

PALESTINE

Habitat Country Programme Document

2023 - 2026

UN HABITAT
FOR A BETTER URBAN FUTURE

United Nations Human Settlements Programme
Regional Office for Arab States



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Cover: ©UN-Habitat (2021). Birds-eye view of HAYA promenade rehabilitated as a safe and inclusive public space in Khan Younis, Gaza Strip

Foreword

The Habitat Country Programme Document (2023 - 2026) for the Special Human Settlements Programme for the Palestinian People is launched at a critical time for the Government of Palestine and its people across Palestine¹. Palestine is one of the most complex and challenging environments in which the United Nations operates in realizing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), meeting the humanitarian needs, and supporting peace building. The principal barriers include the protracted Israeli occupation, the internal Palestinian political divide, and ongoing conflict. These barriers result in significant urban challenges especially for vulnerable groups that continue to experience multidimensional vulnerabilities, among them women and girls, children and youth, the elderly, people with disabilities, refugees, Bedouins, and residents of Area C, H2, the Seam Zone, East Jerusalem, and the Gaza Strip.

The adoption of the New Urban Agenda in 2016 has seen national and local governments around the world embark on a transformative path towards making SDG 11 a reality. The State of Palestine has not been an exception. In this spirit, we recognize the importance of working together in achieving the commitments prioritized under the Habitat Country Programme Document (2023 - 2026) that aligns with the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (2023 - 2025) and the National Development Plan for the State of Palestine (2021 - 2023).

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¹ The terminology employed in this document, including but not limited to the terms "State of Palestine", "Palestine", "Government", "country" and "national", is without prejudice to the status of Palestine and the Occupied Palestinian Territory (OPT): the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, and the Gaza Strip as recognized by the United Nations.

Acronyms

BBB	Building Back Better
DRR	Disaster Risk Reduction
EU	European Union
GLTN	Global Land Tool Network
GoP	Government of Palestine
HCPD	Habitat Country Programme Document
HRBA	Human Rights Based Approach
HRIAM	Human Rights Impact Assessment Mechanism
ICA	Israeli Civil Administration
LGU	Local Government Unit (village council or municipality)
LNOB	Leave No One Behind
LWSC	Land and Water Settlement Commission
MoLG	Ministry of Local Government
MoPWH	Ministry of Public Works and Housing
NUA	New Urban Agenda
NDP	National Development Plan
NSP	National Spatial Plan
OPT	Occupied Palestinian Territory
PLA	Palestinian Land Authority
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SWM	Solid Waste Management
SHSPPP	Special Human Settlements Programme for the Palestinian People
UNCCA	United Nations Common Country Analysis
UNCT	United Nations Country Team
UNDIS	United Nations Disability Inclusion Strategy
UNSDCF	United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework

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Introduction

This Habitat Country Programme Document (HCPD) marks two decades since the establishment of the Special Human Settlements Programme for the Palestinian People (SHSPPP). The SHSPPP and the Technical Cooperation Trust Fund were established through Governing Council Resolution 19/18 in 2003 and re-confirmed by Governing Council Resolution 20/14 in 2005 and Governing Council Resolution 22/11 in 2009. UN-Habitat's Governing Council, during its twenty-third session in 2011, adopted by consensus another resolution on the Occupied Palestinian Territory (OPT) (GC23/2), calling upon UN-Habitat "to further focus its operations on planning, land and housing issues in view of improving the housing and human settlement conditions of Palestinians, addressing the urbanisation challenges, supporting the building of a Palestinian State." Finally, during the twenty-sixth Governing Council of UN-Habitat (now Assembly) in 2017, a resolution was adopted by consensus calling UN-Habitat "to continue to focus its work where there are acute humanitarian and development needs as identified through technical assessments by UN-Habitat".

The HCPD at hand covers the period between 2023 and 2026 and is a continuation of the previous HCPD that covered the period between 2018 and 2022 signed off with the Government of Palestine (GoP) represented by the Ministry of Local Government (MoLG). The first HCPD was signed off with the GoP represented by the Ministry of Public Works and Housing (MoPWH) covering the period between 2010 and 2011 (Figure 1).



©AlQuds University (2022). The Third Palestinian Urban Forum, Jerusalem, 10 - 11 May 2022

HCPDs and MoUs

MoUs Memorandums of Understanding



HCPDs Habitat Country Programme Documents



Figure 1 Memorandums of Understanding and Habitat Country Programme Documents

The HCPD is the strategic framework document through which the work with the GoP, represented by MoLG, and other UN-Habitat partners is implemented as elaborated in the Memorandum of Understanding between GoP/MoLG and UN-Habitat (2020 - 2023) with focus on understanding, analysing, designing, and implementing fit-for-purpose interventions in the fields of sustainable urbanization, spatial planning, local governance, and urban management. As such, the HCPD identifies the main challenges facing the sustainability of Palestinian cities and communities, as well as strategies and policies designed to respond more nimbly to the immediate humanitarian, and medium-to-long term development interventions within the complex geopolitical context that is fraught with many uncertainties, including dwindling funds and shifts in focus to other regional and global issues.

The HCPD (2023 - 2026) builds on the newly developed United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF) (2023 - 2025), which is based on the United Nations Common Country Analysis (UNCCA) (2022). In turn, the UNSDCF (2023 - 2025) is in harmony with the Palestinian National Development Plan (NDP) (2021 - 2023) and the relevant sector strategies. The main focus for UN-Habitat is on the Local Government Sector Strategy (2021 - 2023), the Public Works and Housing Strategy (2021 - 2023), and the Land Sector Strategy (2021 - 2023). In parallel, the HCPD delivers on the commitments of UN-Habitat's Strategic Plan for the period 2020 - 2023, with a focus on the priorities identified in the Regional Office for Arab States, with a vision of "a better

quality of life for all in an urbanizing world". This vision is encapsulated in UN-Habitat's Strategic Plan's four domains of change namely – all across 12 outcomes: (1) Reduced spatial inequality and poverty in communities across the urban - rural continuum; (2) Enhanced shared prosperity of cities and regions; (3) Strengthened climate action and improved urban environment; and (4) Effective urban crisis prevention and response. In Palestine, it is translated into the following vision: *"Towards harmonious urbanization, rural revitalization, spatial equity, inclusive development, and improved living conditions for all"*. This comes in line with the UN's vision adopted under the UNSDCF (2023 – 2025): *"Palestinians have access to opportunities to prosper and realise their full potential and human rights in a cohesive, democratic and inclusive society through progressive achievement of the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals"*.

Through its partnership with the Office of the Prime Minister and the agencies of the government, primarily MoLG and MoPWH, UN-Habitat continues its policy support towards the **achievement of Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 11 on sustainable cities and communities**, and the **implementation of the New Urban Agenda (NUA)** in Palestine. The work of UN-Habitat is also bounded by the normative commitments of the State of Palestine to the Paris Agreement under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, and Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, amongst others.

UN-Habitat will continue to support the efforts of the GoP and the people of Palestine in the fields of spatial planning, land management, and housing across Palestine with focus on leaving no one and no place behind. More specifically, UN-Habitat will continue to provide technical support to partners in Palestine, mainly to support the resilience of the Palestinian people through fit-for-purpose interventions that respond to the needs and aspirations of the Palestinian communities. UN-Habitat is committed to contributing to harmonious urbanization and to support in the implementation of the New Urban Agenda and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, especially Goal 11, *for a better urban future for all*, where urbanization is considered as a positive transformative force for people and communities, reducing inequalities, discrimination, and poverty. UN-Habitat supports participatory spatial planning and land registration processes, with focus on Area C and East Jerusalem, in order to promote effective planning that can yield positive social and economic outcomes, and the attainment of collective and individual tenure rights. As per the Secretary-General's note on land and conflict, UN-Habitat prioritizes these sectors, acknowledging the competition and conflict over land is likely to intensify with the growing pressures of climate change, population growth, increased food insecurity, migration and urbanization. Additionally, and by building-back-better (BBB) in the Gaza Strip, UN-Habitat aims at fostering resilience into communities that have been torn by war and conflict. UN-Habitat's housing programme has contributed to poverty reduction of marginalized residents across Palestine, including the Gaza Strip and West Bank, with focus on the Old City of Jerusalem. UN-Habitat also aims at promoting safer and more inclusive cities through interventions on enhancing the safety of Palestinian public spaces and through the promotion of urban farming initiatives as a COVID-19 response strategy.

Milestones 2018 - 2022

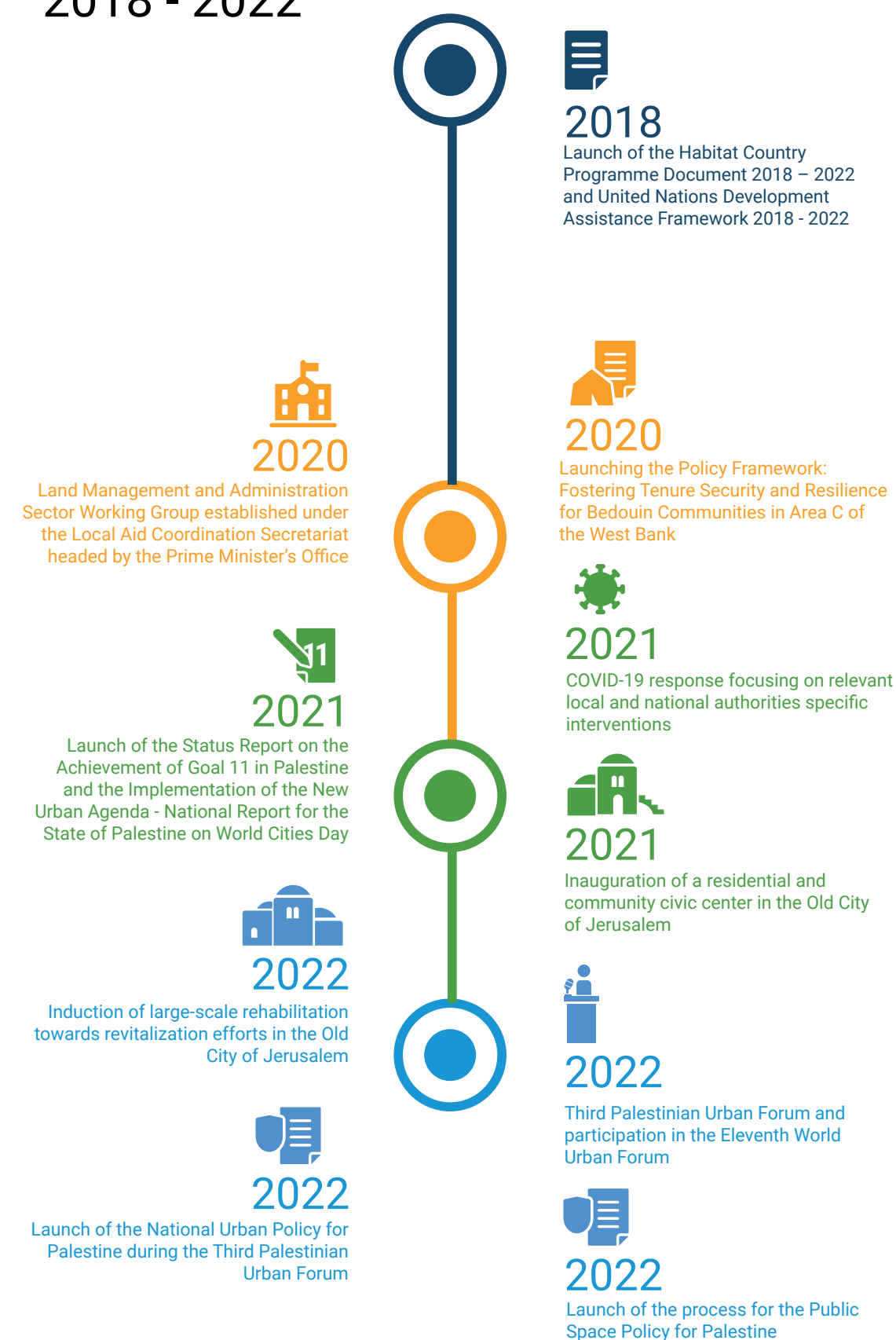


Figure 2 Milestones

General trends

Urban opportunities and challenges

More than half of the world today live in urban areas, and by 2050, it is expected that it will reach over two-thirds². In Palestine, urbanization exceeds the global average given the particularity of its complex geopolitical situation, standing at 77 per cent (71 per cent in the West Bank and 87 per cent in Gaza Strip) mainly in Area A and Area B with an additional 8 per cent of the population living in refugee camps, which are characterized by high levels of informality and considered of urban nature, thus making the *de facto* urban population in Palestine about 85 per cent, with the remaining 15 per cent living in rural settings, designated as Area C³. With a 2.8 per cent urban population growth rate in 2021, Palestine is classified among the top 25 per cent of urbanizing countries. The reality of Palestine is one of territorial fragmentation due to the geo-political conditions on the ground, including Israeli settlements, by-pass roads, checkpoints, Separation Barrier/Wall, etc (Figure 2). The global COVID-19 pandemic added to the governance challenges facing urban areas, along with global finance, climate change, and peace and security issues. The United Nations Secretary-General's landmark report, *Our Common Agenda*, provided countries with a road map to reinvigorate multilateralism for the 21st century, emphasising that sustainable urbanization is a critical element to ensure a more sustainable and peaceful future for our people and planet.

The UNCCA for the OPT (2022)⁴ reported on various strategies, plans, and programmes put in place in response to pressures from rapid population growth and urbanization on public services, infrastructure, and the environment. Key challenges include housing shortages, shrinking public spaces, rising property prices, proliferation of informal human settlements, demolitions and evictions by Israeli authorities – citing lack of Israeli-issued building permits, that are controlled by Israel and almost impossible for Palestinians to obtain, increased vulnerability to disasters, waste management, water loss, traffic congestion, and air pollution. Many of these issues are threats to public health, especially in condensed and overcrowded urban areas such as refugee camps, impacting progress towards attaining both SDG 3 and SDG 11. Broadly speaking, these challenges are steeper in East Jerusalem, Area C, and the Gaza Strip.

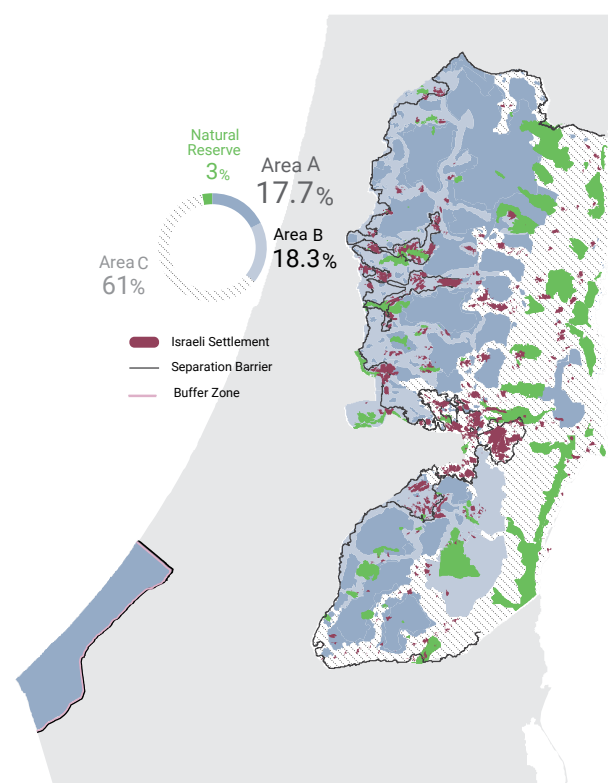


Figure 3 Geo-political map of the OPT

Alignment and attainment of SDG 11 targets with national priorities and interventions varies considerably⁵. The GoP has highlighted the need to strengthen data and monitoring and referred to their lack of capacity in integrated urban planning mainly due to the geo-political situation on the ground⁶.

A National Spatial Plan is being developed, and spatial plans have been developed for all governorates in the West Bank. Furthermore, the National Urban Policy (NUP) is launched, adopting a vision, objectives, and principles for urban development, as well as the commitment of the government to implement the NUP in Palestine over the coming decade.

Key national urban policies

Despite the challenges that face Palestinians, the GoP has made notable strides with regards to fostering people-centred planning and integrated national and sub-national spatial policies, in addition to supporting the local government sector to improve citizens' engagement and representation. The NDP (2021 - 2023) and sector strategies' priorities are directly aligned with the NUP and the attainment of SDG 11 - Sustainable Cities and Communities in Palestine. This policy coherence approach is a steppingstone in transiting from the humanitarian trap towards sustainable development while making sure to leave no one and no place behind, which is indeed a political commitment that deepens focus on the inequalities, including multiple forms of deprivation, disadvantage, and discrimination, and why they are left behind, looking at root causes. This comes in conformity with the Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus approach in the OPT that the UN family, including UN-Habitat, put forward since 2020.

Between 2021-2022, with support from UN-Habitat to the GoP, the NUP has been developed and aims to adopt the vision, objectives, and principles for urban development, as well as the commitment of the government to implement the NUP in Palestine over the coming decade, recalling that the future of Palestine is undeniably urban. MoLG led a consultative process⁷ to develop the NUP identifying the main priorities and pillars, given that more than 77 per cent of the population are living in urban areas. The main pillars identified are housing, transportation, natural and cultural heritage, sustainable urban-rural development, disaster risk management, urban governance, and urban economy.

² UN-Habitat 2022, World Cities Report: <https://unhabitat.org/wcr/>

³ The Oslo designations (1995). Area A and B falls under the Palestinian Authority administrative and planning jurisdiction, where Area C falls under full Israeli control.

⁴ UNCT in the Occupied Palestinian Territory (2022). Common Country Analysis. Jerusalem. Retrieved on 2 October 2022: <https://palestine.un.org/en/200011-united-nations-common-country-analysis-occupied-palestinian-territory>

⁵ Ministry of Local Government and UN-Habitat (2021). Status Report on the Achievement of Goal 11 in Palestine" Sustainable Cities and Communities"

⁶ State of Palestine (2020). Palestinian National Voluntary Review on the Implementation of the 2030 Agenda in 2020: Summary Report

⁷ The consultation process was administered by a task team including the Association of Palestinian Local Authorities, the consultant team from An-Najah National University, and UN-Habitat. The NUP process was financially supported by the European Union.

Main Pillars of the National Urban Policy



Pillar 1: Housing Sector

1. Inclusive safe, affordable, and adequate housing
2. Housing is a national development priority in Palestine
3. Responsive regulatory and legislative frameworks

Pillar 2: Transportation Sector

1. Coordination between urban planning and transportation planning
2. High efficiency of the road network and transportation services
3. Environmentally, socially, and economically sustainable multimodal transport

Pillar 3: Natural and Cultural Heritage Sector

1. Protection and effective preservation of natural and cultural heritage
2. Supporting and protecting land and property tenure security
3. Investing in natural and cultural heritage

Pillar 4: Sustainable Urban-Rural Development

1. Integration and interconnection of urban and rural areas
2. Promotion of technology and the provision of spatial information
3. Sustainable urban planning interventions
4. Introduction of new tools and methodologies to the urban planning craft in Palestine

Pillar 5: Disaster Risk Management

1. Reducing greenhouse gas emissions
2. Supporting renewable and low-carbon energy
3. Climate Change Data Management
4. Restoring and protecting biodiversity
5. Capacity building and preparedness for climate change and natural disasters at the local level
6. Strengthening the capacity of local authorities in risk assessment and mitigation

Pillar 6: Urban Governance Sector

1. Activating and enforcing the legal system in the field of spatial planning
2. Supporting local authorities in efforts to decentralize and diversify their revenue sources

Pillar 7: Urban Economy

1. Building the foundations of the Palestinian economy and incorporating the informal sector
2. Providing a suitable investment environment
3. Promoting Palestinian industries
4. Activating national government roles in bilateral and multilateral agreements
5. Providing job opportunities for all
6. Efficient public financial management

Urban Statistics

GDP Growth
7.1
(2021)^a

Inequality-adjusted Human Development Index
0.584
(2021)^b

Gender inequality index
0.465
(2020)^c

Population
5,354,656
(2022)^d

Urban Population
5.35 million 77.2%
(2022)^e

Population Growth Rate
2.5%
(2021)^f

Urbanization Growth Rate
2.8%
(2021)^g

Youth Population (15-32)
1.17 million
(2022)^h

IDPs Population
12,000 243,000
(2019)ⁱ (2021)^j

Refugee population
2,400,208 44.8%
(2021)^k 96% of refugees are urban^l

Poverty
27.3%
(2021)^m

Land Urban Density
1,333 per sq. kmⁿ

Percentage of households experiencing shelter vulnerability
35%
(58% in the GS)

Percentage of households reported at least one household member with a physical and/or cognitive difficulty
14%^o

Average Household share of food expenditure
49%^p

Households report living in critical shelters
7%^q

Households report damage to their shelter
38%^r

Percentage of households in the West Bank where Israeli Authorities requested household to leave
29%^s

Households report that at least one member shows signs of psychosocial distress
27%^t

Urban population living in slums, informal settlements, or inadequate housing
42.3%^u

Demolished structures by Israeli Authorities since 2009
8,812
(1,562 of which are donor funded)^w

^a World Bank Open Data, retrieved 12 September 2022: <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GDP.MKTP.KD.ZG?view=chart>
^{b/c} UNDP (2022) Human Development Report, retrieved 12 September 2022: <https://hdr.undp.org/data-center/specific-country-data#/countries/PSE>
^d Palestinian Bureau of Statistics (2022), retrieved 12 September 2022: https://www.pcbs.gov.ps/statisticsIndicatorsTables.aspx?lang=en&table_id=676
^e Palestinian Bureau of Statistics (2022), retrieved 17 November 2022: <https://www.pcbs.gov.ps/post.aspx?lang=en&ItemID=4333>
^f World Bank Open Data, retrieved 12 September 2022: <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.POP.GROW>
^g World Bank Open Data, retrieved 12 September 2022: <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.URB.GROW?locations=PS>
^h Palestinian Bureau of Statistics (2022), retrieved 12 September 2022: [https://www.pcbs.gov.ps/site/512/default.aspx?lang=en&ItemID=4296#:~:text=The%20percentage%20of%20the%20youth%20\(18%2D29%20years\)%20in,105%20males%20per%20100%20females](https://www.pcbs.gov.ps/site/512/default.aspx?lang=en&ItemID=4296#:~:text=The%20percentage%20of%20the%20youth%20(18%2D29%20years)%20in,105%20males%20per%20100%20females)
^{i/j} World Bank Open Data, retrieved 12 September 2022: <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/VC.IDP.TOCV?locations=PS>
^k World Bank Open Data, retrieved 12 September 2022: <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SM.POP.REFG?locations=PS>
^m World Bank (2022) Palestinian Territories' Economic Update
ⁿ MoLG and UN-Habitat (2021). Status Report on the Achievement of Goal 11 in Palestine
^{o/p} OCHA (2021) Vulnerability Assessment Framework in OPT
^{q/r/s/t/u/w} OCHA (2021) Multisectoral Needs Assessment
^{q/r/s/t/u/w} OCHA Data, retrieved on 2 October 2022: <https://data.ochaopt.org/dbs/demolition/Index.aspx>

Key Achievements

Key achievements under HCPD (2018-2022)

Throughout 2018 - 2022, UN-Habitat's active portfolio has been USD 25 million focusing on delivering technical support in the fields of housing; spatial planning, including public spaces and basic services; and land management. About 50 per cent of the portfolio has been allocated to rehabilitation of housing and historic places, mainly in the Old City of Jerusalem, with catalytic interventions launched recently in the Gaza Strip to rehabilitate damaged houses for non-refugees. One-third of the portfolio was allocated to spatial planning interventions, with a focus on Area C, to promote effective planning that yields positive social and economic outcomes, and 48 per cent of which were dedicated to public spaces interventions across Palestine. Land management interventions, mainly in the West Bank, formed almost 15 per cent of the portfolio in support of the attainment of collective and individual tenure rights, with the remaining two per cent allocated to COVID-19 response in the fields of basic services and urban farming (Figure 3). Throughout UN-Habitat's interventions, about 3.3 million Palestinians have benefited (about 67 per cent of the population of Palestine). The European Union (EU) is the largest contributor to the work of UN-Habitat, with more than 71 per cent of the portfolio. Team Europe and Switzerland's contribution to the portfolio of UN-Habitat exceeds 84 per cent.

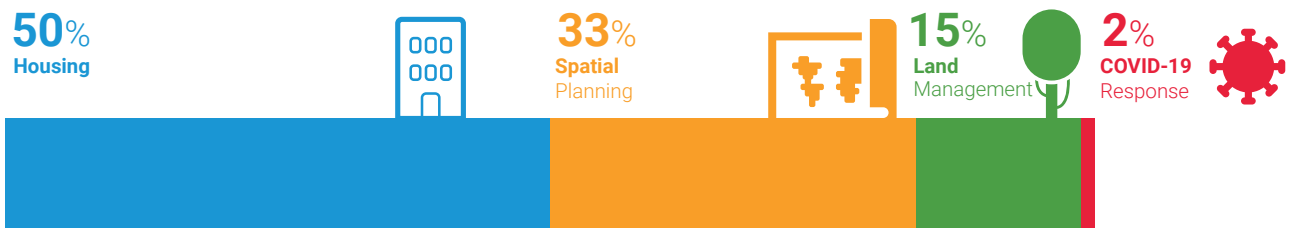


Figure 5 Division of UN-Habitat portfolio funds of a total USD 25 million

The bulk of UN-Habitat's interventions are framed under *Outcome 1* of UN-Habitat's Strategic Plan: *Reduced spatial inequality and poverty in communities across the urban–rural continuum*. Other interventions are framed under *Outcome 2 – Enhanced shared prosperity of cities and regions*, and *Outcome 4 - Effective urban crisis prevention and response*.

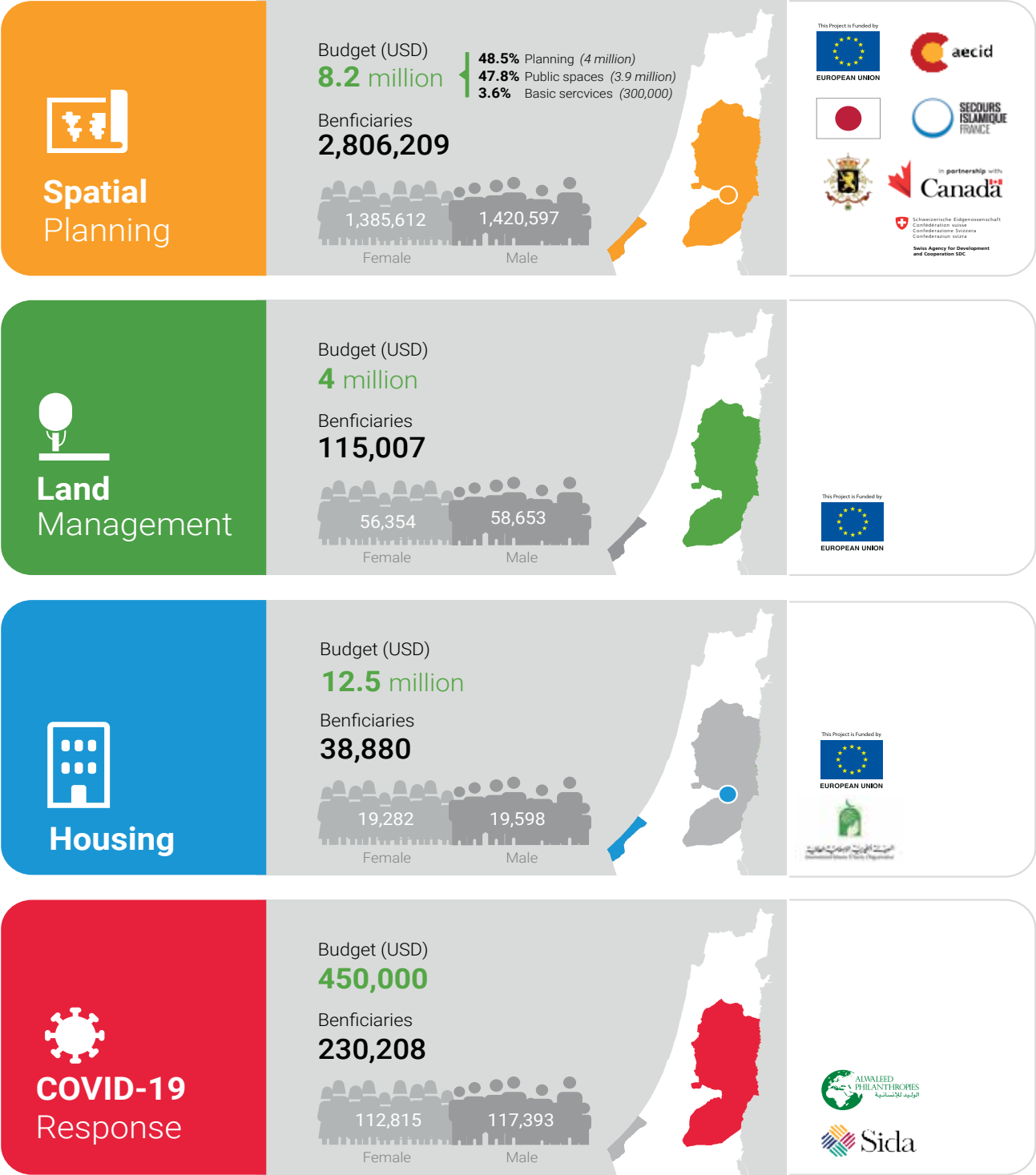


Figure 4 Key achievements towards HCPD 2018 - 2022

Achievements Towards Strategic Framework

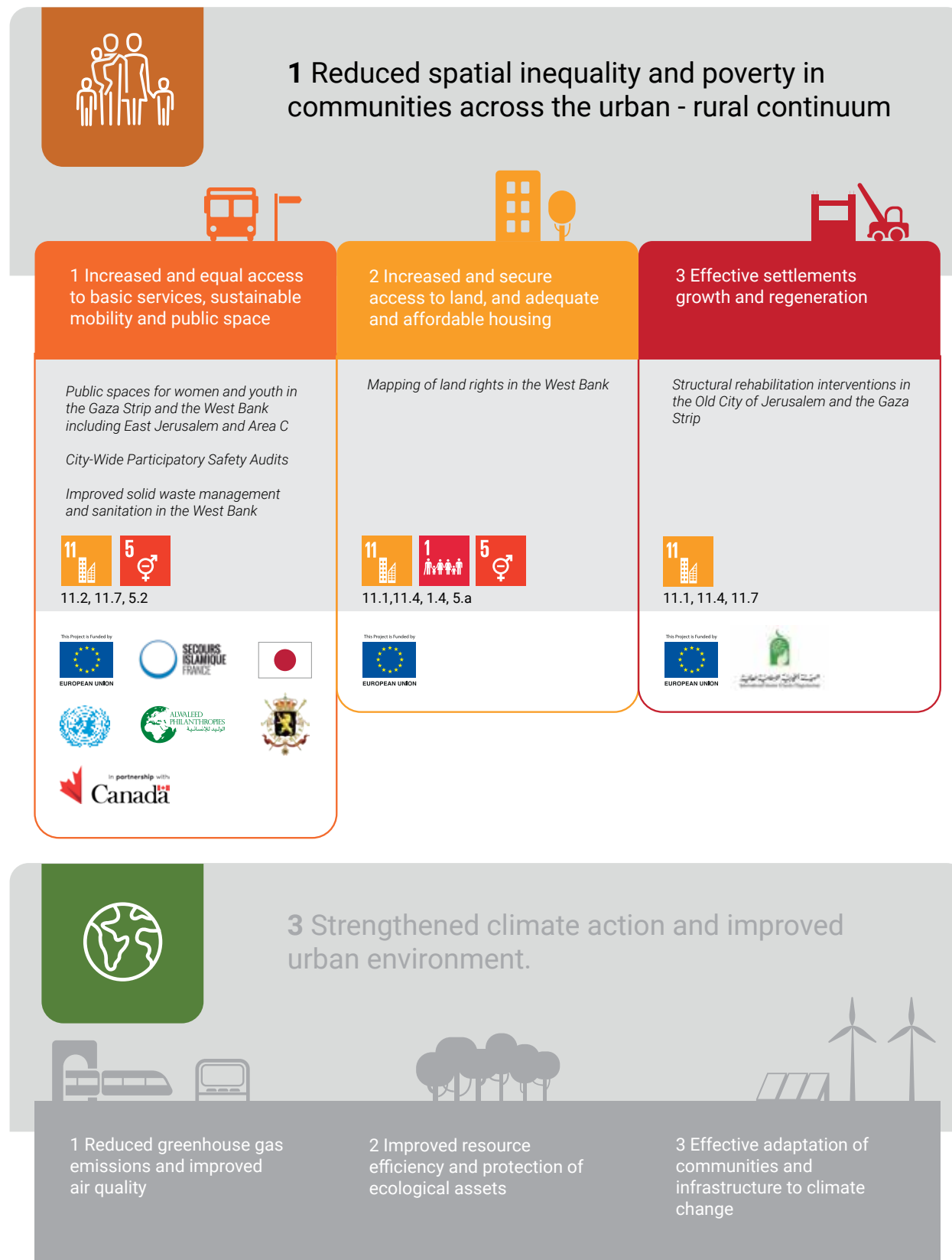
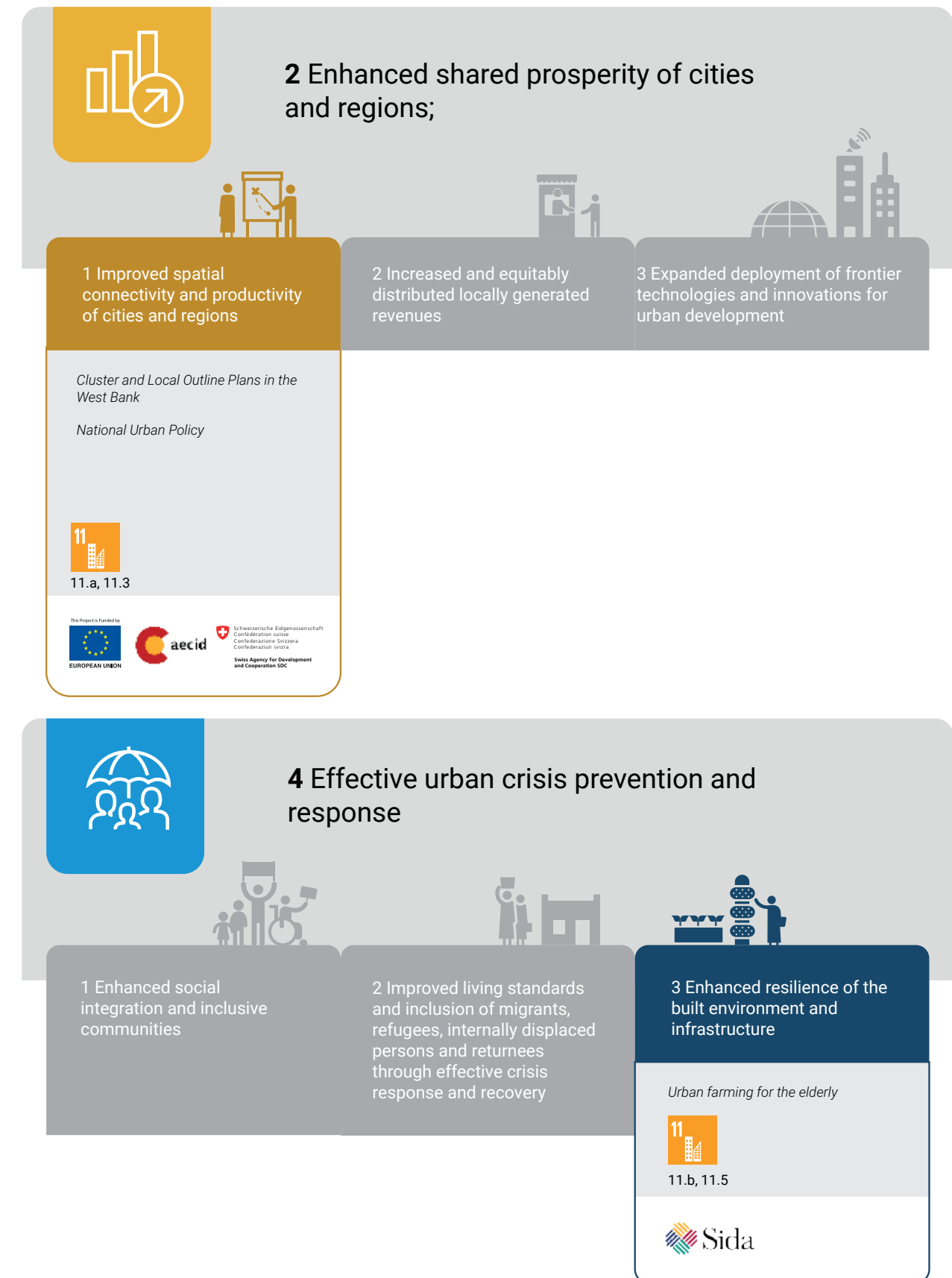


Figure 6 Achievements towards the Strategic Framework



Alignment with the UNSDCF (2023-2025)

The HCPD (2023 - 2026) is aligned with the UNSDCF (2023 - 2025), specifically *Outcome 4 – Palestinians have better access to and management of natural and cultural resources, higher resilience and adaptation to climate change and more sustainable food systems*. The HCPD also contributes to *Outcome 3 - Palestinian governance institutions, processes, and mechanisms at all levels are more democratic, rights-based, inclusive, and accountable*.

Under Outcome 4, the United Nations will promote **resilient and environmentally sustainable land tenure, spatial planning and management** and advance a rights-based approach to **culture and environmental protection**. It will also work on strengthening the capacity of communities, and local and national authorities, to rehabilitate natural habitats, and the preservation and management of cultural heritage and landscape.

The UN will support strengthening of **inclusive green and climate-smart agri-food systems** to enhance food security and nutrition and promote **sustainable and resilient livelihoods**. This will be done through initiatives aimed at strengthening the **climate change resilience** of vulnerable groups and communities, mainly women, men, girls, and boys in underserved and vulnerable communities leading to higher food and nutrition security and livelihoods. It will at the same time support climate smart food system and green agri-business development while enhancing participation of women and men, especially youth population participation in climate change actions.

The UN will also promote sustainable and resilient livelihoods and reinforce systems, policies, and plans for a more sustainable management of **conventional and non-conventional water resources**. Gender-sensitive policy and institutional support towards **clean energy**, greener food systems and sustainable production and consumption will be promoted focusing on reducing consumption and waste and by adopting upcycling and recycling approaches and promoting sustainable solid waste and wastewater management systems.

Measures will be introduced to promote **greening of public and private investment** in natural resource-intensive sectors, including capacitating relevant actors to promote sustainable practices and policies. The UN will also support efforts in advancing **sustainable urban management and development** approaches to attain inclusive, safe, affordable, and adequate housing, public transportation, and green urban spaces and urban farming, that are responsive to environmental conditions and climate change. Integrated natural resource management, participatory and **climate-sensitive spatial planning** interventions to safeguard housing, land, and property rights and unlock economic potentials will be supported.

UN agencies will also seek to enhance capacities in communities and local authorities, as well as the national government, for gender-responsive and disability inclusive disaster preparedness, **early warning and risk reductions and management** measures, emphasizing the creation of disaster resilient communities.

The UN will adopt a collaborative approach, with focus on **strengthening the capacity of national and local authorities**, facilitating **private and public partnerships** with clear area-based social and environmental safeguards, along with supporting community-led initiatives inclusive of the most vulnerable groups. It will support the continuation of existing coordination structures and mechanisms through technical and policy support, including joint bilateral technical committees between the Palestinian Authority and the Government of Israel on transboundary environmental issues and shared natural resources.

The UN aims to scale-up and capacitate green innovation, strategically incorporate the informal sector, and promote public and private-partnerships with a focus on **land-based financing tools** that consider environmental and social safeguards. This will include enhancing good traditional practices to **conserve biodiversity and protect cultural assets** making available financial instruments

and incentives to local communities, with a focus on marginalized groups and communities. In addition, the UN will promote the digitization of services, establishment of urban observatories and the leadership and participation of women and young men in clean energy solutions and practices.

Finally, under this Outcome, the United Nations will **support sustainable tourism** through the safeguarding, rehabilitation and promotion of ecological and cultural landscapes and heritage sites, as well as through museums reaffirming the Palestinian identity and narrative.



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Specifically, **Outcome 4** focuses on the following areas of interventions:

- Climate resilience and environmental sustainability are integrated in gender-inclusive land tenure, spatial planning and management, including for cultural heritage, landscape and natural habitat.
- Strengthened systems, policies and plans for a more sustainable management of conventional and non-conventional water resources
- Inclusive green and climate-smart agri-food systems are strengthened to enhance food security and nutrition and promote sustainable and resilient livelihoods
- Gender sensitive approaches and capacities of communities, local authorities and national government institutions in disaster preparedness and disaster risk reduction and management are strengthened

- Measures and procedures introduced to promote greening of public and private investment in natural resource-intensive sectors, including capacitating relevant private and public actors to promote sustainable practices

These are translated into the following programmatic priority interventions:

- Supporting integrated natural resource management, participatory and climate-sensitive spatial planning interventions to safeguard housing, land, and property rights and unlock economic potentials
- Advancing sustainable urban management approaches to attain inclusive, safe, affordable, and adequate housing, public transportation, and green urban spaces, and encourage urban farming that are responsive to environmental conditions and climate change
- Supporting climate smart food system and green agri-business development, while enhancing women and men participation in climate change actions
- Strengthening the climate change resilience of the most vulnerable groups and communities towards higher food and nutrition security and livelihoods
- Gender-sensitive policy and institutional support towards clean energy, greener food systems and sustainable production and consumption focusing on reducing consumption and waste of materials, and by reusing and recycling by products and promoting sustainable solid waste and wastewater
- Building capacities on compliance to multilateral agreements and normative frameworks (Sendai, Paris agreement, New Urban Agenda, etc.)
- Safeguarding cultural and agro-ecological landscapes and heritage sites to enhance cultural and eco-tourism
- Supporting youth and gender transformative climate change actions, eco- friendly, micro/ family business and social entrepreneurship (financing, mentorship, incubation, innovation labs, hackathons, etc.)
- Participatory protection and rehabilitation of land and water ecosystems, including, Wadi Gaza, Dead Sea, etc.

In terms of partnerships, the UN seeks to build on existing humanitarian cluster groups and Sector Working Groups under the Local Aid Coordination Secretariate (LACS) structure, where governmental, UN, and resource partners meet in support of environmental issues. In doing so, the UN will work on exploring opportunities with the Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) Partnership and other funds such as Green Climate Fund, the Global Environment Facility, the Nationally Appropriate Mitigation Actions Facility, among others.

Urban land, legislation and governance

Land

Land management and administration in Palestine is engulfed by many challenges. Land settlement and registration pre-1967 was almost finalized in the Gaza Strip. In the West Bank, the Jordanian government covered only 34 per cent in terms of land settlement procedures, and the Land and Water Settlement Commission has increased the coverage to 59 per cent since its establishment in 2016, by completing the settlement of 1,421,503 dunums, notably 33 per cent of which are registered to women, and 49 per cent of which are located in Area C—and comprising more than 38 per cent of the area slated for land settlement by LWSC in the West Bank, recalling that land registration is hindered by Israeli Military Order No. 291 of 1968, which suspended land registration in the West Bank.



©UN-Habitat (2022). Palestinian landscape – Hebron, West Bank

UN-Habitat supports the Land Sector Strategy (2021 - 2023) and the Road Map for Reforming Palestinian Land Sector (2017) by providing technical support to the work of LWSC and the Palestinian Land Authority (PLA). UN-Habitat, in partnership with LWSC, prioritise ensuring inclusivity, advocacy, and awareness raising in the land sector, especially for the most marginalised in the sector including women and Bedouins, especially in Area C and specifically in the southern governorates of Bethlehem and Hebron where land settlement was never completed.

Governance and regulatory framework

The local government sector in Palestine has a long and rich history which evolved over time, with a significant part of its institutional and legal frameworks having their origin in different political and legal systems that have governed the country⁸. Local administration acts mostly as a vehicle for the provision of services to the citizens within the limits of their operational capacities. Urban governance strengthens government accountability mechanisms, responds to citizens' demands, and ensures the integrity of legal procedures; therefore, the GoP has intensively invested in the promotion of the role of Local Government Units (LGUs).



©Prime Minister's Office (2021) H.E. Prime Minister Mohammed Eshtayah, addressing the Second Arab Land Conference in Cairo, Egypt, 22 February 2021

The NUP identifies urban governance among the top seven priorities in Palestine. The main policy priorities identified under urban governance are:

1. Activating and enforcing the legal system in the field of spatial planning;
2. Supporting local authorities in efforts to decentralize and diversify their revenue sources, such as public-private partnerships, and land-based financing; and
3. Mainstreaming public participation policies in local and national planning and local governance to increase inputs into decision-making processes and increase conditions for accountability.

In terms of its administrative set-up, the local government sector consists of three levels:

- At the central level: the GoP and its various national institutions are responsible for key tasks including policy making, legislation, financial planning and management, programme development and implementation (to a limited extent), monitoring and oversight, quality control and technical assistance.
- At the regional level: currently 16 governorates (11 in West Bank and five in Gaza Strip) are not a distinct intermediary level of government between central and local.
- At the local level: there are 442 LGUs in Palestine, 417 of which are in the West Bank, including 288 village councils and 129 municipalities, compared to only 25 municipalities in the Gaza Strip.

As far as the legal framework is concerned, the most relevant laws are:

- The Law for Local Authorities no. (1) for the year 1997 describing the rules of the law in forty articles focusing on the main responsibilities of the MoLG, the tasks of local authorities and the duties they have to undertake;
- The Planning and Building Law no. (79) for the year 1966 (Jordanian Planning Law) that continue to be applicable in the West Bank, especially Area C; and
- The Law of Expropriation no. (2) for the year 1953.

⁸ Ottoman Empire (1970 - 1917), British Mandate (1917 - 1948), the influence of Jordanian Rule in the West Bank and of Egyptian Rule in the Gaza Strip (from 1948 - 1967) and the Israeli Occupation (from 1967 to date).

UN-Habitat under the UNSDCF (2023-2025), Outcome 3 - *Palestinian governance institutions, processes, and mechanisms at all levels are more democratic, rights-based, inclusive, and accountable*, plans to support digital urban services at large municipalities and continues to deploy frontier technologies and digital tools in the application of technical support across different sectors (for more, see the sub-section: research, development and innovation). For instance, Minecraft and Kobo Collect have proven efficient in conducting participatory safety audits, which contribute to the availability of verifiable data on the physical and social challenges affecting the safety and inclusivity of public spaces for all. Likewise, the Social Tenure Domain Model (STDM)⁹ has been an efficient tool in collecting informal rights to land and natural resources especially for the most vulnerable groups, including Bedouins, pastoralists, and refugees, along with other rural communities including women, elderly, and youth groups.

Under the HCPD (2023-2026), UN-Habitat will continue to support the MoLG to enhance the inclusivity and responsiveness of the existing regulatory frameworks, including the National Urban Policy, National Public Space Policy, Rural Planning Guidelines, etc.

Urban planning and design

SDG 11 of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development focuses on the need to support positive economic, social and environmental links between urban, peri-urban and rural areas through strengthening national and regional developmental planning. Both rural and urban areas play an important role in achieving sustainability. Following an integrative approach, developing both urban and rural areas can occur simultaneously, regardless of the peak in urbanization in Palestine.

Under the HCPD (2018 - 2022), UN-Habitat provides technical and policy support to the local government sector in Palestine focusing on spatial planning and public spaces interventions. Spatial planning interventions respond to the demolition crisis in the West Bank and enable local development. UN-Habitat, utilizing a Human Rights-Based Approach (HRBA) and participatory approaches, supported the preparation of 77 multi-layered local outline plans; this is in addition to three City-Region Plans at the governorate level in Jerusalem, Ramallah and Al-Bireh, and Hebron covering collectively an area of 3.4 million dunums. In Area C, the PA and the donor community invested in social infrastructure projects inside local outline plans prepared with and for these communities– these plans are negotiated by the PA and the Israeli authorities, upon the discretion of local communities; and in the Gaza Strip, the spatial planning interventions have been introduced to support the efforts to BBB.

Public spaces interventions were implemented employing a comprehensive, evidence-based approach that responds to the physical, social and legal challenges hindering the provision of safe public spaces sustainably for all. This was done through (i) conducting participatory city-wide public space assessments in five urban centres using safety walks; (ii) development and regeneration of

⁹ The Social Tenure Domain Model is a pro-poor open-source land information system developed by the Global Land Tool Network (GLTN)

Population in urban and rural areas

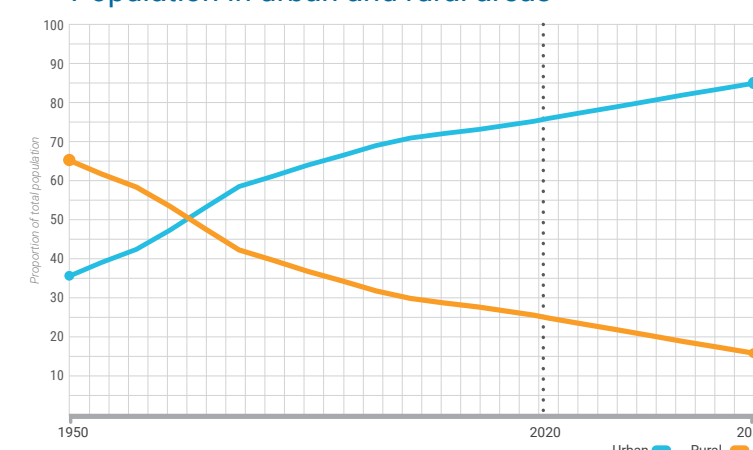
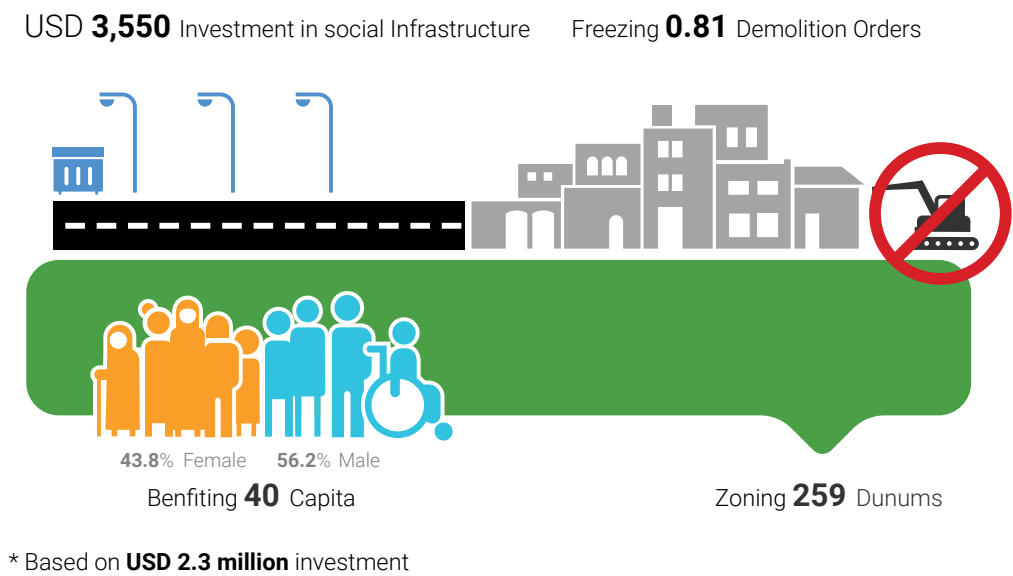


Figure 7 Percentage of population in urban and rural areas (source: United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs UNDESA) (2019)

eight safe and inclusive public spaces in cooperation with national universities and consultants; (iii) elaborating gender responsive guidelines for developing safe and inclusive public spaces for all; (iv) the launch of a nation-wide public space policy; and (v) the development of a university-level curriculum on how to assess, design and maintain safe and inclusive public spaces. UN-Habitat will continue to support the LGUs to institutionalize safe and inclusive public space design, implementation, and maintenance principles and to implement the public space strategies, in addition to supporting the rehabilitation of public space interventions.

Spatial Planning in the West Bank, including Area C
Every USD 1,000* results in:



Public Spaces
Every USD 1,000* results in:

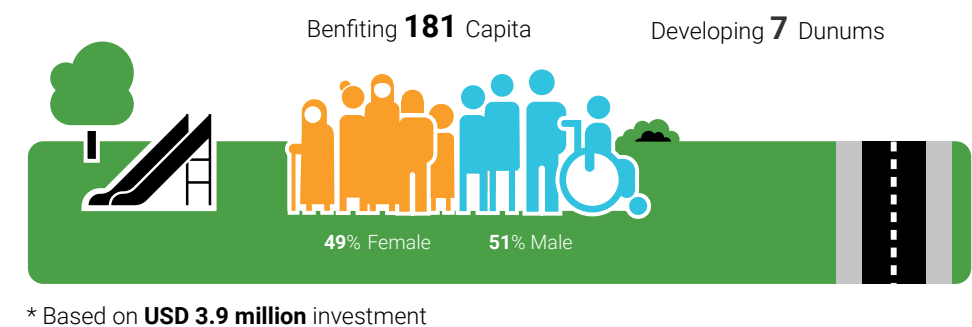


Figure 8 Impacts of Spatial Planning (top) and Public Spaces Interventions (bottom)

In terms of impact, for a sample from spatial planning interventions, for every USD 1,000 invested in spatial planning solutions resulted in zoning an area of 259 dunums, benefiting 40 people (44 per cent of which are women), enabling social infrastructure projects of a total USD 3,550, and freezing 0.81 demolition orders within the planning boundaries of the plans introduced. Likewise, for every

USD 1,000 invested in public spaces interventions resulted in the design and implementation of 7 dunums of public spaces, benefiting 181 people (49 per cent of which are women).

The NUP process identified the importance of sustainable urban-rural development with the following policy priority interventions:

- 1. Integration and interconnection of urban and rural areas;
- 2. Promotion of technology and the provision of spatial information;
- 3. Sustainable urban planning interventions; and
- 4. Introducing new tools and methodologies to the urban planning craft in Palestine.



©UN-Habitat (2020). Students marking safe pedestrian passage next to their school as part of My City initiative in Al Doha, Bethlehem, West Bank

UN-Habitat has been supporting coordinated advocacy efforts of the Palestinian quest for the right to development and to access natural and cultural resources. This trend of support is set to continue with focus on vulnerable areas and groups where the GoP doesn't have direct jurisdiction. UN-Habitat will continue to use a conflict sensitive approach that is based on a HRBA that aims to anchor UN activities in the rights and corresponding obligations of international human rights law.

Urban economy

The Palestinian economy is considered a limited and fragile economy, as it is mostly informal, depends heavily on the Israeli economy on the one hand and is affected by the consequences of regional and international policies and changes on the other. In 2020, the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) at constant prices (2015) was estimated at USD 14,015.4 million; in 2021 the poverty rate in Palestine reached 27.3 per cent and the unemployment rate reached 26 per cent¹⁰.

The concentration of economic activities in the main urban centres and the lack of investment in rural areas and main productive sectors led to a high level of rural-urban migration, resulting in rapid urban development and increasing pressure on a deteriorating infrastructure, in addition to encroachment on agricultural land, deterioration of the urban environment, and rapid and unbalanced urban expansion.

The NUP process in Palestine identified main policy priorities to support the urban economy sector, including:

1. Building the foundations of the Palestinian economy and strategically incorporating the informal sector without hindering its growth;
2. Providing a suitable investment environment and supporting specialised professionals and young entrepreneurs;
3. Promoting Palestinian industries;
4. Activating national government roles in bilateral and multilateral agreements;
5. Providing job opportunities for all; and
6. Enforcing efficient public financial management.

The concept of Local Economic Development (LED) has moved centre stage in the local government sector in Palestine over the past few years. The LGUs in Palestine generally have a relatively weak financial resource base, especially in light of the fragile local economy, dwindling growth rates, limited development perspectives, growing unemployment, and the financial situation of the national government, which continues to deteriorate due to the inadequate revenues and various operational inefficiencies. One of the pressing issues that most of LGUs are facing in the West Bank is the issue of Net Lending, which is defined as the sum deducted by the Israeli side on the clearance revenues to cover bills of electricity, water, wastewater, health referrals and other expenditures, and represent an accumulated debt of LGUs¹¹. Figures show that in 2020, the local government sector contributed with revenues of less than 10 per cent of the overall revenues collected, but the expenditure rate was

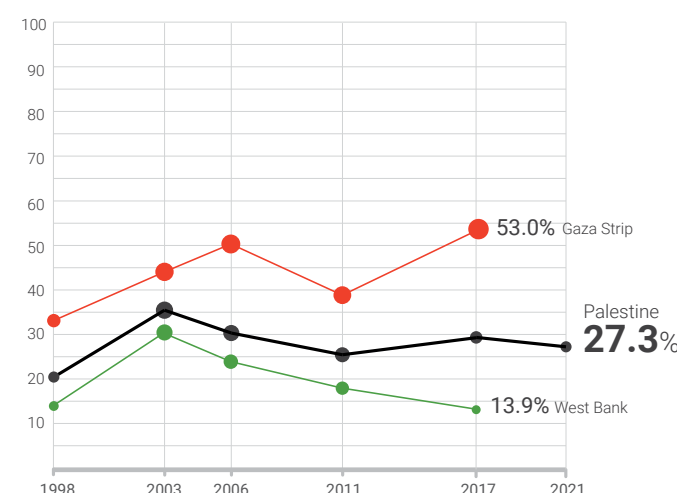


Figure 9 Poverty rate in Palestine (Source: UNCT and PMO, 2020)

less than 7 per cent of the total expenditure. The tax collected by LGUs was less than 2 per cent of the collected taxes in 2020¹².

UN-Habitat, with technical support from the Global Land tool Network (GLTN)¹³, joined forces with development partners to support LGUs in effectively administering property taxes, including standardized valuation and record keeping to promote accountability, and facilitate information sharing and effective support. Additionally, substantial untapped potential exists for application of land-value capture mechanisms and other land-based finance tools in Palestine (e.g. taxes on vacant land, land-use changes, betterment levies, etc.) that UN-Habitat can pilot within the Palestinian context. These efforts are expected to feedback positively into the targeted communities by reducing the financial burdens on the LGUs, thereby enhancing their financial capacities to invest more in physical, social, economic, and environmental infrastructure.

Urban basic services

Increased and equal access to basic services and sustainable mobility have been considered among the development objectives in Palestine. In light of the fact that Palestinians are faced with intermittent and unequal access to water, electricity and sanitation services, it is crucial to invest in these sectors. In fact, the UNCCA (2022) identified the strengthening of equitable access to high-quality basic services among the most promising enablers for accelerating progress on the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs in Palestine. The government also vouched in its NDP (2021-2023) to promote investment in clean energy, water sources, and lay the ground for national collective action to strengthen the resilience of citizens by improving health, education, economy, social protection, and other basic services that are critical to people's lives. UN-Habitat contributed to the basic services sector, namely through supporting the provision of access to Solid Waste Management (SWM) services (transport, waste and drainage) in Bethlehem City and Refugee Camps. UN-Habitat will continue to support this sector; and throughout inclusive and gender-sensitive plan-making processes at the local, regional, and national levels, it will ensure that the hierarchy of social services is in line with socio-economic, environmental, and geo-political conditions, so Palestinian equitable access to basic infrastructure services is safeguarded.

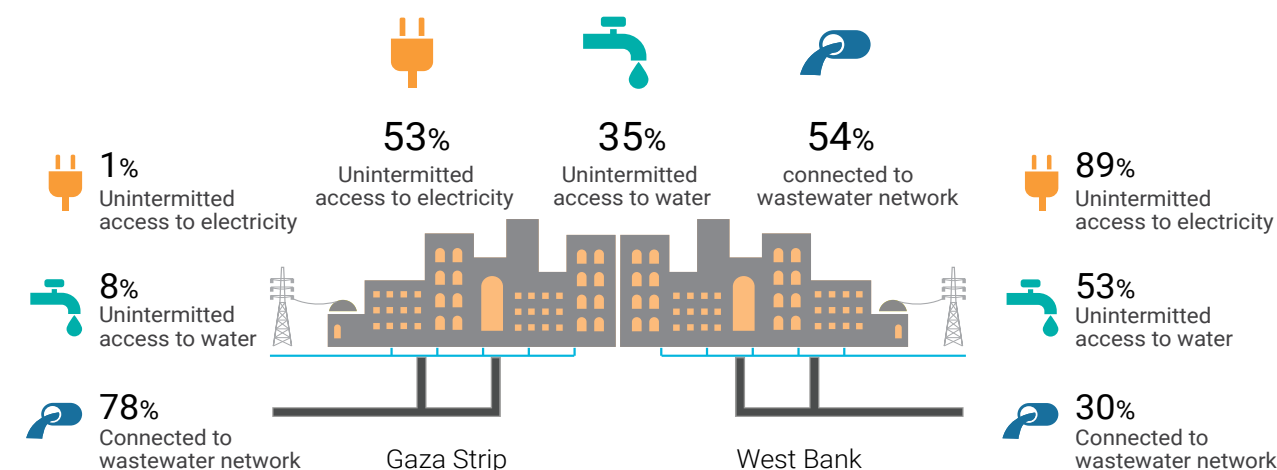


Figure 10 Access to services in the West Bank and Gaza Strip (source: PCBS, 2020)

10 MoLG and UN-Habitat (2021). Status Report on the Achievement of Goal 11 in Palestine.

11 The Coalition for Accountability and Integrity-AMAN (2017) Net Lending Item: Effect on Budget Deficit and Waste of Public Funds <https://www.aman-palestine.org/cached_uploads/download/2020/01/13/net-lending-item-%D8%B5%D8%A7%D9%81%D9%8A-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A7%D9%82%D8%B1%D8%A7%D8%B6-1578922854.pdf>

12 Ministry of Finance (2020). Annual Governmental Data. Retrieved on 2 October 2022: <http://www.pmf.ps/pmf/documents/accounts/annual/2020/GFS-2020-Arabic.pdf>

13 The Global Land Tool Network (GLTN) is dynamic and multisectoral alliance of 83 international partners committed to increasing access to land and tenure security for all, with a particular focus on the poor, women and youth. The GLTN Secretariat is facilitated and hosted by UN-Habitat.

Convenient access to public transportation

Sustainable mobility is of equal concern since Palestinian urban areas face challenges in geographical contiguity and mobility constraints as a result of the geopolitical divisions and movement restrictions imposed by the Israeli authorities. In addition, all urban centres in Palestine suffer from severe traffic congestion because of the continuous increase in ownership of vehicles, limited expansion and development of infrastructure, and a lack of reliance on public transportation. Therefore, these have produced an unsustainable transportation system, with decreasing level of traffic service and road safety, and increasing cost, travel times, delays, and energy consumption.

The NUP process identifies transportation among the priority interventions in Palestine with focus on policies related to:

1. Enhancing coordination between urban planning and transportation planning;
2. Ensuring high efficiency of the road network and transportation services; and
3. Introducing environmentally, social and economically sustainable multimodal transport systems.

Under the HCPD (2018 - 2022), UN-Habitat tackled the concepts of safe streets and safe mobility through small scale interventions implemented with schools under "My City" initiative, where students designed and implemented interventions enhancing pedestrian safety around their schools, as well as tackling the issue of social safety raising the awareness against harassment using a transit advertisement campaign.

UN-Habitat will continue to focus its support by leveraging additional financial resources to deliver inclusive and safe streets interventions through LGUs with focus on main urban centres. Furthermore, UN-Habitat plans to extend its support to plan for greener footprints at the local level with interventions focusing on reducing the adverse per capita environmental impact of cities, including by paying special attention to air pollution.

General information on public transportation

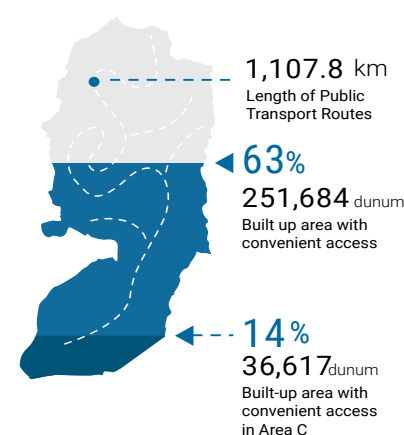


Figure 11 General information on public transportation (Source: Ministry of Transport, 2021)

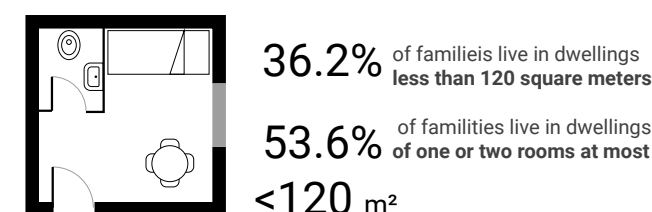


Figure 14 Housing congestion (Source: AlMezan Center for Human Rights, 2018)

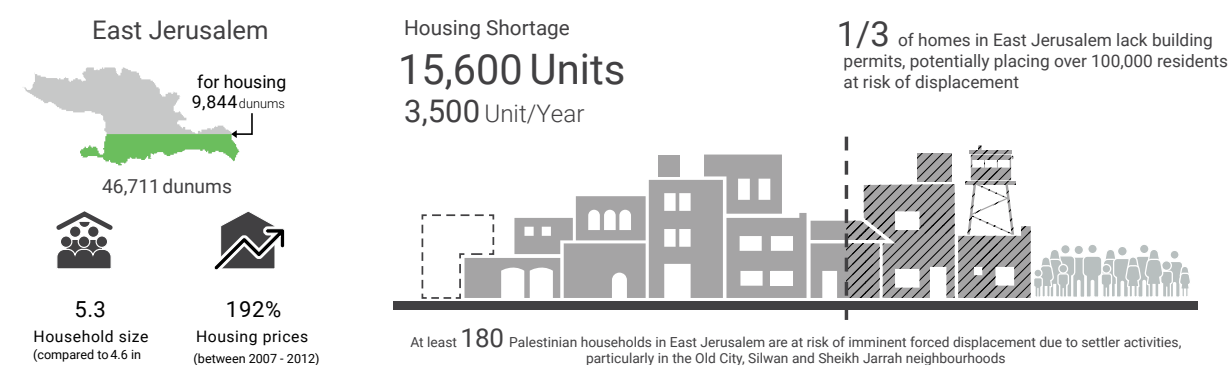


Figure 15 Housing in East Jerusalem (Sources: IPCC, 2013 and 2020)

The NUP process identified the housing sector as the top priority policy intervention with focusing on:

1. Supporting inclusive safe, affordable, and adequate housing;
2. Advancing housing as a national development priority in Palestine; and
3. Introducing responsive regulatory and legislative frameworks for the housing sector.

In the Gaza Strip, rehabilitation interventions to the damaged housing units support efforts to strengthen the local economy by using local building materials and employing skilled labourers. In the Old City of East Jerusalem, the economic contribution is to the well-being of the local Palestinian workforce through the labour-intensive rehabilitations, as well as contributing to poverty reduction through rehabilitated residential units with modern, energy efficient, green friendly, hazard free and elderly-accessible facilities, with access to physically and structurally stable foundations and roofs that were once a living hazard for them and for their surrounding and contiguous neighbours.

UN-Habitat will continue to support rehabilitation and regeneration interventions in East Jerusalem with focus on the Old City, with sustainable models of residential and urban environment development within populated neighbourhoods, enhanced residential functionality and service offering to its residents and visitors, and promotion of local ownership, execution and sustainability of development. Furthermore, rehabilitation of damaged residential houses for non-refugees in the Gaza Strip will continue to be prioritized. UN-Habitat plans to invest in coordinating efforts on launching a government-led process for a nation-wide housing policy.

Housing

The housing sector in Palestine is witnessing governmental, semi-governmental, and private initiatives to advance it and overcome the many challenges and difficulties that face it, propelled by the geopolitical situation. These are represented by informal, unsafe, inadequate, unaffordable, and overcrowded housing, in addition to the unmet need for housing to accommodate population growth.

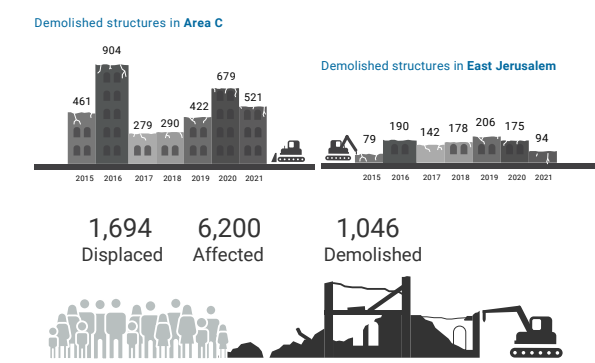


Figure 12 Demolitions in the West Bank (Source: OCHA OPT, 2021)

Urban population living in slums, informal settlements or inadequate housing

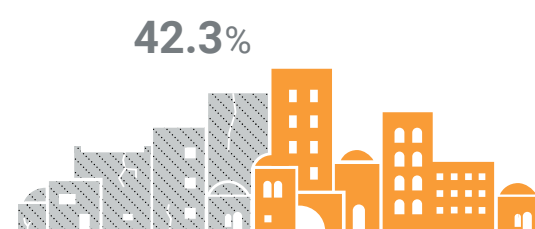


Figure 13 Urban population living in informal settlements, or inadequate housing (Source: PCBS, 2021)

Disaster risk reduction

Identification of risks and response plans have been developed in Palestine by relevant national authorities with support from universities and other research centres. Their main focus is on building the capacity of civil defence programmes, including firefighting and emergency response. The need for adaptation to climate change is prioritised and is already underway in Palestine through the development of national adaptation plans and local adaptation projects, however, funding for adaptation has been limited and adaptation needs to incorporate urban impacts, particularly on vulnerable groups.

The NUP process prioritized policy interventions with regards to Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) as follows:

1. Reducing greenhouse gas emissions;
2. Supporting renewable and low-carbon energy;
3. Supporting climate change data management;
4. Restoring and protecting biodiversity;
5. Supporting capacity building and preparedness for climate change and natural disasters at the local level; and
6. Strengthening the capacity of local authorities in risk assessment and mitigation.

Building on this, UN-Habitat plans to pilot city resilience profiling in certain main urban centres and to provide catalytic interventions on urban farming with focus on urban greening under the UNSDCF (2023 - 2025).

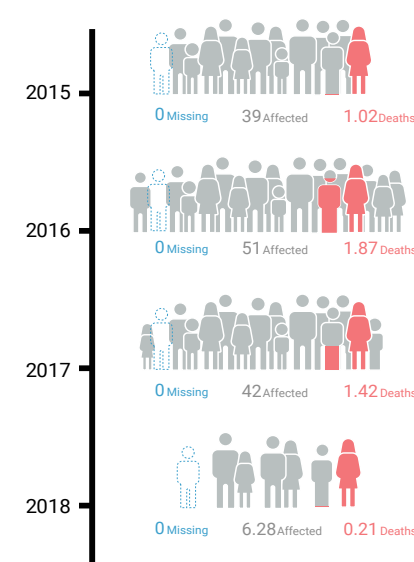


Figure 16 Natural Disasters
(Source: OCHA, 2021)

Natural and Cultural Heritage

7,000 archeological sites
50,000 historical buildings

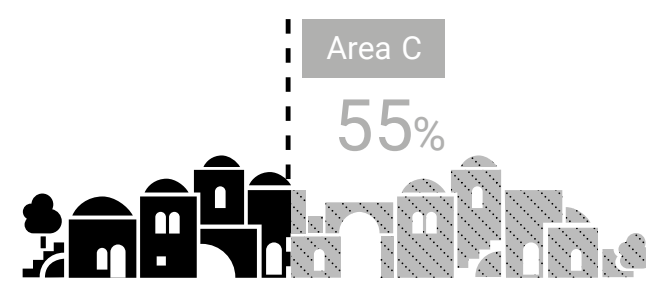


Figure 17 Archaeological sites (Source: UNESCO, 2021)

Expenditure per capita on natural and cultural heritage preservation

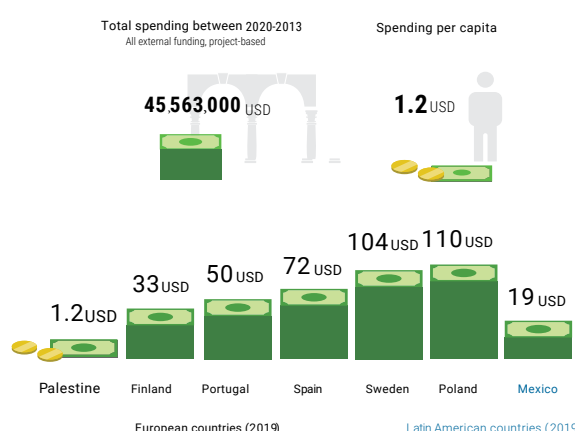


Figure 18 Expenditure per capita on natural and cultural heritage preservation (Source: UNESCO, 2021)

Since the admission of the State of Palestine as a full Member State at the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) in November 2011, three cultural heritage sites were inscribed on the World Heritage List. A list of 14 sites is planned for nomination of around 7,000 archaeological sites and 50,000 historical buildings that exist in Palestine. With very low government spending on preservation and promotion, there is a need for prioritisation of the sector to cultivate economic and cultural benefits.

The NUP process identified the following policy interventions with regards to natural and cultural sector:

1. Protection and effective preservation of natural and cultural heritage;
2. Supporting and protecting land and property tenure security; and
3. Investing in natural and cultural heritage;

To that end, UN-Habitat and under the UNSDCF (2023 - 2025) plans to provide support in natural resource efficiency plans for at risk water ecological sites.

Research, capacity development, and innovation

UN-Habitat has invested throughout the years in research and capacity development to governmental and non-governmental stakeholders at the national, regional, and local levels. It has a wealth of experience in supporting Palestinian cities and communities to integrate thinking and action on sustainable development into plans, processes and projects and, where necessary, identifying additional actions that cities and communities can undertake to ensure innovation. It deployed an integrated approach to innovation that incorporates both digital and non-digital technologies and utilized innovative practical tools that help national and local governments, cities and communities and other stakeholders to address urban challenges in a participatory way.



©UN-Habitat through InterTech (2021). Students engaged in TIME activities (Tourism, IT and Media) at the rehabilitated Dar Al-Consul - Old City of Jerusalem.

Examples of innovative tools employed within the spatial planning, including public space interventions across Palestine is the use of Minecraft computer game to engage local communities in public space planning in East Jerusalem and the Gaza Strip. Likewise, UN-Habitat worked with MoLG and selected urban centres in Palestine in utilizing digital platforms and applications to conduct city-wide public space assessments under the HAYA joint UN programme. The assessments were conducted by utilizing the KOBO Collect open-source platform, reflecting the gathered data spatially, which could also be visualized using multiple filters on the website. Under the HAYA joint UN programme, AMAKEN Mobile application to enhance women safety in public spaces was also developed. By the same token, UN-Habitat employed transformative social tools to raise the awareness of local communities on issues related to making Palestinian cities and communities inclusive, safe, resilient, and sustainable. For instance, it supported the development of an online dashboard on community-driven outline plans and social infrastructure interventions in Area C, and it is linked with the Portal for Geospatial Information in Palestine (GeoMoLG), and is hosted as well by OCHA OPT website.

UN-Habitat also worked with land actors, including the PLA and LWSC in introducing digitalisation of housing, land, and property information and services through innovative tools for land governance and secure tenure especially for vulnerable groups. In partnership with LWSC, UN-Habitat is working on documenting the full continuum of land rights including information collected using STDM which has been an efficient tool in collecting informal rights to land and natural resources especially for the most vulnerable groups, including Bedouins, pastoralists, and refugees, along with other rural communities including women, elderly, and youth groups. In addition, an online dashboard on land settlement was developed, and includes community level information on land settlement progress and achievements, as well as women's land ownership.

An example of UN-Habitat's relevant interventions in the Old City of Jerusalem through local partnerships is the Education and Professional Innovation Center (EPIC) that provides career development and coaching to students, along with training on information and communications technology, social entrepreneurship, and other soft skills. Another interconnected center is the Tourism, Information and Media (TIME) that focuses on student-led productions, especially mobile-based and projection-based extended reality products delivered in partnership with academia counterparts to serve tourism activities in the Old City of Jerusalem.

Under the HCPD (2023 - 2026), UN-Habitat will focus its technical support at city level, by adopting UN-Habitat's comprehensive approach to SDG localization, anchored on three key pillars: i) the Global Urban Monitoring Framework; ii) Voluntary Local Reviews; iii) SDG Cities. More specifically, Ramallah City will be among other nine cities from Asia-Pacific, Arab and African countries that will be supported under the 2030 Agenda Sub-fund with focus on fostering COVID-19 recovery and SDG implementation through local action. Furthermore, UN-Habitat will provide technical support to the set-up of Al-Quds Urban Observatory at Al-Quds University covering Jerusalem Governorate, as a follow up to the recommendations of the Third Palestinian Urban Forum held on 10 - 11 May 2022.

UN-Habitat has contributed to knowledge production. Several publications have been released in partnership with governmental and non-governmental organizations.

Publications Timeline

PLACEMAKING BROCHURES

For the communities of Wadi An Nis, Al Walajah, Al Aqaba and Ti'innik

PLANNING NEWSLETTERS

Cluster Plans, Local Outline Plans, Placemaking, City Region Plans.

SPATIAL DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIC FRAMEWORKS

Jerusalem Hebron Ramallah and Al-Bireh

PLACEMAKING TOOLKIT

Designing People Places, guidelines for local communities



Land Newsletter
Land Issues in the West Bank, Issue 1

APLR BROCHURES
Brochures for the project: Achieving Planning and Land Rights in Area C

LWSC BROCHURE
Achievements of the Land and Water Settlement Commission 2016 - 2019

BROCHURE
Project on Solid Waste Management and public safety during COVID-19

ATLAS of Sustainable Development
A joint publication by all UN agencies and the Prime Minister's Office

PLANNING NEWSLETTERS
Cluster Plans, Local Outline Plans, Placemaking, City Region Plans.

LAND NEWSLETTERS
Land Issues in the West Bank, Issues 2, 3 and 4

REPORTS ON INTERNATIONAL COMMITMENTS
Reporting on the Sustainable Development Goal 11 and the New Urban Agenda

LEGAL FACTSHEET
Land settlement regulations and procedures



PLANNING AND HUMAN RIGHTS
The Human Rights Impact Assessment Mechanism and Fostering Tenure Security for Bedouin Communities

COMMUNITY FLYERS
Information on land surveying and registration for twelve communities

AWARENESS POSTERS
Raising awareness and sharing information on COVID-19 related to preventative and coping mechanisms, including for mental health

CITY-WIDE ASSESSMENT REPORTS
Overview of safety in public spaces in select governorates

Intersectionality and cross-cutting thematic areas

The HCPD (2023 - 2026) is aligned with the UN-Habitat's Strategic Plan's (2020–2023) cross-cutting thematic areas that underpin the work that UN-Habitat carries out: (i) the social inclusion dimension, which encompasses human rights, gender, children, youth and the elderly, and people with disabilities; (ii) resilience; and (iii) safety. These cross-cutting themes provide a transversal connection across all the domains of change and their respective outcomes, as well as the drivers of change. UN-Habitat utilizes an Environmental and Social Safeguards System for all its programming, in support of the agency's constant strive to improve on the delivery of its mandate, measuring and mitigating the impact of its interventions.

Social Inclusion

Human rights

A HRBA to UN-Habitat interventions will invoke the ways of doing. As promised in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its SDGs, Leave No One Behind (LNOB) is the central and transformative promise to focus on discrimination and inequalities that undermine the agency of people as holders of rights. Many of the barriers that right holders face are the result of discriminatory laws, policies and social practices that leave particular groups of people further behind.

A prominent example of UN-Habitat's work on operationalizing the HRBA and the LNOB is the work done with its main national partner, MoLG, that resulted in the adoption of the Human Rights Impact Assessment Mechanism (HRIAM) in 2016 to help in the monitoring and tracking of spatial planning interventions in the West Bank, including Area C, to document the adverse impacts on human rights. It includes criteria and information on HRBA within the Palestinian context, including the right to adequate standard of living and the right to adequate housing¹⁴. The mechanism is mainstreamed in spatial planning interventions¹⁵ contributing to ensuring that spatial planning interventions are addressing and integrating human rights in a disaggregated form, in terms of gender, duty bearers, and rights holders.

Gender equality

Women groups are targeted, by and large, in all UN-Habitat's interventions both separately and within community-level activities by raising awareness and advancing discussions about the rights to safe, inclusive, resilient, and sustainable built environment, and responsive and inclusive planning (including public spaces), land, and housing interventions with territorial economic development. UN-Habitat ensures that its interventions adequately meet the needs of women through conducting contextualized assessments to understand women's specific experiences, and to give them a chance to voice their concerns, needs and aspirations. Where relevant, female-headed households are prioritized in UN-Habitat's interventions.

Furthermore, positive deviant men and women that promote gender and other forms of equality are identified to insight behavioural and perception changes within their communities to achieve greater results and increase resilience to deal with stress due to occupation and the prevention of violence against women and children. This, however, is done in a manner that recognizes that men's relationship to women and children is context-specific within each community where it is recognized that it may not always be possible to collaborate with men on the protection of women and children; therefore, in all communities, especially those with rigid patriarchal gender norms, the

¹⁴ The rights of the Palestinian people in Area C, including the right to an adequate standard of living, along with the human rights principle of participation and inclusion, equality and non-discrimination, accountability and rule of law are continuously undermined by the Israeli regime in place. Article 11 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.

¹⁵ The Human Rights Impact Assessment Mechanism and local outline plans in Area C, retrieved on 2 October 2022: https://unhabitat.org/sites/default/files/2020/05/english_final_1.pdf

role of the LGUs and grassroots organizations to undertake this role is strengthened. UN-Habitat's interventions will continue to be guided by the designated UNCT gender scorecard of 2021 and will also aim for gender balanced representation of its beneficiaries, support the collection of sex-disaggregated data, and utilize gender mainstreaming tools, such as the Gender Evaluation Criteria and Gender Responsive Urban Planning and Design.



©UN-Habitat (2019). Women participating in a roundtable discussion on safe and inclusive public spaces in Nablus, West Bank



©UN-Habitat (2021). The inauguration ceremony for the rehabilitated public space in the old city of Ramallah, West Bank

Children, youth and the elderly

Young women and men are of key focus of UN-Habitat's interventions. The role of youth as social change agents and leaders in sustainable development is well recognized. The HCPD (2023-2026) acknowledges "youth-led development," codified in the five principles of Kampala (2008)¹⁶. Furthermore, the HCPD (2023-2026) recognizes that children, especially girls, and the elderly should be integrated throughout the project cycle to ensure equitable access to basic services, adequate housing, inclusive public spaces and resilient infrastructure, and the overall benefits of well-planned urbanization. UN-Habitat's interventions work to integrate and engage youth in different sectors and to develop accurate, age-disaggregated data.

Likewise, elderly groups are among the vulnerable groups that are targeted by UN-Habitat interventions, noting that 5 per cent of the population in Palestine are aged 60 years and above, with a sex ratio of 92 males per 100 females.¹⁷ Considering that the elderly group was one of the most vulnerable population groups facing the COVID-19 pandemic, UN-Habitat's interventions were refocused with aim to enhance their coping capacity. One prominent example on this has been the provision of plants and equipment to initiate home farming spots, promoting social engagement and physical activity for the elderly, enhancing both their physical health as well as their mental health, along with the livelihoods and food security of the targeted beneficiaries. This is one of the areas that UN-Habitat will strategically look into supporting under the HCPD (2023 - 2026).



©UN-Habitat (2021). Urban farming interventions for the elderly, Bethlehem, West Bank



©UN-Habitat (2017). Community members in participatory planning workshops, Abasan Al-Kabeira, Gaza Strip

People with Disabilities

In June 2019, the UN Secretary-General launched the UN Disability Inclusion Strategy (UNDIS) as part of the commitment to make the UN an inclusive organization for all. The UNDIS includes an accountability framework with two aligned components: one for individual UN entities and one for a designated UNCT scorecard. The accountability framework contains practical

indicators covering both programmes and operations, with clear benchmarks to accelerate and track progress on disability inclusion. The HCPD (2023 - 2026) interventions will witness progress in the efforts of the UNCT in Palestine on the roll out of the designated scorecard and better integrate people with disabilities in its programmatic interventions. Although there is a scarcity of information on disability at the community levels, UN-Habitat will work to collect disability-disaggregated data in all of its interventions. It will also support in documenting the specific challenges, needs and aspirations of this group. All interventions will continue to be open and accessible to persons with disabilities ensuring their participation at all stages through community-level meetings and consultations. More specifically, all plans prepared, along with all public spaces and housing interventions delivered will follow national and international benchmarks to safeguard the needs and aspirations of persons with disabilities in enjoying their built environment. For example, all rehabilitation work takes into consideration inclusion of ramps, lifts, and elevators towards full inclusion in access and all operational work, taking into consideration potential physical and mental limitations.

Resilience

As mentioned by the UN-Habitat Strategic Plan (2020 - 2023), resilience assessments and profiling by UN-Habitat are key to help identify the strengths and weaknesses of systems, as a basis to design proactive measures to make cities, neighbourhoods and communities more resilient to future shocks, and to support the principle of BBB in post-crisis reconstruction situations. This is more relevant to the context of the Gaza Strip, where measures including, for example, reviewing building norms and their enforcement, introducing or reinforcing planning restrictions in locations of risk, upgrading basic infrastructure, reviving increasingly targeted cultural heritage and replanning destroyed areas are among the priority interventions that the SHSPPP could continue to support. UN-Habitat's expertise in urban resilience and reconstruction efforts can also help to align humanitarian and development responses, along with the peace dimension. Likewise, in rehabilitation interventions in East Jerusalem and beyond, energy efficient, environmentally sound and eco-friendly rehabilitation principles have been adopted. Piloting city resilience profiling in certain main urban centres across Palestine is also prioritized under the HCPD (2023 - 2026).



©UN-Habitat through InterTech (2021) The rehabilitated and renovated Dar Al-Consul Complex in the Old City of Jerusalem

Safety

UN-Habitat's Strategic Plan (2020 - 2023) elevates safety as a transversal issue to be considered as a marker across all the domains of change and their respective outcomes, with particular regard to improving standards of living and the inclusion of migrants, refugees and internally displaced persons. The proportion of persons victims of physical or sexual harassment during July 2020 and June 2021 in Palestine were higher among females and were slightly higher in urban centres, including refugee camps compared to rural communities¹⁸. Anecdotal evidence shows that the

¹⁶ The five principles of youth-led development of Kampala (Uganda) are: (1) Youth define their own development goals and objectives; (2) Youth have a safe and generative physical space; (3) Adult and peer-to-peer mentorship; (4) Youth act as role models for other youth; and (5) Youth are integrated into local and national development programmes and policies.

¹⁷ Source: Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS) (2020). On the Occasion of the International Day of Older Persons 1 October 2020: http://www.pcbs.gov.ps/portals/_pcbs/PressRelease/Press_En_1-10-2020-elder-en.pdf

¹⁸ Source: Palestine Police Force (2021).

existence of public and green spaces inside urban and rural areas play an important role in reducing stress and anxiety to all members of the society, especially after the COVID-19 pandemic. UN-Habitat interventions will continue to prioritize this work under the HCPD (2023 - 2026) focusing on elaborating and adopting an evidence-based and inclusive public space policy in Palestinian cities and communities, while continuing to monitor and enforce allocation of public spaces in urban and rural centres and advocating for the right of Palestinians to safely access public areas, including in East Jerusalem and Area C.

Partnerships

UN-Habitat has been focusing its support to the GoP and people of Palestine in priority areas related to spatial planning, land management, and housing. Heading a call from civil society organizations, UN-Habitat established strategic partnerships with focus on needs and aspirations of Palestinian groups at the lowest levels; it has maintained partnerships with several member states and resource partners active in Palestine. Since the establishment of the SHSPPP and the Technical Cooperation Trust Fund back in 2003, the Governing Council (now Assembly) of UN-Habitat urged *“the international donor community and all financial institutions to support UN-Habitat in the immediate mobilization of financial resources towards the establishment and operation of the programme and the fund”*. The largest contributor to UN-Habitat’s work has been the EU with focus on supporting spatial planning and land management interventions in the West Bank, including Area C and rehabilitation of historical places in the Old City of East Jerusalem. Likewise, EU member states and Switzerland have been long-standing supporters, especially the Government of Belgium, United Kingdom (UK), Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), Government of France, the Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation (AECID), and the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA). Likewise, UN-Habitat has received financial support from the Government of Canada (GAC), Secours Islamique France, the Government of Japan, the World Bank, the Saudi Committee for the Palestinian People Relief, the Saudi Campaign of the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques for the Relief of the Palestinian People, AlWaleed Philanthropies, the International Islamic Charity Organization (IICO) – State of Kuwait, the Arab Authority for Agricultural Investment and Development, Al-Maktoum Foundation of the United Arab Emirates, and the UN, including the Resident Coordinator Office to support spatial planning interventions, including public spaces, support to basic urban services, response to COVID-19 pandemic, and capacity building to state parties, across Palestine in an unabated way.

Generous support has also been received in terms of non-earmarked financial contribution from Government of the Kingdom of Bahrain, United States of America, China, Sweden, Oman, Al-Maktoum Foundation of the United Arab Emirates, Sudan, and the Russian Federation. These contributions allowed UN-Habitat to sustain its presence and to develop a portfolio of concrete projects in support of the Palestinian people, while providing technical support to the PA, and other stakeholders. Reconvening the Advisory Board to the SHSPPP is considered important, especially since the programme did not receive non-earmarked contributions under the Technical Cooperation Trust Fund during the HCPD (2018 - 2022). The only meeting of the Advisory Board to the SHSPPP was held in New York in 2012, and 21 member states and the EU were represented in the meeting. The Governing Council 23/2 resolution (2011) requested the Executive Director of UN-Habitat to establish and chair an advisory board to the SHSPPP and the Technical Cooperation Trust Fund, *“comprising representatives to the United Nations of contributing Member States, in order to provide policy guidance to the Special Human Settlements Programme for the Palestinian People, taking into account the evolving context, support fundraising based on identified gaps, review progress and reporting to the Governing Council and prepare the necessary Governing Council resolutions.”*

UN-Habitat aspires to engage in multilateral development cooperation with new strategic partners and commitments to cooperation that may offer unexplored potential, acknowledging the broad

convergence of development priorities, especially in light of the post-2015 development agenda. To succeed in the implementation of the HCPD (2023 - 2026), there will be a need to elaborate a designated resource mobilization strategy in close consultation with the governmental and resource partners, and this strategy will build on the UNSDCF (2023 - 2025) and will include partnering with UN entities in joint programming.

Way forward

After two-decades from the establishment of the SHSPPP, UN-Habitat activities in Palestine have proven to be relevant in meeting the needs and aspirations of the people of Palestine. Peering into the future, UN-Habitat will continue to provide technical support in the priority areas of spatial planning, including public spaces, land management and administration, housing rehabilitation, along with other emergent priority areas, such as the response to COVID-19 pandemic. It will focus on fit-for-purpose interventions based on multidimensional risk analysis to develop systems-based “out-of-fragility” strategies that are context-specific, gender- and conflict-sensitive with the aim of supporting economic development with a livelihood component and delivery of social infrastructure based on community priorities. This will be done by deploying methodologies which ensure that core government functions are strengthened, and that local governance is responsive, inclusive, and resilient in the delivery of at-scale area- and community-based development programmes that builds on humanitarian programmes, while considering peace building interventions.

Next is the action plan that UN-Habitat will focus on under the overall work of the UNSDCF (2023 - 2025), noting that UN-Habitat’s interventions are largely framed under the UNSDCF’s outcome 4 - focusing on environment and climate change. While the action plan has secured funding of approx. USD 16 million, financial mobilisation is planned for approx. USD 26 million, approx. USD 16 million of which are allocated to pilot 300 affordable housing units in the West Bank in partnership with MoPWH warranting availability of funds.





The main interventions with MoLG will continue to be guided by the MoU (2020 - 2023) that will be extended to cover the period (2024 - 2026). The interventions with other governmental institutions, including MoPWH, PLA, LWSC, etc will be translated into joint work plans prioritizing the interventions agreed upon, and details on risks and timelines for implementation. Continuous update with key achievements and goals will be maintained. Resources will be provided for monitoring activities. The action plan captures indicators including targets that will be used for monitoring purposes. UN-Habitat will periodically report against progress and achievements and discuss challenges and multi-dimensional risks, while maintaining a day-to-day repository of all interventions implemented.

An ex-post evaluation will be carried out via independent external consultants. Technical support from UN-Habitat headquarters will be available in the evaluation to the satisfaction of the partners. The evaluation report shall be shared with the relevant national authorities, donors, and other key stakeholders. UN-Habitat shall analyse the conclusions and recommendations of the evaluation and, where appropriate, in agreement with the relevant national authorities, jointly decide on the follow-up actions to be taken and any adjustments necessary.

UN-Habitat will focus on its role as a strategic influencer to ensure the intervention’s sustainability. Addressing capacity building and wider governance issues will be always kept in mind. Before specific interventions, UN-Habitat will seek agreements with local partners and relevant government institutions on long-term sustainability checks. A strong focus on ensuring that interventions are demand driven will also ensure sustainability. By taking participatory approaches as the main methodological drivers for the interventions prioritized, UN-Habitat will promote the ownership of the possible future demonstration projects and wider interventions.

Strategic Framework and Action Plan (2023-2026)

Secured funding
Planned financial mobilization
* Warranting governmental support in financial mobilization to implement interventions

	Outcome	Main Outputs	Budget USD	Indicator including target	Focus area per NUP Pillar	National Partners	UN Entities	Contribution to SDG Indicators	Alignment with UNSDCF
 1 Reduced spatial inequality and poverty in communities across the urban - rural continuum;	1 Increased and equal access to basic services, sustainable mobility and public space	<ul style="list-style-type: none">More than 11 public spaces for women and youthNational Public Space Policy and gender responsive guidelinesFive city-wide participatory safety auditsInclusive and safe streets interventionsMore than four inclusive public spaces	3.2 million 1 million	<ul style="list-style-type: none">20 inclusive public spaces implemented by 2026	 	Ministry of Local Government Ministry of Transport Ministry of Women's Affairs	UN Women UNODC UNFPA	 11.2, 11.7  5.2	Outcome 4
	2 Increased and secure access to land, and adequate and affordable housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none">More than 125,000 dunums surveyed and settled utilising participatory approaches in the West BankStructural rehabilitation interventions in the Old City of JerusalemMore than 50 damaged housing units rehabilitated in the Gaza StripNational housing policy and strategies revisited300 affordable housing units in the West Bank*National land policyMore than 125,000 dunums surveyed and settled utilising participatory approaches in the West BankSpatial data infrastructure of the Palestinian Land Authority Updated	11.83 million 19.7 million	<ul style="list-style-type: none">250,000 dunums surveyed and settled in the West Bank by 2026More than 50 damaged housing units rehabilitated in the Gaza Strip by 2024	 	President's Office Prime Minister's Office - National Office for the Reconstruction of Gaza Ministry of Public Works and Housing Land and Water Settlement Commission Palestinian Land Authority	UN Women WFP	 11.1, 11.4  1.4  5.a	Outcome 4
 2 Enhanced shared prosperity of cities and regions;	1 Improved spatial connectivity and productivity of cities and regions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Four Cluster PlansMore than 25 Local Outline PlansNational urban policy and rural planning guidelinesMore than 15 Local Outline PlansTwo Cluster Plans	750 thousand 500 thousand	<ul style="list-style-type: none">National Urban Policy endorsed by 2023More than 50 multi-layered spatial plans prepared by 2026		Ministry of Local Government	--	 11.a, 11.3	Outcome 4
	2 Increased and equitably distributed locally generated revenues	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Land Value Capture piloted	300 thousand	TBD		Ministry of Local Government	--	 17.1	Outcome 3
	3 Expanded deployment of frontier technologies and innovations for urban development	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Digital Urban Services - Al-Quds Urban Observatory	1 million	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Al-Quds Urban Observatory established by 2026		Ministry of Local Government	--	 13.3  17.16	Outcome 3
 3 Strengthened climate action and improved urban environment	1 Improved resource efficiency and protection of ecological assets	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Natural resource efficiency plans for at risk water ecological sites	500 thousand	<ul style="list-style-type: none">At least one natural resources efficiency plan for a selected site prepared by 2026		Ministry of Agriculture	FAO	 11.3  15.1	Outcome 4
	2 Effective adaptation of communities and infrastructure to climate change	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Reducing the adverse per capita environmental impact of cities, including air pollution	1 million	<ul style="list-style-type: none">At least one air pollution monitoring station is installed by 2026		Ministry of Local Government Environment Quality Authority	--	 11.6  3.9.1	Outcome 4
 4 Effective urban crisis prevention and response	1 Enhanced social integration and inclusive communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Voluntary Local Review	ca. 100 thousand	<ul style="list-style-type: none">One Voluntary Local Review report prepared by 2026		Ministry of Local Government/ Ramallah Municipality Prime Minister's Office	ESCWA UNDP	 All SDGs	Outcome 3 4
	2 Improved living standards and inclusion of migrants, refugees, internally displaced persons and returnees through effective crisis response and recovery	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Urban farming with focus on urban greening interventions	1 million	<ul style="list-style-type: none">At least two urban greening interventions by 2026		Ministry of Agriculture Ministry of Local Government	UNRWA WFP FAO	 11b  2.1, 2.4  12.3	Outcome 4
	3 Enhanced resilience of the built environment and infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none">City resilience profiling piloted in three cities	1 million	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Three city resilience profiles prepared by 2026		National Disaster Risk Management Center in Palestine Ministry of Local Government Environment Quality Authority	UNEP	 11.b, 11.5	Outcome 4








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