

# Housing in The Third World Cities And Sustainable Urban Developments

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## Abstract

This paper documents and examines Housing in the Third world cities generally and the effect of poverty and urbanization. It explains the integration of the green and brown agenda as a means of sustainable urban development in developing cities.

The study provides evidence of housing shortages as a result of poverty and rate of urbanization. However, although urbanization is a common phenomenon that is taking place all over the world, urbanization rate is highest in Africa, and as a result, governments of sub-Saharan African countries are challenged in providing housing and related infrastructure for the growing urban population.

It concludes with the importance of slum improvement and highlights the issue of housing shortages as one of the major challenges facing a developing economy.

**Keywords:** Poverty, Urbanization, Green agenda, Brown agenda, Sustainable development.

## 1.0 Introduction

The term housing has been viewed and conceptualized in different ways in the literature. Housing as shelter has been described as a social necessity of life that is recognized worldwide as one of the most important needs of man, next only to food. Housing is therefore a basic necessity that holds a place of singular importance in the general strategy of development for its socio – economic characteristics (Okpala, 1994). Housing is both a product and a process (Agbola, 1998). As a process, it involves the combination of environment human and material resources for its production; and housing in its entire ramifications is very significant in terms of the social, psychological, cultural, economic and political influence it has on human (Olatubara, 2007). Housing has a life of its own within it. Since people determine the nature, forms and uses to which houses are put, they become part of human institutional framework.

As a broad subject, housing has generated an immense body of research approached from different perspectives by different disciplines. Housing is seen as a social requirement and the United Nations Universal Declaration on Human rights recognized housing as an important urban survival strategy. It offers protection as well as serves as a place to lie down and provides security, and privacy.

Housing ownership conferred exchange value, opportunities to raise cash through rental of a house, nexus for family, and base for urban accumulation for present and future generations (Paradza, 2007). As a unit of the environment, housing has a profound influence on health, efficiency, social behavior, satisfaction, productivity and general welfare of an individual and community.

Housing as a global problem spanning the need for basic shelter in developing and trauma-stricken areas to lack of sustainable, affordable housing in the industrialized world (Fisher, 2002). Housing shortage is the major component of the urban housing problem in the third world (Odongo, 1979); and there is an extensive body of descriptive literature on the problem of housing shortages in third world countries.

The rapid rates of urbanization in most developing countries have led to massive housing shortages and qualitative deficiencies. The rapid urban growth associated with accelerated tempo of socio – economic development has seriously aggravated the shortage of dwelling units, resulting in overcrowding, high rent, slum and squatter settlements which are feasible features of the urban scene in developing countries (Ozo, 1990). Urban densities are very high in West Africa and there are few houses; a large proportion of households are crowded into a single room in a building which has many other tenants and which is not regularly maintained and where facilities and services are a long way from what is taken for granted in the developed countries (Peil, 1995). Majority of urban residents in West Africa are tenants with no interest of ownership, they find a room at a price they can afford (Konadu – Agyemang, 1991).

Arnott (2008) who corroborated the fact that there is a high magnitude of housing problems in developing countries did a paper on the importance of the informal economy as a way of solving the problems. Apart from the several issues in housing, there are also concepts in housing such as the concept of Multi-habitation, which

refers to a social and physical phenomenon and indeed is a kind of solution to some dimensions of the housing problems.

## **2.0 Third World Housing in General: Characteristics and Problems**

There is no doubt of the magnitude of the housing problem in developing countries as a characteristic relevant to the housing situation of many third world countries and the enormous growth of their urban centers (Vlient, 1987, Arnott, 2008).

Urbanization in the third world is in sharp contrast to the western industrial urbanization process. In developing cities of the world, urbanization and the emergent pseudo-urban economy are breeding widespread poverty among the fast growing urban populations (Ozo, 1990). In most developing countries, the urbanization processes have led to massive housing shortages and qualitative deficiencies (Gilbert, 1993) and a direct consequence of this is that the majority of the urban population cannot afford the costs of conventional housing. The rapid urban growth associated with accelerated tempo of socio – economic development has also seriously aggravated the shortage of dwelling units, and this has resulted in overcrowding, high rent, slum and squatter settlements which are visible features of the urban scene throughout the third world cities. Rondinelli; (1990) asserted that the access of the poor to adequate shelter is one of the biggest challenges facing governments in developing countries as cities continue to grow and larger numbers of poor households continue to concentrate in them.

This shortage of housing is a problem which has become an enduring feature of the urbanization process in the third world. As urban population continues to increase, greater pressure is being placed on existing housing supplies and neither national governments nor the private sector in developing countries have been able to meet the growing demand for basic shelter. Many third world housing development schemes which were put in place to address housing provision issues have always ended as fiascos. Many of such schemes meant for housing the poor ended up as middle class housing. Rakodi (1995) noted that as a result of this, different types of rental accommodation have been developed for the vast majority in the developing countries and that the majority of the poor are renters. He also noted that though the poor are predominantly renters in some cities, continued expansion of illegal housing has been providing opportunities for low – cost ownership. There are hardly any third world countries which do not have some low – income housing arrangements such as the slum and squatter settlements for housing provision among the poor. (Turner, 1971, Arnott, 2008, Muller and Mitlin 2007, Jorgensen, 2007) The term squatter and slum settlements is used as an epitome of substandard housing and it is traditionally assumed that such settlements present a major housing problem, and as such are a clear indicator of the housing shortage in cities of the third world. In the literature, researchers have examined squatter and slum settlements in a bid to identify the nature of problems they pose and have followed two main streams of analysis as noted by Odongo (1979). The first stream and the most popular viewed slums as a dysfunctional system of housing. The second streams also represented by a group who emerged in the late 1960 with a holistic philosophy, dispelled the popular myth about the dysfunctional nature of slums and established them as functional as well as justified their existence Turner, 1978, 1982(a).

Although in a number of other countries, public housing has been fulfilling a much more important function in housing. In Hong Kong and Singapore for example, public housing made up as much as 39% (1931) and 80% in (1986) of the national housing stock respectively. (Yeh and Fong (1984) undertook an evaluation of the housing problems in the third world and argued that, the world housing deficit is a problem which is a measure of the official misconception of what housing should be rather than what it does and that the supply of housing stock is determined by unrealistic standards which are dependent on middle class or western values. (Turner, 1972) also put forward the view that the problem in housing the third world is a myth which stems from orthodox use of questionable arithmetical calculations of the gap between housing needs and expected supply. Some of the theories which have been built around the conventional indicator of housing shortage in the third world are overcrowding, slum and squatter settlements. A wide range of urban housing problems exists in different parts of the developing world. The consequences of rapid increase in population and the changing socio-economic pattern in developing countries have resulted in an acute shortage of housing for the low – income households (Sivam, 2003). A study by UNCHS (1995) found poor governance as the main element that encourages informal settlement. Due to corruption many people, not the lower-income group only go for informal transaction rather than formal. This is reflected in the percentage of informal housing in cities of developing countries. Informal housing has evolved because of non –availability of adequate housing in the legal housing market. Countries, experiencing informal settlements growth are facing many problems related to urban poverty, higher unemployment, social hardships and conflicts. This is because the residents of informal settlements are often poor and disadvantaged; they face many problems like lack of access to adequate roads, clean water, public transport, and reliable power. The area is usually unhealthy and environmentally hazardous because of unplanned garbage and sewer discharge and suitable for breeding diseases, epidemics. Because there is no tenure security in most of the cases, the housing area is constantly under threat of being lost and bearing dead capital; particularly due to environmental hazards – floods, landslides, earthquakes or demolition.

According to Mitlin (2000), developing countries have three types of housing development systems; formal, informal and organic. Formal developments have the legal basis of planning agency. They are developed within the structure of government rules, controls and regulations. Whereas informal housing development is often illegal and consists of unauthorized colonies and squatter settlements. These types of developments become rampant because of affordability problems, inadequate housing and poor governance. The significant characteristics of informal development are insecurity of tenure and low standard of facilities and infrastructure. Organic housing developments are those that emerged over a period of time without any conscious measures, whether legal or illegal. Old cities and urban villages fall under this category of developments (Sivam, 2003). A significant proportion of urban population lives in the informal settlements.

The major characteristics of informal settlements in developing countries as itemized by Tsenkova, 2009 include:

Insecure housing tenure, Inadequate basic services, housing settlement that contradicts city bye-laws, housing built on a property owned by the state or a third party instead of that of the owner or resident, Insufficient access to basic urban services, substandard housing and inadequate building structures, Illegal subdivision of housing, poverty and social exclusion and unhealthy living conditions and hazardous location.

Slum and squatter settlements are products of informal housing developments; urban basic service like power, water supply, and sanitation are completely absent. They are characterized by very high densities with small amount of living spaces and chaotic building layout. The settlement is also characterized by inadequate road network which usually results in severe congestion as the volume of traffic grows, and there are usually home based industries within the residential space.

### **3.0 Urban Housing in the Third World**

Urbanization processes in the third world are breeding widespread poverty and have consequently led to massive housing shortages and qualitative deficiencies as reported in the literature. Most of the people living in African cities are poor and urban conditions and amenities reflect their country's poverty, (Ewurdjapor, 2008) urban densities are also very high in West Africa. Rapid growth and the high densities in African cities are a major environmental problem since in addition to the stress they cause residents, they also make it difficult to provide services and keep order. A large proportion of households are crowded into a single room in a building which has many other tenants, which is not regularly maintained and where facilities and services are a long way from what an ideal house in the developed countries looks like (Gilbert, 2000; Groves, 2004).

Gilbert, (1992) asserted that few governments in the Third World have ever managed their cities very well; and he summarized that in general, water system leaks, there are frequent electricity black – outs, and there is a lack of competent policing. He concluded that African cities are rapidly growing and they lack the ability to provide adequate services and infrastructure to their population. Turkey, (2011) opined that though urbanization is a common phenomenon that takes place all over the world, but urbanization rate is highest in Africa (3.5%) and as result of this, governments of sub – Sahara African countries are challenged by providing housing and related infrastructure for the growing urban population especially for the low – income. For example Yeboah (2005) found out that urban growth in Ghana has gone beyond the capacity to provide adequate shelter for most of the population. Only 20% of the annual total housing need is produced by formal and informal housing sectors together. Deterioration of the existing housing stock caused by lack of maintenance has added up to the housing problem. And under – production of housing is causing overcrowding, over loading of the already scarce resources and use of non – habitable units has forced majority of the urban poor to usually occupy compound houses in Ghanaian cities (Konadu – Agyemang 2001, Afram and Korboe, 2009).

UN Habitat (2010) documented that in Ghana; almost half of the population live in unsanitary conditions, in inadequate housing without access to basic facilities like toilet, bathroom, kitchen and refuse facilities particularly in urban areas. UN Habitat (1996) confirmed that, mostly in developing countries, more than one billion human beings live in unacceptable conditions of poverty without adequate shelter; adequate privacy and space, physical accessibility, adequate security, tenure security, constructional stability and durability, adequate lighting, heating and ventilation, adequate basic infrastructure, proper quality of environment and health – related factors, and an accessible location concerning work and basic facilities.

The urban population continues to expand in sub Saharan Africa where urban management is weak and most people are poor. And as a result of this, almost two thirds of the urban population in developing countries live in informal housing and among the most needy urban households, are renters (Arnott, 2008).

Rakodi (1997) affirmed that in many African countries because access to land and house ownership is limited then the majority of the people become tenants. Tade (1989) documented the different ways through which the urban poor find housing in the face of acute housing shortages in Lagos, a city in the developing country of Nigeria. He described a straightforward conventional means such as owning a self built house, renting rooms or houses, living in rooms in family houses and communal compounds. He also described the different

arrangements that are utilized particularly by non – owners and these included: a shared shelter (or in most cases, a room) with family or relatives in which case no payment is made; a shared room rented by a group of tenants either male or female in which the rent is shared; a shared room rented by tenants with the house owner in occupation and; a shared room with other families as joint tenants. Multi-habitation has therefore become popular among urban residents in developing countries as a result of high renting rate. Afram and Korboe (2009) found out in Ghana, how Multi-habitation in the compound house affords owners, relatives and renters to have communal life and mutual assistance. Peil (1976) observed that the majority of urban residents in West Africa are tenants, they find a room at a price they can afford or find a relative or friend with whom to share the rent. At times house owners too rent out some rooms to increase their income and single – family housing is rare and limited to the elites or indigenous families.

### **3.1 Housing Programmes in the Third World**

There were certain conditions and processes that were found nearly universally in the Housing programme of the Third World countries, although in varying degrees. Among them was a rural – urban division that biased development toward urban centres. The urban centres typically possessed more political clout and economic resources than did the countryside that affected policies of government agencies and practices of institutions which had a bearing on housing in their family. (Vlient, 1987) A related characteristic relevant to the housing situation of many Third World countries was the enormous growth of their urban centres. The population increases resulted not so much from declining mortality rates and high birth rates but from rural – urban migration. The inability of the cities to absorb the continuing low – income migrant streams has given rise to “spontaneous” settlements; such shanty towns are found in the Near East, Far East, Africa, Latin America and Central America. An ecological characteristic of these squatter settlements was that they are typically located on land that was cheap because it was unsuitable for profitable development. Other squatter settlements include the communities of steep hillsides, dry river beds, and other areas liable to natural hazards and remote locations on the urban fringe from which access to jobs and community services and facilities were generally difficult. Other common characteristics included an overwhelming poverty among a large majority of the population, great gaps between the poor and the rich, an undeveloped industrial base, and a position of dependency vis – a – vis economically more powerful, generally capitalist countries. Generally, third world nations lack the resources to construct public housing units in sufficient numbers to meet the demand of their low – income populations. In these countries, public housing constituted only a minute fraction of the housing stock, and other means such as site and services programmes were pursued to provide shelter to the poor ( Gilbert, 2004 ).

### **3.2 Poverty as a Problem of Housing.**

It is a well-known fact that the central and dominant problems of the poor are poverty of varying dimensions (Olatubara, 2007). Their low earning power manifests in a variety of ways especially lack of sufficient funds to procure housing.

Poverty in its material sense implies lack of access to adequate quantity and quality of basic assets essential for decent living. This view encompasses the various paradigms in the conceptualization of poverty as it has evolved since the turn of the twentieth century. Be it at the individual or household level, the neighborhood or some more aggregate social and spatial levels; poverty manifests in high morbidity and illiteracy rates, ignorance, lack of access to basic needs and money to acquire them (Olokesusi et al., 2003).

The issue of poverty is a global one which constitutes social, economic, political and cultural deprivations faced by a person, household, community and a nation at any time (Bankole, et al., 2003). According to the World Urbanization prospects Revision (2005), out of six billion people in the world, 2.8 billion live on less than 2 US dollars a day and 1.2 billion live on less than 1 US dollar a day. The experience of poverty varies in different parts of the world.

In East Asia, the number of those living on less than 1 US dollar a day fell from 420 million in 1987 to 280 million in 1998, but in Latin America, South Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa, the numbers of poor people have been rising. Even in the transition economy of Europe and Asia, the number of people living on 1 US dollar a day rose by more than twenty fold (World Urbanization Prospects Revision (2005). This comparative survey of countries shows the global nature of poverty. In Nigeria, the incidence of poverty has been on the increase. It was estimated to be 43% in 1985 and 66% in 1996. Poverty is more pronounced in the rural areas than in the urban centres (Olokesusi et al, (2003).

The World Bank (2000) on the causes of poverty stresses the need to examine dimensions highlighted by the poor people. Such dimensions include; lack of income and assets to attain basic necessities such as food, shelter, clothing and acceptable levels of health and education, vulnerability to adverse shocks, linked to inability to cope with them, and sense of voicelessness and powerlessness in the institution of state and society. UN Habitat further emphasizes the need to examine peoples’ assets in an attempt to understand the determinants of poverty in all its dimensions.

These assets include; human assets such as capacity for basic Labor, skills and good health. Natural asset such as land and physical asset such as access to infrastructure and others, these three categories of assets are related to housing and environment. Poverty of an individual's economy means to be persistently and unchangeably lacking in basic necessities of life such as food, shelter, clean water, clothing, medicine, education, knowledge, electricity as noted by Ewruhjakor (2008). But every country has a responsibility within the context of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) to contribute positively towards the reduction of poverty.

Ewruhjakor (2008) reported that in Nigeria there has been a decline in general human living conditions since 1975. Available data indicate that from 1980 to 2006, real income per head, private consumption and overall physical, economic social and psychological well-being have gone below universally accepted levels.

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) reported that, in terms of quality of life index, Nigeria scored 38 percent in 1991. This translates to a very low standard of living, with about 70 percent of the population living on less than 1 dollar a day. Poverty as measured by low incomes tends to be worse in rural areas. Olokesusi et al (2003 ) for instance posits that poverty in Nigeria is largely a rural problem, and that more than 66 percent of those below the poverty line live in rural areas but as the world is becoming increasingly urbanized, there is an increase in the number of the urban poor as well and Nigeria is also witnessing a worrisome increase in the urbanization of poverty. As a result of the rapid urbanization and population growth UNDP (1997a) has added the city of Lagos to the list of global mega cities. Its population is expected to rise from the current estimates of about 15million to 24.5 million by year 2015, during which Lagos would have become the third largest city in the world after Tokyo (Japan) and Bambag (India) with 28.7 million and 26.5 million respectively. Other large urban centres such as Kano, Kaduna, Ibadan, Port-harcourt, Enugu and Onitsha are equally growing very rapidly.

But the urban, unlike the rural poor are the most vulnerable group considering the high rate of the growth of urban population, when compared with that of the rural settlements. This high rate of growth of urban population poses a serious challenge to urban local governments to provide sustainable livelihoods, safe and secure living environments and better quality of life for the poor. The rate of growth of urban population is usually far greater than the rate of provision of the necessary life supporting facilities such as decent housing whereby individuals and households have access to safe, secure and healthy shelter with basic infrastructure such as pipe borne water and adequate provision for sanitation, drainage and the removal of household wastes. As a result of this urban growth rate, it has been quite obvious that a critical gap exists between housing supply and demand, and for this reason, successive governments have been making policy statement programmes and no actual delivery of new housing units. But most of these government housing programmes have been frustrated by corruption, politicization and lack of infrastructure. Other problems include land acquisition, high cost of building materials and inflation.

In the long run, the established or intended targets of the governments housing programmes were never realized. More than 95 percent of the housing needs are provided by the private sector. Although this is seen as a welcome development, but a vast majority of the housing units exist in unplanned locations devoid of adequate transportation corridors, water supply and other types of infrastructure.

The urban poor has continued to bear the burden of this problem, the overwhelming majority of the population continue to live in sub-human housing conditions. Some found abode under the fly-over bridges that dot some of the country's urban centres; some have to cope with make-shift, ramshackle structures, while some found public buildings as the only option (Peil, 1995). Most Nigerian cities are characterized by squatter's settlements or slums. Although many would have loved and are aspiring to own their houses, the aspiration has been greatly hampered by poverty. Many of the low – income households in the urban areas are hit by poverty, and cannot afford adequate housing so they rent room or rooms in multi-habited houses while the rural poor acquire rooms rent free in family compound houses as a result of their kith and kin relationship. High incidence of poverty in urban and rural areas of developing countries means people find it difficult if not impossible to seek decent housing or improve the quality of dwelling units, unable to participate in decision – making, devoid of property rights and prestige thus reinforcing the cycle of poverty, (Olokesusi et al., 2003). As a result of poverty a high proportion of the tenants in cities of developing countries occupy a single room in rooming or courtyard houses. This high level of overcrowding as represented by the high households and room densities are mainly a function of poverty.

#### **4.0 Sustainable Urban Development.**

The goal of sustainable urban development is to reduce the impact of consumption of natural systems (Global, regional and local) by the city, by keeping within natural limits, while simultaneously enabling human system to be optimized without impairing the quality of urban life. Thus, sustainable urban development is meant to integrate the green and brown agenda, to improve the human environment while reducing the impact of natural resources use and improving the natural environment of the city.

The brown agenda is essential for making a city work, for a healthy and liveable environment, and for creating the human and economic opportunities that have driven cities throughout their history. All cities consume land and resources such as energy, water and materials, which they use for building and transport.

In the process of making a city functional, these resources are turned into wastes. It is now possible to quantify that impact in one parameter called ecological footprint.

From literature, the characteristics of the green and brown agenda in an Urban Environment for a sustainable city are listed in the table below:

<b>The Green agenda</b>	<b>The Brown agenda</b>
Natural systems: global, regional and local used as services by cities	Human systems required to make cities healthy and liveable and which are part of the metabolism of the city
Ecosystem that provides green open space used by the city for biodiversity protection and recreation	Waste systems to recycle and remove wastes from cities, including solid, liquid and air waste.
Water systems that cities use to tap the natural flow for water supply and waste disposal	Energy systems to provide power; heating, cooling and lighting for all city functions
Climate and air systems that provide cities with the requirements for healthy life.	Transport systems to enable mobility in the city, including the fuel.
Other ecological services, including agricultural and forestry systems providing food and fibre for cities.	Building and materials system that provide the physical basis of life in cities.

**Source:( UNEP, 2002 )**

The dilemma for architects, planners and other urban professionals now is how to integrate the “green agenda” and the “brown agenda” i.e. the natural and the built environment. This is because the rapid growth of cities in the past 50 years has meant that managing the built environment while coping with environmental pollution and degradation has overwhelmed many cities, especially in the developing world.

UNEP, 2002; UN – Habitat 2008b submitted some facts about the brown agenda in cities of developing world, and they are itemized below:

- In cities of the developing world, one out of four households lives in poverty, 40 percent in African cities.
- 25 to 50 percent of people in developing cities live in informal settlements.
- Further than 35 percent of cities in the developing world have their waste water treated: 2.5 billion people have no sanitation and 1.2 billion do not have access to clean water.
- Half of the urban population in Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean suffer from one or more diseases associated with adequate water and sanitation.
- Between one third and one half of the solid waste generated within most cities in low and middle income countries is not collected.
- Less than half of the cities of the world have urban environmental plans.
- Millennium Development goals aim to halve the proportion of people without sanitation and clean water by 2015 and significantly improve the lives of at least 100 million slum dwellers by 2020.

**(Source: UNEP, 2002; UN – Habitat 2008b)**

The brown agenda is essential for making a city work, for a healthy and liveable environment, and for creating the human and economic opportunities that have driven cities throughout their history. All cities consume land and resources such as energy, water and materials, which they use for buildings and transport.

- Because of the dominance of cities and towns in developed countries and rapid urbanization in developing countries, it is inevitable that urban areas currently use resources in very concentrated ways, with a major proportion of pollutants affecting the air, lakes, rivers, the ocean and the soil being generated there. On the positive side, however, it is in urban areas that most economic development is located, technological and social advances are made, and the wealth upon which natural development depends is created. Sustainable cities should be environmentally safe, socially inclusive and economically production.

“Cities without slums” is currently one of the most important goals of urban planning in developing countries. During recent years, there has been a resurgence of global concern about slums, manifested in the adoption of specific targets on slums, drinking water and sanitation in the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

- Attaining a goal of cities without slums will require innovative approaches that can enable slums to be upgraded, if not as models of sustainability, certainly in ways that address the most pressing brown and green agenda challenges of poor access to safe drinking water and sanitation, as well as degrading environmental conditions.

The United Nations Global Report on Human settlements in 2003 entitled the challenge of slums presented the first global assessment of slums, emphasizing their problems and prospects. It shared that in many developing country cities, the numbers of slum dwellers far exceeded the numbers of formal residences. At present, slum dwellers constitute 36.5 percent of the urban population in developing countries, with the percentage being as high as 62 percent in sub-Saharan Africa and 43 percent in Southern Asia.

- Cities are about opportunity and, across the world, people have moved to cities in increasing numbers, especially poorer people seeking a new life, with greater employment or livelihood opportunities whether real or perceived.
- In many cities the ability to provide housing services for large numbers of poor people is limited. Slums developed as a result of rapid rural-urban migration, increasing urban poverty and inequality, marginalization of poor neighborhoods, inability of the urban poor to access affordable land for housing, insufficient investment in new low-income housing, and poor maintenance of the existing housing stock.
- Most slums in developing country cities are generally built on empty public or private land in the periphery of the city, or elsewhere in physically unsafe land that is vulnerable to hazard. Often, such land is on steep slopes prime to landslides or in low lying areas prime to flooding, or is so severely contaminated that no one else in the city wants it.

Slums usually have dire consequences for the urban environment. They often deprive the city of fire shire land for flood control and natural bio-filtration firm fringing wetland vegetation, severe erosion can result from steep slopes when they are settled upon; and, as the only source of domestic energy for slum dweller is firewood, nearby land on the periphery of the city is often deforested.

Thus, slums pose a significant threat to the green agenda. At the same time, the brown agenda for those living in the slums is seriously compromised as well. Most slum housing is built of simple and often makeshift materials that can only provide rudimentary protection against natural hazards. Invariably, levels of access to clean drinking water and safe sanitation are extremely low, resulting in basic health problems.

\* Despite these obvious problems; there are some positive aspects of slums in terms of the green and brown agenda. Slums are an organic form of urban development, similar to how most cities in the world were originally formed and grew. They tend to create dense and mixed land use forms that are similar to most “walking cities” of ancient times. The narrow streets between slum buildings are suitable only for walking and, hence, the resultant areas, if upgraded, can become “Car free” and desirable, thus fulfilling one of the goals of sustainable urban design. Communities in slums are often found to be much stronger, with higher levels of trust than in affluent suburbs where people do not know each other.

## **5.0 CONCLUSION**

This paper is a survey of contemporary issues in housing and urban development strategies with emphasis on the evolving third world cities.

It observes that urbanization in the third world cities is in sharp contrast with what obtains in industrialised nations of the world.

The characteristics and problems of housing in the developing economies are presented. The rapid urban growth associated with accelerated tempo of socio-economic development has seriously aggravated the shortage of dwelling units, with its resultant effects of overcrowding, high rent, presence of slum and squatters settlements. In short, the urbanization processes in the third world are responsible for widespread poverty as noted in the conditions of housing being used by many residents of the third world cities. The general conclusion is that the third world nations lack the resources to construct public housing units in sufficient numbers to meet the demand of the low-income populations.

This paper also discusses the concept of sustainable urban development. It reports that sustainable urban development is meant to integrate both the green and brown agenda to improve human environment while reducing the impact of natural resources use and improving the natural environment of the city. The characteristics of the green and brown agenda are presented. The paper also reviews the problems of slums and similar settlements; it however concludes finally that despite the problems identified with slums, the slums are an organic form of urban development, similar to how most cities were organically formed.

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