

# **URBANISATION OPPORTUNITIES IN THE ATTAINMENT OF THE MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS FOR NIGERIA**

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## ***Abstract***

*The benefits of urbanisation within the frame of socio-economic development of Nigeria and how it can aid the attainment of the MDG is examined in this study. This is as a result of a consistent and increasing contribution of urban centres to the gross domestic product (GDP) of many countries. Urbanisation and indeed urban development is gradually becoming an attractive instrument for economic development and poverty alleviation. Consequently, the aim of this study is to demonstrate how sustainable urbanisation in the context of Nigeria can be harnessed for the possible attainment of the MDG. The research relied on data assemblage through secondary data sources. This was obtained through the analysis of pertinent literature together with World Bank reports. Following this*

*was an in-depth desktop analysis. The result shows that Nigeria enjoys such urban landscape qualities that are opportunities in the attainment of the MDG. The need for a result oriented urban management as well as other modalities to enhance the efficiency of cities for the realization of the MDG in Nigeria were put forward.*

**Keywords: MDG; Urbanisation; Urban Development; Urban and Rural Settlements; and Urban management**

## **Introduction**

The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) with its 8 goals, 18 targets and more than forty five indicators to monitor the targets, seeks to banish poverty and the challenge of under-development. The goals which are broken into a series of inter-connected issues of poverty, education, gender equality, health, the environment and global partnerships for development are comprehensive war against poverty. As agreed by the international community to be achieved by year 2015, it is a time-bound reaction to the growing global poverty and associated problems; (widening gap between the poor and the rich, HIV/Aids crisis, social marginalisation, environmental degradation, etc). The MDGs specifically centres on poverty alleviation, democracy, peace, human rights, education and health among other challenges. It is actually a minimum benchmark rather than the ultimate development goals to guide the global community.

Given the prevailing circumstance of ailing economies or economic meltdown; this has affected different fabric of the society; government and individual spending alike. The impact of the current crisis is expected to grow deeper in sub-Sahara African countries including Nigeria. This is because of the export oriented nature of the economies. One area likely to be worst hit is the attainment of the Millennium Development Goals, which was declared with high expectation that developed countries, would provide the needed support to developing economies as encapsulated in MDG goal number 8. "Develop a global partnership; – in trade, national and global poverty reduction, development assistance to needy nations, in medicine and health delivery, in technological development". By the end of 2009, the impact of the melting economy had already taken toll on many African countries; (see ECA, AUC and AfDB 2009). Tables 1 and 2, presents a summary of Nigeria's economic outlook on two fronts.

**Table 1: The Consumer Price Index and Inflation Rates from 2008 to 2009**

			Change in CPI (Feb.2009-Nov.2008)	%change in CPI (Nov.2008=100)
Nigeria	CPI	All items	4.0	2.1
		Food	4.6	2.4

Source: ECA, AUC and AfDB, MDG Report, 2009

**Table 2: Current account balance of Nigeria vis-a viz Oil and Non-oil Exporting countries of Africa**

	2006	2007	2008	2009
Nigeria	8.8	3.5	2.0	-10.8
Oil exporting countries in Africa	13.1	8.8	10.5	-4.2
Oil importing countries in Africa	-4.1	-5.4	-7.0	-6.7

Source: African Economic outlook 2008/2009, African Development Bank

In Nigeria, the consumer price index and inflation rates from 2008 to 2009 show significant changes that are unfavourable (Table1). Similarly the current account balance as a percentage of GDP for Nigeria also shrunk, recording negative change by 2009, (see Table 2). The picture of the synopsis on Tables 1 and 2 about Nigeria occurs across Africa with varying strength. Indeed, the present worldwide financial and economic calamity has led to reduction in the global demand for Africa's export leading to a fall in commodity prices. Consequently, foreign exchange revenues have declined just as corporate tax revenue did, and inflation on the other hand is on the rise (ECA, AUC and AfDB, MDG Report, 2009). This development has obviously left African countries poorer with

monumental implications on the MDGs.

This is the background setting of this research as it explores an alternative survival strategy within the frame of urbanisation. This study contends that a nexus exist between urbanisation and the attainment of the MDGs within the space economy of Nigeria. This is from the point of view that a melting economy presages economic Waterloo, whereas well managed urbanisation is an instrument for economic growth and poverty alleviation. It is hoped that findings from researches like this are capable of providing the needed input for policy review and programmes of Government at every level.

## **But, why urbanisation**

Urbanisation; a process of outward growth and expansion of settlements, is a social, economic and demographic agglomeration of people and their activities. The agglomeration of activities further produces multipliers with increasing industrialisation. Technically, it refers to an increase in the proportion of national or regional population living in cities. Urbanisation constitutes an important component of socio-economic development at both regional and global level. Globally, urbanisation is increasingly becoming the norm, because cities are regarded as the most efficient agents of production, (Adelman and Morris 1971). They have become nerve centres of the local, regional and global economy.

Urbanisation as a building block of posterity holds the ace for determining the quality of life of the future generation (Alaci, 2010). This is the case for sustainable urbanisation which is devoid of such challenges that has actually turned the Nigerian urban landscape to a national blight. Nigeria's urban landscape is characterised with degraded environment, squalid and inadequate housing condition, with well over 4 million housing backlog (ECA and UN-Habitat 2003), failing public services e.g., mounting and uncollected refuse; unreliable water supply; epileptic power supply; poor roads, etc. In fact, adequate benefits of urbanisation may not accrue in Nigeria due to the challenges just enumerated. The poor condition of urban centres has

perceptibly snowballed into a state of insecurity and the urbanisation of poverty. Nigerian cities rather than being a catalyst to the economy and thus, the welfare of its people, have become parasitic, failing in their traditional role as an escape route from poverty associated with the rural areas. The poor state of the Nigerian urban centres notwithstanding, nationally urban growth has continued unabated. The annual urban growth of 3.47 per cent against 0.61 per cent growth rate of the rural areas in Nigeria, if sustained would by 2020 make Nigeria's urbanisation level to be 56.8% (see Table 3). The same year Lagos would have become the third largest city in the world. Unfortunately, cities competitiveness is not about population size but about functionality which is related to settlement serviceability and livability. The Un-Habitat, noted that "Well managed urban growth and development can contribute not just to economic advancement but also to reduce poverty and improved quality of life for all citizens, including the poor" (Un Habitat 2002:6). Functional urban system has unique initiative of economic growth and development; which is needed to improve living standards of the population. This is the background that justifies new thoughts, which seek to harness urbanisation for the attainment of the MDGs.

Therefore, the following specific objectives are put forward as the core of this study: They are to;

- examine trend in settlement growth in Nigeria,

- enumerate the benefits of urbanisation; and
- highlight the implications of Urbanisation to the attainment of the MDGs in Nigeria.

## Methodology

Data for this study relied heavily on secondary sources. The procedure used to achieve the objectives includes analysis of literature and reports pertinent to urbanisation. Comparative trend analysis in urban and rural settlement growth for a period of fifty (50) years (1950-2000) was carried out. Furthermore, another fifty (50) years (2000-2050) trend projection was also carried out. This provided a clear insight into the direction of growth and possible implications. Theoretical works were also reviewed. This was to provide an understanding of conceptual dynamism of urbanisation. Data was also sourced from statutory sources like World Bank statistics and African Development Bank publications. Data were presented using simple tables and graph. The presentation informed the qualitative analysis carried out. The experience from other countries with similar urban

framework was also analysed and appraised. This was with particular reference to the benefits of urbanisation. Arising from the major findings, policy oriented recommendations were put forward.

### **Analysis of settlements growth in Nigeria: Rural and Urban juxtaposed**

Human settlement growth and the attendant anthropogenic activities are largely due to population dynamics. The relationship that exists between urban and rural settlements is such that an increase in one leads to a corresponding decrease in the other. This type of relationship often assumes a competitive dimension when linkages are poor (Alaci 2008). The trend in urban growth in Nigeria like in many other developing economies is that of steady increase as shown on Table1. Urbanisation or the proportion of Nigerians residing in urban areas was a low 10 per cent in 1950, this figure has grown steadily to a state where almost half of the Nigerian population currently resides in urban areas. See Table 1.

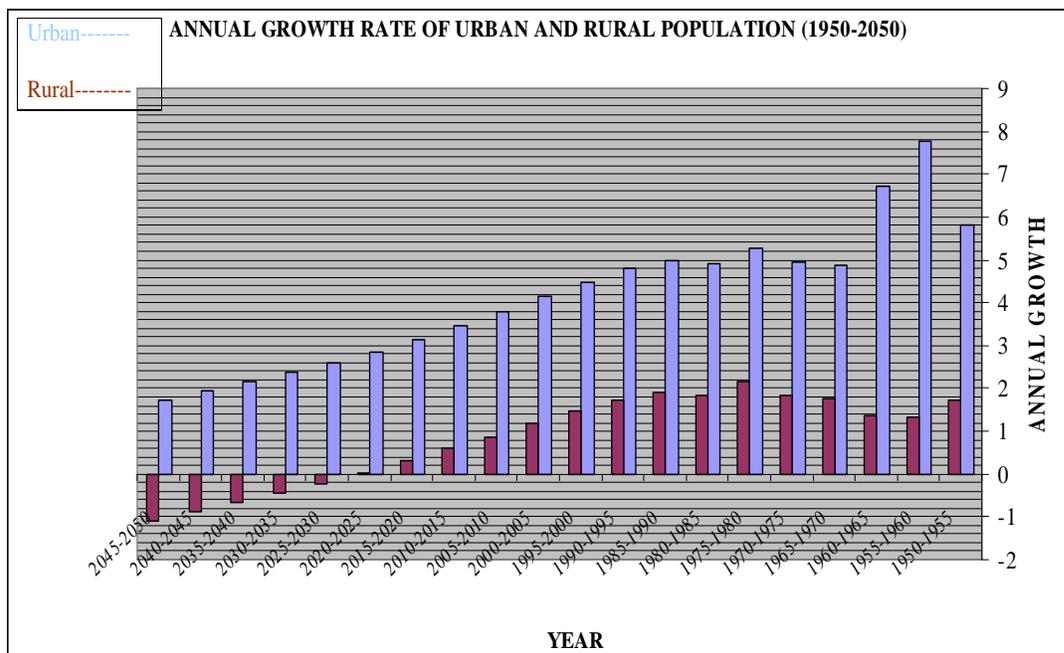
**Table 3: Actual and Possible Trend Direction in Urbanisation in Nigeria (1950-2050)**

Year	Total Population	Year	Percentage urban	Percentage rural	Year	Urban annual growth rate	Rural annual growth rate
1950	33 960	1950	10.2	89.8	1950-1955	5.81	1.71
1955	37 850	1955	12.3	87.7	1955-1960	7.78	1.34
1960	42 356	1960	16.2	83.8	1960-1965	6.71	1.37
1965	47 611	1965	20.1	79.9	1965-1970	4.86	1.77
1970	53 764	1970	22.7	77.3	1970-1975	4.93	1.83
1975	61 163	1975	25.5	74.5	1975-1980	5.26	2.16
1980	71 065	1980	28.6	71.4	1980-1985	4.92	1.83
1985	81 598	1985	31.8	68.2	1985-1990	4.98	1.89
1990	94 454	1990	35.3	64.7	1990-1995	4.80	1.73
1995	109 010	1995	38.9	61.1	1995-2000	4.49	1.47
2000	124 773	2000	42.5	57.5	2000-2005	4.15	1.18
2005	141 356	2005	46.2	53.8	2005-2010	3.78	0.87
2010	158 313	2010	49.8	50.2	2010-2015	3.47	0.61
2015	175 715	2015	53.4	46.6	2015-2020	3.15	0.33
2020	193 099	2020	56.8	43.2	2020-2025	2.86	0.04
2025	210 129	2025	60.3	39.7	2025-2030	2.60	-0.21
2030	226 855	2030	63.6	36.4	2030-2035	2.38	-0.44
2035	243 274	2035	66.8	33.2	2035-2040	2.16	-0.65
2040	259 233	2040	69.8	30.2	2040-2045	1.95	-0.87
2045	274 462	2045	72.7	27.3	2045-2050	1.74	-1.08
		2050	75.4	24.6			

**Source:** Culled from The Population Division of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat, *World Population Prospects: The 2006 Revision and World Urbanisation Prospects: The 2007 Revision*, <http://esa.un.org/unup>, accessed on Wednesday, July 29, 2009; 7:45:29 AM

The concomitant implication of the progress made by urbanisation had meant gradual demise of the rural areas. Urbanisation grew at about 5.81 per cent between 1950 -1955, by 1960 at independence; urbanisation annual growth rate rose, hitting 7.78 per cent, the highest ever. This is not surprising as independence may have actually opened up more job opportunities owing to the exit of the colonialist and the emergence of a new political class, who may have moved to

the administrative centres with a bundle of extended family member. The advance of urbanisation continues with some slowing down, observed from 1965 -1975, thereafter, the increasing growth resumed. By 1990, a sort of stability seemed to have set in with decreasing annual growth. To adequately conceptualise the pattern of settlement dichotomy in Nigeria, the inverse relationship between urban and rural growth is presented on Figure1.



Source: Extracted from Table: 1

Figure 1, Illustrates Urban and Rural growth and the emerging inverse relationship. It shows clearly the direction of advancement by the two human settlements divide; urban and rural. From a slow but steady build up, the size of the urban population has

progressed well beyond the rural. As evident, the marginal growth of the rural areas since 2005 has remained insignificant. This marginal growth in rural population would reach a climax by 2025, when actual increase would have ceased, cascading into a state of

negative marginal difference. The current trend clearly shows that urbanisation is accelerating and obviously unstoppable, and given the trend, the proportion of Nigerians living in urban areas by 2015 (The Millennium Development Goals Year) would be over 53 per cent, the year when the global urban population is expected to also be about 52%. This proportion would shoot up in Nigeria to 56.8 per cent by the year 2020 (Nigeria's target year of joining the top 20 economies and by which time the rural population would have diminished to less than 44 per cent. The trend depicts an obvious scenario; that urbanisation in Nigeria like in most other parts of the world is an inevitable phenomena. However, given the benefits of urbanisation as enumerated earlier, the Nigeria's urban geography which is un-paralleled anywhere in Africa should be an exciting development opportunity. This is because the pattern of urbanisation exemplified by the network of cities appears fairly well distributed unlike in other countries in Africa. Nigeria does not suffer from the problem of a single large, primate city structure where all development is concentrated, (Oluwemimo 2007); as obtains in Ethiopia, Kenya and Uganda, for instance, and which are textbook model of primate city structure. Addis Ababa the capital of Ethiopia is more than 6 times larger than the second largest city (Dire Dawa) in the Country. Similar relationships exist between Nairobi the largest city in Kenya and Mombasa the second largest city.

### **Benefits of Urbanisation for MDGs**

The size and spatial distribution of urban centres in a country has implication for both regional and national development planning. More importantly, however is the level of serviceability and livability inherent in the urban system, which is often a measure of urban service accessibility and modernisation potentials. Urbanisation presents the best opportunity for exploiting economies of scale. The benefits of urbanisation are monumental making the efficient management of urban areas fundamental and imperative. Because urban centres are characterised with large population size, they provide the needed threshold support in their location.

Cities by and large, generate more economic growth than their rural counterparts. Efficient and effectively managed urban areas are a pre-requisite for harnessing the actual and potential benefits of urbanisation which are critical to poverty alleviation and employment generation. The population threshold advantage favours infrastructural provision and development. Investment opportunities and prospects of urban areas are expected to grow concomitantly with the development of infrastructure and communication.

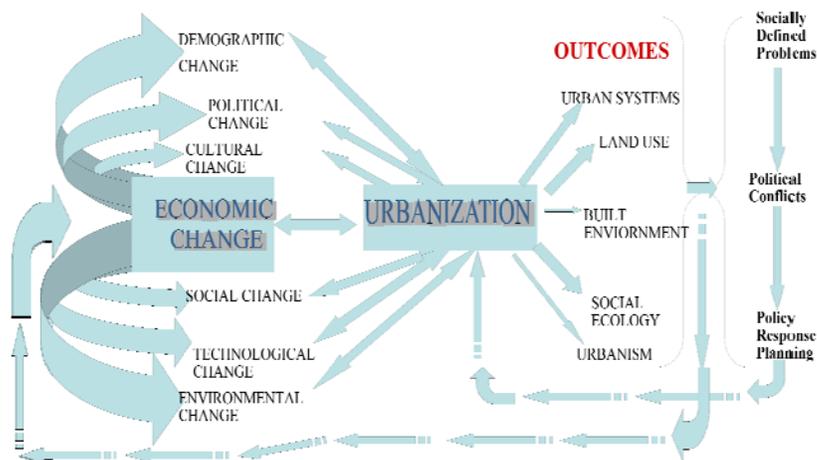
The economic activities of urban areas account for between 50 to 80% of GDP. For example, Addis Ababa accounts for 1/5 of the GDP of Ethiopia (Cour 2003 in Kessides, 2006), but accommodates less than 10 per cent of the national population, similarly, Mexico City though accounts for 20.8% of Mexico's total population,

contributes some 34.3% of GDP (Oberai, 1993). The multiplier effects of urbanisation would include, but not limited to encouraging businesses to expand, setting-up factories and offices, diversified and specialised production and services; leading to increased employment as more firms are establishing new branches, thus strengthening and continuing the job creation circle needed for economic growth. Sustained growth would lead to quality living standards, because more employment equals more money-making opportunities to the labour forces and ability to afford better quality goods and services. Service industries like tourism and hospitality are leading employers of labour and are urban oriented (Alaci 2007). Urban areas are engine of national, regional and local economic development and wealth because they provide: job opportunities; valuable concentration of human; technical and financial resources; access to capital markets; knowledge and expertise; research ideas and innovation; concentrated and accessible markets; efficient infrastructure.

Urban centres are cynosure in attracting investment and harnessing human and technical resources to increase productivity and competitiveness. Most cities meet 24 hour demands for efficiency, productivity and information for global trade, commerce and tourism. Economic leadership is mostly generated in large cities of industrialised countries. Urban areas also provide choices in educational options and create the environment for healthy competition among educational institutions generating quality. Opportunities such as those of specialised training in trades and skills and linking education with on-the-job training are endowed in urban areas.

The critical mass necessary to support universities and other institutions of higher education are urban based. New global information and communications-intensive economy increases the demand for literate and skilled urban workers and informed citizens as media and high technological centres, cities provide the latest information and telecommunications services. Major changes in social, ethnic and cultural make-up of cities contributes to social capital and cultural diversity although also can create social exclusion and intolerance. The convergence of challenges and opportunities in a typical urban system are presented on Figure 2.

**Figure 2: Urbanization: Processes and Outcomes**



*Source: Knox (1994)*

The enormous benefits explored earlier suits the attainment of the MDGs. This is because all the 8 goals of the MDGs require infrastructure intervention and urbanisation offers the best opportunity for economies of scale thus reducing the unit cost of an MDG activity. The population threshold is a strong plus for the MDGs, since returns on some of the provisions can be sure of. The agglomeration of population which is a sort of regional densification does not only favour infrastructural provision, it promotes robust economic activity. Details of these reasons have been enumerated earlier. The next section, therefore, examines the place of urbanisation in the development of Nigeria.

### **Urbanisation Implications for Nigeria: Learning from best practices**

Urbanisation in Nigeria predates colonial administration. This is evident from major urban centres like Kano, Zaria, Kastina, Sokoto, Bida in the North and Oyo, Abeokuta, Benin, Ogbomoso, Ile Ife and Ibadan in the west that were formidable urban centres before the advent of colonialism. This was consequent upon the development of traditional political systems which enhanced stability and peace and hence trade flourished. This phenomenon continued into the colonial era and was further reinforced by colonial factors of monetised economy, transport route construction and establishment of administrative centres. Post-independence urbanisation followed almost the same trend as pre-colonial.

In this instance, the siting of administrative centres through states creation and provision of urban infrastructure enhanced urbanisation. Thus administrative centres and the concomitant infrastructure provision are dominant factors responsible for the pattern of urbanisation in Nigeria.

This momentum was further, lubricated by an enabling factor "The Oil Wealth". Abiodun (1985) has noted that the emergence of Nigeria as an important crude oil exporter and the oil boom from 1973 to 1979 generated intense social and economic activities in large urban centres in Nigeria. Therefore, the growth in our urban centres can be attributed to a large extent on the oil boom which gave room for roads to be constructed, facilitated states creation, more tertiary institution built and better job placement. Consequently, Nigeria's urban landscape demonstrates some elements of regional balance, since state capitals are spread across 36 locations for example. The next segment draws on some best practice in harnessing urbanisation for national development.

The city of Addis Ababa is taken as one of the best practice examples; this is the capital of Ethiopia and a textbook example of primate city. The city's population of 3.5 million is less than 10% of the national population (over 80 million) but accounts for 1/5 of the national GDP. The population of Addis Ababa is by far less than the size of many cities in Nigeria, but Addis Ababa is one the two chartered cities of Ethiopia. As a chartered city, it exerts

equal power as a regional state. Therefore issues like infrastructural provision and services are within her jurisdiction. The city government of Addis Ababa has made some good inroad in the creation of jobs that is worth learning from.

The collection of solid waste is handled using micro and small scale enterprises. The process is handled at two levels, i.e., licensed private collectors and state/government interventions. It is an integrated approach where government provides regulations, monitoring and limited logistics, while the actual collection from households is by the private partners (micro and small scale enterprise). As Alaci, and Ezeaku, (2008) report, the sector alone generated over 2650 employment from the two sub cities that was studied (Addis Ababa is divided into 9 sub-cities). The government provided the needed support for the development of micro-small enterprises (MSE) for food processing, textile and garment, metal and woodworks, construction, municipal services through provision of land, working spaces and technical support benefiting 40,000 small operators. Established one stop service centres for easy business registration, licences, credit, land (working spaces and facilities), market information, business counselling, and technological support; Strengthened weekend local markets through erection of 15,000 teletafi suq. Created car parking lots operated by small businesses giving job opportunities to 6,000 youths.

Accordingly, these interventions as enumerated created 65,000 new jobs in 2004 and 110,000 new jobs in 2005, (50% benefiting women and 75% benefiting youths) (City Government of Addis Ababa) In addition, the government launched micro-financial institution providing credit to small businesses at reasonable rates and conditions; 50,000 operators benefited in 2004 and 2005 (½ were women). Promoted large-scale investment through the creation of more convenient service for registration, licensing, business information and counselling, access to land, etc. This helped provide licenses to 1,500 large and medium scale firms with potential employment opportunities for 155,000 people (City Government of Addis Ababa).

Given that Ethiopia is only 16% urban with a primate city structure, Nigeria's urban landscape provides wider scope of opportunities. It, therefore, means that beyond oil, Nigeria can generate employment for her teeming youth by exploiting the innate potentials of the urban system, and this can be done by adopting innovative urban management strategies in the management of towns and cities. Each of the state capital is a potential job giver and should be so harnessed.

## **Recommendations and Concluding Remark**

The example of Addis Ababa can be replicated for attaining the MDGs in Nigeria. In this work, the advantages

of urbanisation have been fully discussed. The imperative for harnessing urbanisation benefits in Nigeria have also been addressed. Some of the recommendations to form input for policy makers include:

- A distinct urban management component within the existing Nigeria's political setup is urgently needed. This will first hasten the realization of urbanisation issues.
- Urban infrastructure should use economically efficient provision procedures like the use of Build Operate and Transfer (BOT) and Public Private Partnership (PPP). Urban areas offer the best platform for the realization of such.
- On the long run and to accommodate rural areas, settle cluster should be carried out. This is to enable shared infrastructure and enhance access, especially in dispersed rural areas.
- The need to carry out an aggressive urban infrastructural provision in Nigeria. This is key to attaining the MDGs. Once we can raise infrastructure access such that our urban centres become serviceable and liveable, several of the MDGs would have been met. In fact, it is on the infrastructure front that the war of MDGs would be won or lost and urbanisation holds the ace in infrastructure access.

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