

# **Roles of Urban and Regional Planning in enhancing the Services of Nigeria Custom Service**

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## **Introduction**

Cities in the world are experiencing rapid urbanization and this phenomenon is also evident in cities of the developing world. Unlike the developed world, urbanization in the developing countries is considered a misery because of the problems that accompany them (Olurin, 2003 as cited by Olujimi, 2009). Problems breed by this form of urbanization range from terrorism, crime, poor state of planning and most especially security challenges. These problems often put security operatives (Police, Military, Immigration and custom) and stakeholders on their toes on how to surmount the security challenges that comes along with the rapid urbanization experienced in our cities.

These security challenges experienced in our cities can be likened to the problems experienced during the 19th and the 20th century where all forms of social vices, health issues and security challenges were apparent. Utopians rose up to the challenges encountered during this era and these problems were surmounted (Egunjobi and Adeleye, 2015). Like the Utopians, Urban planners can also play an advisory role in tackling all problems faced in our societies, because the planning profession is a pivot of our society (Pettit, 2003). This implies that without urban and Regional planning our cities, towns, rural areas, and residential communities will not run efficiently.

As many communities face different challenges today, it is the responsibility of an urban planner to address these problems by providing viable solutions for today and the future (Pettit, 2003). Against this background, the roles that can be played by Urban and Regional Planning in enhancing the services of the Nigerian Custom Services will be discussed in this chapter.

## **History of Nigeria Custom Service**

Nigeria Customs Service is a paramilitary organisation that was established in 1891. At this time, the Nigeria custom service was under the British Colonial administration with the sole responsibility of collecting Inland Revenue from the Niger Coast Protectorate (Adamu, 2015). In 1922, the Nigeria custom service was renamed Department of Customs and Excise and this name was maintained for the next 23 years (NCS, 2017). Towards the end of 1945,

the Department of Customs and Excise was transformed and the name of the organization was changed from the Department of Customs and Excise to the Customs and Excise Preventive service. Adamu (2015) opined that, Customs and Excise Preventive Service was saddled with the responsibility of Maritime and Preventive.

The Maritime Division of the Customs and Excise Preventive Service was responsible for the collection of import and excise duties while the Preventive Division of the organisation was responsible for enforcement duties. In 1958, the Customs and Excise Management Act (CEMA) No. 55 of 1958 was promulgated, sequel to this promulgation, the affairs of the Customs and Excise Preventive Service were brought under the management of a Board (NCS, 2017). NCS (2017) further asserts that, the Federal Government's Nigerianisation policy in 1960 brought about the appointment of the first Nigerian Chairman of the Board and Chief Executive Officer of the Customs and Excise Preventive Service.

In 1978, the two units of the Customs and Excise Preventive service were merged into a unified Department of Customs and Excise with five distinct Directorates and was placed under the Federal Ministry of Finance (Adamu, 2015). The roles of the Customs and Excise Preventive service after it was merged to provide services in revenue collection from imported goods, excise duty from domestic taxable products, suppressing smuggling, suppressing dealings in fake drugs, suppressing dealings in narcotics, suppressing import and export of arms and ammunition, suppressing movement of persons and offensive materials (Adamu, 2015).

According to Adamu (2015) the Customs and Excise Preventive service at that time (1978), were playing the roles of the National Agency for Food and Drug administration Control (NAFDAC), National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA), Defence Intelligence Agency (DIA) and Defence Security Service (DSS). In 1985, the organisation took a new dimension when it was unceremoniously moved under the supervision of the Ministry of Internal Affairs. Since then the name Nigeria Custom has been in existence (Adamu, 2015).

### **Statutory Function of Nigerian Custom Service**

Over the years the Nigeria custom service has been providing a vital role in securing the borders of the country and regulating the importation and exportation of illegal goods entering and leaving the country respectively. The roles played by the custom service have a

positive impact on the economic life of any country (NCS, 2017). These roles are evident in Nigeria because there is hardly a sector of the economy in the country that is not directly or indirectly affected by the activities of the Customs service (NCS, 2017). The statutory functions of the Nigeria custom services may be limited to the following:

1. Collection of Revenue (Import /Excise Duties & other Taxes /Levies) and accounting for same;
2. Anti-Smuggling activities;
3. Security functions;
4. Generating statistics for planning and budgetary purposes;
5. Monitoring Foreign Exchange utilisation etc.;
6. Engaging in Research, Planning and Enforcement of Fiscal Policies of Government;
7. Manifest processing;
8. Licensing and registration of Customs Agents;
9. Registration and designation of collecting banks; and
10. Working in collaboration with other government agencies in all approved ports and border station

#### **Roles of Urban and Regional Planning in Enhancing the Services of Nigeria Custom Service**

In enhancing the roles of the Nigerian custom service, the Geographical Information system can be employed as a tool by the Urban Planner to ensure an effective Custom service in the country. Geographical information can be used by the urban planner in the following ways:

#### **Curtailling activities of Smugglers**

In curtailing the activities of smugglers which is one of the roles of the Nigeria custom service, urban planners can use Geographical Information system for mapping out all the conventional and unconventional routes in trans-border communities in the country and ascertain their numbers and length. According to Abba Moro, Minister of Interior 1,583 border routes were identified in the country, out of these 1,583 border routes, 1,499 were termed as illegal (unconventional) while 84 routes are considered to be legal (Ojeme and Odiniya, 2013). In Borno state alone, 100 illegal routes and over 250 footpath linking Nigeria with Niger, Chad and Cameroon were identified by the Nigeria Custom service and these routes are accustomed to smuggling (Idris, 2011 and Musa, 2013). Using GIS, the planner will

be able to ascertain the actual number of these routes instead of just giving an approximated figure. Mapping of these routes will serve as a guide to the custom service in policing the established routes (both conventional and unconventional). Also, digital mapping via GIS by the planner will help the Nigerian custom service establish routes of potential threat from those with unlikely threat of smuggling. Further analysis can be done by the urban planner to provide the custom officers with the trend and changes that have occurred with the smuggling routes in trans-border communities.

### **Conducting research, Planning and Enforcement of Fiscal Policies of the Nigerian Government**

Since the Nigeria custom service is saddled with the statutory role of conducting research, Planning and Enforcement of Fiscal Policies of the Nigerian Government. The urban planner can apply geographic information tools in all the aspects of planning processes of the custom service that is, in the area of data collection and storage, data analysis and presentation, policy making, communication with the public and decision makers (Nedovic, 1999). In communicating with the public and decision makers, the urban planner can provide a well articulated map that will easily be comprehended when enlightenment campaigns are carried out by the custom service.

### **Location of Facilities**

The question of where, why and what size of custom security outpost that should be located in the borders/ trans-border community can effectively be answered by the Urban Planner because of the planner's knowledge of location theories. Location theories serve as the basis for examining how and why the arrangement of cities and facilities are done, these theories also provides the rationale for siting service allocation by decision makers (Ayangbile and Adeleye, 2016). Corroborating this theory with geographical information system the urban planner can help the custom officers find out what exists at a particular location, the land use in that location and the conditions of all existing borders.

### **Licensing and Registration of Customs Agents**

In performing the role of Licensing and registration of Customs Agents the Urban Planner can help the custom service create a Geo-database of features (Cargos, entry and exit points, security posts) that can be displayed spatially with just a "Click" when the need arises. The

creation of the Geo-data base can help the custom service move away from the conventional physical filing system. Based on the data provided by the custom service to the planner, a model can be created to form a query to determine what happen if a certain action is taken by the custom service (Dekolo and Oduwaye, 2005).

Other areas where planning can influence the roles of Nigeria custom service are:

### **Trans-Border Planning**

Through an inclusive planning approach the Nigeria custom service can be advised on how trans-border communities will be planned in order to curtail impending crisis in the country. Aluko (2012) opined that planning of border communities and equipping them with infrastructural facilities will restrain the tides of arms smuggling along the borders. This prior information, when provided to decision makers, will go a long way in helping the custom service achieve an effective conflict management in the country. More so, planning of border community will enhance the work of the Nigeria custom and the issues of terrorism (Boko Haram) in the northeast will be reduced when border communities are planned (Amaliya and Nwankpa, 2014). This implies that planning will simplify the work of Nigeria Custom Service.

### **Port Design and Planning**

Effective planning will help to achieve a hitch free circulation of freight within the ports. The Nigerian Custom service can be advised by the planner on where intermediary freight logistics hubs and transport terminals should be located within the ports. This can be accomplished after the planner must have carried out a traffic flow survey, traffic capacity survey and accident survey within and around the port. Also, design and planning of ports that will be presented by the planner should be problem solving and this will help minimise any domestics accident that may occur within the port.

### **Environmental impact Assessment**

In Sitting of inland ports and sea ports the planner with his expertise in environmental impact assessment can advise the custom service and other stakeholders on the implication of sitting such facility in a particular location. Also, the Knowledge of EIA can be extended to the custom service in the area of screening of crates, containers and cargoes. When there is a

need to dredge the seaports, the planner can further advise the custom service on the implication of such actions on the inhabitants of the locality.

### **Conclusion**

The roles of Urban and Regional Planning cannot be undermined in any profession because planning is fundamental to any society that will be practicable in ensuring safety and comfort. Since most activities of the Nigeria Custom Service are carried out in space, it will be so pertinent to seek the advice of the urban Managers (Physical Planner) in performing her roles. Especially, roles of the Nigeria Custom Service that have to do with research, planning and enforcement of government fiscal Policies.

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