



UN-Habitat  
**Regional Office for Arab States**  
Overview 2021





Regional Office for Arab States Overview 2021

United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat)

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Cover photo (Left top): UN-Habitat organizes the second Mosul Old City Citizens Consultation Forum to develop a consensus from stakeholders on the ownership and redevelopment of Mosul, Iraq's debilitated Al Maidan riverfront and to discuss its revival. Photo by UN-Habitat

Cover Photo (Left bottom): Reem, a girl from Souf camp for Palestinian refugees, participates in interactive activities organized by UN-Habitat and the Government of Jordan's Department of Palestinian Affairs. Photo by UN-Habitat

Cover photo (Top): Haya Promenade under Haya Joint Programme in Palestine. Photo by UN-Habitat

Cover photo: (Bottom): Osama returns to his house in Syrian neighborhood after the area was rehabilitated. Photo by UN-Habitat

Design and layout: Anas Wehady

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# 1. Foreword

“ In 2021, paving the way for the realization of the cities we need, UN-Habitat took a number of catalytic actions towards the achievement of the New Urban Agenda, our roadmap for sustainable urbanization. ”

Many countries around the region submitted voluntary national reviews of their progress in achieving the New Urban Agenda. UN-Habitat provided guidance, tools and technical support to countries as they captured achievements, identified trends, challenges and opportunities. Six reports were submitted from the Arab World, with three more currently being finalized. The reports act as inputs informing the UN Secretary General's Quadrennial report to be presented in the High-Level Meeting on the Implementation of the New Urban Agenda in 2022.

The region hosted UN-Habitat's global observance of World Cities Day in Luxor, Egypt on October 31st which called for action on climate change discussing some of the most pressing climate priorities regionally and globally and stressing on the importance of local action. The Arab region is one of the most vulnerable regions of the world to the negative effects of climate change and is now considered the planet's most water-scarce region.

In 2021, COVID-19 was also well into its second year. Cities emerged at the forefront of the pandemic accounting for over 90% of all infections. Together with its partners and donors, UN-Habitat was quick to respond with programming that ensured access to basic hygiene and services infrastructure. However, as we cautiously emerge from the pandemic, cities have also proven to be dynamic centers that play a transformative role in sustainable recovery. Our flagship report "Cities and Pandemics" analyzed 1700 cities in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic and documented how compact, well-planned cities combining residential and commercial functions with public spaces and affordable housing can improve public health, the local economy and the environment.

In the Arab Region, the majority of national

governments adopted the 2030 Agenda and its 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in their national development plans, but the region was not on track to achieving its targets even before the outbreak of COVID-19. The pandemic only served to exacerbate the situation. Projections of the impact of COVID-19 estimated economies shrinking by as much as 13% in some conflict countries, driving the estimated number of population living in poverty up to 115 million, or one quarter of the Arab population.

Key to recovery in a rapidly changing geopolitical landscape is the active participation of local governments. Using the SDGs as a framework for recovery, cities can identify priority actions based on local needs and contexts to address inequalities.

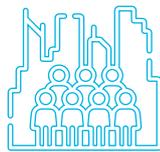
Over the course of the year, we expanded our commitment in the region by opening two new country offices in Morocco and Bahrain. We continue to work closely with governments and partners to achieve a better future through well-planned and well-managed urbanization as well as reach the cities we envision: prosperous, inclusive and resilient.

**Erfan Ali**  
Regional Representative for Arab States  
UN-Habitat

## 2. Key Urban Figures in The Arab Region

### Urban Figures

**90%** of the region's population live in **4%** of the total area



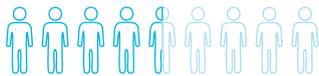
Population **444.8M** People  
**59%** Of which live in urban areas



By **2050**, Population expected to reach **646M** Inhabitants & **70%** will reside in cities

2021

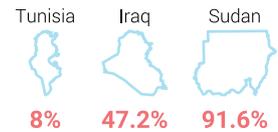
2050



More than **half** of the total inhabitants of the region is younger than the age of **25**



The average share of urban dwellers living in slums, informal settlements or inadequate housing is **30.9%**  
 By country, figures range from




Average of **18%** of the population live below each country's national poverty line with around **38.2 Million** living in acute poverty



Conflicts in Yemen, Libya, Palestine, Iraq, Sudan and Syria have led to **waves of displacement**



About **12.4M** people were still living in internal displacement of **conflict and violence** at the end of 2019



**Syrian crisis** has led to large-scale migration and displacement of over **5.6 Million refugees**



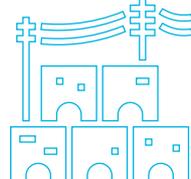
Estimated cost of **damage** and destruction of the physical infrastructure caused by the Syrian crisis: **USD 67.3 billion** (2016)



**40M** migrants of which **9.3M** were refugees and asylum seekers



Regional unemployment rate accounts for **7.3%** and The region has the highest unemployment rates in the world for women



**+ 81 Million** live in informal settlements

## Environment and Climate Change



Water scarcity is a major issue in **19** of the **22** Arab countries, while desertification and land degradation affect **17 countries**



Current utilization rate of water resources are estimated at **76.6%** compared to about **7.5%** worldwide  
Sea-level rise is expected to impact over **43** port cities



Almost **98%** of people in the region are exposed to levels of **particulate matter in the air** that exceed World Health Organization guidelines

### Five Arab countries



are ranked among **the top 10** polluted countries worldwide

### Three Arab countries



are among **the top 10** countries with the most deaths from air pollution

## Public Spaces and Transport



Cities across the Arab region remain largely, **inaccessible for persons with disabilities** despite some notable recent initiatives to improve physical accessibility and to address stigma and social exclusion

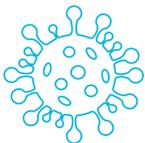


Public spaces constituted just **2%** of Arab cities in 2016 compared to an average of **12%** in Europe



Transportation contributes around **25%** of carbon dioxide emissions in the region

## COVID-19 Figures



More than **9M** registered **COVID-19** cases in the Arab region  
**90%** of confirmed cases come from urban areas



**74M** people are at **a higher risk** of contracting the virus due to lack of handwashing facilities in the region



**55M** existing recipients of humanitarian aid are **at higher risk**



**26M** existing forcibly displaced are **at higher risk**

# 3. Regional Summary



Sustainable urbanization is a driver of development, poverty reduction and peace. UN-Habitat is striving to utilize it to advance the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in the Arab region. This aligns with the overarching goal of UN-Habitat’s Regional Strategic Plan for Arab States (2020-2023) to advance **“sustainable urbanization as a driver of development and peace and to improve living conditions for all in line with the SDGs.”** The Strategic Plan was developed to present strategic priorities and focus areas of work and to lay out the roadmap for achieving four mutually reinforcing and integrated goals, or **“domains of change,”** in the Arab region.

 <p>Reduced spatial inequality and poverty in communities across the urban-rural continuum</p>	 <p>Enhanced shared prosperity of cities and regions</p>	 <p>Strengthened climate action and improved urban environment</p>	 <p>Effective urban crisis prevention and response</p>
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## Country Presence

UN-Habitat Regional Office for Arab States (ROAS) has current activity in **16 countries** and **13 operating** country offices

## 4. Mainstreaming Human Rights and Social Inclusion

Human Rights, including the rights to adequate housing, as well as safe water and sanitation, are included in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and international human rights instruments. UN-Habitat is working toward more sustainable, safe, resilient and inclusive cities.

### Ensuring Continuity of Care and Prevention in Response to COVID-19: The Rehabilitation of the National AIDS and Tuberculosis Centre in Lebanon

Completed in December, 2020, the renovation of the National AIDS and Tuberculosis Centre in Lebanon is an example of a comprehensive project that has contributed to the betterment of human rights. Much of it was destroyed following the Port of Beirut explosion in August, 2020. As a direct result of the renovations, the facility now has the capacity to accommodate 1,450 patients per month instead of 600. Updated equipment has improved social and health conditions for the examination of patients and offered decreased levels of exposure to the COVID-19 virus through several interventions.

UN-Habitat completely renovated the centre. Solar panels were installed to provide reliable and renewable energy, making it fully self-reliant on its own electricity, which is vital in Lebanon's current situation. Improvements have been made to the public spaces around the centre to enhance connectivity to surrounding areas. Six hundred households living in Karantina received hygiene kits as part of this project, especially those who are considered vulnerable. These included female-headed households, women, girls, the elderly and people with disabilities. Public handwashing stations were also installed around the grounds. Hygiene kits and the handwashing stations ensure better protection for the community from COVID-19 transmission.

The centre's rehabilitation ensures that at least 90 percent of HIV and tuberculosis (TB) patients will benefit from restored services and improved conditions, including women and youth, who can once again access health care, medications and awareness sessions. Free medication provided by the centre is critical for boosting HIV and TB patients' immunity systems against COVID-19. The TB programme now also offers free PCR testing.

Resident of Karantina, Beirut picks up hygiene kit under UN-Habitat's project to rehabilitate the National HIV and TB Centre. Photo by UN-Habitat, 2021



With support from UN-Habitat, the National AIDS and Tuberculosis Centre in Lebanon now provides a restored, multifunctional, green, public space that offers enhanced amenities and services to all, but particularly to vulnerable populations. This has been especially critical for patients and their families during the pandemic. The project aligns with UN-Habitat's global guidance and messaging on COVID-19 and public spaces.

## Breakdown of Beneficiaries

### Rehabilitation and Outdoor Shading Structure

**Direct:** Four thousand people, including migrant workers, refugees and vulnerable Lebanese living with HIV/TB who are subjected to increased risk of COVID-19.

**Indirect:** Patients' families, staff, Ministry of Public Health officials, NGO workers, approximately 20-50,000 migrant workers, refugees and the general population, since the centre's programmes offer prevention and treatment for the whole country.

### Public Space

**Direct:** Seven thousand local residents—including children and people with disabilities—and hospital visitors will benefit from the updated sidewalks and safe play areas.

### Hygiene Kits Distribution

**Direct:** Five hundred and fifty-two households and 2,500 people from the host and refugee communities in Karantina were provided with lifesaving personal hygiene protection kits.

## Syrian Women Help With Urban Recovery Planning in Community Workshop

In collaboration with the United Nations Population Fund, UN-HABITAT in Syria organized a community consultation workshop to engage women in participatory urban recovery planning. Representing different backgrounds and educational levels, women from all over the Daraa Governorate attended. Daraa is one of the fourteen provinces in the south-west of the country and is currently experiencing a humanitarian crisis. The women discussed their challenges and needs and shared opinions about which locations should be included in the Safer Access Project in light of their needs. Sharing their deep local knowledge, the women helped to prioritize five pivotal urban and rural locations that will be important for the UN-Habitat team to consider when they implement the project.

## 5. 2021 in Brief

In 2021, UN-Habitat worked collaboratively with other United Nations partners, local and national governments, NGOs and host funding partners to improve the lives of many vulnerable populations across the Arab region. Work to address the ongoing challenges of the pandemic that begun in 2020 as part of the COVID-19 Response Plan continued across many countries. Awareness-raising sessions for city residents and training opportunities for community leaders were offered to help mitigate the transmission of the virus. The introduction of sanitation and hygiene stations in public spaces—from parks to refugee camps—occurred in almost every country.

Support for basic services in poor urban communities continued apace. Using mapping and data collection tools, many regions and neighborhoods were targeted for help. Homes, facilities and public spaces were rehabilitated. The pressing issue of water-scarcity was also broadly addressed through the implementation of several water-saving and waste management strategies. In all cases, UN-Habitat strove to engage the voices of all stakeholders to ensure the long-term investment of local populations in each project and the most effective outcomes. Some of this work is highlighted in the regional initiatives and country projects below.

### COVID-19 response initiatives and projects

#### In Iraq

In the city of Heet, 60 houses were rehabilitated, 262 households (representing 1,434 individuals) benefitted from water network extensions and seven health facilities were upgraded with a focus on water and sanitation, including Heet General Hospital. In total, 319,406 beneficiaries were impacted by the interventions. With funding from the Japanese government and in partnership with Peace Winds Japan (PWJ), UN-Habitat launched vocational training for 200 unemployed returnees, including 80 females in Dkory and Tal Banat villages in Sinjar.

UN-Habitat also partnered with PWJ to increase access to employment opportunities and to conduct an awareness-raising campaign in response to the COVID-19 crisis,

targeting more than 1,200 beneficiaries in Tal Banat. As part of the Headway Programme, implemented in partnership with the United Nations Development Programme and funded by the European Union, UN-Habitat distributed **290 WASH/cleaning kits to targeted beneficiary families in selected vulnerable neighbourhoods in Erbil and Mosul to help raise awareness about the importance of good hygiene habits in fighting the COVID-19 pandemic.** The kits included a leaflet promoting water-saving strategies and practicing hygiene with less water to counter the ongoing water scarcity in Iraq.

#### In Palestine

Efforts to address COVID-19 challenges in the Bethlehem Governorate directly targeted 60,000 Palestinians—of which 20,000 were refugees—and indirectly reached 217,400 people, 49 per cent of which were female and 33 per cent were youth. A further two million people were reached via social media.

The interventions supported solid waste management efforts in Bethlehem to ensure continuity of the provision of these basic services amid the pandemic. More specifically, about 1,882 tons of waste were collected, transported and disposed of in the Al Menya landfill from three refugee camps. Other efforts included an awareness-raising campaign to prevent the spread of COVID-19, the disinfection of public spaces and the installation of handwashing units. Physical sanitation and hygiene units that minimized the need to touch the surface of the unit were considered as design alternatives.

The project also contributed to the preparation of the first report outlining Palestine's work to implement Sustainable Development Goal number 11 which aims to make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable.

## In Sudan

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, UN-Habitat implemented a number of interventions in collaboration with Khartoum State Ministry of Social Development Foundation as IP, under Alwaleed Philanthropies/SIDA fund, targeting urban displacement and homeless populations in informal settlements in the Jabal Awlia locality, just south of Khartoum.

Three hundred shelter units were rehabilitated and extended, benefitting 300 vulnerable households (approximately 1,800 people) by reducing overcrowding and mitigating spread of the virus. These included female-headed households and households with a family member living with a disability. Three trainings were provided on flood-resistant building technology using stabilized soil blocks, in order to better address flooding and pandemic challenges. Sixty-six people participated in the trainings and this resulted in the building of two additional shelter units using the stabilized soil blocks.

In addition, four awareness workshops were conducted, targeting more than 240 beneficiaries in the local community, including women and children at risk of infection. A campaign of 15 radio awareness broadcasts

about COVID-19 was broadcast twice daily for a month from December, 2020 to January, 2021, accompanied by the dissemination of 500 informational flyers to families. Thirty mobile handwashing facilities were added in 23 girls' schools and seven boys' schools in the Jabal Awlia locality and essential COVID-19 supplies (soap, facemask, hand sanitizer) were given to six social care centers with a total of 1,121 beneficiaries. Two training and capacity-building workshops on monitoring and evaluating construction work were provided to 10 NGOs to ensure the delivery of housing units, enhance local capacities and scale up and sustain project intervention.

## In Syria

Four projects were implemented in 2021 to limit the spread of COVID-19 in Homs in the Talbiseh, Ar-Rastan and Al-Waar neighborhood, in Hama in the Suran and Fayhaa neighborhood and in the Arbin, Jaramana, Harasta, Duma, Al-Zabadani, Al-Tal, Saida Zeinab areas of Damascus. Three projects were funded by the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs in Sudan and one was funded by Alwaleed Philanthropies—together they targeted six municipalities in rural Damascus. Six hundred and thirteen thousand persons living in densely populated, poor areas with huge needs directly benefitted from the four projects.

The activities included removal of more than 14,000 cubic metres of solid waste and debris; provision of 225 solid waste containers; 55 masks and gloves; 166 portable sterilization spray devices; 13,150 litres of sterilization solutions; the deployment of 80 solid waste workers; rehabilitation of wastewater networks and house connections and the rehabilitation of water supply systems and water pipelines in multiple locations, including: 20 locations in Duma (500M); 12 locations in Harasta; six locations in Al-Zabadani; 200m in Saida Zeinab (Lahlwh & Bahdliah street); 100 LM in Jaramana; and 125LM in al Tal. UN-Habitat also supported municipalities in mapping needs and conducted awareness sessions and hygiene campaigns in Homs and in rural Damascus and supported assessment of municipal capacities in terms of contingency planning and responding to emergencies.

## In Tunisia

Identifying the homeless population as one of the most vulnerable groups during the COVID-19 pandemic, the project enhanced a homeless centre's reception capacity and rehabilitated living areas, including rooms, sanitary blocks, windows, and outdoor landscaping. This work directly benefitted more than 1000 homeless men and women, including elderly people and children and indirectly impacted a further 3000 homeless people.

UN-Habitat also supported the government in mapping the needs of the homeless, addressed forced evictions, reviewed the housing sector strategy, assessed the need for health and basic services in slums, developed a Leave No One Behind mobile application to provide information, support and services to the most vulnerable and provided guidance for public transport for the homeless. UN-Habitat also provided policy support and rapid operational solutions to address forced evictions and improve the protection of the homeless and coordinated operational support to address the needs of vulnerable groups in urban areas. The Mediterranean City-to-City Migration (MC2CM) project was established in the Municipality of La Marsa, which identified and addressed the needs of local governance of urban migration, leading to the launch of

a study on the impact of COVID-19 on the migrant population through cultural activities. In parallel, an architectural competition was organized for innovative, low-cost and quickly-buildable housing solutions for low-income households, ready for use by the Ministry of Equipment, Housing and Territorial Planning. The competition targeted 95 students from which five winning projects were selected. During the competition, 20 volunteer teachers and six Tunisian entrepreneurs and experts worked with participating students. Another conference was held with BEITY, a non-profit association fighting for women rights, to present a study on social evictions during the COVID-19 pandemic.

## In Lebanon

The Municipality of Beirut, Lebanon, partnered with UN-Habitat to purchase and operate its first Municipal Mobile Health Clinic to provide free and non-discriminatory COVID-19 testing and vaccines to any individual unable to access basic medical services, including migrants and refugees in marginalized neighbourhoods. Following a comparative study, the vulnerable areas of Hay Tamlis and Sabra were selected as the principal target areas for intervention. Municipal Social Cell gathered information about the health issues and needs in the neighbourhoods and conducted awareness-raising sessions on COVID-19 preventative methods. The Mobile Health Clinic provided

COVID-19 awareness-raising session, Sudan. Photo by UN-Habitat



PCR tests for 296 persons in December, 2021. Fifteen handwashing stations were also established in private facilities in Beirut.

With funding from the Royal Norwegian Embassy in Lebanon, UN-Habitat provided 220 families in Sabra with lifesaving personal hygiene protection kits which enabled approximately 1,066 residents to adopt proper hygiene practices for two months, reducing the pressures caused by the constantly increasing living costs and household-related expenditures. With a United Nations Central Emergency Response Fund grant to support vulnerable households affected by the 2020 Beirut Port blast, 816 households received informative sessions on COVID-19 preventative measures.

## **In Jordan**

UN-Habitat designed a public space in the Ghor Al Safi neighbourhood as part of the United Nations COVID-19 Response and Recovery Multi Partner Trust Fund, whose aim is to empower local women of all socio-economic backgrounds to have a safe and inclusive public space, including a market and community centre. Using consultation sessions and tools, UN-Habitat invited the community to engage in imagining the design, implementation and maintenance of the space to ensure it would be gender-sensitive, inclusive and safe.

Additionally, in response to the risks faced by the refugee population during the pandemic, a project aiming at enhancing the safety and resilience of Palestinian Refugees through improving access to water and sanitation facilities in public spaces was established. The project, funded by the UN-Habitat Global Public Space Programme, targeted the public spaces of Souf and Al-Shahid camps. Considering the limited resources in Jordan for conducting widespread COVID-19 testing, UN-Habitat collaborated with the Royal Scientific Society to address the presence of COVID-19 in the wastewater as a way to identify potential cases. Funding for this project was provided by the United Nations' Global Water Operators' Partnerships Alliance.

# 5. 2021 Highlights



## Domain of Change 1

**Reduced spatial inequality and poverty in communities across the urban-rural continuum**

### Regional Initiatives and Projects

UN-Habitat consolidates its experience in the areas of basic services, housing and slum upgrading, land, urban mobility, public space and the effective growth and regeneration of settlements, which contributes to reduced spatial inequality and poverty in the Arab Region. As part of the regional programme, **“Towards Arab Cities Without Informal Settlements”** launched in Abu Dhabi in 2020, UN-Habitat provided technical support to 12 Arab cities. Technical support aimed to help them prioritize development projects to reduce vulnerability and generate more than 70,000 job opportunities.

A regional consultation workshop was held under the theme **“Building Back Better in the Arab Region: Supporting Spatial Equality: Urban Regeneration and Informal Settlements”**. The workshop aimed to encourage the use of city planning and management tools to advance sustainable local recovery and development in the region. Using materials from the drafting of the **“Iraq Housing Reconstruction and Housing Development Strategy in the Liberated Areas,”** the workshop was developed in collaboration with the Government of Iraq, various United Nations agencies and the World Bank, offering recommendations for the operationalization and implementation of strategies in priority areas.

### Country-specific Projects

## In Egypt

UN-Habitat developed a programme in partnership with the Urban Development Fund (UDF) in Egypt- to identify a new approach to urban upgrading and development in Egypt. The study results were endorsed by the Minister of Housing. With community participation, the programme identified potential development opportunities in deteriorating areas as a way to further the Sustainable Development Goals in cities. The new methodology was piloted in four Egyptian cities prior to national replication. The UDF’s digital urban monitoring unit aided in gathering data to further knowledge-based management and decision making to advance the project’s priorities.

The Sharm El-Sheikh Strategic Plan for Urban Development was endorsed in 2021 with the goal of improving quality of life in the city through green and economic initiatives. This included recommending financing mechanisms to support city leaders. These private and public projects drew from pre-feasibility studies and explored several funding sources. The government also endorsed strategic plans for Kafr El Batiekh, Gamasa, Nasr El Noba and Tamy El amdid, providing new opportunities for urban expansion and regeneration to enable these cities to play a more effective role within their regions.

UN-Habitat continued to support innovation in the water sanitation sector. The scaling up of river bank filtration units continued, with 13 new units becoming operational in 2021 serving more than 195,000 vulnerable inhabitants in Upper Egypt. Training to ensure the successful implementation of these units, as well as adherence to quality and health regulations, was also instituted. Thirty local water company representatives attended the training, including two female chemical engineers from Luxor and Assiut. Guidelines for design, implementation, operation and



maintenance were translated into Arabic and are being disseminated to key stakeholders.

Advancements in sanitation work include the setup of a new containerized sewage treatment unit in Damietta on the Nile Delta serving 5,000 inhabitants without access to sanitation services. This decentralized sewage treatment approach may be replicated in other small communities in Egypt to improve surface water quality and the livelihoods of many more Egyptians.

## In Saudi Arabia

UN-Habitat mobilized university students, female-led non-profit organizations and local experts through a series of workshops and activities designed to reimagine new culturally-appropriate and gender-sensitive housing and neighborhoods in the future development plans of Saudi cities.

## In Tunisia

A contest for innovative ideas was launched for architecture students under the theme, "A Roof for Dignity: Designing an economic and decent habitat for the homeless in Tunis." UN-Habitat launched the rehabilitation work of homeless centers in three cities: Tunis, Sousse and Sfax to provide the homeless with adequate shelter, access to basic hygiene facilities and socio-psychological support.

## In Syria

Aiming to advance Municipal Technical Support Offices and under the "Urban Recovery Framework" project, several thematic papers were developed. Four participatory plans were developed in Daraa, Aleppo, Deir Ezor and Homs; seven urban recovery projects were introduced in Aleppo, which included the rehabilitation of a microbus station, rehabilitation of roads, solid waste management, monitoring of air pollution, treatment of medical waste; and improved access to cadastral services for returnees to Aleppo. All these activities boosted recovery in the Qadi Askar and Al-Surian neighborhoods.

In Daraa, UN-Habitat joined with the United Nations Relief and Works Agency to support the restoration of basic services and rehabilitation of wastewater connections in a Palestinian camp, which encouraged returnees. In Deir Ezzor, UN-Habitat supported the restoration of roads, a bridge and a microbus station. Under the joint programme to support urban rural resilience in Daraa and Deir Ezzor, mapping was used to conduct assessments of roads and utilities, markets, cultural heritage sites and open spaces.

## In Iraq

UN-Habitat continues its efforts to promote sustainable urban recovery and resilience by rehabilitating war-damaged infrastructure and facilities in Iraq. With European Union funding for local area development, UN-Habitat completed the rehabilitation of four water treatment plants—the Al Maliha plant in Baiji, the Salah al Din, Al Jubair plant in Yathrib Sub-District and two plants in Al Baker in the city of Heet in Anbar. The team also completed the rehabilitation of a community hall in Mosul and initiated work on a kindergarten in Telafar. In the Al Anbar Governorate, the local development team completed the rehabilitation of 130 war-damaged houses in Heet and involved the community in the participatory design of a new park that was subsequently inaugurated in May.

In the rural town of Yathrib in Salah al Din, the team designed and constructed 21 houses for vulnerable returnees whose homes had been completely destroyed. WASH upgrades were implemented in seven health facilities in Heet, including Heet General Hospital which has a catchment population of 130,000 people. Intensive capacity building trainings were held for technical staff and engineers from water directorates and municipalities on the effective maintenance and operation of water networks in Erbil, Mosul, Duhok, Sumel and Sinjar. Up-to-date knowledge on the most effective maintenance procedures of water networks and pumping stations was provided in the trainings. UN-Habitat also completed the implementation of five small-scale WASH projects with a focus on the rehabilitation of

dysfunctional infrastructure to ensure quick and regular access to potable water across the five target locations.

In Mosul, UN-Habitat completed water infrastructure upgrades in Al-Shifaa and Zanjili neighbourhoods, which included the replacement of 4,719 metres of damaged and non-functional water pipes and the connection of 430 houses to the upgraded network. The upgrades resulted in the creation of 2,142 working days for local skilled and unskilled workers and provided a clean water supply to 2,580 beneficiaries. The project will be managed going forward by the Ninewa Water Directorate. Similarly, in Duhok, rehabilitation of the water network included replacement of 5,300 metres of damaged and non-functional water pipes in the Aytote neighbourhood and the connection of 315 houses to the main water supply network. The project generated 1,300 working days for local workers under the direction of a local contractor. The project has now been handed over to the Duhok Water Directorate who will be responsible for its ongoing operation and maintenance.

UN-Habitat is currently establishing a WASH project in Sinjar, to include the reconstruction and rehabilitation of three water wells funded by the Government of Japan. Approximately 30,150 people will benefit from the project.

## Lebanon

A total of 95,560 people benefitted from the implementation of a multisectoral urban upgrading project in Tripoli. Eleven projects were completed in the municipalities of Beddawi and Mina, ranging from the installation of solar lighting on a major highway in the areas of Jabal el Baddawi and Al Masaken, to the rehabilitation of building facades on historic Labban Street and the establishment of inclusive public spaces, such as a park and football fields.

An incentive-based recycling model was introduced through reverse vending machines that can receive aluminum, glass and plastics and give store discounts and points in return. Additionally, as a direct outcome of the priority needs identified in the **Maraash neighbourhood profile**, UN-Habitat transformed five alleyways

in Greater Beirut neighbourhood to be greener through renewable energy and urban gardening, safer through improved mobility and organized electrical wiring and better equipped for emergency response through the delivery of a rapid intervention firefighting vehicle suited for the narrow streets of Bourj Hammoud.

UN-Habitat has also successfully rehabilitated 22 building facades, improved street mobility and safety, shifted electrical network underground and enhanced access to basic urban services in **El Jazzar Street in the Sabra neighbourhood** of Beirut.

With funding from the United Nations Central Emergency Response Fund and The Polish Centre for International Aid, UN-Habitat in Lebanon was able to **support 816 vulnerable households** (3,201 people) affected by the Beirut Port explosion with cash assistance for a period of four months. This helped these families to secure their rent, enhance tenure security and avoid evictions. The cash assistance was complemented with an awareness-raising campaign on COVID-19 preventative measures and sexual and gender-based violence.

With support from The Lebanese Women Democratic Gathering, UN-Habitat designed and implemented a media awareness campaign that reached approximately 183,000 people through social media. Eight hundred and sixteen families were provided with briefs on sexual and gender-based violence and self-care, reaching 353 households through 24 online sessions. These sessions enabled 134 women and girls at risk of violence, abuse and

## In Yemen

UN-Habitat in Yemen successfully implemented an improved sanitation system in Al Taqniea neighborhood in the Al Mansourah district and, in collaboration with a local partner, started a vocational training for 30 young, unemployed men and women.

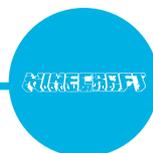
## In Palestine

Twenty-three handwashing units were installed in the Bethlehem Governorate in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

In 2021, UN-Habitat continued to strengthen the capacity of national and local governments to promote safe, inclusive, accessible, and gender-based violence-free public spaces. In Palestine, a new safe, inclusive and accessible public space called the “Haya Promenade” was inaugurated in Khan Younis to promote equity and inclusivity for women, children and people with disabilities, through the provision of adequate facilities such as baby care rooms, accessible bathrooms and service rooms. Site-specific assessments and innovative tools and approaches were applied to engage the local community, such as utilizing the **Minecraft computer game.**



Neighbourhood Profiles collect and analyze data on the conditions in a neighborhood. They offer an integrated place-based analysis covering multiple sectors and issues, including governance, population, safety and security, health, education, child protection, youth, local economy and livelihoods, buildings and housing, basic urban services and access to open spaces. Data is gathered participatively through field and household surveys and key informant interviews. Focus group discussions and findings are prefaced by a contextualization that covers the neighbourhood's history. By drawing on the collective knowledge of different stakeholders in the data collection and assessment, the resulting prioritization is built on a collaborative understanding and broad ownership of decisions. The spatial organization and presentation of data enables decisionmakers to understand multi-sector linkages and identify vulnerabilities (e.g. disaster risk prone areas) and underserved areas of cities. Opportunities for tangible transformation of urban areas that benefit all population groups can also be outlined.



UN-Habitat has been working with Mojang, the makers of the video game Minecraft, since 2012 on an innovative programme called Block by Block. Central to the programme is the notion that in order to make urban planning and design processes more participatory, people without design or architectural skills need tools that enable them to effectively describe their ideas to professionals. Through this programme, UN-Habitat uses Minecraft as a community participation tool in the design of urban public spaces involving hard to reach groups such as youth, women and slum dwellers. The Block by Block methodology includes community meetings, presentations, site visits and, very importantly, the site design workshop using Minecraft as a tool, to help the community visualize the site planning and design. It gives voice to those who are not usually heard, but who are most impacted by the planning decisions.

## In Iraq

UN-Habitat invested in the creation of interactive open spaces for children who lived through periods of insecurity and displacement as a means to support their recovery, reconciliation and sustainable return. The children's playground section of the Al-Yarmouk Park in Mosul was completed with increased accessibility for people with disabilities. Thirty-five pieces of interactive playground equipment were installed over 15,000 square metres, offering a dynamic and lively space for toddlers, children, youth and people with disabilities, who have grown up in an atmosphere of intolerance and conflict. A children's playday event was organized in the park to celebrate its completion. A 3,440 square metre park in Al-Nejoom in Heet, Anbar, was designated a safe and inclusive public space for people of all ages. Volunteers were invited to contribute to its greening. The once-abandoned 12,500 square metre Al Hurrya Park in rural Yathrib,

Salah al Din was also rehabilitated with a joyful playday being held for 140 boys and girls from the surrounding area.

A dedicated team of UN-Habitat engineers and urban planners is supporting a United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization flagship project in Mosul by conducting community consultations with experts in different sectors to develop a recovery plan for the Old City of Mosul. The plan assists property owners attempting to register their compensation claims for war damages and helps tailor building guidelines. The project has been extended to June 2022.

Two new tourism projects were launched in support of local communities in the Hawizeh marshes and Eastern Hammar marshes in the Maysan and Basra Governorates. The projects will be completed in 2022.

**Rehabilitation of the main street in Daraa, Syria. Photo by UN-Habitat**



### Knowledge Products



Land Issues in the West Bank Newsletter – July 2021, Issue #4



Recovery Plan for the Land and Water Settlement Commission from the COVID-19 Pandemic



Policy Brief: Promoting and Protecting Housing, Land and Property Rights of Syrian Refugees Living in Lebanon



City Wide Public Spaces Assessment in Palestine

## In Jordan

UN-Habitat is using public green spaces across the country as an entry point to address community needs, enhance social cohesion between local communities and refugees and improve livelihoods and opportunities for vulnerable women, youth, elderly, disabled persons and refugees. In the Marka Neighborhood and in Al-Majd Residential City in Zarqa, the lack of accessible and inclusive public spaces was addressed. UN-Habitat also supported the socio-economic empowerment and wellbeing of vulnerable women in Ghor Al Safi. This happened through the provision of a safe, gender-inclusive and green public space, as well as a community center to assist women in achieving economic sustainability through capacity-building and training. The completed community centre includes play areas for children of all ages, including those with disabilities, shaded seating areas and a market space which serves as a platform for the creation of livelihood opportunities for vulnerable women. There is also an area allocated for the implementation of sustainable agriculture methods such as permaculture.

Improving storm  
water drainage  
infrastructure in  
AlQati, Aden, Yemen.  
Photo by UN-Habitat

WASH facilities in the public spaces of Souf and Al-Shahid Palestinian refugee camps were also installed. While the proposed pilot interventions are limited to the public spaces in these selected camps, the broader framework offers a long-term vision for urban resilience to ensure the health and safety of those living in the camps. The design, management and maintenance of all these projects were significantly enhanced by the participation of vulnerable and marginalized populations at each step of the process.

## In Egypt

a new study was conducted in partnership with the GOPP on the management of public spaces in the greater Cairo region. Resulting capacity-building and pilot programs are being prepared to support the implementation of key recommendations.

## In Saudi Arabia

UN-Habitat joined with the United Nations Development Program to support the development of housing in the kingdom. It provided technical support to the Developmental Housing and Community Engagement Deputyship to aid in the implementation of the program.



This resulted in 10 reports aimed at improving the initiative's performance and bolstered non-profit engagement in the delivery of housing. The technical support generally entailed reviewing and providing recommendations to the regulatory and legal framework and offering tools and methods for improving non-profit involvement. Recommendations for the planning and design of future locations were also covered. The newly updated Housing Program 2021-2025 reflects the agility of the Saudi government to update and refine the housing strategies based on what has been working, while recognizing what needs to be refined.

**The regional pilot project to secure the rights of refugees and internally displaced persons in regards to housing, land and property** was led by the Regional Office for Arab States and managed by UN-Habitat offices in Iraq and Lebanon. Working with the Global Land Tool network, UN-Habitat implemented the Social Tenure Domani Model (STDM), a participatory and affordable land tool for recording people-to-land relationships along the continuum of land rights, as a way to map and georeference the rights of displaced people through a community-based approach.

So far, the project has reached over 4,000 households in three communities, two in Lebanon and one in Iraq, who submitted approximately 9,000 claims for housing, land and property in their areas of origin. The goal is to document and secure housing for at least 10,000 households by the end of 2022. During the enumeration process, particular attention was paid to ensure the participation of women-headed households who represent 35 per cent of the project beneficiaries.

Continuing to January 2023, the project is being implemented as much as possible through local actors, particularly members of the target displaced communities in Lebanon and Iraq. A first training on the implementation of STDM was held in Beirut in May, 2021 for key project personnel, data managers, community mobilizers and enumerators conducting the mapping of HLP claims.

Combined with local capacity development and awareness raising activities, the training strengthened participation in customization, deployment and uses, while helping beneficiaries to better understand HLP issues, secure their rights and register claims with the project.

## In Palestine

UN-Habitat continued its support for mapping formal and informal rights, and the adoption of a fit-for-purpose methodology based on the Social Tenure Domain Model to complete approximately 100,000 dunums, with special attention to women's land rights using the Gender Evaluation Criteria.

## In Egypt

UN-Habitat continued to support local governments in Qena & Damietta to improve successful urban planning and governance through the Hayenna Integrated Urban Development Project. Using the "Participatory and Inclusive Land Readjustment" approach, the project aims to adapt the traditional land readjustment tool to a developing nation context by emphasizing the participation of different stakeholders to ensure an inclusive outcome.



### Knowledge Products



Promoting and Protecting Housing, Land and Property Rights of Syrian Refugees Living in Lebanon: Towards an



National Feasibility Study for Riverbank Filtration in Egypt



Status Report on the Achievement of Goal 11 in Palestine: Sustainable Cities and Communities (2021)



State of Palestine: Progress in the Implementation of the New Urban Agenda (2021)



Riverbank filtration system project, Egypt. Photo by UN-Habitat



## Featured Story

# Riverbank Filtration System in Egypt

Living in Saqulta, Sohag, with his family, Omar Ahmed, a 24-year-old farmer said that water quality in his village was impure and the flow was continually disrupted.

Water scarcity is a major problem in Egypt with water shortages reaching 23 billion cubic metres. This is only expected to worsen because of population growth, expansion in both urban and rural settings, climate change and the disrupted flow of the River Nile.

Planning for infrastructure and basic services is becoming increasingly challenging. This is especially true for villages not connected to sanitation systems who have built informal systems with no quality control, often disposing of sewage in nearby water canals which leads to the pollution of surface and ground water and endangers public health.

Upper Egypt in particular is home to over 90 per cent of Egypt's most vulnerable and marginalized villages in terms of access, quality, affordability and sustainability of basic services, including clean water. UN-Habitat and its partners have set out to find innovative technological approaches that can provide quick access and cost-efficient solutions for water and sanitation for these vulnerable communities and provide a model to be replicated locally.

Riverbank Filtration Technology (RBF) was identified as an effective technology, costing only about five per cent of traditional water treatment stations. Units produce clean and potable water which has been approved by the Egyptian Ministry of Health and Population.

Since 2017, more than two million inhabitants have benefitted from RBF units in Egypt, specifically in Minya, Assiut, Sohag and Luxor, which are home to the nation's most vulnerable and marginalized populations.

Omar and his farmer are now also benefitting from the RBF unit serving his village. The new small-scale, on-site sanitation unit is expected to be introduced in more than 20,000 small villages.

Students are trained on sustainable housing design, Saudi Arabia. Photo by UN-Habitat





## Domain of Change 2 Enhanced shared prosperity of cities and regions

### Regional Initiatives and Projects

In partnership with United Nations Economic and Social Commission for West Asia (ESCWA), the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and the Arab Economists Circle, UN-Habitat held an expert group meeting on “Open Government and Digital Transformation for the New Urban Agenda (NUA) in the Arab Region.” The meeting was held in Cairo but was also simultaneously offered online. Decision-makers, digital transformation experts, national and local government representatives and donors from across the region discussed the importance of an open government approach and on the ways in which digital transformation can accelerate the implementation of the New Agenda in the region.

UN-Habitat supported the efforts of government authorities at different levels to develop policies, frameworks and actions that boosted the productivity of cities and regions. Beyond the conclusion of the regional programme on sustainable, inclusive and evidence-based national urban policies in selected Arab countries, UN-Habitat continued to provide technical support to authorities as they developed and implemented their national urban policies.

#### In Jordan

Final consultations with the steering committee of Jordan’s National Urban Policy (NUP) are underway. Key stakeholders attended a workshop and an expert group meeting to develop the final vision. These attendees included government officials and academics. Two thematic guides on

mainstreaming local economic development and transportation into the National Urban Policy were also published.

As part of UN-Habitat’s advisory services on urban law reform—and within the framework of Jordan’s National Urban Policy—a focus meeting was held with the Parliament Committee to advise on the needed modifications for the new Decentralization and Municipality Laws.

#### In Tunisia

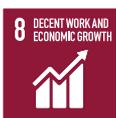
UN-Habitat advanced previous phases of the National Urban Policy by organizing a consultation workshop on the formulation of the NUP which is integrated into the new “Program for Cities.” The objective of the workshop was to mobilize partners and stakeholders to present the deliverables of the last phase and to discuss the results. It also contributed to emerging consensus on the policy’s national priorities and essential elements to include a charter of values. Participants and stakeholders can view all NUP outputs on the ONU Habitat online platform. Further consultation has been planned with government officials and civil and international cooperation agencies to determine the next phases of the project.

#### In Sudan

A diagnostic study was developed with a vision for a new system of governance and a proposal of merging the 18 states into six regions. A meeting at ministerial level was conducted and discussions are ongoing to agree on the way forward and incorporate new developments in the country into the study.

#### In Egypt

The final version of the NUP was approved by the General Organization for Physical Planning and the Ministry of Housing, Utilities and Urban Communities. The NUP will be presented to the Supreme Council for Planning and Urban Development for final comments with the official launch of the policy being planned for the second quarter of 2022. Embracing



the concept of the Egyptian System of Cities, the NUP will help each city to decide what their role should be and how they should fulfill it. The success of the system has already been proven in numerous Egyptian cities which have adopted its practical tools. The Implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the NUP is currently being planned.

## In Lebanon

As part of the NUP project, two thematic mainstreaming guides—one on housing (the Guide for Mainstreaming Housing in Lebanon’s National Urban Policy) and one on transport and mobility (Guide for Mainstreaming Transport and Mobility in Lebanon’s National Urban Policy)—were written in 2021 and are slated for publication in March, 2022. A synthesis report (Lebanon’s National Urban Policy Synthesis Report: Intersection of Housing and Transport) was also completed. These publications are important in advancing UN-Habitat’s urban and sectoral policy reforms. The first National Urban Forum will

take place at the end of March, 2022.

## In Palestine

The consultation phase of the NUP was launched during the celebrations of World Cities Day on October 31, 2021. The diagnostic phase has been successfully finalized. UN-Habitat is helping to prepare for the Third Palestinian Urban Forum that will take place during the second quarter of 2022.

## Country-specific Projects

HAYA Programme Promenade, Palestine. Photo by UN-Habitat



### Knowledge Products



Guide for Mainstreaming Transport and Mobility in Lebanon’s National Urban Policy



Guide for Mainstreaming Housing in Lebanon’s National Urban Policy



Lebanon’s National Urban Policy Synthesis Report: Intersection of Housing and Transport



Guide for Mainstreaming Transport and Mobility in Jordan’s National Urban Policy

## In Iraq

UN-Habitat introduced the **Rapid Own Source Revenue Analysis (ROSRA)** tool to Kurdistan's Minister of Municipalities and Tourism. The tool was developed by UN-Habitat headquarters to help local governments optimize their Own-Source Revenues. The enhancement of local revenue administration in Iraq is an important component of the European Union's support towards decentralization. The Local Area Development Programme will be piloting ROSRA in five cities, starting with Erbil, Sulaymaniyah and Mosul.

## In Syria

UN-Habitat supported evidence and area-based multi-sectoral planning and deployed experts who met and trained municipalities to enhance their own-source revenues.

## In Saudi Arabia

UN-Habitat provided technical support to the Ministry of Municipalities, Rural Affairs and Housing on the preparation of the first national-level guidelines for urban design. This will be utilized at the national and local levels

to enhance the urban scenery in Saudi cities, with a goal of having three Saudi cities at the top of the most livable cities list by 2030.

In collaboration with the United Nations Development Programme and the World Bank, a high-level discussion policy paper was drafted on the spatial and investment optimal distribution in Saudi Arabia. The paper was followed by several rounds of consultations with national ministries on the preparation of the first National Spatial Plan for Saudi Arabia.

This project will support the localization of sustainable urban development at the national, regional and local levels. It will improve the capacity for the implementation of the plan by 2030 through different initiatives with regards to: classification and re-categorization

Students work on housing design project, Saudi Arabia. Photo by UN-Habitat



### Knowledge Products



Guide for Mainstreaming Local Economic Development in Jordan's National Urban Policy



Guide for Mainstreaming Housing in Jordan's National Urban Policy



Beirut City Profile



Publication of the UN-Habitat-UN ESCWA State of the Lebanese Cities Report



of Municipalities in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia; municipal finance performance; visual pollution elimination; and urban design. These approaches are central to the new municipal strategy issued in 2021 with UN-Habitat's support, namely the strategy's urban sector reform pillar.

## In Lebanon

UN-Habitat has published the Beirut City Profile. Over the past years, Lebanon has witnessed a series of shocks including the Beirut Port explosion, the protracted Syrian refugee crisis, a collapse of the economy, a political crisis, large-scale civil protests, the fuel crisis and the COVID-19 pandemic. Moreover, a large portion of Beirut's residents live in chronic poverty. To reach a common understanding of how this trauma has manifested in Beirut, the Beirut City Profile was developed to provide a cross-sectoral and spatial analysis. This highlights the capacity of the existing systems and governance structures to absorb shocks and recommends how they can be strengthened to help the city transform from its current fragile state to being a resilient and inclusive city.

In collaboration with ESCWA, UN-Habitat prepared the State of the Lebanese Cities Report. Through the presentation of geographical, multisectoral data and analysis on urbanity in Lebanon and its manifestations within 10 cities, the report recommends a territorial approach for coordinating sustainable urban development delivery. This is particularly effective at the local level where contextually contingent spatial planning, execution and monitoring takes place, while factoring in the unique dynamics and priorities of each city. The report highlights key urban trends and implications for governance, while identifying entry points for mitigating challenges and capitalizing on opportunities across a range of key sectors which span the economy, infrastructure and services, inclusion and protection, heritage and the environment. The report also includes city dashboards which present city-specific multisectoral data relevant to sustainable urban development.

The project supports the work of city decision-makers and stakeholders in designing and

monitoring holistic, area-based approaches to improving urban wellbeing and resilience. A Policy Brief on the State of the Lebanese Cities is currently under production. The report targets specialist and non-specialist urban stakeholders, spanning government, humanitarian and development organizations, as well as community, private sector and academic partners. It offers an evidence basis, useful to entities engaged in urban planning, decision-influencing and decision-making. The report is also intended to be a springboard for sensitization and capacity-building in municipalities and in other entities working to reduce vulnerabilities among city communities.



The ROSRA tool helps local governments optimize their Own-Source Revenues (OSR). It quantifies revenue leakages and deconstructs known bottlenecks to identify root causes and entry points for reform. By supporting local revenue administrations in better understanding and communicating the weaknesses of their OSR systems, it facilitates strategic and resource-effective interventions and helps to build reform momentum within local governments. The ROSRA tool ultimately strengthens the Municipal finance foundations of local governments, enhances creditworthiness and thus enables local governments to leverage external resources to fund their development.



### Knowledge Products



Publication of the UN-Habitat-UN ESCWA Policy Brief: State of the Lebanese Cities 2021



Online portal profiling disadvantaged neighbourhoods in Lebanon



Toolkit on how to read and use the Lebanon Neighbourhood Profiles



Couple sit outside of a café in Maraach, Lebanon, as UN-Habitat leads the upgrading of 5 alleyways. Photo by UN-Habitat, 2021



## Featured Story

# Using Data to Identify Vulnerable Neighbourhoods in Lebanon

In Lebanon, there has been a long-standing scarcity of multisectoral data. What is available is rarely used. UN-Habitat and United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) embarked on a project to create 28 profiles of disadvantaged neighborhoods across the country. These were selected from a list of the 498 most vulnerable areas in Lebanon, according to national rankings. The results were then published in an interactive, user-friendly online portal where users can view the work underway to improve the livelihoods of the inhabitants of these neighborhoods.

Projects to improve water and sanitation, child protection and the local economy are just some of the issues addressed in the profiles. In Sabra, Beirut, the findings of the neighbourhood profile led to the multisectoral upgrading of El-Jazzar Street, an area characterized by overcrowding, sub-standard living conditions and poor infrastructure. The upgrades, funded by the Royal Norwegian Embassy in Beirut, included the weatherproofing of buildings and the rehabilitation of soft mobility and stormwater networks. The street's residents, including many refugees from Lebanon, Syria and Palestine, are now directly benefitting from better living conditions.

To ensure the profiles' data is used by local authorities, civil society groups and NGOs, UN-Habitat and UNICEF offered nine interactive workshops that benefitted 90 participants. Antoine Abou Younes, a board member of the Zahle, Maalaqah and Taanayel Municipality in the Beqaa Governorate, was one of the participants. He commented: "we now have a roadmap for anyone who wants to help the neighborhood," adding that the comprehensive study successfully identifies the area's problems, which, if applied, can effectively "meet the needs of the entire neighbourhood... in a way that will not go unnoticed."

UN-Habitat and Beirut Municipal Social Cell on field assessment to understand housing, land and property issues facing residents of the areas affected by the Beirut Port explosion. Photo by UN-Habitat





### Domain of Change 3

## Strengthened climate action and improved urban environment

The third domain of change focuses on the intersection of cities and other human settlements with climate and the environment. **In the Arab region, UN-Habitat is keen to address the resilience, adaptation and mitigation** actions for the development of sustainable cities through curbing the impact of climate change, creating new economic opportunities and improving livability in cities.

The Arab region is the most water-scarce region in the world and as such, is especially vulnerable to desertification and drought. Desertification is one of the leading causes of increased sand and dust storms in Iraq and Kuwait and demonstrates the adverse effects of climate change on our planet. In 2021, UN-Habitat initiated a project to build resilience against sand and dust storms in Iraq and Kuwait through the adoption of innovative scientific and technological solutions. This will generate jobs in southern Iraq and boost the local economy in target areas.

Using resources from the Adaptation Fund, UN-Habitat embarked on projects in Syria, Jordan and Lebanon to advance climate adaptation in the Arab region. The projects tackle adaptive capacities that have deteriorated due to

environmental threats, crises and damaged infrastructure, to name just a few of the contributing challenges.

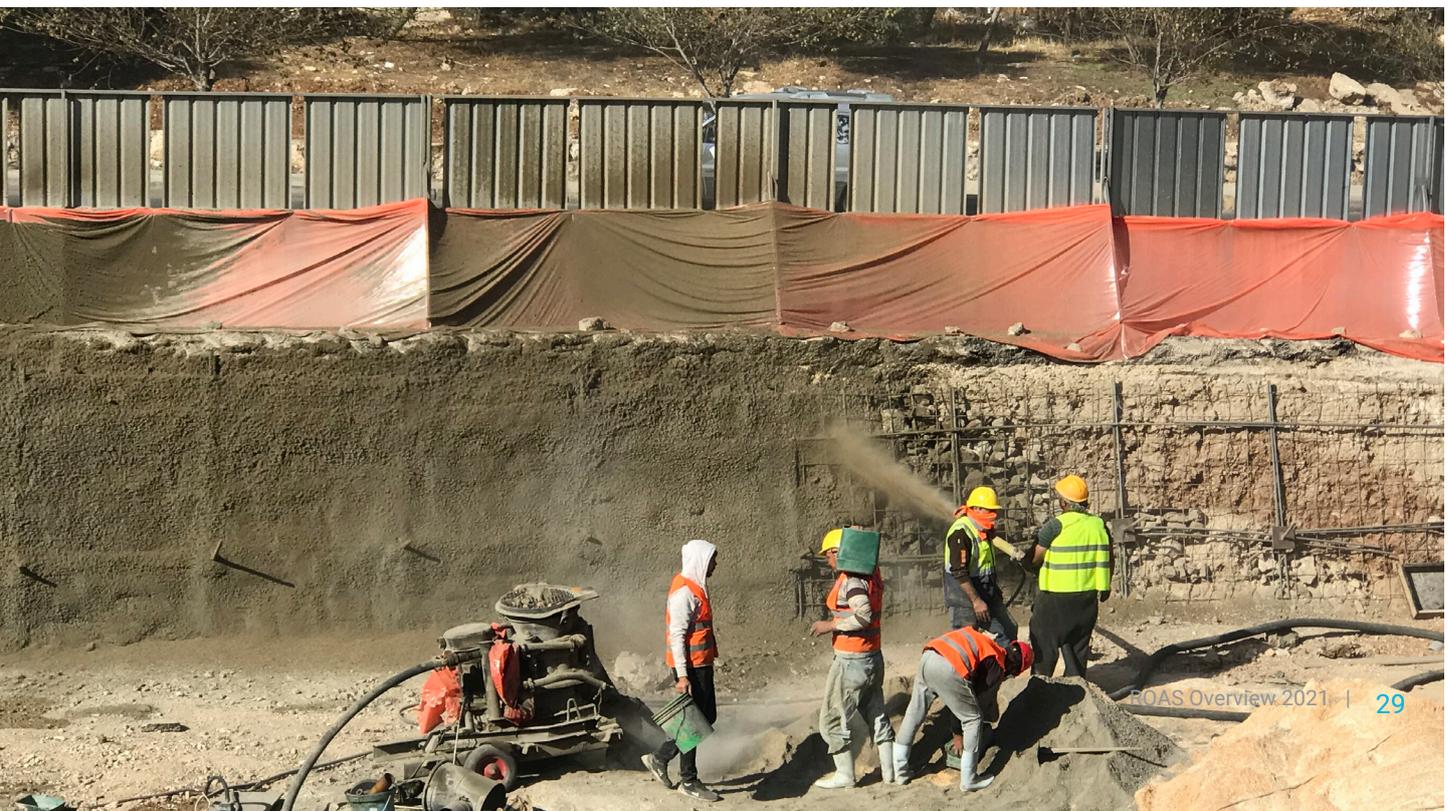
The Syrian project targets Eastern Ghouta, one of the most vulnerable areas of Syria. Its goal is to address the problems of water availability by finding strategies to manage water and land resources more efficiently while considering future climate change risks. The launch of the project was lauded in Syrian and national media, with coverage in newspapers and on television. UN-Habitat also supported monitoring polluted gases and improving air quality in the city of Aleppo in addition to treatment of medical waste.

The regional project, aiming to find resilient water solutions against climate change in Jordan and Lebanon aims to adopt a sustainable water management approach to respond to urgent climate change impacts and vulnerabilities in the context of the Syrian refugee crisis. This will be accomplished by reducing the demand of unsustainable water sources, such as over-extracted—and often polluted—groundwater, while increasing water supply options from innovative and more sustainable sources, such as rainwater harvesting and the reuse of treated wastewater.

As one of the driest countries in the world, Jordan's water scarcity problems present a significant impediment to the country's sustainable urban development. In 2021, UN-Habitat provided technical support to



Construction of underground flash flood water tank progress in Amman, Jordan. Photo by UN-Habitat



the Greater Amman Municipality, to local communities and to refugees, to help them build more effective adaptive capacities. This support included identification of the most flood-vulnerable areas in downtown Amman and the implementation of flood resilient infrastructure. UN-Habitat's **"City Resilience Action Planning" tool (CityRAP)** engaged multiple stakeholders to address problems caused by flash floods in Amman. Participants considered concepts of urban resilience and disaster risk management and proposed potential solutions.

In 2021, the "Flood Risk Assessment and Hazard Mapping Study" was developed and an awareness-raising campaign was launched. Fifty participants received vocational training on the implementation of sustainable agriculture methods and more were trained in building resilience to flash floods. A priority site was selected in the Al Zouhour district in Amman to introduce green stormwater infrastructure through bioretention, with a capacity of approximately 750 cubic metres and an underground stormwater detention tank with a capacity of approximately 2,100 cubic metres.

## In Lebanon

UN-Habitat coordinated with several partners to continue its support of Beirut's recovery following the Beirut Port explosion in August, 2020. Over 200,000 people benefitted from the "Rubble to Mountains" initiative that aims to prevent foreseeable environmental hazards caused by dumping rubble into landfills. Through its three-pronged approach, the initiative transforms rubble and glass into a biodegradable material that can be used to fill holes left by mining in Lebanon's mountains; builds furniture for Beirut's public spaces and establish a permanent site for processing waste left by construction and demolition.

To help streamline efforts in urban planning and urban recovery processes, UN-Habitat partnered with academic institutions and the Ministry of Mosul to jointly organize Engineering Week with the theme "Building Back Better." Specialists in environmental sustainability delivered 27 public lectures and 67 students presented their final projects. One

of the major highlights of the event was the organization of an Exhibition Fair where 13 Iraqi companies displayed innovative construction materials and renewable energy solutions, all of which were produced in Iraq. Over 1,000 people attended the fair. Topics covered ranged from water desalination techniques to innovative solid waste treatments and from environmental standards for green buildings to a vision for the development of the Tigris River banks in Mosul.

## In Egypt

a Sustainable Urban Mobility Plan (SUMP) was developed to determine the 6th of October new city potential for a successful SUMP. Considerations included the development process and scope of the plan, analyses of the mobility situation and a common vision for sustainable mobility.



**City Resilience Action Planning Tool (CityRAP)** is a step-by-step participatory resilience planning methodology that includes a set of training exercises and activities targeting municipal authorities, communities and local stakeholders. It starts by introducing key concepts related to urban risk and resilience and training municipal staff on the collection of necessary information on resilience challenges and opportunities for their city through interviews and participatory planning with communities. Data is then analysed through focus group discussions and prioritized according to the five resilience pillars of the CityRAP tool: Urban Governance, Urban Planning and Environment, Urban Disaster Risk Management, Urban Economy and Society and Resilient Infrastructure and Basic Services. Finally, a City Resilience Framework for Action is developed based on a baseline needs assessment of the identified priority issues for building city resilience.



## Knowledge Products



Sustainable Urban Mobility Plan (SUMP) in 6th of October, Egypt

(Diagnostic Report)

In partnership with the New Urban Communities Authority (NUCA), UN Women and the Institute for Transportation and Development Policy (ITDP), UN-Habitat undertook a study on gender equity in Greater Cairo's public transportation system. This included a series of surveys and focus group discussions with commuters to better understand the challenges women face while using the transportation system. These data-driven gender concerns, combined with the results from the SUMP, helped inform the design of the new Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) system in Greater Cairo and Giza Governorates. A tender package was developed that includes the masterplans and designs for the BRT of the Greater Cairo's Western Corridor to become operational by 2024. A bicycle sharing system was also introduced in Cairo to provide a low-cost, environmentally-friendly mobility option to the city's residents. This will be operated by the Danish company, Donkey Republic and its Egyptian consortium, RASCOM.

By encouraging a shift to sustainable modes, the bicycle sharing system will reduce dependency on automobiles, reduce traffic congestion, vehicle emissions and demand for motor vehicle parking. In addition, the system will expand the health and wellness benefits of bicycle transport to new users.

Facilitated by UN-Habitat, the Municipality of Tyre launched two bikeshare stations through a City-to-City Partnership with the City of Zurich. To date, bikes have been rented by approximately 450 people for recreational purposes, including tourism, shopping and sport.

UN-Habitat made remarkable progress in advancing sustainable solid waste management in the Arab region. At the regional level, UN-Habitat established "Plan Zero," a partnership with multiple private sector companies including Nestlé, Diageo, PepsiCo, Development Inc. and IBI Group, to tackle the issue of plastic waste pollution across the region.

This new avenue of collaboration builds on the success of the "Rubble to Mountains Initiative" in Lebanon and puts forward several city-level initiatives that address climate action by promoting sustainable resource use and management and recycling.

Moreover, to support sustainable solid waste management and improve access to data on municipal waste, UN-Habitat's "**Waste Wise Cities Tool (WaCT)**" was introduced and applied in Tunis and Alexandria.



Lack of data creates an obstacle to the development, improvement and maintenance of an integrated solid waste management system. **WaCT** is a seven-step guide to the collection of data on municipal solid waste generated, collected and managed in controlled facilities. Based on the data assessment and in coordination with all relevant stakeholders, key intervention areas are identified and bankable projects are developed, ensuring long-term sustainability. Waste from homes, markets, businesses and institutions is often thrown in drains on the streets, is dumped next to communities, or is openly burned, which leads to flooding, air and water pollution and disease. While waste management operations account for a significant proportion of city budgets, financing for waste management remains inadequate. Cities can however effectively tackle the waste management problem when regarding waste as a resource.



Building resilience to flash floods in Jordan. Photo by UN-Habitat



## Featured Story

# UN-Habitat mitigates the effects of flashfloods in Amman, Jordan

Flash floods have become a serious problem in Jordan and are identified as the second priority-risk in the country. Just thirty minutes of heavy rainfall can cause a severe flash flood leading to loss of life, damaged properties and flooded streets, leaving people trapped in their cars and homes. In 2018, flash floods claimed 35 lives and affected approximately 150,000 citizens.

The capital, Amman, is among the most vulnerable areas. In the last 100 years, it has experienced unprecedented growth from 5,000 inhabitants to the current estimate of over four million. This increase is both the result of natural urban growth and the continuous influx of refugees due to ongoing conflicts and political instability in the region. As a result, social services, infrastructure for water and sanitation, as well as drainage and waste management are under pressure. Additionally, climate change, rapid population and spatial growth, lack of adequate land use planning and a deficient drainage management system have resulted in ever more frequent and intense flash floods, especially in downtown Amman.

UN-Habitat is working to mitigate the effects of flashfloods in downtown Amman through a comprehensive and integrated response, including community consultations and awareness-raising, training and capacity building on resilience to floods, urban planning management and construction standards. Implementation of urgent flood effect mitigation infrastructure, such as building and rehabilitating stormwater drainage facilities using environmentally friendly construction technologies in downtown Amman, proactively reduced the vulnerability of local communities and refugees to flash floods, benefitting nearly 35,000 people.

UN-Habitat is also training municipality officials in conducting assessments, emergency preparedness and planning, design and implementation of flood infrastructure. It is also delivering vocational training and conducting awareness-raising campaigns on appropriate flood resistance construction technologies.

Visualization of Al Zohour  
Green Triangle under the  
Pilot Project in Amman,  
Jordan





## Domain of Change 4 Effective urban crisis prevention and response

UN-Habitat supports the implementation of the New Urban Agenda and the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction in countries affected by conflict and natural and human-caused disasters, ensuring that its work contributes, in a coordinated manner, to sustaining peace and a comprehensive whole-of-system response to complex emergencies.

Considering the increased complexity and urban nature of crises in the region, **the UN-Habitat regional office for Arab states has adopted a focus on resilience, of both systems and people**, as well as a rights-based approach that gives particular attention to women, children, youth, older persons and persons with disabilities in both host and displaced communities.



## Global & Regional Projects

Two countries in the region are part of the **Urban Planning and Infrastructure in Migration Context (UPIMC)** project funded by the Swiss State Secretariat for Economic Affairs to be implemented in three countries. The UPIMC is a three-year programme that aims to improve access to reliable services and socio-economic opportunities for migrants and displaced populations in urban settlements.

### In Jordan

An introductory workshop was conducted to engage different stakeholders in spatial mapping and profiling as well as to identify challenges in Amman and Irbid on the ground. Trainings in Geographic Information System (GIS) and remote sensing in developing urban profiling have been delivered to the Greater Amman Municipality, the Greater Irbid Municipality and the Department of Statistics

to build their capacities on utilizing GIS and spatial mapping. Additionally, spatial profiles for both municipalities were produced and validated.

### In Egypt

The project produced the profile of Damietta at the national and regional levels. The project also conducted a technical kick-off workshop with the governorate technical staff and it was jointly agreed to target New Damietta and its peripheries to implement the UPIMC.

## Country-specific Projects

### In Libya

Under the "Rapid City Profiling and Monitoring System," administered in conjunction with United Nations Population Fund, an urban profile for Derna City was developed to identify neighborhoods in critical need and to determine key action priorities. It built on the six profiles previously developed for other Libyan cities. Contributing to stability and peace building, the profiles are jointly implemented by the Libyan Ministry of Planning, the Bureau of Statistics and Census, the Urban Planning Agency and respective municipalities. All of this is in coordination with United Nations agencies and non-governmental organizations. A Land Assessment Report was also developed to analyze land management and administration by identifying gaps in need of intervention. The final draft of the report is currently going through rounds of feedback with relevant stakeholders. It is expected to be published by the end of 2022.

A round-table on "Addressing Land Administration and Land Rights Challenges to Pave the Ground for Peace and Stability in Libya" was held in Tunisia, bringing together land, housing and property rights experts and practitioners from different institutions and disciplines to exchange experiences and discuss priorities for action in Libya.

### In Lebanon

A project to improve access to basic services

Opening of Al Yarmouk playground in Mosul, Iraq.  
Photo by Dheras Sultan



Vocational training in Sanuni,  
Iraq. Photo by Laila Lahod

for refugee and host populations was implemented in the Sabra neighbourhood in Beirut with support from three shelter partners—Save the Children Fund, Habitat for Humanity and the Norwegian Refugee Council. A harmonized shelter assessment tool was developed—including a technical and vulnerability questionnaire—and 10 surveyors were trained in its use. A maintenance toolkit was developed to inform the project stakeholders on possible preventive measures to minimize the deterioration of completed works.

Through another project, “Improving the well-being of host and refugee populations through enhanced access to social and basic services in Tripoli”, a workshop was offered on how to read the Neighbourhood Profile. It was attended by 39 participants from Tripoli. A mini-profile for the Beddawi area was also developed.

A project funded by the Government of Japan targeted vulnerable areas in Beirut and Bourj Hammoud where nine out of 11 heritage buildings and public facilities were damaged after the explosion. To improve the livelihood of inhabitants in those areas,

interventions include cash-for-work activities, the installation of 15 handwashing stations and COVID-19 awareness-raising activities. The project is expected to be completed in March, 2022. Another project provided critical time-bound emergency shelter repair to support vulnerable families whose homes were damaged. The project directly supported 97 housing units in Nabaa, Bourj Hammoud and Greater Beirut and had a direct positive impact on over 500 residents. The project also created jobs for labourers, cash-for-work opportunities for beneficiaries and local small and medium enterprises, such as construction material businesses. Not only were buildings and homes repaired, dignity was also restored for those impacted by the explosion.

Also in Lebanon, 1,019 residents benefitted from a multisectoral, community-led project to improve the wellbeing of host and refugee populations through enhanced environmental conditions and services in the Maraach neighbourhood of Greater Beirut. The project will be completed in March, 2022. It aims to enhance the environmental conditions of host and refugee populations by improving access to basic services and enhancing social stability. Maraach is one the most vulnerable

Implementing water supply system in IDP site in Al-Tour, Al Hudaydeh, Yemen. Photo by UN-Habitat



neighbourhoods of Bourj Hammoud and in Greater Beirut (earlier profiled by UN-Habitat and UNICEF). The project's three components include: the rehabilitation of the sub-neighbourhood of Maraach which consists of 90 buildings, 300 housing units and five streets; capacity-building and awareness-raising of the community and the municipality and the promotion of renewable energy. A project pamphlet was developed to explain the project to stakeholders and to raise awareness about waste reduction, saving water and COVID-19 precautionary measures.

In-line with UN-Habitat's ongoing efforts to address Housing, Land and Property (HLP) issues, 4,275 property claims have been processed for 2,250 households. These claims also address the needs of Syrian refugees living in Lebanon. This also makes important headway in addressing the possible future return of displaced persons to Syria. The HLP report and policy brief were finalized, the latter in both English and Arabic. The Arabic HLP report is being finalized.

A three-year project funded by United Nations Development Account was established to enhance the capacities of local authorities and communities for the social and economic inclusion of migrants in border cities through safe and accessible public spaces. It was implemented in early 2021 in Lebanon and Brazil. Key achievements in Lebanon centred on preparatory activities, including multiple field visits in the targeted areas in Abdeh in the Akkar Governorate and Bar Elias in the Bekaa Governorate. Preliminary literature reviews and maps were prepared after obtaining official approval from the Municipalities of Bebnine, Mehamarah and Bar Elias.

## In Tunisia

As part of the participatory process of the "Mediterranean City to City Migration" (MC2CM) project, UN-Habitat Tunisia and Terre d'Asile Tunisia embarked on a project to increase the positive contribution of migrants in the local development of La Marsa. The project's aim was to strengthen the social cohesion between the city's host and migrant communities through art. The airing of the show, "Union," took place on September 15 in La

Marsa City Sports Complex. It included dance performances and set elements created by young Tunisian and migrant amateur artists and children from La Marsa city. Sixteen artists between the age of 16-25 were trained in cultural management.

## In Iraq

In Western Ninewah, in support of urban recovery and peacebuilding, 1829 occupancy certificates were delivered to beneficiaries, 138 compensation claims were filed, 1245 beneficiaries received awareness-raising activities on HLP rights and 569 returnees participated in vocational training to facilitate their employment under construction and rehabilitation activities in Sinjar & Baaj.

In Yathrib sub-district, 70 shelter upgrading kits were distributed to 86 very vulnerable households and 16 housing units were directly rehabilitated. At the close of the project, an event was held with beneficiaries to discuss the project impact and remaining needs.

In Mosul, UN-Habitat constructed nine buildings of three and four stories which will accommodate 324 households with 2,300 vulnerable returnees. This project was funded by the Government of Japan. It has been highlighted on multiple occasions as being a durable solution by the Governor of Ninewa, the Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary General, United Nations resident coordinator and the humanitarian coordinator for Iraq.

In the old city of Mosul, a series of Citizen's Consultation Forum meetings were held to discuss thematic needs and aspirations, property ownership and claims along the riverfront. These discussions informed the drafting of a participatory urban recovery plan for this war-ravaged area. In September, a city property mapping task force was launched by the Mosul Municipality and Ninewa's Real Estate office, with the intent of streamlining the upload of property documents.

These will be available through a dynamic database created by United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization which also link to digitized property maps. Under the efforts of normative support for the recovery of the Old City of Mosul, UN-Habitat held a second consultation workshop with the local authorities on developing building guidelines that are fit-for-purpose, as well as the simplification of procedures and reduction of costs that can fast-track building applications, especially for vulnerable returnees.

UN-Habitat produced and disseminated a video on the Headway Programme, funded by the European Union, which demonstrated the impact of the successful rehabilitation of 976 houses that are home to 7,000 host community members, refugees and internally displaced persons in the Governorates of Erbil, Duhok and Ninewa. The video shows how the project has helped vulnerable families to gain access to water, sanitation and hygiene through the rehabilitation of small-scale infrastructure projects, such as the installation of water supply networks and drilling water wells. A water sterilization device to improve water quality was also developed to enhance the operational capacities of the Mosul Water Directorate.

## In Jordan

UN-Habitat embarked on a project to enhance the safety and resilience of Palestinian Refugees through improved access to water and sanitation facilities in public spaces. This included community awareness-raising sessions for children in Al-Shahid (Husn) and Souf Palestinian refugee camps. Sessions included an urban planting activity; a play about the importance of parks and COVID-19 safety measures; and an engaging exercise about appropriate social behaviours in parks. A public space site-specific assessment for two public spaces in the camps was conducted to inform current and potential stakeholders about benefits of the spaces, as well as possible future uses.

The identified priorities were discussed with the Department of Palestinian Affairs and UN-Habitat agreed to rehabilitate the existing sanitation facilities in the two parks, as well as to add facilities for persons with disabilities.

## In Palestine

As part of the project to achieve planning and land Rights in Area C, West Bank, UN-Habitat organized a meeting on HLP rights in Palestine in partnership with the Land Water Settlement Commission. Policy support came from the Palestinian Land Authority and financial support came from the European Union. The event brought together a diverse group of experts from 14 countries covering five continents. The participants offered a wealth of experience from their professional, international, civil academic and government backgrounds.

The newly-rehabilitated Al-Consul Complex, situated in the heart of the Old City of Jerusalem, was inaugurated in November. The complex houses 36 residential units, 5 community courtyards and a ground floor area of more than 1,200 square metres.

With the support of the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) and in response to the impact of COVID-19 on poverty, food insecurity and unemployment, three areas in the Bethlehem Governorate were targeted for an emergency relief project. Through the establishment of small urban agricultural plots, the project not only enhanced the built environment during (and after) the pandemic lockdown but also improved food security for elderly residents, whose home gardens became a source of healthy food production. The intervention used wicking bed technology—self-contained, raised beds with built-in reservoirs, that are both visually attractive and easy to use. The project also provides households with home-based composting technology.



### Knowledge Products



Maintenance Toolkit for enhancing El Jazzar Street project, Lebanon



El Beddawi mini-profile, Lebanon

## In Syria

UN-Habitat focused on crisis prevention and promoting social cohesion through the restoration of basic services and the mainstreaming of area-based planning to enhance synergies and complementarity of interventions. Multiple projects focused on HLP rights and the restoration, sustainability and accessibility of cadastral services, especially in the area of Harasta. All the work took into account context sensitivity, risk management and community planning.

Two projects (phase I and phase II) were designed to backfill pits left by tunnels that were dug under residential buildings, threatening both infrastructure and safe access. One was the Analysis Network Syria (Urban-S) for Improved Humanitarian and Recovery Response and the other, the Joint Programme to support Urban Rural Resilience in Daraa and Deir Ezzor. Both aim to restore services and support crisis prevention.

The Urban Recovery Framework aims to build upon the urban information and analytical expertise developed during the previous phase of this project by creating pathways for institutional actors, such as the United Nations, donors, and the World Bank. It also aims to help local communities to better access and use urban information to design accountable urban recovery. Safer access projects in Aleppo and rural Damascus were implemented to reduce disparities and to enhance social cohesion.

## In Yemen

A project to prevent water borne disease outbreaks by making emergency repairs and upgrades of damaged water and wastewater facilities was implemented in Aden City, Yemen. The project was funded by the Government of Japan and administered by the Building Foundation for Development, following a sub-agreement with the Planning and International Cooperation Office in Aden. It provided vocational training activities for 30 young men and women and undertook Training of Trainers for 30 hygiene promoters who live in the targeted communities and who went on to conduct several training sessions on proper hygiene practices and

disseminate key WASH messages in their own communities. Ultimately, the project will target more than 20,000 beneficiaries through awareness-raising sessions and employment opportunities. An additional awareness-raising campaign was offered on the prevention of Cholera, COVID-19 and other water-borne diseases among communities in five vulnerable neighborhoods.

The rehabilitation of water and sanitation networks occurred in five communities where dysfunctional water and sanitation systems were identified. One local area in particular needed urgent attention to its stormwater system. Drainage issues were also addressed in the Sirah district which was most severely affected by the floods. These interventions benefitted around 16,000 vulnerable people.

UN-Habitat completed the assessment and restoration of 600 damaged housing units in the Al-Moala district. The project was funded by by Alwaleed Philanthropies and the Saudi Programme for Development and Construction in Yemen. Funded by the Yemen Humanitarian Fund, emergency WASH services were provided in hard-to-reach locations and internally displaced persons sites in the Ad Durayhimi District. Fifty community health volunteers were trained in courses promoting hygiene. In consultation with local stakeholders, these courses were then offered to 18,900 individuals based on their needs and vulnerabilities.

## In Sudan

As part of the exit strategy of **The United Nations – African Union Hybrid Operation in Darfur** (UNAMID), UN-Habitat completed the State Liaison Function (SLF) Project in four states in the Darfur region. It focused on two priorities: the rule of law through police, justice and corrections and on the promotion of resilience, livelihood. Land and other natural resources remain at the heart of the inter-communal conflicts in Darfur and hold the key for durable solutions for IDPs and host communities. Considering the impact of climate change and desertification in Darfur, accountable and effective land management is also a key factor for stability in the long run.

Against this backdrop, UN-Habitat developed a conflict management manual, taking into consideration the context and typology of conflicts in Darfur. The manual will help stakeholders and conflict resolution mechanisms in Darfur to peacefully settle conflicts triggered by competition over resources, land, criminality or any other conflict triggers. It is also expected to help maintain a peaceful existence among returnees, herders, IDPs and farmers and to enhance their knowledge of mediation, negotiation and conflict analysis to prevent violent conflict.

UN-Habitat also supported the development of a handbook on land to strengthen the ability of rural courts in dealing with land disputes. Eight dissemination workshops were organized in the four SLF states to raise awareness amongst the IDPs about the handbook and to inform them about procedures for claiming Housing, Land and Property Rights. Six rural court buildings were constructed in three states in Darfur to improve the working environment of rural judges. A series of eight joint dialogues among IDPs, host communities, pastoralist communities and returnees addressed conflict-free land returnees and settlers.

With funding from United Nations Peace Building Fund, UN-Habitat carried out capacity development and backstopping of the five core teams to support the peaceful resolution of the land issues in Darfur, in full partnership with all relevant stakeholders at state and local community levels. This addressed issues such

as land registration, through the utilization of detailed digital village maps. Hands-on training included mapping approaches and exercises; the use of mobile data collection tools and software, such as koBo toolbox; the use of the Social Tenure Domain Model to capture and digitize and capture land plots, demarcate boundaries, land uses and buffer zones, and create databases; and using survey equipment and geographic data collection information systems such as RTK and GPS.

A project in the Eid Elfursan Locality in South Darfur and the Tawila Locality in North Darfur was established with the goal of achieving sustainable peace and stability by supporting the return of Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) affected by deteriorating security conditions in the region. Measures sought to help those who chose to return to their original villages in Darfur. The project also responded to the serious impact of the drawdown of the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID), as well as the consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic and the overall social and political unrest in Sudan. To that end, UN-Habitat completed the provision of minimum basic service infrastructure which included the construction of two water yards and two schools; the building of two new medical wards in the Eid Elfursan locality and a new health unit in Tawila; and the provision of solar systems for five public facilities.



### Knowledge Products



Maraach sub-neighbourhood project pamphlet, Lebanon



HLP Policy Briefs in English and Arabic, Lebanon



Ms. Sarika and Mr. Gabi Twemeh learn home farming under UN-Habitat project to alleviate COVID-19 impacts on vulnerable people. Photo by UN-Habitat



## Featured Story

# UN-Habitat introduces home gardens to mitigate COVID-19 impacts on wellbeing in Palestine

“It felt good to wake up to the green views in my home, and I look forward to this everyday,” sixty-eight-year-old Suzan Nafaa said about the home-farming initiative, introduced by UN-Habitat to help mitigate the impact of COVID-19 on mental health.

At the start of the global COVID-19 pandemic, a four-month lockdown was introduced in Palestine to curb the spread of the virus. COVID-19 has proven to be a real threat to all age groups—the elderly (60 years and above), estimated at five per cent of the population, were hit especially hard, with the coronavirus accounting for about three of every four deaths. Additionally, in 2017, the percentage of elderly living in poverty reached 27 per cent.

To alleviate the effects of lock-down, UN-Habitat Palestine introduced home-farming technologies to help provide healthy and positive mental coping mechanisms to the elderly. A sustainable and organic source of food was introduced through new agro-technologies, utilizing home gardens, backyards and rooftops.

Sixty vulnerable households were identified from three cities in Bethlehem, the first governorate to be affected by the pandemic. Almost all people benefitting from the project demonstrated improvements in food security, as well as improvements related to wellbeing. This included reduced feelings of anxiety and isolation, spending more quality time with household members and feeling physically healthier.

Seventy-year-old Sarika Twemeh expressed how much this activity helped her cope with the isolation brought about by the pandemic, bringing her closer with her grandchildren as they shared the at-home activity.

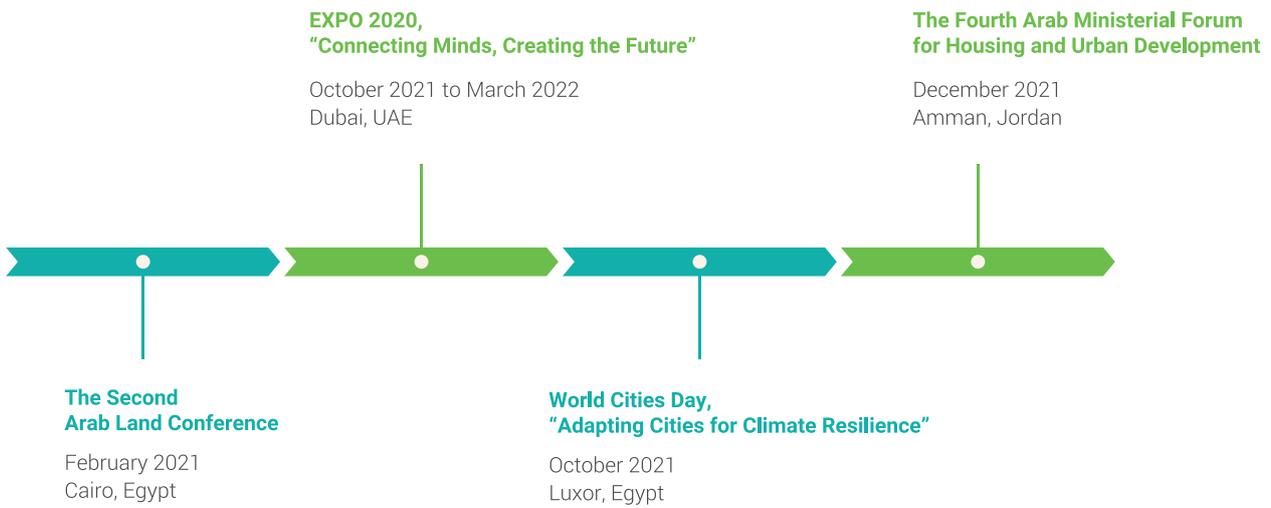
At the community level, the value and benefits of urban farming were promoted through the distribution of simple guidelines. As well as the individual benefits, households will be able to contribute towards a broader, sustainable circular economy.

Adam Abou receives shelter unit from UN-Habitat and AlWaleed Philanthropies after floods destroyed his house. Photo by UN-Habitat



# 6. Networking and Advocacy

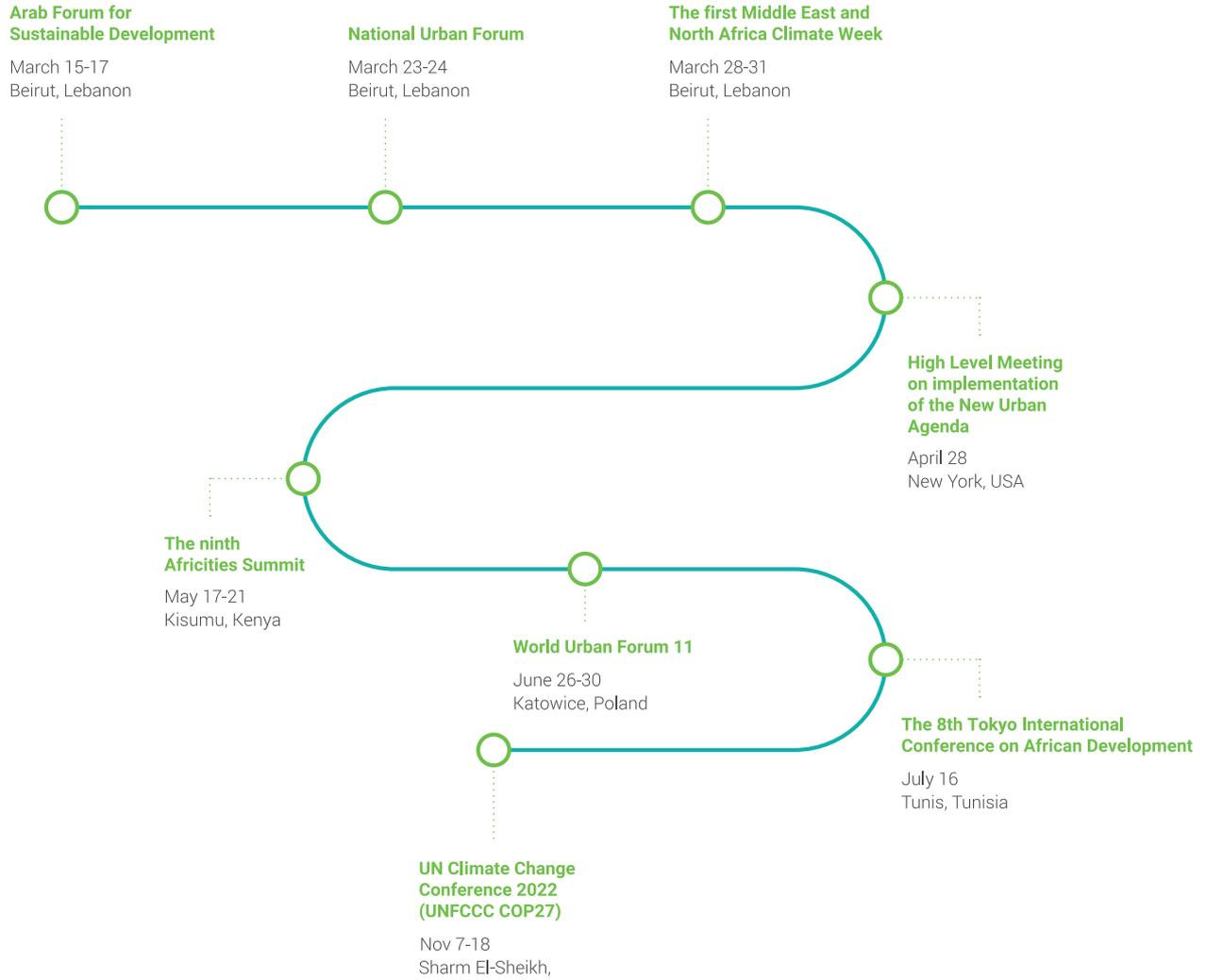
## 2021 Events



Maimunah Mohd Sharif, UN-Habitat Executive Director, at World Cities Day. Photo by UN-Habitat



## 2022 Events Highlights



## 7. Partnerships and Alliances

In line with Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) number 17, to “strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development,” the Regional Office for Arab States continues to build on its network of strategic partners in order to maximize the reach and impact of SDG number 11 through regional and country-specific programmes.

The ongoing successful partnerships with central and local governments in Arab countries are essential to advancing our work towards the New Urban Agenda. Moreover, our programmes are fully aligned with the Arab Strategy for Housing and Sustainable Urban Development 2030, developed by the League of Arab States, a long-standing partner of the UN-Habitat Regional Office.

The joint programmes between UN-Habitat and other United Nations entities remain of considerable importance. Besides ongoing cooperation with ESCWA and United Nations Development Programme, a new cooperation was established in 2021 with the United

Nations Environment Programme Regional Office for West Asia (UNEP ROWA) to further promote climate adaptation, green recovery and reconstruction.

Cooperation with international and local civil society organizations was behind most of the country programme activities in 2021, enabling a wide range of services such as the reception and accompaniment of migrants in Tunisia with the Terre d’Asile International NGO, the development of city and neighborhood profiles through the Welthungerhilfe Foundation, the rehabilitation and reconstruction activities with Caritas Czeck Republic and COVID-19 response interventions with Peace Winds Japan, the largest NGO in Japan.

Rehabilitation of centre for the homeless in Tunisia.  
Photo by UN-Habitat



The Mohammed bin Rashid Initiative of Global Prosperity and UN-Habitat launched the “Decade of Action Challenge,” a ten-year partnership to deliver innovative solutions and partnerships which contribute to sustainable urbanization and harness the power of entrepreneurship, technology and collaboration to make cities across the world more sustainable and inclusive.

Alliances with academic institutions and research centers were fruitful in 2021. We worked closely with Université Gustave Eiffel in France, the American University of Beirut in Lebanon, Mosul University, the Faculty of Engineering in Iraq, Notre Dame University in Lebanon and Université de la Manouba in Tunisia, to name a few.

In alignment with the ROAS strategic plan 2020-2025, stronger partnerships with the private sector have been forged, including the Memorandum of Understanding with the private sector alliance, Development Inc., Diageo, IBI Group, Nestlé Waters and PepsiCo, to promote a circular economy mindset in the Middle East and North Africa region. Glass and plastic are recycled and reused to reduce the carbon footprint by diverting the packaging waste from the landfills, rivers and oceans and by retrieving most of the producers’ recyclable and non-recyclable plastic, fiber, glass and metal packaging materials. The regional office for Arab states also worked on engaging the private sector in following sustainable environmental approaches in different sectors, including the oil and gas industries. It signed an agreement with the Kuwait Petroleum Corporation to help improve the environmental performance of the company and its subsidiaries and to model sustainable urban development goals.

**More international and local civil society partners**

- Drosos Foundation
- Norwegian Refugee Council
- Save the Children Fund
- Habitat for Humanity
- Polish Center for International Aid, Lebanon
- Cités Unies Liban
- The Lebanese Women Democratic Gathering
- Lebanon Reforestation Initiative
- Catalytic Action Lebanon
- Live Love Lebanon
- The Campaign for the Children of Palestine, Lebanon
- PARC Interpeople’s Cooperation, Lebanon
- Taybah Foundation for Development, Yemen
- Building Foundation for Development, Yemen
- Volunteer With Us, Iraq
- Engineering Association for Development and Environment, Iraq
- Order of Engineers and Architects, Lebanon
- The Popular Aid for Relief and Development, Lebanon

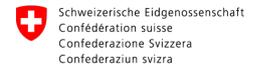
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Iraq UNDAF Trust Fund

Sorting of materials at Laziza Park for reuse in the UN-Habitat-led area rehabilitation. Photo by UN-Habitat





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