



NIGERIA'S POOR URBAN QUALITY: A CHALLENGE TO SUSTAINABLE ENVIRONMENT

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Abstract

Nigerian cities have been found to be aesthetically displeasing and their urban setting described as chaotic. A typical Nigerian city has been described as being aesthetically distressing. The cities are not organized and are lacking in urban quality attributes when assessed with the five crystallizing elements of the city image- paths, nodes, edges, landmarks and districts. The origin and pattern of Nigerian cities revealed that the colonial urban centres evolved out of the commercial out posts and administrative centres. They were developed mainly along trade routes except where there were existing indigenous cities. The colonial cities were not meant to sustain themselves but to be fed by the surrounding countryside. The nation's planning system has since remained trapped in the left-over colonial pattern with the planners concentrating more on development controls at the expense of advance planning. Development therefore speeds ahead of plans resulting to pseudo-urbanization. The cities' characters are neither European nor African, but alien with lack of maintenance culture since they do not match with the lifestyle of the people that occupy them. The UN-Habitat states that planned urbanization is essential for Africa's structural transformation and achievement of the continent's Agenda 2063. It goes further to state that urbanization that occurs in unsustainable pattern can actually constrain economic growth. As the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) is being reviewed, this paper examines Nigerian cities to determine their environmental sustainability in accordance with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The paper asserts that the prevailing urban forms and patterns of Nigerian cities need to be re-organized and re-ordered to create enabling environment for their livability and sustainability. The paper goes further to suggest ways of improving the urban quality of the cities which include synergizing inputs of the urban professionals and the establishment of urban design departments in government development agencies and schools.

Keywords: *pseudo-urbanization, sustainable development, sustainable environment, urban design, urban quality*

INTRODUCTION

Aim and Objectives of Paper

The aim of this paper is to examine Nigerian cities and determine their environmental sustainability in accordance with the Millennium and Sustainable Development Goals.

Theoretical Concept

Basic issues significant to this discussion include urban development quality and environmental sustainability. Urban environmental sustainability depends on man and his

activities in the urban environment. Environmental mismatch is a concept derived from the poor relationship between man and his environment. With the formula $B = f(P,E)$, Lewin (1951) explains that behavior is a function of the person and the environment. This implies that when there is a 'good fit' between people and their environment, they are happy, productive, and satisfied. But as the degree of fit between them and their environment decreases, the levels of satisfaction and productivity fall. (Krupat, 1985)

Urban Development Quality

Urban development quality is assessed by the urban design attributes of a place. The 'official' definition of urban design for example in England is '*...the relationship between different buildings, the relationship between buildings and the streets, squares, parks and other spaces which make up the public domain itself; the relationship of one part of a village, town or city with the other parts; and the patterns of movement and activity which are thereby established. In short, the complex relationships between all the elements of built and unbuilt space.*' (DoE, 1997: para 14) A subsequent government publication, *Design: Urban Design in the Planning System: Towards Better Practice* (DETR/CABE, 2000a: 8) – gave a more rounded and complete definition, stating that urban design was the 'art of making places for people':

'It includes the way places work and matters such as community safety, as well as how they look. It concerns the connections between people and places, movement and urban form, nature and the built fabric, and the processes for ensuring successful villages, towns and cities.'

Seven objectives were identified – each relating to the concept of place:

- *Character* – a place with its own identity.
- *Continuity and enclosure* – a place where public and private spaces are clearly distinguished.
- *Quality of the public realm* – a place with attractive and successful outdoor areas.
- *Ease of movement* – a place that is easy to get to and move through.
- *Legibility* – a place that has a clear image and is easy to understand.
- *Adaptability* – a place that can change easily.
- *Diversity* – a place with variety and choice (DETR/CABE, 2000).

A 2005 update in policy (ODPM, 2005) emphasized that '*Good design ensures attractive, usable, durable and adaptable places and is a key element in achieving sustainable development.*' Such high level policy is replicated at national/state level around the world. (Carmona, Tiesdell, Heath & Taner 2003, pp. 10-11) The above are indicators of the quality of 'good' places.

Environmental Sustainability

Environmental sustainability refers to the preservation, the resilience and the adaptation of physical and biological systems (Pugh, 1996). According to the UN-Habitat (2015), economic growth cannot occur without urbanization, but urbanization alone is not sufficient to generate economic growth. Urbanization that occurs in unsustainable patterns can actually constrain economic growth (UN-Habitat, 2015). Conscious development is critical, not only for nature but for the economy and social wellbeing. The prevention of urban sprawls is a key factor in city competitiveness (UN-Habitat, 2015) Reporting further, the document stated that planned urbanization is essential for Africa's structural transformation and achievement of the continent's Agenda 2063 (a long term regional agenda to achieve development in five

decades). Urbanization is a tool for development, if it is supported by urban planning and design, clear urban rules and regulations, integration of urban economies into national development plans, and empowerment of cities and local governments to create wealth and prosperity (UN-Habitat, 2015). The document continued to say that National governments' adoption of integrated national urban policies premised on multi-stakeholders engagement is the most important indication of strong political commitment to Africa's urban and human settlements agenda. National urban policies strengthen the link between urbanization, socio-economic development, and environmental sustainability by guiding the urbanization process in ways that promote compact, connected, integrated, inclusive and resilient cities and human settlements. (UN-Habitat, 2015)

Our Common Future, the Report of the World Commission on Environment (also known as the Brundtland Commission) published in 1987, stated that we must meet 'the needs of the present generation without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs' (Brundtland Commission, 1987) and this has become the most widely quoted summary of the goals of sustainable development. The needs which include economic, social, cultural, health and political are outlined as below-

Multiple Goals of Sustainable Development as Applied to Cities involve-

A. Meeting the needs of the present, viz.

- Economic needs which include access to an adequate livelihood or productive assets; also economic security when unemployed, ill, disabled or otherwise unable to secure a livelihood.
- Social, cultural and health needs which include a shelter which is healthy, safe, affordable and secure, within a neighbourhood with provision for piped water, sanitation, drainage, transport, health care, education and child development. Also a home, workplace and living environment protected from environmental hazards, including chemical pollution. Also important are needs related to people's choice and control – including homes and neighbourhoods which they value and where their social and cultural priorities are met. Shelters and services must meet the specific needs of children and of adults responsible for most child-rearing (usually women). Achieving this implies a more equitable distribution of income between nations and, in most, within nations.
- Political needs which include freedom to participate in national and local politics and in decisions regarding management and development of one's home and neighbourhood – within a broader framework which ensures respect for civil and political rights and the implementation of environmental legislation.

B. Without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs, viz.

- Minimizing use or waste of non renewable resources which includes minimizing the consumption of fossil fuels in housing, commerce, industry and transport plus substituting renewable sources where feasible. Also, minimizing waste of scarce mineral resources (reduce use, reuse, recycle, reclaim). There are also cultural, historical and natural assets within cities that are irreplaceable and thus non-renewable – for instance, historic districts and parks and natural landscapes which provide space for play, recreation and access to nature.

- Sustainable use of renewable resources – cities drawing on freshwater resources at levels which can be sustained; keeping to a sustainable ecological footprint in terms of land area on which producers and consumers in any city draw for agricultural crops, wood products and biomass fuels.
- Wastes from cities keeping within absorptive capacity of local and global sinks – including renewable sinks (capacity of a river to break down biodegradable wastes without ecological degradation) and non-renewable sinks (for persistent chemicals that cause ecological damage and that are not biodegradable or only degrade over long periods; these include most greenhouse gases and stratospheric ozone-depleting chemicals and many pesticides). (Mitlin & Satterthwait, in Pugh, 2002)

ORIGIN AND PATTERN OF NIGERIAN CITIES

Urbanization in Nigeria pre-dates colonialism as has been documented as below. “The urban centres of Nigeria which are scattered throughout the country developed at different periods of the country’s history and exhibit varied traits accordingly. Vigorous trading activities in the indigenous empires during the medieval period had given rise to numerous towns and cities. Some of these towns and cities disappeared in the period of unstable conditions that followed the four centuries of slave trading by Arab and various European nations. Many managed to linger on, but with their activities greatly reduced. Such centres include Kano, Zaria, Katsina, Ife, and Ijebu-Ode which were still thriving at the beginning of the colonial regime”. (Osunkwo, 2011)

“The assumption of full control of administration of both Northern and Southern Nigeria by 1st January 1900”, (Mabogunje, 1968 in Osunkwo, 2011) was followed by “...the Township Ordinance of 1917, “...which provided for the creation, constitution and administration of all towns and municipalities in Nigeria, with the exception of those native towns where the population was sufficiently homogeneous for it to be administered by a native administration”. (Osunkwo, 2011) Three categories of townships were constituted and designated first, second and third class. “Until the end of the Second World War, Lagos was the only first-class township in the country. Second-class townships consisted principally of large cities of trade. These were centres either along the railway line or on the coast so that they represented places where European traders had set up stores. They were not particularly distinguished by the size of their population or by their traditional importance” (Mabogunje 1968, in Osunkwo, 2011). “With the establishment of administrative headquarters a little distance from the exhibiting *native* settlements the bi-nuclear settlements that was called Government Stations emerged” (Osunkwo, 2011). Such was categorized as the third-class townships. The Government Stations consisted of the spacious European reservation and an African location, which was crowded and unsanitary. The great contrast between the urban centres which *had* the amenities, and the rural areas that lacked them was responsible for the gravitation of large numbers of people from rural areas to the towns. (Nwosu, 1981 in Osunkwo, 2011). “The Government Residential Areas (G.R.A) gradually developed into low density, high class residential area, while the African townships developed into high density, low and middle class residential area. (Nwosu, in Osunkwo 2011). With the attempts to build quarters for workers (with up to six miners sharing a room as in the case of Enugu colliery workers) the government introduced their standards for living areas”. (Osunkwo, 2011)

The colonial urban pattern revealed that “the colonial urban centres of Nigeria evolved out of the commercial out post and administrative centres. They were developed mainly along trade routes except where there were existing indigenous cities. The colonial cities were not meant to sustain themselves, but to be fed by the surrounding countryside and none of them therefore developed as a self-sustaining industrial town.”(Osunkwo, 2011) With the 1917 Township Ordinance in place, “Indigenous urban centres were allowed to exist side by side with adjoined settlements outside their boundaries. (Osunkwo, 2011) The settlements which developed became clusters of independent neighborhood and commercial area units. There were European Residential Area, the African township, the Commercial or Business Area, the Strangers’ quarters, and the Government Administrative Station. Each of the areas had an independent origin and organization and there were no positive efforts to organize them into a self-sustaining whole, or individual units.” (Osunkwo, 2011) “...the colonial government paid little attention to town planning but concentrated development project, public utilities, health facilities and other social amenities in the administrative headquarters. By shifting the economic centre of the old town to one end, the new development checked the expansion of the town at the other end and encouraged growth around itself. (Mabogunje, 1968 in Osunkwo, 2011)

Nigeria’s Urban Quality

With the foregoing origin and pattern, Nigerian urban clusters have continued to emerge and expand. The planning system left by the Colonial Government has continued to maintain its grip on the ‘independent’ country. Successive governments of Nigeria have continued to battle for the provision of infrastructural amenities and services to meet the demands of the fast expanding urban centres. On the part of the nation’s planners, concentration has been more on development control, at the expense of advance planning. Thus, development speeds ahead of plans. Such cities in which significant growth in the absence of adequate infrastructure has taken place are deemed “pseudo-urbanized”. Urbanization in the Third world tends to consist primarily on pseudo-urbanization. This happens largely because of so-called ‘rural push’ factors which push people from the countryside into the cities, without the city being prepared to accept them (Wikipedia, 2018).

Nigeria must have been in focus as Watson and Agbola (2013) stated that:

Africa’s cities are growing and changing rapidly without appropriate planning, they will become increasingly chaotic, inefficient and unsustainable. In many countries, planning legislation dates back to the colonial era. It is ill-equipped to deal with contemporary urban problems. A shortage of urban planning and management professionals trained to respond to urban complexity with progressive pro-poor approaches exacerbates urban dysfunction. (p.13)

Nigeria is now encountering a myriad of urbanization problems which affects the nation’s urban environmental quality. Public and community spaces are lacking whereby community activities take over the streets at random to the detriment of traffic flow.

A typical Nigerian city is what Adejumo (2002) has described as being “aesthetically distressing”. This description aptly captures the general disillusionment with the way we build and maintain our cities. A first time visitor to any of Nigerian cities is confronted with

so many strange phenomena. The inefficiency of most of the crystallizing elements of the city due to poor design and maintenance gives the impression that little or no attention is paid to city planning and urban design as distinct areas of professional activity (Ekop, Etim, & Obot, 2007). A number of factors have adversely affected the physical development of and character of urban Nigeria one of which is as a consequence of both indigenous and foreign design models. Many of them are usually juxtaposed between two cities, one, a repository of the ruins of traditional settlements, which in instances, have metamorphosed to cities of slums and shanty towns; the second, for the elites, which the British administration initiated by providing a simulacrum of western-styled amenities. In many Nigerian urban centres, the two cities are interwoven into one expansive city with development regulations that ostensibly seek to establish standards in Western civilization. The consequence of this dual influence in urban development is reflected in the way the character of Nigerian cities has evolved (Ekop, Etim, & Obot, 2007).

The city character is neither European nor African, but alien with lack of maintenance culture because it does not match with the lifestyle of the people that occupy them. There is no 'good fit' between the people and their environmental setting. This adversely affects the people's satisfaction, comfort and productivity. Many of the urban streets lack the streetscape elements, making them visually barren, monotonous and uninteresting, and provide no opportunity for street activities. They often lack an appropriate sense of enclosure, stretching visually to infinity. Views down these streets in many cities of the country do not contribute to the quality of urban experience (Ekop, Etim, & Obot, 2007). Such is the situation in Nigerian cities.

SUSTAINABLE CITIES OR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Concentration on 'sustainable cities' focuses too much on achieving ecological sustainability within increasingly isolated 'eco-regions' or 'bio-regions'. Seeking sustainable cities implies that each city has to meet the resource needs of the population and enterprises located there from its immediate surrounds. But the goals of sustainable development are the meeting of human needs within all cities (and rural areas) with a level of resource use and waste generation within each region and within the nation and the planet that is compatible with ecological sustainability. It is (therefore) unrealistic to demand that major cities should be supported by the resources produced in their immediate surrounds but (it is) entirely appropriate to require that consumers and producers in high-consumption, high waste cities reduce their level of resource use and waste and reduce or halt the damaging ecological impacts of their demands for fresh water and other resources on their surrounds. (Mitlin & Satterthwaite, 1994 in Pugh, 2002)

Efforts should therefore be to concentrate on improving the quality of the city environment which will translate to livability and sustainability. Unfortunately in Nigerian cities, slums and independent unorganized settlements spring up at random in continuation with the colonial leftover system. Since Nigerian cities were not planned and designed for sustainability their physical and biological systems are not worth preserving and their resilience and adaptation not guaranteed. The existing chaotic systems of the cities demand re-organization to enable their sustainability.

As observed above, Nigerian cities are alien to the people, unsustainable for the future and displays poor urban quality which should be addressed. To achieve sustainability in Nigerian cities translates to making them organized and livable. This calls for spatial re-organization both in the two- and three-dimensional realms and to give them local orientation to match the people's socio-economic expectations. Discussing Nigerian cities' quality, Ekop, Etim, and Obot, (2007) state that to assess the functional and visual character of Nigerian cities for quality aesthetic experience, the five crystallizing elements of a city as identified by Lynch (1960) are used. These are the streets or paths, activity spaces or nodes, linear breaks or edges, outstanding landscape elements or landmarks and zones or districts. Apart from creating the image of the city these elements also perform the function of providing comfort and orientation so necessary in a city (Ekop, Etim, & Obot, 2007). They explained that paths, nodes, landmarks and edges are the skeleton of urban structure, which are fleshed out to form various districts in a city. In other words, districts are structured with nodes, defined by edges and penetrated and networked by paths, and punctuated with landmarks. For efficient urban design, the above crystallizing elements must function efficiently together so as to guide the city's users to understand the opportunities the city offers. Where any of these elements is lacking or ineffectively created, not only will the legibility of the city become blurred, but its aesthetic experience is also impaired (Ekop, Etim, & Obot, 2007).

These are the concerns of urban design that deals with the public space and image of the cities. Public space including streets is at the core of properly functioning cities. It is one of the drivers of social and economic development, as it supports mobility, productivity, social interaction, recreation and public engagement, all of which improve the livability and prosperity of cities and human settlements.

According to UN-Habitat (2015), *"To address current socio-economic and environmental challenges, African countries should make room for planned city extensions, while promoting appropriate urban in-fills, densification, as well as upgrading and integration of informal areas into the urban fabric."* (p. 8)

Attempts with Foreign Master Plans

Erroneous approach has been put forward by governments and developers to showcase modernism in African cities. In attempts to copy the developed cities of other countries, a new genre of urban plan has recently emerged in Africa, usually created by international architectural and engineering companies. Nowadays an urban future akin to that of Dubai, Singapore or Shanghai is fancifully and inappropriately envisaged. The master plan for Kigali, Rwanda's capital, where 80% of the inhabitants live in informal settlements, is one of the most far-fetched examples- complete with glass-box towers, landscape lawns and freeways. It even features a replica of "the Gherkin", a skyscraper in the financial district of London (Watson & Agbola, 2013). It is also observed that the vision of the future for Africa's cities was often shaped by reference to cities in developed economies like London, Paris or New York. The master plan for Lusaka, Zambia's capital city was based on the concept of the "garden city", a quintessentially British creation. The unanticipated scale of informal settlement in contemporary Africa is typically ignored or wished away, by national governments and city authorities (Watson & Agbola, 2013). The urban fantasies (more recent urban master plans) assume either that the existing informal city can be scraped away or that new "smart" or "eco" cities or green field sites provide a better alternative to upgrading what is in situ (Watson & Agbola, 2013). These fantasy designs for African cities win

awards. Typically, they nod in the direction of the needs of shack-dwellers and purport to embrace other laudable aims. But the implementation of plans that are unsustainable in the extreme and inappropriate in terms of climate, available infrastructure- particularly power- and affordability, exposes their shortcomings (Watson & Agbola, 2013).

Indigenous Urban Values

Nigerian cities should be given local orientation and this is not achievable if the environmental professionals do not team up to study and re-organize the Nigerian cities and provide them the expected sustainable quality. Many erroneous assumptions about African urbanization have gone unchallenged for decades (Watson & Agbola, 2013). However, critical studies of Nigeria's indigenous urbanization have revealed indispensable urban values that need to be incorporated into Nigeria's urban planning to make the cities match with both the local environment and the people that occupy them. A study of Nigeria's indigenous settlements has revealed that " ... Despite the variety of forms and materials employed by various groups of Nigerian society consequent of the prevalent geographical and climatic conditions, their interaction on house-, village- and town-form is of great value in determining their inherent common values and characteristics. These values have been observed in the various elements of planning" (Osunkwo, 2011). The elements constitute sine qua non considerations in any emerging spatial planning of Nigeria's urbanization.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Urban Planning and Design Education

The history of planning education in Africa is firmly ensconced in the tradition and models of Europe, especially the United Kingdom (UK) and the United States of America (USA). The curricula of African planning schools draw largely on the colonial past and promote ideas and policies transferred from the global North. Most planning text books used in Africa are produced for students in the USA, the UK or other developed economies. The Association of African Planning Schools (AAPS) was formed to mitigate the dominance of unsuitable and irrelevant archetypes in planning education. (Watson & Agbola, 2013) A more critical view holds that planning is deeply political, its overriding purpose being to further the interests of political and economic elites. There is little enthusiasm for reform from within. Yet planning is the single most important tool that governments have at their disposal for managing rapid urban population growth and expansion. If inclusive and sustainable planning replaced outdated, controlling and punitive approaches it would underpin more equitable and economically productive urban development in Africa. Crucially, change depends on planners who are innovative problem-solvers and willing to collaborate with all parties involved in the development process, including local communities. Their actions will need to be informed by explicit and progressive values. The education of future planners requires thorough reappraisal of existing teaching methods, the introduction of new ones and remodeled curricula.(Watson & Agbola, 2013) The emphasis on a more positive and inclusive approach to urban informality in research and teaching is the most contentions of the AAPS objectives. Informality is widely regarded as synonymous with illegality, inefficiency or unproductive chaos. Planning (modern, orderly, emulating "clean" western urban models) is equally widely regarded as the antidote. Anti-informality still informs the approach of many planning schools and educators, and appears to be particularly strong in Nigeria. There, the educational accrediting body, which has a high degree of control over planning curricula, does not even specifically require informality to be addressed. Planning

educators and their students need “to get their shoes dirty”. This imperative has been overlooked in traditional planning education models – and by many practicing planners (Watson & Agbola, 2013).

Urban planners have historically been regarded by civil society and community organizations as one of the main obstacles to achieving more inclusive cities and greater utilization of “bottom-up” processes for upgrading informal settlements. Increasingly it is recognized that they are also potentially part of the solution. The local knowledge of inhabitants and technical knowledge of students are complementary. Both are needed to shape new approaches to planning in the future. (Watson & Agbola, 2013) As planning educators seek to train students for employment within the existing system, the urban and rural planning curricula of many planning schools are as outdated as planning legislation. Some African countries have no planning school. The reform and revitalization of planning education-and legislation- could contribute significantly to sustainable and more equitable urban development in sub-Saharan Africa (Watson & Agbola 2013).

The principal objective of the fledgling AAPS network was to ensure that future urban practitioners were equipped to respond effectively and meaningfully to urbanization in Africa. The gap between what planning students were taught and the urban realities they confronted after graduation needed to be reduced (Watson & Agbola, 2013). Until this is done young planners may find Nigerian urban environment not compatible with the “foreign” theories they have been equipped with in school.

Professional / Urban Design Team

In order to facilitate desirable character of urban environment, a shift of attention away from the traditional 2- dimensional urban planning to a 3- dimensional realm of development planning appears timely to ensure functional and aesthetic development of the urban forms. To do this a process must be instituted that allows the participation of city designers in important decisions concerning the future of the city. They must be present when critical design decisions are made to influence the shape of the city. This will entail creating an urban design department in the relevant ministry especially for development concept and specifications that will regulate specific spatial character of the urban environment (Ekop, Etim, & Obot, 2007).

Appropriate efforts are not made to improve the quality of Nigeria’s urban image. Unlike other countries where the urban development professionals are working together toward the environmental sustainability of their cities, Nigerian professional groups are still operating independently within the cities. These urban professional disciplines and activities include architecture, town planning, landscape architecture, surveying, property development, environmental management and land protection etc. Affirming the necessity for professional cooperation in urban design practice, Carmona, Tiesdell, Heath and Taner, (2003) stated that from the late 1960s onwards, the hard-edged, silo-based and divisive separation of professional responsibilities was seen as contributing to widespread poor-quality environments, development and places (Carmona, Tiesdell, Heath & Taner, 2003). Professional cooperation in the cities of some developed countries has not only improved city qualities, livability and tourism but also assured environmental sustainability. In the United Kingdom, the first umbrella organization was the Urban Design Group (UDG), founded in 1978. The UDG was deliberately inclusive, considering everyone acting in the built

environment an urban designer"...because the decisions they made affected the quality of urban spaces" (Linden & Billingham, 1998 in Carmona, Tiesdell, Heath & Taner, 2003). In Australia, "Urban Design Forum (UDF) began in Melbourne in 1986 as a network of enthusiastic and creative people committed to making a significant contribution to improving the functioning and quality of our cities and towns". In 2001, the Hong Kong Urban Design Alliance (HKUDA) was formed, drawing key professional institutes with a keen interest and concern for urban design and the environment. It is a grouping of architects, planners, engineers, surveyors, landscape architects and conservation bodies. In India, the Institute of Urban Designers (IUDI) was founded on the 1st June 2008 with the aim of creating livable cities (Urban Design Group, 2011).

Nigeria's environmental professionals should as a matter of urgency gather together and synergize to reorganize Nigerian cities for sustainability.

Nigerian cities can be greatly reshaped if all the stakeholders are observant, aesthetically conscious and disciplined enough to imbibe maintenance culture and a happy acceptance of environmental values for their well-being and that of the cities.

Nigeria's Urban Quality Workshops / Conferences

New urban expansion, housing and development programmes are embarked upon by governments, individuals and corporate organizations without adequate understanding of the environmental implications. There is need for interactive workshops and conferences where salient issues should be discussed to guide every contributor in the urbanization process.

Establishment of Urban Design Departments

Governments and schools should establish urban design departments to create public awareness, evoke participation, and prepare urban professionals and administrators in line with the demands of Nigeria's urbanization.

CONCLUSION

The history of Nigeria's urban centres revealed that they were not planned or designed to sustain themselves. The colonial left-over system has resulted to pseudo-urbanization. Such urbanization that occurs in unsustainable pattern can actually constrain economic growth. Sustainability of cities depends on their urban quality. The poor urban quality of Nigerian cities does not guarantee their environmental sustainability and therefore capable of forestalling the attainment of the Sustainable Development Goals. The cities need to be re-organized in line with the inherent Nigerian indigenous urban values to give the cities the much desired people oriented urban image. Nigerian cities can still achieve the Sustainable Development Goals if the prevailing urbanization is controlled and modeled with their inherent place qualities. There is need for Nigeria's environmental development professionals to synergize their inputs towards improving the quality of the urban environment. Urban design departments and education need to be promoted for public awareness and people's participation towards the desired sustainable urban development goals.

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