

A SYNERGY BETWEEN URBAN PLANNING AND THE PUBLIC TOWARDS ACHIEVING SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS (SDGs)

Adams Ndalai Baba¹, Hassan Y. Tifwa², Mercy Inikpi Achoba³

¹Department of Urban and Regional Planning, Universiti Teknologi Malaysia, 81310, Skudai, Johor Bahru, Malaysia

^{1,2}Department of Urban and Regional Planning,

³Department of Architectural Technology,

The Federal Polytechnic, P.M.B 1037 Idah, Kogi State, Nigeria

Email- babaadams88@gmail.com

Abstract-The global challenges that necessitated the setting of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) identified priorities areas to be addressed within 15 years starting from Year 2000. Upon reaching the endpoint year, stocks of progress were taken to fashion out a way forward on how to consolidate on the gains of MDGs. This led to the idea of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). This paper explored key areas of urban planning concerns in the MDG and SDG and identify possible collaboration efforts of urban planners and other stakeholders in Nigeria for the success of the SDG. Specifically, literature was reviewed on the global efforts of goal 7 of the MDG and areas of goal 11 of the SDG requiring urban planning intervention and collaboration. Findings show that other than robust policy framework, Nigeria still lag behind even within the scope of Africa in the attainment of these goals and their associated targets. The synergy between urban planners in public service, community and non-governmental organisations/development agencies, the organised private sector, and professional bodies has been explored as a key contrivance to a successful implementation of the SDGs.

Key words: Synergy, Urban Planning, Sustainable Development Goals

1. INTRODUCTION

The idea of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) as a programme and strategy to address myriads of global problems relating to poverty, education, gender equality, health, the environment and global partnership was brought about following the resolution of the United Nations Summit in September 2000. It was resolved that eight (8) time-bounded development goals, twenty-one (21) targets, and sixty (60) indicators are to be pursued and achieved by the year 2015. A cursory look at the MDGs achievements indicated that Several MDG targets have been met on a global scale, however, many of the targets remained a challenge with regional variations in measuring these success rates. In Africa, certain countries have made an appreciable progress with respect to some specific targets/indicators, though not necessarily reaching the targets. A primary area of concern for urban planners in the MDG is Goal 7 which focussed on environmental sustainability. Interestingly, this is the only area Nigeria was rated among best-performing countries in Africa among all goals and targets. However, this rating only applied to Target 7 which is merely in the area of integrating the principles of sustainable development into its national policies and programs and reversing the loss of environmental resources (World Bank Group, 2016). Never the less, the end-point status in 2015 indicated that there were an appreciable effort and progress in Nigeria with regards to indicators of Goal 7. For instance, the number of people with access to improved source and use of potable water reached 62.2 percent which is 14.8 percent less than the MDG's target of 77 per cent, revealing an improvement from the 57.8 percent recorded in 2012 (FRN Report, 2015). On the contrary, an assessment of the endpoint status of those with improved sanitation facilities stood at 41 percent by 2014 implying a weak progress. Although there has been a gradual decline in the percentage of urban dwellers living in slum conditions from a baseline figure of 77 percent in 1990 to 50.2 percent at an endpoint status in 2014, there is still a startling figure of slum dwellers in Nigeria (MDG Nigeria, 2015). Against the backdrop of the slow rate of progress particularly in reducing the rate of slum dwellers in urban Nigeria, this paper seeks ways of collaboration between urban planning activities and multiple stakeholders in the attainment of the sustainable development goal (SDG). For the world to consolidate on the gains of goal 7 target 7. D of MDGs towards meeting goal 11 of SDGs (make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable), several steps need to be taken as we begin the pursuit of achieving a good result in the SDG framework in years to come. The paper relies on secondary data source mainly from journals and published reports to ascertain areas of urban planners concerns for possible interventions. Particularly, the paper is structured into two parts; firstly, it identified areas of contemporary urban dynamics and suggest a re-think in urban planning praxis. Secondly, we emphasise the need and areas for a strategic collaboration between urban planners and multiple stakeholders in urban development.

2. SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOAL AND URBAN PLANNING

In order to consolidate on the gains of MDG goal 7 towards meeting goal 11 of SDGs (make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable), several steps need to be taken as we begin the pursuit of achieving a good result in the SDG framework in years to come. The SDG goal 11 is targeting the issues of;

- Adequate, safe, affordable housing and basic services and slum upgrading.
- Access to safe, affordable, accessible and sustainable transport systems, road safety, road expansion, special consideration to the needs of the vulnerable, women, children, persons living with disabilities and older persons.
- Inclusive and sustainable urbanisation and capacity for participatory, integrated and sustainable human settlement planning and management.
- Protect and safeguard world's cultural heritage.
- Reduce the number of death, economic losses caused by disasters including water-related disasters, protecting the poor and people in vulnerable situations.
- Paying special attention to air quality, municipal and other waste management to reduce adverse environmental impact of cities.
- Access to safe, inclusive and accessible green and public spaces particularly for women, children, older persons and people with disabilities.

For urban planners and urban planning agencies to contribute to the actualisation of the SDGs, there must be a re-think in approaches to the principles and practices of the profession. Old practices will have to give way to accommodate the dynamics of contemporary urban systems. Possible areas of focus in urban development that can be addressed in an effort towards meeting this goal are discussed as follows;

2.1 Improved Street Design

Across the globe, cities of the emerging economies have demonstrated parsimonious land allocation to streets. To achieve the SDGs, cities must allocate 25-30 percent of land areas to streets as recommended by the UN. The essence of this is that public utilities such as water, sewerage, and electricity systems are usually designed along existing road networks. Inadequate and lack of planning have limited many urban areas to provide spaces for the authorities to provide essential services such as basic water and sanitation. Less than 15 percent of land was allocated to streets in many urban settlements in Africa, Asia, and Latin America and the Caribbean. This assessment is based on data from geospatial information systems (GIS) and satellite images of street networks in more than 100 cities around the world. In the 18 African cities included in that study, 13 allocated less than 15 percent of land to streets. The same study showed that it was common in the suburban areas of all cities for less than 10 percent of land to be allocated to streets, indicating widespread, unplanned urban settlements (UN, 2014). In line with this, cities must begin to develop new ways of solid waste management, provisions are hardly made in the urban areas for waste collection. This has forced urban dwellers to litter the streets and surrounding with wastes from households and industrial outfits. The case of Nigerian capital city of Abuja attests to the fact that despite being a planned city, street designs did not meet this stipulated standard as shown in Figure 2.1. This infers a worst case scenario for other cities in the country that are largely unplanned.

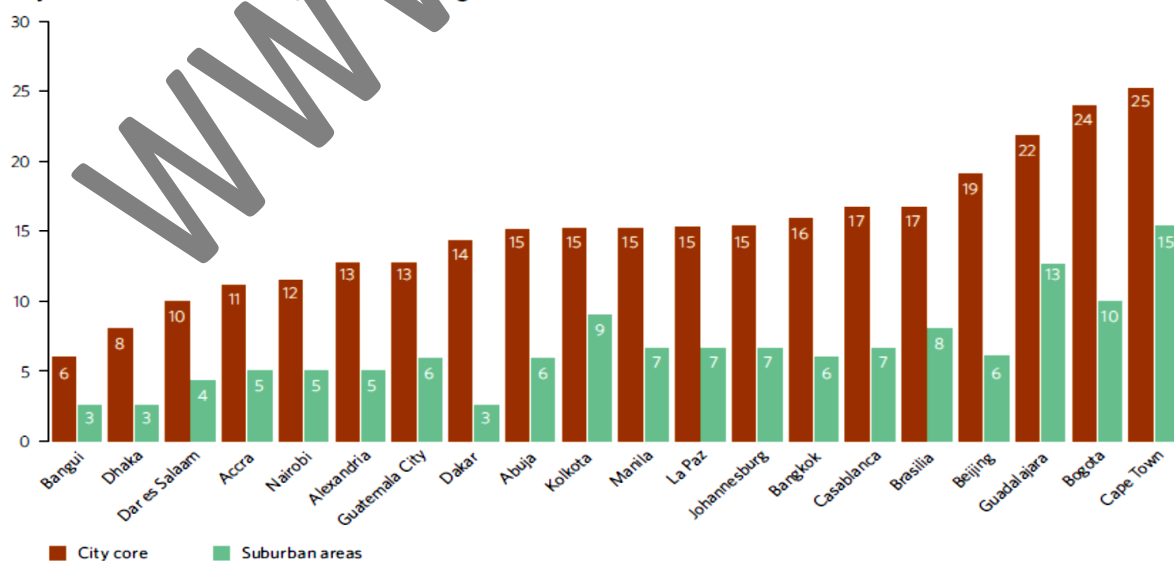


Fig. 2.1: Proportion of Land Allocated to Streets in Selected Cities in Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean, City Core and Suburban Areas, 2013 (%)

Source: United Nation, 2014

2.2 Developing Inclusive, Safe, Resilient And Sustainable Cities

For urban planning to actualise goal 11 of the SDG, cities must be made inclusive. City inclusiveness involves promoting equity; about creating cities where all can participate in their social, economic and political dynamics. Most cities in the developing countries exhibit social exclusion whereby a good number of people are being excluded from the normal exchanges, practices and rights of modern society. There is a correlation between cities inclusiveness and urban growth and development. Major Nigerian cities such as Lagos, Abuja and Kano ranked 13th, 14th, and 17 respectively among 19 selected African cities with top potentials for inclusive growth (Angelopopu, and Hedrick-Wong, 2013; Baba, et al, 2015). Inclusiveness is essential for effectively achieving sustainable urban development. More than ever with rapidly growing rates of urbanisation and with increasing social, economic and environmental challenges, it is important to re-think the existing “development” approaches from national to community levels; from high to low-income people. Countries including India, Sweden, Denmark, Singapore, USA, and Brazil have engaged in inclusive urban development initiatives with significant lessons to be learned. Urban planning principles to consider include accessibility by all social groups to resilient shelter and sustainable services, mixed but compatible land uses providing convenient access to a range of social and economic amenities, advance planning to accommodate growth in an orderly manner to avoid sprawl and informal settlement, and an information base to inform sustainable environmental planning as the starting point.

2.3 Developing Compact Cities

Increasingly, planning policies of cities globally are now supporting new urbanism and smart growth principles (Filion, 2002, 2003; Grant, 2003). Many cities have adopted plans that encourage intensification, mixed use, transit-oriented development, integrated housing, and connected street grids for sustainability. Compact development means that buildings, parking areas, streets, driveways, and public spaces are developed in a way that shortens trips, and lessens dependence on the automobile, thereby reducing levels of land consumption, energy use, and air pollution. Compact development promotes full utilisation of urban services, such as water lines, sewers, streets, and emergency services, by taking advantage of existing public facilities and minimizing the need for new facilities. Developing compact cities will bring about dense and proximate development patterns. This will ensure that urban land is intensively utilised, urban agglomerations are contiguous or close together, the distinct border between urban and rural land use, and public spaces are secured. It will also ensure that urban areas are linked by public transport systems, thus promoting effective use of urban land and facilitate mobility in urban areas. Furthermore, compact cities enhance accessibility to local services and jobs. In doing this, planning should ensure that land use is mixed and most residents have access to local services either on foot or using public transport. Compact development will ensure access to safe, affordable, accessible and sustainable transport systems, road safety, road expansion, special consideration to the needs of the vulnerable, women, children, persons living with disabilities and older persons. Compact development will enhance energy conservation through reduced reliance on the automobile and this will further reduce carbon emissions into the ozone layer.

2.4 Integrating the Informal Economic Sector in Urban Planning

The informal economy accounts for over 70% of urban employment in Nigeria (ILO, 2002). Urban planning has continued to ignore their occurrences in space and often treated as a nuisance. This irresponsibility on the part of urban planners to accommodate them in planning programmes are the product of their environmental consequences (Rukmana, 2007). The influence of human activities has brought about a paradigm shift of homes and neighbourhood spaces functioning as commercial premises. The United Nations Centre for Human Settlement (UNCHS, 1988) in the “Global Strategy for Shelter to the Year 2000” and “The Habitat Agenda” (UNCHS, 1997) gave credence to housing as an economically productive sector. This is a deviation from an earlier view of the sector as a consumption entity in previous housing policies, thus redefining the multiple roles of the home (Kellet, and Tipple, 2000). In recent time, the UN-HABITAT’s stipulated five principles as a strategy of sustainable neighbourhood planning. This includes the issue of mixed land use where it emphasises the need to allocate at least 40 percent of neighbourhoods’ floor spaces to economic activities (UN-Habitat, 2014). In line with the concept of sustainable neighbourhood and housing development, stakeholders recognised for the first time that application of enterprise-residential mix will be a boost to the draft national housing policy of Nigeria. The draft National Housing Policy of Nigeria (2012) therefore stipulates as a strategy; “the incorporation of micro-enterprises (such as agro-allied ventures) in the housing scheme with a view to generating employment opportunities and enhancing the ability of the beneficiaries to repay their loans at reasonable periods with less strain” (Adeokun, and Ibe, 2014; FGN, 2012). For Nigeria to achieve inclusive and sustainable urbanisation and capacity for participatory, integrated and sustainable human settlement as stipulated in the SDG target of goal 11, planning effort must provide space and protect the occurrences of the informal sector as stipulated in the draft housing policy. A return to updated versions of the shop/house is capable of revitalising residential densities (Davis, 2012) and bringing about sustainable living.

2.5 Inclusive Urban Renewal Strategy

Informal settlements, slums, and other poor residential neighbourhoods are a global urban phenomenon. They exist in urban contexts all over the world, in various forms and typologies, dimensions, locations and by a range of names (squatter settlements, favelas, poblaciones, shacks, barrios bajos, bidonvilles, ghettos etc.) Urban informality predominates cities of the global south including Nigeria. Urban planning needs to adopt a methodological approach that aims to address urban development inequalities represented by slum dwellers' living. It must engage and put all key urban stakeholders – all levels of government, community representatives, civil society, non-government organizations, academia, the private sector and, especially, slum dwellers – at the core of the process to improve slums' living standards. This multi-stakeholder platform is considered more likely to promote the necessary partnerships, governance arrangements, institutional structures and financing options which result in inclusive planning and sustainable outcomes. Slum dwellers, in particular, have important knowledge, skills, and capacity to contribute, direct and own the upgrading process, and an inclusive approach towards the improvement of their living conditions brings fundamental socio-cultural changes towards a rights-based society. A concerted effort should be made to discourage slum clearance as it adds to the problem of the housing shortage and will be a setback to the core targets of the SDG that seeks to provide affordable housing and protect and safeguard world's cultural heritage

2.6 Urban Green Infrastructure Provision

In order to actualise the target of reducing number of death, economic losses caused by disasters including water-related disasters, protecting the poor and people in vulnerable situations, the effort of planning should be geared towards plans with comprehensive green infrastructure. This will equally help in reduction of carbon emission and effect on climate change. Urban wetlands and flood plains should be protected and preserved. Allowing physical development on flood plains will increase vulnerability to flooding, erosion, and other related natural disaster. The 2012 flooding of cities in Nigeria attests to the fact that our urban centres are disaster prone aided by anthropogenic factors. Lack of green infrastructure plan has exposed the vulnerability of these cities to natural and man aided disasters. Individual efforts towards tree planting and environmental conservation are also key to a sustainable green infrastructure delivery.

3. URBAN PLANNING, THE PUBLIC, AND SDG REALITY – A SYNERGY

Urban planning dynamics has shifted from the concept of planning for the people to planning with the people. The urban system is an embodiment of different actors and activities. Therefore, collaborative effort is required among stakeholders to actualise the SDGs especially as it relates to goal 11. Town planning activities in Nigeria are shared among the three tiers of government and are largely operational within their structures as stipulated in the Urban and Regional Planning Law (URPL) of 1992. The law assigned various responsibilities to the three tiers of government in line with their capacity. The land use decree (Decree 88) of 1978 place enormous responsibility on the state and the local governments as custodians of urban and rural land respectively. Since all physical planning activities take place on land and are essentially within the public sector, the government at all levels are important stakeholders in the drive towards achieving the SDGs. Essentially, the duties of the town planning agencies include among others, plan preparation and administration, development control, additional control in special cases, acquisition of land and compensation, and improvement of areas – rehabilitation, renewal and upgrading (URPL, 1992). Like the SDGs, all planning activities are futuristic, goal oriented and with a definitive time frame for action. In order to carry out these functions, public participation tool is key.

The concept of the Public refers to everyone, the people either as a social group, community, local or national authorities. In view of this, the entire society belongs to the public who are expected to play a role in actualising the SDGs. Key drivers for action in the sustainable urban development process that can aid the actualisation of the SDG can be categorised into four main groups: the public sector agencies (officials from government ministries, department and agencies such as lands, survey and town planning); the community/civic leaders and NGO/CBOs (community heads and leaders of community-based organisations (CBOs) and non-governmental organisations (NGOs)); the organised private sector (commercial real estate developers and financial institutions) and the professional bodies (Nigeria's Institute of Town Planners, Institute of Surveyors etc.) In order to make progress in the SDG it is important that the following line of actions are sustained and improved upon by various stakeholders:

3.1 Public Sector Agencies

Governments at various levels (especially state and local) must play a leading role in identifying informal settlement/slum and other urban challenges. They must provide the enabling environment to develop and implement the appropriate policies and plans to initiate change and improvement for, and in partnership with, poor urban dwellers. They must be proactive and work with municipal authorities since they have the capacity to organize and bring together key stakeholders, harness local knowledge, enact policies and plans and manage incremental infrastructure development. Existing planning legislations must be reviewed to meet up present

trends in urban development processes. Planning authorities are agencies of government and are major stakeholders in urban development and management. An important aspect of the planning process is the availability of data. One beneficial outcome of the MDG process has been the push for better data and its contribution to the ongoing data revolution (UN 2014). In 2003, only four developing countries had two or more data points for at least 16 of the 22 MDG indicators. By 2013, 129 countries met this metric of data availability. Behind the increased availability of data lies enhanced national statistical capacity building, with data often collected in collaboration with international experts. The town planning organisations must reach out to the public to elicit information on peculiar and prevailing situations at the household, neighbourhood and the entire urban levels. In turn, the public is obliged to provide honest responses to problems affecting communities and also recommend possible solutions towards solving them. The problems and needs of the communities are better known to them and only bottom-top approach can effectively resolve local challenges. The collaborative effort is required between governments and development partners. Beyond the traditional data collection methods which are a combination of questionnaire methods, interviews, mapping, focus group discussions etc. “smart data revolution” such as information from satellite imagery, smartphones, etc. must be exploited. In order to ensure that SDG commitments (especially goal 11) are translated into effective action, precise understanding of target populations along with their characteristics is important before plans are drawn out for action.

3.2 Community and Non-Governmental Organisations/Development Agencies

Community heads and leaders of community-based organisations (CBOs) as well as non-governmental organisations (NGOs) operating as local and international development agencies are a veritable instrument in issues relating to poverty alleviation, settlement planning, and urban sustainability. The international agencies usually generate a good database that is useful for planning. Urban planners can avail themselves of this opportunity towards achieving SDGs. For instance, the United Nation Centre for Human Settlement (UNCHS-HABITAT) global campaign for good urban governance promotes cities inclusiveness. Such campaign of good urban governance discourages physical, social and economic exclusion capable of preventing a certain group of persons from participating in the cities where they live (Amis and Kumar, 2000). The United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Development (Habitat 3) hosted on October 31, 2016, set out the New Urban Agenda for the next 20 years as part of the plans to mark World Cities Day. The recognition of experts’ views towards the implementation of the theoretical framework necessitated the coming together of a panel of architects and urban designers on World Cities Day at the UN headquarters in New York. This provided insight into how Urban Policy translate into tangible projects after a panel of architects and urban designers share their practical experiences and exploring ways of concrete implementation of the Urban Agenda (UN-Habitat, 2015). This will enable the theoretical framework to be linked to actual ‘on-the-ground examples. Town planning activities will equally achieve a boost if community heads and leaders of CBOs are carried along in mobilising the public within their domain to participate in development activities. Bilateral and multilateral agreements for development often involve the communities as stakeholders. Such partnership could entail sourcing capital or direct labour for initiating and implementing local programmes that translate to physical development.

3.3 The Organised Private Sector

In carrying out one of the urban planning functions on the improvement of areas – rehabilitation, renewal and upgrading as stipulated in the URPL of 1992 which incidentally is a key component of the SDG (adequate, safe, affordable housing and basic services and upgrade slum), the organised private sector is needed. The collaboration between town planning authorities and the commercial real estate developers and financial institutions will aid housing and infrastructure provision. The expertise of real estate developers and finances from the financial institutions is required in property development especially in slum upgrading process as well affordable housing delivery.

3.4 Professional Bodies

Professional bodies exist among the different disciplines of the built environment. Such bodies as the Nigerian Institute of Town Planners (NITP) and Town Planning Registration Council of Nigeria (TOPREC) were established to regulate the conduct of planning activities in Nigeria. For sustainable development, it is apt to ensure that the professionals in the practice of town planning are registered, other than this, appropriate sanctions are meted out on deviant practitioners by same bodies. A synergy between multi-disciplinary bodies is essential to facilitate effective implementation of sustainable urban programmes and projects.

CONCLUSION

The paper has looked at the MDGs and highlight the successes recorded over the past 15 years, and also given a background to the evolution of the SDGs. Areas that reflects on town planning activities such as the goal 7 and goal 11 of the MDG and SDG respectively were identified and discussed. Issues particularly on slums, resilient and sustainable cities are still a major challenge that requires the participation of urban planning and other stakeholders in view of the rising urbanisation rate especially among the cities of sub-Saharan Africa. A way

forward is to have a re-think in town planning approaches that will not only meet the needs of the present generation but also that of the future. Governments must take up leadership role carrying along other stakeholders to invest more in statistical capacity building and a “smart data revolution.” Given the increased number of goals, targets, and indicators under the SDGs, the associated data challenges are even more tasking than those of the MDGs. It is important to invest in statistical capacity and build on existing mechanisms and systems to gather the micro-level data needed for monitoring the SDGs. Monitoring efforts, however, will benefit from the ongoing smart data revolution, which is filtering through all aspects of modern society. It is important that we ensure inclusiveness and ownership of programmes at the country level (inclusiveness and ownership are essential, extending to policy makers, representatives from the private sector and civil society, and other stakeholders); building on synergies between goals; specifying targets that can be monitored with good data and that are time bound; and supporting strong implementation, including ensuring adequate financing and effective use of resources.

REFERENCES

- [1] C. Adeokun, E. O. Ibem, Using the Home for Income Generation: - Home Based Enterprises and Implications for Housing Policy in Nigeria. Using the Home for Income Generation: Home Based Enterprises and Implications for Housing Policy in Nigeria, 1–8, 2014. Available at: <http://bit.ly/2jqwLYS>, Accessed: 17 January 2017.
- [2] P. Amis, S. Kumar, “Urban economic growth, infrastructure and poverty in India: lessons from Visakhapatnam”. *Environment and Urbanization* 12(1): 185–196, 2000.
- [3] G. Angelopopu, Y. Hendrick-Wong, Master Card Cities Growth Index, Master Card World Wide Insights IQ 2013.
- [4] A. N. Baba, N. B. Yusoff, E. O. F. Elegba, “Towards Cities Inclusiveness: The Land Use Paradigm Option for Nigeria,” *Procedia - Soc. Behav. Sci.*, vol. 172, pp. 367–374, Jan. 2015.
- [5] H. Davis, *Living over the Store: Architecture and local urban life*. Routledge, 2012
- [6] FGN, National Housing Policy. Federal Ministry of Land and Housing, Abuja, 2012
- [7] FGN, The Nigerian Urban and Regional Planning Law, Decree 88 of 1992. Available at: <http://bit.ly/2ivVEmv>, Accessed: 6 August 2016.
- [8] P. Filion, “Towards smart growth: the difficult implementation of alternatives to urban Dispersion”, *Canadian Journal of Urban Research: Canadian Planning and Policy*, 12(1), pp. 48 – 70, 2003.
- [9] FRN, The Millennium Development Goals Performance Tracking Survey 2015 Report, National Bureau of Statistics, 2015 Available at: <http://bit.ly/2ivU1Fv>, Accessed: 25 September 2016.
- [10] J.L. Grant, “Theory and Practice in Planning the Suburbs: Challenges to Implementing Planning Theory & Practice”, 10 (1), pp.11–33, March 2009
- [11] ILO, Decent work and the informal economy. Technical report. International Labour Conference 90th Session 2002. Available at: <http://bit.ly/2iAOMze>, Accessed: 16 January 2017.
- [12] P. Kellett, A. G. Tipple, “The home as workplace: a study of income generating activities within the domestic setting”. *Environment and Urbanization*. 12(1), 203–214, 2000.
- [13] MDG Nigeria Millennium Development Goals End-Point Report, Abridged Version, 2015, Available at: <http://bit.ly/2j2QrP9>, Accessed: 6 August 2016.
- [14] D. Rukmana, Urban planning and the informal sector in developing countries. *Planetizen*. May. 7, 2007. Available at: <http://bit.ly/2ivSNtD>, Accessed: 15 June 2014.
- [15] UNCHS, The Global Strategy for Shelter to the Year 2000: 43rd session, in Resolution 43/181, 1988. Available at: <http://bit.ly/2ivXjIR>, Accessed: 18 August 2014.
- [16] UNCHS, The Habitat Agenda Goals and Principles, Commitments and the Global Plan of Action 83 / 109 1997, Available at: <http://bit.ly/2jDZreu>, Accessed: 18 April 2014.
- [17] UN-Habitat, A new strategy of sustainable neighbourhood planning: Five Principles. Nairobi, Kenya: United Nations Human Settlements Programme, 2014, Available at: <http://bit.ly/2jZjCa>, Accessed: 18 July 2015.
- [18] UN, Millennium Development Goal Report, 2014. Available at: <http://bit.ly/2iB7cQn>, Accessed: 6 August 2016.
- [19] UN-Habitat, Informal Settlements. Habitat III Issue Papers 22 New York, 31 May 2015 Available at: <http://bit.ly/2iAVfu9>, Accessed: 6 August 2016.
- [20] World Bank Group, Global Monitoring Report 2015/2016: Development Goals in an Era of development Change, 2016, Available at: <http://bit.ly/2jE5ob5>, Accessed: 6 August 2016.