

UN-Habitat Regional Office for Arab States Overview 2022

The collage features several circular and rectangular frames containing the following elements:

- Top Left:** A small icon of a person at a computer terminal.
- Top Center:** An icon showing three stylized human figures connected by lines, representing community or social networks.
- Top Right:** An icon of a globe with red wavy lines above and below it, symbolizing climate change or environmental impact.
- Far Top Right:** A small bar chart icon with a magnifying glass over it.
- Middle Left:** An illustration of two blue apartment buildings with yellow windows and green trees.
- Middle Center:** A photograph of a young man in a blue t-shirt with 'NUSS' on it, standing next to an orange bicycle and looking at a red sign with Arabic text.
- Middle Right:** A photograph of a group of women and children standing next to a large white water storage tank in a rural, hilly area.
- Bottom Left:** An illustration of a hand holding a house icon, symbolizing shelter or housing.
- Bottom Center:** An illustration of two people sitting at a table under green trees, representing community or social services.
- Bottom Right:** A photograph of a smiling woman wearing a pink headscarf and a patterned black dress, holding a small white object.



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United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat)

P.O. Box 30030 00100 Nairobi GPO KENYA

www.unhabitat.org

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Cover Design: Omnia Moussa

Design and layout: Omnia Moussa

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List of Acronyms and Abbreviations

1

GCC	Gulf Cooperation Council	URF	Urban Recovery Framework
		VLR	Voluntary Local Review
HLP	Housing, Land, and Property	WaCT	Waste Wise Cities Tool
IDPs	Internally Displaced Persons	WASH	Water, Sanitation and Hygiene
ILO	International Labour Organisation		
MENA	The Middle East and North Africa		
NDCs	Nationally Determined Contributions		
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organization		
ROAS	Regional Office for Arab States		
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals		
SUDs	Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems		
SURGe	Sustainable Urban Resilience for the next Generation		
UN	United Nations		



UN-Habitat's Presence in the Arab Region

2

The UN-Habitat Regional Office for the Arab States, located in Cairo, was established under a cooperation agreement with the government of Egypt and supports 18 countries in the region to promote socially and environmentally sustainable cities.

In a rapidly urbanising region, UN-Habitat envisions well-planned and well-governed cities through focusing on adequate housing, urban recovery, access to basic services, public spaces, policy and governance, housing, land and property rights, localisation of the Sustainable Development Goals and climate action.

Morocco
1 active projects

Algeria

Tunisia
4 active projects

Libya

Egypt
9 active projects

Sudan
4 active projects

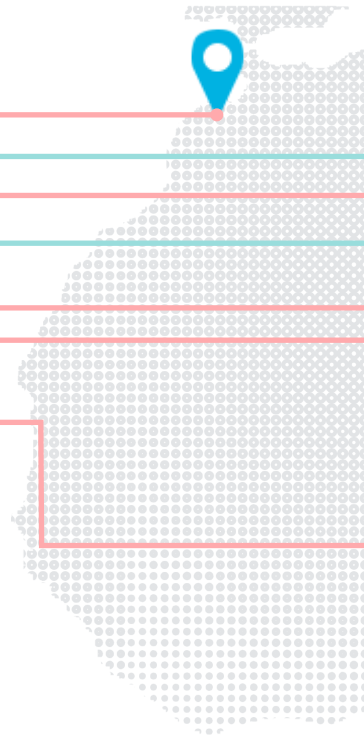
Palestine
5 active projects

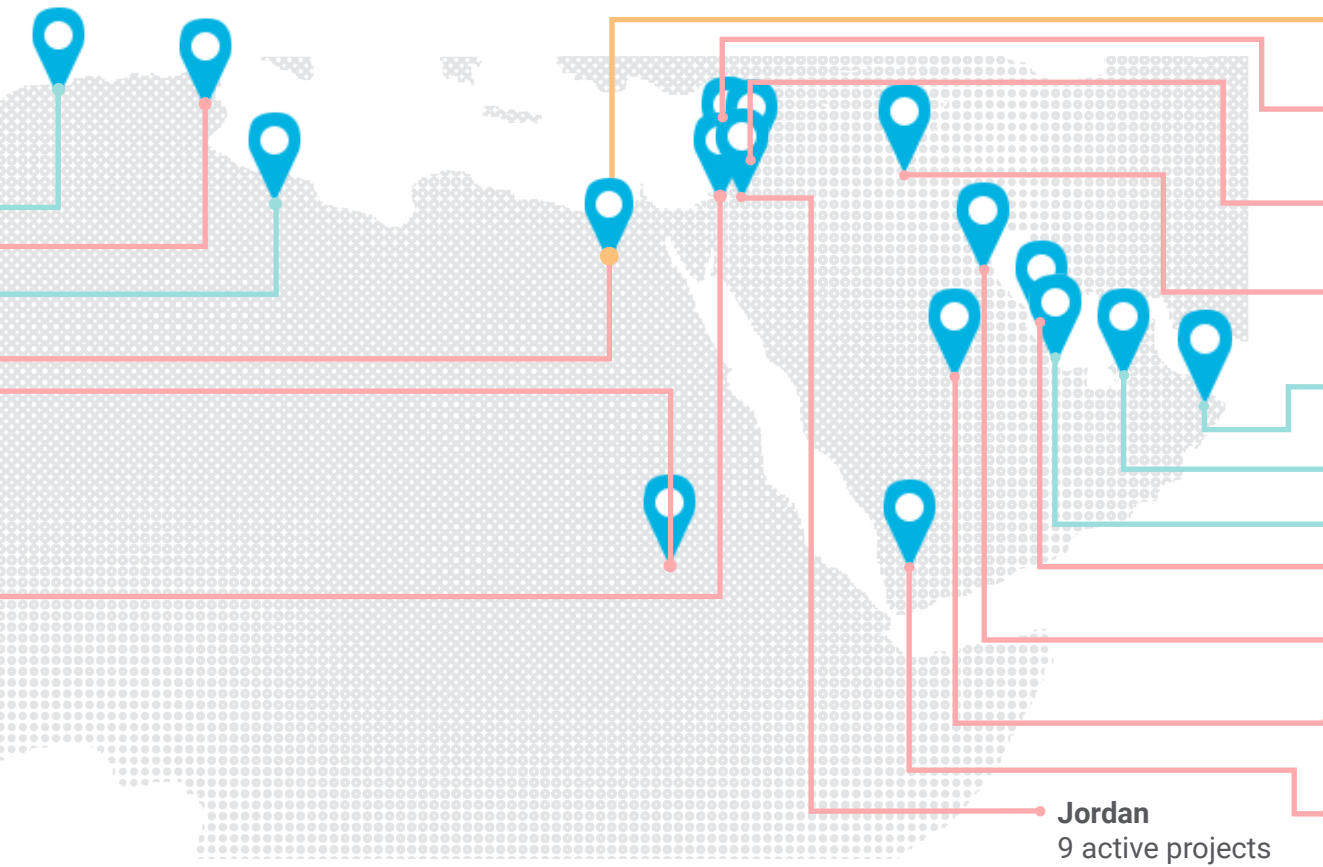
Legend

 **Regional Office**

 **Country Office**

 **On-going Activities but No Office Presence**





- ROAS**
7 active projects
- Lebanon**
14 active projects
- Syria**
14 active projects
- Iraq**
8 active projects
- Oman**
- United Arab Emirates**
- Qatar**
- Bahrain**
3 active projects
- Kuwait**
1 active projects
- Saudi Arabia**
2 active projects
- Jordan**
9 active projects
- Yemen**
6 active projects



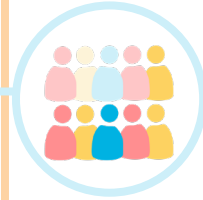
Key Urban Figures

3

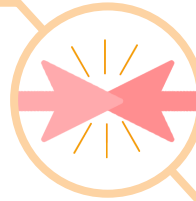
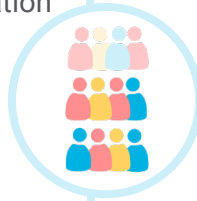
Conflict and Displacement

Demographics

456.52M people reside in the Arab Region (2021), almost **60 per cent** of which lives in urban areas¹

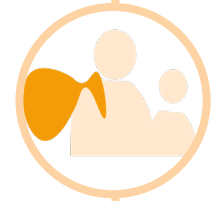


By 2050, population expected to reach **646 M** inhabitants and **75 per cent** will reside in cities²

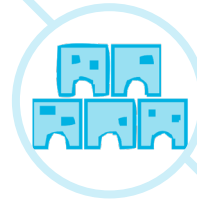


On-going conflicts in Yemen, Libya, Palestine, Iraq, Sudan and Syria have led to waves of displacement⁶

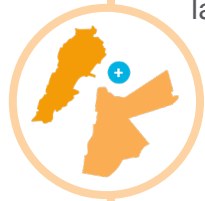
In 2020, Arab countries hosted **41.4 M** international migrants and refugees, who made up around **15 per cent** of all migrants and refugees worldwide⁷



Average of **26.67 per cent** of the population live below each country's national poverty line³ with almost **51.5M** living in multidimensional poverty⁴



In 2020, more than **81 M** people residing in the Arab region were living in informal settlements⁵



Globally, Jordan and Lebanon hosted the largest number of refugees as a proportion of their populations⁷

1/3 of migrant and refugee population in the Arab region were women in 2020⁷



The Syrian Arab Republic had the highest conflict-induced internal displacement in the world in 2020, reaching **6.6M**⁷



Unemployment

In 2020, **32.8M** of 281 million international migrants and refugees originated from Arab countries, **44 per cent** of whom stayed within the region (**14.4 M**).⁷

The Arab region registers the **highest levels of unemployment worldwide**, especially among women and young people, with **14.3 million** individuals already unemployed prior to the COVID-19 pandemic⁸



Approximately **36 per cent** of all conflict-induced **IDPs globally** were in Arab countries in 2020, making up around **17.1M** persons⁷



Regional unemployment rate for 2022 is estimated at **9.3 per cent**⁹

Impact of the Russia-Ukraine War

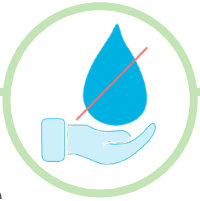


The poverty rate in the 15 non-GCC countries is likely to reach **32 per cent**, meaning that in 2023, **3.7M** people will be pushed into poverty, raising the total to a record of **125.8M** people living below national poverty lines¹⁰



Arab region's wheat imports from Russia and Ukraine are 34.4% and 15.9% respectively, with high discrepancies between individual countries ranging between 80% and 25%¹¹

Water scarcity is a major issue in **19** of the 22 Arab countries, while desertification and land degradation affect **17** countries¹³



In 2020, more than **47M** people lacked access to basic drinking water services in the region¹⁴

Current utilization rate of water resources estimated at **76.6 per cent** compared to about **7.5 per cent** worldwide¹⁵



All Arab countries suffer from air pollution exceeding the World Health Organization's guideline limit, with **11 of the 22** Arab countries exceeding the world average (2017)¹⁶

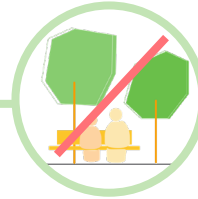


In 2021, all world regions recorded an increase in CO2 emissions¹⁷, with 6 out of the top 10 highest CO2 emissions per capita countries originated from the Arab region¹⁸

Widespread global attention to the war in Ukraine is likely to lead to less interest in providing humanitarian assistance to the countries in the MENA region. In March 2022, the UN collected only \$1.3 billion out of the expected \$4.27 billion¹²



Public spaces constituted just **2%** of Arab cities in 2016 compared to an average of 12% in Europe²²



Seas in the MENA region have become more polluted, and the average resident contributes more than **6 kg of plastic waste** into the region's seas each year, the highest level globally²³



Five Arab countries—Egypt, Kuwait, Libya, Qatar and Saudi Arabia—are ranked among the **top 10 polluted** countries worldwide. Three Arab countries—Egypt, Iraq and Saudi Arabia—are among the top 10 countries with the most deaths from air pollution¹⁹



Extreme weather, including droughts, floods, sand and dust storms and intense heat waves, is currently more frequent in the Arab region^{20,21}



With 60% of waste already mismanaged in most of the region, total waste generation is expected to almost double by 2050 to 255M tons (from 129M tons in 2016), further exacerbating the issue²³





Impact in the Region in 2022

4

4.1 UN-Habitat's Presence in the Arab Region

Legend

	Affordable and Adequate Housing		Urban Basic Services		Urban Policy and Legislation
	Climate Change Adaptation		Sustainable Urban Mobility		Healthy Cities
	Urban Data and Observatories		Urban Recovery and Reconstruction		Urban Planning Law
	Capacity building on urban planning		Urban Upgrading and Regeneration		Energy Efficiency
	Spatial Planning and Advisory Services		Technologies and Innovative Urban Solutions		
	Housing Land and Property Rights		Municipal capacity building regarding own source revenues		
	Safe, inclusive and accessible Public Spaces		Support to Socio Economic Impact of COVID-19		

Morocco

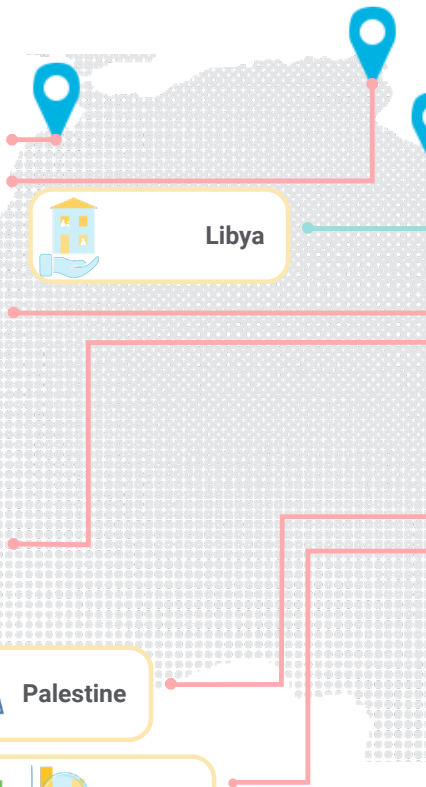
Tunisia

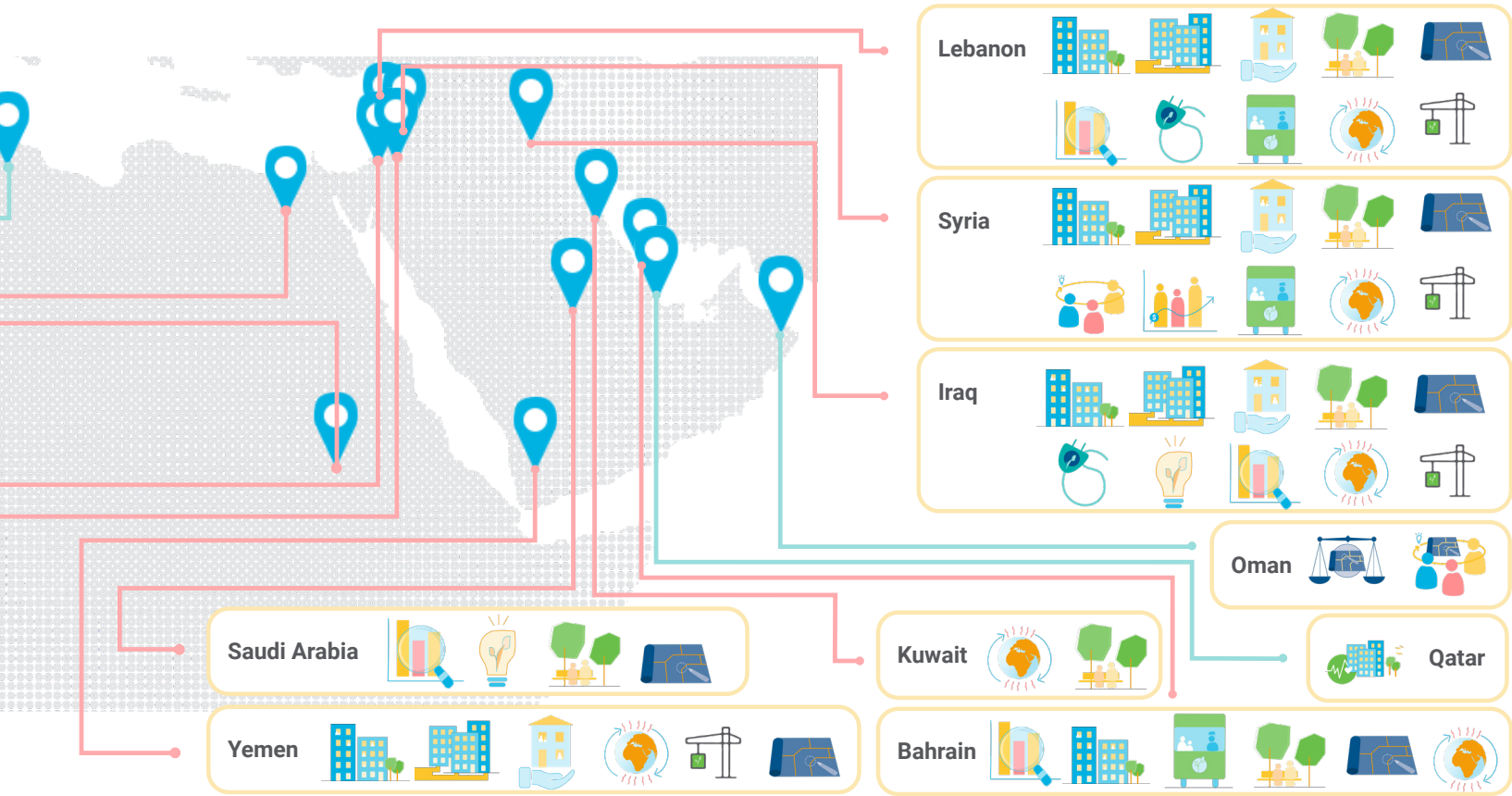
Egypt

Sudan

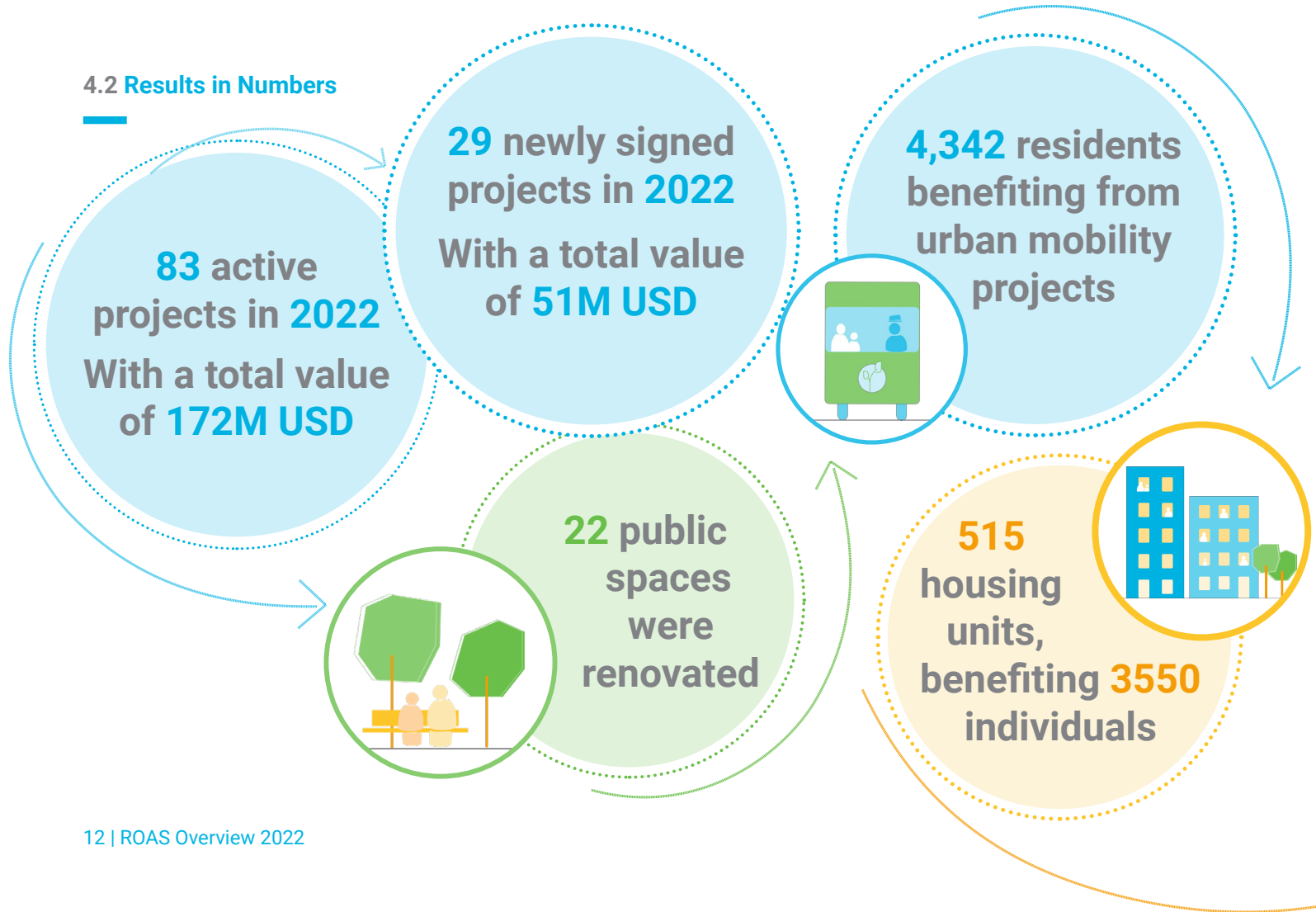
Palestine

Jordan





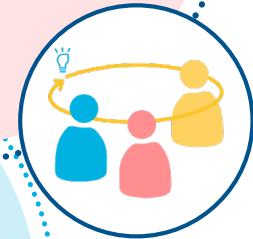
4.2 Results in Numbers



In Daraa, Syria in the Camp of Palestinian Refugees, **40,000** of the most vulnerable were supported to restore their houses



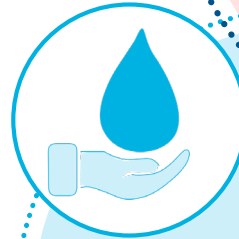
More than **620,000** partners, including local governments, NGOs and other urban stakeholders, participating in trainings and awareness raising activities in 2022.



27,578
Beneficiaries
of Energy
efficiency
projects



951,530
beneficiaries
of WASH and basic
services, including
5,410 persons with
disabilities



4.3 Voices from the Region

Hassan Dughaim is a lawyer who was born and raised in Harasta, Syria. In the first year of the Syrian crisis, Dughaim and his family had to flee their home in Al-Hadaeq neighbourhood and relocate to another city in rural Damascus. After ten years of displacement, it is now possible for the family and other families to return to the neighbourhood.

In Al-Hadaeq neighbourhood, UN-Habitat provided safer access to residential areas through rehabilitation of the area, enabling the community to access their homes to assess the damage, undertake basic repairs and begin to rebuild their lives.

“I had to sell some of my father’s properties to be able to renovate our house,” Dughaim said. He wishes he never had to leave his home in the first place. However, Dughaim is among thirteen million people who fled Syria or are displaced within the country’s borders due to the crisis.

UN-Habitat’s interventions included clearing the streets, providing solar streetlights, restoring the sewage



Photograph: UN-Habitat

network, removing accumulated debris, and backfilling tunnels, which safeguarded the structural integrity of many homes.

Supported by the Syria Humanitarian Fund, UN-Habitat in Syria helped more than 700 families, who were internally displaced within Harasta and neighbouring areas, to safely access their homes. The overall safety of the neighbourhood seemed to be improving through an increase in footfall within the area, a return to small-scale economic activity and visible repairs being undertaken by homeowners.

“I was very relieved as I re-entered my house. For me, it’s a fancy castle.”
–Hassan Dughaim, Harasta, Syria.



Photograph: UN-Habitat

Simone AlAshkar, a Lebanese woman, had her home destroyed in the Beirut Port explosion. AlAshkar was born in that house, where she grew up, lived, learnt, loved and got married. She has all her memories tied to her home.

The day of the explosion, she was at home. She hid under the covers of her bed, which miraculously protected her. The hatred and hopelessness she felt when everything collapsed around her led her not to shed one single tear for three months after the

explosion. She did not know what to do, she felt like she was falling apart.

“There are no words to express the joy in our hearts,” AlAshkar said after UN-Habitat, Live Love Lebanon and partners came to rehabilitate her house through funding from the Government of Japan and Impact Lebanon.

Eleven building were rehabilitated directly benefitting 65 individuals. Additionally, 160 people from the community cash for work assistance.

The Ghor Al Safi Zaha Cultural Centre and Park, officially inaugurated in December 2022, was developed and implemented by UN-Habitat, the United Nations Office for Project Services, and the International Labour Organisation, in cooperation with Zaha



Photograph: UN-Habitat Cultural Centre and the Municipality of the Southern Jordan Valley.

“Since the centre is an open space in the centre of a residential area, it has been a space for us to promote our business and become known among many people.” -Sabah Khalaf, Ghor Al Safi, Jordan.

The park now includes inclusive and safe play areas for all ages, with a specific consideration of children with disabilities, shaded seating areas and a multi-use area designated for social and cultural activities and for a market. The market serves as a platform for the creation of livelihood opportunities for vulnerable women, as well as an area that is allocated for the implementation of sustainable agriculture methods.

The community centre will host the different social, cultural and capacity building activities, including the tailored training on entrepreneurial skills and livelihood creation to enhance socioeconomic conditions of women.

This park and community centre were developed under a project targeting the socio-economic

empowerment of vulnerable women in Ghor Al Safi, aiming to benefit the 37,040 Ghor Al Safi inhabitants, of which 46 percent are women, as well as those from neighbouring communities.

After years of displacement, Barakat Hamad and his family are able to return to their new house in Sinjar, one of the most conflict-affected areas of Iraq.

Since 2017, UN-Habitat has been actively working in the remote district of Sinjar to facilitate its citizens’ return to normalcy and peace after years of displacement and instability.

UN-Habitat, supported by the Government of Japan, handed over 95 reconstructed houses in the rural village of Dokry, located in Sinjar, for some 1,100 returnees under a project aiming to support the reconstruction and peacebuilding of liberated cities in Iraq.

Hamad, a man living with a disability, had been forced to leave his home in Tal Banat, Sinjar

District, with his family and seek safety in a village in the mountains for almost two years.

The Bab Sinjar Housing Complex in Mosul was inaugurated in May 2022 and comprises of nine medium-rise residential buildings, including 324 apartments for approximately 2,300 returnees.



Photograph: UN-Habitat

“I never imagined that my house will be reconstructed. I will plant flowers for my wife in my garden.” -Barakat Hamad, Sinjar, Iraq.



Photograph: UN-Habitat

The conflict in Maqbanah district of Taiz governorate, Yemen, has resulted in the displacement of hundreds of families. Without any warning, they found themselves in need for basic services.

Access to water is one of the main challenges facing the vulnerable families in Internally Displaced Persons' (IDPs) sites in Maqbanah district. The area is characterized by its rugged mountainous terrain, which makes fetching water a challenging task, in which people walk long distances back and forth carrying heavy plastic

jerrycans. Some of them even use donkeys to transport water.

“Currently, we can drink water safely and without trouble ... and our children are not suffering from going long distances to fetch water anymore,” Mahyoub Al-Twairi, a member of the community, commented.

Now 4015 people have access to safe water through 4 rehabilitated water wells and provision of communal water tanks/taps under a project, implemented by UN-Habitat and supported by the Yemen Humanitarian Fund, to ensure the vulnerable households of IDPs has access to adequate water and shelter.

**“Fetching sufficient and clean water is not an easy task... our children even dropped out of schools in order to bring water for their families.”
-Mahyoub Al-Twairi, Taiz, Yemen.**

4.4 Work on the Ground

Resilience against Flash Floods, Amman, Jordan



Al-Zohour Green Triangle, designed to address the impact of flash floods, Downtown Amman.
Photograph: UN-Habitat

The ramifications of the floods in Jordan did not only lead to damaged properties and houses as well as flooded streets, they also had an adverse effect on many people psychologically and economically.

With an aim to increase the resilience of vulnerable communities in Amman against flash floods, UN-Habitat, in collaboration with the Greater Amman Municipality and supported by the Government of

Japan, implemented Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SUDs) pilot projects. SUDs are systems designed to efficiently manage the drainage of surface water in the urban environment.

Types of sustainable urban drainage systems (SUDs) implemented are **Al-Zohour Green Triangle, water harvesting systems, and household rain gardens.**

UN-Habitat is working to mitigate the effects of flash floods in downtown Amman through a comprehensive and integrated response through **community consultations and awareness raising, training and capacity building on resilience to floods, and urban planning management and construction standards**

Benefitting
nearly **35,000**
people in
Amman



A Yazidi female-headed household receives the land occupancy certificate. Photograph: UN-Habitat

The year 2022 came to an end with a decision to officially recognise the land ownership rights of the Yazidi minority in Iraq after more than 47 years of discrimination against Yazidis.

The Iraqi Prime Minister, Mr. Mohammed S. Al-Sudani, **stressed that the decree, which was drafted with the support of UN-Habitat, along with other decisions that will be taken later within the agenda of the Prime Minister's work, are all aimed at "safeguarding the rights of Iraqi citizens, embracing them and ensuring**

their rights within the principle of full citizenship, justice and equality.”

Under the Urban Recovery Programme, UN-Habitat works to facilitate the voluntary, safe and dignified return and sustainable reintegration of the Yazidi community in Sinjar.

In the late 1970s during the former regime, 100,000 Yazidis are estimated to have been forcibly evicted from their mountain villages and into 11 collective townships located on the plains to the South and North of Mount Sinjar. In 2014, the so-called Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant displaced over 275,000 people from the Mount Sinjar area – including a vast majority of Yazidis.

Through the housing, land and property rights programme, UN-Habitat is mapping and registering

the land occupancy claims of Yazidi returnees and holding community consultation meetings so that the returnees can verify their claims among themselves and have them endorsed by local authorities and community leaders.

To date, **14,550 claims** are registered and as many land occupancy certificates were issued to prove occupancy or ownership land rights of displaced persons and returnees in Sinjar. The next step is to upgrade the certificates of occupancy into ownership titles recognized by local and national authorities.

Since 2016, the UN-Habitat programme in Sinjar, Nineveh has been supported by the Government of Germany, the Department of State of United States of America, the European Union, Japanese and Korean Governments.

“The team from the Ministry and UN-Habitat came to our village and recorded my land, collected data on basic services and gave me my record. It will be saved with the locality office. I hope it will be a base for further development projects, and we could have land titles in the future.” -Mohamed Azrag, South Darfur, Sudan



Housing, Land and Property Rights in Sudan

Photograph: UN-Habitat

Supporting the return and reintegration of IDPs in Darfur and Blue Nile, UN-Habitat, in cooperation with the Ministry of Infrastructure and supported by the Peace Building Fund and the Government of Japan, promotes housing, land and property rights, environment friendly and affordable self-help housing construction and improving access to basic service infrastructure. There are now **124,118 occupancy certificates and land records of IDPs.**



Photograph: Mahmoud Hossam, UNIC Cairo

Cairo Bike: First Public Bicycle Sharing System, Cairo, Egypt

Aiming to provide the community with an alternative mode of transportation and promote a greener city, Cairo Bike is the first public bicycle sharing system in Egypt.

In October 2022, UN-Habitat, in cooperation with Cairo Governorate, supported by Drosos

**“I’ve always dreamt of the existence of such a project in our country.”
-Mohamed ElAraby, Cairo, Egypt.**

Foundation and through technical assistance and supervision by the Institute for Transportation and Development Policy, launched the first phase of Cairo Bike in Downtown Cairo.

The first two kilometres of bike lanes and 26 stations, holding 250 bicycles, were also constructed. The stations are situated in youth hotspots around downtown, where people from any age can rent bikes from one station and drop them off in another. Renting the bikes is facilitated by a mobile application or a prepaid membership card.

Since the project’s launch, there have been over 1,342 users of the system and more than 10,000 online applicants.



A building before and after rehabilitation under “Adequate Housing” project, Yemen. Photograph: UN-Habitat

Adequate Housing, Aden, Yemen

Samah Al-Hasani lives in Hafoon, Aden, with her mother, two brothers, a sister and two nieces. Her house was recently rehabilitated under the “Adequate Housing” project in Yemen.

“Even though she has a disability, my mother is the head of the household. She depends on the pension of my deceased father,” Samah explains. Her house’s roof was dangerously damaged, and the family had no means to fix it.

UN-Habitat, supported by the Saudi Development and Reconstruction Program for Yemen and AlWaleed Philanthropies, undertook the rehabilitation of the house, among the houses of 150 low-income families in the area, through changing the old roof and the rehabilitation of the walls, windows and doors.



Photograph: UN-Habitat

The “Adequate Housing” project aims at improving the living conditions of families in Aden, Yemen, through ensuring that their housing is safe, secure and designed to resist hazards.

Over 4,000 people are set to benefit from this project after the rehabilitation of a targeted number of 600 low-income housing units in Aden. The project also aims to enhance the capacity of Yemeni engineers and provide unemployed youth with vocational training.

“We are very grateful, especially when we see my mom smile, as this change is like a dream for her.”
-Samah Al-Hasani, Aden, Yemen

4.5 Key Events of 2022

Lebanon's First National Urban Forum

Beirut, Lebanon
March

Palestine's Third National Urban Forum

East Jerusalem, Palestine
May

AfriCities 2022

May

The United Cities and Local Governments of Africa's flagship pan-African event that is held every three years in one of the five regions of Africa

7th Arab Housing Conference

December

held on the sidelines of the Council of Arab Ministers of Housing and Reconstruction featured over 50 sessions discussing regional trends and achievements in sustainable urbanization, policy, governance and development. The conference provided a platform for dialogue, networking and exchange among official delegations, development agencies, donors and stakeholders.

The Eleventh Edition of the World Urban Forum (WUF 11)

Katowice, Poland
June

more than 30 sessions from the region, 8 official delegations from the region

Kuwait's First National Urban Forum

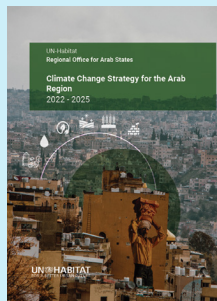
Kuwait City, Kuwait
October

The 27th Conference of the Parties (COP27)

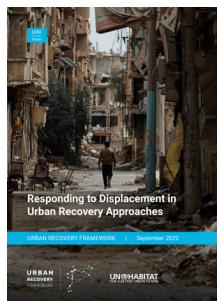
Sharm ElSheikh, Egypt
November

The **first-ever Ministerial Meeting on Urbanization and Climate Change** at a UN Climate Change Conference of Parties, focusing on housing, urban development, and multi-level action in relation to climate change. The Ministerial Meeting also witnessed the launch of the **Sustainable Urban Resilience for the next Generation (SURGe) global initiative** focusing on five urban sectors: buildings and housing; urban energy; urban waste/consumption; urban mobility and urban water.

4.6 Key Publications of 2022



Regional Climate Change Strategy

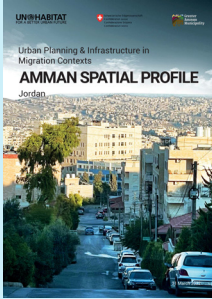


URF Publication Series

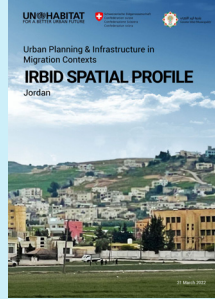


Local Economic Development Assessment for 3 Municipalities in Lebanon

Waste Wise Cities Tool (WaCT) – Arabic Version (Egypt), to be launched in 2023



Amman Spatial Profile, Jordan

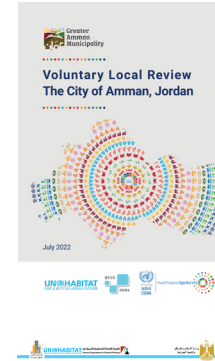


Irbid Spatial Profile, Jordan

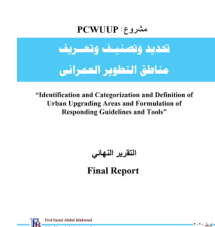
Developed under the Urban Planning and Infrastructure for Migration Contexts (UPIMC), The Amman and Irbid Spatial Profiles have been built upon to develop strategic visions, scenarios, and action plans for selected pilot neighbourhoods.



Guideline: Classification of Urban Development and Upgrading Areas (in Arabic) Egypt



Voluntary Local of Amman, Jordan



Technical report: Identification and Categorization and Definition of Urban Upgrading Areas and Formulation of Responding Guidelines and Tools (in Arabic) Egypt



Priority Areas for 2023 and Beyond

5

5.1 Global Priorities



Adequate Housing for All

Investing in adequate and affordable housing for all and including housing into national planning and land-use strategies will tackle several issues central to people's well-being. Adequate housing advances economic and social inclusion, digital access, personal safety and security, and healthy environments.

Cities and Climate Change

Cities have a key role as contributors to climate solutions. With increased local climate finance, cities could make significant progress towards implementing adaptation priorities set in Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs).

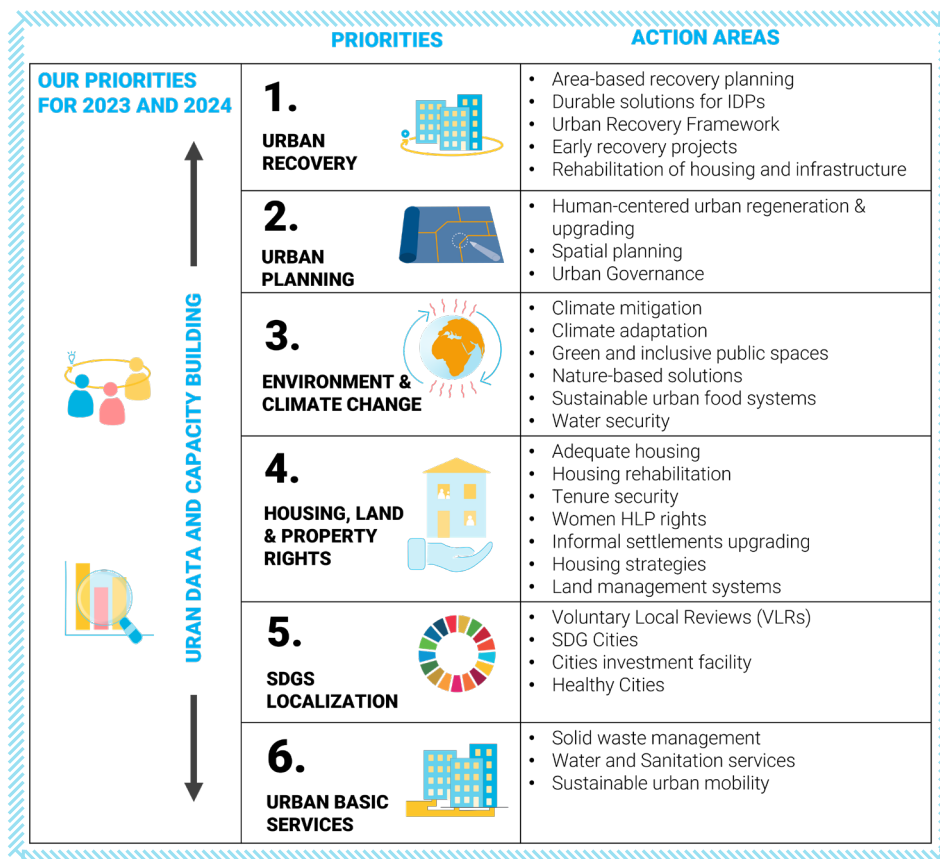
SDG Localization

Local leadership and local action plans on the SDGs have been identified as central to realizing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. To be successful, localization needs to be anchored in the principles of inclusion, partnership, and multilevel governance, and to build on adequate data and financing availability at the local level.



5.2 Our Priorities in the Arab Region

In response to the on-going and emerging challenges in the region, UN-Habitat ROAS aims to focus on six priority action areas in 2023 and 2024 as indicated below. While continuing our work on: (1) Capacity building as the means to ground UN-Habitat’s normative work, assess and respond to the needs of Governments and partners, trigger innovations and support long-term institutional transformation at the country level; and (2) Urban data and information to monitor urban conditions and trends at the local, national and regional levels to support reporting of progress on SDG 11 and providing evidence-based information to build sustainable urban policies at every level of urban governance.



5.3 Opportunities for Engagement

We look forward to engaging and collaborating with all our existing and potential partners and donors during international events in 2023 and 2024.





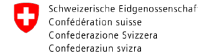
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UN-HABITAT

UNITED NATIONS HUMAN SETTLEMENTS PROGRAMME
P.O. Box 30030, Nairobi 00100, Kenya
unhabitat-info@un.org
www.unhabitat.org



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