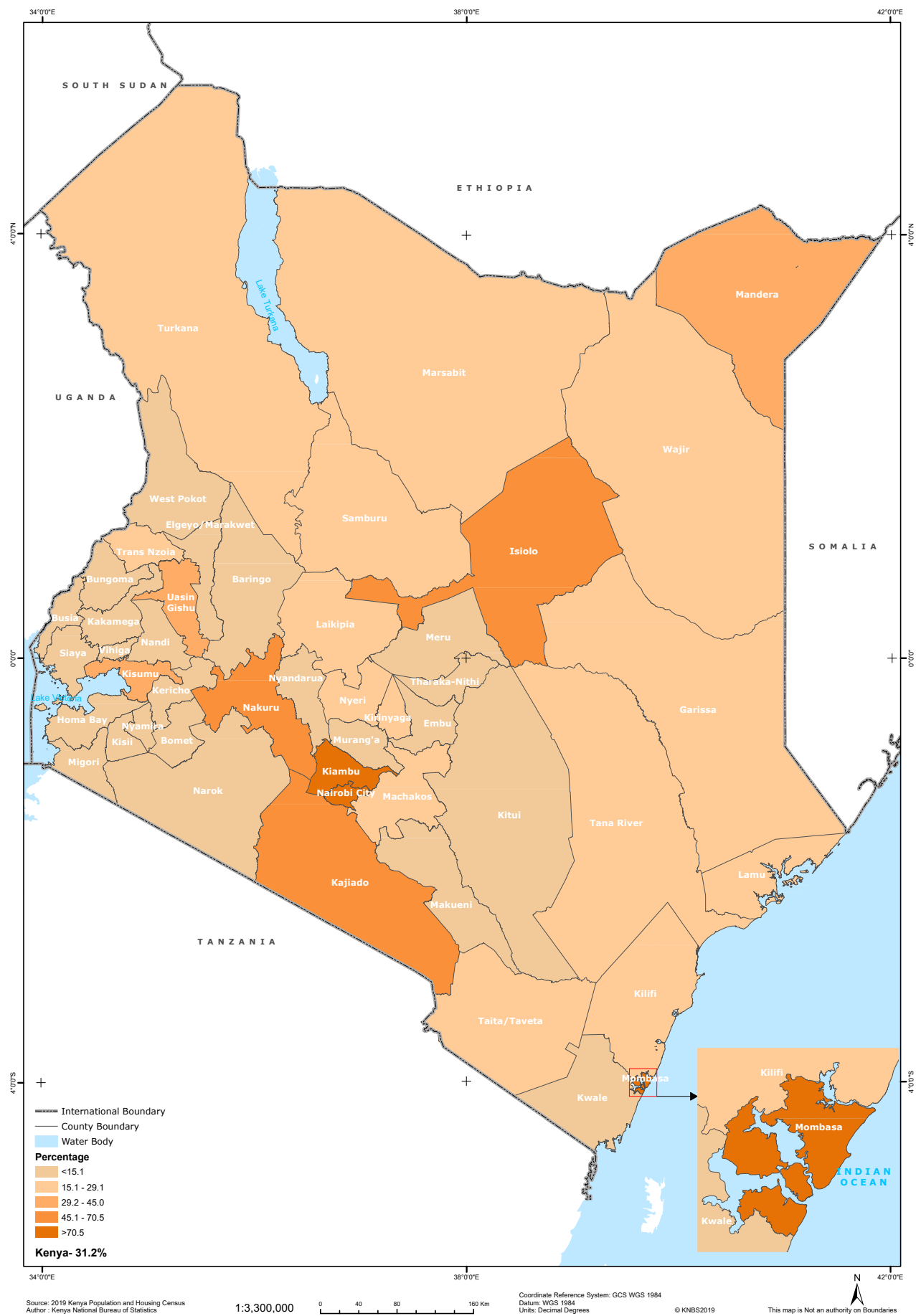


F.3: Proportion of Urban Population by County

Map F.3 shows the proportion of urban population by county. Nairobi City and Mombasa counties are purely urban and therefore the entire population in these two counties live in urban areas. More than 70.5 per cent of the population in Kiambu County lives in urban centres. The proportion of the population that live in urban centres in Kajiado, Isiolo and Nakuru Counties is between 45.1 per cent and 70.5 per cent. The proportion of the population living in urban centres

in Uasin Gishu, Kisumu and Mandera Counties falls between 29.2 per cent and 45.0 per cent. The proportion of population living in urban centres in twelve counties including Machakos, Taita/Taveta, Lamu, Kilifi, Garissa, Tana River, Laikipia, Marsabit, Wajir, Kirinyaga, Nyeri, Trans-Nzoia, Turkana and Samburu ranges between 15.1 per cent and 29.1 per cent. The rest of the counties have less than 15.1 per cent of their population living in urban centres.

Map F 3: Proportion of Urban Population by County



F.4 Spatial Concentration of Informal Settlements in Nairobi

The 2019 Census data showed that the total urban population living in informal settlements is 1,016,913. Out of this, Nairobi City county accounted for the largest share of the informal settlement population at 80.0 per cent. Map F.3 shows spatial concentration of informal settlements in Nairobi City County by administrative locations. Out of the 74 locations in Nairobi, 27 have less than 0.1

per cent of the informal settlement population. Five locations of Korogocho, Laini Saba, Viwandani, Kibera and Pumwani have the highest proportion of informal settlement population at more than 83.7 per cent. The proportion of informal settlement population in Ngara, Mwiki, Maringo, and Kariobangi locations falls between 0.1 per cent and 1.4 per cent.

Map F 4: Spatial Concentration of Informal Settlements in Nairobi

