

## Achieving Sustainable Cities: The Role of Government in Providing Green Public Spaces in Nigeria

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**Abstract:** *This paper is titled achieving sustainable cities: the role of government in providing green public spaces in Nigeria. The aim is to ascertain Nigeria's efforts toward adapting to Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) number 7. The specific objectives are to; determine what makes a city sustainable and to examine the policies of Nigeria Government directed to achieving sustainable cities in Nigeria. The paper is anchored on Sustainable Regeneration approach. It is a qualitative research which relies mainly on content analysis of secondary data. Findings from the study reveal that going green can help make Nigerian cities become places where people want to live and work, and where the environment is respected. It is therefore concluded that a city that fails to meet the core expectations of governance by maintaining order, making and carrying out collective decisions, and providing basic services will not be able to sustain the ecological, social, and economic aspects of the concept of sustainability. The paper recommends among others that there is need for government to make policies that help to make it easy to get around without a car by creating paths, bike bridges and sidewalks, and encouraging citizens to walk, ride, or commute via metro trains or buses so as to; decrease congestion, reduce harmful emissions, enhance air quality, and improved health and wellness. Also there is need to improve water conservation and waste management through sustainable urban planning. Government can also adopt programs to minimize waste by recycling and composting. Similarly, it is high time government began to implement green architecture as an innovative ways to reduce resource use and lower greenhouse gas emissions.*

**Keywords:** *Sustainability, Cities, Green Spaces, Environment.*

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### Introduction

The world's cities need to grow and develop in more sustainable ways if the goals of sustainable development are to be achieved (UN, 2019). Green public spaces are a critical and fundamental component of cities and communities sustainability. Many new approaches to sustainable cities are breaking with the long predominant mindset of "taming nature" and are bringing back greenery into the infamous concrete jungle. More broadly, there is a strong move toward what is increasingly termed "nature-based solutions." Besides rapid urban population growth and urban land expansion, most cities in Nigeria are characterized by high levels of informality and poverty, poor infrastructure, and consequently a high susceptibility to environmental hazards. Nigeria is constantly threatened by poor water, poor sanitation, crowded housing, sickness,

diseases and natural disasters Climate change and its impacts are exacerbating the environmental pressures on cities. The rapid increase in population, in conjunction with increase in the rate of urbanization, had led to unplanned and uncontrolled expansion of many cities and communities. These have also resulted in the gradual loss of green public spaces in cities. (Taylor, Anna, and Camaren, 2014).

Cities are powerhouses of economic growth—contributing about 60% of global gross domestic product (GDP), but also account for a high percentage of global carbon emissions and natural resource use (UN, 2019). Urbanization has exacerbated the impacts of global warming, with urban centers being warmer than their surrounding areas due to the urban heat island effect (IPCC, 2021). Increasing urbanization contributes to biodiversity loss, increased material consumption, and climate change. It therefore means that urban planning needs to be inclusive and responsive to the needs of local communities.

Although the quest to achieve sustainable cities and communities is receiving increased attention, the topic is not new. In fact, it was on the agenda of the very first multilateral environmental conference, the landmark 1972 United Nations Conference on the Human Environment in Stockholm, Sweden (UN-Habitat, 2019). At the time of the conference, which convened in the context of the decolonization process, urbanization was much lower, though growing. Policymakers nevertheless recognized urban sprawl has destructive impacts on the environment and that, while people move to urban areas with hopes of better employment opportunities and living conditions, cities often struggle to meet the increased demand for housing, mass transit, and other infrastructure.

As set forth in the Vancouver Declaration adopted at the 1976 UN Human Settlements Conference (Habitat I), the most important objective of urban development policy is the improvement of the quality of life for all people, beginning with satisfying basic needs such as food, shelter, clean water, employment, health, and education (UN-Habitat, 2019). The Rio+20 outcome document reaffirms the key role of all levels of government and legislative bodies in promoting sustainable development. It further acknowledges efforts and progress made at the local and sub-national levels, and recognizes the important role that such authorities and communities can play in implementing sustainable development, including by engaging citizens and stakeholders, and providing them with relevant information, as appropriate, on the three dimensions of sustainable development. It further acknowledges the importance of involving all relevant decision makers in planning and implementation of sustainable development policies.

This underscores a fundamental reality in Nigeria: the starting line may not be the same for all cities. Whereas fulfilling fundamental needs—such as through improving access to clean piped water and sanitation—remains an important part of city planning in most states, discussions on sustainable cities mainly centre on how to make existing infrastructure more efficient and less wasteful. In the latter, the aim is for a “transformation” of building, energy, transport, and other systems toward enhanced environmental sustainability—for example, promoting better building insulation for reduced heat waste or fostering waste recycling. Sustainable cities also touches on heritage preservation, disaster planning, urban-rural linkages, and much more. Striving for sustainable cities requires a holistic vision for how to accommodate increasingly large urban populations, ensuring sustainable livelihoods, quality of life, and social cohesion, while minimizing cities’ and city dwellers’ immediate

and long-term impact on the environment. With a growing population of 173.6 million (2013), there is an obvious need to push for the preservation of more green spaces in Nigeria, especially in our industrialized areas. The world's most livable cities - New York and London to name a few - have made this a primary component of their urban planning agenda, to the benefit of present and future generations (UNDESA, (2019). It against this backdrop that this article intends to assess the extent of government activities towards achieving sustainable cities in Nigeria in order to; determine what makes a city sustainable, examine the policies of Nigeria Government directed to achieving sustainable cities in Nigeria.

### **Methodology**

The authors used methods traditionally used for social and humanitarian research, combined with a systematic approach. At different stages of the work, formal logical methods (analysis, synthesis, deduction, induction), methods of comparative analysis, methods of systematization and classification were used.

### **Conceptual Clarification**

#### **Sustainability**

Sustainability implies that something can continue over time without interruption or weakening. Thus, sustainability when used in relation to the environment, **it means avoiding the depletion of natural resources so as to maintain an ecological balance.** By way of definition, sustainability implies that a city maintain a balance among the ecological, economic, and social systems, with government as a critical enabling institution. In a similar way, the World Commission on Environment and Development (1987, 63) described sustainability as "promoting citizens' initiatives, empowering people's organizations, and strengthening local democracy." As a consequence, a core governance capacity of a sustainable city will be that of integrating cross-system policies. Lafferty and Ervin Hoven (2003) argue that a core part of the sustainability concept is the "integration of environmental objectives into non-environmental policy sectors." According to Weiss (2000), sustainability entails that the goals of economic success, social equity, and environmental protection should all be integrated into future sustainable planning.

A fundamental premise of the sustainability literature is that a vibrant and informed community dialogue enables citizens to realize that a transition to sustainability is in their collective interest. Arguably, sustainable development cannot be achieved without the interface between development and environment. This is because while development is pro-people and environment pro-nature, they are both evidently interrelated (Eugene 2013).

#### **Green Public Spaces**

The concept urban open spaces according to Rapoport (1979) is defined as an area of relatively large diverse and permanent settlement of socially heterogeneous individuals and In terms of functions; it is a region of organized and effective use of space, a ceremonial centre having symbolic meaning, a cosmic symbol, powerful enough to organize areas. Open spaces could be classified as functional and non functional, it is functional when it serves a particular purpose and vice versa and it could also be described as public or private. Green public spaces offers many benefits – from providing materials (for culinary, medicinal, energy purposes), aesthetics to environmental benefits (temperature regulation, energy-saving, storm water reduction, carbon sequestration, etc.). Connections across these GI components can optimize the multifaceted

benefits they deliver. They facilitate biodiversity conservation and resilience of ecosystem service provision. For example, root connectivity between trees (which provides shade, fruits, herbs etc.) facilitates growth in stressful conditions and movement of biological species (Rapoport, 1979).

### **Sustainable Cities**

SDG Goal 11 objectives include but are not limited to: safe and affordable housing for all, safe and affordable transport for all, sustainable urbanization and human settlement planning, protect cultures around the world, protecting the poor and vulnerable from death by natural disasters, monitoring air quality and waste management to reduce negative city impact, and to provide green public space. Thus, this goal promotes making cities and human settlements safer, resilient, and sustainable through use of national urban policies, more access to public spaces, convenient public transportation, and the reduction of slums. Its sustainability involves the management of all the factors that will promote the existence of the city green space for the residents in order to make the environment habitable for humans (Erhun, 2015), (Emechebe and Eze, 2019). Nevertheless, as development continues, it is important that mankind understands the importance of city green spaces, in order to value the need for their existence. Having a good thermal environment is a product of a sustainable green space. These sustainable factors that will promote existence of sustainable urban green space include: having a good socio-economic and demographic environment, proper management and good planning towards the high pressure of city migrants and having a good planning regulations and authorities.

### **How the four city sustainability systems (governance, ecological, economic, and social) interrelate at the city level**

Urban green spaces with trees as the major component play role in every aspect of sustainability issue. (Konijnendijk, Nilsson, Randrup, and Schipperijn, 2005). Urban green space has a range of values to urban society. Positive social impact of city green spaces include; providing settings for physical exercise, reducing ultraviolet radiation and air pollution, and lowering stress levels. By having the green areas, the high temperature will be moderated to favour the inhabitants. This provides a cooling effect and help to lower air temperatures. The connection between public health and the provision of free, accessible, open green space – particularly in towns and cities – is obvious to most people (Taylor, Anna, and Camaren, 2014). Urban green space, such as parks, playgrounds, and residential greenery, can promote mental and physical health and reduce morbidity and mortality in urban residents by providing psychological relaxation and stress alleviation, stimulating social cohesion, supporting physical activity, and reducing exposure to air pollutants, noise and excessive heat (Taylor, Anna, and Camaren, 2014).

Greening of public spaces improves the city image and quality of life. Economic values of green city include making attractive environments for business to settle in and people to live in. Environmental values of urban green are: water management, protection of soils, cooling the air, reducing wind speeds, giving shade, reducing air pollution, contributing to the cost-effective sustainable urban drainage systems, preserving and enhancing the ecological diversity of the environment of urban places, increasing biodiversity through the conservation and enhancement of the distinctive range of urban habitats contemporary city. Trees and shrubs play an important role to remove the harmful gases and also aid to absorb some pollutants (PRIA, 2013, Parry et al.,

2018). Urban green spaces have a great value in terms of economic developments. Every house needs a green space for aesthetics appreciation and this means they need to be managed. In order to have a good result, employment opportunities are created. The creation, maintenance and management of green space also generate employment opportunities, and may have indirect benefits to local economies by encouraging further investment and property development in the area (United Bank of Carbon (UBoC), 2015). It is an interconnected network of green space that conserves natural ecosystem values and functions and provides associated benefits to human populations (Benedict and McMahon, 2002). It contributes to a very high level of achieving the sustainable urban form (Rafeq, 2006) and supports the natural life system (Benedict and McMahon, 2002).

### **What Nigerian Governments are Doing to Keep Cities Green**

Cities are looking for ways to cut costs, reduce pollution and resource use, and be more efficient and sustainable. They're looking for ways to be more resilient in the face of natural disasters or economic downturns. Many cities are committed to reducing their carbon footprint, by increasing the efficiency of their waste disposal system and reusing materials. Cities across the Nigeria have started going green using new technology that can help them achieve these green initiatives goals – such as: smart meters that allow people living in low-income areas to see how much electricity they are using so they can cut back on consumption if necessary; solar panels on rooftops; building insulation programs; composting programs; rainwater harvesting systems (which require no maintenance); green roofs which increase air quality by filtering out toxins from exhaust fumes, etc.

The good news is Nigeria does not only acknowledge the importance of sustainable development, but it is also committed to creating eco-friendly spaces. A main project of the government is the Greening Nigeria Project which aims to plant 1 billion trees across the country to combat deforestation and climate change and, at the same time, improve access to green spaces for its citizens. The government has launched several projects to promote accessibility and enhance ease of use of parks and public spaces. The Nigerian Building and Road Research Institute (NBRRI) has formulated accessibility guidelines for public buildings, spaces, and parks. Moreover, some parks such as the Millennium Park in Abuja have made improvements to include walkways and paths for the convenience of all users. In addition, the Lagos State Parks and Gardens Agency (LASPARK), which is tasked with the development and upkeep of parks and gardens in the state, also focuses on creating recreational and relaxing spaces. Non-governmental organizations (NGOs), notably the Nigerian Conservation Foundation, are working to preserve the biodiversity and the rich natural resources of the country. The same can be said of the Lekki Conservation Centre which is a nature reserve in Lagos.

As captured in the works of Adejumo (2002), Briggs (2019), Ekong (2017) Enete, Ogbonna, and Officha, (2012), across the country, cities are using lots of innovative ways to go green. Abakaliki, the capital of Ebonyi State has a recycling program and it's known for its green initiatives. The city has an extensive recycling program that includes biodegradable waste bags and compost bins, as well as a waste management program to collect garbage from residents' homes. Residents can also opt-out of this service if they prefer not to participate. Abakaliki's efforts toward sustainability have been praised by visitors who come to visit the city each year during their vacations; some even consider it one of their favorite destinations. **Uyo**, the capital

of Akwa Ibom State is at the forefront of solid waste management. The city is going green with many green initiatives and has been at the forefront of solid waste management in Nigeria. The state government built a solar park in 2012, which generates electricity for over 60% of Uyo's population. It also plans to build more solar parks as well as wind power plants across its cities. In addition to these projects, they have also constructed biogas plants across all major townships in Akwa Ibom State so that residents no longer need charcoal for cooking or heating purposes since they can now use gas instead. Benin City, the capital of Edo State is home to many green spaces and its home to the largest city in Nigeria. The City allows residents and visitors alike to enjoy nature while they are relaxing or traveling around town on foot or by bike (or even car). There are several parks throughout this area some of which include Odo Iri Park, Oba Adetunji Park, etc.

Lagos is looking to use more solar power. The city is implementing many different green initiatives to help improve the environment. For instance, Lagos has installed solar streetlights in some areas of the city so that people can have better lighting at night and reduce their carbon footprint with this renewable energy source. The city is also going green with its waste collection service that picks up garbage from homes every week. Lagos is going green because it has created a number of parks throughout the city that are open to the public. These parks are beautiful, and they provide residents with places to go and enjoy themselves while also keeping them safe from crime. Port Harcourt the capital of Rivers state has introduced bus lanes. Port Harcourt is a city that has been struggling with air pollution and traffic congestion for years. In 2014, the Nigerian government announced plans to mitigate these issues by introducing bus lanes within the city limits. This would allow buses to use dedicated lanes so they could travel more quickly on their routes without causing delays for other motorists or pedestrians. The plan seems to be working: Port Harcourt now has one of the lowest levels of carbon dioxide emissions from motor vehicles in Nigeria (Nigeria's Environmental Protection Agency estimates that they account for 3 percent). The city also recently saw an 11% decrease in car ownership between 2012-2016—a trend indicative of greater public awareness about climate change issues among Nigerians living there who may have previously ignored them out of convenience or ignorance rather than concern over personal health risks associated with running such vehicles regularly.

### **Towards Achieving Sustainable City in Nigeria: The way forward**

Plants are not only used on the ground and on roofs but also on facades, with architects and urban residents increasingly experimenting with vertical gardens. Similarly, urban wastelands and unused industrial infrastructure are being re-natured to provide habitat for urban biodiversity and recreational spaces for city dwellers (Eugene, 2013). Striving for sustainable cities requires overcoming barriers between different levels of government as well as vested interests in preserving the status quo (Hoeflich, 2021). It requires looking beyond the sphere of the urban to attend to urban-rural linkages, foster circular resource use, and decarbonize the energy, transport, and building sectors. Urban sustainability requires cross-sectoral planning and attention to the differentiated needs of all urban dwellers so as to leave no one behind in the necessary transformation. Sustainability pathways should be tailored to specific urban contexts (PRIA, 2013). As such, there will never be one single model for what a sustainable city looks like. Against this background, it is important to pay attention to inclusive urban planning. Decisions adopted at Habitat I

in 1976 already stipulated that “Public participation is a right that must be accorded to all segments of the population, including the most disadvantaged” and that “Citizens must be provided opportunities for direct involvement in the decisions that profoundly affect their lives”.

To improve air quality, investment in public transport and green mobility is rising on a global scale. The urban mobility paradigm is shifting away from petrol-dependent systems and governments play a crucial role in implementing alternative solutions to tackle the urban mobility challenges cities are currently facing Ekong (2017). Policies to promote public transport, walking or cycling through adequate infrastructure investments and measures to disincentive, the use of private vehicles through taxes, tolls and parking fees, inspire more and more cities to shift to low-carbon models. Similar policies can be adapted to protect the environment, for instance through sustainable waste and water management. Recycling is not only an opportunity for cities to save resources, but also to increase income sources for people engaged in the recycling process and enlarge the value chain. Furthermore, government can favor cooperatives of the urban poor or local communities to manage recycling processes in order to support the livelihoods of informal workers.

At the same time, governments can monitor and regulate land use to make cities more resilient to climate change and disasters. The protection of rivers and lakes and the promotion of alternative energy sources are just as important as preventive educational measures, such as emergency plans. However, these measures are only effective in cooperation with communities and thus with the involvement of the government that is responsible for them. Good governance is required for achieving sustainable city (Erhun, 2015). The very term "good governance" implies that governance can be bad. Governance is good once all of the factors that are making it inefficient are resolved, expunged, or addressed (PRIA, 2013). To be considered good governance, it must be transparent, inclusive and people-oriented. It must be accountable and open. It must respect people's rights to participate in decisions affecting. Good governance should help make the optimum use of resources, promote the rule of law (UNDP 1997), and mobilize resources from various sources. Environment conservation and improvement can only be actualized effectively within the structure of good governance. Participation in environmental policy decision efficaciously connects the general public to environmental governance. Accountability and transparency are more attainable by involving individual, who are at the centre of possible reasons, consequences, and answers to environmental problems. This action gives democratic legitimacy to environmental decision-making, an essential element to achieving good environmental governance (Bulkeley & Mol, 2003).

Thus, in making sure that good environmental governance is improved in Nigeria, the formulation and enactment of environmental policies and laws must be inclusive, transparent, implementable and enforceable. The process should enable substantive public engagement, particularly citizen's active involvement in environmental decision making, citizen's access to information disclosure, and equal protection under the law.

### **Theoretical Framework**

This article is anchored on the theory of *sustainable regeneration*. The idea of regeneration came to the fore in the 18th century through the work of the naturalist Abraham Trembley, who wanted

to know why and how the heads of hydra and earthworms could grow back after they had been removed. *Sustainable regeneration* focuses on active ecosystem recovery rather than mere damage mitigation. Advances such as renewable energies are undoubtedly positive, but a new philosophy reflected in sustainable regeneration projects is gaining momentum. Sustainable regeneration takes into account a world of limited resources. At its core, it is about the industrial activity starting to behave more like natural ecosystems, where all resources are used without undermining the overall balance.

Sustainable regeneration goes a step further than sustainability, striving not only to prevent harm, but to redress that which has already been done and regenerate what has been lost. The effort is to replenish and restore what the planet has lost by healing environmental, economic and social wounds. Sustainable regeneration is a concept that seeks to create economies and communities that thrive so that the planet can too. There requires that work is done on several fronts in the fight against climate change. But committing to a circular economy, achieving carbon neutrality and building resilient infrastructure are three crucial steps if we are to reduce global warming. Sustainable regeneration involves taking action to repair what has been destroyed.

Sustainable regeneration will continue to have a positive impact on the planet: developing tactics for capturing CO<sub>2</sub> emissions, recovering biodiversity, circular waste management and reuse of water. This range of activities focuses on reversing some of the most urgent climate indicators. The objective of regeneration is to unite, add value and positively impact the planet. So together with the climate crisis, sustainable regeneration addresses systemic inequalities to reduce diversity gaps and, again, generate a positive impact on communities and society.

Since the early 1990s, environmentally sustainable development has also emerged as an important element of urban policy. In *Sustainable Development: the UK Strategy* (1994) the Government recognized the importance of urban regeneration in contributing to a sustainable pattern of development that uses “the already developed areas in the most efficient way, while making them more attractive places in which to live and work” (Department of the Environment, 1994). Many cities around the world including cities in Nigeria have experienced high levels of floods, extreme levels of heat and cold.

### **Empirical Review**

Yakubu (2012) wrote on Improving the Planning and Management of Urban Green Spaces in Zaria, Nigeria. This paper tries to explain the constraints, limitations and challenges in the development of a viable and sustainable urban green system in Zaria. These constraints were identified to include; land ownership, lack of comprehensive land use plans, and lack of green space development strategy. Cases were reviewed from Sofia, Bulgaria and Abuja, Nigeria. The most important lesson learned from these cases is the need to integrate green space development into the wider planning and development programmes of the city. The paper concluded by recommending specific actions namely promulgation of a green space legislation, land title regularization and recertification, preparation of comprehensive land use plans, establishment of urban green agency and public awareness and sensitization on the potential benefits of urban green spaces which need to be taken to ensure the planning and management of a viable urban green system in Zaria.



Ola (2019) investigated Resource Utilization and Environmental Sustainability in Nigeria. The paper examines the issues of resources utilization and how that affects the environmental sustainability profile of Nigeria. The paper notes that Nigeria has a substantial amount of human and material resources while the way and manner the resources are managed influences environmental sustainability within the nation and the world at large. It is observed that despite numerous policy measures, human and material resources are continuously wasted in Nigeria even as the nation continues on a downward trend of poverty. The paper concludes that something drastic needs to be done about how Nigeria manages its resources if sustainability must be attained.

Emechebe and Eze (2019) investigated Integration of Sustainable Urban Green Space in Reducing Thermal Heat in Residential Area in Abuja. The paper observed that inadequate green spaces in urban residential housing environment have been contributing to increase in environmental temperature. This research aims to integrate green spaces in the housing environment in order to lower the intense heat caused by sunlight in the residential areas of Abuja. The study adopts quantitative method of research. Structured questionnaires were employed to elicit information from the residents on the need for urban green space in residential environment. Total of 370 structured questionnaires were distributed randomly to residents of Abuja Municipal Area Council (AMAC) to ascertain the value of green spaces in residential area, out of which 322 were retrieved. The results revealed that four factors accounts for the need of green space in residential areas; comfortability (87.8%), good climate (91.6%), good air quality (86.0%), and good health (85.7%). It is concluded that urban green spaces fulfill many functions in the reduction of thermal heat in urban residential areas that benefit people's quality of life. The study recommends that adequate urban green spaces should be encouraged to ensure good living for the residents. Also, Architects are encouraged to integrate green spaces in their designs while other stakeholders in the building industry are to ensure its implementation. The government through the development control unit should ensure that green spaces are enforced.

Additionally, Olumuyiwa, Ayodele, Tobi, and Olawale (2021) researched on urban green infrastructure in Nigeria: A review. The paper observed that urban green infrastructure is critical to sustainable cities and society, especially in rapidly urbanizing developing countries. This paper provides a review of studies on urban greening in Nigeria. Through a review of 94 papers selected from online databases, evidence on practices, benefits, disservices, challenges as well as opportunities associated with domestic gardening, green roofs, vertical greening systems, public parks, urban trees, and forest are identified. Evidently, urban green infrastructure has (and can significantly) enhance the well-being and quality of the environment within cities in Nigeria. Urban greening master plan(s) is imperative and there are lessons from sub-Saharan African and developing countries in this regard. The paper concluded that mainstreaming green infrastructure for climate adaptation should gain traction. To exploit the potentials, the paper recommended that all stakeholders need to collaborate to make green infrastructure development happen concurrently with ongoing urban development.

Similarly, Ikugbe, Hassan, Shoyemi, and Adepegba (2021) researched on Green Infrastructure Development Planning System as a Tool for Promoting Sustainable Development. The paper maintained that modern approaches to urban planning assume the dualistic nature of urban green infrastructure. The need for this paper was as a result of poor urban infrastructural development. The paper first looks at the contents of urban resilience and then discussed the principles for

planning resilient cities. The ways green infrastructure initiatives can foster the principles contributing to building urban and regional resilience were emphasized. The paper observed that there are challenges facing the institutionalization of green infrastructure initiatives. It concluded that there should be future role of spatial planning in the process of institutionalizing green infrastructure strategies.

Also, Abiodun (2022) investigated environmental justice and green spaces in Ibadan metropolis, Nigeria: Implications on sustainable development in urban construction. The paper observed that Environmental Justice (EJ) in urban construction is lacking, and it is a major concern towards achieving some of the sustainable development goals (SDGs). This study employs the concept of EJ in explaining the fairness in the distribution of green spaces (GS) with regard to urban construction in Ibadan metropolis, Nigeria. The paper revealed that GS distribution is more a function of the pattern of unplanned and uncontrolled physical developments than of a deliberate effort by the people or government to maintain the GS.

### **Concluding Remarks**

A sustainable city is an urban center engineered to improve its environmental impact through urban planning and management. Greening public spaces not only implies geographical changes, but also a political change in order to manage growth. A city that fails to meet the core expectations of governance—maintaining order, making and carrying out collective decisions, providing basic services—will not be able to sustain the ecological, social, and economic aspects of the concept of sustainability. Going green can help make Nigerian cities become places where people want to live and work, and where the environment is respected. It is important to pay attention to inclusive urban planning. Decisions adopted at Habitat I in 1976 already stipulated that “Public participation is a right that must be accorded to all segments of the population, including the most disadvantaged” (p. 76) and that “Citizens must be provided opportunities for direct involvement in the decisions that profoundly affect their lives” (p. 71). In the light of the above, there is need for government to make policies that help to make it easy to get around without a car by creating paths, bike bridges and sidewalks, and encouraging citizens to walk, ride, or commute via metro trains or buses so as to; decrease congestion, reduce harmful emissions, enhance air quality, and improved health and wellness. Also there is need to improve water conservation and waste management through sustainable urban planning. Programs to minimize waste by recycling, composting, and repurposing materials can improve ways cities can be more sustainable with waste management. Similarly, it is high time government began to implement green architecture as an innovative ways to reduce resource use and lower greenhouse gas emissions.

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