FOREWORD

The years 2015 & 2016 have, and will witness two major events: the endorsement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and the Sustainable Urban Development Conference - Habitat III. Both are expected to shortly achieve positive impacts on the lives of people worldwide, especially on poor and vulnerable groups.

On 25 September 2015, the 193 countries of the UN General Assembly adopted the 2030 Development Agenda titled “Transforming our world”. 17 Sustainable Development Goals were adopted with a will that each government with its relevant partners and actors will be working on achieving the identified targets under each SDG.

Goal 11 of the SDGs states that cities and human settlements should become inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable. The 10 targets set under this goal imply exceptional efforts and collective work in order to be achieved by 2030. This involves amongst others, ensuring access to adequate, safe and affordable housing and basic services, sustainable transport systems, road safety, enhancing inclusive and sustainable urbanization, protecting cultural and natural heritage, etc.

The Habitat III conference that will be organized by the United Nations in October 2016 in Quito – Ecuador, will endorse the “New Urban Agenda” which should be implemented by all governments in the coming 20 years.

UN-Habitat, globally, and at the regional and country levels, will be aligning its strategies, programmes and action plans to become consistent with the targets of SDG 11 and with the recommendations of the New Urban Agenda.

In Lebanon, with the absence of a national urban policy and urban planning actors, the Country Programme will have to devote enormous efforts to lobby, promote, and implement programs and interventions that will contribute to achieving the targets of Goal 11 and the New Urban Agenda.

The Country Programme Document that will be prepared shortly, and which will reflect the strategy and planning of UN-Habitat Lebanon for the coming 5 years, will clearly indicate the planned activities, the adopted approaches, and proposed strategies, and their link in achieving SDG 11 and the New Urban Agenda.

Tarek Osseiran

UN-Habitat Lebanon
URBAN CONTEXT

Key Urban Issues
Lebanon has for decades witnessed a rapid and uncontrolled urban growth and sprawl. With limited planning regulations in place or enforced, the urban areas are covering increasingly large areas, at the same time urban disparities have grown. New constructions are massively increasing especially at the coastal zone, where the majority of the Lebanese population resides, contributing to the uncontrolled urban expansion (CDR, 2005).

While the cities, and especially the capital Beirut, have flourishing high end districts, the urban divide and inequality have only grown deeper. Only in the metropolitan area of Beirut, there were 24 slums/impoverished poor neighborhoods before the current crisis hosting 20% of the population (Fawaz and Peillen, 2003). UN-Habitat estimated that the ‘slum’ to urban population in Lebanon was around 50% in the year 2001 (UN-Habitat, 2010).

A notable change in poverty indicators was noted between 1995 and 2004 with a decrease in both the households living in extreme poverty (from 7% till 5%) and those living in relative poverty (from 28% till 18%) (MOSA and UNDP, 2004). However, with the Syrian crisis, the poverty levels has again risen. The poorest areas have also experienced a significant increase of population, with some neighborhoods experiencing up to a doubling of the population with Syrian refugees.

The planning systems are to a little extent equipped to consider measures to mitigate the urban divide. The lack of local planning and cross sectorial master plans hinders any absorption capacity of the increasing urban population. The service systems have over the years of the civil war become increasingly deficient and have not been systematically addressed since. This has been further exacerbated by the Syrian crisis and the massive rise of population.

Urbanization
Lebanon is one of the most urbanized countries in both the world and the Arab region, with 87% of its population of 4 million living in urban areas and the majority - estimated at 64% - residing in the metropolitan areas of Beirut and Tripoli. Urban expansion in Lebanon is concentrated in and around the main coastal cities (Beirut, Tripoli9, Saida and Tyre), between secondary cities and in the form of informal areas on the belts of cities10. The Palestine refugee population of about 270,000 lives in the 12 official camps and 43 adjacent areas and gatherings, the far majority found in the four main coastal cities.

With the outbreak of the Syrian crisis in 2011 Lebanon witnessed a massive influx of displaced people from Syria, with more than 1,075,000 Syrian refugees registered as per October 2015,
in addition to 43,500 Palestine refugees from Syria and smaller numbers of Lebanese returnees and Iraqi refugees\textsuperscript{11}. The displaced from Syria to a large extent follow the urbanization pattern of the host population as there are no formal camps, thus the refugees have found shelter mainly through the formal and informal market channels. Three of four key economic sectors - construction/real estate, service industry and tourism (exception is the agricultural sector) - are also concentrated in the main cities along the coast, as well as the larger informal market and services. It is therefore expected that also more of the displaced from Syria will move towards the larger cities in the coming years to seek work opportunities.

**Managing Urbanization**

Lebanon is divided into eight governorates that include 25 districts (Cada) which are: Beirut, Mount Lebanon, North, Akkar, Beqaa, Baalbeck/Hermel, South, and Nabatiyeh. Most of the localities in Lebanon such as cities, towns and villages of the country are governed by municipalities (1080 municipalities exist in Lebanon). Municipalities are local administrations which according to the law enjoy a “legal personality as well as financial and administrative independence”. The majority of the municipalities have voluntarily come together to form Unions of Municipalities (53 Unions of Municipalities covers more than 800 municipalities), thus enhancing the capacities of municipalities and allowing them to operate on a regional scale.

Planning in Lebanon is executed in a highly centralized manner and in a “pastiche” manner due to the various planning actors, many ad-hoc developments, and primacy of the real-estate sector and the influence of politics. While there are tools to regulate planning in Lebanon such as the National Physical Master Plan for the Lebanese Territories from 2005, master plans and building codes planning does not respond to the territorial specificities, urban disparities or to the latest impact of the Syrian crisis. Lebanon has a number of national actors concerned with urban planning, yet state policies in this sector remain minimal. Those key concerned actors include the local authorities (municipalities and unions of municipalities), the Directorate General of Urbanism (DGU), the Higher Council for Urban Planning (HCUP), the Council for Development and Reconstruction (CDR), and other sector ministries.

**Environmental Challenges**

The population growth and the increase in consumption rates are causing a rapid increase in the demand for water for domestic use in urban cities, which is estimated to reach an average of 420 mm\textsuperscript{3} in 2030\textsuperscript{12}. Mismanagement of water resources, with very low water storage capacity, a high amount of water lost to the sea, low operational maintenance of the water distribution network and absence of an official management scheme for the water sector, lead to regional and seasonal discrepancy in the supply of water\textsuperscript{13}. As a means to secure water for daily consumption 50\% of the population purchase bottles or gallons, 25\% of the population use water from vending trucks, 10\% use water from spring or tap stand, and 10\% use private networks\textsuperscript{14}.

Aside from its high water consumption, the combined effect of the rapid demographic growth together with an increase in consumerism is also significantly increasing the volume of solid waste generated in urban areas in Lebanon. Therefore, of the average 1.57 million tons of waste generated in Lebanon per year around 65\% are generated in urban areas. Since July 2015, Lebanon has been facing a severe solid waste crisis that led to the creation of 1700 dumping sites, nearly in each locality, and to the compilation of garbage in the streets of the city of Beirut.

\textsuperscript{11} UNRWA 2015  
\textsuperscript{12} CDR, 2005  
\textsuperscript{13} MOE, 2001; UNICEF, 2010; CDR, 2005; World Bank, 2010  
\textsuperscript{14} UNICEF, 2010
Country Profile - Lebanon

The UN-Habitat country office in Lebanon was initiated in late 2006. As the country has faced two large scale crises - the 2006 July-War on Lebanon, and the Syrian Refugee Crisis - the programme steered most of its activities to focus on responding to emerging issues through housing reconstruction, shelter provision, basic services upgrading while also laying the foundation for long term sustainable solutions. The projects of UN-Habitat in Lebanon is aligned along specific key focus areas:

**Urban Planning and Design**

Improvement in the national urban policies and spatial frameworks for compact, integrated and connected cities can again be exemplified through the city and neighbourhood profiling programmes. The outbreak of the Syrian crisis in 2011 came to add more strain on Lebanon. UNHCR figures show that some 1.2 million refugees have crossed the Lebanese borders, including 1.16 million registered Syrian refugees and 45,000 Palestinian refugees from Syria. Some 35 % of the refugees coming from Syria can be found in the four largest urban metropolitan areas: Tripoli, Beirut, Saida and Tyr. These areas are thus accommodating more than 50 % of the total population of Lebanon. The influx of over one million Syrian refugees to Lebanon impacted on the country’s overall urban setting, placing an additional layer of deprivation on the poor urban neighbourhoods. In the absence of data especially for residents of urban areas, the city and neighbourhood profiles are a tool developed by UN-Habitat to analyse impacts of crisis on urban settings. These programmes are being developed in 2015/2016. They take into consideration the interrelatedness of urban sectors and maps and analyse population movements, functionality and strains on social and physical infrastructure as well as damage on the economy and markets, including the shelter, housing and rental market. They also identify how communities are coping with crisis and the capacity of local actors, including who is doing what where and where the key gaps are. This rapid multi-sectorial tool is able to help local authorities and the humanitarian community...
to identify neighbourhoods in critical need, and is used as a basis to plan multi-sectorial area-based interventions with relevant actors. More specifically, neighbourhood profiles will be used as the basis for integrated neighbourhood upgrading projects in shelter, infrastructure, services and public spaces. The city and neighbourhood profiles will be developed with the full collaboration of national and local authorities in order to provide tools for change, support in planning, capacity building and collaboration through implementing neighbourhood upgrading strategies.

Policies, plans and designs for compact, integrated and connected cities and neighbourhoods will also be a focus of the city and neighbourhood profiling. As part of the upcoming program in 2015/2016 neighbourhood profile, UN-Habitat has implemented during October 2015, a rapid assessment in Naba’a for a comprehensive neighbourhood-upgrading project. The findings showed that shelter and building facades are in dire conditions. 62% of assessed houses have unsafe balconies and windows. Shared infrastructure in the neighbourhood is dismal, with rainwater coming from buildings that are not connected to the storm water networks causing damages. Barely any public spaces exist within the area. The project will be implemented with the full participation of the municipality of Bourj Hammoud and community members. The municipality has been overloaded with service and maintenance demand due to the increasing number of inhabitants and without having initial financial and human capacity to cope with the magnitude of demands. The neighbourhood upgrading will consider an integrated approach to physical upgrading which is required across the key aspects of shelter, infrastructure, services and public spaces.

**Urban Legislation, Land and Governance**

The capacity of local and national governments as well as other UN-Habitat partners has increased in the past year through UN-Habitat Lebanon’s research and implementation programs. Both the city program and neighbourhood programmes launched in 2015 aim to provide local and national governments with a tool to improve response in the areas of shelter, infrastructure and services. Both city and neighbourhood profiles are done together in collaboration with national and local authorities in order to engage them in a substantial discussion on the importance of cross-sectorial analysis that enables the improvement of extension, densification and planning. This is much needed since Lebanese cities were not prepared nor planned to handle the massive increase in population that was caused by the Syrian crisis in 2011 and resulted in 1.2 million refugees.

Other research programs that also aim at increasing the capacity of local and national governments are for example UN-Habitat’s and UNHCR’s assessment of the housing, land and property issues for Syrian refugees and host communities. The study offers recommendations for planning policies and projects to address housing. Land and property issues and rights to be adopted by various international NGOs working in the shelter sector for Syrian refugees in Lebanon.

Another search project, titled “No Place to Stay”, in partnership with Issam Fares Institute for Public Policy at the American University of Beirut addresses the emerging challenges of providing shelter to Syrian refugees and advises national and local governments on effective policy measures that are able to address this. Further, both studies were launched in a public event with wide participation of national and local government representatives.

Furthermore, UN-Habitat Lebanon currently has a major program that facilitates increased capacity of local and national governments as well as other partners in the implementation of programmes that improve the security of tenure for vulnerable groups and minorities at the national levels. Launched in 2015, both the city and neighbourhood programs will offer local and national governments recommendations to directly improve the security of tenure of Syrian and host communities in Lebanon’s four major cities Beirut, Tripoli, Saida and Tyre.

Improvements in the policies, plans and strategies in the local and national governments can also
be exhibited in the preparation of the Habitat III report. UN-Habitat is supporting the Council for Development and Reconstruction (CDR) in the preparation of the Habitat III National Report of Lebanon. The report with the title “Inputs for and support to the preparatory process of the third United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development (Habitat III)“ was to be prepared in response to resolution 24/14 of the UN-Habitat Governing Council and adopted at its twenty-fourth session. For the government of Lebanon, represented by the CDR, the report shall cover and offer the government policy recommendations on demography, land planning, environment, governance and legislation. The Habitat III report shall be considered as the basis of discussions during the Habitat III conference.

**Urban Economy**

The capacity of partner cities to adopt and implement strategies supportive of inclusive economic growth is also an integral part of the city and neighbourhood-profiling program. The program is already underway throughout 2015/2016. UN-Habitat Lebanon expects that the next city and neighbourhood profiles of Tyre, Beirut and Saida will be developed and done in collaboration with some national government bodies as well as with local authorities. City profiles are meant to be developed as a tool used by local authorities to increase their planning and response capacities. City profiles are also meant to encourage local authorities to plan for their constituencies in terms of economic sustainability, produce comprehensive and strategic department plans and develop more efficient neighbourhood plans in the long-term instead of reacting on an ad-hoc basis.

The profiles will review city functionality, economy services understanding capacities and coping mechanisms for the identification of recovery priorities. This will help the capacity of targeted cities to adopt urban policies and programmes supportive of increased employment, livelihoods and opportunities with focus on urban youth and women. City and neighbourhood profiles constitute a framework on which national government and local authorities derive action plans and programming from. Furthermore, youth and women often constitute a resource that is often not drawn upon and could be catalysed in improving living conditions of both host communities and refugees as sources of employment and catalytic agents, given UN-Habitat integrated approach in mainstreaming youth and gender equality in programming.

**Urban Basic Services**

Policies and guidelines on equitable access to sustainable urban basic services implemented by local, regional and national authorities are exemplified by UN-Habitat’s work and role in the Lebanon Crisis Response Plan (LCRP). UN-Habitat in Lebanon is also the shelter co-lead in the national and interagency response plan. This role allowed UN-Habitat to directly improve and influence policies and guidelines on equitable access to sustainable urban basic services implemented by local, regional and national authorities in 2015. This was done through the following programs and partners:
UN-Habitat is the shelter co-lead and plays an integral role in Lebanon’s crisis response plan which has been created in response to the Syrian crisis and in effect since 2011. The LCRP is formulated by the United Nations agencies and all the international NGO’s working in Lebanon (such as OXFAM, NRC, DRC, ICRC, World Vision, ACTED, CARE among others) and the government. This response plan functions as a programme under the Prime Minister’s Office and is also lead by the Ministry of Social Affairs. From the humanitarian side it is led by the UN Resident Coordinator’s office. It aims at streamlining the institutional response and follows a sectorial approach covering shelter, protection, food security, basic assistance, education, health, WASH, livelihoods and social cohesion.

Since 2013, UN-Habitat Lebanon built on its experience in capacity building for municipalities towards efficient local authorities and reliable partners and launched the “Enhancing the Role of Unions of Municipalities to Respond to Refugees’ & Host Communities’ Needs” project. The aim of the project is to support the accommodation process of refugee families through the active involvement of municipalities and unions of municipalities in identifying, assessing and facilitating sound shelter facilities that comply with UNHCR standards and norms. Furthermore, the project supported host communities through the implementation of sound projects that would respond to community groups needs and would enhance the delivery of basic urban services taking into account the existing and forthcoming numbers of refugees.

Through the project UN-Habitat launched two Regional Technical Offices (RTOs) in 2 Unions of Municipalities (UoMs) in Sahel Zahrani and Iqleem al-Kharoub. The RTOs currently play a major role in assisting and contributing to local planning and implementing various project activities to facilitate and enhance the response to the Syrian crisis in various sectors of shelter, infrastructure and services. UN-Habitat contributed through financial and technical support in addition to continuous coordination of project activities. This has increased the capacity of local authorities and contributes to the flow of investment into urban basic services.

The Regional Technical Offices are responsible for:

- Improving water access for 20,000 individuals in Nabatieh area;
- 45,000 of households now have access to wastewater/sewage systems in Mount Lebanon and the south;
- 10 Municipalities with systems strengthened and harmonized to increase access to quality wastewater/sewage services.

**Housing and Slum Upgrading**

The formulation and implementation of the national housing, slum upgrading and prevention strategies and programmes integrating the Global Housing Strategy vision and principles can be seen as part of the neighbourhood profiling programme. The neighbourhood profile is
already underway in Naba’a where UN-Habitat is making efforts in addressing the urban crisis in poor neighbourhoods. This initiative seeks to improve the living conditions of Syrian refugees and host communities through adopting holistic neighbourhood upgrading strategies.

**Risk Reduction and Rehabilitation**

Through enhancing the role of Unions of Municipalities to Respond to Refugees’ & Host Communities’ Needs, UN-Habitat launched two Regional Technical Offices (RTOs) in 3 Unions of Municipalities (UoMs) in Sahel Zahrani and Ileem al-Kharoub. The RTOs are positioned in such a manner to increase city resilience and play an active role in urban risk reduction policies, strategies and programmes. The RTO’s bring to the attention of municipalities issues such as renovation of facades, raising awareness on the importance of public spaces, coordinating with national and local authorities in case of natural disasters or threats. The RTO’s play an active role and being positioned in unions increases their effectiveness over many municipalities. Moreover, the cities of Beirut and Tripoli have also been selected as pilot cities for the Global UN-Habitat programme, City Resilience Profiling Programme (CRPP). The CRPP provides national and local governments with tools for measuring and increasing resilience to multi-hazard impacts, including those associated with climate change. Working through partnerships with stakeholders including international agencies, academic and research institutes, private sector actors and NGOs. The CRPP will develop a comprehensive and integrated urban planning and management approach for profiling and monitoring the resilience of any city to all plausible hazards.

As part of the City and Neighbourhood Profiling Programme, together with UN-Habitat Lebanon involvement as shelter co-lead in the LCRP, a neighbourhood profile and rapid assessment is already underway in the eastern suburbs of Beirut, Naba’a. UN-Habitat efforts aim at implementing shelter rehabilitation programmes working in partnerships and the community to contribute to sustainable and resilient cities and other human settlements. The neighbourhood profile addresses the urban crisis in cities, and mainly in poor neighbourhoods by adopting an integrated approach. This initiative seeks to

![Training of Trainers (ToT) - Hotel Le Crillon Broummana, 2015](image)
improve the living conditions of Syrian refugees and host communities through adopting holistic neighbourhood upgrading strategies.

**Research and Capacity Development**

UN-Habitat in Lebanon has published the following publications:

“No Place to Stay” in partnership with Issam Fares Institute for Public Policy at the American University of Beirut.


“Housing, Land and Property Issues in Lebanon: Implications of the Syrian Refugee Crisis” study with UNHCR and the European Union.

“Tripoli Rapid City Profile”. (Upcoming publication)

As part of its programme on “Enhancing the Role of Unions of Municipalities to Respond to Refugees’ and Host Communities’ Needs” funded by UNICEF, UN-Habitat in Lebanon has organized extensive health and protection awareness raising campaigns and activities that to date has targeted 7336 refugees and 7936 people from the host population with the overall aim to reduce health problems through behavioural changes.

UNHCR awareness campaigns address health and protection topics that directly affect the living conditions of host and refugee communities. Awareness campaigns are specifically designed to target audiences and aim at:

a. Implementing awareness sessions and mass media campaigns in areas of increased refugee presence: Ikleem al-Kharroub, Ghareb al-Aala Chahhar, Sahel Zahrani, Nabatieh and Tyr unions of municipalities;

b. Increasing knowledge of host communities and refugees on health, food safety and protection issues such as diarrhea/ORS/hand washing, chain of contamination (food, water, open defecation, vector), personal hygiene, water chain storage and treatment, menstrual hygiene, solid waste management.

c. Increasing skill capacity of health promoters through a Training of Trainers workshop.

All UN-Habitat projects are learning opportunities as cities and neighbourhoods in Lebanon are constantly in flux and security and access always remain an issue. Every project is an opportunity to learn and bring in new partners from national and local governments, agencies, academia or the private sector which always lends to the successful implementation of the project by bringing in new capabilities, perspectives and working together towards building a better urban future in Lebanon.

**UN-HABITAT PARTNERS**

**Donors**
The Government of Finland
The Government of Netherlands
The Government of Cyprus
European Union (EU)
The Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC)

**UN Agencies**
United Nations Development Program (UNDP)
United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)
United Nations International Children’s Emergency Fund (UNICEF)
UN-Women

**National Government**
Ministry of Social Affairs
Ministry of Public Health
Ministry of Energy and Water
Ministry of Education and High Education
Ministry of Interior

**Local Authorities**
Municipality of Beirut
Union of Municipalities

**National and International Organizations**
Council for Development and Reconstruction (CDR)
American University of Beirut (AUB)
World Vision
Development for People and Nature Association (DPNA)
Makassed Philanthropic association
Young Men’s Christian Association (YMCA)
Lebanese-Palestinian Dialogue Committee (LPDC)
Outlook

The Country Programme operates under the direct guidance and monitoring of UN-Habitat Regional Office for Arab States (ROAS), and with the support of various branches at the Head Quarter (HQ) level. All developed programs at the country level are aligned with the outcomes of the sub-programmes developed as part of the global strategic plan of UN-Habitat.

At the regional level, the strategic plan reflects the global one with emphasis on issues that are more relevant to the needs of the Arab region.

The Country Programme in Lebanon will urge and work closely with ROAS in the coming years to elaborate joint regional programs and projects that address common problems and issues across the Arab Countries.

There is a need to regionally address common issues that are affecting most of the Arab Countries, such as, the migration to cities, the refugee crisis, water scarcity, etc.
### Achieved and Currently implemented Projects

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project title</th>
<th>Donors</th>
<th>Amount (USD)</th>
<th>Year</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Phase 1: Pre Syrian Refugee Crisis (2007-2013)</strong></td>
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<td>Good Governance for Enhanced Post-War Reconstruction in Southern Lebanon</td>
<td>The Governments of Finland, Netherlands, and Cyprus</td>
<td>1,770,000€</td>
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<td>Mobile Reconstruction Unit for Shelter Recovery and Support to affected families in Southern Lebanon and Bekaa</td>
<td>ECHO</td>
<td>400,000€</td>
<td>2007</td>
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<td>Shelter Recovery and Support to affected families in Havy El Sullum</td>
<td>ECHO</td>
<td>713,068€</td>
<td>2007</td>
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<td>Integrated support to the rehabilitation of NBC Adjacent Area</td>
<td>EU</td>
<td>231,761€</td>
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<td>Enhancing Recovery of Nahr el Bared Surrounding Communities</td>
<td>UNDP</td>
<td>68,500$</td>
<td>2008</td>
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<td>Improved Municipal Governance For Effective Decentralization in Lebanon</td>
<td>The Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs</td>
<td>500,000€</td>
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<td>Profiling Service Delivery in the Adjacent Areas of the 12 camps for Palestine Refugees in Lebanon</td>
<td>UNDP</td>
<td>25,145$</td>
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<td>AL Fayhhaa Sustainable Development Strategy AFSDS</td>
<td>Al Fayhaa UoM</td>
<td>41,000$</td>
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<td>Lebanon Municipal Observatory</td>
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<td>35,000$</td>
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<td>Towards Sustainable Solutions for Improved Living Conditions of Palestinian Refugees in Lebanon</td>
<td>SDC</td>
<td>668,488$</td>
<td>2011-2015</td>
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<td>Project development and resource mobilization towards the establishment of a project to reform urban planning systems in Lebanon</td>
<td>UN-Habitat</td>
<td>100,000$</td>
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<td>Addressing Urban Hot Spots</td>
<td>PBF</td>
<td>291,575$</td>
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<td>Safe &amp; Friendly Cities for All</td>
<td>UNICEF</td>
<td>125,000$</td>
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<td><strong>Phase 2: During Syrian Refugee Crisis (2007 – today)</strong></td>
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<td>Enhancing the role of Unions of Municipalities to respond to Refugees’ and host communities’ needs</td>
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<td>Improving Living Conditions of Palestinian gathering Host communities</td>
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<td>Enhancing the Role of Municipalities to Respond to Shelter Needs of Syrian Refugees in Mt Lebanon</td>
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<td>1,483,076$</td>
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<td>Enhancing Access to Water and Sanitation in South Lebanon to Respond to Refugees’ and Host Communities’ Needs</td>
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<td>2,295,150$</td>
<td>2015</td>
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