

# UN-HABITAT IN PARTNERSHIP WITH THE **ARAB STATES**

UN HABITAT  
FOR A BETTER URBAN FUTURE







## Introduction

UN-Habitat, the United Nations city agency has been engaged with the Arab States region for over 30 years, and over this period UN-Habitat has expanded its operation to more than 10 countries in the region.

Home to some of the world's oldest cities, the Arab region is also one of the most urbanized. As of 2010, the Arab countries are home to 357 million residents, 56 per cent of whom live in cities; by 2050, these countries will be home to 646 million people, 68 per cent of whom will live in cities. With projections showing that most of this urbanisation expected to take place in secondary cities, their urban management capacities have to be strengthened. So do some of the region's main cities, several of which have become extended metropolitan regions and some even mega urban regions. These emerging regional urban patterns tend to raise complex region-wide holistic management aspects, authority conflicts and governance voids.

UN-Habitat's commitment to the region continues to be strengthened. This year, with the financial support of the Kuwait Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the agency reached a major milestone with the publication of ***The State of the Arab Cities 2012*** which gives due recognition to the urban challenges in the region, and provides a discussion on urban trends between the countries, in the context of the larger Arab region. This is reiterated by the United Nations Secretary-General Mr. Ban Ki-moon in his foreword to the report which states:

“

“Through the centuries, Arab cities have generated many of humankind's most enduring achievements and legacies. Today, we must ensure that these cities are sustainable and inclusive – able to maintain their cultural and spiritual heritage while advancing well-being for generations to come.”

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This brochure presents an overview of UN-Habitat's engagement in the region, reflecting on what was achieved, how it was made possible, and what lies ahead – especially in these times of change.



## Our Presence

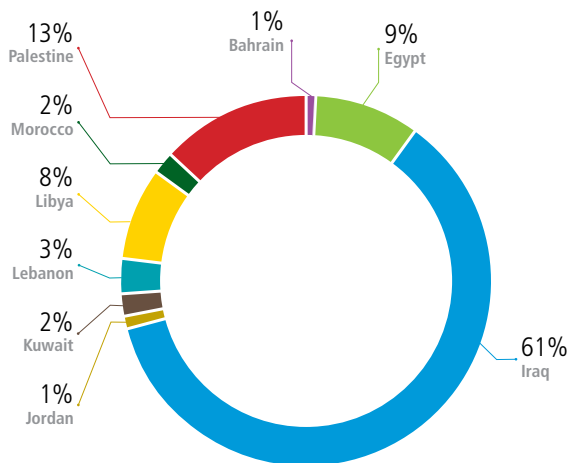
### Project portfolio, target countries and main contributors

UN-Habitat's portfolio of projects in the region for the period 2001-2010 was valued at USD 129 million<sup>1</sup> and represents 35 per cent of the global country level project portfolio of the organization. 60 per cent of this portfolio was allocated to the reconstruction and recovery in Iraq, as well as significant engagement in Libya, Egypt, occupied Palestinian territories (oPt), Morocco and Lebanon. This significant and diverse portfolio was possible thanks to major contributions from the Arab region which include Government of Egypt, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates (UAE), Kingdom of Bahrain, State of Kuwait, Government of Libya, the Kingdom of Morocco as well as other major donors such as the Iraq Trust Fund and Government of Japan. Our activities in the current decade as reflected in the tables below continue to be diverse but are more evenly distributed. UN-Habitat's portfolio for the period 2011-2012 is valued at 74 million, and the sustained engagement and contributions from the above-mentioned Arab governments as well as the Iraq Trust Fund has allowed UN-Habitat to maintain a significant presence in the region.

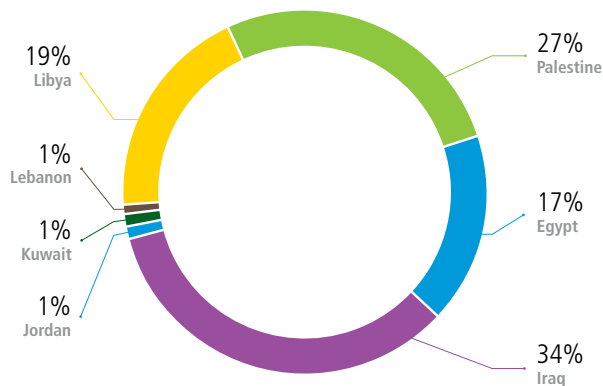
UN-Habitat has been active in the region in advocacy for sustainable urban development in Arab Cities through its sub-regional Information Office in the Hashimite Kingdom of Jordan. In line with the growth of our activities in the region, UN-Habitat has consolidated its relationship with the Arab world through the establishment of the Sub-regional Office for the Gulf States in Kuwait and recently the Regional Office for Arab States, in Cairo.

<sup>1</sup> This portfolio is inclusive of programmes which are still on-going in Libya, Egypt, Kuwait, and occupied Palestinian territories. This portfolio excludes UN-HABITAT's programmes in Iraq under the special Oil-for-Food programme which was over \$600 million.

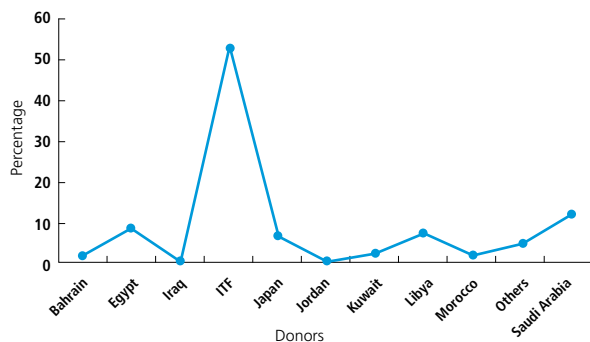
Geographical Distribution of Projects 2001 - 2010



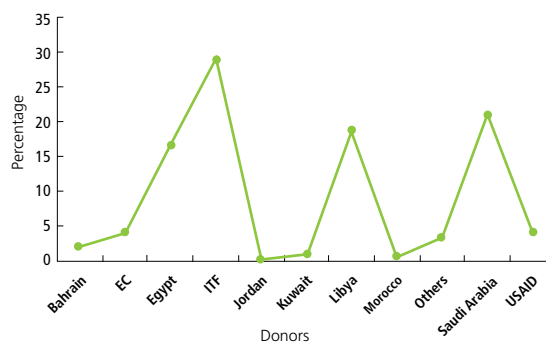
Geographical Distribution of Projects 2011 - 2012



Donor Contribution to Projects Portfolio (%) 2001 - 2010



Donor Contribution to Projects Portfolio (%) 2011 - 2012



## Accomplishments

UN-HABITAT's key accomplishments in the region in the past decade include, the formulation of urban sector policies, advocating participatory urban and strategic planning, promoting good urban governance, and reconstruction of basic urban services and housing. The synopsis of UN-Habitat's interventions over the past 10 years are noted below and the detailed results of our interventions by country are reflected in Box 2.

### BOX 1 : Synopsis of UN-Habitat's Interventions

Intervention	Country
Development and implementation of urban planning and management policies	Iraq, Somalia, Egypt, Libya, Lebanon, Bahrain, Sudan, oPt*, Morocco
Formulation of land management policies and legislation for implementation	Iraq, Somalia, oPt
Design and delivery of local government capacity building and training	Somalia, Lebanon, Egypt, Dubai, Libya, Kuwait and Bahrain
Development and execution of urban governance and municipal decentralization policies	Somalia, Lebanon, Egypt, Dubai, Morocco, Libya
Design and delivery of housing and slum upgrading programmes including development of housing and shelter policies	Iraq, Somalia, Egypt, Bahrain, Sudan, oPt, Morocco,
Urban planning and housing surveys and profiles	Iraq, Somalia, Lebanon, Egypt, Sudan, Kuwait, Bahrain, Saudi Arabia
Reconstruction and rehabilitation of urban infrastructure (housing, schools, markets, government buildings)	Iraq, Somalia, Lebanon, Egypt, Sudan, oPt

\*oPt – Occupied Palestinian Territories



The construction of the 120 mud brick houses for dozens of homeless Palestinian families in Gaza City. © **Suhair Karam/IRIN**

## The road ahead

UN-HABITAT's work across the region has been extensive, its expansion made possible thanks mainly to increased contributions from respective partners. Whilst much has been achieved over the last few decades, the region itself has also transformed phenomenally which calls for renewed engagement and begs for more sustainable partnerships to address the ever increasing urban progression.

Areas in need of intervention include better employment prospects for young people, better urban management capacity, improved urban development plans involving the private sector, and the devolution of responsibilities to local governments with appropriate financial resources.

Steps must also be taken to address the shortage of affordable housing plagued by speculatively escalating land prices, expensive property registration procedures, and limited access to housing finance for lower income households. It is crucial also to address urban water and food insecurity –the region's defining social problems of the very near future, and harbingers of social unrest. There is also a need for greater intra-Arab cooperation to strategically position its' countries and cities in our globalising world.



These problems are daunting but can be addressed with political will, adequate financial support and strategic interventions in urban development, housing, economic, environment and financial policies. This will require the support of major Arab funding institutions and Islamic banks backed by effective partnerships with regional organizations such as Arab League, Gulf Cooperation Council and Arab Towns Organization institutions.

UN-Habitat stands firm in its commitment to the region through enhanced engagement and supportive partnerships with regional bodies, national and local governments, and with tools like ***The State of the Arab Cities*** and ***UN-Habitat Regional Strategy for engagement*** to guide policies and interventions to manage urban growth. UN-Habitat also brings a wealth of knowledge and experience in sustainable urban development through its worldwide presence and engagement in over 70 countries across the globe. As a convening power on sustainable urban development, UN-Habitat will continue to create knowledge platforms to support regional and bilateral dialogues on urban priorities. This will also facilitate the expansion of long-term partnerships to identify financial resources for programmes addressing the urban challenges faced by the Arab States.



Cairo, Egypt. © Bzzuspajk/Shutterstock

## BOX 2 : Detailed Achievements and Results of UN-Habitat Interventions

Country	Achievements
<b>Bahrain</b>	<p>Formulation of National Housing Policy and Shelter strategy for the Government of Bahrain.</p> <p>Establishment of Bahrain Urban Development Indicators Programme</p> <p>Urban Profiling in Muharraq and Wasta.</p> <p><b>Partners</b> – The Court of the H.R.H the Prime Minister of Bahrain, Ministry of Municipalities and Urban Planning.</p>
<b>Egypt</b>	<p>UN-Habitat has been engaged in Egypt since 2004.</p> <p>Through pilot projects in Ismailia, and El Minya demonstrating participatory and integrated slum upgrading, UN-HABITAT was able to facilitate development of National slum upgrading and prevention policies including a national implementation strategy</p> <p>Conducted Rapid Urban Sector Profiling for Sustainability (RUSPS) in seven cities – Alexandria, Suez, Menouf, Tanta, Rosetta, El-Menia, Baltim. The RUSPS contributed to urban poverty reduction and policy development through an urban sector profile study, including the rapid assessment of needs, response mechanisms and capacity gaps that are to be addressed at the local, national and regional levels, hence providing an urban plan of action for major cities.</p> <p>On-going technical support for the development of Strategic Urban Plans for 50 small cities.</p> <p>On-going decentralised Strategic Planning and Participatory Budgeting pilots in Ismailia, Fayoum and Luxor and technical support for the Strategic Development Plan for Greater Cairo Region.</p> <p>Established the new UN-Habitat Office for the Arab States in Cairo which will be dedicated towards supporting the Arab states region with its' urban development challenges</p> <p><b>Partners</b> – Ministry of Housing, Utilities and Urban Development – General Organisation for Physical Planning; Ministry of Local Development; Local Administration(s) Greater Cairo Region</p>

Country	Achievements
<b>Iraq</b>	<p>UN-Habitat's intervention has primarily been in (1) Urban Planning and Local Governance, 2) Urban Services and Infrastructure, 3) Land Policy and Management, and 4) Housing</p> <p>Development of a national housing policy and implementation plan.</p> <p>Development of Land Policy and Legislation Analysis and Land Management Policy Reform</p> <p>Establishment of a National Habitat Committee and Knowledge and Training Centre at the Ministry of Construction &amp; Housing</p> <p>Upgraded: 370 community facilities for 50,000 people; 2,760 slum homes for 19,300 people; 23 water systems and; six water and sanitation networks for 25,000 people.</p> <p>Published the <i>State of the Iraq Cities</i></p> <p>Completed a <i>Housing Market Study</i> and developed a manual on Inclusive Cities and Decentralization.</p> <p><b>Partners</b> – Ministries of: Municipality and Public Works, Construction and Housing, Planning and Development Cooperation, Migration and Displacement, Education, &amp; Higher Education, Foreign Affairs, Justice, Finance, Communication, Agriculture, Environment, Labour and Social Affairs,</p> <p>Prime Minister Office-Advisors Commission, Mayoralty of Baghdad, Erbil, Dohuk and Suleimaniyah Governorate.</p>
<b>Jordan</b>	<p>Established the UN-Habitat sub-regional Information Office serving Jordan, oPt, Iraq, Syria and Lebanon.</p> <p>The office is working on the 2013-2017 development assistance framework for Jordan in the areas of urban planning, disaster risk reduction, housing and decentralization.</p> <p>A housing sector assessment for Jordan has also been completed.</p> <p>The Information office has organized knowledge sharing workshops, seminars and conferences to advance the urban agenda in the region and disseminates UN-Habitat flagship reports and periodicals to the Arab world in Arabic language.</p> <p><b>Partners</b> – Ministry of Planning and Development Cooperation, and Ministry of Public Works and Housing.</p>



Amman downtown in 2008, Jordan.  
© Daniel Biau/UN-Habitat

## Country

## Achievements

### Kuwait

Opened the UN-Habitat Regional Office for the Gulf States in 2007 which is hosted by the Government of the State of Kuwait. The primary focus of the office is to Promote knowledge development and enhance the capacity of cities to address urban challenges.

Completed the Kuwait Workers Housing Study (in Arabic); conducted Rapid Urban Sector Profiles for two Bahraini cities, Al-Muhharraq and Al-Wosta; organised an international conference on a Strategy for Safer Cities in Africa and Arab States producing an urban safety report.; organised a regional workshop on disaster risk reduction in the Gulf States in May 2011 in partnership with United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction and the United Nations Development Programme.

Established the Gulf States High Level Habitat Committee in cooperation with Gulf Cooperation Council.

Started regional urban observatories to support three cities [Kinetra (Morocco), Ras El-Khaima (UAE) and Geraiyat (Saudi Arabia)].

Launch of the State of the Arab Cities 2012; and organised the conference on Urban Development and Municipal Management for Sustainability in Arab Cities.

**Partners** – Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Kuwait Municipality, Arab Towns Organization and Arab Urban Development Institute.



Country	Achievements
<b>Lebanon</b>	<p>The initial engagement of UN-Habitat in Lebanon was in post-war recovery and rehabilitation.</p> <p>Reconstruction of homes for more than 300 families and rehabilitation of 25 community facilities with the aim to restore basic services.</p> <p>The above intervention was a stepping stone for UN-Habitat towards strategic engagement in Lebanon in the area of governance and municipal decentralization.</p> <p>Results of the strategic engagement includes establishment of 3 Local Urban Observatories which houses important data and statistics on urban trends and development, training of 21 municipalities in municipal financial management, archiving and strategic planning, completing urban profiles of 21 municipalities; and formulating three regional strategic plans.</p> <p>A training manual and toolkit on Local Strategic Planning were also developed which enabled national training workshops to more than 100 municipalities.</p> <p>Development and publication of the Lebanon Urban Profile</p> <p><b>Partners</b> – Ministry of Interior and Municipalities – Directorate General of Municipalities, Ministry of Public Works – Directorate General of Urbanism, Lebanese Palestinian Dialogue Committee, Beirut and Tripoli Municipality.</p>
<b>Libya</b>	<p>UN-Habitat's oldest programme in the Arab world dating back over 30 years.</p> <p>Development of the National Spatial Policy for the years 2006 - 2030</p> <p>The institutional development and capacity building of the Urban Planning Authority (UPA).</p> <p>Provision of technical assistance and supervision in the development and implementation of the first, second and third generation spatial plans in line with the National Spatial Policy (NSP 2006-2030).</p> <p>Establishment of Urban Information Centers at national and regional level allowing for the storage, processing, protection, updating and accessibility of all UPA data via intra/internet and hardcopies.</p> <p><b>Partners</b> – Urban Planning Authority</p>

Country	Achievements
<b>Morocco</b>	<p>Engaged in participatory local governance and strategic planning for local development since 1997 covering urban poverty reduction, sustainable urban environment (Agenda 21), basic services and slum upgrading.</p> <p>Provided technical support to local authorities in 10 cities.</p> <p>Since 2010, UN-Habitat is providing continued support for improving the local governance framework of the national slum upgrading programme, which is facilitating Morocco to achieve the MDG target 7-4 on slums.</p> <p><b>Partners</b> – Ministry for Housing, Urban Planning and Policies and Al Omrane Agency</p>
<b>Occupied Palestinian Territories</b>	<p>Since 2005 provided 200 homes and several community centres serving medical support, technical and vocational training, schooling, and public parks in the West Bank and Gaza, targeting the most vulnerable.</p> <p>In April 2011, a new Governing Council mandate for further planning, land and housing work allowing UN-Habitat to mobilize the international community on behalf of the most vulnerable Palestinian communities. As a result European Commission commits 4.5 million euros, with Belgium, and France for further work in planning, including the rehabilitation of 56 homes in East Jerusalem.</p> <p><b>Partners</b> – Ministries: Local Government, Public Works and Housing, Planning and Administrative Development,</p> <p>Association of Palestinian Local Authorities, Municipal Development and Lending Fund, Palestinian Housing Council, Al Najah University, Al Quds University, Hebron Technical College, Islamic University Gaza</p>
<b>Somalia</b>	<p>UN-Habitat has been engaged in Somalia for over 25 years and main interventions have been in (1) Local Governance and (2) Reconstruction and Urban Livelihoods</p> <p>Developed the <i>Somalia Urban Sector Profile</i> and the Somaliland GIS-based Property Tax System.</p> <p>Produced strategic urban plans for various towns in Somaliland and Puntland, including an urban planning manual, and the Hargeisa street classification and naming system.</p> <p>Completed a land law review, established: Land Conflict Tribunals; the Somaliland Land and Urban Management Institute and; a draft municipal finance policy.</p>



Reconstruction of housing in Lebanon  
© UN-Habitat

Country	Achievements
<b>Somalia</b>	<p>Rehabilitated infrastructure creating 36 new market places, three slaughterhouses, waste collection points, 30 water wells, and seven government office buildings.</p> <p>Constructed 2,300 low cost homes with integrated settlement planning for 14,000 internally displaced people and poor people.</p> <p><b>Partners</b> – Local Government Authority in Adaado; Benadir Regional Administration; Northeast and Northwest Somalia: Ministries of: Interior; Public Works Housing &amp;Transport; Mining, Energy &amp; Water Resources; Labour &amp; Social Affairs; Environment. Local Government Authorities in Hargeisa, Burao, Boroma, Gabiley, Berbera, Sheikh, Odweyne, Las Canood. Hargeisa and Burao Water Agency, Local Government Authorities in Garowe, Bossaso, Gardo, Galkayo, Jiriiban, Bandar Beyla and Eyl. Association of Local Government Authorities of Somaliland and Puntland.</p>

View towards the medina and harbour in Tripoli, Libya.

© Danie Nel/Shutterstock



Country	Achievements
<b>Sudan</b>	<p>UN-Habitat has been working with the Government of Sudan since 2007.</p> <p>In Khartoum State, developed pro-poor urban planning, strategies and policies.</p> <p>Completed rapid urban assessments in three informal areas around Khartoum city.</p> <p>Provided post rehabilitation in Dafur, where economic profiles for two settlements were developed, as well as an assessment for customary land dispute mechanisms, and the construction six community buildings, a clinic, four schools and 19 public latrines.</p> <p>Two slum upgrading and sustainable housing development pilots in southern Darfur for 237 people. These included 37 low-cost homes for vulnerable displaced people. The success of the pilot project has resulted in UN-Habitat replicating the above approach to two areas addressing the needs of approximately 670 people, by constructing 100 houses.</p> <p>Ongoing regional planning strategy for Dafur, and a youth development project which also addresses primary health care needs.</p> <p><b>Partners</b> –Federal Ministry of Environment, Forestry and Physical Development (MEFPD) Ministry of Planning and Urban Development (MPUD), Darfur Regional Authority (DRA), and Ministry of Health (MOH)</p>



Country	Achievements
<b>UAE</b> <b>Abu Dhabi</b>	<p>The Abu Dhabi Water and Electricity Authority (ADWEA) supported UN-Habitat's Global Water Operators' Partnerships Alliance (GWOPA) program with a contribution of 3 million USD for 3 years (2009 – 2011). The contribution facilitated training and capacity building of 14 water and sanitation service providers in the Arab Region</p> <p><b>Partner – Abu Dhabi Water and Electricity Authority (ADWEA)</b></p>
<b>Dubai</b>	<p>Between 1987 and 2000, UN-Habitat supported the institutional development of Dubai municipality to better undertake the responsibilities for major municipal services comprehensive planning and development, the provision of infrastructure, public health services, and the licensing and control of commercial activities.</p> <p>Improvement of municipal organizational structures and functions, an increase in the number of female employees, and practical outputs in planning, zoning ordinance, surveying, and environmental and financial capacity.</p> <p>International recognition of Dubai Municipality as a best practice.</p> <p>Establishment of the Dubai International Award for Best Practices to Improve the Living Environment. This is a joint venture between Dubai Municipality and UN-HABITAT which started in 1996. Up to 12 outstanding initiatives from around the world are awarded biennially.</p> <p><b>Partner – Dubai Municipality</b></p>



Orascom affordable housing in Haram City, Egypt.  
© Photo courtesy of Orascom



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Become a UN-HABITAT partner for better cities in the Arab States Region.  
Become a city changer...

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