UNIVERSITE Joseph KI-ZERBO
Office du Baccalauréat

Séries G1-G2

Année 2020
Session Normale
Epreuve du 1er tour
Durée : 20 minutes
Coefficient : 1

EPREUVE ORALE D'ANGLAIS

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3. Informal Economies

In sub-Saharan Africa the informal economy – economic activities that are not regulated and therefore not taxed – represents up to 41% of GDP and provides 85.5% of total employment, reports the International Labour Organization, the UN body that sets international labour standards and promotes social protection. Without collecting enough taxes, cash-strapped city authorities cannot finance critical infrastructure such as roads, hospitals and powers.

Some local administration depends on foreign direct investment (FDI) or opts for the BOT system – build, operate, transfer – in which investors finance a project such as a bridge and compensate their investment by, for example, collecting tolls for a limited period. The State of African cities 2018, a UN report, says that Johannesburg, Lagos and Nairobi are the leading FDI attractions in sub-Saharan Africa.

Private investors often accompany financing with technological know-how. For example, smart city projects across South Africa, such as Melrose Arch in Johannesburg, require a diverse range of talent not often found in that country. Foreign investors with expertise in this field can draw on their own experience and contacts to put a skilled team in place.

In sum, the Key to urban planning and attracting investors is to plan with an eye toward future population growth, notes Jonathan Hall, assistant professor at the University of Toronto's Department of Economics and Munk School of Global Affairs and Public Policy.

From Africa Renewal April-July 2019