Habitat Country Programme Document

Lebanon

2021–2023

UN-HABITAT LEBANON / HABITAT COUNTRY PROGRAMME DOCUMENT / 2021–2023

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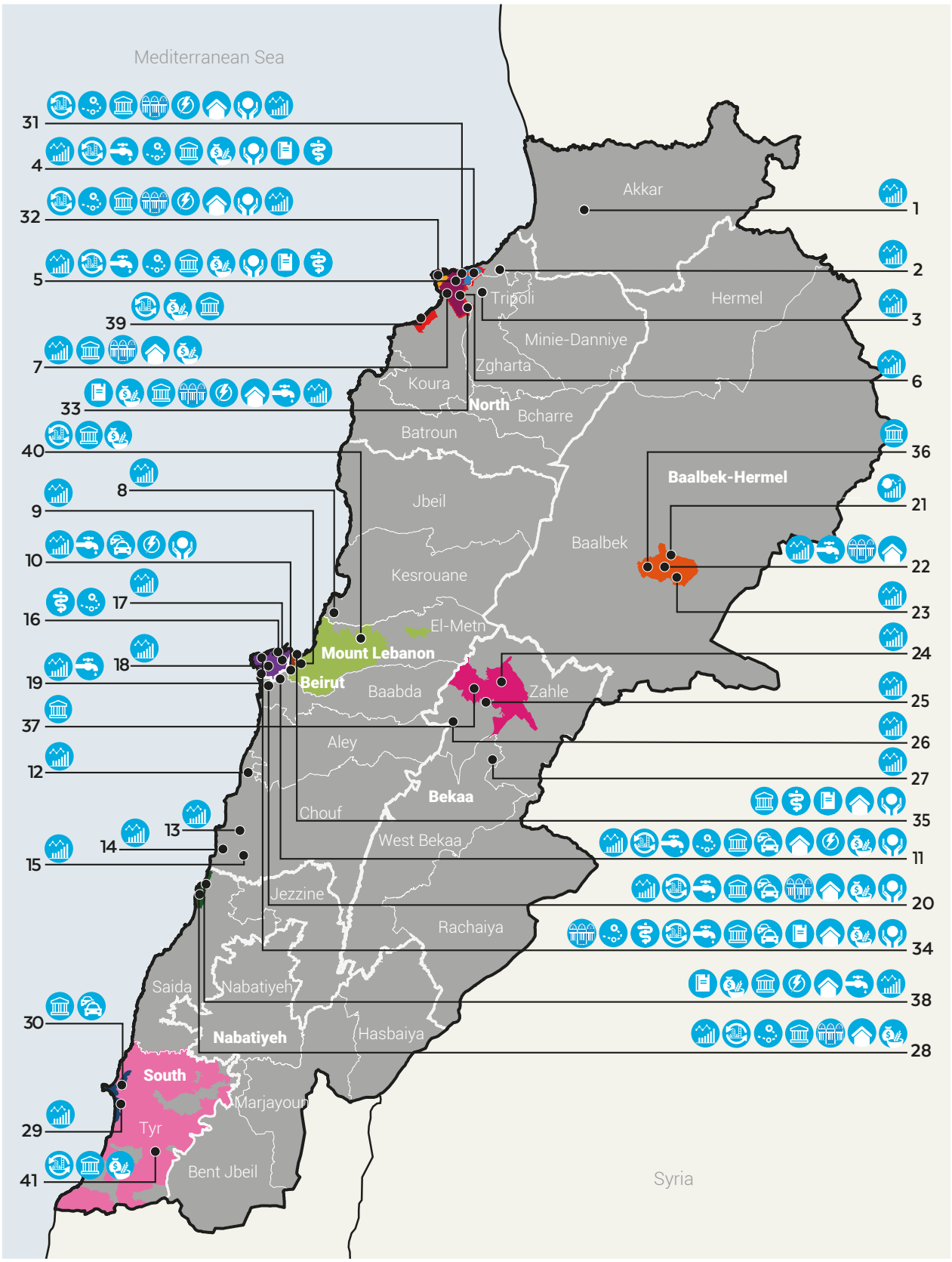
11 SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES

IMPLEMENTING THE NEW URBAN AGENDA

Geographical areas of current intervention by UN-Habitat in Lebanon by sector



Targeted Sectors

- Mobility & Transportation
- Education
- Shelter
- Local Economy & Livelihoods
- Urban Upgrading
- Energy
- Water, Sanitation & Hygiene
- Local Governance
- Health
- Heritage Preservation
- Public Spaces
- Urban Profiling
- Protection

Targeted Areas

Targeted Neighbourhoods

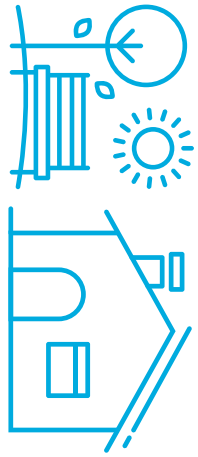
1. Hayy El-Qalaa
2. Hayy El-Blat
3. Hayy El-Arab
4. Jabal Mohsen
5. Bab El-Tabbaneh
6. El-Qobbeh
7. Haddadine
8. Hayy El-Kharoubeh
9. Hayy El-Jadid
10. Nabaa
11. Maraash
12. Naameh
13. Barja El-Qadimeh
14. Sibline
15. Ketermaya El-Qadimeh
16. Karantina
17. Karm El-Zeytoun
18. Hayy Tamlis
19. Daouk-Ghawash
20. Sabra
21. Shooab
22. Mogher El-Taheen
23. El-Soleh Sahet El-Naser
24. Haoush El-Oumara
25. Taalabaya El-Fawaa
26. Hayy El-Souk
27. El-Marj
28. Old Saida
29. Maachouk

Targeted Municipalities

30. Tyre
31. Beddaoui
32. El-Mina
33. Tripoli
34. Beirut
35. Bourj Hammoud
36. Baalbeck
37. Zahle
38. Saida

Targeted Unions of Municipalities (UoMs)

39. Al-Fayhaa
40. Coastal and Central Metn
41. Tyre



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"Making cities and
in Lebanon safe, i
and sust

urban communities
nclusive, resilient
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Karm El Zeitoun, Beirut ©UN-Habitat

01

Introduction.

Lebanon has made progress with regards to economic, social and human development despite facing both recurrent internal and external shocks. The country has shown exceptional resilience and solidarity, welcoming around 1.5 million Syrian refugees since 2011 – the highest per capita number of refugees in the world. However, economic, social, urban, demographic, political and development challenges have been compounded by multiple recent and ongoing crises, the October 2019 civil uprising, the COVID-19 pandemic, the continued socioeconomic and financial downfall, the resignation of two consecutive governments in under a year and the August 2020 Beirut Port explosion.

Lebanon is one of the most urbanized countries in both the Arab region and the world, with 88.76 per cent of its population living in urban areas and the majority – estimated at 64 per cent – residing in the metropolitan areas of Beirut and Tripoli.[1] Urban expansion in Lebanon is concentrated in and around the main coastal cities (Beirut, Tripoli, Saida and Tyre), between secondary cities and in the form of informal areas on the belts of cities.

The country has for decades witnessed rapid and uncontrolled urban growth and sprawl. With limited planning regulations in place or enforced, built-up areas are expanding to cover increasingly large spaces, while at the same time urban disparities have been growing. Until the recent socio-economic crisis, large-scale construction and development projects took place, especially along the coastal zone – where the majority of the Lebanese population resides – further contributing to pre-existing socioeconomic and environmental challenges that Lebanon continues to face. The lack of local planning and cross-sectoral master plans hinders any absorption capacity of the increasing urban population and its social, economic, environmental and demographic needs.

During and since the Lebanese Civil War (1975–1990), service systems and infrastructure have become increasingly deficient and have not been systematically addressed or maintained since. In addition to the Beirut Port explosion of 4 August 2020, Lebanon and its growing population face a multitude of hazards, both natural and human-made. The city's seismic risk is considered by many experts to be serious. In addition, different national and regional crises have contributed to Lebanon's current urban landscape. Furthermore, Lebanon does not have institutional national-scale mechanisms in place to effectively prevent, mitigate or respond to natural and human-made disasters. The protracted Syrian refugee crisis, the fragile economy and the COVID-19 pandemic have also placed additional pressure on already fragmented and struggling cities and

[1] UN-Habitat Lebanon, 2018, pp. 7–8.

urban agglomerations, resulting in increased poverty and widening the social inequality gap.

Uncontrolled urbanization and the aforementioned and multiple crises have contributed to, among others:

- Increased pressure on basic urban services in already poorly served urban areas;
- Declined socioeconomic situation and increased social tensions;
- Formation of informal – slum-like – areas on the belts of cities;
- Loss of natural resources, habitats and biodiversity; and
- Inadequate access to housing, notably in poor urban neighbourhoods.

Many of the above challenges necessitate an urban response, with the need to ensure good urbanization is at the core of national policy and planning discourse. In this context, **the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) is driven by a long-term vision that strives to:**

"make cities and urban communities in Lebanon safe, inclusive, resilient and sustainable".

Thus, the overarching goal of this Lebanon 2021–2023 Habitat Country Programme Document (HCPD) **is to contribute to improving the living conditions of children, youth, women and men in Lebanon – regardless of their nationality – by creating liveable urban areas that are effectively planned and managed, environmentally sound, financially viable and competitive, and socially cohesive through good and inclusive governance and equitable distribution of resources**.

In line with UN-Habitat's global mandate, the envisaged three-year programme includes **three interlinked and mutually reinforcing focus areas**:

- Promoting inclusive and sustainable urban development,
- Promoting participatory urban planning, management and governance, and
- Improving disaster risk mitigation and effective urban crisis response.

The Lebanon 2021–2023 HCPD is aligned with recent international and regional frameworks, notably the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (adopted in 2015) and its Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030 (also known as the Sendai Framework), the New Urban Agenda (NUA, adopted in 2016) and the Paris Agreement on climate change (signed in 2016). Furthermore, it is as well aligned with the national frameworks and agendas including the government-endorsed Lebanon Crisis Response Plan (LCRP, 2017–2021) and the United Nations Strategic Framework for Lebanon (UNSF, 2017–2021). It is also in line with UN-Habitat's global Strategic Plan 2020–2023 and regional strategic plan as well as other regional urban frameworks, including the Arab Strategy for Housing and Sustainable Urban Development 2030.

Country Analysis.

General

Lebanon is an upper-middle-income country with an estimated population of 6.85 million. In 2020, the gross domestic product per capita was USD 51,992.[2] The country is ranked 92 out of 192 countries, according to the 2020 Human Development Index.[3] Since 2019, Lebanon's macroeconomy has been assailed by compounding crises, beginning with a political, economic and financial crisis, followed by the COVID-19 pandemic and lastly the Beirut Port explosion. In October 2019, the economy plunged into a financial crisis brought about by a sudden stop in capital inflows, which precipitated systemic failures across banking, debt and the United States Dollar and Lebanese Lira exchange rate.

In addition to pre-existing development challenges, the Syrian refugee crisis since 2011 has profoundly affected Lebanon, further impacting political, social, economic and security situations.[4] Government estimates suggest that there are 1.5 million Syrian refugees in Lebanon, in addition to nearly 200,000 Palestinian refugees under the mandate of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), as well as 17,000 refugees from Iraq, Sudan and other countries of origin.[5] The presence of these population groups has placed significant additional strain on already overburdened resources and vulnerable Lebanese communities. Public services are overstretched, with demand exceeding the capacity of institutions and infrastructure. The loss of cross-border trade, the slowdown in the tourism and service industries, and the suspension of private sector investment has led to constrained economic growth and unemployment, along with increased social tension.

Urban Context

Despite being predominantly urban, Lebanon has long failed to address the challenges that are associated with its particular experience of rapid urbanization. Historically, the Lebanese state has demonstrated a laissez-faire approach to spatial development. Land regulation and building code designations that do exist are not uniformly enforced and require improvements, and the state has shied away from reforming the spatial development sector.

A large and increasing share of Lebanon's residents are suffering from a lack of affordable and adequate housing. There is a supply/demand mismatch in terms of prices, tenure ar-

[2] The World Bank, 2021.

[3] United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), 2020

[4] The World Bank, 2013; The World Bank Group, 2016; and The United Nations Country Strategic Analysis for Lebanon, 2015-2019.

[5] United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), 2020

Qobbeh, Tripoli ©UN-Habitat

Jabal Mohsen, Tripoli ©UN-Habitat

Bourj Hammoud, Mount Lebanon ©UN-Habitat

rangements, and quality of housing. The housing market is to a large extent segregated, catering to different socioeconomic as well as sectarian groups. During the post-Civil War period, rental and housing prices increased drastically, rendering adequate housing unattainable for a large majority of inhabitants. Central areas of the cities are characterized by very high density, overcrowded and poorly serviced accommodations, and precarious tenure in pockets next to high-end real estate development of which a large share is vacant or unsold.

From a legal perspective, the right to adequate housing and protection of households' housing, land, and property (HLP) rights are preserved through Lebanon's legal framework and its international obligations (such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights).[6] However, these principles are not well-enshrined in existing governance structures. Firstly, Lebanon lacks a national strategy and policy for the housing sector. Also, it does not have a specialized governance body mandated with ensuring housing for all, such as a ministry for housing.

From a policy perspective, the country still lacks national urban frameworks that guide the land use planning process. At the institutional level, while a special Ministry of Planning existed in the 1960s, the Council for Development and Reconstruction (CDR) has been responsible since 1977 for the planning and programming of war-related reconstruction/rehabilitation projects in all sectors across Lebanon. The urban planning institutional landscape is fragmented, with a range of local and central actors involved.

Municipalities are unable to fully play their (often front-line) role and to respond to urban challenges due to a number of constraints. These mainly include poor financial capacities and an over-reliance on revenues centrally transferred on ad hoc basis, weak human resources and technical

[6] UN-Habitat and UNHCR, 2018.

capacities, an overcentralized system and heavy bureaucracy. Decree 118/77 of the Municipal Law has devoted much of the planning-related to municipalities. Article 49 of the aforementioned decree allows municipalities, in collaboration with the Directorate General of Urban Planning (DGUP), to draft their master or detailed plans, designs as well as regulations, and to parcel out projects. However, in most cases, the central authorities restrain the power of local authorities by granting them only a consultative role in the implementation of their urban policies.

Today, cities and urban communities in Lebanon embody the typical, globally recognized features of a malfunctioning urban system, which include among others:

- Inadequate basic infrastructure and services, including potable water, wastewater, electricity, transportation, solid waste management and limited safe and inclusive public spaces.
- Increased urban poverty, inequalities and disparities, which are manifested in the proliferation of slums, informal settlements and poor urban neighbourhoods and can contribute to increased unsafe public spaces, particularly impacting women and children.
- Poor access to affordable and adequate housing.

Lebanon and its growing population face a multitude of hazards, both natural and human-made disasters. The country is threatened by the prospect of severe weather events and increasing stress on its water resources due to the impacts of climate change. Inter-communal tensions and recurrent security incidents have been on the rise since 2019, a significant cause of concern, and only heightened by the ongoing socioeconomic difficulties. Within its small territory, Lebanon boasts five UNESCO world heritage sites; however, cultural heritage is increasingly under threat, especially in conflict or post-conflict areas. Long-term neglect, collateral damage, and lack of resources, exacerbated by previous protracted conflicts in Lebanon, have caused serious neglect to the overall preservation of the country's unique cultural heritage.

Key Challenges

Through strategic review in consultation with national and local stakeholders and experts, **UN-Habitat has identified the following overarching five gaps and challenges relating to the urban context of the country**:

Political and socioeconomic challenges

- Political instability, exacerbating social tensions.
- Urban poverty and polarization.
- Vast immigration to large cities, existence of informal areas/settlements and slums.
- Significant economic and social impact due to the refugee influx.
- Under-regulated free market housing sector combined with a lack of social housing provision.

Infrastructure and basic services challenges

- Increased pressure on basic urban services in already poorly served urban areas.
- Poor-quality basic urban services (water, wastewater, stormwater, solid waste, electricity, transport).
- Shortage of social services (education, health).
- Inadequate access to housing linked to urban expansion, notably in poor urban neighbourhoods.

Sabra, Beirut ©UN-Habitat

Institutional and urban governance challenges

- Weak and poor governance, including lack of transparency, accountability and commitment.
- Lack of up-to-date, reliable and monitorable area-based/spatial multisectoral urban data and well-developed and managed systems for the collection, management and monitoring of such data.
- Weak technical capacities at the local government level.
- Lack of coordination and overlapping mandates of concerned stakeholders.
- Unequal and poor provision of urban services.
- Lack of linkages between the country's political framework and the work of development agencies.

Urban planning and development policy challenges

- Unplanned growth/unevenly distributed population among the regions/regional disparities.
- Uncontrolled, unplanned urban development; loss of open/public space; illicit use of public properties.
- Absence of urban policies and lack of adequate urban planning frameworks.
- Inefficient use of development potential, such as coastal cities, inner agricultural lands, etc.

Climate challenges and hazards

- Inefficient integration of urban disaster risk management principles/measures into national and subnational systems.
- Gradual loss of green spaces and natural resources, loss of biodiversity.
- Marginalization of environmental and climate change issues.
- Multitude of hazards, both natural and human-made.
- Considerable pollution created by transport sector, industries, heat islands creation.

Country Priorities.

At the time of publication, the current caretaker government has developed and launched a comprehensive three-year vision document for 2020–2023,[7] outlining development priorities encompassing market-based reforms. Notwithstanding the possibility of a future government overhauling this vision,[8] the strategy addresses Lebanon's three-year development priorities across several focus areas, through complementary planning tools and support mechanisms. The strategy comprises six pillars:

[7] Launched by the Government of Lebanon on 4 May 2020 at the Grand Serail, Beirut, Lebanon.

[8] On 10 August 2020, current and caretaker Prime Minister, Mr. Hassan Diab, resigned due to mounting political pressure and anger at the Lebanese government for their failure to prevent the 4 August 2020 Beirut Port explosion, exacerbated by existing political tensions and upheavals within the country. Since this date, his cabinet has been a caretaker government, awaiting the formation of a new one.

Bourj Hammoud, Mount Lebanon ©UN-Habitat

- Financial reforms, including economic reform plan.
- Infrastructure and utilities: addressing sectoral reforms across electricity, telecommunications, water, oil and gas, and aviation, in line with CEDRE[9] commitments, particular location-based issues (coastal development, urban and rural regeneration and preservation of historic centres in cities).
- Governance: addressing anti-corruption regulatory framework and judicial reforms and digital transformation and public sector modernization.
- Productive sectors development: focusing on sectoral development for industry, agriculture, and tourism and business reforms.
- Social policies: focusing on social assistance (social safety nets), social protection policy, labour policies, access to health services, as well as access to affordable housing; and
- Environment: focusing on governance, waste management, Litani River depollution, quarrying, air quality, and climate change adaptation and mitigation.

[9] Conférence économique pour le développement, par les réformes et avec les entreprises (Economic Conference for Development through Reforms with the Private sector).

Although Lebanon does not have an up-to-date national development plan, ministries have developed their own strategies. Nevertheless, the central alignment of sector plans and strategies with national priorities has not been systemized and the process of aligning them with Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development and its 17 SDGs – and regularly monitoring progress against SDGs – has not been implemented yet.

Complementing the current national development vision and priorities outlined above, UN-Habitat – in consultation with national government and non-government partners – has identified the following five priorities, responding to the identified five national challenges – with the view to **contribute to improving the living conditions of children, youth, women and men in Lebanon – regardless of their nationality – by creating liveable urban areas that are effectively planned and managed, environmentally sound, financially viable and competitive, and socially cohesive through good and inclusive governance and equitable distribution of resources:**

1. Political and socioeconomic

- Achieve employment-generating economic growth.
- Improve social protection systems for all groups and address inequalities and social inclusion.
- Develop national social protection (policy).

2. Infrastructure and basic services

- Ensure access to health services.
- Develop policies for effective solid and chemical waste management.
- Achieve energy security.
- Ensure access to affordable and adequate housing.

3. Institutional and urban governance

- Build institutional, administrative and technical capacities of national and local government institutions and improve governance and coordination among state institutions at national and subnational levels.
- Develop anti-corruption and judicial reforms.
- Develop digitization and public sector modernization.
- Develop sound mechanisms for urban data collection, management and monitoring at national and subnational levels.

4. Urban planning and development policy

- Achieve sustainable, smart, liveable and resilient cities.
- Develop required, evidence-based urban development policies, guidelines and regulations.
- Develop land management policies and reforms.

5. Environment, climate challenges and hazards

- Protect natural resources, habitats and biodiversity.
- Ensure climate change adaptation and mitigation.
- Ensure effective disaster risk management and mitigation.
- Increase green public spaces and energy efficiency.

Sodeco, Beirut ©UN-Habitat

Habitat Country Programme Document (HCPD).

Domains of change

The HCPD reconciles potential urban scenarios for Lebanon, including addressing other existing and ongoing humanitarian crises (such as the Syrian refugee crisis), and envisions a degree of flexibility for UN-Habitat to adapt its country strategic vision for 2021–2023 to the changing context and emerging opportunities. In line with UN-Habitat's Global Strategic Plan 2020–2023, and based on its four interconnected and mutually reinforcing domains of change – **(1) reduced spatial inequality and poverty in communities across the urban-rural continuum; (2) enhanced shared prosperity of cities and regions; (3) strengthened climate action and improved urban environment; and (4) effective urban crisis prevention and response** – UN-Habitat Lebanon is well-positioned to confront the toughest urbanization challenges, and to take advantage of the opportunities that urbanization can offer to maximize the positive contributions to overall sustainable development.

In addition, the HCPD will contribute to strengthening systems, developing common delivery platforms and introducing innovations with other actors to increase the efficiency, equity and effectiveness of humanitarian and development assistance in Lebanon. The HCPD will also strengthen national capacities to manage the humanitarian crisis with a view to preparing for hand-over while ensuring that system improvements benefit vulnerable Lebanese and non-Lebanese communities sustainably.

Global and regional frameworks

The HCPD will align with global and regional frameworks, namely the Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development, the New Urban Agenda (NUA), the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, and the Arab Strategy for Housing and Sustainable Urban Development 2030.

Within the framework of the United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development (Habitat III), held in Quito, Ecuador, in 2016, world leaders adopted the NUA, presenting a key paradigm shift in urbanization. The NUA represents a road map for developing cities that can serve as engines of prosperity and centres of cultural and social well-being, while protecting the environment. Globally, UN-Habitat is mandated to lead the implementation of SDG 11. By endorsing this stand-alone goal on cities, known as the "urban SDG", the international community has recognized urbanization and city growth as

transformative forces for development. Moreover, the third United Nations World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction (WCDRR), held in Sendai, Japan, in 2015, created a real momentum in discussing policies and implementation modalities boosting urban resilience. Those were thoroughly examined during Habitat III. As a result, national governments recognized the need to prioritize spatial planning to continue investing in building stronger and more liveable cities.

The global UN-Habitat Strategic Plan 2020–2023 focuses on the agency's commitment and contribution to the implementation of these global development agendas. Through its operational and normative work, the agency aims to:

"advance sustainable urbanization as a driver of development and peace to improve living conditions for all".

At the regional level, the HCPD is also aligned with a number of key frameworks. The 2020–2022 Regional Refugee and Resilience Plan (3RP) is a USD 5.5 billion plan that deals with the continued impact of the Syria crisis and is designed to support national efforts in this regard in Turkey, Lebanon, Jordan, Egypt and Iraq. The Arab Strategy for Housing and Sustainable Urban Development 2030, prepared by the League of Arab States in 2015, is another key regional framework that proposes a set of goals and targets to develop the housing and other relevant sectors to achieve integrated, inclusive and sustainable urbanization at the regional level. These goals and targets are to be adapted and developed at the national level, according to the specific context of each country.

Additionally, UN-Habitat's Regional Office for the Arab States (ROAS) has developed the Regional Strategic Plan (RSP), aiming to provide a key tool for ensuring the successful implementation of UN-Habitat's Strategic Plan 2020–2023, which repositions UN-Habitat as the global centre of excellence and innovation on sustainable urban development at the regional and country levels. As a response to the needs and priorities of the Arab region, the RSP's 2020–2023 vision is **"to support the development of integrated, inclusive, resilient and sustainable cities and human settlements, capable of providing adequate standard of living for all."**

Programme rationale

The HCPD aims to develop and implement integrated programmes in view of achieving greater impact. As such, it is "people-focused" and will spearhead interventions that are more holistic rather than sectoral, transformative rather than fragmentary, linking urbanization and human settlements with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the humanitarian development peace nexus, as proposed by the United Nations Secretary-General's reform.

The HCPD provides a framework for engagement with Lebanese national and local governments, as well as key stakeholders and is aligned with UN-Habitat's strategic and country-level priorities and activities. It aims to establish a clear linkage with the national development plans of Lebanon and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

In line with the overarching goal of the HCPD, **the main objective is to advance sustainable urbanization as a driver of development and peace, to**

The Egyptian Port, Tyre ©UN-Habitat

improve living conditions for all people living in Lebanon. The HCPD aims to:

- Promote inclusive and sustainable urban development to contribute to the national reform programme that aims to stimulate growth, create employment, reduce poverty, and maintain social and political stability.
- Promote participatory urban planning, management and governance through implementation of an integrated urban initiative to promote decentralization reforms, enhance local governance processes and strengthen the capacities of national and local authorities.
- Improve disaster risk mitigation and effective urban crisis response by supporting the Government of Lebanon's endeavours to create efficient and responsible institutions able to manage the cities and towns in Lebanon.

Through UN-Habitat's normative and operational capacity and complementarity, the agency's strategic entry point in Lebanon is to articulate the key challenges in urban development in the country by: **providing technical assistance at national and local levels, to enhance urban strategies, policies, urban resiliency, plans and their implementation; and addressing urban challenges and engaging stakeholders at all levels, including women, youth and marginalized groups, in a constructive dialogue that fosters mutual understanding, reshapes perceptions and identifies viable solutions**.

As a cross-sectoral issue, **the HCPD will also address the effectiveness of public institutions, including contributing to enhanced local governance capacity and systems strengthening**. While comprehensive reforms may not be realistic, due to the complexity of the political situation, it is possible to increase the legitimacy and capacity of institutions; promoting inclusive, evidence-based planning at the local level; supporting the adoption of specific reforms; strengthening mechanisms for community security and reinforcing the capacity of front-line agencies to respond to the challenges.

Programme focus areas

The Lebanon HCPD 2021–2023 will respond to the aforementioned five priorities guided by the following three focus areas:

Focus Area 1: Inclusive and Sustainable Urban Development

To promote sustainable urbanization, the programme envisages through this focus area to upscale its interventions at the national level and influence urban policy reform and transformation. While Lebanon is moving forward to implement the commitments made during CEDRE in 2018, reforming the country's urban realm emerges as a cross-cutting national priority. The planned large-scale investments in the country's infrastructure require that the Government of Lebanon formulates guiding tools and practices that would prioritize urbanization challenges and harness cities as drivers of development. This step should be accompanied by a thorough review and reform of existing legal urban frameworks and tools.

This focus area includes the following sub-focus areas and programmes:

Sub-Focus Area 1.1 Effective urban settlements growth and regeneration through peace building,

improved spatial connectivity and productivity of cities and regions.

- Urban renewal, gentrification and regeneration.
- Informal settlements and slums.
- Urban-rural linkages-connectivity and productivity.
- Capacity development of city authorities.

Sub-Focus Area 1.2 Improved social protection systems, reduced poverty and spatial inequality in urban and rural communities.

- Social and basic services (education, health, infrastructure projects in deprived urban areas).
- Social cohesion.
- Public and green spaces.

Sub-Focus Area 1.3 Expanded deployment of frontier technologies and innovations for urban development.

- Smart cities.
- E-governance.
- Digitization and public sector modernization.

Focus Area 2: Participatory Urban Planning, Management and Governance

To address the challenges of rapid urbanization in Lebanon, this focus area emphasizes, through concrete actions, the urgent need to make available locally verified urban data that represents one of the key ingredients for promoting inclusive urban and land use planning. Additionally, securing public and green spaces in urban settings is considered a key component of the planning process. UN-Habitat will support the Government of Lebanon's efforts in building a resilient economy by bringing forward initiatives and programmes that promote environmentally sustainable cities through the development of policies, institutional arrangements, establishment of supportive legal frameworks, and planning that support sustainable urban policies. The promotion of urban events and linked to the development of a National Urban Policy, such as a National Urban Forum (NUF) for building awareness and capacity in the urban realm is an effective way to create dialogue on issues of common concern. The NUF can also strengthen coordination within cities and between cities and national authorities.

This focus area includes the following sub-focus areas and programmes:

Sub-Focus Area 2.1 Increased and secure access to land, and adequate and affordable housing.

- National housing strategies, policies and plans.
- Social housing projects.
- Tangible and intangible cultural heritage.
- HLP rights for all population groups.

Sub-Focus Area 2.2 Enhanced policies and reforms for safe, resilient and sustainable urbanization.

- National urban policy.
- Urban population movements and effective urban sprawl management.
- Institutional, administrative and technical capacity-building and governance improvement at local and subnational.

Sub-Focus Area 2.3 Inclusive urban land use planning

- National, regional and local master plans that promote land use as the tool for enhanced

socio-economic development, taking into consideration vulnerabilities and population groups across communities.

Capitalizing on its vast experience in this domain along with other United Nations sister agencies, UN-Habitat – in cooperation with relevant national and subnational stakeholders – will continue promoting area-based approaches to planning and implementation. UN-Habitat's three-year programme will support the central government and local authorities to move towards more strategic and integrated urban and regional planning frameworks with a view to ensuring territorial homogeneity, boosting economic competitiveness, and achieving social cohesion and stability.

Focus Area 3: Disaster Risk Mitigation and Effective Urban Crisis Response

UN-Habitat will offer continued support to the Government of Lebanon's efforts in relation to environmental issues, crisis response, migration, sustainable transportation, environmentally sustainable infrastructure and climate change. Particular attention will be given to supporting efforts to: establish a better understanding of climate change mitigation and adaptation options and practices among stakeholders, including technology transfer, capacity-building and access to international finance; improve sustainable transportation, including public transportation and urban mobility; improve sustainable water, land and natural disaster management, addressing challenges such as air pollution, sand and dust storms/desertification/deforestation/soil contamination, biodiversity conservation, and marine and coastal environmental protection; scale-up and mainstream the adoption of energy-efficient buildings, resource-efficient and cleaner patterns of production, promoting renewable energies and minimizing generation and discharge of emissions, effluents, wastes and heavy metals.

This focus area includes the following sub-focus areas and programmes:

Sub-Focus Area 3.1 Resilient built environment, infrastructure and utilities.

- Resilient construction, rehabilitation and restoration of the built environment, infrastructure projects.

Bourj Hammoud, Mount Lebanon ©UN-Habitat

Gemmayzeh, Beirut ©UN-Habitat

Bourj Hammoud, Mount Lebanon ©UN-Habitat

- Institutional and communal capacity on resilience.
- Emergency mapping and planning including urban data collection/monitoring.
- Urban mobility.
- Water harvesting.

Sub-Focus Area 3.2 Effective adaptation of climate change into development plans.

- Use of renewable energy to reduce greenhouse emissions and improve energy security and air quality.
- Protection of natural resources, habitats and biodiversity.
- Adaptation of communities and infrastructure to climate change.
- Solid waste management.

Sub-Focus Area 3.3 Effective urban crisis prevention and response.

- Upgrading of disadvantaged urban neighbourhoods.
- Building cities and towns that are resilient to public health emergencies and other crises.
- Enhancing living standards and inclusion of migrants, refugees, internally displaced persons and returnees through effective crisis response and recovery.
- Risk sensitive land use planning strategies.

Programme and risk management

Risks that may prevent the successful implementation of the proposed programme include:

- **An absence of multisectoral urban data for evidence-based programming and poor monitoring systems at the national and subnational levels.** To mitigate this risk, UN-Habitat will work closely with national and local governments as well as other United Nations organizations and relevant actors (e.g. academic and research institutions) to strengthen existing state systems including the national statistics system, and possibly pool resources and, therefore, collect and monitor common area-based data at city and neighbourhood levels in a cost-effective way, with the involvement of communities and the adoption of innovative technologies where possible, building on its extensive previous experience with city and neighbourhood profiling.

- **The continuation of the humanitarian and development challenges informed by the protracted Syrian refugee crisis has resulted in high demand on social and basic services and increased tensions among host and refugee populations, leading to a fragile country stability on the political and security levels.** Through the LCRP, UN-Habitat has been steering its programmes to focusing on five sectors that represent key risk factors in urban vulnerable neighbourhoods: shelter, water, energy, protection and social stability.

- **The COVID-19 pandemic, which is threatening to leave deep social, economic and political scars for years to come, particularly in Lebanon, which is weighed down by fragility, poverty and conflict, may negatively affect the implementation of the programme.** UN-Habitat's COVID-19 Policy and Programme Framework[10] that provides guidance for global, regional and country-level actions will

[10] UN-Habitat, 2020.

Barja, Mount Lebanon ©UN-Habitat

be the essential tool to overcome this challenge. The framework is a key instrument to focus and scale UN-Habitat's contribution to the overall response led by national and local governments, United Nations agencies and local partners.

- **The continued deterioration of the economic situation may lower the focus on sustainable urban development concerns.** The measures UN-Habitat has adopted to address this risk include developing a close relationship with the local governments and private sector and encouraging the adoption of appropriate measures, even in a weak policy environment; mainstreaming sustainable development in all subnational initiatives; focusing on capacity-building for future action; and scaling up innovations through market and financing mechanisms.

- **An increased demand on UN-Habitat services that overstretches the organization and affects its capacity to respond.** UN-Habitat will review its operations and identify and adopt efficient ways and innovative approaches to expand without affecting programme quality or delivery. National implementation, with operational support from the Regional Office for Arab States (ROAS), is the preferred modality. Direct implementation will be used on an ad-hoc basis, and in agreement with the government. Alternative delivery models, such as full national implementation and non-governmental organizations (NGOs), will be considered where necessary. Community-based implementation will be pursued in partnership with relevant United Nations organizations.

Monitoring and evaluation

The three-year Habitat Country Programme will be thoroughly monitored through multiple tools and instruments. A yearly programme monitoring plan (PMP) will be developed and will serve as a master sheet that will be updated every three to six months through field validation that will be used to measure output indicators and ensure that interventions are accomplished in a timely manner. The plan will display the intervention strategy, output indicators, baseline information, means of verification, targets, accomplishments, risks, assumptions and mitigation strategies. In addition, activity work plans (AWP) will be developed to demonstrate activity-level indicators related to each donor-funded project. AWPs will be updated on a monthly basis and will inform the overall PMP.

At the end of the HCPD cycle, a country programme-level evaluation will be conducted, which will provide the country programme, its governing bodies and donors with an independent and forward-looking appraisal of its operational experience, achievements, opportunities and challenges. Findings and recommendations from the evaluation are expected to play an instrumental role in shaping the focus of UN-Habitat in planning and programming future projects, influencing strategies, adjusting the programme as appropriate, capitalizing on opportunities, replicating and upscaling the implementation approach used, demonstrating the value of activities for targeted beneficiaries, and improving how the programme addresses national priorities.

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11 SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES

IMPLEMENTING THE NEW URBAN AGENDA