



Building Clean Cities in Nigeria



THE NIGERIAN INSTITUTE
OF TOWN PLANNERS (NITP)

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| | | |
|--------------|---|-----|
| Chapter 11 | Keeping Abuja-FCT Clean: The Efforts, Successes, Challenges and the Way Forward <i>Uche Agbanusi</i> <i>(Federal Capital Territory Administration (FCTA), Abuja)</i> | 295 |
| Chapter 12 | City Restoration and Urban Quality Control for Environmental Sustainability in Abuja, Nigeria <i>A.M. Jinadu</i> <i>(Department of Urban and Regional Planning, Federal University of Technology, Minna)</i> | 319 |
| Chapter 13 | Promoting Green Housing for Sustainable Clean Cities in Nigeria <i>Oluwasinaayomi F. Kasim and Tunde Agbola</i> <i>(Department of Urban and Regional Planning, University of Ibadan, Ibadan)</i> | 335 |
| Chapter 14 | Green Transport for Nigerian Cities <i>Olusiyi Ipingbemi</i> <i>(Department of Urban and Regional Planning, University of Ibadan, Ibadan)</i> | 365 |
| Appendix I: | The Lagos Megacity Solid Waste Management Plan and Achievements | 385 |
| Appendix II: | Rapporteur's Report for the 16th Edition of the Mandatory Continuing Professional Development Programme (MCPDP) <i>Joshua Adewumi Adebisi</i> <i>(Rapporteur-General)</i> <i>(Department of Urban and Regional Planning, The Polytechnic, Ibadan)</i> | 391 |
| Index: | | 419 |

12

City Restoration and Urban Quality Control for Environmental Sustainability in Abuja, Nigeria

A.M. Jinadu

12.1 Introduction

Cities are important human settlements which perform a lot of socio-cultural, economic and political functions. They provide the base for social interactions and cultural heritage preservation as well as the spatial frameworks for commerce, industry, employment politics and administration. Together, these activities and functions interact and compete for the use of space. The process of competition and location of these activities/functions produce an urban landscape, which gives the city its form and character (Jinadu, 2006).

The shape, form and character of emerging urban landscapes depend on the level and nature of human physical planning efforts instituted. The idea of physical development plan preparation emerge from the

need to guide and control physical development in cities to ensure orderliness and to prevent chaos. The general aim of master/development plans is, therefore, to guide physical development in space. In line with this general aim, the Abuja Master Plan was formulated to provide long-term guidance for orderly physical development and to serve as a framework within which planning for the various systems and sectors can continue. The plan provided for a system of open space and green areas to balance up the ecological need and functioning of the Federal Capital City (FCC). This provision is in line with the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) 7 on environmental sustainability, particularly target number seven, which seeks to integrate sustainable development into the policies and programmes of developing countries and to reverse loss of environmental resources.

The implementation of physical development plans in most parts of the developing world is problematic. With respect to the Abuja Master Plan, the report of the Ministerial Committee for the appraisal of physical planning and development issues at the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) noted plan distortion problem, such as illegal conversion or alteration of use at the implementation stage. Many of the district/neighbourhood centres, organized open spaces and green areas for districts in phases I and II of the Federal Capital City (FCC) have been converted to other uses, such as residential and commercial uses. The problem is that the continuous conversion of open spaces and green areas brings about environmental resource and aesthetic loss. For instance, the conversion and development of green areas that were meant to protect the hilltops, hillsides and river courses bring about such ecological problems as erosion and landslides.

In pursuant of the need to reverse the trend of open space and green area conversion at the FCC to ensure environmental sustainability in the area, the Federal Government of Nigeria, since 1999, has made efforts to address cases illegal conversion and physical development in order to restore the Abuja city. The goal of the past and current restoration exercise in the Federal Capital Territory is to recover wrongly allocated open spaces/recreational facilities, reverse all land use conversion cases

and restore the provisions of Abuja Master Plan. This chapter examined the problem of land use, open space and green area conversion in Abuja and the restoration efforts of the government. The objectives were to examine the restoration activities and strategies with a view to ascertaining the level of success and proposing sustainable measures for city restoration within the context of goal 7 of the MDGs.

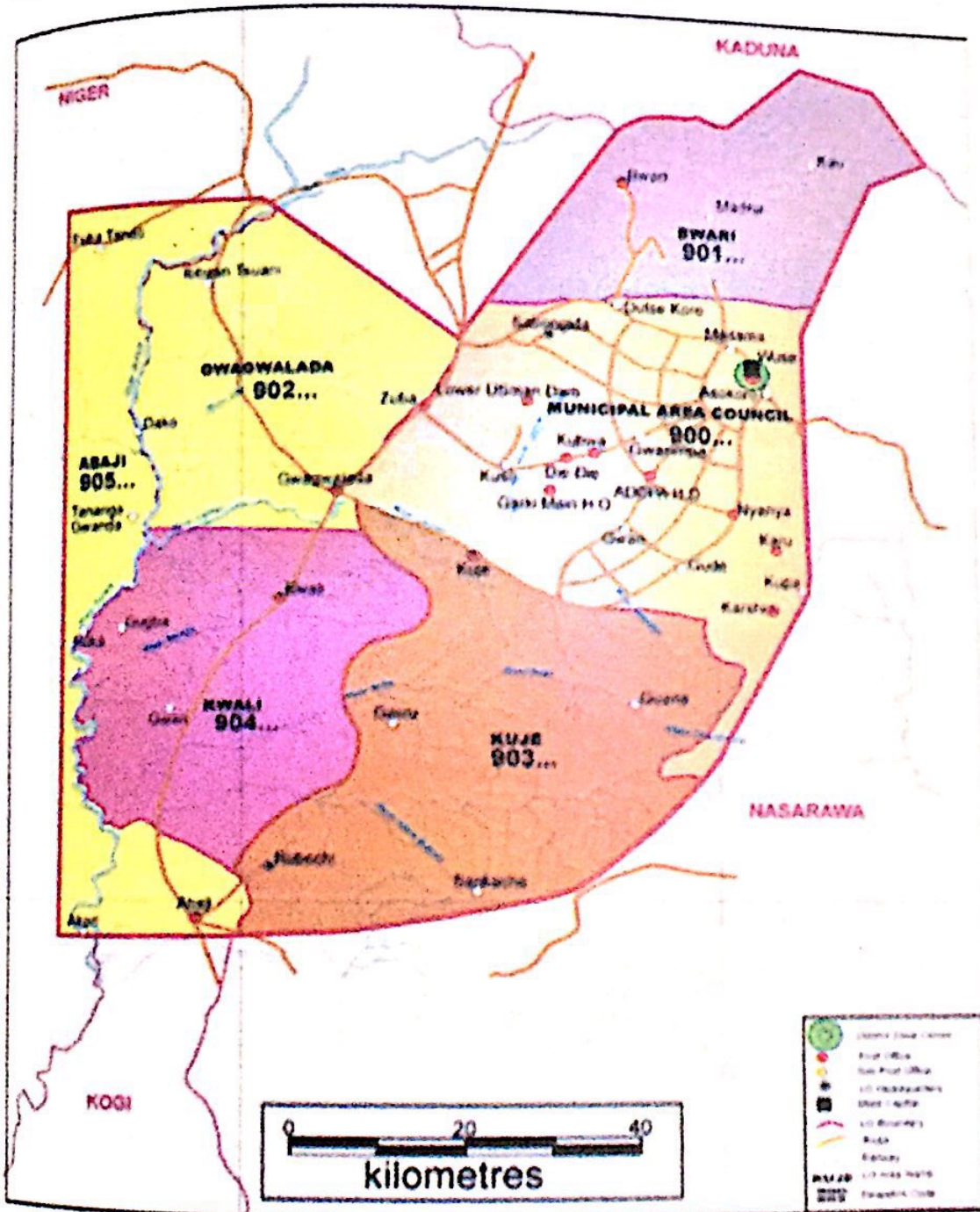


Figure 12.1: Federal Capital Territory, Nigeria
 Source: Urban and Regional Planning Department, FUT Minna, 2014

12.2 The Study Area

The FCT is located at the heart of Nigeria, approximately between latitudes $7^{\circ} 25''$ and $9^{\circ} 20''$ north of the Equator and longitudes $5^{\circ} 45''$ and $7^{\circ} 39''$ east of the Greenwich Meridian. It lies just above the hot humid lowlands of the Niger-Benue trough and it is bounded on the north by Kaduna State, on the west by Niger State, on the east and southeast by Plateau State, and on the southwest by Kogi State (Figure 12.1).

The FCC is located at Municipal Area Council, which occupies the north-eastern corner of the FCT. Phase I of the city is organized into six major districts (Garki I & II, Wuse I & II, Maitama and Asokoro Districts), each consisting of a set of neighbourhoods. The city has a total of 8, 435 hectares of land devoted to parks, rock outcrops, active recreation, gardens, protected areas (monuments) and malls (Figure 12.2). As at 1998, the Abuja Environmental Protection Board (AEPB) had a list of about 41 organized open spaces in its inventory, prominent among which are the Kwame Nkruma Park, ECOWAS Park, Area 1 Park, Area 2 Children's Park, Sokoto Street Park, Wuse Amusement Park, and Maitama Amusement Park (Abuja Master Plan, 1979).

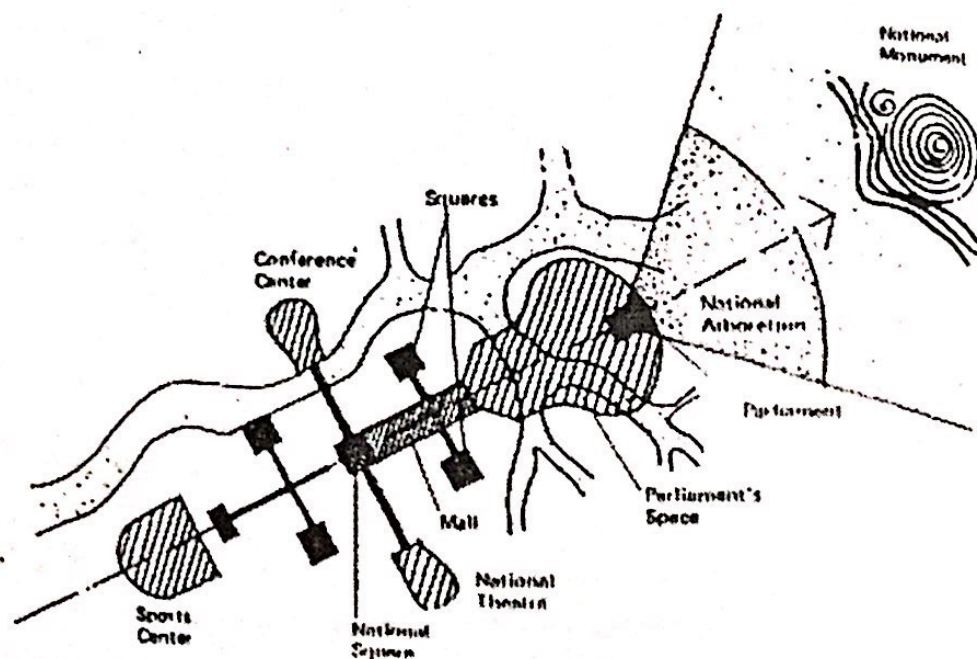


Figure 12.2: Open Space and Green Area System in Abuja City
Source: Abuja Master Plan (1979)

Over the years, high population growth and the increased demand for land and housing infrastructure have led to encroachments on the green areas and parks of Abuja city. The encroachments resulted in serious distortion of the Abuja Master Plan and this forms the basis for the restoration exercise embarked upon by the Federal Government of Nigeria.

12.3 The Abuja City Plan: Distortion Cases and Problems

The FCC plan is based on the neighbourhood concept. A neighbourhood, as provided for in the plan, has a residential enclave with 5,000-threshold population. A group of neighbourhoods form a district, which is served with a district centre and basic facilities, like schools, open spaces, recreational parks, gardens and children playgrounds. Each of the districts also has areas designated as "undevelopable green areas" – green stretches along valleys, riverbeds, hilly patches and incidental open spaces within the built environment. The district centres, open spaces, recreational parks, etc. were provided for as civic centres for socialization and recreation, while the undevelopable green areas were created to protect the hilltops, hillsides and streams/river courses from erosion and degradation.

As noted in the introductory section, many of the district centres, open spaces and green areas, as provided for in the master plan, were converted to other uses. The Ministerial Committee for the Appraisal of Physical Planning and Development Issues in the FCT reported, in 1999, that reservations for the district centres of Garki II, Wuse II and Maitama had been tampered with through subdivision and change of use. Statistics given in Table 12.1 show that 28 out of the 32 neighbourhood centres provided for in the site development plans of the six residential districts of phase I of the FCC had been converted to either corner shops or subdivided for other uses. According to Falade (1999), the Ministerial Committee identified 100 worst cases of land use conversion in the Central, Garki, Wuse, Maitama and Asokoro Districts in 1998. Fifty-one of the 100 cases recorded in nine different

land uses were for recreation and open spaces land use alone. The total amount of open space/green area land loss in these areas stood at 268.05 hectares in 1998, with Wuse (11) and Maitama (21) recording the highest cases of land use conversion (Table 12.2).

Table 12.1: Number of Open Space/Green Area Conversion in the FCC, 1999

| S\No. | Districts | Number of Neighbourhood Centres Provided | Number Converted to Corner Shops | Number Partially Subdivided |
|-------|-----------|--|----------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1 | Garki I | 3 | - | - |
| 2 | Garki II | 6 | - | - |
| 3 | Asokoro | 3 | 1 | 5 |
| 4 | Maitama | 6 | - | 2 |
| 5 | Wuse II | 8 | 4 | 6 |
| 6 | Wuse I | 6 | 5 | 4 |
| | Total | 32 | 10 | 18 |

Source: The Ministerial Committee for the Appraisal of Physical Planning and Development Issues in the FCT, 1999

Table 12.2: Cases of Open Space/Recreation Use Conversion by District, 1998

| S\No. | Districts | Cases of Conversion | Open Spaces \ Green Areas lost (ha) |
|-------|--------------|---------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 1 | Central Area | 4 | 20.72 |
| 2 | Garki | 8 | 42.49 |
| 3 | Asokoro | 7 | 28.87 |
| 4 | Wuse | 11 | 89.12 |
| 5 | Maitama | 21 | 86.85 |
| | Total | 51 | 268.05 |

Source: Adapted from FCDA (1998) and Falade (1999)

Table 12.3 shows some specific areas of open space/green area conversion and the nature of conversion made. Amongst others, land use conversion was observed at Garki Garden, Garki II District Centre, parks along Kwame Nkruma Street and Yakubu Gowon Crescent as well as green areas along IBB Way. The nature of the conversion observed in the areas range from partial to full conversion of open/green areas to residential, commercial and shops/offices spaces. The problems associated with green area conversion include indiscriminate removal of vegetation, land

degradation and destruction of microhabitats. This leads to loss of biological resources of parks; it upsets the natural city ecology and brings about aesthetic loss. Besides, the open space relief and the space organizing effects of the green areas are lost and this affects the proper functioning of the city as an ecological unit.

Table 12.3: Specific Cases and Nature of Green Area Conversion in Abuja

| S/No. | Name and Location of Park/Green area | Nature and Status of conversion |
|-------|---|--|
| 1 | Garki Garden along the inner ring road 1 at the Nnamdi Azikwe Way | Erection of fences in some part and conversion into drinking place |
| 2 | Plot 53 green area, off Ladoko Akintola Road | Fully converted and no more land to be recovered. |
| 3 | Neighbourhood Centre at Gimbiya street (plots 875, 892 - 902) | Fully converted and no more land to be recovered. |
| 4 | District centre of Garki II along Ahmadu Bello Way (plots 1067 and 1075) | The centre has been redesigned into residential and commercial outfits. |
| 5 | Park along Kwame Nkruma Street (plot 11750) | Erection of buildings on park land |
| 6 | Park by the Yakubu Gowon Crescent (plot 398) | Fully converted and no more land to be recovered. |
| 7 | Green Area near FHA Estate by IBB Way | Fully converted and no more land to be recovered. |
| 8 | Green Area opposite Florence Primary School, IBB Way (Park No. 2885) | Partly converted, plots 3203 and 3205 recoverable |
| 9 | Neighbourhood Centre by Lala Complex (Plot 108) and by Universal Furniture, (plot 569 (A7)); Aminu Kano Crescent. | Area fully developed as residential, offices and shops |
| 10 | Neighbourhood Centre near ECWA Church (plot 590) | Area redesigned and fully built as residential |
| 11 | Green Area behind NERFUND & Citizen Bank (parks 2106 and 2125) | Partly redesigned as plots 2405 and 2506 and given out to NAOWA |
| 12 | Wuse Community Centre | Area redesigned and developed as offices for NEPA, Inland Bank, Federal Ministry of Education etc. |

Source: Compiled from the Observations of the Ministerial Committee for the Appraisal of Physical Planning and Development Issues in the FCT, 1999

City Restoration Measures and Activities

City restoration in Abuja effectively began in 2003 when the FCT Administration launched the re-greening of Abuja project with massive tree planting and development control campaign. Based on the observed high level of land use contravention and conversion of open spaces and green areas, the Abuja Metropolitan Management Agency (AMMA) set a policy target of achieving 80% conformity to the Abuja Master Plan by year 2007. The policy objectives were to remove 60% of illegal settlements/structures within FCC by year 2006 and to reclaim 70% of land intended for public parks, green areas, schools etc. by 2007 (AMMA, 2006). In order to achieve the policy objectives, the Development Control Department (DCD) of AMMA was mobilized and the Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) was created in year 2004. The restoration strategies adopted by these bodies included the removal of illegal settlements/structures, recovery of public lands and greening of areas.

The city restoration activities of the DCD included control of illegal development through issuance of contravention, stop work and quit notices as well as the demolition/removal of illegal structures and shanty developments. Plate 12.1 shows a petrol station being removed to pave way for a pedestrian bridge originally designated at AYA junction of Abuja city. As shown in Table 12.4, the department issued a total of 689 stop-work order, 3,212 quit notices and demolished 12,852 houses/make-shift structures between January 2003 and July 2006. Apart from these, the department also embarked on the demolition/removal of pockets of squatter settlements in the city. In 2006 alone, the DCD removed six squatter settlements (Idu-Karmo, Jabi, Utako, Mabushi, Angwan Tiv and Wise Man's Village in Kugbo) and demolished 44,500 structures, including residential houses, schools and religious buildings (Table 12.5).

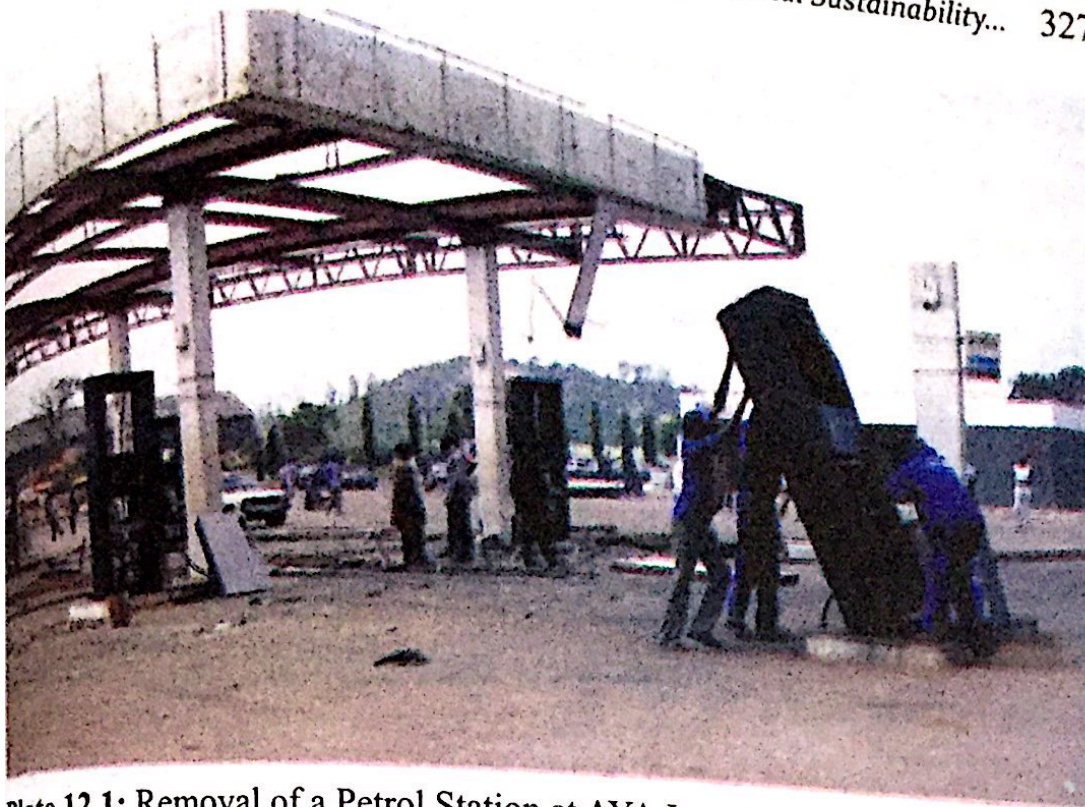


Plate 12.1: Removal of a Petrol Station at AYA Junction, Abuja
Source: Author, November 2006

Table 12.4: Development Control and City Restoration Activities, 2003–2006

| Phases | Districts | Quit notices | Stop work order | Demolitions |
|-----------|----------------|--------------|-----------------|-------------|
| Phase I | Central area | 47 | 47 | 8 |
| | Asokoro | 80 | 39 | 47 |
| | Wuse I and II | 1088 | 233 | 2029 |
| | Garki I and II | 303 | 177 | 671 |
| | Maitama | 54 | 78 | 111 |
| Phase II | Jabi | 216 | 115 | 65 |
| | Mabushi | 500 | 8 | 8 |
| | Durumi | 40 | 27 | 200 |
| | Utako | 152 | 168 | 107 |
| | Gudu | 24 | 59 | 3004 |
| | Wuye | 24 | 35 | 16 |
| Phase III | Gwarinpa | 678 | 411 | 1585 |
| | Idu\Karmo | 6 | 14 | 5001 |
| Total | | 3,212 | 689 | 12,852 |

Source: Compiled from the Records of Development Control Department, AMMA (2007)

Table 12.5: Demolition\Removal of Squatter Settlement, January-July 200

| S\No. | Location\District | Plot No. | No. of Structures |
|-------|----------------------------|--|-------------------|
| 1 | Idu-Karmo | - | |
| 2 | Kado (Angwan Tiv) | - | 19,350 |
| 3 | Kugbo (Wise Man's Village) | - | 1,060 |
| 4 | Jabi | 419 & 420, 749 - 753 | 30 |
| 5 | Nnamdi Azikiwe (Abattoir) | Abattoir site | 8,500 |
| 6 | Utako | 681,490,771,770,374 - 380, part of 488 | 451 |
| 7 | Panyan Village (Jabi) | 293 and part of 254 | 5,500 |
| 8 | Mabushi | 960, 945 & 939 | 251 |
| | | Total | 3,858 |
| | | | 44,500 |

Source: Compiled from the Records of Development Control Department, AMMA (2007)

The DCD of the FCT has executed several other control regulations between 2010 and 2014. The department has served 31 'stop work' notices, 28 'quit notices' and 9 'demolition notices' on illegal structures at various levels of development in the Nyanyan and Karu axis of the FCT. Some of the recent urban restoration efforts in the FCT include the removal of illegal buildings/shanties, illegal telecommunication masts, illegal sign boards, bill boards, and posters that have defaced public places in the city; relocation of tipper garage as well as the clean-up of the green area under the high tension electricity line at the Katampe extension of Abuja city. As shown in Table 12.6, a total of 2,158 illegal structures/shanties were demolished in seven locations in the city.

Table 12.6: Demolition of Illegal Structures\shanties, 2010 - 2014

| S\No. | Location\District | Number of Structures Demolished |
|-------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 1 | Katampe District | 200 illegal structures |
| 2 | Chikakore | 500 illegal houses |
| 3 | Jabi | 300 structures and shanties |
| 4 | Kafe District | 82 shanties and 58 fence walls |
| 5 | Durumi | 480 shanties and illegal structures |
| 6 | Kugbo and Nyanyan | 336 shanties and 2 fence walls |
| 7 | Wining Clause Estate Gwarinpa | 200 houses |
| | Total | 2,158 |

Note: Record of several other demolitions within the period is not available
Source: Compiled from the Records of FCT Development Control Department (2014)

The above development control and city restoration activities are combined with those of park development and greening of Abuja city. A substantial part of the lost green areas have been recovered, fenced and planted with ornamental flowers. The DPR has established many plant nurseries, rehabilitated the old ones and has raised over one million seedlings. The department has identified, secured and advertised 14 parks, including those at Accra Street, Berger junction, Area 1, National Hospital and Durban Street, for private-sector participation. It has completed work on the accelerated greening of between 3 and 5 hectares at the Accra Street, Wuse Zone 5 and the Millennium Park. Work has also commenced on the abandoned Jabi Dam Resort, which is designed to have artificial beach, picnic area and Nature Park, amongst others. The department is also involved in the planting and maintenance of avenue trees, lawns and ornamentals in the city.

Recently, the idea of Abuja city restoration has metamorphosed into the concept of Abuja Centenary City, as the Federal Government of Nigeria conceived the idea of modelling Abuja after cities like Dubai, Monaco and Singapore as part of the 2014 centenary celebration in Nigeria. The Centenary City is a project for the future which plans to make the new Abuja city a sustainable city that balances economic, social, cultural and environmental factors to produce harmonic development. It is to be a green city with a natural buffer that will protect the environment and nurture the culture of conservation. If this project is implemented according to plan, it will enhance the level of green development in Abuja as a capital city.

12.4 City Restoration as a Means for Achieving the MDGs

The city is certainly on the road to achieving 80% conformity to the Abuja Master Plan. As at July 2006, progress report on the master plan restoration showed that 50% of structures/development on water, sewer and under high tension lines had been removed all over the FCC (AMMA, 2006). The success and progress made in city restoration have positive implications for the achievement of the millennium

declaration (Goal 7) on the reverse of environmental resources loss and improvement of the lives of slum dwellers.

The removal of illegal/makeshift structures and slum condition from the city as well as the greening exercises have greatly improved the environmental quality of the FCC. The restoration efforts have gone a long way in restoring the visual aesthetics, preserving the environmental resources and maintaining the ecological balance of Abuja city. This will, no doubt, enhance the liveability and environmental sustainability of the city.

The programme of slum and squatter settlement removal is not without MDG content. A relocation plan was made for 16 squatter settlements with over 32, 421 structures (AMMA, 2006). The agency has established relocation sites at Pegi, Yangoji, Kuchiko, Gidan Mangoro, and Apo Mechanic Village. The relocation sites have been properly planned and laid out with plot sizes of 250-350m². Prototype building designs have also been prepared for settlers. As shown in Table 12.7, a total of 10,493 squatter landlords have benefited from the scheme as at 2007 and all the beneficiaries have paid processing fees for the plots allocated. Assessment of response level showed that, 8,897 (84.8%) beneficiaries have forwarded letters of intention to commence development. Out of these, 744 (7.1%) have commenced development, while 105 (1.0%) have completed development.

Table 12.7: Number of Beneficiaries of Relocation Scheme and Response Level

| Beneficiaries\Relocation Site | Pegi | Yangoji | Kuchiko | Gidan Mangoro | Apo Mechanic. Village | Row total | % of total |
|---|-------|---------|---------|---------------|-----------------------|-----------|------------|
| No. of beneficiaries | 5,316 | 732 | 1,429 | 2,000 | 1,016 | 10,493 | 100 |
| Persons who paid processing fee | 5,316 | 732 | 1,429 | 2,000 | 1,016 | 10,493 | 100 |
| Persons who forwarded letters of intent | 5,316 | 300 | 415 | 1,850 | 1,016 | 8,897 | 84.8 |
| Persons who have commenced development | 700 | - | 2 | 32 | 10 | 744 | 7.1 |
| Persons who have completed development | 100 | - | - | 5 | - | 105 | 1.0 |

Source: Compiled from the Records of AMMA (2007)

The relocation scheme provides the opportunity for a better living and good environmental quality for the relocating slum dwellers. Proper execution of the relocation schemes will, therefore facilitate the achievement of target number 11 of Millennium Development Goal 7, which seeks to achieve significant improvement in the lives of at least 100 million slum dwellers by 2020. However, it was observed that the level of development at the various relocation sites is low when compared with the number of beneficiaries who forwarded letters of development intent (Table 12.7). The problem of low level of development is attributed to the remoteness of the sites and lack of basic infrastructure. As at the time of establishment, only lateritic-graded road was provided and there were no water and electricity connected to the relocation sites. Developers were, therefore, not encouraged to build, as they were not willing to incur huge costs of infrastructure development. Findings on the current situation on the implementation of the relocation schemes showed that the situation has not improved after seven years of the schemes (2007-2014). Some of the relocation schemes have been abandoned and some of the beneficiaries were reported to have sold out their plots out of frustration. This is an unexpected situation which has to be reversed to meet the shelter needs of the displaced population in Abuja and the entire FCT.

12.5 Conclusion and Recommendations

The findings of this study show that Abuja city witnessed tremendous city restoration activities, backed up by policy commitment and strong political will between 2003 and 2007. The initial restoration efforts have been complemented with other development control activities of the DCD between 2010 and 2014. The high level of restoration efforts put into the removal of illegal structure and accelerated greening of Abuja is gradually moving the city towards environmental sustainability. Although the demolition and land/green area recovery exercises have severe effects on people who incurred property and financial losses, the restoration exercise is imperative in order to

reverse the loss of environmental amenities and natural resources of the city. The creation of relocation sites and allocation of plots to beneficiaries also provide the evacuated squatters/slum dwellers the opportunity to live in a better, well-planned environment.

Although the city restoration and relocation programmes of the government are commendable efforts at restoring the Abuja Master Plan, achieving green development and ensuring environmental sustainability in Abuja, there is an apparent low commitment to implementation of the established relocation schemes in the post-2007 period. The government needs to build on the gains of city restoration efforts by providing the necessary enabling environment for the relocation sites to become functional. The abandoned relocation schemes should be revisited while more sites should be opened to accommodate the shelter needs of the people. Good enabling environment, such as the payment of compensation for property loss, provision of basic infrastructure at the relocation sites and access to mortgage/micro credit finance to enable beneficiaries to develop their properties should be provided by the FCT Authority. This is the only way to achieve environmental sustainability in Abuja city without compromising the residents' shelter need as well as the improvement of the lives of slum dwellers, which are vital aspects of the MDGs.

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