

Nigeria promotes ridesharing in Africa

By [Ebi Atawodi](#)

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At the start of the last century, just one in seven people worldwide lived in cities. Today it's half, and by 2050, the UN predicts, another 2.5 billion people will be living in urban areas. This has brought huge benefits, with the growth of cities linked directly to economic growth, as well as improved health and education.



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Nowhere is this more apparent than across Africa, but it has also often come at the cost of creaking infrastructure, especially when it comes to transportation.

In response to this challenge we have seen governments across the world—from Mexico City to Sydney—embrace ridesharing. We are thrilled that Nigeria is now the first country in Africa to make a significant step forward towards building ridesharing into their transportation policies.

Obinna Chidoka, a member of the Federal House of Representatives and the chairman of the Committee on Environment and Habitat, recently started an important conversation for Nigeria's future in the Federal House of Representatives, looking ahead to how technology can enable safe and reliable rides and limit the negative effects of traffic congestion. This culminated in a unanimous vote by the Nigerian House in favour of a resolution supporting ridesharing.

Pivotal step

Chidoka says: "This resolution is a pivotal step for Nigeria and the critical role technology will play in helping us achieve the ambitions set out in the 2015 Intended Nationally Determined Contributions (INDCs), towards a low-carbon, climate-resilient future. This ridesharing resolution is an important development in reducing the number of cars on our roads, creating thousands of jobs and building sustainable businesses for our country."

This matters, because Nigeria is at the very vanguard of urbanisation, expected to add over 200 million people to its cities in the next 40 years, more than tripling the size of its current urban population. Only China and India will add more.

This fast pace of change presents a serious challenge for the country's transport system. As the African Development Bank notes, the average commuter in Lagos now spends over three hours in traffic every day.

Thankfully technology can help bring the answer. With just the smartphone in your pocket, ridesharing apps like Uber can now connect riders and drivers at the push of a button. This brings benefits for riders, drivers and cities. Riders find it easier, safer and more affordable to get around; drivers have access to new, flexible economic opportunities; and cities see their transit networks extended, emissions cut as we start to take cars off the road, and reductions in alcohol-related accidents.

This resolution is a great first step towards legislation that will allow the benefits of ridesharing to be felt across Nigeria, and ultimately we hope it encourages transport innovation for cities across Africa.

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