

A Review of the Criteria for Defining Urban Areas in Nigeria

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ABSTRACT This paper is a review of criteria for the definition of settlements as urban areas in Nigeria. The review of literature was adopted as a basic method to gather information for analysis in the paper. Population size, densities and contiguities criteria as adopted by different nations of the world were reviewed. Other criteria such as functions of settlements and urban field criteria were also reviewed. In Nigeria, the population size and administrative/legal criteria are adopted in defining urban areas. The paper noted that because of the adoption of these criteria, Nigeria, with a population of 140 million people and a total landmass of 923,768sq km has just 774 designated urban areas thereby leaving out over 50% of the people from the urbanisation process. Based on this revelation, a comprehensive and rational criterion that is statistically determined and devoid of political sentiment is recommended for defining urban areas in Nigeria.