

# INFORMAL LAND DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIA

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*“A new process of urbanization unleashed by the masses of relatively low income migrants who have flocked into the cities since independence, and are seeking to solve their problems of accommodation and employment informally, and on their own terms...; the urban poor are dominant, and in most cases are transforming the city to meet their own needs, often in conflict with official laws and plans.”*  
(Mabogunje, 1992; cf. Stren R and White R. R, 1989).

*“Although critics dismiss the sector as ‘a chaotic jumble of unproductive activities’, and an obstacle to the development of a modern economy, the reality is that the sector has proved to be a vital source of opportunities for employment, entrepreneurship and income for the poor, and a way to alleviate poverty and strengthen social protection.”*  
(Geoffrey Nwaka 2012)

## A. INTRODUCTION

Informal land development in Nigeria dates back to the advent of urbanization, when the early rural to urban migrants were faced with the dilemma of poverty and lack of access to affordable housing in the planned and formal developments resorted to the more affordable housing in the emerging slums.

Informal developments constitute a huge and fast expanding part of the urban landscape in Nigeria. The population and socio-economic activities in these settlements have become so pervasive that they now outnumber those in the legally planned development. Regrettably, decades of neglect of this evolving menace has resulted in abysmal environmental conditions and self sustaining poverty.

The main policy challenge is to figure out how to support and regulate this sector in order to promote employment, productivity, and income for the poor, and at the same time ensure a safe, healthy and socially acceptable environment.

## A. INTRODUCTION CONT'D

### *Issues*

- ❖ Affordability gap and the 16 million units housing deficit.
- ❖ Between 50 – 60% of the urban dwellers live in these informal areas
- ❖ Curative approach vs Preventive/Regularization of informal land developments
- ❖ Majority of the labour force in the cities live in informal development areas
- ❖ Rapid Urbanization, Poverty and Informal development.

## **B. CAUSES OF INFORMAL LAND DEVT**

- ❖ Poor vision in urban city creation/expansion and administration
- ❖ Cumbersome regulations and costly charges
- ❖ Poverty, unemployment, ignorance and resort to self help
- ❖ Lack of collaboration among professionals and the MDA's
- ❖ Mediocrity and corruption
- ❖ Inability of land and housing policies to generate sufficient, accessible, affordable or adequate options for the poor.

## **C. NEGATIVE EFFECTS OF INFORMAL LAND DEVELOPMENT**

- ❖ Health and socio-economic hazards
- ❖ Diminished economic growth potential for property owners.
- ❖ Breeding ground for social miscreants
- ❖ Poor revenue collection
- ❖ A tale of two cities in one

## D. CURRENT APPROACH TO INFORMAL LAND DEVELOPMENT

- ❖ Curative/Remedial approach via demolition/relocation etc
- ❖ Relocation of consolidated settlements with attendant socio- economic and ecological fallout. E.g. Maroko (Lagos), Gwari relocation program (Abuja).
- ❖ Pretend it does not exist.

## E. RECOMMENDATION

- ❖ All stakeholders participation especially the direct beneficiaries because no cap fits all.
- ❖ Prevention and regularization through effective policy, data acquisition and management
- ❖ Multi- disciplinary and multi-agency co-operation
- ❖ Affordable housing and Labour-intensive infrastructure programs as a solution for employment, shelter and growth.
- ❖ Government funding of the regularization program as a security and socio-economic measure.
- ❖ Constant evaluation and upgrading of the legal infrastructure, policies and procedures for land management
- ❖ Deployment of efficient and dynamic GIS/LIS program for Land Titling/Registration

THANK YOU AND GOD BLESS