

# The 1976 local government reform and physical planning

[Business](#)



In Nigeria, there are 774 local governments spanning across the 36 states in the federation. Local government, which can be simply described as government at the local level has been defined by various scholars in different ways. In Ola (1984) the United Nations Office for Public Administration defines local government as: A political subdivision of a nation or (in a federal system) State, which is constituted by law and has substantial control of local affairs including the powers to impose taxes or to exact labour for prescribed purposes.

The governing body of such an entity is elected.

Redmond (2007) defines Local Government as an agency organized to provide and supervise administrative, fiscal, and other services to the people who reside within its territorial boundaries. It is the level of government most directly accountable to the public. In the US, for example, local governmental units consist of five major types: county, town and township, municipality, special district, and school district.

Physical planning, on the other hand, has one secular definition provided by Lewis Keeble, as “ the art and science of orderiing the use of land and the character and the siting of buildings and communication routes so as to secure the maximum practicable degree of economy, convenience and beauty. ” Similarly, Luning defined it as “ the systematic assessment of land and water, alternative patterns of land use and other physical, social and economic conditions, in such a way as to encourage and assist land users in selecting options that increase their productivity, are sustainable and meet he needs of the society. ” A reconciliation of the two definitions connotes

that planning seeks the: promotion of accessibility; rationalization of resources; mitigation of incompatibility of uses; and enhancement of aesthetics.

However, the consideration here is for local governments in Nigeria, in terms of the reform of the 1970s and the implication of it for physical planning which is hereafter discussed