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Implementation of the normative and operational activities of UN-Habitat, including reporting on the programmatic activities of UN-Habitat in 2024 and the implementation of its subprogrammes, flagship programmes and technical cooperation activities, and UN-Habitat engagement in countries, territories and areas affected by conflicts and disasters

Status of the development of the efforts to reconstruct the human settlements in the Gaza Strip

Report of the Executive Director

I. Introduction

1. In paragraph 6 of its decision 2023/5, the Executive Board of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) requested the Executive Director of UN-Habitat to present a comprehensive and up-to-date report on the status of the development of the efforts to reconstruct the human settlements in the Gaza Strip to the Executive Board at its first session of 2024.
2. At its first session of 2024, the Executive Board took note of the preliminary report of the Executive Director on the status of the development of the efforts to reconstruct the human settlements in the Gaza Strip, as set out in document HSP/EB.2024/INF/6, and requested the Executive Director to present an updated preliminary report to the Executive Board at its second session of 2024. The present report provides information on the status of the development of the reconstruction efforts.

II. Limitations

3. With the war in the Gaza Strip ongoing and no durable ceasefire reached,¹ it was not possible to update the report. In particular, the situation on the ground prevented further detailed assessment and ground-truthing of data. The present report contains data, updated in September 2024, from debris quantification exercises conducted jointly with the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP).
4. Alongside the European Union and the World Bank, the United Nations, including UN-Habitat, is engaged in preparations for a new interim rapid damage and needs assessment.

* HSP/EB.2024/14/Rev.1.

¹ As at 30 September 2024.

5. The challenges and uncertainties related to planning recovery and reconstruction efforts in the Gaza Strip noted in the preliminary report remain valid, and responding to the humanitarian situation remains the immediate focus. The principles derived from lessons learned from previous response and reconstruction efforts in the Gaza Strip and elsewhere and the proposed pathways from acute humanitarian response to recovery and reconstruction also remain applicable.

III. Selected updates on the impact of the war on the human settlements in the Gaza Strip

6. UN-Habitat, jointly with UNEP, has updated the preliminary estimations on debris to be cleared at neighbourhood level. The debris generated by the conflict increased from 22,930,000 metric tons as at 7 January 2024 to 47,339,542 metric tons as at 6 September 2024, a rise of 107 per cent over eight months. The most significant increase was observed in Rafah (1447 per cent), while increases of 166 per cent and 115 per cent were observed in Khan Yunis and Deir al-Balah, respectively. Notably, Gaza Governorate recorded the highest total amount of debris, with an increase of 72 per cent during the period. Using satellite imagery analysis, the United Nations Satellite Centre identified 52,564 destroyed structures, 18,913 severely damaged structures, 56,710 moderately damaged structures and 35,591 possibly damaged structures, giving a total of 163,778 structures, as at 6 September 2024. That corresponds to around 66 per cent of the total structures in the Gaza Strip and an estimated total of 227,591 damaged housing units. The above-mentioned figures are based on a preliminary analysis that has yet to be validated in the field.

7. UN-Habitat has contributed to the production of a debris management framework that will ensure that all actors involved take a coherent approach to promoting and adopting a sustainable debris management approach. The framework also highlights concerns related to housing, land and property rights. A Gaza debris management working group has been established, co-chaired by the United Nations Development Programme and UNEP.

8. Owing to the ongoing Israeli military operations, displacement continues to be very dynamic, having risen from 1.7 million people, or 75 per cent of the population of Gaza, in April 2024 to 1.9 million people, or 90 per cent of the population, in September 2024.

9. UN-Habitat has prepared concept notes on the mobilization of the resources needed to implement its emergency shelter support, urban profiling and recovery planning interventions.

10. The initial mapping of possible sites for transitional shelter solutions and the related methodology have been finalized. Further analysis remains severely limited by data scarcity and restricted ability to conduct assessments on the ground. UN-Habitat continues to collaborate with the Global Shelter Cluster, which is led by the Norwegian Refugee Council, and the Gaza site management working group, which is co-led by the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East and the Agence d'aide à la coopération technique et au développement. The highly dynamic nature of the displacement caused by the ongoing war has prevented any progress from being made on implementing transitional shelter solutions.

11. Alongside the Norwegian Refugee Council, UN-Habitat is leading the housing, land and property working group to ensure that consideration of those matters is mainstreamed across all interventions, particularly debris management, temporary shelter, repairs and reconstruction efforts, whether implemented by civil society or local authorities.

IV. Next steps

12. Updated and comprehensive reporting will be possible when considerable change occurs in the situation on the ground that allows more detailed assessments and clearer likely scenarios to be developed.

13. UN-Habitat will contribute to the forthcoming interim rapid damage and needs assessment.