

UN HABITAT

FOR A BETTER URBAN FUTURE



UN-HABITAT MEDIUM-TERM STRATEGIC
AND INSTITUTIONAL PLAN

A FOCUS ON LEBANON

UN HABITAT FOR A BETTER URBAN FUTURE

UN-HABITAT, the United Nations agency for human settlements is mandated by the UN General Assembly to promote socially and environmentally sustainable towns and cities with the goal of providing adequate shelter for all.

In April 2007, the Governing Council of UN-HABITAT approved the 2008-2013 Medium-Term Strategic and Institutional Plan (MTSIP). The vision of the plan is to **help create by 2013 “the necessary conditions for international and national efforts to stabilize the growth of slums and to set the stage for the reduction of urban poverty and the reduction of the number of slum dwellers”.** The plan has defined UN-HABITAT’s contribution to sustainable urbanization through five main focus areas.

To promote the alignment of UN-HABITAT normative and operational activities at country level, a

UN-HABITAT Lebanon programme was developed. It aims at supporting governments and their development partners to achieve more sustainable urbanization. This country programme is aligned with three out of five key focus areas:

- Improved sustainable urbanization policies from local to global levels adopted;
- Inclusive urban planning, management and governance (UPMG) improved at national and local levels;
- Expanded access to environmentally sound basic urban infrastructure services with a special focus on the un-served and under served populations.

To implement its programmes, UN-HABITAT in Lebanon cooperates with an array of partners, Governmental and Non-Governmental Organizations, local authorities, Community- Based Organizations as well as training institutes.

Focus Area (1): Effective Advocacy, Monitoring, and Partnerships

The Global Strategy

This focus area concerns UN-HABITAT global normative and advocacy role. It focuses on raising awareness on sustainable urbanization issues among governments, local authorities, and other Habitat Agenda Partners through major global mechanisms such as the World Urban Forum, the World Urban Campaign, World Habitat Day, the Global Urban Economic Dialogue series, and the Dubai International Award for Best Practices.

Focus Area (1) expected accomplishments include:

1. Improved awareness of sustainable urbanization issues at the national and global levels.
2. Habitat Agenda partners actively participate in the formulation of sustainable urbanization policy.
3. Monitoring of sustainable urbanization conditions and trends improved.

Lebanon Context

With the absence of national urban policies, sustainable urbanization in Lebanon is seriously challenged. Recently, in an attempt to provide policy directions that respond to the challenges of a highly urbanized context, the Government formulated a National Physical Master Plan of the Lebanese territory (**Schema Directeur d'Aménagement du Territoire Libanais**). The Plan defines the guiding principles for the development of the various regions and for the use of the diverse areas that constitute the national territory, proposing the infrastructure, the sites for activities and the actions best suited for implementation, specifying their purpose, magnitude and locations.



Focus Area (2): Participatory Planning, Management, and Governance

The Global Strategy

UN-HABITAT supports sustainable urbanization by helping to develop inclusive and participatory urban planning and local development practices. By encouraging more inclusive urban planning, management, and governance, UN-HABITAT strategic change would be accomplished through improved policies, legislation, and strategies; strengthened institutions; and improved capacity of cities to function in a holistic, integrated and sustainable manner.

Focus Area (2) expected accomplishments include:

1. Improved policies, legislation and strategies support inclusive planning, management and governance.
2. Strengthened institutions promote inclusive planning, management and governance.
3. Improved implementation of inclusive planning, management and governance.

Lebanon Context

Urban planning in Lebanon is traditionally practiced at the central level 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). Master plans, which are traditionally developed by the central government with limited involvement of local communities, address land use and parcelization, Floor to Area Ratio (F.A.R), building heights, and setback regulations, with little concern to the general strategic plan of the region and to socio-economic development concerns.

The highly centralized system coupled with limited resources and weak know-how obstructs local authorities from carrying out urban planning initiatives.



Focus Area (3): Access to Land and Housing for All

The Global Strategy

More than 1 billion people around the world live in slums and other sub-standard housing, and their number is expected to rise over the next 30 years to about 2 billion. In response, UN-HABITAT is mobilizing a global coalition of partners to address the challenges presented by unsustainable urbanization.

UN-HABITAT supports national and local governments and Habitat Agenda partners to put in place better land and housing policies. The agency is focusing on three outcomes: supporting enabling land and housing reforms; increasing security of tenure; and promoting slum improvement and slum prevention policies.

Focus Area (3) expected accomplishments include:

1. Improved land and housing policies implemented.
2. Security of tenure increased.
3. Slum improvement and prevention policies implemented.

Lebanon Context

Slums and informal settlements exist in the key Lebanese cities. In Beirut and its northern and southern suburbs, a survey found that there are around 300,000 slum dwellers in 24 studied slums (Fawaz & Peillen, 2003).

National policies addressing informal areas in Lebanon do not exist. However, it is worth mentioning that slum-related issues have been incorporated in the recently developed National Social Development Strategy (Ministry of Social Affairs, 2011). **The strategy emphasized the need to 'enhance living environments especially in villages and urban slums... and to improve living conditions in crowded urban agglomerations and underserved rural areas, and promote home and land ownership by low-income families'.**



Focus Area (4): Environmentally Sound Basic Urban Infrastructure and Services

The Global Strategy

To expand access to environmentally sound infrastructure and services, UN-HABITAT is focusing on delivering sustainable services to the poor, integrating infrastructure and housing, and ensuring harmony between the built and natural environments. The agency is also monitoring progress against the Millennium Development Goals and beyond.

UN-HABITAT supports partner countries through projects that demonstrate effective approaches for improving access to environmentally sound basic infrastructure and services. The agency also engages in global normative and advocacy work to disseminate good practices and inform the development of policies on effective and environmentally sound urban infrastructure and services.

Focus Area (4) expected accomplishments include:

1. An enabling policy and institutional framework promotes expanded access to environmentally sound urban infrastructure and services.
2. Increased institutional efficiency and effectiveness in the provision of basic urban infrastructure services.
3. Enhanced consumer demand for efficient and environmentally sustainable basic urban infrastructure and services.

Lebanon Context

The country does not have a comprehensive strategy to tackle the issue of environmentally sound basic urban infrastructure and services. A recent World Bank report (2011) on environmental analysis concluded that despite considerable progress in shaping its legal and institutional framework and providing substantial public funds for financing its infrastructure after the war, Lebanon is still at an early stage of its transition to environmental **sustainability**. **Similarly, Lebanon's economic growth** is not accompanied with an improvement in environmental sustainability which remains low.



Focus Area (5): Strengthening Human Settlements Finance Systems

The Global Strategy

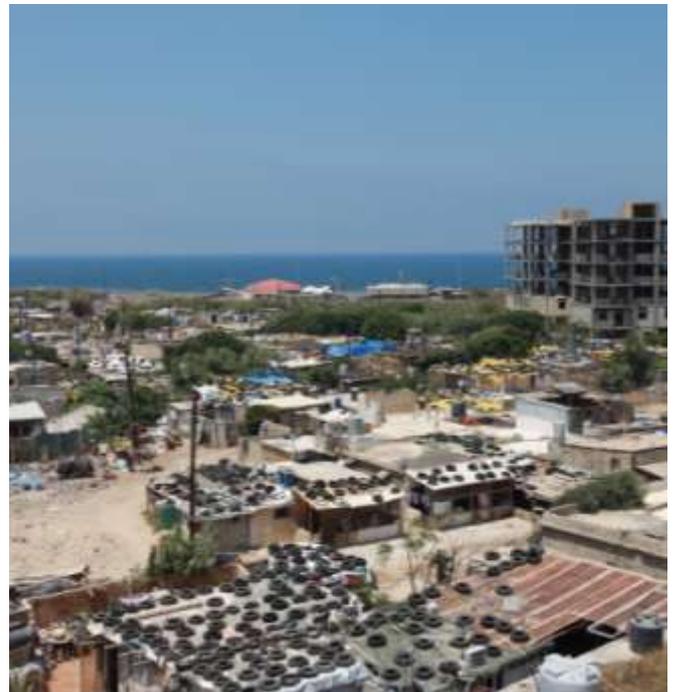
This Focus Area has two strategic objectives: 1) to develop innovative pro-poor mechanisms for financing housing and urban services and infrastructure, and 2) to become a catalyst and knowledge centre in creating innovative financing mechanisms for affordable housing and basic urban infrastructure and services. Specific urban economy, urban finance, and social development goals include examining economic and financial conditions, issues, challenges, policies, and systems and developing tools and mechanisms to strengthen local government finance systems and housing finance systems. The agency also focuses on improving access to market-driven finance and increasing the supply of formal low-cost housing as well as attracting large-scale funding sources and encouraging well-targeted, efficient subsidies.

Focus Area (5) expected accomplishments include:

1. Increased financing for affordable housing and infrastructure.
2. **Empowered consumers (including women's organizations)** access financing for affordable housing and infrastructure.
3. Effective local institutions catalyze access to finance for affordable housing and infrastructure.
4. Conducive policy frameworks.

Lebanon Context

With the absence of a comprehensive national housing policy, access to adequate and affordable housing represents a key challenge to the poor segments of the society in general and to the urban poor in specific. The situation exacerbates with the increasing prices of land and houses (specifically in urban areas), which further compromises the ability of low income households to access adequate and affordable housing.





United Nations Human Settlements Programme
UNESCO Regional Office
Cite Sportive Avenue - Jnah - Beirut
Telephone: +961 1 850015 (ext.111)
www.unhabitat.org

UN HABITAT
FOR A BETTER URBAN FUTURE