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Table of Contents

An Assessment of the Legal and Institutional Framework on Urban Planning in Nigeria

| | | | | | | | | | | Page | |
|---------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|------|----|
| 1.0 | Introduction | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 1 |
| 2.0 | Section I: Legal and Institutional Framework on Urban Planning in Nigeria | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 2 |
| 2.1 | Legal Framework on Urban Planning in Nigeria | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 2 |
| 2.2 | The Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria 1999 (as amended) | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 4 |
| 2.3 | Land Use Act, 1978 | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 5 |
| 2.4 | Nigerian Urban and Regional Planning Act (NURPA) | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 6 |
| 2.4.1 | Implementation of Guidelines on Local Government Reforms | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 10 |
| 2.4.2 | Establishment of Urban Development Agencies | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 10 |
| 2.4.3 | The Presidential Committee on Urban Development and Housing | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 11 |
| 2.4.4 | Revised National Housing Policy and National Urban Development Policy 2012 – 2019 | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 11 |
| 2.5 | Institutional Framework on Urban Planning in Nigeria | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 11 |
| 2.5.1 | Grant of Planning Permission | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 13 |
| 2.5.2 | Urban Planning Controls and their Enforcement in Nigeria | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 15 |
| 2.5.2.1 | Enforcement Notice | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 15 |
| 2.5.2.2 | Stop Work Notice | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 15 |
| 2.5.2.3 | Contravention Notice | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 16 |
| 2.5.2.4 | Demolition Notice | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 16 |
| 2.6 | Adequacy of Legal and Institutional Framework on Planning in Nigeria | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 17 |
| 2.7 | Section II: Challenges in the Enforcement of Urban Planning Laws in Nigeria | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 19 |
| 2.7.1 | Rapid Urbanization | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 19 |
| 2.7.2 | Urban Sprawl, Illegal Structures and Slum Formation | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 22 |
| 2.7.3 | Emergence of Unplanned Settlements due to Customary Land Use Practices | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 26 |
| 2.7.4 | Nature and Landscape Conservation | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 28 |
| 2.7.5 | Illegal Conversion of Approved Uses due to Weak Planning and Management Institutions | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 30 |
| 2.7.5.1 | Inadequate Manpower | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 30 |
| 2.7.5.2 | Poor and Inadequate Funding | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 31 |
| 2.7.5.3 | Corruption | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 31 |
| 2.7.5.4 | Lack of a Strong Institutional Base and Infrastructure | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 31 |
| 2.7.5.5 | Lack of Political Will | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 32 |

| | | | | | | | | | |
|----------|--|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|----|
| 2.7.5.6 | Absence of Cadastral Maps | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 32 |
| 2.7.5.7 | Absence of a Uniform Land Registration System | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 33 |
| 2.7.5.8 | Absence of Effective Urban Governance Mechanism | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 33 |
| 2.7.5.9 | Lack of Public Participation Processes in Urban Development | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 34 |
| 2.7.5.10 | Non-Implementation of SDGs 11 and 16 | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 34 |
| 2.7.5.11 | The COVID-19 Pandemic | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 37 |
| 2.8 | Section III: Approaches to Urban Planning Challenges in Other Jurisdictions- | | | | | | | | 37 |
| 2.8.1 | Plurality of Laws on Urban Planning | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 38 |
| 2.8.2 | Urban Sprawl and Slum Formation | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 41 |
| 2.8.3 | Institutional Framework for Enforcement of Urban Planning | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 43 |
| 2.8.4 | Urban Governance and Public Participation | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 48 |
| 2.8.5 | Political Will to Conserve Natural Sites and Agricultural/Special Purpose Lands | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 53 |
| 2.8.6 | Enforcement Procedure | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 58 |
| 2.9 | Section IV: Recommendations | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 59 |
| 2.9.1 | Rapid Urbanization, Sprawl and Slums | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 60 |
| 2.9.2 | Adoption of Traditional Development Control Practices | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 61 |
| 2.9.3 | Adoption of Regional and International Instruments on Urban Planning | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 62 |
| 2.9.3.1 | The African Charter on Human and Peoples Rights (ACHPR) | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 62 |
| 2.9.3.2 | The Constitutive Act of the African Union (AU) | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 63 |
| 2.9.3.3 | The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 64 |
| 2.9.3.4 | The United Nations Conference on Environment and Development | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 65 |
| 2.9.3.5 | The United Nations (UN) Conference on Human Settlements (UN Habitat) | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 65 |
| 2.9.4 | Establishment of Multi-Layer and Multi-Cluster Institutional Frameworks | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 68 |
| 2.9.5 | Introduction of Urban Democracy/Public Participation | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 69 |
| 2.9.6 | Incorporating SDGs into National Strategic Policy Framework to Eradicate Corruption | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 70 |
| 2.9.7 | Surmounting the COVID-19 Challenge | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 71 |
| 2.10 | Conclusion | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 73 |
| | Bibliography | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 75 |

Abstract

Use of land in Nigeria has dramatically increased over the years because, with the explosion in population, land is needed for more activities especially in urban environments which have been profoundly affected. The character and nature of urban landscapes have thus changed irrevocably, so that future generations are deprived of the choices enjoyed by present generations about the uses to which land can be put. Though legislation and institutions exist to regulate the uses to which land especially in urban centers can be put to in the country, dysfunctional and unsustainable urban development remains, thus the need and importance for effective legal framework and effective institutions to ensure sustainable urban planning in the country.

This seminar highlights and discusses the legal and institutional framework available in Nigeria for urban planning and the challenges that urban planning in Nigeria is faced with. It equally takes a look at the way such challenges have been dealt with in other jurisdictions notably the United Kingdom, Germany and India the choice of which is premised on the ground that Nigeria's legal framework is as much a reproduction of United Kingdom's urban planning laws by virtue of her colonial ties with England; Germany's choice is borne out of the fact that it operates a federal system of government like Nigeria and is held out as a model in Europe while India shares a lot in common with Nigeria first as one of the countries colonized by the English and also in its hybrid population and urban problems.

Findings from an analysis of the legal and institutional framework for urban planning in the country show that apart from the 1999 Constitution (as amended) which lists land administration and urban and regional planning under the concurrent list, the legal framework for urban planning in the country is hinged on the Land Use Act (LUA) and the Nigerian Urban and Regional Planning Act (NURPA) and state urban and regional planning laws in addition to allied legislations. The institutional framework on the other hand includes the National Urban and Regional Planning Commission, Urban and Regional Planning Boards and Local Planning Authorities created for the Federal, State and Local Governments in the country. Though sufficient to deliver sustainable urban development in the country as the jurisdictions compared also have similar or slightly better legal frameworks, the enforcement of urban planning laws in the country is bedeviled with several challenges including rapid urbanization, sprawl and slum formation which challenges are also experienced in the jurisdictions. Recommendations based on the approaches adopted in the jurisdictions studied in dealing with the identified challenges are proffered as the way forward especially for the strengthening of institutions in line with Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 11 and 16 for sustainable urban development in Nigeria.