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NIGER STATE

NIGER STATE URBAN POLICY

FEASIBILITY POLICY NOTE

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United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat)
P.O. Box 30030 00100 Nairobi GPO KENYA
Tel: 254-020-7623120 (Central Office)
www.unhabitat.org

Acknowledgements

UN-Habitat team

Programme coordinators: Kibong Lee, Remy Sietchiping

Author: Emmanuel Gbadebo Adeleke

Contributors: Grace Githiri, Michael Kinyanjui, Kibong Lee, Dennis Mwamati

Niger State

Programme coordinator: Mustapha Zubairu

Contributors Niger State: Ahmed Abdullahi, Bature Abdullahi, Habiba Ahmed, Ibrahim Audu, Idris Aliyu Auna, Mohammed Baba, Lucky Barau, Hassan Chado, Umar Danbaba, John Dawaba, Abdul Hussain, Shuaibu Hussaini, Ibrahim Jemaku, Sabo Jibrin, Usman Liman, Adamu Mustapha, Bashar Nuhu, Sarah Toloju, Mustapha Zubairu,

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Table of contents

Acronyms and abbreviations

AIDS	Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome
FCT	Federal Capital Territory
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
LGA	Local Government Area
LUA	Land Use Act
MDAS	Ministries, Departments and Agencies
MMR	Maternal Mortality Rate
NBS	National Bureau of Statistics
NIGIS	Niger State Geographic Information System
NISEPA	Niger State Environmental Protection Agency
NPC	National Population Commission
NSBS	Niger State Bureau of Statistics
NSUP	Niger State Urban Policy
NSWB	Niger State Water Board
NUA	New Urban Agenda
NUP	National Urban Policy
PPP	Public-Private Partnership
RUWTSAN	Niger State Rural Water Supply and Sanitation Agency
SDGS	Sustainable Development Goals
STI	Sexually Transmitted Infection
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UN-HABITAT	United Nations Human Settlements Programme
URL	Urban-Rural Linkages

List of tables

List of figures

Suleja, Niger State Nigeria
© Juju Films/ Flickr

I. Demographic dynamics and urbanization

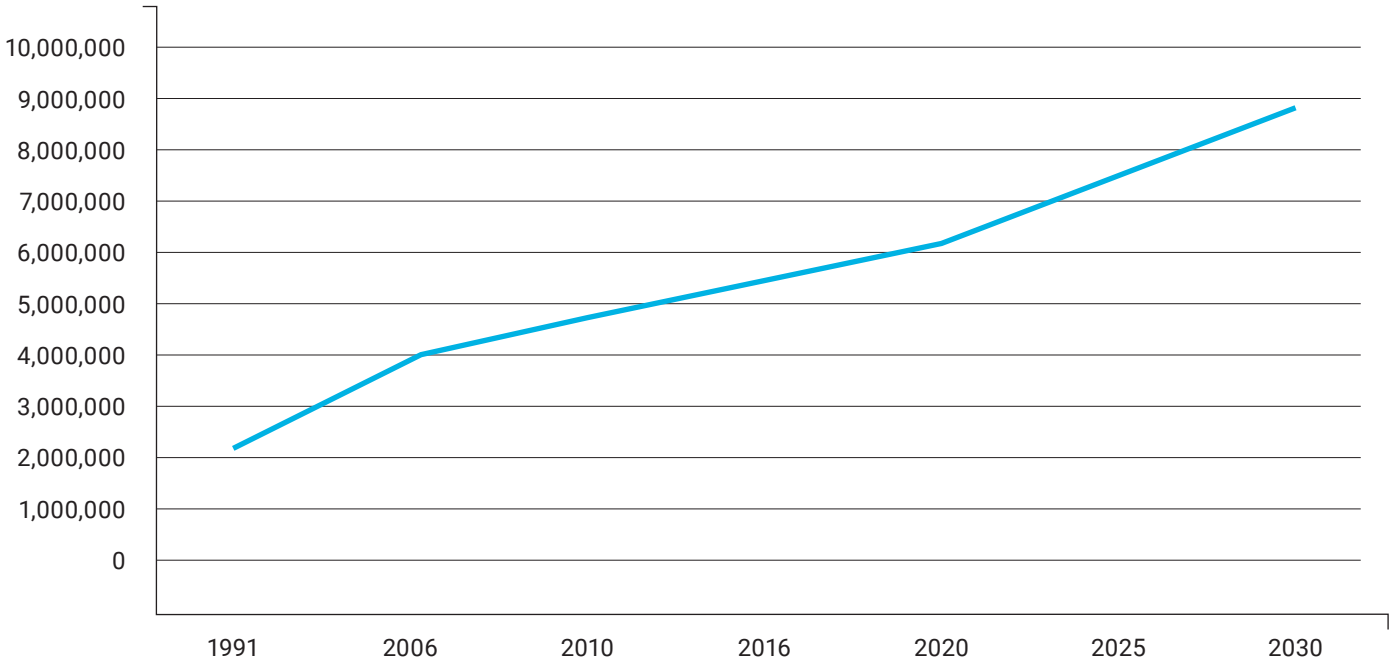
A. Demographic dynamics

1. Demography

Niger State is located in the north-central region of Nigeria between latitudes 8.020N and 10.200 N, and longitudes 3.380E and 7.030E, sharing an international boundary with Benin in the west and state boundaries with Kebbi and Zamfara States in the north, Kaduna and the Federal Capital Territory in the east, and Kogi and Kwara in the south. It is the largest State in terms of landmass area (76,469.903 km^2); it has lowland terrain covering 18,007 km^2 (24.94 per cent), plains covering 24,181 km^2 (33.49 per cent), uplands covering 20,616 (28.55 per cent) with the remaining 9,593.3 km^2 (13.01 per cent) made up of highlands.

Statistics show that the population of Niger State has been growing steadily. In 1979, the population was 1,745,664 (Niger State Regional Plan),[1] however the 1991 National Population and Housing Census revealed that by then the population had increased to 2,421,581; by 2006 it was 3,950,249 and by 2017 it was 5,712,778.[2] Projections are that by 2050 the population of the State will be 17,219,613 (based on annual growth rate of 3.4 per cent for Niger State) (see figure 1).

FIGURE 1 Trend analysis of Niger State population (1991–2050)



Adapted from (National Bureau of Statistics (2015); Niger State Bureau of Statistics (2012; 2017a).

** Population was further projected from 2017–2050.

1 Niger State Regional Plan Report 1979–2000.

2 Niger State Bureau of Statistics (2017a). Statistical Year Book.

2. Demographic structure

The demographic structure of Niger State reflects a growing young population (see table 1). According to the 2006 National Population and Housing Census, about 36 per cent of the approximately 4 million people in Niger State were aged less than 10 years, 21 per cent were aged between 10 and 19 years, and 39 per cent were in the prime age bracket between 20 and 59 years. The population of the elderly was also estimated to be 4 per cent in 2006.[3] This is a very large cohort of young people, particularly of young children, who will be entering the educational system and then the labour force (under an ideal scenario). Gender disaggregation is another critical indicator in the demographic analysis. As of 2017, the State's disaggregated population was 2,895,339 males and 2,817,439 females.[4]

3. Population distribution

The spatial distribution of the population in Niger State is uneven because resources and opportunities are not evenly distributed. Some areas are densely populated because of the presence of infrastructural facilities and employment opportunities, while others are sparsely populated due to a lack of the same.

The 2006 National Population Census in Nigeria showed that in Niger State, the Mokwa Local Government Area (LGA) had the larger proportion of the population in the State, followed by Shiroro LGA, while the Agwara LGA had the smallest population (see table 2).

TABLE 1 Population distribution by five-year age groups: 2006

SERIAL NUMBER	AGE GROUPS	2006
1	0 – 4	786,009
2	5 – 9	628,204
3	10 – 14	443,402
4	15 – 19	391,175
5	20 – 24	351,104
6	25 – 29	335,405
7	30 – 34	257,413
8	35 – 39	190,217
9	40 – 44	161,193
10	45 – 49	105,863
11	50 – 54	100,079
12	55 – 59	43,193
13	60 – 64	54,327
14	65 – 69	23,925
15	70 – 74	30,228
16	75 – 79	12,795
17	80 – 84	19,772
18	85 and above	20,468
	Total	3,954,772

Source: NSBS (2012).

3 National Population Commission (2006). National Population and Housing Census.

4 Niger State Bureau of Statistics (2017a). Statistical Year Book.

TABLE 2 Disaggregated population by local government area 2017

SERIAL NUMBER	LOCAL GOVT AREA	MALE	FEMALE	TOTAL POPULATION 2017
1	Agaie	96,354	94,465	190,819
2	Agwara	42,315	40,525	82,839
3	Bida	135,411	132,625	268,036
4	Borgu	126,146	123,519	249,665
5	Bosso	108,387	105,599	213,987
6	Chanchaga	152,058	139,955	292,013
7	Edati	116,451	114,411	230,862
8	Gbako	92,263	90,968	183,231
9	Gurara	65,225	66,052	131,277
10	Katcha	87,431	87,202	174,633
11	Kontagora	112,358	107,164	219,522
12	Lapai	86,634	82,406	169,040
13	Lavun	154,775	148,253	303,029
14	Magama	131,076	131,062	262,138
15	Mariga	145,751	142,576	288,328
16	Mashegu	155,878	154,981	310,858
17	Mokwa	178,352	172,464	350,815
18	Munya	75,959	73,493	149,452
19	Paikoro	114,694	113,798	228,493
20	Rafi	136,356	132,496	268,853
21	Rijau	128,382	126,142	254,524
22	Shiroro	171,379	169,046	340,425
23	Suleja	161,830	148,851	310,682
24	Tafa	59,983	61,176	121,158
25	Wushishi	59,889	58,210	118,099
TOTAL		**2,895,339**	**2,817,439**	**5,712,778**

Source: Niger State Bureau of Statistics (2017b).

4. Population density

In 1979, the average population density for Niger State was 30 people per km2 in an area of 76,470 km^2. By 2006, the population density had increased to 52 people per km^2 – the total population for the State being 3,95 million – and in 2017 it was approximately 75 people/km^2.

The population density is expected to increase to 226 individuals per km^2 by 2050. Statistically, population pressure in the State is still relatively low; in 2006, Bida LGA was densest followed by Chanchaga, Suleja and Tafa LGAs, while Borgu LGA had the least population density (see table 3).

TABLE 3 Population density by local government area in 2006

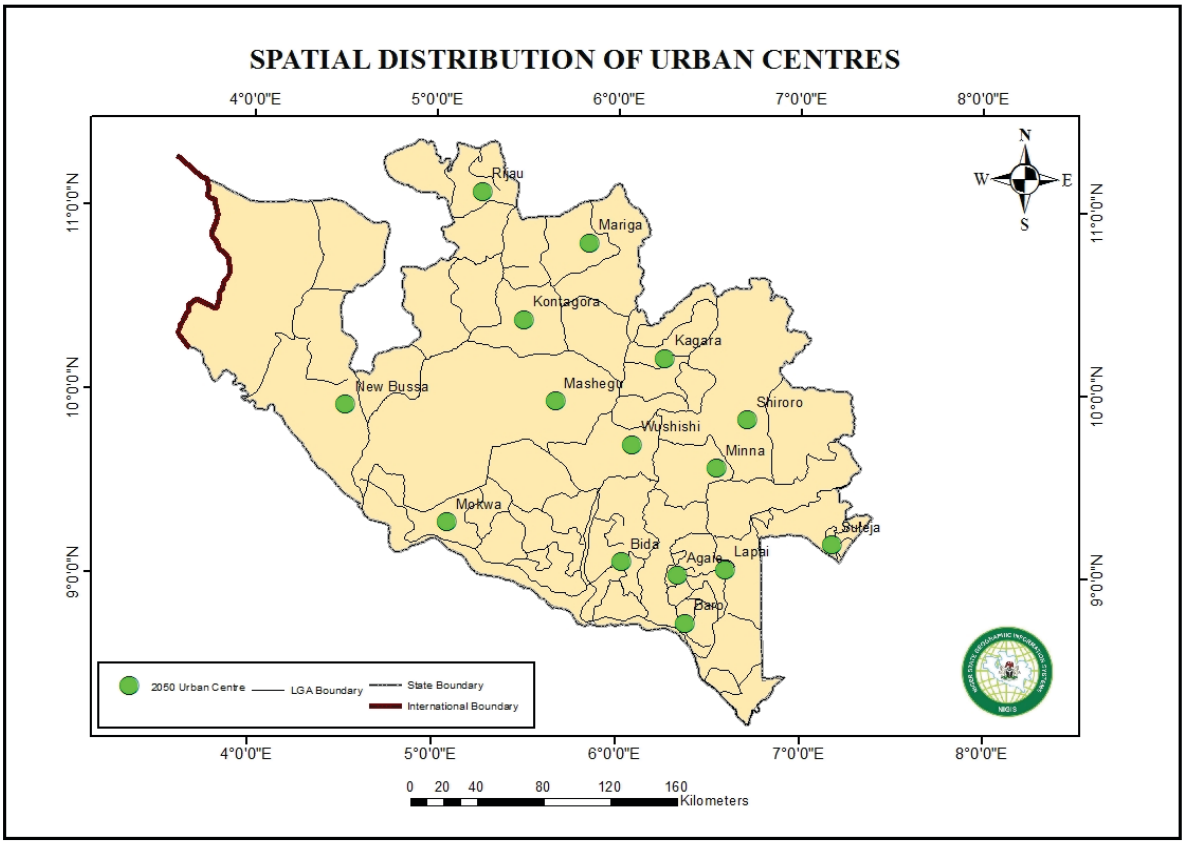
LGA	HEADQUARTERS	LAND AREA (KM2)	POPULATION DENSITY
Agaie	Agaie	1,972.6	67
Agwara	Agwara	2,105.9	27
Bida	Bida	50.0	3,764
Borgu	New-Bussa	11,782.5	15
Bosso	Maikunkele	1,606.1	92
Chanchaga	Minna	73.4	2,744
Edati	Enagi	759.7	211
Gbako	Lemu	1,912.7	67
Gurara	Gawu-Babangida	1,126.3	81
Katcha	Katcha	1,686.1	72
Kontagora	Kontagora	2,179.3	70
Lapai	Lapai	3,265.5	34
Lavun	Kutigi	4,218.5	50
Magama	Nasko	3,985.2	46
Mariga	Bangi	5,991.2	33
Mashegu	Mashegu	10,009.7	21
Mokwa	Mokwa	4,478.4	55
Munya	Sarkin-Pawa	2,310.2	45
Paikoro	Paiko	2,259.2	70
Rafi	Kagara	3,558.7	51
Rijau	Rijau	3,432.2	51
Shiroro	Kuta	5,558.0	42
Suleja	Suleja	153.4	1,412
Tafa	Sabon Wuse	226.5	369
Wushishi	Wushishi	1,779.4	46
TOTAL		**76,481.1**	**52**

Source: Niger State Bureau of Statistics (2012).

B. Urbanization trends

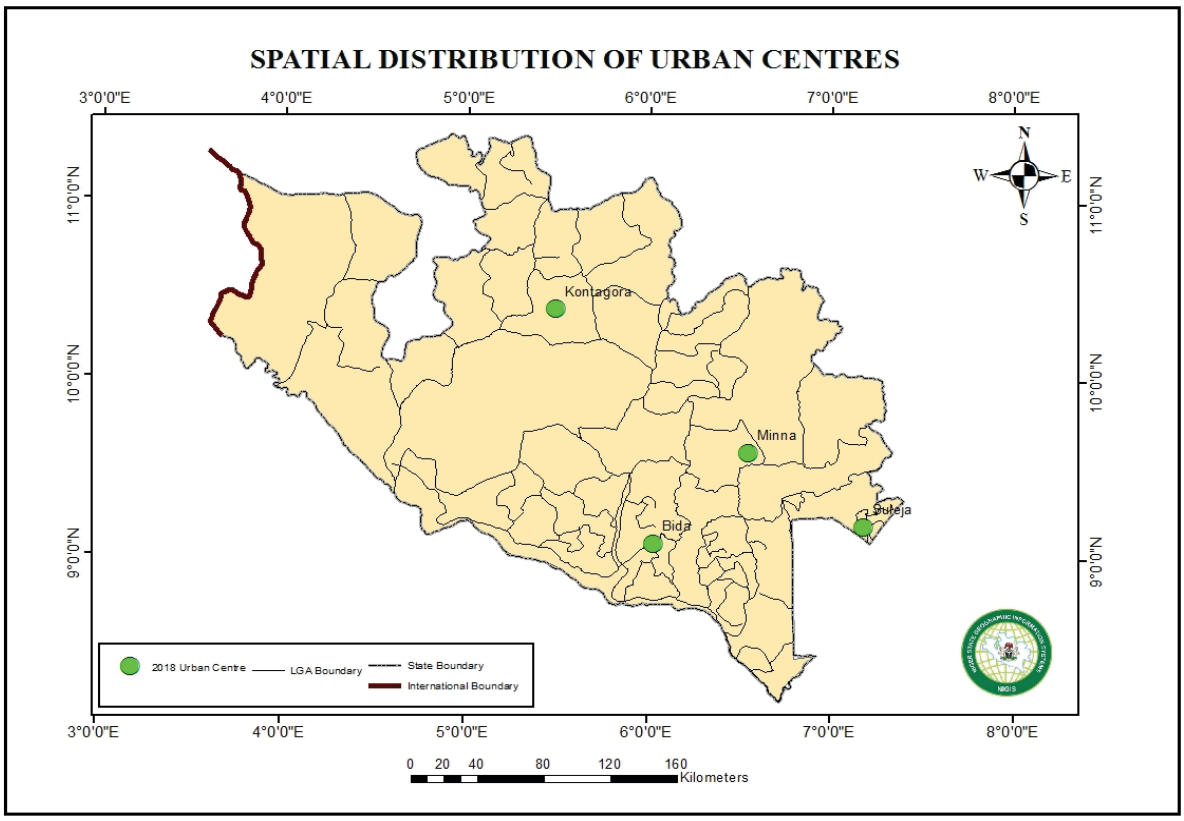
As of 2020, there is no official figure establishing the rate of urbanization or proportion of inhabitants residing in urban spaces in the Niger State due to a lack of data and inconsistencies in defining urban areas and boundaries. Nevertheless, an attempt was made to analyse urban growth using extent of land-use land cover and the number of urban centres. Prior to 1976 when Niger State was created, the State was predominantly a dispersed agrarian settlement. However, since its creation and subdivision into 25 LGAs (in 1996) for administrative and development purposes, spatial growth in the State has been on the increase. In 1979, only four settlements – Bida, Kontagora, Minna and Suleja – were declared urban (for specialized functions) and these four settlements are now the (major) urban centres in the State, with a population of at least 150,000 people in each. Additionally, to channel development to the grassroots, the State Government declared all local government headquarters as being urban centres, including Baro settlement. It is envisaged that by 2050, 11 towns will have developed into major urban centres, thus increasing the number from 4 to 15 using the population threshold of 150,000 inhabitants. These towns are Agaje, Baro, Lapai, Kagara, Mariga, Mashegu, Mokwa, New Bussa, Rijau, Shiroro and Wushishi (see figures 2 and 3).

FIGURE 2 Spatial distribution of urban centres (2019)



Source: Niger State Geographic Information Systems.

FIGURE 3 Spatial distribution of urban centres (2050)



Source: Niger State Geographic Information Systems (NIGIS).

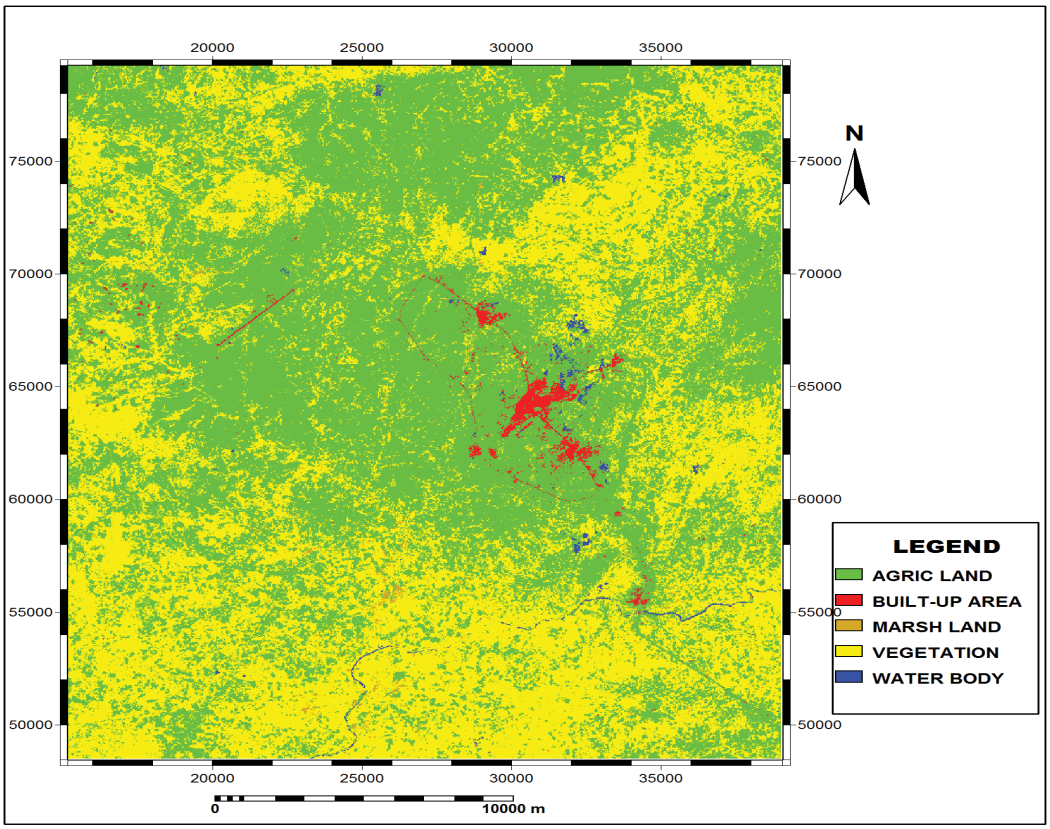
It is interesting to note that a major urban area such as Minna gives a clear picture of urbanization in the State when looking at the extent of land cover (see figures 4 and 5). As the population increased overtime, there was a corresponding increase in land-use land cover, particularly in urban centres. For instance, a trend analysis of the land-use land cover in Minna between 1986 and 2017 shows the phenomenon of urban growth in the city. Built-up areas of Minna city in 1986 covered 0.81 per cent of the total land area, which had increased to 2.41 per cent by 1996,[5] 3.8 per cent by 2000, 19.1 per cent by 2010 and 48.2 per cent by 2017.[6]

Nonetheless, continuous urban expansion is not only wasteful in terms of land and energy consumption, it will also lead to the alteration of ecological systems in different parts of the State. In order to mitigate negative externalities of rapid and unplanned urban growth which threatens sustainable development, there is a need to harness urbanization and promote an urban paradigm shift with supporting policies and frameworks that can leverage it for increased development gains and guide it towards sustainable patterns.

5 Morenikeji, G. et al. (2015).

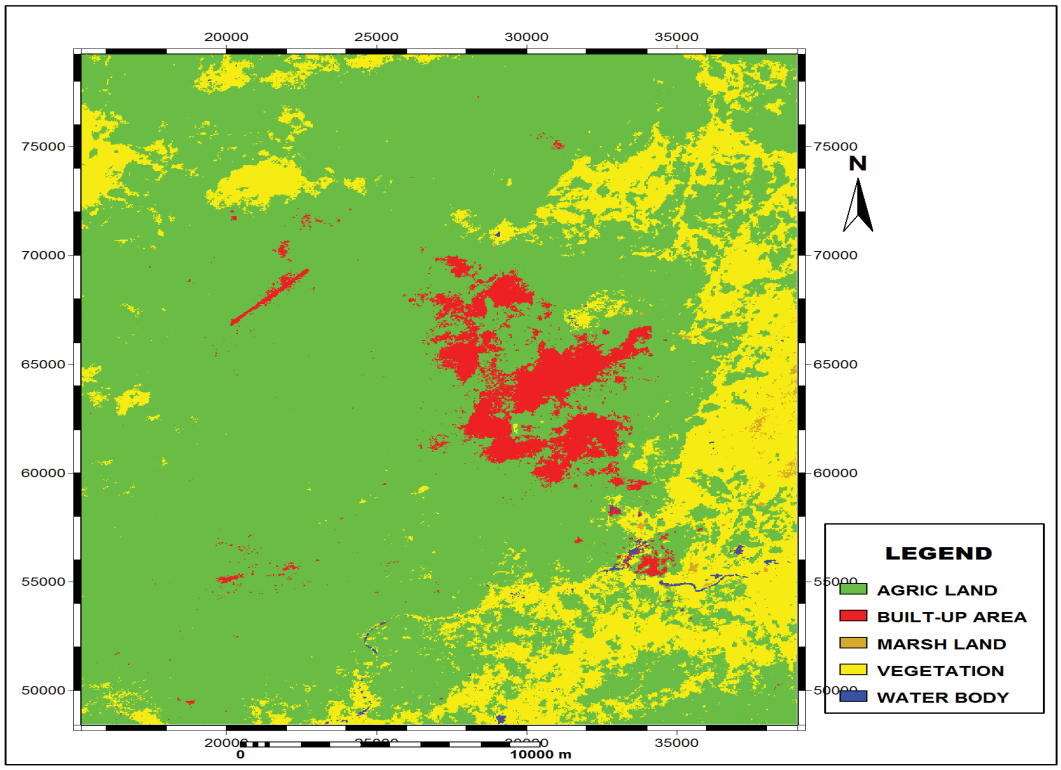
6 Daniyan M. and Muhammed M. (2018).

FIGURE 4 Extent of land-use land cover in Minna (1986)



Source: Morenikeji et. al, (2015).

FIGURE 5 Extent of land-use land cover in Minna (2011)



Source: Morenikeji et. al, (2015).

II. Urban development challenges in Niger State

A. Infrastructure and service deficits

The availability of a wide range of services and infrastructure is a determinant of how safe, resilient and sustainable a settlement could be. Services are the facilities needed to meet basic, social and economic needs of people in any region or human settlement. In 2020, one of the most visible challenges to achieving sustainable development in Niger State is the inadequacy of basic services and infrastructure. Lack of access to basic and social services hinders the productivity of human resources, sustainable economic growth and poses a threat to the wellbeing of Nigerlites.

1. Provision of and access to improved water supply

Water is essential for survival because of its universal use for domestic, agricultural and industrial purposes. Particularly at the domestic level, potable water is important to ensure healthy living conditions as well as freedom from the threat of water-borne diseases.

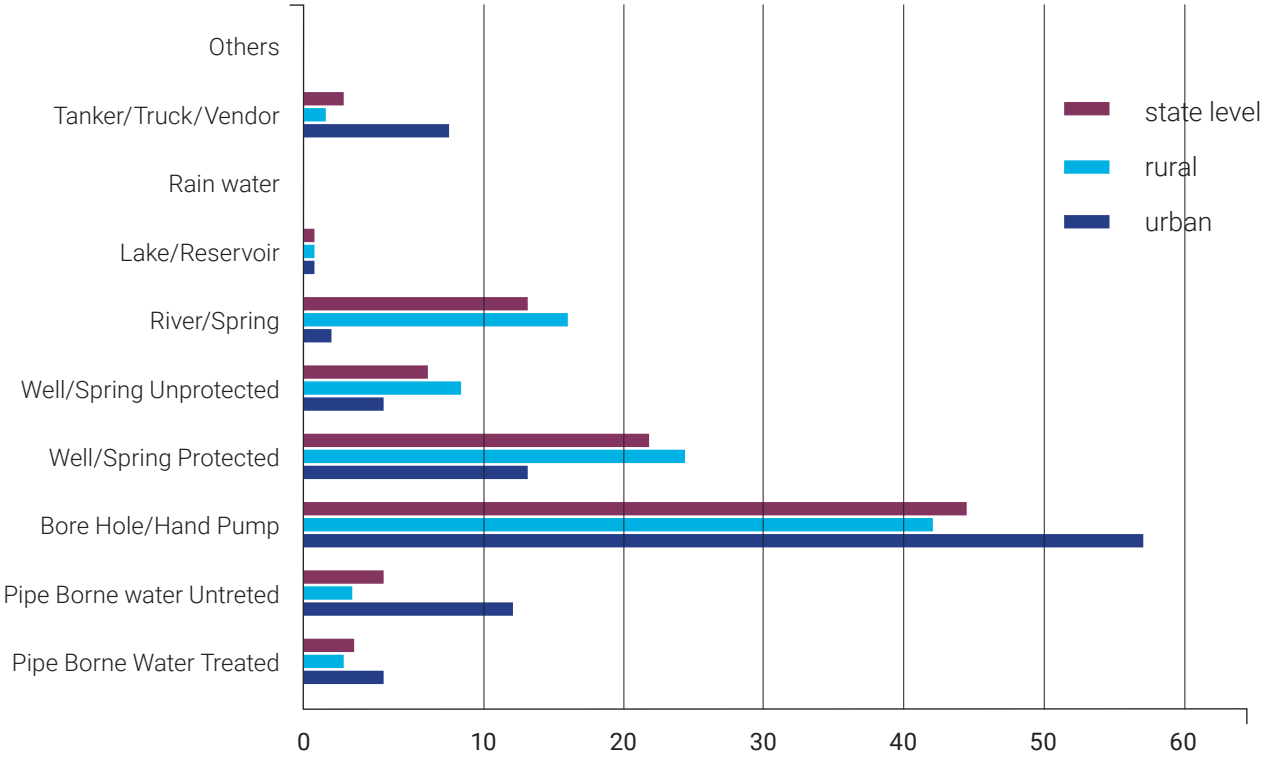
Clean water is essential for human survival, wellbeing and for general economic development; the Sustainable Development Goals (particularly Goal 6) and the New Urban Agenda contain elements stressing the fact that safe water is vital for human health, social dignity, healthy ecosystems and productive livelihoods. In an attempt to ensure the provision of adequate and safe water for all Nigerlites, the State Government, through its agencies the Niger State Water Board and Niger State Rural Water Supply and Sanitation Agency, has over the years constructed water infrastructure which led to the development of 5 urban water supply schemes, 32 semi-urban water schemes, 35 rural water supply schemes, 53 bi-water schemes, 9 reservoirs, 386 wells, 5,772 boreholes and 10 dams all over the State (NSBS, 2017a; Niger State Water Board).

Statistics from 2014 revealed that the main source of drinking water in Niger State, in both urban and rural areas, was boreholes/hand pumps (see figure 6). The statistics also showed that there was a clear disparity in access to improved water supply (pipe-borne water) and water facilities across the State because the service coverage from Niger State Water Board was limited to only 12 out of 25 LGAs, while only 32 wards out 156 wards had access to pipe-borne water as the main source of drinking water.

Other wards relied on other sources of water which was mostly untreated and not safe for human health (NSBS, 2017a). Of the total boreholes in the State, 3,111 (53.89 per cent) were non-functional while 2,661 (46.10 per cent) were functional. Bida LGA had the most functional boreholes at 312 (10.02 per cent) while Mashegu LGA had the fewest at 15 (1.64 per cent). Lapai LGA had the highest number of non-functional boreholes at 256 (9.26 per cent).[7]

7 Niger State Bureau of Statistics, (2013).

FIGURE 6 Source of drinking water during dry season (urban/rural)



Adapted from Niger State Bureau of Statistics (Socioeconomic Survey, 2014).

» *Alternative source of water supply in Bosso – Minna*

© UN-Habitat/Emmanuel Adeleke (2019)

2. Lack of access to improved sanitation

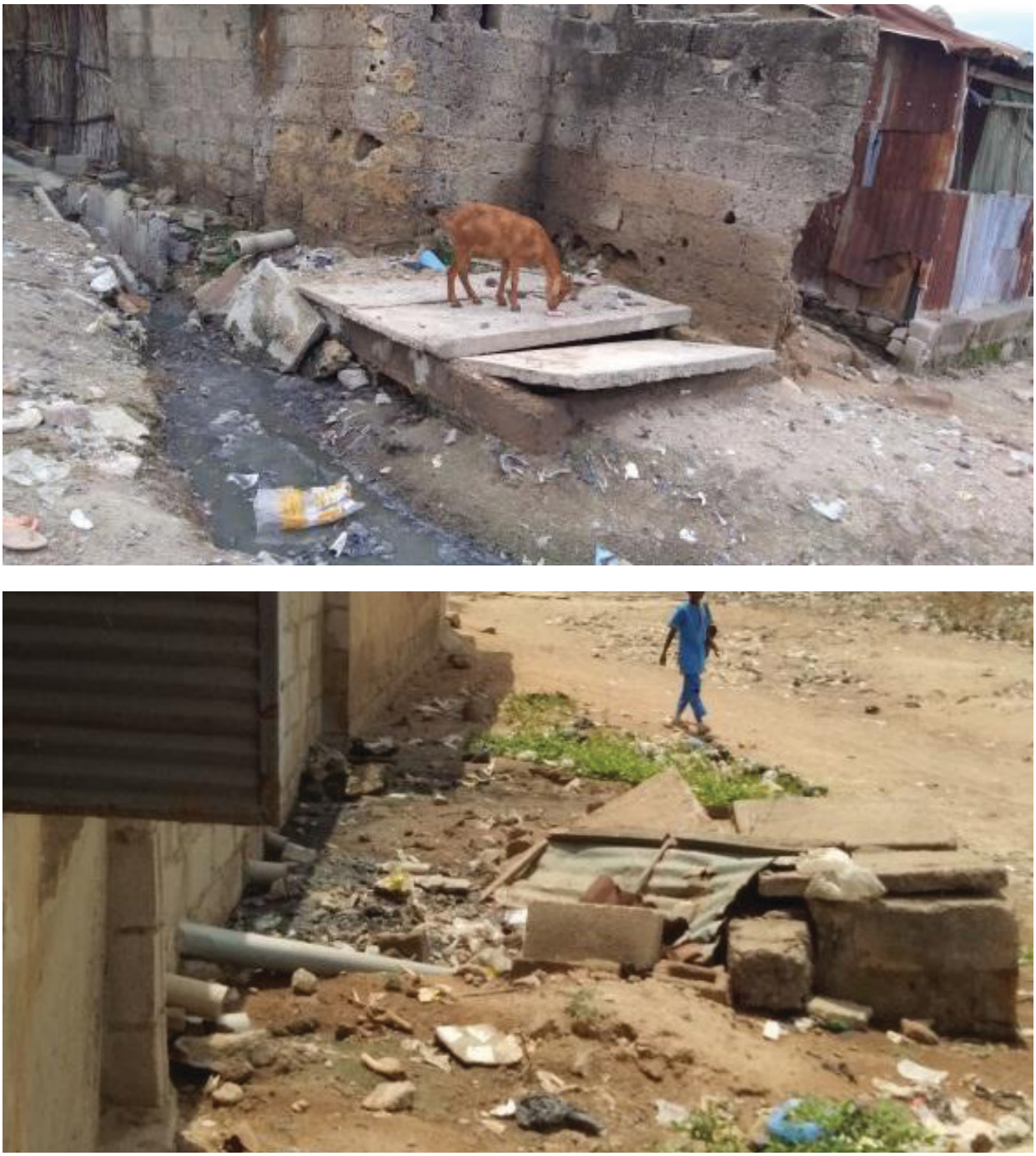
The sanitation in Niger State is very poor. According to a Niger State Socioeconomic Survey carried out in 2014, most of the buildings sampled did not have access to sanitary facilities, with the highest occurrence of such buildings being in the rural areas.

The widely used sanitary facility in the State was a covered pit latrine, while the rate of use of this facility in urban areas was 47.1 per cent and 31.5 per cent in the rural areas (see table 4). An uncovered pit latrine system was used by 17 per cent of all sampled households; very few had toilet-on-water and flush to septic tank systems in urban areas. The number of households using flush to sewerage was 9.5 per cent of those sampled and the number using ventilated improved pit latrines was as low as 1.8 per cent.

Furthermore, a pail or bucket system was the least-used toilet facility in the State, with 1 per cent of sampled houses using this method. Statistics also showed that there was disparity in assess to improved sanitation between urban and rural areas, and between local government areas. In Katcha and Lapai LGAs, only 1 per cent and 2 per cent of the households respectively had access to improved sanitation while Mokwa and Tafa LGAs had the highest number of households with access to improved sanitation.

TABLE 4 Distribution of access to toilet facilities by type (LGA and sector)

TOILET	URBAN	RURAL	STATE
None	3.6	27.9	23.2
Toilet on water	3.6	0.8	1.3
Flush to sewerage	25.8	5.7	9.5
Flush to septic tank	6.1	1.1	2.1
Pail/bucket	0.5	1.1	1
Covered pit latrine	47.1	31.5	34.5
Uncovered pit latrine	11	18.5	17
VIP latrine	2.3	1.6	1.8
Others	0	11.9	9.6



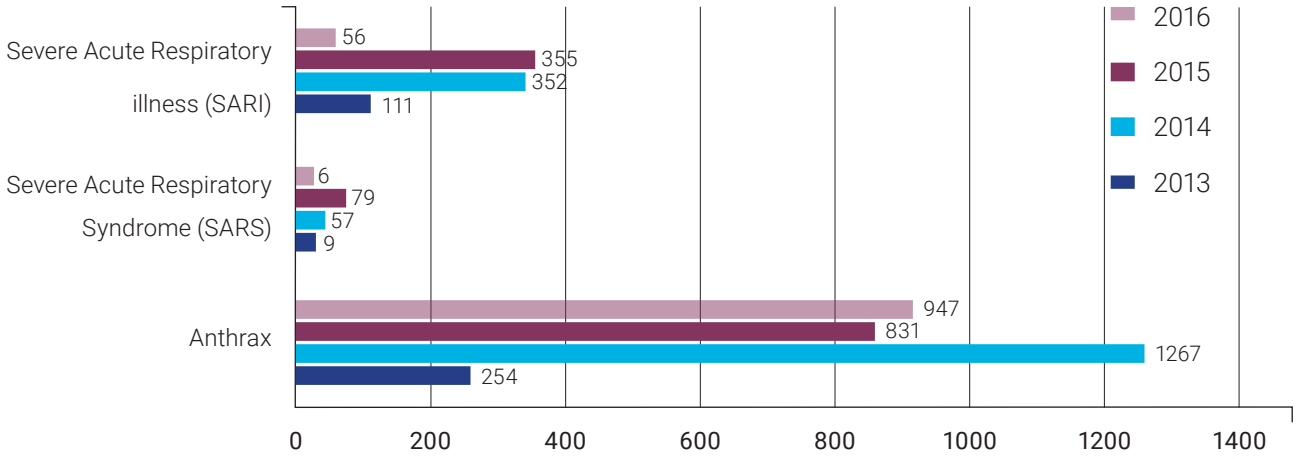
» *Sewerage system at Tudun Fulani – Minna*

© UN-Habitat/Emmanuel Adeleke (2019).

3. Unsustainable solid waste management

Waste management is another acute issue in Niger State. Most households (in urban, peri-urban and rural areas) practised an unsustainable method of solid waste disposal. This was evident in the prevalence of open burning, open dumping and dumping of waste inside the drainage channel believing that the rain will wash the waste away. This practice poses a serious threat to the health (such as respiratory disorder) and wellbeing of Nigerlites over time (figure 7).

FIGURE 7 Reported respiratory cases in Niger State



Adapted from Niger State Bureau of Statistics (2017a).

» *Open Dumping in Minna*

» *Blocked drainage in Suleja*

© UN-Habitat/Emmanuel Adeleke (2019).

4. Lack of access to clean energy

An important element of the infrastructure in the development of a human settlement is energy supply. Energy is the lifeblood of economies around the world and global economic growth depends on adequate, reliable and affordable supplies of it. It is clear that without adequate and stable energy – in particular an electricity supply – there cannot be any meaningful economic development.

In 2013, 192 political wards out of the 274 in Niger State had access to electricity, while only 475 towns/villages were connected to an electricity supply (Niger State Bureau of Statistics 2013). Despite the installation of three hydro power stations in the State (Kainji, with a generating capacity of 760 MW, Jebba with a generating capacity of 540 MW and Shiroro with a generating capacity of 600 MW) and a little above average (57 per cent) rate of electrification in the State, the power supply is still erratic. As of 2020, only 2.58 million people are directly connected to the grid, 80,000 people live in grid-connected areas without a household connection, and 2.34 million people live without grid connection in rural areas (Lemu, 2017).

Access to constant, affordable and clean energy is a major challenge to economic growth and environmental sustainability and this has continued to increase the rate of deforestation, greenhouse gases emission and pollution, thus contributing to global warming and environmental concerns.

5. Poor health care system

Despite the efforts of the State Government on the health front, Niger State still battles with an acute public health crisis. Data from 2015 data revealed that the maternal mortality rate was 130 per 100,000 live births, the under-five maternal mortality rate was 103 per 1,000 live births and the infant mortality rate was 260 per 1,000 live births. Life expectancy was 54 years (table 5).

In 2017, Niger State Bureau of Statistics reported that for the years 2014, 2015 and 2016, the number of inpatients recorded across the State was 2.5 million, 2.5 million and 3.3 million respectively. In the same years there was a high prevalence of diseases such as HIV/AIDs, diarrhoea, malaria, pneumonia, sexually transmitted infections, typhoid fever etc. This could be attributed to insufficient health-care facilities – particularly in rural areas – malnutrition, lack of access to improved water and sanitation, and poor living conditions.

TABLE 5 Infant, under-five and maternal mortality rates

INDICATOR	WORLD	WEST AND CENTRAL AFRICA	NIGERIA	NIGER STATE	SDG TARGET
Infant mortality rate per 1,000 live births	34	72	74	260	12
Under 5 mortality rate per 1,000 live births	46	109	117	103	25
Maternal mortality rate per 100,000 live births	210	590	560	130	Less than 70

Source: UNICEF State of the World's Children Report 2015; Niger State Vision 3:2020; 2030 Agenda.

B. Poor connectivity within and between cities

Connectivity is one of the elemental factors in any land-use development pattern as it forms a fundamental part of settlement development needed to open up regions and provide access to natural resources. It is also the veins and arteries of urban areas, linking together social and functional zones. Ali, (2010) sees transport as an important element for the survival of modern society; without it there would be no life in the city as it becomes an essential service in urban centres which enables people, businesses and other organizations to carry out their economic activities. Despite the huge potential of agriculture for economic growth and shared prosperity in Niger State, poor connectivity within and between urban centres impedes economic growth.

Almost all the urban centres in the State are connected by road while few towns and cities are connected by rail. As of 2020, there is 358 km rail length connecting different towns: Baro – Badeggi – Minna; Jebba – Mokwa – Zungeru – Minna, albeit with little or no train services. The poor condition of the roads in most cases results in increased in travel time, more road accidents, loss of lives, loss of business, economic loss, and wear and tear on vehicles. For instance, due to poor connectivity, the current travel time from Minna to Suleja (102.3 km) is 2 hours rather than 1 hour 20; Minna to Bida (89.4 km) is 2 hours and 15 minutes rather than 1 hour; Minna to Kontagora (197.1 km) is currently 3 hours and 10 minutes rather than 2 hours and 30 minutes.

These urban centres are connected by single carriageway roads and are not served by frequent train services. Though there is an ongoing improvement in the road network linking different rural areas to towns and urban centres, there are still several challenges.

» *Minna – Suleja Road*

© UN-Habitat/Emmanuel Adeleke (2020).

C. Local economies, employment and poverty

In Niger State, the rate of investment in infrastructure development to boost job creation and firm productivity is very low. This has significantly contributed to the prevalence of a high rate of poverty (61.2 per cent) and unemployment (39.4 per cent) (United Nations, 2015; NBS, 2012). As of 2020, agriculture is the main driver of the State's economy (a sector regarded as being a low producer). In 2011, the agriculture sector accounted for 88 per cent of the gross domestic product of the State, according to the State GDP Pilot Survey, 2013. Over 80 per cent of the State's population was engaged in agriculture (farming, fishing and cattle rearing) while nearly 90 per cent of the rural population equally depended on agriculture as a means of livelihood. Other means of livelihood in the State were mainly informal sectors dominated by low productivity services. These economic activities not only failed to contribute significantly to improving living standards, but they also failed to achieve high levels of production and value addition to the agricultural and mineral resources of the State.

» *Urban agriculture in Minna*

» *Calabash crafting centre at Izom*

© UN-Habitat/Emmanuel Adeleke (2020)

D. Housing and urban development

Housing is a basic need for human survival in addition to food and clothing; it is one of the most important elements in human lives. Besides functioning as shelter that provides privacy and protection, housing serves as a link to neighbourhoods, communities and the larger society. Housing not only provides people with the social values associated with shelter, security, independence, privacy and amenity, it also plays a major role in the economy of any nation, such as the provision of space for production, the generation of employment and access to income- earning opportunities as well as being an indicator of a person's standard of living and status in a society. Despite the significance of housing, an adequate supply of affordable houses is still one of the major urban challenges in Niger State.

Up until 2020, the State Government provided 2,105 housing units in different parts of the State through the Niger State Housing Corporation. To increase the availability of affordable urban housing, the State Government and Corporation opted for a new strategy using public-private partnerships under a private-sector driven mechanism. However, housing units provided under such partnerships were not affordable for Nigerlites, in particular for middle and low-income earners, and a lack of access to adequate and affordable housing resulted in a predominance of slums and informal settlements, mostly in major urban areas. For example in Minna, slums are evident in areas such as Barikin Sale; Chanchaga; Dutsen Kuran Gwari;Sabongari; Keteren Gwari; Kwangila; and Kpagungu.

» *Kwamba Slum in Suleja*

» *Barikin Sale Slum in Minna*

© UN-Habitat/Emmanuel Adeleke (2020).

E. Weak and centralized planning

Urban planning plays a crucial role in sustaining the physical and socioeconomic development of any region. By implication, urban planning provides the lead system for "building" the environment, which is fundamental to the attainment of inclusive, resilient and sustainable human settlement. In the past in Niger State, urban planning featured the development of Niger State Regional Plan (1978–2000), and urban master plans for Bida, Kontagora, Minna and Suleja (1980–2000). The outdated Niger State Regional Plan was developed to ensure balanced development across the State; likewise the master plans were designed for a period of 20 years, with a special focus on land-use, transport and utilities (water supply, waste management, electricity) in the four major urban centres in the State. Before the expiration of these physical development plans, implementation had been very weak and once the plans expired, the physical development plans were not reviewed nor were new spatial plans prepared to address urban issues or guide physical/urban development. Equally, the urban development strategy (residential scheme) used in the State as of 2020, which focuses mainly on land-use/land subdivision, is an irrelevant strategy for harnessing the transformative force of urbanization and addressing developmental issues such as unemployment, slum proliferation, the informal economy and environmental sustainability.

The lack of a workable balance between planning for future urban growth and the actual pace of urban growth has resulted in backlogs of service delivery that further impede the process of achieving sustainable urban and territorial development. Haphazard development, urban sprawl and the proliferation of informal settlements are evidence of poor responsive planning, the weak enforcement of urban planning and regulations, a lack of spatial plans and integrated development plans, a lack of coordination among urban development actors (public and private) to promote a gradual and normative city extension, and none or only the partial implementation of the Nigerian Urban and Regional Planning Law at state and local levels.

F. Climate change and city resilience

One of the critical issues affecting resilient and sustainable human settlements in Niger State is vulnerability to climate change and other environmental disasters, which is evident through a wide range of problems associated with urbanization. Urbanization, if well managed, has been conceived as a development mechanism that presents opportunities for strengthening city resilience (World Bank, 2016). In the years preceding 2020, Niger State was hit severely by a series of disasters that not only threatened livelihoods and human security, but also resulted in the spread of infectious and water-borne diseases, undermined development gains and damaged infrastructure, amongst other things. There was also flooding. Flooding is the result of the overflowing of a body of water onto land, or by extreme hydrological events, or an unusual presence of water on land to a depth which affects normal activities (Olajuyigbe, Rotowa and Durojaye, 2012). It is also the result of a combination of meteorological and hydrological extremes and the activities of humans on drainage basins (Adeaga, 2008). Other disasters experienced in the State include rain/windstorms, drought, erosion, deforestation, artisanal mining, fire disasters, dam collapse, air pollution, banditry and herdsmen attacks.

Some of the major impacts of climate change and other disasters in the State include the loss of lives and livelihoods and the displacement of people. An assessment of the flood impact published in the Nigerian Annual Abstract of Statistics (2016) showed that in Niger State, a total of 14 LGAs, 213 communities and 651,325 people were affected by flooding, which resulted in the displacement of 148,128 people and the destruction of 65,587 houses (see table 6).

These threats from pressure on ecosystems, natural disasters, climate change and its related risks have not only undermined development gains in the State but they have also hindered the efforts to end poverty and to achieve sustainable development.

TABLE 6 Spatial distribution and impact of flooding in Niger State

S/NO	LGA	NO. OF DEATH	NO INJURED	TOTAL NO OF VICTIMS
1	Mokwa	29	7	41,347
2	Lavun	2	5	21,274
3	Edati	-	2	11,321
4	Chanchaga	3	9	1750
5	Shiroro		3	31,812
6	Borgu	4	5	37,282
7	Bida			2,127
8	Bosso	9		14,350
9	Munya		4	27,327
10	Wushishi	1	5	8,280
11	Kontagora	1	3	5,187
12	Katcha	0	3	7,400
13	Lapai	2	7	36,450
14	Agaie	0	0	2,221

Source: Niger State Ministry of Environment.

» *Environmental Degradation in Mokwa LGA*

» *Flood disaster in Suleja*

Source: Niger State Emergency Management Agency.

G. Inefficient land administration and management

Land administration and management comprise of records which specify the extent of rights and/or spatial information on a land. Land administration and management play an important role in the stimulation of economic development, social coherence and sustainable urban and territorial development. In Niger State, the Niger State Geographic Information System is responsible for land administration and management with the administrative support of the Ministry of Lands and Housing. Despite these institutions' involvement, there are still serious challenges to achieving sustainable urban and territorial development in the State.

One of the major issues is the inability to deliver adequate land for physical and urban development. For instance, Kuma (2016) found that in Minna over 96 per cent of urban households rely on the informal

land delivery system (from local people) to acquire land for development – a situation which has been attributed to inefficiency in the administration of urban land, a weak institutional framework and poor implementation of the Land Use Act in the State (Kuma, 2016; Adeniyi, Oniemola and Badru, 2018). Most of the local lands were not planned, thus development in these areas occurred in a haphazard pattern and without complementary infrastructure and basic services.

Similarly, security of tenure is another challenge to sustainable development. Although the current legal framework for land administration in Nigeria (Land Use Act) recognizes both statutory and customary rights to land, formalization is usually recommended as a means to secure rights, particularly on customary land in Niger State. As of 2020, most lands in the State have not been surveyed and demarcated, while the involvement of numerous actors and bureaucratic processes in the formalization of land rights usually leads to further delays in tenure security, resulting in the proliferation of slums and informal settlements, and haphazard development by private housing developers, mostly in peri-urban areas (Kuma and Ighalo, 2015).

H. Poor urban–rural linkages

Despite the disparity in the global urban and rural population, evidence from all over the world shows that there is an interaction between urban and rural areas that is an important element of the livelihood strategies of both urban and rural households, either in the form of flows of products, goods and services, people (migration), information and money, or in the form of income diversification, such as urban agriculture and non-farm rural employment (Tacoli, 2002).

However, urban and rural developments are often considered in isolation while the intrinsic linkage between the urban and rural development is less considered or reduced to only market linkages. Although market linkages play a substantial role in this scenario, urban-rural linkages are beyond a linear interaction as they encompasses many complex interactions and processes.

In Niger State, despite the symbiotic relationship between urban and rural areas, there is a disparity in the quality of life between urban and rural households. This could be attributed to a lack of proper, strong linkages between urban and rural systems, which emanated from the uncoordinated development strategies of the two systems. The resultant effect of this is not only evident in the prevalence of rural poverty and high rate of mortality but also in food insecurity, declining returns on agriculture for rural farmers, rural-urban migration, inadequate infrastructure and poor basic services among other things.

According to Niger State Bureau of Statistics Report, in 2014, about 77.7 per cent of rural dwellers were estimated to be poor; over 40 per cent of the sampled buildings and people in rural areas had no access to electricity; 27.9 per cent had no sanitation facilities; 61.4 per cent disposed of waste in an open dump and the literacy rate in rural areas of Niger State was 38.5 per cent. Similarly, the influx of people from different parts of rural areas to urban centres in search of employment opportunities and welfare not only created huge pressure on the already fragile urban infrastructure and social services but also exacerbated the urban unemployment problem, the number of people living in urban slums, and contributed to the ever-increasing environmental pollution and degradation in many parts of the State.

I. Security and urban safety

The issue of security and urban safety is one of major global concern. Continents, countries and many regions of the world are battling with domestic and or international security threats ranging from terrorism, communal-conflict, epidemics and natural disasters, amongst other things. In 2020, Niger State is experiencing several security and safety challenges in its towns and cities. A particularly noteworthy type of security challenge is the increasing rate of bandit attack. Table 7 shows statistics on banditry attack incidents between 2019 and 2020.

TABLE 7 Banditry attacks in Niger State (2019–2020)

DATE	LOCATION	AFFECTED COMMUNITIES	NUMBER OF PEOPLE KILLED	NUMBER OF PEOPLE DISPLACED
June 2019	Shiroro LGA	Ajatayi, Gwassa, Barden Dawaki, Alewa and Sarkin Pawa	> 40	> 2,000
October 2019	Shiroro LGA	Gyaramiya, Bataron Jatau and Bataron Waziri		> 1,200
September 2019	Rafi LGA	Rafin-wayam, Rafin-kwakwa and Gidan Dogo-Gurgu villages		
November 2019	Kagara LGA	Kukoki	13	
December 2019	Shiroro LGA	Kaure, Kwaki ward	8	
January 2020	Shiroro	Kudodo Nakpala, and Gulapai	1	

» *Internally displaced persons at Sarkin Pawa Munya LGA*

Source: Niger State Emergency Management Agency.

J. Ineffective governance

The ability of an institution to effectively manage the area under its jurisdiction is fundamental to effective governance. In Niger State, urban governance structure is very weak and this continues to pose a threat to achieving inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable urban and territorial development. Most institutions responsible for urban management and provision of public goods and services (including municipal governments) in Niger State do not have the required capacity to perform their statutory functions optimally. Similarly, lack of technical coordination and synergy among government institutions – that is, the ministries, department and agencies (both horizontal and vertical) as well as other service and utility providers (such as power, water, waste management, and so on) have not only made the State incapable of harnessing opportunities of urbanization for long-term sustainable urban development, but they have also hindered economic growth.

Furthermore, the incomplete decentralization of governance has heightened tensions at subnational and local levels, thus compromising the delivery of sustainable urban development. In the framework of Local Agenda 21 and Habitat II, since the 1990s civil society and local governments have been mobilized to become key stakeholders in urban development and service delivery. But the evidence is that in practice there is incomplete decentralization at the State level versus local authorities in Nigeria, including Niger State.

For instance, despite the clear functions of municipal governments as stated in the provisions of the Nigerian Constitution (1999) and Nigerian Urban and Regional Planning Law Decree 88 of 1992, the municipal governments in Niger State have neither autonomy to mobilize revenue/direct access to fund urban infrastructure and other facilities, nor have they the authority to prepare and implement physical development plans (town plans, rural plans, subject plans) or control physical development in their area of jurisdiction.

Hence, to address governance issues in the State, formulating and implementing an urban policy will strengthen the capacity of the state and local governments to implement effective local and metropolitan multilevel governance as contained in Article 90 of the New Urban Agenda, improve urban management and enhance urban-rural collaboration.

III. Development opportunities for transformative urbanization

To achieve sustainable urban and territorial development in Niger State, there is a need to take advantage of development opportunities as a catalyst for sustainable urbanization and socioeconomic and infrastructural development, some of which include the following.

A. Demographic dynamics

Niger State has an average population growth (3,9 million people based on the 2006 population census) for Nigeria and is the thirteenth most populous State in the country. The demographic structure of the State reflects a growing young population. According to the 2006 National Population and Housing Census, about 36 per cent of the population in the State was aged less than 10 years; 21 per cent were aged between 10 and 19 years; and 39 per cent were between 20 and 59 years. In 2019, the population was just over 5 million with an annual growth rate of 3.4 per cent, so it was expected that the population of the State would increase to 17.2 million by 2050. The demographic structure has critical implications for sustainable urbanization and needs to be harnessed for structural transformation in the State. To achieve desired demographic dividends, the urban policy for the State will promote diverse opportunities, in particular the right mix of economic opportunities that allows all working people (in particular young people and women) to contribute productively to the economy. It will ensure that this workforce has the appropriate skills required for structural transformation and a productive, innovative and competitive economy, as well as skills to compete and attract investments to the State.

B. Transport infrastructure

Transport is one of the major drivers of socioeconomic development, creating wealth, enhancing social development and influencing the pattern of land-use development in cities across the globe. As at 2020, the State has transport infrastructures across all travel modes, vis-a-viz road (2,375 km of federal roads, 2,014 km of state roads and 5,153 km of local roads), rail (358 km of rail length), water (Baro Inland Port) and airport (Minna International Airport). The urban policy for the State will promote the development of efficient transport infrastructure and integration of the existing transport system, thus providing unlimited access for safe, efficient, affordable and sustainable transport systems that enhance mobility and boost sustainable economic growth.

» *Minna airport*

» *Minna train station*

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C. Dams

The State has 12 irrigation dams capable of irrigating 399,408 hectares of land, importantly during the distinct six months of dry season. An urban policy for the State could promote these assets for large-scale agriculture to improve productivity and the sectoral share of agriculture in the economy, and to ensure food security.

» *Kainji Dam, Kainji*

» *Buntu Dam, Tafa*

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D. Vast land resources

Niger State has a land mass of over 76,000 km2, which is 8 per cent of the total land mass of Nigeria. Despite the vast land owned by the State, there is the challenge of land availability for socioeconomic, urban and infrastructural development which could be attributed to inefficiency in the land administration mechanism. However, an urban policy for Niger State will provide a window of opportunity for all Nigerlites and investors without discrimination, equitable access to affordable serviced land, security of tenure for all, facilitate access to land for mechanized farming, the development of compact, connected and social, inclusive, mass affordable housing and resilient infrastructures. The urban policy will also enhance land-value sharing and revenue generation through land-based and presumptive tax systems at the state and local government levels.

» *Suleja Smart City Site*

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E. Natural endowment (solid mineral)

Niger State has rich supplies of solid minerals that have great potential to transform the economy of the State and enable it to favourably compete with oil producing states in the south of the country. These minerals are clay, kaolin, limestone, petroleum product and glass sand, copper lead, marble, iron, columbite, silica, gold, granite, talc, graphite, tourmaline and quartz. The urban policy for the State should promote the extraction of these minerals to improve job creation and shared prosperity, and accelerate economic growth and diversification.

F. Tourism potential

Niger State has significant tourism and cultural potential with comparative and competitive advantages in the country. As of 2020, there are about 48 potential tourism locations and numerous Indigenous cultural sites, some of which are the following: Zuma Rock (Suleja), Gurara Waterfalls, Mayanka Water Falls (Suleja), Kainji Lake National Park, Lord Lugard Amalgamation Park (Zungeru Colonial ruins), Mungo Park Cenotaph (Jebba), Baro Empire Hills/Port, Durbar Festivals, Bida Brass and Glass Works, Kusherki Magnetic Hill, and so on. Similarly, the State has Kainji Lake and the three hydroelectric dams – Jebba, Kainji and Shiroro – with typical open woodland that gives rise to numerous forests, plantations and games reserves. If the potential of these sites is properly harnessed through the implementation of the urban policy, the tourism and culture industry could be one of the leading sources of revenue and job creation in the State and attract direct foreign investment.

» *Gurara Waterfall*

» *Zuma Rock*

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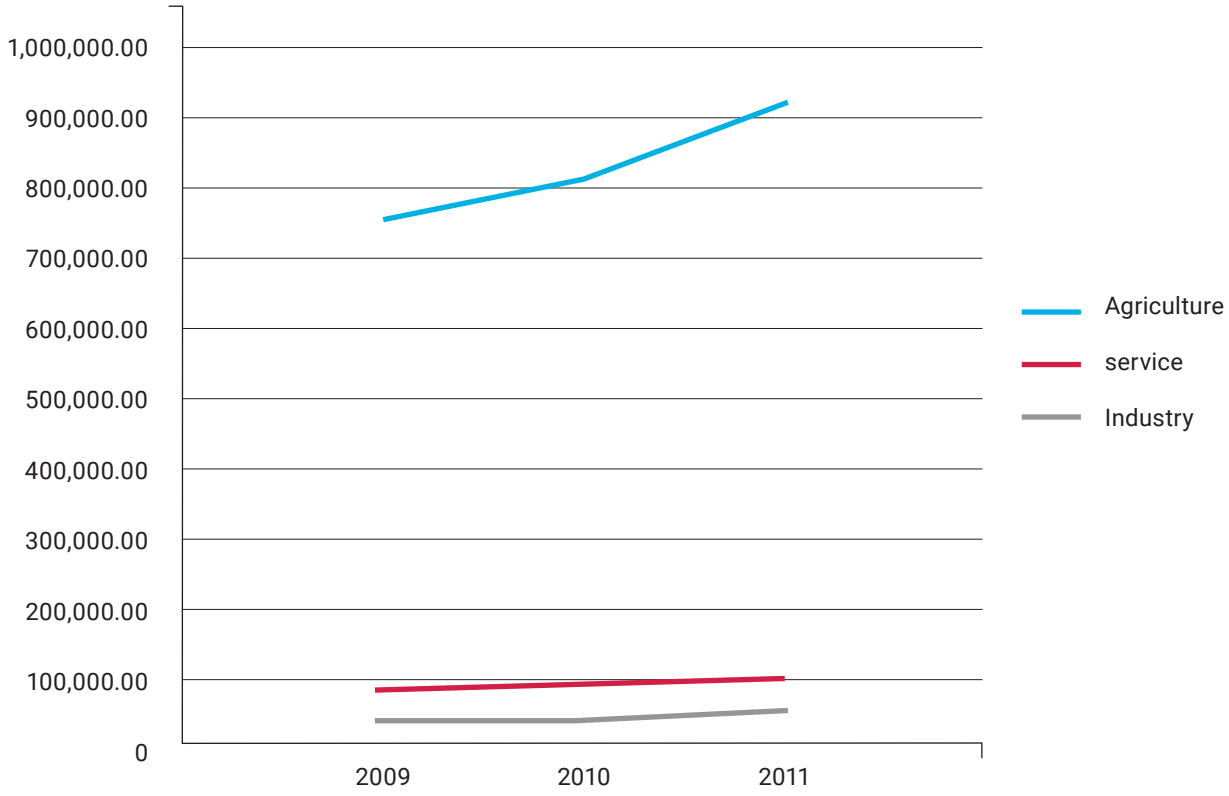
G. Agriculture development

Niger State, like most States in northern Nigeria, has an agrarian-based economy with huge agricultural potential. It has arable land of about 7 million hectares of which about 32 per cent (2.3 million hectares) is cultivated for the production of various food and cash crops. The agricultural sector has the largest share of labour in the State (over 90 per cent) and the bulk of that labour is in rural areas where the primary source of employment is agriculture. The structural transformation in Niger State is depicted in figure 8. The pattern reveals that the contribution of the agricultural sector to the State economy is very high and accounted for 87 per cent of the State's GDP in 2009 and 2010, and increased to 88 per cent in 2011 (NSBS, 2014).

Agriculture resources in Niger State have significant potential that could be harnessed through the urban policy for the State to achieve food security, reduce rural poverty, accelerate economic development and agro-industrialization, and improve job creation amongst other things.

FIGURE 8 Niger State GDP at current basic prices percentage distribution 2009-2011

(Millions of Nigeria naira)



IV. Principles and guidelines of national urban policy

Urbanization has been widely acknowledged to be a transformative tool for sustainable urban and territorial development. However, to effectively harness and promote its transformative force, there is a need for a coordinated approach and clear policy direction. Following the adoption of the New Urban Agenda in 2016, which strongly commits the signatories to fully harness the transformative power of urbanization for sustainable urban and territorial development, a national urban policy was recognized not only as a major tool for harnessing the transformative power of urbanization, but it also as a tool for implementing and monitoring other global urban agendas, including the Sustainable Development Goals, particularly Goal 11.

UN-Habitat and Cities Alliance (2014) have defined a national urban policy as "a coherent set of decisions derived through a deliberate, government-led process of coordinating and rallying various actors for a common vision and goal that will promote more transformative, productive, inclusive and resilient urban development for the long term". It is a valuable tool for harnessing opportunities of urbanization for long-term sustainable urban development.

A national urban policy is intended to identify urban development priorities towards socially and economically equitable and environmentally friendly urban and territorial development; provide guidance on the future development of an urban system and its spatial configuration, concretized through instruments such as spatial plans for territorial development; enhance coordination and guidance of actions by national actors, as well as all levels of government in all sectors; and coordinate private and public investments in urban development and consequent improvement in the following areas: the productivity of cities, inclusiveness and environmental conditions, state and local governments, financial flows, urban planning regulations, urban mobility, urban energy requirements and job creation.

UN-Habitat advocates five key principles for the national urban policy process and incorporating these principles into the urban policy process for Niger State will augment the ability of the policy to respond to the challenges and opportunities presented by urbanization.

These principles are the following:

- **Forward thinking:** A forward-thinking policy should have clearly defined goals and roles for stakeholders;
- **Implementable:** During all phases of the urban policy process, it must be ensured that the policy being formulated is implementable;
- **Joined up:** An urban policy should recognize the need to look beyond traditional institutional boundaries to address the challenges and opportunities of urbanization. There is a need for both horizontal and vertical coordination to ensure that the policy is efficient and effective;
- **Evidence based:** All decisions associated with the urban policy process in Niger State should be based on relevant and current evidence to ensure decisions are relevant and well-informed;

- **Action oriented:** Key parts of the urban policy process are to identify the challenges and opportunities presented by urbanization in the State and to outline clear goals associated with the policy. Hence, it is imperative that clear actions are delineated during the formulation and implementation phases so that goals are translated into actionable activities that can be monitored and evaluated.

A. National urban policy experiences in Africa

In 2018, UN-Habitat supported 19 countries in the African region in the formulation and implementation of a national urban policy. This support ranged from technical assistance with the feasibility, diagnostic, formulation, implementation and monitoring phases of a policy, as well as capacity development, acupuncture projects and stakeholders' engagement. Ghana, Malawi, Rwanda, South Africa and Zambia have finalized their national urban policy frameworks while, Egypt, Liberia and South Sudan were at the formulation phase in 2020. Underlying incentives for the development of an urban policy in these countries could be attributed to the need to make cities more productive and inclusive, strengthened urban-rural linkages, to attract private investment for urban development, good governance, the provision of resilient infrastructures and basic services and the effective coordination of government institutions at all levels.

As discussed in part II, unplanned and uncontrolled urbanization has triggered interrelated problems characterized by infrastructural and service deficits, disparities in socioeconomic development, high rates of unemployment and poverty, inadequate and unaffordable housing, slums proliferation, natural disasters (climate change), ineffective governance, uncontrolled urban expansion and unsustainable use and consumption of urban space in Niger State. Urbanization, however, offers a unique opportunity in terms of development and wealth creation. Evidence shows that some countries, such as Brazil, China and South Africa, have been able to transform their cities by harnessing the transformative potential of urbanization. Thus, in order to address development challenges in Niger State and maximize and reap the benefits of the transformative potentials of urbanization, the need to develop an urban policy is very necessary.

Formulating and implementing an urban policy in Niger State will create a unique window of opportunity to achieve the following: (i) facilitate access to safe and affordable housing, access to sustainable and affordable transport systems, improved water and sanitation, effective land management, inclusive economic growth and job creation, poverty reduction, sustainable use of land and natural resources, integrated and balanced territorial development, and effective trade links across the urban-rural continuum; (ii) harness the full potential of the State's urban growth and human settlements' development to serve as a transformative force for inclusive and sustainable development at local, subnational levels and in key areas of economic diversification, value addition, employment creation, agro-industrialization, domestic resource mobilization, low-carbon economies, and green infrastructure, amongst other related aspects; (iii) strengthen effective governance and synergy between government institutions, ministries, departments and agencies at all levels of government (state and local government) in the State.

B. Policy development process

Preparation of the urban policy for the State involves research, analysis, consultation and consolidation to translate political will into programmes and implementable actions for a more prosperous urban future. This requires a process that is government-led and inclusive, involving key stakeholders from both the public and private sectors to establish a shared vision for the desired urbanization.

To ensure the quality of the urban policy, UN-Habitat suggests five phases to manage the process:

- Feasibility
- Diagnostic
- Formulation
- Implementation
- Monitoring and evaluation

V. Rationale for Niger State urban policy

To successfully maximize the transformative potentials of urbanization and transform Niger State into one with productive, inclusive, resilient and self-sustaining towns and cities, 10 issues have been prioritized in the Niger State Urban Policy Framework. These are outlined in the following sections.

Integrated and balanced territorial development

In 2020, the current urban development strategy in the State focuses mainly on land-use/land subdivision and is not an appropriate tool for addressing developmental issues such as unemployment, slums proliferation, urban sprawl, the informal economy and environmental sustainability. Hence the Niger State urban policy should promote integrated planning and sustainable urban and territorial development.

This approach will be based on the following strategies: planned urban extensions on the principles of equality, compactness, polycentrism, density and connectivity, as well as mixed social and economic uses of land in the State; design of various priority intervention projects (low-cost housing project, urban retrofitting and regeneration); strengthening the capacity of the State Government and municipal authorities to coordinate balanced development to achieve access to sustainable, affordable, adequate, resilient and safe housing, infrastructure and services, while preventing urban sprawl and reducing urban and territorial disparities.

Inclusive, productive and competitive economy

Formulating and implementing an urban policy in Niger State will provide a platform to facilitate the following: form partnerships with the private sector and foreign investors to harness economic development potentials in each local government; maximize the potential of the vast land mass of the State – approximately 76,000km^2 – and the 12 irrigation dams, for inclusive economic growth diversification, a productive and competitive economy, industrialization and agricultural value addition, home-grown innovations and technology that will thereafter lead to decent jobs creation, shared prosperity, poverty reduction and economic empowerment, in particular for women and young people.

Effective land governance

Implementing an urban policy in Niger State will provide an opportunity for all Nigerlites and investors, without discrimination, to have equitable access to affordable, serviced land as well as security of tenure for all, recognizing the plurality of tenure types.

The policy will strengthen the management frameworks of institutions that deal with land registration and governance through transparent and sustainable management and use of land, property registration and a sound financial system; facilitate digitization of the land assets of the State and local governments; the creation of serviced plots that facilitate the development of compact,

connected, socially inclusive and affordable mass housing projects; shared communal facilities; secure tenure for all residents; and regularization of tenure for families living in slums. In addition, an urban policy will enhance land value sharing and revenue generation through land-based and presumptive tax systems.

Urban security and safety

Formulating and implementing an urban policy in Niger State will provide an opportunity to strengthen and integrate inclusive measures for urban safety and crime and violence prevention through the deployment of smart city components (Internet of Things) such as smart streetlights and smart buildings; open data should enhance the participation of residents in surveillance and enable a more effective contribution to crime detection and prevention; engage relevant local communities and non-governmental actors, where appropriate, to develop urban strategies and initiatives, taking into account slums and informal settlements, vulnerability and cultural factors in the development of public security and crime and violence-prevention policies, by preventing and countering the stigmatization of specific groups as posing inherently greater security threats.

Strengthening urban-rural linkages

An urban policy for Niger State will bridge the development gaps between urban and rural systems thus leaving no one and no place behind. Strengthening the linkages between these systems will further improve the livelihood of urban and rural populations and enhance economic and social development with positive outcomes on improved competitiveness, job creation, access to basic services, balanced accessibility, sustainable management and use of natural resources and land, ensuring a reliable supply and value chains that connect urban and rural supply and demand to foster equitable development across the urban-rural continuum.

Resilient infrastructure and services

Central to sustainable urban development is the provision of adequate infrastructure, housing and associated social and communal facilities. Urban infrastructure provision is capital-intensive and characterized by a high ratio between capital and output. The financing, management and governance of the cities must be rearranged to enable them to provide their residents with infrastructure facilities and services on a self-sustaining basis by becoming creditworthy; by being able to develop bankable projects to be financed by private and institutional investors; and by floating bonds in the capital market.

Thus, the urban policy should set the stage for adequate investments in protective, accessible and sustainable infrastructure, social and basic services such as adequate and affordable housing, transformative education, improved water and sanitation, hygiene, sewerage, solid waste management, urban drainage and stormwater management in order to improve economic productivity of businesses and individuals, improve security against water-related disasters and health threats, ensure state-wide access to safe and affordable drinking water for all; and access to adequate and equitable sanitation and hygiene for all Nigerlites, including slum dwellers and rural residents.

Sustainable transport and mobility

With a focus on the use of electric, solar powered and hydrogen buses for mass and affordable transport systems between and within cities and towns, an urban policy for Niger State will facilitate urban-rural interactions and connectivity between and within

cities and towns in the State so as to maximize the economic potential in different local government areas for enhanced productivity, shared prosperity, social, economic and territorial cohesion, as well as safety and environmental sustainability. Such a focus will also promote the development of an efficient transport infrastructure, an integrated transport system and use of innovative transport technologies. This will lead to unlimited access for all Nigerlites to safe, efficient, affordable and sustainable transport systems that boost sustainable economic growth and enable towns and cities to improve their service delivery, and reduce the financial, environmental and public health costs of the existing, inefficient mobility and transport system, air pollution, and urban heat island effect.

Urban resilience, climate change mitigation and adaptation

An urban policy for Niger State should integrate disaster risk reduction, and climate change adaptation and mitigation considerations and measures into urban and territorial development and planning processes that also consider greenhouse gas emissions, the resilience-based and climate-effective design of spaces, buildings and constructions, services and infrastructure.

Effective strategies should be developed for sensitizing urban residents to adopt environmentally friendly sources of energy for cooking, thus reducing the production of greenhouses gases.

Similarly, efforts should be made to promote cooperation and coordination across sectors, as well as build capacity of local authorities to develop and implement disaster risk reduction and response plans, such as risk assessments on the location of current and future public facilities, and formulate adequate contingency and evacuation procedures.

Smart city strategies

An urban policy for Niger State will integrate smart city elements, such as the Internet of Things in the development and management of towns, cities and local government headquarters.

The goal is for the cities to provide a lifestyle and environment which is effective, efficient and enjoyable for all; to enhance the quality and performance of urban infrastructure facilities and services such as power supply, transport and utilities; reduce resource consumption; better demand management of infrastructure by households; elimination of waste and overall costs; and to fuel sustainable economic development, high quality of life and effective citizen participation in their governance.

Effective urban governance and coordinated management

An urban policy for Niger State will serve as a veritable instrument for good governance, importantly in the area of sound institutions and mechanisms for effective stakeholder participation (bottom-up) in decision-making processes, strong partnerships with higher and lower tiers of government and the private sector for effective delivery of public goods and sustainable management of urban and rural systems, as well as improved transparency and accountability in the operation and administration of institutions, especially local governments, in a self-sustained manner. An urban policy will also enhance the capacity at state and local government levels to be able to perform their constitutionally assigned functions, and to have real devolution of power to local governments.

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Niger State Urban Policy: Feasibility Policy Note

With rapid population growth, urban expansion, and uncoordinated urban development, the need for a clear, harmonized urban vision has never been more urgent. This Feasibility Policy Note presents an evidence-based foundation for the formulation of the Niger State Urban Policy and also highlights sectoral opportunities to accelerate sustainable urbanization in Niger State.

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