

COUNTRY PROFILE

Saudi Arabia

UN  **HABITAT**
FOR A BETTER URBAN FUTURE





Riyadh @Mohammed al-Deghaishim

FOREWORD

Saudi Arabia's cities are urbanizing fast with urban population almost tripled from 9.32 million in 1980 to 29.8 million in 2014. In addition, urbanization is expected to continue its increase to reach up to 97.6 % by the year 2030, out of which Riyadh (the capital) will reach 8.2 million out of which 75 % will be Saudis. In light of the current growth rates and the Kingdom's long-term demographic estimates, the annual demographic growth in the Kingdom is expected to reach an average of 0.87 %, bringing the number to about 31.457 million in 2030, of which 4.214 million are non-Saudis. Most of the population is concentrated in the capital Riyadh, the secondary cities Jeddah and Dammam, and the holy cities of Mecca and Medina.

This calls for an urgent need to address the negative externalities and imbalances of urban growth and maximize the benefits of urbanization through balanced territorial development. With the new custodian of the two holy Mosques, King Salman Al-Saud, a new government was formed with a new Economic and Development Council that approved the Ministry of Municipal and Rural Affairs strategy in February 2015. The new strategy has taken into consideration the direction for sustainable development and the new urban agenda's three pronged approach. The strategy aims to achieve balanced and sustainable urban development and outstanding municipal services in a context of justice and competitiveness in all regions. Sustainable urban development practices will require larger room and mechanisms for the people's participation in what matters to them. Saudi Arabia aims to take its cities to a level of sustainable urbanization that addresses these factors.

This is to be realized by forming urban environments of high efficiency that fulfil the expectations and needs of current and future generations, which provide high standards of living as well as developed and planned communities which all citizens of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia can feel proud of and where they can work, live and enjoy amenities and opportunities that meet or exceed international standards. By utilizing UN-Habitat's principles of sustainable urbanization, the three pronged approach and the City Prosperity Initiative as entry points, Saudi cities will be capacitated to address urban development in a more inclusive and multi-dimensional way.

The Future Saudi Cities Programme is currently being implemented by UN-Habitat and the Secretariat of City Planning in the Ministry of Municipal and Rural Affairs, its goals, prescribed results and outputs are fully aligned with the Ministry's new vision, set of goals and objectives as well the Sustainable Development goal 11 "Make cities inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable".

Tarek El-Sheikh, Ph.D.
UN-Habitat Programme Director
Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

URBAN ISSUES

High Levels of Urbanization

According to the Ministry of Municipal and Rural Affairs approximately 82.1 % of the total population lives in urban areas whereas 17.9 % live in rural areas. The urbanization rates at the regions level show that 6 regions have recorded rates that exceed 80 %, including the Eastern Province (93.2 %), Riyadh (90.9 %), Holy Makkah (87.6 %), the Northern Borders (86.7 %), Tabuk (85.9 %), and Jouf (84.5 %). It could also be noticed that approximately 76 % of Saudi population live in urban areas compared to 24 % in rural areas, as for non-Saudi population, 90 % live in urban areas and 10 % in rural areas.

While growth in the largest cities has been very significant, it is not confined to them only: smaller cities outside Riyadh and other major urban concentrations have also witnessed similar growth. The number of cities in Saudi Arabia increased from 58 in 1936 to 258 in 2004 and lately to 285 in 2015, distributed over 13 regions and 118 governorates.

In addition, urbanization is expected to continue its increase to reach up to 97.6 % by the year 2030. In light of the current growth rates in urban areas as stipulated in figure 1, the population of Riyadh will reach 8.2 million people, out of which 75 % will be Saudis. According to the Kingdom's long-term demographic estimates, the annual demographic growth in the Kingdom is expected to reach an average of 2.15 %. Most of the population is concentrated in the capital Riyadh, the secondary cities Jeddah and Dammam and the holy cities of Mecca and Medina.

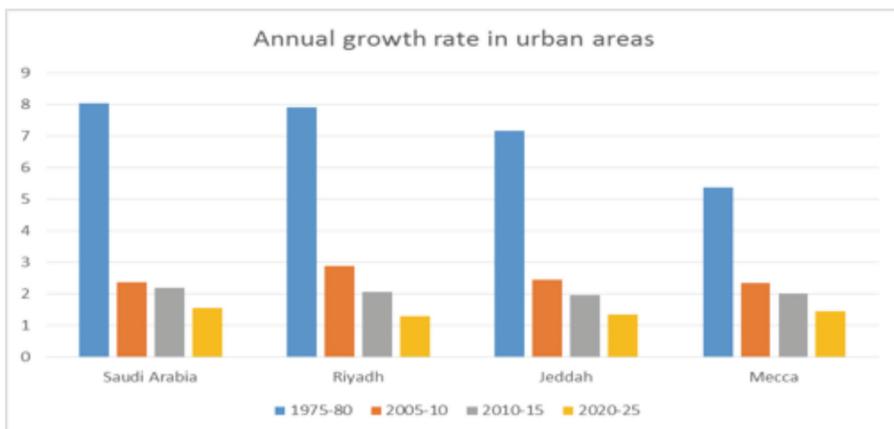


Figure 1: Annual growth rates in Saudi Arabia

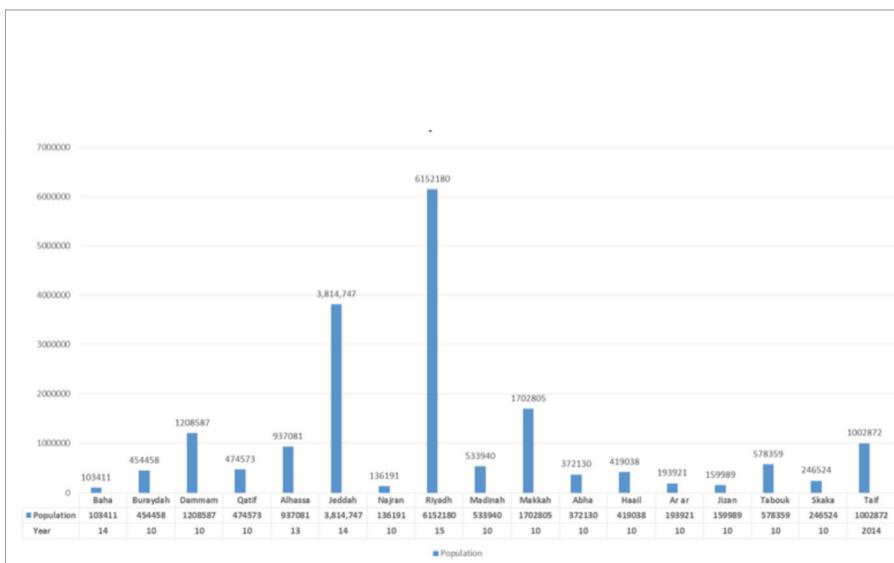


Figure 2: Population of Saudi Cities – Department of statistics KSA

Demographic Challenges

The major challenge of Saudi Arabia now and for the years to come is the youth bulge with almost 60 % of the population are youth, putting pressure on the government to provide them with economic opportunities, jobs, housing and quality services as well as cities with opportunities that match their aspirations. People under the age of 24 constitute almost half of the nation's population and people under the age of 15 make up one third. In 2012 the population under the age of 15 constituted 34.1 % of the total population of 29.99 million.

The percentage of youth under 15 within the Saudi population is much higher than that of the non-Saudi population within the country.

Access to Services and Infrastructure

Rapid urbanization results in increased usage of water resources, high consumption patterns, resource intensive lifestyles and increased industrialization. This poses challenges for protecting the environment, addressing water scarcity, pollution, solid waste management and

biodiversity. The rapid increase in urbanization is generating a population demand for speedy, quality and efficient public services, most importantly housing, piped water, electricity, roads, sewerage, and telephones. That created a serious challenge for municipal authorities: to meet the increasing demand for services and responsive proper planning of city extensions, urban centres and land infill's on the one hand and on the other enabling the private sector to play an increasing role in providing quality urban services, housing and mass transit.

Indicator	Central Region	Eastern Region	Western Region	Northern Region	Southern Region
	RIYADH	DAMMAM	JEDDAH	SKAKA	ABHA
Population	5710926 Inhabitants	1031097 Inhabitants	3976368 Inhabitants	273416 Inhabitants	412357 Inhabitants
Population in households	6.2 Person / Family	7.3 Person / Family	5.21 Person / Family	5.7 Person / Family	5.2 Person / Family
Total Number of Families	1052533 Families	163667 Families	763219 Families	47968 Families	73636 Families
Homes to Households Ratio	99.99%	100%	99.80%	99.50%	100%
Urban Footprint area	1297 Km2	800 Km2	647.63 Km2	333 Km2	294.9 Km2
Population Density	2504.98 Person /Km2	1288.87 Prson /Km2	1085.94 Person/Km2	821 Person/Km2	1398.2 Person/Km2
Mean Household Income	34195 \$/ Year	42327 \$/ Year	25596 \$/ Year	28550 \$/Year	34835 \$/Year
over 65 years inhabitants	130856 Persons	20460 Persons	126937 Persons	6647 Persons	16833 Persons
Youth Population aged 18-23 years	593756 Persons	105259 Persons	931091 Persons	28939 Persons	39548 Persons
Total Work Force in the City	2481691 Persons	410566 Persons	1,518,030 Persons	100264 Persons	144232 Persons
Unemployment	177437 Persons	16743 Persons	64983 Persons	2032 Persons	7210 Persons
Families accessed to Electricity	948554 Families	163667 Families	733625 Families	N/A	48901 Families
Families accessed to Improved Sanitation	483762 Families	163667 Families	230023 Families	19527 Families	43277 Families
Families accessed to Improved Water	920097 Families	163667 Families	641690 Families	17844 Families	40392 Families
Number of persons accessed to the internet	3263976 Persons	6686524 Persons	2265401 Persons	18131 Families	20618 Families

Figure 3: Urban data at the city level distributed on geographic regions of the Kingdom – Department of Statistics 2015

UN-HABITAT IN SAUDI ARABIA: FUTURE SAUDI CITIES PROGRAM

As a result of the growing significance of cities in Saudi Arabia an agreement has been developed between the Ministry of Municipal and Rural Affairs and the United Nations Human Settlements Program (UN-Habitat) for the implementation of a technical cooperation programme entitled Future Saudi Cities Program.

The Future Saudi Cities Program (FSCP) contributes to developing a new vision and a strategic planning framework for a sustainable urban future in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia that

follows international standards and fully aligned with the Municipalities New Strategy.

The FSCP is located in the City Planning Secretariat of the Ministry of Municipal and Rural Affairs and aims to enhance the secretariat's performance in fulfilling its functions, in particular providing its planning services at national, regional and local levels. With this in mind, the improvement of urban planning and design as well as the effective implementation of urban plans' outcomes by local authorities and coordinated line ministries

is the focus of the FSCP. This will be achieved through a three pronged approach building on i) the promotion of high quality urban design supported by practical implementation strategies incorporating, ii) economic and financial tools and iii) effective legal and institutional structures. The goal is to have prosperous cities that are productive, equitable, socially inclusive and environmentally sustainable, with adequate efficient infrastructure and providing a high quality of life.

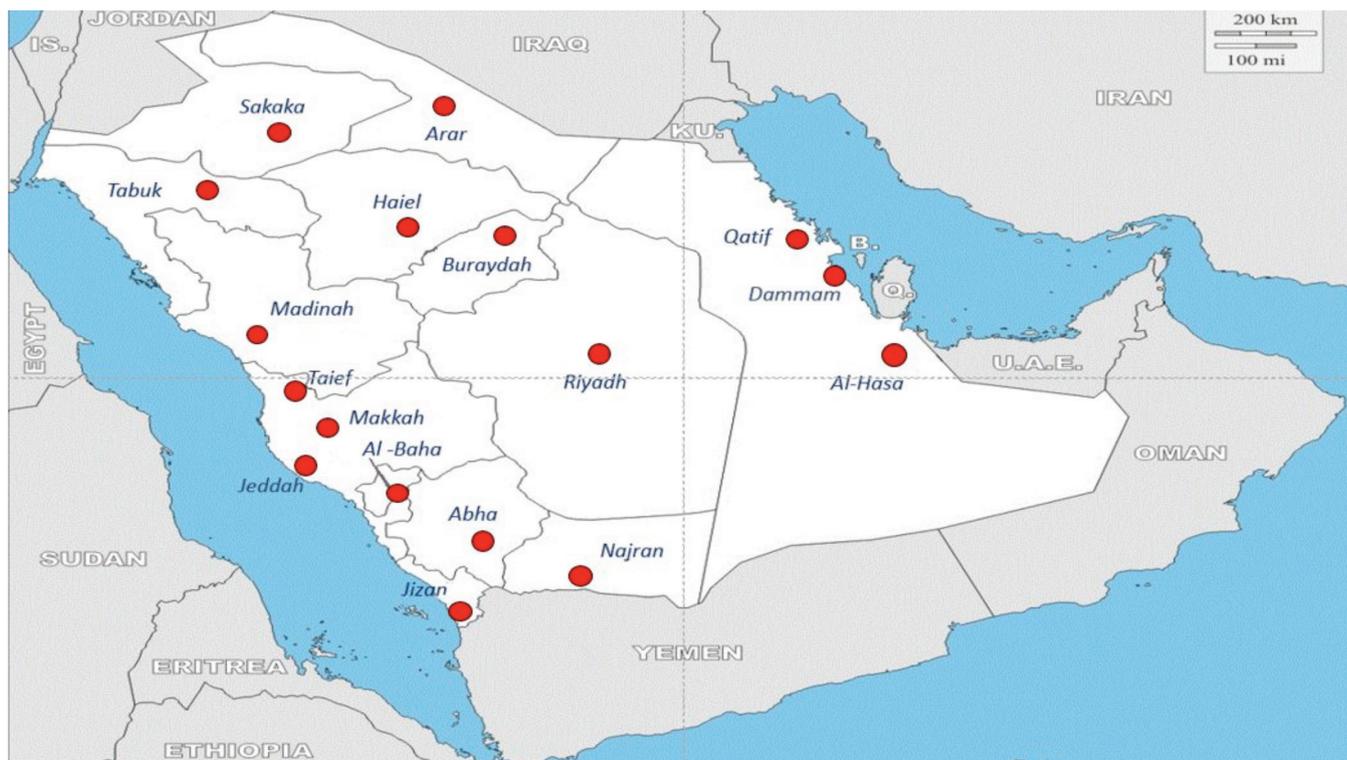


Figure 4: The 17 cities of the study in the Kingdom

URBAN PLANNING AND DESIGN

The programme aims to analyse the commitment of different cities in the implementation of national and regional spatial strategies and the feasibility of such strategies. It also focuses on the capacities of local administrative and institutional bodies and development partners for the implementation of these policies and strategies. This includes discussions with various development partners and interest groups for the reformulation of a new planning vision in Saudi Arabia that is based on an accurate diagnosis of all challenges facing cities and exploring the optimal urban pattern to enable cities to compete, attract investments, open new horizons for skill development, innovation and restoration and promotes public participation.

The 17 participating programme cities have been selected based on different population sizes, range of capacities and economic potential and will benefit and learn from each other. The selection is also in light of the Kingdom's strive for a more balanced territorial development between cities.

The Future Saudi Arabia Cities Program aims to achieve sustainable urbanization in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. It contributes to a shift in how urban development is perceived and addressed in the country by promoting a new urban agenda. The goal is ultimately to achieve future cities that are able to achieve balance between the three basic objectives: quality of life, economic competitiveness and environmental protection.

Some of the key strategies that the programme utilises to promote sustainable urban development in Saudi Arabia are:

	City	Region		City	Region
1	Riyadh	Riyadh	10	Abha-Khamis Msheet	Asser
2	Makka	Makka	11	Najran	Najran
3	Jeddah	Makka	12	Jizan	Jizan
4	Taief	Makka	13	Haief	Haief
5	Madina	Madina	14	Arar	Shamaleia
6	Tabouk	Tabouk	15	Al-Baha	Baha
7	Dammam	Sharkeia	16	Buraidah	Qaseem
8	Al-Hasaa	Sharkeia	17	Sakakah	Al-Gouf
9	Qatif	Sharkeia			

Figure 5: Programme regions and cities

- I. Increasing evidence-based and multi-dimensional analysis of cities using the City Prosperity Index, addressing urban sprawl and urban expansion in an informed and planned manner.
- II. Understanding and providing recommendations on the legislative and institutional context necessary for proposed changes in how urban development is addressed.
- III. Strengthening institutional relations between ministries and partners engaged in the urban sector. Assessing capacity gaps and developing tailor-made capacity for stakeholders involved.
- IV. Engaging and integrating the needs of all residents and in particular youth and women's needs as part of urban plans. Enhancing public awareness in the Kingdom on the notion of prosperous cities and sustainable urbanization. Creating forums for engagement on Saudi urban development issues both in the country and internationally.

National Spatial Strategy Analysis: From Spatial Strategy to National Urban Policy for Sustainable Urbanization

The development plans will need to be more aligned with the national spatial strategy of Saudi Arabia launched in 2000 and further updated in 2014 and to be informed by the regional, territorial and city strategies and plans. With the aim to reduce urban sprawl, promoting spatially-balanced development and protecting the environment, the strategy will need to be revised as a major strategy direction that focuses on creating (eastern, central and western) development corridors and targeted investment to less-developed regions, designating small- and medium-sized cities as regional growth centres. Such strategy direction according to other developing world experience and as per the urbanization model evolved in Saudi cities did not reduce energy consumption, was environmentally unsustainable and, at the end, economically inefficient. It did not reduce unemployment rates nor prevented urban sprawl in major cities (Jeddah, Riyadh), thus slums and informal settlements increased.

Towards people centred inclusive urban planning in 17 cities:

Urban planning practices have remained the less effective activity of the state. So much so in fact that the resulting urban form of Riyadh and other modern annexes of modern Saudi cities have developed into a patchwork of rectangular subdivisions.

Urban planning remains centralized in the Ministry of Municipal and Rural Affairs (with limited exceptions of the four major cities Riyadh, Jeddah, Mecca and Medina), despite the ever increasing expansion of the city's coverage – often in line with outmoded plans such as the super-grid road network. This was formally enshrined in Riyadh in the First Master Plan of 1973, designed by a Greek consultant which laid out a 'functional' modern city around a grid. Among other issues, this resulted in segregation and imposed an economic map on the population, favouring social ties over economy.

The programme will recommend a well-developed decentralized planning framework based on 17 city analyses and plan reviews and present proposals to reduce the urban expansion of cities that is led by land speculation. Through the Urban Planning Labs introduced in selected cities proposals for densifications, connectivity and integration are to be introduced in order to reduce privatization of Saudi life and the preference for detached housing. The programme is undertaking a set of studies to introduce planning guidelines that are in line with international standards to reduce auto-dependence, sprawl, scattered development, extensive road construction and massive outlays on costly infrastructure and gradually increase the

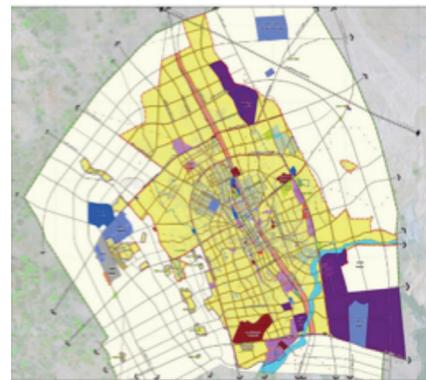
density of residential housing. Urban boundaries will be critically studied based on the results of urban indicators for city prosperity to stop and optimize unnecessary sub-division of outer areas in Saudi cities (despite the availability of undeveloped sub-divisions closer to the core) and propose measures to strictly enforce regulations to stop land speculation.

The Future Saudi Cities Program has presented solutions to the Secretariat of Urban Planning using the Urban Lab checklist for plan reviews to enhance the process of land sub-divisions for developing mixed-uses housing communities, densification, reducing sprawl and increasing municipal revenues from land planning and management services. A land and construction sector study will present evidence based policy guidelines that can position well the National Urban Policy. The program will have a country wide advocacy campaign to promote participatory planning, changes in consumption patterns and housing life-style and promoting effective utilization of space.

Saudi cities have prepared a number of programmes for slum upgrading and urban regeneration, the current approach adopted is land and property evacuation with compensation that was implemented in Mecca, Medina, Riyadh and Jeddah. This model that is mainly led by government agencies is not the best solution. The programme, through establishing urban labs in selected cities, will develop implementation tools for participatory upgrading and regeneration with public-private partnership and introduce the regeneration agencies to new models of national and international partnerships in urban regeneration and slum improvements.

Urban Legislation, Land and Governance

The Ministry of Economy and Planning is responsible for national development, the Ministry of Interior for rule of law, order and oversight on regions and governorates development, the Ministry of Rural and Municipal Affairs, which was established in 1975 (1395 AH), is responsible for the administration of the municipalities throughout the Kingdom. Its primary functions include city and town planning, and the development and maintenance of the basic



infrastructure, such as roads, town cleaning and hygiene. The Statute of Municipalities enacted by the royal order M/5 in 6/2/1397.

In 1992 the Law of Provinces (Regions) was promulgated to improve provincial administrative standards and development through local authorities. Still many challenges remains. Although it focused on regional and urban development through provincial and local level decentralization of managing local change and development meeting the needs of the population and utilizing local resources and

assets. The councils have too little to say on budgeting for projects or executing them. The law divided Saudi Arabia into 13 regions each of which is headed by a prince from the royal family, each region has a Regional Council that include in it the governors in the region. The head of the regional council, the emir, is appointed by the king and has the rank of minister. Each region has a number of governorates, the total number of governorates in KSA is 118 governorates and within these governorates are 285 municipal councils. The council's membership consists of the local heads of the sectorial ministries, the heads of government agencies, ten citizens and local civic leaders. The council maintains law and order and supervise socio-economic development. The regional and municipal councils prepare master plans.

Some authorities have special status in the Emirates of Riyadh, Mecca, Jeddah and Medina to manage their own finances and have budgets separate from the Ministry of the Interior. In Mecca and Medina, development committees conduct administrative functions, planning and development, and education and health services, among others. The central government still has the power to dissolve a local government, remove members of the local council or choose contractors to undertake local projects, which in some cases can create conflicts of interest.

In 2005 and 2011 elections for the municipal councillors were held and another round will follow in 2015 in which women were allowed to vote and run the election. Now in 2015 cities have 285 active councils. These councils have proven successful, holding more than 2471 sessions throughout the year, issuing 492 decisions, 70%

of which have subsequently were executed. The total number of members was 1212, and half of them (506 members) selected by election. A total of 106 new councils were established after the previous elections. A total of 62 new municipalities established committees to act as municipal councils.

The role of local authorities (municipalities) has been revised to improve local capacities from managing day to day immediate services to managing cities from all five city prosperity dimensions. The shifts envisaged by the new Ministry of Municipality's strategy and the propositions for a new urban vision require the enhancement of both institutional and human resources capacities. Future Saudi Cities Program addresses institutional performance-related shortcomings so that the ability of Saudi cities, their institutions as well as their policy, technical, managerial and administrative cadres are adequately strengthened to guide the process of sustainable urbanization in the Kingdom. The Future Saudi Cities Program will analyse how regulatory frameworks best address the needs of the local population. In particular it will analyse the Regions Act, the Municipalities Statute and the Building Act in order to recommend the legislative and institutional requirements for effective implementation of policies and regional and city plans.

Urban Economy

Enhancing local capacity for efficient urban economy and Municipal Finance

Saudi Arabia is the world's largest exporter of oil, and this provides the foundations for its

economy: 45% of GDP, 80% of budget revenue and 90% of export earnings. It is currently attempting to diversify its economy into areas such as telecommunications, power generation, natural gas and encouraged private investment to provide more employment opportunities to Saudi nationals, particularly its substantial youth population. Riyadh is the country's financial, political and commercial centre. It has successfully created prominent financial and industrial sectors with two large industrial parks with the support of the Saudi Industrial Development Fund. Jeddah, the largest port and gateway to Mecca, has also developed rapidly. It is now preparing a strategic plan to guide its development through extensive infrastructure improvement, enhance its liveability, exploit its potential as a hub in the globalized market and maintain its competitiveness with other emerging 'economic cities' in the country. Religious pilgrimages are a major source of tourism economy in Mecca, Jeddah and Medina. Jeddah has diversified its economy to tourism, transport, logistics, education, healthcare, finance and retail and wholesale trade. Economic activities are also concentrated in other cities. Dammam is located close to the country's oil fields and this has boosted its development. The strategic plans of many cities has taken in consideration such priorities but was not able to develop the most optimum spatial configurations mainly in small and medium sized cities.

In an effort to shift economic growth to the secondary cities, Saudi Arabia is improving the infrastructure of Asir, Hail, Hofuf, Medina, Tabuk, and Taif. It is also investing in the development of new towns. The Knowledge Economic City in Medina (completion 2016-18) will focus on developing commercial expertise, supported by

a range of commercial and cultural complexes. In 2015 a renewable energy city in Riyadh, will be completed. The King Abdullah Economic City, north of Jeddah, Jizan Economic City will focus on heavy industries, biotech and pharmaceuticals. In Ha'il, the Prince Abdul Aziz Bin Mousaed Economic City will become a transport and logistics hub. Both are scheduled to be completed in 2016. Plans for two other economic cities, in Tabuk and in the Eastern Provinces, are currently under development. The challenge remains in the type of education of unemployed youth to qualify them to get employment in a private-led high competitive market for best expertise.

Municipalities, are responsible for issuing building and business permits, ensuring food safety and public health, maintaining parks and public space, solid waste management and street lighting. The national ministries provide education, social services and housing. The Municipalities Statute is very restrictive in giving them opportunities to structure their fees for services to be realistic and generate revenue to all the municipalities to improve services at their own discretion or initiate community led initiatives.

The programme is currently critically analysing Saudi Arabia economic development and investment programmes that are regionally distributed with the aim to ensure equal distribution of development gains across the regions. Within cities it has not yet trickled down its effect to Saudi population, particularly the labour force seeking employment. In addition, the programme will propose locally acceptable tools and solutions to enhance municipal finance and introduce participatory budgeting

for municipalities who are not able to collect taxes, adapt municipal fees to a reasonable rates particularly for city planning, building permits, land transfer, land-subdivisions and municipal service charges.

The programme is preparing urban planning related economic studies based on consultative discussions with the youth and women networks in cities. With the aim of achieving the right balance between different levels of government, designing new financial mechanisms and exploring new sources of capital, improving systems of revenue collection and improving budget management and transparency. The programme will develop and train municipalities and planning specialists on new mechanisms of land value capture, identifying bankable projects attractive to the private sector and privatization of municipal and revenue collection. The programme will recommend options to generate income including the issuing of permits to business operators, forming public-private partnerships and privatization of the provision of municipal services.

Well planned and designed cities can generate better financing, higher levels of wellbeing and better employment opportunities. Programme priorities are: to help cities improve municipal finance, to turn local assets into economic drivers, to promote community empowerment and to focus strongly on youth.

Risk Reduction and Rehabilitation

Planning for Resilience

Future Saudi Cities Program is integrating city

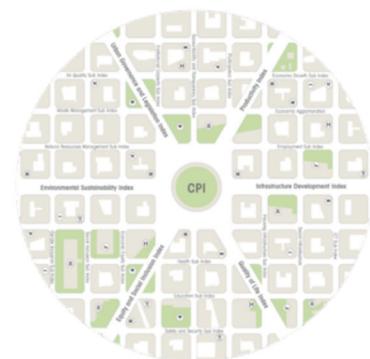
resilience strategies and preparedness guidelines for mitigation of and adaptation to flooding in vulnerable areas in Saudi cities. The programme will provide on the job training to planners and jointly develop with cities their resilience action plans and propose a set of recommendations for enhancing services through public private engagement.

Urban Research and Capacity Development

City Prosperity Indicators (CPI):

The intent is that with UN-Habitat's principles of sustainable urbanization and the Cities Prosperity Index as entry-points, Saudi cities will be capacitated to look at their cities in a more inclusive and multi-dimensional way, addressing prosperity across six dimensions: productivity, infrastructure, quality of life, equity, environmental sustainable urban form and structure, and institutions, laws and governance.

Two streams of activities in the programme are intended to lead to informed policy analysis and a set of 17 action plans (one per participating city), namely:



- I. Identification of indicators and city-level data collection on multiple dimensions of prosperity, using UN-Habitat's CPI;
- II. Reviews of existing Saudi planning practices and consideration of principles and approaches to a new urban agenda.

The participatory processes built into the programme will result in “inclusive, evidence-based policy analysis and customized action plans”, in direct support of Country Program Outcome 1.2. The data generated will feed into 17 national reports and the Flagship State of Saudi Cities Report. These sets of information will also feed into the Saudi national reporting to Habitat III. The programme includes youth and gender-specific indicators within the CPI across the 17 cities with the goal of determining a baseline on the needs of these population groups.

Orientation Workshops on CPI:

The aim of the workshops have been for participants to acquire improved knowledge about the urban challenges facing Saudi cities, and develop a greater understanding about the requirements for developing and applying the CPI through the FSCP. Sessions highlighted the importance of information for city planning and urban management, showing practical examples of cities, including those using the CPI, that have successfully addressed issues such as economic development, public transport, urban revitalization, urban environmental management, and urban planning strategies through more evidence-based policies to enhance the performance of cities.



CPI Workshop attended by the 17 cities

Gap Evaluation:

The study of training and institutional needs started through sending off the capacity-building experts into short assignments and to the head department of capacity –building.

The programme has already met with several officers in the ministry of municipal and rural affairs, major municipal departments, ministry of planning and universities. A primary report on the evaluation of needs of and the gap evaluation in the capacity building at the city level and the national level were prepared.

The main goal is to raise awareness amongst 178 specialists in the municipal and planning issues, the experts of urban observatories in cities, ministries, and the local consultants, universities faculties, and the private sector.

Cross Cutting Issues: Women and Youth

The Future Saudi Cities Program highlights equity and social inclusion as key pillars of sustainable urbanization, focusing on the equitable distribution and redistribution of the benefits of a

prosperous city as well as citizen engagement in governance processes. A key point of departure for the programme is the promotion of inclusive planning practices and a premise that cities with fuller engagement and effectively responding to the needs of women and youth (as well as other groups, such as the elderly), invariably have an enhanced level of prosperity.

Building up the Partnership with Women and Youth-led Organization in Each City:

The programme has held several meetings and has undertaken a number of missions across the kingdom. It has met with different women-led and youth start-ups as part of mapping relevant organizations for the programme. These are detailed in separate reports, highlighting specific entry-points for the programme.

The purpose of the mapping has been to:

- I. Identify relevant groups for the programme to engage with.
- II. Start the process of understanding the realities and needs of different population groups.
- III. Identify how they can individually or institutionally be champions of the FSCP. For the latter, so far the programme has already drawn on this pool for interns and consultants and for nominations to Advisory Group on Gender (AGGI) and Youth Advisory Board (YAB).

There will be one new mapping mission undertaken every 2 months to complete the

exercise for the full set of 17 Program cities.

Production of Women and Youth Indicators:

The program has committed to ensure youth and women-specific data to catalyse more informed and responsive policies and actions of Saudi cities and create conditions to measure present and future progress.

We are in agreement with our national counterpart on having 5 youth indicators as part of the CPI and the formulation and collection of these indicators will be sub-contracted to WARIF, as youth representative on the National Habitat Committee.

A first meeting with selected Saudi Women Sustainable Urbanization Network representatives from Universities and the private sector have been held on how the CPI can be more gender responsive and to look at both age and sex-disaggregated data where possible. This is an important contribution to the overall CPI, where there is room to enhance the analysis of women and men in cities. The meeting noted in particular the need for sex-disaggregated analysis on employment opportunities after graduation in program cities; affordability of transport, and the use of streets as public space.

National Urban Campaign: “My Neighbourhood My Responsibility”

The Future Saudi Cities Program advocates among Saudi youth groups and women in various Saudi cities sustainable urbanizations of green, connected, integrated, liveable, productive, equitable and smart cities and

neighbourhoods. The programme partners with academic institutions, universities, and local authorities, NGOs, Ministry of Municipalities, Ministry of Planning and Ministry of Housing in advocating for a paradigm shift in planning and managing cities and its public spaces. During the World Cities Day, the programme launched together with the al-Omran Society City changer campaign a competition among students of the Saudi universities on their aspirations for public open space as an entry point for revitalizing the city they want.



During a visit to burida, as part of the women organizations mapping

MAIN PARTNER

Ministry of Municipal and Rural Affairs

His Highness, the Minister of Municipal and Rural Affairs headed the Kingdom's delegation to the sixth session of the World Urban Forum (WUF) held in Napoli – Italy during September 2012 (Shawwal 1433H) organized by United Nations Program for Human Settlements "UN-Habitat".

During the bilateral meetings of H.H. the Minister and H.E. the Undersecretary with the UN-Habitat officers within the forum's events, an idea was suggested for signing a mutual agreement with UN-Habitat to develop a modern planning strategy and vision for the Saudi Cities.

A proposal was raised to His Majesty to seek the assistance of UN-Habitat's experience and the involvement of both the Minister of Finance and the Minister of Economy and Planning.

As a result, a Memorandum of Understanding –MoU- was signed between the Ministry and UN-Habitat for the implementation of the "Saudi Cities Program".

OUTLOOK

UN-Habitat, through the Future Saudi Cities Programme, aims to contribute to the achievement of sustainable urbanization in the kingdom through the study and analysis of the current state in potentials and abilities to provide a sustainable urban environment. UN-Habitat will present the analysis for the urban legislation and institutional infrastructure in Saudi cities, and the extent of ability to implement the participatory urban policies and strategies.

UN Habitat aims to contribute to the achievement of sustainable urbanization in the kingdom

through preparation of a detailed strategic plan and a frame for pilot projects to serve as a road map for a phased development towards sustainable Saudi cities.

The overarching goal for UN-Habitat in Saudi Arabia, is assisting in developing a new vision and framework for the strategic planning, for a sustainable urban future in the kingdom, where the international standards are pursued and to be accepted by the national and local partners.



National Urban Campaign "My Neighbourhood My Responsibility"

Future Saudi Cities Program
United Nations Human Settlements Programme
United Nations, Diplomatic Quarter, Riyadh
Telephone: +966 (11) 488 5301
Fax: +966 (11) 488 5309

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www.unhabitat.org/Saudi-Arabia

