



# Informal Settlements in the Arab Region

*“Towards Arab Cities without Informal Areas”*  
Analysis and Prospects

February 2020

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EDITORIAL

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# FOREWORD

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## UN HABITAT FOREWORD

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Inequality and poverty are growing to formulate one of the main challenges facing global development. In the Arab region, this is magnified by the ongoing social and political unrest in some countries. Climate change, water shortages and food security are also threatening stability and sustainable development in the region.

According to the analysis presented in this report, such a complex situation resulted in emergence and growth of informal and poor settlements around and inside many of the main Arab cities and economic hubs. People migrating to these areas simply seek safety, job, access to opportunities and improved quality of living.

The new urban agenda (NUA 2016) recognized the complexity of informal and degraded settlements, their links to poverty, inequality, and social exclusion. It recommended availing resources and commitment to creating an enabling environment that reduces the vulnerability of informal settlements socially, economically and physically, and enhances urban security.

This report accordingly highlights the key challenges, successful experiences and lessons learned, and required resources to enable supporting national and local governments progress towards these integrated objectives. The main conclusion of the report includes priority action areas that needs to integrate innovatively to effectively address this complex challenge.

The analysis of various cases in this report ensures the need to integrate efforts and resources to influence sustainable upgrading of informal settlements in the Arab region. This echoes the United Nations efforts towards integration of the sustainable development goals, and leaving no one and no place behind. Approaching informal settlements upgrading entails supporting improved access to basic services (education, health, clean water and improved sanitation services), decent work and economic growth, reducing inequalities, climate action, and specifically Goal 11 “to make cities and human settlements inclusive Safe, resilient and sustainable”, in addition to the key importance of partnerships to achieve these goals, i.e. Goal 17.

The strategic plan of UN-Habitat 2020-2023 reflects the goals of the Organization in advancing sustainable urbanization processes as an engine for development and peace to improve living conditions for all, is based on four main domains of change, with a specific focus on reducing spatial inequality and poverty.

This report, conducted in partnership with the Islamic Development Bank, represents the first step towards operationalizing the regional programme “Towards Arab Cities without Informal areas”. reaffirming UN-Habitat’s commitment to work with partners to promote programmes and initiatives that contribute to sustainable and inclusive urban development in cities and human settlements.



**Erfan ALI**  
Director,  
Regional Office Arab States  
UN HABITAT

## IsDB FOREWORD

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Despite significant progress made to date, the proliferation of slums and informal settlements has been a continued challenge in the Arab region, perpetuated by several factors including, but not limited to, high cost of land, limited access to credit, population movements and displacements, lengthy land transactions and tenure registration procedures.

Since the adoption of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in 2015, the IsDB has taken several initiatives to support its member countries in their efforts to achieve the SDGs. The relevant target of Goal 11, which is to ensure access to safe and affordable housing by 2030, is measured through the indicator ***“the proportion of the urban population living in slums or informal settlements”***.

The IsDB supports the implementation of its transformative agenda according to the needs and priorities of its member countries, through a collaborative approach, and in partnership with bilateral and multilateral development financing institutions, the private sector and the civil society.

This book, ***Informal Settlements in the Arab region : “Towards Arab Cities without Informal Areas” | Analysis and Prospects***, is the result of a successful partnership between the Islamic Development Bank (IsDB) , UN-Habitat Regional Office of Arab States (ROAS) and United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (UN-ESCWA). It is also the result of an innovative and inclusive approach for tackling informal settlements in the Arab region with a direct participation of the countries themselves in identifying their housing challenges and the best solutions to address them.

This partnership between IsDB, UN-Habitat ROAS and UN-ESCWA and the inclusive approach being adopted, can help to identify bankable projects and programmes which, if implemented with the commitment of the concerned members countries, will solve in a sustainable way, the challenges posed by slums and informal settlements in the Arab region.

Amadou Thierno DIALLO  
  
Ag. Director General,  
Global Practices  
Islamic Development Bank



# TABLE OF CONTENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	9
INTRODUCTION	11
THE SITUATION IN THE DIFFERENT COUNTRIES	22
THE FIRST CATEGORY COUNTRIES	23
EGYPT	23
IRAQ	34
JORDAN	43
MOROCCO	47
SAUDI ARABIA	57
TUNISIA	64
THE SECOND CATEGORY COUNTRIES	71
LEBANON	71
LIBYA	75
SYRIA	77
SUDAN	83
YEMEN	87
SYNTHETIC TABLE	93
CONCLUSION	97
THE WAY FORWARD	103

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## INFORMAL SETTLEMENTS

Global commitment to the inclusive right to adequate housing was renewed at the Third United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development – Habitat III. Housing will hence prove central to the achievement of Sustainable Development Goal 11: ‘Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable’.

Across the Arab region, around 18 % of residents live under each country's national poverty line, with significant variation between the Gulf countries, which have an average per capita income of USD 29,000, and the Southern Tier countries (not including Somalia), which have an average per capita income of USD 1,300. Also significant disparities continue to exist between rural and urban areas. Informal Settlements have become the reflection of the mirror of poverty and lack of access to adequate housing.

Slums versus informal settlements: the term ‘slum’ is a “general context to describe a wide range of low-income settlements and/or poor human living conditions”. Different criteria are used to define slums include physical, spatial, social and behavioral criterion. Informal or spontaneous settlements are settlements whereby persons, or squatters, assert land rights or occupy for exploitation of land which is not registered in their names, or government land, or land legally owned by other individuals. Squatters are people who occupy land or buildings without the explicit permission of the owner. The structures and location of the informal settlements of the region are characterized by two different patterns: substandard or makeshift structures in central slums, hazardous, and unsafe locations or suburban areas lacking access to basic services; and unplanned urban expansion mostly through the subdivision of agricultural land in violation of existing codes.

At this stage of the analysis, the data collection process was limited. It is based on two elements:

- A questionnaire filled by National focal points in some countries with variable quality and comprehensiveness of the information provided.
- Data based on literature review and research networks.
- Two-days Consultation workshop with representation from most Arab countries, development partners and civil society organizations where the data prepared was presented, discussed and further information was gathered in parallel thematic groups.

This report provides an overview of the status of informal settlements in the main Arab countries where data was accessible; explores the reasons of emergence, national definitions and forms of informality, national responding approaches and strategies; in addition to highlighting some useful case studies from these countries. This overview provides guidance to national governments by offering a preliminary framework for the preparation of national or local informal settlement upgrading strategies grounded in international and regional best practices and recognizing approaches and regional and national challenges.

The analysis of the different countries focused on the potential lessons learned through highlighting the advancement level of their public policies responding to informal settlements, the mapping processes of their informal settlements, their physical state and socio-economic situations, the presence of pilot projects, and the involvement of the private sector or innovative finance mechanisms in the upgrading process.



Despite the data limitation, the review and analysis presented by country conducted in this report enabled some observations on the common and specific challenges, the importance of social and economic aspects of informality, the need for innovative financial and governance mechanisms, and the importance of participation for sustainable strategies and programmes. The review of all approaches that have been addressed in different Arab countries and the examples of the different projects could be concluded in such in some main items as follows: The investment, financial and environmental impacts in most of cases not been tackled and there was concentration on the physical, and sometime social, aspects only. The sustainability of development aspects (financial, social, environmental) of projects has not been addressed in most of cases and there will be risks of sustainability of the development of the projects in future. This would emphasize the need for an integrated development approach to be embraced in development of informal settlement.

The overview also shows large possibility of cross learning among the region, specifically between comparable countries, or those whose political or governance situations are similar. The conclusion also highlights key cross cutting issues that have to be mainstreamed in upgrading approaches and programmes, namely: environment, migration and displacement, finance, gender, participation and local government.

Finally, the report lays out the way forward towards the formulation of the new programme -to be launched in WUF 10- "Towards Arab Cities without Informal areas" where this report and analysis present the first step, followed by the launch of a call for Arab cities to join the first phase of the programme supported by UN-Habitat in cooperation with the Islamic Development Bank. The regional programme will continue to learn from early implementation phases to support progressing of Arab cities that are inclusive, resilient and productive; integrating various sustainable goals and programmes to ensure leaving no one, and nowhere behind.



## REPORT

# 2

# INTRODUCTION

Shelter is a fundamental human need and, as such, the right to adequate housing has been recognized internationally in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) onwards. Housing is a fundamental pillar to various human development areas such as education, employment, and health. It also plays a vital role in terms of identity, social belonging, and inclusion.<sup>1</sup>

The global commitment to housing, within urban development and the right to adequate housing, was renewed at the Third United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development – Habitat III (Quito, October 2016). Habitat III's outcome document and the New Urban Agenda pledge to **“promote housing policies based on the principles of social inclusion, economic effectiveness, and environmental protection...[and] support the effective use of public resources for affordable and sustainable housing.”** Hence, housing proves to be central to the achievement of Sustainable Development Goal 11, which explicitly states: **‘Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable’.**

Across the region, around 18 % of residents live under each country's national poverty line, with significant variations between the Gulf countries, which have an average per capita income of USD 29,000, and the Southern Tier countries (not including Somalia), which have an average per capita income of USD 1,300. Most oil-rich countries have invested significantly in infrastructure, housing improvements, and subsidies for food, water and energy. In the oil-poor countries, governments have been constrained in their ability to dampen the shocks of rising food and energy prices while simultaneously supporting the production of affordable housing.<sup>2</sup>

Significant disparities continue to exist between

rural and urban areas as well as between the high-income countries of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), and other Arab countries. The Mashreq and Maghreb countries face challenges in reducing youth unemployment, child mortality and, in a few countries, achieving universal primary education.

The on-going existence of slums and informal areas in the Arab region represent physical manifestations of inadequate housing policy and social and economic exclusion. The challenge of improving the living and environmental conditions of these spaces while increasing access to economic opportunity, fostering social inclusion and integrating these as neighborhoods within the wider city is hence a continuing one.

At 35.6 per cent, the Arab States is the ‘subregion’ with the highest proportion of migrant workers in the workforce, and hosted 11.7 per cent of migrant workers worldwide, most of them from South and South-East Asia. The number of international migrants in the Arab States roughly tripled from 11 million in 1990 to more than 32 million in 2015<sup>3</sup>. Internally, within the Arab region, urbanization has been driven by the region's economic development, migration to oil rich countries, drought, and conflict driven displacement. As of 2010, there were 7.4 million registered refugees in Arab countries, most of them Palestinians and Iraqis living in Jordan and Syria; 9.8 million internally displaced peoples (IDPs), mostly in Sudan, Iraq, Somalia, Lebanon, Syria and Yemen; and 15 million international migrants in the GCC. Most of them live in cities and - together - represent one-third of the sub-region's population.

1 Slums as Expressions of Social Exclusion: Explaining the Prevalence of Slums in African Countries. Ben C. Arimah, UN Habitat, 25 pp

2 The State of Arab Cities 2012, Challenges of Urban Transition

3 ILO: ILO global estimates on migrant workers: Results and methodology: Special focus on migrant domestic workers (Geneva, 2015)

Most countries in the Maghreb and the Mashreq have made significant progress in developing initiatives to increase the supply of affordable housing through targeted programmes, while GCC countries and Saudi Arabia have policies to provide their citizens with adequate housing in place. However, in some Gulf, housing conditions of low-income expatriate workers pose a challenge.

Informal settlements and slum areas have become the reflection of urban inequalities, poverty and lack of access to adequate housing. The term 'slum' is a "general context to describe a wide range of low-income settlements and/or poor human living conditions". Different criteria used to define slums include physical, spatial, social, and behavioral criterion. However, the situation in the real world is much more complex as rapidly expanding squatter settlements are comprised of simple shacks or permanent structures, with a population having a wide variety of social, tribal, and economic backgrounds. Every settlement is different, especially in the Arab countries, and even in the same country with distinctive characteristics.

On the other hand, informal, or spontaneous settlements are settlements whereby persons, or squatters, assert land rights or occupy for exploitation of land which is not registered in their names, or government land, or land legally owned by other individuals. Squatters are people who occupy land or buildings without the explicit permission of the owner (HABITAT, 2003).<sup>4</sup>

Different models of financing slum upgrading have been used within the Arab region and respond to the challenge of making such programmes financially sustainable in the long-term. Models relying upon the financial contribution of slum inhabitants must remain sensitive to factors such as increased cost to the resident of formal service provision in order that upgrading does not negatively impact households' economic situation. Integrating slum upgrading within urban planning strategies is of prime importance, as Arab cities continue to grow.

Rather than adopting a piece-meal approach, integrated urban planning can enhance the efficiency and sustainability of slum upgrading. While slum upgrading serves to retrospectively address the challenges of existing informal settlements, steps must be taken to anticipate the future formation of informal urban areas. With water scarcity, climate change and desertification disproportionately threatening the Arab region, rural to urban migration is likely to continue driving urbanization and the pressure on housing stock. In the context of these challenges, planning for future urban growth can help control the formation of slums and informal areas. Systematic land use planning, zoning and the anticipation of trunk infrastructure are all methods that can serve to avoid the costly and inefficient processes of extending services and adequate shelter to unplanned informal settlements once they have grown unchecked.<sup>5</sup>

4 UN Habitat (2003° The challenge of Slums : Global report on Human Settlements, 345 pp

5 ESCWA, Working Paper, Slum Upgrading in the Arab Region, Patrick Ray 2016, 31 pp.

# HYPOTHESES

## HYPOTHESIS 1

## STUDY SCOPE

The study focuses on both informal settlements and slums recognizing the concept of slums, addressed by SDG11.1, and the differences are important, where Informal settlements operate outside legal and regulatory systems, but can include well-built homes (i.e. Syria, Morocco, etc.) and access to basic services. However, informal settlement lots may have been illegally sub-divided and having homes built without permission and access to services procured through unauthorized third parties. Similarly, not all slums are informal settlements as sometimes legally built housing developed through formal planning permissions may be -or change to be- in poor condition, overcrowded, with access to services limited by neglect or inadequate incomes (i.e. Iraq, Palestine, Morocco). The term “slum” often has derogatory connotations, suggesting the need for renewal through eviction. A third category, which is also concerned, is refugees’ camps- especially in countries affected by civil war. It concerns mainly in the analysis in report, such as Syria, Iraq, Lebanon, Jordan and some Palestinian territories. On the other hand, in some countries like the United Arab Emirates, the informal issues are related to the number of inhabitants in a house and apartment.

## HYPOTHESIS 2

## HETEROGENEOUS DATA

The methodology of conducting this study is being introduced on three main stages:

1. Introducing the draft report based on:

- a. Unified questionnaire form circulated in UN-Habitat country offices
- b. Desk review of official reports of all Arab countries.

2. Presenting the draft report in a regional workshop and getting feedback and comments from official representatives of all Arab countries and development partners and experts .

3. Producing the final report by reflecting all the discussions and applying all comments and feedback and including recommendations on the structure and content of the report.

At this stage of the analysis, the data collection process is still very limited as it is based on two elements:

1. The questionnaire elaborated by the consultants and filled by the focal points in some countries, where the quality of the information is variable from one country to another
2. The data collected by the authors based on literature review, experiences, and networks.

Based on available data; the report has categorized the countries into main two groups:

1. Countries with solid data on relevant experience and case studies representing their different strategies and policies.
2. Countries with less available data or not enough introduced effort to deal with informal settlements.

## HYPOTHESIS 3

## TARGETS

The report also shed light on UN Habitat action plans in different Arab countries and the extend of support and guidance to national governments through offering a framework for the preparation of national or local informal settlement upgrading strategies, grounded in international and regional best practices. In addition to



Consultation Workshop | Informal Settlements in the Arab Region  
Cairo, Egypt © UN Habitat ROAS  
26-27 November 2019

# 4 | THE SITUATION IN ARAB COUNTRIES

## BASED ON HABITAT III REGIONAL REPORT

By 2050, over 70 % of the Arab population will be urban, bringing new opportunities and challenges in sustaining inclusive, resilient, and safe human settlements. In order to achieve and sustain such settlements, policies shaping the urban space should foster peaceful coexistence, promote dialogue among residents and levels of governance, and integrate policy objectives such as health, transportation and mobility to enhance social equity, particularly for the urban poor and marginalized youth, women, and persons with disabilities.

The major drivers of urbanization in the region have led to encroachments on agricultural land. Land in general, particularly urban land, presents complex challenges reflecting the cumulative legacy of medieval Ottoman, colonial, and post-colonial rules and regulations that have shaped tenure rights. Unlocking the potential to capitalize on the key role of land, as a public asset in the financing of urban projects, will depend on resolving problems arising from complex tenure rights, unclear property titles, cumbersome legal and regulatory controls, and a lack of appropriate land management tools.

The Arab region has faced various conflict and post-conflict situations. The majority of Arab countries have suffered from at least one conflict during the last 10-year period. Conflicts have resulted in a weakening of the rule of law, declining operational capacity to provide services, a spread of informal housing and land grabs, increased levels of crime, and reduced safety.

## THE SITUATION IN THE ARAB COUNTRIES

By the end of 2016, displacement totals had reached a global record high, with 59.9 million people characterized as refugees, internally displaced persons, or asylum seekers, driven in large part by conflicts in the Arab region<sup>6</sup>. The Syrian crisis has significantly contributed to this growing total in the last few years, bolstered by ongoing conflicts in Somalia, Sudan, and Yemen and continued instability in Iraq and Libya. Additionally, Palestinians constitute the largest refugee population in the world. Changes in climate, with increasing frequency and magnitude of dry seasons, have also led to population displacement in the last 20 years and continue to, as Damascus hosted another 400,000<sup>7</sup>. In Iraq, the estimate total number of displaced persons has reach approximately four million in June 2015- many of whom had fled to urban centers, such as Baghdad or Erbil in the Kurdistan Region. In Anbar province, most of the displaced were within their province of origin and had fled to Fallujah and Ramadi, the two fastest growing urban centers in the country.

In addition to massive displacement in the Mashreq, civil wars in Libya, Sudan, and Yemen have forcibly displaced millions in multiple waves. Protracted conflict in Darfur, spillover violence from South Sudan, and natural disasters had driven the displaced population in Sudan to over 3.1 million by early 2015. Conflict in Libya displaced approximately half a million people in 2011 and another half million in 2014, when violence reached urban camp settings. In situations of protracted conflict that generate multiple displacements, the needs solutions for the internally displaced differ from those for refugees, as the former are citizens of the country in which they have been displaced. Some countries have adopted policies to manage internal displacement, for example In 2008, Iraq developed a national policy on displacement which widened land tenure options in order to facilitate displaced persons' access to land and ensure their right to adequate housing .

Yemen was the second country in the Arab region to adopt such a policy in June 2013, when its main achievement was to establish a legal framework promoting the primacy of volunteerism regarding integration, resettlement, or return.

The situation of displaced populations in the region is dynamic and is correlated with developments in the various conflicts causing such displacement. New urban policy considerations that do not take into account the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) Guiding Principles, on Internal Displacement, and the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) Framework, on Durable Solutions for Internally Displaced Persons, risk overlooking or excluding the needs of the displaced in terms of access to shelter, services, livelihoods, and jeopardizing local and regional stability. Today, the question of durable solutions for the internally displaced primarily comes down to ensuring long-term safety and security and protecting rights, such as the right of return and the restitution of land or property as guaranteed by the Pinheiro Principles. Capacity and resources for local and central governments are a critical component of durable solutions to ensure sustainable access by internally displaced persons to land and services.

6 UNHCR Global Trends: Forced Displacement in 2015

7 Internal displacement monitoring center, 2014

# REFUGEES

## AND INFORMAL SETTLEMENTS

Conflicts in Iraq, Libya, Somalia, Sudan, Syrian Arab Republic, Yemen and Palestine have contributed to a protracted refugee crisis, the impacts of which are felt globally. In 2014, the Syrian Arab Republic became the country of origin of the largest number of refugees worldwide. Syrian refugees have primarily sought safety, shelter, and services in the cities of neighboring countries, namely Turkey (2.62 million), Lebanon (1.07 million), and Jordan (635,000). With a decreasing proportion staying in camps, host cities face the challenge of providing housing, basic urban services and jobs to this influx of refugees. These challenges concern also the management of difficult climate conditions in these camps.<sup>8</sup>

As of the end of 2014, Lebanon and Jordan were amongst the top 10 refugee-receiving countries in the world as they hosted the first and second highest number of refugees per 1,000 inhabitants, respectively. Other Arab region countries hosting Syrian refugees include Iraq (245,000) and Egypt 118,000.<sup>9</sup> Contrasting with the suddenness of displacement in Syrian Arab Republic, the State of Palestine is the country of origin of the world's longest lasting refugee crisis. In 1995, 2.8 million displaced Palestinians were registered with the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), a figure that now stands at 5.1 million (UNHCR, 2015).<sup>10</sup> The return of refugees to Palestinian cities has declined since the last decade of the twentieth century, due to continued occupation, conflicts, house demolitions, and land confiscations (Palestinian National Authority, 2010).

National and local authorities are critical stakeholders in dealing with refugee populations, an increasing proportion of whom

(currently 59% of refugees globally and over half of global internally displaced persons) are no longer seeking temporary refuge but are living in urban settings (Crawford and others, 2015). In Jordan, approximately 85% of Syrian refugees are living in non-camp settings, primarily in the Northern governorates. Over 50% of refugees have settled in Amman and Irbid governorates, with another 20% in Mafraq and Zarqa<sup>11</sup>. One of the key issues facing Syrian refugees is gaps between the income that their limited economic activities have been able to generate and the cost of living, such as high food prices and increasing rents. Studies published in April 2013 showed that in Mafraq 86% of Syrian refugees lived in a house or apartment with an average cost of JOD 136 (\$190), compared to average monthly income of JOD 140 (\$195), leaving few resources for other essentials<sup>12</sup>. The vulnerability of refugee households is exacerbated by short-term insecure rental contracts. Jordan's national housing sector response strategy emphasizes interventions that strengthen how the urban housing sector can meet the basic needs of both refugees and local populations by bringing unfinished or dilapidated housing units into the market in partnership with the local private sector through support to Jordanian developers, banks, and enhanced household credit capacity. In addition to the pressures on the housing sector, the rapid onset and scale of the Syrian crisis have outstripped local authorities' ability to effectively manage its urban consequences. Overcrowding, water scarcity, and spontaneous land settlement patterns have negatively impacted living

8 UNHCR Global Strategy for Settlement and Shelter, 2014, 36 pp.

9 UNCHR 2015 trends for Syrian refugees, fact sheets. UNHCR 2019, Regional winterization assistance, Plan 2019-2020

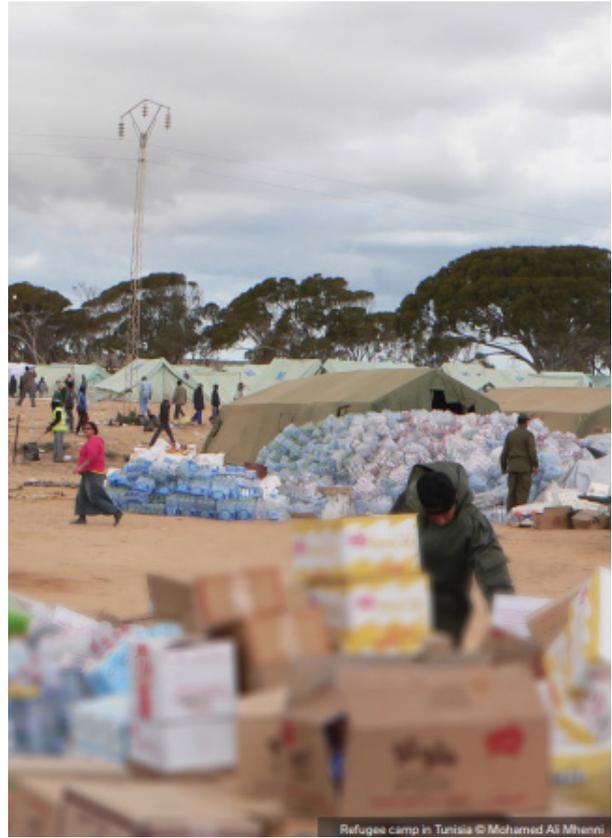
10 UNHCR towards Regional Refugee and Resilience Plan (3RP, 2015), 22 pp.

11 Report of Jordan to Habitat III.

12 Ababsa M. Les défis du développement territorial et de la décentralisation en Jordanie, 2019, Confluences Méditerranée; ISBN 9782343187440.

## REFUGEES AND INFORMAL SETTLEMENTS

conditions and the environment. The Government of Lebanon estimates that over a million Syrian refugees are renting accommodation or living in informal settlements across 1,000 municipalities, where they account for approximately 25% of the population in host communities. By the end of 2014, it was estimated that 55% of refugees lived in substandard shelter or informal settlements (Lebanon and United Nations 2014).



Syrian refugees walk through the flooded streets of Dalhamiya informal settlement in Bekaa Valley, Lebanon, January 2019. © UNHCR/Diego Ibarra Sánchez

# URBAN MIGRATION

## AND INFORMAL SETTLEMENTS

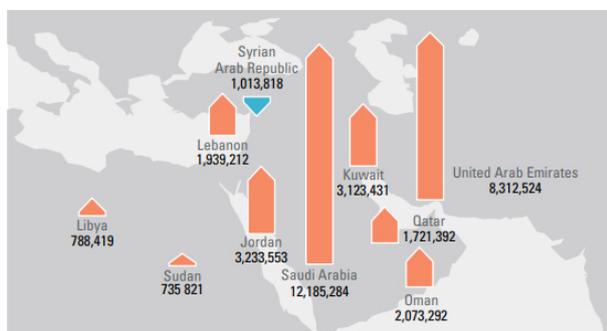
Rural to urban migration in the Arab region was driven by several push and pull factors. Economic development, through investment in city-based industries and sectors and the livelihood opportunities they offer, attract rural migrants. On the other hand, endemic water shortages and droughts and the modernization of the agriculture sector push many rural residents to abandon agriculture-based livelihoods. As urban-rural disparities persist, families and individuals seeking greater access to work, better services, and better quality of life continue to flow to large and medium-sized cities in each sub region.

Mashreq countries are primarily countries of origin which send skilled and unskilled rural and urban workers to the Gulf States or abroad. Patterns of migration in and out of the region have been severely disrupted by events since 2011 and forced displacement. Before the civil war, the Syrian Arab Republic was predominantly a host country, hosting significant numbers of Iraqi and Palestinian refugees, as well as other migrants from Arab region countries, who accounted for 86.5% of foreign nationals in the country. This situation changed after 2012 and Damascus is only hosting Syrians coming from other more deteriorated areas.

In the Maghreb, cities in oil-producing countries, such as Algeria and Libya, were key destinations for Egyptians, Lebanese, and other regional migrants attracted by job opportunities created by oil revenue. In Libya, African migrants settled, more or less, permanently in the country which is

a situation facilitated by the country's pan-African policy, thus altering the structure of the economy and society in many cities. The war in Libya reversed this immigration pattern with migrants fleeing to neighboring countries, crossing the Mediterranean Sea to Italy or returning home. Morocco and Tunisia are predominantly sources of migrants to Europe. Between 2000 and 2013, the global stock of migrants from the Maghreb grew from approximately 3.6 million to 5.5 million.

One of the most striking migration transformations in the Maghreb affecting urban development is the influx of sub-Saharan African migrants using urban areas of Morocco as transit cities through which to migrate, often illegally, to Europe. Through the late 2000s, the magnitude of irregular migration flows through the Morocco- Spain corridor increased and the Spanish authorities' increased control of the land and sea crossings caused large numbers of sub-Saharan Africans to settle in Moroccan cities, with a large portion of them concentrated in Rabat. This led Morocco to become the first Arab country with an immigration policy. Adopted in 2013, it included the regularization of certain categories of migrants (Morocco, Ministry responsible for Moroccans Residing Abroad and Migration Affairs, 2015). Several institutions are working to reduce the marginalization of sub-Saharan African migrants, but discrimination and negative perceptions by host communities are still barriers to further integration.



a. OM's regional office for the Middle East and North Africa and the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) launched the 2019 edition of the Situation Report on International Migration in the Arab Region on December 4, 2019 in Cairo | Credit: ESCWA

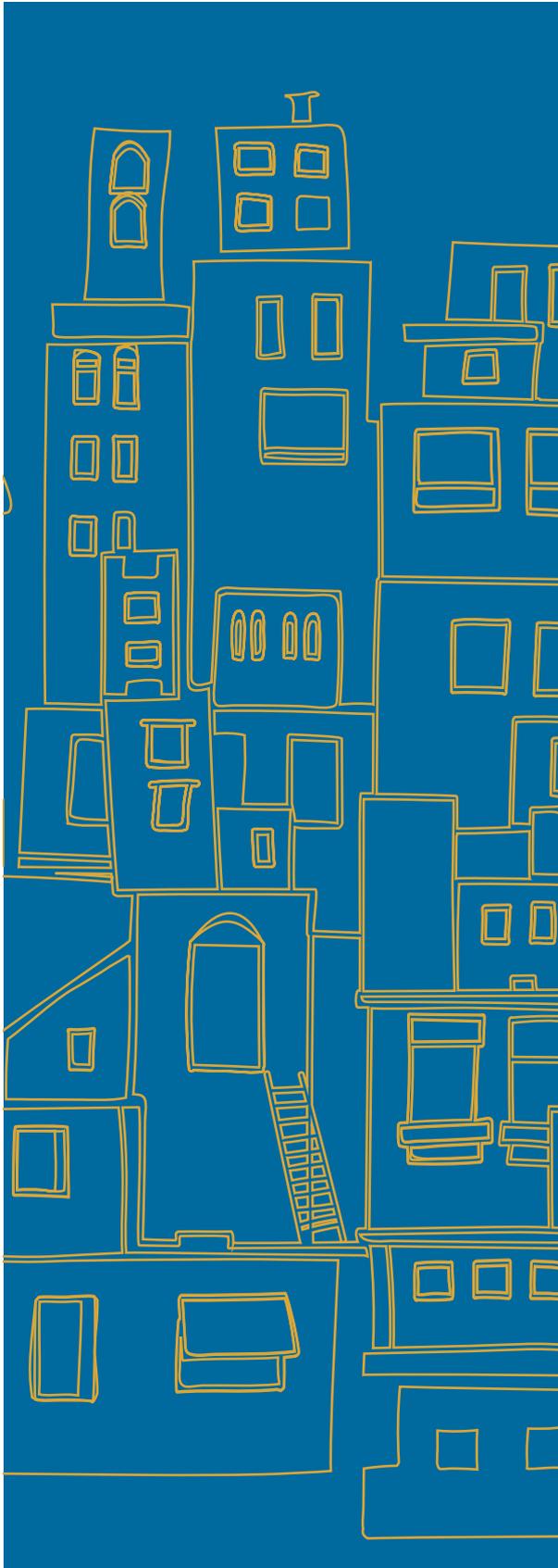
b. Syrian refugees cross over into the outskirts of Kobani, Turkey, after fleeing their homes.

© UNHCR / I. Prickett



# ARAB COUNTRIES

## AND INFORMAL SETTLEMENTS



The structures and location of the informal settlements of the region are characterized by two different patterns:

1. Substandard or makeshift structures in central slums, hazardous, and unsafe locations or peri-urban areas lacking access to basic services;
2. Unplanned urban expansion mostly through the subdivision of agricultural land in violation of existing codes.

The latter simplified typology is characterized by solid construction in concrete and brick and a rectilinear layout emanating from the shape of fields and anticipating future infrastructure servicing by local authorities. However, the density of buildings in these settlements often makes it difficult to provide basic urban services, such as sewerage, drainage, public space, and public transportation, thus compromising the inhabitants' right to adequate housing and accessibility of services.

Small-scale developers, real estate brokers, lawyers, and accountants operate in these settlements, where land and property transactions are mostly through private sales documents that are rarely registered. Informal finance mechanisms are also used for both land acquisition and housing construction. In Palestine, for instance, it is estimated that over 80% of all financial transactions, concerning housing, are cash-based and go unreported except through private contracts (State of Palestine, 2014).

Despite considerable progress, the proliferation of slums and informal settlements has been a continued challenge in the Arab region, perpetuated by the high price of land, population movements and displacement, limited access to credit, cumbersome land transactions, tenure registration procedures, and financial constraints on public management of land development.

# 5 | COUNTRY STATUS

1  
EGYPT

2  
IRAQ

3  
JORDAN

4  
MOROCCO

5  
SAUDI  
ARABIA

6  
TUNISIA

7  
LEBANON

8  
LIBYA

9  
SYRIA

10  
SUDAN

11  
YEMEN

# SITUATIONS OF THE DIFFERENT COUNTRIES

## A brief summary

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Countries were classified based on data availability, during the process of analysis, and wealth of information made available. The first category are countries that were able to produce and demonstrate sufficient data, considering the topic of informal settlements in their social and urban policies and have a governance system able to manage potential pilot projects. In this category, identification of pilot projects is possible among development partners.

This category includes: Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Morocco, Saudi Arabia and Tunisia. The second category includes countries with different profiles: Countries that do not clearly address the issue or those where data availability was limited during this analysis. The second category includes the following countries: Algeria, EAU, Lebanon, Libya, Mauritania, Palestine, Soudan, Syria and Yemen. Some of the countries can be integrated in the first category later, when data is collected and shared.

# FIRST CATEGORY COUNTRIES

1

## EGYPT

### Introduction:

Egypt's government has shown tremendous commitment throughout the years to upgrade informal settlements in all its forms. The Informal Settlement Development Programme was executed (from 1993 until 2004) on 1,221 areas, which were defined as needing development, and 20 areas in need of demolition. Approximately, 3,183 billion Egyptian pounds were spent on developing 352 informal settlement areas, demolishing 13 areas, and their reconstruction.

After the collapse of part of the Mokattam Mountain, in 2008, and the death of over 100 citizens, the previously applied development methods were revised. In the same year, the Informal Settlement Development Fund (ISDF) was established by a presidential decree, as a subordinate of the Egyptian Cabinet, to facilitate the allocation and execution of funds and development programmes. The role of this sector is to compile and define informal areas and put a broad and inclusive plan to develop concerned areas. The responsibility of execution then falls on the municipalities. The fund depends on active cooperation between central organizations (Ministry of Planning and Administrative Reform, Ministry of Exterior, and Ministry of Housing, Utilities and Urban Communities), municipalities, and local civilian organizations.<sup>13</sup>

The main reference for data, in Egypt, would be the ISDF and local municipalities, however with the highly dynamic processes related to informality, the numbers and analysis are continuously changing.

### Definition:

The definition has been changed to two main categories, either unsafe or unplanned areas. Unsafe areas include Life threatening conditions, Unsuitable shelter, Health risks and/or Tenure risk.. Unsafe settlements form about 1% of units in urban areas of low-rise 1-2 story buildings and need immediate interventions. Unplanned areas include buildings that do not follow the official urban plans or urban laws<sup>2</sup>. About 40% of the urban areas are unplanned,, varying from low-rise 2 story units to high-rise 12 story buildings.

There are Two official definitions for Informal areas that has been issued in Egypt. Definition of Unplanned areas according to the Building Law (119/2008) is that those "Areas that have arisen in violation of laws and planning regulations". On the other hands, the Unsafe areas are those that classified as Life threatening areas (1st Degree), Unsuitable shelter areas (2nd Degree), Health risks areas (3rd Degree), and Tenure risk areas (4th Degree).

### THE COMMON DEFINITION OF INFORMAL SETTLEMENTS

Issued as the formal definition

***"Areas that have arisen in violation of laws and planning regulations"***

<sup>13</sup> UN HABITAT- Documentation of the work of ISDF , 2018.

## Reasons of Emergence:

After the 1967 war, migration of citizens from the Suez Canal area to more central Egyptian cities and the focused national funds to wars in the 60's and early 70's. Until the end of the 80's, with shifted focus from urban planning and national housing initiatives, which encourage the increase in the phenomena of informal settlements. Additionally, migration from rural to urban areas to find better job opportunities or better quality of living has always been one of the major reasons of continuous expansion of informal settlements. Another reason was unchaining the ties between landowners and renters of agricultural lands, which allowed a lot of rural residents to abandon their land and move to bigger cities.

Moreover, the laws regulating rent caused the private sector to retreat from the housing market in that section and only focus on ownership. Furthermore, the laws prohibiting extension from old urban limits, without offering alternatives to accommodate expansion, facilitated the expansion of unplanned areas that are not following urban codes and regulations.

The emergence of informal areas is also caused by the gradual decrease in the supply of low-cost housing units which are accessible to low-income segments of the population compared to demand. With the increasing population (relative to demand), the increasing number of migrating populations (from rural to urban areas), the formation of new families in attracting urban centers, and the inability to provide responding adequate housing units with the same growth rate, some houses were formed in small patches which expanded gradually and turned into unplanned communities. Lacking facilities and services may create informal areas in remote areas that are located on the outskirts of cities far from the boundaries of urban blocks, built on desert or previously agricultural land.

The most important reasons for the emergence and spread of informal settlements in Egypt can be attributed to the following : <sup>14</sup>

- The 1967's war led to the displacement of citizens from the Suez Canal axis to the depths of Egyptian cities.
- The state budget was then directed to the war in the late 60's and early 70's.
- Egyptian labor remittances in the Gulf directed

to housing sector rather than any other investment sector due to the instability of the economic and investment environment (1980-1990).

- Rural migration to cities, in order to get jobs, led to the expansion of informal settlements (1990 - beginning of 2000)
- Rent control laws led to the private sector's withdrawal from the housing market for rental purposes and its conversion to ownership.
- Spread culture of housing ownership and the income gap compared to the economic cost of housing construction leading to an increased gap between supply and demand.
- Internal migration from rural to urban.
- The liberalization of the relationship between the landlord and the tenant of agricultural land, which led to the emigration of many rural residents to the cities.

## Evolution of Informal Settlements:

A project-by-project approach was taken during the 60's and the 70's, as informal settlements were perceived as a hazard to or a mutation of urban development. Relocation and demolishing of informal settlements were the chosen method, as it was considered only a housing issue. The high cost of this programme (transportation, demolition, and alternative housing) were one of the main reasons of this programme's challenges, additionally since most alternative units were provided on the outskirts where land was available and affordable, there was a growing need to provide alternative transportation to help the residents commute. With the continuous increase in housing prices, the residents end up selling or renting their allotted apartments to return to their informal settlements. There was also lack of maintenance systems, so the project-by-approach was abandoned.<sup>15</sup>

### During the period of the 1970s:

In the mid-seventies, it was suggested that the informal settlements dwellers themselves could partially solve their housing issues. herefore, the informal settlements upgrading approach was adopted to protect the social and functional frame of the areas, with the improvement of the housing situation and the lives of the residents. with the improvement of the housing situation and

<sup>14</sup> General Organization for Physical Planning, 2007; Leila Nowar et al., 2008, Gamila Sameh, 2010

<sup>15</sup> UN HABITAT- Documentation of the work of ISDF, 2018.

the lives of the residents. Incremental Housing systems were established through the self-help approach. The most notable one at the time being “Site & Services” and “Core Housing”. Basically, the government would supply lands and public services, and informal settlements dwellers would build their homes whether with direct or indirect governmental support<sup>2</sup>. Although this approach had achieved success in other countries, the results of it in Egypt were limited and only specified to the area improved; in conclusion, no large scale improvement was noticed.

### During the period of the 1980s:

By the mid-eighties, it was understood that one approach was not enough to tackle this complex challenge. The intricacies and differences between each informal settlement was addressed, and it was understood that no particular method can address the informal settlements issue by itself, and that there is a need to integrate different methods. The methods shouldn't only depend on just housing issues that need to be resolved, but additional social, financial, political, and funding issues must be addressed as well. Partnerships and the bottom-up approach helped residents know how development should proceed.

Forming an equally primary concern -but more challenging- in Egypt's upgrading projects is security of tenure. A land titling initiative followed the Helwan Housing and Community Upgrading Project (1976-1988) funded by USAID; however, no title was issued as residents were unwilling to pay for land they had already occupied for so many years. A similar project in Hayy al-Salam in Ismailia met more success with 7,000 titles sold and a total of LE 6.6 million raised. Inhabitants participated in negotiating the low cost and payment installments over 30 years. In Nasriyya, Aswan, the GTZ and Governorate of Aswan's slum upgrading project formalized ownership in an existing squatter settlement. By June 2006, over 3,500 households (around 45%) had bought their lots while the remaining households continue to lease the land at a low cost of LE 4 per month and plot.<sup>16</sup>

### During the period of the 1990s:

The inflation of the problem led to the presidential decision and the state's Informal Settlements development Programme (1993-2004) which focused on supplying necessary services and utilities, such as drinking water, sanitation,

electricity, paving of roads, etc., to support the residents of these areas. The development at that stage was an urgent solution to a big problem that needs effort and time to deal with. The focus was on maintaining the status quo in those areas and avoiding the removal of existing units without considering real urban development, as well as the absence of an economic and human dimension in development.

### Period of the 2000:

In 2005, a new strategy was developed to deal with the informal 'ashwa'eyat' areas in Egypt, which unifies efforts among many ministries and bodies concerned to develop a unified vision and an integrated programme. All state agencies are committed and focused on integrated development, the development of economic, social, environmental, and urban dimensions. This included continuing provision of infrastructure and services, in addition to improved accessibility through opened major traffic hubs around the informal settlements and expanded roads which allowed for the improvement of such areas.

### In 2008:

In 2008 and after the rockslide which resulted in the death of a number of citizens in Manshiyet Nasser, the Informal Settlements Development Fund (ISDF) was established. ISDF bases its approach on five fundamental axes: information, development programmes and projects, communication and participation, technical support and skill development, and monitoring and evaluation.<sup>3</sup>

## Programmes are divided into three criteria:

- **Short-term** for unsafe areas (will be completed by the end of 2020)
- **Mid-term** for unplanned areas development.
- **Long-term** prevention of emergence.

Moreover, cooperation with international development agencies aims at broadening the approaches of urban development and upgrading. ISDF has number of cooperations with several organizations. The Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) Participatory Development Programme in urban areas (2010-2019) reaching around 600,000 residents and improving the capacity of various stakeholders on participatory upgrading approaches, adding to, the recent programme “Urban development: support for the development of public infrastructure

<sup>16</sup> Runkel, C., The Role of Urban Land Titling in Slum Improvement: The Case of Cairo; A Critical Examination of the GTZ land titling programme in Manshiyet Nasser, 2009.

facilities” 2017-2021.

The Agence Française de Développement (AFD) and the Italian Agency for Development Cooperation (AICS) give support on upgrading unformal areas in greater Cairo Region.

African Development Bank has funded “Informal Settlements Upgrade Technical Assistance project” which aims at Supporting ISDF to carry out technical studies that are focusing on A) Outcome Evaluation study for completed Informal Settlements Development projects, B) Feasibility Study for Developing Informal Settlements, C) Public Private Partnerships (PPPs) in the Housing sector and D) Training Needs Assessment for ISDF. Following the general support provided by UN-Habitat in Egypt since 2008, in 2017 the specific relevant programme “Participatory City-wide urban upgrading in Egypt” was signed through funds from the ISDF and in cooperation with the Egyptian Ministry of Housing, utilities and urban communities.

On the preventive side, Egypt’s National Housing Project (NHP) aimed for 500,000 units to be produced between 2005 and 2011. The NHP drew on the private sector and on self-building by occupants for 95,000 and 100,000 units, respectively. Ensuing the conclusion of the National Housing Project in 2011, the Social Housing Project (SHP) was commenced in 2012 and guaranteed one million housing units by 2017 for low income Egyptians, with the objective of 200,000 units to be built yearly. The cost of the SHP was valued at 150 billion EGP- excluding land and utilities. The target is the low-income demographic, defined as households earning between 1,400 and 2,500 EGP per month. In January 2014, this eligibility was revised to households earning between 1,920 and 3,333 EGP per month .

The Egypt National Housing Profile provides a comprehensive analysis to the housing conditions in Egypt focusing on the low-income groups. Additionally, it acts as the base of the new National Housing Strategy that lays the foundation for the housing sector vision for the coming 20 years. The newly drafted National Housing strategy in Egypt<sup>17</sup> builds on the originated efforts to ensure sustainable and integrated urban upgrading that includes both physical and socio-economic programmes. Moreover, the strategy addressed

the low-income housing and efficient subsidy, availing vacant housing units to the market, fixing rental market, strengthening housing maintenance and ensuring new sustainable housing designs and communities are implemented and continuous capacity building and knowledge creation of the sector. The strategy also introduced mechanisms and encouragement to the inclusion of the private sector in the housing and upgrading programmes to ensure more inclusion of development partners and better integration of resources. So far, the private sector has only contributed in the forms of donations.

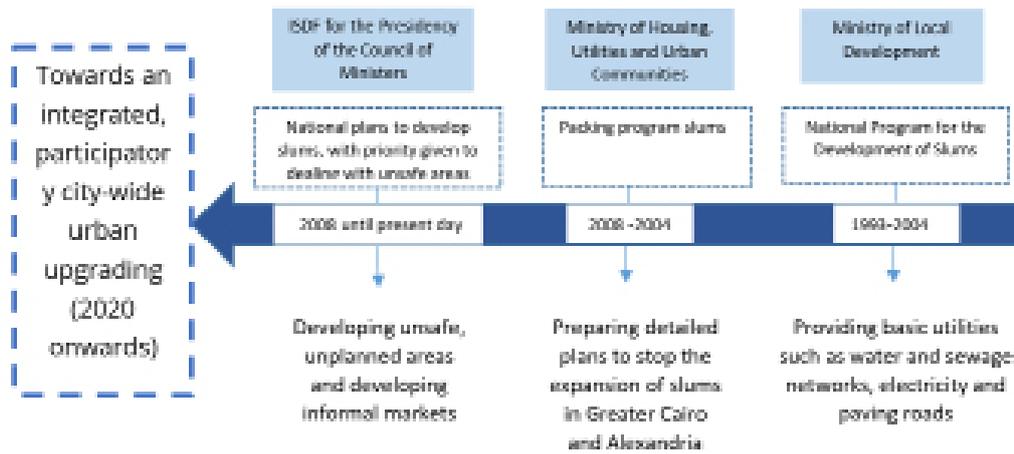
These efforts are also doubled by the continued review of laws and regulations to ensure the best impact on sustainable housing. The ministerial law 17/2019, to resolve the status of unregistered buildings and provision of their infrastructure, review of the Law 119 for urban planning which introduces the ‘urban upgrading areas’ and the new approach and tools for inclusive and integrated upgrading.

There is additional coordination between the ISDF, Ministry of housing, Local governorates and The Ministry of Social Solidarity in Egypt to ensure upgrading of informal settlements integrated social and economic aspects. The Ministry of Culture is also playing an important role in the upgrading of heritage buildings and the participatory change of use of some abandoned buildings turning them to tourist attractions.

Participation plays also an important role in upgrading and maintenance mechanisms for housing. Civil assemblies and community programmes are conducted with support from the Ministry of social solidarity and local civil society organizations targeting youth development and empowerment, skills provision and literacy programmes, anti-drug use campaigns and health awareness, etc. .Monthly and Annual meetings are also held with the dwellers for their feedback.

It is envisioned that the upgrading efforts of unsafe areas will resume until mid-2020, and projects for unplanned areas (estimated at around 40% of urban areas) will continue in light of the Egypt vision 2030.

17 Supported by UN-Habitat and based on the Global housing Strategy (2015), expected to be published in 2020



National Strategies addressing informal areas in Egypt 1993-2019

Source: UN HABITAT- Documentation of the work of ISDF, 2018.

## Classification on Informal settlements in Egypt:

ISDF has unified a new standard for unsafe housing classification as follows:

### 1<sup>st</sup> degree areas:

Areas prone to landslides near mountains, floods, or railway accidents (i.e. Mokattam area, Manshiyet Nasser). The necessity of relocating the residents due to the unsafety of the housing conditions made it essential to provide them with relocation options ((Informal Settlement Development Fund (ISDF), the Governorates and the Ministry of housing utilities & urban communities)). This degree includes 21% of all upgrading projects, housing 628 units with 23.9% living on unplanned areas, and 0.9% living on urban land.

### 2<sup>nd</sup> degree areas:

Units were built with remnants of building material, cracked or ailing buildings, or built on landfills (for example zirzara area in Port Said). The methods used are in-situ upgrading, monetary compensation, renovation, or relocation- if renovation is not possible. The execution of projects for this degree reached 76.2% of the overall national projects.

### 3<sup>rd</sup> degree areas:

Lack of potable water and drainage, heavily polluted industrial areas, or areas built under overhead power lines (for example Ezbet El Walda in Helwan). The Ministry of Environment is responsible for addressing pollution issues, while

the Ministry of Electricity and Renewable energy is addressing overhead power lines and turning them into underground power lines.

### 4<sup>th</sup> degree areas:

Units built on governmental, central, or "Awqaf" lands (for example Karyet El Sayadeen in Damietta). Tenure is given for residents or negotiations by the responsible authorities. This category has the lowest execution rate in all the projects, as it falls at 6.1% of all executed projects.

According to the national map of unsafe areas in 2009, the number of unsafe areas was 404 areas, whereas, in 2018, it has decreased to 251<sup>18</sup>.

There is currently no official record of classification of unplanned areas, however ongoing efforts between the ISDF and the Ministry of housing is drafting a new approach to classifying, defining, and identifying "Urban Upgrading areas" with support from UN-Habitat programme in Egypt "participatory City wide Urban Upgrading in Egypt".

18 UN HABITAT- Documentation of the work of ISDF, 2018.

## Upgrading Tools and Approaches:

### FIRST | Limiting and Controlling the Growth and Emergence of IS

#### A. Re-planning existing buildings.

This has been done through the preparation of participatory strategic plans for existing cities and villages and the provision of the land required for urban expansion, housing, services, and job creation as detailed below.

- The national project to prepare the general and detailed strategic plans for Egyptian cities with the participation of 227 cities to accommodate the population increase of cities until 2027.
- The national project to prepare strategic plans for Egyptian villages with the participation of 4,409 villages and 27,000 secondary rural units.

#### B. Containment of IS.

By planning the projected areas for the extension of informal areas on the outskirts of cities- in a manner consistent with the local conditions of each city, appropriate building requirements, and allowing the owners of those lands to build according to their material potential under the planned plan- the project is carried out in cooperation with concerned provinces and is adopted by the local people's council.

### SECOND | Dealing with existing IS

#### A. The Unsafe Areas

Upgrading of unsafe areas is determined according to the method of intervention which is based on the type and degree of unsafety explained above. ISDF had developed a national map of unsafe areas based on the defined criteria and this map is updated and reviewed with local governorates on yearly basis. The first annual map produced in 2009 included 404 mapped areas.

The first approach to address unsafe areas is to avoid the risk (changing flood stream path or burying electric cables) with minimal impact on the inhabitants. The next approach is to relocate to the nearest housing project while ensuring

access to basic services through a detailed plan and legalization of their ownerships. Relocating to external housing sites resorted to as a final approach if all other approaches are not possible where financial compensation or alternative housing units are offered to the dwellers based on an evaluation committee.

The National Map of Unsafe areas across all governorates has been established based on satellite images besides detailed surveys by consultant firms. The Central Agency for Public Mobilization and Statistics (CAPMAS) has also compiled information about each specific area.

Neighborhoods	The numbers of unsafe areas	The numbers of areas according to the degree of severity			
		First	Second	Third	Fourth
Doki	4	0	4	0	0
Alagoza	2	0	2	0	0
Al Omraniya	1	0	1	0	0
alHaram	1	0	1	0	0
Al Waraq	2	0	2	0	0
Bolaq Eldakror	5	0	5	0	0
South Giza	6	0	6	0	0
North Giza	3	0	3	0 <td 0	
<b>Total</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>



N	Name	The degree of severity	property	Area (Acre)	The number of housing Units
1	Ezbet Awlad Allam	2	Ministry of Endowments	6.4	448
2	Shacks on the railway	2	State property	2.2	269
3	Dayer ElNahya	2	Private property	2.6	297
4	Bein ElSarayat	2	Private property	1.5	155

(Sample of the national map of unsafe areas

Source: ISDF 2009)

The development programmes focus on areas depending on the severity of the situation and its hazards. It includes the following: programmes to develop hazardous areas, inadequate areas, life-threatening areas or unstable areas. It is worth mentioning that the development of programmes for unsafe areas are fully inclusive urban development ventures. Therefore, special social and economic programmes are included, such as illiteracy programmes, improving medical services for women, jobs for youth, support of vocational training, drug rehabilitation, advocating savings and micro-loans, and issuing national identification cards.

Regarding inadequate units on private land, ISDF has addressed all governorates, in 2011, to allow demolition and reconstruction legislation requests in order to allow the private sector to participate in development. This also helps decrease the number of areas that need governmental intervention.

The ISDF executes many technical studies to ensure the implemented projects are effective and sustainable. This includes Geological hazards analysis, drainage systems options, migration patterns from unsafe areas, land registration, health side effects of high voltage electrical lines, as well as social and economic studies of the informal settlements' dwellers.

**Examples:**

**Moqattam:**

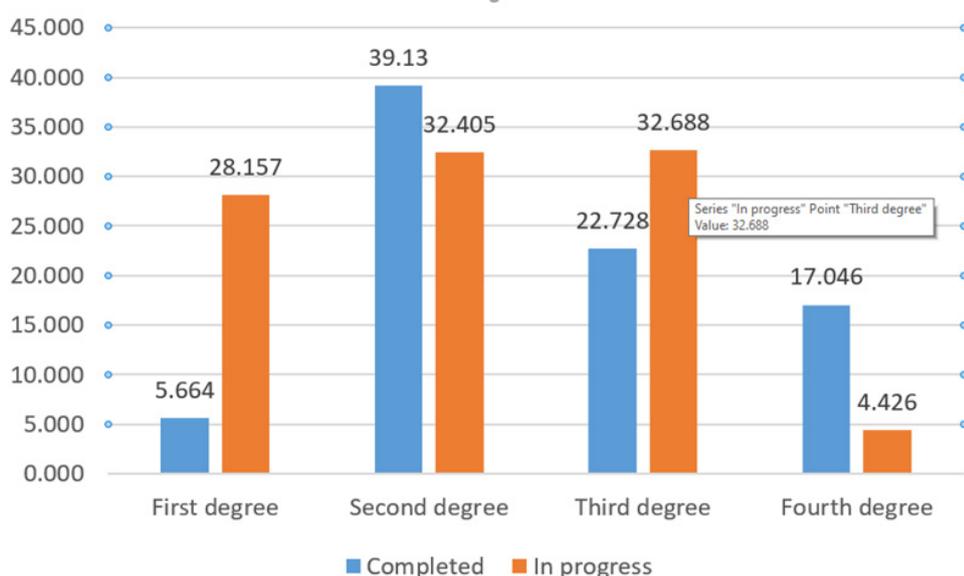
For a portion of the inhabitants, a supporting wall was built to ensure safety of the cliff and avoiding relocating inhabitants.

15th of May: Upgrading Approach: the railway threat was not avoidable, so relocation needed to take place and financial compensations were provided.

**Red Sea:**

Upgrading Approach: unsafe areas were rebuilt based on socio-economic needs assessments which showed that people preferred one story units with a small yard. As a result, they were provided with such housing which responded to their needs.

Implementation status of units /benefited families



of the development projects in unsafe areas according to the degree of severity

UN HABITAT- Documentation of the work of ISDF, 2018.

**B. The Unplanned Areas**

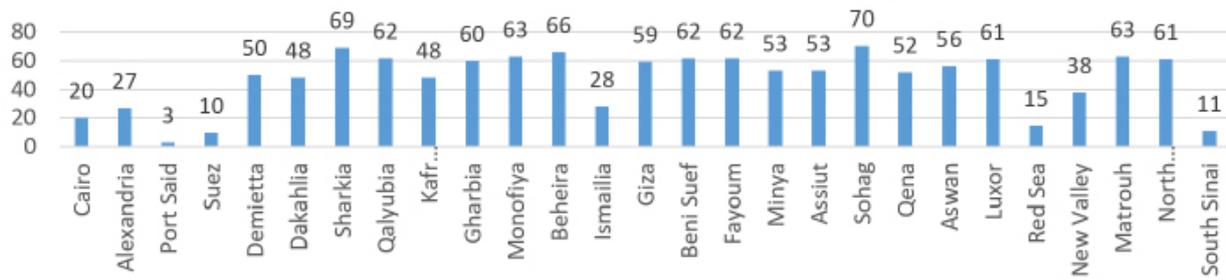
It was decided that a national map should be established for the unplanned areas. Base maps were established for 225 cities. The below graph shows the number of unplanned areas per city.

Information also included are as follows: location, accessibility, current rates, capacity, extension lines, extent of services and living standards. There were number of unplanned areas within the greater cairo region, that were in need for development and maintenance of infrastructure, sewage, street lighting, utilities and firefighting systems. ISDF suggests adapting to the different stages and economic situations throughout Egypt and not considering all unplanned areas as "illegal". The modification or renewal of laws to facilitate reconstruction is also needed, as proving the authenticity of the foundation of the building is difficult in application.

Addressing unplanned areas by ISDF focuses on :

- Legalization of land and housing holdings in informal areas by supporting security of tenure and access to improved infrastructure and basic services.
- Supporting accessibility and connectivity to surrounding areas by introducing traffic hubs.

### Unplanned areas in Egypt - Initial Mapping

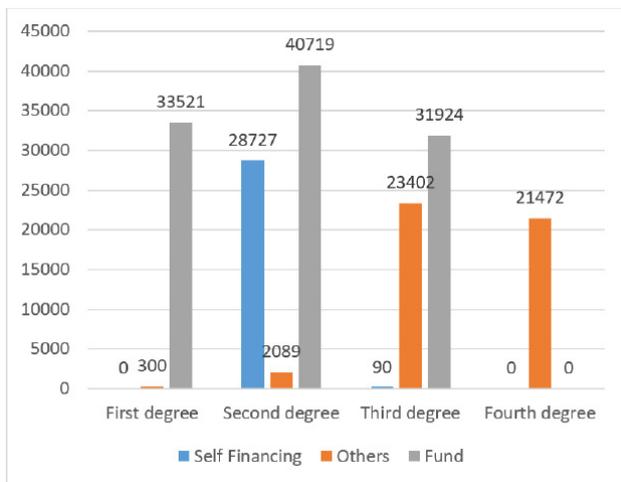


Encourage the contribution of civil society organizations and NGOs to support social and economic dimensions of development.

Urban development planes that are prepared for unplanned areas includes local economic development projects besides the upgrading of the physical conditions of these areas.<sup>19</sup>

### Analysis of Upgrading Approaches in Egypt

Based on the analysis of ISDF efforts (2008-2018), the number of units/households, that benefitted from each upgrading approach and per classification and used tools were reviewed. As shown in the figure and table, the first used tool was to provide units outside the area (almost 30%), the second was the facilitation of self-improvement approaches (15.8%), followed by providing utilities, and lastly, conducting detailed planning schemes (11.8%).



(Number of households benefiting from upgrading projects by source of finance and classification - Source: UN HABITAT- Documentation of the work

of ISDF, 2018)

Number of households benefiting from upgrading projects by upgrading tool and classification

Mechanisms	First degree	Second degree	Third degree	Fourth degree	Total
Avoid the risk (flood stream )	2	-	-	-	2
Avoid the risk (Landslides)	5	-	-	-	5
Avoid the risk (High voltage electricity lines)	-	-	29	-	29
Avoid the risk (Pollution)	-	-	5	-	5
Avoid alternative units inside the area	-	17	-	-	17
Avoid alternative units near the area	1	12	-	-	13
Avoid alternative units outside the area	10	20	-	-	30
Utilizing Housing Plan of the governorate	15	26	1	-	42
Facilitating Self-development	-	97	1	-	98
Providing utilities	-	-	7	-	7
Conducting detailed plan	-	-	-	10	10
Providing Financial compensation	1	17	-	-	18
Providing Non-monetary compensation	-	2	-	-	2
Providing Non-monetary compensation + Provide units outside the area	-	2	-	-	2
Conducting Detailed plan + Remove the risk of floods	1	-	-	-	1
Conducting Detailed plan + Provide alternative units inside the area	-	1	-	-	1
Conducting Detailed layout + Provide alternative units inside and outside the area + Non-monetary compensation	-	1	-	-	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>195</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>283</b>

# ASMARAT PROJECT

## CASE STUDY

The Asmarat Project represents a new model to accommodate the residents relocated from various 1st degree areas. The area developed over three phases, and includes health, educational, recreational services and sports facilities.

According to a survey conducted by UN-Habitat in 2018, 70% of the residents were satisfied with the project. The wide streets, privacy, spacious apartments, cleaner areas, basic services and sports club contributed greatly to the improvement of their lifestyle. Nevertheless, there were few concerns about the transportation networks, accessibility of the area and the resulting costs of communizing. The relatively high rent for stores in the area and the increasing cost of living meant food prices were raised as well. Additionally, there were concerns relating to the breaking of ties

between the old residents. Since the evaluation, a lot of improvements were however introduced. Various transportation methods were introduced within and out of the area. A number of job creation programmes, behavioral awareness campaigns and operation of non-residential units took place.<sup>20</sup>



Al Asmarat Project in Cairo

# ZERZARA, PORT SAID.

## CASE STUDY

Low-rise informal settlements area built of construction material remains and red brick. Roofs are built of wood or tin. The methods used in this area, considered it a 2nd degree area. It is built on government land with a population of 5,850 in 1,852 units. The initial plan was to relocate the residents into a nearby area and build 63 apartment buildings in a better area to achieve a lucrative benefit for investment.

Due to the requests of the residents to remain in their area, the method applied was changed to in-situ and changing the name to "Buildings of Hope" implemented by the local governorate. Satisfaction rates were split almost evenly between satisfaction and discontent with the results of the projects, while there was unanimous agreement on not relocating. The relatively low rent, wider streets, and provision of relatively better housing units are considered one of the achieved results of the project. However, the lack of garbage disposal systems, sidewalks and commercial activities, limited water supply, were the mentioned shortcoming of the project. The social ties of the neighborhood were maintained. Economically,

it the rising cost of living was mentioned and subsequently due to the formalized rent of units.<sup>21</sup>



20 UN HABITAT - Documentation of the work of ISDF - final report, 2018

21 Ibid.

# SAMAKEEN, SOHAG.

## CASE STUDY

Located on the River Nile directly, most of the residents are fishermen. Considered 2nd degree in ISDF classification as most units are built using construction material remnants and red brick. Roofs are built of wood or tin. The informal settlement is built on land belonging to the Ministry of Agriculture, with 206 families living in 91 units. The method chosen was to relocate the residents to an adjacent area and provide inclusive endeavors. A medical unit was established, as well as a social services unit and an administrative unit to oversee the project. 18 commercial stores were provided to the residents with the rent prices reduced to accommodate their financial situations. The rent was to be allocated for maintenance buildings, roads and public utilities in the area. The area to be demolished was to be utilized as a fish market and would have maintenance workshops for boats and manufacturing nets.

The social impact of this project was apparent, as the social ties of the residents were maintained. There are several points of improvement to be considered: The planned units for medical, economic, and administrative purposes as well as the workshops were not established. The land between the old and new neighborhoods is used as an unsanitary landfill, and the sewage network is constantly clogged due to ignorant behavior (cleaning nets).<sup>22</sup>



Samakeen Area in Sohag



22 UN HABITAT- Documentation of the work of ISDF - final report, 2018.

# CONCLUSION

## Lessons Learned and the Way Forward:

Practical experiences have shown that informal settlement dwellers seek job opportunities before choosing their residence. The job opportunities or their lack thereof, decides whether a location is suitable for residence or not<sup>23</sup>. Previous experiences have shown that using only one upgrading tool is not enough; conditions and inconveniences change from one place to another. Although In-Situ upgrading approach is the most prevalent method used worldwide, the resettlement approach is, at times, the most suitable method especially with naturally hazardous or life-threatening locations. Nevertheless, the most important elements to be overcome in the social and economic aspects of resettlement are as follows:

- Provide alternative sources of income or proper training programmes for better integration into the new society.
- Increased acceptance of the new residence area by raising participation, ownership and social responsibility. This can be done by availing and enriching public spaces where several interaction and social programmes can take place.
- Ensuring proper monitoring and following-up mechanisms are in place to measure the sustainability and effectiveness of programmes and feed in the next cycles.

Application of the project-by-project approach has shown that partial approaches tend to fail, which led to the adoption of broader approaches that tackle all aspects contained in the informal settlements issue as well as curbing its expansion. The chosen method must integrate the existing informal settlement area into the foundation of the city whether functionally (role of area in the city) or spatially (increasing accessibility). In this context, the road network has proven to be the main engine behind the street-led approach.

It was demonstrated that a government alone could not overtake solving the informal settlements issue whether financially or through arising burdens of execution. Therefore, the government's vital role becomes the legislative

through laying out plans that all societal parties could participate in through:

- Supporting the decentralization of planning and boosting the role of municipalities and local communities
- Strengthening the role of the private sector, confirming their social responsibilities of funding through both incentive and impact investment programmes
- Actual presentation and participation of local residents in the planning and execution of programmes, with a focus on the marginalized and resource poor, and catering to their priorities and needs.
- Flexibility of planning and execution to include all varying aspects of every settlement.
- Finding new, inventive methods of funding directed to the informal settlers themselves besides national and private funding<sup>24</sup>.

In light of the above analysis of various approaches and lessons learned on the Egyptian context, UN-Habitat is currently coordinating with the ISDF and the Ministry of Housing (General Organization for physical planning) and local governorates to shape the new vision towards a sustainable upgrading approach. This approach builds on the new National housing strategy to introduce an integrated approach to upgrading that looks at the whole city in an attempt to boost the productivity and cohesion through linking gained investments from developing potential areas with deteriorated and poor areas. This approach encouraged by the Global programme "participatory slum upgrading programme PSUP". The approach improves options for financing large scale slum upgrading, encourages participatory mechanisms for various stakeholders in the upgrading processes, and supports strongly the New Urban Agenda recommendations to ensure maximized urbanization values and equitable distribution of these values leaving no one behind.

23 Mahmoud Al-Kurdi, *The Slums in Egyptian Society*, 2003

24 UN HABITAT- Documentation of the work of ISDF, 2018.

## 2 IRAQ

### Introduction:

In comparison with other Arab countries, such as Egypt or Syria, the spread of informal settlements in Iraq is a relatively recent phenomenon. The issue emerged after 2003, mostly as a result of the widespread insecurity that triggered waves of internal displacement compounded by the scarcity of affordable serviced land within cities. The lack of viable alternatives saw poor segments of society encroaching and building informal dwellings mostly on state-owned land within municipal boundaries. While most settlements comprise of sub-standard housing, which lack basic physical and environmental requisites and are characterized by extreme poverty, deprivation and lack of services, some informal subdivisions have instead attracted wealthier citizens taking advantage of existing legal loopholes and a thriving self-organised real estate sector with a general lack of building control.

The **Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper** approved by the Council of Ministers, under Resolution No. 409 of 2009, included in its fourth Outcome, **“Providing Adequate Housing for the Poor”** in recognition of the limited impact of the partial solutions presented earlier on addressing poverty hotspots in informal settlements. Therefore, the Permanent Technical Committee responsible for drafting the Poverty Reduction Strategy, with technical support from UN-Habitat, adopted an integrated multi-dimensional poverty reduction programme.

In light of this, a High Steering Committee was formed, under Ministerial Decree No. 3255 of 2014, The committee was headed by the Minister of Planning and was comprised of the Ministry of Planning, the Ministry of Construction, Housing, Municipalities and Public Works, and the Governorate of Baghdad.

The Steering Committee approved the road map, which was developed with the technical assistance of UN-Habitat, and submitted it to the High Committee for the Poverty Reduction Strategy, established by Cabinet Decree No. 91 (2014). In collaboration with Ministry of Planning, Ministry of Displacement and Migration and Ministry of Housing and Construction in Baghdad, UN-Habitat initiated the **“National Programme for Informal Settlements and IDPs”**. This programme aims to provide an implementation mechanism for the national policies in housing and strategy on longer-term shelter solutions and its objectives entail:

- Strengthening the capacity of central and local authorities to help prevent urban sprawl mechanisms.
- Recommending improvements to the legal framework.

- Exploring executable solutions that rely on successful experiences from similar experiences.

In the context of Iraq, an informal settlement is a housing community built informally on state-owned or private land within municipal boundaries and without proper approvals or pre-set designs. Most of these are in conflict or not conforming with earmarked land uses defined by the approved urban master plans and detailed plans. Many of these settlements share common characteristics, including the low quality of housing construction, lack of basic public services and infrastructure networks, a degraded urban environment and their incompatibility with urban standards of adjacent formal residential neighbourhoods.

In 2016, the Ministry of Planning conducted a detailed analysis of high-resolution satellite imagery for the mapping and documentation of all informal settlements located within municipal boundaries in governorates not affected, at the time, by the conflict with ISIL. GIS experts conduct periodic field checks to record changes within the settlement and their growth. In 2017, the Ministry completed the surveys in Anbar and Salah al-Din governorates. The cooperation with UN-Habitat and other international donors is strong and efficient.

In 2018, UN-Habitat conducted the pilot upgrading of three informal settlements in the cities of Mosul, Ramadi, and Basra.

### THE DEFINITION OF AN IRAQI INFORMAL SETTLEMENT

*is a housing community built informally on state-owned or private land within municipal boundaries and without proper approvals or pre-set designs. Most of these are in conflict or not conforming with earmarked land uses defined by the approved urban master plans and detailed plans. Many of these settlements share common characteristics, including the low quality of housing construction, lack of basic public services and infrastructure networks, a degraded urban environment and their incompatibility with urban standards of adjacent formal residential neighbourhoods.*

The National Map for the Distribution of Informal Settlements according to the most recent comprehensive Survey produced in 2016 is summarized in annex 1. Other comprehensive surveys were carried before. The detailed results are available and will be useful for a later detailed analysis. All these survey were realized under the umbrella of the national project dedicated to reduce the poverty. For example, Anbar and Salah al-Din governorates were analyzed in 2017. An exhaustive Pilot Survey was realized in Baghdad Governorate / Kadhimiya Area (district 405) in 2018 (Annex 2).

1. The lack of affordable housing plots to meet demand, due to the delay in implementation of adequate services and infrastructures, the delay of implementation of residential expansion areas proposed and approved by the master plans for administrative and financial reasons, and the non-implementation of new cities and towns. As in many other countries, the widespread of informal settlement and the organisation of local communities makes it socially acceptable, by the government, as a solution to the housing problem, thus causing its continuation. The control and the elaboration of control mechanisms is the solution.
2. One major reason is the will, or the need, of some ethnic groups or minorities to settle in certain areas, sometimes forcing them to resort to informal settlement. This is related to the high rate of population growth as a result of social norms which encourage natality and large families which increased the continuing demand for housing- as it is not adequately matched by the construction of new housing.
3. The high increase in the percentage of poor families (as a result of security tensions, terrorism, unemployment, migration, forced displacement, etc.), which makes them unable to access formal housing. The lack of subsidized economic and social housing and the sharp rise in land and housing prices encouraged the development of informal settlements in Iraqi cities, especially Baghdad.

4. The outdated legislation and regulations which make the economic environment unattractive to investors to finance social private housing. The absence of a legislative framework allowing the regularization of informal settlement.<sup>25</sup> UN Habitat and Ministry of Planning elaborated a law. Rattifying the proposed law is not considered as a priority by the Council of Representatives.
5. There are other legislative impediments, approvals, and fees that hinder easy sale, purchase, and even rental of legal housing units, making the housing market unattractive to investment, especially in the area of social housing. This exacerbates the lack of construction of new economic housing to reduce housing in informal settlements. Even soft government loans, which are limited in number, are targeted to middle-income and high-income groups and do not cater to the poor. That is because loan granting requires the loan applicant to have a residential land plot as collateral, and poor families certainly do not have such collateral.
6. The increase in demand and housing market imbalance have been compounded by factors such as: high population growth, lack of housing construction, displacement and migration, among others. These factors, together, allow the growth and spread of informal settlements, unless the housing sector is rehabilitated, developed, and special support is provided to the poor.

Regarding the urban morphology, there is no quantified data available on a national or regional scales on the construction materials and socio-economic situation in the Iraqi informal settlements; however, comprehensive socio-economic surveys were realised by UN Habitat on three pilot settlements. The below qualitative observations seem to be correct:

- The majority of informal settlements are implemented on agricultural lands and on urban/ suburban pockets. The buildings are constructed either with concrete, blocks, or tin plates.
- Several settlements in many cities (i.e. Mosul, Ramadi and Basra) suffer from flooding during the rainy season. Illegal housing built along

25 A law draft was elaborated by Ministry of Planning and UN-Habitat but not yet ratified.

riverbanks is also affected by spring floods, which was a phenomenon that occurred regularly. The most recent episode occurred in March 2019.<sup>26</sup>

- Several informal settlements have developed over land earmarked for high-rise housing complexes, public facilities, road reserve, and even infrastructure projects of regional interest (i.e. railway tracks, airports, etc.)

For example, in the three pilot settlements, upgraded in 2019, UN-Habitat recorded very high levels of illiteracy and lower education level than the national average.



Post Flooding pictures (source UN Habitat Iraq, 2019)

## The Situation of Informal Settlements:

The National Map for the Distribution of Informal Settlements produced in 2016, under the umbrella of the national project, dedicated to reduce poverty will be useful for a later detailed analysis. Other comprehensive surveys were carried earlier. An exhaustive pilot survey was realized in Baghdad Governorate/ Kadhimiya Area (district 405) in 2018. The results were well documented and present an important data basis for potential implementation of donor projects.

## The Evolution:

Since 2003, the growth and expansion of informal settlements continued increasing. The impact of the war and the lack of control by municipalities and local authorities generate an important sprawl. The first comprehensive survey was conducted in 2013. The results were that the number of informal settlements areas is 1,552 which corresponds to more than 34,000 dwellings and the population of informal settlements, at the time, was an estimate of 2.5 million persons distributed in most cities of Iraq. No remedial measures have been taken (i.e. upgrading, redevelopment through land sharing, or resettlement) due to legislative impediments. The legal issues, in 2013, indicate that these illegal constructions have to be removed as they were illegally built.

The expansion of informal settlements has increased significantly during the period of 2013 - 2016 reaching 3,687 settlements, which is a 138% increase compared to 2013, as the number of dwellings reached 521,947. The population of slum dwellers is about 3,292,606, (accounting for 12.9%) of the total population in Iraq. For example, in Baghdad, 1,022 informal settlements were identified, Basra has 667 areas. The lowest governorates were Najaf and Karbala (88 and 89 respectively). The number of dwellings is estimated around 525,000 units which represent around 16.5 % of the total housing sector in Iraq. In Baghdad, the informal settlement sector represents around 26% of the total housing. The total inhabitants in the informal sector are estimated to be around 3.3 million inhabitants (12.9 %).





home to nearly 1/3 of all informal housing in Iraq, show that only around 5-10% of the populations of informal housing are actually IDPs. The requirements and priorities of the two populations differ considerably making generalization of management strategies different.

Since the outbreak of the ISIS crises in 2014, more than 6 million persons were reported to have been displaced inside Iraq at its peak. UN-Habitat, in coordination with the governorates of Erbil, Sulaymaniyah, Dohuk, Anbar, Missan, Basra and Baghdad, constructed more than 12 shelter sites to install Prefabricated Shelter Units (Caravans). These shelter sites included basic infrastructure such as electricity, water and sanitation facilities to accommodate IDPs. Since 2015, approximately 4,000 shelter units were constructed to accommodate more than 26,100 IDPs.

## Shelter and Infrastructure Support for non-camp Refugees

In its efforts to help the Syrian refugees in Kurdistan region, UN-Habitat carried out this project in poorly-serviced neighbourhoods in Erbil, Sulaymaniyah and Dohuk governorates in densely populated areas with Syrian refugee families. Rehabilitation of rented houses, construction and repair of sanitary facilities, and water systems were constructed, expanded, and upgraded. The living conditions of approximately 230,000 individuals, including Syrian Refugees, were improved. UN-Habitat has been working very closely with the Central Government in Baghdad, and the purposely established Land Tenure Steering Committee on the new Land Law roadmap, to reassert and redefine strategic priorities for the reform process. In addition to that, develop a shared vision in regards to the required institutional reform steps

in the land sector, mutual responsibilities, and the engagement of lead champions, partners, non-state actors and women in the process.

## Strategy of informal settlements management:

Iraq has a national strategy for dealing with informal settlements, which was developed under the technical support provided by (UN-HABITAT) in coordination with the concerned departments, and endorsed by the Council of Ministers in 2015. It included a roadmap for the national programme for the rehabilitation and regularization of informal settlements in Iraq. The strategy and roadmap include the required frameworks of action in the (legislative, technical, financial and institutional) thematic areas.

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In 2015, UN-Habitat proposed the setup of a fund for the development and physical planning of informal settlements; the provision of basic utilities such as water, sanitation and electricity. This fund is focusing on providing funding contributing to addressing the informal settlements for the government, private sector, and community organizations willing to participate in this area by working and cooperating with financial institutions, donor programmes, and other relevant actors-both domestic and international. The strategic objectives of the fund are as follows:

- Develop a plan to provide financial support to the Fund through the national budgets, the budgets of regional development of institutions, donors and various other sources, and implementing this plan to achieve the objectives of the National Strategy of Informal Settlements.
- Continuous coordination with donors to ensure continuity of funding to address informal settlements.
- Develop and implement a mechanism to provide financial support to actors working to address informal settlements and investors interested in investing in the sector.

The fund as an operating entity which works on achieving its strategic objectives, namely, to address informal settlements through the following principles:

- Develop an overall plan to address informal settlements identifying target housing settlements, priorities, funding sources, target entities, the nature and value of the funding to be provided to institutions and agencies that will address informal settlements.
- Develop an annual plan, according to the approved priorities, to identify the target actions per year.
- Preparation of the budget for the five-year target actions and based on it the preparation of annual budget depending on the priorities set out in the annual plan.
- Inventory of sources of funding available through land sharing, and determine funding deficits required by donors, funders and investors, in addition to the Fund's allocations in the State budget as appropriate.
- Determine the foundations of granting financing facilities to the various actors working to address informal settlements and targeted investors.
- Implement the fund's approved plans and follow-up of completion rates and accomplishment of objectives for the fund and for each project.
- Management and follow-up of funding for each project <sup>28</sup>



BASRA - New potable system



Basra - Community meetings



RAMADI - Community consultation FGDs in 7-Kilo\_Aug2019

28 Two millions dwellings were needed in 2017

# EARLY PILOT INFORMAL SETTLEMENT UPGRADING PROJECTS (UN HABITAT) — CASE STUDIES

## 1. Erbil Upgrading

The inauguration took place in March 2014, of the new road serving the settlement of Kurani Ainkawa -which was built with government funds- marked the completion of the joint UN-Habitat/UNDP pilot informal settlement upgrading project. The project was initiated in 2009 and it permits the following:

1. Relocation of informal settlers on government land (96% moved voluntarily).
2. Self-help housing and neighbourhood improvement in Kurani Ainkawa (100 new houses to replace existing is already underway).
3. School construction.
4. Construction of new roads by municipality and UN-Habitat.
5. Establishment of a community-based organization (women's livelihoods, education, neighbourhood development).
6. Construction of a multi-purpose hall demonstrating environmentally sustainable construction techniques (underway by UNDP)



Demolition of informal housing on government land



Self-help housing improvement

## 2. Initiative Durable Shelter Solutions for IDPs and Returnees in Baghdad.

UN-Habitat finalized the implementation of its one-year *“Durable Shelter Solutions for IDPs and Returnees in Baghdad”* project – as a follow up on the 2012-2013 phase of the *“Initiating Durable Shelter Solutions for IDPs and Returnees in Iraq”* project, which saw the preparation and piloting of tools like pre-feasibility studies for redevelopment/land-sharing sites or enumerations as first step toward incremental upgrading in selected peri-urban sites. The 2014 phase saw the scaling up of the enumeration exercise to five urban sites identified as suitable for incremental upgrading.

## 3. Baghdad Strategic Perspective on IDP Sites/Informal Settlements:

As part of the effort to extend policy options and approaches to the entire city of Baghdad, UN-Habitat drafted, in close collaboration with the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) (funded by the U.S. Department of State Bureau of Population, Refugees and Migration) an analytical report titled *“Baghdad Strategic Perspective on IDP Sites/ Informal Settlements”* which propose a ‘stepped spatial policy development’ build on a conceptual ‘merger’ of urban development and durable solutions policy domains and seeks to identify urban development options for all informal settlements or sites in the city.

## 4. The National Programme For Rehabilitation And Regularization of Informal Settlements Programme:

In 2018 and 2019 an important initiative was realized by UN Habitat, in partnership with the US Department of State Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration (BPRM). The title of this programme is:

**NATIONAL Programme FOR REHABILITATION AND REGULARIZATION OF INFORMAL SETTLEMENTS / IDP AREAS IN IRAQ POST-ISIL IMPLEMENTATION, LIBERATED AREAS AND IDPS CAMPS.** UN-Habitat Iraq has implemented pilot upgrading projects in three selected settlements of Mosul, Ramadi and Basra.

The target of this programme is to support the Government of Iraq address the challenges related to the 1,1 million IDPs estimated in 2015, many of whom were living in precarious conditions in the informal settlements rapidly sprawling throughout the country. Under the guidance of the Steering Committee, led by the Secretary General of the Council of Ministers, UN-Habitat developed jointly with the Poverty Reduction Executive Secretariat in the Ministry of Planning (MoP) a ***National Strategy for Long-term Durable Solutions for IDPs and a Road Map*** for the enumeration, upgrading and regularization of informal settlements. It is evident that the local authorities should strengthen their control over the usurpation of land earmarked for public services and agriculture, but they also need to develop durable solutions to address and effectively respond to the needs of low-income citizens, IDPs and returnees, for affordable housing and secure tenure in compliance with basic human rights.

In the informal settlement of Hay Tanak in west Mosul, the programme implemented a new storm water drainage system, connected 362 houses to a new potable water network, organized a two-month Garbage Cleaning Campaign, levelled and improved the sub-base of the streets, and planted two rows of tall palms at the entrance of the settlement.

In the informal settlement of 7-Kilo in west Ramadi, the programme connected 432 houses to a new potable water network (including 178 houses in 5-Kilo), organized a two-month Garbage Cleaning Campaign and realized a new public Park by reclaiming a vacant and derelict area at the center of this settlement in coordination with the municipality who has proceeded to incorporate the settlement in its planned urban extensions. This was made possible through a close coordination with the local authorities and target IDP and returnee communities.

In the informal settlement of Al Qibla in Basra, the programme connected 180 houses to a new formal potable network, and conducted a one-month cleaning campaign. The campaign also included awareness raising sessions to the inhabitants on how to maintain sustainability of the cleanliness of the area. All these activities were conducted through a very strong collaboration with the local authorities and community members.

# CONCLUSION

Iraq does not yet have the authority to start regular implementation and to identify priorities programmes due to the absence of a legal cover.

The lessons learned during the implementation of the pilot projects, in Mosul, Ramadi and Basra, provide an important contribution to the “operationalization” of the future law at the local level. On the other hand, UN-Habitat has also demonstrated that through its close liaison with the local authorities and incremental approach, it is possible to address the urgent needs of marginalized informal dwellers even in the absence of the law.

In 2019, the UN Habitat programme gathered momentum both at national and local level. The Shura Council (now known as Al Dawla Council) approved the earmarking of funds to be allocated under the National Strategy for Poverty Reduction. Between late 2018 and early 2019, UN-Habitat led five intense parliamentary discussion rounds aimed at galvanizing consensus on the package of three laws listed in the Road Map of the National Programme of Informal Settlements. The first parliamentary reading of the two proposed laws on informal settlements and funding allocation occurred on July 2nd 2019, while the first reading of the law on “Agricultural Lands within Baghdad and Municipalities’ Master plans” took place on September 26th 2019.

Scaling up the initiatives spearheaded by UN-Habitat, on the basis of the lessons learned during the pilot upgrading projects and the assistance on the legal issues related to land and property issues, are the two key elements towards social justice, access to land, and the development of more inclusive cities. In fact, the shortage of adequate housing is constrained by the affordability and the absence of housing finance.

There is also a renewed attention to housing land and property rights analysis and identification. This attention can help the government to address the perceived social disparities and unmet needs. These integrated approaches of social, economic and resilience issues, in public territorial and urban policies, will initiate durable solutions in Iraq. These solutions will allow to solve the pressing issues related to the growing needs for adequate shelter among the internally displaced persons as well urban poor / vulnerable population living in informal settlements.

## 3 JORDAN

### Introduction:

While the issue of managing Palestinian camps in Jordan and integrating them into the urban fabric of the agglomerations of Greater Amman and Irbid has been extensively studied, few studies focused on the management informal areas developed in the periphery of the camps and in Jordanian cities.

Jordan is a pioneer country in the upgrading informal settlement in the Middle East, through the Housing and Urban Development Corporation (HUDC). The East Wehdat camp is one of the worldwide references in the upgrading in a participatory approach.

The definition of informality is specific to Jordan. The term 'skan ashwa'i refers almost exclusively to areas inhabited by Palestinian refugees, and not used for rural or Bedouin populations, in which the term 'poor areas' is preferred. The HUDC has three defining criteria of informality: two morphological criteria related to the accessibility of the area and the style of building (the view and proximity of buildings), and a legal criterion related to types of ownership of property.<sup>29</sup>

Regarding the Jordanian context, two periods are important, pre 2012 and post 2012- after the Syrian war- which will be described briefly.

### Informal settlements in Jordan:

#### A- Pre 2011

In the 1980s, the projects concern mostly the neighborhoods built on the outskirts of UNRWA camps which are populated by Palestinian refugees. The ownership and the legal issues were considered as priorities. Since 1994, and the peace agreement of Wadi Araba, the policy changed, and the infrastructures issues were considered to improve the quality of life.

### THE DEFINITION OF INFORMAL SETTLEMENTS

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Jerash Camp | UNRWA

<sup>29</sup> "Public Policies toward Informal Settlements in Jordan" (1965-2009), in ABABSA M., DENIS E., DUPRET B., 2012, Popular Housing and Urban Land Tenure in the Middle East. Case Studies from Egypt, Syria, Jordan, Lebanon, and Turkey, The American University in Cairo Press, pp. 259-282

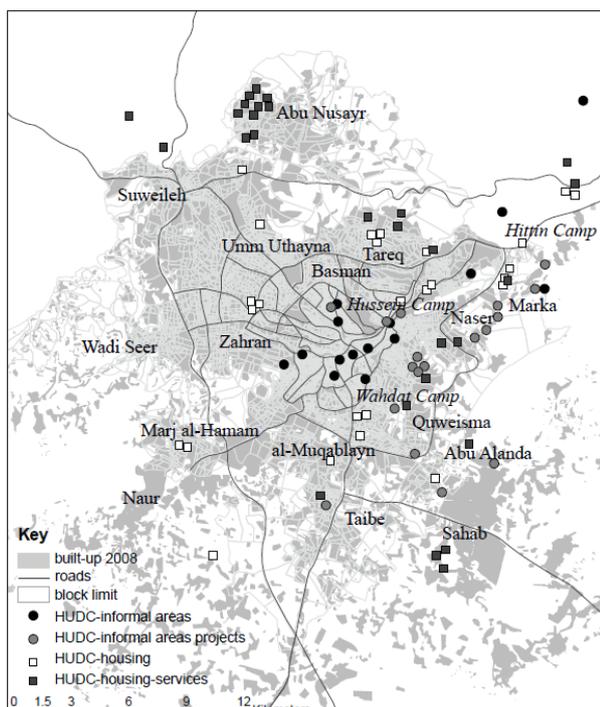
Since 2008, the policy changed, especially in Amman, the context of building Abdali and the gated communities approaches, where two informal settlements were displaced: the district of Qaysiya in Wadi Abdoun and the informal camp of Shalaleh. These two areas were upgraded during the 1990s and 2000s, but later removed in 2009 and the houses were partially destroyed.

As a result, three types of policies were implemented in Jordan:<sup>30</sup>

Upgrading, in the 1980s, with participation of residents,

1. Provision of services alone with the 1990s because of rising costs of land,
2. Eviction and selective rehousing from the neoliberal wave of the mid-2000s,

Jordan is having an important data base related to the situations of informal settlements: expansion, size, risk issues. There is no sustainable policy for the management of the informal settlements and the Syrian crisis changed the situation. Specific maps are available, and the GIS is operational. The figure below shows the projects in Greater Amman Municipality since 1966.



The projects in Greater Amman Municipality since 1966.<sup>31</sup>

## B- After 2011

The presence of Syrian refugees in Jordan has dramatically increased demand for already limited stocks of affordable housing. In Jordan, the reported average annual shortfall of 3,400 housing units has been compounded by the need for an additional 120,000 housing units to accommodate Syrian refugees- according to the country's Response Plan for the Syria Crisis. Assistance in local community settings focused on upgrading housing units, completing unfinished buildings, providing harsh weather kits and conditional cash-for-rent programmes in various cities, including Al Balqa, Amman, Ajlun, Irbid, Jerash, Karak Madaba, Mafraq, Tafileh and Zarqa. The shock of the Syrian refugee crisis acted as a catalyst for institutional reforms, such as a review and revision of the National Housing Policy and the revitalization of the Housing and Urban Development Corporation (HUDC).

Unlike Lebanon, which also hosts a large number of refugees, Jordan has opened refugee camps in the North of the country to control the arrival and settlement of refugees. Established in late July 2012, the Zaatari camp, which has nearly 80,000 inhabitants today, is the most famous space of settlement of Syrian refugees. The camp is located in a semi-arid area about ten kilometers Southeast of the city of Mafraq in Northern Jordan, near the border with Syria. Originally composed of tents juxtaposed next to each other, the camp has grown dramatically with the increasing number of arrivals of Syrians in late 2012 and early 2013, with up to 200,000 inhabitants registered by UNHCR in April 2013. This figure has decreased with the departures of Syrians to urban areas in Jordan, or returns to Syria.

Zaatari camp is a unique case which reflects the relation between camps of refugees and urban planning. It appears as a makeshift city where prefabricated, and a few tents are juxtaposed. This area concentrates all the paradoxes of the Syrian presence in Jordan. Humanitarian organizations are omnipresent, symbolizing the vulnerability of an exiled population deprived of resources. A large proportion of Syrian refugees are from rural areas, and therefore more vulnerable. At the same time, refugees were able to develop this space, despite the constraints of humanitarian authority,

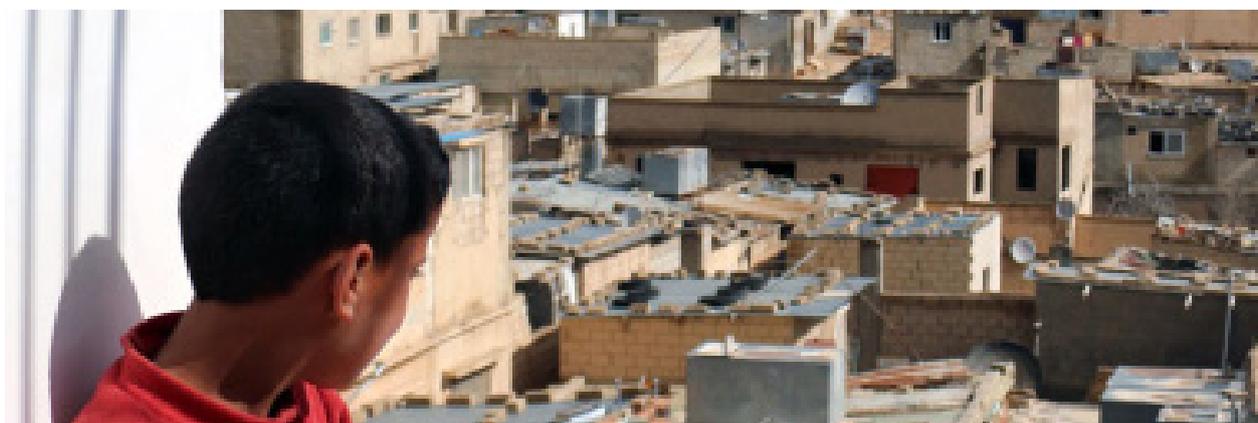
30      ibid, pp. 279

31      ibid, pp. 267

attempting to reconstruct in exile their social and economic life. Small businesses, and other small income-generating crafts businesses, opened around the camp. The refugees tried, whenever possible, to recreate some form of normal life. Syrian refugees have limited access to the labor market, and those who reside in camps must obtain an authorization to exit it, granted for a limited period. In a vegetation-free landscape, a city has emerged thanks to the dynamism of its inhabitants. Since the establishment of the camp, an informal economy grew, and got structured in all neighborhoods. At the entrance of the camp, a shopping street developed, officially called “Souk street,” but referred to as “Champs Elysées” by the inhabitants of the camp. Along the street, all kinds of shops, such as mobile phone sellers, grocery stores, bakeries, small restaurants, or hairdressers. Street vendors circulate in the camp, selling all kinds of products or sandwiches. Adjacent to many facilities and founded by NGOs, this shopping street is frequented by many refugees. It has become a central place in the social and economic life of the camp, symbolizing the economic dynamism of refugees. In other parts of the camp, small grocery stores, and hairdressers have set shops. These small businesses provide income to refugees- who run them- but also operate as places of sociability

for the Syrians. In total, according to UNHCR, nearly 3,000 stalls are operational in Zaatari. In terms of housing, the camp is not a simple juxtaposition of standardized houses, but recreates forms of housing quite similar to those of Southern Syria, or peripheral informal settlements of major Syrian cities. An important place is given in homes to the reception room of the guests (madhafa). People external to the family meet up in this room, which is made up of arranged mattresses, thus rendering it a main meeting place for men—while the women gather in the small courtyards to cook in groups, or chat in smaller rooms.

***The camp has a dual face: a closed space, where the most vulnerable refugees are forced to reside, as well as a city in the making, produced with limited means but which try to recreate, in exile, a social and economic life***



# CONCLUSION

Jordan, and by consequences Palestine, have specific urban policies implemented by dedicated central agencies which address the provision of affordable housing. Since its creation in 1991, the not-for-profit and primarily donor-funded Palestinian Housing Council has made significant contributions to the rehabilitation, reconstruction, and provision of housing units and apartments in the West Bank, Gaza, and East Jerusalem, earning it the Dubai International Award for Best Practices in 2008.

Despite the achievements made at the level of urban development, centralization poses a significant challenge that municipalities have to carry. Other challenges manifest in the absence of the planning function in councils, as it depends immediate reactionary remediation of the issues of the necessary services for the population, and the financial shortfalls at the municipality which incapacitate implementation of the mandated services.

The repercussions of Syrian refugees' presence on the Jordanian government and host communities are important. Jordanian's political response to this crisis despite the massive threats caused by the political tension with Syria and the fighting of terrorism, Jordan was eager to provide humanitarian assistance to Syrian refugees. Syrian refugees have negatively impacted the Jordanian economy and labor market, except for the slight increase in the investment indicator.

## **The most important achievements:**

1. The comprehensive development plans for municipalities, which would assist the equal distribution of economic and social activities to all districts within the municipality. These plans integrate the informal settlements contexts.
2. The emergency services project and social resilience of municipalities hosting Syrian refugees in 2013: The project aims to help the Jordanian municipalities and communities hosting Syrians refugees, which provide direct services to refugees.
3. The presence of the Housing and Urban Development Corporation is very useful and very performant. HUDC has already constructed (185) housing projects for low-income households in all parts of the Kingdom, which attracted urban growth to those areas.

# 4 MOROCCO

## Introduction:

The Kingdom of Morocco is a lower-middle-income country and the fifth largest African economy. The country has a European Union (EU) neighborhood status and actively seeks South-South cooperation. From 2010 to 2015, the gross domestic product (GDP) grew by around 4 % annually (WDI, 2016). In 2017, it was around 4.1%, as opposed to in 2016, where it was only 1.22%. Fiscal consolidation and sustainability are a priority, while subsidies and pension systems are undergoing reform. The Kingdom of Morocco is in the process of localizing the 2030 global Agenda for Sustainable Development (SDGs) and the New Urban Agenda. The process of regional decentralization is also a key element of the urban and rural strategies of the kingdom.

It is important to observe that Morocco is one of the first countries, and the only country in the Middle East and North Africa region, to benefit from an The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) Country Programme. The Morocco Country Programme was signed on June 15, 2015. The Programme contains 16 projects which focus on three strategic areas for Morocco: competitiveness, public governance, and social inclusion. The HCPD considers these three priorities as pillars to be applied to the cooperation with The Ministry of National Territory Planning, Urban Planning, Housing and City Policy (Le Ministère de l'Aménagement du Territoire National, de l'Urbanisme, de l'Habitat et de la Politique de la Ville - MATNUHPV

The Government of Morocco intends to support and empower communities to achieve the future development they seek. The partnerships between the public and the private sectors, are essential for capacities' building to manage funds and projects that are in line with the new strategic plan of UN Habitat in Morocco for the period 2020-2023.

In respect to the commitment of the Kingdom towards SDGs 2030, it is considering poverty alleviation, decentralized governance, climate change and disaster risk, and economic inequality

as priorities. The Voluntary National Review (VNR) will be presented during the High-Level Political Forum in 2020 convened by the The UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) . The urbanization challenges facing the rapid demographic growth, climate change, and spatial transformation are important levers towards the SDG goals. The National Sustainable Development Strategy (NSDS) is a policy framework adopted by the government in June 2017. It encompasses the vision stated in the National Charter for the Environment and Sustainable Development (CNEDD) and incorporates the SDGs. Both rural and urban development issues are emphasized in the NSDS.

The Morocco UN-Habitat Country Programme Document (HCPD) 2020-2023 is aligned with the global, regional and national priorities of Morocco, including: Morocco UNDAF 2017-2021, the Morocco Vision 2040 established by the World Bank, and the National Strategy for Sustainable Development 2017-2030, Morocco Green and the Energy Plans established since 2009. It is also coherent with the Arab Strategy for Housing and Sustainable Urban Development 2030. It is responsible for the following:

- a. Providing technical support to enhance urban and housing strategies, policies, plans and their implementations in countries.
- b. Highlighting the needs and priorities in the housing and land use and all its consequences, such as mobility, energy efficiency, and Greenhouse Gas Emissions.
- c. Promoting the delivery of basic urban services and improving built-environments sustainably (i.e. solid waste, water, sanitation and hygiene, energy).
- d. Contributing in the modernization of the institutional Moroccan frameworks by strengthening local capacities; allowing, developing, and implementing integrated strategies and urban policies on national, regional, and local levels to ensure that the benefits of urbanization and development are contributing to better living standards for Moroccans in intermediate cities and rural settlements and not only in metropolitan areas.

Committing to the safeguarding and valorization of heritage especially in Medinas, Oases and Ksours, and the promotion of intangible cultural expressions and industries as drivers of sustainable urban development with respect of the different categories of heritage. Local Economic Development (LED), heritage protection in partnerships with other UN agencies and donors are the key elements of the UN Habitat action in this field.

In Morocco, the percentage of urban population was estimated at 62% in 2018 and is estimated to reach 77% by 2050<sup>31</sup>. Over the last decades, the urban population growth has been high and stable; it is estimated to be around 2% /year. In 2017, the total population of Morocco was estimated to be 35.75 Million inhabitants.

Informal settlements

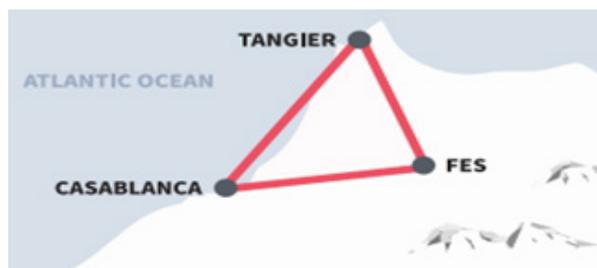
## THE DEFINITION OF INFORMAL SETTLEMENTS

*Moroccan informal settlements are heavily structured shacks lacking all basic amenities. They are mostly built on private land, with no license. Three different types of households are classified as slums by the Moroccan Government:*

1. *Truly temporary shacks made of second-hand materials that only offer the basic protection from the surrounding, called bidonvilles.*
2. *The dwellings, which are structurally sound, but are illegal: habitat non réglementaire.*
3. *The buildings in the historic core of the major cities, especially in the Medinas.*

Due to the intricacies of Moroccan culture, and the French colonization's heavy influence on how the country was formed, slums are locally commonly referred to as "Bidonvilles". In Moroccan dialect, shantytowns will be named karyan, derb [district] or douar [dwar = circle, village], in reference to the rural origin of the inhabitants and their language. In the early 2000s, 57% of Morocco's population lived in its cities. The number of households identified

as slums was 212,000, which represented 10% of the urban population. However, another 19%, 520,000 households, were marked as clandestine quarters. Between 1992 and 2001, the number of households living in slums increased at 5.6% per annum and the clandestine quarter households increased at 4.9% per year. Examples of bidonvilles showed that the Sidi Moemen slum was created on agricultural land, while older districts, in Casablanca and Rabat, develop into slums due to decades of overpopulation from migration and lack of maintenance and improved infrastructure. Urbanization in Morocco has been marked by coastal development and urban polarization, mainly in the axis Kenitra-Rabat-Casablanca El Jadida. Along this strip extended over 180 km, the concentrated urban population is estimated at about 40%. The urban areas have recorded a spreading at the expense of rural space through the increase of the number of cities and urban centers due to the extension of their perimeters.



The figure above shows the highest concentration of urban slums in Morocco in this Magic triangle, including Rabat. Of the 885 slum settlements, 509 (58%) have a population under 100 units, 280 settlements (31%) have a population between 100 and 500 units, and 97 settlements (11%) have a population over 500 units.

31 United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division (2018). World Urbanization Prospects: The 2018 Revision, custom data acquired via website.

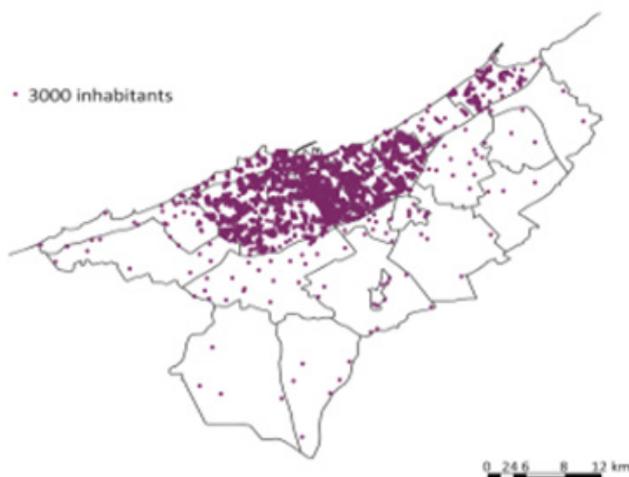


Figure 1: Density of the population in 2004 (inhabitants per km<sup>2</sup>)

Source: Document prepared by the regional inspection of MHPVAE - Region of Grand Casablanca in 2010

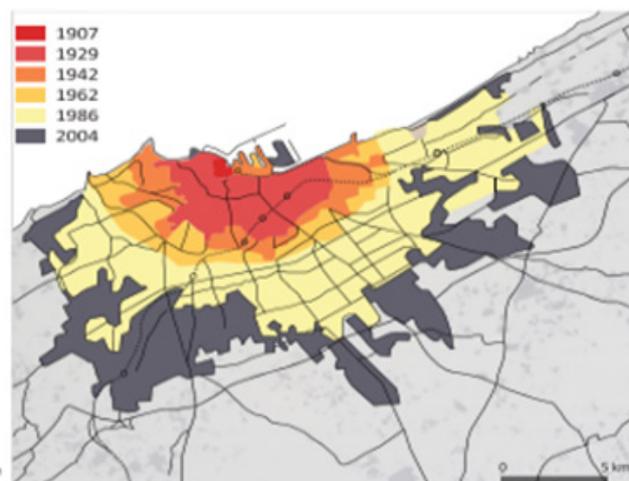
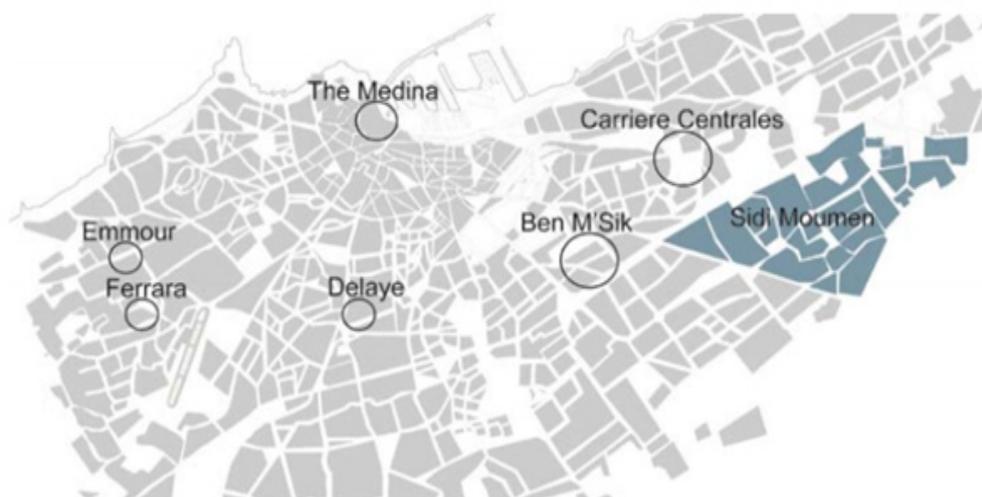


Figure 2: Casablanca's demographic growth from 1907 until 2004

Source: Agence Urbaine de Casablanca - Rapport diagnostic du nouveau SDAU (2006)



Slum areas in Casablanca. Data derived from Cohen, 2002 and Google maps.

Due to the lack of access to national level information, the general form of informal settlements nationwide has not been concluded. However, research about Sidi Moemen shows that the slum was created by farmers and nomadic settlers in the 1950s. It used to be the fastest growing area of the country because there was industrial work nearby, good land and suitable climate (after years of ill-treatment and lack of awareness- which is not the case anymore), and accessibility to the city's infrastructure- if still limited. The settlers have chosen to stay where their ancestors built their shacks with their own hands, even though the area has lacked public services and has been socially isolated from the

rest of Casablanca for decades.

Based on the limited investigations undertaken to pinpoint the socio-economic mix of the residents, only the reasons and expectations for the migration/settling in a slum are referred to in this paper. The paths vary from fleeing their rental status, displacement from another slum area, and seeking cheaper rent or starting a family. In their quest for homeownership, young couples move to areas known to benefit from public intervention and access to subsidized lots, therefore the slums continue to expand for several reasons other than the unemployment, limited resources or deteriorating state of the home of origin.

## The Causes of the Emergence of Informal Areas:

The causes of the emergence of informal areas are numerous. Settlers built their homes using canisters in the 1930s and were excluded from the urban development scheme. Due to the prices of property increasing dramatically after 1907, it became harder to find affordable and adequate land. Lack of sufficient job opportunities mixed with ties to the inhabitant's original way of life lead to building slums out of scrap material in that time. Housing shortages exasperated the unrest between international migrants/citizens and the rural population seeking better living standards through the industrial base that was created by the migrants; the native population was mostly excluded from the urban development plans.

Urban sprawl, lack of densification approaches, and missed opportunities to coordinate new developments at the city and local level lead to inefficient land use and city management, increasing costs of service provision and mobility for workers, creating additional barriers for labor to assess jobs and economic opportunities, and burdening commerce and industry with additional expenses. In addition, the on-going urban sprawl may create the sentiment of isolation among certain groups, particularly youth. Urban sprawl in Morocco's main cities is characterized by scattered developments in the form of housing or tourism projects that do not have spatial and physical links with each other or their direct environment.

The tenure issues are also complicated due to the disputed nature of occupancy by the inhabitants of slums, including intricacies in the older districts (Medinas) of inheritance, social status and influence, tenure issues remain the most difficult to resolve throughout the years and various programmes implemented.

## National Programmes and approaches

One of the major issues in Morocco, is the prevention and addressing shanties and slums. Several strategies and intervention programmes were implemented, through political subdivisions, integrated operations and special programmes against slums. According to the 2011 Constitution,

Moroccan citizens have an essential right to housing, water, a healthy environment, healthcare, and social security. On the other hand, slums often lack a combination of water supply, electricity, sewage, or waste management, and often unreasonable numbers of people are housed together in small spaces.

By far, the most valuable national project of the Kingdom of Morocco is "Villes Sans Bidonvilles". King Mohammed VI kicked off the programme on 24 July 2004: a new impulse in the fight against unsanitary housing, which has now become one of the national priorities. This programme aims to eradicate all shanties: 376,022 households in 85 cities and urban centers with an investment of around 32 billion MAD till 2015. This was to be achieved through Three main approaches: restructuring, relocation and resettlement. The intervention is developed in a partnership framework where each partner, depending on the specificity of each territory. This programme, which represents a strategic axis of the National Initiative for Human Development, was an essential component of urban upgrading and a major project for sustainable development. It adopts a participatory approach that involves all partners at the national level: local, central, as well as the target population.

In April 2019, 59 cities and urban centers have been declared without shanties of 85 cities involved and around 300 000 housings were treated and rehabilitated . The most recent city to receive such status is Settat in central Morocco. The actors intervening in the context of social support for beneficiaries of relocation and resettlement households are associations, NGOs, construction companies and engineering firms. The majority of households say they are satisfied with their homes. Nearly 90% say they are satisfied with their decent housing and equipment (i.e. kitchen and toilet). While 84% of families say they are satisfied with the site of relocation projects.

The VSB programme refers to the technical practices already tested in slum upgrading in Morocco, favoring certain modes over others according to the contexts of intervention, namely:

**ALLOCATION:**

Which consists of the allocation of developed lots with an area of between 64 and 70 m<sup>2</sup> for single-family lots and 80 m<sup>2</sup> for two-family lots to be valued in self-assisted construction, in the context subdivisions with full or progressive equipment. The use of progressive development responds to the desire to produce lots financially and is more adapting to the possibilities and the rate of savings of households with limited resources. It also ensures the safety and health of the inhabitants and the harmonious development of cities, based on subdivision plans and technical studies previously established.

**RELOCATION:**

Operationally, it is a question of relocating social housing (with a surface area less than or equal to 60 m<sup>2</sup> of a total real estate value not exceeding 120,000 dirhams). This mode of intervention is intended for relocating the slums identified and, in some cases, the households concerned by means of de-densification of the areas. The State has granted an aid equating to a third of the needed budget.

**RESTRUCTURING:**

Defined as restructuring operations, aimed at providing large and medium-sized shantytowns that can be integrated into the urban fabric with necessary infrastructure equipment (i.e. sanitation, roads, drinking water, electrification) and regularizing their urban and land use situation. The cost is calculated on the basis of 1.5 million dirhams/ha. State aid (50% of the cost) is intended for road and sanitation equipment. Drinking water supply and electrification are the responsibility of the beneficiaries with a contribution, if any, from the local authority. Continuing the support to the programme **Cities without slums**, UN-Habitat focused on supporting the programme between 2014 and 2016. 59 slum areas were addressed from a total 85 identified slums. The remaining 26 slums are the most sensitive.

International donors provided substantial funds to the VSB, including about USD 90 million from the European Investment Bank for off-site infrastructure and VSB operations, and USD 65 million from the Agence Française de Développement (AFD) to the government's parastatal developer, Holding Al Omrane. The EU

also made a grant of USD 117 million for social infrastructure in connection with the programme. All local governments are required to prepare comprehensive plans for the elimination of slums in their jurisdiction. They are also expected to make sites available without charges to the developers of new social housing apartments, in addition to availing central government land or land acquired from private owners.

The government has also established a central guarantee—the FOGARIM—which is used to guarantee 70% of each bank mortgage loan to low-income individuals with irregular incomes who would normally not be eligible for these loans.

The National Initiative for Human Development (INDH) is a development programme, launched by His Majesty King Mohammed VI on May 18, 2005. INDH activities in rural areas aim at reducing poverty and exclusion of rural citizens. Goals in urban areas aim at enhancing integration, social cohesion and improving the conditions and quality of citizens' lives.

The planned actions can be grouped under four headings:

- Promoting access to basic infrastructure, proximity services, social equipment and basic urban infrastructure.
- Boosting the local economy through revenue and employment generating activities.
- Supporting social, cultural and sporting activities.

Additionally, and to integrate a complementarity between the two configurations of urban or rural, local authorities have resorted to partnerships between municipalities in the implementation of the national basic infrastructure programmes (**PAGER: Programme of Grouped Rural Drinking Water Supply, PERG: Global Rural Electrification Programme and PNRR: National Programme of Rural Roads**). These inter-municipal developments were generally driven either by the authorities in charge or by the implementation of sectoral projects.

The pace of urbanization in Morocco has decreased since 1994. This is due to the decline in fertility rate and the decreasing pace of rural exodus. Various programmes and strategies have been the source of curbing the rural exodus. These are as follows: PAGER, PERG, PNRR1, NRRP2, the Urgent Plan, health care strategies, housing programmes for rural population,

Green Morocco Plan, Programme Against Drought, and strategies for tourism: vision 2010 and Vision 2020.

Standardization and performances for a better quality of buildings will also be applied. UN Habitat will participate in the implementation of standards regarding the environmental performance of the building components (i.e. windows, heating and cooling systems, etc.).

These programmes, combined with the Urgent Plan in education and successive strategies of the health care sector, built up to the following:

- Doubling of schooling enrolment rate (tripling for rural girls) and the rate of attendance at health centers.
- Improving well-being by offering opportunities of access to electrical equipment within rural households.
- Reduced overall expenses on electricity.

Private sector developers are encouraged to participate in the social housing market by the provision of tax incentives and serviced land by local governments. The parastatal, Holding Al Omrane, acts as the developer for many of the slum upgrading projects, and undertakes the construction of new housing and even new towns. "Holding Al Omrane" was founded in 2004 through an amalgamation of ANHI and about 18 other smaller agencies. Of the VSB projects- for which we have data- Al Omrane had 52 %; however, the remainder of the work is being implemented by private developers.

Furthermore, Morocco has put in place an innovative mechanism to promote and establish conditions for inclusive and sustainable development of rural areas. The implementation of the Emerging Rural Centers mechanism within a reasonable timeline would help to reduce disparities between cities and rural areas and strengthen the competitiveness of rural areas through the collaboration of different public interventions. Citizens' commitment to the location of the Emerging Rural Centers, to the vision of the development they promote and to the public action they start should also be sought to guarantee an enthusiastic, lasting implementation of the projects planned in this framework.<sup>32</sup>

The below figure shows the evolution of strategies to address the formation of slums.



Figure 2.2: Timeline on the emergence and evolution of slum eradication strategies  
 Source: Ministry of Housing and the Politics of the City

32 Habitat III-2016, Third United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban, P.20, 2014

# RURAL UPGRADING

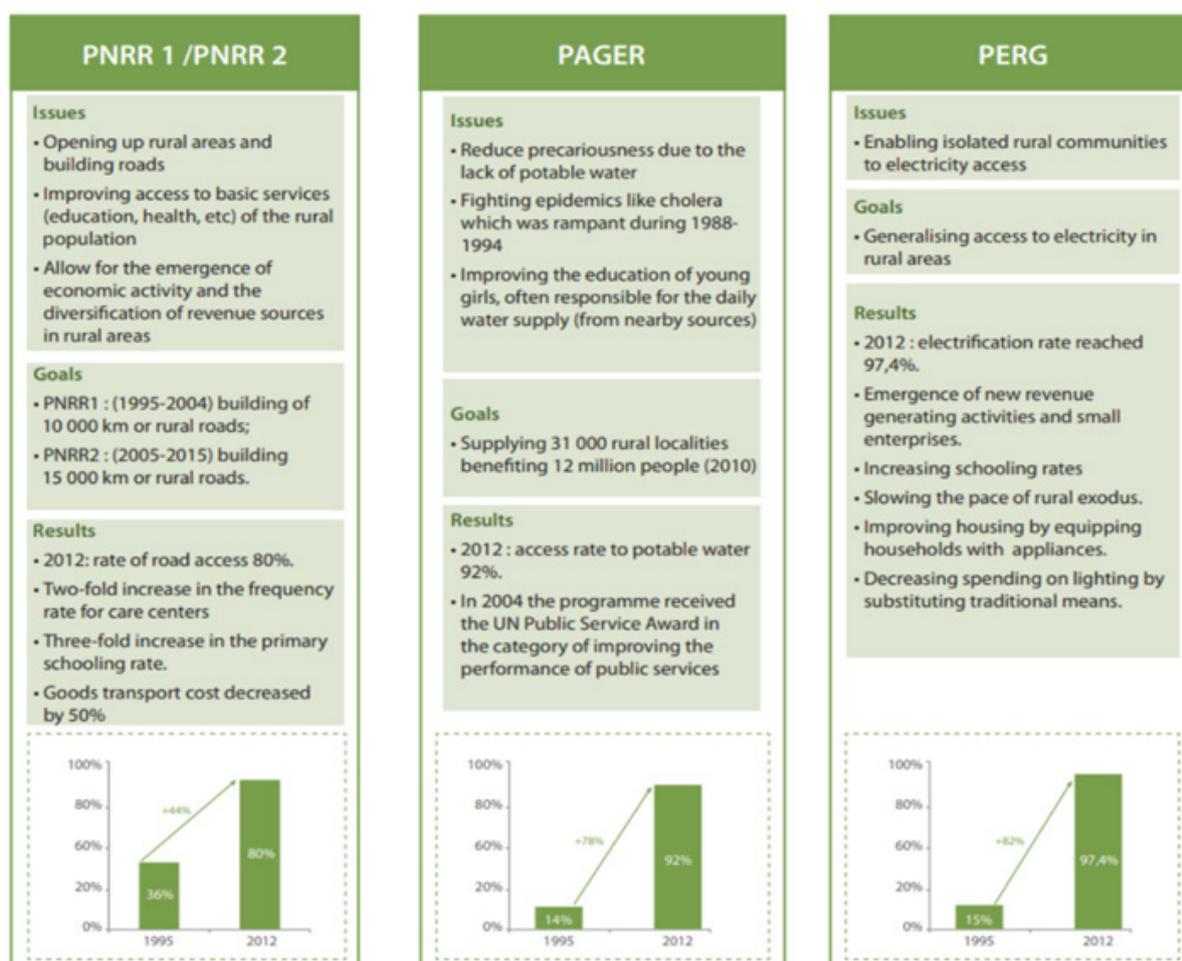
## CASE STUDY

At the beginning of the 90s', the rural world was suffering developmental delays due to isolation and the lack of basic services and infrastructure, such as roads, water, electricity, health, education, etc. The conclusion was that it was landlocked due its low accessibility (in 1995, only 36% of the rural population had access to a road), devoid of basic resources (in 1994, only 14% of the population had access to drinking water) and with low access to electricity (15% of households), economic or human development remained inconceivable. The Moroccan authorities decided to resolve this situation. Large-scale programmes were undertaken, targeting primarily the previously identified disabilities: PNRR1, NRRP2, PAGER, PERG, vaccination campaigns, rural education, and fight against adult illiteracy, mobile clinics, and cancelation of small farmers' debts, fighting

desertification and drought aid. Such projects were designed, implemented and followed up by the highest state level. The implementation of the first and most important industrial area in Morocco, Ain Sebaa. The first job on the borders of Sidi Moumen triggered the first installations of habitat due to lack of childcare necessities in social housing.

The opening of a quarry, with a stone crush for the production of gravel needed for construction of roads on the one hand, and on the other to supply raw materials for the installed cement manufacturing. This led to an increase in unhealthy habitat due to the gradual establishment of crude huts to house the laborers required to operate.

The location of the landfill in the centre of Sidi Moumen.



Progress and approaches of key national programs - Habitat III-2016, Third United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban, 2014.

Ksour are located in the vicinity of cities (most of these cities were built under the French protectorate) retain a high population density. For this reason, the MATNUHPV takes action in many of these 'ksour' with the intention of consolidating their general structures and improving security and living conditions.

Regarding Ksour and Kasbah, since 2013, the MATNUHPV has elaborated a programme for the sustainable development of Morocco's Ksour and Kasbah to improve the living conditions of this population, especially young men and women. Legislations related to the conservation of cultural heritage and the construction of earth and the strategies and interventions were realized under the responsibility of the Ministries of the Interior, Culture, Tourism, MATNUHPV, Crafts, Environment and Moroccans Residing Abroad.

Rehabilitating and enhancing 10 Ksour and Kasbah pilots, in a sustainable way with the active and effective participation of local stakeholders, was the major content of this project. Nine partnership

agreements were signed, eight of which with the municipalities hosting the selected Ksar and one with the Ministry of Culture. 10 beneficiary sites (2 in Errachidia, 2 in Tinghir, 2 in Zagora, 2 in Figuig, 1 in Ouarzazate and 1 in Tata) were selected according to the criteria defined by the project document and according to the urgency of required intervention. This choice was made in collaboration and in consultation with the municipalities, local authorities and the external services concerned.

The priority actions for the rehabilitation of the 10 Ksour and Kasbah selected were initiated with a budget approaching 10 million dirhams (1 million USD). Regarding the water and sanitation concerns, today, 83 % of Moroccans have access to improved drinking water, and 72 % have access to improved sanitation. The percentage of people using at least basic drinking water service varies between urban areas: 95% and rural area: 67% (2015).<sup>33</sup>

# SIDI MOEMEN

## CASE STUDY

This borough, which covers an area of 47 km<sup>2</sup> and is considered one of the poorest in the city, experienced a significant population increase from 1994 to 2008, from 134 6971 to 298 4312 inhabitants. It was created by farmers and nomadic settlers in the 1950s. It used to be the fastest growing area of Morocco because there was industrial work nearby, good land and suitable climate (after years of ill-treatment and lack of awareness- which is no longer the case) and accessibility to the city's infrastructure- if still limited. The settlers have chosen to stay where their ancestors built their shacks with their own hands, even though the area lacked public services and has been socially isolated from the rest of Casablanca for decades.

Sidi Moumen is the largest and most infamous slum area in Casablanca due to an incident in May 2003 when the social isolation escalated into

terror as downtown Casablanca bombings killed more than 45 people. All bombers came from the Sidi Moumen slum. Overnight, Sidi Moumen became famous as a terror slum. Today, Sidi Moumen is transforming from a terror slum area into a busy mass housing area. Sidi Moumen is suffering from social problems like illiteracy, poverty, unemployment and lack of infrastructure, green spaces, and services. But the main problem of Sidi Moumen is the unhealthy habitat. The district contains nearly a third of all slum area in Casablanca, with more than 20,000 slum-dwelling households.<sup>34</sup>

33 (Rodriguez Navarro and Gil Paqueras in Buildings 2018, 8, 16; doi:10.3390/buildings8020016).

34 Jennie Luthander & Karolina Gustavsson, SIDI MOUMEN: FROM TERROR SLUM TO OPEN CITY, 2014.

While some of the areas have been demolished and new social houses are being built, many of the inhabitants feel a gap between how the new social houses are designed and how their lives used to be concerning their culture, traditions and needs. Sidi Moumen urban development has an area of 47 km<sup>2</sup>. In the last census in 2008, Sidi Moumen had 298 4312 inhabitants and with an average annual population growth of 7.9% the population is estimated to nearly 500,000 inhabitants (Royaume du Maroc haut commissariat au plan, 2004). Three major events have completely changed the urban landscape in Sidi Moumen.<sup>35</sup>

1. The implementation of the first and most important industrial area in Morocco, Ain Sebaa. The first job on the borders of Sidi Moumen triggered the first installations of habitat due to lack of childcare necessities in social housing.
2. The opening of a quarry, with a stone crush for the production of gravel needed for construction of roads and to supply raw materials for the installed cement manufacturing. This led to an increase in unhealthy habitat due to the gradual establishment of crude huts to house the laborers required to operate.
3. The location of the landfill in the centre of Sidi Moumen.



Sidi Moumen is built on agricultural land but there is very little land allocated for that purpose. A few factories provide jobs to the inhabitants and there are more factories nearby in Sidi Bernoussi. Most of the land is residential and the rest is waiting to be converted into residential areas. do not contain spaces for trade or allow the inhabitants to trade from home, which is causing

them to lose a source of income and forcing them to commute to make a living.

Since Sidi Moumen is a suburb that has no green spaces, it is viable to create green spaces such as social gardens, parks and urban agriculture.<sup>36</sup>



Slum Area of Casablanca Sidi Moumen, Blekinge Institute of Technology (Sweden) and ENA Rabat (Morocco), interdisciplinary and intercultural student team research

35 Jennie Luthander & Karolina Gustavsson, SIDI MOUMEN: FROM TERROR SLUM TO OPEN CITY, 2014.  
 36 ibid

# CONCLUSION

Morocco is one of the most advanced Arab countries in the upgrading of informal settlements. Private sectors are involved via the creation of joint venture in Rabat Casa Blanca and Tangiers. These companies are in charge of the infrastructure management and insure the basic services. ALOmrane Holding is a unique model allowing having an active public action in relation with the housing sector and the urban planning. The programme VSB: Cities without slums is also an important success but many informal settlements have to be analyzed in the coming period. It is also important to understand the relations between the informal settlements and the urban development processes. At the end, the new phenomenon of 'Habitat Menacé de Ruine' is crucial. It is different from informal settlements as they are legally constructed, but their physical state is even worst in comparison with informal settlements.

Morocco needs specific policies to derive higher returns from its urbanization process. Moreover, urbanization in Morocco has not been accompanied by structural transformation, notably towards industrialization, and thus it has proceeded without adequate job creation. Although more than 60 % is urban, Morocco still employs about half its labor force in agriculture.

It is important to have an evaluation of the implemented work within the main programmes (especially relocation ones) and also to coordinating with the FSH (Social solidarity fund: fond de solidarité sociale).

# 5 SAUDI ARABIA

## Introduction:

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is witnessing a rapidly growing urbanization due to demographic, social and economic growth in the country<sup>37</sup>. This resulted in an increase in the number of cities reaching 285 local authorities in 2014.

In the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), slums and informal settlements are found in only a few gateway cities. Jeddah has experienced rapid population growth and spatial expansion, which, combined with an inadequate supply of affordable housing and loosely enforced development regulations, resulted in 35 % of the city's residents living in informal settlements in 2009.

In response to the urban challenges that arose from the rapid growth, and supporting to the Urban Strategy of the Kingdom to achieve balanced development, a Royal Decree has been issued for the Ministry of Municipal and Rural Affairs- in cooperation with UN Habitat- to implement the "Future Saudi Cities"<sup>38</sup> Programme in order to achieve sustainable urbanization for the Kingdom. The Future Saudi Cities Programme objectives, results, and deliverables are fully aligned with the 2030 Saudi Arabia's vision, as well the Ministry's Municipal Transformation Programme. It contains 13 components<sup>39</sup> ) and this Ministry has a state secretary dedicated to Urban Planning and Cities Development. The informal settlements are not mentioned precisely in the future of Saudi cities but the inclusivity and urban regeneration are considered as priorities.

## The informal settlement situation in KSA

According to the MOMRA report, produced for Habitat III<sup>40</sup>, the two holy cities of *Makkah AlMukarrama* and *AlMedina AlMunawarra*<sup>41</sup>, as well as the cities of Jeddah and Taif, have the largest concentrations of informal settlements in KSA. This issue generates major challenges for

urban settlements. In Makkah, the number of formal settlements is 66, accommodating a total population of some 590,000 people. In Medina, there are 15 such settlements, with a population of around 814,000. Jeddah has 64 settlements with the population estimated at well over 1 million people.

### • Legal Issues

1. Legitimate ownership by 86% and the problem of illegitimate ownership of land in farm areas increases to 30%.
2. The majority of areas are planned but not supported by 74% and increased to 80% in villages and scattered areas.
3. 25% of the buildings are built without permits, and increase to 100% in rural communities and 88% in agricultural villages, scattered and construction violations.

### • Social and Economic Issues

1. Informal settlement areas do not suffer from a very high population density except some areas of Old Deira, where they reach more than 100 inh/h.
2. 50% of the population is Saudi, areas with a population of more than non-Saudis have led to the emergence of criminal hotspots.

### • Infrastructure Accessibility

1. Most of the external roads are in good condition, while the internal roads are in poor condition with widths up to 6 m.
2. Most of the water supply is by tanks, except for the most urbanized areas, they have access to clean water systems.
3. Lack of sewage networks.

37 Mapping Informal Settlements in the Middle East Environment using an Object-Based Machine Learning Approach Ahmad Fallatah<sup>1\*</sup>, Simon Jones<sup>1</sup> and David Mitchell. Preprints 2018, 2018090219 (doi: 10.20944)

38 Future of Saudi cities Programme (2016) presentation in Habitat III Conference, Quito 2016 by Dr A. Bin Hassan Alcheick. ([www.futuresaudicities.org/press-kit/](http://www.futuresaudicities.org/press-kit/))

40 Al Balad Al Amin Company ; <http://albaladalameen.com.sa/ab/arservice.php?serviceid=222>

41 MOMRA, Informal settlements in Jeddah and Makkah (situation in 2014). Habitat III report 2016)

## • Housing issues

1. The area of the housing unit in informal areas ranges from 100-200 m<sup>2</sup>. This is not commensurate with the average number of family members. The plots of land are small in size, reaching 330 m<sup>2</sup> in the city center.

## National Strategies and Approaches

According to the national study<sup>42</sup> conducted by MOMRA (Ministry of Municipal and Rural Affairs) in February 2014, the following recommendations were to be considered:

### Institutional level:

1. Establish an informal settlements unit in the deputyship of town planning at the Ministry of Municipal and Rural Affairs. The role of this unit is to study and analyze the status of informal settlements in regions and develop a national map.
2. Establish an informal settlements unit, in regional municipalities, to coordinate with the central unit in the Ministry.

### Technical level:

1. Update the national assessments of informal settlements in 12 regions, including GIS data base and other related studies.
2. Continue the urban detailed studies for the new master plans of these settlements and select eight areas as a pilot project.

### Coordination with partners:

1. Implement training workshops targeting MOMRA and Municipalities technical experts to enhance their capacity on upgrading informal settlements
2. Coordinate with local urban observatories on data collection about slums and other figures on the area. .
3. Coordinating with ministry of interior on the security information about these areas.

The two holy cities of Makkah AlMukarrama and AlMedina AlMunawarra as well as the cities of

Jeddah and Taif have the largest concentrations of informal settlements in the Kingdom of KSA. This issue generates major challenges for urban settlements. In Makkah the number of informal settlements is 66 accommodating a total population of some 590,000 people. In Medina there are 15 such settlements, with a population of around 814,000. Jeddah has 64 settlements with the population estimated at well over 1 million people.

## The institutional setup for informal settlements has many major players:

- Ministry of Municipalities and Rural affairs has a long history in setting guidelines and policies for informal settlements in KSA.
- Regional Authorities are newly mandated with informal settlements amongst many other mandates at city level.
- Ministry of Housing is dealing with the housing provision and several projects for urban regeneration.
- Amanat (Local government) is dealing with the execution of projects for unplanned settlements.
- Emarat is dealing with the setting policies and main support to local policies setting and also supervision on the execution.
- Several other entities were formulated such as companies affiliated to Amman (Al Balad Al Amin Company and JUDRC).

Policy on informal settlements has been of particular concern to the Government; therefore, Royal orders have been issued instructing the Government to improve the conditions of the informal settlements -according to their state of development and their assessed attractiveness as locations for potential investment. In 2008, the Council of Ministers approved the Informal Settlements Regulation in Makkah Region, this regulation includes the following:

- Definitions of informal settlements.
- Strategies of development for informal settlements.
- Implementation process.
- Real-estate regulations.

42 The National Report for the Third UN Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development (HABITAT III) for the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia The Ministry of Municipal and Rural Affairs and the National HABITAT Consultation Group in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

- Urban perspective in upgrading informal settlements project.
- Socio-economic perspective.
- General regulations.
- Master plan process.

Based on the above decree, four categories were developed:

- **Category 1:** Attractive for investment by the private sector.
- **Category 2:** Partly attractive for investment by the private sector.
- **Category 3:** Areas with potential for self-improvement.
- **Category 4:** Areas which require immediate intervention.

### Regarding the management process, basic information is collected and the physical status of informal settlements in Saudi cities is monitored following two stages:

- Field Survey (i.e. Social, Economic, GIS, Infrastructure, Topographic, Environment)
- Classification of Informal Settlements based on locations (i.e. City centers area, within Urban boundary area, Infringement areas, rural areas, agriculture areas, high risk areas (social, environment), abandoned areas, heritages areas).

### The development companies for the management and upgrading of Informal settlements:

#### • **Jeddah Development & Urban Regeneration Co. (JDURC) :<sup>43</sup>**

It is a state-owned company, represented by Jeddah Province Municipality and Public Investment Fund. JDURC is working on realizing the vision of the Jeddah Province Municipality to strengthen the unique position of the Municipality to be a gateway for the two holy mosques and to be a cultural center for Islamic culture and a commercially and environmentally distinct tourist destination.<sup>44</sup>

43 MOMRA, Informal settlements in Jeddah and Makkah (situation in 2014). Habitat III report 2016

44 Al-Ruwais Slum Area development Project; <http://jdurc.com/en/project1.aspx?mid=16&msid=0&mssid=0>

45 Al-Ruwais Slum Area development Project; <http://jdurc.com/en/project1.aspx?mid=16&msid=0&mssid=0>

### In Jeddah informal settlements regeneration projects, the private sector is playing an important role to be a part of the development, the companies:

#### **Ruwais International Real Estate Development Company :<sup>45</sup>**

Ruwais Alliance Real Estate Development: This company was selected to be the main and exclusive developer of slum areas of Ruwais District Development Project. The company was incorporated by partnership between JDURC and Ruwais Alliance

#### **Khozam Development Real Estate Company**

In 2007, The Minister of Municipal and Rural Affairs issued the approval of the Khozam area as a work area for Jeddah Company.

A partnership agreement was signed between Dar AlArkan Real Estate Development Company (DAAR) and Jeddah Development and Urban Regeneration Company (JDURC), in 2007, to incorporate Khozam Real Estate Development Company as the main developer of Qasr Khozam Development Project. In 2009, the development plan of Qasr Khozam Development Project was approved by the Ministry of Municipal and Rural Affairs, with a plot ration of six for the project and multi-use system to ensure the desired investment benefits.

#### **Murooj Jeddah Company Limited**

The company was incorporated on 13/02/2013 pursuant to a partnership agreement between JDURC and Sumou Holding Company. Jeddah Murooj Suburb Company Limited carries out the following:

- Developing the primary infrastructure works of the whole project.
- Marketing for the residential / commercial development packages for secondary developers.

## Relevant Case studies:

### JEDDAH INFORMAL SETTLEMENT DEVELOPMENT PLAN

The informal settlement plans for Jeddah are particularly well advanced under the strategic planning work being undertaken for the city as a whole. Informal settlements in Jeddah are extensive, taking up almost 20% of the city's area and housing around 1 million people.

As the Figure shows, informal settlements in Jeddah have been classified according to these four categories and a programme of planned intervention forms part of the Jeddah Strategic Plan. This includes:

- Preparing Master Plans and Action Plans for each informal settlement.
- Resolving land tenure and formalizing ownership where possible.
- Creating mechanisms for engaging the private sector.
- Establishing measures to prevent the future formation of new informal settlements.
- Implementing these actions will require significant resources from the Jeddah Municipality, faced with tasks such as validating, surveying and issuing new land titles for properties in informal settlements.

With the assistance of international advisers, the Municipality of Jeddah and the Jeddah Development and Urban Regeneration Company (JDURC) are managing a programme titled 'Jeddah without Slums', aimed at legalization of land titles, improvement of local environments, and increased provision of services for residents.

Plans prepared for each settlement include options for (i) regeneration of the entire area, and (ii) upgrading streets and minimal redevelopment alongside improved streets. During all stages of the development, consultations were held with local residents, representatives of traditional community groups, municipalities, and private developers to ensure that stakeholders were appropriately engaged throughout the process.

The Jeddah Strategic Plan 2009 addresses unplanned settlements and recognizes both the social importance of such areas and the public health and security issues they raise for the municipality. An institutional response, began in 2007, with the establishment of the public enterprise Jeddah Development and Urban Regeneration Company (JDURC)<sup>46</sup> and the Jeddah without Slums programme. The company's mandate includes slum clearance, developing sustainable housing solutions, establishing public-private partnerships, and special purpose vehicles to construct and manage sustainable shelter solutions (JDURC, 2015). To prepare for a projected population of 5.7 million by 2029, the Strategic Plan calls for the construction of 950,500 housing units, 685,000 of them affordable for lower- and middle-income groups, in an effort to reduce informal urbanization and precarious housing (UN-Habitat, 2012a).

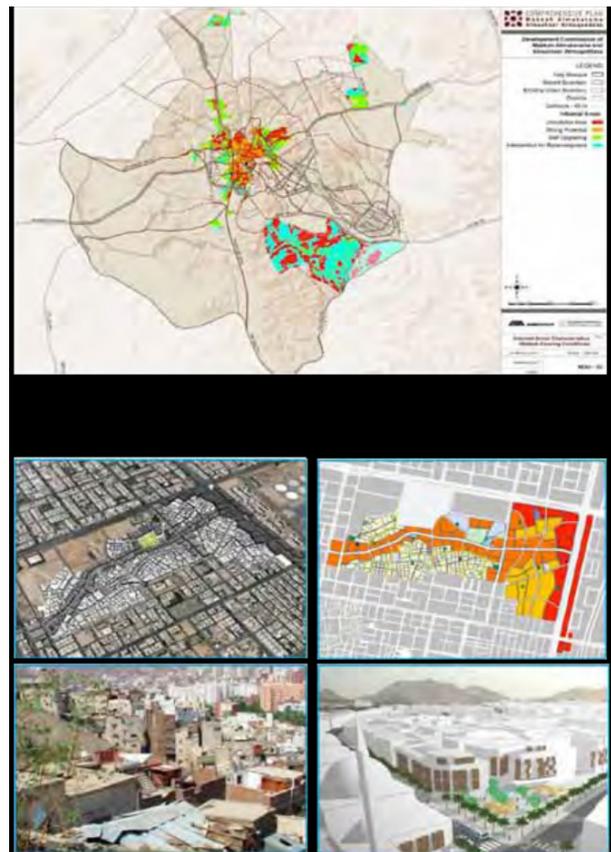


Figure 1: Informal settlements in Jeddah and Makkah (situation in 2014).

Source: MOMRA, 2016, Habitat III report

46 <http://jdurc.com/en/Default.aspx>

## JABAL ALSHARSHEF INFORMAL SETTLEMENTS<sup>47</sup>

AREA = 1,700,000 SQUARE METER.  
POPULATION = 190,000

Due to its proximity to the Holy Mosque and its low urban status, Jabal Al-Sharaashif is considered a top priority in development. The slum area will be transformed into a world-class mixed-use urban plan, which will contribute to improving the urban fabric of Makkah.

With a total area of 1.7 million square meters, Jabal Alshraashf is a natural landmark that offers a view of the Holy Haram and the smooth flow of walking on several roads and paths, only 500 meters at the nearest point of the Haram. And 1.7 km from the waist. The project site is bordered on the north by the King Abdul Aziz parallel road and Jabal Omar project, on the east by Ibrahim Khalil Street, on the south by the confluence of Ibrahim Khalil Street and Jarham Street, and on the west by Jarham Street.

The project aims to reconstruct the urban environment of the neighborhood on the basis of comprehensive and coordinated plans covering all aspects of the urban environment such as: urban formation, housing, transport networks, utilities, public services and social and economic events. All the necessary studies for the project were prepared by international and local consultants. On the day of Muharram in 1435 AH, the area of Jabal Al-Sharaashf was declared as a development zone. This was announced in local newspapers at the time. And gentlemen owners of real estate, which are located within the project area of the development of mountain bed sheets in Mecca started providing their documents and proving their ownership of the property.



Figure 2a : Jabal Alsharashif area (<http://>

[albaladalameen.com.sa/ab/arproject.php?mid=49&msid=34](http://albaladalameen.com.sa/ab/arproject.php?mid=49&msid=34))

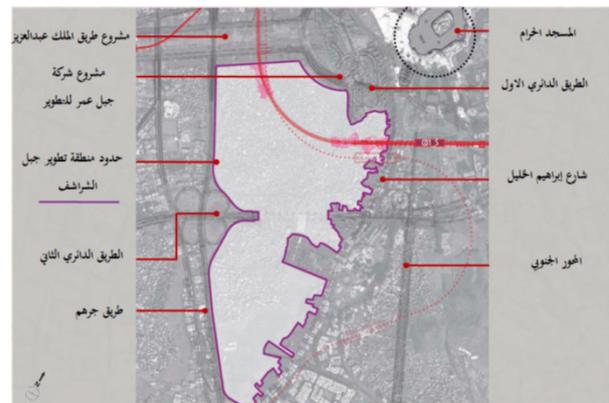


Figure 2b Jabal Alsharashif area ( Al Balad Al Amin Company, <http://albaladalameen.com.sa/ab/arproject.php?mid=49&msid=34#>)



Figure 2c Jabal Alsharashif new master plan  
Source: Al Balad Al Amin Company, <http://albaladalameen.com.sa/ab/arproject.php?mid=49&msid=34#>

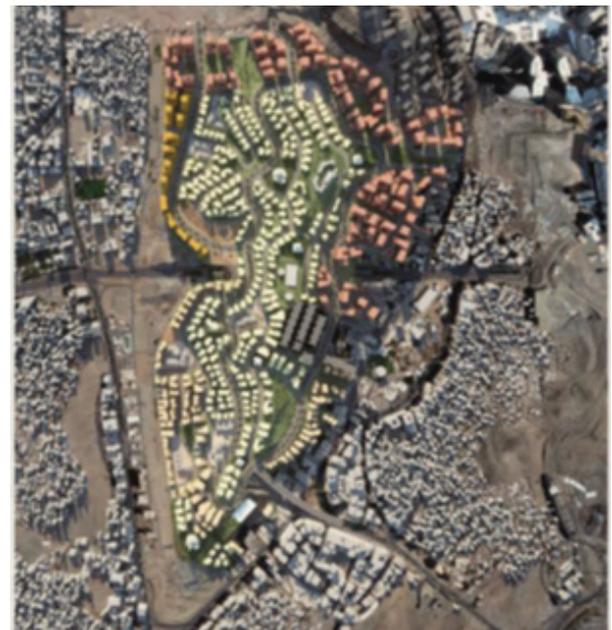


Figure 2d Jabal Alsharashif new master plan  
Source: Al Balad Al Amin Company, <http://albaladalameen.com.sa/ab/arproject.php?mid=49&msid=34#>

# AL-RUWAIIS IS AREA DEVELOPMENT PROJECT

## CASE STUDY

The project is located at Al-Ruwais district, center of Jeddah. The total development area is about (1.166.000) square meters. It is considered a pioneer experience in the field of the development and regeneration. It aims at uplifting the level of life and services and provide a new vision of the area according to the world's best practices in the field of urban development and regeneration of slum areas. The project is subject to the regulation of development and addressing slums in Makkah Region approved by the Supreme Decree No. 5519.

Objectives of the Project: The project aims to develop Al-Ruwais district, support economic development, and address the social, environmental, and urban problems in the neighborhood. The aim is to do so in an integrated manner to make it one of the most important cultural landmarks, especially for

Jeddah and the Kingdom in general. In addition, the project provides and implements public utilities and infrastructure for the development area and connecting it to Jeddah's infrastructure networks. The project also offers investment interest and returns to the current owners by granting them priority in the contribution and establishment of one of the most promising real estate projects in the Kingdom.

Components of the project:

- Residential area
- Commercial and Hotel services area
- Medical area



Figure 3a: Al-Ruwais Slum Area site plan<sup>48</sup>

# CONCLUSION

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KSA is considering the question of informal settlements as part of the urban development strategy for each city and metropolitan area. The private sector is involved and the governance system is clear and transparent. But the information regarding the relocation strategy and the attribution of parts in the new districts are not detailed. The presented case studies are relevant and present a very interesting potential for the other Arab countries.

# 6 TUNISIA

## Introduction:

The Tunisian population increased by 25% since 1994, reaching 10.983 million people- according to the 2014 population census- despite the continuous drop of the annual population growth rate. The population growth rate synchronized with the growth of the urbanization phenomenon, as the cities accommodated 67.7% of the overall population in 2014; however, this rate had not exceeded 61% in 1994.

Fast urbanization during the period between 1994 and 2014 resulted in a high increase of the urbanization ratio, which is currently about 68%. Urban population represents 61 %, and 76% the houses are in urban areas.

The average population density in Tunisia increased from 56.5 people/km<sup>2</sup> in 1994 to 67.12 people/km<sup>2</sup> in 2014, an increase of 19% during this period. However, the geographic distribution of population densities shows major differences from one region to another up to now. While the population density reaches 200 people/km<sup>2</sup> in the coastal strip stretching from Great Tunis to Monastir, it does not exceed 100 people/ km<sup>2</sup> in the rest of the coastal strip, except Gabes, and then falls to 55 to 75 people/km<sup>2</sup> in the central steppes and to less than 55 people/km<sup>2</sup> in the regions of South and Mid-West.

## The informal settlement evolution and the current situation

Several demographic and economic changes contribute to the formation of chaotic settlements. Migration to main cities and industrial hubs for job opportunities, high process of land and difficulty to attain formally. Additionally, the bank loan system is not accessible to the low-income sector like those who work low-income and informal jobs, such as welders or carpenters. All real estate constructions and areas are very expensive and often remote from the cities. Accordingly, citizens plan areas informally over agricultural lands. key reasons can be summarized as follows:

- A decline of social plots supply for low-income groups;
- Lack of urban rehabilitation system within housing and urban policies;
- Lack of efficiency concerning access mechanisms to adequate housing notably for low-income and medium social groups;
- Difficulty in providing urban services including health and security services with the required quality, especially for needy families. Tunis does not have vast expanses of land.

In the late 1940s, the first informal areas appeared in Tunisia with the creation of “informal settlements” in near-central locations of the major cities. A massive rural exodus caused this, and most were made up of crude structures predominated by single rooms rented to families. At the time of independence, in 1956, a “belt” of informal settlements surrounded Tunis and its Medina. The government response to these “gourbis” was demolition and either resettlement or forced return to the villages of origin.

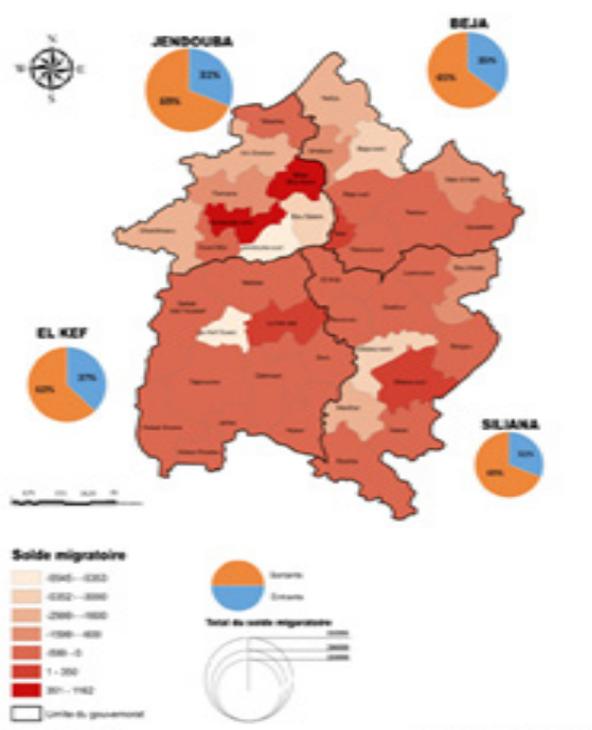
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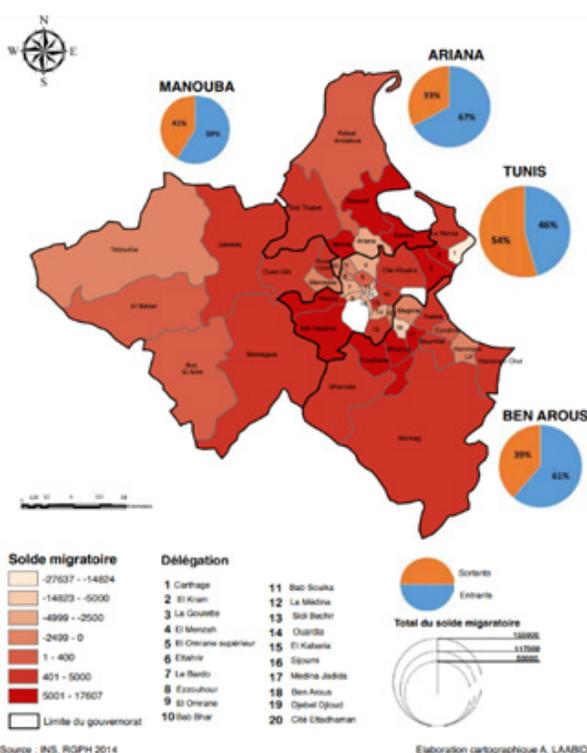
The majority of informal settlements inhabitants were migrant farmers from agricultural areas. Triggered by changes in the environment, land tenure issues, and decreasing employment opportunities in their place of origin, they migrated to informal settlements in urban areas. Some of them were from rural or high-risk land, looking for better prospects, living standards and security. The term “gourbivilles” is now considered archaic therefore classification as such has been stopped, preferring the term chaotic settlement more accurately. However, older chaotic settlements are still called “gourbivilles” for continuity in studies. The second wave of informality began in the 1960s, and peaked in the 1970s, with the creation of peripheral spontaneous urban settlements around major towns, and other land that was either bought or squatted. Housing varied from rudimentary to quite substantial courtyard and multi-family units, usually only a single-story high. Over time, owners invested considerably in this housing. In some cases, completely new areas were created by secretive land sub-dividers in quite identical, grid-pattern areas that were generally of acceptable quality. However, the roads were mostly narrow and utilities were completely lacking.

After Tunisia gained independence in 1956, the government began to reshape the status of the country and launched economic and urban development plans. However, the focus on the capital and the eastern coast, with a concentration on industries, services and institutions, created a deep territorial gap and social segregation. Since then, a huge new rural migration has taken place, leading to urban population growth of up to 65 % in 2006 <sup>49</sup>, representing an average annual growth rate of 3.5%. <sup>50</sup>

Between the 1960s and 1980s, the preferred method of intervention was socio-economic. Concentration on industries, services and institutions was found necessary rejuvenate national economy and avoid further expansion of informal settlements.



Abdelala BOUNOUH et Sonia GSIR, Migrations et environnement en Tunisie : Relations complexes et défis pour le développement, P.69, 2017.



Migration density from one area another in several states and the most areas that caused migration

49 Population urbaine (% de la population totale), Tunisie, Perspective monde

50 Maha Kouas, Informal Marginalized Districts in Tunis: An Urban Development Failure Leading to Rampant Social Inequalities, 2018.



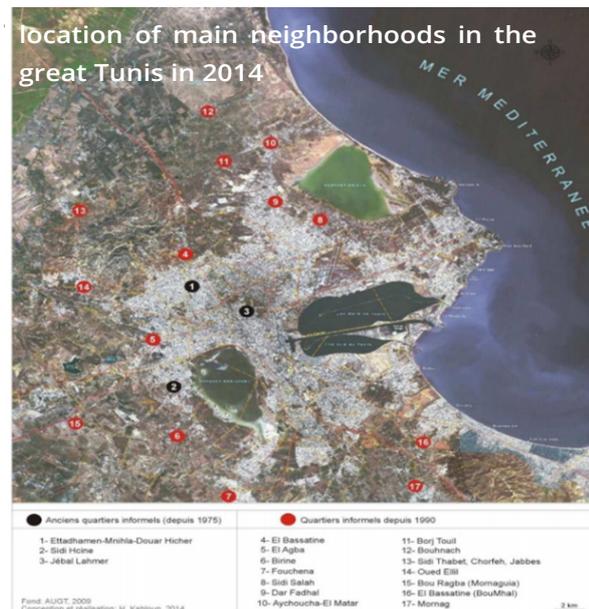
FAO, Rural Migration in Youth, 2018.

Surveys conducted in 1980, in Tunisia’s main urban areas, identified some 210 squatter/informal areas with more than 500,000 inhabitants, representing 28% of the total population of the cities investigated. The phenomenon continued throughout the 1980s and 1990s. In 1989 Ben Arous, one governorate of Greater Tunis, it was estimated that over 434 hectares (representing 16% of the total urbanized space of the governorate) were covered by informal settlements.<sup>51</sup> Nevertheless, the 1990s witnessed a resurgence of massive rural migration triggered by droughts, seismic lands, and the abandonment of agricultural lands in rural

Aridity, variability of rainfall patterns, and extreme natural phenomena characterize much of Tunisia. Observed trends and projected climate changes raise fears of increased vulnerabilities that cause migration, whether to abandon now inhabitable land or searching for a better opportunity to survive, both of which are direct factors in the formation of chaotic settlements. 18 heavy floods were reported, causing the deaths of nearly 800 people over the past five decades.

Unregulated urbanization and the spread of unregulated neighborhoods, estimated at 1,400 neighborhoods, are the most influencing elements in the urban sprawl. According to official estimates, urban sprawl occurred in an unorganized and unregulated fashion out of urban management plans ranging between 30% and 40% of urban areas. In the municipalities of the governorate of Manouba in Great Tunis, urban sprawl out of urban management plans has been estimated at 44.9% of the built masses. Besides approximately 1,005 hectares of lands that are considered non-residential in urban management plans of Great Tunis.

The nature of these informal settlements is alluvial plains, massive forests, oases, or steppe ecosystems in more isolated slum areas. Historic districts in downtown that are badly maintained and have no proper infrastructure additions over the decades are also considered as informal settlements. It is built on agricultural land (Douar Hicher), on high risk land (Sebkha, Raoued), historic districts (called Wakalas), or old social housing programmes, such as Ettadhamen. , an exemple discussed in further details.



### National Strategies and approaches:

- Since the 1980s, the government has begun revitalizing these informal areas, and has contributed through the Urban Rehabilitation and Renovation Agency (ARRU) to improving the living conditions of over 192 neighborhoods in the country. Since 1992, grants for this have been provided by the European Investment Bank (EIB) and the French Development Agency (AFD). Major projects have been implemented, including the demolition of low-quality buildings, the construction of social housing for the poorest families, introducing drinking water, electricity, and

improvements. However, this form of urban growth has never stopped; the government cannot contain nor curb it.

In February 1990, Law 17 was created to enable legislation for private real estate developers, which set the framework for the registration and operation. In the early 1990's decrees gave private developers tax-breaks and other incentives to provide affordable housing. Land for such housing projects is in some cases provided by AFH (Agence Foncière d'Habitation) at market and below market prices. Urban sprawl, experienced by most cities since the 90s, resulted into an excessive increase in the consumption of lands, estimated at 60% (i.e. 1,200ha in 1994 to 3,000 Ha in 2014, including 27% for Great Tunis). Since 2012, 155 areas, 12838 units have been improved as the first generation of the Programme of Rehabilitation and Integration of the Great Quarters of Habitats (PRIQH) (2012-2016).

Moreover, the Tunisian government is setting a new policy for:

- Controlling urban land prices to respond to the needs of low-income social groups of rehabilitated plots;
- Controlling dwellers prices and developing construction methods;
- Activating the partnership between the private and public sectors and implementing integrated urban and housing projects in which reasons and decent living conditions are available;
- Ensuring good quality in basic urban and leisure services (i.e. lighting, energy, drinking water, sanitation, waste management and fighting pollution, green areas, etc.) developing health control system of food and drinking water;
- Mobilizing the non-traditional water resources by adopting sea water desalination for the great urban poles by coastlines and desalination of groundwater in the South and the Center;
- Activating preventive policies to ensure safety and health security to urban and rural population;
- Promoting the culture of energy conservation by encouraging the use of renewable energy and the adoption of green building techniques that save energy.

There were also trials for some preventive approaches including surrounding the areas to avoid expansion. They separate it into "makasem" for families under their full responsibility, so they

are held liable for any expansion. Additionally, laws were made illegalize expansion and formation of chaotic neighborhoods.

### The Main Stakeholders involved in the upgrading of informal settlements in Tunisia are as follows:

**a.** The Ministry of Infrastructure, Housing and Regional Development (Ministère de l'Équipement, de l'Habitat et de l'Aménagement du Territoire : MEHAT) is the primary institution dealing with housing in Tunisia. It is responsible for preparing, coordinating and guiding national housing policies and strategies, mainly through its Department of Housing (DGH, Direction Générale de l'Habitat, formed 1988). It's also responsible for developing housing programmes and monitoring implementation. The Ministry also has a Department of Planning, which is responsible for urban planning in the country. The Housing Directorate (DGH) of MEHAT is responsible for developing housing programmes and policies, also for monitoring policy implementation and programme achievements through its Housing Observatory (OIF, l'Observatoire de l'Immobilier et du Foncier).

**b.** The Tunisian Housing Corporation (SNIT, la Société Nationale Immobilière de Tunisie) was established in 1957 and has functioned as the main agency for the supply of social housing for low and middle-income families in Tunisia. It is a corporation fully owned by the State. By 2010, SNIT had built about 261,000 housing units, but its level of production has reduced



New Peri-Urban Informal housing. Source: ARRU, The Tunisian experience in limiting Random Housing, power point presentation, June 2010

access to health services and various road compared to earlier decades. In the past, SNIT undertook neighborhood renovations in Bab-Souika/Halfaouine, the demolition of Wakalas (old districts), and the demolition of crude housing, choosing to relocate inhabitants. SNIT decentralized in 1979 and since then has operated under three divisions, in addition to its national headquarters in Tunis which covers Greater Tunis plus the governorate of Nabeul.

**c.** The Company for the Promotion of Social Housing (SPROLS, la Société de Promotion des Logements Sociaux) is another public enterprise which builds mainly social housing. Its levels of production have always been less than SNIT. They now have “serviced” informal settlements, with full infrastructure and services, such as Ali Helal neighborhoods and ElBahr el Azrak. In 2012, 1,400 housing units were expanded in these areas. People in these areas are waiting for the government to provide services such as garbage collection, more transportation points, and setting up commercial stores/hubs.

**d.** The Housing Land Agency (AFH, Agence Foncière d’Habitation) was created in 1973 with the power to claim land for the public good and the pre-emptive right to purchase land. AFH was created to supply land for the construction of affordable social housing to enter into land markets -to control prices- and to assist municipalities in land management.

**e.** In 1981, Tunisia established the National Agency for Urban Renovation (ARRU: L’agence de Réhabilitation et de Rénovation Urbaine) a new government agent responsible for executing and synchronizing upgrading activities throughout the country. This shift in policy handling urban upgrading was heavily supported by international donors. Over the 1982-2009 period over 36 slum/informal neighborhoods have been continuously upgrading in larger cities throughout Tunisia. Currently ARRU is continuing to integrate its activities and is the main arm of the National Programme for Rehabilitating Popular Neighborhoods (PNRQP, Programme national de réhabilitation des quartiers populaires, established in 2004). In a particular neighborhood, ARRU typically focuses on improving water, sanitation, roads, electricity, and public spaces, and it coordinates with central and local sectoral authorities for the provision of schools, clinics, and house improvement. ARRU works closely with AFH to ensure that land is available for social housing or serviced plots for those affected by its

urban upgrading efforts.

**f.** The Housing Bank (BH, Banque de l’Habitat), was established in 1989, to replace the former government National Housing and Savings Fund (CNEL, Caisse Nationale d’Epargne Logement). The Housing Bank was set up as an autonomous bank liable for its financial results and able to raise funds through the sale of share capital. It gives loans to individuals for house purchases, house improvements, and residential land purchases. BH has also been vital in supporting private sector involvement in housing projects, mainly through loans to private developers. Over half of BH expenditures on low-income housing are made to private entities. There are roughly 20 private commercial banks in Tunisia that have housing loan programmes for individuals, mainly targeting middle and upper-income families.

**g.** The Housing Promotion Fund for Salaried Persons (FOPROLOS) was created in 1977 to assist lower income demographics in obtaining housing. The fund is partially financed through employer contributions, and it covers the construction or purchase of social housing-according to preset terms. By 2006, it had financed roughly 20,000 units for the low-income social demographic.

**h.** The National Fund for House Improvement and Rehabilitation (FNAH, Fond National pour l’Amélioration de l’Habitat) was established in 2004. As a result of ARRU’s first three urban improvement and rehabilitation projects, it was found necessary to create this fund as a way to support low-income families living in these areas. Loans are given for home improvements for those whose income is less than a set standard. The National Solidarity Fund 26-26 (FSN, Fonds de Solidarité Nationale 26-26), was established in 1992, with the objective of supporting the poorest of the demographic to obtain decent living standards. The fund is financed from the governmental budget as well as private donations. In 2006, the fund was allowed to fund the improvement of housing in gourbi areas both in Greater Tunis and other large agglomerations.<sup>52</sup>

The next step will focus on integrating people into the redevelopment of the areas, so that stores and commercial spaces that are needed are provided, environmental and economic demand. Solar energy must also be integrated.

# GREATER TUNIS, ETTADAHMEN

## CASE STUDY

Built in the late 1960s as a governmental project, as “solidarity”, to provide social housing to accommodate the rural exodus. It was created as redistribution for the population densification in the capital. Rural internal migration increased the population significantly. In 2012, the population of Ettadhamen in the Ariana governorate was 142,000 while the surrounding neighborhoods Douar Hicher and Mnihla reached 157,000 dwellers. In total, these three neighborhoods were composed of 300,000 dwellers, which made it one of the most populated peri-urban agglomerations in North Africa.

By 1995, an increasing number of households had invested in commercial activities. Most transformed their living rooms into headquarters for a living mainly in the field of commerce. According to a 2014 survey, among 714 youth aged between 18-34 from Douar Hicher and Ettadhamen, 27.8% were self-employed as craftsmen or small merchants, and 20.3% were employed in commerce. It has a very high population density estimated at 23,420 inhabitants per square, the unemployment rate is

-deemed as one of the highest in the country- at 18%.

The specificities of this informal area are the following:

- Stigmatization of local residence impeded the integration of youth and local residents into the market and affects their chances of being hired.
- Informal street vendors

Land tenure remains a pivotal social and cultural reference for rural households in the studied areas. Nevertheless, household members’ migration causes families to be more prone to viewing their land as a commodity. As a strategy to curb land’s abandonment, in the Northern areas land rental plans have spread. Recent developments in the rural land market mean that out-migrating families are reportedly more prone to sell their land, often with an aspiration to invest in housing in their next destination.



Tunis Medina after rehabilitation © UN Habitat  
Tunisia Housing Profile, 2011

# CONCLUSION

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It can be stated that Tunisia is a pioneer in the Maghreb region in effective upgrading of slums, informal settlements, and deteriorated city centers. More than three decades of the Tunisian Government's programmes of urban upgrading and rehabilitation have improved the lives of more people than any other housing or land development programme in the country.

In present day, urban upgrading is strongly situated as a vital aspect of Tunisia's housing as well as urban development policies.

Tunisian authorities started to implement far-sighted policies towards low-income urban areas in the late 1970s. Several urban development projects were initiated in 1978-79 with some support from international donors. These projects aimed to integrate informal and squatter areas into the surrounding urban fabric, regularizing land tenure, and upgrading local infrastructure. By 2003, about 25% of urban dwellers in around 700 neighborhoods had been reached by these rehabilitation programmes, and the number of beneficiaries was estimated at 1.5 million.

This was due to the effective institutional structure, which was set up, most notably with the establishment of the Urban Rehabilitation and Renovation Agency (ARRU, Agence pour la Renovation Urbaine) in 1981 and the National Fund for Housing Development which was set up in 2004 to complement the rehabilitation and regeneration work of ARRU.<sup>53</sup>

# SECOND CATEGORY COUNTRIES

7

## LEBANON

### Introduction:

Given that there is no official definition of slums or informal settlements in Lebanon, it is difficult to approach this topic from an overall inclusive angle. It is, however, crucial to attempt being as inclusive as possible, in order to achieve a comprehensive strategy for addressing the issues of informal settlements in an efficient and structural way. To date, there is no official national strategy for managing informal settlements or indeed affordable housing generally in Lebanon.

The creation of informal settlements in Lebanon has been the result of several factors, namely:

- The absence of a strong central government which enforces building regulations, monitors population growth, and strategizes development visions and plans through any national urban policy (including a national housing policy), where an informal economy and an informal housing sector flourished to respond to emerging needs;
- The rural-urban migration during and after the 1975-1990 civil war;
- The influx of foreign migrant workers and refugees (particularly Palestinian and Syrian refugees);
- The economic model that relies on the real estate and services sectors;
- The lack of a national transport strategy that efficiently links different areas in the country.

Prior to the civil war of 1975, informal settlements developed around the industrial zones of Beirut. The large internal displacements and rural exodus, which took place during the civil war, resulted in the proliferation of informal settlements at the outskirts of major urban centers. The post-war development strategy was heavily centralized around the capital, reinforcing the rural-urban migration in search for work opportunities and better access to services, which further grew poor

urban pockets where many low-income residents had to reside.

Some scholars have attempted to document informal settlements in Beirut<sup>54</sup> and its outskirts. As a starting point, they have categorized them into three kinds of “slums” according to the conditions of their creation:

1. Areas that were created as low cost housing for refugees (Armenian, Syriac, Palestinian),
2. Areas that were created to house rural-urban migrants pre-civil war, and
3. Areas that were created by squatters during the civil war years.

Sub-categories can be further derived, including pockets that are extensions of, or located near, existing Palestinian refugee camps, areas that were created on agricultural land, in the urban suburbs, in violation of urban regulations, and areas characterized by contested property rights. All these areas are characterized by some kind of illegal land tenure, informal land subdivision, buildings that don't comply to the building codes, informal access to basic urban services/networks, and households living in precarious socio-economic conditions.

It is important to describe the conditions that created these “informal settlements” that are currently housing not only poor Lebanese, but also thousands of displaced Syrians, since 2011. As the 2019 Vulnerability Assessment of Syrian Refugees (UNHCR et al, forthcoming) survey notes, 80% of refugees live outside temporary so-called ‘informal tented settlements’. These are distinct from urban ‘informal settlements’ in the current sense of often low-quality, regulatorily non-compliant buildings. A large number of registered and unregistered refugees reside in these areas, joining low-income Lebanese and other non-Lebanese, sharing their precarious living conditions, and adding additional demographic pressure to already overcapacitated housing infrastructure.

54 Fawaz, M. and Peillen I (2002) The slums of Beirut : History and Development 1930-2002. Paper presented for the UN Habitat and Mona Fawaz and Isabella Peillen (2003), Urban Slums Reports: The Case of Beirut, Lebanon, in: Understanding Slums: Case Studies for the Global Report 2003. Available on: [https://www.ucl.ac.uk/dpu-projects/Global\\_Report/pdfs/Beirut.pdf](https://www.ucl.ac.uk/dpu-projects/Global_Report/pdfs/Beirut.pdf)

## The Syrian crisis and its impact on the housing sector

With some 1.5 million Syrians, in addition to a large community of Palestinian refugees, Lebanon hosts the highest number of displaced per capita in the world. Since 2011, Lebanon has received more than US\$6.7 billion in support of its crisis response, with tangible results on the ground. In 2018, as for previous years, the humanitarian response coordinated through the Lebanon Crisis Response Plan 2017-2020 (Government of Lebanon and UN) mitigated food insecurity and poverty levels for the most vulnerable communities, while supporting municipalities and infrastructure across the country. The UN characterizes the flight of civilians from Syria, from March 2011, as a refugee movement, and considers that these Syrians are seeking international protection. The government of Lebanon refers to individuals, who fled from Syria into its territory since 2011, as temporarily displaced individuals, and reserves its sovereign right to determine their status- according to Lebanese laws and regulations.

**The Lebanon Crisis Response Plan** uses the following terminology to refer to persons who have fled from and cannot return to their country of origin:

1. 'Persons displaced from Syria', which can, depending on context, include Palestinian refugees from Syria as well as registered and unregistered Syrian nationals;
2. Displaced Syrians", referring to Syrian nationals, including those born in Lebanon to displaced Syrian parents;
3. Persons registered as refugees by UNHCR
4. Palestinian refugees in Lebanon, referring to 180,000 PRL living in 12 camps and 156 gatherings;
5. Palestinian refugees from Syria, referring to 28,800 PRS across Lebanon.

Much research has been dedicated to the reconstruction phase of Lebanon after the civil war. Many major urban development projects (i.e. Elyssar, Linord and Solidere) realized are controversial for ethical, financial and social

reasons. Our analysis will not consider this period but will try to describe, with limited data, the current situation and the risks encountered by Lebanon in relation to urban planning issues.

## Informal Settlements

In Lebanon, our analysis focuses on urban shelter and not on shelter in the so-called 'Informal Settlements' in the Lebanon terminology, comprising temporary tent-like structures and accommodating almost exclusively displaced Syrians arrived since 2011. Currently, 20% of all displaced Syrians reside in these 'informal settlements' (UNHCR et al, forthcoming).

In the Lebanon Crisis Response Plan, for the period 2017-2020 (Government of Lebanon and UN), the term 'informal settlement' is commonly used to refer to settlements set up spontaneously without government assistance and comprising makeshift shelters composed of timber and tarpaulin on largely unserviced land that is often agricultural in its zoning/ prior usage. Activities that may render these makeshift shelters more permanent such as service infrastructure improvements, more robust shelter materials or ground resurfacing beyond gravelling are prohibited.

There is no representative basic data available on housing stock conditions for all nationality cohorts in Lebanon. There are only the below partial snapshots:

- The annual Vulnerability Assessment of Syrian Refugees, which offers data on a representative basis for the condition and selected tenure characteristics nationally, but for displaced Syrians only.<sup>55</sup>
- UN-Habitat/ UNICEF Neighbourhood Profiles, which offer detailed data on the external conditions of shelters and selected aspects of tenure characteristics for all nationalities, host and non-host. However, these are spatially very limited with up to approximately 30 neighbourhoods only anticipated; inside-shelter is not assessed and the sample is not representative but, instead, selects for study the most vulnerable areas nationally.<sup>56</sup>

<sup>55</sup> Government of Lebanon and UN (2019) Lebanon Crisis Response Plan 2017-2020. Beirut, UN.

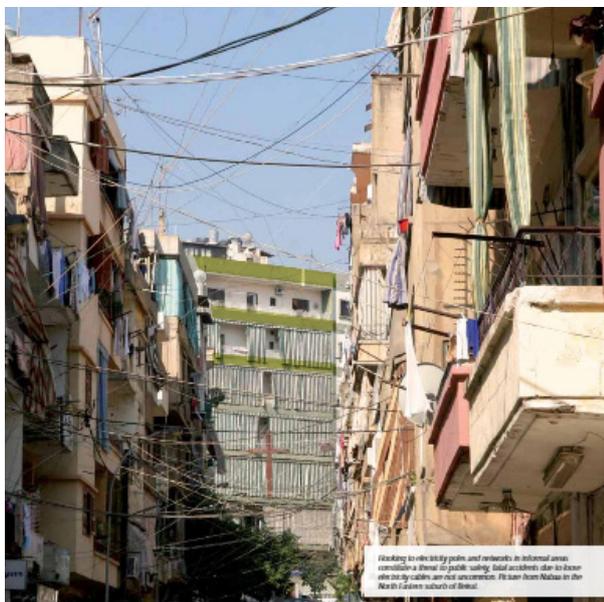
<sup>56</sup> UNHCR et al (forthcoming) Vulnerability Assessment of Syrian Refugees 2019. Beirut, UNHCR.

In 2005 a figure published online by World Bank stating that 53.1% of Lebanon's urban population lives in slums. The figure was compiled for the MDGs initiative, but methodology is unclear. Eg it is worthwhile noting that there is no accepted definition of 'urban' in the country. Also, UNHABITAT (2003) estimate that the 'slum' to urban population in the Greater Beirut Area was around 20%, corresponding to ~300,000 dwellers. This was before the 2011 Syrian crisis

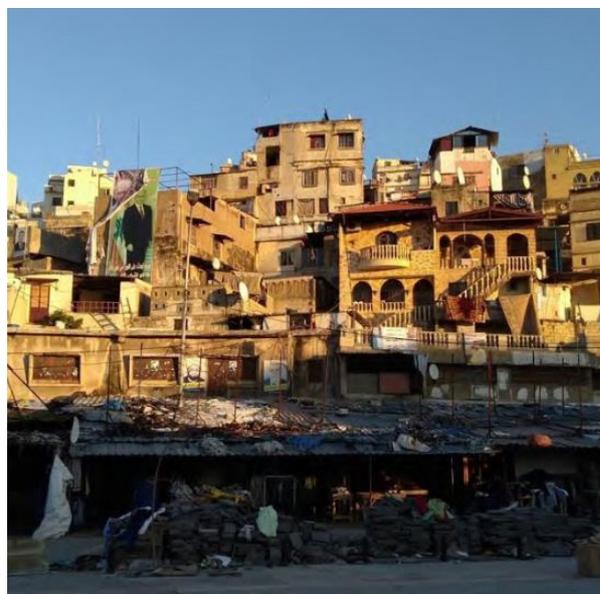
There is no Lebanon-specific definition of informal area that has been adopted by the government or the national shelter sector (the interagency coordination sector for shelter and housing assistance). The many available academic references give a variety of definitions, but they are not recognized in public policies. The definition of neighbourhood profiles conducted by UN-Habitat and UNICEF, which gathered multisectoral data on a limited number of neighbourhoods within poor urban pockets across the country. However, neither a national map nor a national strategy regarding informal settlements exists.

The Lebanese government, faced with a long history of Palestinian camps and their militarization, refused to allow the establishment of official refugee camps for Syrians. As a result of this 'no camp' policy, Syrians are forced to either live in private rented accommodation in towns and cities throughout the country, or in informal settlements comprising makeshift tent-like structures located on private, often agricultural land. These informal settlements are developed through a complex assemblage of humanitarianism, hospitality, security, economic and political considerations.

These informal settlements are located in many places across Lebanon but especially in the Bekaa Valley, Eastern Lebanon. In fact, an informal response to the crisis, through a system of deregulation, is enabling refugee spaces to emerge that are visible, yet unrecognized, flexible, yet precarious. These spaces destabilize the city/camp dichotomy by drawing together elements of both. Until 2015, the movement between Syria and Lebanon has been fairly unrestricted, following the long-established policies of not requiring visas at the border. Many families have also extended un-conditional hospitality to refugees. However, as numbers have continued to grow, and the crisis has become more protracted, it has caused growing tensions between refugees and local communities. Refugees have added pressure to families already struggling to cope economically, and overwhelmed infrastructure and resource. In fact, sheltering of Syrian refugees in Lebanon is not a part of our scope regarding informal settlements, but since it is a major phenomenon in Lebanon then it is important to mention it.<sup>57</sup>



Lebanon Urban profile, UN-Habitat, 2011



A view of the neighborhood of Jabal Mohsen, Khaled Ismail, Claire Wilson, and Nathan Cohen-Fournier, Tufts University, March 2017

57 Daniel Meier. The blind spot: Palestinian refugees from Syria in Lebanon. Maximilian Felsch; Martin Wahlish. Lebanon and the Arab Uprisings: In the Eye of the Hurricane, Routledge, pp.104-118.

# CONCLUSION

The antagonism between the state and local policies in Lebanon has left the settlements without any structured urban development. Hence, the importance of the regional crisis, since 1967, and the presence of refugees (Palestinians and now Syrians) generate important difficulties in Lebanon.

This specific context is pushing Lebanon to have strategies for a crisis management approach, but without integrated long term strategies. The local players and the settlements', informal or formal, residents constantly blame the state for its inability to fulfill its duties towards its citizens. This was the situation before 2011. The Syrian crisis impacted the Lebanese cities and territories. Actually, it is the key element of urban planning in Lebanon. Despite its absence from our scope of the study, it seemed important to us to mention it in our conclusion

A key aspect of Lebanese policies towards displaced Syrians has been the refusal to allow the establishment of formal refugee camps by humanitarian organizations. As a result, innumerable informal settlements have proliferated across private agricultural lands. There may or may not be an informal or formal agreement between landlords and residents of the settlement. The 2015 Lebanon Shelter Sector Strategy formally defines an Informal Settlement as an 'Unofficial group of temporary residential structures, often comprising of plastic-sheeting and timber structures and can be of any size from one to several hundred tents. Informal Settlements may have some informal community-led management.'

These informal and transient spaces offer a degree of flexibility to residents, in that they can work and move in and out of 'Informal Settlements' at their own risk. Interestingly, many of these 'informal settlements', also incorporate spatial features and governmental practices similar to 'camps', such as forms of screening and policing of residents, but without the formal legitimacy granted to them either through the state or humanitarian organizations. This 'informality' of status and of materiality also has variations, which is contingent on the ways in which humanitarian organizations, landlords, and the state intersect with each other. A careful spatial analysis is necessary to interrogate how these settlements inhabit the grey space of legitimacy and what that means for the future of refugee politics and humanitarian governance.



## LIBYA

### Introduction:

Urban planning in Libya is a multi-level system planning, where there is the national level, different governates (e.g. transport systems), regional plans (four different regions, different routes of transportation and role of each city), and sub-regional plans, where there is one municipal authority). Physical plans are also prevalent, as there are different land plots and different divisions. All the cities are the outcomes of the different generations of urban development.

From 1989 to 1996, 75 % of all housing was produced by the public sector, before that, state involvement lessened somewhat from 1997 onwards. State expenditures on housing was increased in the decade preceding the 2011 uprising, rising as high as 30 % of all public investment in 2007. Eligible households would receive completed housing units and have access to zero percent interest housing loans from government banks to fund this.

The public body responsible for contracting public housing is the Housing and Infrastructure Board (HIB) within the Ministry of Housing and Utilities. The HIB was created in 2007 and targeted the construction of 200,000 units. As of 2012, Ministry figures stated that 11,121 housing units had been completed, 134,341 units were under construction, and a further 94,500 units were being bid for. Those unfinished units amount to a value of 11 billion USD and since the above data was released in 2012, HIB's housing projects have been paused given the political and security situation in Libya. Libya faces an estimated housing shortage of 350,000 units. Nevertheless, with the havoc and damage caused by armed conflict and population displacement, this shortage is likely to be more. Further hurdles exist within Libya's housing market, chief among them is land tenure. Law 4 of 1978 restricted citizens to owning only one house. In 1986 land ownership was abolished, on the grounds of redistribution and equality.<sup>58</sup>

### Reasons of Emergence:

With this housing gap, the delayed implementation, lack of enforcement of legal procedures lead to the informal settlement's emergence in the 1950s. This was also doubled by the incompleteness of the detailed planning by the Urban Planning Agency (UPA), since 2009, and the uncontrolled

construction of unregistered sprawl. Another key challenge is the lack of clear property registration mechanisms have been and weak private sector participation. Reasonable prices are a further challenge, particularly given that a large majority of the working population is employed in the public sector and is directly affected by the disintegration of the government and the surfacing of opposing leaderships. Housing remains expensive in urban centers and is often unaffordable for low-income households.<sup>59</sup>

The informal areas in Libya are characterized by chaotic buildings, extensions, or land divisions not following the formal urban plan. Chaotic urban sprawl, unauthorized transgression of agricultural land often without proper spaces or regulation overtaking historical or ancient districts and disregarding natural reserves and resources. The structural conditions of the houses are usually however of good quality often constructed in steel and concrete structure and include schools, mosques, water and electricity networks, and facilities. Owned by individuals, some of these buildings are licensed and some of them have attained loans. The current definition of informal areas in Libya is "inadequately planned areas".

### National Strategies and Approaches:

The government of Libya, through its Ministry of Housing and Utilities and Urban Planning Agency (UPA), in collaboration with UN-Habitat Libya Office concurred on expanding the programme on "Institutional Development and Capacity Building of the Urban Planning Agency" until 2016. This programme supported setting the vision to revive the spatial planning process in Libya and exploring the most fitting urban planning approaches under the transitional period in Libya.<sup>60</sup>

Libya's 2020 Vision states that "*sufficient and affordable housing in urban and rural areas for all Libyans is critical for building strong and prosperous communities*".<sup>61</sup> This focuses emphasis on housing options for all demographics needed and, as such, housing supply that must meet the groups' demand. Vision 2020 recalls the legal, regulatory, and planning reforms necessary to achieve these housing goals.

58 Centre for Affordable Housing Finance in Africa, Libya, 2016 Yearbook: Housing Finance in Africa: A review of some of Africa's housing finance markets, 2016.

59 *ibid*

60 UN-HABITAT Global Activities Report, 2015.

61 Libya Institute for Advanced Studies, 2014.



Destroyed building in Benghazi, Libya. June 2018. Photo: Alex Koclejda/NRC

## CONCLUSION

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In Libya, the available information is based on literature analysis and UN data especially the city profiling data. The conflict in Libya worsened the housing shortage challenge leading to further growth and sprawl of informal settlements. National vision ensures the importance of availing housing options for all, however it is still unclear how this vision will turn into implementable strategies and programmes.



## 9 SYRIA

### Introduction:

In the Syrian Arab Republic, a large proportion of the population, in certain governorates, lived in slums and informal settlements before the war, with 85% of the population in Hasakeh, 74% in Raqqa, and 59% in Homs. In terms of their share of urban land, 18% of the total area of Aleppo consisted of informal settlements- which are concentrated primarily in the northeast around the Sheikh Najjar industrial zone. At this stage, there is no reliable information about the exact situation of informal areas in Syria, but an analysis of many documents produced by the Government, donors, and mapping undergoing processes will give way for useful results of a more detailed and integrated analysis.

The crisis in Syria had a huge impact on the country's major cities, with large scale movements of population, damage to buildings and infrastructure, and interruptions to the local economy. Cities represent multiple and inter-related formal and informal systems and need to be described and analyzed in an integrated manner that captures the complexity of urban conditions.

Until now, most of the information available has been sector-specific, rather than integrated or city-based. A major characteristic of this crisis has been the shortage of information for decision making, from assessment of needs to monitoring of the response and identifying emerging issues. Without a better understanding at family, community and city levels, humanitarian interventions may not be responsive or appropriate to local coping mechanism. Without better understanding of local institutions, interventions may not be anchored. Without better monitoring of local conditions, the impact of interventions cannot be evaluated.<sup>62</sup>

The traditional land tenure systems in Syria are complex and overlapping, stemming from hundreds of years of evolution in the legal as well the socio-economic conditions of the different communities in the country and the region. Some of these systems were codified progressively in the 20th century, while others remained outside

the control of the State. The rapid rural to urban migration, starting in the second half of the 20th century, generated a major demand for housing and real estate in the main cities. Most of the formal systems failed to cope with the increased demand for housing, and the magnitude of rural to urban migration, creating massive zones of informality particularly in peri-urban areas of major metropolitan areas and in secondary cities. Supply-side state subsidies and a promise of a free hold homeownership for all was a dream in which the State could not deliver. Contradictions unresolved in the transformation from traditional land tenures to modern land registries accumulated and added to the inability of the State to manage urban growth properly. These contradictions were an important factor contributing to the outbreak of the conflict in 2011.<sup>63</sup>

Informal areas were often located on the periphery of urban centers. Over 70% of informal settlements were located on private lands, while less than 30% involved squatting on public and Awqaf lands. Yet, informality is not universal and involves different degrees of formalization. The State feared the repercussion of evicting residents from informal settlements for two reasons: first, such evictions would generate social unrest and threats to order, and, second, they desperately needed to house the lower echelons of the public sector and the required labor for the urban economy. Various techniques for recognizing informal construction were accepted by the State as quasi legal means of securing tenure. These included the proof of purchase of the built structures on the land as registered by a court order (the courts would recognize the transfer of brick and mortar or usufruct rights on land not the land ownership). The court records are reminiscent of the old deed system, a new buyer would have to acquire the whole lineage of court orders from all previous holders of the property. Other tools involved the registration in the cadasters of a small share purchased from the original owner(s) of the agricultural areas or transfer of shares in a collective ownership situation (shiou'). Private land owners fearing the encroachment of squatters subdivided agricultural lands illegally and sold shares of the larger parcels to potential residents.

62 City Profile Homs 2014 UN Habitat ([www.alnap.org/system/files/content/resource/files/main/Homs\\_RCP.pdf](http://www.alnap.org/system/files/content/resource/files/main/Homs_RCP.pdf))

63 State of Syrian cities 2016-2017 – European Union, October 2017, non-published. 301 pp.

Other instruments were water and electricity bills. The State was keen on retaining some control on public infrastructure and facilitated the access to public networks. Over 90% of informal areas had access to public electricity networks and, to a slightly lesser degree, access to water.<sup>64</sup>

The context

The first large demonstrations began in March 2011, and the following months saw a process of escalation as demonstrations spread and increased in size within the country. By the summer of 2011, the armed conflict was already unfolding. Now, in its eighth year, the Syrian conflict remains active in the Northern part of the country and is bringing much pain and tragedy on a daily basis.

Conflicts destroy tangible and intangible assets, affect informal settlements, and leave deep marks on a country's social fabric, culture, and collective memories. It is, unfortunately, not possible to capture all of these consequences in a comprehensive manner.

On the eve of the 2011 unrest, Syria was a fast-growing, lower-middle-income country. In aggregate terms, the Syrian economy was improving, albeit starting from an unfavorable base, during the 2000s. Gross domestic product (GDP) grew at an average of 4.3 % per year from 2000 to 2010 -in real terms. This increase was almost entirely driven by growth in non-oil sectors, and inflation averaged at a reasonable 4.9 %.

Important feature of Syria's governance landscape, prior to 2011, was the country's low capacity of public institutions to control the sprawling of informal and illegal areas. These areas are illegally built on public or private lands in risky or stable areas. They are located in urban and agricultural zones, but Syria never had slums neither before 2011 nor after.

In this period, before 2011, the informal settlements progressed in all Syrian cities in relation with rural migration and with the other armed conflicts in the region- especially the long Iraqi war. The economic development of the largest cities, like Damascus, Aleppo, Homs, Tartous and Lattakia, attract young population and create an important rural

migration and exhaude.

Among all the consequences of the conflict, the effects on human lives and demographic displacement have been the most dramatic. The pre-conflict population of Syria was estimated at 20.7 million in 2010. Since 2011, the conflict created a complex set of pressures on the country's population. The most recent calculations, by the International Organization for Migration (IOM), put the population within Syria at 18.8 million as of November 2018. Data limitations render a precise and comprehensive decomposition of the demographic changes impossible: conflict affects fertility rates and life expectancy alike. In addition, an important portion of demographic movements takes place informally, as some refugees remain unregistered and, in certain cases, migrants do not factor into in-country population or refugee totals. Informal settlements in Syria before March 2011

Before 2011, Syria was a unified country, strong with a central power present on all the territory of 185 810 km<sup>2</sup>. In September 2019, it was under the control of armed troops in the North and East of the country. The presentation regarding the informal settlements situation in Syria will consider the situation before 2011. The main constraints to analyzing the situation is described below:

- The situation changed strongly, and some areas have spread, others have disappeared, and some places have been subject to land speculation.
- The available data is not reliable and is often sensitive which limits the analysis.
- The involvement of donor in Syria is mainly related to humanitarian aid.
- Physical damage, demographic dispersion, economic and human development outcomes will not thus be considered.

In this period, National strategy was elaborated, and most Syrian cities established a very reliable mapping system to evaluate the situation of the different informal settlement. Even though the government issued a new law (law 33/2008) to enable the formalization of spontaneous settlement areas, no major action was taken by

64 Touma G. : Reasons and situation of informal settlements. Journal of Scientific Research in Tichrin University. Vol 35- N°3.

municipalities to implement the directives. By the time conflict erupted in 2011, the peri-urban expansion zones around the main cities were becoming the landscape for a future confrontation. On one hand, local officials were eyeing these areas for future development and on the other hand local communities were entrenched to defend their fragile tenure rights. Peri-urban areas were being incorporated into the formal zones of cities at a rapid pace with the adoption of law 26 of 2000. By 2005, at the mid-point of major efforts at liberalizing the economy, rural areas ceased to produce new land for development. Most growth was taking place in urban areas, mainly in the peri-urban areas around cities.

The figure represents the mapping of Damascus and the rural Damascus area. Also, the informal settlements were analyzed and documented following many criteria related to the ownership of land, environment, socio economic conditions, physical state, etc. Institutional reforms and involvement of international donors (i.e. EU, World Bank, EIB, GIZ, UN agencies, Jaica, etc.) with the local authorities was also important.

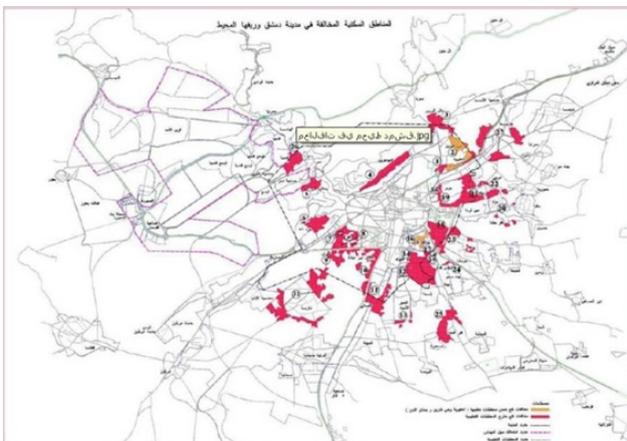


Figure 1 Damascus informal settlement areas

(2011) source Damascus Governorate  
In Syria informal settlements are physically, socially and functionally similar to formal settlements. Construction is generally of breezeblock, often with a framework of reinforced concrete. This could be attributed to the policy of integration, equipment, and upgrading (though not necessarily legalization) that was applied mainly during the 1980s and 1990s.

Informal neighborhoods are served- to a large extent- by public infrastructure on a normal legal basis. During the 2000s, the government continued implementing its equipment plans, putting in service infrastructure (i.e. schools, healthcare centers, etc.). In 2006, some 97 % of the informal neighborhoods in Damascus had running water, rubbish was collected, and most streets were tarred. However, in most of these neighborhoods access was still problematic in 2011. In some cases, taps ran for only a few hours a week, schools were overcrowded and public spaces – particularly parks – were virtually nonexistent.

Some informal neighborhoods were important economic and shopping centers. Though, in general, the least affluent inhabitants of the city lived there, but there were also middle-income families, civil servants and military personnel (sometimes even high-ranking). And urban poverty was by no means confined to the informal zones. Many of the inhabitants were not recent rural migrants or refugees, and had lived in the city for a long time – sometimes for several decades – in formal or informal housing.

There were two main types of land tenure: some settlements had developed on land that had been squatted by the initial occupants – this was mainly the case with public land and zones on the slopes of Mount Qassioun in Damascus (illegal construction plus illegal occupation of land); the other settlements were built on privately-owned land which, though legally held by its occupants, were areas where buildings was not permitted. This latter type of occupation was mainly to be found in the Ghouta, the agricultural region in the oasis surrounding Damascus to the south and the east. Generally located outside the compass of the urban plans, constructions did not follow the applicable rules and were consequently categorized as 'ašwiyyt (anarchic).

Plots were small and streets were narrow, adjoining buildings were not set back from the street, and buildings were usually low. At the same time, several programmes and urban projects, both national and local, were designed with the aid of international cooperation (i.e. European Union (MAM), Germany (GIZ), and Japan (JICA)).

The constantly expanding informal settlements became a central issue in urban policy. The two main orientations – renewal (demolition of a neighborhood and planned reconstruction-modernization) and upgrading (improvement of existing zones by introducing infrastructures) – prolonged the policies implemented during previous decades. In parallel, town planning services were drawing up detailed master plans with a view to the total reconstruction of certain zones, while other zones were provided with infrastructure and services by municipalities, in accordance with the upgrading alternative.



Figure 2 Kassioum mountain informal settlements (MAM, 2010)



Figure 3 Informal settlements in Damascus suburbs Hay Elrlz and Tadamon (Cler, 2009)

## The Current Situation

Syria's housing sector has been dramatically impacted by the past eight years of conflict, leading to a growing housing deficit forecasted to exceed 230,000 dwellings per year based on current demand and returnee trajectory. After nearly a decade of war and loss in housing stock, Syria's current housing stock has been set back by at least two decades, and the gaps in the housing sector are likely to aggravate the housing needs for future Syrian generations. As a State Party to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Civil Rights, Syria has an affirmative obligation to ensure and work towards realizing the Right to Adequate Housing to meet agreed-upon targets. Therefore, Syria will need a realistic roadmap for a sustainable housing sector to navigate the post-conflict devastation to finance, buildings, infrastructure, the construction sector's labor market and capital capacity. The relation is very close between informal settlements and a performant policy of housing especially in a recovery phase after a war. In fact, housing is accepted as a politically neutral universal good that constitutes a fundamental building block of the country's future economic and social recovery. Under the Right to Adequate Housing guidelines<sup>65</sup>, Syria's housing sector support is a key starting point for the economic recovery of the country -which requires attention in the current pre-agreement political context. According to the Syrian Arab Republic Universal Periodic Review (UPR) (Second Cycle)<sup>66</sup> as of 2016,<sup>67</sup> the Syrian government had allocated SYP 2 billion (international funding) and 493,440,000 SYP (State Budget) to cover the cost of emergency rehabilitation plans. Of this, the country's annual housing strategy was focused on rehabilitating and building collective 'Temporary Shelters' for then-estimates of 5.6 million IDPs. Plans for some 12,000 new residential units, over the next five years, were promised through the government's affordable housing instruments (military housing, social and youth housing), which clearly demonstrates the shortages in the face of the real demand.

The urgency of gathering the information needed to address the availability of affordable and decent

65 Syria housing sector recovery concept note 11/2019 – UN Habitat for EU 10 pages

66 Syria's Report to International Covenant and Civil Rights on Realization of Rights

67 <https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/G16/215/69/PDF/G1621569.pdf?OpenElement>;

housing, for returnees and resident Syrians, is driven by evidence that current housing demand far outpaces available supply and stands to present a host of new conflict drivers to Syria's fragile socio-political context. The informal settlements are also a key question for a sustainable reconstruction of Syrian cities.

Assessment of the situation is undergoing and will use the Right to Adequate Housing and its seven key factors as the primary assessment criteria for the housing overview, which include Security of tenure, availability of services, materials, facilities, and infrastructure, affordability, habitability, accessibility location, cultural adequacy.

The abovementioned criteria are a part of the New Housing Law (Law 10 of 2018). This law allows also the development of new neighborhoods by integrating informal areas. Private/Public partnerships is also mentioned as a potential solution. IDPs addressed according to their housing status vis-à-vis those whose properties are structurally safe/destroyed/re-occupied/etc. Resettlement guidelines and best practices are also discussed in partnerships with donors, especially EU and UN Habitat, and an assessment of informal settlement is scheduled for August 2020.<sup>68</sup>

As mentioned before, the informal housing represented prior to the conflict 30 to 40% of total dwellings as an average on a national scale. It probably increased during the conflict. Housing reconstruction should be more seen as an opportunity to formalize the informal and to create a new sustainable urban environment.

Housing, land, and property issues will create a specific complication to recovery and reconstruction, and ultimately to return, affecting specifically vulnerable communities of informal settlements. A human-rights-based approach, to the restitution of property rights, is essential for just and equitable recovery. Unless access to social housing is significantly improved, the informal market and the random development will thrive, and is an indicator of growth demands, as well as a policy challenge for changing informal stock to formal.



Figure 4Kafar Dael Sub urban informal settlement in Aleppo (2010, MAM)

68 [https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Publications/FS21\\_rev\\_1\\_Housing\\_en.pdf](https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Publications/FS21_rev_1_Housing_en.pdf)

# CONCLUSION

Before 2011, there was already competition between two types of urban policies concerning informal settlements in Syria: renewal and upgrading. The fact remains that both the 2011 building boom in informal settlements, and the widespread destruction of many of these quarters, in the course of combats, bring back the basic question: what should be done about these zones?

The wholesale demolition of entire neighborhoods, both formal and informal, has now completely transformed the planning issues of the future. Regarding informal settlements, the fact that entire zones have been wiped out lends unprecedented weight to an option in favor of urban renewal. Reconstruction of Syria and its cities will make the country an enormous worksite in which the issue of informal settlements, whether demolished or not, will be raised in completely different terms. It might be an opportunity to have integrated urban sustainable development policies.

Many people will return to cities, believing that security will be better, and that health care, schools and job opportunities will be more accessible. Do we know which cities and which neighborhoods are more likely to support returns? How will we address the complicated issue of land and property rights? In addition to physical reconstruction, what will we do to help rebuild divided societies? If it comes, peace in Syria will bring a surge of private investment, again much of it in cities. Are we engaging with business leaders to understand the opportunities and challenges from their perspective? Do we have a prioritized plan for the critical infrastructure investments necessary to support economic recovery?<sup>69</sup> The combination of city profile approaches, country profiles and the neighborhood approach, proposed by UN Habitat, Syria could be a very useful tool for an integrated approach for a sustainable urban planning of Syrian cities; this could be done by considering the informal settlements areas as a part of the urban fabric. Finally, cities in Syria have served not only as sites of conflict but also as places of refuge and resilience. Some cities that suffered immense damage are gradually recovering. This situation calls for longer-term interventions that prioritize population needs while rebuilding their surroundings and providing the basic services needed for survival. Thus, in such cases, strong urban analysis and urban profiling are necessary to get the overall context of cities and to feed into the existing humanitarian-sector information portals. Many initiatives are remarkable, like the portal Urban-Syria, supported by the European Union. This Urban Analysis Toolkit is a set of guides and templates which enable organizations to work together in undertaking an urban profiling process in a post-crisis recovery context. This methodology for urban profiling starts with an analytical framework and brings together several different types of data collection methods into one coherent and holistic urban analysis. The informal settlements issues have to be an important part of it.

Housing, land and properties (HLP) issues will be generally looked as part of the greater reconciliation efforts between the different communities in Syria. Informal settlements are an important part of this issue. Resources must be provided to develop local reconciliation infrastructure. The focus cannot be left to a national top down process. The HLP issues in Syria will be enormous in urban areas where the real estate markets will be used to support the reconstruction process. Donors should avoid the temptation of supply side solutions to housing reconstruction and focus more on demand side solutions through micro loans, legal hedges against gentrification and economically motivated evacuations (but no rent controls), housing coupons, etc.

69 COUNTRY PROFILE Syria 2016 ([www.urban-response.org/system/files/content/resource/files/main/Country\\_Profile-Syria\\_Eng\\_Final.pdf](http://www.urban-response.org/system/files/content/resource/files/main/Country_Profile-Syria_Eng_Final.pdf))

## Introduction:

Sudan hosts the world's fourth largest populations of internally displaced persons (over 3.2 million and 3.1 million respectively)<sup>70</sup> Internal displacement has increased over time due to the political and security situation, as well as other factors which will be monitored.<sup>71</sup>

### DEFINITION

#### INFORMAL SETTLEMENTS

*In Sudan, informal or squatter settlement is defined as an acquisition of land within the city boundaries for the purpose of housing in contradiction to Urban Planning and Land laws and building regulations.*

It is reported that 85% of informal settlements in Sudan are built on governmental land, while 10% is on private land, and 5% on high risk land<sup>72</sup>. In 2009, according to official statistics, Greater Khartoum hosted over 600,000 internally displaced persons, in addition to 1.5 million locally integrated displaced individuals<sup>73</sup>. Furthermore, the poor living in informal settlements or who have settled in low-lying areas of the capital, are among those most vulnerable to climatic shocks and stresses<sup>74</sup>. In 2009, flooding affected 22,291 homes, primarily in informal urban settlements in Khartoum and caused damage to critical water and sanitation systems.<sup>75</sup>

The organization responsible for the implementation of upgrading projects is The Squatter Housing Device or Organization, National Fund for Housing and Reconstruction, Khartoum State, Ministry of Planning and Physical Development.

## Reasons for emergence

In Sudan, the urban-based industrial and service sectors contribute 33.6% and 39% of national GDP respectively. In 2008, 75% of all manufacturing firms and 85% of all service firms in Sudan were in Khartoum, the country's economic base. Therefore currently, migration is mainly for business opportunities. Moreover, in Sudan, the line of semi-desert and desert areas has shifted southwards 50 to 200 km, since 1930, and is projected to continue shifting southwards, threatening 25% of the country's agricultural land and reducing food production by 20%. Long periods of severe droughts have generated massive migration to cities along the Nile. Khartoum's population inflated as migrants and internally displaced individuals from the continuous skirmishes in the Darfur province sought survival and a safe haven in the capital and other major cities in the Darfur region.

Addressing climate change issues in Sudan is the responsibility of the Higher Council for Environment and Natural Resources at the national level. Khartoum State has also established its own Council for Environment. Following the severe flooding in 2013, Khartoum State took several remedial measures, such as reinforcing river banks, repairing retaining walls, relocating squatters away from flood-prone areas, and encouraging durable building materials in new home construction.

Mass migration towards urban centers due to civil war, droughts and desertification, from 1970 till 2007, has been the major reason of informal areas emerging. Due to the inadequacy of education, health, and basic services (i.e. potable water, sanitation, electricity, entertainment), families migrated seeking better job opportunities as well as escaping the political unrest.

In Sudan, slum design always supported the main cities, it created huge opportunities for the people. There are three main centers as such, and they are the primary component of slums creating job opportunities.

70 UNHCR, 2015

71 HABITAT III REGIONAL REPORT, Arab Region, 2016.

72 National Fund for Housing & Re-construction, Informal Settlements Questionnaire, 2019.

73 Humanitarian Policy Group, Annual Report, 2011

74 International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (2009). Sudan: Khartoum State floods emergency appeal.

75 ibid

## Definition of Informal Area

In Sudan, informal or squatter settlement is defined as an acquisition of land within the city boundaries for the purpose of housing in contradiction to Urban Planning and Land laws and building regulations. The typology of slums in broad terms can be categorized as follows:

1. Inner-city slum areas which are either engulfed or annexed by urban expansion, such as Ishash Fallata which was moved further out and the area was redeveloped and planned. Others have been re-planned, and residents were allowed to stay, (i.e. Diyoun)
2. Outer slums are areas planned by the authorities and distributed to the landless. Living conditions are worse than in the first group.
3. Squatter settlements, these are settlements that built on land illegally occupied by newcomers, and conditions here are the worst of all the slums. Temporary shelters are built of cardboard, tin, and sacks.

The official term used as an umbrella term for all types of illegal residence is "squatter settlement". Within this broad category, there are a number of particular categories including:

1. Carton (cardboard) and safeeh (tin) camps, which are the poorest slums on public or private land.
2. Large fenced areas with or without housing, which are reserved by land speculators (for sale or rent) who claim that it is theirs through inheritance.
3. Old villages incorporated into the urban centre, which are occupied by people who have customary rights. These are now being re-planned, and residents are given ownership rights.
4. Planned squatter settlements, which emerge when authorities resettle squatter or displaced populations and give them ownership rights.
5. Luxurious squatter settlements erected by dignitaries on public land.<sup>76</sup>

As noted in Sudan's Habitat III National Report, the absence of housing finance represents a prime

hindrance in the quest for adequate housing for all.<sup>77</sup> In May 2014, Sudan's Central Bank ordered banks to cease real estate and housing financing in an attempt to steer financing away from property speculations and towards sectors such as agriculture and industry. The Central Bank then relaxed this measure for the NFHR and state-level housing schemes for low-income households.<sup>78</sup>

## Anticipated actions or national strategy to avoid the formulation of the informal areas:

The National Council for Physical Development (NCPD) has proposed a National Physical Development Strategy (NPDS) and a National Structural Plan (NSP) during 2010 - 2035. The main objectives of the NPDS are the following:

- (1) Prepare comprehensive scientific study to oversee physical development at the national scale.
- (2) Develop a vision for the long-term future of physical development in the Sudan.
- (3) Develop proposals to solve the problems (informal and squatter settlements) resulting from unbalanced physical development between different regions and between rural and urban areas.

The follow-up, implementation, monitoring, evaluation and funding will be carried out mainly by the organs of the Ministry of Infrastructure and Transport and sister organizations which include:

- The National Council for Physical Development.
- The National Fund for Housing and Re-Reconstruction.
- The Private Sector.
- UN agencies (UN-Habitat, UNEP)

In 2008-2009, six thousand units were provided and 2.5 million people were integrated, as informal settlement development is, currently, a priority of the government. Usually, self-participation method is used for all aspects of urban development, including health and education programmes.

## Observations

<sup>76</sup> National Fund for Housing & Re-construction, Informal Settlements Questionnaire, 2019.

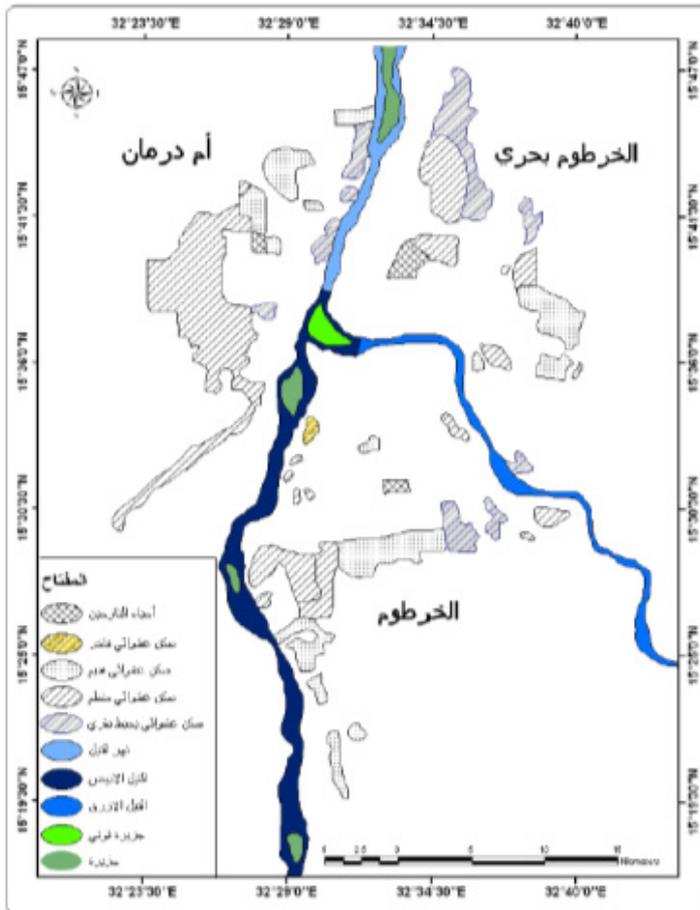
<sup>77</sup> Republic of Sudan, Ministry of Environment, Forestry and Urban Development, Sudan's Report For United Nations' Third Conference On Housing and Sustainable Urban Development, (Habitat III-2016), 2014.

<sup>78</sup> UN- HABITAT, Social Housing in the Arab Region: An Overview of Policies for Low-Income Households' Access to Adequate Housing, 2017.

Relocation is the only currently chosen mode, as neither construction nor mobilization is preferred. Participation of private sector in Sudan is very limited because it's financing a lot of economic crisis in the country. The private sector was not found to have contributed to the upgrade of informal settlements recently.

scenarios for selecting the appropriate model for implementation. Following that, the framework of implantation should be prepared for execution, follow-up and evaluation.

خريطة رقم (3-6) السكن العشوائي بولاية الخرطوم



المصدر: بانقا، البشري (2006م).

## Ongoing strategies for dealing with informal settlements

The National Physical Development Strategy studies the demography, land tenure, natural resources and climate, size and distribution of human settlements, distribution of economic activities, road network, spatial distribution of social services, regional development challenges, and environmental threats. The purpose of the studies is to discover the root causes of the emergence of informal settlements. This is also done through studying similar situations of countries in the region, by addressing the informal settlements issue through a global lens and preparing various

# CONCLUSION

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Sudan is still formulating its national vision to upgrade informal settlements. The main policy, currently being adopted, is the assessment of the existing situation as well as project staffing and capacity building. The secondary purpose of this method is data collection and preparation by national and international parties, with a total budget of \$65,000.

The second ongoing intervention policy is the preparation of PDS and NSP through data assessment, coordination, and consultation. This is to cover training, management, and general evaluations. The secondary method is to prepare proposals, suggestions, consultations, tools and equipment for implementation, with a total budget of \$3,250,000.

## Introduction:

Our summary analysis is based, at this stage, on the information available in the National report, proposed in 2016 to Third United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development Habitat III and literature review. The majority of the literature is academic and published before the Yemenite current crisis.

According to the 2004 Census, one of the main characteristics of Yemen's population is the unbalanced geographical distribution. 43% of the country's population is located in four out of the 21 governorates (including the Capital Secretariat, Sana'a). Taiz Governorate encompasses the largest number of population (12% of the total resident population), followed by Al-Hodeidah (11%), Ibb (11%) and the Capital Secretariat of Sana'a (9%). Other smaller governorates such as Al-Maharah, Marib and Raymah are almost depopulated, as they comprise respectively 0.5%, 1% and 2% of Yemen total population. The two most densely populated regions are the two urban agglomerations of Aden and the Capital Sana'a, reaching 1,655 inhabitant/km<sup>2</sup> and 714 inhabitant/km<sup>2</sup>.

## DEFINITION OF INFORMAL SETTLEMENTS

*There is no official standard definition of informal settlements in Yemen. Informal areas are usually labeled as "ashwa'i", i.e. "random" areas with a connotation of chaotic and unlawful development. They are also often associated with poverty, marginalization, and precarious housing conditions.*

## Informal Settlements

Informal settlements are a relatively new phenomenon in Yemen. They were first documented in the 1980s and have since grown at

a very rapid rate. In 2009, in Sana'a alone, there are an estimated 35 informal settlements that contain approximately 20.5% of its 2.0 million residents. The Government of Yemen has done little to address the growth of informal settlements. Nonetheless, there was a growing concern about the issue, and both governmental and nongovernmental actors began to consider new approaches to urban policy development and implementation. One such approach is the establishment of governance networks, in 2011, which are inter-organizational networks of multiple actors that coordinate with one another in order to influence the creation, implementation, and monitoring of public policy. Some areas are mentioned in the master plans (such as Aden Governorate master plan indicating

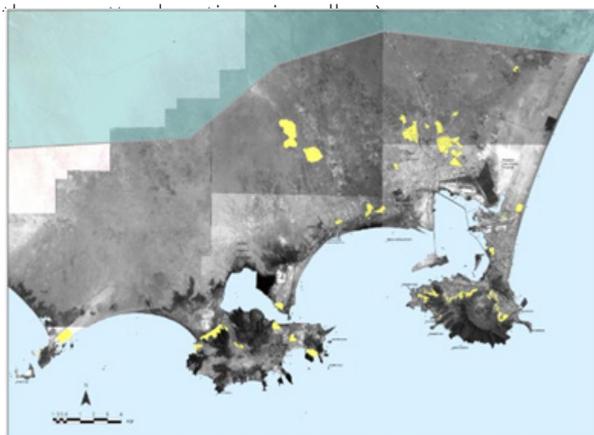


Figure 1 : Aden Master plan (IS areas are indicated in yellow)

## Form and definition:

The General Authority for Land, Surveying and Urban Planning (GALSUP), which is responsible for detailed planning of new residential neighborhoods inside cities, uses a very broad definition of informal areas. It considers all areas in which residential development takes place without an official land use and services plan and where construction is done without building licenses as "ashwa'i".

*Informal settlements, as defined by the Ministry of Public Works and Housing, includes two types: squatters and slums.*

Squatters are human settlements that fulfill two main criteria, as they do not have access to basic urban services and/or have not undertaken ex ante planning, hence, are not included in formal plans.

There is no official standard definition of informal settlements in Yemen. Informal areas are usually labeled as “ashwa’i”, i.e. “random” areas with a connotation of chaotic and unlawful development. They are also often associated with poverty, marginalization, and precarious housing conditions.

**Squatters are of two types:**

**Legal and Illegal:**

- **The legal squatters:** Are those that have been self-built on resident’s own land. The definition of a squatter depends on two criteria:
  - o If the house has been built on a land that does not yet have a land use plan, or
  - o It has been built on a land that has a land use plan but the overall conditions of the built house are very poor.
- **The illegal squatters:** occupying and building on vacant lands in regions that have been planned for public usage or regions that are exempted from planning (in mountainous hills and valleys).

**The main characteristics of informal settlements in Yemenite urban areas were/are the following:**

1. Poor access to basic infrastructure and services, such as water supply and sewerage, garbage collection and street lighting;
2. Environmental degradation; dangerous as the face hazards and natural risks.
3. Lack of economic and educational opportunities;
4. Poor health care;
5. Lack of security of land tenure.
6. Owned by the inhabitants,
7. High Poverty

**Reasons for Emergence:**

Migration from the rural to urban areas was a key feature of Yemen’s urban setting. Increased poverty rates in rural areas, absence of

employment opportunities, and other climate-related factors (i.e. water scarcity, drought, natural disasters, etc.) are the main reasons behind the increasing trend of rural migration before the war. This trend is specifically targeting the youth segment of the society. Available estimates indicate that Sana’a City, the historical and capital city, is the main destination of internal migrants. Other main receiving destinations include Aden governorate, followed by Al- Hodeidah, Al-Mahrah, Al- Jawf, Hadramout, Shabwah and Saadah due to initiation of various projects (oil discovery and some investment projects). It is worth noting that the recent armed conflicts lead to a “reverse” population movement from main cities, such as Sana’a, Aden and Taiz, to rural areas transforming them into hosting areas for Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs). The influx of displaced people is putting additional strain on existing services and infrastructure that are already scarce or depleted. This phenomenon generates new settlements, which are not yet identified by the government.

Before the armed conflicts, the increasing rates of urbanization, poverty and unemployment led to the rapid surge of slums and informal housing in Yemen. The UN-Habitat Global Urban Indicators Database estimates that 60% of Yemen urban population was living in informal settlements. The cities that have been mostly affected by the rapid growth of slum populations, in terms of severity include Taiz, Al-Hodeidah, Sana’a and Aden. In Taiz, for example, close to 70% of total residential built-up area of the city is informal and the vast majority of residential development, since the 1980s, has taken place informally. Most of the informal settlements have expanded onto mountain slopes, exposing the households to landslides and flooding.

**National Approaches and Strategy**

The national housing strategy is supposed to deal with the informal settlements. This strategy isn’t approved due to the situation of the country.

In the 2000s, the World Bank directed part of its aid to assist the government of Yemen in addressing the myriad challenges that are associated with the proliferation of informal settlements. Two main World Bank projects were proposed, namely:

the **Integrated Urban Development Project** and the **Port Cities Development Project**. The World Bank has produced a number of reports on its efforts in Yemen. It also made recommendations to Yemen for in-situ upgrading of its slum settlements instead of the more expensive resettlement alternative, though tenure issues inhibit the implementation of either strategy.

The World Bank provides US\$ 22.00 million equivalent for the Yemen Integrated Urban Development project to improve access to basic services in selected informal settlements in urban areas in Taiz Governorate and strengthen dialogue on a national framework for urban upgrading. This project emphasizes the scaling up of urban upgrading, from a local to a national scale, and the improvement of living conditions in these areas by extending affordable services to informal settlements. Through this project, WB's support will help improve urban management of the cities through an effective approach to basic service delivery for the urban poor in Yemen.

In 2008, the Yemenite Government, along with key international partners, such as the World Bank, has initiated a number of slums upgrading and re-settlement initiatives for dwellers of informal settlements in main cities, such as Sana'a and Taiz.

In Sana'a, with funds made available by Cities Alliance, the MoPWH, in cooperation with Sana'a Municipality, conducted an assessment of informal settlements in the city in 2007-2008. The study was able to identify a total of 35 informal settlements located throughout the city as well as on the urban fringe. Most of those areas have been established during the period 1990-1995. A total of 23 areas were at least partially planned but plans were never really enforced, and development continues largely informally. From a geographic point of view, four informal settlements are near river and Massils/ Weds, seven on mountains areas, and 24 in agricultural lands. One area is constituted of tents and instable buildings. All these areas were established between 1990 and 1995. An aerial view of these areas is presented:

The 35 areas were classified into four different types, including sub-types:

- Slum pockets (distributed all over the core

urban fabric of Sana'a);

- Informal areas within or close to the core urban built-up area.

These are areas that were mainly established on state land by forced returnees, after the 1991 Gulf war, and/or by poor rural migrants, low paid security personnel, low rank government employees, and other lower income segments of society.

Many of these areas developed at the periphery of the city alongside or close to newly constructed major roads or road extensions such as Taiz Road, Khawlan Street, Shamlan Street, Saada Road, the Airport Road and Marib Road.

The total number of residents in these areas was somewhere between 313,000 (low estimate) and 390,000 (high estimate) who represent between 16.5% and 20.5% of the total population of Sana'a.

This assessment laid to the elaboration of a draft strategy to deal with the informal residential development. The strategy detailed seven key elements:

1. Secure State land and land needed for infrastructure and services;
2. Declare pilot development zones for guided fringe informal development;
3. Carry out integrated upgrading projects in selected mature informal areas;
4. Quickly identify tailored and feasible solutions for areas where crucial public goods are endangered;
5. Create an information system that allows for continuous monitoring and effective needs assessment;
6. Adapt planning tools and increase enforcement capacities;
7. Improve inter-sectoral approach for service provision.

All these strategies, pilot projects, and international assistance were stopped, and a new assessment has to be realized. The cities of Makla, Aden and Hadida were analyzed but the available information seems to be collected during the 1990s. The selected case study was suggested by the World bank; however, it is crucial to update the data after three years of civil war.

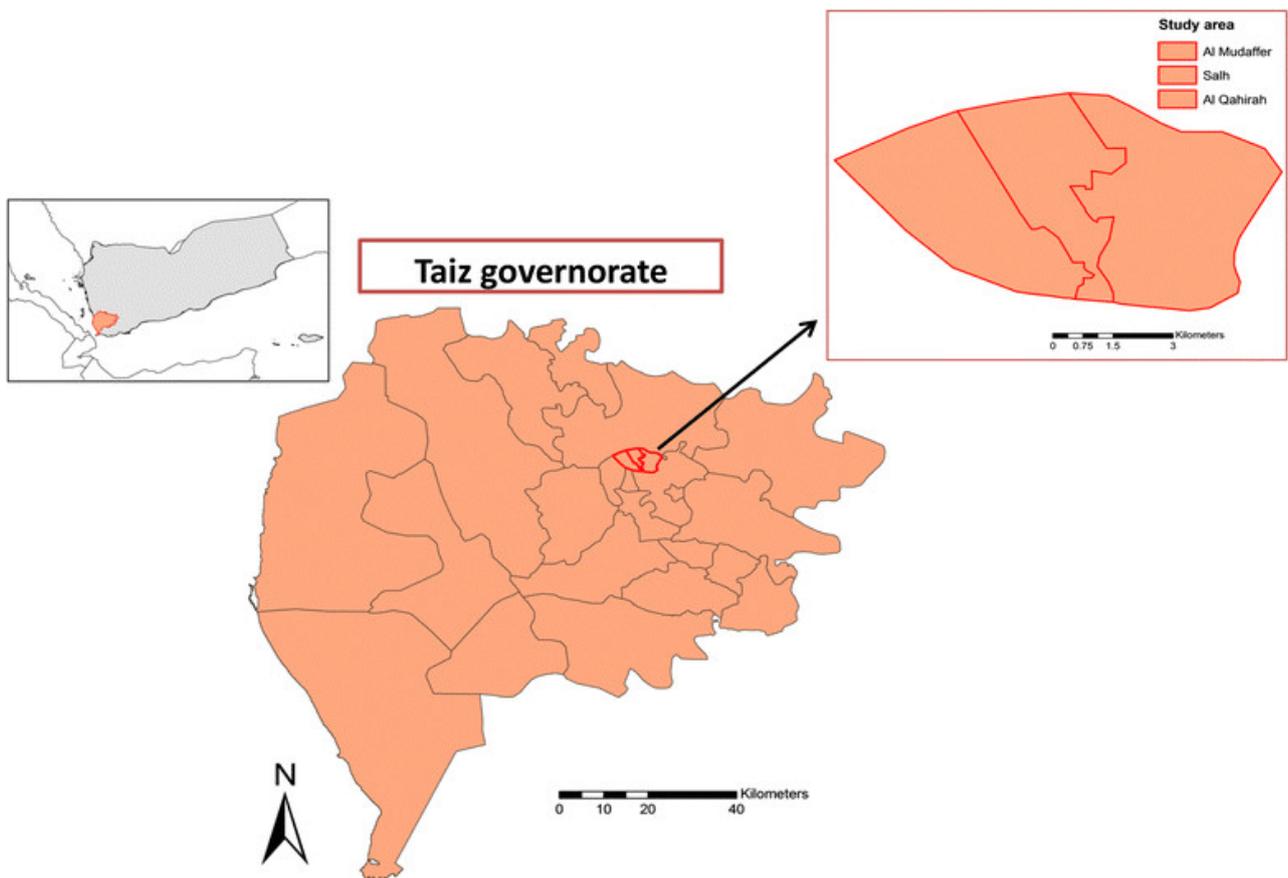
### Case Study:

Taiz is one of the cities that are most severely affected by the rapid growth of informal settlements. Nearly 70 % of the total residential built-up area of Taiz is informal and the vast majority of residential development, since the 1980s, has taken place informally. Taiz governorate also benefited from a number of urban water supply projects. In addition, the success of several Public Works Projects, to mitigate the adverse effects of structural adjustment through support for labor intensive infrastructure to create employment in both rural and urban areas, has attracted significant donor funding for Yemen. The integrated approach, to upgrading of public infrastructure in selected settlements in Taiz, including road and pedestrian ways, water, drainage and sewage systems, and street lighting, tackles the basic needs and necessities of people's livelihoods.



Damaged cars and buildings are seen after forces loyal to Yemeni President Abdel Rabbo Mansour Hadi captured Hasab neighborhood following clashes with Houthi rebels and former Yemeni President Ali Abdullah Saleh's forces, in Taiz, Yemen, on Feb. 14, 2016

Anadolu Agency/Getty Images



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# CONCLUSION

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In Yemen, informal settlements in urban areas are characterized by poor access to basic infrastructure and services like water supply and sewerage, garbage collection and street lighting, environmental degradation, lack of economic and educational opportunities, poor health care, and lack of security of land tenure. The growth of informal settlements in Sana'a accelerated after the unification of the former North and South Yemen in 1990 and the influx of refugees from Iraq, Eritrea and Ethiopia, which occurred during the mid-1990s. There is an urgent need to develop a national urban policy backed up by a strong political will to reforming the urban sector.

The national housing strategy is supposed to deal with the informal settlements, however this strategy isn't approved yet.

All land-reform efforts remain incomplete if land governance aspects are not adequately addressed. Land registration in Yemen is a critical issue, especially in urban settings. In fact, according to the urban planning law, urban areas that are subject to development have to be registered before development takes place. Land parcels and the land area divided on the ground must be mapped or registered. A complex and unstable history of land issues, particularly relating to property laws, registration systems, adverse possession and land distribution, have persuaded the majority of the population to disengage from the formal system. The strengths and traditions of Yemeni social and cultural structures are what binds the current land practices followed by most people. A severe lack of trust in authority and lack of conformity to formal procedures exists and this fosters hybrid systems and informal dealings. Updating the data is the first step if a strategy or local actions are considered either by the donors, local authorities, or the government.



# SYNTHETIC TABLE



Country	Law Related to Informal Settlements Management	National Strategy	Detailed Geographic Mapping	Urban and Engineering Mapping	Socio-Economic Analysis	Pilot Projects	Implementation Strategies	Private sector involvement	Specific issues
<b>Egypt</b>	YES	YES (ISDF)	Yes (not always accessible)	Yes (national and local level)	Yes	Yes (land sharing, sites & services)	YES		Maintenance, services and transportation provision for improved IS
<b>Iraq</b>	Under approval	Yes	YES	No only pilots (*)	Partially (**)	Yes. Rich expertise and excellent results	No guidelines and solutions	No	Important coordination and IS is a priority. Pilot of high value and references for the MENA region
<b>KSA</b>	No national law	Yes integrate in the Future cities programme	Partially	No only pilots. Detailed analysis for pilot	Partially	Yes	No but capitalization of experiences	Yes	Local intervention and integration in UP strategies. Legal and environmental concerns are analyzed.
<b>Palestine</b>	No	No	No	Very limited to few case studies ( not pilots)	Very limited to some project with support of UN agencies	Case studies with limited inputs and output. No implementation	No	No	Difficulties related to the political situation and the land use processes after Oslo agreements
<b>Jordan</b>	No in progress	HUDC is a public operator with a level of expertise	Yes	Yes very performant	Yes	Yes	Yes, but changed three time (participatory / infrastructure / relocation)	Yes, in some major projects	The presence of 2 categories of camps (Syrian and Palestinian). The HUDC and their exceptional role.
<b>Lebanon</b>	NO	No	No	No	No	Yes (after the war)	No	No	No common acceptance of the term IS. The Syrian crisis is changing the concept and the approaches.
<b>Yemen</b>	No	No	Yes (before the war)	Yes (before the war)	Yes (World Bank)	No	No	No	Civil war and rural / urban migration phenomenon. Need an urgent updating of the data.

<b>UAE</b>	YES	No	No	No	Yes	No	No	No	No	No IS but over occupancy is assimilated to informal settlement
<b>SAR</b>	YES PARTIALLY	Yes, and local strategies (***)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Partially	Partially	The majority of the analysis concern the period before the Syrian crisis but new strategies of mapping, state of cities and laws were proposed recently
<b>Morocco</b>	YES	YES	Yes for the majority of Informal Settlements	Yes for the majority of Informal Settlements	Yes	Yes	Yes for Urban Management	Yes	Yes	National programme for IS, AlOmrane as a model. Private sector participation. Excellent pilots.
<b>Tunisia</b>	YES	YES	YES	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Not clear	Not clear	One of the pioneer countries in the field Many innovative approaches and institutional reforms. Updating is necessary.
<b>Mauritania</b>	NO	NO	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No formal banking route for most citizens, relies on only donor funds which are abandoned due to costs
<b>Algeria</b>	NO	YES	Yes	Yes	Not available	Not Available	No	No	No	Algeria is declaring not having IS any more. Data is missing (may be available but not shared)
<b>Libya</b>	NO	YES in Libya 2020	No	No	No	No				Lack of information and need of updating
<b>Sudan</b>	NO	Yes integrated in UP development	No	No	No	Yes in Khatham providing housing units, the rest are "sites & services" based (double approach)				Information available for Khartoum and possible pilot projects

## KEY SOURCES

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(\*): **All informal settlements in Mosul, Ramadi and Basra** mapped and enumerated. Land uses compared with existing Master Plans (although Mosul's 1974 Master Plans is obsolete). Age, locations, patterns of growth and environmental factors analyzed for pre-assessment.  
- Conducted diagnostic of priority needs in each settlement in consultation with community members and municipal staff. Community top priorities were listed as:

(\*\*): **The door-to-door survey** focused on understanding better demographics, community relationships and mutual support, home and displacement, education, child labor, livelihood, infrastructure and public utilities, health, drug usage and housing, land and property issues. The Focus Group Discussions covered similar topics through open-ended questions, in addition to security, involvement in conflictual situations, open spaces/outdoor activities and sport, mobility and free time.

(\*\*\*) **Syria** was, before the war, one of the most active Arab countries in the sustainable management of informal settlement. Recently after, the lull of the war, Syrian government is proposing laws, mappings and strategies.

# REPORT

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# CONCLUSION

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## PERSPECTIVES AND CONCLUSIONS

Informal settlements exist as a result of rapid urbanization driven by the pursuit of improved quality of life through access to urban employment and urban services, and the lack of capacity to offer appropriate housing in sufficient supply. Informal settlement, driven by urbanization, is not limited to the highest density, inner city areas. It includes informal settlement in suburban areas and the urban fringe, with the understanding that these communities rely on urban employment and services. While informal settlement occurs across the MENA region, without exception, its form and characteristics are diverse. Building on the available data, for this preliminary analysis, urban informal settlement in the region is characterized by a significant proportion of high-density populations concentrated within rapidly growing urban regions. These informal settlements face particular challenges in terms of vulnerability to climate change, social crises, and disaster risk, unaffordable and sub-standard housing conditions, and socio-economic inequality. Some of these settlements were directly concerned by the Arab Spring- since 2011. These risks are traded-off against access to employment, services, and amenities offered. At this stage, no homogenous characterization of these settlements is realized through satellite imagery. The availability of such a mapping exercise is needed to enable further analysis of typologies and sizes of informal areas across the regions. However, this is also linked to the local definition of various countries and availability of base maps to include social and economic aspects. For the early phases, and for comparative purposes, analysis of satellite images with local checking could be attained.

From a historical point of view, in the immediate post-independence period in the early 1950s, authorities in the Arab countries did not focus on controlling and addressing informal areas. This led to fast growth of such areas mainly due to the increasing number of rural-urban migrants. These areas were not well serviced by main infrastructure or utilities. In the later years, Governments started introducing low income housing programmes in an attempt to respond to the growing housing demands around main urban and industrial areas where jobs and opportunities are available. Such Programmes were implemented in Morocco, Tunisia, and in a lesser degree in Syria, Iraq, and Egypt. Despite the large implementation in many countries, the success of these programmes to control and prevent informal areas formulation was limited mainly due to the gap between the fast growing demand and limited supply, the in affordability to the migrating low income families, and the often lack of participation of local communities in housing options.

It was found that the impact of economic growth appears to be counterintuitive. The coefficient suggests that a 1% increase in economic growth will increase the incidence of slums by about 3.8% in African countries. This finding confirms the expectation that an increase in financial supplies will reduce long-term interest rates (including mortgage rates) and stimulate economic activity-including housing construction and investment in urban infrastructure, as well as various forms of urban development projects- which will increase the access to potable water and sanitation, sustainable housing, adequate living space and secure tenure; which are vital for reducing the widespread presence of slums. This, however, assumes that the economy is not under 'full' employment, in which case, money supply would be inflationary and counterproductive. The issue of availability of finance is pivotal especially in the face of the economic crisis facing cities in both developing and developed countries.

Inequality in the distribution of income, as measured by the Gini index, significantly contributes to the prevalence of slums. The coefficients for the Gini index indicate that a 1% increase in income inequality will bring about an increase of between 0.39% and 0.47% in the incidence of slums and informal settlements .

Inequality in the distribution of income, as measured by the Gini index, significantly contributes to the prevalence of slums. The coefficients for the Gini index indicate that a 1% increase in income inequality will bring about an increase of between 0.39% and 0.47% in the incidence of slums and informal settlements<sup>80</sup> . Such high levels of inequality make it difficult for economic growth to have a reformative effect on poverty, and by augmentation, on the pervasiveness of slums and social exclusion. There is no single comprehensive solution for all informal housing settlements in the Arab countries. However, taking into consideration the abovementioned points on the nature of and reason for the settlements can help point out the strengths and weaknesses of some proposed solutions.

On the other hand, the high level of vulnerability in Arab informal settlements is linked to poverty, past unwise and unsustainable land use practices, excessive deforestation, poor building practices, unplanned settlements in environmentally sensitive areas, and inadequate solid and liquid waste management. Inadequate drainage systems, presence in environmentally vulnerable areas, poor housing quality, limited access to basic services, and precarious livelihoods all place informal settlements- and their inhabitants- at a greater risk to regular environmental and health hazards and extreme climate-induced events. Risk assessment prior to any upgrading is an integral part of the informal settlement upgrading methodology in several Caribbean countries. In Syrian experiences before 2011, one of three criteria for prioritizing interventions is an early assessment of any serious threat to human safety. In all these instances, relocation is recommended, only where necessary, to protect lives, accommodate critical infrastructure or to protect Environmentally Sensitive Areas.

Countries such as Algeria, Egypt, Jordan, Libya, Morocco, Saudi Arabia and Tunisia experience a low rate of informal settlements. Within this group of countries, the proportion of urban dwellers living in informal settlements is less than 40%.

80 <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SI.POV.GINI>

When compared to other in the region, these countries have high levels of income, more stable economies, and lower rates of poverty and moderate to low urban growth rates. All these tend to mitigate the proliferation of slums. It is pertinent to note that the low prevalence of slums- particularly in Tunisia, Egypt and Morocco- reflect far-sighted political commitment to slum upgrading, slum prevention, and service provision for the urban resource-poor. This adequately describes the situation in Tunisia where slum upgrading institutionalized, as it has been a fundamental aspect of the country's urban development programme for the past three decades.<sup>81</sup>

Also, improving the stock of existing infrastructure has the consequence of decreasing the existence of slums among Arab countries like Egypt, Tunisia, and Algeria; paved roads are exceptional in this regard. Improved road

network is also reported to reduce the level of social exclusion by improving the access of residents of slum and squatter settlements to various employment and activity junctions. This is particularly important given that informal settlements are remote and disconnected from the main urban intricacies with residents being cut off from the city. Residents often have to put up with longer commuting times and higher transportation costs.<sup>82</sup>

## KEY OBSERVATIONS

The most important observations could be summarized through main aspects which address the different strategies and approaches of various Arab countries, which are the following:

- Due to the varying character of informal settlements in the Arab region, common definitions or intervention approaches won't bring much advantage. Rather, the focus should be on knowledge sharing and capacity development.
- The heterogeneity of situations and the crucial need for capitalization around good strategies and practices.
- The involvement of the private sector is still not developed enough at many countries.
- The strategies of upgrading and revalorization still needs more development in most of countries, however; Egypt and Iraq have introduced very successful and comprehensive strategies and have achieved great results.
- The place of public policies, laws, and land tenures is important in order to activate the different programmes and to assure their sustainability.
- The study concluded some main principles that could be embraced to tackle the development of informal settlements as follows:
  - Upgrading informal areas in an integrated manner that includes economic, social and environmental aspects and aims to reduce poverty.
  - Focus on regulating the conditions of the inhabitants of these areas.
  - Relying on the method of planning and development with the participation of the population, civil society organizations, parents and the private sector.

81 Ben C. Arimah, SLUMS AS EXPRESSIONS OF SOCIAL EXCLUSION: EXPLAINING THE PREVALENCE OF SLUMS IN AFRICAN COUNTRIES, 2001.

82 UN-HABITAT, State of the World's Cities 2010/2011: Bridging the Urban Divide, 2010.

# MAIN ISSUES AND LESSONS LEARNED

A Community-Based Approach to planning, as a starting point in upgrading, can be a starting point for preparing to upgrade an informal settlement by engaging in a process of meaningful and continuous dialogue with local communities within the framework of a community planning exercise. Constructing a collaborative vision, a set of shared objectives, and a multi-stakeholder partnership-based investment plan helps address many of the obstacles to the upgrading process. Outcomes of open dialogue include: introducing a community-based governance model, establishing local employment targets and community contracting systems into the upgrading process, relying on community-based risk assessment as an input to decision making about the need for risk reduction investments or relocation of households and structures, and a collaborative approach to establishing appropriate planning and engineering standards.

**Integrating Physical and Social Dimensions:** The process of land titling is time-consuming and expensive, resulting in the need to make trade-offs between delivering full title and delivering basic services. If the goal of informal settlements upgrading is to maximize the reach of public-sector led investments, then the focus must be on a mix of basic services upgrading while achieving tenure security without full title. While full title regularization can be an option available to interested households, this process should not disrupt the process of delivering priority physical investments programmes must shift towards a plan-based approach. There is now a need to integrate these communities into the wider fabric of the surrounding and neighboring cities, within the framework of a city-wide or metropolitan scale plan. A more integrated city-wide approach to informal settlements upgrading includes understanding informal settlements within their broader geographic context, considering the urban-rural linkages that drive informal economies. Planning for sustainable livelihoods is particularly important in the context of relocation. The reluctance to be relocated is as much a fear of the

loss of livelihoods as it is about losing shelter. The traditional approach relied on offering adequate alternative shelter to a relocated household without consideration of any impacts on livelihoods or social networks. Precarious livelihoods will not survive a relocation, which may also result in an associated loss of family ties and social networks.

**Investment in Infrastructure based on Appropriate Standards:** The focus of informal settlements upgrading must be on reaching the maximum number of beneficiaries through priority physical infrastructure and essential services. These investments will address issues of basic quality of life and environmental protection. The range of public investments includes multi-purpose mobility networks (i.e. roads, stairs, pathways), water and sanitation, drainage /storm water management, public space, and access to health and education facilities. The specific investments will be defined by available resources and collectively identified priorities. Integral to successfully investing in public infrastructure is relying on context-sensitive planning and engineering standards. These planning and engineering standards will evolve over time, reflecting and adapting to changing local conditions and emerging technologies. The main planning and development standards to reconsider include:

- **Lot Size:** National norms are generally not easily applied due to limited land suitable for development.
- **Site development standards:** These would also have to be varied to accommodate the existing investment in housing stock and community formation.
- **Vehicular Access:** Historical expectations that each parcel must have direct vehicular access have to be rethought.

## 1 SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC INCLUSION

- The key reasons behind the emergence of informal settlements is the search for better jobs, economic opportunities and prosperity. Accordingly, Socio-economic aspects need to be understood when planning to upgrade or redevelop an area. Informal neighborhoods are not detached from the formal system but provide services and economic value. Planning interventions without taking this fact into account can have unintended consequences for the city and the country as a whole.

## 2 GOVERNANCE AND PARTICIPATION

- Participative approaches are more effective since they make residents' knowledge and experience part of the solution. They also enable a policy cycle through which a learning process that connects different levels of governance can be facilitated. This includes local community -particularly women and youth- private sector developers, and local administration.
- The lack of basic services and infrastructure in many informal settlements together with the limited extent of governmental oversight can facilitate political opposition and instability. Strengthening the responsiveness and efficiency of local authorities can prevent such dynamics.
- There is a recognized value added through the involvement of international agencies in support to upgrading informal settlements in the Arab region. This includes – beside the financial support in some cases- introducing and enabling sustainable upgrading tools and approaches and benefitting from lessons learned regionally and internationally.
- Sustainable financing of upgrading programmes and effective institutional mechanisms (both at the local and national levels) affects greatly the effectiveness of upgrading programmes.
- The emergence of informal settlements is connected to the nature of land management in each country. Characteristics of land ownership and tenure need to be explored in order to understand the reasons behind informality.
- The phenomenon also relates to the nature of national and local governance. Once a country is highly centralized with limited responsibilities for local institutions,

informal settlements are likely to emerge. Decentralization constitutes one of the major instruments to enable planned urbanization.

## 3 APPROACHES AND STRATEGIES

- Integrated city-wide planning approach is a key to ensuring multiple aspects of city development is met without gentrification or social exclusion. Applying only one development approach is not sufficient.
- Relocation is not a preferable option for improving people's livelihoods since most of them are rooted in their area through socio-economic links. Experience in different country contexts show that many of them would move back or settle in a different informal area. When there is no other option (because of the site safety for example) Temporary subsidy programmes (i.e. food supplies, service fees, public transport, etc.) needs to be in place, and alternative sources of income or proper training programmes for better integration into the new society are essential.
- Many countries have dealt with informal settlements in the past primarily by demolishing them and relocating residents. Such interventions lead to a lack of trust and grievances against local authorities and national governments. Future interventions need to be aware of the context and apply a conflict sensitive approach towards urban redevelopment. Social inclusion and ensuring gender is mainstreamed in the upgrading process are also key to ensure all voices are heard and avoid affecting vulnerability.
- There is a strong need to ensure flexibility of planning and execution to include all varying aspects of every settlement.
- There is a strong need for strong monitoring and evaluation mechanisms to ensure best use of the programmes and reach to the target population and the overall effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability of the programmes.

# CROSS CUTTING ISSUES

1

## ENVIRONMENT

Informal settlements are sometimes more vulnerable to environmental disasters. Moreover, climate change plays an important role in increasing rural-urban migration and the set-up of informal housing units. The Arab Region is particularly vulnerable due to water scarcity and food insecurity, which force people to move into cities.

2

## MIGRATION AND DISPLACEMENT

Political instability and armed conflict lead to the emergence of informal settlements, which involve very different social dynamics and problems than established informal neighborhoods. While many established informal settlements provide most of the important services, informal settlements as a result of conflict are particularly prone to vulnerability and scarcity.

3

## FINANCE

Sustainable financing of upgrading programmes and effective institutional mechanisms (both at the local and national levels) affects greatly the effectiveness of upgrading programmes. There is a need to expand financing sources and tools to ensure wider impact and best use of resources, not only during physical construction but also in the socio-economic upgrading to ensure better sustainability of upgrading interventions.

4

## GENDER

Women are very often disadvantaged when it comes to the access to public space as well as the ownership of land. Gender disparities need to be further assessed and considered.

5

## PARTICIPATION + LOCAL DEVELOPMENT

The most successful interventions in informal settlements are those which give voice to local residents. Relocation without considering local knowledge will likely be inefficient and lead to unintended outcomes.

# THE WAY FORWARD

Having identified and agreed on the main regional issues and key lessons learned. The way forward has become clearer towards the formulation of a new regional programme. This programme will be based on the foundation of all the information processed through the study and the validation and will be conceptualized at the regional level with implementation frameworks at National and city levels.

The programme formulation will be based on the objective of progressing “Towards Inclusive Arab Cities Without Informal Settlements”. This objective will be further broken down to sub objectives including:

- **Quantification of informal settlements in the Arab Region (General national estimations)**

Based on the understanding of the various national definitions and mapping of informal settlements, quantification of the regional current status and percentage of these settlements will be defined as a baseline and reference for the programme target setting.

- **Developing the regional programme framework and a call for national participation in the first phase of the Regional Programme.**

A regional concept for a participatory citywide approach to informal settlements upgrading based on the identified gaps and challenges will be formulated. Having created the main network of national and local relevant representatives from various Arab countries, a call for these various countries will be shared to select the first phase of Inclusive Arab Cities Without Informal Settlements based on the developed conceptual approach. This call will include a clear criterion to support governments in the selection of the first phase of cities to enable demonstrating the programmematic approach.

- **Supporting national mapping mechanisms to quantify informal settlements in the first phase of cities**

After identifying contributing cities to the programme, UN-Habitat and development partners will share experiences to support national and local governments map informal settlements in these cities. The mapping will be based on a general approach but tailored to national contexts based on capacity, data availability and complexity of the local situation. The objective of the mapping is setting a baseline status to enable monitoring progress in these areas, however interventions will remain at a city-wide level focusing on improved competitiveness and performance of the whole city.

- **Identification of the programme financing tools and mechanisms**

This phase will aim at developing financial tools that enable sustainable replication and scale up of the upgrading model with strong support from the IsDB. Once the national governments are enabled to identify priority cities, and they are both capacitated to map informal settlements and identify potential areas of interventions, support will be provided to analyses of legislative, institutional and financial mechanisms for implementing the participatory city-wide approach focusing on availing investment opportunities that is able to cross finance related development in the city and the inclusion of the social and economic perspective.

- **Piloting, monitoring, evaluation and feedback**

The final stage in the suggested way forward process is the implementation of priority phase of the development projects. While acknowledging that such a city-wide integrated approach aims preliminary at sustianble long term impacts, an M&E mechanism will enable assessing direct results and expected progress towards this anticipated outcomes through smart indicators. This assessment will feed into the designed approach and enable review that benefits the later phases of the regional programme.





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