

# Planning and Land Administration Challenges in Developing New Cities:- The Abuja Experience in Nigeria

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**Keywords:** Master Plan, Land Administration, Land Use Conversion, Distortions and Deviation.

## SUMMARY

The decision to relocate the capital city of Nigeria from Lagos in the south to a central location of Abuja was taken almost four decades ago. It is spacious with easy access to all parts of the Federation. The Master Plan of the new city of Abuja was submitted in 1979. Actual development activities started in the early 1980s. The relocation of the seat of the Federal Government from Lagos to Abuja was effected in 1991. The Master Plan provided ‘an organized pattern of land use and development guidelines for 500 hectares of government activity, 891 hectares of service, 12,486 hectares of residential land, 920 hectares of light industry, 1,840 hectares of transport infrastructure, 561 hectares of commercial, and 8,300 hectares of open and recreational land’ (P. 5 MP). It stipulates a maximum population of 3 million people after 25 years of development after which population growth would be accommodated in satellite towns.

“The 25-years-plus focus requires that the plan must recognize changes and uncertainty by making provisions for foreseen growth and transition as well as unforeseen events.”(P. v MP). 15 years after the target year of 2000, how has the implementation fared? What are our expectations? And what are the present realities? This paper traces the implementation of the Master Plan since inception with particular emphasis on series of government policy changes and its implications on the development of the city of Abuja. It attempts a critical analysis of the performance of the Plan from the land administration and planning perspective. Key issues brought out in this study include the huge population of the city beyond the original projections. Provision of transport infrastructure is lagging behind with consequences of traffic grid lock hence longer journey time. Various land uses have been changed. There is increase in size of the city from its original 250sq km to over 1000sq km now and city has changed shape from original crescent shape to something different. Though the city has seen tremendous development in the last 35 years, a lot still needs to be done.

Resettlement issues are a reoccurring decimal with significant effect on implementation of the master plan provisions. Professional Planners and Land Administrators are constantly at receiving end from government/political leadership. This is not a very pleasant development and would definitely require serious intervention from organised professional bodies in order to protect its members that are involved in discharging their professional duties.

The development of Abuja has lessons for other nations. Our experiences could serve not only as guide but a good laboratory for land related professionals the world over.

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(7723)

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 The decision to relocate the capital city of Nigeria from the coastal area of Lagos to a central location of Abuja was taken almost four decades ago. The spacious nature of Abuja coupled with easy access to all parts of the Federation are the major advantages that tilted the decision to relocate from Lagos. Accordingly a law was passed by the Federal Government of Nigeria to establish the Federal Capital Territory – the FCT Act of 1976. The Master Plan of the new city of Abuja was submitted in 1979 and was prepared by the International Planning Associates (IPA). Actual development activities started in the early 1980s. The relocation of the seat of the Federal Government from Lagos to Abuja was effected in 1991. The area known as the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) today covers a total land mass of about 8,000 square kilometer. It is bounded by Nasarawa State to the east, Kaduna State to the north, Niger State to the west and Kogi State to the south (see Figure 1).



FIGURE 1: MAP OF NIGERIA SHOWING THE LOCATION OF LAGOS AND THE NEW FCT, (AGIS, 2006)

1.2 With the relocation of the seat of the Federal Government from Lagos to Abuja in 1991, the tempo of development activities within the FCC increased tremendously. This put the

Master Plan to test because over night the FCC became a huge Planning Laboratory where Planners, Architects, Engineers and almost all the land related professionals got involved in the development of a modern city. The Federal Capital Development Authority (FCDA) is the statutory body charged with the responsibility of the implementation of the provisions of the Master Plan of the FCC and the regional development Plan of the FCT. Its engineering department takes care of the provision of the city's infrastructure. This is by no means an easy task.

- 1.3 This paper examines the implementation of the Abuja Master Plan in the last 35 years bearing in mind that the year 2000 was targeted as the year that the city was to be fully developed to its ultimate population of not more than 3 million people. It is now 15 years after that target. How has the Plan implementation fared? It is hope that this paper would give some answers to some important issues experienced during this period. It should be noted that this is not a review of the Master Plan of Abuja because that is a huge task. What this paper has done is to attempt to answer some few but important questions hoping that this would stimulate further debate and more studies about Abuja.

## 2. THE MASTER PLAN

- 2.1 As earlier seen the Master Plan for the City of Abuja was prepared by the International Planning Associates and submitted to the Nigerian Authorities in 1979. The Plan provided 'an organized pattern of land use and development guidelines for 500 hectares of government activity, 891 hectares of service, 12,486 hectares of residential land, 920 hectares of light industry, 1,840 hectares of transport infrastructure, 561 hectares of commercial and 8,300 hectares of open and recreational land' (Page 5, MP, 1979). This land use budget gives a total area of 254.98 square kilometer (or 25,498 hectares). (See Figure 2).

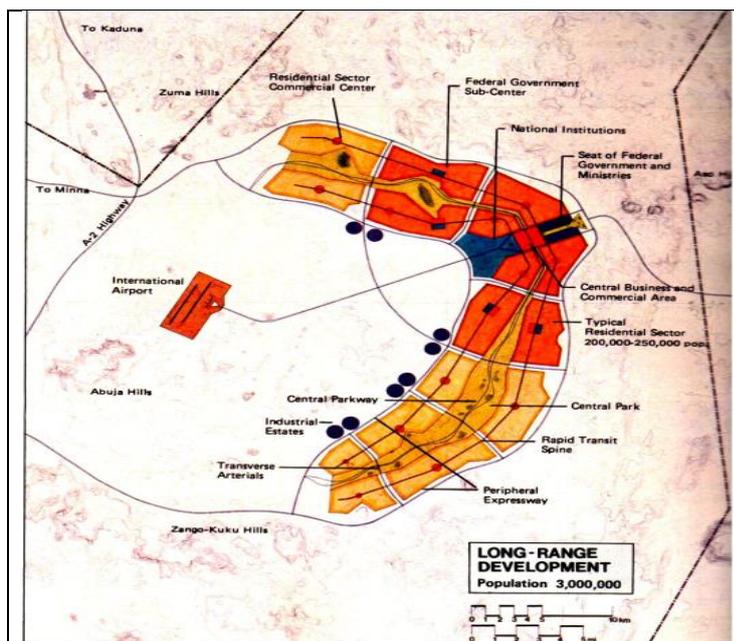
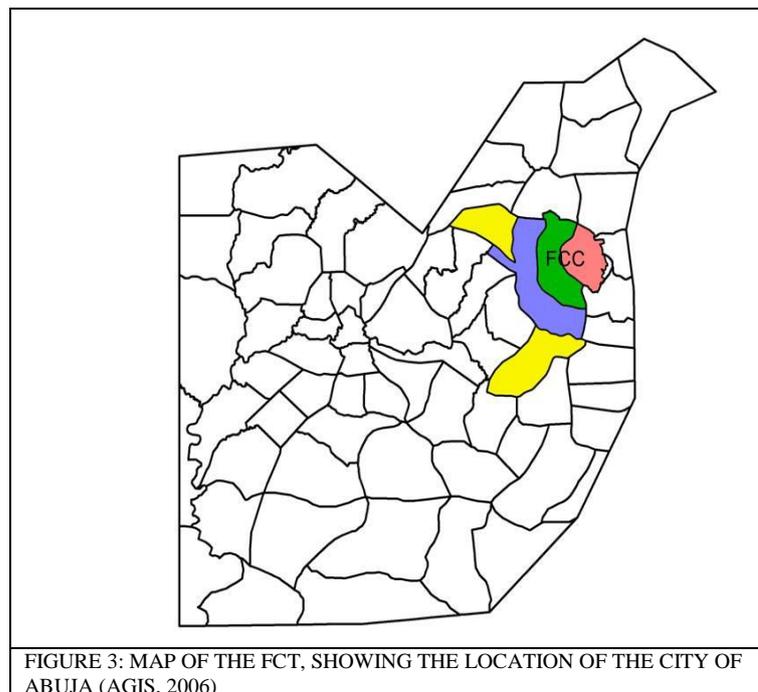


Figure 2: Original Size and Shape of the FCC (Source: The Master Plan of Abuja, 1979)

2.2 It stipulates a maximum population of 3 million people after 25 years of development after which population growth would be accommodated in satellite towns. As earlier seen The City of Abuja (also known as the Federal Capital City (FCC), was planned to cover a total land area of 254.98 square kilometer (out of the 8,000 square kilometer of the FCT). It is located on the Gwagwa plains in north eastern part of the FCT and generally ‘above elevation 366 meters below the escarpment surrounding the outer arc of the site’ (Master Plan, P4,) . It is designed in a crescent-shaped (see Figures 2 & 3) with Aso hill as a major focal point. It is bounded to the north by Bwari – Aso range of hills, which gives it a natural boundary with beautiful landscape.



2.3 The FCC is developed in Phases (Phases 1 to 4, see Figure 3). Each phase has a number of districts with a mixture of residential, commercial, educational and recreational land uses. The neighborhood concept is adopted as the smallest unit of development within a district. Each neighborhood is designed for a population of 5,000 people, with common facilities such as a nursery and primary school, a shopping center, a park, and other services. Collections of four or five neighborhood constitute a district. Each district has a district center where services such as district postal service, district fire service, secondary school, shopping malls, hotels, police department and many others can be found. The growth modules in the form of development sectors, ‘each a mini-city of 100,000 to 250,000, focused on internal secondary employment centers and sub-divided into residential districts’. The residential districts are planned for between 40,000 to 60,000 people.

- 2.4 It should be noted that a district center is much higher and provides more services than a neighborhood center. Services that could not be found at district centers are located at the central area or CBD of the city. The central area as the name indicates is situated in the central part of the city with residential districts surrounding it on both sides (northwest and southeast axis). It consists ‘of a mall flanked by Federal Government buildings focused on the National Assembly’. It extends to the southeast in the form of the ‘major commercial shopping street, ending at the transportation center with a major sports complex adjacent’ (Mater Plan, P 4).
- 2.5 Provision of infrastructure is such that ‘dual transit spines form core of each development corridor’ so that majority of residents can ‘be within walking distance of public transportation’ a provision is also made of a ‘peripheral highway system flanking each development corridor and defining their outer limits’. There is also a parkway in the central park connected by transverse parkways, as well a ‘sector road system designed to provide easy access to centers from periphery but designed to discourage traffic through residential areas’.
- 2.6 Provision is made for a network of ‘water, sewage, and drainage infrastructure’ in such a way that it would preserve the natural landscape and respect the existing drainage patterns. An international airport is located on the plain to the east of the Central Area connected by a limited-access expressway.
- 2.7 Lastly the planned provided for a ‘program of stage growth planned to occur in incremental stages so that construction of one sector is completed before the next is begun’. This in order to ‘reduce impacts of noise, dust and disruption’ associated with continues, long-term construction program.

### 3. DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM OF THE FCC SINCE INCEPTION

#### 3.1 Phase I

- 3.1.1 It is now 35 years that implementation of the provisions of the Master Plan and physical development of the FCC and FCT started. A lot has happened within this period. So far the most developed part of the city still remains the Phase 1. There are ten districts in this phase and most of them are provided with some of the basic infrastructure, including the newest district – Guzape (See Table 1). Together these districts cover a total land area of about 90 square kilometer. Most private and governmental activities are concentrated in these districts.

S/N	NAME OF DISTRICT	CADASTRAL ZONE	SIZE SQKM
1	Central Area (CBD)	A00	16.5
2	Garki I	A01	4.6
3	Garki II	A02	6.9
4	Wuse I	A03	5.6
5	Asokoro	A04	22.4
6	Maitama	A05	11
7	Maitama	A06	7
8	Wuse II	A07	3.2

9	Wuse II	A08	2.4
10	Guzape	A09	10.6
	<b>Total</b>		90.2

Table 1:- Phase I Districts of the FCC (Source: AGIS, 2015)

3.1.2 As result of the near full development within this Phase of the FCC a lot of changes generally not in full conformity with the provisions of the Master Plan are visible here. Details of the implications of these changes would be discussed in subsequent sections of this paper..



### 3.2 Phase II Development

3.2.1 This Phase of the city has 20 districts (see Table 2) and covers about 97 square kilometer in size. It is physically separated from Phase I by Ring Road I – a major ten lane dual carriage way. It is divided into two stages with the first six district arranged

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from north to south, while the remaining nine districts are separated from Phase III by another dual carriage way – Ring Road 2. The four sector centers are in between four districts each except Sector Center D which is in between three districts. Detailed land use and site development plans of this phase were completed in the early 1990s.

3.2.2 Infrastructure development has gone far in some of the districts – a least five of them.

S/N	NAME OF DISTRICT	CADASTRAL ZONE	SIZE SQKM
1	KUKWABA	B00	15.3
2	GUDU	B01	5.3
3	DURUMI	B02	4.7
4	WUYE	B03	4.5
5	JABI	B04	5.3
6	UTAKO	B05	3.7
7	MABUSHI	B06	4.7
8	KATAMPE	B07	8.0
9	JAHI	B08	7.0
10	KADO	B09	4.9
11	DAKI BIYU	B10	5.4
12	KAURA	B11	5.3
13	DUBOYI	B12	3.4
14	GADUWA	B13	4.8
15	DUTSE	B14	5.4
26	SECTOR CENTRE A	B15	1.4
27	SECTOR CENTRE B	B16	0.8
18	SECTOR CENTRE C	B17	0.7
19	SECTOR CENTRE D	B18	0.9
20	KATAMPE EXTENSION	B19	5.5
	<b>Total</b>		97

Table 2:- Phase II Districts of the FCC (Source: AGIS, 2015)

The remaining ones are already accessible through some of the major arterials that are already completed or are ongoing. Despite the lack of full infrastructure in some of these districts, residential and commercial developments are going on at an alarming rate. There is therefore a high risk of some of these developments not going according to the engineering provisions. Details would be discussed in later sections of this paper.

### 3.3 Phase III Development

3.3.1 This Phase of the FCC covers 16 residential districts, 2 industrial districts, 1 research and institutional district and four sector centers – total of 23 districts - on an area of about 153.2 square kilometer (see Table 3). This phase is also divided into two stages just like the phase II districts. It is bounded to east by the Ring Road 2 and the Ring Road 3 to the west.

3.3.2 About 5 districts in this phase of the FCC development are earmarked for ‘Mass Housing Program’ which started in year 2000. Under this program large parcels of plots of land were earmarked for large scale housing development to private corporate organizations with certain terms and conditions. Some of the terms was for the government to provide primary infrastructure such as major access roads, power, water and sewage connections, while the private investors are to provide the secondary infrastructure such as secondary and tertiary road network within the estates, affordable housing in large numbers and other services. (The performance of this program is a separate issue which I discussed elsewhere – see Jibril, 2012). This phase has no much infrastructure in place. Only the Industrial Area and some of the

S/N	NAME OF DISTRICT	CADASTRAL ZONE	SIZE SQKM
1	INSTITUTIONS & RESEARCH	C00	19.4
2	KARMO	C01	5.5
3	GWARINPA I	C02	6.1
4	GWARINPA II	C03	4.3
5	DAPE	C04	5.3
6	KAFE	C05	6.0
7	NBORA	C06	5.4
8	GALADIMAWA	C07	6.6
9	DAKWO	C08	5.7
10	LOKOGOMA	C09	8.0
11	WUMBA	C10	5.9
12	SARAJI	C11	5.6
13	KABUSA	C12	8.9
14	OKANJE	C13	6.1
15	PYAKASA	C14	5.8
16	WUPA	C15	2.8
17	INDUSTRIAL AREA I & EXTENSION	C16	21.6
18	INDUSTRIAL AREA II	C17	12.3
19	BUNKORO	C18	8.4
20	SECTOR CENTRE E	C19	0.93
21	SECTOR CENTRE F	C20	0.65
22	SECTOR CENTRE G	C21	0.9
23	SECTOR CENTRE H	C22	0.9
	<b>Total</b>		153.2

Table 3:- Phase III Districts of the FCC (Source: AGIS, 2015)

Mass Housing districts have some form of infrastructure.

### 3.4 Phase IV Development

3.4.1 This phase is the least developed part of the FCC with very little or no infrastructure at all. It consists of 44 districts on an area of about 231.8 square kilometers. It has 6 sector centers plus an industrial area (see Table 4). About 4 of the residential districts are set aside for Mass Housing development.

S/N	NAME OF DISTRICT	CADASTRAL ZONE	SIZE SQKM
1	KARSANA EAST	D01	7.7
2	KARSANA SOUTH	D02	6.1
3	IDOGWARI	D03	6.3
4	IDU-SABO	D04	4.3
5	KARSAN NORTH	D05	9.2
6	KARSANA WEST	D06	5.1
7	SABO GIDA	D07	7.4
8	KODO	D08	3.8
9	KAGINI	D09	7.9
10	GWAGWA	D10	8.4
11	FILINDABO	D11	5.5
12	KABA	D12	5.4
13	KETTI NORTH	D13	5.1
14	SHERETTI	D14	4.5
15	SHERETTI CHECHE	D15	7.5
16	WARU-POZEMA	D16	7.8
17	KETTI	D17	5.1
18	KETTI EAST	D18	4.8
19	BURUN WEST	D19	7.3
20	BURUN	D20	7.3
21	GIDARI BAHAGO	D21	6.2
22	GWARI	D22	4.7
23	BUDE WEST	D23	8.6
24	BUDE	D24	5.8
25	KPOTO WEST	D25	5.6
26	KPOTO EAST	D26	5.2
27	CHAFE	D27	6.3
28	JAITE	D28	6.2
29	MAMUSA NORTH	D29	4.6
30	MAMUSA EAST	D30	4.7
31	PARFUN NORTH	D31	4.5
32	MAMUSA WEST	D32	5.4
33	PARFUN SOUTH	D33	6.9
34	SECTOR CENTRE N	D34	0.96
35	SECTOR CENTRE O	D35	0.95
36	SECTOR CENTRE P	D36	0.74

37	SECTOR CENTRE Q	D37	0.7
38	MINI CENTRAL AREA	D38	1.2
39	SECTOR CENTRE M	D39	0.7
40	ABUJA WEST CENTRAL DISTRICT	D40	3.8
41	BAKUSA	D41	7.03
42	INDUSTRIAL AREA PHASE 4	D42	14.0
43	SECTOR CENTRE K	D43	0.26
44	SECTOR CENTRE L	D44	0.43
	<b>Total</b>		231.8

Table 4:- Phase IV Districts of the FCC (Source: AGIS, 2015)

### 3.5 Other Development within the Vicinity of the FCC

- 3.5.1 As earlier seen the FCC Master Plan provided for the development of about 250 square kilometer of the FCT land mass. There after any other development was to be taken care of within the various satellite towns that are close to the city. This would allow for a more manageable population in the city as well as maintain the city character and landscape. However starting from the mid 1990s certain development started manifesting by way of extensions of existing districts. The first to be affected is the Asokoro District. This district has undergone several extensions to the extent that it is now over three times its original size.
- 3.5.2 The pressure on service plots of land has there lead to most of the areas close to the city now planned and replanned to cater for this demand. Consequently several districts have now sprung up particularly within Municipal and Bwari Area Councils (see Tables 5 & 6).

S/N	NAME OF DISTRICT	CADASTRAL ZONE	SIZE SQKM
1	GOUSA	E04	30.6
2	AVIATION VILLAGE	E05	77.2
3	DEIDEI	E06	46.9
4	LUGBE CENTRAL	E07	19.2
5	LUGBE SOUTH	E09	9.2
6	KURUDUMA	E15	7.1
7	KPADUMA	E16	9.2
8	KUGBO	E17	4.7
9	WASA	E18	37.5
10	APO-TAFYI	E22	20.4
11	KYAMI	E23	28.7
12	WAWA	E24	18.4
13	LUGBE NORTH	E25	24.3
14	KPEGYI	E26	16.1
15	APO	E27	8.5
26	GURKU	E28	13.8

27	LUGBE EAST	E29	19.1
18	LUGBE WEST	E30	12.3
19	CARRAWAY DALLAS	E31	2.6
	<b>Total</b>		405.6

Table 5:- Districts WITHIN MUNICIPAL COUNCIL of the FCC (Source: AGIS, 2015)

3.5.3 There are now 19 districts that have sprang up within Municipal Area Council with a combined total land mass of 405.6 square kilometers (see Table 5). These districts are virtually linked to the city and apart from the better planning standards and strict development control activities that go with the FCC development, there is very little to differentiate these additional districts from those of the city.

3.5.4 Most of these Municipal Districts are located to the west of the FCC particularly along the Airport Express Way. Others are located to the east particularly along the Abuja-Keffi Express Way and the Outer Southern Express Way.

S/N	NAME OF DISTRICT	CADASTRAL ZONE	SIZE SQKM
1	KUBWA	F01	10.6
2	MPAPE	F04	54.4
3	DAKWA	F11	19.8
4	JIBI	F12	20.7
5	KUBWA TOWN	F13	9.4
6	BAZANGO	F14	10.8
7	KUBWA EXTENSION	F15	3.9
8	DAWAKI	F18	13.1
	<b>Total</b>		145.7

Table 6:- Districts WITHIN BWARI COUNCIL of the FCC (Source: AGIS, 2015)

3.5.5 Similarly 8 districts are located along the Outer Northern Express Way and this falls within Bwari Area Council. These districts have a combined land mass of 145.7 square kilometers (see Table 6). The nature and consequences of these extensions beyond the original FCC boundary would be discussed in the next section of this paper.

#### 4. CHALLENGES

4.1 A Master Plan for a city is a guide towards orderly development of that city. That of Abuja FCC cannot therefore be an exception. To implement a Plan from the scratch and to watch a city grow from conception on paper to actual reality is by no means an easy task, more so when that is coming from a developing country. So many factors come to play in the successful implementation of the provision of a Master Plan. Prominent among these factors includes (but by no means not limited to):-

- 4.1.1 Strong finances (both from public and private domain),
- 4.1.2 Strong Political will to adhere to the rules of the game,

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- 4.1.3 Availability of experienced professionals that would carry out the implementation process,
- 4.1.4 Support from various relevant professional bodies,
- 4.1.5 Enlighten citizenry that would always agitate and point out deviations if and when they notice any.

#### 4.2 Policy Changes

Right from the onset the establishment and development of the FCT and FCC was prone to constant policy shift and inconsistencies. These policy shifts or changes proved to have wider implications for the implementation of the provision of the Master Plan, than one could ordinarily imagine.

- 4.2.1 For instance the first policy statement in respect of the establishment of the FCT and FCC was issued in 1976. (For details on resettlement issues within the FCT see Jibril, 2006). At that time the government opted for complete resettlement of the entire inhabitants of the FCT out of the present area. ***“... The few local inhabitants in the area, who needed to be moved out of the territory for planning purposes, will be resettled outside the area in places of their choice at Government expense...”***(Gen. Murtala, 1976).

- 4.2.2 By the year 1978 there was a policy shift and the idea of complete resettlement was modified to partial resettlement.

***“...those not affected by the first phase of resettlement, but wish to move out of the territory may do so, but such people will have no claims on the FCDA, as they have not been forced to leave. This in effect means that inhabitants (indigenes) not moved out during the present exercise who decide to stay will now be deemed to be citizens of the FCT and FCDA will soon appoint an administrator to administer them and look after their welfare. The present land area gazetted as FCT will remain. The site cleared for the building of the capital itself will be evacuated and resettlement of the people so evacuated can take place within or outside the territory. The meagre funds available now should be spent more on development of infrastructure rather than on payment of compensation...”*** (Gen. Obasanjo, 1978).

In other words resettlement was made optional and only those people whose area would be needed for development purposes could be resettled.

- 4.2.3 By 1992 there was another policy shift from that of 1978. This time the government opted for the policy of integration of the locals. This change opted to allow the local inhabitants to remain in their original locations. This policy proved to be a complete failure.

- 4.2.4 As a result of the complete failure of the above policy another change was initiated reverting to the previous policy of complete resettlement. This was in 1999. This policy though not changed was however never implemented.

- 4.2.5 These series of policy changes and inconsistencies by Government have a lot of serious implications on the implementation of the provisions of both the Abuja Master Plan and the Regional Development Plan of the FCT.

As earlier seen, the FCT Act was enacted with the initial intension of getting every person residing within the Territory evacuated, (Section 1[3], FCT Act, 1976). That is why the Act vested all land within the FCT absolutely in the Federal Government.

This effectively alienated the original inhabitants from their ancestral land. Section 297, Subsection 2 of the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria further affirms the above provision, that: “The ownership of all lands comprised in the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja shall vest in the Government of the Federal Republic of Nigeria” (FGN, 1999). I have argued elsewhere that ‘these series of inconsistencies and changes on Government resettlement policy has led to the springing up and massive development of squatter settlements within the areas earmarked for the City and other areas within the FCT, particularly those very close to the City’ (Jibril, 2006). This has in turn militated against orderly development and in some instance actual prevention of development activities within the FCC.

#### 4.3 Extensions beyond the FCC Master Plan Limits

The original concept of the Master Plan was for the city to be developed in a crescent shape and to cover an area of 250 square kilometer. Along the line this provision was somehow ignored. Pressure from developers as well as the inability of government to cope with the demand for houses, infrastructure and other commercial services led to developments that are not consistent with the provisions of the Master Plan. As a result of the above people kept insisting on having plots that are in serviced areas, mostly within Phase 1 of the FCC. This has in turn led to concentration of development within the Phase I and series of extensions of the existing districts that have infrastructure. The Phase I districts are now ten (as against the initial nine). This is because of the addition of

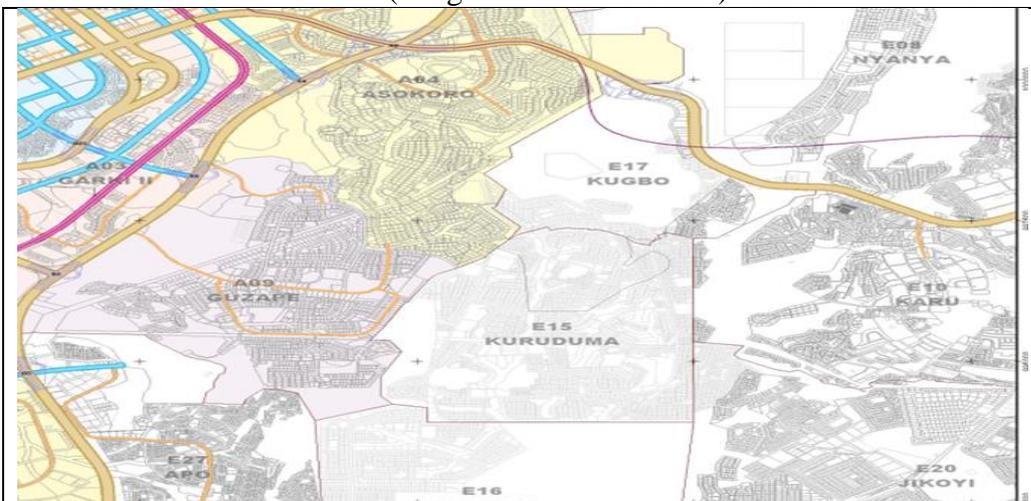


Figure 5:-Layouts / Development outside City limits – Phase I  
(Asokoro Extensions, Guzape, Kuruduma, etc.: -Source: AGIS, 2015)

Guzape district and adding more than 10 square kilometer to the original size. Similarly one more district in Phase 2 (Katampe Extension) was created adding more than 54 square kilometer to the FCC. Apart from these districts there are other districts that are officially not part of the city but their close proximity and present development trends make them part of the city by default (See Figures 5 & 6).

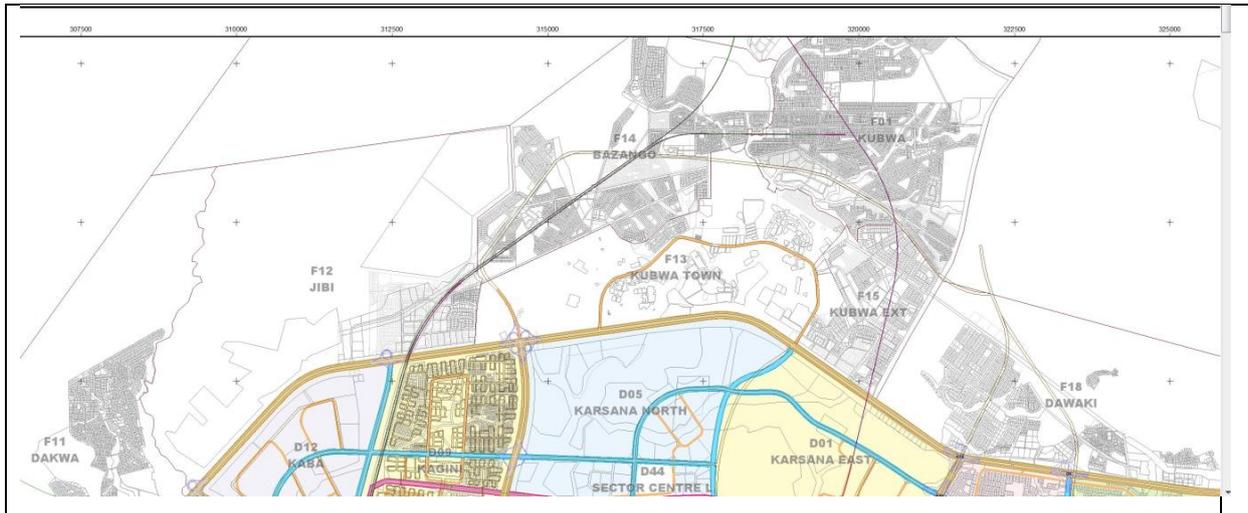


Figure 6:- Extension beyond the Northern FCC Boundary (Source:- AGIS, 2015)

As a result of this development the present reality today shows an increase in the size of the FCC from the original 250 square kilometer to 1,123 square kilometer. The implication of these extensions means more traffic, more population and overstretching of the existing infrastructure. It is clear that the population of the FCC has already gone beyond the projected 3 million and the relocation to other satellite towns is not going according to plan. Very little emphasis is placed on these satellite towns even though there is an Agency (FCT, Satellite Towns Development Agency) set up to address this issue.

#### 4.4 Encroachment on Greens

The FCC has adequate provision for green areas. As earlier seen the Master Plan made provision for 8,300 hectares of ‘open and recreational land’. Excessive pressure has been brought to bear and a lot of the areas set aside for this purpose have been converted to other uses ( mostly residential, commercial and hotel development) this is a major challenge to the not only to the implementers of the Master Plan provisions but also to the environment. The initiative taken between the years 2003 and 2007 to recover most of the green areas is no longer sustained (see Jibril, 2010). New recent studies have shown that not only the green areas, but even road reservations that are yet to be developed are under attack. This would not augur well for the city scape in future. Recent planning report from FCDA consultants has identified and recommended about 38 areas of ‘greens’ converted to other uses within the phase I of the FCC for recovery.

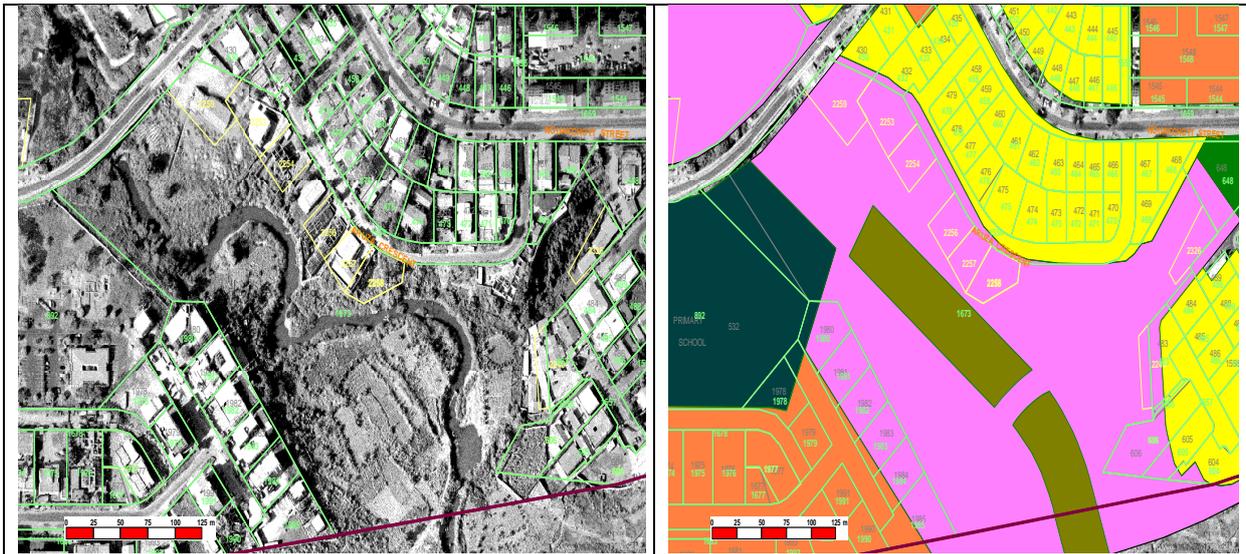


Figure 7:-Development encroaching River Protection Park A6, Maitama District (Source:- AGIS, 2004)

#### 4.5 Provision of Infrastructure

- 4.5.1 So far the Phase I of the FCC remains the most developed and probably the most that has suffered the most distortions. One major critical infrastructure that is yet to be provided is the rail transport. Though construction work on the national and FCT rail lines are ongoing a lot needs to be done to eliminate the present grid lock of traffic in some areas of the city at certain time of the day and weeks.
- 4.5.2 Apart from the railway that is lagging behind there other important roads that are yet to be provided. A lot of the districts within the remaining three districts are yet to be provided with road infrastructure. Apparently the major reason for this is the finances. The huge amount of money that is required by government to finance these projects as well as meet the demand of other competing needs that equally needs the attention of government is a big predicament.
- 4.5.3 It is perhaps in view of this predicament that the government recently decided to go into what it calls “Land Swap” program. Though ground work has been going on for the past three or four years, it is in February 2015 that the ground breaking ceremony was lunched signaling the beginning of the program. It is understood that 8 district would be affected. The government would give out land in these districts and private concerns would provide the infrastructure, parcel the land into commercially viable plots and then sell to those in need with a view to recovering their initial investment. This program is intended to free government from the provision of infrastructure which is seen to be consuming a huge chunk of government revenue so that the private sector can take that responsibility.
- 4.5.4 It is too early to predict the outcome of this project since it is just starting. It is however worthy of note to look at the outcome of the past program initiated by the FCT administration. Of particular relevance is the ‘Mass Housing Program’ initiated about 15 years ago. It expected that the program would address the housing needs of

the FCC. It is doubtful if those expectations have been met. Some many factors were responsible for the low or dismal performance of the mass housing program. I have argued elsewhere (Jibril, 2012) that the inability of the government to meet some of its obligations to the mass housing developers on one hand and the ability of the developers to attempt to cut corners on the other hand led to the somehow dismal performance of the program. Though one can argue that a lot of houses have been built which is a fact, but most of these houses are located in districts that lack basic infrastructure. That is why a lot of the houses are yet to be occupied.

- 4.5.5 It is hoped that the lessons of the mass housing program would be a major guide to the land swap program. Of particular importance is for the government to adhere strictly and fulfil its part of the bargain. This would be a major determinant of the success or otherwise of the program.

## **5. THE WAY FORWARD**

The implementation of the provisions of the FCC, Abuja is by no means an easy task. A lot of money, time and energy have gone into it in the last 35 years. A lot has been achieved and a lot more needs to be done. All the land related professionals have contributed to the successes that have so far been recorded. Looking back at what has been done lessons must be learnt.

- 5.1 Looking forward to what should be expected, there is a strong need for Professional bodies in Nigeria to show more concern, become more involved and be more forthcoming in the defense of their professional ethics in the development of Abuja. Abuja is a huge laboratory for all professions in Nigeria.
- 5.2 In a situation where a lot of the green areas are converted to other land uses such as hotels, or school plots converted to hotels/residential and many other such cases, the need for the Nigerian Institute of Town Planning (NITP) and the Town Planning Registration Council (TOPREC) to intervene cannot be over emphasized. This intervention should be from two fronts. It is a fact that most Town Planning officers find it difficult to discharge their official and professional responsibilities if and when the Political head is not inclined to look at their professional input with some measure of sympathy. In such a situation it becomes the responsibilities of these bodies to come to the rescue. It is the contention of this writer that if the political head is seen to be heading for a conflict with a strong professional body over an issue that has a lot of professional implications, such a political leader may reconsider his/her position and follow the path of wisdom. Major land use changes that may have great implications for the city could be discussed in a public forum. Such is not done now and that is why the professionals are constantly at the receiving end.
- 5.3 Similarly appropriate sanction should be in place to any erring official found wanting in the course of discharging professional responsibilities.
- 5.4 So many reports have been produced for the FCTA IN THE LAST 35 YEARS. Many of them were never implemented while a lot had their recommendations selectively implemented. At the last count more than 15 of such reports were available yet the problems of land use conversion and outright distortions kept reoccurring. Again the professional bodies should become more involved and more proactive in defending what is

good for the city. A lot of sensitization needs to be done to make the general public know about the existence of the Master Plan and the need to adhere to its provisions. That is not to say that there would be no changes at all. Changes are always a constant thing and should be accepted if and when it becomes absolutely necessary.

- 5.5 There is the need to address the issue of resettlement of the original inhabitants once and for all. A decision needs to be taken and government should show a strong political will on this issue if the provisions of the Plan is to be achieve. It is either they are move out or a good program of integration should be adopted without further delay. I would prepare the first option but should that prove difficult then care must be taken to avoid the experience of the last episode of the 1990s where slum conditions were created in one of the ‘integrated’ area.

## 6. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the journey so far has been great. What I attempted to do was a little review. This paper does not set up to review the entire episode that took place over a period of 35 years. Beside it was done from the point of view of a land manager and land administrator who has been involve for the past 30 years in the administration of land in the FCTA. My intension is to stimulate further discussion particularly from fellow colleagues who are also involved in this period. Those I have in mind are the Town Planners, Architects, Engineers, Builders, Land Surveys, Quantity Surveyors, Estate Surveyors and Valuers, Lawyers and many more that may have interest in the Abuja land industry. There are many areas that we need to look into. These includes but not limited to:-

- ✚ Transportation Issues in Abuja (this would include both the transport infrastructure and the mode of transportation currently in place within the city)
- ✚ The Central Area( of Abuja) Urban Design and its implementation,
- ✚ Resettlement Issues and Squatter Settlements,
- ✚ Development of Satellite Towns within the FCT,
- ✚ Housing Needs and Housing Studies,
- ✚ Industrial needs of the FCT(what is happening with the Industrial areas set aside by both the Master Plan and the Regional Development Plan),
- ✚ The Green Areas of the FCC (and what is is happening to them. Can they survive for long? ).

I do hope that this work has added a little to the existing body of knowledge that is already available about Abuja and Nigeria.

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## **BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES**

The Author holds a Bachelor's Degree Education & Geography and Master's Degree in Land Resources with specialization in Land Administration all from Bayero University (BUK), Kano – Nigeria.

He has over 30 years of working experience, 25 of which were spent as a Land Officer in the administration of the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja. Has worked (during his national service year) as an Instructor in Map Reading with the Nigerian Army School of Artillery, Kachia – Kaduna state, Nigeria,

He has also worked as a Geography Teacher in many Secondary Schools and a Polytechnic in Nigeria. He has had the privilege of attending an Advance Training Program in Gavle – Sweden on Land Administration and Geographical Information, organized by Swedesurvey (the overseas agency for the National Land Survey of Sweden) sponsored by SIDA.

He has served at various times as Secretary of the Technical Committee on Rural Lands within the FCT, Ministerial Committee for the Appraisal of Physical Planning and Development Issues within the FCT, Land Use and Allocation Committee of the FCT, Task term on Computerization of the Cadastral and Land Registry of the FCT, which led to the establishment of Abuja Geographic Information Systems (AGIS), a body that is the only official source of geospatial information for the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja - Nigeria. He was once the Director of Land Administration Department of the FCT.

He is now on a special assignment with Nasarawa State Government as a Project Manager where he has set up the new Nasarawa Geographic Information Service (NAGIS).

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