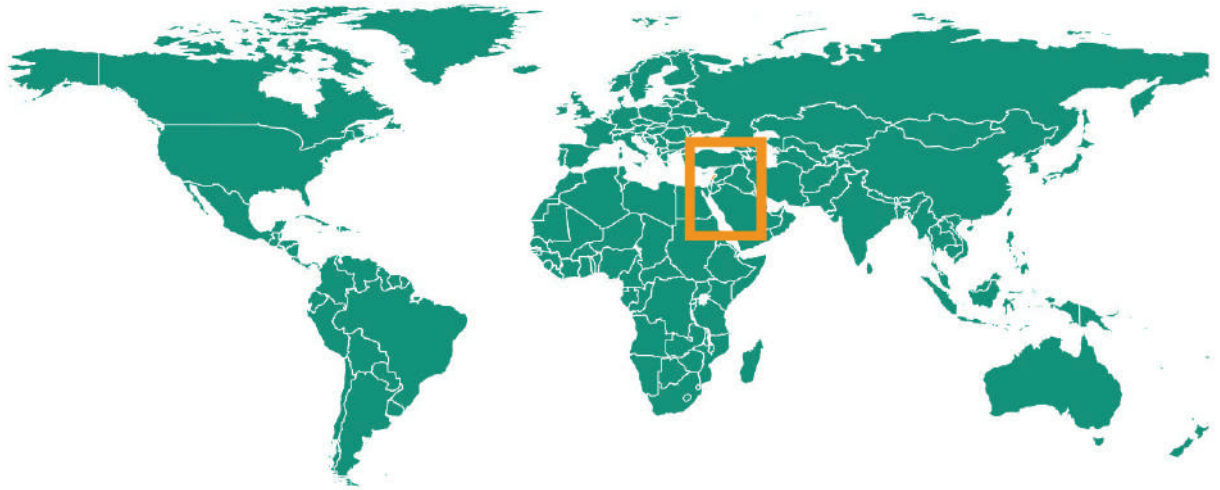




HABITAT COUNTRY PROGRAMME DOCUMENT

2018 - 2022

PALESTINE



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Write-up and coordination:

Dr. Ahmad El-Atrash

Contributors:

Amjad Taweel, Fuad Saliba, Hanin Nammari,
Haya Mani, Laila Abu Baker, Dr. Lubna Shaheen,
Mohammad Abu Qaoud, Nour Al-Masoud, and
Rami Abuzuhri

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FOREWORD

The Habitat Country Programme Document (HCPD) (2018-2022) for the Special Human Settlements Programme for the Palestinian People (SHSPPP) has been prepared and launched at a critical time for the Palestinian people across the occupied Palestinian territory (oPt), in the Gaza Strip, and West Bank, including East Jerusalem. The operational environment is increasingly characterized by territorial fragmentation, administrative division, lack of jurisdiction, weak accessibility to natural resources, and dwindling funding resources, amongst other major urban challenges and within an exponential increase in urbanization rates.

The SHSPPP, through its partnership with the Government of Palestine represented by Ministry of Local Government continues its support within the framework of the relevant frameworks and resolutions of UN-Habitat's Governing Council with the overall development objective of improving the human settlements conditions of the Palestinian people and- in so doing- contribute in a modest way to strengthening peace, security and stability in the region.

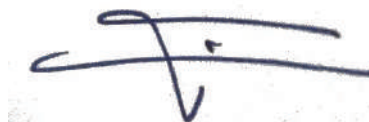
Within the programming period for HCPD of 2018-2022, the SHSPPP and in partnership with the Palestinian authorities is committed to strengthen its relevance as a trusted partner in an increasingly complex and evolving development environment, to achieve its mandate to work "for a better urban future". To do so, the SHSPPP recognizes the need to respond in a nimble and innovative way to the challenges that continue to grow, through fostering multilateral and bilateral partnerships with UN agencies and development partners to support in realizing a coherent spatial planning system across the oPt.

We are pleased to co-launch the HCPD (2018-2022) at the World Habitat Day, October 1, 2018, which is celebrated to reflect on the state of our towns and cities, and on the basic right of all to adequate shelter. This launch comes during the Urban October 2018, where UN-Habitat and State of Palestine, along with other member states organize a month of activities, events and discussions around urban sustainability, ending with the World Cities Day, October 31, 2018 with the sub-theme "Building Sustainable and Resilient Cities". Within this spirit, we recognize the importance to work closely together in achieving the commitments prioritized under the HCPD (2018-2022) to support the localization of the New Urban Agenda and the acceleration of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, especially Goal 11, for a better urban future for all.

Dr. Zeyad Elshakra
Head of Office/Palestine



H.E. Dr. Hussein Al-A'raj
Minister of Local Government



INTRODUCTION

MAIN OBJECTIVES OF THE UN-HABITAT COUNTRY PROGRAMME DOCUMENT

The UN-Habitat Country Programme Document (HCPD) is the strategic framework document through which the Special Human Settlements Programme for the Palestinian People (SHSPPP) (UN-Habitat Palestine) work with the Government of Palestine (GoP)¹, represented by Ministry of Local Government (MoLG), and other stakeholders as elaborated in the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between GoP/MoLG and UN-Habitat (2017-2020) in understanding, analysing, designing, and implementing fit-for-purpose interventions in the fields of sustainable urbanization, spatial planning, local governance, and urban management.

The HCPD should be treated as a living document, where needs and priorities and interventions will be revisited to target those who are furthest behind.

As such the HCPD aims at identifying main challenges facing the sustainability of Palestinian cities and communities, and strategies and policies designed to respond more nimbly to the immediate humanitarian, and medium-to-long term development interventions within the complex geo-political context for the State of Palestine that is fraught with many uncertainties, including the dwindling in funds and shift in focus to other regional issues.



¹ The terms “Government of Palestine”, “Palestinian Authority” and the terms “Palestine”, “State of Palestine”, “occupied Palestinian territory” are used interchangeably depending on context. Specifically, the term “occupied Palestinian territory” refers as a whole to the geographical area of the Palestinian territory occupied by Israel since 1967.

GLOBAL AND REGIONAL CONTEX

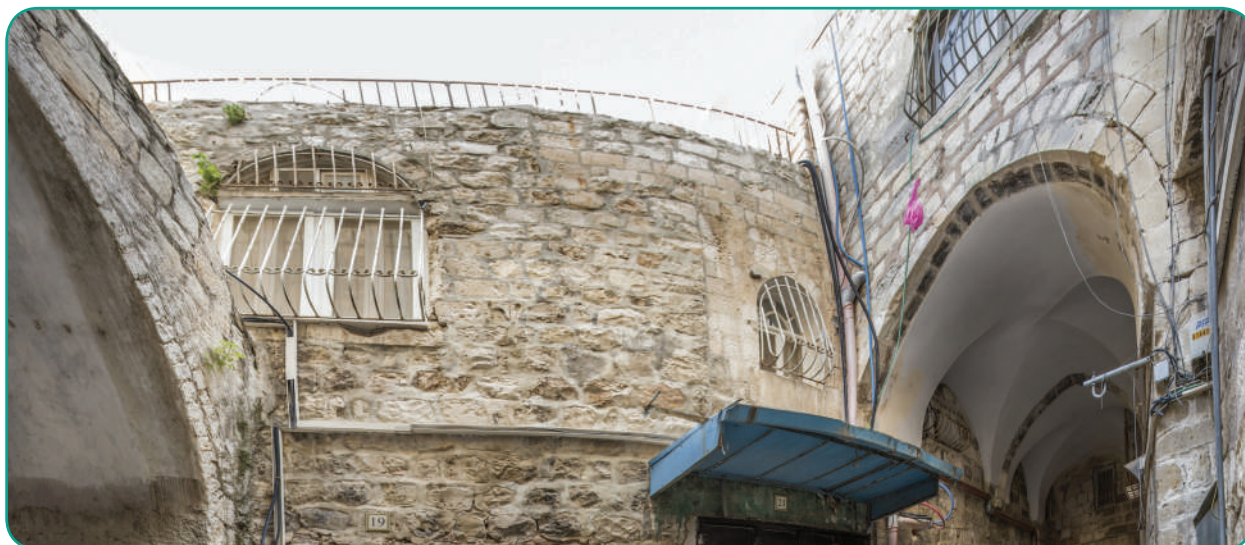
The HCPD is bounded by and aligned with the normative frameworks of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (2015), Paris Agreement (2015), and the New Urban Agenda (2016) amongst others, to which the State of Palestine is a party.

The HCPD is also based on specific frameworks and resolutions of UN-Habitat's Governing Council. The SHSPPP and the Technical Cooperation Trust Fund for the Programme were established upon the adoption of the consensus UN resolution 19/18 that was adopted by governments at the 19th Session of the UN-Habitat Governing Council in 2003. During the 23rd Governing Council in 2011, a new resolution 23/2 was adopted, providing a clearer and more focused mandate for the SHSPPP, requesting UN-Habitat *"to further focus its operations on planning, land and housing issues in view of improving the housing and human settlement conditions of Palestinians"*. Moreover, in the 26th Governing Council of UN-Habitat in 2017, a resolution was adopted calling UN-Habitat *"to continue to focus its work where there are acute humanitarian and development needs as identified through technical assessments by UN-Habitat"*.

Furthermore, the HCPD is strategically harmonized with the National Policy Agenda for Palestine (2017-2022), the United Nations Development Assessment Framework (UNDAF) (2018-2022) for Palestine, UN-Habitat's Strategic Plan 2014- 2019, and UN-Habitat's Regional Office for Arab States (ROAS) Strategic Plan 2014-2019 with reference to UN-Habitat's main focus areas, namely: urban legislation, land and governance; urban planning and design; urban economy; urban basic services; housing and slum upgrading; risk reduction and rehabilitation; research and capacity development, and the main cross-cutting issues to be mainstreamed, namely: Climate Change, Gender Equality, Human Rights and Youth.



SITUATION ANALYSIS



OVER ALL URBAN SITUATION

The Palestinian urban areas are growing with a rapid pace, while reeling under immense pressures on the environmental, socio-economic, and geo-political fronts. At present, almost 74 percent of the population in Palestine is considered urban, living in 40 percent of the territory that is effectively under direct Palestinian jurisdiction, while the remaining are living under full Israeli control in semi-urban and rural communities in the West Bank, including Area C and Hebron H2 (at the heart of the city). East Jerusalem continues to be occupied by Israel since 1967, and the Gaza Strip is totally besieged by the Israeli measures. The high urban growth rate in Palestine is accompanied by random spatial development, as cities and communities have expanded in a poorly planned manner, encroached on surrounding agricultural land, and suffer from poor basic infrastructure. Furthermore, there is an increasing demand for job opportunities, services and housing.

URBAN OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

The urban development in Palestine is faced with many challenges, especially the territorial and administrative fragmentation and financial constraints due to the rather weak rate of revenue collection, the ongoing political impasse between the West Bank and Gaza Strip, a rather centralized governance system in place that is a result of years of occupation, and a stunted economy that is dependent on the Israeli economy, since economic development could not grow beyond a specific structural level as it could not access critical inputs of natural resources and free transport of people and goods. The aforementioned factors are highly affected by the military occupation practices in the occupied Palestinian territory (oPt), in terms of the overall control on Gaza Strip, and the restrictions in terms of access on movement in the West Bank and occupied East Jerusalem, including the Separation Barrier, Israeli settlements, bypass roads, military and firing zone, to name a few. Against this dismal background and challenging complex context, the Palestinian competent authorities with support from the international community has focused

on enhancing service delivery at the local level, both to provide tangible development benefits to citizens, and as well to strengthen the view of municipalities as credible government bodies being elected directly by local population with the aim to further the aims of a strong local democracy, a rationalization of the multiple fragmentations within the urban development sector, and overall state-building aims by fostering national-local collaboration. Despite the absence of a national legislature since 2007, and due to the fact that the West Bank and Gaza Strip are still effectively under Israeli military occupation, the elected local authorities are perceived by the local population as credible and legitimate bodies to represent them administratively and politically. The concerns of the external risks, especially military practices continued to overweight those related to internal risks, such as the overall weak delivery of services.

The Palestinian Authority (PA) at the national level alone cannot address the complications of the unprecedented urbanization rates, where 74 percent of the population is located in urban areas - creating growing pressure on land, infrastructure and resources. Furthermore, the government cannot effectively exploit the potentials that are pent up in cities and communities that are characterized by territorial fragmentation and high poverty rates, recognizing urbanization and city growth as a transformative force for urban development.

NATIONAL INSTITUTIONAL SETUP AND LEGAL FRAMEWORKS RELATED TO URBAN DEVELOPMENT

The State of Palestine has voluntarily adopted the New Urban Agenda (NUA) in Quito in 2016, which is a reinforcement to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, especially the urban related Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) adopted as well in 2015. The State of Palestine has acknowledged that the effective implementation of the NUA would lead to a meaningful contribution to the achievements of many other global agendas such as the Paris Agreement and the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction of 2015.

The Ministry of Public Works and Housing (MoPWH) endorsed, on behalf of Palestine, the national report on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development to the Third United Nations Conference on Human Settlements and Sustainable Urban Development (HABITAT III). The submission of the Report came after the United Nations General Assembly which accorded Palestine the status of a non-member observer state, thus marking new opportunities and challenges.

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