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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

Normative and operational activities of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme, including updates on the Nepal and Jordan country programmes, urban crisis prevention and response initiatives and activities for the period January–June 2024

Report of the Executive Director

I. Introduction

1. The present report highlights the progress made by the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) in implementing its normative and operational activities. Sections II and III provide updates on progress under, respectively, the UN-Habitat Nepal and Jordan country programmes. The Nepal and Jordan updates demonstrate how UN-Habitat has been able to develop programmes and field presence, drawing on its comparative advantage in various thematic areas of work, across the different domains of change of its strategic plan. They also show how normative and operational activities are balanced, linked and mutually reinforcing at the country level. Section IV provides an update on the initiatives of UN-Habitat in countries, territories and areas affected by conflict and disaster, including the Gaza Strip. In addition, document HSP/EB.2024/INF/13 will provide an update to 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, while document HSP/EB.2024/14 will highlight the progress made regarding selected normative and operational activities during the period January–June 2024 that contributed to each domain of change of the UN-Habitat strategic plan 2020–2025 and the achievement of Sustainable Development Goal 11 and other Goals.

* HSP/EB.2024/14.

II. Update on the Nepal country programme

2. UN-Habitat started to support Nepal in the aftermath of the earthquake in 1988. The assistance provided by UN-Habitat, initially geared towards reconstruction, ultimately led to the formulation of the Nepal National Building Code (1994).¹ In 2007, the UN-Habitat country office in Nepal was established, with the goal of supporting the Government and people of Nepal in achieving green, resilient, inclusive and sustainable development. Since the creation of the Nepal country programme, UN-Habitat has continuously expanded its work in the country, addressing needs for liveable and sustainable human settlements and committing to the implementation of the New Urban Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals, in alignment with the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework for the period 2023–2027.

A. UN-Habitat in Nepal: background

3. In Nepal, the promulgation of the 2015 Constitution solidified the restructuring of the State into a federal republic with three tiers of government – federal, provincial and local – each with distinct authority and responsibilities. Following the federal restructuring, the country has 753 local governments, of which 293 are considered urban municipalities and 460 are classified as rural municipalities. In 2023, of the national population of 30 million, 27.07 per cent was urban, 39.75 per cent was peri-urban and 33.19 per cent was rural, showing an increase in the urban and peri-urban populations over the previous 10 years.² The rise in the urban population is associated with a growing migration trend, from mountainous areas to plains and urban centres, resulting in unplanned urban sprawl.

4. As part of the federal restructuring, local governments have been granted greater autonomy and more resources, providing opportunities to address infrastructure deficits, enhance public services and stimulate economic activities. However, some challenges remain, including disparities in the technical capacity of municipalities to undertake urban planning for long-term development, leading to haphazard urban expansion.

5. Nepal is highly vulnerable to climate change due to its topography, climate-sensitive livelihoods and the limited adaptive capacity of its communities.³ With the melting of snow and glaciers in the Himalayas, Nepal faces increased downstream events, such as erosion, landslides, flash floods and droughts, which have a significant impact on lives and livelihoods. By 2050, climate change could cost Nepal 2.2 per cent of its annual GDP.⁴

6. Landlessness is another major concern. In Nepal, landlessness is both a consequence and cause of poverty,⁵ which has implications for access to food, shelter, public services and citizenship documentation. Despite the 2015 Constitution ensuring land tenure security and land rights protection, more than 1.34 million households are identified as landless or near-landless.⁶ They include people living in informal settlements, those facing threats of eviction, and some subsistence farmers. In Nepal, more than 57.3 per cent of the population is dependent on agriculture,⁷ and nearly half of the rural population that depends on subsistence farming is near-landless, frequently operating under informal tenure. For farmers and people living in informal settlements, being landless exacerbates unsustainable livelihoods and increases their vulnerability to climate risks. The lack of formal tenure systems also has a negative impact on municipalities, as it limits potential revenue from land, property

¹ Nepal, Ministry of Physical Planning and Works, *Nepal National Building Code* (Kathmandu, 1994). Available at https://gcoe.tus-fire.com/archive/uploads/2014/08/nepal_nbc.pdf.

² According to an analysis of the 2021 census data using the degree of urbanization approach, the results of which were endorsed by the Government.

³ Nepal, “Second nationally determined contribution (NDC)”, 8 Dec. 2020. Available at [http://climate.mohp.gov.np/attachments/article/167/Second%20Nationally%20Determined%20Contribution%20\(NDC\)%20-%202020.pdf](http://climate.mohp.gov.np/attachments/article/167/Second%20Nationally%20Determined%20Contribution%20(NDC)%20-%202020.pdf).

⁴ Mahfuz Ahmed and Suphachol Suphachalasai, *Assessing the Costs of Climate Change and Adaptation in South Asia* (Mandaluyong, Philippines, Asian Development Bank, 2014).

⁵ See A/HRC/50/38/Add.2.

⁶ The near landless are those with less than 0.25 ha, who comprise about 65 per cent of the rural population. See Nepal, Ministry of Agricultural Development, *Agriculture Development Strategy (ADS) 2015 to 2035*, Part: 1 (Kathmandu, 2015). Available at <https://moald.gov.np/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/ADS-Final-English-Part-1-2-combined.pdf>.

⁷ Nepal, National Statistics Office, *National Population and Housing Census 2021*. Available at <https://censusnepal.cbs.gov.np/results>.

and rental taxes.⁸ When property rights are not recorded in formal cadastres – corresponding to 25 per cent of all land in Nepal – it results in “dead capital” that cannot be used as collateral for a loan.

7. Lastly, there are significant gaps in housing ownership, housing safety and access to basic services in Nepal. According to the Fifteenth Plan, which was published in 2019, approximately 2 million new housing units were needed, in order to fill the housing gap.⁹ In addition, at least 3.5 million housing units remain vulnerable to large earthquakes, such as those occurring in 2015 and 2023, posing a critical threat to the humanitarian crisis.¹⁰ Furthermore, only 50 per cent of households have access to piped water and 16 per cent to safe water, while 4.5 per cent are without toilet facilities and 49 per cent without safe sanitation.¹¹

8. Addressing these challenges and promoting sustainable urban development through normative and operational activities is the priority of the UN-Habitat Nepal country programme, which is therefore focused primarily on four sectors, while prioritizing the needs of the most marginalized: urban planning and climate change; land reform and management; water, sanitation and hygiene; and inclusive development through the localization of the Sustainable Development Goals.

9. The normative and operational work under the programme is guided by a multi-ministry steering committee led by the Ministry of Urban Development of Nepal. The committee facilitates effective coordination between UN-Habitat and government agencies, including on project endorsement, advice, implementation and monitoring. Strong collaboration has been established with diverse partners, including all levels of government, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), civil society, academia, the private sector, professionals (e.g. urban planners and land surveyors) and other United Nations agencies. That collaboration has led to successful policy support, projects, annual national dialogues on sustainable urban development in connection, for example, with the National Urban Forum, World Habitat Day, World Cities Day and World Town Planning Day and the hosting of an international event, the fifth meeting of the Spatial Planning Platform, in collaboration with the Ministry of Urban Development and the Government of Japan).

B. Normative and operational activities under the Nepal country programme

1. Building resilience through low-carbon climate action for sustainable urban development

10. In 2015, Nepal was struck by the devastating Gorkha earthquake, resulting in damage to or destruction of more than 785,000 homes.¹² In affected urban areas in the Kathmandu Valley, a significant portion of the damaged homes were located in historical urban centres, which were lagging behind in their reconstruction.¹³ Under the project entitled “Sustainable tourism and green growth for heritage settlements in Kathmandu Valley” (2019–2022), UN-Habitat Nepal, funded by the European Union, supported the reconstruction of 12 heritage settlements. The reconstruction process put communities and respect for the environment first, using a community-centred planning approach, as well as Indigenous construction technology and local materials. In addition to rebuilding homes, the project also aimed to revitalize the local tourism industry and create new jobs for affected communities (i.e. with the development of 60 tourism-based enterprises, with improved access to finance and the promotion of handicraft, heritage and food-based activities). The project also leveraged established tourism networks to promote restored heritage settlements as touristic destinations. These activities were supported by a step-by-step urban planning methodology developed jointly with Lalitpur Metropolitan City, the UN-Habitat Our City Plans team and Arcadis (Shelter Mission). Multiple normative products were generated (for example, videos, booklets and publications), contributing to the advancement of global knowledge on the linkages between physical

⁸Janak Raj Joshi and others, “Fit-for-purpose land administration strategy: an innovative approach to implement land policies in Nepal”, paper prepared for the World Bank conference on land and poverty, Washington, D.C., March 2019.

⁹ Nepal, National Planning Commission, *The Fifteenth Plan (Fiscal Year 2019/20–2023/24)* (Kathmandu, 2020). Available at www.npc.gov.np/images/category/15th_plan_English_Version.pdf.

¹⁰ Bernardo Coco, “Retrofitting of existing housing stock has great potential to manage earthquake risk effectively”, *Medium*, 29 Nov. 2020.

¹¹ See <https://washdata.org/data/household#!/npl>.

¹² David Jame Molden, Gopilal Acharya and Eklabya Sharma, “Lessons from Nepal’s 2015 earthquake”, International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development, 22 Aug. 2016. Available at [www.icimod.org/article/lessons-from-nepals-2015-earthquake/#:~:text=The%20earthquake%20caused%20widespread%20damage,damaged%20\(NPC%2C%202015\)](http://www.icimod.org/article/lessons-from-nepals-2015-earthquake/#:~:text=The%20earthquake%20caused%20widespread%20damage,damaged%20(NPC%2C%202015)).

¹³ Housing Recovery and Reconstruction Platform, *Urban Housing Reconstruction Status Paper* (2021). Available at www.hrrpnepal.org/uploads/media/UrbanStatusPaper-min_20210811154749.pdf.

reconstruction, green local economic development and disaster readiness. Overall, these operational and normative activities advanced the work of UN-Habitat under subprogramme 1, Reduced spatial inequality and poverty in communities across the urban-rural continuum, through the reconstruction of heritage settlements, subprogramme 2, Enhanced shared prosperity of cities and regions, through the creation of jobs, and subprogramme 3, Strengthened climate action and improved urban environment, through the use of green and low-carbon technologies to support disaster recovery.

11. Working towards strengthening the resilience of Nepal to climate change (under subprogramme 3), support has been provided under the UN-Habitat Nepal country programme for the implementation of low-cost climate adaptation and mitigation technologies. Through the implementation of two projects, “Emergency support initiative for green building-based prevention and control measures for vulnerable communities in Cambodia, Nepal and Sri Lanka” (2022–2023), funded by the Government of Japan, and “Water for life” (2015–2021), supported by the city of Fukuoka, UN-Habitat Nepal provided capacity-building support and low-cost infrastructure to low-income vulnerable communities. Key operational solutions included heat insulating paint for public schools in regions facing extreme heat, low-cost rainwater harvesting systems for water-scarce communities, permeable pavements, urban agriculture and support for renewable energy utilization through the installation of off-grid solar electrification and improved cooking stoves. The implementation of these climate-smart technologies was guided by tested regional technologies, such as the Tametotto rainwater harvesting system and Miracool heat insulating paints. Such initiatives attracted interest from the Government, other agencies and organizations for replication.

12. Under subprogramme 3, UN-Habitat Nepal is also currently developing normative national and local guidelines that promote climate- and gender-responsive urban development. These guidelines are developed through the “Cities 4 women” project, in partnership with the United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS) and the Cities Alliance, with funding from the United States Agency for International Development and from the European Union. This ongoing project is highly collaborative. It builds on previous support provided to the Ministry of Urban Development and involves direct cooperation with beneficiary municipalities in the implementation of participatory approaches to identify and develop climate- and gender-responsive projects and investments. As part of the project, UN-Habitat Nepal also supports municipalities to strengthen their urban planning processes. To this end, UN-Habitat Nepal has been working closely with experts from the UN-Habitat Global Public Spaces Programme and the Our City Plans team. Experts from the Global Public Spaces Programme are providing technical support in contextualizing and implementing the “Her city” toolbox for developing gender- and climate-responsive public spaces. The Our City Plans team supports the development of municipal planning guidelines.

13. Bolstered by this solid experience in making Nepalese urban areas more sustainable, inclusive and resilient, UN-Habitat Nepal has recently engaged in a new collaboration with the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the Kathmandu Valley Development Authority to implement a Global Environment Facility project on ecosystem-based adaptation in an urban context. Under the project entitled “Urban ecosystem-based adaptation for climate-resilient development in the Kathmandu Valley, Nepal” (2019–2025), contextualized training materials and technical guidelines are being provided to the Kathmandu Valley Development Authority and local governments of the Kathmandu Valley region. These normative products are aimed at building capacity and promoting urban ecosystem-based adaptation through urban planning, project development and implementation. Their content builds on resource materials previously generated through regional and multi-country projects supported by the UN-Habitat Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific.

14. To further its contributions to subprogramme 3 and strengthen its response to climate-related needs, UN-Habitat Nepal is intensifying its efforts to build a strong climate portfolio. Firmly guided by the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (2023–2027) and supporting the “One UN” approach, UN-Habitat Nepal has been establishing partnerships with other United Nations agencies (e.g. ongoing joint projects with the World Food Programme and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) through the Joint Sustainable Development Goals Fund).

2. Advancement of land tenure security and sustainable land management

15. Since 2012, UN-Habitat has stood next to the Government of Nepal in its efforts to prioritize access to land and housing. Directly contributing to the implementation of subprogramme 1, UN-Habitat Nepal, with the support of the Global Land Tool Network, has applied the Network’s tools and approaches, including the continuum of land rights,¹⁴ since 2016 and contextualized the Social

¹⁴ See <https://glttn.net/tag/continuum-of-land-rights/>.

Tenure Domain Model.¹⁵ Internalizing learnings from these interventions, the primary achievement was the adoption of the National Land Policy (2019) with the integration of the fit-for-purpose strategy in land administration, which, for the first time, recognized informal land tenure and the importance of participatory approaches in land management.

16. From 2020 onwards, UN-Habitat Nepal, through the continued support of the Global Land Tool Network, engaged with national and local governments in the implementation of the National Land Policy¹⁶ with due consideration to the multifaceted aspects of land administration and management (i.e. land tenure, livelihoods, shelter, gender, human rights, climate change, conflicts and natural disasters). Countrywide policy implementation was guided by the engagement of UN-Habitat with 14 municipalities, customizing and implementing solutions, as well as its guidance and tools (the Fit-for-Purpose Land Administration Strategy,¹⁷ the resource book on participatory land-use planning¹⁸ and the publication entitled *Localization of Land Governance in Nepal*¹⁹). The work of UN-Habitat Nepal with these 14 municipalities (i.e. using the Social Tenure Domain Model for the identification, verification and recording of informal tenure and the development of participatory land-use processes) has since been embedded into national legislation and has been rolled out successfully in 723 of the 753 municipalities in Nepal. As a result, social tenure information has been collected for 984,000 households, and 5,000 land ownership certificates have already been distributed.²⁰

17. Building on its expertise and strong collaboration with the Government of Nepal, UN-Habitat Nepal recently acquired funding from the Government of the Republic of Korea to work on tackling landlessness and tenure insecurity while promoting climate-smart agriculture technologies to foster climate-resilient development. Support is being provided through a project entitled “A safety net of innovative land tenure solutions for near-landless sharecroppers and for a greener rural Nepal” (2023–2027) to four municipalities from the province of Lumbini in accelerating the delivery of land and tenure security to informal settlers and farmers. With the support of the UN-Habitat Global Land Tool Network and Urban Lab, the project is also aimed at improving the land-use planning practices of engaged municipalities to comprehensively address the climate change and land use nexus. This ongoing project has already enabled the four municipalities to prepare policies, initiate documentation for landless individuals, allocate a budget and put in place a local-level structure to take the lead in upscaling initiatives. The project advances the work of UN-Habitat under subprogrammes 1 and 3.

3. Improving quality of life for all through inclusive sanitation

18. UN-Habitat in Nepal has intensively engaged in the water, sanitation and hygiene sector since 2005. Key early normative and operational milestones included support for the formulation of national policy and guidelines (for example, the Bagmati Action Plan,²¹ Environment Guidelines,²² Solid Waste Management Technical Guidelines,²³ a legal framework for rainwater harvesting²⁴ and the National Sanitation and Hygiene Master Plan²⁵) and implementation of innovative water, sanitation and hygiene technologies for the urban poor (such as rainwater harvesting, ground water recharge, and community-led water supply). Notably, through the National Sanitation Campaign (2011–2021) and under the leadership of the Government of Nepal, the role of UN-Habitat was instrumental in reaching 6 million people in 19 districts to successfully raise the status of Nepal as an open-defecation-free country in 2019, the first to be so declared in South Asia.

19. With continued technical support from the UN-Habitat urban basic services team, the Nepal country programme is focused on citywide inclusive sanitation systems through policy integration,

¹⁵ Christiaan Lemmen, *The Social Tenure Domain Model: A Pro-Poor Land Tool* (Copenhagen, International Federation of Surveyors, 2010).

¹⁶ Global Land Tool Network, “Special announcement: Nepal Government adopts a national land policy”, 28 March 2019.

¹⁷ Nepal, Ministry of Agriculture, Land Development and Cooperatives and others, *Fit-for-Purpose Land Administration: A Country Level Implementation Strategy for Nepal* (Kathmandu, 2018).

¹⁸ Nepal, Ministry of Agriculture, Land Development and Cooperatives and others, *Formulation of Participatory Land Use Plan: Resource Book* (2021).

¹⁹ UN-Habitat and Community Self-Reliance Centre Nepal, *Localization of Land Governance in Nepal* (2022).

²⁰ Data provided by the National Land Commission of Nepal, March 2024.

²¹ UN-Habitat, “Bagmati Action Plan prepared with support of UN-Habitat”, n.d.

²² UN-Habitat, “Urban Environmental Management Guideline under preparation in Nepal”, n.d.

²³ Nepal, Ministry of Local Development and Solid Waste Management and Resource Mobilization Centre, *Solid Waste Management Technical Guideline for Municipalities of Nepal* (2008).

²⁴ UN-Habitat, “Developing a national strategy to harvest rainwater in Nepal”, 19 Jan. 2006.

²⁵ Nepal, Steering Committee for National Sanitation Action, “Sanitation and Hygiene Master Plan”, 2011.

data-strengthening and partnership-building, aiming to achieve safely managed sanitation through the three tiers of government. This global normative project, entitled “Scaling citywide inclusive sanitation systems” (2021–2023; 2023–2026), co-implemented with the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF), is aimed at supporting the ongoing efforts of UN-Habitat to refine global methodologies and assessment tools for Sustainable Development Goal target 6.2 and indicator 6.3.1.

20. As an open-defecation-free country, Nepal has been recognized as a driver of safely managed sanitation. UN-Habitat Nepal acts as the secretariat of the Citywide Inclusive Sanitation Alliance Nepal, which aims to drive collective action to accelerate the adoption of citywide inclusive sanitation in national, provincial and local policy, programming and practices. The Alliance is composed of 22 diverse partners (including United Nations agencies, NGOs, academic institutes, private companies, the media and individual experts) to create a national sanitation movement for water, sanitation and hygiene services for all at the national and subnational levels.

21. Notably, during the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, as the need for water, sanitation and hygiene facilities became paramount, UN-Habitat Nepal, through a Global Sanitation Fund project, supported the installation of handwashing stations in 20 poor areas and coordinated with other United Nations agencies to provide cash support to women in informal settlements and to fulfil immediate basic needs. In addition, through a European Union project on heritage recovery, home-based women were trained to produce face masks and sanitizers.

22. More recently, UN-Habitat, in collaboration with Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific and the Office of Information and Communications Technology, engaged in a project on mainstreaming “leaving no one behind” in national urban policies and programmes (Sustainable Development Goals 11 and 6) in South Asia, led by the Department of Economic and Social Affairs. The aim of the project was to develop urban policy and planning normative tools to support national and local governments in developing inclusive sanitation projects that cater to the needs of persons with disabilities. In Nepal, the major normative outputs of this project included: (a) a design catalogue of accessible public toilets;²⁶ (b) the Gender Equality and Social Inclusion Operational Guidelines of the Ministry of Urban Development;²⁷ and (c) a policy review report containing recommendations for mainstreaming gender equality and social inclusion.

4. Strengthening urban data analysis for evidence-based planning and investments

23. In December 2023, the Government of Nepal launched a report on the degree of urbanization in Nepal.²⁸ The report included a redefinition of the classification of Nepalese urban areas and became a crucial reference for the formulation of national policies and strategies, including the Sixteenth Plan.²⁹ It facilitated the production and reporting of data on Sustainable Development Goal 11 and demonstrated innovative ways to analyse and use data for urban management and decision-making. The report resulted from the collaboration of UN-Habitat Nepal, the UN-Habitat Data and Analytics Unit and the National Statistics Office, supported by the European Commission. The degree of urbanization methodology used is aimed at harmonizing the definition of urban and rural areas globally in support of producing comparable data within and across countries. A series of technical training sessions was conducted by experts from the Data and Analytics Unit and the European Commission with Nepalese participants from various ministries, professional bodies, academia, municipal associations, and the National Statistics Office as the lead, resulting in the analysis of urbanization trends in Nepal. The results, after field verifications and national validation, were formally endorsed by the Government.

24. To further accelerate the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals and the implementation of the organization’s subprogrammes, UN-Habitat Nepal is also actively supporting the localization of the Goals. As a part of the global project led by the UN-Habitat Sustainable Development Goal localization team entitled “Fostering COVID-19 recovery and Sustainable Development Goal implementation through local action in Asia-Pacific, Arab and African countries”, UN-Habitat has collaborated with the Chandragiri Municipality to prepare its voluntary local review and produce local data sets to draw concrete steps towards achieving the Goals. The process is well recognized by the Government of Nepal, and UN-Habitat Nepal is preparing to support other

²⁶ UN-Habitat, *Design Catalogue of Accessible Public Toilets in Nepal* (2023).

²⁷ Nepal, Ministry of Urban Development, *Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI) Operational Guidelines, 2013* (Kathmandu, 2013). Available at www.moud.gov.np/storage/listies/July2019/GESI-Guidelines-en.pdf.

²⁸ Nepal, National Statistics Office, *Degree of Urbanization (DEGURBA) in Nepal* (Kathmandu, 2024).

²⁹ See https://npc.gov.np/en/category/periodic_plans.

municipalities in conducting their voluntary local review and taking local actions towards achieving the Goals.

III. Update on the Jordan country programme

25. Since its establishment in January 2005, the UN-Habitat Jordan country programme has grown to support the Government of Jordan in addressing emerging challenges, including responding to the Syrian refugee crisis, the COVID-19 pandemic and other global crises. The programme entered a new phase in 2018, with a significant increase in its budget, staffing and operations. From 2020 to 2024, UN-Habitat made significant collaborative achievements through its country programme towards advancing sustainable urban development and resilience-building, focusing on urban planning frameworks, inclusive and accessible infrastructure development, socioeconomic empowerment, urban resilience and climate change adaptation. The Jordan country programme reflects a commitment to advancing the Sustainable Development Goals, implementing the New Urban Agenda and contributing to the subprogrammes of the UN-Habitat strategic plan.

A. UN-Habitat in Jordan: background

26. Jordan faces persistent and systemic challenges that impede its sustainable development efforts. With a population of 11.5 million (2023),³⁰ of whom 2.3 million are aged 15-24 years, the country's demographics have been significantly influenced by regional conflicts, being the second largest refugee host per capita worldwide.³¹

27. Migration has played a key role in shaping the politics, economy, society and urban characteristics of Jordan. With more than 80 per cent of refugees, in particular Syrian refugees, in Jordan living in host communities,³² municipalities experience increased pressure to provide services within their limited capacities and resources. Jordan has attracted substantial international aid in support of its role in hosting Syrian refugees since 2012, however, economic challenges persist due to limited government revenues, exacerbated by the impact of COVID-19 and global inflation. This has led to reduced municipal capital spending and increasing debt, with stark investment disparities across regions. Meanwhile, municipalities grapple with a cycle of short-term, sector-specific interventions. Despite reforms aimed at enhancing quality of life and public sector capabilities, economic hardship continues.

28. Urbanization presents another major challenge, with 90.3 per cent of the population living in urban areas.³³ Rapid, concentrated urbanization, driven partly by refugee influxes, has led to inadequate distribution and access to basic services and public facilities. The housing market faces critical affordability challenges due to inflated land, construction and energy costs.³⁴ Inadequate mobility options exacerbate vulnerabilities, in particular for low-income individuals, owing to costly and time-consuming public transportation.

29. In addition, natural resources are scarce, and Jordan is heavily dependent on imports.³⁵ As the world's second most water-scarce country, Jordan struggles to meet its domestic water needs. Climate change exacerbates water and food insecurities, reducing agricultural productivity and increasing land fragility. Climate change risks, such as floods, droughts and heatwaves, are increasing and have a disproportionate impact on host communities and refugees, who are already vulnerable.³⁶ Meanwhile, disaster prevention and mitigation efforts are hindered by insufficient institutional capacities, limited awareness and poor policy implementation.

³⁰ Jordan, Department of Statistics, *Jordan Statistical Yearbook 2023*. (2024), see "Table 2.5 Estimated population of the Kingdom by sex and age group at the end of the year, 2023". Available at https://dosweb.dos.gov.jo/databank/yearbook/YearBook_2023/Population.pdf.

³¹ Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), "Jordan", fact sheet, Sept. 2021. Available at <https://reporting.unhcr.org/sites/default/files/Jordan%20country%20factsheet%20-%20September%202021.pdf>.

³² UNHCR, Jordan Operational Data Portal, available at <https://data.unhcr.org/en/country/jor>.

³³ Jordan, Department of Statistics, *Jordan Statistical Yearbook 2023*, see "Table 2.3 Estimated population of the Kingdom by Governorate, urban and rural, at the end of year, 2023".

³⁴ UN-Habitat, *Urban Planning and Infrastructure in Migration Contexts: Mafraq Spatial Profile – Jordan* (Amman, 2024).

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ Mohammad Ghazal, "Climate change to hit impoverished Jordanians the hardest, streamlining funding process vital to build resilience", *The Jordan Times*, 6 Sept. 2022.

30. To address these challenges, the Jordan country office has partnered with a wide range of national and local partners, including line ministries, municipalities, civil society organizations, academia and the private sector, as well as other United Nations entities, namely the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia, UNEP, UNDP, UNICEF, UNOPS, the International Labour Organization and UNESCO. The portfolio of the Jordan programme grew from \$1.02 million in 2020 to more than \$12 million in 2024. Resources were mobilized through the generous support of international donors, namely the Government of Japan, the Mediterranean City-to-City Migration Project, the Global Public Space Programme, the United Nations COVID-19 response and recovery multi-partner trust fund, the Adaptation Fund, the Government of Italy through the Italian Agency for Development Cooperation, the European Union, the Swiss State Secretariat for Economic Affairs, the Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development Sub-Fund and, most recently, the Government of the Kingdom of the Netherlands.

B. Normative and operational activities under the Jordan country programme

1. Multi-stakeholder urban data and planning frameworks for sustainable and resilient cities

31. UN-Habitat, through the Jordan country programme, has addressed reduced spatial inequality and poverty (subprogramme 1) by enhancing national and local urban planning frameworks, focusing on creating comprehensive normative products, such as urban policies, guidelines, profiles and plans through spatial analysis and technical support. By strengthening planning regulations and strategies, UN-Habitat has built institutional capacities and promoted informed, participatory decision-making. These efforts are crucial for fostering sustainable cities and identifying viable investment projects at the local level.

32. A landmark achievement under the country programme was the development, in collaboration with the Ministry of Local Administration, of the first National Urban Policy.³⁷ The development of the Policy was a milestone in the modern history of Jordan and provides a national framework for urban development, transforming urbanization patterns into a development engine. As a normative framework, the Policy supports integrated regional and local planning for compact, inclusive cities that are resilient to climate change, offering a structured, coordinated and proactive approach that responds to the country's urban opportunities and challenges, based on its unique national assets, interests and priorities. As part of the development of the Policy, UN-Habitat produced thematic guides on mainstreaming local economic development,³⁸ housing,³⁹ transport and mobility⁴⁰ into the Policy. Endorsed in 2024 during a steering committee meeting led by the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Local Administration, the Policy underscores the commitment of Jordan to sustainable urbanization and inclusive growth.

33. Globally the Jordan country office has highlighted the importance of evidence-based normative studies in guiding decisions and operational work. Through the project entitled "Urban planning and infrastructure in migration contexts" (2021–2024), accurate data and multisectoral analysis have enabled stakeholders to make informed and impactful decisions, in particular in vulnerable areas hosting refugees. In Jordan, comprehensive spatial profiling has been conducted in Amman,⁴¹ Irbid⁴² and Mafraq⁴³ cities. This integration of normative frameworks with operational implementation is a core strength of the programme work. Benefiting from the lessons learned across three countries and multiple cities, the UN-Habitat Jordan, Egypt and Cameroon country offices and the Planning, Finance and Economy Section developed normative guidelines for urban planning and infrastructure in migration contexts, for local and national planning uses. In addition, UN-Habitat

³⁷ Jordan, Ministry of Local Administration and UN-Habitat, *Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan: Jordan National Urban Policy* (Amman, UN-Habitat, 2024).

³⁸ UN-Habitat, *Mainstreaming Local Economic Development into Jordan's National Urban Policy Thematic Guide* (Amman, 2021).

³⁹ UN-Habitat, *Mainstreaming Housing into Jordan's National Urban Policy Thematic Guide* (Amman, 2021).

⁴⁰ UN-Habitat, *Mainstreaming Transport and Mobility into Jordan's National Urban Policy Thematic Guide* (Amman, 2021).

⁴¹ UN-Habitat, *Urban Planning and Infrastructure in Migration Contexts: Amman Spatial Profile – Jordan* (Amman, 2022).

⁴² UN-Habitat, *Urban Planning and Infrastructure in Migration Contexts: Irbid Spatial Profile – Jordan* (Amman, 2022).

⁴³ UN-Habitat, *Urban Planning and Infrastructure in Migration Contexts: Mafraq Spatial Profile*.

conducted training sessions using a “learning-by-doing” methodology for local planning and geographical information system departments, which has led to the institutionalization of spatial profiling within municipal practices, enhancing knowledge exchange between municipalities and government institutions. For instance, the Greater Irbid Municipality is currently using the UN-Habitat methodology to develop comprehensive “Needs guidelines” to address community needs.

34. As part of the same project, spatial profiling at the city and neighbourhood levels has enabled the identification of critical projects in highly vulnerable neighbourhoods. For example, in 2023, a collaboration with Arcadis, through its Shelter Program, was focused on rehabilitating 16 deteriorating staircases to improve mobility and well-being in a refugee-hosting neighbourhood. In addition, a partnership with the Goethe Institute and the Greater Amman Municipality led to the rehabilitation of Queen Noor Park, through innovative interventions by young local artists. The revitalized park has been warmly embraced by residents, symbolizing a renewed sense of community.

35. In addition to these efforts, the country office has been advancing multi-stakeholder urban planning frameworks to promote inclusive, sustainable development. Partnering with the Greater Amman Municipality, UN-Habitat provided technical support for the development of the Municipality’s first urban planning regulation, emphasizing community participation and equitable access to services. Similarly, UN-Habitat extended its support to the Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation in developing the Karak Governorate Spatial Development Plan, steering local authorities towards tangible development initiatives.

2. Community-led public space development

36. Under the Jordan country programme, normative and operational tools are combined to leverage public spaces in order to enhance socioeconomic conditions, climate resilience, social cohesion and the overall well-being of vulnerable communities. Targeting dense urban areas, heritage cities, affordable housing projects, poverty pockets, and refugee camps, these community-driven initiatives emphasize empowering vulnerable groups and evolve along with the needs of communities. In addition to supporting the achievement of Sustainable Development Goals 1, 5, 8, 11 and 13, these initiatives contribute to advancing work under UN-Habitat subprogramme 1 (“reduced spatial inequality and poverty in communities across the urban-rural continuum”), subprogramme 3 (“strengthened climate action and improved urban environment”) and subprogramme 4 (“effective urban crisis prevention and response”).

37. In response to the Syrian refugee crisis, UN-Habitat aimed to foster social cohesion between migrants and host communities by rehabilitating safe, inclusive and accessible public spaces in Amman and in Zarqa. Through the project on safe, inclusive and accessible public space for social cohesion in Marka neighbourhood and Al-Majd Residential City, Zarqa (2020–2022), UN-Habitat Jordan worked with the Global Public Space Programme to localize the Global Public Space Toolkit and employ the Block-by-Block Methodology, engaging refugees, Jordanian youth, and persons with disabilities in participatory public space co-design using Minecraft. This approach ensured the reflection of community voices and needs into the local design.

38. In 2021, to mitigate the negative socioeconomic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, a joint United Nations project entitled “The socioeconomic empowerment of vulnerable women in Ghor Al Safi through improving access to safe and green public spaces” (2021–2022), co-implemented by UN-Habitat, the International Labour Organization and UNOPS, was focused on supporting vulnerable women living in the poverty pocket of Ghor Al Safi. The project enabled the creation of a gender-sensitive, inclusive, accessible and safe public space and community centre. It followed the participatory public space site-specific assessment⁴⁴ process, designing a child-friendly space. In partnership with a local NGO, the space is being maintained as an incubator for training and entrepreneurial activities for local women and youth.

39. Between 2021 and 2024, under the project entitled “Enhancing the safety and resilience of Palestinian refugees through improving access to water and sanitation facilities in public spaces”, UN-Habitat Jordan applied the public space site-specific assessment tool, which enabled it not only to provide water, sanitation and hygiene facilities, but also to improve safety and resilience in the Souf and Al-Shahid Palestinian refugee camps. Youth were engaged in space design and urban gardening activities, transforming neglected spaces into vibrant community areas and fostering a sense of ownership and active participation among residents.

⁴⁴ UN-Habitat, *Public Space Site-Specific Assessment: Guidelines to Achieve Quality Public Spaces at Neighbourhood Level* (Nairobi, 2020).

40. Public spaces have also been used under the country programme to address broader challenges, such as food and water insecurity. In Amman, a community garden, developed through the project entitled “Inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable development in urban areas hosting Syrian refugees in Jordan and Turkey” (2022–2023) in partnership with UNEP and the Greater Amman Municipality, features sustainable urban agriculture components, such as a greenhouse, a water tank, a composting system and inclusive facilities. These components seek to enhance food security, promote sustainable practices and prioritize community involvement and capacity-building for long-term self-sufficiency, aiming at empowering local stakeholders to replicate and sustain similar projects. Normative knowledge resources, including forthcoming publications on community urban gardens, are being developed to support replication.

41. In Al-Salt city, a UNESCO world heritage site, public spaces are being leveraged to address the emerging issues of heritage loss, unplanned urbanization and inclusivity. Under the project entitled “Green Al-Salt: public spaces and living heritage for socioeconomic development” (2024–2026), UN-Habitat and UNESCO are conducting a citywide public space assessment and creating a citywide public space strategy, the first in Jordan. This will ultimately create an evidence-based blueprint for urban planning and development initiatives in the city. Through collaboration with the Greater Salt Municipality, this strategic framework will be integrated into municipal policies, institutionalizing the principles of safe, inclusive and accessible urban spaces in heritage conservation.

42. Furthermore, the country office is exploring the potential for transforming public spaces into hubs for innovative upcycled products and creating livelihood opportunities for vulnerable women. Promoting a circular economy approach, UN-Habitat is involved in a project on enabling advancements in recycling and transforming habits through women-led initiatives in Jordan (2024–2025). The project encourages waste reduction through recycling, upcycling and reuse, supported by normative guidelines that foster sustainable practices and behavioural change.

3. Localizing the Sustainable Development Goals and implementing the New Urban Agenda

43. The Jordan country office is supporting localized data collection, monitoring and analysis processes and platforms, to ensure that local actions contribute effectively to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals at the national and global levels. By bridging local and national gaps, UN-Habitat and partners are striving to ensure that the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is tailored to the needs and context of Jordanian cities, in alignment with the subprogrammes of UN-Habitat.

44. A key achievement is the development, in collaboration with the Housing and Urban Development Corporation, of the first progress report on the implementation of the New Urban Agenda in Jordan.⁴⁵ The report provided key insights into the progress made by Jordan against relevant indicators, and recommendations for the effective implementation of the New Urban Agenda.

45. Furthermore, in partnership with the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia and the United Cities and Local Governments Middle East and West Asia Section, and in close cooperation with the Greater Amman Municipality, UN-Habitat developed the first voluntary local review in the Arab region, analysing and presenting recommendations to improve the performance of Amman with regard to the Sustainable Development Goals. This voluntary local review report was developed in parallel with the second voluntary national review of Jordan, creating the opportunity to reinforce national-local policy coherence. In 2022, at the high-level political forum on sustainable development, Jordan presented both its second voluntary national review and its first voluntary local review. This significant milestone showcased Jordan as a pioneer in fostering national-local development dialogue. Subsequently, this project also contributed to the joint development of the *Practical Guidelines for Voluntary Local Reviews in the Arab Region*.⁴⁶ The voluntary local review process is currently being replicated in Irbid city, in alignment with the Global Urban Monitoring Framework⁴⁷ and the action-oriented voluntary local review methodology.⁴⁸

46. Furthermore, through the Local2030 Knowledge and Scientific Network, UN-Habitat is collaborating with young researchers and the municipalities of Irbid and Aqaba to collect data and

⁴⁵ Housing and Urban Development Corporation, *Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan National Progress Report on the Implementation of the New Urban Agenda* (2022).

⁴⁶ *Practical Guidelines for Voluntary Local Reviews in the Arab Region* (United Nations publication, 2024).

⁴⁷ UN-Habitat, *The Global Urban Monitoring Framework* (Nairobi, 2022).

⁴⁸ UN-Habitat and United Cities and Local Governments, “Action-oriented voluntary local reviews: a methodology for the partners of UN-Habitat”, Feb. 2024. Available at https://unhabitat.org/sites/default/files/2024/02/action-oriented_vlr_methodology.pdf.

enable evidence-based policymaking for the localization of the six Sustainable Development Goal transitions.

47. The country programme has also been selected to lead joint United Nations country team efforts and build on its current work with the localization of the Sustainable Development Goals and data collection to strengthen participatory data collection and monitoring through digital platforms, under the project entitled “Pathways to inclusive development: bridging data, participation and human rights for the localization of the Sustainable Development Goals”. This planned collaboration with the Resident Coordinator Office, UNDP, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and national and local authorities fosters coordination to advance the localization of the Goals within a human rights-based framework, combining capacity development, digital reporting and monitoring systems, and advocacy. It positions Jordan to effectively localize and advance the 2030 Agenda.

4. Addressing climate change and building climate resilience

48. Directly advancing subprogramme 3, UN-Habitat Jordan is focusing on responding to water and food insecurities and enhancing the adaptive capacities of vulnerable populations, including refugees, the urban poor and women. The followed approach integrates environmental sustainability with human rights, supporting the achievement of multiple Sustainable Development Goals.

49. In collaboration with UNDP, UNEP and the Greater Amman Municipality, UN-Habitat conducted a climate change vulnerability and risk assessment for the city of Amman in 2023. Along with the C40 Cities Climate Leadership Group, partners updated the Amman climate action plan, which is aimed at creating a sustainable future for Amman and achieving carbon neutrality by 2050. By integrating comprehensive risk assessments and targeted actions, these normative products set a clear path towards mitigating climate impacts in Amman.

50. In partnership with the Greater Amman Municipality, under the project entitled “Strengthening the social stability and resilience of vulnerable Jordanian communities and Syrian refugees in Amman against flash floods” (2020–2022), UN-Habitat has also enhanced institutional and community resilience to flash floods in Downtown Amman. A flood risk assessment identified 120 flood hotspots, and targeted interventions were identified using the city resilience action planning tool,⁴⁹ tailored for the first time in the Arab region. This initiative engaged stakeholders in capacity-building, vocational training and awareness activities, focusing on community priorities like water harvesting systems and green infrastructure. Pilot projects, such as the Al-Zohour Green Triangle, applied sustainable urban drainage systems to manage stormwater through bioretention and detention methods, benefiting 35,000 individuals. The project, which was praised by the Mayor of Amman, served as a catalyst for future strategic solutions and expanded resource mobilization to strengthen the resilience of Amman to water challenges. Accordingly, through the subsequent project entitled “Smart urban water management: enhancing the adaptive capacity and urban resilience of Amman through urban green infrastructure” (2024–2026), green infrastructure, stormwater detention and water harvesting solutions will be scaled across hotspot areas in Amman to reduce flood risks for vulnerable communities, including refugees. The project fosters public engagement with academia, through initiatives such as the National Award for Green Innovation campaigns, which promote environmental responsibility. The proposed “Typologies of urban green infrastructure” toolkit will help to sustain these practices.

51. In addition, in the city of Sahab, through the Resilient Settlements for the Urban Poor (RISE UP) flagship programme, UN-Habitat Jordan is working with the Climate Change and Urban Environment Team to pilot innovative tools and interventions to address urban, climate and biodiversity vulnerabilities. Through a project on accelerating the implementation of the Paris Agreement by building the climate resilience of the urban poor in Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Colombia, Ethiopia, Jordan and Tunisia (2024–2025), which follows the UN-Habitat multilayered vulnerability assessment methodology, the most at-risk areas, focusing on urban poverty and climate exposure, will be identified. The project bridges the gap between normative guidance and practical application, ensuring recommendations are integrated into local planning practices. It also plays a critical role in resource mobilization, supporting targeted actions to address pressing climate-related challenges in Sahab.

52. The regional Adaptation Fund project entitled “Increasing the resilience of both displaced persons and host communities to climate change-related water challenges in Jordan and Lebanon” (2021–2025) in Jordan is a critical initiative within the humanitarian–development nexus that

⁴⁹ UN-Habitat and Sub-Regional Technical Centre for Disaster Risk Management, Sustainability and Urban Resilience, “CityRAP tool: city resilience action planning tool”, 2018.

addresses climate change within the Syrian crisis context. The project is focused on the needs of displaced persons and host communities, in particular women and youth, by promoting sustainable water management practices, such as rooftop rainwater harvesting and greywater treatment systems, to reduce tension and reliance on unsustainable water sources. This is integrated with guidelines and knowledge resources, including climate change adaptation action plans and climate-resilient master plans. Support to the Regional Knowledge Management Platform and municipal urban observatories in Irbid and Mafrq will strengthen data-driven decision-making.

53. Further resource mobilization has resulted in expanded efforts to address climate-related water risks. This includes the project entitled “Enhancing climate change resilience through water-related interventions and non-conventional nature-based solutions in areas hosting displaced people in Jordan and Lebanon” (2024–2026), through which rainwater harvesting systems will be installed in Jordan and Lebanon and a lagoon constructed. The lagoon, guided by best practice frameworks, leverages natural processes – solar radiation, wind circulation, and biological activities – to treat wastewater and enhance water quality. In addition, the Jordan country office is conducting a flash flood risk assessment and hazard mapping for Mafrq Wadi, prioritizing adaptation measures in collaboration with local stakeholders.

54. In the city of Madaba, the project entitled “Climate-smart pathways for an agile and resilient economy (CARE)” (2024–2026) is following the water–energy–food–ecosystems nexus approach to integrate green growth, climate change adaptation and the Sustainable Development Goals into strategic frameworks. An innovative Urban-Water, Energy, Food and Ecosystems Nexus Lab will be developed as a demonstration site showcasing hydroponics, aquaponics, solar-powered irrigation and a community garden in a public space. Alongside this, comprehensive baseline analyses and strategic plans will guide monitoring, evaluation and communication, ensuring the project’s lasting impact on sustainable development in the region.

IV. Update on urban crisis prevention and response initiatives

A. Progress in institutional and normative support

55. In June 2024, UN-Habitat finalized a publication that advances global normative knowledge on the relationship between urban planning, public space development and migration. In *Mainstreaming Migration and Displacement in Urban Planning and Public Space Development*, UN-Habitat demonstrates how, through participatory urban planning and the implementation of inclusive public spaces, cities and local governments can leverage innovative and complementary strategies to manage migration flows and harness the opportunities that they bring. The publication presents best practices, case studies and recommendations, drawing from the recent experiences of UN-Habitat through its operational programming work. Showcasing examples from cities in Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Burkina Faso, Jordan, Kenya, Lebanon, Nepal, Somalia, the State of Palestine, Uganda and Latin America and the Caribbean, UN-Habitat outlines how bridging humanitarian and development activities is paramount to effective urban crises response.

56. In addition, as a key contribution to the Secretary-General’s Action Agenda on Solutions to Internal Displacement and the work led by the Special Adviser on Solutions to Internal Displacement, UN-Habitat has worked with a wide variety of stakeholders on a global framework under the title “Towards inclusive solutions to urban internal displacement”. The document seeks to guide international actors in their support to national and local governments to program internal displacement solutions that are more sustainable, scalable and transformational in urban areas. It results from a collaboration with the International Institute for Environment and Development and consultation with IMPACT Initiatives, the International Organization for Migration, the Joint Internally Displaced Person Profiling Service, the Office of the Special Adviser on Solutions to Internal Displacement, the office of the Special Rapporteur on the human rights of internally displaced persons, UN-Habitat, UNDP, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), UNICEF, the World Food Programme and the World Bank, among others. The framework provides guidance on a better alignment of the response across the humanitarian–development–peace nexus, ensuring that solutions are initiated from the start during a humanitarian response.

57. In addition, UN-Habitat released a compendium of its work entitled “Sustainable urbanization and forced displacement: UN-Habitat practices towards solutions”. The document includes case studies reflecting on solutions in crisis-affected countries, including Colombia, Iraq, Mozambique and Somalia. The compendium will serve to inform the policy paper on internal displacement being prepared by the High-level Committee on Programmes, to be published in the last quarter of 2024.

58. UN-Habitat has also been working on developing a policy paper on “Housing, land and property rights for local integration and durable solutions in customary contexts”. The paper is intended to complement the body of knowledge on durable housing, land and property solutions, incorporating lessons learned from customary contexts. The review of displacement trends and case studies, as well as the analysis of key concepts and underlying assumptions, form the basis of key findings and lessons learned on how to prevent displacement and provide durable solutions in customary contexts through interventions relating to housing, land and property rights.

59. Since January 2024, UN-Habitat has also expanded the work of its community of practice on solutions to internal displacement to increase knowledge exchanges and peer-learning across the agency and improve the impact of operational activities. Five sessions have taken place, covering the topics of social inclusion, urban profiling, financing and housing, land and property rights, and foresight analysis on displacement flows, territorial assessments and investment strategies. Priority topics were selected based on a survey identifying knowledge gaps related to forced displacement across UN-Habitat. The sessions are used to develop further training material.

B. Progress in the provision of support to countries experiencing crisis

60. In accordance with paragraph 3 of decision 2024/2, UN-Habitat has continued to support efforts to reconstruct the human settlements affected by conflict and disaster, through a comprehensive system-wide response, and has continued to provide assistance to countries affected by urban crises, using urban profiling to assess the needs, vulnerabilities and capacities of urban areas and to establish urban recovery frameworks. Some examples of the work of UN-Habitat in this regard are given in the paragraphs below.

61. In Lebanon, which is facing multiple concurrent crises (socioeconomic, political, financial and armed conflict), UN-Habitat continues to support local authorities, service providers and communities in coping with the impact of crises. In South Lebanon, support includes providing operational emergency assistance through the Regional Technical Office in the Union of Tyre Municipalities, rehabilitation and equipping of the Disaster Risk Management Unit within the Union and increasing its information technology capacities to enhance data-driven decision-making during the ongoing conflict. Strategically, UN-Habitat is also working closely with: (a) the humanitarian water, sanitation and hygiene and shelter sectors to identify and assess collective shelters for internally displaced persons, (b) the United Nations country team on planning ahead of future damage assessment and debris management needs, and (c) the Lebanese Red Cross and the Council for the South (a public entity) to develop and use mobile damage assessment tools, to enhance local response strategies. Other countrywide crisis prevention and response support includes strengthening of civil defence and firefighting capacities in Tripoli, Beirut and Zahle.

62. In the Syrian Arab Republic, affected by the ongoing crisis and the impacts of the devastating earthquake in 2023, UN-Habitat continues to play a vital role in the broader transition of international support from life-saving humanitarian assistance to resilience-oriented early recovery. During the reporting period, UN-Habitat supported communities in assessing damages caused by conflict and the earthquake and in prioritizing needs. The agency also facilitated the formulation of city recovery plans in eight municipalities, including Irbin and Nashabiyah in Rif Dimashq Governorate, Jablah in Latakia Governorate, Hama, Mahardeh, Halfaya, and Salamiyah in Hama Governorate, and Aleppo city in Aleppo Governorate. On the basis of those analyses and plans, UN-Habitat supported the restoration of essential city infrastructure and services, while also providing capacity development support for housing, land and property rights protection measures. Furthermore, UN-Habitat contributed to the formulation of the Early Recovery Strategy by the Humanitarian Country Team and the Area-Based Return Support Initiative led by UNDP and UNHCR.

63. In the Sahel region, UN-Habitat is developing, in partnership with UNDP, a spatial development strategy to support strategic decision-making to reduce existing vulnerabilities, reinforce ongoing development efforts, and contribute to peace and stability. Following the preparation of a preliminary diagnosis at the regional level, UN-Habitat has advanced the methodology to develop strategic spatial action plans in four identified transboundary areas under the leadership of the eight Governments concerned. The strategic spatial action plans are intended to promote an integrated territorial approach that fulfils the humanitarian–development–peace nexus by addressing issues related to displacement, food security, resilience and livelihoods. The development approach used is mainly driven by infrastructural investments.

64. In Burkina Faso, with funding from the Government of Japan, UN-Habitat is implementing a second project to provide durable solutions for internally displaced persons in the towns of Boussouma and Nagreongo. In addition to building 300 new durable housing solutions, the project is aimed at

improving the living conditions of host communities and reinforcing social cohesion through the improvement of basic and social services and supporting the economic inclusion of both population groups. It also seeks to reinforce the capacities of local governments to harness accelerated urbanization in a context of massive displacement.

65. In Myanmar, which is grappling with the impact of a climate and conflict polycrisis, UN-Habitat, in alignment with the United Nations system's transitional cooperation framework in Myanmar, prioritizes local actions targeted at enhancing resilience-building efforts for the most vulnerable communities. Priority interventions include sectors such as water safety and security; energy security; food security (reinforcing the water–energy–food nexus); public health and disaster risk reduction; education, science and technology; and cross-sectoral interventions, such as inclusive and gender-responsive climate action, as well as support to green and blue growth opportunities. With funding from the European Union, UN-Habitat developed a simplified methodology for community-based climate change vulnerability assessment and is currently providing support to local communities in resilience building and developing local level climate action plans. Multisectoral climate dialogue is being promoted through the engagement of the private sector and the establishment of the Myanmar Climate Action Network, currently composed of more than 200 non-State climate actors. Under the country programme, the capacities of professional organizations, such as the Myanmar Journalism Institute and the Myanmar Engineering Society, are being developed in critical areas, such as climate reporting, ecosystem-based adaptation and nature-based solutions, with a view to expanding outreach and replicating resilience-building initiatives. These include, for example, water, sanitation and hygiene and waste management support in informal settlements, community rainwater harvesting, mangrove restoration and school-led climate action in monastic schools, where thousands of internally displaced children are hosted.

66. In Mozambique, the support to the Government and displacement-affected communities lies at the centre of the UN-Habitat country programme. UN-Habitat promotes integrated approaches towards achieving sustainable urbanization in resettlement areas and sustainable integration of internally displaced people persons in urban areas, focusing on participatory urban planning, provision of housing, promotion of security of land tenure, increased access to basic services and community infrastructure, livelihood and employment. In order to increase data quality and information, UN-Habitat Mozambique is also partnering with the Joint Internally Displaced Person Profiling Service to implement an urban displacement profiling for the metropolitan area of Pemba, as a collaborative exercise that will produce a baseline for national authorities and partners to inform solutions-oriented interventions in the area and support impact monitoring. UN-Habitat in Mozambique also continues to perform an important role in the working group on solutions to internal displacement at the national level and in the regional subgroups, as well as in co-leading with UNHCR the “Community engagement” workstream.

67. UN-Habitat is collaborating with the Government of Iraq to develop a new national housing policy and housing finance tools and review the regulatory and legal framework to enable affordable housing supply and address complex housing challenges in the country. UN-Habitat is also assisting the Government of Iraq in finalizing a law on informal settlements. UN-Habitat is securing the tenure rights of the Yazidi minority by mapping and registering land occupancy claims to recognize informal land rights and supporting the government to issue the land title deeds. UN-Habitat is also conducting policy dialogue on the land legislative reform to improve land governance to regulate e-land governance and establish the e-cadastre system and e-land registry. UN-Habitat Iraq is also addressing climate change impacts, focusing on mitigating sandstorms in urban and rural areas by restoring ecosystems in affected areas in southern Iraq to adapt to the impact of desertification and mitigate the causes of sandstorms resulted from climate change. Lastly, UN-Habitat is supporting the Government of Iraq in strengthening the legal frameworks to access compensation schemes for damaged or destroyed properties.

68. In Yemen, where UN-Habitat has been operational since 2018 and has established a strong presence, a city profiling exercise, carried out in cooperation with local universities, has been started to assess the impact of the protracted armed conflict in the country. The sectoral focus of UN-Habitat Yemen includes the provision of basic services (i.e. water, sanitation and hygiene interventions), shelter and housing rehabilitation, housing, land and property programming, and climate-readiness projects. Fruitful governmental partnerships have also been established, most notably with the Ministry of Water and Environment, the Ministry of Public Works and Highways, the Ministry of Justice and the General Authority for Lands, Surveys and Urban Planning.

69. In Ukraine, UN-Habitat is applying a comprehensive approach that combines policy advice, capacity-building and practical planning work. Emphasis is placed on building local and national capacities to drive an evidence-based and participatory recovery process, including through digital

solutions. UN-Habitat has been operating in partnership with Ukrainian and international organizations, through the establishment of an Urban Lab based in Kyiv. This collaborative platform is also aimed at convening, strengthening and solidifying the role of Ukrainian urban experts in the recovery of Ukrainian human settlements. At the local level, UN-Habitat is focusing on urban profiling and recovery planning in eight municipalities affected by physical damage and/or high levels of internal displacement. At the national level, UN-Habitat works closely with the Government, contributing to key policies and mechanisms for urban recovery, including the reform of the housing policy, the review of the urban planning code, the development of the national cadastre, and the use of digital solutions for a green and inclusive urban recovery in Ukraine.

70. In the context of the ongoing crisis in the State of Palestine, 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 (HSP/EB.2024/INF/6) remains a foundation for the operations of UN-Habitat. As the situation on the ground had not changed drastically at the time of drafting of the present report, a brief update to the preliminary report will be provided in document HSP/EB.2025/INF/13. The response of UN-Habitat during the reporting period has focused on further contributions to damage assessments and technical support to the strategic advisory group of the shelter cluster and the sites-management working group. The latter is exploring solutions for transitional shelter. UN-Habitat has submitted three project proposals to potential donors, including on debris management, innovative profiling and emergency response and early recovery plans.

71. As a follow-up to the pledge on human settlements launched at the Global Refugee Forum in December 2023, UN-Habitat has stepped up its support to UNHCR and its collaboration with the World Bank to support the implementation of the pledge and further engagements in countries including Ethiopia, Kenya, Mauritania, Somalia and the Sudan.

72. Lastly, under the Leaving No One Behind – The Internal Displacement Solutions Fund, UN-Habitat began providing new support in Afghanistan, Colombia, Iraq, Mozambique and Somalia, in alignment with Fund's goals regarding the development of solutions for internally displaced persons, in particular in protracted contexts. UN-Habitat continue to appeal for support from the Fund, with due consideration of lessons learned. The Fund has also incentivized new country-level partnerships with the International Organization for Migration, UNDP and UNHCR.
