



Federal Republic of **Nigeria**

# Planning Sustainable Urban Growth in Nigeria: Challenges and Strategies

Presentation by

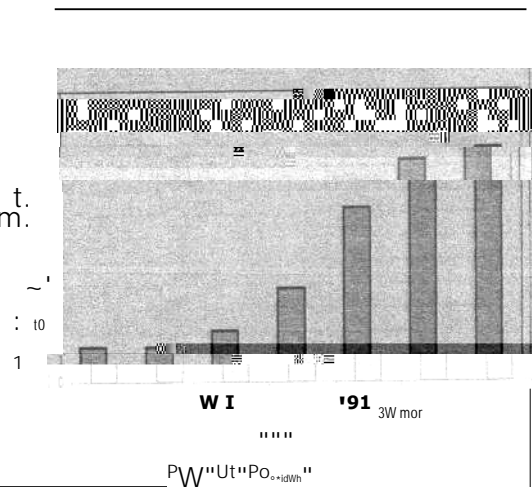
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Not only has Nigeria experienced one of the fastest rates of urbanization in the world, its experience has also been unique in scale, in pervasiveness and in historical antecedents. This has resulted in a very dense network of urban centres unequalled anywhere in Africa. Unlike other countries in Africa, Nigeria does not suffer from the problem of a single, large, primate city where all development is concentrated; there are several large cities of importance spread across the country, a number of which are larger than most national capitals in Africa.

The rate of population growth has also been spectacular in recent times. Compared to a growth rate of 2.8 per cent for the total population,

the urban population in Nigeria over the last three decades has been growing close to about 5.8 per cent per annum.

The urban population is about 48.2 per cent and projections indicate that more than 60 per cent of Nigerians will live in urban centres by year 2025. Today, there are more than 840 urban centres, and well over 10 cities with populations of over a million. Lagos State, one of 36 States is larger than more than 32 African countries and has a population projected to



implementation of sustainable growth programmes, which are slowly, but significantly making an impact. The Habitat Agenda, Agenda 21 and the MDGs remain the basic framework for action. The key strategies of urban development, provision of adequate shelter; poverty eradication; environmental management; economic development; governance and international cooperation for development, are examined in the following sections.

### Strategies for balanced development

Strategic planning and regional planning are very important institutional supports to an integrated approach to the sustainability of cities. The balanced development of human settlements in the country has been primarily achieved through increased states and local governments' creation. The increase to 36 States and 774 Local Government Councils structure in 1996 has meant the establishment of more urban centers in the country. This development has helped to ensure the even spread of towns and cities across the country. Furthermore, the location of a new Federal Capital in the central region, and the establishment of universities and colleges in virtually every state capital have helped in bringing about balanced urban settlement and growth.

However,

streets, the demarcation of all neighborhoods and wards in

with at least 1,000 in each state and the Federal Capital. In addition several institutions responsible for delivering housing are being restructured\_ and adequately funded to ensure enhanced performance. Other sustainability strategies in the housing sector include:

- Developing and promoting the use of locally produced building materials as a means of reducing housing construction cost, in collaboration with the Nigeria Building and Road Research Institute (NBRRI);
- Promoting the use of indigenous professionals, appropriate design and technology in housing delivery;
- Promoting measures that will mobilize long term and affordable funding for the housing sector by restructuring and recapitalizing the Federal Mortgage Bank of Nigeria (apex mortgage institution) for better performance;
- Improving access to finance by refocusing secondary mortgage markets;
- Deliberately imbibing a private sector led housing provision through the introduction of incentives such as serviced land and tax rebates; and
- Development of a well managed land information system and computerization of land registries.

**Services Scheme which includes programmes on qualitative education, primary health care, farmers' empowerment and provision of social services and (iv) the Natural Resources Development and Conservation Scheme contain programmes for environmental protection as well as the development of agricultural, solid mineral and water resources.**

**Other sectoral strategies and actions plans that compliment NAPEP programmes include the Universal Basic Education Programme and the**

The Sustainable Cities Programme being implemented in Ibadan, Kano and Enugu - in collaboration with UN-Habitat and JNNDP is another practical response to the search for sustainable development. The Programme focuses primarily on capacity building in urban environmental planning and management, on broad-based partnership and participation as well as on leveraging of technical and financial resources at every level, to resolve urban environmental problems. Additionally, the creation of a Federal Ministry of Environment, the Niger Delta Development Commission and the National Emergency Management Agency are among other actions of government directed at ensuring effective conservation of the natural resources and ecosystems and thereby setting the country on the path of sustainable development.

### **Good governance and development**

Government realizes that good governance is fundamental to national development and that sustainable development cannot thrive on its own without sustainable peace and democracy. This is why strong emphasis is placed on ensuring a stable political environment, sustenance of democratic principles and government, and achievement of improved living conditions for the people. Several b.94

leaders while the last component aims to introduce an innovative method of preventing urban crime based on broad partnerships to enhance security for all urban citizens, and a secure environment for investment and development. Together as a package, they will go a long way in implementing a series of practical measures to promote good urban governance at the national, state and local levels in Nigeria. A UN-HABITAT regional office was established in Abuja, Nigeria in 2003 to support these and other initiatives.

### **International cooperation for development**

At the continental scale, Nigeria plays a prominent role in cooperative initiatives that will benefit Nigerians and chart a new course for sustainable growth and development. The NEPAD programmes, objectives of the African Growth and



- (vi) Develop efficient and effective governance systems in African cities and other human settlements.
- (vii) Strengthen national and local institutional capacities in the areas of sustainable urbanization;
- (viii) Promote city-to-city cooperation to encourage exchange of best practices of sustainable urban development at all levels; and
- (ix) Mobilize external resources and more coordinated and concerted support for sustainable development.

The international community, on its part will need to support these initiatives by ensuring that they are adequately financed, technology is transferred, institutions strengthened and capacities built.

By way of conclusion, I want to thank the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations for organizing this important Conference on sustainable urban planning and sustainable architecture, which is a further demonstration of the Council's strong commitment to ensuring sustainability of our environment. I appreciate the exchange of experiences and lessons learnt, and I believe that working together we can evolve effective strategies for sustainable development in our rapidly urbanizing world.

I thank you for your attention.