



Ministry of Local Government

NATIONAL URBAN POLICY for Palestine

*“Towards Sustainable Urban Development,
Enabling Sovereignty and Resilience of Palestinian
Cities and Communities”*

Summary
2023



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Second Version

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The National Urban Policy (NUP) is a collaboration between the Palestinian Ministry of Local Government (MoLG), UN-Habitat, and the Association of Palestinian Local Authorities (APLA) that constituted a task team of the NUP. The task team efforts were complemented with the support afforded by the Sustainable Development Goal 11 National Team in terms of the NUP review process. An-Najah National University provided technical support to the process of the NUP, including feasibility, rapid diagnostic, and formulation phases.

The achievement of the NUP would not have been possible without the valuable support and active participation of representatives of the following ministries, governmental, civil, academic and private sector institutions:

Ministries and authorities

- Association of Palestinian Local Authorities
- Central Elections Committee
- Environment Quality Authority
- Investment Promotion and Industrial Estate Agency
- Ministry of Agriculture
- Ministry of Education
- Ministry of Labor
- Ministry of National Economy
- Ministry of Public Works and Housing
- Ministry of Social Development
- Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities
- Ministry of Transportation
- Municipal Development and Lending Fund
- Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics
- Palestinian Energy and Natural Resources Authority
- Palestinian Land Authority
- Palestinian Monetary Authority
- Palestinian Water Authority
- Prime Minister's Office

Local government units

- Abasan Al-Kabira Municipality
- Alshuka Municipality
- Al Musaddar Municipality
- Beit Lahia Municipality
- Gaza Municipality
- Khan Younis Municipality
- Nablus Municipality
- Ramallah Municipality
- Wadi Gaza Municipality

Academia

- Al Quds University
- Birzeit University
- Islamic University of Gaza
- Ramallah Friends School



Non-governmental organizations

- Aisha Association for Women and Child Protection
- Centre for Cultural Heritage Preservation
- Norwegian Refugee Council
- Palestine Economic Policy Research Institute (MAS)
- Palestinian Housing Council
- UNRWA

Unions and private sector

- Center for Engineering and Planning
- Engineers Association
- Palestinian Contractors Union
- Universal Group for Engineering and Consulting

The following MoLG's staff had a prominent role in preparing the NUP:

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The outputs were reviewed, and the final report was drafted by UN-Habitat Palestine, specifically: Mona AlQutub, Haneen Zaqout, Mohammad Abu Qaoud, Laila Abu Baker, Zeyad Elshakra, and Rami Abuzuhri.

The preparation process was directly supervised by Ohood Enaya, Director General of the Planning and Policy Unit at MoLG, and Ahmed El-Atrash, Senior Urban Programme Officer at UN-Habitat Palestine.

The MoLG dedicates the NUP to the spirit of Jihad Rabaya, who was part of the preparation team, and passed away before completing the project.

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Foreword

On behalf of the Ministry of Local Government, I am pleased to present the National Urban Policy for the State of Palestine to the institutions of the State of Palestine and the Palestinian citizens. This policy has been developed following a participatory approach by the Ministry's staff, national partners and local experts, and it forms the basis for the National Spatial Plan for Palestine (2050) which is currently under preparation.

The NUP constitutes a framework and reference for the implementation of public interventions in urban areas by the ministries and service-providing institutions of the State of Palestine, in addition to being an awareness tool focusing on the promotion of sustainable urban development.

The Palestinian government endorsed this policy on 17/7/2023, affirming its commitment to achieve all the outputs of this policy, and to link them to short and long-term national development plans.

I would like to extend my thanks to all the national and local teams who supported in realizing this achievement. We also thank the European Union and UN-Habitat for their support to this achievement.

Eng. Majdi Al Saleh
Minister of Local Government

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Acronyms

APLA	Association of Palestinian Local Authorities
BRT	Bus Rapid Transit
DRR	Disaster Risk Reduction
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
ICA	Israeli Civil Administration
LGUs	Local Government Units
MoLG	Ministry of Local Government
NDP	National Development Plan
NSP	National Spatial Plan
NUA	New Urban Agenda
NUP	National Urban Policy
OPT	Occupied Palestinian Territory
PA	Palestinian Authority
UN-Habitat	United Nations Human Settlements Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
USD	United States Dollar

Background

The reality of the Occupied Palestinian Territory (OPT) is one of territorial fragmentation due to the geo-political conditions on the ground and constrained financing due to a volatile rate of revenue collection, a complex internal system of distribution of revenue between the local and national governments, and a weak economy that is dependent on the Israeli economy, since economic development cannot grow beyond a specific structural level as it cannot access critical inputs of natural resources and free of transport of people and goods. To varying degrees, the aforementioned factors are either caused or exacerbated by the occupation, the continuing blockade of the Gaza Strip, and the recurrent wars. Within this complex context, the Ministry of Local Government (MoLG) and the international community have focused on enhancing service delivery at the local level to provide tangible development benefits to citizens and foster their resilience as well to strengthen the view of Local Government Units (LGUs) as credible governmental bodies. Progress has been notable despite the challenges outlined above, and potential new areas of support are possible in order to further the aims of a strong local democracy, a rationalization of the multiple fragmentations within the local government sector, and overall state-building aims by fostering national-local collaboration.

The Government of Palestine at the national level alone cannot address the complications of the unprecedented urbanization rates, where 77 per cent of the Palestinian population is located in urban areas (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 the OPT about 85 per cent, with the remaining 15 per cent living in rural settings, referred to as Area C. This fact is creating growing pressure on land, infrastructure and resources, especially with urbanization growing steadily, fuelled by high demographic growth rates and spatially concentrated development with limited space to expand. With a 2.85 per cent urban growth rate in 2020, Palestine is classified among the top 25 per cent of urbanizing countries. It is expected that the population in Palestine will reach 6 million people by 2030 of which 5.3 million will be in urban areas. The land scarcity and spatial fragmentation, combined with rapid urban growth and uneven development within Palestine have increased pressure on local authorities.

In a related analysis, it was found that the percentage of land available for use in the West Bank and Gaza Strip is 75 per cent and 48 per cent respectively, of the total area, with the exception of the determinants of the National Spatial Plan (NSP), which are: high-value agricultural lands, natural reserves, forests, and areas of biodiversity, and excluding built-up areas (Figure 1). When taking into account the restrictions imposed by the Israeli authorities on the land use, represented by Israeli settlements, military bases, firing zones, the Wall Barrier and bypass roads, the percentage of land available for use decreases to about 38 per cent of the West Bank (Figure 2).



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Figure 1: Land availability based on NSP's limitations and built-up areas.



There are restrictions imposed on the Palestinian access to fishing areas along Gaza's coast on the Mediterranean sea (3-12 nautical miles). Also, the majority of the Dead Sea area is off limits to Palestinian community use and development.

Figure 2: Land availability based on NSP's limitations, built-up areas, and Israeli restrictions.

Area C represents more than 60 per cent of the land in the West Bank and is considered a cornerstone in the establishment of the Palestinian statehood, since it contains valuable natural and historical resources. Nearly 300,000 Palestinians in Area C continue to face issues related to territorial and administrative fragmentation and financial constraints. These conditions are intensified by the maintained matrix of control on the West Bank and occupied East Jerusalem, including the Separation Barrier, Israeli settlements, bypass roads, military and firing zones, etc. Currently there are 18,711 Demolition Orders against Palestinian owned structures across the West Bank, of which 92.3 per cent are targeting Area C, and demolition of homes and infrastructure continues. Many Palestinians living in Areas A and B are affected as well, where they have property or livelihood in Area C. Without planning permission from the Israeli Civil Administration (ICA), construction of any sort in Area C is viewed as illegal by the Israeli authorities and slated for possible demolition.

A Palestinian National Urban Policy

UN-Habitat (2014) defines National Urban Policy (NUP) as “a coherent set of decisions derived through a deliberate government-led process of coordinating and rallying various actors for a common vision and goal that will promote more transformative, productive, inclusive and resilient urban development for the long term.” It is a multi-sectorial, multi-level, multi-stakeholder and human development centred process aimed at the development of urban areas.

A NUP is an essential tool through which government can facilitate positive urbanization patterns and create favourable conditions through a three-pronged approach – appropriate legal framework, municipal financing, and planning and design which articulate horizontal and vertical coordination. Complex socio-economic and environmental issues that manifest in urban areas in Palestine require a broader approach to urban policy and a higher level of vertical and horizontal coordination, as well as creative partnerships outside of the public sector. As such, the value of a NUP is not only in the product itself, but also in the process that can enable the environment for considerate decisions to be made and supported by different layers of the Palestinian society.

Within the framework of the Palestinian National Development Plan (NDP) 2021–2023, centred around cluster development and disengagement from the occupation, and the cross-sectoral strategies, the NUP contributes to the vision of an independent Palestinian state built on democracy, equality, safety, transparency, and rule of law. Additionally, the NUP directly contributes to the NDP’s Pillar 2: Excellent Public Service Provision and Pillar 3: Sustainable Development. The NUP and the NSP currently under development by the government are interlinked and interrelated. The NSP aims at assessing feasible and desirable scenarios in terms of economic transformative processes, changing relative importance of sectors in GDP growth, in light of the impending urbanization process of expected increasing demand for housing and services etc. The NUP supports sectorial ministries in programming needs and demand at independence and producing sector plans accordingly. The analysis and the adopted strategic focus of the NUP including its spatial dimensions, contribute to a baseline for Palestine as envisaged under the NSP. The NUP has resulted in a sector-by-sector analysis of required preparedness mechanisms and related sector reform.



The NUP contributes to the achievement and measurement of achievement towards Sustainable Development Goal 11. Palestine is a non-member observer state at the United Nations that signed on to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in September 2015, and thereby also adopted Goal 11 – “Make Cities and Human Settlements Inclusive, Safe, Resilient and Sustainable”. Palestine also adopted the New Urban Agenda (NUA) in October 2016, which identifies the critical means and tools by which cities may achieve Goal 11.

The NUP is a government-led process that provides a plan for the identification of problems and/or

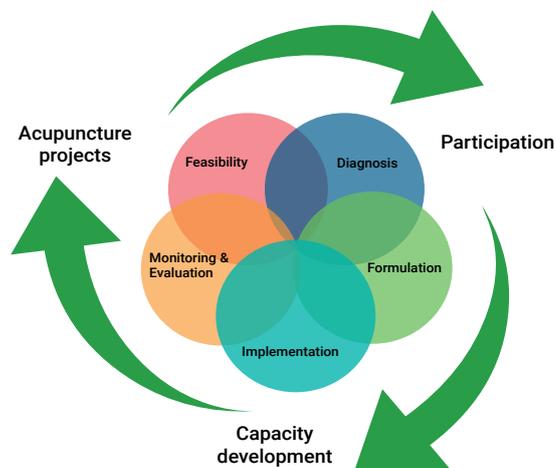


Figure 3: The NUP Process

opportunities, the establishment of goals, the delegation of roles, and the ability to monitor and evaluate the success of the policy. The general methodology as outlined by UN-Habitat, considers five phases to develop the NUP: Feasibility, Diagnosis, Formulation, Implementation, and Monitoring and Evaluation, and three pillars, namely: participation, capacity development, and acupuncture projects, which are characterized as an iterative policy process (Figure 3). The NUP was developed through public consultations involving communities, including women and youth across the OPT at local level by MoLG with support from UN-Habitat. The diagnosis phase is entirely based on the urban profiling exercise done by MoLG and UN-Habitat under the Status Report on the Achievement of Goal 11 in Palestine (2021). The implementation, monitoring and evaluation phases over the next decade will require detailed work at the national level and should be grounded in the NDP (2021-2023) and the NSP (2050).

Over the past year, MoLG and partners led a consultative process in identifying the main priorities and pillars of the NUP. The consultation process was administered by a task team including the Association of Palestinian Local Authorities (APLA), the consultant team from An-Najah National University, and UN-Habitat. The consultations included stakeholders from the Gaza Strip and West Bank, including East Jerusalem. Refugee camps were not excluded but were not directly involved in the NUP process. The main pillars identified are housing, transportation, natural and cultural heritage, sustainable urban-rural development, disaster risk management, urban governance, and urban economy. Climate change was a cross-cutting issue in the discussions between stakeholders and was considered when formulating policies related to all the pillars mentioned above, especially, the fifth pillar related to disaster risk management.



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Pillar 1: Housing Sector

Implementing the National Urban Policy



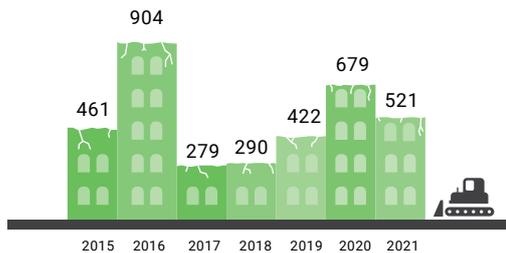
Background

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, which are propelled by the geopolitical situation. These are mainly represented by the Israeli occupation's practices and its restrictive and exclusionary planning policies on Palestinian land. These policies result in a state of insecurity in the possession of housing, especially in East Jerusalem and Area C, in addition to the scarcity of affordable housing and the increase in overcrowding due to the limited horizontal expansion and the need for large numbers of housing to meet the needs of the growing population in Palestine.

Policy priorities are

- 1 Inclusive safe, affordable, and adequate housing including housing for people with disabilities, poor and elderly that is responsive to environmental conditions and climate change
- 2 A sustainable housing sector within the national development priorities aimed at safeguarding the citizen's right to housing throughout the Palestinian territory
- 3 Legislations, laws and regulations controlling and regulating the housing sector in Palestine
- 4 Effective partnerships to provide an incubating and supportive environment to achieve affordable and sustainable housing, including a financial portfolio that supports the citizen's right to safe and affordable housing

Demolished structures in Area C



Demolished structures in East Jerusalem



1,694 Displaced
6,200 Affected

1,064 Demolished (East Jerusalem)



Source: United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs - Occupied Palestinian Territories, 2021

Urban population living in slums, informal settlements or inadequate housing

42.3%



Source: Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, 2018

Challenges	Response
Undermining the security of tenure	Supporting the Palestinian right to housing throughout Palestinian territory and providing an environment that enhances the citizen's ability to obtain affordable and decent housing
Obstructing the implementation of sustainable Palestinian planning and development policies in light of the Israeli practices of demolition, settlement expansion and confiscation of Palestinian lands	Defending the Palestinians' right to spatial planning and enabling them to access all natural resources and basic services
High population density in many residential communities especially in the Gaza Strip	Enhancing the supply of suitable and affordable housing units to meet the housing demand of Palestinian citizens based on a detailed housing plan
Weak legislative system that doesn't align with the needs of the local communities	Revising and updating the relevant legislative, legal and regulatory frameworks to include the dimensions related to the human right to obtain safe and sustainable housing and protecting nature reserves within the National Spatial Plan
Lack of affordable housing	Establishing a national fund for implementing affordable housing projects and creating effective partnerships between the public and private sectors
Lack of institutional capacity and overlapping powers	Improving the capabilities of relevant government institutions and defining powers

SDGs

Direct contribution to SDGs:



Indirect contribution to SDGs:



Social inclusion and leave no one behind

Prioritising vulnerable groups and areas, especially East Jerusalem, Area C, Gaza Strip, and refugee camps, noting the different challenges and needs and Prioritisation of the most vulnerable for public housing, including women-headed households.

Develop a national definition of affordability and public housing policies via a participatory approach that is based on the needs of the most vulnerable groups, especially women, persons with disabilities, children and youth.

Environmental sustainability

Incorporation of safety, green materials and methods, and efficient construction methods into building codes, regulatory and legislative frameworks.

Preserving areas such as biodiversity, natural reserves, and high-value agricultural lands for the sake of allocating new areas for housing.

Other cross cutting issues

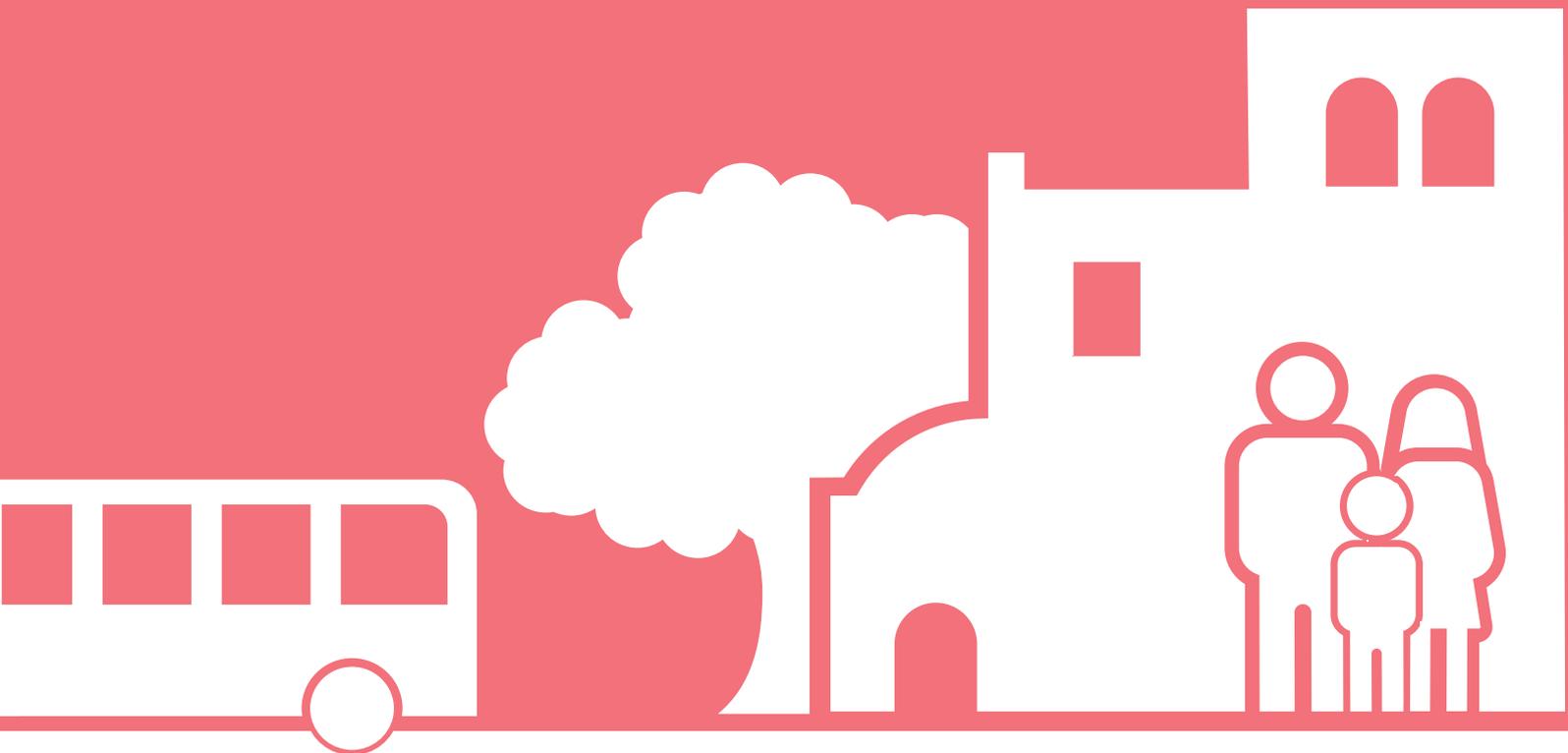
Enhancing the capacity of institutions working in the housing sector to ensure their capacity in developing effective housing policies.

Collecting and analyzing data related to the housing sector and establishing a national housing observatory that unites and coordinates efforts.

Activate the application of building regulations and planning and organization regulations that contribute to the existence of an affordable and sustainable housing sector.

Pillar 2: Transportation Sector

Implementing the National Urban Policy



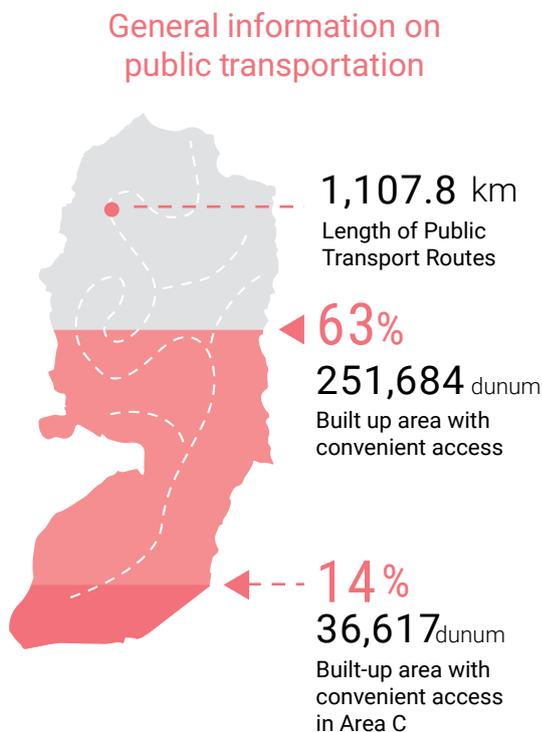
Background

Palestinian urban areas face challenges in geographical contiguity and mobility as a result of the geopolitical divisions and movement restrictions imposed by the Israeli authorities. In addition, all urban centers in Palestine suffer from severe traffic congestion as a result of the continuous increase in ownership of vehicles, limited expansion and development of infrastructure, and the lack of reliable public transportation. These have produced a non-sustainable transportation system, with decreasing level of traffic service and road safety, and increasing travel times, delays, and energy consumption.

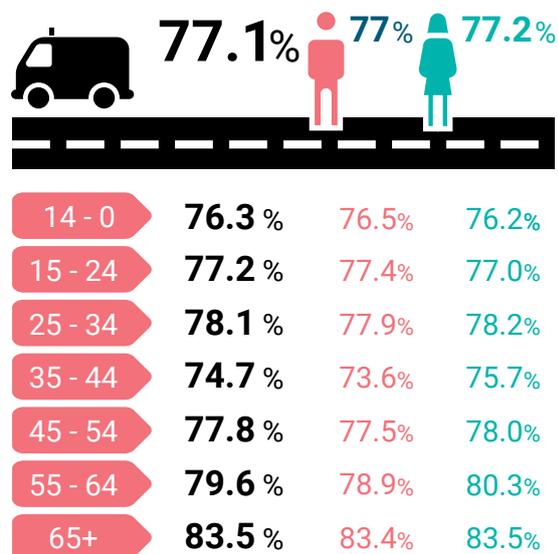
Policy priorities are

- 1 Coordination between urban and transportation planning and complementarity between them
- 2 High efficiency of the road network and transportation services including responsive transportation modes to people with disabilities and elderly
- 3 Environmentally, socially, and economically sustainable multimodal transport that promotes the use of environmentally-friendly vehicles

Convenient access to public transportation:



"Proportion of population that has convenient access to public transport, by sex, age and persons with disabilities"



Source: Ministry of Transportation - raw data, 2021

Challenges	Response
Weak complementarity between urban and transportation planning	<p>Enhancing the integration of urban and transportation planning, creation of new urban centers, and provision of appropriate infrastructure and services that take impact studies into account as part of the urban planning process</p> <p>Improving digital services and the institutional development of the Ministry of Transport to support solution-oriented interventions, such as accelerating service provision</p>
<p>Poor road network infrastructure and high level of traffic congestion as a result of the steady increase in the number of vehicles in reference to the required infrastructure</p> <p>The lack of multimodal transportation systems</p>	<p>Initiating the use of sustainable transportation solutions, in terms of developing urban centers that are friendly to users and the environment; creating an urban environment that reduces dependence on private vehicles, encourages walking, using bicycles/electric bikes, and public and environmentally friendly transportation; creating central public transportation stations outside the main urban areas; introducing city buses, bus rapid transits (BRT) and light rails, and environmentally friendly electric vehicles; and the provision of an enabling environment and infrastructure</p> <p>Improving the level of service on the streets in terms of planning, implementation and maintenance</p>

SDGs

Direct Contribution to SDGs:



Indirect contribution to SDGs:



Social inclusion and leave no one behind

Prioritising vulnerable groups and areas, especially East Jerusalem, Area C, Gaza Strip and refugee camps, noting the different challenges and needs, and ensuring accessibility to all public transportation and areas and control of unlicensed and unsafe means of transportation.

Environmental sustainability

Promoting using the non-motorised modes for transportation within urban areas, encouraging the use of environmentally-friendly vehicles, and better testing of vehicle carbon emissions during licensing.

Other cross cutting issues

Improving the capacities of public organisations in data collection and analysis.

Enforcement of transportation and traffic regulation laws.

Pillar 3: Natural and Cultural Heritage Sector

Implementing the National Urban Policy



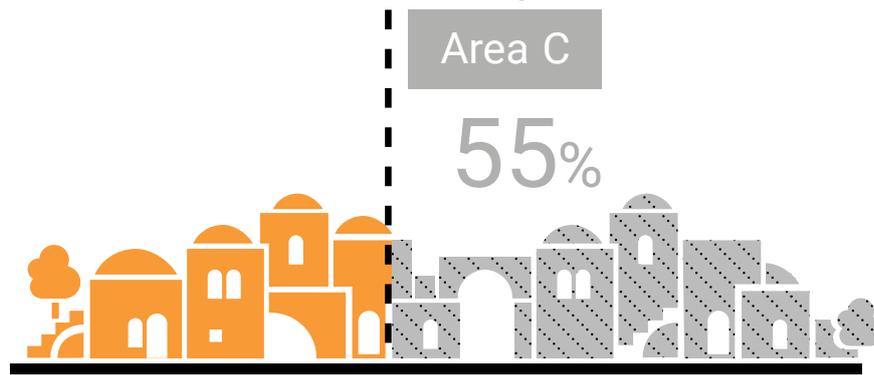
Background

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 from around 7,000 archaeological sites and 50,000 historical buildings that exist in the OPT. With very low government spending on preservation and promotion, there is a need for prioritisation of the sector to cultivate economic and cultural benefits.

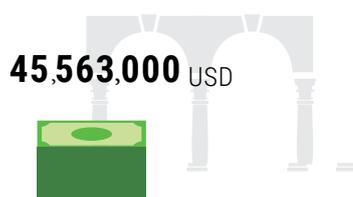
Policy priorities are

- 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, including continuous documentation -improve data collection related to cultural and natural heritage sites, to support in decision making and management of the sites

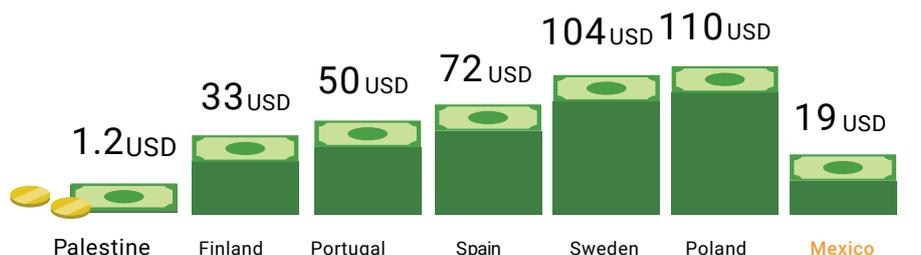
7,000 archeological sites
50,000 historical buildings



Total spending between 2020-2013
All external funding, project-based



Spending per capita



European countries (2019)

Latin American countries (2019)

Source: United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, 2021

Challenges	Response
Weak support for protecting and preserving natural and cultural heritage	<p>Development of a comprehensive plan that includes planning, architectural, service, social, economic, cultural, environmental, and administrative aspects</p> <p>Expansion of protection and rehabilitation efforts to cover all national heritage sites beyond the boundaries of "Area A" and raising the necessary funds for protection operations</p> <p>Preparing a national list of intangible cultural heritage elements</p>
Lack of a database of natural and cultural heritage sites	Updating of national site records and improvement of data collection on natural and cultural heritage sites, to support decision-making and management
Challenges related to clear land and property rights	Improving coordination with LGUs to protect sites inside urban and rural centers
Weak investment in natural and cultural heritage	<p>Conducting heritage conservation assessments to identify potential sites for rehabilitation, use, and development, using the UNESCO Historic Urban Landscape Recommendations</p> <p>Educating and raising awareness on the importance of preserving cultural and natural heritage sites; including incorporation into educational curricula, among youth groups, and environmental-cultural paths</p> <p>Allowing and encouraging investment in the natural and cultural heritage sector, and reforming the legal and institutional sector</p>

SDGs

Direct Contribution to SDGs:



Indirect Contribution to SDGs:



Social inclusion and leave no one behind

Prioritising vulnerable groups and areas, especially East Jerusalem, Area C, Gaza Strip and refugee camps, noting the different challenges and needs.

Environmental sustainability

Protection and reuse of natural and cultural heritage sites as public spaces that model entrepreneurial innovation and promote behavioural change.

Other cross cutting issues

Improving the capacities of public organisations in data collection and analysis and continuously updating the natural and cultural heritage database to include comprehensive information.

Enforcement of the protection of natural and cultural heritage.

Pillar 4: Sustainable Urban- Rural Development

Implementing the National Urban Policy

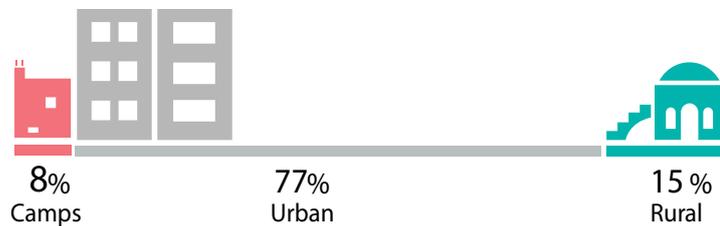


Background

Goal 11 of the Sustainable Development Goals focuses on the need to support positive economic, social and environmental linkages 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. Therefore, the social and economic development of urban areas should not result in neglecting the rural areas. Following an integrative approach; developing urban areas should be parallel to the development of the rural areas regardless of the peak in urbanization in the OPT.

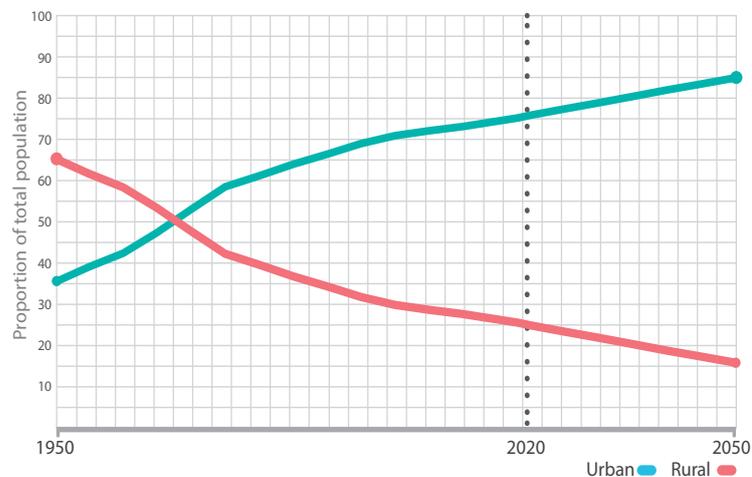
Policy priorities are

- 1 Integration and interconnection of urban and rural areas, reducing and even reversing the migration from rural to urban areas
- 2 Promotion of technology and the provision of spatial information in an accessible manner and the enhancement of economic empowerment interventions with a focus on telecommunication and technology
- 3 Sustainable urban planning interventions based on mainstreaming public participation policies in local and national planning and local governance to increase inputs into decision-making processes and increase conditions for accountability
- 4 Introduce new tools and methodologies to the urban planning craft in Palestine that would move from the traditional land-use and physical planning towards urban growth scenarios and modelling techniques to achieve sustainability in terms of socio-economic and environmental interventions



Source: Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, 2017

Population in urban and rural areas



Source: United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2019

Challenges	Response
Poor integration between urban and rural areas and migration from rural to urban areas	Developing a clear functional definition of urban and rural areas, taking into consideration the political situation of the refugee camps Development of rural areas taking into consideration climate change, environment, health, and sustainability aspects
Lack of interest in sustainable development and spatial planning (urban and rural)	Developing an integrated and sustainable urban-rural system based on decentralization and partnership between the various levels Mainstreaming access to finance, urban management, gender, climate change, participatory approach, risk reduction, etc
No conceptual and planning framework for urban and rural areas	Proposing new tools and methodologies for the urban planning in Palestine to achieve sustainability
Migration from rural to urban	Develop policies aimed at reversing and reducing migration

SDGs

Direct contribution to SDGs:



Indirect contribution to SDGs:



Social inclusion and leave no one behind

Prioritising vulnerable groups and areas, especially East Jerusalem, Area C, Gaza Strip and refugee camps, noting the different challenges and needs.

Ensuring justice and equal distribution in allocating developmental policies, efforts and budgets in rural areas the same as urban areas.

Environmental sustainability

Adopting and advocating for eco-friendly and climate change strategies in both urban and rural areas and development.

Integrating the environmental dimension and climate change into urban and rural strategies, development plans and master plans.

Other cross cutting issues

Formulating a fit-for-purpose functional definition of the urban and rural that addresses the special characteristics of each area and assists in formulating future development plans.

Pillar 5: Disaster Risk Management

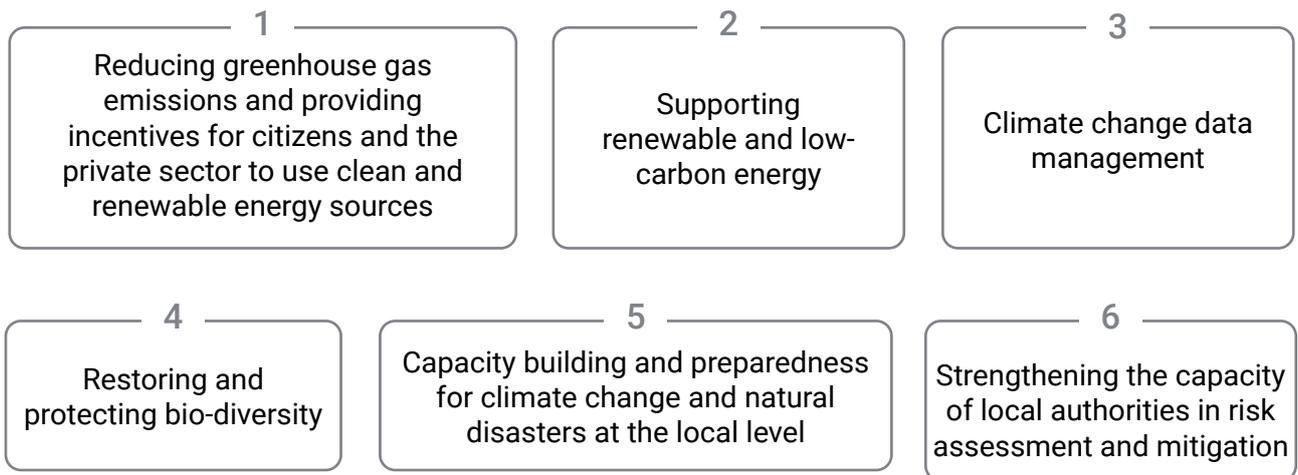
Implementing the National Urban Policy



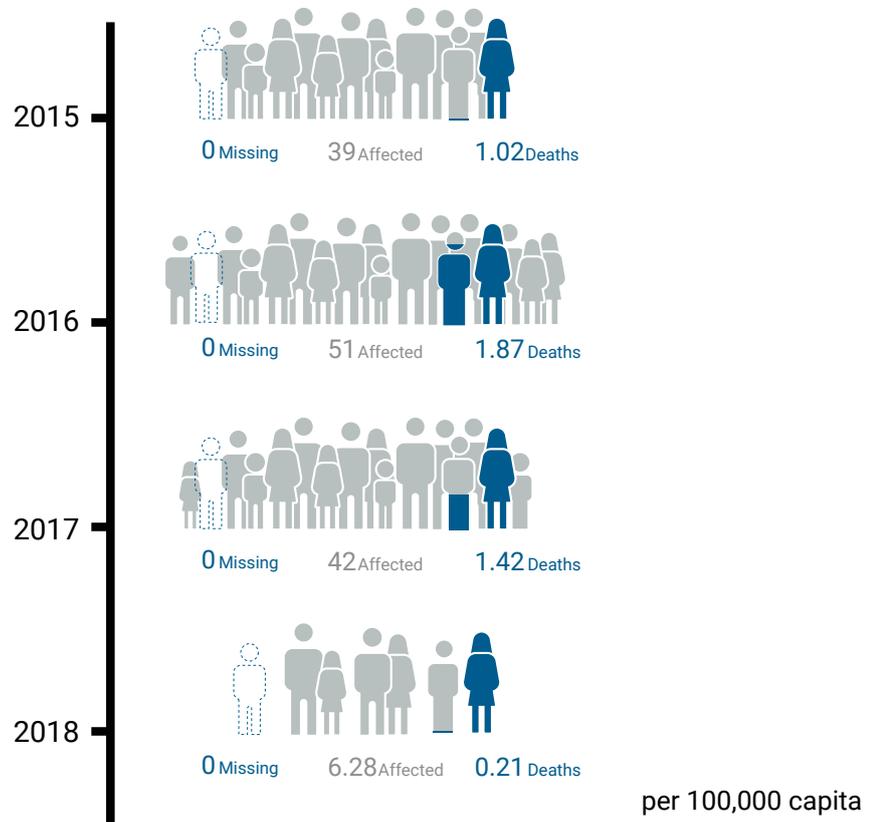
Background

Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) identification of risks and response plans have been developed in Palestine by relevant national authorities with support from universities and other research centers. 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 is still to incorporate urban impacts, particularly on vulnerable groups.

Policy priorities are



Number of affected people by natural disasters in Palestine



Source: United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs - Occupied Palestinian Territories, 2021

Challenges	Response
Failure to activate the legal/institutional framework to address issues related to natural hazards and climate change	DRR and climate change mainstreaming and integration in national planning to achieve sustainable development and adaptation to climate change
Weak DRR policies related to disaster preparedness, mitigation, and response measures	Advocating for and legalizing low-carbon urban development and mitigation by encouraging and supporting the development of plans and strategies at the local level to reduce greenhouse gas emissions
Israeli restrictions on the use of advanced technologies and devices used in monitoring various natural disasters and climate change issues	Advocating for the right to access advanced technologies to safeguard human, economic, natural and cultural resources
Incorrect disposal of waste including electronic wastes, and non-compliance with waste recycling, etc	Building resilience to natural disasters and climate change adaptation through planning, land use regulation, and provision of critical infrastructure and services Developing the infrastructure for the proper management of solid waste and its safe disposal
Lack of awareness in terms of the environmental, climate change and natural disasters	Raising awareness and enhancing public knowledge of environmental factors, climate changes and natural disasters
Need for standardization of data related to climate change	Formulation of a national cross-sectoral climate change program
Limited budget allocated to DRR and impacts on urban and rural areas, especially on marginalized groups	Encouraging decentralization in addressing climate change in urban areas

SDGs

Direct Contribution to SDGs:



Indirect contribution to SDGs:



Social inclusion and leave no one behind

Prioritising vulnerable groups and areas, especially East Jerusalem, Area C, Gaza Strip and refugee camps, noting the different challenges and needs, including ensuring equal distribution of capacities and efforts of preparing for disasters in both urban and rural areas.

Environmental sustainability

Incorporation of DRR strategies, climate change, and sustainable environment strategies aspects and principles in the legislative frameworks and policies on all levels; national, regional, and local and across all sectors.

Other cross cutting issues

Building a unified national framework for data collection and hazards mapping that ensures proper coordination between all relevant (primary and secondary) implementation entities.

Ensuring active engagement of all society stakeholders.

Pillar 6: Urban Governance Sector

Implementing the National Urban Policy



Background

Local government units in the OPT has been in existence for a long time. It has evolved over time with a significant part of its institutional and legal framework having its origin in different political and legal systems that have governed the Palestinian Territories¹. This explains the complexities of the institutional setting of the current Palestinian local administration system as it is today. A constant feature of those political regimes was a strong domination of the central administration. Local administration acted 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 Palestinian Authority (PA) has intensively invested in the promotion of the role of LGUs.

Policy priorities are

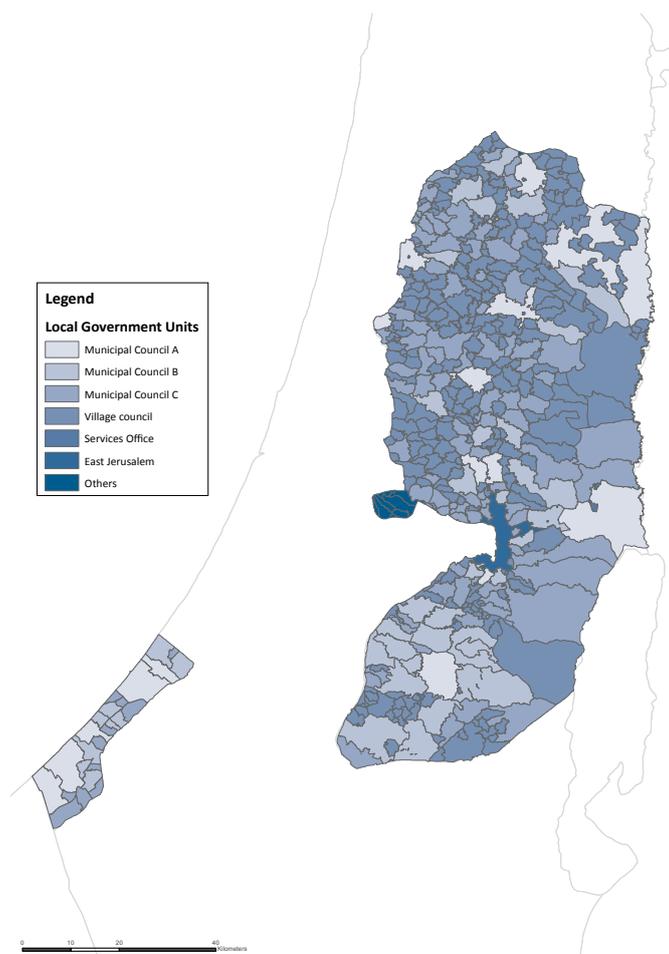
1

Activating and enforcing the legal system in the field of spatial planning

2

Supporting local government units in efforts to decentralize and diversify their revenue sources, such as public-private partnerships and land-based financing

Classification of Local Government Units



Source: Ministry of Local Government, 2021

¹ 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).

Challenges	Response
Weak interdependence and complementarity between the laws regulating local governance, especially those related to planning and zoning	Developing and integrating the legal system for urban governance between the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, with a focus on strengthening decentralization, clarifying responsibilities and powers in institutional systems, in addition to strengthening the implementation of laws
Disparities and weaknesses in institutional capacities in the field of urban planning	Developing institutional capacities and maintaining human resources in the field of planning, zoning, joint and cross-sectoral planning, and linking this to budgets and clear indicators
Weakness in public participation and inclusiveness Weakness in partnership projects with the private sector Poor gender sensitivity	Activation of community participation and the use of technological tools in decision-making processes and spatial planning, adopting the principle of participation, inclusion, gender considerations, and strengthening partnership with the private sector

SDGs

Direct Contribution to SDGs:



Indirect contribution to SDGs:



Social inclusion and leave no one behind

Prioritising vulnerable groups and areas, especially East Jerusalem, Area C, Gaza Strip and refugee camps, noting the different challenges and needs.

Women's empowerment to participate in decision making and governance on all levels.

Improving participatory approaches to decision making towards the achievement of human rights.

Environmental sustainability

Identification of synergies and trade-offs among economic, social, and environmental policy areas to ensure effective participation of all community's stakeholders.

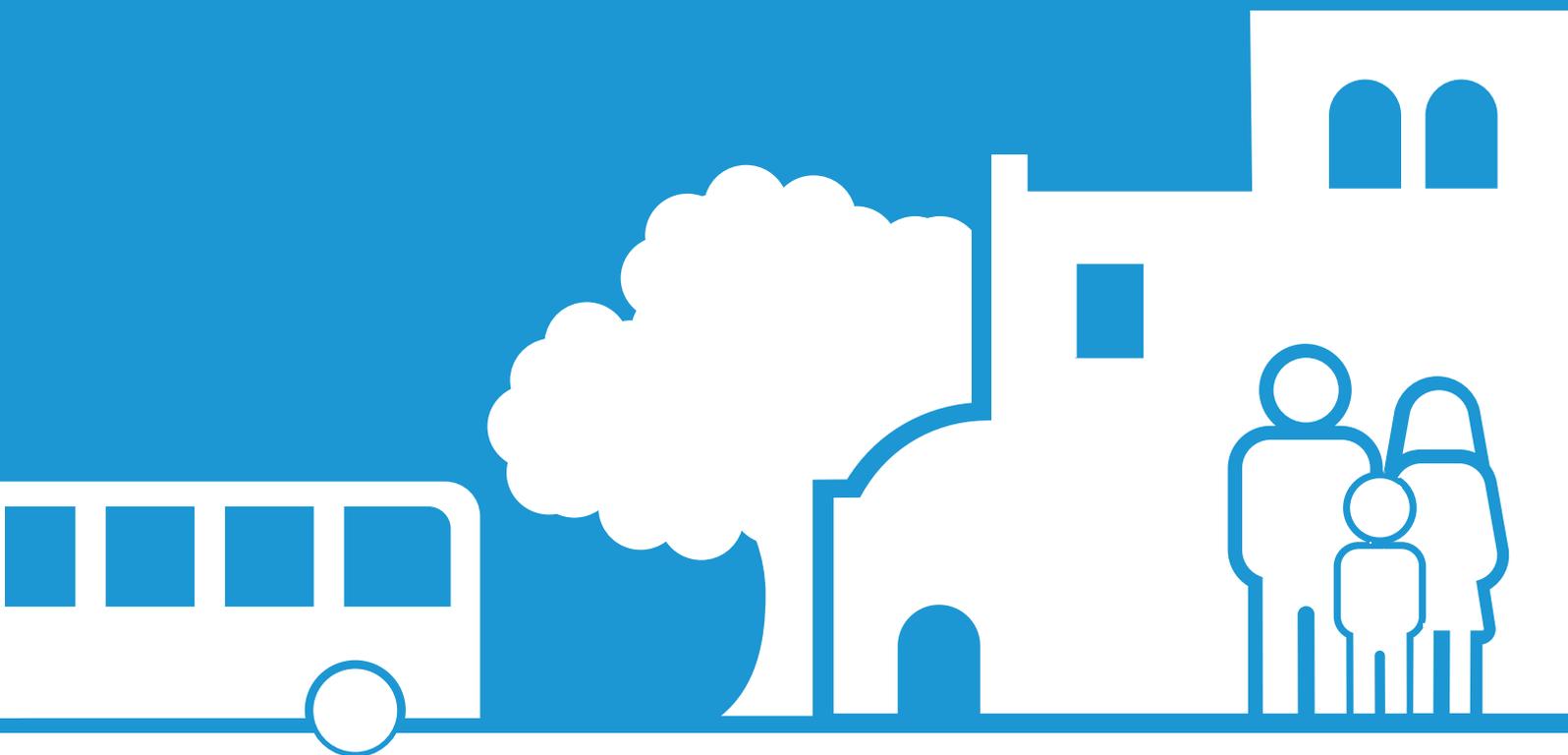
Integration of the environmental aspect and climate change into policies, strategies and plans, and provision of the necessary infrastructure for optimal use of information technology.

Other cross cutting issues

Data collection and analysis related to vulnerable groups and women's participation.

Pillar 7: Urban Economy

Implementing the National Urban Policy

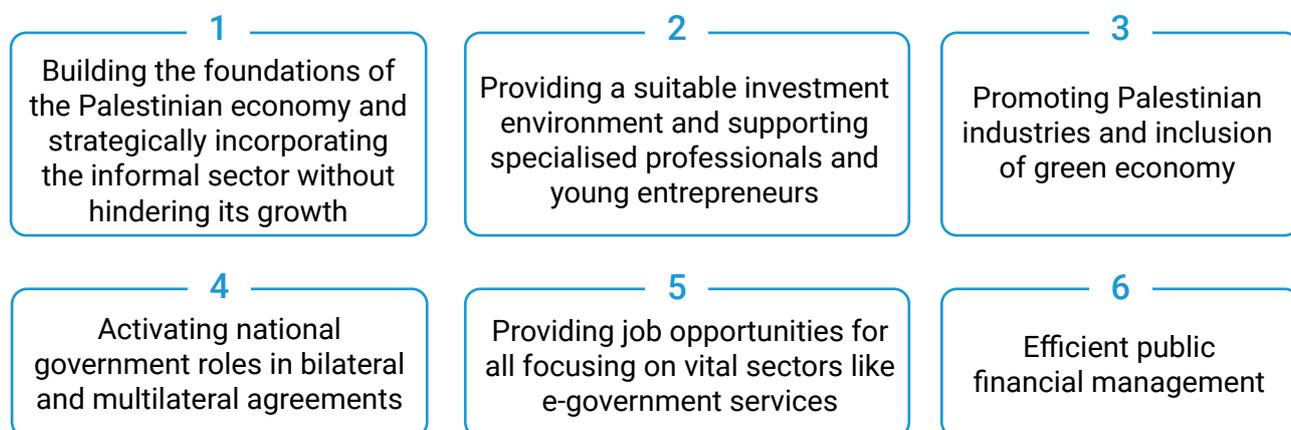


Background

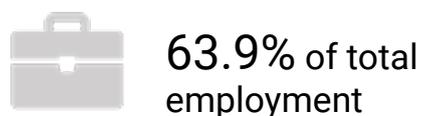
The Palestinian economy is considered a limited and fragile economy, as it is mostly informal, depends heavily on the Israeli economy, which systematically weakens the Palestinian economy and is affected by the consequences of regional and international policies and changes on the other. In 2020, the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) at constant prices (2015) was estimated at USD 14,015.4 million, in 2017 the poverty rate in Palestine reached 29.2 per cent and the unemployment rate reached 25.3 per cent.

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.

Policy priorities are



Proportion of informal employment



Unemployment



Gaza Strip



West Bank



95% of agricultural employment

Source: Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, 2021

Challenges	Response
Weak economic structures	Developing an economic plan focusing on institutional capabilities and maintaining human cadres in the field of planning, organizing, and mobilizing economic resources
Rising unemployment and incompatibility between higher education and available job opportunities	Ensuring active community participation in all sectors of the economy, and that all population segments benefit from the urban planning process and its associated social and economic investments
Palestinian government continuous and rising budget deficit, resulting in lack of investment in local economic development	Creating an investment and urban environment conducive to sustainable development and achieving the objectives of the NUA

SDGs

Direct Contribution to SDGs:



Indirect contribution to SDGs:



Social inclusion and leave no one behind

Prioritising vulnerable groups and areas, especially East Jerusalem, Area C, Gaza Strip and refugee camps, noting the different challenges and needs.

Ensuring gender is mainstreamed within urban and economic planning and implementation to support inclusion of youth, women, and people with disabilities in economic development.

Environmental sustainability

Promoting and incentivizing green urban economic initiatives and increasing green employment opportunities.

Other cross cutting issues

Promoting private sector involvement in local economic development.

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