



UN-HABITAT EVALUATION BRIEF

Evaluation of the Establishment Process of the Rafik Hariri UN-Habitat Memorial Award Evaluation Report 5/2012

1. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

The Rafik Hariri UN-Habitat Memorial Award, hereafter the "Award", was inaugurated at the Fifth Session of the World Urban Forum held in 2010 in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. It is a joint initiative between the Rafik Hariri Foundation (hereafter the "Foundation"), and UN-Habitat.

The Foundation was established in 1979 to provide health, social and cultural services to disadvantaged people in Lebanon. A partnership between UN-Habitat and the Foundation has developed over the years based on common objectives related to development and the implementation of the Habitat Agenda.

UN-Habitat emphasises the role of partnerships in sustainable development. Specifically, UN-Habitat identifies and disseminates best practices through its best practice programme and administers several awards, including the Rafik Hariri Memorial Award, that recognise exemplary achievement and best practices in human settlements. The Award, which comes with a USD 200,000 cash prize, trophy and certificate, commemorates the life and achievements of the late Lebanese Prime Minister Rafik Hariri. It is awarded every two years to individuals and organisations that demonstrate exemplary achievements in human settlements and socio-economic advancement of the urban poor.

2. EVALUATION PROCESS AND METHODOLOGY

The evaluation was requested by the Foundation for the purpose of evaluating the launch phase of the Award and to provide lessons learned and recommendations. The objectives of the evaluation were to:

- Determine the progress made and lessons learned during the launch phase;
- Identify the strengths and weaknesses of the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the Foundation and UN-Habitat; and
- Provide forward looking recommendations for the Award process.

A review of the existing literature on the Award was conducted and interviews undertaken with UN-Habitat and Foundation staff, and members of the International Jury and Steering Committee. An on-line survey was also administered to staff and other stakeholders involved in the Award process as well as a sample of participants at the World Urban Forum. Out of 50 questionnaires administered, 36 questionnaires (response rate 72 per cent) were returned.

The evaluation was carried out between March and July 2011 by an independent consultant, Ms. Rukia Hayata, and managed by the Evaluation Unit of UN-Habitat.

3. MAIN FINDINGS

The success of the first cycle of the Award was mainly due to the high level of support within the Foundation and by UN-Habitat senior management. The design of the Award process, *inter alia* the MOU, proved to be adequate while the delivery processes needed to be improved:

- The MOU was comprehensive and encompassed aspects of funding, governance, transparency and conflict resolution and has thus helped establish a solid institutional structure to manage the processes and resources to support the Award. About 80 per cent of the respondents

believed that the Award was well conceptualized and its mission clear and focused.

- The Foundation has through its endowment fund secured funding for the Award for at least the next ten years. From the survey, half of UN-Habitat respondents were not aware of the existence of the Endowment Fund, while half of the Jury members thought that the Fund was managed by UN-Habitat. At the Foundation's Secretariat, all respondents were aware of the provision of the endowment fund but they could not confirm if it had actually been established.
- Adequate resources have been allocated for managing the Award. However, United Nations rules and regulations were at times not well-suited for adjustment to the specific needs and demands of various Award actors such as members of the Jury and the Steering Committee in matters of employment, travel and honoraria.
- The lack of a calendar for Award meetings constrained the process. Nevertheless, most of the respondents (82 per cent), believed the management of the Award compared favourably if not better with other special awards in UN-Habitat.
- The Foundation needs to secure financial stability for the Award. The process of establishing a USD 20 million endowment for the Award, as prescribed in the MOU, has not yet been initiated.
- At the senior management level of both UN-Habitat and the Foundation there was great support and commitment to the Award. Sixty-seven per cent of respondents were positive in their responses on the question of adequate support and engagement by UN-Habitat senior management.

- The Tanzania Women Land Access Trust, which provided the outsourced administrative and logistical services for the launching of the Award, was commended for its work by the participants. The Trust provided logistical services on behalf of the UN-Habitat secretariat.
- Given certain gaps in knowledge about the Award there is a need for greater effort to disseminate information among senior managers at UN-Habitat and the Foundation.
- It is not clear among the key stakeholders which venue would be the most suitable for the Award ceremony in order to ensure due attention and continued high-levels of publicity.
- Instant visibility was secured by having the launch ceremony at the opening of the Fifth Session of the World Urban Forum in March 2010. However, limited publicity of the Award has emerged as a major concern to be addressed.
- There was a lack of reporting and monitoring frameworks, which could have helped to inform the process, monitor progress and identify areas for improvement. There were no action plan, indicators of achievement and means of verification with timelines and responsible teams and/or persons.

4. LESSONS LEARNED

The correct timing of the processes related to the Award is essential to its continued success and could be improved. These include:

- Adequate time before and after the award for the optimal involvement of stakeholders; and

- Publicity campaigns through established media channels could be started further in advance of the call for nominations.

A Technical Review Committee to independently verify the nomination documents would be helpful.

The first cycle of the Award has shown that there could be a number of management options for the award. The evaluation proposed the following four options:

- Maintaining the current arrangement with UN-Habitat as the hub of the Award secretariat based on a bilateral arrangement between the Foundation and UN-Habitat with UN-Habitat in the lead;
- Outsourcing of administrative function under a tripartite agreement between UN-Habitat, the Foundation and the service provider;
- Shifting responsibilities from UN-Habitat to the Foundation with the Foundation in charge of the Award secretariat and UN-Habitat playing a supporting role; and
- Moving the Award secretariat to the Foundation and with the Foundation responsible for outsourcing administrative functions.

5. KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

The Award management should consider outsourcing the Award's administrative and other functions such as publicity, website design and media strategy in order to reduce the burden on UN-Habitat's and the Foundation's line staff. However, the 'packaging' of the Award must be closely guided and supervised by UN-Habitat and the Foundation. The management should consider an action plan or 'roadmap' to complement the existing MOU and

which clearly outlines the activities, responsibilities and timeframes in relation to the Award process.

A calendar should be fixed for Award meetings throughout the year to ensure regular events and provisions should be made for alternate co-chairs at Steering Committee meetings.

Some conceptual aspects of the Award should be reviewed to strengthen its focus, including sharing the Award between two winners provided there is adequate follow-up; and the possibility of alternating winners between different geographical areas and social groups and looking beyond well-known personalities for people who have shown commitment and excelled in their work.

There should be greater efforts made to generate publicity for the award, through established media channels.

The international Jury should be kept informed of the preliminary screening done by the secretariat to ensure full transparency in the screening process. As far as possible, the practice of selection of the winner by the Jury should be encouraged as it worked well during the first cycle.

The Steering Committee should consider which venue is best suited for the Award ceremony between the venue of the World Urban Forum, the UN-Habitat Headquarters in Nairobi which hosts the Governing Council, and the United Nations General Assembly at the United Nations Headquarters in New York.

Monitoring and evaluation frameworks for the Award process should be built into the proposed action plan/road map for the next cycle. Progress reports, based on the action plan, should be regularly submitted to the Steering Committee for review.