

**LAND REGISTRATION LAW AND PRACTICE IN NIGERIA:
LESSONS FROM UNITED KINGDOM ***

Abstract

The importance of land registration to ease and efficient land management system cannot be overemphasized, suffice to say that it is sine qua non to good land management. From time immemorial, it has been recognized that good land registration systems encourages real property registration, boost the state internally generated revenue (IGR), offer security and certainty of title/interest to property owners, reduces property conflicts and litigation, adds value to the property and make it easier for prospective buyers to acquire property with reasonable certainty. In Nigeria the registration is perfected through the instrumentality of land registration law of each state. Presently, land registration law and practice in Nigeria is in a state of flux. There are disparate land registrations laws as there are states in Nigeria. The lapses observed in the Lagos State law and invariably Nigerian laws on the subject must be addressed holistically, particularly the applicable principles with respect to registration of the adverse possessor under the law.

Keywords: Land Registration Law and Practice, Nigeria, United Kingdom, Lessons

1. Introduction

One of the veritable tools in land management is land registration. Although the law requires that all transactions in land must be by deed and/or evidenced in writing as the case may be,¹ proof of title to land by these private unregistered documents may be more contentious and complex, leading to prolonged and expensive litigations due to several factors such as allegations of fraud, forgery and multiple claims over ownership of a parcel of land. Land registration system addresses this concern by providing an official platform through which records on land, concerning ownership, possession or other rights in land are regularly kept and maintained with a view to providing evidence of title; facilitate transactions and prevention of unlawful disposal.² It is also a process of officially recording legally recognized interests (ownership and/or use) in land³ through deeds or title (on properties).⁴ In essence, land registration documentarily formalizes title or interest in land by officially recording all dealings affecting title and interest in a parcel of land in a government provided registry. The importance of land registration to ease and efficient land management system cannot be overemphasized, suffice to say that it is *sine quan non* to good land management. From time immemorial, it has been recognized that good land registration systems encourages real property registration, boost the state internally generated revenue (IGR), offer security and certainty of title/interest to property owners, reduces property conflicts and litigation, adds value to the property and make it easier for prospective buyers to acquire property with reasonable certainty.⁵ In Nigeria the registration is perfected through the instrumentality of land registration law of each state.⁶

The traditional trinity objectives of any registration law are to give certainty to the title of the real property; facilitate the proof thereof; and render the dealings with land more simple and economical. It has been generally accepted that a register of title is an authoritative record, kept in a public office, of the rights to clearly defined units of land as vested for the time being in some particular person or body, and of the limitations, if any, to which these rights are subject. With certain exceptions known as 'overriding interests', all the material particulars affecting the title to the land are fully revealed merely by a perusal of the register which is maintained and warranted by the State. Hence, the register is at all times the final authority and the State accepts responsibility

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¹ See: Statute of Fraud Act 1775, Conveyancing Act 1881, Property & Conveyancing Law 1959

² JD McLaughlin & SE Nichols, Resource Management: The Land Administration and Cadastral Systems Component, In: *Surveying and Mapping*, (1989). No. 2, p. 77-86; see also: EO Thontteh, & MM Omirin, Land Registration within the Framework of Land Administration Reform in Lagos State. *Paper presented at the 21st Annual Pacific-Rim Real Estate Society Conference (Prres)* Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, 18-21 January, 2015

³ McLaughlin & Nichols, *Resource Management: The Land Administration and Cadastral Systems Component*. Surveying and Mapping (1989) No. 2, p. 77-86

⁴ J Zevenbergen, 'A Systems Approach to Land Registration and Cadastre' *Nordic Journal of Surveying and Real Estate Research* VOL 1, 2004 p. 11

⁵ W Joel, Importance of a Good Land Registration System (1) available at: ibejulekkilawyer.com accessed 15/12/2018

⁶ E.g. Land Registration Law, 2015 (Lagos State)

for the validity of transactions, which are effected by making an entry in the register.⁷ This notion of certainty of title by registration was judicially recognized by the Privy Council in *Gibbs v. Messer*⁸ when the court observed:

The object is to save persons dealing with registered proprietors from the trouble and expense of going behind the register, in order to investigate the history of their author's [i.e. vendor's] title, and to satisfy themselves of its validity. That end is accomplished by providing that everyone who purchases in bona fide and for value, from a registered proprietor, and enters his deed of transfer or mortgage on the register, shall thereby acquire an indefeasible right, notwithstanding the infirmity of his author's title.⁹

In recent times, with the introduction of the new Lagos State Registration Law 2015 (fashioned with slight modification after the UK Land Registration Act, 2002) there has been a paradigm shift from registration of title to title by registration. Although a casual reading of these terminologies offers no distinction but there is a wide difference between the two concepts. The difference between these concepts is whether the register mirror 'true' ownership or whether being registered as an owner is ownership, even if be altered in a way that pre-registration principles would disallow. If the former, the register should be altered where it does not reflect 'true' ownership as determined by pre-registration substantive rules of property law. If the latter, the registered owner, even if not 'entitled' according to 'normal' principles of property law, takes priority in all but those limited cases where the Law itself allows the register to be altered.

2. Land Registration in History

Land registration and property rights have deep historical foundations reaching back to the prehistoric times. Evidence of the sale of private properties was noted as early as 2700 BC from the city-states of Ur and Uruk in the present day Iraq.¹⁰ The bible also recorded the land purchases of Abraham¹¹ and Jerimiah¹² which were all done by deed. In the pre-colonial Africa recording of land transactions was not documentary in terms of paper-works, but the traditional system still recognized some form of recording in the presence of witnesses. There are two variants of land registration processes: Registration of deeds and Registration of Titles. From a legal perspective, a distinction can be made between deeds registration, where the documents filed in the registry are the evidence of title, and registration of title, in which the register itself serves as the primary evidence.¹³ According to a commentator,¹⁴

A Deed recording is a system of giving publicity to land transactions and helping to prevent concealed dealings. The act of recording a deed gives notice to the public of a claimed interest in land and establishes priority against other possible claimants to the same interest although there is usually no statutory compulsion for parties to a transaction to record their documents although it is prudent for them to do so while it is risky if they do not.

Registration of title, on the other hand, goes beyond mere registration of deeds or entry in a public register. Registration of title is validation of the ownership or other legal interest of a party to a piece of land. It confirms the existence of the transaction so recorded and authenticates the right of the parties in the transaction. In the words of Awolaja,¹⁵ 'the act of registration confirms transactions that confer; affect or terminate that ownership or interest and once the registration process is completed no search behind the register is needed to establish a chain of title to the property, for the register itself is conclusive proof of title'. In Nigeria, formal land registration law and practice started during the colonial period. The first colonial regulation on land registration was Ordinance

⁷ S. R. Simpson, *Land Law and Registration*, 1976 edn., page 16, para. 4.1.

⁸ (1891) A.C. 248

⁹ *ibid* at p. 254, *per* Lord Watson

¹⁰ JP Powelson, *The Story of Land: A History of Land Tenure and Agrarian Reform*, The Lincoln Institute of Land Policy(1988), 26 Towbridge Street, Cambridge,

¹¹ See: Genesis 23

¹² The Bible tells of an early land transaction in the book of *Jeremiah* 32:9-12. In 587 B.C. Jeremiah bought his cousin Hanameels's field in a purchase of land that involved a sealed deed prepared in accordance with legal requirements.

¹³ African Union, United Nations Economic Commission for Africa, and African Development Bank Framework and Guidelines (2009) Framework and Guidelines on Land Policy in Africa; Land Policy in Africa: A Framework to Strengthen Land Rights, Enhance Productivity and Secure Livelihoods. Addis Ababa.

¹⁴AG Awolaja, *Land Registration In Nigeria: Issues And Challenges*. Available at: <http://m.covenantuniversity.edu.ng/content/download/33937/233886/file/LAND+REGISTRATION> accessed 15/12/2018

¹⁵ *ibid*

of 1863¹⁶ by which three commissioners were appointed to inquire into titles under which all lands within the Lagos settlements were held and the settling and defining rights to such land. This was built upon in 1883 with the promulgation of the Registration Ordinance of same year. The Ordinance established Land Registry in Lagos where all record books of registered instruments and certificate were kept and made accessible to the public at a fee. From here, land registration Ordinances were proclaimed in other parts of the British protectorates that later amalgamated to form the present day Nigeria. Sequel to the 1914 amalgamation, the colonial government enacted the Land Registration Ordinance of 1915,¹⁷ repealed and reenacted same in 1924 with amendments. The 1924 Land Registration Ordinance¹⁸ applied to all parts of the country until 1954 when Nigeria became a federation of three regions. On the introduction of the federal system of government in 1954, land became a residual matter within the exclusive jurisdiction of the Regions and subsequently the various states created out of the regions. Thus, the Land Registration Ordinance of 1924 became a state legislation under various titles,¹⁹ but essentially with similar content. The 1924 Ordinance remained the extant legislation on Land registration in most states²⁰ of the federation except in some states where legislative reforms have taken place in recent times.²¹ Whilst the 1924 Ordinance was the general legislation on Land Registration countrywide, a new law²² was introduced in the federal capital of Lagos in 1935 with the ultimate aim of replacing the 1924 Ordinance nationally. The Registration of Titles Act²³ was introduced piecemeal into Lagos territory.²⁴ The fundamental principle of Registration of Titles Act is that the creation and proof of legal interest to land is based on the fact of registration in the register of titles and not on any conveyance. In other words, title does not depend on the execution of the instrument by the parties and neither is the evidence of title furnished by the production of the instrument. Presently, land registration law and practice in Nigeria is in a state of flux. There are disparate land registrations laws as there are states in Nigeria. Though some of the provisions of these legislations are *in pari materia* since they were founded on the rubric of the 1924 Ordinance, but there are instances of divergent provisions in the law in view of the reforms carried out in some states of the federation. It is also to be noted that except in Lagos where there were two registration laws operating simultaneously, the other parts of the country operated and are still operating generically, under the 1924 Land Instrument Registration Act.²⁵ The salient provisions of the general land registration law and some innovations introduced in some states are herein highlighted.

Land Registration Act 1924

The Land Instrument Registration Act 1924 was the parent Act enacted for the whole country, and which was adopted and re-enacted in some state under different names. A common feature of land registration under the Act is the registration of any instrument executed before or after the commencement of the Act. In order to facilitate registration, the law established in every state, land registry under a land registrar charged with the responsibilities of registering instruments affecting land in the state and to keep registered books and files relating to each plot.²⁶ The Act defines a registrable instrument as a document affecting land, whereby a party called grantor confers, transfers, limits, charges or extinguishes in favour of another party called the grantee, any right or title to the interest in land and includes a certificate of purchase, power of attorney under which any instrument may be

¹⁶ No. 9

¹⁷ No. 12 The Ordinance repealed and replaced the Northern Nigeria Land and Native Rights Proclamation of 1910 and the Southern Nigeria Land Registration Ordinance 1907

¹⁸ No. 36

¹⁹ In Lagos, Eastern, Mid-Western and Western States of Nigeria, the statute is known as the Land Instruments Registration Laws, while in the Northern States of Nigeria, it is known as Land Registration Laws.

²⁰ In Cross River State, the applicable law is the Land Instruments Registration Law, cap. 62 Laws of Cross River State of Nigeria, 1981.

²¹ Federal Lands Registry (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act (1992); see also: M. M. Daniel, S. D. Wapwera & C. O. Omogor, Land Reform Implementation and Its Impact on the Registration of Property Title and Instrument in Greater Jos Metropolis, Nigeria: 2007 – 2014 *International Journal of Real Estate Studies*, Volume 10, Number 2, (2016) 44-56.

²² The Registration of Titles Act.

²³ Cap.121 1935

²⁴ By its provisions the law was made applicable only in Declaration Area. Some parts of Apapa and Ebute-meta were already made Declaration Area before the law became moribund partly because of the adoption of Federal system of government in Nigeria in 1954

²⁵ In 2015 Lagos State enacted a new Land Registration Law which repealed all previous legislations on the subject and consolidated land registration within the new legislation.

²⁶ Section 3 Land Instrument Registration Act 1924

executed, but does not include a will.²⁷ Except for a power of attorney, a registrable instrument must be accompanied with a survey plan of the land²⁸ and a *jurat* where an illiterate is involved.²⁹ Upon the submission of all the required documents to the Registrar and the payment of prescribed fees, the registrar is obliged to register the instrument without more.³⁰ Failure to register a registrable instrument within the prescribed period³¹ makes it void,³² inadmissible in evidence³³ and loses priority.³⁴ One important limitation of the instrument registration law is the fact that registration only provides information affecting the land to which the instrument relates; it does not cure any defect in the grant.³⁵ Other short-comings of the law include the fact that things were done manually under the law with high incidence of human error and corruption; expansive paperwork and the problem of space management; and timeline management challenges. Also, as paper records are transported from one location to another in response to demands from users, the rate of wear and tear is enormous, resulting in risks to the accuracy and availability of information.³⁶ This was the situation with respect to land registration law and practice in Nigeria until the recent reforms in Abuja (FTC); Lagos state and some states in western Nigeria.

Lagos State Land Registration Law 2015

This Law (fashioned along the UK Land Registration Act, 2002 with slight modification) repealed all existing laws on the subject of land registration in the state and consolidates on the progressive reforms³⁷ embarked upon by the state with the integration of the provisions of all repealed laws into single legislation. In the process, some of the provisions in the repealed legislations relating to first registration, adjudication of interest and rights in land and need for registrar's investigation of title prior to registration were removed in the new law, though, the validity of acts done under the old law remain valid.³⁸ The new law also departs from the notion of state title guarantee. The Law, for good reasons, expanded the ambit of what constitutes 'instrument' by defining 'document'³⁹ expansively to accommodate what would have otherwise failed to qualify for registration under the old law. For example the law expressly includes Certificate of Occupancy within the meaning of documents to be registered under the law. It also requires that every document of interest or title to land in Lagos state shall be registered in accordance with the provisions of the law,⁴⁰ thus assuring compulsory registration on all proprietary interest. The law also expressly provides for the recognition and registration of adverse possession⁴¹ as monument of title, giving credence to the Supreme Court position in *Majekodunmi v Abina*.⁴² The provision of section 7 of the Lagos state Land Registration Law is novel in every respect. The section provides that 'any person, who has the power or is entitled in law or equity to any land'⁴³, may apply to be registered as the land holder.' The amplitude of this

²⁷ See: Section 2 Land Instrument Registration Act 1924. The Land Instrument Registration Laws of the former Western Nigeria described registrable instruments to include in addition an estate contract, a deed of appointment or discharge of trustee containing expressly or impliedly a vesting declaration affecting any land; *Elegbe v Babalola* (1968) 1 ALL NLR 347

²⁸ Section 10 Land Instrument Registration Act 1924

²⁹ See generally: Illiterate Protection Act/Laws in Nigeria

³⁰ Unlike the provisions under the Registration of Title Act, the registrar is not under any obligation to investigate the title submitted to him for registration.

³¹ Within Six months of execution where executed within Nigeria and 12 months where executed outside Nigeria.

³² Section 14 Land Instrument Registration Act 1924. It means that the instrument is void as to the grant of a legal estate intended to be transferred from the grantor to the grantee although it may confer an equitable interest in the property where the purchaser has gone into possession and has paid the purchase price. See: *Alayo v Akinduro* [1998] 4 NWLR pt. 545 311; *Okoye v Dumez* [1985] 1NWLR Pt. 4 783

³³ Section 15 Land Instrument Registration Act 1924 See: *Adeyemo v Ida* [1998] 4 NWLR Pt. 546 504

³⁴ Section 16 Land Instrument Registration Act 1924 *Amankrah v Zankley* (1962) 1 ALL NLR 304

³⁵ Section 19 Land Instrument Registration Act 1924

³⁶ Didigwu, A. & Osarenkhoe, A: Automated Land Registration in Edo State, Nigeria *British Journal of Environmental Sciences* Vol.3, No.5, Pp.1-9, December 2015

³⁷ Lagos State Electronic Documents Management System Law 2007

³⁸ Section 121 Lagos State Land Registration Law, section 6(1) Interpretation Law 2003

³⁹ Ibid: sections 1; 74(7)

⁴⁰ Ibid: section 2

⁴¹ Ibid: section 112

⁴² (2002) 3 NWLR Pt. 755 720

⁴³ For emphasis. See also: sections 26(3) and 69(1) Lagos State Land Registration Law

section provides safe haven to holders of customary title to land and holders of pre-Land Use Act titles to register their interest under the law irrespective of the provisions of the Land Use Act on tenure and title to land.⁴⁴

Another innovation of the law is the introduction of registration under the Land Information Management System (LIMS) through an Electronic Document Management Solution (EDMS). Under this system every land document shall be registered using the LIMS by providing information as to the names and addresses of the parties to the transaction, description of the property, location of the property, survey plan of the property and all other information that are deemed necessary. This new system allows the introduction of ICT model and digital recording into land registration system in Lagos state by providing restricted online registration platform. This is a great improvement on the hitherto manual information vetting, storage and retrieval system that existed under the repealed law. Though the law permits the Registrar to investigate where necessary, he is mandated to register the registrable document on the satisfaction that all necessary conditions to registration have been met and prescribed fees paid; and on the production and supply of all required documents by the land holder.⁴⁵ The registration which must be done within 60 days of due execution and subsequently at the pain of a fee⁴⁶ is evidenced by the issuance of a Land Certificate in the prescribed manner showing all entries in the register affecting the land.⁴⁷ Failure to register a registrable document under the law makes it void as a deed,⁴⁸ inadmissible in evidence in proof of title,⁴⁹ and losses priority in the ranking of documents affecting the land.⁵⁰ It is worthy to note that registration is only a prima facie evidence of holding of the parcel of land together with all the rights, privileges and appurtenances; it however does not cure any defect in the title of the holder. Registration does not guarantee title.⁵¹ It also recognized adverse possession as a basis for extinguishment of title of rightful owners.⁵²

Land Registration Act UK 2002

Originally in English law, the only way to transfer freehold land was by livery of *seisin*, that is the public transfer of the land by the vendor to the purchaser, usually involving handing over a piece of turf in the presence of witnesses.⁵³ This form of conveyance was not abolished until 1925, but lost favour after the Statute of Uses (1535) allowed conveyance by deed. However, Statute of Enrolments of the same year introduced compulsory enrollment of deeds of bargain and sale with the keeper of the rolls of the county, or in one of the courts at Westminster.⁵⁴ This Act was the precursor legislation on Land Registration in United Kingdom. In 1996, the Law Commission and the Land Registry started a joint project to reform the land registration system, and in September 1998, they published their joint reform proposals in a consultative document entitled 'Land Registration for the Twenty First Century: A Consultative Document.'⁵⁵ In July 2001, at the end of the consultation process, the Law Commission and the Land Registry jointly published a set of recommendations in another Report called 'Land Registration for the Twenty-First Century: A Conveyancing Revolution.'⁵⁶ On 26 February 2002, England adopted the Land Registration Act ('Act'), which took effect on 13 October 2003.⁵⁷ The Land Registration Act 2002 was introduced in response to the Law Commission and HM Land Registry reports. The Act simplify and modernizes the law of land registration by making the register to reflect a more accurate picture of a title to land and showing more fully the rights and subsidiary interests that affect it.⁵⁸ The Act also facilitates the introduction of e-conveyancing;

⁴⁴ Land Use Act prescribes a maximum tenure of 99 years and only a right of occupancy as cognizable proprietary right under the Act.

⁴⁵ Section 26(1)

⁴⁶ Section 28

⁴⁷ Section 35

⁴⁸ See: *Alayo v Akinduro* (1998) 4 NWLR (Pt. 545) 311

⁴⁹ Section 30, see also: *Adeyemo v Ida* (1998) 4 NWLR (Pt.546) 504

⁵⁰ Section 29, see also: *Amankrah v Zankley* (1962) 1 ALL NLR 304

⁵¹ See: *Folashade v Durosola* (1951) 1 ALL NLR 87

⁵² Section 112 Lagos State Land Registration Law 2015

⁵³ P Mayer & A Pemberton, *A Short History of Land Registration in England and Wales*. HM Land Registry, London 2000

⁵⁴ *Ibid*, p.4

⁵⁵ C Harpum & J Bignell, *Registered Land: Law And Practice Under Land Registration Act 2002* At 2 (2004)

⁵⁶ Law Commission, *Land Registration for The Twenty-First Century: A Conveyancing Revolution*, 2001, HC 114 (U.K.).

⁵⁷ For a summary of the reform of land registration system leading to the eventual adoption of the Land Registration Act 2002, see Cooke, E.J.: *The New Law of Land Registration*, ch. 2, at 15-32 (Hart Pub. 2003)

⁵⁸ The practical efficacy of this process was vividly demonstrated by officials of the HM Land Registry, UK to the researchers during their study tour of HM Land Registry in the course of this research in 2014. The process

encourages voluntary land registration; change the system of protection of third party rights; and reforms the law of adverse possession. The Lagos state law was greatly influenced by the provisions of the UK Land Registration Act 2002. Innovations such as the Electronic Document Management Solution (EDMS); express the recognition and registration of adverse possession; consolidation and unification of land registration legislations in the Lagos State law are rooted in the UK Act on the subject. However, the Lagos law fell short of the standard of the UK Act in many respects.

The Lagos State Registration Law muddled up the concepts of registration of titles and registration of deeds. The end result of the misconception of concepts by the law is that there is confusion within the law as to what the purport and effect of registration is under the law. It is trite that registration of title usually guarantees the title derived under the law and validates it since same is guaranteed by the state. This is the position under the UK Act,⁵⁹ which unfortunately is not reflected under the Lagos law. The issue of indefeasibility of title does not arise under the Lagos law as the validity of title goes beyond registration of land.⁶⁰ This position of things diminishes the value and efficacy of land registration and lay open the security of title derived under the repealed Title Registration Act⁶¹ of Lagos. The Lagos law also subscribed to the online registration regime⁶² like the UK Act. However, unlike the provisions of the UK Act which permits online 'do it yourself conveyancing' by members of the public,⁶³ the Lagos State law only give access to a limited number of professionals in the land management industry.⁶⁴ In addition to user restriction under the Lagos law, there is also restriction access to the LIMS portal by the accredited users. Whilst it is possible to access and interface online with the Land Registry Portal from home and offices under the UK Act,⁶⁵ it is impracticable to access the LIMS portal without a visit to the Land Registry in Lagos.⁶⁶ The potential benefit of the online process is lost to the man-hour required to get things done under the Lagos state law. Another area of disquiet under the Lagos state law is the issue of adverse possession. The express provision for the registration of an adverse possessor as a title holder under the Lagos law is novel in that repealed legislations did not provide for it. Section 112 of Land Registration Law contains provisions on acquisition of land by adverse possession by reference to number of years in possession and obtainment of a court order. The law by this provision turns what hitherto had been used as a shield into a sword since an adverse possessor can now approach a court to obtain a declaratory order endowing him title as against the original owner without more. Whilst the UK Act has streamlined the process to make it difficult for an adverse possessor to defeat the interest of a registered title holder by introducing notice of application to register to the original owner, the Lagos state law is more liberal to the cause of an adverse possessor. This position justifies the view that the Lagos law is neither a mirror of title nor a notice to squatters unlike what is envisaged under the UK Act.

3. The way forward

As noted above, land registration is a necessity for proper and effective land management in any society. Its importance to the economic wellbeing of the State and individuals in the society cannot be overemphasized. Land registration reduces poverty by giving people guaranteed, protected land rights, which serve as a source of personal wealth and provide opportunities for economic independence. The lapses observed in the Lagos State law and invariably Nigerian laws on the subject must be addressed holistically, particularly the applicable principles with respect to registration of the adverse possessor under the law. In this respect, the Nigerian law could borrow from the English practice which has restricted its effects on the proprietary rights of a registered title holder. The current incongruent position as regards registration of interest or title under the Nigerian law should also be addressed to move the law towards state guarantee of title in the nearest future. The online platform

includes filling and filing of various forms and making entries on the registers in copious details to reflect the interest of the title holder and any interest affecting it except the overriding interests, which numbers has been reduced to a minimal level by the Act. The highly transparent process gives parties opportunity to file complaints cautions and notices affecting title and empowers the Registrar to speedily resolve all queries.

⁵⁹ Section 58 Land Registration Act UK 2002

⁶⁰ Section 27 Lagos State Land Registration Law 2015, See also: *Folashade v Durosola* (1951) 1 ALL NLR 87

⁶¹ Cap 121 1935

⁶² Sections 23-25 Lagos State Land Registration Law

⁶³ Schedule 5 Land Registration Act UK 2002

⁶⁴ Section 25(2) Lagos State Land Registration Law

⁶⁵ Researchers were taken on practical demonstration of the process during a study tour to Her Majesty Land Registry, Croydon UK in 2014

⁶⁶ Practical and personal experience of the Researchers at Governor's office, Land Bureau, Alausa Lagos while conducting this research.

for searches and registration of documents system under the Lagos law⁶⁷ is commendable, though there are rooms for improvement on the current system. The online system should be legitimized nationally and be made accessible to registered stakeholders and members of the public so that it can be accessed from the comfort of offices and homes. To further strengthen certainty of title under the law, there is a need to review the extent of overriding interests affecting registered land and reduced them to a manageable level. These and more are needed to be done to bring the law and practice of Land Registration in Nigeria to attune to 21st century realities of land management practice globally.

⁶⁷ Also available in Edo State and FCT See AU Didigwu & A Osarenkhoe, Automated Land Registration In Edo State, Nigeria. *British Journal of Environmental Sciences* Vol.3, No.5, pp.1-9, December 2015