Urban Development and Environmental Implications: The challenge of urban sustainability in Nigeria

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The impact of rapid urbanization has indeed become a major threat to the quality of urban environment, human health and urban productivity in Nigeria. It is therefore not surprising that the living environments in most cities in Nigeria are "life and health threatening". Today's urban environment in Nigeria is at best described as unsustainable. This situation poses a serious challenge to urban administrators, planners, other professionals as well as urban residents in the country. Poorly managed urban growth as obtained in Nigeria creates irreversible environmental and natural resources degradation with a concomitant increase in poverty. Urban environmental problems are exacerbated because policies do not account for environmental factors. In resolving the environmental implications of rapid urbanization in Nigeria, as articulated in this paper, there is need to apply sound principles of environmental management through the integration of environmental planning into development.

Keywords: Environmental planning, Nigeria, urbanization, urban sustainability, urban environmental problems

Introduction

In most countries of the world, especially in the developing world, urbanization has become an integral part of the growth and development process. Unfortunately, many developing countries, including Nigeria, are still experiencing urbanization and its associated problems, which they hardly can control or manage. This situation is made worse by the decreasing economic incomes and spiraling external debts of many developing countries attendant upon fiscal austerity or budget constraints which compound most governments’ burden of expanding and upgrading infrastructure and social amenities. The provision of infrastructure remains largely elusive because populations are growing much faster than the capacity of the public sector to finance massive investments that are needed to support rapid urban growth. Added to this is the 'top down' approach towards development planning in the last four decades (UNCHS, 1996).

The impact of rapid urbanization has indeed become a major threat to the quality of the urban environment, human health and urban productivity (Leitmann et al., 1992; Abbott, 1996). It is therefore not too surprising that the living environments in many cities in Africa, Asia and Latin America, where more than 600 million people currently reside are 'life and health threatening' (Leitmann et al., 1992). Many basic facilities are nonexistent, while the existing ones continue to deteriorate in quality.

In the 1980s and early 1990s, deep urban crisis prevailed across Africa largely because of the declining or stagnant economy (UNCHS, 1996:89). During this period, the most serious environment-related problems associated with urbanization, commonly referred to as the 'Brown Agenda', were aggravated (Leitmann et al., 1992). These include lack of safe and sufficient water supply, inadequate drainage system, waste management and pollution control, insecure government, inadequate
and substandard housing, overcrowding, degradation of sensitive lands and the overburdening of public transport systems. All these pose a serious threat to the urban dwellers especially the poor, who are often at the receiving end. Hence, the challenge of urbanization is how to sustain economic growth while solving environmental and social equity problems.

With special reference to Nigeria, which is a classic case of a country experiencing rapid urban population growth. Lagos has one of the fastest rates of growth – between 5 and 8 per cent per annum. It has thus become one of the 15 largest agglomerations in the Third World. According to UN data (UNCH, 2003), Lagos is expected to be the third most populous city in the world by 2015. According to Onibokun (2004), urbanization (city growth) is not bad per se, it is, in fact, an inevitable process which is part of the natural process of development in any nation. From available data, a strong correlation exists between the rate of urbanization and other indicators of development like energy consumption per capital, the contribution of the industrial and manufacturing sectors as a percentage of GNP, survival indicators (life expectancy at birth, infant and under five mortality), and the human development index in general (UNDP, 2003). The sheer magnitude and intractability of urban problems in Nigerian towns and cities have brought to the fore the very crucial issue of how to plan and manage our cities, with a view to making them livable and sustainable.

The problems of urbanization in Nigeria are summed up in the prologue to the 2006 National Urban Development Policy (NUDP) thus: “the problems and challenges posed by the rapid rate of uncontrolled and unplanned urban growth are immense. Nigerian towns are growing without adequate planning. Millions of people live in sub-standard and sub-human environments plagued by squalor and grossly inadequate social amenities. The result is manifested in growing overcrowding in homes and increasing pressure on infrastructural facilities and a rapidly deteriorating environment. The low level of awareness on the part of the people, absence of effective advocacy and inappropriate programmes of development have further compounded the problems of urban growth and development” (FMHUD, 2006). From the foregoing, it is evident that rapid and uncontrolled urban growth and its associated problems have continued to plague successive governments in Nigeria. The result is that the supply of infrastructure is grossly affected. Nigeria’s urban environment is best described as unsustainable; it poses a serious challenge not only to urban administrators and planners, but also to urban residents. It is from this perspective that this paper examines the environmental implications of unsustainable urban growth and development in Nigeria. Specifically, the paper examines the major environmental problems resulting from rapid urban growth and some of the major implications, and proffers solutions to these problems in order to ensure the sustainable growth of Nigerian cities.

Conceptualizing Urban Sustainability: The Nigerian example

The goal of improving the social and economic conditions of an increasingly urbanized population while preserving life systems and maintaining environmental quality has become subsumed under the rubric of urban sustainability. The ideal of sustainability, which is widely but loosely defined as meeting today’s needs without compromising future generations – is used to justify and legitimize a myriad of policies and practices ranging from communal agrarian utopianism to large-scale, capital-intensive market development (NSF, 2000).

Sustainable development is attainable if major global environmental threats are addressed by measures that place environmental concerns at the centre of development. The environment should also be seen as a complex system that can be geared to productive requirements in such a way that our current utilization of it for development does not compromise its potential to meet the needs of future generations. Sustainable development therefore promotes the exploitation of resources, investments, technological advancement and institutional change.

Physical planners have for long been faced with the challenge of ensuring that urban settlements are both economically and environmentally sustainable. Urban sustainability correlates with the capacities of the natural resource environmental system. Poorly managed urban growth creates natural resource degradation and increases poverty.

It is this that informed the Sustainable Cities Programme of The World Bank/UNCHS/UNDP which is based on the principles listed below:
Table 1. Distribution of States by Size of Population of Urban Settlements

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Geo-Political Zones</th>
<th>High* (1-10)</th>
<th>Medium** (11-21)</th>
<th>Low*** (22 and above)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>North-west</td>
<td>Kaduna (9)</td>
<td>Katsina (18)</td>
<td>Sokoto (27), Kebbi (28)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North-east</td>
<td></td>
<td>Kano (11), Borno (13)</td>
<td>Bauchi (26), Yobe (22), Jigawa (31)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West central</td>
<td>Kwara (7)</td>
<td>Kogi (14), Abuja (19)</td>
<td>Niger (23)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>East central</td>
<td></td>
<td>Plateau (21)</td>
<td>Adamawa (24), Benue (25), Taraba (30)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South-west</td>
<td>Lagos (1), Oyo (2), Osun (4), Ogun (6), Ondo (14)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South-east</td>
<td>Anambra (3), Edo (5), Enugu (8)</td>
<td>Abia (12), Delta (15), Imo (16), Rivers (17), Cross River (20)</td>
<td>Akwa Ibom (29)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* High rank group: At least 50% urban population
** Medium Rank group: At least 25% urban population but less than 40%
*** Low rank group: less than 25% urban population


Due to a high rate of rural-urban migration, the overall population growth rate for Nigerian urban centres in 1991 was 4.5 per cent per annum compared to a rural growth rate of 1.70 per cent and a national rate of 2.8 per cent. Lagos, the commercial and industrial capital of Nigeria, was believed to be one of the 15 largest agglomerations in the world in 2000 (UN, 1995). With a projected population of 24.4 million, Lagos is expected to be the third most populous city in the world by 2015. The implications of these demographic trends for employment, provision of food, housing, and social services as well as the protection of the environment are staggering. As far back as 1981, approximately 58 per cent of the 4.1 million inhabitants of Lagos were recorded to be residing in slums and informal settlements (Obenyai, 1993).
Ibadan Journal of the Social Sciences

As evident from table 2, while Nigeria was estimated to be at 44.1 per cent level of urbanization in 2000 (compared with about 36 per cent for Ghana, 33.4 per cent for Kenya, 56.9 per cent for South Africa and 57.4 per cent for Malaysia), this figure is expected to rise to 68.3 per cent by 2020.

The characteristics of the urban situation have led to a host of environmental, economic, political and social problems in most of the major urban centres, all of which have impacted negatively on the development of the nation (Onibokun, 1989).

Urban Environmental Problems in Nigeria: Causes and implications

Urbanization can be both beneficial and problematic for humans and the environment. If well planned, urban centres will generate economic growth and prosperity. However, if they are not properly managed, they may generate major environmental problems that could impact negatively on development. Also, the structure and location of economic activities in and around cities are some of the causes of environmental problems. According to Leitmann (1994), this explains much of the variation in environmental issues between and within cities.

The way in which our physical environment, and in particular the land, is planned greatly influences the quality of the environment and indeed the quality of human lives (Perloff, 1973). Normatively, a city plan should precede the land-use zoning ordinance. In practice, specifically in Ibadan, land-use zoning has replaced city plans. The process of zoning in the city was non-participatory and took little cognizance of environmental resources and the effects of developmental activities (Adesanya, 2000). A major outcome is the organic growth of the city, with inadequate infrastructure, poor economic base, poverty, natural resource depletion and deteriorating environmental quality. It is quite apparent that the pattern of development in the city is not sustainable.

### Table 2. Urbanization Trends and Growth of Urban Population in Nigeria and Selected Countries – 2020

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Countries</th>
<th>Level of Urbanization %</th>
<th>Estimates and Projections 2000-2020</th>
<th>Annual Growth Rate %</th>
<th>2000-2010</th>
<th>2010-2020</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Africa</td>
<td>37.2</td>
<td>295,228</td>
<td>3.66</td>
<td>3.26</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Algeria</td>
<td>57.1</td>
<td>17,311</td>
<td>2.54</td>
<td>2.01</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ghana</td>
<td>36.1</td>
<td>6,963</td>
<td>3.15</td>
<td>3.15</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kenya</td>
<td>33.4</td>
<td>10,234</td>
<td>4.38</td>
<td>3.14</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nigeria</td>
<td>44.1</td>
<td>50,175</td>
<td>4.23</td>
<td>3.39</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S. Africa</td>
<td>56.9</td>
<td>24,629</td>
<td>1.63</td>
<td>0.55</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asia</td>
<td>37.5</td>
<td>1,375,519</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>2.24</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malaysia</td>
<td>57.4</td>
<td>12,758</td>
<td>2.68</td>
<td>1.98</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Europe</td>
<td>73.4</td>
<td>534,061</td>
<td>0.04</td>
<td>0.07</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>87.5</td>
<td>71,798</td>
<td>0.11</td>
<td>0.04</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brazil</td>
<td>81.2</td>
<td>138,287</td>
<td>1.75</td>
<td>1.28</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: UN-HABITAT, 2003b, p.252.

Urban environmental impacts stem from the use of resources, including land, water and energy; waste and wastewater treatment and disposal practices as well as industrial and domestic uses of chemicals (UNEP, 2000). These problems already exist in Nigeria, and are being compounded by other problems. According to the Draft National Urban Development Policy (FMHUD, 2006), the two most important factors determining the quality of the urban environment in Nigeria are the increasing concentration of people in the cities, marked by abject poverty. Generally, the main urban environmental issues include liquid and solid waste, urban blight, air pollution from increasing vehicle use, water pollution, poor urban transportation, urban land degradation, lack of open spaces and poor management of the urban informal sector.

The urban areas of Nigeria are on the pathway of decay. Air pollution and environmental degradation from poor refuse disposal are the norm in Nigerian cities, while industrial activities which pay little
attention to the sustainability of the environment are resulting in increasing levels of air, water and land pollution. In general, many Nigerian cities are reputed to be the dirtiest, most unsanitary, least aesthetically pleasing, least safe and secure and most poorly governed cities in the world. Environmental degradation is noticeable everywhere with waste littering the roads (Mabogunje, 1990). According to Olokessus (1999), Nigerian urban settlements are afflicted with a growing list of problems, such as poor environmental quality, traffic congestion, quantitatively and qualitatively inadequate housing, uncontrolled growth, inadequate building setback, poverty and encroachment on environmentally sensitive and marginal lands.

Nearly all the cities and urban centres in Nigeria manifest glaring qualitative and quantitative deficiencies of housing, roads, municipal services and urban infrastructure. In 2000, access to water supply in urban areas was about 78%, while sanitation access was 66% (UN-Habitat, 2003). As a result of rural-urban migration drift and rapid natural population increase, urban centres are congested. Homelessness, overcrowding and unemployment are serious problems contributing to poverty in the urban areas of the country.

The reasons for these problems can be classified into three. One of them is the absence of development plans to serve as the basis for growth management. Closely related to the first is weak local management capacity, especially in the areas of development control and municipal management. The third reason is the insufficient consideration given to the integration of environmental and equity plans into municipal management and development control.

The European origin of physical planning lies in the concern for human health, safety and visual appreciation of the physical environment. Thus, Ratcliffe (1981: 39-40) contends that town and country planning as we know it today (in the United Kingdom) has its roots in the public health and housing legislation of the late nineteenth century. Coke (1967) also shows that a similar situation exists in the United States. In Nigeria, the usefulness of the Town and Country Planning Ordinance No. 4 of 1946, which has a similar purpose – to promote human health through sanitation practices and orderly physical development – became questionable as from the 1980s, following a national reawakening in environmental protection and conservation issues.

Hitherto, the local town planning authorities handled physical planning in a parochial and environmentally neutral way. Consequently, emphasis is not on growth management with sensitivity to environmental issues, but on physical layout of human settlements and often indiscriminate issuance of development permits. The problems of urban floods in Lagos, Ibadan and Benin are partly attributable to poor development control practices and environmental insensitivity. Since physical planning is often perceived by local town planners in terms of ad hoc physical solutions to human settlement problems, it has tended to aggravate the problem it is supposed to ameliorate (Izeghu, 1986).

The problem of solid waste disposal has become one of the most intractable environmental problems facing many cities in Nigeria. In recent years, there has been a phenomenal increase in the volume of waste generated daily in the country. This is due to an increasing rate of population growth, urbanization, industrialization and general economic growth.

Most of the urban areas in Nigeria lack effective systems of refuse collection. As a result, most urban households resort to dumping refuse in unacceptable places, while some engage the services of private refuse collectors or burn or bury solid waste. The common arrangement in the very few urban communities where a system is in place, is for waste management authorities to collect refuse from households and public containers on a regular basis. Unfortunately, the operation of the waste management authorities is ineffective as evidenced by heaps of decomposing refuse that are fast becoming part of the regular landscape in many urban areas. The management authorities often lack adequate manpower, equipment and operation funds in relation to the size of the population they are obliged to serve. The reluctance of Nigerians to pay for waste disposal services, as well as the relatively low cooperation between the states and local government authorities with regard to waste management further reduces the chance of success of waste management agencies. The poor management of landfill sites is another challenge to waste management agencies.

On the whole, solid waste creates environmental problems in two main ways. First, much of it is not
collected in major cities, and the rate of waste collection is generally between 30-50%. The remainder is usually burned or dumped haphazardly in illegal landfills or streets, where it creates health hazards and blocks drains, contributing to urban flooding. Secondly, because of the inability to sort waste at source, household and industrial wastes, including toxic ones, are often handled together, leading to soil and groundwater pollution (UNEP, 2000). In view of the environmental situation in the urban areas, Nigerian cities have been described as some of the dirtiest in the world (Mabogunje, 1990).

Another major environmental implication of uncontrolled urban growth in Nigeria is the increasing vulnerability of urban areas to disasters. According to Olokesusi (2004), a closer analysis of what transforms a natural event into human and economic disaster reveals that the fundamental problems of development that Nigeria, as well as other developing countries face, are the very same problems that contribute to natural hazards. The principal causes of vulnerability of urban areas to disasters include rapid and uncontrolled urbanization, widespread urban and rural poverty, degradation of the environment resulting from the mismanagement of natural resources, insufficient social amenities and ineffective public policies.

The vulnerability of urban areas to frequent environmental emergencies in Nigeria is largely determined by two variables: (a) the vulnerability of the elements within the urban areas to disasters. This means the ability of the built physical environment, site improvements and the infrastructure in them to withstand the stress imposed by natural hazards. (b) The hazards of their locations. This means the extent to which they are subjected to environmental emergencies.

Furthermore, the roots of urban vulnerability in Nigeria are the citizens and the prolific rate (between 2-5% per year since the 1990s) in which urban population in the country has been growing (Olokesusi, 2004). Overall, the growth reveals that thousands of people migrate to cities and towns each year. About 45 per cent of the country's estimated total population of over 120 million reside in urban centres, with the highest concentration in the large metropolitan areas such as Lagos, Ibadan, Kano and Port-Harcourt. The environmental problems associated with uncontrolled expansion and poor management has increased the vulnerability of these cities to major disasters.

A large contingent of low-income migrants have settled in poor, cheap, dilapidated and over-crowded houses constructed on vulnerable lands, subject to floods and landslides. Poverty and lack of innovative approaches to urban management contribute to the acute shortage of social infrastructure services in the urban areas in general and low-income neighbourhoods in particular. The combination of physical development on unsuitable lands such as wetlands, slopes, flood plains and other environmentally sensitive areas, and overcrowding all exacerbate environmental degradation and vulnerability to environmental and anthropogenic hazards. Blocked drainage channels in urban areas worsen the externalities associated with flooding. Little wonder then the rampant incidences of flooding in major cities like Ibadan, Abuja, Benin City and Port-Harcourt.

As a result of this, Nigeria is a disaster-prone country. In 2000/2001, more than 200,000 people were displaced by anthropogenic and environmental emergencies, and more than 1,000 deaths were recorded. Many homes, farm crops, fishing sites and businesses were destroyed. In the flood disaster in Kirfi Local Government Area in Bauchi State, more than 11,000 were displaced while 500 were displaced due to a similar incident which occurred in Osun State (Orebiyi, 2002).

The Challenge of Urban Management in Nigeria
The management of urban environmental problems is a complicated business. The factors responsible for managerial complexity are: (a) the frequently large number of actors per problem area; (b) cross-jurisdictional conflicts; (c) central-local conflicts; and (d) tension between forces for centralization and devolution of authority. Part of this managerial complexity can be attributed to the fact that there is often a minimal relationship between spatial scale or nature of urban environmental problems and the design of institutions or policies. Thus, the processes of planning and implementation can only address partial aspects of environmental problems. For example, there may be an ability to handle waste collection within municipal borders, but solid waste disposal often requires metro-level authority to plan, co-ordinate and execute a waste disposal programme, conflicts and suboptimal results are likely to occur. Similarly, urban environmental problems worsen when policies do not
take into account environmental factors. An example of this is land use policies that fail to prevent the erection of buildings in flood or earthquake-prone areas. Different measures taken by the government to improve the urban sector are highlighted in table 3.

One of the major goals of the recent National Policy on Urban Development (FMHUD, 2006) is to enhance environmental situation in the urban areas. Specifically, the goal of the urban policy in the context of the environment is to make the urban environment in Nigeria safe, clean, healthy and aesthetically pleasing. According to the policy, to achieve this, the government should:

i. encourage health authorities as well as the local government environmental agencies to be more diligent in the discharge of their responsibilities;
ii. enact appropriate legislation to back up the various environmental protection convention resolutions;
iii. promote co-operation among urban households to take an keen interest in the maintenance of safe, clean and healthy environment and embark on campaigns to alert the public, especially the urban poor, on the increasing rate of health hazards in the urban environment;
iv. ensure participation in promoting high environmental standards in our cities;
v. enforce development control measures in order to reduce environmental hazards such as deforestation, oil spillage, desert encroachment, flooding and erosion and;
vi. ensure better coordination among different agencies involved with the environment at the local level such as the town planning authorities, local health boards, local education authorities and local works departments.

Thus, urban environmental management can be an easier and more successful process when physical planning, analysis and policy development encompass the spatial and other characteristics of vulnerable ecosystems.

City-specific strategies should be guided by the configuration of key economic variables. These variables are: (a) the level of industrialization (focusing on the exposure of different populations to high-risk emissions and the extent to which effective pollution-control policies are in place); (b) the composition of the energy balance and its dynamics as an indication of energy-related emission; and (c) the positive and negative environmental roles of the informal sector.

Enhanced public awareness, consultation and participation can improve environmental management. The ignorance of the public concerning environmental issues indicates that environmental education may be needed to raise public consciousness about inconspicuous environmental problems. The consultation process has shown its value in identifying a number of topics, including process-oriented issues analysis.

Attention should be paid to the relationship between problem areas, their spatial scale, and institutional capacity when designing interventions. The impact of different problems will vary between cities over time. The spatial dimension of problems may not correspond to jurisdictional or sectoral alignments and impacts can extend well beyond metropolitan boundaries. The availability of financial and human resources will enhance the management of environmental problems.

Stakeholders’ participation is crucial to urban development. Many environmental plans have failed due to the non-participation of the major actors in the preparation of the plans (Duruzoechi, 2001). There is need, therefore, to involve the stakeholders in the identification, assessment, clarification and prioritization of urban environmental issues.

These participants must be those whose interests are affected by the environmental issues and problems; they must possess relevant information and expertise required to understand the issues and proffer solutions legally, financially and politically. These include government ministries and parastatals, local governments, community-based organizations, non-governmental organizations, the private formal sector, the private informal sector, research institutions, media houses, external support agencies, etc.

In clarifying environmental issues, the stakeholders should analyse identified environmental problems and define the roles of agencies and organizations that are involved in environmental plans for a successful implementation.
Table 3. Categories of Measures taken by Governments in Nigeria on Urban Sector

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Legislative/Policy</th>
<th>Institutional Building</th>
<th>Direct Action</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>In 1904, the Cantonment Proclamations led to the segregation of European Reservation from the Native Areas</td>
<td>In 1924, Town Planning Committees were established for the Northern and Southern Provinces to vet planning schemes and initiate new ones where necessary.</td>
<td>In 1974, FGN commissioned Studies of twenty major urban centres in Nigeria to identify critical areas of urban infrastructure needs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In 1914, Ordinance No. 9 was enacted to empower government to acquire land compulsorily for public reasons.</td>
<td>During the First National Development Plan period, State-owned Housing Corporations were created to provide planned residential and industrial estates.</td>
<td>1975 to 80, the World Bank-Assisted Nigerian States Urban Development Programme was initiated.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In 1917, the Road and Township Ordinance No. 29 provided for different grades of urban settlements, established broad physical layouts of towns and classified Nigerian towns into first, second and third class categories, with Lagos as the only first class town.</td>
<td>In 1992, Urban Development Bank was established to focus on urban infrastructure and public utilities.</td>
<td>In 1985, FGN, in collaboration with the World Bank, introduced the Infrastructure Development Fund (IDF) to finance urban development projects.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In 1928, the Lagos Town Planning Act created the Lagos Executive Development Board (LEDDB) and the Board was empowered to carry out slum clearance, land reclamation, residential and industrial estates.</td>
<td>1979 Federal Ministry responsible for Housing, Urban Development and the Environment was created (it was scrapped in 1983)</td>
<td>In 1984, the monthly National Clean-up Exercise was introduced.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In 1946, the Nigerian Town and Country Planning Ordinance No. 4 authorised Town Planning Authorities to prepare planning schemes. In 1978, FGN introduced the Land Use Decree (1978) as a regulatory tool to control the use of land and ensure equitable access to it by all Nigerians.</td>
<td>In 1992, Decree No. 3 of 1992 was enacted to establish National Housing Fund as a source of funds for housing finance.</td>
<td>Between 1996 and 2002, FGN, in collaboration with UNCHS and UNICEF, the Sustainable Cities Programme, the Urban Basic Services programme, Community Upgrading Programme, Safer Cities Programme and the Campaign on Good Urban Governance were introduced.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In 1985, a National Housing Policy was adopted.</td>
<td>In the 70s, the concept of New Towns was introduced, as a strategy for decongesting the major urban centres and of creating new growth poles. This concept, for example, gave birth to the relocation of the Federal Capital from Lagos to Abuja.</td>
<td>In 1972 to 75, FGN planned to build 59,000 housing units over the federation, the number was subsequently increases to 202,000 units in 1997. The states also launched their housing programme each planning to built 4,000 between 1977 and 1980.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In 1986, the Rolling Plan concept was introduced.</td>
<td>In June 2003, a new Ministry of Housing and Urban Development again re-established.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In 1988, National Policy on Environment was enacted.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In 1991, National Urban Development Policy was prepared.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In 1992, the Nigerian Urban and Regional Planning Decree No. 88 of 1992 was adopted.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In 1996, National Plan of Action to guide human settlements development in the twenty-first century was prepared as part of the background papers for the Second United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II).</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>In 1998, the Federal Environmental Protection Agency (FEPA) was created under Decree No. 58.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>In 1971, the National Council of Housing was adopted.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>In 2002, a new Housing and Urban Development Policy was scrapped.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Source: Osibokun (2004), Author’s compilation.

Conclusion

There is an increasing awareness that environmental precautions are essential for continued economic development. Thus, the goal of sustained and healthy economic growth inherently requires careful attention to the environment. Environmental issues should be approached realistically in the planning, management, and coordination of urban projects. The most common environmental problems in cities in developing countries, according to Lee (1985), are similar to those
in developed countries, except for the fact that they are usually more severe. Consideration of environmental issues should also identify long-term costs and adverse impacts that are likely to occur in the future.

While the increasing rate of urbanization is inevitable in Nigeria, the circumstances under which the urban population is growing have wiped out most of the associated gains. The context within which urbanization is taking place is creating a host of problems far beyond the managerial and fiscal capacity of the municipal government. Thus, in resolving the environmental implications of rapid urbanization in Nigeria, it is necessary to apply sound principles of environmental management through the integration of environmental planning into development. This is a challenge to urban planners and administrators in Nigeria.

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Biographical Notes
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