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General Secretariat of the Supreme  
Council for Planning and  
Development

# National Report Kuwait Housing and Sustainable Urban Development

UNITED NATIONS  
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# Kuwait National Report

To the United Nations Conference  
On Housing and  
Sustainable Urban Development  
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Quito, Republic of Ecuador.

## Foreword

In today's roadmaps for development, economic growth, social equity, and environmental sustainability are our most central themes. In Kuwait, as a wealthy oil-exporting country, the questions we need to address are the following: are we able to provide housing for the Kuwaiti population and achieve sustainable urban development in our city-state in the best way we can? And are we supporting the sustainable development of developing and least developed countries in the best way it can?

In his speech delivered at the United Nations Summit to adopt the post-2015 development agenda held during 25-27 September 2015, His Highness the Amir of Kuwait, Sheikh Sabah al-Ahmad al-Jaber al-Sabah, said that "the state of Kuwait has spared no effort in its attempts to provide development aid to developing countries and least developed countries through its various institutions, most notably through The Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development, providing the necessary loans and grants to establish infrastructure projects in these countries. In actual fact, my country has continued in its provision of development assistance in measures amounting to 2.1 % of the GDP, more than double the internationally agreed upon rate."

Kuwait's current revenue depends mainly on its exports of oil. As we look forward to further national development, the question of diversification of the economy becomes even more essential. On several occasions, His Highness the Amir has pointed out his vision for the State of Kuwait for 2035, reaffirming that "we can no longer be solely dependent on the resource of oil for our national income. Instead, we must utilize the creative energy of our young people to create new job opportunities and ensure that our country embarks on a long-term sustainable and prosperous economic path..."

To return to the first part of the question and the problem of adequate housing, the Kuwait National Report for the Third United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development examines these six key areas: (1) urban demography, (2) land and urban planning, (3) the environment and urbanization, (4) urban governance and legislation, (5) urban economy, and (6) housing and basic services.

The report also discusses past issues and lessons learned, and also identifies key anticipated challenges that must be addressed and resolved through the New Urban Agenda. It is worth pointing out that this National Report is the first of its kind to be prepared in Kuwait; it sheds new light on crucial policies and programs as well as key challenges that need to be addressed on all six fronts of urban development in order to best achieve the Amir's Vision of Kuwait for 2035.

The National Report finds that the country's demographic policies are headed in the right direction, but the implementation has been slow with regards to the development of new cities and the relocation of the population to these cities. In addition, immigration policies have been changing with efforts to attract more skilled expatriate workers who are needed for the country's social and economic development.

The National Report highlights that Kuwait is one of the first countries in the GCC to develop a Master Plan for the country's urban development plans. The First Master Plan was prepared in 1952 followed by the Second and Third Master Plans. Currently, work on the Fourth Master Plan for 2040 is in progress, building on the aim of the Third Master Plan to develop Kuwait into becoming a major business and financial hub in the region.

The national report also highlights the importance of finding alternative, renewable sources of energy to protect our environment from carbon emissions that contribute to global warming. Another key mission discussed in the report is the importance of introducing alternative transportation systems to reduce local congestion and air pollution as well as increasing mobility throughout Kuwait and to neighboring countries. These projects include a subway system, the Kuwait Metropolitan Area, which is being strongly considered, as well as the need to commence plans for a railway system that will not only connect the northern and south-eastern parts of the country, but will also become part of the Gulf Railway connecting countries in the region, connecting Kuwait to Iraq in the north and Saudi Arabia to the south, all of which will help expand Kuwait's international trade.

On the subject of Kuwait's trade and economy, the National Report additionally highlights the government's plans to encourage further economic activity by developing and providing funding for small and medium enterprises in order to create jobs and diversify income, allowing citizens to contribute to a more vibrant economy and thereby changing the nation's economic and urban landscape.

The report's chapter on housing and basic services shows that Kuwait has successfully fulfilled its commitment on providing clean drinking water, sanitation and sewage services, and electricity to the entire population; it also points out the shortage in the supply of adequate housing for the Kuwaiti population in relation to growing demand in this area.

I hope that everyone who is concerned with this subject matter will find Kuwait's first national report a milestone in addressing all these aspects of development and in providing instrumental analysis of housing and sustainable urban development in Kuwait, while allowing room for further analysis on policy matters on the above-mentioned six areas.

I would like to express my gratitude to the team of the General Secretariat of the Supreme Council for Planning and Development (GS-SCPD) of Kuwait as well as the team at the UN-Habitat Office in Kuwait, all of whom were instrumental in both collecting and collating data and providing their valuable insights and comments. I would also thank other ministries and government agencies as well as the private sector for their cooperation in the preparation of the report by contributing time, effort, and information. My special thanks go to Dr. Ameera Al-Hassan of UN-Habitat for her invaluable contributions and for leading the work on data collection and collation for this report, and without whose dedication this report would not have been completed. Special thanks also go to Mr. Dilli Prasad Bhattarai, GSSCPD Consultant, for preparing the draft of this report, and Dr. Tarek El-Sheikh, the Director of UN-Habitat Office in Kuwait and Regional Representative for the GCC, for providing comments to the draft report, and last, but not least, to the Kuwait

Delegation to the United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development in Quito, the Ecuador, for representing their country at its best.

Dr. Khaled Mahdi  
Secretary General  
Secretariat General,  
Of the Supreme Council for Planning & Development  
State of Kuwait

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### Team Members for Data Collection

- Dr. Ameera Al-Hassan, UN-Habitat
- Eng. Ahmad Al-Janahi, GS-SCPD Kuwait
- Eng. Abdullah Benghaith, GS-SCPD Kuwait
- Mr. Dilli Prasad Bhattarai, GS-SCPD Kuwait

### GS-SCPD Kuwait staff for Data/Information or Administrative Support

- Mr. Talal N. al-Shammari
- Ms. Eman H. Al-Mutairi
- Ms. Masouma H. Ashkanani
- Ms. Eman Abdul Lateef al-Naser
- Mr. Mohammad Al-Sheikh Musaed
- Ms. Narjes Abdelhadi
- Ms. Heba Yacoub Al-Musaileem

### Other persons and organizations that provided data/information

- Eng. Adel E. Khraibut, Office of Minister for Planning and Development
- Prof. Nasra Shah, Kuwait University
- Mr. Othman Abdullah Al-Othman, Central Statistics Bureau
- Ms. Hadeel Abdul Latif Binnaji, Public Authority for Housing Welfare
- Eng. Naser A. Khraibut, Public Authority for Housing Welfare
- Eng. Anwar A. Al-Helailah, Public Authority for Housing Welfare
- Mr. Khaled Ahmed Abdel Muaty, Public Authority for Housing Welfare
- Eng. Heba Al-Mufarij, Public Authority for Housing Welfare
- Mr. Abdullah Saqr, Public Authority for Housing Welfare
- Eng. Elaf Ashkanani, Kuwaiti Credit Bank
- Ms. Amnah Behzab, Kuwaiti Credit Bank
- Eng. Mona M. Bourisli, Arab Towns Organization
- Mr. Nasser A. N. Al-Ammar, Ministry of Social Affairs and Labor
- Ms. Sherifa Al-Shalfan, LSE Kuwait Program
- Mr. Nasser Ahmed Al-Shaikh, Ministry of State for Youth Affairs
- Mr. Tawfiq Ahmed Al-Jarrah, Real Estate Association
- Eng. Sharraf, Private Sector
- Eng. Suhaila A.G. Marafi, Ministry of Electricity & Water
- Mr. Khalifa M. Hamada, Ministry of Finance

- Ms. Sarah Al-Duwaisan, Delta Consulting
- Eng. Saad Al-Mhailbi, Kuwait Municipality
- Mr. Abdulaziz M.A. Al-Majed, Supreme Council for Governorates Affairs
- Mr. Salem Al-Rowaisan, Supreme Council for Governorate Affairs
- Mr. Deeb Al-Hajar, Supreme Council for Governorate Affairs
- Ms. Dalal Abdulrahman Al-Radhi, UN-Habitat
- Ms. Dana Soumaf, UNDP
- Ms. Fatima Al-Seri, UNDP
- Ms. Sahar Shawa, UNDP
- Mr. Bashar Marafi, UNDP
- Mr. Ali el-Muntaser, UNDP
- Ms. Fatima Keaik, UNDP

Draft of the report prepared by

- Mr. Dilli Prasad Bhattarai, GS-SCPD

Comments for the draft were provided by

- Dr. Tarek El-Sheikh, UN-Habitat

Translation, proofreading and revision of the report was prepared by

- Ms. Lamyia B. Sulayman, GS-SCPD

Graphic Designer

- Mr. Qusai Alduaij, Ministry of Information

## Executive Summary

Kuwait is an oil producing country and is a member of the Gulf Cooperation Council, with an area of 17,820 sq. km. In 2014, the Gross National Product (GNP) in PPP (or purchasing power parity) was USD 83,961. Kuwait's Human Development Index (HDI) of the same year was 0.816.

### Urban Demography

1. Kuwait's population has grown from 0.99 million in 1975 to 4.18 million in 2015. The country is essentially a city-state where more than 98% of the total population resides in the urban areas. Most of the population is concentrated in the Kuwait Metropolitan Area to the south-western and eastern edges of the country as well as a few other surrounding urban areas, all of which cover about 8% of the country's total land area. The government has therefore designed policies to begin developing new cities and rural town areas in the northern, northeaster, western and south-eastern parts of the country to relocate the rapidly increasing population in the Kuwait Metropolitan Area.
2. The total population of Kuwait includes Kuwaiti citizens and non-Kuwaiti residents. As of 2015, the proportion of the Kuwaiti population to the non-Kuwaiti population was at was 31% to 69%, returning to the same figures of the 1975 census; the government has been working on developing immigration and demographic policies that hope to change the distribution to 40% to 60% by 2030.
3. Kuwait has a hot desert climate, with infertile soil and a lack of rivers or freshwater sources. Because of this lack in sufficient natural freshwater sources or arable lands, as well as a lack in well-trained farming labor, Kuwait's rural and agricultural economy is very small. With the new urban agenda, the government recognizes the need to bring in dry land, urban agriculture, and aquaculture technologies as well as the other necessary resources and skilled labor to enhance its food production.
4. Kuwait's general parameters for the youth population range from 14-34 years of age. In 2011, those aged 15-24 made up 17.5%, while those aged 15-24

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