BRIEFING NOTE ON URBAN PLANNING AND DESIGN LAB,
6 April 2016

The Urban Planning and Design Lab (UPD-LAB) is an initiative from UN-HABITAT to promptly respond to the requests of national and local governments to support sustainable urban development.

The LAB acts as the integrative facility of the Agency in which spatial planning is used as the tool coordinating economic, legal, social and environmental aspects of urban development, translating them into concrete and implementable strategies and bankable projects that materialize the normative work of UN-HABITAT. These urban strategies generate value, economic development and jobs, but also more integrated and inclusive cities and towns in both a long and short term perspective.

The UPD-LAB is located within the Urban Planning and Design Branch and formed by a multidisciplinary team of urban planners, legal and financial experts providing a holistic proactive approach. Due to this, the UPD-LAB has become the team building facility inside the Agency where different areas of expertise come together to deliver concrete and integrated solutions. Often, the UPD-LAB operates within a network of international and local peers, allowing the LAB to both draw and share state-of-the-art best practices and know-how.

The focus areas of the LAB are:
- Citywide strategies
- Planned city extensions (and new towns)
- Urban infill, densification and renewal
- Planning guidelines and capacity development
- Climate change and urban planning
- Process management and supervision of development projects.

The LAB is currently working in concrete projects joining international and local expertise in more than 20 countries and 40 cities in Latin America, Africa, the Middle East, Europe and Asia.

The UPD-LAB is also the cornerstone of the Global Network of Planning and Design LAB’s, an initiative supported by member states during the 25th Governing Council of UN-Habitat. The Network promotes the collaboration of international experts working together in different countries with local partners to propose implementable plans.

Selection of currently running projects

Spatial Development Framework 2040 Johannesburg, South-Africa
Spatial Development Framework 2040 (SDF 2040) is a city-wide spatial policy document that identifies the main challenges and opportunities for Johannesburg for the next 25 years. The SDF includes implementations strategies. The LAB among
others pushed for a strategy of densification connected to Transit Oriented Development in key areas.

**Port-au-Prince, Haiti:**
The LAB is working with the UN Habitat country office and American Red Cross to create a redevelopment plan for Canaan, an area that is at risk to turn into a slum after it was invaded by 200,000 people as a result of the earthquake in 2010.

**Gabley, Bosasso and Mogadishu, Somalia**
The LAB is working together with Joint Program for Local Governance (JPLG) Somalia to create city-wide plans for Gabiley, Bosasso and Mogadishu. These plans will be a demonstration of the new Urban Regulatory Framework developed by UN-Habitat with the Ministry of Public Works.

**Kalobeyi, Kenya**
The LAB is assisting UNHCR with the development of a refugee camp in Northern Kenya. UNHCR recognizes that refugee camps often turn into permanent urban settlements, and has asked UN-Habitat to conceptualize and develop a refugee camp based on sustainable planning principles.

**Buraydah, Saudi Arabia**
Under the Future Saudi Cities Program, the LAB is designing a sustainable neighborhood in Buraydah to showcase the sustainable planning principles and test the urban planning process, as pilot project for the development of other neighborhoods in the city and the country.

**Creative Industries:**
The LAB is supervising 5 teams of planners, funded by the Dutch Creative Industries Fund NL, that work on planning assignments in various countries to support the UN Habitat country offices, or local partners, among others in Accra, Yangon, Mexico City, Gaza and Tacloban as highlighted below:

1. **Accra, Ghana**
   Team works on the city extension of Accra/Ningo-Prampram. Accra is expected to grow with 2 million people in 20 years. The plan aims to limit the present urban sprawl, and create a sustainable city, with integration of climate issues (such as water) from the onset. The plan has recently been made presidential priority project. This project was initiated on Request of the President of Ghana to Secretary General Ban-Ki Moon to assist Ghana to manage rapid urbanization. The plan will be gradually implemented in 10-20 years.

2. **Yangon, Myanmar**
   Team works on a Planned City Extension in Yangon, in cooperation of Yangon City Development Committee and UN Habitat country office. Draft of the plan is expected to be ready in June.

3. **Mexico City, Mexico**
   The Urban Planning and Design LAB in collaboration with 4 urban planning studios promoted by the Creative Industries Funds is working in close collaboration with the
office of UN-Habitat in Mexico and SEDUVI (Secretary of Urban Development and Housing of the City of Mexico) in Colonia Doctores, a central area of the city with an important potential for urban regeneration. The working team is promoting a strategic vision for the area articulating urban planning and design, legal and financial expertise and tools for public participation.

4. **Gaza, Palestine**
The team works with the country office and the Palestinian housing council for a reconstruction plan for the area of Kuza’a in Gaza, on the border with Israel.

5. **Tacloban, Philippines**
Team works on a city extension and land-use plan in Yangon, an area heavily hit by Typhoon Haiyan.

**Other ongoing and upcoming projects** include urban planning and Development work in Kisumu and Nairobi, Kenya; Paramaribo, Surinam; Belmopan, Belize (city-wide plan); Egypt, and Kabul, Afghanistan.

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