



Evaluation of the UN-Habitat Urban Programme in Iraq 2004-2012

SEPTEMBER 2012

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UN  HABITAT

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Front cover illustration: Map of Iraq

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ACRONYMS

CCA	Common Country Assessment
CEDAW	United Nations Convention for Elimination of Discrimination Against Women
COSIT	Central Organization for Statistics and Information Technology
CRC	Convention on the Rights of the Child (United Nations)
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
GLTN	Global Land Tool Network (UN-Habitat)
HCPD	Habitat Country Programme Document
ICI	International Compact with Iraq
IDP	Internally Displaced Persons
ILO	International Labour Organization
IOM	International Organization for Migration
IRFFI	International Reconstruction Fund Facility for Iraq
ITF	Iraq Trust Fund
KRG	Kurdistan Regional Government
LADP	Local Area Development Plans
MDTF	Multi-Donor Trust Fund
MTSIP	Medium-Term Strategic and Institutional Plan (UN-Habitat)
ROAAS	Regional Office for Africa and Arab States
SIDA	Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency
UNAMI	United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq
UNCT	United Nations Country Team
UNDAF	United Nations Development Assistance programme
UNDG-ITF	United Nations Development Group-Iraq Trust Fund
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNEG	United Nations Evaluation Group
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNESCWA	United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNHCR	Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNIDO	United Nations Industrial Development Organization
UNIFEM	UN Women (new name)
UNOPS	United Nations Office for Project Services
UN Women	United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women
USD	United States Dollar
WFP	World Food Programme
WHO	World Health Organization

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



A child in an Erbil Neighbourhood/Kurdistan Regional Governorate. © UN-Habitat

I. INTRODUCTION

The evaluation of the United Nations Human Settlements (UN-Habitat) Iraq Urban Programme from 2004 to date was initiated by UN-Habitat to provide its governing bodies, staff, donors, government counterparts and development partners with a forward-looking assessment of UN-Habitat's operational experience, achievements and challenges in the country.

Since 2004, the United Nations Development Group under the Multi-Donor Trust Fund in Iraq has become the largest post-war single programme—in size and scope—worth USD 1.6 billion and implemented by 17 United Nations resident and four non-resident agencies. UN-Habitat's country operations in Iraq account for 22 projects implemented as joint programmes with a number of United Nations and other partners. Under the United Nations Multi-Donor Trust Fund, the UN-Habitat cumulative portfolio since 2004 has reached about USD 89.8 million or 6.6 per cent of the USD 1.37 billion budget for Iraq.

The Iraq Programme has operated within a challenging developmental context, cross-border management constraints and a constantly evolving security and political scenario. More recently, the Programme has shrunk, as have other United Na-

tions operations in Iraq. Alongside the closure of the Iraq Trust Fund the Multi-Donor Trust Fund, and a new development phase in the country with the Iraq United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) Fund framework, the Iraq Programme faces complex challenges.

The objectives of the evaluation were to assess the contributions of the Iraq Programme, the relevance of its programmatic focus, the appropriateness of its institutional arrangements and partnerships in responding to Iraq's developmental needs and priorities. In addition, the purpose of the evaluation was to assess the added value of UN-Habitat within the context of joint programmes, and draw lessons toward improving UN-Habitat's future contributions.

II. APPROACH AND METHODOLOGY

The evaluation was conducted as part of Habitat's efforts at systematic and timely appraisals of its programmes. It was managed by the agency's Evaluation Unit and conducted between December 2011 and September 2012 by independent consultants Johnson Nkuuhe and Siraj Sait. The evaluation used a range of methods, including review of Iraq Programme documents, face-to-face interviews, focus group discussions and a field trip to Iraq. Over 100 interviews were conducted with

staff from UN-Habitat and other United Nations agencies working in Iraq, officials from the Government of Iraq, the Kurdistan Regional Government and other stakeholders. These were carried out at UN-Habitat's Headquarters in Nairobi, Kenya, at the country office in Amman, Jordan, where the UN-Habitat Iraq Programme and several other programmes are situated, as well as in Iraq and the region. Where security or logistical issues prevented the team from interviewing individuals in person, exchanges were carried out by electronic mail, Internet telephony and the standard telephone.

A short field visit to Erbil, Iraq, enabled the evaluation team to inspect some projects, meet stakeholders and hold focus group discussions. In view of the broad range of projects covered by the assessment, the team selected two projects—the Erbil Housing Projects and Local Area Development Plans as case studies. These studies were representative of various aspects of the UN-Habitat Iraq Programme, reflecting different foci, partnerships, methods and outcomes. The Erbil project belonged to the Housing and Land Governance thematic pillar, while that of the Local Area Development Plans was part of the Urban Planning and Economy thematic pillar of the Iraq Programme. The case studies considered the overall project in the joint programming context and specific UN-Habitat outputs as a way of examining the approach used in the Iraq Programme. Assessment of the evaluation criteria—including relevance, validity of design, development results and management efficiency of the Programme—was partly based on the selected case studies.

The evaluation team attempted to gather information from a range of sources. Information from different sources and responses from each stakeholder group—UN-Habitat staff, United Nations officials, central Government, the Kurdistan Regional Government, civil society and professionals, and externals—was validated in respect of accuracy.

The evaluation of the Iraq Programme was limited by time, resources and access to the country owing to logistical and security considerations. In particular, access to civil society and beneficiaries was restricted. However, the limitations were not significant enough to affect the outcome of the evaluation. The evaluation team assessed the developmental and operational effectiveness of the programme from a range of sources while recognising the constraints of cross-border management.

III. KEY FINDINGS OF THE EVALUATION

UN-Habitat has made a significant contribution within broad thematic areas, collaborating with a large number of United Nations agencies, Government departments and partners. Based on the UN-Habitat 2003 report *Rebuilding Iraq: Iraq Reconstruction Plan for Shelter and Urban Development*, and subsequent Habitat Country Programme Documents, successes were noted in pro-poor housing, land governance, urban planning and economy, as well as urban infrastructure and basic services. Of the 22 projects UN-Habitat implemented out of the Iraq Trust Fund since 2004, 13 were ongoing by May 2012 and several of these were almost completed.

UN-Habitat's achievements are impressive given the dynamics of cross-border management and the challenging context of urbanization in Iraq. However, much more needs to be done at scale and in partnerships to respond to Iraq's developmental challenges.

Achievements

The Iraq Programme has made a visible and well-acknowledged contribution to the country's sustainable urbanization agenda, both individually as an agency and as part of the United Nations Country Team and joint programming activities. These include the sectors of housing and land; urban planning; water and sanitation; infrastructure as well as broader issues of governance and protection.

UN-Habitat's work on pro-poor housing has demonstrated innovation and adaptability to Iraqi priorities. Its pioneering housing market survey—which the Government used to attract funding, and outputs such as the *State of the Iraq Cities Report 2006/2007: Cities in Transition (2007)*—are widely cited. There were significant slum upgrading surveys and strategy development tasks carried out in 2005 but there is no evidence of a follow-up.

The main achievement was the National Housing Policy developed in close partnership with the Government and funded by the Iraq Trust Fund. The policy is under implementation through the federal budget. However, the factors determining successful implementation will be the extent to which resources and an adequate institutional basis have been set up.

The catalytic role that UN-Habitat played in improving access to land and security of tenure has

also contributed to pro-poor housing policies being implemented in Erbil by the Kurdistan Regional Government. Four hundred families that were illegally occupying land in Erbil were recently resettled, voluntarily. Another example is the Baghdad Informal Settlements Initiative, part of the Internally Displaced Persons Durable Shelter Solutions, which UN-Habitat is implementing. There are several pioneering areas for the Iraq UN-Habitat team such as sustainable housing finance.

UN-Habitat has been unable to make the policy breakthrough in the difficult area of pro-poor land management, comparable to housing. However, the agency's contributions represent a paradigm shift in approach. The declaration published on the development of policy and land management by an Iraq delegation at the end of a study visit to Berlin in 2011 indicated Iraq's commitment to initiate a land policy process. The declaration will help catalyzing a much needed policy, institutional and regulatory framework for management and disposal of State land (urban and rural) for investment, housing and public uses. It promotes public-private partnerships in managing and administering land as well as the continuum of land rights that recognizes a range of tenures. UN-Habitat is contributing to the development of a draft law on public land management, and the establishment of a Land Commission for Iraq appears imminent.

UN-Habitat has been at the forefront with the message that sustainable development needs good governance and proper management in cities and towns. It has supported the shift towards decentralization with conferences, capacity development and policy support. However, as a case study of a UN-Habitat joint programme with other United Nations agencies demonstrates, this is a long process which will need legal reform, policy support and stronger partners, including that of the Iraq Local Government Association. In addition to pilot settlement upgrading projects affecting 2,500 households, UN-Habitat has augmented participatory planning and capacity on environmental management in the housing sector. Urban planning is another dimension which UN-Habitat has been spearheading and that all stakeholders in Iraq consider critical, but it requires sustained commitment.

Since 2004, UN-Habitat has contributed to Iraq's recovery by rehabilitating run-down and damaged community infrastructure that include schools, water supply systems, sewerage networks, youth centres, public parks and health facilities. Between 2009 and 2011, 2,400 boys and girls benefited from

12 new child-friendly primary school buildings that replaced existing mud structures. Over time, the focus has shifted—as has the rest of the United Nations—from large-scale infrastructure development to providing technical and policy support. Through the Public Sector Modernization Programme, UN-Habitat and the United Nations Children's Fund have supported the Government's efforts at modernizing its public sector with focus on water and sanitation, and delivered key outputs such as a guide to achieving this objective. However, UN-Habitat is in a crowded field of agencies working in the water and sanitation sector and must decide on what gap it could fill and in which focus areas.

Strategic focus

The strategic focus of the Iraq Programme was derived from UN-Habitat's comparative advantage, harmonization within the United Nations Development Group framework and joint programmes, relevance in the context of Iraqi priorities, national ownership and prospects for sustainability. The Rebuilding Iraq: Iraq Reconstruction Plan for Shelter and Urban Development was developed in the context of the agency's general mandate as regards human settlements and sustainable urbanization, as well as the post-conflict context.

The Iraq Programme has been well aligned with the focus areas of the agency's Medium-Term Strategic and Institutional Plan and was also a priority country under the Enhanced Normative and Operational Framework. The approach has evolved from recovery and transition towards long-term development.

Development of the Iraq Programme can also be traced through its own priorities as well as the United Nations-wide programme development in Iraq, such as the 2003 Joint Needs Assessment, the International Compact for Iraq 2007, the Joint United Nations Iraq Assistance Strategy 2005-2007 and 2008-2010, and the United Nations Development Assistance Framework. Equally, it has been integrated into successive development strategies for Iraq, including the current National Development Programme 2010-2014, and regional schemes such as the Kurdistan Regional Government Development Plan. UN-Habitat's expertise was recognized in the current United Nations Development Assistance Framework, where UN-Habitat's potential contribution was listed in four of five programmatic priority areas, underscoring the agency's relevance in its contribution to joint programmes.

Institutional arrangements

The UN-Habitat Iraq Urban Programme based in Amman, Jordan, is led by the chief technical adviser, who is also the head of mission. The current team of 17, comprising four international and 13 national staff is organized under the three thematic pillars and operations as well as national coordinators in Baghdad and Erbil and representative in Hilla. It is supported by technical and management teams and consultants in Baghdad and Erbil, and by project staff in Basrah, Hillah, Missan, Salahdin, Sulaimaniyah, Thikar and Wassit. Given the small size of the Programme and uncertain funding context, UN-Habitat relies on its project field teams which, besides project implementation, have to undertake very time-consuming inter-agency work, constant project pipeline development and fundraising.

The contributions of the Iraq Programme are all the more impressive given the relatively small but highly motivated and competent team. The Programme has good team coordination and is very well managed by the current chief technical adviser with appropriate resources. All Iraq United Nations Country Team members and United Nations partners in joint programmes spoke highly of the professional and management efficiency of the Iraq team, as did the central Government and Kurdistan Regional Government officials. The Iraq Programme is guided by a high-level National Habitat Committee, comprising of high-ranking officials and civil society, which plays an advisory role and also contributes to the development of the Habitat Country Programme Document.

The Iraq Programme coordinator at UN-Habitat's Headquarters in Nairobi is the senior human settlements officer in the Regional Office for Africa and the Arab States. The coordinator has the experience, competence and strategic vision to supervise, nurture and provide effective support to the Programme. Though the Iraq team in Amman enjoys considerable autonomy from the agency's Headquarters, it is satisfied with the level of support it receives, for example, with the visits from the Executive Director and the Director of Regional Office for Africa and the Arab States.

UN-Habitat's main funders under the Multi-Donor Trust Fund-Iraq Trust Fund have been the European Commission, Japan and Spain. The Government of Iraq and Kurdistan Regional Government

are also key contributors. Several partners and co-organizers, such as Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia and the International Finance Corporation have also contributed. Other countries such as Korea, Sweden and the United Kingdom have contributed indirectly to Iraq projects of which UN-Habitat has been a part. More recently the United States of America has funded a UN-Habitat project. However, funding for the Iraq programmes, including UN-Habitat, is decreasing and UN-Habitat is reviewing its programmatic and resource strategies in Iraq.

Joint programmes

Joint programmes were a key feature of the Iraq United Nations Development Group framework. Of the 22 projects UN-Habitat participated in implementing in Iraq, the agency singly carried out nine. Among the 12 joint programmes, it has collaborated mostly with the United Nations Development Programme (seven projects); the United Nations Children's Fund (six projects); the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization; and the World Health Organization. It also teamed up with the International Labour Organization; the United Nations Office for Project Services; UN Women, the United Nations Industrial Development Organization; and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. It also joined forces with the International Organization for Migration and the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization—a majority of the United Nations agencies working in Iraq. It had one partner in five projects and up to six partners in some other projects. UN-Habitat's niche is well recognized within the Country Team as seen in its partnerships in Iraq. UN-Habitat successes and limitations are, therefore, generally its own and those achieved through partnerships.

The United Nations Development Group is an instrument for United Nations reform, created by the Secretary-General of the United Nations in 1997, to improve the effectiveness of United Nations development at the country level as part of its approach to deliver diverse services as one body. These initiatives are aimed at increasing the impact of the United Nations on countries' bid to achieve the Millennium Development Goals, including poverty reduction. The 2011 Lessons Learned Evaluation of the United Nations Development Group-Iraq Trust Fund considered the high level of coordination among United Nations agencies to be one of the

most acknowledged achievements of the Group, as noted by most interviewees from United Nations agencies, donors and the Government.

Iraq was the first country in which United Nations agencies adopted the “cluster approach”, a joint planning, funding, coordinated implementation and reporting arrangement for large-scale operations. The approach was followed by and improved through Sector Outcome Teams in 2008, and the current structure for coordination, which are the United Nations Development Assistance Framework Priority Working Groups and their subgroups.

UN-Habitat is a member of several groups, chair of the Housing Sub-priority Working Group and co-chair of the Water and Sanitation Sub-priority Working Group. Overall the system has worked well.

Joint programmes have generally resulted in a coordinated and coherent response to Iraq’s recovery, reconstruction and development priorities without competition for funds. It has led to the coordination and management for better results. For example, the Local Area Development Plans would have been impossible without the synergies of United Nations agencies, most notably the International Labour Organization, the United Nations Development Programme, UN-Habitat and Iraqi stakeholders at the governorate, provincial and federal government levels. Joint programmes have been mutual learning spaces. The programmers have placed considerable demands, time and logistical resources on coordination and communications of participating agencies.

Joint programmes cut two ways for a relatively small agency such as UN-Habitat. Its partnerships have increased its profile, opportunities and potential for impact. It enjoys mutual respect with other United Nations partners and joint positions and activities are more effective in lobbying government on key reform issues. Yet, in the United Nations Development Group size and clout do matter and UN-Habitat often risks losing out to bigger players owing to factors ranging from inadequate field presence to the lack of starter or bridge funds. The agency must reflect on how best to leverage its relative advantages.

Partnerships

In Iraq, UN-Habitat works closely with several partners, notably the Government of Iraq and that of

the Kurdistan Region. It has generally very good relations with United Nations partners, and has developed some ongoing and potential for further collaboration with the World Bank. It also has a reasonable base of professionals, experts and academics guiding its activities, as also seen from the membership of its National Habitat Committee.

The Development Group framework has facilitated donors’ involvement with broader policy issues. UN-Habitat also has a strong record of working with the private sector, including contractors, and is now strengthening its liaison with the banking sector. UN-Habitat provides organizational support to the Iraq Local Government Association but this level of direct support to national partners is exceptional.

In Erbil, the setting up of Housing Facilitation Units of professional/technical experts and Local Facilitation Units has been effective. The Units were set up as intermediaries between community or households and local authorities or lending institutions. The Units were an alternative to independent non-governmental organizations and justified as being easily trained and institutionalized within municipal structures, or within a regional ministry.

Civil society is relatively weak in Iraq. UN-Habitat works with non-governmental organizations through other agencies such as the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees or networks such as the Norwegian Refugee Council on UN-Habitat’s Technical Working Group on Internally Displaced Persons. However, UN-Habitat still needs greater proactive engagement with civil society.

Challenges

Strategic focus

Priority areas for the UN-Habitat Iraq Programme developed through its 2003 strategy document for Iraq, followed by the Habitat Country Programme Document for 2008 to 2011, have remained almost the same for the 2012 to 2014 period. The continuing thematic pillars of focus—housing and land, urban governance and planning, water and sanitation, and infrastructure—no doubt are derived from the agency’s expertise and mandate, demand from United Nations partners and the Government. However, as Iraq enters a new development phase with

the Government as the dominant partner, and with reduced resources available for UN-Habitat projects, the agency must consider how best to reposition in the new Iraq.

The achievements of the Iraq Programme under its main pillars range from good to impressive; its pro-poor approaches are well directed towards disadvantaged urban poor, including internally displaced persons and returnees. However, the Iraq Programme needs to deal more directly with the cross-cutting issues. It has done well in promoting environmentally friendly housing and responsible water and sanitation projects but it could do more. Despite its emphasis on pro-poor, inclusiveness, good governance and protection issues, the Iraq Programme has not adopted a sufficiently developed rights-based approach. Though projects under the Iraq Programme to encourage participation of (and often target) women, children and the youth as beneficiaries, it needs to develop clearer gender and youth frameworks and align with relevant UN-Habitat strategic documents.

Institutional arrangements

UN-Habitat Iraq's institutional arrangements are being dictated by drastically reduced funds. Staff numbers have fallen from 26 in 2008 to 17 today, and are likely to be cut further. United Nations Development Assistance Framework documents estimate that the implementation of the United Nations Country Programme will require USD 1.9 billion, of which the United Nations has pledged USD 250 million. UN-Habitat requires USD 77.2 million for its full programme of which it has so far secured USD 9.3 million in funding. An additional USD 67.9 million is needed. With the Multi-Donor Trust Fund-Iraqi Trust Fund closing, UN-Habitat will have to review its resource mobilization strategy to carry its substantial portfolio in Iraq, or at least its most important parts.

However, fundraising in Iraq has become difficult as most donors consider the oil-rich country wealthy. Conversely, most donor countries are currently in financial crisis. As such, the agency must accept that the programme will be much smaller and that the focus must be on making it most effective. To raise funds within Iraq, UN-Habitat will have to redirect its efforts to strategic areas where it has strong political support, funding, partners and prospects of high impact. Iraqi Government funding, however, is limited to technical interventions and does not cover staff and operational costs.

Another key challenge for the Iraq Programme is the pressure to return to Baghdad, the nation's capital, as most United Nations agencies have or are in the process of doing. The view of the Government, United Nations partners and other stakeholders is almost unanimous that activities would be more effective if managed from within the country. However, there are also political compulsions for the move, as well as higher costs and possible staff losses to consider. The cost of a professional staff member in Baghdad is close to USD 400,000 per year due to the high accommodation and security expenses. So far, UN-Habitat has agreed that staff for new projects will be resident in Baghdad. UN-Habitat Headquarters, together with the new Regional Office for Africa and Arab States, in Cairo, Egypt, must urgently provide viable transition plans for the move to Iraq, though there are choices in the shape and extent of the relocation.

Joint programmes

The closing of the Multi-Donor Trust Fund-Iraq Trust Fund marks the end of a prolific period of United Nations joint programming in the country. However, it is widely appreciated that the joint programmes have been a good practice and that UN-Habitat has significantly added value to the effort through its specialist expertise as well as cross-sectoral contributions. The Government will direct all future Iraq operations. This will require UN-Habitat to concentrate in areas of demand. For example, closure of the staggering capacity development gaps requires innovative methods and approaches. UN-Habitat must step up the dissemination of its tools and outputs to ensure replication and scaling up.

Partnerships

The United Nations Country Team documents recognize that the planned phase-out of the Iraq Trust Fund and the situational transition in the country warrants "a more strategic, coherent and cohesive response to Iraq's development priorities and challenges". This must be based on renewed partnership and engagement with the Government, the United Nations System and civil society. While UN-Habitat already is working with civil society largely through local governments, it needs a more proactive approach.

Opportunities

As the role of UN-Habitat in Iraq, and other United Nations agencies generally, is reassessed in view of

the country's new phase of development and the various funding dynamics, UN-Habitat is well positioned to continue supporting the Government and that of the Kurdistan Region through pioneering policy or strategic inputs. Moreover, United Nations partners, and officials of the Kurdish Region and the central Government view the technical and strategic contributions of UN-Habitat as a vital part of its broader canvas, and beyond project delivery. The strong political will exhibited so far by the Government will be necessary to support the process of reform and change that underpins the reform agenda and implementation of the United Nations Development Assistance Framework and Iraqi national priorities. Two ongoing UN-Habitat projects in Erbil supported by Kurdistan Regional Government and the Baghdad Settlements Project backed by the Bureau of Population Refugees and Migration, as well as the United States Department of State, indicate the opportunities to contribute to that process.

UN-Habitat is well positioned to support the Government in scaling up from its project experience; for example, from projects in Erbil and the Local Area Development Plans project. As part of the housing improvement scheme, UN-Habitat is providing technical help through an established housing facilitation unit in the neighbourhood, as well as facilitated loans for home upgrades. The project on internally displaced persons with the Bureau of Population, Refugees and Migration of the United States Department of State, which is under way, could also be applied to poor and vulnerable families in upgraded settlements and in resettlement projects countrywide.

UN-Habitat and Country Team has lobbied the Iraqi Government hard for reforms and legal changes. The Provincial Powers Law (or Law 21) of 2008 was a major milestone for the introduction of decentralized government in Iraq, but supporting the capacity of the Iraq Local Government Association (the key player) will be critical. Similarly, despite improvements, there are technical and legal bottlenecks preventing commercial banks from investing in housing finance. UN-Habitat's mission remains to provide technical support for overcoming the significant political, financial and capacity challenges.

IV. CONCLUSIONS

Relevance

UN-Habitat's Iraq Urban Programme on shelter and urban development focuses on housing policy and

land management; urban planning and governance; water and sanitation; and infrastructure. It captures well UN-Habitat's comparative advantages in relation to Iraq's sustainable urbanization and developmental challenges.

The Programme is fully aligned with the Government's National Development Plan 2011-2014, the Kurdistan Regional Government's 5+ Multi-sectoral Plan, and other key documents for Iraq.

The Iraq Programme has been developed as part of a collective response of all United Nations agencies, programmes and funds to Iraqi priorities. UN-Habitat's programmatic areas are recognized in the United Nations Development Assistance Framework, where UN-Habitat's potential contribution is listed under four of the five priority areas.

Efficiency

The institutional arrangements for the Iraq Programme's country office have been adequate and structured to achieve the planned results.

Given the security situation requiring cross-border management from Amman, difficulties in hiring competent staff and the frequent lack of effective coordination have meant high programming costs inherent in many post-conflict contexts. Independent audits show that UN-Habitat has utilized its Multi-Donor Trust Funds efficiently and strategically.

In terms of timely project delivery, United Nations agencies, including UN-Habitat, have performed poorly. All projects, barring one, were given no-cost extensions ranging from one to five extensions. The Amman office attributed some of the delays to Headquarters and the bureaucracy of the United Nations Office at Nairobi. Other delays were due to operational reasons and the need for inter-agency coordination and liaison with Government. Among the implications were continuing UN-Habitat staff commitment to outstanding projects for which no additional funding was available. However, staff at the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq/ Multi-Donor Trust Fund office was at pains to point out that UN-Habitat performance was in line with overall averages and did not reflect the management efficiency or affect the quality of outcomes.

The considerable autonomy given to the Iraq office has worked well, despite increased workload pressures on the chief technical adviser given the technical, organizational, political, and fund raising roles. The senior settlements officer at the Regional Office

for African and Arab States supervises and provides effective support for planned results. However, as the Iraq Programme enters a new phase, there are further opportunities for consolidation of its links with head office.

Effectiveness

There was consensus among respondents that the Iraq Programme was well managed and supported for the achievement of results. UN-Habitat personnel in the Amman, Baghdad and Erbil offices were motivated, competent and well-trained; combining technical expertise, field experience and political liaison as relevant.

The UN-Habitat Iraq team has operated effectively within the United Nations Country Team. This assessment agrees with the finding of the 2011 United Nations Development Group's "Lessons Learned Evaluation" that the "high-level of coordination among United Nations agencies is one of its best acknowledged achievements" of the world body's Iraq operations.

The Iraq Programme has had several successes, but this is ongoing work. A significant success for UN-Habitat is its role in the development of the comprehensive National Housing Policy, which is funded through the federal budget and is being implemented.

UN-Habitat's pro-poor land management initiatives are conceptually sound and well directed, as seen through the Government-endorsed Declaration on the Development of Policy and Land Management in Iraq.

UN-Habitat's focus on inclusive urban planning, management and governance alongside the United Nations Development Programme, have introduced new decentralization and participative approaches, for example, through projects on Iraq Public Sector Modernization and Local Area Development Plans.

UN-Habitat has a solid record on urban infrastructural development but its critical role is through joint efforts with the United Nations Children's Fund at modernizing and reforming the Iraqi public sector, such as through providing the water and sanita-

tion road map and deliberations with the Ministerial Advisory Committee.

Review of internal progress reports and visits to the Multi-Donor Trust fund office as well as the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq demonstrate regular, and satisfactory monitoring as well as reporting on UN-Habitat projects. However, in joint programmes the agency had to deal with additional layers including the Trust Fund Office, donors and members of thematic groups. It also had to make several periodical reports to Headquarters, including those on the implementation status of the Medium-Term Strategic and Institutional Plan and to the Regional Office for Africa and Arab States. Most staff at the UN-Habitat Iraq office considered the reporting systems time consuming and often duplicative.

Impact

Through partnerships with United Nations agencies and government counterparts, UN-Habitat has contributed significantly to the sustainable urbanization agenda, improved understanding of bottlenecks and developed tools and responses. The role of UN-Habitat is widely acknowledged and visible in Iraq development planning; although the impact of its projects are difficult to ascertain given the country's security context, limited access to beneficiaries and limits of this evaluation.

UN-Habitat has achieved most of its project outputs and many of its programme objectives. The agency's technical and strategic contributions are a vital part of its role, beyond project delivery. Through implementation of successful projects as seen from the case studies of Erbil and Local Area Development Plans, UN-Habitat has contributed to better monitoring, capacity development, new partnerships (including civil society and private sector), and legal and institutional reforms.

UN-Habitat projects are pro-poor and generally demonstrate tangible benefits to a number of disadvantaged groups such as slum dwellers, internally displaced persons, women, youth and children. Its inclusive "settlements-based approach" is positive.

However, despite some good project outputs for women's rights and youth training, there is no overall gender or youth strategy. As a result, UN-Habitat's potential contribution to the fifth pri-

ority area under the United Nations Development Assistance Group relating to the “empowerment of women, youth and children” is unrecognized in the Group’s documents. Environmental sustainability is an emphasis that needs to be further highlighted and the human rights-based approach needs to be strengthened.

Sustainability

A range of high-quality UN-Habitat outputs from legislation and master plans, to training manuals and tools are widely used in parts of Iraq. However, the sustainability of the developmental results from UN-Habitat depends on the Government’s capacity to provide an enabling policy environment, including incentives for meeting the demands of urban development. A number of elements in favour of sustainability are noted, as are several threats.

Generally, there has been high-level official engagement with UN-Habitat projects. However, officials told this evaluation team that there were concerns regarding the limited capacity, uncertain security situation and polarized political environment. Moreover, UN-Habitat needs to do more to ensure national ownership beyond policymakers by building diverse partnerships, despite the challenges of a divided or unstable government.

Through its various projects, UN-Habitat has contributed to Iraqi capacity development to formulate, implement and review vital policies, strategies, laws and programmes. However, training has not reached all stakeholder groups and has not been at scale, as the mode of delivery has been conventional.

While UN-Habitat has a broad mandate, it must continue to focus on strategic areas and opportunities where it has strong political will, funding, partners and prospects of high impact.

A major concern is the drastically altered funding situation with the closure of Multi-Donor Trust Fund-Iraq Trust Fund. UN-Habitat must accept that the programme is unlikely to attract prior levels of funding, and it must review its resource mobilization strategy. This will have to be coordinated between the Iraq Programme, UN-Habitat Headquarters and the Regional Office focusing on key elements of its mandate in Iraq. With limited projects unable to

fund related staff time, Headquarters and the Regional Office must support critical areas.

Another key challenge for UN-Habitat is the pressure to move the Iraq Programme Country Office back to Baghdad in line with most United Nations agencies. Though there are higher costs as well as security risks to staff, UN-Habitat must urgently put in place viable transition plans for the move.

V. LESSONS LEARNED

Based on the review of the Iraq Programme activities, the following lessons were learned:

1. **Using the UN-Habitat Country Programme Document effectively:** While the Iraq Programme developed its UN-Habitat Country Programme Document in a fluid and complex context, the process could have been more systematic and strategic.
2. **Managing multiple transitions:** The Iraq Programme would need to be strategized on ways to manage the multiple transitions and its mandate adapted to the evolving scenarios in Iraq.
3. **Sharing experiences of the Multi-Donor Trust Fund:** With the experience of the Iraq Programme, UN-Habitat senior management needs to reflect on how best to anticipate and prepare for opportunities with other Multi-Donor funds.
4. **Beyond financial resources:** UN-Habitat needs to invest in its Iraq office and help promote cost-effective, high impact, niche initiatives which are visible, scalable and which correlate to Iraq’s priorities with strong partnerships.
5. **Timely project delivery:** United Nations agencies, including UN-Habitat, have performed poorly in meeting project deadlines. All projects, barring one, were given up to five no-cost extensions. UN-Habitat must consider how to avoid these delays by better and more realistic project design.

VI. RECOMMENDATIONS

1. **Sharpen strategic focus:** The Iraq Programme should revise its UN-Habitat Country Programme Document to reflect its current strategic focus in line with the new realities in consultation, dissemination, resources and monitoring.
2. **Develop a resource mobilization strategy:** The Iraq Programme, UN-Habitat Headquarters and the Regional Office for Arab States should develop a resource mobilization strategy document building on its track record, so as to widen the donor base to include non-conventional funding sources, the private sector, regional sources, as funding/cost sharing from the Government of Iraq and the Kurdish Regional Government.
3. **Design programmes with impact assessments:** UN-Habitat should put in place a project/programme development process, which incorporates targets and results-based management into the project design and enables effective monitoring and participative evaluation of impact.
4. **Attend to gender, age and human rights:** UN-Habitat Iraq should review the extent to which its projects have tackled cross-cutting issues, with recommendations on how this could be improved towards effectiveness and meeting its mandate.
5. **Improve national ownership:** UN-Habitat Iraq Programme and the UN-Habitat Headquarters should regularly discuss and respond to the changes in political context and key parameters on documents such as the memorandum of understanding with the central Government and Kurdish Regional Government, and the *Declaration on the Development of Policy and Land Management in Iraq* and the *Iraq Housing Policy*.
6. **Promote and engage with civil society:** The Iraq Programme should be proactive and develop stronger relations with existing and potential civil society partners and with those of other United Nations collaborators on the joint programmes.
7. **Strengthen communications:** The Iraq Programme should allocate responsibilities—or appoint a part-time staff member—as communications officer, as part of a communications strategy.
8. **Innovate with capacity development methods:** The Iraq Programme should review its capacity-building methodologies, training resources, participation dynamics and impact to draw up a holistic capacity-building approach.
9. **Plan for relocation to Iraq:** UN-Habitat should urgently review its institutional arrangements with the new Regional Office for Arab States and the Iraq Programme on strategic options (security, costs, programmatic and staffing issues) with firm timelines for a transition and relocation of the Programme's country office to Baghdad.
10. **Consolidate liaison between the Iraq Programme, Regional Office and Headquarters:** UN-Habitat should set up a mechanism for strategic dialogue between country programmes like Iraq, regional offices and the thematic branches at Headquarters, which is more regular, structured and target-based.

1. INTRODUCTION

The United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) initiated this evaluation of its Iraq Urban Programme¹, covering the period 2004 to date. Its aim is to provide its governing bodies, staff, donors, government counterparts and other development partners a forward-looking understanding of the agency's operational experience, achievements and challenges in the country. It assessed the context, opportunities and constraints, programmatic priorities and partnerships, strategic vision and options as well as the outcomes and sustainability of the development and operational efficiency and effectiveness of UN-Habitat's Iraq Programme. The intent of this evaluation was to support accountability, provide information for performance management and future decision-making as well as contribute to learning in the organization.

1.1 UNITED NATIONS IN IRAQ

Country context

Iraq has a unique history as a "powerful engine of regional economic growth and trade, and a global beacon of culture and learning" (Common Country Assessment 2009). In more recent decades, it has endured two successive Gulf wars, economic sanctions, a military intervention and internal conflicts. Political instability, the centralized nature of governance mechanisms, an imbalanced allocation of resources and a lack of investment in infrastructure, environment and social services have had a devastating impact on the country's ability to develop its economy and support the needs of the population (*United Nations Development Lessons Learned Evaluation 2011*). Since the peak of the post-2003 violence, Iraq has made visible security, political and developmental progress. Confidence in the State and a basic level of social trust are returning – albeit slowly in many areas. The formation of the first Iraqi government in 2006 and the new constitution supporting inclusion and decentralization have been accompanied by policy dialogues and pioneering development measures, thereby catalyzing the country's recovery and progress.

¹ The terms UN-Habitat Iraq Programme and UN-Habitat Iraq Urban Programme are used interchangeably in UN-Habitat documents and in this evaluation.

Iraq is a resource-rich middle-income country with the potential to sustain a development agenda. Sustainable urbanization is one among the country's formidable challenges. Over 70 per cent of its estimated 32 million people are now urban; its cities and towns are unable to provide basic services, housing and employment (*The State of Arab Cities Report 2012: Challenges of Urban Transition*). Almost one-quarter of Iraq's population lives below the poverty datum line, while several vulnerable urban poor groups such as children, women, minorities and the displaced are at further risk. Unless effectively tackled, most Millennium Development Goals will remain distant dreams and Iraqi cities may breed more social problems and frustrations, particularly among the youth. As Iraq progresses towards greater democratization and human rights, decentralization and pluralism, increased confidence and enhanced opportunities pave the way for hope and change.

United Nations mandate

United Nations has a long history of development activities in Iraq, with the Oil-for-Food Programme phase (1997-2003) marking the broadening of its mandate. The current post-war role of the United Nations is based on clear security, political and economic reform benchmarks. Various efforts have been made to integrate the political mandate of the United Nations mission with the humanitarian and development objectives of the United Nations Country Team. The United Nations has sought to pursue and sustain integrated and sustainable solutions necessary to promote stability, security, national reconciliation and the protection of human rights in Iraq.

The United Nations development programming for Iraq has evolved since the initial 2003 United Nations/World Bank Joint Needs Based Assessment identified 14 priority sectors and cross-cutting themes for the United Nations International Reconstruction Fund Facility for Iraq. The subsequent Joint United Nations Iraq Assistance Strategy 2005-2007, following Security Council Resolution 1546, began the process of greater Iraqi ownership, given the return of sovereignty to Iraqis (28 June 2004) and in-

corporated the Iraqi-owned National Development Strategy 2005-2007 as well as lessons learned. The Assistance Strategy was followed by another covering 2008-2010, formulated in partnership with the Government. The aim was to further harmonize and implement the Millennium Goals, the International Compact with Iraq and the National Development Strategy 2007-2010, focusing on priority areas and outcomes. The 2009 Common Country Assessment provided the United Nations' analysis of the national development context applying gender, human rights and conflict analysis toward identifying potential priority development areas for Iraq.

The current structure is the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (2011-2014), which incorporates the National Development Programme 2010-2014, regional schemes such as the Kurdistan Regional Government Development Plan, updated United Nations Country Team documents as well as universal standards such as the Millennium Goals. As the United Nations and the Government embark on clearer prioritization and an increasingly comprehensive and integrated strategic approach, there has been greater emphasis on Government ownership and cost sharing arrangements. Individual United Nations agencies, including UN-Habitat, are reassessing their roles and comparative advantage in the new phase of Iraq's development within each sector-based mandate, experience, capacity and availability of funds for United Nations operations.

United Nations Development Group Iraq Trust Fund

The Iraq Trust Fund, which started in 2004, has become the largest post-war funded development programme. Its Multi-Donor Trust Fund was worth USD 1.6 billion (excluding the USD 531 million under the World Bank Iraq Trust Fund). Contributions were made by European Union members, Australia, Canada, India, Japan, Qatar and Turkey. A total 17 United Nations agencies, forming part of the world body's Country Team, collaborated to implement these projects supported by the United Nations International Reconstruction Fund Facility for Iraq². The scope of the 274 projects was ambitious, and included thematic areas such as governance and human rights, inclusive economic growth, environment, education, water and sanitation, housing, and food security. The United Nations Iraq development programme was coordinated and operated

under the supervision of the Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General, who is the Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator.

The Iraq Trust Fund was established as one of two such facilities of the International Reconstruction Fund Facility for Iraq, the first Multi-partner Trust Fund to be administered jointly by the United Nations and the World Bank. It was set up to provide donors with a single channel for funding, thereby reducing donors' transaction costs. The United Nations Development Group mechanism also pioneered the adoption of common planning, funding, coordinated implementation and reporting arrangements through a thematic cluster framework. However, the Development Group's Iraq Trust Fund will close by December 2013. Meantime, a new Iraq United Nations Development Assistance Framework Trust Fund has been established, envisaging enhanced Government funds. The Multi-Donor Trust Fund Iraq Trust funding arrangements through the Development Group, spelt out through the Development Assistance Framework with the Government, and coordinated by the *United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq*, are all part of a highly developed joint coordination mechanism for the country. They are important factors in the "Delivering as One" and the "One United Nations" reform strategies in supporting Iraq's continuing national development.

This evaluation explored the United Nations planning processes, priorities and arrangements to the extent they were relevant for the assessment of UN-Habitat operations. It was recognized that the strategic programme lens of UN-Habitat includes the "Delivering as One" dynamics. The efficiency and effectiveness of the Multi-Donor Trust Fund structure and processes itself has been positively evaluated elsewhere (Lessons Learned Evaluation 2011). This evaluation of United Nations joint programme dimensions were thus limited to UN-Habitat jointly executed projects with other United Nations agencies. Its scope was the coordination, added value and achieved development results by UN-Habitat in an overall context. As the Multi-Donor Trust Fund-Iraq Trust Fund is closing, the success of United Nations partnerships, in terms of operational and developmental effectiveness, was assessed. The analysis also focused on the extent to which the fund had integrated the principles of harmonization, alignment, national ownership, accountability and management for results within Multi-Donor Trust Fund structures and operational procedures. The level of institutionalization of such approaches within the United Nations in Iraq is vital for the better implementation of future Development As-

² The UNCT comprises seventeen resident agencies: FAO, ILO, IOM, OCHA, OHCHR, UNDP, UNDSS, UNESCO, UNFPA, UN-Habitat, UNHCR, UNICEF, UNIDO, UN Women (formerly UNIFEM), UNOPS, WFP and WHO; and three non-resident agencies: ESCWA, UNCTAD and UNEP.

sistance Framework and as a learning process for other UN-Habitat country programmes.

1.2 UN-HABITAT IN IRAQ

UN-Habitat's involvement in Iraq

UN-Habitat is the lead United Nations agency for cities and human settlements. The basic framework for UN-Habitat's work is laid down in the 1996 Habitat Agenda, which reflects the agency's core responsibility of promoting socially and environmentally sustainable towns and cities to provide adequate shelter for all, as mandated by the United Nations General Assembly. Therefore, in Iraq the agency focuses on sustainable urbanization and components toward attaining the Millennium Development Goal target of improving the lives of 100 million slum-dwellers by year 2020. UN-Habitat's intervention is equally driven by national priorities such as the National Development Plan, the Kurdish Regional Government Development Plan, as well as the United Nations Development Assistance Framework, and universal development and human rights standards.

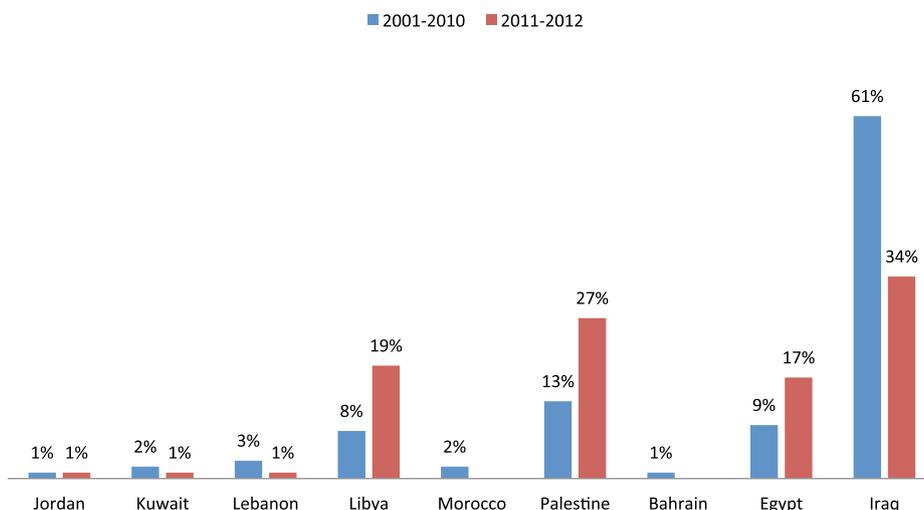
Iraq was one of UN-Habitat's biggest country programmes, working within broad thematic areas, collaborating with a large number of United Nations agencies, Government departments and partners, and accessing funding from a wide cohort of donors (if the number of donors to the Iraq Trust Fund

are considered). The geographical distribution of UN-Habitat projects in the Arab/Middle East and North Africa region for the 2011-12 biennium shows that Iraq accounts for the country with the most UN-Habitat projects, followed by Palestine (Figure 1.1).

Since 2004, UN-Habitat has been a lead or significant partner in 22 United Nations projects worth USD 89.8 million. The entire Multi-Donor Trust Fund portfolio of 274 projects in Iraq is worth USD 1.37 billion.

In Iraq, UN-Habitat works directly with nine United Nations agencies, the World Bank, some Government departments, local authorities and diverse stakeholders. The projects in Table 1.1, the subject of this review, indicate the diversity of the portfolio covering a range of expertise, partnerships and outputs. As the UN-Habitat Iraq Reconstruction Plan for Shelter and Urban Development 2003 initially identified, the four key areas of intervention are housing policy, urban planning and management, local governance and the revitalization of Government institutions for housing and urban development. These areas have generally continued to be the main areas of UN-Habitat operations despite some shifts in emphasis and adaption to evolving United Nations and national priorities. Yet, as Table 1.1 indicates, UN-Habitat projects fall within a broader ambit of sectors which include education, economic reform and diversification, human development and gover-

FIGURE 1.1: Geographical distribution of UN-Habitat projects in the Arab Region



Source: UN-Habitat (2012) UN-Habitat in Partnership with Arab States (Nairobi)

TABLE 1.1: List of UN-Habitat projects in Iraq, 2004-2012

Project Number	Project Title	Amount in USD	Donors	Sector	Partners (lead UN agency in bold)	Start date	End date (Italics indicate still ongoing)
NO10	Strengthening Capacity of Housing Sector	5 965 638	ITF Donor Pool	Housing & Shelter	n/a	06.07.2004	31.07.2010
NO12	Education Facilities Rehabilitation	17 580 663	ITF-Government of Japan	Education	n/a	06.08.2004	30.09.2008
NO14	Strengthening Urban Sector through Building Capacities in Municipal Planning and Management	2 550 216	ITF Donor Pool	Housing & Shelter	n/a	22.12.2004	31.12.2006
NO15	Rehabilitation of School Buildings in Lower South Iraq	5 270 152	ITF Donor Pool	Education	n/a	22.12.2004	22.11.2005
NO16	Rehabilitation of Community Facilities and Infrastructure	16 025 007	ITF-Government of Japan	Housing & Shelter	UN-Habitat	09.09.2005	30.09.2009
NO17	Community-based Integrated WATSAN Rehabilitation and Management Project	1 983 516	ITF-non-earmarked	Water & Sanitation	n/a	09.09.2005	31.12.2006
NO21	School Rehabilitation and Capacity Building for School Maintenance	6 631 818	ITF-EC	Education	UNICEF & UN-Habitat	24.07.2006	30.06.2008
NO22	Strengthening Capacity of Housing Sector Phase II	2 385 917	ITF-Government of Spain	Housing & Shelter	UN-Habitat	21.12.2006	31.12.2010
NO24	Area Based Development Programme – Local Area Development Plans	3 986 250	ITF-EC	Economic Reform & Diversification	UNDP, ILO, UNOPS, UN-Habitat, UNIFEM, WHO, and UNESCO	19.04.2007	31.07.2010
NO26	School Rehabilitation and Capacity Development for Enhanced Access and Retention in Primary Education	4 012 682	ITF-EC	Education	UNICEF & UN-Habitat	24.07.2007	30.09.2009
NO27	Solid Waste Management Project for Iraqi Ministry of Municipalities and Public Works and the Governorate of Basra	2 396 426	ITF-EC	Water & Sanitation	UN-Habitat & UNICEF	04.07.2007	31.12.2010
NO29	Improving quality and relevance of Technical and Vocational Education and Training in Iraq	2 000 932	ITF-EC	Education	UNESCO, ILO & UN-Habitat	31.07.2008	31.03.2011
NO32	Local Government Association and Urban Development Capacity Building	1 985 256	ITF-non-earmarked (EC & Government of Spain)	Economic Reform & Diversification	UN-Habitat	26.03.2008	30.09.2011
NO33	Improving Access for Internally Displaced Persons and Returnees to Acceptable Shelter Solutions	5 150 304	ITF-EC	Housing & Shelter	UN-Habitat	26.03.2008	31.07.2011
NO34	Developing the Capacity of the Iraqi Education Sector/Enhancing the Learning Environment in Vulnerable Areas in Iraq for meeting Education-For-All goals	3 860 259	ITF-EC	Education	UN-Habitat, UNICEF, UNESCO, WHO & UNIFEM	15.10.2008	<i>30.06.2012</i>
NO35	Improving the Housing Delivery System in Erbil	1 645 547	ITF-Korea & interest money	Housing & Shelter	UN-Habitat & UNDP	09.12.2008	<i>31.12.2012</i>
NO36	Private Sector Development Programme for Iraq	2 000 000	ITF-Governments of Spain, Sweden, and EC	Economic Reform & Diversification	UNDP, ILO, UNOPS, UNIDO, FAO, UN-Habitat, and UNIFEM	18.12.2008	<i>31.12.2012</i>
NO41	Water and Sanitation Master Planning and Capacity Building Programme	1 496 434	ITF-EC	Water & Sanitation	UNDP, UNICEF, UN-Habitat, WHO	01.12.2009	<i>30.04.2012</i>

Project Number	Project Title	Amount in USD	Donors	Sector	Partners (lead UN agency in bold)	Start date	End date (Italics indicate still ongoing)
N044	Support to Decentralization and Local Governance for Service Delivery - Preparatory Phase	1 194 070	ITF-non-earmarked	Governance	UNDP, UN-Habitat, UNICEF, UNESCO, UNFPA, UN-Women, and UNESCWA	28.04.2010	<i>31.03.2012</i>
N045	Iraq Public Sector Modernization Programme	2 000 000	ITF-EC	Governance	UNDP, UNICEF, UNESCO, WHO, UN-Habitat	28.04.2010	<i>31.03.2012</i>
N048	Bridging for Local Area Development Programme Phase II	384 882	ITF-EC, interest, non-earmarked	Economic Reform/Human Development Sub-SOT	UNDP, ILO, UNOPS, UN-Habitat	08.07.2010	<i>08.03.2012</i>
N050	Strengthening the Capacity of the Housing Sector in Iraq: Bridge for Phase III	465 000	ITF-EC	Housing & Shelter	UN-Habitat & UNDP	31.08.2010	<i>30.06.2012</i>

nance which are vital cogs in the overall and broader United Nations joint programmes.

The size of UN-Habitat's portfolio since 2004 is not surprising as UN-Habitat executed the third largest activity among United Nations agencies under the humanitarian component of its Iraq Oil-for-Food Programme. Though the pre-war phase is not covered by this evaluation, achievements during this period underscore the existing strengths which it brought to the United Nations Country Team in 2004. Under the Oil-for-Food Programme, UN-Habitat implemented three separate initiatives. In northern Iraq the agency executed the Settlements Rehabilitation Programme worth USD 600 million, providing shelter and basic services to about 120,000 internally displaced persons and vulnerable groups. In south and central Iraq UN-Habitat conducted the Housing Sector Observation Programme, including monitoring the importation of building materials and implemented in Baghdad of the Neighbourhood Rehabilitation Project, a set of small-scale infrastructure schemes applying principles of community management and partnership.

The Settlements Rehabilitation Programme reached about 1.4 million people in the northern governorates of Dahuk, Erbil and Sulaimaniyah, equivalent to about one-third of the region's population. It was implemented through local authorities and over 800 local contractors, with the added advantage of building local capacity and generating employment to at least 80,000 people. UN-Habitat had a long list of achievements during the Rehabilitation Programme, which included about 905 km of sewage and water systems, 2,940 km of roads, 34 bridges, and over 21,000 houses, 700 schools and 225 agri-

cultural and community facilities between 1997 and 2003. The Rehabilitation Programme also created 150,000 jobs in the private sector by engaging and capacitating local contractors. UN-Habitat thus had the contacts and credibility of working intensively with the three northern governorates, familiarity with housing in south and central Iraq and specific projects in Baghdad.

UN-Habitat's mandate in post-conflict situations

UN-Habitat developed the key 2003 Iraq Reconstruction Plan in the context of the agency's general mandate as regards human settlements and sustainable urbanization, as well as the post-conflict context. The 2003 document refers to the UN-Habitat General Council Resolution adopted at its 19th Session (Resolution 19/7 on 9 May 2003), which requested the agency to devote specific attention to human settlements needs in the reconstruction of countries affected by armed conflicts and other man-made or natural disasters. Since then, the Iraq Programme has been updated by further emphasis and elaboration of UN-Habitat's key role in post-conflict contexts, particularly 20/17 in 2005. For example, the key document Humanitarian Affairs and the role of UN-Habitat (2008) provide the Strategic Policy on Human Settlements in Crisis and Sustainable Relief and Reconstruction Framework. This Framework emerged from a four-year policy development effort undertaken in consultation with partners and through the 20th and 21st Governing Council sessions that the UN-Habitat's Committee of Permanent Representatives endorsed in November 2007.

This strategy is also linked to UN-Habitat’s priorities in the Medium-Term Strategic and Institutional Plan. Urban resiliency and vulnerability reduction are covered in the Plan’s Focus Area 2, whereas post-crisis recovery and reconstruction fall under its Focus Area 3. Since the adoption of the strategy, UN-Habitat has developed a range of tools and guidelines on post-conflict interventions in its field, which are well disseminated throughout the agency and among its partners, and assist in assessing the effectiveness of the agency’s post-conflict work. UN-Habitat has a proven track record in post-conflict reconstruction: for example in Afghanistan, Angola, East Timor, Haiti, Kosovo, Mozambique, Rwanda, Somalia, Sri Lanka and Sudan. In addition to the offices at UN-Habitat Headquarters specifically coordinating activities in post-conflict countries, the agency has a coordinator in Geneva and works through its regional offices.

The increasing visibility and expertise of UN-Habitat in post-conflict contexts does not imply a change in its core mandate of sustainable urbanization. Rather, it involves an adaption of its approaches in challenging and diverse environments such as Iraq. The 2008 UN-Habitat strategy document also clarifies that the agency has not transformed into a post-conflict humanitarian relief body, as others perform that role. Since joining the United Nations Inter-Agency Standing Committee in 2008, UN-Habitat works with other United Nations agencies and partners collaboratively within their respective mandates. UN-Habitat’s innovative approaches

on issues like housing, land, governance and planning are critical development issues for overall efforts to reduce vulnerabilities and enhance protection, improve livelihoods and living conditions and provide holistic infrastructure and services. As in Iraq, UN-Habitat often serves as focal point for housing, land, water and settlements-related issues and as an important contributor to governance, protection and overall development clusters. Table 1.2 shows UN-Habitat’s involvement in priority areas of the United Nations Development Assistance Framework in Iraq. UN-Habitat’s added value lies in its expertise on human settlements and sustainable urbanization and in its mainstreaming capacity within the broader planning and response systems. This evaluation of UN-Habitat’s Iraq Programme explores this distinct role in the agency’s collaborative mode in a post-conflict situation.

UN-Habitat Iraq operations

The plan for Rebuilding Iraq: Iraq Reconstruction Plan for Shelter and Urban Development (2003) launched the agency’s new programme from 2004, and was followed by the Habitat Country Programme documents for 2009-2011 and for 2012-2014. The plan laid out the vision and priority thematic areas and made detailed proposals. The four key areas defined were:

- Housing policy
- Urban planning and management

TABLE 1.2: Iraq UNDAF areas and UN-Habitat involvement

Priority Number	United Nations Development Assistance Framework Area	UN-Habitat involvement
1	Improved governance, including protection of human rights	UN-Habitat listed as partner
2	Inclusive, more equitable and sustainable economic growth	UN-Habitat listed as partner
3	Environmental management and compliance with ratified international environmental treaties and obligations	UN-Habitat listed as partner
4	Increased access to quality essential services	UN-Habitat listed as partner
5	Investment in human capital and empowerment of women, youth and children	UN-Habitat not listed as partner

Source: Government of Iraq and United Nations Country Team Iraq (2010) *Partnering for Development 2011-2014: An overview of the United Nations Development Assistance Framework Iraq (UNDAF)*.



Participants sharing ideas in a planning workshop organized by UN-Habitat, 2009. © UN-Habitat

- Local governance
- Revitalization of central government institutions for housing and urban development

These have continued to be the primary areas of UN-Habitat operations despite some shifts in emphasis and adaption to evolving United Nations and national priorities. The programme is currently organized under the three pillars of Housing and Land Governance, Urban Planning and Economy, as well as Urban Infrastructure and Basic Services. All current projects are listed under one of these pillars.

The Iraq Country Office of UN-Habitat is in Amman, Jordan, currently with a team of 17 staff, four of whom are international and the rest national. The team is led by the chief technical adviser who is the head of mission. It includes thematic pillar heads and national coordinators in Baghdad and Erbil and a representative in Hilla. The Amman office liaises with UN-Habitat Headquarters in Nairobi, Kenya, through the Iraq country coordinator, located in the Regional Office for Africa and the Arab States. The programmatic outlook and funding of the Iraq office

should be seen as part of the UN-Habitat's Regional Strategy for Engagement (2012). The location and structure of the UN-Habitat Iraq Programme is predicated on funding as well as strategic choices for the Baghdad office, the new Regional Office for the Arab States in Cairo, the subregional office for Gulf States in Kuwait and the new Regional Office for Africa and Arab States at UN-Habitat Headquarters.³ The evaluation of the UN-Habitat Country Programme also considered the joint programme dynamics and the operational constraints, which include the security situation and post-conflict context.

1.3 PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES OF EVALUATION

The independent evaluation of UN-Habitat's Iraq Programme (2004 to date) is intended to provide

³ The evaluation was carried out during the organizational restructuring of UN-Habitat. The Regional Office for Africa and the Arab States (ROAAS) were later divided into the Regional Office for Africa (ROA) and the Regional Office for the Arab States (ROAS)

UN-Habitat, its governing bodies and donors with an independent and forward-looking evaluation of the agency's operational experience, achievements and challenges. Lessons learned are expected to play an instrumental role in shaping the agency's new focus in planning and programming projects in Iraq and contribute to better accountability.

Primary constituencies for this report are UN-Habitat, its governing bodies, donors and other stakeholders. It will also be of interest to those working in Iraq including Government, civil society and private sector stakeholders as well as donor agencies. The sharing of results will inform key stakeholders about what was achieved by and learned from the Programme.

The specific objectives of the evaluation, identified in the Terms of Reference, are as follows:

- a. To assess the relevance of UN-Habitat in responding to Iraq shelter and urban development needs and priorities.
- b. To assess the efficiency and effectiveness of the Programme, in terms of delivery of outputs, achievement of outcomes, impact and sustainability.
- c. To identify approaches that worked and which did not—drawing key findings, lessons and good practices from UN-Habitat programming experience.

- d. To bring forward programming opportunities that indicate the strongest potential for long-term partnership between UN-Habitat and other organizations working in Iraq.
- e. To make recommendations on what needs to be done to achieve planned objectives in Iraq, or whether such planned objectives are still relevant or need to be changed.

1.4 REPORT OUTLINE

This evaluation report is divided into five chapters. Chapter 1 titled Introduction describes the context, the background to United Nations and UN-Habitat operations in Iraq, the challenges, the purpose and objectives of the evaluation. Chapter 2 outlines the evaluation methodology. Chapter 3 sets out the key findings of the evaluation through a review of the design and joint programming of projects, sources and utilization of funds, overall achievements between 2004 and 2012, as well as challenges and opportunities facing the Programme. Chapter 4 provides an assessment of the Programme through a review of institutional arrangements, assessment of Programme approaches through its relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, sustainability and impact. Chapter 5 presents the conclusions, lessons learned and key recommendations for action.

2. METHODOLOGY

2.1 EVALUATION SCOPE AND CRITERIA

The evaluation team was guided by the approach and methodology in the terms of reference and the Inception Report (January 2012). The latter was finalized through consultations with the Evaluation Unit, the Regional Office for Africa and Arab States through the coordinator for the Iraq Programme at headquarters, and the Iraq Programme Office. Parts of the detailed approach and methodology are reproduced in the terms of reference in Annex I. This chapter outlines the evaluation scope and criteria, data collection and analysis methods, limitations and management of the evaluation.

The scope of the evaluation was the UN-Habitat Iraq Programme from 2004 (after the Oil-for-Food Programme ended) to the present. The focus is more on the programmatic level rather than the individual projects, as some have already been assessed either through internal or joint evaluations. Due to limited time and access resulting primarily from the security situation, two individual projects were selected for in-depth case studies to accompany the overall review.

This evaluation was intended as a forward-looking document. The activity aimed to avoid duplication of existing evaluations. Rather, particularly given its resources and constraints, it relied and built on information of previous evaluations, as relevant. Box 2.1 lists evaluations of UNDG-ITF informing this exercise. It relied on the evaluation *United Nations Development Group Iraq Trust Fund: Lessons Learned Exercise* (2011), which also analyzed findings from 60 independent assessments of the Development Group's Iraq Trust Fund programmes and projects that United Nations participating agencies commissioned. There were also other reviews of the Group's Iraq Trust Fund conducted, for example, by the Scanteam in 2007 and 2009. Evaluations of UN-Habitat rehabilitation projects were also consulted (Box 2.2).

The evaluation did not explore the financial management or security arrangements relating to the

BOX 2.1: Evaluations of UNDG ITF informing this exercise

EVALUATIONS OF THE UNDG/MDTF

UNDG 2011a *United Nations Development Group Iraq Trust Fund: Lessons Learned Exercise* (Pricewaterhouse Cooper, Bagdad)

UNDG 2011b *Operational Effectiveness of the UN MDTF Mechanism* (UNDG, New York)

UNDG 2006 *Review of Trust Fund Mechanisms for Transition Financing* (UNDG, Somerset)

Scanteam 2007 *Review of Post-Crisis Multi-Donor Trust Funds* (Scanteam, Oslo)

Scanteam 2009 *Stocktaking Review of the International Reconstruction Fund Facility for Iraq* (Scanteam, Oslo)

Volker Committee 2005 *Volker, Paul (2005) Report of the Independent Inquiry Committee into the United Nations Oil-for-Food Programme in Iraq* (Volker Committee, New York)

EVALUATIONS OF UN-HABITAT PROJECTS

OIOS (2012) *Audit of the UN-Habitat Iraq Programme* (OIOS, New York)

UN-Habitat 2010a *External Evaluation of UN-Habitat Project - Rehabilitation of Community Facilities and Infrastructure E4-14* (Star Orbits, Amman)

UN-Habitat 2010b *External Evaluation of UN-Habitat Project - School Rehabilitation and Capacity Development for Enhanced Access and Retention in Primary Education B1-29b* (Star Orbits, Amman)

UN-Habitat 2010c *External Evaluation of UN-Habitat Project - School Rehabilitation and Capacity-building for School Maintenance B1-22b* (Star Orbits, Amman)

JOINT EVALUATIONS

UNDP 2010a *Independent External Joint Evaluation of 'Local Area Development Programme'* (UNDP, Baghdad)

UNDP 2010b *Evaluation of UNDP Governance Projects Funded by the Iraq Trust Fund* (UNDP, Bagdad)

BOX 2.2: Evaluations of UN-Habitat rehabilitation projects

An evaluation of three UN-Habitat projects, Rehabilitation of Community Facilities and Infrastructure (E4-14) worth more than USD 16 million; the School Rehabilitation and Capacity-building Phase 1 (B1-22), worth over USD 6.6 million; and the School Rehabilitation and Capacity Development for Enhanced Access and Retention in Primary Education (B1-29) worth USD 4 million were carried out in July 2010 for UN-Habitat by an Amman based evaluation firm, Star Orbits. The projects collectively dealt with the quality, access to and management of community facilities and services among disadvantaged groups, and particularly schools. UN-Habitat implemented the first project while the other two were joint programmes with the United Nations Children's Fund. The first project commenced in September 2005 while the other two projects began in July 2007. The projects were extended five, four and three times respectively and completed between September 2009 and July 2010. Evaluations of all three projects were completed in July 2010.

The evaluation examined the operational and development effectiveness of the project, with a view to providing insights, lessons learned and recommendations in order to guide future activities of UN-Habitat and the Iraq Trust Fund. Its conclusions were founded on desk review of relevant documents, interviews with key stakeholders, and field visits to about 30 per cent of the project sites. The evaluations—similar in findings and results—found that all three projects had achieved sound results against planned targets, despite the challenging implementation context. It recognized the reasons for delay but did not find that it affected quality of outcomes. The evaluation noted the excellent partnership between UN-Habitat and the Government and recommended further collaboration in all areas of relevant technical assistance, financial support, and capacity development to the Ministry of Construction and Housing, Ministry of Municipalities and Public Works, Ministry of Education and directorate level staff. The evaluation further recommended that the Government should allocate more resources—human and financial—to scale up the project countrywide, with technical aid of UN-Habitat and the United Nations Children's Fund. The Government was further requested to have a maintenance plan and to carry out more routine inspection and maintenance of education and community facilities. Further recommendations regarded promotion of child-friendly schools and use of local contractors to promote job creation.

Sources: *UN-Habitat 2010a, 2010b and 2010c.*

UN-Habitat Iraq Programme as these issues were dealt with by a recent UN-Habitat review.⁴

⁴ OIOS (2012), *UN-Habitat Audit of the UN-Habitat Iraq Programme*, OIOS, New York.

Evaluation questions

The evaluation questions were developed in conformity with United Nations Evaluation Group-approved criteria of relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, impact and sustainability of the Programme.

Relevance

1. To what extent is the UN-Habitat Programme for Iraq shelter and urban development coherent, strategic and based on the UN-Habitat Country Programme Document (and other relevant programmes) and comparative advantage?
2. To what extent is the Programme responsive to specific needs priorities of the Iraqis, and appropriate to the economic, sociocultural and political context?
3. To what extent is the Programme complementary to, and harmonized with, other United Nations programmes in Iraq?

Efficiency

4. To what extent are institutional arrangements for the Programme adequate and structured to achieve the planned results in a cost-effective manner?
5. Have resources (funds, human resources, time and expertise) been allocated strategically to achieve outcomes?

Effectiveness

6. To what extent do management capacities and arrangements put in place support the achievement of results? What has been the added value in the context of joint programming?
7. To what extent are the Programme's objectives achieved, or are expected to be achieved, taking into account their relative importance?
8. Is the delivery and impact of Programme monitored and reported on effectively?

Impact

9. To what extent has the implementation of the Programme had the intended and non-intended impact so far on improving good gover-

nance and planning in the various sectors in which UN-Habitat is involved in Iraq?

10. Where performance is judged to be successful or unsuccessful, what has contributed to this? (Responses to these questions should be categorized by design, management and external factors (particularly context);
11. Does the Programme target gender and youth issues so as to impact favourably on the lives of women and girls in Iraq?

Sustainability

12. What is the likelihood that the results of the Programme are durable and can be maintained or even scaled up and replicated by partners after major assistance has been completed? How has the Programme fared in resource mobilization?
13. Are national partners willing and committed to continue with the project? How effectively has the project built national ownership?

2.2 DATA COLLECTION METHODS

An evaluation framework matrix was developed, capturing focus questions, issues, methods and sources, from the evaluation objectives and criteria. The evaluation involved a combination of methods, including desk review of Iraq policy and programme documents; face-to-face interviews with UN-Habitat staff in Kenya, Iraq and Jordan; one field visit to Erbil; and discussions with focus groups in Iraq and Jordan. Telephone interviews and email questionnaires were used where personal meetings were not possible. In addition, the evaluation team talked to people on the sidelines of an event for the Middle East and North Africa at the World Bank land conference in April 2012 and at the launch of the report on *The State of the Arab Cities: Challenges of Urban Transition* in May 2012 in Kuwait, though these were not formal evaluation missions. In all, over a 100 people were interviewed. A list of persons interviewed is reproduced in Annex II. Limitations of time and security considerations as well as the location of the Iraq Programme in Jordan limited access to civil society.

Literature review, desk study

An extensive review of a range of concept, policy and programme materials relating to the Iraq Pro-

gramme was carried out in three stages. In the preparatory phase at UN-Habitat Headquarters, background information such as United Nations resolutions providing the Iraq mandate, core documents underpinning the Iraq Programme were studied. Some of these were the Joint Needs Assessment (2003), the Common Country Assessment (2009), and the Iraq UN-Habitat Country Documents (*Iraq Strategy 2003*, *Habitat Country Programme Document* for 2008-2011 and for 2012-2014) Also perused were UN-Habitat strategic documents such as the Medium-Term Strategic Institutional Plan (MTSIP), the Enhanced Normative and Operational Framework; and concept, practice notes and reports; as well as an updated organization chart for the agency in view of its restructuring. A literature review linked to Iraq was developed. Relevant MTSIP six-monthly and annual progress reports were also used.

At the UN-Habitat Iraq Country Office in Amman, Jordan, project documents, concept notes, progress reports, newsletters, previous evaluations and strategies were collected, as well as relevant material from United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq and other agencies of the world body. The UN-Habitat office made available its database on urban governance, land and housing. Materials were also collected during the visit to Erbil visit, during the Iraqi Hilla team visit to Amman and from the UN-Habitat office in Baghdad. A key source for data was the Multi-Donor Trust Fund office in Amman visited by the evaluation team. A list of key documents is listed as Annex III.

Face-to-face interviews

At UN-Habitat's Headquarters in Nairobi, evaluators conducted face-to-face interviews with UN-Habitat staff knowledgeable of Iraq operations. The interviewees included staff from the Office of the Executive Director, the head of Regional Office for Africa and Arab States, the Country Coordinator for Iraq, past heads of the Iraq Programme, and heads of sections whose area of work was relevant for the Programme—such as land, housing, disaster, rehabilitation, safer cities, gender and youth.

In Amman, the team met with United Nations officials, including the Deputy Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Iraq and those of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq. It also met partners from the United Nations Development Programme, the International Labour Organization, UN Women and the United Nations Office for Project Services.

In Erbil, the team engaged the United Nations Children's Fund and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization staff, and civil society. Annex II is the list of the people interviewed. Semi-structured interviews were used to assess the agency's overall strategic priorities as well as relevance and applicability to the Iraq Programme. The discussions focused on outcomes of joint projects and different institutional arrangements with other United Nations agencies that are part of the organization's Country Team. The questionnaire template is attached as Annex IV.

The evaluators interviewed all UN-Habitat staff based in Amman, and met with those from the agency's Iraq offices; Baghdad, Erbil and Hilla. As the basis for dialogue, they used the self-evaluation process for senior staff, whereby Iraq staff was encouraged to identify Programme strengths and weakness. During the Iraq Erbil field visit, Government officials, professionals and United Nations project staff were interviewed on the progress and impact of the Iraq Programme. The evaluators also attended a meeting in Amman of the Hilla Slum Upgrading Project. This provided an opportunity to interview selected delegates such as project staff, Government officials and professionals.

Telephone calls and teleconferences were an important means of communication with Government officials, United Nations staff in Baghdad and other stakeholders. Questionnaires were prepared, drawing on the evaluation and sent to individuals in advance. They were adapted to the role or interests of the respondent; for example, gender, human rights or children. Government officials and those of the Kurdish Regional Government were sent e-questionnaires to which there was a good response, with 12 contributions out of 15 questionnaires administered. Several other respondent groups such as international consultants who had worked with the Iraq Programme and UN-Habitat staff in the Middle East or other duty stations were engaged through email.

Field visits and focus group discussions

A four-day Erbil visit served to understand the context, meet stakeholders (particularly government partners and civil society) and conduct focus group discussions as well as make direct observations of the project delivery and impact. Photographs were also taken to document on-site observation visits.

Focus group discussions were held in Amman and Erbil. The methodology for these group discus-

sions was selected to solicit opinions of Iraqis who benefited from or were knowledgeable of the Iraq Programme. Questions were designed to allow free discussion among group members. Translations between English and Arabic had to be made during the discussions.

The discussion in Amman comprised six male and five female Iraqi graduates who were interns at the UN-Habitat Amman office. All of them had insights into the agency's roles and operations. As they were in regular contact with families in Iraq, they could contextualize project activities.

In Erbil, the focus group discussion involved four men and five women associated with Erbil project. The participants included four women architects in the Housing Facilitation Unit, a male and a female community leader from the Local Facilitation Unit, a professor who was familiar with academia and the private sector, and two assistant project officers. Participants were from the three governorates of the Kurdistan Regional Government: Erbil, Duhuk and Suleymaniah. They discussed experiences of everyday work in Kuraini-Ankawa and Saidawa. The discussion was conducted with reference to written questions, similar to a semi-structured interview, based on the evaluation criteria of relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, impact and sustainability.

Case studies

Out of the 22 Iraq Trust Fund projects implemented by UN-Habitat since 2004, 14 were ongoing by May 2012 (some were technically open and close to completion). UN-Habitat or collaborating agencies generally do not have access to most of the closed projects owing primarily to security issues. However, the evaluation team accessed all project documents and reports and relied on prior internal, external or joint evaluations of relevant projects or aspects of the Programme.

The evaluation selected two projects as case studies which were representative of various aspects of the UN-Habitat Programme, reflecting different foci, partnerships, methods and outcomes. The Erbil project belongs to the Housing and Land Governance pillar, while the Local Area Development Plans project is part of the Urban Planning and Economy pillar. The Erbil case study involved a field visit while the results and impacts of projects under the Local Area Development Plans were gauged from document reviews, prior independent joint evaluation (UNDP 2010a) and interviews with staff members and some stakeholders, to the extent possible. The

case studies consider the overall project in the joint programmes context and specific UN-Habitat outputs as a way to examine overall Iraq programme approaches. The assessment of the relevance, validity of design, development results and management efficiency of the programme is partly based on the selected case studies.

2.3 DATA ANALYSIS

The stakeholder group consisted of UN-Habitat staff, United Nations officials, the central and the Kurdish Regional governments, civil society, professionals and other stakeholders who are familiar with the Programme. Their responses were analyzed by the evaluators. The structure for recording data was based on the 13 evaluation questions. Emerging themes were identified through collation of information from documents, the focus groups and the interviews. These themes were tested across individuals and groups, and variance in responses examined to understand stakeholder or individual positions. Where gaps or inconsistencies in information were identified, the team developed either further sources of corroboration or a return to original sources for further discussion.

Triangulation of data from different sources was used throughout to validate information. Data gathered from the preparatory phase at the headquarters were tested in Amman, and then information from Amman was compared with findings during the field visit to Erbil and consolidated during a follow up and debriefing visit to headquarters. The evaluators were able to ascertain accuracy of their information with the chief technical adviser of the Iraq office; the monitoring and evaluation, the reports and donor relations officer in Amman; or the programme management officer. The team monitored key factors influencing the performance of projects and which were likely to explain the degree to which aspects of the evaluation criteria were met, whether projects had or had not met their objectives. The data extracted from various sources were processed by filtration and ordering, and by triangulation and verification with other data sources to arrive at the findings, conclusions and recommendations.

2.4 LIMITATIONS

Access to Iraq was, as expected, restricted by security, logistical and time constraints. Initially, two field visits to Iraq (Baghdad and Erbil) had been

planned but only Erbil materialized owing to logistical difficulties. The information from Baghdad was collected by other means. The evaluation engaged extensively with United Nations staff and to a lesser extent with Government officials. Access to other stakeholders, particularly beneficiaries and civil society, was limited. However, the restrictions were not sufficiently significant to impact the outcome of the evaluation materially.

The scope of the evaluation was broad, covering 22 projects with a portfolio of about USD 89.8 million over eight years. The evaluation of the UN-Habitat urban programme in Iraq focused on the execution of the substantive focus areas detailed in the Habitat Country Programme document and the United Nations Country Team documents as it related to Iraqi national priorities. In view of the available time, resources and access, the evaluation undertook two in-depth case studies as samples of individual projects feeding into exploration of broader programmatic aspects. Given the limitations of the evaluation it could not make a detailed review of the 22 projects but it was able to draw general conclusions.

The country evaluation was a complex and time-consuming process, given the post-conflict context and political dynamics. The absence of a national evaluator in the team was a limitation, though the UN-Habitat Headquarters and the offices in Amman and Baghdad provided effective backstop and access to relevant material, and facilitated access to key partners. Careful attention was paid to outcomes of meetings, document reviews and the site visits, through triangulation and verification of results.

2.5 MANAGEMENT OF THE EVALUATION

The evaluation was carried out by a team of two independent experts: Mohammed Siraj Sait, the team leader and a Middle East development specialist and human rights lawyer at the University of London, United Kingdom; and Johnson Nkuuhe, a former parliamentarian, development expert and experienced evaluator in Kampala, Uganda. The evaluation was conducted in consultation with and support of relevant UN-Habitat staff, including the Iraq Country Coordinator based at the Regional Office for Africa and Arab States.

The UN-Habitat Evaluation Unit managed the evaluation process, which it supported from the development of the terms of reference to the review and delivery of the report.

The head office of the UN-Habitat Iraq Programme in Amman facilitated logistics, including field visits and liaison between the evaluation team, United Nations partner agencies and Government officials in Baghdad as well as those of the Kurdish Regional Government in Erbil. The United Nations Evaluation Group Norms and Standards for evaluation guided the assessment.

2.6 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The evaluation team thanks the Evaluation Unit and the Regional Office for Africa and Arab States at the UN-Habitat Headquarters for supporting the team throughout the evaluation process. UN-Habitat Headquarters staff from various branches—and particularly the Regional Office for Africa and Arab States through its Director (now Director of the Project Office) and the senior settlements officer in charge of the Iraq Programme—guided the team through its inputs and materials. UN-Habitat Iraq Country Office in Amman efficiently coordinated the evaluation team's visits to Jordan and Iraq, as did the UN-Habitat national regional coordinators and teams in Baghdad and Erbil, and the focal point in Hilla. In particular, the head of mission and chief technical adviser, the thematic pillar head of the land and housing team and the programme manage-

ment officer in charge of operations strengthened this evaluation. United Nations agencies in Amman and Baghdad— particularly the International Labour Organization, the United Nations Development Programme, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the United Nations Children's Fund, the United Nations Office for Project Services, UN Women and donors, including a representative of the Embassy of the United States—held discussions with the evaluation team. Exceptionally, the United Nations Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General, the head of Economic Recovery and Poverty Reduction of the United Nations Development Programme in Iraq and the officer at the Resident Coordinator's office in Baghdad also held discussions with the team. The evaluation could not have taken place but for the written inputs from senior officials in the Iraqi Government, including those of the ministries of Construction and Housing; of Planning; of Tourism; of Municipalities and Public Works; of Foreign Affairs; and the Kurdish Regional Government, among them its deputy governor. Appreciation is also extended to focus group participants, academics, consultants and experts who contributed to this report. The evaluators are appreciative of their own respective staff members for the coordination between Amman, Baghdad, Kampala, London and Nairobi.

3. KEY FINDINGS OF THE EVALUATION

3.1 DESIGN AND JOINT PROGRAMMING OF PROJECTS

UN-Habitat Iraq Programme development

The development of UN-Habitat's Iraq Programme was well planned, documented and systematic. Even though it drew from the experience of the Oil-for-Food Programme phase, the post-2004 Programme was a fresh start, based on meetings and workshops with the established High-level Advisory Board at the time that consisted of Iraqis from the Government and the private sector. The design of the projects was undertaken with reference to the agency's comparative advantage and mandate as well as the United Nations process. Due to its strong record during the Oil-for-Food Programme, UN-Habitat was well placed to set out the strategic vision in the relevant areas of housing, shelter and urban development in the 2003 Joint Needs Assessment carried out by the World Bank and the United Nations.

The key document *Rebuilding Iraq: Iraq Reconstruction Plan for Shelter and Urban Development (2003)* launched the agency's new programme from 2004. The document also served, in effect, as its first *Habitat Country Programme Document for 2004-2008*. It was followed by the *2009-2011* and the *2012-2014* documents. The 2003 UN-Habitat Iraq Plan laid out the vision and priority areas of intervention in Iraq. UN-Habitat developed it in 2003 based on its past experience, rapid assessment and consultations with Iraqi officials. The plan identified four key areas of focus: housing policy; urban planning and management; local governance; and revitalization of central Government institutions for housing and urban development. These have continued to be the main areas of UN-Habitat operations despite some shifts in emphasis and adaption to the evolving national and United Nations priorities.

The second Iraq *Habitat Country Programme Document (2009-2011)* was built on the initial four areas though incorporation of national development goals and priorities through a framework for securing greater alignment of UN-Habitat normative and operational activities at the country level through the Medium-Term Strategic and Institutional Plan.

The areas of focus dealt with were (1) advocacy, monitoring and partnerships; (2) participatory urban planning, management and governance; (3) pro-poor land and housing; and (4) environmentally-sound basic urban infrastructure and services. In the 2012-14 document these areas are retained, though land management and administration as well as pro-poor housing are highlighted as distinct areas, for emphasis. These documents indicate a general continuity of the main areas of focus with a shift away from large construction projects to enhanced technical support and capacity development.

Juxtaposing UN-Habitat's core mandate and competencies and its Iraq experience lead to the conclusion that the Iraq Programme's focus best captures its comparative advantages in relation to the country's sustainable urbanization and developmental challenges. Urbanization will continue to be a dominant issue which characterizes Iraq, as many cities have experienced huge movements of people within and between them since 2003. For example, more than one-tenth of Baghdad's 7 million people were displaced. Babil, Basrah, Erbil, Karbala, Kirkuk, Mosul, Najaf, and Sulymaneah are among the fastest-growing cities in Iraq. The thrust of the Habitat Agenda—which commits governments to the twin goals of "adequate shelter for all" and "sustainable human settlements development"—are particularly relevant for Iraq as it emerges from chaos of conflict, decades of neglect and mismanagement of resources.

The Programme is currently organized under the three thematic pillars:

- Housing and Land Governance
- Urban Planning and Economy
- Urban Infrastructure and Basic Services

All current projects are listed under one of these pillars (Table 3.1). They also fall under categories such as education, economic reform and diversification—relating to the clusters when correlated to the United Nations Country Team's original list of themes. These have now either been completed or absorbed within the broader pillar of Urban Planning and

Economy. Clearly, there are inevitable overlaps with several projects being multidimensional.

TABLE 3.1: Ongoing UN-Habitat projects by thematic pillar, as of April 2012

HOUSING AND LAND GOVERNANCE	URBAN PLANNING AND ECONOMY	URBAN INFRA-STRUCTURE & BASIC SERVICES
N033 – Improving Access to Housing for IDP’s and Returnees	N032 – Local Government Association and Urban Development Capacity-building	N033 - Improving Access to Housing for IDPs and Returnees
N035 – Improving Housing Delivery in Erbil/Kurani Ainkawa Upgrading Project	N044 – Support for Decentralization and Local Governance	N034 – Enhancing the Learning Environment
N036 – Private Sector Development Programme for Iraq	N045 – Iraq Public Sector Modernization Programme	N041 – Water and Sanitation Master Planning and Capacity Building
N050 – Strengthening the Capacity of the Housing Sector	N048 – Local Area Development Planning-Bridging	N045 – Iraq Public Sector Modernization Programme
N053 – Initiative Durable Shelter Solutions for IDPs	N052 – Local Area Development Planning-Bridging (SIDA)	

development, as part of the 2003 Joint Needs Assessment. Its role was reiterated and elaborated in the Joint United Nations Iraq Assistance Strategy 2005-2007 and United Nations Iraq Assistance Strategy 2008-2010, reflecting Iraqi priorities in its National Development Strategy, then its National Development Plan. While housing, water and sanitation are among the agency’s niche areas, land has been added as an area of the agency’s competence. Yet, the 2008-2010 Assistance Strategy recognized a far wider role for UN-Habitat in the education sector (providing quality facilities, hygiene for universal access); protection (rights of vulnerable groups including internally displaced persons); and in governance (improved policymaking, planning and delivery capacity of decentralized governance stakeholders). UN-Habitat’s expertise is recognized in the current Development Assistance Framework document, where UN-Habitat’s potential contribution is listed under four of five programmatic priority areas. This underscores UN-Habitat’s relevance as its own entity and its contribution to joint programmes.

UN-Habitat’s Iraq Programme is also an outcome of complex negotiations through the United Nations Development Group process and available Iraq Trust Fund money. Iraqi priorities determine the Programme’s strategic vision. The evaluation team found United Nations partners in Iraq, Government counterparts and other stakeholders in agreement that UN-Habitat’s operations in the country were derived from its expertise and were necessary. The Government (and including the ministries of Planning; of Construction and Housing; of Municipalities; of Tourism) and the Kurdish Regional administration described UN-Habitat as an “irreplaceable partner” in several programmes. The deputy governor of Erbil said in some sectors such as water,

Joint programmes

The core mandate of UN-Habitat was recognized through a specific document on shelter and urban

FIGURE 3.1: Number of United Nations partners implementing projects with UN-Habitat in Iraq

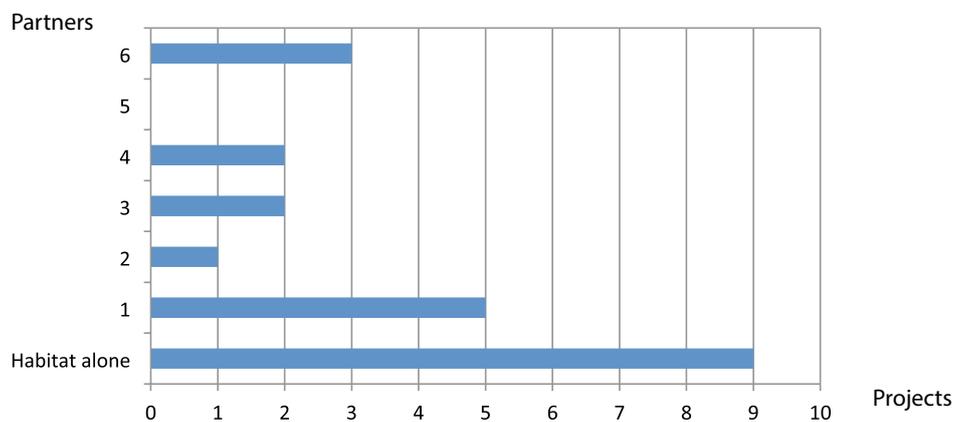
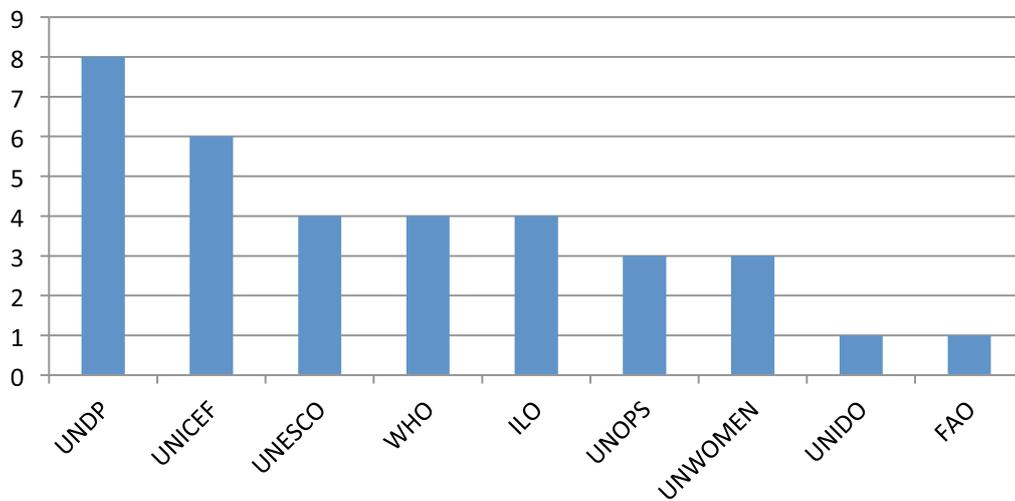


FIGURE 3.2: UN-Habitat in partnership with other United Nations agencies



sanitation and solid waste management there were overlaps in the work performed by other United Nations agencies. However, in fields such as urban planning, land and housing UN-Habitat had core competency. One of the donors, that is the Embassy of the United States of America, told the evaluation team that it funds UN-Habitat's project for internally displaced persons because of the agency's mandate and expertise.

Figure 3.1 shows that of the 22 projects in the Iraq Programme, UN-Habitat implemented nine on its own. It had one partner in five projects and up to six partners in others. UN-Habitat's niche is well recognized within the Country Team as seen in its partnerships in Iraq (see Figure 3.2). Of the 22 projects UN-Habitat has implemented in Iraq, 12 have been joint programmes.⁵ It has collaborated mostly with the United Nations Development Programme (eight projects) and the United Nations Children's Fund (six projects), as well as with the Food and Agricultural Organization; the International Labour Organization; the International Organization for Migration; as well as the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. Other partners are the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, UN Women and the World Health Organization. Most of these agencies are present in Iraq. Discussions with United Nations partners in Amman, Baghdad and Erbil reflect that

⁵ In this context, project refers to activities managed by a single agency, while programme refers to activities managed by two or more agencies.

UN-Habitat has strong institutional relationship and common goals with these aforementioned agencies. However, the positive tone set during the period of abundant resource and prolific activities is now under strain as competition increases for scarce funds. Yet, the Deputy Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Iraq commended UN-Habitat for "always playing fair and square" in bidding for funding and in all aspects of inter-agency collaboration.

3.2 SOURCES AND UTILIZATION OF FUNDS

UN-Habitat's main funders under the Multi-Donor Trust Fund-Iraq Trust Fund have been the European Commission (education, housing and shelter, economic reform and diversification, and water and sanitation); Japan (education, housing and shelter) and Spain (housing and shelter). The largest donor has been the European Commission which, between 2004 and 2006, contributed substantially to the Development Group but then diminished funding to the Group's Iraq Trust Fund and increased the amount allotted bilaterally (Scanteam 2009). More recently, the United States has provided bilateral funding for a project on internally displaced persons. The Development Group's Iraq Trust Fund agreement with donors allows for funds to be earmarked either by thematic cluster (now Priority Working Group) or agency. Donors to International Reconstruction Fund Facility for Iraq have

in fact shown a strong tendency to earmark, even though the cluster coordinators at the time disapproved. The possible reasons for earmarking have been either disillusionment with the Development Group's Iraq Trust Fund mechanism or because of donors' interest in pursuing their visible priorities (UNDG 2011a). Therefore, Japan has been driving the education and schools agenda and Spain has pursued housing policy, and more. The Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration of the United States Department of State has focused on durable solutions for displaced persons and vulnerable categories. As such, earmarked funds also need to fall within priority development areas and get Iraqi approval. Talks do take place among donors to avoid duplication (Scanteam 2007).

The United Kingdom's Department for International Development (Basra Governance Support Project), Sweden (private sector development) and Korea (Erbil housing delivery) have also contributed to Iraq projects in which UN-Habitat has participated, albeit indirectly. Other funds have come from the Government of Iraq and the Kurdish Regional Government. The International Finance Corporation and, though not a donor, the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia have made in-kind contributions to meetings and consultations. However, funding for the Iraq programmes, including UN-Habitat's, is decreasing and this evaluation comes when UN-Habitat Iraq is reviewing its programmatic and resource strategies.

The United Nations Office of Internal Oversight Services' financial audit in 2012 of the UN-Habitat Iraq Programme found the accounting to be satisfactory (Office of Internal Oversight Services 2012). In addition, the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq supervised the use of money from the Multi-Donor Trust Fund by UN-Habitat and other United Nations agencies. It found UN-Habitat's use of these resources to be good, and that by the other agencies average. The evaluation team found evidence of regular and satisfactory monitoring as well as reporting on UN-Habitat projects in internal progress reports as well as visits to the offices of the Multi-Donor Trust Fund and the Assistance Mission for Iraq. The Amman office has a staff member in charge of monitoring and evaluation as well as of donor relations. Officials of the Assistance Mission for Iraq recorded those UN-Habitat utilized funds in a transparent manner.

3.3 OVERALL ACHIEVEMENTS, 2004-2012

The evaluation examined the developmental results of the UN-Habitat Iraq Programme from 2004 to the present, through its own priorities set out in its three-country programme documents. The appraisal included a range of documentation and interviews with stakeholders, including the central Government, the Kurdish Regional Government and staff from other agencies. The inputs from civil society and beneficiaries were limited, as explained earlier in the methodology section. In addition to individual projects and joint programmes, strategic outputs such as the Berlin Declaration on the Development of Policy and Land Management or the Iraq National Housing Policy were considered to evaluate the extent to which UN-Habitat had made a broader contribution to sustainable urbanization between 2004 and 2012.

The evaluation found the contribution of the UN-Habitat programme was visible and well-acknowledged in sectors such as housing and land, urban planning and governance, water, sanitation and infrastructure. Since the Joint Needs Assessment in 2003, UN-Habitat's involvement in these sectors was seen in key documents of the Common Country Assessment into the Development Assistance Framework and the National Development Plan 2011-2014. This reflects the important role UN-Habitat has played in consultations and lobbying in contributing to the sustainable urbanization agenda with stakeholders including Ministry of Construction and Housing and Ministry of Municipality and Public Works. Establishment of a high-powered and active National Habitat Committee, with serving ministers to guide the agency's work programme, is itself a good practice.

3.3.1 Pro-poor housing

Iraq's population rose from 10 million to 30 million between 1970 and 2007, 71 per cent of whom now live in urban areas. Shortage in housing supply coupled the lack of housing finance, the high cost of building materials, insufficient private sector involvement in delivery, and poor regulatory capacities constrain efficient housing delivery. Decades of conflict and mismanagement have led to dilapidated housing in the majority. Unless urgent measures are taken, a breakdown in urban services looms. In addition, widespread displacement has added other complexities which include the violation of housing, land and property rights and the lack of protection of the urban poor from forced eviction. Some 60 per

cent of internally displaced families rent accommodation, which is generally dilapidated and lacking basic services including amenities.

National Housing Policy

In a number of ways, UN-Habitat has been supporting the central and Kurdish Regional governments tackle the country's housing crisis. The agency's *State of the Iraq Cities Report 2006/2007: Cities in Transition* (2007) is still standard reference. In addition, the National Housing Policy for Iraq and three subnational pro-poor housing strategies are major UN-Habitat achievements. UN-Habitat has worked closely with the Ministry of Construction and Housing to develop the National Housing Policy. Support for the Policy was the focus of a memorandum of understanding signed on 31 May 2010 by the minister and the Executive Director of UN-Habitat. It was launched in November 2010 and endorsed by the Government's Council of Ministers, which is carrying out an implementation plan funded through the Iraqi federal budget. Exceptionally, the UN-Habitat Governing Council on 14 April 2011 recognized the Government's commitment to tackle urban challenges, particularly by providing the poor with housing (Box 3.1).

BOX 3.1: UN-Habitat Governing Council Resolution on pro-poor housing

The UN-Habitat Governing Council on 14 April 2011 recognized the Government of Iraq's commitment to face the formidable urban challenges, particularly pro-poor housing. It is a culmination of several key milestones shared by the Government and UN-Habitat, including the memorandum of understanding signed on 31 May 2010 between Construction and Housing Minister Mohammed Sahib al-Darraj and the Executive Director of United Nations Human Settlements Programme, Dr Joan Clos. On 4 October 2010, the Government endorsed the UN-Habitat supported *National Housing Policy* (2010). As a result, all related sector ministries are supporting the implementation of the policy, including the component on pro-poor housing that is also further emphasized by the National Development Plan for 2010–2014.

The Governing Council Resolution recognized that the Government was "moving robustly towards achieving adequate and appropriate housing for all Iraqis, especially the poor, slum-dwellers residents and those lacking shelter". It noted that the Government had endorsed pro-poor housing initiatives by allocating a portion of the federal national budget each year from 2012. Further, it called upon UN-Habitat and the international community to support housing and pro-poor housing initiatives in Iraq in all stages of planning and implementation, and to secure capacity-building in the fields of project management as well as provision of infrastructure.

The policy responds to Iraq's significant housing needs, and promotes the right to housing and adequate shelter for all Iraqis through a greater role of the private sector. The Iraq Housing Policy is significant in its multidimensional, integrated and innovative treatment of a number of housing issues. These issues include land management, housing development, housing finance, infrastructure for housing, housing management and maintenance, housing construction materials and informal housing. The last section deals with different aspects of implementing the housing policy, including strategy, institutional reform and regulatory development. Beyond the UN-Habitat logo on the key Government policy document, the agency has succeeded in partnering on housing sector reform. However, the concern will be the extent to which resources and institutional basis have been put in place for implementation.

On slum upgrading, a significant survey, consultations and strategy development took place in 2005. A team of UN-Habitat staff, consultants and two focal point coordinators from the ministries of Ministry of Municipalities and Public Works and the Ministry of Construction and Housing carried out three sets of investigations identifying Iraq's urban slums, slum inhabitants' perceptions of problems and secondary information on slums. However, there is no evidence of a follow up, though the information and ideas have been used in advocacy, programming and strategy development.

Erbil Housing Strategy

The catalytic role that UN-Habitat plays in improving access to and security of tenure is seen from its contribution to pro-poor housing policies being implemented in Erbil. The Kurdish Regional Government Housing Strategy, which UN-Habitat supports, has been strengthened by a task force under the Ministry of Planning to review the Erbil strategy report and align the plan with Iraq's National Housing Policy. The three expected outcomes of the Erbil housing project are improving capacity, environmentally sustainable slum upgrading and decentralized implementation. UN-Habitat is supporting the upgrade and rehabilitation of dilapidated houses, providing technical aid through an established housing facilitation unit in the neighbourhood and providing loans for home upgrades. New approaches through effective participation of the private sector and local communities, and better information, transparency in compensation and monitoring to prevent encroachment practices appear to be improving security of tenure. Through the project, 400 fami-

lies illegally occupying land in Erbil were recently resettled voluntarily.

Baghdad Informal Settlements Initiative

Another example of UN-Habitat's innovative engagement in the pro-poor housing area is the *Baghdad Informal Settlements Initiative*. It is part of the Durable Shelter Solutions for internally displaced persons funded by the United States' Bureau of Population, Refugees and Migration. UN-Habitat is carrying out three pilot projects in settlement upgrading and relocation in Baghdad, in order to provide long-term shelter solutions for internally displaced persons and other vulnerable people living within them. The project is geared towards finding long-term solutions through the Government. Notable features of this UN-Habitat led project are the multidimensional design and objectives, and the model of engaging many stakeholders. In these projects, UN-Habitat works alongside the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the International Office for Migration and the Norwegian Refugee Council. UN-Habitat also provides technical aid to the ministries of Construction and Housing; of Displace and Migration; of Municipalities and of Public Works. The agency also assists the Baghdad Provincial Council, Amanat Baghdad [Baghdad's public works department] and related institutions. The resulting package will support and establish procedures for assisting internally displaced persons and others in informal settlements in Baghdad, in line with *National Housing Policy*. The 12-month project began in January 2012.

UN-Habitat has collected available information on 125 settlements in Baghdad and on two potential resettlement sites, set up coordination mechanisms and facilitated a workshop in Amman in order to reach consensus of relevant institutions on the way ahead (see Box 3.2). At least two detailed feasibility studies materialized for relocation projects, settlement upgrading and land readjustment, including master plans, with associated local level liaison to ensure community support. Relevant ministries and institutions are discussing a budget for implementation in 2013. Importantly, modalities have been established with the National Housing Fund to provide loans to qualifying low-income and vulnerable families.

Housing Finance

A pioneering area of work for the Iraq UN-Habitat team lies in facilitating increased sustainable financ-

BOX 3.2: Consultations on IDP camps and informal settlements in Baghdad

How does UN-Habitat work with partners, identify common objectives, debate strategic options, provide technical inputs and develop implementation plans? An example is a high-level workshop in Amman, Jordan, held 17-19 January 2011 on durable shelter solutions for internally displaced persons. UN-Habitat - along with the Government of Iraq, donors including the United States Department of State's Bureau of Population Refugees and Migration—organized the consultations to build consensus on viable approaches for the internally displaced and to kick-start the Baghdad Settlements initiative or the project on Durable Shelter Solutions for Internally Displaced Persons in Baghdad. The workshop drew over 60 participants from different departments of the governments of Iraq and Jordan, international organizations (the Norwegian Refugee Council, the International Organization for Migration, and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees), multi- and bilateral financial institutions (the World Bank, Agence Française de Développement), Iraqi and international experts, non-governmental organizations in Iraq and the region.

The presentations were of high quality and exchanges frank. Ministers of construction and housing, and of displacement and migration talked about the need for better coordination between ministries, gaps in data and tools, risks, challenges and strategies. The representative from the Bureau of Population, Refugees and Migration emphasized the need to move away from relief projects and focus on long-term projects. The Norwegian Refugee Council outlined the characteristics of Baghdad's informal settlements, as did the Baghdad Provincial Council/Baghdad Mayorality. International experts in post-conflict and urban planning, Sultan Barakat and Babar Mumtaz, presented options for dealing with informal settlements and finding durable solutions for internally displaced persons. The third expert, Yu-Hung Hong, from Massachusetts Institute of Technology, held a brainstorming session on land readjustment and land value capture. Contributions from Ministry of Municipalities and Public Works, and Agence Française de Développement and the National Housing Fund looked at budgeting and financing issues.

The workshop participants agreed on concrete actions, including: (i) a pilot project on land sharing; (ii) a pilot project on resettlement; and (iii) establishment of a technical committee to develop a plan to tackle the problem of informal settlements and the internally displaced.

Consensus was reached regarding: (i) the need to shift activity from humanitarian relief response to sustainable development, focusing on whole settlements instead of selected households within; and that (ii) different actors need to communicate and work together. Evidence of partnerships and national ownership is demonstrated as consensus and plans emerged that UN-Habitat should take the lead on working toward durable shelter solutions for the internally displaced.

ing for affordable land development, social housing and infrastructure. The *Berlin Declaration on Development of Policy and Land Management* seeks to review and develop the legal and accounting framework for land taxation, valuation and land-related public finance. UN-Habitat worked to ensure that a housing finance subsection would be included in the Iraq National Housing Policy 2010. The policy now includes the development of commercial housing finance markets. UN-Habitat seized the opportunity provided in a recent law that allows the Housing Fund to increase its capital and to finance commercial banks to implement housing loans, as well as provide interest-free housing loans direct to households. UN-Habitat sees a role in supporting the National Housing Fund initiate commercial housing finance in line with the Housing Fund Law, through capitalizing commercial banks. Through the Iraqi Bank Training Institute, the Housing Fund can provide relatively small initial capitalization to interested commercial banks. The Housing Fund can also facilitate monitoring and certification of performance in relation to the execution of commercial mortgages to households, so that banks can qualify to approach the Central Bank for large-scale capitalization.

3.3.2 Pro-poor land management

In contrast to UN-Habitat's role in supporting housing policy, the agency had to generate awareness regarding the importance of land rights underpinning economic growth and overall development. Iraq's complex land management framework is derived from an amalgam of Ottoman, Islamic and colonial constructions as well as contemporary fixes such as the national reallocation plans during the Baathist Government. The unresolved institutional and legislative framework is unable to respond to the increasing pressure to make land available for socioeconomic development, housing, social infrastructure and food security. Conventional approaches are unable to respond to significant growth of informal and "illegal" land uses and settlements or resolve land disputes. *The State of the Arab Cities Report 2012: Challenges of Urban Transition* notes that the land registration and ownership are complex issues in Iraq due to the exodus of many nationals after 2003. Key land management issues in Iraq are the informal or illegal occupation of evacuated homes and land by squatters, conflicts and mutual claims placed by returnees and squatters, and the lack of any specific legal framework for resolving land and property disputes.

Berlin Declaration

UN-Habitat has done pioneering work on a land policy for Iraq, predicated on land for public benefit and private sector growth. Though it has been unable to make the policy breakthrough comparable to the Iraq National Housing Policy, its achievements represent a paradigm shift in thinking and are no less significant. A stakeholders' meeting on land management was held in Beirut, Lebanon, in May 2010. UN-Habitat and the World Bank organized the event, under the auspices of the Government of Iraq. UN-Habitat's Global Land Tool Network backstopped the meeting. This was followed by a study visit to Berlin in March 2011 by high-level Government delegation headed by the chair of the Prime Ministry Advisory Commission. The resulting *Berlin Declaration on the Development of Policy and Land Management* defines a series of tasks in the area of land management. These tasks include setting up and developing a "policy, institutional and regulatory framework for management and disposal of State land (urban and rural) for investment, housing and public uses. It promotes the process of privatization of surplus State land in line with market principles", and "utilizing the principles of public-private partnerships in managing and administering land". The Berlin Declaration is one of the four documents underpinning the current *UN-Habitat Country Programme Document*.

Public land management

Under the Private Sector Development Programme, UN-Habitat is contributing to development of a draft law on Public Land Management, which is to regulate the acquisition, management and disposal of State land. This is intended to provide clear direction on how Government will identify surplus State land, and procedures for making it available for other uses, including housing. It identifies technical and governance framework for the reclassification of land, establishing inventories of public land, streamlining land registration procedures and procedures to deal with illegally occupied State land. UN-Habitat is seeking endorsement of such a law and related governance structure as a medium-term intervention. Among ongoing UN-Habitat initiatives are feasibility studies on land readjustment in Baghdad. These studies are to be conducted within the project funded by the Bureau of Population, Refugees and Migration. Other short-term proposals are pilot projects in relation to land wholesaling.

Continuum of land approach

Government officials, the World Bank and United Nations partners regard UN-Habitat's pro-poor land management initiatives as conceptually sound and well directed. Evidence of confidence in the agency is by virtue of its ties with, for example, the World Bank in the Land Governance Assessment Framework. There is also successful collaboration between UN-Habitat's Iraq Programme and the Land Tenure and Property Administration Section in the Shelter Branch at headquarters in Nairobi, particularly the Global Land Tool Network. For example, the agency's projects recognize a "continuum of rights" approach rather than just title and explore a range of tenure options for the urban poor. It has created improved knowledge on tenure practices in urban areas with the Government, civil society and international actors. By bringing in international land experts, the agency has injected new proposals into the discourse over sustainable pro-poor land approaches. The UN-Habitat land and housing team is ambitious and would like to expand its post-crisis work, develop recommendations of the study into land policies and scale up from pilots to programme, all of which will require political will and resources.

3.3.3 Urban planning and economy

UN-Habitat has been at the forefront in voicing that sustainable development needs good governance and proper management of cities and towns. UN-Habitat has supported decentralization efforts in Iraq through advocacy. The agency has also provided technical support for developing policies and frameworks that further clarify and enable decentralization, including local government reform in Iraq. Inclusive urban planning, management and governance at the national and local levels are visible priorities. These priorities are relevant to urban planning, the economy thematic pillar and the land and housing governance area. A range of respondents, from the Deputy Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General to Government officials, ranked the importance of UN-Habitat's participatory urban governance approach even higher than delivery of urban services.

Decentralization

A notable emphasis is the shift under way in Iraq of administrative responsibility from central Government to municipal, regional and local administra-

tions. UN-Habitat joint projects such as "Support to Decentralization and Local Governance for Service Delivery" and the Local Government Association and Urban Development Capacity-building" have been introducing fresh ideas and partners. At a conference on decentralization in May 2011, UN-Habitat brought together the Iraq Local Government Association, key Government ministers, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, the United Nations Development Programme and the World Bank, as well as other experienced practitioners, to further decentralization as an effective tool for service delivery.

UN-Habitat has also sought the experience of central and local governments in Egypt and Jordan, as well as professional institutions to improve technical aid to the ministries of Municipalities and Public Works; and of Planning; to enhance the urban planning and local economic development skills of the planning staff in Iraq. The General Organization for Physical Planning in Cairo, Egypt, has since been designing and conducting the training of trainers, creating an e-learning website and planning exchange study tour from which Iraqi planners can benefit. Planners The UN-Habitat manual on Inclusive Cities and Decentralization was mentioned as an example of a successful tool. The evaluation team attended a meeting of the Hilla slum upgrading team which also visited Cairo as part of its learning, and noted that UN-Habitat had also facilitated exchanges with the Malaysian Town Planning Institute.

Urban governance

The institutional reform agenda underpins the United Nations' broader Iraq Public Sector Modernization Programme as well as other aspects. For example, as lead coordinator for the Local Area Development Planning Process (Annex V, Case Study II), UN-Habitat has involved a wide range of local stakeholders in the participatory local area plans. In promoting urban governance, the International Labour Organization, UN-Habitat, the United Nations Children's Fund, the United Nations Development Programme and partners have been working to resolve the ambiguities surrounding the division of responsibilities between ministries, municipalities and governorates. This is so particularly in the context of fuzziness around the implementation of the Law of Governorates not incorporated into Region No.21 (2008). While local governments have received allotments under the Regional Development Fund, their ability to programme and deliver projects to meet local demand is constrained. UN-Habitat and United Nations partners are trying

to resolve the confusion over the role and responsibilities for functions at different levels of government, which in turn impacts on the quality of local services and urban living conditions.

Urban planning

Despite the demand to update master plans for many of the key cities in Iraq, there is limited capacity. With only 14 trained planners currently working in Government, there is high reliance on external consultants. Beyond the numbers, UN-Habitat has worked with Iraq Local Government Association toward greater exposure to more inclusive, comprehensive and up-to-date urban planning approaches and tools in the country. It has created strategic links with planning institutions in the region and internationally. It has worked with the Government and the Local Government Association in a national dialogue on the legal and institutional framework for decentralization and training of elected local representatives in key competencies. UN-Habitat has supported the decentralization of planning functions through its engagement in a wider Country Team initiative to pilot participatory local area development planning in six governorates.

3.3.4 Urban infrastructure, basic services

In the past three decades, Iraq's urban infrastructure and many essential services have deteriorated significantly in terms of quality and delivery. Only about 80 per cent of Iraq's population has access to safe water regularly and nine per cent of urban populations outside Baghdad have sewage collection and treatment services.

"Improving the quality of life" is a core pillar of the country's National Development Strategy and United Nations priority. Infrastructure problems are another impediment to housing development. Acute infrastructure problems coupled with decrepit housing have created slum-like conditions in many of Iraq's cities. Yet, there are limited funds, capacities and strategies to restore basic levels of drinking water, nutrition, sanitation, electricity, transportation, education and health care.

Schools and infrastructure

Iraq has a shortfall in primary schools and public health centres but the existing ones also need rehabilitation. Since 2004, UN-Habitat has been contributing to Iraq's recovery by rehabilitating run-down and damaged community infrastructure; these include schools, water supply systems, sewerage networks, youth centres, public green parks and health facilities. The UN-Habitat documents demonstrate upgrading of 370 community facilities for over 50,000 persons through upgrading of community-based infrastructure; about 20,000 through slum upgrading and housing; and 25,000 persons through improved water and sanitation (HCPD 2012).

Institutional framework

UN-Habitat has played a strategic role in promoting an enabling policy and institutional framework for expanded access to environmentally sound urban infrastructure and services. UN-Habitat supported the Ministry of Construction and Housing and Ministry of Municipalities and Public Works in drafting the chapters of the National Development Plan on housing and construction; water and sanitation;



School children at a primary school in Missan rehabilitated by UN-Habitat as part of the Rehabilitation of community facilities and infrastructure project, 2009 © UN-Habitat

and essential services, including access to environmentally sound basic urban infrastructure services. UN-Habitat is an active member of several joint United Nations programmes supporting the central and the Kurdish regional governments in promoting private sector development by improving modalities to access land, local governance, decentralization and sector reforms, for example in the water and sanitation sector.

Water and sanitation

Through the Public Sector Modernization Programme UN-Habitat and the United Nations Children's Fund support the Government in modernizing and reforming its public sector with focus on water and sanitation. They worked on a functional review of the sector, innovative delivery models and a road map for the modernization of the sector. UN-Habitat has effectively participated in the preparation of the Water Resource Management White Paper (UNAMI and UNCT in Iraq 2010), and has worked closely with the Government through the Ministerial Advisory Committee. The United Nations Country Team and the United Nations Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General have used the White Paper as an advocacy tool to mobilize resources among the donor community and the Iraqi Government.

Among the results are the enhanced Government capacities to develop integrated water resource management for Iraq. UN-Habitat has supported the training of 20 technical staff from Ministry of Municipalities and Public Works and the Water Department in Erbil on best practices of operations and maintenance of water systems. Its training has reached a substantial percentage of managers and engineers from six Iraqi municipalities on best international practices and experience on solid waste management. The training, which took place during April 2011, was conducted in cooperation with the International Solid Waste Association, and continues. However, the sector is crowded and competitive with the Food and Agricultural Organization, the United Nations Development Programme and the United Nations Children's Fund. In addition, the evaluation team learned in Erbil that UN-Habitat would more technical and political clout—and help from its headquarters—to fulfill its potential.

3.4 CHALLENGES

United Nations Country Team documents recognize that the planned phase-out of the Iraq Trust Fund and the situational transition in the country warrants “a more strategic, coherent and cohesive

response to Iraq's development priorities and challenges”. This will have to be based on renewed partnership and engagement with the Government, the international community, civil society and the United Nations System as a whole.

Security

The greatest constraint for UN-Habitat, the Country Team and partners continues to be the security situation, though this has arguably improved recently. Previous evaluations of the United Nations Development Group in Iraq have highlighted the constraints within which United Nations offices operate in the country. The Programme environment placed restrictions on the movement of international personnel, and contribution of their full potential. Continued insecurity has left the Country Team and UN-Habitat to manage high and unanticipated forms of risk. It is remarkable that UN-Habitat and other agencies have continued, uninterrupted, to deliver significant results under extremely difficult security conditions (Scanteam 2007). Despite innovations to mitigate risks, such as cross-border management of projects from Amman and relying heavily on national staff, the uncertainty on the ground has affected UN-Habitat's impact, as well as monitoring and evaluation.

Infrastructure

Iraq has staggering infrastructure needs; for example the estimated need of 1.27 million housing units during the next 10 years. The UN-Habitat Iraq Programme built its reputation on large infrastructure projects—including housing—during the Oil-for-Food Programme, and has continued some work rehabilitating thousands of housing units, and constructing hundreds of schools and shelters for internally displaced persons in five governorates. However, the Iraq Programme's focus has been redirected from infrastructure development towards enhancing government capacities and partnerships to plan, budget and provide adequate housing for the disadvantaged urban poor, including the internally displaced and returnees.

Capacity Development

UN-Habitat has organized training around housing and land, urban planning and sustainable urbanization issues. Yet, the scale of demand for capacity development is staggering and would require innovative methods and approaches. More importantly, the extent to which the Programme has succeeded in changing attitudes and approaches is unclear. UN-Habitat has partnered with agencies to support

Iraq put in place a comprehensive capacity development strategy, develop civic education, participation and e-government strategies, and pilot improved business processes for increasing service delivery in selected municipalities. However, the capacity gaps of civil society need to be tackled.

Reform

UN-Habitat and the Country Team have engaged the Government to introduce legal changes to enable greater devolution of political power. One outcome of this effort was passage of the Provincial Powers Act in 2008, signaling the introduction of the decentralized government in Iraq. In this regard, supporting the capacity of the Iraq Local Government Association will remain critical. Similarly, despite improvements, there are technical and legal bottlenecks preventing commercial banks from investing in housing finance. UN-Habitat's mission remains to overcome these political, financial and capacity challenges.

Communication

UN-Habitat Iraq has produced some successful outreach documents and tools, for example the *State of the Iraq Cities Report 2006/2007: Cities in Transition* (2007), which is regularly cited. Other effective publications are the *Urban Baghdad: Impact of Conflict on Daily Life* (2010), done with the International Organization for Migration, and the report on the *International Conference on Decentralization, Local Governance and Service Delivery: Sharing Experience and Sustaining Projects in Urban Iraq*, held 8-9 May 2011 (with Iraq Local Government Association). However, limited resources and a modest communication strategy have not let UN-Habitat fulfill its advocacy potential or the dissemination of its tools. UN-Habitat has relied primarily on the United Nations Country Team's publicity mechanisms but would need to reach out further as it scales up.

Gender and youth strategies

The assumption is that the general efforts towards improvement in infrastructure, services and policies would help women and youth. UN-Habitat does target women and youth as participants and beneficiaries. Within Government, there is little critical appreciation of what UN-Habitat had achieved or the scale of what was further needed to be done for women. To contribute effectively to the Millennium Development Goals, UN-Habitat must overcome the bottlenecks which prevent women's equal access to resources and decision-making power. Equally, UN-Habitat must adopt more youth and age responsive approaches in its activities.

3.5 OPPORTUNITIES

Policy support

While the role of UN-Habitat and the United Nations Country Team is being reassessed in view of the new phase in Iraq's development and the different funding dynamics, UN-Habitat is well positioned to continue to support the central and the Kurdish Regional governments through pioneering policy or strategic reviews. Moreover, United Nations partners as well as officials of the two levels of government view UN-Habitat's technical and strategic contributions as a vital part of the agency's broader role beyond project delivery. The central Government's strong backing received so far must continue in support of the process that underpins the reform agenda and implementation of the United Nations Development Assistance Framework and Iraqi national priorities. Two ongoing UN-Habitat projects indicate the opportunities to contribute to that process.

Scaling up

UN-Habitat is well positioned to scale up or replicate its Erbil projects. As part of the housing improvement scheme, UN-Habitat is providing technical aid through an established Housing Facilitation Unit in the neighbourhood and facilitated loans for home upgrades. These Units were set up in Erbil and staff trained by UN-Habitat in order to fulfill their role as intermediaries between household and lending institutions. UN-Habitat continues to build the capacity of the Units in target settlements in Erbil, which will support linkages between households and microfinance institutions. UN-Habitat continues to support efforts to inform staff of the National Housing Fund about the Iraqi experience of lending to poor households that would not normally qualify for loans under standard bank procedures.

UN-Habitat aims to use the Bureau of Population, Refugees and Migration's project on the Baghdad Informal Settlements Initiative for internally displaced persons to support the National Housing Fund in developing modalities and financial products designed for poor and vulnerable families in upgraded settlements and in resettlement projects. UN-Habitat's entry point is that a pro-poor housing finance mechanism would require developing subsidy options so that the provision of social housing matches the circumstances of the beneficiaries, allowing all adequate affordable shelter, but also the capability to buy the housing unit, or enjoy part ownership.

4. ASSESSMENT OF THE UN-HABITAT URBAN PROGRAMME IN IRAQ

The Iraq Programme has been based on UN-Habitat's comparative advantage, harmonization within the United Nations Development Group framework and joint programmes, its relevance in the context of Iraqi priorities, national ownership and prospects for sustainability.

4.1 ASSESSMENT OF INSTITUTIONAL ARRANGEMENTS

Role of trust funds and bilateral donors

Most UN-Habitat projects in Iraq are funded by the Multi-Donor Trust Fund-Iraq Trust Fund and coordinated through the Iraq United Nations Development Group. The Group is an instrument for United Nations reform, created by the United Nations Secretary-General in 1997. The Group's task is to improve the effectiveness of United Nations development at the country level, as part of the world body's "Delivering as One" approach. The Group, chaired by the United Nations Development Programme, brings together the 17 operational United Nations agencies present in Iraq and Jordan, as well as four non-resident United Nations agencies. The priorities of the International Compact for Iraq and the Iraq National Development Plan guide the Iraq Trust Fund, which is firmly anchored in directives contained in Security Council Resolution 1770. This resolution reinforces the centrality of the International Compact with Iraq as a guiding principle for United Nations support to the Government.

The Development Group has crafted policies and procedures that make it easier for agencies to work together and analyze country issues, plan support strategies, implement programmes, monitor results and catalyze change. These initiatives are aimed at increasing the impact of the United Nations' efforts with countries trying to achieve the Millennium Development Goals, among which is poverty reduction. The Country Team framework follows five parameters of the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness: alignment, harmonization, national ownership, management of development results, and accountability for development and operational effectiveness.

The role of the donors in the International Reconstruction Fund Facility for Iraq is significant. At least 25 countries contributed to the Multi-Donor Trust Fund-Iraq Trust Fund and the mechanism allowed smaller donors a place in setting the agenda. It enables donors to be involved with broader policy issues without needing to negotiate, sign and monitor individual grants, or even be present in country. Donors were recognized as key stakeholders who were part of the project development and approval process. In practice, the donors remained marginally involved in the initial years when it mattered most but began to seek better accountability subsequently (Scanteam 2009). For example, donors at the Sixth Donor Committee Meeting held in Bari, Italy, in October 2007 emphasized the need for quick impacts and implementation with expectations of rapid disbursement and delivery, though the expected improvements in security failed to materialize (UNDG 2011a).

Documents such as the *United Nations Iraq Assistance Strategy 2008-2010* improved interface with donors and Iraqi ministries, and demonstrate the important role donors have in sectors such as education, housing and land, water and sanitation. Donors have also pushed for enhanced monitoring and evaluation of United Nations operations. In the case of UN-Habitat, the donors including the European Commission, the United States, Japan and Spain have provided more than funds. The evaluation team experienced this through discussions with the United States representative, who had supported the Durable Solutions Project for internally displaced persons (Baghdad Settlements Initiative).

Priority working groups, United Nations Country Team

A United Nations effort to provide a range of humanitarian, reconstruction and development initiatives in Iraq has triggered coordinated, coherent and harmonized response over the period of time. With experience, the effort has been made more efficient and transparent to reflect the new phases of partnerships and priorities of Iraqis and their Government. Iraq was the first country in which United Nations agencies adopted the "cluster approach",

a joint planning, funding, coordinated implementation and reporting arrangement for large-scale operations. However, the *Review of Trust Fund Mechanisms for Transition Financing* (UNDG 2006) found substantial variations in the performance of the clusters due to lack of institutionalized charters, codes of conduct, standardized operational processes and decision-making mechanisms. Donor coordination was expected to take place at the cluster level but this was not always the case, leading to duplication.

The initial cluster system from 2004 was replaced by the Sector Outcome Teams in 2008. The ten sectors were Education, Water and Sanitation, Health and Nutrition, Housing and Shelter, Food Security, Protection, Governance, Economic Reform and Diversification. In 2010, the current coordination mechanism through the United Nations Development Assistance Framework Priority Working Groups structure with United Nations and Government counterparts was established (Box 4.1). Sub-Priority Working Groups have also been set up.

The Working Groups collectively review, prioritize, implement and report on joint programme and project proposals. The Groups also vet the technical quality of all proposals to ensure their alignment with the programming principles of the United Nations and national priorities, and available resources. UN-Habitat is a member of several groups. It chairs the Housing Sub-priority Working Group and is co-chair for Water and Sanitation subgroup. This high level of coordination among the 17 participating United Nations agencies was hitherto unprecedented-

ed within the United Nations System. Now, this collaboration has been recognized widely as a good practice example in the world body's approach of "Delivering as One". The Government and United Nations agencies consider the process of Priority Working Groups as efficient, though the frequency of meetings have dropped in proportion to the funding available.

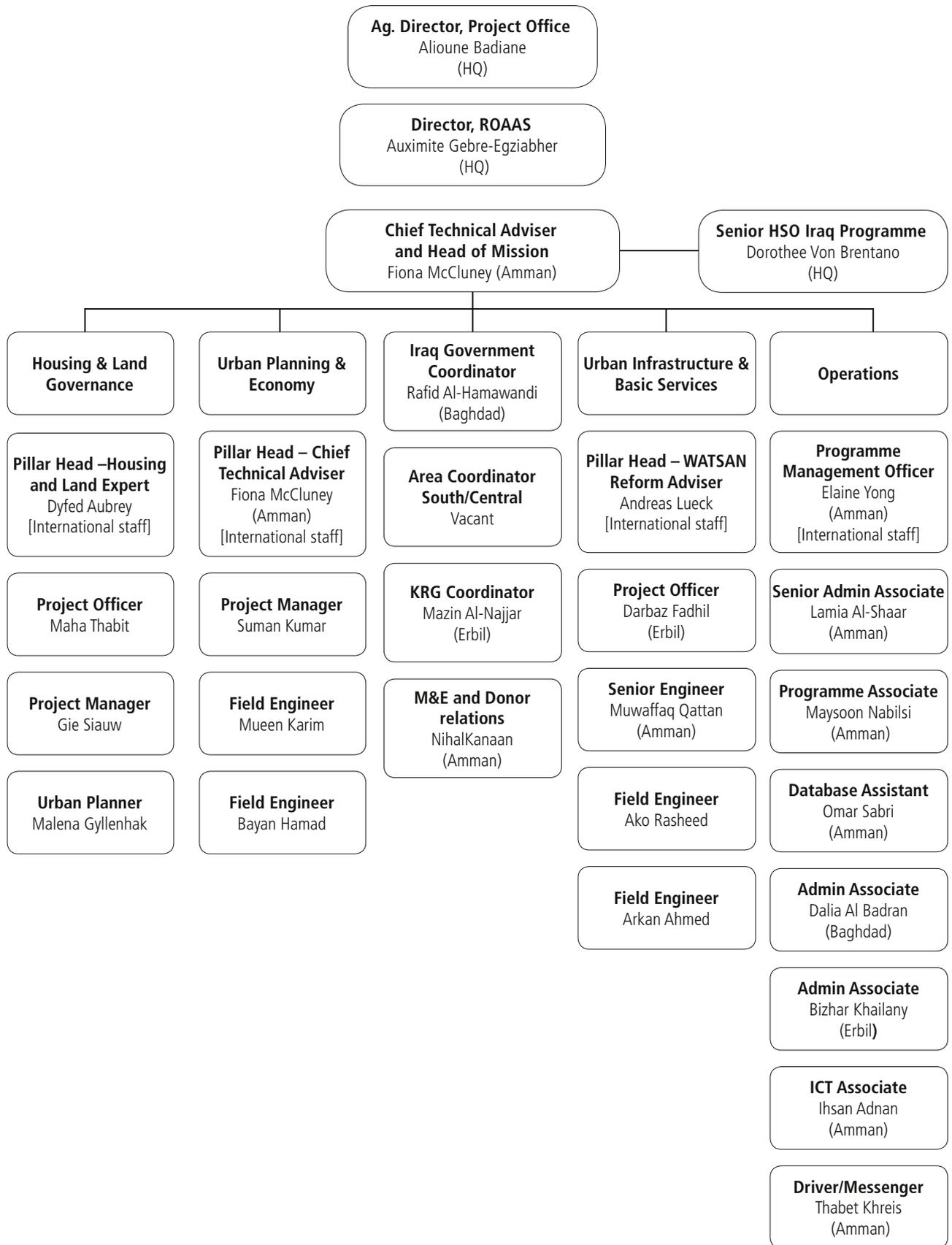
UN-Habitat Offices

The UN-Habitat Iraq Programme office is in Amman and managed by the chief technical adviser, who is the head of mission. As of April 2012, the Programme has 13 national and four international staff members. The liaison at the UN-Habitat Headquarters is the senior human settlements officer in the agency's Regional Office for Africa and Arab States. He is also the Iraq Programme coordinator. As the organization chart in Figure 4.1 indicates, the Government coordinator in Baghdad and that for the Kurdish Regional Government in Ebril assist the Iraq Programme. In addition, there are project officers, project managers, field engineers and specialists such as urban planners. There are technical and management support teams and consultants in Baghdad and Erbil, and project staff in Basrah, Hillah, Missan, Salahdin, Sulaimaniyah, Thikcar and Wassit. The contributions of the UN-Habitat Iraq Programme are especially impressive given the relatively small but highly motivated and competent team. Given its small size and uncertain funding context, UN-Habitat tags onto its project field teams which, besides project implementation, must undertake time-consuming inter-agency work, constant project pipeline development and fundraising.

BOX 4.1: UNDAF Priority Working Groups

UNDAF Priority Working Groups and Sub-priority Working Groups	UN CHAIR	GOVERNMENT CHAIR
Governance and Human Rights	UNDP, UNHCR	Prime Minister's Advisory Commission; Ministry of Human Rights
Inclusive Economic Growth	UNIDO, ILO	Ministry of Industry and Minerals; Ministry of Planning
Social Transfer	WFP	Ministry of Trade; Ministry of Finance
Environment	FAO, UNDP	Ministry of Environment; Ministry of Water Resources
Education	UNICEF, UNESCO	Ministry of Education; Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research
Health and Nutrition	WHO, UNFPA	Ministry of Health; Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research
Water and Sanitation	UN-Habitat, UNICEF	Ministry of Municipalities and Public Works; Ministry of Water Resources
Housing	UN-Habitat, UNHCR	Ministry of Municipalities and Public Works; Ministry of Construction and Housing
Food Security	WFP, FAO	Ministry of Agriculture; Ministry of Trade
Human Capital	UNWOMEN/ UNFPA, UNICEF	Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs; Ministry of Youth and Sports

FIGURE 4.1: Organization chart of UN-Habitat’s Iraq Programme



The three thematic pillars of the Technical Programme—Housing and Land Governance, Urban Planning and Economy, and Urban Infrastructure and Basic Services, are headed by international staff. A programme management officer is responsible for operations including administration, human resources, finance, logistics and information management. The Technical Programme also has an officer for monitoring, evaluation and donor relations who reports to the head of mission.

The four international staff body comprises the three heads of the pillars and the Programme Management Officer. The Head of Mission or Chief Technical Adviser has extensive technical, administrative and diplomatic responsibilities. The other is a senior full international staff member who manages key substantive pillars and works with the chief technical adviser to develop a strategic view and resource strategy for the Iraq Programme. Two long-serving coordinators based in Baghdad and Erbil, for the central and the Kurdish regional governments, respectively, assist the chief technical adviser. Baghdad also has an administrative associate as part of the two-member team. As demonstrated by the meeting of the National Habitat Committee held in February 2012, the Baghdad-based coordinator is a key team member and maintains regular contact with Government. This coordinator facilitates team leaders' visits to Iraq. Similarly, in Erbil a programme officer and administrative associate support the regional coordinator. The evaluation team found the unit to be cohesive and well integrated and generally dedicated to the agency's mandate and the programme's priorities, despite challenging constraints.

Presently, UN-Habitat Amman international staff travels regularly to Baghdad and other parts of Iraq, particularly the Kurdish Region, to monitor projects. Several United Nations agencies have since returned to Baghdad—though their movements are still restricted—and UN-Habitat faces pressure to return the operational office to Baghdad.

Involvement of beneficiaries, other stakeholders

UN-Habitat project documents and progress reports indicate that it works closely with beneficiaries and other stakeholders in the development and implementation of their projects. However, the evaluation could not verify the extent or quality of participation given the difficulties in accessing these groups. The agency in Iraq has a reasonable base of professionals, experts and academics guiding its activities. This is evident from the membership of its National Hab-

tat Committee, with two members from the Iraqi Institute of Regional and Urban Planning and projects such as slum upgrading in Erbil in collaboration with Salahuddin University.

UN-Habitat is a key partner in the implementation of the Private Sector Development Programme with the Iraqi Government and other partners. However, UN-Habitat has succeeded better in bringing international experts than in developing its local base. The agency engages with much of civil society largely through its local, regional and national government partners. The reason for this approach is that sustainability of projects is best served by securing official recognition of non-governmental partners. United Nations partners also make reference to the issues raised by the 2009 national draft law requiring that Government clears domestic non-governmental organizations for work with United Nations or other foreign entities. However, the Non-governmental Organizations National Law passed in 2010, and Kurdish Regional Government law from 2011, hold no such restrictions. Rather, the laws remove arbitrariness in registration or lack of recognition of such non-governmental bodies.

United Nations partners also make reference to the issues raised by the 2009 national draft law regulating non-governmental organizations, which proposed Government clearance for domestic non-governmental organizations to work with the United Nations or other foreign entities. However, the national law on non-governmental organizations that was passed in 2010 as well as the 2011 Kurdistan Regional Government law do not have such restrictions and remove arbitrariness in registration or de-recognition of non-governmental organizations.

As UN-Habitat focuses on governance initiatives, it has broadened its engagement and reached out to various stakeholders. Some of these actors are, for example, in the public-private partnership model for housing, community groups and women. The two projects that this evaluation reviewed in-depth, Erbil Slum upgrading and Local Area Development Plans, demonstrated that civil society was vital to deliver sustainable outcomes (see case study on Erbil, Annex IV). In Erbil, the setting up of Housing Facilitation Units of professionals/technical experts and Local Facilitation Unit—as an intermediary between community or households and local authority or lending institutions—has been effective. However, the Facilitation Units were an alternative to independent non-governmental organizations and were justified as being easily trained and institutionalized within municipal structures, or within a regional

ministry. A robust debate during the focus group discussions was whether and how to incorporate these Facilitation Units within the Kurdish Regional Government. The evaluation team saw invitations for non-governmental organizations to work with the Housing Facilitation Unit at street widening of Kurani Ainkawa in Erbil, but the implications of co-opting civil society needs closer examination. The Local Area Development Plans involved civil society. However, their evaluation called for greater involvement of non-governmental organizations and support towards ensuring the civil society organizations in Iraq are able to participate, effectively.

UN-Habitat's Iraq Programme did not take a proactive approach to ensuring engagement with civil society. Yet, the Scanteam evaluation (2007) generally found that strengthening civil society and the private sector were strategically important in a post-conflict situation. However, the Scan team noted that United Nations agencies in Iraq did not appear to have an overall strategy that focused on non-public sector capacity development as a means of empowering those actors, strengthening accountability and democratic governance "except on an *ad hoc* project-by-project basis". In response, the United Nations team has increased its engagement with civil society in fields such as the Iraqi constitutional review process, conflict analyses, peacebuilding, civic participation, emergency response structures, human rights and elections. For example, the United Nations Office for Project Services has been building the capacity of Iraqi non-governmental organizations, enabling them to gain hands-on experience in project design and implementation. Between 2005 and 2011, the Office for Project Services supported some 500 projects that Iraqi non-governmental organizations implemented. UN-Habitat works with non-governmental organizations through other agencies and networks such as the United Nations refugee agency and the Norwegian Refugee Council on UN-Habitat's Technical Working Group on Internally Displaced Persons. An example of UN-Habitat paying attention to partnership is the organizational support it gives to the Iraq Local Government Association, but this is exceptional.

4.2 ASSESSMENT OF PROGRAMME APPROACHES

Since the height of the conflict in 2003, Iraq's needs have been changing continuously. In response, UN-Habitat has been shifting its emphasis from direct intervention in infrastructure rehabilitation, to providing technical aid and capacity-building of the

Government and local authorities, in order to improve service delivery, municipal financial management, and prepare local and national investments plans. United Nations' overall effort itself has moved from short-term humanitarian to long-term development approaches. In the immediate post-conflict environment of 2003-2006, the United Nations focused heavily on large and small-scale infrastructure rehabilitation, working directly through the Government or through private contractors as well as on institutional development and a legal framework setting. From 2007, to respond to an emerging humanitarian crisis, the United Nations stepped up direct delivery of humanitarian aid, primarily to internally displaced persons and host communities. The balancing of immediate needs, including humanitarian help, the provision of basic social services and protection, and longer-term reconstruction and development requirements are debated within the United Nations Country Team and UN-Habitat.

Transition in Iraq has not proceeded as expected and the line between emergency, recovery and development is blurred and often United Nations agencies have chosen not to define it. Evaluators have noted that the International Reconstruction Fund Facility for Iraq was being implemented in a conflict rather than a post-conflict situation (Scanteam 2007). United Nations Security Council Resolution 1770 provides the framework accentuating the humanitarian role of the world body in Iraq but proposing that expanded intervention proceed in tandem with reconstruction and development aid to enable the United Nations pursue and sustain durable solutions necessary to promote stability, security, national reconciliation and the protection of human rights in Iraq. Priority Working Groups cover a range of humanitarian, reconstruction and development approaches. However, and as highlighted in the 2009 Common Country Assessment, the United Nations Development Assistance Framework is a milestone in Iraq's recovery and quest for long-term development. While moving towards stability, Iraq remains a post-conflict, transitional environment where political factors and perceptions still determine how successfully and equitably a development agenda can be implemented.

Underpinning UN-Habitat's Sustainable Relief and Reconstruction Framework 2008 are the two principles that the highest possible development gain could be made in the shortest possible time, and that strategic interventions in an emergency phase, if integrated in sustainable development goals, could reduce the period of crisis and build a platform for early recovery and advancement. As noted

earlier in section 3.3 outlining the Programme's achievements, UN-Habitat since 2004 has contributed to technical aid, capacity development, policy dialogue and legal reform toward long-term improvements. The 2010 Iraqi National Housing Policy is cited as an example. UN-Habitat is recognized as contributing to four of five Development Assistance Framework priority areas. These are inclusive economic growth, environmental management, promoting good governance and protection of human rights, and ensuring access to improved basic services for all. UN-Habitat also contributes to the Fifth Development Assistance Framework priority through investment in the capacities of women, youth and children to enable full participation in all aspects of life in Iraq— though not visibly.

4.3 RELEVANCE

UN-Habitat's interventions in Iraq

The UN-Habitat Iraq Programme—as seen through the Habitat Country Programme Documents—has developed through its own mandate, joint programming dynamics and Iraqi priorities. Despite its broad mandate, UN-Habitat's successful track record in the planning and implementation of housing and infrastructure programmes in Iraq has been perceived as its main comparative advantage. However, the agency's strategic focus continues to evolve and has shifted away from physical rehabilitation of infrastructure to capacity-building and provision of technical aid. The Iraq Programme has demonstrated realism, flexibility and coherence in building a UN-Habitat brand and portfolio, which is easily recognized by its United Nations partners, government counterparts and other stakeholders. This has been, in part, opportunistic but also dictated by demands from donors and Government counterparts (see Box 4.2 Building of schools in Iraq).

The Iraq Urban Programme is well aligned with the focus areas of the agency's Medium-Term Strategic Institutional Plan. The correlation is manifest through UN-Habitat Governing Council Resolution of 14 April 2011, which endorses and supports pro-poor housing in Iraq as a follow up of the Executive Director's memorandum of understanding with the Government in 2010. Iraq is also a priority country under the Enhanced Normative and Operational Framework catalyzing the implementation of the Medium-Term Strategic Institutional Plan. The framework has provided a bridge between UN-Habitat's normative messages and the agency's operational work, seeking to better connect UN-Habitat's

BOX 4.2: Building schools in Iraq

One of Iraq's current priorities is achieving universal primary education, under the Millennium Development Goal 2. Iraq has experienced a drop in the net primary school enrolment ratio from 91 per cent in 1990 to 85 per cent in 2007. In rural areas, just 77 per cent of primary school-age children are enrolled. Iraq's primary enrolment rate compares poorly with neighboring Iran (94 per cent) and Turkey (92 per cent), and it is unlikely to meet the Millennium Goal target of 100 per cent net primary enrolment by 2015, but it is trying. The 2008-2011 Habitat Country Programme Development points out that Iraq needs 23,000 primary schools, and among the existing school buildings estimated at 18,000 half of them require major rehabilitation. Millennium Goal 2 may not appear to be directly within UN-Habitat's mandate, but the agency has responded positively to stakeholder demand that schools come under urban infrastructure, services and sustainable urbanization.

UN-Habitat partnered with the United Nations Children Funding supporting "Child Friendly Schools", particularly by building designs, maintenance and asset management strategies. UN-Habitat's contributions have benefited 2,400 children in 12 new gender-sensitive and child-friendly primary school buildings, which replaced existing mud schools. Moreover, rehabilitation and extension of water and sanitation facilities have helped increase girl enrolment. Following new designs and technology options, schools and asset management plans were prepared for the governorates of Salahaldin, Suleimaniyah and Thiqr. UN-Habitat has contributed to a national strategy developed and implemented for schools' maintenance and asset management. As UN-Habitat moves away from schools, they remain a visible and often talked about legacy and contribution to Iraq's school infrastructure.

global policy with its regional and country activities. UN-Habitat has developed a more strategic partnership with the central and the Kurdish Regional governments in its areas of operations as part of the United Nations Common Country Programming process.

The Iraq Programme absorbs the agency's wide-ranging local government and planning engagement in the Arab States as well a track record in post-conflict reconstruction elsewhere in Afghanistan, Angola, East Timor, Kosovo, Mozambique, Rwanda and Somalia. UN-Habitat deploys a range of participatory tools and methods and has technical and training material to support reform. Key perceived strengths of UN-Habitat are its technical skills and materials relating to shelter and urban development including land management and housing policy, urban planning and local governance, and urban services and infrastructure. However, the Iraq Programme is unaware of all tools and resources available at UN-Habitat Headquarters.

The political desire of the Development Group-Iraq Trust Fund to be a visible partner appears to have occasionally overridden prudent planning or quality of interventions by United Nations agencies, when funding had been easy. Past and present UN-Habitat staff in Iraq, and those from other United Nations agencies, admit there was little resistance to getting involved in “any” projects. One critique of the Development Group-Iraq Trust Fund, characterized as a “structural flaw” by another independent evaluation of four United Nations Development Programme Governance projects, was that United Nations agencies were in effect carving out their own niche without an objective and independent party to exercise authority over funding decisions. United Nations agencies were not held accountable as they carried out implementation.

In its initial years, the Government was unable to undertake a full review of United Nations proposals. Thus, it was not always clear if projects were in synchrony with National Development Plans. Projects were often passed through the newly created Iraq Strategic Review Board with minimal scrutiny, despite the procedures of the Development Group Iraq Trust Fund. The costs of bypassing Iraqi institutions in executing United Nations projects have become much higher than the short-term benefits of speed. UN-Habitat, for its part, has continued to work within the areas of focus and with increasingly strategic relationships with its partners, including the central and the Kurdish Regional governments.

UN-Habitat in joint programmes

The evaluation finds the effectiveness of UN-Habitat in Iraq was significantly enhanced through its collaboration with United Nations partners. It has been able to pursue the reform agenda jointly; for example, the Country Team meeting on Urbanization and Land issues to propose joint approach to lobby the Government on urban management in 2011. The agency has created synergies, as reflected in the joint publications such as *Urban Baghdad: Impact of Conflict on Daily Life* (2010) jointly prepared by UN-Habitat and the International Organization for Migration on movements of internally displaced persons and the growth in informal settlements in and around Baghdad. The report titled *United Nations Development Group Iraq Trust fund: Lessons Learned Exercise* by the United Nations Development Group Iraq Trust Fund in 2011 considered the high level of coordination among United Nations agencies to be “one of the most acknowledged achievements” of the Fund, as noted by most inter-

viewees from United Nations agencies, donors and the Government.

United Nations joint programmes have resulted in a coordinated and coherent response to Iraq’s recovery, reconstruction and development priorities without competition for funds. It has also facilitated the coordination and management for better results. Further, the shared assessment of the Iraq Programme and United Nations’ partners is that level of transparency and access to financial and programme information on the activities of the Iraq Trust Fund considerably exceeded that of bilaterally funded projects. Several joint programmes this evaluation reviewed support the view that joint programmes have worked well in Iraq but there have been shortcomings, yet lessons learnt.

The Local Area Development Plans—now at a bridging phase, awaiting Phase II (Annex V Case Study II) would have been impossible without the synergies of United Nations agencies (most notably the International Labour Organization, the United Nations Development Programme and UN-Habitat) and Iraqi stakeholders at the governorate, provincial and federal government levels. Together, they were able to promote more effective local development processes while tackling such development objectives as poverty reduction and economic recovery.

An evaluation in 2010 found that Local Area Development Plans sharing of area coordination duties and areas—amongst the International Labour Organization, UN-Habitat and the United Nations Development Programme—was effective. The United Nations development agency acted as the area coordinator in the south region, UN-Habitat coordinated the centre and the International Labour Organization the north. However, a strategic mistake was made in the original programme design when each United Nations agency was allocated a certain portion of a Local Area Development Plan’s budget before Iraqi stakeholders could set their priorities; this was subsequently rectified.

The use of multiple administrative systems, whereby each United Nations agency employed its own procedures, was problematic. However, this did not overly hinder the project for Local Area Development Plans and improvements were made. There was confusion and an excessive amount of procedural responsibilities at the local level for the Programme’s Iraqi partners but UN-Habitat performed well due to its delegation of authority.

Joint programming has its advantages and challenges for a smaller agency like UN-Habitat. The agency's partnerships have increased its profile, opportunities and potential for impact. The agency enjoys mutual respect with other United Nations partners and strength in numbers in lobbying Government on key issues. Yet, the size and clout of larger agencies within the Development Group have often threatened to overshadow UN-Habitat's contributions. Despite this, joint programmes have been mutual learning experiences for participating agencies but this has required of them considerable effort, time and logistical resources for coordination and communications.

Reaching target populations

UN-Habitat has a mandate to promote inclusive human settlements, with improved rights for the urban poor and marginalized groups. Clearly, identifying marginalized categories as beneficiaries and participants in decision-making, as in the project on "Improving access for internally displaced persons and returnees to acceptable shelter solutions", has been a key achievement. This project involves men and women from the target communities and local authorities at all stages and levels. It aims to provide appropriate low-cost extendable housing designs; for example, houses with two living spaces to facilitate gender segregation, site identification, basic infrastructure options and a range of tenure and housing models in response to the needs of both sexes.

Erbil projects are another example of how UN-Habitat has responded to low-income and other disadvantaged homes. Here, through the 2009 Kurdish Regional Government housing strategy, UN-Habitat supports options to meet the needs of women and those among them who head households.

An enhanced gender sensitive organizational development and capacity-building needs assessment study of Erbil has been followed with opportunities for skills of key personnel (men and women) in identified priority areas of housing delivery, land management and slum upgrading. UN-Habitat has been a pioneer in establishing Housing Facilitation Units and Local Facilitation Units where community women, along with other stakeholders, have driven the process through its neighbourhood upgrading projects and pilot schemes. For example, in Kurani Ainkawa (the Kurdish Region), local women have carried out surveys and have been involved in the formalization of tenure arrangements on illegally occupied private land.

Underpinning of data and studies are needed to ascertain the relevance and effectiveness of UN-Habitat's work. A key product of the agency's Iraq Programme, the *State of Iraq Cities Report 2006/2007: Cities in Transformation (2007)*, provided data on at least 100 indicators collected from the Ministry of Municipalities and Public Works staff in relevant governorates. Data was also derived from the Rapid Urban Sector Profiling for Sustainability involving the cities of Baghdad, Bashra, Hilla, Mosul, Najaf and Nassiriya, although this effort did not identify needs at district level. The data demonstrated the need for and relevance of projects. However, UN-Habitat is likely to be weaker at data collection than other United Nations agencies, which obtain their own statistics. UN-Habitat is largely reliant on data provided by the Government's National Development Plan, the Central Organization for Statistics and Information Technology and other United Nations partners.

In view of this weakness, UN-Habitat has included questions on housing and urbanization in the Iraq Knowledge Network Survey that the Interagency Information Analysis Unit of the United Nations Country Team initiated. As part of the Housing Observatory project, UN-Habitat trained Iraqi participants on gathering data for indicators as well as formulating and reviewing housing policies. The Government also wants UN-Habitat involved in revising a housing market survey. Despite UN-Habitat's efforts to cater to the deprived communities, there is insufficient monitoring of its impact on targeted communities.

4.4 EFFICIENCY

UN-Habitat has achieved a reputation for efficiency among Iraqi Government officials, United Nations partners and other stakeholders with whom the evaluation team spoke. However, the team was unable to verify this view because insecurity in the country prevented it from visiting a sufficient number of projects and speak to enough beneficiaries. Nonetheless, the team found that the management capacities were adequate and resources were generally allocated strategically and used efficiently. Yet, efficiency is relative in the context of cross-border management where the political aspects are as important as those that are technical. In joint programmes, the effectiveness and efficiency of each agency varied in terms of implementation.⁶

Regarding timeliness of project delivery, all United Nations agencies have failed to perform well. All

⁶ Source: UNDP 2010a, *Independent External Joint Evaluation of Local Area Development Programme*

TABLE 4.1: List of UN-Habitat projects with Delivery Timelines

Project Number	Project Title	Original Duration of Project	Start Date	Original End Date	Number of Extensions	Actual End Date
NO10	Strengthening Capacity of Housing Sector	12 months	06.07.2004	06.07.2005	1	31.12.2006
NO12	Education Facilities Rehabilitation	12 months	06.08.2004	06.08.2005	1	30.09.2008
NO14	Strengthening Urban Sector through Building Capacities in Municipal Planning and Management	12 months	22.12.2004	22.12.2005	2	31.12.2006
NO15	Rehabilitation of School Buildings in Lower South Iraq	12 months	22.12.2004	22.12.2005	0	22.11.2005
NO16	Rehabilitation of Community Facilities and Infrastructure	14 months	09.09.2005	09.10.2006	5	30.09.2009
NO17	Community-based Integrated WATSAN Rehabilitation and Management Project	6 months	09.09.2005	09.03.2006	1	31.12.2006
NO21	School Rehabilitation and Capacity-building for School Maintenance	18 months	24.07.2006	24.01.2008	2	30.06.2008
NO22	Strengthening Capacity of Housing Sector Phase II	18 months	21.12.2006	21.06.2008	4	31.12.2010
NO24	Area Based Development Programme – Local Area Development Plans	12 months	19.04.2007	19.04.2008	3	31.07.2010
NO26	School Rehabilitation and Capacity Development for Enhanced Access and Retention in Primary Education	12 months	24.07.2007	24.07.2008	4	30.09.2009
NO27	Solid Waste Management Project for Iraqi Ministry of Municipalities and Public Works and the Governorate of Basra	18 months	04.07.2007	04.01.2009	5	31.12.2010
NO29	Improving quality and relevance of Technical and Vocational Education and Training in Iraq	18 months	31.07.2008	31.01.2009	4	31.03.2011
NO32	Local Government Association and Urban Development Capacity-building	15 months	26.03.2008	26.06.2009	5	30.09.2011
NO33	Improving Access for IDPs and Returnees to Acceptable Shelter Solutions	18 months	26.03.2008	26.09.2009	3	31.07.2011
NO34	Developing the Capacity of the Iraqi Education Sector/Enhancing the Learning Environment in Vulnerable Areas in Iraq for meeting 'Education for All' goals	24 months	15.10.2008	15.10.2010	2	30.06.2012
NO35	Improving the Housing Delivery System in Erbil	24 months	09.12.2008	09.12.2010	2	31.12.2012
NO36	Private Sector Development Programme for Iraq	36 months	18.12.2008	18.12.2011	2	31.12.2012
NO41	Water and Sanitation Master Planning and Capacity-building Programme	24 months	01.12.2009	01.12.2011	1	30.04.2012
NO44	Support to Decentralization and Local Governance for Service Delivery - Preparatory Phase	24 months	08.12.2008	08.06.2010	2	31.12.2012
NO45	Iraq Public Sector Modernization Programme	12 months	28.04.2010	28.04.2011	2	31.03.2012
NO48	Bridging for Local Area Development Programme Phase II	12 months	08.07.2010	08.07.2011	1	08.03.2012
NO50	Strengthening the Capacity of the Housing Sector in Iraq: Bridge for Phase III	15 months	31.08.2010	30.11.2011	2	30.06.2012

of UN-Habitat's projects, barring one, were given no-cost extensions. As Table 4.1 shows, of the 22 projects, a majority were for 12 to 18 months. Five projects were extended once, eight were extended twice, two were extended three times and the rest four or five times. There are several implications of this, including the continuing staff commitment for outstanding projects for which no additional funding is available. The Amman office attributed some of the delays to headquarters and bureaucracy at the United Nations Office at Nairobi. Other delays were due to the need for operational, inter-agency coordination and liaison with the Government.

However, the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq and the Multi-Donor Trust Fund offices regarded UN-Habitat's performance as having been in line with overall averages and did not reflect the management efficiency or affect the quality of outcomes. Delays were attributed to the original project designs with set short periods and high disbursement expectations, which were impossible to attain because of insecurity and political instability in the country. In addition, communication and coordination issues, high staff turnover at the United Nations and the Government, as well as the deficit in capacity collectively slowed down project implementation. As Table 4.1 shows, extension and revisions were often required.

Another reason for the extension of projects has been complications inherent in the nature of UN-Habitat projects. In earlier projects, the process of land allocation in the central and southern governorates was lengthy and complicated. Project progress reports indicate that overlap and lack of clarity in the mandate of different Government departments and coordination among stakeholders—including central and State institutions—were recurring challenges. UN-Habitat's response was to enhance the technical capacity of staff in ministries and foster a learning environment at all levels, which was carried out alongside strengthening of local capacities through institutional reform measures. As the implementation has progressed, UN-Habitat has developed better planning and information systems, capacity development components, political support and monitoring protocols. Government coordination is vital during project implementation and the execution of the National Housing Policy began by clarifying institutional roles and functions.

Officials of the central Government and that of the Kurdish Region generally considered the roles of UN-Habitat and other United Nations partners to

be complementary in joint programmes. Nevertheless, officials also noted competitive undercurrents and recognized the need for more comprehensive urban development approaches. However, a review of project documents and the evaluation team's dialogue with stakeholders indicate that UN-Habitat adds a great deal of value to the joint programmes in Iraq with its distinct mandate, expertise and approaches.

Cost-effectiveness

A unique selling point of joint programmes through the Development Group Iraq Trust Fund arrangement is that donors were able to fund projects through a single channel, reducing transaction costs. The facility also reduced resource mobilization and reporting costs. In Iraq, mechanism has avoided duplication of projects and larger integrated projects have incurred lesser costs. However, the 2011 evaluation of the Development Group's projects noted that while joint programmes reduced the costs of external coordination, expenses for internal coordination increased. Therefore, while UN-Habitat staff did not have to compete for funds or individually report on joint projects, staff spent more time communicating with partner United Nations agencies. The Development Group's evaluation did not conclusively rule on the overall cost-effectiveness of the United Nations Iraq operations, as it did not have budget breakdowns or clarity on programmatic and non-programmatic expenses.

A significant component of expenditure by United Nations agencies in Iraq, including UN-Habitat, is insecurity. The 2011 evaluation report on *United Nations Development Group Iraq Trust Fund: Lessons Learned Exercise* found that United Nations security costs increased significantly after the United States withdrew its combat troops. Security costs in some projects amounted to 40 per cent of the budget (particularly United States projects). Costs of travelling to and within Baghdad were often exorbitant; on one occasion it cost USD 5,000 for travel from a city location to the airport. Hence, agencies operated by remote management though some have returned to Baghdad. Again, there is no evidence on cost-effectiveness of cross-border management. For example, bringing Iraqi participants to Amman for meetings or capacity development has been safer but expensive. Cross-border management has generally resulted in increased resource cost of time, communication and coordination. Project overruns have also increased costs. While the costs were not a dominant concern during the well-resourced

Multi-Donor Trust Fund-Iraq Trust fund period, it is a critical dimension today.

Several examples are available on how United Nations agencies reduced administrative costs, jointly hired consultants or had a joint capacity development plan. The Local Area Development Plans are an obvious case where one overall project manager is used for the entire programme (from the United Nations Development Programme), alongside a shared information and communications technology manager, media officer, as well as a monitoring and reporting officer for the project. Yet, the administrative fee for joint programme that United Nations agencies charged remained 6.5 to 7 per cent. Government officials interviewed in this evaluation were concerned about the costs of United Nations programmes, particularly owing to the use of security and international consultants. This was particularly true of the earlier phase of United Nations operations when Government inputs into the budget were limited. Now, even the Government's acknowledges its own high costs. UN-Habitat and others have been increasing their share of national partnerships and their national staff to reduce costs.

The central and the Kurdish Regional governments and other partners, however, generally agree that, despite the costs, UN-Habitat contributions are, in the long-term, worthwhile monetarily through its pilot schemes and technical support.

UN-Habitat is pioneering low-cost housing that is to be scaled up as in the Erbil and Baghdad project. The agency is also supporting improved pro-poor access to housing finance. For example, negotiations are under way for UN-Habitat to support the Economical Housing Programme funded out of the Iraq's federal budget. *The Common Country Assessment Iraq 2009* made the following observation:

*"The measure of success for the United Nations System in Iraq will not be the dollar value of resources channelled through United Nations agencies, or even the immediate impact of directly-funded United Nations projects. It will be how the United Nations manages to mobilize international and Iraqi resources around Iraq's development priorities, and the degree to which United Nations and Government of Iraq initiatives are effectively scaled up."*⁷

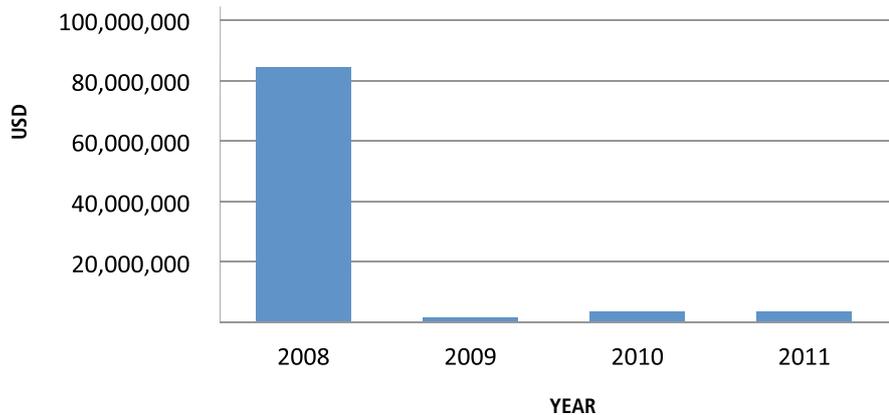
⁷ *United Nations in Iraq (2009). Common Country Assessment Iraq 2009, p. 68*

Funding

The pattern of approved budgets and funds disbursement from the Multi-Donor Trust Fund-Iraq Trust fund of USD 90 million for the 22 UN-Habitat projects is telling. Two-thirds of total funds flowed into the United Nations Development Group-Iraq Trust Fund in the first two years. About USD 84 million or about 90 per cent was approved in 2008, with only about USD 1.5 million in 2009 and some USD 3 million per year in 2010 and 2011 (see Figure 4.2). This trend is not unique to UN-Habitat; all other agencies have been hit in different proportions. The downward trend in funding is attributed to the economic downturn, loss of interest in big infrastructure projects and the shifting of donor attention elsewhere. In any case, the "donor fatigue" is based on the premise that oil-rich Iraq must now deal with its own challenges. Following the closure of the Development Group's Iraq Trust Fund, there are fewer bilateral donors and the attention has shifted to the Government, which has promised significant support to development projects.

The evolving institutional arrangements for managing the Iraq Programme can be best understood in relation to the flow of funds. Between 2004 and 2008, where the Development Group's Iraq Trust Fund was active, the staff strength of the UN-Habitat programme in Iraq rose to 26. Numbers dropped with senior staff leaving without being replaced. The change between 2009 and 2012 was 38.5 per cent (42.9 per cent for international staff, and 36.8 per cent for national). Staff reduction occurred across the board—technical (programme), administrative and support staff. Seniority of staff also declined, with replacements by juniors. The evaluation team learnt that UN-Habitat and its sister agencies struggle to recruit good staff. Furthermore, delays in recruiting are compounding the problem as the Iraqi private sector offers increasingly better wages and terms of service. The current UN-Habitat programme management officer, who has been instrumental in the transition, returns to headquarters in 2012. Her responsibilities are to be shared by staff in the offices in Amman and Baghdad, and with a senior administrative officer at the Regional Office for the Arab States.

The United Nations Development Assistance Framework estimates that its implementation will require about USD 1.9 billion, of which the United Nations has pledged USD 250 million. However, in line with commitments under the Paris Declaration, the

FIGURE 4.2: Funding approvals between 2008 and 2011 for the Iraq Programme


Government of Iraq will guide and lead the Framework's implementation in partnership with the international donor community. As such, donors expect cost sharing lead by Government, which is thought to have the resources. Until January 2012, the new Framework's Trust Fund had received USD 15 million partner contributions. UN-Habitat requires USD 77.2 million for its full programme, for which it has secured USD 9.3 million in funding. With the closing of the Multi-Donor Trust Fund-Iraq Trust Fund, UN-Habitat will have to review its resource mobilization strategy to continue its substantial portfolio in Iraq, or at least its most important parts. However, fundraising for Iraq has become difficult as most donors are in financial straits and consider the oil-rich country awash with reserves and, therefore, well able to meet its own needs.

UN-Habitat's Headquarters needs to support the development of a resource mobilization strategy for Iraq, but Iraq staff point out that headquarters lacks the local contextual knowledge and experience for the task. A recurring question is the extent to which the Government is willing to fund United Nations or UN-Habitat implemented projects, including nationally-run programmes continued from these

projects. A notable success has been the Kurdish Regional Government, which has given UN-Habitat USD 842,800 for street widening, and another USD 30 million to provide physical and social infrastructure undertaken by the municipality and directorates of Education and of Health (2011-2014).

Management and reporting

UN-Habitat staff from the Iraq Programme, United Nations partners, and Government officials has rated the UN-Habitat Iraq management and leadership highly. The evaluation found UN-Habitat personnel in the Amman, Baghdad and Erbil offices to be motivated and competent—combining technical expertise, field experience and political liaison as relevant. While there were some gaps in training for administrative staff, senior colleagues were familiar with operations in the field, the workings of a Multi-Donor trust fund and with the procedures of the central and of the Kurdish Regional governments.

UN-Habitat has good team coordination, put in place by two earlier heads of mission. Despite busy travel schedules, the team has regular meetings through which effective monitoring of project and programme progress takes place. In addition, the head of mission provided feedback on wider issues affecting the team, budget and administrative concerns as well staff development activities. The evaluation team attended one of these monthly meetings. There were also other regular programme coordination meetings, and periodic senior management team meetings, in addition to informal but regular project team meetings. The team held stock-taking and planning retreat in April 2012. Though the Amman office faces many challenges, morale appeared high and interns made the office busy.

TABLE 4.2: Staff changes between 2009 and 2012

Year	International	National	Total
2009	7	19	26
2010	5	20	25
2011	6	19	25
2012	4	13	17
% reduction	42.9	36.8	38.5

TABLE 4.3: **Monitoring and reporting of the Iraq Programme**

Title	Frequency	Client	Objective
Human Resources Development Update	Fortnightly	Resident Coordinator's Office	Activity and result reporting
Project Progress Report	Monthly	Donor (mainly Government of Japan)	Activity and result reporting
Commitments & Disbursements	Monthly	MDTF Office	Financial delivery reporting
Project Summaries	Quarterly	MDTF Office, donors and members of thematic groups	Qualitative and quantitative progress reporting
Project Progress Report	Six monthly	MDTF Office and donors	Reporting of qualitative and quantitative Progress, financial delivery, lessons learned.
Portfolio Review, Financial Review & Outlook	Quarterly & six monthly	ROAAS	Financial delivery review and reporting
CPR Report	Six monthly	UN-Habitat Committee of Permanent Representatives	Update on new and closed projects during the reporting period
Operational Activities Report	Annual	ROAAS	Reporting of qualitative and quantitative progress, financial delivery, lessons learned etc.
MTSIP Progress Report	Annual	UN-Habitat Governing Council	Reporting of progress towards MTSIP focus area outcomes

However, the drop in staff numbers jeopardizes the current programme (where projects are still incomplete), and staff have to latch onto existing projects and think imaginatively of ways to raise resources for an expanded programme. Staff members are overworked in a stressful environment—with regular travel, security risks, and shifting political scenarios—and their temporary contract status is a drawback.

UN-Habitat's overall project completion rate of 96 per cent—as the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq records show—compares favourably with the performance of other agencies. There were only three external evaluations of individual projects and one joint evaluation of projects for Local Area Development Plans (Annex V, Case Study II). However, UN-Habitat projects were reviewed in broader assessments.

Monitoring is of particular importance in cross-border management. The coordination mechanisms in place ranged from daily phone contact with field personnel to annual progress reports to headquarters. Phone communication and reporting have improved over the years, with teleconferencing between Amman and Baghdad or Amman and Erbil now frequent. Initially, there were weekly reports using standard reporting templates, later these became monthly. Now the Iraq Trust Fund begins to reach its intended beneficiaries, the need for reporting has reduced.

As the Table 4.3 shows, reports were regular and comprehensive during the period under review. It shows the frequency, client and objective of the dif-

ferent reports. For instance, there were monthly project progress reports made to the donor, especially in the early phase of the project. Every six months project progress reports were submitted to the Trust Fund office and to donors. These reports were on activities and results achieved, financial delivery, and lessons learned. Commitments and disbursements were reported on a monthly basis to the Trust Fund office. Quarterly project summaries reported on progress in qualitative and quantitative terms to the Trust Fund office, donors and members of thematic groups. There were six monthly reports to the UN-Habitat Committee of Permanent Representatives, showing new and closed projects. Additionally, there were two annual reports: an Operational Activities Report to the Regional and Technical Cooperation Division, and the Medium-Term Strategic Implementation Plan Report to the UN-Habitat Governing Council showing progress towards the Plan's focus area outcomes. However, UN-Habitat staff noted that reporting was time consuming and were often duplicated.

The evaluators discussed monitoring of field staff and field projects under the prevailing insecurity in Iraq. Even in the relatively peaceful Kurdistan Region, monitoring is by telephone and digital photos of personnel or infrastructure. This was particularly important in the early "brick and mortar phase" of the Programme, when physical infrastructure was being rehabilitated or constructed anew. The Amman office had a database and shared drives. The database on Urban Governance, Land and Housing—which the evaluators accessed—contained project documents; progress reports; departmental, management and staff meetings; as well as some

correspondence, though it did not cover all thematic areas. Overall, the monitoring and reporting were systematic, regular and effective.

4.5 EFFECTIVENESS

Linkages with Iraqi priorities and policies

From the initial United Nations and World Bank Joint Needs Assessment of 2003, through the *Common Country Assessment Iraq 2009* to the United Nations Development Assistance Framework 2011-2014, as noted above, United Nations agencies have sought alignment with Iraqi development priorities. UN-Habitat's priorities correlate with Iraq's Common Country Assessment primary themes of governance, pro-poor economic growth, infrastructure and quality essential services including education, shelter and water as well as sanitation. The Framework was developed as a collective response of all United Nations agencies, programmes and funds in Iraq to priorities outlined in the Government's National Development Plan, the Kurdistan Regional Government's 5+ Multi-sectoral Plan, and the Poverty Reduction Strategy for Iraq. UN-Habitat's programmatic areas are recognized in the Framework, where it is listed in four of five priority areas.

The *Habitat Country Programme Document* is aligned with the Iraqi National Development Plan; the Kurdish Regional Government's Development Plan, and the Framework and flagships documents for the Government of Iraq and United Nations Country Team, respectively. As the UN-Habitat engagement in Iraq enters a new phase, the members of the UN-Habitat National Committee, several of whom are ministers, filter UN-Habitat proposals through its criteria for endorsement. These criteria are the priority for Government departments, the non-existence of similar projects, the capacity to deliver, added value and that emerging from UN-Habitat's memorandum of understanding with the Government.

Partnerships

Since 2004, the United Nations intention and practice has been to strengthen its partnerships with the Government. The expiry of Chapter VII restrictions on Iraq in 2010⁸ has changed the nature of the partnership; it has become a more normalized, hierarchical partnership, where the Government takes

the lead. The evaluation found strengthened Iraqi faith in United Nations' ability to work on highly sensitive issues, in comparison with other international State actors. The United Nations Development Assistance Framework signed in May 2010, which will be operating until 2014, marks that matured equal partnership acknowledging the implementation by the United Nations Country Team will be through the Government.

UN-Habitat has good relations with its Government counterparts, and the National Habitat Committee has provided a strong foundation and guidance. This has been imperative for project implementation and lobbying for reform. UN-Habitat advocacy often challenges well-entrenched political attitudes such as centralization, and public sector monopolies or restrictions on civil society. A key feature of UN-Habitat partnerships has been its ability to work with regional and local governments. Projects under the *Habitat Country Programme Document* are often implemented through local authorities. The UN-Habitat Programme is based on its technical prowess, familiarity and partnerships with particular regions such as Babil Province and Kurdish Region. The plan drives inclusive and holistic approaches to urbanization with strong partnerships with local and national governments, and other stakeholders.

The mature relationship with the Government has allowed UN-Habitat to lobby for a review of proposals such as the National Development Plan seeking to redirect urban growth to rural areas. There are sensitive issues such as the fear of "Arabization" in the Kurdish Region as an unintended outcome of UN-Habitat's inclusive strategy. However, the agency relies on its the credibility as a neutral player. Apart from access and goodwill, UN-Habitat has struggled—as have other United Nations agencies—with limited Government capacity to manage change. The agency has added value by providing technical aid and strengthening the capacities of institutions, such as housing and planning bodies. UN-Habitat progress reports regularly complain about the poor coordination between different ministries. Equally, the delay in launching the Land Commission indicates the political impasse and coordination problems.

The United Nations Development Assistance Framework also highlights the need for increased partnerships with civil society, the private sector, academia and the international donor community. UN-Habitat has been a pioneer in promoting participatory processes in several projects, for example

⁸ Under Chapter VII of the United Nations Charter, the United Nations Security Council had undertaken enforcement measures, including economic, to maintain or restore international peace and security in Iraq.

within the framework of the National Housing Policy, as an effective means of contributing to its mandate of sustainable urbanization. While the agency has made several efforts to include civil society (despite the constraints of post-conflict and cross-border management contexts), the need to augment the role of civil society and community groups in decision-making is a consistent recommendation, for example, arising from evaluation of the Local Area Development Plans as well as the International Conference on Decentralization, Local Governance and Service Delivery: Sharing Experience and Sustaining Progress in Urban Iraq held in 2011. A notable feature of UN-Habitat's work is the establishment of Housing Facilitation Units within a neighbourhood, using female employees as advisers to households on home construction and home improvement loans. UN-Habitat has been actively partnering other United Nations agencies and those such as the World Bank and the International Finance Corporation, as well as national bodies like the Iraq Local Government Association.

UN-Habitat has been a pioneer in public-private partnerships, in several respects. It is a hall mark of the National Housing Policy, the Berlin Declaration on the Development of Policy and Land Management in Iraq and other initiatives. For example, on housing finance and land development, UN-Habitat has been working strategically to remove bottlenecks, improve coordination as well as get the money moving towards the poor, through public-private partnerships. This is vital as funds available for loans are low and strict lending procedures do not cover requirements for all households. Through coordination with Government banks and local non-governmental organizations, UN-Habitat and United Nations partners, such as the United Nations Development Programme, seek to improve the flow of loans. Loan products are under development with one microfinance institution. UN-Habitat is working closely with such institutions in Erbil, the Kurdish Regional Government's Investment Board and the governor of Erbil in relation to housing finance for incremental housing improvements for low-income households.

Scale of operations, replication

While the quality of UN-Habitat's contributions is generally well acknowledged, concerns were raised by partners over whether they are at sufficient scale to make a difference. Successful projects and pilot schemes have often failed to dent the staggering dimensions of most problems. For example, Iraq is nowhere close to achieving the Millennium Development

Goals or even being at par with the regional average on several developmental parameters. As the Common Country Assessment Iraq 2009 noted:

"If the Millennium Development Goals [are] to be achieved in Iraq by 2015 a massive scaling up is needed in delivery of basic services and resources for development. This requires a considerable improvement in the current capacity to plan and manage development programmes and coordination of resources."⁹

Though UN-Habitat has a good record in infrastructural development, its comparative technical advantage lies in enabling the Government to better strategize before scaling up. While UN-Habitat has moved from situational analysis to strategy development and pilot schemes, the real test lies in scaling up. To this end, UN-Habitat is now focusing on using its data analysis, implementation experience for replication and further policy and legislative reforms. A good example is the pilot scheme on internally displaced persons funded by the Bureau of Population, Refugees and Migration of the United States Department of State, through which UN-Habitat is providing technical support, planning guidelines, local management models, and subsidy options for the Government. UN-Habitat pilot schemes could be scaled up but there is no evidence yet of its prospects.

The Ministry of Construction and Housing has formally asked UN-Habitat to support a revised Housing Market Assessment. The Government has allocated USD 75 million to co-finance projects generally, though the portion set out for UN-Habitat activities for this initiative is unclear.

Decision-makers are being trained on gathering data, transforming and analyzing it to derive indicators, and learning how these indicators become tools for decision-makers to form and review housing policies.

Another example is the Housing Observatory, which has been established under the Ministry of Construction and Housing to monitor developments in the housing sector and provide guidance to policy-makers. The Ministry is further interested in Housing Observatory quarterly reports, which are important in planning housing investment, targeting land for development and monitoring the effectiveness of housing policy interventions. However, funding lines are unclear. Moreover, progress reports show a

⁹ United Nations in Iraq (2009). *Common Country Assessment Iraq 2009*, p. 12

lack of coordination and understanding of the role of this vital unit. It is evident that scaling up and replication is contingent on the Government and the political will of the Kurdish Regional administration and resources.

UN-Habitat has implemented a number of fast track projects that Local Steering Committees have identified during the Local Area Planning Process. The case study of Local Area Development Plans demonstrates that UN-Habitat has introduced innovative and inclusive approaches. However, these are not fully institutionalized and Phase Two of these Local Area Development Plans would need to do more at scale.

In 2009, an otherwise positive assessment of United Nations' role in Iraq challenged the world body to strengthen the longer-term impact of its investments on Iraq's broader recovery. In this respect, the United Nations is being asked to increase inter-agency cohesion; alignment with Government policies and programmes; ensure that initiatives are on a needs basis, and that the initiatives are institutionalized, replicable and appropriate for scale up. A Government review of aid management in Iraq that the Ministry of Planning and Development Cooperation commissioned supported this conclusion (Scanteam 2009).

Coherence with United Nations strategies

UN-Habitat projects and activities are clearly aligned with and part of the United Nations Country Team framework. As noted above, the agency's Iraq Programme was developed in tandem with the United Nations Development Group framework and the Priority Working Group processes. It makes clear reference to Iraq's National Development Plan for 2010-2014, and the Development Assistance Framework, which provides a coherent and coordinated strategy for the delivery of United Nations assistance in line with the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness. The Programme also supports the Government to meet its obligations such as the Millennium Declaration and Millennium Development Goals, and international treaties to which Iraq is signatory.

The Common Country Assessment Iraq 2009 underpinning the Framework ensures the strategic alignment with and effective contribution of the United Nations System to the National Development Plan and the broader United Nations strategies. Thus, it provides the basis for the prioritization of the United Nations strategic focus for the Framework, follow-

ing the principles of human rights-based programming and results-based management. The processes have allowed UN-Habitat and partner agencies to formulate and align their respective country programmes with the National Development Plan and the Framework. This, in turn, has led to greater harmonization within the Country Team and between it and the Government.

4.6 SUSTAINABILITY

Institutional arrangements

Delivery of UN-Habitat projects depends on the effectiveness of the Development Group joint project management structures and internal UN-Habitat's Iraq office arrangements, which was dealt with earlier. The programmatic outlook and funding of the Iraq office cannot be seen in isolation. Rather, it should be part of the UN-Habitat Regional Strategy for Engagement in the Arab World (2012). The location and structure of the UN-Habitat Iraq Programme is predicated on funding as well as strategic choices for the Baghdad office, the Regional Office in Cairo, the Amman office and the Regional Office for Africa and Arab States at headquarters.

Historically, the Programme has enjoyed autonomy in most respects since the Oil-for-Food Programme. Headquarters has deferred to the country programme leadership to negotiate the complex political and distinctive operational context that required field-level flexibility. Some staff members would argue that the Iraq Programme was considered a mechanism for headquarters, which was otherwise disinterested, with which to make money. However, colleagues on both sides of the issue concur that the devolved management arrangement has, so far, worked well despite increased pressures on the chief technical adviser. Despite responsibility for several other countries, the UN-Habitat Iraq country coordinator—the senior settlements officer at the Regional Office for Africa and Arab States—has the experience, competence and strategic vision to supervise and nurture the Programme and provide effective support. However, as the Programme enters a new phase, there are further opportunities for consolidation of its links with the head office.

Visits between the UN-Habitat's Nairobi Headquarters, and the Amman and Baghdad offices have been irregular but are, mostly, considered adequate. The management of the Programme feels strongly supported by the high profile visits of the UN-Habitat Executive Director, the Director of the

Regional Office for Africa and Arab States at the time (now the director of the Project Office) and other senior staff member who have strengthened relations with the Government and United Nations partners. The May 2011 visits of the UN-Habitat Executive Director to the office in Amman and Baghdad to sign the memorandum of understanding on housing and the review visit by the director of the Regional Office for Africa and Arab States to Baghdad have been leveraged for breakthroughs in UN-Habitat relationships. The UN-Habitat Governing Council Resolution of 14 April 2011 on pro-poor housing policies and urban management has proved to be a powerful advocacy tool. The United Nations Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General and as other senior United Nations staff members believe that these visits enhanced UN-Habitat's profile as well as secured dividends for development programming. However, there are no regularly scheduled headquarter visits for senior Iraq Programme officers, though this occasionally occurs due to meetings which individual UN-Habitat sections or programmes organize. This has, in fact led to limited information flows between the Iraq Programme and staff at headquarters.

The evaluation team encountered divergent views on the appropriate model of relationship between Amman and Baghdad, and headquarters. Some views offer a neat but incorrect distinction between the headquarters, which is normative, and country programmes, which are operational. The Medium-Term Strategic Institutional Plan, the Enhanced Normative and Operational Framework and reporting processes have helped in developing mirrored, if not common approaches. However, coordination varies. The Iraq Programme's successes in land and housing can be partly attributed to the technical backstopping from UN-Habitat's Thematic Branches and programmes (and the Geneva-based UN-Habitat officer on post-conflict issues)—for example, the Global Land Tool Network. On the other hand, the Iraqi water and sanitation initiative has been unable to consolidate its good work due to a surprising lack of contact with the relevant headquarters branch, and despite a former coordinator of UN-Habitat's programme in Northern Iraq working there.

The administrative coordination between headquarters and the office in Amman is good, helped by the programme management officer from Nairobi posted in Amman. Since 2007, the office has delegation of authority to approve up to USD 150,000. This is comparable to the United Nations Development Programme. Possibly only the United Nations Children's Fund, within the Country Team, has a larger

delegation of authority. While some would want a higher figure, the chief technical adviser found the ceiling was adequate and practical. Staff members interviewed in the Amman office reported some delays in approval of projects. There was also optimism that the restructuring of UN-Habitat would speed up and streamline projects. Delays were partly also due to inexperience of some field personnel, leading to the returned of papers. Areas for further improvements would include greater capacity-building of field staff in areas such as the Medium-Term Strategic Institutional Plan, results-based management, new reorganizational structures at headquarters, and new initiatives such as the Project Accrual and Accountability System.

Project sustainability

Sustainability is a key objective in the overall Development Group framework and a criterion found in individual projects as well as programmes. Contributions towards the Millennium Goals and their targets such as poverty reduction, universal education, gender equality, improved access to drinking water and sanitation are based on the premise of sustainability. UN-Habitat's mandate of "sustainable urbanization" with its multi-faceted dimensions is expressed through the Habitat Agenda and more pointedly Millennium Goal 7 on environmental sustainability, and Target 11 on making "a significant difference in the lives of 100 million slum dwellers by 2020". Whether the momentum or direction of United Nations or UN-Habitat current initiatives in Iraq will continue when major aid ceases is debatable.

The evaluation team's review of UN-Habitat managed joint projects in Iraq confirmed that the pursuit of sustainability was a primary objective. This was also broadly reflected in the *Habitat Country Programme Document*, which identified sector priorities through the Medium-Term Strategic Institutional Plan focus areas. Moreover, the Enhanced Normative and Operational Framework could potentially enable UN-Habitat to play a leadership and catalytic role in promoting sustainable urbanization in Iraq. In moving from infrastructure projects to governance and policies, UN-Habitat has geared itself towards creating more inclusive, equitable and long-term processes and capacities. The *Berlin Declaration on the Development of Policy and Land Management in Iraq and the National Housing Policy* are prime examples of innovative, holistic and comprehensive strategies. The sustainable development approach is the invariable thrust in projects, most notably the project on 'Improving Access for Internally Displaced

Persons and Returnees to Acceptable Shelter Solutions’.

The twin advantages of increasing harmonization with national development strategies and United Nations joint programmes should aid the replication and scaling up of UN-Habitat’s work. However, an inherent structural defect in United Nations development programmes has been the fragmentation and improvisation in the project delivery model. As several Development Group project evaluations noted, including the Local Area Development Plan case study (Annex V, Case Study II), the United Nations’ desire and the requirement of the International Reconstruction Fund Facility for Iraq for speedy results through quick impact projects resulted in setting unrealistically short project durations, typically for a year or two. This also affected sustainability. While UN-Habitat and some of its partners have progressively improved and learnt how to overcome these weaknesses in subsequent phases, projects have remained of shorter duration owing to limited resources.

The strengthening of national institutions by UN-Habitat has contributed to their organizational and financial durability. However, the sustainability of the developmental results from UN-Habitat also depends on the Government’s capacity to provide an enabling policy environment, including incentives for meeting the demands of urban development. The question of sustainability of UN-Habitat projects was subject to some debate between respondents from various Government ministries, the Kurdish Regional Government and academics during the evaluation. Reference was made to the National Housing Policy and the master plans in Erbil, which are now part of official development strategies being carried forward.

Ownership

The level of national ownership of the UN-Habitat Programme is a critical indicator of its success and sustainability. In 2003, when the United Nations and World Bank Joint Need Assessment were carried out, there was no government with which to negotiate. Instead, UN-Habitat was proactive in forming a high-level National Habitat Committee which met regularly to review strategies and proposals.

Since 2003, the Government, regional and local governments have moved towards being equal partners, as seen in the United Nations Development Assistance Framework. The now defunct Iraq

Strategic Review Board—at the centre of the International Reconstruction Fund Facility for Iraq governance structure ensured a prominent government role in clearing projects. This ensured that line ministries took ownership of United Nations projects and engaged with them.¹⁰ The 2011 report on *United Nations Development Group Iraq Trust Fund: Lessons Learned Exercise* pointed out that among the significant challenges the United Nations faced in Iraq were a weak Government capacity and weak national leadership. In addition, Iraq ranks 176 out of 180 on Transparency International’s Corruption Index, the lowest ranking country among its regional neighbours. The evaluation team found that there had been high-level official engagement with UN-Habitat projects on water and sanitation, land and housing or urban planning, though dividends are not always easy, as experienced with the stalemate of the Land Commission.

The evaluation found a considerable amount of national ownership of UN-Habitat programmes. UN-Habitat continues to consolidate its strong collaboration with its Government counterparts, as seen in the Minutes of National Habitat Committee, February 2012. The central and the Kurdish Regional governments have supported improved decentralized, transparent and good governance. The institutionalization of these ideas and reforms is necessary, particularly in view of the exit strategy for big United Nations programmes. Government and non-governmental actors in Iraq use a range of UN-Habitat outputs: legislation, master plans, training manuals and physical infrastructure. Government officials from the ministries of Planning, of Construction and Housing, and of Municipalities and Public Works; those from the Kurdistan Regional Government Ministry of Municipalities & Tourism; governorates in Kurdish Region and Babylon expressed continued commitment to UN-Habitat products and programmes. This was primarily because UN-Habitat activities are mostly seen as reflecting common perceptions, needs and priorities.

The director general in the prime minister’s Advisory Commission points out that the Development Group-Iraq Trust Fund has been flexible and responsive to Government’s priorities. Yet, there are variations in the extent to which specific UN-Habitat contributions have been acknowledged but these are linked to political views over the desirability of a United Nations role in Iraq. Broadly, UN-Habitat’s conventional projects such as infrastructure have been well received while governance and policy ini-

¹⁰ Scan Team (2007). *Review of Post-Crisis Multi-Donor Trust Funds*, Paragraph 61

tiatives—particularly in relation to gender and marginalized groups—can be controversial. Officials expressed to the evaluation team that there were concerns regarding their own limited capacity, the uncertain security situation and the polarized political environment. Another challenge for capacity strengthening is the high turnover of Government and United Nations personnel.

The current Habitat Country Programme Document is a product of consultations with Iraqi officials, though this has been a complex and time-consuming process. The UN-Habitat Iraq office acknowledges that lessons have been learned from the process. Government officials wrote the foreword and launched the preceding 2008-2011 Programme Document but the current edition has not yet been publicised. The high-level Habitat National Committee reviews and selects projects in the Programme Document that are “Iraqi priorities” and “reflected the needs of the current phase 2012-2014” in which UN-Habitat can offer technical aid. The Programme Document also relies on texts such as the UN-Habitat supported National Housing Policy, the memorandum of understanding between Ministry of Construction and Housing and UN-Habitat 2010-2014, and the 2011 Berlin Declaration on the Development of Policy and Land Management in Iraq endorsed by the Government. The establishment of a Land Commission could be the next step as detailed in Box 4.3. Despite the successful role of its Baghdad-based national coordinator in liaising with Government officials, UN-Habitat is disadvantaged by basing its country office in Amman.

National ownership, however, is not just recognition by policymakers. UN-Habitat implements its projects through cooperation and partnership with the central and the Kurdish Regional governments, civil society organizations as well as Iraqi and international non-governmental organizations. An example of this is the Internally Displaced Persons Durable Shelters Project where over 60 participants from the Government of Iraq, international organizations, multi- and bilateral financial institutions such as the World Bank and *Agence Française de Développement* participated in the workshop. Overall, UN-Habitat has strong relationships with the central and the Kurdish Regional governments and, to a much lesser extent, with civil society. For example, the passing of the Provincial Powers Law 2008 was a major milestone for the introduction of the decentralized government in Iraq. This legislation was formulated under the auspices of the Iraqi Local Government Association. However, despite UN-Habitat support to the Association, there are questions over

BOX 4.3: Politics and political will—A land commission for Iraq?

The Government of Iraq has demonstrated political will in tackling complex land issues. In 2010, it set up the Working Group on Land Tenure and Utilization including senior officials of relevant ministries within the Prime Ministers Advisory Commission. The Working Group, among other things, examines recommendations based on UN-Habitat studies on barriers to private sector development from land and planning issues. Through the Berlin consultations in 2011, it was agreed that a comprehensive land policy would require a long-term process of reforms with the establishment of a Land Commission to drive that process. Given the political nature of a land policy process, there would need to be consensus amongst ministries. In addition, their endorsement of the vision declaration for land reforms and on the nature and powers of the Land Commission would be necessary. Its adoption would require a Council of Ministers’ decision.

The head of the Advisory Commission had decided that the Berlin Declaration would be presented to the Committee of Ministers with a proposal to establish a Land Commission. In October 2011, the Working Group on Land Tenure and Utilization met to discuss the nature and functions of the Land Commission and by November 2011, the working group agreed on a draft order for the establishment of the Land Commission. It was decided that as the Committee of Ministers would be busy in December debating the 2012 budget, the proposal would be lodged to the Committee in January 2012. The Committee was delayed in meeting to form the budget as a result of the tensions that followed the arrest warrant for the vice president at the end of December 2011. Then in March 2012 the focus of senior Government officials was on the Arab Summit. Accordingly, UN-Habitat and partners planned a retreat for the Working Group in May 2012 to work out a way forward. Government officials continue to back the Land Commission and are looking to press ahead.

the latter’s future financial sustainability. In contrast, in Erbil there are moves afoot to absorb the Housing Facilitation Unit into the Ministry of Municipalities and Public Works to ensure sustainability.

Risks

Despite the successes of the UN-Habitat Iraq Programme, the sustainability of achievements and impact are not yet secured—several threats remain. The political and security environment is still fluid and momentum towards change could be lost without partnerships. Humanitarian approaches that are appropriate to the conflict environment need to be more fully shifted to workable development frameworks, but the lines separating them are not always clear. UN-Habitat and United Nations partners have helped support improved capacity at different levels

of government and among different stakeholders but these are still insufficient. However, the biggest risk is financial. There is no confirmation yet that adequate budgets have been set aside for the priority programmes agreed between UN-Habitat and the Government.

Relocation of the Iraq Programme

For security reasons, the Iraq Programme was moved from Baghdad, first to Amman and Kuwait and then back to Amman, where it is currently located. The Programme has been described as a “programme in exile” because of this cross-border management arrangement. This is not a unique situation; the Afghanistan Programme was temporarily managed from Islamabad, Pakistan, and the Somalia Programme is still managed from Nairobi. However, given that the elected Iraqi Government is in its second term, and that security has improved, and most United Nations agencies have returned to Iraq (or planning to do so), there is pressure on the UN-Habitat Iraq Programme to do likewise. Pressure for the return to Baghdad has also come from Government officials, UN-Habitat offices in Amman, Baghdad and Erbil, and UN-Habitat partners such as other United Nations agencies and donors.

The option of relocation to Erbil was suggested but would not offer the advantage of proximity to the Government and United Nations partners. Headquarters-based UN-Habitat staff members familiar with the Iraq Programme were in favour of relocating to Baghdad, although the high security and shifting costs—at a time of a paucity of funds—were debated. There is no systematic study of the financial implications of a return to Baghdad; estimates vary from a 30 per cent to a 200 per cent increase from current costs. It costs close to USD 400,000 per year to keep a professional staff member in Baghdad due to the high accommodation and security charges.

Some UN-Habitat staff members living in Amman were apprehensive of the move, while others supported the proposed measure. Clearly, as with other United Nations agencies like the United Nations Children’s Fund, the return to Baghdad could result in staff losses because the capital is classified a non-family duty station. The main argument against the return is the sufficiency of existing cross-border management arrangement, where there is continuous presence of a senior staff in Baghdad to support the national coordination. The other relates to the limited mobility for United Nations staff in Baghdad, raising questions about the practicality of the move.

United Nations partner agencies that have returned to Baghdad speak of a “painful” transition but one that eventually has paid dividends due to their proximity to Government officials and better access to Government contributions to development programmes. More importantly, the Government has repeatedly insisted that location within Iraq would be a litmus test for full-scale partnership. Without a substantial presence in Baghdad, UN-Habitat risks being relegated as a peripheral partner of the Government.

The decision is financial as well as political and there may be a range of options to be considered. Moving partially to Baghdad and designating it to be the Programme head office, or locating the Programme in the Regional Office in Cairo with an enhanced presence in Baghdad were discussed. UN-Habitat’s decision to post international personnel of new projects in Baghdad is positive. The final decision on the location of the Iraq Programme management needs to be taken urgently at UN-Habitat Headquarters, and not be left to the Amman office which is overstretched with programme work and fundraising.

As UN-Habitat considers options for relocation, strengthening regional coordination is paramount. There is no denying Iraq’s regional, Arab and Muslim identity. Through the launch of the *State of the Arab Cities Report 2012* and regional strategy documents, UN-Habitat has rightly recognized the common features and outlook that unites many of the countries. The recruitment of senior officers in the Regional Office in Cairo, with experience in Iraq, will strengthen the option of managing operations from the Egyptian capital. It will support the need to develop – and share – among country programmes common ways of improving effectiveness and dealing with opportunities and threats.

4.7 IMPACT

Programme, project impact on Iraqis and targeted audience

UN-Habitat’s interventions are to be assessed against the scale and complexity of urbanization and the challenges of implementation. The thematic analysis the Common Country Assessment provided pointed to strong interlinkages between the immediate, underlying and root causes of a wide range of sectoral problems. The United Nations team in Iraq has supported the Government in trying to tackle long-term issues such as environmental degradation, human rights abuses, poor governance, civil society gaps

and the lack of transparency. UN-Habitat's focus on institutional reforms such as decentralization and participatory planning, as well as social issues such as women's empowerment and housing for internally displaced persons have been politically charged but found champions within Government. The United Nations presence is therefore essential in Iraq as "...a harmonizing fulcrum between the Government's development agenda and that of the international community for Iraq"¹¹.

An independent assessment of United Nations' interventions funded by the International Reconstruction Fund Facility for Iraq noted that the majority of assessed United Nations interventions had a significant effect on individual Iraqi lives, particularly in project localities¹². However, this assessment also challenged the United Nations to strengthen the longer-term impact of its investments on Iraq's broader recovery, by increasing inter-agency cohesion and Government alignment and by ensuring that initiatives were needs-based, institutionalized, replicable and appropriate for scale up. A Government review of aid management in Iraq, which the Ministry of Planning and Development Cooperation commissioned, supported these conclusions.

The limited access, resources and time available to the evaluation team made assessment of "impacts" of the UN-Habitat Iraq Programme in general or its component projects difficult to ascertain in part due to insecurity. In terms of development results, most outputs and several outcomes, as defined in project documents, have been achieved to the extent possible given the circumstances in Iraq. At the same time, most projects in the Iraq Programme were implemented in partnership with other United Nations agencies, and it is hard to attribute impact to any particular agency, owing to the joint vision, goals and management of the Programme—even when outputs and reporting are separate. Several assumptions such as improved security, increased Government funding or better civil society participation are yet to fully materialize.

A key question for this evaluation, beyond developmental results of individual projects, is the contribution the programme makes to the broader, long-term, sustainable development changes. The International Reconstruction Fund Facility for Iraq assists key Iraqi ministries to work with the United Nations Development Group as one entity, facilitating

coordinated and collaborative joint programmes. While this evaluation did not have resources to quantify the level of impact and sustainability, it noted a number of elements in favour of sustainability are already in place. UN-Habitat advocacy, arising from its mandate on "sustainable urbanization", is generally widely accepted and acted upon by Government and non-governmental actors. UN-Habitat managed projects were developed through broad consultations and reflect national priorities and critical gaps needing to be continued. Most UN-Habitat projects enjoy considerable visibility and positive reviews, which enhances prospects for sustainability. UN-Habitat has introduced or supported new professional cultures and governance models that have initiated reform and changing attitudes. The agency has supported or developed a number of tools, policies, laws, resources and methodologies that underpin sustainability though several other vital aspects are being developed.

Iraq's developmental challenges include closing or, at least, reducing poverty gaps and ensuring equal benefits for all groups of the population from ongoing reforms. In contemporary Iraq, which is still highly polarized politically and socially, an individual's religion, sect, ethnicity, identity or other forms of identity (for example Shia, Sunni, Christian, Kurdish or Assyrian) could have disparate influence on participation in decision-making or access to basic services. There are clear limits to what UN-Habitat or other United Nations agencies can directly do as their mandate of impartiality restricts any activity seen as favouring political, sectarian or ethnic groups or factions. By adopting a broad "and other vulnerable categories" and an inclusive "settlements-based approach", UN-Habitat promotes specific responses to gender, age and other forms of diversity and vulnerability from a human rights and environmentally responsive approach. UN-Habitat projects generally demonstrate tangible benefits to a number of disadvantaged groups from slum dwellers and internally displaced persons to women, youth and children. To a considerable extent, multiple forms of interventions (from awareness and capacity development, to innovative project focus and participatory delivery methods) have empowered marginalized sections. These interventions have created (directly or indirectly) recognition; job opportunities; initiation of policy; legal and institutional reforms reviewing options for tenure security; improved governance and better access to basic services and infrastructure. The consensus among officials from the central and the Kurdish Regional governments, and those from the Hilla project team was that UN-Habitat was at the forefront of reaching and empowering

11 *United Nations in Iraq (2009). Common Country Assessment Iraq 2009, p.68*

12 *Scanteam (2009), Stocktaking Review of the International Reconstruction Fund Facility for Iraq.*

marginalized sections of society. United Nations partners and other stakeholders also commended UN-Habitat but referred to the potential to do more and better.

Cross-cutting Issues

Gender

The Millennium Development Goal of promoting gender equality and empowering women is well reflected in the Development Assistance Framework, the Development Group and UN-Habitat projects as a cross-cutting theme. Gender is a key determinant of vulnerability in periods of economic transition, particularly in conflict and post-conflict contexts—and the UN-Habitat commitment is reflected in the Medium-Term Strategic and Institutional Plan.

Yet, gendered programming is a formidable endeavour where there are patriarchal attitudes and resistance to women's empowerment, as referred to in the evaluation of Local Area Development Plans. These gendered roles often confine women to family chores and limit their participation in income-generating and other productive activity. An estimated 47 per cent of Iraqi women are illiterate or partly so, and their share of wage employment outside agriculture fell from 11 to seven per cent between 1990 and 2008. Among Iraqi women, there are further vulnerable categories such as the four million widows who are at greater risk of destitution and abuse. Compared to male-headed households, a higher proportion of female-headed households, which the International Organization for Migration estimates at ten per cent, live in improvised shelters, particularly the displaced and returnees. Despite 25 per cent of parliamentary seats being allocated to women, they are in general underrepresented at all levels of the public sector and Government. Women's ownership of land and property is very low and their voice in decision-making limited.

UN-Habitat projects are designed to be gender responsive. For example, one of the three key programming objectives of the Local Area Development Plans is gender sensitive outputs. These plans required a 30 per cent female participation benchmark in activities, yet the 2010 independent evaluation of the Plans found that UN-Habitat meetings in Babil, Hilla in Babylon with 37 per cent women participants were the highest proportion among the seven United Nations agencies on the project. Women were visibly targeted as beneficiaries in UN-Habitat fast-track projects and other outputs (Annex V, Case Study II). Faiza

Mohammad Ismaeel's involvement in a slum upgrading project implemented by UN-Habitat is a success story (Box 4.4). Evaluation of the Plans, however, found that gender lens was, in general, insufficiently integrated in the joint Programme. The evaluation also noted that despite putting women's rights on the agenda, the United Nations Development Fund for Women's initial solo activities were a missed opportunity. The evaluation recommended "more substantial consideration" of gender mainstreaming and internalizing of concepts such as gender equality in the second phase of Local Area Development Plans.

A review of UN-Habitat project progress reports finds that design and delivery to be generally gender responsive. The UN-Habitat land management initiatives, housing strategies, water and sanitation map, the Iraq Public Sector Modernization effort all aim to enhancing gender equity, female participation and capacity in different ways including gender planning, budgeting and mainstreaming. A project involving men and women from the target communities and local authorities at all stages and levels is the recently begun Baghdad Settlement Initiative relating to shelter solutions for internally displaced persons. It aims to provide appropriate low-cost extendable housing designs (for example, houses with two living spaces to facilitate gender segregation), site identification, basic infrastructure options and a range of tenure and housing models in response to the needs of women and men. These are driven by a review of existing informal settlements, occupied public buildings and host families through gender disaggregated socioeconomic data and surveys. UN-Habitat identifies its niche in supporting provision of secure land tenure for men and women through promotion of appropriate types of land rights not just individual leases, taking into consideration equal tenure rights of women.

UN-Habitat's gender work in Iraq is largely driven through project demands, and it does not refer to UN-Habitat's gender policies or tools available, such as the Global Land Tool Network gender evaluation criteria. Government officials are generally satisfied that UN-Habitat is taking up gender issues sufficiently, but this stems from low expectations and some apathy towards gender equality. This impression is invariably derived from women being identified as the primary beneficiary group and the relatively high levels of female participation in UN-Habitat activities. The assumption is that the general effort towards improvement in infrastructure, services and policies would invariably help women. In fact, there was limited critical appreciation of what

UN-Habitat had achieved or the scale of what was further needed. To contribute to the Millennium Development Goals, UN-Habitat would have to tackle the bottlenecks that prevent women's equal access to resources and decision-making power. For other stakeholders, UN-Habitat's contribution to women's rights was perceived as good but unsystematic or insufficient. As a result, UN-Habitat's potential contribution to the fifth priority area under the United Nations Development Assistance Framework relating to "empowerment of women, youth and children" is unrecognised in the Framework's documents.

A key Iraqi member of the UN-Habitat Iraq Programme, who also has a substantive portfolio, is its gender focal point. She has attended gender training and activities that the United Nations Development Programme and the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (or UN Women) organized. Though she is competent on gender issues, there is no outline of her responsibilities on gender mainstreaming, no allocation of time for gender work, or standardized procedures to ensure consistency quality of gendered inputs. There is no liaison between the Iraq Programme and the UN-Habitat Headquarters on gender. This is in contrast to the expectations of the fledgling but enthusiastic UN Women office or the United Nations Development Programme, which is truly a leader in the field with a senior gender officer. In discussion with the head of the Iraq Programme, the evaluation team was persuaded that the reasons for this were an overworked and under-resourced office, nevertheless committed to follow a more systematic gender strategy.

Age—children, youth and older persons

UN-Habitat Iraq Programme components on child-friendly schools have been innovative, visible and high impact with a strong relationship with the United Nations Children's Fund. Between 2009 and 2011, 2,400 children benefited from 12 new child-friendly primary school buildings that replaced existing mud structures. Specific school asset management plans were prepared for three governorates (Thiqr, Suleimaniyah, and Salahaldin) as well as new designs and technology options for child-friendly schools developed with participation from technical staff of concerned national and local authorities (Suleimaniyah, Salahaldin, and Thiqr). The Programme is developing and implementing a national strategy on schools maintenance and asset management. Children are dealt with as beneficiaries in several projects such as the project for

BOX 4.4: Empowering women: Faiza Mohammad Ismaeel's Story

Faiza, 47, is a key contributor to the enhanced slum upgrading project in Kurani-Ainkawa, a high density suburb of Erbil. With six children, one would expect Faiza to be housebound in keeping with a conservative society. However, she says her involvement with UN-Habitat changed all that. She graduated from Erbil Technical Institute and joined the local facilitation unit, comprised of members from the local community working to improve neighbourhoods. She trained through the Housing Facilitation Unit, which comprised architects, engineers and professionals to build her technical and other skills. She learnt to use computer software necessary to transform collected data from the field onto spreadsheets and maps. Then, she became part of the team that was able access the community, take actual measurements of streets and houses to reflect them on the existing maps and to set the Master Plan of Kurani-Ainkawa.

This is a small but vital part of the USD 5 million project on Improving the Housing Delivery System in Erbil, (funded by the United Nations Development Group-Iraq Trust Fund, the Kurdish Regional Government and the United Nations Development Programme) where UN-Habitat is the lead agency. At the time of joining the project, Faiza says she knew "nothing about the United Nations, housing strategy, or slum upgrading". However, she soon became a trusted intermediary between the community and professionals in accessing information on living conditions in the slum and ideas on how they should be upgraded. She has arranged meetings in mosques, community halls and schools.

"It is rare for a woman to address men in our society, let alone an Imam. But I am able to do it, thanks to empowerment by UN-Habitat," she says.

According to the consultant on the project and a professor at a local university, Mand Ibrahim Aziz, the community would have rejected the project without people like Faiza. She is a remarkably empowered woman who has made a tremendous contribution to slum upgrading in a poor neighbourhood of Erbil City possible. Her story is similar to that of other community women working on UN-Habitat projects.

internally displaced persons, but mostly as passive recipients rather than through robust child-centred methodologies, monitoring and evaluation such as the child-friendly cities of the Children's Fund or "Iraq fit for Children", using child rights towards achieving the Millennium Goals.

Youth (ordinarily between 14 and 25 years) and young adults up to 35 years of age, who represent the majority of the Iraqi population, need social inclusion, skills and meaningful economic opportunities that enable them to become the drivers of

a future stable and prosperous Iraq¹³. UN-Habitat has had some success in dealing with youth issues. For example through the Local Area Development Plans, it has built schools, four youth centres, and three green areas. It has also organized two training workshops for unemployed youth and contractors in three project areas. UN-Habitat has supported “on the job” training opportunities benefitting mainly unemployed youth. Six hundred unemployed youth in select governorates in southern, central, and northern Iraq have improved skills in construction management and different construction trades, for example, under the joint Private Sector Development Programme. While the Local Area Development Plans Bridging Phase does not specifically refer to youth, it is planned to involve them in the Plan’s second phase.

The UN-Habitat Iraq Programme has a part-time youth focal point, given the limited resources. Through him, the Programme has developed a better knowledge base and, despite sharing the focal point with the United Nations Development Programme, has created a profile for UN-Habitat as a “service offer” on urban youth issues. With his support, the Amman office has tried to push youth issues, albeit thus far with limited response. The office

¹³ United Nations in Iraq (2009). *Common Country Assessment Iraq 2009*



Women learning how to use computer software courtesy of the Housing Facilitation Unit at the Erbil Technical Institute. 2012
© UN-Habitat

has sought to contribute materially and analytically to a forthcoming UN-Habitat report on the *State of Urban Youth: Youth in the Prosperity of Cities* (2012) (Box 4.5). In addition, despite the lack of funding under the report, the office was prepared to provide analytical support to the overall report methodology, and to its writing and editing. Furthermore, this focal point sought to connect with the United Nations Development Programme, Iraq’s current effort to draft a National Human Development Report, which is intended to highlight youth issues. While initial feedback from United Nations Development Programme Iraq was positive, the agency became bogged down in planning and funding the project, and UN-Habitat’s support was no longer sought.

Nevertheless, the focal point is continuing to tackle youth issues, supporting a Kirkuk-based non-governmental organization to submit a joint proposal for youth training and advocacy issues to the Cities Alliance. The Amman office requires support from the section dealing with youth at UN-Habitat Headquarters, as it is under-resourced and the youth focal point needs better access to agency youth tools and initiatives. Guidance from Nairobi on available resources, tools, funds and networks could alert UN-Habitat Iraq to additional ways through which the Iraq Programme could support youth schemes in the country, and provide additional youth-focused outputs in its various projects.

The Iraq Programme does not engage older persons specifically, except as a mentioned category. However, this reflects a wider gap within United Nations Country Team and Government policy and programming.

Environment

The Iraq Programme carries out the agency’s core mandate relating to sustainable urbanization with environmental dimensions. Iraq’s environment has suffered greatly from conflict as well as from the poor management of natural resources, including over-reliance on oil for income generation. Iraq experiences soil salinity, drought, reduction in cropland: air, water, soil and chemical in addition to the menace of unexploded ordnances. Most of UN-Habitat managed projects incorporate the cross-cutting issue of environmental management, which are directed at achieving Millennium Goal 7, target 11. UN-Habitat’s programmes focus on supporting policymakers and local communities engage in human settlements and urban development issues toward finding workable, lasting solutions.

BOX 4.5: Youth agenda in the State of the Arab Cities 2012: Challenges of Urban Transition

In his preface to the report on *The State of the Arab Cities 2012: Challenges of Urban Transition*, the United Nations Secretary-General highlighted the importance of focusing on the aspirations of young people who make up the majority of the population. Lack of opportunities and dim prospects for personal and professional advancement can have destabilizing impacts, he said. The report showed how unemployment disproportionately affects youth and female populations. In Iraq, 44 per cent of its population is under 15 years old. Youth employment stands at 28 per cent, while only 17 per cent of women participate in the labour force, in part due to various cultural and social codes. Referring to the civil unrest or the "Arab Spring of 2011", the report noted that the youth rose to protest and demand reforms to bring about social justice and political transparency. Others demonstrated for lower food prices, jobs and affordable housing.

The UN-Habitat Iraq Programme is aware of and committed to meeting the growing demands from youth seeking their rights as stakeholders in sustainable urbanization. A majority of UN-Habitat projects responds to a range of youth priorities from education facilities and affordable housing to community and recreation centres. UN-Habitat has contributed to "on the job" training opportunities benefitting mainly unemployed youth.

Through some of the projects it runs, it has provided vocational and professional training for youth, though the numbers are small. Youth are also often visible in UN-Habitat's community planning initiatives. However, the youth perspective is not a main part of the Iraq Programme. With UN-Habitat Headquarters taking the lead in youth as partners in sustainable urbanization, and the Government highlighting this dimension, the demands on the Iraq Programme to do more with and for the youth are expected to increase.

A prime example has been the UN-Habitat land management approach, which promotes environmentally responsible use of land—particularly State and public land—in an equitable, transparent, efficient and sustainable manner. The aim is to contribute to interrelated national goals of economic growth, poverty reduction, food security, national defence and balanced socioeconomic development. Thus, UN-Habitat and its partners are formulating new laws, policies and programmes and sharing best practices. Likewise, a guiding principle in Iraq's National Housing Policy is that housing and development standards must be continually reviewed to ensure affordability of shelter while neither compromising key health, nor safety concerns, nor those

of the environment. Continual innovation in design, materials, energy efficiency and environmental impacts is to be supported. However, Government priorities and budget allocation for the provision of environmentally sound infrastructure are relatively low in comparison to the enormous needs of proper community infrastructure and adequate housing for internally displaced persons and returnees.

The increasing congestion of residential areas, slum formation and inadequacy of urban services has a wide range of negative consequences for the environment. UN-Habitat has, in turn, catalyzed environment-friendly housing designs which are locally developed, cost-effective and energy efficient. In addition to pilot settlement upgrading projects affecting 2,500 households, the agency has enhanced participative planning and capacity on environmental management in the housing sector. Likewise, in Erbil and Basra, UN-Habitat along with the United Nations Children's Fund, has reinforced improved solid waste management practices within targeted communities, demonstrating solutions to a major critical environmental and public health problem. Yet, United Nations counterparts, officials from the Ministry of Municipalities and Public Works as well as other stakeholders call for better interventions and impact assessments. The evaluations of Local Area Development Plans (without specifically pointing to UN-Habitat) recommended increased and direct engagement on environmental questions, which is being taken up in the second phase of the project.

Human rights

Human Rights are a cross-cutting issue in the United Nations Development Group, and are vital for the empowerment and a successful, dignified and sustainable transition for all Iraqis. Despite Government's commitment, the legacy of impunity from the earlier regime has been difficult to erase in the contentious political climate of conflict, distrust and competition. Common Iraqis face extensive rights violations. This observation was made in the recent Report on Human Rights in Iraq: 2011 published in 2012 by the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq Human Rights Office and the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights. However, the report focuses on largely civil and political rights while ignoring those that are socioeconomic and cultural. As the Habitat Agenda and international standards extrapolate, discrimination in the provision of basic services, denial of decent housing, existence of land grabbing, inadequate health and poor education that affect the quality of life are rights violations, as

much as those of a civil and political nature. Moreover, vulnerable groups such as poor women and children, the disabled, internally displaced persons and returnees as well as ethnic, religious, linguistic, sexual minority communities are particularly at risk. Iraq is taking steps towards improved human rights by setting up an independent national Human Rights Commission.

UN-Habitat, through its diverse portfolio of projects, deals with human rights. It does so, for example, by emphasizing secure tenure in its land and housing projects or in enhancing the voice of all stakeholders in planning processes under the Local Area Development Plans. The head of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq Human Rights Office confirms that lead UN-Habitat personnel have been trained and are responsive on human rights issues. Yet, the UN-Habitat Iraq Programme does not champion this

cause as it could. The Programme needs to argue more forcefully that weak implementation of legal and human rights frameworks, including cultural and social structures, impinge on the effectiveness of reforms and participation. Article 14 (h) of The Convention on Elimination of All Forms of Discriminations against Women, which created state obligations to fulfill the rights of women “to enjoy adequate living conditions, particularly in relation to housing, sanitation, electricity and water supply, transport and communications” needs to be further emphasized. The Convention on the Rights of the Child also demands provision of services or protection from abuse and participatory rights for children and young adults. Using a human rights approach more consciously would make the UN-Habitat Programme more effective but this would require resources and further training.

5. CONCLUSIONS, LESSONS LEARNED AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 CONCLUSIONS

Relevance

The UN-Habitat's Iraq Programme on shelter and urban development focuses on housing policy, land management, urban planning, governance, water and sanitation, and infrastructure. It is in these areas that the Programme best captures its comparative advantages in relation to Iraq's sustainable urbanization and developmental challenges. Government officials, United Nations partners, stakeholders and a bilateral donor, United States, generally considered the agency as having the mandate, experience and expertise to operate effectively in its areas. The current Habitat Country Programme Document for Iraq is well aligned with the Medium-Term Strategic and Institutional Plan focus areas and, to some extent, through the Enhanced Normative and Operational Framework. The document is strategic and coherent. However, the agency will have to further prioritize its activities in view of the new developmental phase and changed funding situation.

The Programme is also fully aligned with the Government's National Development Plan 2011-2014, the Kurdistan Regional Government's 5+ Multi-sectoral Plan, and other key documents for Iraq. The Programme appears responsive to specific needs and priorities of Iraqis, as reflected in key Government initiatives. However, there has been insufficient study and inputs into UN-Habitat programming from civil society to ascertain the appropriateness of its sociocultural dimensions.

The Programme was developed as part of a collective response of all United Nations agencies, programmes and funds for Iraqi priorities. UN-Habitat's programmatic areas are recognized in the United Nations Development Assistance Framework, where its potential contribution is listed under four of five priority areas.

Efficiency

The institutional arrangements for the UN-Habitat Iraq Programme office have been adequate and structured to achieve the planned results. Programme resources have been strategically allocated

and well implemented through the heads of three thematic pillar teams, the national coordinators in Baghdad and Erbil and field offices. The programme management officer has been responsible for operations including administration, human resources, finance, logistics and information management. These arrangements have contributed to its success.

Given the security situation requiring cross-border management from Amman, difficulties in hiring competent staff and often lack of effective coordination has meant high programming costs. Joint programmes reduced costs of external coordination, but there were increased expenditures of internal communication and coordination between United Nations partner agencies. However, the joint programmes added significantly to the value and quality of outputs. The Government and the United Nations found UN-Habitat's institutional arrangements to be adequate and programming challenges similar to those experienced by other United Nations agencies.

The considerable autonomy given to the country office in Amman has worked well, despite increased pressures on the chief technical adviser in a complex environment. The senior human settlements officer at the Regional Office for Africa and Arab States supervises and provides effective support for planned results. However, as the Iraq Programme enters a new phase, there are further opportunities for consolidation of the Programme's links with UN-Habitat Headquarters and the Regional Office for Africa and Arab States.

Independent audits show that UN-Habitat has utilized its extensive Multi-Donor Trust Funds efficiently and strategically. However, a major concern is the drastically altered funding situation. United Nations Development Assistance Framework documents show that UN-Habitat requires USD 77.2 million for its full programme, of which it has secured USD 9.3 million in funding. With the Multi-Donor Trust Fund for Iraq closing, UN-Habitat will have to review its resource mobilization strategy to carry its substantial portfolio in Iraq, or at least its most important parts.

Another key challenge for UN-Habitat Iraq Programme is the pressure to move back to Baghdad,

as have most United Nations agencies. The Government, United Nations partners and other stakeholders are almost unanimous in this view that UN-Habitat operations in Iraq would be more effective if the Programme office is in Iraq. There are also political pressures to return, as reinforced by the Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Iraq. A location in Baghdad does not imply free movement in the city or the country; there are higher costs as well as risk of staff losses. So far, UN-Habitat has agreed that staff assigned to new projects will be located in Baghdad. UN-Habitat Headquarters together with the Regional Office for the Arab States must urgently put in place viable transition plans for the return, though there are choices in the shape and extent of the relocation.

Effectiveness

There was consensus among respondents that the Programme was well managed and supported for achievement of results. UN-Habitat personnel in the Amman, Baghdad and Erbil offices were found to be motivated, competent and well-trained—combining technical expertise, field experience and political liaison as relevant. The Programme team with its 17 staff (four international and 13 national) spread between Amman, Baghdad, Erbil and other Iraq offices operated efficiently, which produced good results.

The UN-Habitat Iraq team has operated and responded effectively within the United Nations Country Team. This evaluation has endorsed the finding of the 2011 evaluation of United Nations Development Group operations that the “high level of coordination among United Nations agencies is one of its best acknowledged achievements” of the United Nations’ Iraq operations. From the UN-Habitat projects reviewed, where mistakes were made, they were corrected and lessons learned. UN-Habitat’s experience of working with a majority of United Nations partners in its 22 projects has been largely successful, harmonized and added value.

The Iraq Programme was successful, individually and with other stakeholders, in promoting sustainable urbanization approaches, lobbying for policy and legislative changes and building new partnerships. This is an ongoing challenge and UN-Habitat needs to consolidate and expand its governmental and non-governmental partnerships.

A significant success for UN-Habitat is its role in the development of the comprehensive National Housing Policy, which is funded through the federal

budget and is being implemented. The Erbil housing strategy being implemented is another achievement. The Baghdad Neighbourhood Settlements Project for internally displaced persons being carried out by the International Office for Migration, the Norwegian Refugee Council and the United Nations refugee agency provides a unique opportunity to pilot and replicate the model.

UN-Habitat’s pro-poor land management initiatives are conceptually sound and well directed, as seen through the Berlin Declaration on the Development of Policy and Land Management in Iraq that the Iraqi Government has endorsed. The establishment of the Land Commission, public land management law and supporting the World Bank’s initiative on the Land Governance Assessment Framework continue to be priorities.

UN-Habitat’s inclusive urban planning, management and governance effort in partnership with the United Nations Development Programme has introduced new decentralization and participative approaches; for example through the Iraq public sector modernization and projects under Local Area Development Plans. However, the effort will have to support the Iraq Local Government Association and other capacities, lobby for legal changes and piloted on service delivery at the municipal level, to create critical mass for change.

UN-Habitat has a solid record on urban infrastructural development but its critical role is through joint efforts with the United Nations Children’s Fund at modernizing and reforming the Iraqi public sector, as through the water and sanitation plan and deliberation of the Ministerial Advisory Committee. However, there are many players in this field and the Iraq Programme must work more closely with UN-Habitat Headquarters to maximize its capacity and strategy.

A pioneering area of work for the UN-Habitat team, with the United Nations Development Programme and other partners, lies in facilitating increased sustainable financing for affordable land development, social housing and infrastructure, as reflected in the housing policy. The breakthrough will be tools that are being developed in Erbil through the Kurdish Regional Government’s Housing Facilitation Unit and microfinance institutions.

The evaluation team found evidence of regular and satisfactory monitoring and reporting on UN-Habitat projects from internal progress reports and visits to the office of the Multi-Donor Trust Fund and the United Nations Assistance Mission in Iraq. The Iraq Programme also has an officer dedicated to moni-

toring and evaluation. The coordination by the Amman office with its United Nations and Government counterparts, as well as with headquarters in Nairobi was regular and effective.

Impact

The impact of UN-Habitat projects in Iraq is difficult to ascertain due to insecurity and the limited access to beneficiaries, as well as the limitations of this evaluation. Yet, the agency's role is widely acknowledged and visible. Through partnerships with United Nations and Government counterparts, UN-Habitat has contributed significantly to the sustainable urbanization agenda, improved understanding of bottlenecks and developed tools and responses.

UN-Habitat has achieved most of its project outputs and many of its programmatic objectives. Technical and strategic contributions of UN-Habitat are a vital part of its role, beyond project delivery. Through implementation of successful projects, as seen from the Erbil and case studies of Local Area Development Plans, the agency has sought better monitoring, capacity development, new partnerships (including civil society and private sector)—legal as well as institutional reforms.

The successful funding and implementation of the Iraq Housing Policy 2010 is owed to sound conceptual preparation by many stakeholders, strong relations with Government and support from the agency's Headquarters. An example of such support was the 2011 visit of the UN-Habitat Executive Director to Iraq to sign a memorandum of understanding with the Government.

The Erbil project has been successful due to the strong political commitment and funding by the Kurdish Regional Government. Other features include the involvement of stakeholders through Housing Facilitation Units and Local Facilitation Units. The coordination mechanism was effective and the project was better monitored and implemented than other United Nations schemes in Iraq, generally owing to better security and access in the area than in the rest of the country.

UN-Habitat continues to test the tools developed, such as in Erbil and projects of the Local Area Development Plans or those of the Bureau of Population, Refugees and Migration, and United States-funded activities for internally displaced people. Nevertheless, UN-Habitat must continue to focus on capacity development and coordination amongst various stakeholders, and technical aid.

UN-Habitat projects are pro-poor and generally demonstrate tangible benefits to a number of disadvantaged groups—from slum dwellers and internally displaced persons to women, youth and children. The agency's inclusive "settlements-based approach" is positive. However, despite some good project outputs for women's rights and youth training, there is no overall gender or youth strategy. Environmental sustainability is an emphasis that needs to be further highlighted and a human rights-based approach needs to be strengthened.

Sustainability

A review of UN-Habitat managed joint projects confirms that the pursuit of sustainability is a primary objective. A range of high-quality UN-Habitat outputs from legislation and master plans to training manuals and policy briefs are being widely used. However, the sustainability of the developmental results from UN-Habitat is predicated on the Government's capacity to provide an enabling policy environment and incentives for meeting the demands of urban development. A number of elements in favour of sustainability have been generated but several threats also persist.

Formally, there has been high-level official engagement with UN-Habitat projects generally. Examples of national ownership are the National Housing Policy committees, the Working Group on Land and the Water and Sanitation Ministerial Advisory Committee. UN-Habitat also has the full commitment of the Kurdish Regional Government, which has contributed extra funding to projects. However, officials informed the evaluation team that there were concerns regarding limited capacity on sides, an uncertain security situation and a polarized political environment. Moreover, UN-Habitat needs to do more to ensure national ownership beyond policymakers and building further partnerships, particularly with civil society.

Through its various projects, UN-Habitat has contributed to Iraqi capacity development to formulate, implement and review vital policies, strategies, laws and programmes. However, training has not reached all stakeholder groups and has not been at scale, as the mode of delivery has been conventional.

Despite a strong mandate from the Berlin Declaration on the Development of Policy and Land Management in Iraq and the formation of an inter-ministerial working group, the process of reform has stalled with the postponement of the formation of the Land Commission. Though the delay appears to

be due to a political impasse, it reflects the need for better coordination between Government agencies and the need for UN-Habitat's presence in Baghdad.

While UN-Habitat has a broad mandate, it must continue to focus on strategic areas and opportunities where it has strong political will, funding, partners and prospects of high impact. Example are the three pilot projects in settlement upgrading and relocation in Baghdad, in order to provide long-term shelter solutions for internally displaced persons and other vulnerable people living among them.

5.2 LESSONS LEARNED

The following lessons were learned based on the review of the UN-Habitat Iraq Programme activities.

Using the Habitat Country Programme Document effectively

Habitat Country Programme Document is a key instrument toward developing a coherent and strategic review of its activities; for strategy identification, planning, coordination and monitoring; as key vehicle to demonstrate the validity of Enhanced Normative and Operational Framework at country level; and to link to focus areas under the Medium-Term Strategic and Institutional Plan. The Document is also a useful tool for involvement and ownership of Government and other partners; links with National Development Plans, and the United Nations Development Assistance Framework and the "One United Nations" strategies. The Document provides enhanced visibility of UN-Habitat in-country activities and a basis for advocacy and resource mobilization. While the Iraq Programme developed its *Habitat Country Programme Document* in a fluid and complex context, the process was difficult, time-consuming and problematic. The Document was overhauled following the May 2012 staff retreat in Amman. UN-Habitat could reflect on the Iraq experience and consider how it could have benefitted further by prioritizing and systematizing the Document's development process. These are lessons for all of the agency's Country Programme Documents.

Managing multiple transitions

The UN-Habitat Iraq Programme strives to move from conflict and post-conflict humanitarian approaches to one of development, though many of the expectations of stability and security have not yet materialized. Given the project delivery model, the Programme has been focused on outputs; in-

stead, it needs to review priorities, partnerships and strategies to enhance impact, national ownership and sustainability of its initiatives. The Programme would have to strategize ways to manage the multiple transitions Iraq is experiencing and how to adapt its mandate to the evolving scenarios. The dialogue would have to be inclusive and engage all stakeholders from within the Programme, agency and partners.

Sharing Multi-Donor Trust Fund experiences

One of the successes of the Iraq Programme is how well it performed through joint programmes, cross-border management and reporting under Multi-Donor trust funds. There are presently 42 such funds, ten of which UN-Habitat is an active partner. Although they are all distinct, the Iraq experience would be instructive on how to anticipate and plan better to work in joint programmes. In the coming decades, it will not be the thrust of mandates or the innovation of programmes that will matter, rather it will be the preparedness of individual United Nations agencies to act quickly in concert in humanitarian or conflict situations. Learning from the experience of the Iraq Programme, UN-Habitat senior management could reflect on how to equip itself for opportunities and effectively negotiate and participate in Multi-Donor trust funds.

Beyond financial resources

The Iraq Programme is at a crossroad facing a fundamental conundrum: how to run a programme where there is demand but little or no money. The importance and legacy of the Iraq Programme is too great to be left to the vagaries of funding. Long-term thinking is necessary on ways UN-Habitat could adopt to maintain its relevance in Iraq, despite scarce resources. An inevitable shift has already been evident from the brick and mortar emphasis to the softer governance and capacity development approach. UN-Habitat would have to invest in its Iraq Programme because the country has been the showcase for the region and other post-conflict countries. To survive, and thrive, the headquarters could help promote select and niche cost-effective high-impact initiatives which are visible, scalable and which correlate to Iraqi priorities with strong partnerships.

Timely project delivery

In terms of timely project delivery, United Nations agencies, including UN-Habitat, have performed

poorly. All projects, barring one, were given up to five no-cost extensions. Several projects are still open. The Amman office attributed some of the delays to headquarters and to bureaucracy at the United Nations Office at Nairobi. Other delays were due to the need for operational, inter-agency coordination and Government liaison. The Office of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq and the Multi-Donor Trust Fund reported that UN-Habitat's performance was in line with overall averages of other sister agencies and did not reflect the management efficiency or affect the quality of outcomes. However, an obvious implication has been continuing staff commitment for outstanding projects with no additional funding. UN-Habitat could consider how these delays could have been avoided by better and more realistic project designs, which set impossibly short periods of completion and high disbursement expectations in a climate of insecurity and political instability. Such consideration is relevant for future Iraq work and comparable contexts where there is a rush to disburse funds when the capacity for implementation or political support is missing.

5.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation 1: Sharpen Strategic Focus

While UN-Habitat has justifiably had an extensive portfolio when resources were plenty, it needs to prioritize niche innovative projects and initiatives which are visible, correlate to Iraqi priorities and are high impact and sustainable with strong partnerships. These include policy support, capacity development and tool dissemination in targeted areas. Doing less but better and making choices with reference to its staff capacities and strengths are building blocks to a durable country presence.

The UN-Habitat Iraq Programme should revisit the *Habitat Country Programme Document* to reflect on its current strategic focus in line with the new realities with consultation, dissemination, resource and monitoring components.

Recommendation 2: Develop a Resource Mobilization Strategy

While the Iraq Programme leadership has a resource plan, it needs to develop a clearer strategy document—in consultations with UN-Habitat Headquarters, the Regional Office, the central and the Kurdish Regional governments, and the United Nations Country Team—for funding the key priority development programmes in Iraq.

UN-Habitat resource mobilization strategy should include Iraqi priorities and the Iraq Programme. UN-Habitat's Headquarters and the Regional Office should develop a resource mobilization strategy document which highlights its track record and widens the donor base to include non-conventional funding sources, the private sector and regional sources, as well as funding and cost-sharing by the central Government and the Kurdish Regional Government.

Recommendation 3: Design Programmes with Impact Assessments

While UN-Habitat was successful in achieving development results, many of its well-directed joint programmes were developed hurriedly without proper consideration of how its impact would be assessed. The Baghdad Settlements Initiative on Internally Displaced Persons project model of inclusive participation of women and marginalized groups toward a range of affordable tenure options is a best practice to be replicated.

UN-Habitat should put in place a programme development process which incorporates into project designs targets, results-based management and enhances the criteria that enable effective monitoring and participative evaluation of impact.

Recommendation 4: Tackle Gender, Age and Human Rights Systematically

While UN-Habitat programmes have had regular and positive outputs in relation to women, youth, children and other vulnerable groups the agency needs to attend to incorporate these cross-cutting issues in its work programme, systematically, and similarly to those of human rights and environmental sustainability. The agency can attain these objectives by liaising with UN-Habitat youth and gender focal points at headquarters on improving effectiveness of its initiatives in these areas.

Recommendation 5: Improve National Ownership

The UN-Habitat Iraq Programme has developed strong partnerships with various Government departments. However, it needs to consolidate its position with counterparts in the new highly competitive environment. In contrast to the present largely opportunity driven-approach, a follow up partnerships document with an action plan to meet expectations and obstacles needs to be developed in consultation with the agency's National Habitat Committee.

The Iraq Programme—in consultation with the UN-Habitat Headquarters—should develop a regular process of monitoring and revising the political context and progress updates on key Country Programme Documents such as the memorandum of understanding with the central and the Kurdish Regional governments the Berlin Declaration on Land and the Iraq Housing Policy.

Recommendation 6: Promote, Engage Civil Society

UN-Habitat Iraq's commitment to stakeholders and participative approaches is well established. Yet, it must do more (on its own, with Government and United Nations partners) to ensure space for civil society and reliable civil society and non-governmental organizations in the designing, implementation and monitoring programmes. Though the constraints in Iraq are well recognized, fuller partnerships with civil society and community groups must be recognized as indispensable for sustainability.

The Iraq Programme should carry out a review of its projects to map existing and potential civil society partners, and those of other United Nations agencies on the joint programmes. It should identify bottlenecks for civil society and non-governmental organizations and outline steps and targets to strengthen their stake in UN-Habitat activities.

Recommendation 7: Strengthen Dissemination

The Iraq Programme has a number of significant achievements disseminated through the United Nations Country Team. However, it has failed to publicize them adequately. This undermines the sharing of its best practices, dampens enthusiasm of its partnerships, affects resource mobilization and even limits impact.

The Programme should assign these responsibilities to a communication officer as part of a strategy that supports its website, contributes to regular updates to partners and works with the Information & Analysis Unit of United Nations Assistance Framework for Iraq and other dissemination mechanisms.

Recommendation 8: Innovate with Capacity Development Methods

While UN-Habitat Iraq has been relatively successful in its training packages, it needs to reach more people with enhanced effectiveness through inno-

vative learning initiatives and on the job training which are culturally appropriate and locally owned. This would include partnerships with academic institutions in Iraq and globally, with civil society, and the use of e-learning and distance learning courses and platforms.

The UN-Habitat Iraq Programme should review its capacity-building methodologies, training resources, participation dynamics and impact to guide a holistic capacity-building approach. The approach should ensure easier replication of innovative and best practices at scale, reflecting the new agency capacity development strategy.

Recommendation 9: Plan for Relocation to Iraq

Despite some consultations, there is an urgent need for UN-Habitat Headquarters to make better plans to respond to the growing United Nations and Iraqi pressures on the Iraq Programme's return to Baghdad. This has to be in concert with plans for the Amman office and the Regional Office for the Arab States, and the Regional Office for Africa and Arab States.

UN-Habitat Headquarters should further consult the country office in Amman, the Regional Office in Cairo and the office in Baghdad, and outline the strategic options (security, costs, programmatic and staffing issues) recommending timelines for the possible relocation of the Programme's main office in an appropriate form.

Recommendation 10: Consolidate Liaison between Country Office for Iraq, Regional Office and Headquarters

While the arrangements between the Iraq Programme coordinator and the country office in Amman have been satisfactory, the Programme has benefited from technical and strategic linkups with relevant staff from the thematic branches and Project Office at headquarters in Nairobi.

UN-Habitat should set up a mechanism for strategic dialogue between country programmes like Iraq, the Regional Office for the Arab States and headquarters, which is more regular, structured and target-based. The mechanism should be designed to ensure mutual learning, interdependence, exchange of tools, best practices and flow of information.

ANNEX I: TERMS OF REFERENCES

EVALUATION OF THE UN-HABITAT URBAN PROGRAMME IN IRAQ TERMS OF REFERENCES

1. BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

The United Nations Human Settlements Programme, UN-Habitat, is the lead United Nations agency for cities and human settlements. The basic framework for UN-Habitat's work is laid down in the Habitat Agenda adopted in June 1996 by all Member States of the United Nations. The Habitat Agenda commits governments to the twin goals of "adequate shelter for all" and "sustainable human settlements development". UN-Habitat works with other organizations at every level, including governments, local authorities, civil society and the private sector to help build, manage, plan and finance sustainable urban development.

UN-Habitat has been at the forefront of post-conflict rehabilitation and reconstruction. In 1997, the United Nations Secretary-General called upon UN-Habitat to implement the settlement rehabilitation component of the "Oil-for-Food" Programme of Iraq. The main objectives of the Settlements Rehabilitation Programme were to improve the humanitarian situation of internally displaced persons and most vulnerable groups in northern Iraq within the context of a sustainable human settlements framework; and to help lay the foundation for a stable society in northern Iraq by rehabilitating, upgrading, and expanding in a planned fashion the towns, villages, and rural settlements and their linkages.

The Settlements Programme was carried out in the northern Iraq governorates of Arbil, Dahuk and Sulaimaniyah. By December 2002, the programme had benefited about 1.4 million persons, equivalent to one-third of the northern region's population. Despite the difficult humanitarian environment, the programme had completed 21,268 homes for internally displaced persons and other vulnerable groups; 765 primary and secondary schools; 134 health centres; 905 km of sewage and water systems; 2,940 km of roads; 34 bridges and 225 agricultural and community facilities. The programme further created 150,000 jobs in the private sector by engaging and capacitating local contractors. Over the course

of the programme's implementation, UN-Habitat received a total allocation of USD 520 million. By November 2003, when the programme was handed to the Coalition Provisional Authority in Iraq, total disbursements had amounted to USD 353 million.

With the inclusion of the Housing Sector into the Oil-for-Food Programme by the United Nations Secretary-General in 2000, UN-Habitat was entrusted with the Housing Sector Observation Programme in central and southern Iraq. UN-Habitat was in-charge of monitoring and reporting on the imports into Iraq of building materials and equipment under the tenets of equity, efficiency and adequacy of the Oil-for-Food Programme.

The Observation Programme was important because construction had dropped from 16.09 million square metres in 1989 to 349,000 square metres in 1996. Furthermore, overcrowding and lack of maintenance contributed to the deterioration of housing stock and infrastructure. Due to the housing sector's forward and backward economic linkages, the sharp decline in construction investment had a negative impact on all sectors of the economy including employment creation.

Until May 2003, the United Nations' presence and activities in Iraq were placed within Humanitarian boundaries stipulated under the Oil-for-Food Programme. The United Nations Security Council Resolution 1483 of 23 May 2003 lifted the Iraq sanctions and provided for termination of the Oil-for-Food Programme in November 2003.

1.2 UN-Habitat in Iraq since 2003

Security Council Resolution 1483 of May 2003 called for continuing United Nations support to needy Iraqis and assigned crucial roles to the United Nations in the country's post-conflict reconstruction, including coordination of humanitarian aid. In accordance with the resolution, the United Nations Development Group and the World Bank jointly undertook a needs assessment to inform the international Donors Conference on the Reconstruction in Iraq (Madrid: 23-24 October 2003) of the status and priority reconstruction and rehabilitation needs in different sectors. These areas include humanitar-

ian aid, emergency rehabilitation, and technical assistance to key ministries, critical reconstruction activities and, later, regular development cooperation.

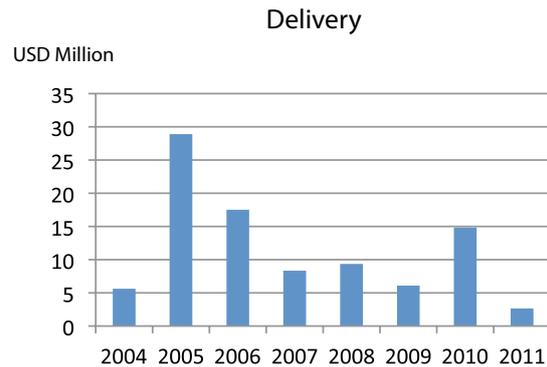
In the context of the past United Nations strategic framework, UN-Habitat developed the Iraq Reconstruction Plan for Shelter and Urban Development. The Plan included project proposals in housing and shelter for vulnerable groups; urban management and planning; local governance, as well as the revitalization of Government and public institutions. The Plan was prepared with a view to mobilize resources for implementation.

The UN-Habitat Iraq Programme has over 13 years of experience working in Iraq's 18 governorates. The overall management of the Programme is administered by an Amman-based team comprising 4 international and 13 local staff members, in addition to a number of full-time technical consultants. UN-Habitat also has offices in Baghdad and Erbil (4 national staff members), as well as field teams in Basra, Hillah, Missan, Nassirya, Salahuddin-ThiQar and Suleimaniya. A small team at UN-Habitat Headquarters backs up all operations and provides additional technical support.

The Programme relies on non-core resources to implement its schemes. Since 2003, the overall portfolio has peaked to USD 100 million, distributed among 30 projects and programmes. Most of the projects are funded through the United Nations Development Group-Iraq Trust Fund, while a small number of projects have been funded through bilateral channels. The Trust Fund has, however, been closed down.

The Programme supports various projects and schemes that fall under four main areas: i) Urbanization, Urban Planning and Local Governance, ii) Urban Services and Infrastructure, iii) Land Policy and Management, and iv) Housing. In line with the country's changing needs, UN-Habitat has shifted focus from physical rehabilitation of infrastructure to capacity-building and provision of technical aid.

UN-Habitat works closely with a range of partners in-country and elsewhere. At the national level, it maintains close engagement with the ministries of Construction and Housing, of Municipalities and Public Works, of Planning, of Education, and of Displacement and Migration. At the local level, it collaborates with the entire range of authorities. UN-Habitat also partners with academia, research and training institutions and employs consulting agencies. The agency has been partnering other



United Nations bodies and others such as the World Bank and the International Finance Corporation.

2. PURPOSE OF EVALUATION

The agencies comprising the United Nations Country Team for Iraq have collaborated in devising the strategies and plans for implementing programmes and activities under the United Nations Development Group-Iraq Trust Fund. UN-Habitat is undertaking this evaluation in order to account for the management of allocated funds; to evaluate results achieved thus far; and use evaluative evidence for decision-making on programme direction and performance improvement. This evaluation is part of UN-Habitat's effort to perform systematic and timely evaluations of its programmes.

2.2 Objectives of evaluation

The evaluation of UN-Habitat's Iraq Programme (2004 to date) is to provide the agency, its governing bodies and donors with an independent and forward-looking appraisal of the agency's operational experience, achievements and challenges. Lessons learned are expected to play an instrumental role in shaping the new focus of UN-Habitat in planning and programming projects. Evaluation results will contribute to UN-Habitat's planning, reporting and accountability. The sharing of evaluation results will inform UN-Habitat and key stakeholders, including Iraqi partners, on what was achieved and learned from the Programme.

Key objectives of evaluation are:

- a) To assess the relevance of UN-Habitat in responding to Iraq shelter and urban development needs and priorities.
- b) To assess the efficiency and effectiveness of the Programme, in terms of delivery of outputs,

achievement of outcomes, impact and sustainability.

- c) To identify approaches that worked and those that did not - drawing key findings, lessons and good practices from UN-Habitat programming experience.
- d) To bring forward programming opportunities that indicate the strongest potential for long-term partnership between UN-Habitat and other organizations working in Iraq.
- e) To make recommendations on what needs to be done to achieve planned objectives in Iraq, or whether such planned objectives are still relevant and need to be changed.

3. Evaluation scope and focus

The evaluation is expected to cover the period of UN-Habitat involvement after the termination of the Oil-for-Food Programme in November 2003. The focus should be on the Iraq Reconstruction Plan for Shelter and Urban development, tackling issues of:

- Responsiveness to specific needs priorities of the Iraqi
- Design and appraisal issues: whether or not the UN-Habitat Programme for Iraq is coherent and based on UN-Habitat's mandate and comparative advantage
- Whether the Programme is complementary to and harmonized with other United Nations programmes in Iraq. Issues of resource mobilization should also be attended to
- Performance issues: Whether or not the delivery and impact of the Iraq Programme was monitored and reported effectively
- If the institutional arrangements for the Programme were adequate and structured to achieve the planned results
- Identification of the direct and indirect results of the Programme
- Identify what contributed to success or failure of certain performances (Responses to these issues should be categorized by design, management and external factors, particularly context)

- Whether or not the Programme contains adequate mechanisms for effective mainstreaming of gender and youth issues, so as to impact favourably on the lives of women and girls in Iraq
- Whether or not the Programme is cost-effective

The evaluation team may expound on these issues as necessary in order to carry out the overall objectives of the inquiry.

4. Stakeholder involvement

It is difficult to evaluate the UN-Habitat Iraq Programme as an isolated intervention. The Programme is just one of many inputs to the activities of Iraq partners who all combine to produce the results on the ground. It is expected that this evaluation will be participatory, involving key stakeholders. United Nations agencies, beneficiaries of the projects, donors and other civil society organizations may participate through a questionnaire, interviews or group discussions.

5. Evaluation methods

The evaluation shall be independent and be carried out following the evaluation norms and standards of the United Nations System. A variety of methodologies will be applied to collect information during evaluation. These methodologies include the following elements:

- a) **Review of relevant Iraq documents** to be provided by the Iraq Programme staff, and documentation available with the partner organizations (such documentation shall be identified and obtained by the consultants). Documentation to be reviewed will include (1) original project documents and implementation plans; (2) annual workplans, (3) monitoring reports; (4) reviews, (5) previous evaluation documents; (6) donors reports and evaluations.
- b) **Key informant interviews and consultations, including group discussions** will be conducted with key stakeholders, including each of the implementing partners. The principles for selection of stakeholders to be interviewed as well as evaluation of their performance shall be clarified in advance (or at the beginning of the evaluation). The informant interviews will be conducted to obtain qualitative information on the evaluation issues, allowing the evaluation team to assess programme relevance, efficiency and effectiveness of the Programme.

- c) **Field visits** to assess selected samples of Iraq projects. If possible, from a security perspective, the evaluation team will carry out a week-long mission in Iraq to assess the projects and document relevant observations from the visits and interviews.

The evaluators will describe expected data analysis and instruments to be used in the evaluation workplan. Presentation of the evaluation findings should follow a standard format of a UN-Habitat evaluation report.

6. Accountability, responsibilities

UN-Habitat will commission the evaluation that the Monitoring and Evaluate Unit will manage. A joint advisory group with members from the Unit, the Regional Office for Africa and Arab States, and the Iraq Country Office will be responsible for comments on workplan and draft reports.

The Monitoring and Evaluation Unit will lead the assessment by guiding and ensuring the evaluation is contracted to suitable candidates; providing advice on a code of conduct of evaluation; providing technical support as required; ensuring that contractual requirements are met; and approving all deliverables (evaluation workplan, draft and final evaluation reports).

The evaluation team is to comprise two consultants: a team leader and a senior evaluator. They are responsible for meeting professional and ethical standards in planning and conducting the evaluation, and producing the expected deliverables. The role of the national consultant will be to support the lead/international consultant.

7. Evaluation team

The evaluation shall be carried out by two consultants with the following criteria:

- Extensive evaluation experience. They should have ability to present credible findings derived from evidence and putting conclusions and recommendations supported by the findings.
- Country specific knowledge and understanding of UN-Habitat and the organizational context of the Iraq Programme.
- Experience in working with projects or programmes in the field of urban development,

local governance, housing or infrastructure. Experience of working in post-conflict environment is also required.

- Advanced academic degree in urban development, housing, infrastructure, local governance or similar relevant fields
- Recent and relevant experience from working in developing countries (ideally within the Arab world).
- It is envisaged that the team members would have a useful mix of experience and academic training from various parts of the world.

8. Work scheduling

The evaluation will be conducted over two months: December to January 2011. The consultants (evaluation team) are expected to prepare an evaluation workplan that will operationalize the evaluation. In the workplan, schedules and delivery dates to guide the execution of the evaluation should be detailed. A provisional timetable is as follows.

9. Deliverables

The three primary deliverables for this evaluation are:

- An evaluation workplan.** Once approved, it will become the key management document for the evaluation, guiding evaluation delivery in accordance with UN-Habitat's expectations throughout the performance of contract.
- Initial draft evaluation report.**
- A final evaluation report** (including an executive summary) will be prepared in English and follow the UN-Habitat's standard format of an evaluation report. The report should not exceed 40 pages (excluding appendices). The executive summary should also be presented in Arabic. In general, the report should be technically easy to comprehend for non-specialists.

10. Resources

The funds for the evaluation of the Iraq Programme are available within the 2011 funding cycle from Sweden. Daily subsistence allowance will be paid only when working outside the official duty stations of consultants. The consultants to conduct this

evaluation should be of equivalent to P-5 to D-1 for the lead consultant and P-4 to P-5 for the senior evaluator.

Item	Description	Time Frame
1	Development of Terms of Reference	November 2011
2	Call for consultancy proposals and recruitment of consultants	November 2011
3	Preparation and approval of the evaluation workplan	December 2011
4	Data collection including document reviews, interviews, consultations and group meetings	December 2011
5	Draft report writing and briefings to UN-Habitat	January 2011
6	Production delivery of final evaluation report	January 2012
7	Presentation to the Committee of Permanent Representatives	March 2012

ANNEX II: LIST OF PEOPLE INTERVIEWED DURING THE EVALUATION EXERCISE

UN-Habitat - Nairobi Headquarters

Acioly Jr. Claudio

Head
Capacity Development Unit Research and Capacity-
building Branch

Anderson Cecilia

Human Settlements Officer
Local Governance and Decentralization Unit,
Urban Legislation, Land and Governance Branch

Auclair Christine

Human Settlements Officer
World Urban Campaign
Advocacy, Outreach and Communication Branch

Augustinus Clarissa

Chief
Land and Global Land Tool Network Unit
Urban Legislation, Land and Governance Branch

Badiane Alioune

Director
Project Office

Barugahare Martin

Chief
Evaluation Unit

Dzikus Andre

Branch Coordinator
Urban Basic Services Branch

Elkin Velasquez

Unit Leader
Regional and Metropolitan Planning Unit
Urban Planning and Design Branch

El-Sioufi Mohamed

Branch Coordinator
Housing and Slum Upgrading Branch

Goodwin Robert

Unit Leader
Water and Sanitation Unit
Urban Basic Services Branch

Haile Solomon

Human Settlements Officer
Land and Global Land Tool Network Unit
Urban Legislation, Land and Governance Unit

Kessler Rocio

Senior Programme Officer
Portfolio Strategy
Project Office

Kulikauskus Paulius

Inter-regional Adviser
Project Implementation, Monitoring and Reporting
Project Office

Krishnan Anantha

Chief
Youth Section (retired)

Jonsson Asa

Human Settlements Officer
Portfolio Strategy
Project Office

Lewis Daniel

Unit Leader
Risk Reduction Unit
Risk Reduction and Rehabilitation Branch

Masaud Ansa

Humanitarian Affairs Officer
Risk Reduction Unit
Risk Reduction and Rehabilitation Branch

Meeuwissen Jan

Branch Coordinator
Risk Reduction and Rehabilitation Branch

Melin Thomas

Ag. Head
External Relations

Mutizwa-Mangiza Naison

Policy and Strategy Adviser & Acting Chief
Office of the Executive Director

Nyakairu Jane

Chief
Finance, Quality Assurance and Information Support
Section
Office of Management

Ragan Douglas

Unit Leader
Youth and Job Creation Unit
Urban Economy Branch

Robleh Mohamed

Methods & Oversight Officer Quality Assurance, Finance,
Quality Assurance and Information Support

Office of Management

Swalleh Margaret

Programme Management Assistant, Regional Office for
Africa

Taylor Paul

Chief
Office of the Executive Director (retired)

Von Brentano Dorothee

Programme Coordinator
Regional Office for Africa

UN-Habitat – Iraq Programme, Amman Office

Adnan Ihsan

Information and Communications Technology Associate

Al-Sha’ar Lamia

Administrative Associate

Aubrey Dyfed

Housing and Land Expert

Kanaa’n Nihal

Monitoring and Evaluation
Reports & Donor Relations Officer

Khreis Thabet

Driver/Messenger

Lueck Andreas

Water & Sanitation Reform Adviser

McCluney Fiona

Chief Technical Adviser

Nablisi Maysoon

Programme Associate

Qattan Muwaffaq

Senior Engineer, Project Officer
Urban Governance

Sabri Omar

Data/Information Management Assistant

Thabit Maha

Project Officer
Shelter & Housing

Yong Elaine

Programme Management Officer

UN Habitat Iraq Programme - Baghdad Office

Al-Badran Dalia

Administrative Associate

Al-Hamawandi Rafid

National Coordinator

UN Habitat Iraq Programme- Erbil Office

Fadhil Darbaz

Project Officer, Infrastructure

Khailany Bizhar

Administrative Associate

Talat Mazin

National Coordinator

UN-Habitat Iraq Programme- Babylon Office

Kareem Mueen

Area Coordinator, Hilla, Babylon

UN-Habitat - Other Offices

Kishiue Akiko

Associate Human Settlements Officer
Regional Office for Africa

Schaefer Katja

Human Settlements Officer

Regional Office for the Arab States

Al-Ashhab, Wa’el

Rehabilitation Expert
Regional Office for Africa

Shalaan Ihab

Project Manager
Strategic Urban Development Plans for Small Cities in
Egypt,

Regional Office for Arab States

Nada Mohamed

Project Manager
Strategic National Development Support Programme,
Regional Office for Arab States

Fricska Szilard

Humanitarian Affairs Officer
Coordination in Human Settlement in Crisis Programme
Risk Reduction and Rehabilitation Branch, Geneva

United Nations and World Bank Partners for Iraq

Al-Ali Bashar

United Nations Programme Specialist
ITF Steering Committee
Support Office

Borey Anou

UNDP Senior Gender Adviser

Kaloti Bana

UN M&E Specialist, UNDG-ITF Support Office

Laurens Lionel

UNDP Programme Management Adviser,
Area Based Development & Local Service Delivery

McNab Christine

UN Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-
General for Iraq and the UN Resident and Humanitarian
Coordinator, UNAMI Resident Representative, Iraq

Seina Amereh

UNOPS PSD Project Officer
GHD Unit

Soroush Javadi

ILO Chief Technical Adviser and Iraq Programme Team
Leader

ILO ROAS

Sudipto Mukerjee

UNDP Head Economic Recovery & Poverty Alleviation
Pillar

Tuleen Khoffash

UNDP
Project Officer

Area Based Development & Local Service Delivery,
Economic Recovery & Poverty Alleviation

Maha Al-Nuaimy

UN Women Deputy Regional Programme Director

Usman Akram

UNAMI

Office of Resident Coordinator

Bousquet Frank

Sector Manager

Urban and Social Development

MENA Re Region

World Bank

Endo Victor

Land Governance Assessment Framework team,

World Bank

Kelly Lauren

Public Sector Evaluations Independent Evaluation Group,

World Bank

Jensen David

Head of Programme, Environmental Cooperation for

Peacebuilding

UNEP

Geneva

Bruyas Florian

Programme Specialist

UN Interagency Framework Team for Preventive Action

New York

Sy Amoudou

Economist

IMF Institute

Al-Khoja Sami

Programme Officer/OIC UNESCO Iraq Office, Kurdistan

Gachiri Joyce

Chief

Field Office

UNICEF Zonal Office, North (Erbil)

Government of Iraq - Baghdad

Sami Metti

Deputy Minister

Ministry of Planning, Chair, Habitat Committee

Istabraq Al Shouk

Deputy Minister

Ministry of Construction & Housing

Riyadh Al Wazir

Director General of Planning and Follow up Department

Ministry of Municipalities and Public Works

Amb., Dr. ZaidEzildin

Ministry of Foreign Affairs

KRG - Erbil

Tahir A. Osman

Deputy Governor, Governorate of Erbil

Saman Arab Sadik

Director, Legal Affairs, Kurdistan Board of Investment

Khalid S. Smael

Director General of Urban Planning, Ministry of

Municipalities and Tourism

Burhan Ismail Abdulsalam

Relation Advisor, Ministry of Municipalities and Tourism

Zana M. Uzeri

Director General, Planning, Ministry of Construction and

Housing General Directorate of Technical Affairs

Sahand Seerwan Ahmed

Director General, Ministry of Municipalities and Tourism,

General Directorate of Water & Sewerage

Mariwan Izzadin Faizy

Deputy Director General Ministry of Tourism and

Municipalities General Directorate of Water & Sewerage

Babylon Governorate

Selamn Ala'a Obied

Manager of physical planning, Babylon Governorate

Hadi Abdul Hussien

Manager of Hillah municipalities, Babylon Governorate

Jawad Hayder Ali

Chief of Planning Department, Hillah Municipality,

Babylon Governorate

Mohsin Hameed Ajrash

Manager of sewage directorate, Babylon Governorate

Gzar Ali Hussein

Member Babylon Provincial Council, Babylon

Governorate

Other Governments

David Reimer

Senior Coordinator

Office of Refugee and IDP Affairs

US Embassy Baghdad

Fahima El Shahed

Under Secretary

Ministry of Housing & and Urban Development

Egypt

Ameera Al Hassan

Curriculum Development

Ministry of Education

Jordan

Civil Society

Rawand Fuad Sabir

Assistant Project Officer

Mand Ibrahim Aziz (Prof)

Consultant to Housing Facilitation Unit (HFU) from

University of Salah Al-Din

Faiza Mohammad Ismaeel

Local Facilitation Unit (LFU)

Othman Ibrahim

Local Facilitation Unit (LFU)

Bana Yusuf Qadir (Ms)

Architect/Intern at the HFU

Badia Ali Hassan (Ms)

Architect/Intern at the HFU

Gulala A. Qadir Aziz (Ms)

Architect/Intern at the HFU

Sara Amin Abdurahman (Ms)

Architect/Intern at the HFU

Deborah Espinosa

Senior Attorney & Land Tenure
Specialist,
Landesa, USA

Robert Beer

Norwegian Refugee Council
Programme Manager
Iraq
Academics, Experts and Consultants

Al Ammar Ali

High Institute of Regional and Urban Planning

Al Kinani Kamil

Dean
High Institute of Regional and Urban Planning

Hong Yu Hung

Professor
MIT

Mumtaz Babar

Independent consultant

Willi Zimmerman

Consultant
UN-Habitat Programme
Iraq

ANNEX III: KEY DOCUMENTS AND REFERENCES

UN Resolutions

Security Council Resolutions (SCR) 1546 (2004); 1770 (2007).

United Nations Security Council, Second Report of the Secretary-General pursuant to para 3 of Resolution 1905 (2009) July 2010

UN Habitat Resolutions

The UN-Habitat Governing Council on 14 April 2011 on Pro-poor housing in Iraq

UN-Habitat General Council Resolution adopted at its 19th Session (Resolution 19/7 on 9 May 2003)

Resolution 20/17 in 2005.

UN- Habitat Strategy Documents

UN-Habitat *Humanitarian Affairs, and the role of UN-Habitat: Sustainable Relief and Reconstruction Framework 2008*

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ANNEX IV: QUESTIONNAIRE

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR EVALUATION OF THE UN-HABITAT IRAQ	PROGRAMME
Relevance	
To what extent is the UN-Habitat Programme for Iraq shelter and urban development coherent, strategic and based on the UN-Habitat's Country Programme Document (and other relevant programmes) and comparative advantage?	
To what extent is the Programme responsive to specific needs priorities of the Iraqis, and appropriate to the economic, sociocultural and political context?	
To what extent is the Programme complementary to, and harmonized with, other United Nations programmes in Iraq?	
Efficiency	
To what extent are institutional arrangements for the Programme adequate and structured to achieve the planned results in a cost-effective manner?	
Have resources (funds, human resources, time, expertise, etc.) been allocated strategically to achieve outcomes?	
Effectiveness	
To what extent do management capacities and arrangements put in place support the achievement of results? What has been the added value in the context of joint programming?	
To what extent are the Programme's objectives achieved, or are expected to be achieved, taking into account their relative importance?	
Is the delivery and impact of Iraq Programme monitored and reported on effectively?	
Impact	
To what extent has the implementation of the Programme had the intended and non-intended impact, so far, on improving good governance and planning in the various sectors in which UN-Habitat are involved in Iraq?	
Where performance is judged to be successful or unsuccessful, what has contributed to this? (Responses to these questions should be categorized by design, management and external factors (particularly context).	
Does the Programme target gender and youth issues so as to impact favourably on the lives of women and girls in Iraq?	
Sustainability	
What is the likelihood that the results of the Programme are durable and can be maintained or even scaled up and replicated by Programme partners after major assistance has been completed? How has the Programme fared in resource mobilization?	
Are national partners willing and committed to continue with the project? How effectively has the project built national ownership?	

ANNEX V: CASE STUDIES OF ERBIL HOUSING PROJECT AND LOCAL AREA DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME



A view of Parki Shar (City Park) in Erbil © Shutterstock

CASE STUDY I: IMPROVING HOUSING DELIVERY SYSTEM IN ERBIL PROJECT

Background

Erbil (Hewlêr in Kurdish, also spelt Arbil, or Irbil), capital of Kurdistan (Kurdistan Regional Government) with a population of about 1.3 million, is the fourth largest city in Iraq after Baghdad, Basra and Mosul. Estimated to have been established as early as 6,000 B.C., Erbil is among the oldest continuously inhabited cities in the world. It has been governed by many regional powers, including the Assyrians, the Greeks including Alexander the Great, the Babylonians, the Persians, the Arabs and the Ottomans. The old city was developed on a raised circular mound (the Citadel) but modern construction cascades into the relatively flat plains beyond. Erbil, however, faces a crisis in housing supply and urban services and UN-Habitat, which has a long history of successful intervention in the Kurdistan Regional Government.

Context

The Government of Iraq has initiated actions towards longer-term sector reform, including improving the

housing stock and quality, as well as tenure security, as seen from the Iraq Housing Policy 2010, supported by UN-Habitat. The Erbil Housing Strategy 2008, prepared by the Kurdish Regional Government with UN-Habitat help, recommends multipronged actions and provides blueprints for programmes and projects to improve the performance of the housing sector in the Governorate, particularly in Erbil City. In response, this project had three interlinked outcomes:

1. Improved Governorate capacity to implement the Erbil Housing Strategy
2. Enhanced slum upgrading and energy efficient housing practices
3. Decentralized housing strategy implementation experience widely disseminated for replication and further policy and legislative reform

Project details

Improving the Housing Delivery System in Erbil (project HS E4-18) is a joint project of UN-Habitat and the United Nations Development Programme,

with UN-Habitat as the lead agency. The project was implemented by Erbil Governorate and the Kurdish Regional Government Ministry of Municipalities and Tourism in Erbil city, Erbil District of Erbil Governorate. The project budget was USD 5,087,118 of which the United Nations Development Group-Iraq Trust Fund contributed USD 2,987,115; the Government in-kind contribution was USD 2 million; and the United Nations Development Programme USD 100,000. The project was designed to last 24 months from December 2008 to December 2010. However, it continues with two time extensions and a change of scope.

Relevance

The project contributes to the Iraq National Development Strategy Pillar 3 (Improving the quality of Life – Increasing affordable housing units through housing finance facilities); and to Millennium Development Goal 7, Target 11 (By 2020, to have achieved a significant improvement in the lives of at least 100 million slum dwellers); Goal 4.4.1.5.2 of the International Compact with Iraq (Delivering Basic Services—Improve access to housing by 15 per cent). The project is compliant with the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness and, through its gendered strategy, adheres to the *Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women* Article 14 (h). The article concerns the right of women “to enjoy adequate living conditions, particularly in relation to housing, sanitation, electricity and water supply, transport and communications”.

Validity of design

As with other United Nations Development Group schemes, the project results framework does not show a baseline established for most outputs or capacity assessment. This project was designed to last 12 months; it is now projected to last more than 36 months, which shows that it was too ambitious to be completed in the time allotted, though there were external variables related to the challenging environment which added to delays. Although the design included risk analysis, this analysis should have anticipated resistance from slum dwellers to demolition of their homes. In one instance, project implementation was held up for some three months. The objectives, outcomes and outputs were clearly spelt out for United Nations agencies and Iraqi counterparts, and entered in the project document. The strength of the project design lies in the joint programming and “multi-stakeholder” model, which conceives of holistic and sustainable outputs.

For its part, UN-Habitat sought the views of the many stakeholders of the planned project. For example, a consultation of stakeholders in Erbil in February 2008 formed the basis of designing the project. The design also covered cross-cutting issues of diversity, gender, age, environment and human rights. Field visits by the evaluation team saw ample evidence of these – women-headed households, widows (ordinary and widows of martyrs), youth, and older persons were beneficiaries of the project. Green spaces for recreation and sports for youth were visited. The private sector and academia (Salahaddin University) actively participated in the project.

Development results

The project had 10 outputs/deliverables which, in brief, are (1) a comprehensive organizational development and assessment study of relevant Urban Planning and Land Directorates of Erbil Governorate, and Erbil Municipality; (2) a Capacity Development Plan spanning several years; (3) a critical mass of key personnel with improved skills in priority areas; (4) a framework for public-private partnerships in the delivery of low-cost energy efficient housing and the sustainable management; (5) slum area improvement designs, implementation frameworks and microfinance strategies related to pilot slum upgrading projects prepared and implemented; (6) demonstration low-cost housing constructed, incorporating energy efficiency and environment-friendly construction and design features; (7) an inclusive and integrated pilot neighbourhood improvement plan prepared; (8) documentation of the experience of implementing the Erbil Housing Strategy and the pilot project; (9) experience and knowledge disseminated through a National Housing Delivery Conference in Erbil at the end of the project. The final output, (10) “improved a state of the art Electronic Data Processing infrastructure in place and functioning”, was cancelled in 2011.

There has been no independent evaluation of the project and this country programme evaluation did not have the resources for an in-depth and methodical or statistical appraisal of the success of this project. Generally, from the dialogue with United Nations partners, officials, focus group discussions in Erbil and review of project reports, it appears that the UN-Habitat component has met or is meeting its nine outputs, despite delays. From the results framework and indicators, the evaluation found a paper trail of development results. These were remarkable given the constraints and the pioneering work involved and the deliverables were contributing to ongoing implementation of the 2008 Erbil Hous-

ing Strategy. The objective of affordable, acceptable and sustainable approaches that could benefit all those who need to improve their housing and living conditions might be still far away but the project seems to have made a breakthrough.

Management effectiveness, coordination arrangements

This complex multidimensional project is implemented by the United Nations Development Programme and UN-Habitat through several Iraqi Government departments such as the Ministry of Construction and Housing, the Kurdish Regional Government Ministry of Municipalities and Tourism, the Erbil Governorate and relevant technical directorates and the Erbil Municipality. The private sector (contractors), academia and the local community, represented by the Local Facilitation Unit, a component of the Housing Facilitation Unit, are involved. From a review of project progress reports and dialogue with stakeholders in Erbil, it appears that UN-Habitat provided effective management and contributed to good coordination between the stakeholders at various levels. UN-Habitat has a designated project manager responsible for overall progress and technical aid, as well as administrative cover based in Amman but supported by the Erbil office. UN-Habitat had project officers based in Erbil who were responsible for managing the project's daily operations in close consultation with the Amman office. UN-Habitat staff from Amman and Baghdad regularly visited and supported the Erbil operations.

The Steering Committee set up and chaired by the Minister of Municipalities and Tourism in Erbil, to provide policy and strategic guidance to the Project Executive Team, seems to have been effective. Committee members also included the deputy governor of Erbil, and representatives from cooperatives, the contractors' union, private bank (active in housing finance), private sector developers and other stakeholders. UN-Habitat and United Nations Development Programme Project Managers participated as observers. The Project Executive Team, in turn, comprised of the national project coordinator as well as the UN-Habitat and United Nations Development Programme officers. The Project Executive Team responsibilities were to oversee the project implementation and guide the work of national experts and teams. It also prepared the project workplan and bi-annual progress reports for the Steering Committee. The national project coordinator, seconded from the

Governorate of Erbil or the Ministry of Municipalities, oversaw daily activities of the project and made periodic progress reports. The national project coordinator was the secretary to the Steering Committee. UN-Habitat Erbil staff maintains that despite the joint programme requiring more coordination, the outputs were stronger owing to that partnership with the United Nations Development Programme—an observation the agency reiterated.

Monitoring, evaluation and reporting

These were done regularly in accordance with the internal regulations of UN-Habitat and the United Nations Development Programme, as required under the memorandum of understanding with the Multi-Donor Trust Fund Office of the United Nations Development Group-Iraq Trust Fund. This reporting was as shown in Table 4.3; the evaluation team had access to some of the reports, in particular the project summaries. The project managers, the national project coordinator and others described above monitored and reported in accordance with Multi-Donor Trust Fund office requirements.

The reports comprised of an Annual Review Report prepared by the Project Executive Team and submitted to the Steering Committee. This report consisted of the quarterly progress reports covering the whole year. The Annual Project Review, driven by the Project Steering Committee, was held annually to review the extent to which progress was being made towards outputs, and whether these remained aligned to appropriate outcomes. The mid-term and final evaluations by an External Evaluation Team (that includes staff at UN-Habitat Headquarters, Iraqi consultant and independent international evaluator) was expected to assess the project at the midterm and towards its end.

The project met with some problems. According to some reports to the Multi-Donor Trust Fund office, the governor stopped the project in April 2011 due to minor protests and a general tense situation in the city. This tension followed the refusal of compensation terms by certain communities in Kurani-Ainkawa following planned demolition of homes illegally built on public land. The governor asked UN-Habitat staff in the field to close the office and leave the site. However, the situation was resolved by the Project Execution Team and the Housing Facilitation Unit, working with the Office of the Governor. After changes to the neighbourhood master plans, project work resumed in July 2011.

Sustainability

Although the project is ongoing, impressions gathered from the progress reports and field visits, plus interviews with key partners and stakeholders point to a project that was well received and is likely to be sustained even after UN-Habitat and the United Nations Development Programme end their support. Sustainability was built into the project design—capacity-building of key national actors, a memorandum of understanding spelling out roles of each player, a sound management team comprising international personnel but gradually transferring responsibility to nationals, and incorporation into the Kurdish Regional Government policies and plans. The design pays attention to the cross-cutting issues of diversity of beneficiaries, gender, environment, human rights and involvement of civil society and professionals. The exit strategy took into account the need for continuation of the project beyond donor support.

The project was designed and implemented on the foundations of the Erbil Housing Strategy, which was already integrated into the Erbil Government structures. This was further evidence of the project's likely continuance since the problem it was handling—improved informal housing—was a pressing need for all of Iraq. At the time of evaluation, evidence showed that the United Nations Development Programme and UN-Habitat had created adequate managerial and implementation capacities together with a scaling up plan for the Erbil Governorate and Ministry of Municipalities and Tourism to carry out similar project activities in Erbil and beyond. The successful implementation of the proposed project created favourable conditions for further financial support by the Kurdish Regional Government and the international donor community for follow-up initiatives in the sector.

The best evidence for sustainability was gathered during the evaluation team's interaction with the Kurdish Regional Government and Erbil officials. The region's deputy governor avowed to the team his personal commitment to ensure that project funding would continue when the United Nations support ended. Senior officials in the Ministry of Municipalities and Tourism, Ministry of Construction and Housing and Kurdistan Board of Investment spoke highly of the project, as well as the professional capacity and leadership of UN-Habitat management. The Housing Facilitation Unit—the body linking the beneficiaries to the project

and representing their interests—was functional. Government showed willingness to absorb the Unit into its structures so that the Unit could continue the task of scaling up upgrading of informal settlements in Erbil and beyond the project.

CASE STUDY II: LOCAL AREA DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME

Background

The Local Area Development Programme (F8-06 or NO 33) is a multidimensional and integrated approach combining more participatory local development processes, stimulation of local economic development and the improvement of social and physical infrastructure. The Local Area Development Plans (LADP) started in 2007 as a joint effort of seven United Nations agencies and the Iraq Ministry of Planning and Development Cooperation, which received funding of USD 30 million through the United Nations Development Group-Iraq Trust Fund. Donor agencies for the LADP have been the European Union and Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency. The lead executing agency of the LADP is the United Nations Development Programme, with UN-Habitat a major partner. In the first phase, other United Nations partners included the International Labour Organization; the United Nations Office for Project Services; the World Health Organization; the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization; and UN Women. In the Bridging Phase (linking up to Phase 2 being finalized) the LADP is implemented by the United Nations' development, labour and human settlements agencies mentioned above, with field support from the United Nations Office of Project Services. UN-Habitat implemented a number of fast track projects that the Local Steering Committees identified during the Local Area Planning Process. These projects included social infrastructure and capacity-building related to the construction sector.

The coordination of LADP was in six districts and five governorates and divided among the agencies. UN-Habitat coordinated activities in the old city of Hillah in Babylon in the central region; the United Nations Development Programme in Maimouna in the Missan Governorate, Chibayesh in the Thi-Qar Governorate and Mdaina in the Basra Governorate in the south. The International Labour Organization coordinated the northern areas of Sharazour and Sayed in Sulymaniya. This case study covers the first phase (2007-2010), the bridging phase (2011-2012, on-going) and plans for Phase II. The LADP

bridging phase seeks to consolidate, replicate and scale up the outputs into a national programme.

The evaluators met with the LADP programme manager and staff of the United Nations Development Programme, the International Labour Organization and United Nations Office for Project Services. Evaluators also met with UN-Habitat Amman-based personnel and in Hilla with the UN-Habitat project team, government officials and professionals. However, the evaluators could not meet beneficiaries to ascertain actual impact and relied on interviews, documents, progress reports for the case study. In addition, the evaluators relied on the independent joint evaluation of LADP (LADP evaluation 2010), commissioned by the United Nations Development Programme,¹⁴ which also reviews UN-Habitat's performance. The LADP evaluation 2010 offered a positive assessment of UN-Habitat's performance in the projects, despite some overall lessons.

Relevance

The LADP project falls within several areas of the UN-Habitat Medium-Term Strategic and Institutional Plan, particularly urbanization, urban planning and local governance. United Nations agencies developed the project jointly, based on a situational analysis pointing to the need for decentralization, problems facing provincial councils and the limited capacity of governorates to deliver. It also corresponds to Iraq National Development Goals: Goal 1: Mitigate poverty and hunger; Goal 3: Enhancing gender equity and strengthening women's issues, as well as strengthen the foundation for economic growth. The outcomes are relevant including a sustainable, socially inclusive and gender-balanced economic reform and development in Iraq; improved policies, strategies and related institutional developments that are sensitive to the Millennium Goals, social inclusiveness, gender equality and pro-poor economic growth; and enhanced key sectors of local economy in most deprived areas.

The LADP Bridging Phase project document makes the case for added value for the joint programme, through the geographical familiarity of the respective agencies as well as their thematic expertise. UN-Habitat has led on urban development with a focus on housing and municipal services including urban planning, and solid waste management; The International Labour Organization and the United Nations Office for Project Services leads on econom-

ic recovery with a focus on economic development, employment and vocational training services; the United Nations Development Programme focuses on rural and sustainable development especially on water and sanitation, electricity and the environment.

Design validity

The project was developed during a period of relatively easy funding but the objectives, design, outcomes and outputs for Phase I were clearly spelt out for United Nations agencies and their Iraqi counterparts. However, the joint independent evaluation in 2010 found several design defects. First, the project was too ambitious to be completed in the 12 months envisaged; delays were to be expected. In effect, the three-year lifespan would have been better suited for systemic and better integrated development process. Second, a mistake was made in the original programme design when each United Nations agency was assigned a certain amount of the LADP's budget before development priorities could be properly set by Iraqi stakeholders. This led to lost opportunities. The LADP evaluation also identified a number of areas for future intervention that were missing from the initial design, which would have been more beneficial and would have resulted in a more supportive environment for participatory local development.

While the underlying principles of LADP Phase I and the core values of the United Nations remain at the heart of bridging (and Phase II) mandate, lessons have been learnt from phase I that there is a need for better planning. The paradigm shift in the project model changes after LADP I sees the departure "from the initial, largely United Nations-driven, one-off district pilot process to strengthening an institutionalized, Government-driven, iterative development planning and implementation process covering all districts within a Governorate". There is greater emphasis on civil society, gender and human rights approaches. While inter-agency coordination issues are tackled, the bridging phase is again for one year in anticipation of the LADP Phase II, which has failed to start in 2011 as planned. The LADP Bridging Phase project has not been completed.

Development results

The 2010 Local Area Development Programme (LADP) evaluation, as well as other sources, agreed that "in terms of development results, the LADP has by and large achieved its programming aims". The

¹⁴ The evaluation was undertaken in the spring of 2010 when the LADP was near the conclusion of its programming activity. See UNDP 2010a

key elements of the LADP: the support provided to the local development processes in six districts, the economic recovery component and the fast track projects have largely been successful. The evaluation found short-term employment generated through the fast track infrastructure projects (UNDP, UN-Habitat, WHO) for more than 135,000 person days. In terms of economic recovery activity, 2,685 (local trainers, NGO managers and final beneficiaries) were provided technical training in business development practices. These and other achievements have been commended, given the relatively short time frame of the project and the initial sputters.

The LADP evaluation viewed UN-Habitat outputs favourably. It noted that UN-Habitat completed six schools, four youth centres, three green areas, including two training sessions for unemployed youth and contractors in the three project areas. However, UN-Habitat was unable to carry out some of its mandate on housing delivery due to difficulties in selecting beneficiaries and an insufficient budget allocation. Instead, it was decided to invest in communal upgrading in poor housing areas through improvements to access roads and surface drainage thus benefiting a larger number of people in low-income housing areas. UN-Habitat had a range of other outputs, Local Area Development Plans prepared for Suleimaniyah, Hilla, and the marshlands by 2009. There was also spatial analysis and methods for urban consultation included in planning process and rehabilitation of community infrastructure and housing. UN-Habitat contributed to local development planning process by introducing spatial analysis of the districts and an implementation plan prioritized around available financial resources. In particular, the evaluation noted the “stimulated interest in seeing more fast track projects implemented”.

Beyond specific outputs, there are strategic gains from the LADP project. It has demonstrated how strong local and participatory planning and engagement could make a difference. The evaluation pointed out that despite the strong centralized tendencies in Iraq and some scepticism, the LADP has met with “enthusiastic support” from Iraqi stakeholders. It noted, “This passion for the LADP has been a critical factor in the programme’s success.” The LADP Bridging Phase has looked at how better coordination among UN-Habitat, the United Nations Development Programme and the International Labour Organization/United Nations Office for Project Services could consolidate the achievements into Phase II. Under the Bridging Phase, UN-Habitat is delivering several outputs including

knowledge-sharing activities on principles and approaches of slum upgrading practiced in few different contexts in the region.

Management effectiveness and coordination

The management of Local Area Development Programme (LADP) turned out to be effective in meeting its objectives but not without problems. In the first year of the LADP’s implementation, there was low productivity and some confusion over roles of agencies owing to delays in various agencies recruiting staff, particularly the United Nations Development Programme in appointing an appropriate programme manager. This also stalled UN-Habitat. Since the original programme design allocated each United Nations agency a certain amount of the LADP’s budget before development priorities could be properly set by Iraqi stakeholders, there was initially lack of coordination, even purpose. This was remedied in time by strong leadership of LADP at the United Nations Development Programme and partner agencies, including UN-Habitat. A key recommendation from the 2010 evaluation is on better coordination and administrative control over LADP, owing to some weaknesses.

The LADP evaluation 2010 noted that stakeholders generally spoke well of UN-Habitat’s role in the LADP as area coordinator and implementer of a series of fast track projects. The agency’s work as area coordinator in the central region was deemed to be very effective. Once the current programme manager arrived a year into the LADP, UN-Habitat had in place a steady cross-border management team. However, the overall problem the LADP faced “in terms of sharing information between the local, governorate and national levels” led to a concern that the process of contracts was not transparent. The LADP evaluation, however, pointed out that there was no evidence of this.

The Bridging Phase project greatly improves management efficiency by setting up formal mechanisms, including the Programme Management Team, composed of the overall programme manager (the United Nations Development Programme) and the UN-Habitat and ILO programme managers based in Amman; a regional team providing technical support, comprising the regional area coordinators (strategic planner and institutional development specialists and infrastructure, urban development and economic development experts and other sectoral specialists) to provide the main technical in-

puts. In addition, there would be area coordinating agencies for each governorate. The management arrangements of the Bridging Phase continue to empower local level structures of government, such as planning units with the primary decision-making authority. A National Supervisory Committee in Baghdad, supported by a United Nations National Coordinator, looks after the programme management functions at the central level. UN-Habitat reporting and monitoring on the LADP were deemed to be regular and satisfactory. The monitoring and evaluation tools developed under LADP Phase I are improved and extended during the Bridging Phase programme.

Sustainability

The goal of the Local Area Development Programme is sustainable local social and economic development. LADP has made significant progress on all three programmatic fronts, but its project leaders agree that it is too early to talk of genuine sustainability. The 2010 evaluation referred to LADP in promising terms but as reaching midterm rather than a fully mature programme. While LADP project activities have led to developmental benefits and provided important experience and exposure to constructive developmental practices, the appro-

priate administrative arrangement to support “the participatory local planning championed by the programme are still in flux”. It may be too early to comment on if the LADP concepts are adequately institutionalized and if all administrative levels are being targeted. The question of sustainability is related to political and financial support and to how the concepts of inclusion, bottom up, gender, human rights and environment are negotiated.

The LADP phase II strives to consolidate and scale up the work begun in the original six districts to ensure sustainability, institutionalization and to establish models for other districts to follow. The successful launch of the next phase, with greater involvement and funding from the Government, is likely to frame the issues of sustainability and Iraqi ownership in a more favourable way. The LADP independent evaluation argues that greater sustainability “is contingent on some resolution between national and local layers of the Iraqi political system over factors that currently hinder the preparation and implementation of locally conceived development plans”. The LADP Phase II proposes an exit strategy and sustainability on the basis that it enhances capacity and transfers governance powers to local actors in a fully participatory process. Clearly, UN-Habitat has a key role to play in getting there.



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