

# Exploring Political Will as a Veritable Tool for Localizing and Implementing the New Urban Agenda in Developing Countries: Lesson from Nigeria

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**Abstract**— The rapid transformation and transition of cities of developing countries in the 21st Century is becoming a difficult proposition and a clog in the wheel of achieving sustainable development. The New Urban Agenda (NUA) is a replacement of a number of earlier agreements and declarations which had reached their lifespan around the same time, often referred to as the post 2015 agenda, was significantly aimed at achieving global urban sustainable development framework in the next few decades. Since the formal adoption of the New Urban Agenda at Quito's Conference, many governments and municipalities around the world have started commencing the process of translating the principles of the New Urban Agenda into their policies, plans and actions. The paper explores 'political will and the structure of governance' in Nigeria as a tool for achieving, delivering, fostering, localizing and implementing the New Urban Agenda that will provide all citizens with an opportunity to benefit from economic growth, inclusiveness and the right to live in harmonious, safe and resilient environment. The paper argues that the NUA is not just like any other agenda, which having being signed and debated in seminars and workshops are eventually ended up not seeing the light of the day. Instead, the paper observes that turning policies and strategies into actions through political will of the government in the 21st Century will facilitate achievement of sustainable development outcomes. The paper therefore, canvasses for the full implementation of the New Urban Agenda by institutionalizing its key elements into strategic policy frameworks for inclusive and sustainable growth among the levels of governments in Nigeria.

**Index Terms**— Cities, Political Will, Sustainability, Urban Agenda.

## I. INTRODUCTION

The earth is becoming an urban planet comprising of a network of cities and urban agglomerations of different sizes, nature and functions that need to be well managed and guided by plans and strong institutions operating within an enabling and organizational environment. The rapid evolving trend and transition of emerging cities in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century is becoming a difficult proposition and a clog in achieving sustainable development. The phenomenon of urbanization is increasingly being acknowledged as one of the defining issues of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. According to Awumbila (6), more than half of the world population now lives in towns and

cities, and that figure is projected to rise to 75 per cent by 2050, with most of this urban growth concentrated in Africa and Asia. United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (35) describes Africa, along with Asia as the epicenter of global urbanization. The quest for civilization, modernization, globalization and urban lifestyles are seen as the root cause of many sustainable challenges, and at the same time, has a profound implication for achieving the continental and global targets for inclusive growth and transformation which includes Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development.

However, thinking the future of cities means facing the challenges of those unsustainable practices and the related socio-economic and environmental issues including, inequality, education, health, poverty, unemployment, housing, infrastructure, food security, exclusion, biodiversity loss, degradation, desertification, climate change and a host of others. Development experts now observe that sustainable economic growth and development is unachievable without sustainable urbanization. Sustainable urbanization has been described by the UN-Habitat as a dynamic, multi-dimensional process involving environmental as well as social, economic and political sustainability. The works of UNECA(35) asserts that urbanization could be a powerful asset for industrialization provided it is harnessed through a strategic cross-sectoral policy framework anchored in national development. Essentially, urbanization helps in the creation of diversified and dynamic economies, which increase national productivity as well as creating employment and income generating opportunities. Hence, effective urban development and management can become assets that are capable of propelling socio-economic development, especially in the developing countries where urbanization is fastest. Just as Onibokun (23) pointed out that cities will continue to grow while the challenges will continue to become more complex as development continues to take place in the different sphere of the world. Therefore, the action we take now will determine whether or not the current paths of development will be sustainable for the future, or will merely produce deleterious repercussions that are capable of destroying humanity.

Inversely, when rapidly emerging cities of contemporary world are not properly and effectively managed can produce monsters (creations that are capable of destroying humanity). The problems and challenges created by the rapid urbanization as being witnessed today in the rapidly expanding cities of the Third world in the 21<sup>st</sup> century is an

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evidence of unsustainable development which has remained a source of concern to planners, urban analysts, policy makers and heads of governments. While observing African urbanization issues, Mabogunje notes that the trend reflects the backwash effects of an inappropriate sets of economics policies of most countries in the continent. For instance, while beaming their search lights on the housing policy of Nigeria, Agbola and Odunola (3) note that Nigeria has experimented and implemented myriads of policies, programmes and strategies to ensure that every Nigerian has access to safe, affordable and decent accommodation, but all have ended in monumental failure because of large proportion of people that are still wallowing in shackles of overcrowding and homelessness. Gretchen (14) observes that the biggest challenge for housing affordability is the need for political will. In other words, inconsistencies in policy implementation are largely attributed to lack of political will of the decision makers.

In the same vein, Dialoke, Ukah and Maduagwuna (10) affirmed that, Nigeria over the years has initiated well articulated developmental, economic, and social policies, intended to launch the nation on the pathway of meaningful development, but all failed to yield any result due to either poor implementation or non-implementation. Similarly, Oduwaye (20) laments at the frightening situation of African urbanization that has little or no resource to cope with unsustainable urbanization practices. All this suggests that management strategies and development frameworks of African countries, especially Nigeria, have not adequately explored the inherent potentials of urbanization as assets that can deliver sustainable development outcomes to cities' citizens.

However, in order to make cities and urban systems productive and tapping into urban advantages for equality, integrity, trust, affordability, accessibility, social cohesion, a sense of belonging and resilient in building a long-term economic progress and social and environmental sustainability; cities must develop urban strategies that are people-centric and provide a platform that help them thrive rather than just survive. This understanding propagates and promotes sustainable urban development agreements and declarations launched regularly to guide cities in addressing the challenges and opportunities and the mega trends requiring transformation (World Economic Forum, (39). Such agreements as Habitat I and II, the Millennium Development Goals, Rio+20, and the Hyogo Framework for Action have unquestionably led to significant transformation. Sadly, according to UN-Habitat World Cities Reports, 2016, the implementation and monitoring of these agreements have been uneven across regions and holistic development has not been achieved.

Consequently, in recognition of the new challenges facing cities and the need to reinvigorate the global commitment to sustainable development led to the adoption of a new, better and pragmatic sustainable urban management strategy, called "A New Urban Agenda" for the purpose of advancing innovative solutions that can foster a culture of creativity in the ways cities and human settlement operate. The new urban agenda sets a new global standard for sustainable

development which will help humanity to rethink how we plan, manage and live in cities. Thus, it is specifically imperative for developing countries like Nigeria with fastest urbanization growth in the world to address the challenges and opportunities of urbanization for the purpose of promoting a sustainable, spatially integrated and orderly development of urban settlements with adequate infrastructure and housing development, efficient service delivery, working and livable environment that support socio-economic development of the country. Against this background, this paper explores political will as an impetus for adopting, localizing and implementing the NUA in Nigerian policy direction.

### II. NIGERIA URBAN DEVELOPMENT: A HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

The phenomenon of urban growth is a global one. In fact, Africa and Asia have been considered as major recipients of this growth. Although in absolute terms, Asian cities still remain the world's fastest growing, the global share of African urban dwellers is projected to rise from 11.3 per cent in 2010 to a 20.2 per cent by 2050, with almost two-thirds of its population growth expected to occur in urban areas (29). According to Aliyu and Amadu (4), Nigeria is one of the three countries, after India and China that are jointly expected to account for 37% of the projected growth of the world population between 2014 and 2050.

Nigeria has not only experienced one of the fastest rates of urbanization in the world, at the same time, its experience has also been unique in scale, in pervasiveness and in historical antecedents. This has resulted in a very dense network of urban centres unequalled anywhere in Africa. Unlike other countries in Africa, Nigeria does not suffer from the problem of a single, large, primate city where all development is concentrated; there are several large cities of importance spread across the country, a number of which are larger than most national capitals in Africa (6).

Urban Summit in 2016 observes that Nigerian urbanization predates the Colonial administration. Origin of urban centres in Nigeria can be traced to the development that occurred at heartlands of traditional kingdoms and empires between C4<sup>th</sup> and C5<sup>th</sup> BC. Examples include Kanem Bornu Empire, Sokoto Caliphate and Oyo Empire. Drivers of this kind of urban development can basically be adduced to the trans-Sahara trading activities between the savanna in the south and the Magrebs in the north e.g. Ibadan, Iseyin, Ilorin and Kotonkarfi; quest for security as a result of incessant inter-tribal wars then, which posed significant threats to habitation. However, another factor of pre-colonial urbanization was related to cultural, traditional and religious considerations which influenced settlement pattern. More so, the developments of rail systems that connect south to north helped in opening up and create urban status to some rural settlements. Examples of such settlements include Kaduna, Jos, Enugu, Minna, Zaria and Oshogbo. In addition, there was astronomical growth and development of settlements that served as colonial administrative headquarters. These settlements grew faster than others. Lagos, Kano, Kaduna and Enugu were seats of colonial administrations.

Post independence urban growth experience in Nigeria is most spectacular and intriguing! Growth factors include administrative decentralization policy of states creation from 4 regions at independence in 1960 to 12, 19, 21, and 36 States with their respective state capitals in 1970, 1976, 1992 and 1996 respectively; creation of Local Governments from 301 in 1976 to the present 774 (28), leading to development of Local Government Headquarters as activity centres with administrative responsibilities. However, the boom experienced in the petroleum sector in the seventies and development of propulsive industries has propelled people jettisoning agriculture and running to cities for white collar jobs. Ever since, Nigeria as a nation, has been witnessing an accelerated shift of her population from the rural to urban areas (20). The pattern, trend and characteristics of urbanization in Nigeria have been alarming. In fact, the major drivers of these rapidly expanding contemporary cities in Nigeria are linked with rural-urban population, rural transformation and increasing robust economic growth.

Over the last few decades, Nigeria urban population has been growing close to about 5.8% per annum (1) and by projection, more than 60% of Nigerians will live in urban areas by 2025. Today, there are more than 840 urban centres, and well over 10 cities with populations of over a million. Lagos State, one of 36 States is larger than more than 32 African countries and whose population was projected to rise to 23million by year 2015 (19). In another decade, four additional cities in Nigeria will qualify as mega-cities. The above conditions have posed a lot of sustainable challenges for Nigerian urban centres. Rapid rate of urbanization in Nigeria, according to Nnaemeka (19) has engendered several problems and challenges. According to FGN (11), Nigeria towns are growing without adequate planning. Millions of urban dwellers live in sub-standard and sub-human environment, mainly in slums and shanty settlements. Alkali (5) notes that the explosive rates of growth have not only progressively complicated and exacerbated inter-related problems of human settlements and the environment, but have also greatly accelerated poverty. According to same author, about 70million Nigerians live in poverty.

The above mentioned problems and challenges in most cases reflect situations in other parts of the world as they remain clogs in the wheel of progress of developing countries' efforts towards achieving sustainable development. The reason for this is contained in the works of Celik, et al (7) and Gould, (13) where the authors note that many opportunities and potentials of urbanization in developing countries especially Nigeria are jeopardized akin to policy inconsistency, resource inadequacy or rather misuse of available resources, resulting in deficient basic infrastructure, insufficient service delivery and planning cum implementation.

### III. ADOPTION OF GLOBAL AGENDAS IN NIGERIA: ISSUES AND CHALLENGES

Nigerian cities like other rapidly expanding cities of the world are facing uncertain future in this era of unprecedented urbanization. The burgeoning urbanization challenges such as rising unemployment and poverty, overcrowding and

housing shortages, decay or dearth of infrastructure, poor sanitation and waste management, escalating crime rate, social conflicts, and a host others, need serious and immediate attention. The scenarios pose great sustainable development challenges for Nigeria's urban centres. However, the explosive rates of growth have not only progressively complicated and exacerbated inter-related problems of human settlements and the environment, but have also greatly accelerated poverty. At the dawn of 21<sup>st</sup> Century, close to 70 Millions Nigerians live in poverty (5).

In September 2000, building upon a decade of major United Nations Conference and summits, world leaders came together at the United Nations Headquarters in New York to adopt the United Nations Millennium Declaration. The Declaration committed nations to a new global partnership to reduce extreme poverty, and set out a series of eight time-bound targets - with a deadline of 2015 - known as the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). According to the UNDP Report the 15-year effort has produced the most successful anti-poverty movement in history. Meanwhile, as the MDGs era comes to a conclusion with the end of the year, 2016 ushered in the official launch of the bold and transformative 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development adopted by the world leaders. The new Agenda (Sustainable Development Goals), calls on countries including Nigeria (being a signatory to that declaration) to begin efforts to achieve 17 SDGs by 2030.

Furtherance to this, in 2001, National Urban Policy (revised) was established as a dynamic policy aimed at fostering sustainable economic growth, promote effective urban and regional development and ensure improved standard of living and well being for all Nigerians (5). Meanwhile, implementing the provision of this policy has led to the establishment of Ministry of Housing and Urban Development. Thus, to achieve sustainability in housing provision for instance, National Housing Policy was formulated. In the area of poverty eradication and rural areas' development, a lot of programmes were initiated such as National Directorate of Employment (NDE), Directorate of Food, Roads and Rural Infrastructure (DFRRI) and a host of others. The Sustainable City Programme (SCP) was launched in the early 1990s by UNCHS (UN-Habitat) as a strategy for building capacities in urban planning and management. According to Onibokun (23) the SCP is anchored on the planning concept of Environmental Planning and management which is designed to provide useful learning experience for sustainable growth and development of other cities in Nigeria, using Ibadan as demonstration project from the twelve cities chosen across the globe; the Environmental Planning and Management (EPM), an urban management approach that recognizes the dynamic nature of humans and the living environment and thus provides for flexibility in policy initiation and execution (38). The Urban Universal Services was given birth to by the UNICEF for upgrading, improving and expanding health and educational services in targeted poor communities of the urban areas.

However, achieving sustainable delivery outcomes of these programmes and strategies is central to good governance. Okonkwo and Omole (22) note that Good Urban Governance

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is another fundamental strategy that Nigeria has adopted in the time past to develop and manage the emerging urban centres. Good Urban Governance in Nigeria is a collaborative strategy with UN-HABITAT which was launched on April 10 2001 with the main focus on eradication of corruption, promotion of transparency, accountability and social equity in the business of government. Nigerian Government realizes that good governance is fundamental to national development and that sustainable development cannot thrive on its own without sustainable peace and democracy. This explains why strong emphasis is placed on ensuring a stable political environment, sustenance of democratic principles and government, and achievement of improved living conditions for the people.

Furthermore, several anti-corruption measures have been put in place. The enactment of Anti-Corruption Act, the Corrupt Practices and other Related Offences Commission, the Code of Conduct Bureau and Public Complaints Commission, and the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) indicate Government's commitment in doing away with corruption. The Nigerian legislature has also taken bold steps to review various laws, decrees and statutes governing and regulating the development and management of human settlements through amending or repealing Laws and decrees that inhibit sustainable development (5).

According to the Good Urban Government Assessment of Nigeria (UNDP, UN HABITAT (29) "Many Nigerian cities do not have up-to-date city development strategies due to the lack of capacity and resources to plan, ineffective development control, and inadequate institutional as well as legal frameworks for promoting good urban governance. These challenges have been complicated by Nigeria's Federal system of government that is based on the administrative boundaries of Local, State and Federal Governments, with no recognition for municipal administrations.

### IV. THE NEW URBAN AGENDA

Since the first United Nations Conference on Human Settlements in Vancouver, in 1976 and that of Habitat II of Istanbul, 1996, some undeniable transformative changes were recorded in the life of millions of urban residents, particularly the slum dwellers and others taken out of poverty. Despite these dramatic improvements, the Habitat III Zero draft document of 2016 observes that, we are still very far from

understanding and capitalizing on harnessing and exploring urbanization potentials for sustainable development. In any case, if after over four decades of global initiatives and commitments, there are still rising prevalence of informal settlements, rising poverty; vast deficit in the supply of safe, sufficient water and good-quality sanitation for urban residents; then, as Satterthaite (26) notes, obviously, a lot has not been accomplished and the New Urban Agenda cannot be better than now. According to the author, "although the UN-Habitat's vision document on the New Urban Agenda and Habitat III contains very little that is new- much of what it says was also said at the Habitat I or II; still, hard thought about the delivery failures of the past decades is needed for a serious attempt at addressing the urban agenda".

The New Urban Agenda (NUA), otherwise referred to as Habitat III is a renewed global commitment to achieve sustainable urbanization (39). NUA is set to provide a platform that will facilitate the achievement of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and other global initiatives and commitments. The New Urban Agenda is a UN development framework that was adopted in Quito, Ecuador on October 2016, by all United Nations countries to address the mounting challenges facing 21<sup>st</sup> Century cities. Under the NUA, the UN Countries have committed to undertake efforts at making cities the drivers of sustainable future (8). In the same vein, UN (32) asserts that recognition of global urbanization and crucial roles of cities will achieve Sustainable Development Goals. In his forward address, Joan Clos, the Executive-Director, UN-Habitat and the Secretary- General of the Habitat III remarks that NUA is an ambitious agenda which aims at paving the way towards making cities and human settlements more inclusive and ensuring that everyone can benefit from urbanization (39). However, based on the Adopted Draft of the NUA, the Agenda embodies three key guiding principles:

- Leave no one behind, by ending poverty in all its forms and dimensions, including eradication of extreme poverty
- Ensure sustainable and inclusive urban economies and opportunity for all
- Ensures environmental sustainability.

**Table 1: NUA's Guiding Principles**

<i>Guiding principles</i>	<i>Leave no one behind, by ending poverty in all its forms and dimensions, including eradication of extreme poverty</i>	<i>Ensure sustainable and inclusive urban economies and opportunity for all</i>	<i>Ensures environmental sustainability</i>
Actions	-Ensuring equal rights and opportunities, socioeconomic and cultural diversity, and integration in the urban space - Enhancing livability, education, food security and nutrition, health and wellbeing, including by ending the epidemics of HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria - Promoting safety and eliminating	- Leveraging the agglomeration benefits of well-planned urbanization, including high productivity, competitiveness and innovation - Promoting full and productive employment and decent work for all - Ensuring the creation of decent jobs and equal access for all to economic	-Promoting clean energy and sustainable use of land and resources in urban development - Protecting ecosystems and biodiversity, including adopting healthy lifestyles in harmony

	discrimination and all forms of violence – Ensuring public participation providing safe and equal access for all – Providing equal access for all to physical and social infrastructure and basic services, as well as adequate and affordable housing	and productive resources and opportunities – Preventing land speculation, promoting secure land tenure and managing urban shrinking, where appropriate	with nature – Promoting sustainable consumption and production patterns – Building urban resilience  –Reducing disaster risks and mitigating and adapting to climate change
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**Source: Adapted Draft of the New Urban Agenda, 2016**

Accordingly, the NUA ensures optimization and maximization of the potential economic and social development arising out of urbanization so as to reduce poverty, improve the quality of life of the urban population as well as taking appropriate steps to protect the environment. Apart from improving the service delivery in our cities and towns, managing rising urbanization must be capable of producing a better and more suitable future- one in which all people have equal rights and access to the benefits and opportunities that cities can offer. However, a quick review of some of the global development frameworks, agendas and strategies aimed at achieving sustainable human settlements spurred by global urbanization, especially in the developing countries like Nigeria, always end up not being successful as many of them either died at conception stage or are poorly implemented or managed to the extent that their expected outcomes are barely noticed.

Sadly, the contents of the FGN (11) document reveal that “urban planning is yet to be accorded the pride of place in Nigeria, as most cities continue to grow without the benefit of physical plans to guide them, resulting in nonfunctional, disorderly, unhealthy, unsafe and aesthetically displeasing urban areas”. This phenomenon is even more widespread with respect to peri-urban growth, where most of the unplanned expansion takes place. This scenario is exacerbated when the 1999 Federal Constitution places Town and Country Planning as a reserved role of the State and Local Governments, while the enactment of the Nigerian Urban and Regional Planning Act 1992 has been assigned the responsibilities of physical planning and development control and stipulated the establishment of professional bodies involved in its implementation.

**V. IMPLEMENTING URBAN AGENDAS IN NIGERIA: INSTITUTIONAL IMPEDIMENTS**

A publication of the Nigerian Institute of Town Planners on the state of Urban and Regional Planning in Nigeria in 2004 clearly identifies the major causes of failures of Development Plans Implementation in Nigeria as ‘Weak Institutional Machinery’. Reports by McGill (18) and African Development Bank (2) indicate that, institutional weakness constitute serious impediments to overall development of most developing countries. In the same way, the state of Urban and Regional Planning Report, 2014 categorizes the major challenges to implementation of Development Plans and programmes in Nigeria into two, namely:

- Weak Institutional machinery or Framework, including strength of political will to implement
- Inadequate resources (financial, Professional, managerial skills).

The report argues further that in several African countries, including Nigeria, Local/Municipal governments are still too weakly institutionalized to effectively cope with urban development plan/implementations. When the local or municipal governments that are suppose to disseminate planning outcomes to the grassroots population are weak or non responsive, localizing New Urban Agenda will simply become a mirage. Meanwhile, domestication of urban and regional planning law of 1992 and CAP 1999 has not been imbibed by all the states of the federation. For instance, SDGs and National Emergency Management Authority are yet to have offices at both states and local government levels. The vibrancy of Ondo state government in adopting the Urban and Regional Planning law but has not been accompanied with implementation since adoption, is a typical example in Nigeria. In most times, adoption and implementation of planning initiatives lie in the political will and considerations of the government.

Essentially, Joan Clos (31) in his foreword address on the evolution of urban policies on global perspective notes that, much of the way in which cities progress, stagnate or become dysfunctional depends on the extent to which their involvement is planned, coordinated and well managed. He further posits that these factors, in turn, basically, depend on the skill, money and political will being available and used in the best possible way to improve the lives of millions of people. The alternative is poor transport networks, insufficient water supplies, public health crises and slum settlements, among other things.

However, another UN-Habitat Country Programme Document, Nigeria (2017-2021) equally observes that inadequate revenue has remained a major limiting factor in the management of Nigeria’s cities. According to the document, income sources available to LGs in Nigeria include statutory transfers, internally generated revenues (IGR), grants/donations, returns on investment and others like donor funded projects in the LG. The most common and, perhaps, reliable sources of revenue to LGs are the statutory transfers and internally generated revenues While most LGs have accepted IGR as a dependable source of revenue, they lack the required capacity to effectively mobilize and manage the process. Their capacity for mobilizing municipal revenues,

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using IGR, is rather low, thereby limiting the ability of LGs to meet their statutory obligations and guarantee the delivery of urban services. Not only that, the release of statutory allocation to the Local Governments perhaps to any development assignment is still subject to political will or interest of the ruling class.

It is expected that results of conferences on sustainable global agendas and best practices around the world need to be adopted, domesticated and institutionalized for progressive and favourable frameworks. Adoption and domestication of these global agendas like NUA, in many developing countries, especially Nigeria, are usually constrained by lack of political will and conceptualization of such agendas by the governments. This accounts for poor commitment and responses at the international conferences and summits of such magnitude.

However, and more importantly, the Urban and Regional Planning Law Cap LFN 2004, provides for the establishment of the Urban and Regional Planning Commission to serve as the administrative organ to midwife National Development Plans to the States' Boards and eventually to the Local Planning Authority.. Unfortunately, this is non existence as of today! The absence of the Commission that will disseminate Planning outcomes to the States and the Local governments has far-reaching consequences on our cities. It is pertinent to say that after the Fourth National Development Plan of 1985, there has not been a Development Plan for Nigeria. As a result of this anomaly, plans and developments have been disjointed, spontaneous and uncoordinated. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)'s office is currently under the auspices of the presidency because of non existence of Urban and Regional Planning Commission. The implications are that many projects developed and implemented without a Development Plan to guide and to provide platforms for constant review and monitoring.

### VI. POLITICAL WILL AND ACHIEVEMENT OF THE NEW URBAN AGENDA IN NIGERIA

A growing body of knowledge has observed that good, transparent, accountable, effective, and equitable governance cannot be achieved by the efforts of the governments alone. Good governance requires strong, effective government and the active involvement and collaboration of citizens and civil society organizations (CSOs) (34); (16) and (27). Around the world, citizens and CSOs have responded to this challenge by affirming citizen rights and supporting initiatives that empower citizens to participate in and influence governance processes, beyond simply voting once every few years. Malena (17) notes that the impacts of unresponsive and unaccountable governments with significant level of corruption and failure of governance constitute principally to the cause of lingering poverty and human suffering, as well as a barrier to the realization of urgent priorities such as Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Unfortunately, despite the impressive successes and significant impacts of increasing participatory governance experiences, lack of political will for participatory governance remains a stumbling block.

Derick and Nicholas (9) defines political will as the

commitment of actors to undertake actions to achieve sets of objectives and sustain the cost of those actions over time. The phenomenon of political will is usually only referred to in the context of its absence or negation. In other words, political will is likened to the air we breathe, according to Hammergren as quoted by Post et.al ( 24), it is only once we start suffocating that we become aware of it that it is absent. Hammergen's position is that, political will, is sine qua non of policy success which is never defined except by its absence. Political will is usually mentioned in reference to the centre of power, and to political decision makers as the key actors in good governance. However, political will must serve the good of society or interests of its citizens

Conceptually, political will may be defined as the extent of committed support among key decision makers for a particular policy solution to a particular problem (24). In this definition, the authors highlighted some sub- conceptual issue:

- 1) A sufficient set of decision makers.
- 2) With a common understanding of a particular problem on the common agenda
- 3) Committed to supporting
- 4) A commonly perceived potentially effective policy solution.

From the above, political will involves efforts of the government, civil society, community leaders, private sector, nongovernmental organizations, professionals, and religious leaders in development process. Decision making process must not be restricted to the ruling class or party affairs neither should it be an elite dictates but, must be a participatory and collaborative efforts of both the grassroots and every actor in the society, as this represents the sure engine that kick starts an adoption and implementation of any global initiative. Political will recognizes and collaborates with the local citizens at the grassroots level, empowers cities and enable them to build capacities, resources and raise revenue to deliver sustainable urban development and inclusive growth. This set of decision makers must have the common understanding of the nature of problem on the agenda to solve. For instance, in Nigeria poverty must be perceived and understood as a common problem to be tackled by all and sundry. Political Will involves adequate engagement and representation of the local /citizens, community leaders and stakeholders and actors for quick understanding, conceptualization and implementation of such policy initiatives.

It is also pertinent to know that, whole-hearted commitments of decision makers to supporting policy initiatives to tackle urban problems, is an expression of the dimension of Political Will. Simply, this relates to the commitment of actors to undertake actions to achieve a set of objectives. In this context, localizing and domesticating the New Urban Agenda in Nigeria requires commitment and participatory roles of the citizens of those cities that will be affected by the materializations that will result into putting into place of localized version of the NUA. This commitment should not only be in principle but must be accompanied with concrete actions. Achieving sustainable cities and inclusive human settlement is hinged on the commitments of all parties

involved in the decision making process. Unfortunately, governments of most developing countries are not committed to the promotion of policies and programmes that will better the lots of the citizens especially the poor and underprivileged. Likewise, when local citizens who are supposed to be part of, or included in the decision making process are alienated, they will now receive government projects and programmes with lack of commitment, seeing those projects as 'theirs' (i.e. government owned) and not 'ours'. Political Will must be based on the premise of a commonly perceived and potentially effective policy solution that must be achievable and sustainable.

Lack of Political will, according to Gerald (12) is the reason for the failure of the many anti-corruption crusades. In the same manner, Malena (17) points out that it is very difficult to nurture political will in a situation where citizens are disempowered or disengaged or where relations between civil society and state are characterized by distrust and hostility. In other word, political will is when all individuals voices are heard (not only during election) but in the decision making process as this will determine the final outcome of a certain policy. Political will is necessary for the development and sustenance of a policy and programmes and at the same time, determines the success or failure of a policy. According to Food and Agriculture Organization "if planning is to be successful, there must be the political will and the ability to put the plan into effect. So, mainstreaming New Urban Agenda into Nigeria requires in its entirety, the will of her political actors. Therefore, adopting, domesticating and implementing New Urban Agenda in Nigeria needs a sound political will as an impetus of permeation of policy and programmes across all spheres of the actors in the country, right from the conception to implementation of the policy until realization of achievement of eventual desired outcomes. Lack of political will on the part of the government and some socials, economic, administrative and political factors were identified as the major factors that encourage the contravention of urban and regional planning regulations in most neighbourhoods (25).

## VII. CONCLUSION AND THE WAY FORWARD

In this era of urban bang and since the inception of Habitat I and II, the rate of urbanization has more than doubled and the phenomenon has been seen as an essential catalyst for transformational development change. However, cities are not only perceived as "generators of crisis" but also possess the solution pills for sustainable future. At its core, the New Urban Agenda is about the role played by global urbanization in achieving inclusive and green growth, in all countries of the United Nations. The New urban Agenda is set to leave no one behind in its bid to ending all forms and dimensions of poverty; ensure equal rights and opportunities with integration of urban spaces; enhancing livability, education, food security, nutrition and health; ending of HIV/AIDS and tuberculosis, malaria as well as promotion of inclusive growth and elimination of all forms of discrimination and violence of whatever magnitude

Adopting and localizing the NUA in the developing countries have commenced already. For instance, the

increasing urbanization of Ghana has thrown up both challenges to be managed and opportunities to be explored. In its attempt to contain some of the challenges and improve on the living conditions of the urban population in Ghana, Habitat III document was prepared for the country. According to Habitat III National Report (15) the preparation of the document went through a number of reviews, among multi-stakeholder interest groups for wider acceptability. There is the need for other developing countries to emulate Ghana and other countries that have adopted and commenced implementation of the new agenda,

The paper has examined political will as an impetus for adopting and localizing the New Urban Agenda in Nigerian context. The paper argues that political will that recognizes and collaborates with the local citizens at the grassroots can empower cities and enable them to build capacities, resources and raise revenue to deliver sustainable urban development and inclusive growth. The paper further argues that since the 4<sup>th</sup> and the last National Development Plan of 1985 in Nigeria, the country has not formulated or implemented any National Urban Development Plan that will dissipate global initiatives, commitments and agendas as the case may be, to other states of the country. For instance, the paper stressed that the domestication of urban and regional planning law of 1992 and 1994 CAP has not been imbibed by all the states of the federation.

In the light of the fore-going, if Nigeria is to make progress in dealing with the myriads of her social, economical, political and environmental problems, and not to be left out in the pathway towards achieving sustainable development outcomes and the New Urban Agenda for the future of Nigerian cities, the following policy directives should be strictly adhered to as a matter of urgency:

1). There should be an establishment of Urban and Regional Planning Commission at the federal level that will serve as a veritable administrative organ that is best positioned to receive and disseminate development agendas like the NUA for localization and implementation

2). There must be a shift in the traditional planning approach in that, there must be an involvement and active participation of the local governments in the principle of NUA will enhance quick understanding, conceptualization, and implementation through their planning authorities.

3). Setting up an Inter-ministerial Committee to identify priority areas for the implementation of NUA will facilitate achievement of sustainable urban development and management.

4). Managing the growing challenges arising from unsustainable urbanization of Nigerian cities should be accompanied with the production of Operative National Development Plan for the country which will be in tandem with the principle of New Urban Agenda.

5). If the voices of the people especially at the grassroots, stakeholders, civil organizations, nongovernmental organizations at every sphere of levels of the government are heard and included at the decision making process, not only effectiveness and strict adherence to urban and regional planning standards and regulation will be achieved, but also, the spread and the awareness of the gains associated with

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adopting and implementing the new urban agenda to larger proportion of Nigerians shall be enhanced.

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