



UN HABITAT



# NIGERIA: ONITSHA URBAN PROFILE



Copyright © United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat), 2012  
All rights reserved

United Nations Human Settlements Programme publications can be obtained from  
UN-Habitat Regional and Information Offices or directly from:

P.O. Box 30030, GPO 00100 Nairobi, Kenya.

Fax: + (254 20) 762 4266/7

E-mail: [unhabitat@unhabitat.org](mailto:unhabitat@unhabitat.org)

Website: <http://www.unhabitat.org>

This Onitsha report and project was prepared and managed by Alioune Badiane, Johnson Bade Falade, Don Okpala, Francis Onweluzo, Moses Olubunmi Ajayi, Chike F. Ejindu, C. C. Okojie, and Udejaja Chris Ikenna in Nigeria.

This report was also managed by Kerstin Sommer, Alain Grimard, David Kithakye, Mathias Spaliviero, and Doudou Mbye in Nairobi.

HS Number: HS/066/12E

ISBN Number(Series): 978-92-1-132023-7

ISBN Number(Volume): 978-92-1-132481-5

## DISCLAIMER

The designation employed and the presentation of the material in this publication do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of the Secretariat of the United Nations concerning the legal status of any country, territory, city or area, or of its authorities, or concerning delimitation of its frontiers or boundaries, or regarding its economic system or degree of development. The analysis, conclusions and recommendations of the report do not necessarily reflect the views of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat), the Governing Council of UN-Habitat or its Member States. This document has been produced with the financial assistance of the European Union. The views expressed herein can in no way be taken to reflect the official opinion of the European Union.

Excerpts from this publication may be reproduced without authorisation, on condition that the source is indicated.

Photo credits: © UN-Habitat

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Editing: Edward Miller

Design and Layout: Florence Kuria



UN HABITAT



# NIGERIA: ONITSHA URBAN PROFILE

UNITED NATIONS HUMAN SETTLEMENTS PROGRAMME

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

FOREWORDS	5
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	6
BACKGROUND	7
GOVERNANCE	10
SLUMS AND SHELTER	13
GENDER	16
ENVIRONMENT	19
LOCAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT	21
BASIC URBAN SERVICES	23
HERITAGE	26
TRANSPORTATION	27
SWOT ANALYSES	
GOVERNANCE	31
SLUMS AND SHELTER	32
GENDER	33
ENVIRONMENT	34
LOCAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT	35
BASIC URBAN SERVICES	36
HERITAGE	37
TRANSPORTATION	39



## FOREWORD



According to research published in UN-Habitat's<sup>1</sup> flagship report, *The State of the World's Cities 2010-2011*, all developing regions, including the African, Caribbean and Pacific states, will have more people living in urban than rural areas by the year 2030. With half the world's

population already living in urban areas, the challenges we face in the battle against urban poverty, our quest for cities without slums, for cities where women feel safer, for inclusive cities with power, water and sanitation, and affordable transport, for better planned cities, and for cleaner, greener cities is daunting.

But as this series shows, there are many interesting solutions and best practices to which we can turn. After all, the figures tell us that during the decade 2000 to 2010, a total of 227 million people in the developing countries moved out of slum conditions. In other words, governments, cities and partner institutions have collectively exceeded the slum target of the Millennium Development Goals twice over and ten years ahead of the agreed 2020 deadline.

Asia and the Pacific stood at the forefront of successful efforts to reach the slum target, with all governments in the region improving the lives of an estimated 172 million slum dwellers between 2000 and 2010.

In sub-Saharan Africa though, the total proportion of the urban population living in slums has decreased by only 5 per cent (or 17 million people). Ghana, Senegal, Uganda, and Rwanda were the most successful countries in the sub-region, reducing the proportions of slum dwellers by over one-fifth in the last decade.

Some 13 per cent of the progress made towards the global slum target occurred in Latin America and the Caribbean, where an estimated 30 million people have moved out of slum conditions since the year 2000.

Yet, UN-Habitat estimates confirm that the progress made on the slum target has not been sufficient to counter the demographic expansion in informal settlements in the developing world. In this sense, efforts to reduce the numbers of slum dwellers are neither satisfactory nor adequate.

As part of our drive to address this crisis, UN-Habitat is working with the European Commission and the Brussels-based Secretariat of the African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) Group to support sustainable urban development. Given the urgent and diverse needs, we found it necessary to develop a tool for rapid assessment and strategic planning to guide immediate, mid and long-term interventions. And here we have it in the form of this series of publications.

The Participatory Slum Upgrading Programme is based on the policy dialogue between UN-Habitat, the ACP Secretariat and the European Commission which dates back to the year 2002. When the three parties met at UN-Habitat headquarters in June 2009, more than 200 delegates from over 50 countries approved a resounding call on the international community to pay greater attention to these urbanization matters, and to extend the slum upgrading programme to all countries in the ACP Group.

It is worth recalling here how grateful we are that the European Commission's 9th European Development Fund for ACP countries provided EUR 4 million (USD 5.7 million at June 2011 rates) to enable UN-Habitat to conduct the programme which now serves 59 cities in 23 African countries, and more than 20 cities in six Pacific, and four Caribbean countries.

Indeed, since its inception in 2008, the slum upgrading programme has achieved the confidence of partners at city and country level in Africa, the Caribbean and in the Pacific. It is making a major contribution aimed at helping in urban poverty reduction efforts, as each report in this series shows."

I wish to express my gratitude to the European Commission and the ACP Secretariat for their commitment to this slum upgrading programme. I have every confidence that the results outlined in this profile, and others, will serve to guide the development of responses for capacity building and investments in the urban sector.

Further, I would like to thank each Country Team for their continued support to this process which is essential for the successful implementation of the Participatory Slum Upgrading Programme.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Joan Clos'. The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

**Dr. Joan Clos**  
Executive Director, UN-Habitat

<sup>1</sup> UN-Habitat - United Nations Human Settlements Programme

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## INTRODUCTION

The Participatory Slum Upgrading Programme (PSUP) is an accelerated and action-oriented urban assessment of needs and capacity-building gaps at the city level. The programme is supported by funds from the European Commission's European Development Fund and it is currently being implemented in 20 African, Caribbean and Pacific Countries. PSUP uses a structured approach where priority interventions are agreed upon through consultative processes. The PSUP methodology consists of three phases: (1) a rapid participatory urban profiling at national and local levels, focusing on Governance, Local Economic Development, Land, Gender, Environment, Slums and Shelter, Basic Urban Services, and Waste Management, and proposed interventions; (2) detailed priority proposals; and (3) project implementation. PSUP in Nigeria encompasses profiles for Ifako-Ijaiye, Karu and Onitsha, each published as a separate report. This is the Onitsha report and it constitutes a general background, a synthesis of the eight themes; Governance, Slums and Shelter, Gender and HIV/AIDS, Environment, Local Economic Development, Basic Urban Services, Heritage, and Transportation, and priority project proposals.

## BACKGROUND

Onitsha is located in Anambra State, which is one of Nigeria's 36 states and one of 5 states in the country's south-east geo-political zone. The other states in the zone are Abia, Ebonyi, Enugu, and Imo. The new Anambra State was created in August 1991, together with Enugu State from the old Anambra State, with its state capital at Awka. The state is divided into 21 local government areas for administrative purposes, each with its headquarters.

Onitsha, the gateway to eastern Nigeria and economic nerve centre of Nigeria, is located on latitude 6.1°N and longitude 6.8°E in the Anambra North Senatorial Zone of Anambra State. It occupies the eastern bank of the Niger River, covering some 50 square kilometres. Onitsha is strategically located and accessed through the east-west national main road from Lagos through Benin, which links the eastern north-south route via the Niger Bridge at Onitsha. The main concentration of population and industrial activity and the areas showing the greatest potential for growth are situated along this transportation axis. The recent process of urban expansion largely reflects the communication network. Onitsha's location, which combines both road and waterway access points, makes it one of the four main potential industrial and commercial growth areas in Nigeria.

The city is split into two local government areas, Onitsha South and Onitsha North. Both areas are bound by Ogbaru local government to the south, Idemili North and Oyi to the east, and Anambra East to the north.

# BACKGROUND

## INTRODUCTION

### Urban Profiling

The Onitsha Urban Profiling consists of an accelerated, action-oriented assessment of urban conditions, focusing on priority needs, capacity gaps and existing institutional responses at local and national levels. The purpose of the study is to develop urban poverty reduction policies at local, national, and regional levels, through an assessment of needs and response mechanisms, and as a contribution to the wider-ranging implementation of the Millennium Development Goals. The study is based on analysis of existing data and a series of interviews with all relevant urban stakeholders, including local communities and institutions, civil society, the private sector, development partners, academics, and others. The consultation typically results in a collective agreement on priorities and their development into proposed capacity-building and other projects that are all aimed at urban poverty reduction. The urban profiling is being implemented in almost 30 ACP<sup>1</sup> countries, offering an opportunity for comparative regional analysis. Once completed, this series of studies will provide a framework for central and local authorities and urban actors, as well as donors and external support agencies.

## METHODOLOGY

**The Participatory Slum Upgrading Programme** consists of three phases:

**Phase one** consists of the rapid profiling of urban conditions at national and local levels. The capital city, a medium-sized city, and a small town are selected and studied to provide a representative sample in each country. The analysis focuses on eight themes; governance, slums and shelter, gender and HIV/AIDS, environment, local economic development, basic urban services, heritage, and transportation. Information is collected through standard interviews and discussions with institutions and key informants, in order to assess the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT) of the national and local urban set-ups. The findings are presented and refined during city and national consultation workshops and consensus is reached regarding priority interventions. National and city reports synthesise the information collected and outline ways forward to reduce urban poverty through holistic approaches.

**Phase two** builds on the priorities identified through pre-feasibility studies and develops detailed capacity-building and capital investment projects.

**Phase three** implements the projects developed during the two earlier phases, with an emphasis on skills development, institutional strengthening and replication.

<sup>1</sup> ACP - African, Caribbean and Pacific Group of States

This report presents the outcomes of **Phase One** at the local level in Onitsha.

## URBAN PROFILING IN ONITSHA

The urban profiling in Onitsha is one of three similar exercises conducted in Nigeria; the other urban profiling centres are Karu and Ifako-Ijaiye.

## REPORT STRUCTURE

This report consists of:

1. a general background of the urban sector in Onitsha, based on the findings of the Onitsha City Assessment Report, a desk study, interviews, and a city consultation. The background includes data on administration, urban planning, the economy, the informal and private sector, urban poverty, infrastructure, water, sanitation, public transport, street lighting, energy, health, and education;
2. a synthetic assessment of the following eight themes; Governance, Slums and Shelter, Gender and HIV/AIDS, Environment, Local Economic Development, Basic Urban Services, Heritage, and Transportation, in terms of the institutional set-up, regulatory framework, resource mobilization, and performance; this second section also highlights agreed priorities and includes a list of identified projects;
3. a SWOT<sup>2</sup> analysis and an outline of priority project proposals for each theme. The proposals include beneficiaries, partners, estimated costs, objectives, activities, and outputs.

## THE GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT OF ONITSHA

The founding fathers of Onitsha migrated from Benin between 1630 and 1680 and settled immediately after crossing the Niger River. Onitsha is often known as the “waterside town” (Udo 1981). In 1857, when the trade expedition led by Macgregor Laird on the Niger arrived at Onitsha, the settlement had a small market similar to neighbouring Ibo markets, held every four days. In the company of the expedition was Reverend Samuel Ajayi Crowther, a freed slave who led the Church Missionary Society team. The Roman Catholic mission came later. These two Christian religious groups were responsible for the early establishment of schools and colleges in Onitsha. The Central Primary School at Odoakpu in Onitsha was established in 1860.

Historically, Onitsha has exercised a great deal of political, economic, and social influence over the

<sup>2</sup> SWOT - Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats

surrounding area, including the neighbouring towns of Obosi, Nkpor, Oba, Ogidi, Nkwelle-Ezunaka, and Umunya, which existed before the founding of Onitsha.

Onitsha expanded inland, which led to the development of new residential areas along major arterial roads including Awka Road, Oguta Road, New Market Road, Old Market Road, Iweka Road, Modebe Avenue, Venn Road, Court Road, Park Road, and Old and New Cemetery Roads. The planned new residential layouts also include the GRA, American Quarters, Fegge, Woliwo, Odoakpu, and Omagba; the indigenes mostly reside in Inland Town (the historical and traditional section of Onitsha).

The central business district of Onitsha is around the main market, which is one among many. The influx of traders from all parts of the country and Cameroon invariably contributed to the town's physical and population growth. The low price of commodities in Onitsha market, the wide range of goods, and the accessibility and low cost of transportation to and from the town continue to draw people. Onitsha's location on the Niger River is advantageous; in addition, the bridge over the Niger makes the town the only gateway between south-eastern and south-western Nigeria.

The rapid growth in the size of the town and the market coincided with the period of formal occupation of southern Nigeria by the British when Onitsha market became a daily market. Over the last 300 or 400 years, Onitsha became the commercial hub of Nigeria, the focal point of canoe traffic bringing yams, beans, rice, maize, and imported merchandise from the upper Niger, the Benue valley, and the coast through Benin, Warri, and Sapele. Onitsha has historically been a collecting and distributing centre rather than a production centre, and this explains its vast trading area, which includes places as distant as Kano, Sokoto, Maiduguri, and Jos.

Onitsha also grew to become a major industrial, educational, religious, and administrative centre. As an industrial centre it now houses the largest number of industries in Anambra State. As a major religious centre, it has the largest cathedrals for both the Anglican and Roman Catholic churches, east of the Niger. And as an administrative centre, Onitsha houses two local governments and has high courts and other government institutions. Onitsha's growth and trading roots have resulted in cosmopolitanism, with non-indigenes accounting for more than 70 percent of the total population.

## DEMOGRAPHIC INDICATORS

When the first census was conducted in 1921, the population figure for Onitsha was 8,084. By 1931, the population increased more than threefold to 26,921, with 18,356 males and only 8,565 females. This growth reflects the in-migration of male traders, civil servants,

and school leavers seeking employment. From 52,745 in 1953, the population of Onitsha more than trebled by 1963. By the 1991 census, the figure was 256,941 – 136,230 males and 120,711 females.

The 2006 census gave figures similar to 1991, but the census was not properly carried out in Onitsha. Members of the Movement for the Actualization of the Sovereign State of Biafra disrupted the exercise in Onitsha and other parts of Anambra State, claiming that those areas were “Biafraland”. Using the National Population Commission's growth rate of 2.83 percent, the 2006 population of Onitsha projected from the 1991 figure of 256,941 would have been 390,509. This figure represents the night time population; the daytime population could be up to 1.5 million, a result of commuting workers and visitors. The rapid growth in the population of Onitsha has obvious implications for the physical planning and development of the town.

## SOCIAL ORGANIZATION

Onitsha is administered by the Obi, a paramount traditional ruler who is assisted by a hierarchy of male and female chiefs and age groups. The male chiefs include the Ndi Ichie (Red Cap Chiefs), Agbalanze Society (Ozo-titled men representing various lineages and quarters), and Agbalaniregwu, as well as a Council of State consisting of prominent titled men representing various lineages and quarters. The Red Cap Chiefs are categorized as Ndiche Ume (Privy Council or Standing Committee), Ndiche Okwa and Ndiche Okwaraze.

The age groups that play a role in traditional social organization include Ogbo-soachi-ani, Oro-Okwute, Otu-Agbo (age grades), and Umu-Ilo (young boys). Among women, the hierarchy includes Omu (Queen of Onitsha), Otu Odu (titled women), Ikporo Onitsha (married women), Umuada Inyemesi, and Umu-Agbogo (young girls). The Ndi Ichie advise the Obi generally and take decisions in times of emergency. They are the custodians of the prosperity and welfare of Onitsha community. They take decisions about wars and treaties and fix dates for annual festivals and other ceremonies. They communicate the resolutions of the Obi-in-Council to the Agbalanze, Ogbo-soachi-ani, and the Omu, who in turn communicate them to the rest of the community (Onitsha North IGA 2007).

The Onitsha Progressive Union is a town development union that caters for the interests of the indigenous community, who largely dwell in the Inland Town. The union works hand in hand with the Obi.

## NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

### GEOLOGY, RELIEF, DRAINAGE, AND SOILS

Geologically, Onitsha and its neighbouring towns are situated within the vast sedimentary basin of the Niger-Benin trough of the upper middle Eocene strata known as the Bende Ameke group. Within this area, there are large areas of alluvium from the Quaternary Period. Topographically the planning area is traversed and drained mainly by the Niger River and its many tributaries, notably Anambra (which lends the state its name), Nkissi, and Idemili Rivers, all draining into the Niger. The Anambra River is the largest of all the tributaries of the Niger south of Lokoja, the confluence of Benue River with the Niger. The geology of the area is characterized by the Orlu cuesta, which terminates at the Niger River bank. This upland area, which varies between 150 and 240 metres in height, is dissected by a number of small streams draining into the Niger.

### CLIMATE

Onitsha and its neighbouring towns are located in the transition area between the sub-equatorial and the tropical hinterland climatic belts of Nigeria. The climate here is influenced by two major trade winds: the warm moist south-west trade winds during the rainy season (April–October) and the north-east trade winds during the dry and dusty harmattan (November–March).

### TEMPERATURE

In Onitsha, temperatures are generally high, between 25 and 27 degrees Celsius, with maximum temperatures experienced in the December–March period and minimum temperatures in the June–September period.

### RAINFALL

Annual rainfall averages about 1,850 millimetres (74 inches) per annum, which is reasonably high. Most of the rain falls between mid-March and mid–November; rain in the dry season is infrequent.

### RELATIVE HUMIDITY

Relative humidity is generally high throughout the year, between 70 percent and 80 percent. The highest figures are experienced during the wet season and the lowest during the dry.

### VEGETATION

The vegetation of this region is light forest interspersed with tall grasses. The trees are not too tall and include both hardwood and softwood varieties; domesticated trees such as the mango, palm tree, guava, orange, and almond are found. Much of the natural vegetation has been felled and the land utilized for development.

### SOILS

Around Onitsha and on the banks of the Niger River is a wide plain of alluvium. There are also sandy and loamy soils around Nkpor and Ogidi.

### THE EFFECTS OF NATURAL CLIMATIC FACTORS ON URBAN DESIGN AND LIVING

The factors of climate, geology, and vegetation influence the lifestyle of the community and how they build their cities and houses. For example, the two prominent trade winds influence the orientation and design of buildings. A long span of buildings is oriented in a south-westerly and north-easterly direction. This is to reduce the effect of intense warmth from the south-west and cold from the north-east. The cropping season begins in March at the commencement of the rains, and the traditional new year begins at the end of the harvesting period (October/November). The porous nature of the soil dictates special consideration for foundation and landscape design and nature conservation. Onitsha's high temperatures are a great asset for promoting outdoor recreational pursuits and tourism.

## GOVERNANCE



© UN-Habitat / Alessandro Scotti

### INSTITUTIONAL SET-UP

Urban governance in the project area is made up of traditional governance structures that coexist with the state and local government structures.

### TRADITIONAL URBAN ADMINISTRATION

Traditional governance of Onitsha involves the traditional ruler – the Obi in Onitsha and the Igwe in other communities. As discussed in the background section, the traditional ruler is the custodian of the people's tradition and culture. He is supported in the administration of the city by the Privy Council (Ndi Ichie or Red Cap Chiefs in Onitsha) or Igwe-in-Council in other towns. The traditional ruler is assisted by the Town Development Union, with a president-general and his executive. The town unions, development unions, and other groups (chiefs, male and female age groups, men's and women's associations, etc.) play important roles in traditional urban governance structures. They provide strong platforms for initiating self-help development activities and maintaining law and order, as well as promoting social, political and religious advancement. Some of them have built town halls, schools, and hospitals, and provided electricity, credit facilities, and scholarship schemes. The town

unions usually have women's wings with their own executive body.

### THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT COUNCIL

According to the Nigerian Constitution (1999), local governments constitute the third tier of government and should have autonomy. The council should consist of an elected chairperson and councillors. However, no local government elections have been held in the state since 2003. Local government areas in the state are presently controlled by the state government. There is an acting chairperson appointed by the state government. The local government administration is organized into various departments:

- Administration (Personnel Management)
- Finance and Supply
- Works, Housing and Transport
- Health (including Primary Health Care and Environment)
- Agriculture and Natural Resources
- Education (headed by a professional)

- Social Development (headed by a professional)

There are divisions, sections, and units within each department, manned by unit heads.

Local governments are expected to provide essential services to their citizens, including primary education, employment opportunities for the young and able, health care, and protection of vulnerable groups.

Some local government areas (such as Onitsha North) have delivered services such as parks, health and maternity centres, and tarred/rehabilitated roads in their areas. However, the majority of local government areas have not been able to deliver the expected services effectively. Several town unions have been more effective in delivering services to the people, and stakeholders have a poor opinion of local governments, though the latter are constrained by inadequate funds and lack of manpower and equipment.

## RESOURCE MOBILIZATION

Local governments are primarily dependent on funds from statutory allocations from the federal and state governments. Internally generated revenue constitutes only a small proportion of local government funds. Such revenue includes: registration of business premises, billboards, park fees, vehicle licence fees, tenement/property rates, marriage registration fees, etc.

Generally, local governments in Nigeria have found it difficult to maximize revenue collection because of fraud (by revenue collectors), lack of manpower, and crude revenue collection methods. Several banks, hotels, filling stations, etc. that should be paying tenement rates have been evading payment. As much as 50 percent of revenue collected is lost through “leakage”, when local government staff pocket the revenue. The state government has taken over some of the functions of local governments and the attendant revenue windows – for example, refuse disposal and markets.

At present, local governments prepare their budgets following guidelines from the supervising ministry. Projects are prepared at the local government level, but must be approved by the state government through the special adviser on local government before funds are released. Funding for environmental and other services is from the federal and state governments and it is usually not adequate. The local government should be made responsible, if only for solid waste collection and disposal.

## DECISION-MAKING PROCESS

Local governments are yet to be adequately sensitized on the need for the involvement of civil society and other groups (women’s groups) in participatory planning and budgeting processes. Women are under-represented in decision-making positions at the local government level. Of the seven local governments visited, only one had a female acting head of service. Most of the heads of departments were males. Due to a lack of gender-disaggregated data, the proportion of female employees of local governments could not be ascertained.

Each local government in the planning area has prepared its Local Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy as strategy paper for poverty reduction. Preparation of the document was largely participatory, as communities were represented. This participatory approach should be sustained in the preparation of the structure plans.

## TRANSPARENCY, ACCOUNTABILITY AND PERFORMANCE

Fraud and corruption have made it difficult for local governments to deliver services to the people. The local government administration is characterized by a lack of openness and transparency, reflected in the non-publication of annual accounts, lack of proper auditing of local government accounts, inefficiency and fraud in revenue collection, political interference, and lack of merit-based appointments and promotion of staff. Some procedures are in place to promote transparency and accountability and improve performance.

Planning, research and statistics departments have been established in local governments to enhance planning and budgeting activities and monitor project implementation. However, staff of the departments lack the required training in data collection and analysis, monitoring and evaluation, and operation of equipment (computers and statistical packages) to be effective.

Local government budgets are not prepared in a participatory manner and not published for public viewing so that residents can monitor implementation. However, the federal Ministry of Finance publishes monthly statutory allocations from the federal government in newspapers. In their development strategy documents, local governments propose to implement public sector reforms to ensure greater transparency and accountability and to reduce corrupt practices in local government administration and restore trust in local governments. Efforts will be made to improve financial management procedures to check fraud, wastage and revenue leakage.

## CAPACITY BUILDING AND TRAINING

Local governments suffer from shortages of skilled and professional personnel to deliver services efficiently. Lack of equipment is also a constraint. For example, local governments lacked motor graders, pay loaders, bulldozers, and rollers for road construction and maintenance. Poor incentives (salaries and welfare packages, training opportunities) also affect performance.

Many local government officers have not had the opportunity to attend seminars and workshops to upgrade their knowledge and capabilities. For example, monitoring and evaluation officials have not undergone any training in areas such as project evaluation and analysis to improve their job performance. There is a need for the training and retraining of staff. Local governments are required to provide enabling environments for public-private partnerships to flourish, but the capacities of local government staff to achieve this will need to be developed. Monitoring and evaluation capabilities need to be developed so that local governments can monitor project implementation effectively, track development and check deviation from set targets. The capacity for participatory planning and budgeting also needs to be developed.

## SLUMS AND SHELTER



© UN-Habitat / Alessandro Scotti

“Slums” are residential areas in towns and cities that lack adequate access to water and sanitation and secure tenure, and their buildings are of poor structural quality with insufficient living areas (UN-Habitat 2002)<sup>1</sup>. According to UN-Habitat (2002), slums create the conditions for poor health and insecurity and are the most visible forms of poverty in the city. While there have been concerted efforts at the national, state, local, and global levels to eradicate poverty, the efforts to effectively improve the lives of people living in slums have either been missing or less than desired<sup>2</sup>.

An assessment of the slum conditions in Onitsha and its environs is therefore imperative for devising appropriate strategies for addressing poverty reduction and to achieve sustainable urbanization in the planning area. In the urban profiling framework, several key variables were defined for profiling cities.

<sup>1</sup> UN-Habitat (2002), *State of the World's Cities Report*.

<sup>2</sup> See National Planning Commission (2003), *National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategies*; Anambra State Government (2007), *Anambra State Economic Empowerment Development Strategies*; Onitsha North (2007), *Local Economic Empowerment and Development Strategies*; Onitsha South (2007), *Local Economic Empowerment and Development Strategies*; UN-Habitat (1996), *Habitat Agenda*; and UN (2001), *Millennium Development Goals*. All these documents emphasized poverty eradication. Both the MDGs and Habitat Agenda emphasize improvement of the lives of the people living in slums.

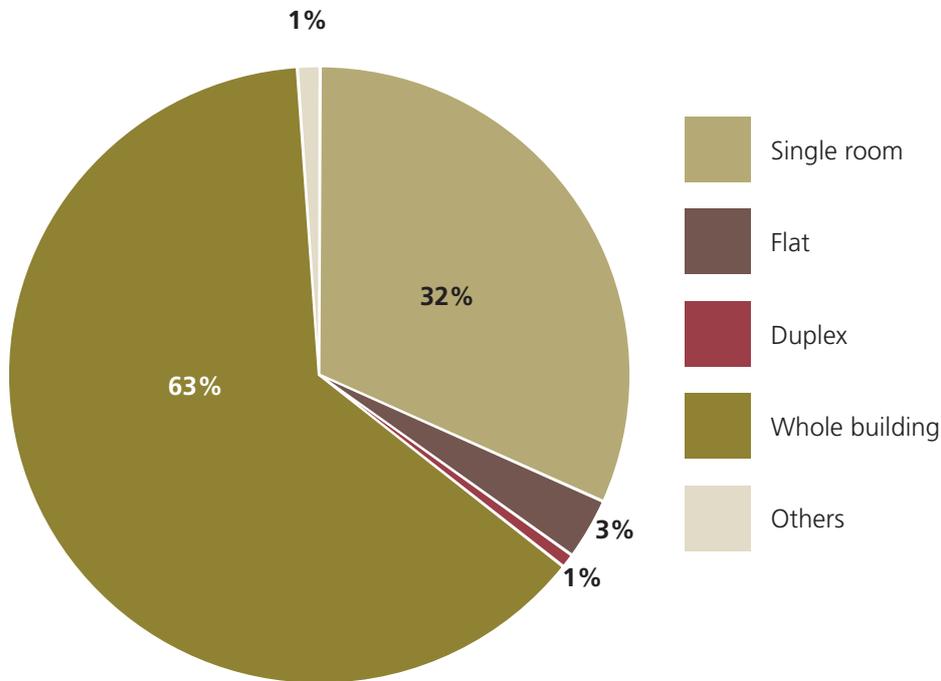
### EXISTING SLUM AREAS

The pie chart on page 15 shows the analysis of households by house types in Anambra State. Some 32 percent of households live in single rooms, which is more than half (51 percent) of those living in whole buildings (63 percent). The figure for those living in single rooms in Onitsha (36 percent) is higher than the average for the state.

Based on the definition of slums with regard to structural fitness, accessibility by roads, good drainage, and access to water and sanitation, large areas of slums are identifiable in both old and new areas of Onitsha. There are two slum areas located within the legal city limits, Mammy Market and Otu. Outside the city boundary are Okpoko and Prison slums.

Mammy Market slum is located within the army barracks. It comprises mainly temporary structures, most of which are wooden. The arrangement is that these structures can be removed anytime the military authorities so decide. A few structures are of zinc or metallic construction, but no sandcrete. No less than 400 structures can be counted. The environment is filthy, congested, and overcrowded, with commercial and residential premises located side by side. Though the

**HOUSEHOLD DISTRIBUTION BY HOUSE TYPES IN ANAMBRA STATE**



area is supposed to be for commercial uses, residential uses have become prominent. Since the area is enclosed within the barracks, little can be done from outside to improve it.

Otu slum is in Otu, the original settlement of the Onitsha people. The houses are old and dilapidated and there are inadequate services. The land area is very small, and the population cannot be more than 2,000 people.

At the outskirts of Onitsha is Okpoko, which is the largest suburban slum in Onitsha. Okpoko covers an area of 292 hectares. Okpoko's population grew very fast from 31,000 in 1978 to 128,417 in 1998. It is now one of the most densely populated slums in the country, attracting as many as 44,000 people per hectare in 1998. At a similar growth rate and using graphical projection, the population would have reached 140,000 by 2008.

**PROPORTION OF PEOPLE WITH ACCESS TO WATER AND SANITATION**

Onitsha appears to be not well placed, since almost 95 percent of the households in the state have no access to adequate water supply and sanitation. The situation has been worsening, as the proportion of people with access to safe drinking water in Anambra State declined from 49.9 percent to 49 percent between 1999 and 2003. Similarly, the proportion of the population with

sanitary means of excreta disposal declined from 85.5 percent in 1999 to 49 percent (Anambra State Economic Empowerment Development Strategy, 2006).

**INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORT**

The federal government, state government, local governments, NGOs, and international donor agencies have been involved in improving conditions in the major slum area of Okpoko. The State Town Planning Department in the Ministry of Works framed a redevelopment scheme for Okpoko in 1976. The World Bank undertook an Okpoko slum-upgrading project in 1981, jointly with Onitsha Local Government and Anambra State Government. The project was described as a huge failure, and the conditions that necessitated it have since worsened. Presently, Okpoko has no donor-funded projects, but a few NGOs, including church organizations, are currently engaged in social development in the area, particularly with the large number of widows. The Okpoko Community Development Union is also working within the community to make it livable.

The local government has built some markets in Okpoko and let them out to traders, from whom it collects market fees without any development programme. There is a need for coordination of all the various NGOs and community-based organizations working in the community.

There have been past physical planning efforts in Onitsha. Over the past four decades, the Town Planning Division of the Ministry of Lands, Survey, and Town Planning has been providing a form of physical planning for Onitsha. Prior to the civil war in the 1960s, town planning officers were resident at Onitsha.

In 1978, the Onitsha Master Plan Project was commissioned by the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development<sup>3</sup>. The consulting firms produced Volume 1 of the Master Plan for Onitsha in 1979. The planning report provided for comprehensive development of the city up to the year 2000 and projected the likely future physical growth of Onitsha towards the east, north and south.

Successive governments of Anambra State over the last ten years have always attempted to give attention to the issue of decentralization of activities in Onitsha. This led to the relocation of the electrical materials market, building materials market, baking materials markets, etc. However, the decentralization of activities has been done in isolation and not within the context of a structure plan for Onitsha and its neighbouring towns, where some of these decentralized activities have been relocated.

Presently, the Anambra State Urban Development Board, which has established a zonal office in Onitsha that supervises town planning and development, controls activities within the Onitsha area. Both Onitsha North and Onitsha South Local Government Areas have town planning officials who are charged with control of development in their area of jurisdiction. The present efforts of Anambra State Government under the leadership of His Excellency Mr. Peter Obi must be sustained to achieve the desired results.

## REGULATORY FRAMEWORK

While national laws exist on urban and regional planning, and national policies have been adopted for housing and urban issues, there are no specific laws for urban renewal in Anambra State. There is no approved land use master plan that covers slums areas such as Okpoko. There is also no security of tenure for people living in Okpoko.

## AGREED PRIORITIES

- Drainage and prevention of floods.
- Provision of water and health facilities.
- Employment creation ventures.
- Capacity building programme for dealing with slum development.

## RESOURCE MOBILIZATION/CAPACITY BUILDING

Okpoko relies mainly on its development union and other NGOs for development resources. It does not have enough schools within the community, and so children have to cross the dangerous expressway, with some getting knocked down by vehicles. A number of the schools are flooded and in very bad shape, due to poor environmental conditions and poor maintenance. There is a lack of health services in Okpoko. Despite the government's annual budgets providing for basic urban services, such services have yet to be extended to the Okpoko community and other communities.

<sup>3</sup> The main consultants were G&G International (Nigeria) Limited Consulting Engineers, Architects, and Town Planners as well as Inter-Group Architects (architects and town planners).

## GENDER AND HIV/AIDS



© UN-Habitat / Alessandro Scotti

According to Anambra State Government (2007), the economic role of women is shaped by the socio-cultural environment, the educational attainment of women, access to aspects of production, access to loans or bank credit, etc. Onitsha is the gateway to the east. Many of Onitsha's neighbouring towns are largely rural. The main occupations of women in the majority of these towns are farming and, to some extent, trading – mainly in agricultural produce and foodstuffs, but also clothing items, plastics, etc. Some women are teachers or nurses. Women in this zone suffer from poverty and various cultural restrictions.

### INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK

To promote gender issues in development, the state government has established focal agencies at the state and local government levels. At the state level, it has established the Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development, charged with coordination of programmes for women and children, implementation of the aims and objectives of the government's Family Support Programme, promotion of safe and responsible motherhood and maternal health, elimination of all forms of harmful social, traditional and cultural

practices, and promotion of gender equality.

At the local government level, gender issues are addressed by gender focal persons and staff of the Departments of Health, Education and Social Welfare.

The following structure and processes are in place to promote gender issues in development:

- The National Gender Policy, prepared by the federal Ministry of Women Affairs
- "A law to prohibit all malpractices against Widows and Widowers and to provide for related purposes", 2005, No: ANI/A/LAW/2005/02, Anambra State of Nigeria
- Various support programmes (e.g. the Women Fund for Economic Empowerment) at the Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development to enhance women's access to credit and other productive resources, provided they organize themselves into groups or cooperatives
- Local government AIDS Committees to promote awareness about HIV/AIDS and enhance access to programmes

- Local Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy documents, prepared by local governments, which address gender concerns
- Gender-disaggregated data, especially education data and staff statistics, though there is a need for more routine gender statistics, especially at the local government level (e.g. beneficiaries of programmes and projects), and modern equipment and staff training at the Planning, Research, and Statistics Departments to generate relevant data on their activities

The programmes implemented include the following:

- Organization of International Rural Women's Day in January 2008 by the Anambra State Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development at Oyi Local Government Headquarters in Nteje, where women exhibited their agricultural products and crafts, and various registered women's groups received gifts and prizes to enhance their economic activities: grinding machines, food processing machines, water pumps, hair dryers, etc.
- Assistance extended to about 100 widows yearly since 2006 to have access to credit (NGN 10,000 each) for empowerment, working through local church groups
- Assistance to several women groups and cooperatives to benefit from the Women's Fund for Economic Empowerment and the National Poverty Eradication Programme Multi-Partner Microfinance Scheme, in which the Anambra State Government is a partner
- Development of a skill acquisition centre located within the premises of the Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development in Awka, where women receive varied vocational training, an initiative that should be replicated at the local government level to empower rural women
- Organization by the Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development of gender sensitization workshops (2006 to date) to sensitize the society about women's rights, including organizing a Mothers Summit every year since 2006 and several meetings to sensitize women on their rights
- Sensitizing churches, town unions, and the International Federation of Women Lawyers (FIDA) about the rights of women (FIDA assists in prosecuting cases)

Gender-based support takes various forms: the donation of items such as food processing equipment and water pumps to assist women farmers; microcredit assistance to widows; and assistance to cooperative societies (for men and women). However, there is still a general lack of information about the activities of the Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development and the

local government, especially among rural women and widows. There is need to promote synergy between state and local agencies. As communities are unaware of gender policies and related issues, these agencies need to embark on more advocacy and sensitization of women on their rights.

## WOMEN AND GOVERNANCE

Women are generally excluded from participating in decision-making processes. For example, women are not members of the Obi-in-Council (Igwe-in-Council in other towns), which administers most of the communities in the project zone. Women are also excluded from the executive bodies of Town Improvement Unions. They have to form a women's wing with its own executive body to deliberate on issues concerning women. However, this exclusion does not extend to political participation, although, as in other states, women belong to the women's wing of political parties. In Nkwelle-Ezunaka, the men have dissolved the women's wing, which is a negative development.

Women dominate the teaching workforce and are well represented in the administrative workforce because of their education. For example, in Idemili South local government area, there are only 37 male teachers out of a total of 556 teachers. Although data for individual towns are not available, women head a number of the departments in the local government offices visited in the planning area (Fig 3.8). At the state level, women were equitably represented in 2004, constituting 56 percent of senior management staff, 61 percent of middle management staff, and 41 percent of junior staff (Anambra State Government 2007).

Of the seven local governments in the Onitsha project area, there is only one female head of service (Anambra East), who is the acting chairperson in the absence of local government elections to elect chairpersons and councillors.

## WOMEN AND EDUCATION

While there is gender balance in enrolment at the primary school level, in most schools in all the towns, educational statistics show that more females remain in school than males beyond the primary level. Boys tend to drop out mainly because of the get-rich-quick syndrome. They believe that it is easier to make money trading in Onitsha's main market than wasting time in school, especially as there is no guarantee of employment after school. Furthermore, salaries paid in

the wage sector are considered too low when compared to the money that can be made as traders in the main market.

### FACTORS THAT CONSTRAIN WOMEN

Socio-cultural factors that constrain women have been well covered in literature. These include:

- High incidence of poverty
- Lack of awareness of gender-related programmes in the Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development and the Onitsha North and Onitsha South Local Governments
- Lack of access to credit
- Gender discrimination, reflected in a preference for boys, which often leads to the neglect of the girl child
- The practice of female genital mutilation
- Violence against women, including rape, wife battering, and lack of maintenance
- Maltreatment of widows
- Denial of inheritance rights
- High levels of teen pregnancy, resulting from discrimination against the girl child and poverty
- Child labour and trafficking of children, who are used as domestic workers
- Lack of resources (land, skills, etc.) that would allow women to compete with men
- Early marriage
- Lack of political will to implement gender-sensitive policies and programmes
- Gender inequalities in decision making and implementation

In terms of land use planning, women are excluded from decision making and lack access to land and credit for business development. In their neighbourhoods, women also lack access to schools, health facilities, and recreational parks for children.

### CAPACITY BUILDING AND TRAINING

Training programmes are available at the state level to increase sensitivity to gender. However, there is a need to increase the accessibility of local government staff to these programmes. Various donor agencies (including UNFPA and UNICEF) are engaged in different activities in all the local government areas. Their activities include

gender training programmes, but these tend to be few and infrequent.

### AGREED PRIORITIES FOR WOMEN AND YOUTH

The suggestions for promoting gender concerns made by respondents during the data collection include:

- Gender sensitization through radio and TV and in markets, churches and communities
- Review and enforcement of existing policies to protect women
- Sex education in schools
- Skill acquisition and soft loans for women entrepreneurs
- Institution of gender-friendly police stations
- Provision of shelter for victims of violence against women and widows' support programmes
- Education for women and girls
- Training in gender mainstreaming and programming for staff of local governments and the Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development

Identified priorities were presented for the six communities where meetings have been held with women's representatives. In summary, from all the discussions, priority women-specific projects aimed at empowering women are the following:

- Adult education centres
- Skills development (vocational skills) centres
- Micro-credit schemes
- Standard markets for women to sell their foodstuff
- Basic urban services – water, sanitation, electricity, good roads, etc.

In terms of land use planning, this will require making land available for the education and vocational centres and markets, as well as slum upgrading through the provision of water, sanitation and electricity and the general improvement of the environment.

## ENVIRONMENT



© UN-Habitat / Alessandro Scotti

### INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORT

The Federal Environmental Protection Agency Law of 1992 is the main guide from which Anambra State legislation was derived. In Anambra State, there is a provision in the development control guidelines that certain categories of development must be supported by environmental impact assessments.

At the state level, the Ministry of Environment was established, which gives general policy guidelines for environmental management in the state. It has set up the Anambra State Environmental Protection Board, which is the executive arm of the ministry. The board cooperates with the Town Planning Department, Ministry of Trade and Commerce, Ministry of Health, Chamber of Industry, and small-scale industrialists.

### POLLUTION

The location of industries within residential areas is causing air and noise pollution. There is a high level of air pollution from automobiles, electricity generators, and industrial workshops and factories in residential areas.

There is also the problem of water pollution. More than 30 percent of the residents depend on water from boreholes, whose quality cannot be ascertained.

### EROSION AND FLOODING

Soil erosion is a major problem within both the metropolis and the surrounding towns. The erosion results from a high volume of rainfall and is exacerbated by indiscriminate farming activities and the removal of trees and vegetation through bush burning, etc.

Erosion sites abound, but the major gullies that require urgent attention can be found at Umunya, Obosi, Omagba Phase 1, and Nkwelle Ezunaka. Erosion can be controlled through constructing drainage structures, deliberate vegetation and tree planting, and unblocking drainage channels.

Coastal erosion is also a problem. All the rivers in the project area, particularly the Idemili, Anambra and Nkissi Rivers discharge their storm water into the Niger River, causing its level to rise during the rainy season and consequently erode the shoreline.

This is presently taking place along Atani Road in Ogbaru local government area. A two kilometre length of the shoreline very close to the road is being gradually washed away, thereby exposing the road to danger.

Flooding also occurs, particularly when storm water collects in an area with either no drainage or a very flat topography. Incidents of flooding abound in Onitsha, with the very visible ones occurring along Enugu Expressway (around Okpoko junction), Iwaka Road, Port Harcourt Road, and Zik Avenue.

### CAPACITY BUILDING AND TRAINING

Current training activities are very weak. There is a need for training in the following topics: environmental impact assessments, using measurement equipment, environmental inspection, legal enforcement, environmental awareness, and building the institutional and administrative capacities of the Anambra State Environmental Protection Authority. There is also a need to provide measurement instruments and equipment that help in implementing environmental policies.

### AGREED PRIORITIES

- Solid waste collection.
- Solid waste disposal site.
- Purchase of environmental equipment measurement equipment.

## LOCAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT



© UN-Habitat / Alessandro Scotti

### TRADE AND COMMERCE

As already specified in the previous chapters, the strength of the local economy derives largely from the expanding commercial activities in the city. Onitsha is known all over Nigeria for its market, which is by far the largest in the country, if not West Africa, and for the variety of goods available there. There is a common saying that if there is any merchandise that cannot be found in Onitsha, then it cannot be obtained anywhere in Nigeria.

On a comparative scale, the contribution of the primary sector (agriculture, fishing and mining) to the economy is almost non-existent. About 20 percent of the workforce is engaged in the secondary sector (industry and manufacturing) while nearly 80 percent are engaged in the tertiary sector (sales and distribution). This includes the distributive trades, service establishments, transport and communication, banking and insurance, professional services, and government. Of these, sales, distribution and services are by far the most important categories in terms of the numbers involved.

While the market is a major source of revenue, its value for the economic growth of Anambra State and the nation and its contribution to resource mobilization

is yet to be fully harnessed. The market defies good planning, and property taxation cannot be effected at present. This is a critical issue to be addressed in the structure plan for Onitsha.

### INDUSTRIAL BASE

Onitsha has the largest agglomeration of industries in the state, followed only by Nnewi. There are industrial estates developed in the city, although the infrastructure seems not to be adequate. Despite the presence of these estates, local investors still locate their factories within residential areas. Apart from trading and a few industries, the rest of the people are in the service industry as motor vehicle mechanics, welders, etc.

### MEASURES TO BOOST LOCAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

The state government has taken a number of measures to accelerate economic growth in the city:

- Establishment of a Nigerian Stock Exchange Office in Onitsha so that people who used to trade in

### AGREED PRIORITIES

- Rebuild the present central market outside of the city
- Relocate some of the other markets (e.g. the building materials market) to areas outside the city
- Purchase of environmental equipment measurement equipment.
- Create an international market along Nsugbe Road outside the city
- Create a mega-parking area for regional trucks, with affiliated services and facilities
- Simplify access to credit and loans to generate new jobs
- Establish new businesses and light industries that depend on a large number of labourers
- Complete the export free zone
- Create an independent power supply
- Establish an airport (for cargo)

commodities can now trade in the capital market

- Granting of soft loans for establishing micro-projects
- Establishment of micro-finance banks to assist the development of small-scale industries
- Establishment of technology incubation centre
- Relaxation of conditions for granting loans to small-scale entrepreneurs
- Development and running of skill development centres, which are backed by soft loans
- Organization of trade fairs and exhibitions to advertise products from the state
- Using the State Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy and Local Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy documents to attract development partners and multilateral agencies to the state

- Investing in proper planning of the business environment in the form of business parks, goods markets, shopping plazas, and well-laid out, functional, and efficient industrial estates and markets, which are rare in the town

### CONSTRAINTS TO LOCAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

- There is no facility for any form of tourism. There are few good quality hotels that can attract tourists.
- The insecure environment does not encourage tourism for now.
- The lack of a nearby airport is hampering business transactions.
- Erratic electricity supply has hampered industrial development.
- The non-utilization of the river port is not encouraging the growth of commerce in Onitsha.
- The absence of a railway linkage limits transportation choices.

## BASIC URBAN SERVICES



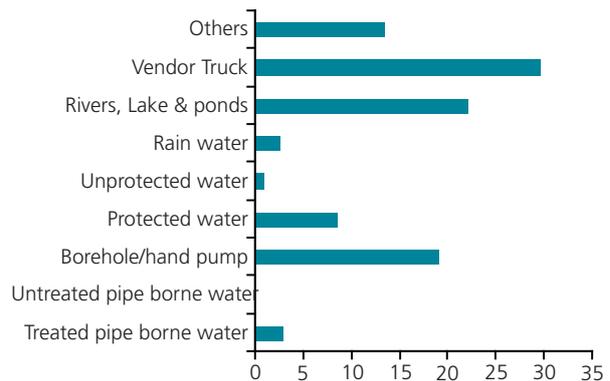
© UN-Habitat / Alessandro Scotti

### WATER SUPPLY

There used to be a water treatment plant on the Nkissi River supported by boreholes, three in the GRA and two in the army barracks. Later, there was the Greater Onitsha Water Scheme, which was to supply water to the growing population through a treatment plant on the Idemili River. The scheme supplied the town with treated water until it ceased in 2003 due to Anambra State Water Corporation's non-maintenance of the facilities and the indiscriminate construction of buildings on the water pipeline. On inspection, it was observed that the intake of the treatment plant was submerged due to silting of Nkissi River. This was relocated upstream to a new site in the Tarzan area, but the problem persisted.

The second phase of the Greater Onitsha Water Scheme has been unduly delayed. Above all, the single biggest problem is that of low morale among the staff of the Anambra State Water Corporation, as they have not received their salaries for so many months. However, it was gathered that the federal and state governments are working together to see how the project can be resuscitated.

### HOUSEHOLDS BY ACCESS TO WATER SUPPLY IN ANAMBRA STATE



Source: National Bureau of Statistics 2006

Generally, Anambra State suffers from an inadequate water supply, a situation that affects all the towns and cities in the state. The most common sources of water are through vendors by truck, purified water dealers and boreholes.

The challenges in water provision include the following:

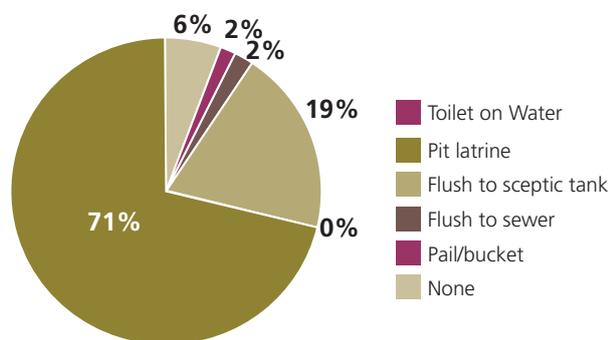
- Non-functional public water supply, with the majority of urban dwellers relying on boreholes
- Poor quality drinking water
- Low quantity of water

### SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT

Onitsha generates solid waste not only on a domestic basis, but also as a result of commercial, industrial and other activities. Devising an effective system for solid waste management will enhance the sanitation, general amenity and aesthetic appeal of the city.

The responsibility for effective waste disposal in the city falls on the Anambra State Environmental Protection Agency. Onitsha lacks an integrated solid waste system. This problem is aggravated by unplanned market sites and the lack of a well-located, sanitary landfill for waste disposal. Solid waste management services are poor and inadequate. There is no proper method used for handling sewage and, generally, the solid and liquid waste is disposed of irresponsibly. Disposal of liquid human waste in Anambra State is mostly by pit latrine (71 percent), followed by septic tank.

### HOUSEHOLD BY ACCESS TO TOILET IN ANAMBRA STATE



Source: National Bureau of Statistics 2006.

Presently, the state government engages the services of contractors to collect and remove solid waste, while private sewage tankers are used for removing liquid waste. The only refuse dump site is along Owerri Road near the metallurgical training institute. Despite this arrangement, heaps of waste can still be seen at various locations in the town. Either the method adopted by the government is inadequate or the rate of production of solid waste outstrips the rate of removal. Meanwhile, the indiscriminate discharge of sewage into rivers by sewage trucks is unhealthy and can cause an epidemic. The disposal of used engine oil into road drains by mechanic workshops also has to be discouraged.

### ELECTRICITY AND TELEPHONE

An electric power supply is critical to social and economic life. The problem of erratic power generation, transmission, and distribution has persisted for some years in Nigeria despite interventions by the federal government. This has led to the privatization of the country's only power utility company – Power Holding Company of Nigeria. To underscore the importance of Onitsha in the economic affairs of the country, a major transmission substation of the national grid (the 330/132/33/11kV substation) is located in Awada. It is generally agreed that the power supply in Onitsha, as in any other city in Nigeria, is irregular and often non-existent. There is not much the state government can do to assist in this regard.

For some years, the Nigerian Telecommunication Company has been the sole federal government agency providing telephone services. As a result of their obvious non-performance, the federal government recently registered private telecommunication operators and some mobile communication providers. There has been a tremendous boom in this subsector, as the overall teledensity of Nigerian cities is steadily rising.

### INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORT

The European Union is currently supporting water supply systems in Onitsha. The federal government is helping to rehabilitate the Onitsha water supply scheme.

The Anambra State Environmental Protection Board is working out modalities for solid waste collection. The Federal Road Safety Commission and state traffic officers are helping to reduce traffic congestion on the roads. The police authorities too are disciplining the okada riders. Local authorities are yet to be effective in the provision of basic urban services.

#### AGREED PRIORITIES

- Improving water quality and quantity
- Creating an integrated system for solid and liquid waste disposal
- Solving traffic problems
- Completion of greater Onitsha water supply project
- Piping of raw water from Idemili River
- Rehabilitation of pipeline work in Onitsha

#### TRAINING AND CAPACITY BUILDING

- Providing training programmes for decision makers and technicians
- Providing logistical support and infrastructure equipment

## HERITAGE



© UN-Habitat / Alessandro Scotti

Culture plays a dominant role in the community. National policies for the preservation of cultural sites exist, but tradition determines the operation and maintenance of such sites. Many of the publications referred to in this document have sung the praises of Onitsha's highly cultural and scenic environment. The heritage of Onitsha derives from the rich architecture of the palaces and the importance attached to traditional religion and cultural practices.

The city's heritage is made up of palaces, folklore, shrines, and historical events and practices. There are also many literary giants who hailed from Onitsha.

## TRANSPORTATION



© UN-Habitat / Alessandro Scotti

### EXISTING ROAD SYSTEM

#### FEDERAL ROADS

Three federal roads link Onitsha to satellite towns and other major cities such as Enugu, Aba and Port Harcourt. The Onitsha-Enugu Expressway has been in a deplorable state for some time now. Apart from the recent rehabilitation opposite the military barracks, the road has been impassable. The area opposite the Bridgehead Housing Estate is completely silted because of blocked drains. The service lane on this road, stretching from the military barracks to Bridgehead Housing Estate, has been completely washed off around the estate, turning the setback area into a swamp. The Onitsha-Owerri Expressway is not spared the menace from commuter buses and hand-pushed barrows.

The Onitsha-Otuocha Road has had a remarkable increase in traffic flow as a result of the road through Nkwelle Ezunaka. There are difficulties at some places due to inadequate drainage. The Onitsha-Enugu Road (Old Road), with the stretch between Zik Roundabout and Nkpor Junction renamed Limca Road, has recently been rehabilitated.

The government has recently relocated the bus park at Nkpor Junction to Umuoji Road, creating major congestion relief on this road. This notwithstanding, there are still some bottlenecks on this road due to the resumed activities of the buses. One undisputed fact is the degree of neglect these federal roads have suffered. Even the interchange at Upper Iweka Junction was not left out, prompting the state government to fence and beautify the ramps.

#### STATE ROADS

Almost all roads in Onitsha are single carriageways with no hard shoulders or pedestrian walkways. Some of the major roads in the town have just been resurfaced, while many are in bad condition and completely impassable. Parking spaces are inadequate, and motorists have no choice but to park on the roads. There are often no street lights, footbridges, road signs, and lane markings. Most roads are not wide enough, as some space has been taken up by traders and their stalls (Table 1).

TABLE 1: SURVEY OF CONDITIONS OF MAJOR ROADS IN ONITSHA

Road	Class	Length (km)	Existing	Existing Pavement	Existing Drainage	Proposal
Onitsha Enugu Expressway	Fed		Dual Carriageway with service lanes (partial) and Central divider	Asphalt surface	Inadequate causing siting opposite Bridge head estate	Completely controlled access. Full service lanes to take traffic off the road and footbridges and ramps
Onitsha –Owerri Expressway	Fed	5 to MTI	Dual carriageway with central divider with side walks under construction	Asphalt surface	Adequate covered side drains and culverts	Roundabout at Nwaziki Rd. junction and foot-bridges
Onitsha – Otuocha Road	Fed	7.2 to Nwelle-Ezunaka Road	Single carriageway and gradually being washed off	Asphalt surface	Inadequate causing failure at some points	Dual carriageway to Otuocha with new bridge over Nkissi River and roundabout under 33 estate- New part junction road
Onitsha-Ogidi-Enugu Rd. (Limca Rd)	Fed	2.1 to Nkpor junction	Single carriageway recently built to Nkpor junction	Asphalt surface	Adequate open drains	Dual carriageway to Nkpor junction with pedestrian footbridges
Awka Rd	State	3	Single carriageway	Asphalt surface	Inadequate open drains	Dual carriageway with footbridges
New Market Rd.	State	1.2	Single carriageway	Asphalt surface	Inadequate open drains	2 lane one way road with footbridges
New parts Omagba Rd Nsugbe Rd.	State	-	Single carriageway	Asphalt surface	Inadequate open drains	Dual carriageway with fly over at Enugu expressway & Nsugbe Rd
Old Market Rd	State	1.7	Single carriageway	Asphalt surface	Inadequate open drains	2 lane one way road with footbridges
Bright Rd	State	0.6	Single carriageway	Asphalt surface	Inadequate open drains	Ditto
Iweka Rd	State	2	Single carriageway	Asphalt surface	Inadequate open drains	Dual carriageway from upper Iweka to Zik Avenue junction with footbridges
Modebe Avenue	State	1.3	Single carriageway	Asphalt surface	Inadequate open drains	Roundabout at Oguta road junction
Niger St.	State	2.4	Single carriageway	Asphalt surface	Inadequate open drains	Dual carriageway to form part of coastal road with flyover across Enugu Expressways
Zik Avenue	State	2	Single carriageway	Asphalt surface	Inadequate open drains	Flyover to link Ozomagala St. across upper Iweka Rd

**TABLE 1: SURVEY OF CONDITIONS OF MAJOR ROADS IN ONITSHA**

Road	Class	Length (km)	Existing	Existing Pavement	Existing Drainage	Proposal
Venn Rd	State	2.1	Single carriageway	Asphalt surface	Inadequate open drains	Roundabout at Old Market Rd junction
Atani Rd	State	2.1	Single carriageway	Asphalt surface	Inadequate open drains	Dual carriageway with footbridge at Obodoukwu junction
Moore St	State	2.1	Single carriageway	Asphalt surface	Inadequate open drains	Asphalt surface with drains
Oguta Rd	State	2.2	Single carriageway	Asphalt surface	Inadequate open drains	To flyover Modebe Avenue and Awka Rd and made to link roundabout at Ekene park
New Cemetery Rd.	State	1.5	Single carriageway	Asphalt surface	Inadequate open drains	Flyover to link Ezeiweka rd across Enugu Expressway
Port Harcourt Rd	State	2.7	Single carriageway	Asphalt surface	Inadequate open drains	Alignment to be adjusted to terminate at roundabout at Ekene park. Needs resurfacing
Old Cemetery	State	0.6	Single carriageway	Asphalt surface	Inadequate open drains	Resurfacing needed with drains
Nwaziki Rd.	State	3.7	Single Carriageway Rd	Earth road	No drainage	Dual carriageway with drains and roundabout at Obosi Rd.
Ezeiweka Rd	State	2.1	Single Carriageway Rd	Earth road	No drainage	Single carriageway with asphalt and flying over Enugu expressway and with a roundabout
Mgbemena St	State	1.1	Single Carriageway Rd	Earth road	No drainage	Single carriageway with asphalt with drains linking culvert on Owerri road.
Umunya St	State	0.5	Single Carriageway Rd	Earth road	No drainage	Single carriageway with asphalt surfacing

## TRAFFIC SITUATION

A lack of designated bus stops has encouraged commuter buses to pick up and drop off passengers anywhere, causing traffic congestion. The poor condition of the roads over the years has sent the taxis off the streets. There is now an alarming presence of motorcycles (okada in local parlance), which are trying to fill the gap created by the absence of taxis (as can be seen in the traffic census). Activities of commuter buses have created traffic bottlenecks along federal expressways and roads and major streets in the town.

Motorists in Onitsha waste valuable time in traffic jams. Studies have shown that one of the causes of this problem is the attitude and orientation of road users. Most of them are totally ignorant of road traffic rules, regulations, and signs, with the motorcyclists being the worst offenders.

Traffic congestion problems also result from the large number of visitors to the market and the markets coexisting with motor garages. The lack of parking in markets worsens the problem.

## WATER AND AIR TRANSPORTATION

Water transport is one of the cheapest means of transporting people, goods and services. No effort has been made to utilize the water transport potentials of the Niger and Anambra Rivers. There is an existing river port built by the federal government that could have boosted water transport in Onitsha, but it has been abandoned.

An airport was formerly proposed for Oba (along Owerri Road), where some site clearing was carried out a few years ago but was eventually abandoned. It appears a new site is being considered along the Onitsha-Adani Road.

Essentially, a thriving commercial town such as Onitsha needs an airport to cope with the influx of people from all over the country and other neighbouring West African countries wanting to patronize the big Onitsha market. The Delta State Government has just started the construction of an airport at Asaba, next door to Onitsha. The impacts/effects of this development on the proposed Onitsha airport are being studied.

## GOVERNANCE

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES	OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS	PRIORITIES
<p>Community's willingness to participate in governance</p> <p>Governance structures exist at state, local and community levels</p> <p>High regard for cultural norms and traditional rulers</p> <p>Existence of New Anambra State Land Information Management System to ensure faster and easier access to land</p>	<p>Inadequate funding of local governments</p> <p>Inadequate staffing of local governments and Anambra State Urban Development Board zonal offices and over-staffing of ministries</p> <p>Agencies lack understanding of elements of good urban governance such as transparency, accountability, and participation, and have not adopted them</p> <p>Overcentralization of decision making and resources at the state level</p> <p>Poor project implementation and lack of continuity</p> <p>Traditional norms discriminating against women</p> <p>Inadequate administrative framework for urban governance</p> <p>High levels of crime and insecurity</p>	<p>Scope for improvement through the implementation of the Anambra Integrated Development Strategy</p> <p>Willingness of the public, highly educated workers, retired professionals, community-based organizations, and NGOs to engage in participatory planning</p> <p>Several new initiatives by the Government to promote good governance</p> <p>Onitsha Stock Exchange as an avenue for resource mobilization for projects</p>	<p>Business as usual attitude, which supports the existing over centralization of power, roles and resources, limits the performance of local governments</p> <p>Lack of funds and poor budgetary allocation and resource mobilization</p> <p>Absence of institutional and policy frameworks for governance</p> <p>Lack of political will and continuity</p> <p>Community unrest arising from introducing new initiatives such as slum upgrading and clearance</p> <p>Corruption in government at all levels</p>	<p>Enact enabling state planning laws, policies and land use standards and institutions for urban governance</p> <p>Establish and promote participatory planning and budgeting</p> <p>Implement sensitization programme and value orientation</p> <p>Promote Safer Cities programme for Onitsha</p> <p>Establish a new institutional framework for implementing plans</p> <p>Establish Programme Management Committees (Policy and Technical Committees)</p> <p>Institute a new revenue generation and accounting system</p> <p>Strengthen institutional capacity for promoting good urban governance</p>

## SLUMS AND SHELTER

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES	OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS	PRIORITIES
<p>Existence of national policies and legislation for housing and urban development</p> <p>Existence of legal and cultural system of land ownership</p> <p>Existence of ad hoc approach to land use planning that can be built upon to achieve a comprehensive approach</p>	<p>No formal master plan for Onitsha and its surrounding communities and weak development control</p> <p>Absence of state planning laws and policies</p> <p>Non-adoption of a comprehensive planning approach</p> <p>Improper approach to slum prevention and land ownership that discriminates against women and non-Nigerians</p> <p>High levels of land speculation</p> <p>Lack of adequate internal funding and limited use of external sources of funding</p>	<p>Exploring opportunities in the Anambra Integrated Development Strategy structure plan for slum upgrading</p> <p>Willingness of some local community-based organizations and NGOs to improve living environments</p> <p>Backlog of approved housing estates waiting to be developed</p>	<p>High land prices, high building costs and insecurity</p> <p>Possible resistance to rezoning</p> <p>High land coverage by slums (72 square kilometres) and 51 percent of the urban population living without access to water and sanitation</p> <p>Unwillingness of some local community-based organizations and NGOs to improve living environments</p> <p>Resistance to slum upgrading</p> <p>Lack of resources</p>	<p>Upgrade inner slums covering 72 square kilometres, and improve the lives of 50 percent of the population of Onitsha living in slums by ensuring adequate access to safe water and sanitation</p> <p>Develop approved housing estates</p> <p>Develop a strategic plan for suburban housing expansion and infrastructure provision</p> <p>Encourage passage of relevant legislation, policies and land use standards</p> <p>Reform land titling to ensure access to land by the poor, women and non-indigenes</p> <p>Capacity building</p> <p>Resource mobilization for projects</p>

## GENDER AND HIV/AIDS

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES	OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS	PRIORITIES
<p>National and international laws and commitments (Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and national policy) exist on gender and development</p> <p>State and local agencies' set-up for promoting gender issues</p> <p>State and local development strategies (Anambra State Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy, Local Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy) promote gender in development</p> <p>Existence of educated women's groups, communities, NGOs, and community-based organizations contributing to development</p>	<p>Cultural restrictions on women limiting the effectiveness of women in development</p> <p>Lack of access to land and finance for women</p> <p>Non-inclusive approach to land use planning and budgeting</p> <p>Gender imbalance tilting towards men</p> <p>High child and maternal mortality rates</p> <p>Limited gender-disaggregated data</p> <p>Lack of equitable distribution of basic services, which inhibits easy access by women and children to schools, water supplies and health facilities</p>	<p>Building on the inclusive approach adopted for the development strategies and the urban structure plan</p> <p>Exploring opportunities in the Anambra Integrated Development Strategy structure plan for slum upgrading</p> <p>Willingness of the community, community-based organizations and NGOs to be involved in development</p>	<p>Resistance to change and continued adoption of harmful traditional practices</p> <p>Lack of funds to implement projects and programmes</p> <p>Prevailing male-dominated culture and tradition</p> <p>HIV/AIDS stigma and related negative attitude</p>	<p>Adopt pro-poor approach to land tenure</p> <p>Promote gender budgeting</p> <p>Capacity building</p> <p>Resource mobilization for projects</p>

## ENVIRONMENT

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES	OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS	PRIORITIES
<p>Existence of national policy and legislation on environment</p> <p>Existence of state agencies for environment and land use planning</p> <p>Federal government provides funding for environmental projects through the Ecological Fund</p>	<p>Weak institutional capacity</p> <p>Uncoordinated institutional working arrangements between federal and state governments and between state and local governments</p> <p>Inadequate disposal of solid and liquid waste</p> <p>Environment pollution</p> <p>Poor urban environment</p> <p>Inadequate and unqualified staff</p> <p>Poor promotion of partnerships between the community and the private sector</p> <p>Poor funding of environmental issues</p> <p>Lack of equipment</p> <p>Low level of public awareness of environmental issues</p>	<p>Promoting public-private partnerships for resource mobilization and environmental management</p> <p>Utilizing the Ecological Fund and donor resources to develop and implement environmental projects</p>	<p>Lack of information and coordination within the three tiers of government</p> <p>Lack of capacity at the local government level</p> <p>Lack of adequate resources for environmental projects</p> <p>Lack of preparedness for managing environmental disasters</p>	<p>Improve environmental planning management capacity</p> <p>Establish local urban forum for improved environmental governance</p> <p>Develop and implement urban landscape improvement</p> <p>Implement solid waste management plan for Onitsha</p> <p>Capacity building</p>

## LOCAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES	OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS	PRIORITIES
<p>Thriving industrial and commercial establishments</p> <p>Government commitment to promoting industrial and commercial activities</p> <p>Ongoing programme to assist the unemployed and small and medium-sized industries and enterprises</p>	<p>Large informal sector which is attracting 60 to 80 percent of the youth</p> <p>Highly enterprising community</p> <p>Unfriendly government regulations regarding location, multiple taxation, etc.</p> <p>Lack of access to funds and valuable information</p> <p>Industries located within residential areas</p>	<p>Some donor agencies – notably UN-Habitat, UNICEF, the European Union, and UNDP – are active in the planning area</p> <p>Foreign direct investment that can be used for projects</p> <p>The structure plan provides for a standard industrial estate for Onitsha</p>	<p>Inadequate power supply</p> <p>Effect of globalization</p> <p>Resistance to relocating industries in new estates</p> <p>Lack of resources</p>	<p>Develop new industrial estate for Onitsha</p> <p>Rehabilitate old markets and establish new ones</p> <p>Develop business parks for small and medium-sized enterprises</p> <p>Improve power supply</p> <p>Link Onitsha to the national rail lines.</p> <p>Capacity building</p> <p>Resources mobilization for projects</p>

## BASIC URBAN SERVICES

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES	OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS	PRIORITIES
<p>Agencies for the provision of schools, roads, health, water, sanitation, and electricity services exist</p> <p>The community, NGOs and the private sector are involved in the limited provision of education, health and sanitation services</p> <p>Government's commitment to upgrade basic services</p>	<p>Poor maintenance of infrastructure</p> <p>Inadequate provision for and inequitable distribution of schools and health centres</p> <p>Poor road networks, low design and construction standards and poor maintenance</p> <p>Erratic power supply and poor distribution</p> <p>Poor education standards and high number of dropouts</p> <p>Poor funding of basic services</p> <p>Capacity gaps in government agencies</p>	<p>The structure plan provides an enormous opportunity to correct imbalances in the provision of basic services</p> <p>Promotion of public-private partnership in the provision of water, health, and sanitation services</p> <p>Donors' willingness to provide support for basic services such as water, health, and sanitation</p>	<p>Resistance to change</p> <p>Lack of political will</p> <p>Lack of resources</p>	<p>Construct new schools and health, water, and sanitation facilities</p> <p>Rehabilitate existing schools and health, water, and sanitation facilities</p> <p>Redesign and rehabilitate old roads</p> <p>Design and construct new roads to a high standard and ensure maintenance</p> <p>Rehabilitate and upgrade old electricity facilities and provide new infrastructure in the town</p> <p>Capacity building</p> <p>Resource mobilization</p>

## HERITAGE

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES	OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS	PRIORITIES
<p>Existence of government policy on culture and heritage</p> <p>Onitsha is rich in historical places, shrines and folklore</p> <p>Community is committed to the preservation of cultural events</p>	<p>Poor development and maintenance of heritage sites</p>	<p>High potential for developing eco-tourism</p>	<p>Effect of modernization on culture</p> <p>Lack of resources</p>	<p>Rehabilitation and conservation of heritage sites, including landscape improvement</p> <p>Promote the heritage sites for tourism</p> <p>Capacity building</p> <p>Resource mobilization</p>

## TRANSPORTATION

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES	OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS	PRIORITIES
<p>Existence of government policy on culture and heritage</p> <p>Onitsha is rich in historical places, shrines and folklore</p> <p>Community is committed to the preservation of cultural events</p>	<p>Poor development and maintenance of heritage sites</p>	<p>High potential for developing eco-tourism</p>	<p>Effect of modernization on culture</p> <p>Lack of resources</p>	<p>Rehabilitation and conservation of heritage sites, including landscape improvement</p> <p>Promote the heritage sites for tourism</p> <p>Capacity building</p> <p>Resource mobilization</p>

## BIBLIOGRAPHY:

Anambra State Government, 2007, *State Economic Empowerment and Development Strategies*, second edition, Government Printer Awka

Anambra State Government, 2007b, *Oyi Local Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy 2005–2007*, Ministry of Economic Planning and Development, first edition

Anambra State Government, 2007c, *Ogbaru Local Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy*

Anambra State Local Government System, 2006, *Idemili North Local Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy*

Anambra State Local Government System, 2007, *Onitsha South Local Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy*, first edition

Anambra State Local Government System, 2007b, *Onitsha North Local Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy*

Anambra State Local Government System, 2007c, *Ayamelum Local Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy*, January 2007

Anambra State of Nigeria, 2007, *Idemili South Local Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy 2005–2007*, Ministry of Economic Planning and Development

Department of Town Planning, Ibadan Polytechnic, 1969, *Structure of a Nigerian Town – Outline Development Proposals for Iwo*, Ministry of Lands and Housing

Federal Capital Development Authority, 1979, *The Master Plan for Abuja*

Jaeckel, M., and M. van Geldermaisen, 2006, "Gender Equality and Urban Development: Building Better Communities for Women", *Global Urban Development Magazine*, Volume 2, Issue 1, March 2008, [www.globalurban.org](http://www.globalurban.org)

Masika, R., A. de Haan, and S. Baden, 1997, *Urbanization and Urban Poverty: A Gender Analysis*, report prepared for the Gender Equality Unit, Swedish International Development Agency, October 1997

National Bureau of Statistics, 2006, *Statistical Year Book 2006*

National Planning Commission, 2003, *National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategies*

Nnewi North Local Government, 2007, *Local Economic Empowerment and Development Strategies*

Nnewi South Local Government, 2007, *Local Economic Empowerment and Development Strategies*

Ofomata, A.U., 1975, *Eastern Nigeria: A Case Study of Anambra Onitsha*

Udo, R. K., 1981, *Geographical Region of Nigeria*, Heinemann, London

UNDP, 2002, *The Urban Governance Initiative (TUGI)*, Kuala Lumpur

UN-Habitat, 1996, *Habitat Agenda*

UN-Habitat, 2001, *Women in Urban Governance*, Policy Dialogue Series No. 1

UN-Habitat, 2002, *City Development Strategies*, Urban Management Programme

UN-Habitat, *State of the World's Cities Report 2002*

UN-Habitat, 2002, *The Global Campaign on Urban Governance*, concept paper, second edition, March 2002

UN-Habitat, 2006, *Rapid Urban Sector Profiling for Sustainability*

United Nations, 2001, *Millennium Development Goals*

Udo, R. K., 1981, *Geographical Region of Nigeria*, Heinemann, London

UNDP, 2002, *The Urban Governance Initiative (TUGI)*, Kuala Lumpur

UN-Habitat, 1996, *Habitat Agenda*

UN-Habitat, 2001, *Women in Urban Governance*, Policy Dialogue Series No. 1

UN-Habitat, 2002, *City Development Strategies*, Urban Management Programme

UN-Habitat, *State of the World's Cities Report 2002*

UN-Habitat, 2002, *The Global Campaign on Urban Governance*, concept paper, second edition, March 2002

UN-Habitat, 2006, *Rapid Urban Sector Profiling for Sustainability*

United Nations, 2001, *Millennium Development Goals*

### ADDITIONAL SOURCES OF INFORMATION

Cities Alliance, [www.citiesalliance.org](http://www.citiesalliance.org)

Commonwealth Local Government Forum, [www.clgf.org.uk](http://www.clgf.org.uk)

International Union of Local Authorities

The Urban Governance Initiative (under UNDP)

## ONITSHA URBAN PROFILE

The Onitsha Urban Profiling consists of an accelerated, action-oriented assessment of urban conditions, focusing on priority needs, capacity gaps, and existing institutional responses at local and national levels. The purpose of the study is to develop urban poverty reduction policies at local, national, and regional levels, through an assessment of needs and response mechanisms, and as a contribution to the wider-ranging implementation of the Millennium Development Goals. The study is based on analysis of existing data and a series of interviews with all relevant urban stakeholders, including local communities and institutions, civil society, the private sector, development partners, academics, and others. The consultation typically results in a collective agreement on priorities and their development into proposed capacity-building and other projects that are all aimed at urban poverty reduction. The urban profiling is being implemented in 30 ACP (Africa, Caribbean, Pacific) countries, offering an opportunity for comparative regional analysis. Once completed, this series of studies will provide a framework for central and local authorities and urban actors, as well as donors and external support agencies.

HS Number: HS/066/12E

ISBN Number (Series): 978-92-1-132023-7

ISBN Number (Volume): 978-92-1-132481-5



UNITED NATIONS HUMAN SETTLEMENTS PROGRAMME

P.O Box 30030 - 00100, Nairobi, Kenya

Tel: +254-20-7623120

Fax: +254-20-7623426/7 (Central Office)

[infohabitat@unhabitat.org](mailto:infohabitat@unhabitat.org)

[www.unhabitat.org/publications](http://www.unhabitat.org/publications)