



# **“Realizing the Potentials of Urbanization in Nigeria amidst the realities of Socio-Economic Adversaries in Nigeria”**

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# Outline



**Introduction:**  
Nigeria is in the  
urban age



**From Urban Past  
to Urban Futures**



**Bridging the  
gap: Leave no  
one behind**



**Towards a  
better urban  
future:**



# Introduction

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# We are in an Urban Age!!!

More than half of the world's population live in cities and towns, and the number is growing every day, with concentration in **secondary cities**

Cities are centres for economic growth and development, but they also face demographic, environmental, economic and social challenges.

These challenges have been exacerbated in recent times by the **climate crisis, COVID19 and conflict**.

**Cities and local governments** play a front-line role in responding to crises and emergencies, as well as in planning for an inclusive, resilient, and green future.





# Urban Development in Nigeria

- **Population growth**

Nigeria's urban population has continued to grow exponentially, from 10.2% in 1950, to an estimated urban majority since 2015.

- **Urbanisation of Poverty**

Urbanisation in Nigeria is occurring alongside increasing levels of **poverty and informality**. About half of all Nigerian urban residents live in informal settlements and survive on precarious jobs in the informal economic sector .

- **Urban Infrastructure Deficit**

Nigeria's infrastructure is generally poor, resulting in challenges of population density, urbanization and social development, especially in large and intermediate cities.



- **Socio-economic inequalities**
- **Slums and informal settlements**
- **Informal livelihoods**
- **Youth Unemployment**
- **Precarious urban access**
- **Food insecurity**
- **Epidemics and Pandemic**
- **Uncontrolled migration**
- **Urban Violence and Crime**
- **Urban conflict**
- **Flooding**
- **Infrastructure gaps**

# Urban Past to Urban Futures

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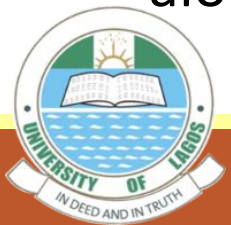
## Nigeria: The Urban Past (before 1960)

- Pre-colonial Nigerian cities were planned for **defense and social interaction**. In the mid-1800s, settlements with >20,000 people had established land management practices, centered around the monarchical structure.
- Formal urban planning began during the colonial era and was for improving **public health and aesthetics**, as well as supporting economic interests of the colonisers.
- Township Ordinance No 29 of 1917 used the tool of town planning for socio-spatial and racial segregation resulting in the **dual city paradigm**.



## Nigeria: The Urban Present (1960 till date)

- Rapid urban growth driven by both migration and natural increase
- National development plans with economic development prioritisation
- New towns e.g. Onne, Festac and increased social exclusion through gated communities and private sector led aspirational infrastructures
- Relocation of Nigeria's capital to Abuja
- Centralised urban management structures and privatisation of basic services
- Urban policy focus on reversing rural – urban migration
- Planning and development approaches continued along **dual city paradigms**





# Nigeria: envisioning the Urban Future

- Cities are centres of innovation and prosperity
- Massive urbanisation and population growth.

## Business as usual?

- National prioritisation of economic development, to the exclusion of spatial and social planning

## Consequences

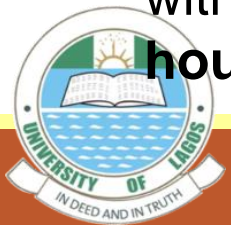
- Unregulated planning and urban development, peri-urbanisation
- Expansive socio-economic inequalities
- Focus on new towns, smart cities and aspirational infrastructure
- Planning that does not consider socio-cultural constructs or local realities.





## Nigerian urban futures are being envisioned along 'Business as usual' case

- Urban planning and planning regulatory processes promote **modernist ideals**, through the emphasis on the master plan approach to city development and rigid development control.
- Informality is rejected and urban development policies aspire to city forms in which informal settlements and economic activities are obliterated, even though in reality they dominate the urban scene.
- Master plans are still the planning instrument of choice, with many of the provisions being at variance with the reality of urban development.
- Economic plans have limited considerations for spatial contexts and vice versa
- Kaduna state Infrastructure master plan marginally considers peri-urbanism and informality, while social housing and urban regeneration fall within the long-term activities of the LSDP, despite **urban informality and housing challenges** being the most dominant features of these states.





## Is the Urban present threatening Urban Future?

- <20 states have domesticated national planning laws.
- Many cities do not have spatial development plans or policies to guide urban growth, thus cityscapes are unplanned and chaotic.
- Due to weak administrative and regulatory frameworks as well and limited financial and technical capabilities, city administrators are unable to effectively manage rapid urbanization.
- When public investments are not guided by operative spatial development plans, there is haphazard project selection and poor implementation, leading to unintended consequences of new or exacerbated urban development challenges.
- Glaring socio-economic inequalities are manifesting spatially as socio-spatial segregation, homelessness, informality and increasing urban discontent

***If this is the present.....What can we expect in the future?***

Captain Amangana, Port Harcourt, 2016



# Smart City Dimension:

There is an upsurge of **foreign investment**, architecture and /or infrastructure firms as major players in large-scale development of smart city projects across Nigeria, utilizing the instrument of professional planning to further entrench **socio-spatial segregation and inequality**.

These projects are designed as utopian cities and housing solutions largely catering to the **ultra-wealthy** with limited attention to local nuances, cultural constructs or social inclusion that are essential for human interaction and sustainable settlements.





# Bridging the gap: Leave no one behind

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The 2030 agenda, and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) is the international development community's **most inclusive ever roadmap** for change, with a commitment to Leave No one Behind.

**SDG 11 – to make cities inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable** – is an entrypoint for all SDGs. It identifies sustainable urbanization as a key priority for global development.

New Urban Agenda is a framework for implementing SDG 11



# Leave No One Behind

- LNOB is the (LNOB) central transformative promise of the SDGs, representing unequivocal commitment of all of all UN Member States ***to eradicate poverty in all its forms, end discrimination and exclusion, and reduce the inequalities and vulnerabilities that leave people behind and undermine the potential of individuals and of humanity as a whole***. Nigeria is a signatory to the SDGs and is committed to the principle of LNOB
- It is grounded in the UN's normative standards that are foundational principles of the Charter of the United Nations, international human rights law and national legal systems across the world.
- Operationalizing the commitment to LNOB at the country level requires a comprehensive approach with a series of steps,
  - **identifying who is being left behind and why;**
  - **identifying effective measures to address root causes;**
  - **monitoring and measuring progress; and ensuring accountability for LNOB.**
- Ensuring free, active and meaningful participation of all stakeholders, particularly those left behind is a key component of all steps and phases of policy, planning and programming for LNOB.

[https://unsceb.org/sites/default/files/imported\\_files/CEB%20equality%20framework-A4-web-rev3.pdf](https://unsceb.org/sites/default/files/imported_files/CEB%20equality%20framework-A4-web-rev3.pdf)



# Who is left behind?

People get left behind when they lack the choices and opportunities to participate in and benefit from development progress.

Those often left behind are **people living in poverty and other vulnerable situations**, including children, youth, persons with disabilities, people living with HIV/AIDS, older persons, indigenous peoples, refugees and internally displaced persons and migrants (UN, 2022).

In Nigeria, this has a significant urban face





## Where is Left Behind?

Places are left behind when public economic and physical development plans neglect their contextualised needs and comparative advantages.

**Formal vs Informal;  
Urban vs Peri-Urban vs Rural;  
Primate vs Secondary  
Cities for Profit vs Cities for People**

### Consequences:

- Multidimensional poverty
- Environmental pollution
- Social neglect
- Socio-spatial fragmentation





# **Towards a better urban future for Nigeria:**

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**RETHINKING URBAN+ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT  
INTERFACE**



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Nigeria's population is expected to rise to 377million people by 2050, of which 70% will be based in urban areas (World Bank, 2023).

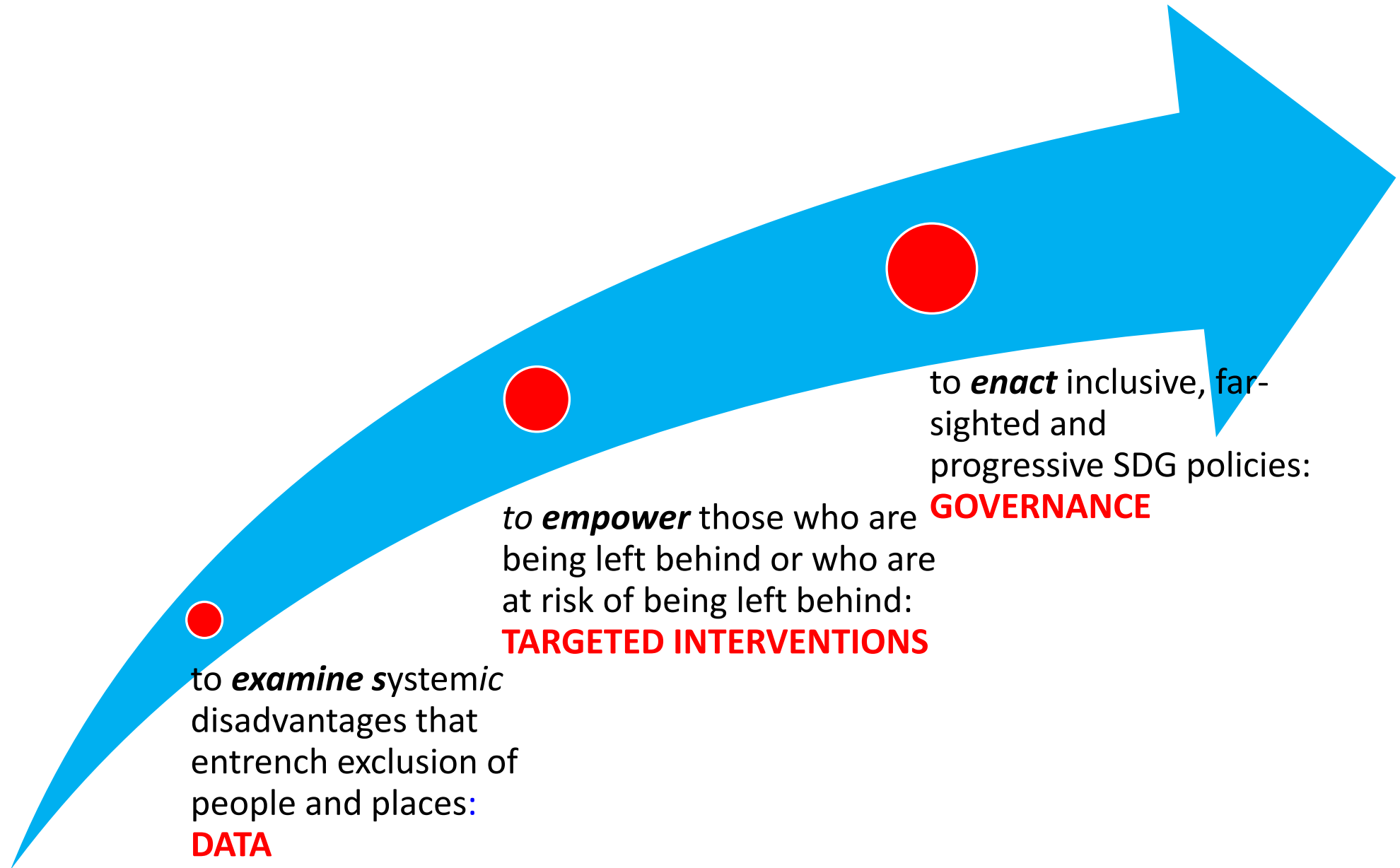
***How do we envision the future of Nigeria (and her cities)? By 2030? 2040? 2050?***

Given where we are now:

***Will it be the same? Better? Worse? For people? for housing, for cities?***

***What can we do ?***







# Data: The place of Accurate Empirical evidence

- Jettison the siloed approach; the estimated projections and non-contextual scenario projections
- Embrace disaggregated data collection and analysis. Collect data across scale, sectors and geographic boundaries. Prioritise documenting the voice of the marginalised.
- Mobilise partners and stakeholder groups including knowledge institutions and civil society to fill gaps in disaggregated data with improved surveys, new techniques and technologies, perception surveys, practitioner knowhow, participatory mechanisms etc.
- Analyse to establish inter-dependencies and cross-sectoral consequences. Project across Economic, Social and Environmental dimensions.



# Targeted rather than aspirational Interventions

- Facilitate a rights-based approach to planning and public engagement that promotes meaningful participation, civic engagement and supports the role of people, communities and civil society organizations to shape public decisions and hold government to account to realize their rights.
- Embrace evidence-based planning that promotes equitable allocation of urban benefits and resources based on contextualised need.
- Ensure interventions are culturally sensitive, economically viable, people-centred, respect human rights and fit for purpose
- Ensure benefits across economic, social and environmental dimensions
- Explore interventions with cross-sectoral benefits and co-production processes.





# Governance

- Integrate LNOB in development planning, strategies, plans and budget processes.
- Adopt an equity focused and rights-based approach to governance which is focused on addressing gaps at various scales (community, district, city level and beyond) and responding effectively to identified gaps.
- Encourage the domestication of inclusion policies using the SDGs as an entry point.
- Cooperation and Participation: Build accountable, responsive and inclusive governance systems to reduce inequalities and exclusion.
- Support all stakeholders (including the private sector) to identify, embed and respond appropriately to identified gaps .



## Population

- Recognise that **Urbanisation is an opportunity**, therefore, Nigerian cities cannot afford to be (re)designed and (re)developed with ideals other than **sustainability, prosperity and social inclusion**.

## Urbanisation of poverty

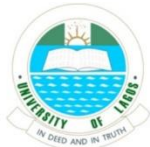
- Rethink **ideological underpinnings** of national economic and urban development policy - **ADOPT A HUMAN CENTRED APPROACH TO URBAN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**
- Ensure **decentralised and contextualised** solutions based on **empirical evidence** that offer cross-sectoral benefits and are sustainable.

## Infrastructure

- Embrace **Top down AND bottom-up** approaches to urban infrastructure provisioning
- **Fit for purpose Housing solutions:** New build + Urban renewal; multi-income mixed developments
- Recognise the **catalytic role of Urban Planning** as an all-encompassing dimension of sustainability that promotes physical-environmental, social and economic development and human wellbeing
- From Urban Planning to Urban Management







**UNIVERSITY OF LAGOS**



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