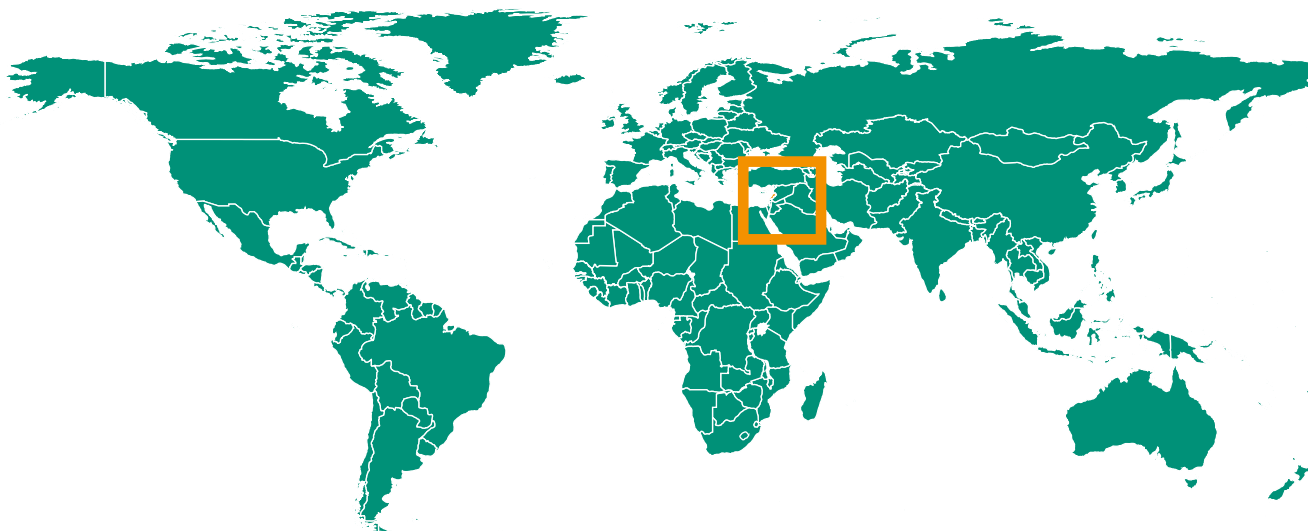


COUNTRY PROGRAMME DOCUMENT 2008 – 2009

LEBANON





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FOREWORDS

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



In April 2007, the Governing Council of UN-HABITAT approved our 2008-2013 Medium-Term Strategic and Institutional Plan. This plan intends to promote the alignment of UN-HABITAT normative and operational activities at country level.

The UN-HABITAT Country Programme Documents (HCPD) are tangible components of this Plan as well as a genuine endeavour of UN-HABITAT to better coordinate normative and operational activities in a consultative and inclusive process involving UN-HABITAT's in-country focal points, UN-HABITAT Programme Managers, national governments, UN country teams, sister-UN agencies, development partners and all divisions of our Agency. The UN-HABITAT Country Programme Documents are strategic tools meant as a guide for all UN-HABITAT activities over a two-year period. A major dimension of the UN-HABITAT Country Programme Document is to advocate UN-HABITAT's mandate and address the urban challenges facing the world's developing countries.

The UN-HABITAT Country Programme Documents identify national urban development goals and priorities including shelter, urban governance, access to basic services and credit. Important cross-cutting issues such as the environment, gender, responses to disasters, and vulnerability reduction are also addressed. The UN-HABITAT Country Programme Documents focus on UN-HABITAT country programming. They

serve as a work plan for UN-HABITAT Programme Managers and a reference tool for national and local actors involved in sustainable urban development. According to the Medium-Term Strategic and Institutional Action Plan adopted by the UN-HABITAT Committee of Permanent Representatives on 6 December 2007, twenty UN-HABITAT Country Programme Documents were completed during 2008, including the One-UN Pilot countries where UN-HABITAT is active.

In line with the United Nations reform process, UN-HABITAT Country Programme Documents seek to strengthen the role of the United Nations and to demonstrate our commitment. I wish to thank our UN-HABITAT Programme Managers for their input and dedication and for putting together these documents under guidance of the Regional and Technical Cooperation Division and with support from all branches and programmes of the Agency.

A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read 'Anna K. Tibaijuka'. The signature is fluid and cursive.

Anna K. Tibaijuka
Executive Director, UN-HABITAT

MINISTER



Lebanon is situated on the Mediterranean Sea on 10,452 square kilometers with a total population of 4.1 million people and an urban population of 3.6 million people. Lebanon is considered a highly urbanized country with more than 85% of people living in urban areas; sustainable urbanization is a key national development challenge.

Although cities in Lebanon embody the most pressing development challenges, including environmental pollution, unemployment and increased disparities, they also reflect the country's cultural diversity, multi-confessionalism and vibrant democracy. These features represent the driving force for the people's resilience to overcome challenges, re-build war affected cities and towns and contribute to local development.

Over the last 40 years, Lebanon has been facing series of internal crisis which have had devastating repercussions on the lives of Lebanese citizens, their livelihoods and the physical infrastructure of the country. As a response to the devastating consequences of these wars, the Government of Lebanon, with the support of the international community has contributed significantly to successful reconstruction programs.

As the country recovers from the series of crisis that occurred after the assassination of Prime Minister Rafik Hariri in 2005, the Government of Lebanon is committed to the implementation of a national reform programme that aims to stimulate growth, create employment, reduce poverty, and maintain social and political stability.

The national reform program emphasizes the importance of local development, balanced regional development and poverty reduction. To achieve this, we strongly believe that national and local stakeholders, including municipali-

ties, should have the necessary resources to play a key strategic role as local development agents.

The Ministry of Interior and Municipalities is committed to creating local authorities with democratic legitimacy and genuine powers for local decision making and self governance. In this context, the Ministry with the support of UN-HABITAT as well as other international organizations would implement an integrated initiative to promote decentralization reforms, enhance local governance processes and strengthen the capacities of local authorities.

We believe that partnerships with key international organizations like UN-HABITAT are instrumental to support our endeavors to create efficient institutions and municipalities able to manage our cities and towns in Lebanon.

Ziyad Baroud
Minister of Interior and Municipalities
Government of Lebanon

SITUATION ANALYSIS

NATIONAL URBAN POLICY CONTEXT

With an estimate of 87% of the total number of population living in urban areas (a rate higher than most other Arab States), urbanization is considered one of the key issues facing Lebanon. The population is distributed unevenly among regions. Around 48% of total number of the population is distributed in Beirut and Mount Lebanon regions alone, whereas only 13.6% live in Bekaa region (the largest governorate in size). This urban expansion poses a major challenge for Lebanon. Its impact, depending on how it is managed, would reflect on the quality of life, water resources availability, costs of infrastructures, and the future of natural, agricultural and landscape areas.

In an attempt to promote the sound planning of the country, the Government embarked in 2002 in a pioneer initiative to formulate a National Physical Master Plan. The draft report (submitted in 2006) emphasized the country urbanization challenges and concluded that in 2030, there will be a total of 884 square kilometers of urbanized areas (ratio 170 square meters of urban area per inhabitant), for a population of 4 million people. This represents a growth of 284 square kilometers within 30 years, which would have significant impact on the natural environment and agricultural lands. To date, the Council of Ministers did not yet endorse the plan.

War and peace are also considered key development challenges within the national urban policy context.

Since 1975 to date, Lebanon witnessed a number of crises. The long crisis that hit the country between 1975 and 1990 impacted the socio-economic status and quality of living for the country's population. The war resulted in massive population displacement, which remains until today a main challenge affecting the national urban context. Over the last 50 years or so, Lebanon has been facing massive population displacement due to the war with Israel leaving hundreds of thousands of displaced people from Bekaa and southern Lebanon remain in illegal settlements in Beirut Southern suburb.

Since the return to stability in the nineties, the country has witnessed a comprehensive planning and development. The government has been addressing issues of land development, urban and regional planning, upgrading and social development along with a fiscal restructuring of the tax system. The reconstruction was motivated by a strong belief that Lebanon can regain its position as the Middle East center for culture, entertainment and services.

Since 2005, after the assassination of PM Rafic Hariri, the country has witnessed several crisis and wars (July 2006 and Naher El Bared Crisis in 2007). The overall security situation remains precarious in light of the continued internal and regional tensions.

In this context, the absence of a national urban development strategy and the devastating consequences of the last 20 years of war resulted in:

- Conflicting land uses which are consequently prompting the deterioration of physical and environmental conditions;
- Urban sprawl without adequate provisions of roads and infrastructure, open public spaces, parking facilities, etc;
- Loss of agricultural land;
- Disappearance of coastal land;
- Destruction of natural and archeological sites.

Part one of the HCPD is divided into the mutually reinforcing focus areas of UN-HABITAT's Medium Term Strategic Institutional Plan for 2008-2013, as approved by the Governing Council in 2007.

STATISTICAL OVERVIEW

Urbanisation (2008)

- Total population: 4.1 m
- Urban population: 3.6 m (87 %)

Annual growth rates (2005-2010)

- National: 0.9 %
- Urban: 1.2 %

Major cities (2008)

- Beirut: 1.8 m

Source: UN DESA

Slum indicators

- Slum to urban population: 53 %

Source: UN-HABITAT, 2005



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FOCUS AREA 1: ADVOCACY, MONITORING AND PARTNERSHIPS

INSTITUTIONAL SET UP AND CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT

Since Lebanon gained independence, many attempts to prepare a national master plan were aborted. The most serious efforts in that direction were made but still unsuccessful. Later on, in 1977, two years after the war started, the Council for Development and Reconstruction (CDR) was created for the purpose of developing the needed National Master Plan.

Urban planning in Lebanon is traditionally practiced at the central level of government by key ministries (such as Ministry of Public Works, Ministry of Interior and Municipalities, etc.) and Councils (such as the Higher Council for Urban Planning and the Council for Development and Reconstruction-CDR). Traditionally, human settlements planning have been exercised at the central level with very limited involvement of local communities. This often generates obstacles during the implementation phase.

The Directorate General of Urbanism (DGU), created in 1959 in the Ministry of Public Works, was entrusted with the planning of the development of land through the preparation of comprehensive master plans for the urban and regional development of Lebanon. However, after more than 40 years of its inception, the DGU produced several localized master plans for the purpose of managing urban growth. These master plans addressed land use and parcelization,

Floor to Area Ratio (F.A.R), building heights, and setback regulations, with little concern to the general strategic master plan of the region. Furthermore, all other spatial, volumetric, and environmental issues were not considered. The only construction control is stipulated in F.A.R of 0.8 that does not differentiate between rural, urban, agricultural or natural sites.

At the intermediate administrative level, the Mohafazat council (Governorate) was created as an application of de-concentration. Its responsibility is to report the local needs to concerned administrations in the numerous fields of construction, socio-economic, agricultural, health, etc.

At the lower level of administration, municipalities and municipal councils enjoy administrative and financial autonomy and have a broad mandate as determined in the municipal law. However, the majority of municipalities are under-resourced in terms of human and financial capacities to fulfill their mandate efficiently.

Absence of national development policies, weak decentralization, overlapping of powers, lack of finances and poor institutional capacities are the several key problems causing poor human settlements planning.

GENDER EQUALITY IN HUMAN SETTLEMENTS

Significant progress has been made in recent years in terms of gender issues. The female illiteracy rate (as % of population 15 and over) dropped from 27% in 1990 to 17.8% in 2003. The fertility rate for percentage of the population aged 15



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to 24 dropped from 11% in 1990 to 5% in 2003. Primary School Enrolment for females (as Gross % of School Age Population) rose from 76.2% in 1990 to 89.4% in 2001, and Secondary School Enrolment for females (as Gross % of School Age Population) rose to 79% in 2002. Seats in parliament held by women rose from three in 2000 to six in 2005.

DISASTER MANAGEMENT AND RECOVERY

Despite the country's precarious security situation,

slow. This is primarily due to the lack of sufficient financial resources to cover all affected houses.

With its re-establishment in Lebanon in 2007, UN-HABITAT has been providing technical assistance to municipalities and households in devastated towns and villages in Southern Lebanon to enable them manage, control, monitor and evaluate the reconstruction of totally destroyed houses according to pre-defined standards and norms.

In general, critical efforts need to be carried

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