

Information Exchange Event on Urban Planning Methodology and Application in Egypt, Libya, Sudan, Palestine and Iraq

(4th DRAFT)

Background

"There is a large disjuncture between prevailing planning systems and the nature of 21st century cities."¹ In close partnership with UN-HABITAT, national institutions in several Arab countries are undertaking efforts in moving towards new urban planning approaches. A major emphasis of these, stakeholder driven, interventions is on strategic and implementation oriented urban planning processes which respond to local concerns. Successively, varied programs and projects have been supporting national and local stakeholders in developing ever more sustainable solutions to urban challenges faced in the particular country.

UN-HABITAT has been or supporting strategic urban planning activities in different countries of the Arab region. The current portfolio comprises of various urban planning related project activities at different stages of implementation. Within the Egyptian context, UN-HABITAT is technically supporting the General Organization of Physical Planning in addressing local needs by preparing a *Strategic Development Plan for Greater Cairo* and *Strategic Urban Plans for Small Cities*. Furthermore, attempts are made in the *Strategic National Development Support Project* to integrate planning into enhanced and decentralized governance systems in correlation with other departments and link it to the budgeting process at district and governorate level. During a recent Mid-term Review, the approach to developing and implementing Strategic Urban Plans in small cities in Egypt was evaluated and the experience gained in this sector assessed. In Libya, the ongoing project 'Institutional Development and Capacity Building of the Urban Planning Agency' has just been assessed and extended by four years (until 2014), while similar projects in Iraq, Palestine and Sudan have also accumulated considerable experience and 'lessons learned' over the past few years. Several discussions took place between those projects in recent months and a strong need for an information exchange event highlighted and identified.

Objective

To take stock, share information and identify challenges pertaining to the current state of urban planning processes, methodologies and applications in Egypt, Iraq, Libya, Palestine and Sudan, with an overarching objective of starting the processing of synthesizing an appropriate approach to urban planning in the Arab region. This event is intended to lay the seeds for a future and more comprehensive meeting involving all Arab counties in 2011.

Output

A concise published product highlighting current urban planning challenges, lessons learned, methodologies as well as the 'broad lines' of a preferred methodology/modality for dealing with the urban challenges in Egypt, Sudan, Libya, Iraq and Palestine and possibly other Arab countries

Participants

UN-HABITAT projects concerned with strategic urban planning and management issues in Egypt, Iraq, Libya, Palestine, Sudan (from each country: 1 – 2 senior UN-HABITAT staff/project managers plus 3–4 senior national staff or counterparts) as active participants. Key note speakers (1-2), representatives from UNHABITAT HQ, ATO and UNHABITAT Kuwait Office (State of Arab Cities Report). The event will also be open to supplementary attendance upon request from any other Arab country (at the rate of max 2 participant per country). The overall target number of participants is 40-50.

Logistics

¹ UN-HABITAT (2009), Global Report on Human Settlements 2009: Planning Sustainable Cities - Policy Directions; Earthscan, London, p5.

UN-HABITAT Egypt will facilitate and host the event, invite keynote speakers (from UNHABITAT HQ, Regional or Country Offices) and one representative from ATO, organize field visits as well as initiate and facilitate all preparatory discussions with local counterparts. Participating projects will meet their travel/accommodation expenses.

Workshop Structure:

Day 1: Opening of workshop. Key note speakers, presentation from Egypt, Libya, Sudan, Palestine and Iraq, discussions and plenary.

Day 2: Plenary and discussions. Special session for presentations/contributions from other Arab countries.

Day 3: Field visits.

Day 4: Plenary, conclusions and recommendations. Closing of workshop.

Venue and Time frame

Cairo, Egypt. 13 - 16 December 2010, 4 days